

Scarman seeks a Bill of rights for blacks

By Lucy Hodges

A Bill of rights to protect blacks in Britain was advocated yesterday by Lord Scarman because, he said, ethnic minorities would find it difficult to gain power through the House of Commons.

British government was organized on the basis of numbers so that the majority made the important decisions, Lord Scarman told a London conference on black rights.

"Is freedom enough to restrain the majority from overlooking, perhaps through ignorance or fear or misunderstanding, the needs,



Lord Scarman: Riot view modified

fears and insecurity of the minority communities?" he asked.

Ethnic minorities had to be protected if the civilized values of Britain were to be maintained. "They have to be protected, not by sticking a silver spoon into their mouth, but by ensuring that their basic human rights, economic and social, are safeguarded and that these safeguards will not be dis-

mantled by the transient will of the majority".

Lord Scarman, who was addressing a meeting of Black Rights (United Kingdom and the USA) which has been set up by the *Caribbean Times*, modified one of the observations he had made in his report last year on the Brixton riots.

He said he had been criticized for saying that "institutional racism" did not exist in Britain but, on analysis, that argument had turned out to be one of semantics. If "institutional racism" meant hidden, unconscious racism, it did exist and should be rooted out, he said.

But if the phrase meant that British institutions, Parliament and the judges, were racist in principle and in theory, then institutional racism did not exist. That racial discrimination and disadvantage existed in practice was undeniable.

"There is no black member of the House of Commons and the reason for this is not that there is a rule or a law or a constitutional convention against black people", he said. "It just happens to be a question of numbers".

He suggested the House of Lords could be reformed to ensure ethnic minority representation.

There was some heckling when Lord Scarman told his audience of about 100 that they had to make themselves worthy of a Bill of rights. "Success comes to those who are prepared to be self-reliant," he said. "Operate the system. Do not just allow the system to be operated by others".

Daily Mail, Monday, June 21, 1982

Today is the day...

THE new Messiah is due to burst upon a waiting world today.

But late last night, there was no sign of the Second Coming.

His appearance has been predicted by disciple Benjamin Creme, of Hampstead, London NW, who has spent

£150,000 on advertising in the West's major newspapers.

But he is a trifle disappointed with the level of interest shown.

He said of the new Messiah last night: "I don't know if he is considering me but I hope he is revealed soon."

He added: "Maitreya (Christ) does not work to a rigid timetable. After all, we have waited nearly 2,000 years, I'm sure we can wait a few more days."

The Messiah is apparently working in the Asian community of Brick Lane, in East London.

Scarman approval

Lord Scarman welcomed the launching of Black Rights UK at its inaugural meeting. The group seeks a Bill of Rights.

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