In the second part of our series In the second part of our series on race and the criminal justice system, Detective Inspector Paul Wilson, chairman of the Black Police Association, tells JULIA LLEWELLYN SMITH that police racism is rife — but it will not be solved by a resignation letter from Sir Paul Condon

OMORROW, the Metro-politan Police will hold a press conference about the Macpherson Report on the murder of Stephen Lawrence. Sitting on the podium will be many of the charac-ters that this tragedy has turned into household names, including the much-criticised Commissioner Sir Paul Condon.

Paul Condon.
Yet only one black person is expected to be there — Inspector Paul Wilson, 40, one of London's 20 senior black officers — and one of senior black officers — and one of the very few black officers any-where prepared to stand up and cri-ciese the Met for its "institutional racism", a culture "where black people aren't considered important, where what they are saying simply isn't taken on board".

Paul, chairman of the Black

Police Association, has had plenty of first-hand experience of it during his 16 years as a London bobby.

"In the old days racism in the organisation was quite overt," he says when we meet at the BPA headquarters in central London. "You would frequently hear colleagues saying things like 'We have just dealt with that nigger."

On the street, people's attitudes

were no more enlightened. always remember going to a

robbery incident when I was a young PC in Croydon in Surrey," he says. "The victim's friend said, it's no good you dealing with it because it's one of your lot that did it'. I said What? You mean a police officer?"
He gives a hollow laugh. There were to put the BPA in the spotlight. "It

## Why the black voice of the Met does not believe Sir Paul Condon should stand down

to be 10 years of such incidents, before Paul set up the BPA. He had the support of every black senior officer in the country but still the process was "painful and emotive". "The Met said it was on our side but then it would ask us things like

did we have to call ourselves black, because that sounded a bit militant? They would have preferred some word like 'ethnic

Then when we launched in 1994.

the Commissioner spoke for about 15 minutes about how he was not going to sit on the fence and how going to sit on the fence and how this was the only way forward." He laughs again. "So there was all this razzmatazz, and then... nothing at all. We were just left to drift." Sadly, it took the Lawrence murder

nas given us a profile that we could never have envisaged," Paul says. He and fellow BPA member Inspector Leroy Logan both submit-ted evidence to the Macpherson

ted evidence to the Macpherson Inquiry, saying the bungled investi-gation into Stephen's murder had provided the public with a "graphic and perhaps unique insight into the insensitivity, ignorance and plain apathy towards race and ethnicity by members of the Met".

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Examples included the typical reaction of white officers to a black man driving a smart car — "Who

reaction of white officers to a black man driving a smart car — "Who did he rob to get that?" "The problem," says Paul "is that most white officers go home every night to the suburbs of Kent and Surrey but they go to work in an inner-city environment, where their

based on confrontational situations. The only black people they meet are either suspects or victims of crime. It gives them a rather distorted view It helps them to form negative stereotypes of black people."

CCORDING to Paul, every aspect of police culture needs to be examined -however subtle. "You even need to look at pictures on the wall. How many posi-tive images of black people do you see in a police station? The only ones there are have the word suspect underneath. I told Sir Paul that. He just laughed. I said, 'Look, I'm not saying you should have a picture of saying you should have a picture Bob Marley on your office wall

racial-awareness training hours of racial-awareness training under his belt should laugh at such a suggestion, gives some indication of how far the Met has to go before its "lip-service", as the BPA calls it, towards racial issues becomes

sómething more concrete.

But, unlike many critics, Paul does not believe Condon should resign in the wake of the Macpherson Report. "We are not suggesting Condon goes. We would prefer he continued to get on with the job he's promised to do. He's probably the best-suited person for that job," he says.

On the walls of the spartan office is a picture of Norwell Roberts, the first black officer to join the Met in coincidentally taken in the yard outside. "Look who's standing

