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Patterns of racism: interviews with National Front members

We publish here an extract adapted from Michael Billig's forthcoming book, Fascists: a social psychological view of the National Front (Academic Press, Autumn 1978). This analysis is taken from a larger section, based on in-depth interviews with eleven NF members, all of whom were activists, nine having either held official positions in their local branches or stood as official election candidates. This is not claimed to be a representative sample; the indications suggest a bias towards the 'moderate' element.

The National Front is an openly racist party; its journal *Spearhead* proclaims: 'we are proud racials and we say so'. [1] The party's ideology is constructed from racist presuppositions. (According to one interviewee, D, 75 per cent of members joined because of the immigration issue.) Therefore, when examining the beliefs of the ordinary National Front member, it is necessary to enquire what meaning is given to the concept of 'race'.

In the first place it can be accepted that 'race' is 'a term which is borrowed from biology ... Race is a biological concept which helps us to bring order out of the otherwise meaningless range of human variation'. [2] Although the term has passed into everyday discourse, 'race' has not lost its biological origins. Non-specialists have implicit theories of race; it could be said that by using the concept to explain human affairs, the non-specialist becomes an amateur biologist. In this way an investigation of the contemporary meaning of 'race' involves looking at the naive theories of biology used by non-specialists.

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SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND RACE

Unfortunately this aspect of racial prejudice has been ignored by the bulk of social psychological research into racial attitudes. Instead racialism is often subsumed under the general heading of 'prejudice' and consequently is treated as an example of a more general phenomenon. This is reinforced by the tendency to define prejudice in terms of hostility. For instance, a recent and typical definition describes prejudice as 'interpersonal hostility which is directed against individuals based on their membership in a minority group'. [3] Leaving aside the 'minority' aspect of this definition, which could exclude white supporters of *apartheid* in South Africa, one can note that the emphasis is upon the individual and the hostility he is presumed to feel against others. Similarly, Rose, in his survey of attitudes in Britain, defined prejudice in terms of hostility, adding that the hostility derives from 'processes within the bearer of the hostile attitude'. [4] Again the implication is that racialism is a matter of individual hostility.

In the history of social psychology two of the principal methods used for measuring prejudiced attitudes have been questionnaires of social distance and stereotypes. The Social Distance Scale was designed to measure the degree of intimacy to which subjects would allow a member of another group. Stereotype research has examined the adjectives, or traits, which subjects associate with particular social groups. [5]

These two lines of research suggest that the prejudiced individual will use unfavourable descriptions of outgroups and will personally keep his distance, unless it is to act in a directly hostile manner to a member of the outgroup. A number of the interviewees' comments conformed to this conception of prejudice. For instance, all firmly rejected the notion of intermarriage between blacks and whites, advocating a measure of social distance between races. K, a young van driver, was typical when he declared, 'I wouldn't like my family, or anything to do with me, to marry a black person, because I'm totally against racial mixing.' According to H, 'you can't mix oil and water — they just don't mix'. When asked about intermarriage A declared, 'Absolutely not, absolutely not. Mixed marriages are just not on as far as I'm concerned.' None expressed any equivocation on the subject.

Whilst all rejected blacks with respect to the most intimate of social relations, a variety of reactions was shown with regard to less intimate relations. All the interviewees were at pains to present their views as being reasonable rather than as prejudiced bigotry. The upshot is that a number of the interviewees claimed to have normal social contacts with blacks. It is true that A and H showed reserve on this issue: A said, 'I'm a racist, yes. But at the same time I don't

believe because I don't like a man, I should go and push him around ... If I don't like a man and choose not to talk to him, then OK I just won't talk to him.'

However others were not so exclusive on a personal level. P, a shop steward at work, said that he would strive as hard for blacks as for whites: 'I'll fight for them coloured fellows when something's happened to them or they've got trouble, I'll fight for them as well. I'll fight for any bloke while he's here, while he's placed with me and I'm shop steward. I'll fight for that man's rights irrespective of what colour he is.' K, also a shop steward, claimed that blacks had voted for him, despite knowing his political convictions: 'politics doesn't come into it as long as they can see that I'm doing a job for them and protecting their livelihood'. Like a number of the other interviewees, K claimed to get on well with blacks on a personal level. He played football with blacks and would drink with them after the game: 'They're a good bunch of lads, they really are ... They're friends, whether they're black or white. But they'd be the first back home, just to show that I'm National Front and I do believe in repatriation.' T likewise claimed no personal animosity and said that he had upset his neighbours by inviting an Asian friend home.

This seems to be a real-life example of the old Jewish joke about the gentile who disclaims anti-semitism because 'some of my best friends are Jewish'. The traditional social psychological picture cannot explain the joke. The prejudiced person is assumed to stereotype all members of the group against which he feels hostility (stereotype research) and to keep his distance from individual members of that group (social distance research). From this it follows that the man who has black or Jewish 'best friends' cannot possibly be prejudiced. Perhaps it is no surprise that a social psychologist has recently in print objected to the 'unfairness' of the joke.[6] Certainly the traditions of the discipline do not equip one to understand the bitter irony of the joke.

This is because racism or anti-semitism is interpreted in terms of prejudice, which in turn is interpreted in terms of interpersonal hostility. Racism and anti-semitism as theories or ideologies become correspondingly neglected. In fact, the National Front officially advocates 'racialism' as a theory, not as interpersonal hostility — see, for instance, the distinction in *Spearhead* (92) between anti-semitism as an emotion and anti-semitism as a doctrine. Similarly, *Britain First* (41) tries to make a distinction between 'racialism' as recognition of racial differences and 'racism' which is defined accordingly as 'an irrational animosity towards other races'. With this in mind it becomes entirely understandable that individuals might express their prejudices theoretically rather than personally. Hence the joke's irony; it is based upon the knowledge that personal friendship is no guarantee that myths arising from the culture of prejudice are not

being entertained. Furthermore, the joke asserts that those who believe that personal friendship is the total refutation of the charge of prejudice only fool themselves.

Given this, a proper study of racist attitudes should concentrate upon the current mythology of race. Here, despite literally thousands of empirical studies of 'racial attitudes', social psychology seriously disappoints. There seems to have been virtually no systematic examination of racial attitudes *qua* racial attitudes. The traditional methodologies were not devised to measure racial attitudes specifically. Racial attitudes are typically measured by substituting the word 'negro' or 'black' for 'American', 'French' or 'homosexual', or whatever; even fictitious names will do, as was shown in one classic experiment.[7] Racialism is inferred to occur if the stimulus words 'black' or 'negro' are rated by white subjects more unfavourably than are white outgroup stimulus words.

In this way 'racialism' is treated as being merely one form of ethnocentrism; if it is distinguished from other forms it is by intensity not quality (for instance, that white Americans would be less willing to marry a black than they would a Scotsman). The topology of bigotry is flattened and the particularities of racism are ignored. An understanding of the role racism has played in modern society and the hold it continues to exert cannot be achieved by refusing to look directly at the meaning of 'race' itself.

If the above argument is valid, then it implies that social psychology, which has claimed to have studied race prejudice extensively, has in fact ignored the most central feature of racialism, namely the meaning of race to the racialist. One might speculate why this should be the case.

It is possible that a detailed examination of the meaning of race in this context might seriously conflict with social psychology's self-image of itself as a science. In this self-image science is equated with rationalism, as distinct from prejudice and irrationalism. Study after study of racial attitudes has confirmed this self-image by correlating bigotry with lack of education. Examination of the social origins of racialist bigotry, however, would reveal that for the past three hundred years western science has been a consistent source of racist mythology.[8] Moreover, psychology, although primarily a discipline of the twentieth century, has not been slow to incorporate the mythology of nineteenth-century scientific racism. This again tends to be neglected in the discipline's self-image. Few textbooks today, while celebrating the memory of the discipline's great men such as Galton, Macdougall, Yerkes, etc., mention their consistent racism and, most importantly that such racism was based on their psychologies. It is left to a few heretics to present the discipline's history in a way which invalidates the assumption of an opposition between science and prejudice.[9] Nor is this merely a historical problem; it is

also necessary to examine the extent to which the contemporary ideas of Jensen, Eysenck, etc. have been diffused into the popular consciousness.

What is clear is that if a psychologist were to discover that racist psychology has permeated the thinking of ordinary racials, then it becomes difficult to champion the discipline unequivocally. It is easier to settle for the untruth that one's trade has been and always will be a force of enlightenment and that bigotry is the exclusive property of the uneducated and the poor.

RACIALISM AS MYTHOLOGY

One superficial difference between official NF ideology and the views of several of the interviewees can be mentioned first. B, K and T all denied being racialist. T said, 'I'm not a racialist. I would probably accept the term "race preservationist", but not a racialist.' The denial of the term 'racialist' was not accompanied by an ignorance of the official ideology, since all three adhered to a conspiracy theory of immigration.[10] Rather, it seems that an attempt was being made to distinguish between race theories and sentiments; all three definitely attached great importance to racial categories in their interpretation of global politics. For them, but not for the other interviewees, this was not sufficient to merit the title 'racialist', which they seemed to associate with personal hatred and brutality. Because such associations are ordinarily affixed to the term 'racialism', the NF faces an uphill battle if it wishes to promote 'racialism' as a theory — even its own supporters are shy of the term 'racialism'.

The NF policy to repatriate all black immigrants and their descendants who came to Britain after the 1948 Nationality Act does not of itself imply that blacks by definition cannot be British. It would still be logically possible for a long-settled black person to be British according to this policy. The question is whether the interviewees saw the categories of British and black as being mutually exclusive. Both T and P allowed the possibility of black Britons; T even went as far as allowing the possibility of black members of the National Front, but this was not mentioned by any other respondent. According to P, if one's grandparent's parents were born in Britain then this entitled a person to be British regardless of racial origin.

For the others racial characteristics were all important and led to the conclusion that blacks cannot be British. In A's opinion blacks must accept 'the heritage of their ancestors' country, be it grandfather, great-grandfather or whatever'. Similarly C asserted: 'If a negro is born in this country, he's not English he's West Indian.' This distinction did not apply to white immigrants to Britain (although T,

with his separation of citizenship from colour, said he would deport all post-1948 immigrants regardless of colour). The reasons for distinguishing citizenship on the basis of colour were not always in themselves racial, at least at first glance. For instance, R tried to justify the distinction on the grounds of cultural differences; he claimed that white immigrants were assimilable because their life-style was like that of the British. K advanced a similar argument about the ease with which Poles could be assimilated into British culture as opposed to black immigrants. C, despite several equivocations on the issue, mentioned a friend, a second-generation Pole, who C thought of as an English patriot: 'to all intents and purposes he's British through and through'. He was unsure whether his friend would be allowed to join the NF, thereby admitting the possibility that his own criteria of Britishness might not be quite in accord with official party policy. Moreover, he did not seem unduly perturbed that his friend might be excluded from the party — no doubt he would consider himself unprejudiced because some of his best friends were Polish.

The argument that a distinction between whites and blacks can be made on the basis of cultural similarities and dissimilarities seems a tenuous one, especially since most West Indian immigrants, as the respondents were well aware, are English-speaking Christians. The argument has a stronger appeal if the distinction between heredity and environment is blurred, or if it is assumed that cultural differences are ultimately derivable from racial differences. The latter perspective was adopted by J, who asserted that religions and cultures cannot mix, 'never in a million years, never mind two thousand years'. Acknowledging that Britain's early history had been one of cultural mixture ('the Danes and all this lot from the past'), he said that this had been possible because 'we are the same race, the only difference being the language barrier. The race is the same.' Comments by H showed that assumptions about the primacy of race need not be thought antithetical to theories of cultural differences. He maintained that the outlook of blacks 'is totally different'. When asked how much this was due to cultural differences, H replied: 'All of it, obviously.' And yet the criterion was racial. Blacks could not be assimilated because they 'stick out like a sore thumb'. The British, according to H, were a white race: 'You've got Angles, Jutes, Saxons, Celts and the lot... but we are white... so the mere fact that someone has lived in a place doesn't make them a British person or an Englishman.'

RACIALISM AS SCIENCE

It would be easy to dismiss the confusion between culture and

heredity as simply ignorance of scientific theory. But the ideological consequences of such confusion, as well as their conceptual sources, need to be examined in order to explore the theories of racial differences upheld by these middle-range ideologues of the NF. Their views are not just on the level of folklore emanating from a pre-scientific age, such as Banton, for instance, found. He recounts that in the 1950s there were still British people who believed that blacks had tails and were surprised to hear West Indians speak English:

When West Indians were first employed as bus conductors there were passengers who grabbed them and shouted to the rest of the bus that their hands were warm, passengers who would try to see if the blackness would rub off and others who would put their hands on the black man's hair for luck.[11]

It is possible that some of the older interviewees might once have entertained such myths, and it is even more probable that their parents did. Nevertheless, there was no indication of such myths in the interviews. In fact it would appear that a few years of familiarity with black people in Britain have been sufficient to eradicate these fantastic prejudices, or at least relegate them to the realm of jokes, metaphors and unconscious fantasies. Their place has been taken by a more scientifically-based form of racism. 'Scientifically-based' does not in any way imply 'reality-based' — the history of science is littered with erroneous detritus, especially in the field of race — but only that scientific authority is, or could be, cited to support the beliefs.

One example is the common belief of the interviewees that whites are, on average, more intelligent than blacks. This is constantly stressed in NF propaganda, buttressed by endless quotations from Jensen, Eysenck, Shockley, etc. The interviewees assumed that the belief was factually correct. For instance, C asserted that 'as a matter of fact the white man is superior'. B, whose general style of argument was to stress the factual and hence reasonable nature of NF policies, asserted that the facts of history showed that the white race has attained 'a level which now reflects itself higher than those civilizations which the coloured people enjoy', adding that: 'I'm compelled to observe from the facts, not necessarily from my innermost thoughts or fancies.' Two of the respondents specifically mentioned investigations into IQ scores, purporting to show a difference between blacks and whites, as back-up arguments to their general point, but expressed doubts about giving too much weight to such results. For instance, D mentioned that IQ scores are not very accurate and H agreed that, 'you can't prove that sort of thing'. However, the results lent confidence to the general proposition; as H said: 'you can only produce alleged facts or results and ... this has been born out to be

true'. The conclusion H drew was that 'the negro-type are in many ways inferior to the average white ... They've got more than their fair share of the nits, if you like, the slow-witted guys.'

In one aspect the older theories of race differ from the modern psychological theories of the hereditarians; the modern theories are essentially statistical and they refer to average differences, rather than implying that there is a systematic difference between every white and every black. This is reflected in the views of the interviewees. H specifically mentioned that exceptions are possible, giving the lie to the notion that racialists must think in dogmatic stereotypes; in his view there were some blacks with first-class minds, as well as 'some right dumb whites knocking about ... It's one of those things you can't generalise too smartly about.' Similarly, P thought that three-quarters of blacks were not as intelligent as whites, but there were 'that few that are educated'.

Such views are to be expected, not because of the IQ findings, but because educated blacks have become evident in Britain in the last twenty or so years. It becomes hard for a man with limited education to maintain a view of utter differentiation between races if he knows that there is a strong possibility of being treated by a black doctor. Such sentiments become hard to reconcile with the official policy of repatriating all blacks (except those few who lived in Britain before 1948), unless a very rigid theory of race is believed. Certainly several of the interviewees expressed doubts about the official policy on this score.

The racist's recognition that there are educated and intelligent blacks has implications for his more general theories of racial differences. If once in racial mythology the black man was a primitive beast, hardly human and maybe even possessing a tail, then the mythology has itself evolved. This evolution can be seen as paralleling the contemporary racist's perception of the evolution of the black man. The recognition that there are intelligent blacks need not necessarily negate the previous mythology; it might imply improvement from the primitive state. In this way the contemporary racist need not disown past mythology.

The interviewees allowed for the possibility of black improvement; far from seeing this as a negation of their theories of racial differences, they returned to the biological origins of the concept of 'race'. The possibility of progress was interpreted in terms of the evolution of racial differences. The presupposition of the interviewees was that the alleged differences between blacks and whites, especially in intelligence, had not arisen by chance, but were the product of evolutionary processes. According to C's theory, whites living in the cold north-east of Europe 'had to very quickly develop a reasonable mentality' in order to clothe and heat themselves. On the other hand, the black man lived in Africa in very different climatic conditions. In

C's genealogy blacks only needed to develop their physical powers and 'never had the necessity to form any kind of culture'.

Taken at face value such a belief should imply that blacks are not capable of improvement, their limitations having been established by the processes of evolution. However, this was not generally true of the interviewees. According to C, blacks were a 'developing people' and, he added significantly, were 'gradually evolving'. P thought that in time the blacks might eventually catch up with whites, and R was prepared to date the difference between the races: in his opinion the blacks were three or four hundred years behind the whites. Where once the imperial British attitude might have been that Africans were biologically incapable of governing themselves in a civilized manner, the justification for continuing British rule in the latter stages of the Empire was that the colonies were being educated towards self-government. Whilst none of the interviewees thought that independence should have been withheld from the former colonies, they were generally of the opinion that most of the 'new' Commonwealth was better governed under colonial rule. Education thus had occurred, but was still held to be incomplete.

It was when the interviewees started discussing in detail their concept of black progress that they departed from the perspectives of contemporary science. Whereas most contemporary scientific racists recognize a balance between heredity and environment, albeit heavily weighted in favour of the former, there was a tendency amongst those interviewed to collapse the distinction between heredity and environment, interpreting both in terms of an anthropomorphic version of biology.

The idea that a race can genetically evolve under natural conditions in a predicted direction in the space of three or four hundred years is absurd from a scientific point of view. The time-scale of evolution has been collapsed; none of the interviewees entertained the idea of eugenic programmes designed to raise the genetic endowment of blacks, thereby quickening the pace of natural evolution.

C's remark that 'blacks are gradually evolving, they're learning', indicates that the collapsed time-scale might be related to a genetic interpretation of cultural factors. Evolution and learning are being considered as similar processes and the distinction between acquired and inherited knowledge is blurred. C did not mean cultural evolution when he spoke of 'evolution'; he believed that at the present time a black baby brought up by white parents would probably be less intelligent than a white baby brought up in similar circumstances, although this might change in the future. True to the paternalistic image of the later imperial era, the evolution/learning of blacks is presumed to depend on white teachers. According to C: 'They are learning from the white man... Logically if we'd left them to it...

they'd be swinging about the trees, eating coconuts and things and dancing around fires. Everything that the black man has got, he owes to the white man.' Thus the older images of black savagery and primitiveness are not rejected, but are incorporated into the modern racist system of thought, as signs of how far blacks have since progressed under white tutelage.

An implication, which is not always clearly expressed, is that acquired knowledge can be transmitted genetically. At times the naive biology of these NF members repeats the Lamarckian fallacy. Of all the interviewees, D expressed this style of thought the most succinctly, incorporating the themes of evolution, white superiority and the inheritance of acquired characteristics.

It would seem, on a historical basis, the white people are the most inventive of all, and I can't find a record anywhere of a negro ever inventing anything... Intelligence of a kind is inherited, I would think, to some extent. You inherit some of the learning of your parents and their parents and so on backwards. I suppose some learning becomes part of one's instinct. The black people haven't a lot of that; there isn't this instinctive something with them. I suppose another thousand years of western-style civilization and there won't be much between us. I'm only guessing, I don't know, I'm no expert.

The fusion of the inherited and the acquired allows a sense of moral superiority to enter into the diagnosis of white intellectual superiority. If learning is a process under human control then evolution itself is no longer strictly deterministic. The racist is then able to defend his criticisms of multi-racialism with a tone of self-righteousness. In his mythology, not only does interbreeding between races spread diseases, a proposition entertained by several of the interviewees, but it weakens the white race both genetically and spiritually (the one implying the other). The white man is presumed to be the genetic heir to a worthier heritage and, similarly, the black genetically bears the sins of his fathers. This rather bizarre notion arises from the belief expressed by several of the interviewees, that the superior evolution of whites is a product of effort. The work ethic guides human evolution and rewards come to those who strive. In C's theory the black man did not evolve because 'life was easy... he never needed to', unlike whites who had to work hard. It was R's opinion that blacks had less drive, 'whereas a lot of white people through their background are always pushing and I think that would come through the hereditary cycle'. In the same vein B thought that by 'a process over the years' the white race, 'by dint of sheer effort, had pulled themselves to a level which now reflects itself higher' than that of the black race. Hard work and sense of purpose had therefore resulted in a more advanced state of evolution.

In this way a traditional stereotype trait associated with blacks by white racialists, that of laziness, is given biological status. However, in doing this the racist interviewees circumscribed biological science, making evolutionary change dependent in part on will-power. Accordingly, it is in the black man's power whether or not he evolves in the future without white tutelage: it is a matter of will-power, although the genetic history suggests that the drive for evolutionary betterment is absent, or nearly absent, in the black race. In this style of thought the laws of genetics are inextricably bound up with spirit or will; scientific distinctions are blurred into a conglomerate synthesis. This sort of fusion is not without precedent: a parallel can be made with the Nazi philosophy of race. For instance, the Aryan race was considered a biological entity, created and maintained by will-power. Hitler, in describing how the Aryan race achieved pre-eminence in the world, ascribed 'the inner causes of the Aryan's importance' to the 'self-sacrificing will to give one's personal labour and if necessary one's own life'. [12] A similar jumble of pseudo-science and moralism is to be found in the writings of Rosenberg, amongst other Nazi theorists.

The components of the interviewees' theories about evolution are in themselves compatible with orthodox scientific thought. The belief that the white race is intellectually superior to the black race can be supported with reference to the scientific racists within psychology. The statistical nature of this form of scientific racism, plus its allowed environmentalist effects (20 per cent is the figure permitted by some authorities), ensures that some concept of progress can be supported and also that the racist does not have to deny the obvious reality of educated blacks. The desire to fit both genetic and environmental components within an encompassing evolutionary framework finds ready parallels with the works of biologists, especially with the new burgeoning discipline of socio-biology. It would be no surprise that evolutionary theory is selected to be the integrative theory and that once again it finds itself an accomplice of racism. The interviewees only depart from scientific orthodoxy in the ways in which they attempt to combine these various strands of thought.

IMMIGRATION AS INVASION

Although the implicit theories of evolution held by some of the interviewees can be compared to the Nazi racial doctrines, there are of course many important differences. K stressed the difference between his views on race and Nazism; his views had 'nothing to do with racial purity, blond blue-eyed British — no chance'. None talked of ideal racial types and none suggested anything like a programme

of eugenics. Nor was there any hint of the nazi concern with *Blut und Boden*. In the main the official propaganda avoids themes suggesting a mystical connection between soil and race. It is possible to speculate that this element of nazi propaganda is particularly unsuitable for Britain, even to the committed racialist, and that its absence might be expected for cultural reasons. It is hard to maintain that there is an age-old mystical connection with the land when the early history of Britain was one of invasion and settlement. J might deny that this early history makes Britain 'a mongrel race', but it does crucially relate the origins of Britain as a nation to the concept of immigration. Moreover, this is a feature of history well-known to all. P mentioned that it was by learning from the Romans and the Vikings that 'we gradually developed into a nation'. If many of the founders of the nation (for instance Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Vikings, Normans, etc) were themselves immigrants, it becomes inappropriate to claim a mystic relationship with the soil dating back to time immemorial. This is especially true in the light of the NF policy of realignment with the 'old' Commonwealth, supported whole-heartedly by all the interviewees. A's views were typical, except perhaps for the retrospective tone which coloured all his beliefs: 'I would love to see the time when we could be back together with ... the Old Commonwealth, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Rhodesia and Canada; get back with all these people again.' By 'these people', A meant the white immigrants and their descendants, not the original inhabitants. Again the theme of immigration precludes the *Blut und Boden* connection. The implication is that the countries of the 'white' Commonwealth belong by right to the immigrants.

Carrying this line of speculation further, one might assert that the twin images of immigration and conquest are amongst the most strongly-ingrained images in British history, or at least those parts of history which have had the greatest impact on the popular consciousness. Knowledge that the early history was one of invasion (no single date is as well-known as 1066) and awareness of Empire must be familiar to all: here again speculation is necessary because of a lack of systematic investigation into popular images of history. The result may well be a heritage which recognizes the basic legitimacy of immigration and the creation of national identity by denizens. Far from leading to a tolerant attitude towards immigration, it has linked the concept of immigration with conquest so that legitimate immigration is synonymous with successful conquest. Certainly, NF propaganda uses the images of conquest to describe contemporary immigration by West Indians and Asians. The immigration itself is frequently called an 'invasion'. The theme of 'blacks taking over the country' is reflected in the comments of the interviewees.

According to T, white people have second-class citizenship as compared to the blacks, who 'have certainly got the edge over the

white citizens'. A felt that in Britain 'the white race is certainly on the way to being overtaken, unless something is done about it'. Similarly, N thought that 'the people have always felt second-class citizens because foreigners have always been put in front of them'. K echoed the fear that the mere presence of black people in Britain was a threat:

it's frightening to think that these strange people should be massing all around you all the time, and doing things contrary to your culture ... and not conforming or anything, and not trying to live in peace with us in any way and just sticking in their own separate cliques. And that to me is frightening.

In this statement the opposition between the presence of foreign immigrants and 'not living in peace' is significant: their presence alone is perceived as tantamount to a declaration of war. A cultural bias is possible since the present wave of immigrants from the West Indies and Asia is not the first to have encountered this reaction in Britain.[13]

PATTERNS OF PREJUDICE

So far, in describing the racist thought of the interviewees, emphasis has been placed upon their stereotype of the Negro (or more properly of West Indians). In their comments this stereotype emerged most strongly. There seemed not to be such a readily available racist package for describing Asians. The overall generic term 'immigrants', equated with 'blacks' or 'coloureds', was commonly used, and the progression was then to talk of West Indians or Africans when talking of blacks. When distinctions between West Indians and Asians were made a different picture of the latter emerged.

In certain respects the stereotype of the Asians was more diffuse than that of the West Indians. K objected to Asian cooking smells and considered that Asians were aggressive amongst themselves. A was offended by the existence of mosques in England and thought that Asian children were contributing to a drop in educational standards in the schools because of their language difficulties. Such disparate objections do not suggest a composite image in the way that the racist stereotype of Africans and their descendants has crystallized into the Sambo/Brute images.[14]

At times interviewees seemed to doubt whether racial feeling was the cause of their objections to Asians; talk of race tended naturally to focus upon West Indians rather than Asians. Certainly, there were disagreements about the traits ascribed to Asians. C's comments about 'illiterate Pakistanis' not only contradicted, for instance, H's

view that Indians and Pakistanis were on average intelligent, but also some of C's own statements. At times he expressed admiration for Asians who had built up businesses in Britain 'by sheer bloody backbone'. As a small businessman himself he had great sympathy for them; he did not seem to regard them as illegitimate competition. He went on to praise Asian culture as being:

a damn sight older than ours and I'd be the last to decry it. The Asians were civilised when we were running about hitting people on the head with lumps of rock. And for that you've got to respect them and I respect them greatly. That is why their crime rate is so much lower ... they respect each other, and as a rule they respect their surroundings.

He claimed that his objections to Asians were not racial; in fact he did not consider that the Asians were black; properly speaking, he said, they were white. 'I don't think that they're that much different to us race-wise, other than a bit darker.' What he objected to was the possibility that Asians might gain a 'stranglehold on the economy'.

Through the disparate images invoked to describe Asians it is possible to discern an inchoate pattern resembling the images which have crystallized in anti-semitic mythology. Not all stereotype patterns of anti-semitism are identical. In nazi propaganda two separate images were combined: the Jew as vermin/dirt and the Jew as the powerful manipulator. Allport, following Bettelheim and Janowitz [15], refers to these respectively as 'id' and 'superego' stereotypes. He noted that in nazi Germany Jews were blamed for the sins of the id (e.g., lechery, filth, violence) as well as those of the superego (deceit, overambition, slyness). Allport commented that Americans, having the Negro to personify the sins of the id, 'do not need the Jew for this purpose. The American, therefore, can build up a more specialised stereotype for the Jew, embracing only the "superego" qualities of ambition, pride and adroitness'.

The possibility for a similar division of labour within bigoted thinking exists today in Britain, with the West Indian bearing the brunt of id accusations and the Asian being designated by superego traits. Although comments about Asian violence and cooking suggest id stereotypes, the main thrust of the interviewees comments point towards superego traits; it is these traits which resemble closely the superego ascribed to the Jew in the way Allport described. For instance, K criticized Asians for 'sticking in their own separate cliques', but then proceeded to fulminate against an Asian who had bought a small shop in a white area and had anglicized his name. This is reminiscent of the Jewish stereotype which depicted Jews as being conjointly clannish and intrusive — a contradiction which was claimed by Adorno *et al* to be a symptom of inner psychological

contradictions.[16] The parallel between Asians and Jews became striking in some of the comments and was even perceived by the interviewees themselves. For instance, K spontaneously described Asians like the Jews as 'a powerful financial race', and said that Jews stick together in the same way as Asians. When C made a comparison between Asians and Jews, not only did he invoke the traditional images of anti-semitism, but he also voiced negative feelings towards Asians. He talked of Asians in Africa controlling the economy:

they've got their tentacles wrapped so tightly round it that it's suffocating ... We're going to get exactly the same here. The Asians are a clever race. They're a business race and they're like the Jews — wherever they go they tend to make money and be successful. And they'll do exactly the same to this country if we let them. They'll get a stranglehold on it.

It should be remembered that although C here referred to the Asians as a 'race', he also spoke of them as being white (or almost white) and possessing an older culture than the British: the parallel with the Jews thus grows even closer.*

On the basis of these comments there are good reasons for thinking that under the blanket classification of 'immigrant' in contemporary Britain lies the possibility of demarcating two stereotypes which would be complementary from a psychological point of view. If psychological theories stressing the motivational functions of prejudice were correct, one would expect contemporary fascism to have replaced anti-semitism by anti-Asian propaganda, so updating the superego stereotype. However, the National Front's ideology has not replaced anti-semitism. That it retains anti-semitism at the centre of its ideology says much for the tenacity of prejudice; it also limits the role of individual psychology in explaining the politicization of bigotry.

RACE WAR

A number of studies have suggested that, because of psychological inadequacies, about 10 per cent of the population harbour extreme irrational hatreds against outgroups.[18] Marsh surmises that such persons are attracted to the National Front. But Weir's survey,[19] conducted in Hackney, indicates that not all NF supporters have

*It should be noted that the stereotype of Asians as small businessmen in Britain is at variance with the facts; Smith, in a comprehensive survey, has shown that only 8 per cent of Asian working men in Britain are self-employed, as compared to 12 per cent of the indigenous population.[17]

the extremes of hatred described by Marsh. Scott talks of 'pathological' NF members, some of whom had personally attacked black people.[20] However, the leadership of the branch he studied was not dominated by such pathological types. The moderate tone adopted by the interviewees in the present sample does not of itself indicate pathological hatred; nor, of course, was it intended to. Yet the interviewees gave indications that others were more extreme than themselves.

D appeared to follow the official line that the NF moderates hatred of blacks because it seeks to direct hatred away from the hapless immigrant onto the real villains behind the scenes. D mentioned that some people join the party and immediately start talking about their hatred for blacks:

whether they talk in this fashion because they think they ought to, because they think we're like that, I don't know. But we are very quick to put them right. My own personal view and that of my colleagues is that hatred is an emotion that blinds people to reality and hatred's no good. It gets in the way.

In an ideological sense such hatred does stand in the way: the official ideology does not identify blacks as the group behind the world's ills.

Even if the NF is held to play such a 'moderating' role, it hardly seems to have been completely satisfactory. A number of the interviewees, while assuring the interviewer that they had no personal hatred for blacks, said that others in the party did. For instance, P mentioned that 'there are people in the National Front that absolutely hate the sight of them'. Similarly, J said that there were 'probably people in the National Front who do hate the blacks — personally I don't'. K talked about those in the party who 'every time they see a black face it gets their back up ... They'd sort of move away if one [a black] sat at the table in the pub. They're the type to move away.' C, characteristically, was more outspoken about his colleagues, talking of the 'non-thinking, blind hatred of blacks' which some of the members have.

Significantly it was J, K and C who mentioned the hatred of blacks by other members; all these three had personal doubts about the policy of total repatriation. However, all three were prepared to go along with the party line. J said, after voicing his personal doubts, 'because we're so strong on our thing, the lot has to go back', thereby indicating the primacy of party opinion over personal preference. As if by way of explanation, he added: 'I ain't in the NF policy department you know.' C said that when he first expressed the belief that some blacks might be of benefit to Britain, 'this was, I found, totally unacceptable to the majority of our people. And it struck me that they were racist blindly ... I didn't accept this sort of blind hatred and I still don't accept blind hatred of blacks.' Nevertheless,

this young rebel, who was hoping to change the party from the inside, was in fact changing his views towards the official line. He was struggling to impose the rigid and unyielding categories upon his unruly thoughts. By the second interview he talked about the changes in his attitudes: 'I was quite willing at one point to allow those more useful members of the community to stay. And for various reasons, probably two or three dozen little reasons, I've come to the conclusion that perhaps that wouldn't be a good idea after all.' He did not specify what the reasons were, but on other matters too his beliefs were tending towards the official line.

If the remarks about other party members being active haters of blacks is taken at face value, then the policy of total repatriation is defended by two separate pressures within the party. First, the official ideology, with an elaborate racial doctrine at its core, demands a higher standard of racial purity than perhaps the interviewees would have demanded. Official policy itself carries a normative weight for the faithful follower — J was prepared to accommodate himself to the official line: 'let's face it, you don't write a policy in five minutes'. Secondly, grass-roots haters of blacks put pressure on from below. If this is the case then the present sample of middle-range ideologues would be under pressure from above and below to maintain the path towards extremism.

It is not only social pressures from party colleagues which determine the political development of party members. Attitudes themselves need not be considered as permanent. Just as party members may predict what the course of political events might be in the future, so they may also have ideas about the likely developments in their own beliefs. Most social psychological research into racial attitudes is firmly rooted in the here and now. It enquires typically into present attitudes, often neglecting that present attitudes might contain their future tendencies. For this reason not only should the present feelings of the interviewees be taken into consideration, but also their predictions for the future. Given that such predictions contain the ingredients of self-fulfilling prophecies, they should be paid special attention.

K, after distinguishing himself from the haters, expressed sympathy for them. He said he could understand why they felt that way and that if the political situation degenerated he himself would join the ranks of the haters: 'the more and more it goes on, the more and more they'll [the blacks] get my back up'. He predicted that, in a year's time, 'I'll probably be entirely different. I'll probably tear my hair out and say "no I hate all blacks, no matter where they come from, no matter how long they've been here. I just hate blacks and they've all got to go home." I don't feel that at the moment.'

The path however was mapped out. In common with all the other interviewees he foresaw with certainty future interracial violence and

a polarization between blacks and whites. According to J, '92 per cent of the National Front thinks that there is going to be violence at some stage'. This prediction of violence makes the distinction between the moderates and extremists with regard to racial attitudes largely cosmetic. All see the mere presence of West Indians and Asians in Britain as a major threat, leading possibly to civil war. Even P, claiming to like blacks on a personal basis, was preparing himself for the impending battle. C, another so-called moderate, was accommodating himself to the line dictated by the ideology and the haters; this was to be his side in the foreseen war. Stressing that his own personal views were in no way 'based on political brain-washing or mindless hatred', he perceived the connection between such views and violence, and, moreover, that the progression might lead to the ultimate form of racial violence — genocide. He did not flinch from the prospect: 'At the moment I know what I want. I know what I think is right and I'll fight for it. And if it means picking up a gun and destroying a group of people or a race of people, who I consider a threat, then I will do it.'

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