

UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLMOUCI  
PEDAGOGICKÁ FAKULTA

Ústav cizích jazyků

BAKALÁŘSKÁ PRÁCE

**Immigration History of the UK in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries**

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Olomouc 2024

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## **Čestné prohlášení**

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## **Poděkování**

Ráda bych poděkovala svému vedoucímu práce Mgr. Jiřímu Flajšarovi, Ph.D. za odborné vedení, cenné rady, vstřícnost, trpělivost a pomoc při vypracování bakalářské práce.

## Anotace

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<b>Vedoucí práce</b>	Mgr. Jiří Flajšar Ph.D.
<b>Rok obhajoby</b>	2024
<b>Název práce</b>	Immigration History of the UK in the 20 <sup>th</sup> and 21 <sup>st</sup> Centuries
<b>Zvolený typ práce</b>	Bakalářská
<b>Anotace práce</b>	Tato práce zabývá historií přistěhovalectví ve Spojeném království ve 20. a 21. století a zkoumá, jak přistěhovalectví ovlivnilo a formovalo Britskou společnost od konce 19. století po současnost, vývoj imigračního zákonodárství a vliv imigrace na strukturální změny v oblasti veřejných a občanských služeb. Práce se také věnuje jednotlivým přistěhovaleckým skupinám. V rámci úvodu práce definuje termíny jako jsou imigrace, kdo je to migrant, včetně typologie. Druhá kapitola se zabývá přistěhovalectvím od druhé poloviny 19. století po konec 20. století. Třetí kapitola mapuje imigraci 21. století převážně ze zemí Evropské Unie. Kapitola čtvrtá se věnuje imigraci po Brexitu. Pátá kapitola mapuje imigrační zákony, omezení a kontroly. Kapitola šestá se zabývá uprchlíky a žadateli o azyl, zatímco kapitola sedmá nelegálními uprchlíky. Nakonec, kapitola osmá nastiňuje problematiku získání Britského občanství.
<b>Klíčová slova</b>	Přistěhovalectví, historie, Spojené Království, 20. století, 21. století
<b>Anotace v AJ</b>	This thesis explores the history of immigration in the UK in the 20th and 21st centuries, examining how immigration has influenced and shaped British society from the late 19th century to the present, the development of immigration legislation, and the impact of immigration on structural changes in public and civic services. The thesis also examines individual immigrant groups. Within the introduction, the thesis defines terms such as immigration and who is a migrant, including typologies. The second chapter examines immigration from the second half of the 19th century to the end of the 20 <sup>th</sup> . Chapter three deals with 21st-century immigration, mainly from European Union countries. Chapter four looks at immigration post-Brexit. Chapter Five maps immigration laws, restrictions and controls. Chapter six deals with refugees and asylum seekers, while chapter seven with illegal refugees. Finally, Chapter Eight outlines the issue of obtaining British citizenship.
<b>Klíčová slova v AJ</b>	Immigration, History, The United Kingdom, 20 <sup>th</sup> century, 21 <sup>st</sup> century
<b>Rozsah práce</b>	66 stran
<b>Jazyk práce</b>	Angličtina

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## List of Abbreviations

EU	European Union
EU 2	European Union Group 2 – Bulgaria, Romania
EU 8	European Union Group 8 – the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia
EU 14	European Union Group 14 – Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, the Republic of Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden
NHS	National Health Service
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
US	United States

# 1. Introduction

A fiction writer, Cristina Henriquez, once said: “Immigration is a system and a set of policies. And immigrants are the people behind those policies and behind that system, and the human stories” (Brainy Quote, 2024). However, the definition of a migrant is not simple. The Cambridge Dictionary (2024) defines a migrant as “a person that travels to a different country or place, often to find work”. On the other hand, the Oxford Dictionary (2024) sees a migrant as someone “who moves from one place to another to find work or better conditions”. Yet, the United Nations and migration scholars such as Siegel (2020) define a migrant as someone who has been moving from home not only to another country but also within the native country, for example, to another region, irrespective of whether the move is intended and planned or forced, for how long is the person moving, what is the person’s legal status and what are the grounds for the move (Siegel, 2020, 3:57). This definition of who is a migrant also includes refugees and asylum seekers. There is also a distinction between the terms immigration and emigration. Immigration is a migration of entering a new country, whereas emigration is the process of leaving the native country for another, innate one. Therefore, it could be said that migration is a complex process of emigrating from or immigrating to a different region or a country for voluntary or forced reasons involving various types of migrants, from voluntary or involuntary, refugees, asylum seekers, regular and irregular - illegal migrants, temporary and permanent with dependence on their status, study, or economic migrants that are categorised upon their skills as highly skilled or low skilled (Siegel, 2020).

Reflecting upon that, this bachelor's thesis considers the immigration history of the United Kingdom in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries through literary review and statistical evidence, using the overall approach, as immigration seems to be a dynamic and changing process of many interwoven factors in terms of cause and effect and how these have been influencing and shaping not only the British homogenous society but also the developmental processes of various legislations and structural changes within the British government. Concerning this work, immigration to Britain has been considered since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as immigration has not been happening in isolation and within specific time limitations but rather through a series of overlapping historical events and conditions. Thus, the thesis begins with the immigration of the Irish and Jewish people as the largest groups of migrants, while considering the number of people

coming, the causes and motivations of their migration, obstacles around entering the United Kingdom, their assimilation within the native society, and the perception of them by the British public including antisemitism and the British government. The concept of *'jus solis'* is also considered, as well as the factors leading up to the introduction of the first large-scale immigration legislation, The Aliens Act 1905, which formed a basis for all subsequent legislations that have followed. Moreover, other immigrant groups before World War I are explored, including the governmental and societal approach, the pre-war situation and Germanophobia, the outbreak of the Great War, its impact and its aftermath regarding immigration, of which the Commonwealth and Allied forces were integral.

Furthermore, the essay delves into the significant periods of pre- and post-World War II immigration, which included troops of the Commonwealth and the Allies. These periods brought about profound political and societal changes that resonated throughout the rest of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st. The thesis discusses the role of immigration in rebuilding Britain, including the immigration of war refugees, voluntary workers, prisoners of war and former soldiers, against the backdrop of security measures and immigration regulations. It also examines the changes within the society, such as the beginning of the emigration of British nationals via Ten Pound Poms in contrast to the transnational and multicultural immigration of the Windrush Generation and other nations, transport developments, societal and immigrational differentiation, the establishment of the National Health Service as well as the austerity measures. The thesis continues to look into the motives for migration, work-related and assimilation struggles, differentiation upon their skills, origin and social class, as well as the growing racism within the British society and the approach of the British government. It also considers the impact of immigration legislation and various governmental measures, highlighting the significant role of immigration in shaping British society and government policies.

With the progress into the later 20<sup>th</sup> century, The United Kingdom experienced an economic downturn, which, together with changes in migration policies, meant a decrease in migration even though various political changes and armed conflicts around the world had still sent immigrants into Britain. Also, the patterns of immigration began to change with the expansion of the European Economic Community, the entry of more rich immigrants from the Arab countries and the opening of Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain. The establishment of the European Union led to a



change in the factors and motivations for immigration, with some that were not that apparent throughout the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century becoming more obvious. For example, economic motives became more substantial and reasoned than armed conflicts, geopolitical changes, famine, revolutions, poverty, the notion of ‘mother country’ and political and religious intolerance. The economic motives grew even stronger with the expansion of the European Union at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with Britain experiencing a mass migration, mainly from Poland, followed by growing migration from non-European countries such as India. Even though the first twenty years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century were not without wars and armed conflicts that contributed to the increased migration, economic reasons were the foremost and correlated with economic downturns and the pandemic situation in Britain. Yet, at the same time, other reasons appeared to be almost as strong as the economic ones, such as family connections and higher education studies. On the other hand, work patterns and immigrant differentiation did not change much compared to the immigration of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nevertheless, the most significant change to 21st-century immigration was brought about by Brexit, which impacted levels of European and non-European immigration, work patterns and employment seeking not only by the workers but also by the employers, strengthening legislation and visa requirements for all migrants, including workers, asylum seekers, refugees and irregular migrants, which this thesis also considers.

Consequently, the immigration history of the United Kingdom in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries seems very dynamic, with Britain proving to be an exceptionally attractive country for various groups of migrants with different reasons for migration. Besides identifying the migration process, its advantages, and disadvantages, this thesis examines how immigration shaped the United Kingdom into what it is known today, how British society changed from mostly homogenous to multicultural, and the impact of immigration on the government, consequent legislative processes and structural changes in terms of public and civic services.

## **2. UK immigration during the 20th century (pre- and post-WWI, pre- and post-WWII, citizens from British colonies and overseas territories)**

### **2.1 The Irish and Jewish immigration before the World War I**

Apart from a few lower-numbered migrations of non-Europeans arriving in Britain between the mid-1800s and 1914, the largest-scale migration in those years was across the Irish Sea from Ireland. The Irish were coming to Britain mainly due to the Great Famine, which had occurred in Ireland in 1845 – 49 and was caused by the infection of the potato crop that amounted to the total deaths of around one million people. Furthermore, an estimated two million people emigrated to Great Britain or the United States of America. Panayi (2010) points out that from 1800 to 1914, almost one million Irish people came to Great Britain and were the largest group of migrants (Panayi, 2010, p. 49 – 50; Britannica, 2023).

The second large group of migrants was the Jews. Even though the Jewish migration to Britain was rather frequent throughout British history, the most significant influx of the Jewish population came from Eastern Europe, mainly from the areas of Pale Settlement within the Russian Empire. This minority was a victim of forced migration, meaning running away from the oppression that they had been experiencing, from antisemitism, pogroms, and social, existential, and educational segregation to severe poverty and executions, which had been escalating throughout the Russian Empire after the assassination of Tsar Alexander II, for which the Jews were blamed. Even though before the assassination, most of the Jewish population in Russia was oppressed, limited in terms of residency, and confined mainly to the areas of the Pale, those with high enough education, of noble background, and wealthy, in the aftermath, their lives in Russia, Poland, Romania became unbearable for many (Bloom, 2004; Packer, 2017; Britannica, 2023).

It is estimated that around one million Russian Jews emigrated to start a new life elsewhere, usually in parts of Western Europe or the United States. Panayi (2010) argues that between 1880 and 1914, up to 3 million Russian Jews emigrated, with 2.5 million settling in the United States. Yet, there has been much confusion about the number of these immigrants permanently staying in Britain. Packer (2017) estimates that around 100,000 Jewish immigrants had settled permanently in Britain between 1880 and 1905. Wray (2006) and Panayi (2010) point out that around 150,000

Jewish immigrants settled permanently between 1880 and 1914. That would mean an approximate increase of 50,000 immigrants in less than a decade. However, the National Archives of the British Government (2023) argues that between the years 1870 and 1914, 200,000 immigrants arrived and settled in Britain. Although there are some variations in the starting years of these estimations, it would still mean an increase in immigration throughout another decade (Packer, 2017, p.2; Panayi, 2010, p. 72-73; Wray, 2006, p. 308; The National Archives, 2023).

However, Gartner (1960), in his Notes on the Statistics of Jewish Immigration to England, reveals that it is almost impossible to have any exact figures for the Jewish migration from 1870 to 1914 due to several factors. Firstly, even though the master of every ship entering the British ports had a duty to hand in a list of foreign passengers on board according to an Act of 1836, it ceased to be done so throughout the 1850s and 1860s. It was enforced again in 1890. Consequently, there are at least 30 years of no viable evidence of the coming immigrants. Secondly, the governmental measure separated immigrants into two groups. Those who were on route to somewhere else and used Britain only as a transit country, usually to further West, and those who wanted to stay, not on route. The travel ticket served as the sorting mechanism, which was not a reliable determinant since not all passengers could afford to pay for a ticket that covered the whole of their journey from their starting point of travel. Instead, they had intended to buy the ticket further west in Britain, yet they were stated as not on route. Consequently, the number of foreigners arriving, staying, and leaving further on can be flawed. Thirdly, in comparing passengers, the system did not consider foreign seamen or the English people migrating to mainland Europe. Moreover, the system did not record the nationalities of the foreigners. Lastly, although the public censuses of 1871 and 1881 registered immigrants according to their nationality, they failed to record their religion. Records show an increase in migrants, such as Russians, Russian Poles, and Romanians, from 1871 until 1911, but it does not show how many were Jewish. On unofficial terms, the immigrants knew among themselves that they were Jewish, with only a fraction of them being Christian; general society recognised that too, yet the government failed to do so. Even though there are some records from the various Jewish organisations in Britain, they are also incomplete (Gartner, 1960, p. 97 – 102).

Most Jewish and Irish people settling in Britain permanently were poor, unskilled, and in need of work or semi-skilled in shoemaking, tailoring, or furniture-making. At the beginning of

the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most migrants settled in the East End of London. Eventually, they moved further north into cities like Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, and Glasgow, as these were the hubs of industrial Britain, and workers were always in demand. Yet, the East End proved to be a problematic place to live. The Jewish immigrants were coming in large numbers, with poor health, some very ill, and most importantly, very poor and without the knowledge of the English language. Therefore, they could not apply for good jobs, afford a decent living in other, better-off suburbs of London, and concentrated in already over-crowded poorer parts of the city, doing any jobs for any wage. Although charity aid was provided to many by the English Jewry, the most vulnerable, including children, were working in Jewish-owned businesses and sweatshops, with women having to work in the sexual industry. Furthermore, as Packer (2017) points out, many of the Ashkenazi Jews wanted to rebuild their former eastern communal life in the form of the traditional Jewish settlement 'shtetl' with the predominant language being Yiddish, with their shops and businesses, which gained disapproval from the English Jewry. Also, with the growing numbers of immigrants from the East of Europe, English Jewry began to be worried that the mass migration would negatively influence the perception of themselves as well as the newcomers, which would, in turn, reflect in antisemitic behaviour towards all due to the growing unemployment among the English people and lack of suitable housing (Panayi, 2010, p. 51; Packer, 2017, p.16; Wray, 2006, p. 309).

The worries of the English Jewry had proved correct as the influx of migrants into the East End of London did not go down well with its native inhabitants. The immigrant's traditional culture and lifestyle, eating habits, family size, and lack of English were perceived as strange and endangering the conventional British way of life. Moreover, the Jews were blamed for creating the housing problem even though they were paying higher rents and for causing unsanitary conditions due to overcrowding. Although various Jewish organisations had put pressure on the local council to improve the housing and hygienic conditions and fund private housing for the worst affected immigrants, voices calling for limits on the number of inhabitants in East End's Bethnal Green and immigration control were steadily growing stronger. In comparison, the Irish migration was more significant in numbers and fended much better even though many were poor and unskilled. Yet, they did not attempt to create an Irish community within the native British; they knew the language and could get jobs either in farming or in many conventional companies. Thus, they integrated

much better into British society even though they were always regarded as the lower social class of heavy drinkers by the British people (Panayi, 2010; Packer, 2017, p. 16 – 17).

## **2.2 Other Immigrant Groups Before WW1**

Even though the Irish and Jewish populations belong to the largest group of immigrants, other nations such as the Chinese, South Asians, other Europeans, and Africans were part of the immigration process, too, just before World War I. Yet, in comparison, on a much smaller scale and in lower thousands. It is suggested that between 1800 and 1945, each nation did not reach more immigrants than just over 20,000 (Panayi, 2010). For example, the Census 1911 records show that there were 1,219 Chinese and 23,000 French nationals living in Britain (Migration Watch UK, 2014; Morgan in Gold, 2016). Furthermore, Panayi (2010) points out that even though the Census 1911 data are inaccurate, with some nations being omitted, up to 44,592 Americans lived in Britain before the Great War (Panayi, 2010, p. 74).

The only other nation with a significant number of immigrants was Germany, which had as many as 60,000 people permanently living in Britain. The majority of these Germans were part of the forced immigration due to their opposing activity against the political regime in their home Country. However, the German migration was also influenced by the interwoven network of Germans already settled in Britain and the subsequent demand for specifically skilled workers in comparison to other migrants who were employed in agriculture, clothing, shipping, or docks. For example, the sugar-baking businesses in the East End of London required workers from Hanover and up to fifty per cent of correspondence clerks were from Germany due to their language skills, which could not be obtained from the British public or others. Other skilled jobs occupied by experienced Germans were waitressing, bakery, expert agriculture, business, missionaries, and teaching at all levels of education, from private tutoring to universities (Panayi, 2010, p. 74, 97, 114 - 115).

## **2.3 Germanophobia and Immigration in World War I.**

Britons have been quite hostile towards immigrants, with Germans not being an exception. With the outbreak of The Great War, Germans were portrayed very negatively by the government as well as the media through various means of propaganda, such as the portrayal of Germans as a nation of brutes and spies. Thus, this led to a very negative approach towards Germans on the state level and the introduction of The British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act of 1914, which saw Germans as a threat and had consequences for whole communities. For example, the banishment of German music had a direct effect on the production of The Henry Wood Promenade Concerts; streets that were formerly named after Queen Victoria's family members were renamed due to German ancestry with the Royal Family changing its name from Saxe-Coburg in 1917 (Panayi in Encyclopedia 1914 – 1918, 2014).

Furthermore, the new legislation and the Government approach led to the prohibition of Germans from moving further afield than five miles, having to be registered with the Police, abolishment of German clubs and newspapers, closure of all businesses owned by Germans, property and assets confiscations without any reimbursements and all men of military age between the years of 17 to 55 were incarcerated in special camps throughout Britain. The largest had been established on the Isle of Man, which held up to 23,000 men at its highest level. The German women, children and elderly were deported, as were the men who were released from the camps. The British public supported these measures by organising anti-German rallies that culminated after the sinking of the passenger cruise ship Lusitania by the German Navy, the establishment of anti-German organisations and worker's Unions. Consequently, the German community living in Britain by the end of the First World War decreased from 60,000 to 22,254 people in 1919 (Panayi in Our Migration History, 2024).

Additionally, the war turmoil and the anti-alien British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act of 1914 did not provide many opportunities for immigration into Britain. However, the Act did not stop the influx of some refugees, although the refugee relief was not without restrictions and conditions during their stay. For example, by being bound by The Treaty of London in 1839 to protect the neutrality and independence of Belgium, Britain welcomed approximately 250,000

refugees after Belgium had been invaded by the German Army with quite brutal consequences, in what has been the most significant refugee relief in British history (BBC Teach, 2024). At first, the relief was solely financed by the War Refugees Committee. Still, with the increasing influx of refugees, the British Government took responsibility through its Boards and other general organisations alongside other charities such as the Prince of Wales National Relief Fund or private philanthropes (Declercq, 2020, p. 8 - 14).

Contrary to German communities in Britain, the Belgians were portrayed positively and were welcomed by the British government and media as heroes in need of help through publishing stories about the atrocities done by the German Army. Consequently, the British public actively participated in the relief through memberships in various refugee and war relief committees and offered housing, food, clothing, and other help (Plowright in Migration Museum, 2015). Yet, the mass relief action was organised to address the conditions of employment of men and women in the war industry, the continuity of children's education, and their return to Belgium as soon as the war was over. Declercq (2019) points out that from the German invasion of Belgium till June 1915, a rough estimate of 265,000 Belgians entered Britain through refugee relief, out of which 40,000 were wounded soldiers from the front, excluding a larger number of Belgian soldiers being in Britain on leave. However, it is also argued that the figures need further clarification due to the lack of thorough registration of refugees upon arrival (Declercq in *Close Encounters in War Journal*, 2020, p. 16). Not even two years into the Great War, in 1916, Belgians had returned home; by 1921, less than 10,000 had been settled in Britain (Plowright in Migration Museum, 2015).

Apart from Belgians, Britain provided safety to other nations' refugees who had come in lower numbers. For example, 5% of the Belgian refugees were estimated to be French, meaning 13,250 French refugees (Morgan in Gold, 2016). Together with the pre-war numbers of French nationals, it made up quite a strong and large community living in Britain through World War I. It is assumed that this community established French schools, French Catholic and Protestant churches, the French Red Cross, Franco-British Newspapers, and French trade services, providing, among other accommodations, clothing or dentistry, some of which still function today (Francophones in London, 2016). Another group of refugees were Russians fleeing the impact of the Russian Revolution in 1917. Panayi (2010) estimates that up to 15,000 refugees have escaped to Britain (Panayi, 2010, p.99).

Nevertheless, Britain was not so generous to everyone in their war refugee relief. Only half of the 600 Serbian children, mainly boys, seeking refuge in Britain through the Serbian Relief Fund were granted temporary refuge on condition of their return after the war and funding from private sources. In comparison, France accepted 3000 Serbian children. The British government had argued the lack of resources and the unsuitability of the Serbian children for life in Britain due to their assumed inability to assimilate. Also, compared to Belgian refugees, the children were in small, urban colonies housed in hostels. Yet, the children adjusted well within British society and progressed in schools, with some attending British universities. Some were also offered jobs in engineering or agriculture (Kushner; Sieff in *Our Migration History*, 2024).

### **2.3.1. Troops in World War I.**

At the beginning of the Great War, Britain had a small army of professionals appointed to guard its overseas territories, territorials and reservists consisting of no more than 700,000 men. That was much less than Russia, France, or Germany. Consequently, the government had to recruit men from the public as volunteers and conscripts. At the war's end, over 4 million men fought or participated in other ways under the flag of Great Britain in the British Armed Forces, including forces from across the Empire. For example, Gilbert (2021) points out that up to 1.3 million soldiers from India had served at the front lines, including the Western Front, with over 74,000 having lost their lives (Gilbert in *A News Education*, 2021; National Army Museum, 2024). Other Empire forces included the Caribbean nations such as Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, and the Bahamas; African Nations including South Africa, Canada, Newfoundland, Australia, and New Zealand, with many playing a pivotal role in winning the most important battles such as on the Somme in 1916. In addition, over 200,000 Irish men fought under the British Army, with up to 35,000 losing their lives in the conflict. Yet, on their return, many participated in the Irish War of Independence against Britain. Panayi (2010) also assumes that many descendants of the former British immigrants fought in the name of Britain due to the concept of '*jus solis*', meaning that the place of birth declares citizenship. At the end of the First World War, many of the injured soldiers of the Empire were taken to Britain, but very few settled permanently. For example, around 1000 Indian doctors stayed at the end of the conflict, and during the inter-war years, only 8000 Indians lived in Britain (Panayi, 2010, p. 195, 232; National Army Museum, 2024).



## 2.4 Pre-and World War II Immigration

After World War I and throughout the 1920s, immigration into Britain was at its lowest due to the economic impact of the Great War, the influence of The Aliens Act of 1919 and the Great Depression, even though the political and social changes were happening in Russia. Unemployment and social instability in mainland Europe were high, and the same was true in Britain, which led to many riots around the country caused by returning men from the front. For example, in 1919, riots were caused by the former seamen in coastal towns across the country who were replaced by foreigners in bringing in supplies, leading to more significant governmental regulations. Ireland was the only country supplying Britain with a relatively steady stream of workers despite the turbulent times of gaining independence between 1919 and 1921. Although the Census of 1921 cannot be taken as exact due to its various biases, it shows the lowest number of Irish living in England and Wales, well below 400,000 for the first time since 1851. Subsequently, it grew steadily in the following years, although the Census of 1941 was not carried out because of World War II. (BBC, 2024; Migration Watch UK, Figure 15.2., 2014).

Immigration from the mainland European countries, mainly from Germany, started growing again with the political and societal changes due to the influence of the Nazi antisemitic ideology and the suppression of the Jewish communities as well as those that opposed the Nazi Regime in the years leading up to World War II. Panayi (2010) points out that it is difficult to estimate how many of the 60,000 Germans living in Britain before the Great War were Jewish, as the German Jewry perceived themselves to be as much Jewish as Germans. However, he argues that the number of new arrivals between 1914 and early 1930 was around a few thousand. Moreover, it is assumed that between 1918 and 1939, up to 20,000 Germans arrived in Britain, excluding Jewish pre-war refugees (Panayi, 2010).

The Migration Watch UK (2014) calculates the Jewish population to be 400,000 by the 1940s. Yet, this number also includes the Jewish refugees of the 1930s who began to come to Britain in 1933 due to the growing limitations of Jewry in Germany imposed by the anti-Jewish discriminatory laws and restrictions. At first, the immigrants were from the upper social class and had foreign contacts and financial means, which could comply with most of the Aliens Act of 1919 entry conditions. Although the upper class was more welcome compared to the lower social class due to the prevailing high unemployment and dire economic situation, and consequently existing worries from the economic immigration, there were still fears from various fields of professions. The upper class of the Jewish immigrants were well educated and skilled in professions such as dentistry and general health. They were, therefore, seen as a significant threat to native professionals. Various professional associations, such as the British Dental Association, argued that their skills and education were insufficient according to British standards. Therefore, only 261 immigrant health professionals were employed between 1935 and 1937, out of which 78 were dentists, which was in line with the Home Office's policy to accept unique and internationally recognised cases. Nevertheless, not all professional bodies refused to accept highly educated Jews, with architects being allowed to practice in dependence on their experience and recognised academics were offered jobs at various universities (Panayi, 2010; Migration Watch UK, 2014; Pistol in Gale, 2020).

However, the middle and lower social classes, which were not as highly skilled, were rarely accepted in Britain in these years due to the restrictions based on the fears of economic immigration and taking over the jobs of the British people. The least restricted field of work was domestic service and nursing as long as the applicant had an occupation secured beforehand and would remain in the job after their arrival. Consequently, many women took this opportunity and, where possible, secured a similar job for their family members once they had settled in Britain. It was also likely to be accepted into Britain based on studies or through training programmes for young people organised by various charities, such as the YMCA. Yet, the student or trainee was expected to leave as soon as possible after the completion. Upon arrival, the strict admission rules by the Home Office posed a question of whether they should have been relaxed due to the strengthening of National Socialism in Germany. However, the vast majority of the British public did not know of the consequences for those who were of Jewish descent or opposed the growing regime. Also, the Nazi ideology was seeping through into British upper society and politics via various movements such as Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists. Eventually, this movement attracted not only the influential members of society but also members of the lower social classes throughout the early 1930s. As the right-wing political party since 1932, it influenced politics and specific regulations. The movement was disbanded in 1940, just before the beginning of World War II, with Mosley and other members being detained (Pistol in Gale, 2020; Wallenfeldt in Britannica, 2024).

With a series of prearranged antisemitic violent pogroms called Kristallnacht in November 1938, where many Jewish-owned businesses, homes and synagogues were destroyed in Germany, Austria and areas along the former Czechoslovakian borders known as Sudetenland, began the organisation of refugee programmes. These were predominantly organised by the Jewish communities in Britain that were also informing the British public and thus adding pressure on the reluctant British Government, which was worried about a massive influx of Jewish refugees. The Kitchener Camp is regarded as one of the most extensive rescue operations, where up to 4,000 people were transported to various concentration camps in Germany following the Kristallnacht and were granted a temporary visa to Britain on terms of transmigrating to other countries within a year. In some cases, whole families were included and were transported to a former army base in Kent (The Wiener Holocaust Library, 2021). Yet, the most significant rescue operation was

called the Kindertransport, a series of train transports of child refugees under the age of 17 in unspecified numbers from Germany and German-occupied areas, such as Austria, Poland, the Free City of Danzig, and Czechoslovakia. The operation began on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 1938, with the first transport leaving Germany, and lasted for nine months. The conditions that the British Government imposed were a sponsorship for each child by British members of society to ensure that no child becomes a financial burden to the wider public, their resettlement once on British soil either within British families or in other temporary accommodation, and the prepaid £50 per head as a guarantee of possible future re-immigration back home. Up to 10,000 children were saved via the Kindertransport programme, with the majority never seeing their parents or relatives again as they perished in the Holocaust. Nevertheless, the 669 children saved by Sir Nicolas Winton from Czechoslovakia grew into over 6,000 descendants by the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In total, 55,000 Jewish refugees had found their way to Britain after the pogroms in 1938. Other nations whose refugees or forced migrants were coming before World War II were Italy and France, but in low numbers (Panayi, 2010, p.110; Pistol in Gale, 2020; Sir Nicolas Winton, 2024; Goodman and Hacker in Britannica, 2024).

The outbreak of World War II halted immigration to Britain and the influx of refugees. The number of people who managed to cross the English Channel before the fall of France was meagre. Upon their arrival, those who did not have sufficient papers and permits were arrested and detained out of justified worries about spies and saboteurs. Similarly, as with the Great War, the beginning of the Second World War meant a new wave of Germanophobia. Consequently, all persons in Britain of German and Austrian origin were regarded as enemy aliens regardless of whether they were Jewish refugees or not. However, the British Government tried to evade the First World War's mass detainment by classing the Germans and Austrians into three different categories depending on the risk they posed as assumed by the governmental tribunals. The categories ranged from category A, which posed the biggest threat to national security and required immediate internment of those classed as such, over category B, categorised as suspects and had to be submitted to restrictions, to category C, regarded as genuine refugees. The number of people classed as category A was approximately 600. This group consisted of the Nazi regime supporters, people who actively opposed the regime, as well as members of the trade unions and communists. In their internment, they were joined by other almost 300 known Nazi party members and those posing a threat to Britain as listed by the MI5. Those considered to belong to category B were not allowed into

specific restricted areas, usually around the coastline. Yet, the governmental tribunals were prone to various misjudgements and variations between themselves, such as misusing one category over another or making different assessments (Pistol in Gale,2020).

With the fall of France on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 1940, new security measures were implemented in Britain, which included the mass internment of category B and C people. Consequently, all men from the age of 16 and over from both categories and category B women, most with their children, were arrested and transported to various made-up camps around Britain, including old hospitals, abandoned factories and mills or unused housing estates and eventually transported to camps on the Isle of Man. Moreover, this incarceration included over 1,000 young people from the Kindertransport who were of age. In total, almost 30,000 people regarded as enemy aliens were moved to the camps within two months, including around 6,000 Italians who were classed the same since Mussolini's declaration of war on Britain. While on the Isle of Man, the men were held in separation in the northern, western, and eastern parts of the island in various types of accommodation surrounded by barbed wire, while women and children were allowed to live among the local communities in the southern part and were allowed to organise various types of classes or social gatherings. Yet, at the beginning of the internment, before their transportation to the island, many children were separated from their mothers and sent to care (Pistol in Gale,2020; Goodman and Hacker in Britannica, 2024).

Moreover, some internees were shipped to Canada and Australia due to fears of overcrowding in the camps. The initial thought was to ship away those assumed to pose the most significant security threat. Consequently, the first two ships were occupied by category A males, usually prisoners of war. However, other ships contained people from categories B and C, yet again included young people from the Kindertransport, with some entering Canada while others were in Australia. Conditions on these ships were very harsh, including overcrowded and inadequate sanitary conditions and the ill-treatment towards its passengers by the guards. For example, the Dunera ship, carrying some Kindertransportees to Australia, became infamous for such conditions and was consequently called a 'hell-ship'. The shipping of people stopped after the sinking of the Arandora Star on its way to Canada, with a total loss of 800 lives out of the 1,200 passengers, mainly due to the pledge of the British public. Additionally, the category C enemies were released on conditions dependent on their usefulness to the country and the war effort according to specific

groups created by the government. Firstly, doctors, agricultural workers, engineers, and those who had signed up for the army services were freed. Then, as more groups were formed, more people were allowed to leave the camps and work as a part of the war effort or communities, with some being accepted for immigration to the U.S. (Pistol in Gale,2020; Goodman and Hacker in Britannica, 2024).

#### **2.4.1 Troops in World War II**

Similar to World War I, troops of the Commonwealth joined the British forces for World War II, either on their home fronts or in the British ones. Their purpose was not just to supply the soldiers but also the medical staff and people for the war effort, as well as goods and materials. The countries of the Empire and Dominions were Canada, India, New Zealand, Australia, East Africa, South Africa, West Africa, and the West Indies. Together with Britain, the total of military men was almost 9,000,000. This number does not include personnel of other military services, such as the hospital and supply staff. Many of these troops were trained in Britain, such as pilots from the Commonwealth's air forces or sea men, who became part of the Royal Air Force or the Navy. Moreover, even though the Irish Free State, then named Ireland, declared its neutrality throughout the war, over 133,000 people, including 64,000 from Northern Ireland, joined the British forces. Nevertheless, the total figures of the Irish who migrated to Britain during the war to either join the war effort or to work remain unknown as people younger than 22 years of age and those from agricultural areas were forbidden from leaving Ireland. Yet, based on the number of passports issued during the war years, it is assumed that over 8 % of the then-total Irish population of almost 3.000.000 people left for Britain. Yet, the figure could be even higher, up to 15 %, if all the Irish government's other age and occupational restrictions are considered (BBC Bitesize, 2024; Doherty in Four Courts Press, 2021; History Ireland, 1998).

Additionally, after the United States of America entered World War II in December 1941, over 1,600,000 of its soldiers moved to Britain and Northern Ireland to army bases. These soldiers extensively interacted with the native inhabitants, including marriages to local women, and participated in cultural and social life. At the end of the war, almost 500,000 army personnel remained on British soil. Also, many soldiers and pilots from the occupied European countries left for Britain to fight in the war and help in defence, especially those whose governments were exiled

to Britain. The soldiers and pilots came from Poland, former Czechoslovakia, France, Belgium, Netherlands, and Norway. The British forces had set up special army units, including intelligence, for those soldiers who had to undergo British army training and cultural and English language education. Foreign pilots were taken into the Royal Air Force and sailors into the Royal Navy. It is assumed that around 200,000 Polish soldiers fought as a part of the British Armed Forces, with at least 2,200 Czech pilots in RAF. Up to 250,000 Polish soldiers were offered British citizenship under the Polish Resettlement Act 1947, as they came to fight in their most significant numbers to help rebuild Britain. (American Battle Monuments Commission, 2015; BBC Bitesize, 2024; iDnes, 2020; Robinson, Walker, Mills in House of Commons Library, 2019).

## **2.5 Post-World War II Immigration and Citizens from British Colonies and Overseas Territories**

Britain was at the edge of bankruptcy at the war's end, with towns, cities, and industrial centres in ruin after the Blitz and other air raids. The population was poorer than ever, living off very short rations and under severe austerity measures. Moreover, a British workforce was lacking to rebuild Britain again. According to data provided by the British government, 384,000 soldiers lost their lives during the war, together with around 70,000 civilians, mainly due to air raids (UK Parliament, 2024). Furthermore, Europe was on the move, with hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons in European camps, direct victims of the war in the form of forced labourers, concentration camp victims, and prisoners of war, as well as the displaced people of their native countries due to post-war geographical and political changes. Wills (2018) points out that by the end of the war, the total number of displaced people in German refugee camps, regardless of the reason, was almost 7,000,000. Panayi (2010) assumes that between 1944 and 1950, nearly 25,000,000 people were moving across Europe to various parts of the world. Consequently, the Second World War and its aftermath brought huge and unexpected social and international change (Wills, 2018, p. 27).

The British government was aware of the movement of the post-war refugees, and even more so, as many British people began to emigrate to Canada, Australia, and New Zealand through the scheme called Ten Pound Poms, which ended in 1982. From the end of the war till 1947, almost

500,000 Britons left, with another 650,000 during the 1950s and many more until the beginning of the 1980s. In the process of rebuilding Britain and due to the lack of a home workforce, Britain started to look towards drawing in immigrants and using its prisoners of war from Italy and Germany. The former Polish soldiers and their families were the first deployed in this process through the Polish Resettlement Act almost immediately after the war had ended. The second wave of workers were the unskilled displaced persons, the European Volunteer Workers, and the Irish, mainly for agriculture, coal mining, textile factories and the newly established NHS in 1948 (Wills, 2018; Panayi, 2010).

According to Panayi (2010), 2,200 men from Ireland have been employed in the coal mining industry since 1946, with another 29,000 arriving for agricultural and nursing work in 1947. The British government also implemented schemes to employ Italian men for work in metal and brick manufacturing and coal mining. Almost 230,000 European Voluntary Workers, including their families and 85,000 displaced persons from the predominantly German refugee camps, arrived to work in Britain on work permits for essential work between 1946 and 1953, with almost 150,000 Italians between 1948 and 1968 (Panayi, 2010, p. 78, 105 – 110). Those not destined for heavy industrial work or agriculture found employment in cafés, restaurants, domestic and cleaning services and in the less desirable NHS departments, such as the TB or mental care hospitals. Furthermore, 24,000 German prisoners of war were in Britain after the war, with others coming in, such as 11,000 voluntary workers and the 10,000 German wives of British soldiers. (Panayi, 2010, p. 77 - 79; Wills, 2018).

It may be assumed that Britain could have rebuilt itself without bringing in European Volunteer Workers and refugees. However, the attitude of the British people, namely women, changed with the war. Before the war, women were employed solely in jobs regarded as ‘women’s work’ or stayed at home, caring for the children, while the sole breadwinners were the men. Also, women were employed for lesser wages and had worse working conditions than men. However, with the war in progress and men who were healthy enough to be on the front, many women took over men’s jobs to keep the country going. Apart from the direct war effort jobs, it included the munition industry, heavy farming, driving, engineering, and even chimney-sweeping. Consequently, women were not keen on returning to their previous jobs for low pay and without the benefits the men enjoyed, and even less so once the government began directly targeting them



through various public campaigns that made them feel undervalued again. In addition, the birthrate was at its lowest throughout the late 1920s and 1930s due to the long-lasting effects of the First World War and the Great Depression, so there was not enough of a young workforce directly after the war. Moreover, the government had to stand up to their promises of improving social services, social security, and education, including raising the school leaving age from fourteen to fifteen. This step made 370,000 young people not eligible for work (Wills, 2018, p. 22 - 32).

Consequently, in 1946, the British government began looking for a workforce in the refugee camps, mainly in its zone in Germany and others run by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration and the International Refugee Organization, which Britain supplied with finances and food provisions. The selection of displaced persons for the British labour market and employment based on specific conditions and characteristics set a course for future immigration schemes. Apart from age, it was predominantly based on place of birth and country of origin. Furthermore, stereotypes about specific nations, their cultural background, assumptions of their ability to assimilate or work, and British detachment from mainland Europe as an Empire were reflected in the selection process. As Wills (2018) indicates, certain countries and races were preferentially selected for employment rather than Jews (Wills, 2018, p. 27 - 28). The conditions were such that the age limits for men were between 18 and 50, women between 18 and 40, single, healthy, and physically fit for manual labour. Many Baltic women were selected as a preference for their good looks and fitted into the governmental assumption of ideal immigrant women who would assimilate quickly, marry British men, have British children, and work hard. This type of selection was even encouraged by the British Population Commission in 1949. Yet, even though the health checks were implemented, many of the chosen women were pregnant at the time of selection and knowingly lied about it. Additionally, marriages between women of the European Voluntary Workers and British men were rare as the workers usually married each other (Wills, 2018, p. 33 – 42).

Although the British government was very open to the realisation of bringing European workers to Britain, the general British public took the opposite approach, even though the workforce was amiss in the least desirable fields of work that the natives refused to do. Therefore, the government had to use the means of propaganda to gain public support as British society was not inclined to the mass intake of refugees, not only for economic reasons but also for the long

prevailing prejudice and stereotypical mindset. Consequently, the government did not call the people coming from Europe ‘refugees’ but ‘productive or volunteer workers’ instead while unveiling a large-scale information campaign through pamphlets and newspapers, especially to households near the worker’s lodgings. The overall message to the public was to highlight similarities between the native inhabitants and the foreigners and their common cause to fight the post-war plight of rebuilding Britain into a prosperous economy and society. It also emphasised the need of the workers for a stable home and their desire to be worthy of it through hard work. The government had also tried to diminish arguments about immigrants being a burden to society while parasitising on social welfare; neither would they take over British jobs, and they just needed help with the assimilation into communities. The pro-governmental press covered their suffering throughout the war, emphasising their craving for work, independence, and their wish to contribute to society while arousing empathy from the British public towards the newcomers (Wills, 2018, p. 35 – 39).

Even though the state outlined its plans for assimilation and re-education of the workers, there were still strong voices who opposed their coming and employment. Among the opposing arguments were insufficient qualities of the workers, such as their physical state, hypothetical abuse of social welfare and planning, prejudices of outlived racial theories and social classes, and adverse effects on wages and employment. Thus, under public pressure, the government improved the newly emerging welfare scheme with the expanding rules of contributions into the National Insurance system that covered pensions and the NHS, which determined the eligibility of benefits. Moreover, the workforce was given contracts with the condition of work for the designated employer for at least three years upon the condition of deportation if the restriction was breached. European migration almost ceased with the closing of borders due to the spread of the communist regime in central and Eastern European countries, including Eastern Germany and the beginning of the Cold War in the late 1940s until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Yet, Panayi (2010) points out that after the Hungarian uprising in 1956, up to 22,000 people managed to escape to Britain with almost 600 Czechoslovakians after the failure of the Prague Spring in 1968. Additionally, a few thousand succeeded in leaving Poland; however, the exact number is unknown. (Wills, 2018, p. 35 – 39; Panayi, 2010, p. 76 – 78; Hobson, Kennedy, Mackley, Kirk-Wade, Harker in House of Commons Library, 2022).

With the British Nationality Act of 1948, immigration into Britain became genuinely multicultural and transnational due to the immigration wave referred to as the ‘Windrush Generation’. Even though this concept is generally understood in terms of the Commonwealth people from the Caribbean, who had been invited in mass by the British government to live and work in the United Kingdom, for many historians, it also includes persons from Europe, such as Poles or Latvians, Indian and Pakistanis as well as Irish, Maltese or Cypriots who were arriving every year in the approximal amount of 40,000 since the post-war years and throughout the 1950s (Wills, 2018, p. xii). The name ‘Windrush Generation’ is derived from its symbol, the boat named Empire Windrush, which arrived in Tilbury Harbour in Essex on the 21<sup>st</sup> of June 1948, shortly after the introduction of the Act. Although this symbol carried, till then, the largest cargo of post-war immigrants from the West Indies, with 1,027 legal passengers on the boat plus two stowaways, out of which 800 people had their official residency in the Caribbean, it was not the first such boat. The first ship to carry immigrants from the Caribbean to the United Kingdom was the SS Ormonde in 1947. Of the 241 West Indian passengers, 110 formerly belonged to the RAF and fought in the Second World War. Those men did not stay in Britain at the end of the war like many of their fellow countrymen but returned home instead, only to run out of their demobilised army pay and be unable to find employment. The other 131 men were skilled workers such as plumbers or engineers. Later that year, another ship, the SS Almanzora, arrived with 200 West Indian ex-servicemen on board. Nevertheless, the Windrush migration was not hurried, at least not initially, for various reasons. Only six ships, totalling 1,800 people, left the West Indies for Britain in the first two years (Wills, 2018; Royal Museum Greenwich, 2024).

Yet, apart from the immigration opportunity, the passing of the Act provided entrepreneurial prospects. In 1950, the first agency arranging travel from the Jamaican city of Kingston via the United States of America to the United Kingdom opened. Only a few of the wealthier Jamaicans took this opportunity, but with gradually growing travel options and various prices dependent on the levels of luxury, immigration was on the rise. In 1954, over 10,000 West Indians made the sea journey to Britain, while a year later, it was almost 25,000 people. Added to that was the restriction of seasonal immigration by the U.S. in 1950 and the subsequent working quotas since 1953, which had a direct and negative impact on the nations of the West Indies who worked for the American contractors in agriculture. Moreover, 61 ships departed from Jamaica by direct route to Britain in 1955, carrying 8,000 men and women altogether, with another 39 boats

returning from Southern America via the West Indies for mainland Europe, whose 10,000 passengers were destined for Britain as this option was cheaper. Other ships used for travelling to Britain were those that were transporting troops to war in Indochina or the banana boats that transported the fruit to Britain via various small ports of the West Indies. Those boats were the cheapest travel option and became infamous for the high number of ‘black passengers’ and, thus, illegal immigrants. The name was also used as an insult by some British people towards the Windrush immigrants. The migration of the Windrush rapidly increased during the 1950s and 1960s. It continued until the introduction of The Immigration Act of 1971, even though it rapidly slowed down with the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1968 – 2, which the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962 – 1 failed to do. Campbell (2024) points out that more than 500,000 residents of the United Kingdom arrived before 1971 and were born in a Commonwealth country (Wills, 2018; Siegel, 2021; Campbell in BBC News, 2024).

Apart from the British reasons for inviting the immigrants of the Commonwealth to become its citizens, the men and women of the countries of the former colonies had their motives for immigration. At the forefront lay the promise of Britain as their ‘mother’ and the assurance of acceptance as members of the Commonwealth, which increased their sense of belonging and heritage. With this notion, which helped Britain to run its colonies as a part of its imperium, many West Indians grew up and lived for generations. It influenced all aspects of life, from jobs and administration to education, while strengthening the people's loyalty towards the Crown and its politics, which had proven crucial during the war years. The people of the Commonwealth believed that it was also their war. Consequently, the Act of 1948 clarified what the people of those countries had been believing for years and was passed with little to no opposition. This calm approach was in contrast to the treatment of the European refugees and workers that were streaming to Britain with the end of the war. The slow effect of the Act in terms of the number of Commonwealth people immigrating to Britain was, apart from the limited travel options at the beginning, also due to the delayed negative implications of the Second World War (Wills, 2018).

Although the West Indies were subjected to the Defence of the Realm Act since 1939, which meant austerity measures such as rationing, price regulations, and censorship, the hardest effect on people was the late demobilisation of the US forces from certain islands. The Army bases and soldiers provided the people with employment opportunities directly within the base or

through various improvements, such as infrastructure or other structural works. Once the Army left, several thousands of people were without work, purpose and any chance of their future improving. Added to that was the long-term neglect of agriculture before the First World War and the lack of investment in other areas. By the late 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s, unemployment was at critical levels. Consequently, people either saved money, borrowed from their families or took loans to finance their ship fare into Britain and obtain the needed travel documents. Some were lucky enough to have pre-signed work contracts through governmental working schemes such as NHS or the British Rail or job advertisements from various British companies. Many had no work arrangements before leaving and searched for a job upon their arrival. The immigrants' ages ranged from young people to middle-aged, from students to skilled and educated workers, and from mothers who were leaving their children behind to fathers whose aim was to provide for their families. Families, including young children, usually followed their parents once they had been settled (Wills, 2018).

In comparison to the European workers and refugees, the Windrush generation was rather naïve, full of grand expectations and hopes without realisation that their 'mother' country was a completely different world socially and culturally and that even the weather was different. Many of the young people took their immigration as an adventure. Moreover, they cared about the first impression and their appearance on arrival. Thus, they usually saved their best clothes, which was problematic because the term 'best clothes' meant something completely different in the Caribbean and Britain. Therefore, the latter arrivals were awaited in harbours by their family members and charities handing out warm clothing. Also, the members of the Colonial Office, London and the British Council were usually present, as well as members of the public looking for tenants and company representatives looking for workers in manufacture, food production, agriculture, public transport or construction (Wills, 2018).

The largest employer of the Windrush migrants was the newly established NHS due to its dependency on a wide range of skills and, thus, a great variety of human resources, including unskilled workers and young people. It also offered various training programmes and career growth. The positions offered ranged from trainees to skilled nurses or doctors, as well as porters, cleaners, carpenters or cooks. The positions for unskilled workers were often in higher demand by the NHS than the skilled ones. As Bivins (2019) points out, in 1963, the total number of

construction and maintenance workers employed by the NHS stood at 19,552 compared to 18,095 doctors (People's History of the NHS, 2024). In the late 1960s, almost 5,000 women from the West Indies were employed in British hospitals. By the late 1970s, 12 % of midwives and nurses came from abroad, with 66 % from Jamaica. Additionally, approximately 40 % of junior doctors were from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka or Bangladesh in 1960, and the 1971 figures show that 31 % of the total number of doctors working for the NHS were educated in countries other than Britain. These figures also show that the levels of education and qualifications of the former British colonies were accepted to a far greater extent in comparison to the education achieved by other immigrant groups, mainly from mainland Europe throughout the post-war period (Wills, 2018; Bivins in People's History of the NHS, 2019).

Moreover, other nations travelled to Britain during the 1950s and 1960s. Around 70,000 immigrants came from Cyprus, out of which 80 % were Greeks and 20 % were Turks, with another 10,000 Greeks arriving in 1974 after the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. Around the same time, around 35,000 people from Malta immigrated. Additionally, 148,140 Italians reached Britain between 1948 and 1968. Yet, almost 30,000 of these returned home, with more following in the 1970s and 80s. Moreover, Chinese people, mainly from Hong Kong, have been arriving continuously since 1946. By the 1970s, their population had risen to 60,000, continuously increasing to almost 250,000 persons today. Also, due to the construction of the Mangla Dam in Pakistan between 1962 and 1967, over 100,000 people were displaced, with the majority coming to Britain. Nevertheless, the Irish were the largest ethnic group in Britain by 1971, with 709,235 people. Even though the number of people born in Ireland has got lower over the decades since the Censuses of 1961 and 1971, they were the most consistent in their immigration to the United Kingdom historically (Panayi, 2010, p. 75 – 80; Migration Watch UK, 2014; Siegel, 2021, 9:38 – 10:33).

Nevertheless, although the post-war immigrants from the West Indies were generally accepted in the beginning, with the progression of migration, the people were often subjected to racism. Antisemitism against Jewish immigrants was historically present in Britain even after the Second World War, and so was racism against, mainly, the Polish and Irish post-war immigrants and refugees. Yet, racism against the coloured people of the Commonwealth who were arriving in predominantly homogenous Britain was something relatively new and crept slowly into society. After the Blitz, the Jewish population moved away from what had been left out of the East End of

London to other parts of the main city or further afield; the European Voluntary Workers were assigned to specific accommodations in more industrial parts of Britain until they assimilated into society, and what was left of the East End, with its few native inhabitants, waited for the new immigrants of the Windrush. The increasing immigration from the Caribbean, with people seeking the cheapest housing, and the long-term governmental underinvestment in the area did not help (Wills, 2018; Collinson, 2024).

Consequently, the native inhabitants, who could not cope with the vibrancy of immigration, began to perceive their areas as no-go zones while blaming the immigrants because of their different ways of life, from socialising to child upbringing. Added to that were the lonely immigrant men and women who could not find decent housing and work for a more extended period and looked for some purpose and company in their lives. The negative attitude towards the Windrush generation spread across London, with many newcomers experiencing prejudice, unequal treatment and racism. For example, many were declined a job solely on the colour of their skin and were turned away from various venues of entertainment and church sermons. Many landlords advertised rooms or flats to rent, except for dogs, coloured people and Irish, or often charged double rent. Therefore, many people were living in the most deprived areas, in crowded conditions, with some being accommodated by local councils in former air-raid shelters deep below the ground (Wills, 2018; Collinson, 2024).

Furthermore, the negative approach towards immigrants throughout the 1950s was to be seen even among the members of the Parliament and the Government itself, with some blaming the immigrants for being the cause of the problems, and the tensions grew. The situation was often exaggerated by the press, a newly appearing group of youths called The Teddy Boys, the British neo-Nazi group White Defence League as well as by the re-appearing aristocrat and politician Oswald Mosley and his neo-Nazi movement. With the rising immigration from China, the anti-immigrant mood also harmed this community. The tensions turned into a series of smaller attacks against the Windrush communities. Subsequently, they escalated with the Notting Hill riots of 1958, where several hundred Teddy Boys targeted men of colour who had a relationship with white women. The riots and attacks lasted for almost a week. Moreover, in 1959, a Windrush immigrant, Kelso Cochrane, was murdered, also in Notting Hill, with his attackers never to be caught nor prosecuted. The Riots and the murder were exploited by the conservative politician Enoch Powell

throughout the second half of the 1960s to criticise the Government for its immigration politics and to oppose the proposed anti-discrimination law, the Race Relations Act 1965, followed by the Race Relations Act 1968 (Panayi, 2010; Wills, 2018; Collinson, 2024).

It is assumed that the two incidents in Notting Hill, with the general perception of the immigrants, added to the mounting pressure on the government and led to the passage of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962 - 1 as the first attempt to curb immigration from the commonwealth countries followed by the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1968 - 2 and the Immigration Act 1971. The Acts 1968 and 1971 were also the government's reaction to Kenya's Republic Africanisation policies in 1964, which resulted in the significant arrival of African Asians, such as Indians and Pakistanis, into Britain. However, the same policies were applied in Uganda in 1972, with over 70,000 people having to leave the country in less than 90 days, with the majority having British passports and heading for Britain. The estimate is that around 200,000 people immigrated due to these political changes in Britain from 1964 to 1972, including refugees of the civil war in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Nevertheless, the Immigration Act of 1971 and its restrictions managed to reduce immigration from the Commonwealth countries significantly, with the foreign-born population growing only by around 100,000 between 1971 and 1981 in comparison to a mass increase of about 1,000,000 between 1961 and 1971 (Panayi, 2010; Wills, 2018; Migration Watch UK, 2014; Siegel, 2021, 10:35 – 11:20).

Although the decrease in immigration was significant, it was also influenced by the austerity measures and rising unemployment throughout the 1970s and 1980s due to the economic downturn, increasing inflation and miners' strikes. This resulted in raising racism as someone needed to be blamed and in many Britons leaving their homeland for other countries and outnumbering the few isolated groups of politically forced migrants making their way to Britain from the 1970s until the 1990s. Among others, it was 30,000 victims of the Iranian Revolution in 1979, 3000 Chileans because of the dictatorship, 15,000 Vietnamese due to civil war and 15,000 Kurds escaping prosecution. 15,000 Zairians had left Turkey due to oppression, with 28,000 Sri Lankans and 7,500 Ghanaians. Furthermore, in 1977, 162,000 people came to the United Kingdom, but 208,000 people left. A similar pattern repeated until 1982. However, in 1983, immigration rose slightly due to the impact of The British National Act 1981, with 202,000 people



entering Britain while leaving 184,000, continuing to rise until 1986. In 1987 and 1988, more people left than came in. (Panayi, 2010; BBC News, 2012; Office for National Statistics, 2016).

Nevertheless, by the European Economic Community in 1973, the government extended The British Nationality Act 1981 in 1988 with a clause that enabled the citizens of other countries. The same scheme, which allowed free movement within the United Kingdom, also increased immigration. The entry of numerous wives within polygamous marriages was restricted to just one. This led to a slight increase in immigration since 1989 for the next two years. The primary cause was the fall of the communist regime in Europe and the subsequent end of the Cold War in 1991. The start of the Yugoslav Wars the same year also played a significant role, sending 12,000 refugees to Britain. Germany's entry into the European Economic Community in 1990 also resulted in the economic immigration of Germans. Panayi (2010) highlights that towards the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, 290,000 Arabic immigrants, including Lebanese, Yemenis, and Palestinians, entered Britain. However, immigration decreased again in 1992 and 1993 and has been steadily rising since 1994, mainly due to another wave of economic migrants from the long-closed Eastern Europe, who had been granted work permits based on their skills, from agricultural workers to highly skilled jobs (Panayi, 2010; Office for National Statistics, 2016).

Moreover, The Maastricht Treaty in 1993 led to the establishment of the European Union, which provided all citizens of the member states with EU citizenship, enabling them to move freely regardless of reasons between the member countries, such as Spain, Portugal, the Republic of Ireland, France, Germany, Italy, Denmark, Luxemburg, Belgium and the Netherlands. Yet, the United Kingdom has never signed the Schengen Agreement; consequently, citizens of the member states still had to undergo border control. In addition, three European Free Trade Area members, Iceland, Lichtenstein, and Norway, signed the creation of a single market in 1994 with the countries of the EU, enabling the free movement of goods, services, capital and people. Consequently, more people could live and work in Britain in the last six years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. 1994 also marked a breakthrough in transportation between Britain and mainland Europe by opening the Channel Tunnel, which made transporting people and goods easier (Panayi, 2010; Office for National Statistics, 2016).

Likewise, migration began to increase sharply at the end of the century and has remained so ever since. The patterns of immigration also began to change. Throughout the 20th century,

Britain experienced various waves of immigration from different nations, with the largest being the South Asians, which had almost 1,000,000 people; Africans, with a total of 1,000,000; West Indians, with around 400,000; and 700,000 Irish immigrants. Yet, as the century ended, the 21st century saw a decline in Irish immigrants, dropping from almost 600,000 in 1991 to less than 500,000 in 2001 and continuing to decrease. However, as one nation's immigration declined, others rose. A notable example is the British Nationality (Hong Kong) Act 1990, which led to around 50,000 immigrants being granted British citizenship in 1997 due to the transfer of Hong Kong to China. This act significantly influenced the immigration trends in the UK (Panayi, 2010; Migration Watch UK, 2014).

### **3. 21st Century Immigration - Countries of the European Union**

The United Kingdom experienced changes in various migration patterns with the new millennium. The significant change was a shift from forced immigration and refugees to economic migration as a reason, mainly after the expansion of the European Union in 2004 with countries classed as EU 8, such as the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Malta and Cyprus. Due to this expansion, the net migration rose from 185,000 in 2003 to 268,000 in 2004 and remained the same until 2007, with almost 600,000 people coming in each year. There was a slight drop in net migration in 2008 and 2009 due to more people leaving the United Kingdom. In 2004, immigration from the EU almost doubled from 66,000 people in 2003 to 127,000 in 2004, increasing further to 151,000 in 2005 and 170,000 in 2006, with peak years of the first millennial decade in 2007 to 195,000 people and 2008 to 198,000. However, as people were migrating back and forth between the EU and Britain, the net migration of EU citizens in 2004 was 43,000 and began to rise slowly until 2007 to 69,000 while booming in 2008 to 134,000 and dropping since 2009 until 2011 to 89,000 people. The decrease in immigration in these years could be attributed to the economic downturn and the sharp increase in unemployment that Britain had been experiencing. The second sharp increase in immigration from the EU was after the expansion of EU 2 countries, Romania and Bulgaria, after the temporary restrictions imposed by the government of the United Kingdom were lifted in 2013. Consequently, the net migration has risen to over 280,000, with another almost 500,000 EU citizens moving to Britain in 2016 (Panayi, 2010; Office for National Statistics, 2016; The Migration Observatory, 2023).

The number of residents in Britain from EU countries was 167,000 in 2004 and 276,000 in 2005, almost tripling to 819,000 in 2008, further increasing into the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The national Census data 2011 shows that Poland was reported as the country of birth for most EU non-UK-born residents. In 2001, only 61,000 Polish people lived in Britain, but in 2011, it was eleven times more, 654,000, almost 8 % of the British population. Among the EU countries included in the Census, Polish nationality was the only one that has rapidly increased in these years. German citizens rose from 266,000 in 2001 to 300,000 in 2011, whereas Irish citizens decreased from 534,000 to 468,000. Furthermore, according to estimates of the Census 2021, the overall population of EU countries in Britain in 2017 was 3,705,000, with Poland being the leading country of origin with 826,000 people. Romania was the second nation of EU-born citizens, with

554,000 people residing in Britain, Ireland with 389,000, and Germany and Italy with 298,000 citizens. However, it's important to note that the data available may not be exact due to the pandemic of Covid 19, which made the conduction of Census 2021 impossible. Consequently, these data might be biased as they are grounded solely on the Annual Population Survey up to the year 2018, with further years being estimates constructed on the previous developments of immigration and may not be comparable with the data from the Census (The Migration Observatory, 2023; Office for National Statistics, 2013).

Furthermore, the reasons behind immigration in 21st-century Britain have also changed and divided immigrants according to whether they came from the EU or were not EU-born. Compared to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, where the chief motives for migration were political changes, armed conflicts, religious and political persecutions, famine and resource pressures, Siegel (2021) points out that almost 50 % of European immigrants came for work-related reasons. Only 34% of those came due to family connection, while the non-European-born immigrants' reasons were vice versa, with almost 50 % coming for family motives and only 21% for work. Of the non-EU-born nationalities living in the UK in Census 2011, India had the highest representation with 468,000 people in 2001, almost doubling the increase to 722,000 in 2011, even higher than the Polish nationality. The population of people from Pakistan also experienced an increase from 321,000 in 2001 to 503,000 in 2011. Other countries with the highest population in the British Census 2011 were Bangladesh, with 300,000 people, and South Africa and Nigeria, with around 200,000 people. US-born citizens increased by 40,000 people between 2001 and 2011, from 158,000 to 197,000 (Siegel, 2021, 4:43; Office for National Statistics, 2016).

On the other hand, the employment and work patterns did not change much compared to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Even though the employment of foreigners has been steadily increasing since 2004, the growth was caused by non-EU-born workers coming to Britain in more significant numbers than workers from the European Union. The only years the numbers were equal were between 2012 and 2016 when the net migration from EU countries peaked. In 2016, EU workers comprised 7 % of the UK workforce, while non-EU-born citizens covered 10%. According to skills acquired by EU employees, the types of occupations did not undergo any significant changes compared to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Almost 80 %, or just over 500,000 of workers from the EU 8 and EU 2 countries, worked in medium-low skilled compared to 17% of people from North America, 23%

from India and 31% of UK citizens. The only other nations working in more significant numbers in the same field of skilled employment were Pakistan and other South Asian countries, with 44%. Moreover, 36% or 225,000 people from those European countries also worked low-skilled jobs, while only about 10% or 58,000 Indians were doing the same category of work. Citizens of EU 14 countries were usually employed in high-skilled or medium-high-skilled jobs, with almost 700,000 people for both categories and only 74,000 in the low-skilled job sector. Similarly to the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most people from EU 8 and EU 2 were employed in retail areas, with almost 170,000 workers, in manufacturing, with nearly 180,000 people and roughly 140,000 citizens employed in transport and storage. Only around 128,000 people from the EU were used in the health and care sector. This segment has employed more people from East and Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa since the Windrush generation, with almost 400,000 people. Yet, the number of people from the EU countries living and working in Britain declined after the Brexit referendum on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 2016 (The Migration Observatory, 2023; The Migration Observatory, 2024).

## 4. Post-Brexit Immigration

The 2016 referendum on the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union, which was fuelled by the Eurosceptic, populist and racist political party of Nigel Farage, greatly impacted immigration from European Union countries and non-EU nations. Since 2016 and throughout the transition period until 2022, immigration from European countries has rapidly decreased by almost 70%, with net migration being -51,000. The net migration decline throughout the same period from EU 8 countries has been around 126%, EU 14 42% and EU 2 around 40%, with the average fall from EU countries around 58%. The decrease has been felt among other job sectors, mainly in NHS, as between 2016 and 2021, the number of EU workers has halved from 128,000 to 61,000. The decline in immigration might also have been influenced by the pandemic of Covid 19 and the rising unemployment due to the work restrictions throughout. However, immigration from non-EU nations increased by about 85% in 2023, with over 1,000,000 people arriving. The total immigration into Britain in 2023 was 1,218,000, of which only 10% or 116,000 were from EU countries. The 10% of EU nationals also corresponds with the long-term number of people before 2022 and those with pre-settled or settled status as required by the British government since 2021. The rest were predominantly from India, with over 250,000 people, 141,000 Nigerian nationals, 83,000 from Pakistan and 36,000 from Zimbabwe. Other nations accounted for fewer people. Due to Brexit, UK nationals have been returning to Britain, making 5% of the overall immigration, with 88,000 returning by December 2022 and 61,000 by December 2023. (BBC News, 2024; Siegel, 2021; Migration Statistics Team in Office for National Statistics, 2024).

Long-term immigration from non-EU nations on work visas has been sharply increasing since 2016, mainly for work-related reasons, and it could be said that those nationals are slowly replacing workers from the EU. The number of people, mainly from India and Nigeria, almost doubled between December 2022 and 2023, from 277,000 to 423,000 and were employed in the health and care sector. There was also an increase in dependant applications, such as children or spouses. For example, from December 2019 to December 2023, Indian citizens increased from 72,000 to 250,000, Nigerian nationals rose from 14,000 to 141,000, and Chinese citizens increased from 51,000 to 90,000. Nevertheless, despite the influx of non-EU workers, Britain has suffered labour shortages across the most important employment sectors. For example, the number of people applying for jobs in NHS has been continuously falling to the lowest monthly levels

throughout the two years before 2023, with the lowest number of visas granted. Also, between January and April 2023 and the same period of 2024, a further drop of 76% has been recorded. Moreover, agriculture and horticulture were hit hard by the decline of seasonal EU workers. In 2021, only 30,000 visas were granted to EU workers in this sector, yet three times more were needed to fill in the demand by farmers (Daniel, Cooper in BBC News, 2022; BBC News, 2024; Siegel, 2021; Migration Statistics Team in Office for National Statistics, 2024).

Additionally, Siegel (2021) argues that Britain appears to be among the most important countries for higher education since the beginning of the 21st century. International students have gradually increased since 2001, with 142,355 newly enrolled students in 2004 compared to 237,795 in 2011 and 381,725 in the academic year 2021/22. Furthermore, the highest number of newly enrolled university students was 255,590 in the academic year of 2020/21 from non-EU countries in postgraduate programmes. While the overall number was still sharply rising throughout the year 2021/22 to 350,330, the number of students from the countries of the EU rapidly decreased to -53 % from 66,680 to 31,400. This might be caused by the Brexit situation, including higher student fees, the requirement of student visas and difficulty in gaining student loans. Also, undergraduate students appear to be affected more as the number of those students dropped by 63 % compared to postgraduates, with a decrease of 39 %. Consequently, most international students are from non-EU countries such as China, India, Nigeria, Pakistan or the United States. All those groups of students increased sharply since the academic year 2020/21 (Siegel, 2021, 4:43; The Migration Observatory, 2024).

## 5. Immigration laws, restrictions, and controls

With the surge of Jewish immigration at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the very beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Jewish community leaders attempted to assimilate the newcomers as quickly as possible through English and religious education for children as well as adults by founding various clubs, such as the Jewish Lads Brigade in 1895. Yet the objections against any other future arrival of Jews into Britain grew beyond the local community to wider society and into the field of politics. It resulted in the establishment of the British Brothers League in 1901, an anti-alien pressure group, which cooperated with Major William Evans-Gordon, a Conservative MP for East London, and was supported by other right-wing MPs. The group had actively protested against migration and, thus, gained many followers through proclamations that the immigrants were the cause of the suffering, high unemployment, and insufficient living conditions even though these were issues before the heightened migration (Packer, 2017, p.17). The gradation of the protests, campaigns, growing worries of trade unions in terms of unemployment and lowering of the working conditions, split within the society on migration, and the influence of the anti-alien MPs had put considerable pressure on the predominantly Conservative government to establish legislation that would limit the number of immigrants coming to Britain and that would allow the eviction of the unwanted. Moreover, while various governmental committees had not found enough evidence that the migrants were the cause of the unemployment nor a startling number of migrants, some gave their legislation recommendations. Further inspiration for the introduction of the legislation was the United States of America, which had such regulation in place in the form of the Immigration Act of 1882 (Wray, 2006, p. 309).

Although there was a political and economic force against harsh legislation as well as many unsuccessful attempts to introduce it earlier, the growing pressure for immigration legislation resulted in the very first such regulation in The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in the form of the Aliens Act 1905, employed in 1906 (Packer, 2017, p. 17). Its main purpose was to prevent further Jewish immigration into Great Britain. The conditions of the Act were quite disjointed and indefinite, yet the conditions were the first established within the immigration control. For example, landing the boat could have been done only in the authorised ports without entering the soil, and the immigrants were supposed to be inspected only by an immigration officer



accompanied by a medical examiner. Entering the soil could have been refused to any immigrants who were deemed unsuitable and as such were regarded as those who were unable to prove that they had enough funds to support themselves as well as any children; were either mentally ill or with very low intelligence, or had a disease or sickness that would mean a burden or a disadvantage to society; had a conviction of specific crimes or had been evicted from another country (Wray, 2006, p. 311).

The Act also granted the refused immigrant the right to appeal to the Immigration Board. In the process, the immigration officers, medical examiners, and the members of the Board were all answerable to the Home Secretary, who had the biggest powers within the Act itself, including expelling any immigrant deemed unsuitable and having a final say, with his decision being compulsory to the Board. Those powers of the Home Secretary ensured that the Government maintained informal control over immigration, with many decisions being made away from the framework of the Act. Thus, the Act was a subject of political views, power, and influence. The act itself was constructed by the Conservative Government; the implementation fell on the Liberal Government in 1906. The Liberals were formerly against it and consequently tried to soften its Effects by various means, but usually through the Home Secretary and his recommendations towards the Board. For example, as Wray (2006) points out, the Immigration Board had received an order from the Home Secretary to grant the immigrants the ‘benefit of the doubt in cases of disputed evidence in cases of their refugee status’. (Wray, 2006, p. 312 - 313).

Apart from the Act posing as the very first framework of immigration legislation, it had been rather incoherent in practice and effectively led to many biases and mistakes. The Act could only be applied to ships with more than twenty third-class passengers. Those travelling via the first or second class or proving to be on route to somewhere else were not subjected to control. This posed a great chance for various criminals in human trafficking. Furthermore, although the Act granted the statutory recognition and right to asylum for political and religious reasons, it was rarely applied, with very few immigrants being admitted under the refugee status but were selected solely on the grounds of having enough funds or on the state of their health, physical or mental. In terms of its effectiveness, the number of immigrants refused was low. According to figures in Wray (2006), the after-appeal refusal quotas had risen between 1906 and 1909 from 1.3% to 6.5% and fell to 4.8% in 1910. Yet, it was not just the official conditions of the Act that were applied by the

immigration officers but also some unofficial, more biased ones, which reflected the concerns of the wider public as those did not calm down with the Act's implementation. For example, employers were admitted before the Board hearing and were asked whether there were not sufficient English employees available instead of the migrant (Wray, 2006, p. 314 – 316).

Additionally, unmarried and unaccompanied women were usually detained until their contacts were verified. A woman was refused if her relatives were not respectable enough. If the officials doubted the marriage of a couple, a woman was refused. Two conditions led to refusal on medical grounds. Yet, if a detained immigrant got a chance for a second medical opinion, he often got a pass to stay for suffering from a less serious disease while others with marginal illnesses got refused even though they had secured a job. However, ill, disabled children or old people were often refused even though their relatives would care for them. Nevertheless, the Act served several purposes well. Firstly, it re-routed many migrants to other countries, such as The United States. Secondly, no stricter measures or amendments were introduced for the eight years of its validity as even the Conservative party came to recognise the importance of maintaining the right to asylum for political and religious reasons. Lastly, the Act created a framework for the admissions of immigrants and asylum seekers (Wray, 2006, p. 314 - 319).

The Aliens Act of 1905 was modified into The British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act of 1914, which was severely influenced by the outbreak of World War I and the subsequent 'Germanophobia'. With this Act, the powers of the monarch were extended and immigrants from Germany were unable to enter the United Kingdom. Yet, deportations of those regarded as a threat to Britain were permitted. Also, the Police officers were allowed to arrest, hold, and search those who were under suspicion of threatening the British citizens or the Crown. They also had the right to arrest those who were thought of as being 'enemy aliens'. Nonetheless, the Act allowed the acceptance of refugees from Belgium and France (Panayi, 2010, p. 110; Siegel, 2021, 1:19).

Furthermore, with the prevailing anti-German approach and the consequences of the Great War, The British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act of 1914 was extended further into The Aliens Act of 1919, with even harsher entry conditions for the immigrants. These, for example, were the permission for ships to land only within strictly designated ports with the inclusion of immigration officers, registration with the police for anyone over 16 years of age, and a duty to carry identification papers for all travellers as well as undergo a thorough medical examination of those

that were planning on staying in Britain for longer than three months to ensure that the immigrants did not suffer from undesirable health conditions. Also, similarly to previous Aliens Acts of 1905 and 1914, those who were deemed unsuitable by the police officers for the lack of financial resources and with the prospect of being a public burden were denied entry into Britain. Additionally, the duty of having identification documents upon travelling to Britain had been extended into the duty of having a standardised passport in the additional Aliens Order of 1920 as well as work permits (Panayi, 2010, p. 110). Even though the earliest record of a British passport is from 1414 under the reign of Henry V., which was known as the safe conduct with other passports being issued throughout history, the first modern passport with a photograph and signature was issued in 1915 as a single page document in hard-cover. The first passport most resembling today's passport was issued in 1921 and had 32 pages written in French in blue cover of a book format (Refugee History, 2024; Home Office Media, 2024).

Additionally, the police had responsibility for the Aliens' lodging houses with the permission of their closure. The police were also legitimate in deporting aliens from Britain arrested for committing a crime, in case of suspicion of instigation to rebellion with the Armed Forces and strikes within manufacturing, or if the Home Secretary deemed it necessary for the public benefit. Those who had been a part of instigation to rebellion, strikes or other disloyal behaviour were sentenced to ten years in prison before being deported. Moreover, immigrants were prohibited from working at certain jobs, such as in civil service or merchant ships. However, in comparison to previous Acts, this Act did not make exceptions for refugees and remained valid until 1948 (Refugee History, 2024).

Moreover, just after the end of the Second World War, the government had to deal with the war's negative impacts and decided to rebuild Britain as quickly as possible with the help of many foreign soldiers, mainly from Poland, who were unable and unwilling to return home due to changes on the political scene in their home country. Taking responsibility for these men, the British government established the Polish Resettlement Corps in 1946 so that they could stay and expand their education and the resettlement process into a job market and civil life. This also led to the creation of the Polish Resettlement Camps around Britain. Consequently, the British government passed its new and first legislation for large-scale immigration of refugees in the form of The Polish Resettlement Act of 1947. The act gave Polish soldiers and their families the right

to citizenship since 1948 and, consequently, to jobs and possible state help in the form of benefits, pensions, health services, and education (Panayi, 2010; Wills, 2018).

Although the British government managed to bring thousands of workers to the United Kingdom through the post-war employment and assimilation schemes, this was still insufficient. Therefore, the government looked towards its Commonwealth countries and introduced the British Nationality Act 1948. Because of the growing independence of the former Empire colonies, such as India, Pakistan, Canada, Sri Lanka, and South Africa, the Act gave all its citizens, including the newly independent countries, the right to British citizenship based on the fact that they had been born in the territory of the United Kingdom and its Colonies. Thus, the people of the Commonwealth became the ‘Citizens of the UK and Colonies’ and were entitled to live and work in the United Kingdom like any other native British persons (Siegel, 2021, 2:35).

However, due to the mounting anti-immigration tensions from the public and some political figures throughout the 1950s escalating with the Notting Hill riots in 1958 and the first racially motivated murder of Kelso Cochrane in 1959, the government introduced the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962 – 1 to limit the arrival of the citizens from its former colonies. Those who owned a British passport based on their birthright or dissent were subjected to restrictions in the form of work permits, as was the case with the Aliens Act of 1919. However, this act failed to restrict immigration due to the much greater demand for workers than was available in Britain at that time, so work permits were given to anyone who wanted to work in Britain. Thus, the impact was the increase of immigration instead, with the influx of Asians from Kenya, who were forced to migrate due to the Africanization policies imposed by the newly independent Republic of Kenya in 1964. The reaction of the British government was firstly the limitation of issuing work permits in 1965 and the introduction of another Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1968 – 2 to impose further restrictions. By this act, a British Commonwealth citizen was regarded as a person who proved that at least one of his grandparents was either born or naturalised in the United Kingdom or became a citizen via adoption or through the British Nationality Act 1948 validation process (Panayi, 2010; Siegel, 2021, 3:40 – 5:22).

Further extension in the form of The Immigration Act 1971 restricted the right to reside in Britain to those with at least one grandparent born in the United Kingdom, which, in its consequence, restricted all non-white people while establishing the primary purpose rule for the

reunification of families by including the children of those who emigrated not long before the validation of the act. The act also established the concept of partial status to differentiate those with close links to the United Kingdom from those without, including legal residency for five years. It also distinguished between immigrants based on indefinite leave to remain and those applying for work permits assigned to specific jobs with restricted periods, as well as further differences between Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth citizens (Panayi, 2010; Siegel, 2021, 3:40 – 5:22).

Even though immigration in the late 1970s was very low and the number of people emigrating from Britain outnumbered those coming in, the government introduced The British Nationality Act 1981. This act aimed to simplify migration politics and restrict the entry of immigrants into the United Kingdom. Because not all citizens of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth had an automatic right to live in Britain since 1962, the act restored the right to abode for those having citizenship while eliminating the category of the citizen of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth. Instead, three new categories were introduced. The first category was British citizenship, the second was British overseas citizenship, and the third was British dependent territories citizenship. Moreover, the concept of '*jus solis*' was changed, meaning that citizenship of a child is no longer declared by the place of birth but by at least one parent being born in the United Kingdom. Furthermore, mothers could pass their citizenship on to their children, previously restricted to men only. However, this act and its consequences led to a rise in immigration as many families unified due to the inability to travel freely between the country of their origin and the United Kingdom. They chose to settle permanently in Britain instead. Additionally, before the act, the government introduced the Primary Purpose Rule 1980, in which foreign nationals married to British citizens were obliged to prove that gaining residency was not the reason for their marriage. Otherwise, they were not allowed entry. This rule was eradicated in 1997. The British Nationality Act 1981 was extended in 1988 to safeguard the entry of only one wife or widow from a polygamous marriage and the free movement of citizens from countries of the European Economic Communities (Panayi, 2010; BBC News, 2013; Siegel, 2021, 5:20 – 7:10; Office for National Statistics, 2016).

Moreover, in 1990, the United Kingdom introduced the work permit system, which authorised various companies and employers to recruit or move workers from abroad while

encouraging those with specific skills to work in Britain or to obtain work-related experience. To gain a work permit, it was compulsory for the potential worker to have a valid job offer fixed to his details, a particular company, a specific work position and a required level of education. Furthermore, the applicant had to prove their financial independence so they would not burden the state and could accommodate and care for any dependents. Apart from the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme, which was accessible to specific workers even without a job offer, most of the work permit programmes were for workers in food processing agriculture, including seasonal workers, manufacturing or NHS workers, such as nurses. Each scheme had its quota, which might have been altered as needed, with permits being issued for the usual five-year period and minimal guaranteed pay for the worker, which had to be equal to the pay given for that particular job. However, there was little control over the companies and workers, whether they did the assigned jobs or switched between jobs and employers. The scheme was cancelled in 2008. Additionally, that same year, the government introduced The British Nationality (Hong Kong) Act 1990, which granted British citizenship to chosen residents, their partners and underaged children and was limited to 50,000 refugees (Panayi, 2010; Migration Watch UK, 2005).

In the second half of the 1990s, the British government introduced several immigration acts and policies on a smaller scale. On top of what had already been introduced in the past, The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 1996 made a criminal offence the employment of anyone without permission to live and work in the United Kingdom. It also made employers responsible for the relevant documentation checks. In 1997, the government established The Special Immigration Appeals Commission, which, as an independent court, deals with appeals from those deported or awaiting deportation or who were deprived of British citizenship in the past due to the effects of the British Nationality Act 1981. The commission also assesses every applicant concerning national security and is subjected to changes depending on changes in any new immigration acts. Moreover, The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 introduced a faster system of processing legal and genuine tourists into the United Kingdom while proposing measures to tackle illegal immigration, including the rules of benefits provision for asylum seekers (Denbighshire Country Council, 2024; Legislation Government UK, 2024).

In the new millennium, the British government reacted to the needs and dynamics of immigration with The Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, which gave British

Overseas Citizens, British Protected persons and subjects the right to register as British Citizens. This applied to those who did not have any other citizenship or nationality and who did not surrender or lose any of these due to their activity. Moreover, the act granted British citizenship to those born between 1961 and 1982 who could not gain citizenship on their mother's line due to the law restrictions before The British Nationality Act 1981. Additionally, dual nationals could lose their British nationality if they acted against the interests of the United Kingdom. Also, those older than 18 years of age applying for British citizenship were obliged to take an Oath of Allegiance and Pledge to the United Kingdom at a citizenship ceremony before it took effect and undertake a language competency test, which was extended to Life in the United Kingdom test in 2005 with the pass rate of 75% (, Siegel, 2021, 11:56; Legislation Government UK, 2024).

Nevertheless, the Asylum and Immigration Act 2004 was introduced, along with document changes, to tackle human trafficking. Consequently, those arriving and unable to present sufficient travel documents were arrested. Moreover, the government introduced a somewhat controversial 'White List' of desired countries that safeguarded the well-being of refugees and did not abuse human rights. Consequently, if a refugee came from such a country, the asylum would be denied as unsubstantiated. Yet, some countries known to abuse human rights or with an ongoing civil war appeared on the list, as was the case of Sri Lanka, which was added to the list before the act came into force in 2003 with an ongoing civil war until 2009. Moreover, this act also introduced the immigration process in which people were able to enter the UK legally either as visa holders or as non-visa holders for the EU member states, including the newly accepted countries of EU 8 or the British nationals, asylum seekers on the settlement schemes and refugees, including the process of entry refusals, asylum applications, citizenship applications, procedures of tackling the illegal immigration and removal from the country in case of visa breaching and overstaying (Siegel, 2021, 8:43).

Furthermore, during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the British government established the UK Border Agency, which was responsible for safeguarding British borders, including the processes of immigration and customs regulations. Yet, it was replaced by UK Visas and Immigration in 2013. Also, the Immigration Rules 2008 were created, including the expansion of the 2002 Points-Based System for non-EU immigrants, which is still valid despite some changes throughout the years. The system is based on five tiers and various sub-categories of gained

qualifications, skills, and possible benefits for the United Kingdom. The first tier is for highly skilled workers; the second is for sponsored skilled workers with secured job placement by a UK sponsor; the third for low-skilled workers is currently suspended as there is no present need for this type of worker; the fourth is for students; and the fifth was initially for special categories of temporary migrants but now serves for temporary workers. The system poses similarities with other systems, such as those in Australia or the US (Siegel, 2021, 9:42, 11:11; BBC News, 2013; Immigration Direct, 2024).

Further immigration policies included the Migration Impact Fund, launched in 2009 but stopped a year later. Yet, in 2016, the Controlling Migration Fund, in which the local government departments had 140 million pounds available for four years, was used to minimise the impact of immigration on local levels and to tackle illegal immigration. Also, restrictions were made for immigrants from the European Economic Area to access the state benefits in 2013, with a further extension in 2014, where they had to wait three months before claiming the income-based jobseeker's allowance while not being able to apply for the housing benefit. Additionally, non-EEA immigrants had to show they had enough finances to not claim public funds before entering The United Kingdom. Furthermore, The Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 extended rules upon non-EEA citizens so that before being eligible for naturalisation, a person had to have a residential status for at least eight years before applying. Those requesting naturalisation through marriage had to be married for at least five years prior. Also, the act enabled immigration and customs officers to share their remits (Siegel, 2021, 9:42, 11:11; BBC News, 2013; Immigration Direct, 2024).

Moreover, apart from other less significant immigration policies, the government established the NHS surcharge in 2015 through its Immigration Act 2014. Initially, the surcharge was deemed for non-EEA visa applicants. However, it was changed to anyone applying for a visa or immigration application for longer than six months from outside the UK or for any length of time from the UK, even if the applicant has private medical insurance. In 2015, the surcharge was 300 per year for students and 400 for others. Nevertheless, the fees have increased, with the standard fee being 1,035 pounds per year and 776 pounds for students since April 2024. The act dealt with illegal immigration. For example, landlords were banned from renting properties to people without legal documentation and visas, and illegal immigrants could not gain British



driver's licences or participate in bogus marriages. This was further extended in the Immigration Act 2016 for taxi driver applications, private hire drivers and other licenses (Siegel, 2021, 11:56; BBC News, 2013; Government UK, 2024).

Brexit led to significant changes in immigration policy. To remain in the UK legally, EU nationals living in the UK had to apply for the EU Settlement Scheme, either for settled or pre-settled status. This scheme also includes Norway, Iceland, Lichtenstein, and Switzerland citizens. The pre-settled status means a Limited Leave to Remain for EU nationals living in Britain for less than five years by 31st December 2020 and having no criminal record. The pre-settled status is granted for five years, but the EU national cannot leave the UK for two years. Moreover, the residence in the UK, which is measured for every EU national, resets to zero time if the given person stays abroad for more than six months. After five years of continuous stay in the UK, the pre-settled status changes to settled upon application from each individual. In contrast, the settled status means Indefinite Leave to Remain with the same initial conditions. Yet, it is for EU nationals who had lived in the UK for at least five and spent less than six months abroad in any twelve months during their longitudinal stay in the UK. The settled status remains unchanged unless the EU national leaves the UK for more than five continuous years and is not subject to re-application. Both groups allow some exceptions, such as staying abroad for longer in exceptional cases and having the same employment and welfare rights. Moreover, the settled status is passed onto children in the case of linked applications. In the case of any baby born after gaining settled status, the baby earns British citizenship automatically. Yet, citizenship applications are accepted only by those holding the settled status for at least a year unless married to a British citizen. Nevertheless, since the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2021, all EU citizens are treated the same as non-EU nationals and must apply for work visas based on job offers according to their skills in compliance with the new Points-Based System, have the required level of English, and receive pay of at least 80% of the specific minimum for the given job, which is classified as the standard rate, or higher. The standard rates are subject to change depending on the type of occupation. NHS workers or students in the UK who are changing to employment are subject to exceptions. Moreover, according to the system, applicants must achieve 70 points in their application, with 50 compulsory points and 20 as tradeable for specific occupations. Sponsorship may be required for certain categories. NHS workers or students in the UK who are changing to employment are subject to exceptions in salary limits and application points (Siegel, 2021, 15:39; The 3 Million, 2024).

## 6. Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the UK

Historically, refugees and those seeking asylum entered Britain due to a crisis in their home country. The crisis could have been anything from armed conflicts to forced migration because of political and geographical changes or a threat of persecution. The 21<sup>st</sup> century is no different. In 2019, the calculations showed that almost 400,000 non-UK-born people entered Britain on asylum-seeking visas. This number totals 5% of the non-UK-born population living in the United Kingdom or 0.6% of the residing population. 56% of the almost 400,000 assailants have been living in the UK for more than 16 years continuously. Additionally, 104,423 were between 16 and 20 when claiming asylum, 70,936 people were aged between 21 and 30, and 40,449 were older than 31. Also, 76,252 were children aged 0 to 5 years old, with older children and young people up to age 15 being 96,257. Nevertheless, those who did not receive full asylum or immigration status are included in those figures, as only around 5% of claimants receive full asylum approval. However, the number of genuine asylum seekers applying in the UK corresponds with crises in their native countries. For example, the number of claimants rose rapidly between 1988 and 1991 from 5,739 to 73,400 people due to Somalian and Sri Lanka's civil wars, with 3,810 people being granted full asylum or another form of asylum-related leave (The Migration Observatory, 2022).

The number of asylum seekers increased substantially again in the second half of the 1990s with the conflict in Yugoslavia and Somalia, followed by the war in Iraq and Afghanistan peaking in 2002 with 103,081 claimants, out of which 33,460 were positively decided. The number has risen since 2014. Also, data on settled refugees, measured since 2010, show only a fraction of those settled in the UK. Of the 9,113 claims with positive results in 2020, only 823 people settled permanently. Yet, the pandemic of Covid 19 disrupted the asylum-claiming process, with claims in 2020 being 21% less compared to 2019, with 40% fewer positive decisions. The resettlement of refugees dropped by 85%. While asylum applications increased substantially with the end of the pandemic and exceeded previous levels, the number of refugees did not return to their pre-COVID-19 levels. Nevertheless, further reliable data beyond this year are unavailable (The Migration Observatory, 2022). Yet, the latest armed conflict in Ukraine has sent around 174,000 people to the UK. For those, the government devised separate Ukraine Family and Ukraine Sponsorship Schemes. The Family Scheme opened in March 2022, and the number of applications until May 2023 was 95,400, with 68,200 issued visas. The Sponsorship Scheme also opened in March 2022,

and until May 2023, the number of applicants was almost 200,000, with 160,100 positive visa decisions. Nonetheless, only 51,000 with Family Scheme visas and 122,400 with Sponsorship Scheme Visas arrived in the UK by May 2023 (The Migration Observatory, 2022).

## 7. Illegal Immigration in the UK

Illegal or better irregular immigration to the UK is a problem even though, without legal status and residence, immigrants cannot access any benefits, housing, the legal employment market, public services, secondary healthcare, or nursery and school education. The majority of those entering Britain irregularly are single men of productive age and from countries of Africa, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq or Syria, with some having their asylum visas refused or withdrawn. For those entering the UK from continental Europe, primarily France or Belgium, the usual way of transport is either via a boat or a lorry. These people are also subjected to human trafficking from their home country through various illegal transit routes in inhumane conditions, with Britain being among their top destinations, often because they are promised a better life or have a connection to the UK via family or friends. Nevertheless, it is not possible to have reliable data on irregular immigration; consequently, all data are based on estimates that vary in the typology of groups, size, and methodology used. For example, an estimate for 2017 ranges from 800,000 irregular immigrants to 1,200,000. Moreover, exit data are equally unreliable as the overstay of visas is not measured, and many departures are unrecorded. Yet, the overall obedience to visa duration from 2017 until 2020 was assumed to be at 97%. Moreover, in 2017/18, around 1,800 people were arrested for an attempt at irregular entry, yet it is impossible to measure the total number of successful entries. Also, each year, from 2010 to 2019, almost 37,000 irregular immigrants left the UK, with more agreeing with the voluntary return than those having to go on enforced return. For example, 2013 had the highest voluntary returns for 29,505 people compared to 15,984 enforced returns (The Migration Observatory, 2020).

However, since 2022, the British government has proposed The Rwanda Asylum Plan, which aims to send irregular immigrants entering the UK after January 2022 from a safe country to Rwanda for asylum processing. So far, it could include around 52,000 irregular immigrants, including those with refused or withdrawn asylum visas. The applicant can stay in Rwanda if the asylum application is granted refugee status. If the decision is adverse, the claimant can apply for settlement in Rwanda or another safe country of the third world. None of the applicants will be able to live in the UK. The plan is aimed at single men who come to Britain illegally via boats or lorries and are subjected to human trafficking. Even though the plan was passed through the British Parliament, it faces criticism and numerous legal challenges, including a declaration about

Rwanda's safety for refugees within the UK law. Yet there are questions about to what extent the courts are ordered to ignore specific parts about human rights breaches or the International Refugee Convention. The government is further criticised for the expenditure of The Rwanda Plan as the UK had already paid 240,000,000 pounds to Rwanda with future costs of another 370,000,000 pounds, excluding an additional 150,000 pounds for every immigrant sent not including other extra fees for more than 300 people sent and individual resettled (BBC News, 2024).

## 8. Acquiring citizenship in the UK

Anyone who has been living in the UK for at least five years and has been issued either the indefinite leave to remain in the UK status, the settled status or the indefinite leave to enter the UK for at least a year or is married to a British citizen, can apply for British citizenship. Yet, the person applying must also prove that he is at least 18 years old, has been living in the UK for at least five years, has the expected level of English language, Welsh or Scottish Gaelic, has passed The Life in the UK Test, is of good character and will continue to live in the UK. The applicant will be eligible for naturalisation if he proves that he has lived in the UK for more than ten years. According to statistics, 43% of non-UK-born residents declared British citizenship in 2021, of which 6% had dual citizenship. Of the non-UK-born living in the UK for more than ten years, 64% had citizenship. Of the EU-born citizens, only 17% had citizenship, with 79% having a foreign passport, compared to 59% of non-EU-born citizens with British passports. Even though applications for citizenship from EU-born citizens increased since the Brexit referendum, they are still less likely to apply for citizenship compared to non-EU-born. Most citizenships were granted 36,129 EU 14 citizens in 2021, followed by 16,005 EU 8 citizens in the same year. Moreover, the longer people live in the UK, the greater the chance they will become British citizens. For example, 74% of the non-EU-born citizens who have lived in the UK long-term were granted citizenship upon their naturalisation in 2022. Also, those entering the UK with a family visa gain citizenship faster than those on work or student visas. Yet, workers are more likely to become citizens after an average 8-year stay in the UK (The Migration Observatory, 2023).

## 9. Conclusion

Considering the immigration history of the United Kingdom in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries using the overall approach, this thesis has tried to establish how the dynamic and changing process of immigration, with its advantages and disadvantages and many interwoven factors in terms of cause and effect, influenced and shaped the formerly homogenous British society into multicultural one. Moreover, through the presented literary research and statistical evidence, the essay has attempted to outline the impact immigration has had on individual immigrating groups, British society, the government, the consequent legislative processes, and structural changes in terms of public and civil service.

The evidence has shown that, throughout history, Great Britain has been at the centre of migration as an attractive country, with various nations and people immigrating in different numbers, including Asian nations, Russian Jews, Irish, Europeans, and the nations of the Commonwealth. The prevailing and often interconnected reasons behind migration throughout the 20th century were usually part of forced migration due to armed conflicts that usually increased migration, geopolitical changes, famine, revolutions, poverty, the notion of ‘mother country’, and political and religious intolerance, with economic reasons not being as strong, not before the Second World War. Yet, immigrating people from various nations often had specific motives depending on the changing situation in their country, such as Jews in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century who were immigrating mainly due to religious persecution and oppression, or the Irish who left Ireland primarily due to famine and better working opportunities and the generation Windrush, which had been invited and sought for by the British government as a workforce. Furthermore, the government's responses to migration were usually influenced by pressure from the public, media or political opposition, leading to restrictions, limits on immigration, and the introduction of various Immigration Acts. Yet, with the introduction of the first large-scale immigration legislation, The Aliens Act 1905, onto which the government built any subsequent legislation, began the preferential treatment of certain immigrant groups over another, often underlined by patterns of antisemitism, prejudice and outdated assumptions as well as political connections on local and international level. This has been chiefly striking throughout World War I and II with Germanophobia and, in the aftermath, with the selection of refugees and voluntary

workers to rebuild Britain or the open and welcome migration of generation Windrush, often influenced by governmental propaganda.

Moreover, the societal and political changes brought on by World War II resonated throughout the challenging rest of the 20<sup>th</sup> century into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In summary, besides others, were the increasing transnational migration brought on by development in transport, rising unemployment, austerity measures, economic and social restructuring of Britain, attempts of immigrants to assimilate, get decent jobs and housing, adapt to cultural changes while keeping their sense of identity, social unrests fuelled by racism and political populism. Again, the government reacted to the changing dynamics of immigration with more measures to limit legal and irregular migration through updated legislation. This, in turn, has been reflected in immigration differentiation concerning employment, country of origin and social class, and preference for specific education and skills over others, which has again influenced immigration legislation, work permit policies, refugee and asylum-seeking processes, irregular migration and the procedure of acquiring citizenship. Even more so after the British exit from the European Union as a reaction to a mass increase of immigration after the expansion of the European Union in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which was fuelled yet again by racism and populism with the undertone of the economic downturn in the first decade of the new millennium. The results were not only significant changes in immigration policies but also a decrease in European migration and a lack of low and medium-skilled workforce. Yet, it increased migration from non-European countries and students seeking higher education.

Consequently, immigration should not be approached as an isolated process. Instead, it should be seen as a lively and changing organism of interwoven individuals, policies, systems, and life stories. Despite the obstacles immigrants faced throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries to make a new life in Britain, whether permanent or temporary, British society has gained a lot as every nation has left a mark. Whether in culture, cuisine, history, field of profession or other forms of contribution, it has shaped British culture and society into a multicultural one, as it is known today.



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