more recent events of Stephen Lawrence’s widely documented death will also need to be brought into consideration. The way that politicians, the police and the public responded to these events will show that Britain as a country has not been tolerant of the fight for equality that immigrants have fought for. However, as with any debate, there will always be another viewpoint to be considered; that Britain has historically been tolerant with racism and immigration.

The Slavery Abolition Act of 1833, which abolished slavery throughout the British Empire, was repealed but policies were still in place to ensure slavery was not legal under the Slave Trade Act of 1824, Slave Trade Act of 1843 and Slave Trade Act of 1873. With this in mind, one should also take into consideration that the Human Rights Act of 1998 made the holding of persons as a slave illegal. Therefore it is important to consider that institutionally Britain had a positive stance on anti-slavery from the very beginning, and the abolition that took place means something very relevant in Britain’s history. Britain is also the only country in Europe that has a Race Relations Act. Historians have however, debated extensively that Britain, for all its Acts and Laws, has not been historically tolerant of immigration and racism when it comes to the black people of Britain. Panikos Panayi has debated the idea that Britain has been tolerant compared to other countries and has stated in his book Immigration, ethnicity and racism in Britain 1815-1945 that ‘we may argue that because state racism has been less potent than in other states, this has allowed the development of more widespread unofficial hostility towards minorities’. Following on from this, Panayi continues to argue that unlike Nazi Germany or Tsarist Russia, within Britain public opinion influences the government attitudes towards minorities. This argument is consistent with the opinion that no matter what laws the British government put in place, there will always be proof that the

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would be granted even the poorest housing, and men whose families were not in Britain were homeless frequently, ‘this is because men, who may have been living in Britain for several years, are not able to apply for council accommodation until their families have actually arrived in Britain.’

The Race Relations Acts are, as stated, proof of history of racism and immigration prejudice, conforming that Britain has not been a tolerant country.

Paul Gordon and Anne Newman have stated that ‘Powell himself would be astonished at the success of today’s multi-racial society’ and to an extent this is true, Powell may be astounded at the progression that British society has made. Thankfully ‘Britain has come a long way from the days when he was the most admired man in the country.’ However, this does not eradicate Britain’s history of intolerance towards racism and immigration with Black history, and truly, how far can a country really outlive its past? Even today, Germany and Poland are sometimes visited purely by tourists who are interested in the history of the Holocaust. That is not to say that Germans are today all viewed as Nazi extremists, but the anti-Semitic past of the country stays with Germany. It is a part of the country that they are, as, unfortunately, is the case with Britain and its history of institutionalised racism. Although the Slavery Abolition of 1833 was a positive anti-racist stance that Britain began with, Gordon and Newman have given evidence towards a rather obvious but stark reminder that ‘in Britain, black people were often subject to discrimination even after slavery had been abolished.’

The analysed failures of the Commonwealth Immigrant Acts of 1962, 1965 and 1968 are examples that even though laws were passed and Acts were put into place, they

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60 Paul Gordon and Anne Newman, ‘Racism and Discrimination in Britain’ Different Worlds (Nottingham : Russel Press Ltd, 1986) p. 31