

Bloody Foreigners – the Story of Immigration to Britain by Robert Winder.
Little Brown 2004.

A few years ago an ex-Tory MP caused outrage when he warned that if current trends in immigration continued the English were in danger of being turned into a 'mongrel race'. Apart from being impolitic, the statement was stupid because it evinced a colossal ignorance of the true nature of Britain, the demographic swirls and eddies of its history, and the ultimate fact that the phrase he used as a term of derogation could rightly be seen as a label of honour.

Robert Winder's *Bloody Foreigners* is a demographic history of Britain, illustrating the successive waves of individuals and ethnic groups who have come to these islands over the millennia, the contribution they and their descendants have made to our national life and success, and the rich cultural heritage they bequeathed to us.

But *Bloody Foreigners* is not a dry analysis, it positively throbs with individual and incident and contains anecdotes about some of the most significant British citizens in history whose direct or indirect origin was 'abroad'. Winder also details the indigenous response to immigration which, while always cautious and occasionally grudging nevertheless always balanced out due to a sense of British fair play and concern for the underdog. He does not deny the racism and xenophobia that have occasionally loomed large, but places it in its context when set against that of other European nations.

Bloody Foreigners is also replete with information about Jewish immigration and immigrants, and there is much in its pages from which any Jewish reader will derive pride and satisfaction.

This is a superb piece of history: beautifully written, highly informative, and a powerful source text for any who seek to combat bigotry and small-mindedness.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh