

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



HOME OFFICE  
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE  
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14 May 1981

Dear William

PRIME MINISTER'S APPEARANCE ON "NATIONWIDE"

... I attach, as requested, some briefing on the subject of "Positive steps to improve racial harmony" for the Prime Minister's appearance on "Nationwide" tonight.

Yours sincerely  
C J Walters

(C J WALTERS)

William Rickett Esq

PRIME MINISTER'S APPEARANCE ON "NATIONWIDE" 14 MAY 1981

Positive steps to improve racial harmony : Points to make

The Government's view of race relations

1. The Government is wholeheartedly committed to a society in which all individuals, whatever their race, colour or creed, have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities. All our policies reflect this commitment.
2. The great majority of our ethnic minority citizens have shown themselves willing to accept the responsibilities as well as the benefits of our society. They are making an important contribution to our society.
3. Already more than 40% of our ethnic minority citizens were born here and are British by birth; many others have been brought up here; many more have taken our citizenship. It is wrong, therefore, to regard them as immigrants and so imply they belong elsewhere.
4. It is the responsibility of us all to break through the myths and fears, on both sides, which divide us. Every individual has the right to be treated on his merits. We must have respect for each other.

More resources

5. The fundamental problem of race relations concerns our attitudes to each other. Money alone cannot change these attitudes.
6. For various reasons, ethnic minorities suffer more acutely than the white majority from disadvantages in housing, employment and education. Considerable sums of money are already devoted to trying to overcome these disadvantages, through main programmes and through special programmes. (i.e. The Urban Programme, MSC schemes, grants under section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966 to meet the special needs of ethnic minorities). At a time of financial stringency the Government has in general maintained the level of resources devoted to the special programmes.

The Government's role

7. The Government through its policies sets the framework for a just and equal multi-racial society but the development of mutual understanding

depends on the efforts of everyone.

8. The Government understands the feelings of insecurity among the ethnic minorities. It will seek to remove genuine causes of such insecurity. For example, The Home Secretary has recently set up an inquiry into racial attacks. But feelings of insecurity are often based on myths which are exploited, even created, for their own ends. *by extremists on both sides.* There is much the leaders of the black community can do to dispel these myths.
9. The Government has always stressed the importance of good police-community relations, and much has been done by the police (e.g. developing specialist community relations training and appointing specialist officers). But the promotion of good relations also calls for an effort on the part of the ethnic minorities and their leaders.

#### The Deptford Fire

10. I understand that there is a likelihood of further legal proceedings. It would not, therefore, be appropriate to comment. It is sad that a tragedy which should bring us together is being used to keep us apart. As regards the sending of a message of sympathy, we acted on the basis of advice from the local community : the same course would have been followed had the victims been white.

#### Repatriation

11. Proposals for compulsory repatriation are irrelevant and divisive. Black people who are born here or have settled here have as much right to live here peacefully as the rest of the community.

#### What the ethnic minorities can do

12. The ethnic minority communities cannot separate themselves from the rest of society. They too have a duty to assist in creating a harmonious multi-racial society. They must take their full part in public life and the institutions of our society.