

# **Immigration into the UK after World War II: Community of Afro-Caribbean Descent**

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**Analyzujte imigrační vývoj od konce druhé světové války po současnost.**

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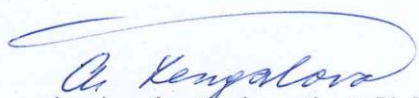
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## ABSTRAKT

Hlavním účelem této bakalářské práce je analyzovat těžký zápas komunity afro-karibského původu, která se rozhodla začít nový život ve Velké Británii po druhé světové válce. Úvodní kapitoly nabízí čtenáři stručnou historii prvního výskytu černých obyvatel ve Velké Británii, počátků imigrace, obchodu s otroky a doby první světové války. Nicméně, hlavní pozornost je věnována poválečné éře a problémům, které příliv afro-karibských imigrantů do země vyvolal. Na základě příkladů práce zkoumá způsob, jakým se afro-karibští přistěhovalci začleňují do většinové společnosti. Dále také probírá různé zátěže, které jsou nuceni nést vzhledem ke svému původu. Všeobecně se tvrdí, že rasismus a předsudky byly v moderní společnosti potlačeny. Nicméně životní zkušenosti členů komunit afro-karibského původu ukazují, že rasa a barva pleti stále negativně ovlivňují jejich život.

Klíčová slova: imigrace, integrace, rasismus, komunita afro-karibského původu, národnostní menšina

## ABSTRACT

The central purpose of this bachelor's thesis is to point out and analyze the difficult struggle of Afro-Caribbean community, which decided to start a new life in the United Kingdom after World War II. The introductory chapters offer the reader a brief history of the first occurrence of black inhabitants in Britain, early immigration, the slave trade and the period of the World War I. However, the main focus is the postwar era and the problems an influx of Afro-Caribbean immigrants brought to the country. Based on the examples, the thesis examines the way blacks integrated into mainstream society, and it also discusses various burdens they are forced to bear owing to their origin. It is widely alleged that racism and prejudice have been suppressed in modern society. Nevertheless, the life experiences of people of Afro-Caribbean community in the United Kingdom show that race and skin color still negatively influence their lives.

Keywords: immigration, integration, racism, Afro-Caribbean community, ethnic minority

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**CONTENTS**

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF AFRICAN IMMIGRATION TO BRITAIN .....</b>	<b>11</b>
1.1 Early Immigration .....	11
1.2 The African Slave Trade .....	12
1.3 The War Periods .....	13
1.4 The Windrush Era .....	14
<b>2 AFRO-CARRIBEAN DIASPORA IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.....</b>	<b>15</b>
2.1 The First Generation and its Disintegration in London .....	15
2.2 The Notting Hill Carnival .....	16
2.3 Black Power in the UK .....	17
<b>3 IMMIGRATION AND ASYLUM LAWS .....</b>	<b>20</b>
3.1 Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962.....	20
3.2 Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1968 and 1971 .....	21
3.3 The Current Situation in UK Immigration.....	22
<b>4 RACE AND PREJUDICE.....</b>	<b>24</b>
4.1 Stop and Search Law .....	24
4.2 Name Whitening as a Reliable Tool to Obtain a Job.....	25
4.3 Other Uses of Racial Profiling.....	25
<b>5 EDUCATION .....</b>	<b>27</b>
5.1 Blacks in a White-controlled Education System.....	27
5.2 Black Academic Underachievement: Lack of Talent or Poor Ambition? .....	28
5.3 Black Intellectuals in Exile .....	29
<b>6 THE AFRO-CARIBBEAN DIASPORA IN THE UK TODAY .....</b>	<b>30</b>
6.1 Black History Month: A Celebration of the African Diaspora in Britain .....	30
6.2 Black Men in the Community.....	31
6.3 Black British Talents and their Achievements.....	32
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>43</b>



## INTRODUCTION

“Black people are... really just like everybody else. Some of them are exceptional and most of them are not.” James Baldwin (1924-87)<sup>1</sup>

Sybil Phoenix is a Guyana-born community worker who changed the lives of thousands of young people in Britain. She came to the UK in 1957 and started fostering unwanted children, for which she had to raise funds herself by selling clothes she designed and made. Her seamstress skills were so exceptional that the pieces she made dressed the models on the African fashion show at one of the top hotels, The Savoy, London. Just in the first ten years she fostered over one hundred children and young women.<sup>2</sup> Her work became widely recognized and in 1972 she was offered an MBE that she initially refused with an argument that “no medal will feed and dress her children”. She also said: “I didn’t want a medal, but if the Queen and all the people felt that I need to be honored for all the work that I was doing they then need to give me a house to do this work because until then my children didn’t have a bedroom of their own. They had to share them with anybody the social services brought.”<sup>3</sup> Later on, when her requirements were met, Her Majesty Queen Elisabeth II awarded her with an OBE.<sup>4</sup>

Nonetheless, Sybil Phoenix initially faced discrimination and had to struggle with the SUS law. Eventually, she also became aware of practices at schools where many of the black children were told that the way their parents were bringing them up was wrong. They complained and then the social services removed them from their parents’ care. During her interview in 1993 she also mentions the negative discrimination from the employers who asked the job centers to recruit only white people. This encouraged her to state “white people can be skinheads when they are young. Then they buy a new suit and are back in the society. Black people cannot do it. They stay black so they have to work twice as hard.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>David W. Bygott, *Black and British* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 4.

<sup>2</sup>Yvonne Field, “History and Origins: Mrs. Sybil Phoenix,” Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust, <http://www.marshaphoenix.org.uk/history.php> (accessed April 28, 2014).

<sup>3</sup>Black Cultural Archives, Sybil Phoenix Interview 2, Black Cultural Archives (London, 1993), VHS.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

Mrs. Phoenix feels an urgent need of guiding and educating young black children, so she founded the first black youth center called Moonshot. The center provides facilities for education, leisure activities, and childcare mainly to the African and Caribbean community.<sup>6</sup> One of her most successful current projects is an international exchange program for black youth. It is financed from trust funds she founded. The African and Caribbean students joining this project have had the opportunity to visit the USA, Barbados, Guyana, Germany and Russia.<sup>7</sup>

This thesis aims to point out the issues Afro-Caribbean people have had to face and the ways they have dealt with them. Mrs. Sybil Phoenix is one of the best examples of a member of an Afro-Caribbean community who experienced hardships and still managed to improve the lives of thousands people and become a valued member of the British society.

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<sup>6</sup> Moonshot Centre, "Moonshot Centre," <http://www.moonshotcentre.org> (accessed April 28, 2014).

<sup>7</sup> Black Cultural Archives, Sybil Phoenix Interview 2, Black Cultural Archives (London, 1993), VHS.

## 1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF AFRICAN IMMIGRATION TO BRITAIN

Most British mistakenly assume the first blacks in Britain were the postwar Windrush arrivals. However, evidence documents the presence of blacks in the British Isles even before the Anglos and Saxons arrived in the fifth century A.D. As soldiers of the Roman imperial army, blacks occupied southern England for more than three centuries.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the archaeological discovery of the Ivory Bangle Lady burial proves that there was at least one black representative of the upper class. Britain's relationship with blacks remained stagnant until the Elizabethan era and the beginning of the Atlantic slave trade, from which Britain greatly profited. Even though this trade was outlawed in Britain in 1834 for several reasons such as the industrial revolution or the weakening relationship with the US,<sup>9</sup> Britain is still coming to terms with the legacies of the so-called "peculiar institution" that brought many Africans to British shores. Black immigration to Britain before World War II and the position of blacks in antebellum British society stands in stark contrast to the postbellum immigration and position of British blacks. While in most cities before WWII, blacks were integrated British society, in the post-war period they faced heightened segregation.<sup>10</sup> In either case, however, in a society with great disparity in wealth, blacks inevitably came up short.

### 1.1 Early Immigration

The first African-born Roman emperor, Septimius Severus, arrived in Britain to solve an uneasy situation with the Roman garrisons at Hadrian's Wall in AD 208. By the time he arrived, black soldiers were already there.<sup>11</sup> Rather surprising is a discovery of a male skeleton of an African in Strafford upon Avon, as this town is relatively far from the Romano-British towns of York and London. Scientific analysis has revealed that he was between 40 and 50 years of age and carried heavy loads, leading archaeologists to believe

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<sup>8</sup> Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 2010), 1.

<sup>9</sup> British Broadcasting Corporation, "The End of Slavery," <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/features/storyofafrica/9chapter8.shtml> (accessed April 5, 2013).

<sup>10</sup> The National Archives, "Introduction: Arrival in Britain," The National Archives, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory/intro/intro.htm> (accessed February 9, 2013).

<sup>11</sup> British Broadcasting Corporation, "Septimius Severus and Black Soldiers," <http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/clips/septimius-severus-and-black-soldiers/3641.html> (accessed February 9, 2013).

he was either a slave or a Roman army veteran.<sup>12</sup> This archaeological find is juxtaposed with that of a skeleton of a woman of African descent who clearly belonged to the highest society in York in the fourth century. Known as the Ivory Bangle Lady, her remains, along with personal items such as jewelry and a bottle of perfume, were entombed in a stone sarcophagus, a sign of considerable wealth. An analysis of the skeleton notes little wear and tear, suggesting she did not live a hard life. Isotopes taken from her teeth revealed her North African origins, a fact supported by her ivory bangle bracelet. According to archaeologist Hella Eckardt, this discovery contradicts the assumption that all black people had a low social status.<sup>13</sup> Her discovery supports the argument that skin color in Roman Britain, like in other Roman provinces, was not the sole determinant of class.

## 1.2 The African Slave Trade

African chattel slavery had an immense impact on the global economy for centuries, and Britain was one of the leaders in this trade. Indeed, Yet, British pockets were being lined with profits from slavery largely at the Africans' expense. Pro-slavery campaigners actively spread the message through newspapers and pamphlets that slavery sustained the economy and provided jobs for white Britons, mainly in port cities such as Liverpool and Bristol, and should therefore be maintained. The British public agreed, and supported slavery for much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>14</sup> By the end of the eighteenth century, however, the number of abolitionists was increasing, as were their efforts to persuade the parliament to outlaw slavery and the slave trade. These efforts came to fruition in 1807, when Parliament outlawed the slave trade. However, Africans in British colonies remained in bondage. This changed, however, in 1833 when Parliament passed the Emancipation Act, ending slavery throughout the British realm.<sup>15</sup> Even so, freedmen in the British West Indies were forced to continue working for their former owners. The length of

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<sup>12</sup> Associated Newspapers Ltd, "Found in a Warwickshire Cemetery a Long Way From Home, the African Immigrant from 300AD," <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-1350579/Found-Warwickshire-cemetery-long-way-home-African-immigrant-300AD.html#ixzz2KRhooCti> (accessed February 9, 2013).

<sup>13</sup> Steve Bird, "Analysis of Roman Grave Reveals that York was a Multicultural Society," Times Newspapers Limited, <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/science/article1844046.ece> (accessed February 9, 2013).

<sup>14</sup> The British Library Board, "The Campaign for Abolition," The British Library Board, <http://www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/campaignforabolition/sources/proslavery/proslaveryarticle/proslaveryarticle.html> (accessed February 9, 2013)

<sup>15</sup> Discovery Education, "A World of Slavery," Discovery Communications LLC, <http://school.discoveryeducation.com/schooladventures/slavery/britain.html> (accessed February 9, 2013).

their servitude depended on their status, with skilled laborers and domestic workers required to serve their former masters for four more years and agriculture workers six more years. After 1838, however, they could buy their way out of servitude. These so-called apprenticeships gave the planters time to establish a new labor system and gave Britain time to adapt the legal and financial systems.<sup>16</sup> The former slaves worked forty-five hours a week only for food, clothing, lodging, and medical care. No salary was paid. It was presumed by British whites that the grateful freedmen would transform themselves into hard working Christians. After the initial celebrations died down, though, the freedmen soon realized they had little hope for a better life as they had no assets. For some, toiling for their ex-masters remained the only viable option.<sup>17</sup>

### 1.3 The War Periods

The most common profession for black males was as seamen, but black seamen had difficulty finding work because many white seamen refused to work with them. This situation significantly changed when the First World War broke out.<sup>18</sup> Black laborers were in demand in munitions and chemical factories while black seamen filled gaps in the British navy. Others were used as cannon “fodder” in battles against Germans in East Africa. Black troops were praised for their courage and bravery, for which they were promised benefits. However, black civil rights were disregarded even before the First World War ended. Moreover, blacks were victims of racial abuse. A worthy example of this conduct is an incident that occurred at the Belmont Military Hospital in Liverpool. More than 500 white soldiers started a fight against 50 black soldiers after a verbal insult on the part of the Whites. Although the white soldiers were found guilty by the War Office, London newspapers still blamed the black troops for rioting. As for the black seamen, the Ministry of Labor purposely did not inform blacks of their eligibility for unemployment compensation.<sup>19</sup> The British Government neither kept its promises nor treated black British citizens fairly.

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<sup>16</sup> Gad Heuman, “The Legacies of Slavery and Emancipation: Jamaica in the Atlantic World,” Yale University, <http://www.yale.edu/glc/belisario/Heuman.pdf> (accessed March 6, 2013).

<sup>17</sup> Jan Rogozinski, *A Brief History of the Caribbean: From the Arawak and Carib to the Present* (New York: Plume, 1999), 186.

<sup>18</sup> Fryer, *Staying Power*, 296.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 299.

## 1.4 The Windrush Era

Large post-war immigration waves from the British West Indies helped to rebuild Britain and changed British society. By the same token, the environment the British newspapers and the predominantly white society created was far from welcoming. Short of labor war-torn Britain looked for help in the British West Indies. The *Evening Standard* released an ironic article just a day before the *SS Empire Windrush*, a ship that arrived on 22 June 1948 at Tilbury with 492 passengers from the West Indies. The front page of the newspaper boldly proclaims: “MEAT: LAST RESERVES” and details the release of supplies of meat from Australia. At the same time, the paper ironically welcomes “the 400 sons of Empire” in a subheadline. This can be perceived as a way of increasing fear in the minds of citizens of the United Kingdom over their uncertain future related to food rations combined with extra mouths to feed. The newspaper is influencing the attitude of the Britons towards blacks, and the *Windrush* arrivals are portrayed as a threat coming from the West Indies (see appendix I).<sup>20</sup> After arrival, these blacks received temporary accommodation from the officialdom. 202 blacks were recruited immediately, filling gaps in a variety of jobs in railways, hospitals, farms and in the post office. The rest did not have to wait long. Indeed, demand was so great that the country started resourcing in the West Indies again. Sweet promises of a better life in Britain enticed skilled blacks to leave their homes in Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago.<sup>21</sup> The annual influx of West Indian immigrants by the end of 1955 was 20,000, which the British government deemed too high and decided to restrict. Since the suggestions on restrictions were racially discriminatory, there was a threat that it would jeopardize the relationship between Britain and the Commonwealth countries in the West Indies. The question remained how to restrict non-white Commonwealth immigrants and sustain the relationship between their countries and Britain.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>John Frost Newspapers, “Windrush: Post-war Immigration,” <http://www.bl.uk/learning/timeline/item107829.html> (accessed March 27, 2013).

<sup>21</sup>Fryer, *Staying Power*, 373.

<sup>22</sup>Ian R. G. Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939: The Making of Multi-Racial Britain* Taylor & Francis e-Library, (London: Taylor and Francis e-Library, 2013), 82.

## 2 AFRO-CARRIBEAN DIASPORA IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

The Afro-Caribbean community in the UK consists of people from different islands in the West Indies, mainly from Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. The majority of Afro-Caribbean people is concentrated in the south of England, particularly in London.<sup>23</sup> The first generation had to face a lot of discrimination and find a way to endure in British society. Thanks to their togetherness they managed what was for many white Britons impossible, buy off properties they were renting. The racial tensions culminated in riots in Nottingham and subsequently in Notting Hill in 1958. A year later the largest street festival in Europe started, Notting Hill carnival, held annually as a celebration of multicultural diversity.<sup>24</sup> While the first generation was too busy with jobs searching and struggling to make ends meet, the second generation strived more to be involved in British politics. They were empowered by, and in some cases duplicated, the American civil rights movement. As a result of black<sup>25</sup> unity, strength and inspiration, they founded several organizations and institutions that created a fruitful soil for a contemporary black society in the UK.

### 2.1 The First Generation and its Disintegration in London

The colonial educational system portrayed Britain as a far better place to live than the first generation of immigrants experienced. Most Britons had never seen a black in person. These immigrants of African descent were viewed by whites as uncivilized creatures with strange practices such as cannibalism, infanticide or polygamy.<sup>26</sup> As Ruth Glass and Harold Pollins concisely described in a 1960 report, “colored people are feared as competitive intruders; they are thought of as promoters of crime and carriers of disease; they are envied when they are resourceful and thrifty. They are looked down upon; they are patronized; occasionally they are treated just like everyone else.”<sup>27</sup> Tensions increased as more

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<sup>23</sup> Minorities at risk project, “Assessment for Afro-Caribbeans in the United Kingdom,” University of Maryland, <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/assessment.asp?groupId=20005#references> (accessed March 18, 2014).

<sup>24</sup> <http://thecityspeaks.org/post/29824972383/nottinghillcarnival> (accessed March 20, 2014).

<sup>25</sup> Although some sources are describing black minorities or include black Africans, they still are considered relevant as Afro-Caribbean people belong in this category.

<sup>26</sup> Fryer, *Staying Power*, 374.

<sup>27</sup> Ruth Glass, *London's Newcomers; the West Indian Migrants* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1961). 120, quoted in Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 2010), 375.

immigrants arrived. The 1950s newcomers found themselves in a stifling situation. Finding a sympathetic landlord became problematic. Advertisements clearly stated that non-white people were discouraged from applying (see appendix II). Even if they applied in person, they were met with all sorts of excuses, for instance that the husband or the neighbor of the landlord would not be happy about it. A Jewish Polish immigrant, Peter Rachman, was the first landlord willing to rent to the black immigrants, but he exploited them.<sup>28</sup> While white people were legally protected from high rental fees, the new non-white tenants had to pay outrageous prices. Soon he established a property empire based on turn-based strategies. For instance, he would rent rooms to West Indian musicians who held lively parties, which forced the white tenants still paying pre-war rates to vacate their homes.<sup>29</sup> These homes could then be rented at higher prices.

Soon, the immigrants found a way out of the vicious circle of Ranchman's exploitation. The West Indians in Notting Hill got together and established a traditional Susu bank, a type of bank then common in Africa, the West Indies and in the United States as well.<sup>30</sup> Each member of the group contributes a small amount of money, which is safely kept with low transaction saving fees in a Susu account. These funds also served as emergency loans to members.<sup>31</sup> As for the West Indians in Notting Hill, their aim was to buy out the decaying houses in which they lived. This outraged white Britons, especially those who could never afford to buy houses in which they themselves had lived their entire lives.<sup>32</sup> Any attempt to integrate in the British society was rather a failure, as whites were building barriers based on their fear and prejudice.

## 2.2 The Notting Hill Carnival

In 1958, racial tensions between poor whites and black immigrants peaked in rioting in Notting Hill, where West Indians had organized an annual event celebrating their heritage,

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<sup>28</sup> British Broadcasting Corporation, "Windrush: Arrival," BBC, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0074ksb> (accessed April 13, 2013).

<sup>29</sup> Sunday Times, "Landlord Rachman Gets Rich on Racial Tension." Times Newspapers Limited 2011, October 2, 2011. 33. <http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/comment/regulars/archive/article788167.ece> (accessed April 13, 2013).

<sup>30</sup> British Broadcasting Corporation, "Windrush: Arrival," BBC, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0074ksb> (accessed April 13, 2013).

<sup>31</sup> Ernest Aryeetey and Christopher Udry, "The Characteristics of Informal Financial Markets in Africa," Yale University, <http://www.econ.yale.edu/~cru2/pdf/aerc.pdf> (accessed April 13, 2013).

<sup>32</sup> British Broadcasting Corporation, "Windrush: Arrival," BBC, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0074ksb> (accessed April 13, 2013).



the Notting Hill Carnival (see appendix III). Fascists and the British subculture gangs, Teddy Boys, were abusing blacks. Moreover, they started anti-black campaigns called “Keep Britain White” (KBW) (see appendix IV).<sup>33</sup>

Senior police officers covered up the nature of the incidents by persuading the home secretary, Rab Butler, that the incidents were more about hooliganism than racial conflict. In fact, the KBW mobs equipped with knives, petrol bombs and leather belts were attacking West Indians living in the area of Notting Hill. On the first day of the riots, five black men were left unconscious on the street. Among the hundred people charged with offences, only one-third was non-white. Police Constable Anthony Saunders attempted to help a black man who was being beaten by whites and ended up being attacked as well. He said, "There were milk bottles raining down on us. I felt blood running down my face, the side of my nose and cheek." Since then, the police have never fully gained the trust of blacks again.<sup>34</sup> The only justice that came out of it was sentencing nine white youngsters to four years in prison. The judge said that everyone in the country has the right to walk the streets with their arms straight and no fear.<sup>35</sup> The first Notting Hill Carnival was held a year after in the streets of Notting Hill in order to portray West Indians in a better light.

### 2.3 Black Power in the UK

As a response to continuous attacks on blacks and discrimination against them, the community looked for ways of defense. It might be argued that the US civil rights movement had the biggest impact on British race relations. However, there are several aspects that do not support this statement. Firstly, it was the Afro-Caribbean and African students who campaigned for black people's rights in the 1930's and 1940's in Britain. Plus there were black organizations founded to promote the interests of blacks. For instance, the West African Student Union (WASU, 1925), the International African Service Bureau (IASB, 1937) and the Pan-African Federation (PAF) in 1944. Secondly, the

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<sup>33</sup>Paul Rich, “Black People in Britain: Response and Reaction, 1945-62,” History Today Ltd. <http://www.historytoday.com/paul-rich/black-people-britain-response-and-reaction-1945-62> (accessed April 18, 2013).

<sup>34</sup>Alan Travis, “After 44 Years Secret Papers Reveal Truth about Five Nights of Violence in Notting Hill,” Guardian News and Media Limited, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2002/aug/24/artsandhumanities.nottinghillcarnival2002> (accessed April 18, 2013).

<sup>35</sup>Fryer, *Staying Power*, 379.

proportion of the US and UK's black population differs notably and therefore to fully apply the strategy of the Civil Rights Movement on British soil was impossible.<sup>36</sup>

Although Britain had numerous activists who fought for black people's rights, the starting point of Black Power in the UK is considered the foundation of a Black Power organization, the Universal Coloured People's Association (UCPA).<sup>37</sup> The major goal was to focus on identity, culture and control of community institutions. Children and adults were taught about the first two terms in supplementary education. The goal of focusing on identity was to empower their pride of being black and culture was just as important in order to keep common values. As for community control, the objective was to not let the government interfere and have an influence on the institutions of the community. This meant a rejection of any funding for supplementary schools and homeless hostels.<sup>38</sup> British Black Power groups also promoted self-defense by monitoring the streets and police intervention and providing legal advocacy services.<sup>39</sup> One of the movement's aims was also to unify people of African and Asian heritage to work together against the common enemy. Like Black Power movements in other countries, the movement in the UK promoted the idea of black people being a part of a global majority.

Britain hosted visits of several strong leaders of the American Civil Rights Movement such as the Muslim African American Malcolm X, Martin Luther King and W E B Dubois (see appendix V). When Malcolm X delivered his speech in London in 1965 he inspired one of his listeners to change his name to Michael X and set up a Black Power organization, the Racial Awareness Action Society (RAAS).<sup>40</sup>

A great contribution to the British Black Power was made by the visit of the Trinidadian-American black activist Stokely Carmichael in 1967. Carmichael was a leader of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) who laid a strong foundation for Black Power movement in the UK.<sup>41</sup> He is known for his proclamation, which brought

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<sup>36</sup> Rosalind Eleanor Wild, "Black was the colour of our fight. Black Power in Britain, 1955-1976." (PhD dissertation, University of Sheffield, 2008), 30-31, <http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/3640/1/489059.pdf>

<sup>37</sup> Black Power movement represented interests of Africans, Afro-Caribbeans, Pakistanis, Indian, Chinese, Arabs and other non white people). *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>38</sup> Rosalind Eleanor Wild, "Black was the colour of our fight. Black Power in Britain, 1955-1976." (PhD dissertation, University of Sheffield, 2008), 6, <http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/3640/1/489059.pdf> (accessed April 7, 2014).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 32-33.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

the term “Black Power”: “This is the twenty-seventh time I have been arrested - and I ain’t going to jail no more. The only way we gonna stop them white men whuppin’ us is to take over. We been saying freedom for six years and ain’t got nothing. What we are gonna start saying now is BLACK POWER!”<sup>42</sup> The British Black Power movement has had a significant impact on the lives of members of Afro-Caribbean communities in the UK and it laid a strong foundation for contemporary black movements, organizations and projects designed for African and Caribbean communities.

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<sup>42</sup> Carmichael, Stokely, and Michael Thelwell. *Ready for Revolution: The Life and Struggles of Stokely Carmichael* (New York: Scribner, 2003), 507.

### 3 IMMIGRATION AND ASYLUM LAWS

The large influx of black immigrants was curtailed by the Commonwealth Act of 1962 followed by other acts in 1968, 1971 and 1981. The main motive of introducing these restrictions was the violence during the Notting Hill and Nottingham riots in 1958 (see appendix VI).

The applicants had to obtain work permits, which were difficult and limited. Britain became selective and granted entry only to those who possessed professional skills. Paradoxically, these professionals were not able to find a job in their field in the UK as their qualifications were considered invalid.<sup>43</sup> This triggered waves of unrest. Racial discrimination gained momentum by the late 1970s under the Conservative Party leadership of Margaret Thatcher.<sup>44</sup>

According to the 2001 national census, Britain was home to 563,843 people of Black Caribbean origin and 479,665 Black Africans, while 96,069 referred to themselves as Black Other, for a total of 1,139,577.<sup>45</sup> By 2011, the number of people stating their ethnicity as a Black African had doubled from 0.9 % to 1.8%, whereas the proportion of Black Caribbean ethnicity remained the same. The amount of people belonging to the group Other Black increased as well.<sup>46</sup>

#### 3.1 Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962

After the US government passed the McCarran-Walter Act in 1952, which restricted the ability of citizens from the West Indies to migrate to the US, Britain became the targeted destination for Afro-Caribbean immigrants. The labour demand was still huge so London Transport began recruiting its new staff in Barbados and later on also from Trinidad and Jamaica (see appendix VII). Skilled workers were also needed to fill gaps in British restaurants and hotels. A great contribution to the NHS system was made by Afro-

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<sup>43</sup> British Broadcasting Corporation.

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/familyhistory/bloodlines/migration.shtml?entry=commonwealth\\_immigration\\_act&theme=migration](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/familyhistory/bloodlines/migration.shtml?entry=commonwealth_immigration_act&theme=migration) (accessed April 2, 2013).

<sup>44</sup> Kwesi Owusu, *Black British Culture and Society* (London: Routledge, 2000), 14.

<sup>45</sup> Office for National Statistics, "Census 2001: National report for England and Wales," Crown copyright, <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/census-2001-national-report-for-england-and-wales/national-report-for-england-and-wales-part-1/index.html> (accessed April 2, 2013).

<sup>46</sup> Office for National statistics, "Video Summary: Ethnicity in England and Wales," <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/key-statistics-for-local-authorities-in-england-and-wales/video-summary-ethnicity.html> (accessed April 2, 2013).

Caribbean nurses.<sup>47</sup> Before the passing of the first Commonwealth Immigrants Bill in 1962, Commonwealth citizens were considered as British subjects and therefore had the right of unrestricted entry to the country. However, the Tory and Labour politicians, fearful of losing their seats and votes, soon adhered to limiting entry of immigrants. Apart from controlling immigration this piece of legislation also authorised the deportation of Commonwealth citizens convicted of a criminal offence. Entry was then guaranteed only to holders of employment vouchers, students, members of the armed forces and immigrants who proved their ability to provide for themselves without working. Furthermore, the Act modified the citizenship requirements.<sup>48</sup>

### 3.2 Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1968 and 1971

Although the pace of immigration slowed down, English racism prevailed as an effective weapon during general elections. An example serves to demonstrate this. Tory candidate Peter Griffiths fought for ending immigration and repatriation of non-white Commonwealth immigrants. “If you want a nigger neighbour vote Labour” was his slogan which granted him a seat in the British parliament.<sup>49</sup> In 1967, Asians and Kenyans, holders of British passports, started fleeing from their countries to avoid discrimination from their own governments. The next year, a Conservative MP, Enoch Powell led a campaign for further restrictions of immigration policy. He made a significant contribution to British racism by his notorious “Rivers of Blood” speech (see appendix VIII). Shortly after that, the 1968 Bill became law, which required British passport holders to demonstrate they had a parent or grandparent in the UK.<sup>50</sup>

Yet another Act followed in 1971 requiring Commonwealth citizens to obtain a work permit in the same way as anyone else coming to live and work in the UK. The Conservative Party inclined to a dual approach. On the one hand, they called for stricter immigration controls, whereas the second approach strived to ensure equal rights for the

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<sup>47</sup> Fryer, *Staying Power*, 373.

<sup>48</sup> Mike Philips, “Immigration Legislation in Britain,” Moving Here, <http://www.movinghere.org.uk/galleries/histories/caribbean/journeys/legislation.html> (accessed February 6, 2014).

<sup>49</sup> Fryer, *Staying Power*, 382.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 384.

immigrants that were already in the country.<sup>51</sup> The immigrants who obtained a work permit had to reapply for a new one every twelve months. Nevertheless, those who wished to be repatriated had all their travel expenses paid for. In spite of these restrictions, Britain still let in 27 000 Asians fleeing from Uganda in 1972. This African country faced a brutal regime of the dictator Idi Amin.<sup>52</sup>

### 3.3 The Current Situation in UK Immigration

Since immigration into the UK is one of the most discussed issues in the British Parliament, the Acts are frequently amended according to the current needs. One of the reasons is to create a cost effective and secure system to control immigration. Currently, the legislation allows Nationals of Commonwealth countries, West Indies, to enter the country without a visa if they meet certain requirements. Nevertheless, the duration of their stay cannot exceed a period of 6 months.<sup>53</sup>

Thanks to advanced technologies the visa application process is now faster and more efficient. Although each case is assessed individually, the applicants may find out whether they need to obtain a visa by filling in a quick questionnaire on the UK Border Agency website. The applicants select a purpose of their journey and the system gives them the answer. The choices are: “tourism, including visiting friends or family, work or business, study, transit (on your way to somewhere else), join family for a long stay, get married, visit your child at school, get private medical treatment.” However, the application process is far more complex and, depending on the circumstances, relatively expensive.<sup>54</sup> Therefore the applicants have to be ready to provide all supporting documents as an incomplete application may be considered as a reason for refusal and thus a loss of the application fee.

Since the United Kingdom is a part of the EU, the EU immigration laws apply as well. In order to manage migration effectively and select individuals who can contribute to the UK’s economy the most, the UK Border Agency introduced a point-based system. It is

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<sup>51</sup> Christina Julios, *Contemporary British Identity: English Language, Migrants, and Public Discourse* (England: Ashgate, 2008), 93.

<sup>52</sup> British Broadcasting Corporation, “1971: UK restricts Commonwealth migrants,” BBC, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/february/24/newsid\\_2518000/2518513.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/february/24/newsid_2518000/2518513.stm) (accessed February 9, 2014).

<sup>53</sup> UK Border Agency, “Information for non-visa nationals,” <https://contact-ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/general-info/non-visa-nationals/> (accessed April 9, 2014).

<sup>54</sup> UK Border Agency, “Check if you need a UK visa,” <https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa/y/jamaica> (accessed April 9, 2014).

composed of five tiers for which the applicants need to obtain a certain amount of points to fit in one of them. Another reason for introducing this system is also the ageing UK population and skilled labor gaps. The employer has to prove that it is impossible to find a person with the same set of skills who is already in the country in order to be able to recruit a foreign national.<sup>55</sup> In fact the free entry and eligibility to work for EU citizens makes it more difficult for West Indians to obtain a visa. Although the government's approach should help boosting Britain's economy, it leaves Caribbean people, some of who have strong bonds to Afro-Caribbean people living in the UK, at a great disadvantage.

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<sup>55</sup> UK Parliament, "Managed migration," The Crown.  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/research/key-issues-for-the-new-parliament/security-and-liberty/managed-migration/> (accessed April 9, 2014).

## 4 RACE AND PREJUDICE

Contemporary racism in British society took on a different aspect in contrast to the period between 1958 and 1968. The early postwar migrants were exposed to a legal system and predominantly white society, which did not allow them to assimilate. As the black communities were strengthening their rights were fought for. However, skin color remained a powerful factor for black Britons. One of the restrictions blacks have to deal with often is the Stop and Search law regulated by the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act of 1994. This act was originally passed to tackle people going to illegal rave parties. Nowadays it is used to tackle street crimes, especially gang-related crimes.<sup>56</sup>

### 4.1 Stop and Search Law

In England and Wales, the police have a right to stop and question anyone at any-time. They might ask two or three questions regarding the person's reason for being in the area and about their intentions. The person, however, is not obliged to answer any such questions. If the police officer decides to search the person, the officer must state their name and rank, the reason why the person is going to be searched and what the police officer is looking for. According to Criminal Justice and Public Order Act of 1994, the suspect can be stopped and searched to find out whether they possess illegal drugs, weapons, stolen property or any subject that might be used to commit a crime.<sup>57</sup>

Nevertheless, these practices led to a racial profiling and are being used disproportionately. The latest study done by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) reveals that police officers are up to thirty-seven times more likely to stop and search blacks than whites. Between 2008 and 2011 the percentage of ethnic minority members who got stopped and searched increased from fifty-one percent to sixty-four. Overall the number of black, Asian or minority ethnic people who were searched doubled in the last decade. Paradoxically, the highest disproportional use of this law was outside London. EHRC claims that these searches are ineffective, as only 2.8 percent of 60 stopped suspects resulted in an arrest in 2010-11 and this number is decreasing. The Stop and Search is one of the most divisive laws in the UK, and it has a negative effect on blacks,

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<sup>56</sup> The National Archives, "Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994," Crown copyright <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1994/33/section/60> (accessed April 24, 2013)



Asians and other ethnic minorities. Should this profiling continue, the police forces risk losing the trust of minorities.<sup>58</sup>

## 4.2 Name Whitening as a Reliable Tool to Obtain a Job

Although the Employment Law of the United Kingdom knows the concept of so-called positive discrimination, the cases of discrimination on the job market are prevalent. Positive discrimination is defined as “the process of giving preferential treatment, especially in employment, to minority groups of society that have been prejudiced against in the past.” In other words, preference must be given to an ethnic minority applicant even when all the applicants are equally trained and skilled for the position.<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, the real situation differs considerably. In 2012, BCC News reported on an ethnic minority graduate who was recommended by her adviser in a job centre to “whiten” her name after sending a vast number of ineffective job applications. This helped her to be at least short listed and invited for an interview. Another reason for rejecting ethnic minority women is the biased assumption that every Muslim or black woman is about to start a large family which would limit her efficiency and devotion.<sup>60</sup> Again, these examples demonstrate the effort of the British authorities to secure equal opportunities for all its citizens. At the same time, when it comes to real life implementation the applicants are marked by their skin color.

## 4.3 Other Uses of Racial Profiling

Google is targeting internet users according to their race and ethnicity not only in the US but also in the UK. A service offered by Google, Gmail, is selecting advertisements according to names in the emails. For instance, an email with a name which is more likely to be of a white person such as Robert Howe and with a subject stating “I Need Cash” would automatically assign to the e-mail with advertisements offering foreign exchange

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<sup>57</sup>The National Archives, “Your Rights and the Law,” Crown copyright, <https://www.gov.uk/police-powers-to-stop-and-search-your-rights> (accessed April 24, 2013)

<sup>58</sup> Vikram Dodd, “Police Up to 28 Times More Likely to Stop and Search Black People,” Guardian News and Media Limited, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2012/jun/12/police-stop-and-search-black-people> (accessed April 24, 2013).

<sup>59</sup> Thomson Reuters Corporation, “Positive Discrimination,” <http://www.findlaw.co.uk/law/employment/discrimination/500553.html> (accessed April 24, 2013).

<sup>60</sup>Holly Wallis and Stephen Robb, “Workplace discrimination prompts 'whitened' job applications”, British Broadcasting Corporation, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-20608039> (accessed April 24, 2013).

solutions for business. On the other hand, an e-mail with an African name Segun Akinkube and exactly the same subject is assigned completely different advertisements. He is offered payday loans. While whites get products offering them solutions, blacks are encouraged to fall in to debt.<sup>61</sup> The behavior of such marketing companies implies that black and ethnic minorities are more likely to be of low socio-economic status and therefore an easy prey for creditors.

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<sup>61</sup>Willard Foxton, "Google Denies Racial Profiling via Gmail. Here Are Some Disturbing Questions It Still Needs to Answer," Telegraph Media Group Limited, <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/technology/willardfoxton2/100007473/google-denies-racial-profiling-via-gmail-here-are-some-disturbing-questions-it-still-needs-to-answer/> (accessed April 24, 2013).

## 5 EDUCATION

Undoubtedly, blacks were made to adjust to the British educational system. However, at the same time it was necessary to employ new teaching methods focused on multiculturalism. This became a widely discussed issue as some scholars argued that the teacher adopts the role of a social worker and neglects their primary function.<sup>62</sup> On the other hand, activities which help the pupils understand the differences among them lead to improvement of relations between the groups.<sup>63</sup>

### 5.1 Blacks in a White-controlled Education System

Many of the Afro-Caribbean families arriving in the UK became disappointed; as they expected their children to receive a better education than they did in their home country where success is not determined by skin color or class. The immigrant children were given the entrance tests with questions which said very little or nothing to them as, for example “How does Big Ben indicate the time?” Based on the test results, in most cases these pupils were classified as educationally subnormal (ESN) and sent to secondary modern schools, where they were trained to do menial jobs. Later, in the 1970s, these children were put in special schools, which made it very difficult to get to the main stream. A Grenadian born scholar, Bernard Coard, claims that the black immigrant students’ failures are mostly caused by low expectations of teachers and a lack of motivation to succeed in a predominantly white society.<sup>64</sup> By the end of the 1980s, these black students were four times less likely to find a job than whites.<sup>65</sup> In such a situation, people have an opportunity to extend their qualification by studying at college or university. However, blacks’ applications appeared to be disproportionately selected. The amount of black applicants was significant but the number of the accepted ones dismal. One explanation that is offered is that the Afro-Caribbean students tend to follow a less conventional path to higher education and thus become less attractive for the universities. They complete the BTEC

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<sup>62</sup> Maurice Craft, *Teaching in a Multicultural Society: The Task for Teacher Education* (Sussex: The Falmer Press, 1981), 60.

<sup>63</sup> Patty Bode, “Multicultural Education,” <http://www.education.com/reference/article/multicultural-education/#B>, (accessed February 8, 2013).

<sup>64</sup> Polly Curtis, “Opportunity Locked,” Guardian News and Media Limited, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2005/feb/01/raceineducation.race> (accessed April 24, 2013).

<sup>65</sup> Mike Phillips, “Growing Up,” The National Archives, [http://www.movinghere.org.uk/galleries/histories/caribbean/growing\\_up/growing\\_up.htm](http://www.movinghere.org.uk/galleries/histories/caribbean/growing_up/growing_up.htm) (accessed April 24, 2013).

course first and then do their A levels. The highest rates of university acceptance are achieved by whites and the lowest, only 36.6 percent, by blacks. On the other hand, black applicants applying for polytechnic courses reach a higher acceptance level than their white counterparts.<sup>66</sup>

Moreover, the issue of education can also be perceived from a completely different point of view. It goes without saying that in order to increase the number of students from the minorities in the tertiary education system it is necessary to “raise” the academics of those who would attract more black students. The recent statistics revealed that there are only 50 black professors out of 14,000 at universities in the United Kingdom. Obviously, the British universities are very punctilious with respect to possible discrimination of students of ethnic origin; however, with regard to the staff, there seems to be a real issue. According to Harry Goulbourne, professor at London South Bank University, it is apparent that “while the crude racism of the past had gone, universities are riddled with 'passive racism',” as the candidates for the professorships must spend twice as much effort compared to white aspirants. Based on these findings it might be worth considering whether the black students would not be more motivated to seek higher education if there were more positive role models for them.<sup>67</sup>

To sum up, although the education of black students has undergone significant development there is still much to improve. Nowadays, special training programs are held for teachers who teach in multicultural classrooms. More importantly, with the improving quality of teaching the improvement of social status of the black students can possibly be expected as these two are closely related.<sup>68</sup>

## **5.2 Black Academic Underachievement: Lack of Talent or Poor Ambition?**

Although the education system underwent several changes to accommodate the needs of the diverse society, a recent survey shows that Black students do not aim as high as their White and Asian counterparts, neither in their academic career nor in their professional

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<sup>66</sup> Harry Goulbourne and Patsy Lewis-Meeks, *Access of Ethnic Minorities to Higher Education in Britain: Report of a Seminar at King's College Cambridge* (Coventry, University of Warwick, 1993).

<sup>67</sup> Jessica Shepherd, “14,000 British professors – but only 50 are black,” *Guardian News and Media Limited*, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2011/may/27/only-50-black-british-professors> (accessed April 26, 2013).

one. According to a survey from 2010, the majority of the black respondents desired to find a job in their field. If they failed during the application process some tended to blame the institutions for racism. However, none would desire to be an employer to tackle the potential discrimination themselves. Another fact that contributes to black unemployment and underemployment is their choice of a degree course. The courses they tend to choose are less likely to guarantee them a job after finishing their studies. The most common are psychology, sociology, human studies and media. The academic and career results of Black people are juxtaposed with Asians, who generally choose more difficult subjects, mostly science related such as pharmacy, medicine and biochemistry.<sup>69</sup> Therefore, in contrast to the degree course choice of Asians, Blacks' choices might make it easier during their studies, however less likely to secure a job in their field.

### 5.3 Black Intellectuals in Exile

Positions for black and therefore Afro-Caribbean scholars as well who graduated from British universities are more attractive in the US than in the UK. Although race and race relations is a widely discussed topic in British politics, the foundation supporting these studies is significantly lower than in the US. Due to the 1960s civil rights movement, black studies are more developed. Some scholars feel more valued and also claim that their work is far more respected in the United States. Being a black student in a faculty where the vast majority were whites also left in blacks odd feelings. As a matter of fact, most of these blacks would like to stay, however their skills are not as in demand in the UK as they are overseas. Christan agrees with Bhavnani who claims that the "US is more racially polarized".<sup>70</sup> The glass ceiling in the UK may also explain why there is a significantly lower amount of blacks being accepted to colleges in the United States.<sup>71</sup> In spite of the fact that blacks managed to get to the top of the educational ladder, they are forced to immigrate to find a job relevant to their qualifications.

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Black History Month, "Why Are Black People Underachieving Academically?" *Why Are Black People Underachieving Academically?*, [http://www.black-history-month.co.uk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=510:why-are-black-people-underachieving-academically&catid=52:uk-news&Itemid=78](http://www.black-history-month.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=510:why-are-black-people-underachieving-academically&catid=52:uk-news&Itemid=78) (accessed April 16, 2014).

<sup>70</sup>TSL Education Ltd, "Black intellectual seems an oxymoron in England", TSL Education Ltd" <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/192064.article> (accessed April 26, 2013).

<sup>71</sup>Theodore Cross, "Black Africans Now the Most Highly Educated Group in British Society," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 3 (March, 1994): 92.

## 6 THE AFRO-CARIBBEAN DIASPORA IN THE UK TODAY

Although the second and the third generation of people of Afro-Caribbean descent is now relatively integrated in British society, they managed to keep their values, traditions and honor their heritage.<sup>72</sup> Thanks to the unity of the community they founded organizations, movements and projects, which contribute to British society and have a positive impact on black people's lives. In many instances it is similar to the US black communities, which prefer not to rely on the government but take their faith in their hands and act according to the quote in the Bible: "but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken."<sup>73</sup>

### 6.1 Black History Month: A Celebration of the African Diaspora in Britain

Black History Month originated in the USA in 1915. That year was the fiftieth anniversary of the end of slavery. The three weeks' celebration highlighted the development of US black society. An American historian Carter G. Woodson, enthused by the anniversary exhibitions, decided to found an organization called the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. Its members were scientific researchers who had to present their findings about the lives of black people. Later on, Negro Achievement week was created and subsequently Black History Month.<sup>74</sup> However, this thesis focuses on the life of the Afro-Caribbean community in the UK where this event has been celebrated annually since 1987. The month of October is devoted to the celebration of black culture and heritage in order to promote the black presence in Britain. It is also considered as a tool to boost the confidence of black people and to make them proud of their heritage. During Black History Month over 6000 events are held. These events are held across the UK in the form of film screenings, book readings, presentations, exhibitions and workshops.<sup>75</sup> In fact this celebration is an official project that highlights the effort of people of African descent to take an active part in improving their social status and highlight their identity in multi-

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<sup>72</sup> Black History Month, "About Black History Month," [http://www.black-history-month.co.uk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=223&Itemid=57](http://www.black-history-month.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=223&Itemid=57) (accessed April 22, 2014).

<sup>73</sup> *The Holy Bible N.R.S.V.* (London: Darton Longman and Todd, 2005), 1132.

<sup>74</sup> Daryl Michael Scott, "The Origins of Black History Month," Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, <http://www.asalh.org/blackhistorymonthorigins.html> (accessed April 22, 2014).

<sup>75</sup> Black History Month, "About Black History Month," [http://www.black-history-month.co.uk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=223&Itemid=57](http://www.black-history-month.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=223&Itemid=57) (accessed April 22, 2014).

cultural society. Black History Month has yet another function. Their UK website serves throughout the year as a bonding tool between African and Afro-Caribbean people in order to help link potential business partners, employers, employees; and to promote services provided by people of African and Afro-Caribbean descent.

On the other hand Black History Month also triggered several waves of resentment. For instance, American actor Morgan Freeman declared this celebration “ridiculous.” He argues that black history is American history and putting it in one month cheapens it. Moreover, he says that black people should avoid labeling to tackle racism. In other words, since there is no “white history month”, there should be no “black history month.”<sup>76</sup>

To sum up, Black History Month has an immense recognition among people of African and Afro-Caribbean descent and undoubtedly helps them to unite thanks to their common heritage. However, gathering people under a common label “black” might create imagined segregation.

## 6.2 Black Men in the Community

Although the most significant actions of black activists happened in the past, the current black activists continue their mission. Across the UK, particularly in London, there are several black-led groups that provide leadership and support to people of African and Afro-Caribbean descent. One of these groups is Black Men In The Community (BMITC) which aims to create a network of skilled professionals that promotes the community and builds up good relationships with public sector bodies.<sup>77</sup> Even though the description of the mission does not mention it, the influence of philosophies of former black activists such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X is evident.

Due to the fact that the project is not funded by the state, one of the primary targets is to raise funds from different sponsors and partners. These funds are then invested in various sectors such as health, education, housing, leisure, employment and social services for the community.<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, the website as well as the Facebook group that promotes the activities of this group project provides only the basic information and lists

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<sup>76</sup> The Associated Press, “Freeman calls Black History Month ‘ridiculous’,” <http://www.today.com/id/10482634/ns/today-entertainment/t/freeman-calls-black-history-month-ridiculous/#.U1fGPP2C8ds>

<sup>77</sup> Greg Morris, “Mission,” Black Men in the Community, <http://www.blackmeninthecommunity.com/about-us> (accessed April 24, 2014).

past events without mentioning their outcomes. This fact might lead to discouraging both current and potential sponsors and partners from investing money in the future. On the other hand, if this project is successful from a long-term perspective it will become a great example of an improvement of black people's lives without the help of the state and therefore the taxpayers.

### 6.3 Black British Talents and their Achievements

While Black Men In The Community focuses more on the African and Afro-Caribbean community as a whole, a project of a non-profit organization, Black Youth Achievements (BYA), deals with issues regarding the UK's Black youth. The alarming amount of gang activities, robbery, gun crime and underachievement at school inspired the social entrepreneur Kay Oldroyd to start this project in 2008. In contrary with Black Men In The Community, BYA has provided a full list of the outcomes and carries on organizing an annual event awarding talented members of the African and Caribbean Community, Black Youth Awards. The talents are awarded in different categories such as education, sport, performing arts and business in order to inspire their peers and tackle the negative perception and stereotypes that young black children often experience.<sup>79</sup> The foundation of the BYA awards and Black Men In The Community have undoubtedly had a positive effect on both the African and Afro-Caribbean Community. Nevertheless, they would have gained more importance if both had more developed websites as a marketing tool to attract more long-term partners and sponsors.

There is a fair amount of black British celebrities who, like Mrs. Sybil Phoenix, made a significant contribution to British society. Although their occupancies vary, the categories are relatively close to each other. Many of them are from the music, film, sport and fashion industry (see appendix IX, X, XI). One of the most prominent black Britons with Afro-Caribbean roots is a Cambridge graduate novelist, Zadie Smith. Her literary work is world-renowned which is proved by the amount of awards and prizes she has won.<sup>80</sup> According to the Daily Mail the first rung of the top black British women is occupied by Dominican born

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Black Youth Achievement, "About us," Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/BYA.UK/info> (accessed April 26, 2014).

<sup>80</sup> British Council, "Zadie Smith," <http://literature.britishcouncil.org/zadie-smith> (accessed April 26, 2014).



Janet Patricia, Baroness Scotland of Asthal. She is the first woman and the first black person to hold the position of Attorney General.<sup>81</sup> In spite of the hardships Afro-Caribbean people experienced they managed to establish a strong community network that helped many individuals sell their talent on the British market and be successful in British society.

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<sup>81</sup> Associated Newspaper, Ltd., “Top 100 black role models unveiled in new list,” <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-478012/Top-100-black-role-models-unveiled-new-list.html#ixzz307BI7rwm> (accessed April 26, 2014).

## CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to point out and analyze the difficult struggles of people of African descent who came to Britain with hope for a better life. The first chapter contradicts the incorrect assumption of most Britons that the first blacks in Britain were the postwar arrivals. The archaeological discoveries of an African male skeleton, who is believed to be either a Roman army veteran or slave, and the Ivory Bangle Lady supports the claim that in the past blacks were integrated and the representatives of the British upper-class did not necessarily need to be white. In the Seventeenth Century, the British Empire started to flourish as a colonial power and became a leader of one of the most profitable business, the slave trade. Firstly, the British public was made to think slavery was necessary for the economic well-being of the country. However, this belief was dropped by the end of the Eighteenth Century. As a result of abolitionists' efforts, Parliament outlawed slavery and the slave trade. Paradoxically, Africans still had to work for their slave masters, as it was the only way to earn a livelihood. Before World War I, blacks had to deal with rejection from their potential employers as the current workers refused to work with them. When the war broke out blacks were in high demand, especially in fields where whites were not willing to serve. The black soldiers neither got what they were entitled to nor were they treated fairly. After World War II, Britain urged hundreds of West Indians to come and help with restoring war-ruined cities. This led to a rise of black communities in the country and made the British authorities deal with the issues the expanding ethnic minority brought. The country strived to fill cheap labor gaps with West Indians. Soon, they had to take action to tackle the influx of these immigrants.

The second chapter portrays the atmosphere of hardships West Indians experienced in London during the 1950s. Not only were they looked down upon, they had to overcome frequent intimidation and exploitation by a wicked Polish landlord called Peter Rachman who saw a great profit in a loophole in the law. This loophole enabled him to charge the desperate West Indian families extortionate money for the rent. Eventually, West Indians found a solution. They got together and established Susu account, a Foundation, which helped them to buy off the houses they lived in. However, this exasperated whites who were rather jealous that they could not afford to do the same. Therefore, any attempt to integrate into the predominantly white British society failed. The racial tensions peaked in rioting in 1958, when white subculture gangs attacked blacks. As a result, the white

attackers were arrested. Finally, blacks could experience some justice. Since that they organize an annual event celebrating their heritage, the Notting Hill Carnival.

The third chapter lists the immigration and asylum laws and examines the impact on immigration from the Caribbean to the UK. The government passed laws that were racially discriminatory and convenient only for Britain. First, only people with certain skills were recruited to fill labour gaps. Then the government had a dual approach. One that dealt with tighter restrictions and the other dealing with immigrants that were already in the country. The current immigration situation in the UK applies EU immigration laws.

The fourth chapter deals with racial discrimination that has prevailed in the country for more than a century. In order to tackle street crimes, police are now allowed to stop and search anyone at any time. Nevertheless, it is proved these practices are used disproportionately among certain ethnic groups and are, moreover, ineffective. The research shows that the racial profiling blacks are experiencing are part of their everyday lives. For instance, job hunting is far easier for people with “white” names than for ethnic minority people with traditional names.

The fifth chapter notes the surprising fact that African and Afro-Caribbean people find the United States as a land of more equal opportunities when it comes to getting a job in their field. It is one of the factors that makes them leave the country after they graduate. However, many have a lack of ambition to either become an employer or study the subjects that would help them to succeed in the job market.

The final chapter is focused on today’s Afro-Caribbean Community and lists a few examples of community projects and organizations that play an important role in uniting the community. It also gives examples of individuals who managed to get high positions and gain recognition.

In modern British society Afro-Caribbean descent is no longer considered as the primary determinant of life chances of people of Afro-Caribbean origin; however, race and skin color remain powerful factors negatively influencing the lives of these people. Nevertheless, it is a choice of each individual if he or she identifies themselves as more British or more Caribbean and the extent they honor their heritage. However, I think they should keep the positive values their cultures bring in order not to forget their roots and stand up for their rights. At the same time they should make an effort to follow the saying, “When in Rome, do as the Romans do.”



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**APPENDICES**

- I Windrush Post-War Immigration
- II Immigrant Reading Sign 'Room To Let – No Coloured Men' 1958
- III Notting Hill Carnival 1978
- IV Keep Britain White. Two Jamaican Men In Brixton 1952
- V Malcom X at Oxford 1964
- VI Notting Hill Riots
- VII Receipt for Passage From Jamaica to England
- VIII Demonstraion Against Immigration
- IX Olympic Gold Medalist Denise Lewis at News Conference in Singapore
- X The Olympic Winners (Athens 2014 and Barcelona 1992)
- XI Model Naomi Campbell on London Fashion Week in 1997

APPENDIX I: WINDRUSH POST-WAR IMMIGRATION

# EVENING STANDARD

FINAL NIGHT EXTRA

38.608

MONDAY, JUNE 21, 1945

ONE PENNY

## MEAT: LAST RESERVES

### WELCOME HOME!

Evening Standard plane greets the 400 sons of Empire

Picture by Evening Standard cameraman Victor Drees, story by Evening Standard reporter Denise Richards

A dirty white ship sailed up the Channel as an Evening Standard airplane circled over the Straits of Dover today. From the air the Empire Windrush was indistinguishable from many of the ships which sail by daily, but to four hundred people on board she was the beginning of a new life.

She they are the Jamaicans who set sail for the West Indies when they found they could not get work in their own country.

As it approached Dover, the air was calm and the sea smooth, but the ship was crowded with 400 immigrants, and more than 100 of them were children.

The Evening Standard airplane, seen over the sea, first sighted the Windrush at 11.25 a.m. As it circled round the passenger vessel to the sides of the ship, but there was no waving or cheering.

Radio messages came in the case they showed in wonder as the ship came round and they saw her.

The airplane circled for 15 minutes, and gradually approached the ship.

Up to £100 may be spent on repairing or reconstructing any one building from July 1 without a building licence.

Mr. Charles Kerr, Minister of Works, announced this in the House of Commons this afternoon, but said economic conditions did not permit of any substantial relaxation of the building licence system.

The position would be kept under review, and if the need to reconstruct were found to justify the process of original cost they would have to be reconsidered.

**Owner's labour**

There was an adequate supply of labour, particularly operative labour, at most of the jobs.

Mr. Kerr, however, said that the Government would not give any allowance for the cost of the owner's own labour, as was the case with the war effort.

Mr. Kerr said the owner's own labour will not be taken into account, but voluntary labour by the public will have to be accounted for.

## Smithfield emptying fast

### £100 may now be spent on a building

London markets are now drawing on their last reserves of meat following the gravest turn yet in the dock strike.

To-day, for the first time, the strike, commenced by trade union leader Arthur Deakin last night as a "political" manoeuvre, spread to such a degree as to curtail the supply of meat and other perishable food to the London markets.

About 1,000 cold storage workers were persuaded to down tools, bringing work to a halt at nearly all the major wholesale depots, which handle huge quantities of the nation's food.

The extension of the general walk-out cut off the big wholesale meat markets from their main supply depots, and forced the markets to fall back on their last reserves.

At Smithfield for cold storage was stated this afternoon to be involving far, and unless further supplies are forthcoming from the wholesale depots, Smithfield may have to "stand off."

**100 go back**

There were two larger spots in the rapidly expanding situation, the "off-loads" at Abchurch Lane and the "off-loads" at the West India Docks, involving 1,000 men who did not strike.

At 11.30 a.m. the off-loads were back to work, involving 1,000 men who did not strike.

The situation is regarded as serious quarters as the first sign that the strike is beginning to recede.

It is now expected in this call and return to work. London's situation should be open.

For the time being, however, the situation is regarded as serious quarters as the first sign that the strike is beginning to recede.

## MEAT, CLOTHES ARE FREED

### In Australia

CANBERRA, Monday.—Banishing of meat and clothes in Australia will end tomorrow, it was learned here today.

The decision was made by the Cabinet, but was after a period of anxious deliberation, the defeat of the Government in the recent Australian election of October 1944.

Mr. Bennett, the new Minister of Finance, said that the decision was made in October 1944.

Mr. Bennett said that the decision was made in October 1944.

## Quiet Wimbledon

### And the rains came

Evening Standard Reporter

It was one of the quietest evenings for years for the Wimbledon Championships today.

Just before the start the British turned into a downpour, and the rain continued until the end of the day.

The rain was not only a nuisance to the players, but it was also a nuisance to the spectators.

The rain was not only a nuisance to the players, but it was also a nuisance to the spectators.

## £2000 mink goes

A mink coat worth more than £2,000 has been stolen from Mrs. W. Carter, of Great Marlborough Street, London.

The mink coat was stolen from Mrs. Carter's dressing room on Sunday night.

The mink coat was stolen from Mrs. Carter's dressing room on Sunday night.

## Wife deserts war-blinded husband

A wife who deserted her husband after he had been blinded in active service was sentenced by Mr. Commissioner Trenchard in the District Court today.

The woman, who is now known as Mrs. Elizabeth Williams, was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment.

The woman, who is now known as Mrs. Elizabeth Williams, was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment.

## Berlin, by air

### Freight fleet taking over

BERLIN, Monday.—Cargo-carrying aircraft will soon be taking over the freight traffic from the railways in Germany.

The German Air Force is now taking over the freight traffic from the railways in Germany.

The German Air Force is now taking over the freight traffic from the railways in Germany.

## "MAD PARSON"

Police have on all the streets of London, and are looking for a man who is known as "Mad Parson."

The man is known as "Mad Parson" and is a dangerous character.

The man is known as "Mad Parson" and is a dangerous character.

### "My home is Hoover-Cleaned LIKE 'GROSVENOR HOUSE'"

Mrs. Grosvenor, 11 Grosvenor House, Grosvenor Gardens, London, W.1.

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**APENDIX II: IMMIGRANT READING SIGN 'ROOM TO LET – NO  
COLOURED MEN' 1958**



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p. 79. ©2011 by Getty Images, Seattle (USA).

**APENDIX III: NOTTING HILL CARNIVAL 1978**



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**APENDIX IV: KEEP BRITAIN WHITE. TWO JAMAICAN MEN IN  
BRIXTON 1952**



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**APENDIX V: MALCOM X AT OXFORD 1964**



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## APENDIX VI: NOTTING HILL RIOTS



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**APENDIX VII: RECEIPT FOR PASSAGE FROM JAMAICA TO  
ENGLAND**

No. 18299

5 EAST STREET,  
KINGSTON, JA. B.W.I.

June 3 1955

Received From Mr. Thomas M. Skinds  
the sum of Seventy five Pounds  
for Passage to England on the 15/6/55  
Shillings and Pence

£ 75:—s—d

WITH THANKS

COXE BROS.  
Per Joan Hedrick

Courtesy of the Wandsworth Museum, London.

## **APENDIX VIII: DEMONSTRATION AGAINST IMMIGRATION**



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p. 204. ©2011 by Getty Images, Seattle (USA).

**APPENDIX IX: OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST DENISE LEWIS AT  
NEWS CONFERENCE IN SINGAPORE**



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**APENDIX X: THE OLYMPIC WINNERS (ATHENS 2014 AND  
BARCELONA 1992)**



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## **APPENDIX XI: MODEL NAOMI CAMBEL ON LONDON FASHION WEEK IN 1997**



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