

governors. This aspect of the new law gives to parents the opportunity to play a much more dominant role in the management of their children's schools. The experience of Broadwater Farm people in participating in the institutions which regulate their lives should enable them to make the most of this opportunity. The Inquiry is particularly concerned that there should be a strong component of Black and ethnic minority governors in the schools which teach Black and ethnic minority children. Both the Council and organisations in the community have a role to play in encouraging all participation by Black parents on boards of governors, so that the curriculum, facilities and management of the schools can truly reflect the needs of all children who attend them.

CHAPTER 10

THE CORNERSTONES OF POLICY

10.1 For nearly three years the Inquiry team has followed the fortunes of Broadwater Farm. We have come to respect its people, to understand the causes of their grievances, and to recognise the spirit of determination and self help in which they are trying to overcome their problems. Their determination must be matched with policies by the different branches of central and local government, which effectively tackle the grievances. In late 1987 the Government produced a glossy document entitled "Action for Cities". The document was more impressive for its packaging than for its policy content. It scarcely touched on the themes which the Inquiry in its two stages has identified as being central if conditions of life in inner city estates like Broadwater Farm are to be improved, and if the alienation, bitterness and desperation which are the fuel of riot situations are to be ended. The four themes which the Inquiry has identified as the cornerstones of policy are:-

- justice from the law.
- equal treatment for all, especially those who have suffered historic discrimination.
- investment in people, through education, jobs and facilities.
- democratic participation by people in the decisions which affect their lives.

Justice

10.2 It is generally acknowledged that respect for the law and institutions such as the police and the courts is one of the foundations of a healthy society. But respect for the law is a two way process. If the agencies of the law show no respect for the citizen, it is hardly reasonable to expect the citizen to respect the law. A considerable part of both of the Inquiry's reports has been concerned with this theme of justice. In its first report the Inquiry showed how the arm of the law on the streets had abused its power over many years, and had failed to show the respect that was due to Black people. Since that report was published there has been signs of improvement which are recorded in chapter 2. But still there are no grounds for complacency. For example, shortly before the second report was completed there was a press report of a disgraceful incident in which a group of Black Seventh Day Adventists, a most respected and law abiding element in the Black community, were racially abused by police officers in Tottenham High Road. Bernie Grant MP happened to be passing and intervened, and was himself treated with serious disrespect. An incident such as this is a reminder that police officers with overtly racist attitudes continue in the Metropolitan Police.

10.3 As stated at length in the Inquiry's first report, such behaviour, as unprofessional as it is pernicious, can only be eradicated by a sustained effort by the police leadership over years who through the publicising of anti racist policies and the disciplining of those who offend. Furthermore, there needs to be an elected police authority to which the Metropolitan Police would be accountable.

10.4 The other principal arm of the law is the system of criminal justice. The Inquiry's second report has revealed major shortcomings which have caused serious injustice and suffering. So long as these are not remedied, people will rightly remain cynical about the claim of those in authority that our society is governed by the rule of law. In particular, if individuals remain in prison who are reasonably believed to be innocent, their families, friends and community will campaign unceasingly for justice, and their campaign should be supported. Society ignores their voices at its peril.

Equality

10.5 The factor of racism has been a running theme throughout the two reports. The Inquiry has described how discriminatory attitudes and policies have affected policing, education, employment prospects, housing allocation, and media reporting. All of British society is implicated in the chain of consequences which results in tragedies such as the death of Mrs Jarrett and of PC Blakelock. Because of the centuries old assumption of white superiority, expressed most rabidly through slavery and colonial repression, fostered still in school books, in the media, in the expressed prejudices of parents to their children, and in the utterances of many political figures, racism remains a day to day fact of life in Britain. Black people wake up every morning wondering how much their colour will be used against them on that day and how they will be able to cope with it. Britain cannot be seen as a green and pleasant land until Black people have the same freedom to participate in British society at all levels as White people have.

10.6 The other major equality issue concerns the place of women as equal members of society. The squeeze on public services brings particular and direct suffering to women. If society refuses to extend child care facilities to women who need them, women will be unable to even enter the job market, let alone compete in it with men on equal terms of opportunity and training. The Inquiry's first report had shown how Broadwater Farm people have identified some of the needs of women, but their scale far outstrips the small resources which have been made available.

Investment

10.7 The Inquiry has urged that in many areas, especially child care, education, housing and job creation, there is a need for the resources which are at the disposal of Government to be invested. This is not a question of handouts to the "under privileged" but rather the sensible use of funds to enable all the people of our country to grow, to become qualified, to fulfil themselves, and to contribute as they would wish to the common weal. Thus investment in child care would promote the development of children and releases women to study or to work; invest-

ment in education allows the talents of young people to be fruitful rather than to waste.

10.8 The Government's major policy towards job creation and the development of the economy has been to allow the market mechanism in labour and goods to act as the major source of distribution and regeneration. The national effect of this policy has been to provide a movement of wealth and job generation to those areas where there is already considerable wealth and where there was a lack of unemployment. Thus there has been investment, but it has been done in a way which leads to great inequality. For example, the development of new technology industries in the Thames Valley demonstrates how new industry, if left to itself, clusters together; while very little new industry has developed in areas like Broadwater Farm, where there is a skills gap and a lack of existing development. Whatever view is taken of the government's free market policy as a whole, it must be apparent that public investment in people, their education and their jobs is also necessary if gross divisions in society are not to be widened — divisions which are all the more dangerous because of the race inequalities mentioned above.

Democracy

10.9 British public life is founded on the democratic principle that if you do not agree with the people who govern, you have the right to speak out freely against them, to organise peacefully to change their mind, and finally to vote them out of office. It is a principle that ought to govern the relationship between powerful institutions and people at all levels. The Inquiry's reports have shown that the Broadwater Farm story is a success story in democratic participation. People on the Estate, who were rightly disgusted at its condition, spoke out and organised, and persuaded the local authority to change its policies. They insisted on real consultation and participation in the decisions which would affect them. The Inquiry's reports have described the positive results in terms of increased security, facilities, jobs and artistic creation on the Estate.

10.10 It is now necessary for all concerned with Broadwater Farm and similar estates to reaffirm their belief in democratic participation. It is fanciful to suppose that private ownership or private investment could, even if there were willing investors,

significantly resolve the needs which the Inquiry has identified. But a democratic combination of local government and grass roots enterprise has proved capable, and can do so in future, provided its value can be recognised through public support and investment. Democracy needs both to be recognised by those in authority and practised by those on the ground. Indeed, the more disregard that is shown by the authorities at the top, the more important it is that those at the bottom should organise in a democratic way.