White Supremacism: An Archaic Issue in Modern Society

In June 2016 the world of politics and the rest of the UK felt the loss of MP Jo Cox who was murdered whilst campaigning by a man who was said to be inspired by white supremacism. Cox was campaigning against leaving the European Union when a referendum was called in 2016. Brexit undoubtedly sparked tensions with issues of race and immigration which were already rife in a modern society where jobs and employability are focal in national concerns. Thomas Mair who committed the murder of Jo Cox acted in the name of white supremacism and was linked to groups such as the National Front and targeted Cox for her pro-immigration stance which he said made her 'one of 'the collaborators' [and] a traitor' to white people.

Photo credit: Philafrenzy

Jo Cox was an active campaigner in favour of immigration. Immigration is fundamental to the UK economy and since the vote in favour of leaving the European Union many industries have struggled from the lack of European immigrants willing to join their workforces. Immigration has been fundamental to human advancement and our society would not be what it is today without crucial movements of immigration throughout history. Thus, if something is so fundamental to our society we must make sure that these groups are not targeted or intimidated into relocating as diversity is so clearly a defining part of our culture.

There are a number of white nationalist groups that are currently active in the UK; until 2009, the British National Party effectively banned non-white members – those they titled as 'Indigenous Caucasian' from joining and only abandoned this requirement when challenged in court. Whilst many nationalist groups promote patriotism and do not actively target people from different ethnic backgrounds, often boundaries can be blurred between patriotic nationalism and racism or supremacism. Groups exist such as Blood and Honour which are far more advanced than simply nationalist parties and instead actively promote white-supremacist ideologies and hatred towards particular, targeted ethnic groups in our society.

In the US, race is still a prominent and divisive issue in society whereas in the UK often focal issues are directed towards issues such as the NHS. Whilst these far-right groups do exist and have members within the UK, our culture is undoubtedly founded in diversity and the integration of races, religions and nationalities. If we consider food, it's a rarity to find a household that doesn't engage with takeaway cultures of Indian, Chinese and Thai food to name a few. In the arts, defining movements in cinema, music and theatre were undoubtedly influenced by immigration and foreign cultures. Whilst acts such as the murder of Jo Cox are, thankfully, a rarity in the UK, it undoubtedly highlighted just how dangerous white supremacist thought can become if it is allowed to develop and not re-educated.

It is crucially important that nationalist organizations are not allowed to exist and develop to the extent that they promote targeted discrimination rather than just patriotism and nationalist values. If racist organisations are allowed to prevail, the consequences of marginalisation, exclusion and violence can have devastating consequences not only for the groups that are targeted but for the UK's culture, economy and way of life. Without actively challenging racial hate thought, speech and crime it can allow extremist views to spread and develop. In the case of Jo Cox, hateful thought was nurtured by existing nationalist groups which meant that an advocate of diversity lost her life due to the thoughtless actions of one misinformed and hateful individual.