

Ethnicity and Race: Significant government reports

Source: Griffiths and Hope (2000) *Access to Sociology: Stratification and Differentiation*

THE SWANN REPORT, 1985

The Swann Report (1985), officially called *Education for All*, was a government report advocating a multicultural education system for all schools, regardless of institutions, location, age-range or ethnicity for staff/pupils. The report provided clear data on ethnicity and educational attainment, discovering that racism had a causal effect on the educational experiences of black children in the UK.

The report's recommendations found little support from central government, except for limited funding for the in-service training of teachers, but it did provide a fulcrum for debate and conferences on multicultural issues. The Education Reform Act (1988) ended the concept of 'education for all', based on the assimilationist nature of the newly introduced National Curriculum, school-based financial management and weakening of the Local Education Authorities. Multicultural educational initiatives had no place within schools that now had to adopt a curriculum based on the concept that everyone was the same.

THE MACPHERSON REPORT, 1999

Stephen Lawrence, a young black A Level student, was murdered by a gang of white youths in 1993. He had been waiting at a bus stop with a friend when the youths attacked him without provocation. The police did not investigate the murder properly and the murderers did not get arrested.

The parents of Stephen Lawrence were outraged by the treatment their sons' murder had received by the police and demanded justice through an inquiry. 6 years later the MacPherson Report identified that institutional racism existed within the Metropolitan Police Force and that this was the cause of the poor treatment in relation to Stephen Lawrence's murder inquiry. It also identified that poor relations between the police and ethnic groups should be improved through improved racism awareness training for officers. Sir Paul Condon, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, acknowledged with a 'sense of shame' that institutional racism existed within his force, but that it was unintentional, rather than conscious in its application.

NB: The MacPherson Report also recommended that the National Curriculum in schools should be adapted to reflect society by valuing cultural diversity. This was also a recommendation of the Swann Report, 1985, which was made impotent by the Education Reform Act, 1988

Many of the answers are in the passage, but some are not. You may need to revise topics.

1. What was the full name of the Swann Report?
2. What recommendation of the Swann Report was invalidated by the ERA 1988 and how did this happen?
3. What was the main conclusion of the McPherson Report?
4. What implications did this have for educational provision?
5. Who was the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police at the time of the McPherson Report?
6. What is the difference between covert and overt racism?
7. What is institutional racism?
8. Suggest other institutions which might be racist in our society.
9. What insights does Marxism offer to the understanding of racism in our society?
10. What is the difference between Marxism and neo-Marxism?
11. What insights do post-modernists bring to the understanding of racism and ethnicity in our society?
12. Evaluate the impact of the Swann Report on education for multi-culturalism in our society.