

①

THE BROADWATER FARM DISTURBANCES AND THE PRESS

- a report  
by Dorothy Kanya

1. I monitored twenty five newspapers, seventeen of them were national papers, five were local, one was a London wide paper. Of these four are minority ethnic papers and five are Sunday papers. The dates cover are October the 7th, 8th, 9th, to the 31st 1985 and November 1985 to May 1986. The newspapers we monitored were as follows: the local papers were the Haringey Advertiser, The Haringey Independent, The Weekly Herald, The Yorkshire Post, The Wolverhampton Express and Star. The London wide paper was the London Standard. The minority ethnic papers were New Life, Asian Times, Caribbean Times and The Voice. The national papers were the Daily Mail, The Morning Star, The Sun, The Express, The Mirror, The Daily Telegraph, Financial Times, The Guardian, The Times. The Sunday papers were The Sunday Mirror, The Observer, The Sunday Times, The Mail on Sunday, The Sunday Express and the Star.

2. In 1975 the National Union of Journalists layed down its first set of guide lines for journalists. Two of these were:-

Only mention someones race or nationality if strictly relevant.

Resist the temptation to sensationalise issues which would harm race relations.

4

These were added to in 1977 when the National Union of Journalists and the National Graphical Association joint agreement stated that:-

Freedom must be conditioned by responsibility and acknowledgement by all media workers of the need not to allow press freedom to be abused, to slander a section of the community or to promote the evil of racism.

The NUJ and NGA recognised the right of their members to withhold their labour on grounds of conscience because employers are providing a platform for racist propaganda.

In reading through the mass of cuttings made available to us we have found very little regard being given to the NUJ guidelines mentioned above or the agreement between the NUJ and the NGA. In fact the newspapers we have read have gone out of their way to mention not only colour but place of origin of many people involved in the Broadwater Farm disturbances particularly those people who were black and in particular those who do not appear to be approved of by the press. For example: "Jamaican born Reverend Eglan Graham" yet the mention of two other Reverends the Reverend John Wheaton and the Reverend Francis Ackroyd are done without any reference to colour or ethnicity. The place of origin of Bernie Grant and Dolly Kiffen were emphasised in the many articles and reports that were published. Miss Cynthia Jarrett was described variously as black, or West Indian, or coloured. PC Keith Blakelock's colour or ethnicity is not mentioned at all throughout any of the reports. The press

sensationalised the issues related to the disturbances on Broadwater Farm through lurid headlines, hysterical and emotional reporting, racist and sexist language, which was reinforced by pictures and cartoons likely to inflame or create anger or fear in their readers. We have heard of no journalist withholding their labour on the grounds of conscience because of the nature of the reporting of the events in connection with the Broadwater Farm Estate. Neither have we heard of any complaints against journalists because of the reporting. We know of no one who has been disciplined by the NUJ or the NGA for the mass of information, much of it distorted and inaccurate, which has been published. It does not appear that the NUJ or the NGA have sought to uphold their guidelines or agreements by taking action against any of their members for their presentation of any of the events of October 6th and 7th 1985. It does appear that the guidelines and the agreement are not worth the paper on which there are written.

3. The racism which is part and parcel of the British way of life has been aptly demonstrated in the press through Eurocentric writing and is addressed to those who share the cultural assumptions of the writers of the reports and articles which have appeared. Stereotypes are being created and recreated and reaffirmed. Bernie Grant has become the Idi Amin of the 80's- all the more frightening for being on our doorstep and not someone who can be easily deported. In fact a delegate at the Annual Conservative Party Conference at that time demanded that he be deported. He is now the 'Barmy Bernie who must be disowned' 'who is evil' 'who is defiant' who is even, amazingly, classed

(4)

as a 'racist'. The new bogeys are the English born Black Youth who are here to stay because their parents and sometimes they grandparents have been here for many, many years, and cannot be exiled or wished away. They have been characterised as 'muggers,' 'rapists' 'lazy' drug pedlars' or 'drug takers' and worst of all 'murderers'. Stereotypes become a reality which means to the that Black people and either ostracised, rejected or harassed and are put away either in prison or in mental institutions. The press was not only racist in its presentation of the events of that sad and tragic period , but also extremely offensive in its attempts to be witty at the expense of women on the Farm. One reporter - Amrit Roy describing Broadwater Farm 'as a no-go area' said: 'Here the housewife cannot have an affair with the milkman, even if she felt so inclined. The milkman stopped calling a year ago.' That appeared in the Daily Mail. However the Mirror on the same day shows a picture of the so-called disappeared milkman Michael Edwards delivering his milk on the day that the Mail report was filed.

#### MISS CYNTHIA JARRETT AND PC KEITH BLAKELOCK AND THE PRESS

4. "British relations with non-whites in all parts of the world have been characterized by white domination so that colour has become, on average, a factually accurate index relative

3

wealth, power and status. The ideas and imagery surrounding white domination have served to legitimate the assumption that colour confers a differential entitlement to status and resources."

It is instructive to compare the way the press handled the news of the death of Mrs Cynthia Jarrett and of PC Keith Blakelock.

5. The death of PC Blakelock was given continual front page headline coverage in almost all the papers, "London riots kill a PC" "PC murdered in riot fury" "Rioters kill policeman", "KILL, KILL, KILL," "Police officer knifed to death", "Hacked to death", "Red butchers", "Name the killers," and then a sub heading: "150 pounced to slice him up". In most of the papers of the 7th and 8th October placed his death was placed ahead of Cynthia Jarrett's in the story line. Her death was either mentioned in a very few words,- fourteen words in one case, thirty words in another,- or the police version was given before the family's. Only four papers headlined Mrs Jarrett's death, for example as follows:- "Police left woman who died on the hallway floor", "Tottenham riot after black women's death", "Mother dies in police raid", "One mother is like all our mothers". One newspaper headlined the death of the policeman and wrote 180 words on him and 25 on Mrs Jarrett, when Mrs Jarrett was mentioned in the same item as PC Blakelock, it was always much further down the page or in another column towards the end of the report in the article. There were three articles in one paper on the issues related to the disturbances, each of them mentioned PC Blakelock but made no mention at all of Mrs Jarrett.

6. Mrs Blakelock, the widow of the murdered policeman, was quoted on numerous occasions, her expression of sympathy for the rioters, her compassion for people who were caught up in that situation. Police colleagues of her husband, were interviewed extensively. There was coverage of her family life and also of the professional life of PC Blakelock as well as his personal life. Many of his colleagues gave testimony about him as a policeman and people in the community were also interviewed. One newspaper carried details of his childhood with photographs of him as a child. Photographs of him which did appear showed him in civilian clothing same very large and on the front page. None of them showed him in uniform. In the publicity surrounding his death following October 6th, there were extensive calls to punish his murderers and to find his murderers.

7. The contrary applies to Mrs Cynthia Jarrett. Only three papers attempted to cover get the story of her death in some detail with have quotes from her family and the family's lawyer. No newspaper had bothered to deal with her life, with her as a person, no reporters have asked for comments by her friends, her family, about the sort of person she was, why she came to this country - all the sort of things that create an empathy with a person. Nowhere is her country of origin mentioned, she was just described as 'coloured', 'black', 'West Indian'. One newspaper described her as 'a 20 stone West Indian divorcee - who apparently died from heart failure'. One newspaper after describing PC Blakelock as 'being brutally stabbed' went on to say 'that Mrs Cynthia Jarrett died of a heart attack. She was grossly over weight and had other medical problems - even so,

⑦

leaders of the West Indian community talk of her being killed. The only comments which would extend the reader's knowledge and draw on their sympathy for Mrs Jarrett were the incidental comments made by Dolly Kiffin, Bernie Grant and another black woman who lived on Broadwater Farm and each of them commented on the fact that she was well known and she was well liked. On October 8th there was less coverage of Mrs Jarrett but increasing coverage of PC Blakelock and his murder and lots of information about his family and his colleagues. One national newspaper set up an appeal fund for PC Blakelock starting it with a £5,000 donation from the newspaper, incidentally the London Fire Brigade has set up a fund also for the Blakelock family.

8. By October 9th Mrs Jarrett death had almost disappeared from the press except for mention of the inquest. Reference was continually being made to PC Blakelock and as details began to emerge on how he died. From reports of the inquest Mrs Jarrett's death was described in terse medical terms by the press, however the account of PC Blakelock's death was given additional sensational coverage by additional descriptions of other policemen 'I have seen the body and you couldn't count the wounds. He was slashed to pieces'.

9. There were no longer any photographs of Mrs Jarrett appearing in the papers but the one picture of PC Blakelock in civilian clothes continued to be shown and he continued to be described as 'a victim'. Continual calls were made through the press for tougher action by the Home Secretary, and Sir Kenneth Newman against rioters, and to find the killers of PC Blakelock. At no



time was a call made for the police to deal with the policemen involved in entering the house of the Jarrett family and pushing over Mrs Jarrett. No one called for suspensions, disciplining or questioning. A few papers mentioned the formal inquiry into Mrs Jarrett's death and appeared content with that. Reports on the following days, weeks, months, set out to justify police action and villify people, black people on Broadwater Farm specifically, particularly those who were leading personalities on the farm.

10. Sir Kenneth Newman is reported as saying 'PC Blakelock - a husband and a father of three children as well as a invaluable home beat officer - was savagely murdered in a knife attack', he went on to add as if it were an after thought 'his loss is every bit as sad as the death of Mrs Jarrett and added to the sadness is an undeniable anger at the unambiguous viciousness of his killing'. One would say that the same thoughtful comments could have been made about Mrs Jarrett and her five children's loss of a mother. What we see in the press is a marginalisation of the death of Mrs Jarrett, in most of the reports there's been an attempt to suggest that she might be responsible for her own death - after all she was overweight, she already had certain medical conditions. Suggestions in some newspaper accounts of the incident surrounding her death was that it was her son coming into the house and having an altercation with the police that led to her collapse - in other words the media is helping British society to wash its hands of the death of Mrs Jarrett and to not take any responsibility for it whatsoever. We have seen that Mrs Jarrett's colour had conferred on her a 'differential status' and



a differential treatment which reveals the extent of racism and sexism which is still prevalent in the British press and which is a reflection of what is going on in the wider society.

### HEADLINES AND PAGE LEADS

"When I use a word", Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean, neither ~~more~~ more nor less". "The question is, said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things". "The question is", said, Humpty Dumpty "which is to be the master."

11. Nine out of the eleven papers on the 7th October 1985 had headlines and page leads refering to the police. "Rioting Mob Shoot Police", "Police Shot In Riot Fury", "Policeman Killed In Riot". The Times had a headline "Police Officer Knifed to Death", and along the top of that report "Tottenham Riot After Black Women's Death". The Morning Star was the only paper which had a main headline "Storm As Woman Dies In Police Raid". They also delve in some detail into what happened at the Jarrett family home, it was the only daily paper who attempted to do that in its first story on the events of the 7th October. Other headlines were "Streets Of Hell" and "Black Youth In Demo".

a differential treatment which reveals the extent of racism and sexism which is still prevalent in the British press and which is a reflection of what is going on in the wider society.

### HEADLINES AND PAGE LEADS

"When I use a word", Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean, neither ~~more~~ more nor less". "The question is, said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things". "The question is", said, Humpty Dumpty "which is to be the master."

11. Nine out of the eleven papers on the 7th October 1985 had headlines and page leads refering to the police. "Rioting Mob Shoot Police", "Police Shot In Riot Fury", "Policeman Killed In Riot". The Times had a headline "Police Officer Knifed to Death", and along the top of that report "Tottenham Riot After Black Women's Death". The Morning Star was the only paper which had a main headline "Storm As Woman Dies In Police Raid". They also delve in some detail into what happened at the Jarrett family home, it was the only daily paper who attempted to do that in its first story on the events of the 7th October. Other headlines were "Streets Of Hell" and "Black Youth In Demo".

12. On the 8th October 1986 the headlines became more virulent related quite clearly to the knowledge of how PC Blakelock had died. Headlines such as "Kill, Kill, Kill" in large letter along side a photograph of PC Blakelock, the story line refers to charges that "crazed left wing extremists trained in Moscow and Libya were behind Britain's worst violence". "Merchants of hate" over a picture of a policeman in a riot helmet, a picture of a petrol bomb and an article by Sir Eldon Griffiths MP. The report was headed "Ambush IRA Style". The opening sentence of the article "They were not out to loot, the Tottenham rioters were out to kill". The article went on to give a count down from 7.15 p.m on the 6th October to 11.30 p.m, from a police view point. A editorial in the Daily Mail headed "The choice for Britain's blacks" and the choice, as pointed out by that paper, was "Either they obey the loyalty of this land where they have taken up residence and accepted both the full rights and responsibilities of citizenship, or they must expect the facist street agitators to call evermore boldly for them to go back from whence they came." Mr Harvey Proctor MP for Billericey and chairman of the Monday club's Immigrants Committee, made his call "for a policy of resettlement of immigrants in advance of the Conservative Conference" which was about to commence the following week he also called "for the existing repatriation scheme under the 1971 immigranton act to be supplemented by a resettlement grant of £4,000 to £4000 or whatever figure would needed to be to upset the growth of the new commonwealth population."

13. Only four newspapers The Financial Times, The Daily Telegraph, The Morning Star and The Guardian, headlined Sir Kenneth Newman's statement on plastic bullets and there were various headlines accompanying that. The Morning Star also headlined "Police left women who died lying on her hallway floor" and reported the London Borough of Haringey's press conference in some detail. In their report "police plastic bullets threat" they quoted Labour Party spokesman. The Daily Telegraph reported extensively Sir Kenneth Newman statement and the Home Secretary's comments.

14. The variety of headlines and page leads in the Sun on the 8th of October were quite illustrative the major headline was "Lazy yobs just live off crime", "its Barmy Bernie on the attack", "Two son accused" these refers to the sons of Mrs Jarrett who were appearing in court. Another headline was "bomb charge" and relates to a student who was granted £2,000 pounds bail. Another headline was "riot was planned weeks ago" and makes reference to, a lady called Mrs Flo Gregory who is described as a leader of 'Broadwater Estate Anti-Crime scheme! A headline. 'The rage of bobbies boss' refers to Les Curtis the chairman of the Police Federation. The headlines were retentive in their hysteria. We to we saw him butchered police fury over the night, "mayhem", "mob of 150 pounced to slice him up", "Lazy Yobs just live off crime." Another headline "I pity the mob" a comment from Mrs Blakelock the widow of PC Blakelock, "A bullet in a PCs stomach". "Bomb in a bottle of Babydam." Then, "my thoughts ranged from hatred to asking, why Keith, why my husband" a quote by Mrs Elizabeth Blakelock. The logo which was us used

throughout all of these reports is that of a policeman with a bleeding face this was actually taken from a report in the Sun of the 1981 riots. That particular addition of The Sun also appealed for the setting up of a fund for PC Blakelock with a by-line 'coppers for a copper'.

15. On the 9th October the papers were well into their stride, the headlines were more varied and the papers were finding their own special angle. The Daily Mail had its headline 'white victims of racial humbug this is a vicious article and full of cant. It expresses pity for "white and asian people living on housing estate monopolised by black youth" "leading a life of wretchedness and persecution". It talks of young white mothers being afraid to shop even in daylight and described how "white men on shift work run from their cars to front doors so frequently kicked in that steel frames have had to be erected around the timber and the locks". They then go on to say "on Broadwater Farm estate there are a few trappings of a normal murder inquiry. The police are still trying to find murderers who kill their colleague, but they are the ones who are being told not to act in an inflammatory manner". The impression given is that the police cannot come on normal police inquiries because of presumably "Black Youth". Other variables in headlines are "Riots - Tories blast men of hate "Rioters storm council to axe police cash".

16. The headlines begin to be more personalised "Riot Jibe Bernie in £45,000 loan row" this refers to the fact that Bernie Grant's sister is part of a co-operative which has benefitted

from a grant from the council. The report suggests that her brother was involved in securing the grant for the co-operative. The Sunday Mirror becomes even more personal - the new slogan is "Barmy Bernie moves in with blond", the focus is now on rooting out Bernie Grant's personal life and that of all his family and his personal friends. Some papers have a hey-day digging the dirt. Others however begin to take stock in a more thoughtful way. The Observer attempts to seek clarity about Bernie Grant as a politician is the article headed "Instinctive activist in the Town Hall". It talks of Bernie Grant's uncompromising approach to politics. In The Financial Times, article "Man in the News" it profiles Bernie Grant under the heading "Town Hall Boss at the Barricades". For the more thinking journalists Bernie Grant is clearly a phenomemon - a black person in a powerful position who will not play the white institutions game of adaptation after achieving leadership. He refuses to wear the establishment hat or to take on establishment patterns of behaviour. To the less thinking journalist of which there are many if the news coverage which we have been monitoring is anything to go by - he provides good copy and will probably provide headlines for years to come because of his particular brand of honesty and unwillingness to compromise. It is interesting however that since he had been returned to power with a much higher vote than previously and with many of his other colleagues in Haringey the media has said very little about him. They may want to hold back on giving him any more publicity because maybe they've given him so much already of such a vic<sup>ary</sup>~~ary~~ kind that, a backlash of decent Black and White people has presented Bernie with a greater political victory and vote than he had preciding. The headlines began to

change during the week of the 16th October, reports came through of police anger at senior officers lack of competence and organisation during the disturbances at the Farm. The Standard, under its headline "How agitators failed", the claim that a roving group of politically motivated agitators is behind the London riots ... can be discounted. The article is mainly about Brixton but deals to some extent with Haringey. The suggestion now is that criminals produced the guns which were used on the night of the disturbances, and which as far as we understand no policeman has yet found.

17. Some of the national press began to direct its attention to Dolly Kiffin under various headlines "Dolly and her dynasty" "The rise and rise of Dolly Kiffin" Dolly's club cash under the spotlight" "Police probe a riot estates' Godmother". A systematic campaign of villification and defamation of Dolly Kiffin was orchestrated and is still being orchestrated. It appears to be intended to discredit her and remove her from her position of trust in the Broadwater Farm Youth Association. It may also be an attempt to destroy the Broadwater Farm Youth Association and the major developments that have taken place on Broadwater Farm which have led to a tremendous the contions in the estate improvement.



## THE PRESS AND THE PICTURES

18. Press cuttings contained 191 pictures including 6 cartoons - all of these were related to the disturbances. The photographers and editors were clearly fascinated by the scenes of policemen looking like Roman soldiers in their helmets with visors and huge shields and small round shields carrying sticks. Of the total number of pictures, 87 had policemen in them, 36 were just of the police at the scene of the disturbances in riot gear, 18 were of PC Blacklock, there were only nine pictures of Mrs Jarrett. There were 13 pictures showing police in hospital, four of these were a repeated picture of a hospitalised policeman with a black policeman. Except for those four pictures it was not possible to know how many black policemen or women there were because of the police being in riot gear. One picture showed a white demonstrator confronting the police outside Tottenham Police Station, others showed two policemen arresting a black man, two black men shouting at two policemen and two policemen arresting a white man. There were a number of pictures showing the police assisting white people off the estate during the disturbances, one of an old woman, with the caption "Frail and frightened". The same picture was used in another newspaper with the a different caption which read "Tottenham Burns - and a bewildered elderly victim is led gently away from the flames of hate". A young white man is shown carrying a child and being helped by a policeman. This picture was also shown in two or three papers. The caption for that was "Young and Innocent - a baby is shielded". There was another picture of a policeman with a

wounded white civilian, the picture of this same white civilian was shown on a stretcher. The caption under the first picture said "Hit - a TV sound man and a policeman hit by shot gun pellets". There was another of a white woman and a child and the caption was "a mother and child escorted to safety by a ambulance man and police officers in riot gear during last night's disturbances". There were two different pictures in different newspapers of young white mothers wheeling babies in prams the day after the troubles, one of the pictures was captioned "a stunned mum pushes her baby through the debris". Others with white people showed them on the 7th October, walking along the streets and around the estate, cleaning the estate. Others pictures showed one Black person in a demonstration with White people against Bernie Grant. This was part of an article headed "A thousand strikers saying Grant must go". There were a few photographs of Princess Diana on her visit to the estate some of them with Dolly Kiffin. The rest related to Bernie Grant and Sharon Lawrence except for the latter the pictures were clearly part of an image of white people fleeing from the farm and the black people who lived on it. Then there was the image of the policeman helping poor old white women, young white women, babies and the white wounded. These were clearly to distract readers from the more war-like and aggressive image and dress and posture of what The Voice magazine characterised as "the soldier in blue". It was a bid for sympathy and support as was the continual harping on the centrality of the death of PC Blakelock to the events of the 6th and 7th of October as against the importance of the death of Mrs Jarrett. One picture showed a demonstration in support of Bernie Grant, although I know this

was a multi-racial demonstration the picture of it in the newspaper showed it as an all black demonstration. The caption read "progrant demonstrators from NALGO outside civic centre yesterday".

19. There were 44 pictures of a black person or black people but 35 of these were of Bernie Grant on his own. Among the many captions under the many pictures that appeared of Bernie Grant were "astonishing attack on police" "No condemnation". "he was blasted as evil". Some of the captions were very terse like for example "attack", "defiant" "blacklist" "under fire", "tightrope", and, amazingly, "a racist". A number of pictures of Dolly Kiffin were beginning to appear, there was a picture also of her son in Jamaica and two of young black men, one in a verbal confrontation and another is the now well known picture of a young black man in dark clothes with white boots carrying a petrol bomb, there was no indication where this came from, it was from a previous disturbance not on Broadwater Farm. The caption underneath that picture read "for the hell of it...riotous youth 1985". Other pictures showed street scenes on the estate the day following the disturbance, a trolley with missiles, a crate of petrol bombs, a picture of the knife which killed PC Blakelock, a number of pictures of petrol bombs, burning cars and the damaged school, shops and the house that was set on fire.

20. The juxtaposition of the pictures and the placing of the appropriate text and headlines together created a vivid, distorted and totally exaggerated picture, calculated to create a negative image of Black people of Broadwater Farm and

particularly of young black people and to present a positive image of the police and White people. The latter if living on or around the farm were present as being in fear of their lives. The view of Broadwater Farm presented by the press was almost totally negative and very destructive. The headlines reinforced this negative image and added to the fearful message.

"A city erupts in fury. Its residents are appalled and outraged.

"Multi-racial committees are appointed and scapegoats appear from everywhere. Instead of wretched housing and stifling unemployment, outside agitators and wily communists are said to be the most important causes. Always the basic reasons are at best minimised and at worst denied. After three centuries of oppression the black man and woman is still thought to need a provocateur to inflame them."

## CONCLUSION

### GENERAL NEWS COVERAGE

"Most white people don't want to believe that black people are really mad. They don't want to believe that so many people are justly aggrieved against them and their institutions. And at it is much easier to look at Stokely Carmichael and other alleged outside agitators".

But talking about outside agitators...is a way of not taking them seriously, of not giving them their full stature as men. And in order to stop the riots Americans are going to have to look not only at Stokely Carmichael but at their most cherished institutions - they are going to have to admit that black people are rebelling because they are men. One might also add here -women and because they live in a society which denies that they are men and (women)." By Lerone Bennett junior, from an article in Ebony titled 'How to stop riots' October 1967."

21. The ethos of the press in its dealing with the Broadwater Farm disturbances is characterised by the ideological trappings of the rightness of whiteness, the right to rule, the right to say what it wishes about the people who live on the estate, particularly about those who are black and those who support the changes and developments on the Broadwater Farm estate. Except for the black press and one or two thoughtful items from some national papers reporting of the events of the 6th and 7th October was totally negative and unconstructive in its presentation particularly of the roles of black people. The only exception was a headline "Brave Black constable who saved PCs life", and this covered a story about a black constable who protected a white colleague when he was injured and lying on the ground. Otherwise we find that Dolly Kiffin and Bernie Grant in particular and members of Mrs Jarrett's family have been presented as being irresponsible, and troublemakers. As a group Black youths have been presented as being out of control and this was marked by one headline "mobs of mainly black youths" This

was part of a description of the disturbances on the farm. Even the evidence of the family was put in doubt when printed so that in The Daily Telegraph report about the death of Mrs Jarrett the evidence of Cynthia Jarrett was presented as "she claimed that one of the policemen pushed her mother and caused her to fall". Whereas a Scotland Yard spokesman in the same item "was shown to have said Mrs Jarrett was initially very co-operative." The Scotland Yard spokesman's statement is presented as fact where there is some doubt about the statement by Cynthia Jarrett who was actually present at the event. It is unlikely that the Scotland Yard spokesman was. The comment that we were most struck, which, was by the Jarrett family in relation to the incident at their home, they said that the police "showed no respect for their mother, they ignored her". This comment is a reflection also of what happens in wider society, which is that, in general White people have no respect for Black people and as far as possible ignore them. Bernie Grant was wrongly described as Haringey's black mayor in The Guardian of the 7th and 10th 1986. And John Akass in The Express said "it might well be necessary to say that an evil alliance between Jamaica and the terraces of Tottenham united by the light and carefree use of violence is not the kind of multi-racialism to which we ought, properly to aspire." The Mail writes "It isn't England any more.

~~Q.~~ Not to the white residents who want to move out. Not to the Asian shop-keepers who are moving out". This reference, of course is to Broadwater Farm. So, who is left this must be the African/Caribbean community, who it is suggested are taking over,



and who, it is further suggested are not capable of taking over or being in charge of anything. A further report in The Daily Mail of the same day was of Barbara who is described as a white resident of Broadwater Farm. She is reported as saying "that the police told her that she could not return to the farm on 6th October and that they told her if you are white you are dead". The article goes on to say "Barbara is used to abuse, 'white slag, white bitch', the black youths often shout when she goes shopping". The Daily Mail has given many graphic accounts of life on Broadwater Farm as has The Mail On Sunday. They particularly detail the rape of a white woman who was seven months pregnant by four black men. And another white woman victim of mugging and also breaking and entering by a black youth. This was also part of the package that was presented about life on the farm during the period that The Mail was reporting the disturbances on the farm. The Black youth one singled out by inference or directly for scurrilous attacks. We are told in reports that not only do the white population of Broadwater Farm leave their homes in trepidation, the old blacks concede that they have lost control of their youths. The Mirror editorial headed "vicious and inevitable" also attacks black youths and ends with a call "for the sake of all decent, law abiding people - the vast majority of their leaders have got to take control of their own communities. Especially the young". The article called Mrs Cynthia Jarrett 'Patricia' and clearly placed responsibility for the disturbances at the door of the black community. Only one newspaper attempted to give the youth a chance to talk for themselves and this was in a short report by Rizu Hamid in The Guardian of the 8th October 1986. The article



23

headed "Youths fear protest will not be heeded", made some interesting reading. "Its a shame that someone had to die during the protests but I'm telling you its more of a pity that it was a policeman because now they are going to put all the blame on us and say that we are criminals" said one black man early yesterday. "They think we just riot for the sake of it, as if we like to see our own areas being burnt up" said another young man. But we've got a reason. They near enough killed a black woman in Brixton, now another innocent woman is dead - it wouldn't be so bad if it was one of us or someone who was guilty that got injured". Rizu Hamid also went on to say that one Rastafarian accused white journalists of not talking to young blacks. It was the same reporter who quoted an Asian bus driver as saying "If I was their age and hadn't had a job since I left school and was called a Paki and a black bastard on top of that by the police, I probably would react in the same way". This was a particularly interesting comment as the press were suggesting that Asians on the estate were harassed by black youth and that there was no sympathy or relationship between Afro/Caribbean people and members of the Asian community who lived in or around the estate. The press failed to mention, for example that there are a number of Asian workers on the estate working full time and who have continued to work there.

23. The negative portrayal of relationships between black and white people on the estate was particularly damaging. The impression gained through all the reports was that there was NO positive relationship at all. There was no mention of the excellent meal service for the mainly white elderly and other

(2.2)

activities which white people attended at the Broadwater FarmYouth Association building and in other places in and around the farm. There was nothing said of how the campaigns to improve the estate which were spearhead by the Tenants Association and the Broadwater Farm Youth Association had created initially a great deal of work which had mainly benefitted White people. It had meant more White cleaners, caretakers, repair workers, and staff at the Housing Office. The press did not mention either that a great many of the people who are working on the estate in the various services on a day to day basis, some of whom also live there are White and have in their interviews with us, said that in their relationships with Black people are not significantly different from their relationships with other White people. Nothing was said about the fact that many of the families on the farm are inter-racial or are living in multi-racial households single people particularly, male and female. The press set out to emphasize contrasts and divisions and exacerbated these by the way in which they reported them. So we have the picture of "a Methodist minister the very Reverend John Wheaton, who sheltered his 50 strong congregation in the church during the rioting". Low down the column in the same article "black vigilantes last night warned the police 'stay away - or more of you will die'". In another part of the same paper, The Sun, of 9th October 1986, an unnamed Labour councillor is reported to have said "Bernie Grant is like the leader of a black tribe - always looking for battles and shaking his spear. He sees all Whites as his enemies". The same paper did not return

for a quote to the unnamed councillor, when it reported about "Barmy Bernie and his new woman", later in a report on Councillor Grant's relationship with Sharon Lawrence a white woman.

24. That the press treats race relations issues and the presence of black and minority ethnic people as a problem, and sees them creating conflict situations has been born out by the research of Paul Hartman and Charles Husband in their well researched book "Racism and the Mass Media". Their research was reaffirmed in the 1981 Commission For Racial Equality report "Public Awareness and the Media - a study of reporting on Race". It would seem that when disturbances of the kind seen on Broadwater Farm occur, it is as if a nightmare has come true, particularly, as in this case the police were unable to agree/take control of what were perceived as being Black rioters with a few Whites involved (although at no time has a white person been interviewed who supported <sup>the</sup> so called the Black rioters) Since the disturbances the response of the press is for plastic bullets, more police, more arms, more punishment and more legislation for support of the police, particularly to deal with rioters or to expel immigrants. Nowhere was a call made for a more effective race relations act or for less racism or for more equal opportunities.

25. The press coverage of the disturbances at Broadwater Farm and its follow up reporting, which has been characterised by omissions of what ~~has~~ happened to the people on the farm since the disturbances, leaves us in no doubt that most of the press is guilty of inciting racial hatred and possibly further racial conflict. The divisions between black people and white people

were already created way back in our history "In spite of the decolonisation, the beliefs and imagery of white superiority are still common currency in Britain and represent a widespread tendency to accept the relatively disadvantaged position of black people as natural and even necessary". These divisions are reaffirmed daily in the press, on radio and television, so it not surprising that in a BBC London Plus programme survey in October, "Most white people in London think the police are too soft with troublemakers. They want the police to use tear gas and plastic bullets." On the other hand a quarter of black people supported the riots, and 61% of black people opposed the use of plastic bullets. At the same period a survey of 633 West Indians showed that 30% thought that black people had been rejected by white people and almost half of them forecast worsening race relation. In spite of all this information the mass media continues its racist reporting, stereotyping, its distortions and its jingoism. Dudley Trainer's Troyners research in "Public Awareness and The Media", states "a large proportion of the white majority rely almost exclusively on the media for information on the size and nature of the black community, and for details of the relations between those communities and there white counterparts. Indeed even where white people live (and work) in close proximity to blacks, interaction between them may be limited. In these situations the media may once again be regarded as an important source of information and interpretation about race relations".

27

25. Black organisations, who over the past few years have been able to receive for the first time grant aid from central and local government which enables them to deal with many of their community problems are now being held up as irresponsible and untrustworthy, there is talk of "unscrupulous local leaders" receiving grants and stirring up racial hatred and riot. the suggestion being that the organisations who receive the money allow their leaders to pocket it or to do what they like with it. Individuals, characters have been defamed and the public, having no other source of information but the press accepts the information given by the press about particular people. In one article, Dolly Kiffin was described as "just an ordinary West Indian mother with her own talents but without the intellectual capacity to run a high profile political campaign. They say she is being manipulated by the far left." So we are faced with another stereotype and that is of the black person who is not really as clever and as able as they seem to be. If a black person shows the immense ability, commitment and toughness that someone like Dolly Kiffin has done then there must be someone manipulating her because afterall according to the stereotype black people do not have such ability, they are not trustworthy, they are not honest and they haven't got a very able intellectual capacity.

26. The image of the black person in the mass media and even in childrens literature as remained almost static, there have been some slight changes in the stereotype but certain classic elements continue and are reiterated. In fact very little has changed since 1735 when Linnaeus in his book about the diversity

233

of mankind divided homo-sapiens into five groups. The African was on the lowest rung of the ladder of that grouping and was described by him as "black, phlegmatic, relaxed. Hair black, frizzled, skin silky, nose flat, lips tumid. Crafty, indolent, negligent. Anoints himself with grease. Governed by caprice".

27. We often forget how long we have had a public press and around the same time that Linnaeus and many others were writing on the diverse races of mankind the press was getting under way and negative reporting of black people was also part and parcel of the general day to day reporting - so it has a long history. For example, in complaining of the number of negro servants coming into Britain, the Gentlemen's magazine of 1764 said "The main objections to their importation is, that they cease to consider themselves as slaves in this free country, nor will they put up with an inequality of treatment, nor more willingly perform the laborious offices of servitude than our own people. If put to it they are generally sullen, spiteful, treacherous and revengeful. And the Morning Post of December 1786 another newspaper of the period, reports how an MP "intends to bring in a bill to prevent blacks from being brought into the kingdom. There is such a law in France and a very excellent one it is. When so many of our young men and women are out of employment, and, literally speaking, are starving in the streets, it is abominable that aliens, and more particularly black aliens, should be suffered to eat the bread of idleness in Gentle houses". We have to say sadly that nothing appears to have changed.



28. The press has shown a lack of integrity and responsibility in its coverage of the events relating to Broadwater Farm on October 6th and 7th. Our report will show in detail much of what was happening during and since the disturbances and this is information which the press could have obtained quite easily if it had bothered to make the effort to do so. In fact when the press chooses to campaign on social issues and carry out major investigations into areas of social concern it is second to none in its ability to ferret out information and to bring about change. We remain confident that the press can play an active positive and critical role in improving race relations and community relations and we would not wish to take away from it the right to and the freedom to express itself about areas of concern. We believe it should do so with responsibility and with regard to the major influence it had for change for better or for worse. We would ask the press that it looks to its very substantial powers to change the face of racism and social deprivation in this country. To be concerned only with news value and therefore popular sales, suggests that the press are concerned only about profit and not people. We are concerned not only with the adults of today but with the adults of tomorrow. We have heard horrific stories of black childrens fears of policemen, since their homes have been raided by the police. Of childrens fears of bombfires and fireworks since the night of the 6th and the 7th October. We fear for those children and for the many others that are at a very young age read parts of the press, watch television, and listen to radio. There has been major research done which shows "when characters belonging to minority groups are presented in a favourable light the attitudes



of readers moved in a positive direction, however when characters belonging to minority groups were presented in an unfavourable light attitudes of readers moved in a negative direction... The research shows, the more attractive and desirable the models, the greater the likelihood that the reader will be able to identify with them personally and therefore feel positively towards those characters". All children are being presented with negative images of black people through the press, and those images teach a black child to undervalue itself and to be ashamed. The same images teach a white child the superior values of whiteness and the negative values of blackness. Sara Goodman Zimet in her book "Print and Prejudice" says "Through the mass media, journalists, politicians, marketing specialists and propaganda purveyors have successfully exploited the power of words to move adults to buy products and ideas". We believe that the ordinary white British person would buy the idea of racial justice and of equal opportunities if they are properly explained and not negatively sensationalized.

29. We would recommend that the NUJ guidelines and the NUJ/NGA agreement be rigorously enforced and be a disciplinary matter in those unions. The Press Council also needs to take a firmer line on how press deal with issues and how Black and Minority ethnic people and women are treated in the press. The unions and the Press Council should be monitoring press coverage of sensitive issues or major public disturbances, And journalists themselves should be monitoring their own work and their own attitudes.

Dorothy Kunga