

Damn it or fear it, the forbidden truth is an insurrection in Britain

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Global Research, August 20, 2011

[jpilger.com](#) 20 August 2011

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

On a warm spring day, strolling in south London, I heard demanding voices behind me. A police van disgorged a posse of six or more, who waved me aside. They surrounded a young black man who, like me, was ambling along. They appropriated him; they rifled his pockets, looked in his shoes, inspected his teeth. Their thuggery affirmed, they let him go with the barked warning there would be a next time.

For the young at the bottom of the pyramid of wealth and patronage and poverty that is modern Britain, mostly the black, the marginalised and resentful, the envious and hopeless, there is never surprise. Their relationship with authority is integral to their obsolescence as young adults. Half of all black British youth between the ages of 18 and 24 are unemployed, the result of deliberate policies since Margaret Thatcher oversaw the greatest transfer of wealth from the bottom to the top in British history. Forget plasma TVs, this was panoramic looting.

Such is the truth of David Cameron's "sick society", notably its sickest, most criminal, most feral "pocket": the square mile of the City of London where, with political approval, the banks and super-rich have trashed the British economy and the lives of millions. This is fast becoming unmentionable as we succumb to propaganda once described by the American black leader Malcolm X thus: "If you're not careful the newspapers will have you hating the oppressed and loving the people doing the oppressing."

As they lined up to bay their class bigotry and hypocrisy in parliament, barely a handful of MPs spoke this truth. Heirs to Edmund Burke's 18th century rants against the "mob rule" of a "swinish multitude", not one referred to previous rebellions in Brixton, Tottenham and Liverpool in the 1980s when Lord Scarman reported that "complex political, social and economic factors" had caused a "disposition towards violent protest" and recommended urgent remedial action. Instead, Labour and Liberal bravehearts called for water cannon and everything draconian: among them the Labour MP Hazel Blears. Remember her notorious expenses? None made the obvious connection between the greatest inequality since records were kept, a police force that routinely abuses a section of the population and kills with impunity and a permanent state of colonial warfare with an arms trade to match: the apogee of violence.

It hardly seemed coincidental that on the day before Cameron raged against "phony human rights", NATO aircraft – which include British bombers sent by him – killed a reported 85 civilians in a peaceful Libyan town. These were people in their homes, children in their schools. Watch the BBC's man on the spot trying his best to dispute the evidence of his

eyes, just as the political and media class sought to discredit the evidence of a civilian bloodbath in Iraq as epic as the Rwanda genocide. Who are the criminals?

This is not in any way to excuse the violence of the rioters, many of whom were opportunistic, mean, cruel, nihilistic and often vicious in their glee: an authentic reflection of a system of greed and self-interest to which scores of parasitic money-movers, “entrepreneurs”, Murdochites, corrupt MPs and bent coppers have devoted themselves.

On 4 August, the BBC’s Fiona Armstrong – aka Lady MacGregor of MacGregor – interviewed the writer Darcus Howe, who dared use the forbidden word, “insurrection”.

Armstrong: “Mr. Howe, you say you are not shocked [by the riots]? Does this mean you condone what happened?”

Howe: “Of course not ... what I am concerned about is a young man Mark Duggan ... the police blew his head off.”

Armstrong: “Mr. Howe, we have to wait for the official enquiry to say things like that. We don’t know what happened to Mr. Duggan. We have to wait for the police report.”

On 8 August, the Independent Police Complaints Commission acknowledged there was “no evidence” that Duggan had fired a shot at police. Duggan was shot in the face on 4 August by a police officer with a Heckler and Koch MP5 sub-machine gun – the same weapon supplied by Britain to dictatorships that use them against their own people. I saw the result in East Timor where Indonesian troops also blew the heads off people with these state-of-the-art weapons supplied by both Tory and Labour governments.

An eyewitness to Duggan’s killing told the Evening Standard, “About three or four police officers had [him] pinned on the ground at gunpoint. They were really big guns and then I heard four loud shots. The police shot him on the floor.”

This is how the Metropolitan Police shot dead Jean Charles de Menezes on the floor of a London Underground train. And there was Robert Stanley and Ian Tomlinson, and many more. The police lied about Duggan’s killing as they have lied about the others. Since 1998, more than 330 people have died in police custody and not one officer has been convicted. Where is the political and media outrage about this “culture of fear”?

“Funny, too,” noted the journalist Melanie MacFadyean, “that the police did nothing while some serious looting went on – surely not because they wanted everyone to see that cutting the police force meant more crime?”

Still, the brooms have arrived. In an age of public relations as news, the clean-up campaign, however well-meant by many people, can also serve the government’s and media goal of sweeping inequality and hopelessness under gentrified carpets, with cheery volunteers armed with their brand new brooms and pointedly described as “Londoners” as if the rest are aliens. The otherwise absent Boris Johnson waved his new broom. Another Etonian, the former PR man to an asset stripper and current prime minister up to his neck in Hackgate, would surely approve.

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