

WHY IS THERE A NEED FOR RACIAL EQUALITY ACTIVITY IN SCOTLAND?

Bob Cant and Elinor Kelly

There is increasing opposition to racism in many sections of Scottish society. This opposition is, however, often accompanied by a disclaimer to the effect either that there is no racism in Scotland or that racist activity is much less serious than that found in, say, London or Johannesburg. We would agree that experiences of racism in Scotland are often - but not always - different from experiences of racism in other countries. However, there is nothing to be gained by seeking to place Scotland on a league table of racism. Understanding the particular formations of racism in Scotland has a value in that it can assist us in developing an anti-racist strategy that acknowledges and builds upon the experiences of Scottish history and society.

There are a number of generalizations that are often made about issues of racism in the Scottish context. We have all heard these statements; some of us have probably made some of them ourselves. We need to examine these to see how far they are based on factual evidence and how far they assist us to develop good practice in the voluntary sector.

'OF COURSE, WE ARE LUCKY THAT THERE IS NO RACE PROBLEM IN SCOTLAND, BECAUSE THERE ARE HARDLY ANY BLACK PEOPLE.'

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The numbers game is a regular feature of many debates and discussion about racism. The implication is that racism only emerges after the appearance of large numbers of people of a different 'race'. Suggesting that 'where there are no black people there is no racism' puts the responsibility for racist behaviour on black people and takes it away from the white perpetrators. It is also a pessimistic argument in so far as it suggests that there can be no harmony in a multiracial society. It is, moreover, an absurd argument insofar as it implies that the least racist society would be one where everyone was of the same 'race'.

The black and minority ethnic population of Scotland according to the 1991 Census figures is 62,724 (see note on terminology at end of article). For a variety of reasons, a number of people are likely not to have registered and so this figure is generally assumed to be an underestimation of the real figure. A significant feature of the black and minority ethnic communities in Scotland is that they are scattered. As well as the communities in the larger cities, there are more isolated households and families in towns and villages across Scotland. Towns of the size of Dalbeattie and Stornoway and Forfar include black and minority ethnic people amongst their numbers.

The fact that they are dispersed in this way does not mean that they are free from racist activity. As the 1989 Home Office Report, **The response to Racial Attacks and Harassment: Guidance for the statutory Agencies**, states:

Indeed the perception which we take from our visits and from the evidence we have received is that members of the ethnic minorities living in predominantly white areas may be particularly at risk... Even when incidents are reported, the statutory agencies may fail to recognise them as racially motivated, because of an ingrained belief that 'we don't have racial problems in this area'.

Fife Regional Council produced a useful research document on **Racial Equality** in 1991. Currently, this is the only piece of research done on this topic in a non-urban area in Scotland. Pursuing a variety of avenues of enquiry, it illustrated how, in a region with a very low percentage of people from the black and minority ethnic communities, racist activity took a number of forms such as racial violence on the streets, and institutional racism on the part of service providers and employers. Photographic evidence of racist graffiti and damage to property was recorded all over Fife from communities such as Lower Methil, Kirkcaldy, Ballingry, Tayport,

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Leslie, Leven, Burntisland and Kennoway. The number of black people was not the factor which determined the racist activity (Fife Regional Council 1991).

The numbers issue is a distraction from acknowledging the needs of the black and minority ethnic communities in Scotland. The number of black people on the 1991 Census is near the number of teachers (70,000) and double the number of people with epilepsy (one in 200 - approximately 30,000). No-one suggests that teachers or people with epilepsy are insignificant groupings because of their numbers. It is time to acknowledge that, whatever the numbers in question, the black and minority ethnic communities are a significant part of Scottish society. It is important for the voluntary sector to acknowledge that, whatever the numbers in the black and minority ethnic communities, steps should be taken to identify their needs and to provide services which meet these needs.

'SCOTS KNOW ALL ABOUT THE OPPRESSION OF BLACK PEOPLE; AFTER ALL, WE ARE AN OPPRESSED NATION OURSELVES'.

Scotland is a small country and, like all small countries, has always had a difficult relationship with its larger, more powerful neighbour. Since the beginning of the 1970s there has been increased interest in re-asserting aspects of the Scottish identity and Scottish traditions. A number of cultural and political groupings have been established to ensure that these traditions are not forgotten or subsumed by the traditions of our larger neighbour. As a result:

- there is a lively debate about the teaching of Scottish history in schools and universities
- there are widely supported campaigns for the establishment of a Scottish Parliament in either a UK or a European Union context
- the Scottish tourist industry is placing relatively less emphasis on tartan nostalgia and more on the cultural and artistic achievement of creative Scots both past and present
- there is a literary renaissance among urban Scottish writers.

This growing self-confidence as a small nation has also been accompanied by expressions of identification with other nations trying to establish more

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secure, democratic identities for themselves. Scottish charities have played a significant role in providing humanitarian assistance and regeneration in countries such as Romania and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Links have also been established with grass-roots community projects in countries such as Nicaragua, the Philippines and Georgia.

The relationship between Scotland and countries which were once part of the British Empire is altogether more problematic. Many Scottish Universities, for example, pride themselves on the welcome which they provide for students from former colonies. Such acts of courtesy to individuals need, however, to be understood in the context of the role which Scotland played in the British Empire. Any student from a former colony cannot help but be aware of the fact that large numbers of Scots were part of the imperial system that rules their countries. It is important to be clear about Scotland's role in the British Empire if we are to understand recent changes to the multiracial fabric of Scottish society.

'WHAT WAS SCOTLAND'S ROLE IN THE BRITISH EMPIRE?'

Scotland came late to the British Empire. There was no major Scottish involvement in the slave trade in the 16th or 17th centuries or most of the 18th century. Individual wealthy Scots purchased slaves and brought them back to Scotland, but this practice did not meet with the approval of either the Scottish legal system or local Scottish communities.

In 1778, the Court of Session ruled in a case between a former Jamaican slave, Joseph Knight, and his Scottish purchaser John Wedderburn that 'the dominion assumed over this Negro, being unjust, could not be supported in this country to any extent'. The Knight v Wedderburn judgment was the first, explicit legal statement condemning slavery in the United Kingdom (Fryer 1984).

The Scottish judges were not the only Scots to be opposed to slavery. In 1769, a West Indian slave, David Spiers, had run away from his purchaser, a merchant in Methil. He had been offered employment by a Wemyss farmer and he was supported by local miners and slaters until he was able to live as a free man (Fryer 1984).

That was two hundred years ago, and things have become more complicated since then. Many ordinary Scots became involved in the expansion and

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maintenance of the British Empire, so much so that imperial loyalty became a common feature of Scottish popular culture. The 19th century saw increasing Scottish involvement as missionaries, as middle-managers in industries in India such as jute and tea, and as soldiers

One of the most famous Scottish missionaries was the Blantyre-born David Livingstone. Livingstone was born into a working-class family in 1813, and he shared the Scottish opposition to slavery and the slave trade. He worked in Southern and Central Africa, travelling up the Zambezi River. He encouraged British traders to follow him on the grounds that they could offer alternatives to trading on demand. In 1857, he told a meeting in Cambridge; 'I go back to Africa to make an open path for commerce and Christianity'.

People such as Livingstone promoted education and literacy in many parts of Africa. Many of the leaders of African liberation movements in the 1950s and 1960s, such as Julius Nyerere in Tanzania, acknowledge the debt they owe to the establishment of schools by missionaries from Scotland and other parts of Europe.

The legacy of Scottish missionaries in Africa is, however, more complex than that. There was for example a saying common in many parts of Africa up to the 1960s: 'when the Europeans came to Africa they had the Bible and we have the land; now we have the Bible and they have the land'.

David Livingstone's brother-in-law Robert Moffat, for example, played a controversial role in persuading Lobengula, the King of the Ndebele, to allow one hundred European traders and miners into his country. They proved to be the vanguard for the wholesale colonisation of what was to become Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and for the humiliation of the Ndebele people.

North East India, with its rich stocks of tea and jute was the focus for activity by many Scots who managed tea plantations and jute mills. Eugenie Fraser, the Russian-Scottish author, writes evocatively of this managerial class in the 1930s:

Dundee being the centre of the jute trade in Britain, practically all the Europeans connected with jute in Calcutta, or in the mills, came from Angus or Fife. They came from various backgrounds and, although the magic of India beckoned, all had the realistic down-to-earth approach - simply to improve their lot and make some money...I remember one of

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the ladies once saying to me, 'I like India but would not care to die here. All I want after we retire is to have a little bungalow and spend the rest of our days at home' (Fraser 1989).

These managers, like the missionaries, came for the most part from ordinary Scottish families. Just as the missionaries' attempts to end slavery, establish alternative economic structures, open schools and spread the Christian word were much admired in Scotland, so too were the attempts of the Scottish managers to raise their standard of living.

Scotland's regiments provided a way for many other Scots to improve their standard of living and to make a contribution to the defence of the United Kingdom and of the British Empire. The locally based traditions of many Scots regiments go back two hundred years, and in many communities the regiment has been almost like an extended family. Just as coal mining and textiles and fishing were the occupations which most young men in some Scottish communities would expect to enter, in other communities life in a particular regiment was the normal route for employment. It was seen by many, however, as more than just a form of employment; it was seen as an opportunity to develop skills and to belong to a larger social grouping with important values. For some it was an opportunity to display bravery and courage in situations of considerable danger. Many Scottish regiments pride themselves on the numbers of their soldiers who obtained the Victoria Cross and other awards for gallantry.

During the colonisation of Africa in the late 19th century, and during the anti-colonial struggles after the Second World War in places such as Kenya, Aden and Malaysia, Scots troops played a prominent role in defending British interests against campaigns for liberation. The Scottish regiments may not have been the people who made the decisions to defend colonial interest, but they were the people who were seen to be implementing these decisions. The people against whom they were fighting in the colonial context were seen not as freedom fighters struggling to assert the dignity of their own society but as troublemakers and terrorists.

Soldiers from both sides of the European part of the Second World War have found it helpful to meet years later and effect some measure of personal reconciliation on occasions such as the 50th anniversary of the D-Day landings and VE Day. No attempt has been made to establish any such dialogue between members of Scottish regiments and the freedom fighters of the anti-colonial liberation movements in the former British colonies.

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The experience of Scottish missionaries, middle managers and soldiers in the development and maintenance of the British Empire means that there is a perception of the people of British colonies in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the Caribbean as less than equal. They are perceived either as being in need of conversion to Christianity or as workers to be paid low wages in industries over which they had no control or as trouble makers. This is clearly not the whole picture and it is useful in consideration of Scotland's role in the Empire to recall the words of Scotland's most popular poet, Robert Burns:

O wad some Powe'r the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us!
It wad frae manie a blunder free us
And foolish notion

(Burns - 'Ode to a Louse')

So, although the intentions of the Scottish missionaries, managers and soldiers can be well understood in the context of Scotland, the impact of their activities is understood rather differently in Africa, India and other former parts of the British Empire (see for instance, Edward Said 1993). Scotland may not have taken the political initiative in establishing colonies, but the fabric of life in these societies was irrevocably altered by the Scottish presence there, and the people of these societies had no control over the process. For example, the bulk of the profits of the jute and tea companies in India came back to the UK, and, in Africa, the healing qualities of traditional medicines were disregarded and much of the medical knowledge was lost permanently. Clarity about the complex Scottish role in the British Empire and about its impact will assist us to develop clarity in understanding the multiracial society in which we live now.

**'ALL THIS TROUBLE ABOUT RACISM IS A RECENT THING:
PEOPLE IN SCOTLAND ALWAYS USED TO GET ON WELL WITH
ONE ANOTHER.'**

Scotland is, and has long been, a multiracial society with many diverse communities of interest and experience. The earliest recorded Scottish history shows massive movements of people (such as Picts, Angles, Scots, Norseman) and conflict between them. In the 12th century, David I

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addressed his subjects by 'race' - French, English, Scots, Welsh and Galwegians. Even then, Scotland was not a monocultural society.

Major migrations occurred during the Industrial Revolution; increasing numbers of people came from Ireland to areas such as Lanarkshire to do seasonal or unskilled work. The 1770s saw an expression of anti-Irish hostility in anti-Catholic riots in Glasgow, Dundee, Perth, Peebles and Edinburgh. Anti-Irish hostility grew in the 19th century and the Irish were sometimes held to be 'directly responsible for both the material and moral deterioration of the Scottish working class' (Miles 1982). Such expressions of resentment and hatred are commonly made against foreigners and outsiders in times of economic and political uncertainty.

Jewish people came to Scotland in increasing numbers throughout the 19th century partly to take part in industrial and trading developments here, but also to avoid persecution in other European countries. By 1905, there were approximately 15,000 Jewish people in Scotland. Although some of them were offered assistance by Christian organisations, there was some resentment about that because it was felt that greater priority was given to converting people to Christianity than assisting them to establish a decent lifestyle. The chief Rabbi, Dr Herman Adler, visited Garnethill in Glasgow in 1896 and he urged that: 'the Christian task should be to raise their own lapsed masses before they attempt the conversion of others' (Collins 1990).

A whole network of Jewish self-help organisations including schools, friendly societies and the Jewish Lads Brigade was set up at this time and played a major role in strengthening community life and supporting people through hard times. Despite this, anti-semitic feelings were being expressed increasingly publicly and, in 1905, the British Government introduced the Aliens Act, the first immigration control legislation in the history of the United Kingdom.

Irish and Jewish people also organised themselves politically and took part in local government. In 1883, the Jewish councillor Michael Simon was elected to Glasgow City Council. In 1897 Patrick O'Hare was elected to Glasgow City Council as the representative for Springburn. He was the first Irish Catholic councillor to be elected in Scotland.

Scots themselves were not static. The first half of the nineteenth century in particular saw the enforced removal of hundreds of thousands of Highlanders in the process of the Clearances. Between 1871 and 1901, 483,000 Scots

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emigrated mainly to the Dominions - Canada, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand. They were to play a particularly big role in economic and political development in Canada and New Zealand. The 20th century has seen continuing migrations. Scots continued to go to the Dominions and USA. Many Italians came to Scotland to open catering businesses; Lithuanians came to work in the mining industry; Poles came as refugees from Hitler's Nazis. There has been no time in Scottish history when the Scottish population has remained closed. People have sought new opportunities for themselves both in Scotland and away from Scotland. Newcomers have not always been welcomed and have sometimes been the subject of persistent ongoing hostility, for example attacks on Italian businesses at the outbreak of the Second World War, or disputes about European miners coming to Scotland as part of the post-war European Voluntary Workers Scheme.

The more recent arrivals in Scotland of people of Asian and Chinese origin are but the latest episodes in a centuries-old pattern. People have come to Scotland because they wanted to improve the quality of life for themselves and their family, because the situation in their country of origin was unstable, or because they saw opportunities in Scotland which they felt well able to meet. While not everyone in the Asian and Chinese communities is involved in the retail and catering trades, there can be no denying the extent to which they contribute to the Scottish economy and society through these particular forms of activity.

Evidence suggests that while immigrant communities have in some situations been welcomed in Scotland there have been other situations where they have been subjected to intimidation of various forms, because of prejudice or ignorance or fear. Evidence also suggests that a key factor in their winning acceptance in Scottish society has been their own self-organisation. The situation of the Irish and the Jews improved after they organised themselves, and the growing emergence of self-help groups among the Asians and Chinese in particular could lead us to believe that this will be a motor for change in their situation. There is no evidence in Scotland or elsewhere to suggest that the situation of minority communities improves or that they achieve equal status as a result of waiting for it to happen.

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'WHAT HAVE BLACK PEOPLE IN SCOTLAND DONE TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THEIR LIVES?'

The ways in which people from the black and minority ethnic communities have organised have differed from period to period and from context to context.

The first Asian councillor in Scotland was elected in 1936. Dr Jainti Dass Saggar came to Dundee from the Punjab in Northern India. A GP and a founder secretary of the Dundee branch of the Friends of India Association, he became councillor for a ward where all the voters were white. He was centrally involved in the modernisation of Maryfield Hospital and the introduction of cheap fares for old pensioners on Dundee Corporation buses. On his death in 1954, the then Lord Provost, William Hughes, said of him:

He came to Dundee from halfway across the world, but no son of Dundee had greater love for its people, or worked harder in their interests. (Murray and Stockdale 1990)

While he was seen locally as a son of Dundee, he seems also to have continued to see himself as a son of India. As well as being an open and active supporter of the movement for Indian independence, he was also a founder member of the Vegetarian Society. He clearly believed that there were values which he could bring from Indian culture to enhance the quality of Scottish life. Often represented by Scottish writers as being 'one o' Jock Tamson's bairns', Jainti Saggar was a more complex character than is often allowed.

Fifty years after his election, many black and minority ethnic people continue to work in the mainstream political parties, but there is much more scepticism expressed about the integrationist approach. More and more people are of the view that there should be organisations set up by and within the communities themselves to make sure that the needs and aspirations of black and minority ethnic people are incorporated into public debates.

In 1984, for example, the Scottish Asian Action Committee was set up as a non-party political and non-sectarian organisation to make representations on behalf of the Asian communities throughout Scotland. Committed to the principles of equal rights, they have developed a reputation as an

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organisation that both offers individual support and promotes collective action.

In 1985, a group of black women made application for funding for a refuge for black women. Central to this initiative was a belief in a Black perspective. They refused to divide women who were experiencing violence into groups according to their ethnic origin; they saw fighting racism as a common purpose, inseparable from the issue of setting up a refuge. Black women escaping violence had, in addition to that experience, to overcome the barriers in relation to communication, to religious and dieting practice and to racist hostility in a variety of contexts. As a result of this bold and imaginative initiative, Shakti Women's Aid was set up. Not only do they run a refuge in Edinburgh, but they also take responsibility for raising issues of concern to black women throughout Scotland (Lamola 1991).

Self-help groups have been set up all over Scotland, frequently based around religious meeting places such as churches, mosques, temples and gurdwaras. The informal networks that exist in these contexts are increasingly assertive around a number of issues, for example care of the elderly, women's rights, racial harassment and education. The younger people growing up among such networks in Scotland will, in time, develop their own groups and their own campaigns appropriate to their needs.

'EVEN IF THERE IS RACIST ACTIVITY IN SCOTLAND, SURELY IT IS JUST CONFINED TO A MINORITY OF PEOPLE, WHO ARE PROBABLY DISTURBED'

The first important thing for society to do in relation to racist activity is to start listening to what people from the black and minority ethnic communities have to say about it. Their growing confidence in describing their experiences makes it more and more clear that it is a fantasy to suggest that racist activity is limited only to a handful of individuals.

The figures published by the Commission for Racial Equality of racial incidents reported to the police in 1993 show an increase from 663 to 721 between 1992 and 1993, and from 299 to 721 between 1988 and 1993 (see table). The figures also show that the incidents occur in all areas - mainly-white as well as where the minority ethnic communities may be settled.

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Racial Incidents Reported to and Recorded by Scottish Police Forces

Police Force	Ethnic Minority Population	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Central	1947	9	18	45	69	51	52
Dumfries and Galloway	528	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fife	2519	-	-	3	35	30	20
Grampian	4458	4	4	9	4	20	28
Lothian and Borders	12291	89	91	178	213	184	223
Northern	1421	-	-	-	-	-	-
Strathclyde	35121	197	236	300	254	250	205
Tayside	4439	-	27	101	103	128	196
<i>Total Incidents</i>	<i>62724</i>	<i>299</i>	<i>376</i>	<i>636</i>	<i>678</i>	<i>663</i>	<i>724</i>

Source: Commission for Racial Equality, Annual Report, 1994.

These figures show not only a rise in the number of such incidents but also a greater willingness to report. However, there are still many people who feel afraid to report incidents of such violence to the appropriate authority, as the following case studies demonstrate.

Case Study No 1

Then my Dad phoned the police [after he had suffered a serious assault]. He had to phone 3 or 4 times before the police came. When they came, they took a statement from a customer and went away. The boy then came back and threw a brick through the window. When my Dad phoned the police again, they said, 'you are just phoning to annoy us' (Quoted in **Race Equality in Fife** June 1991)

Case Study No 2

Two pupils have experienced a great deal of racist verbal abuse and were bullied. They spoke of feeling very isolated and not enjoying school. They described the teachers' response as 'not really caring'. Although the

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parents met with the teachers, and the pupils who were racially abusing their children received warnings, the abuse continued (Quoted in **Time to Have Our Say: Report of a survey of the needs of black and minority ethnic people living in Greater Pilton** April 1994)

Case Study No 3

Mr and Mrs J were desperate for a management transfer because of harassment. The husband and son were beaten to the ground but would not report it to the police because a combination of shame, mistrust and fear of the street [in Glasgow] was such that family members used to leave through the back window rather than the front door. The rigidity of the allocation system has meant that this family with high medical priority have to wait months for an 'appropriate offer' whilst they are living in intense fear (Quoted in **Race & Housing News** Sept 1992)

Case Study No 4

Harry Bassi, the only black player in Scottish rugby, has laid bare the abuse he has suffered from opponents, including leading internationalists. Celtic's black centre half, Paul Elliot, told him: 'You have to grow a hide to it. Racism is actually worse in Scotland, because there are so few coloured players up here' (Quoted in **Scotland on Sunday** February 1991)

Case Study No 5

'We can't go on living like this. Our children play indoors because we don't want them injured by stones', said one parent, shaking a jagged stone which shattered their living room window in Dundee's Maxwelltown.

Going to the shops for a loaf of bread is a daily ordeal for these residents who are adamant they do not want special treatment, only support from the council and more efficient back-up from the police. 'It's like asking for the moon. Sure they help us with new doors and fittings that are vandalised, but believe it or not some people feel that we're getting special treatment when we get brand new replacement fittings for our houses!', said one irate mother.

(Quoted in **Dundee Courier & Advertiser** July 1993)

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Such violence has to be understood in the context of what people in Scotland learn about black and minority ethnic people. In the past, as we have seen above, they were largely seen as inferior beings in need of various forms of control. While these old stereotypes are less commonly held than they used to be, and mass communications mean that most people in Scotland are exposed to a variety of images of black people, the experience of young people in the black and minority ethnic communities does not leave any room for complacency.

Anecdotes about name-calling and physical abuse are very common. The experience of the black Scottish poet, Jackie Kay, as recounted in her poems, **The Adoption Papers**, probably rings true for many school children today:

We're practising for the school show
I'm trying to do the cha cha and the Black Bottom
but I can't get the steps right
my right foot's left and my left foot's right
my teacher shouts from the bottom
of the class Come on, show

us what you can do I thought
you people had it in your blood
My skin is as hot as the burning coal
like that time she said Darkies are like coal
in front of the whole class - my blood
what does she mean
she'd stopped all that after the last time
my dad talked to her on parent's night

the other kids are all right till she starts
my feet step out of time, my heart starts
to miss beats like when I can't sleep at night -
What in my blood? The bell rings, it is time.

(Kay 1991)

Racist after-dinner jokes told, in 1991, by the Chief Constable of Strathclyde Police and, in 1995, by the leading lawyer, Donald Findlay QC, have become notorious. In 1993 remarks made by the Depute Director of Education for Strathclyde Regional Council showed that racist attitudes and gratuitous insult can emerge in public discussion of social issues. When the

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Commission for Racial Equality decided to investigate the reasons why such large numbers of children from black and minority ethnic communities were found in special schools, the Depute Director defended Strathclyde's assessment procedures and claimed that the high numbers could be due to 'a multiplicity of other factors possibly malnutrition when young or other genetic factors' (**The Scotsman** 19 March 93). Racist attitudes are not found only among thugs and bullies.

The lesson for organisations and for all white people in Scotland is that it is important to listen to what people from the black and minority ethnic communities have to say about their own experiences. Scottish people do not want to believe that Scotland is a racist society, but the voices from the black and minority ethnic communities tell us otherwise. They make it clear that racism is something which they find in all parts of their everyday lives. They are also making it increasingly clear that it is something they are no longer prepared to tolerate. It is time for a change.

'WHAT HAS ALL THIS GOT TO DO WITH THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR?'

The voluntary sector prides itself on its ability to respond to changing social trends and to develop imaginative and innovative approaches to dealing with them. Local authorities, health boards and other statutory bodies have often changed their policies and practice as a result of good practice which has been developed by the voluntary sector. Racism and racial equality present enormous challenges to the voluntary sector - if it is to continue to have an influential role in Scottish society. Black and minority ethnic led voluntary groups are being set up everywhere and, while they are usually small and under-resourced, their vision and their insight will be crucial in determining the response of the voluntary sector to the challenges of the multiracial society.

The traditional white-led voluntary sector also has an important role to play in terms of forming partnerships at the local level with the black-led groups. The issues at stake may be harassment or housing or training or child care or care in the community; the issues will vary from place to place. Such partnerships will be essential, however, not only in relation to the initial advocacy around particular issues, but also in terms of improving service provision and empowering the black and minority ethnic communities.

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Such partnerships will need to be carefully negotiated. Organisations have to transform their policies and practices in order to improve the level and the quality of their service provision. Black and minority ethnic led groups people are not likely to be interested in forming partnerships with organisations which have not already gone some considerable way along the path of transformation.

Transformation for racial equality helps organisations to see that the black and minority ethnic communities are not seeking special treatment. Any organisation which succeeds in making itself accessible to the black and minority ethnic communities should have developed procedures that make it more accessible to everyone. An organisation that takes on board the issue of racial equality makes itself a more effective organisation.

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NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

We recognise that it is important to clarify issues of terminology; words are an important part of the process of change. However, we do not wish to suggest that the terminology which we have chosen to use is the correct formulation. On the contrary, we want it to be known that we have been and continue to be sensitive to debates in

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this country and elsewhere which seek to clarify and define empowering usage of words. Clarification and definition do not in themselves solve problems, but they can act as tools for understanding and action.

The Race Relations Act (1976) makes it illegal to discriminate on grounds of race, colour, nationality and ethnic origin, either directly or indirectly in relation to employment, education, housing and certain services. A 1983 decision of the House of Lords defined an ethnic group as having some of the following characteristics:

- a long shared history
- a cultural tradition of its own
- a common geographical origin
- common descent from a small number of common ancestors
- a common language
- a common literature
- a common religion
- being either a minority or a majority within a larger community

We use the term 'black and minority ethnic communities' throughout this article. The term 'black' is used by a number of people to signify the common experience of racism; 'minority ethnic' is used by some groups which wish to suggest that there are different ways in which racism can be experienced; 'communities' in its plural form emphasises the diversity of experience and aspiration which is found among people whose skin colour is deemed to be different from the majority of Scots. Our favoured usage - 'black and minority ethnic communities' - is therefore a compromise and inclusive term which seeks to reflect both the common elements and the diversity of the people who experience racism in Scotland.

But, in keeping with what is becoming a convention, we use the terms 'black' or 'black and minority ethnic communities' more or less interchangeably when we wish to refer to those people who experience racism in Scotland. These communities include people whose origins are African, Chinese, South Asian (Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani) and African Caribbean, as well as smaller numbers of individuals whose origin is, for example, South American.

Where our material is drawn very directly from a source such as the annual report of a voluntary organisation or Census data, we use the form of words used by that particular agency.

'Race' is a social construction as opposed to a biological one. We always place the term 'race' in inverted commas to highlight this social dimension.

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'Racial group' is a term used within the Race Relations Act (1976). It is a term which we use only as it is required by the Act. We are opposed to its usage otherwise in so far as it implies that differences between individuals or groups can be attributed solely to their 'race'.

'Racism' is used in a variety of ways to describe attitudes, values, behaviour and service provision which treat people from the black and minority ethnic communities less equitably than those from the white communities.

'Multiracial' is the best compromise term which we have been able to develop to indicate that there are many ethnic groups in Scotland and that some of those are picked out and racialised.

'White-led' is used to signify organisations and institutions the values of which are the Eurocentric values of the majority white communities, whose managers and policy makers are, for the most part, white, and where the process of change has yet to begin. Most organisations and institutions in Scotland can be said to be 'white-led'.

Words are used in different ways in different contexts and at different times. Some people will disagree with our terminology; in a year or two the terminology which we use here may have changed. The important thing about terminology is that it should be a tool to greater understanding. We hope that by clarifying our use of words, we have increased the possibility that our article can be read and appreciated in its own terms.

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