

## **INTRODUCE REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP SCHEME, ARGUES THINKTANK**

*Foreign Policy Centre sets out proposal to allow more refugees into Britain without state financial support*

Embargoed Monday September 16 00.01

The Government's efforts to promote Britain as an internationalist country will not be taken seriously unless there is a radical change in the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers, according to a new report published by the Foreign Policy Centre.

In an essay in *Reclaiming Britishness: Living together after September 11 and the Rise of the Right*, Phoebe Griffith and Sacha Chan-Kam argue that the Government should introduce a scheme in which Britons can sponsor refugees to come to the UK. The scheme would allow hosts – individuals, charities or companies – to pay for the subsistence and training of refugees during their first year in the UK. Those entering Britain through this route would be in addition to the number who are given refugee status by the UK Government.

Based on an existing system in Canada, this would both increase Britain's commitment to its international responsibilities and neutralize claims that refugees are placing a "burden" on the state. It argues that the current efforts to boost confidence in the system by adopting tough policies and rhetoric are backfiring – public fears are greater than ever.

### **KEY FINDINGS:**

- **Public perceptions of refugees have never been worse:** Refugees are the least popular group in our society and half of the public thinks that Britain "should not take any more asylum seekers". An EU wide survey commissioned by the EU monitoring Centre classified the UK as a "passively tolerant" country that, together with Greece, displayed an exceptionally low tolerance threshold for asylum seekers.
- **The Government's efforts to demonstrate that the asylum system is well managed are backfiring.** Public opinion is hardening whilst ever-greater sums are spent- £1.05 billion in 2001 – on controlled immigration. According to MORI, immigration and race relations are for the first time second on the list of the most important issues facing Britain – below health but above crime, education and transport.

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- **The British public knows very little about the asylum system.** In a recent poll, when asked what percentage of the world's refugees are in the UK, respondents estimated 23%. The real figure is only 1.9%.
- **Employment opportunities for refugees remain limited:** The most recent figures on refugee employment date back to 1995 and show that, despite a third of refugees in the UK having a degree, post-graduate or professional qualification, and 90% speaking two languages, an average of 70% of refugees are unemployed. The age of these figures shows that the Home Office should give priority to commissioning up-to-date research.
- **Government policies over-emphasize the responsibilities of refugees to adapt** and fail to recognize the responsibilities of their hosts – the government and the population – to deliver services that allow them to integrate.
- **The policies currently adopted to fast-track asylum seekers and refugees have increased their isolation.** Asylum-seekers are assigned to accommodation centres in rural areas, they are allocated an Application Registration card which sets them aside from the rest of the community, and through language based dispersal are made to relocate to parts of the country that are already subject to serious social tensions.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- **Politicians must lead public opinion on the issue of immigration and asylum:** The Government should make clear statements about the fact that Britain is not being “swamped” and that people entering the UK can make a positive contribution to our economy. They must communicate the fact that, contrary to popular belief, **asylum seekers account for a mere 0.15% of the population.**
- **Once Refugee status has been awarded, individual integration plans should be drawn up** to help refugees gain access to education and the employment market. This already happens in Finland and recognizes that each arrival will have different language abilities and qualifications.
- **The Government should provide a consistent standard of English language training:** Up until recently there was no English curriculum targeted at refugees and services provided are still only tagged onto the normal services supplied by Further Education Colleges. The UK Government should match the Australian Government's commitment to provide 510 hours of compulsory language tuition each year.

## **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

1. *Reclaiming Britishness: Living together after 11 September and the rise of the Right* is strictly embargoed until Monday 9 September 00.01.

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2. The Foreign Policy Centre was established in 1998 by the then Foreign Secretary Robin Cook and Prime Minister Tony Blair to explore the consequences of globalisation.

- **New Labour's "initial talk of an outward-looking, hybridised, ever-changing Britain was a profoundly metropolitan one" according to Phillip Dodd. Because of the geographical concentration of Blacks and Asians in Briton, multiculturalism remains alien to many. Only 96% of Blacks and Asians live in England, with only 2% in Scotland and just over 1% in Wales. Within England a large number are concentrated in London: 57% of the UK's Afro-Caribbeans live in Greater London, as do 82% of Africans, 49% of Bangladeshis, 42% of Indians, 35% of Chinese and 19% of Pakistanis.**
- **New Labour's strategic attempt to outmanoeuvre the far-right risk playing to the same gallery, according to Philip Dodd: "There are those who think that it is potentially lethal pandering to a racist politics that can only strengthen the Right".**
- **Matthew D'Ancona argues that the routing of Lionel Jospin has led to "a policy debate more debased than any in recent memory" "The malfunctioning of our asylum system reflects a failure of international conventions, the perversity of judge-made law, and the administrative chaos that reigns as a consequence".**
- **The Government's aims to promote social inclusion and community cohesion through initiatives like youth parliaments and citizenship classes are misguided because they do not address the role played by street life in young people's lives, according to Adrienne Katz: "The day to day reality – what happens to**  
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**children on the way to school or in the neighbourhood – will have the greatest impact on their sense of belonging”**

- Young people from ethnic minorities are more likely to be bullied, **according to a new report. While approximately one in ten of all young people in Bradford suffered bullying, one in three Muslim children had experienced violence from bullies.**
- In a survey of 2,062 inner London teenagers post September 11, Asians were the most likely to join a gang and carry a weapon. **Nearly all of these “at risk” Asians described being attacked, bullied and insulted, and the feeling prevailed in nine in ten of them that it is “acceptable to carry a weapon for self-defence”.**
- The likelihood of different ethnic groups being bullied depends on the local ethnic mix. **Remedies that focus on black or Asian populations miss the point for two reasons. One reason is because minority population patters vary from one neighbourhood to another, with different groups becoming targeted because they belong to the smallest minority:**
- **According to David Blunkett there is a “continuing tension between modernity and the cultural practices of those entering highly advanced countries”.**
- It is the responsibility of diasporas within Britain to help integrate newcomers. **David Blunkett argues that: “Recognising and helping people with this change is as much part of the settled community of similar religion and culture as it is of the host nation, and this is one of the challenges that we need to face”.**
- There has been a misunderstanding on the liberal left in particular of the need to maintain stability and security in order to protect individual freedoms and liberty, **rather than allow them to be eroded”.**
- Democratic states like Israel who defend their citizens must abide by international law and conventions, and uphold moral standards. **As we know from painful experience in Northern Ireland, conflicts between peaceful communities that have legitimate aspirations and rights cannot be resolved by brute force.**
- Rapid change and fears of social dislocation remain critical to a feeling of wellbeing and stability. **Dismissing this as either a right wing agenda or of marginal relevance can only lead to the demise of progressive politics.**

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- We must have a respect for cultural difference that is marked out by fundamental human rights and duties: **“Some of the boundaries are clear, such as examples of forced marriages and female circumcision”**
- Speaking English enables parents to converse with their children in English at home and participate in a wider modern culture, **and it helps overcome the schizophrenia which bedevils generational relationships. In as many as 30% of Asian British households, according to a recent citizenship survey, English is not spoken at home.**

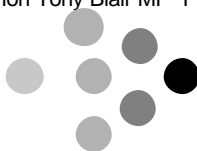
Labour Markets:

- Many second-generation ethnic minorities face greater barriers in the work place than their parents. **Writing in “Reconnecting Britishness” for the Foreign Policy Centre, Shamit Saggarg argues that economic integration has not matched expectations.**

**The report argues that the tendency of first generation immigrants to cluster geographically has been continued. It shows:**

- Ethnic minorities are commonly located in deprived, economically weak areas. **This results in a number of employment barriers including limited residential mobility, transport difficulties, and a general failure of regeneration policy.**
- Where progress in the labour market among ethnic minorities has been recorded it has not been sustained. **It is often based upon tenuous foundations and, in many cases, does not correlate closely with actual capital gains.**
- Minority groups exhibit higher staying on rates in full-time education than their white counter-parts.
- First generation groups who are rich in human capital have often succeeded in making labour market gains because of their pre-existing advantageous position.
- The location of first-generation settlement have determined later patterns of success: **Unlike their Pakistani counterparts, Indian immigrants and their children have tended to settle in areas of continued economic growth. Pakistani immigrants have tended to settle in areas of structural economic decline in manufacturing and textiles. This in turn has hampered opportunity structures in employment and housing.**
- Ethnic minorities who have jobs in mainstream labour markets are more likely to interact, share and exchange perspectives with their White counterparts.

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- An ethnic minority might appear to be doing as well – or even better than – Whites when one looks at the gross difference, but not as well as might be expected given key characteristics such as educational qualifications. **Black Africans appear to be doing quite well, but when one observes they are a highly educated group it becomes apparent that, on average, they are not doing nearly as well as equally well-educated whites.**
- Around half the projected growth in the labour force during the next decade will be among ethnic minorities.
- There are vast disparities in the Labour market achievements of different minority groups. **For instance, around one in twenty males of Indian origin are employed as doctors or in professions allied to medicine. Significantly, one in eight men of Pakistani origin work as taxi-drivers.**
- Minorities have poorer returns to education in the labour market than their white counterparts.
- Indian and Chinese men are more likely than whites to hold jobs at professional or managerial level, according to a Labour Market survey. **This again marks dramatic progress, but, again, arguably less than the rates commensurate with their educational attainment levels. This nails the myth that discrimination is exaggerated and cannot apply to groups who are notionally “successful” in the labour market.**

#### Young People:

- In an inner London neighborhood 16% of young people will join gangs **and 13% might carry weapons to protect themselves.**
- The smaller the ethnic population in a neighbourhood, the higher the risk of being bullied. **Children of mixed heritage can expect to be especially singled out for taunts. It depends upon who is in the minority in a particular neighborhood.**
- 30% of Muslims have experienced violence from bullies and 61% claim that they had experienced racism. **Black pupils had similar experiences. Children of mixed heritage reported even higher levels. Around two thirds of those who described themselves as Asian, Indian or Bangladeshi experienced racism compared to around one in five white teenagers.**
- In a survey of teenagers at risk Asian young people were the most likely to join a gang and carry a weapon. **90% of those “at risk” young citizens said they believe it is acceptable to carry a weapon for self-defence.**

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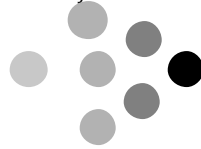
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- When pupils were asked if they enjoyed school, Black pupils responded most positively of all groups. **But responses reveal that Black people also dislike school more than any group. Only 54% of Black pupils in inner London feel that their area is a good place to grow up.**

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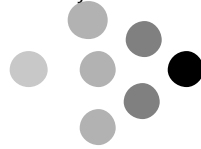
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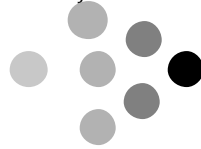
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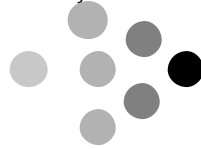
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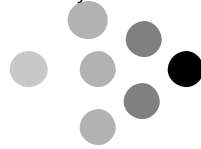
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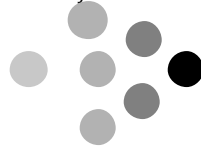
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