



Post-War Immigration Restriction in Britain

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Introduction

Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister of Britain from 1940-1945 and 1951-1955, led Britain to victory in World War II. After this victory Churchill had very few supporters remaining because after WWII Britain was left bankrupt and in shambles as a consequence of war. Britons saw Churchill as a destructive war figure and the result was his loss in the 1945 elections to the Labor Party. Londoners yearned for a better future and believed the Labor Party could provide it for them, with Clement Richard Attlee as Britain's new Prime Minister.

WWII ruined much of Britain's historical sites, as well as its economy. After WWII ended in 1945, soldiers began returning from war and needed jobs, medical care, and government support. In order to accommodate the needs of London, recovering Britain required total reconstruction. Reinvention was Britain's only choice, making manual labor a necessity. The cheapest form of manual labor was through the hiring and welcoming of immigrants. The dilemma the government faced was enticing immigrants to journey to London and introducing immigration laws that would not affect the pre-dominant white London. The solution was the introduction of four immigration laws between 1948-1971. However, these laws were restrictive. At what point would restrictive immigration laws be considered discriminatory against non-white immigrants? These were controversial issues that were debated in parliament and invariably gave way to public contention.

British Nationality Act of 1948

The British Nationality Act of 1948 was passed by Parliament to entice immigrants to journey to Britain. The British Nationality Act of 1948 was a ploy created by Parliament in order to take advantage of immigrants seeking a new life. This act was introduced by the Labor Party in hopes of meeting the post-war reinvention needs of Londoners, while also embracing Britain's

commonwealth nations. As explained best in the book *Race, Gender and the Body in British Immigration Control: Subject to Examination* written by Evan Smith, an American journalist, and Marinella Marmo, a professor of criminal justice and criminology, the British Nationality Act stated that any individual who was a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies or was a citizen of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Newfoundland, India, Pakistan, Southern Rhodesia and Ceylon shall by virtue of that citizenship have the status of a British subject.¹ Migrants could attain citizenship through birth, descent, naturalization, or registration. By attaining British citizenship, these individuals also now had the right to vote at Parliamentary and local government elections. With the knowledge of definite employment and full citizenship, migrants found this invitation difficult to resist.

As more and more migrants entered Britain, Londoners began to retaliate because they were unhappy with the passing of the British Nationality Act. On the 21st of June in 1948 *Empire Windrush*, a ship assigned to the British Ministry of Transport, docked at the Port of Tilbury near London. *Empire Windrush* had gathered a little over 1,000 immigrants prepared to relocate to Britain. The passengers aboard included 417 Jamaican migrants, 66 Mexican immigrants and 119 displaced English migrants.² This only fueled the anger of Londoners because they were tired of the random influxes of migrants entering Britain claiming the same rights as them. Parliament was under the assumption that by giving citizenship to commonwealth migrants, the migrants would solve the nation's lack of laborers issue. Except, by initially solving that issue, Parliament

¹Evan Smith and Marinella Marmo, *Race, Gender and the Body in British Immigration Control: Subject to Examination* (London: The MacMillan Press, 1981), 24.

²Mike Phillips, *Windrush – the Passengers* (BBC History: 2011), http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/windrush_01.shtml [Accessed 15 June 2018]

produced a sense of animosity among native Londoners and non-white migrants as their population increased.

The overcrowded neighborhoods and the growing diversity in the city led to social unrest and generated the worst racial violence riot the United Kingdom has ever seen in August of 1958 in Notting Hill. As reported in *The Independent*, The Saturday before the area exploded, nine white teenagers armed with iron bars had embarked on a “nigger hunting expedition” in the neighborhood of Notting Hill. Their expedition ended in the hospitalization of five black men. Six days later a multiracial couple, Majbritt Morrison (a Swedish woman) and Raymond Morrison (a Jamaican man), were arguing outside of their home. Against Majbritt’s will, a white crowd began to form in her defense and eventually broke out into a brawl between the crowd and Raymond’s West Indian friends. The next morning a mob formed with 200-armed people rampaging through the streets of Notting Hill shouting “Down with the niggers” and “Go home you black bastards”.³ The Notting Hill riot was an example the Conservative Party insistently used to convince Parliament to support the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962. As Parliament member Bernard Braine had stated, the mixture of races with different mannerisms was a recipe for disaster as proven by the Notting Hill riot.

The aftermath of these violence’s saw Parliament passing the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962, then the White Paper Commonwealth Immigration Amendment of 1965, the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1968 and finally the Immigration Act of 1971. Many scholars argue that by passing these controversial acts Parliament displayed discriminatory, and at times, racist behavior. As argued by Smith and Marmo, the British immigration control system works by

³ Mark Olden, *White Riot: The Week Notting Hill Exploded*, (The Independent: Independent Digital News and Media: 2008), www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/white-riot-the-week-notting-hill-exploded-912105.html. [Accessed 30 May 2018]

keeping a clear distance between domestic British society and the alien – colonial ‘other’.⁴ In spite of this political agenda, the immigration laws marked the beginnings of multicultural Britain.

Immigration Laws Passed by Parliament 1962-1968

The Labor Party was able to convince Parliament to pass the British Nationality Act, three years after the war ended, because the Conservative Party finally agreed to embrace commonwealth migrants as well. Sir David Maxwell, an influential member of Parliament, stated “We must maintain our great metropolitan tradition of hospitality to everyone from every part of our empire”.⁵ The British Nationality Act was the catalyst to the multicultural Britain today, and to the unrest of conservative Londoners who wished to maintain a largely ‘white’ Britain. The British Nationality Act of 1948 enticed many migrants from the commonwealth to journey to Britain, as expected by parliament. What Parliament did not expect was the unrest produced by Britain’s increasing population. Smith and Marmo explain, “Between 1948 and 1962 over 279,000 West Indians, over 79,000 Indians and over 68,000 Pakistanis travelled to Britain alongside nearly 19,000 West Africans and nearly 24,000 Cypriots as well as the massive, but unrecorded, number of Australian, New Zealand, Canadian, Rhodesian and South African migrants”.⁶ Marmo and Smith explain that Parliament now found themselves in a conundrum; How would they balance

⁴ Evan Smith and Marinella Marmo, *Race, Gender and the Body in British Immigration Control: Subject to Examination* (London: The MacMillan Press, 1981), 13.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

the use of migrant labor and the interests of Britons?⁷ This conundrum was supposedly solved with their first restrictive policy towards British subjects, the Commonwealth Immigration act of 1962.

Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962

The Commonwealth Immigration Act, passed on February 27th, 1962, was a provision for controlling commonwealth immigration into the United Kingdom. Caroline Knowles, a professor of sociology, explains that this act-controlled commonwealth immigration by limiting who was able to enter the United Kingdom and by creating a link between immigration and labor needs.⁸ As explained by Abrahmova in her study of Immigration Policy in Britain since 1962, those who were able to enter Britain maintained the following conditions: 1) Were holders of employment vouchers issued by the Ministry of Labor, 2) Students, 3) Members of the armed forces and 4) Entrants who could support themselves and their dependents without working. Abrahmova also reported that this act entailed vouchers in three specific categories: 1) Category A: Those with a specific job from an employer, 2) Category B: Those who had skills or training useful or in short supply within Britain and 3) Category C: Workers without any specific skills or job offers.⁹ These criteria's restricted commonwealth immigration by making it mandatory for those entering to identify their specific purpose for residing in Britain.

The Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 created criteria to follow, not answers to the needs of the public. Instead of the criteria helping the general public, the Labor Party criticized it as a form of racism. In November of 1961 Parliament held a debate, allowing both the Conservative

⁷ Ibid., 26.

⁸ Caroline Knowles, *Race, Disclosure and Labourism* (London: Routledge, 1992), 98.

⁹ N Abrahmova, "Immigration Policy in Britain Since 1962," (Czechia, Masaryk University: Masters Diploma Thesis, 2007), 27.

and Labor Party to discuss their viewpoints on the bill. Both the Conservative and Labor Parties agreed on the issue of mass immigration but held different expectations on how to handle it. The Labor Party opposed the introduction of the Commonwealth Immigration Act on both political and economic grounds. Politically, the Labor Party favored a more benevolent British Commonwealth and defended the right of free entry for Commonwealth citizens.¹⁰ The Labor Party also rejected the bill on economic grounds. The Labor Party believed the flow of migration was closely related to the rate of economic absorption. If Britain suddenly lost their large influx of migrants, they would also lose their economic standing which would then affect their political standing. As Ruth Brown, a famous British author, explains by supporting this act the Conservative Party unknowingly “ruined the almost perfect symmetry which had previously existed between levels of migration into Britain and the level of demand for labor there”.¹¹

During the debate the Labor Party accused the Conservative Party of supporting an act that ‘consistently accused the government of implementing racism’ and ‘introduced a color bar into legislation’, giving them the slogan produced by local Londoners, “If you want a nigger neighbor, vote Labor”.¹² This slogan was created as a consequence of the unrests in London, where Londoners were tired of commonwealth migrants ‘taking over London’ and supporting the bill. Conservatives refuted this point of view and argued the bill was created to solely solve the serious social problems that are arising from the enormous increase in immigration. Cyril Osborne, a British Conservative member of Parliament (MP), believed immigration was the most difficult, most dangerous and most delicate problem facing Britain at the time and an issue that had to be

¹⁰ Evan Smith and Marinella Marmo, *Race, Gender and the Body in British Immigration Control: Subject to Examination* (London: The MacMillan Press, 1981), 31.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., 33.

tackled. As supported by a fellow Conservative MP, Norman Pannell stated “non-white Commonwealth immigration was the main problem because colored immigrants come in greater numbers and many of the immigrants from Commonwealth countries maintain a standard of civilization which is lower and have acquired habits and inclinations which conflict with the accepted pattern of the British”.¹³ The Labor Party believed by placing restrictive bills on migrants Britain would lose their economic and political standing. The conservatives believed by doing nothing, Britain would lose the support of Londoners. The debate solved nothing. Both parties agreed upon the same central issue, mass migration and its impact on the people, but neither party suggested possible ways to improve or solve the social problems caused by migrants.

Although the Conservative Party used examples of social unrest as support for the passing of the act, the act failed to solve social unrest within Britain. If anything, the act negatively impacted migrants by making London unsafe for their community. This is because radical Londoners believed they now had the support of Parliament to view migrants as an ‘other’. This was caused by Parliament denying the racial discrimination bill. Prior to the introduction of the Commonwealth Act, a bill for the prohibition of racial discrimination was brought to Parliament three times yet defeated each time. Bernard Braine, a Conservative MP, described the bill as “so inconsistent and ill-conceived that it is almost an insult to the House to consider it further”.¹⁴ Instead the ‘racial discrimination’ was described as ‘evidence of the inevitability of conflict between races’ using the peoples complaints as the Conservative Party’s reasoning for supporting the Commonwealth Act. British citizens protested against Commonwealth migration because employment opportunities were being taken from British workers and because of the overuse of

¹³Ibid., 29.

¹⁴ Evan Smith and Marinella Marmo, *Race, Gender and the Body in British Immigration Control: Subject to Examination* (London: The MacMillan Press, 1981), 28.

social services from Commonwealth citizens. The majority of Parliament also supported the Commonwealth Act because it solved the issue of the sickly entering Britain. Commonwealth citizens were able to enter Britain “regardless of health, means of subsistence, character record, habits, culture, education, need for them economically... or the wishes of the British people”.¹⁵

White Paper Commonwealth Immigration Amendment of 1965

The White Paper Commonwealth Immigration Amendment of 1965 was created after a complaint by the Labor Party’s new leader, Harold Wilson. In March of 1965, Wilson stated that the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 “was not working as intended”.¹⁶ Wilson stated this because the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 was supposed to create a decline in migration – but it did not. Therefore, the White Paper Commonwealth Immigration Amendment of 1965 was created to better regulate the number of undesirable migrants entering Britain. To do so, Parliament focused on Category C: Workers without any specific skills or job offers. Category C vouchers were being taken advantage of by migrants. Since the introduction of the act 42,367 Category C vouchers were issued between July of 1962 and September 1964. To solve this issue, the White Paper Commonwealth Immigration Amendment of 1965 was created. This amendment differed from the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 in two main ways: 1) The discontinuation of Category C vouchers and 2) A large reduction in the number of vouchers issued. Parliament decided to reduce the total number of vouchers issued from 20,000 to 8,500 a year to ensure the reduction of migrants entering Britain. Of the 8,500 vouchers, 1,000 would be reserved for citizens of Malta, and no more than fifteen percent of Category A vouchers would go to any

¹⁵ Ibid., 27.

¹⁶ Ibid., 33.

one Commonwealth country.¹⁷ This amendment also allotted more power to Immigration Officers, allowing them the ultimate say whether or not an individual was worthy to enter Britain.

Both the Labor and Conservative Party were now supporting a ‘racist’ act. Prior to passing the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962, the Labor Party had expressed resentment towards the act because the act made it seem as though Parliament was being racist towards commonwealth migrants. Yet, their party now suddenly supported a more restrictive form of the same act. This was because of a change in leadership within the Labor Party. By 1965 the Labor Party had completely changed their stance on immigration. When the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 was being produced a man by the name of Hugh Gaitskell was the Labor Party’s leader. Hugh Gaitskell firmly believed, “the rate of immigrants into this country is closely related and will always be closely related, to the rate of economic absorption. There was an almost precise correlation between the movement in the number of unfulfilled vacancies and the immigration figures”.¹⁸ Gaitskell presented an official, unified, formal position on the concept of immigration control for labor until he passed away in 1963. Gaitskell’s successor, Harold Wilson, now claimed the Labor Party “supported and... do support certain provisions of the Act” later explaining “we do not contest the need for control of immigration into this country”. The Labor Party went from declaring the Commonwealth Act of 1962 was a “plain anti-Commonwealth Measure in theory and a plain anti-color Measure in practice” to supporting certain aspects of the bill under Wilson’s leadership.¹⁹ The Labor Party was now in agreement with the rest of Parliament who believed

¹⁷ Ibid., 34.

¹⁸ Ibid., 32.

¹⁹ Ibid.

unrestricted immigration could only produce more problems, additional suffering and additional hardship unless something was done by Parliament.

This amendment further implemented restrictions against the commonwealth community by dividing the community between desirable and undesirable laborers. As explained by author Kathleen Paul, a professor of British and European history, “The voucher system significantly reduced primary migration to Britain. With 66,941 vouchers issued between July and December 1962, which was reduced to 16,046 by December 1965 when Category C was abolished.²⁰ Parliament belittled commonwealth migrants by segregating their communities based on how desirable of laborers the migrants were.²¹ Thus, further segregating the commonwealth community from the Native Londoners. Originally, during the creation of the British Nationality Act of 1948, commonwealth migrants were seen as fellow British citizens – with a purpose to serve (the rebuilding of Britain). After the migrants served their purpose, Parliament began to push *certain* migrants aside. Parliament consistently claimed the reason they passed the more restrictive Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1965 was because of the pressures of overpopulation was placing on Britain’s resources and community. This seems unlikely, because a majority of commonwealth migrants were laborers and their claim to resources were limited. In addition, overpopulation meant commonwealth workers as a whole were migrating to Britain at too fast of a pace, but it seemed only black immigrants were being targeted. As explained in Caroline Knowles book *Race, Discourse and Labourism*, “Black worker immigrants were a focus for labour anxieties concerning their impact upon the political community, and these anxieties were organized by an understanding of development...concerns were stated publicly (through

²⁰ Ibid., 30.

²¹ Caroline Knowles, *Race, Disclosure and Labourism* (London: Routledge, 1992), 99.

Parliament) and because no attempt was made by labour to disassociate itself from these conceptions, they must be interpreted as falling within the limits of labourism”.²² This supports the argument that although all commonwealth migrants fled to Britain to become laborers, only the black migrants were targeted as the ‘issue’.

This act further fueled the prejudices within London; as a result, the Labor party pushed for the Race Relations Act of 1965 to be passed. The Race Relations Act was created to prevent discrimination of places of public usage, but instead only caused further damage. Parliament claimed this act was meant to assist multi-cultural Londoners and provide them with a sense of safety, but the act barely had any influence. It is believed, the sole reason the Race Relations Act was passed was because the Labor Party required it and because Parliament believed immigration control was necessary to prevent racism. The Labor Party required it because they refused to have Parliament seem racist. This further supports the claim that Parliament passed the White Paper Commonwealth Immigration Amendment of 1965 with the knowledge of racist sentiments and created the Race Relations Act of 1965 to conceal this truth. What Parliament did not realize was that by creating more acts that pertained to racism and its *prevention*, they were only creating more tension among Londoners.

Parliament passed the amendment to the Commonwealth Immigration Act to ensure less non-white commonwealth citizens could enter Britain.²³ Throughout the 1960’s the amendment was able to decrease the number of vouchers issued to commonwealth immigrants. Meanwhile, the number of colonial migrants who had been issued a British passport overseas increased. The

²² Ibid., 101.

²³ Evan Smith and Marinella Marmo, *Race, Gender and the Body in British Immigration Control: Subject to Examination* (London: The MacMillan Press, 1981), 35.

number skyrocketed between 1965 and 1967, two years after Kenya won their independence. This was due to a law passed in Kenya stating Kenyans who held British citizenship were only allowed temporary stay in Kenya causing the influx of Kenyan South Asians fleeing to Britain. This frightened Parliament, causing an emergency meeting in 1968 where they discussed methods that could restrict the entry of Kenyan Asians holding British passports.

Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1968

The Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1968 amended the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962, with the sole purpose of preventing the entry of commonwealth migrants who have British passports into Britain.²⁴ The Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1968 made it so that British citizenship was now determined by the birth of the individual entering, of their parents or their grandparents in Britain. By doing this, virtually all of the Kenyan South Asians and a majority of migrants could no longer enter Britain solely because they had a British passport. As best explained by T.E. Smith, author of *Commonwealth Migration: Flows and Policies*, the major difference between this act and the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 was that this act was aimed to control the entry of a finite medium sized number of migrants who were in considerable economic distress.²⁵

The creation of the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1968 was Parliament's way of keeping Britain 'white' and distinguishing native British citizens from commonwealth citizens. The Labor and Conservative Party were finally in complete agreement on an act. This was because the Labor Party now viewed the commonwealth community and immigrant community as two

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ T.E Smith, *Commonwealth Migration: Flows and Policies* (Hodder Education, 2016), 110.

separate communities. The Labor Party identified immigrants as ‘blacks’ and agreed to the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1968 because they did not want Kenyan Asians destroying their ‘white’ nation. With this sudden shift in beliefs came controversy as argued in the article “The Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1968 – A British Opinion” written by J.G. Collier, a British author, “The Labor government was accused, both in and out of Parliament itself, of a great catalogue of offences; they included breach of faith towards persons whom they had led to believe would always be able freely to enter Britain; racialism; allowing...”.²⁶ The passing of the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1968 negatively impacted the migrant citizens of Britain because migrant citizens were now aware both the Labor and Conservative Party no longer wished for their presence in Britain.

This act continued the segregation of commonwealth migrants, only worsening the social issues for migrants. As described by Knowles “the increasingly tougher controls on immigration away from Commonwealth and labor needs caused the perception of immigrants as an invasive and oppositional political community to indigenoussness”.²⁷ This means, because Parliament was sectoring off the majority of non-white commonwealth immigrants through restrictive policies, Londoners were beginning to view non-white commonwealth immigrants with a negative connotation. Parliament claims they produced restrictive policies to avoid racism but in reality, it produced both racism and prejudices among Londoners. Many authors have argued that Parliament was fully aware of the fact that this act was especially created with racist intentions; to keep Asian

²⁶ J.G. Collier, “The Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1968 – A British Opinion”. (Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, Vol. 2, No. 4, pp. 457-468: 1969), 457.

²⁷ Evan Smith and Marinella Marmo, *Race, Gender and the Body in British Immigration Control: Subject to Examination* (London: The MacMillan Press, 1981), 36.

Kenyan out. In an article written by British writer Kenan Malik, he quotes Cabinet secretary at the time, Sir Burke Trend, stating: “Britain would be in breach of international obligations by refusing entry to British nationals, but a reasonable case could be put that the Asian community in East Africa are not nationals of this country in any racial sense”. In response the *Times* commented, “The Labour party has a new ideology. It does not any longer profess to believe in the equality of British citizens. It believes in the equality of white British citizens”.²⁸ Parliament was aware they would not be able to restrict immigration of every non-white individual but knew they could limit a majority of non-white immigrants through the passing of restrictive acts.

Immigration Act of 1971

The Immigration Act of 1971, passed in 1971 and implemented in January of 1973, was created to prevent migrants from obtaining the right to residency in Britain through a work voucher. This meant, commonwealth citizens who had entered Britain under a work voucher – no longer were employed through the voucher system. This act was the final restrictive immigration act and is now the modern immigration control system in Britain. Interestingly, Parliament never provided the causation for this act. Some scholars believe it was to ensure ‘Britain remained a white country’ others believe it was for the safety of Britain. What is common knowledge, is that in the 1970’s Conservatives promised, if elected, there would be “no further large scale permanent immigration”.²⁹ Three years later, after their election, the Immigration Act was passed. The Immigration Act of 1971 created a distinction between ‘partial’ and ‘non-partial’ immigrants. Partial immigrants fell into the following two categories: 1) The individual is a citizen of the United

²⁸ Kenan Malik, “Racist rhetoric hasn’t been consigned to Britain’s past,” (London, The Guardian: 2018)

²⁹ Evan Smith and Marinella Marmo, *Race, Gender and the Body in British Immigration Control: Subject to Examination* (London: The MacMillan Press, 1981), 37.

Kingdom and Colonies who attained their citizenship by birth in the United Kingdom and 2) The individual is a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies who has at any time been settled in the United Kingdom and Island and been ordinarily resident there for the last five years or more. Non-partial immigrants were citizens who could not prove their status according to the two categories. Such citizens, with the exception of the European Economic Community (EEC) migrants, were then restricted in their entry into the country unless they were receiving an annual renewable work permit. Non-partials could be granted permission to stay in Britain once their annual work permit had been renewed four times and the type of employment in which they were engaged was approved by the government.³⁰

Non-partial commonwealth migrant families were destroyed by this act. If a commonwealth migrant was able to obtain a work voucher under the Immigration Act, they were unable to bring their families. In order to bring their families, the migrants would have to undergo a long process where it was necessary to prove how 'desirable' the members were to Britain. Britain was now even more careful with who was allowed to enter. As explained best by Smith and Marmo, "The category of the 'desirable' migrant grew smaller and the category of the 'undesirable' migrant grew larger and larger. In order for migrants to prove their desirability to Britain, it meant they had to undergo an exhaustive, and often humiliating, process that determined whether a person fit into the scheme of the host society. The humanity of the migrants was stripped away and only their 'value' to the British nation-state was assessed".³¹ Parliament cared so little for non-white

³⁰ Ibid., 38.

³¹ Ibid., 39.

migrants, that they allowed for the commonwealth subjects to be treated as auction items; with the restrictive laws they were determining who would be worth the most to their society?

Immigration Officers acted discriminately with the power the Immigration Act allowed them. This act allowed a wide range of discretionary powers to such officers, including the right to deport people and to refuse entry.³² Those who were suspected by Immigration Officers to have the influence to hinder Britain in anyway, could be arrested without warrant. This is because, this act also aimed to control the population of citizens already residing in Britain. Smith and Marmo, describes the way of life for black citizens enduring the impacts of the act: “The problem was the black labor that was already in Britain with laws and regulations that kept families apart, sanctioned police harassment and invited fascist violence... the Conservatives were making life untenable for the black citizens of Britain.”³³ This act indirectly greatly impacted the lives of migrants already living within Britain – as well as those attempting to enter.

Conclusion

Throughout much of the Swinging London era (1960-1970) the British Parliament tried to balance the interests of their predominately white community and their nation’s need to reinvent themselves after the destruction of World War II. Parliament welcomed migrants on their own terms; using restrictive acts as their discrete terms of entry. It can be argued that Parliament purposely left loopholes within each of their restrictive acts to try to subliminally assist commonwealth migrants enter Britain. Some scholars believe Parliament was sympathetic to the migrants but knew Britain would not be able to welcome every migrant with open arms. Parliament

³² Ibid., 38.

³³ Ibid.

needed to show its people, they would not allow their nation to be taken advantage of by migrants. To ease the inevitable transition into a multi-cultural nation and not completely abandon its commonwealth citizens, Parliament saw the Commonwealth Act of 1962 as the simplest answer. Migrants would still be able to enter but on Parliament's terms. This act could be seen as a way to keep Britain white and the 'perfect' middle where migrants were still able to enter but at a lower rate. In 1961, prior to the passing of the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962, only one-sixth of immigrants were women but by 1968 there were over fifty thousand 'dependents'. Although Parliament implemented a restrictive law, they were still aware of the many migrant families entering.

Robert Winder believes that by the 1960's migrants were journeying to Britain with a different purpose. When the British Nationality Act of 1948 first passed, migrants were entering Britain with the purpose of supporting their families at home but by the 1960's migrants were entering Britain to bring their families. By bringing their families, migrants were able to save less and spend more. This threatened Britons, because migrants were unlike them. Migrants were not missionaries and did not seek converts. Instead they promoted, by example, new appetites, colors, sounds, fashions, prejudices and sensitivities.³⁴

Multicultural Britain is the result of these acts passed by Parliament. Change was upon Britain and Parliament embraced it. The Notting Hill carnival, which was once a distinctly British event, can now be described as an authentic Caribbean party.³⁵ Although the passing of the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962, White Paper Commonwealth Immigration Amendment

³⁴ Robert Winder, *Bloody Foreigners: The Story of Immigration to Britain*. (London, Abacus, 2013), 372.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 373.

of 1965, Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1968 and finally the Immigration Act of 1971 negatively impacted the majority of migrants at the time – these acts positively impacted Britain as a nation because they produced the multi-cultural Britain today. London, England has the largest population number of foreign-born with 3,082,000 born abroad in 2014. In 2011 it was found that 36.7% of London’s population was foreign born with 24.5% of that population being from other parts of Europe.³⁶ Britain’s government is still debating on how exactly to address immigration issue especially with the added tension of Brexit, but today the society’s attitudes have changed; Britons are now perceived as more accepting of their multicultural population.

³⁶ Hawkins, Oliver. *Migration Statistics*. House of Commons Library, 2018.
<file:///C:/Users/Jody%20Carregal/Downloads/SN06077.pdf>. [Accessed 13 June 2018]

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