

to which common schools should be required to reinforce existing religious and cultural beliefs (333).

Each chapter ends with a rich source of bibliographical references to which the interested reader may turn.

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Race and education: policy and politics in Britain, by Sally Tomlinson, Maidenhead, Open University Press and McGraw-Hill Education, 2008, 248 pp., £24.99 (hdbk), ISBN 978-0335-2230-77

This book is a breathtaking tour de force of 'race' and education in Britain. It focuses on the wider political and policy context which shaped the government response to educating the 'new' postcolonial and migrant populations in the UK. It presents a detailed forensic account of the systematic racism experienced by black and Asian peoples in the British education system in the last 50 years – ever since post-war migration brought citizens of Empire to our 'white' shores. The experience of these 'dark strangers' is a lesser-told story in our history of education in Britain, but as the book shows it is one which is firmly rooted in the deeply racist political intent of our times.

This is an authoritative and comprehensive account by a well-established and renowned scholar in the field of sociology of race and education. There is no better person to tell the story than Sally Tomlinson – Emeritus Professor of Education at Goldsmiths College and Senior Research Fellow at the University of Oxford. Tomlinson, an impeccable scholar with world class credentials, has been in the front line of the political struggle against racism in our schools for over 50 years, the time span of the book. This book represents her life reflections, and if anyone knows what an education system for a multicultural society should look like in twenty-first century, it is Sally Tomlinson.

The book is less concerned with the pedagogic practice of multicultural education in the classroom, and more focused on the major conflicts and contradictions of successive governments' legislation, policies and practices since the 1960s. In Chapters 1 and 2, Tomlinson shows how the roots of race and educational disadvantage were sown in 1960s and 1970s. Racist immigration policies that encouraged new flows of much needed labour from the colonies were marked by an underlying post imperial fear and a deep resentment of the black presence in British society. With an education system moving toward comprehensivization in a time of increasing economic recession, there were race and class conflicts on the streets and in schools. As chapter 3 and 4 show, the ascendancy of Thatcherism in the 1980s and 1990s marked the new right wing political ideology of the market. It was a time of racial tensions symbolized by the Brixton and Toxteth uprisings and the Satanic Verses. Ironically this racial and religious unrest opened doors for ground breaking reports such as Rampton, Swann and Scarman which highlighted the economic and social consequences of oppressive racism in schools and across society. However by the 1990s race became the 'absent presence' tucked away in a discourse which was now more about failing schools and colour blind policies. It is here that Tomlinson wears her Weberian position on her sleeve and points us toward understanding the importance of race as a class category. Symptomatic inequalities in housing, employment and education for migrants and children of migrants has led to poverty and

disadvantage: a state of affairs which still remains unaddressed in the government's new rhetoric of social cohesion.

Chapter 5 on New Labour begins with Tomlinson's excellent prose describing 'the giddy rush of public enthusiasm' for change that marked the new era 1997–2003. However the commitment to social and racial justice was short lived and the revival of the 'present presence of race' now set different groups apart. The focus is now on the differential gaps in achievement among ethnic minorities in the context of white working class failure. Chapter 6 takes us right up to 2007 and shows how the climate created by the War on Terror and the ensuing social cohesion agenda has further polarized religious, ethnic and white groups – and Muslims in particular. Black and Asian parents' expectations have been met with disillusion and disappointment as market competition and diversity of school choice has exacerbated social and racial segregation.

Tomlinson's conclusions are unequivocal. She argues that the unequal possession of economic, social and cultural capital gives different social classes and in particular, ethnic minorities unequal chances in the competition for the best schools and universities. Racist political ideology mirrored in racist government policy is the central mechanism by which racist cycles of educational disadvantage perpetuate. Her detailed evidence and painstaking plotting of successive government legislation, policies and events leaves little doubt as to the salience of her sustained argument. Her observation is that education plays a key role in tackling the manifestations of inequality, racism and discrimination. However it still rests on the shoulders of our political leaders to make the change... and in Britain we really do still need 'change we can believe in'.

This is a book that tells what really happened in the corridors of power, on the streets, and in the classrooms – for all those who don't know, can't remember, or don't want to remember. It is a must read for all those who care about educating our young people for a just and global world. It is already on my course reading lists!

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