



A HISTORY OF THE BLACK PRESENCE IN LONDON

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FOREWORD



This exhibition and the booklet that accompanies it, represent an important step in the necessary process of bringing the history of the black presence in London to the centre stage of our consciousness. For too long the black experience has been relegated to a footnote in history, or denied altogether. The time has now come to reclaim our own heritage and share it with all London. The history of black people is closely interlinked with this city, not only as the hub of 'Empire' but also as a place to which our predecessors came. They were amongst the conquerors in Roman times, then as slaves, workers and comrades in the struggle of the early Labour movement.

We learn here of the depth and breadth of the black contribution to London, in the many facets of its life and history. Not only as fashionable chattels and domestics, but also in the theatre, in music, in politics, and not least in the example of Mary Seacole, in medicine. We discover also how when the seeds of liberation were nurtured in this city, blacks were in the forefront of the struggles of the day. Their concerns were not limited to the abolition of slavery and the Pan-African movement, but extended to the fight for economic and social justice in Britain too.

William Davidson and Robert Wedderburn, both black men prominent in the radical working class movement of the early nineteenth century, speak to us of the need to match scholarship and rhetoric with action in the struggle for the liberation of all peoples, regardless of colour. The cries of 'Murder' that went up on the execution of Davidson, find a ready echo, in these times, when black and white take to the streets in protest against racial violence in all its many forms in this city.

Afro-Caribbean and Asian have worked together in the past, just as they must work together now, if we are to go forward in London. The lives and work of Jeffrey Archer, the Pan-Africanist and Mayor of Battersea and Shapurji Saklatvala, Indian Nationalist and MP for Battersea North, show how working together both autonomously and as part of the wider labour movement, we can win for change.

The bringing together of these images from the past serves a dual purpose. We are all, regardless of our colour, reminded of the richness and variety of London's past, and the part people from different races and traditions have played in it. We are further given an opportunity to draw inspiration from them and to re-dedicate ourselves to working together in London for a better future. The abolition of the GLC and its Ethnic Minorities Committee and Unit, who made this work possible, does not represent an ending for those many millions of Londoners, black and white, who care about our city's future. The hopes and aspirations which these images embody and inspire can never be snuffed out.

Paul Boateng GLC
Chair, Police Committee
Vice-Chair, Ethnic Minorities Committee 1981-1985

include all the known information about the black presence in London in this booklet.

With regard to the twentieth century in particular, it has not been considered necessary to give an extensive coverage of what is well documented elsewhere. The GLC has also grant-aided Creation for Liberation to produce a pictorial history of this recent presence which will be available later in the year. In addition, it has not been possible to do justice to many individual figures and visitors to London from black countries, for example, visiting princes and students.

The E.M.U. hopes to bring to the public attention the lost history of black people in London by means of this exhibition and its accompanying booklet. The voices of the 15,000 strong black community of the late eighteenth century have been completely silenced. Prominent and well-known black figures have been omitted or neglected in the history books our children read. Their cries resonate loudly and demand from us that we reclaim their experiences and hence our own heritage.

INTRODUCTION

For most people in this country, the history of black people is synonymous with the history of slavery. Until recently, the established view of history has been extremely reluctant to concede that black peoples actually had a history in any accepted sense. And just as until as recently as the 1950s, studies of black people in Africa were solely 'anthropological', so the study of black people in Britain has been predominantly 'sociological' as opposed to 'historical'.

With the advent of authentically historical studies on black people however, the interest in those who have lived in the diaspora for some 500 years has prompted research into whole new areas of the black experience. The current interest in the African and Indian presence in Britain therefore, is an essential element in reconstructing an historical experience that has long been neglected.

The importance of such research however, is not confined simply to those with a special interest in the subject. It may be argued that the history of black people in Britain critically informs aspects of British social history in such a way as to challenge many of the assumptions popularly held about Britain's past; and in so doing can be seen as fundamental in educating a racist society.

In fully realising its obligations to all its residents, it is not sufficient for this society merely to acknowledge the existence of a multi-racial populace, nor merely to pay lip-service to its cultural diversity. The 500 years of contact with black peoples that Britain has had as a result of its Imperial adventures in Africa and India is itself such as to suggest the qualitative impact of black people upon this country – the economic benefit of their exploitation alone bears ample testimony to the visceral nature of the connection.

The fact is that British history, from at least the sixteenth century, is inextricably woven with that of black people, through slavery, imperialism, and colonial domination. Black people have been present here in Britain, since at least 1507 in different material conditions, in significant numbers and with sufficiently wide talents, to have penetrated every level of British society.

The fact is however, that the popular belief that slavery did not exist in Britain (and the corollary that neither were there any black people), resonates so loudly in the pages of so many self-righteous histories of Britain, that it had almost completely silenced the voices of those who, numbering some 10-20,000, were so audible and so visible as to have been the objects of an attempted forced repatriation.

Only relatively recently then, has the history of black people in Britain begun to be written; more recently still has it gained academic currency. But even if it is the newest subject to excite historical interest, it is undoubtedly the most significant single area of historical research, not only because it discloses information about a new area of the black diaspora, but also because of its profound challenge to the popular misconception of Britain having been a racially homogenous i.e. white society.

It is not to overstate the case to suggest that the seriousness of this misconception lies not only in the violence that it does to British history, but also in the violence that is visited upon black people in its name.

The racial hostility that is the everyday experience of black people, is in this regard informed by two major factors. Firstly, a general ignorance of the histories of black peoples, and in particular, of their long association with Britain; and secondly, widespread misinformation about black people which has tended to marginalise the black community and preclude any real understanding of what the black community actually represents in Britain. These two factors have encouraged the majority of people in Britain only ever to perceive black people as an 'immigrant' community. Attendant with the synonymy of 'blacks', with immigration has been the assumption that immigration, and therefore the immigrant, is a problem. Given the perceptions of post-war black immigration to Britain, black people are not only blamed for present economic ills, but are given no credit for – nor are believed to have made any positive, useful, or productive contributions to Britain whatsoever.

The supposition that the black presence in Britain is a post-1945 phenomenon, and that black people are associated with Britain only insofar as they are merely the recipients of its benign culture, is a dangerous myth that all too readily finds expression in a racist society.

The Ethnic Minorities Unit thus began in 1984 a programme of archival research into the black historical presence in London with the GLC's own archives held at the Greater London Records Office (GLRO).

The purpose of the research was to contribute towards challenging prevailing preconceptions and attitudes to black

people in London by demonstrating the extent of the black involvement in London in an exhibition using facsimiles of original documents and other visual material. These documents have been used to show the way in which the black presence has been recorded by a variety of official as well as unofficial sources; the details within the documents by which the quality of black people's lives can be reconstructed; and to suggest the extent and range of the black presence in London which has been as multifarious historically as it has been at present.

The exhibition, which had its first run at The Royal Festival Hall, uses visual material from a variety of sources: the GLRO, local history libraries eg of Newham and of Haringey, the British Library, museums, art galleries and from documents contributed by individual historians, to give an overview of the African and Indian presence in London over the past 500 years.

The exhibition has the following aims:

- 1) To bring evidence of the historical black presence in London to a wider public than has hitherto been possible.
- 2) To advertise the value of local history archives – in particular the Greater London Records Office – and the need to consult these facilities in order to begin to reconstruct the black presence in London.
- 3) To emphasise the value of teaching black history from original sources.
- 4) To stimulate interest amongst members of the black community into their own history.
- 5) To encourage and stimulate further research into this area of the black experience.

This publication begins with a brief outline of the history of the black presence in London accompanied by the photographic material of the exhibition. The second section deals with the GLRO, giving a description of the main classes of records held there and some methods to employ in the search for evidence of black people's presence in London. This is followed by an assessment of the black history research undertaken by the E.M.U. at the GLRO and its implications. The publication continues with a brief historiography of the black presence in Britain which we hope will be of use to those interested in the current literature on this subject. This precedes a Selected Bibliography giving the names of the books consulted in the research and the forthcoming publications that have also contributed, which is appended in the final section of this booklet.

The material included in this booklet is by no means definitive. Indeed, there is no lack of primary source materials available. It is hoped that the exhibition and booklet will stimulate interest in retrieving this further information. Working for London to archive.parvindervir.com

A HISTORY OF THE BLACK PRESENCE IN LONDON

Black People in Tudor London

There have been black people in Britain since Roman times when an African division of Roman soldiers was stationed near Carlisle, defending Hadrian's Wall in the third century, AD. The first known evidence of the presence of black people in London is of the 'black trumpet' who was a solitary black musician living in London in 1507. He was employed by the courts of Henry VII and later by Henry VIII. In the accounts of the treasurer of the Chamber, it was recorded that Henry VII paid him 8d a day and that he had to wait a week for the 20s due to him for the month of November 1507. (Fryer, 1984).

A black trumpeter, twice portrayed in the painted roll of the 1511 Westminster Tournament which was held to celebrate the birth of a son to Catherine of Aragon is almost certainly the same man. The Great Tournament Roll of Westminster, a twenty-two feet long parchment roll is the most precious treasure of the College of Arms in the City of London today. One section depicts six trumpeters wearing yellow halved with grey and with blue purses at their waists. The black trumpeter alone wears a brown turban laced with yellow and is mounted on a grey horse with black harness. (Fig. 1) The fanfare trumpets are decorated with the royal quarterings and fringed.

The first group of Africans known to visit London prior to the slave trade were the five Ghanaians brought over by John Lok, an English merchant, in 1555. This was a time when neither potatoes, tea nor tobacco had reached English shores. The merchant brought them over eight years before slave trafficking began at a time when the English were keen to grab a share of the profits from the lucrative trade in West African gold, ivory and pepper, which had up until then been monopolised by the Portuguese. It was hoped to enlist the support and help of the Africans by teaching them English and then using them as interpreters in Africa. For Londoners, this was probably their first contact with Africans, which must have taught them more about Africa and African people than they were to subsequently learn from travel books about the African continent.

6 (Fig 2) Although the five men were referred

to as slaves in a contemporary account, they had not in fact been bought.

Three of the men were taken home a few months later and were soon helping English ships. The English were surprised at the warm and joyful welcome given to the returning Africans by their countrymen, which did not fit into the stereotypes that they had already developed. As more and more Englishmen visited the continent and published their tales in travel books, fact soon became inextricably mixed with fiction. Amongst many other tales, the English learnt that some Ethiopians had no noses and others no mouths. That the Ptoemphani were ruled by a dog, and that people in Libya had no names and never had dreams. They even believed that elephants were continually at war with dragons!

The myths of Africans as carefree, lusty, lazy cannibals grew as increasingly ignorant generalisations were made about the continent and it was these myths which later saved English consciences when the slave trade began. If Africans were inherently inferior, morally, mentally, culturally and spiritually inferior to civilised Europeans, then kidnapping them and forcing them to work under the whip could be no disgrace. (Fryer, 1984)

The first English adventurer to enter into the trafficking of slaves was John Hawkins who in 1562 kidnapped 300 people from the Guinea coast, took them to the Caribbean Island of Hispaniola and sold them to the Spaniards for £10,000 worth of pearls, hides, sugar and ginger. He made 12% profit. It has been reported that Queen Elizabeth disapproved of this and warned him that carrying off Africans without their consent would be detestable, and would bring down the 'Vengeance of Heaven upon the Undertakers.' However, she herself subsequently lent Hawkins a ship for his second slave-hunting voyage.

Hawkin's coat-of-arms now included three black men shackled with slave collars. (Fig 3). Clarencieux, King-at-Arms, 'granted to Hawkins on his return from his voyage of 1564 by patent for his crest a demi-Moor proper bound captive, with annulets in his arms and in his ears, for his victory over the Moors,' (Hawkins, 1888) (Fig. 4)

Black people were all called Moors or Negroes at this time which later developed into blackamoors or blackmoores.

Black people were brought to England as a by-product of the slave trade from the 1570s onwards, from which time there is evidence that black people lived in London as household servants, as courtesans and as court entertainers. Most black people tended to live in London. Some were independent even at this time. In 1597 there is evidence that a group of Africans built their own house in London.

London Parish registers of the period reveal that in 1598 in Barking's All Hallows Parish, Tower Ward, two 'Negroes' were living – Clare at Widow Stoke's and Maria at Olyver Skynan's and that two Negroes lived at Mr. Miton's and Mr. Woods. Black slaves became fashionable towards the end of the sixteenth century and soon most aristocratic and wealthy families had one or two black slaves amongst their household servants. One of the first 'innovators' was Lady Raleigh, wife of Sir Walter Raleigh.

Elizabethan Reaction

As a result of the wars with Spain in the Caribbean during the reign of Elizabeth I, the number of black people arriving in Britain increased. Queen Elizabeth in the 1570s was shown with a group of 10 black musicians and dancers in a painted panel of her court at Kenilworth. Despite appreciating black entertainers, Queen Elizabeth became concerned at the numbers of 'blackmoors' who had 'crept into the realm.' England at this time had been troubled by famine and the Government's resources for dealing with the resulting social problem were severely taxed. As immigrants, black people were the most easily identifiable as scapegoats, and in 1596 Elizabeth commissioned the merchant Edward Banes to immediately deport them from England. Black people were thus being blamed for the country's ills.

The justifications given were that there were enough people in England already (about 3 million) and that, furthermore, 'blackmoors' were infidels. However, it has been argued that the real reasons were the association of black with evil, ugliness and dirt and white with virtue, purity and beauty such that black people came to be seen in a derogatory way because of their skin colour. It must be remembered that Elizabeth herself had a complexion of extreme pallor, and it was her example which set the standards for beauty and virtue in the country.

On 11 July 1596, the following open letter was sent to the lord mayor of London and his aldermen (Fig 5). A week later, an open warrant informed the lord mayor of London and all other public officers that Her Majesty had authorised a merchant to transport all the black people in the country to Spain and Portugal, in exchange for his return of 89 English prisoners from those countries (Fig 5). Black people were simply confiscated from their owners. However, this attempt at deportation evidently failed completely because in 1601 Queen Elizabeth issued a proclamation in which she commissioned the same merchant, Caspar Van Senden to transport the 'Negroes and blackamoors' and commanded her subjects to assist him by delivering up their blackamoors to him or choose to be answerable to her (Figs 6 & 7). This venture

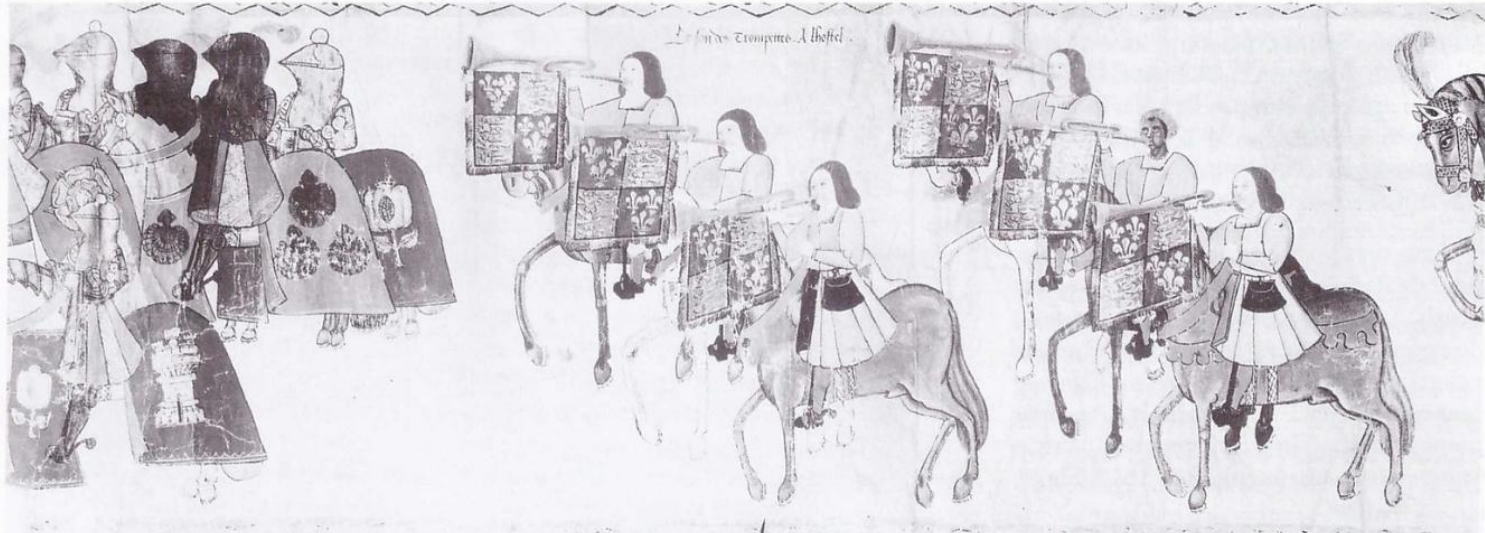


Fig. 1

'taule and stronge men . . . coulde well agree with our meates and drynkes . . . the coulde and moyst ayer dooth sumwhat offende them'.

(tall and strong men who could well agree with our kind of food and drink [although] the cold and damp air gives them some trouble.)

Fig. 2

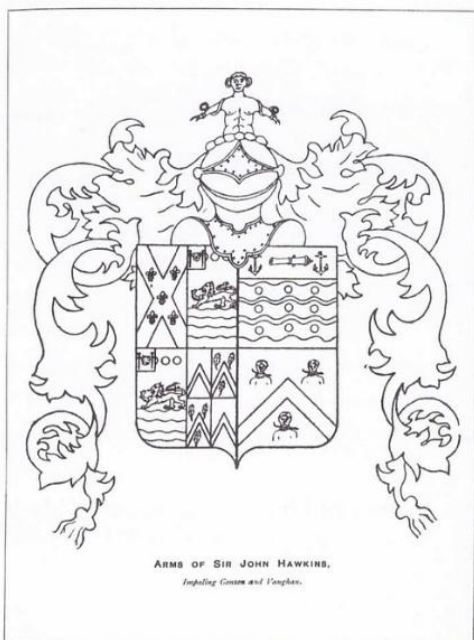


Fig. 3

An open letter to the Lord Maiour of London and the Aldermen his brethren, and to all other Maiours, Sheryfes, & c. and Her Majestie understanding that there are of late divers blackmoors brought into this realme of which kinde of people there are already here to manie, considering howe God hath blessed this land with great increase of people of our owne nation as anie countree in the world, whereof manie for want of service and meanes to sett them on work fall to idleness and to great extremytie. Her Majesty's pleasure therefore ys that those kinde of people should be sent forth of the lande, and for that purpose there is direction given to this bearer Edwarde Banes to take of those blackmoores that in this last voyage under Sir Thomas Baskeville were brought into this realm the nomber of tenn, to be transported by him out of the realme. Wherein wee require you to be aydinge and assysting unto him as he shall have occacion, and thereof not to faile.



Fig. 4

Fig. 1 Black Trumpeter in the Westminister Tournament of 1511.

Fig. 2 Contemporary account by Londoners of five Africans from Shama, Ghana brought over by John Lok in 1555.

Fig. 3 The Coat of Arms of Sir John Hawkins, the first English slave trader.

Fig. 4 Sir John Hawkins's Crest.

Fig. 5 Elizabeth I's open letter to the Lord Mayor of London in 1596.

Fig. 5

like the first was not successful and black people have maintained a continuous presence in London from that day on. This was the first attempt at repatriation which was to recur many times and has culminated, in the twentieth century, in the repatriation calls of Enoch Powell and his ilk.

We have very little information about black individuals living in London in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. However, painstaking research into archive records can occasionally reveal certain interesting clues. For example, the first known African in Haringey was Walter Anberey who was baptised in 1610 (Fig 8).

The fourth entry in the Christening Register of 3 February 1610 at All Hallows Parish Church, Tottenham reads 'Walter Anberey son of Nasser Anberey, born in the Kingdom of Dungala in Africa was baptised on the third day of February.' Dungal was and still is a town in Sudan. A sixteenth century map of Africa shows the city of Dungal in what used to be called Nubia (Fig 9).

We do not know why Walter came to Tottenham, but do know that he was probably brought over by a Levant trader. The Levant Company was formed in 1580 to organise a convoy system of shipping sailing to the eastern Mediterranean. The Nile was an artery for the slave trade and Nubians were shipped up the Nile to be sold. Walter could have been captured in a sea-fight or bought as a slave. Walter Anberey is therefore evidence of one of the first Mediterranean mercantile ventures England was involved in (Collicott, 1986).

The English Slave Trade

Since the first batch of Africans were sold as slaves to the West Indies in 1510 by the Portugese and the first African slaves arrived in North America in 1619, black people probably first came to Britain as slaves between these two dates. (Shyllon, 1977). The earliest evidence of the sale of slaves in this country is in 1621 when interestingly, thirteen people from the East Indies (India) were sold by the East India Company for £6,875 which included six women plus seven men and boys (Fig 10). William Bragge, the merchant in his petition to the East India Company lists the thirteen slaves amongst his other items and professes Christian sentiments at the same time. This is evidently a reference to Asian and not African slaves.

The English slave trade did not begin to flourish until the second half of the seventeenth century when England established its colonies in the Caribbean and introduced the sugar industry there. The new beverages coming to England — tea, coffee and chocolate had a bitter taste and this greatly increased the demand for sugar.

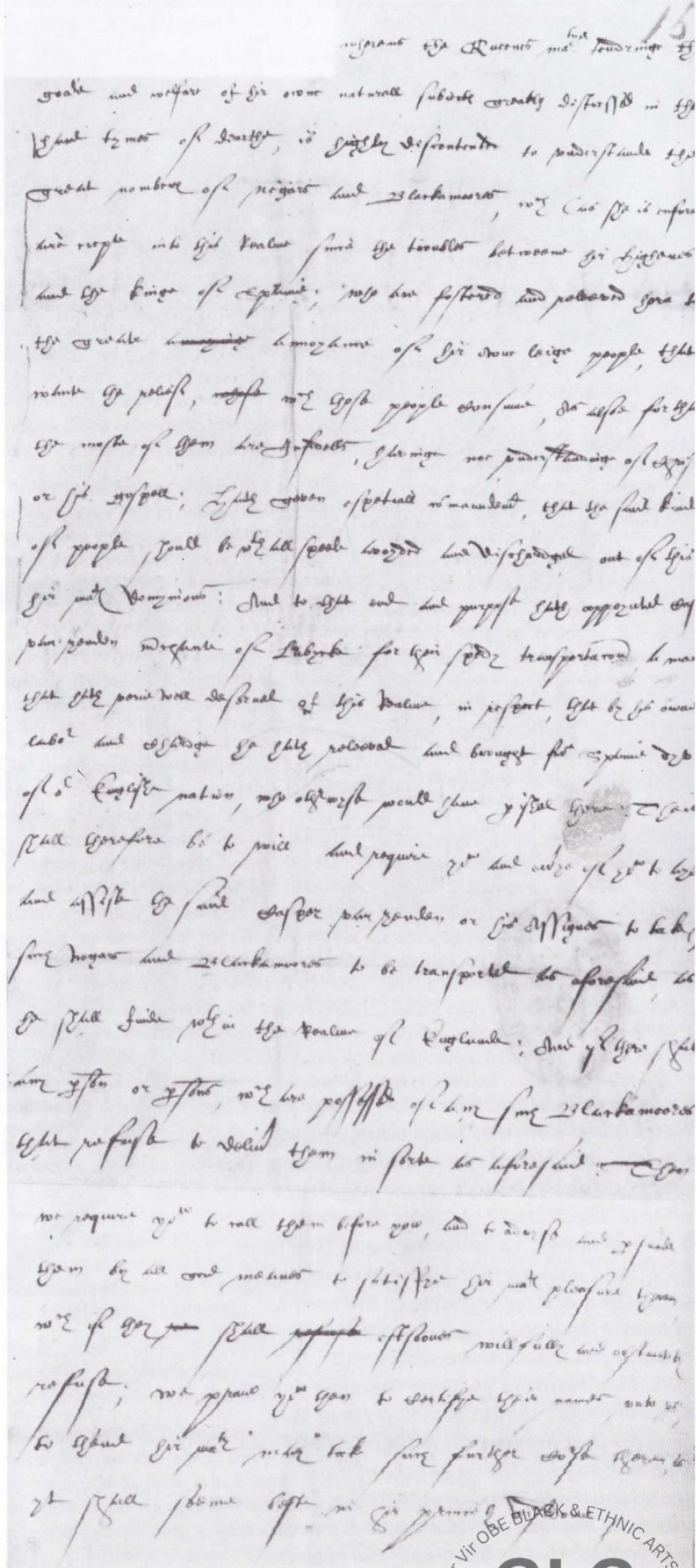


Fig. 6

Fig. 6 An Elizabethan Proclamation in 1601.

Fig. 7 Translation of proclamation.

Fig. 8 Christening Register of 1610 at All Hallows Parish Church, Tottenham.

Whereas the Queen's majesty, tendering the good and welfare of her own natural subjects, greatly distressed in these hard times of dearth, is highly discontented to understand the great number of Negroes and blackamoors which (as she is informed) are crept into this realm since the troubles between her highness and the King of Spain; who are fostered and relieved here, to the great annoyance of her own liege people who want the relief which these people consume, as also for that the most of them are infidels having no understanding of Christ or his Gospel: hath given especial commandment that the said kind of people shall be with all speed avoided and discharged out of this her majesty's dominions; and to that end and purpose hath appointed Casper van Senden, merchant of Lubeck, for their speedy transportation, a man that hath very well deserved of this realm in respect that by his own labour and charge he hath relieved and brought from Spain divers of our English nation, who otherwise would have perished there. These shall therefore be to will and require you and every[one] of you to aid and assist the said Casper van Senden, or his associates to take up such Negroes and blackamoors to be transported as aforesaid, as he shall find within the realm of England; and if there shall be any person or persons which are possessed of any such blackamoors that refuse to deliver them in sort as aforesaid, then we require you to call them before you and to advise and persuade them by all good means to satisfy her majesty's pleasure therein, which if they shall eftsoons [soon afterwards] willfully and obstinately refuse, we pray you then to certify their names unto us, to the end her majesty may take such further course therein as it shall seem best in her princely wisdom.

Fig. 7

Christenung des 1610
 Casper Andowes the sonne of Randall Andowes yeoman was
 baptizd upon Sunday the xxth daie of January in the
 eighte yeare of King James anno 1610
 y^e Hansell Wulder the sonne of y^e Peter Wulder Butcher
 was baptizd upon Sunday the xxth daie of January in the
 eighte yeare of King James anno 1610
 Edward Edwards the sonne of Edward Edwards labourer
 was baptizd upon Sunday the xxth daie of January in the
 eighte yeare of King James anno 1610
 Walter Andover the sonne of y^e Casper Andover, borne in the
 kingdom of Dancalia in Africa was baptizd upon the thirde
 daie of february being Shrove Tuesday in the eighte yeare
 of King James anno 1610
 Anna y^e late the daughter of Richard y^e late yeoman was
 baptizd upon Sunday the tenth daie of february in the
 eighte yeare of King James anno 1610
 Maud Kavin the daughter of Robert Kavin yeoman was baptizd
 upon Sunday the xxth daie of february in the eighte yeare
 of King James
 Dorothy Smyth the daughter of William Smyth yeoman
 was baptizd upon Sunday the thirde of merr in the eighte
 yeare of King James Anno Domini 1610
 The xxth of March 1610 in the
 eighte yeare of King James
 Anno Domini 1611

Fig. 8

Consumption of sugar increased four-fold between 1660 and 1700 and twenty-fold between 1663 and 1775. As the planters of St. Kitts told the Lords of Trade in London in 1680 'it is as great a bondage for us to cultivate our plantations without negro slaves as for the Egyptians to make bricks without straw.' By 1660 when the upheavals of England's Civil War had come to an end, England whole-heartedly embarked on this branch of commerce with the support of Oliver Cromwell. The Stuart monarchy later initially entrusted the slave trade to a monopolistic company – the comanay of the Royal Adventurers Trading in Africa – who were incorporated for 1,000 years. However, since this collapsed much sooner due to mismanagement in 1672, a new company was created. The Royal African Company, another monopoly, whose stockholders included the aristocracy and gentry amongst whom were the King and Queen. In honour of this new company, a new coin was struck in 1663 – the guinea – which became the measure of English wealth flowing from the colonies from that date onwards.

The company lost its monopoly in 1698 and free trade in black slaves then became ensured as the established fundamental and natural right of all Englishmen. The volume of the slave trade now grew rapidly. From 1680-86 the Royal African Company transported 5,000 slaves annually. In the first nine years of the slave trade, Bristol alone transported 160,950 slaves to the West Indies. By 1771, in one year, 190 British ships had transported 47,000 slaves to the sugar plantations. (Fryer, 1984).

England thus became the world's leading slave carrier and slave trader. (Shyllon, 1977). Millions of Africans were transported to their deaths in the infamous Middle Passage, or to servitude and oppression in the West Indies or America in sugar, rice, cotton and tobacco plantations. At the same time thousands of black people were arriving in England to a life of bondage.

Since being captain of a slaving ship was a lucrative occupation, captains were wont and flaunt their good fortune. The most distinguishing mark of a captain was his black slave in attendance. These slaves would be sold to wealthy families when the captains embarked on a voyage and the taste for black servants spread. Samuel Pepys records that he had a black cookmaid in 1669 with whom his family were 'mightily pleased.' In 1714 George I arrived in England attended by black muslim body-servants who dressed him to the resentment of certain Dukes who were deprived of this honour.

The triangular trade gave a considerable boost, (as shown by Williams, 1944) to Britain's industrial revolution. Sugar

cultivation, manufacturing industry and trade in slaves were inextricably linked.

In 1729 the merchant Joshua Gee wrote

'Our Trade with Africa is very profitable to the Nation in general;...The supplying our plantations with negroes is of that extraordinary advantage to us, that the Planting Sugar and Tobacco, and carrying on Trade there could not be supported without them; which plantations are the great cause of the increase of the Riches of the Kingdom.'

As the merchantilist writer Malady Postlethwayt put it in 1745,

'if we have no Negroes, we can have no sugars, tobaccos, rice, rum, etc...consequently the Public Revenue, arising from the Importation of Plantation Produce, must be annihilated. And will this not turn many hundreds of thousands of British manufacturers a begging...'

The candour of these merchants gives basis to the contention that Britain's industrial revolution was not only given a boost by the slave trade but was rooted in it.

Black People as Chattels in London

Young black slaves were also brought to England by West India planters who had grown fond of their household slaves. Black slaves who were brought into Britain this way were treated as chattels who could be freely bought and sold, who often had to wear metal collars like dogs and who could be bequeathed to relatives as objects. They were exotic gifts of playthings who conferred status and the symbol of power on the owners and became an 'Index of Rank.' The diarist Samuel Pepys recorded in 1662 how the Earl of Sandwich brought 'a little Turke and a Negro' for his daughters as presents in addition to a parrot and other novelties. The agents who bought the slaves preferred children or teenagers up to the age of 15 over adults. A few privileged slaves were treated kindly but they were exceptions. Most slaves were subject to the whims and mercies of their masters and many were brutally treated.

Rich people to display their wealth and good taste dressed their slaves in ostentatious livery or exotic dress. Many portraits of aristocrats show black boys and girls wearing jewels and dressed expensively who act as a foil or status symbol. In the portrait of the Duchess of Portsmouth, friend of Charles II, for example, a black girl is shown holding a branch of coral and her mistress's jewel-case (Fig 11). The 3rd Duke of Perth, James Drummond had his portrait painted with his black slave boy who wears a padlocked collar around his neck (Fig 12). That Henrietta of Lorraine was a woman of some importance and wealth is evident from the richness of her slave's attire (Fig. 13). In these and many other portraits, the black slave is continually depicted in a deferential and

awed attitude and her/his chattel-like status is obvious by the proprietary way the slave is usually grasped.

As soon as black slaves arrived in London they took the only course open to them – they ran away. Numerous hue-and-cry advertisements appeared in the newspapers alongside other adverts in the late seventeenth century as soon as newspapers began to be printed. A great deal of information can be obtained from the content of these adverts. For instance, very few of the runaway slaves were under 20 and many were described as having scars, or marks of some sort. It was common that runaway slaves wore collars of brass, copper or silver inscribed with the owner's initials, name or coat-of-arms and address.

The 'Taunymore' who escaped in March 1685 was described as wearing grey livery and a silver collar with an inscription (Fig 14). The runaway slave of William Smith of Battersea was a 'Spanish Indian' man, indicating the presence of an American Indian slave in this country (Fig 15). Since it was difficult for slaves to survive in the community at large, not surprisingly the bolder slaves decamped with their master's property. Diego, as he was aged 30, had probably been living in London for some time. The advertisement placed to contact Christopher Newel shows that some black people were free and were able to travel alone in England (Fig 16). His mother dying and leaving him some estate poses questions of his parents' origins and status.

The majority of slaves living in London in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were Africans in origin. There were, additionally, Indian slaves who were also called blacks and occasionally called negroes. An advertisement in the Tatler of February 1709 shows a twelve year old Indian boy for sale in London (Fig 17). Runaway slaves adverts also referred to Indian slaves (Fig 18). The circumstances in which 'East India blacks' (Asians) were brought to England as domestics in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were similar to those in which African people were imported. Although Indians were brought over as servants, during the slave trade their legal status was exactly that of the majority of the African slaves where they could be bought and sold on the open market (Shyllon, 1977).

The Lord Mayor's Pageant

London merchants and traders displayed and celebrated their wealth and its origins in an annual festival – the lord mayor's Pageant which was often elaborate and very expensive. This event occurred on the day the lord mayor took his oath of office. A 'King of the Moores' traditionally began to appear originating from the traditions of the mid-sixteenth century Midsummer show.

From 1629 until 1708 black people appeared continually in this pageant in elaborate and colourful costumes. In 1672, the first groups of African musicians to perform in Britain participated in the pageant as the 'Kitchen Musicians.' The instruments used were tongs, a gridiron, keys, a salt-box and frying pan to play traditional African music which were probably the only available local substitutes for African instruments. (Fryer, 1984.) The black performers were often Asian as well as African whose cultures were interchangeable in the eyes of the English. In 1692, 'a Negro habited according to the Indian Manner threw fruit into the crowds from the back of the grocers' golden camel.' In 1963 an Asian and an African on camel-back in their Richest Robes intimated their 'submission to the Heroic Monarch of Great Britain, the sole sovereign of the sea.'

Commercial Images of Slaves

It was not only the aristocracy or gentry who owned black slaves but also those of humbler status. The detailed descriptions given of the clothes of runaway slaves are good indicators of the wealth of the owners. Since black slaves and their acquisition was the mark of wealth, fashion and status amongst the rich, small traders and shopkeepers too cashed in on the vogue. The images and caricatures of black people were used for commercial signs, and diverse other purposes. From the mid-sixteenth to mid-nineteenth century London had 61 taverns named 'The Black Boy' and 51 known as 'The Blackamoors Head.'

Innkeepers of the seventeenth century were required to obtain a licence to serve ale in much the same way as today. The Manor Rental of 1690 for the Parish of Tottenham recorded the names of all the public houses in the parish applying for a licence and shows two pubs called 'The Black Boy' in Tottenham, at Hanger Green which today is known as St. Anne's Road (Fig 19). There is a 'Black Boy' pub in Tottenham today. In the 1970s the black community's protests led the sign to be changed (Fig 20), from a caricature of a black slave boy to a picture of a chimney sweep. Pubs like this are good testimonies to black people's long presence in London. In London today there is still a road named 'Black Boy Lane' in N15 (Fig 21).

Black people were also represented in popular brand names like, 'The Blackamoors Head' snuff in eighteenth century London (Fig 22). Many such examples can be found.

The Slave Lobby

London was not the only port used by the slave trade. Bristol and Liverpool, formerly insignificant little towns, as a result of the slave trade underwent a tremendous boom and became great world ports. In the eighteenth century, Bristol ranked as Britain's



Fig. 9

Fig. 9 Contemporary map of Sudan, showing the city of Dungala.

Fig. 11



Item, more, for thirteen negroes or Indian people, six women, seaven men and boyes, the price of them not bee vallewed, for why, . . . Well, for estimacion of theis poor Soules, they are not to be vallewed at anie price . . . And now for the thirteen heathens . . . so farre now my most Worshipful Masters, I most humbly beseeche my heauenlie God. I may not receeve Rewards either of Gold or Silver for such as are Created after the Image, Similitude, and Likenesse of God, our most heauenlie, most sweete comforter, whom in troubles is reddy alwaies to bee founde . . . And so much in the name of God as touching that Businesse, and touching the Negroes or Indians.

Fig. 10



Fig. 12



Fig. 13

Fig. 11 The Duchess of Portsmouth was a slave girl — portrait by P. Mignard 1682.

Fig. 12 Portrait of James Drummond, 3rd Duke of Perth with a collared slave.

Fig. 13 Portrait of Henrietta of Lorraine with a slave boy, 1634.

A Taunymore with short bushy Hair, very well shaped, in a gray Livery lined with Yellow, about 17 or 18 years of Age, with a Silver Collar about his Neck, with these Directions, Captain George Halting's Boy, Brigadier in the King's Horse-Guards. Whoever brings him to the Sugar Loafe in the Pall Mall, shall have 40 s. reward.

Fig. 14

Run away from his Master Mr. William Smith of Battersea, on Monday the Third Instant, a Spanish Indian Man called Diego or James, of low Stature, Tawny Complexion, flattish Nosed, about 30 years of age, long black lank Hair, and his Cloaths lined and faced with Blue, a black Hatt with a blue Ribbon; he stole from his Master a small Silver Rapier Shell Handell, with several Silver Buckles, two Cloth Livery Suits lined with Blue, and white Metal Buttons, &c. was seen in London the day he went away. Whoever gives notice of him so as he may be apprehended to his said Master at his House near the Church in Battersea, shall have a Guinea reward, and all their Charges

Fig. 15

Christopher Newel, a tall black Man, of lank hair, about 30 years old, is desired to come to the Parish of Lymghstead in the County of Kent, where his Mother lately dying, hath left him some Estate.

Fig. 16

A Black Indian Boy, 12 Years of Age, fit to wait on a Gentleman, to be disposed of at Denis's Coffee-house in Finch-Lane near the Royal Exchange.

Fig. 17

Run away on the 25th past, an East-India Slim Boy, about Fourteen years old, short Hair, with a grey Cloth Cap faced with blew, a Pair of blew Stockins, an old sad-colour Coat, the Bone in one of his Legs sticks out below his Knee Pan, his Name is Coventry. Whoever secures him, and gives Notice to Mrs. Margaret Cooper, at the Upper End of Threadneedle-Street; over against the Pump, an East-India Warehouse, shall have a Guinea Reward.

Fig. 18



Fig. 20



Fig. 21

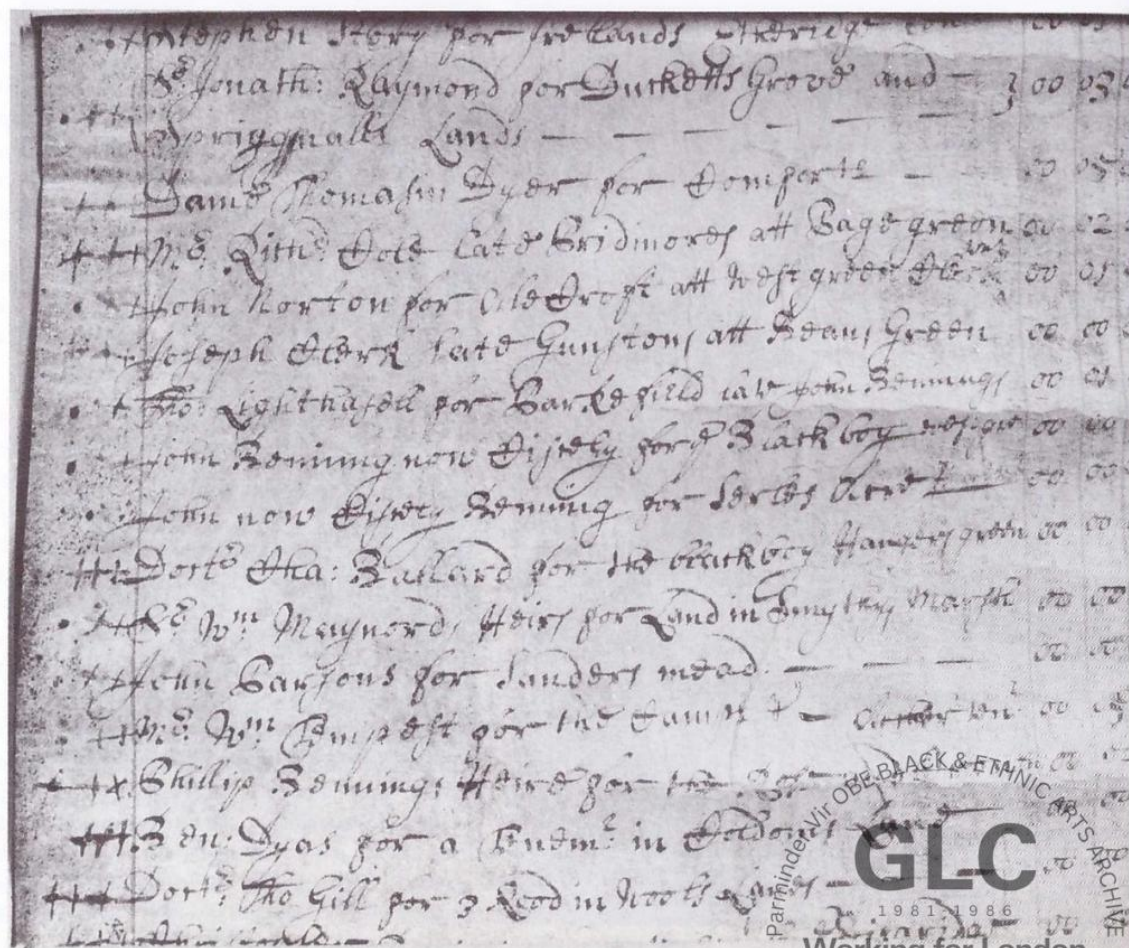


Fig. 19



Fig. 22

RUN away from his Master on the 2d Instant, David Marat, a Black about seventeen Years of Age, with short woolly Hair; He had on a whitish Cloath Livery, Lin'd with Blew, and Princes-mettal Buttons, with a Turbant on his Head: He sounds a Trumpet, whoever secures him and brings him to Edward Talbot Esq; by Kingstreet near Soho, shall have five Guineas Reward.

Fig. 23

RUN away from his Master on the 14th Instant, one Tho. Jones, about 24 Years of Age, with Pock-holes in his Face, a dark Brown Wig, in a Grey Cloath Livery lin'd with black, Stammers a little in his Speech, whoever brings him to Mr. Dikes, by the Horse-shoe Tavern in Drury-lane, shall have two Guineas Reward.

Fig. 24

Hannah Prefs, a Servant Maid of a Middle-Statute, brown Complexion, a short Nose, Marked with the Small Pox, with a Light coloured Gown and Petticoat with a little dirty Silver Lace at the bottom, and a Dark-coloured Riding-hood, speaking broad Somersetshire, went away from her Service on Sunday Morning the second Instant about 11 a Clock, and carried with her the following Plate, One Silver Tankard of old Standard holding above a Quart, One Silver Sclver with a wrought Rim, Six Silver Forks with three Prongs each, Six Spoons of German Silver, Two plain Salts, A Silver Stand for Oyl and Vinegar, Pepper and Mustard-Box, of new Standard: Supposed to be gone away with one John Brown, an old Grey-haired Man and Squints, who was her Security, and said he lived at Hammer-smith. If any Person brings Intelligence either of the Servant Maid, or the Plate, or the Man, to Mr. Edward Bird at the White Lyon a Linnen-Drapers over-against Bullin-Court in the Strand, shall have 4 Guineas Reward.

Fig. 25

On Thursday the 27th Instant, between Bristow Causeway-hill and Stretham in Surrey, about 8 of the Clock at Night, Devereux Watson of Epsom in the County of Surrey aforesaid, was Robbed by a Highway-Man of a Bay Gelding about 14 Hands one Inch high, 6 Years old, well shaped, a little hasty at first getting upon him, his Knees formerly broke, one white Spot on the off Knee remaining, his neet Shoulder wrung with the Saddle, all bright Bay, he Gallops Trot and Paces, worth 7 or 8 l. Whoever brings or sends him to Devereux Watson at Epsom, or Mr. Walkers at the Star-lan at Chairing-Cross, shall receive 10 l. Reward, and reasonable Charges.

Wm Jacobs, a Negro, aged 22 Years, Run away from his Master on Tuesday last in the Evening, he is a middle-sized Man, with a Stammering Speech, hath the Mark of a Cut in his Forehead, and the Jerusalem Arms W. I. 1706, on his Left Arm. Whoever brings him to his Master, Alexander King, Surgeon of her Majesty's Ship the Rye Galley, either on board the said Ship at Woolwich, or to his House in Lambeth Street in Goodman's Fields, shall have a Guinea Reward; or if he will voluntarily return, he shall be rewarded.

A black boy, an Indian, about thirteen years old, run away on the 8th instant from Putney, with a collar on his neck with the inscription 'The Lady Bromfield's black, in Lincoln's Inn fields'. Whoever brings him to Sir Edward Bromfield's at Putney, shall have a guinea reward.

Fig. 27

St Mary the Virgin, Aldermanbury

Bapt. May 6 1565
Bapt. Jul 7 1729

Jhon the Blackmoor

Richard a negroa servant of Mr Rose of Coverstoke in Northamptonshire about fifteen years of age

Bapt. Apr 21 1707

Mary Prudence a black baptised

Bapt. Dec 14 1771

Elizabeth d. of William Blyden & Mary a negro born Nov. 25

Bur. May 23 1566

Jhon a Blackmoor

Bur. Nov 7 1683

Capt, Sley's blacke

St Olave, Hart St.

Bapt. Jan 26 1616

Mark Antonio, a negro

Bapt. Dec 4 1631

Thomas Wood, a blackmoore

Bapt. Jan 13 1638

Abraham Thornburye, an Indian

Bapt. May 5 1638

Thomas Williams, a blackmoore

Bapt. Apr 29 1675

George, an Indian servant of Mr Robert Andrews, Chirurgeon, aged 16 years or thereabouts, Christened in ye publike congregation

Bapt. Dec 25 1682

Edward Angell a black boye belonging to Madam Hampton

Bur. Jun 6 1588

Isabell, a blackmoore

Bur. Jun 29 1588

a man blackmoore laye in the street

Bur. Nov 9 1594

Peter Marley, a blacamore, dire vira house

Bur. Jan 23 1595

George, a blacamore; oute of Mrs Barker's

Bur. Nov 23 1598

Madelen, a blackemore oute of Bernarde's house

Bur. Jul 13 1590

Grace, a nigro oute of Dcor Hector's

Bur. Mar 14 1610

the blackamore girle from Mr Pintoe's

Bur. Jan 28 1616

Mark Antonie, a negro christian

Bur. Jul 29 1665

A negro man servant of Mr. John Newton

Bur. Jul 31 1680

a black buoy, from Mr. Matine's, out of ye Tower Liberty

Bur. Jun 14 1681

Loreto, an India woman buried in ye new churchyard,

Bur. Feb 14 1682

Seething Lane from Mr. Pewseye's

Bur. Jan 24 1683

An Indian Black boy of Mr Thomas Gray

Bur. Jun 8 1686

Marea, a ffemale neager, from Mr Pewseye's

a neager male child, ffrom Mr. Rides buried at Bethlehem in ye churchyard

Fig. 28

Fig. 14 From the London Gazette, March 26-30, 1685

Fig. 15 From the London Gazette, August 10-13, 1685.

Fig. 16 From the London Gazette, April 22-26, 1685.

Fig. 17 From the Tatler, Feb 9-11, 1709.

Fig. 18 From the London Gazette, 1688.

Fig. 19 The Manor Rental of 1690, parish of Tottenham.

Fig. 20 The Black Boy pub in Tottenham.

Fig. 21 Black Boy Lane, Haringey, N.15.

Fig. 22 Blackamore's Head - an eighteenth century brand name for snuff.

Fig. 23 From the British Apollo, 13 February 1708.

Fig. 24 From the British Apollo, 13 February 1708.

Fig. 25 From the Daily Courant, 4 March 1712.

Fig. 26 From the Daily Courant, 29 March 1719.

Fig. 27 From the London Gazette, 1688.

Fig. 28 Baptisms and Burials - Black People in some London Parish Records.

Fig. 26

second city, but it was London merchants and bankers who financed the entire system. Between 1660 and 1689, fifteen of London's lord mayors and twenty-five sheriffs were shareholders in the Royal African Company. By 1750, London merchants were handling one quarter of the sugar imported into England and had become highly specialised money lenders. The fortunes of many of the Bank of England's directors and governors in the eighteenth century were made on the profits of slavery. These fortunes were invested both in British industry and reinvested in colonial plantations. West India planters were the most favoured customers of the Bank of England.

The West India planters, merchants and money lenders organised themselves into the powerful West India Lobby which in 1766 had up to forty members in Parliament. This West India Lobby consisted of the commission agents or money lenders, the absentee landlords and their political agents resident in London appointed by the various West Indian islands. Together these three elements wielded considerable power in the political affairs of the Government. The abolition movement was a struggle principally against this force which to continue its lucrative and immoral profits, and to rationalise its activities to the English public, fostered the racist ideology of white superiority.

Runaway Slaves

In such circumstances, it is amazing that high numbers of slaves attempted and succeeded in escaping from their owners, indicating extensive resistance to slavery. Often in the newspapers particular items would appear in block adverts month after month. One such example are the adverts placed for the runaway slaves David Marat and Thomas Jones which reappeared time after time in the London Gazette (Figs 23 and 24). In 1712, a black woman named Hannah Press took her freedom together with articles of value which would ensure her survival for a little while (Fig 25).

Freedom for runaway slaves, however, was to be endured rather enjoyed since they became unemployed and, not having training in other than domestic work, had low prospects of finding work.

Many runaway slaves were described, for identification, as having scars, scratches or brands on their bodies or having deformed limbs as a result of being beaten, whipped or branded by their owners. William Jacobs (Fig 26) was described as having the mark of a cut in his forehead when he escaped.

Slave hunters and slave dealers conducted their activities openly. In the London Advertiser of 1756, Matthew Dyer intimated to the public that he made 'silver padlocks for Blacks or Dog; collars, & c.'

The Indian boy who ran away from his masters in Putney was wearing a collar inscribed with the name 'My Lady Bromfield's Black' and the owner's address (Fig 27). Openly exhibited for sale in shops was other equipment popular with slave merchants eg. the iron muzzle, iron necklaces shackles, chains and thumbscrews. If caught, runaway slaves were kept in Poulter Compter, a City jail and then often sent straight to a ship bound for the plantations. Despite the risk of being captured by slave hunters and kidnappers on the streets of London and subjected to their mercies, black slaves were not deterred from fleeing.

An examination of the Parish registers of London shows that a number of black people were baptised and buried in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Fig 28).

Many black people embraced the religion of their masters in the mistaken belief that conversion and baptism automatically bestowed full freedom. This belief was shared by some slave-owners who kicked out their slaves once they had dared to become baptised. Few black people became members of a church however. White sympathisers frequently offered to act as godparents for the slaves. Black people were baptised at all ages depending on their length of time in England, their relationship with their master and the status of the parents. Conversion and baptism also involved the giving of new names. English names generally. African or Indian names were dropped, as was also the case for unenslaved and unbaptised black people. The names given were often classical Greek or Roman ones which could be pompous and even absurd. Pompey was very popular as were Scipio and Cato. According to the latest fashion, names were bestowed on black people as they would be on dogs.

Black Women In The Eighteenth Century

The majority of black people living in London in the eighteenth century were men or boys as male slaves were more in demand. There was, however, a sizeable number of black women and girls who when free, found work as laundrymaids, seamstresses and nursemaids. Few individual black women of the period are known to us today. Two women whose names have been recorded and who provide interesting glimpses of their lives were Elizabeth Caesar and Ruth Thomas.

The 'humble petition of Elizabeth Caesar the wife of John Caesar' was made to the Middlesex Sessions in 1717 (Figs. 29 and 30). She stated that her husband had served as a slave for fourteen years without wages to Benjamin and John Wood, who were printers and embossers. They had much abused her husband with 'very hard usage'

and had kept him confined as a prisoner. Although the Woods claimed John Caesar to be their slave, his wife was advised that 'slavery in England is inconsistent with the laws of this Realm'. She herself was very poor and destitute and it was argued that unless her husband was released from slavery he would be unable to provide for himself and his wife, who would then become chargeable to the parish. It was the condition of John Caesar's wife which most probably influenced the justices finding in favour of the petitioner. It is not certain if Elizabeth Caesar was a black woman but this is highly likely since she was married to a man who had been a slave for fourteen years.

Ruth Thomas from Barbados died intestate on 1 July 1745 and her will was contested by Thomas Godman, a creditor and John Knight, her former employer who owed her money. The declaration or inventories of her possessions list a fascinating collection of personal possessions, all the more interesting because they belonged to a black female servant of the early eighteenth century (Fig. 31).

Hogarth's Images of Black People

William Hogarth was the most prolific painter and engraver of black people in the eighteenth century. Hogarth uses black people and lower class whites as satirical devices to comment on sexual, cultural and economic aspects of English upper class life. The Marriage à la Mode sketches are about the disastrous marriage between the son of an impoverished Earl and the daughter of a rich tobacco merchant, and aim to expose the degradation beneath the aristocratic facade. Frame IV depicts the young wife's boudoir where she is having her hair styled and listening to music by the Italian Opera singer Senesino (Fig. 32). The black man serving chocolate is laughing at the effeminate Senesino and thus revealing Hogarth's attitude to Italian singers. Hogarth uses the black man who, was commonly thought of as sexually and culturally savage, to laugh at these aristocrats who he considers corrupt, thereby reversing the conventional roles. The black boy on the left is used to laugh at the couple behind him as a comment on their morality. The black man, the sugared chocolate and tobacco references, reveal that aristocratic culture was funded from the proceeds of colonial trade and slave labour and that their 'high civilisation' was based on inhumane economic exploitation (Dabydin, 1985).

The Rake's Progress depicts the story of Rakewell who has inherited money on the death of his father, made from East or West India trade. In Frame III Rakewell visits Drury Lane, where Hogarth uses a laughing black woman to give a satirical perspective on the vulgarity of the unwashed 'English beauties' (Fig. 33). This was in

Fig. 29 Petition of Elizabeth Caesar, 1717.

over the world but predominantly from Africa, the West Indies, India, South and North America. There was considerable pressure from an influential and vociferous lobby for immigration to be restricted. The slave lobby and the anti-slavery movement both had reasons to inflate the size of the black population. Granville Sharp privately accepted 20,000 for black population in the country and 10,000-15,000 for London alone which appears to be the most reasonable estimate.

By the second half of the eighteenth century free black people had formed themselves into a very distinct group who were largely self-sufficient. This is very apparent in the account of the fifty-seven black people in 1764 who had their own entertainment in an exclusive and fashionable club in Fleet Street (Fig. 37). The black community at this time was largely concentrated in the areas of Mile End, Stepney, Paddington and the St. Giles area.

An engraving by Cruikshank c.1805 (Fig. 38), shows black and white people in an inn drinking and dancing. There are five black people in this sketch including, interestingly, three women and a baby. This is one of the rare realistic portrayals of the black community's presence during this period where the artist recorded what he saw (rather than putting in a token black as is often the case in the media today). This community provided collective strength against the threat of recapture and re-enslavement and was a refuge for runaway slaves. The largest occupational group within this black community was domestic servants.

Due to the high cost and the risk of losing the investment if the slave gained freedom, few slave owners trained their slaves in artisan skills. Most runaways in London possessed only domestic skills and found themselves often unemployable when free in an urban area already plagued by social unrest. (Walvin, 1973). This was compounded by the lord mayor's order of 1731 which prohibited the apprenticeship of black people in any London companies, thereby depriving them of opportunities for learning new skills and trades. This employment colour bar, the first of its kind, was not to be the last. The prospect of poverty did not dispel the attractiveness of freedom in the main.

Free blacks shared the environment of poverty with thousands of whites in a life of dirt and hunger. There is little evidence of tensions and resentments between poor blacks and whites who regarded each other with friendly co-operation. It was the West Indian planters and other beneficiaries from slavery who found mixed marriages objectionable. Slave-owners¹⁹⁸¹⁻¹⁹⁸⁶ were quick to comment that soon money for

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To the Worshipfull His Ma^{ties} Justices of the Peace
for the County of Middlesex.
The humble Petition of Elizabeth Cesar, the Wife of John Cesar
Humbly sheweth, That your Petitioner's said Husband has for these fourteen
years last past, lived as a Slave without any Lawful Benjamin Wood,
and Son of said Thomas' Street in Ecclestone, Middlesex, Parish
of White Chappell in the said County of Middlesex, and
Embassadors, who have very much abused the said John Cesar, with very hard
usage, and for the greatest part of that time, kept him as a Prisoner, in
their dwelling House in Thomas' Street aforesaid.
That the said John Cesar about seven years ago, was
Baptized according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England
by Mr. William Edwards a Minister of the said Church then in sacred Orders
the Captain to the late Duke of Ormond, at which said Baptism were
present, Mr. John Mayfield and Mr. Peter Bollenius.
That the said Benjamin Wood and John Wood in one of
them Nevertheless, claim and detain the said John Cesar for a Slave
and as your Petitioner is advised, Slavery in England is inconsistent
with the Laws of this Realm.
That your Petitioner is very poor and destitute of all
means of Subsistence and like to become chargeable to the Parish unless
her said Husband be Released and Dismissed from the said Slavery
and Captivity and set at Liberty, whereby he may be capable to
earn his Livelihood and maintain himself and your Petitioner.

Your Petitioner therefore humbly prays That the
Wid Benjamin Wood, and John Wood together wth
the said John Dear y^e Petitioner's Wth bands and
the said John Mayhew and Peter Ball ex^{te}ms who
were Witnesses to the said Dear's Baptism may
be Ordered to Utter at this present Session of the
Court So as that upon a full Examination & Hearing
of the matter Your Petitioner may have such Relief
as to the said ^{the} Death shall seem meet.

And y^e Petitioners shall ever pray &c

MSP 1717 Sep 4/17

response to an article in the *Spectator* where the female hottentot (black) 'in all her dirt' had been compared to an English beauty in all her 'purity.'

Hogarth was one of the few eighteenth century artists who sympathised with black people who he considered to belong to the world of the lower classes.

18th Century London Sales – of Slaves

Human beings were not only sold in the West Indies or America but in England itself. Black people were still being sold as slaves in London as late as the second half of the eighteenth century. The sale would normally take place in various inns or hotels in the capital. The unfortunate nine year old boy for sale in 1744 was to be transported to

the colonies immediately should he not find a buyer (Fig. 34). In 1769, a boy was up for sale with horses and a carriage (Fig. 35). These adverts frequently referred to the slave as being 'good-tempered' or of a 'pleasant disposition.' Occasionally, references were made about the slaves fondness for labour and of course, his physical well-being was of paramount importance.

The girl who was for sale in 1769 was the 'property' of John Bull and was described as having an 'excellent temper and willing disposition'! (Fig. 36). The process of dehumanising of black people was complete.

A Community of Defiance

By the mid-eighteenth century, black people were arriving in England from all

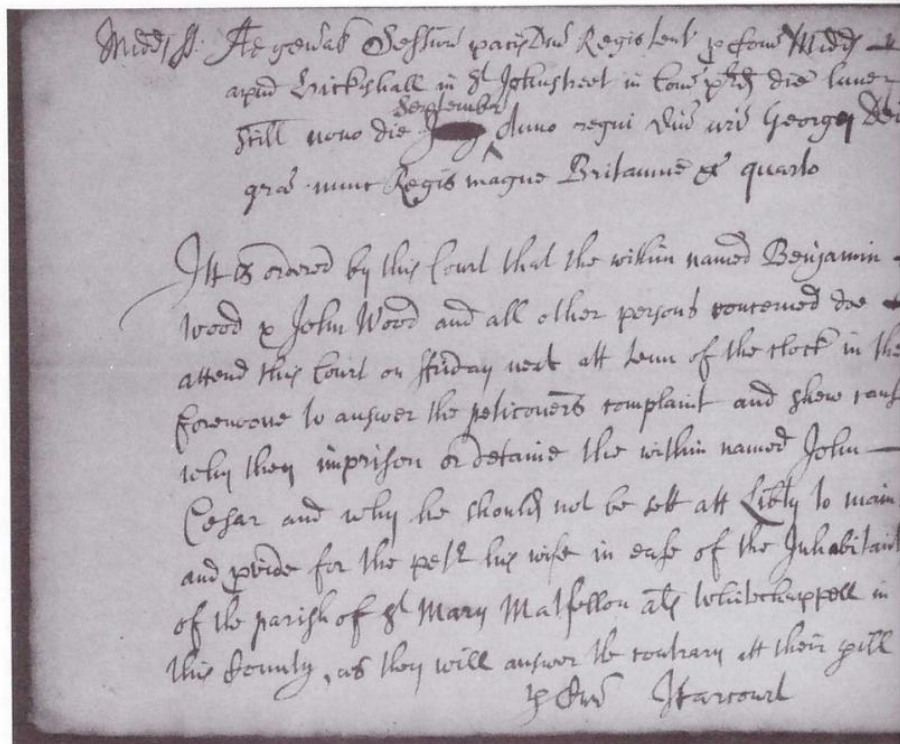


Fig. 30

A declaration instead of an inventory Ruth Thomas in the hands of John Knight

Declares that there were found in dec'd boxes and trunks
In the dec'd's lodgings at Edmonton

One pair of stone earrings 5ct in gold with drops, one pair of plain earrings without drops, 2 stone rings set in gold, 2 plain gold rings, one necklace with a gold locket, one stone lid of a snuff box, 2 large silver spoons, one small silver tea spoon, one razor, one penknife, another with 2 blades, but what the value cannot set forth they not being appraised.

14 shifts, one white dimity under petticoat, 4 quilted petticoats, 2 stuff gowns 3 linen gowns, 2 silk gowns, 4 pair stays, 2 pair childrens stays, 15 white aprons, 2 chequer aprons, one coarse brown apron, 17 white hankerchiefs, 5 silk & gauze hankerchiefs, 2 coloured linen hankerchiefs 20 caps, 7 ruffles, 4 pair womens worsted stockings, 8 pair white stockings, 7 pair of shoes, one pair clogs, one pair of pattens, 3 pair new leather gloves, one silk apron, a paper parcel containing ribbons & thread, 3 napkins. One bundle containing sundry remnants of new cloth, 3 black hoods, one scarlet cloak, one Leghorn hat, 2 stomachers, 3 hoop petticoats, The Life of Moll Flanders, a Common Prayer book, a remnant of striped stuff, remnant of plain silk, 2 bundles of rags and other things. But what the value . . . cannot set forth.

Declaration instead of an inventory of Ruth Thomas widow which have come into the possession of Thomas Godman a creditor of the dec'd
That the dec'd had at the time of her death a lodging or room in this declarant's house and the following goods are in the room. A grate & fender, dish, kettle, a pot, a tea kettle, two saucepans, one cover, 3 pewter dishes, 14 plates, one looking glass, a small wainscot table, hearth brush, a basket, bedstead & curtains, a feather bed, bolster, two pillows, 2 old blankets, 2 pair of tongs, a stove, brass warming pan, one old table, 2 gowns, one old childs coat china, a punch bowl, 5 pint basins, 4 half pint, one coffee cup, 2 teapots, one sugar dish, 6 tea cups & saucers, 6 chocolate cups and saucers, which have been appraised by John Norris & Wm. Matthews at £5.3s. Due to dec'd from this declarant by bond £10 and 17s 6d for 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ years interest. The dec'd for some time before her death lived at the house of John Knight at Edmonton. Believes she was then possessed of money clothes, rings, securities and other things to a considerable value. Believes John Knight was & is indebted to the estate for wages and money lent to his wife.

Fig. 31

Fig. 30 The Summons of Benjamin and John Wood, of Whitechapel, 1717.

Fig. 31 The inventories of Ruth Thomas, 1745.

Fig. 32 Marriage A La Mode, Frame IV, by W. Hogarth.

Fig. 33 Rake's Progress, Frame III, by W. Hogarth.



Fig. 32



Fig. 33

To be SOLD,
A Pretty little Negro Boy, about nine Years
old, and well limb'd. If not dispos'd of, is to be sent to the
West Indies in six Days Time.
He is to be seen at the Dolphin Tavern in Tower-Street.

Fig. 34

HORSES, TIM WISKY, and BLACK BOY.
TO be SOLD, at the Bull and Gate Inn,
Holborn, A very good Tim Wisky, little the worse
for wear, with good harness, and, if desired, a Horse also,
that goes well in it.

A Chesnut Gelding, 14 hands and an half high, is very
fightly, and would suit a lady in every respect, extremely
well, as he goes safe, pleasant, and steady.

A very good Grey Mare, 15 hands high, mistress of
12 stone, and a very pleasant goer. The above are just
come out of the country, are rising five years old, and will
be warranted sound.

A well made, good-tempered Black Boy,; he has lately
had the small-pox, and will be sold to any gentleman. En-
quire as above.

Fig. 35

To be SOLD,
A Black Girl, the Property of John Bull,
Eleven Years of Age, who is extremely handy
works at her Needle tolerably, and speaks English
perfectly well; is of an excellent Temper, and will-
ing Disposition.

Enquire of Mrs. Owen, at the Angel Inn, behind
St. Clement's Church in the Strand.

Fig. 36

Among the fundry fashionable routs or clubs,
that are held in town, that of the Blacks or
Negro servants is not the least. On Wednes-
day night last, no less than fifty-seven of them,
men and women, supped, drank, and enter-
tained themselves with dancing and music, con-
sisting of violins, French horns, and other in-
struments, at a public-house in Fleet-street,
till four in the morning. No Whites were al-
lowed to be present, for all the performers
were Blacks.

Fig. 37



Fig. 38

'We are of Opinion, That a Slave by
coming from the *West-Indies* to *Great
Britain* or *Ireland*, either with or with-
out his Master, doth not become free,
and that his Master's Property or Right
in him is not thereby determined or var-
ied: And that Baptism doth not bestow
freedom on him, nor make any Altera-
tion in his Temporal Condition in these
Kingdoms. We are also of Opinion,
that his Master may legally compel him
to return again to the Plantations.

Jan. 14, 1729.

P. York.

C. Talbot.

Fig. 39



Fig. 40

On Monday near 200 Blacks, with their La-
dies, had an Entertainment at a Public-house
in Westminster, to celebrate the Triumph
which their Brother Somerset had obtained
over Mr. Stuart his Master. Lord Mansfield's
Health was echoed round the Room, and the
Evening was concluded with a Ball. The
Tickets for Admittance to this black Assembly
were 5s. each.

Fig. 41

Fig. 34 From the Daily Advertiser, 13 December
1744.

Fig. 35 From the Gazetteer, 18 April 1769.

Fig. 36 From the Public Advertiser, 28 November
1769.

Fig. 37 From the London Chronicle, 16-18
February 1764.

Fig. 38 'Lowest Life in London' drawing and
engraving by Cruikshank.

Fig. 39 The Yorke and Talbot Judgement,
Gentleman's Magazine 1741, pp. 126-7.

Fig. 40 Granville Sharp 1767-1831.

Fig. 41 From the Public Advertiser, 27 June 1772.

'fall into the company of vicious white servants and abandoned prostitutes of the town; and thus are quickly debauched in their morals, instructed in the science of domestic knavery, fleeced of their money and driven to commit some theft or misdemeanour.'

(Long, E., *Candid Reflections*, 1772). Increasingly the poverty-stricken urban population found it difficult to survive within the framework of legality. Poor people were at the time being sentenced to death for burglary and black people also experienced this. Crimes which today would be considered petty were severely punished. Sentences of transportation or death were the hazards faced by the poor who were unfortunate enough to get caught. It is normally impossible to tell from records of court proceedings if the defendants were black. Research carried out recently on this indents of convicts arriving in Australia, (Duffield 1984) for around this time revealed that by the eighteenth and early nineteenth century 400 blacks had been transported. By tracing back their names and the exact date of trial session papers, details of the case can be revealed. For example, in 1828 George Barrow was tried at Middlesex Sessions Court and convicted of various fraudulent acts (Sessions Rolls MJ/SR 4186). Nowhere do these documents held at the Greater London Records Office (G.L.R.O) mention his origins, yet from the Australian indents we know that he was a 'mulatto' born in Demerara.

Slavery and English Law

Due to the successful attempts at escape by increasing numbers of slaves, who were often given refuge and support by free blacks and sympathetic whites, slave-owners found their property rights in danger. This issue raised two legal problems for the courts. First, did English law permit slavery of black people and second, did the masters have a legal right to kidnap their runaway slaves and send them back to the colonies? From the sixteenth century until 1772 numerous cases were brought before the courts and the contradictory decisions which resulted confounded the issue further. In a case in 1569 it had been resolved that English law would not recognise the status of a slave and that England was 'too pure an Air for slaves to breathe in.'

However, in the late seventeenth century, a number of rulings on blacks being slaves because they were 'heathens' led to the popular belief that being baptised would confer freedom. For this reason, many slaves got baptised and found sympathisers amongst the clergy and laity who were willing to perform the baptismal ceremony and stand as godfathers. The Yorke and Talbot judgment in 1729 in response to the petitions from

the West India Lobby finally established that 'Baptism does not bestow freedom on' the slave. They also supported the legal right of masters to compel their slaves to return to the plantations (Fig. 39).

Granville Sharp, a minor government clerk, who in challenging the Yorke & Talbot ruling, became England's first leading abolitionist and a much beloved friend of black people (Fig. 40). Sharp first became involved in the anti-slavery movement through the case of Jonathan Strong. Sharp noticed Strong queueing with other poor people for free medical treatment which was being administered by Sharp's brother in Mincing Lane. Jonathan was in a very bad physical state, almost blind from head wounds and was hardly able to walk. He explained that he had been beaten savagely by his master with a pistol until nearly dead and then thrown out into the street.

Shocked and moved, the brothers arranged for Strong to be admitted to St. Bartholomew's Hospital where he remained for four months and then helped him to find a job. Two years later he was recognised by his employer in the street who immediately sold him to a West Indian planter and had him lured into a trap by slave-hunters. Jonathan who had been baptised, wrote to the Sharp brothers, his godfathers. The case came before the lord mayor at the Mansion House who set Jonathan free. The captain of the ship which transported Strong tried to take Jonathan by force until warned off by Sharp. A few days later Granville Sharp was served with a writ by Kerr the planter, alleging trespass and claiming damages for being deprived of his property. Sharp, who had never opened a law book before in his life, studied all the available texts thoroughly and concluded that the Yorke & Talbot ruling had been wrong and was not sanctioned by the laws of England. The plaintiffs lawyers were intimidated by his findings and the case was won when they failed to proceed. Jonathan Strong, however, never quite recovered from the savage beating he had received and died five years later at the age of 25.

Granville Sharp then began a campaign to obtain a definitive ruling that it was unlawful to kidnap black slaves and ship them off to the plantations by publishing his refutation of the Yorke & Talbot ruling. At the same time he began to use whatever loopholes in the law he could find to save kidnapped slaves.

The Somerset Case

The case of James Somerset made legal history when the right of the slave-owner to forcibly repatriate his slave was contested in the courts. Somerset had run away two years after arriving in England but was soon recaptured by his former owner Stewart and held on ship which was about to leave

for Jamaica. He was rescued in the nick of time by Granville Sharp. Lord Mansfield., the Lord Chief Justice of England, granted a writ of habeus corpus against the captain of the ship and commanded that Somerset be brought to his Chambers. Lord Mansfield decided to refer the case to the Court of the King's Bench before which Somerset appeared after a delay of two months.

The case was much talked about all over London and was reported to have become one of the principal topics of general conversation by the General Evening Post of 13 June 1772. Many attended the Court Sessions in the interests of humanity or from curiosity due to the great excitement created by the case. The black community sent a delegation to attend each hearing in solidarity with their brother and for the cause of liberty and freedom. A small group with none of these interests was easily recognisable. They were the West India merchants and planters who were openly defraying the expenses of Stewart, the slave owner.

The case eventually dragged on three terms as a result of several adjournments. Finally a ruling was given on 22 June 1772 where Lord Mansfield, who had struggled hard against giving a decision on this issue, pronounced that the powers applying in the West Indies allowing masters to remove slaves forcibly could not apply in England and therefore that Somerset had to be discharged. Mansfield, the father of Commercial Law, succeeded in not only setting Somerset free knowing that he had previously erred in supporting Yorke & Talbot judgment, but at the same time he ensured that proprietary interest in slaves would not suffer (Shyllon, 1974).

The Middlesex Journal reported that 'A great number of blacks were in Westminster Hall to hear the determination of the case and went away greatly pleased.' The black community saw the judgment as a cause for celebration which was reported in The Public Advertiser on 27 June 1772 (Fig. 41).

For Granville Sharp, the outcome of the case was the confirmation and admission of all that he had fought for with tenacity and determination and unlike Lord Mansfield, with no lack of moral firmness. Sharp, himself, had engaged seven counsel to defend Somerset but did not appear in court himself in order not to provoke the magistrate. This case became the culmination of a contest between Mansfield and Sharp on the issue of slavery in England.

The black community delighted with the outcome of the case, in common with the wider public, mistakenly assumed that slavery in England had come to an end. Certain newspapers interpreted the verdict in this way and soon the legend had taken firm root that black slaves had become emancipated and that Lord Mansfield was their emancipator. Despite Lord Mansfield's record to the contrary, it was the later case of Grace Jones in 1827 which proved that this was decidedly not the reality.

Honourable and Worthy Sir,
Give us leave to say, that every virtuous man is a truly
honourable man; and he that doth good hath honour to
himself: and many blessings are upon the head of the just,
and their memory shall be blessed, and their works praise
them in the gate.

And we must say, that we, who are a part, or
descendants, of the much-wronged people of Africa, are
peculiarly and greatly indebted to you, for the many good
and friendly services that you have done towards us, and
which are now even out of our power to enumerate.
Nevertheless, we are truly sensible of your great
kindness and humanity; and we cannot do otherwise but
endeavour, with the utmost sincerity and thankfulness, to
acknowledge our great obligations to you, and, with the
most feeling sense of our hearts, on all occasions to express
and manifest our gratitude and love for your long,
valuable, indefatigable labours and benevolence towards
us, in using every means to rescue our suffering brethren in
slavery . . .

And now, honourable Sir, with the greatest submission,
we must beg you to accept this memorial of our thanks for
your good and faithful services towards us, and for your
humane commiseration of our brethren and countrymen
unlawfully held in slavery.

And we have hereunto subscribed a few of our names, as
a mark of our gratitude and love. And we are, with the
greatest esteem and veneration, honourable and worthy
Sir, your most obliged and most devoted humble servants.

Ottobah Cugoana
John Stuart
Geo. Rob. Mandeville
William Stevens
Joseph Almaze
Boughwa Gegansmel

Jasper Goree
Gustavus Vases (Equiano)
James Bailey
Thomas Oxford
John Adams
George Wallace



Fig. 43

Should you My Lord, while you peruse my song,
Wonder from whence my love of Freedom sprung,
Whence flow these wishes for the common good
By feeling hearts alone well understood.
I, young in life, by seeming cruel fate,
Was snatch'd from Africa's fancy'd happy seat;
What pangs excruciating must molest,
What sorrows labour in my parents breast?
Steel'd was that soul and by no misry mov'd
That from a father seiz'd his babe below'd;
Such – such my case; and can I then but pray
Others may never feel the tyrannic sway?

Fig. 44



Fig. 45

Fig. 42 Letter to Granville Sharpe by members of
the black community, 1787.

Fig. 43 Portrait of Phyllis Wheatley, c. 1773.

Fig. 44 A poem by Phyllis Wheatley, 1773.

Fig. 45 Portrait of Ignatious Sancho by
Gainsborough, 1768.

Fig. 46 Letter from Laurence Sterne to Ignatious
Sancho, 1766.

Fig. 42

Fig. 46

Coxwold near York
July 27. 1766

There is a strange coincidence, Sancho,
in the little events (as well as in the great ones)
of this world: for I had been writing a tender tale
of the sorrows of a friend's poor negro-girl, and
my eyes had scarce done smothering, when your
Letter of recommendation in behalf of so many
of her brethren and sisters, came to me –
– but why her brethren? – or yours, Sancho!
any more than mine? It is by the finest taste
and most insensible gradation, that nature descends
from the fairest face about St. James's, to the
sootiest complexion in Africa: at which hint of these
is it, that the ties of blood are to cease? and
how many shades must we descend lower still in
the scale, ere Mercy is to vanish with them? –
but tis no uncommon thing, my good Sancho, for
one half of the world to use the other half of it like
brutes, & then endeavour to make 'em so. for
my own part, I never look westward (when I am in
a pensive mood at least) but I think of the burdens
which our Brothers & Sisters are there carrying – &
could I safe this Shoulders from one ounce of 'em I
declare I would set out this hour upon a pilgrimage
to Mecca for their sakes – Wth by thy by, Sancho, exceeds

your Walk, often miles, in about the same
proportion, that a Visit of Humanity, should
one, of mere form – however if you mean
my friend, Toby, ~~Sancho~~ more – he is y^e better.

If I can weave the Tale I have wrote into
the Work I'm abt. – tis at the service of the afflicted
– and a much greater matter; for in serious
truth, it casts a ~~unpleasant~~ ^{sad} shade upon the
world, that so great a part of it, are and
have been so long bound in chains of
darkness & in Chains of Misery; & I cannot
but both respect & felicitate you, that by so
much laudable diligence you have broke
the one – & that by falling into the hands
of so good and merciful a family, Providence
has rescued you from the other.

and so, good hearted Sancho! adieu!
& believe me, I shall always I will not forget
y^r Letter. Y^{rs}

L. Sterne

Are 1129/157/30

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The Slave Ship Zong

Due to a contest in the courts between the owners and the insurers of a ship, on mercenary consideration, the terrible case of the slave ship Zong, came to the public's notice when it was heard in the Guildhall, London on 6 March 1783. The captain of the ship carrying 470 slaves to Jamaica from Africa, having realised that many would die from sickness in the Middle Passage before Jamaica was reached, ordered his crew to throw overboard 132 sick slaves. The idea was that if the slaves died a natural death the loss would fall on the owners, which would mean smaller profits for the captain too. However, if they were thrown overboard on the pretext of necessity for the safety of the ship, the loss would be borne on returning to London.

In the event the underwriters refused to accept the alleged necessity and honour the claim and hence the case came to court. An anonymous letter which appeared in the Morning Chronicle reports the case and the following day Olaudah Equiano, one of the leaders of the black community visited Granville Sharp to enlist his support in avenging the blood of his murdered brothers. Sharp made attempts to bring about the prosecution of the crew of the Zong for murder and campaigned vigorously by writing to the courts and even to the British Prime Minister. But Sharp's call for prosecution of the murderers was doomed to failure because eighteenth century England did not regard black people as human beings.

On December 15, 1787 some representatives of the black community sent to Granville Sharp a testimony of their appreciation for his work in rescuing and defending kidnapped slaves (Fig 42).

The case of Grace Jones heard by Lord Stowell in 1827 established finally the fallacy of Englishman's boast that his country did not countenance slavery. Grace had been a slave on the island of Antigua, had travelled with her mistress to England and then was taken back to Antigua. Amongst other charges, a charge was taken against her mistress that she, Grace, was a free person as a result of her residence in England but was still being treated as a slave. In his ruling, Stowell upheld that residence in England without manumission (buying or conferring of freedom through deeds) did not extinguish the status of slavery although it was suspended until returned to the country where slavery was legal (Shyllon, 1974).

Famous Black Individuals

Phyllis Wheatley

Phyllis Wheatley was kidnapped in 1761 at the age of eight and transported to Boston, America. Phyllis was taught to read and write by her owners and became a child

prodigy. She spoke English perfectly well and also knew Latin (Fig 43). In 1773 a book of thirty-nine of her verses 'Poems on Various Subjects' was published in London and reprinted many times. The first black poet of note, she was lionised when she arrived in England in 1772. The London Magazine in 1773 reported that 'these poems display no astonishing power of genius, but when we consider them as the production of a young untutored African...we cannot suppress our admiration of talents so vigorous and lively.'

Phyllis's work was used in conjunction with Sancho's letters by abolitionists keen to show the capabilities of black people. It has been argued that she was overpraised at the time because of her age, sex, race and servitude and consequently was later undervalued. It has also been said by Robinson (1975) that she displayed 'much more Black consciousness, much more concern for her fellow blacks, than many readers will admit.'

One of her poems describes the feelings of the parents of young Africans when their children were snatched away from them and excited much sympathy for slaves (Fig 44).

Ignatious Sancho

Ignatious Sancho was born on a slaving ship and came to England at the age of two. He was sold to three maiden sisters living in Greenwich who 'judged ignorance the best and only security for obedience.' Sancho by 'unwearied application' taught himself to read and write. Ignatious Sancho was the first African prose writer to be published in England whose work became a best-seller. At the age of twenty, he sought refuge with the Duke of Montague who became his patron. During this time, he was able to pursue his interests in reading and writing poetry and also emerged as a minor composer. Sancho's music was broadcast by the BBC in 1958. Sancho was feted by the nobility and taken up by London's fashionable literacy and artistic circles. He became a friend of Garrick, the famous actor, the sculptor Joseph Noekens, the writers Laurence Sterne and Samuel Johnson. In 1768, Gainsborough painted Sancho's portrait (Fig 45).

Although Sancho had little experience of West Indian slavery, he constantly pleaded for the well-being of his brethren and condemned the iniquities of the English, who while believing the worst stories about Africa, were unable to see the evils of their own society. In his letters to Laurence Sterne, Sancho writes: 'Consider slavery – what it is – how bitter a draught – and how many million are made to drink it.' In another letter in July 1766 he wrote: 'Dear Sir, think in me you behold the uplifted hands of thousands of my brother Moors. Grief...is eloquent: figure to yourself their attitudes: hear their supplicating addresses.'

Laurence Sterne the well-known literary figure and writer of 'Tristram Shandy' was sympathetic to the cause of the slaves. He replied on 27 July 1766 that Sancho's brethren

were his own and that when looking westward he often thought of 'the burdens which our brothers and sisters are sharing' (Fig 46). He asked at which tint of complexion the ties of blood between black and white ceased. Sterne was one of the few eminent Englishmen who professed such sentiments during this period.

Sancho married a black West Indian woman and they had six children. He opened a grocery shop in Charles Street, Westminster but constantly lived on the poverty line. He witnessed the Gordon Riots in 1780 of which he disapproved. Sancho realised that he had a privileged position in English society compared to other blacks. Yet he never forgot that he was black and kept in touch with the black community. He knew he was never accepted by certain sections of the English society who despised him and he wrote in his letters 'from Othello to Sancho the big – we are either foolish – or mulish – all – all without a single exception.'

Sancho died in 1780 at the age of fifty-one and was buried at Westminster Broadway. His letters were posthumously collected and published as, 'The Letters of the late Ignatious Sancho, an African' by one of his correspondents, a Miss Crewe. The first edition of the letters were immediately subscribed and the book became a best-seller. Sancho's wife received more than £500 from the sales of the second edition. In 1803, Sancho's son William brought out the fifth edition of the book. The book's significance and success lay in its author's origins and it became the first tract written by an African to be used by the abolitionist movement to prove black attainments, perfectibility and capabilities.

Francis Barber

Francis Barber was born in Jamaica and brought to England in 1750 by a Captain Bathurst who gave Francis his freedom in his will. Francis then became a servant to the renowned Dr. Samuel Johnson, the author of the first English dictionary. Johnson laid out £300 in fees to educate Francis at Bishops Stortford Grammar School from 1767-1772 and was clearly very fond of his valet-come-secretary. Black domestic servants in London formed the greater part of the black community and informal meetings and gatherings were common. A visitor to Johnson's house c.1760 when he was away from home noted that 'when Francis Barber, his black servant, opened the door to tell me so, a group of his African countrymen were sitting around a fire in the gloomy anti-room.' Dr. Johnson came to rely on Francis greatly in his last years and there are many accounts of Francis's presence during this time.

Francis Barber was painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds in 1767 (Fig 47). Dr. Johnson and Sir Joshua Reynolds the artist, formed a literary circle called 'The Club' in 1769. In a sketch entitled 'A Literary Party at Sir Joshua Reynolds,' the members of the club include Johnson, Reynolds, Garrick, Goldsmith and Boswell. The members are waited on by an

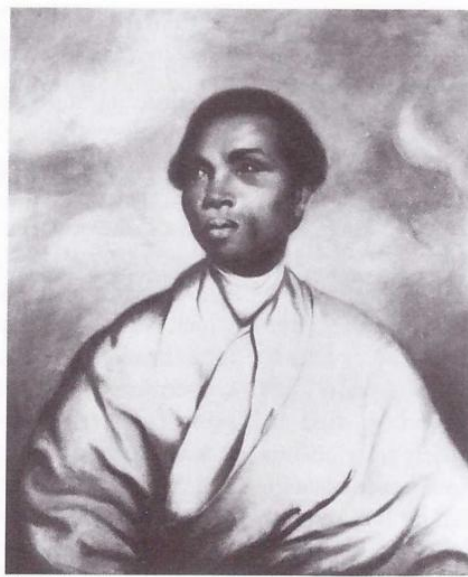


Fig. 47



Fig. 48



Fig. 49

A Black came in after dinner and sat with the ladies and after coffee, walked with the company in the gardens, one of the young ladies having her arm within the other. She had a very high cap and her wool was much frizzled in her neck, but not enough to answer the large curls now in fashion. She is neither handsome nor genteel – pert enough. I knew her history before, but My Lord mentioned it again. Sir John Lindsay having taken her mother prisoner in a Spanish vessel, brought her to England where she was delivered of this girl, of which she was then with child, and which was taken care of by Lord M., and has been educated by his family. He calls her Dido, which I suppose is all the name she has. He knows he has been reproached for showing fondness for her – I dare say not criminal.

Fig. 50

Person's of in family 1742

Sept 11

Brought over	3452	9	11
Expense of Making second crop of Hay	34	2	6
Carriage of wood	8	6	
Plate butter	8	6	
for Sept 10 to Sept 16	F	4	9
Letter of Remittance	3		
for Sept 10 to Sept 16	H	15	6
Daniel's wages due 20	10		
for Sept 10 to Sept 23	F	4	4
Poor Person Sept 25	5		
for Sept 10 to Sept 23	H	15	8
Board wages to Sept in farm to 10	2	9	
Porter's bill for Carriage	4	14	
Wages of Wages Dido's Dec	12		
Sum of Dec for one year due to 10	5	9	
for Sept 20 to Sept 30	F	3	19
Letter of Remittance	4		
for Sept 10 to Sept 30	H	18	
Board wages to Sept in farm to 10	10		
Porter's bill for Carriage	1		
Dido's wages due	10		

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Fig. 51

Fig. 47 Portrait of Francis Barber, by Sir Joshua Reynolds, 1767.

Fig. 48 A Literary Party at Sir Joshua Reynolds, by James E. Doyle, 1767.

Fig. 49 Portrait of Dido Elizabeth Lindsay and Lady Elizabeth Mary Murray attributed to Zoffany, c.1779.

Fig. 50 Extract from the Diary of Thomas Hutchinson, 29 August 1779.

Fig. 51 A page from Lady Anne Murray's Account Book.

'Index of Rank' who may well have been Francis Barber or Reynold's black servant (Fig 48).

When Dr. Johnson died he left Francis £50 annuity, his property, books and personal possessions to the resentment of certain of his friends such as Boswell and Baretti. Francis Barber married an Englishwoman and moved to Lichfield where he became a celebrity. He ran a school at Burntwood near Lichfield until he died in 1801.

Dido Elizabeth Lindsay

The man who was regarded by many as the champion of slaves, despite many of his rulings to the contrary, Lord Mansfield, kept a slave in his own household. Although she was his great-niece, the daughter of his brother's son, and had many privileges, she was nevertheless still a slave (Shyllon, 1974). Knowing the vulnerable position she would be in before he died, he confirmed her freedom in his will, which implies that he had given her freedom earlier.

Dido Elizabeth Lindsay or Dido Belle, was the daughter of Sir John Lindsay and an African slave and was born c.1763. She was brought up by Lord and Lady Mansfield with her half cousin Lady Elizabeth Mary Murray, whose mother had died in her infancy. Dido and her half cousin are portrayed walking arm-in-arm in the grounds of Kenwood, the residence of Lord Mansfield with a view of London in the background. This portrait is attributed to Zoffany. Dido is dressed exotically wearing an Indian turban and a silver dress (Fig. 49). The children grew up together and Dido probably served as a playmate or personal attendant for Elizabeth.

Dido spent the first thirty years of her life at Kenwood in an intermediate position between the domestic servants and family members. She was given the task of overseeing the dairy and poultry yard.

From reports by visitors to the estate it appears that she was held in much affection by the family and particularly by Lord Mansfield. A hostile visitor Thomas Hutchinson, an American loyalist living in London, commented in 1779 on Dido's joining the guests after dinner (Fig. 50). To him she appeared neither handsome nor genteel – a view belied by the vivacity and beauty of her portrait. Hutchinson remarked that Lord Mansfield had been reproached for showing her fondness. He also wrote that a few years before, a Jamaica planter had commented on the outcome of the Somerset case. 'He will be set free, for Lord Mansfield keeps a Black in his house which governs him and the whole family.' Since Dido was only about eight at the time, this is clearly an exaggeration.

Some information about Dido's life can be gleaned from the Account Book kept by Lady Anne Murray, an older niece of Lord

Mansfield who kept house for him in the last eight years of his life. There are many regular references to allowances made to Dido including birthday and Christmas presents, which shows Dido's material well-being (Fig. 51). An entry relating to Dido's allowance can be seen at the bottom of the page.

It was precisely because the Somerset judgment did not set black slaves in England free that Lord Mansfield 'confirmed' Dido's freedom in his will dated 17 April 1788. Dido's father, Sir John Lindsay died in 1788. Little is known of their relationship except that he acknowledged her in his will, leaving £1000 to be shared by her and her half-brother John. In Sir John Lindsay's obituary in the Morning Herald, Dido is praised for her 'amiable disposition' and accomplishments (Fig. 52). Dido left Kenwood after Lord Mansfield's death in 1793. It appears from various accounts that she changed her name from Belle to Davinier, probably on her marriage. She was comfortably provided for. Lord Mansfield left her £500 plus £100 annuity. Her father had left her £500 and Lady Margery Murray left her £100. We have little further information about Dido after she left Kenwood.

The Black Poor

In late eighteenth century London, there were a number of black people of Indian origin who were usually working as servants or Lascars (Indian seamen). Though much fewer in number, it was their plight which first caught public attention. A letter published in the Public Advertiser in March 1785 described the writer's 'shock' at the number of miserable objects, Lascars, that I see standing in the streets' (Fig 53.) He appealed to persons of 'sense and worth' to subscribe to a relief scheme to provide food and clothes for the poor strangers. Concern about Lascars who had been reduced to begging, led to the formation of the Committee of Gentlemen which soon extended its scope to all the black poor. Contemporary whites contrasted the condition of well-cared for servants with the rest of the blacks where 'those not in livery are in rags.'

In January 1786, a group of concerned merchants, bankers and MPs formed the Committee for the Relief of the Black Poor (Fig. 54). Funds raised by public appeals were used to provide food, clothing and medical assistance for poor black people. Daily relief was given to two hundred people initially in the form of a piece of meat, broth and a two penny loaf at the White Raven in Mile End Road and at the Yorkshire Sting in Lisson Green.

The General Evening Post, 21 January 1786 published that the Committee had so far received £550, and had already discovered over 250 blacks who were objects of their charity. Of this 150 were African men, 30

were African women and the remainder, i.e. 40, were blacks from the East Indies.

The number of people receiving relief soon rose to almost 700. The names of each of the black poor were recorded and these documents are now held at the Public Records Office, London. Some examples are shown in Figs. 55-57. Relief in cash at the rate of 6d. a day was handed out, the greater part of which was contributed by the Government. It has been argued that the generosity of the Government at this time was for the purpose of using the relief as bait for those who, it was justified nine years later, were 'indigent, unemployed, despised and forlorn and it was necessary they should be sent somewhere and be no longer suffered to invest the streets of London.'

The Sierra Leone Resettlement Scheme

The Committee then sought from the Government finance for an alternative scheme it had already conceived of to resettle the Black Poor overseas. The location was originally to be in America but the Committee was persuaded by a Henry Smeathman to accept a plan for Sierra Leone. When Smeathman suddenly died, the Committee lost confidence in the plan. It was representatives of the Black Poor who argued not to abandon the Sierra Leone scheme and eventually the Committee and Government gave way. The Black Poor organised themselves to obtain agreements and certificates formalising their relations with the whites and safeguarding their freedom in Africa. Increasingly, they came to have a say in decision making and showed initiative and organisation.

Initially many members of the black community considered the Sierra Leone scheme to offer some hope to those of the black poor who wished to participate in it. Olaudah Equiano (Gustavus Vassa) had reluctantly accepted the position of Commissary for the African Settlement in order to ensure that the needs of the settlers would adequately be met.

In the certificates demanded by the prospective settlers, it was certified under the royal arms, that the bearer was 'a good and loyal subject' and a 'Freeman of the Colony of Sierra Leone or the Land of Freedom,' which the participants intended to use for protection against slave-traders in that area. The Black Poor also requested supplies, stores and, most importantly, arms. Instead of being mere passive recipients of charity as they have frequently been portrayed, it has been argued that the Black Poor assumed responsibility for their own future (Braidwood, 1984).

There is debate amongst historians regarding the influence of racism in determining the settlement schemes, whether this in fact was a system of reparations (Shyllon, 1977)

On Wednesday last died, at Marlborough, on his way from Bath, where he had been for the recovery of his health, Sir John Lindsay, Knight of the Bath, and Rear Admiral of the Red, to which latter rank he was raised in September last. Sir John Lindsay was nephew to Lord Mansfield; he has died, we believe, without any legitimate issue, but has left one natural daughter, a Mulatto, who has been brought up in Lord Mansfield's family almost from her infancy, and whose amiable disposition and accomplishments have gained her the highest respect from all his Lordship's relations and visitants.

Fig. 52



WHEREAS many Negroes and People of Colour having appeared in the Streets of London to be in great Misery, a certain Number of British Subjects did in the Beginning of the present Year, form themselves into a Committee, under the Name of the Committee for the Black Poor, and afforded them such Relief, as the Money, collected from the Piety of their fellow Subjects, enabled them to do. And whereas the Right Honourable the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury being informed of the wretched Situation of the said Negroes and People of Colour, and the apparent Causes thereof, have expressed their desire that the said Committee should make the necessary Arrangements for sending the said Blacks and People of Colour to such Places as they the said Committee may think fit and proper for their prosperous Establishment; and their Lordships (as an indubitable Evidence of the Sincerity of Government) having directed the Money necessary for this Purpose, as far as the Rate of Fourteen Pounds of lawful Money of Great Britain per Head, to be issued to the said Committee for the Use and Service of the said Blacks and People of Colour,

Now this Instrument witnesseth that
aged _____ Years, or thereabouts
of the Stature of _____ Feet, _____ Inches

Fig. 54

In Alphabetical List of the Black People who have received the Bounty from Government 1785

1 John Adams	31 Adam Adams
2 George Adams & Child	32 Samuel Adamson
3 John Ashfield	33 John Alderton
4 James Anderson	34 Ann Almon
5 Jack Anderson	35 Robert Ashfield
6 John Atter	36 Jack Andrew
7 William Anderson	37 John Ashfield
8 Henry Anderson	38 Jack Anthony
9 John Ayres	39 Joseph Anthony
10 Thomas Ashworth	40 John Anthony
11 James Atkinson	41 John Brown
12 Thomas Adams	42 Joseph Brown
13 John Anthony	43 Thomas Bruce
14 John Allen	44 John Bickell
15 James Atkins	45 William Burns
16 Samuel Allen	46 George Brownfield
17 Thomas Amos	47 William Bird
18 Thomas Amos	48 Benja Brown
19 Thomas Amos	49 Joseph Bury
20 Joseph Amos	50 William Blue
21 Henry Armstrong	51 George Brown
22 Joshua Amos	52 Joshua Brown
23 Henry Amos	53 John Booth
24 Daniel Atkinson	54 John Bell
25 David Amos	55 John Boulton
26 John Anthony	56 John Brandy
27 Joseph Anderson	57 Jacob Bots
28 Augustus Amos	58 David Brown
29 John Adams	59 John Brough
	60 Richard Brown

Fig. 55

a Native of _____, and by this Covenant doth consent to put under the Protection of the British Government, and as soon as required, to embark and go to the Grain Coast of Africa under the Terms and Conditions of the Plan of Settlement proposed by Henry Smithman, Esq. who has lived several Years on the said Grain Coast of Africa. That the said Plan now printed and delivered to the said _____ explains the several Advantages which are liberally proposed and offered, that the Party contracting may by _____ Representative

Fig. 58

Fig. 53

563 Adam Southland	600 Jack Thomas
1 John Strong	1 Thomas Ticks
2 Thomas Thompson	2 John Thomas
3 Adam Spence	3 John Crave Thomas
4 John Smith	4 Edward Thompson
5 Thomas Silva	5 John Thompson
6 Thomas Thompson	6 Charles Thomas
7 John Thomas	7 John Thompson
8 John Thomas	8 Thomas Thompson
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Fig. 56

1 March Banger	27 Catherine Brown
2 Mary Banger	28 Hanna Bland
3 Lucy Banger	29 John Bland
4 Thomas Banger	30 Johanna Boyan
5 Robert Banger	31 Emily Bowdoin
6 Joseph Banger	32 Eliza Boulton
7 John Banger	33 Ann Bunnell
8 Eliza Banger	34 Eliza Bunnell
9 Mary Banger	35 Catherine Bunnell
10 Ann Banger	36 Ann Bunnell
11 Mary Banger	37 Ann Bunnell
12 Mary Banger	38 Eliza Bunnell
13 Mary Banger	39 Judith Bunnell
14 Mary Banger	40 Sam Bogan
15 Mary Banger	41 John Bogan
16 Mary Banger	42 Mary Bogan
17 Mary Banger	43 Ann Bogan
18 Mary Banger	44 Anna Bogan
19 Mary Banger	45 Sophia Bogan
20 Mary Banger	46 Anna Bogan
21 Mary Banger	47 Mary Bogan
22 Mary Banger	48 Mary Bogan
23 Mary Banger	49 Mary Bogan
24 Mary Banger	50 Mary Bogan
25 Mary Banger	51 Mary Bogan
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29 Mary Banger	55 Mary Bogan
30 Mary Banger	56 Mary Bogan
31 Mary Banger	57 Mary Bogan
32 Mary Banger	58 Mary Bogan
33 Mary Banger	59 Mary Bogan
34 Mary Banger	60 Mary Bogan

Fig. 57

Fig. 57 List of some Women's names from the Black Poor, 1786.

Fig. 58 Undertaking for the Sierra Leone Scheme, 1787.

Fig. 52 Sir John Lindsay's obituary, from the Morning Herald, 9 January 1788.

Fig. 53 From the Public Advertiser, 16 March 1785.

Fig. 54 Proclamation of the Committee for the Black Poor, 1786.

Figs. 55 & 56 List of Names of some of the Black Poor, 1786.

argues that this was 'a concerted attempt by the British Government and Britain's liberal establishment to rid Britain of her black population and make Britain a white man's country.'

The Committee chose eight Headmen or Corporals to act as recruiters for intending settlers. This group consisted of four North Americans, two Africans, one man from Barbados and the eighth was a Lascar from Bengal.

They were paid an extra 2s. a day to produce a list of prospective settlers to sign the undertaking (Fig. 58). Out of 437 black poor claiming relief only 130 undertook to go to Sierra Leone. Many were suspicious of the intentions of the Committee and the purpose of the scheme. There were, however, ways of putting pressure on to force them onto the ships. In October 1786 the Committee resolved not to give poor relief to any black person who had not signed on for resettlement and thereafter black people experienced increasing harassment and arrests for vagrancy. At this stage, the black people who had signed on for the scheme demanded some surety for their arrival in Sierra Leone. It was then that the Government agreed to supply certificates of freedom. The Mayor of London gave orders to his officials to round up black beggars and include them to participate in the scheme after spending time in jail. The Public Advertiser on 3rd January 1897 commended this action, but felt that perhaps hard labour was preferable since 'The blacks, especially those of the East Indies are naturally indolent' (Fig. 59).

Black people were reluctant to go on the ships because they feared being sent to the penal colonies in Australia, they felt vulnerable to slave-traders on the West African coast and had justifiable suspicions of the viability of the scheme. There was political opposition to the plan in addition notably from the black leaders, Equiano and Cugoana. Equiano, as Commissary of the stores exposed to the Public Advertiser in his letter of 4th April 1788 the mismanagement and dishonesty of the agent supplying the stores. Ottobah Cugoana raised important questions from the black point of view in his book 'Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evils of Slavery' where he challenged the

Government's aims of establishing a free colony while it supported forts and garrisons protecting the activities of the slave-traders in the same area.

Those who did go on board endured wretched living conditions and a lack of basic necessities as highlighted by Equiano. As a result, fifty died of cold and disease before the voyage began three months later. 350 black settlers, including some Lascars and 41 women plus 59 white wives left England finally on 9th April 1787. After a voyage of one month 35 more had died. Four years after they arrived in Sierra Leone only 60 were left of the 374 who originally arrived. The new colony was a failure as disaster followed disaster. It has been claimed that this was a result of the settlers arriving in the wrong season of the year. (Braidwood 1981). However, it is widely believed that the British Government had not effectively planned the programme in terms of supply and organisation in the interests of expediency and in order to get rid of what the nation regarded as a nuisance.

Olaudah Equiano, A Black Leader

Also known as Gustavus Vassa (his English name), he was born an Ibo in Biafra in 1743 and was enslaved at ten years old. After many harrowing experiences, he purchased his freedom in 1766 at 21 years of age after having been baptised years earlier in a mistaken attempt for freedom. Just before he obtained his freedom his master had him shipped to be resold in the Americas. He was employed as a sailor and learnt bitterly that loyalty and kindness did not alter the master's legal right or will to treat or sell the black as a slave.

Equiano became a devout Christian and worked as a hairdresser for 20 years. In 1773 he took part in Phipp's expedition to the Arctic. In 1767 Equiano (Fig. 60) became part of the closely knit black community. In 1774 he began his abolitionist work where he supported the attempts for freedom made by his brothers and became actively involved in black politics. He emerged as the leader and spokesperson for the black community and served as a link between them and their white friends who belonged to a different social world. (Walvin, 1973).

On 19th March 1783 Equiano called on Granville Sharp to assist him in avenging the death of 132 Africans thrown overboard the slave ship Zong. He went on to forge close links with the humanitarian Sharp, which were to have profound political repercussions for the blacks in England. Equiano campaigned ceaselessly up and down the country on behalf of abolition and 'those captive, oppressed and affected people' of whom he counted himself one. When the Sierra Leone scheme was proposed, it was natural that Equiano was appointed as Commissary to the expedi-

tion. Equiano, at that time, with many of his peers favoured a return to Africa or 'home' but soon complained of the treatment of the black by the scheme. He exposed Joseph Irwin, the Government agent for his flagrant abuse of the scheme whereby he was pilfering the basic necessities provided for the the settlers. Equiano wrote a letter to the Public Advertiser making his views widely known and signed the letter Gustavus Vassa (Fig. 61). He found himself accused of inciting unrest among the black poor and was dismissed from his post.

Equiano's active participation in the growing movement for Abolition was furthered by the publication of his *Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African* in 1789. The book was described by contemporaries as a 'uniquely detailed account of an African's movement out of slavery' and was the first time that the case against slavery was presented by a black writer in a popular form to a wide reading public. The narrative excited much comment and roused public opinion. It was to be an important contribution to the abolitionist movement.

Ottobah Cugoano

Ottobah Cugoano was, with Olaudah Equiano, one of the leaders of the London black community. He was born c.1757 on the coast of Ghana and kidnapped into slavery at the age of 13. He arrived in England in 1772 and was set free by his owner. In 1786 Cugoano was involved in rescuing a runaway slave Henry Demane, from recapture, enlisting the help of the abolitionist Granville Sharp. In 1788, Cugoano, probably in collaboration with Olaudah Equiano, published his 'Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species.' This book systematically and competently demolished the arguments in favour of slaves and was a powerful contribution to the Abolitionist Movement. Not only did Cugoano denounce slavery, but he went further to declare that the black slave had a moral right and a moral duty to resist (Fig. 62).

He considered that every man in Great Britain was responsible in some degree for the slave trade and held that 'men of eminence and power must incur a double load of guilt,' not only that burde of guild in the oppression of African strangers, but also in that impending danger and ruin to their own country.

Cugoano proposed total abolition of slavery and universal emancipation of all slaves from that date. He also recommended that Britain send a fleet of ships of war to intercept and obstruct slave traders' ships (Fig. 63). This latter is in fact what Britain did 20 years later, although emancipation did not occur until 50 years later.

Cugoano's unique contribution was that he was the first African to write on treatise on the transatlantic slave trade, and to call for the total abolition of slavery and emancipation. He was also able to foresee the 'delayed boomerang from the time of slavery.'

The controversy over the Sierra Leone resettlement scheme led to increasing attacks on the black community whose position became extremely threatened. In December 1787, there were calls in the British press to follow the example of new French Treaty of 1787 in which a law was passed to expel all black people from the country and ban entry (Fig. 64). As a response to this, the black community called a protest meeting in Whitechapel, a good example of the level of militancy and organisation of black people during this period. The press reacted in hysteria. The Morning Post questioned the right of blacks to tell the English what to do, unleashing the full force of racist invective (Fig. 65). Racist ideology such as this was used by the slave lobby primarily to safeguard their interests.

The English working-classes who, towards the end of the eighteenth century rose in their hundreds of thousands to support the call for abolition, had a relationship of friendly co-operation with black people. After all, the squalor and poverty of the urban area of London in particular, was shared by black and white alike and there are few records of tneions and resentments between this class of people. The slave traders had made clear their views on trade with the colonies and its advantages in 1773 in which they expressed the typical fears about race and mixing amongst their kind (Fig. 66).

Granville Sharp replied to this in his 'remark' in which he ridiculed the assumption that black people were slaves because they were black and expressed his disgust at the sneering comments made on washing the 'blackamoor white' (Fig. 67).

End of Slavery

Slavery in England came to an end not from the judgment in the Somerset case of 1772 nor from the Act of Parliament in 1833 which abolished slavery in the colonies. Slavery came to a virtual end between the 1760s-1790s as a consequence of the resistance and escape of the slaves themselves. (Lorimer 1984).

To explain this phenomenon requires examination of the social history of the slaves. Slaves in England held an intermediate position between plantation or chattel slaves and domestic servants.

There is evidence that as soon as black people began working in England they began to demand wages. In England, slavery served no vital economic or social function

An ingenious Question considered.—PASCAL had asked which was most happy, "A King—who dreams every night he is a peasant; or a peasant who dreams every night he is a King?"—A correspondent thus decides in favour of the peasant: Imagination being the principal source of all our pleasures must, when uncontrolled by the wakeful senses and dictating reason, render our visionary enjoyments more exquisite and delightful. It occupies itself entirely without any distraction with whatever object the mind presents for its entertainment. But, awake, our reason, which is the natural enemy of pleasure, then resumes its arbitrary empire, puts our fancy in fetters, and obliges every captive sense to revolt against the divine power of our imagination.

The Mayor has given orders to the City Marshals, the Marshalmen, and Constables, to take up all the blacks they find begging about the streets, and to bring them before him; or some other magistrate, that they may be sent home, or to the new colony which is going to be established in Africa; near twenty are already taken up, and lodged in the two Compters.

The conduct of the Lord-Mayor in ordering the blacks who are found begging about the streets to be taken up, is highly commendable, and it is to be hoped will be imitated by the Magistrates of Westminster, Middlesex, Surry, and the other counties. It is however humbly submitted to their judgment, whether instead of mere confinement in a gaol, it would not be preferable to put them to hard labour in Bridewell. The blacks, especially those of the East-Indies, are naturally indolent; nothing but the utmost necessity will make them work; and the very thought of being subjected to that would soon reconcile them to the plan proposed by Government.

Fig. 59

sent the following Letter to Mr. John Stewart, Pall-mall:

'At Plymouth, March 24, 1787.

'SIR,

'These with my respects to you. I am sorry you and some more are not here with us. I am sure Irwin, and Frazer the Parson, are great villains, and Dr. Currie. I am exceedingly much grieved at the conduct of those who call themselves gentlemen. They now mean to serve (or use) the blacks the same as they do in the West Indies. For the good of the settlement I have borne every affront that could be given, believe me, without giving the least occasion, or ever yet relenting any.

'By Sir Charles Middleton's letter to me, I now find Irwin and Frazer have wrote to the Committee and the Treasury, that I use the white people with arrogance, and the blacks with civility, and stir them up to mutiny: which is not true, for I am the greatest peace-maker that goes out. The reason of this lie is, that in the presence of these two, I acquainted Captain Thompson of the Nautilus sloop, our convoy, that I would go to London and tell of their roguery; and further insisted on Captain Thompson to come on board of the ships, and see the wrongs done to me and the people: so Captain Thompson came and saw it, and ordered the things to be given according to contract—which is not yet done in many things—and many of the black people have died for want of their due. I am grieved in every respect. Irwin never meant well to the people, but self-interest has ever been his end: twice this week they have taken him, bodily, to the Captain, to complain of him, and I have done it four times.

'I do not know how this undertaking will end; I wish I had never been involved in it; but at times I think the Lord will make me very useful at last.

'I am, dear Friend,

'With respect, your's,

'G. VASA.

'The Commissary for the Black Poor.'

* The Agent for Africa.

Extract of another Letter from Plymouth, dated on board the Belisarius.

Fig. 61



Fig. 60

'If any man should buy another man . . . and compel him to his service and slavery without any agreement of that man to serve him, the enslaver is a robber, and a defrauder of that man every day. Wherefore it is as much the duty of a man who is robbed in that manner to get out of the hands of his enslaver, as it is for any honest community of men to get out of the hands of rogues and villains . . . every man in Great-Britain (is) responsible, in some degree . . . unless he riseth up with abhorrence of it in his own judgement, and, to avert evil, declare himself against it. . . '

'Is it not strange to think, that they who ought to be considered as the most learned and civilised people in the world, that they should carry on a traffic of the most barbarous cruelty and injustice, and that many . . . are become so dissolute as to think slavery, robbery and murder no crime?'

Fig. 62

The practice of importing Negroe servants into these kingdoms is said to be already a grievance that requires a remedy, and yet it is every day encouraged, insomuch that the number in this metropolis only, is supposed to be near 20,000; the main objections to their importation is, that they cease to consider themselves as slaves in this free country, nor will they put up with an inequality of treatment, nor more willingly perform the laborious offices of servitude than our own people, and if put to do it, are generally sullen, spiteful, treacherous, and revengeful. It is therefore highly impolitic to introduce them as servants here, where that rigour and severity is impracticable which is absolutely necessary to make them useful.

The mortality among the horned cattle rages in Saxony to a terrible degree. Inoculation has been practised in other countries with success, and is recommended to the sufferers there as the most effectual means to prevent the loss of their herds. (See Vol. xxix. p. 426.)

Fig. 64

But some of them, by various services either to the public or to individuals, as more particularly in the course of last war, have gotten their liberty again in this free country. They are thankful for the respite, but afraid of being ensnared again; for the European seafaring people in general, who trade to foreign parts, have such a prejudice against Black People, that they use them more like asses than men, so that a Black Man is scarcely ever safe among them. Much assiduity was made use to persuade the Black People in general to embrace the opportunity of going with this company of transports; but the wiser sort declined from all thoughts of it, unless they could hear of some better plan taking place for their security and safety. For as it seemed prudent and obvious to many of them taking heed to that sacred enquiry, *Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?* They were afraid that their doom would be to drink of the bitter water. For can it be readily conceived that government would establish a free colony for them nearly on the spot, while it supports its forts and garrisons, to ensnare, merchandize, and to carry others into captivity and slavery.

Fig. 63

Fig. 59 From the Public Advertiser, 3 January 1787.

Fig. 60 Portrait of Olaudah Equiano.

Fig. 61 From the Public Advertiser, 4 April 1787.

Fig. 62 Extract from tract on slavery by Ottobah Cugoano, 1787.

Fig. 63 Extract from tract on slavery by Ottobah Cugoano, 1787.

Fig. 64 From the Gentleman's Magazine, vol. 34, 1764.

The oppositionists have converted numbers of the black poor into zealous patriots. They assembled, it seems, in Whitechapel, where they held, what the Indians term a *talk*; the purport of which was, that they had "heard of an intention of introducing the arbitrary French laws, with respect to black people, as part of the new French Treaty; and they looked upon the arts now practised to inveigle them out of a land of liberty, with the utmost jealousy." In this instance, as in many others, the lenity of our Government operates to the detriment of the nation. Are we to be told what articles in a treaty should be adopted or rejected, by a crew of reptiles, manifestly only a single link in the great chain of existence above the monkey? Should a footy tribe of Negroes be permitted to arraign, with impunity, the measures of Government? A few constables to disperse their meetings, and a law, prohibiting blacks from entering our country, would be the proper mode of treating those creatures, whose intercourse with the inferior orders of our women, is not less a shocking violation of female delicacy, than disgraceful to the state. In France, should a Negroe casually arrive, he is escorted to a sea-port, and dismissed the kingdom; and why any debasement in the breed of the people should not be an object of attention in the legislature, a man versed in sound policy must be at a loss to conceive.

Fig. 65

But the trade of our Colonies has this peculiar advantage above all the branches of foreign commerce, that Britain may enjoy it for a perpetuity. All foreign trade may be prohibited, or loaded with duties amounting to a prohibition: but no foreign power can affect our own colonies, but Britain may enjoy that trade for ever, with proper care, protection and encouragement.

Even those of our colonies which produce not sugar, tobacco, rice, or indigo, and consequently add little to the revenue of Britain; yet they support a large navigation, and, being cold countries, take off abundance of our woollen and other manufactures, and supply our people in deficient harvests with bread and rice.

All foreign nations will rejoice at the destruction of our colonies by the extinction of the African trade, as conducing to promote the interest of their own. One would think some French or Dutch writers had been lately employed to write on this subject. But the wisdom of parliament has for many years encouraged and promoted it, by frequent supplies to support our forts upon that coast; and doubtless will continue to maintain a trade so essentially necessary to the support of our colonies, from whence is derived not only great profits to trade, and the British revenue, but also a very great navigation, which is the natural strength of our country. If therefore the writers who argue for the freedom of Negroes were successful; all those advantages must be lost, and Britain itself become a poor, wretched, defenceless country, and very soon a province to France: and thus, by setting free the Africans, Britons become the more wretched slaves to arbitrary power.

These are evidently the natural consequences, deducible from facts. May heaven avert such fatal consequences; and though there is little reason to believe that such enthusiastic writers for the freedom of Negroes can produce such a fatal mischief; yet they may inspire our Colony Negroes with endeavours to steal away from thence, in order to come into this land of liberty, though it be to starve, in vain hopes of washing the Blackamoor white. If not that effect, they may instil such enthusiastic notions of liberty, as may occasion revolutions in our colonies, and consequently the effusion of much blood. It is therefore humbly hoped the Parliament will provide such remedies as may be adequate to the occasion, by expelling the Negroes now here, who are not made free by their owners, and by prohibiting the introduction of them in this kingdom for the future; and save the natural beauty of Britons from the Morisco taint; and remove the envy of our native servants, who have some reason to complain that the Negroes enjoy all the happiness of ease in domestic life, while many of those starve for want of places.

Fig. 66

Remark
 Even now that the Author professes to be serious he cannot quit this absurd conceit about washing the Black moor white: and he still insists that he received this Lotion, as he calls it, from the Lawyers: but ^{his} glaring misapplication of the Proverb, reflects on none but himself ^{against his purpose} the dishonour of the intended Sarcastic for no Lawyer, surely, was ever yet so ignorant as to suppose that a Man's freedom depended upon his complexion; or that Negroes are Slaves because they are black! and therefore the Author's rhetorical Trope about their being washed white is so very impertinent to the present question, that it disgusts, even when the Author affects to be witty & to ease upon it; but it is unpardonable, when he talks of being serious!

Fig. 67

Want Places

AS LADY'S MAID, to a young lady that going to the East Indies, a black girl, who is capable and qualified for that capacity, can work well at her need and can be well recommended. Direct for S. M. at No. Hart-street, Bloomsbury.

Fig. 68

WANTS a Place, a young Man, an East India Black would be glad to serve a single Gentleman, or in a Family as Footman can make himself useful in any Thing that may be required, and can have a Character from his last Place, where he lived seven Years and an Half. Please enquire at Mr. Tomlinson's, opposite the Admiralty, Charing Cross, and be waited on.

Fig. 69

Fig. 65 From the Morning Post, 30 December 1786.

Fig. 66 From the London Chronicle, 1773.

Fig. 67 Remark by Granville Sharp.

Fig. 68 From the Morning Herald, November 20 1777.

Fig. 69 From the Daily Advertiser, August 26 1776.

but was merely a form of personal servitude affecting 10-15,000 people. There were therefore no laws in England which sanctioned slavery and, moreover, prejudice in the white communities was not pronounced enough to keep black chattels in their place. Only the defenders of the slave trade, the West Indian Planter Edward Long and Samuel Estwick the agent for Barbados used racist ideology to justify their interests because English law was colour blind.

However, although institutionalised racism was less blatant in England than in the colonies, black people were still the only people in English society who could be treated as property, as evidenced by newspaper adverts on runaway slaves. At the same time, through the activities of philanthropists defending the cases of the slaves, the slave owners faced difficulties in enforcing their presumed rights. Edward Long, the Jamaican planter, in his response to Lord Mansfield's judgment in the Somerset case commented that slaves faced no legal punishment for running away and consequently

'soon grow acquainted with a knot of blacks who, having eloped from their respective owners repose themselves here in ease and indolence and then are further corrupted by vicious white servants and abandoned servants of the town.'

In effect, Long was complaining that the slave owners' property had been stolen from them and they had no legal means to retrieve it. What was actually occurring was that slaves were establishing their own liberty with the aid of free blacks and sympathetic whites.

Long also showed intense repugnance for sexual relations between black men and white women. The black community was for the main part male as mentioned earlier. Consequently, the group nearest to the blacks in the social scale were poor whites, who to the disgust of the planters, mixed with blacks and related well with them. Many black men married or lived with white women and less frequently, black women with white men. Planters found such relations abhorrent and Long continues, as their spokesperson, that *'English women are remarkably fond of the black, for reasons too brutal to mention.'* Carrying his racist argument even further he foretold that within a few generations the *'higher orders of the people'* would become contaminated until *'the whole nation resembles the Portuguese and Moriscos in complexion of skin and baseness of min.'* Long also complained of the weakness of racism among the English population!

Granville Sharpe, made the link between slavery and the exploitation of the English labouring population, for example, the colliers and the salters who served life-time bondage, and the domestic servant population. Whilst recognising that slavery was a

worse form of oppression, he argued that the violation of the rights of black people in England posed a major threat to the liberty of all English people. (Lorimer, 1984).

Contemporary sources from the mid-eighteenth century inform us that black slaves demanded to be given the wages and treatment of free domestic servants. As Lorimer has outlined, this demand for wages, the slaves most important demand, had both social and legal implications. Even on low wages, black servants were able to carve out some time and money for themselves, which contributed to the fostering of a community.

There is evidence that blacks made regular recourse to the courts and were ready to exploit the law to their own advantage. They were hence fairly knowledgeable about the law as was the working-class population at large.

In demanding wages, slaves challenged the rights of ownership. Receipt of wages implied a contract or agreement entered into by free agents. Thus the slave could sell his labour for a wage. Blacks therefore established their legal credentials as free people within English society and at the same time were able to establish rights of residence in a particular area. This was a condition of the Poor Law which meant that any parish of a settlement achieved by residence entitled one to parish relief. Many former slaves were denied parish relief because it was claimed that they had not entered into a 'hiring' agreement and hence could not claim settlement in a parish.

In the case of Charlotte Howe in 1785, the Lord Chief Justice Lord Mansfield ruled that she was not entitled to settlement as she had not received wages and that *'her being black or a slave is no objection, but the statute requires a hiring.'*

Over and above the assault on the slaves' human dignity, the distinguishing feature of slavery, which separated it from the forms of oppression faced by poor whites, was the vulnerability of the slaves to the arbitrary will of their masters. For the abolitionist movement, the case of Jonathan Strong exemplified this clearly. If slaves were treated well, or were given freedom, it was dependent on the will of their owners. Many slaves refused to accept this situation which might mean waiting for the owner to die before obtaining manumission. The greatest danger faced by black people in England was the ever present threat of deportation back to the plantations and slavery. Lord Mansfield's Somerset ruling in 1772 therefore removed and made illegal this grave threat which is probably the reason why the decision was celebrated and Lord Mansfield's health toasted by the black community at the time.

The case of Mary Hylas in 1768, where John

Hylas successfully sued for the return of his wife who had been sold to the West Indies, shows the status held by female slaves who married in England. John Hylas had gained his freedom for the Newton family by leaving their service for one year and the owners had lost their ownership of him because they had failed to provide him maintenance during this time. The condition of his wife, Sharp argued, followed that of her husband that thus she was also free. The court ordered her return as a free woman, supported the slave's right to leave a negligent master and ruled that a woman's subservience to her husband took precedence over her loyalty to her master.

It appears from the black community's response to the Somerset ruling that they recognised that the social implications of the case were larger than its limited legal application to involuntary transport from England. Granville Sharp and other leading abolitionists turned their attention away from slavery in England to abolition in the colonies on the assumption that the legality of slavery had ended in England. This was because a heavy blow had been struck at the most abusive aspect of the slavery in England and enabled slaves to serve their master willingly or leave if they wished. The slaves' self-emancipation was the first victory of the anti-slavery movement. This was important in giving reformers the confidence that slavery could be overcome. It is a remarkable feat and remains a mystery how a small community of slave servants made such an effective resistance against their owners who were among the most powerful forces in eighteenth century society.

Abolition and Emancipation

One of the prevailing myths today written into history books with regard to the abolition of the British slave trade in 1807 and the emancipation of slaves in British colonies in 1834 is that this was due to humanity's conscience slowly awakening. This is despite challenges to the contrary from 1905 onwards when a German economist argued that the *'British slave trade may have been abolished for economic and political reasons.'* It was C.L.R. James who finally laid the myth to rest in 1938 in his biography of the black statesman Toussaint-Louverture.

'Those who see in abolition the gradual awakening conscience of mankind should spend a few minutes asking themselves why it is man's conscience, which had slept peacefully for so many centuries, should awake at the time that men began to see the unprofitableness of slavery as a method of production in the West Indian colonies.'

This account too was ignored until the issue was taken up by Williams (1944). According to Williams, the British slave trade was abolished in order to curtail overproduc-

tion of sugar. Abolition in the long terms was part of a vast historical process.

'The commercial capitalism of the eighteenth century developed the wealth of Europe by means of slavery and monopoly. But in so doing it helped to create the industrial capitalism of the nineteenth century which turned round and destroyed the power of commercial capitalism, slavery, and all its works.'

The abolitionist movement was set in motion by white humanitarians including Granville Sharp, and many Quakers, William Wilberforce MP, etc. Wilberforce introduced an abolition bill in 1791 in Parliament which was defeated by 163 votes to 88. William Wilberforce was the great hypocrite of the abolition movement which he used as his personal platform whilst being quite racist to black people. Meanwhile, another element of the abolitionist movement had been developing which was totally unexpected and expressed the emergence of working-class radicalism. (Fryer, 1984). In 1788 over 100 petitions had flooded Parliament from all over Britain demanding abolition of the slave trade. This was the first large-scale use of petitions as political weapons and petitions were widely used as such until the 1840s.

In 1792, over 500 petitions were sent to Parliament in support of Wilberforce's bill. As a result of Government repression, trade union and radical activities were crippled for about twenty years. In 1814 the working-classes rose in fury on the issue of the possibility of the rights of French slave-merchants being renewed. Within four weeks, 806 petitions bearing 1,500,000 signatures were sent to Parliament. Walvin (1973) has pointed out that a greater number of English working people signed the petitions against slavery than were to sign the Chart-ist petition of 1848. From then on the grassroots movement for emancipation grew steadily stronger, until slavery was abolished in the colonies in 1833.

East India Blacks

The circumstances in which East India blacks (Asians) were brought to England as domestics in the 17th and 18th centuries were similar to those in which African people were imported. Numerous cases of the sale of Indians and runaway Indian slaves give support to this. Many returning families from India brought with them not only male servants or boys but also female servants who were employed as domestic servants or Ayahs (nannies). In the late eighteenth century many of these servants and Ayahs were stranded in London when their families had finished with them. Some were dumped when their employers no longer wanted them, some had run away and for others the death of their employer set them free but destitute. These Indian servants and Ayahs often advertised in the London

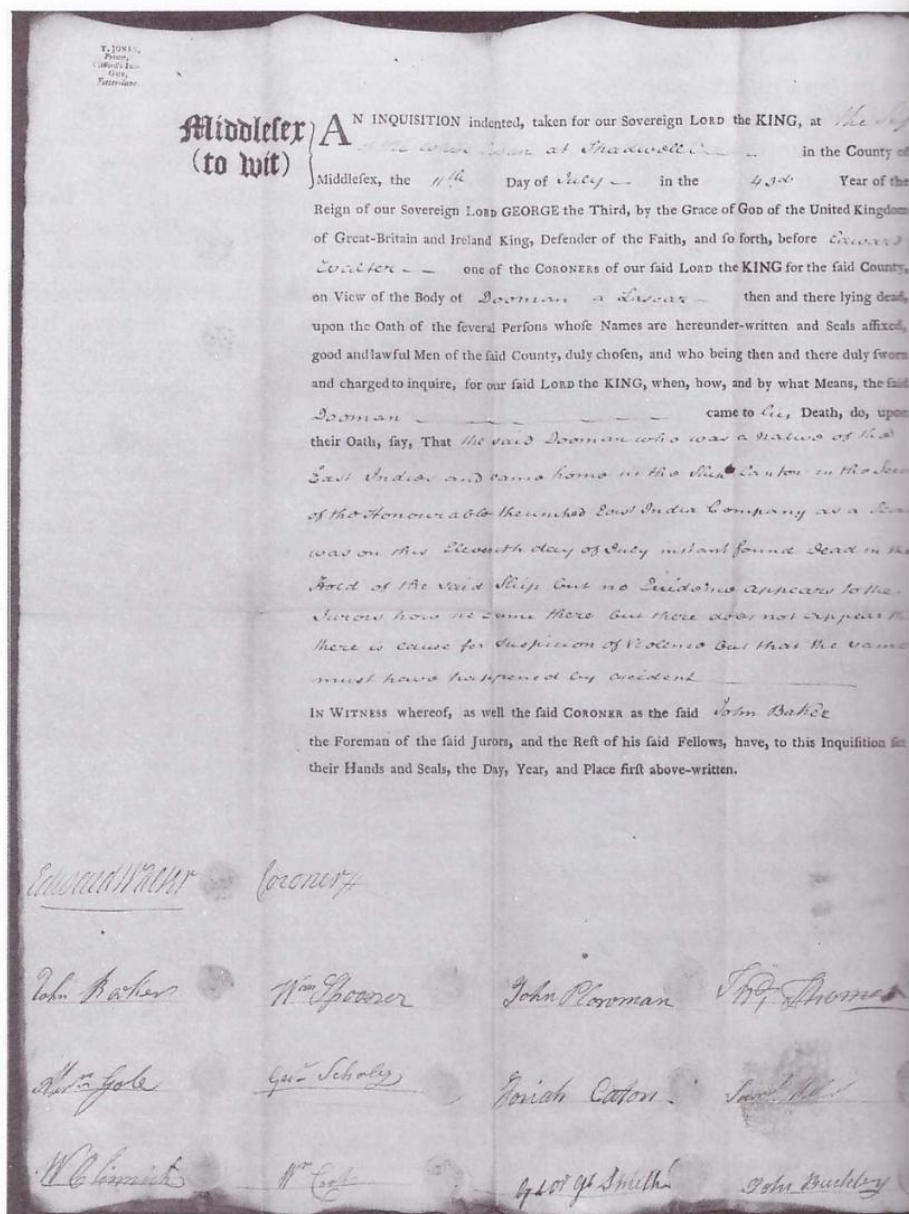


Fig. 70



Fig. 74

Parminder Vir
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bequeath the same unto the issue of my late daughter Mary & her Son & give bequeath unto my son Benjamin Smith the Mullett or Phoebe & her offspring & to which I have given my said Son a right in life time I also give him the sum of 25 £ sterling Monies of Great Britain to be paid him immediately after my decease for Mullett or ship to Virginia & for which sum he shall

£8. 15. 0
 Birkow 6th of 7th month 1824
 Received of Richard Smith the sum
 of Eight Pounds and fifteen shillings being
 the full consideration money for the freedom
 of Hamma Jee a slave to Bentoo Domba
 Madeba ^{his} Alcaide of Birkow
 mark
 Witness to the payment.
 George ^{his} Allenick
 mark
 NB. In case of the aforesaid ^{Haxman Jee} not working
 out the above money the Alcaide promises
 to be accountable to R. Smith for any deficiency.

Fig. 76 A Black Drummer, Grenadier Guards, c. 1790.

IN WITNESS whereof, as well the said Coroner as the said *William Ransdell* the Foreman of the said Jurors, on the Behalf of himself and the Rest of his said Fellows, in their Presence, have, to this Inquisition, set their Hands and Seals, the Day and Year first above written.

Thos. Phillips
Littles Falls

Parminder Vir OBE BLACK & ETHNIC ARTS ARCHIVE

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papers for service with a family returning to India in order to secure a passage home (Figs. 68 and 69). Like African slaves, Asians were sometimes ill-treated. In 1800 a Surrey woman was accused of cruelty to her Indian maid. Not all Indians were able to return however but little is known of the lives in London of individuals.

Other Indians in London during this period were performers and conjurers. In 1790 an 'East Indian Gentoo', a conjuror was performing at Bartholomew Fair.

There were many Lascars also stranded in London at this time, who made up a sizeable proportion of the Black Poor. In 1785, five Lascars fought a court action with the owner of an East Indian ship to recover payments due to them, the Plaintiff being Soubaney, a Lascar. The court at Guildhall found in favour of the seamen 'so as to entitle them to recover the sum of twenty pounds and ten shillings.' It was reported that Serjeant Bolton, the Counsel for the Indians, had pleaded the case of the Lascars, without fee or reward. (*Morning Chronicle*, 28 November 1785). The fate of one of the Lascars, living in London Dooman is recorded in the Inquisition report (Coroners Inquest) which was made after his death. He died on 11 July 1803 in Shadwell (Fig. 70).

Further Records of Black People

Three documents held in the archives of the Greater London Records Office (G.L.R.O.) show the status of some black people at a time when the tendency in England was towards greater liberation and civil rights for the people. England prided itself on its laws and 'civilisation'. In 1776, black slaves were being still bequeathed in a will like objects in London (Fig. 71).

In 1824, another Richard Smith paid £8 25s for the freedom or manumission of Hamma Tie, a slave to Bentoo Demba (Fig. 72). This is an interesting case which poses several questions and needs further research. There are many references to black people in the Coroners Accounts and Inquisitions held at the G.L.R.O.

On 14 August 1782, Samuel Wright, a 'Negro man', drowned on the river Thames when the boat he was in capsized. He was of the parish of St. Dunstan Stepney, where there was a sizeable black population (Fig. 73).

Black People in the British Armed Forces

The first two engravings show black people serving in the British armed forces in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In the engraving of the death of Nelson in 1805, a black man is shown in a central position (Fig. 74). Similarly, one of the Chelsea pensioners depicted who were jubilant at the news of the victory at Waterloo in

1815 is a black man (Fig. 75). It is possible that these men were former black American loyalists. Some black Americans fought for the British in the American war of Independence and had to flee the country when the British were defeated. Although the Government gave financial compensation to white people who fought on their side, not one claim by a black American was successful. Arriving in London in their hundreds in 1784, they were forced to join the ranks of the other black poor.

Black people had been employed by the army since the seventeenth century in another capacity – as military bandmen. Black trumpeters and drummers in the various regiments of the army became a tradition which continued into the nineteenth century (Fig. 76). There are numerous records of these black musicians who provided a tremendous fillip to military music and more importantly, enabled troops to march better – especially when going into battle. Black regimental bandmen usually wore elaborate, oriental-style costumes. Contemporary reports say that the black musicians were a joy to the eye as well as to the ear because they danced as they played. The popularity of black musicians led to another stereotype of black people – that they are particularly musical. But for black people, music is a socially and culturally acquired quality through which they can represent their history, military victories and folklore.

Black Beggars

The free black population of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was desperately poor and unable to find employment like many poor whites. A number turned to begging from destitution. There was said to be a concentration of black beggars in the St. Giles or Seven Dials district of north London who became popularly known as 'St. Giles black birds.' The Society for the Suppression of Mendicity was set up in the early 1800s and they concerned themselves with the apprehension and imprisonment of the beggars with zeal (Fig. 77). From 1820 to 1826 they dealt with approximately 400 black beggars, who they either had flogged, sent to the workhouse or to prison. There were others who managed to escape the harassment of the authorities – the famous professional beggars whose numbers were few. Billy Waters, a one-legged violinist was elected 'King of the Beggars'. London's down-and-outs turned out in force at his funeral when he died in 1823. In order to make a living, some black people allowed themselves to be fitted in the stereotypes earmarked for them by white society. They became street musicians or street singers and were very popular bands (Fig. 78).

Beggars were still a cause for concern to the authorities in 1899 and black beggars were

included, although their numbers were by this time much fewer (Fig. 79).

The Black Radicals

The Gordon Riots began as a protest to Parliament against civil rights for Catholics and were led by Lord George Gordon. Initially, the protest was very decent and civilised and composed mainly of fanatical puritans. It was the refusal of Parliament to debate the issue which led to a spontaneous uprising in which thousands of London workers poured on to the streets of London in their thousands demonstrating for liberty. The protest had extended from being against rich Catholics to being against prominent people in authority. Groups marched through Shoreditch, the City, Westminster and Southwark led by working men and smashing up the town houses of the nobility and the lord mayor's offices at the Mansion House. The engraving of the Gordon Riots shows that some black people participated in the demonstration (Fig. 80).

The 'Mob' as it was called, went on to attack the Bank of England and to partly burn down Newgate jail where they released the inmates. A black woman, Charlotte Gardener, was later hanged with others at Tower Hill for her part in the uprising.

The Gordon Riots were witnessed by Ignatious Sancho from his grocer's shop in Westminster. Sancho did not approve of the rioters. It is interesting that Lord Mansfield was so unpopular with the London 'Mob' that, as Sancho reports, his house was attacked (Fig. 81).

It was this same 'Mob' which was attacked in the London papers for 'corrupting and inciting' black slaves to rebellion. London's working people saw black people as fellow victims of their own enemies and with their support, London became a centre for black resistance by the 1760s. It was on Lord George Gordon's advice that 400 of the Black Poor who had signed the undertaking for the Sierra Leone resettlement scheme failed to embark. Lord George Gordon was the idol of the 'Mob' and was a well-known agitator who opposed the transportation of convicts.

There were three black men who were prominent amongst the radical working-class movement of the nineteenth century. One was William Davidson who was hanged and beheaded on 1 May 1820, Robert Wedderburn who was jailed for sedition and blasphemy in 1820 and William Cuffay, a prominent leader of the Chartist movement who was transported to Tasmania for life in 1848. Both Davidson and Wedderburn were revolutionary socialists and followers of Thomas Spence, and members of the most left radical organisations of the time. The Spenceans, who were basically agrarian communists, were solidly working-class in composition with a mem-

No. 4132.—J. W. M. aged fifty-eight, a native of Jamaica, was apprehended begging and taken before a Magistrate, who ordered him to be searched, when a quantity of meat, vegetables and money were found upon him. It appeared that he had before been imprisoned for the same offence, and was therefore committed to the Sessions. Soon after his liberation, he was again apprehended by the Society's officers, but refused to come to the office; upon being taken before the Magistrate, he was again committed to the Sessions, and upon being prosecuted by the Society, was sentenced to be imprisoned six months, and well flogged.

Fig. 77

Fig. 77 Case Study No. 4132 by the Society for the Suppression of Mendicity, c.1819.

Fig. 78 The Ethiopian Serenaders, c.1819.

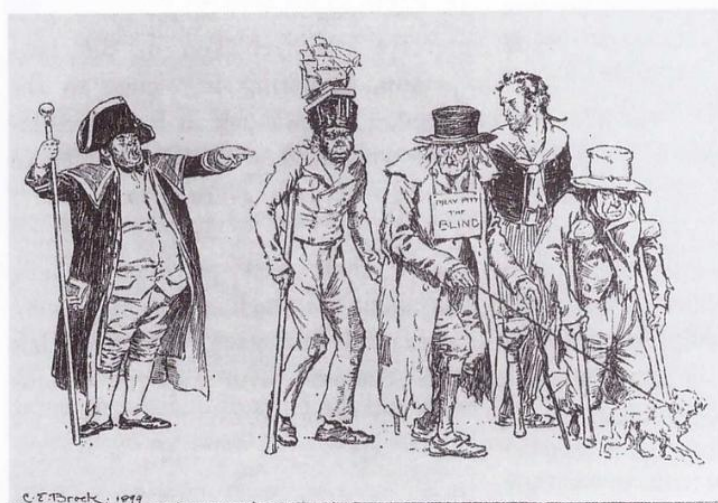
Fig. 79 The Decay of Beggars In The Metropolis, 1899.

Fig. 80 The Gordon Riots, 1780.

Fig. 81 Commentary by Ignatius Sancho, June 6-9 1780.



Fig. 78



A COMPLAINT OF THE DECAY OF BEGGARS IN THE METROPOLIS

Fig. 79

June 6

This — this — is liberty! Genuine British liberty! — This instant about two hundred liberty-boys are swearing and swaggering by with large sticks.

Eight o'clock — Lord George Gordon has this moment announced to my Lords the mob — that the act shall be repealed this evening: — Upon this, they gave a hundred cheers — took the horses from the hackney-coach — and rolled him full jollily away: — They are huzzaing now ready to crack their throats.

June 9

The Fleet Prison, the Marshalsea, King's Bench, both Compters, Clerkenwell, and Tothill Fields, with Newgate, are all flung open; Newgate partly burned, and 300 felons from thence only let loose upon the world — Lord Mansfield's house in town suffered martyrdom; and his sweet box at Caen Wood (Kenwood) escaped almost miraculously.

Fig. 81



Fig. 80

bership of factory workers, shopmakers with some soldiers and sailors (Fryer, 1984). It was the only socialist organisation in England in 1815. After Spence's death in 1814, various Spencean groups operated independently of each other from 1817-20 and Davidson and Wedderburn were members of different groups.

William Davidson

Born in Kingston, Jamaica in 1786 Davidson came to Britain at the age of 14. He married a poor English widow with four sons and set up home in Marylebone. Davidson joined the Marylebone Union Reading Society in 1819 in response to the Peterloo massacre in which eleven unarmed demonstrators had been killed and 500 injured.

Davidson held regular meetings in his house and like many other radicals all over England, practiced military drills on Sunday mornings. Reports by police informers who infiltrated the radical movement, now held at the Public Records Office today, give a step by step account of the groups activities and also records how the group was set up. George Edwards, the agent provocateur, persuaded the group under the leadership of Arthur Thistlewood, one of London's most influential radical organisers, to attempt to blow up the House of Commons. So with the Government watching them carefully the group went ahead with their plans. As they set out for Grosvenor Square they were raided by the police.

Thistlewood, Davidson and three others stood trial for high treason. They were all found guilty and sentenced to be hanged, beheaded and quartered but the latter was remitted by the order of the King. William Davidson's letter to his wife shows his courage and determination in the face of death (Fig. 82). On 1 May 1820 the largest crowd ever turned up for this execution. The assembled crowd was split up into small groups by the Life Guards to foil any rescue attempts. Blackfriars Bridge was guarded by 100 artillery men and six guns. The five men were hanged and beheaded outside the debtors' door of Newgate Jail. The crowd went wild with fury, some were sick, some fainted and other cried out 'murder.' This was to be the last public decapitation in England.

Robert Wedderburn

Robert Wedderburn was born in Jamaica in 1762 and came to England in 1778. He was licenced as a preacher in later life. He met Thomas Spence in 1813 and joined the Society of Spencean Philanthropists. Wedderburn first came into prominence when the leader of the Spenceans' Thomas Evans was jailed in 1817 for high treason. Wedderburn brought out a periodical in 1817 entitled 'The Forlorn Hope or A Call to the Supine, To rouse from Indolence and assert

Public Rights,' which aimed to establish a free press. Again, from the detailed accounts of police spies of the time, Wedderburn's radical activities can be pieced together. He opened his own meeting house in Hopkins Street, Soho where meetings of up to 200 people regularly attended 'Lectures every Sabbath day on Theology, Morality, Natural Philosophy and Politics, by a Self-Taught West Indian.'

Wedderburn was arrested for sedition and blasphemy after he participated in a discussion which supported the slave's right to kill a master. The group assembled '*exultantly expressed their Desire of hearing another sable Nation freeing itself by the Dagger from the base Tyranny of their Christian Masters.*' Wedderburn was locked up in Newgate Jail until £200 bail was raised. The events of Peterloo a few days later transformed the political climate. (Fryer, 1984). The implications and lessons of Peterloo were discussed at Wedderburn's meeting where it was unanimously agreed that 'it was an act of Murder, committed by the Magistrates and Yeomen.'

Wedderburn also campaigned on the issue of the abolition of slavery and in 1817 sent the first revolutionary propaganda from Britain to the West Indies. This was called '*The Axe laid to the Root, or a fatal Blow to Oppressions being an addres to the planters and negroes of the Island of Jamaica,*' (Fig. 83).

As a result of charges made by police spies, Robert Wedderburn stood trial for 'blasphemous libel', a convenient term covering any threat to the opinions of the Government of the day. He was found guilty and served two years in Carlisle jail. After he was released, in 1824, he published an autobiographical sketch entitled '*The Honours of Slavery.*'

William Cuffay

William Cuffay was one of the principal leaders of the Chartist movement, the first mass political movement of the British working-class (Fig. 84). The Chartists fought for the rights of working men including the right to vote. Cuffay, whose father was an African born into slavery in St. Kitts, was born in Chatham, Kent in 1788 and became a journeyman tailor. After political involvement of a few years, he became in 1840 the delegate of Westminster Chartists to the Metropolitan Council. In 1842, he was elected the president of the executive of the Metropolitan Delegate Council. Cuffay's militancy earned him lampooning in the press of the ruling class. Punch depicted London's Chartists as 'the Black man and his party.'

Some of the struggles Cuffay was involved in were opposing the Masters and Servants Bill, which would have given magistrates power to imprison a neglectful worker for

two months on merely his employer's oath; and supporting the Chartist land scheme which would give each unemployed family from the slums two acres of good arable land. Cuffay was prominent in the activities of the Chartists until 1848 which to many was 'the year of decision' in western Europe.

The National Chartists' convention in 1848 had as its main task to organise a mass meeting on Kennington Common and a procession that would accompany the Chartist petition, bearing almost 2,000,000 signatures, to the House of Commons. On the day of the demonstration, Cuffay found that the executive lacked spirit and determination and he declared that he had lost confidence in them in hoping that the convention would take the responsibility of leading the people away from them.

The measures adopted by the government in preparation for the procession showed the power of the Chartist movement and hence their popularity. Whilst the crowd was mobilising at Kennington Common, negotiations were under way with the Commissioner of Police (who had declared the procession illegal), to allow the demonstration to proceed. The Queen had been packed off to the Isle of Wight for her safety and valuables removed from the Palace. The Foreign Office had its ground-floor windows blocked by bound volumes of the Times to stop bullets. The British Library was supplied with 50 muskets and 100 cutlasses and the Bank of England protected with sandbags. The bridges were sealed off and guarded by over 5,000 police. 7,000 soldiers were deployed along the Embankment and thousands of shopkeepers, lawyers and government clerks were enrolled as special constables. Heavy gun batteries were even brought up from Woolwich to the Embankment. (Fryer, 1984).

The Chartist leader Feargus O'Connor in response to pressure from the Police Commissioner suddenly decided to call off the procession. The demonstrators at Kennington Common were furious and Cuffay was one of those who protested strongly. He felt that the convention was a set of cowards and that the demonstrators had been caught in a trap. Subsequently, Cuffay was elected as one of the Commissioners to promote the campaign for the Charter after its rejection by Parliament. Again, police spies' accounts reveal that an uprising was planned in London and Cuffay was one of the organising 'Ulterior Committee,' which Cuffay later denied. On 16 August 1848, eleven activists were arrested for allegedly plotting to fire certain buildings as a signal for the rising. At his trial Cuffay pleaded not guilty and objected to being tried by a middle-class jury. In his final speech where he showed defiance and courage Cuffay exposed the dastardly behaviour of the government (Fig. 85).

Fig. 82 William Davidson's letter to his wife Sarah Davidson, 1820.

Fig. 83 Extract from the writings of Robert Wedderburn, 1817.

Fig. 84 Portrait of William Cuffay.

Fig. 85 The last speech of William Cuffay from the dock, 1848.

Fig. 86 Sketch of Ira Aldridge, the great actor.

Fig. 87 Portrait of Rajah Rammohun Roy, H.P. Briggs, 1832.

My dear Sarah, — According to the promise your entreaties caused me to make to you concerning matters of counsel &c. I have sent you here the order I received last night — an order for application to either of the several justices therein mentioned, whereby an order will be granted to the applicant for the free admission of counsel, solicitors, &c. But I would rather for my part, use such an order for you and my dear children, in preference to counsel, &c; and would now retain my integrity of not having any, only as it is the first time you ever ask the favour of being dictator; and, as in such considerations, I did grant you that request, I will not now fall from such a promise, to one whose sole interest and young family entirely depends on the result of this trial, Therefore you can be advised how you are to act; for my own part I am careless about it, as I am determined to maintain my integrity as a man against all the swarms of false witnesses; and I hope you will never be persuaded, or suffer the public to be led away with a belief, that I am fallen from that spirit maintained from my youth up, and had so long been in possession of the ancient name of Davidson (Aberdeen's boast), and is now become fables. Death's countenance is familiar to me. I have had him in view fifteen times, and surely he cannot now be terrible. Keep up that noble spirit for the sake of your children, and depend that even in death, it will be maintained, by your ever affectionate husband,

Fig. 82

Oh, ye Africans and relatives now in bondage to the Christians because you are innocent and poor; receive this the only tribute the offspring of an African can give, for which, I may ere long be lodged in a prison . . . ; for it is a crime now in England to speak against oppression . . . I am a West-Indian, a lover of liberty, and would dishonour human nature if I did not shew myself a friend to the liberty of others.

Fig. 83

My lords, I say you ought not to sentence me, first, because although this has been a long and important trial, it has not been a fair trial, and my request was not complied with to have a jury of my equals. But the jury as it is I have no fault to find with; I daresay they have acted conscientiously. The next reason that I ought not to be sentenced is on account of the great prejudice that has been raised against me in particular, for months past. Everybody that hears me is convinced that almost the whole press of this country, and even other countries, has been raising a prejudice against me. I have been taunted by the press, and it has tried to smother me with ridicule, and it has done everything in its power to crush me. I crave no pity I ask no mercy . . .

As I certainly have been an important character in the Chartist movement, I laid myself out for something of this sort from the first. I know that a great many men of good moral character are now suffering in prison only for advocating the cause of the Charter; but, however, I do not despair of its being carried out yet. There may be many victims. I am not anxious for martyrdom, but I feel that, after what I have gone through this week. I have the fortitude to endure any punishment your lordship can inflict upon me. I know my cause is good, and I have a self-approving conscience that will bear me up against anything, and that would bear me up even to the scaffold; therefore I think I can endure any punishment proudly. I feel no disgrace at being called a felon. . . .

Any Act that has been brought forward for the good of the country has been delayed and great time has been lost in attending to it, and indeed most of them have been thrown aside or put off to the next session; but anything to abridge the rights of the working classes can be passed in a few hours. I have done, my lords.

Fig. 85



Fig. 86



Fig. 84



Fig. 87

The journal, Reynolds Political Instructor reported that Cuffay was

'loved by his own order, who knew him and appreciated his virtues, ridiculed and denounced by a press that knew him not, and had not sympathy with his class, and banished by a government that feared him...whilst integrity in the midst of poverty, whilst honour in the midst of temptation are admired and venerated, so long will the name of William Cuffay, a scion of Africa's oppressed race, be preserved from oblivion.'

Cuffay was sentenced to transportation to Tasmania where he arrived in November 1849 and was joined by his wife in April 1853. Alone of the Veteran Chartist in exile, Cuffay continued his radical activities after his free pardon in May 1856. He died in 1870 at the age of 82 in Tasmania.

Two other prominent black men in the London Chartist movement were David Antony Duffy and Benjamin Prophitt who were two of the leaders of a demonstration in March 1848. Duffy was transported for seven years and Prophitt for fourteen.

Ira Aldridge

Ira Aldridge was the famous, much talented black actor of the early nineteenth century. He was born in New York in 1807 and arrived in Britain at the age of 17 or 18 with the view to furthering his theatrical career begun in America. As a black man his prospects of success were bleak in the USA. Within one year of arriving in England he was performing on stage. His debut was described as the 'First night of the celebrated American Tragedian in a new and effective melodramatic romance called The Revolt of Surinam or a Slave's Revenge.' The performance was an unqualified success. Most of the critics gave him approving reviews with the exception of the Times. He continued acting in other dramas and married a Yorkshire girl, Margaret Gill. The marriage excited such anger among the pro-slavery forces in London that Aldridge was shunned for one year, and a virulent smear campaign against him began, motivated by naked racism.

Aldridge was forced to try provincial theatres where he initially confined himself to playing black parts such as Othello or Onoonoko (Fig. 86). But later he widened his repertoire to include parts written for white actors e.g. Macbeth, King Lear, Shylock etc. It was when Ira performed Othello with the English actress Ellen Tree as Desdemona at Covent Garden that the hysteria against his colour found expression in many of the London newspapers. The Times was to spearhead the campaign against Aldridge. After slamming his performance it announced that *'In the name of common propriety and decency, we protest against an interesting actress and lady-like girl, like*

Miss Ellen Tree, being subjected to the indignity of being pawed by Mr. Henry Wallack's black servant.' The Standard paper rejected the bigotry of the other newspapers, and commented that Aldridge had 'the fire and spirit of a first-rate actor.' Paul Robeson in 1930 was to receive the same reception when he played Othello with Peggy Ashcroft as Desdemona. The manager of the Covent Garden was forced by pressure to discontinue Aldridge's performances.

For the next nineteen years he played in provincial and minor London theatres. In July 1852 he left England and performed in theatres of many European cities and also in St. Petersburg, Russia. He returned in 1957 to England after having been decorated with honours by many of the crowned heads of Europe, including being made a Knight of Saxony. The newspapers now told a different story. The Althenium reported *'So far as our acquaintance with Mr. Aldridge extends we have formed a favourable opinion of his talents.'* No London stage could now afford to exclude him. He went on a second continental tour in 1861-6 and while on tour in Poland, died in Lodz on 7 August 1867 at the age of 69.

A biography written about Aldridge by Own Mortimer states that

'This was the man the unhonoured and uncelebrated and unknown people, held in slavery, gave to the world. It was from the epic struggle of his people to overthrow their masters that the great Negro tragedian derived his inspiration, his strength, his genius, all his magnificent art.'

Rajah Rammohan Roy

Rajah Rammohan Roy was the first Indian in Britain to be involved in British politics (Fig. 87). He stayed in London at Bedford Square from 1831 to 1833. He was a philosopher, reformer, poet and a journalist. He came to London as the envoy of the Emperor Akbar Shah of India to make representations to the British Government. At this time, large parts of India were governed by the East India company leaving many princes, including the Emperor, in a powerless position or as mere company pensioners.

The fame of Rammohan Roy had preceded him in London and Londoners who came into contact with him saw him as a great man who had power and grace in his frame as well as in his countenance and manner. Roy became a friend of the English radical, Jeremy Bentham.

During his stay in London, Roy was consulted by the British Government on Indian Affairs. He submitted a memorandum to a Parliamentary Committee which was described as the first authentic statement of Indian views placed before the British by an

eminent Indian. Rajah Roy died in September 1833 while on a visit to Bristol.

Black People In Victorian London

Mary Seacole

Mary Seacole was one of two famous women who nursed the sick and wounded at Crimea. Whilst the other, Florence Nightingale, became celebrated and is renowned to this day, Mary Seacole was consigned to obscurity. This Jamaican nurse, daughter of a free Black woman and a Scottish soldier was born in Kingston in 1805. A woman of great energy and determination, she developed a reputation as a skilled healer and doctress. She learnt her skills in Jamaican traditional medicine from her mother who kept a boarding house for invalid soldiers and their wives. Mary Seacole travelled widely and in 1851 joined her brother in Panama during the Californian goldrush, where she gained valuable experience of nursing in a cholera epidemic.

In 1854 she arrived in London and hearing of the collapse of the British nursing system in the Crimea, applied to the War Office and other relevant authorities. Offering her skills and experience she was turned down by all including one of Florence Nightingale's nurses. She asked herself if it was possible *'that American prejudices against colour had some root here? Did these ladies shrink from accepting my aid because my blood flowed beneath a somewhat dusker skin than theirs?'* Eventually, Mrs. Seacole went to the Crimea at her own expense at the age of 50 and set up a store and hotel with a distant cousin in the British camp where she sold medicines and home comforts.

Her considerable skills and personal kindness earned her the love of the soldiers and the respect of the army surgeons. One soldier wrote in his memoirs:

'She was a wonderful woman...All the men swore by her, and in case of any malady would seek her advice and use her herbal medicines, in preference to reporting themselves to their own doctors. That she did effect some cures is beyond doubt, and her never failing presence among the wounded after a battle and assisting them made her beloved by the rank and file of the whole army.'

The assistant surgeon of the 90th Light Infantry also praised her (Fig. 88). Mary Seacole first became famous in Britain through the reports of the war correspondent W.H. Russell who wrote *'This kind and successful physician doctors and cures all manner of men with extraordinary success'* (Fig. 89).

After the war ended (Fig. 90), she returned to England forced into bankruptcy after having been left with expensive redundant stock. In England she took lodgings in Paris

'She did not spare herself . . . In rain and snow, in storm and tempest, day after day she was at her self-chosen post, with her stove and kettle, in any shelter she could find, brewing tea for all who wanted it, and there were many. Sometimes more than 200 sick would be embarked in one day, but Mrs Seacole was always equal to the occasion'.

Fig. 88

'I have seen her go down under fire with her little stove of creature comforts for our wounded men, and with a most tender or skilful hand about a wound or broken limb could not be found among our best surgeons. I saw her at the assaults on the Redan, at the Battle of the Tchernaya, at the fall of Sebastopol, laden . . . wine, bandages and good for the wounded or the prisoners. Her hands, too, performed the last offices for some of our noblest slain. Her hut was surrounded every morning by the rough navvies and Land Transport men, who had faith in her proficiency in the healing out, which she justified by many cures and by removing obstinate cases of diarrhoea, dysentery, and similar camp maladies.'

Fig. 89



Fig. 90

OUR OWN VIVANDIÈRE.

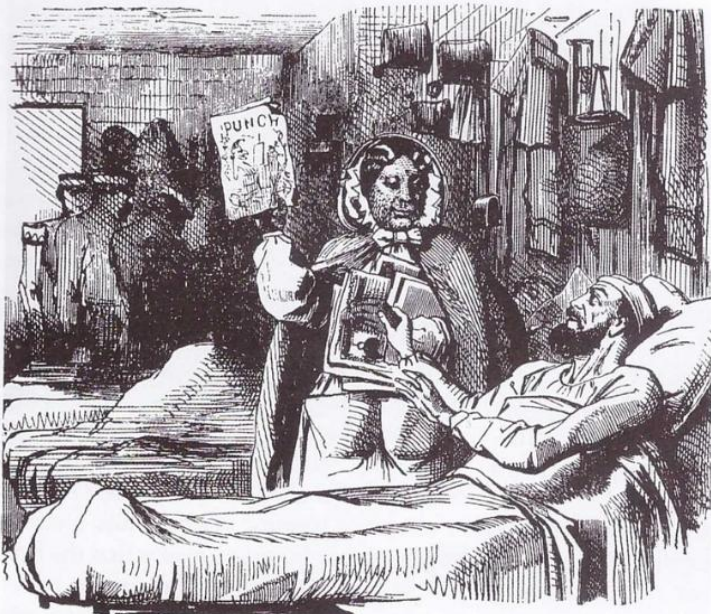


Fig. 91

Fig. 88 Quote by the Assistant Surgeon, 90th Light Infantry, 1855.

Fig. 89 Report on Mary Seacole, by W.H. Russell, 14 September 1855.

Fig. 90 Evacuation of the Crimea by the Allies, 9 July 1856.

Fig. 91 Mrs Seacole as depicted in Punch, 30 May 1857.

Fig. 92 Mary Seacole from the cover of the original edition of her book, 1857.

Fig. 93 From the Illustrated London News, Oct 6, 1877.

Fig. 94 From the Illustrated London News, Oct 6, 1877.

WONDERFUL ADVENTURES of M^{RS} SEACOLE



LONDON
JAMES BLACKWOOD
PATERNOSTER ROW

Fig. 92



Fig. 93

The Nubian attendants are fourteen in number, drawn from five or six different tribes, inhabiting the great Nubian desert. They are tall, slim, active men, with dark skins, splendid white teeth, and fantastically arranged hair; and, robed in their loose cotton dresses, they present a decidedly picturesque appearance. All but one are in religion Mohammedans, the exception being a heathen negro of the Baza tribe.

Fig. 94

tock Street, Covent Garden and was 'wined in fortune and injured in health.' The Times brought her condition to the public notice in a letter which asked what had happened to the Crimeans who had been nursed by Mrs Seacole. 'While the benevolent deeds of Florence Nightingale are being handed down to posterity...are the humbler actions of Mrs Seacole to be entirely forgotten?...?' (The Times, 24 Nov. 1856). Punch also published a poem and appealed on her behalf (Fig. 91).

Several well wishers including Major-General Lord Rokeby and Lord George Paget, both commanders in the Crimea, joined in organising a huge four-day benefit for Mary Seacole in the Royal Surrey Gardens, Kensington in which a music hall was set up. There on 25 July 1857 almost 1,000 artists performed, including eleven military bands and an orchestra, with Mary Seacole seated in the centre gallery in between Paget and Rokeby. The Times on 28 July 1857 reported that *'Nothing could have been more triumphantly successful...At the end of both the first and second parts the name of Mrs Seacole was shouted by a thousand voices...Never did women seem happier, and never was hearty and kindly greeting bestowed upon a worthier subject.'* Success notwithstanding the benefit only managed to raise about £233. In 1871, Count Gleichen, nephew to Queen Victoria, made a bust of Mary Seacole which shows the four Crimean medals she was awarded.

One of Mary Seacole's most important legacies is her autobiography. *'The Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in Many Lands'* was published in London in July 1857 and became an instant success (Fig. 92). In this book she relates not only her Crimean experiences but also draws from her life in the Caribbean and visits to Central America. For us today, she provides us with an invaluable chronicle of a very interesting nineteenth century black woman's experiences and thoughts.

Mary Seacole lived prosperously until old age and died on 14 May 1881 in London. She left over £2,500 in her will which today would be tens of thousand of pounds. She is buried at St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery in Harrow Road, London. A Centenary Commemoration Service for her was held on 14 May 1981 organised by the black community to honour Mary Seacole, the Jamaican nurse, whose name will now never be forgotten.

Victorian Racism

The emancipation of slaves was followed by a growing articulate racism amongst English people. In September 1877, an open-air exhibition of the animals and people of Nubia was held on the slopes of Alexandra Palace. The general public for an admission fee were able to view the Nubians living in

their tents surrounded by their animals. This exhibition was but one of many events where Africans were presented to the British public as freaks. Such occasions, which dehumanised African people, gave the Victorians a heightened sense of racial superiority (Fig. 93). Little attempt was made to understand the African way of life. The Illustrated London News reported the success of the exhibition and commented on the dark, glossy skins of the four Nubian (Sudanese) men with their *'fantastically arranged hair'* (Fig. 94). The overall impression given is of the exotic, curious, and picturesque nature of the Africans, who had been brought to 'civilised Europe' by a German, Dr Carl Hagenbeck.

As early as 1810, African individuals too, were exhibited for the public amusement. One of the most painful examples is that of Saartje Baartman, who was the daughter of a San cattle drover. She was exhibited as the 'Hottentot Venus' at 25 Piccadilly in 1810 in a cage in which she was kept like a wild beast. Her fame lay in her large buttocks.

In May 1899, a spectacle entitled 'Life In The Wilds of Africa' opened at the Empress Theatre in Earl's Court. The public were offered a sight never before seen in Europe – a horde of 'savages direct from their kraals.' 200 people from various South African countries were presented in a show aiming to give a realistic and vivid picture of South Africa.

Economic Changes

Abolition of the slave trade by Britain in 1807, whilst influenced by the anti-slavery movement, was actually passed by Parliament for economic and political reasons. Firstly, it was necessary to curtail the over production of sugar, and secondly, slavery was no longer profitable. New methods of securing profits were sought. The industrial capitalism of the nineteenth century, which had superseded the commercialism capitalism of the eighteenth century based on slavery and monopoly, required new markets for its products. Also required were raw materials for the factories. Both were achieved by colonisation of the targetted countries such as in Africa and India. The scramble for Africa by various European imperialists was on. Not one country in Africa was safe.

It is a phenomenon of the nineteenth century that racism became entrenched as an inherent part of English Culture in its history, in its writing and in its arts. The racist writings of the novelist Charles Kingsley and the historian Thomas Carlyle exemplify this. The massacre of 439 black people in Jamaica in 1865 and the flogging of 600 others in response to a rebellion of black farmers at Morant Bay took place on the orders of Governor Eyre of Jamaica. The controversy surrounding this massacre split

England in two with prominent people taking sides. The Eyre Defence Committee consisted of Carlyle, Kingsley, Dickens, Tennyson, Ruskin and Matthew Arnold. They were opposed by a group led by John Stuart Mill, with Charles Dickens, Thomas Huxley, Herbert Stephen and Leslie Stephen – who called for the governor's prosecution for murder. The governor however, was acquitted and retired on a pension. Years later, the same verdict was to be received by General Dyer who ordered the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in India in 1919, where hundreds were killed and thousands injured.

A Colonial War

The links between the entrenched racism of the establishment and the obscene portrayal of black people in the 19th century meant that the British were able to enter into the Zulu Wars without protest from the British people.

It was the technological changes of the nineteenth century which enabled the Europeans to conquer Africa – they had the machine gun which Africans did not.

This was a decisive factor in the Zulu Wars which the British had prompted in order to forestall the Boers. Zulu warriors were mown down line after line by a Gatling gun. They made a heroic stand at the battle of Ulundi where they were defeated. Cetewayo, King of the Zulus was later captured (Fig. 95). He was exiled to Capetown and paid a visit to London in 1888 (Fig. 96). It was a London regiment which was involved in the last battle against the Zulus at Gingindlovu. A member of the 57th Foot, Middlesex Regiment arrested Cetewayo and brought Zulu shields and other trophies back to London (Fig. 97). They can be seen today at the Bruce Castle Museum in Harrogate.

Cetewayo was a patient, tolerant leader of the Zulu people (Fig. 98) who were a highly disciplined society. Cetewayo had pledged friendship with the British and had no intention of making war on them. The Zulu tradition of training warriors into a strong fighting force, however, meant that the British were resisted by a Zulu army which fought hard and courageously. A letter sent from the Zulu Wars direct to London shows a totally different view of Africans, a view not widely publicised (Fig. 99).

Discarded Servants

It was reported in 1852 that there were about 200 Indian beggars in London itself. Concern was expressed in the London papers by an Indian gentleman about their predicament (Fig. 100). He laid the blame on the treachery of the employers who had brought them over from India as servants and then discarded them. They had no means by which to support themselves other than by begging for food.

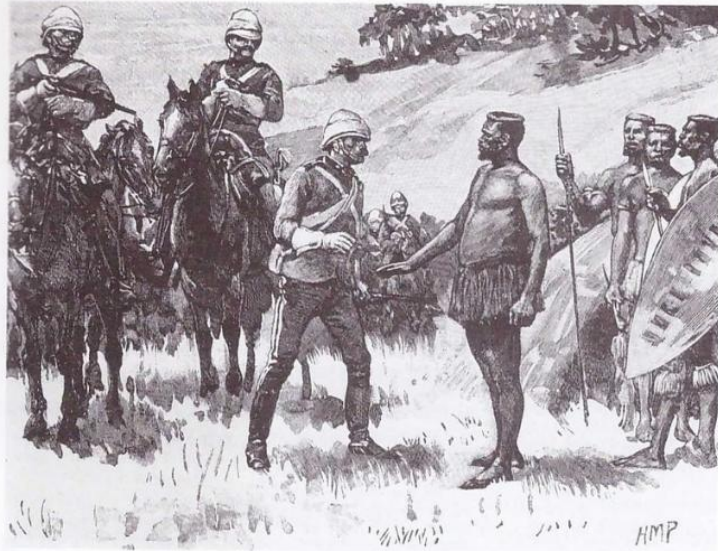


Fig. 95



Fig. 97



Fig. 98

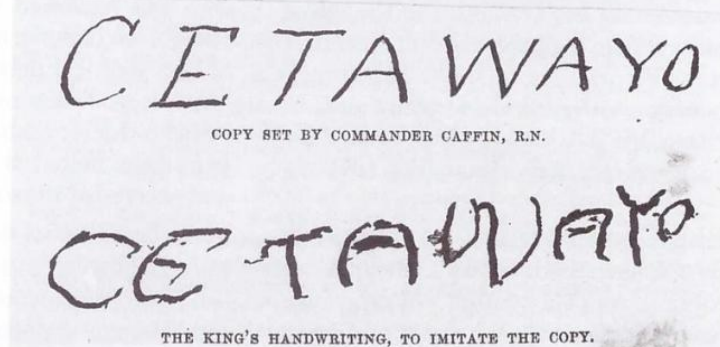


Fig. 96

Fort Napoleon
Zululand S.Africa
3rd August 1879

My dear Henry

* * * *

The Zulus are a very powerful stamp of men, about 6ft 4in and built in proportion and very numerous, generally emerging on their battles from the long grass or rucks where they hide, they carry shields made of leather, assegais and guns of all sorts of shapes and sizes, the assegais are about 5ft long with a sharp spear at the end, very sharp, which they throw at you with great accuracy, and can strike you with them at 60 yards, the wounds from them being very dangerous, they also use those weapons in close quarters to effect, they are besides being very numerous, very brave, and at the Battle of Ulindi came up to about 20 yards of the gatling guns in full play but you may imagine how long they stayed there ...

... the R.D. Gds loss at Ulindi was 2 horses killed, 1 wounded and one man, total killed and wounded in the columns 10 killed 60 wounded and 1500 Zulus killed besides a considerable number wounded, since dead....

* * * *

your affectionate Brother
Alfred Bland

Fig. 99

Fig. 95 The Surrender of Cetewayo, September 1879.

Fig. 96 Cetewayo, King of the Zulus, after his capture by the British.

Fig. 97 The Shield of Cetewayo.

Fig. 98 Cetewayo, King of the Zulus.

Fig. 99 Letter from the Zulu Wars,

3rd August 1879.

Working for London
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fund be raised for such individuals to enable them to return to India if they so wished. This letter contrasted with a further letter to the editor of the Times, with the writer complaining about the 'worst and notorious' nature of the 'Indian delinquents' who made up more than half of the Indian beggars. He argued for a ban on their immigration since England was 'overstocked' by various people already. India at this time was 'overstocked' by her own people which did not prevent thousands of British people settling there to exploit the country's resources.

In 1846, the British Government in response to this problem, had stipulated that a deposit of 500 rupees would be required by employees for each servant leaving Bombay born within the limits of the East India Company's charter. Six years later, this order had had little impact. Lascar seamen, too, were reduced to begging and would have been included in the ranks of other Indian beggars. A late nineteenth century photo of London shows interestingly, a poverty-stricken Indian man outside a cheap café in what may have been a difference with the servingman (Fig. 101).

19th Century Black Londoners

By the nineteenth century, the large black community of a century before seems to have disappeared. We have few records today of black Londoners during the Victorian era. There are several hypotheses for this phenomenon. Since the majority of black people living in London were men, they married white women. As a result of intermarriage black people's distinguishing characteristics became no longer visible. So much for the 'purity of the Anglo-Saxon race' advocated by twentieth century fascists. The lack of evidence may also have been due to the change in the methods of record keeping which, for various reasons, may have omitted the race or colour of the individual entered into official papers. The growth of statistical research in response to the demands of a growing metropolis led to the depersonalisation of record keeping. Issues of race were not important, poverty was. In addition, English people's perceptions changed from the eighteenth century where black people were recorded as they actually were, to the nineteenth century where as a result of the whitewashing of history and the imprinting of the anglocentric culture on all other cultures, black people were ignored.

Nineteenth Century Lascars

The numbers of Lascars arriving in Britain varied from year to year. The high numbers of destitute Lascars or Indian seamen was a cause for public concern in 1785. During the Napoleonic Wars (1805-1815) about one thousand Indian seamen came to England every year. As Britain became a

mercantile nation and trade with India was developed, it was Indian sailors who were employed by the East India Company to crew their ships. Indian sailors were also used on passenger ships. The parallel situation of African and Caribbean seamen occurred with the West India Company both during and after slavery. Some Indian sailors, like African sailors, jumped ship and stayed in Britain where they took up petty trading, sweeping or begging as their last resort in common with other poor people in London at the time.

In the London Weekly Dispatch of October 1829, it was reported that a Lascar had refused to go back to Ceylon and the Captain of the ship he had arrived on had taken him to the magistrates court (Fig. 102). This article is a good illustration of nineteenth century racist abuse and a black individual's triumph over his oppressor. The magistrate refused to force the seaman to go back to the ship and remarked that he was 'emancipated from his state of slavery the moment he sets foot in England'. The seaman had been flogged, like many others, while on board and determined not to allow it to happen again, bolted at the first opportunity and succeeded in escaping.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the term 'Lascar' was extended by the English to include Indian, Malay, Chinese and Indo-chinese seamen, as is shown in this well-known sketch of the Lascars (Fig. 103).

Indian sailors in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were employed in East India ships mainly for their cheap labour. Once in England, they had to await an India or East bound ship. They were housed during this waiting period in barracks and lodging houses. Many were forced to beg. Concerned individuals including the philanthropist William Wilberforce accompanied by William Allen visited the Lascars in their lodgings and called public attention to their desperate situation (Fig. 104). As a response, the Government established a Parliamentary Committee of Enquiry in 1814 to look into the accommodation problems of Lascars. The Committee reported that

'the walls of the different apartments appeared whitewashed and dry: the men usually slept on the floor which is planked, without bedding, and covered with a blanket; the rooms were without furniture of any kind... your Committee also observed that the proper accommodation for the sick were totally wanting, that there was no regular hospital, nor any sufficient means of separating the diseased from those in health ...'

(Parliamentary Papers, 1814-15). A report by the Church Missionary Society presents a similar picture (Fig. 105).

In the winter of 1856-7 eight Indian seamen

died in the London streets from exposure and hunger. The coroner reported that he had held 40 such inquests by this time.

Finally, owing to missionary support, a substantial donation from an Indian, Maharajah Dhuleep Singh, plus subscriptions from humanitarian bodies in England, a sailors' home was opened in the East End of London in 1857. Called 'The Strangers' Home for Asiatics' it was situated in West India Dock Road at Limehouse, near to the East India Docks. The photograph of the main hall of the Strangers' Home was taken at the turn of the century (Fig. 106).

'Oriental London'

An account of the black community in the Docks area was published in 1903 as 'Oriental London' which was one aspect of London examined in a series of volumes which attempted to cover all aspects of London at the turn of the century (Fig. 107). The author's racist, paternalistic view of the 'orientals' living in London accompanied by false benevolence is illustrative of the prevailing attitudes of the Victorians. The sailors, students and visitors to London from the East provide an exotic and picturesque side of London and their 'presence is emblematic of England's far-reaching commerce and power.' Eastern peoples, if they were Hindus or Muslims, were only grown-up children, incredulous and woefully ignorant of science and technology (Fig. 108). In this series, it was also reported that there were 20,000 Indian and African seamen arriving annually at the docks at the turn of the century. Missionaries worked very actively amongst these men.

Chinese seamen did not appear in Limehouse, in the East End of London, in any numbers until the second half of the nineteenth century. Chinese sailors settled in various lodging houses until the Chinese Mission was opened in Limehouse in the late 1800s (Fig. 109). Soon there were numerous shops and houses belonging to the Chinese community in Limehouse which became known as 'China-Town.'

The popular image of the locale was a ghetto of Joss-houses or opium dens but this was merely a convenient myth. After the 1920s the Chinese population in Limehouse declined sharply. A little known fact which appears to have eluded the history books and requires further research is that there were mass deportations of Lascars and Chinese people from London in 1920s - 1930s.

Nineteenth Century Indian Domestic

After India became annexed as part of the British Empire, the numbers of Indian servants in London grew. They were not confined to London but were also dotted up and down the country. Details about Indian

INDIAN BEGGARS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES,

"Sir, I was not a little surprised on my arrival from India in this glorious part of the world to see in this metropolis several Indian beggars, who are of great annoyance to the public, but more so to the Indian gentlemen who visit England. Now, I frequently entered into conversation with them, and inquired the cause of their begging in London; the only reply that I could obtain was, that their masters died and they were left unprovided for; no other resort is left to them but to beg; this is the principal excuse they bring forward, and what I aim at by bringing this subject to your notice is this, that more than half of these Indian beggars are of the worst and notorious characters, who effect their escape by some means to seek their prey here, and are often guilty of various crimes. England is overstocked by various people already, and the following rule should be strictly adhered to and acted upon by the authorities in India, which would in a great measure put a stop to the coming of Indian beggars to this free land, and it would be highly beneficial to the public as well as to the Indian delinquents, who often perish for want of care and the effect of climate.

GENERAL DEPARTMENT.

"The Hon. the Governor in Council is pleased to intimate for general information, that under instructions from the Hon. the Court of Directors, the customary deposit of five hundred rupees (500) will in future be required on account of all servants leaving Bombay by any route for Europe, whether such servants be Asiatic, or African, or other persons of colour, born within the limits of the East India Company's charter.

"By order of the Hon. the Governor in Council
"W. ESCOMBE,
Secretary to Government.

"Bombay Castle, Feb. 11, 1846."

At present there are upwards of 200 Indian beggars in London itself, and many of them are certainly left through the treachery of the parties who brought them, and are anxious to return to India, but for want of means they are unable to do so, actually starving and suffering, and, if all the Indian beggars be called upon, many of them will volunteer to return home, and it would be an act of infinite charity to send them to India, and to call upon the authorities of the port from which they were allowed to embark for England, for infringing the above order, and to adopt such measures as to totally put an end to the sufferings of Indian foreigners in this country. I sincerely hope this may attract the attention of those in this country who have got the power of interfering and taking up this matter, and to obtain passage for their poor Indian subjects, whom circumstances have thrown in their land.

Yours, obediently,
AN INDIAN GENTLEMAN.

London, July 18.

Fig. 100



Fig. 101

Fig. 100 From The Times, July 20, 1852.

Fig. 101 A poverty-stricken Indian in London - late nineteenth century.

Fig. 102 A self-emancipated black, a Lascar in London, 25 October 1829.

Fig. 103 The Lascars, a nineteenth century drawing.

THAMES POLICE.

A SELF-EMANCIPATED BLACK.—The captain of a merchant-ship brought a curly-headed black fellow to the office to know what he should do with him, as the fellow swore by G—he would not go back to Ceylon.—The Captain said he had shipped this black at Ceylon as under-steward and servant, and was under a bond of 500l. to deliver him back there, if alive. He had arrived in this country two months since, during the chief part of which time the black had been ashore with other sailors; and having attached himself to a woman, and partaken extensively of the luxuries which this "blessed country" affords, he was disinclined to go on board to his duty, as the ship was going to sea in a day or two. The fellow was too stupid to think about the consequences of his stopping here, but he would probably be starved, as all his false friends would give him "the cut direct" the moment they ascertained that all his money and clothes were gone. The Captain wished the magistrate to send the black on board, and he would take good care to keep him safe until the vessel was at sea.—Capt. Richbell—"Has he committed any offence?"—Captain—"No criminal offence, only being drunk; he is half drunk now."—Capt. Richbell—"What can I do with him? I cannot make him go on board."—Captain—"Not make him go on board? why the fellow will perish with hunger."—Captain Richbell—"Not he. Hallo! you Sir! why don't you go back with the ship, as you promised?" Black—"Me like London d—n well. Me stop; me like to stop; me no go back." Captain Richbell—"But you must go on board—the master wants you." Black—"Me no care a d—n; me came London passenger; me no black fellow servant; oh no! Captain tell d—n lie!" Captain—"Why, you scoundrel; what do you mean by that? Do you think, Sir, I would bring a black son of a w—, like that fellow, a passenger. He was servant in the cuddy, Sir; nothing more; and had 30s. a month." The black grinned, and shrugging up his shoulders, said, "all d—n lie—me passenger." Captain, in a rage, "Passenger! pshaw! you deserve a good flogging." Black—"Me had floggee enough—me no like floggee. No floggee in England; me stop and get work." Captain Richbell—"I can't interfere. If he will not go on board, I have no power of making him. He is emancipated from his state of slavery the moment he sets foot in England." Captain—"I wish I had left the d—n thief behind." The Magistrate reproved the Captain for swearing, and, addressing the black, contrasted the misery he was likely to be reduced to by remaining here, with the comfort he would experience on board. The fellow shook his head with the air of a black who had made up his mind, and said, "Me see you all d—d before me go back."—A gentleman whispered the commander of the ship, who said, "A thought has struck me; this fellow has committed some offence in the island, and he is afraid to go back. Now I think he ought to be sent back."—Captain Richbell smiled, and said, "Oh, that sort of thing won't do with me; have you any evidence of his committing any offence, because if you had, you should not have brought him away."—The black fellow at this juncture, the door of the office being opened to admit some one else, made a bolt, upsetting an Irish apple-woman, who exclaimed, "bad luck to your — black soul!" His only answer was, "Me see Captain d— before me go back." His flight was too instantaneous and rapid to admit of his being stopped, and he escaped. The captain departed very angry, hoping the fellow would go to a certain repeatedly described very hot residence for wicked souls.

Fig. 102



LASCARS.

BENGALI. MALAY. SIAMESE.
BURMESE. CHINESE. SURATI.

ayahs (nannies) and their experiences are few as are portraits or photographs of them. This photograph shows an Indian ayah with a Victorian baby from the 1870s (Fig. 110).

There were such high numbers of Indian women living in London as nurses or attendants in the nineteenth century that the City Mission, one of London's many missionary groups, opened a home for ayahs in Hackney (Fig. 111).

Queen Victoria, who styled herself Empress of India after 1857, had many Indian servants over the years. The servant Abdullah is shown with three of Victoria's children in 1898 (Fig. 112). Since she herself never visited India, she derived much of her information about the peoples of India from those Indians she met in Britain. There were many who took exception to her discussion of matters of state policy with her Indian servants. The most famous of them all, Munshi Abdul Karim, served Queen Victoria for many years and became her Indian Secretary as well as her teacher in Hindustani.

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

He was one of Britain's outstanding young composers at the turn of the century (Fig. 113). At the age of 23, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, achieved fame and prominence for his great work *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast* described by the Royal College of Music in 1898 as 'one of the most remarkable events in English musical history.' Of African and English parentage Coleridge-Taylor was born in Holborn, London on August 15, 1875. At the age of 15, he entered the Royal College of Music as a violin student. He later changed his course to composition and after graduation taught at Trinity College, London and the Rochester Choral Society. He became professor of Theory and Harmony at the Crystal Palace School of music and art, and also conducted the Croydon conservatory orchestra and Bournemouth symphony. He was very proud of his African heritage and tried to incorporate black traditional music into concert music.

Coleridge-Taylor was devoted to the cause of black people in England and abroad. He made three trips to the USA where he encouraged other black musicians and led workshops in composition. Each trip was a triumph and he was given a hero's welcome. His identification with Africa can be seen throughout his compositions and many had African themes e.g. *African Romances* (op. 17, 1897), *African Suite* (op. 35, 1898), *Four African Dances* (op. 58, 1902) and many more. Coleridge-Taylor became a leader and a model for guidance in the black cultural renaissance in America.

Coleridge-Taylor was also politically active in the Pan-African movement. Furthermore he helped to found with Duse Mohammed the *African and Orient*

Review newspaper in London, an important mouthpiece for the movement.

Although *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast* was the most popular English choral work from 1898-1912, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor derived little financial benefit from it. Huge profits were raked in by the publishers. Today, the works of this British composer have been almost forgotten by the British public. A recent revival of interest in his work has been spearheaded by the black community. The first Annual Benefit concert of his works performed by all black musicians and organised by the Black Cultural Archives took place in London in May 1985 to reclaim for black people the legacy of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, who died tragically in 1912 at the age of 37.

Indians In Parliament

The fact that there have been three Indian MPs elected to the House of Commons for London constituencies within the last 100 years, is one of the most well-kept secrets of British political history. They represented the diversity of political convictions whereby the first, Dadabhai Naoroji was a liberal centrist, the second, M.M. Bhowndegree was a conservative lawyer and the third, Shapurji Saklatvala was a communist.

Dadabhai Naoroji was born in Bombay in 1825 and came to Britain in 1855. He was a partner in the first Indian business in this country and was appointed professor of Gujarati at University College, London. He was one of a group of Indians living in London at the time who dedicated themselves to the political advancement of India. Naoroji took every opportunity available to voice the grievances of India and became an official ambassador for India in England. In 1865 he helped to found the London Indian Society. He was, moreover, the president of the Indian National Congress in 1886, 1893 and in 1906. In his commitment to the welfare of India he moved steadily to the left and in 1904 was the honoured guest of the International Social Congress in Amsterdam.

Naoroji became famous overnight in England when, after he had unsuccessfully contested the seat for Holborn in the 1886 general election the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, declared that British constituencies had not yet got to the point where they would elect a 'black man'. His name was soon on everybody's lips and despite the whipping up of race prejudice by the Tories, he was elected MP for central Finsbury in 1892, a seat he held for three years (Fig. 114). He was given the title 'Grand Old Man of India' as India's first great statesman and he died aged 91 in 1916.

Sir M.M. Bhowndegree (Fig. 115) was MP for Bethnal Green North-East for 10 years continuously from 1895. He was born in

Bombay in 1851 and was called to the Bar by Lincoln's Inn in 1885. He not only fought for the rights of Indian subjects but also for the rights of Indians in South Africa. He made links with Indian students living in London and was involved in their education and welfare.

Shapurji Saklatvala is recognised as a heroic figure who fought for international communism, Indian national liberation and for the causes of the British working class movement. He was the most radical Indian to have been involved in British politics.

Saklatvala was born in Bombay on 28 March 1874 in a wealthy family. In India he was passionately concerned to find a means to end the poverty and misery of the Indian masses. He arrived in England in 1905, when Bengal was partitioned resulting in the Swadeshi movement. This was a period of aggressive measures adopted by the British authorities to destroy growing, militant Indian nationalism. Soon after meeting liberals such as Lord Morley (of the Morley Minto Reform 1909) Saklatvala moved unerringly to the left.

He became a member of the British socialist movement as a member of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) in 1910, and was active in the foundation of the Communist Party until his death in 1936. Saklatvala brought to British Parliamentary politics an uncompromising brand of militancy. When he first stood for Parliament in Battersea North he was supported by the local Labour Party in 1922. He lost his seat in the 1923 election when the Labour Government was elected but regained it in 1924 as a Communist Party candidate, despite the united front presented by the main opposing parties (Conservative and Liberal) fielding a 'constitutionalist' candidate. Saklatvala was supported by the local Labour Party and Trades Council.

One of the issues which concerned him was the international aspect of working class unity and he arranged for the ILP to be affiliated to the Third International. Saklatvala was deeply involved in the British Trade Union Movement earning the respect and love of the British workers (Fig. 116). He was also a member of the Home Rule League and in 1916 formed the Workers Welfare League (WWL). This organisation originally catered for Indian seamen in London but later broadened its scope to include all groups of Indian workers. Moreover, in 1921 when the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) was established the WWL became its agent in Britain. In this way, Saklatvala linked the British and Indian working classes.

Given his industrial and political activities in Britain, Saklatvala was closely watched by the British authorities. He was arrested and charged with sedition for a speech he

"While on shore they were herded like cattle — six or eight in a single room or cellar without bedding, or chairs, or tables, and were found, when visited, sitting on the floor with their backs against the bare walls . . . Those who fell ill among them, and became incapacitated for the labour on shipboard were sent to hospitals or to warehouses, where they were found to have been lying for weeks, in a most desolate condition, without being able to communicate their wants to any around them. Some upon escaping from ships became street sweepers . . . but associating only with those of their own religion."

Fig. 105

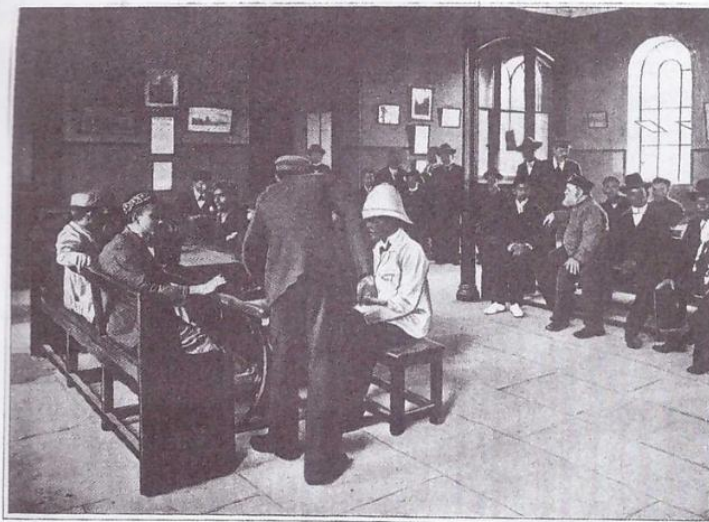


Fig. 106

81



ORIENTAL TYPES IN LONDON.

ORIENTAL LONDON.

By COUNT E. ARMFELT.

VISIONS of palm trees and mango groves, of mosques and pagodas, rise in the imagination as one beholds the swarthy sons of the Orient, whose quaint costumes bring colour into the London streets, whose presence is emblematic of England's far-reaching commerce and power.

The Maharajah who wears a diamond star and the ayah with her children, the Japanese who dress in solemn black, the Persian philosopher and the Parsee student, the Turk, the Egyptian, the Arab, and Chinaman one meets in the West-End are all interesting figures. But to understand what Oriental London means from the points of view of character, costume, and life scenes, one must travel from the fashionable West to the humble East, for it embraces all the various spheres of society, high and low. It is in the crowded thoroughfares leading to the docks, in the lodging houses kept by East Indians, in the shops frequented by Arabs, Indians, and Chinese, and in the spirit houses and opium smoking rooms that one meets the most singular and most picturesque types of Eastern humanity, and the most striking scenes of Oriental life.

The pale yellowish Chinaman from Peking who almost trails his pigtail, and whose loose flowing robes are caught by the breeze, and whose soft thick felt shoes glide silently through the streets, and his brother from Canton or Hong Kong who wears sailor's

clothes, and whose hair is neatly plaited round his head and covered with a large golf-cap; the red-turbaned Lascars whose toes are as nimble as monkey's hands, and whose sea-chests contain treasures of odds and ends of cast-off European clothing mixed with bits of odorous Bombay ducks; the alert, up-to-date Japanese, whose pilot jacket has capacious pockets bulging with weird-looking little idols,

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with the

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Arabs and

the Zanzi-

baris, lithe

and resolute,

who wear

tarbooshes

and turbans



CHINESE WEDDING GREETINGS.

The Oriental, whether he be a Mussulman or a Hindu, is only a grown-up child. He is credulous of things which are wonderful, monstrous, and absurd, and incredulous of scientific facts. He most firmly believes in the baneful influence of the Jinns, the Spirits of the Night, and the Evil Eye, and he purchases amulets to protect him against them and sickness, cholera, the plague, and the dangers of travel and the sea. These amulets, which usually consist of verses of the Koran, of gems, little pieces of green and white stones and corals, are sewn in little leather cases, sometimes of a triangular form, and embroidered with silver; and they are worn round the neck or round the left forearm, or carried in a pocket of the waistband.

Fig. 108



Fig. 109



Fig. 110

Fig. 104 From the Diary of William All3en, 1814.

Fig. 105 Report by Henry Renn of the Church Missionary Society, London.

Fig. 106 The main hall of the Strangers' Home, West India Dock Road.

Fig. 107 A description of the black community in the East End of London, 1903.

Fig. 108 Photograph of the Chinese Mission, 1903.

Fig. 109 English attitudes to Hindus and Muslims, 1903.

Fig. 110 An Indian ayah with her charge, c.1870.

made on the first day of the 1926 General Strike when he urged the Army not to shoot at the people. He served two months imprisonment at Wormwood Scrubs prison.

Saklatvala visited India three times. On his third visit in 1927 he received a hero's welcome from Indian nationalists. Aware of Gandhi's presence and influence, in a published open letter he severely criticised Gandhi's policies. Predictably, when Saklatvala returned to Britain, India became a no-go area, excluded from the list of countries he was allowed to visit.

The Major of Battersea in 1912 had been the Pan-Africanist J.R. Archer. In 1921 Archer introduced Saklatvala at the Pan-African Congress where Saklatvala made a statement of solidarity on behalf of the Indian Nationalist Movement. Archer, who was not Saklatvala's election agent at the time as claimed by some writers, supported Saklatvala's candidacy (Fig. 117). Saklatvala had many Irish constituents whose interests he represented in Parliament. He always linked India and Ireland together in the struggle for freedom from imperialism. During the Irish Civil War it was Saklatvala who raised the question of Ireland in Parliament. Saklatvala again was one out of only two MPs who voted against the motion to partition Ireland.

Saklatvala lost his seat to a Labour Candidate in the 1928 election and unsuccessfully contested by-elections in Glasgow and Battersea in the following years (Fig. 118). By this time, Saklatvala had made many memorable speeches. Perhaps none were more memorable than his speech in the House of Commons on 'Socialism and Labourism.' The Manchester Guardian reported that

'No contribution to the debate had such a stirring and stimulating effect as Mr. Saklatvala's, and for some hours afterwards the enquiry was everywhere made when two persons met within the walls of Parliament "Did you hear Saklatvala?"'

Saklatvala died of heart failure in 1936 after continually agitating against unemployment and working in election campaigns. Many paid tribute to Saklatvala, who was loved by working people in Britain. The first Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru wrote,

'I wish to pay tribute to the memory of Shapurji Saklatvala, who throughout his life was a brave and intrepid soldier of freedom.'

Saklatvala was very popular amongst the working class constituents of Battersea in what was the most radical, left borough in Britain at the time. His popularity attracted the attention of the press. The following extract from the Daily Graphic shows the patronising and racist incomprehension of many English people that an Indian could be so well loved by English workers:

'The Parsee might be a Svengali or an Indian fakir with a knowledge of black magic. He wields a magnetic influence over his audiences that verges on hypnotism. I met a Battersea woman who was almost in tears because she lived on the wrong side of the street to Saklatvala...Nor is it only hysterical women that he captures, but solid British working men. A burly taxi driver...' who also argued that 'he had fought side by side with Indian regiments, and that their soldiers were as brave as any white soldiers.'

Colonial Troops

In 1902, two thousand five hundred colonial troops came to London for the coronation of Edward VII. They were billeted at the Alexandra Palace where they put up their own tents and cooked their own food in the palace kitchens. The coronation was delayed due to the King's ill health which meant that there was plenty of time for the troops to relax, play football and other games. This also gave an opportunity for the English to see the troops (Figs. 119-124).

Sir Apolo Kagwe, the Prime Minister of Uganda, had been invited to attend the Coronation celebrations and he gave an account in his diary of his visit to Alexandra Palace.

'In the afternoon we went to see the soldiers who had come from all lands; all kinds of Africans to the number of four hundred – Sudanese, Swahilis, Baganda, Kavirondo people, Abyssinians, Masai – and other nations from Asia: Chinese, Indians and a great many other tribes we saw there. We saw also English people like locusts in numbers who had come to see what black people were like . . . if one were to fall down he would be trodden to death . . .'

The Weekly Herald, the local paper, covered the event on June 27, 1902 with an article entitled 'Huge crowd at the Palace gets beyond control.' It reported that there were roughly 100,000 people on the day of the celebrations. There were also Canadian and Australian troops, and the 'distinction of clime and race were forgotten in the general rejoicing.'

The photographs of some of the colonial troops at Alexandra Palace have managed to capture a little of the vivacity and natural expressions of the various black soldiers. It was these colonial troops who were used to discipline and control, not only their own peoples, but those of other colonies. It was the same black colonial troops who were to be massively used in the two world wars to come. They were used primarily as cannon fodder to defend a system that exploited them and were asked to fight for rights which they themselves had little hope of achieving.

J.R. Archer

John Richard Archer became in 1913 the first black mayor in Britain who was also born here. He was born in Liverpool in 1863 to a Barbadian father and an Irish mother. He arrived in Battersea in his late twenties with his black Canadian wife and took a house in Brynmaer Road where they were to live for forty years. He earned his living as a photographer, after having given up medical studies. He came to prominence as a public speaker and a keen supporter of John Burns in the 1905 General Election. In November 1906 he won the municipal election in Latchmere Ward as the Progressive candidate and became Britain's first British-born black councillor. He was deeply involved in local affairs and served on many council committees and local boards.

On 10 November, 1913 Archer was elected 10th Mayor of Battersea. Until his nomination for mayor there had been no mention of Archer's colour or race in the local press. Immediately he was besieged by reporters eager to know his origins. Rumours spread that he was from Rangoon in Burma! The national Tory press used this as an opportunity to attack Battersea's radical, internationalist, working-class tradition. The Daily Express, reporting on the election remarks that a 'man of colour' had been elected for the first time in an English borough (Fig. 125). With scarcely veiled wonder that a black man could achieve such a position, the article concentrates on Archer's colour. No mention is made of Archer's political views.

A few weeks later, J.R. Archer attended the Lord Mayor's function at the Guildhall where all 28 London mayors were assembled. The photograph from the Daily Graphic shows him amongst the other mayors to the lower left of the picture (Fig. 126).

J.R. Archer attended the first Pan-African Conference in 1900 and gave his life long commitment to the struggles of the African peoples. His commitment to Pan-Africanist ideals saw his participation at the Pan-African Congresses of 1919 in Paris and in London in 1921. At the latter conference, he chaired a session on colonial freedom where he introduced Saklatvala, the Indian Communist. In 1918, Archer made an important and memorable speech at the end of the inaugural meeting of the London-based Pan-African Group, African Progress Union, whose president he was to be for three years. He said that

'the people of this country are sadly ignorant with reference to the darker races, and our object is to show to them that we have given up the idea of becoming hewers of wood and drawers of water, that we claim our rightful place within this Empire. That if we are good enough to be brought to fight the wars of the country, we are good enough



Fig. 116

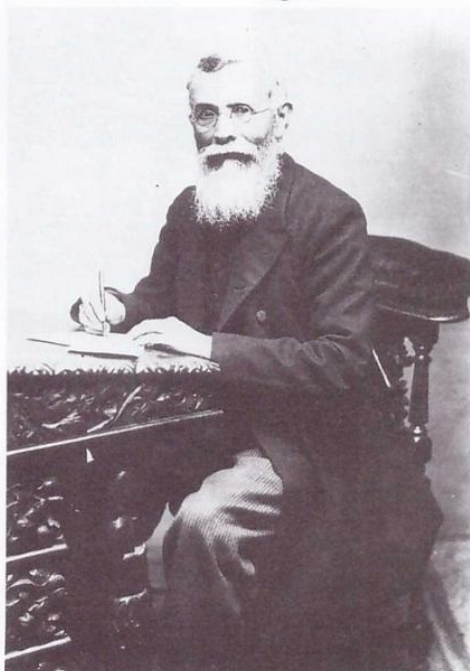


Fig. 114



Fig. 113



Fig. 115

GENERAL ELECTION, 1924

Polling Day, Wednesday, October 29th

NORTH BATTERSEA DIVISION

A RALLY

WILL BE HELD AT THE

Battersea Town Hall
Lavender Hill, S.W.

—ON—

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19th

at 7.30 p.m.

when an Address will be given by

Mr. S.

SAKLATVALA

The Labour Candidate

Supported by

Mrs. C. S. GANLEY, J.P.

J. R. ARCHER, J. EDWARDS

C. J. POWELL, and others.

Chairman - - - J. G. CLANCY
President, Battersea Trades Council and Labour Party

Labour this time!

Printed by BATTERY BROTHERS (T.U.), Queen's Road, Battersea, and Clapham Park; and Published by C. E. MASON, 45, Battersea Road, S.W. 11.

Fig. 117

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION ::

Thursday, May 30th, 1929

North Battersea Division



S. SAKLATVALA

who is:
M.P. for NORTH BATTERSEA
in 1922-1923 and again 1924 to May 1929

who was the only M.P.
Prohibited by Capitalist Governments from
entering their country

Imprisoned by the British Tory Government
on the outbreak of the General Strike

The only M.P. that dared to march and attend
all the May Meetings in Hyde Park

The only M.P. who has demanded in the
House the complete overthrow of Landlords and
Capitalists by Social Legislation without Capitalist
payment

SHAPURJI SAKLATVALA
PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATE FOR NORTH
BATTERSEA

Advised by
The Battersea Trades Council and Labour Party,
the Battersea Workers' Electoral Committee,
the Communist Party of Great Britain.

Election Agents:
Comrade E. R. POUNTNEY
449 Battersea Park Road, S.W. 11

Telephone Number: 4499 Battersea 6180

Printed by C. E. MASON, 45, Battersea Road, S.W. 11, and printed by the same Press at 45, Battersea Road, S.W. 11.

HOW TO VOTE
on 30th May

PICK OUT THE NAME OF
SAKLATVALA
and put a X opposite his name and
no other, and do not write any
remarks

BRIGGS, T. P.
BRIGGS, A.
SAKLATVALA, S.

1981-1986

Working for London

VOTE for SAKLATVALA

archive.parmindervir.com

Fig. 118

Fig. 111 In the Ayahs' Home, Hackney, c.1900.

Fig. 112 Abdullah, one of Queen Victoria's Indian
servants, 1898.

Fig. 113 Samuel Coleridge-Taylor.

Fig. 114 The first Indian MP, Dadabhai Naoroji.

Fig. 115 Sir Mancherjee Bhownagree, the second
Indian MP, by L. Ward.

Fig. 116 Shapurji Saklatvala addressing the crowds
in Trafalgar Square, c.1929.

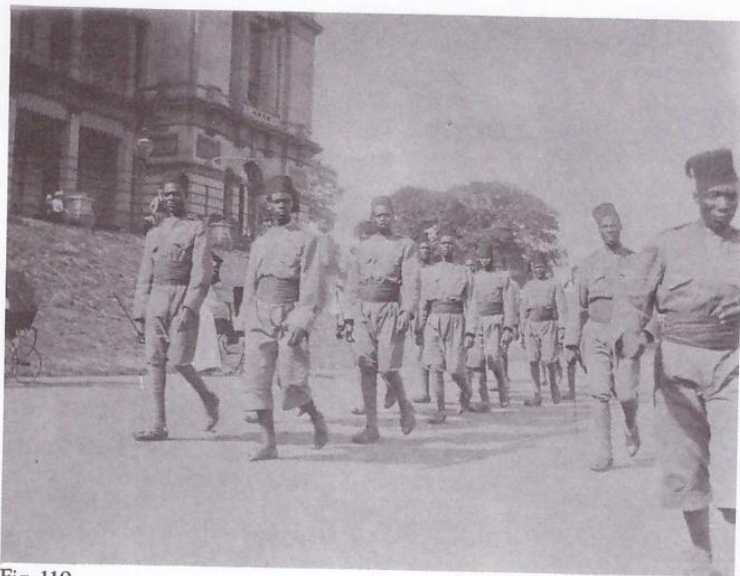


Fig. 119



Fig. 122



Fig. 120



Fig. 123



Fig. 121



Fig. 124

Figs. 119-124 Colonial Troops at Alexandria Palace 1902.

Parminster Vir OBE BLACK & ETHNIC ARTS ARCHIVE
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 Working for London
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to receive the benefits of the country... One of the objects of this association is to demand — not ask, demand; it will be 'demand' all the time that I am your President. I am not asking for anything, I am out demanding.' (*West Africa*, II/101, 4 Jan. 1919).

Gandhi

The great Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi studied in London at the age of eighteen from 1887 to 1891 until he was called to the Bar. He returned to London in 1931 to attend the Round Table Conference which was the second of three such conferences called to decide on the future of India. He addressed a meeting at Friend's House, Euston soon after he arrived, where a crowd had assembled in the pouring rain.

While he was in London, Gandhi paid a visit to the East End of London. He was very popular with London's working class people, who thronged to see him (Fig. 127). He also met Charlie Chaplin in 1931 in South London after being mobbed on the way by enthusiastic crowds.

Gandhi later made a triumphant trip to the Lanchashire mills where he received a warm welcome and great sympathy from the working class women workers (Fig. 128).

Black Cricketers

Britain, India and the West Indies today share a passion for cricket which goes back many years. The most famous of all Indian cricketers in the late nineteenth century was Ranjitsinhji from Gujarat. He was the captain of Sussex for 5 years and an England Test player. He was the first Indian to play cricket for England and was recognised as one of the greatest Indian cricketers of all time (Fig. 129).

Ranjitsinhji's nephew Dhuleepsinhji also excelled at the game and played for England in four out of five Tests against Australia in 1930. He was another of crickets' greats (Fig. 130).

The most famous of the early West Indian cricketers is Learie Constantine who came to England in 1923 as a member of the West Indies team (Fig. 131). He played until 1939 and made eighteen Test appearances. During this time he was a member of the League of Coloured Peoples and took part in many charity matches. During the Second World War he was employed by the Minister of Labour as a welfare officer for West Indians in Manchester.

In 1944 Learie Constantine was involved in a court case where he claimed compensation for the racial discrimination he had faced from the owners of the Imperial Hotel in London's Russell Square. They had refused him lodging for the night and were abusive. The Times reported on 22 June 1944 that when he was asked to move to

another more 'congenial' hotel, Learie Constantine replied 'that wherever he went in the West Indies no restrictions were made on grounds of colour.' He won his case and damages for inconveniences were awarded to him.

Black Troops – World War I

People from all over the world fought for Britain in 1914-1918 – from the Caribbean, India, Africa as well as from Australia, Canada and New Zealand who altogether made up Britain's colonial troops.

Indian soldiers as colonial troops fought on the side of Britain in the First World War. India contributed not only in terms of manpower alone but also towards the defraying of war expenses. £100m were given outright at the outset of the war, followed by £20-30m annually. India made a great effort to mobilise the high numbers of men for the war. At the beginning of the war, the Indian army was about 240,000 strong. By 1919, India had sent 1,096,013 men overseas. Whilst over half went to fight in the Mesopotamia campaign against the Turkish, a significant contribution was made by Indian soldiers fighting on the main battle front in France. With regard to casualties, India had more than her share since it was British policy to use black troops as cannon fodder in the trenches. Out of 121,598 casualties, 53,486 were dead and 64,350 wounded. The contribution made by India to Britain's war effort was recognised by the press at this time (Fig. 132).

During the war, 14,500 Indian soldiers were admitted to hospitals in England. The Royal Pavilion at Brighton was turned into a major hospital for Indian troops (Fig. 133). They were taken care of by newly qualified Indian doctors studying in England who volunteered their services, and by European orderlies. Many died of their wounds at Brighton and were buried at the South Downs in Brighton where a monument was erected.

The British West Indies Regiment and the West India Regiment also fought for the British in the First World War. In addition, troops came from Africa and with West Indian troops fought bravely in battles in Africa and elsewhere. They too were used as cannon fodder. The 3rd and 4th battalions of the West India Regiment were confined to ammunition-carrying and labour services in France (Fig. 134).

A large number of West Indian soldiers were wounded, crippled for life or killed in battle. The British West Indies Regiment alone lost 185 killed, 1,071 who died of sickness and 697 wounded. Many wounded soldiers were brought back to Britain for treatment and recuperation.

Recognition of their bravery meant that

many were decorated as heroes. After the war, many African and West Indians were demobilised in Britain and decided to stay. In 1917 a book devoted to black troops during the war praised their 'pluck, gallantry and devotion'. (*The Black Man's Part In The War*, Johnston, 1917).

After the war there were many celebrations held to honour the troops. The Times in 1919 reported on a special service held for West Indian troops and for volunteers from South America and the Dominion (Fig. 135). There were numerous other accounts of the heroism and courage of black troops during the war. However, figures are not available on the total numbers of Caribbean and African troops who fought in the war or on the total number of their casualties.

Many black seamen also contributed to the war effort, which took a huge toll. From Cardiff alone 1,000 were killed at sea while 400 died from exposure after being rescued from their ships.

Black Londoners Under Attack

Before the outbreak of the First World War, black seamen in London found it extremely difficult to find work due to the racist employment practices of the seamen's unions and the shipowners. Preference was given to white seamen who with white dockers refused to work with black seamen. This was a period of great hardship for the black community in London.

The war dramatically changed the situation for black workers in Britain. There was now plenty of well-paid work to do, and more black people were encouraged to come to Britain to work in the chemical and munitions factories. Black seamen were made welcome in the merchant navy. By the end of the war, there were about 20,000 black people living in London.

The 'race riots' of 1919 which shook the country can be traced back to events which took place during the war between troops hospitalised in England. In 1917 in Liverpool, 50 black soldiers had been attacked by 400-500 white soldiers in a fight which had been provoked by white South Africans. There were some white soldiers who defended their black friends having fought with them in the trenches. London newspapers instantly blamed the black soldiers but a War Office enquiry found otherwise.

Once the war had ended, the demand for black labour ceased and shipping companies again refused to sign on black seamen. Hundreds were affected and by the connivance of the Employment Department cheated out of benefits due to them. Secret instructions were sent to labour exchange managers to leave black seamen of British nationality in ignorance of their rights. Black people began to experience resentment and open hostility from demobilised

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'BLACK' MAYOR OF BATTERSEA.

SPEECH IN DEFENCE OF HIS COLOUR AND RACE.

WORLD'S RECORD.

For the first time, it is believed, in the history of local government, a man of colour was yesterday elected mayor of an English borough. He was Mr. John Richard Archer, who, by the solid vote of the Progressive party—numbering thirty to the Municipal Reformers' twenty-nine—was chosen Mayor of Battersea.

No reference was made in the speeches preceding the election by either side to Mr. Archer's race.

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Fig. 125



Fig. 126



Fig. 127



Fig. 128



Fig. 129



Fig. 130



Fig. 131

Indian Patriotism Throughout the Empire: THE RALLY TO THE FLAG.

THE patriotism shown by Indians living in the United Kingdom, the Dominions, and Allied and neutral countries has, so far, remained unnoticed and unacknowledged. This is surprising in view of the readiness with which Indians residing in the remotest corners of the world came forward to serve the Empire in its hour of need in any way they could.

Take the case of Guruchan Singh, who is now fighting the Germans in the ranks of the Australian Imperial Force. He had gone to the Commonwealth thirteen years ago, after obtaining his discharge from the Indian Army, on his return from the South African Campaign, in which he was employed as a Jemadar (or Indian Lieutenant) in the Supply and Transport Department, and went through the siege of Ladysmith. When he landed in Australia he knew no English to speak of, and he had no capital. A kind-hearted countryman initiated him into the mysteries of hawking, and in the course of a few years he built up a good trade. At the time of the outbreak of war he owned a large general store in a wayside town in south-west Australia, and was earning an income that would appear to be a small fortune to an Indian. The Sikh blood boiled in him, in spite of his being on the wrong side of forty. The sight of the stripes and medals he had won in the Tirah and Chitral campaigns stirred him to further fighting. He volunteered, but was told that only "substantial Europeans"—that is the phrase he used—were being enlisted. He was, however, too persistent to take "no" for an answer. In the middle of 1915 he managed to obtain his heart's desire: he was the first—and, it is to be regretted, the last—Indian to be admitted into the Australian Field Force. Now, after the required training, he is on active service "somewhere in France." Just

before he went out he told me that the Germans had killed a cousin of his who was a Subadar Major (or Indian Lieutenant-Colonel) in the Indian Army, and he would soon have his revenge. He is likely to meet, at the front, Indians who volunteered in Canada, and are now fighting in the Canadian contingent.

Here is another case. The outbreak of hostilities found Arjan Singh in the Argentine. The spirit of adventure had taken him to South America, where, he was told, he could make many times the amount of money that an Indian in the Indian Army receives. He took the trouble to learn Spanish, and in a short time succeeded in being placed in charge of a large number of men working on a sugar plantation owned by an Englishman. The pay exceeded his wildest dreams, and he was held in much esteem. But he heard that the regiment in which he had formerly served had been ordered out to the Western front from India, and he wanted, more than anything else in the world, to be a member of the first Indian expeditionary force that fought in France. His

arrive from the Western front. Indians were detailed to serve on the ships conveying these fighters, and also in the hospitals and camps set apart of improved for their care.

Later on, when the hospitals for Indians in this country were closed and the Indian Ambulance Corps was disbanded, some of the Volunteers offered to go to Egypt, to engage in medical relief there. One of these young men was a relative of Mr. Bhupendra Nath Basu, who was recently appointed to the Council of India, and who, along with Mr. M. K. Gandhi, took a leading part in organising the Indian Voluntary Ambulance Corps. Another young man who went out to Egypt was the eldest son of Sir Abbas Ali Baig, who retired, early in June, from the Council of India. Mr. G. V. Uram Singh, after serving in the hospitals at Netley, Brighton, and Milford-on-Sea, became a Special Constable in London, and established for himself a record for dependability and conscientious work.

There were several Indians belonging to the Indian Military Service in England at the time the war broke out. They at once went back to India. Among these men were Lieut.-Colonel Bakhle, Lieut.-Colonel Bhola Nath, and Lieut.-Colonel Jivan Singh. Two Indian officers who had retired from the Indian Military Service and were living in London—namely, Col. Kanta Prasad and Colonel Warlekar—went out to India to relieve younger men for active service. Colonel Kanta Prasad's patriotism rose to such a high pitch that he did not mind serving, for a short time, as an orderly in a military hospital under an officer junior to him in service. He was recently given a first-class Kaiser-i-Hind medal as a reward for the valuable services he has rendered during the war.



Fig. 134

THE MEN FROM THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.

TRIBUTE TO "SOLITARY HEROES."

A special service of thanksgiving and remembrance for soldiers from overseas was held, at the desire of the Overseas Club and Patriotic League and West Indian Contingent Committee, in the church of St. Clement Danes.

BISHOP FRODSHAM, formerly of North Queensland, Canon Residentiary of Gloucester, delivered an address, and the Rev. F. W. T. Elliott, formerly Archdeacon of Barbice, British Guiana, also took part in the service. The church was beautifully decorated with flags and flowers—red, white, and blue. Special arrangements had also been made for the musical side of the service. The choir was augmented, and the Australian Imperial Force sent its band. The congregation contained representatives not only of all the Dominion troops, but also of troops from the West Indies and volunteers from South America.

BISHOP FRODSHAM, in his address, said that there was no part of the whole earth from which men had not come to fight for the Empire. Honour to whom honour was due; yet in honouring the men from overseas it was necessary to preserve proper proportion. To speak as though they had borne the sole burden of the war, or even had done more than the rest to preserve the treasures of Empire, would be repugnant to the men themselves. Those who had walked in the fiery furnace did not talk lightly of their own prowess. Neither did they desire to minimize the prowess of others.

The main burden of the war had fallen upon the men of these islands, and particularly upon the English regiments, who with magnificent humility had fought everywhere and everywhere given the praise to others. This the men from overseas would be the first to acknowledge, while the American troops, by joining in the Empire celebrations, were showing the same generous spirit of comradeship.

There were some from overseas to whom no State laid claim. These masterless men heard the call of the Empire on the South American pampas, on the coral strands of the Pacific Islands, in the jungles of Africa, in all the five continents and on all the seven seas. Having heard the voice of duty, they were not disobedient to it. These did not clamour for exemption or for safe appointments. Commissioners and planters, sailors and stockmen, rich and poor alike, they were content to enlist as men, to fight as men, to suffer like men, and, when occasion demanded it, to die like men. When honour was given, let no man forget the solitary heroes of Empire.

Fig. 135

Fig. 132



Fig. 125 From the Daily Express, November 11, 1913.

Fig. 126 From the Daily Graphic, January 1914.

Fig. 127 Gandhi meets the Pearly King, Prince and Princess in the East End, 1931.

Fig. 128 Gandhi meets Lancashire mill workers, 1931.

Fig. 129 The great Indian cricketer Ranjitsinhji.

Fig. 130 Dhuleepsinhji, the Indian cricketer.

Fig. 131 Learie Constantine, (front row, centre) with the West Indian Wanderers.

Fig. 132 From the Illustrated London News, August 25, 1917.

Fig. 133 Wounded Indians at the Brighton Pavilion, c.1917.

Fig. 134 West Indian troops, Albert-Amiens Road, 1916.

Fig. 135 From The Times, 26 May, 1919.

Fig. 133

SERIOUS RIOTING AT CANNING TOWN.

Revolvers, Choppers and Steels at Play.

At the West Ham Police Court on Monday, a riotous scene, in which blacks and whites were concerned, in Canning Town on Saturday afternoon, was described.

It appeared, according to the magistrate, the whole affair arose out of an unprovoked attack on a coloured man, who hit back, and he reminded one of the offenders that the blacks were also subjects of the King, and were entitled to the protection of the law.

Revolvers were fired by blacks, but a police inspector said the weapons were timed over the heads of the crowd.

A dock labourer, Walter James Grant-ham, of Custom House, was charged with having been drunk and disorderly, and with causing damage at a house of a West Indian, Thomas Pell, in Crown Street.

Pell said he was standing at his door with two other coloured men when Grantham made an insulting remark and passed on. He returned and accused the black man of having laughed at him, and hit him on the chest. Pell hit back, and was pulled into the house by his friends, whereupon Grantham smashed the window, broke a flower stand, picked up a guitar, and broke more glass.

A large and disorderly crowd then assembled, and coloured men were attacked wherever they were found, the police soon finding themselves powerless to check the disorder.

Grantham pleaded guilty to being drunk, and said that the black man hit him and he struck back.

Mr. Ratcliffe Cousins: What did you do during the war?

Prisoner: Stevedoring.

Mr. Ratcliffe Cousins: Making good money while other men were risking their lives. These inhabitants of Jamaica, continued the magistrate, were British subjects and entitled to equal treatment by the law. During the war the coloured races of the Empire had done splendid service, and it was a very shabby thing for those who had loafed about the docks to turn round on them. He (Grantham) would be sent to prison for two months with hard labour.

Grantham's wife, who ran out and hit a black man when someone said, "Come quick; Wally is killed; they are shooting the people," was discharged with a caution.

Three coloured West Indian seamen were charged with discharging revolvers, and it was pleaded that they had been chased by the crowd for a quarter of a mile, and the shots were over the heads of the people.

Mr. Daybell, defending, said a number of butchers with choppers and steels joined with the crowd, and the men felt they were in great peril.

Fining two of the men 20s. for having revolvers without a licence, Mr. Ratcliffe Cousins said he regarded their conduct as the acts of desperate men in danger of violence.

whites on the streets. In February 1919, a group of Arab seamen in South Shields was attacked by a crowd of white seamen. Tensions grew in Liverpool as black workers were increasingly harassed by Liverpool police as well as whites on the streets. Three Africans were then stabbed on 8 June and for the next few days crowds of thousands of whites roamed the streets attacking every black person they could find.

Whilst the worst of the incidents occurred in Cardiff and Liverpool, Canning Town in London also erupted on 16 April, 1919 against black and Chinese people (Fig. 136). The Strangers' Home for Asiatics and the Sailors' Home in St. Anne St. were attacked by large crowds. During the summer of 1919 black people in Britain were being constantly physically harassed. The press again laid the blame on the victims and set in motion a pattern for their future reporting on race issues. Black people did not hesitate to defend themselves in every possible way and this too was attacked. Black men were also blamed for associating with white women.

These attacks on black people occurred directly after a war in which black troops had bravely given their lives and their services. They were forgotten so soon for their invaluable contribution when they decided to live in the country for which they had fought.

Dr Harold Moody

Harold Moody came to London in 1908 to study medicine at King's College Hospital. He specialised in ophthalmics but was unable to get a hospital job. He then set up as a family doctor in Peckham. He became President of the London Missionary Society and was a devout Christian (Fig. 137). During the last sixteen years of his life he led the first effective black pressure group in this country which was *The League of Coloured Peoples* established on 13 March 1931. Dr. Moody used every opportunity to assist other black people in need and to fight for their rights. Although the League was not a radical campaigning organisation, Dr. Moody had an influence on public affairs and was much respected by many in the black community. He was also able to provide for the welfare needs and social needs of a large group in the community. The magazine of the League was called *The Keys* and showed some of the day trips that black children were enabled to go on in the 1930s through the League's work (Fig. 138 and Fig. 139).

The League was criticised for its liberal stand by the Pan-Africanists who took a radical, militant line and believed that the League diverted the struggle and made too many concessions to the establishment. There was however, some co-operation between the Pan-Africanists and the League. C.L.R. James was on the Executive

of the League for a time and contributed to the *Keys*.

During the Second World War, Dr. Moody worked as a doctor amongst the falling bombs and was also called to do civil defence work. Dr Moody died in 1947. His funeral in Camberwell was attended by thousands.

The Pan-African Movement

One of the greatest achievements of black people in Britain is the creation of a major political tradition – Pan-Africanism which was to change the shape of the world in only a few years. The name for this movement was established in 1900 when the first Pan-African conference was held in London. The origins of the movement lay in the late eighteenth century when the black community in Britain was instrumental in bringing about the first victory of the abolitionist movement with leaders such as Olaudah Equiano, Ottobah Cugoana and Paul Cuffee.

Virtually every significant figure in the Pan-African movement came to Britain which, as the hub of the imperial state, became a meeting place for people from all corners of the world. It was in London that black people could influence the powers that controlled the lives of millions of their people. Nowhere else in the world could people of African origin from the West Indies, America or Africa so easily meet each other as in London. Two black Londoners were involved in the early development of Pan-Africanism. Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, the brilliant composer and J.R. Archer, councilor and mayor in Battersea.

The first Pan-African Congress met in Paris in 1919 based on the structure of the conference of 1900. Individuals such as Celestine Edwards and later Henry Sylvester Williams brought out journals on black issues in Britain. Duse Mohammed Ali, the editor of the *African Times and Orient Review* and the *Africa and Orient Review*, important and very popular magazines, made a significant contribution to Pan-Africanism. The most famous of all Pan-Africanists are George Padmore (Fig. 140), Ras Makonnen, C.L.R. James (Fig. 141), Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta and I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson who attended the most important Pan-African Congress of all in 1945 which took place in Manchester.

The task was no longer to seek justice from within the framework of the British empire but to demand rapid independence from the empire for all subject black peoples. Whilst the tactics employed by Gandhi of mass non-co-operation would be employed, if this was not successful, the people would take up armed resistance. The role of the Pan-Africanists themselves would be in their own countries organising the masses for independence struggle. It is precisely

Fig. 136 From the East London Observer, 16 August 1919.

what the leading Pan-Africanists did and twenty years later most of Africa and the Caribbean had become independent.

Kamal Chunchie

Another important figure in the black community of the early twentieth century was Revd. Kamal Chunchie (Fig. 142). He was born in Ceylon in 1886 and became a convert to Christianity. He fought in the First World War and was wounded twice and gassed. He arrived in London soon after the war and settled in the East End of London, at Canning Town. He became very concerned about the poverty and racism faced by black seamen in the docks area. His work with the seamen eventually led to the establishment of the 'Coloured Mens' Institute' in 1926 for which he raised the funds through his own efforts (Fig 143). He provided much needed support to black people in distress and was untiring in his work. He supported the cause of Indian independence and was fairly radical in his views.

Chunchie had other interests besides missionary work. He was also a talented boxer, tennis and cricket player and on one occasion played cricket for Essex County. He died in 1954.

World War II

Once again, people in the colonies were expected to fight for Britain. Many black people came to Britain to work in the armed forces, or as civilians in factories. The majority of British people welcomed them. The two reports in *The Times* in 1941 show that the sacrifices made by African and West Indian troops were appreciated and valued (Fig. 144 and Fig. 145). Again figures are not readily available on these troops involved in the war effort and the casualties they sustained.

Between 1939 and 1945 over two and a half million Indians volunteered for the army. Over thirty six thousand Indians died or went missing, over sixty thousand were wounded and about eighty thousand taken prisoner. 30 Victoria Crosses were awarded for bravery to Indian men. In 1945, when three Indians received their VCs they were mobbed by a crowd of English autograph hunters and photographers (Fig. 146).

After the Second World War, it no longer became possible for Britain to maintain its rule over the 'Empire'. The illusions of white superiority were shattered forever once colonial troops were shipped across the world to fight a European conflict.

Today, little is mentioned of the bravery and sacrifices made by black troops in the Second World War, repeating what had happened when the First World War ended.

It is since 1945 that due to post-war labour shortages in England and the resulting employment recruitment drives in the

colonies, that black people began arriving in Britain in discernible numbers. History is again repeating itself. In times of crisis and recession, the presence of black people becomes no longer desirable.

The commitment and contributions made by black people, who have been living in London for nearly 500 years, to the progressive and radical movements in this country have been historically consistent. Despite many attempts at repatriation, bleak employment prospects and racist internal controls, black people have always been and are an integral part of the London communities.



Fig. 137

Fig. 137 Dr. Harold Moody.

Fig. 138 Epsom Downs from The Keys, 1930s.



Fig. 138



Fig. 139



Fig. 140



Fig. 141



Fig. 142



Fig. 143

COLONIAL WAR EFFORT

LORD MOYNE, Secretary of State for the Colonies, said that the Nazi effort to destroy the City of Westminster had not interfered with the traditional ceremony with which his Majesty opened Parliament. As befitted our present state of war, to-day's proceedings had been shorn of some of their traditional pageantry, but never could Parliament have met their Sovereign with a deeper feeling of loyalty and patriotism. (Cheers.) We should never forget the way in which during this year the King and Queen had shared to the full the anxieties and the dangers of their people, and how they had never spared themselves in encouraging the nation in its effort. (Cheers.)

The House would have heard with great interest and appreciation what Lord Fitzalan had said about religious development in Russia. The war effort of both great countries would profit by the closer sympathies which would inevitably develop in our outlook on other problems of life.

People were not always sufficiently informed on what the Colonies and Dependencies had been doing. A great expansion had taken place in our African troops, and tens of thousands of men of the African races now supplied man-power not only for the infantry but for the technical services as well. Their achievements in Eritrea and Somaliland showed their efficiency and gallantry. It was the same story throughout the Empire. Remote Dependencies in the Atlantic and Pacific had raised units according to their resources and needs. Several days each week he welcomed at the Colonial Office parties of volunteers of many races who had come, often at their own expense, to join the R.A.F. and other fighting units. We had also been reinforced by hundreds of technicians, timber workers, and other skilled personnel.

The great resources of man-power available in the Colonial Empire must be used not only for the war effort but in the constructive work of peace-time development. He looked forward with confidence to a progressive increase in the part played by the Colonial peoples. Some of the Colonies could now run their administrations from local resources with little help from outside. Our policy must be so to press on with the improvement of educational, cultural, and other facilities that full scope should be given to the Colonial peoples to employ their talents and abilities in the interests of their own communities and the Empire generally. (Hear, hear.) In earnest of this he had in the last few months been able to recruit to the Colonial Office staff in London two men of African race. He hoped that process would expand and continue. (Cheers.)

WAR AID FROM THE COLONIES

"SPLENDID ACHIEVEMENTS"

A luncheon at the West Indian Club, Whitehall Court, yesterday was made the occasion of warm tributes to the many men and women of our African and West Indian Dependencies who are giving generous and spontaneous service in the Empire's war effort. The purpose of the luncheon was to initiate a Colonial Comforts Fund for their benefit.

The following contributions to the fund were announced:—£1,000 from Lord Nuffield; £500 from Elder Dempster Lines, Ltd., the Consolidated African Selection Trust, and the Sierra Leone Selection Trust, and the United Africa Company; and two cut diamonds from the Diamond Trading Company. The address of the hon. secretary, Sir Norman King, is Halton House, Holborn, E.C.1.

SIR HANNIS VISCHER, chairman of the management committee, who presided, said that the question of colour had no place in their scheme. They were undertaking this work of providing for the special needs of Africans and West Indians as a duty towards fellow-citizens who were taking their full share in the war for the existence of their Empire. Not a penny of the fund would be consumed in overhead charges.

LORD TRENCHARD, president of the council, testified to the splendid response of the British Colonial peoples of Africa to the call to fight on the side of liberty. It was our duty to make certain that, while they were fighting, their lot should be as easy and comfortable as we could make it.

LORD MOYNE, Secretary of State for the Colonies, said he was glad to hear that there would be no colour bar. The African regiments had shown in the East African campaign the highest qualities of courage and disciplined initiative, and had not yet had the full credit they deserved for their splendid achievements.

A great amount of valuable war work was being done by men of African descent in ways less prominent in the public eye, Lord Moyne continued. We had had hundreds of highly skilled technicians from the West Indies and Africa, thousands of seamen who were continually facing the terrible dangers of submarines, hundreds from the West Indies who had come over to join the Royal Air Force.

Fig. 139 League of Coloured People's Coach Trip, from The Keys, 1930s.

Fig. 140 C.L.R. James.

Fig. 141 George Padmore.

Fig. 142 The Reverend Kamal A. Chunchie.

Fig. 143 The Coloured Mens Institute, Canning Town, 1930s.

Fig. 144 From The Times, 13 November, 1941.

Fig. 145 From The Times, 2 December 1941.

Fig. 146 Three Indian VCs receive their medals, 16 October 1945.

Fig. 144



Fig. 145

Fig. 146

THE GREATER LONDON RECORDS OFFICE

Although much has been uncovered by the various studies on the subject, there is still a great deal to be learned about the black presence – What did happen to blacks in the mid 19th century? How many black women were there? How many families? In what sense was there a community? How many local communities were there? These are just some of the questions that remain unanswered.

To hint that the research has been 'incutaneous' is to indicate no more than the fact that the same sources have been repeatedly consulted. Necessarily for example, the material is always arranged in the general texts in much the same way as Kenneth Little first introduced it; but Little and Banton are themselves quoted extensively as sources, which may indicate that primary sources are not consulted as often as might be expected – this may, for example, account for some of the inaccuracies to be found in Edward Scobie's work. Similarly, Dorothy George's 1925 study of *London Life in the 18th century*, enjoys a popularity in the footnotes of other historians quite remarkable for the three or four pages she actually devotes to black people.

The significance of this is that it highlights some of the problems of researching the early history of the black presence. Possible source material is difficult to identify and therefore makes this a particularly time consuming subject for research; there are also gaps in the current knowledge (as indicated above) which will be difficult to fill without exhaustive surveys of a wide variety of records.

Local records are an invaluable source for the social historian and are a source which, though difficult to penetrate when looking for black people, are nonetheless a major untapped possibility.

Combining the former County record offices of London and Middlesex; with official records from around 1549, and private records dating from as early as the thirteenth century, the Greater London Record Office is England's largest local record office, and as such represents an immense and detailed resource for the history of the Greater London area. The GLRO is situated in Clerkenwell, at 40 Northampton Road, London EC1. Such a

comprehensive collection of records clearly has an enormous potential for providing an illustrative account of London life and the part that black people have played in its history.

As well as official records that cover all aspects of London's administration – from Court records to Asylums to the maintenance of sewers, etc. – there are records from over four hundred Parishes, a rich diversity of private records, photographs, prints and maps, which makes the GLRO a most fertile source in which to research the history of black Londoners.

The GLRO receives some three hundred searchers every week, some 65-70% of whom are engaged purely in private study of their own family history. The E.M.U. felt that the GLRO as a local record office was a unique resource for Londoners generally, and that as a public facility every effort should be made to identify and publicise those records, where they existed, that related to black people, in order to respond to the growing demand for such material – especially amongst teachers.

In addition, the GLRO holds a substantial quantity of uncatalogued records whose contents are largely unknown to the department's archivists. Records are received daily at the office at a rate and in a quantity that exceeds the staff's ability to catalogue them. Added to the large quantity of uncatalogued records which were inherited by the present administration, the backlog is now considerable.

The Greater London Records Office, after the abolition of the GLC, will be transferred to the Corporation of London, which will have implications for its operation since the priorities of this organisation will be quite different to those of the GLC administration.

GLRO: The Main Classes

As with all records offices, access to the GLRO holdings is by way of Indexes and Catalogues. The General and Name indexes refer to information about, and where to find specific subjects and individuals that appear somewhere in the records. The Catalogues and Lists however, contain details of the actual documents to be found within any particular group or class of records.

To obtain material it is necessary either to locate the specific concern in the cross-reference indexes, or to identify the group of records which is most likely to contain the required information.

For most users of the records this procedure, though time-consuming, will yield results if, as was suspected, the required information is indeed located somewhere in the records. For those with a more general interest in miscellaneous material on black people, the

task is not only time-consuming, but is made particularly difficult for a number of reasons:

- 1 As a subject, black people have not received the attention of archivists for indexing purposes; and, as no systematic search of the holdings has ever been undertaken, references to black people are not only few, but occur only as a by-product of other quite unrelated searches and have been noted only as curiosities.
- 2 Biographical information on black people is scanty – those about whom we know anything emerge because objects of notoriety, or as subjects of legal cases, or through their own published writings. The Name index is therefore of little direct use in identifying individuals among the mass of 'ordinary' black people.
- 3 Whilst there has been considerable research into black history in the last ten years or so, there is little that can lead directly into local records sources; the main value of local records offices is in supplying information about just those areas where the current knowledge is deficient, and it is only through a trawl of the records themselves that particular groups of records might recommend themselves to this kind of study.
- 4 The records themselves offer few clues beyond those which – like some Parish and Sessions records – are informal or necessarily have groups of documents of miscellaneous content.

In short, local records, having been stored archivally, are accessible only to those with objectives sufficiently well defined, that can be pursued systematically through a collection offering different types of record.

Looking at the records themselves, as valuable as they are to local historians, the problems peculiar to studying black people in this way are daunting: for unless specifically referred to as such, it is virtually impossible to tell whether or not a given document – even those containing otherwise detailed biographical information – is actually referring to a black person.

There are certain classes of records however, which for their own reasons might be more worthwhile searching than others and one has therefore to make informed selections, both among the main classes of records and amongst the various series within those classes..

The main classes of records fall within the following major groupings: Session records; Parish records; Middlesex County Council, and London County Council records; the records of Estates, Families, Businesses, Hospitals, Charities and Associations; and a large and varied collection of Miscellaneous Accessions.

Parish records, and Middlesex Sessions records

The two largest sections of the GLRO holdings are parish and sessions records, which two sections alone are of immense interest to the social historian, for although concerned mainly with judicial and administrative matters they are necessarily thereby dealing with people – as parishioners with parochial duties and obligations, or as recipients of charity, etc; as transgressors of the law in any number of ways, or as petitioners of the courts, etc.

Parish records cover a large variety of documents, representing the accumulated administrative duties of individual parish churches. Briefly, they include material that falls into the following general categories:

- 1 Baptism, Marriage and Burial Registers.
- 2 Churchwardens bills, accounts, etc.
- 3 Overseers of the Poor records.
- 4 Papers about various charities.
- 5 Documents related to Apprenticeship.
- 6 Documents related to Vagrancy and Bastardy.
- 7 Documents related to Enclosures.

Any given area for which there are Lists in the Search Room, will refer to records held for a number of parishes deposited in the GLRO for that area. Thus a selection of the records to be found deposited by a single parish – St Mary Lambeth – may serve to indicate the size and variety of the material to be found in parish records.

St Mary Lambeth P85

Overseers of the Poor: 1826

Minutes (various), Poor Law: 1791-1827

Poor Rates and Accounts 1811-1836:

summaries of rate collections; Churchwardens, Overseers and Surveyors payments; Militia accounts; register of weekly payments of our-relief; poor rate books; minutes of workhouse committees.

Settlement 1682-1824: Certificates, and Removal orders.

Bastardy: Examinations, pay books.

Apprentices: Registers 1782-1826.

Workhouse 1744-1834:

admissions, discharges; order books; registers of children maintained by parish; summaries of expenditures; tradesman's day book; master's account book; monthly payments to nurses; clothing books; inventories – fixtures and fittings.

Scavengers rate books: 1800-1806.

Surveyors of the Highways: minutes 1816-1834.

Burial ground rates: 1834.

Charities: ca.1783-1836.

Parish Registers:

Marriages 1669-1718

Baptisms 1699-1907

Burial 1788-1883

Middlesex Sessions records are similarly extensive, and the list attached details the variety of subjects which come under the auspices of the Court.

Estates and Family records

These are in the main collections of various transactions affecting property, or more general accounts of their maintenance, and thus consist of such things as:- Ground Rentals, Agreements, Marriage Settlements, Assignments, Maps and Surveys, Bonds, Wills, Covenants, Leases and Releases, Conveyances, and various receipts, notices, letters and accounts. Family records are often somewhat more diverse, consisting far more of such items as diaries and letters.

The greater part of these records consist of numerous small deposits, although there are larger, single deposits which form substantial collections in their own right. An example would be the Bedford Estate (E/BED) which are the records of the Russell family (16-19 century) who owned various estates in London and Surrey, among which was the Covent Garden Estate.

Miscellaneous Accessions (Acc/) similarly consist of many small deposits – but which are far too numerous to list, and for which there are some 110 catalogues. Whilst frequently concerned with property, they also contain more personal material. Here again there are large single deposits, such as the papers of Lord Jersey Acc 510/1-59, 331, 405, 435, 436, 506, 510, 1128, 1275, 1140; the Stowe collection Acc 262/1-3; and the Kent collection Acc 333/1-48. The contents of the **Artificial Collection (Q/)** are much the same as the above.

Middlesex, and London County Council records simply chronicle the functions of those two bodies through the operations of their many departments.

An Assessment of Black History Research Undertaken at the GLRO

In order to undertake a general survey of the GLRO holdings with reference to black people, given the time restraints, it was necessary in this project to apportion time and energy to those records which it was felt:

- (a) Seemed the most likely areas in which to find black people.
- (b) Were, by their nature, easily accessible.
- (c) Where possible, formed a group or sub-series of a manageable size where the whole could be scrutinised.

In addition, some classes of records were searched in more detail than others. It was felt that Parish records, Sessions records, Estates and Family records, and some General Accession records should be looked at more closely than those of the MCC, LCC, Hospitals, Charities, Associa-

tions, Businesses and Churches for example.

Whether or not a class of records would contain the kind of evidence looked for, could more easily be determined from the descriptions of the records in the catalogues and lists in the latter cases than was felt could be in the former. In addition to this, the research concentrated more specifically on the pre-twentieth century records, whereas the records of MCC, LCC, etc, contained a greater quantity of late 19th and 20th century material.

It was felt that among the Estates, Family and General Accessions records occasional references might be found either to household servants, or to slaves, among those families, etc., with Caribbean, African or Indian interests or connections. Whilst the information therein was unlikely to dwell upon black individuals, the context of any such references would be of interest.

The Middlesex Sessions and Parish records on the other hand, refer more specifically to the black community in London and can turn up literally anything about their individual lives which might generally inform our knowledge of the black presence in London.

In particular it was felt that these two classes would be the most likely to contain first-hand accounts of black people, thereby offering potentially valuable information.

In fact however, both these classes proved more difficult to penetrate than was anticipated, insofar as isolating particular groups of records that seemed most promising was concerned. This proved difficult not only because there are so few types of record that particularly recommend themselves; but also because so many series of records were prohibitively large and searches among them could only be of the most general kind.

Similarly, the Estates, Family and Accessions records proved difficult to survey, largely because of their disparate nature, and in fact only two new references were found amongst them in addition to those already noted by GLRO archivists.

The research then, has been best able to assess the GLRO holdings in terms of its *potential* rather than the exact contents of its many deposits. It is in this light that the following comments are made upon the quality of the evidence found, and more generally, on the nature of the search.

Parish Records

Perhaps the easiest place both to search and within which to find black people, are Parish registers: these contain the details of Births, Marriages and Deaths of individual parishes in a given area, and the GLRO has a large collection covering most of London (with the exception of the City).

References to black people take a number of forms, and given time, one is assured of finding them eventually. On the whole, the information contained in the registers will simply make reference to the name and probable age of a person. Sometimes a place of residence will be cited; sometimes the status – servant or slave – will be appended; and occasionally the country of origin will be indicated.

Whilst the entries are generally brief and formal as might be expected, even the (relatively) small sample looked at produced quite a wide variety, both descriptively and in content. For example the entries for St Mary Whitechapel all mention country of origin, and only those entries for black people in the whole of this register appear to have required witnesses. The St George in the East entries, on the other hand, seem more concerned with status and with locale.

Parish Register St Marylebone, London 1793-1799 (P89/MRY1/10 Micro: X/23/16)

1793	Dec	8	Maria Jackson a black woman 23 years of age
		23	Mary Collier a black woman aged 20 years
1794	July	2	William Morgan a Black Man aged 23 years
	Aug	20	George Jackson a Black Man aged 30 years
	Nov	3	John Jackson a Black aged 18 years
1796	Nov	16	Elizabeth Gordon a black woman aged 32 years
	Dec	4	Eliza Haylett a black woman aged 20 years
1797	Jan	1	James Tucker a Black Man aged about 20 years
	Feb	1	Ann Read black woman aged 55 years
		1	Ellenor Read Black woman aged 19 years
		1	John Liss black man aged 20 years
1798	Feb	28	John Butler black man aged 24 years
	May	25	Mary Cathe Princess Suttle a black woman aged 19 years
	Nov	21	Chas Steere commonly called Freeman a black aged 22 years
1799	Jan	24	Jane Maria Delruse a Mulatto aged 16 years
	Feb	10	Thomas Chelsea a black man aged 20 years
	Mar	1	James Smith a black man aged 25 years

There are roughly an equal number of women to men (8:9), whereas black women are generally invisible in the historiography on this subject, and although a difficult task, very much more research needs to be done in this area before we can approximate their numbers with accuracy. Indeed the oldest

person found in any of these registers is a 55 year old woman, who interestingly, appears to have been baptised at the same time as her daughter or possibly sister. Although a common surname, the coincidence seems too extraordinary for Ann and Ellenor Read not to have been related. The reference to Jane Maria Delruse as a 'Mulatto' is evidence of the germ of 19th century scientific racism; whilst Mary Catherine 'Princess Suttle' is a mystery that might prove rewarding on further investigation.

In addition, whilst a sample as small as this makes speculation tentative and analyses very general, the fact that the St Marylebone register produced 17 entries in the 6 years from 1793-1799, whereas St George in the East recorded 7 in 41 years (1729-1770); and St Mary Whitechapel, 3 in 31 years (1792-1823); is persuasive evidence of strong black presence in St Marylebone at the turn of the 18th-19th centuries.

It was not considered necessary to spend a great deal of time examining all of the registers of births, marriages and deaths. The evidence found was sufficient to establish that black people could easily be identified in this type of record, and that careful searchers of these records, with sufficient time at their disposal, would be similarly rewarded. It was felt more valuable to determine whether other areas of parish records would be as fruitful.

Looking at parish registers however, illustrates some of the problems involved in researching this subject, in particular, the difficulties of assessing the evidence.

For example, if it could be reasonably assumed that clergymen would always note the origin or colour of a person when that person were black, then a scrutiny of the registers might lead one to conclude that there were no black people in a given area (baptised, married or buried at least) if none were found. Such conclusions are hazardous however due to the lack of uniformity in record keeping; and the fact that there is no concrete way of knowing with what consistency parish priests noted their parishioners' origin. The revisions that were made to the procedures, historically, (in 1538, 1666, 1754 and 1812), also meant that registers became more standardized, which might have relegated the noteworthiness of colour.

In short, refinements in record keeping generally, reflecting the administrative demands of a growing metropolis, would require extraneous information to be kept to a minimum – whereas it is just such minutiae that betrays the black presence.

What this seems to suggest is that the earlier the records, the more likely one is to find these references. A supposition that may be true for many types of civic record: the more informal the recording procedure or con-

tent, the greater the possibility of physical, or other, description.

Here again however, one must be careful about any conclusions or analyses based on evidence obtained from an area delineated by the limitations of the records themselves.

As noted earlier, parish records are something of a mixed bag, representing the accumulated contents of the Parish Chest and therefore are of considerable interest to the social historian. The E.M.U.'s searches amongst the other series in this class produced no references above those found in the Registers.

Many of these records deal in some regard or other with the poor, and one series which were scrutinised at length, and which may yet produce a quantity of unique information, is that which deals with Settlement and Vagrancy.

Settlement Examinations

In order to determine which persons were chargeable to the parish it was necessary to ascertain their place of origin. Local officials were assiduous in their efforts to determine qualification for all kinds of poor relief, and thus a large quantity of Vagrant Examinations, Order, and Removals, containing quite detailed biographical information, are to be found in the parish records.

Given the informal and verbatim accounts that were in this way produced, this was deemed a fertile area to look for evidence of black people; particularly in light of the fact that such testimonies were produced by persons who frequently had been apprehended locally for begging or vagrancy.

However whilst the documents contained information about place of origin, number and names of children, and other details of a biographical nature, none made reference to colour nor mentioned places of birth/origin outside the UK.

There are a number of conclusions that may be drawn from this. It seems most likely that either some of these documents do in fact relate to black people but do not mention colour; or that the sample so far looked at is too small to have uncovered those which do.

Given that the number of black poor was sufficiently large to have excited so much heated comment in the 18/19th centuries; that stories of the wealth, success and popularity of black beggars are legend contemporaneously; and that the Society for the Suppression of Mendicity so ardently sought and apprehended these people; it seems likely that the cases of black people would have been heard by officials. Thus despite no such cases being found, further searches among this type of record may yet discover the personal testimonies of black people amongst the thousands of cases in the parish records.

Middlesex Sessions Records

Middlesex sessions records are an extensive corpus which contain the administrative and judicial proceedings of the county court and petty sessions of the old county of Middlesex. The wide breadth of concerns they cover make them a valuable source, yet ironically for the researcher of this subject (for reasons mentioned earlier) this very comprehensiveness tends to militate against the more casual or informal documentation in which it is so much easier to find black people.

This notwithstanding however, some at least of the 10,000 or more black people in London would have come into contact with the law or the administrative functions of the courts, and thus although a difficult class within which to make general searches, it is nonetheless an important one.

Sessions Papers

The sessions papers themselves, that is the records of the actual proceedings heard by the justices, are a particularly impenetrable series due to their size, whilst potentially the most interesting. The 'humble petition of Elizabeth Caesar the wife of John Caesar' is a prime example of the quality of information that may be discovered in these papers.

The petitions of persons with any of a wide variety of grievances could be heard before locally appointed justices. One such petition was made by Elizabeth Caesar in 1717, whose husband John had been held as a slave, imprisoned, "Very much abused... with hard usage" and paid no wages, for fourteen years, by printers and embossers Benjamin and John Wood, of Whitechapel.

Although the resolution of this case was determined at the next General Quarter Session, and as often happens, the particulars of this case are no longer extant, this case is well known in the historiography of this subject (first noted by Dorothy George, in 1925) and it's reported that the justices found in favour of the petitioner.

It is an interesting case, if only for the speculation that has not been forthcoming from the historians who have noted it. The Charges against Benjamin and John Wood are clearly damning and appear to be concretised in the assertion "as the petitioner is advised Slavery in England is inconsistent with the laws of this realm." The implication is clear, that a law has been broken for which Messrs Wood are answerable. This being the case, the fact that John Caesar had been baptised seven years earlier is not germane to the case, beyond the mistaken assumption (which enjoyed currency amongst black slaves) that the Christian rite itself constituted manumission from slavery.

That slavery was considered "inconsistent" with the law, as early as 1717, nearly 60 years before the Mansfield Judgement made the fact 'de jure' in 1772, is a point of some inter-

est as a sentiment being expressed 'officially,' albeit expressed in a petty court.

For Kenneth Little (*Negroes in Britain*), (1972) the 'fundamental issue' from the court's point of view appears to be the enslavement of John Caesar. However, the original petition and the rules governing settlement indicate that the most persuasive factor in this case was not so much the condition of John Caesar, as that of his wife, for,

'the petitioner is very poor and destitute of all means of subsistence & likely to become chargeable to the parish unless her said husband be released and discharged from the said slavery & confinement & set at liberty whereby he may be capable to earn his livelihood and maintain himself & the petitioner.'

Unfortunately, cases such as the above are extremely difficult to find amongst the sessions papers, despite the fact that Middlesex Sessions papers are also published volumes complete with indexes. References to black people may be so oblique or peripheral that they may not appear in the indexes; an example of which is MJ/SP 1696 Feb/8 which refers to "a black Negro maidservant" incidentally in a case involving theft from her mistress.

It was felt that the sessions papers might yet provide a great deal of information about the lives of black people once suitable 'keys' have been found which might allow researchers to enter: an example of which are the papers covering Transportation.

Transportation Cases

For the most part it is impossible to tell from court proceedings whether persons named are black. Dr Ian Duffield of Edinburgh University has spent some considerable time in Australia scrutinising the convict indents of persons transported from England. These indents give very good physical descriptions of the convicts, as well as their names, ages, offences, ports of departure, and place and time of trial. Until recently the name of only one black person tried at Middlesex was known out of the 400 or so black convicts transported to New South Wales and identified by Duffield. Given the name and exact date of the trial it was relatively easy to find the case in the records and discover the exact details of the case.

Thus George Barrow was identified, and his various fraudulent exploits – impersonating a Mr Thomas Hopkinson of Trinity College Cambridge, claiming to have extensive property in the West Indies and a cottage in Uxbridge; and purporting to be studying, and to being a friend of the Lord Chancellor thereby gaining the confidence, and property, of a number of individuals – could be gleaned from various bills of indictments and recognizances.

Nowhere do these documents mention his

colour, yet it is known from the Australian indents that he was a 'Mulatto' born in Demerara.

The case of George Barrow alone indicates that records exist which relate to black people, but which we have virtually no way of identifying, except where existing information can be brought to bear upon them: and where this might be done, research would need to be both intensive and extensive.

What is so interesting about this type of record is that, where actual depositions exist (that is, statements made by the convicts in court, or other material connected with it), there exist unique opportunities to read, first-hand, the personal details of black people. Admittedly, such information will be pertinent to the case being answered, but virtually anything might turn up in such testimonies, in particular references to other blacks. Even where no depositions survive (as with George Barrow) the quantitative information alone is valuable.

Amongst other series, however, very little was found, but it was felt that this is necessarily a reflection upon the potential of the contents of the records themselves. Of the references that were found, these were mostly confined to Coroners' Inquisitions.

Coroners' Accounts and Inquisitions

Details of the inquests held by Coroners are numerous and illustrate the type of civic record which reveal the black presence. The documents are divided between their four administrative areas – East Middx., West Middx., the Duchy of Lancaster, and Westminster. The Inquisitions are formal descriptions of the causes of death in individual cases, whilst the accounts are quarterly lists (of parishes, names, etc.) produced by the coroner for the purpose of payment.

Accounts and Inquisitions for East Middlesex alone were looked at (1777-1838) and these yielded several new cases. Not all of the Inquisitions for a given area have survived, and thus there are references to black people in the Accounts for which no further details can be found.

Whilst no details of the individual are given, these references at least locate black people in a particular place at a particular time; and whilst most of those so far discovered were found in or near the Thames and were men, a fuller examination of all the Inquisitions might provide further statistical information from which might be deduced such things as: the ratio of men to women, young to old, or the general dispersal of black people, or indeed, in what circumstances they met their deaths.

Returns of Aliens

The Accounts of Aliens, Householders' Notices, and Overseers' Returns, were thor-

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oughly examined. After 1793 (the onset of the Napoleonic Wars 1793-1815), 'aliens' were required to register the names, ranks, occupations, and addresses, to local Justices of the Peace; and householders too were obliged to notify the authorities of any aliens residing in their premises.

This is relatively small series (1797-1798) which could therefore be covered entirely, and in addition to one notice declaring a "black servant," there were three references to 'pagans' which may or may not refer to black people, although this seems most likely given late 18th century perceptions and the supposition that religious dissenters/nonconformists were likely to be more specifically described by officialdom.

Commissioners for Land and Assessed Taxes

The only other reference found in the Session records came from the above titled series, which provides, amongst others, a list of inhabitants of St George, Hanover Square from which we learn that George Gordon, a black man, lived at No 54 Oxford Buildings. In itself an unremarkable fact beyond its statistical interest, until one notes that Mr Gordon's occupation was a Chandler, which distinguishes him as a shop owner. How many other black shop owners there were in 1790s London it is very difficult to guess, but evidence such as this bespeaks intriguing possibilities.

Accessions, Family and Estates Records

Although searches among these classes produced very little that was new, the records deposited in Accessions have one or two substantial collections of documents relating to the administration of West Indian sugar plantations, as well as other single items that make reference to slavery.

Dukinfield Hall Plantation, Jamaica

The largest group of these papers are those of the Cooper, Honerywood, and Dawkins families of Isleworth, Berkshire, Jamaica and Grenada (ACC 775). Lady Isabella Cooper was born of a rich Jewish family and inherited her fortune from her father, Moses Franks, her mother's father Aaron Franks, and from her aunt Priscilla Franks, from whom she inherited the Dukinfield Hall sugar plantation in Jamaica (1719-1877). She also inherited the St Cloud, Grand Bras and Chantilly plantations in Grenada (1773-1867).

The documents include great volumes of papers on an administrative and legal nature, and amongst them are various accounts, inventories and conveyances of property which include slaves. Some of these inventories include such details as the names, ages, occupation, condition and origin of the slaves, in addition to their details in terms of capital investment –

number bought, cost, deaths etc. – and the papers as a whole give an illuminating insight into the administration of a sugar plantation.

Most interesting of all however, is the will of Robert Dukinfield (17 Nov 1755), which bequeaths a considerable amount of property and capital to Jane Engusson "a free negro woman" and their three children. Jane inherits 101 acres in the parish of St Andrew; 2 lots of land in East Kingston; three hundred pounds with which to build on that land; fourteen slaves, and a miscellany of other items. Both her sons each inherit 400 acres, 4 slaves, and building lots in Kingston; and her daughter, 417 acres, 7 slaves, a building lot, and a £1000 dowry on condition that she marries a white man.

In contrast to this will, are the wills of Gentlemen Richard Smith of St Mary Islington (ACC 711, 1776) and Joseph Price (Class O, 1819) which makes the kind of provisions for their families from their West Indian estates that were more the norm.

In addition to these, and miscellaneous deeds: to plantations in Barbados (Acc 621); Antigua (Acc 742); and Antigua and St Christopher (Acc 455); are the various deeds, wills, and letters relating to the Charnocks sugar plantation in Barbados (Acc 333).

Charnocks Plantation, Barbados

Despite being a very small part of a very large deposit in the Kent Collection, the plantation documents are numerous, tracing the various transactions which affected ownership, rents, leasing, mortgaging and hereditaments.

From an Abstract of Title (1771), it can be shown that the estate was sold by John Charnock of Barbados and Bath to F.S. Estwick, for a sum of £13084 12/- 10½d. The estate was some 220 acres and included a mansion house, and out dwellings, stables, windmill, distil house, airing house, boiling house, and, from a schedule attached to a marriage settlement of 1793, approximately 130 slaves.

As with the Dukinfield Hall documents, the material in this collection is extensive. The following is an example from one such document.

Acc/333/38/7

Bundle of various letters (legal); Abstracts of accounts (1891-1889); letters and mortgage (1909); 1910 assignment of mortgage; mortgage extract - F.A. Kent et al to Samuel Manning (1863); mortgage - G.E. Estwick to F.D. Hill (1883); mortgage (1875); transactions to counsel (1884); mortgage - G.E.

Estwick to G.W. Digby (1877); Abstract of Title (1771); Abstract of Estwick estate (1793); Copy of Lease and Release - John Charnock to Samuel Estwick (1771); mortgage - F.W. Estwick to G.E. Digby (1872); Declarations by Richard Evelyn Estwick, Gustavus Edward Estwick, and W.G. Chambers (1887); Lease - F.M. Estwick to Francis King; various other mortgages - 1880, 1883, 1876.

The Estwicks are of particular interest to students of the black presence in Britain. A brief outline of the Estwick Family tree (1600-1887) removes any doubt that Samuel Estwick, is the same Samuel Estwick MP, who 'Considerations on the Negro cause' 1772, attacked the Mansfield Judgement and poured such vitriol on Africans; and who advocated a law to prohibit the entry of black people into Britain, expressly to preserve 'the race of Britons from stain and contamination.'

Howard and Eliot Families Acc 1270, 1017

Other references to slavery, can be found in the papers of these Quaker families. As well as being well known prosperous manufacturing and merchant families (related by marriage), the Howard and Eliot families were also connected with British anti-slavery activity: as their letters (1017/1067, 1179:1270/39,79), and a receipt for freeing a slave (1017/1617) show. The letter 1017/1179 is of particular interest for it is written to the Pennsylvania Quaker Anthony Benezet and refers to the celebrated case of James Somerset, whose proceedings in the courts (the object of the Mansfield Judgement) were so closely being followed by pro- and anti-slavery lobbies at the time of writing.

It was Anthony Benezet whose writings were influential in the abolitionism of Thomas Clarkson, Granville Sharp, and John Wesley.

Letter of Laurence Sterne Acc 1128/187/30

Amongst the many autograph letters, poems, etc of the 5th Countess of Jersey (Jersey Papers) is a single letter from the celebrated novelist Laurence Sterne. One of the first writers of the Novel form, he is of interest to historians of the black presence because of his association with Ignatius Sancho.

Sancho is one of the better known figures of black history. He was born on board a slave ship in 1729 but was brought up in England and became the first black prose writer to be published in this country.

Sterne was one of a number of artistic socialites that Sancho numbered among his personal friends. His letter is in answer to Sancho's supplication to 'give one half hour's attention to slavery.'

The papers of John MacGregor c 1860-80

The papers of John MacGregor illustrate something of the disparate nature of the Family records, (true of Estates and Accessions too). Collected papers individuals deposited after their death; or collections belonging to and deposited by individuals, can cover specific subjects, or contain details of many different interests.

John MacGregor (1825-1897) commonly known as Rob Roy, was a philanthropist of true Victorian mould. Traveller, canoeist, lecturer, he was co-founder of the London Shoe-black Society, Vice-President of the Ragged School Union, and as well as stalwart of a number of causes, he was a supporter of Lord Shaftsbury. His papers thus reflect these wide interest, and among them are two handbills inviting "all who take an interest in the suppression of Slavery" to public meetings to be addressed by escaped slaves.

A number of black American ex-slaves toured Britain from the 1930s onwards, pleading the abolitionist cause. It is difficult therefore to know which of them MacGregor's handbills refers to. The fact that one mentions 'Narratives' (F/MM/86) however, might indicate that the meeting that took place at the Hanover Square Rooms at least was addressed by some of the prominent of these ex-slaves, who published narratives of their lives.

Collections deposited by/of other individuals or families may similarly reveal evidence of the black presence. It is a difficult task however to determine which of them are likely to be most productive, given that the kind of associations looked for would be so tangential.

Local history libraries and Records Offices are an extensive, abundant, and valuable resource. Their value to historians of the black presence in Britain is inestimable – not, ironically, so much for the relevant material they are known to contain, but for the information that almost certainly exists therein but is as yet unexplored, if not unknown.

The demand for material on this particular aspect of black history grows daily, amongst schools and colleges, children and adults alike. Yet few local records offices have indexes list or catalogues that identify black people, or material pertaining to black people, in their holdings. This is not surprising given the general ignorance about the black presence in Britain, and the ubiquitous complaint that mounting records and dwindling staffs prevents more work in this direction. It is however recognised amongst these same archivists and librarians, that such work needs to be undertaken, and that it is of value to the communities they serve.

Thus, even at a time when history libraries and records offices are beginning to become more aware of the interest and demand for this subject, they have rarely been in a worse position to respond to it.

It is a travesty that so much of Britain's history has been so carefully and consciously preserved in the private and public collections deposited in so many records offices, only to be made inaccessible because undervalued. The Greater London Record Office alone represents an immense historical resource, but is nevertheless being starved of the human resources to allow it to function as a public service.

Thus, whilst the importance of identifying archival material that is pertinent to black history is now being recognised, tragically black history is bound to be an immediate casualty of the continuing contraction in public services.

Although individuals following their own particular lines of enquiry will undoubtedly uncover new material in records offices, the amount of information that will come to light in this way will nonetheless, only scratch the surface. This is because the number of individuals working in record offices on this material is (comparative to the task) infinitesimal, and because this is not an area

of academic research which granting bodies either have been, or are keen to patronise.

Given the problems, the importance of the subject, and the potential which the numerous records offices represent – individually as well as collectively – the most effective course that may be taken to ensure that this material is identified and made available, is that records offices recruit archivists specifically for the purpose of looking at this material.

Whilst it may be contradictory to advocate extra staff at a time when posts are being pruned, the E.M.U. feels that realistically it is only the creation of posts with this responsibility that will ensure that any substantial work in this direction will be undertaken. Indeed it is the opinion of many archivists that only such a situation could facilitate the retrieval of this information.

Far more needs to be done to publicise the value of records offices to their black communities, and in particular their potential as sources of black history. University departments, the British Library, and the Public Records Office are generally felt to be inaccessible, but if the possibility that exists in records offices to research black history is made more widely known (particularly amongst schools for example, who should already be exploiting what is the cheapest extramural resource for the teaching of History, Sociology, Town morphology etc.) then records offices can be seen to be more fully engaging, embracing, and responding to the public interest.

The E.M.U. hopes that this exhibition and the accompanying booklet will achieve the task of stimulating interest into black historiography and contribute to the collective knowledge on black people's participation in the life of London and its communities.

THE BLACK PRESENCE IN BRITAIN: HISTORIOGRAPHY

A large body of work exists on the black presence in Britain. Political, psychological, religious and cultural studies abound in the literature that relates specifically to black people and almost exclusively, it relates to Britain's post-war years. As soon as the first black people came to the aid of a Britain short of labour, fascinated commentators were producing sociological studies on the 'newcomers'. Shortly they were to comment on the 'colour question.' Until very recently, the history of black people in Britain was understood only in terms of some 30 years history of 'race-relations'.

It is not surprising then, that prior to 1970, any historical perspective on the black presence in Britain appeared in texts which dealt primarily with the sociology of contemporary black communities.

Kenneth Little's *Negroes in Britain* (1948) and Michael Banton's *The Coloured Quarter* (1955), were both seminal sociological studies on black communities, but together they also mark the beginning of an 'historical' dimension to academic interest in the black British presence. The black communities of Cardiff's Tiger Bay and London's Stepney, were not only large, established and well known communities, they also shared the fact of having been visibly present in those areas since the 18th century. Thus whatever sociological moment brought academic or public gaze to bear on the 'racial' problems of these communities in the early 1950s, their two hundred year history critically informed their present day experiences.

Michael Banton's study of black people in Stepney then, includes an introductory chapter on the history of blacks in East London, establishing a continued presence since 1707. Although Kenneth Little is concerned specifically with the black community in Cardiff, similarly his *Negroes in Britain* devotes a long chapter to the history of blacks in Britain "...From 1600 to the Present Day".

Both chapters prove authoritative for later historical studies, and Kenneth Little's work in particular may be seen to have established the parameters within which historians of the black presence were to work.

devoted solely to the study of the black presence in Britain was published. *The Black Presence: A Documentary History of the Negro in England 1555-1860* (1971), and *Black and White: The Negro and English Society 1555-1945* (1973) both by James Walvin, formally announced academia's interest in black people and dutifully followed the entrée made by the social scientists Little and Banton.

Walvin traced the appearance of black people from the time of their formal entry into Britain as servants brought back by merchant adventurers such as John Lok; explains their relative ornamental or slave venue; analyses something of their mode of existence, as runaways, beggars, prize-fighters, courtesans, etc., explains their precarious legal position; and gives outlines of the more prominent blacks whose lives were variously reported either in the press, by their own testimonies, or by other commentators.

If Walvin gave flesh to the previous skeletal outline of the subject, when the Nigerian historian Folarin Shyllon published *Black Slaves in Britain* (1973) and *Black People in Britain* (1977), he brought the full weight of historical scholarship to bear upon the subject. In a re-examination of that renowned chestnut of school history lore — that the 'Mansfield Judgement' allowed slaves to become free on setting foot on English soil — Shyllon showed that the 'Somerset Case' in fact resolved nothing of the kind, and that in fact blacks in Britain themselves were a vociferous and animate force within the anti-slavery lobby.

Shyllon addressed much the same material as Walvin, but offered more detailed accounts of the black personalities of the 18th and 19th centuries, such as Phyllis Wheatley, Ignatious Sancho and Francis Barber. He also challenged Walvin's interpretation in certain cases and provided for the first time a representation of the black perspective on black historiography.

Published in 1972, Edward Scobie's *Black Britannia*, is essentially a reworking of the known material uncovered by Walvin, Shyllon, Little, etc., in a way that is perhaps more accessible to the general reader. Scobie also offers a survey of black involvement politically, socially, and in the field of entertainment for the increasingly important pre, inter, and post war periods, and was thus the first study to bring the history up to the present day, (i.e. the time of writing).

Before 1984, the general literature on the black presence was largely contained in the work of James Walvin and Folarin Shyllon, and it is largely through the four books mentioned that the general early history of black people has become widely known. To these however, must be added the pioneering work of Paul Edwards, Ziggi Alexander and

Audrey Dewjee, who have recovered the works of four of the best known black characters of 18th/19th century Britain.

Paul Edwards edited modern publications of works by Olaudah Equiano (1967), Ottobah Cugoana (1969), and Ignatious Sancho (1968). Similarly, Ziggi Alexander and Audrey Dewjee are responsible for bringing Mary Seacole to public attention and having her autobiography published in 1984.

In 1983 Walvin and Edwards published *Black Personalities in the Era of the Slave Trade* which, after some introductory remarks setting the scene up to the 18th century, gives details of black 'Writers' and 'Personalities' making extensive use of transcriptions from primary source material, and is therefore of considerable value to students eager to read first-hand contemporary accounts.

1984 marks something of a formal 'coming of age' for black history, with the publication of Peter Fryer's *Staying Power*. From the earliest known references to black people (3rd century AD) up to 1945, Peter Fryer meticulously gathers together all the disparate elements of previous research on the subject, and in a single volume offers the most comprehensive general history yet written.

Coming three years after the first International Conference on the History of Black People in Britain in 1981, *Staying Power* revises the current body of knowledge with the benefit of the most up to date research. Although there are gaps in the areas covered, the value of the book lies in its extensive list of sources and references to original documents.

Nigel File and Chris Power's *Black Settlers in Britain 1555-1958*, an extremely useful pictorial representation of the history of Africans in Britain was published in 1981 for use in schools. The publication of *India In Britain* in 1984 by Kusoom Vadgama also provides some interesting glimpses of the life of Indians in Britain and prominent Indian visitors to Britain.

To this list of historical works on black people in Britain must be added some recent research which is to be published later this year. Most notable of these works are:

Ron Ramdin's *The Making of the Black Working Class In Britain* which will be the first comprehensive historical perspective on the relationship between black workers and the changing patterns of Britain's labour needs from 1555 to 1986. This is an important and timely contribution to British historiography and is due to be published in May 1986.

Sylvia Collicott's *Local - National - World Links: A Case Study of Haringey History* is a unique approach to the study of history Working for London

with British and world history being taught through local evidence, and showing the importance of English overseas activities to the home economy. She also shows that British history consists of both the lives and events of people who went out from England and the lives and events of people who came here from elsewhere for example, the African and Asian people who have lived in Haringey during the past centuries. This book is due to be published in Summer 1986.

Ayahs, Lascars and Princes by Rosina Visram is devoted to the history of Indian people in Britain and is to be published in May 1986. This is an illuminating and useful contribution to the history of black people in Britain since there has been, until recently, very little known about the Indian presence in Britain.

Other significant works which have shaped attitudes on the black historical presence are *Colour, Class and the Victorians* by Lorimer; Arnos Ford's work on Belize Foresters; the works of Marika Sherwood; and numerous articles in journals, for example, an article on the West Indian Regiment in the Jamaica Journal. There have also been some TV programmes made on this subject, for example, *Blacks in Britain* by Mike Phillips.

The research is expanding year by year. 1984 saw the second International Conference on the History of Blacks in Britain sponsored by the GLC, and the past year alone has seen the publication of a number of studies, all of which indicates both the scope of the research and the growing interest in the subject generally.

The available works on the black presence have not all been cited here or consulted in this research due to the constraints of time and resources. We hope to have stimulated interest in these further works.

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The Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in Many Lands, ed. by Ziggi Alexander and Audrey Dewjee (1984).

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