

RACIAL VIOLENCE: THE BURIED ISSUE

By Harmit Athwal, Jenny Bourne and Rebecca Wood

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Introduction

For most politicians raw, crude racism is over. The Macpherson report,[1] it is said, dealt with it.[2] Our research shows the hideous fact that since Stephen Lawrence's death in April 1993, eighty-nine people have lost their lives to racial violence – an average of five per year. And this is just the worst aspect of a huge problem which has, far from going away, increased its impact in new areas across the UK. Whilst the main parties are in denial about the extent and severity of racial violence and popular racism (unless it manifests itself in lost votes to the British National Party) their racist domestic and foreign policies and the terms of the race debate – that immigration is indeed a problem, that British jobs are for British workers – are helping to fuel the misinformation and disaffection that can lead to such violence.

The first part of this report analyses murders with a racial element since Stephen Lawrence's – from the attack on the street to the convictions of assailants in the courts. The second part, analyses data on 660 cases of racial violence collated for 2009. In the appendices, Lee Bridges examines official statistics on racial violence and A. Sivanandan is interviewed about Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism.

Defining racial violence

It might look very odd to begin by asking what racial violence is. For, on the face of it, the answer looks obvious. But in fact, and especially after particular legislation was brought in since the 1990s, the definition of what actually constitutes a racial attack has become somewhat blurred and even contested. (See Appendix 1 on p20 for a discussion of official statistics on racial violence.)

Historical context

Racial violence against ethnic minorities in the UK is centuries old. In recent time, 'race riots' (of white

people against a black presence) which indeed led to deaths have taken place in port cities such as Cardiff (1919), Liverpool (1916) and South Shields (1919 and 1930). In 1959, a year after the 'riot' in Notting Hill, Kelso Cochrane was stabbed to death in North Kensington. Though there were outcries against such violence, they were localised to specific incidents. It was during the late 1960s, when 'P**i-bashing' appeared to become a national sport in poor white communities into which Asian families were forced, by poverty, lack of decent housing and job choices, to settle, that a political campaign to highlight and try to prevent racial violence really took off. Community campaigning – public meetings, marches and pickets, informal local protection against racist gangs – became the order of the day, with the focus on the police who appeared to take little notice that such crimes were taking place, showing little sympathy to the victims and certainly not prioritising the prosecution of their attackers. There were also problems noted during trials of cases involving racial attack and necessary self-defence, that judges did not appreciate the racial context in which such crimes took place.[3] Hence, some community groups began to agitate for a new and separate charge that could be brought to prosecute racial violence.

Legislation and definitions

Additions were made in the 1990s to incoming legislation to try to deal with racial violence and harassment. For example, sections of the Football (Offences) Act 1991 proscribe the throwing of objects on to the field and racist chanting. In 1994, following agitation from community groups that additional legislation was necessary to deal with racial violence,[4] a private members bill specifically on Racial Hatred and Violence was introduced into parliament for the first time but failed for lack of government support.

But most significant was the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act which introduced enhanced penalties for racially aggravated offences in the case of common

assault, actual bodily harm, malicious wounding and criminal damage. And in December 2001, the Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act added a penalty enhancement for religiously aggravated offences (as above). Such penalty enhancements were a way of indicating to prosecutors and judges the need to take racial harassment and violence seriously. Section 145 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 added that if a court was considering an offence other than that covered above, and was considering the seriousness of the offence, then if the offence was racially or religiously aggravated this had to be stated in open court and must be treated as an aggravating factor.

But without the police being sensitised to their initial role in investigating such crimes and the evidence needed to later bring a charge, such penalties would have no value. It was the Macpherson report in 1999 that introduced a definition of a racial incident to guide the police as ‘any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.’

Problems

Both the definition of the racial incident and the penalty enhancement for racial or religious aggravation were no doubt intended to help in the prosecution of racial violence and thereby also to act as a deterrent in the future. But, because aggravation was defined partly in terms of the motivation for a crime (effectively what was in someone’s mind at the time of the act), and so became equated with it, a subjective element was introduced – and such crimes became notoriously difficult to ‘prove’ and open to blatant misrepresentation and misuse.

On the one hand, it is often the case that the Crime Prosecution Service (CPS) enters into a kind of plea-bargaining (specifically recommended against in the Macpherson report) by bringing the substantive charge, e.g. assault, which is easier to prove, and neglecting to bring in the racially aggravated element, thus negating its purpose (see below). On the other

hand, police and prosecutors may bring a racially aggravated charge when it is not appropriate. This appears to happen on a regular basis where young BME people may be using racial epithets during a police operation but are actually reacting to the hostility of the police rather than objecting to their colour literally. Moreover, individuals, including some police officers who will be involved in bringing charges, now find it harder to distinguish between a racially motivated or aggravated offence and a crime in which perpetrator and victim are of different ethnicities (ie an inter-racial or inter-ethnic crime). Thus many victims asked in the British Crime Survey in 2007 about car theft believed that the crime was racially motivated. And the British National Party (BNP) launched a campaign about racial violence which, according to it, showed that white people were in fact the main victims of such crimes.[5] Lastly, the use of racist language during a crime, which is often used to prove motivation/aggravation, may in fact, as experts have pointed out, reflect the educational background and restricted vocabulary rather than the level of prejudice of a perpetrator.[6]

Objective definition

The IRR which monitors racial attacks (reported in the local and national press) has therefore created a definition which attempts to move away from subjective assessments:

The IRR considers that the identification of a racially motivated attack must depend on an objective evaluation of the whole context in which the attack takes place and not just on the skin colour or ethnicity of the alleged perpetrator(s) or victim. In particular, the IRR would regard a murder or attack as racially motivated if the evidence indicates that someone of a different ethnicity, in the same place and similar circumstances, would not have been attacked in the same way. Subject to the above, a formal legal finding or allegation of racial motivation would be taken as prima facie (but not definitive) evidence that an attack was racially motivated.

PART ONE: DEATHS SINCE THE MURDER OF STEPHEN LAWRENCE*

According to research carried out by the IRR (which has been monitoring deaths from racial attacks from the 1970s) since the highly publicised death of Stephen Lawrence, in April 1993, an average of five lethal attacks with a racial element take place in the UK each year.[7] Seventeen years ago, the country was transfixed by the information that emerged, because of the sustained campaign by the Lawrence family, about the random nature of the attack and the way in which the police failed repeatedly to follow up leads so as to find the killers. The Macpherson report into the death, with its finding of institutional racism in the police force and seventy recommendations as to how to deal with the problem and that of racial violence, was supposed to ensure that such murders never happened again. Yet our research shows that there have been at least eighty-nine deaths with a racial element since the murder of Stephen Lawrence. The sad fact is that such murders hardly make news. The names of the victims will barely be known to any but their immediate families. For politicians the issue of racial violence has been dealt with.[8]

The IRR collects and collates information on racial attacks by carrying out on a daily basis the monitoring of over 300 media sources across the UK. Where there is a suggestion that an attack that ends in death may be racially motivated considerable additional research is undertaken. This involves following a case through from police investigation, arrests and charging to the trial and any subsequent appeal. Where possible, family members of the deceased are consulted, as are investigating police officers and the CPS, to establish additional facts.

Of the eight-nine deaths we have examined here, eighty-two victims came from BME communities, four were white British and three were white Eastern Europeans. Within the BME victims, thirty-nine were Asian and twenty-five were black. The vast majority of perpetrators, in eighty-three cases, were white British people.

Although the IRR examines all crimes with a racial element which result in death (see definition on p4), this does not mean that every inter-ethnic crime which results in death will be on this list.*[9] It also has to be pointed out that in some cases the racial element is more overt than in others. For example, in the Stephen Lawrence case, there appeared to be absolutely no other reason for his attack than that he was a young black man in that area at that time. The deaths of Anthony Walker, Kunal Mohanty, Christopher Alaneme and others follow this pattern. In other cases, the racial element may be less clear-cut but still, according to our definition, play a large part in the crime, as in the cases of Syden Pearson and 3-year-old Deraye Lewis. However, we have not included cases in our list where the racial element is present but may not be conclusive and where a death might have occurred as an unintended consequence of a crime such as a shop robbery rather than an added element of racial aggravation.

Death rates

On average there have been five deaths in each year. The exceptions to this have been in 1999, 2000 and 2006 when the figures doubled to nine, ten and ten

Anthony Walker, his girlfriend and a cousin, Marcus Binns, all 17, were waiting at a bus stop in Huyton, Merseyside, when they were subjected to racist abuse in July 2005. They decided to move and took a short cut through a park. They were followed by a white gang which attacked Anthony. Anthony's girlfriend and cousin went for help and, when they returned, found Anthony with an axe embedded in his skull. He was taken to hospital where he later died. The murder was treated as racially motivated by the police. In December 2005, Paul Taylor, 20, pleaded guilty to murder and was sentenced to serve at least twenty-four years. Michael Barton, 17, was found guilty at trial and sentenced to serve a minimum of eighteen years. On sentencing the men, the judge commented 'this was racist thuggery of a type that is poisonous to any civilised society'. In July 2006, Paul Taylor had his appeal against his sentence thrown out by the Court of Appeal.

* Please note that the full list of 89 murders can be viewed online at: www.irr.org.uk/violence/

Quadir Ahmed, 59, an Indian restaurant owner died nearly a month after suffering head injuries in a racist attack outside his restaurant in Eastcote Village near Ruislip, west London in November 2003. In September 2004, Daniel Palmer, 19, was jailed for life for Quadir's murder. The court was told that Palmer and his gang had been throwing eggs at the Zhai restaurant on Halloween night and Quadir and his brother came out to remonstrate with them. Palmer attacked him with an estate agent's 'for sale' sign. The gang were heard mimicking Asian accents and Palmer ran off laughing, boasting that he had broken Quadir's nose. Palmer was sentenced to a minimum of twelve years in prison.

respectively. It should be remembered that 1999 was the year of the publication of the report into the inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence, and the subsequent very public confession by the Metropolitan Police Commissioner of institutional racism in the force which may have led to a backlash from a wider society angry about the apparent vindication of what black people had been saying about the police and racism at large. The London bombings occurred in 2005 and all our research at the time indicated a backlash and a rise in racial violence against people assumed to be Muslim or Arab.[10]

Where is the risk?

Murders took place in rural areas as well as in large and smaller cities.

A large proportion of attacks – 52 per cent – which resulted in death were carried out on the streets of the UK and were quite often random acts of unprovoked violence, carried out by mainly young white men under the influence of drink. Indeed, drink-fuelled aggression was a primary feature of many attacks, whether they were carried out by large gangs or small groups of people (see cases of Quadir Ahmed and Mohammed Pervaiz).

Adam Michalski, 24 a Polish migrant worker, was stabbed to death in a Wrexham street in August 2007. In December 2007, Thomas Blue, 25, was sentenced to life in prison with a minimum sentence of seventeen years, after being found guilty of the murder which he said was in self defence. The trial was told that he abused Adam for being Polish and then later stabbed him four times. The judge said he was satisfied that there was a racist element.

Mohammed Pervaiz, 41, an Asian taxi driver died from head injuries after a racist gang attack in the Golcar area of Huddersfield in July 2006. In January 2007, the trial of Christopher Murphy and Michael Hand, both 19, Graeme Slavin, 18, and Steven Utley, 17, who denied charges of murder, was told by an unnamed 17-year-old how they had planned the ambush of a taxi driver in revenge for an earlier incident during which a scooter had been damaged. Other witnesses told the court of racist language and how Mohammed was attacked by a gang of men like a 'pack of wolves'. Hand changed his plea to guilty but in February, Murphy, Slavin and Utley were found guilty of racially aggravated murder after a six-week trial. Murphy and Hand were ordered to serve at least 25 and 21 years as ringleaders of the attack and Slavin and Utley were given 17-year minimum terms. In October 2009, Murphy failed on appeal to get his sentence reduced.

People would normally expect to be safe in their homes. But, significantly, seven deaths were as a result of cowardly, clandestine arson attacks on houses under cover of darkness. Given how rare arson attacks are (see general research on types of attacks on p10) it is obvious that when they do take place they are potentially highly lethal. Most recently, *Crimewatch* announced that the deaths of grandmother Hamida Begum, 71, and her granddaughter Alana Mian, 4, in a house fire in Bolton in June 2008 were being treated as racially motivated following an arson attack.

Who are the victims?

The young

The young are over-represented as victims of such deaths. Twenty per cent of those who died were young people aged 20 and under, and 27 per cent were aged 21 to 30. Therefore almost half the victims were 30 or under. Examples of such murders include Anthony Walker in July 2005, Christopher Alaneme in April 2006 and Mohammed al-Majed in August 2008.

Certain trades put people at risk

Taxi drivers, takeaway workers, shop workers – many of whom work alone and at night – are at particular risk to attacks which result in death. Taxi drivers and takeaway employees are routinely attacked on Friday and Saturday nights and the attacks are usually

fuelled by alcohol which loosens tongues and inhibitions.

Sixteen per cent of all the deaths in our list were on people working as taxi drivers or in takeaway establishments. There have, however, been numerous other deaths over the last few years on such vulnerable workers which cannot, without more evidence, be certainly attributed to racism and are not on the list of eighty-nine. (For example, Ahmjid Ismail at Kirkland Stores in Maybole, Ayrshire in 2006; Jashbhai Patel who died at his Luton store in June 2009; Nasir Sayeed who died after his shop in Bristol was set alight in February 2008).

Refugees, asylum seekers, migrant workers and overseas students

People who are newly arrived and who do not have a settled immigration status, home or community, are particularly at risk. At least seventeen of those who died were refugees, asylum seekers, migrant workers or

Kalan Kawa Karim, 29, an Iraqi asylum seeker died in hospital after being attacked by a white man outside a pub in Swansea in September 2004. Kalan was disabled – he had lost a leg below the knee after being tortured in Iraq. He came to the UK to seek asylum in 2002 and had been living in Swansea. Kalan was walking home with a friend when three men attacked them; Kalan was punched in the back of the head and taken to hospital, where he later died. Police treated the attack as racially motivated. Eight days after his murder, 26-year-old Lee Mordecai was charged with Kalan's murder. In February 2005, Mordecai admitted manslaughter and was jailed for five years.

overseas students. These newcomers often have to live – because they have been dispersed, because they are seeking work (often agricultural) or because college places are only available – in remote areas which are traditionally white and may already have a degree of deprivation. For example, asylum seekers have been murdered in Glasgow (two deaths: Wei Wang in August 2006 and Firsat Dag in August 2001), in Swansea (Kalan Kawa Karim in September 2004), and in Sunderland (Peiman Bahmani in August 2002). Mohammed al-Majed, a Qatari student, was killed in Hastings and numerous attacks have been recorded on overseas students at universities and language students, particularly in coastal towns like Plymouth, Hastings, Newhaven and Brighton.[11]

Gregory Fernandes, 32, an Indian sailor from Goa died after being attacked by a gang in Fawley Hampshire. He and a shipmate were returning to their ship berthed at Fawley oil refinery when they were attacked by a 20-strong gang. A passer-by broke up the fight and took Gregory back to the docks where he collapsed and died from a heart attack as a result of the stress. His friend Pitchilnaviram suffered a broken collarbone. Police said that Gregory was attacked because of his race. Ten teenagers, aged 13–17, were arrested on suspicion of murder, GBH and violent disorder and later released on bail. In January 2008, the Fernandes family expressed concern at the police investigation and the failure to charge anyone in connection with his death. Later three young boys were charged with murder. At their trial, in February 2009, the three admitted lesser charges of manslaughter. In March 2009, Stephen Pritchard, 18, Daniel Rogers, 18 and Chay Fields, 16 were sentenced to six-and-a-half years in prison. A 15-year-old boy admitted GBH on Pitchilnaviram and was given a 12-month detention and training order. Another 15-year-old who also admitted assault was given a 18-month supervision order.

Mohammed al-Majed, 16, an Arab student from Qatar, studying English at a foreign language school in Hastings, died from serious head injuries after being set upon by a gang of drunken youths shouting racist abuse in August 2008. The gang began by racially abusing Peter Henworth, a Black South African student, by calling him a 'n****r' and throwing a punch at him. Mohammed and other friends witnessed the altercation from a takeaway and came out of the kebab shop to run away and avoid any further violence. But the gang insisted on a fight and a single punch knocked Mohammed to the ground where he fractured his skull – dying three days later. In November 2009, George Austin (who delivered the fatal punch) was jailed for four and a half years. Paul Rockett was sentenced to four months for racially aggravated common assault and Alexander Quinn received two years for wounding one of Mohammed's friends.

Ekram Haque, 67, died a week after being attacked by a Black gang outside his local mosque after evening prayers in September 2009. He suffered head injuries in the attack (which is thought to have been racist). His 3-year-old granddaughter who was with him at the time of the attack was unharmed. Three young people aged 14 and 15 have been charged with GBH with intent and murder. And a 12-year-old were charged with conspiracy to commit GBH and two counts of assault. The attack followed other assaults on elderly Asians near the mosque.

Muslims

Although Muslims represent 3 per cent of the population in the UK, they represent a massive 44 per cent, almost half, of those who have died. Because of their names, the IRR has taken these victims to be Muslim but can only attribute two deaths directly to Islamophobia. Kamal Raza Butt died in July 2005 (following the London bombings), allegedly being called ‘Taliban’ during the attack and, more recently, Ekram Haque, a 67-year-old pensioner, was attacked by a black gang outside his local mosque in Tooting.

It is impossible to tell exactly if an attack has been influenced by a religious factor as opposed to (or as well as) a racial one. The category ‘Muslim’ is becoming more and more racialised and the distinction between ‘racial hatred’ and ‘religious hatred’ is increasingly blurred. The term ‘Taliban’ or ‘suicide bomber’ may just have replaced the abusive term ‘p**i’, but neither denotes a real understanding of where a victim hails from. And ‘Muslim’ victims may have been picked out for violence because they work in restaurants, takeaways, corner shops or taxi cabs – sectors where they are particularly vulnerable to attack (see also part two on p10). All these are lines of work in which capital-poor ‘immigrants’ now find

Shahid Aziz, 30, was murdered by his cellmate, Peter McCann, in Leeds prison in April 2004. Evidence showed that he was attacked from behind, his throat was cut and he was hit repeatedly with a chair leg as he lay dying. McCann had previously attacked other prisoners and had objected to Shahid using his own language and having to share a cell with an Asian but he denied being racist. Shahid had previously made allegations of racism at the prison. The CPS alleged the murder was not racially motivated. In July 2004, McCann pleaded guilty to murder and was sentenced to life imprisonment, with a 13-year tariff.

themselves employed. And those from, say, Pakistan and Bangladesh, Somalia and Turkey are now very likely to end up in such jobs.

It is also debatable as to whether attackers can actually distinguish one Asian from another. Two young men, both Tamils (and hence Hindus) from Sri Lanka are amongst recent victims, as was a Hindu (from India) and a Sikh. Appendix 2 on p23 discusses Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism.

The criminal justice system

The police generally appear to have become better since the Macpherson recommendations were implemented at recording that attacks can be racially motivated and investigating them as such. However, our research into racist murders suggests that the stumbling block is now at the points of prosecution and trial. In numerous cases within our sample, the racial element is never brought before the court (a judge and jury may never hear about the racist language that was used during an attack). Section 145 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 applies in cases where a court is considering the seriousness of an offence (over and above those covered by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998). And in such cases, if the offence was racially or religiously aggravated, the court must treat that as an aggravating factor and

Kamal Raza Butt, 48, a Pakistani man, was found unconscious outside a shop in Nottingham and taken to hospital where he was pronounced dead in July 2005. It is thought that he refused demands for cigarettes from a gang of youths who then racially abused him and punched him to the ground. It is alleged he was called ‘Taliban’ during the attack. In April 2006, 17-year-old, Mardell Pennant, was sentenced to an 18 months’ detention and training order in a young offenders’ institute after pleading guilty to the manslaughter of Kamal in a joint enterprise with another youth, against whom charges were dropped. Detective Chief Inspector Russ Foster commented after the plea that ‘no evidence was found to suggest Mr Butt was targeted due to his race or religious belief’.

must state in court that the offence was so aggravated. Our research suggests that the judge may decide, despite strong evidence to the contrary, that the racial element is not significant, as in the cases of Frankie Kyriacou, Shezan Umarji, Tarsen Nahar and Shahid Aziz, for example.

The European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), in its fourth report on the UK, specifically recommended that judges be trained in an awareness of the impact on the community as a whole of their statements in court when sentencing offenders. ECRI also recommended that progress be made in the police's gathering of evidence – which was another of the stumbling blocks.[12]

Tarsen Nahar, 44, was found dead in Hayes, west London on 19 May 2007. Daryl O'Connor, 18, was later found guilty of murder and of aggravated actual bodily harm. The court was told that O'Connor and his friends had been heard to say 'We don't like n****s in our park'. O'Connor, who was 17 at the time of the murder, is said to have beaten Tarsen to the ground and then kicked him in the head, as the gang stole his phone and wallet. Tarsen was able to make his way to a friend's house where he collapsed. Local police said the murder was investigated as racially motivated and that O'Connor was initially charged with racially aggravated ABH (as well as murder), however the 'racially aggravated' rider was dropped. In July 2008 O'Connor was sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum sentence of thirteen years.

PART TWO: RACIAL VIOLENCE IN 2009

Methodology

The 660 cases analysed here were mainly obtained from coverage by the BBC, in national newspapers and over 310 local web news sites across the UK during 2009. They represent a small fraction of all cases of racial violence.[13] News coverage on racist attacks is patchy and often dependent on information from local police forces or how local newspapers report the issue. For cases to reach news coverage they often have to be fairly severe and frequently only become news once the local police have sent out the information – in other words, the police consider the case to be racially motivated and is investigating it.[14] This means that cases which involve petty harassment, for example, vandalism, graffiti, spitting and spoken insults, may well not see the light of day on our tally. Different police forces will have different policies for both responding to racial violence cases and for reporting these to their local paper. (Some forces, for example, do not report certain cases because they do not want to appear to be losing the war on crime.) And then again local papers may have different policies and levels of sympathy when reporting such cases at all to their readership. In addition to the vagaries within the media and police, there is still the all-important fact that victims, for a variety of reasons, are not reporting all their experiences. They may have lost confidence in the system if they are victims of persistent harassment or they simply may not know what to do. In areas where there is an active support and campaigning group for victims of racial violence, statistics could be enhanced because they come closer to reflecting the actual level of attacks in that area.

But the cases here recorded have been followed up as far as was possible by our researchers and analysed via the IRR's database. Flawed though this methodology may be, it is the first time, to our knowledge, that a national picture of racial violence has been drawn.

Overall findings

It comes as little surprise that 467, ie. 89 per cent of all perpetrators of racial violence are definitely known to be white and that only 3.8 per cent of blacks and 0.6 per cent of Asians are definitely perpetrators of such violence. Victims are most likely to be Asians, Blacks, asylum seekers or migrant workers. There are also attacks recorded in Wales and Scotland on the English but these are negligible in number at just nine. Twelve of all the attacks appeared to be anti-Semitic.[15]

Evidence suggests that those groups, such as asylum seekers, who have moved involuntarily to new areas, or migrant workers, who have moved to follow work, are at risk to attack. And Asians, who are recognisably Muslim and/or working in isolating trades or living in poor communities where they do not enjoy strength of numbers, are at greatest risk. Just over 45 per cent of victims were Asian. And although only forty-six attacks clearly involved the factor that they were Muslim, it is highly likely, because of the location of attacks, that Muslims were in fact the victims. (However, it is also the case, as signified in the deaths analysis, that racists cannot distinguish between one Asian and another, whether they are Sikh, Hindu or Muslim. Islamophobia may be enhancing the likelihood of racists seeking out Muslims, but, on the other hand, they are unable to distinguish what they would call one 'p**i' from another.)

Areas which record the highest levels of attack are not generally the areas with long settlement of BME communities.

The nature of the attack

An attack can take any form from graffiti on a wall and spoken abuse to the clandestine setting of fires and violent, murderous stabbings.

Taxi drivers targeted

Two white men who had been picked up outside Leeds train station by a 71-year-old Asian taxi driver in the early hours of Sunday 15 February, became abusive and made racist remarks to the driver throughout the journey. The driver eventually stopped and asked for the fare owed, the men refused to pay and one of them punched him in the head several times before throwing food at him. The pair ran off but then returned as the taxi driver was cleaning out his car. One of the men grabbed him round the neck while the other went through his pockets and stole cash. He was then spat at and racially abused before the pair ran off again.

Racial abuse was recorded in 68.7 per cent of cases. This is not surprising since the abuse might well be the factor used to define that the attack is indeed racially aggravated. What is more surprising is that 31.3 per cent of cases involved physical violence to the person, of which four attacks were fatal. 12.4 per cent of attacks involved criminal damage, and robbery or attempted robbery were recorded in 1.3 per cent of cases. Given the evidence in Part 1 of deaths arising from arson attacks, it is worrying that twenty-two attacks (3.1 per cent) involved arson.

People at risk

Figures show that the places where most attacks take place, over one third of all, i.e. 37.6 per cent, took place on our streets, in car parks, parks and other open spaces, which suggests that assailants do not know victims – that there is a random element in attacks. This is borne out by the fact that though around 8.4 per cent of attacks take place on each weekday, almost 34 per cent take place over the weekend – when more people are on the streets and fuelled by drink or recreational drugs. Seventeen per cent of assailants were known to have been under the influence of drink or drugs during an attack – which leaves open the possibility that others were, but this data is unknown.

Sadly, over 12 per cent of attacks take place where people ought to feel most safe – in their homes. This suggests that these are not random attacks but that assailants can live in the vicinity and know their victims and that victims may well be facing frequent or even continuous forms of harassment.

There are a number of trades in which BME people are at especial risk to attack. Over 10 per cent of attacks took place on taxi drivers or in taxis or taxi offices. In many areas this trade is peopled by Asians. Another 8.6 per cent of attacks took place in takeaways, restaurants, pubs and bars and another 8 per cent took place in shops. Over 3 per cent of attacks took place at sports events.

The geography of racial violence

By far the majority of attacks (82.42 per cent) take place in England. Almost 10 per cent take place in Scotland, 5.1 per cent in Northern Ireland and 2.8 in Wales. (But it is worth noting that ethnic minorities, as self-describing in the 2001 Census represented 13 per cent of the total population in England, 4 per cent in Wales and 2 per cent in Scotland.)

Drawing conclusions about particular hotspots of racial violence in the UK is hard to do from our data because of the limits on our methodology – relying on the media in each area, which may, in turn rely on the police. (However we know that our sources do cover the whole of the UK, though certain areas, e.g. North Wales and the East coast of England, including Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, may have sparser coverage.)

What has emerged is that the map of violence has changed quite dramatically since studies were first done of such violence in the 1970s.[16] It is no longer poor, deprived areas of London like Southall, Tower

Asylum seeker targeted in arson attack

A racist arson attack was launched on a house where asylum seeker Zanko Hamamin lived in Stockton-on-Tees with the words 'Hope your home burns down, curry muncher'. Mr Hamamin had lived in the house for three months, during which time he had been subjected to constant abuse. On the day of the attack, 26 July, it took the police three hours and twenty minutes to arrive. They found the word 'P**i' scratched on the pavement outside the damaged door.

Gang attack

In the early hours of Sunday 26 April, Mohammed Saleem went outside his home to speak to a gang of six after they climbed on to the roof of his car. His wife Parveen Khan, heavily pregnant with their fifth child, said 'they were shouting racist abuse at him and wouldn't get down. Then one of them went and got the baseball bat and hit him round the head from behind. He tried to defend himself but they punched him and then a vodka bottle was smashed over his head. He tried to run away but he fell down and they kept hitting him again and again. I could do nothing to stop them because I am pregnant and couldn't risk the baby being hurt. I phoned for the police but I felt so helpless. My children were inside sleeping and they woke up screaming. I was terrified for my husband, for all of us.' The family have lived in Blackburn all their lives. Mrs Khan, 30, says that they have been subjected to increasing abuse over the past two years - 'young lads shouting racist abuse and spitting at us in the streets.' Mr Saleem was left needing to have sections of his scalp glued together and had to have a section of skin re-attached to his foot following the vicious assault.

Hamlets, Hackney, Newham, which witnessed many of the racial attacks and racist murders a generation or two ago, that are now so prone to serious attacks. Not only are BME communities now more established there but also a whole history of struggle against racism has strengthened those communities. These communities are, for want of a better way of describing them, now more at ease with their diversity. (Also see Appendix 1 on what official statistics reveal about location of attacks.)

In terms of county regions 7.6 per cent of all attacks do still take place in Greater London. But that is likely to be the case since London has the highest proportion of people from minority ethnic groups apart from those who identified themselves as of Pakistani origin, of whom there is a higher proportion in Yorkshire and the Humber (2.9 per cent) and the West Midlands (2.9 per cent). When we ranked local administrative areas by prevalence of attack, not one London borough appeared in authorities with five attacks or more attacks.

But what was significant was that ethnic minorities in a whole host of cities, towns and areas, not traditionally associated with such violence, now appear to be experiencing it. These are areas which have traditionally been very white and are not

affluent. In some cases core industries have gone and a whole generation of young people are without a future. And the migration is small-scale, it does not compare in any way to the large-scale migrations which took place when the UK was in its industrial prime. This means that families and small businesses are often very isolated, facing a sea of resentment in areas which are poor, where unemployment, particularly of the young is high, and residents feel they have been ignored by mainstream parties.[17]

The migration to these areas has occurred over the last ten years and takes a variety of forms. Whatever the reason for the new migration, it is our belief that tensions could have been overcome if local authorities and central government had worked practically to facilitate the arrival of newcomers into areas of unemployment, housing shortage and deprivation, and been more open and honest in the discourse about migration - instead of opening up the terrain on which the new migrants would be blamed. Again, just as in the 1960s and 1970s in parts of London, it is being left to community-based organisations to shoulder the resulting impact of racial violence which comes from community tensions. (It may well be that in certain places such as Glasgow and Bristol where there are active campaigns, Positive Action in Housing and Support Against Racist Incidents, respectively, the recording of attacks being better than in other places, explains a rise in figures.)

In policy terms the most obvious group to suffer within this new set-up are asylum seekers. They have

Random street attack

An Iranian couple in Sheffield were making their way home on Boxing Day when they were set upon by four white men. Racial abuse was hurled at them before they were attacked. The woman, Hannah Abdolrahman, was left unconscious and her husband, Blend, was left covered in blood and with his clothes ripped. When hearing of the attack, Behzad Takerkhani, a friend of the couple's, rushed to help them, but was also attacked by the four men. All three victims needed hospital treatment.

Isolated taxi drivers

Atif Khan had dropped off a fare in Wokingham on 30 May when a group of men approached him and demanded a lift. After he said that he was not allowed by law to accept the fare, the gang of seven became aggressive and started shouting at him. He was then pushed and kicked to the ground. A group of bystanders whom he thought were good Samaritans starting milling around the taxi, shouting racist insults at him, including 'swindling P***i' and 'why don't you fuck off home?'. Fellow taxi driver Imran Hussein described Mr. Khan's attackers as behaving like 'a pack of wild animals'. He was left with a broken kneecap, requiring surgery and unable to work for at least six weeks.

been forcibly dispersed, away from their kith and kin or larger conurbations like London, across Great Britain and very often to areas which had known very little BME migration before. They are often housed in areas of cities which are already run-down such as Sighthill in Glasgow or in cities like Plymouth undergoing decline.

Migrant workers, too, are in a sense dispersed – because they are being sent to specific regions of the country where jobs are available. And these are again often areas, including swathes of agricultural, rural counties, which have not really experienced diversity before. These newcomers, whether visibly different or from eastern Europe, are resented, despite the fact that they are very often doing agricultural work where there are massive shortages of labour or working in trades where local people do not have the skills, such as in Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Northamptonshire.

Asian takeaway and workers targeted

Since February, police have been called at least twenty-three times following attacks on Roopnagar Indian takeaway in Plymouth. Stones, missiles and eggs have been thrown at windows and staff, beanie guns shot at windows, and staff have been racially abused, called 'P***s' and told to 'go home'. A member of staff was assaulted during an attempted robbery in May just outside the restaurant. In another attack, burning newspaper was stuffed through the letterbox of the owner's adjacent house and his front door broken. The owner says that he fears for his family's safety and that his young son is now too scared to go to nursery. He also feels he is losing business because people are too scared to eat there. He has paid out thousands of pounds in repair bills and adding extra security measures, including a fire-proof letterbox and panic alarm.

Migrant workers in Belfast in 2009 faced a particular experience of extreme racism. Belfast has not only been extremely white and unused to ethnic minorities, but also has had a long history of sectarian violence. Some Loyalists appear to have shifted their focus to the newly arrived especially in areas where housing is in short supply. The Protestant working class has, through globalisation, the peace agreement and the imposition of the market, lost its privileged position. And some people respond with vicious racism - in blatant attacks on Chinese people and Bulgarian and Romanian migrant workers, whom they have literally tried to run out of town.[18]

Sometimes areas may be receiving both asylum seekers and migrant workers and the demography of cities can change quite rapidly. The high levels of racist attacks in Glasgow and Edinburgh can in part be explained by a violent reaction to a fairly rapid change in areas which are both deprived and not used to migration. In 1999 Scotland was 98.4 per cent White with Blacks representing 0.2 per cent, Indians 0.2 per cent, Chinese 0.3 per cent and Pakistanis/Bangladeshis 0.6 per cent. But things changed rapidly in the 2000s as permits were given to migrant workers from the new accession states and asylum seekers were dispersed from England to Scotland. Between May 2004 and June 2006 32,125 work vouchers were given for Scotland. The population not born in the UK in Glasgow was 32,700 in 2001 but 55,000 by 2008. In August 2006 there were an estimated 5,000 asylum seekers in Glasgow. And migrants and asylum seekers are, because of dispersal and the nature of any work they may obtain, often very isolated and at particular risk of attack.

Another cluster of towns and cities, particularly along the south coast of England, are attracting overseas students - either to small language colleges or to universities – in increasing numbers. And it is in these areas which have been traditionally very white, and enjoyed reputations as resorts such as Hastings, Brighton and New Haven or key ports such as Portsmouth and Plymouth that attacks seem to be

Hindus mistaken for Muslims

In March, Fagu Patel was working behind the counter of the shop she runs with her husband, Manish, when a man threw a pig's trotter in her face. The family have suffered eight years of racial abuse at Reehal's Off Licence and News in Wakefield. Mrs Patel is quoted as saying that although the family are Hindus, the attacker 'probably didn't know we are not Muslim but he must have done it thinking we were'.

increasing at a rate. Plymouth is also a garrison town - with strong military and naval links - and a recruitment area for the forces. Returning marines from the Iraq War, among others, are based here. In addition it now has a very high level of youth unemployment. (Portsmouth is similarly a city based on its naval connections.) It has also recently received a number of asylum seekers - many of them now clearly recognisable because they come from African countries.

But where many attacks appear to be taking place are in towns and cities adjacent to or close to larger conurbations to which sections of the settled BME communities are only now slowly moving as their communities expand and their prospects allow them to seek better housing or to open up small businesses in non-inner-city neighbourhoods. Places along corridors northwest and southwest from London such as Watford, Reading, Swindon are now recording high levels of violence. These are places, like Barking and Dagenham before them, which had first attracted white families seeking a better life, perhaps even a whiter life than that they had experienced within what they derided as crowded, crime-ridden inner London. And these areas are those to which mobile BME families are now moving - to some local white dismay.

The exceptions to the scenario above, that areas with long-settled large BME communities are not those now experiencing the most acute forms of racial violence, are in parts of Lancashire and Yorkshire. The mill towns had, in their heyday a large number of Asians in their workforces and they had lived cheek by jowl with white workers around their workplaces. But when the mills closed in the 1970s and 1980s whites were rehoused by local authorities on newly built estates away from the mill areas while the poorer Asians by and large remained in the old housing

around the mills. What became a virtual segregation in housing led to segregation in education and a generation of whites and Asian grew up with little social contact and much distrust.[19] The local press, drawing on statistics about crime provided by the local police, exacerbated the situation by sensationalising the idea of Asian no-go areas and the dangers of parallel lives being lived by whites and 'self-segregating' (Muslim) Asians. Nine years ago in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford Asian youth took to the streets to protest against white racists and a police force that always took young Asians to be the perpetrators of violence. Today, racial violence is still high in many of these old mill towns but there is also evidence to suggest that Asian families now with the where with-all to move out of their ghettos are being targeted in the new areas to which they have moved. Thus Carlisle, Liverpool, Blackpool, Wigan and Calderdale as well as Rochdale, Preston, Kirklees and Bradford all were found to have high levels of racial violence.

In an article for the *Guardian* just before the 2010 general election, Gary Younge wrote about how Labour had left a 'more open-minded place' he argued that the connection between immigration and race in the public psyche had 'finally ruptured'. The movements of people and the colour of people were no longer routinely confused. Though xenophobia, religious intolerance and racism now bled into one another the fault lines had 'clearly shifted from colour to culture, race to religion, language and ethnicity'.[20] Our research suggests that rather than there being a clear

Ongoing harassment in home

A Nigerian family were subjected to over twenty attacks in their Merseyside home in nine months in 2009, leaving them desperate to move away. Police, who treated the attacks as racially motivated, arrested and charged three boys, aged 12, and one boy, aged 13, in connection with the attacks. The Asemote family had bricks and missiles hurled at their living room windows, cars vandalised and their children verbally abused and called 'n****r' as they walked down the street.

Arson attack on mosque

In what was described as the second petrol bomb attack in a week, Greenwich Islamic Centre in southeast London was set alight in the early hours of 16 June. The 62-year-old caretaker, Mohammad Kohealtee, who managed to extinguish the flames, had been hit with a hammer in the last serious attack on the mosque in March 2006. The centre's director said that: 'The Muslim community see this as a racist attack'. A chain that locks two heavy duty metal gates, which were put in place after the London 7/7 bombings, had been cut.

national shift from a racism based around colour to one based around culture, it is more useful to see the UK as now witnessing an ever-expanding mosaic of different racisms based on different local conditions, including xeno-racism against foreigners who happen to be white.[21]

The victims

Almost 80 per cent of victims of racial violence are men and just 20 per cent women and almost 90 per cent are 18 years old and over, with just 11 per cent aged 17 and under. Where the ethnicity of victims is known, just over 45 per cent are Asian, 18 per cent Black, 10 per cent white British, 7.03 per cent Polish, 1.25 per cent Chinese, 1.25 per cent from Traveller communities.

Though it is not always possible to know a victim's immigration status, it is important to note that 66 victims (10 per cent) of the total were described as migrant workers, refugees or asylum seekers.

In keeping with findings about where groups are at risk, it was found in terms of professions that the largest group were taxi drivers (10 per cent), takeaway and restaurant workers (8.6 per cent), shopkeepers and shop workers (8 per cent), and police officers (4.4 per cent). (It seems possible that police officers are not being racially attacked in a random fashion as are members of other groups but, rather, when involved in apprehending a suspect they are the target of abuse, which then gets noted as racially aggravating another offence such as assault.)

Anti-Semitic attacks formed just 1.8 per cent (twelve cases) of all cases examined. Muslims, were the victims of at least 7 per cent of all racial violence

attacks. Significantly, twenty-six attacks (4.3 per cent) took place in or on religious institutions or people in their vicinity. Two per cent (fourteen attacks) took place on or near a mosque with five of these being arson attacks. Churches (0.45 per cent) and gurdwaras (0.3 per cent) were also attacked as were graveyards for people of all denominations (0.9 per cent).

The perpetrators

Almost 93 per cent of perpetrators are white, 3.8 per cent Asian and 2.8 per cent Black. Eighty-five per cent of perpetrators are male and 15 per cent female. Sixty per cent of attacks are carried out by children or young adults of 25 and under – many of them in gangs acting together. And of these, 4.8 per cent are carried out by children of 14 and under. Just 41 per cent of attacks are carried out by adults aged 26 and over.

In the cases we analysed, only twenty-four of the perpetrators were recorded as belonging to an extreme far-right party or of using fascist symbols. This is probably an under-estimate of the far-right influence on racial violence.[22]

But there is some evidence in our figures to suggest a correlation between areas where extremist groups are active and where racial violence is high. For example, the Watford area which had BNP county and district councillors came out high in our ranking of

BNP chants before brutal attack

A 17-year-old Asian girl, who was playing in a Rochdale park on 16 June with her three young sisters, her sister-in-law and her sister-in-law's baby, was punched in the face with such ferocity she suffered a fractured eye socket and part of her attacker's bangle lodged in her cheek. Before the attack, two white girls had confronted the family group with racist obscenities and chants of 'BNP'. A short time later, another white girl and boy joined in, with the boy saying 'I'm more British than you' before suggesting they pull the teenager's headscarf off and the third girl punched her.

Veil ripped from face

As Rehana Sidat was walking to work in Leicester on 6 October, Stephen Ard approached her and shouted, 'get that off' before ripping her veil from her face. Ard later pleaded guilty to religiously-aggravated assault and was fined £1,000. Ms Sidat said that the attack had left her feeling 'naked, frightened and in shock'.

places with high violence, as did Stoke-on-Trent, which had nine BNP councillors. And Essex, where the BNP had twelve councillors in Barking and Dagenham and Rainham, comes out high in the county tally.[23]

However too much should not be read into this correlation since there are other areas where the BNP is active but attacks are not particularly high. And political success of the BNP in an area which has high levels of violence could be read as the party choosing to focus on areas where local tensions over 'race' are already well known and evidenced in racial attacks.

There is no mistaking the fact that the majority of attacks are actually being carried out by what one might call racist freelancers and that in those areas where ethnic minorities have been settled for some time, find strength in numbers and/or might have a history of fighting such racism, attacks are now less likely.

Conclusion

Eighty-nine people have lost their lives to racial violence since the death of Stephen Lawrence in April 1993. Despite a number of legislative developments and policing initiatives over the past two decades, politicians remains in denial about the extent and severity of racial violence and popular racism. Indeed, we would argue those governments' actions have in fact contributed to an unremitting and largely silent outpouring of racial animosity and violence, albeit shifting in focus and locus since Stephen died.

In the seventeen years since Stephen's death, there have been significant changes to the complexion of the British population and labour force. EU expansion means that many migrants from Eastern Europe are moving to the UK to seek work. And the movement of refugees - fleeing civil war, political persecution and environmental catastrophe in many parts of the world - has had an impact too, with asylum seekers dispersed to many parts of the UK where, if they receive refugee status, they go on to form new communities.

There has been hostility and resentment, particularly in poorer areas where the competition over scarce resources has been at its keenest. Too often, politicians have responded to fears and insecurities by failing to act responsibly, or even fanning the flames of prejudice. The 'Dutch auction' amongst political parties about who can be hardest on asylum, the endless and simplistic denunciations of 'illegal immigrants', all play a part in creating a climate where asylum seekers and migrants are harassed, and where new refugee communities find it hard to put down roots and gain acceptance. Islamophobia, too, has become more socially acceptable and much of the rhetoric around the 'war on terror' has served to legitimise a crude anti-Muslim racism.

Unfortunately, having contributed to popular racism and hostility, the political parties only wake up

to the social and human cost when the BNP makes inroads into their electoral base. And that they do so in ways that actually pander to the anti-foreigner sentiment of the BNP is a matter of great regret. What our research clearly demonstrates is that there are direct, and often violent, repercussions from such misguided policies.

If you are an asylum seeker or a migrant worker or a foreign student, dispersed throughout the UK, or if you are a British Muslim, or could be mistaken for a Muslim, and maybe work in a trade where you are isolated and vulnerable, if you are from a settled BME community seeking to move into a more affluent, and traditionally white, area, there is a real and terrifying daily risk of becoming a victim to racial violence.

These are the forgotten victims.

References

[1] The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry: Report of an inquiry by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny,

<http://www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm42/4262/4262.htm>

[2] In the former Home Secretary's speech of 30 November 2009, 'Stephen Lawrence, ten years on', there is much congratulation about the strides taken since the death, but not a mention about racial violence itself. This was followed by a speech in January 2010 in which he said that Britain had changed 'immeasurably for the better' and tackling racism needed a more nuanced approach. See Jenny Bourne: 'Putting John Denham's speech in context', IRR News (21.1.10), <http://www.irr.org.uk/2010/january/ha000024.html>. Trevor Phillips, head of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, wrote in January 2009 in *The Daily Mail* on 'Why Britain is now the least racist country in Europe' and uses the Lawrence death as a landmark to show how improved matters are. The murder of Anthony Walker is mentioned but only to praise the police's action in that case.

[3] In 1977, four brothers from the Virk family from Newham were arrested for defending themselves against a racial attack on the street. At their trial, Judge Michael Argyle, who condemned as 'irrelevant' the introduction by the defence of 'racial prejudice' as a motivation, sentenced the brothers to various prison terms ranging from seven years to three months. *Policing Against Black People*, IRR, 1987.

[4] Lee Bridges argued in 'The Racial Harassment Bill: a missed opportunity', *Race & Class*, Vol. 34, no. 4, 1993, that such additional legislation would actually make it harder not easier to get a conviction.

[5] The campaign, entitled 'Racism cuts both ways', was launched by the BNP in 2008. Professing to use the same criteria as the IRR, but in fact looking at inter-racial crimes, the BNP concludes that the typical racist murderer would 'be forty times more likely to be non-white than white'.

[6] See Larry Ray, David Smith and Elizabeth Burney in Paul Iganski (ed.), *The Hate Debate: should hate be punished as a crime* (London, Institute for Jewish Policy Research/Profile Books, 2002).

[7] To read the IRR's full list of eighty-nine racially motivated murders since the death of Stephen Lawrence, please visit our website at:

<http://www.irr.org.uk/2002/november/ak000008.html>.

[8] As indicated in speeches by the Home Secretary and the head of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, op. cit.

[9] It is important to note this because of the BNP's campaign noted in note 4 above.

[10] See coverage of Islamophobic attacks at: 'The anti-Muslim backlash begins', IRR News (14.7.05), <http://www.irr.org.uk/2005/july/ak000008.html>; 'The anti-Muslim backlash continues', IRR News (21.7.05), <http://www.irr.org.uk/2005/july/ha000013.html>; 'The racist backlash goes on...', IRR News (25.8.05), <http://www.irr.org.uk/2005/august/ha000021.html>.

[11] See Mark Hughes, 'The dark side of "liberal" Brighton', *Independent* (23.7.09); Richard Gurner, 'Newhaven gangs targeting foreign students', *The Argus*, (9.9.09); 'Language students targeted by yobs in Hastings', *Rye and Battle Observer*, (11.8.09); 'New Powers to curb drinking mob', BBC News (!8.4.10).

[12] See Council of Europe – ECRI, *Fourth Report on the UK*, March 2010, section 27, p. 17.

[13] In the four years to 2009, the Crown Prosecution Service prosecuted 45,200 defendants for hate crimes. And the British Crime Survey's figure for 2007/8 for racially and religiously motivated crime was estimated at 207,000. According to the Home Office Statistical Bulletin, July 2009, police forces in England and Wales were investigating 29,560 racially-aggravated offences between 2008-9.

[14] The fact that the media are increasingly relying on police handouts as a basis for crime stories was highlighted by Nigel Green in *The Guardian*, (7.12.09).

[15] The number of anti-Semitic attacks we have come across in our research contrasts with the figures produced by the Community Security Trust for 2009, which were widely reported in the press in 2010 as representing a 67 per cent increase in incidents as compared with 2008. However it should be noted that the Jewish community is the only one in the UK to have established a comprehensive reporting and collating service of attacks, which range from extreme violence and assault to threats

and abusive behaviour. (It is worth noting that CST figures on threats and abusive behaviour rose spectacularly during the period when Israel invaded Gaza and there were many rallies and pickets in protest in the UK. Two hundred and fourteen incidents were recorded in January 2009 and only 16 in December 2009.)

[16] See for example, *Blood on the Streets*, London Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council, 1978, *Police Against Black People*, IRR, 1979.

[17] This would complement the findings of the Institute for Public Policy Research report 'Exploring the roots of BNP support', April 2010, that support for the BNP is not highest where immigration is highest but where other social factors are at play.

[18] See Anna Morven, 'Shockwaves: Romanians in Belfast', IRR News, (25.6.09)

<http://www.irr.org.uk/2009/june/ha000051.html> and Phil Scraton, 'Fear and loathing in Belfast', IRR News, (25.6.09),

<http://www.irr.org.uk/2009/june/ha000046.html>.

[19] This is analysed in Arun Kundnani, 'From Oldham to Bradford: the violence of the violated', *Race & Class*, Vol. 43, no. 2, 2001 and Herman Ouseley, *Community Pride, not Prejudice: making diversity work in Bradford*, Bradford Vision, 2001.

[20] The *Guardian* (4.5.10).

[21] For a discussion of xeno-racism see Liz Fekete, *A suitable enemy: racism, migration and Islamophobia in Europe*, Pluto, 2009.

[22] Rob Booth in the *Guardian* (15.1.10) found a correlation between wards with a high BNP vote and levels of attack, see 'Rise in hate crime follows BNP council election victories' at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2010/jan/15/hate-crime-bnp-local-council-elections>.

[23] In the May 2010 local elections, the BNP lost many of its councillors.

APPENDICIES

1: Examining official statistics on racial violence by Lee Bridges

Statistical data on racial incidents and attacks can be drawn from a number of sources. The British Crime Survey (BCS) is based on a sample of the general population aged over 16 conducted each year, in which respondents are asked about incidents of crime which they have experienced and their perceptions of those crimes. The police also record the number and types of racial incidents and crimes reported to them. The Crown Prosecution Service records the number of cases of racial crime referred to them by the police, whether or not these cases lead to prosecutions, and the outcomes of those prosecutions. Finally, data are collected on numbers of persons dealt with in magistrates' courts and the Crown Court for racially aggravated offences.

Data from victim surveys, such as the BCS, always tend to show a much higher rate of crime than is recorded in police or court statistics. There are many reasons for this. Such surveys tend to focus respondents' minds on incidents that may not have been perceived as 'crime' when they occurred and therefore to have been reported to the police. There is also a possibility that the very fact of being interviewed directly about the subject can lead those questioned to exaggerate, perhaps inadvertently, the incidence of crime in their lives, for example by reporting events happening over a much longer period of time than set in the survey questions.[1] But there is also the fact that many incidents that technically do constitute 'crimes' are simply not reported, for a variety of reasons, to official agencies.

Similarly, the police will also tend to record far more 'crimes' than are eventually referred by them for prosecution. In some instances the police will not be able to identify those responsible for committing the offence or to obtain sufficient evidence against them. In other instances the police may treat the incident as not constituting a crime. There has been a long-standing concern that racial incidents are frequently re-classified by the police as non-criminal. Finally, even where cases are referred for prosecution, a significant number will not result in a conviction. Not

only will some defendants eventually be acquitted, but in other cases the charges may be dropped along the way for a variety of reasons. Where there is a conviction, especially by way of a guilty plea, this may be the result of some form of 'plea bargain', under which the defendant agrees to plead guilty to a less serious charge, for example in which allegations of racial aggravation are dropped, or to do so in order to obtain a lesser sentence from the court.

In discussing data from all the above sources, it is important to draw a distinction between racial incidents, on the one hand, and racial aggravated criminal offences, on the other. All police forces have collected data on racial incidents since 1986, but in 1999 the definition adopted was changed as a result of the Macpherson report, to 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'. The definition of an 'incident' is also wider than the normal definition of a crime as reported in crime statistics.

The concept of 'racially aggravated crime' was introduced in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which created specific offences for racially aggravated criminal damage, public order and harassment, and provided for more severe sentences than the same crimes without racial aggravation. In addition, the Powers of the Criminal Court (Sentencing) Act, as amended in 2001, requires courts to treat evidence of racial aggravation, in criminal cases where offences are not specifically covered by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, as an aggravating feature increasing the seriousness of the offence and therefore potentially of the sentence imposed. For these purposes, an offence is racially aggravated if, at the time it is committed or immediately before or afterwards, 'the offender demonstrates towards the victim of the offence hostility based on the victim's membership (or presumed membership) of a racial group' or if 'the offence is motivated (wholly or partly) by hostility towards members of a racial group based on their membership of that group'.

Generally, the chances of being a victim of crime within the previous twelve months has fallen according to successive British Crime Surveys, from 40 per cent of respondents in 1995 to 22 per cent in 2007/8. There are slight differences in victimisation rates as between ethnic groups, with those from mixed ethnic backgrounds being highest at 28 per cent, followed by Asians at 23 per cent and whites, blacks and Chinese at 22 per cent, but these differences are not considered statistically reliable and are likely to be due to other differences between the groups, such as their age profiles.

Some right wing groups argue that, with seemingly high rates of crime committed by some ethnic minority groups, it is whites rather than ethnic minorities who tend more often to be victims of inter-racial crime. In reality, most crime is intra-racial, committed by one member of an ethnic group against a member of the same ethnic group. This is especially the case where victims are white. Nine out of ten white victims in the BCS who were able to identify perpetrators reported that at least one of the offenders was white, and in only 17 per cent of cases was one of the offenders from a black or minority ethnic group. By contrast, in over half (54 per cent) of the crimes where the victim was black or from another ethnic minority group (BME) and able to identify perpetrators, at least one of the offenders was white, while 60 per cent involved at least one offender from a BME group.

These data help to contextualise another finding of the BCS. While only 1 per cent of white victims perceived of the crimes committed against them as racially motivated, this was true of 10 per cent per cent of BME victims.

On the basis of the BCS, the total number of racially motivated incidents occurring nationally each year can be estimated. This reached a peak in 2007/8, when it is estimated that 207,000 racially motivated incidents took place. Over the previous three years this number had fluctuated between 139,000 and

184,000. By comparison, the number of racial incidents recorded by the police over the same four years ranged from 57,055 to 61,262. Interestingly, the lower of these latter figures for racial incidents recorded by the police was in 2007/8, the year in which the estimated number of such incidents nationally reached its peak, suggesting that in that year that almost three in four racial incidents were not recorded by the police. This may reflect a lack of confidence among victims that the police will take their reports of racial incidents seriously, and there is indeed evidence in respect of 'low level' racial harassment that this is indeed the case. The police 'clear up' rate for racially aggravated harassment in 2007/8 was 42 per cent, compared with 68 per cent for non-racial harassment cases. On the other hand, cases of racially aggravated criminal damage has a higher 'clear up' rate (21 per cent) than other criminal damage cases (14 per cent), while 'clear up' rates for 'less serious wounding' and criminal assault cases were similar whether or not the offence was considered to be racially aggravated.

Data are available on the number of racial incidents recorded within each of 43 police forces covering England and Wales. While such data have been collected ever since 1986, the definition of a racial incident used changed in 1999 following the Macpherson report. However, remembering that only a minority of racial incidents will end up being recorded by the police, variations in these figures may reflect differences in the extent to which victims report such incidents as well as in recording practices of different police forces. The national figures do show a 7 per cent decrease in the total number of racial incidents recorded nationally by the police between 2006/7 and 2007/8. A similar decline occurred between 2001/2 and 2002/3, but otherwise the national total for racial incidents recorded by the police has risen in every year since 1999/2000, when it stood at 47,701. The figure of 57,055 for 2007/8, although down on the previous year, was nevertheless nearly 20 per cent higher than in 1999/2000.

What is perhaps most interesting about the figures for individual police forces is how the geographical pattern of recorded racial incidents has changed over the longer term. In 1999/2000 London (made up of the Metropolitan and City of London Police) recorded 23,401 racial incidents, accounting for 49 per cent of the national total. The number of racial incidents recorded in London declined virtually every year since, to a low of 9,866 or 17 per cent of the national total in 2007/8. This represented a 58 per cent reduction in recorded racial incidents in London over the period.

Other areas recording high numbers of racial incidents in 2007/8 were Greater Manchester (4,623), the West Midlands (3,561), West Yorkshire (3,296), Thames Valley (2,455) and Lancashire (2,177), which together accounted for 28 per cent of the national total. The comparable number of racial incidents recorded in these same five areas in 1999/2000 was 7,906. In other words, in contrast to London these areas overall showed a 103 per cent increase in recorded racial incidents over the period.

The remaining thirty-six police force areas recorded a total of 31,077 racial incidents in 2007/8, compared with only 16,394 in 1999/2000, a 90 per cent increase over the period.

There is nothing in the above data, whether from the BCS or police statistics, that would indicate that the problem of racially motivated crime has declined, let alone been solved by the measures introduced following the Macpherson report. Rather, the data show not only that the incidence of such crimes has grown and, perhaps more significantly, become much more widely spread geographically across the country and therefore less heavily concentrated in London. Indeed, while the number of recorded racial incidents has declined significantly in London, it has more than doubled across the rest of the country, both in major conurbations and less populated areas.

The same trend is confirmed in Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) data. This shows that the number of

persons referred to the CPS for possible prosecution for racially aggravated offences rose from 2,417 in 1999/2000 to 9,145 in 2006/7, a 313 per cent increase. However, this compares with a total of 45,554 racially aggravated offences recorded by police forces in England and Wales in 2006/7. This suggests that only one in five of racially aggravated offences recorded by the police result in a reference for possible prosecution. Moreover, of those so referred in 2006/7, 16 per cent were not in fact prosecuted for various reasons. Data on the results of prosecutions relate to charges rather than defendants, so that the 7,694 defendants charged faced a total of 10,179 charges, with three quarters of these charges relating to specific racially aggravated offences and the rest of other offences (including two homicides), although in some of the latter the court would have been presented with evidence of the racial aggravation. The conviction rate for all charges prosecuted was 87.9 per cent with 83 per cent of conviction resulting from a guilty pleas, which would ordinarily attract a reduction in sentence. Of those convicted, 23 per cent or 2,000 charges resulted in a custodial sentence.

References

[1] Face-to-face interviews, as in the BCS, can have the opposite effect for particularly sensitive types of crime. For example, much higher rates of domestic violence are recorded from self-report questionnaires than from BCS interviews. There may be a similar effect with regards to racial incidents and crime.

2: Fighting anti-Muslim racism: an interview with A. Sivanandan

IRR News spoke to one of the foremost analysts of racism and Black struggle as to how to meet the contemporary challenge of anti-Muslim racism.

Should we look at Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism today as something new and apart, or as a continuation of the racism we have known in the UK?

A. Sivanandan: Every racism is different and every racism is the same.

Western culture, because it is a culture of conquest and subjugation, is impregnated with racist and nativist/anti-foreigner ideas. Such ideas develop into a fully-fledged ideology when harnessed to an economic or political programme such as slavery or apartheid. But they can still become a material social force, justifying discrimination and engendering racial violence, in areas and times of economic hardship when there is competition for jobs, housing etc between indigenous and foreign or immigrant workers

It is 'natural' for indigenous, poor, white people who have to compete for housing, employment, social services etc to be hostile to those who look like the obvious cause of their hardship, marked out by colour, foreignness or cultural difference. When such hostility is lent justification by government policies (domestic and foreign) and harnessed by political parties for electoral gain, racial ideas become firmed into a quasi-ideology which, in turn, feeds and justifies popular racism.

The components of racism are always the same - cultural, political, economic and social. But the shift from an industrial to a post-industrial society gives the components of racism a different weightage.

The racism of industrial capitalism was connected to exploitation - slavery, colonialism, indenture, immigration. Racism was imbricated in labour exploitation. The economic factor was dominant in the way racism changed and was shaped and became

functional. In post-industrial capitalism, where the exploitation of labour in the old sense is concentrated in the periphery; the political and cultural components are dominant. And ideas, in an Information Society dominated by the media, become material irrespective of the economic factor. There is, in other words, very little disjuncture between the racist idea and the racist act; they virtually flow into each other.

Are you saying that before we even look at contemporary Islamophobia, per se, we have to look at the way that the balance within racism itself has changed over the last thirty years or so?

A. Sivanandan: Yes. By and large, under industrial capitalism, racist views, filtered down through slavery and colonialism, were prevalent mostly among the working class. But in post-industrial society racial ideas run through the whole of society and culture. For, globalisation and the market have sundered the ethos of the nation state and opened the door to nativism.

Let me explain. Globalisation has shifted the role of the state from welfare to market. The welfare state was guided by principles of social equality, which made for social cohesion. The market state is guided by the principles of wealth creation and individual success, which fractures society, fragments communities, and reifies personal relationships. There is nothing organic now to cohere the nation. Hence the imposition from above of British values and programmes of social cohesion to hold the nation together - aided now by the politics of fear and the 'enemy within', creating in the process a faux nationalism evident in everything from foreign policy to oaths of allegiance in our town halls.

How does this then relate to how we tackle Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism, are they really the same thing? Can the terms be used interchangeably?

A. Sivanandan: Yes and no. Yes, Islamophobia is implicated in anti-Muslim racism; but no, the one does not equate the other. I see Islamophobia as a term relating to a set of ideas which indicate an antipathy to Islam - which can range from the crude and direct demonisation we find in the tabloids to the intellectual sophistry we associate with people like Amis. Whereas anti-Muslim racism is the acting out of that antipathy, that prejudice - in violent attacks on the street or, when institutionalised in the state apparatus, in the impact of the anti-terror laws, in racial profiling by the police, and so on.

The distinction is important because Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism reside by and large in two different constituencies - and each has to be fought on its own 'merits'. Islamophobia, in its most sophisticated form, is the province of middle-class opinion formers, erstwhile liberals, defenders of the true liberal faith against the encroachments of illiberal Islam, as defined by them, the 'liberati'. Anti-Muslim racism is the province of the working class and is no different from past working-class racisms. Except that now it finds its justification in Islamophobia - suitably translated into the vernacular of stereotype and scapegoat by the tabloids, the carriers of racist culture. Racism is now justified not on notions of racial superiority but on notions of Islamic 'barbarity'. And religion is racialised.

Hence the confusion that fighting Islamophobic discourse is tantamount to fighting anti-Muslim racism. But, as I have said, Islamophobia is not the cause of anti-Muslim racism but its rationale. Religion is not race. And unless we unravel race from religion and employ different strategies for the different sites of struggle, while still keeping their relationship in view, we will be rendered ineffective on both sites. Conversely, to let the fight against Islamophobia (ideological/theoretical) dictate the fight against anti-Muslim racism (strategic/practical) is to intellectualise both and undermine action. To concentrate on the anti-racist aspect of struggle without missing out on the fight against

Islamophobia, however, is not only to be able to draw on the long history of that struggle but also to gain the support of allies that were made on its way, especially - at a time of British National Party (BNP) resurgence - the anti-fascists. Such solidarity is also important to make sure that the liberati's use of the term Islamofascism does not let the real fascism off the hook.

There are other reasons, too, why we need to focus on the struggle against anti-Muslim racism. Firstly, because anti-Muslim racism has become institutionalised through the government's 'Muslim wars', its anti-terror laws, its use of stop and search and its failure to curb the media's excesses. (And institutional racism, as we know, reproduces itself at other levels of society.) Second, these in turn breed a culture of fear and suspicion and give groups such as the BNP and the English Defence League a hold on public opinion. Third, the government's elevation of 'British values' (as opposed to universal values) to which we should all aspire - and therefore to British culture - confirms the popular view that Muslim values and Muslim culture are raw and threatening. And this gives a fillip to nativism which, in the hands of the Right, turns into the rough and tumble patriotism of the street.

Do you feel that the extreme Right in the UK has shifted, like other rightwing groups in Europe, towards recruiting on the basis of Islamophobia?

A. Sivanandan: In the past, the extreme Right's fascist ideology was per se reprehensible to all sectors of society in a democracy. Today, the classlessness of Islamophobia, ie the fact that it runs through the whole of society, from the liberati to the illiterati, and is made respectable by government policies, has given groups like the BNP a new constituency within 'middle England' on whom they work for electoral purposes. Hence its two faces: one electoral and the other populist - and its bipolar tactics of putting on a respectable front for the first and a militant front for the second. And the politics of fear engages both

constituencies. The middle-England constituency is frightened by the immolation of its culture and values, and the working-class constituency is frightened by the spectre of aliens taking their jobs, homes, shops, and marrying their children.

So are you really saying that activists should be just addressing anti-Muslim racism as it affects poor communities on the streets?

A. Sivanandan: At the risk of repeating myself, we have to fight both Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism when and where they are acted out. But the fights are at two different levels which need two different strategies and weapons. We need to dismantle and critique the intellectual arguments being put forward by Islamophobia's intellectual protagonists and attack the media at every turn for popularising and disseminating that discourse. And we have simultaneously to take up the other fight, the fight against Anti-Muslim racism, be that at the level of government policy or the level of hate crime on the street.

Why it is important to understand the two fights as different but connected is because of the danger that, in confining ourselves to the religious aspect of the fight against Islamophobia without taking on its political translation on the street, we would once again descend into the inward-looking politics of identity.

Any Asian could be a Muslim. Any Asian wearing a headscarf or a beard must be a Muslim. Every Muslim is a fundamentalist. Every fundamentalist is a terrorist. We are in danger of creating a culture of suspicion and distrust not only between communities but within communities, indeed within families and between individuals - which can hardly count for British values or democracy!

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