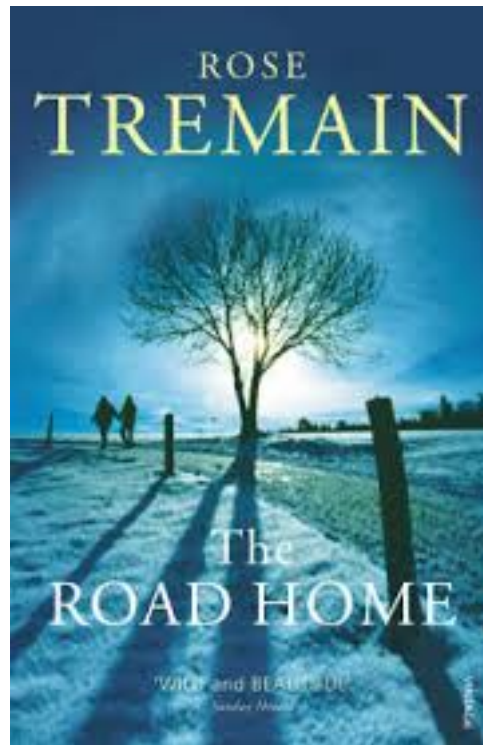


ROSE TREMAIN THE ROAD HOME



CONTEXT: IMMIGRATION IN BRITAIN

Britain suffocates in immigration problems (24.07.2013)

The UK is a very attractive country for immigrants. Its well-organized system of social security that is available to all, without exception and its high standard of living are the main reasons why many foreigners choose to stay in the UK permanently. However, the British do not like this dominance of the immigrants.

The British Ministry of Internal Affairs at this time has over half a million unaddressed cases related to immigrants. It will take at least 37 years to process them. These data were reported by the British Parliamentary Committee for Home Affairs. It should be noted that a year ago there were only 275,000 such cases. The agency responsible for the control of immigration and visas is faced with an unprecedented situation. 502.5 thousand claims remain unresolved, which is a historical high.

The "queue" is increasing at a fast pace because cases that have not been addressed earlier have been discovered, explained MPs of the Committee for Internal Affairs. The total number of cases included over four thousand foreign criminals that the British government intends to deport, 35.5 thousand people seeking asylum, and 61,000 cases not logged in the computer system. The Parliamentary Committee called the situation "astonishing," demanding that Theresa May, the British Home Secretary, provided further clarification.

The issue of immigration is extremely acute in many European countries. Their liberal policies and a high standard of living have led to the fact that crowds of immigrants, particularly from developing countries, rushed into the developed countries of Europe. They do anything they can to stay in Britain. As a result, according to the latest statistics, over 13 percent of the population in the country is immigrants. Britain is particularly favored by people from India, Poland, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Ireland. Immigrants in the UK are faced with many challenges.

British immigrants, especially of African-Caribbean origin and Asians are faced with different challenges. It is hard for them to find employment. Studies show that it is much easier for whites to get a job. For example, among Bangladeshis and black Africans unemployment rate is 24 percent and 27 percent, respectively, among the Indians - 12 percent, while among the white population unemployed is only eight percent.

Black immigrants are faced with most difficulties in obtaining a bank loan for housing. Approximately 38 percent of Bangladeshis and Pakistanis face this kind of problem. Children of immigrants also experience difficulties. As a rule, members of ethnic minorities live in cheap areas of large cities, and attend schools where the level of education is quite low.

It is next to impossible for the children of immigrants to obtain a good education. Compared with blacks, Asians are much more successful. Some wealthy Indians are investing a great deal of money in the education of their people in Britain. For example, Dulwich College, located in south-east London, is considered one of the most prestigious schools in the country, and was funded by patrons of India.

Members of ethnic minorities are more often checked by the British services. Black youth is currently a major target for the British police. A number of black people commit various crimes, and get imprisoned in England and Wales. However, this does not stop them. Every year the number of visitors coming to the UK is increasing, and they go to great lengths to stay in the country forever.

Fictitious marriages are one of the ways to stay in the country. Illegal immigrants enter into thousands of marriages with the British. The Foreign Office of Great Britain believes that tightening of the laws that regulate issuance of student visas forced immigrants to resort to this method. Over the past few years tens of thousands of citizens of other countries came to the UK under the pretext of studying. The Government is convinced that these people did not intend to return to their home countries after graduation.

The country has shut down dozens of fake schools, and also tightened the rules of enrolling students who reside outside of the EU. During this time, the number of foreign students has decreased by 22 percent, and is now at 190,000 people. However, after the introduction of this measure immigrants have found a rather simple but effective way to cheat the system.

Bogus marriages with EU citizens or subjects of Her Majesty allow them to legally stay in the country. These immigrants may even receive social benefits. Only in 2012 British police identified over two thousand fictitious marriages, half of them with foreigners. A signature in a marriage document brings a "bride" or "groom" decent income (several thousand dollars). Immigrants are using all possible ways to stay in Britain for good, but it causes plenty of problems.

British Minister for Immigration called on the Government to improve the monitoring system for people entering the country. The Chief Inspector of UKBA (UK Border Agency) believes that the agency does not have "a clear strategy" against foreigners remaining in the country after expiration of their visas.

John Vine who oversees the agency said that the number of immigrants from countries that are not EU members is constantly growing. The Border Guard Service has no accurate data about the exact number of people who were to leave Britain but never did. Some politicians blamed the previous government, while the Labour Party claims that the situation is due to the mistakes made by conservatives. Yvette Cooper, the Shadow Home Secretary is convinced that the ruling coalition has failed in the matters of illegal immigration.

The UK government, aware of the severity of the situation, is going to limit the access of migrants to the labor market of the country, and deal with the immigration policy of the United Kingdom in its entirety. The British Prime Minister said that the government intended to stop the flow of migrants to the UK. In particular, it is proposed to impose fines on private landlords who fail to check the immigration status of their tenants. Those who lease housing to unregistered visitors will face a fine of 1,000 pounds.

Prime Minister David Cameron and Queen Elizabeth II share the opinion that the access for immigrants to unemployment benefits must be limited to six months, and new rules for local governments must be created. When allocating social housing, they will have to give priority to the locals. Companies that use illegal labor will likely face large fines. Cameron also said that only after 12 months of being in the country immigrants may receive civil legal aid.

The Prime Minister hopes that the new proposals will help to calm the discontent of the local population. The British are extremely hostile to immigrants. Approximately 47 percent of the British said that they strongly opposed immigrants from countries outside of the EU. Only 20 percent of the British approve of immigrants. 52 percent of respondents believe that Muslims are creating huge problems for Britain, and 48 percent of Britons would support a party that opposes immigration. The authorities in the UK will have to make serious efforts to tidy up the state immigration policy to maintain their image and trust of the local population.

Sergei Vasilenkov

NOTES

New 'going home' immigration posters shameful, say
Scottish politicians (2013)



Home Office heavily criticised for advertisements at immigration reporting centres in Glasgow and Hounslow, West London (2013)

A new Home Office poster campaign that advises immigrants to "ask about going home" and offers to book them flights back to their native countries has been criticised by Scottish politicians as "shameful". The adverts have been on display in immigration reporting centres in Glasgow and Hounslow in west London since the end of last month and will stay until 4 October.

The Home Office said the posters were designed to ensure people knew that immigration officials could provide them with "sensitive advice and assistance to help them return home with dignity" and to raise awareness of its "voluntary return scheme". Earlier this month, ministers were threatened with court action over a Home Office publicity campaign in which vans touring six London boroughs carried the wording: "In the UK illegally? Go home or face arrest."

Opponents, among them the business secretary, Vince Cable, labelled the scheme an offensive stunt. Some critics said the "go home" wording was reminiscent of racist slogans from the 1970s. Those attending the Glasgow and Hounslow immigration reporting centres include people applying for asylum, those appealing a decision to refuse them asylum and migrant workers with queries about their visas.

The adverts include signs on chairs that read: "Ask about going home" and posters with the wording: "Is life here hard? Going home is simple." One poster shows a photograph of an aircraft and reads: "This plane can take you home. We can book the tickets." The campaign also includes an aeroplane-shaped poster suspended from the ceiling carrying the words: "Let us help you go home."

Sandra White, the SNP MSP for Glasgow Kelvin and a member of the Scottish parliament's cross-party group on asylum seekers, said: "Very many asylum seekers are fleeing for their lives, escaping violence and persecution. To be greeted with posters urging them to return to the countries they have just fled is totally inappropriate and appalling.

"In my view the campaign borders on the racist. The posters are in an area where most people who go there are African or Asian and to my mind they are there to put fear into people." White said the posters should be removed "as soon as possible". "They are clearly sending out a message saying: 'You are not welcome here and we want you to leave.'"

Ken MacIntosh, Labour MSP for Eastwood, said: "I think the whole 'go home' campaign has been damaging, and this latest campaign certainly seems to reflect the same sentiment. "It is a shameful attempt to whip up anti-immigration feeling." Rachel Robinson, policy officer at Liberty, the civil liberties campaign group, said: "Dismissive posters encouraging asylum seekers to go home reveal a depressing culture of disbelief in the Home Office. "They also help explain the consistently poor-quality decision-making in asylum cases, overturned with sky-high frequency at appeal. The claims of those seeking protection from persecution should be treated with seriousness and respect, not gimmicky disregard." All asylum seekers in Glasgow must report to the Home Office centre in Govan. How often they report depends on each individual, and can vary from once a week to once a month.

Most asylum seekers living in Scotland are from Africa and the Middle East, including hundreds who have fled conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria. An SNP MSP said he was writing to Theresa May, the home secretary, to demand that the campaign end immediately. James Dornan, who represents Glasgow Cathcart,

described the campaign as "xenophobic" and highlighted the humanitarian crisis in Syria. He said: "I am writing to Theresa May to find out if she thinks this type of manipulative messaging to people in very difficult situations is appropriate or not. Did she authorise this campaign? And if not, does she approve of it? And will she commit to ending the use of this inflammatory language immediately?"

"We only have to look at the terrible events in the Middle East right now to see what 'home' can be like for some of these people. There are upwards of 1,300 Syrian asylum seekers in the UK – undoubtedly including some in Glasgow – does the Westminster government really think it is appropriate to be telling people like them that it is 'easy' to 'go home'? "There is no room for this type of abhorrent xenophobic campaign which will only serve to make already vulnerable people feel unwelcome and fans the flames of racial bigotry."

Dornan has also put down a motion in the Scottish parliament calling for the campaign to end and calling for Scotland to "have a humane asylum system". He added: "The Home Office clearly has absolutely no idea about how modern Scotland treats vulnerable people – regardless of where they are from. Their campaign must stop immediately. "I strongly condemn this poster campaign and urge them to reconsider this so-called pilot and remove their extreme tactics from Scotland."

A Home Office spokesman said asylum seekers attended the offices, but the majority of people attending the offices had no right to be in the UK. He said: "Those with no right to remain in the UK should leave voluntarily. These posters are designed to ensure people know that we can provide sensitive advice and assistance to help them return home with dignity. "We also continue to work closely with community groups who welcome the opportunity for someone who is not here legally to leave the country of their own accord."

The Road Home

Chapters 1/2/3 (-> 46)

- 1) What do we learn about Lev?
- 2) What do we get to know about Lydia?
- 3) What do you get to know about Lev's family?
Relationships / tragedies / conflicts?
- 4) What about Lev's friends?
- 5) Describe Rudi and his attitude towards life / the city / the police / his car.
- 6) Who/what is "the Tchevi"?
- 7) Discuss the scene in the garden for residents.
- 8) How is the city / London / England described by various characters?
- 9) Discuss the arrival of Lev at the station. What is going on here?
- 10) What is ironic about the sentence: "May you help me, please?"
- 11) Discuss the symbolism of the scene where Lev wipes away the mud of Auror.
- 12) Why does Lev see a difference between the journey of tourists and his own?
- 13) Why does Lev not want to be an asylum-seeker but an economic migrant?

Chapters 4/5/6 (-> 99)

- 1) Why does Lev call Lydia? How does their relationship proceed in this chapter?
- 2) Describe the scene at Tom and Larissa's.
- 3) What's the problem with "Benefits" in England?
- 4) What do we get to know about Marina's life and her relationship with Lev?
- 5) What do we get to know about Christy Slane?
- 6) What happens at the concert?
- 7) Find evidence for the discrimination of Lev, the immigrant worker.
- 8) Discuss the story Lev tells about Lake Essel.
- 9) Are there any more descriptions regarding the city / London / England / Yarbl / Glic ?
- 10) What about Lev's state of mind? In how far has he adapted to his new life? What about his old life?

Chapters 7/8/9/10 (-> 151)

- 1) What do you make of Sam and Andy?
- 2) What does Lydia think about modern art?
- 3) Discuss the scene with the dead body in the cave!
- 4) How does Lev develop throughout these chapters?
- 5) Describe the relationship between Len and Sophie! What do you make of Sophie?
- 6) What about Lydia's job situation?
- 7) What is Christy Slane's opinion about English girls? What about him and Angela?
- 8) Discuss the scene at Ferndale Heights.
- 9) Which book does Lydia give to Lev? Symbolism?
- 10) Discuss Lev's letter to Ina.
- 11) What problems does Rudi face back home?

Chapters 11/12/13/14 (-> 214)

- 1) What do you think about Andy Portman's play? Is it art? Does it have a message?
- 2) How does Lev react to the play? Can you explain this reaction?
Psychoanalysis!
- 3) Analyse Lev's relationship with Sophie. (sex, love, everyday life) How does it develop in these chapters?
- 4) What do you make of Mrs Viggers and Jane and the way they treat Lev?
- 5) Is there anything new going on in Lydia's life?
- 6) Who is Howie Preece and what do you make of him?
- 7) What do we get to know about Ruby Constad's life?
- 8) Who is Vitas? What do we get to know about him?
- 9) Discuss the development in the relationship between Christy Slane and Angela!
- 10) What news from home worries Lev? Who is the messenger?
- 11) What about Lev's state of mind in these chapters? Development?

THEME BASED LESSONS / ANALYSIS

INVISIBLE BOUNDARIES

There are many places where Lev is not welcome or where he feels like an alien.

Give examples of such places and analyse what is happening and why.

FOOD FOR YOUR SENSES

Food is a crucial topic in the novel. The kind of food that the people eat has a great impact on their well-being / mood.

Meals are an opportunity for people to get together / to gather. It serves a social function. Hospitality.

Give examples from the book to prove your point.

Passage

Type of food

Impact

CHRISTY SLANE

Claim: Lev and Christy have a lot in common. Discuss.

Claim: They share their problems and difficulties and help each other out. Discuss.

RUDI

Claim: Rudi has been Lev's driving force, his moral support and his compass

LYDIA

Why is Lydia important for Lev?

Think about all the times that Lev disappoints Lydia. How does he disappoint her?

Does their friendship have a happy ending?

Explain the relationship between Maestro Greszler and Lydia.

SOPHIE

Why is Sophie important for Lev?

Why does Lev prefer Sophie to Lydia?

Sophie has two different personalities. Explain!

Why do they split up?

THE DAM IN BARYN

Who tells Lev about the dam?

What does Lev do once he hears the news?

What does the construction of the dam mean for the people of Auror?

Why is this tragic?

"If you dam a river, it floods backwards. Auror would be under water" (p. 163)

"All of us. No work. No house. No money. No transport. We're dead." (p. 278)

"The feeling that he was responsible...a clammy fever of guilt." (p. 258)

What are the reactions of Rudi, Ina and Maya to this news?

THE GREAT IDEA

What is the great idea? Why does Lev suddenly develop this idea?

What does he need to realise this dream?

How does he go about the realisation of his dream?

Who helps him to realise his idea?

Why is the restaurant important? (Rudi and Lora work there / Eva)

What is the name of the restaurant? Why is this significant?

HAPPY ENDING?

Discuss the ambivalence of the ending. Is it a happy ending?

THE JOURNEY

How do certain characters develop throughout their own personal and spiritual journey?

Which characters do not change at all?