



MAGAZINE

ISSUE 2: 2020





Contents

Message from the Steering Group	1
1. On George Floyd, Racism & Police Brutality (Katy Sian)	2
2. The Fight for Answers: Anthony Grainger Inquiry (Gail Hadfield-Grainger)	3
3. Sheku Bayoh, Police Accountability and the Myth of Scottish Exceptionalism (Smina Akhtar)	5
4. The Murder of Zahid Mubarek: A Result of Unjust Practices in Policing and the Prison Service (Sibia Akhtar)	7
5. Resistance Lab: Taser poses threat to life (Resistance Lab)	10
6. Trans State Watch – Who We Are, What We Do (Trans State Watch)	10
7. Survivors* Need Specialist Services, Not Increased Police Powers (Sisters Uncut MCR)	11
8. Sex Worker Rights and Abolition (Molly Smith)	12
9. Nobody ‘deserves’ to be Tasered (Roxy Legane)	14
10. Firearms raids – what about the children? (Anonymous)	15
11. Policing Migrants: biotechnology as border agents (Laura Loyola-Hernández)	16
12. No Police in Our Schools (Remi Joseph-Salisbury)	17
13. No Police in Schools – an Educator’s Perspective (Vik Chechi-Ribeiro)	18

educate // empower // organise



Message from the Steering Group

This has been an interesting and difficult year, to say the least. We continue to come to terms with a global pandemic that has impacted most harshly on already marginalised communities. The pandemic has brought about the unprecedented extension of police powers which, unsurprisingly, have been used disproportionately against racially minoritised communities. Amid this uncertainty, yet another racist murder by a US police officer sparked waves of protest. We stand in solidarity with George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter protests that have spread across the globe.

As so many viral videos have shown in these times, and as the wider landscape of UK policing attests, we see all too clearly that police racism and violence is alive and well here in the UK. As the protesters have told us: the UK is not innocent! It is for this reason that we remain committed to working towards the abolition of the police both here and elsewhere. The persistence of police violence, brutality, and harassment underscores the importance of anti-racist movements. At the Northern Police Monitoring Project, we are committed to the struggle for social justice and will always fight for those affected by unjust policing and hold the police to account.

Whilst the pandemic prevented our usual programme of face-to-face events this year, we've found other ways to support our communities. For example, we have put together a range of resources to help those impacted by new Covid-19 policing powers, working in collaboration with other police monitoring groups for the first time. The BLM protests encouraged many activists to reach out to us and we're developing new ways for them to get involved in the work we do. Alongside Kids of Colour, members of the National Educational Union's Black members organising forum and others, we also continue to work on our No Police in Schools campaign. We have also been supporting *Resistance Lab* on their important work challenging police use of Tasers, and we continue to work towards coalition building with other activist groups.

We want to take this opportunity to say a heartfelt thanks to our supporters, new and old. We have received an influx of donations, which will help us to continue the critical work we do.

In solidarity always,

NPMP, August 2020

1. On George Floyd, Racism & Police Brutality

Katy Sian (Northern Police Monitoring Project)

Despite white America's attempts to forget, lynchings of black bodies are not simply part of a grisly and shameful chapter in the history of the US. Lynchings are very much the present, with black body, after black body, after black body murdered by white supremacists masquerading as police. This is borne out of a system built on racism; a society whose laws, culture, politics and education serve white supremacy. The United States, it seems, is only united in its disregard, disrespect and dismissal of black lives. Police racism and violence knows no bounds in this context, with officers inflicting a regime of daily terror upon African Americans. They do not serve to protect, but serve to kill. They do not serve to keep communities safe, but serve to keep them defenceless. They do not serve for the common good, but serve for the exceptionally bad.

The US has always criminalized black bodies, so much so that being black is in itself a crime. This is a society that prefers to incarcerate masses and masses of black and brown bodies, rather than afford them the right to an education. Communities of colour are kept in poverty rather than being provided with the access to healthcare, welfare and resources that they so desperately need. It is a society that prefers to kill innocent black bodies rather than see them live, grow and prosper. The US was built by the hands of African Americans - their blood, their sweat and their tears - and how are they repaid? It seems that the shackles, chains, servitude and oppression weren't enough - now bullets are fired into their backs, they are put in chokeholds, and officers kneel on their necks to the sound of I can't breathe.

The myth of 'threatening' racial 'others,' particularly black bodies, has served to legitimize police brutality throughout history, right up to the present day. This of course is not unique to the US; it is standard practice across all Western nations. In the UK, as Stuart Hall documents, there was the construction of the mugging crisis in the 1970s, which linked so-called mugging to black youth, so much so that, "mugging and black crime are now virtually synonymous." By falsely equating

mugging to black youth, official responses in the form of oppressive street policing in inner city areas, i.e. 'trouble spots,' were legitimised.

The murder of George Floyd, and the many other black men and women before him and after him, really has to make us question the role of police in society. Unfortunately, as so often is the case when these horrific events happen, we see the all too familiar 'bad apples' argument being replayed. In this narrative, it is the individual officers who are to blame. We must question how many times this claim can be made before we reach a point and finally admit that the whole system is rotten. Recent events have certainly contributed to the opposing of the 'bad apples' framework, as more and more recognise that the problems with the police are indeed systemic.

The police for black and brown working-class communities have always represented what Sivanandan refers to as 'an army of occupation.' [ii] The notion of the 'bobby on the beat' who is trusted and supported by the community is therefore a fantasy, and couldn't be further away from the realities experienced by communities of colour, who remain targeted and pursued in all walks of life, from the war on drugs to the war on terror. Over the decades, the police have become increasingly militarized, with tactics being deployed around coercion rather than consent. Equipped with armed vehicles, assault rifles, grenades and snipers, the police continue to spread terror with a state sanctioned capacity to use violence on their targets. They have more and more power, and less and less accountability, often operating with total impunity.

In his 2018 book *The End of Policing*, Alex Vitale makes a compelling case for the abolition of the police. He demonstrates that the key purpose of the police is to suppress poor, working class, and non-white communities. He argues that more police than ever before are engaged in more enforcement of more laws, resulting in astronomical levels of incarceration and abuse, particularly aimed at black and brown communities. For communities of

colour then, the police have an increasingly pervasive and aggressive presence. In the light of George Floyd, we can no longer ignore or deny the toxicity inherent within policing. Reform is not enough, and the mobilizations and campaigns around Black Lives Matter and wider calls for police and prison abolition need to be taken seriously, if we want a better society and future for all.

For too long now we have seen a liberal complacency and an attempt to weaken anti-racism, prompted by a false belief in post-racial ideology, i.e. the idea that the West is somehow free from racism. Over several decades, this liberal denial of racism has paved the way for a dangerous unchecking of white supremacy, which has facilitated the landscape that we find ourselves within today. The Black Lives Matter movement is therefore significant in calling out and calling to account the racism that has been left to fester for far too long. It is an exciting and transformative movement which is rebuilding and strengthening anti-racist and abolitionist movements, allowing voices of the dispossessed to be heard across the

globe. From the protests in the US to the removal of statues across Europe and solidarity from the Palestinians, these are critical uprisings that are forcing the West to own up to its brutal colonial history, and recognize the way in which those imperial legacies continue to inflict pain and suffering among black and brown bodies throughout the world.

In her book *Freedom is a Constant Struggle*, Angela Davis alerts us to the necessity of forging transnational and intersectional solidarities, arguing that, “We will have to be willing to stand up with our combined spirits, our collective intellects and our many bodies.” This seems symbolic of the Black Lives Matter movement today. It represents a force for real change through its ability to connect so many of us around the world fighting for social justice, allowing our collective demands on the state to be heard. This has to be the start of a new global and hegemonic anti-racist politics, and now more than ever is the time for all of us to be courageous. After all, as W.E.B Du Bois reminds us, the cost of liberty is less than the price of repression.

2. The Fight for Answers: Anthony Grainger Inquiry

Gail Hadfield-Grainger (United Families and Friends Campaign, Legal Officer)

Eight years ago, I lost the love of my life when he was shot and killed by the police in what is alleged to be a highly pre-planned operation. I just want to take the opportunity to share the struggles and the painstaking process which myself and other families have to go through after the police kill someone you love so dearly.

It starts the moment you are told. In the ordinary world in which we *think* we live, the natural route would be to phone the police and believe they will do everything in their power to catch the person that did it.... But, in this situation, that isn't the case. You have just been given news that doesn't sink in, it doesn't feel real – the police killed him. So who do you ring? What do you do? How do you tell the kids?

At that point you sit in a daze, a million things in your head that do not make sense, questions like, “*What was he doing?*”, “*How could he have*

possibly been in a situation where the police had a gun and shot him?”. The newspapers start printing about a person the police killed, as though Anthony was one of the Kray twins or some monster – not the Anthony I know, or anyone else who knew him. It must be a mistake. Over the next few years, the struggles get harder. Your emotions take over, you do what you can to keep normality at home to protect your children and your own sanity, but at every step of the process, nothing is ever what you would expect in a fair, just and transparent investigation.

I soon found out, by reading every single document available to me and cross-referencing, that on the night he was killed there were four cars. Each had four Armed Officers in. Each officer had a Heckler and Koch Machine gun and a self-loading pistol called a Glock, each with 30 rounds of ammunition. Some officers had CS Gas canisters, a shotgun and Tasers with extra

cartridges. All this for a kind, loving man, a dad who worked with cars? You cannot get the vision from your mind, and even now when I see an armed officer, I envision what must have happened in that dark carpark that night and the panic attacks set in.

I would find myself sitting in the wardrobe, wearing his clothes because the smell of him was lingering around, I'd close my eyes and pray that he would walk through the door. But he never did. The realisation starts to sink in. This is real, the police really do kill people. I can't believe I have been so ignorant to it in the past. You are led to believe that the IOPC is independent of the police, but once you speak to the team investigating the death, it soon becomes clear that a high number of these are actually ex-police officers. They do not have the power to compel an officer to make an independent statement, which is the least that you would expect because this is not a petty theft - it is potentially murder or manslaughter.

You find out that all 16 armed officers sat in a room together, nine days later, and made their '*independent account from memory*' with another officer guiding them on what to say via a flip-chart. But this only came to light because of the exact same mistakes they all made; the car

registration was written down wrong and street names were all spelled wrong. This is not how I imagined a serious investigation into the death of a person by the police would be carried out. This wholly undermines the independence and integrity of any account they subsequently provide, and would not be allowed if they were anything but police officers.

The four cars of armed officers swooped on Anthony's car that night. It took less than two seconds before 'Q9' fired his weapon from the back seat of a car, which delivered the fatal shot into Anthony's left lung, through the pulmonary trunk of the heart and into the right lung, but no ambulance was called. I believe that there should have been an ambulance on standby given the 'highly pre-planned' element of the operation. It later transpired that it wasn't as 'highly pre-planned' as the police made out. In fact, the planning of the operation did not even consider any less lethal tactic than an armed strike. The disclosure that the police allow you to have is redacted, page after page. We have to make a case with a percentage of the information missing, but available to the police, the IOPC and every other interested party except us! Working with pages of information that the police say you are not entitled to see, but they can – how is that a fair trial?



Whilst it is still early stages, families are meant to see if they are entitled to breadcrumbs of funding to find out why their loved one isn't here anymore, then you learn that all other parties, such as the one who fired at and killed Anthony, the Chief Constable and Greater Manchester Police as a whole, the IOPC and the National Crime agency

are all entitled to the best legal teams that money can buy, regardless of their income or situation. How can this be fair? I've met other families along that way that have sold their home, emptied children's savings accounts and even got into serious debt through borrowing money to pay for their legal representation. I do not believe any

family can raise the money needed to cover years and years of this whole process. But all the officers are represented from day one!

Eight years on, still not one single officer has been held to account in any sense of the word. I realised quite quickly that some struggles were going to hinder me. I started to study law - this way I could take days off when needed so I could attend the hearings, but later down the line, I realised I may have to represent myself in the fight to find out why Anthony was killed.

The worst part of this whole process is not only going up against trained officials, experienced lawyers, and 100+ police officers all working together – it is doing everything you can against all of these people as a single-family member, whilst you're trying to hold your own life together. Eight years of random dates to attend court, delay after delay. It is almost impossible to hold down a job, or even start the grieving process – how can you grieve over something you can't understand? Our public inquiry found that officers lied and fabricated documents to exaggerate the threat level. The police also used a criminal past from a different person and told the court they believed

Anthony had previous criminal convictions that were proved in the inquiry to be completely false – Anthony died because of serious systemic failures in the operation from the very start and these failures continued after he died. This includes the deleting of vital emails that were related to the case, which showed some of the armed officers that night did not hold a valid Firearms Licence due to failing the course.

Yet here I am, fighting for the government recommendations to be implemented – but who am I except a grieving woman and mother who just wants answers and justice for the death of the man I love. This should not be left to the families – families who have been through enough! This system needs to change. Officers need to be held to account by the law when they break the law!

The Chair of the Public Inquiry, HHJ Teague, described in the report that, “*Anthony Grainger’s untimely death was not the consequence of one wrong decision but of many. As often happens, it took a combination of errors and blunders to produce so calamitous an outcome – an outcome for which I have concluded that Greater Manchester Police is to blame*”.

3. Sheku Bayoh, Police Accountability and the Myth of Scottish Exceptionalism

Smina Akhtar (School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Glasgow)

The killing of George Floyd by police officers in Minneapolis last month sparked global demonstrations not only about police brutality in the US but police brutality and structural racism at home. Some people may be surprised to know that there were Black Lives Matter events in different parts of Scotland too. There remains a widespread belief amongst many Scots that racism doesn't happen here, we call it the myth of Scottish Exceptionalism, but the killing of George Floyd allowed Sheku Bayoh's family to remind us that deaths in police custody happen in Scotland too.

Sheku Bayoh a 31-year-old Black man was arrested and restrained by nine police officers in Kirkcaldy, a small town on the east coast of Scotland, in the early hours of 3 May 2015, he was pronounced dead when he got to hospital. Sheku was originally from Sierra Leone, but left for London at the age of 4 and joined his sister Kadi in

Kirkcaldy when he was 17 because his mother thought he'd be safer in Scotland. He had two children; Isaac was only 3 months old when his father died. In November 2019 the Lord Advocate confirmed that there would be no criminal prosecution of any of the police officers who arrested Sheku; the following day the Justice Secretary Humza Yousaf announced that there would be a full Public Inquiry into Sheku's death. The terms of reference of the Public Inquiry were announced in May 2020, and stated that it will 'examine the circumstances leading up to the death of Mr Bayoh... the post incident management process and the subsequent investigation into his death', 'it will also establish if Mr Bayoh's actual or perceived race played a part in events'. This was five years after Sheku died.

Was the fact that Sheku was Black and a Muslim significant? If so, then racism did have a part to play.

Examples of the police using brutal force to contain public protest are not hard to find; examples include the 1984-5 miners strikes, poll tax demonstrations, the killing of anti-racist activist Blair Peach in 1979. The system which investigates severe misconduct within the police exists on a state canvas which is also institutionally racist. This ensures that any challenge to their authority by families and activists involved in *deaths in police custody* campaigns are contained. The racism of the police has been documented countless times and ranges from the disproportionate stop and search statistics of Black and other racialised groups, to publicly disclosed evidence that the police spied on the family of Stephen Lawrence knowing that they had failed to investigate his death sufficiently. In Scotland, it took the police and judicial system 18 years of constant pressure from the family lawyer, Aamer Anwar as well as a change in the law to prosecute the killers of Surjit Singh Chokkar.

According to Inquest, from 1990 to 2019, there have been 1741 deaths in custody, of them 183 are of Black and minority ethnic people in police custody including shootings and they are more likely to have force used on them whilst being arrested and restrained. They confirm that no police officer has been convicted of a death in police custody since 1969. A BBC analysis found that Black people are twice as likely to die in police custody. When the police are accused of killing, the whole system closes in to protect them and stop victims' families from getting justice. This is containment at an institutional level.

Sheku's sister Kadi told me that after Sheku's death, police officers met family members separately and told them different versions of how Sheku died which naturally made them suspicious. At one point the family were told Sheku had been found by a member of the public. They were told he had a machete, which was downgraded to a knife and then a blade – all in one conversation, though no such item was on him when arrested.

The press ran several stories which can be described as racist, often originating from police sources; police suspected Sheku was a terrorist because they realised Sheku had been brought up Muslim. The police asked Sheku's partner if they

ate pork and bacon at home, no doubt to establish whether he was a practising Muslim, they even asked her if she got on with the rest of the family, because they are Black and she is white. Some newspapers reported that he'd been high on drugs and had fought with his best friend. All in an attempt to present Sheku as violent and justify the amount of force used on him when he was being arrested.

Aamer Anwar wrote in *Scottish Left Review* that, 'CS spray, Pava (pepper) spray and batons were used by uniformed police officers on Sheku as he was restrained and brought to the ground by several officers within 42 seconds of their arrival. Some officers stated they believed they were under 'terrorist attack'. CCTV footage leaked to the BBC revealed that Sheku was also handcuffed and restraints applied to his knees and ankles. Shortly thereafter, he lost consciousness and died. His body was covered with lacerations, bruising and a broken rib', over 50 injuries in total.

The police post mortem found no conclusive cause of death, common in *deaths in police custody* because when so many non-lethal weapons are used it is not possible to identify which caused the fatal blow. The report however cited excited delirium, a very much contested condition which is caused by excessive struggle whilst being restrained. The family's pathologist concluded Sheku died of 'positional asphyxiation' which meant he couldn't breathe, caused by the use of extreme force. Such use of force is more common in Black *deaths in police custody*, justified by a racist stereotype of the Black man possessing super human strength, which has existed since slavery. This is how Sheku was portrayed by the Scottish Police Federation lawyer Peter Watson when he told the media that 'a petite female police officer was subjected to a violent and unprovoked attack by a very large man who punched, kicked and stamped on her.'

Sheku was of average height, 5-foot 10 weighing 12 stone 10 pounds. The same 'petite' police officer alleged in her submission to the Court of Session for early retirement in 2019, that when she was kicked by Sheku she landed across the road resulting in significant injuries which have prevented her from returning to work since. Aamer Anwar states that 'no one could kick a person that distance, especially since CCTV footage shows that Sheku was handcuffed and face down on the ground within seconds of police officers arriving on the scene'. It was also revealed

that one of the police officers on the scene when Sheku died was reported by his own family to be a violent racist.

There were several instances where we can see how the system closed in to protect the police officers from recrimination. The police officers who arrested and restrained Sheku, in a restraint that led to his death, were allowed to go back to the station and sit in a room together which gave them an opportunity to confer. This would never have happened if they had been treated as suspects. PIRC, the body that investigated Sheku's death, didn't have the power to force police officers to give statements; they eventually gave statements 32 days after Sheku died. That would not have happened if a civilian had been suspected of killing Sheku, or if a civilian had been suspected of being responsible for the death of a police officer.

Just as the PIRC investigation was about to start, the then head of Police Scotland, Stephen Hause met the police officers involved, he didn't bother meeting Sheku's family. Kenny McAskill, the former Justice Secretary but still an MSP at the time wrote in a police magazine that no criminality would be found in the case, effectively claiming that the police officers were not guilty, this was months before the investigation had concluded. He added that this case was an example of 'open season of hunting Police Scotland' thus dismissing the family's legitimate right to an investigation.

The PIRC investigation structure is far from perfect and according to the family's lawyer not fit

for purpose. Over 70% of its investigators are ex police officers, and the two officers investigating Sheku's death had over 35 years of service at a senior level in the police. The PIRC investigation which the Lord Advocate has based his decision not to prosecute the police officers was far from an independent investigation.

Sheku's family have had no public funds to help them find out what really happened to him, they have had to fundraise and rely on the goodwill of their legal team and professionals they have sought services from, whilst the police and judiciary have access to public funds to safeguard their reputation and authority.

Finally, Dame Eilish Angiolini's interim report of the Public Inquiry into *deaths in custody* has recommended that there should be no delays in investigations, that police should not be allowed to confer and investigating bodies such as PIRC be more independent of the police. These conditions were not met in PIRC's investigation which is why Nicola Sturgeon and Humza Yousaf have agreed to have an independent Public Inquiry. Scotland could have its own equivalent of the MacPherson Inquiry report following the killing of Black teenager Stephen Lawrence in 1993, which concluded that the police were institutionally racist. At that time, Scottish police said that MacPherson didn't happen in Scotland and the police weren't racist. The Sheku Bayoh Public Inquiry may conclude otherwise.

4. The Murder of Zahid Mubarek: A Result of Unjust Practices in Policing and the Prison Service

Sibia Akhtar (Resistance Lab)

Both the policing and prison system offer systematic issues for ethnic minorities in Britain. The issues of policing are often underlaid with the issues within the prison system. Disparities in the treatment of ethnic minorities are prevalent in both systems of oppression as the policing disparities continue in prison. We need to identify the systematic similarities within the policing practices and prison life whereby there is a lack of concern for the treatment of ethnic minorities by the

officers and the inmates. This is evident when we consider how decisions made by senior officers in 2000 resulted in the unjust killing of Zahid Mubarek at Feltham Youth Detention centre, London.

Zahid Mubarek was a 19-year-old British Pakistani Muslim, in prison for a first-time offence. He was given a 90-day prison sentence for stealing razors. Mubarek was involved in petty crimes and had run-ins with police officers. His serving of 90 days

for stealing a packet of razors for his first offence shows how non-white individuals are given harsher sentences for petty crimes than their white counterparts. When he was just hours from being released from prison, his cellmate, Robert Stewart, hit him with a broken table leg 11 times.¹ Mubarek was taken to hospital but died from his injuries. Mubarek's murder highlighted the failure of the British criminal justice system from his arrest to his death, thus demonstrating the continuation of injustice from policing to prison. His murder was racially motivated, but the prison system failed to keep Mubarek, a British-Pakistani, safe in prison. He was failed by the police, prison and justice for Mubarek was not immediately served.

In this issue of policing and prison, the question is: why was Mubarek in the same cell as Stewart, who was known to be violent months before he committed a murder? He had spoken about committing his first murder and this was known by some of the prison officers at Feltham. Stewart was openly racist and had a violent past and was suffering from mental health issues. This should have been an indication to the prison guards that Stewart should not be allowed to share a cell with any of the inmates. This was predominantly the reason as to why an inquiry needed to be launched to investigate prison officers' attitudes to their non-white inmates.

Mubarek was born in 1980, a time where race relations were characterised by white vigilantes' physical violence towards ethnic minorities in Britain. However, this period also demonstrated a Civil Rights movement in Britain where those of African, Caribbean and South Asian descent mobilised to tackle the racism enacted towards them. Physical violence was evident on the streets but the idea that those in the youth detention centre should have been protected by the racist abuse too just shows how 'BAME' communities are perceived as being unBritish. Racism to ethnic minorities had been exacerbated by the politics of those in power and the racial attitudes towards these communities were under threat by racists.²

¹ <http://www.thezmt.org/index.php/background>

² Solomos, J. (2003) *Race and Racism in Britain*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

The racialized politics in Britain meant that forms of resistance were needed to defeat the racial abuse. The police were unsupportive of these communities who were being attacked and the freedom of speech rules applied. Particularly to the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities, the act of 'Paki bashing' became prominent in certain cities with large South Asians communities. The physical racism was much more apparent in this period as hostility to South Asian communities remained prominent. South Asian boys were overpoliced and targeted by the police officers, and at the same time they were suffering as victims from racist violence. 'Race Riots' were prominent in cities like Bradford, London and Manchester. South Asian boys particularly defended their communities as they knew that the police would not take the abuse seriously by police officials and the Criminal Justice System.

Before Mubarek's death, he met with his father a few times and told him about his cellmate Stewart and that he was behaving strangely to which his father responded that Mubarek should stay out of his way and should not let anything get in the way of his release. Mubarek followed his father's requests but his father did not know that Stewart was a known racist. Mubarek had even notified the prison officers that he wanted to change cells and the prison guards failed to respond promptly to Mubarek's call. However, the positioning of Mubarek to share a cell with Stewart was not a minor institutional error but a fatal one.

The racialised policing of prison guards was demonstrated when Mubarek was placed in a cell with a known racist who was suffering from mental health issues. This shows how there is a disregard for these issues which have not been tackled properly or considered. It is a fatal situation and the points made in the inquiry must be considered to prevent further disproportionate deaths in the prison service.³ The inquiry followed after constant pressure from the victim's family to have his death investigated, and this is also another consideration as to why families have to constantly battle to have these inquiries take place.

³ HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2014). *Report of a review of the implementation of the Zahid Mubarek Inquiry recommendations A thematic review*. London: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons.

By 2008, the family of Mubarek were able to launch an inquiry into the murder of their son.⁴

This was seen as a victory for the family and those involved in the case, but it took so long and required continuous pressure from the family, MPs such as David Blunkett and community activists to push for the inquiry to take place. The inquiry found that his death was preventable.⁵ Also, the inquiry demonstrated that the prison officers showed little concern about Stewart, known for racism and harassment, but also as someone suffering from mental health issues, sharing a cell with anyone let alone a Pakistani boy.

As news articles from the time showed, police officers refused to follow up on the inquest into Mubarek's death and the similarities with the death of Stephen Lawrence, particularly there were parallels between the policing and covering up of unjust deaths of 'BAME' individuals and the institutionalised racism within the prison.⁶ A report was needed to show that the police service was to blame for the death and appropriate consideration of Mubarek's self. In the report, the police officers knew of Stewart's racist history, his ongoing letters depicting racial violence, but also that Mubarek asked numerous times that he wanted to be moved away from his cellmate.⁷

The Mubarek inquiry (2014) also found that prison officers were unlikely to check on the wellbeing of the prisoners, particularly those who are vulnerable. But it also highlighted that many officers were not equipped to see these issues taking place in the cell. Here arises the problem of cell sharing, and the dangers associated with this. The practice of cell sharing highlighted that it needs to be removed to prevent these deaths from taking place in the future, and the training of prison officers needs to be improved to protect the 'BAME' individuals. Especially because Mubarek did reach out to the prison officers about Stewart

multiple times, yet this was never investigated until after his death.

The importance of recovering these cases demonstrates how far we still need to go in terms of how the police and prison officers treat 'BAME' people, in this case a South Asian individual. The way policing operates in the prison service does not aim to protect but it is a hostile place for people like Mubarek, and there needs to be structural anti-racist improvement in how the system operates. To bring about systemic change, we must continue to seek justice and hold the perpetrators accountable whilst also supporting the affected communities.



Rest in Peace Zahid Mubarek

⁴ Family wins race murder inquiry Alan Travis Home affairs editor The Guardian (1959-2003); Sep 5, 2001; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Guardian and The Observer

⁵ HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2014). Report of a review of the implementation of the Zahid Mubarek Inquiry recommendations A thematic review. London: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, p.6.

⁶ Rollock, N. (2009) The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Ten Years On, London: Runnymede Trust.

⁷ <http://www.thezmt.org/index.php/background>

5. Resistance Lab: Taser poses threat to life

Resistance Lab

A new report published by *Resistance Lab* warns about the dangers of increased Taser use. The report shows that the use of Taser by police forces in England and Wales has increased by more than 500% over the last decade. In Greater Manchester specifically, Taser use has increased by 73% from 832 incidents in 2017/18 to 1,442 incidents in 2018/19.

These increases should be understood in a context where Black Lives Matter protests have drawn renewed attention to racist policing and have highlighted the need to think meaningfully about defunding the police.

A Growing Threat to Life: Taser usage by Greater Manchester Police is the first report by the newly launched Resistance Lab – a coalition of academics, activists, and grassroots community groups working to confront state violence in Greater Manchester.

Using Home Office data, the report finds that Greater Manchester Police (GMP) reported more incidents involving Taser, whether discharged or not, than any other police force with the exception of the Metropolitan Police in 2018/19.

It also highlights significant racial disparities in GMPs use of Taser, with Black people four times more likely to have a Taser used against them than their white counterparts.

The report also raises alarms about the use of Taser against children and young adults. In 2018/19, GMP reported more incidents (118) involving the use of Taser against children under the age of 18 than any other force with the exception of the Metropolitan Police. Whilst the Home Office notes that data from GMP on Taser use against children contains errors, it nonetheless indicates a normalisation in the use of violence towards children from the state.

Resistance Lab make one key demand: the urgent abolition of Taser. As a member organisation of Resistance Lab, Northern Police Monitoring Project is proud to support this demand and the ongoing work of Resistance Lab to confront state violence.

To find out more visit:
<https://resistancelab.network/taser-repor>

6. Trans State Watch - Who We Are, What We Do

Trans State Watch, UK

Trans State Watch UK is a trans-led organisation looking to monitor state violence against trans, nonbinary, intersex and/or gender nonconforming people, collecting, organising, and analysing data based on individual submissions in order to create a clearer picture of the nature of such violence in the United Kingdom. The organisation was formed in response to a lack of formal recognition of, and response to, the specific ways in which state violence operates to oppress trans and gender nonconforming people, through policing and healthcare to name a few.

We felt that it was necessary for such violence to be recorded since transness and gender nonconformity are one of the many ways in which a person can be significantly more vulnerable to the power of the state; in interactions with the police, when trans people are often violated and misgendered; in attempts to access healthcare, which encompasses not only access to gender-affirming hormones and/or surgery but also day-to-day medical needs; in mental health services, where transness is pathologised and belittled, often treated as a symptom or even a manifestation of other mental health problems, preventing a trans person both from having their gender treated with dignity and from receiving the help that they need.

The given examples are just a small selection of the many ways in which state violence works to attack both trans and gender-nonconforming individuals, and the very fact of transness and gender nonconformity as a whole.

As far as we are able, we take an approach to understanding transphobic state violence in relation to other vectors of oppression; a person's race, gender, class, disability, etc. may play a significant role in shaping their interaction with the state as their transness will, and we aim to account for these as far as we are able to in our work. We do not demand that people disclose any of these factors as we prioritise the safety of those who submit their experiences to us and trust the individual to determine whether or not such a disclosure is worthwhile.

At the same time, one of the aims of the project is to understand not only the fact that transness is related to other vectors of oppression, but the nature of those relationships in the UK context -

what forms of state violence are different trans people impacted by, and what are the factors that shape that? It is only when we understand this kind of nuance to transphobic state violence, textured by a variety of power structures and other social factors, that we can begin to address it.

Our policy for data collection is that people can disclose as much or as little information as they prefer, at their own discretion, in order to preserve the individual's right to anonymity and security. We use the information that we collect to consolidate a firmer understanding of how and why transphobic state violence takes place in the UK, ultimately in order to be better able to combat it.

We can be found at @TSW_UK on Twitter and Trans State Watch UK on Facebook, and contacted at transstatewatch@protonmail.com. If you are interested in volunteering with us, our policy is that we are run exclusively by trans people.

7. Survivors* Need Specialist Services, Not Increased Police Powers.

Sisters Uncut, MCR

During the pandemic, we have all felt trapped inside our homes. But for survivors of domestic and sexual abuse, this prospect is horrifying. For many, staying indoors means confinement with those who harm them. A survey by Women's Aid reported that 67% of survivors currently experiencing domestic abuse say it has worsened since Covid-19 reached the UK and 72% say their abuser now has more control over their life. Refuge, the UK's largest domestic violence charity, reported a 700% increase in referrals in a single day. Local specialist services have reported that women are waiting longer to reach out for help—resulting in high-risk situations with dire consequences. These statistics are unlikely to even scratch the surface.

Meanwhile, a new Domestic Abuse Bill is finally in the 'report' stage. This step precedes the third and final reading in the House of Commons. And Sisters Uncut Manchester have been asking the

question: does this Bill go far enough to protect survivors?

We are the Manchester branch of Sisters Uncut: a direct-action feminist group founded in 2014 in response to the murderous cuts in funding for domestic abuse services. As intersectional feminists, we understand that an individual's experience of violence is affected by interconnecting and mutually reinforcing systems of oppression. Domestic and sexual violence does not exist in a vacuum. The systems of power and privilege in our society enable and protect the actions of perpetrators.

The new Bill's broader definition of domestic abuse encompasses physical, sexual, emotional and economic abuse. This can be celebrated as a helpful start point for educating our communities. It hands local authorities more responsibility in supporting survivors but no hard promises for long-term funding. Early drafts of the bill offered

little to no support for migrant communities but we are pleased to see that, thanks to the advocacy of survivors groups nationwide, we can expect changes to the Immigration Acts which give survivors *some* recourse to public funds. The Secretary of State must now ensure the personal data of migrant survivors will not be used for immigration control purposes.

Of course, new protections are celebrated but we are profoundly concerned that the cornerstone of the new Domestic Abuse Bill is that of increasing police powers. Creating more criminal offenses cannot be the primary way in which we deal with domestic violence. The Bill builds upon a framework that requires individuals to approach the police for safety. To ask this, particularly from those communities that are consistently and aggressively over-policed, has not and does not work. The police are notoriously ineffective in dealing with domestic violence. They have none of the specialist knowledge, skills or trust required to positively transform communities or adequately support survivors. Survivors who are marginalised, including people of colour, migrant communities and the LGBTQ+ community, often have good reason to fear and distrust the police. Handing additional weapons to a police force which terrorises these communities routinely, in the name of safety for survivors, is not only unhelpful but dangerous.

Lasting support and safety for survivors cannot be found within the criminal justice system. Writer and organiser Lola Olufemi writes that "the most pressing issues for survivors is not that their abusers go to prison, but that there is a safety net for them to fall back on that enables them to leave abusive situations." Justice for survivors goes well beyond a carceral solution. We must move the emphasis from the expansion of police power to

ring-fenced funding for specialist frontline community services.

There are organisations across the country that, unlike the police, have expert and specialist knowledge of domestic abuse, and are dedicated to supporting survivors within their communities. They have been starved of funds after a decade of Conservative-driven implemented austerity. A Manchester specialist service provider told us this week that, "they're making us work in darkness. We can't put things in place that ensure trust and availability to service users [without long-term funding]." The money that is available for these services is being auctioned off to the lowest bidder, often going to a de-specialised service provider with less experience. Properly funding these vital organisations will save lives.

We demand a long-term funding plan for specialist services that meets the needs of all survivors. To those in power, our message is this: your cuts are violent, your cuts are dangerous, and you think that you can get away with them because you have targeted people who you perceive as powerless.

We are those people. We are Sisters Uncut. We will not be silenced.

* We use the term 'survivor' when referring to those who have experienced or are experiencing violence and abuse, but we know that this language isn't perfect. We recognise the resourcefulness and resistance of those living with the impacts of violence whether in the present or the past. We acknowledge that not everyone who experiences or has experienced abuse defines themselves as a 'survivor', and that society may determine who is allowed to identify as one. We also recognise that not everyone does survive domestic, sexual, gendered, and/or state violence; we remember those who haven't in our fight.

8. Sex Worker Rights and Abolition

Molly Smith (organiser with sex worker group SWARM, co-author (with Juno Mac) of 'Revolting Prostitutes: the fight for sex workers' rights)

Sex worker rights organising is an education in abolition. People sell sex because they need money, and for many marginalised people it is a strategy of survival. Any attempt to 'reduce'

prostitution through policing will inevitably fail in its stated goal because it does not address the actual reasons that sex work exists. The policing and criminalisation of prostitution misdirects

attention away from the structural problems of our society – such as capitalism and poverty – onto pathologised, stigmatised and criminalised ‘others’ such as ‘the prostitute’, ‘the john’, and ‘the dealer’.

Not only does policing prostitution ‘miss the point’ of why people sell sex, but policing it actively creates harm. In England, Scotland and Wales, street sex workers and their clients can be arrested and prosecuted, and sex workers who work indoors from shared flats face criminalisation for brothel-keeping. This pushes sex workers to forego safety strategies such as working on the street in groups and in well-lit areas, or working indoors with a friend. Criminalisation thus creates a vicious circle of harm: it sends a message to society that sex workers are bad and dirty, while also materially obstructing the ways that sex workers might try to stay safe – rendering sex workers intensely vulnerable to violent people. State violence and interpersonal violence go hand in hand: the sex workers most vulnerable to arrest, prosecution or deportation are also those most vulnerable to physical violence and exploitation from individuals. That is because criminalisation and policing, far from making people safer, creates the conditions in which interpersonal violence and harm can flourish.

The policing of prostitution in the UK uses immigration law to chiefly target migrant sex workers. For example, in 2017 police raided a flat in Swindon where three Romanian women were working. The police arrested the women, took their money, and deported them. They framed this was for the women’s safety, telling the local paper: “the women are now safe and away from their clients, and are no longer vulnerable to the risks of off-street sex work.” A few months later, police in Smethwick raided a flat where three Romanian women were working, and had the women evicted and then deported. In Leeds in 2013, the police prosecuted three Polish women who had escaped an exploitative manager and were working in what the judge acknowledged was an ‘informal co-operative’. They were convicted. Additionally, in 2018, hundreds of police officers raided London’s Chinatown parlours in what was portrayed in the press as an anti-trafficking operation. As a result of the raid, multiple women were charged with immigration offences, and many were taken to Yarl’s Wood detention centre and then deported. The police also stole £37,000 out of individual women’s lockers.

Despite this contentious relationship between sex-workers and the police, it is common for women’s organisations to work with the police, and for the anti-prostitution feminist movement to uncritically laud them. Anti-prostitution campaigners routinely celebrate raids like those described above, and such campaigns sometimes share resources on ‘how to spot a brothel’ – with obvious implications for the sex workers who will be caught up in a raid. The manager of a women’s service, based in Glasgow, even told a reporter: “We don’t wait until [prostitutes] say they want to exit, and we share all our info with police ... we try everything to engage with them. That could be a [criminal] charge, which puts them in a system where they have support.”

It is deeply ironic that this strand of the feminist movement has attempted to co-opt the term ‘abolition’. They want to connect their attempts to ‘abolish’ the sex trade through criminalisation to the abolition of slavery. Analogising modern prostitution to chattel slavery underplays the horror of centuries of slavery in the Americas to the extent that borders on genocide denial. Furthermore, in both the US and the UK, policing and prisons are directly descended from slavery and colonialism. For instance, in 2012, then-prime minister David Cameron responded to calls for reparations by offering to give money to Jamaica to build a new prison, on the understanding that it would be used to incarcerate ‘foreign criminals’ deported from the UK, all while the criminalisation of prostitution disproportionately targets black sex workers and other sex workers of colour. In Norway – which is one of the countries held up by anti-prostitution feminists as their ideal – Amnesty International found that police routinely stop black women they suspect to be sex workers, and criminalise, evict and deport them. It should be impossible to claim any proximity to the word abolition while advocating for more criminalisation.

The decriminalisation of prostitution is an abolitionist demand. It would take power and resources away from the police. Those resources could be invested in things that actually help people – such as housing, healthcare, and childcare. Criminalisation is deeply implicated in creating the conditions where violence against sex workers thrives. We can change those conditions by dismantling the power of the police.

9. Nobody ‘deserves’ to be tasered

Roxy Legane (NPMP and Kids of Colour)

Nobody ‘deserves’ to be tasered. However, responses to a recent video of a Black man being tasered in Greater Manchester, in front of his young son, show that many believe otherwise. What became clear following the incident on Wednesday 6th May is how progress remains bound by a society that relishes in physical and emotional punishment for ‘crime’. The racist and classist attitudes of the police force are well documented, but what becomes shocking is the reminder that sections of the public accept that someone’s actions could warrant violence, without consideration for whether this will produce a better society. What follows as a result is the police force’s ability to weaponise such acceptance, consciously choosing to exploit the public’s support for physical and emotional harm to over-police and use violence without scrutiny.

Public acceptance of the notion that some people deserve to be subject to state violence is the force’s most meaningful ally. Following the incident involving the man and child in Manchester, Greater Manchester Police were quick to release a list of the man’s charges (concerningly, including his full name and address). His ‘deserved it’ list. It then evoked its expected reaction on social media, acting as a ledger of justification for the use of a potentially fatal weapon, which was used seemingly without warning; in close proximity to a child; and at a petrol station, an environment in which such weapons are a greater risk.

That ‘deserved it’ list is typical police protocol. Today and historically, it works perfectly to help the institution avoid accountability because we live in a country that largely stands by the idea that if the police can ‘justify’ it, it is acceptable, and any misdemeanour gives the police power to do what they want.

When Northern Police Monitoring Project led an event in Moss Side in 2019 on deaths after police contact, there were clear similarities between each speaker’s story, and one specific similarity was key. From Lisa Cole, Janet Alder, Gail Grainger and Germaine Phillips, we heard the same message and the same warning to others: If this happens to you, the police will take the narrative out of your hands almost immediately.

That ‘deserved it’ list will be released to the media almost instantly. They will begin to defame the character of your loved one, to ensure that before you have your chance to speak of the intimate moments you shared, the kindness they had, the things they enjoyed, the public will know them as someone else. The person the public will come to know will be someone you never did: a dehumanised construction, underpinned by ideas of criminality, and no doubt by their race and class. To this day, many will still argue Mark Duggan ‘deserved it’ because of who he was presented to be.

But the ‘if this happens to you’ warnings often land on deaf ears. What is interesting about the way these incidences and following constructions work is the ability for people to remove themselves from any proximity to behaviours shared on the ‘deserved it’ list. Reading through the list of charges shared by GMP regarding the man they tasered, how could people be so certain that this would never be someone they knew? While recognising the risk here in being seen to ‘condone’ certain behaviours, the purpose is to be realistic and eradicate the idea of a flawless majority.

Some public reactions to the list could lead you to believe that every other citizen in the UK has never known someone to have ‘one more pint’ before driving, to do 46mph in a 40mph zone, to not have car insurance, or to leave their home unnecessarily during COVID-19. As videos emerge online of people coming together to congregate in celebration of VE day, clearly breaking social distancing rules, you wonder how many of these individuals would say ‘well he should not have been travelling’. As for those shouting ‘but he resisted’, how many times must Black people, people of colour and campaigners against police violence justify the fear and anger – a product of over-policing – that leads to said ‘resistance’?

The inability of many to see themselves or those they know in a similar scenario is of course significantly aided by race and privilege. In many ways, the ‘deserved it’ list is just bonus validation to justify police action, because for so many, the

ability to see this man was Black was enough to wake the racism settled in so many of us (people of colour included) that affirms a base view of 'he deserved whatever followed'.

A base view supported by a society, with help from its media and politicians, that labels Black men as inherently 'risky', consequently framing your reaction to them. Race and class are strong groundings for the 'deserved it' list that the police are quick to reveal, they are companions that truly validate one another to construct the notion that this man was 'taser-worthy'. The police emerge unscathed.

Surrounding this case, the unforgiving rhetoric of sections of the public was a stark reminder of the critical groundwork that needs to be done to shift opinion on 'crime and punishment', if we are to make progress. It feels, at times, that those who

stand firmly by the belief that *no one* deserves to be tasered, are a much smaller group of advocates.

That those who want accountability for the fact that a taser is 8 times more likely to be used against a Black person than a White person are fighting an uphill struggle. Those standing on that side will always be vindicated for stating that what an individual has done is, in many ways, unimportant. It is separate to our anger which stems from living in a state in which "wrong-doing" legitimates police violence, where the police are near immune from public criticism, and that the police are armed with weapons that can kill. A state in which the police force is institutionally racist, a key factor in deciding who is framed as more 'deserving' of harm.

This article was originally published in Ceasefire Magazine.

10. 'Firearms raids - what about the children?'

Anonymous

Ever since being subjected to an armed police raid on my home, my thoughts kept going back to a single question: where is the duty of care for young people in these situations? Has there not been any prior investigation of minors in the home? Why isn't there an appropriate adult on the scene to ensure that the mental health of that innocent young person isn't permanently damaged?

At approximately 2 am in the morning I was awoken by shouting, banging, and a torch light being shone through my upstairs bedroom window. I initially thought I was dreaming, but on realising this was real and hearing shouts of "armed police," I ran down the stairs and opened the door to a gun being aimed at my forehead. I was ordered to step outside slowly with my hands in front of me, only wearing pyjamas with no shoes or socks on a freezing winter night. There was lots of shouting and aggression, "Is anyone else in the house?" Thankfully neither my son who they had come for, nor my youngest child were present. "We're sending the dog in so you need to tell us, or they will be *attacked* by the dog". I repeated that no one else was there and was led down the path, and about two houses

away, still with a gun pointed at my head, I was told to put my hands on the wall. I started shaking with a combination of fear and cold. I looked around and the road had been blocked off by police cars at each end; innocent pedestrians and motorists were being screamed at to go the other way.

It's funny the random things you think of in a situation like this: I wondered why someone was out walking their dog at this time of the morning, she looked petrified being screamed at in such an aggressive way. Then I began to think of things I was grateful for, at least neither of my children were at home, and at least it was a Friday, so I didn't have to get up for work in the morning. I think I was able to remain so calm because I only had to deal with my own emotions. I know it would have played out very differently if I had to consider the trauma of my children, especially my 10-year-old. There is no way I would have walked away from my house and allowed my youngest child to be woken up to a gun in their face and all the shouting. What would have happened in that scenario? I felt I had a lot to be grateful for in that moment. I eventually asked the

officer if I could cross my arms as I was really shaking by this point and felt very exposed. He looked me up and down and said, “yes you don’t look like you’ve got anything on you.” Another officer eventually brought me some shoes that were on the stairs.

After they had been around the house with the dog, they let me back in. Two plain clothes Xcalibre Officers came in, a male and female. I asked whether I could use the toilet, she laughed and said, “yes, but don’t be pulling any guns out.” I didn’t even honour that comment with a response. I was told I needed to leave my home as it was now a crime scene, and no one was available to do a search until between 7 am and 9 am the next morning. Fortunately, my friend answered the phone when I rang – by this time it must have been close to 3 am. The officer waited outside my bedroom door while I got dressed and then I had to leave. I felt humiliated and thought about how unnecessarily loud they were; my whole street must have been awake. My next-door

neighbour told me the following day that there were twenty-two armed officers. She had counted them through the window, even though they had also screamed at her and her daughter to move back. Clearly, they thought my son was going to come out shooting everyone in sight, even though he has never been convicted of a firearms offence in the past.

Since this traumatic event, I refer back to my original questions, what guidelines do armed police have for minors in the home? Why is no one there to put the needs of children at the forefront of all of this? As an adult now, I feel a lot of anxiety: I always leave my key in the door now in case I ever need to open it quickly again. What impact would this have had on my child? What impact has it already had on the many young people who must have been subjected to this inhumane treatment? When will these questions be answered?

11. Policing Migrants: Biotechnology as Border Agents

Laura Loyola-Hernández (Stop the Scandal)

Over the past couple of weeks, an unprecedented number of protests have erupted in the UK in support of Black Lives Matter following the murder of George Floyd in the United States. On June 27th, on the one year anniversary of Shukri Abdi’s death, a Black Muslim refugee girl, a protest was organised in her name. Hundreds of people chanting “No Justice, No Peace” and “Justice for Shukri” inundated the streets. Shukri’s tragic death signals wider issues around systemic failures by schools, the police and the UK government’s treatment of migrants, in particular Black people with precarious immigration status.

The hostile environment, a set of government policies first implemented by then Home Secretary Theresa May, has been in place since 2012 to make life so difficult in the UK that migrants would want to voluntarily leave the country. Banks, schools, landlords, doctors, nurses and universities all became border agents. The hostile environment has leaned heavily on the use of technology as a surveillance mechanism and the police as an active operating arm of it. A pilot program to use a biometric fingerprint scanning device and app connected to the Home Office

immigration database by police was launched in West Yorkshire in February 2018 (now used nationwide): anyone suspected of committing a crime and lying about their identity can be stopped in the street, have their fingerprint scanned by police on the spot, and have their details searched in both the Police and Immigration databases. Given that anyone with an immigrant status (someone on a visa, with Indefinite Leave to Remain, asylum seekers, refugees or precarious migrant status) will have their fingerprints stored in the Home Office immigration database, a potential traffic stop could end with someone being detained by Immigration Enforcement, maybe unlawfully due to an unreliable Home Office database. From our #STOPtheSCANDal campaign’s Freedom of Information request, we know that Black and Brown communities are disproportionately targeted by these searches. Liberty has warned that these technologies can deter survivors of domestic abuse in coming forward as their immigration data can be shared with the Home Office. This is particularly concerning given the astronomical increase in the number of domestic abuse cases since the COVID-19 lockdown. This is not the only consequence that

COVID-19 has had on migrant communities in the UK.

The police use of Motorola's PRONTO software (Police Reporting and Notebook Organiser, PRONTO), which includes the biometric fingerprint app, has been updated with COVID-19 penalty functions introduced among the new emergency police powers granted by the Coronavirus Bill in March. This new development will compound the unequal impact of the pandemic with the discrimination and lack of accountability embedded in policing technologies. Big Brother Watch's research, which examined fines given in England under the Coronavirus Bill, found that Asian people received at least 13% of penalty fines even though they represent 7.8% of the national population, and Black people were issued 5% of fines despite being 3.5% of England's population.

The impact of COVID-19 has already been devastating on Black, Brown and migrant communities. The COVID-19 report released by Public Health England in June demonstrates that, in comparison to white people, 'BME' people (to use the report's terminology) are more likely to die from the virus. Black people specifically are 4 times more likely to do so than the average for all ethnic groups. This percentage increases for people born outside of England. The report found that, in comparison to the all group average, people from Central and West Africa are 4.5 times more likely to die of COVID-19 while in this country. A joint report by migrant organisations and campaigns found that the hostile environment is having a

devastating impact on migrants' access to healthcare during the COVID-19 crisis. The report concluded that 57% of respondents were actively avoiding seeking medical advice because of fear of being charged, their data being shared with the Home Office, and other immigration enforcement issues. Those with precarious migrant status, often in frontline jobs, have No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) which means they are unable to access universal credit. Migrants are being forced to work despite having COVID-19 symptoms out of fear of becoming destitute or being threatened at work. During a pandemic we are only as safe as the most vulnerable in our society. Nobody should be forced to put their life at risk during a pandemic out of fear of immigration enforcement, and the police should not be working to make it harder for migrants to stay safe. These fears will only increase under the use of Schedule 21 of the Coronavirus Act, where police and immigration officers are now given the power to stop and hold anyone suspected of having the virus for 3 to 48 hours.

Many who took to the streets on June 27th in the name of Shukri Abdi put their own immigration status in jeopardy by breaking lockdown rules. It is important to remember migrants do not have the same rights when stopped by police. But until there is no more need to protest social inequalities in the streets we will continue to scream and give voice for those that can no longer chant:

**No Justice, No Peace. Justice for Shukri.
Abolish Hostile Environment. Defund the
Police.**

12. No Police in Our Schools

Remi Joseph-Salisbury (NPMP)

There should be no doubt that Boris Johnson's election victory was a monumental blow for the anti-racist left. As state-driven racisms deepen, we need to pay attention to the challenges facing communities of colour. The Tories vowed to be the party of 'law and order', and we should expect increasingly authoritarian and punitive forms of social control – including ramping up the presence of police in UK schools.

The past few years have seen calls to significantly increase the number of police officers working in schools. Among the high-profile advocates are the

children's commissioner, the head of the Metropolitan Police and a Home Affairs Select Committee on serious youth violence. While there appears to be relative (and rare) political consensus on the 'merits' of this intervention, these plans should really be a cause for concern.

Rather than making schools safer, a police presence risks irreparable damage to our learning environments. In my research on racism in schools, secondary school teachers expressed serious concerns about the detrimental impact. Teachers described the efforts they go to in

making their schools a comfortable and safe space for their students.

As one teacher from a racially diverse school in Greater Manchester explained, even though students might ‘see school as crap at the time, they see it as a safe space’. The presence of police in schools, he warned, risks disrupting this sense of safety. Particularly for students from already over-policed communities, schools-based police officers threaten to turn schools into an environment of fear, suspicion and alienation.

We know that black and Asian young people are more likely to be subject to policing practices such as stop and search. They are also more likely to be subject to school disciplinary procedures, including exclusions. It is not a leap, therefore, to suggest that students of colour are more likely to be subject to police attention in schools. Evidence from the US certainly suggests this is the case. As the American Civil Liberties Union has warned, a police presence risks turning minor incidents into criminal issues, with potentially devastating consequences.

Perhaps most troubling are the ties between schools-based police officers and the prison-industrial complex – the ever-expanding network of profiteering that governs the expansion and privatisation of prisons. The presence of police in schools facilitates the early filtering of young people towards prison.

US activists have drawn attention to this issue, with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People warning in 2005 that ‘the punitive and overzealous tools and approaches of the modern criminal justice system have seeped into our schools, serving to remove children from mainstream educational environments and funnel them onto a one-way path toward prison’. This warning should resonate here. Not only does the UK incarcerate an even higher proportion of its black population than the US, according to a 2017 review by David Lammy for the justice ministry, but it also has the second-highest proportion of its prisoners in private prisons (after Australia), at 20 per cent.

With the government committed to increasing police powers, expanding prisons and placing more police in schools, we need to pay urgent attention to the pipeline feeding young people of colour into the expanding prison system.

The long histories of institutional racism in both policing and schooling indicate that schools-based police officers are likely to intensify the racism facing students of colour.

It is important that we oppose these plans and call for our schools to be free from the presence of police officers.

This article was originally published in Red Pepper Magazine

13. No Police in Schools – an Educator’s Perspective

Vik Chechi-Ribeiro (NEU Black Members Organizing Forum)

The criminal justice system is institutionally racist. We know this because black people are more likely to die in custody, be stopped and searched, receive longer prison sentences and are over represented in children and adult prison populations.

The education system is institutionally racist. We know this because black children are more likely to be excluded, attain less than other cohorts, be under predicted at GCSE and A-levels and be victim to behaviour and other school policies.

Society is institutionally racist. We know this as half of black children are living in poverty, have less access to housing, secure employment, pay and are more likely to live in areas of deprivation. These market failures along racial lines have been highlighted during this coronavirus pandemic.

Therefore, it’s extremely worrying that the Greater Manchester Mayor is looking to expand the use of school-based police officers. Schools are places of learning where children should feel free to express themselves, make mistakes, reflect and grow. As our children return into schools, they need support not policing.

School-based police officers raise the possibility of the criminalisation of behaviour, students being stopped and searched, compilation of gang databases and surveillance of an already over policed group. Police officers have no place in schools and it's not on educators to provide PR or relationship building for them.

It's important to understand where the demand for police officers has come from. It's a law and order response to a decade of austerity and an education system moving towards 'zero-discipline' approaches driven by exam results and league tables. I would suggest it's much more effective to have increased funding and support for pastoral support, social workers, teacher training, restorative justice and independent student councils. And in the community campaigning for properly funded accessible housing, health and social care, and secure employment.

As trade unionists, what can we do? As workers we should be seeking to transform education and society and assert our right to anti-racist spaces.

It is for trade unionists to collectivise an issue and collectively bargain on issues of equality. It's how we inspire our members and bring in wider layers of workers into the union.

Speak with your fellow union members and then your Headteacher on the role of school-based police officers. They may disagree with you but part of a democratic workplace is highlighting the issue and persuading others. The right to anti-racist workplaces isn't a debate but it's important we show leadership on the issue.

Our North West Black members organizing forum (NW BMOF) has produced a motion that you can use in schools to raise the matter with your members. If you need more information read and share Dr Remi John-Salisbury's report for the Runnymede Trust titled 'Race and racism in secondary schools'. Finally follow and support *Kids of Colour* and *Northern Police Monitoring Project* who our union black members group are supporting.





Northern Police Monitoring Project
is an independent, grassroots collective that
aims to educate, empower and organise the
people of Greater Manchester in the face of
police harassment, intimidation, violence and
racism.

For more information about NPMP check out:

Website: www.npolicemonitor.co.uk

Twitter: [@npolicemonitor](https://twitter.com/npolicemonitor)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/npolicemonitor/

Instagram: [Instagram.com/npolicemonitor](https://www.instagram.com/npolicemonitor)

Email: npolicemonitor@gmail.com