

Migration to Europe since 1945: Its History and its Lessons

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WHEN vast swathes of Europe were rubble, and the United Kingdom teetered on the verge of bankruptcy, few expected that the largely white and ethnically cleansed old world would emerge thirty years later as a multi-ethnic continent. The history of migration to Europe is one of unforeseen developments and unintended consequences. This was true of labour migration, of colonial migration and, most recently, of asylum-related migration. Adopting a broad—probably too broad—postwar historical sweep, this essay reviews past patterns of migration to Europe and tentatively draws a number of lessons from these experiences. It refers in particular to the experience of France, the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany.

The legal frameworks through which the postwar migration occurred were varied, but they can be grouped in two: colonial migration regimes and 'temporary' guest-worker policies. Migrants passed through these two streams for one reason: to satisfy labour shortages created by a booming European economy. The story of migration up to the early 1970s is one of economic shortages interacting with prewar colonial migration and citizenship laws in the UK, France, the Netherlands and Belgium, and with postwar guest-worker policies in Austria, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Denmark and Sweden.

Labour migration 1: guest-worker policies

After the 1948 currency reform the German economy began to recover, and recover quickly. By the mid-1950s, Germany and the rest of continental Europe had a level of demand for labour that could no longer be satisfied domestically (or, in Germany, by expellees from eastern Europe). In a pattern common to most continental European countries, Germany looked first to southern Europe (believing that such migrants could be assimilated more readily into the labour market), later to Turkey and finally to North Africa. The German government negotiated guest-worker schemes with Italy (1955), Greece and Spain (1960), Turkey (1961), Morocco (1963), Portugal (1964), Tunisia (1965) and Yugoslavia (1968). In 1964, an apparently bemused worker identified as Germany's one-millionth *Gastarbeiter* was given a motorcycle; a decade later, he was one of over two million.

German trade unions—which often privilege those in work to the detriment of those out of it—were highly suspicious of guest-worker migration, fearing that it would lead to downward pressure on wages. The German government

appeased them by guaranteeing the guest workers the same basic conditions as their German counterparts, and the former were integrated into the unions. The basic idea behind the guest-worker schemes was simple: the workers would remain so long as there were jobs for them, and they would return home once the economy soured. When Germany experienced its first recession in 1967, the policy appeared to work: large numbers of guest workers returned home, knowing that they could come back when the labour market picked up again.

By the early 1970s, however, numbers were rising in the context of a slowing economy, and the SPD–FDP government responded by issuing a migration stop in 1973. Among its other consequences, this had the unintended effect of locking in Germany’s foreign population. In the absence of a guarantee of easy return to Germany, most guest workers did not opt for repatriation. They stayed in Germany and, with the aid of churches, NGOs and sympathetic academic activists, secured a number of legal judgments that guaranteed their right to remain. Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands and France adopted variants of this guest-worker scheme. After 1973, all countries ended or sharply reduced labour migration.

Labour migration II: colonial migration regimes

In countries without a colonial history, bilateral guest-worker agreements were the only source of migrant labour. Europe’s former colonial powers—the UK, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands—were, by contrast, able to draw on a vast supply of unskilled workers. Some scholars of migration have maintained that European policy-makers deliberately sought to tap the reservoir of colonial labour to feed the postwar boom; this is a misunderstanding. It was rather the case that an inability to secure workers (especially white workers) from Europe meant that policy-makers had little choice but to rely on (or, which was more often the case, to tolerate) colonial migrants. The United Kingdom and France present the clearest examples of this trend, but it can also be found in the Netherlands and Belgium.

After the war, the UK briefly tried its own version of the guest-worker schemes, bringing in workers from eastern Europe. The Iron Curtain put paid to this effort, and the sluggishness of the British economy soon meant that France, Germany, Switzerland and Austria were more attractive destinations for migrants from southern Europe. Nevertheless, in the 1950s, the UK may have lacked the German and Swiss economic buoyancy or the French cultural affinity with southern Europe, but it had a citizenship regime encompassing some 600 million colonial subjects.

In 1948, for reasons unrelated to migration,¹ the British government had adopted legislation that transformed all colonial British subjects into citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies, confirming their right to enter the UK and to enjoy all social, political and economic rights. From the early to mid-1950s, the British economy, though unstable, delivered full employment and

labour shortages resulted. Following classic 'pull' incentives, first West Indians, then Indians and Pakistanis, began to migrate to the UK. When restrictive legislation was first introduced in 1962, some 500,000 non-white migrants had entered the UK; a decade later, when the government curtailed the migration privileges attached to UK citizenship, the figure was closer to a million.

France's experience was in some ways similar, although Algeria was legally not a colony but (in the oft-repeated phrase) an integral part of France. In the 1950s, France sought to avoid recourse to migrants from Algeria and the rest of North Africa by having the National Office of Immigration (ONI) set up bureaus exclusively in southern Europe. German/Swiss competition and sustained economic growth soon rendered this supply inadequate. Algerians exercised their right to enter in ever larger numbers (especially in the run-up to Algerian independence) and, from the 1960s, French companies looked to Algeria, and to Morocco and Tunisia as well. In contrast with the tightly regulated system in Germany, Switzerland and Austria, the common practice in France was for companies to hire colonial migrants directly and to regularise their status later through the ONI.

Family reunification

As another indication of how similar the postwar migration experience has been across Europe, all countries ended (or all but ended) primary migration in the early 1970s. The UK acted first in 1971, France and Germany followed in 1972 and 1973, and everyone else did the same within a year or two. By then, however, the deed was done. Colonial migrants had entered in the main as citizens, and as such claimed a right to family reunification. For the others, governments attempted to limit family reunification, and even to encourage repatriation, but all such efforts failed.

There is a debate within the literature about the source of migrants' security, but the most convincing explanations hold that domestic courts, on the basis of domestic constitutions, blocked state efforts to limit family reunification.² As a result, in admitting young men in the 1950s and 1960s, European states committed themselves to admitting wives, children and sometimes grandparents later. At the same time, in the short to medium term, migrants almost always have a higher birth rate than the indigenous population. The result, for every nation in Europe, was the emergence of multicultural, multilingual societies.

The politics of immigration

In France and Germany, the first two decades of immigration were relatively uncontentious. A strong economy and full employment meant that indigenous workers did not feel especially threatened by the new

arrivals. In many cases, the new workers took jobs that no French or German national wanted anyway, and when they did obtain better-paid industrial jobs the unions ensured that the terms were equal to those offered to domestic workers.

Altruism was not the motivation: ensuring equality of wages and conditions prevented migrants from acting—as they do in the United States—as wage depressors. Above all, Germany throughout the period, and France until the late 1950s, could harbour the illusion that migrants were temporary, and that they would politely return to their countries of origin if and when the boom ended. To be sure, migrants to both countries faced discrimination in housing and in daily life, but their arrival was for the most part not a national political issue.

Perhaps because Britain could harbour no such myth, immigration became politicised much earlier in the United Kingdom. In the 1950s, Labour—motivated by imperial guilt and optimistic internationalism—was largely in favour of colonial migration. The Conservative Party, in power throughout the decade, was much more divided, but a sort of pro-migration deadlock emerged: the imperialist right was unwilling to exclude Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders, while the moderates were unwilling to exclude solely non-white colonial migrants.³

The TUC equivocated on the issue, but ultimately decided that its commitment to the international worker took precedence over workers' concerns about foreign labour. Partly because of its limited ability to enforce its policies, there was widespread discrimination on the shop floor, and the closed shop was used to lock black migrants out of certain trades. No one asked the public what it thought until 1958, but the festooning of London hotels with 'No Coloureds' signs suggested a less than enthusiastic welcome.

This elite consensus was shattered in 1958. In the late summer, a group of white thugs in Notting Hill, London, and in Nottingham went on 'nigger hunts', attacking West Indians with knives and broken bottles. No one was killed, but the 'race riots' shocked the public; from then on, immigration and race were high politics. Public opinion polls taken shortly after the riots indicated strong majority support for immigration control, and MPs in constituencies with a high concentration of migrants lobbied publicly for it. The government itself remained divided—the Minister for Labour was strongly in favour of controls, the Colonial Secretary against—but an increase in arrivals after 1959 eventually carried the argument. In 1962, the Commonwealth Immigrants Act ended the open-door policy towards the Commonwealth.

The new controls did not end the debate on immigration; if anything, they relaunched it. In the 1960s immigration became the source of bitter national debate, often punctuated by the sudden arrival of significant numbers of migrants following a decolonisation crisis. Opponents of immigration in the Conservative Party and the press made liberal use of the aquatic metaphors

associated with migration—waves, floods, swamping—and from 1964 to 1972 migration politics in the UK reached their nadir.

In 1964, in the midlands constituency of Smethwick, a Tory challenger unseated a prominent Labour MP, Patrick Gordon Walker, through a shameless appeal to racism. He offered an apologist interpretation of the slogan 'If you want a nigger for your neighbour, vote Liberal or Labour,' and painted nightmare scenarios of an immigrant takeover of the UK. As the hapless Gordon Walker drove off after conceding defeat, Conservative supporters jeered at him: 'Where are your niggers now, Walker?'

A few years later, a conservative Shadow Cabinet member and leading Tory intellectual, Enoch Powell, threw a match onto the tinderbox. In an infamous 1968 speech, he told the story of an elderly English lady who suffered the taunts of grinning immigrants, saw excrement pushed through her door and feared to leave her house. Filled with much 'foreboding', Powell saw the 'River Tiber flowing with much blood', a prediction of interracial violence.

This speech, by a cultured student of classics and modern languages with no obvious connection to the man on the Clapham omnibus, galvanised working-class support: Conservative Central Office was flooded with letters backing Powell, and thousands of workers marched through London in his defence. Edward Heath sacked him, but this only gave Powell the freedom to launch an impassioned, and at times demonic, campaign against immigration. Throughout the 1970s immigration crises repeatedly flared up; the National Front enjoyed some local electoral successes (but no national ones), and immigration was only removed from national politics in 1979. The issue stayed away until the 1990s, when asylum applications brought it back with a vengeance.

In France and Germany, immigration became politicised only later, when it became clear to both countries, and especially Germany, that migrants were there to stay. In France, the issues were first local—appalling housing conditions for North Africans, local mayors' opposition to immigration, specious arguments about a 'threshold of tolerance' pegged at a certain percentage of migrants—but they later became national. They did so for one reason: the Front National. In the early 1980s, the Front secured a derisory result—less than a single percentage point—in national elections. By 1988 its support had reached 15 per cent, and its indefatigable leader, Jean Marie Le Pen, scored 17 per cent in the 2002 presidential elections. Divisions among the left meant that the far-right party knocked the socialists out, and Le Pen went on to the second ballot.

The sources of his support are too varied to be fully covered here, but the major parties themselves have played a role in the Front's rise, or at least its consolidation. The Socialists did so in part by retreating, after 1983, from their radical heritage and by embracing a neo-liberal macroeconomic policy. With the Communists out of government and mired in decline, the Front constituted the only radical alternative in national politics. The point is often

exaggerated, but a substantial portion of Front National support comes from disaffected Communists. More importantly, Mitterrand encouraged the introduction of proportional representation (PR) for the 1986 legislative elections in order to divide the right, but thereby ensured Front National representation in the National Assembly.

Although PR lasted for only two years, it is likely that holding parliamentary seats helped the Front to stabilise its support at around 15 per cent. For its part, the centre-right (Gaullists, UDF) attempted to siphon off Front National support by itself politicising immigration and nationality. It adopted a series of restrictive immigration measures and more rigorously enforced existing regulations (notably the French equivalent of stop-and-search, especially of North Africans). Following a somewhat tortured debate about what it meant to be French, in 1993 the centre-right coalition passed a restrictive nationality law that ended the automatic acquisition by foreigners born in France of French citizenship at the age of majority. These measures did nothing to undermine Front National support; if anything, they conceded part of the Front's argument.

In Germany, a different sort of dynamic has shaped immigration politics. Even more than in France, the debate about immigration has been a debate about citizenship. Germany allowed itself to believe for longer than did France or (especially) the UK that guest workers would one day return home. Once it became clear that they would remain, Germany's citizenship law, founded almost exclusively on ethnicity, became untenable. The debate on immigration—like the debate about everything else in Germany—was and is shaped by the country's history.

Germany's (pre-1989) uncertain borders, the 16 million East Germans held hostage by the GDR, and the still substantial number of ethnic Germans facing discrimination in eastern Europe all argued in favour of a descent-based citizenship. Ethnic citizenship was also supported by an unholy alliance between the right, which opposed the integration of migrants except under the most stringent of terms, and the left, which saw in any attempt to integrate migrants a new form of *Zwangsgermanisierung*, the National Socialist policy of 'forced Germanisation'. At the same time, the CSU (Christian Social Union), partly because it takes a particularly robust view of German citizenship, and partly to prevent the far right from making any inroads into Bavaria, consistently blocked nationality reforms from within the centre-right. As the Germans fought each other about what it meant to be German, the non-Germans—Turks, Yugoslavs and others—were excluded from the debate, from full acceptance by Germans and from political citizenship.

The deadlock was overcome only in the early 1990s. The fall of the Iron Curtain was followed by German unification, a final settling of the border question—and an explosion in asylum applications (many from Yugoslavia), reaching 438,000 in 1992. Germany's processing machinery was overwhelmed, and in Hamburg there were literally accommodation centres

floating on the Elbe. At the same time, a series of brutal attacks on asylum seekers and other foreigners horrified Germans, and created unwarranted fears of a return to the violence and instability of the Weimar period.

The CDU/CSU (especially the latter) wanted to restrict asylum; the FDP, SPD, Greens (and a few CDU members) wanted to reform citizenship. As asylum was a constitutional right, cross-party agreement was needed to make any change in the law. The left agreed to restrictive asylum measures in return for more liberal citizenship provisions. After reforms in 1990 and 1993 failed to increase substantially Germany's naturalisation rate, the left turned to support for dual citizenship. After coming to power in 1998, the SPD–Green administration proposed a highly liberal nationality law including full acceptance of dual citizenship.

The CSU, however, now saw its chance, and it spearheaded a campaign against dual citizenship that helped to tear the heart out of the Schröder government's nationality reform. The campaign garnered something like 5 million signatures, and helped bring the CDU to power in 'Red Hessen', thus robbing Schröder of a majority in the upper house of parliament. Although its tone has moderated somewhat lately, the CSU remains a significant impediment to a reformed nationality law and immigration policy. It is the first voice raised to warn of the dangers of multiculturalism, or to seize on some especially heinous crime committed by a foreigner resident in Germany.

In sum, by 1980, the labour shortages of the 1950s and 1960s had led—through guest-worker schemes and/or colonial migration and citizenship regimes—to a core of non-white settlement in Europe. Family reunification and higher birth rates locked this population in and expanded upon it, and the result in Europe is a non-white citizenry/permanently resident population of some 10 per cent. In Britain, France and Germany alike, immigration was transformed from a non-issue or a local matter to a national issue, often when an individual politician or party sought to make it one. In the UK, immigration occurred through the mechanism of citizenship; in France and especially Germany, the politics of immigration became bound up with the politics of citizenship. Finally, in all three countries, immigration occurred against the wishes of the public. All hard measures to foster immigration, and quite a few soft ones, have attracted majority opposition.⁴

Permanent migration and public opinion

In this abbreviated history lie a number of observations relevant to immigration. The first is that temporary immigration will almost assuredly become permanent. This is as true for asylum seekers as it is for 'guest workers'. Politicians should not—as they have at times in all three countries examined here—give the impression that immigration can be turned on and off like a tap, or that migrants will merely resolve labour shortages or do jobs that Europeans do not want to do before going quietly on their way. When we ask for hands, to paraphrase Max Frisch, we get people.

As immigration tends to be permanent, reactions to it must be managed. The default position of public opinion across Europe, and indeed across the West, is anti-immigrant. This opposition is at times rooted in ignorance, prejudice and hysteria; at others, it reflects a more reasonable concern that newcomers will alter the culture of local communities. In both cases, politicians need to recognise and address public fears. If they give the impression—as some pro-migrant academics are wont to do—that all fears of immigration are founded in racism, then the argumentative ground will only be vacated to the benefit of the far right.

At the same time, politicians must be willing to lead public opinion. European publics can at times be persuaded to support immigration, but it requires exceptional events (Kosovan refugees fleeing soldiers burning their houses) or exceptional actions (Edward Heath taking a principled stand in favour of the admission of Ugandan Asians in 1972). If politicians of any party play to anti-immigrant sentiment, then there is little hope of turning European publics towards immigration. The history of immigration to the UK makes it clear that public suspicion can quickly be transformed into loud, ugly opposition if a politician or party lends its support. This is true everywhere in Europe; in the UK, there is the added difficulty of the gutter press, which compares immigrants in generous moments with thieves, in less generous ones with sewage.

Finally, if anti-immigration sentiment is to be countered or at least controlled, politicians must start by stopping: they must end their habit of making promises they cannot keep. When Tony Blair or Jack Straw claims that their government will deport 30,000 failed asylum seekers, they raise expectations that they know—or should know—will be disappointed. If politicians can stop playing to prejudice, they can then take the next step: outlining to the public the case in favour of migration. As the history of the integration of Europe (though not in the UK) shows, governments willing to argue their case can turn sceptical public opinion around, or at least persuade it to give the government the benefit of the doubt.

The integration of Europe's ethnic minorities

As permanent migration to Europe was unexpected and unwanted, integration policies developed belatedly and inadequately. The UK adopted anti-discrimination legislation as early as 1965, but its aims were purely 'negative'—keeping first public then private bodies from discriminating in employment, housing and services. It did little positively to promote the integration of new migrants. The Netherlands, which has the closest thing in Europe to an integration policy, adopted it only in 1981; in France and Germany, integration measures are piecemeal and often left to localities and/or intermediate institutions (such as unions and churches).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the integration of Europe's ethnic minorities has proceeded in a halting and unsatisfactory manner. Migrants and their

descendants are poorly represented in national parliaments; they suffer from disproportionately high levels of unemployment; and they thus draw disproportionately on welfare services. The latter points admit of several exceptions (such as the Indian community in the United Kingdom), but there is nonetheless worrying evidence of a racialisation of unemployment across Europe.

In the United Kingdom, the employment rate among whites of working age is 75.1 per cent; the average for black and Asian people is 57 per cent (1998 figures). Within this second category, the rates for Pakistanis and Bangladeshi Britons were 35 per cent and 41 per cent respectively. On a positive note, the average hourly earnings of Indian men and white men in 1988/9 were almost identical (£9.34 for Indian men, £9.29 for white men); they were £1 lower for black men and £1.50 lower for Bangladeshi and Pakistani men.

In Germany, the picture is equally bleak. In the year 2000, the unemployment rate among foreigners, at 16.4 per cent, was double that of the national population at 8.8 per cent.⁵ Low educational levels and a poor grasp of German are contributing factors. Looking at a particular severe case, a study of the Berlin district of Wedding (which contains a large foreign population) showed that 75 per cent of the children required additional German-language instruction to compete at a primary level, and 40 per cent needed intensive German-language lessons. While many German students were found in the first groups, foreign children dominated the latter. In France, a strong aversion (based on the Vichy experience) against ethnic monitoring makes it extremely difficult to know with certainty, but anecdotal evidence from Paris's northern suburbs and the south of the country suggests a much higher unemployment rate among France's North African communities.

These unemployment levels exist among communities that have lived in Europe for some time. The chances that more recent migrants, including refugees, will integrate into the labour market remain lower still. In part (but only in part) because European policy-makers restrict asylum seekers' access to the labour market, the costs of their housing and support fall almost entirely to the taxpayer. Figures are disputed, but it is estimated that in the United Kingdom alone, asylum-seeker support in 2000 cost £835 million, or £34 per UK household.⁶ Once processing is added, the total bill comes to almost £2 billion per annum.⁷ Although most studies confirm that migrants make a net economic contribution to the economy, these figures are worrisome.

Europe's experience with immigration has been an unhappy one in part because the entry of immigrants was, until the 1970s, largely market determined. The state's role has been limited to (often heavy-handed) control, largely negative forms of integration policy (anti-discrimination legislation in France, the UK and the Netherlands),⁸ and mass legalisation programmes (Italy). The result was that the market chose low-skilled immigrants who found themselves disproportionately penalised by the restructuring of the

European economy after the oil crises of the 1970s. Migration patterns in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s make it clear that immigration policy needs to ensure a greater integration of future immigration streams and domestic labour markets.

Priority for skilled workers

Part of this effort would involve placing an emphasis on skilled migration, and both Germany and the UK have taken steps in this direction. Britain has adopted a more liberal attitude to work permits for the high-skilled, and policy-makers are debating (though they have been debating for some time) a complete overhaul of the 1971 immigration legislation. Germany in 2000 launched a 'green card' programme for 20,000 high-skilled workers, and an ambitious immigration law fell in late 2002 for procedural reasons.

When privileging skilled immigrants, governments should not—as they have done in the past—place the emphasis on matching particular jobs with particular people. They should rather ensure that workers have the skills that make them flexible and adaptable, so that they may find other work if economic change eliminates the jobs for which they came. The higher ethnic minority unemployment rate in France, Germany and Britain in part reflects the fact that these people arrived to fill particular positions in the early postwar years but were unable to cope with the economic restructuring that followed the oil shocks.

Europe should also—and Germany is particularly guilty in this respect—adopt a more liberal attitude towards foreign higher education qualifications. A trip through migrant communities in London, Frankfurt or Paris will find trained doctors driving buses and engineers sweeping floors. This sort of brain waste is both demoralising for the individuals themselves and masochistic for the European economy. There are no doubt gaps between European degrees and (some) non-European ones, but to allow the professions to use a white-collar version of the closed shop to lock out fully trained foreigners is in no one's interest.

As part of this emphasis on skilled migration, Europe should open the immigration door fully to the developed world. Nothing more than a misguided liberal sentimentality justifies the claim that a young American accountant seeking to work in London, or a Québécois journalist with an eye on a career in Paris, presents the same immigration problem as an impoverished peasant from Vietnam or an unskilled worker from Russia. Yet such a claim underpins all European immigration regimes.

Language acquisition

A related policy shift would involve a clearer emphasis on language and language acquisition. Evidence from all countries of immigration makes it

clear that mastery of the national language(s) is fundamental to economic success, especially in the service sector. European policy-makers must ensure that new migrants have or can quickly acquire it.

There are several ways to do this. In the case of family reunification, policy-makers should encourage new migrants to bring their spouses and children and to integrate their children into local schools as quickly as possible, as young children have the greatest hope of becoming bilingual. They should thus replace work permits with immigration schemes for long-term settlement, pure and simple. If migrants are unsure whether they will be able to remain after four or five years (which is now the case in Germany and Britain), they will be more reluctant to bring spouses and children and more tempted to place the latter in international schools.

In every case, all efforts should be directed at ensuring that migrant children master the language quickly and succeed in school. This would involve both positive measures (providing easy access to language training) and negative ones (preventing an excessively high concentration of non-native language speakers in particular schools). European policy-makers should above all avoid the madness—supported in the past by some German *Länder*—of allowing or encouraging migrant children to be educated in their native language. Even bilingual education, depending on what is meant by this term, should be viewed with suspicion.

Asylum

Following labour migration and family migration, the third link in the migration chain is composed of asylum seekers. For much of the postwar period, asylum was a Cold War sideshow. Applications were low, and the majority of the world's refugees came from the Soviet Union and eastern Europe. Accepting rare large-scale outflows (such as from Hungary in 1956) and the occasional Soviet ballet dancer allowed the West to assert, without much financial cost, its moral superiority.

From 1980, numbers began to increase—they passed the 100,000 mark in West Germany in that year—and after 1989 they exploded. Violent conflict, falling transportation costs and the fall of the Berlin Wall all made travel to Europe more attractive and easier. The result was a sharp increase in asylum applications. Between 1989 and 1992 total applications in Europe more than doubled, from 320,000 to 695,000, declining to a still-high 455,000 by the end of the decade. In 1992, almost two-thirds of all applications in Europe were lodged in Germany, which received a still unmatched record of 438,000. The UK, by contrast, in that year received 32,000. By the end of the decade, the UK had overtaken Germany as a destination country, receiving some 100,000 applications.⁹

I shall leave the future of asylum policy to other essays in this volume, but it is worth making one comment on the evolution of asylum policy since 1980. In the past two decades, EC/EU member states and the Community/Union

itself have constructed every barrier to asylum consistent with their obligations under the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the status of refugees (and some that are probably not). Yet, numbers to Europe remain, in most EU countries, at intolerably high levels. At the same time, only the most resourceful—generally the young and male—can make it to Europe’s shores, and they are by definition not always the most deserving. The vast majority of the world’s refugees are in the South, rotting in refugee camps or suffering internal displacement.

In a shrill and caricature-ridden debate, asylum seekers are seen as either genuine or ‘bogus’. Yet there is no clear distinction between desiring freedom and desiring material security. Asylum seekers coming to Europe want a better life, to use an American phrase, but they come in the main, as Jeff Crisp describes elsewhere in this volume, from lands afflicted by political instability and violence. They are fleeing death and destruction and seeking a land of stability and prosperity.

At the same time, postwar and more recent history suggests that the majority of asylum seekers—50–70 per cent—will be denied refugee status but remain in Europe. As they cannot prove an individual well-founded fear of persecution by the state (in France and Germany) and/or by a non-state actor (in the UK), the majority will see their applications turned down. Because deportation is an ineffective tool of immigration control, the majority will nevertheless stay.¹⁰

Rather than perpetuating a second postwar myth—that asylum seekers, like guest workers before them, will eventually go home—governments should recast policy to accept and take advantage of this permanent migration. Above all, they should seek to channel asylum seekers into the labour market through a mix of carrots (language training, job placement) and sticks (tight controls on entry, and limits on access to welfare).¹¹

Conclusion

Three steps in a historical migration chain have brought us to where we are today: the arrival of guest-worker/colonial migrants; the arrival of their families; and the post-1980 (and especially post-1989) surge in asylum seekers. European publics did not want immigration at all; European policy-makers did not expect it to be permanent; and the policies developed to manage it have been reactive and, in terms of integration, less than entirely successful.

This would be disconcerting in itself, but it is doubly so because, as Demetrios Papademetriou explains in this volume, Europe needs immigrants. Whereas the United States has a birth rate at replacement levels (2.2 per cent), Britain, France, Italy, Germany and Spain all have birth rates below the replacement rate and, all things being equal, face an ageing population and probable population decline over the next fifty years. The problem is especially severe in Spain, Italy and Germany (in that order).

In 2000, the UN's Population Division released a report entitled 'Replacement Migration: Is it a Solution to Declining and Ageing Populations?'¹² It provided estimates, based on different scenarios, of how much migration would be required in certain countries to maintain the overall population and its working-age component. To retain its current population of 82 million by the middle of the century, Germany would need to accept 17.8 million net migrants, or 324,000 per year. To maintain the current size of its working-age population, it would need many more: 6,000 migrants per one million inhabitants per year, or approximately 480,000. The latter figures, and possibly the former, are beyond what Germany could absorb. Immigration is thus only a partial solution to the demographic problem, and it will have to be accompanied by an increase in the retirement age and measures to ensure, outside Scandinavia, a higher female employment rate. A partial solution is nonetheless immensely preferable to none at all.

Europe's emergence as a multicultural continent was unforeseen and largely unwanted. It has given Europe's capitals and other large cities an added international flair, and it has undoubtedly enriched European life. There are also many Europeans who appreciate and defend multicultural Europe, though too many of them live in west London or north Oxford rather than the eastern neighbourhoods of either city.

At the same time, however, immigration policy has been poorly thought out, has served short-term economic interests, and has failed to ensure sufficient life-chances for first- and often second- or third-generation migrants. This is regrettable in itself, but it bodes extremely ill in the context of Europe's demographic development. In a post-9/11 world, there is much that stands in the way of a rational policy. Justifiable fears about security, and genuinely held but unjustifiable fears about Muslim migrants' capacity to integrate, may tempt policy-makers into silence or, worse still, anti-immigration rhetoric. Either step is a great mistake. Europe needs immigrants, and the emigration pressures emanating from a poor and overpopulated South—manifested already in asylum applications—mean that it will in all likelihood get them. Europe must develop—collectively if it can, nationally if it must—a proactive, managed immigration policy.

Notes

- 1 See Randall Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, ch. 2.
- 2 See Christian Joppke, 'Why Liberal States Accept Unwanted Immigration', *World Politics*, vol. 50, 1998, pp. 266–93.
- 3 Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain*, ch. 3.
- 4 On this, see J. Simon and L. Lynch, 'A Comparative Assessment of Public Opinion toward Immigration and Immigration Policies', *International Migration Review*, vol. 30, no. 2, 1999, pp. 455–67. Even in the United States, only twice in its history has a majority of the public supported more immigration. See Phillip Martin, 'The

- Impacts of Immigration on Receiving Countries', in E. Uçarer and D. Puchala, eds, *Immigration into Western Societies*, London, Pinter, 1997, pp. 17–27 at p. 22.
- 5 R. Süßmuth (chair), *Zuwanderung gestalten, Integration fördern: Bericht der Unabhängigen Kommission Zuwanderung*, Berlin, Ministry of the Interior, 2001, p. 42.
 - 6 http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/1261116.stm (accessed 13 Aug. 2002).
 - 7 <http://society.guardian.co.uk/asylumseekers/story/0,7991,727599,00.html> (accessed 13 Aug. 2002).
 - 8 See Erik Bleich, *Race Politics in Britain and France*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003.
 - 9 Randall Hansen, 'Commentary', in Wayne A. Cornelius, Philip L. Martin and James F. Hollifield, eds, *Controlling Immigration: A Global Perspective*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2002.
 - 10 In the latter case, mainly because of limits on deportation. See Matthew J. Gibney and Randall Hansen, <http://www.unhcr.org/> (accessed 20 Feb. 2003).
 - 11 On the latter, see Matthew J. Gibney and Randall Hansen, 'Asylum Policy in the West: Past Trends and Future Possibilities', <http://www.wider.unu.edu/conference/conference-2002-3/conference2002-3.htm>.
 - 12 United Nations Population Division, 'Replacement Migration: Is it a Solution to Declining and Ageing Populations?', March 2000, on website: <http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/migration/migration.htm> (accessed 1 June 2002).