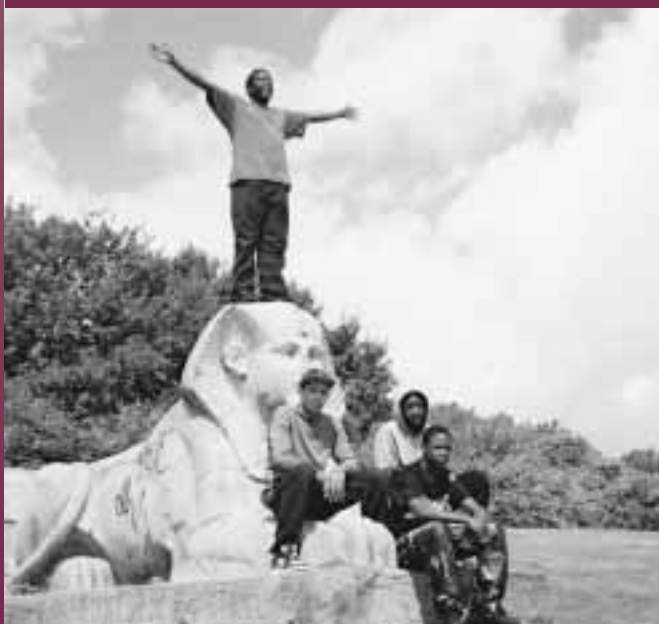


# Realising the Vision

## Progress and further challenges



## Foreword

The Report on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain had a difficult birth, and was the subject of much misunderstanding and misrepresentation. This was so for two main reasons.

First, the Report criticised the currently dominant conservative, liberal and Marxist conceptualisations of the place of ethnic minorities in British society, and offered instead a pluralist view that sought to reconcile the conflicting demands of equality and difference as well as those of social cohesion and respect for minority identities. This required the Report to reformulate old questions, raise new ones, and to develop a new vocabulary. Many who read the Report were not prepared to make the effort to enter into the structure of the Report and come to grips with its new perspective. Secondly, the Report offered a coherent, comprehensive and interventionist strategy for tackling racial discrimination and disadvantage, and many on the right were obviously unsympathetic to it.

Thanks to the good sense of the British people and the quiet work of the Runnymede Trust, policy-makers, opinion-formers, and others soon began to take a fresh look at the Report and found much of it valid and persuasive. Many of its recommendations have now been implemented, and the large issues relating to British identity, pluralism, cohesion and reconsideration of the traditional narrative of the country's history are now being debated in public. Authors of the Report could not hope for more.

This paper by the Runnymede Trust provides a detailed and well-considered account of the current state of play, and gives grounds for hope. In some ways British society has moved on since the Report was published. However, the basic issues raised by the Report and many of its proposals for dealing with them remain just as relevant as ever.

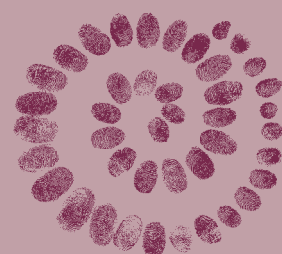
**Bhikhu Parekh**

*Chair of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain*

The Report of the Commission on  
the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain  
(2000) revisited in 2004

Runnymede Trust  
Briefing Paper April 2004

RUNNYMEDE



# Introduction

*'The Parekh report made an insightful and valuable contribution to the vision of a modern multi-cultural society. The Government place on record and welcome the contribution that the commission has made and can make in future. I know that the previous Home Secretary was extremely impressed by the report's detailed analysis and its recommendations. Last year, some 70 of the report's 130 recommendations were already part of government policy and thinking, which is an indication of the report's relevance.'*  
(Lord Bassam, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office, House of Lords Debate, 20 March 2003)

When the report of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain (The Parekh Report) was launched in October 2000, it 'created a bit of a stir', according to its ever-diplomatic Chair. Headlines read:

*'Ministers welcome report which says "British" is racist and all our history must be rewritten'* (The Sun, 11 October 2000)

*'Racism slur on the word "British"'* (The Daily Mail, 11 October 2000)

It was clear that, in the words of the editor of the report, it had

been 'misunderstood, grossly misrepresented, and often deliberately distorted'. The report was accused of trying to fundamentally destabilise Britain. So much so that Commissioners had to reiterate the major recommendations of the report in order to encourage a serious engagement with the issues that it raised. Three years on, the debate continues, but the 'heat' of those weeks immediately after publication has been replaced with the 'light' of serious engagement with the vision set out in the report.

By the end of 2003, over two-thirds of the recommendations of the report had been acted upon. The report encouraged responses in a wide range of media from academic journals to community newsletters. It also features on numerous university reading lists, representing an important contribution to our understanding of a multi-ethnic society. This would suggest that the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain has been influential in shaping the latest phase of thinking on race equality, and that the hundreds of people from around the country and from various walks of life, who gave their time and effort to contribute to the work of the Commission, did not do so in vain.

This is a brief account of the changes, progress and further challenges to the creation of a community of citizens and community of communities since the publication of the report.

**Rob Berkeley**

*Senior Research and Policy Analyst, Runnymede*

## Acknowledgements

The Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain was set up by the Runnymede Trust. Its work was funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, the Nuffield Foundation and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. The Commission consulted from 1998 until early 2000, when the findings were edited for publication in October 2000 by Profile Books. Copies of the full report (*The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain: The Parekh Report*) are obtainable either direct from the publisher (at 58a Hatton Garden, London EC1N 8LX [[www.profilebooks.co.uk](http://www.profilebooks.co.uk)]), or from the Amazon.com website. Contact Runnymede if you are unable to obtain a copy.

## Photo credits

The photographs reproduced here have been taken by young people participating in activities that encourage them to represent their lives in London today. These include The Museum of London's 'London 16-19', which draws on contributions from young people in Fitzrovia, Croydon, Seven Sisters, etc. These groups are working in partnership with Runnymede's This Is Where I Live project. We are grateful to the following individual photographers for permission to reproduce their work here. Members of the Create team (for p.1, p.3 lower and p.4 upper), part of the Croydon Youth Development Trust; Rickon Hussain (p.2) and Shehzad Chishti (p.4 lower and p.8) from the Fitzrovia Youth in Action Group; Kayleigh Waterman (p.3 and p.7) and Gurson Ferreira (p.6) from the Seven Sisters Group, Tiverton Housing Estate.



Rickon Hussain

# Negotiating the Turning Point

In 2000 the Commission noted that; 'England Scotland and Wales are at a turning point in their history. They could become inward looking, with rifts and divisions between themselves and amongst their regions and communities. Or Britain could develop as an outward-looking community at ease with its internal diversities.' It argued that Britain needs to engage with six overarching tasks in the years ahead, and here, the progress made and ongoing challenges to these tasks are considered.



Keyleigh Waterman

## Rethinking the national story and national identity

Many of the currently dominant stories in Britain need to be rethought, for they omit large sections of the population ... all have the role of fashioning Britain as an outward looking, generous, inclusive society.<sup>1</sup>

Increasingly the conception of Britain is that of a multi-ethnic society. The arts and heritage sectors have moved a long way in developing initiatives to recognise the ethnic diversity of British societies. The construction of the Memorial Gates to those from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean who fought in World Wars I and II, and the increased presence of minority ethnic ex-servicemen and women, highlight practical ways in which the contribution of all communities to a national story can be recognised. Diversity is seen as evidence of dynamism, creativity and success, and is used to promote Britain and its cities at home and abroad, for example in the London 2012 Olympic bid and in the city bids for European Capital of Culture.

While there is still some way to go in recognising the historic and future contributions of minority ethnic communities in Britain, there are many examples of innovative and creative ways in which the 'national story' is coming to represent better all the people of the nation.

## Identities and communities in transition

Homogeneity in the so-called majority is a myth, not a true story. So is the idea that 'minorities' have more in common with each other than they do with people in the so-called majority ... All communities are changing and all are complex, with internal diversity and disagreements. Neither 'minority' communities nor 'majority' communities are static.

The events of recent years have highlighted the complexity of our communities. Complexity of identity is frequently understood as commonplace and indeed beneficial. Debates previously played out between Muslim communities have become more widely reported and helped others to understand the internal diversity of British Muslims. Through various media, similar understandings have been developed of the tensions within what had previously been seen as homogeneous communities. The 2001 Census included a broader range of ethnic identities and, for the first time, religious identification. This has enabled us to better understand the complexity of ethnic categorisation, including the experiences of Irish, Muslim and other communities. The results of the census are now being used to influence policy development. The burgeoning of regional and sub-national politics has raised the vista of the transition to identities and communities based on a stronger conception of region.

## Cohesion, equality and difference

The fundamental need is to treat people equally *and* to treat them with due respect for difference; to treasure the rights and freedoms of individuals *and* to cherish belonging, cohesion and solidarity.

The government has led the development of a new policy agenda focused on building community cohesion. Local and central government have used it as a focus for a range of activities that aim to build improved relationships between communities and to develop a sense of belonging for all. Guidance published by the Home Office, Local Government Association and Interfaith Network described a cohesive community as one where:

- There is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities;
- The diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued;
- Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities;
- Strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools, and within neighbourhoods.

Fourteen 'pathfinder pilots' were initiated to learn how government



Create Team

<sup>1</sup> Each of the highlighted quotations in this section is drawn from the Summary document, published at the same time as the full Report on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, to which this Briefing Paper is a companion.



Create Team

can operate in such a way as to deliver a more cohesive society.

Runnymede focused on community cohesion in 2001–3. It has challenged the government to better define the policy which will lead to more cohesive communities, to conceptualise community cohesion beyond a narrow definition of intercultural dialogue to an agenda which poses fundamental questions about power relationships and successful inclusive governance, and to use community cohesion as a policy tool to realise multi-ethnic Britain as a community of communities and a community of citizens. We have reiterated through various means the need to balance cohesion with equality and difference.

For further discussion about cohesion see Runnymede's *Community, Cohesion and Citizenship* (October 2002); *Developing Community Cohesion* (September 2003).

## Dealing with racisms

Distinctions must be drawn between the racism of individuals and the racism of institutions, and between institutional racism and violent racism. All kinds of racism must be addressed. Anti-racism, therefore, must have a range of priorities and strategies.

There now exists for the first time a framework for managing performance on race equality in the public sector. However, the potential of this framework and approach is yet to be fully realised. The implementation of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act was designed to counter institutional racism. It has enabled public services to review their practices, understand the impact of their institutional practices on minority ethnic communities, and to begin to respond more effectively in order to tackle racisms. It also gives the rest of society more information and the potential for greater involvement in eradicating institutional racism from our public services.

Police and community initiatives to tackle all forms of hate crime have moved up the agenda in the recent period. A policing approach that involves more members of all communities must be seen as a positive move in tackling the number of racist incidents and raising awareness of the need to report such incidents.

Problems remain – among them the increasing electoral success of the Far Right, the rather grudging approach of many organisations to their duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, increasing reports of rural racism, and increasing numbers of reported violent racist attacks. However, there are many examples of concerted action to tackle racism at all levels of society.

## Reducing economic inequalities

... efforts to reduce inequality must be concerned with the whole population, not with some communities only. They must not however be colour-blind or culture-blind ...

A major focus of government efforts has been to tackle child poverty in the UK and beyond. Since 1999 government spending on support for children has risen by 52 percent in real terms. Initiatives to support low-income families, such as Sure Start and the Children's Fund, have concentrated their efforts on the inner cities, where the largest proportions of children from minority ethnic communities live.

Official measures of employment report that historically low numbers of people are without work. However, members of certain ethnic groups are much more likely to feature among the unemployed. Further, the gap between the rich and poor is persistently wide. Government efforts to respond to poverty are to be commended but, as always, more could be done to reduce economic inequality – especially given the disproportionate effects that these inequalities have on minority ethnic communities and the challenge this poses for maintenance of social cohesion.

## A pluralist human rights agenda

Racial justice is a quintessential human rights issue ... Human rights principles must accordingly be centre-stage in all discussions and negotiations in multi-ethnic Britain, not left to lawyers and courts. They are a language everyone must learn to speak and use.

The Human Rights Act was enacted in 1998. It has not since seen a 'torrent of constitutional legislation' as was predicted at the time. In the 2003 annual LAG lecture, Lord Justice Sedley noted that 'there is still a vast amount to be done in creating access, not necessarily to litigation but at least to an awareness that certain rights are now there to be claimed'.

The proposed new Commission for Equality and Human Rights may go some way to addressing this barrier to the development of a human rights culture in Britain. On announcing the government's intention to create the new body, Lord Falconer, the minister responsible for human rights, noted that it: 'will champion human rights good practice and responsibilities throughout the public sector; reducing the need to go to court over problems. We want to see a human rights culture, not a litigation culture.'

The relationships between equalities and human rights, between legislation and practice, and international and domestic human rights obligations would all benefit from additional elucidation. The activities required to further develop a pluralistic human rights culture will require greater efforts to engage with this agenda from the community/voluntary, public, private and academic sectors. An Audit Commission research report (*Human Rights; Improving service delivery*, October 2003) noted that: 'three years on, the impact of the Act is in danger of stalling and the initial flurry of activity surrounding its introduction has waned ... ; and few links are made between equalities and human rights legislation by public bodies.'



Shehzad Chishty

# Progress and Change

The Report of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain contained around 130 recommendations. Most of these were addressed to government at Cardiff, Edinburgh and Westminster, or else to regional and local authorities. A selection of the recommendations that have been taken up since the publication of the report is provided below.

## Coordination by central government

Government has four principal functions: to provide political leadership; to allocate resources; to manage its own departments in ways that are both efficient and exemplary; and to formulate and implement legislation, with support, regulation and enforcement as necessary. In the course of 1999 the current government began to drop its colour- and culture-blind approaches to social policy and to modernisation, and by the early summer of 2000 it was able to itemise several specific and significant developments. It needs, however, to give a more explicit lead, to ensure greater consistency and co-ordination between its separate departments, to accord race equality and cultural diversity a higher profile, and to ensure that it hears and attends to a wider range of views and perceptions.<sup>2</sup>

- Each government department has published a race equality strategy. The Home Office Race Equality Unit has been reorganised to better support the delivery, policy impact assessment, and monitoring of these plans.

[see: *Race Equality in Public Services*, published November 2002, Home Office]

- The CRE and the Audit Commission have published guidance for inspectorates on improving their practice and approach to promoting race equality. The Runnymede Trust published 'Guardians of Race Equality' to help create a dialogue about the role of inspection in combating racism.

[see: *Guardians of Race Equality*, October 2003, Runnymede Trust; *A Framework for Inspectorates*, 2002, Commission for Racial Equality]

- Policy impact assessments are now a formal part of delivering new policy as a result of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Major new policies are assessed to better comprehend and anticipate the impact that they will have on citizens from minority ethnic communities. A cross-government impact assessment methodology will be published in 2004.

- A new Commission for Equality and Human Rights will be established in 2006. It will cover all grounds of unlawful discrimination and act to promote human rights in Britain.

[see: *Equality and Diversity: Making It Happen*, October 2002, Dept of Trade and Industry]

## Criminal justice system

There is a growing body of data which shows that black and Irish people are differentially treated at all stages of the criminal justice process, and that they are disproportionately likely to be imprisoned. The report discusses the response of the criminal justice system to racist crime, considers the role and responsibilities of the police, prison service and the Crown Prosecution Service, and discusses the likely impact, from the point of view of race equality and cultural diversity, of a range of new government measures and initiatives. The system comes under the microscope in two particularly sensitive ways. On the one hand, it must deal with racist crime with the utmost vigour; on the other, it must engage in its own processes with the utmost professionalism and fairness, and with the minimum of damage to wider relationships and public trust.

- From April 2004, the independent Prisons and Probation Ombudsman will investigate all deaths in prisons, probation hostels and immigration detention accommodation.

- An Independent Police Complaints Authority begins its work in April 2004.

- The CRE carried out a formal investigation of the Prison Service, which found substantial weaknesses and made a wide range of practical recommendations for urgent action. The response of the Prison Service has been swift, and systematic reforms have been promised.

[see: *Race Equality in the Prison Service*, December 2003, Commission for Racial Equality]

- The Home Office have set up a Race and the Criminal Justice System Unit (November 2002) to research across all criminal justice agencies, advise on what works and actively manage change.

[see: [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/justice/race.html](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/justice/race.html)]

- A Commission for Judicial Appointments was established in 2002. Its annual reports include information which provides a better basis for monitoring the appointment of women and minority ethnic candidates to the judiciary.

- Police officers are now required to record all stops and 'stops and searches', data is recorded locally and nationally and reported annually by the Home Office. Each record of a stop includes ethnic monitoring. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary will work to ensure that all police services have the correct recording systems in place.

## Education

A country's education system is a gateway to employment and to participation in political, social and cultural affairs. Also, it equips children and young people – or fails to equip them – with the essential understandings, skills and values which they need to play a substantial role in the building and maintenance of Britain as a community of citizens and a community of communities. England, Scotland and Wales have different educational systems and curricula, but in each there are individuals and institutions engaged in fine work in relation to race equality and cultural diversity. Also, however, there is a lack of commitment and leadership on these issues from the respective government authorities. Monitoring by ethnicity is inadequate or non-existent; there are substantial inequalities affecting in particular pupils and students from African-Caribbean, Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities; there is insufficient official guidance on the content of the curriculum; teacher training – both initial and in-service – needs to be improved; and the inspection systems are insufficiently rigorous and authoritative in terms of race equality.

- The availability and use of data related to ethnicity in schools is improving. The DfES has implemented an Information Management Strategy to improve the data held in schools about teachers and pupils. As a result data will be more comparable between schools and more reliable. The PLASC (pupils level annual school census) has been improved to allow for a better understanding of the trends relating to ethnicity in schools.

- The Office for Fair Access will operate to ensure that universities that wish to charge top-up fees to students will enter into an agreement to widen participation. This is likely to have a larger effect on the practice of universities that have a lower intake of students from minority ethnic communities.

<sup>2</sup> Each of the highlighted quotations in this section is drawn from *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain: The Parekh Report*, London: Profile Books for the Runnymede Trust (2000).

- Education for citizenship is establishing itself in schools. Resources are available to support teachers in using citizenship lessons to promote human rights, opposition to racist beliefs and behaviour and knowledge of global interdependence.

- Runnymede published *Complementing Teachers* in 2003. It is a resource that offers teachers helpful guidance in promoting race equality in schools through the curriculum. It is now being used in over 2000 institutions. Runnymede has also established the Real Histories Directory, an online resource providing access to learning opportunities about cultural diversity in the UK.

[see: [www.realhistories.org.uk](http://www.realhistories.org.uk)]

- An independent study into the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) was published in 2002. Its findings were used, alongside consultation, to inform the Aiming High Strategy from the DfES. Launched in 2003, Aiming High adds focus to activities aimed at raising the achievement of African and African-Caribbean pupils, and at supporting primary schools in teaching pupils with English as an additional language.

[see: *Aiming High*, October 2003, Department for Education and Skills]

- Support materials for training teaching assistants specialising in teaching English as an additional Language (EAL) have been published by the DfES. There are currently five pilots in operation developing better training for primary school teachers working with pupils with EAL.

[see: EAL – induction training for teaching assistants, September 2002, Department for Education and Skills]

## Arts, media and sport

The cultural fabric of a society expresses ideas of who 'we' are. To the extent that it is inclusive it gives all people a sense of belonging, and makes a strong stand against racism. Cultural fabric has many strands, but of particular importance are the performing, visual and literary arts, the print and electronic media, and a wide range of representative and recreational sport.

The report discusses issues of programming, staffing, bias and representation in the arts and media, and in sport at all levels. It cites specific examples of good practice. But the overall message, in the words of a specialist who gave evidence to the Commission, is that 'the arts and media sectors do not see any implications for themselves in the Macpherson report', for they do not recognise that institutional racism needs urgently to be addressed within their own domains.

- The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has adopted the promotion of social cohesion as one of its strategic priorities. In November 2002 the DCMS published a race impact assessment of its policies and functions. Its policy development processes have been improved to include more extensive consultation with black and minority ethnic communities.

- The Cultural Diversity Network has been established by television broadcasters to agree action plans to ensure that our multi-ethnic society is more accurately represented in front of and behind the cameras.

- Government-funded initiatives such as Creative Partnerships, Splash Extra, and Decibel (Arts Council) have the promotion of race equality at the core of their mission.

- Museums, Archives and Libraries have set up a number of initiatives to address cultural diversity in their work.

[see: *Holding up the Mirror*, October 2003, London Museums Agency; *Making Connections*, 2002, published by Black Pasts, Birmingham Futures Group]

- Organisations such as Sporting Equals and Kick it Out have worked with sport's national governing bodies to deliver a strong anti-racist message. The most high-profile campaign has been in football, with support from the FA and UEFA. Sporting Equals published *Achieving Racial Equality: A Standard for Sport*, which has been

adopted by the governing bodies of many sports as a framework to develop their own approaches to tackling racism.

## Health and welfare

A recurring theme throughout the report is that public bodies should treat people both equally and differently. The need for both equal and different treatment is seen particularly clearly in services providing health and social care. The report reviewed the twin roles of the NHS as (a) a provider of services and (b) an employer. The roles are linked in a striking paradox. On the one hand the NHS depends, and for several decades has depended, on the contributions of Asian, Black and Irish doctors, nurses, managers and ancillary staff. At the same time patterns of mortality and morbidity are more serious in Asian, Black and Irish communities than in the population as a whole, and there is much insensitivity in the NHS to the distinctive experiences, situations and requirements of these communities.



Gurson Ferreira

- NHS Direct now offer a confidential interpretation service for patients for whom English is not their language of choice.

- The government has made reduction of child poverty one of its key ambitions. Total spending on child-contingent support has risen from £10 billion to £22 billion per year since 1975. The largest increase has occurred since 1999, with spending rising by half since then. Child-contingent support now accounts for a higher proportion of GDP

and total government spending than at any time since 1975.

[see: *The financial costs and benefits of supporting children since 1975*, January 2004, Joseph Rowntree Foundation]

- The NHS *Mental Health Policy Implementation Guide* published in 2002 and *Inside: Outside*, published by the National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE) in 2003, have established a national policy framework to tackle the ethnic inequalities in mental health provision.

[see: *Ethnic Diversity and Mental Health in London: Recent Developments*, August 2003, King's Fund]

- The Independent Inquiry into the death of David 'Rocky' Bennett (February 2004) highlights the failures of the NHS and suggests a number of recommendations for government to respond to in order to tackle the inequalities and discriminations within the mental health sector.

## Employment

Broadly, in the context of the report, there are two large tasks to be undertaken: (a) to reduce unemployment and underemployment for all those who are affected; (b) to eliminate glass ceilings. The tasks have practical implications for the government at national, regional and local levels; for employers in the public, private and voluntary sectors; for unions and professional associations; and for those who provide financial and advisory support to new business enterprises. The report discussed practical implications, focusing in particular on the role of government, and stressed that there is substantial diversity among and within different communities, and that the labour market itself has changed substantially over the last 20 years.

- The Ethnic Minority Business Forum was founded in 2000. The Forum exists to advise government ministers and the Small Business Service on how to offer the kind of help and advice BME businesses need for growth and success. It has worked to ensure that at regional and local level businesses led by people from minority ethnic communities are offered relevant support.

- The Cabinet Office Strategy Unit published a report on employment in March 2003. The report sets out a strategy for government to tackle the inequalities in the labour market for people from minority ethnic communities. Its recommendations focus on: improving the employability of ethnic minorities; improving the connection of ethnic minorities with work; promoting equal opportunities; and delivering change through reform of government structures

[see: *Ethnic Minorities and the Labour Market: Final Report*, March 2003, Strategy Unit, Cabinet Office]

- The British Bankers' Association has published research into access to finance for minority ethnic businesses. While it did not find widespread discrimination, the report recommended improved ethnic monitoring of lending decisions. The Bank of England now includes a section on minority ethnic businesses in its Finance for Small Firms Report. Individual banks are developing procedures to monitor to ensure that discrimination is not taking place.

[see: *Ethnic Minority Business in the UK: Access to Finance and Business Report*, September 2002, British Bankers' Association]

- With the support of British Trade International (Department of Trade and Industry), Regional Development Agencies have initiated work with minority ethnic businesses to develop international trading relationships.



Keyleigh Waterman

## Immigration and asylum

Postwar British history is littered with legislation and regulations passed swiftly, and by both major political parties, to counter perceived 'floods' of immigrants and, latterly, asylum-seekers. There are two problems with this approach. First, the sense of panic the issue instils, and the subjectivity with which it is discussed, lead to bad law which does not work even in its own terms, giving rise to challenges both in UK courts and among international human rights bodies. Second, and even more seriously from the point of view of this report, it undermines Britain's development as a community of communities. The report reviewed and criticised immigration and asylum policy over the years and made several recommendations for short- and longer-term action.

- Among others, the government has published research into the economic benefits of immigration.

[see: *Migration; an economic and social analysis*, published by the Home Office, 2001]

- Instead of removing the exemption of immigration officials to discriminate on the basis of ethnic or national origin, the Home Office have appointed an Independent Immigration Race Monitor to 'monitor the likely effect of Ministerial authorisations to discriminate on grounds of nationality or ethnic origin relating to the carrying out

of immigration and nationality functions'. The Race Monitor presents an annual report to parliament.

## Politics and representation

If Britain is to flourish as a community of citizens and communities, its political leaders will lead, not pander to, public opinion on issues relating to race and diversity. Their legitimate desires to maximise their own electoral support and to diminish the attractions of their opponents will never involve playing the race card, either openly or covertly. Further, black and Asian people will be more fully involved than at present in the party political system at local and national levels, both as elected representatives and as party activists, as well as fully involved in unelected bodies. Such bodies are representative in the sense of exhibiting a spectrum of perspective and experience.

- The Commission for Racial Equality introduced a compact setting out good practice in political campaigning for the general election of 2001. All five main UK political parties signed the compact to 'represent the interests of all constituents regardless of race, sex, colour, religion or any other discriminating factor; and promote good race relations'. Before polling day 520 individual candidates had signed the compact.

[see: *Election Compact 2001*, CRE]

## Religion and belief

Article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam provides the European Union with a legal basis for action against discrimination based on, among other grounds, racial or ethnic origin and religion or belief. In Britain many public bodies have declared formally that, in addition to their obligations under the Race Relations Act 1976, they will not discriminate on grounds of religion. At publication of the report, such discrimination was not unlawful. The report considers the importance of religious identities and organisations in modern society; the practical and theoretical problems of introducing laws against discrimination on grounds of religion or belief; whether the Church of England should be disestablished; whether a range of religions and beliefs should be represented in public life; how to balance action against discrimination with the need for beliefs of all kinds to be challenged and interrogated; and ground rules for handling profound differences and disagreements between and within communities.

- Legislation has been introduced to outlaw discrimination in employment on the basis of religion or belief. The proposed Commission for Equality and Human Rights will have responsibility for supporting the enforcement of this law. The 2001 Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act introduced higher penalties for offences defined as 'religiously aggravated'.

- The House of Lords convened a select committee (reporting in June 2003) that focused on legislation to combat hate crime containing a religious component. In response, the government reasserted its commitment to legislating in this area at the first opportunity. The CPS published guidance for prosecuting racist and religious crime.

- The Home Office has published further research into religious discrimination and its effects. It has also established a Faith Communities Unit.

[see: *Religious discrimination in England and Wales*, February 2001, Home Office, *Tackling Religious discrimination*, February 2001, Home Office]

# Further Challenges

While there has been a great deal of progress since publication of the report, there are some areas in which a need for change persists. Some of the areas of concern raised in the Report that have not yet been taken up are reiterated here:

- There should be a single Equality Act in Britain. This is even more salient in the light of proposals to create a Commission for Equality and Human Rights, where each equality 'strand' will be operating different legislation and different burdens of proof, often with conflicting interests.
- In education, issues of race equality and cultural diversity should be properly covered in initial teacher training and in continuous professional development for all staff working in schools. According to the Teacher Training Agency's surveys of newly qualified teachers, race equality remains the area in which they feel the least prepared when embarking on their careers. Not all schools have responded favourably to their duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act and research has shown an often grudging compliance with the letter rather than the spirit of the duty to promote race equality. The achievement gaps and exclusion rates between different ethnic groups remain persistently wide.
- There needs to be improved inter-agency action to cut the numbers of young black and Asian men held in state mental health institutions and action taken to reduce the inequalities of treatment suffered within the mental health system. Further, research has highlighted that women from minority ethnic communities also often receive an inadequate level of support with their mental health needs. The developments in policy at a national level need to be transferred more successfully for local implementation. Inequalities in health outcomes remain, posing a big challenge to the National Health Service to respond more sensitively to the needs of all communities.

- There has been little improvement in the government's approach to immigration and asylum. While the terrain has shifted considerably since publication of the report, most of the recommendations in this area remain relevant, including: family reunion, appeal rights, speed and efficiency of asylum claim systems, and human rights.
- There are only 12 MPs from black or Asian backgrounds – an increase of just 2 since the previous parliament – and all 12 of these MPs are members of the Labour Party. All the political parties need to improve their engagement with people from Asian and black communities and publish plans on how they each propose to ensure that more candidates from these communities are selected for safe and winnable seats.
- Despite improvements in policy and leadership within the police service and the wider criminal justice system, there are still a number of areas for improvement and for the policy to translate more fully into practice. Stop-and-search practices and sentencing remain discriminatory; during the period there has been a huge increase in the number of stop-and-searches under anti-terrorism legislation, disproportionately affecting Muslim communities. The Prison and Police services remain under the scrutiny of the Commission for Racial Equality in order to counter racism within their ranks.
- The position and status of Gypsy/Traveller communities has not improved markedly and there seems to be little action to tackle the discrimination and unequal outcomes that these communities suffer. Provision of sites, of ethnic monitoring and of measures to counter persistent educational disadvantage – these issues in particular remain in need of enlightened attention.
- The government should take a lead in determining what race equality means and setting out a vision for a successful multi-ethnic Britain. A key means of so doing would be to declare Britain a multicultural state. The process of developing the declaration would be a positive means of addressing the issues raised in discussions about community cohesion, and offer a way in which to develop shared understandings of the modern British state.

## ABOUT RUNNYMEDE

As a prominent, independent think-tank on ethnicity and cultural diversity, the Runnymede Trust has a long track record in leading-edge research, working in close collaboration with eminent thinkers and policy-makers in the private, public and voluntary sectors. Founded in 1968 as a Charitable Educational Trust, our mandate is to promote a successful multi-ethnic Britain – a Britain where citizens and communities feel valued, enjoy equal opportunities to develop their talents, lead fulfilling lives and accept collective responsibility, all in the spirit of civic friendship, shared identity and a common sense of belonging.

## THE RUNNYMEDE TRUST

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