The White Essential Subject

Schaffer, Gavin; Nasar, Saima

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Introduction

Tyson Fury, a world heavyweight-boxing champion between 2015-16, was none too

impressed when Anthony Joshua won his own rival world heavyweight crown in April 2016.

Describing Joshua as a 'pumped up weightlifter, out of his mind on drugs', Fury told a press

conference that his rival only won a world title because he fought a man who had come 'to

lay down', and had 'about as much fight in him as [a] glass of water'.[1] Of course, rhetoric of

this kind goes with the territory in a sport where any reckoning between Fury and Joshua will

be lucrative directly in proportion to the amount of heat generated in anticipation, but Fury's

press conference took an unusual turn when his father, John, took to the microphone. Fury,

his father alleged, had been a victim of 'racism'. Coming from an Irish traveller background,

he was inherently uninteresting to the British public, who had failed to 'give him the credit he

deserves'.[2] Had he instead been from 'a Peckham estate' (a euphemism for Black-British in

this case), John Fury told the press, his son 'would be having tea with the Queen-mother and

being took round in an open top bus'.[3]

Fury's claim, that Black-British ethnicity has afforded recognition that was often

denied to Irish immigrants and their descendants, is far from new. Away from the fighting

talk of a boxing press conference, it is a case that has been made repeatedly by generations of

postwar scholars and activists in Britain, who have articulated the need to understand British

prejudice about the Irish in similar terms to other racisms. Mary Hickman, at the outset of

her influential study of British-Irish life, argued that discourses of multiculturalism and race

relations had 'operated their own set of inclusions and exclusions', amid the US-inspired

notion that racism was 'about "colour"'.[4] Expanding on this idea in an article written with

Bronwen Walter, Hickman explained how colour had 'become a marker of national belonging' so that 'being of the same "colour" can be equated with "same nation" implying "no problem" of discrimination'.[5] Like Hickman and Walter, Mairtin Mac an Ghaill has argued that the colour paradigm used to understand race in Britain has traditionally over-determined the representation of non-white social collectivities, while denying the possibility of white groups being victims of racism.[6] He posits that the myth of British cultural homogeneity, particularly prior to 1950, masks the full recognition of historical forms of racialized exclusions.[7] Experiences of whiteness greatly differ between, to offer just one example, white members of the landed gentry, Welsh farmers, and newly arrived Irish immigrants.[8] Collectively, these arguments hold that Irish 'whiteness', and the perception of Irish and British racial similarity, has masked significant discrimination against British-Irish communities and undermined the need to support and recognise the struggle of Irish immigrants, a struggle exemplified by the case of Irish travellers.[9]

It was along these lines that Irish activists in the 1980s began to challenge local authority decisions to fund Black and Asian support organisations and not Irish equivalents. For example, in 1980, the Irish embassy recorded that Gearóid Ó Meachair, from the Federation of Irish Societies Welfare Sub-Committee, was pressing Haringey Council to appoint a liaison officer for the Irish community on the grounds that the Commission for Racial Equality had successfully persuaded some councils to appoint similar figures for 'Asian and other minorities'.[10] Indeed, the Embassy reported, if Ó Meachair succeeded, he planned to 'urge Irish societies to press for the same decision by their local councils'.[11] This pressure yielded immediate results. In 1981, the Greater London Council (GLC) recognised 'the Irish as an ethnic minority' enabling Irish community projects to apply for local government funding, a decision which achieved a 'fundamental transformation' in the community, although it was never unequivocally accepted by other minority communities.[12]

As Ó Meachair desired, the GLC appointed an Irish Liaison Officer in 1983 and its Ethnic Minorities Committee wrote a report on the Irish population in Britain in the following year. By 1985, around thirty Irish community projects were being funded by the body.[13]

Yet the stance of the socialist and London-based GLC should be seen more as highlighting a tension than achieving a national solution. Recognition of the complexities of Irish struggles in Britain as racism was at every stage met by incredulity from other quarters, where the idea of racial discrimination against a white group seemed perverse. When, in 1994, the Commission for Racial Equality launched its own investigation into anti-Irish discrimination in Britain, Jonathan Miller, in the *Sunday Times*, sneered at the very idea.

> The week ended with the Commission for Racial Equality launching an investigation into alleged discrimination against the Irish. They are nuts. The Irish pour into Britain by the thousand because they perceive that this is the land of opportunity. If we hate them so much, why do our television companies hire so many of them to present programmes? The racial equality police may as well investigate discrimination against Americans.[14]

Wading into this debate, this article will focus on the history of Irish migrants in Birmingham in an attempt to enhance historical understanding of race, ethnicity and 'whiteness' in postwar Britain.[15] It will consider the extent to which Irish immigrants were victims of racism, what this meant in terms of discrimination and identity, and, in particular, how Irish experiences corresponded to that of Black and Asian migrants. Focusing on a period where ideas of race as a biological category were ostensibly discredited, the article will strive to unpick the ways in which conceptual, normative and epistemological notions of race and ethnicity have developed in an era defined both by the rise of discourses of

multiculturalism and significant on-going racial prejudice and violence.[16] In recognizing that white identities do not necessarily correlate with elite identities, especially in the context of various inter- and intra-ethnic hierarchies, it advocates the need to understand the historical processes that shape and renegotiate racial and ethnic categories over time. To do so, it will look at two Birmingham histories: the Young Christian Workers' Association's report on the Welfare of Irish migrants in 1951, and anti-Irish violence in the aftermath of the Birmingham Pub Bombings of 1974. By teasing out the complex history of the Irish in Birmingham, this article ultimately seeks to challenge the slippage between the Occidental usage of whiteness as a unifying, hegemonic, totalizing category, which inevitably serves to essentialize the white subject, and whiteness as an explanatory enterprise used to analyse multiple racial and ethnic identities.

Debates about the significance of whiteness in the historicisation of racism have hitherto focused on the United States from the antebellum to the period prior to the Second World War, and more recently on South Africa during and following apartheid.[17] In a period when immigrant groups were popularly constructed in terms of racial difference, numerous scholars have argued that whiteness was the essential racial marker, into which immigrants (such as Jews, the Irish, Italians and East Europeans) pulled themselves, securing preferential status in the process, or what Gramsci has referred to as 'consensual control'.[18] The premise of this scholarship rests on the idea that whiteness was a subjective category, malleable and ultimately lacking in objective meaning, just like the concept of race itself. As one leading whiteness scholar, Karen Brodkin, puts it, 'Prevailing classifications at a particular time have sometimes assigned…[Jews]…to the white race, and at other times have created an off-white race for Jews to inhabit'.[19]

Constructions of malleable, aspirational whiteness have, however, triggered a significant backlash from historians who have sought to highlight the distance between the

experiences of Black and white immigrants without minimising complexities of racism.[20]

Thomas Guglielmo, for example, has pointed out that Italian immigrants were, from their

point of arrival in America, always constructed as white, even as they were victims of racial

discrimination.[21] Presenting a similar argument, Eric Arneson has claimed that it has been

historians themselves that have printed non-whiteness onto Irish immigrant experiences.[22]

Within these critical engagements with whiteness theory, the idea of a more rigid colour line

at the heart of race is paramount.[23]

Scholars working on British race relations have cautioned against appropriating

models based on societies in the United States and South Africa to explain disparate

historical processes within the British setting. This is especially pertinent given that the

political organization of white identities, as argued by Alistair Bonnet, cannot to any

significant level be traced in Britain until the 1950s.[24] Even then, whiteness did not carry

with it the same connotations as it did in other geographical regions, and its application and

meaning was subject to redefinition.   This absence of whiteness within thinking on racism

enables the faceless, Irish white essential subject described by journalist Jonathan Miller at

the start of this article. Moreover, it demonstrates the way in which narrow conceptions of

the white essential subject are problematic, specifically because they elide the totality of

White-Irish subjectivities, which include ethnic, religious, class, and gender particularities.

Thus, it can be said that within the burgeoning literature on whiteness in Britain exists a

dislocation between the perception of a monolithic, visible whiteness, and the various

ethnoracial identities and experiences of communities of white people. This require analysis

in terms of an 'economy of Otherness', set alongside the experiences of black and Asian

people in Britain.[25] By looking in depth at a case study of postwar Irish immigration (which

of course took place amid substantial Black and Asian immigration), this article will question

some of the meanings of whiteness and how its application shaped what Brodkin neatly

differentiates as 'ethnoracial assignment' and 'ethnoracial identity'.[26] By selecting two case studies, one relating to immigrant arrival, the other to a period of extreme racial tension, we aim to explore the relationship between day-to-day discrimination, and lurking, subconscious prejudices, which re-emerge in troubled times.[27] In this way, we shall consider the limits of whiteness as a prophylactic against discrimination and explore how 'circumscriptive aspects of the notion of community quickly become thresholds of suspicion and boundaries of exclusion'.[28]

<p style="text-align:center">I</p>

Between 1801 and 1921 approximately eight million people left Ireland, creating huge diasporic populations across the world.[29] In Britain, there were over a million Irish people by the end of the 19th century.[30] By the 1930s, because of the economic depression and immigration restriction in the US , Britain had become the primary destination of Irish migrants, one hundred thousand more of whom took up labour opportunities in support of the Second World War effort.[31] War migrants 'acted like magnets'[32] for further postwar immigration, providing 'vital…pathways and networks' for friends and family who wanted to follow them to Britain.[33] By 1951 'the number of Irish migrants in England and Wales nearly doubled',[34] a figure that was soon surpassed again as half a million new Irish immigrants arrived between 1951 and 1961.[35] By some distance, the Irish were 'consistently the largest group to enter postwar Britain'.[36] In this period, Birmingham and the surrounding area of the Midlands became a destination of choice, steeped as it was in manufacturing opportunities for migrant workers.[37] Indeed, by the 1960s, 5% of Birmingham's residents were Irish-born.[38] Birmingham had only belatedly become a centre point of Irish British

migration, Hickman and Walter noting that two thirds of Birmingham's Irish population (at the end of the twentieth century) had arrived in the 1950s.[39]   At the point of the 1971 census, 140,000 Irish people lived in the Midlands, some 18% of the British Irish population.[40]

The Irish population in Birmingham, as elsewhere in Britain, was diverse and divided, never easily understood as a single community, and often difficult to differentiate from white British neighbours.   While first generation migrants could be identified at least generally by accent, second and third generation Irish did not stand out in this way. While the community was frequently constructed as Catholic, 20% of migrants were Protestant[41], and the majority of Irish by the 1990s did not attend church or engage with any community organisations.[42] The proximity of Ireland enabled frequent movement, which further complicates historical understanding of the population's size and shape. In one year, between 1962-3, over two million people travelled between the two states,[43] a movement described by Delaney as a 'constant back and forth across the Irish Sea'.[44]

One of the core focuses of existing historical engagement with these Irish migrants has been their reception alongside black and Asian migrants in the same period, a comparison which has repeatedly focused on the defining restrictive immigration legislation of the period, the Commonwealth Immigrants Act, 1962. This legislation, while ostensibly non-racial, in effect was designed to limit Black and Asian migration to the United Kingdom, creating a voucher system for migrant workers without specific sponsors. [45] As we have seen, the largest numbers of such workers in the postwar period were Irish, but they were exempted from the immigration controls of the new law, a move seen as evidence of the colour prejudice behind the legislation.[46] In a period where migrant workers were very much needed, allowing the Irish to circumvent the legislation, as far as policy makers were concerned, 'could maintain a reserve army of labor without the difficulties of assimilation they were convinced non-white immigrants presented'.[47]

Irish exemption from this section of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act should not, however, be seen as an indicator that the British saw the Irish as equal, or even as desirable immigrants, though it does suggest that Irish migrants were seen as racially familiar, perhaps as assimilable, in a way that Black and Asian people were not. As Kathleen Paul explains, 'UK officials acted as they did because, notwithstanding their presumed cultural inferiority, the Irish were regarded as being of the same "family" as residents of the United Kingdom'.[48] Other scholars have argued that the Irish were themselves targeted by the legislation, only differently to Black and Asian migrants. Jordanna Bailkin has explained in this context that historians have neglected to look at the legislation's provision for the deportation of migrants, a part of the new law in which the Irish were very much included. Indeed, Bailkin argues, more Irish migrants were deported from Britain in the postwar period than anyone else.[49] For Hickman, the Commonwealth Immigrant Act's treatment of the Irish did not indicate tolerance as much as 'the specificity of the relationship' between the two countries'.[50] After all, given the deep roots of Irish migration in Britain and vice versa, and the land border with Northern Ireland, restriction would have been very difficult to enforce. This reality, though, should not be taken to mean that the Irish escaped postwar British racism, only that discrimination against the Irish took a 'different form'.[51] John Corbally has argued, for example, that when it suited British leaders the Irish were valuable citizens, however, they remained 'favoured inferiors' that continued to meet the 'sting of prejudice'. [52]

How then did this different form of racism relate to that which faced Black and Asian migrants, and how did it shape the lives of Irish people in Britain? For many, the 'specificity' of Ireland within British thinking led to a particular racism, focused on long-held racial tropes relating to Irish treachery, violence and stupidity, which had their heyday in tense British-Irish industrial relations in the nineteenth century.[53] The colonial relationship between the nations more broadly fostered these constructions of inferiority.[54] Set against

the rational Protestant work ethic of the British, the Irish were frequently held up as violent sectarians and ignorant Catholics.[55] These constructions were legitimised by what Krishnan Kumar terms 'banal imperialism' wherein the Irish became 'living fossils, representatives of an atavistic or primitive human strain'.[56] Sometimes portrayed as Simian in British satire, Irishness became a byword for dirt, disease and ignorance.[57] Irish people were labelled as drunks, criminals and brawlers.[58] Of course, racial constructions of this kind were never static or constant and always existed alongside British feelings of affinity and gentler, if similarly problematic, stereotypes of jolly, happy-go-lucky, friendly Irish.[59] Overall, however, there seems little doubt that the ethnocization and racial constructions of the Irish as White-Other created dominant discourses of inferiority and danger.

Yet despite these persistent racial discourses, for many contemporaries of postwar immigrants, and subsequent analysts, the experience of Irish in Britain, in terms of racial discrimination, was incomparable with those of Black and Asian people.[60] Thus in EJB Rose's famous 1960s study of British race relations, it was explained that the Irish were by the Second World War largely accepted and their full participation in the extension of rights in the Welfare State was unquestioned'.[61] For many, the core of the difference was Irish whiteness.[62] In a period when immigration was increasingly understood in terms of belonging (and non-belonging),[63] the simplicity of racial typologies meant that the Irish were able to pass as English-speaking whites easily into the stream of Britishness. Commenting on this ability among Irish immigrants, Holohan noted, 'for all practical purposes they are indistinguishable from their British peers'.[64] Indeed, for many, the arrival of significant numbers of Black and Asian migrants served a positive function for the Irish, allowing their transition from non-belonging to belonging, as ostensibly more desirable migrants than people of colour. [65] As Delaney explained, 'The arrival of other, more visible migrants

served to distract attention away from Britain's Irish population and allowed the Irish to move up the hierarchy of newcomers in British society'.[66]

Ultimately, these questions, regarding Irish familiarity, have the potential to unlock some of the complexities of postwar social history, especially as regards attitudes towards migrants, and the evolution of British multiculturalism. To focus on these questions precisely, our first case study will probe the early history of one of the political pioneers of British race relations, Harold Wilson's first minister for immigration, Maurice Foley. When Foley was brought into this role in 1965 his brief was almost entirely focused on supporting the integration of Black and Asian migrants. He was seconded to this role from the Department of Economic Affairs because Wilson was 'not satisfied with progress in integrating Commonwealth immigrants into the community, particularly in some of our big towns and cities'.[67] But Foley's understanding of immigration was not built on Black and Asian experiences. As his name suggests he was the son of Irish migrants, and he cut his teeth on immigration issues by living and working with the Irish migrant community in Birmingham.

II

Foley was born in Billingham, County Durham and educated in Middlesbrough, after his father migrated from Ireland to work in the Durham coalmines during the First World War.[68] Prior to his parliamentary career in the Labour Party (he was elected Member of Parliament for West Bromwich in 1963), Foley worked for a range of international organisations including the Ariel Foundation and the Young Christian Workers' Movement (YCW), a Catholic youth movement founded in Belgium, which started in Britain in 1937. By the end of the 1940s the YCW had around 30 branches in the Birmingham area.[69] Foley was sent

from the national headquarters to coordinate these branches as 'diocesan organiser', focusing on 'the recruitment and training of young workers as lay apostles'. Soon, however, he was distracted by the quality of life facing many of the new migrants in the city.[70] Having spent some time living alongside migrant men in a city centre hostel, and having engaged with civic and religious leaders in Birmingham (as well as with the migrants themselves), Foley produced a report on the welfare of the Irish migrants, which he brought to the attention of Prime Minister Éamon de Valera's government, and the Catholic Church in Dublin.[71] The moral welfare of Irish migrants in Britain had by this point been a political issue in the Republic for some time.[72] Foley's report was not the first, nor would it be the last, to highlight the plight of Irish migrants, and indeed the Young Christian Workers' endeavours in this field should be seen in the context of broader Catholic anxieties in this period, especially about the moral danger of migration for young Irish women.[73]

The report painted a sombre picture of immigrant fortunes in the city, reminiscent, Delaney has argued, 'of mid-nineteenth-century descriptions of Irish hovels in Liverpool and Manchester'.[74] Foley described migrants sleeping 'in public lavatories…in parks, air raid shelters and on railway stations', and boarding houses with an atmosphere of 'depression, almost despair'.[75] At the heart of the problem, to Foley, was the emotional dislocation that occurred when rural people were parachuted into unfamiliar urban environments. Irish men and women, he explained, were uprooted from 'an agricultural land to a highly industrial one', a process comparable 'to the uprooting of a hot-house plant and its replacement on a wind-swept hill'.[76]

The problems that occurred as a result of this dislocation were manifold. Foley reported 'the adverse effect on the health of many', the prevalence among the migrants of tuberculosis and malnutrition; but by far his biggest concern, perhaps unsurprising given the agenda of the YCW, related to the moral impacts of British urban life on the Catholic

migrants. In analysis that focused predominantly on his fears about Irish women, Foley described 'undesirable friendships' between bus drivers and conductors 'on late or evening shifts'. Particularly at night-time, he explained in a later letter, 'drivers force their affections on the girls, who, if they resist these approaches, have a very unfortunate time.'[77] Foley described a world of unwanted pregnancies and abortions, of infidelity and illegitimate children.[78] Poor conduct, in his mind, blended with a naïve inability to recognise temptation and danger. Irish boys and girls, the report claimed, often ended up living in 'houses of ill repute' without realising 'the real atmosphere'. To Foley, Irish women especially were ingénues in a dangerous world. He had met young girls, he reported, who had made themselves 'ill through too much dancing'.[79]

Key to Foley's concerns was the impact of migrant behaviour on their Catholicism. He described disapprovingly the prevalence of Irish migrant babies being 'adopted by non-Catholic families and homes'.[80] Most of the people who went down this road, he explained, 'cease to practice their faith'.[81] The decline, among the migrants, of Catholic practice, was a concern to Foley more generally. In one hostel of 50 migrants, he found only four people regularly attending mass.[82] In the place of religion, he feared, the migrants were living immoral and decadent lives, drinking and getting into trouble. On one Monday, his report asserted, 48 of 75 arrested drunks in the city were 'young Irishmen', behaviour that made them 'more argumentative and prone to fighting'.[83] In this atmosphere, the YCW worked hard to set migrants back on the right path. In the 1952 annual report of their Balsall Heath branch, it was noted that 'one leader persuaded a lad to go to church who had not been there for five years. He now calls for him every Sunday'.[84]

In July 1951, Foley met with Frederick Boland, the Irish ambassador to the UK, who was sufficiently impressed to forward his report to the Department of External Affairs in Dublin,

with the request that it be given the 'serious consideration of the department'.[85] Foley's

work, the ambassador confirmed, was well known, and regarded as 'objective, trustworthy,

and not exaggerated in any way'. It now required publicity in the Republic, to 'open the eyes

of people' who were themselves thinking of leaving Ireland and migrating to Birmingham.[86]

Once in Dublin, the report attracted the attention of de Valera, who publicised Foley's

findings in a speech at a Fianna Fáil Jubilee dinner in Galway on the 29 August. Emigration,

de Valera warned his audience, had now reached 'alarming dimensions', while the migrants

themselves were living in 'conditions of absolute degradation'.[87] 'The saddest part', claimed

the Prime Minister, was that leaving Ireland was unnecessary. Work was 'available at home,

and in conditions infinitely better from the point of view of both health and morals'. De

Valera's speech, Delaney records, caused 'absolute uproar' in the British and Irish press.[88]

The Prime Minister, however, stood by his remarks. He told the *Irish Times*, 'That my

statement has caused anger to certain people does not surprise me, but their anger is certainly

not greater than mine when I read the report'.[89]

Beyond the furore of de Valera's speech, Foley's report was designed to have a

specific impact. He wanted Irish migrants to be made more street wise, proposing 'three or

four months' training in Ireland, 'with the assistance of a priest', to prepare them for the

challenges that awaited in Britain.[90] Once there, Foley wanted the Irish community to do

much more to help their new brethren to settle in. He suggested that immigrants should be

met at the train station, taken to their accommodation, and 'put in contact' with a local priest

and other 'young Irish people'.[91] To this end, he proposed the establishment of an Irish

Centre in Birmingham, which could act as a focal point for community self-help and support.

In 1953 Foley took a petition to de Valera and the Archbishop of Dublin asking for the Irish

state and the Catholic Church to fund such a centre.[92] Initially, both the Church and State

were unconvinced, Archbishop McQuaid asserting that had Foley's petitioners contributed

'half a crown each', there would be enough funds 'for the first year'.[93] But McQuaid was worried, fearing, like Foley, the loss of his flock to secularism and Communism.[94] He sent 'missioner' priests to Birmingham to tend to the Irish community, and asked Irish schoolchildren to pray for the migrants' welfare.[95] And, by the following year, McQuaid had agreed to contribute £1,000 to set up the Irish Centre in Birmingham. With financial contributions from established Irish migrants and also from the Irish State, the Centre opened its doors in Moat Row in Birmingham in June, 1957.[96] The Irish Centre immediately fulfilled Foley's vision. Its staff, the Irish Press reported, would meet every train coming into the city 'even the 5.30am service'.[97] That Foley's research led to such an outcome both supports and problematizes Hickman's seminal reading of British Catholic intervention in Irish affairs. For sure, the work of Foley and the YCW was rooted in a desire to cement religious values and prevent the straying of the flock, but the desire to foreground Irish identity through an Irish Centre suggests that not all British Catholics wanted to downplay Irish culture as a strategy of integration, even as they wanted Irish culture contained, controlled and guided; and even as, as Hickman rightly points out, Catholicism was clearly seen as the safest integrative structure.

Overall, Foley's success (highlighting the plight of Irish immigrants and harnessing support for them) served as preparation for his national brief, eight years later. By this stage, however, the immigrants causing concern were not Irish, but Black and Asian people from the Commonwealth. As had been the case in his dealings with Irish migrants, Foley was worried that Commonwealth migrants were ill prepared for life in British cities. They needed, he explained in a speech to adult educators, 'instruction in elementary facts which are obvious to us, who have always lived in an urban environment, but are not obvious to the many immigrants who have known nothing but a remote rural village'.[98] Without this instruction, Foley was concerned that Commonwealth immigrants could descend into moral

impropriety and political radicalism, worries that had taken centre stage in his 1951 report. Throughout his work on immigration, Foley maintained the belief that immigrants required support to adapt. As had been the case with the Irish, Foley saw the solution to the problem as two-pronged. The Commonwealth migrants had to be helped to take responsibility for themselves, to ensure that they acted as 'first class immigrants' who made an effort to adapt to the society around them.[99] Foley praised 'immigrant leaders' who were 'trying to create a true community from the diverse elements in each of the areas where immigrants have settled in substantial numbers'.[100] Looking back to his days in the YCW, Foley argued that it was on the street level where 'real work must be done'.[101] To enable this to happen, Foley sought coalitions (as he had done with the Irish) from the countries of the immigrants' origin, as well as the British government (national and local) and 'representatives of the churches, of the voluntary bodies and of the immigrants interests in each area'.[102] Still seemingly rooted in the religious values that had shaped his earlier approach, Foley felt ultimately that only a push for Christian neighbourliness could secure good race relations. He argued, 'Legislation will not help to change human attitudes, neither will coercion. It is a matter of conscience – and of tolerance'.[103] In response to abusive letters from the public, criticising his support for immigrants, Foley replied that opposition to immigration was 'unacceptable, anti-social and un-Christian'.[104]

Recognition of the trajectory of influence within Foley's thinking from Irish to Commonwealth immigration offers important lessons about the need to re-couple post-'Windrush' narratives with earlier experiences of migration. But recognition of inheritance and similarity simultaneously disorientates historical understanding of significant differences in migrant experiences and reception, exemplified by disparities within Foley's own thoughts and actions, as he moved his work from Irish to Commonwealth immigration. For despite the similarities in much of his stance, Foley saw clear differences between Commonwealth

immigrants and the Irish of Birmingham. Speaking to local government officials, Foley was asked if his new brief was only to focus on Black and Asian immigrants. He replied that although 'his remit did not exclude white immigrants… he thought that the main problems were caused by the complicating factor of colour'.[105] As a result, Foley argued that lessons needed to be learned from America, where the specific challenges posed by colour were being addressed. Prior to taking his new role, he indeed visited the States eight times 'for the purpose of looking at the problem of race relations', believing it offered lessons that could not be learned from other (white) migrant experiences in Britain and Europe.[106] Describing a trip he had taken to Holland to assess immigrant problems, Foley told journalists:

> I think there is far greater relevance for us in what has been done in such cities as New York, Chicago and St Louis, where they have great experience not only of the Negro problem but an influx of immigrants such as the Puerto Ricans.[107]

Foley's insistence that the integration and support of 'coloured' immigrants posed different challenges to those he had previously experienced with the Irish community tells us much about the ideas of belonging and race which shaped the reception of migrants in this period. For many within British society at all levels, the difficulties associated with Black and Asian migrations were of a different order. Partly, 'the complicating factor of colour', as Foley described it, was rooted in a perception of greater public hostility towards Black and Asian immigration. While Foley was sure that only a 'small minority of Britons' were 'strongly prejudiced against coloured people', it was clear to him that there were 'many more' who were 'slightly prejudiced or…simply suspicious of newcomers'. And, Foley explained, 'coloured people stand out as the most obvious newcomers'.[108]

Colour as 'obvious' difference was, for Foley and many others, a heightened challenge in terms of integration. It was, he said, 'a new social situation' and a 'special problem'.[109] Here, the differences perceived between these Black and Asian immigrants and other Britons were represented as larger than had been the case with the Irish. And Foley believed that addressing these issues head-on was crucial if Britain was to 'avoid the tragedies which have occurred elsewhere where people of different races have made their homes together'.[110] 'We must be honest enough to recognise', Foley told journalists, 'that the presence of nearly one million immigrants from the Commonwealth, many of whom have entirely different social and cultural backgrounds from our own, has raised a number of problems in the areas where they have concentrated'.[111]

These immigrants, with their 'entirely' different backgrounds, were not to be encouraged to stick closely to their past traditions as the Irish had been. While for Foley, devotion to the Catholic Church and the traditional lifestyle it advocated was an unequivocal good, for the new immigrants, a marrying of old and new, of their traditions alongside a new British state of living, was desirable and necessary. Their cultures were, he explained, different to our own; '…there are ways of doing things here to which they must conform'.[112] This did not mean that migrants had to 'abandon their own national traditions and cultures….', but they had to recognise 'that we have established in this country certain standards of behaviour, of hygiene and of sanitation and that, if they are to make their homes here and be accepted as full and equal citizens, they must be prepared to conform to the standards which we have adopted for ourselves'.[113] Thus the key difference, in Foley's thinking, between the Irish and the Commonwealth immigrants, seems to have come down to the idea of racial type. While in many ways the migrants from the Commonwealth needed similar structures of support and faced similar problems to those Foley had experienced with the Irish (allowing the Irish to set precedent in his thinking on managing immigration),

racially alien Commonwealth immigrants brought, to his mind, an additional new set of challenges. Whereas for the Irish, problems could be solved by harnessing efforts to minimise the impacts of social dislocation and ensuring proper standards of welfare, taking in the Commonwealth immigrants meant all of this, plus also working through challenges posed by bringing together different races.[114]

Lessons learned from the United States, where the Civil Rights conflict boiled over into violence in this period, led Foley, and indeed wide swathes of British society, to see racial mixture in terms of danger, even where (as was certainly the case with Foley) sympathies lay with Black protestors. But were Irish immigrants, because of constructions of racial affinity, largely exempt from constructions of racial difference? Looking at the Irish in Birmingham during a period of profound crisis in the 1970s re-opens this question, and problematizes any idea that whiteness offered protection against discrimination and violence.

<p style="text-align:center">III</p>

On 21 November 1974 two bombs exploded in central Birmingham pubs, killing 21 people and injuring over 200. While no one took responsibility for the attacks, it was widely presumed, and later confirmed, to be the work of the Irish Republican Army (IRA)[115], part of a bombing campaign in Northern Ireland and Britain that had been on-going since the early 1970s.[116] The bombs in Birmingham came in the context of similar attacks in Guildford and Woolwich, and smaller devices had 'been going off for months in and around Birmingham' in the previous months.[117] As a direct precursor, the attack was thought to be 'revenge' after an IRA would-be terrorist, James McDade, accidentally blew himself up in Coventry while trying to attack the Central Telephone exchange, a week prior to the bombings.[118] Although

then far from unprecedented, the Birmingham pub bombings caused shock and outrage, both because of the scale of death and injury, and the selection of unambiguously civilian targets. On the streets of Birmingham, violence immediately erupted, targeted at Irish people and places.[119] Youths chanted anti-Irish slogans in the City Centre, the Irish Centre was repeatedly firebombed, and Irish businesses, schools and pubs were attacked. Car workers at the British Leyland plant in Longbridge (and in other factories) staged walkouts in protest at the IRA.[120] Suddenly, being Irish in Britain was a scary business.[121] Numerous accounts highlight the prevalence of anti-Irish rhetoric and violence across Britain after the bombings, and the government soon added to this atmosphere, introducing the Prevention of Terrorism Act one week after the Birmingham bombs.[122] In the meantime, six Irish men living in Birmingham were arrested and charged with carrying out the attacks. In what became one of the most infamous miscarriages of justice in modern British legal history, these men were brutally beaten into making confessions, which, combined with what would later be shown to be unreliable forensic evidence, ensured their convictions for murder in 1975 (convictions which were overturned in 1991).[123]

Like its 1939 predecessor, the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) was specifically intended to focus only on Irish terrorists.[124] As one Home Office official noted, as regards the legislation's power to enforce 'exclusion orders', it was applicable only to those whose aim was to 'influence public opinion or Government policy with respect to affairs in Northern Ireland', not to 'terrorists of other persuasions'.[125] Similarly, the only terrorist organisations proscribed under the legislation were the IRA and the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA).[126] This targeting was felt personally among British Irish communities. In its evidence to the Shackleton Report in 1978 (which was convened to assess the Act's effectiveness), the Irish Civil Rights Association complained, 'Despite killings and bombings emanating from other nationalities, only the Irish have been detained and excluded under the

Act'.[127] The PTA changed lives for many within Britain's Irish communities, both in terms of

its draconian powers, and even more so its psychological impact. The PTA gave the Home

Secretary substantial powers to 'control the movement of people between Ireland and Great

Britain'.[128] At ports and airports, officials could examine or detain anyone they wished, and

if they had a 'reasonable suspicion' that detainees had information relating to terrorism, they

could hold people without charge for up to a week. After 48 hours, permission for detention

had to come from the Home Secretary, but in reality this was never denied.[129] Additionally,

the Home Secretary was given the power to ban suspected terrorists from living in any part of

the United Kingdom.[130]

Combined with broader currents of anti-Irish feeling after the 1974 bombings, the

PTA served to accentuate the racial difference of Irish communities living in Britain, creating

an atmosphere wherein Irishness became synonymous with terrorism. As Sean Boyle argued

in a newspaper article in 1980, the feeling in Britain in this period seemed to be, 'If You're

From Ireland, You're Guilty!'[131] Nowhere was this racism clearer than in the treatment of

the Birmingham Six. Early critics of the convictions argued that the men's' confessions were

a racist fantasy of Irish violence, written in 'the language English people sometimes put in

the mouths of Irishmen'.[132] In the wake of the bombings the Irish community *en masse* were

frequently constructed as inherently perfidious and violent. One contemporary chronicler of

the Birmingham Six case revealed something of the blanket assumptions held by

Birmingham police after the bombings. 'The frustration for many detectives was that they

were meeting bombers every day of their lives – and could not prove a thing'.[133] This kind of

thinking trapped Irish people in Britain in a web of prejudice and discrimination. Hillyard

explained, 'A suspect community has been created against a backdrop of Irish racism'.[134]

This racism did not spring from nowhere, but fed from a long-established reservoir of Irish

racial discourse. As Hickman has argued, 'The stereotype of the Irish as inherently violent

has undergone changes since the 19th century…but it is essentially based on the same assumptions about the Irish as "a people"'.[135]   IRA terrorism in the late 1930s and Irish neutrality in the Second World War fuelled longstanding constructions of the Irish as dangerous and treacherous, ideas that were still simmering beneath the surface in the 1970s, ready to recur.

This recurrence of anti-Irish racism had many impacts on the development of Britain's Irish communities. From our own gathering of oral testimony, it is clear that Birmingham's Irish population did not respond uniformly. In the immediate aftermath, Irishness for some became something to be hidden, or, at least, only expressed in specific contexts. One participant of our research project explained the difficulty of growing up in 1980s Birmingham:

> You were always expected to explain why they [the IRA] carried out the bombings. But I couldn't articulate as a youngster that *I* didn't do it. It gave you a sense of culpability…
> … People changed their accents; there was a shop near my school called O'Keefe's that received threats and then had to change its name. People were changing themselves and hiding from their Irishness.[136]

Along these lines, members of Birmingham's Irish population today revealed that the disguising of one's Irishness and the subsequent disappearing into British society, was a possible, if undesirable, response to a hostile British public:

> I have an English accent so [the events after the Birmingham pub bombings] never really affected me in the slightest. I didn't always have an English accent, I had a

Derry accent. But I've lived quite an English way of life; it wasn't my choice to become an English person; it was just I evolved into that way because of where I lived and where I went to school.[137]

Hickman and Walter have described how Irish responses to hostility tended to take 'the form of avoidance of contact with British people and attempts to remain invisible by staying silent'.[138] This should not, Hickman has cautioned elsewhere, be seen as an abandonment of Irishness, rather a 'specific response' or strategy.[139] To offer an example, another research participant claimed: 'When you were in certain situations you didn't want to open your mouth. When we went to the shops we kept our heads down and our voices down; we didn't feel good about it.' Many felt that it was not only unfashionable to be Irish, but that is was also dangerous. 'Malicious tip-offs' to the police, followed by house raids and neighbourhood gossiping resulted in a climate of fear and suspicion.[140]

Concurrently, for others, the racism that followed the pub bombings resulted in a sharpened ethnic focus, creating a 'much greater identification of themselves as Irish'.[141] Most obviously, to people who were mixing into broader British communities, it assigned an ethnoracial label which forced them back into a racial block. By pointing the finger, anti-Irish prejudice worked to highlight a white-other ethnicity. This meant that some sought the safety of associational life. By 'moving in Irish Catholic circles' they felt protected from the animosity directed towards them.[142]

One coherent manifestation of this process was the clamouring of Irish leaders and groups for the Irish to be considered and identified as an ethnic minority in the 1980s, outlined at the start of this article. [143] For Irish people fighting discrimination, Black and Asian groups became role models of self-defence. One account of Irish women's lives in 1980s Britain explained, 'An example had been set by the Black community in resisting

assimilation, fighting racism and asserting the validity of their own cultures. The Irish community learned from this'.[144] This assertion of status was built by critiquing the importance of colour at the heart of racism. Hickman and Walter described the '"myth of homogeneity" of whiteness', while Hickman described elsewhere how whiteness had never 'been enough' to 'ensure acceptance'.[145] As Corbally put it, 'Politically, culturally, and socially, there was enough hostility to go around, and it went beyond skin colour'.[146] On this basis, Irish groups fought and won ethnic minority status in the 1980s, although such status has never gone uncontested. What, though, does this story ultimately tell us about Irishness, whiteness and British racism?

The experience of migration in and of itself shaped what new arrivals understood as 'being Irish'.[147] Living in Britain meant that Irish people experienced their ethnicity 'in a series of new spaces and places'.[148] For many, being outside Ireland meant for the first time reflecting on themselves as Irish. As Kells explains, 'their ethnicity only began to take on meaning for them on leaving Ireland'.[149] New ethnicities were shaped at every turn by interactions with other Britons. What it felt to be Irish had much to do with constructions of Irishness in British imaginations. For some, distinct Irishness diminished as they worked towards invisibility in a climate where to be Irish was ascribed with low value and even perceptions of perfidy and danger.[150] Indeed, Hickman has persuasively explained how the British Catholic church fuelled this process, working to minimise the Irishness of migrants and incorporate them into a broader (less visible) Catholic identification.[151] Thus for Catholic immigration support workers in postwar Birmingham, as we have seen, it was the Catholicism of the immigrant, not his or her Irishness, wherein lay the root of successful absorption. 'Each one as a Catholic', one leader told Archbishop McQuaid in Dublin, 'has a definite contribution to make'.[152] Indeed, the idea of accentuating Irishness over Catholicism

did not sit well in much of the Church. Responding to the idea of an Irish Centre in

Birmingham, one senior clergyman expressed his concern that it would 'make a problem of

our Irish brethren, and even to make them a kind of displaced people'.[153]

For some, however, Irishness necessarily and desirably sharpened as they faced

discrimination, felt hostility from other Britons, and learned lessons from interactions with

other migrants.[154] Of course, these tendencies were not mutually exclusive. Migrants could

perform Irishness in some places and not others, and in some ways and not others.[155] In her

study of Irish nurses, Louise Ryan explained how 'in an environment where their Irishness

was denigrated and derided, they sought out spaces where they could relax and experience

their identity in a positive and enjoyable way'.[156] The ability to choose where or when to be

Irish, limited as it was by accent and other signifiers, seems to differentiate the Irish from

Black and Asian immigrants who could not decide when they wanted their blackness to be

noticed and ascribed with meaning, a reality which led contemporary observers and some

subsequent scholars to observe better outcomes for Irish migrants.[157]   Passing as white

British, and negotiating safe spaces to perform Irishness, took their own toll on Irish lives in

Britain, shaping a consciousness of shame and silence.

Conclusion

This article sought to trace the historical processes that have shaped our understanding of

race, ethnicity and Irish 'whiteness'. It has shown that the case of Birmingham's Irish

problematizes immigration histories that have constructed British multiculturalism as a

postwar Black phenomenon. The career of Maurice Foley neatly illustrates a broader point.

The race relations agenda of Wilson's government was led and in many ways defined by the

son of interwar Irish migrants, whose expertise on migrant communities was mostly based on white Irish in Birmingham, many of whom arrived long before the Second World War. Foley's background and training undermines 'the myth of British homogeneity prior to the 1940s' and reminds immigration historians that British multiculturalism developed over hundreds of years, not after the arrival of the Empire Windrush.[158] Both the examples in this case study show that white groups, especially at times of crisis, were drawn into hierarchies of race, and that racism was never only targeted at people of colour.

Yet both examples here also illustrate that the experiences of Irish migrants in Britain were substantially different from those of Black and Asian migrant communities. Foley saw both similarities but also clear differences between white and black migrants in the 1950s and 1960s, a period during which the distance between immigrants and the host community remained much determined by colour. Even in the very real horror of anti-Irish discrimination in the 1970s, these distances remained. While Irish migrants frequently felt forced into silence and passing, these tactics were never available to most Black and Asian people, who could not opt in or out of categorisation. Delaney has concluded in this context that anti-Irish discrimination in employment and housing was 'not comparable to the widespread and systematic discrimination that Black and Asian immigrants faced'[159], a reality which points to the on-going potency of postwar discourses of racial familiarity, signalled by colour. As Weight has argued, 'Even when the Irish proclaimed themselves to be foreign, they were still seen to be more British than Black people'.[160]

Crisis, though, in the form of terrorism and the Troubles, brought racism which tended to homogenise Britain's Irish migrants. In no sense any kind of single community, the Prevention of Terrorism Act and longstanding Irish racial discourses rendered Irish migrants one troublesome mass, forcing new strategies of identifying/not -identifying on communities that previously had little in common. Tellingly, one result of this discrimination was a

concerted attempt by Irish community leaders and activists to pull themselves into models of race relations. Racial violence and discrimination led to demands for recognition on a par with Black and Asian groups, action which no doubt improved the lot of many marginalised Irish communities in Britain and gave voice to those Irish people who wanted their struggle to be recognised.[161] This process, however, pushed victim status onto Britain's diverse Irish communities, 'a reified Catholic and Nationalist profile of the Irish in Britain, focusing more on a unified picture of disadvantage and discrimination than on the contradictory narratives that constitute Irish identity'.[162] It also silenced the extent, evident in Foley's work, that Black and Asian communities were singled out as different. Colour, in postwar migration history, was a massive marker, and whiteness most frequently guaranteed better outcomes in terms of acceptance at every level. On these terms, Irishness, albeit funnelled and controlled, was constructed as familial and domestic in a way that Black and Asian ethnicities rarely were. Yet without understanding changing historical meanings and values placed on racial identities and ethnic association, the white essential subject becomes the ultimate terminus of reification.[163] In this context, the work of scholars such as Mary Hickman has driven forward the study of race and ethnicity by insisting that white migrant experiences are integrated within studies of race. Telling the story of white Irish migrants has the potential to clarify the significance of colour in migration history, as well as to improve historical understanding of the multiple processes by which Britain has been shaped by constructions of racial difference.

Notes

[1] "Pumped Up Weightlifter", *Watford Observer*, 13/4/2016.
[2] For analysis of the relationship between categorizations of Irishness and Travellers see Taylor*, A Minority and the State*, 4-5.
[3] Ibid. Joshua is, in fact, of Nigerian and Irish heritage. That John Fury chose to focus on Joshua's Black British identity is telling and hints at wider issues relating to hierarchies of otherness.

[4] Hickman, *Religion, Class and Identity*, 1. Also see Panayi, *An Immigration History of Britain,* 221 and Holmes, *A Tolerant Country?*, 29.

[5] Hickman and Walter, 'Deconstructing Whiteness',5-19. Also see Walter, *Irish Women in London,* 93.

[6] Mac an Ghaill, 'The Irish in Britain', p.137.

[7] Ibid., 141.

[8] Also see Killeen, 'Culture, Identity and Integration', 77.

[8] For analysis of hierarchies of whiteness in postwar immigration to Britain see McDowell, 'On the Significance of Being White', 51-66.

[9] See Taylor, *Minorities and the State*, 5-10 and Bhreatnach, *Becoming Conspicuous.*

[10] National Archives of Ireland, Dublin, TAOIS/2012/59/1711, Letter to Michael Fitzgerald (department of Foreign Affairs) from Gerard Corr, First Secretary: Irish Embassy, 14/10/1980.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Curtis et al, *Hearts and Minds*, 19. For responses to the decision at the GLC see Nagle, *Multiculturalism's Double Bind*, 60-2.

[13] Ibid. 19-20. Also see Hazley, 'Re/negotiating "suspicion"', 329. Taylor has usefully highlighted the different timeline of recognition of traveller status under the Race Relations Act in *A Minority and the State*, 189.

[14] Miller, 'Screaming Could be Good for You', *The Sunday Times*, 23/1/1994.

[15] The authors acknowledge that not all Irish immigrants were white. However, this article focuses on white British-Irish communities. The importance of analysing Irish immigrants as a white group has been explained by Peatling in 'The Whiteness of Ireland Under and After the Union', 115-33.

[16] Panayi has described modern Britain as evolving an atmosphere of 'multicultural racism' in Panayi, *An Immigration History of Britain.*

[17] Roediger, *Coloured White*; Roediger, *Working Towards Whiteness; The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs*; Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*; Brodkin, *How Jews Became White Folks*. See also, Falkof, *Satanism and Family Murder in Late Apartheid Africa*.

[18] Ignatiev, *How the Irish…*, 2-3 and Roediger, *Colored White*, 23. On Gramsci, see Hoare and Smith (eds), *Selections from the Prison Handbooks of Antonia Gramsci.*

[19] Brodkin, *How Jews became White*, 1. To Brodkin's thinking, her Jewish parents and grandparents 'lived in a time when Jews were not white', 2.

[20] This is specific as regards the relationship between the Irish and British see Peatling, 'The Whiteness of Ireland', 115-6.

[21] Guglielmo, *White on Arrival.*

[22] Arneson, 'Whiteness and the Historians' Imagination', 20-1.

[23] Fields, 'Whiteness, Racism and Identity', 48-56.

[24] Bonnett, 'How the British Working Class Became White', 316-340. For analysis which challenges the novelty of whiteness in British thinking see Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class,* 18-20.

[25] Hage, *White Nation,* 128.

[26] Brodkin, *How Jews became White*, 173.

[27] For the historical prevalence of increases in racism during periods of crisis see Panayi, *An Immigration History of Britain*, (chapter five).

[28] Killeen, 'Culture, Identity and Integration', 126.

[29] Delaney, 'Transnationalism, Networks and Emigration from Post-War Ireland', 276.

[30] Davis, 'The Irish in Britain, 1815-1939', 20.

[31] Connolly, 'Emigration from Ireland to Britain during the Second World War', 51-2.

[32] Delaney, 'Transnationalism, Networks and Emigration…', 284. For detailed analysis of immigration from Ireland in this period see Daly, *The Slow Failure.*

[33] Delaney, 'Almost a class of helots in an alien land', 260.

[34] Ibid. p.242.

[35] Hickman, Religion, Class and Identity, 207. Also see Ewart, 'Protecting the honour of the daughters of Eire', 71-84.

[36] Paul, 'A Case of Mistaken Identity', 119.

[37] Delaney, The Irish in Post-War Britain, 9.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Hickman and Walter, *Discrimination and the Irish Community*, 156.

[40] Irish National Archive, TAOIS/2012/59/1711, Gerard Corr, Report on Visit to Birmingham, 9/6/80.

[41] Davis, 'The Irish in Britain', 20.

[42] Hickman and Walter, *Discrimination and the Irish Community*, 210.

[43] National Archives of the United Kingdom, RG23/299, The Social Survey, 'The Irish Travel Survey', 2/9/1962-2/9/1963.

[44] Delaney, 'Transnationalism, Networks and Emigration…', 288.

[45] See Fryer, *Staying Power*, 372-399; Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration,* 11-114; Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 111-130; Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, 129-133; and Goulbourne, *Ethnicity and Nationalism in Post Imperial Britain,* 87-125.

[46] Schaffer, *Racial Science and British Society*, 161-3 and Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 107-9 &161.

[47] Corbally, 'The Jarring Irish', 104. Also see Delaney, 'Almost a class of helots', 259.

[48] Paul, 'A Case of Mistaken Identity', 134.

[49] Bailkin, The Afterlife of Empire, 203. Also see Garrett 'The Hidden History of the PFIs', 41.

[50] Hickman, *Religion, Class and Identity*, 210.

[51] Hickman and Walter, 'Deconstructing Whiteness', 11. Also see Holmes, *A Tolerant Country?* 30.

[52] Corbally, 'The Jarring Irish', 116.

[53] See Curtis Jr, *Apes and Angels*, 102. For analysis of anti-Irish racism in nineteenth-century British cities see Gallagher, *Glasgow: the uneasy peace*; Neal, *Sectarian violence*; Peach, 'Poverty, Religion and Prejudice in Nineteenth Century Britain'.

[54] Corbally, 'The Jarring Irish', 103-6 and Connolly et al., 'Editorial: the Irish Issue. The British Question', 3.

[55] Hickman, *Religion, Class and Identity*, 213.

[56] Kumar, 'Empire, Nation, National Identity', 298. Douglas, 'Anglo-Saxon and Attacotti', 44.

[57] Corbally, 'The Jarring Irish', 105. See also Curtis, *Apes and Angels*; De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy*.

[58] For the persistence of these constructions in postwar Britain see Bottoms, 'Delinquency amongst Immigrants', 363-4.

[59] Hickman, *Religion, Class and identity*, 215.

[60] Peatling, 'The Whiteness of Ireland', 115-33.

[61] Rose, Deakin, et al, *Colour and Citizenship,* 19. Delaney has drawn similar conclusions in 'Almost a Class of Helots', 260.

[62] For Delaney, 'the significant difference was that the Irish were white and this ensured that the "open door" policy continued in force'. See Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, 214.

[63] See Hampshire, *Citizenship and Belonging*.

[64] Holohan, *Working Lives*, 4. Also see Delaney, *The Irish in Postwar Britain*, 30 and Ziesler, 'The Irish in Birmingham 1830-1970', 224 and 230.

[65] See Panayi, *An Immigration History of Britain*, 224 and Holmes, *A Tolerant Country*, 84.

[66] Delaney, *The Irish in Postwar Britain*, 31.

[67] Statement from Harold Wilson, Hansard (Commons), Vol: 708, Col: 248-9, 9/3/1965.

[68] *Sunday Mercury*, 25/4/65.

[69] Birmingham Archdiocesan Archives, File AP/Y3, PW Corrigan, 'YCW Birmingham Diocese', April 1960.

[70] NAI, DFA 402/222, Maurice Foley, 'Some Notes on the Situation of Irish Workers in Birmingham', 1951.

[71] *Sunday Mercury*, 25/4/65.

[72] Daly highlights the extent to which migration was an issue in the Irish General Election of 1948 in *The Slow Failure*, 158-9, and considers this and subsequent research into it, 270-92.

[73] See, for example, the research of social worker Helen Murtagh analysed in Earner-Byrne, 'The Boat to England', 52-77; and that of the Liverpool Viligence Association considered in Caslin, '"One can only guess …", 254-73.

[74] Delaney, The Irish in Postwar Britain, 11.

[75] NAI, DFA 402/222, Maurice Foley, 'Some Notes on the Situation of Irish Workers in Birmingham', 1951.

[76] Ibid. For an alternative analysis, see Daly, *The Slow Failure*, 270-6.

[77] Birmingham Diocesan Archive, File AP/J6, Foley to Father J Gray, 20/5/53.

[78] See Earner-Byrne, 'The Boat to England', 52-77. Also see Daley, *The Slow Failure*, 156.

[79] NAI, DFA 402/222, Maurice Foley, 'Some Notes on the Situation of Irish Workers in Birmingham', 1951.   For analysis see Caslin, '"One Can Only Guess"', 254-73.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Birmingham Diocesan Archive, File AP/J6, Foley to Father J Gray, 20/5/53.

[82] NAI, DFA 402/222, Maurice Foley, 'Some Notes on the Situation of Irish Workers in Birmingham', 1951.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Birmingham Diocesan Archive, File AP/Y3, Birmingham Area Young Christian Workers Report, 1952.

[85] NAI, DFA 402/222, Frederick Boland to the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, 23/7/51.

[86] Ibid.

[87] NAI, DFA 402/222, Press Release of de Valera's Speech in Galway, 29/8/51.

[88] Delaney, *Demography, State and Society,* 194.

[89] *Irish Times*, 31/8/51.

[90] NAI, DFA 402/222, Maurice Foley, 'Some Notes on the Situation of Irish Workers in Birmingham', 1951.

[91] Birmingham Diocesan Archive, File AP/J6, Foley to Father J Gray, 20/5/53.

[92] Dublin Diocesan Archive, McQuaid, 3/G/45, Letter from Foley to McQuaid, 27/11/53.

[93] NAI, DFO 402/222, Note from Frederick Boland to Sean Nunan, 2/12/53.

[94] Dublin Diocesan Archive, AB8/B/XXIX/b, McQuaid wrote to the Lord Cardinal (2/8/56) that he feared the straying of immigrants from the faith, meaning 'we lose both them and their children'. A report by Father Edward MacElroy (from the Missionary Society of St

Columbian) in June 1957 described in a report ('How Many Irish Emigrants in Ireland Betray the Faith?') the immigrant community as 'Ireland's most serious source of danger from communism'.

[95] Dublin Diocesan Archive, AB8/B/XXIX/b, Note, 18/1/55.

[96] Irish Press, 14/6/57. For a broader history of the establishment of Irish Centres in Britain see Daley, *The Slow Failure*, 296.

[97] Ibid.

[98] NA, EW4/54, Speech by Foley to the Annual Conference of the National Institute of Adult Education in Leicester on Sunday, 12/9/1965.

[99] NA EW4/54, 5/8/65, Speech by Foley to luncheon given by Commonwealth Writers' Association, 5/8/1965.

[100] NA EW4/54, Foley Speech to the Foreign Press Association, 10/10/1965.

[101] Ibid.

[102] NA, EW4/54, Minutes of meeting between Foley and Representatives of the Association of Municipal Corporations, the Country Councils Association, the Rural District Councils Association, Urban District Councils Association, the London Boroughs Committee and the Greater London Council, 1/4/1965. Also see 'Tackling Problems of City's 16,000 Immigrants', *The Guardian*, 18/1/1966.

[103] NA EW4/54, Foley, 'Commonwealth Commentary', Circa March 1965.

[104] McGlashan, 'Jenkins Going into the Attack against Racial Prejudice', *The Observer*, 20/2/1966.

[105] NA, EW4/54, Minutes of meeting between Foley and Representatives of the Association of Municipal Corporations, the Country Councils Association, the Rural District Councils Association, Urban District Councils Association, the London Boroughs Committee and the Greater London Council, 1/4/1965.

[106] NA, EW4/54, Note from the Home Office, 8/3/65.

[107] *Sunday Mercury*, 25/4/65.

[108] NA, EW4/54, Speech by Foley at a meeting sponsored by International Co-operation Year in Birmingham, 22/5/1965.

[109] NA, EW4/54, Speech by Foley to the Annual Conference of the National Institute of Adult Education in Leicester on Sunday, 12/9/1965.

[110] NA, EW4/54, Speech by Foley to celebrate the launch of 'Living Together' series of children's books, 22/4/1965.

[111] NA, EW4/54, Speech by Foley to luncheon given by Commonwealth Writers' Association, 5/8/1965.

[112] NA, EW4/54, Speech by Foley at a meeting sponsored by International Co-operation Year in Birmingham, 22/5/1965.

[113] NA, EW4/54, Speech by Foley to the 'Younger members' conference of the Commonwealth-American Current Affairs Unit of the English-Speaking Union, Nottingham University, 4/4/1965.

[114] This difference of approach problematizes Feldman's suggestion that a 'recurrence of conservative pluralism over three centuries' guided responses to black and white migrants, suggesting instead that colour was seen as difference on a different scale. See Feldman, 'Why the English Like Turbans', 300.

[115] See Conway, *Southside Provisional*, 179.

[116] Bell, *The Secret Army*, 373-418 and Feldman, *Formations of* Violence, 254.

[117] Mullin, *Error of Judgment*, 1.

[118] Ziesler, 'The Irish in Birmingham', 340.

[119] Hickman and Walter, *Discrimination and the Irish Community*, 204.

[120] For details of the anti-Irish backlash see Moran, *Irish in Birmingham*, 199-201 and Mullin, *Error of Judgment*, 7-8.

[121] Killeen, 'Culture, Identity and Integration', 124.

[122] In oral histories taken as part of a Heritage Lottery Project on Childhood Memories of Irish and those of Irish Descent, conducted by the Birmingham Irish Association, there are numerous accounts of anti-Irish violence in the aftermath of the bombing. This collection is presently being catalogued by the Library of Birmingham. There was a precedent of establishing new legislation to combat republican terrorism, after the passing of the Prevention of Violence (Temporary Provisions) Act, 1939. For analysis see Moulton, *Ireland and the Irish in Interwar England,* 308.

[123] The solicitor of three of the men, Ian Gold, wrote to the Regional Director of Prisons, reporting that his clients had 'been most brutally treated' and had 'numerous and manifest' injuries. NA, HO 413/19, Gold to the Regional Director, 2/12/1974. The matter was reported in the press. See Chippindale, 'Bomb Accused "Beaten in Gaol", *The Guardian*, 19/12/1974. Indeed, 14 prison officers were put on trial for violence against the men in 1976, though all were acquitted. For details see Mullin, *Error of Judgment*, 50-54, 112-13 & 215.

[124] Moulton, Ireland and the Irish, 308.

[125] NA, CJ4/1220, Letter from DHJ Hilary (Home Office) to the Chief Officer of Police 7/2/1975. In 1984, the legislation was extended to include other international terrorists.

[126] NAI, TAOIS/2012/59/1711, National Council of Civil Liberties News Letter, March, 1980.

[127] NAI, TAOIS/2010/53/879, Jim Curran, Evidence of the Irish Civil Rights Association, February 1978.

[128] See Hillyard, *Suspect Community*, 13.

[129] *Irish Times*, 15/2/1978 revealed that the Home Secretary had never refused a request for an extension to detention.

[130] Hillyard, *Suspect Community*, 198.

[131] Boyle, *Sunday World*, 23/3/1980.

[132] Faul and Murray, *The Birmingham Framework,* 14.

[133] Gibson, *The Birmingham Bombs*, 12.

[134] Hillyard, *Suspect Community*, 273.

[135] Hickman, *Religion, Class and Identity*, 213. Also see Lunn, '"Good for a Few Hundreds at Least", 102-14 and Delaney, 'Almost a Class of Helots', 259 and Curtis, *Apes and Angels,* 102.

[136] Participant A, Witness Circle, 2016.

[137] Participant B, Witness Circle, 2016.

[138] Hickman *and Walter, Discrimination and the Irish Community,* 203.

[139] *Hickman, Religion, Class and Identity*, 231.

[140] Participant C, Witness Circle, 2016.

[141] Curtis, O'Keefe and Keatinge, *Hearts and Minds*, 7. Also see Holohan, *Working Lives*, 71 and Hazley, 'Re/negotiating "Suspicion"', 336-8.

[142] Participant D, Witness Circle, 2016. This supports Hickman's contention that Catholic identification provided a degree of safety to Irish communities in Britain. Killeen, in this context, has noted the development of fourteen Irish County Associations in Birmingham in 'Culture, Identity and Integration', 130.

[143] This pressure led to Birmingham City Council recognizing the Irish as an ethnic minority in 1986. See Killeen, 'Culture, Identity and Integration', 73.

[144] Lennon, McAdam and O'Brien, *Across the Water*, 10.

[145] Hickman and Walter, *Discrimination and the Irish Community*, 224; Hickman, *Religion, Class and Identity*, 253.

[146] Corbally, 'The Jarring Irish', 112.

[147] Roediger, *Coloured White*, 142.

[148] Ryan, 'Who Do You Think You Are?', 416-38.

[149] Kells, 'Ethnic Identity Amongst Young Irish Middle Class Migrants in London', 25.

[150] Hickman and Walter, *Discrimination and the Irish Community*, 203, Hickman, *Religion, Class and Identity*, 213 & 230-31; Feldman, *Formations of Violence*, 11; Lennon, McAdam and O'Brien, *Across the Water*, 10 and Holohan, *Working Lives,* 5-6.

[151] Hickman, *Religion, Class and Identity*, 229.

[152] Birmingham Archdiocesan Archives, St Chads Cathedral, Birmingham, File AP J/6, Foley's notes to Father J Gray, Archbishop's House, Westminster, 20/5/53 as National Secretary of the European Youth Campaign for guidance on a draft report he has written (undated)

[153] Birmingham Archdiocesan Archive, File AP J/6, Note by Rev. Dennis Hickling, 21/1/57

[154] The availability of these two responses to anti-Irish prejudice has been outlined by Hazley in 'Re/negotiating "Suspicion"', 326-41.

[155] See Killeen, 'Culture, Identity and Integration', 128.

[156] Ryan, 'Who Do You Think You Are?', 428.

[157] See Daly, *The Slow Failure*, 154; Peatling, 'The Whiteness of Ireland', 133; and Rex and Moore, *Race, Community and Conflict.*

[158] Hickman and Walter, 'Deconstructing Whiteness', 7. For broader analysis see Panayi, *An Immigration History of Britain.*

[159] Delaney, *The Irish in Postwar Britain*, 30. Also see Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, 210-214.

[160] Weight, *Patriots: National Identity in Britain 1940-2000*, 141.

[161] See Hazley, 'Re-negotiating "Suspicion"', 329.

[162] Gray, 'From "Ethnicity" to "Diaspora"', 74.

[163] See Jameson, 'Ulysses in History', 129.

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Disclosure Statement

Notes on Contributors

Professor Gavin Schaffer is lecturer in British History at the University of Birmingham.

Dr Saima Nasar is lecturer in the History of Africa and its Diasporas at the University of Bristol.

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