

Counting the cost: racial violence since Macpherson

A report from the Institute of Race Relations
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“In effect there are two racisms in Britain today ... the racism that discriminates and the racism that kills. The solution to the one is no solution to the other.”

Dr. A. Sivanandan, IRR Director, 1993

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Summary

The anti-racist agenda since Macpherson reported has concentrated on how organisations can tackle their internal indirect racism. This research asks how the external 'social barrier' of racial violence has been tackled since Macpherson's Report.

Examining, from the point of view of victims' families, the ways in which public bodies, including the police, have dealt since February 1999 with certain serious racial incidents which took place in London, it suggests that understanding the impact of racial violence on Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) communities should become part of every voluntary organisations' policy and programme for tackling institutional racism.

An awareness of specially vulnerable groups has to be developed, community safety has to be integrated into service delivery, methods of supporting victims have to be found which go beyond legal referral and campaigning should, wherever possible, complement the provision of direct services.

Voluntary organisations do not operate in a racial vacuum. They have to raise their awareness of both national developments in race policy and the local climate in which they work. Funders, too, need to become aware of the role campaigning can play as a service to victims and a way of changing the local climate and challenging the national agenda.

Introduction

The fact that the Macpherson Report put the concept of institutional racism on the national agenda was, indeed, a watershed. It brought to the fore the impact of inadvertent racism and the need for a whole institution to tackle its particular form of indirect racism.

It plays a critical role in showing that racism is neither confined to an individual act nor reducible to a racist intent. Collective behaviour can result in unwitting racism.

Meeting the internal challenge

The post-Macpherson agenda being adopted by parts of the voluntary and statutory sectors has involved devising ways of reducing that unwitting racism. Precisely because it is unwritten and often unquantifiable racism, the proposed procedures have tried to influence key components of an organisation: management (by ensuring BME people are in positions of influence and that equality issues are high on the agenda); staffing (by ensuring recruitment matches community representation, looking to retention, career development of BME staff and developing competencies); service delivery (matching users to baseline data); changing the overall culture (especially using more community consultation).

The LBG's report, *One year on ... and counting* identified two key points:

- (i) 'that an institution of itself is made up of individuals who set policy and procedures and, it is only by introducing a more diverse culture into the institution that it will begin to change.'
- (ii) 'that the question of access to services ... does not only reside in individual barriers, but also the barriers put up in a racial society.'

We believe that while LBG and others (such as LARRIE/LGA/EO/IDeA) have been successfully addressing the first point, they have not, as yet, addressed the second – the barriers put up in a racist society.

Meeting the external challenge

The next challenge to a voluntary sector organisation is to examine how the racist culture of the wider society affects that organisation. How does the work of a particular organisation influence the wider racism, or how is it influenced by the wider issues of, for example, racist media portrayal of BME communities and asylum-seekers, by changes to legislation which particularly impact upon BMEs, by the incidence and severity of racial harassment?

We believe that it is through developing this outward focus to tackling institutional racism, that practice can move beyond the parameters set out in the 1976 Race Relations Act.

Facing up to racial violence

We intend to focus on one crucial aspect of that social barrier – racial violence.

Since 1999 when Macpherson reported, racial violence has massively increased. In the years from 1994-8 reported racist incidents in the Metropolitan police area were around 5,000 year-on-year. But in the year 1998/99 the number of reported incidents rose to 11,050 (an increase of 89%) and in the year 1999/00 the figure has more than doubled again to 23,346 (an increase of 111%).

Of course there may be, as the police contend, more confidence felt by BME communities in the police and therefore a greater reporting of attacks and there is certainly a greater willingness in the police to record reported attacks. In fact, as we show below, the police may be recording

as racial incidents what are, in effect, inter-racial crimes. But, given all these caveats when interpreting the data on racial incidents, there is, undoubtedly, an increase in very serious attacks – often ending in permanent disability or death.

Since February 1999 when Macpherson reported we have recorded 19 deaths involving a racial motivation in England and Wales, of which 9 took place in the London area. (see appendix one)

Ironically, although the Stephen Lawrence case which prompted the Macpherson Inquiry was initially one of overt racial violence, most of the interest in racism since the Macpherson Report has been directed towards covert or indirect racism. Most organisations are concentrating solely on Macpherson's definition of institutional racism ignoring other key aspects of his report which related to tackling overtly violent racism.

Macpherson and racial violence

Thirty-four of the seventy recommendations in the Macpherson Report related to racist incidents. They included:

- (i) the development of performance indicators by the Metropolitan Police Service in relation to preventing, recording, investigating and prosecuting racist incidents;
- (ii) a redefinition of a racist incident as 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person';
- (iii) the development of a Good Practice Guide for Police Response to Racial Incidents;
- (iv) a review by MPS of procedures for recording information on incidents;
- (v) the need for Family Liaison Officers to treat families professionally with respect and according to their needs – with the provision to a victim's family of all possible information about the crime and its investigation;
- (vi) the police services and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to take particular care at all stages of prosecution to recognise and include reference to any evidence of racist motivation;
- (vii) that the CPS ensure that a victim or victim's family be consulted and kept informed as to any proposal to discontinue proceedings.

Case studies

What the Stephen Lawrence case demonstrated was a lack of a convincing and thorough investigation by the police of the crime. It showed that some police officers were still viewing all black people, even victims of crime, as potential suspects. It suggested that a racial murder was not being treated with sufficient seriousness by the police. Steps were not taken to collect forensic evidence soon enough. Witness statements were not followed up. Suspects were not called in for questioning early enough.

And liaison with the Lawrence family broke down. The family felt excluded from the process and disadvantaged by not having access to information. Finally they felt let down because there was no prosecution of their son's killers. And there was, until the Macpherson Inquiry, no acknowledgement by the police that they had indeed collectively bungled the inquiry and owed an apology to the family.

But without the support of key community workers and a voluble community campaign the Stephen Lawrence case would possibly never have grown into the cause célèbre.

We examine here the experience of eight victims' families to see what has changed for them since Macpherson. Though some of the racial incidents analysed here have taken place before February 1999, we are examining the investigations, prosecution and follow-up after Macpherson's Report.

Case One: Ricky Reel - Kingston-upon-Thames

On the night of 14 October 1997 Lakhvinder (Ricky) Reel and his three friends were racially abused and attacked in Kingston-upon-Thames. Fearing for their lives, the Asian youths fled. Ricky got separated from the group. He never returned home. And as the hours and days passed, his family grew more and more frantic. They begged the police to investigate his disappearance. The police were reluctant. They suggested that he had merely gone to stay with friends – a secret girlfriend perhaps? Mrs Reel, other family members and friends began to search for signs of Ricky – handing out leaflets in the town asking for information, locating CCTV footage of the area where the racial incident had taken place.

Seven days after the incident, Ricky's body was found in the Thames just half a mile away. Because the flies of his trousers were undone, the police concluded that he had slipped as he urinated into the river. No further investigation was required, they said. An independent post-mortem, however, found bruising to Ricky's back. The family, who felt that this and the fact that his new shirt had been ripped, suggested foul play, were angry that the police had not gone further with their investigations. They did not follow up an anonymous letter which named some youths as killers, they did not allow a televised reconstruction to take place. The family instigated a complaint against the police which was investigated by the Surrey constabulary. The report was completed in 1998 but kept secret. After external pressure the report was shown to the family and their solicitor on condition that it was not made public. It criticised officers for not logging the racially motivated attack and for not filling out a missing person log immediately. It apologised for 'weaknesses and flaws' in the investigation and 30 officers were found guilty of neglect of duty. Jack Straw agreed to meet Mrs Reel to discuss whether the report could be shown to other members of her family, only after her constituency MP had threatened to invoke parliamentary privilege to make the PCA report public. Paul Condon, Met Chief, decided that it should not be published.

In late 1998 the investigation of Ricky's death was taken over by the Racial Violent Crimes

Task Force (RVCTF). The family again had expectations about a result. But in November 1999 at the inquest into his death the RVCTF announced that they, too, believed his death to be an accident. The fact that the jury returned an open verdict suggests that the police view was not entirely convincing and doubts remained about the possibility of a racial attack.

Observations:

- a. victims still treated with suspicion.
- b. racial incident not logged
- c. racial motivation for death not initially investigated
- d. critical report from PCA withheld without sufficient reason
- e. handing over of case to RVCTF suggests lack of will or capacity to investigate racial incident in local force
- f. open verdict at inquest shows police version of events was not entirely credible
- g. no arrests, no convictions
- h. family continues with its campaign for justice

Case Two: Michael Menson - Enfield

On 28 January 1997 a young black musician was set alight by four youths in a north London phone box. Although Michael told officers at the scene that he had been racially abused and then doused in petrol and set alight, they decided he was responsible for his own injuries, which they did not regard as life-threatening. As a result, in the crucial hours after the attack, the police did not treat the area as a crime scene. Police declined to interview Michael when he remained conscious in a burns unit. He gave details to his brother but the police failed to take a statement before he died.

The family of Michael took on the struggle to get the crime investigated as a racial murder and the culprits brought to justice. The day before the inquest opened in September 1998 the Met's Deputy Commissioner wrote to the Menson family admitting mistakes: 'police action at the scene and for the first 12 hours was not as thorough as I would have wished ...assumptions were made by the officers who initially attended the scene. As a consequence the scene was not forensically preserved.'

After an inquest verdict of unlawful killing the Home Secretary met the family and a new team of investigators led by the RVCTF appointed. This signalled that after two years of campaigning by the family the police conceded that the death was a result of a racist incident. In March 1999, fifty-one days later, officers arrested three men (a fourth was tried in northern Cyprus) for the involvement in Michael's murder. In December 1999 one man was found guilty of murder and another of manslaughter.

The family of Michael Menson lodged a formal complaint in to the original investigation into Michael's death and the Cambridge police were asked to investigate. In May 2000 eleven officers, including a detective chief inspector, were removed from operational duties.

Observations

- a. victim treated with suspicion
- b. racial incident not logged

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- c. forensic evidence not collected
 - d. refusal to accept racial dimension to case
 - e. handing over case to RVCTF suggests lack of ability to investigate racial incident by local force
 - f. needed jury verdict, campaign of family and intervention of Home Secretary to reopen the investigation as a racial incident
 - g. convictions for crime took place almost three years after incident

Case Three: Farhan Mire - Harrow

On 23 December 1998 Farhan Mire, a 33-year-old Somali refugee was attacked and kicked to death in Harrow. Two witnesses spoke about a white woman and man in the area at the time and police linked them to the murder. The police, who must have been conscious of the interest in the ongoing Macpherson Inquiry into Stephen Lawrence's death which was then reaching its height, immediately accepted that this was a racially motivated attack.

A man was arrested on 18 February 1999 and charged with murder. The night before the trial the family learnt that charges had been dropped because the CVPS thought the case too weak to succeed and had queried the racial motivation. The family had not been forewarned of this and not consulted.

In May the police told a public meeting that their investigation had been hampered because a key witness had gone missing. Again the family had never been told of this. The family complain that the police have cancelled meetings with them, without explanation, that DNA tests are incomplete and they are unsure as to whether the police are still treating the incident as racially motivated. Now they believe Farhan's killers will never be found.

Observations

- a. family liaison by police broke down
- b. consultation was post-hoc
- c. forensic evidence was not collected
- d. no prosecution

Case Four: New Diamond restaurant - Westminster

Chinese waiters at the New Diamond restaurant in Soho were attacked by eight white men in their restaurant in December 1999. The youths smashed up the restaurant and racially abused and threatened staff after they had declined to serve them because of their rowdy behaviour. Mr Poon, the manager was kicked to the floor and racially abused. Other waiters intervened and one had a tendon severed in his hand. When waiters called the police, nothing happened. After a second call for help, when two waiters were already on their way to hospital for treatment to their injuries, police arrived and arrested three of the Chinese waiters, going on to the hospital to arrest the two others. The waiters were held for 21 hours and charged with grievous bodily harm.

It was only after the Chinese waiters managed to involve a community worker and a support group who intervened with the police, that the police arrested some of the white attackers. Ultimately no one faced charges in court. It is dispiriting to find that a very similar incident occurred at the same restaurant in 1987, with the police also charging the victims not the aggressors. That time a special unit was established to liaise with the Chinese community so as to prevent a further similar case happening.

Observations

- a. victims were treated as aggressors
- b. racial dimension of the attack was not taken into account
- c. no charges brought against perpetrators of racist attack

Case Five: nail bombings - Lambeth, Tower Hamlets, Westminster

In April 1999 over 60 people were injured in bomb attacks in Brixton and Brick Lane. A third bomb killed three white people in the Admiral Duncan pub, a gay bar in Soho.

The investigation into these outrages was, understandably, on a scale quite unlike other racial incidents and the perpetrator, 22-year-old David Copeland was arrested and charged on the day of the last bombing. He was sentenced in June 2000 to six life sentences.

Observations

- a. The police systematically played down the perpetrator's links to far-Right/Nazi parties, preferring instead to emphasise the lone, isolated nature of the crime.
- b. Special Branch, MI5 and the anti-terrorist squad were unable to identify Copeland after he was located on CCTV. His name was supplied by an independent anti-fascist organisation. This suggests a lack of intelligence about the far-Right fringe in the UK within security forces.

Case Six: Uppadathil Divakaran - Westminster

On 21 May 2000 an Asian shopkeeper of City Bargain Bookshop in Queensway pursued three youngsters who had stolen a football worth £4.95 from his shop. He caught up with the youngest of the gang who held the ball and asked for it back. The gang turned on him, punching him in the face, through his glasses. As they beat him, Divakaran fell, hitting his head on the pavement. The gang continued to kick him as he lay there unconscious. No one intervened. Ultimately, someone called the police and he was taken to hospital where he died two days later after surgeons tried in vain to remove a clot from his brain.

The police investigated this as a racist killing. Since the death there have been other attacks on the shop, threats to his partner and racist abuse. Originally four young people were charged with murder but the charges were reduced to manslaughter and affray.

Observations

- a. investigated initially by police as a racist attack but the racial dimension does not appear to have been included by the CPS.
- b. Issues are raised in this case and a similar murder of a Kurdish shopkeeper which took place in Holloway following the theft of a phone card, as to the racist extent of the incident. Such incidents appear to be racist and are accompanied by racial abuse. However, the incidents begin as petty thefts and the escalate because extreme violence is used. However it appears that shops run by members of BME groups are being targeted for thefts and conduct towards the personnel in the shops reflects particular hatred.
- c. Convictions were secured – though not for the murder charge

Case Seven: Tewodros Afework - Camden

On 24 April 2000 around midnight Tewodros Afework, a 24-year-old Eritrean refugee was beaten and kicked to the ground by a white man close to Sainsbury's supermarket in Kentish Town. The attacker shouted racist abuse and rained blows and kicks on Afework's head and body. His head swelled to twice its size as it was stamped on during the attack.

Afework is still receiving specialist care because of his brain damage during the attack.

The police, who have never found the assailant, have been criticised by the family for not photographing the injuries and delaying the obtaining of CCTV footage from the supermarket. It was the family who handed out their leaflets at the crime scene, asking for information. The family asked for the RVCTF to take over the investigation but this did not happen.

Observations

a. police have been criticised for a lack of thoroughness in the investigation

Case Eight: Zahid Mubarek - Hounslow

On 23 March 2000, just 12 hours before he was due to be released, 19-year-old Zahid Mubarek was the victim of a racist attack in his cell at Feltham Young Offenders' Institute. His white cell mate took a table leg and beat Mubarek about the head as he slept. He died from severe head injuries five days later in hospital. The cell mate was jailed for life in November 2000 for the murder.

The Director General of the prison Service issued an immediate apology to the family for failing in his duty to protect their son. However, the family has not allowed the matter to rest there but have asked for a full investigation of both the institutional racism involved in the particular case and in the prison service generally. The family ask how the murderer, known for his racist views (he was writing extremely racist and threatening letters from prison) and violent disposition came to be sharing a cell with a black inmate. The case raises the question of culpability and negligence in the prison service.

With the support of a community campaign, the family urged the Minister for Prisons and Probation to hold a judicial inquiry, akin to the Macpherson Inquiry, into the prison service. Instead, the Commission for racial Equality was asked to investigate Feltham, Brixton and Parc prisons for racism.

The internal Prison Service inquiry into Feltham, where half the inmates are black, has already reported. It found an underlying 'malicious racist culture' and branded Feltham as institutionally racist. Racist incidents were being poorly reported and staff at all levels were failing to take them seriously.

Observations

a. case was particularly horrifying because it indicated the lack of protection afforded within state custody

b. raised the issue of how an indifference towards overt racism can be part and parcel of institutional racism

c. conviction was secured

d. like the Lawrence case, it was able, because of community support for the family, to open up the issue of institutional racism within a whole service.

Observations

I Racial attacks

a. Victim profile

All the victims were male (bar one in the nail bombing) and relatively young. Victims came from a range of ethnic backgrounds - Asian, African-Caribbean, Chinese, Somalian, Eritrean and, in the case of the bombing, white English. It is significant that victims were both born in the UK and first-generation migrants.

A worrying trend is the choosing of asylum seekers as victims. Two of the eight were refugees and additional research shows that asylum seekers and recently arrived migrants are extremely vulnerable to attack. In attacks since December 2000 (see Appendix 2), a Turk, a Kurd, a Greek Cypriot and an Algerian have been subject to serious, sometimes lethal, attacks.

b. Nature of attack

Attacks took place in both inner and outer London boroughs. All the attacks appear to have been entirely unprovoked. They are not the result of an ongoing dispute. The victims have not played any part in the aggression, although some may have been trying to protect their goods from theft.

Most attacks involve a gang setting on a person alone, usually at night. What is significant is that passers-by do not involve themselves, do not remonstrate or intervene, even when an attack takes place in daylight and even when it is on a relatively busy street.

It is also worrying to find that serious racial incidents are taking place within custodial institutions. The case of Zahid Mubarek drew attention to this issue but subsequent inquiries reveal a serious problem of racial violence (between inmates and between staff and inmates) which is only now beginning to be recognised by the prison service.

c. Extent of violence

Despite the problems in the way that racial incidents are being defined by the Metropolitan Police (see IV below), we are in no doubt that racial attacks, running the whole gamut from graffiti and verbal abuse to physical attacks on individuals and arson, are on the increase.

Attacks are now taking place in areas which have not traditionally been the sites of such violence. And attacks appear to be extending from victims who are clearly of Asian or African-Caribbean descent to anyone perceived as foreign-looking or foreign-sounding. Obviously it is those who are least prosperous – living in social housing, working unsocial hours, without their own transport - who are most at risk within these groups.

Our research shows that the policy of dispersing asylum seekers, allocating them to designated accommodation and withdrawing cash benefits from them has marked this particular group out, and heightened the likelihood of racial attack. The way that the issue of asylum is being debated by both main political parties and the tone and coverage by a section of the press (see Appendix Two) appears to be inflaming a popular racism throughout the country which is resulting in more racial attacks. And though the 'debate' may be about asylum seekers, the resultant violence is spilling over on to settled BME communities.

II Policing response

a. Identifying a racial incident

The policing response appears to be slowly changing. Those cases which began before Macpherson reported show the police as reluctant to acknowledge the racial dimension of an attack. A gradual change appears to be taking place in the way an attack is recorded and evidence collected (also see IV below).

b. Treatment of victims

Some police officers are, unfortunately, still regarding ethnic victims with suspicion and even treating them as the aggressors, not the victims of an incident.

c. Family liaison

Family liaison continued, both before and after Macpherson's recommendations, to be very poor. It was only in those cases where a support organisation intervened to work with the family that a meaningful consultation took place at all. The CPS is clearly not liaising with families – especially when deciding to discontinue a prosecution.

d. Openness

Despite recommendations by Macpherson that families should be shown documents and reports into investigations and complaints unless there was the risk of 'substantial harm', this is still not happening.

The public accountability and total transparency advocated by Macpherson was again not adhered to in the kind of inquiry (and subsequent access to documents and evidence) initiated by the government into prison racism following the Mubarek death.

III Role of Racial and Violent Crimes Task Force

This force, established in the Met in August 1998 because of disquiet over the policing of racial crimes but before Macpherson reported, has achieved a high profile in its three years of existence. In particular, its role in the Menson Case – finding the killers within 51 days of being put in charge – is noted. Its ability to work through 32 Community Safety units across London, gathering intelligence on racial harassment, led to a series of high profile raids in Newham, Staines, Hounslow, Richmond, Dagenham, Barnet, Brent, Greenwich, Havering and Islington after which 30 people were charged in 2000.

But there is some evidence to suggest that, instead of each local force training its own officers and developing its expertise in tackling serious racial incidents, the RVCTF is being called in – like the cavalry – to sort out a problem which local forces have been unable to tackle. In case after case (including those outside London), the RVCTF is brought in after families of victims have protested at the lack of action. Of course, by that time, lines of inquiry have often gone cold.

IV Defining a racial incident

Because of the substantial evidence presented to the Macpherson Inquiry about the police's reluctance to record, follow up and prosecute racial attacks, Macpherson redefined a racial incident as 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person'. Although this definition allowed BME people's own experience and interpretations to be included in the

process, it has also opened the door for everyone, including the victims of any inter-ethnic crime, witnesses of such a crime and the police themselves, to identify a 'racial incident'.

The result is that figures of racial incidents can no longer be relied upon to identify the kind of 'hate crime' that centrally concerned Macpherson.

For example, in the Northeast Metropolitan Area in December 2000, of 472 victims of racial incidents, 99 are recorded as white European as compared with 136 African/Caribbean and 151 Indian/Pakistani. And, of the 42 accused of offences, 7 are African/Caribbean and 8 Asian. Although members of BME communities can be racist and could perpetrate racial harassment and violence, it is highly improbable that, in the UK today, in this particular racist climate (which is anti-black and anti-foreigner), almost a quarter of race victims will be white and 36% of perpetrators will be non-white.

We believe that simple inter-ethnic crimes, which do not involve a racial hatred or racist motivation are being recorded as racial incidents.

A distinction has to be drawn between inter-ethnic crimes (where victim and perpetrator just happen to have different ethnicities) and a racist attack (where victims are being chosen because of belonging to a different ethnic group). This is important not merely in petty crimes but also in more serious attacks. Thus, in this research, we have not included the murder of Damilola Taylor (in Southwark in November 2000) because we believe that, although he was Nigerian and his assailants apparently indigenous African-Caribbean young people, the crime primarily stemmed from bullying rather than racism. Similarly, we have not included the stabbing of a Kurdish shop keeper in Islington in January 2001 by a young person attempting to steal a phone card. The wanted person is African-Caribbean but there is not, as yet, evidence to show that the murder was racially motivated. However, in the case of Divakaran, also a shop keeper, also the victim of theft, there was evidence that the gang had racially harassed him before the incident and that racial threats continued even after the attack.

V Prosecuting racial violence

The police's inability to distinguish between an inter-ethnic crime and a racist attack is followed through in prosecution. One of the first prosecutions of a 'Racially Aggravated Crime' was of a black man who had called a policeman a 'white bastard'. London-based magistrates have voiced their concerns to our researchers, with anecdotal evidence of other ridiculous cases where verbal abuse in inter-ethnic cases has been prosecuted as constituting a 'racially aggravated offence'.

Macpherson, who was obviously concerned about more serious crimes on a par with the Lawrence case, urged that care be taken at all stages of the prosecution of crimes to include reference to any evidence of racist motivation. Preliminary research suggests that not only is this not taking place but that the CPS, by treating this as an area needing additional burden of proof, are actually not proceeding with such cases at all. (It is significant that the CPS is currently commissioning research into the way it prosecutes racial crimes.)

There is also a discrepancy emerging between the police's treatment in a case and the CPS' prosecution of it. So, while a force may treat an incident as a racial one, the CPS fails to prosecute on that ground.

There appears to be a disjuncture between Macpherson's recommendations, the actual terms of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 which created new offences of Racially Aggravated Crimes, and prosecutable offences. Under this act, most assaults, criminal damage, public order offences and harassment are all prosecutable as Racially Aggravated crimes (Sections 29-32) which means that they carry a higher maximum sentence than would otherwise be the case. However, more

serious crimes such as wounding or murder (Section 18) cannot be prosecuted as racially motivated, since they already carry a maximum sentence of life. Instead, with such offences, a court may impose a higher sentence (within the maximum permissible) if it can be demonstrated that there was racial aggravation.

At present, judges appear to have a wide leeway in interpreting how and when a racially aggravated rider can be added. For example, in the trial of four young people accused of kicking to death an Indonesian man in Newport in June 2000, where serious racial abuse was used and a racial attack on another family member had taken place the same day, the judge, somewhat inexplicably, decided that the murder was not racially motivated.

Implications for the voluntary sector

I Awareness of the larger racist culture

Voluntary organisations, like other institutions, do not operate in a racial vacuum. However much they may tackle the racism of their internal structures and culture of their organisations, they must also examine how the larger racist culture impinges upon their organisation, how it determines or ought to determine their priorities, influences their role, defines their stakeholders.

Organisations need to take steps to ensure that the development of race awareness competencies in their staff include an understanding of legislation on race discrimination, immigration and asylum seekers; of the race dimension in strategic policies such as social inclusion, city regeneration and dispersal.

II Taking on the racial climate

Racial violence is today the most prevalent form of racism. All voluntary organisations need to take account of the fact that, whatever services they provide, racial violence or the fear of that violence will be a determining factor in who will be accessing services and how people will access them.

III Direct versus indirect racism

For many years, voluntary sector organisations did not tackle racism, and, when they did, it was to ignore its evidence within their own structures. Now the pendulum has swung too far the other way. Concerns are rooted within issues of internal or institutional racism (which is defined as inadvertent or indirect racism) at the expense of overt racism.

We believe that, at a time when racial violence is so prevalent and frequently so serious, organisations must begin again to address it. This is not an 'either or' situation. It has been shown in cases like those of Stephen Lawrence, Michael Menson and Zahid Mubarek, that 'institutional racism' can compound overt racism. Or, rather, that not recognising the potential seriousness of such racism is part of institutional racism. Ways must be found for organisations to integrate understanding of the impact of racial violence into their service delivery.

IV Need for support structures

In all the cases we studied which had a 'successful' outcome, victims of racial violence had an active support structure. Despite the publicity around the Lawrence case and Macpherson's recommendations, families still face problems akin to those of the Lawrences. In addition to the trauma of losing a loved one, comes the battle with the authorities. In almost every case, families (with lawyers and a support group) had to pressure the police first to view the crime as racially motivated and then to get an investigation in terms of that understanding. Support groups are an essential bridge between victims' families and the wider society which includes the criminal justice system, politicians and the mass media.

Such support groups are not just offering emotional help or counselling (as a conventional victim support organisation would), they can provide a very specific range of services:

- obtaining the most experienced lawyers
- helping in liaison with the police
- holding public meetings to publicise the case and gather community support

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- handling relations with the mass media
 - putting families in touch with one another
 - producing literature on the case and the issues it raises
 - fund-raising for the family
 - bringing the case to the attention of local and national politicians

V Return to campaigning

All the evidence from the cases we studied indicates that there is a need for community groups to return to campaigning and advocacy for victims of racial violence.

Black and other minority ethnic voluntary organisations have had a different history from many 'white' generic voluntary organisations. Many arose, in the first instance, to combat the kinds of overt racism which marginalised and disadvantaged BME communities. For many of these organisations, campaigning against racism went hand-in-hand with the provision of services which were being denied them by mainstream society. Because such groups were often based on self-help and rooted in community resources, there was no distinction made between campaigning and developing community services.

But the voluntary sector, as a whole, has, over the last 20 years, moved away from advocacy. And the provision of culturally-appropriate services has taken the place of campaigning against racism. For the voluntary sector has been encouraged to become a major player as a 'service provider', competing alongside the statutory and private sectors for contracts. Although this has professionalised many voluntary organisations and allowed BME ones to develop their own expertise, the campaigning aspect of the voluntary sector, which has a particular significance for BME groups, has been seen as outside of the sector's concerns and not a funding priority.

Campaigning and advocacy work is, to put it bluntly, regarded as 'political' and divorced from the kind of professional service now expected from this sector. But this is first, to underestimate the way in which racial violence itself is derived from structured racism and connected to popular racism and, second, the diverse role that campaigning can play.

Campaigning and advocacy clearly provide support in a number of ways to family victims (see above). But campaigning does far more than this. It enables isolation to be broken down. Families can be put in touch with one another, networks can be formed. Local racist climates can be challenged and transformed through public educational forums around local cases. Campaigning can transform a case into an issue. And the issue, in turn, can influence the national policy agenda. If the Stephen Lawrence case did anything, it proved that point.

Action plan

Understanding the racial climate

As well as developing staff competencies to tackle the internal barriers which create institutional racism, organisations should include an understanding of the larger racist culture in which all groups operate and, especially, the levels and seriousness of racial violence.

Integrating community safety

All groups should develop plans and perspectives around community safety, integrating this awareness of exactly how racial violence and the fear of it affects their users' lives and the accessing of service.

Meeting the needs of vulnerable groups

All groups should raise their awareness of the especially-vulnerable groups in their community and orbit of work, paying particular attention to the specific needs and fears of newly-arrived and refugee communities.

Appropriate support

All groups should reassess the degree to which they currently offer support to those who have been victims of racial attack. Referring a victim to a lawyer or a victim support helpline, or to the police, may not be sufficient. Groups need to develop specific forms of additional support, appropriate to the area in which they operate.

Campaigning

The sector as a whole and its funders should rethink the strategic importance of campaigning on the issue of racial violence and its implications within voluntary sector organisations.

Attention should also be given to devising ways through training, consultation, seminars etc of sharing within the sector the experiences of those few groups which are carrying out successful campaigning/advocacy work in the field.

Appendix One - List of racist deaths

Deaths in suspected racial attacks which took place between February 1999 and March 2001.

April 1999	Nail bomb in Soho kills Andrea Dykes, John Light and Nicholas Moore
May 1999	Stelios Economou pushed under north London train after going to aid of black girls being racially abused
June 1999	Harold McGowan found hanged in suspicious circumstances in Telford
June 1999	Jospeh Alcendor died after being punched outside Kilburn party
Sept 1999	Ben Kamanalgi killed in Salford
Dec 1999	Jason McGowan, nephew of Harold, found hanged in suspicious circumstances
April 2000	Santokh Singh killed in Port Talbot, Wales
May 2000	Uppadathil Divakaran killed in Queensway, London
June 2000	Jan Passalbessy killed in Newport, Wales
June 2000	Glynne Agard killed outside Wiltshire nightclub
Sept 2000	Liaquat Ali killed in Bury
Oct 2000	Zahid Mubarek killed in Feltham Young Offenders' Institute
Nov 2000	Tariq Javed, taxi driver killed in Bury
Dec 2000	Safraz Khan, taxi driver burnt to death in Rotherham
Dec 2000	Tenant of Greek Cypriot burnt to death in Stoke-on-Trent
Jan 2001	Djamale Daikha dies after stabbing in Soho, London
Jan 2001	Gian Singh murdered in suspected attack in Elm Park

Appendix Two - Chronology of racism

'When politicians ... pillory individuals and groups such as asylum seekers, the greater the chance that other people will think they can join in, not just with words but with violent actions.'

(Simon Hughes, MP, December 2000)

There is evidence to show that levels of racial violence and the selection of its victims can be correlated against the racial climate being created by politicians and parts of the mass media. Below we examine what happened in the one month between 9 December 2000 and 7 January 2001

- 9.12.00 Daily Mail headline "Cars to be searched for illegal immigrants"
- 10.12.00 Sunday Telegraph headline "Migrant squad to operate in France"
Independent on Sunday headline "Immigrants find secret back door"
- 14.12.00 William Hague attacks the Macpherson report for contributing to the lack of police and the increase in crime
- 16.12.00 Daniel Herbert, a 13-year-old black boy is attacked in a Sussex Street and two white women are subsequently charged with his attempted murder.
- 17.12.00 Sunday Mirror headline "Find the seekers"
- 23.12.00 Times headline "Record surge in asylum seekers"
Safraz Khan, taxi driver is stabbed and burnt alive in his cab in Rotherham
Cumali Sinangili, a Turkish asylum seeker attacked by white gang in Southwark
- 27.12.00 Anne Widdecombe announces plans to lock up all asylum seekers
- 29.12.00 Man dies after arson attack on Cypriot shop in Stoke
- 31.12.00 Observer reports that dispersed asylum seekers are returning to London because of racial violence
Heseltine declares bogus asylum seekers are cheating British people by taking their homes and benefits
- 2.1.01 Djamale Daikha dies after attack in Soho
- 7.1.01 Mail on Sunday headline "Ban new asylum seekers now, say 44 per cent of Britons"
Gian Singh murdered in suspected racist attack in Elm Park

Family support organisations in the UK for victims of racial violence and of 'racial' deaths in custody

- Black Racial Attacks Independent Network
C/O Newham Monitoring Project
Unit 4
63 The Broadway
Stratford
London
E15 4BQ
- Campaign Against Racism & Fascism
B M Box 8784
London
WC1N 3XX
- Chhokar Family Justice Campaign
C/O Fire Brigades Union
52 St Enoch Square
Glasgow
G1 4AA
- Chinese Monitoring Group
19 Whitcombe Street
London
WC2
- Civil Rights Caravan
C/O CARF
B M Box 8784
London
WC1N 3XX
- Inquest
Alexandra National House
330 Seven Sisters Road
London
N4 2PJ
- Justice for Ricky Reel
The Monitoring Group
14 Featherstone Road
Southall
Middlesex
UB2 5AA
- Michael Menson Family Campaign
The Monitoring Group
14 Featherstone Road
Southall
Middlesex
UB2 5AA
- National Civil Rights Movement
14 Featherstone Road
Southall
Middlesex
UB2 5AA
- Newham Monitoring Project
Unit 4
63 The Broadway
Stratford
London
E15 4BQ
- United Friends and Families Campaign
C/O 330 Seven Sisters Road
London
N4 2PJ