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Racism — History and how incidents like the Glasgow Blasts contribute to it



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Racism is a belief or doctrine that differences in physical appearance between people (such as those upon which the concept of race is based) determine cultural or individual achievement, and usually involves the idea that one's own 'race' is superior. Indians the world over have experienced racism in various forms sometimes or the other. The East India company during its hold over India had rampantly practiced racial discrimination and looked upon Indians with suspicion and hatred. If we delve into the pages of History it appears that as an ideology, racism first appeared during early modern Europe in Spain during the Reconquista, and then during the 19th century, where “scientific racism” ideologies, which attempted to provide a racial classification of humanity, became very common. Although such racist ideologies have been widely discredited after World War II and the Holocaust, the phenomena of racism and of racial discrimination have remained widespread all over the world. Racism has been a motivating factor in social discrimination, racial segregation, hate speech and violence (such as pogroms, genocides and ethnic cleansing). Despite the persistence of racial stereotypes, humor and epithets in much everyday language, racial discrimination is illegal in many countries. State Racism played a role in the Nazi Germany regime and fascist regimes in Europe, and in the first part of Japan's Showa period. State racism also played a major part in the formation of the Dominican Republic's identity and violent actions encouraged by Dominican governmental Xenophobia against Haitians and "Haitian looking" people. These governments advocated and implemented policies that were racist, xenophobic and, in case of Nazism, genocidal. The formation of the Dominican Republic was based on the Christian anti-semitism and racism carried out during the Reconquest of Spain. **We are all familiar with Apartheid** (meaning *separateness* in Afrikaans, cognate to English *apart* and *hood*) was a system of ethnic separation in South Africa from 1948, and was dismantled in a series of negotiations from 1990 to 1993, culminating in democratic elections in 1994. In the modern world the increase in Islamic fundamentalism has again raised issues of racism once again. The world has changed drastically after September 11 2001. The London Subway bombings and the recent attack on the Glasgow airport has once again rekindled feelings of hatred for the people of the subcontinent. As a result and aftermath of this incident patients at an Australian hospital have refused to be treated by several of the Indian-trained medical staff after two Indian doctors employed there were questioned in connection with the UK failed terror plots. The silver lining in the entire episodes from the Indian point of view has been the protests by many Australians (non Asians) criticizing the detention of Muhammed Haneef, the UK based car bomb suspect in Brisbane. It also asserts the fact that there is hope for the NRIs as many Indians living in foreign lands are in a state of fear and confusion and hoping against hope that there are no repercussions of these incidents in their homes away from home. Let us all

endeavour to make the world a better place to live and one of the key factors would be to contribute in any small way that we can in our day to day lives to eradicate racism.

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