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**Auszug aus:**

*Speech Analysis - Robin Cook: "Chicken Tikka Masala" (April 19th, 2001)*

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## Robin Cook, "Chicken Tikka Masala"

Robin Cook was the Foreign Secretary of Great Britain from 1997 to 2001. He gave the following speech at the Social Market Foundation in London on April 19<sup>th</sup> 2001.<sup>1</sup>

Tonight I want to celebrate Britishness. [...] **Sadly, it has become fashionable for some to argue that British identity is under siege, perhaps even in a state of terminal decline. The threat is said to come in three forms. First, the arrival of immigrants who, allegedly, do not share our cultural values [...]. Second, our continued membership of the European Union [...]. Third, the devolution of power to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, which is seen as a step to the break-up of the UK.** This evening, I want to set out the reasons for being optimistic about the future of Britain and Britishness. Indeed, I want to go further and argue that in each of the areas where the pessimists identify a threat, we should instead see developments that will strengthen and renew British identity.

The first element in the debate about the future of Britishness is the changing ethnic composition of the British people themselves. The British are not a race, but a gathering of countless different races and communities, the vast majority of which were not indigenous to these islands. [...] **It is not their purity that makes the British unique, but the sheer pluralism of their ancestry. [...] This pluralism is not a burden we must reluctantly accept. It is an immense asset that contributes to the cultural and economic vitality of our nation [...] [and] it reaches into every aspect of our national life.**

Chicken Tikka Masala is now a true British national dish, not only because it is the most popular, but because it is a perfect illustration of the way Britain absorbs and adapts external influences. Chicken Tikka is an Indian dish. The Masala sauce was added to satisfy the desire of British people to have their meat served in gravy. [...] **The modern notion of national identity cannot be based on race and ethnicity, but must be based on shared ideals and aspirations. [...]**

**To deny that Britain is European is to deny both our geography and our history. [...] Some anti-Europeans now argue that Britain's destiny lies outside Europe, as part of the English-speaking world and a member of NAFTA. Yet Britain trades three times more with the rest of the EU than we do with NAFTA<sup>2</sup>. The reason why over four thousand US companies have located here is because they want to export to Europe. If they only wanted to sell to NAFTA, they would have stayed at home. Europe is where our domestic quality of life is most directly at stake, whether the issue is environmental standards, the fight against organised crime, policy on asylum or stability on the continent.**

But it is not simply a question of economic and political realism that ties Britain to Europe, compelling as those arguments are. Britain is also a European country in the more profound sense of sharing European

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/apr/19/race.britishidentity>

<sup>2</sup> North American Free Trade Agreement: A trade agreement between the United States, Canada and Mexico

## Solutions

### 1. **Outline Robin Cook's views on immigration and multiculturalism.**

Robin Cook argues that, even though “some argue that British identity is under siege” due to immigration and multiculturalism (among others) (ll. 1), he believes that these should be seen as “developments that will strengthen and renew British identity” (ll. 7).

First, he points out that the “changing ethnic composition of the British people” (ll. 9) is not a new phenomenon, but rather that the British people have always been diverse, and that the “sheer pluralism of their ancestry” is not a “burden” that they must carry but rather an opportunity (l. 12 - 14). He uses the dish Chicken Tikka Masala as an example for the opportunity which diversity and multiculturalism present: Though Chicken Tikka is an Indian dish; a sauce was added to the recipe in order to make the dish more appealing to the British (ll. 16 - 17).

After addressing other aspects besides immigration and multiculturalism, Cook claims that because of this diversity, which has always defined Britain in the past, a “shared framework of values and institutions” (l. 46) is necessary which would “act as a unifying force” (l. 47). Finally, Cook points out that the British people should be proud of their country, but that they must be proud of “the real Britain of the modern age” where pluralism is “welcome[d] [...] as a unique asset” (l. 50), which is not just tolerated, but rather celebrated (ll. 52).

### 2. Analyse the way Cook tries to convince his audience of his views on immigration, the EU and the devolution of power. Take the structure of his speech and his use of language into consideration.

Cook tries to convince his audience of his views by making clear arguments that are structured in such a way that they seemingly inevitably lead the audience to agree with Cook's conclusion. First, Cook begins by identifying three alleged threats to British identity: “the arrival of immigrants”, the “continued membership in the European Union” and “the devolution of power” (ll. 3). By identifying these alleged threats, Cook addresses the fears that some people have for the future of Great Britain. He then sets out a goal for his speech: To argue that these threats aren't threats after all, but rather “developments that will strengthen and renew British identity” (ll. 7). By making this claim, Cook shows that he has understood the fears of the British people and is willing to address them directly rather than ignore them or trivialize them. He addresses each of these three points in turn.

He begins by addressing the topic of immigration. He points out that the feared immigrants are not arriving in a homogenous society, but that the British people themselves are a “gathering of countless different races and communities, the vast majority of which were not indigenous to these islands” (ll. 10). By using an alliteration which highlights the relationship between these two words, he contrasts the perceived “purity” with the genuine “pluralism” of British culture (ll. 11). Thus, the



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