HISTORY RESOURCE CUPBOARD

**EQ LESSON 6 (Modern): What were the experiences of Polish migrants to Britain in the post-1945 period?**

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| **Knowledge Takeaways**: |
| * During World War Two, the Polish Air Forces fought alongside the Allies. The role they played in the Battle of Britain is particularly famous. * When the war ended, many Polish soldiers and migrants settled in Britain, establishing Polish communities that would continue to grow in the post-war period. * Many of these migrants filled gaps in coal-mining, textiles, agriculture and engineering. Despite being highly-qualified, migrants often took low-paid work in Britain. |
| *Key terms: servicemen, Battle of Britain, resettlement, political exile, Communism.* |
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This enquiry focuses on the establishment of Polish migrant communities in Britain, exploring the reasons for Polish settlement in the years after the Second World War. Students first categorise evidence about the causes of Polish migration, before using the case study of one Polish migrant to develop their understanding of what it was really like to settle in Britain during this time. Finally, students are equipped to respond to a tricky 12-mark exam question, explaining why migrants to Britain faced challenges in the years 1800-2000.

**Starter**

Begin by asking students to complete the ‘post-it note retrieval’ activity on slide 3: how much can they remember about migration in the 20th century so far? Students could note down their answers, or you could go through the questions as a class. The correct answers are given on slide 4.

**Main**

Use slide 5 to set the scene for the lesson: explain that, during the Second World War, the Polish air forces played a key role in fighting alongside the Allies. Their contributions to the Battle of Britain are particularly famous – leading, as slide 6 explains, to Winston Churchill’s well-known quote ‘Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few’. Slide 7 helps to explain that, when the war ended, many Polish soldiers and migrants settled in Britain, establishing new Polish communities that would continue to grow in the coming decades.

To find out more about the reasons for Polish migration to Britain during this period, distribute copies of WS1. Students need to categorise the information according to the cause of migration it describes: recognition of wartime service; difficulties in returning to Poland; or benefits for the British. The answers are given on slide 10.

Use slide 11 to get students thinking about how they would prioritise these causes: which was most important in prompting post-war Polish migration to Britain? How would they categorise these causes: which was the catalyst; which was the necessary cause; and which was a contributing cause for migration? Slide 12 offers some suggestions.

**Next steps**

Explain that it is important to look at ‘real’ case studies to find out more about the lived experiences of these Polish migrants. Use slide 13 to introduce Stanisław, a Polish soldier who served on behalf of the Allies forces during the war, and who remained in Britain once the war ended. Distribute copies of WS2, and ask students to use two different coloured pens to highlight Stanisław’s positive and negative experiences of migration. The answers are given on slide 16.

Slide 17 rounds off Stanisław’s story, explaining that he spent the rest of his life in Britain. Get students to use the word bank to sum up Stanisław’s experiences of migration: how would they characterise his experiences in Britain as a whole?

Using slide 18, ask students to decide whether the four statements are true or false: what evidence do they have to support their ideas? This activity would work well as a class discussion, helping to crystallise students’ knowledge of Polish migration to Britain.

**Finally**

End the enquiry with some exam practice: distribute copies of WS3, and guide students in completing their responses to the 12-mark exam question. Support for is offered on slide 19.