

National Refugee Week

15-21 June 2020



To aspire, endeavour and thrive together



**Refugee
Week**

Why?



Refugee Week started in 1998 as a direct reaction to hostility in the media and society in general towards refugees and asylum seekers. The purpose of the week is to **counter the negative climate of discrimination and racism**, defending the importance of **sanctuary** and the benefits it can bring to both refugees and host communities.

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Why?



Refugee Week takes place every year across the world in the week around World Refugee Day on 20th June. In the UK, Refugee Week is a nationwide programme of arts, cultural and educational events that **celebrate the contribution of refugees to the UK**, and encourages a **better understanding** between communities.

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What is a refugee?



A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of **persecution, war or violence**.

A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of **race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group**.

Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries.

How many refugees are there today?



41.3 million people are displaced across the world today.

67% of refugees come from **5 countries**: Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar and Somalia.

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Displacement is certainly not new



Britain has had many phases of immigration since the Roman invasion in 55BC, however, most of the settlers to Britain until the early modern era were invaders.

The Huguenots are often known as England's 'first refugees', French Protestants arriving in the late C17th fleeing religious persecution.

However, there were some groups who had already sought sanctuary in Britain before them....

A History of Refugees in Britain



Spanish soldiers executing Dutch Protestants at Haarlem, 1567.

1560-1575

Dutch Protestants fled religious persecution in the Spanish Netherlands and settled in London and east England.



A History of Refugees in Britain



Bevis Marks synagogue, **Qahal Kadosh Sha'ar ha-Shamayim**, in the City of London, the oldest synagogue in the UK in continuous use, built in 1701 and affiliated with the Spanish-Portuguese Jewish community.

1665

Jewish people were allowed to settle in England, provided that they converted to Christianity.

Those Jews who settled in England were mostly of Spanish and Portuguese origin, but living in the Netherlands. This group of refugees introduced fish and chips to the UK.



A History of Refugees in Britain



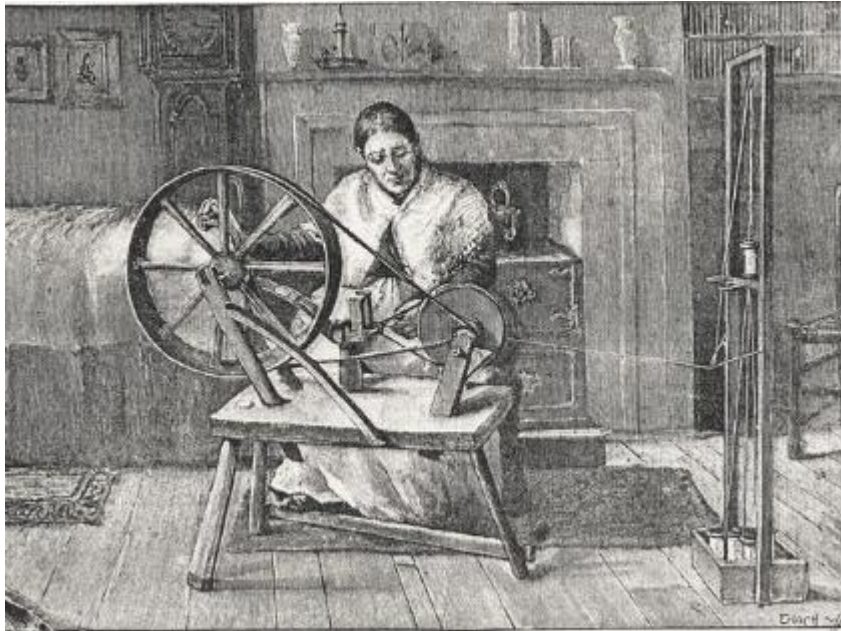
The French Huguenots arrive on the English beaches - 1685

1685-1700: The Huguenots

Around 100,000 French Protestants, known as Huguenots, fled to Britain and Ireland from the persecution of Louis XIV. They settled in London, Bristol, Canterbury, Dover, Ipswich, Exeter, Norwich, Plymouth, Rye, Southampton, Derry and Dublin. Classed as non-political immigrants, Huguenots were prohibited from inheriting landed property, subject to double taxation and extra subsidies.



A History of Refugees in Britain



Winding quills in a Spitalfields cottage

The Huguenots brought with them an organisational talent, knowledge of industrial processes, a determination to succeed in spite of being uprooted.

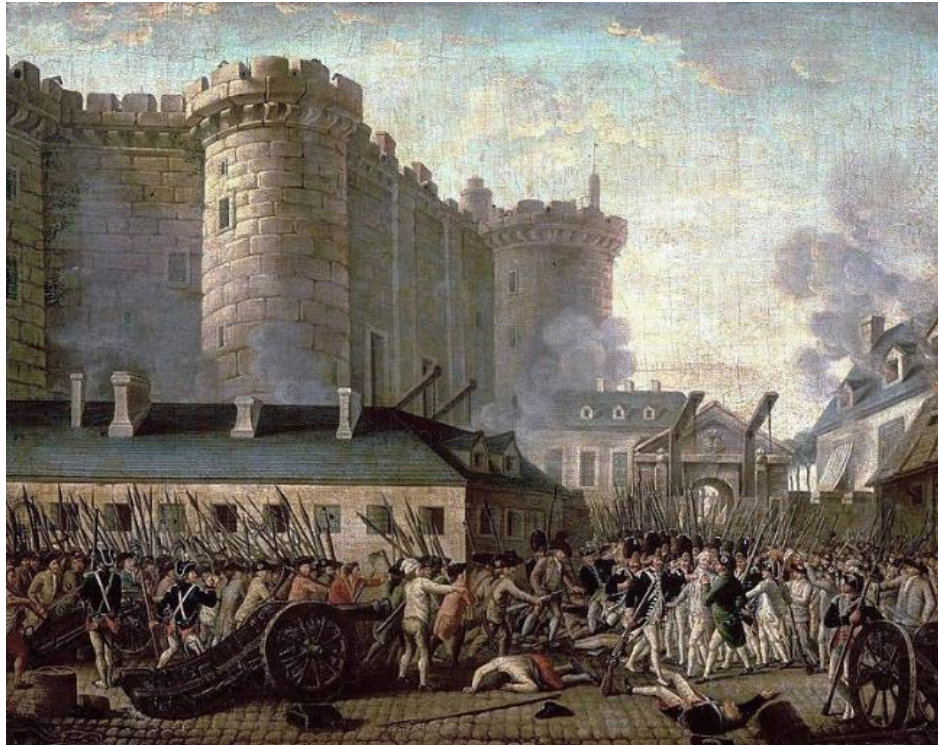
They engaged in numerous activities: the art of silk weaving, copper engraving, hat making and bleaching, dyeing and colouring. Huguenots reintroduced and developed market gardening vegetables, fruit and flowers that they supplied to London and other cities.

Their contribution to British society is still evident today. Seven of the twenty-four founders of the Bank of England were Huguenots. The first Governor of the Bank of England, Sir John Houlbon, was a son of Huguenot refugees.

David Garrick, the Shakespearean actor - who has a theatre in London named after him - and John Dolland, who improved microscope design and created Dolland and Aitchison opticians, were both descendants of Huguenots.



A History of Refugees in Britain



The storming of the Bastille, 14th July 1789

1780-1900

Roman Catholics and aristocracy fled the 1789 French Revolution and came to Britain. They were later joined by people from the French monarchy restoration movements.



A History of Refugees in Britain



1848-1880



Paris, 1848

The year of revolutions, 1848, caused royalists, socialists, republicans and liberals to seek sanctuary in the UK, fleeing from conflicts across the European mainland. Among the exiles was a prominent political dissident who fled charges of high treason in Germany, Karl Marx. Victor Hugo, a politician and political writer, best known for his inspirational work, “Les Misérables”, fled France after Napoleon III’s coup in 1851.



A History of Refugees in Britain



1880-1914:

Russian Jewish refugees During the 1880s, tens of thousands of Russian Jews fled pogroms and sought sanctuary in Britain. Jewish people also fled Poland, Romania and Galicia, part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

At the end of the nineteenth century, more than 200,000 eastern European Jews had arrived in the UK and settled in towns such as London, Leeds and Manchester. The influx sparked the first attempts by the UK to limit the ability of exiles to find sanctuary in the country.



In 1905 an Aliens Act was passed marking an end to liberal acceptance of foreigners. However, an amendment to the act excluded refugees from being refused asylum on the grounds of not being able to support themselves.



A History of Refugees in Britain



Burtons in Leeds

Jewish refugees left a legacy of economic contribution to the UK. Many became tailors or shoe-makers. Some, having personal experience of appalling employment practices and social conditions, campaigned in Britain for social justice by setting up unions and getting involved in local politics.

Sir Montague Burton (1885-1952), founder of Burtons, was one of several Russian Jewish immigrants who built enormously successful businesses from humble beginnings.



A History of Refugees in Britain



1914-1918: the First World War



Belgian refugees arriving in Folkestone in 1914

More than 250,000 Belgian refugees fled to the UK, escaping the fighting of the First World War. However, other foreigners were not treated so warmly. Under amendments to the Aliens Act, Britain interned 32,000 men for being 'enemy aliens'.



A History of Refugees in Britain



The camp in Eastleigh, near Southampton

1937: Basque refugee children

Around 4,000 Basque refugee children fleeing General Franco's fascism in the Spanish Civil War arrived in the UK. There was huge public sympathy for the children who were housed initially in a large camp near Southampton. One of the children of this group is the Conservative politician, Michael Portillo.



A History of Refugees in Britain



1933-1939: Jewish refugees

The British government was slow to respond to the persecution of Jews in Europe in the 1930s and the Second World War. Eventually, some 50,000 people fleeing Nazi Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia were admitted. In 1938, following the Nazi annexation of Austria, the British government introduced a visa requirement to restrict the refugee influx. However, following violent atrocities against the Jews on 'Kristallnacht' the government introduced a programme to allow children and some other categories to be exempt from the visa regulations.



Polish Jews arriving in London on the *Warsaw* in 1939



A History of Refugees in Britain



1945-1960



Bucharest, Romania in 1945

More than 50,000 refugees from the Soviet Union, Romania and Czechoslovakia arrived in the UK. Some of them were living in refugee camps at the end of the Second World War and did not want to return to their home countries. Other refugees were political opponents of the new communist governments in Eastern Europe. The British Council for Aid to Refugees (BCAR), the basis of the present day Refugee Council, was established in 1950 to assist in the resettlement of displaced people after the war.



A History of Refugees in Britain



1956: Hungarians

21,000 Hungarians who fled their country following the 1956 uprising against the communist regime were among the most well received refugee groups in post-war Britain. British industries were keen to employ foreign workers to fill labour shortfalls during a period of economic growth. Within months of arriving, more than three-quarters had found jobs assisted by the active involvement of the Ministry of Labour. Most of the Hungarians were industrial workers, but one exile, Geza Gazdag, founded the Vanderbilt Racquet Clubs in New York and London.



Hungarian Refugees arriving in Blackpool



A History of Refugees in Britain



Ugandan Asians at Bishops Stortford train station, Hertfordshire, 1972

1972: Ugandan Asians

In 1972, Uganda's military dictator, Idi Amin, expelled 80,000 Asians. The British were reluctant to admit the refugees, even though the majority were highly skilled and had British passports. The Conservative government was worried that the refugees would upset already volatile race relations. The government considered settling the refugees on the Solomon Islands in the Pacific, or the Falklands Islands. Britain eventually admitted 28,000 Asians, many of whom settled in Wembley in Middlesex, and Leicester in the Midlands. Ugandan Asian refugees arrive in the UK in 1972. Politicians like Enoch Powell fuelled xenophobic attitudes and the rise of the National Front.



A History of Refugees in Britain



Violence under the Pinochet regime in Chile

1973-1979: Chileans

Some 3,000 Chileans fleeing the violence of General Pinochet's regime were allowed to enter the UK. However, despite their small numbers, their presence has left a lasting legacy. The exiles came to Britain mainly through links with the international labour movement or academic programmes set up by the World University Service and therefore the group included a large number of academics as well as working class people sponsored by trade unions.



A History of Refugees in Britain



Bosnia, September 1995

1992-1996: Bosnians

2,500 Bosnians fleeing the war in the former Yugoslavia were given temporary protection status by the British government under a small quota resettlement programme. Germany accepted more than 300,000. Several thousand other Bosnians applied independently for asylum in the UK.



A History of Refugees in Britain



1975-1992: Vietnamese

24,000 Vietnamese refugees entered the UK under a resettlement programme. The exodus from Vietnam included South Vietnamese former government officials fleeing from the communists, and ethnic Chinese people who fled Vietnam when China invaded in 1979 and they became a target for persecution. Those admitted to Britain became known as “boat people” following pictures of Vietnamese people fleeing in rickety boats across the shark-infested waters of the south China Seas.

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Vietnamese ‘boat people’ rescued in 1960s



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Ethnic Albanians arriving in Macedonia in April 1999

1995-1999: Kosovans

More than 4,000 mostly ethnic Albanian Kosovan refugees were given temporary protected status in the UK under the Humanitarian Evacuation Programme. Housed initially in resettlement centres around the country, the vast majority returned home within months. Several thousand more Kosovans applied independently for asylum.



A History of Refugees in Britain



1980s – present day



A Rwandan camp, 1994

Asylum seekers from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Cyprus, Iran, Afghanistan, Iran, Ghana, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Somalia, Turkey, Congo, Burundi, Sudan, Angola, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Kenya, Algeria, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Colombia, the former Soviet Union and eastern European countries have sought asylum in the UK. They have brought with them a wealth of skills, languages, experience and knowledge.



Prominent Refugees



Alek Wek

Supermodel

Fled civil war in Sudan in
1991 and came to Britain



Prominent Refugees



MIKA

Singer and songwriter

Fled Lebanon in 1984
and moved to France



Prominent Refugees



Rita Ora

Singer

Fled Kosovo in 1991 and moved to London



Prominent Refugees



Ed and David Miliband

Ed – Former leader of the Labour party

David – former MP

Sons of a Belgian Jewish refugee



Prominent Refugees



Omid Djalili

Comedian

Son of Iranian refugees



Prominent Refugees



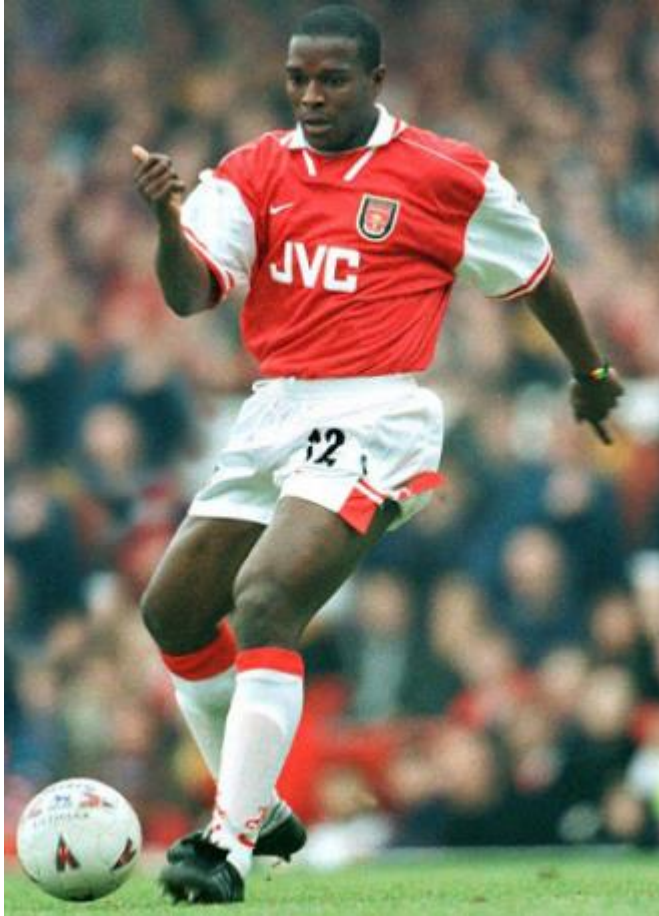
Isabel Allende

Writer

Fled Chile in 1973 to seek
exile in Venezuela



Prominent Refugees



Christopher Wreh

Former Arsenal footballer

Fled civil war Liberia in
1989 to come to Britain



Prominent Refugees



Madeline Albright

The first female US
Secretary of State

Fled Prague,
Czechoslovakia in 1948



Prominent Refugees



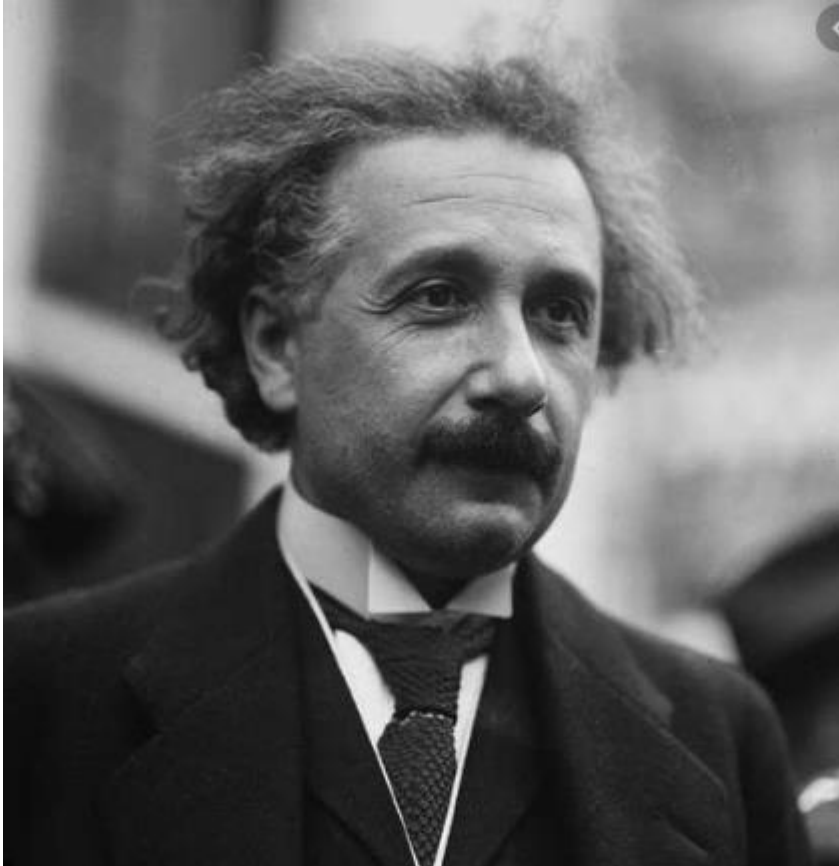
Freddie Mercury

Lead singer of Queen

Fled Zanzibar, Tanzania
in 1964 to come to Britain



Prominent Refugees



Albert Einstein

Physicist

Fled Germany in 1895 to live
in Switzerland



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Prominent Refugees



M.I.A

Rapper and activist

Fled Sri Lanka in 1986 to
settle in Britain





Michael Marks

Co-founder of Marks and
Spencer

Fled Poland in 1882 to
settle in Leeds



The theme for Refugee Week this year is 'Imagine....'



"Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing." Arundhati Roy

"Imagination is more important than knowledge." Albert Einstein

We live in uncertain times. The climate crisis, political division, rapid technological change and ongoing conflicts around the world mean the future is unclear, not least for people on the move.

This Refugee Week (15 – 21 June 2020), we're inviting you to explore the theme of 'Imagine'. Because when things feel stuck; when the old ways of doing things are no longer working, that's what we need to do.

In the era of Covid-19, the call to imagine feels more important than ever.

'To imagine' means to picture something you can't currently see. To step beyond the current moment, and perceive something different. Rather than being a flight away from reality, imagination is sometimes the best response to it – the only way to get us somewhere new.

Maybe you'll imagine a future where we've found new ways to care for our planet, transcend borders or protect human life.

Or perhaps you'll imagine what it's like to have to leave your family behind, or what your hometown might look like to someone walking its streets for the first time.



Imagine.....



Imagine what **seven billion**
humans could accomplish if
we all **loved** and **respected**
each other. **Imagine.**

AD Williams



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Imagine...



Imagine all the
people living life
in peace. You may
say I'm a dreamer,
but I'm not the only
one. I hope someday
you'll join us, and
the world will be
as one.

- John Lennon

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Imagine...



We do not need magic
to change the world, we
carry all the power we
need inside ourselves
already: we have the
power to imagine
better.

- J.K. ROWLING

To aspire, endeavour and thrive together