

# It's time to tell the good news about 'racist' Britain

So, according to the latest inquiry by the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), headed by Sir David Calvert-Smith, formerly director of public prosecutions, the police service is still institutionally racist. It was all too predictable that Trevor Philips, chairman of the CRE would seize the opportunity presented by *The Secret Policeman* to hold yet another probe into the service that, for the last thirty years, has attracted most of the opprobrium of those who maintain that Britain is a deeply racist society. Philips, incidentally, managed to brush off his own recent *faux pas* when, writing in *The Times*, he lumped "policemen" along with the BNP and the lumpen proletariat. Unable to claim that he was misquoted, he fell back on "misunderstood" to explain a gaffe that said a lot about the lofty disdain of those inside the magic circle for those on the outside. Rick Naylor, the president of the Superintendents Association, must have known that his call for Philips to resign would go unheeded, but at least the CRE supremo now knows that if you prick police officers, they bleed.

Instead of all these piecemeal probes into our national institutions, isn't the time right for a comprehensive high-level examination of British society as a whole? Rather than picking-off the usual suspects, let us see what progress Britain has made over the last fifty years, during which the country has undergone

what is probably the largest transformation of its population of any country in the world? I believe that such an exercise would show that Great Britain has assimilated its ethnic minorities in a manner that, far from revealing deep-seated racism, is a tribute to the tolerance and fairness of the indigenous population.

To have assimilated ethnic minorities as we have and to have done so with a minimum of social unrest and without the manifestations of murderous racial hatred that are inseparable from the conditions existing in so many of the countries from which some of those generations came, is a testament to the humanity and decency of the vast majority of the nation. In all this time, those who have preached racial hatred and white supremacy have been contained within the lunatic fringe of British politics, their isolated temporary successes being nothing more than the safety valve on a cauldron of localised grievances.

We are told that one of the biggest issues in the imminent election will be immigration, or rather the public's widespread perception that the country is being swamped by illegal immigrants and bogus asylum seekers. The negativity surrounding the conflicting statistics and sensationalised reporting in the tabloids is the most depressing feature of what is a matter of huge importance. Yet, to judge from the radio phone-ins, which



Tony Judge, founder of *Police* magazine in 1968

have become a barometer of public opinion, there are very few voices raised against the principle of giving asylum to genuine victims of persecution, and the same people who are alarmed at the prospect of still more immigration acknowledge that without the incomers, vital public services would not be able to function. The biggest threat to the climate of tolerance that still prevails, is the widespread belief that the machinery for dealing with failed asylum seekers and illegal immi-

gration just does not work.

The police service, including the Federation, has to make a considered response to the Calvert-Smith report, but this is not the time for police officers to don yet another hair shirt.

Today's police service has every reason to be proud of what has been achieved so far to achieve a fully inclusive service. In my humble, if old-fashioned opinion, the same can be said for our country as a whole.

