

Teacher's Name: Dr. Omar RAHMOUN

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I do not regard [integration] as meaning the loss, by immigrants, of their own national characteristics and culture. I do not think that we need in this country a 'melting pot', which will turn everybody out in a common mould, as one of a series of carbon copies of someone's misplaced vision of the stereotyped Englishman... I define integration, therefore, not as a flattening process of assimilation but as equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance **Roy Jenkins**

Immigration to Britain

Britain has a long history of immigration and emigration. Over the centuries many groups from all over the world have come and settled in Britain. Many immigrants have come from European countries, notably Ireland, Britain's western neighbour. More recently Eastern Europeans have tended to seek their fortune in Britain. Yet, the term *immigrant* in contemporary British public debates has come to be understood as a person coming from a poorer country, often with a different skin colour.

Refugees, adventurers, labour migrants, asylum seekers are all terms used to categorise the flux of people entering a country like Britain. Often they overlap, but sometimes the terms, and what they mean, are used interchangeably creating a muddled picture. Immigrants has thus been used as the all-encompassing term to describe groups of people entering Britain.

Post-War Immigration

During World War II British cities were bombed to pieces by Adolf Hitler's Nazi Germany. Although Hitler never managed to invade Britain, the Blitz left urban areas in ruins. After the war, Britain needed both economic and labour assistance to rebuild society. The British got financial help from America, but they had to actively invite people from abroad to get the necessary manual labour. For this, they turned to their colonies, and especially the Caribbean islands. **In 1948, the British Nationality Act** gave, in practice, UK citizenship to people of the colonies, which meant that they, and people from Commonwealth countries, could enter Britain freely. This is referred to as "**The Open Door Policy**" where Britain literally opened their borders, and the first group of Caribbean people – 492 Jamaicans – came to Tilbury on the river Thames just south of London in 1948. This arrival is seen symbolically both as the beginning of Black Britain and the start of mass immigration to Britain.

The Need for Labour

Not only did Britain need unskilled labour, but also skilled labour, particularly in connection with the newly established Welfare State. The National Health Service (NHS) was in need of doctors and nurses and they were actively recruited, especially from Asian countries. In addition, many

immigrants began working in the London Transport system. However, in 1962, through the **Commonwealth Immigrants Act**, access to Britain was restricted and immigration regulations were further tightened up in 1968 and 1971 due to increased opposition among a number of British political organisations.

Where did they Come from ?

During the first decades of post-war immigration, many settlers came from the West Indies, from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in Asia, and from Kenya, Uganda and Nigeria in Africa. Both skilled and unskilled workers settled down where there was work to be found, notably the mill towns of North West England, industrial towns in the Midlands and in London's East End. Mill towns like Bradford, Manchester and Leeds were legacies of the industrialisation of the textile industry in the early 19th century, and thus attracted many Asians, as many of them had been involved in textile industries in their homelands. Many Africans and people from the West Indies settled in and around London, and all these areas swiftly became multicultural. The Notting Hill Carnival was first established in 1959, when it was held indoors in St Pancras Town Hall. It was widely seen as a response to the generally worsening race relations of the late 1950s and more specifically to the Notting Hill Riots which took place the year before. 1958 had seen violent clashes between white Britons and people from the West Indian community living in and around Notting Hill. The carnival tradition displayed the colourful community and became an annual event, and has in recent years been a celebration of London's multicultural diversity.

New Empire Within Britain

Even though the immigrants who came to Britain had British passports, and were legally British, it took a long time before they felt British. The Indian-born Indian-British writer Salman Rushdie coined the term the "New Empire within Britain" referring to immigration as the other side of the British Empire. Britain historically colonised large parts of the globe, and then in the process of decolonisation people moved the opposite way, to the mother country. Britain thrived as a colonial power, but when the majority of the immigrants came not only to work but to stay and settle, the white Britons changed their tune. Increased levels of hostility between black and white Britons led to oversimplified reactions from the authorities and further restrictions were called for at many levels.

Identity and ethnicity

A lot of concern about multiculturalism is related to the belief that some ethnic and religious minorities do not think of themselves as British, subscribing to some other identity. But much of this seems to be exaggerated. Immigration to the United Kingdom in the 21st century is larger and more diverse than at any point in its history. As the global recession bites, early evidence shows a reduction in the numbers of immigrants coming to work.

Public anxiety about immigration, fueled by media attention, has risen in parallel to the numbers. Monthly polling data from the IpsosMORI agency shows that beginning in the late 1990s, people identified race and immigration as one of the top three most important issues facing the country for all but a couple of months. Opinion polling data from different sources shows a similar picture,

with between two-thirds and four-fifths of the public indicating a preference for less immigration.

The Postwar Policy Model

After World War II, two contrasting trends changed the nature of UK immigration. First, Irish nationals and the countries of the United Kingdom (England, Scotland, and Wales) have consistently enjoyed free movement and settlement rights. Second, nationals of many other countries, particularly former British colonies like India and Jamaica, have had their access to the United Kingdom progressively eroded.

The high watermark of this approach was the **British Nationality Act of 1948**, which tried to assert Britain's role as leader of the Commonwealth and affirmed the right of Commonwealth citizens (including those of newly independent Commonwealth countries like India) to settle in the United Kingdom.

The **British Nationality Act** was a sandy edifice against the tides of change that broke the British Empire apart. Instead, a new migration policy emerged based on two pillars: **limitation and integration**.

Limitation followed immigration flows of workers from Commonwealth countries in the 1950s and early 1960s. The three laws that make up this pillar together had the goal of "**zero net immigration**." The relevant laws were enacted in 1962, 1968, and 1971.

The **1971 Immigration Act**, with a few minor exceptions, repealed all previous legislation on immigration. It still provides the structure of current UK immigration law, which accords the Home Secretary with significant rule-making powers on entry and exit.

The core of the legislation was strong control procedures, which included new legal distinctions between the rights of the UK born/UK passport-holders and people from former British colonies — notably India, Pakistan, and the Caribbean — **who became subject to immigration controls**.

The second pillar, **integration**, was inspired by the U.S. civil rights movement. The approach mainly took the form of antidiscrimination laws: in a limited form in the **1965 Race Relations Act**, in an expanded form in the 1968 Race Relations Act. The **Race Relations Act 1965** was the first legislation in the United Kingdom to address racial discrimination. The Act outlawed discrimination on the "grounds of colour, race, or ethnic or national origins" in public places. It also prompted the creation of The Race Relations Board (in 1966), to consider complaints under the Act.

The UK saw an influx of economic migrants after World War II, many from the Commonwealth countries. The Museum of London states that "casual 'colour prejudice' was part of daily life" for many. In 1963 the Bristol Bus Boycott occurred and was considered to be influential in the passing of the Race Relations Act 1965 which made "racial discrimination unlawful in public places" and the Race Relations Act 1968, which extended the provisions to employment and housing.

The Conservative Era

From 1979 to 1997, policy continued on much the same track, albeit with a stronger emphasis on **limitation and restriction**. The British Nationality Act of 1981 ended centuries of common-law tradition by removing the automatic right of citizenship to all those born on British soil, for instance.

The target of policy changed from the late 1980s onwards, when asylum-seekers became the greater concern. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the breakup of the Soviet Union — together with conflicts in the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s — led to increased humanitarian flows to the **United Kingdom and other European countries. Policymakers, unused to flows of asylum seekers, began to legislate change.**

Two major Acts of Parliament encapsulated the changes. **The 1993 Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act** was restrictive, creating new "fast-track" procedures for asylum applications, allowing detention of asylum seekers while their claim was being decided, and reducing asylum seekers' benefit entitlements. **The 1996 Immigration and Asylum Act** continued in the same vein with new measures and concepts designed to reduce asylum claims, such as further welfare restrictions.

Immigration Policy since 1997

When the Labour party came to power in 1997, migration policy shifted course. The direction of policy has been one of **"selective openness" to immigration**, with a commitment to economic migration on one hand and development of a tough security and control framework on the other. The change in economic migration has been accepted across the political divide, and, consequently, limiting and restricting immigration is no longer a prerequisite for UK migration policy.

The security approach, which accelerated after the September 11, 2001, attacks in the United States, has been built on greater efforts to combat illegal immigration and reduce asylum seeking through various measures, but especially new visa controls. In addition, the Labour government has also altered the second postwar pillar of integration. Labour has reinforced antidiscrimination measures under an agenda of equality and has developed ideas and policies around **"community cohesion,"** which roughly means bringing **together segregated communities and fostering shared values and belonging.**

However, many changes, some not immediately of great import, together have fundamentally altered how government approaches immigration.

Among these are policies to encourage international students, new labor market programs that have culminated in the development of a Points-Based System, and above all the government's decision to allow labor market access to citizens of a newly enlarged Europe.

Economic Migration, Enlargement, and the Recession

In response to public and media disquiet over such high levels of economic migration, the government introduced a new approach in 2008 that it first announced in 2005: a **Points-Based System (PBS)** incorporating revised and consolidated versions of existing labor migration schemes.

PBS has five tiers:

Tier 1 aims at the highly skilled and does not require a job offer. Instead, it is based on applicants' skills and characteristics for which points are awarded. Points allocations show a strong commitment to youth and to certificated qualifications.

Tier 2 incorporates the main body of the work permit system and offers entry to those with a confirmed job offer in a sector of labor market shortage. Such shortage is designated by an

independent, new body — **the Migration Advisory Committee** — that provides the government with nonbinding advice on areas of labor market shortage. It is expected that Tier 2 will account for the majority of non-EU economic migrants.

The government envisages **Tier 3**, aimed at filling "lower-skill" jobs, as a highly restricted migration route. This route has been suspended indefinitely because of intra-EU migration; indeed, all low-skilled migration schemes, such as the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS), have been slated for closure.

Tier 4 is dedicated to student visas. It differs from the previous system by compelling colleges and universities to act as "sponsors" for which they must undertake obligations, such as checking student attendance.

Tier 5 is aimed at a variety of exchange programs including five subcategories under temporary workers and a youth mobility scheme.

Overall, with its focus on points and sponsors, policy has moved away from an employer-led system to one that is increasingly government led and more focused on control.

In response to September 11 and for other security concerns, the government introduced compulsory biometric identification data for all migrants who intend to stay in the country for longer than six months. The rollout for "Biometric Identity Cards" for all non-EU foreign residents began in November 2008 for certain foreign students and expanded in March 2009 to other visa categories. By April 2011, it is expected to cover all those coming from outside the European Union.

Though these measures have controversial civil-liberties implications, the government has argued they reduce the scope for illegal entry and working and that more secure identity documents will prevent the entry of people who may pose a security threat.

Multiculturalism, Integration, and British Muslims

Over the last five years, the United Kingdom has seen significant debate about the **multicultural or race relations model** of immigrant integration, which has come under sustained criticism, including from within government.

It is first worth describing the "multiculturalist" or "race relations" model, for which the United Kingdom has been known. The classic definition of this model comes from the 1970s Home Secretary Roy Jenkins, who described it as "**not a flattening process of assimilation but equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance.**"

In practice, this meant new antidiscrimination laws and some enforcement and promotion work — especially the creation of an independent, publicly funded body, **the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)**, which combined both unique enforcement functions and a promotional role of encouraging "**good race relations.**"

The kindling for the change in mood dates to 2001 when three events shook official policy: riots involving minority communities in the northern towns of Bradford, Burnley, and Oldham; the peak of the Sangatte refugee crisis; and the September 11 terrorist attacks.

Thus over the last ten years, there have been passionate debates about **national identity** and concerns over **radicalization in Muslim communities**. This has led to four semidistinct strands of policy: **refugee integration policy; community cohesion; active promotion of citizenship; and a strong and broad emphasis on equality**.

Until recently, formal "**integration**" policy concerned settlement services for recognized refugees. The refugee integration strategy — first introduced in 2000 and strengthened in 2005 — makes refugees eligible for orientation services and some financial assistance for integration.

Community cohesion is concerned with bringing (segregated) communities together through a variety of local level initiatives, such as school twinning projects, which encourage education and pastoral links between schools with ethnically different student bodies, and mixed-housing policies. Unsurprisingly, questions remain as to whether the promotion of "cohesion" is an appropriate way to accommodate social and cultural differences.

The promotion of citizenship has involved "activating" **the naturalization process** through **new citizenship tests**, language tests (also mandatory for long-term residence), and citizenship ceremonies.

Finally, major equal opportunity measures introduced under Labour have reinforced and extended the antidiscrimination framework. The 1998 Human Rights Act enshrined the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into UK law. **The 2000 Race Relations (Amendment) Act** aimed to eradicate institutionalized racism by obligating certain public authorities, including the police and immigration services, to take action to correct ethnic inequalities in recruitment, employment, and service delivery.

Concerns over segregation and radicalization have led the government to expand the equality agenda. **The Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006**, which has had important symbolic value, made it illegal to stir up hatred against persons on racial or religious grounds.