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THE ROLE OF RACISM AND PREJUDICE IN EXCLUSION, MARGINALISATION, INEQUALITY, AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS FOR A COHESIVE SOCIETY

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INTRODUCTION

1. In October 1999, I attended an international seminar on ethnicity and conflict in Salzburg. Delegates from thirty-nine countries included academics, writers, journalists, educators, artists, filmmakers and community activists. The week we were there, nearly 29 per cent of Austrians voted for an extreme right wing party which demanded that Austria should be re-made once more for Austrians. It was a call for purification, which sent shudders throughout Europe. In the same month the similarly inclined Swiss People's Party collected 23 per cent of the votes by arguing for cultural protectionism and against the European Union and the entry of 'aliens' pretending to be asylum seekers.
2. Meanwhile a military coup had taken place in Pakistan and both the Indians and Pakistanis present at the meeting went through a profound crisis about what this could mean for the already volatile political relationship between the countries on the sub continent, connected by a common ethnicity but increasingly divided by religious extremism. Weeks previously, India had voted into power a party which had gained popularity through promoting a vision of a Hindu India. African American delegates spoke eloquently about continuing racism in the United States where a new, complex hierarchy of colour and class made it impossible to speak simply of white racism and black oppression. East Asian and Japanese Americans for example, do not suffer from the same levels of racial injustice as do African Americans and Hispanics.
3. Things got even more complicated when the African Americans were reminded by many from the two thirds world that they needed to be more involved on behalf of non US victims of western power and that a purely domestic view of their own struggles against racism was limiting their potential. The civil rights movement became a world issue because leaders like Martin Luther King and W. B. Du Bois made constant and consistent links with other oppressed people. An Iraqi teacher wanted to know what right minded North Americans, black and white, were saying about the effects of UN sanctions on Iraqi children. An Israeli Palestinian shared her views about social

and political exclusion with us and some initially hostile Israelis, who by the end of the week were moving towards a remarkable understanding of the Palestinian issue.

4. The globally respected Indian filmmaker Shyam Benegal showed his new film, which dwelt on the persistence of discrimination against Dalits (untouchables) in India in spite of laws against this. The film showed how caste hatred manifested itself in traditional, almost feudal communities and also the negative attitudes, sanctioned by religion, which exist among the metropolitan educated elite. We had people from Ghana, Uganda and Kenya, all passionate human rights lawyers who wanted to see the birth of a new Africa where Rwanda would acquire the moral resonance the holocaust has in Europe and elsewhere. South Africans wanted to speak about the balance between justice and reconciliation. They in turn were asked whether they thought South African leaders – who had acquired a unique place on the world stage – needed to develop a broader engagement with injustice and to take themselves beyond the particular experiences of apartheid.
5. Difficult questions appeared all the way through. How could Nelson Mandela support President Suharto knowing what was happening in East Timor? Muslims feel the brunt of hatred against their communities around the world. But does this blind them to their own prejudices and hatreds towards others? When would Israelis look beyond their own suffering and empathise with Palestinians? And what is to be done about the increasingly autocratic behaviour of some Palestinian leaders? Ethnic tensions in the former Yugoslavia and Soviet Union were inevitably at the forefront of the debates too.
6. At the end of the long week, a consensus emerged that racism and prejudice are the most serious inhibitors to democracy and progress on human rights around the world and that in some ways things are getting worse. Even more importantly we were able to agree that the issues of inequality, exclusion, and injustice could not be confined to simple world where whites were all culpable, and people of colour always victims.
7. Globalisation is enabling people to live the reality of cross boundary connections but as this gathers momentum an opposite pressure has been created as countries and communities attempt to protect themselves against the forces of homogenisation. There is a serious problem of wealth inequality and this, combined with a globalised media that beams out images of western affluence and the 'good life' has created immigration flows which are only likely to increase. This, in turn is causing a closing off of real and imaginary borders to those perceived as the 'other.' Across Europe there are now common policies which are obsessively focused on keeping out refugees rather than on balancing immigration control with a genuine commitment to human rights and ensuring that the richer societies take their share of the global responsibility for the increasing numbers of dispossessed people across the world.
8. All this flux means a very different set of circumstances from those which prevailed in previous eras. The world at the end of the century is affected by many diverse forces of disaffection. Western capitalism may have won the ideological battle but the converts are not all rejoicing in the streets. The problem of racism is now more complicated than before and cannot be analysed simply in terms of the power relationship between black and white or even between rich and poor. The issue of identity whether national, ethnic, racial and religious is now emerging on the geopolitical scene with an overwhelming intensity making a purely deterministic analysis of prejudice and racism not only inadequate, but inaccurate. Why does, for example, a rich country like Austria with an unimaginably high standard of living choose this moment to vote for intolerance? Britain, which is a winner in the global business stakes, and where multiculturalism is more accepted than other EU countries, is going through a crisis where new forms of racism can flourish. The English – still the most powerful of all the people who make up this nation – are in a state of obvious anxiety about their ethnic identity since the process of devolution which led to the creation of a Scottish parliament and a Welsh Assembly. In 1999, Gordon Brown the Chancellor of the Exchequer wrote

this after the country had lived through a shocking public enquiry on the racist killing of a young black man, Stephen Lawrence, whose killers had gone free because institutional racism had disabled a proper investigation into his murder.

As the Tebbit “cricket test”¹ and the Stephen Lawrence case illustrate, there are those who would retreat from an expansive idea of Britishness into a constricted shell of right wing English nationalism. My vision of Britain comes not from uniformity but from celebrating diversity, in other words a multi-ethnic and multinational Britain . . . I understand Britishness as being outward looking, open, internationalist with a commitment to democracy and to tolerance.²

9. This challenge is one that could be replicated thousands of times in various locations. It is about creating a nation and a notion of citizenship that includes rather than excludes. It is about confronting the iniquitous responses to ‘the other’. It is about creating common values and principles which hold a nation together but which are not based on ethnic or ancestral entitlements and hierarchies. It is about creating a legal and political framework which promotes the vision. It is about becoming globally civil and responsible and creating external relations which are based on this rather than only the narrowest and most damaging ideologies of national self interest.
10. What is needed is a concerted and integrated approach from those in power. Merely concentrating on the law, for example as in the case of untouchables in India, achieves little deep progress. On the other hand having no effective anti-discrimination legislation or idea of plurality, as is the case in France, means that the society is handicapped by an unsustainable self image of a homogeneous society where everyone is presumed to be French and thereby equal. Injustices are exacerbated by the failure of people to recognise what is happening. Then there are those who would say that South African black people have legal rights but little real economic opportunity which means that they are still not real citizens of their country.
11. A good society, as John Kenneth Galbraith said in 1994, must be at peace with itself.³ Too many countries at present are uneasy, unsettled, looking for an identity and a narrative which makes sense.⁴ The following elements all need to be woven together into a coherent strategy if real change is to be created. Almost all countries dealing with these issues need such an integrated approach. As most of my experience is of Britain, I have used this country as my key example. I have mentioned other countries when relevant and hopefully this will be expanded by the contributions of other delegates during our seminar.

THE LAW: SANCTIONS ON BEHAVIOUR

12. The British Government strategy since the 1960s has been to use the law to tackle discriminatory behaviour. The Race Relations Act (1976) is about to be strengthened to include the Police Force and government departments. In most countries with visible minority populations, there is incontrovertible evidence of institutional racism in the law enforcement system. Even countries with a wholesome image, such as Canada for example, have this problem. The law as Martin Luther King said will not change hearts but restrain the heartless. But what are the implications if the criminal justice system itself replicates and reinforces the very prejudices that legal sanctions are supposed to put right?

¹ Tebbit is a Conservative politician who has periodically called into question the loyalty and rights of non-white Britons. He has claimed that these citizens do not automatically support Britain in cricket matches and this proves that they can never be truly British.

² Gordon Brown, *The Guardian*, 12th November 1998

³ See the text of his lecture at the University of Sheffield published in *The Guardian*, 26th January 1994

⁴ *Britain TM*, (Demos, 1997) by Mark Leonard confirms this national sense of unease

13. This leads to the second issue to do with race and law and order policies. In most countries around the world, those who are oppressed are usually also over-represented in prisons and on death row. There needs to be a proper and sophisticated analysis of this phenomenon. Racism is obviously the main cause of this. But could it be that some individuals in these groups, in responding to racism do actually resort to crime in greater numbers? Does racism mean that we are not permitted to examine pathologies that develop within 'out' groups? And does this then lead to less or more prejudice against them?
14. Two of the strategies universally adopted to tackle this issue are:
 - increasing the recruitment of visible minority professionals as policemen, lawyers and judges; and
 - training various sections of the criminal justice system on how not to discriminate and to learn respect for various cultures.
15. In many countries this has been going on for decades, yet little has changed. In Britain, there have been periodic bursts of activity in both of these usually following a crisis like the serious inner city riots in the eighties. The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry has reiterated these 'solutions'. Yet there remains strong evidence of police brutality against people of colour many of whom end up dead. To this day not a single policeman or woman has been convicted for racist conduct in the UK.
16. Does this strategy need a rethink? Can people can be trained out of racism? Should more punitive action achieve more? What is the effect of recruiting more people of colour into a force that is racist? And should we not be clearer about the connection between how the police and others deal with racist crime and racism in the system itself?

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND EXCLUSION

17. Within the EU, Britain is considered a leader when it comes to race discrimination laws and policies. But progress has been uneven, and less than is frequently assumed.⁵ One reason is that unlike the US, affirmative action is not allowed under British law. While there are clear indicators showing social exclusion, harassment and inequality, black and Asian Britons are also making a positive impact on British life, which is out of all proportion to their numbers.⁶ Signs of de facto integration are visible in all walks of life. But the subjective understanding of these developments, how they are seen and evaluated by many white Britons, presents a more pessimistic picture. Urban Britain is now indisputably and irreversibly multicultural. Tensions do exist and periodically there have been moments of serious unrest, but such problems are less widespread and intractable than they are in the USA. Just over 3 million people from ethnic minorities live in the UK. The majority of children in every ethnic community are British born. Among those born in Britain, half of Caribbean men, a third of Caribbean women and a fifth of Asian men have a white partner.⁷
18. The issue of the 'colour line,' which William Du Bois warned against has not emerged in Britain in quite the stark way that one sees in American cities. There has not been a massive white flight into the suburbs.⁸ The difference is also clear when one compares Britain with European countries. In

⁵ See for example the government reactions to the report submitted by Liberty to the United Nations Committee in April 1997 quoted in *The Scotsman* 4th March 1996. The Home Office Minister said that Britain had a 'proud record' on race relations and that 'our race relations policies are second to none.'

⁶ See Trevor Phillip's *Fantastic Voyage*, in *the Guardian* 17th May 1998 in which he describes his television series on black Britons fifty years since the arrival of Windrush. The programmes show how much has been achieved by this community and how they are now an integral and indispensable part of the British Landscape.

⁷ Information in various chapters in *Diversity and Disadvantage: The Ethnic Minorities in Britain*, T. Modood, R. Berthoud et al, Policy Studies Institute, 1997

⁸ See C. Peach, *Ethnicity in the 1991 Census*, Vol. 2, *The Ethnic Minority Populations of Great Britain*, HMSO, June 1996

France, for example, although mixed communities live in close proximity in some of the most deprived urban areas, it is rare to see middle class neighbourhoods which have any significant ethnic minority presence.⁹

19. Considerable economic and educational progress has been achieved by some. Indian, African, Asian and Chinese children are doing better educationally than the white population.¹⁰ Eighty three per cent of Indians living in Britain are owner occupiers. Some of Britain's self-made millionaires are from the ethnic communities and 23 per cent of doctors in the National Health Service were born abroad.¹¹
20. Inequality and exclusion, however, persist at every level. When it comes to positions of influence and power, black and Asian Britons are seriously under-represented. For example, Out of 651 MPs, only 7 are from the minorities. There are no High Court judges or national newspaper editors.¹² Direct racism continues and can be seen even in large organisations like Fords¹³ which have had anti-racist policies for decades.
21. Bangladeshis, Pakistanis and young Caribbean men are the most likely to face discrimination and, in part as a result, poverty is also a serious problem in these groups. A new report has confirmed that the rate of poverty in these communities is four times that for the white community.¹⁴ Unemployment among young black men in London is over 60 per cent.¹⁵ Many young people in these communities have started to disengage from the political process. In 1997 election, among Afro-Caribbeans aged under 25, only 16 per cent intended to vote.¹⁶ There is increasing evidence of 'cultural racism'¹⁷ and scapegoating continues as anxieties about job security and diminishing resources for welfare begins to bite.
22. The most recent PSI survey shows that 250,000 Caribbeans and Asians are racially harassed every year¹⁸ mainly by young whites.¹⁹ A 1997 government report concluded that the perpetrators of the most violent racist assaults do not act in a social vacuum. They carry out their assaults in areas in which all age groups across the local community share common attitudes to ethnic minorities, where people of all ages, including very young children and older adults, regularly engage in the verbal abuse and intimidation of ethnic minorities.²⁰
23. Racism in the shires and rural areas has been growing and neo-Fascist groups have turned their attention to those areas for recruitment and financial support.²¹ There is also concern over the manifestation of conflicts between ethnic and religious groups.²²

⁹ See for example P.E.Ogden, Immigration to France since 1950: Myth and Reality, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* Vol. 14, No 3, July 1991

¹⁰ Modood, Berthoud et al, Op. Cit. pp 63-75

¹¹ Commission For Racial Equality, 1996

¹² Labour Party Conference Figures published in *Black to Black*, Issue 10, September 1996

¹³ In October 1999, a whole catalogue of racism against black and Asian workers was revealed by the press and by a race tribunal case at the car company. A wild cat strike followed these revelations

¹⁴ Richard Berthoud, *Incomes of Ethnic Minorities*, University of Essex, 1998

¹⁵ See for example reports in *The Independent*, 12th June 1996 of the findings of The Office For National Statistics published in the same month

¹⁶ Quoted in *The Guardian*, 4th February 1997

¹⁷ Details in Modood, Berthoud et al, Op. Cit.

¹⁸ Op. cit. p 288

¹⁹ See R Hewitt, Sagaland: *Youth Culture, Racism and Education: A report on research carried out in Thamesmead*, London Borough of Greenwich/University of London, 1986. Also M. Fitzgerald and C Hale, *Ethnic Minorities: victimisation and racial harassment*, Home Office Research Study 154, 1996

²⁰ *The Perpetrators of Racial Harassment*, Dr. Rae Sibbitt, Home Office research study, No 176, 1997, p101

²¹ See press reports for example of racism in Yeovil, Somerset, 2nd February 1996. See also report on rural racism in reports by the CRE in 1996

²² A forthcoming report collating information presented at an Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) seminar on

24. Signs of increasingly virulent anti-Muslim attitudes are manifest across Europe. With the end of the Cold War, Islam is portrayed as the new enemy of the west by the media, by some politicians, especially in the European Parliament and even by academics.²³ The American political scientist Professor Samuel Huntington sees Islam as fanatic and irrational, the west as its opposite.²⁴ Respected journalist Clare Hollingworth and others have expressed similar views in publications like the *International Herald Tribune*.²⁵
25. Professor Fred Halliday believes that these views tap into ancient sources of enmity making them potentially lethal:
- For some, particularly those who advocate it, hostility to Muslims requires no justification since it is itself a legitimate response to the threats, and the militant rhetoric that emerge from the Muslim world itself.²⁶
26. Anti-Semitism continues to be expressed. A synagogue was violated in North London, and a Jewish investment banker described the overt anti-Jewish feelings openly expressed in the financial sector.²⁷ A survey found that 12 per cent of white Britons said that they would not like to live next to a Jew. 25 per cent of people interviewed believed that the problem was likely to get worse over the next few years.²⁸
27. Much less has been achieved than was hoped for by those who have been involved in anti-racist initiatives for the past thirty years. The backlash against affirmative action policies in the United States shows that in spite of (or maybe because of) some impressive progress which has resulted in non white Americans entering every powerful institution in the country and at high levels, resistance has grown to equality measures. It is time to seek new solutions to the old problems of discrimination. In both countries the white population including liberals are showing immense anxiety about losing out; being overtaken by demographic changes; losing the might of their cultural and political positions. There has been much less buying into the ideal of diversity than one might have expected especially in the years following the civil rights movement. The impact of welfare reform on visible communities and the subsequent demonisation of excluded groups – single mothers for example – is another emerging area for consideration. In both countries, when one looks at school exclusions and prison populations, black men and boys are seriously over-represented.
28. In Britain there is some talk of setting up a Human Rights Commission which would include age discrimination and the rights of children and thereby persuade all citizens to own the problem of discrimination and support attempts to reduce unfairness against any group in society. This then deals with the pernicious competition between victims of discrimination and hopefully helps to create a more integrated counter-force.

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

29. In general, political leaders have failed to portray a positive vision of multiculturalism, contributing to the dominant perception of minorities as a 'problem' and fostering a damaging association between immigration policy and internal race relations. The public's anxiety about multiculturalism

divided communities provides deals in depth with this issue.

²³ See Fred Halliday, *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation*, I B Taurus, 1995

²⁴ S. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations?* Foreign Affairs, Summer 1993

²⁵ *International Herald Tribune*, 9th November 1993

²⁶ Draft chapter of Halliday's book on Islam and the west, Chapter 4, p3. See also Halliday's published *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation*, I B Taurus, 1995, Chapter 4

²⁷ *Suzanne Glass in Real Life*, *The Independent on Sunday*, 4th June 1995

²⁸ Gallup poll, September 1993, quoted in *A Very Light Sleeper*, Op, cit p50

is central to its confusion over Britain's changing national identity. This is true across the European continent and in many other countries. With the end of the Cold War, old histories are being resurrected to define insiders and outsiders, those with a legitimate claim and those without. The sad history of Bosnia and Rwanda reveal the tremendous harm that can be done by persuasive leaders. South Africa shows us the good, which can come out of moral leadership. All affected countries need to take up the challenge to foster a new national identity for the 21st Century and to create a cohesive, inclusive country. More needs to be done too to educate people about both the negative and positive effects of globalisation which is often an ill understood but increasingly fearful idea for most people around the world.

30. To be successful, public *attitudes and beliefs* need to be addressed. Changing behaviour alone is not enough. Unhelpful assumptions of the past must be shed and countries should explore good practice elsewhere. This is the challenge facing the EU, the US and other countries too such as Indonesia. In Northern Ireland for example, the political leadership on both sides needs to re-tell the story of this disputed area without bias and honesty examining how hatreds have grown out of a particular history. They must promote change not only in order to end the cycle of violence but because they feel an obligation to create genuine mutual respect between individuals. Without this kind of groundwork, no settlements can take root. The consensus of inaction on this is not only dangerous, it is wasting opportunities to create cohesive communities.
31. The day-to-day lives of people from diverse backgrounds, how they relate in the workplace, neighbourhoods, schools and in personal relations depend on trust and ease which in turn are determined by perceptions and attitudes.
32. In Britain, political leaders are still afraid of breaking with an ignoble historical legacy. In 1964, one British Conservative candidate was elected on the basis of this racist slogan: 'If you want a nigger neighbour, vote Labour.' Such tactics would be unthinkable today in mainstream politics, but the spirit of that occasion has haunted politics ever since. Too many politicians prefer to placate rather than to tackle prejudiced attitudes especially those against so called 'bogus' asylum seekers.
33. Not only have leaders largely failed to exercise leadership to foster more positive attitudes,²⁹ political leaders in some countries have been guilty of:

. . . deliberate stirring up of xenophobia for political gain . . . it is considered necessary that the Governments and Parliaments of the Member states should act clearly and unambiguously to counter the sentiments and manifestations of racism.³⁰
34. The media has also evoked criticism for providing misinformation about minorities and inciting antagonism.³¹
35. Perhaps there are lessons on this outside politics. Some business leaders in Britain are leading the way on how to give positive messages about immigrants and their families. For example, Robert Ayling, chief executive of British Airways, repeatedly says:

as a country we have thrived, improved and become more wealthy by taking the best of the immigrant community and utilising their skills. If we cannot break down racist barriers between people we won't work successfully as a company³²

²⁹ See for example, *The Evrigenis Report*, European Parliament, December 1985, p72

³⁰ The European Commission, OJ C 289/148 5th November 1992, Response to a written question in the European Parliament

³¹ *ibid.* pp89-90

³² Quoted by Y. Alibhai-Brown, in *The Independent*, 31st May 1996

36. It may also be important to learn from other social campaigns. The Green issue has gone from being the business of eccentrics to mainstream concern with profound changes in attitudes throughout most societies so that today poor Indian farmers can stop GM crops and find allies in the richer west. Those fighting against racism and xenophobia should seek good practice of this sort when developing a strategy.

NATIONAL IDENTITY AND A NEW MASTER NARRATIVE

37. Attitudes towards minorities are inextricably tied to something deeper: the sense of nationhood and how ethnic communities fit into that landscape. Visible minorities have historically been described, discussed and legislated for on the basis that they were a 'problem' for the nation, not an intrinsic part of nor an asset to it. Their presence has been deemed to be temporary and conditional.³³ Nations fear the future will be 'contaminated' if too many 'aliens' are allowed on to their territories.³⁴ There is a second ideology, which is also promoted by those with power and influence. This reinforces the notion that the majority community embodies greater virtues than minorities.
38. History is often abused in the service of such beliefs. Margaret Thatcher frequently expressed her pride in Empire and said that she did not want her country "swamped" by foreigners. Tony Blair, in 1995 spoke with great passion saying: 'Consider a thousand years of British history and what it tells us... An empire, the largest empire the world has ever known.'³⁵
39. Leaders need to take this responsibility seriously and tell new and positive stories about complex national identities. They can use economics, like Blair did in 1996:
- It would be an economy in which] opportunity is available to all, advancement is through merit and from which no group or class is set apart or excluded. This is the economic justification for social cohesion, for a fair and strong society.³⁶
40. In Germany, economists at the University of Essen have produced evidence showing that without migrant workers, Germans today would be paying significantly higher taxes.
41. Leaders could pay greater attention to the need to disseminate the principles of diversity and rights. For example, Germany has not really understood racism beyond the Holocaust. In part, this must be because this country has had to face defeat, economic collapse, massive national guilt and the universal abhorrence which was unleashed towards it after the Second World War. Reunification posed further challenges. But political leader have persisted in encouraging the view that Germany is a homogeneous country and not a country of immigration in spite of the millions of migrant workers studied by the researchers in Essen. The laws in Germany which allow for the official exclusion of people on the grounds that they are not connected by blood to Germans have had a seriously detrimental effect on all the people of that nation.

³³ This was evident in the speech made by Lord Tebbit at the Tory party conference in October 1997 when he said that ethnic minority Britons could not be truly of this nation unless they imbibed British values and history. Interestingly most of the prominent Tories and the media did not support these views and for the first time in recent history, the speech seemed out of tune and out of touch with modern times and the vies of most British people. William Hague responded to the sentiment expressed by Tebbit in forceful terms. See the press coverage of the week 3rd – 10th October.

³⁴ See my column in the *Independent*, Caught Between the British Bigots and the Crazy Mullahs, 23rd September 1999

³⁵ See the texts of the speeches made to conference on the 3rd of October 1995 and the 1st of October 1996. This quote is on p12 in the 1996 speech.

³⁶ Speech to the Singapore Business Community, January 8th 1996, text in *The Guardian* September 9th 1996

42. Leaders could promote the idea of respect which is an essential component of a fair society, says the Indian political philosopher, Bhikhu Parekh:

Respect and recognition are complex concepts. They require that ethnic minorities should be accepted as fellow subjects fully qualified to speak for themselves and to participate in all decisions affecting their lives, including the norms by which they are to be judged. Respect and recognition go beyond equal opportunity and call for a profound change in white society's attitude to ethnic minorities.³⁷

43. They can re-tell and change an old history to engage new minds. Professor Ron Takaki at Berkeley in California is a passionate advocate of this. His book, *A Different Mirror*, describes how black Americans fought in the Civil War, how much Japanese, Chinese and other non-white peoples gave to build up the wealth of the nation.³⁸ Most British people do not know that 3 million Indians fought in the Second World War. The Dutch, on the other hand, are reminded by their establishment every year that many non-whites died in the two world wars. These stories matter because they give important entitlements.

IMMIGRATION POLICIES AND RHETORIC AND HOW THEY IMPACT ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND RACIAL ATTITUDES

44. A communication from the European Commission in 1994 on acknowledged that fears of immigration have led to behaviour which is totally out of character with Europe's image of itself and the diminishing of the principles of human rights and social justice.³⁹
45. The communication argued that there was a lack of knowledge or acceptance that immigration had been a positive process which had brought economic and broader cultural benefits both to the host countries and to the immigrants themselves:

This poses an increasing problem for governments. They must retain credibility with moderate people on both sides of the argument in a situation where the anti-democratic elements have sought to exploit the immigration issue.⁴⁰

46. It is important to remember that white immigration to the New World is always seen as an asset to the receiving country while black immigration to the Old World is regarded a calamity. Refugees and those seeking asylum are the new official and public hate targets. Hardly any western politician today is willing to explain to people that increasing numbers of refugees does not mean an increase of bogus applicants but a disordered world and perhaps over stringent criteria.
47. The stories could be told very differently. South African exiles who have returned home will not forget the countries which offered them shelter and this in turn is leading to trade and other exchanges. Ugandan Asians expelled by Idi Amin in 1972 have proved themselves extraordinarily successful immigrants in Britain and Canada and have created thousands of jobs in both countries. The US actually encourages immigration from universities in the Third World (something which creates other problems of course) and Canada has decided to define itself as a broad-minded nation made up of immigrants from around the world.⁴¹

³⁷ *The Independent*, 19th June 1996

³⁸ Back Bay Books, 1993

³⁹ European Commission Communication 24 03 03, 25th February 1994

⁴⁰ Op cit. Foreword

⁴¹ See my book *True Colours*, IPPR, 1999 where I have described the Canadian model in detail.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN CHANGING ATTITUDES AND REDUCING RACISM

48. More evidence needs to be collected on racial prejudice. Do attitudes change for the better during times of economic boom or do they simply mutate and express themselves as fear of loss of a good life? Is there a gender divide when it comes to negative attitudes? In Britain, white women have found it easier to accept Black immigration than have white men. Are there typologies that one can outline in order to understand what kinds of people are most susceptible to change? And is it wrong to assume the young are more accepting of other cultures and races?
49. An MTV survey of young people's attitudes in Europe, published in February 1997 showed British youngsters to be the most intolerant in Europe; in Germany the figure was 19 per cent. 30 per cent of British youngsters admitted to having committed at least one racist act.⁴²
50. Eurobarometer surveys are, for example, a useful source of information because they are based on a representative sample of the citizens of the member states and provide some comparative data. The key findings of the 1989 survey were these:

Otherness

51. 'Otherness' as defined by nationality, race, religion, culture and social class was explored by the researchers:
 - In Denmark, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, respondents associated 'others' with populations which are culturally distinct from European cultures.
 - All countries except for France and the United Kingdom identified black people as the 'other' race. In France, however, it tended to be Arabs and in the UK, it was mostly applied to Asians.
 - In the European Union the 'other' religion was clearly Islam. Islam was mentioned by more than half of the respondents in Belgium and France and by people in Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands. In the United Kingdom at that time, Islam was not particularly prominent. The fieldwork for this study predated the Rushdie affair.
 - The majority of Europeans believed that there was considerable diversity in Europe, but one in three people believed that there were too many people of another nationality or race in his/her country.
 - There was a correlation between a strong sense of national pride and a feeling that there were 'too many foreigners around.'
 - Advancing age, a lower education level, a tendency towards 'materialism' and right wing leanings were associated with the feeling that there were too many 'others'. Those who were more highly educated and in higher income groups, and those with left wing leanings and notions of leadership, public good and less inclined towards materialism were more likely to attach importance to human rights and to opposing racism.
 - Not many EC citizens said that they mixed with 'others' in their neighbourhood or considered them their friends although one in three Europeans has occupational contact with 'others.' Contact made little difference to the degree of intolerance.
 - Only five percent of the EU population saw immigration as the most important problem facing their country.
 - Nearly half of the EU population strongly believed that immigrants were a negative factor for the future, but nearly half of the European population saw their presence as a positive factor.
 - 8 out of 10 people disapproved of racist movements.
 - One in ten Europeans appeared to show sympathy for racist organisations concerned about immigration.

⁴² Music TV/Scantel survey published in January 1997

1997 Eurobarometer Survey

- For this survey, 16,154 people were interviewed in the fifteen member states.
 - Nearly one third of European citizens describe themselves as very or quite racist.
 - Job insecurity was a major factor influencing the prejudice. Fear of unemployment rather than unemployment itself was the key influence.
 - The majority of white Europeans agreed that race discrimination existed and that it was wrong.
 - Nearly half believed that too many minority children in schools lowered standards.
 - A third were of the opinion that ethnic minorities should 'give up their culture' and assimilate.
52. A detailed Dutch study published in 1995 produced some persuasive evidence on the attitudes of indigenous Dutch people towards the minorities. It found that there was a variety of ways that racial prejudice was manifested and rationalised⁴³:
- Beliefs in the biological or (more commonly) cultural superiority of the indigenous in-group and the tendency to think that the values of the majority group were the universal norm
 - An inclination to blame minority groups for bringing 'troubles' to the country
 - A tendency to generalise the negative characteristic of ethnic minority communities and individualise the achievements
 - Negative tolerance mechanisms which amounted to indigenous in-groups having no meaningful interactions with minority communities or making 'special' efforts to understand 'their' ways
 - A proclaimed neutrality which has come from a belief that there is no common humanity between different ethnic groups and that it is inevitable that ethnically different people lead separate lives
 - Paternalism based on feelings of cultural superiority
 - Forced anti-racism and resentment of pressure to conform to what is acceptable to say and do.

DISCUSSION POINTS

53. This paper raises several areas for discussion. I would prioritise the following:
- How do we balance the need for external protection from discrimination, internal restrictions on individuals within communities and individual human rights?
 - If affirmative action policies produce massive resentment do they in the end defeat themselves and do we need to consider more holistic models which potentially include all vulnerable groups? Does this cause unacceptable dilution?
 - Racism and prejudice can create negative behaviours in target groups. How can these be dealt with without accusations of racism?
 - Can laws change attitudes? They seem to have when one looks at attitudes towards children or the environment. What needs to be done to make the leap from obeying the law to believing in the principles behind it?
 - Training and employment may not be the best route to achieving the above.
 - Does racism get worse or better during times of economic boom? Or does it mutate. So that groups are attacked for working too hard as much as living off the state.

⁴³ G. Verbeek, P.Scepers, and F. Wester, *Attitudes Towards Ethnic Minorities*, paper presented at the University of Bristol, April 1-4 1995

- How can the public be more involved in these matters without racists taking over the agenda?
- And what sort of education is needed so that people can actually learn that the majority does not embody greater value and virtue?