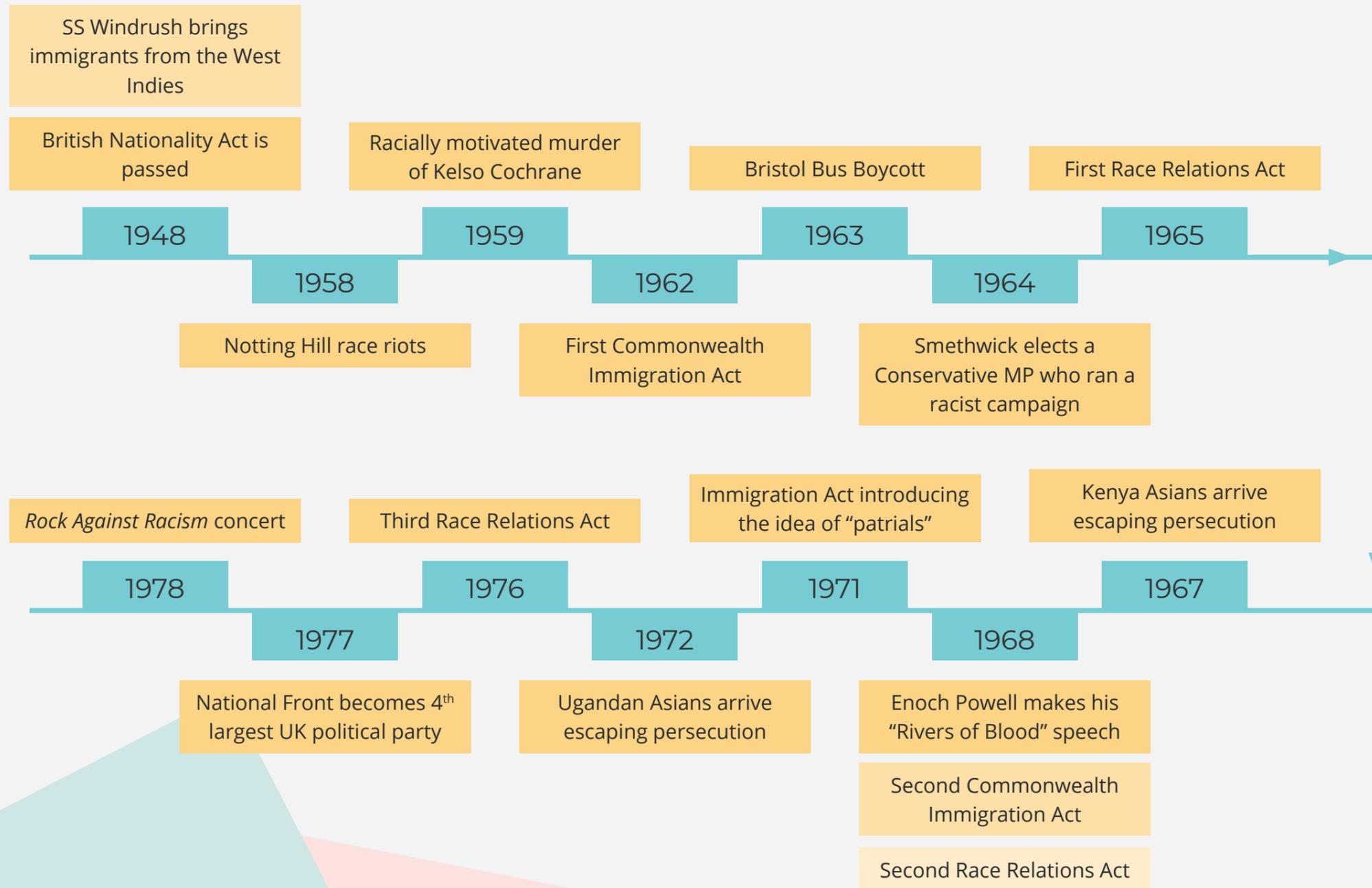


Key Question 6 : What impact did immigration have on society in the UK during this period?

Timeline of events



"It is like watching a nation busily engaged in heaping up its own funeral pyre." Enoch Powell, Conservative MP, in the *Rivers of Blood* speech 1968

Important concept

Multicultural society – many people in the UK thought that British people were white and had been born here. Commonwealth immigration showed that British also included people from the West Indies, Africa and Asia. The government aimed for everyone to live together appreciating each other's differences while appreciating what they had in common as well.

Key words

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Immigration | going to live and work in another country |
| Commonwealth | countries that used to be in the British Empire |
| Patrials | people whose parents had been born in the UK |
| The "colour bar" | discrimination against immigrants in public places |
| Integration | helping different groups of people to live together |

Key Question 6 : What impact did immigration have on society in the UK during this period?

Reasons for immigration

2 million non-white people lived in the UK by 1971. 2/3rds came from the Commonwealth [countries that used to be in the British Empire].

1. *The British Nationality Act 1948* - every Commonwealth citizen had the right to settle anywhere in the Commonwealth.
2. The UK needed *cheap labour* e.g. 4,500 West Indians came to work for London Transport between 1955 and 1961.
3. There was *40% unemployment* in the West Indies.
4. Most immigrants from India and Pakistan in the 1960s were encouraged to leave their countries by *population pressures* and the desire for a better life.
5. Asians living in Kenya, were *persecuted* and tried to use their British passports to escape in 1967.
6. Asians living in Uganda, *terrorised* by the brutal dictatorship of Idi Amin, tried to use their British passports to escape in 1972.
7. The 1949 *Communist revolution* meant many refugees fled to Hong Kong. It was still ruled by the UK but was getting overcrowded so people used their British passports to come to the UK.

Creating a multicultural society

Race Relations Acts tried to help those already here to integrate into [become part of] UK society -

1965 Race Relations Act - made racism in public places illegal and created a new offence, 'incitement to racial hatred' BUT it ignored problems in housing and employment.

1968 Race Relations Act - prohibited discrimination in housing, employment and financial services. BUT discrimination was not very clearly defined, which continued to make it difficult to prosecute.

1976 Race Relations Act - made all racial discrimination illegal, as well as to use threatening or abusive language to incite racial violence. It also established the Commission for Racial Equality to enforce the Act.

The Campaign Against Racial Discrimination (CARD) was set up in 1965.

'Rock Against Racism' gigs took place in the 1970s e.g. The Clash in 1978.

The UK was no longer a country of white people - it was becoming a *multicultural society* e.g. Chinese and India restaurants and takeaways became common in the UK in the 1950s and 1960s; singers like Shirley Bassey, sportsmen like boxer John Conteh became famous.

Problems facing immigrants

Public places - many hotels, restaurants, dance halls and pub landlords operated a '*colour bar*' [not letting coloured people in].

Employment - *discrimination* over pay, promotions or even getting a job e.g. Bristol Bus Boycott when the company refused to employ immigrants. They were often stuck in low paid jobs or unemployed.

Housing - adverts for rooms often said, '*No Coloureds*' or '*Whites Only*' - landladies often blamed this on not wanting to upset the other tenants.

Police - Parliament found that in 1971 most police officers believed that black people were much more likely to be criminals than white people.

Racial violence - e.g. the 1958 Notting Hill race riot; houses were overcrowded, a lot of crime in the community. It attracted immigrants because it was cheap. White residents resented West Indian immigrants. On the summer bank holiday weekend, large gangs of white youths started to attack houses where West Indians lived.

Opposition to immigration and restricting immigration

1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act - the government issued limited work vouchers to immigrants who had to prove that they: already had a job offer.

1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act - restricted automatic entry to the UK to people who had been born in the UK, or had one parent or grandparent who had been born in the UK.

The 1971 Immigration Act - automatic entry would only be granted if an immigrant's parents [paternal] had been born in the UK.

Smethwick - in the 1964 general election a Conservative won with the slogan 'if you want a nigger for a neighbour, vote Liberal or Labour.'

Enoch Powell was the Conservative MP for Wolverhampton. In April 1968, Powell gave a speech to the local Conservative group warning that if immigration was not controlled then the streets would run red with blood.

He was sacked but there were pro-Powell demonstrations across the UK e.g. East End dockers who broke into Parliament.

The **National Front** campaigned in the 1960s and 1970s to have coloured immigrants sent back to where they had come from [repatriation].