The End of Tolerance: Racism in 21st Century Britain

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For all the time that politicians, columnists and activists spend discussing it, racism is seldom defined with any precision or accuracy, or indeed in any way that might inculcate an awareness of its complex, multiple nature and origins. It's most often understood simply (and yet very specifically) as discrimination, by an individual, on the basis of another individual's skin colour. Sir William Macpherson's report into 'matters arising' from the murder of Stephen Lawrence asserted that this discrimination may be practised, fostered or encouraged, even unwittingly, by institutions as well as individuals; a fairly mild, reasonably obvious statement, which nonetheless seemed to create consternation at the time.[1]

But Macpherson's slight extension of racism's mode of operation (refuted, at any rate, soon afterwards by the government who caused it to be written[2]) brings us no closer to describing what racism actually is, if indeed it's more than just simple discrimination. Racism can be construed as an *effect*, arising from a broad range of conditions of disparity: historical, economic, ideological, and crudely political. In this interpretation, it is the *expression* of all of these conditions, and as such it is ultimately symptomatic of the inequalities inherent in what we now call 'the global order'. But racism can simultaneously be understood to lie within the originary inequality itself, to be implicated at the cause, in the rationale lying behind policy and law; so it is in its nature cyclical – as a system of belief, a way of thinking difference, it is implicit in the basic legal and social structure of our modern state, and, expressed as a set of behaviours, it is then perpetuated by this structure.

One of the most persuasive and accessible historians of the roots and forms of racism, Paul Gilroy, emphasises what he terms 'racialisation', the ideological and historical processes by which thinking in terms of race became first possible, then predominant, and finally unavoidable.[3] Gilroy details a history of 'racialised thinking', the positing of a type of ineluctable difference determined by biological categories of race. The basis of racism lies in this troubled history of the thinking of the concept of race itself. But this thinking is not static, and nor are the social contexts upon which it is brought to bear; so biological race is inflected now as cultural or ethnic difference, and is no less irreducible. As Kundnani points out,

"… race is a socially constructed concept that is both wider in its range and more profoundly rooted in the history of the nation than is commonly supposed. Moreover, the restriction of the concept of racism to 'colour' difference has concealed the full range of ways in which racism has operated in Britain, including against Jews, Gypsies and the Irish."[4]
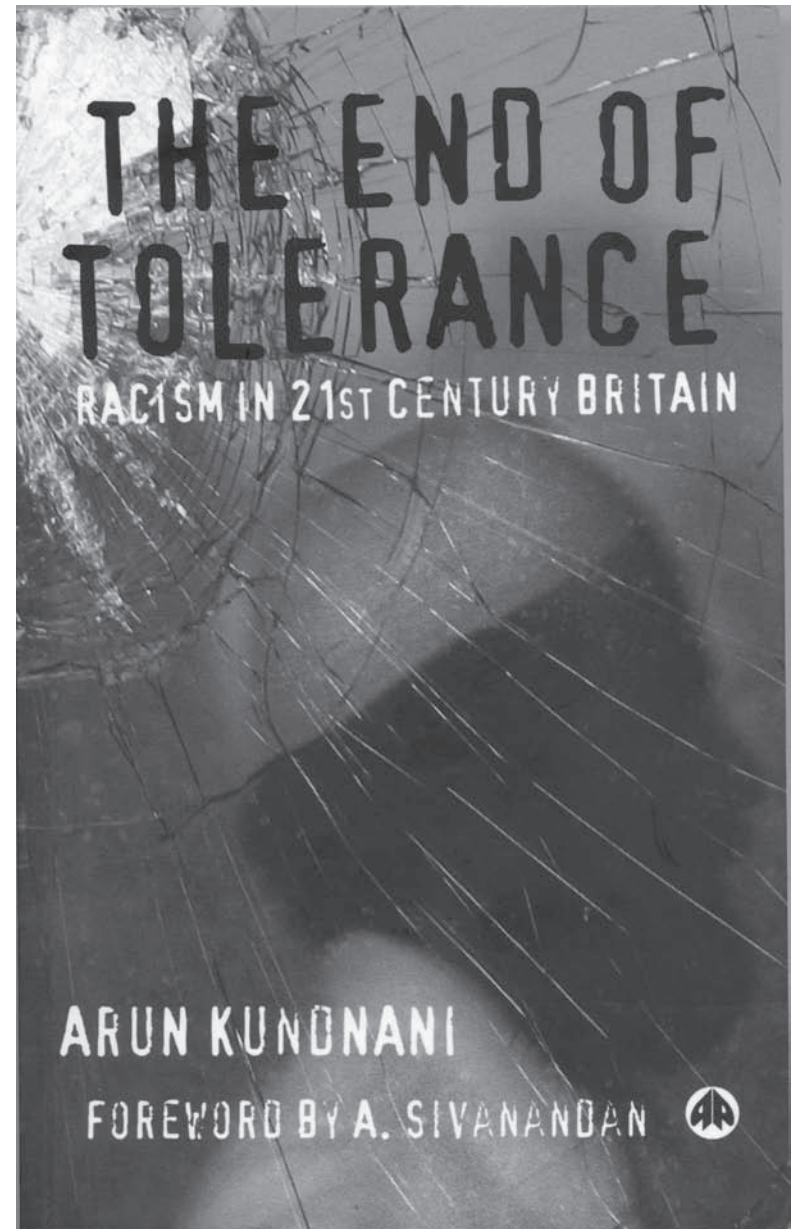
This is extremely pertinent to any current discussion of racism, which is now, in Britain as elsewhere, overwhelmingly directed against Muslims. Columnists and commentators of many political persuasions pronounce that anti-Muslim sentiment is not racism at all, since Islam is a religion, not a race; such argument betrays not only an ignorance of the workings, history and logic of racism, contemporary or otherwise, but also an adherence to a rather literal and outdated concept of 'race'. As a legitimation of discrimination in law and vilification in society, anti-Muslim racism is every bit as real as the anti-Semitic racism that was propagated so blithely by the British rightwing press of the 1930s.

In order to substantiate this already complex definition of racism, one must also account for the way in which relations of power are implicated in racism. Racism (as effect) is the public enactment of a prior disparity of power between one group and another; indeed, far from being 'anti-social', racism is a violent demonstration that this disparity has already been sanctioned, historically, within society and the state.[5] Most often, a group that experiences racism has received its identification, its definition as a coherent group, from the powerful group (it has been 'overdetermined from without'), in order that it can be 'acted upon'. (And, as Kundnani demonstrates, this identification can change to suit current policy: in the late 1990s, second- and third-generation British Pakistanis found that they had ceased to be 'Asian' and had become 'Muslims'.) But racism is not merely the expression of this power relationship (calling someone a 'black bastard'); for the power relationship is itself shaped and defined *by racism*. This is why, within a British context, anti-white feeling amongst, say, black or Asian groups cannot be called 'black on white racism': because the unequal relationship that defines racism is entirely absent in this situation.[6]

It might appear that *The End of Tolerance* is about far more than just racism; but then, racism itself is about far more than 'just racism'. The task that Kundnani sets himself is to guide us through the many contributory factors to 21st-century British racism, to show how old arguments are given new articulation, how, in the process, racism becomes more, not less institutionalised, its causes becoming more tortuously misrepresented, and how, as a consequence, its comprehension grows more difficult. Most significantly, and most damningly, he examines rigorously the contribution made by government. Whilst any citizen of average intelligence is aware of the essential duplicity of their government, it is nevertheless extremely disturbing to realise, as one reads the book, the extent to which government action and policy – sometimes knowingly pernicious, sometimes merely feckless and populist – has been the single most active agent in the promulgation of a new racism. To this end, he describes in turn the details and effects of New Labour's radical restructuring of immigration, asylum and nationality law; its reckless and calamitous foreign policy (both before and after the 11th of September 2001); its repressive and cavalier instincts in criminal justice; its contempt for international conventions and doctrines of universal human rights; its subservience to globalised corporate interests very often in direct conflict with the interests of British citizens; and its framing of, and pandering to, a populist agenda around issues of cultural identity, in the interests of maintaining its electoral base with white middle-class voters.

A picture emerges of policy and legislation that, accustomed as we are to viewing it always through the exigencies of the current moment, is usually only visible in fragments: the disparate statements and actions, consultation documents and acts of parliament are considered in painstaking detail, and one starts to appreciate that, incrementally, an entire regime of racist ideology has been constructed over the last decade, one which goes further in terms of law and consequence than anything enacted by the governments of Thatcher or Major (whose own more overtly racist, but, in many ways, less thoroughly invasive and far-reaching policies the Labour opposition of the time regularly spoke and voted against).

Multiculturalism

A great angst is at large in the country at present, amongst government ministers in particular, about communities (almost always Muslim) who 'refuse' to 'integrate' into British society and culture: they speak their own languages, at home and on the street; they follow an alien religion; they wilfully dress, eat and behave differently; and they live in 'no-go' areas that 'British people' (that is, white Britons) are afraid of entering. The main problem with this overall diagnosis lies not in its individual inaccuracies, but in the inference drawn: that these communities have willingly cut themselves off from the 'shared values' of society, that they are an alien and potentially hostile presence living amongst the host community (a phrase which carries obvious and intentional connotations of parasitism), and that we should not be expected to tolerate this any longer, as we have done, so blindly, for so many decades. After all (it is argued) it is precisely this toleration, under the guise of multiculturalism, which brought us to this situation in the first place.

There are a great many misrepresentations in this set of attitudes. Small distortions are piled upon greater falsifications to create a thoroughly mendacious, thoroughly racist picture of minority communities in Britain, and their situations and concerns. The notion that multiculturalism 'allowed' communities to 'self-segregate', by encouraging the expression of their culture on an equal footing, is one of a series of reversals of

cause and effect that render the argument fairly worthless. As Kundnani writes,

"… the policies that were implemented in the 1980s in the name of multiculturalism were a mode of control rather than a line of defence. Multiculturalism in this sense referred to a set of policies directed towards taking African-Caribbean and Asian cultures off the streets – where they had been politicised and turned into rebellions against the state – and putting them in the council chamber, in the classroom and on television, where they could be institutionalised, managed and commodified. Black culture was turned from a living movement into an object of passive contemplation, something to be 'celebrated' rather than acted upon. The method for achieving this was the separation of different ethnic groups into distinct cultural blocs, to be managed by a new cadre of ethnically defined 'community leaders', and the rethinking of race relations in terms of a view of cultural identity that was rigid, closed and almost biological…"[7]

By refocusing communities on a politics of competitive recognition, multiculturalism had the desired effect of fragmenting a broad-based movement that had, by the time of the Brixton, Handsworth and Toxteth riots of 1981, become a dangerous challenge to state authority. "The often conservative community leaderships tried to insulate their clans from the wider world, not… to strengthen group identity… but rather to protect the structures on which their power depended. Ethnic identity became an escape from a racist society rather than the basis for a challenge to it."[8]

So a partial segregation of minority communities, who were kept at arm's length both from the 'centre' and from one another, was one of the consequences of multiculturalism[9]; this was exacerbated, particularly in northern England, by a combination of rapid industrial decline and openly discriminatory housing policies, which led to workers and families who had previously been side by side in the same mills, factories and streets gradually being screened out to separate parts of town. Over time, in towns like Oldham or Bradford, this division became entrenched and self-perpetuating; damp, cramped ghettoes, centred around the Victorian back-to-backs vacated by rehoused white families, at least offered some safety for Asians who didn't wish to risk racist attacks on the overwhelmingly white estates. The 1988 Education Act and its doctrine of parental choice further encouraged segregation; infamously, a year earlier, parents in Dewsbury had set up their own 'white' school in a room above a pub, on the grounds that their local school had too many Asian students.

This portrayal of two decades of managed, multifaceted discrimination as *self*-segregation, a *refusal* to integrate, and as something which is therefore the fault of the communities in question, is typical of the insidious nature of contemporary racism. Its apparently 'commonsensical' explanation of the segregation that clearly exists is also difficult to counter. Through careful, detailed argument, Kundnani turns the proposition on its head: it was neither state pandering to cultural difference, nor unwillingness to mix, that led to our segregated cities and society; rather, it was years of conscious, racist manipulation and exclusion of communities, conducted for short-term political advantage.

The demand now made of these communities is that they surrender their obstinate difference and declare their allegiance to as-yet-undefined 'British values' (as far as they can be identified, these seem, paradoxically, to be the very 'values' attacked in successive government legislation over the last decade). That the call for integration must simultaneously be accompanied by an agonised quest to invent a 'British' identity into which to integrate is, in the circumstances, only mildly amusing. The current focus on Muslim communities' non-integration is of course sharpened by the supposed threat they pose – a threat upon which there seems to be consensus across the political spectrum. Kundnani develops this: "What had before been interpreted as a problem of Asians living in separate *cultures* has, since 9/11, been taken to be a problem of Muslims living by separate *values*."[10]

If the very existence of cultural diversity within the nation has now come to be perceived as a threat, what hope is there for anti-racism? The type of pluralist solidarity that Kundnani calmly advocates now seems tantamount, in the state's terms, to a call for bloody racial rioting on the streets of Britain. Clearly, the potential for collective action is severely restricted by the demonisation and suspicion directed at British Muslims (who can nowadays only be framed in a positive manner when they are supporting spurious government-authored definitions of 'moderate Islam', and thus attacking the externally perceived and misrepresented ills of their community). Kundnani notes that, today, " 'anti-racism' is reduced to a conflict-management exercise carried out by the state, which does not grasp the underlying causes of racism and leaves existing power relationships in place."[11] One could comment that the state grasps the underlying causes of racism only too well.

The distorted debate over integration has a corollary, which has also been discussed with tedious regularity lately, the issue of religious tolerance. Just as the state now depicts Islam as uniquely anti-democratic, violent and authoritarian, and therefore the 'enemy within' British society, so a raft of 'secularists' of various persuasions argue that it is directly opposed to the very Enlightenment values that define and guarantee the rights and freedoms that we in the West cherish. For both parties, the fact that the men who bombed London on the 7th of July 2005 were born and raised in this country adds to the apparent urgency of delivering this challenge to Islam. Notwithstanding the fact that these defenders of 'the Enlightenment' rarely acknowledge the limits of their own positivistic world view (Theodor Adorno was not the only Western citizen to suppose that imperialism, totalitarianism and the gas chambers were a culmination of scientific rationalism, rather than its monstrous, aberrant deviation), the broader question that this raises concerns the nature of solidarity. We find ourselves in a pale re-enactment of the political territory of the 1960s and '70s, when the British Left was perfectly happy to welcome immigrant communities under its umbrella, so long as their 'sectional', identitarian demands could be made subservient to the movement's programmatic 'universalism'.

For 'integrationist feminists' as Kundnani calls them, denouncing practices such as wearing the veil, forced marriage and 'honour killing' (usually the only examples of the patriarchal nature of Islamic culture that these commentators can cite, because they are the most visible to the outsider, and so are disproportionately reported in the media), "combating violence against Muslim women is seen as fighting against a culture, while combating violence against white women is seen as a fight for rights".[12] Kundnani points out that denunciation of inequality in Muslim communities almost never amounts to actual solidarity with women's groups within those communities. And when the government chose to target forced marriage, instead of working with Muslim women, "solutions were sought in tightening up immigration controls; those trying to escape abusive marriages faced the threat of deportation rather than support and protection".[13]

"Renunciation of one's identity becomes a prerequisite for emancipation, and a new kind of superiority is entrenched in the name of feminism. State coercion is then justified as a possible means for bringing about this "emancipation"… Behind this "integrationist feminism" lies the tendency to regard the West as the sole bearer of enlightened progress and the European Enlightenment, not as one particular expression of universal values, but as the only possible expression for all time."[14]

Kundnani argues, fairly vaguely at times, it must be said, for a pluralist tolerance which can make this kind of 'cultural supremacy' obsolete, but the question that remains unanswered is whether one *can* voice disapproval of, or disagreement with, Islamic religious culture without automatically being co-opted into a mainstream 'secularist Enlightenment' agenda. The answer may lie in a reappraisal of the question; or rather, in stating that another question might be both more pressing and more revealing. Why is it that a defence of the 'progressive' gains of bourgeois Western society necessarily involves an attack, specifically and

most immediately, on Islam, rather than on any of the reactionary tendencies in our own culture? It often appears that much of this attention is the result of ignorance and laziness, an uncritical rush to 'comment' on whatever appears to be most topical. Furthermore, it's at least arguable that to set out one's secularist or socialist argument solely in reference to the predominant, stereotypical portrayal of the repressive, alien nature of Islam is itself reactionary: it further alienates the very individuals struggling to build progressive politics from the basis of their membership of the Muslim community. This isn't in any way a renunciation of the responsibility to criticise or to analyse, for fear of somehow causing offence. It's simply a caution that anti-racism – the central, most fundamental element of any progressive politics – must be based on solidarity, and that solidarity requires a relationship between equals.

"In a context in which anti-Muslim racism is institutionalised by the 'war on terror', it is natural and necessary that Muslims organise *as Muslims* in fighting the specific racism they face. Confronted by an intensely anti-Muslim political culture, Muslims cannot be expected to leave their religious identity behind when they enter the public sphere. To do so would only reinforce the mistaken belief that there is an incompatibility between Islam and democracy."[15]

Globalisation

British racism cannot be understood only in the context of conditions within Britain, and the larger part of Kundnani's book sets about putting these conditions in the setting of the global factors that nourish racism everywhere. Ultimately, his plea is for a particular form of 'global citizenship', as the only ethical response to the structural inequalities of a world where corporations move capital unimpeded across borders and between territories, while nation states police the movement of people across the same borders.

Throughout, Kundnani combines historical overview with analysis of contemporary situations. So, for example, accounts of postwar immigration from the Commonwealth, the origins of International Monetary Fund (IMF) 'structural adjustment' programmes in the Third World, and historical conflicts in Sri Lanka and Afghanistan give important context to discussions of the development of present-day asylum and immigration law and foreign policy priorities. This gives Kundnani's argument depth and authority, even if it can sometimes make the forces he describes seem depressingly unassailable. Many contemporary polemics fail adequately to historicise the mysterious and vaguely-defined phenomena that comprise globalisation; Kundnani's measured descriptions of its origins and evolution make his work a valuable corrective. He describes the way in which IMF and World Bank debt 'restructuring' packages have repeatedly impoverished debtor nations and helped to breed repressive regimes, friendly to neo-colonial political and business interests, from Suharto in Indonesia, to Pinochet in Chile, Moi in Kenya and Abacha in Nigeria. He details how the US and UK over decades selectively sponsored other brutal administrations in Africa and the Middle East for the purposes of immediate regional leverage, only to turn away refugees subsequently displaced by conflict in those states. And through all such considerations he underlines the convergence of Western corporate and political interests at the global level.

This is most clearly the case in chapters on immigration, asylum and the 'market-state'. Analysing the four major pieces of immigration legislation put onto the statute books by New Labour, Kundnani demonstrates how the treatment of refugees has deteriorated rapidly in ten years.[16] During this decade, successive Home Secretaries have striven for two ends. Firstly, they have attempted to make conditions here so unattractive to potential refugees that they are deterred from attempting to come. Presumably, this is in large measure a populist approach, since the Home Office's own research accepts that those fleeing their homes halfway round the world have very little knowledge of provision available here, and choose a destination based instead on existing or previous connections with a country, and

perceptions of it as safe.[17] Under Section 62 of the 2002 Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act, the Home Secretary has the power arbitrarily to detain an asylum seeker until the settlement of their case (this is euphemistically referred to as the 'fast-track procedure'); an enlargement of the Home Office's estate of detention centres was announced in May 2008. At any time, around two-thirds of those in detention under Immigration Act powers are asylum seekers, and roughly five per cent of all asylum seekers are in detention centres.[18] Statistics do not even exist for the numbers kept in prisons or police cells.

Secondly, entry into the UK for those without papers has been made much more difficult. Former Home Secretary Jack Straw, quoted by Kundnani, comments that the Geneva Convention "gives us the obligation to consider any claims made within our territory… but no obligation to facilitate the arrival on our territory of those who wish to make a claim".[19] Nearly all refugees will only be able to have their case considered once they have arrived in the UK. "And the only way they can do that is by some form of clandestine entry into the country: either stowing away in a lorry or boat, clambering on the undercarriage of a moving Channel Tunnel train or using forged documents."[20] And whilst, in theory, Article 31 of the Geneva Convention recognises that illegal entry of a country is sometimes necessary for persons escaping persecution, the government continues to criminalise those who are forced to use people traffickers to get to the UK. Furthermore, "those asylum seekers who do travel to the UK legally with a valid passport are told by the Home Office that they could not be a genuine refugee, on the assumption that the authorities in the home country would refuse to allow a genuine dissident to obtain one."[21] Roughly two-thirds of all asylum applications are refused, even in many cases where the applicants have independently verified proof of torture. Out of 380 decisions made on applications by Iraqis in the first quarter of 2008, 280 were refusals.[22]

If the government's approach to asylum has the effect of giving trade to the people traffickers, so too does the market's continued demand for low-paid, unprotected labour; many failed asylum seekers, driven into destitution by the summary withdrawal of support and unable to return home, find themselves working illegally, with no rights and no legal protections. Others come expressly to work for 'gang bosses' in the agricultural industries, and find that after 'deductions' for accommodation and transport to work every day, they have next to nothing to live on (not that there is much living to be done after an 18-hour day picking crops). The new five-tier, points-based 'managed migration' system is supposed to streamline entry into the UK for those coming to work, but it institutes a 'guest-worker' system under which low-skilled workers will have limited or no access to employment protection during their stay in the country, and on termination of their contract will have no right to remain. Migrants are now valued only as economic assets: there must be free movement of 'labour' – that is, of individuals as productive resources, servicing the demands of the 'flexible' marketplace wherever it may need them – but the right of individuals to live safely, free from persecution, must be restricted and rationalised as much as possible.

The effect of an asylum policy principally aimed at deterring applicants, of failed claimants becoming destitute in large numbers, and of low-paid, unprotected workers finding themselves constantly on the brink of illegality, is the effective criminalisation of large numbers of non-EU migrants. The supposed 'proud tradition' of Britain's welcome to the displaced of the world (something of a myth to begin with, as many Jews fleeing Nazi Germany or East African Asians escaping Idi Amin could testify) is reduced to a squalid, dehumanising numbers game, with the government eagerly setting itself targets for numbers it will deport by the end of the year.

The precise details of ministerial statements on the imminent existential threat posed by immigration, even those that gain some brief notoriety, have the habit of slipping from public consciousness very shortly after they've disappeared from the headlines and opinion columns. Successive acts of parliament redefine the territory until it's unclear which rights exist and which have been repealed, who is welcome and who unwelcome. What persists, what is nurtured, is a generalised, non-specific fear and paranoia. The asylum seeker, the illegal immigrant, the economic migrant, all these various 'underclasses' of non-citizen or para-citizen come to represent the same thing: a gathering, innumerable encroachment, threatening the fragile 'being' of the state. The great merit of Kundnani's work is his ability to trace the connections between the domestic contexts of racism and the many aspects that bear down on the discussion, and legislation, of immigration and asylum. Likewise, chapters linking Britain's foreign policy adventures and their aftermaths (current, recent and more distant), with the progressive withdrawal of civil rights, the extension of arbitrary executive powers to detain and deport, and the new regime of control orders and internment, illustrate the bluntly racist motivations behind an extraordinarily repressive array of measures.

Nevertheless there are problems with the book, mostly editorial in nature. Many of the book's different chapters originated as articles for *Race & Class*, of which Kundnani is editor. The original articles, closely argued, densely substantiated pieces of sociological research, could have been more extensively reworked to make them fit together better: the book's 200 pages feel longer, partly because of the book's great scope, but also because its chapters jump between complex topics fairly unpredictably. Also, because of the essentially hermetic nature of each chapter, there's a certain amount of repetition or, conversely, spreading of related information between disparate chapters. There is a certain chronology imposed on the contents, but this soon becomes lost because of the number of subjects tackled by Kundnani in his twelve chapters. Closer editorial attention might also have achieved a greater evenness of tone throughout: some chapters begin with extensive historical or contextual notes (which in places, such as the first chapter, read like a school history textbook), and move to personalised 'case study' illustrations of the topic at hand, statistical or quantitative analysis, or passionate polemic. Kundnani is a sociologist first and foremost, and his expertise is the book's strength, but he is also a perceptive and persuasive activist-writer, and he (or his editors) perhaps should have decided who might be the book's primary audience.

There's a narrowness to his terms of reference too, no doubt due in part to his social scientist's suspicion of the 'cultural turn' in the politics of race and class. His cursory, two-page summary of everything in postcolonial theory from Stuart Hall to Homi Bhabha does him no favours (Gilroy doesn't warrant a single mention); whilst it's true that postcolonial critics challenged the 'politically black' identity of the 1970s (the discarding of which he presents as a uniquely retrograde step), just as they challenged all such overarching categorisations of identity, the solidarity of broad interests of culture, race and class that he espouses would be supported by those critics too; and 'political blackness' was already under attack, as he himself shows, from other directions. At this point his history is less than complete.

Finally, and most surprisingly, there are some basic errors in the use of statistics: in chapter 10, for example, he quotes Home Office asylum figures for the second quarter of 2006 to show the number of asylum seekers in detention, but reads the wrong column: "by June 2006, there were 2,285 being held in detention centres, despite a lower rate of asylum claims than in 1997".[23] There were indeed 2,285 people detained under Immigration Act powers as of the 24th of June 2006, but only 1,705 of these had ever sought asylum at any stage. This is a small, and perhaps quite pedantic quibble, but any text that straddles a line between pure sociology and anti-racist activism needs to be doubly sure of its numbers: it's the easiest way for an opponent to discredit the whole enterprise.

Universal rights

"… asylum seekers do not ask for British charity; they claim rights as global citizens in an age when the national sovereignty of poorer nations has been eroded. Through its part in the empire of global capitalism, Britain carries with it a profound obligation to today's migrants… It is an obligation that runs through the dirty politics of sponsoring foreign regimes that oppress their own people, in Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria and elsewhere… It runs through the wealth that Britain continues to extract from Africa and Asia… Ultimately, it is an obligation to treat today's migrants, not as scroungers or opportunists or victims of some self-created calamity of which little is known, but as global citizens. It is in the very processes of globalising capitalism, which Britain has led and profited from, that their global citizenship derives.[24]

It turned out that the moment human beings lacked their own government and had to fall back upon their human rights, no authority was left to protect them and no institution was willing to guarantee them… The conception of human rights based upon the assumed existence of a human being as such broke down at the very moment when those who professed to believe in it were for the first time confronted with people who had indeed lost all other qualities and specific relationships except that they were still human."[25]

Hannah Arendt's words of half a century ago seem to ring with a new urgency (but nothing in this discussion is really new, just endlessly revisited; the phrase 'never again' really must be the most callous irony, the rhetorical equivalent of putting one's hands over one's eyes and ears). The governments of highly-developed nations carry out foreign invasions in the name of 'humanitarian intervention' – in the name, that is, of *abstracted* 'human rights', belonging to no-one and yet *ultimately* enforceable; at the same time, they abnegate their duty to protect those made destitute and stateless by their actions, and raise the possibility of 'opting out' of the Geneva Convention on Refugees (where extra-territorial rights were defined and promised for the first time), or the European Convention on Human Rights, because they no longer feel the lavish protections they afford are 'appropriate' to our age, with its new security concerns. As Arendt so mordantly points out, one's universal rights are only an issue when it is finally impossible to protect them.

We might follow Slavoj Zizek in arguing that we must not therefore dismiss human rights as "a reified fetish", well-intended but worthless: rather, this stage of globalised neocolonial capitalism is precisely the point at which these rights can posit the political space proper, the point at which the individual subject – the refugee, the internee, the illegal worker – is able to assert their exclusion, their statelessness, their absolute repudiation, as the only meaningful point from which to assert the "universality of the social itself": and they *become* the *universal political subject*.[26] On these terms, it could not be more essential for anti-racists in Britain to build positions of solidarity with those struggling to make this most fundamental of assertions, for the sake of every subject.

Notes

1. Sir William Macpherson (1999) *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry: Report of an Inquiry* (London: The Stationery Office), <http://www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm42/4262/4262.htm>.

2. Kundnani quotes former Home Secretary David Blunkett, who in 2003 told Black and Asian Home Office workers that 'institutional racism' was 'a slogan' that 'missed the point'. Kundnani, p. 131.

3. See particularly Gilroy (1993) *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness* (London: Verso) and (2000) *Between Camps* (London: Allen Lane).

4. Kundnani, p. 15.

5. Of course, certain types of crude, overtly racist behaviour are (often somewhat belatedly and begrudgingly) outlawed by the State, but this apparent paradox simply testifies to the gulf that can exist between appearance and actuality: whilst racialised thinking underpins the workings of the State, the government can distance itself from the 'working out' of this thinking, separating cause from effect in a manner that we shall return to later.

6. As has been exhaustively argued elsewhere, white people's act of identifying themselves 'as white' is, in a curious way, an act of *dis*identification, of claiming to have no race, much in the same way as individuals often presume themselves to have no accent. See Theodore W. Allen (1994) *The Invention of the White Race: Volume One; Racial Oppression and Social Control* (London: Verso); Alastair Bonnett (2000) *White Identities: Historical and International Perspectives* (Harlow: Prentice Hall); David Roediger (1991) *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London, Verso). Also see Suzanna Chan (2005) 'Some notes on deconstructing Ireland's Whiteness: Immigrants, emigrants and the perils of jazz', *Variant 22*, available at <http://www.variant.randomstate.org/22texts/Whiteness.html>; and the journal *Race Traitor*, available at <http://racetraitor.org>.

7. Kundnani, pp. 44-45.

8. Ibid., p. 45.

9. For a further consideration of the history and problematics of multiculturalism, see Daniel Jewesbury (2006) 'Show some disrespect!' in *Mute* 2:2, available online at <http://www.metamute.org/en/show-some-disrespect>

10. Ibid., p. 127.

11. Ibid., p. 133.

12. Ibid., p. 138.

13. Ibid., p. 139.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid., pp. 185-186.

16. The four acts are, in order of implementation, the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Act 2004 and the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006. Multiple Statutory Instruments have also been passed under the terms of these acts, for example, those providing for the 'fast-track' asylum procedure and the new five-tiered points-based managed migration system.

17. See Kundnani, p. 77.

18. Home Office Research Development Statistics (2008) *Asylum Statistics: First Quarter 2008*, at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs08/asylumq108.pdf>.

19. Kundnani, p. 68.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., p. 69.

22. Home Office, op. cit.

23. Kundnani, p. 159.

24. Ibid., p. 71.

25. Hannah Arendt (1958) *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Cleveland, Ohio: Meridian Books), pp. 292-297

26. Slavoj Zizek (2005) 'Against Human Rights', in *New Left Review* no. 34, p.131. Available to download free at <http://libcom.org/library/against-human-rights-zizek>.