

## What the lobbies want

Key points from reactions to the Consultation Document

### rail lobby

#### British Rail

"Basic network," 8000 miles  
Support as necessary for this, plus subsidy for uneconomic services—including commuters

More investment, with infrastructure grant  
Transitional subsidies over next few years (eg, for freight)

#### National Union of Railwaymen (NUR)

No mileage cuts  
50 per cent increase in investment  
BR control of National Carriers, Freightliners  
Curbs on lorry licensing

#### The drivers' union (ASLEF)

No cuts in BR subsidy or investment  
Subsidies to persuade car users to go public  
Nationalise road haulage  
Physical direction of traffic as between modes

### road lobby

#### Road Haulage Association

General support  
No special juggernaut tax  
Freight Transport Association  
No special juggernaut tax  
No transfer of National Carriers, Freightliners

#### National Freight Corporation

No loss of National Carriers' Freightliners

#### Automobile Association (AA)

Cut rail subsidy  
Increase road investment  
No additional road taxes  
National Bus Company  
Long-term financial support  
Maintain present organisation  
No major changes in licensing  
Association of Road Passenger Transport  
No major changes in licensing

### local authorities

#### Association of County Councils

Take over bus licensing  
Association of Metropolitan Authorities  
Take over Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs) in conurbations

### environmentalists

#### Transport 2000

Reject rail closures  
Heavier fuel taxes; extra tax on juggernauts  
Restrict car use

Transfer maximum traffic to rail

#### Friends of the Earth

Plan transport and land use together  
Promote anti-mobility policies  
Replace vehicle taxes by fuel taxes

#### CPRE

Plan transport and land use together  
Promote anti-mobility policies  
Transfer heavy freight to rail

#### Town and Country Planning Association

Plan transport and land use together  
Develop polycentric cities with orbital roads

### political

#### Labour Party

Opposition to document's approach  
Extra rail subsidies  
Partial re-nationalisation of road haulage

#### Fabian Society

General support of document  
Central infrastructure spending on common lines for road and rail  
Low-cost innovations

Friends of the Earth conclude that the document has got its whole philosophic basis wrong. Simultaneously taking on the pro-rail and pro-road lobbies, they demand a transport policy that is based on minimal movement. To that end, they suggest replacing vehicle taxes by fuel taxes—thus making motorists more conscious of distance. No one could accuse the Friends of trying to win friends and influence people. And their approach flies in the face of the demand-responsive populism of the consultative document, which powerfully argues that higher future levels of car use are inevitable. Of all the reactions, that of the Friends is the most iconoclastic—and, in a politically charged atmosphere, most likely to be ignored.

Since environmentalists tend towards the political left (or, put it another way, the political left tends to be environmentalist), it is not surprising that similar large rifts appear in the political evidence. But here they become almost schizophrenic. The Labour Party subcommittee demands an extreme *dirigiste* approach, with a National Transport Authority to switch traffic back to rail, cuts in the roads programme, extra rail subsidies, and at least a partial re-nationalisation of road haulage. (Groups to the left of Labour, interestingly, were not even consulted; and the Tories have been silent.) The Fabian Society commends the managed market approach of the consultation document. It wants an attack on low productivity in public transport through innovations like light railways—moves which are very unlikely to succeed in winning the hearts of ASLEF or the NUR.

At the end of the day, the decision lies with the man on the 18th floor—and finally with the cabinet. But perhaps mercifully for both, they may find there is little choice. We are faced with demands for heavy cuts in public spending—and the massive rail subsidy is an obvious target. Since British Rail is more than happy to acquiesce in removing about one third of the system, that provides an obvious solution. There is one small snag: a very large part of the cuts will be in Scotland and in Wales. But the labour force here is, by definition, scattered in rural areas, and does not offer the same political challenge as would massive redundancies in Derby or Crewe. The consumer interest could be met by replacement bus services—which, if the document's calculations are right, would be cheap at the price.

There would need to be countervailing measures to save yet more money on the roads side—and to draw the NUR-ASLEF fire. A differential tax on heavy lorries would yield useful extra revenue, with a fairly minimal and indirect effect on shop prices. A few extra pence duty on fuel would be a useful piece of the package. And there could be yet another ritual re-phasing of the national roads programme, delaying the completion of the strategic network until the early 1990s—though, for a government committed to help industry become more efficient, that would hardly make much logical sense.

The casualties will be rail workers at remote depots in the Scottish highlands and the Welsh borders, London commuters and Inter-City travellers who will certainly face another price rise, the road hauliers (marginally), and the people living in villages astride juggernaut-laden roads. Whether collectively they add up to a politically significant force is a moot point. The package appeals to British Rail's new chief, Peter Parker, and the National Bus Company, and overseas bankers, and a goodly proportion of the cabinet—which is what now matters. But the cry from Labour's grassroots may be terrible to hear.

# Young Asians between two cultures

Muhammad Anwar

'English children of my own age have a lot more freedom than I have.'  
One girl's comment shows the conflict between young Asians and their parents.

The children of Asian parents born or brought up in Britain are a generation caught between two cultures. They live in the culture of their parents at home, and are taught a different one in school, the neighbourhood, and at work. Their world is not the "old" or the "new" but both. Parents cannot fully understand their children; children rarely fully understand their parents. Stress and conflict inevitably arise between the generations.

There are a number of symptoms of this kind of stress. For instance, the *Daily Telegraph* reported the "traumatic clash" between Asian immigrants and their children: "The parents cannot understand why their children wish to give up the culture they have held for centuries, and the children cannot understand why their parents are old-fashioned, illiterate, embarrassing and will not let them have boy and girl friends." The Asian press often carries articles on the problems of the younger generation of Asians and publishes letters on the subject from both parents and children. Asian organisations have expressed the concern of the Asian community about the generation gap and about the needs of young Asians.

Is the Asian parents' authority over their children, which can often lead to unhappiness, tension and rebellion, a special case? Research shows that other groups from different backgrounds have been in similar situations. John Brown, in *The Un-Melting Pot*, writing about the case of young Italians in Bedford, says: "The immigrants cling fast to southern Italy, to break the bonds of traditional culture and merge into Englishness. The violence of reaction against the parents is already causing profound unhappiness and could well go on to create a formidable record of suffering and even of delinquency."

The Community Relations Commission has carried out a study to find out what difficulties young people of Asian descent encounter by living in a society whose predominant culture is different from that of their parents. Altogether, 1,117 Asian young people, 944 parents (from nine areas) and 40 young people who had left home, were interviewed, plus 200 people who had special knowledge of the Asian community (from 24 areas). I shall deal here mainly with the issues relating to family and culture. There are now, by the way, about one million Asians in Britain. The main religious groups are Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims.

The traditional family system in the Asian sub-continent is the joint/extended family. This kind of family consists of a group, usually of three or more generations, with a complex set of mutual obligations. They usually pool their income, and expenditure is made from a common purse. Brothers share land, business and property, work together and often live together. In some cases where one or two members of the family are working abroad, often the case with Asians in this country, they still maintain these obligations and hold together as a

joint family. Decisions are made jointly and authority depends on age and sex.

Because of the nature of migration and immigration restrictions, Asian extended families in Britain are less common than in their countries of origin. Households are usually of two generations. Grandparents are less frequently found in Britain, though sometimes they come for a visit and some have come as dependants. Out of 1,427 Asian households covered in our study, 67 per cent are living in Britain as nuclear families of parents and immediate children and 33 per cent as extended families.

The prestige of the family was almost unanimously regarded as being sacrosanct. When asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement, "I would not like to damage the prestige of my family," no more than 5 per cent of any group of respondents believed that they would be prepared to do this. Ninety four per cent of the young Asians in every group took the view that the family was important. A Sikh boy explained that he would never discredit his family: "It is against my principles." A Sikh girl remarked that she respected the prestige of her family, "because family's name is very dear to me."

Both parents and young people felt that Asian children respect their parents more than their English counterparts. Nine out of ten parents and children alike stated that they felt Asian children have more respect for their parents than white children. Many commented on the importance that Asians attach to bringing up children to respect their parents. One Bengali Muslim boy pointed out: "because in our religion it says, our parents are next to God [in terms of respect] and we respect them." Another related the respect of the parents to discipline and what parents do for children to bring them up, "because we have been disciplined from the very beginning. The parents do a great deal for you and so you must respect them."

An overwhelming majority of both parents and young people—eight out of ten—believed that "Asians prefer to live as joint families" (even though our study showed only one third to be actually doing so). Only 14 per cent of both parents and young people disagreed. There are two reasons for preferring the extended family system in principle: the traditional and the pragmatic, "traditionally families live together" or "so that people can help each other and members of families rely on each other." But most of the children thought that they would not do this in practice.

Nonetheless, a Muslim boy said: "I have a duty to look after my parents. After all, they have spent all their lives making life better for us." The main reasons for preferring a nuclear family were privacy, independence and "having a home of one's own."

Of the religious groups, the Muslims are best catered for in terms of religious facilities and Hindus seem to have the greatest difficulty. For Hindus, one

Muhammad Anwar is a reference officer at the Community Relations Commission.

parent in five said that facilities for religious teaching simply do not exist.

One place where Asian religions can be taught is in schools. Eighty per cent of both parents and children agreed that "there is not sufficient formal teaching of Asian religions in English schools." One Punjabi Sikh father commented, "Local education committees do not take an interest in Asian religious teaching." Many Asians feel that there should be religious education facilities at school, believing children may otherwise be influenced by Christianity.

Parents were marginally more concerned about facilities for practising their religion than young people. However, there were substantial differences between communities in different areas. Among various religious groups, Hindus said that they faced more problems than Sikhs and Muslims. There were only marginal differences between parents and young people and no difference at all among Muslims. Almost all the respondents who felt that they faced difficulties in practising their religion mentioned that the mosque or temple was too far away.

Religion was expected to be a problem area, particularly over diet restrictions, arranged marriages, dress, religious education and the difficulties created for Asian women and girls by the observation of Purdah, veiling, and so on. Conflicts in this area are acute among Muslims and especially girls. Meetings between men and women are limited—apart from immediate kin—as outlined in the Koran. The sexes are also segregated before or at the time of puberty.

Some community workers said that Asian children go to religious services to please their family and this indirectly creates conflict and tension. To find out how far this was true, young people were asked how they reacted to the statement, "I don't like having to go to religious services but I do it just to please my family." More than two thirds of the young people disagreed with it and there were no substantial differences between religious groups. For example, 19 per cent of the young people claimed they went because they wanted to go and a further 9 per cent claimed to enjoy going to religious occasions.

We asked the young people if their parents were more religious than they were and 78 per cent agreed this was the case. They thought their parents prayed more than they do, but had the advantage of having had more religious teaching than they have had.

To discover how far parents and young people differ in their attitudes over clothes, we asked whether "most Asians would like to wear more

western clothes." A majority in almost every group agreed. More Asian girls held this view than boys. Between the parents and young people, the greatest difference was among Sikhs—among whom 73 per cent of young people agreed with the proposition as compared with 59 per cent of parents. Personal preference and a desire to be "fashionable" seem to be important reasons for this. One Muslim boy commented that Asian girls would like to wear more western clothes, "I think because of the fashion and they don't like to be left out." A Hindu father said: "Everyone around them [Asian girls] is wearing western clothes and they feel they are odd if they wear Asian clothes."

Attitudes to the question, "Do you see anything wrong with Asian girls wearing western clothes?" were extremely varied (see table 1). Young people were less likely to see anything wrong than their parents. Girls favoured the proposition more than boys, but a majority of Muslims, both parents and young people rejected the idea of Asian girls wearing western clothes.

Among those who saw no harm in wearing western clothes there was a general feeling that the clothes of the host society should be worn, and that personal preferences should be indulged. A Punjabi Hindu girl remarked, "If you are living in the west, you have to be prepared to do things as western people do." Religion was given as the main reason for disagreeing, particularly by the Muslim respondents. A Bengali Muslim father said: "Our religion does not allow us. We should stick to our dress." Several others said that they did not feel western clothes were decent and the cultural traditions of the Asian community did not allow them.

There was disagreement among both white and Asian experts on the question of arranged marriages. Some of them felt that as the children become westernised, the system will weaken. "The young girls who are here will want to be the same as the others" [whites]. Others felt that Asian parents are beginning to adapt to the views of their children and that a compromise over an arranged marriage may be reached. One of them, who seemed optimistic, said, "Nowadays the arranged marriage is usually with the consent of both parties, the boy and the girl."

Most parents and young people favoured endogamy (ie, marrying somebody from the same group), but a quarter of adolescents opposed to it. Over half the parents and young people did not like the arrangement of marriages in the sub-continent and there was great opposition (six out of ten who were asked) to returning girls to the sub-continent to get married. One in three young people did not want parents to arrange their own marriages and four out of ten did not wish to arrange their own children's marriage. Young people generally said that arranged marriages are more popular with their parents than their own age group. Those under 15 were less in favour of the idea that their marriage should be arranged by their parents than their older brothers and sisters.

In answer to the proposition: "More young people will rebel against arranged marriages," 57 per cent of parents and 67 per cent of young people foresaw the breakdown of the system of arranged marriages. Among the religious groups, Hindu and Sikh parents tended to be more in agreement with the statement than Muslim parents.

Most of those who agreed with the statement gave their reasons as the "western influence" and the freedom and example of their British contemporaries. The higher proportion of girls who agreed with

the proposition felt that "times are changing and traditions are not being carried on."

Parental restrictions can cause conflict between parents and children wishing to adapt to western freedom and leisure. Many are directed limiting the opportunities for the sexes to mix. Asian parents feel that their children, girls in particular, must be protected from undesirable relationships. It is generally accepted by Asian children that English children of their own age have more freedom: 68 per cent of young people agreed with the statement, "English children of my own age have a lot more freedom than I have." Those who agreed with the statement gave several reasons. One Punjabi Hindu girl explained, "Parents disapprove of the western habits which my friends practice—for example, boy-friends. I resent this because I feel I am missing something which I should not and I have to watch my friends having a better time than I do." A Muslim girl expressed a similar view. "Because they [English] can do what they like, we are not allowed to." This clearly shows that young Asians value the freedom of English children and feel frustrated.

Most adolescents (55 per cent) are convinced that their own children will have more freedom. Their response came from personal experience of what they considered to be harsh restrictions. It is amongst the Muslim community that this issue is most important. They hold the strongest view about restricting their daughters' movements, and older adolescents appear to resent this. In particular girls complained about parents' restrictions on their movements as compared with their brothers.

Another aspect related to women's freedom is going out to work. There are indications that language, religious and traditional views restrict Asian women going out to work. While there was agreement between the views of adults and adolescents on this, men and women appear to disagree. There was a greater demand from girls (eight out of ten) that they should be allowed to work, than among male members of the family. Reluctance to let women work was the most common amongst Muslim males.

To find out about inter-generation conflict, we asked: "Do you find you ever argue with parents/children." Some 39 per cent of parents and 53 per cent of young people said they had family disagreements (see table 2). Now, obviously, all children, whether Asians or white, have disagreements with their parents. Nonetheless, the areas of difference seem very wide. The main issues mentioned by young people more frequently than the parents were "things done in spare time/leisure" (24 per cent), "friends/dating" (19 per cent), marriage (11 per cent), "clothes" (21 per cent). This last was particularly mentioned by older girls. These differences cause increasing numbers to leave home, while those who stay are under considerable stress and strain.

There is a social and psychological gap between them and their parents due to different social environment and education. The world at home is not that of school and community. Young people are part of both worlds.

How far is this situation understood by those policy-makers and practitioners who can help the Asian community? We found these "specialists" preoccupied by their own narrow professional responsibilities. One of the few groups who take the wider view are community relations officers, who relate issues of culture to general problems of discrimination and prejudice. There is universal agreement that discrimination in employment and housing are the main problems facing the Asians.

Both these factors cause conflict with parents and the other institutions in society. One illustration was the recent trouble in Southall: initially a demonstration against a murder, it became a protest about treatment by the police, discrimination against them in getting employment, and parental ideas and attitudes which prevented young Asians participating as full members of society. Authority was resented and the pleas of older Asian leaders and parents were ignored. The same pattern has been repeated in east London, Blackburn and other places where young Asians, humiliated by being treated as "second-class" citizens, revolt against it and their own community which appears to accept it.

John Brown, *The Un-Melting Pot* (Macmillan, 1970)

Raymond Firth, "Family and kinship in industrial society" (*Sociological Review*, Monograph No. 8, 1967)

Roger Ballard, "Family organisation among the Sikhs in Britain" (*New Community*, No. 2, winter 1972-73)

Verity Saifullah Khan, "Pakistani women in Britain" (*New Community*, vol 5, No. 1-2, 1976)

Peter Evans, *The Attitudes of Young Immigrants* (Runnymede Trust, 1971)

D. Hiro, *Black British White British* (Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1971)

The full CRC study, *Between Two Cultures*, is published today by the CRC, 15-16 Bedford Street, London WC2, price £1

# Who are the IMF, anyway?

Brian Tew

Denis Healey is now likely to get his loan, on IMF conditions. The fund has become one of the main commanding heights of the British economy.

With appropriate professions of good behaviour, duly incorporated in a Letter of Intent, Britain's current application for substantial help from the International Monetary Fund, the sixth in the last 20 years, has given her a \$3.9 billion stand-by, to be drawn on as required in 1977 to support sterling in the foreign exchange market. But during the Great Debate on this, little has been publicly said on the origin and purpose of this institution, whose best customer we have been ever since it began to do business in earnest.

The IMF, like its sister institution the World Bank, is a creature of the Bretton Woods conference in 1944. Its establishment had already been foreshadowed by the publication in 1943 of the British Keynes plan and the American White plan. In the event, the Bretton Woods charter followed much more closely the latter plan. But the Keynes plan made proposals about laying on extra reserves, which went

much beyond the 1944 agreement. In many ways they pointed the way to the first amendment, adopted in 1969, providing for the Special Drawing Rights scheme.

The Fund set up shop in Washington in March 1947. But its business was desultory until it mounted a big rescue operation for sterling and the franc after the Suez affair in 1956. The membership now totals 128. The most important non-members are Switzerland and all the communist countries except Rumania and Yugoslavia.

The Fund is required by its charter to act in two main roles. First, it has to set a code of international behaviour for its members, and to try to ensure that it is respected. This code mainly concerns international payment restrictions and exchange rates. The second role is to be an international financial institutions for its members, supplementing the official reserves of gold and foreign exchange they have

Brian Tew is Midland Bank Professor of Money and Banking, University of Nottingham

Table 1: I don't see anything wrong with Asian girls wearing western clothes

	parents			young people				
	all Asian parents	young people	boys Sikh	boys Hindu	girls Muslim	girls Sikh	male Hindu	female Muslim
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	57	68	54	77	36	75	85	45
Don't know	5	5	8	6	4	5	5	5
Disagree	38	27	38	17	60	20	10	50
Total	944	1,117	220	323	358	254	391	426

Table 2: Do you ever argue with your parents/child?

	all Asian parents	young people	15-		16+		parents	parents
			%	%	%	%		
Agree	39	53	45	52	51	64	36	42
Disagree	58	45	53	47	43	34	61	53
Don't know	3	2	3	1	6	2	3	5
Total	944	1,117	185	281	175	243	586	358