Enoch Powell and the Making of Postcolonial Britain

Enoch Powell’s explosive rhetoric against black immigration and anti-discrimination law transformed the terrain of British race politics and cast a long shadow over British society. Using extensive archival research, Camilla Schofield offers a radical reappraisal of Powell’s political career and insists that his historical significance is inseparable from the political generation he sought to represent. *Enoch Powell and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* follows Powell’s trajectory from an officer in the British Raj to the centre of British politics and, finally, to his turn to Ulster Unionism. She argues that Powell and the mass movement against ‘New Commonwealth’ immigration that he inspired shed light on Britain’s war generation, popular understandings of the welfare state and the significance of memories of war and empire in the making of postcolonial Britain. Through Powell, Schofield illuminates the complex relationship between British social democracy, racism and the politics of imperial decline in Britain.

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For my dad and in memory of Bua
Skin-colour is like a uniform.
Enoch Powell, 1978
The symbols of social order – the police, the bugle calls in the barracks, military parades and waving flags – are at once and the same time inhibitory and stimulating: for they do not convey the message ‘Don’t dare to budge’; they cry out ‘Get ready to attack.’

Frantz Fanon, 1961
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