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978-0-521-14124-6 - Migrants and Refugees: Muslim and Christian Pakistani families in Bristol

Patricia Jeffery

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London · New York · Melbourne

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521141246

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First published 1976
This digitally printed version 2010

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Jeffery, Patricia, 1947–
Migrants and refugees.
Bibliography.
Includes index.

1. Pakistanis in Bristol, Eng. 2. Bristol, Eng. – Foreign
population. 3. Christians in Bristol, Eng. 4. Muslims in Bristol,
Eng. I. Title.

DA690.B8J43 942.3'93'00491412 75-25428

ISBN 978-0-521-21070-6 Hardback
ISBN 978-0-521-14124-6 Paperback

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‘Why for one lost home mourn, when grief
Can find so many a lodging place?’

From a *ghazal* in *Bal-i-Jibril* by
Muhammad Iqbal, translated
by V.G. Kiernan

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Acknowledgements

During the course of the research that led to this book, several people helped me by discussing my work with me and reading various reports which I produced. Professor Michael Banton and Dr Mick Lineton were my supervisors at Bristol and I am grateful for advice which they gave me. I also wish to thank Professor Adrian Mayer, Dr Ian Hamnett, Dr Roger Ballard, Catherine Ballard, Dr Verity Saifullah-Khan and Dr Jonathan Parry for helpful comments on my work, and Miss Sabiha Kaukeb who taught me Urdu. Special thanks are due to my husband who became engulfed in my research and was involved in my obligations to my 'kin'. He also, most conveniently, goes by the name of Jeffery, which my informants unanimously associated with *Jafri* and thus accorded me the high status of a supposed descendant of the sixth *Imam*! He has also discussed my work with me at all stages, and has (usually willingly) helped me with some of the donkey-work of proofing and correcting drafts. Finally, I am obviously greatly indebted to my informants: not only did they provide me with the information on which this book is based, but they also welcomed me into their families with a warmth I had no right to expect.

Some people might take offence at a white person writing a report of this kind: I am fully aware that the area under discussion is very sensitive and that there is considerable resentment of the snoopings of white researchers. There is little that I can do about being white, and neither I nor my informants (as far as I know) see what I was doing as snooping, so I hope that my research will not be taken in that spirit. I would like my efforts to interpret my informants and present a view of their life in this country as they see it to go some way towards overcoming those misunderstandings which contribute to racial and inter-ethnic hostility in Britain.

January 1976

P.J.

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Note

In order to preserve the anonymity of my informants, I have used pseudonyms throughout. Muslims have been given Muslim names, while the Christians have been given biblical or British names. The pseudonyms of spouses begin with the same letter.

The meanings of Urdu and Arabic words are given in the text where they are first used, and also in the glossary at the end; Urdu and Arabic words have been printed in italics throughout. When the fieldwork began, Pakistan still consisted of West Pakistan and East Pakistan (now known as Bangladesh). In the text I use 'Pakistan' to refer to the old west wing which remained after the secession of Bangladesh.

As will be seen, many Pakistani migrants in Britain send money to Pakistan, so something needs to be said about exchange rates: for some years several exchange rates have operated with respect to the Pakistani rupee. British people living in Pakistan obtained about Rs. 12/- per £1 sterling, and this exchange rate probably gives the closest comparability when costs of living are compared. However, Pakistanis living abroad remitting money through banks and post offices obtained Rs. 20/- per £1 sterling (until the rupee was devalued in 1974, when the rate became about Rs. 24/-). Even more favourable rates could be obtained through black-market and extra-legal routes, sometimes over Rs. 30/- per £1 sterling. Remittances of £10 per month would thus give upwards of Rs. 200/-, a sum which is more than many families earn through work in Pakistan: this discrepancy between exchange rates and costs of living is crucial for migrants in Britain.