

AUSTERITY, AFFLUENCE AND DISCONTENT IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, *c.1951–1979*

Part 5: *“Love Thy Neighbour”* *Immigration and Race Relations, c. 1951–1979*



Source 1: Black revellers confront the police during the 1976 Notting Hill Carnival riots

Introduction

Before the Second World War there were very few non-white people living permanently in the UK, but there were 2 million by 1971. Two thirds of them had come from the Commonwealth countries of the West Indies, India, Pakistan and Hong Kong, but one third had been born in the UK. The Commonwealth was the name given to the countries of the **British Empire**. However, as more and more countries became independent from the UK, the Commonwealth came to mean countries that had once been part of the Empire.

Immigration was not new. By the 1940s there were already black communities in port cities like Bootle in Liverpool and Tiger Bay in Cardiff. Groups of Chinese people had come to live in the UK at the end of the 19th century and had settled in Limehouse in London, and in the Chinatown in Liverpool.

Black West Indians had come to the UK to fight in the Second World War. The RAF had Jamaica and Trinidad squadrons and the Army had a West Indian regiment. As a result there were 30,000 non-white people in the UK by the end of the war.¹ The British people had also been very welcoming to the 130,000 African-American troops of the US Army stationed in the UK during the war. They had even challenged white officers' attempts to enforce the same racial **segregation** that African Americans would have faced back in the USA. When the war was over most of these non-white immigrants returned to the countries they had originally come from.

¹ Andrew Marr, *A History of Modern Britain* (London, 2009), page 40.

Why did different groups of people migrate to the UK during the 1950s and 1960s?

The 1948 Nationality Act



Source 2: A Second World War propaganda poster about the different peoples of the Commonwealth fighting together in the same army

A change in the law began the process of large-scale migration from the Commonwealth to the UK. In July 1948 the British Nationality Act was passed. Canada wanted to more clearly define what was meant by Canadian citizenship, but it was also worried that this might end up excluding migrants from the other Commonwealth countries. An international conference, organised by the Labour government, agreed to common citizenship rights for everyone living in the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth. This meant that every Commonwealth citizen, and their dependant family members, had the right to settle anywhere in the Commonwealth.

The Conservatives opposed the Act. They argued that the peoples of the Commonwealth were subjects of the British Empire, not British citizens. After India had been granted independence in 1947 this was part of Labour's plan to prevent other countries in the Empire from becoming independent. There was an underlying assumption that travel across the Commonwealth was so slow and expensive that very few people would ever make the journey to the UK.

Once the door to Commonwealth immigration had been opened it was very difficult to close it again. Throughout the 1950s there were government and parliamentary investigations into restricting immigration, but they could not get around the issue that this would either prevent white people from the Commonwealth migrating, or the system would have to become more openly racist about who would and would not be allowed in.

James Shuter Ede, Home Secretary at the time of the 1948 Act, justified the open-door policy to Commonwealth immigrants by saying:

...some people feel it would be a bad thing to give the coloured races of the Empire the idea that, in some way or the other, they are equals of the people in this country... we recognise the right of the colonial peoples to be treated as men and brothers with the people of this country.²

FOCUS: The SS Empire *Windrush* and West Indian immigration

On 22 June 1948 the steamship SS Empire *Windrush* landed at Tilbury docks in London.³ The *Windrush* was not the first ship to bring West Indian immigrants to the UK, but it was more widely publicised than the *Ormonde* which had brought 108 migrant workers by the same route in 1947,⁴ but was not greeted by newsreel cameras.

The *Windrush* was a ship with an unusual history. It was originally a German passenger vessel built in 1930, but was taken over by the Nazis in the 1940s and used to transport Jews to death camps. It was eventually captured by the British and turned into a troop ship. It was relaunched as a civilian ship in 1947 and was sailing from Australia to the UK via Jamaica. The *Windrush's* captain had decided to advertise in the local papers to get some passengers for his nearly empty ship. Not everyone thought that this was a good idea at the time. The Jamaican government did not like the idea of losing so many people and told people that they should not travel to the UK without definite offers of work. The UK government ordered a navy ship to escort the *Windrush* with orders to turn them back to the West Indies if there was any trouble.

A total of 492 passengers got on the *Windrush* in Kingston, Jamaica. Each paid the huge sum of £28 10s, although there were 18 stowaways as well. Once they got off the ship in London they were fed and housed at old air-raid shelters in Clapham then taken to Brixton Labour Exchange. Although this was not part of a Labour government plan, they did try to help find these new arrivals work. The Prime Minister Clement Attlee thought that this would be the only group of migrants but then other ships like the *Orbita* and *Georgic* arrived as well. The London *Evening Standard* newspaper welcomed the *Windrush* with the headline 'Welcome Home',⁵ and the *Daily Worker* newspaper welcomed them with the headline 'Five Hundred Pairs of Willing Hands'.⁶

² Andrew Marr, *A History of Modern Britain* (London, 2009), page 193.

³ Newsreel coverage of the *Windrush* arriving may be seen at <http://goo.gl/y9p4Gh> including an impromptu performance of 'London is the place for me'. A shorter alternative newsreel may be seen at <http://goo.gl/BFVpLG>

⁴ Robert Winder, *Bloody Foreigners: The Story of Immigration to Britain* (London, 2005), page 347.

⁵ *Yesterday's Britain: The illustrated story of how we lived, worked and played in this century* (Reader's Digest, 1998), page 198.

⁶ J. A. Cloake and M. R. Tudor, *Multicultural Britain* (Oxford, 2001), page 32.

Vincent Reid gave his impression of arriving in London aged 13 in 1948:

We got off the boat at Tilbury and caught the train for Victoria, and what struck me as really weird was to see that the train driver was white. I expected him to be black. I also expected all of the porters to be black – because that's how it was in Jamaica. I'd never seen a white person work in my life. When I looked at the people, comparing them with the passengers coming off the boat – we had all kinds of floral dresses, bright clothes – the English people seemed drab and shabby. Of course I didn't know anything about rationing and things of that sort.⁷

Some of the lyrics from the 1950 calypso song 'London is the place for me' by Lord Kitchener (real name Aldwyn Roberts), an immigrant from Trinidad describe his feelings about London at the time:

... Well believe me I am speaking broadmindedly,
I am glad to know my 'Mother Country',
I've been travelling to countries years ago,
But this is the place I wanted to know,
London that's the place for me.
To live in London you are really comfortable,
Because the English people are very much sociable,
They take you here and they take you there,
And they make you feel like a millionaire,
London that's the place for me...⁸

⁷ *Yesterday's Britain: The illustrated story of how we lived, worked and played in this century* (Reader's Digest, 1998), page 198.

⁸ The lyrics are quoted from <http://goo.gl/iMWxfj> and the song may be heard at <http://goo.gl/P6h0a3>

West Indian Immigration

Lloyd Miller, a former Jamaican banana plantation worker, explained why he came to the UK in 1949:

If you could make a few shillings for yourself, then you're alright, but if you couldn't make it [in Jamaica] it was very hard. See, so that's the reason why I said to myself, I don't want to stop here to grow old, and, you know, I want to travel and make something.⁹



Source 3: West Indian immigrants arriving at Victoria Station, London, in 1956

There are a number of reasons why West Indians wanted to migrate to the UK:

- West Indian soldiers had seen what life was like in the UK while they had been stationed here during the war
- the hurricanes of 1944 and 1950 had destroyed a lot of houses and crops in the West Indies
- it was difficult to get work in the West Indies after the war had ended – there was no tourism and the price of sugar was very low; there was 40% unemployment and 90% of people earned less than £2 a week in Jamaica¹⁰
- there was poor healthcare and education in the West Indies
- having family members in the UK was a source of pride to many families
- the 1952 McCarran–Walter Act had tightened restrictions on immigration into the United States of America which was a lot nearer to the West Indies than the UK.

By the 1950s money sent back from migrants in the UK was the second largest source of income on the island of Jamaica.

⁹ Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good* (London, 2005), page 313.

¹⁰ Robert Winder, *Bloody Foreigners: The Story of Immigration to Britain* (London, 2005), page 348.

Asian Immigration

Ehsan-ul-Haq, an Asian immigrant, remembers arriving in the UK in 1965:

It was one of the harshest winters for years and at the airport there was snow on the runway...in May! ...on brushing my shirt against the wall I realised my white shirt had become dirty from the grime from all the smoke – there was no restriction on burning coal in those days. This was quite a surprise as I had a rosy picture of England in my mind – marble floors, tall buildings, beautiful people.¹¹

Most immigrants from India and Pakistan in the 1960s were encouraged to leave their countries by population pressures and the desire for a better life. There was no '*Windrush*' moment for them but there were already established Asian communities in the UK:

- the Spitalfields community of Sylhetis from East Pakistan (now called Bangladesh) was set up before the war and villages in Pakistan would receive money to send migrants to come to London
- the Southall personnel officer of Woolf's Rubber Company had worked with Sikhs during the war and was sent to the Punjab to bring his Sikh friends to work in London; after 1947 the Sikhs were sometimes persecuted in India and came to the UK to live in peace.

There was Asian migration to the UK before 1951 because of the violence and confusion caused by the **partition** of Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan after they were given independence from the British Empire in 1947. The 'Indians', as British people often wrongly called them, were actually a wide range of people from different religious backgrounds and cultures. Some were highly-educated professionals, for example doctors who went on to work in NHS hospitals. Others were rural labourers who took jobs that local white people no longer wanted to do in textile factories and steel mills, or worked unpopular night shifts.

People came from Kashmir to the UK in the 1950s and 1960s because:

- they were displaced from their homes in Pakistan by the building of the Mirpur dam; they spent their compensation on tickets to the UK
- poor farming villages sent men to help with labour shortages in the textile mills of Yorkshire and Lancashire.

¹¹ This is quoted from <http://goo.gl/8yCXqB>

As independence was granted to countries in Africa that had once been part of the British Empire in the 1960s new groups of Asian immigrants tried to settle in the UK:

- Asians living in Kenya, persecuted by the policy of **Africanisation**, tried to use their British passports to escape in 1967
- Asians living in Uganda, terrorised by the brutal dictatorship of Idi Amin, tried to use their British passports to escape in 1972.

Chinese Immigration

There was increased immigration from China as the 1949 Communist revolution had meant that many refugees had fled to the island of Hong Kong, which was still part of the British Empire. By the 1960s Hong Kong was getting so overcrowded that immigrants used their British passports to come to the UK. Some 96,000 Chinese immigrants had come to the UK by 1971.¹² The arrival of Chinese immigrants caused much less attention than other migrant groups as they were less concentrated in particular places and were mostly working in the catering trade where they were not in direct competition for jobs with British workers.

Labour Shortages

After the end of the Second World War the UK needed cheap labour. The post-war economic revival and the government's policy of full employment led to severe shortages of workers. In 1949 the Royal Commission on Population found that the UK needed 140,000 immigrants a year to meet demand from employers.

The Commonwealth was an obvious source for this extra labour. As the 1948 British Nationality Act automatically entitled all Commonwealth citizens to come and work in the UK, employers were quick to make the most of this opportunity. The government had thought that this would be organised through agencies that would find immigrants work and then send them back when they were no longer needed. However this Act meant that these migrant workers could exercise their legal right to settle in the UK permanently.¹³

¹² Dominic Sandbrook, *State of Emergency: The Way We Were: Britain 1970–1974* (London, 2010), page 266.

¹³ Some of the early West Indian immigrants may be seen talking about why they came to the UK at <http://goo.gl/CL6gSI>



Source 4: West Indian Mrs Agatha Hart who was working for London Transport as a bus conductor in 1962

In 1956 the London Transport Executive¹⁴ made a deal with the Immigrants' Liaison Service in Barbados to loan thousands of workers money to come to the UK which could be paid back out of their wages. It did the same in Trinidad and Jamaica – 4,500 people came to work for London Transport between 1955 and 1961.¹⁵ The British Hotels and Restaurants Association did the same and many steamship and airline companies made a lot of money from ferrying these immigrants to the UK.

The people migrating to the UK during the years after 1948 had mostly been recruited to work for British companies. However, the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act introduced stricter controls on immigration. It said that immigrants needed to have skills and had to already be contracted to a UK employer before they could be allowed into the UK. The result of this was that unskilled migration was considerably reduced. The Act also allowed the dependant family members of immigrants already in the UK to come and live with them, which meant that Commonwealth immigration continued into the 1970s.

SUMMARY:

By the time the *Windrush* arrived in the UK in 1948 there were already 75,000 West Indian and Asian people living in the UK – many had been born there.¹⁶ The 1971 census showed that 650,000 people in the UK could trace their origins to Commonwealth countries – this was nearly ten times the total number of non-white people living in the UK in 1951.¹⁷

¹⁴ A clip about this may be seen at: <http://goo.gl/fKHVV>

¹⁵ Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good* (London, 2005), page 314.

¹⁶ Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good* (London, 2005), page 311.

¹⁷ Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good* (London, 2005), page 315.

How did the people of the UK react to Commonwealth immigration?

In an interview for the BBC programme *Playing the Race Card* in 1999, Bruce Paice, Head of Immigration at the Home Office from 1955–1960, said, “The population of this country were all in favour of the British Empire as long as [it] stayed where it was – they didn’t want it here.”¹⁸

Immigration Acts

Immigration was a difficult issue for politicians to resolve – to keep the UK’s economic recovery going, businesses needed immigrant workers, but most voters were against immigration, and in particular non-white immigration. White immigrants greatly outnumbered non-white immigrants coming to the UK after the Second World War. Irish workers were arriving at the rate of 60,000 a year from 1945 to 1956 which was much more than the 30,000 West Indians. Between 1945 and 1949 some 300,000 white European immigrants arrived from Poland, Austria and Italy.¹⁹

In 1954 Winston Churchill told the Conservative Cabinet, ‘...the continuing increase in the number of coloured people coming to this country and their presence here would sooner or later come to be resented by large sections of the British people.’²⁰ Ordinary people were not the only ones who had concerns about unrestricted immigration. Many politicians in the 1950s worried that increasing immigration would put too much strain on the UK. Academic studies in the 1950s showed that immigration should be restricted. Parliament investigated the issue twenty times in the 1950s.²¹

Increasingly Parliament was put under pressure to restrict immigration by the Home Office and the Ministry of Labour as unemployment started to rise in the early 1960s. In 1958 Tom Driberg, the Labour Party Chairman speaking to representatives of the main workers’ unions at the Trades Union Conference in 1958 said, “How can there be a colour problem? There are only 190,000 coloured people in our population of over 50 million. The real problem is not black skins but white prejudice.”²² At the same conference a resolution was passed demanding an end to all immigrant workers entering the country.



Digital source 1

A cartoon by Vicky commenting on the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act, published in the *Evening Standard* newspaper, 2 July 1962
<http://goo.gl/xipOKJ>

¹⁸ This is quoted in <http://goo.gl/fKHHHV>

¹⁹ J. A. Cloake and M. R. Tudor, *Multicultural Britain* (Oxford, 2001), page 47.

²⁰ A. N. Wilson, *Our Times: The Age of Elizabeth II* (Arrow, 2009), page 53.

²¹ A short clip about this may be seen at: <http://goo.gl/iEhRLJ>

²² J. A. Cloake ac M. R. Tudor, *Multicultural Britain* (Oxford, 2001), page 48.

The 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act

1962 was a year of rising unemployment and increasing support for right-wing anti-immigration groups. Harold Macmillan's Conservative government decided to restrict immigration in order to limit the numbers of immigrants coming in to the UK, even though there were more emigrants leaving the UK. The government would issue work vouchers which were strictly controlled. Limited numbers of these vouchers were made available – 8,500 a year from 1963. To get a voucher an immigrant had to prove that they:

- already had a job offer
- had specialist skills
- had appropriate education and qualifications
- had close relatives already in the UK.

Labour said that this Act was too harsh and racist²³ but the Conservative Home Secretary Rab Butler said that it was a matter of numbers, not race. The Act said, 'Immigration officers will, of course, carry out their duties without regard to the race, colour or religion of the Commonwealth citizens who may seek to enter the country.'²⁴ The restrictions imposed did favour white immigrants from countries like Ireland rather than non-white immigrants from the West Indies and Asia.

The 1962 Act still allowed 45,000 people a year into the UK, as 900 vouchers were issued a week. In the year before the Act came into force there was a final rush of immigrants. In 1961 alone there were 49,000 from India and Pakistan, 66,000 from the West Indies and 21,000 from Hong Kong.²⁵

The 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act

After Labour won the 1964 election they realised that the 1962 Immigration Act had not really reduced immigration as it had caused a last minute surge as people tried to avoid the restrictions of the Act. There were also large numbers of **dependants** who were still entitled to come to the UK. By 1965 there were 330,000 voucher applications being investigated and 500,000 dependants who wanted to come to the UK.

Labour had criticised the 1962 Act as being too tough but were now being much tougher on immigration themselves. They had been frightened by what had happened in Smethwich during the general election in 1964, when an anti-immigration candidate had won the election by taking votes away from the Labour candidate.

²³ A discussion of this may be seen at <http://goo.gl/my8Avy>

²⁴ A. N. Wilson, *Our Times: The Age of Elizabeth II* (Arrow, 2009), page 90.

²⁵ Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good* (London, 2005), pages 314–15.

In 1965 the government tightened the administrative procedures that enforced the 1962 Immigration Act:

- only 15% of vouchers were available to be used by any single country
- only children under the age of 16 were classed as ‘dependants’ and were allowed to join their parents
- priority was given to skilled workers like doctors and engineers
- more was done to ensure that illegal immigrants were deported
- a quota of 8,500 vouchers a year was set in 1965 and was later reduced to 1,500
- if immigrants held a British passport but did not meet the other entry requirements they had to go to other Commonwealth countries like Australia or Canada.

This still did not completely solve the immigration problem. Some immigrants ended up staying longer or permanently in the UK because they were worried that if they left they would not be allowed back in again. It also meant it was more likely that these immigrants would invite their families to come and join them while they still could. There was a reduction in the number of unskilled workers who were immigrants after 1962, but this continued at a lower level as dependants of those already working in the UK came to join their families.

Immigration became an important political issue again in 1967 as large numbers of **Kenyan Asians**²⁶ tried to come to the UK to escape persecution in newly independent Kenya. There were 200,000 Kenyan Asians. The Labour government set a quota of allowing in 1,500 Kenyan Asians a year, even though 7,000 were already waiting for their papers to come through. This effectively invalidated their British passports.

Both Labour and the Conservatives agreed to a new Commonwealth Immigration Act in 1968.²⁷ It further restricted automatic entry to the UK to people who had been born in the UK, or had one parent or grandparent who had been born in the UK. Although it did not specifically say this in the Act this clearly favoured white people.

The 1971 Immigration Act²⁸

Conservative Prime Minister Edward Heath introduced a probation period for new immigrants and much harsher penalties for illegally entering the UK in 1971. Work permits were limited to 12 months only.²⁹ The 1971 Act introduced the idea of ‘patrials’, that automatic entry would only be granted if an immigrant’s parents had been born in the UK. This meant that many Australians, Canadians, New Zealanders and South Africans whose families had recently emigrated from the UK could still return. Right-wing politicians like Enoch Powell opposed the Act because it did not provide for **repatriation** of immigrants who were already living in the UK.

²⁶ A clip about this (referring to ‘Kenyan Indian migration’ which we now refer to as ‘Kenyan Asian migration’) may be seen at <http://goo.gl/xodnHP>

²⁷ See James Callaghan justifying these restrictions on immigration at <http://goo.gl/dkUd3h>

²⁸ See the politicians discussing this at <http://goo.gl/tbdXcW>

²⁹ A video showing how difficult it had become for dependants to join their families by the end of the 1970s may be seen at <http://goo.gl/p8gUjJ>

FOCUS: The Ugandan Asians crisis of 1972³⁰

The Conservatives' determination to end the immigration question was tested by the **Ugandan Asians** who tried to come to the UK to escape the dictatorship of Idi Amin. Some 57,000 of them held British passports. By the summer of 1972 the Conservative government agreed that they should look after the Ugandan Asians. Not everyone agreed. Leicester Council took out adverts in the Ugandan press to try and dissuade refugees from coming to them as they were 'full up' and the people of Bolton petitioned the council not to allow these refugees there. People said there was already too much unemployment amongst UK citizens. Some Conservative opponents wanted the Ugandan Asians to go back to India, where they originally came from, even though they had British passports.

As some city councils would not provide help, the British Asian community started to raise money for the refugees, buying up houses due for demolition and setting up schools for the children in cities like Leicester. The government set up a Ugandan Settlement Board who had thousands of people offering rooms for the refugees to stay in. The Home Secretary, Robert Carr, offered £750 per family to cover travelling expenses. It was a very different response to Labour's shutting out of the Kenyan refugees in 1967 and 1968.



Source 5: A photograph of Ugandan Asian refugees arriving in the UK in 1972

Praful Patel of the All-Party Committee on United Kingdom Citizenship praised the government in *The Times* newspaper, saying that their policy on the Ugandan Asians was:

... in the highest traditions of justice and fair play so often shown by the British people. The decision to accept responsibility for these people is a tremendous credit for the Government. It vindicates our trust in them.³¹

³⁰ A clip about this (referring to 'Ugandan Indian migration' which we now refer to as 'Ugandan Asian migration') may be seen at <http://goo.gl/GGNP9a>. and a range of views about the Ugandan Asians may be seen at <http://goo.gl/FoA19l>

³¹ Dominic Sandbrook, *State of Emergency: The Way We Were: Britain 1970–1974* (London, 2010), page 265. This was originally from *The Times*, 19 August 1972.

The immigration issue still did not go away. In January 1978 Mrs Thatcher, the new leader of the Conservative Party, said in a television interview on *World in Action* that she had sympathy for people who “are really rather afraid that this country might be rather swamped by people with a different culture.”³² Right-wing extremists who had left the Conservatives in the 1950s and 1960s because they thought they were too soft on immigration now returned to support the Party.

In some ways Winston Churchill had been right about how the British people would react to continued immigration. Opinion polls in 1956 showed that two thirds of the British population still supported the idea of unrestricted Commonwealth immigration. However by 1961 Gallup polls suggested that two thirds of the British people wanted restrictions placed on immigration.³³ After the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act there were more white emigrants leaving the UK to go to Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa than there were non-white immigrants coming into the UK.³⁴ Despite this, opinion polls between 1964 and 1974 continued to show that the British people thought there were too many immigrants, even though the restrictions placed on immigration had become harsher and harsher during that time.

Right-wing groups and opposition to immigration

Political groups who believe in maintaining social inequality, in terms of wealth or race, are called right-wing groups. The British Union of Fascists (BUF), who had some support in the UK in the 1930s, were an extreme right-wing group who believed in the supremacy of the white British race. Many BUF leaders were imprisoned during the Second World War because the government felt that they had too much sympathy with right-wing Nazi Germany.

After the war was over these fascist leaders were released and began to create new organisations to spread their ideas. After the Nationality Act of 1948 was passed many of these groups focussed their attention on opposing West Indian and Asian immigration to the UK. These groups included:

- The Union Movement
- British League of Ex-Servicemen and Women
- Imperial Defence League
- Union of British Freedom
- Sons of St George

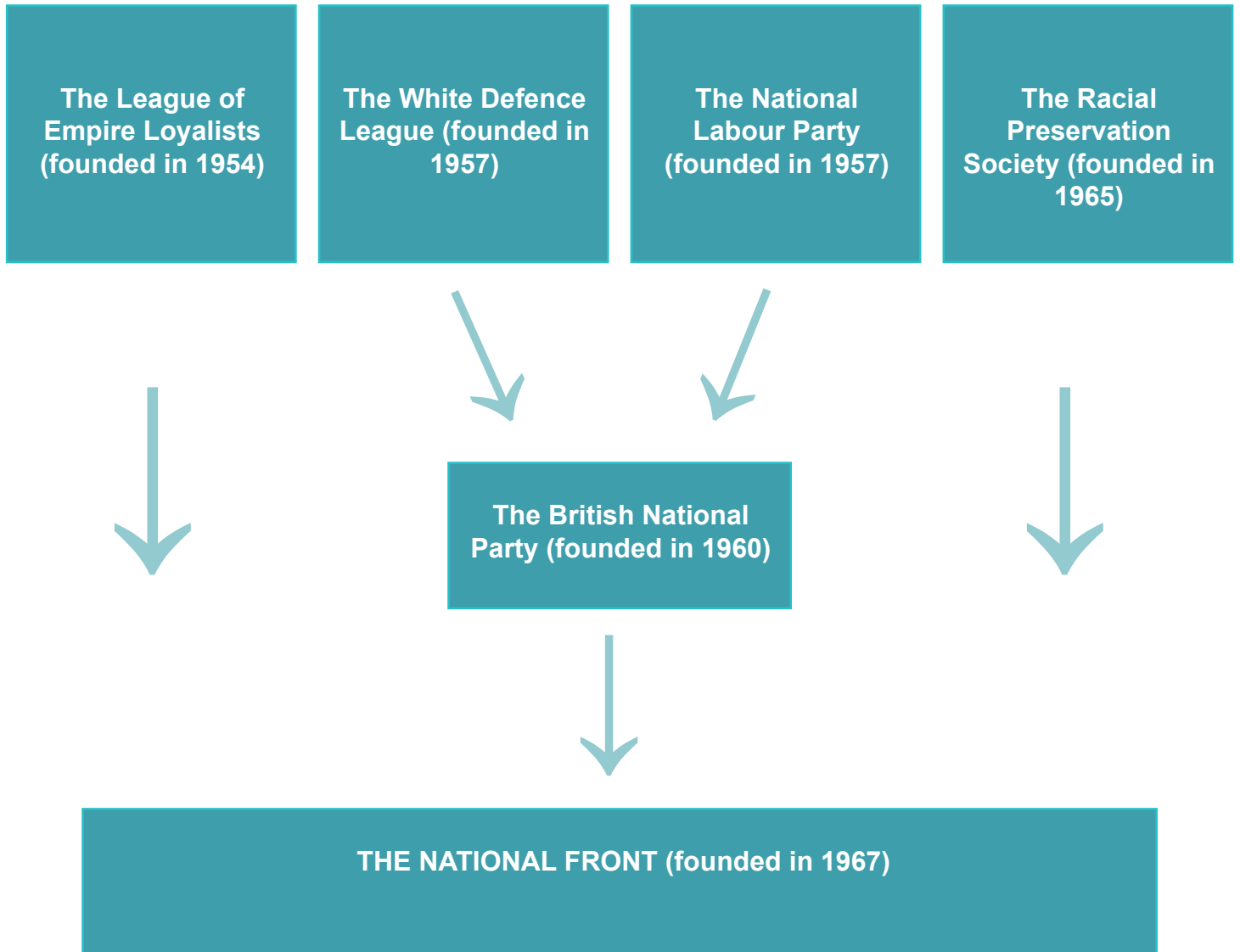
Other right-wing groups were formed in the 1950s and 1960s as the number of West Indian and Asian immigrants coming to the UK continued to increase.

³² Richard Weight, *Patriots: National Identity in Britain 1940–2000* (London, 2013), page 538, and see the video of this, and some people’s reactions to it at <http://goo.gl/aDR9Lo>

³³ Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good* (London, 2005), page 331.

³⁴ Dominic Sandbrook, *White Heat – A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London, 2006), page 664.

Figure 1: The new right-wing groups formed in the 1950s and 1960s



The most successful of these groups was the National Front which was founded in 1967 by merging the British National Party with the League of Empire Loyalists and the Racial Preservation Society. They campaigned to have West Indian and Asian immigrants sent back to where they had come from, and for white emigrants to return to the UK. In 1970 there were about 1,500³⁵ members and in the general election of that year there were ten National Front candidates in cities with large immigrant communities. They did not get many votes.

In an interview with journalist Kevin Walker in 1974, a National Front supporter stated:

Why should I be forced to live with them [black people]? I want to be able to go into a pub, I want to be able to go to work without seeing a black face. The National Front is saying the sort of things I want to hear... I want to just be with our own. I don't want to live in a system that falls over itself to favour blacks. If there's anything going in this country, I want it for myself. We've suffered enough in the past and now it's our turn. We've had one flabby government after another saying, "We've got to learn to live together". Well, why?³⁶

The National Front never appealed to a wide audience as many people were put off by their Nazi-like ideas, and far-fetched conspiracy theories. The protests they organised against the government's policies in the Ugandan Asian crisis did lead to a rise in membership and increased success in the 1973 local elections. In the 1973 West Bromwich by-election the National Front picked up 16% of the vote with their candidate promising to 'send back the coloured immigrants'.³⁷ The party only achieved 3.3% of the national vote in the 1974 general election, even though membership had increased to 20,000 members with 30 local branches.³⁸ In the local elections of 1976 the National Front won 20% of the votes cast in the city of Leicester, which had a very large Asian population,³⁹ as well as winning two seats on Blackburn's town council. By 1977 the National Front was the fourth largest political party in the UK.

While some members of the National Front were trying to use legitimate political means to win support, others took a more violent approach. During the 1974 election campaign, National Front deputy leader Martin Webster wrote that there was a 'global struggle for survival between various aspects of humanity... The British people are in the front line of this struggle and must be made to realise it... White man are you ready to fight?'⁴⁰

³⁵ Dominic Sandbrook, *State of Emergency: The Way We Were: Britain 1970–1974* (London, 2010), page 288.

³⁶ Dominic Sandbrook, *State of Emergency: The Way We Were: Britain 1970–1974* (London, 2010), page 291.

³⁷ Dominic Sandbrook, *State of Emergency: The Way We Were: Britain 1970–1974* (London, 2010), page 294.

³⁸ Dominic Sandbrook, *State of Emergency: The Way We Were: Britain 1970–1974* (London, 2010), page 294.

³⁹ <http://goo.gl/YIMT2H>

⁴⁰ Dominic Sandbrook, *Seasons in the Sun* (London, 2012), page 582.

There were a number of high profile incidents involving clashes between the National Front and other groups who opposed them. For example:

- in June 1974 there was a clash between National Front supporters and **anti-fascist** students during a march in London; this led to the death of Kevin Gately, one of the students, while the National Front saw a further increase in their support
- in August 1977 **left-wing** members of the Socialist Workers Party attacked people on a National Front march against mugging in the largely white areas of Deptford and Lewisham. This became known as the 'Battle of Lewisham': 134 people needed hospital treatment and 214 people were arrested. It led to the formation of the Anti Nazi League as a united opposition group to the National Front
- at a meeting held in Southall town hall in 1979, in the middle of a large Asian community, there was an outbreak of violence between National Front supporters and anti-fascist protesters; a white teacher, Blair Peach, was killed; 4,000 police officers had been sent to protect the 3,000 National Front members at the meeting.⁴¹

By the end of the 1970s National Front support had started to decrease because:

- a 1974 ITV documentary series *This Week* had highlighted the **neo-Nazi** views and activities of many of the National Front's leaders
- in 1978 Margaret Thatcher, leader of the Conservatives had won back many National Front supporters when she had shown sympathy for their concerns about immigrants 'swamping' the UK
- in 1979 the party was almost bankrupt as it put 303 candidates forward in the general election and every one of them lost their deposit.

British Politicians and Immigration

There were a number of politicians who openly opposed immigration:

- Sir Cyril Osborne, Conservative MP for Louth in Lincolnshire told the *Daily Telegraph* in October 1961 that unless immigration was stopped Britain would 'cease to be a European nation and become a mixed Afro-Asian society'⁴²
- Sir Gerald Nabarro, Conservative MP for Kidderminster asked a live radio audience, "How would you feel if your daughter wanted to marry a big buck nigger with the prospect of coffee-coloured grandchildren?"⁴³

⁴¹ Arthur Marwick, *British Society Since 1945* (London, 1982), page 184.

⁴² Quote from *The Daily Telegraph*, 11 October 1961, in Dominic Sandbrook, *White Heat – A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London, 2006), page 665.

⁴³ Quote from *The Times*, 9 April 1963, in Dominic Sandbrook, *White Heat – A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London, 2006), pages 665–6.

- George Rogers and James Harrison, the Labour MPs for the areas of London affected by race rioting in the summer of 1958 both demanded greater immigration controls
- in the West Midlands town of Smethwick,⁴⁴ where 10% of the population were recent immigrants, Conservative Peter Griffiths won the seat from its Labour MP, Gordon Walker, in the 1964 general election with a strongly anti-immigrant campaign which included the slogan 'If you want a nigger for a neighbour, vote Liberal or Labour.'⁴⁵ Griffiths lost the seat back to Labour in 1966.

There were no black MPs until the 1987 general election when Bernie Grant, Paul Boateng and Diane Abbott were all elected for Labour, and Keith Vaz was the first modern Asian MP elected for Labour in the same election, although the first ever Asian MP was Dadabhai Naoroji who was elected as a Liberal MP in 1892.

FOCUS: Enoch Powell and the 'Rivers of Blood' Speech

Enoch Powell was the Conservative MP for Wolverhampton North West. In the 1950s well-paid UK workers had moved out of the town so local businesses had to employ immigrants from the West Indies, India and Pakistan. By 1966 Wolverhampton had a greater concentration of immigrants than anywhere outside of London.⁴⁶ At the time Powell, who was Minister for Health in the Conservative government, resisted pressure from local residents' organisations who wanted him to speak out against immigration. Immigrant doctors and nurses were helping him to solve staffing problems in the NHS.



Source 6: Enoch Powell

After 1964 Powell became very frustrated with the new Conservative leader, Edward Heath, who would not listen to his ideas about Conservative economic policy. From 1965 Powell started to argue against immigration. When people challenged him about this he said he was just reflecting the views of his constituents. By the mid 1960s Wolverhampton's industry was in decline and unemployment in the town was rising. One in twenty people in Wolverhampton were recent immigrants. The birth rate amongst the immigrant community was eight times higher than amongst non-immigrants.

On Saturday 20 April 1968, Powell gave a speech to the annual meeting of the West Midlands Conservative Political Centre. He had not run his speech past the Conservative Central Office as was the normal procedure so his party leaders had no idea what he was going to say.

⁴⁴ A clip about the Smethwick vote and its impact may be seen at <http://goo.gl/6aQsga>

⁴⁵ Dominic Sandbrook, *White Heat – A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London, 2006), page 669.

⁴⁶ Dominic Sandbrook, *White Heat – A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London, 2006), page 667.

The speech began with a story about a man who told him that he and his family were not staying in the UK because in twenty years' time black people would have taken over the country. Powell then focussed on the issue of continuing to allow the dependants of immigrants into the UK: "We must be mad, literally mad, as a nation to be permitting the annual inflow of some 50,000 dependants, who are for the most part the material of the future growth of the immigrant descended population. It is like watching a nation busily engaged in heaping up its own funeral pyre."⁴⁷

Powell went on to describe the alienation that white people felt as a result of government support for immigrants: "... they found themselves made strangers in their own country. They found their wives unable to obtain hospital beds in childbirth, their children unable to obtain school places, their homes and neighbourhoods changed beyond recognition, their plans and prospects for the future defeated; at work they found that employers hesitated to apply to the immigrant worker the standards of discipline and competence required of the native-born worker; they began to hear, as time went by, more and more voices which told them that they were now the unwanted."

The climax of the speech used the image that gave the speech the name it would be referred to afterwards: "As I look ahead, I am filled with foreboding. Like the Roman, I seem to see 'the River Tiber foaming with much blood'.... Only resolute and urgent action will avert it even now. Whether there will be the public will to demand and obtain that action, I do not know. All I know is that to see, and not to speak, would be the great betrayal."

The Conservative leadership acted quickly and Powell was sacked from the Shadow Cabinet. There were pro-Powell demonstrations in Birmingham, Coventry, London, Newcastle, Nottingham, Preston and Southampton. 300 out of 412 local Conservative associations agreed with Powell's views.

Speaking to the BBC television programme *Panorama* on 22 April 1968, Edward Heath, the Conservative leader said:

I dismissed Mr Powell because I believed his speech was inflammatory and liable to damage race relations... I don't believe the great majority of the British people share Mr Powell's way of putting his views in his speech.⁴⁸

The speech was popular with those present at the meeting and amongst the white people of the Midlands.⁴⁹ Newspapers tried to find the real people whose stories had been mentioned in the speech but were unable to, leaving some to think that Powell had made them up. On 22 April 1968 *The Times* newspaper headline was 'An Evil Speech', whereas on 21 April the *News Of The World* had commented, 'We can take no more coloured people. To do so, as Mr Powell says, is madness'.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Quotes are from the Wikipedia page <http://goo.gl/IHSpBa> and the full text may be found at: <http://goo.gl/69xs9M>. A video of some of this speech may be seen at <http://goo.gl/T16qrT>

⁴⁸ Colin Shephard and Rosemary Rees, *British Depth Study 1939–1975* (London, 2010), page 69.

⁴⁹ Michael Heseltine remembers opposing the views of Enoch Powell at <http://goo.gl/WN1p8z> and the impact of the speech is considered in the BBC Class Clip <http://goo.gl/nFjxPb>

⁵⁰ Dominic Sandbrook, *White Heat – A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London, 2006), page 681.



Source 7: A West Indian immigrant walks past a wall with graffiti in support of Enoch Powell in 1968

A Gallup poll at the end of April 1968 showed that 74% of people questioned agreed with Powell. There were a number of wildcat strikes from workers in support of Enoch Powell, including the East End dockers who broke into Parliament on 23 April 1968 carrying placards with slogans like 'Don't Knock Enoch' and 'Back Britain, Not Black Britain'. Powell received thousands of letters of support and a Gallup poll in the spring of 1969 showed that he was the most admired man in the UK⁵¹ and he was still the most popular politician in the country in 1972.⁵²

The Police

In 1970 there were only ten non-white policemen in the Metropolitan Police in London, in a city with hundreds of thousands of immigrants. By 1976 this had only increased to 70 out of 22,000 officers. It was an even worse situation in Nottingham which had 22,000 immigrants but no non-white officers at all.⁵³ Those immigrants who did try to join the police faced prejudice and abuse from their fellow officers. Many potential recruits were put off by the lack of trust in the police in immigrant communities, despite Metropolitan Commissioner Sir Robert Mark stating, 'The only colour we recognise is blue.' Across the whole of the UK in 1972 there were 58 non-white police officers out of 110,000.⁵⁴ This had increased to 286 by 1981.

The Parliamentary Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration found that in 1971 most police officers believed that black people were much more likely to be criminals than white people even though the crime statistics showed that this was not the case.⁵⁵ Young black people were also very suspicious of the police because they would often use the 'sus' (suspect) clause of the 1824 Vagrancy Act to justify searching and arresting black youths over the age of 11 just because they suspected they might be about to commit a crime.

⁵¹ Dominic Sandbrook, *White Heat – A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London, 2006), page 685.

⁵² Dominic Sandbrook, *State of Emergency: The Way We Were: Britain 1970–1974* (London, 2010), page 259.

⁵³ Dominic Sandbrook, *State of Emergency: The Way We Were: Britain 1970–1974* (London, 2010), page 280.

⁵⁴ Dominic Sandbrook, *Seasons in the Sun* (London, 2012), page 576.

⁵⁵ Dominic Sandbrook, *State of Emergency: The Way We Were: Britain 1970–1974* (London, 2010), page 280.

Many immigrants complained that the police had little interest in racist attacks and that sometimes the police themselves would attack immigrants. In 1975 the Special Patrol Group were sent into South London to target black muggers. The tabloid newspapers hailed them as the cutting edge of crime prevention but they terrified local immigrant communities. They stopped 14,000 people and arrested 400, nearly all of whom were black.⁵⁶ In some areas immigrant communities started to form self-defence associations to protect themselves.

Chelsea Council had asked for police support during the 1976 Notting Hill Carnival.⁵⁷ A total of 1,600 officers were sent. The parades on Sunday went without any trouble but on Monday afternoon the police tried to arrest some black teenagers they said had been working as pickpockets. They met resistance from people in the carnival crowd which quickly turned into a pitched battle on the street. Rioters smashed car and shop windows and threw glass bottles at the police. Some 450 people were injured, many of them police, and 68 people were arrested. Newspapers were quick to blame the black community while some journalists argued that it was the aggressive presence of so many police that was the cause.



Source 8: A photograph of the 1976 Notting Hill Carnival riot



Digital source 2

A newspaper cartoon about recruiting black police officers by Trog (Wally Fawkes) published in the *Daily Mail* in August 1970

<http://goo.gl/jYszxr>

⁵⁶ Dominic Sandbrook, *State of Emergency: The Way We Were: Britain 1970–1974* (London, 2010), page 280.

⁵⁷ The BBC News On This Day page, including video footage, for this may be seen at <http://goo.gl/S6yxag> and there is footage with a song by Lord Tokyo at <http://goo.gl/sHfQ34>

The British People and Immigration

In 1958 journalist Philip Gibbs published a survey of British national life and called the section looking at immigration ‘The Invaded Island’. Gibbs argued that the influx of immigrants was putting Britain in danger: ‘[if] this invasion becomes a tidal wave from the countries of the coloured folk, all claiming the right of entry... we [will] gradually lose our English character and blood by too much mixture of foreign strains.’⁵⁸ As more traditional values became less important, as once proud industrial towns went into decline and guaranteed jobs-for-life started to disappear, it was easy for people to blame immigrants, even though it was nothing to do with them.

These ideas were common in the 1960s, whether it was Conservative voters who thought that immigrants could never become British, or Labour voters who resented competition for jobs and housing. Clifford Hill’s *How Colour Prejudiced Is Britain?* published in 1965 included a survey of people in North London which showed that two out of five people knew black or Asian immigrants, one in five objected to working alongside immigrants, half said that they would refuse to live next door to immigrants and nine out of ten disapproved of **mixed marriages**.⁵⁹

A young East End skinhead speaking to reporters in 1970 claimed, “We’re being exploited, the working class. It’s hard for us to fight for our job and our house, but with them here as well, trying to get our houses, it’s another opposition”.⁶⁰

Local communities started to form organisations against immigrants. In London in 1963 the Southall Residents’ Association was formed. Property prices were falling due to an influx of Punjabi immigrants, so the Association demanded segregated schools and put pressure on local estate agents to only sell to white people.⁶¹ They claimed that their whole way of life was ‘threatened and endangered by a flood of immigrants who were generally illiterate, dirty and completely unsuited and unused to our way of life. They overcrowd their properties to an alarming degree, create slums, endanger public health, and subject their neighbours to a life of misery, annoyance, abuse and bitterness’.⁶² These feelings were shared with people living in other towns where other anti-immigration organisations were being formed, like the Birmingham Immigration Control Association.

There was a rise in the membership of right-wing groups like the British Ku Klux Klan, The English Rights Association and the Racial Preservation Society, as well as the newly-formed National Front. Resentment towards immigrants in many communities did not go away. In a Gallup poll from February 1978, some 49% of people said that Caribbean and Asian immigrants should be offered financial aid to return home, even though by then many had been born in the UK.⁶³

⁵⁸ Richard Weight, *Patriots: National Identity in Britain 1940–2000* (London, 2013), page 295.

⁵⁹ Dominic Sandbrook, *White Heat – A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London, 2006), page 664.

⁶⁰ Alwyn W. Turner, *Crisis? What crisis? Britain in the 1970s* (Aurum, 2008), page 63.

⁶¹ This was reported in *The Times*, 9 November 1963.

⁶² Dominic Sandbrook, *White Heat – A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London, 2006), page 666.

⁶³ Dominic Sandbrook, *Seasons in the Sun* (London, 2012), page 580.

Opposition to racial discrimination

Not everyone was racist towards black people. The Campaign Against Racial Discrimination (CARD) was set up in 1965. It was inspired by a visit from American civil rights leader Martin Luther King as he travelled to Norway to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The group was started by Marion Glean, a West Indian opponent of racism, and included Anthony Lester, who helped produce the race relations laws, as well as historian C. L. R. James and London County Councillor David Pitt.

According to the CARD pamphlet *How To Expose Discrimination*:

One of the most urgent tasks facing us in CARD therefore is to build a case by case exposure of discrimination, so that the Press and Parliament cannot pretend that it does not exist. If we are to campaign effectively against racial discrimination, we must publicise the evils which we are fighting.⁶⁴

Other anti-racist groups soon followed, like the Black People's Alliance formed on 21 April 1968 in the Midlands in response to the 'Rivers of Blood' speech and the anti-racist protests against the 1971 Immigration Act, as well as those who tried to prevent the National Front from spreading their message. The Runnymede Trust⁶⁵ was set up by members of CARD in 1968 to promote racial equality and is still going today. In 1978 Mavis Best began the 'Scrap Sus Campaign'⁶⁶ to get the police to stop abusing an old 'stop and search' law from 1824 against young black people – this law was abolished in 1981.

In response to rock guitarist Eric Clapton's onstage rant in support of Enoch Powell⁶⁷ at a gig in Birmingham in 1976, a group of political activists and music fans began to organise 'Rock Against Racism' gigs. These took place in university and polytechnic venues as many young students were already opposed to racism.



Source 9: The 1978 Rock Against Racism demonstration



Digital source 3

A 1978 Anti-Nazi League poster whose slogan was used by Rock Against Racism
<http://goo.gl/J7UGfe>

⁶⁴ Colin Shephard and Rosemary Rees, *British Depth Study 1939–1975* (London, 2010), page 67.

⁶⁵ The Runnymede Trust's oral history of racial issues in the 1960s and 1970s may be seen at <http://goo.gl/Zk829G>

⁶⁶ There is a clip on this from *Playing The Race Card* <http://goo.gl/m5lgh5> and a short video about Mavis Best and this campaign may be seen at <http://goo.gl/tEYOpZ>

⁶⁷ Alwyn W. Turner, *Crisis? What crisis? Britain in the 1970s* (Aurum, 2008), page 221.

By 1978 Rock Against Racism was able to organise a demonstration in London, starting in Trafalgar Square, marching to Victoria Park and finishing with a concert headlined by The Clash,⁶⁸ The Buzzcocks and the Tom Robinson Band.⁶⁹ Some 20,000 people were expected, but 80,000 turned up on the day. It made holding racist opinions deeply unfashionable amongst young people with its very clear slogan – ‘The National Front is a Nazi Front’.⁷⁰

Was the UK a multicultural society by 1979?

In April 1967 Policy and Economic Planning, an independent research organisation, produced a report into racial discrimination which stated:

In the sectors we have studied... there is racial discrimination varying in extent from the massive to the substantial. The experiences of white immigrants... compared to black or brown immigrants... leave no doubt that the major component in the discrimination is colour.⁷¹

Different Experiences

Before the Second World War immigrant communities tended to be in London or in the UK’s port cities as trade and traffic passed through from all over the British Empire. In the 1950s new immigrant communities began further inland in the industrial centres of Lancashire and the West Midlands. West Indian and Asian immigrants did not settle in agricultural areas like East Anglia, South West England, Scotland or Wales.

West Indian communities⁷² grew in areas like Toxteth in Liverpool,⁷³ Moss Side in Manchester, Handsworth in Birmingham and Chapeltown in Leeds. Local people were often surprised to find that black West Indians could speak English, and that they were Christians. Most of the early West Indian immigrants were young single men. Their rowdy behaviour often irritated the white people who lived alongside them. These attitudes were hardened by the unlicensed drinking clubs that catered for the West Indians who had been banned from local pubs. They became a symbol for everything that white communities did not like in West Indian immigrants – excessive drinking, loud ska music, gambling and prostitution.

⁶⁸ The Clash may be seen playing at this event at <http://goo.gl/oa9sVL>

⁶⁹ Dominic Sandbrook, *Seasons in the Sun* (London, 2012), page 588.

⁷⁰ Alwyn W. Turner, *Crisis? What crisis? Britain in the 1970s* (Aurum, 2008), page 223.

⁷¹ Andrew Boxer with Keith Lockton and Elizabeth Sparey, *The End of Consensus: Britain 1945–90* (Essex, 2009), page 119.

⁷² A range of different examples of discrimination experienced by early West Indian immigrants may be seen at <http://goo.gl/JxiiLX>

⁷³ A 1967 *Panorama* report on West Indians in Liverpool may be seen at <http://goo.gl/4eziy3>

Asian communities were very different. They did not see themselves as British like the West Indians did, and there was also a language barrier as they did not usually speak English. Unlike the West Indians, Asians lived in their own communities.⁷⁴ Asian women tended to be kept in the home and arranged marriages meant that many did not mix with white people in the community.⁷⁵ This cultural separation meant that Asian immigrants faced less discrimination⁷⁶ than the West Indians. As many Asians started their own businesses they faced less discrimination from fellow workers, although they could be racially abused by their customers. Asian businessmen revived the local corner shops which had closed down because of competition with supermarkets. In Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, by the end of the 1960s all 37 off-licenses were owned by Asians.⁷⁷

The 'colour bar'

There was a number of contradictions in the British people's attitude towards race in the years after the Second World War:

- the war fought had been fought to defeat Hitler's racial empire
- the Commonwealth was a family of different races working together under the British flag
- British people vocally opposed racial segregation in the USA and apartheid in South Africa.



Digital source 4

A cartoon by David Low, published in the *Evening Standard* newspaper in 1943 showing a West Indian man being refused entry into a British hotel.

<http://goo.gl/9r6CqA>

However, most British people had the view that white Europeans were inherently superior to non-white people. Many hotels, restaurants, dance halls and pub landlords operated a '**colour bar**' a long time before the *Windrush* arrived in 1948. These problems continued to be faced by Commonwealth immigrants until laws were passed to end discrimination in the 1960s and 1970s.

An article published in the *Wolverhampton Express and Star* newspaper 6 February 1955, stated:

The doors of a new dance hall in Wolverhampton are soon to be opened to the dancing public. But the sign is to go up, 'No coloured dancers' – neither will 'Teddy Boys' be admitted. The manager said the ban will be enforced for 'business reasons'. He added that there always seemed to be troubles of some kind when non-white dancers were admitted.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ A BBC Class Clip considers the impact of this on an Asian teenager in the 1960s <http://goo.gl/4l2mlH>

⁷⁵ A 1972 *Panorama* report on the Asian community in Leicester may be seen at <http://goo.gl/xeEKXO>

⁷⁶ The discrimination faced by some Asian immigrants in Smethwick in 1964 may be seen at <http://goo.gl/gMLL6l>. Some examples of discrimination faced by the children of immigrants in 1968 may be seen at BBC Class Clips <http://goo.gl/gMLL6l>

⁷⁷ Colin Shephard and Rosemary Rees, *British Depth Study 1939–1975* (London, 2010), page 70.

⁷⁸ Colin Shephard and Rosemary Rees, *British Depth Study 1939–1975* (London, 2010), page 83.

Employment

Clifford Fullerton, a Jamaican immigrant who arrived in Britain in 1948 remembered:

Four of us got a job at the Salvation Army making uniforms. I was given an officer's uniform to make, and when I had put on the pocket the man in charge took it from me and showed it around the workroom as if to say, 'Look what the black man can do'. Later I applied for a job and the man said he can't trust people from the West Indies to cut English clothes.⁷⁹

Immigrants faced a wide range of different discrimination in their jobs:

- they were the first to be laid off if a business needed to lose workers
- they were often on the bottom of the pay scale while white workers were paid more for doing the same job
- some businesses like the Bristol Omnibus Company refused to employ black bus drivers or conductors⁸⁰
- Birmingham City Transport banned their employees from wearing turbans in 1960; Sikhs went on strike as they are a vital part of their religion and the ban was lifted in 1962
- many immigrants were 'underemployed' – stuck in low-paid low-skill jobs even though they were very well qualified; a 1958 study estimated that 55% of recent immigrants had downgraded their jobs on coming to the UK.⁸¹

Gulzar Khan, who moved from Pakistan to Nottingham in 1962, went from being a customs inspector to a British Railways cleaner:

I knew I wasn't going to get any better jobs. I had seen qualified people... [with university degrees] people who had been teachers, barristers – and not one of them got proper work. They were labourers, bus conductors, railway cleaners, and so on. The jobs we got were always the worst, even if we were educated people who could read and write much better than the people who were in charge.⁸²

By 1970 many Commonwealth immigrants had done really well getting technical, clerical and professional jobs. However, immigrant communities and jobs were linked to the areas of industrial and urban decline which were affected by the economic problems of the 1970s. For example, Wolverhampton saw the closure of the Norton Villiers motorcycle factory and the nearby closure of the Bilston steelworks. These were the only places in the area where immigrants had been able to live and work. By 1975 unemployment amongst immigrant workers was twice the national average, with young black school leavers four times less likely than their white counterparts to get work.⁸³

⁷⁹ *Yesterday's Britain: The illustrated story of how we lived, worked and played in this century* (Reader's Digest, 1998), page 198.

⁸⁰ Dominic Sandbrook, *White Heat – A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London, 2006), page 665.

⁸¹ Richard Weight, *Patriots: National Identity in Britain 1940–2000* (London, 2013), page 140.

⁸² Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good* (London, 2005), page 325.

⁸³ Dominic Sandbrook, *State of Emergency: The Way We Were: Britain 1970–1974* (London, 2010), page 267.

Housing

The Policy and Economic Planning report into racial discrimination in April 1967 stated:

In housing discrimination appears to be even more general and massive than it is in employment. With regard to private rental... two thirds are found to exclude them [coloured people] in practice. If he wishes to buy, the coloured person will find that a large proportion of houses for sale are not available to him.⁸⁴



Source 10: A sign commonly seen hanging outside boarding houses in the 1950s

There was a lot of cheap post-war housing, especially in areas badly damaged by German bombing in the war. Adverts often said, 'No Coloureds' or 'Whites Only'. A 1953 survey found that 85% of London landladies would not let rooms to dark-skinned students.⁸⁵ They often blamed this on not wanting to upset the other tenants or their neighbours rather than admitting to their own prejudice.

The government was fully aware of this situation. In the 1954 Ministry of Labour leaflet *How to Adjust Yourself in Britain* it said, 'You may be refused because you are coloured. You must expect to meet this in Britain'. Many people who did find rooms ended up being overcharged rent or sharing a room with a lot of other people. Similar problems affected immigrants who tried to buy houses when 'colour premiums' were added to the price or building societies refused to give them mortgages. They ended up stuck in poorer quality accommodation.⁸⁶ Despite being made illegal by Race Relations laws, discrimination continued into the 1970s. In 1976 white racist Robert Relf was jailed for advertising his house in Leamington Spa with a sign that read, 'For Sale – to an English family only'.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Andrew Boxer with Keith Lockton and Elizabeth Sparey, *The End of Consensus: Britain 1945–90* (Essex, 2009), page 119.

⁸⁵ Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good* (London, 2005), page 329.

⁸⁶ A clip from an early BBC documentary into racism in housing may be seen at <http://goo.gl/ouCz2D>

⁸⁷ This is quoted from <http://goo.gl/ouCz2D>

Some white people blamed the poor quality of the houses immigrants lived in on the immigrants themselves. It was actually that these houses were the only ones that immigrants could find to live in. Poor quality housing was cheap and white people did not want to live there because living conditions had already deteriorated. Immigrants had to be resident in the UK for 5 years before they qualified for council housing. By the late 1970s many immigrant communities were centred around **sink estates** that white families avoided or had abandoned, like the Holly Street estate in Dalston or Broadwater Farm in Tottenham.

Racial Violence

A researcher in a West Indian community in Nottingham in the late 1960s was told:

I thought the people of Britain would be good and affectionate – now most of them are against us... I did not know I was coloured until the English told me so... I expected people to be nice – it's like a slap in the face.⁸⁸



Source 11: Black protesters marching to publicise racial violence in Notting Hill in 1959

⁸⁸ Dominic Sandbrook, *White Heat – A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London, 2006), page 665.

Some examples of racial violence:

- May 1959 – Kelso Cochrane, an Antiguan carpenter, had gone to hospital with a broken thumb and on his way back was stabbed to death by six white youths in Notting Hill
- August 1961 – hundreds of white people rampaged through Middlesbrough chanting ‘Let’s get a wog’
- May 1963 – a white customer was killed in a fight that started when a group of white men tried to avoid paying their bill at a Chinese restaurant in St. Helens; Chinese properties across the town were ransacked and burned
- April 1970 – a Pakistani kitchen porter called Tosir Ali was stabbed to death during a skinhead rampage in the East End which then spread to other towns like Luton and Wolverhampton
- June 1976 – Sikh teenager Gurdip Singh Chaggar was stabbed to death by a white mob outside a cinema in Southall.

FOCUS: The 1958 Notting Hill race riot⁸⁹

The Notting Hill area of London had been a slum for the poorest white workers even before West Indian immigration in the 1950s. Houses were very overcrowded with few facilities. There was a lot of crime in the community, which was very poorly policed, and its attraction to immigrants was that it was cheap. Notorious crooked property owner Peter Rachman was happy to use the 1957 Rent Act to evict low-paying white families from unfurnished properties to bring in higher rent from black lodgers. This made the white residents of Notting Hill very resentful towards the West Indian immigrants.

It was an area where two very different groups of people ended up in conflict with each other. On one side, the West Indians were mostly lively young black men who spent their free time in ska music clubs and gambling dens. On the other side, right-wing organisations like the Union for British Freedom were based in neighbouring London districts so slogans like ‘Keep Britain White’, ‘Niggers Go Home’ and ‘Niggers Leave Our Girls Alone’ were common sights in the area. Oswald Moseley, the former leader of the British Union of Fascists campaigned against immigrants on street corners.

In the summer of 1958 there had already just been violent attacks by Teddy Boys on West Indians in the St. Ann’s district of Nottingham. On 30 August, the summer bank holiday weekend, large gangs of white youths started to attack houses where West Indians lived. They used milk bottles, iron bars and later petrol bombs, while shouting slogans like, “Let’s lynch the niggers! Let’s burn their homes!”⁹⁰ These ‘nigger hunters’, as they were called, were cheered on by the local white community. The violence had disappeared by 2 September. There were 140 arrests, mostly of white teenagers, and fortunately there were no deaths.⁹¹

⁸⁹ A BBC News page, including a video, commemorating 50 years since the riots may be found at <http://goo.gl/LHq2vX> and a short video about the riots as explained in Notting Hill today may be seen at <http://goo.gl/kO2ftn>

⁹⁰ Richard Weight, *Patriots: National Identity in Britain 1940–2000* (London, 2013), page 292.

⁹¹ A newsreel clip about the riots and some documentary interviews may be seen at: <http://goo.gl/dpEyXD>

There were a number of important consequences of this race riot:

- it turned wider British public opinion away from unrestricted immigration
- 1959 saw the rate of West Indians returning home increase from 150 to 4,500⁹²
- from 1959 the Notting Hill Carnival, launched by journalist Claudia Jones – an immigrant from Trinidad – became an increasingly popular annual black cultural celebration which is still enjoyed today by large crowds each year.



Digital source 5

A cartoon by John Musgrave-Wood in the *Daily Mail* newspaper about the involvement of the Teddy Boys in the 1958 Notting Hill riots
<http://goo.gl/sN1HbJ>

According to official statistics, attacks on ethnic minorities increased from 2,700 a year in 1975 to 7,000 in 1981⁹³ but the real figures are probably a lot higher as many immigrant groups had lost faith in the police and did not report many attacks.

After Enoch Powell's speech in 1968 some racists chanted, "Powell! Powell!!!" to excuse their violence although Powell himself never supported racist violence. Increasing violence against immigrants was more to do with the increasingly gloomy and uncertain economic situation and the threat of unemployment. Racist violence in the 1970s was part of a wider problem with young people and hooliganism.

Race Relations Acts

Home Secretary Roy Jenkins explained the need to integrate immigrants into UK society in 1966: 'I define integration, therefore, not as a flattening process of **assimilation** but equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance'.⁹⁴

All immigrants into the UK had full civil rights unlike in other countries around the world. They also faced a considerable amount of racism as white people refused to serve immigrants in pubs and restaurants, and made it difficult for them to get jobs and houses. There was also the issue of prejudice from the police as well.

Politicians were mostly sympathetic to the problems faced by immigrants and saw the need to both protect immigrants and prevent racist incidents. While the Immigration Acts tried to restrict the numbers of new immigrants to the UK, Race Relations Acts tried to help those already here to integrate into UK society.

⁹² Richard Weight, *Patriots: National Identity in Britain 1940–2000* (London, 2013), page 293.

⁹³ Richard Weight, *Patriots: National Identity in Britain 1940–2000* (London, 2013), page 583.

⁹⁴ Colin Shephard and Rosemary Rees, *British Depth Study 1939–1975* (London, 2010), page 67

The 1965 Race Relations Act

The 1965 Race Relations Act made racism in public places illegal and created a new offence, 'incitement to racial hatred'. The Conservatives argued that this denied the British people their freedom of speech.⁹⁵ To enforce this the Labour government set up the Race Relations Board in 1966 to investigate unfair treatment and oversee prosecutions for inciting racial disorder and refusing to serve people. The Board investigated 2,967 complaints of unfair treatment between 1966 and 1972, but there were only five court cases, and only three were won.⁹⁶ On the other hand, 143 complaints against racial stereotypes in adverts were upheld in 1966 alone.⁹⁷

There were some very serious limitations to this Act:

- it ignored problems in housing and employment
- the Board could only bring disputing parties together to solve a dispute, it could not prosecute them
- prosecutions were for a civil offence rather than a criminal one
- 'incitement to racial hatred' was more often used against black people than white people
- to get a successful prosecution the person who had suffered racism had to prove the racist person had intended to be racist, which was very difficult to do
- racism continued to be a problem for immigrants.

The 1968 Race Relations Act

The 1968 Race Relations Act prohibited discrimination in housing, employment and financial services. The Conservatives were deeply divided by this law, but the Conservative leader Edward Heath persuaded them to focus on opposing specific weaknesses in what was being proposed rather than the principle of trying to improve race relations. This resulted in Enoch Powell's rebellious 'Rivers of Blood' speech. This new law set up the Community Relations Commission, as well as Community Relations Councils in local areas.⁹⁸ These new groups were set up to monitor what was happening in mixed race areas. Prosecutions were now extended to discrimination in jobs and housing and they could result in offenders being taken to court but only after all other means of settling the dispute had been used.

Equality campaigners criticised the Act as government services, like the police, were still not covered by Race Relations laws. Like the 1965 Act, discrimination was not very clearly defined, which continued to make it difficult to prosecute.

⁹⁵ A discussion about this may be seen at <http://goo.gl/jjcEVB>

⁹⁶ Alwyn W. Turner, *Crisis? What crisis? Britain in the 1970s* (Aurum, 2008), page 219.

⁹⁷ Robert Winder, *Bloody Foreigners: The Story of Immigration to Britain* (London, 2005), page 376.

⁹⁸ A clip of James Callaghan explaining the government's policy on Race Relations may be seen at <http://goo.gl/YpYHXC>

The 1976 Race Relations Act

The 1976 Race Relations Act made racial discrimination illegal in employment, housing and education, as well as in providing services, goods and facilities. It was also illegal to use threatening or abusive language to incite racial violence and criminal offences. The Act very clearly defined both direct and indirect racism and emphasised that it was the effect of what was said or done, rather than the intent behind it. It also established the Commission for Racial Equality to ensure that the Act was enforced.

It was a big improvement on the previous Race Relations Acts but there were still important limitations:

- government services, like the police and prisons were still not covered
- jobs where race could still legitimately be an issue, for example an acting role, were not covered
- no money was made available for the poorest victims to take legal action
- little accurate data made it difficult to show if there was indirect discrimination.

FOCUS: The 1978 trial of John Kingsley Read for inciting racial hatred

John Kingsley Read⁹⁹ was the ex-chairman of the National Front. He had made a speech in 1976 in which he had talked of 'niggers, wogs and coons'. On the subject of the murder of an Asian man in Southall he said, "One down, one million to go". He was charged with inciting racial hatred. At his trial in January 1978, the judge, Neil McKinnon, said that using these words was not in itself racist and went on to explain why he agreed with Read that immigration needed to be controlled. An all-white jury said that Read was not guilty.

In response to this judgement, twenty black barristers refused to work with the judge and 133 MPs demanded he lose his job. Legally the judgement was correct as the 1976 Race Relations Act, which did not require proof of intent to incite race hatred, did not come into effect until a few days after the trial. The 1965 Act required the opposition to prove that he was inciting hatred against black people which they had not been able to do.

⁹⁹ Information about this case is from Alwyn W. Turner, *Crisis? What crisis? Britain in the 1970s* (Aurum, 2008), pages 216–17.

Immigrant contributions to the life and culture of the UK

Workers and families from Commonwealth countries in the West Indies and Asia changed the appearance of British towns, the beat of British music and even British cooking. The UK was no longer a country of white people – it was a multicultural society.

Food

In 1951 the first Good Food guide showed that only 11 out of 484 restaurants in the UK outside London served 'foreign' food.¹⁰⁰

The first modern Chinese restaurant was The Lotus House which opened in London in 1958. This was soon followed by the first takeaway in Queensway using Chinese immigrant workers and based on the traditional British fish and chip shop. The owners of this takeaway persuaded Butlin's holiday camps to serve Chinese food. As more ordinary people came to get a taste for it on their holidays, Chinese restaurants and takeaways spread through the rest of the country.¹⁰¹

Veeraswamy's Indian restaurant opened on Regent Street in London in 1918. It was the first Indian restaurant aimed at a UK audience. Before the Second World War the Taj Mahal chain of Indian restaurants were seen in many cities and by the 1950s they had spread right across the UK. A new kind of Indian food became available in the UK in 1959 with the arrival of the tandoor ovens. This food was not authentic Indian food – it had been adapted to British tastes which is why 'curry' is an English, not an Indian, word. For example, Chicken Tikka Masala is a tandoori chicken dish with a sauce added to make it more palatable to British diners. By 1974 there were 2,000 Indian restaurants in the UK.

Indian influences could also be seen in other areas of British food:

- 'Coronation Chicken' was created to celebrate the 1953 coronation of Elizabeth II and consisted of chicken and sultanas in a curried mayonnaise
- in the late 1960s Heinz Baked Beans introduced a variety with curried sauce and sultanas
- one of the first ready meals were the Vesta range of curries which were produced in the UK by Batchelors' from 1961.

Markets in West Indian areas like Notting Hill or Tottenham started selling exotic produce like pineapples, bananas, yams, sweet potatoes, mangoes and chillies which have become sights in modern British supermarkets and cooking.

¹⁰⁰ Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good* (London, 2005), page 321.

¹⁰¹ An audio interview with a Chinese restaurant owner from the 1960s may be heard at <http://goo.gl/X5h2FH>

Sport

There have been a number of black people who contributed to British sport, during this period of time:

- the UK's best 1970s boxer was John Conteh, born in Liverpool to a Sierra Leonean father and Irish mother; he was WBC light-heavyweight champion from 1974 to 1977
- Clive Sullivan was a Welsh rugby player from Splott in Cardiff who captained Britain's Rugby League side in the 1972 World Cup
- Trinidadian cricketer Learie Constantine became the UK's first black member of the House of Lords in 1969
- West Ham signed Bermudian Clyde Best in 1968 who scored 47 goals in 186 appearances¹⁰²
- during the 1970s West Bromwich Albion fielded three black players – Laurie Cunningham, Cyrille Regis and Brendan Batson, who were nicknamed the 'Three Degrees' (also the name of an all-black American female vocal group at the time)
- Laurie Cunningham played for the England Under 21s team in 1977 and Nottingham Forest's Viv Anderson became the first black senior England player in 1978; it took a long time for black players to qualify for a national football team as they had to be born in the country or have a father who had been born in the country.

As in other areas of life, black sportsmen had to face discrimination and abuse. In 1971 a Football Association official had said that black players would not make it in England because they would not like to play when it was cold and wet. Black players often had to face racist chants from the terraces and spectators threw bananas at them. By the end of the 1970s fifty out of a total of two thousand professional football players were black.

Music

There have been a wide range of musical influences on the music of the UK from immigrant communities. For example, Indian music could be clearly heard in many of the songs of the psychedelic rock movement of the 1960s, from the drone in the Kinks' 'See My Friend'¹⁰³ and The Beatles' 'Tomorrow Never Knows',¹⁰⁴ to the sitar in The Beatles' 'Within You Without You'.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² A biographical article about Clyde Best may be seen at <http://goo.gl/gdsofx>

¹⁰³ The Kinks' 'See My Friend' may be heard at <http://goo.gl/S57Nfo>

¹⁰⁴ The Beatles' 'Tomorrow Never Knows' may be heard at <http://goo.gl/HVblf4>

¹⁰⁵ The Beatles' 'Within You Without You' may be heard at <http://goo.gl/6xn5eD>

There was an even wider range of musical influences from the West Indies:

- the 1951 Festival of Britain brought the Trinidad All Steel Percussion Orchestra¹⁰⁶ (TASPO) and the music of the steel band to the UK
- calypso came to the UK in the 1960s with artists like Lord Kitchener and his performance of 'London is the place for me'¹⁰⁷ as he got off the *Windrush* in 1948, Young Tiger and 'I was there (at the Coronation)'¹⁰⁸ in 1953 as well as others like Roaring Lion¹⁰⁹ and Mighty Sparrow¹¹⁰
- Jamaican dance music 'ska' and its gentler form 'rocksteady' were brought to the UK in the 1960s by West Indian record labels like Trojan and Island Records
- there was also chart success for West Indian artists like Millie Small in 1963 with 'My Boy Lollipop'¹¹¹ and Desmond Dekker and the Aces with 'The Israelites'¹¹² in 1969
- reggae came to the UK in the 1970s with Jimmy Cliff's film *The Harder They Come*¹¹³ in 1972 and Bob Marley's album *Catch a Fire*¹¹⁴ in 1973; this became particularly important to the children of West Indian immigrants as it gave them a sense of pride in their heritage and offered an escape from their miserable living conditions and employment prospects; it also encouraged these young black men to be more vocal about the problems they faced, as inspired by Bob Marley's 'Get Up, Stand Up'.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁶ An interview with one of the members of TASPO may be seen at <http://goo.gl/vubpGw>

¹⁰⁷ The song may be heard at <http://goo.gl/lx7yMt>

¹⁰⁸ The song may be heard at <http://goo.gl/TFvhgZ>

¹⁰⁹ Roaring Lion singing the calypso tune 'Love Thy Neighbour' may be heard at <http://goo.gl/agUDXK>

¹¹⁰ Mighty Sparrow singing 'Calypso Twist' (1964) may be heard at <http://goo.gl/FDGPxt>

¹¹¹ The *Top of the Pops* performance of Milly Small singing 'My Boy Lollipop' may be seen at <http://goo.gl/s5w03V>

¹¹² A BBC performance of this from 1978 may be seen at <http://goo.gl/9mfhFN>

¹¹³ Jimmy Cliff performing the title track from this film in the studio may be seen at <http://goo.gl/uqo6ts>

¹¹⁴ A playlist for this album may be found at <http://goo.gl/sDxGMj> and a documentary about making the album may be seen at <http://goo.gl/Mqgzy0>

¹¹⁵ A performance of this live in Germany may be seen at <http://goo.gl/ZyOLbK>

The annual Notting Hill Carnival, established in 1959 by Trinidadian Claudia Jones, was one of the many events that tried to show how West Indian culture could be an important part of UK culture too.

As West Indian music and artists came to be heard more and more it began to influence music being made in the UK:

- The Equals were a multiracial R&B band from London that started in 1965 and are best known for their number one single 'Baby, Come Back'¹¹⁶
- The Foundations were a multiracial soul band that started in 1967 and are best known for their number one single 'Baby, Now That I've Found You'¹¹⁷
- brothers Eddy and Chris Amoo, having failed to get a record deal in the 1960s even with a recommendation from The Beatles, had success as disco band The Real Thing, and are most well-known for their 1976 hit 'You To Me Are Everything'¹¹⁸
- Jamaican-born Errol Brown had a lot of hit records in the 1970s with his band Hot Chocolate, including the single 'You Sexy Thing'¹¹⁹
- UK born reggae acts began to have success in the 1970s like Steel Pulse,¹²⁰ Aswad (which means 'Black' in Arabic)¹²¹ and Matumbi.¹²²

¹¹⁶ The 1968 *Top of the Pops* performance of The Equals singing 'Baby, Come Back' may be seen at <http://goo.gl/WUL3wy>

¹¹⁷ The *Top of the Pops* performance of The Foundations singing 'Baby, Now That I've Found You' may be seen at <http://goo.gl/sp21pU>

¹¹⁸ The *Top of the Pops* performance of The Real Thing singing 'You To Me Are Everything' may be seen at <http://goo.gl/yqqr5v>

¹¹⁹ A performance by Hot Chocolate of 'You Sexy Thing' may be seen at <http://goo.gl/5xtAeL>

¹²⁰ Steel Pulse performing their song 'Ku Klux Klan' in 1978 may be seen at <http://goo.gl/MHqldM> and a live performance of 'Handsworth Revolution' in 1979 may be seen at <http://goo.gl/pnOxKA>

¹²¹ A 1970s performance by Aswad of 'It's Not Our Wish' may be seen at <http://goo.gl/eFJbZx>

¹²² The *Top of the Pops* performance of Matumbi singing 'Point of View (Squeeze a little lovin')' may be seen at <http://goo.gl/pd0vmM>

Many white musicians and young people were heavily influenced by West Indian music, especially in the 1970s. There were a number of reggae-influenced pop hits, including ‘Sugar, Sugar’ by the Archies¹²³ (1969) and ‘I Can See Clearly Now’ by Johnny Nash¹²⁴ (1972). The Beatles used a reggae rhythm for ‘Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da’¹²⁵ in 1968. Guitarist Eric Clapton had his first solo hit with Bob Marley’s ‘I Shot The Sheriff’¹²⁶ in 1974. Popular 1970s band 10CC released a number of reggae-influenced singles, including ‘Dreadlock Holiday’.¹²⁷ Punk band The Clash, like many punk bands, liked reggae and wrote a number of reggae-based songs like ‘The Guns of Brixton’ and ‘White Man in Hammersmith Palais’.¹²⁸ By the end of the 1970s The Police’s first reggae single was ‘Roxanne’, followed by ‘Don’t Stand So Close to Me’ and ‘Walking on the Moon’.¹²⁹

FOCUS: 2 Tone

‘2 Tone’ was a record label founded by Jerry Dammers in Coventry in the 1970s which saw Jamaican ska music mixed with British music like punk to produce a more modern ska sound. ‘2 Tone’ bands included The Specials,¹³⁰ The Selecter, The Beat, Madness,¹³¹ Bad Manners and The Bodysnatchers. This revival in interest in ska music also coincided with a time when both black and white young people faced a bleak future, likely to be unemployed in run-down towns and cities across the UK. Skinheads, mods and rudeboys all listened to ‘2 Tone’ records, but the music and the fashion had a wider appeal too. The sharp suits, thin ties and pork pie hats of the Jamaican rude boys¹³² of the 1960s which had influenced the mods and skinheads were now being worn again by both black and white young people.

¹²³ The video for ‘Sugar, Sugar’ may be seen at <http://goo.gl/ChIBcZ>

¹²⁴ A performance of ‘I Can See Clearly Now’ may be seen at <http://goo.gl/9vzvzS>

¹²⁵ This song may be heard at <http://goo.gl/l8T6Sz>

¹²⁶ A performance of this song from *The Old Grey Whistle Test* may be seen at <http://goo.gl/kXMzCB>

¹²⁷ The *Top of the Pops* performance of 10CC singing ‘Dreadlock Holiday’ may be seen at <http://goo.gl/TGszKF>

¹²⁸ ‘The Guns of Brixton’ may be heard at <http://goo.gl/FkqnCL> and ‘White Man in Hammersmith Palais’ may be heard at <http://goo.gl/hk5Cz1>

¹²⁹ ‘Roxanne’ may be seen at <http://goo.gl/bZQZ7L> and ‘Walking on the Moon’ may be seen at <http://goo.gl/G9IQR2>

¹³⁰ The Specials performing ‘Too Much Too Young’ may be seen at <http://goo.gl/jnyaVZ>

¹³¹ The video for Madness’ ‘One Step Beyond’ may be seen at <http://goo.gl/BGEjHp>

¹³² This is referenced in the song ‘A Message To You Rudy’, originally by the West Indian Dandy Livingston – the song may be heard at <http://goo.gl/lhIHxj>. A ska revival version of this song was recorded by The Specials and may be seen at <http://goo.gl/cJECQt>

The Race Issue in the Media

There were a number of attempts at addressing the varying racial issues in British sit-coms¹³³:

- *Til Death Us Do Part* (1965–1975) – the central character, Alf Garnett (played by Warren Mitchell), was an old monarchist living in the East End of London, who blamed black people and communists for all the things that were wrong with Britain.¹³⁴ For example, in an episode aired in January 1974, as a black electrician arrives to fix his television, Alf Garnett said, “It’s a pity old Enoch [Powell] ain’t in charge. He’d sort them out. He’d put the coons down the pits, he would”.¹³⁵ *Til Death Us Do Part* quickly became very popular and by 1967 it regularly had 17 million viewers.¹³⁶ The show was supposed to make fun of people who had such racist and old-fashioned views, but many critics thought that the reason why people watched the show was because they agreed with what Alf Garnett was saying.
- *Curry and Chips*¹³⁷ (1969) – comedian Spike Milligan blacked up to play an Indian-Irish factory worker – it was received so badly it was cancelled after only six episodes
- *Rising Damp*¹³⁸ (1974–78) – the banter between racist conservative landlord Rigsby (played by Leonard Rossiter) and his charming and intelligent black lodger Philip (played by Don Warrington) was one of the central elements of the show’s success
- *Love Thy Neighbour*¹³⁹ (1972–76) – a black couple move in next door to a white couple, the wives get on really well but the men are constantly hurling abuse at each other. ITV presented it as being ‘about racial prejudice – with a difference. It should make us laugh a lot... and think a lot too’.¹⁴⁰ The characters were racial stereotypes and were hated by black viewers even though they drew in millions of white viewers a week.

¹³³ Read the BFI’s ‘Race and the Sitcom’ article at <http://goo.gl/Bgfbuk/>

¹³⁴ A clip of Alf Garnett ranting about immigration may be seen at <http://goo.gl/5kp5dk>

¹³⁵ Dominic Sandbrook, *State of Emergency: The Way We Were: Britain 1970–1974* (London, 2010), page 262.

¹³⁶ Dominic Sandbrook, *White Heat – A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London, 2006), page 662.

¹³⁷ The first episode of *Curry and Chips* may be seen at <http://goo.gl/XnKt8n>. Spike Milligan was also responsible for what many saw as a racist sketch called ‘Pakistani Daleks’ which may be seen at <http://goo.gl/N62SOk>

¹³⁸ A playlist of *Rising Damp* with an episode that includes racist stereotyping may be seen at <http://goo.gl/624v1s>

¹³⁹ A playlist of a complete episode of *Love Thy Neighbour* (where the wives begin by talking about how their husbands feel about each other) may be seen at <http://goo.gl/SiLJqr>

¹⁴⁰ *TV Times* as quoted in Dominic Sandbrook, *State of Emergency: The Way We Were: Britain 1970–1974* (London, 2010), page 276, with the quote being taken by him from <http://goo.gl/Jzg0or>

- *It Ain't Half Hot Mum* (1974–81) – a Royal Artillery Concert Party performing in India and Burma during the Second World War. The main characters were a mixture of English, Welsh and Scottish officers and soldiers, but there were also some Asian characters as well. Bearer Rangi Ram, the Burmese butler and porter was actually played by a white actor, Michael Bates, who was 'blacked-up': the writers and producers defended this by saying that he was born in India and they could not find enough Indian actors to play all of the roles.¹⁴¹
- *Mind Your Language* (1977–79)¹⁴² – it is about an English as a Foreign Language class taught in an adult education college in London; the teacher is a white Oxford educated man, and the students cover a wide range of foreign nationalities from Europe and around the world, which included several Asian characters; there were a lot of jokes that revolved around the mispronunciation or misunderstanding of commonly used English phrases.

FOCUS: *The Black and White Minstrel Show*



Source 12: White performers 'blacked up' on The Black and White Minstrel Show

*The Black and White Minstrel Show*¹⁴³ ran from 1958 to 1978 on the BBC. White performers were made up with black faces and exaggerated facial features to perform song and dance routines in an exaggerated West Indian accent. It was prime-time television for two decades even though many people saw it as racist. Clive West, an immigrant from Trinidad, wrote to *The Times* in 1967 asking for the show to be cancelled because 'It depicts my race as singing, dancing, laughing, idiotic people'.¹⁴⁴ It was still regularly getting audiences of 12 million in the early 1970s, but was finally cancelled in 1978.

¹⁴¹ Michael Bates is the first person to speak in this episode which may be seen at <http://goo.gl/IMcyl5>

¹⁴² The first episode of *Mind Your Language* may be seen at <http://goo.gl/UVZ7A3>

¹⁴³ An article regarding *The Black and White Minstrel Show* being racist may be seen at <http://goo.gl/hzAWVb>. A video of one of their song and dance routines may be seen here as well.

¹⁴⁴ From *The Times* 19 May 1967, quoted by Dominic Sandbrook, *State of Emergency: The Way We Were: Britain 1970–1974* (London, 2010), page 274.

There were a number of positive contributions made by black people in the media as well:

- Lenny Henry began a long and successful comedy and acting career when he won ITV's talent show *New Faces* in 1976 with his impressions of white celebrities ('You've seen them before, but not in colour!'¹⁴⁵ was one of his punchlines); he also starred in the first black UK sit-com *The Fosters*¹⁴⁶ which began in 1976 on ITV
- daytime soap opera *Crossroads* introduced the first black soap opera character, Melanie Harper, in 1970 and the first black family in 1974
- ITV's *Tomorrow People* had a multiracial cast
- Floella Benjamin, born in Trinidad in 1949, came to the UK in 1960; in the 1970s she became very well-known for her performances in children's television programmes like *Play School* and *Play Away*
- Trevor Macdonald became the first black newsreader in 1973 on ITN and Moira Stuart began reading the news on BBC Radio 2 and 4 in the 1970s, moving to television news in 1981

CONCLUSION: 'When Enoch Powell said: "Go home..."'

A joke told by black stand-up comedian Charlie Williams as part of his 1970s act – his parents were from Jamaica but he was born in Barnsley, South Yorkshire – went as follows: 'When Enoch Powell said: "Go home, black man", I said: "I've got a hell of a long wait for a bus to Barnsley"'.¹⁴⁷

Commonwealth immigrants had come to the UK after the Second World War seeking a better life in the 'mother country'. As the UK economy boomed in the 1950s, there was full employment and immigrants were needed to do the jobs that there were not enough people from the UK to do. They stayed despite the discrimination and violence they continued to face. Their children were born and brought up in the UK. They made contributions to life in the UK from new styles of music to changing what people ate. Eventually the government passed laws to ensure that they were treated equally to other UK citizens.

¹⁴⁵ Alwyn W. Turner, *Crisis? What crisis? Britain in the 1970s* (Aurum, 2008), page 206.

¹⁴⁶ A clip from *The Fosters* may be seen at <http://goo.gl/Vh8clq>

¹⁴⁷ Dominic Sandbrook, *State of Emergency: The Way We Were: Britain 1970–1974* (London, 2010), page 272.

Glossary

British Empire	countries ruled directly by the UK
immigration	people coming from other countries to live and work in the UK
segregation	separation
partition	separation
Africanisation	giving jobs and land to black Africans only
dependants	people whose close relatives had already moved to the UK
Kenyan Asians	Asian families who were born in, or had moved to, the African country of Kenya
repatriation	sending back
Ugandan Asians	Asian families who were born in, or had moved to, the African country of Uganda
anti-fascist	against right-wing ideas
left wing	believing in equality
neo-Nazi	modern Nazi
mixed marriages	marriage between a non-white person and a white person
colour bar	not letting non-white people in
sink estates	economically poor and socially deprived council estates
assimilation	making everyone the same

Recommended materials

Runnymede Trust – oral histories of the struggle to improve race relations in the UK, including short audio interviews with key figures may be found at <http://goo.gl/1eo8Mz>

See the first two episodes of the BBC's *Windrush* television series covering this period at

EPISODE 1: <http://goo.gl/TXpK0k>

EPISODE 2: <http://goo.gl/Q6m283>

See the first two episodes from the BBC's *Playing the Race Card* series at

EPISODE 1: <http://goo.gl/D5Xoxg>

EPISODE 2: <http://goo.gl/zvljl6>

See the BBC series *Reggae Britannia* at

EPISODE 1: <http://goo.gl/45nho8>

EPISODE 2: <http://goo.gl/vKo4pP>

EPISODE 3: <http://goo.gl/4eqsmf>

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Song lyrics on page 5: <http://goo.gl/QcfT1O>

This resource is provided to support the teaching and learning of GCSE History. The materials provide an introduction to the main concepts of the topic and should be used in conjunction with other resources and sound classroom teaching.