

2) Racism in Britain today

In most parts of today's Britain, racism is not part of ordinary life. Most people do not judge other people by the colour of their skin. Groups like the British National Party are very marginal, and do not usually win any elections. The most ugly forms of racism, at least, have been rejected; and while Britain's Blacks still have many forms of prejudice to fight against, vicious racism is not usually one of them.

Nonetheless, although Black and White communities live side by side in most British cities, and there are not usually visible tensions between ordinary people, from time to time serious racist incidents take place. Almost every week, racist incidents are reported in the media, somewhere in Britain. Perhaps, in a population of almost 60 million people, that is inevitable, even in a country where the vast majority of people claim that they are not racially prejudiced.

Yet there are two sorts of racism: visible racism, and invisible racism.

Many black people in Britain feel that they are regularly discriminated against in invisible ways. Unemployment is higher among Blacks than among Whites, and Blacks do not do as well at school as Whites - often because the schools that they go to do not have high academic reputations. Black community leaders frequently complain about racism in the police, and unfortunately, some of their complaints are justified.

The Met and other police forces in Britain have introduced tough programmes to try to stop this form of invisible - though sometimes visible - racism. Though there has been no serious violence in Black districts of British cities for over twenty years, people have not forgotten the violence that occurred in several British cities in the 80's. Even today, there is often tension just under the surface in places like Brixton, London, where poverty, unemployment and other social problems are high, and confidence in the police is very low.

Plenty of projects have been started, to provide jobs and training to young Blacks in the poorest parts of the cities. Some have been very successful, and lots of Black teenagers do well at school, then go to university or do something else interesting, and become successful. They are, nevertheless, in a minority. Most Blacks in Britain today still live in the cities, or in the poorer districts of small towns. Sixty years after the first Afro-Caribbeans were first invited to come and work Britain, only a small minority of Britain's Black community have really integrated into the mainstream of society.