

IAN SANJAY PATEL. *We're Here Because You Were There: Immigration and the End of Empire*. London: Verso, 2021. Pp. 352. \$29.95 (cloth). doi: 10.1017/jbr.2023.132

Ian Sanjay Patel's *We're Here Because You Were There: Immigration and the End of Empire* is both an enjoyable read and a very timely book. In the years since the 2018 Windrush Scandal, there has been a clear need to reckon with the imperial dimensions of British immigration and citizenship history. Patel acknowledges explicitly the lack of public awareness of this history in his introduction, and therefore sets out to write a book that "reveals the lived realities of non-white British citizens who found their automatic right to enter Britain taken away" (17) through the evolution of British law and the definition of British nationality through the twentieth century. It is a well-crafted book, and Patel makes plain the tensions between British government ambitions for an imperial citizenship at the twilight of empire, and the increasing desire by white Britons to draw a color line around how nationality or citizenship operated in the British Isles themselves. While little of the theory or analysis will be particularly new for scholars familiar with this area of study, Patel's accomplishment lies in effectively and clearly laying out this long and complicated legal history and its effects in an accessible way. He has produced a comprehensive overview of the tension between espoused British ideals of government, and the consistent reality of inequality in the practice of British immigration and citizenship law.

We're Here Because You Were There is organized into three sections. The first, "We're Here: Immigration and Empire" provides a legal overview of how movement and nationality and citizenship were regulated throughout the British Empire and Commonwealth from the start of the twentieth century through the 1980s. Although he covers the period from 1945 to 1981, Patel makes the smart choice to first ground the reader in racially discriminatory imperial immigration laws created by white settler colonies far earlier in the century. This provides a strong foundation for understanding what would later play out in British immigration law in the metropole.

Perhaps unusually for a book intended to be more accessible to a general audience, Patel uses specific immigration laws as the framework for an analysis of twentieth century British immigration patterns. Yet despite the reputation legal history has for being dry and less accessible, this proves to be an astute choice that grounds the more personalized and human elements of immigration history in a clear timeline with a very apparent evolution. Patel's argument in this first section for a consistent through-line from the first imperial immigration restriction laws in Australia in 1901 all the way to the British Nationality Act of 1981 provides a solid analytical foundation for the more pointed case studies he explores later in the book.

Part two, "You Were There: International Voices" focuses on confronting the still-powerful myth of the supposed benevolent dissolution of the British Empire after 1945. It is important for Patel's explanation of immigration patterns and laws that the reader understand that the Commonwealth project was initially put in place as a "new imperialism" and "the constitutional evolutionary successor to direct imperial rule" (97). This, after all, was the reason behind the extension of British citizenship to Commonwealth citizens, which would create problems for a Britain also seeking to restrict immigrants along racial lines. Another important conclusion in this section is that the Commonwealth project itself failed over "the issues of race" (159). Patel effectively uses the United Nations condemnation of white minority rule in Rhodesia between 1965 and 1970 and Britain's vetoing of force against that government to illustrate the collapsing of Britain's idealized imperial-belonging rhetoric in the face of racist practice.

In this section, Patel is largely less concerned with British immigration law than with exploring why, in the same decades when British politicians increasingly opposed migration from Africa and Asia, the imperial needs of the government had set up a nationality and citizenship system that provided those same populations with an imperial citizenship guaranteeing their

legal right to free movement into Britain. By the end of part two, in chapter 6, Patel brings the analysis back to the question of immigration, now directly noting the conflict both in the Commonwealth and internationally as one in which “an unreconstructed British racism came into direct opposition to the international effort to eliminate racial discrimination” (161).

In concluding with part three, “Here and There: South Asian Migration at the End of Empire,” Patel takes a different approach from the broad view of the previous sections and grounds the legal and political analysis in specific and personalized human stories. For the reader, to focus on the Kenyan South Asian immigration crisis of 1968 and the Ugandan South Asian immigration crisis of 1972 after being immersed in a more detached history of laws and imperial policy is a welcome shift to a more grounded understanding of the effects of that history. In fact, the relegation of these specific case studies to the third part of the book may have sequestered this dimension of the story too strongly, as it is possible that including these case studies earlier in the text might have proven a stronger support for Patel’s arguments in sections one and two.

While occasionally repetitive and generally presenting a familiar understanding of this period of British history, Patel succeeds in crafting an overview of the ways in which British imperial politics clashed with racially based immigration practices in the twentieth century. Valuable as a comprehensive overview of a time in British history that explains the current controversies around immigration and racial politics in Britain in the twenty-first century, *We’re Here Because You Were There* will surely be an invaluable resource for anyone seeking to understand the current moment.

Ruth L. Almy
Independent Scholar
ruthalmy@gmail.com

SIMON J. POTTER. *This Is the BBC: Entertaining the Nation, Speaking for Britain? 1922–2022*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. Pp. 320. \$27.95 (cloth).
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Writing the history of the BBC in under three hundred pages is a task that has escaped most historians of British broadcasting to date. Asa Briggs’s foundational history of the institution famously took over thirty years and sprawled across five volumes: for media historians and BBC enthusiasts alike, Briggs’s *History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom* (1961–1995) remains the first port of call. Although Briggs’s position as official historian was subsequently taken up first by Jean Seaton and then David Hendy, both have judiciously steered clear from attempting a similar mammoth endeavor. Others have continued to produce important work exploring more tightly focused themes, such as Sian Nicholas’s work on propaganda and war, Thomas Hajkowski on national identity, or Kate Murphy on women’s roles at the BBC. With *This Is the BBC: Entertaining the Nation, Speaking for Britain? 1922–2022*, published to coincide with the institution’s centenary, Simon Potter accomplishes two things: first, to compress existing knowledge about the BBC’s hundred-year history into a monograph-length volume; and second, to frame this historical account in the context of current discourse about the BBC and its future.

In his opening chapters, Potter offers a fairly standard account of the first fifty-odd years of the BBC from its inception in 1926 as the British Broadcasting Company. Potter presents a clear account of the broadcaster’s founding principles and its overall architecture while simultaneously offering readers a glimpse of what programming on the BBC sounded like (and later, looked like) in the years leading up to the Second World War. Moving to the postwar years,