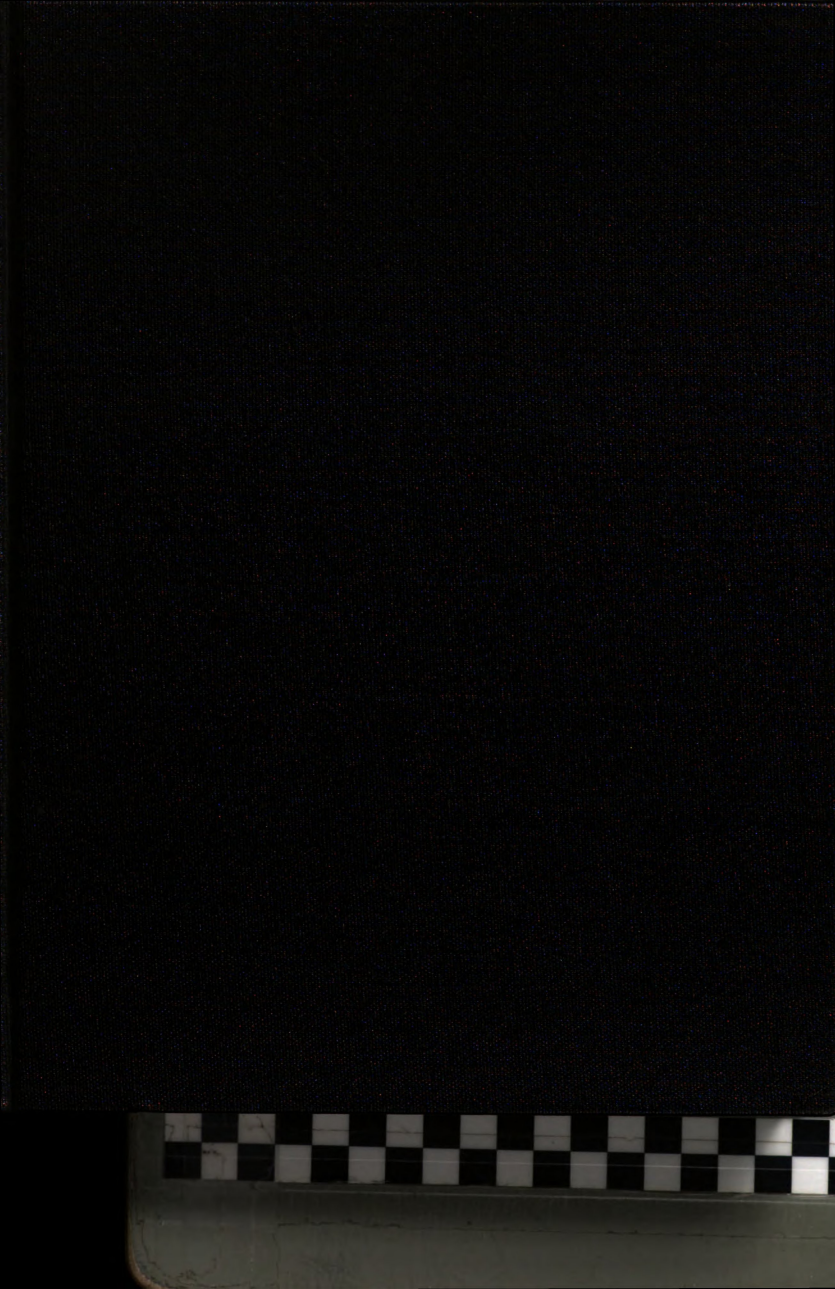
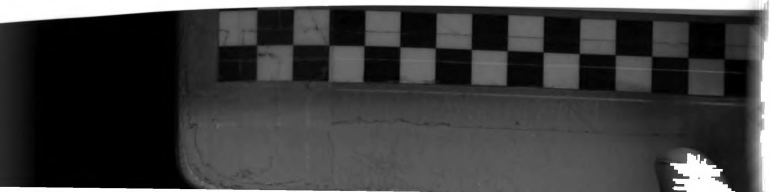


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BLACK MIGRANTS, CITIZENSHIP AND THE TRANSNATIONAL POLITICS OF RACE IN POSTWAR BRITAIN

By

Kennetta Hammond Perry

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of History

2007

ABSTRACT

BLACK MIGRANTS, CITIZENSHIP AND THE TRANSNATIONAL POLITICS OF RACE IN POSTWAR BRITAIN

By

Kennetta Hammond Perry

This dissertation examines the political implications of postwar black migration to Britain. Following World War II, unprecedented numbers of people of African descent migrated to Britain from the Caribbean colonies, exercising their claims to the rights of a transracial British citizenship status guaranteed under the provisions of the British Nationality Act of 1948. As a result of these postwar black migrations, during the 1950s and early 1960s the black population in Britain increased some tenfold, thereafter transforming existing racial dynamics. This study explores how race structured the experiences of black migrants and effectively precluded them from enjoying the full privileges and social entitlements of their British citizenship.

To engage this issue, this dissertation pays particular attention to how instances of racial violence, namely the Notting Hill "race riots" of 1958 and the murder of Kelso Cochrane in 1959, served as critical events exposing glaring inconsistencies between the ideal of a transracial egalitarian British citizenship and the potent realities of socially sanctioned practices of racial discrimination in housing and employment, popular representations of black men as economic and sexual predators, racially motivated attacks on black citizens and the existence of a widespread climate of antipathy in regards to the increasing black presence in Britain. To be sure, all of these elements, informed by a broader imperial history of race-based economic exploitation, political exclusion and social marginalization, provided a context in which black migrants interpreted their

second class citizenship status and consequently framed a grassroots black rights movement advocating police protection, greater regulation of organized racist campaigns, anti-discrimination legislation and opposition to migration restrictions designed to exclude black workers. I argue that in the process of making claims to British citizenship— through the very act of migration and by constructing and articulating a civil rights agenda— not only did black migrants contest and redefine ideas about race and British national identity, but more importantly, they participated in and were influenced by a transnational postwar dialogue on race, political rights, human rights, and the meaning of democracy.

To demonstrate the complexity of the politics of race in postwar Britain, I situate the experiences of black migrants in Britain and the shifting racial dynamics prompted by postwar black migration within a broad transnational context that underscores the relationships engendered between local politics and racially charged international issues. In the postwar period, some of these issues included the emergence of the United Nations, the Cold War, decolonization, apartheid in South Africa, and the United States Civil Rights Movement. In doing so, this study highlights the extent to which the quest for black rights in postwar Britain was not simply a domestic affair, but rather represented a critical moment in the political history of the African Diaspora, interfacing the histories of people of African descent in Britain, the Caribbean, Africa and the United States.

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To the spirit of perseverance present in the lives of Mary Hammond and Louise Patrick.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

No project of this magnitude is possible without the assistance, guidance, encouragement, and prayers of a broad coalition of interested parties. This dissertation began as a series of research papers completed as part of the requirements for Darlene Clark Hine's Comparative Black History research seminar and Leslie Page Moch's course on Migration in Twentieth Century Europe. Not only did these two courses provide an especially rich intellectual space for me to formulate and explore questions related to the history of black migrant communities in Britain, but more importantly, they offered me critical venues to expand the trajectory of my scholarly interests. Both Dr. Hine and Dr. Moch, who served as co-chairs of my dissertation committee have made an indelible impact on my career as a graduate student and evolution as a historian and young scholar. I am thankful to Dr. Hine for being a source of inspiration, a gateway to opportunities and a constant reminder of the limitless possibilities available to persevering black women in the academy. I will always be grateful to Dr. Moch for gently prodding me to clarify my ideas in a concise manner and for being available to listen, advise and offer her invaluable time to give close attention to my work.

Throughout my tenure at Michigan State, I have had the privilege to interact with and learn from a number of thoughtful and engaging scholars. In addition to Darlene Clark Hine and Leslie Page Moch, Laurent Dubois and Daina Ramey Berry of the Department of History and Steve Gold of the Department of Sociology all formed the nucleus of a supportive and stimulating dissertation committee. Dr. Berry was especially key in helping me to develop manageable systems for tackling the tedious nature of conducting archival research at an early stage in this project's development and has

always been a treasured source of professional advice. During my first semester at Michigan State, I had the opportunity to take a Historical Methods course with David Bailey. As a result of my encounters with Dr. Bailey, I gained a profound sense of my ability and capacity to make a worthwhile contribution to the historical profession and the broader enterprise of producing new knowledge. Without that, my career as a graduate student and aspiring scholar might have been quite different.

I am appreciative of a number of funding opportunities awarded through the Graduate School and Department of History at Michigan State which aided me in completing my graduate studies in a timely manner, providing critical monetary support to pursue coursework and research for this dissertation. Likewise, I am grateful to the Carter G. Woodson Institute at the University of Virginia for providing generous funding to complete the writing phase of producing a dissertation. The research for this project could not have been completed without the assistance of helpful and encouraging archivists and librarians at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus, the National Archives (Jamaica), Spanishtown Archives (Jamaica), the Public Records Office (London, UK), the London Metropolitan Archives, the British Library, the London Metropolitan Trades Union Congress Library, the Manchester Labour History Archives, the Lambeth Archives (London, UK) the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Libraries and Duke University Libraries. I am also thankful to Donald Hinds for allowing me to consult his private collection of papers on Claudia Jones and extremely grateful to Armena Richards for opening her home to me while I conducted research in London.

Had it not been for relationships with a host of mentors and friends completing my doctoral work would have been next to impossible. I thank Carlton Wilson, Sylvia Jacobs, Percy Murray, Lydia Lindsey, Freddie Parker and Reginald Hildebrand for developing my interest in the study of History while at North Carolina Central University. To my CBH "crew" at Michigan State—Sowande' Mustakeem, Eric D. Duke (my writing partner), Marshanda Smith, Meredith L. Roman, John Grant, Kenneth Marshall, Mona Jackson and Leslie Rollins—as well as other colleagues in the History Department including Marcie Cowley, Mary Clingerman, Jamie McLean and David Carletta, I am fortunate to have had you all to share this journey with. Also, I am grateful to my colleagues at the Carter G. Woodson Institute, Vicki Brennan, Sarah Silkey, Brian Brazeal, Jamillah Karim, Yarimar Bonilla, Todd Cleveland, Regine Jean-Charles and Cynthia Hoehler-Fatton for helping form a stimulating community for me to present new ideas and extend the resonance of my arguments across disciplinary boundaries.

I will forever be indebted to my parents, Kenneth and Evelyn Hammond for always inspiring me to dare to dream the impossible dream and reminding me to keep the faith. Most importantly, I thank my husband, Brandon Perry, who came into my life at the very moment when this project began to come to life. Thank you for loving me because of and in spite of who I am, and for keeping me attuned to what matters most. To God be the glory.

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INTRODUCTION

In the companion history to the BBC series *Windrush* (1998) commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of 492 Caribbean migrants in Britain aboard a vessel known as the *Empire Windrush*, journalists Mike Phillips and Trevor Phillips, whose respective families had migrated to Britain from Guyana in the early 1950s, noted,

> In the last fifty years the minority to which we belonged had become an authentic strand of British society. If we were engaged in a struggled, it wasn't about our 'acceptance' as individuals. Instead, it was about our status as citizens, and it seem obvious that if our citizenship was to mean more than the paper on which it was written, it would be necessary for the whole country to reassess not only its own identity, and its history, but also what it meant to be British.[1]

These insightful reflections provide a critical point of departure for analyzing the history of postwar black migration to Britain from the perspective of migrants themselves and raise an important set of issues concerning the relationship between migration, citizenship and the meaning of British national identity. This dissertation contributes to a growing body of scholarship detailing the history and impact of black communities in Britain by examining how black migrants in postwar Britain constructed themselves as British citizens, negotiated to substantiate the meaning of their citizenship status, and subsequently in the process appropriated, fractured and reconfigured notions of British national identity.

Following World War II, an unprecedented number of people of color settled in Britain arriving from different parts of the Commonwealth. Before 1945, the total population of people of color in Britain was estimated between 10,000 and 30,000; however, by 1961, when the British government introduced the first in a series of

[1] Mike Phillips and Trevor Phillips, *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise of Multi-Racial Britain* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1998), 5.

migration controls designed to limit non-white migration, Britain's population of color had increased more than tenfold.[2] During the 1950s and early 1960s these migrants primarily consisted of people of African descent moving from the Caribbean colonies. Under the terms of the British Nationality Act of 1948, Commonwealth migrants possessed full British citizenship rights, which included the right to settle and work in Britain. This study explores how race structured the experiences of black migrants and effectively precluded them from enjoying the full privileges and social entitlements of their British citizenship. One of the central concerns of this study centers on the ways in which migrants made claims to British citizenship through the very act of migration and by constructing and publicly articulating civil rights agendas in an effort to counter their marginal citizenship status. In the process, not only did black migrants contest and redefine ideas about race and British national identity, but they also actively participated in and were influenced by a transnational dialogue on race, political rights, human rights, and the meaning of democracy.

To demonstrate the complexity of the politics of race in postwar Britain, this study situates the experiences and activities of black migrants in Britain within a broader transnational context that underscores the relationships engendered between local politics and racially charged postwar international issues including the shifting dimensions of a multiracial egalitarian British Commonwealth ideal, the emergence of the United Nations, the Cold War, decolonization, apartheid in South Africa, and the United States Civil Rights Movement. In doing so, this study highlights the extent to which the quest for black rights in postwar Britain was not simply a domestic affair, but rather represented a critical moment in the political history of the African Diaspora, interfacing

[2] Ruth Glass, *Newcomers: The West Indians in Britain* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.), 1.

the histories of people of African descent in Britain, the Caribbean, Africa and the United States.

Black Life in Britain Before 1948

Although it was not until after World War II that substantial numbers of people of African descent permanently settled in Britain, the history of the black presence in Britain dates back over five hundred years. The history of visible black community life began in earnest with the growing British monopoly over the transatlantic slave trade and the expansion of British interests in sugar-producing regions in the Caribbean colonies during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. During this period and throughout the early nineteenth century, the overwhelming majority of black people in Britain entered and resided as the enslaved laborers of absentee colonial planters, government officials, military officers and other more affluent and elite sectors of British society.[3] Historians including Douglas Lorimer and Peter Fryer have noted that the abolition of slavery in metropolitan Britain was largely defined by a process of gradual self-emancipation unfolding throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as enslaved men and women in Britain abandoned their duties, ran away, defied the authority of owners and renegotiated the terms of the labor.[4] After the official abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1833, for the remainder of the nineteenth century most

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[3] Edward Scobie, *Black Britannia: A History of Blacks in Britain* (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Co., 1972), 12-20; Folarin Shyllon, *Black People in Britain, 1555-1833* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), 3, 6-8; Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 1984), 1-66.

[4] Douglas Lorimer, "Black Slaves and English Liberty: A Re-Examination of Racial Slavery in England," *Immigrants and Minorities* 3, 2 (July, 1984): 121-150; Fryer, *Staying Power*, 132. See also James Walvin, *Black and White: The Negro in English Society, 1555-1945* (London: Penguin Press, 1973), 192; Seymour Drescher, "Manumission in a Society Without Slave Law: Eighteenth Century England," *Slavery and Abolition* 10, 3 (December, 1989): 85-101; William R. Cotter, "The Somerset Case and the Abolition of Slavery in England," *History* 79, 255 (February, 1994): 31-56.

permanent black residents of Britain tended to congregate in major trading ports including London, Bristol, Liverpool and Cardiff. While there is evidence that black people labored in a number of areas as domestics, journalists, artisans and entertainers, throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in most cases, the black population was predominately comprised of male seafaring workers.[5]

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there were a number of notable black personalities who made valuable contributions to reform movements including anti-slavery and temperance and participated in working class politics and anti-racist causes including Mary Prince, Robert Wedderburn, Mary Seacole, and Celestine Edwards.[6] However, during this same period, there was an overall decline in the black population in Britain.[7] Demands of the wartime economy during World War I and World War II reversed this trend as the British Government recruited thousands of black colonial workers to fulfill shortages in essential military support industries. Although it was not until after World War II that the black working classes in Britain began to

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[5] Douglas Lormier, *Colour, Class and the Victorians: English Attitudes to the Negro in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1978), 37-44; Fryer, *Staying Power*, 237; David Killingray, "Tracing Peoples of African Origin and Descent in Victorian Kent," in *Black Victorians, Black Victoriana* ed. Gretchen Gerzina (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 51-52.

[6] Born enslaved in Bermuda, Mary Prince (1788-1833) moved with one of her owners to England in 1828, where she eventually ran away and joined forces with Thomas Pringle of the Anti-Slavery Society who assisted her in publishing her slave testimony, *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave* in 1831. Robert Wedderburn (1762-?) was a key agent responsible for shaping a transatlantic dialogue between the anti-slavery movement in Britain and working class radical movements in England during the early nineteenth century. Wedderburn is most well known for his scathing critiques of slavery which can be found in such writings including *Axe Laid to Root Or a Fatal Blow of Oppressors, Being an Address to the Planters and Negroes of the Island of Jamaica* (1817) and *The Horrors of Slavery* (1824). Mary Seacole (1805-1881) was born a free person of color in Jamaica. In 1854 Seacole traveled to England a later served along with Florence Nightingale as a nurse in the Crimean War. In 1857, she published an autobiographical travel narrative, *The Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Mary Seacole in Many Lands.* Celestine Edwards (1858-1894) was active in the British temperance movement and was widely known for his condemnation of American race relations and his support of Ida B. Wells's anti-lynching campaigns in Britain. For more on these individuals see Fryer, *Staying Power*, 213-214, 220-227, 246-252, 277-281.

[7] Fryer, *Staying Power*, 236.

concentrate in industries outside of maritime labor as the postwar domestic economy generated deficits across the industrial sector in key areas including construction, coal-mining, transportation, textiles and health care, even before World War I, the demographic composition of the black presence in Britain became more diverse as an array of black colonials, including students, civil service personnel, merchants, professionals and diplomats, visited and settled in Britain.[8]

Winston James has recently chronicled the ways in which black communities in early twentieth century Britain organized and participated in a vast array of social and political activities which demonstrated an awareness of certain shared interests and experiences conditioned by the "metalanguage of race."[9] In 1900, Trinidadian-born barrister, Henry Sylvester Williams and members of the London-based African Association convened the Pan African Conference which brought together an elite cadre of black intellectuals and activists primarily from regions throughout the Anglophone world to engage a broad range of issues concerning the conditions faced by people of African descent "under European and American rule."[10] Although the Pan African

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[8] Jeffrey Green, *Black Edwardians: Black People in Britain, 1901-1914* (London: Frank Cass, 1998); Winston James, "The Black Experience in Twentieth-Century Britain" in *Black Experience and the Empire* eds. Philip Morgan and Sean Hawkins (London: Oxford University Press, 2004), 349-355. It is important to note that the black population still remained largely male.

[9] Winston James, "The Black Experience in Twentieth Century Britain," 349-366; Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," *Signs* 17, 2 (Winter, 1992): 251-274. Although Higginbotham focuses on the existence of a "metalanguage of race" as a defining element crucial to unpacking to the history of African American women, the notion of race as a "metalanguage" with transformative effects "on the construction and representation of other social and power relations, namely gender, class and sexuality," serves as a useful means of understanding how race structured, but did not necessarily silence the multifaceted dimensions of black community life in Britain.

[10] Owen Charles Mathurin, *Henry Sylvester Williams and the Origins of the Pan-African Movement, 1869-1911* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976), 49-50, 62; Peter Fryer, *Staying Power*, 281-282. See also Jonathan Schneer, "Anti-Imperial London: The Pan-African Conference of 1900" in *Black Victorians, Black Victoriana* ed. Gretchen Gerzina (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003): 175-186.

Association, established to promote the transnational agenda for racial uplift and progress as envisioned by the delegates of the Pan African Conference, was short-lived, nonetheless, the historic gathering served as a key moment in the emergence of Britain as a center of Pan-African activity during the early twentieth century.

During the interwar period black professionals, students and workers founded a number of Pan-African-oriented organizations, networks and institutions including the African Progress Union (1918), the Society of People of African Origin (1918), the League of Coloured People (1931), the International African Service Bureau (1934) and a number of periodicals including the *African Times and Orient Review,* the *African Telegraph* (1914), *The Keys* (1933) and the *International African Opinion*, which was edited by George Padmore during the late 1930s.[11] The political platforms of many of these organizations oftentimes amalgamated issues relevant to the specific conditions faced by black people in Britain and broader transnational anti-colonial and anti-racist projects linking the experiences of people of African descent in different parts of the world. In particular, the League of Coloured People (LCP), arguably the most influential black political organization in Britain during the 1930s and 1940s, tackled a range of causes affecting black community life in Britain, providing aid to orphaned black children, managing the establishment of a government-sponsored hostel for black colonial students and consistently lobbying government official to end racial discrimination in public places, civil service jobs and in the distribution of military commissions. To be sure, the members of the LCP championed these domestic issues

[11] For a comprehensive discussion of these organizations and their specific agendas for Pan-African unity and racial progress see Immanuel Geiss, *The Pan-African Movement: A History of Pan Africanism in America, Europe and Africa*, trans. Ann Keep (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1974); P. Olisanwuche Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism: The Idea and Movement, 1776-1991* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1994.

just as they maintained a diasporic focus, issuing resolutions on the Scottsboro case in 1933, advocating for a self-governing West Indies Federation and aligning with other Pan-African organizations including the International African Service Bureau in their condemnation of the Abyssinian War of 1935 and support for an official investigation into the socio-economic conditions that resulted in labor uprisings throughout the Caribbean colonies during the 1930s.[12]

In 1945, the London-based Pan-African Federation convened the fifth Pan-African Congress meeting in Manchester, England. Organized on the heels of the end of the Second World War, the 1945 Congress represented a watershed moment when the intellectual vanguards of Pan-Africanism joined forces with mounting nationalist campaigns, civil rights advocates and emerging labor movements in Anglophone Africa, the Caribbean, the United States and Britain. Alongside declarations urging colonial workers to use the "weapons" of strikes and boycotts to combat imperialism and to make demands for self-government in the colonies, the Congress beseeched the newly formed United Nations for greater representation by political organs concerned with the "rights of African Negroes and descendants of Africans in the West Indies and the United States of America."[13] Fitting on the one hand because the bulk of the organization and preparation for the Congress had been conducted by black coalitions in Britain, and on another because Britain remained a critical diasporic space of cultural and political

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[12] Geiss, *The Pan African Movement*, 342-346, 358-359; Fryer, *Staying Power*, 326-334; David Killingray, " 'To Do Something For the Race': Harold Moody and the League of Coloured Peoples," in *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain* ed. Bill Schwartz (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 51-70; Ron Ramdin, *The Making of the Black Working Class in Britain* (Aldershot: Gower Publishing Co., 1987), 100-137.

[13] George Padmore, ed. *Colonial and Coloured Unity: A Programme of Action* (London: The Hammersmith Bookshop, Ltd., 1963), 6-8. The original version of the conference proceedings were published under the same title by Padmore in 1947.

encounters between black global communities influencing the development of Pan African politics throughout the early twentieth century, the opening day of the Congress focused solely on the issue of "The Colour Problem in Britain." At the close of this session, F.O.B. Blaize of Nigeria reiterated areas of concerns including unemployment among black dock workers and orphaned black children which had been raised by delegates from Britain and suggested that the Pan African movement had a vital role to play in addressing the conditions of black communities in Britain. Blaize implored:

> We must see that these people get justice...those born in Britain have the right to stay here. If the British people think they have the right to live in Africa, then we have the right to stay here. We have the right to get together and see that something is done for us here.[14]

The manner in which delegates of the 1945 Pan-African Congress positioned the "problem" of race as experienced by black people—and in particular black workers—in Britain against the backdrop of a broader program of transnational race politics serves as an important pretext to examine postwar campaigns involving the struggles of a largely first generation black migrant population to combat racism and actualize the full possibilities afforded them via their citizenship and legally guaranteed rights of belonging in British society.

Historiographical Interventions

This dissertation seeks to unite three key historiographical trajectories. The first of these relates to the history of the black presence in British society. Coinciding with the arrival of the *Empire Windrush* and the passage of the British Nationality Act in 1948, the publication of Kenneth Little's pioneering study *Negroes in Britain* represents the first scholarly monograph examining black life in metropolitan Britain. Primarily a

[14] Padmore, ed. *Colonial and Coloured Unity*, 31.

sociological study of black communities in the port cities of Cardiff and Wales, Little's work provided demographic evidence about the black population in these areas and focused largely on social relations between black workers and indigenous white residents. Placing race relations at the center of analytical inquiry in such a way that emphasized how indigenous whites interacted with and responded to the presence of growing numbers of black residents, Little's study established an important paradigm that would define the manner in which scholars examined black community life both contemporarily and historically for over three decades.[15]

In the wake of steadily increasing black migration throughout the 1950s and in the aftermath of episodes of racial violence in Nottingham and Notting Hill, the Institute of Race Relations, an independent educational organization, was established to survey, collect, publish and disseminate information that social and welfare associations and local and national government authorities might be able to use to improve race relations in Britain. Throughout the late 1950s and 1960s affiliates of the Institute of Race Relations including James Wickenden, Michael Banton, Ruth Glass, Sheila Patterson, Ceri Peach and E.J. B. Rose conducted a number of sociological studies of black 'immigrants' within the context of a race relations model that analyzed the experiences and conditions faced by black migrants largely by exploring the attitudes and behaviors of white Britons towards rising black populations in major urban centers including London, Birmingham and Nottingham.[16] Recently, Chris Waters has noted that just as many of these studies set

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[15] Kenneth Little, *Negroes in Britain: A Study of Racial Relations in English Society* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972; original, 1948).

[16] James Wickenden, *Colour in Britain* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958); Michael Banton, *White and Coloured: The Behavior of British People Towards Coloured Immigrants* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1960, original, 1959); Ruth Glass, *Newcomers: The West Indians in London* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1960); Sheila Patterson, *Dark Strangers: A Sociological Study of the*

out to collect data which might be used to support measures leading to the incorporation and integration of black newcomers into British society, they simultaneously appropriated and reproduced many of the same discourses of race and nation that essentially erected boundaries of national belonging which excluded black migrants and effectively constructed them as social outsiders who did not conform to mainstream white society's notions of Britishness, despite the fact that they were legally bona fide British citizens.[17]

During the 1970s and 1980s one finds a shift from sociological analyses of black communities in Britain to a sustained historical conversation about the black presence in Britain. The publication of Edward Scobie's *Black Britannia* (1972), James Walvin's *Black and White* (1973) and Folarin Shyllon's *Black People in Britain* (1977) added new dimensions to the study of black life in Britain and consciously set forth to provide a wider frame for viewing contemporary black community formations by connecting British involvement in the slave trade and broader Atlantic economy with a more visible

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Absorption of a Recent West Indian Group in Brixton, South London (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963); Ceri Peach, *West Indian Migration to Britain: A Social Geography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968; E.J.B. Rose, *Colour and Citizenship: A Report on British Race Relations* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969).

[17] Chris Waters, " 'Dark Strangers' in Our Midst: Discourses of Race and Nation in Britain, 1947-1963," *The Journal of British Studies* 36, 2 (April, 1997): 207-238. Similar arguments have formed the basis of the emergence of black British cultural studies pioneered in the seminal volume *Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain* (London: Hutchinson, 1982) produced by the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. See also Paul Gilroy, *Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) and Houston Baker, Manthia Diawara and Ruth H. Lindeborg, eds. *Black British Cultural Studies: A Reader* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). While these studies have been critical to conceptualizing historical narratives that consider the ways in which race has structured British identities that have been inherently conceived as antithetical to blackness, and correctly take issue with sociological models of race relations that reinforce dichotomies between blackness and Britishness, one of the major shortcomings of much of this scholarship is the inattention to the longer imperial history of black people's struggles to strategically appropriate and assume their own visions of Britishness and create more inclusive definitions of British national identity even before mass black migration to Britain during the postwar period—an issue which this study intends to foreground in analyzing postwar black migration.

black presence in Britain.[18] In addition to chronicling the emergence of black communities within the context of their relationship to British imperial interests and maritime exchanges, Walvin's work, in particular, foregrounds a discussion of the development of English racial ideologies by focusing attention on images and stereotypes manufactured as a part of the political rhetoric and policies associated with slavery and colonialism, which he notes effectively served as a means to rationalize and sustain racialized systems of economic exploitation.[19]

Walvin's attention to racial imagery and ideas about black people (and more specifically black men) overlapped with the central themes of important studies by Christine Bolt and Douglas Lorimer, also published in the early 1970s, which were more specifically concerned with shifting Victorian racial ideologies conditioned largely by imperial encounters and metropolitan responses to events including Reconstruction in the United States and the 1865 Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica.[20] While Bolt's study was more confined to examining disparaging ideas about black people that emerged in the Empire and circulated in various metropolitan public spheres traversing all sectors of British society, Lorimer's point was to trace the emergence of anti-black forms of racial prejudice in British society, no doubt as a means of historicizing contemporary race relations discourse which again focused on white society's perceptions of and reactions to black migrants. Lorimer found that during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth

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[18] Edward Scobie, *Black Britannia: A History of Blacks in Britain* (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Co., 1972); James Walvin, *Black and White: The Negro and English Society, 1555-1945* (London: Penguin Press, 1973); Folarin Shyllon, *Black People in Britain, 1555-1833* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977).

[19] Walvin, *Black and White*, 159-176.

[20] Christine Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes to Race* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971); Douglas Lorimer, *Colour, Class and the Victorians: English Attitudes to the Negro in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1978).

centuries, "racially prejudiced individuals undoubtedly existed, but on the whole, no clear pattern of institutionalized or socially sanctioned discrimination [towards people of African descent] was in evidence."[21] However, by the mid nineteenth century Lorimer insisted that a range of factors including scientific theories of race, perceptions of failed projects of emancipation in the Americas and, most importantly, the hardening of class hierarchies in metropolitan society made the concept of black gentlemanliness a contradiction of sorts that opened the gateway to anti-black racism that were sustained by associating black people with an enslaved past and resigning them to the lowest position within a shifting Victorian social order.

The appearance of Peter Fryer's ground-breaking comprehensive survey, *Staying Power* in 1984, provided a major historiographical shift in the study of the history of the black presence in Britain. Fryer's study melds an impressive body of sources ranging from plantation records, travel narratives, newspapers, journals, speeches, literature and music to present a long history of the black presence in Britain. One of the many conceptual strengths of Fryer's work is his attention to the connections between imperialism and slavery in the development of racial ideologies that influenced the experiences of black people both in the colonial setting and in the metropole over time. To be sure, the most significant historiographical contribution of Fryer's work is its incorporation of black agency and strategies of resistance. Throughout a discussion weaving together narratives of enslaved community life in Britain during the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the formation of black social and political organizations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, episodes of racial violence against black seamen in the interwar period, the development and institutionalization of racism and

[21] Lorimer, *Colour, Class and the Victorians*, 31.

racial discrimination, and the impact of postwar black migration to Britain, Fryer consistently traces black people's responses and resistance to their marginalization in British society. Fryer highlights how black people challenged the conditions, practice and legality of their enslaved status and the institution of slavery in the Empire, participated in working class radical movements, fortified anti-colonial and anti-racist coalitions, and devised an array of programs to combat racial discrimination in an attempt to substantiate the meaning of their British citizenship and right to belong in British society during the twentieth century. In doing so, Fryer's monumental study demonstrated that the black presence in Britain had long endured and destabilized the notion that the significance of the black presence in Britain only emerged as a postwar phenomenon.[22]

More recent studies of the black presence in postwar Britain tend to draw upon Fryer's bottom up approach in constructing social histories of black life which highlight black people's active participation in structuring the terms of their experiences in British society. Studies produced by Carlton Wilson, Gretchen Gerzina, Norma Myers, Jeffrey Green, Jon Newman and David Killingray all interrogate a range of traditional and non-traditional historical sources including parish registers, census records, diaries, court records, literature, music and visual imagery in an attempt to reconstruct and quantify the history and interiors of black life in Britain.[23] While these studies range in temporal and

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[22] Although there have been other comprehensive studies of black life in Britain, most notably, Ron Ramdin's *The Making of the Black Working Class in Britain* (1987), considering its sources and wide-ranging perspective, Fryer's study remains the definitive and unparalleled survey of the social history of black people in Britain through the early 1980s.

[23] Carlton Wilson, "A Hidden History: The Black Experience in Liverpool, England, 1919-1945," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1992; Gretchen Gerzina, *Black London: Life Before Emancipation* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1995); Norma Myers, *Reconstructing the Black Past: Blacks in Britain, 1780-1830* (London: Frank Cass, 1996); Jeffrey Green, *Black*

spatial considerations, they have a common interests in examining the everyday lives of black people in Britain, and thus move beyond earlier historical studies privileging the activities of exceptional black personalities whose presence in Britain were more visible through traditional archival sources including official government documents and other written materials. Drawing upon similar sources and methodologies present in these later studies of the black presence in Britain, this study also attempts to present an analysis of the politics of race, citizenship and migration in postwar Britain that incorporates the voices, perspectives and concerns of black migrants as envisioned on their own terms and demonstrate how their activities influenced broader debates about the meaning of British national identity and images of race relations in Britain.

In addition to providing a contribution to the history of the black presence in British society, this study also intends to engage scholarly debates concerning the relationship between race, citizenship and migration in the postwar period. Essentially, the crux of current scholarly literature in this area concerns the extent to which British Government officials actively participated in institutionalizing a marginal citizenship status for black migrants with the implementation of race-based migration controls beginning with the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962. While earlier studies on this subject by scholars including Paul Foot, Nicholas Deakin and Colin Holmes asserted variations of the central premise that British officials were pressured by popular opinion and political expediency to institute migration restrictions targeted to control a largely black migration in 1962, since the release of Cabinet records from the 1950s and 1960s in

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Edwardians: Black People in Britain, 1901-1914 (London: Frank Cass, 1998); John Newman, *Windrush Forbearers: Black People in Lambeth, 1700-1900* (London: Lambeth Archives, 2002); David Killingray, "Tracing People of African Origin and Descent in Victorian Kent" in *Black Victorians, Black Victoriana* ed. Gretchin Gerzina (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003).

the early 1990s, a host of scholars including Lydia Lindsey, Robert Miles, Ian Spencer and Kathleen Paul have challenged these arguments and demonstrated the active and sustained interest of successive British governments in limiting black migration and essentially the growth of black communities in Britain throughout the 1950s.[24]

In addition to establishing Government officials' interests in controlling black migration well before the issue became a subject of public debate in the aftermath of highly publicized incidents of racial violence occurring mainly between indigenous white residents and largely West Indian black migrant communities in Nottingham and Notting Hill during the summer of 1958, the dominant paradigm present in recent scholarship has focused on the extent to which racism and a racialized visions of the boundaries of Britishness guided the reactions of officialdom to increasing black migration in the postwar period and determined their motives in considering and introducing migration controls. Collaborative works by Bob Carter, Clive Harris and Shirley Joshi as well as monographs by Kathleen Paul and Ian Spencer all posit that the state, independent of popular opinion, actively participated in constructing and appropriating negative stereotypes of black workers throughout the 1950s and early 1960s which were then used as a premise to rationalize racially discriminatory policies which relied upon and remapped racialized imperial hierarchies of Britishness and effectively excluded black

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[24] Paul Foot, *Immigration and Race in British Politics* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965); Nicholas Deakin, " The Politics of the Commonwealth Immigrants Bill," *Political Quarterly* 39 (1968), 25-45; Colin Holmes, *John Bull's Island: Immigration and British Society, 1871-1971* (Houndsmill: Macmillan Press, 1988); Lydia Lindsey, "The Role of Immigration Policy, Race, Class, and Gender in Shaping the Status of Jamaican Immigrant Women Workers in Birmingham, England, 1948-1962" Ph.D. Dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1992; Lydia Lindsey, "Halting the Tide: Responses to West Indian Immigration to Britain, 1946-1952" *Journal of Caribbean History* 26, 1 (1992); Ian Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939* (London: Routledge Press, 1997); Kathleen Paul, *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in the Postwar Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997). See also Robert Miles, "Nationality, Citizenship and Migration to Britain, 1945-1951," *Journal of Law and Society* 16, 4 (Winter, 1989), 426-442 and Zig Layton-Henry, *The Politics of Immigration: Immigration, 'Race' and 'Race Relations' in Post-War Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992).

Commonwealth citizens from exercising the full rights and privileges of their British citizenship.[25]

Randall Hansen's, *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain* has offered the most recent critique of this argument. Hansen insists that the "racialization thesis" does not account for the plurality of opinions existing within officialdom about the issue of black migration and refutes the claim that migration controls of the 1960s were the culmination of state-sponsored racism occurring absent from a range of social forces.[26] As will be discussed in further detail in subsequent chapters, this study finds value in Hansen's challenges to the dominant framing and interpretation of the state's role in institutionalizing racialized visions of British citizens, but intends to move the discussion beyond the confines of officialdom to examine a host of perspectives on the meaning of migration restrictions. British officials were not the only players in the politics of race and citizenship which emerged in relation to increasing black migration in the postwar period. As this study will demonstrate, black migrants actively and consistently challenged circumscribed notions of Britishness in their struggles to qualify their rights as British citizens. To be sure, not only did their very presence in British society fracture the racial exclusivity of British national identity as conceived by British officials, but it also occasioned mainstream white society to reevaluate their own conceptions and sense of Britishness.

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[25] Bob Carter, Clive Harris and Shirley Joshi, "The 1951-1955 Conservative Government and the Racialization of Black Immigration" *Immigrants and Minorities* 6, 3 (1987): 335-47; Bob Carter, Clive Harris and Shirley Joshi, "Immigration Policy and the Racialization of Migrant Labour: The Construction of National Identities in the USA and Britain," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 19, 1 (1996), 135-57; Ian Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939;* Kathleen Paul, *Whitewashing Britain.*

[26] Randall Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain: The Institutional Origins of a Multiracial Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 10-16. See Chapter 5 of this study.

A third branch of scholarly studies that this dissertation intents to incorporate and contribute to relates to the transnational politics of race in the postwar period. Recent historical scholarship has begun to develop deeply nuanced analyses of interactions between domestic race relations and foreign affairs during the postwar period. Scholars of American history including Penny Von Eschon, Mary Dudziak, Brenda Gayle Plummer, Carol Anderson and Thomas Borselmann have emphasized the degrees to which black civil rights reform agendas commanded center stage in a contested international sphere defined by the racial politics of the Cold War and decolonization, yet this idea has not been fully explored as it related to Britain as a model of Western democracy, and more specifically has it affected political mobilization strategies among migrant communities of African descent in Britain.[27] This study hopes to address these silences by situating evolving official and grassroots race politics in relation to a broader transnational dialogue about race, civil rights and democracy. Just as black Americans drew international attention to the cause of black rights in the United States and used international sympathies to influence the development of civil rights policies, black political agents in postwar Britain were also very much aware of the international dimensions of race and the potency of images of domestic race relation in the global postwar political arena. Likewise, as policy makers considered introducing legislation designed to control black migration to acknowledge and address racial discrimination in

[27] Penny Von Eschon, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anti-Colonialism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Thomas Borstlemann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Carol Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944-1955* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

British society, they did so mindful that their actions would be scrutinized in an international climate sensitive to issues of race.

Sources and Methodology

This dissertation incorporates a range of archival sources including official government documents, newspapers, Parliament records, manuscript collections, organizational records, migrant narratives, statistical records, contemporary sociological studies and musical lyrics. In doing so, this study is largely concerned with foregrounding the voices and perspectives of black migrants within a broader discussion of the politics of race, citizenship and migration in postwar Britain. Considering the role of non-state actors in shaping, interpreting, and appropriating public policy rhetoric and initiatives requires asking new questions of sources to unmask the voices and perspectives of black migrants. Studies including those of Lawrence Levine and Thomas Holt provide important methodological insights for understanding the ways that historians can begin to understand how those whom traditional sources may have constructed as objects of history were indeed agents of history.[28] This study places government documents in conversation with musical lyrics performed by Calypsonian Lord Kitchener, the meeting records of grassroots black political organs and the recorded testimonies of first generation West Indian migrants to construct a wide-ranging portrait

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[28] Lawrence Levine, *Black Culture, Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought From Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977). Levine's work represented an important methodological shift in the study of slavery in the United States by utilizing non-traditional sources including folk cultural artifacts to understand the history of slavery from the perspective of enslaved people; Thomas Holt, " 'An Empire Over the Mind': Emancipation, Race, and Ideology in the British West Indies and the American South," in *Region, Race and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward* eds. J. Morgan Kousser and James McPherson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 283-313. In this essay, Holt notes that what freedpeople did in the immediate aftermath of the abolition of slavery offered a window into the ways that they interpreted their own visions, expectations, and realities of emancipation. See also Thomas Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

of the experiences of black migrants and their responses to conditions mediated by race in British society.

This study uses the term 'black migrant' to describe a largely West Indian migrant population of African descent in Britain. Although studies including Laura Tabili have employed references to black identity as a construct encompassing virtually all non-white populations in Britain including Africans, West Indians, Indians and Asians, this study resists the this conceptual model because it largely represents perceptions of race and racial categories as defined by white Britons, rather than the people to which they applied.[29] In the postwar period, one finds a historical moment when grassroots black political organs in Britain described their struggles and aligned their programs in relation to a vision of themselves as part of a transnational black community connected to other diaspora communities of African descent in the United States, the Caribbean and Africa. Theoretical models conceptualizing race and blackness by scholars including Evelynbrooks Higginbotham, Barbara Fields, Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy influence the manner in which this study incorporates discussions of race.[30] Higginbotham's notion of a race as a "metalanguage" is useful in understanding moments when race reconfigures and distorts class, gender and, in the case of this study, the island nationalities that simultaneously comprised what it meant to be both West Indian and British. While Fields and Hall pay close attention to the ways that race and racial identities are

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[29] Laura Tabili, *"We Ask For British Justice": Workers and Racial Difference in Late Imperial Britain* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

[30] Higginbotham, "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," 251-274; Barbara J. Fields, "Ideology and Race in American History," in *Region, Race and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodard* eds. J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); Stuart Hall, "Race, Articulation and Societies Structure in Dominance," in *Black British Cultural Studies* eds. Houston Baker, Manthia Diawara and Ruth Lindeborg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 16-60; Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

structured in relation to specific socio-historical contexts. Likewise, Gilroy's notion of blackness as a political condition as opposed to a cultural phenomenon offers a means of tracing the ways that individual communities of African descent formed transnational political networks and dialogues at particular moments, even when the experience of race was mediated by different spatial contexts.

Taking a cue from both black migrants themselves and Winston James's discussion of the black experience in twentieth century Britain, this study also acknowledges the ways in which the terminology 'immigrant' serves as a discursive tool that inherently denaturalizes black Commonwealth citizens who migrated to Britain. James argues that the terms 'migrants', 'settlers' and 'black Britons' as opposed to 'immigrants' is preferable when describing black people, particularly in the postwar period. He notes,

> Strictly speaking, there have been relatively few black immigrants to Britain. Most of those who entered Britain in the twentieth century, including the post-war years, were simply moving from one part of the British empire to another as British citizens...Unless one is prepared to call Yorkshiremen in London immigrants, then we should not call Barbadians entering London on British passports immigrants. The immigrant label attached to such persons largely developed in the 1960s precisely to deprive black Britons of their citizenship rights.[31]

Chapter Overviews

Chapter one of this study, "Historicizing Race, Empire and British Citizenship" intends to provide a long history of the ways in which the history of race and Empire provides a vital context for understanding how black people have historically positioned themselves within and articulated visions of Britishness and the meaning of their British citizenship. Whereas most studies of postwar black migration begin with the arrival of

[31] Winston James, "Black Experience in Twentieth Century Britain", 349.

the *Empire Windrush* in 1948, this chapter intends to offer an intervention to problematize the Windrush narrative which inherently frames the history of black migration as a metropolitan phenomenon confined to the postwar period. When one considers the idea that migration represented an act of claim-making and an articulation of a sense of civic membership and imperial belonging in a transregional, transracial community of British citizens, one can situate black migration to Britain in the postwar era as part of a long history of race and Empire in which people of African descent appropriated the language of Empire to assert their rights as members of the imperial body politic.

Chapter two, "Migration, Race and the Reconstruction of 'Civis Britannicus Sum'" more closely explores the ways that migration represented an act of claim making by black migrants and locates this discussion within the context of the postwar period. In doing so, it intends to show how migrants' choices to move to Britain were made in relation to their vision of a multiracial British community of citizens to which they belonged. While policy makers had no intentions that the terms of the British Nationality Act of 1948, which legalized notions of a multiracial British citizenry, would materialize to any significant degree beyond the small and concentrated non-white populations in major port cities including Cardiff and Liverpool, the unprecedented number of Caribbean migrants substantiating their claims to British citizenship certainly challenged and fractured this ideal. In addition to a discussion of migrants' visions and articulations of their sense of the meaning of their British citizenship through the very act of migration, this chapter offers an examination of the multiplicity of factors that facilitated increased black migration from the Caribbean to Britain after World War II

and detail some of the ways that race structured the experiences of black migrants particularly as they pertain to certain areas including housing and employment.

Chapter three, "Images of Violence and Shifting Narratives of Race" examines how images of racial violence between black migrants and indigenous white residents in Nottingham and Notting Hill during the summer of 1958 drew international attention to British race relations. This chapter demonstrates that as news of "race riots" traveled throughout the world, the existence of what I refer to as the "mystique of British anti-racism" was shattered by images of violent interracial conflict. As international audiences consumed and reacted to news of racial violence in Britain they also exposed preexisting internationally-recognized narratives about British national identity that sustained images of Britain as a beacon of racial progress, the embodiment of Commonwealth ideals of racial democracy and a foil to Jim Crow America and South Africa's apartheid regime. A central goal of this chapter is to examine the ways that news of 'race riots' created an intense questioning of what it meant to be British as images of violence served to contradict domestic and international perceptions of British racial liberalism, tolerance and anti-racism. This chapter explores how British responses to the violence functioned as an attempt to preserve the "mystique of British anti-racism" and reframe a tarnished image of British national identity both domestically and internationally by explaining the violence as the result of increasing "problem" of black migration, confined to a deviant sector of British society.

Chapter four, "'Are We To Be Mauled Down Just Because We Are Black?': Black Bodies and the Gendered Dimensions of Grassroots Race Politics" examines the ways that the murder of Antiguan-born Kelso Benjamin Cochrane served as a critical

moment of political mobilization within black migrant communities. This chapter pays particular attention to the "black body politics" campaign waged by members of the Inter-Racial Friendship Coordinating Council, a black migrant organization formed in the aftermath of the murder to publicly highlight the conditions facing all black migrants including inadequate police protection and hostility from indigenous white communities in certain areas, which precipitated Cochrane's untimely death. In addition to placing the activities of black migrants into a transnational context that locates their activities within a international dialogue of race and civil rights influenced by the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, international debates over apartheid in South Africa, and decolonization, this chapter also highlights the gender dimensions of grassroots political mobilization and explores the process through which images of black community life are produced.

The final chapter "The Evolution of Official Race Policy" closely examines the process through which British officials came to adopt official race policies in the forms of race-based migration controls and historic anti-discrimination legislation by the first half of the 1960s. While scholars have been able to document how British officials actively participated in racializing postwar Commonwealth migration and problematizing black migrants to justify implementing exclusionary controls with the specific intent of curbing the "influx" of black workers and the growth of black communities, this chapter incorporates these arguments and pays close attention to how opponents of migration controls, including Parliament members, West Indian officials, black newcomers, and black communities in Britain played key roles in publicly exposing the racial character of migration controls. The chapter concludes by suggesting how the origins of the Race Relations Act of 1965 were intertwined with the success of migration control opponents

in publicly framing Commonwealth migration restrictions as official policies of institutionalized racism and racial discrimination. As policy makers considered tightening controls in 1965, they did so with a keen awareness that the measure would be regarded as racially exclusionary. As the international community began to champion the cause of the elimination of racial discrimination in the early 1960s, the introduction a national policy of anti-discrimination served as a conduit through which the British Government could publicly balance the extension of race-based migration controls.

CHAPTER ONE

Historicizing Race, Empire and British Citizenship

On June 22, 1948 Aldwyn Roberts disembarked from the *S.S. Empire Windrush* at Tilbury Docks on the outskirts of London. Joined by another 491 passengers arriving from Jamaica, Roberts greeted a host of well-wishers, local media, including B.B.C. reporters and other interested observers with a rousing rendition of his soon-to-be hit song, "London Is the Place For Me."[32] Roberts, a well-known Calypso singer from Trinidad who had adopted the stage name Lord Kitchener cheerfully sang:

> London is the place for me
> London this lovely city
> You can go to France or America
> India Asia or Australia
> You must come back to London city
>
> Well believe me I am speaking broadmindedly
> I am glad to know my Mother Country
> I've been traveling to country years ago
> But this the place I wanted to know
> London, that's the place for me
>
> To live in London you're really comfortable
> Because the English people are very much sociable
> They take you here and they take you there
> They make you feel like a millionaire
> So London, that's the place for me.[33]

Reflecting on the creative energies that produced the lyrics, Roberts explained that with four days remaining before the completion of the journey from Jamaica to Britain he was overcome with a "kind of wonderful feeling that I'm going to land on the mother country,

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[32] Trevor Phillips and Mike Phillips, *Windrush*, 66.

[33]Lord Kitchener, "London is the Place For Me," *London is the Place For Me: Trinidadian Calypso in London, 1950-1956* (London: Honest Jon's Records Ltd, 2002), compact disc recording. Excerpts from the recorded version can also be found in James Proctor, ed., *Writing Black Britain, 1948-1998: An Interdisciplinary Anthology* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 19-20.

the soil of the mother country."[34] This "wonderful feeling" lead Roberts to compose a song which expressed a sense of optimistic expectancy about life in Britain and more importantly, conveyed an understanding of a historic relationship between colony and metropole that allowed for the possibilities that 'London', the urban epicenter of the Empire, could indeed represent a new space of imperial belonging to which he could lay claim.

Roberts's performance at the Tilbury Docks poignantly captures a critical motif defining both the history of postwar black migration from the Caribbean to Britain, but more broadly the history race and Empire. Although the British Empire was premised upon unequal power relations engineered to exploit black labor, sexuality, culture and personhood, the Empire's dependence on black people for its own existence meant that at times it offered certain possibilities for black people to negotiate the terms of their subjugation, and indeed undermine the racialized hierarchies of power that marginalized their position within the Empire.[35] At the moment when Aldwyn Roberts gleefully belted out verses of "London, is the Place for Me," he clearly articulated a sense of belonging for himself and his fellow passengers squarely within the confines of the metropolitan community and the larger British imperial community. For Roberts, 'London' represented the quintessential imperial space where he could assume and reinforce his membership in a transnational, trans-racial British imperial community. Just as Roberts, a Trinidadian-born, male calypsonian of African descent made claims on 'London' as a symbolic space of imperial belonging, in the process, he essentially imparted a

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[34] Trevor Phillips and Mike Phillips, *Windrush*, 66.

[35]Philip D. Morgan and Sean Hawkins, eds. *Black Experience and the Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vii.

democratic vision of Britishness and the British imperial citizenry that united all people of the Empire across the fluid boundaries of race, nation and space. To be sure, Roberts' concept of a trans-racial British imperial citizenry did not emerge simply as a means of positioning himself within the imperial spaces of metropolitan life as a migrating colonial subject, but rather it existed as a means of self-construction and belonging in the imperial spaces of colonial society. In Trinidad, this membership allowed him to fashion himself as both Aldwyn Roberts and simultaneously cultivate a public persona as a Calypso singer invoking the name Lord Kitchener, a revered British militiaman and Secretary of State for War during World War I who also served as an iconic referent for the triumph of British imperial rule in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.[36] His ability to infuse a distinct form of Caribbean cultural expression with images of the British Empire suggests that for him, and perhaps his Caribbean audiences, their multiple national, imperial and racial identities were not mutually exclusive, but rather overlapping constituents of a whole. At the same time that Roberts could be a Trinidadian of African descent performing Calypso music, he could also evoke a British identity that did not conflict with his Caribbeanness nor his blackness. Roberts embodied the intersection of race, nation and Empire, and in doing so, amalgamated both the historical "tensions of Empire" which manufactured markers of racial, spatial and cultural difference as a means

[36] For more on Lord Kitchener see Keith Surridge, "More Than A Great Poster: Lord Kitchener and The Image of the Military Hero," *Historical Research* 74 (August, 2001): 298-313; Trevor Royle, *The Kitchener Enigma* (London: M. Joseph, 1985); A.J. Smithers, *The Fighting Nation: Lord Kitchener and His Armies* (London: L. Cooper, 1994); Philip Warner, *Kitchener: The Man Behind the Legend* (New York: Atheneum, 1986).

of legitimating the superiority of metropolitan whiteness, and paradoxically the democratic possibilities of a trans-racial imperial community of citizens.[37]

This chapter examines the ways that black people have historically interpreted their positions within the British Empire. At the heart of this discussion is a critical assessment of the workings of what Frederick Cooper and Ann Stoler have aptly labeled as the "dialectics of inclusion and exclusion."[38] At times the Empire clearly delineated rigid boundaries of race that functioned to classify people of African descent as black. Accordingly, this racial marker of difference or "otherness" was then oftentimes used to relegate them to inferior positions in the labor market, exclude them from political institutions and systematically impede their abilities to access certain rights leading to full participation and inclusion in the economic, social and civil life of society. To be sure, at other times, the politics of Empire embraced an ethos of racial inclusiveness. Although the Empire produced gendered racial discourses that marginalized blackness as the antithesis of a privileged bourgeoisie masculine whiteness, paradoxically, it could also represent an imagined space of expectation that a sense of trans-racial alignment might be attained under the banner of Crown allegiance. This allowed for the possibilities that the stigmas attached to blackness could be supplanted or even silenced by the bonds of common subjecthood and a shared sense of citizenship between the people of the Empire abroad and those of the metropolitan community. It is in the multifaceted dialogue between racial inclusion and exclusion that one can situate the history of black communities in metropolitan Britain, their contentious relationship to Empire and

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[37]Frederick Cooper and Ann Stoler, eds. *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1-37.

[38] Ibid, 3; Morgan and Hawkins, eds. *Black Experience and the Empire*, 2

perhaps more importantly, the ways that their historic locations within Empire shaped their experiences of migration in postwar Britain and their sense of belonging in the British community.

In order to properly contextualize the complex relationships between postwar black migrations to Britain and the broader history of race and Empire, this chapter begins by examining how the unfolding of the anti-slavery movement produced universalizing discourses of citizenship linking the demise of slavery with the rise of nominally free wage labor societies incorporating former slaves into an imperial community of British subjects. As noted by Christopher L. Brown, the social processes which eventually resulted in the abolition of slavery were consequentially the defining tenets through which the British Empire began to recognize and construct black men and women of the Empire as British subjects, and therefore members of the British imperial citizenry.[39] This chapter highlights the ways that the social transactions characterizing emancipation involved a reevaluation, and indeed a reconceptualization of ideas of British subjecthood and the imperial community of citizens as envisioned by both British liberal elites and enslaved black workers. At the center of this discussion is an analysis of the ways that enslaved abolitionists, and subsequently freed men and women appropriated and produced discourses of Empire for strategic purposes in their quests to attain freedom from enslavement and in their struggles to actualize the meaning of their freedom on their own terms.

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[39] Christopher L. Brown, "From Slaves to Subjects: Envisioning an Empire Without Slavery, 1772-1834," in *Black Experience and Empire* eds. Morgan and Hawkins, 139; See also Christopher L. Brown, "Empire Without Slaves: British Concepts of Emancipation in the Age of the American Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly* LVI (April, 1999): 273-306.

As was the case under slavery, in the post-emancipation period 'Empire' continued to function as a malleable discursive space through which freed people clarified and actualized their own visions of freedom. By invoking their perceived relationship to, and sense of belonging in a democratic community of British subjects, the rhetorical devices and paraphernalia of Empire provided viable instruments for black people to frame and make claims upon their access to certain rights prescribed by membership in a trans-racial imperial citizenry. The last section of the chapter explores these issues, paying particular attention to the ways that struggles concerning land rights illuminate the contrasting dualities of 'Empire.' Just as formerly enslaved men and women asserted a concept of 'Empire,' and essentially freedom that—by virtue of their sense of belonging as subjects—made them privy to an imperial language of rights offering certain possibilities for social, political and economic reform, this same 'Empire' all too often reinforced the very structures and racialized hierarchies of power that sought to adapt many of the social dynamics and labor relations present under the system of slavery to post-emancipation society.

Anti-Slavery and the Construction of the British Citizenry

In 1772, Maurice Morgann published a short essay entitled *A Plan for the Abolition of Slavery*. In it, Morgann offered one of the earliest blueprints for gradual emancipation throughout the British Empire. His essay described an Empire without slavery that would liberate and civilize former slaves and incorporate, "black subjects of Britain" into a unified imperial body politic.[40] In that same year, Lord Mansfield issued his celebrated judgment in the case of an enslaved man by the name of James Somerset who had absconded from his owner after being brought to England. When authorities

[40] Christopher L. Brown, "From Slaves to Subjects", 114-118.

recaptured Somerset, his owner, a Boston, Massachusetts customs official, had made arrangements for him to return to slavery in Jamaica. Represented by Granville Sharp, a well-known anti-slavery advocate in Britain, Somerset eventually won his freedom when the court ruled that English law prohibited slave owners in England "to take a slave by force to be sold abroad because he deserted his service, or for any other reason whatever."[41] Although Mansfield's decision in the Somerset case did not outlaw the practice of slavery in England, nor signal the emancipation of enslaved persons in England, it did serve as a defining moment in the evolution of the anti-slavery movement in Britain. As noted by David Brion Davis, the Somerset decision was widely regarded as a referendum on slavery that characterized the institution as "un-British" and essentially incompatible with the underlying principles of British law and tradition. As the anti-slavery movement unfolded in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, leading advocates including William Wilberforce and Thomas F. Buxton framed abolition campaigns in the same light—as a defense of British tradition and a vindication of laws designed to protect the interests of the Crown's subjects. [42]

Accentuated by a broader intellectual current shaped by European Enlightenment thinkers' preoccupation with ideas of rights and individual liberties, both the publication of Morgann's treatise on the meaning of abolition and the Somerset case represent important examples illustrating how ideas regarding emancipation and the rhetoric of anti-slavery produced new ways of defining both the imperial community and

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[41] Quoted from Fryer, *Staying Power*, 125. For more on the Somerset case see Steven M. Wise, *Though the Heavens May Fall: The Landmark Trial That Led To the End of Human Slavery* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2005).

[42] David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (New York: Oxford University, 1999), 375-378; See also Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776-1848* (London: Verso Press, 1988), 99-100.

subsequently, the rights and privileges of belonging to the imperial body politic. Whereas Morgann envisioned the demise of slavery as a foundation for the creation of a trans-racial British citizenry, the English court's recognition of James Somerset's right not to be reenslaved in accordance with the tenants of British law and tradition established the notion that one's race, class and status did not necessarily prevent them from certain legal protections enjoyed by all British subjects. To be sure, both outlined a particular discursive terrain allowing for the possibility that Empire—and more specifically an Empire that denounced slavery—might indeed operate as a space where black people might come to expect, assume and assert certain liberties, rights and identities as members of British imperial community of citizens. As the movement to abolish slavery took more definitive form during the 1820s, the idea that an Empire without slavery might hold the possibilities of a trans-racial egalitarian citizenry gained currency as anti-slavery advocates invoked universalizing discourses of citizenship to denounce slavery and subsequently frame the meaning of emancipation.

In March of 1823, British anti-slavery advocates including William Wilberforce, Thomas Clarkson and Thomas F. Buxton founded the Society For Mitigating and Gradually Abolishing the State of Slavery Throughout the British Dominions which formed the institutional foundations for the emergence of the Anti-Slavery Society in the late 1820s and early 1830s. Evolving from anti-slavery traditions institutionalized in such organizations including the Society of Friends, the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade and the African Institution, the original mandate of the society focused on pressuring Parliament to introduce measures to improve and reform the conditions of slavery in the colonies and formulate a gradual plan for the abolition of slavery. Whereas

earlier campaigns including the abolition of the slave trade and the push for the Slave Registry Bill of 1816 had been supported by anti-slavery advocates as part of move towards the eventual demolition of slavery throughout the British Empire, the conveners of the Anti-Slavery Society hoped to reinvigorate and accelerate a national movement towards implementing reforms that more explicitly confronted the practice and conditions of slavery.[43]

In an important treatise outlining many of the ideological positions that would later come to define the mobilization efforts waged by the Anti-Slavery Society during the late 1820s and early 1830s, Thomas Clarkson vehemently argued "There is not one English law which gives a man a right to the liberty of any of his fellow creatures." He insisted that as a result of their enslavement, "Africans or Creoles, *have been unjustly deprived of their rights*," and contended that the necessary redress was "to *compensate* to these wretched beings *for ages of injustice*" and "*to train up* these subjects of our past injustice and tyranny *for an equal participation with ourselves in the blessings of liberty and the protection of the law.*"[44] Although his appeal came laced with paternalistic overtures towards enslaved black workers, Clarkson's writings no doubt challenged the legalities of slaveholding, insinuated that slavery was a form of disfranchisement and suggested that emancipation was the only tenable recourse that would lead to the restoration of rights and the full incorporation of enslaved black laborers into the imperial citizenry.

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[43] David Turley, *The Culture of English Anti-Slavery, 1780-1860* (London: Routledge, 1991), 47-56; Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery*, 421-423.

[44] Thomas Clarkson, "Thoughts on the Necessity of Improving the Condition of the Slaves in the British Colonies, With a View to Their Ultimate Emancipation" in *Slavery Abolition and Emancipation: Writings in the British Romantic Period*, Vol.3 ed. Debbie Lee (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1999, original 1823), 99. Italics included as they appear in reprinted version.

Drawing upon a language similar to Clarkson's emphasizing the actionable nature of slavery under British law, on 15 May 1823, Thomas Buxton petitioned the British Parliament to pass a motion for gradual emancipation throughout the Empire arguing that "the state of Slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British Constitution and of the Christian Religion."[45] While Buxton's motion failed to garner the necessary support in the House of Commons, his efforts along with those of the larger anti-slavery movement in Britain did succeed in altering the terrain surrounding the contentious debate over the future of slavery in the colonies. In response to Buxton's motion, the House unanimously adopted the somewhat conciliatory resolutions proposed by Conservative leader George Canning which expressed a Parliamentary commitment towards ameliorating the conditions of colonial slavery in an effort to gradually effect "a progressive improvement in the character of the Slave Population" and "prepare them for participation in those Civil Rights and Privileges which are enjoyed by other Classes of his Majesty's Subjects."[46]

With the passage of the 1823 House of Commons resolutions, the idea that abolition would serve as the process through which enslaved black workers of Empire

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[45] *Substance of The Debate in the House of Commons, on the 15th May, 1823, on a Motion for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery Throughout the British Dominions* (London: Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery Throughout the British Dominions, 1823), xxvi, University of London's Goldsmith's Library Collection, Duke University Microforms, Durham, NC.

[46] *Report From the Select Committee on the Extinction of Slavery Throughout the British Dominions: With Minutes of Evidence, Appendix and Index*, James Robert George Graham, Chair, House of Commons Papers, Paper #721, Vol/Page: xx.1 dated 11 August 1832; *Substance of The Debate in the House of Commons, on the 15th May, 1823, on a Motion for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery Throughout the British Dominions* (London: Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery Throughout the British Dominions, 1823), xxviii, University of London's Goldsmith's Library Collection, Duke University Microforms, Durham, NC; Roger Anstey, "The Pattern of British Abolitionism in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries" in *Anti-Slavery, Religion, and Reform: Essays in Memory of Roger Anstey* eds. Christine Bolt and Seymour Descher (Kent, England: William Dawson & Sons, 1980), 24; Demetrius Eudell, *The Political Languages of Emancipation in the British Caribbean and the U.S. South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 49.

might acquire civil rights and gain equal membership within a broad community of imperial subjects became a repeating motif of anti-slavery rhetoric and political activity. In numerous resolutions and petitions submitted to the House of Commons in the late 1820s up until the 1833—when Parliament finally passed the Abolition of Slavery Act—anti-slavery supporters reiterated the premise of the 1823 Resolution and referenced the ways that the abolition of slavery represented a gateway to black citizenship within the imperial community.

At a meeting of anti-slavery supporters in the town of Leicester in December of 1823, members of the Committee of the Leicester Auxiliary of the Anti-Slavery society resolved that their support of the gradual abolition of slavery was roused by feelings of "sorrow and shame, that there are eight hundred thousand persons in a state of personal Slavery...deprived of those civil privileges and religious advantages to which, as our fellow-subjects, they are entitled."[47] Invoking a similar theme, petitioners from the Surrey Anti-Slavery Society argued in 1826 that "British subjects, born within the King's allegiance, and innocent of all crime, cannot be deprived of their civil existence, and reduced to a state of slavery." In turn, they regarded, "the slavery of their fellow subjects in the West Indies as an outrage upon all justice."[48] Whereas anti-slavery petitioners frequently referenced enslaved black workers of the Empire as "fellow subjects", this sort of phraseology was likely meant to describe the potentialities of an imperial community without slavery, and in most instances, probably functioned mostly as a discursive strategy to mobilize anti-slavery sentiment in Britain, rather than a moniker to

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[47] *Proceedings of the Leicester Auxiliary Anti-Slavery Society*, 17 December 1823, Goldsmith's Library Collection, Duke University Microforms, Durham, NC.

[48] "Surrey Antislavery Petition," *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter* 19 (December, 1826): 287-288.

acknowledge a perceived set of shared interests between enslaved black colonials and the metropolitan community. However, what is clear is that anti-slavery petitioners viewed the slave status of enslaved black workers as the most salient marker preventing them from accessing the privileges of citizenship and equal justice ideally shared by all members of the imperial body politic.

Upon the establishment of the Newcastle Upon Tyne Society for the Promoting the Gradual Abolition of Slavery in 1824, members unanimously adopted a resolution supporting gradual emancipation conceding that "the negro slave is not now in a condition to receive the blessing of liberty," but that "improvement in his moral character, by the communication of civil privileges and religious light...will enable him in due time to take his just and equal rank, as a free man, among his fellow subjects of the British crown."[49] Reiterating the connection between abolition and the acquisition of rights for enslaved black workers as alluded to by the Newcastle Upon the Tyne petitioners, in 1825, a committee of the Aberdeen Anti-Slavery Society urged supporters to continue local efforts to petition Parliament to support amelioration policies which might preclude abolition "in behalf of our enslaved fellow-subjects; praying that they may be admitted to full participation in those civil rights and privileges, and to all those moral and religious advantages, enjoyed by the rest of his Majesty's subjects."[50]

It is important to point out that throughout the late 1820s the anti-slavery movement in Britain continued to embrace the gradualist tradition adapted during the movement to abolish the slave trade which according to Thomas Clarkson viewed

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[49] *First Report of the Committee of the Newcastle Upon Tyne Society for Promoting the Gradual Abolition of Slavery*, 16 June 1824, Goldsmith's Library Collection, Duke University Microforms, Durham, NC.

[50] "Aberdeen Antislavery Society" *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter* 1 (June, 1825): 23-24.

emancipation as "a work of time."[51] As a result, anti-slavery factions focused the majority of their attentions towards effecting amelioration policies and other reforms which might lay the foundations for the eventual abolition of slavery. To be sure, although the larger institutionalized anti-slavery movement had yet to fully embrace a campaign urging Parliament to consider immediate abolition, as illustrated in the petitions issued by anti-slavery supporters in Leicester, Surrey, Newcastle Upon the Tyne and Aberdeen, what clearly resonates in the evolving language of anti-slavery is the notion that slavery operated a as fundamental barrier to black enfranchisement. Therefore, it is useful to note the ways in which the rhetoric of anti-slavery functioned as a critical discursive space where the idea that the reform, and ultimate abolition of slavery would entail a move towards the extension of black citizenship gained public credence, even if abolitionists gave little serious consideration to the practicalities of full citizenship for enslaved black workers as a condition of emancipation.[52]

In November of 1825, residents of the county of Norfolk formed a petition to be presented to the House of Commons noting that slavery "degrades nearly eight hundred thousand of our fellow men to the condition of chattels," which petitioners viewed as "utterly inconsistent with the unalienable natural rights of men--with the benevolent provisions of our holy religion, and with the glorious principles of the British constitution, which ought to secure to all his Majesty's subjects, in whatever situation, a

[51] Thomas Clarkson, "Thoughts on the Necessity of Improving the Condition of the Slaves in the British Colonies, With a View to Their Ultimate Emancipation," in *Slavery, Abolition and Emancipation* ed. Debbie Lee, 85.

[52] Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery*, 422-423, 436. For a detailed discussion of the transition from gradualism to immediatism in British anti-slavery thought see David Brion Davis, "The Emergence of Immediatism in British and American Antislavery Thought," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 49, 2 (September, 1962): 209-230;

full participation in the benefits of even-handed justice and equal laws."[53] By 1831, when the anti-slavery movement had made a decisive transition from supporting gradual reform policies to advocating immediate abolition, the manner in which abolitionists framed the institution of slavery and its impact on enslaved workers in their petitions to Parliament remained consistent with those issued during the 1820s. Reminiscent of Norfolk petitioners in 1825, in April of 1831, petitioners from the Society of Friends submitted an appeal to the House of Commons on behalf of "their fellow-subjects of the African race" in which they described the continuation of slavery as "a direct violation of the inalienable rights of every human being, conferred upon him by the Almighty Parent of the Universe." The petitioners explained that they regarded enslaved black workers as "equal objects with ourselves," and urged that "as British subjects alike" the enslaved were "entitled to the protection of the law, in the enjoyment of life, liberty, and property, as secured to us by our excellent constitution."[54]

James Walvin has noted that discourses relating to the "rights of man" displayed in the 1825 Norfolk petition and the 1831 petition from the Society of Friends remained key themes of British anti-slavery campaigns dating from the late eighteenth century. Walvin found that it was not uncommon for anti-slavery supporters to speak of slaves as 'black Englishmen' entitled to the same rights and privileges extended to all British subjects. He contended that this particular characteristic of anti-slavery rhetoric—reflected to a large extent in anti-slavery petitions during the 1820s and 1830s—was rooted in and certainly entangled with a similar political vernacular steeped in working

[53]"Antislavery Meeting and Petition at Norwich," *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter* 6 (November, 1825): 57-58.

[54] "Abolition of Slavery," *London Times* 6 April 1831.

class radicalism.[55] In considering Walvin's argument, it is important to note that while the language of inalienable rights was indeed employed by working class movements which would later crystallize during the nineteenth century under democratic reform initiatives including Chartism and the Anti-Corn League, middle and upper class elites dominated the leadership and represented the more politically influential sects of the institutionalized component of the British anti-slavery movement. Patricia Hollis, has argued that although the anti-slavery movement might have aroused and collided with radical working class interests, in its institutional form during the late 1820s and early 1830s, it "attracted little working-class support, much working-class indifference, and considerable working-class hostility."[56] While Hollis presents a strong case supporting the notion that working class radicals viewed abolition as an experiment of capitalist elites which would further the economic exploitation of both black and white workers, it is equally important to consider that anti-slavery and its accompanying language of rights constituted a critical element of a broader reform impulse during the late 1820s and early 1830s that engaged a wide spectrum of the British public.[57]

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[55] James Walvin, "The Rise of British Popular Sentiment For Abolition, 1787-1832," in *Anti-Slavery, Religion, and Reform: Essays in Memory of Roger Anstey* eds. Christine Bolt and Seymour Dresher (Kent, England: William Dawson and Sons, 1980), 155. A similar argument regarding the relationship between anti-slavery discourses of rights and working class activism has also been asserted in Seymour Drescher, *From Slavery to Freedom: Comparative Studies in the Rise and Fall of Atlantic Slavery* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 67.

[56] Patricia Hollis, "Anti-Slavery and British Working-Class Radicalism in the Years of Reform" in *Anti-Slavery, Religion, and Reform: Essays in Memory of Roger Anstey* eds. Christine Bolt and Seymour Dresher (Kent, England: William Dawson and Sons, 1980), 295, 302-311.

[57] The broader political and social reform culture in which the movement to abolish slavery developed in England during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century is discussed at length in Turley, *The Culture of English Anti-Slavery, 1780-1860.*. See also Seymour Drescher, *Capitalism and Antislavery: British Mobilization in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 96, 145-146; Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery*, 443-450.

Seymour Drescher and Robin Blackburn have noted that while the middle classes may have engineered the institutional component of anti-slavery, the movement to abolish slavery had an appeal that traversed all classes and sectors of British society during the early nineteenth century.[58] Just as middle class reformers and political elites co-opted discourses of rights manufactured and understood by the working class masses, they situated anti-slavery within a broader national reform agenda culminating in the passage of the Great Reform Act of 1832, which ultimately represented a move towards the expansion of the political rights of citizenship, including the franchise and Parliamentary representation. In the process, as Seymour Drescher has explained, anti-slavery petitioning became a medium through which British abolitionists both affirmed metropolitan intellectual traditions of civil liberty and actively participated in critiquing the chasm between civic ideals and social realities as part of a larger domestic reform moment.[59]

Alongside the petitions of anti-slavery supporters in Britain, Parliament also received requests from free people of color in the colonies which underscored the ways that citizenship was a central element characterizing the ways that they envisioned and hoped to actualize the meaning of their freedom. In petitions presented to the British Parliament in June of 1829 free people of color in Jamaica requested that they be extended "the common rights and privileges of British subjects."[60] Historian Gad

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[58] Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery*, 443-444; Drescher, *Capitalism and Antislavery*, 144-145.

[59] Seymour Drescher, *Capitalism and Antislavery*, 143-145. For more on the Great Reform Act of 1832 see Eric J. Evans, *The Great Reform Act of 1832* (London: Routledge Press, 1994) and John A. Phillips and Charles Wetherell, "The Great Reform Act of 1832 and the Political Modernization of England," *The American Historical Review* 100, 2 (April, 1995): 411-43.

[60] "Civil Rights of the Free Blacks and Coloured Inhabitants of Our Colonies" *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter* 49 (June, 1829): 15-16.

Heuman has noted that after the Haitian Revolution—which in the eyes of many free people of color in Jamaica served as an example of triumph for their St. Domingue counterparts— free people of color in Jamaica consistently organized to pressure both local assemblies and the imperial Government for the rights and privileges of British citizenship granted to white colonials. Heuman has further contended that by the 1820s and early 1830s, this oftentimes placed free people of color in a precarious position as they attempted to negotiate improvements in their legal status with local whites who remained wedded to preserving slavery while simultaneously recruiting the aid of British reformers committed to the eventual abolition of slavery.[61]

In response to this growing concern among free people of color and their increasing ability to gain a wider audience for their cause in British reform circles, Parliament issued orders in the Crown colonies of St. Lucia and Trinidad in January and March of 1829 respectively stating, "every law, ordinance, or proclamation in force within that island, whereby His Majesty's subjects of African birth or descent, being of free condition, are subject to any disability, civil or military, to which His Majesty's subjects of European birth or descent are not subject shall be, and the same and each of them are and is for ever repealed and annulled.". By November of 1830, the Jamaican Assembly passed similar legislation in hopes that free people of color might solidify a local proslavery coalition as the abolitionist movement in Britain gained strength and

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[61] Gad Heuman, *Between Black and White: Race, Politics and the Free Coloureds in Jamaica, 1792-1865* (Greenwood, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981), 24-35. See also Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery*, 425-426 and Mavis Christine Campbell, *The Dynamics of Change in a Slave Society: A Sociopolitical History of the Free Coloured of Jamaica* (London: Associated University Press, 1976).

shifted towards a program of immediate abolition. [62] Just as anti-slavery reformers in Britain articulated their ideas of abolition as a route to black citizenship, the British Parliament's concessions to free people of color began to outline the ideological parameters of the rights of citizenship and effectively asserted the possibility that freedom from slavery might entail a form of racial democracy where the rights, obligations and privileges of citizenship applied equally across the boundaries of race.

Although the British Empire did not abolish slavery until 1834, among the enslaved community, the idea of one's right of freedom from slavery, as an imperial mandate, existed well before Parliament's vote on the Emancipation Act in 1833. While the centrifuge of British anti-slavery activity flourished in the metropole, the movement and its ideological currents were shaped within and disseminated throughout a transnational imperial community that included, the elite, middle, and working classes of metropolitan society, colonial officials, planters, and enslaved men and women. In examining the transnational dialogues concerning abolition in the years preceding emancipation, it is important to emphasize how the language of the anti-slavery movement in Britain cultivated, appropriated and supplied enslaved communities with universalizing discourses of imperial citizenship to frame arguments opposing slavery. Subsequently, enslaved communities adapted and recreated these same discourses for their own strategic purposes to not only resist slavery, but also to construct, articulate and actualize their own visions of black freedom.

On Monday, August 18, 1823 some thirty thousand enslaved insurgents from over fifty estates rose in opposition to the plantocracy on the island of Demerara.

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[62] "Rights Granted to the Enfranchised in the Crown Colonies," *The Anti-Slavery Reporter* 70 (November, 1830): 457-458; "Free Blacks and People of Colour" *Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter* 50 (July, 1829): 31-32; Heuman, *Between Black and White*, 41, 50.

Communicating their intentions to avoid violent confrontations, Demerara rebels informed the colonial Governor that their cause was driven by a simple desire for "Our rights." They insisted that forthcoming reforms designed to ameliorate the conditions of their enslavement "were of no comfort to them," because "God has made them of the same flesh and blood as the whites, [and] that they were tired of being Slaves to them." They contented that their "good King had sent Orders that they should be free and they would not work any more."[63] In July of 1823, Lord Bathurst, the Colonial Secretary, had issued the first amelioration circulars which included provisions banning Sunday markets, prohibiting the flogging of enslaved females and outlawing the use of the whip as a tool of punishment. In addition, the new policies appointed a Protector of Slaves responsible for maintaining an official record of slave punishments and freed all female children born after 1823. Although the amelioration policies signaled the imperial government's intentions to reform the institution of slavery, planters' efforts to circumvent these orders along with the measures' failure to explicitly address abolition left much to be desired for enslaved communities. [64]

Two days into the insurrection, when confronted by the lead commander of the local British militia, who unsuccessfully attempted to persuade a gathering of roughly two thousand rebels at the Batchelor's Adventure plantation to lay down their arms, the

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[63] Extract of Letter from Major General Murray to Earl Bathurst dated 24 August 1823 in Correspondence with Governors of Colonies in West Indies Respecting Insurrections of Slaves, 1822-1824, House of Commons Papers, Session 1824, Paper No. (333), Vol/Page XXIII. 465; Also quoted in Michael Craton, *Empire, Enslavement and Freedom in the Caribbean* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1997), 314; Edwin Angel Wallbridge, *The Demerara Marytr: Memoirs of Rev. John Smith, Missionary to Demerara* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; original, 1848), 89.

[64] Craton, *Empire, Enslavement and Freedom in the Caribbean*, 289, 314; Michael Craton, "Emancipation From Below?: The Role of the British West Indian Slaves in the Emancipation Movement, 1816-1834, " in *Out of Slavery: Abolition and After* ed. Jack Hayward (London: Frank Cass, 1985), 115-116; Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 197-198.

insurgents insisted, "Massa treat us too bad; keep us at work on Sundays; no let us go to chapel; no give us time to work in our garden; they beat us too much; and we hear for true, that the great buckra (the King), at home, give us our freedom for true.[65] As Demerara insurgents justified their opposition to the conditions of their enslavement, they did so in a language that invoked imperial authority to validate their claims to freedom. To be sure, the King, as the consummate symbol of the Empire represented the progenitor of their right to not only challenge the terms of their enslavement, but also to assert the freedom to be recognized as members of the same imperial community of subjects as white colonials.

It is clear from the rhetoric employed by Demerara insurgents that although colonial planters and authorities oftentimes impeded the implementation of amelioration policies, word of the British Government's intentions to reform slavery in response to growing pressure from anti-slavery factions generated a plethora of transatlantic discussion concerning the fate of colonial slavery. According to English missionary John Smith, a resident in Demerara, conversations among slaveholding colonists concerning the activities of the Anti-Slavery Society and Parliament pervaded almost every corridor of society—oftentimes provoking rousing debates even at dinner tables. Smith noted that before long, the same enslaved domestics serving food and wine to their indignant owners, came to hear of the "frequently exaggerated" rumor that "something had been done at home for the benefit of the people," that quite possibly through some " 'New Law'...the King and the Parliament of England had made them free."[66] In addition to

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[65] The testimony of Reverend John Smith notes that the term " 'Buckra' is the term in the negro dialect for a *whit* person." Wallbridge, *The Demerara Martyr*, 91.

[66] Wallbridge, *The Demerara Martyr*, 72.

being privy to conversations between slaveholders, Julius Scott's groundbreaking study on transatlantic communication and black resistance in the eighteenth century demonstrates that an intricate labyrinth of dialogues between enslaved communities, sailors, maroons, soldiers and merchants disseminated a wealth of news regarding political developments in European metropoles. Scott shows that these exchanges oftentimes fueled rumors of emancipation and contributed to the development of a "culture of expectation." Scott argues that this "culture of expectation" played a critical role in forming an undercurrent of opposition to the system of slavery and inherently shaped black visions of freedom.[67]

Less than a decade after the Demerara revolt, Edward Hylton recalled listening to the spell-binding oratory of rebel leader Samuel Sharpe rallying enslaved insurgents in Jamaica to assert their claims to freedom. According to Hylton, Sharpe spoke of "what he had read both in the English and colonial newspapers, showing that both the king and the English people wished the negroes to be emancipated and expressed his belief that the 'free paper' had already been sent out and that the only obstacles which they had to overcome, in order to secure their freedom, were the obstinacy and selfishness of the planters." Sharpe insisted, "the king had determined to put and end to slavery; and the negroes had, therefore, nothing to fear from the opposition of British troops, if they determined to take their freedom."[68]

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[67] Julius S. Scott, "The Common Wind: Currents of Afro-American Communication in the Era of the Haitian Revolution," Ph.D . Dissertation, Duke University, 1986.

[68] Henry Bleby, *Death Struggles of Slavery: A Narrative of Facts and Incidents Which Occurred in a British Colony, During the Two Year Immediately Preceding Negro Emancipation,* 3rd ed. (Coconut Grove, FL: Dewar's Limited Edition Publishers, 1972; original, 1853), 123.

On Christmas Day 1831 Samuel Sharpe and eventually some sixty thousand enslaved insurrectionists participated in one of the largest slave uprisings in the British colonies. What began as an organized campaign promoting passive resistance evolved into armed rebellion resulting in over two hundred enslaved insurgent deaths, at least 340 executions, including rebel leader Samuel Sharpe, and the institution of martial law in Jamaica until February of 1832. As in Demerara, enslaved insurgents in Jamaica cloaked their claims to freedom in a revolutionary language of rights perceived to have been conferred by imperial authority and yet ignored by local planters.[69] Throughout the late 1820s, the Colonial Assembly in Jamaica consistently attempted to thwart the intervention of British government reforms on matters concerning policies aimed at ameliorating the conditions of slavery, even defiantly approving legislation reducing the number of days of respite granted to slaves after Christmas in the month preceding the insurrection.[70] In a report to the Colonial Assembly following the 1831 Jamaican uprising, one observer alleged that metropolitan debates over slavery and "false and wicked reports" circulated by the Anti-Slavery Society as having calcified a "delusive expectation, produced among the whole of the slave population...that they were to be free after Christmas; and, in the event of freedom being withheld from them, 'they must be prepared to fight for it.'"[71] Even though neither the King nor the British Parliament had issued any such order providing for the emancipation of slaves in the colonies by the

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[69] Craton, *Empire, Enslavement and Freedom*, 317; Gad Heuman "From Slavery to Freedom: Black in the Nineteenth-Century British West Indies" in *Black Experience and the Empire* eds. Philip Morgan and Sean Hawkins, *The Black Experience and the Empire,* 146-147; Abigail Bakan, *Ideology and Class Conflict in Jamaica: The Politics of Rebellion* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 57-58.

[70] Richard Hart, *Slaves Who Abolished Slavery: Blacks in Rebellion,* vol.2 (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 1985), 244-245; Craton, *Empire, Enslavement and Freedom*, 316

[71] Henry Bleby, *Death of Struggles*, 107.

time of the 1831 Jamaican revolt, it is clear that enslaved insurrectionists interpreted political developments in both metropolitan Britain and the colonies within a widespread climate of anticipation fueled by the circulation of anecdotal references and rumors concerning British intentions regarding emancipation.[72]

This widening chasm between metropolitan politics—defined by a growing cadre of support for immediate emancipation—and colonial plantocracies' efforts to preserve slavery incited a whirl of speculation on both sides of the issue about the prospects of emancipation as an imperial directive. To be sure, rumors that linked emancipation with developments driven by British metropolitan interests served as vital conduits through which black people enslaved by the institutions of the Empire could also envision that same Empire as a means of claiming their rights to freedom and simultaneously crafting a position for themselves within an imperial community of British subjects. In a study of the circulation of rumors surrounding emancipation in the Confederate states of the American South during the Civil War era, Stephen Hahn argues that among subaltern communities, "rumours can be essential means of conducting cultural and political affairs: of establishing identities, interpreting information and actions, and entering the terrain of public discourse."[73] In both the Demerara and the Jamaican revolts of the early nineteenth century, it is clear that British support for reform and rumors of emancipation functioned as an important vehicle for the enslaved to interpret and articulate the meaning of their position in the British Empire. In doing so, not only did they challenge planter

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[72] Mary Turner, *Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaican Slave Society, 1787-1834* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 151-154; Thomas Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, 14.; Abigail Bakan, *Ideology and Class Conflict in Jamaica*, 58-60.

[73] Stephen Hahn, " 'Extravagant Expectations' of Freedom: Rumor, Political Struggle, and the Christmas Insurrection Scare of 1865 in the American South," *Past and Present* (November, 1997): 124.

power and white supremacy by constructing an argument for their right to control the terms of their labor but also, in the process, they expanded and transformed the boundaries of British subjecthood. Appropriating a discourse of rights grounded in the authority of the British imperial state as an instrument to facilitate emancipation from below, enslaved abolitionists simultaneously made claims on a conception of British subjechood that transcended race and place. Just as debates over the future of slavery and the prospects for emancipation among British intellectuals throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century revealed that rethinking slavery entailed reenvisioning the relationship of black people to the British state, and consequentially, the imperial community of subjects, when emancipation arrived this too would remain an essential question shaping black men and women's post-emancipation struggles to define the meaning of their freedom.[74]

Defining Freedom and Black Citizenship After Emancipation

In 1848, merely a decade after the Jamaican Assembly ended the apprenticeship system as the final transition into full official emancipation, Governor Charles Edward Grey issued a widely circulated edict emphasizing the inextricable ties between freedom and the rights, privileges and obligations of membership in a British community of subjects. Writing in large part to undermine rumors of reenslavement and quell rumblings of a planned rebellion among former slaves Grey contended:

> The Freedom, which was given to the Negro People of Jamaica, was given without recall or reserve, and the rights of the Labourers of that Race now stands on the same foundations as those of the Planter or Proprietor, or those of the People of England, and are a part of the Constitution of the Empire. The Crown, to which the allegiance of all its Subjects is equally due, will afford to all equally the protection of the Laws, and will secure to

[74] Christopher Brown, "From Slaves to Subjects,"111-139.

> all the enjoyment of their rights, and especially that first and greatest and most precious of all rights—their personal freedom.[75]

Not only did Grey, as the highest ranking local representative of the imperial Government, outline a binding relationship between ideas of freedom and the promises of British subjecthood, but perhaps more importantly for the black masses of formerly enslaved communities, Grey showcased a language of possibilities legitimated by imperial authority that might potentially collapse overlapping boundaries of race, place and class under the banner of a shared allegiance to the British Crown. To be sure, just as Grey invoked a democratic discourse of imperially recognized rights and entitlements, he also clearly acknowledged and simultaneously attempted to subvert the radical potential of this same ideology of universal male subjecthood. He added:

> Whilst this Warranty and Assurance of their Freedom, and their Rights, is willingly given to the Negro People of Jamaica...That as good Subjects of Her Majesty they will abhor and prevent the employment of Violence or Threatening Language to others, and that in the enjoyment of the perpetual and Constitutional Liberty which is gladly recognized as belonging to them, they will abstain from all Riotous and Rude Behavior, which might alarm the minds of Peaceable Persons; and will endeavor, by Soberness and Steadiness of Demeanor, and by Prudence of Conduct and of Language, to shew that they are worthy to sustain the Character of freemen, and to be the Fathers of Free Families.[76]

It is important to note the overarching ideological currents shaping the presentation of Governor Grey's provocative statements. Although the legalities of emancipation in Jamaica had crystallized with the passage of legislation abolishing slavery in the Empire in 1834 and the ending of the apprenticeship system in 1838, the terms by which emancipation might gain substantive and material value from the

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[75] Quoted from Mimi Sheller, *Democracy After Slavery: Black Publics and Peasant Radicalism in Haiti and Jamaica* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2000), 178-179.

[76] Ibid., 178-179.

perspective of the formerly enslaved themselves had yet to be fully negotiated. Thomas Holt has persuasively argued that the liberal ideology espoused by British elites focused largely on the ways that emancipation would provide for a nominally free wage labor force that still operated within and sustained the interests of a white male elite plantocracy. Holt emphasized that in the minds of British supporters of abolition, emancipation authorized the masses of ex-slaves to exercise their freedom and marginal social mobility to the extent to which they would maintain preexisting social, economic, and political hierarchies.[77] Governor Grey's decree highlights this peculiar paradox of British elite liberalism and its conception of the position of black people in the Empire. While his words clearly illustrate the enabling ideological characteristics of British elite constructions of emancipation—access to universal rights based on a shared subjecthood that transcended race, place, and class, equality before the law and a sense of individual liberty—at the same time, they most certainly established concrete boundaries for the exercise of black freedom. According to the description provided by Governor Grey, black freedom could exist only as it remained confined to a set of prescribed codes of conduct that inherently attempted to contain the possibilities of revolutionary change to the status quo. However, despite British liberals' desires to construct a model of black freedom and Empire which enabled formerly enslaved communities in so much as it constrained their abilities to dismantle the social structure that sanctioned their enslavement, freed men and women throughout the Caribbean colonies consistently challenged the limits of British liberalism. In doing so, oftentimes ex-slaves employed the same democratic language of Empire implored by British liberal ideology, just as they

[77] Thomas Holt, *The Problem of Freedom,* 13-53.

transformed, reappropriated, and remapped its boundaries, in their pursuits to actualize their own visions of emancipation.

During the early post-emancipation period, one of the major controversies encompassing the entire island waged between the imperial Government, the Jamaican planter elite and freed people involved the uses of large tracts of uncultivated, underdeveloped and oftentimes abandoned 'backlands.' William A. Green has noted that between 1832 and 1847 some 465 coffee estates alone were abandoned amounting to more than 300,000 acres of vacant land for redevelopment and new settlements.[78] Whereas the black masses viewed access to land for provision grounds and greater economic autonomy as a means of substantiating their freedom, Government authorities and local planters recognized the possibilities that black claims to land might eventually undermine not only the economic basis of white male elite authority, but perhaps just as significant, the social and political hierarchies overdetermined by race and class structuring colonial society.

In addition to providing opportunities to generate earnings and subsistence in lieu of the demands of the plantation economy, land also provided a means for greater access to civic participation and political power. According to the provisions of the Franchise Act of 1840, men had to either own land valued at least six pounds, pay or receive rent on property valued at thirty pounds or pay three pounds in direct taxes to become eligible to vote. Qualifications for candidates were even more restrictive. Assemblymen had to demonstrate proof of a net annual income from estate property of 180 pounds, possess land valued at 1800 pounds or possess assets worth 3000 pounds.

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[78] William A. Green, *British Slave Emancipation: The Sugar Colonies and the Great Experiment, 1830-1865* (Oxford: (Clarendon Press, 1976), 300.

Over time these restrictions became more stringent. Coupled with increasing poll taxes, by 1863, only 1,457 males out of a total population of roughly 450,000 voted for the overwhelmingly white planter-controlled Colonial Assembly which abolished the constitution in 1865. [79]

Despite suggestions by the Colonial Governor that "Crown lands" remain solely under imperial authority, in September of 1836, the Colonial Office granted control over these estates to the Colonial Assembly. Supported by the Colonial Secretary, local policy makers set minimum prices for the lands and sold parcels to the highest bidder. In addition, the local Assembly instituted a number of policies including increased land taxes and more expensive procedures for securing legal titles for purchased lands which, in combination with escalating prices for land, formed successful barriers to black land ownership. Behind these measures resided the underlying premise that access to land, and in particular the rise of a significant class of black landowners would surely undermine the process by which a black laboring majority might become economically independent from the demands of white-controlled plantations, and therefore remain a subordinate player in Jamaican politics. [80]

Although the conciliatory posture of the imperial Government in regards to the implementation of these measures in the colony clearly indicated that the uses of these lands securely fell within the regulatory prerogatives of local authorities, the idea that these lands were "Crown lands" served as a basis for black resistance to the post-emancipation plantocracy and shaped black visions of the promises of emancipation. Just

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[79] Don Robotham, "'The Notorious Riot': The Socio-Economic and Political Basis of Paul Bogle's Revolt," Working Paper (Kingston: University of the West Indies Press for the Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1981), 41-42; Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, 216-217.

[80] Don Robotham "'The Notorious Riot,'" 31-36; Thomas Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, 73-74.

as imperial and local authorities recognized that access to land could potentially alter their prescribed course of black freedom by creating greater economic opportunities that might distance former slaves from the interests of a white-controlled plantation economy, freed men and women also view land as a means of bolstering the quality and economic value of their freedom. According to Thomas Holt, throughout the 1850s and 1860s the Jamaican masses buttressed numerous petitions for economic justice by asserting their rights of access to land. Holt noted that oftentimes laborers made "a direct connection between popular notions of Crown land, public land, and the people's land." He argued that "peasants grounded their right to the land in the logically consistent belief that abandoned properties should revert to the queen, thereby returning it to the public domain," and in the minds of Jamaican masses clearly, "They were the public."[81] In this sense, "Crown lands" became a symbol of public space and consequently claims to these imperial lands represented vital instruments whereby the black working classes defined and clarified, in their own terms, their relationship to and membership within a broader imperial public; therefore, the right to land represented a crucial means of asserting one's position in the Empire.

Although a number of legal cases involving disputed lands emerged during the 1850s and 1860s challenging the notion that uncultivated or unused "Crown lands" could be occupied and or claimed as public property by virtue of being a part of the imperial domain, no single event dramatized issues related to land access by a black majority colonial public than the 1865 Morant Bay Rebellion orchestrated in large part through the efforts of Paul Bogle and other local black leaders. In a letter sent to Governor Edward Eyre on October 10, 1865 Paul Bogle and other representatives of the Jamaican laboring

[81] Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, 269

masses petitioned the imperial government for protection against an "outrageous assault" ordered by local magistrates culminating in a violent confrontation between local protesters and police. According to the letter, the conflict had resulted in the dispatch of warrants "against innocent persons" which dissenters were "compelled to resist." In their appeal to the Queen for protection against local authorities, Bogle and his associates argued, "we are Her Majesty's loyal subjects; which protection, if refused we will be compelled to put our shoulders to the wheels, as we have been imposed upon for a period of twenty-seven years, with due obeisance to the laws of our Queen and country, and we can no longer endure the same."[82] One day later, Bogle and his compatriots—the majority of whom were men and women of the black peasantry including plantation workers and small freeholders—launched a mass insurgency organized around a matrix proletarian issues that had become symptomatic of the early post-emancipation period including depressed wages, unemployment, high taxes, unequal justice, and most essential, access to land. [83]

On 11 October 1865, Bogle, a small farmer and Baptist deacon from Stony Gut, lead a parade of several hundred men and women to Morant Bay into a violent confrontation with local police, military forces and other local authorities. Over the course of the following days reports estimated that some fifteen hundred to two thousand local men and women including estate workers, small land owners, farmers, traders, craftsmen, domestics, mothers, fathers, churchgoers, and a variety of other segments of

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[82] House of Commons."Report of the Jamaica Royal Commission, 1866, Part I." Parliamentary Papers 1866 Cmd. [3683], vol. 30, p. 14; Henry Bleby, *The Reign of Terror: A Narrative of Facts Concerning Ex-Governor Eyre, George William Gordon and the Jamaica Atrocities* (London: William Nichols, 1866), 38; Thomas Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, p.297, 459; Gad Heuman, *The Killing Time*, 6.

[83] Thomas Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, 297-300; Arvel B. Erikson, "Empire of Anarchy: The Jamaica Rebellion of 1865," *Journal of Negro History* 44 (April, 1959): 101-102; Don Robotham, "'The Notorious Riot,'" 50-64; Henry Bleby, *The Reign of Terror,* 37-38

the black peasantry participated in the insurgency. The outbreak ended as a result of a violent suppression sanctioned by the Colonial Governor yielding some 439 deaths, hundreds of floggings, and approximately 1,000 burned properties.[84] Although the centrality of a heterogeneous black peasantry suggests that the display of black resistance associated with the Morant Bay campaign amalgamated an array of post-emancipation concerns, according to the 1866 Jamaican Royal Commission report issued in the wake of the outbreak, the most salient cause of the rebellion and most crucial common denominator among Morant Bay insurgents—both lead organizers and rank and file participants—involved access to land. The report noted, "Their [the insurgents] great desire was to obtain land, free from the payment of rent, what are called backlands."[85] Given the complexity of the Jamaican peasantry, quite naturally all of the insurgents might not necessarily have protested out of a desire for access to land without any financial obligation; however, given the economic, political and social value attached to land, it is most certain that land was indeed an important common thread shaping the frustrated expectations of rebels.

Just days before the outbreak Paul Bogle and a host of other observers sat at the Morant Bay courthouse during the trial of Lewis Miller who had been charged with trespassing on the property of James Williams. The Miller case attracted a great deal of attention from the local black community, in part because the case indirectly hinged on the right of the working class black masses to access and make claims upon uncultivated lands. According to Williams, Lewis Miller had unlawfully used his land to graze horses.

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[84] Gad Heuman, *'The Killing Time'*, 3-30; Thomas Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, 297-302.

[85] House of Commons, "Report of the Jamaica Royal Commission, 1866. Part I," Parliamentary Papers 1866 Cmd.[3683] vol. 30, p. 18; Don Robotham, " 'The Notorious Riot', 27; Abigail Bakan, *Ideology and Class Conflict in Jamaica*, 85-86.

Since Miller had not made any arrangements to rent the land, the local magistrate found in favor of Williams and fined Miller. Although James Williams brought the case against Miller, in actuality, Wellwood Maxwell Anderson, a 'coloured' assemblyman, owned the land in dispute, but had decided to lease the property to Williams in 1865. As a part of the lease agreement Williams assumed a number of subtenants and consequently inherited a contentious relationship with a number of occupants, including Lewis Miller, with no formal recognized claims to the land. In 1858 Anderson had won a similar case of trespass against a group of inhabitants occupying the land with no official tenancy. Foreshadowing the verdict of the 1865 case, the final judgement favored Anderson's legal rights of ownership rather than the informal claims of the occupants. Although the court ordered the settlers to vacate the land, many resisted basing their rights of settlement on the premise that "the land was free, and the estate belonged to the Queen."[86] From the perspective of the settlers their position in the imperial community as subjects of the Queen entitled them to appeal to imperial authority to establish their rights of access to certain areas of land.

Akin to the defense made by occupants on the Anderson estate in 1858, in directing their petition for redress to the Queen for their grievances against abuses of power sanctioned local authorities, Paul Bogle and his supporters continued in a broad tradition of black protest strategies which included the invocation of imperial authority to make claims upon certain rights and entitlements provided by their membership in an imperial community of subjects. Just as enslaved rebels on plantations in Demerara and Jamaica had translated their perceptions of their status as imperial subjects into a tangible

[86] Thomas Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, 295-296. Based on accounts taken from the Jamaican Royal Commission; See also Gad Heuman, *'The Killing Time'*, 4-5.

reality of struggle for their right to freedom from enslavement, in the early post-emancipation era, representations of the Empire persistently resonated as a part of freed people's repertoires of resistance and efforts to qualify the meaning of their freedom.

At a meeting organized in conjunction with the Baptist missionary society in May of 1838 between three and four thousand "praedial" apprentices, or fieldworkers, gathered resolved:

> Whenever it suits the wisdom and policy of our legal Rulers to grant us a perfectly equal and just participation in the laws, we shall hail the day as one of our brightest in human prosperity; and although we feel that we are entitled to all the immunities of free subjects without distinction, yet we are determined not to betrayed by the schemes of our adversaries into acts of subordination;[87]

This type of expression of working class frustration was typical in the aftermath of emancipation. Public protest meetings and mass demonstrations represented important vehicles through which the black laboring masses organized to articulate concerns related to a host of issues including working conditions, low or unpaid wages, access to land, greater political representation, equal justice, extension of the franchise, high taxes and the protection of civil rights such as the freedom of association and the right to education.

It is important to point out that just as the nature of black expectations of emancipation was never static or monolithic, so too did the character of organized black resistance mechanisms vacillate over time. Mimi Sheller has noted that white Baptist missionary societies generally arranged the majority of mass public protest meetings held between 1838 and 1844. Oftentimes this meant that white missionaries often took responsibility for transcribing petitions which reflected a tendency to co-opt the voices of the masses into a language defined largely by a white writer. However, in the period

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[87]Quoted from Mimi Sheller, *Democracy After Slavery*, 150.

between 1858 and 1865 Sheller insisted that there was a critical shift in the working class political culture marked by a gradual move towards the development of more autonomous black public spheres of protest. She argues that these "independent black publics" evolved "with their own leadership, genres of communication and political ideologies."[88] Through a careful analysis of black publics in post-emancipation Jamaica in the years preceding the Morant Bay uprising, Sheller highlights the ways that mass meetings and petitioning served as important tools of protest and claim-making. Likewise, in the process of engaging these forums of black resistance and oppositional culture, Sheller unearths not only range of concerns defining black men and women visions of the material value of their freedom, but just as significant, her work also reveals how black people imagined and projected self-inscribed political identities as freed people.

Between 1858 and 1865, various sectors of the Jamaican peasant majority organized and participated in numerous mass public meetings producing a variety of texts which illuminate their own constructions of their post-emancipation identities. Responding to the passage of a new electoral law in 1858 increasing voter registration fees, working class petitioners from the parish of Saint David urged that the Queen recognize that with the institution of the new policy, "a serious injury is done to the class of your Majesty's subjects, who were emancipated from slavery, and invested with the rights of British Freemen." Petitioners underscored the fact that the tenets of the legislation would impede the masses from the most basic right of civic participation and

[88] Mimi Sheller, *Democracy After Slavery*, 182-185. Swithin Wilmont's work on grassroots electoral politics in St. James parish between 1838 and 1865 makes a similar case regarding Baptist involvement in political mobilization among the black masses. See Swithin Wilmont, "Politics at the 'Grassroots' in Free Jamaica: St. James, 1838-1865" in *Working Slavery, Pricing Freedom: Perspectives From the Caribbean, Africa and the African Diapsora* ed. Verene A. Shepherd (New York: Palgrave, 2002): 451-452.

continued to concentrate political power "in the hands of an exceedingly small minority of fellow Citizens," whom the petitioners noted mostly "belong to that class who but too recently owned our bodies and souls and who seem loth and backward to accord to us the equality of political rights secured by the British Constitution, alike to all classes."[89]

In another set of petitions addressed to the Queen in 1859 over one thousand signatories representing five rural parishes near Kingston groups expressed concerns over election laws, unpaid wages, harsh working conditions on estates, indentured immigration from Asia, high taxes, and a corrupt justice system of laborers. Petitioners insisted that overall the state of colonial policy reflected "retrograde steps to a refined state of slavery or something akin to it." In formulating their grievances to imperial authorities workers and small land holders represented by the memorials used a variety of titles to describe themselves including "loyal and Devoted Subjects", "Mechanics and Peasantries," "sable subjects of Jamaica, of African descent," "African descendents," "British subjects" and "black."[90] Taken together, these petitions elucidate a critical dimension of the identity politics shaping the relationships engendered between Empire and the Jamaican peasantry in the post-emancipation period. By addressing their appeals to the Queen, the most potent symbol of Empire and guarantor of imperial rights and privileges, petitioners automatically positioned themselves within an imperial community of subjects. Juxtaposing their relationship to Empire with collective identities denoting race, color, place and class gave even more substance and elasticity to their conceptions of their own British subjecthood and the boundaries of the larger community of imperial citizens. To be sure, not only do these labels illustrate the complexity and

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[89] Sheller, *Democracy After Slavery*, 185-6

[90] Ibid., 186-7

multipositionality of the Jamaican peasantry, but also they allude to a democratic understanding of the possibilities of an all-encompassing British national identity that could unite imperial communities under Crown authority across boundaries of race, color, region and class.

The public petition movement in Jamaica reached a critical apogee during the spring of 1865 in a series of mass gatherings known as the "Underhill meetings." In January of 1865 Edward Underhill, secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society wrote a widely circulated letter to Edward Cardwell, the Colonial Secretary, in which he reported on the dismal economic and social conditions facing the overwhelming majority of Jamaican working classes. Underhill's letter raised concerns over growing poverty, starvation, crime, high taxes, unemployment, low wages and unjust tribunals.[91] Throughout the early 1860s the island weathered several unanticipated upheavals that proved devastating to wages, production, and local markets including two years of drought and flood, falling sugar and rum prices and an overall declining demand for local exports.[92] In response to growing discontent with the actual experience of dire economic circumstances and deteriorating social conditions, throughout the spring of 1865 a number of mass public meetings took place across the island, many of which adopted the grievances listed in Underhill's letter as a rhetorical platform for protest.

Foreshadowing many of the pressing issues that became characteristic of a number of the memorials that would emerge out of the "Underhill meetings" in April of

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[91] Edward Bean Underhill, *The Tragedy of Morant Bay: A Narrative of the Disturbances in the Island of Jamaica in 1865* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971; original, 1895), xiii-xviii; Bakan, *Ideology and Class Conflict in Jamaica*, 75-76.

[92] Robotham, "'The Notorious Riot'", 46-57; Green, *British Slave Emancipation*, 381-2; Heuman, *The Killing Time*, 44; Hall, *Free Jamaica*, 204; Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, 263-266.

1865 the "Poor People of Jamaica and the parish of St. Ann" had appealed to the Queen for assistance in renting Crown lands at reduced rates. Petitioners described their frustrations with low wages, high export taxes on their personal produce, finding employment, and securing basic subsistence for dependents. If the Queen agreed to aid them in their quest to obtain land at reasonable prices petitioners insisted:

> we will put our hearts and hands to work and cultivate cotton, coffee, corn, canes, and tobacco, and other produce. We will form a company for that purpose, if our Gracious Lady Victoria our Queen will also appoint an agent to receive such produce as we may cultivate, and give us means of subsistence while at work.[93]

Although grassroots political mobilization among the black working class masses yielded a number of appeals to the Queen and other representatives of the imperial Government in 1865, the St. Ann's petition is most notable because of the response that it garnered from the Colonial Office. Writing on behalf of the Queen in a widely circulated and oft-cited proclamation known as the "Queen's Advice" Henry Taylor, a senior clerk in the West India department of the Colonial Office, insisted, "The prosperity of the labouring classes, as well as of all other classes, depends in Jamaica and in other Countries, upon their working for Wages." Taylor argued that by working within the confines of the plantation economy as wage-earners laborers would "render the Plantations productive" which "would enable the Planters to pay them higher Wages." He concluded that only through their own efforts of "availing themselves of the means of prospering that are before them, and not from any such schemes as have been suggested to them," might the Jamaican working classes "look for an improvement in their

[93] Underhill, *The Tragedy of Morant Bay*, 25-26; Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, 277; Heuman, *The Killing Time*, 48-9; Green, *British Slave Emancipation*, 383-384; Sheller, *Democracy After Slavery*, 193; Bakan, *Ideology and Class Conflict in Jamaica*, 84

condition." Essentially, instead of supporting the Jamaican peasantry's plight to maximize their economic possibilities by obtaining land to secure the basic survival needs of families and generate earning potential aside from, or in addition to wages paid by estate owners, the attitude of the imperial Government as reflected in the "Queen's Advice" demonstrated an endorsement of the perpetual proletarianization of the Jamaican peasantry. [94]

The ideological tensions present between the petition issued by the St. Ann's parish laborers and the "Queen's Advice" illuminates a reoccurring motif in the history of the black experience and the British Empire. At the same time that the politics of Empire offered black people the possibilities of inclusion in an egalitarian community of subjects, it also oftentimes rejected their claims to the rights and privileges of subjecthood based largely on presumptions rooted in historic hierarchies of race. Emancipation had provided the black majority of former slaves with an officially acknowledged position in the Empire as members of an imperial community of subjects; however, as noted by Christopher Brown, "Winning the rights of the subject...did not free the liberated from the constraints of race, or the taint of their former status."[95]

What is most striking is that even in their acknowledgement of the stigmas attached to their blackness and buttressed by their former status as slaves, freed men and women continued to cultivate a sense of expectation in relation to the meaning of their identities as British subjects. Membership in an imperial

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[94] Quoted in Green, *British Slave Emancipation*, 384-385. See also Sheller, *Democracy After Slavery*, 193; Heuman, *The Killing Time*, 54-55; Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, 277-278; Bakan, *Ideology and Class Conflict in Jamaica*, 84.

[95] Christopher L Brown, "From Slaves to Subjects," 139.

community of subjects gave them leverage to expect that their emancipation might allow them to transcend the limits of their race, status and class. Their images of themselves within the imperial community of subjects oftentimes provided powerful underpinnings to the resistance strategies that they employed to counter their marginalization and actualize their own interpretations of freedom. The St. Ann's petitioners had invoked their position within the Empire as an imagined space of expectancy that might potentially collapse the critical divide between their visions of economic freedom and their lived realities of high rents, low wages and unemployment. In response, the "Queen's Advice" exhibited the very politics of Empire that essentially reinforced the conditions that threatened and discounted freed people's ideals of the emancipation that Empire had legalized. Essentially, at its core, Britain as Empire held out the possibilities of a trans-regional racial democracy, and yet paradoxically often displayed the potent realities of social, political and economic exclusion founded upon ideas of race.

Just as the St. Ann's petitioners experienced the tensions between their expectations of an Empire that might provide an ally in their quest to qualify their freedom and that of an Empire that attempted to keep them resigned to the lowest rungs of the socio-economic hierarchy, by the mid 1950s, Lord Kitchener had also witnessed striking discrepancies between his vision of imperial London as a space of belonging and his own feelings of exile as a black migrant in London. Celebrating the memories of his homeland in the last stanza of a tune titled, "Sweet Jamaica" recorded in 1952, Lord Kitchener sang,

Many West Indians are sorry now,
They left their country and don't know how,
Some left their jobs and their family,
And determined to come to London city,
Well they are crying, they now regret,
No kind of employment that they can get,
The city of London they have to roam,
They can't get their passage to go back home.[96]

Whereas in 1948 Lord Kitchener had assuredly chanted "London is the place for me," as he exited the *Empire Windrush* upon his arrival in Britain, after just a few years in Britain, his music conveyed his nostalgia for his Caribbean homeland and a shattered sense of expectation about life in Britain. In "Sweet Jamaica" Lord Kitchener alluded to many of the themes that would characterize the experiences of a generation of black migrants in Britain during the postwar period including the difficulties of finding employment and the problems associated with securing decent, affordable housing. Perhaps the most disheartening of circumstances shaping the experiences of black migrants including Lord Kitchener was the absence of a widespread recognition that as members of the imperial body politic, they too, like their white metropolitan counterparts possessed the right to belong in the imperial space of London. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s many of the struggles waged and endured by black migrant communities in Britain pivoted on their intent to assert their right to belong by virtue of their membership in the imperial community of citizens. Therefore, as one considers the myriad of ways that migrants—even through the very act of moving to Britain—negotiated the meaning of their relationship to Empire in the postwar period, it is important to note that they indeed participated in and reshaped a broader history of race and

[96] Lord Kitchener, "Sweet Jamaica," *London is the Place For Me: Trinidadian Calypso in London, 1950-1956* (London: Honest Jon's Records Ltd, 2002), compact disc recording.

Empire in which people of African descent made claims upon, fractured, expanded and redefined the meaning of British citizenship.

CHAPTER TWO

Migration, Race and the Reconstruction of "Civis Britannicus Sum"

In a world in which restrictions on personal movement and immigration have increased we can still take pride in the fact that a man can say Civis Britannicus Sum whatever his colour may be, and we take pride in the fact that he wants and can come to the Mother Country.[97]

-Henry Hopkins, Colonial Secretary, 1954

No single set of economic, social or political factors can wholly account for the unprecedented numbers of West Indians who chose Britain as a migration destination in the early postwar period. For over a decade beginning in the late 1940s successive waves of people of color migrated from various parts of the Commonwealth, the overwhelming majority of whom were people of African descent arriving from the Caribbean, and more specifically Jamaica. Estimates of the total number of people of color residing in Britain before 1951 indicate that less than 15,000 resided in various regions, the majority concentrated in major urban centers including London and Birmingham.[98] By 1961, when Parliament considered the first in a succession of migration restrictions designed specifically to limit the "influx" of Commonwealth migrants, according to the census reports for England and Wales some 171, 796 Caribbean-born migrants alone had settled in Britain. While Commonwealth migration trends would change by the end of the 1960s

[97] "Civis Britannicus Sum" is from the Latin and translated, "I am a British Citizen." Quoted from Randall Hansen, "The Politics of Citizenship in 1940s Britain: The British Nationality Act," *Twentieth Century British History* 10, 1 (1999): 70. This quote is taken from a Parliamentary debate in the House of Commons on 5 November 1954.

[98] Ruth Glass, *Newcomers*, 4.

with the expansion of South Asian migration, in 1961 West Indian migrants represented the overwhelming majority of the total number of people of color in Britain.[99]

In 1955, Norman Manley, Prime Minister of Jamaica, commissioned a government-sponsored survey of Jamaican migration to Britain. Manley intended to use the study to develop services both in Jamaica and Britain that would assist prospective migrants with preparing for their move and adjusting to life in Britain. In the preface of the report, its authors explained:

> The term 'migration' is used throughout the report with reference to the movement of West Indians to the United Kingdom, rather than immigration, because the latter term technically should be confined to movements across political boundaries which involve a possible change in citizenship. The West Indian is a 'citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies' according to the British Nationality Act of 1948.[100]

These introductory remarks offer an important point of departure in situating postwar black migration from the Caribbean to Britain within the context of the long history of race and Empire. They articulate a distinct understanding of the nature of Caribbean migration to Britain—one that entailed movement across spatial, as opposed to political boundaries—and in the process, they invoke the claims to and conditions of citizenship as a means of authenticating this particular conceptualization of West Indian migration to Britain. As author Donald Hines has contended, "West Indian migrants in Britain have, right from the start, based the case for being in the United Kingdom squarely on the fact that they had a right to be in the 'mother country.'[101]

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[99] Ceri Peach, *West Indian Migration to Britain: A Social Geography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), xv, 1. Peach notes that this figure may be at least 20% too low and bases this assumption on the fact that by the beginning of 1966, there were 330,000 Caribbean-born persons in Britain.

[100] Clarence Senior and Douglas Manley, *A Report on Jamaican Migration to Great Britain* (Kingston: The Government Printers, 1955), unnumbered pages included before forward.

[101] Donald Hinds, *Journey To An Illusion: West Indian Migrants in Britain* (London: Heinemann, 1966), 170.

According to the terms of the British Nationality Act of 1948, all British subjects resident in metropolitan Britain, the colonies and Commonwealth countries became formally united under the banner of a universal Commonwealth citizenship that ideally transcended social divisions marked by race, region, class and gender. In addition, the policy established a shared national sub-category of British citizenship between metropolitan and colonial communities—"Citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies"—and officially institutionalized the long held tradition of intra-imperial migration to Britain as a legal provision of Commonwealth citizenship. Along with the right of migration to Britain, colonials and other Commonwealth citizens assumed the full privileges, entitlements and responsibilities of British citizenship enjoyed by their metropolitan counterparts including the right to permanently settle and work in Britain.[102]

The introductory statement included in the Jamaican government's report on migration to Britain provides an important insight into the myriad of ways that Caribbean migrants constructed themselves in relation to the migratory process and framed their expectations of life in Britain. The report clearly employs a language of citizenship to define the meaning of Caribbean migration to Britain as a movement across imperial spaces within the borders of a unified civic community and therefore draws attention the ways that the citizenship status of Caribbean migrants structured the terms of their movement and perhaps more importantly, their expectations of migration. To be sure, while the Jamaican government report underscores how citizenship represents a critical avenue through which one can examine the process of migration, it is also useful to consider the ways that migrants themselves, through the act of migration, clarified and

[102] Mike Phillips and Trevor Phillips, *Windrush*, 74; Paul, *Whitewashing Britain,* 10-24; Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain* 35-49; Spencer *British Immigration Policy Since 1939,* 53-55.

readjusted the porous boundaries of the imperial body politic and subsequently expanded and reconfigured the contours of British citizenship.

This chapter unfolds by exploring the dialogic and complex relationships between migration and citizenship. As noted in the previous chapter, the history of race and Empire has been shaped in large measure by countless examples of black men and women's relentless struggles to articulate and substantiate their claims to citizenship within the British imperial community. One of the central premises buttressing this discussion is how the act of migration represented a critical conduit through which black migrants from the Caribbean projected an understanding of and authenticated the meaning of their British citizenship on their own terms. Essentially, this chapter highlights the ways that migration functioned as one of many channels through which black migrants from the Caribbean activated their citizenship, and in the process, negotiated their own sense of Britishness and simultaneously fractured and expanded commonly held notions of British national identity. Acting on the provisions established by the British Nationality Act of 1948, as Jamaicans and other Caribbean migrants settled in Britain, not only did they make claims upon their rights as British citizens, but in doing so, they also constructed a vision of Britishness in which the bonds that sustained Empire became the very mechanisms used to assume and articulate a British national identity that transcended the boundaries of race. As thousands of Caribbean migrants entered the British Isles during the 1950s and early 1960s, their act of migration demonstrated an understanding that their position in the Empire and membership in the imperial

community established and guaranteed them the rights, privileges, protections and freedoms of British citizens.[103]

To situate this conversation, this chapter begins by juxtaposing the coincidental, yet historically revealing timing of the Parliamentary debates surrounding the consideration of the British Nationality Act of 1948 and the arrival of the *S.S. Empire Windrush*. Taken together, these two events represent a critical moment when the ideological possibilities of British citizenship collided with the practical limitations of British citizenship. At the center of this conundrum rested the historical tension between black expectations and imaginings of British citizenship and deeply engrained assumptions about the racially exclusive boundaries of British national identity and the superiority of metropolitan whiteness. To be sure, this tension was not specific to postwar developments concerning questions of race, citizenship and migration, but rather it characterized a broader history and culture of Empire in which people of African descent lived within and constantly negotiated social hierarchies of race which privileged whiteness and devalued blackness. Therefore, as one examines postwar black migration from the Caribbean to Britain, one must consider the ways that migrants participated in a long history of race and Empire in which the Empire provided a language of possibilities and opportunities for citizenship and racial egalitarianism, yet paradoxically, cultivated a contrasting social reality in which the markers of blackness served as the rationale behind race based exclusion, discrimination and second class citizenship.

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[103] James Hampshire, *Citizenship and Belonging: Immigration and the Politics of Demographic Governance in Postwar Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 16. Hampshire's recent study on citizenship and postwar migration supports this contention as he notes that Commonwealth migrants "arrival on British shores was...a legitimate exercise of their citizenship rights."

While the first half of the chapter probes the relationship between migration and citizenship within the context of the history of race and Empire, the second half of the chapter more closely examines the character of postwar black migration and interrogates the ways that the migration process—encompassing both actual movement and settlement—produced and remade racial identities.[104] In lieu of detailing the major political and economic structural factors influencing migration patterns and the mediating structures and social networks that facilitated the migration process, this section pays particular attention to both the markers of blackness in British society, and the ways that the social stigmas attached to blackness structured the everyday lives of migrants of African descent from the Caribbean.[105]

Race, Empire and British National Identity

In 1937, a British delegate to the United Nations declared, "It is the practice of the United Kingdom not to make any distinction between different races in British colonies as regards to civil and political rights, or the right of entry into and residence in the United Kingdom."[106] With the passage of the British Nationality Act of 1948, the informal practice and imperial precedent referred to by the United Nations delegate received official recognition in the form of an institutionalized nationality policy that

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[104] Stephen Castles and Mark Miller, *Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World* (New York: Guilford Press, 1993), 19-29, 45-46.

[105] The use of concepts including "mediating structures" and "social networks" are applied as they are associated with migration paradigms that advocate for a world systems approach that allows one to understand the migration process as it is facilitated by political and economic structural determinants, social networks, families, and the individual decisions of migrants themselves. James Jackson and Leslie Moch, "Migration and the Social History of Modern Europe," *Historical Methods* (Winter, 1989), 27-33; Monica Boyd, "Family and Personal Networks in International Migration: Recent Developments and New Agendas," *International Migration Review* 23, 3 (Autumn, 1989), 638-670. See also Dirk Hoerder and Leslie Page Moch, eds. *European Migrants: Global and Local Perspectives* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1996) and Jan Lucassen and Leo Lucassen, eds. *Migration, Migration History, History* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 1997).

[106] Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*,54.

both legalized a shared citizenship status between metropolitan and colonial British subjects and granted colonials the rights of entry and settlement in the British Isles. Although the policy echoed the racially egalitarian ideals espoused in the statement issued by the United Nations delegate, in much the same way that the delegate's proclamation was premised upon a racialized understanding of the British imperial community, policy-makers considerations of the British Nationality Act of 1948 reveal striking ideological differences between their perceptions of the boundaries of British citizenship and the principles of universalism embossed in the democratic rhetoric of British nationality policy.

The British Nationality Act of 1948 emerged as a Parliamentary response to the passage of the Canadian Nationality Act of 1946. Under the terms of the Canadian policy, British subjecthood became a derivative of, rather than a precursor to Canadian citizenship. As such, the policy represented a decisive departure from the nationality principles maintained under the provisions of the British Nationality and Status Aliens Act of 1914. This act implemented uniformed naturalization procedures and provided for a shared universal British subjecthood status throughout metropolitan Britain, the dominions and the colonies. Although the common status was to serve as the primary nationality of British subjects throughout the Empire and Commonwealth, dominions did have the option of establishing local citizenships as sub-categories of British subjecthood.[107]

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the dominions persistently engaged various means of distinguishing their individual national communities, including restrictive

[107] Hansen "The Politics of Citizenship in 1940s Britain,"69, 71-77; Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain*, 37-45; Paul *Whitewashing Britain*, 10-11.

immigration policies and selective enfranchisement, as part of a broader move to assert and clarify their own sovereignty and constitutional authority aside from the realm of metropolitan interests. However, in spite of these various measures designed to differentiate the borders of the dominion communities, what remained intact was the primacy of British subjecthood, and therefore, the superiority of the common status. The institution of the Canadian Nationality Act of 1946 altered the principles buttressing the common status because it inverted the relationship between local citizenship and the historic imperial nationality. Canadian citizenship then became the gateway to British subjecthood which meant that the imperial status became secondary to an individual's locally defined national status.[108] As a result this "break down" of the traditions that had fortified the common status forced the British Parliament to not only look for avenues to preserve the historic sense of imperial nationality, but more importantly, to reexamine the metropolitan community's own ideas about British citizenship and the parameters of British national identity.[109]

While Parliamentary debates over the British Nationality Act of 1948 raised a number of issues including the prerogatives of Commonwealth dominions to establish their own local citizenships, the ambiguities of British subjecthood for residents of Northern Ireland who maintained political ties to the United Kingdom, and the denaturalization of British women married to non-British subjects, the most critical point of contention involved questions concerning the creation of an applicable local

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[108] Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 14; Hansen, "The Politics of Citizenship in 1940s Britain," 73; Kathleen Paul " 'British Subjects' and 'British Stock': Labour's Postwar Imperialism," *The Journal of British Studies* 34, 2 (April, 1999), 240-241.

[109] "Break down" was the term used by Home Secretary, Chuter Ede to characterize the impact of the Canadian Nationality Act of 1946 on the common code system derived from the 1914 nationality policy. Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons 7 July 1948 Vol. 453, col. 387.

citizenship status for both the metropolitan and colonial communities. If Parliament was to acknowledge the right of the Canadian government to enact a unilateral citizenship status that trumped British subjecthood, it would also have to anticipate that the Canadian legislation might indeed represent a new paradigm of Commonwealth relations that would be adopted by other Commonwealth nations.

In February of 1947, the British Government hosted a meeting of nationality experts from throughout the Commonwealth to outline a proposal for legislating British nationality in light of the new Canadian policy. As a result, the contours of the British Nationality Policy of 1948 took shape. Taking a cue from Canada, at the heart of the proposal was a plan to create a new category of local citizenship—"Citizenship of the United Kingdom and Colonies"—which would then serve as the portal through which individuals in the British Isles and the colonies would be considered British subjects.[110] Explaining the need for such a policy, Home Secretary, Chuter Ede argued that the bill was "a natural sequel" to the provisions established in the 1931 Statute of Westminster.[111] Under the terms of this agreement, Parliament formally acknowledged the limits of its power in the dominions and officially recognized the dominions of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and Eire as equal partners along with Britain in a Commonwealth of Nations bound by an allegiance to the Crown for the principal purposes of security, trade and economic development.[112] Ede, who had been instrumental in lobbying the Cabinet to explore amendments to the British nationality

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[110] Hansen, "The Politics of Citizenship in 1940s Britain", p.77

[111] Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons 7 July 1948 col. 386

[112] Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 2; L.J. Butler, *Britain and Empire: Adjusting to a Post-Imperial World* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), 5; George Boyce, *Decolonisation and the British Empire, 1775-1997* (London: MacMillan Press , 1999), 78, 98, 142

policy after the Canadian government expressed intentions to depart from the common code system, was one of the leading proponents of the bill. He insisted that in accordance with the Statute of Westminster, creating a local citizenship for the metropole and colonies would serve as a necessary endeavor "so that our fellows in the Dominions can understand and can realise that we are in fact recognising the equality of status with this country of each of the Dominions."[113]

In addition to noting the demise of the common system and the need to align the United Kingdom with the shifting politics of the Commonwealth, Ede urged his Parliamentary colleagues to consider the ways that a shared local citizenship between the metropole and colonies could serve as "an essential party of the development of the relationship between this Mother Country and the Colonies who are administered in varying degrees of self government and tutelage by the Colonial Office." Anticipating many of his critics, Ede recognized that many of his colleagues felt "that it would be a bad thing to give the coloured races of the Empire the idea that, in some way or other, they are the equals of the people in this country." However, he conceded, "It is true that we cannot admit all these backward peoples immediately into the full rights that British subjects in this country enjoy," but urged, "we must give these people a feeling that on that homespun dignity of man we recognise them as fellow citizens."[114] Even though Ede supported the bill because of the ways that it reflected a move towards Britain's acceptance of the egalitarian principles of the Commonwealth ideal, his logic for establishing a shared citizenship between residents of the United Kingdom and those of

[113] Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons 7 July 1948 cols. 393, 398.

[114] Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons 7 July 1948 col. 393,

the colonies was clearly tempered by racialized notions of both the colonial populations and the meaning of the most authentic sense of British national identity.

Both Robert Miles and Kathleen Paul have noted that although the British Nationality Bill of 1948 espoused the notions of egalitarianism and universalism underlying the Commonwealth ideal, in constructing their arguments about the boundaries of British national identity in consideration of the bill, policy-makers relied upon a set of assumptions about the people of the colonial territories and the dominions framed by the racial hierarchies that historically validated and sustained British imperialism.[115] In response to Chuter Ede's arguments in favor of the bill, M.P. David Renton insisted that historically, "it has not been an easy matter to keep together so many of the diverse and often primitive races of the world under the British flag," but that this feat had been accomplished by giving these groups "an easy conception...of a great Queen [reference to Queen Victoria] in a distant land, who would give them protection, who would give them prosperity, who no doubt would expect them to work in return, but whose subjects they were."[116] Renton went on to define what he saw as three distinct categories of British subjects existing outside of the metropolitan community. Relying upon his own experience in Egypt he conjectured, "The first are British in the full sense. Mostly British born, they are racially British and are recongisable as such." Included in this group were mainly English-speaking "business people" who had worked in various imperial outpost, but "come home to England when they retire." He added, "They have United Kingdom nationality." In the second category Renton included "the descendents

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[115]Robert Miles, "Nationality, Citizenship, and Migration to Britain, 1945-1951," *Journal of Law and Society* 16 (Winter, 1989): 426-442; Paul, "British Subjects" and "British Stock": Labour's Postwar Imperialism" *Journal of British Studies* 34 (April., 1995): 237-240.

[116] Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons 7 July 1948 col. 475.

of British pioneers" who remained in colonies but "maintained themselves racially pure for several generations." Renton's third category consisted of individuals who were "of British nationality only in a technical view of the law," with "little or no British blood." He noted that these British subjects were less likely to speak English and added that "they do not look English, or for that matter Scottish, Irish, or Welsh."[117] Renton's racially and cultural charged assumptions reveal much about the lenses through which policy-makers and perhaps the majority of imperially conscious metropolitan society viewed the British Empire/Commonwealth. His arguments demonstrate the existence of a particular vision of race and racial communities in which national origins, color, class and cultural perceptions operated as the most salient components of racial identities.

As Parliament members contemplated the merits of the British Nationality of Act of 1948 they repeatedly made reference to these particular markers of racial difference to describe the communities of the Empire/Commonwealth abroad and subsequently, their visions of themselves and the metropolitan community. Speaking against the bill's attempt to create a shared citizenship between metropolitan Britain and the colonies, M.P. David Maxwell Fyfe insisted the metropolitan community "had much to offer the people of the Dominions, and more to people of the racially distinct and smaller countries of the Commonwealth." However, on the matter of the bill's delineation of a shared citizenship between metropole and colonies, he contended, "citizenship" was not "an appropriate word for describing the relationship and geographical situation" between metropolitan Britain and the colonies. [118]

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[117] Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons 7 July 1948 cols. 476-477.

[118] Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, 7 July 1948 cols. 403, 410.

In subsequent debates, Fyfe explained, that "citizenship should be equated with an area of sovereignty" and "must always be equated with some homogeneity and some true community of interest and status." He added, "The new category is only a verbal residue to cover what is left when we have subtracted the citizens of each of the Dominions. It has no justification in logic or in any other relevant aspect, as it does not describe any sense of community.[119] Taken together, Fyfe's remarks clearly reveal his conception of Empire/Commonwealth as a hierarchical entity structured by race. At the top of this social conglomerate he positioned the majority white metropolitan community which he described in classic imperialistic terms as the supreme benefactor of civilized society. As inheritors of metropolitan traditions he first positions the people of the dominions—which mostly likely was a reference limited to the Old dominions including Australia and New Zealand whose societies were largely comprised of white descendents of the metropolitan community—followed by the "racially distinct" or non-white majority populations of the smaller imperial dependencies whom his statement presumes were most deficient, and therefore benefited most from contact with metropolitan society and culture.

In an earlier debate in the House of Lords, Lord Altrincham made a case similar to Fyfe's regarding the inaptness of citizenship as a means of describing the relationship between Britain and the colonies. Altrincham noted that uniting the metropole and colonies under a common citizenship "does not bind like to like" because the union would attempt to bridge "what is geographically, socially and politically a most

[119] **Parliamentary Debates**, House of Commons 13 July 1948 col. 1027.

heterogeneous community at many different stages of development."[120] Altrincham contended that a local British citizenship should only be established if applied solely to the metropolitan community. He argued, "'British' is ours by every right of blood and soil" and that it was "the right and proper name for the national citizenship...for the people of this island [reference to the British Isles.]"[121]

Another point reiterated by opponents of the bill was the idea that establishing a local citizenship for the United Kingdom which included the colonial populations, would create a privileged class of British citizens which would favor the people of the colonial Empire as opposed to residents of the dominion nations. Several Parliaments members including David Maxwell Fyfe, Ivor Thomas, Ronald Chamberlain and John Foster of the House of Commons along with Lord Altrincham and Viscount Simons of the House of Lords asserted that because British subjects migrating to Britain from the dominions would have to wait for a period of twelve months before they could exercise in full the rights of British citizenship shared by those who were considered Citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies, including the right to vote and stand for Parliament, that the bill unfairly discriminated against them. To outline this problem with the bill's provisions members often invoked contrasting images of race to describe those who might reap the most benefits with those whom the bill could potentially marginalize.

On this issue M.P. David Maxwell Fyfe noted that "a Canadian would have to wait 12 months to take up a job which was open to citizens of Britain and the

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[120] Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords 11 May 1948 col. 784.

[121] Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords 11 May 1948 col. 786-787.

Colonies...someone from the West Indies—need not wait at all."[122] Fyfe contended that these favored ties between metropolitan Britain and the colonial communities ignored more authentic racial and cultural bonds among the Commonwealth communities. He explained, "what the ordinary citizen [of Britain] has not got is a feeling which gives him a special unity with the inhabitants of a Colony and excludes from that special unity his first cousin in a Dominion, with whom he may have played in his grandfather's house."[123] M.P. Ivor Thomas of Keighley concurred with Fyfe adding that "it is certainly anomalous that one the West Indians...should be in a more favourable position in this country than someone who comes here from Australia or New Zealand."[124] Reiterating this point, M.P. Ronald Chamberlain of Norwood insisted that the bill created "a situation that if someone comes from the West Indies or Nigeria he is a recognised citizen of this country immediately, but if someone comes from Australia or Canada it is not so."[125]

When this issue arose in the House of Lords Viscount Simon noted that under the bill's provisions,

> A man who comes from Jamaica or the Gold Coast, being a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies from the beginning, enjoys that prestige without any special action on his part...But before a citizen of Canada or Australia can become a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies, he has to live here for twelve months, which the man from the Colonies need not do.[126]

While Simons' illustration echoed the more dichotomous examples of racial imagery used in House of Commons debates, contrasting regions with majority populations of

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[122] Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons 7 July 1948 col. 408-409.

[123] Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons 13 July 1948 cols. 1027-1028.

[124] Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons 7 July 1948 col. 415-416.

[125] Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, 13 July 1948 col. 1053-1054

[126] Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords 11 May 1948 col. 766.

African descent with those having majority European origins, his colleague, Lord Altrincham used a more racially textured example to make his point on this subject. Altrincham urged his colleagues in the House of Lords to carefully consider the effects of differentiating between British subjects in the manner provided by the bill:

> Take the position of a Canadian or Australian, or a citizen of Pakistan or Ceylon. His status here will be inferior to that of millions of member of entirely primitive societies, whose contributions to the development of the Commonwealth is in no way on par with his. Any of the King's subjects in the Colonial Empire, however primitive of mind, can come to this country and exercise the full rights of citizenship the same day as he arrives, while the Australians or the citizen of any other Dominion must, but for special leave, wait twelve month before such status if granted.[127]

Although Altrincham included the predominately non-white populations of Pakistan and Ceylon as groups that the legislation would unjustly temporarily disfranchise in comparison to their colonial counterparts upon their migration to Britain, what similarly resonates among his argument on this point and those of his Parliamentary colleagues is the hierarchical prism of race through which he viewed the imperial community. The overwhelming majority of the colonial territories represented regions in Caribbean and Africa with majority populations consisting of people of African descent. From Altrincham's perspective, it was these communities which were the "primitive societies" that ranked at the bottom of the social hierarchy of Empire.

In spite of forceful opposition in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords against the creation of a shared local British citizenship between Britain and the colonies, the British Nationality Act of 1948 prevailed. To understand why this occurred, it is important to look beyond the racially exclusive visions of British identity represented

[127] Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords, 11 May 1948 col. 784.

in the Parliamentary debates on the question of citizenship and contextualize the bill's passage in relation to the larger political issues in play at the close of World War II. Not only did the Canadian government's move to institute a new nationality policy represent a break from the historic relations of Empire, but perhaps more importantly, the British government's willingness to reexamine questions of nationality and citizenship in the wake of the new Canadian legislation illuminates a broader postwar trend defining Britain's changing relationship to its imperial past.

Following World War II, the one of the central paradoxes shaping British politics involved reconciling the desires to maintain the legacies of world dominance shaped by the history of imperial relations, and adjusting to new realities presented by the declining significance of the British Empire as a geopolitical construct. As noted by historian L. J. Butler in the period between World War I and World War II, due to its extensive imperial resources, Britain could have easily been regarded as the world's sole "superpower."[128] However, the end of the war signaled a new phase in international politics marked by the rise of American economic hegemony, the emergence of the Cold War, the streamlining of imperial military and political commitments, heightened expressions of colonial nationalisms all compounded by the need to facilitate the recovery and reconstruction of Britain's own domestic economy. According to Chris Walters all of these elements contributed to a postwar a "crisis of national self-representation" that took even greater shape during the late 1950s and 1960s and produced an "intense questioning about what

[128] L. J. Butler, *Britain and Empire: Adjusting to a Post-Imperial World.* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2002), 189.

it now meant to be British."[129] It is in this context that one can consider the ways that the racially egalitarian premises buttressing the British Nationality Act of 1948 could be adapted as official policy in light of policy makers' hierarchical vision of the racial communities encompassing Empire/Commonwealth and the exclusive parameters of British identity. Essentially, the British Nationality Act of 1948 represented a means to redress the fading image of Britain's imperial legacy through the institutionalization of a trans-racial, trans-regional citizenship category that bolstered the appearance of Commonwealth uniformity. It was then British policy makers' preoccupations with maintaining "the appearance of concord and unity throughout the Commonwealth," rather than a pressing commitment to principles of racial democracy embedded in the egalitarian rhetoric of the British Nationality Act of 1948 that lead to its adoption as official policy.[130]

Although policy makers' considerations of the British Nationality Act of 1948 focused primarily on its intended role in redefining British citizenship, upon its passage, the bill provided the legal structures of both a citizenship and somewhat indirectly, a migration policy. Not only did the act define the parameters for determining who would

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[129] Waters, "'Dark Strangers' in Our Midst: Discourses of Race and Nation in Britain, 1947-1963," 208, 214-215; Frank Heinlein, *British Government Policy and Decolonisation, 1945-1963: Scrutinizing the Official Mind* (London: Frank Cass, 2002), 88-89; Butler, *Britain and Empire*, 29-62; D. George Boyce, *Decolonisation and the British Empire, 1775-1997* (London: MacMillan Press, 1999), 116-117.

[130] This is a reference used by M.P. Osbert Peake of Leeds, North to describe the purpose of the provisions of the British Nationality Act of 1948. Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons 7 July 1948 col.488. See also Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain*, 17-18, 35-61, 66-7. Hansen's study is rather dismissive of the ways in which the primacy of maintaining the appearance of imperial uniformity was directly linked to transforming the Commonwealth into a symbol of multiracialism in the postwar period. Instead, Hansen focuses on the ways in which policy makers purposed the British Nationality Act primarily formalize historic imperial relationships with the white dominions of the Old Commonwealth. In an alternative reading of the significance of the British Nationality Act of 1948, Bob Carter, Clive Harris and Shirley Joshi maintain that the Act's relevance to imperial interests also entailed a desire to thwart the rising tide of colonial nationalism. See Bob Carter, Clive Harris and Shirley Joshi, "The 1951-55 Conservative Government and the Racialization of Black Immigration" in *Inside Babylon: The Caribbean Diaspora in Britain* eds. Winston James and Clive Harris (London: Verso Press, 1993), 57.

be included in the imperial community of British citizens, but as a derivative of that, it also reinforced a long held tradition of entry for all of subjects of the British Empire and citizens of Commonwealth countries. While the goal of preserving the appearance of Commonwealth unity might have provided the ideological premises for the adoption of the British Nationality Act of 1948, it would be the issue of migration—and more specifically, black migration and the emergence of more visible black communities in Britain—that would test the substantive value of the new policy and force the metropolitan community to again clarify its own definitions of British identity.

Recent scholarship has noted that although the British Nationality Act of 1948 gave legal currency for postwar black Commonwealth migrations, policy makers did not speculate on the ramifications of the bill as a migration policy or chapter in the evolution of Britain as a multiracial society. [131] This argument is clearly supported in Parliamentary debates, but should not completely obscure the relationship between citizenship, race and postwar black migration. The racial undertones framing the Parliamentary debates on British citizenship policy elucidate a critical social commentary on British policy makers' perceptions of who had the most legitimate access to claims to British national identity. What policy makers consistently agreed upon, whether they expressed support or opposition to the provisions of the bill, was the idea that the Empire/Commonwealth represented a hierarchical conglomerate of racial communities in which the of the colonial territories—who were overwhelmingly comprised of populations of African descent—ranked lowest in the social order. Both sides of Parliamentary debate on British citizenship were infused with a racialized vision of Empire/Commonwealth that

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[131] Hansen, "The Politics of Citizenship in 1940s Britain," 93-5. See also Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration to Postwar Britain*, esp. ch.2; Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, 53-55.

positioned the majority white metropolitan community as supreme, followed by the majority white dominions and independent Commonwealth nations. Being the most politically, culturally, socially and abstracted from and inferior to metropolitan community, the colonies occupied the bottom rung of the racialized imperial social hierarchy. It is in this context that one must consider that although policy makers did not envisage that the rights of migration secured through British citizenship might potentially transplant the racial, ethnic and cultural diversity of Empire to metropolitan Britain, when this happened there were already preexisting frameworks grounded in the historic relationships and perceptions of Empire through which metropolitan society received black migrants from the Commonwealth. More importantly, even though policy makers had limited visions of the meaning of British citizenship, black people of Empire oftentimes constructed alternative and more inclusive boundaries to describe the British community and their own sense of and claims to a British identity.

Migration and the Meaning of British Citizenship

The arrival of the *S.S. Empire Windrush* transporting 492 Caribbean migrants to Britain in June of 1948 has come to represent an iconic reference point for interpreting both the history of postwar black migration and the transformation of the politics of race in metropolitan British society.[132] Many scholarly appraisals of the racial politics of postwar black migration tend to privilege Kathleen Paul's assertion that "the significance of the *Empire Windrush*" as the consummate symbol of the unprecedented arrivals of Caribbean migrants to Britain following World War II, "lies not in the motivation of the

[132]Mike Phillips and Trevor Phillips *Windrush*, 2. Most studies of black migration to postwar Britain use the arrival of the *Empire Windrush* as the starting point, largely because of the ways that the arrival prompted official discussions of black migration.

migrants but in the response of the British state."[133] Studies including Paul's have oftentimes inserted this presumption to explore the extent to which the racial politics of black migration prompted a critical policy shift symbolized through the move from the racial liberalism embodied in the provisions of the British Nationality Act of 1948 to the rise of racially motivated Commonwealth migration restrictions in the early 1960s. If one uncritically privileges the reactions of the British state to the dilemmas presented by black migration, historical debate over questions of race, citizenship and postwar black migration becomes narrowly focused on the extent to which policy makers relied upon racist thinking to resolve issues arising from shifting racial dynamics. While that narrative certainly informs the history of postwar black migration, this project departs from and attempts to reevaluate the conclusions of previous studies and critically indulge the motives, perspectives and voices of migrants in interpreting the relationship between race and citizenship and the social transformations concerning race relations in postwar Britain effected by black migration. In doing so, one gains a different perspective, even of the significance of the *Empire Windrush*; for it was not in the arrival of the steamer in Britain, but its departure from Jamaica that marks the more critical moment in the history of race, citizenship and black migration to postwar Britain.

On June 16, 1948 in a telegram to the Acting Governor of Jamaica, Creech Jones, the Colonial Secretary, urged that it was "essential" that he "should know whether [the] decision of Jamaicans to travel to by *Empire Windrush* to England was of their own

[133] Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 112. Other studies that reinforce this argument by focusing largely on the ways that policy-makers interpreted postwar migration from the Caribbean include Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain* and Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*.

motion."[134] On that same day, Jones answered questions in the House of Commons about the Colonial Office's preparedness concerning the housing, employment and general welfare of the *Empire Windrush*'s passengers. In his statements to Parliament members Jones noted that "The West Indians in question booked their passages privately," and explained that despite the fact that most had not made prior work arrangements and had been warned of uncertain employment prospects in Britain before departing, it appeared "that the men concerned are prepared to take their chances of finding employment." When asked if the Colonial Office might institute measures to screen potential migrants to judge "if they are likely to be suitable for employment" in Britain, Jones responded, "We recognise the need for some vetting, but obviously we cannot interfere with the movement of British subjects," adding, "It is very unlikely that a similar event to this will occur again in the West Indies."[135]

Jones' telegram to the Governor of Jamaica and his comments to Parliament members unmasks a critical, yet underprivileged, perspective shaping the significance of the *Empire Windrush* passengers. The passengers of the *Empire Windrush* along with the thousands of other black migrants from the Caribbean who journeyed to Britain during the 1950s and early 1960s did so on their own accord—meaning outside of the confines of government mandates or regulations.[136] If one is to speak of a "Windrush generation," what most clearly defines this reference of black postwar movement

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[134]PRO CO 876/88 Telegram to the Acting Governor of Jamaica from the Colonial Secretary dated 16 June 1948; Quoted from Mike Phillips and Trevor Phillips, *Windrush,* 69.

[135] Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons 16 June 1948 col. 421-422.

[136] Kathleen Paul notes that unlike seamen and military personnel who traveled to Britain from the Caribbean during the first half of the twentieth century postwar migrants came to Britain as "independent British subjects" who "were thus beyond the public control of the Colonial Office." Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 114.

between the Caribbean to Britain is that it was a massive movement of choice by self-selected individuals. While certainly the terms and conditions of individual migrations were shaped by a broad spectrum of social forces, mediating structures and informal networks and associations, the fundamental, yet all too often overlooked element of the significance of the sailing of the *Empire Windrush* is that migrants made a choice. Migrants chose to leave behind the familiarities of their homelands. Migrants made conscious decisions to part ways with spouses, children and other relatives—even if only temporarily. Most importantly, migrants elected to face the uncertainties of life in Britain—a place where most Caribbeans had knowledge of, but relatively few had journeyed. As one examines the choices that black migrants made to travel to Britain one must consider the range of aggregate social and ideological elements that prompted Caribbean migrants to chose Britain as a destination during the 1950s and 1960s. In doing so, this investigation must begin by exploring black migrants' conceptions of Britain, their expectations of life in Britain and perhaps most importantly their own ideas about their relationship to and within British society.

In the companion volume to the BBC television series commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of the *Empire Windrush* to Britain, journalists Mike Phillips and Trevor Phillips poignantly remarked, "the people on the Windrush...regarded their 'Britishness' as non-negotiable."[137] These authors' conclusions draw attention to the ways that migrants might have conceived of themselves in relation to British society even before their actual arrival in Britain. According to Arthur Curling, a passenger on the *Empire Windrush* who had served in the RAF during World War II, it was experiences in his homeland of Jamaica that cultivated his sense of his own Britishness:

[137] Mike Phillips and Trevor Phillips *Windrush,* 5.

> We were always British. In Jamaica I can remember, when it was the Queen's birthday or the King's birthday or the Coronation, everything was done way Britain wanted us to. We hadn't our own identity...England was 'the mother country', as they used to say, and anything the English did or the British did was always right, you know.[138]

Curling's statements illuminate the ways in which British cultural imperialism operated in the colonial context and influenced the ways in which black colonials saw themselves in relation to the British community. Using Jamaica as a case study, Brian L. Moore and Michele Anderson have shown that throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century British imperialists actively promoted a "cult of monarchy and empire" that infused colonial culture in the Caribbean with royal celebrations, pageantry and imperial imagery as a means of molding Caribbean communities into "civilized" and loyal British subjects. Moore and Anderson are careful to note that while the "cult of monarchy and empire" was a potent social force designed to secure and fortify the cultural hegemony of British imperialism— predicated on a social hierarchy of race that privileged upper and middle class notions of metropolitan whiteness and devalued the black colonial working class masses—the black masses' identification with and acceptance of this mechanism of social engineering did not completely overshadow their ability to exercise their own "cultural power." Their study demonstrates that while black colonials oftentimes subscribed to the ideologies and cultural agendas proposed by British imperialism, they also appropriated those discourses for strategic purposes including access to routes of social mobility.[139]

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[138] Mike Phillips and Trevor Phillips, *Windrush*, 12.

[139]Brian L. Moore and Michele A. Johnson, *Neither Led Nor Driven: Contesting British Cultural Imperialism in Jamaica, 1805-1920* (Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2004), 271-325.

Moore and Anderson's arguments have much to offer in terms of understanding the ways that Caribbean migrants' perceptions of their relationship to Britain influenced their choice to migrate and the ways in which their decisions to migrate might be interpreted in that same context. The decision to migrate inherently involved a migrant interpreting that their relationship to Britain allowed for the possibilities that without any form of government intervention, they would be able to successfully negotiate geographical borders, settle in Britain, search for opportunities to secure employment and potentially access new avenues of social mobility unavailable in the home society. In essence, as migrants made choices about their movement to Britain, they also made claims upon, used to their advantage and affirmed their membership in the imperial body politic. As Walter Lothen, a Jamaican carpenter who made the trek to Britain in 1954 explained,

> People did think England was the mother country. When I came here [London] I didn't have a status as a Jamaican. I was British and going to the mother country was like going from one parish to another. You had no conception of it being different.[140]

While it is clear that Lothen identifies with the "cult of monarchy and empire" that Moore and Anderson reference, his statements suggest that his own sense of Britishness allowed him to evaluate the possibilities of migration as one of the privileges or perhaps more appropriately, an entitlement of his membership in the imperial community of British subjects. Even more striking about Lothen's remarks is the ways in which he positions himself as both "British" and a Jamaican in Britain. His comments illuminate a keen awareness of the limits of his Jamaican national and colonial identity in Britain and juxtapose this reality with the possibilities garnered via his claims to

[140] "Walter Lothen" *Forty Winters On: Memories of Britain's Post War Caribbean Immigrants* (London: South London Press, 1988), 23.

Britishness. In this sense, Walter Lothen draws attention to the ways that one cannot easily classify black migrants' claims to Britishness or British citizenship as simply a conditioned hegemonic response to the pervasiveness of the culture of British imperialism in the Caribbean colonies. To be sure, these claims also functioned as a strategic undertaking that allowed migrants to not only access opportunities for migration, but to also consider Britain as route for economic advancement and other avenues of upward social mobility. As Walter Lothen illustrates, his claim to Britishness or a British citizenship did not obscure his own sense of his Jamaicaness and perhaps quite possibly a host of other identities including his blackness, his masculinity and his working class status. Rather, his Britishness served as a self-constructed metalanguage that, when appropriated, allowed him to actualize the privileges and entitlements of British citizenship in lieu of the prescribed social limitations of race, gender, class or status.

As one considers migration as one of the may ways that Caribbean migrants made claims to Britishness and attempted to substantiate the meaning of their own British citizenship, one must recognize that their claim-making involved a mobilization of imperial discourses of identity and citizenship for strategic purposes; however in the process of asserting these claims to Britishness, it is also important to note how black migrants remapped the boundaries of these same discourses both ideologically and in a tangible, measurable physical sense by being the embodiment of the intersections of empire, race and nation—Britishness, blackness, Caribbeaness. To be sure, the British Empire had long been imagined as a multi-racial, multinational enterprise that accommodated, and even promoted the notion of a British community that included the

black populations of the Caribbean. However, the migration of large numbers of black colonials and the growing presence of unprecedented numbers of black people in Britain during the postwar period brought the historic realities of racial difference presence throughout the Empire directly to the metropole.

Examining the ways that migrants perceived of their own relationships to Britain and membership in the imperial body politic represents a crucial starting point for understanding the myriad of social forces at work influencing the decision to migrate. As the previous chapter illustrates, ideas of a black people's claims to Britishness and membership in the imperial citizenry as well as their attempts to substantiate those claims has been a defining point of the history race and Empire even before the abolition of slavery. In locating the various elements contributing to the choices that migrants made and the motivations behind those decisions, one must consider a host of structural and subjective factors. It is clear that socio-economic conditions in both the Caribbean and Britain coalesced with the international politics of migration at a particular moment creating a ripe climate for nearly a quarter of a million Caribbeans to choose Britain as a migration destination in the early postwar period. In addition to these structural determinants, quite often, less quantifiable factors including emotional attachments to family and friends or a migrant's own personal perceptions of potential opportunities in Britain in comparison to that in the home country played the most significant roles in influencing an individual's decision to migrate at a particular moment.

Factors Influencing Postwar Caribbean Migration to Britain

Pointing to the importance of migration as a pertinent theme in understanding the history of Caribbean societies in the twentieth century author Mike Phillips, whose

family migrated to Britain from Guyana in 1956, noted, "By tradition, men from our region looked for work and advancement abroad." Phillips recalled,

> My uncles had worked, on and off, in the Trinidad oilfields, in Panama, in Costa Rica and in Florida. My father had traveled the eastern Caribbean looking for a foothold, before trying to England. On leaving school my older sister, my brother and their classmates had scattered some to the University of the West Indies in Jamaica, some to Brazil and Venezuela, others to colleges in the USA or Britain. For anyone with almost any ambition, spending a period of time in another country was inevitable."[141]

Since the early post-emancipation period, migration has been a recurring motif endemic to Caribbean societies. As noted by Thomas Holt, newly freed black men and women in Jamaica and other former slave societies tested and clarified the meaning of their freedom with physical movement. Holt suggested that migration served as an important tool by which freed people exercised greater autonomy over their labor and families and broadened their access to certain economic opportunities outside of the purview of the plantation.[142] Faced with a declining local sugar industry, decreased employment opportunities, the consolidation of Crown lands, declining wages, and natural disasters in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century thousands of Jamaicans and workers from other British Caribbean islands moved throughout the Caribbean and Latin America to such places including Panama, Costa Rica, and Cuba to work on railroad construction projects, banana and sugar plantations, and multinational investment ventures including the construction of the Panama Canal. [143] In the 1850s, some 5,000

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[141] Mike Phillips, *London Crossings: A Biography of Black Britain* (London: Continuum, 2001), 11-12.

[142] Holt, *The Problem of Freedom*, 160.

[143] Senior and Manley, *A Report on Jamaican Migration to Great Britain,* 4.; G.W. Roberts and D.O. Mills, *Study of External Migration Affecting Jamaica: 1953-1955* (Kingston: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1958), 1; Margaret Byron, ed., *Post-War Caribbean Migration to Britain: The Unfinished Cycle* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1994), 32-37.; Peter Fraser, "Nineteenth-Century West Indian Migration to Britain,"

Jamaicans worked on the construction of the Panama Railroad. Thirty years later when the French initiated work on the Panama Canal an estimated 78,000 Jamaicans migrated to Panama during the 1880s. By 1915, after the French had abandoned the project, which was later completed under the auspices of the American-controlled Isthmian Canal Commission in 1914, approximately 91,000 migrants had departed for Panama.[144] In the meantime, the expansion of American interests in the fruit trade and the growth of Cuban sugar industry lured large numbers of Jamaican migrants to Cuba and Costa Rica. As early as 1887, Jamaica experienced an estimated net outward movement to Costa Rica of 1,736, while labor movement to Cuba peaked at the close of World War I with annual migration figures of some 21, 573 in 1919. By the 1930s there were some 60,000 Jamaicans who had settled in Cuba.[145]

Although substantial numbers of British Caribbean migrants settled throughout Latin America during the early twentieth century, until the passage of more stringent immigration restrictions in 1952, the United States was often a prime migratory destination. During the decade between 1911 and 1921 alone, no less than 30,000 Jamaicans entered the United States. Overall, during the 1920s, this pattern somewhat shifted in part because of the introduction of new immigration restrictions in 1924 sprinkled with nativist undertones, designed specifically to curtail migration from southern and eastern Europe and regions with majority populations of color. This policy

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in *In Search of A Better Life* ed. Ransford Palmer (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1990), 19-37; Dilip Hiro, *Black British, White British: A History of Race Relations in Britain* (London: Grafton Books, 1991), 14.

[144] Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth Century America* (London: Verso Press, 1998), 26.

[145] Senior and Manley, *A Report on Jamaican Migration to Great Britain,* 4; G.W. Roberts and D.O. Mills, *Study of External Migration Affecting Jamaica; 1953-55,* 1-2; Nancy Foner, *Jamaica Farewell,* 9

instituted quotas for countries in relation to the proportion of American citizens who traced their origins to a particular country and reduced the total number of immigrants admitted per year to 150,000.[146] Because the populations of the British Caribbean were included in the generous 65,721 annual quota reserved for citizens of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the prospects associated with actual border crossings between the Caribbean and United States did not change dramatically until the passage of the McCarran Walters Act of 1952. What did fluctuate in terms of migrant settlement opportunities were the economic conditions and the labor climates greeting migrants upon their arrival in the United States.

With the onset of the Great Depression in the late 1920s and early 1930s, job competition at all levels of the working classes reached dire proportions. As a result, foreign-born workers along with black Americans and other people of color were oftentimes marginalized, or in some instances, completely shut out from accessing positions in certain spheres in the labor market. This situation changed somewhat with the onset of World War II. Between 1943 and 1946 the United States actively recruited some 100,000 industrial and agricultural workers from the Caribbean for temporary assignments to supplement the loss of domestic manpower during the war and to meet labor demands in wartime industries.[147]

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[146] Mae M. Ngai, "The Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law: A Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924," *Journal of American History* 86, 1 (June, 1999): 67, 69-70. For a more detailed discussion of the broader context of the nativist undertones represented in U.S. immigration policy after WWI, see John Higham *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*(New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988).

[147] S.K. Ruck, ed. *The West Indian comes to England: A Report Prepared for the Trustees of the London Parochial Charities by the Family Welfare Association* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1960), 7; Irma Watkins-Owens, *Blood Relations, Caribbean Immigrants and the Harlem Community, 1900-1930* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 53. See also Philip Kasinitz, *Caribbean New York: Black Immigrants and the Politics of Race* (Ithaca Cornell University Press, 1992), esp. chapter 1.

Despite a veto by President Harry Truman, the passage of the McCarran-Walters Act on June 27, 1952 represented a decisive political turning point influencing the direction of migrations from the Caribbean after World War II. Essentially, the new policy expanded many of the provisions outlined under the national origins quota system implemented under the 1924 Immigration Act. In regards to the British Caribbean, the most significant policy shift surrounded the extraction of the colonial territories from the generous quota allotted to immigrants from Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Proposed at the height of McCarthyism and the resurgence of nativist rhetoric in the face of Cold War ideological tensions, the McCarran-Walters Act granted each Caribbean territory an annual allotment of 100 border crossings. At the time that the legislation received approval, it was estimated that an average of 2600 immigrants moved from the Caribbean to the United States annually.[148]

In response, West Indian delegations and representatives in both the United States and the Caribbean issued a number of statements protesting the restrictions imposed by the Bill and highlighting its potential effects on Caribbean territories. On 6 February 1952 the British Embassy received a West Indian delegation organized out of a planning meeting held in Harlem, New York a few days earlier which had decided to send a lobby to secure the support of the British Embassy in protesting the new legislation. Delegates pointed out that that the current level of immigration from the Caribbean "could not in any way be described as excessive" and emphasized that West Indian workers offered the United States a steady supply of "skilled labor." In addition,

[148] PRO CO 936/189 *Letter from B.A.B. Burrows of the British Embassy in Washington, D.C. to the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies* dated 18 February 1952.

the delegation noted that the remittances sent back to dependents in the home country provided much-needed relief for many struggling Caribbean economies.[149]

Writing to the Colonial Secretary, Hugh Foot, the Governor of Jamaica, noted that throughout the island, "Public concern has been growing...as a result of reports regarding renewed efforts to pass legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives restricting Jamaican immigration." Alluding to the ways in which emigration to the United States served as a source of economic relief for the Jamaican economy he continued, "It would, of course, be a most serious matter for Jamaica at this time of steeply rising cost of living and continued unemployment, if Jamaican immigration to the U.S. were cut down, and in particular, if employment of Jamaican workers in the U.S. were restricted."[150] Foot's telegram to the Colonial Secretary also included a separate memo issued by Norman Manley and the People's National Party Parliamentary Group urging for intervention by the British Government on behalf of the interests of the Caribbean territories, adding that it "would be [a] terrible blow to Jamaica if [the] bill is passed."[151]

Less than one week after the Jamaican Governor appealed to the British Government for intervention on behalf of the Caribbean territories, the Governor of Barbados reported to the Colonial Secretary that the House of Assembly had passed a resolution protesting the new quotas assigned by the Bill. Although average emigration from Barbados to the United States had totaled little more than 200 annually between 1949 and 1951, the Governor noted that, "Considerable local feeling has been aroused

[149] PRO CO 936/189 Letter from B.A.B Burrows of the British Embassy in Washington, DC to the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies 18 February 1952.

[150] PRO CO 936/189 Telegram from Sir Hugh Foot to the Colonial Secretary, 26 February 1952.

[151] PRO CO 936/189 Telegram from Sir Hugh Foot to the Colonial Secretary, 26 February, 1952.

and [the] psychological effect of [the] passing of [the] bill will be considerable." At a moment of escalating nationalistic fervor in the colonies, the Governor added, "This feeling is likely to react unfavourably on the United Kingdom unless some overt action is taken adequately to represent interest of the British West Indies." [152] The Governor's statement alluded to the possibility that a perception of ineffective arbitration by the British Government on behalf of the interests of the colonial territories on the issue of immigration to the United States might amplify the already intensifying support for more direct colonial representation in international politics and calls for self-government. Similar to the representations made by official in the Jamaican Government, the Barbadian Governor's statement clearly illustrated the importance attached to international labor migration in the Caribbean. Not only did migration expand available employment opportunities and earning potential for workers, but also, it contributed to economic recovery for Caribbean territories in the wake of high unemployment and increasing rates of population growth.

Recalling the reasons behind his decision to move to Britain in 1956, Claude Ramsey, active member of the Barbados Labour Party and Trade Union movement during the 1930s and soldier in the British army during World War II, Ramsey noted, "As the War ended I found myself back in Barbados with its poverty and lack of opportunities...My reasons for leaving were simple—the Barbadian economic depression, and the greater employment prospects in Britain."[153] During the first half of the twentieth century socio-economic conditions in the Caribbean territories spurred a

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[152] PRO CO 936/189 Telegram,"Emigration to the U.S.A." from Sir A. Savage, Governor of Barbados to the Colonial Secretary, 3 March 1952.; PRO CO 936/189 Unsigned letter to R. Cecil dated 6 March 1952.

[153] "Claude Ramsey," *Forty Winters On: Memories of Britain's Post War Caribbean Immigrants* (London: South London Press and London Council), 37.

steady stream of international emigration. Worldwide economic depression during the 1930s, which contributed to a series of labor protest throughout the archipelago only heightened preexisting economic problems including declining wages and unemployment.

In the wake of increasing unemployment during World War II, the colonial government in Jamaica, the largest of the Caribbean colonies and the region where most Caribbean migrants entering Britain hailed during the late 1940s through the early 1960s, established a social welfare system which provided benefits and employment opportunities for workers in the most destitute areas of the island. By 1943, estimates indicated that the Jamaican government provided over 11,000 workers with some form of relief per month. In that same year, according to census reports, the overall rate of unemployment was likely as high as 29 per cent; in the construction industry rates in some areas rose as high as 40 per cent. After the war and throughout the 1950s overall unemployment rates slowly declined, although the economy still failed to generate an adequate supply of labor opportunities for significant portions of the Jamaican populace. A 1957 survey estimated that unemployment had fallen to 18.5 per cent, while the 1960 census reported a figure of 12.7 percent[154] Coupled with the economic strains induced by widespread unemployment and underemployment, overpopulation also contributed to greater job competition, escalating poverty rates, and an increasing surplus population that postwar economic conditions could not adequately sustain. During the first half of

[154] Roberts and Mills, *Study of External Migration Affecting Jamaica, 1953-55*, 2-4. This report also alludes to unspecified "inherent weaknesses" in the census data used to mark this figure. However, the authors are clear that "despite the known limitations of these census data" the figures "clearly emphasize the gravity of the unemployment situation." See also Ceri Peach, *West Indian Migration to Britain*, 24.

the twentieth century the total population in Jamaica had doubled with no visible indicators of declining birth rates.[155]

In striking contrast to postwar employment conditions in Caribbean territories such as Jamaica, after the war ended, a number of industrialized western European countries including France, Germany, and Britain experienced labor shortages in certain industries and actively sought foreign workers to meet postwar labor demands and to facilitate economic reconstruction. In 1946, the British Government issued an economic survey that projected labor shortages between 600,000 and 1.3 million and an overall decline in the working age population. A later survey taken in January of 1947 identified widespread overall labor shortages and a maldistribution of available labor as critical issues facing the British postwar economy. Many of the industries hit hardest by the shortage of workers were essential to postwar economic recovery and reconstruction including coal mining, textiles agriculture, steel and construction.[156] In response, a committee of seven Cabinet members including the Lord Privy Seal, the Home Secretary, the Minister of Labor, the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Minister of Fuel and Power and the Secretary of State for Scotland formed the Foreign Labor Committee in February of 1946 with an initial mandate to explore temporary initiatives to address labor shortages in British industries.[157] In May of 1946, the committee announced the establishment of the Polish Resettlement Corps, a program designed to recruit Polish veterans for civilian employment through the Ministry of Labour. With the passage of

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[155] John Darragh, *Colour and Conscience: A Study of Race Relations and Colour Prejudice in Birmingham* (Leicester: Leicester Printers, 1957), 13.

[156] Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 4-5, 69; Paul, "'British Subjects' and 'British Stock,'" 254; Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, 38.

[157] Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 67.

the Polish Resettlement Act in February of 1947, the government outlined a system of pensions and welfare benefits for immigrating veterans and their dependents. By 1950, no less than 120,000 Polish veterans and their families had migrated to Britain with plans for permanent settlement.[158]

Although the recruitment of Polish veterans represented one of the largest government-sponsored migration programs instituted in the early postwar years, the British Government initiated a number of smaller scale recruitment schemes designed to attract foreign workers from continental Europe. Under the "Westward Ho" initiative the Ministry of Labour facilitated the recruitment of over 78,000 displaced persons lodged in camps throughout Austria and Germany for temporary employment between 1946 and 1951. Eventually, the Ministry of Labour negotiated permanent settlement for these workers, who became known as European Volunteer Workers. Although many of the recruitment programs targeted male workers to meet labor deficiencies in industries including construction and coal-mining, shortages in domestic service, health care and textiles opened more gender-specific opportunities for women workers. In March of 1946, the Foreign Labour Committee agreed to recruit 1,000 women from eastern European countries including Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia to work to work in hospitals, sanitoriums and other health care facilities. During the summer of 1948, three programs, the "Blue Danube", the "North Sea" and the "Official Italian Scheme" facilitated the immigration of roughly 13,600 women from Austria, Germany and Italy respectively to work in the textiles, domestic services and nursing.[159]

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[158] Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 68; Miles, "Nationality, Citizenship, and Migration to Britain, 1945-1951," 430; Patterson, *Dark Strangers*, 64; Layton-Henry, *The Politics of Immigration*, 8.

[159] Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 71-75; Miles, "Nationality, Citizenship and Immigration to Britain, 431.

At the same time that the British Government actively supported and sponsored the immigration of foreign labor from continental Europe, officials expressed serious reservations about the prospects of recruiting colonial workers—who were legally bona fide British citizens—to address deficiencies in the postwar domestic labor market. In September of 1948, just months after the arrival of the *Empire Windrush,* the Colonial Office distributed a memo throughout the Cabinet detailing "the difficulties that arose from the presence of coloured workers in Great Britain." As a result, by February of 1949, the Colonial Office spearheaded the formation of a Working Party on the "Employment in the U.K. of Surplus Colonial Labour" to explore the potential consequences of recruiting colonial labor to address employment deficiencies in Britain. In one of the first reports issued by the Working Party, the committee noted that although there were some 367,000 employment vacancies that had been reported to the Employment Exchanges in major industries including coal mining and textiles, "there are several obstacles to the use of Colonial labour for the purpose of relieving labour shortages over here." In addition to noting the fact that colonial workers, as British citizens, could not be subjected to labor regulations imposed on foreign workers, such as those which confined foreign workers to certain industries for specific periods of time, the report also suggested that "it has to be realised—that while there is no formal 'colour bar' in this country...neither the employers nor the workers, in industry would look with favour on the introduction of coloured workers in factories and workshops where up to now they have not previously been employed." The report added, "many employers—even the most broadminded among their number—tend to look with disfavour on the idea

of using coloured labour to relieve even the most obstinate and persistent labour shortages."[160]

Although the report concluded that overall massive recruitment of colonial workers would not be a viable source for addressing postwar labor market demands, the Working Party did note that more gender-specific arrangements might be more conducive to filling vacancies in certain areas. Their report also suggested that while "no case could be made out in present circumstances for the importation of male colonials for any industry...In the case of industries employing women...we are impressed with the fact that both in the textile industries in the field of hospital domestic employment there are large unsatisfied demands for female labour."[161] An earlier memo from an official in the Ministry of Labour poignantly captures at least some of the gendered opposition to the influx of Caribbean male migrants. The memo explained:

> there is relatively little objection to the importation of women, for example, for domestic employment where there living conditions would be controlled, since the worst troubles concern men who settle in unsatisfactory districts and get into street fights owing to quarrels about coloured men associating with white women, etc.[162]

These statements help to illuminate the ways that gender played an active role in shaping white Britons' perceptions of and policy makers' reactions to Caribbean migration. Marcus Collins has persuasively argued that mythical tropes of West Indian men, including their propensity to engage in sexual relationships with white women, served as powerful narratives buttressing the social politics of race in postwar Britain. Collins

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[160] PRO LAB 8/1571 Draft Report of Working Party on the Employment in the U.K. of Surplus Colonial Labour, March, 1949.

[161] PRO LAB 8/1571 Draft Report of Working Party on the Employment in the U.K. of Surplus Colonial Labour, March, 1949.

[162] PRO LAB 8/1571 Memo from D.J. Stewart to Mr. Goldberg and Mr. Hariman, dated 12 March 1949

insists that negative stereotypes of black masculinity were oftentimes used as a foil to images of respectable, middle-class, white masculinity and then packaged as a means to justify racial discrimination and violence.[163] Collins' argument is instructive in that it draws attention to the stigmatization of black men, but more importantly, because it is suggestive of the gendered constructions of race. For British policy-makers one of the most problematic features of Caribbean migration centered specifically on the influx of black male workers. In the process of crafting political responses to the issue of Caribbean migration policy makers constructed images of and racialized Caribbean migrants through gendered prism of ideas about black men. In turn, these ideas where then appropriated as the consummate symbols of the consequences of Caribbean migration and then used as a means to rationalize and institutionalize race-based social policies that sought to exclude both Caribbean men and women from exercising their right of migration and entitlement to full citizenship in British society.

In addition to the macro economic and political elements that facilitated Caribbean migration to Britain, including high rates of unemployment in the colonies, the tightening of borders in the United States, the open door migration policy in Britain, and the promise of economic opportunities in the postwar British labor market, an array of mediating structures and subjective forces functioned to shape the terms of migration from the Caribbean to Britain. Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s it is clear that Caribbean migrants tapped into a wide range of formal and informal networks including government-sponsored initiatives, local travel agencies, advertisements and exchanges

[163] Marcus Collins, "Pride and Prejudice: West Indian Men in Mid-Twentieth-Century Britain," *The Journal of British Studies* 40, 3 (July, 2001): 391-418.

between friends and family which encouraged migration and shaped migrants' expectations of life in Britain.

The British Caribbean Welfare Service which eventually became known as the Migrant Services Division of the West Indies Commission after the formation of the West Indies Federation, was one of the most important government-sponsored agencies facilitating Caribbean migration during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Established in June of 1956 the organization began as a joint venture backed by the Colonial Office and funded by the local Caribbean governments as mechanism designed to offer support to Caribbean migrants upon their arrival in Britain. Before this agency took shape, only the governments of Jamaica and Barbados had attempted to make arrangements for settlement assistance for migrants. During its lifespan, which coincided with the collapse of the West Indies Federation in 1962, Migrant Services maintained two primary departments—Welfare and Reception and Community Development. The responsibilities of the Welfare and Reception department included receiving migrants at various ports upon arrival, locating family and friends, informing migrants of prospective employment opportunities, negotiating housing contracts, arranging travel to areas outside of the landing port, and providing information on health care and legal services. The Community Development department offered vocational training and education for workers, served as a liaison and advocate on behalf of migrants with Labour Exchanges, employers and trade union through an Industrial Relations component and arranged social clubs and other activities for migrants to incorporate themselves into the fabric of British society.[164]

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[164] PRO CO 1031/2945 Memo, "Migrant Services Division of the Commission for the West Indies, British Guiana, and British Honduras," document undated, file dates 1957-1959; PRO CO 1031/3942 Colonial

While the chief focus of the Migrant Services Division centered on aiding migrant communities in Britain, the agency also prepared a pamphlet for distribution in the Caribbean territories to orientate prospective migrants to conditions in Britain. The pamphlet entitled, *Before You Go To Britain* instructed migrants to take into account a range of issues before migrating. The leaflet suggested that migrants:

> Consider the problem of arranging for accommodation for yourself in Britain, the problem of finding employment, the difficulty of living and working in a cold and wet climate which is different as it could possibly be from the one to which you are accustomed, the long separation from family with little hope of raising enough money to either send for them or return, [and] the great risks of making a success of the venture.[165]

In addition to pointing out some of the factors that informed adjustment and settlement in Britain the pamphlet also provided migrants with details of some of the financial particulars associated with migration to Britain. The pamphlet gave estimates of prices for train tickets to London, a range of average wages for manual laborers, reasonable prices for accommodations and a sample budget of typical living expenses. Likewise, migrants were encouraged to bring ample funds to cover incidentals and expenses associated with securing housing, to be able to provide "satisfactory evidence" of labor skills including records of previous employment, trade union members, character references and tool kits and to anticipate delays in finding suitable employment. The pamphlet warned, "DO NOT BELIEVE that high wages are being paid in Britain from laboring work" and further cautioned migrants that there was significant job competition between them and "long standing residents of Britain" for vacancies in skilled labor

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Office Memo "Commonwealth Immigrants' Advisory Council" undated, file dates 1960-1962; S.K. Ruck, *The West Indian Comes to England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960), 54.

[165] PRO CO 1028/34 Pamphlet, *Before You Go to Britain,* undated, file dates 1954-1956.

positions. [166] It is clear from the tone of the pamphlet that although the government agency had a mandate to assist migrants in their settlement to life in Britain, Migrant Services did not necessarily serve as a proponent of migration. In many ways, in collusion with broader interdepartmental initiatives involving the Colonial Office, the Home Office and various Cabinet officials, the Migrant Services Division attempted to suppress increasing migration to Britain, just as it functioned as a critical intermediary of adjustment for migrants arriving in Britain during the 1950s and 1960s.

Despite the circulation of publications such as the pamphlet prepared by Migrant Services presenting a somewhat dire picture of life in Britain, prospective migrants tapped into an array of information that portrayed the prospects of finding amenable economic opportunities in Britain in a more favorable light.[167] In the early 1950s, the local government in Barbados entered into partnerships with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labor and the Colonial Office to advertise and recruit laborers in Barbados to work for hospitals, domestic service industries, the London Transport Executive and the British Transport Commission. Overall, during this period, migration functioned as an important avenue of economic relief in Barbados in the midst of growing unemployment and declining Gross Domestic Products per capita. As a result, workers overwhelmingly look to Britain as a destination with alternative economic opportunities.[168] Under these

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[166] PRO CO 1028/34 Pamphlet, *Before You Go to Britain,* undated, file dates 1954-1956.

[167] Even before significant numbers of Caribbean migrants moved to Britain during the 1950s, there were publications circulating discouraging employment prospects in Britain. As early as 1948 in a telegram sent to the Colonial Secretary warning of the impending arrival of Jamaican migrants on the Empire Windrush, the Jamaican Governor noted, "Public announcements of the difficulty of obtaining work have not discouraged these bookings [referencing the booking of travel to Britain by Jamaicans aboard the Empire Windrush]." PRO HO 213/714 *Telegram from Governor of Jamaica to Colonial Secretary* dated 11 May 1948. See also Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, 32.

[168] Peach, *West Indian Migration to Britain*, 31-36.

programs, the Barbadian government provided loans to cover the cost of passage and incidentals, conducted background checks and medical screenings, and offered training courses to equip prospective migrants with the necessary skills to adjust to employment in various British industries.[169] In the case of Barbadian women recruited as domestics and nurses, often the local government established a temporary migration program with a three-year contract during which time workers made weekly contributions to the government to cover the costs associated with repatriation.[170] Though the British Government did not pursue labor recruitment in Barbados or any of the Caribbean territories on the same scale as it did in continental Europe after World War II, programs such as those facilitated through the Barbados government most certainly created a greater awareness of labor shortages and employment opportunities available in Britain during a period of economic turmoil throughout the Caribbean.

In addition to government-sponsored initiatives inducing and facilitating postwar migration to Britain, an array of private and more informal agencies and networks played pivotal roles in motivating Caribbean migrants to seek out different opportunities in Britain. By the mid 1950s several new travel agencies in Jamaica had been established in both rural and urban areas to address the growing demand for passage to Britain. These agencies often courted prospective migrants with advertising campaigns that promised competitive rates for mass consumption, advisory services related to arrival and settlement in Britain and credit programs for those unable to make full cash payments at the time of purchase. Travel agencies flourished and offered flexible packages and

[169] PRO CO 1031/3942 Colonial Office Memo, "Commonwealth Immigrants Advisory Council," undated, file dates, 1960-1962. The bulk of these initiatives took place between 1952 and 1955.

[170] PRO CO 1028/20 Copy of Blank Bond Agreement for Barbadian Domestics Recruited for Service in Britain, dated 1952; See also Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, 42.

services in large part due to a corresponding growth in the transportation industries. Throughout the early 1950s there were more ships available providing passenger accommodations for travel from Jamaica to Britain coupled with an increase in the number of aircrafts departing the island. [171]

In lieu of the structural forces and formal networks established motivating Caribbean migrants to depart for Britain, for many migrants' ties to and exchanges with family members and or acquaintances that were planning or had already journeyed to Britain were some of the most important factors influencing their decision to migrate. In a series of interviews conducted with Jamaican workers who had settled in London during the 1950s and 1960s, Harry Goulbourne found that oftentimes the encouragement and resources of family and friends gave potential migrants more incentive to migrate. One worker explained:

> Well I had a brother at the time over here, and a sister, and they want me to come—1956. I refused—they even sent me the fare; 1956 my sister sent me the fare and I didn't come. 1958, sent me the fare again, I didn't come until 1960. Well, most of my friends was leaving—coming to England—all friends and cousins...so I was coming from work one Friday and I saw them going to the Travel Serve place—I went in with them...Well, I booked my passage at the same time because I did have money with me.[172]

The motives behind this worker's decision to migrate were not unusual. One government-sponsored study of Jamaican migration to Britain during the 1950s noted

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[171] Roberts and Mills, *Study of External Migration Affecting Jamaica, 1953-1955*, 5-8; PRO CO 1034/20 "Report of Bureau of Statistics on Jamaican Migration to U.K.," sent by Governor of Jamaica to Colonial Secretary, February, 1955.

[172] P.J. Leese, B. Piatek and I. Curyllo-Klag, ed. *The British Migrant Experience, 1700-2000* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), 131. Interview conducted by Harry Goulbourne, 1975.

that the "element of what can be called a 'multiplier process' had a pervasive influence on migratory flows between the Caribbean and Britain. The reported explained:

> One person goes to the U.K. and induces, directly or indirectly, one or more friends or relatives to come over. In some cases the migrant sends remittances home and these might well be used to finance other another migrant. In other cases the passage is paid for in the U.K. on behalf of a person in Jamaica.[173]

The findings of this study illuminates how an individual migrant's decision to migrate was often facilitated by the economic opportunities for movement made available through the monetary assistance of family members, acquaintances and other networks of social relations maintained with those already in Britain.

The Character of Postwar Caribbean Migration to Britain

The Population Census of 1951 recorded that in that year there were approximately 15,000 people residing in England and Wales whose "birthplace or nationality" was listed as the West Indies.[174] While this figure is representative of the presence of several generations of black people descended from the Caribbean, many of these individuals initially came to Britain in the twentieth century to provide wartime services during both World War I and World and II. During World War I, the British Government actively recruited and accepted several thousand West Indians and other colonial subjects to work in various wartime industries including munitions factories, chemical factories, military labor battalions and naval services. During World War II, upwards of 10,000 Caribbeans served in the Royal Air Force. In addition, through a joint

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[173] PRO CO 1034/20 "Report of Bureau of Statistics on Jamaican Migration to U.K.," sent by Governor of Jamaica to Colonial Secretary, February, 1955.

[174] Glass, *Newcomers*, 4; Patterson, *Dark Strangers*, 41. Patterson notes that although the 1951 census did not include references to race, it would be reasonable to assume that the majority of those listed as "West Indian born" were people of color. This study presumes that since the overwhelming majority of people of color in the Caribbean were people of African descent, it is highly likely that this figure is mostly representative of a black West Indian population.

venture between the Ministry of Labour and the Colonial Office the British Government sponsored the employment of eleven separate contingents of Caribbean workers hailing from Jamaica, British Honduras, the Bahamas, Barbados, British Guiana, the Leeward Islands and the Windward Islands. As a part of this program, several thousand migrant workers were offered temporary employment, provided with transportation to England and guaranteed free return to their homeland at the end of the war.[175]

Although wartime recruitment programs including the Auxiliary Territorial Service and the Women's Auxiliary Air Force employed women workers from the Caribbean in various capacities during World War II, the overwhelming majority of wartime migrations from the Caribbean brought male workers into the British labor market. In the early postwar years, this trend of majority male migration continued until 1958, the first year when female migration surpassed male migration from the Caribbean territories.[176] Throughout the 1950s and into the early 1960s the greatest numbers of Caribbean migrants hailed from Jamaica, the largest of the British Caribbean colonies.

According to the records maintained by the Jamaican government, between 1953 and 1955, there was a noticeable shift in the occupational characteristics of male migrant workers departing for Britain. Reflective of early years of Caribbean migration in 1953 roughly 65% of male migrants were classified at the time of their departure as "skilled" or "semi-skilled" workers. These workers typically occupied positions as carpenters, mechanics, painters, and shoemakers. In that same year, "unskilled" workers, whose numbers included a large proportion of agricultural laborers represented approximately

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[175] James, "Black Experience in Twentieth Century Britain," 366; Ramdin, *The Making of the Black Working Class*, 71, 86-87; Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 112-113.

[176] Patterson, *Dark Strangers*, 417; Glass, *Newcomers*, 5.

20 percent of male departures. By 1955, however, the total number of "unskilled" males migrating to Britain from Jamaica had risen fourteenfold in comparison to a sevenfold increase of skilled labor migration. At that time agricultural workers had become the largest occupational class of male migrants. Whereas the majority of male migrants identified themselves as workers, an examination of female migration indicates that substantial numbers of female migrants from Jamaica did not claim a position in the public labor market at the time of their departures. Of the female migrants who did declare occupations in Jamaica between 1953 and 1955 nearly half fell into the category of seamstress while roughly 16 percent were classified as domestic workers. [177]

By 1955, the Migrant Services Division of the West Indies Commission, a joint venture maintained by all the governments of all the British Caribbean colonial governments began compiling statistics documenting Caribbean migration to Britain. While these statistics represent an important source maintained in Britain for analyzing the scale of Caribbean postwar migrations to Britain, they likely underestimate arrivals because they only account for migrants who had made arrangements or had some form of contact with Migrant Services upon their arrival in Britain.[178] Relying heavily on information gathered through Migrant Services sociologist Ruth Glass formulated some of the earliest profiles of black Caribbean migrant populations in postwar Britain. Glass based her conclusions on a range of data collected from Caribbean migrants in London who utilized the services of the Migrant Services Division throughout the 1950s.

In London, where the highest proportion of Caribbean migrants settled in Britain, Glass indicated that migrants tended to concentrate in West London, in such areas

[177] Roberts and Mills, *Study of External Migration Affecting Jamaica*; 1953-55, 48-52.

[178] Peach, *West Indian Migration to Britain*, 10-11.

including Paddington, North Kensington, Notting Hill, Shepherd's Bush and Hammersmith and in South West London in such places including Brixton, Stockwell and South Lambeth.[179] According to her findings, Glass estimated that most male and female migrants were between the ages of 20 and 30 when they arrived in Britain. Less than 15% were over 44 years of age. In terms of occupational status, Glass found that 46% of men and 27% of women were classified as "skilled" laborers in their home labor markets. Overall, the study noted that male workers tended to have worked as manual laborers in their homelands, while women workers tended to be evenly split between non-manual and manual occupations.[180]

In her study of Jamaican migrants in postwar Britain Nancy Foner has suggested that one must take note of the myriad of social transformations that informed the experiences of Caribbean migrants in Britain. Throughout her study Foner traces several of these "status changes" or reconfigured identities and relationships resulting from the process of migration from Jamaica to Britain including the social value of certain categories of labor, gender relations in the home and family economy, and the meaning of racial identities.[181] In addition, Foner pays close attention to the ways that men and women experienced and participated in the process of migration oftentimes from very different trajectories. As it relates to occupational status, Ruth Glass argued that although most Caribbean male workers came to Britain in search of better employment

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[179] Glass, *Newcomers,* 29-37.

[180] Ibid., 20-23. According to Glass, non-manual occupations would include professionals, shopkeepers, salespersons, clerks and typists while manual workers would include craftsmen, mechanics, carpenters, domestics and seamstresses.

[181] Nancy Foner, *Jamaica Farewell: Jamaican Migrants in London* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1978). Foner understands "status" as one's position in a social system based on differentiation, p. 1-2.

opportunities in general they were employed in occupations that were classified at a lower rank on the occupational scale in Britain than that of their previous employment in their homeland. In her sample population, almost 40 percent of male workers classified as skilled manual laborers in the Caribbean worked in unskilled jobs in London. The study indicated that only 5 percent of male migrants found jobs in a higher occupational category upon their arrival in Britain.

Cautious of Glass's conclusions emphasizing that migrants overall were downwardly mobile in terms of occupational status, Foner noted the importance of understanding that through the eyes of migrants, higher wages and better living standards even in lower ranking positions in the British labor market might have allowed migrants to view their employment as upwardly mobile. Foner also pointed out that even in instances where male laborers might have felt that their skills and training were not comparable to their employment prospects in Britain, for many women who had not participated in wage-earning labor in the homeland, migration offered greater opportunities to earn wages, increase financial independence, and gain more influence over the economic resources of families. Foner argued that while many women initially migrated to join spouses or other family members in Britain, they were not merely "dependent" or "passive" migrants, but rather that they became active participants shaping the process of migration. According to Foner, women's migration proved vital to the settlement and maintenance of household and families. In addition, for those who welcomed the financial opportunities offered through wage labor, meeting the demands

of work responsibilities outside of the home oftentimes required reconfiguring more traditional gendered boundaries of labor in the household.[182]

The Social Dilemmas of Blackness

In addition to understanding the gender dynamics of migration and the shifting social value and meaning of certain types of labor in the home versus the host society, Caribbean migration to Britain offers an interesting point of departure for analyzing the transformation of racial identities. Nancy Foner notes that one of the most important markers of "status" or social identity for Jamaican migrants in postwar Britain was their blackness. According to one fair-skinned Jamaican woman,

> providing you are black at all...they [white Britons] feel there is nothing good in black people. No black people are clean and decent. We is not human being, we is something else. It gives me at times to know that because of the color of your skin they class you in that condition, beneath them in every way."[183]

These statements are striking in that they capture the inherent tensions between the construction and articulation of blackness and black identities as experienced in Jamaica and that which migrants encountered in Britain. In Jamaica, the overlapping legacies of slavery and colonialism produced an intricate hierarchy of race that intimately connected color, class and social status. Evolving out of the social relations that buttressed Jamaican slave society, whites, who were fair skinned people of European descent were at the top of the social pyramid and generally had the greatest access to land, wealth, education and political power. Beneath this group were "coloureds" or

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[182] Foner, *Jamaica Farewell*, 63, 67, 74-75, 87, 90. For a more recent discussion of the role of gender in postwar labor migration to the Caribbean see Margaret Byron, "Migration, Work and Gender: The Case of Post-War Labour Migration From the Caribbean to Britain" in *Caribbean Migration: Globalised Identities* ed. Mary Chamberlain (London: Routledge, 1998).

[183] Foner, *Jamaica Farewell*, 42.

"browns" who were typically people of mixed racial heritage who often did acquire middle class respectability through formal education, skilled or professional occupations, wealth and limited political power. At the bottom of the social hierarchy were the black working class masses who generally had less education, the least amount of political power and typically were darker complexioned people of African descent.[184] To be sure, none of these categories of social classification were absolute. Although gradations of skin pigmentation contributed to the stigmatization of people of African descent, the blemish of blackness assumed by one's skin color could be negotiated and in some cases even transcended by social markers including education, occupation, wealth, and one's affinity towards the adaptation of European physical attributes, cultural norms and sensibilities. As a result, although skin color functioned as a salient characteristic of blackness, it was in no way a definitive marker of social inferiority and thus did not preclude people of African descent from accessing many of the privileges associated with whiteness. [185]

In Britain, there existed more rigid boundaries of race that, despite education, wealth or skill, did not automatically erase the social stigmas associated blackness. In a song entitled, "If You're Not White, You're Black" written during his tenure in Britain during the 1950s Calypsonian Lord Kitchener poignantly addressed the presence of a black/white dichotomy of race in British society during the postwar era that differed from the color/class pigmentocracies found in Caribbean societies. Chastising those

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[184] James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia*, 108-109; James, "Migration, Racism and Identity", 237-239; Ula Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey: The Life and Times of Amy Jacques Garvey*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002): 8-11.

[185] Nancy Foner, "Race and Color: Jamaica Migrants in London and New York," *International Migration Review* 19, 4 (Winter, 1985): 712-713

individuals who could not lay full claim to a European lineage because of their mixed race parentage, yet attempted to distance themselves from darker complexioned people of African descent and define themselves as racially superior, Lord Kitchener's lyrics explained,

> Your father is an African
> Your mother may be Norwegian
> Your pass me, you wouldn't say goodnight
> Feeling you were really white
> Your skin may be a little pink
> And that's the reason why you think
> That the complexion of your face
> Can hide you from the Negro race
> No you can never get away from the fact
> If you're not white, you're considered black.[186]

Kitchener's lyrics draw attention to the ways in which the experience of blackness in Britain was less negotiable when compared the Caribbean. Where stratifications related to skin color—particularly because of their relationship to the material and ideological elements of social class— may have been more fluid and diverse in Caribbean society as it applied to defining the parameters of blackness, in Britain, these social fissures were more rigid and less calibrated.[187]

Ironically, just as the markers of blackness became more concrete explicitly as they related to skin color and national origin in Britain, for many Caribbean migrants, their encounters with the social hierarchies of class in a within European society

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[186] Lord Kitchener, "If You're Not White, You're Black," *London is the Place For Me: Trinidadian Calypso in London, 1950-1956* (London: Honest Jon's Records Ltd, 2002), compact disc recording. In addition to treating darker complexioned people of African descent as socially inferior, in subsequent verses of this song Kitchener alludes to the ways in which those attempting to avoid identifying themselves with blackness would also try to assume traits associated with whiteness by transforming their physical appearance (skin bleaching, hair straightening), changing speech patterns, affiliating with people of European descent, and condemning "the name of Africa."

[187] James, "Migration, Racism and Identity Formation," 239.

destabilized and complicated notions of whiteness. A Jamaican migrant who moved to Britain in 1955 recalled,

> I would look from my window and see a white man sweeping the streets, and fear that, in the shop nearest where I should live, a white girl would sell me cigarettes. Now I was seeing my colonial society in a terrible light. I had never hoped to challenge the whites in Jamaica for a job. I realized in the confusion of the crowded station that I was starting on a desperate phase of life. If the white man was sweeping the streets, then any job I asked for would mean a challenge to him. I was not one of the 'mother country's children. I was one of her black children. That was to be my first lesson on arriving in Britain."[188]

This migrant's narrative of encountering working class whites in British society illuminates the contrasts between the image of whiteness and the experience of blackness in the Caribbean as compared with Britain. While interwoven hierarchies of color and class in Jamaica privileged whiteness in such as way that qualified it as a social category representing an amorphous sector of elites, in Britain, the saliency of class created social divisions which fragmented representations of whiteness for Caribbean migrants, just as they calcified the experience of blackness. Winston James has argued that at the same time that British society provided a context structured by racial ideologies and practices that (re)produced collective black identities that collapsed distinctions including skin color, class, occupation and education among Caribbean migrants of African descent, the presence of a white working class debunked "the mystique of whiteness" cultivated in the colonial setting as Caribbean migrants encountered white people occupying positions at even the lowest rungs of the social ladder, performing menial labor, living in squalid accommodations and experiencing poverty. To be sure, there were working class, and poor whites in Caribbean societies; however, James's point suggests the ways in which the migration experience transformed commonly held ideas of the social meaning

[188] Hinds, *Journey To An Illusion,* 50-51.

attached to whiteness as Caribbean migrants witnessed greater proportions of white people in more diverse non-elite positions within the socio-economic hierarchy.[189]

For Caribbean migrants of African descent in postwar Britain, their blackness was most distinctly marked by their skin color and their national origin. Two of the areas where one's blackness presented particular obstacles for Caribbean migrants included housing and employment. As a part of a sociological study of West Indian settlement in Britain, Ruth Glass found that between November of 1958 and January of 1959 the *Kensington Post*, a weekly newspaper serving London contained over 300 housing ads that barred persons from tenancy on the basis of race and or national origin. Some of the ads specifically excluded persons of color while others read "Europeans only" or "English only" which implied a reference to both color and national origin.[190] Noting the widespread appearance of housing advertisements barring black tenants, May Cambridge, who migrated during the 1950s to attend a training course for nursing, noted "The 'no Irish, Blacks or Dogs' signs are no myth—sometimes you would knock on the door with a vacant sign on the window, some would say the room had just gone, others would slam the door in your face while the less forthright wouldn't bother opening the door but you could see the curtains twitching."[191]

Prior to Glass's study a *Manchester Guardian* editorial acknowledged that, "anyone who has searched for accommodation in London will testify to the large number of advertisements which specify 'No Coloured Applicants' or 'White Tenants Only'; any coloured person in London will confirm that an impossibly high percentage of the

[189] James, "Migration, Racism and Identity," 239-243.

[190] Glass, Newcomers, 58-59.

[191] "May Cambridge," *Forty Winters On*, 32.

remaining accommodation has 'already been let' when the landlord sees the colour of the applicant."[192] The article's conclusions paralleled the exact experience of Baron Baker, who had come to Britain as part of the Royal Air Force during World War II. Baker noted that for him the practice of racism became most apparent during his search for housing. He insisted that "Usually, once you told people you were coloured, they would say their place has been let."[193] These racially discriminatory practices had a two-fold outcome. By placing restrictions on the areas where black migrants could reside, discriminatory housing practices also concentrated black workers in certain areas including Brixton and Notting Hill.

Following World War II, massive housing shortages plagued a number of British cities. Throughout Britain, residential property loss and destruction was a major wartime casualty that became a central concern of postwar reconstruction and recovery efforts. In a White Paper issued in September of 1944, Parliament estimated that roughly 202,000 homes had been completely destroyed during the war and approximately 255,000 more were no longer inhabitable. In lieu of these figures, Parliament records indicated that while they remained in livable condition, over four million homes had suffered wartime damage and needed repairs.[194] In addition to wartime destruction, the failure to fulfill prewar construction agendas initiated in response to housing losses resulting from World War I, the virtual cessation of new home building and the deterioration of existing homes due to inadequate maintenance during the war also exacerbated housing problems. Compounding this, in areas such as London, with higher birthrates and greater numbers

[192] Noel B. W. Thompson, "Roots of Racial Prejudice," *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 18 September 1958.

[193] "Baron Baker," *Forty Winters On*, 19.

[194] M.J. Elsas, *Housing Before the War and After* (London: Staples Press, Ltd., 1946), 67

of returning demobilized military personnel and evacuees, the demand for housing proved even more staggering. According to a report issued by the Commission on Housing in Greater London in 1951, the city had an excess of 500,000 more households than available homes.[195] Thus, as the British government confronted the realities of postwar social conditions, the deficiencies in residential property, overcrowding and rising prices for accommodations transformed housing into a major postwar political issue.

The scarcity of housing, particularly in urban areas with larger population densities such as London, served as a major point of social competition, and in some cases conflict in many communities.[196] In addition to an overall lack of suitable accommodations, overcrowding and the ability of private landlords to impose higher rents and unfair lease agreements because of increased demand, further aggravated social tensions related to living space. While the issue of housing was a source of contention among indigenous residents—particularly in many working class communities— for black migrants, the competition over living space was compounded by their position as social outsiders due to their migrant status and the stigmas attached to their racial identities. In the London borough of Lambeth, which included the Brixton community, an area with some of the largest proportions of black migrant settlement, before local authorities would even consider a resident for public housing, a person had to document local residency for a period of at least three years. As a result, many new migrants were virtually shut out of wait lists for local council housing programs during the 1950s because of residency

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[195] Richard Sabatino, *Housing in Great Britain, 1945-1949*, 3; Edward Pilkington, *Beyond the Mother Country: West Indians and the Notting Hill White Riots* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1988), 53.

[196] Patterson, *Dark Strangers*, 173.

requirements receiving little or no assistance from local authorities.[197] One local M.P. for the Brixton area, during the 1950s maintained,

> Emigrants from the West Indies stand no chance of being rehoused by local authorities...Emigrants have to make their own arrangements, frequently buying dilapidated property with only a few years to run on the lease. There is much overcrowding which local authorities have to overlook because they have no alternative accommodation to offer if an overcrowding notice were to be served.[198]

As the statements of the M.P. explain, although the overall housing shortage generated a host of problems for all residents eager to secure adequate homes at affordable prices, for black migrants, this problem was oftentimes compounded by their inability to access local initiatives available to indigenous residents or those with long-standing ties to the local community. In a study of race and residential housing patterns, Susan J. Smith found that throughout the 1950s de facto exclusionary practices such as local residency requirements effectively prevented most black migrants from accessing public sector housing and therefore limited the majority of black migrants to private sector housing opportunities. Her study found that as of 1961, 74% of West Indian households lived in accommodations secured through the private sector, and only 6% had secured public housing.[199]

Not only did black migrants face discrimination in their pursuit of housing, but oftentimes even when they did secure housing they were subject to indecent living conditions, the constant gaze of suspicious landlords and exorbitant rental fees.[200] Walter

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[197] Layton-Henry, *The Politics of Immigration,* 37.

[198] Quoted from *Racial Unity Bulletin*, July 1956; Found in Patterson, *Dark Strangers*, 176.

[199] Susan J. Smith,*The Politics of 'Race and Residence* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), 51-52.

[200] Layton-Henry, *The Politics of Immigration*, 37-38.

Lothen, who journeyed to Britain from Jamaica in 1954 recalled "Accommodation was appalling. A lot of landlords didn't want to know you. Half the houses had no bath. You had one toilet for five or six houses and had to go to the public baths."[201] Although May Cambridge, who also hailed from Jamaica, had secured housing in Britain through her nursing program, she vividly remembered the frustrations of friends and relatives who were forced to rent rooms "at the princely sum of L2.04sh with six or seven people sharing the facilities." Cambridge also explained the rigidity of life under strict landlords. She noted, "Tenants were subjected to rules and regulations for army recruits," adding that "One of [her] landladies charged 1d for toilet tissue, and if the lights were left on you'd get a knock on the door. You also had to be in at a certain time and all clothing was washed and dried in bedroom."[202] When Claude Ramsey arrived in 1956 from Barbados, he remembered having to rent a room which he shared with some thirty people "with only one bath and toilet." Ramsey insisted, "The conditions were appalling, and it cost me L3 a week in rent," a sizeable sum when the average manual laborer netted little more than L5. per week during the 1950s.[203]

One of the most notorious landlords well-known for capitalizing off of the racial politics of housing was a Polish immigrant named Peter Rachman. At the peak of Rachman's real estate career during the 1950s, he maintained interests in over 23 separate companies controlling over 144 properties in the North Kensington and Paddington districts, where large proportions of black migrants had settled in London. Although many of the properties owned by Rachman were dilapidated and oftentimes in unsanitary

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[201] "Walter Lothen," *Forty Winters On*, 23.

[202] "May Cambridge," *Forty Winters On,* 32, 34

[203] "Claude Ramsey" *Forty Winters On*, 37; PRO CO 1028/34 Pamphlet "Before You Go To Britain".

conditions, for black migrants, they provided some of the few places where they could easily secure lease agreements. Feeding off of the overall housing shortage and a looming reluctance by many whites to rent to black tenants, Rachman and other local landlords easily exploited black migrants demand for the most basic of socio-economic necessities by charging higher than average rental rates for less than adequate accomodations.[204]

During the late 1950s local officials began to take note of increasing housing rates in these areas and began to persuade more black tenants to make appeals to local rent tribunals to seek out lower and more equitable leases. In 1959, one newspaper reported that after reviewing the reports of social workers in the area, local revenue investigators had been dispatched to North Kensington with a specific mandate to gather information on "the earnings of some slum landlords who are amassing quick fortunes by exploiting homeless immigrants." The paper also noted that in most cases the efforts of these investigators had proven futile because many West Indian tenants lived in fear of retaliation by "strong-arm men" employed by landlords who had warned one prospective plaintiff, "Talk and you will be cut up."[205] Another West Indian man recalled that after applying to the tribunal for a decrease in rent, he was told by landlord agents that his family might be met "with an accident" if he continued to pursue his petition. [206]

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[204] PRO HO 325/161 Note of Meeting between George Rogers, M.P. for North Kensington, Mrs. O. Wilson, Mr. Donald Chesworth, Mr. Richard Hauser and Mr. Renton of the Home Office, dated 20 January 1960; PRO HO 325/161 Metropolitan Police Report, Metropolitan and City Police Fraud Department dated 27 July 1959.

[205] "Victims of Rents Racket are Terrorised in Riots Area," *News Chronicle and Daily Dispatch* 25 May 1959.

[206] Ibid.

According to Metropolitan Police records, a number of West Indians reported similar incidents of threats after bringing cases before the local rent tribunal.

Michael de Frietas, who had worked closely with a Donald Chesworth, a local councilor for North Kensington to encourage West Indians in the area to bring relevant issues concerning housing before the local rent tribunal reported that on the day before his own tribunal hearing Peter Rachman attempted to persuade him to withdraw his application. Rachman, whose properties routinely were the subject of tribunal matters, warned de Frietas that if he continued to pursue "tribunal business...Someone is going to get hurt and it's not going to be me." In addition to reporting instances of overt threats or use of intimidation tactics by landlords, local authorities also noticed that some residents withdrew their petitions to rent tribunals under questionable circumstances. In other instances, as in the case of Edmund Jarvis, it was only after the tribunal reduced his rent that his landlord retaliated by disconnecting his electricity.[207]

Not only did housing discrimination and exclusionary housing policies reflect a social hierarchy of race which denied black migrants equitable living conditions, but also employment represented an arena where race operated as an instrument marginalizing black workers' access to opportunities. In a study of West Indian workers in Birmingham, Lydia Lindsey characterized the marginalization of West Indian and other immigrants of color in the postwar era as a "split-labor phenomenon" which stratified workers within the same market on the basis of race. According to Lindsey, "Although they were full citizens, the West Indian immigrants could not become racially integrated.

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[207] PRO HO 325/161 Metropolitan Police Report, Metropolitan City Fraud Department dated 27 July 1959. This document is s summary of reports concerning alleged threats or intimidation towards individuals applying to rent tribunals residing in the Notting Hill and North Kensington district of London between April and June of 1959.

Their skin color and backgrounds in addition to discriminatory policies prevented their movement in higher-paying jobs. Color determined social class and work status. White skin ranked higher than black skin in the social hierarchy."[208] Complicating Lindsey's argument, Clive Harris notes that even before migrants arrived in Britain, the British economy had only manufactured "shortages" in certain lower paying, less desirable jobs deemed as "unskilled" labor, and these were the positions reserved for all migrant workers as indigenous white labor took advantages of new opportunities in higher paying industries. Reminiscent of Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack's work on migrant labor and class structure, Harris's argument is important to understanding the multiple economic and social processes that resulted in labor market segmentation and the concentration of black workers within the British labor market into lower paid "occupational ghettoes."[209] As migrants, black workers' encountered a British labor market structured to incorporate them in a specific, and to be sure, subordinate positions in the labor economy; racism and racial discrimination only compounded their experience as economic outsiders and therefore exacerbated their already marginal status in the British labor market.

In sociological study of British employers' impressions, attitudes, policies and practices as they applied to West Indian workers conducted between 1956 and 1957, Sheila Patterson identified a range of factors contributing to the marginalization of black workers in the labor market and lack of economic mobility. Surveying a number of

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[208] Lydia Lindsey, "The Split-Labor Phenomenon: Its Impact on West Indian Workers as a Marginal Working Class in Birmingham, England, 1948-1962," *Journal of African American History* 87 (Winter, 2002): 126.

[209] Clive Harris, "Post-War Migration and the Industrial Reserve Army" in *Inside Babylon* ed. Winston James and Clive Harris, 18; Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack, *Immigrant Workers and Class Structure* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 57-115. See also Layton-Henry, *The Politics of Immigration,* 44-45.

public and private establishments in industries with the highest concentrations of labor shortages, her study noted that in addition to a traditional hostility towards 'foreign' labor, British employers often characterized black workers as lazy, slow, and irresponsible as compared to their white counterparts and suggested that these stereotypes were often used to justify unofficial quotas in hiring black workers and or overlooking them for supervisory positions.[210]

Patterson also found that while local government-sponsored employment agencies were supposed to exercise non-discrimination on the grounds of race in the consideration of worker for various employment opportunities, oftentimes, informal practices placed black workers at a disadvantage as local employment officials typecast black workers as "unskilled" and or less suited to certain types of higher paying industrial and professional positions.[211] After conducting interviews with eight local employment agencies in Brixton, where some of the highest concentrations of black migrants in London resided, Patterson noted that a combination of employers' perceptions of black workers and agency workers' own interactions with and attitudes towards black workers had produced a number of negative stereotypes about black workers, both male and female. According to Patterson, the prototypical male West Indian worker was "at best semi-skilled", more suited to "rough labouring jobs" that involved more repetition than intellect, required more supervision that their white counterparts and were "sometimes said to be childish and irresponsible."[212]

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[210] Patterson, *Dark Strangers*, 84-130.

[211] Ibid., 131-142.

[212] Ibid., 134-135.

Similar unfavorable images of West Indian women workers also existed. Patterson noted that officials at labor exchanges often viewed black women unable to adapt labor skills acquired in the colonies, to meet the demands of the British labor market. Local labor officials noted that black women were oftentimes ill-suited to industrial labor, generally unwilling to accept domestic labor positions which they regarded as demeaning, making them difficult to employ. Overall, Patterson found that many officials regarded the employment of black women as the greater "labour problem" as compared to men for a number of reasons. Local labor officials maintained,

> Employers find them [black women] slow, touchy, unadaptable, choosy, hypochondriac, and lacking in stamina...They [employers] say they need more supervision than white workers. Many employers prefer the lighter-coloured ones and ask for them in preference to 'black-mammy types' and 'dark ones.' Some employers find them not worth training because of their habit of 'making a baby' every year or so. Employers also claim that their white women employees object to working side by side with them for personal hygienic reasons.[213]

Patterson's finding elucidate the ways in which the racialization, stigmatization and marginalization of West Indian workers occurred on gendered terms. While black migrants entered a British economy structured to relegate them to the lowest positions within the labor market, gendered constructions of race operating in British society channeled them into lower paying, less desirable jobs and in some instances virtually shut them out certain industries and employment opportunities. Although Patterson's study does not account all of the ways that black migrant workers were marginalized in the British labor economy, her study is indicative of the impact of race in determining opportunities for and conditions of employment for black workers.

For many black migrants, experiences of housing segregation and labor market segmentation represented a clear contradiction to the ideology of racial egalitarianism

[213] Ibid., 135-136.

inherent in the Commonwealth ideal as legally prescribed by the provisions of a tranregional, transracial British citizenship, guaranteed by the British Nationality Act of 1948. While the promises of a multiracial British citizenship had allowed black migrants to fashion themselves as members of the British imperial body politic and substantiate the meaning of that sense of belonging through the act of migration, the experience of racism and discrimination in Britain created a penetrating schism between the possibilities of British citizenship and the realities of race-based exclusion. Moments of racial violence dramatized the fractures between ideal and reality and caused both black migrants and indigenous white residents to closely examine their own definitions of what it meant to be British and to become full members of British society.

CHAPTER THREE

Images of Violence and Shifting Narratives of Race

On August 25, 1958 the lead story in Jamaica's largest newspaper, *The Daily Gleaner* announced that hatches, knives and razors had been drawn in a "bloody battle" involving over a thousand "Britons" and West Indians described as "one of the ugliest race riots ever known in the United Kingdom."[214] Over the course of following few weeks, *The Daily Gleaner* joined both British and other international media outlets in reporting on a string of "racial outbursts" beginning on August 23, 1958 involving "coloured residents" and "white teddy boys" in Nottingham, and eventually spreading to Notting Hill, London.[215] On the evening of August 23, Samuel Roberts, who had been drinking at the Chase Tavern, one of the few local bars in the St. Ann's district of Nottingham serving black customers remembered overhearing a group of white patrons remark, "Let's go hunt the niggers" after a fight ensued which later spewed into the street when a Jamaican man made overtures towards a white woman seated in the pub.[216] Returning home for the evening with her husband, Mary Lowndes, a young white woman, recalled that without any provocation "a black man hit me...Then my husband was punched from one side of the road to the other by a crowd of coloured men."[217]

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[214] "Britons, West Indians Riot: 1,000 Wage Bloody Battle in Nottingham Streets," *The Daily Gleaner* 25 August 1958.

[215] "Racial Outburst in An English City," *Manchester Guardian Weekly* 28 August 1959; "Planned Attacks Reported," *The Daily Gleaner* 28 August 1958.

[216] Pilkington, *Beyond the Mother Country,* 106-107. Based on Edward Pilkington's interview with Samuel Roberts on 28 January 1988.

[217] "Dozens Hurt in Racial Clash," *London Times* 25 August 1958.; "Race War in Britain," *Trinidad Guardian* 25 August 1958.

According to Nottingham's Assistant Chief Constable, Fred Porter, "the riot was started by a group of about 20 West Indians who set out on Saturday night to avenge an attack on a fellow West Indian by a gang of teddy boys." However, Porter noted that while West Indians might have initiated the brawl, "The West Indians who started the riot quickly disappeared" as they were swarmed by a group of white locals who "decided to take the law into their own hands and attack every coloured man they came across."[218] While it is unclear what factions initiated the violence, which was eventually quelled with the aid of police dogs and the fire brigades, by the end of the evening, dozens of people had suffered injures ranging from minor cuts and bruises to serious stab wounds.

The next evening, nine young white men armed with makeshift weapons including iron bars and table legs, viciously assaulted Joseph Welsh and severely wounded two other black men. Described as a 'beating-up' spree in which the young white men randomly "beat up coloured people walking about" at Shepherd's Bush Green near Notting Hill, London, the activities of the young men served only as a mere prelude to more interracial violence in the area.[219] On the following week, for four consecutive nights beginning on 31August 1958, numerous reports circulated detailing violent clashes between "gangs of white and coloured youths" throughout Notting Hill and greater North Kensington as hostile white aggressors were heard shouting threatening racial epithets including "We'll kill the black bastards!", "Deport all Niggers" and "Let's lynch the niggers!" amidst cries to "Keep Britain White![220]

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[218] "Several Quizzed By Police," *The Daily Gleaner*, 26 August 1958.

[219] "Old Bailey Trial For Nine English Youths," *The Daily Gleaner* 28 August 1958; "Accused of Beating Coloured Men: Nine Youths Sent For Trial," *London Times* 1 September 1958.

[220] "New Race Riots in UK: Mostly Whites Held," *The Daily Gleaner* 1 September 1958; Pilkington *Beyond the Mother Country*, 114; "Further Racial Incidents," *London Times* 3 September 1958..; "Renewed

On the afternoon of 1 September 1958, Seymour Manning, described as "a young West African student" dashed into a local grocery store in Notting Hill after escaping an attack by "a gang of young toughs" which incited "a crowd of two hundred white people," some of whom called out "lynch him!" When questioned by a reporter about the reasons for the attack on Manning, one person replied, "Just tell your readers that Little Rock learned us a lesson." Another stated, "tell them we've got a bad enough housing shortage around here without them moving in. Keep Britain white."[221]

Michael Leach, a local constable recalled assisting another "coloured man" caught in a similar predicament. He noted in his report that on that same evening, he had come to the assistance of "a coloured man" who had been chased and attacked by "a group of youths" all while "several hundred people, all white" watched and shouted "obscene remarks" such as 'We'll get the black bastards." Leach's report also explained that not only did the crowd display hostility towards black people in the area, but the angry mob also attacked him and another officer as they attempted to intervene in the

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Racial Disturbances in London," *London Times* 2 September 1958; "London Racial Outburst Due to Many Factors," *London Times* 3 September 1958; " 'Lynch Him!' Heard in London," *Manchester Guardian Weekly* 4 September 1958.

[221] " 'Lynch Him!' Heard in London," *Manchester Guardian Weekly* 4 September 1958. This is a reference to the Little, AK desegregation debacle in the United States. In accordance federal mandates issued in Brown v. Board of Education (1954) calling for desegregation in American schools "with all deliberate speed," the NAACP registered nine black students to begin the process of integration at Little Rock Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. On September 4 1957, when the infamous "Little Rock nine" attempted to enter the school, they were blocked by the Arkansas National Guard who had been deployed at the behest of Governor Orval Faubus who had allied with segregationist interests intending to derail integration. Between 1957 and 1959 the Little Rock debacle made international headlines and became a prominently displayed image of the shortcomings of American democracy, the pervasiveness of racism and ideas of white supremacy in American society, and the struggles waged by black Americans to secure social justice and civil rights. See Cary Fraser, "Crossing the Color Line in Little Rock: The Eisenhower Administration and the Dilemma of Race for U.S. Foreign Policy" *Diplomatic History* 24, 2 (2002): 233-264; Daisy Bates, *The Long Shadow of Little Rock: A Memoir* (New York: David McKay Co., 1962); Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), chapter 4.

assault and disburse the crowd.[222] Referencing events on the evening of 31 August Constable Geoffrey Golding's encounter with what he described as a "large crowd of white people in an extremely hostile mood," mirrored Leach's experience. Golding described having to dodge from bottles as the crowd roared "Why are you helping the black bastards?" and referred to police officers on the scene as "nigger lovers."[223]

During the third night of violence in the streets of London, one white resident observed "a crowd of youths" rampaging through Oxford Gardens "smashing windows in houses where coloured people live." In another incident, a mob chased a white woman and her black male companion while throwing saucers, cups and bottles. By midnight, some thirty people filled the Notting Hill police station charged with such offences including weapons possession, displaying insulting behavior and causing grievous bodily harm.[224] Earlier that day, George Rogers, M.P. for the North Kensington district had circled the area with a loudspeaker calling for a halt to the violence. Rogers implored, "I appeal to you for common sense, decency, and tolerance in this matter of race relations. I ask you to all remain calm, to stay indoors in your homes to-night, and to obey the police."[225] As the violence continued for yet another evening, a local West London magistrate asked for a voluntary curfew suggesting "now is the time for people of good will in that area to stay indoors in the evening for a day or two to let the police restore

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[222] PRO MEPO 2/9838 Statement of Michael Leach 1 September 1958.

[223] PRO MEPO 2/9838 Statement of Geoffrey Golding referencing events of Aug. 31, 1958

[224] "Renewed Racial Disturbances in London," *London Times* 2 September 1958; PRO MEPO 2/9838 Metropolitan Police Report 8 September 1958. According to Metropolitan Police records 25 individuals were formally charged on this evening and appeared before the magistrate of 3 September 1958. Of those arrested eleven were identified by the report as "coloured" while the remaining were identified as "white."

[225] "Renewed Racial Disturbances in London: M.P.'s Appeal *London Times* 2 September 1958.

order."[226] By the time that the major fighting between black and white Londoners reached an armistice police had made 108 arrests, the overwhelming majority being young white working class men.[227] As racial tensions in Notting Hill and surrounding areas transitioned from a violent boil back to a more passive simmer, the images, perceptions and realities of race in Britain continued to undergo shifting interpretations as local communities and the wider British public began to decipher the meaning of racial violence in Britain amid an assortment of international spectators and commentators.

As news of "race riots" traveled throughout Britain and the world, the tone of the responses to the violence ranged from a certain naive surprise at the explosion of seemingly nascent racial tension, to anxiety over the plight and presence of growing non-white communities.[228] Moreover, in some cases, commentary evoked subtle tones of vindication that Britain was not immune to the dilemmas of race plaguing nations such as the United States and South Africa. What is clear from both domestic and international reactions to reports of interracial violence in Nottingham and London is that preexisting ideas of race and race relations in Britain underwent significant change and adaptation.

This chapter begins by examining the range of international commentary surrounding the news of "race riots" in Britain. International responses to the new of "race riots" reveal critical discourses about perceptions of race and race relations in Britain and elucidate the ways in which international audiences interpreted the

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[226] "Magistrate Asks for Voluntary Curfew," *London Times* 3 September 1958.

[227] PRO MEPO 2/9838 Memo to Assistant Chief Constable from Divisional Detective Superintendent, September, 1958. According to Metropolitan Police records 72 of the perpetrators were white and 26 were "coloured." See also DO 35/7992 Telegram from Commonwealth Relations Office to Commonwealth Governments 4 September 1958; Pilkington, *Beyond the Mother Country*, 128

[228] References to 'race riots' are used in quotes to denote the fact that this was a discursive device used to publicly discuss racial conflict between black and white residents.

implications of racial conflict in Britain. Perhaps, more importantly, the reactions of international commentators provide a window to gauge preexisting narratives of race and race relations in Britain that informed representations of British national identity on a world stage. What becomes clear from views from abroad is that images of "race riots" sharply contrasted with widely held perceptions of British attitudes concerning race and the social meaning of race in British society.

As one examines international conjecture in the aftermath of the violence in Nottingham and Notting Hill three dominant narratives concerning the representation of race and race relations emerge. The first of these narratives highlights Britain's image as a racially liberal society. In their analysis of the impact of new of the violence in France, British observers were careful to note that unless the conflicts continued to repeat themselves, "they will have done little damage to England's reputation in France as a stronghold both of liberal practice and law and order.[229] A second racial narrative looks at the ways that Britain was envisioned as the 'Mother Country' or flagship symbol of a multiracial Commonwealth of Nations. The third racial narrative addresses Britain's image in the arena of race relations as a foil to those represented by the Jim Crow South of the United States and the apartheid regime of South Africa. To be sure, these narratives of race in Britain did not exist in isolation from one another, nor were they absolute or uncontested; rather, they functioned as converging images informing a broader portrait of race and race relations in postwar Britain that indeed fractured during the summer of 1958.

In addition to highlighting the ways in which international responses to the news of "race riots" unearthed the existence of certain perceptions of race and race relations in

[229] PRO DO 35/7992 Telegram From Paris to Foreign Office dated 25 September 1958.

Britain, this chapter will also attempt to engage the broader historical context in which these narratives evolved and were appropriated for strategic purposes as discursive frames of representing British national identity. In doing so, this chapter traces how these racial narratives manufactured what I refer to as the "mystique of British anti-racism" which in turn informed and sustained certain national myths that white Britons used to envision their own sense of British national identity. The "mystique of anti-racism" provides a means to discuss the ways that, historically, notions of British national identity have evolved in relation to ideas of racial tolerance and Britain's perceived image as a beacon of racial progress and international advocate for anti-racist causes. Because news of "race riots" certainly obstructed the survival of the "mystique of British anti-racism," it is important to note the ways in which British reactions to the violence served as an attempt to preserve a shattered sense of British national identity and to reconcile national myths concerning British anti-racism with the realities of racial conflict. The final section of the chapter probes this issue and suggests how British commentators described and translated the meaning of the violence and its wider implications in such a way that produced new myths about race and race relations in Britain which stigmatized black migration and the working class communities where many black migrants resided. In the process, akin to the preexisting narratives which congealed the "mystique of British anti-racism" before the violence in Nottingham and Notting Hill, the racial narratives that British observers constructed to explain and interpret the violence did much to silence the historic existence of quotidian, structural and institutional racism present in British society.

International Reaction to News of "Race Riots" in Britain

As the intensity of the interracial clashes in Nottingham and Notting Hill London began to reach an impasse, a chorus of international spectators rendered opinions about how news of "race riots" affected public opinion regarding race and race relations in Britain. According to the *Daily Herald* of Ghana "A great roar of protest against Britains [sic] race war exploded across the world," as news of racial violence circulated internationally.[230] While newspapers throughout the world served as the most important channels through which international audiences received news of and publicly reacted to incidents of racial violence in Britain, the British government also took special interest in monitoring international responses to the reports of racial conflict in Nottingham and Notting Hill. British diplomatic representatives resident in various European nations, the United States and the Commonwealth served as key agents responsible for measuring the pulse of international opinion concerning reports of racial violence in Britain and subsequently keeping government officials abreast of the shifting views of race and race relations in Britain from abroad. From the outset, several British overseas observers reported that much of the commentary surrounding the news of "race riots" centered on the seemingly uncharacteristic nature of images of racial violence in Britain given the nation's international reputation for racial liberalism, tolerance, and egalitarianism.

According to reports from New Zealand, most of the major newspapers printed editorials concerning the episodes of racial violence in Britain, all of which expressed sentiments of "surprise and shock." One article appearing in the *Wellington Dominion*, noted that reports of racial violence in Britain proved "more shocking because such

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[230] PRO DO 35/7992 Memo, "Ghana and the Racial Riots" from A. Snelling to Sir H. Lintott dated 4 September 1958.

disorders [seemed] so out of character with Britain [sic] whole reputation for tolerance."[231] Reporting on the view from France, British observers contended, "The British are renowned in France for their tolerance and liberal outlook and it has come as a shock to many that racialism can rear its ugly head in the country of Wilberforce."[232] In a survey of early editorial remarks concerning the violence appearing in the *New York Times*, British officials noted that the paper reported that there was "something especially shocking about the race riots in England," but surely considering America's own prominently displayed racial history, the editor maintained that "one may be sure that the British themselves are more shocked and chagrined than anyone in foreign lands." The editor added that it would "be interesting to see how the British reassert their normal tolerance and good sense," given that "no people in the world had achieved a more urbane since of tolerance than the British."[233]

The issue of a shattered model of British racial tolerance, liberalism and anti-racism also permeated the statements of African and West Indian political leaders who appealed to British government officials on behalf of the interests of their fellow nationals resident in Britain in the days immediately following the violence. Aware that most of the violence against black residents had entailed attacks upon West Indians, as the violence spread from Nottingham to Notting Hill, West Indies government officials made a joint decision to dispatch a federal representative as a show of concern for the plight of West Indians in Britain. Initially, the West Indies Federal government had

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[231] PRO DO 35/7992 Telegram from Wellington, New Zealand to Commonwealth Relations Office 8 September 1958.

[232] PRO DO 35/7992 Telegram from Paris France to the Foreign Office 6 September 1958. William Wilberforce was an iconic figure in the British anti-slavery movement.

[233] PRO DO 35/7992 Telegram from Washington to Foreign Office 4 September 1958.

designated Deputy Prime Minister Carl LaCorbiniere as the official representative delegated to "afford some assurance to West Indians" residing in Britain in light of the violence; however Norman Manley, Chief Minister of Jamaica, the homeland of the majority of West Indian migrants, accompanied LaCorbiniere and ultimately became the most prominent government spokesperson for the West Indian community in Britain. Referencing the racial clashes upon his arrival in Britain, Manley maintained, "That this thing should happen in Britain which as always lead the world in tolerance and decency is a tragedy."[234] Arriving in London just days before Manley, Ghanaian Finance Minister, K.A. Ghademah contended that Ghanaians were "distressed that racial disturbances should be happening in Britain of all places."[235]

Although West Indians represented the overwhelming majority of black residents and targets of racially motivated attacks in Nottingham and Notting Hill, the phenotypical dimensions of the construction of racial identity and blackness in Britain oftentimes trumped any distinctions between people of African descent, or in some instances any person of color from another based on nationality. One Pakistani paper explained, while "the main targets for the time being appear to be negroes...there is no knowing when the teddy boys will direct their wrath at the large population of Pakistanis that are in the United Kingdom."[236] Having received reports of unprovoked attacks on Ghanaian students and well aware that in the eyes of most white agitators involved in violence against black people, "West Africans are most certainly to be classed with West Indians

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[234] "Manley Sees WI Leaders," *Trinidad Guardian* 6 September 1958

[235] "Nigerian Official Blames Influx of West Indians," *Trinidad Guardian* 5 September 1958 p.2

[236] PRO DO 35/7992 Telegram from Pakistan to Commonwealth Relations Office dated 4 September 1958; Reported from the *Karachi Times*

as the major menace," the Ghanaian government urged that the British Government openly condemn the violence and offer stronger protection for people of color.[237]

Following a similar logic, government officials in both Nigeria and Kenya also expressed concern and petitioned British officials on behalf of their nationals resident in Britain. Kenyan leader Tom Mboya appealed to the Home Secretary to explain what measures the British government had taken to ensure the safety of the largely student population of "Kenyan African[s]" in Britain.[238] Although the Nigerian Minister of Health insisted that the roots of racial violence could be traced "to the influx of West Indians," he noted that the Nigerians government was "very concerned" because many Nigerians alongside West Indians had "suffered maltreatment."[239] In a separate memo to the Alan Lennox-Boyd, the Colonial Secretary, Commissioners for the Nigerian Federation maintained that "feelings of anxiety and apprehension" existed among many Nigerians in Britain due to the racial violence and volunteered to counsel their nationals to "exercise all possible discretion and restraint" to help ease racial tensions.

Not only did international responses to the news of "race riots" emphasize how images of racial conflict tarnished Britain's perceived exemplary record on issues concerning race and race relations on a world stage, but also they alluded to the ways in which the images undermined Britain's leadership role within a Commonwealth

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[237] PRO DO 35/7992 Memo, "Ghana and the Racial Riots" from A. Snelling to Sir H. Lintott dated 4 September 1958; "Nigerian Official Blames Influx of West Indians," *Trinidad Guardian* 5 September 1958 p.2; In another memo concerning racial violence towards people of color in Britain, Quaison-Backey of the Ghanaian High Commission criticized the British press for aggregating "different kinds of 'coloured people.' Quaison-Backey maintained that "There was all the difference in the world between Indians and Pakistanis on one hand, West Africans on another, and West Indians in the third place." See PRO DO 35/7992 *Memo*, "Racial Riots in the U.K." to Mr. Chadwick from M.E. Allen dated 1 September 1958.

[238] PRO DO 35/7992 Telegram to the Colonial Secretary from E. Baring of Kenya dated 31 October 1958

[239] "Nigerian Official Blames Influx of West Indians," *Trinidad Guardian* 5 September 1958 p.2.

community bound by the principles of multiracial egalitarianism and universalism. According to Norman Manley, "The whole future of the British Commonwealth of Nations—much of which is people by non-white races—depended on Britain's conduct in the face of racial incidents."[240] Just as the British Nationality Act of 1948 institutionalized the notion of a British Commonwealth community of citizens whose ties transcended the boundaries of race and nation, the Commonwealth itself, at least in theory, represented somewhat of a 'raceless' political entity comprised of equal nationalities, where markers of race had no pertinent social value. With the passage of the British Nationality Act of 1948, Britain reinvented its historic leadership position within the Commonwealth by officially transforming the legal meaning of British citizenship into a universalizing discourse of civic membership and belonging that extended to and united all Commonwealth communities regardless of race, ethnicity, or national origin. In doing so, Britain reaffirmed its premier status in the Commonwealth community as both a symbol and the embodiment of the theme of multiracial egalitarianism resting at the heart of the Commonwealth ideal. News of "race riots" exposed a glaring inconsistency between the ideas of multiracialism inherent in the concept of Commonwealth and the social realities of race and race relations in Britain, where the Commonwealth model was to be upheld to its highest degree.

Referencing the impact of reports of racial violence on Commonwealth relations, an article appearing in the Pakistani daily, *Times of Karachi* suggested the actions of white instigators of racial violence in Britain jeopardized, "the good work done in our multi-racial [Commonwealth] association." As punishment, the article suggested that "the teddy boys or for that matter all of those guilty of provoking race riots should be

[240] *Reuters* report, "British Entertainers Attack Race Violence," *Washington Post* 11 September 1958.

flogged to within an inch of their lives."[241] Expressly opposed to any form of migration restrictions, Hugh Cummins, Premier of Barbados maintained that if the violence persisted, it would "do a lot of harm to the Commonwealth."[242]Similarly, British diplomats noted that Ghana's *Evening News* printed a number of "bitter articles" highlighting the "implicit threat to Commonwealth solidarity" posed by the incidents of racial conflict in Britain.[243]

One of the key issues framing dialogue concerning the how racial violence threatened Commonwealth relations surrounded rumblings that the British government might use the "race riots" as an excuse to impose restrictions on Commonwealth migration to Britain. Although a review of Commonwealth migration policy had been the subject of Parliamentary debate in prior months, according to public statements issued by Home Office Under-Secretary Pat Hornsby-Smith, while the British Government was "anxiously watching" the situation concerning Commonwealth migration, it was "reluctant" to consider any policy which would depart from Britain's "traditional readiness to receive all citizens who have the status of a British subject."[244] However, for some government officials, reports of racial conflict generated cause to reconsider changes to the current Commonwealth migration policy.

Just two days after news of racial violence in Nottingham began to surface, two Parliament members for the city made suggestions that the violence should be read as a

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[241] PRO DO 35/7992 Telegram from Pakistan to Commonwealth Relations Office dated 4 September 1958.

[242] "WI Leaders Opposed to Restricted Immigration," *Trinidad Guardian* 8 September 1958.

[243] PRO DO 35/7992 Extract from *Ghanaian Fortnightly Summary* dated 12 September 1958.

[244] "Nottingham MPs Seek Curb on Immigration," *Daily Gleaner* 28 August 1958. In fact, migration restrictions designed to limit black Commonwealth migration had been the subject of official debate for over a decade preceding the riots. This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

sign that Britain's open door migration policy was no longer tenable. James Harrison, Labour M.P for Nottingham North suggested, "This policy of allowing people to come freely into our country was practicable in the nineteenth century. It is completely impossible under modern conditions." Harrison's Conservative colleague, J.K. Cordeaux, agreed. He explained,

> I have believed for some time that the there ought to be something in the nature of a quota or definite restrictions on people coming into this country from oversea...I have wondered about this matter for some times because I feared that something serious like this might occur. What happened emphasizes the seriousness of the position and urgency of the matter.[245]

Even before the British Nationality Act of 1948 formally established migration as a right of British citizenship which extended to all Commonwealth nationalities, Britain had long exercised an open door migration policy for individuals moving from various part of the Commonwealth to Britain. As a result, the privilege of migration to Britain was an important historic precursor to formal British citizenship that cemented the bonds between Britain and other Commonwealth communities.

Addressing a largely West Indian audience in London Norman Manley, Chief Minister of Jamaica, acknowledged Britain's prerogative to exercise migration controls. However, he contended that it would be "tragic" if Britain restricted its borders to Commonwealth migrants in response to the violence. He noted that Britain's open door migration policy was "a principle which has helped to build the very foundations on which the Commonwealth rests."[246] Also stressing the importance of migration as an essential element defining Commonwealth relations, one Nigerian official expressed

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[245] "Nottingham M.P.s Urge Curb on Entry of Immigrants," *London Times* 27 August 1958; Article also appeared in Jamaica's *Daily Gleaner* under same heading on 28 August 1958.

[246] "Manley Addresses London Meeting," *Daily Gleaner* 8 September 1958 p. 1,9.

concerns similar to Manley's, warning that if Britain decided to restrict migration from Commonwealth nationals it would "do irreparable damage to Commonwealth unity and mutual understanding."[247]

Since people of color, and more specifically, people of African descent from the West Indies, represented the overwhelming majority of migrants from the Commonwealth in Britain during the 1950s, inherently, the issue of migration, and in particular, the question of migration restrictions came embedded with racial undertones. How could British officials consider migration restrictions in lieu of racial conflict involving black Commonwealth migrants without signaling that controls were indeed a de facto race policy designed to limit the entry of black British citizens? South Africa's *Johannesburg Star* addressed this controversial question in an editorial suggesting,

> No doubt Britain would be reluctant to depart from the principle of the open door or to give any appearance of racial bias. But when she is faced with an immediate practical problem, the obvious thing is to check the inflow of people whose coming at this moment could only aggravate the troubles of the authorities as well as the non-whites already in the country."[248]

In an editorial appearing in Cape Town's *Die Burger* after reports of racial violence in Nottingham began to surface, one South African observer attributed the "racial explosion" directly to Britain's reluctance to implement migration controls which would appear to discriminate against the entry of people of color "in the interest of good relations with the multi-racial empire and Commonwealth." The editorial suggested that "Such intolerance towards people who are coloured is completely in opposition to the

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[247] "MacMillan Discusses Race Riots," *Trinidad Guardian* 6 September 1958 p.1

[248] PRO DO 35/7992 Letter from J.O. Wright, South African High Commissioner's Office to W. Preston, Commonwealth Relations Office dated 18 September 1958. This article ran in the *Johannesburg Star* on 4 September 1958.

picture of a liberal, colour-blind Britain which is shown to the world." [249] To be sure, British observers noted that in general, articles related to incidents of racial violence in Britain reported in the South African press tended to highlight what was regarded as, "the very real conflict between the principle of the open door in a multi-racial Commonwealth and the practical problem of controlling the influx of those who are difficult to assimilate."[250] South African opinion clearly articulated how the news of "race riots" in Britain—the premier Commonwealth state—clearly exposed the ways that the principles governing the Commonwealth ideal formed inextricable ties between race and migration.

As racial conflict and its international implications prompted British officials to more carefully reevaluate the relationship between race and migration within the context of notions of 'Commonwealth', two scenarios emerged. Either migration could continue to function as one of the chief mechanisms through which the ideal of a multiracial egalitarian Commonwealth civic community acquired substantive value, or in striking contrast, it could serve as a medium of remapping the racial hierarchies which had defined Empire onto the citizenship rights afforded to Commonwealth nationalities. By even contemplating the latter, particularly in response to racial violence, Britain could not avoid international conjecture speculating that when it came to freely opening its borders to the Commonwealth community, race did indeed matter.

Not only did South African public opinion emphasize how the violence unearthed tensions between a British migration policy reflecting the ideas of a multiracial Commonwealth and the practicalities associated with forging a multiracial society, but

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[249] *Die Burger* was the leading nationalist, pro-government paper in Cape Town. PRO DO 35/7992 Telegram from South Africa to Commonwealth Relations Office dated 1 September 1958.

[250] PRO DO 35/7992 Letter from J.O. Wright, South African High Commissioner's Office to W. Preston, Commonwealth Relations Office dated 18 September 1958.

more importantly, news of "race riots" in Britain offered South African observers an opportunity to attempt to vindicate their own abhorred racial practices and appeal for greater understanding from British critics. J.O. Wright, a representative for the South African High Commission monitoring public opinion in South Africa noted that after the violence spread from Nottingham to Notting Hill, South African commentators had "a real field day" reporting on the riots.[251] As reports of violence in Nottingham emerged, the *London Times* reported that South African papers referenced the events as "a case of the biter bit." Under the heading "No more the cry 'Holier than thou'" the Johannesburg *Star* reprinted a cartoon appearing in Britain's *Daily Express* portraying British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan dodging a scuffle between a "Nottingham 'teddy boy' and a coloured man" as Governor Faubus of Arkansas and a "vaguely resembling Mr. Swart" labeled 'South Africa' watched.[252] A British correspondent reporting from Johannesburg explained,

> The incidents at Nottingham have roused considerable interest here...Many South Africans feel that as their own racial troubles develop the British, like the United States, are likely to be more sympathetic to the Union's [South Africa's] difficulties, and this gives them a feeling of relief."[253]

Editorial commentary appearing in *Die Burger*, the organ of Afrikaan Nationalists evoked a similar tone. One writer contended that Britain was "ill-equipped to deal with

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[251] PRO DO 35/7992 Letter from J.O. Wright, South African High Commissioner's Office to W. Preston, Commonwealth Relations Office dated 18 September 1958.

[252] "Britain's Racial Problems: S. Africans Now Expect Greater Sympathy," *London Times* 29 August 1958. Governor Faubus was the segregationist governor of Arkansas who dispatched the army reserves to stall the integration of Little Rock's Central High School in accordance with the mandate of Brown vs. Board of Education. Charles Robbert Swart was the Minister of Justice in South African and came into power with the Nationalist Party which institutionalized apartheid in 1948. In 1959, he became the Union of South Africa's last Governor-General before the government left the British Commonwealth and became the first President of the Republic of South Africa, a position which he held until 1967.

[253] "Britain's Racial Problems: S. Africans Now Expect Greater Sympathy," *London Times* 29 August 1958 p.7.

the problems of a multi-racial community." The editorialist insisted that because British perspectives of "colour problems" derived chiefly from its role as a colonial power, Britain's answers to issues of race had been resolved through what the commentator labeled as "total apartheid" rather than through any serious consideration of "multiracial existences." Clearly, the commentator was attuned to the ways that historically, Britain's experience with issues of race had been shaped primarily within the context of an imperial structure in which the majority white metropolitan community was responsible for governing from abroad rather than accommodating a sizeable population of color on its own shores. For this reason, the article maintained that British perspectives "on the problems of colour are often stupid and intolerable," and suggested that Britain was unqualified to critique South Africa's use of apartheid policies to regulate race relations within its borders. The editorialist concluded,

> Perhaps the trivial race problem created by non-Whites in Britain will help towards the furtherance of humility, a requirement for all true knowledge, among the British public and leaders. A large part of African can do well with less advice, but no without greater understanding, from Britain."[254]

Just as South African opinion conveyed a hope that the racial violence displayed in Nottingham and Notting Hill might cause British critics of apartheid to reexamine their self-righteous posture on issues pertaining to race, observers in Germany, France, and Australia also expressed a degree of vindication for racial practices and policies scrutinized by the British public. In their surveys of German reaction to news of "race riots" in Britain, British officials reporting from Germany described what was detected as "an undertone of German satisfaction" that Britain had proven itself "not immune to anti-

[254] PRO DO 35/7992 Telegram from South Africa to Commonwealth Relations Office dated 1 September 1958.

racial feeling" despite pompous denouncements of Nazi anti-Semitic sentiment in Germany.[255] Similarly, British officials in Paris noticed that a certain degree of *schadenfreude* characterized French reactions to the violence, particularly among "right-wing Frenchmen" who recognized Britain's "tendency to preach to others" on the subject of race as exemplified in British criticisms of French policy in Algeria.[256] The reactions of German, French and Australian audiences to news of "race riots" illuminates the extent to which various sectors of British society had become invested in the shattered narratives of British racialism, tolerance and anti-racism exploded by news of "race riots." To be sure these narratives had historically allowed various sectors of British society to assert a sense of moral authority and to denounce the racist policies and practices of other nations.

Preserving the Mystique of British Anti-Racism

The manner in which domestic audiences responded to and interpreted racial conflict provides a vehicle to examine the extent to which contested notions British racial liberalism, permeated British observers' own perceptions of British national identity. To be sure, images of racial conflict challenged the legitimacy of preexisting racial narratives buttressing the "mystique of British anti-racism" and subsequently undermined widely held national myths regarding British racial attitudes and race relations in British society. Therefore, it is useful to think about the ways in which news of "race riots" presented a virtual crisis of British national identity that British commentators carefully considered in formulating their responses to the violence in Nottingham and Notting Hill.

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[255] PRO DO 35/7992 Telegram from Bonn, Germany to the Foreign Office dated 25 September 1958.

[256] PRO DO 35/7992 Telegram from Paris, France to the Foreign Office dated 6 September 1958. Schadenfreude is a German term referring to one's satisfaction in the misfortune of others.

In the days following the violence in Notting Hill, Foreign Office officials dispatched a confidential telegram to all Government representatives in Commonwealth territories and those serving in such places including Italy, Japan, the United States and Russia. This memo explained:

> We naturally wish to dampen down public interest in these events which have in any case been given exaggerated importance in the United Kingdom press. You should seek, where necessary, to put them into proper perspective, drawing upon material in my immediately following telegram and particularly emphasizing the following points:--
>
> > (a) The scale of the incidents has been greatly exaggerated. By foreign standards they would not be described as 'riots' at all;
> > (b) They have been condemned throughout the country. Those responsible are being dealt with under the law without regard to race or colour;
> > (c) In the recent disturbances, the racial aspect seems to have been the pretext for disturbance, rather than the cause of it;
> > (d) Organized racial discrimination has never been part of the pattern of British life, nor of the laws of the country;
> > (e) All British subjects, white or coloured enjoy absolute equality before the law;[257]

In a separate telegram sent to the same addressees on the same date, Foreign Office officials issued a more detailed statement seeking to clarify media reports related to the "so-called 'race riots.'" Officials noted that while there had been over a hundred arrests, there were relatively few people injured. Insisting that "There is very little racial prejudice," officials contended that when incidents of racial conflict surfaced between "coloured immigrants" and local white residents, "they have almost invariably arisen from under-currents of jealousy over extraneous things, eg., accommodation, employment or women." The telegram explained that it had only been since the close of World War II that British cities had witnessed a "considerable influx of coloured

[257] PRO DO 35/9506 Telegram from Foreign Office to HMG Representatives dated 3 September 1958.

immigrants"—the majority of whom were "unskilled" West Indian workers—and only recently had this pattern of "immigration" begun to reach "disconcerting proportions" as postwar labor shortages began to level. Foreign Office officials reasoned that because black migrants were "easily recognizable 'foreigners'—and in the particular case of West Indians—were "sometimes more flamboyant in their behavior," they made for "easy targets for hooliganism." The memo concluded that although "the presence of the city's coloured population had been used as an excuse to create a violent disturbance," these incidents did not reflect widespread racial attitudes among the British public and therefore represented "a blot on the conscience of Britain."[258]

The telegrams issued by the Foreign Office in the wake of the violence elucidate at least three key points concerning how one might consider British responses to the violence. First, British audiences were sensitive to the impressions that news of "race riots" made among international observers. Although identifying and addressing the sources of racial tensions as well as reprimanding the perpetrators of violence and devising preventive approaches to subdue future outbreaks all fell within the purview of the domestic community, one cannot ignore the broader transnational context of British responses and interpretations of the meaning of racial violence. In the postwar world in particular, issues of race could never quite simply be confined to a nation's domestic sphere, but rather, they represented contested transnational terrain that defined a nation's image in world politics and tested its legitimacy on racially charged international concerns. Intensifying civil rights campaigns in the United States, the inherent racial undertones of the disengagement of European colonial powers in Africa and the Caribbean and United Nations' debates concerning South Africa's apartheid regime all

[258] PRO DO 35/9506 Telegram from Foreign Office to HMG Representatives dated 3 September 1958.

kept the issue of race firmly ensconced in an international political landscape defined by shifting and competing Cold War diplomatic alliances. In this climate, questions of race mattered, and Britons certainly knew that when news of "race riots" captured headlines, the world would be watching.

Secondly, British audiences were concerned about influencing international perceptions of race and race relations in the wake of the violence. In much the same way that incidents including the Little Rock debacle served as powerful symbols of race in America that provided fodder for international critics to besmirch what Mary Dudziak has referenced as the "image of American democracy," news of "race riots" potentially threatened to dismantle widely held perceptions of British anti-racism. As a corrective, Dudziak contends that during the 1950s U.S. Government officials actively sought to deflect the diplomatic impact of racial narratives emerging from Jim Crow America by reframing the story of race in America for overseas audiences as one of redemptive democracy.[259] Just as the real and imagined impact of racial narratives emerging from Jim Crow America induced U.S. Government officials to repackage tarnished national myths pertaining to the image of American democracy, one might also argue that British reactions to news of "race riots" also were mediated by a desire to preserve certain contested notions of the "mystique of British anti-racism." The images of interracial violence projected throughout the world embodied the realities of racial conflict that severely crippled the "mystique of British anti-racism." Not only did images of "race riots" run counter to the underlying claim that racial differences had no social value in British society, but more importantly, they provided alternative narratives of race and race relations unveiling the existence of racial hostilities, prejudice, and discrimination.

[259] Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights,* chapters 1 and 2 esp.

But how could the "mystique of British anti-racism" persist amid reports of "nigger-hunting," "race war" and vigilante campaigns taking place on the streets of Nottingham and Notting Hill to "Keep Britain White!"[260]

A third theme highlighted in the Foreign Office telegrams is that the racial alternatives exposed for international consumption during the summer of 1958 represented a critical moment compelling various sectors of British society to take an introspective gaze at the social dilemmas of race in Britain more commonly described as the "colour problem." Reconfiguring shattered perceptions of race and race relations required that British audiences construct narratives to rationalize the violence to circumvent a broad indictment of British values and ideals regarding the subject of race. As episodes of racial violence spread from Nottingham to London, newspapers consistently carried headlines including "Reasons for Racial Tension", "Our Colour Problem" "Who is To Blame?" "Why Racial Clash Occurred," "London Racial Outburst Due To Many Factors," all of which represented an acknowledgement of race as a social dilemma, but more importantly provided a means to explain and reframe the nature of racial violence in Britain and its broader social and political implications domestically and perhaps more importantly for the consumption of international audiences.[261] For many British observers, one of the very tenets of British national identity was at stake in the aftermath of the Nottingham and Notting Hill incidents; reconciling the violence

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[260] "Four-Year Terms for Nine 'Nigger-Hunting' Youths," *London Times* 16 September 1958; "Race War in Britain," *Trinidad Guardian* 25 August 1958; " 'Keep Britain White' Call in Notting Hill Area," *London Times* 10 September 1958.

[261] Headline part of larger article entitled "Race Riots Meeting At Chequers," *London Observer* 7 September 1958, p.1; " 'Our Colour Problem,'" *London Observer* 7 September 1958, p.3; Headline part of larger article entitled "Man's Inhumanity to Man...England," *London Observer* 7 September 1958, p.5; "Why Racial Clash Occurred," *London Times* 27 August 1958 p.4; "London Racial Outburst Due to Many Factors," *London Times* 3 September 1958 p.7;

became a means of safeguarding the "mystique of British anti-racism" and essentially perpetuating the very national myths that silenced historic existence of race-based social conflict, discrimination, exclusion and structures of inequality.[262]

In the weeks immediately following the disturbances in Nottingham and Notting Hill British observers began to construct an intricate web of social commentary to analyze what was described as the "colour problem" and explain the factors contributing to racial conflict. In the process, two overlapping and somewhat complimentary explanations—the problems associated with recent "coloured immigration" and the social deviance of the white perpetrators of racial violence— emerged as British officials, media outlets, organizations, and private citizens debated and attempted to account for the sources of racial tensions that lead to the outbreak of violence. The first of these themes focused on the ways in which racial conflict could be directly linked to the "immigration" of large numbers of people of color from Commonwealth communities—the overwhelming majority being West Indians of African descent. British observers used this argument to draw attention to the ways that the origins of racial conflict could be understood as an unfavorable outgrowth of the problems associated with "immigration" and the shifting social dynamics prompted by the growing presence of black migrant communities. Issues of interracial sex, living space, and work dominated this line of discussion. British observers highlighted how sexual relations between black men and white women, housing shortages and employment competition created hostile social relations between black newcomers and indigenous white residents.

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[262] Although his study focuses solely on policy makers, Randall Hansen has noted that the Nottingham and Notting Hill violenced "forced British elites to question assumptions about oft-invoked (but rarely substantiated) English tolerance." See Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain*, 81.

A secondary, and indeed corollary theme emerging out of British considerations of the causes of racial conflict emphasized the ways in which the violence could be explained as a circumscribed event confined to a deviant sector of society. To frame this argument, British observers oftentimes conceded that the violence was, on the whole, the result of racially motivated attacks on black residents; however these racist overtures were largely attributed to the reckless actions of "irresponsible youths" commonly known as Teddy boys and were in no way representative of the broader white indigenous society's attitudes towards black people. Not only did this explanation rely upon images of Teddy boys who were young, white, primarily working class men as the primary agents of violent racist behavior, but it also situated the emergence of Teddy boy violence as part of a broader condition of socially deviant conditions specific to the working class communities of Nottingham and Notting Hill. In the process, these two themes—one of which attributed racial tensions to the problems of adapting to a new "immigrant" population and another which confined those resulting tensions to a deviant sector of society—became instrumental means of accounting for the existence of racism and racial conflict and translating its implications for both domestic and international audiences. To be sure, these explanations of racial conflict provided an essential means of circumventing the realities of endemic raced-based inequalities buttressed by exclusionary, discriminatory and prejudice social policies and practices. More importantly, these arguments became a way of reconstructing and safeguarding the racial narratives that sustained the "mystique of British anti-racism."

In an article appearing in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* just days after reports of interracial violence in Nottingham surfaced, a special correspondent for the newspaper

posed the question, "What produced the tension in this community?" At first glance, the reporter argued that the "real causes" of the violence involved, "the whole complex of prejudice, envy, and mutual irritation inadequately known as the 'colour problem.' In an attempt to further explain the essential features of the 'colour problem' the reporter explained:

> Many people put the verdict credibly into one word—'women'. You might add as one equal factor general anxiety about the presence of coloured men, or 'prejudice'—including white residents' dislike of mixed marriages. Some distance behind these causes comes a complex of irritations: coloured people's manners and mannerisms; rivalry for employment in a time of slight recession in the area; and envy of coloured men who have been able to buy houses and 'flash' cars.[263]

The report added,

> The 'women problem' seems to mean no more than that some West Indians and other coloured men have acquired white girl friends. This is resented by some white male residents—vaguely known as 'teddy boys' though their age range seems to run from over 20 to at least over 30—who do their best to humiliate coloured men in general.[264]

In an editorial appearing in the following week's edition of the paper, Myrtle Shaw, a resident of Nottingham, responded to the special correspondent's arguments concerning the 'colour problem' and suggested that while the article could be commended for its objectivity, "the question 'What went wrong in Nottingham?' is not easily answered." Shaw contended:

> To lay the blame on 'teddy boys' or 'irresponsible' coloured men, or to concluded that it is due to jealousy over women, is really to beg the issue. These are surface causes, and in any case have not given rise to serious trouble until now. Unemployment and housing problems are undoubtedly a factor in the situation and it is social problems such as these which

[263] "Racial Outburst in an English City," *Manchester Guardian Weekly* 28 August 1958.

[264] Ibid.

should be investigated rather than hastily concluding that the affair was the handiwork of youth."[265]

Echoing many of the sentiments expressed in Myrtle Shaw's editorial, *London Observer* reporter George Clay insisted that based on his own investigations of the violence conducted in a number of local pubs in Nottingham, he had unearthed "evidence of prejudice, compounded of suspicion, fear, sexual jealousy and economic uncertainty" concerning issues pertaining to relationships between white women and black men, housing shortages and heightened employment competition. While local observers including the Nottingham Consultative Committee for the Welfare of Coloured People generally viewed the violence as "a limited" and or "spontaneous outbreak of hooliganism" as opposed to a "large-scale communal conflict," Clay concluded that the "pattern of race prejudice" that eventually culminated in violent interracial clashes in "a squalid district" of Nottingham was "as yet neither sharply defined nor widespread," but was often discernable in similar industrial areas which had become home to an "influx of coloured immigrants in recent years."[266]

Just as observers of the Nottingham violence emphasized sexual liaisons between black men and white women, the difficulties associated with housing and economic competition, and the deviant actions of youth and other "irresponsible" persons, as some of the key underlying causes intrinsic to understanding the clashes between black and white residents, in the aftermath of the Notting Hill disturbances some of these same issues resonated as contributing elements. In an article written one week after the violence subsided in Notting Hill, a London staff reporter noted that in the process of

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[265] "Letters to the Editor: Race Prejudice in Britain," *Manchester Guardian Weekly* 4 September 1958.

[266] "Menace Behind the Brawl," *London Observer* 31 August 1958 p.11.

conducting numerous interviews with residents of Notting Hill, "the question about causes of tension produced the same two answers time and time again: the housing shortage and white girls going to live with coloured men."[267] An earlier article appearing in the *London Times* noted that although "The trouble has been written up as race rioting; and it has been written off as mere hooliganism of gangs of excided Teddy boys," the violence could be linked to three main sources of resentment by white residents against "coloured inhabitants." According to the article, white residents alleged that their black counterparts "do no work and...collect a rich sum from the Assistance Board. They [black residents] are said to be able to find housing when white residents cannot. And they are charged with all kinds of misbehavior, especially sexual." In addition, the article took care to note the larger social setting of the London violence. It explained that Notting Hill was "a poor district and it has always been rough." In characterizing the residents of the community the article contended:

> Many of the long-established residents are of gypsy stock...They are, as they say themselves, tough, clannish people. Many of them are self-employed in the used-car trade, which has its lawless fringe. They have no love for the police...Many of the newer arrivals are Irish labourers—who work for good money on the building sites, and then may take a week off to drink their earnings—and coloured immigrants. There are a good many of these—2,000 or 3,000 perhaps...and there is also a number of coloured men who do not work but live off the earnings of prostitutes, some of them white. [268]

The explanations and contextual information furnished by British observers to translate the causes of racial conflict appropriated intersecting discourses race, class, gender and sexuality to denounce the violence and to create stigmatized images of the targets and perpetrators of violence in the Nottingham and Notting Hill. In their analysis

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[267] " 'Brown Town' Speaks for Itself," *Manchester Guardian Weekly* 11 September 1958.

[268] "London Racial Outburst Due to Many Factors," *London Times* 3 September 1958 p.7.

of the situation, the looming social issues related to the incorporation of an increasing black migrant population were reduced to a problem of criminal and/or unemployed black men involved in illicit sexual relationships with white women whose growing presence diminished economic and sexual opportunities for local white men. A *Reuters* report circulated in the Jamaican press poignantly captured this perspective. Noting that 'Teddy Boys' gangs are intent on creating racial incidents in scattered districts of London which have coloured inhabitants," the report also insisted, "Officials believe that the 'black-man-white girl' incidents were the root of the original trouble [and] that it has been stimulated by mounting unemployment which has made white workmen fearful of coloured competition for jobs."[269] Framing the problem of black migration using a similar gendered language, George Roger, a local M.P representing the Notting Hill district, more directly implicated the presence of black men as a cause of interracial strife in the area. From Rogers's perspective while the violence could be attributed to both "coloured and white," he maintained, "West Indians around here caused the violence." Rogers insisted that among all of the West Indian communities in Britain Notting Hill had "some of the worst types—drug traffickers, prostitutes, and their pimps and violent men of all sorts."[270]

This sort of rationale relied upon widely circulated stereotypes of black masculinity that, as Marcus Collins has argued, depicted black masculinity as the anti-thesis of the white bourgeois gentleman and black male sexuality a predatory pathological condition infatuated with conquering white women. Collins noted that these stigmatized constructions of black masculinity and sexuality were framed in relation to

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[269] "Butler In Talks Today," *Daily Gleaner* 3 September 1958.

[270] "Labour M.P. Blames the West Indians," *Trinidad Guardian* 2 September 1958.

white metropolitan society's perceptions of black men in the colonial context as trifling workers, dysfunctional family men and hypersexual beings. In the postwar period, when black migration occurred en masse—consisting primarily of black men—Collins maintained these same stereotypes informed the terms of black migrants' encounters in metropolitan society.[271]

For instance, while unemployment figures for black migrants demonstrated that only a small percentage were unemployed in 1958, the image of the industrious laborer did not firmly resonate in mainstream opinions of black workers.[272] In an editorial appearing in Jamaica's *Daily Gleaner* Charles Archibald of London explained that although "There may be one West Indian only in a street living off the immoral earnings of an English girl,... that one example of West Indian depravity can be multiplied over and over again in the popular imagination."[273] Archibald's editorial highlights the extent to which certain disreputable images of black life became representative of the whole even when they only fairly applied to an infinitesimal portion of the black population. Collins's work helps to elucidate the ways in which, historically, the intersections of race, gender, class and sexuality informed these negative typecasts of black men—and essentially black migrant communities in postwar Britain. More importantly, Collins's study is suggestive of how stigmatized constructions of black masculinity became the very tools used to invalidate black men's claims to a British identity, citizenship and more broadly the rights of belonging in British society. The racial violence of Nottingham and Notting Hill revived these latent, yet pervasive images of black men and

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[271] Collins, "Pride and Prejudice", 391-418.

[272] Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, 117.

[273] Charles Archibald, "The Truth About Notting Hill," *Daily Gleaner* 8 September 1958.

for British observers they became powerful instruments to explain racist behavior and rationalize racial conflict.[274]

Not only did British observers offer explanations which cited and reproduced stereotypes of black masculinity and sexuality to effectively recast black migrants as justifiable targets, rather than unwarranted victims of racially motivated attacks, but also, they emphasized the deviant nature of the white perpetrators of racist violence. In an editorial appearing in the *London Times* B.R. Wilson of the University of Leeds suggested that it was imperative that international audiences be aware that incidents of racial violence were subscribed to a certain aberrant section of society and did not reflect the larger society's attitudes about race or behavior towards non-whites. He contented,

> What needs to be clearly set on record for the benefit of the citizens of Bulawayo, Pretoria, and Little Rock—whose comment has already been forthcoming—is that there is no widespread hostility towards coloured people in Britain; that they are not our basic problem, but rather an ill-disciplined, over-paid, frustrated youth, whose life changes have been vastly improved money-wise without commensurate social adjustment either to preserve our traditional values or to effectively forge them for a new way of life."[275]

Wilson's editorial insisted that explorations of the origins of racial conflict must include a careful consideration of the "social causes of the mob behavior of the white population" most of which he attributed to economic conditions generating a demand for unskilled "socially illiterate" young workers too irresponsible to find socially acceptable means of venting their frustrations as the labor market shifted and migration patterns heightened job competition.[276]

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[274] Marcus Collins "Pride and Prejudice,"391-418.

[275] "Clashes in the Streets: More Than Racial Issues Involved," *London Times* 5 September 1958.

[276] "Clashes in the Streets: More Than Racial Issues Involved," *London Times* 5 September 1958

Most mentions of the group of young white male working class aggressors discussed in Wilson's editorial referred to them as "Teddy Boys." As an article in the *London Observer* noted, "Teddy Boys" was a "generic term for the whites who seemed to be leading the riots," adding that for Americans, the equivalent referent would be "poor white trash."[277] In his study of the Notting Hill violence, Edward Pilkington has noted that the term "Teddy Boy" emerged in the early 1950s out of a new "Rock 'n' Roll" culture prevalent among young white working class men. According to Pilkington, the "Teddy Boy" image became a symbol of moral decline and lawlessness and was generally associated with the worst elements of working class life including crime, gangs and violence.[278]

The rebellious nature of violent-prone "Teddy boys" was only part of the problem. In addition to a fixation on the reckless behavior of "Teddy Boys" inflamed by the presence of black newcomers who threatened white working class men's socio-economic positions and took sexual liberties with white women, the local communities themselves, became marked territories that served as breeding grounds for socially deviant behavior. In the process, the various episodes of interracial violence and the communities in which they occurred, as a whole, became constructed as deviant spaces of masculine aggression waged between an "irresponsible minority" of black and white working class men over issues of living space, economic opportunities and unregulated black male sexuality.[279] Describing the St. Ann's community where most of the violence

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[277] "Man's Inhumanity to Man...In England," *London Sunday Observer* 7 September 1958.

[278] Pilkington *Beyond the Mother Country*, 94-95.

[279] This reference is taken from a statement issued by the Nottingham Consultative Committee for the Welfare of Coloured People, an interracial local welfare association. " 'Irresponsible Actions' at Nottingham," *London Times* 27 August 1958.

occurred in Nottingham, one paper suggested that episodes of interracial violence erupted in a "squalid district" of the city "where the popular idea of a good time...is 'beer, fish-and-chips, and a good fight on Saturday night."[280] Commenting on the public chatter surrounding the setting of most of the racial violence occurring in London, one Notting Hill resident insisted explained,

> I cannot help feeling that some of the comments on Notting Hill which have appeared in the press have been actuated by a class prejudice which is no less reprehensible. Reading some of the comments I have gathered that we in Notting Hill are a brothel-bred rabble inhabiting leprous tenements who have no right to complain of anything.[281]

This Notting Hill resident's observations are suggestive of the ways in which the quest to explain and interpret racial violence as something that was confined to a deviant sector of society constructed the violence as representative of intra-class conflict as opposed to an interracial conflict indicative of the state of race relations or widely prevalent attitudes towards black people in Britain among indigenous white Britons.

Certainly, there existed alternative explanations of the violence that focused on the range of historic and structural conditions mediating the explosion of racial conflict in Britain during the summer of 1958. Undoubtedly many British observers agreed with sociologist Kenneth Little's assertion quoted in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* that the history of slavery, colonialism and imperialism played a vital role in configuring "popular ideas about the coloured races, particularly the Negro" and that these ideas informed racial prejudice against black migrants and notions of "coloured inferiority."[282] Surely many white Britons supported the position of the National Council of Civil

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[280] "Menace Behind the Brawl," *London Observer* 31 August 1958.

[281] Kit Evans, "Roots Of Racial Prejudice," *Manchester Guardian* 18 September 1958.

[282] Kenneth Little, "Racial Myth and Prejudice," *Manchester Guardian Weekly* 23 September 1958.

Liberties who condemned the British Government for indirectly sponsoring institutionalized racial discrimination and attributed racial tensions to an endemic problem of structural racial inequality of access and opportunity. As one representative of the NCCL surmised,

> If the Government-subsidized British Travel and Holidays Association had never allowed hotels which refused accommodation to coloured people to appear on its lists, if magistrates had exercised their powers under the law to refuse to renew licenses of public houses which discriminate against coloured people, if the local administration had refused licenses to dance halls which impose a colour bar, and people in authority were given a lead in a fight against discrimination instead of in many cases tacitly condoning it, then this kind of thing would not have happened.[283]

Nonetheless, this type of historical and structural analysis of the dilemmas of race and race relations in Britain society in the wake of news of "race riots" became marginal to interpretative narratives that highlighted the problems of the growth of an overwhelmingly black male migrant population within a socially deviant sector of society plagued by sexually frustrated "Teddy Boys", housing shortages and economic insecurity. These were the narratives that became co-opted into official explanations as prominent political organs attempted to translate the social context and origins racial conflict for international audiences.

During the same week that violence erupted in the streets of Notting Hill, London delegates prepared for the opening of the annual Trades Union Congress, the largest and most influential national labor association in Britain. In lieu of the violence, Peter Maurice of the Clerical and Administrative Workers' Union urged the General Council of the organization to prepare a public statement addressing the "outburst" of racial violence in Britain. Maurice noted that while the organization was not in a position to pass a

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[283] "Magistrate Asks for Voluntary Curfew," *London Times* 3 September 1958.

definitive motion because it was unclear if the violence was the result of "street gangs, used to fighting among themselves" or the work of Fascist organizations exploiting racial tensions in certain areas, it was important that the Trades Union Congress expressed concern about the violence. Maurice urged,

> We have got to fact the fact that racial prejudice does exist among some of our people. We have got to face the fact that the activities of a minority of coloured people may cause antagonism against coloured people in general. We have got to face the fact that unemployment, bad and inadequate housing, are going to make these problems come to the surface.[284]

In response to Maurice's request, Vincent Tewson, General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress, issued a statement on behalf of the General Council condemning what he labeled as "isolated outbreaks of vicious hooliganism Nottingham and one area of London." Echoing similar sentiments of surprise at the news of "race riots" in Britain reflected in the reactions of many international spectators, Tewson explained,

> Delegates to the Trades Union Congress, like our colleagues throughout the Commonwealth, are shocked and deeply disturbed by the recent isolated outbreaks of vicious hooliganism in Nottingham and one area of London, culminating in violence and assault on British citizens of different races.

Hinting of the possibility that the violence might be attributed to Fascists agitation, Tewson noted, "Evidence is accumulating that elements which propagated racial hatred in Britain and Europe in pre-war days are once more fanning the flames of violence." Tewson's remarks drew attention to speculation that the London violence in particular could be linked to Fascists groups, the most visible being Oswald Moseley's Union Movement which actively promoted a "Keep Britain White" campaign opposing black "immigration" and essentially demonizing the growth of black communities in Britain. Tewson reminded his audience that the Trades Union Movement in Britain had been

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[284] "Report of Proceedings at the 90th Annual Trades Union Congress,"September 1-5, 1958 p. 378 London Metropolitan University Trades Union Congress Library, London, UK.

outspoken in condemning "every manifestation of racial prejudice and discrimination in any part of the world." Although he did draw a direct link between migration and racial conflict, Tewson concluded his remarks by adding that while "immigrants from many countries" had been "freely accepted" by unions and "in general have been integrated into industrial life," addressing other areas including the problems associated with "social integration" and housing had proved more formidable. In the wake of racial conflict, Tewson suggested that local communities pursue efforts to "further tolerance" and greater understanding of the "difficult problems" facing "immigrants" adjusting to life in Britain.[285]

What is most significant to consider about the response issued by Trades Union Congress officials is their anticipated audience. The proceedings of the General Council's meeting indicate that officials meticulously deliberated over the form, scope and content of their first public response to the violence, especially given that many of the facts pertaining to the clashes had yet to be established. However, officials decided that a statement was indeed appropriate at the time—not necessarily for its potential worth among unionists or even the larger British community— but as Tewson maintained, it was most useful as a means of influencing "overseas opinion, particularly in the Commonwealth."[286] Union officials were acutely aware of the international implications of the news of "race riots" and rightly assumed that observers from abroad would pay close attention to domestic reactions and explanations. As noted earlier, news of "race riots" compromised widely held images of Britain's national character on issues of race. The survival of those images pivoted in many ways on how British public

[285] Ibid., 458-459.

[286] Ibid., 459-460.

opinion accounted for episodes of racial violence in a nation which had staked its own national identity and derived international legitimacy in world affairs by embracing anti-racist politics and the rhetoric of multiracial egalitarianism.

The international ramifications of the news of "race riots" also concerned government officials as they too attempted to weigh in on the possible causes of racial conflict and formulate working narratives to explain the violence. Hugh Gaitskill, leader of the the Labour Party noted, "nothing can justify the rioting and hooliganism." Gaitskell insisted, "Such behavior can only damage the reputation of our country in the world, weaken the unity of the Commonwealth, and increase racial tension without...solving the underlying social and economic problems."[287] Concerned that the violence might be "exaggerated at home or oversea," the government's first public response to the violence reflected in a statement issued by Home Secretary R.A. Butler stressed that the most pressing issue involved "the maintenance of law and order." Thwarting any specific references to the racial undertones of the Nottingham and Notting Hill violence, Butler's statement characterized the situation as unbridled acts of lawlessness and further implied that the violence was a breach of some sort of established code of social conduct for which the government and local authorities could and would exercise the "utmost strictness" in restoring through existing legal channels.[288]

In the days that followed, government officials began to formulate more concrete explanations for the violence which highlighted the broader socio-economic context of race relations in Britain. In a report compiled by Home Office officials and submitted to British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan detailing the incidents of interracial violence in

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[287] "Government Warning on Race Riots," *London Times* 4 September 1958.

[288] Ibid.

Nottingham and Notting Hill London, British government officials outlined four key factors contributing to racial conflict. First, the report listed white men's jealousy "because white girls are attracted to coloured men." Secondly, the report noted that increasing unemployment and job competition among largely unskilled workers "has undoubtedly increased the antagonism between white and coloured." The report also made reference to "teddy boys" induced to "stir up still more trouble" as local public opinion in the areas turned against black residents. Finally, the report added that in the area of housing, "Where there is overcrowding whites sometimes become embittered because they feel that the immigrants are increasing their difficulties."[289] The government report reflects an aggregate of a range of public chatter and speculation about the origins of and broader social context framing racial conflict. Perhaps more significantly, the government report represents one of the most important portable public narratives generated by British observers to interpret the significance of the racial conflict and its wider implications for both domestic and international audiences.

While narratives problematizing the presence of a growing black migrant population, acts of "hooliganism" by Teddy Boys and the concentrated social deviance of certain working class communities, all served as talking points to rationalize the existence of racial conflict; but what could serve as a viable solution? In a telegram dispatched to all Commonwealth governments including colonial territories sent just one day after news reports began to circulate pertaining to racial violence in Nottingham an official of the Commonwealth Relations Office noted,

> While police reports make it clear that coloured persons involved in last Saturday's rioting in Nottingham were almost exclusively West Indian, press comment here tends to see this incident in round terms of coloured versus white.

[289] Race Riots Meeting At Chequers," *London Observer* 7 September 1958.

> Publicity, is moreover, bound to lead to further pressure for some form of immigration control.[290]

As the violence spread to London in the weeks that followed debate over migration restrictions became firmly implanted in public discussions concerning the incidents of racial discrimination. Just two days after the fighting began in Nottingham, J.K. Cordeaux, a Conservative M.P. for Nottingham Central linked the conflict to Britain's open-door Commonwealth migration policy which had in recent years facilitated the growth of an unprecedented black population in Britain.[291] Cordeaux's Parliamentary colleague and fellow party member, Norman Panell of Liverpool agreed with Cordeaux's logic and maintained that, "The Nottingham fighting is a manifestation of the evil results of the present [migration] policy." Panell reasoned that, "unless some restriction is imposed we shall create the colour bar we all want to avoid."[292] Cyril Osborne, Conservative M.P. for Louth proposed a one year moratorium on all Commonwealth migration except in the case of "*bona fide* students" imploring that the Nottingham violence should serve as "a red light to all of us." According to Osborne, the alternative would be devastating to race relations in Britain. He insisted, "It will be black against white. We are sowing the seeds of another 'Little Rock' and it is tragic."[293]

When British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan issued his first public statement on the incidents of violence in Nottingham and Notting Hill, although he emphasized that

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[290] PRO DO 35/7992 Telegram from Commonwealth Relations Office to Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, India, Pakistan, Ghana, and other Commonwealth countries dated 26 August 1958.

[291] "Nottingham M.P.s Urge Curb on Entry of Immigrants,"*London Times* 27 August 1958. A similar version of this article appeared in the Jamaican press on the following day. See "Nottingham MPs Seek Curb on Immigrants," *Daily Gleaner* 28 August 1958.

[292] "Renewed Call for Changes in Immigration Law," *London Times* 28 August 1958.

[293] Ibid.

the events represented a breach of law and order requiring "the utmost strictness" by law-enforcing agents, he also noted that the Government had "for some little time" been examining the impact of "the country's time-honoured practice to allow free entry" to those migrating from Commonwealth territories. MacMillan pointed out that the Government would not make any hasty decision regarding a major policy change on the subject of Commonwealth migration without "careful consideration of the problem as a whole;" however, the timing of his comments drew clear connections between racial tensions and the effects of black migration.[294] In fact the subject of Commonwealth migration controls had been actively pursued in various Government departments as early as 1952 when the Ministry of Labour established a commission on the Employment of Coloured People in the United Kingdom to study and collect data pertaining to "coloured immigration" which was later used in Cabinet discussions resulting in a draft immigration restrictions bill in 1955.[295] Racial violence gave this long-discussed agenda new life and more importantly, it provided a more volatile and receptive public climate to test the case for restricting black migration—in this instance, as a means of addressing racial tensions and quelling the spread of interracial conflict.

What dominated public debate on the question of migration controls in the wake of the Nottingham and Notting Hill violence was the unavoidable racial undertones that any form of restriction might convey and the larger implications concerning the concept of British citizenship. In an editorial appearing in the *London Times* T.E.M McKitterick

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[294]"Government Warning on Race Riots," *London Times* 4 September 1958; See also "MacMillan Warns Govt. Will Use 'All Strictness' to End Clashes," *Daily Gleaner* 4 September 1958 and "Britain's PM Warns Race 'Troublemakers,'" *Trinidad Guardian* 4 September 1958.

[295] James and Harris, *Inside Babylon*, 59-68. Paul, *Whitewashing Britain.* Government consideration of migration controls in the early 1950s will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

summarized this issue in an appeal against the introduction of migration controls. McKitterick concluded that any form of Commonwealth migration restriction "would be a breach in the basic principles behind the phrase 'citizen' of the United Kingdom and Colonies'." He further added that "It would inevitably lead to colour discrimination and the creation of two classes of citizenship."[296] McKitterick's remarks captured one of the major subjects framing current historical debate over race, citizenship and migration in postwar Britain. As McKitterick rightly surmised, under the terms of the British Nationality Act of 1948, migration became an institutionalized right of British citizenship which extended to all nationals of Commonwealth territories; therefore the introduction of Commonwealth migration restrictions inherently dismantled the egalitarian principles buttressing the ideal of a transracial, transnational British citizenship by excluding certain categories of Commonwealth nationals from enjoying the migration privileges attached to their British citizenship.

Focusing largely on the perspectives of government officials, in her analysis of race, citizenship and migration, historian Kathleen Paul has asserted that debates over migration controls in the wake the Nottingham and Notting Hill riots implicated the state's role in establishing "separate spheres of nationality" that essentially propagated racialized notions of British citizenship privileging whiteness and marginalizing the citizenship status for black Commonwealth migrants. While Paul highlights the ways in which the state manipulated the subject of migration controls as a means of producing racialized notions of British citizenship to the detriment of black Commonwealth migrants, Randall Hansen contends that restricting black migration was not a widely supported agenda among government officials. Instead Hansen has argued that

[296] "Easing Racial Tensions," *London Times* 4 September 1958.

government action concerning Commonwealth migration policy—which did not officially take place until the passage of the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962—was driven by an "illiberal" British society. Although Paul and Hansen disagree on the extent to which the state promoted Commonwealth migration restrictions aimed at limiting black migration as a means of institutionalizing discrimination against non-white British citizens, both agree that the subject of migration controls—particularly in the wake of the Nottingham and Notting Hill conflict represented an expression of British racism. While there is certainly much validity to this contention, there is another trajectory from which one may gauge this matter.[297]

Suggesting that curbing black migration might remedy racial conflict represented yet another discursive medium to preserve the "mystique of British anti-racism." Reducing the social dilemmas of race and race relations in British society to a problem of migration presented an ahistorical narrative implying that racism and racial conflict had no place historically or structurally in British society until the advent of large-scale black migration and the growth of more visible black communities in the postwar period. This ignored the long history of negative racial stereotypes of black colonials circulating in metropolitan culture historically and the history of racial conflict in cities including Cardiff and Liverpool during early twentieth century.[298] Moreover, this assumption relied on the notion that black migrants exacerbated racial conflict and virtually exonerated white Britons from addressing their own racial prejudices, stereotypes, stigmas and exclusionary practices.

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[297] Kathleen Paul *Whitewashing Citizenship (1997)*; Randall Hansen *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain (1999)*

[298] Fryer, *Staying Power*, 298-310, 367-371; See also Lorimer, *Colour, Class and the Victorians.*

But to what extent did the "mystique of British anti-racism" persevere despite the news of "race riots?" To what extent did overseas audiences accept British explanations of the origins, causes and remedies concerning violent racial conflict? No doubt these questions cannot be answered with any degree of certainty, however, anecdotal evidence does suggest that British efforts to preserve the "mystique of British anti-racism" were not ignored by international audiences. Although Jamaican Prime Minister, Norman Manley encouraged West Indians in Brixton to "Remember what the American Negroes have had to put up with. And remember at last they are winning," his timely comparison of West Indians in Britain and black Americans was more likely an attempt to compare the potential of racial progress rather than similarities between the historical processes and structural determinants shaping race relations in British and American society. Just days before his tour of Brixton Manley commented, "I am satisfied the great majority of the English people are not against West Indians, only a narrow section of the community. No doubt this is agitated by the 'Keep Britain White' Fascist movement." Manley's remarks suggested that he agreed with British assessments that the violence was indeed the result of an aberrant section of society influenced by extremist propaganda rather than an endemic social problem.[299] Hugh Cummins, the Premier of Barbados echoed Manley's position on the causes of the violence. Cummins noted, "We feel that the trouble is the result of gangster-type Teddy boys and probably Fascism...We feel that the average Englishman doesn't explode into intense racial feeling"[300]

While the legal punishments for those found guilty of inciting and or participating in the violence in Nottingham and Notting Hill ranged from small fines to extended

[299] "Nigerial Official Blames Influx of West Indians," *Trinidad Guardian* 5 September 1958.

[300] "Barbados Premier Arrives," *London Times* 8 September 1958.

prison sentences, many international observers seemed to endorse the manner in which British courts responded to the violence. British diplomats in Germany noted that overall in the German press, "The sharp sentences passed at Old Bailey on white youths who beat up coloured people have received wide approval," adding that this "attitude contrasts with German criticism of [the] latest development at Little Rock."[301] Similar to the view in Germany, British officials in France suggested, "The bad impression made by these 'riots' has since been to some extent corrected by the severity of the sentence passed on four of the ringleaders.[302] These sorts of remarks suggest that international observers bought into British interpretations that the violence was the result of a breach of law and order instigated by reckless youth, rather than any pervasive existence of racism or widespread hostility towards black migrants. Moreover, these comments highlight that the punishments disseminated by the British legal system to the perpetrators and the restoration of public order in the aftermath of the violence served as means of redeeming Britain's tarnished image on issues of race and race relations.

As one local magistrate doled out four year prison sentences to nine young white men charged with attacking black men during the height of the racial clashes in Notting Hill, he admonished,

> You are a minute and insignificant section of the population who have brought shame upon the district in which you live, and have filled the whole nation with horror, indignation, and disgust...Everyone, irrespective of the colour of their skin, is entitled to walk through the streets in peace, with their heads erect, and free from fear. That is a right which these courts will always unfailingly uphold...As far as the law is concerned you are entitled to think what you like, however foul your thoughts; to feel what you like, however brutal and debased your emotions; to say what you like providing you do not infringe on the rights

[301] PRO DO 35/7992 Telegram from Bonn, Germany to the Foreign Office dated 25 September 1958.

[302] PRO DO 35/7992 Telegram from Paris to Foreign Office dated 25 September 1958.

> of others or imperial the Queen's peace, but once you translate your dark thoughts and brutal feelings into savage acts such as these the law will be swift to punish you, the guilty and to protect your victims."[303]

On same day that the *London Times* printed the magistrate's remarks, a reprint appeared in the *Trinidad Guardian* along with the following editorial commentary:

> The Judge's action should go far in helping not only to nip in the bud the burgeonings of further racial troubles...but [also] in restoring to coloured people in Britain a sense of being under the shelter of the great rock of British justice, which has stood the test of time."[304]

Two days later the *Trinidad Guardian* carried an editorial by James Nestor which noted that the four year prison terms issued to the "English hooligans" responsible for attacking black men in Notting Hill had restored Trinidadians' "faith in the British Government and "in one breath shown to the world that British justice still remains the highest achievement of man." Nestor maintained that the triumph of "British Justice" should offer an example to Britain's "American cousins," as he proposed "Could the Americans rise above their sordiness of Jimmy Wilson and Little Rock? Can they really redeem themselves and enforce justice as impartially as the English?"[305]

The images of race and race relations in Britain that emerged in the aftermath of violent racial conflict between black and white residents on the streets of Nottingham and Notting Hill London did much to challenge widely held perceptions of British racial liberalism and tolerance. News of "race riots" contradicted the "mystique of British anti-

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[303] "Four-Year Terms For Nine 'Nigger-Hunting' Youths," *London Times* 16 September 1958.

[304] "9 London Youths Jailed for Colour Manhunt: Judge Says Attacks Were Vicious," *Trinidad Guardian* 16 September 1958; "Trinidad Praise For British Justice," *London Times* 17 September 1958.

[305] James Nestor, "British Justice Has Justified Our Faith," *Trinidad Guardian* 20 September 1958. Jimmy Wilson had been convicted of stealing less that $2.00 from a white woman in Alabama and received the death sentence for his crime. His case drew international headlines and served as a potent symbol of the virulence of American racism.

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racism" which informed the ways that white Britons viewed themselves, their relationship to other societies and Britain's image in international politics. Less than one year after news of "race riots" occasioned white Britons to take an introspective examination to account for images of race that countered the "mystique of British anti-racism," another instance of racial violence, the murder of Kelso Cochrane, would create a moment when visions of Britishness were fractured, contested and reconfigured—this time by black migrants.

CHAPTER FOUR

"Are We To Be Mauled Down Just Because We Are Black?": Black Bodies and the Gendered Dimensions of Grassroots Race Politics

On June 6, 1959 over one thousand mourners gathered in Ladbroke Grove London to pay their final respects to thirty-two year old Antiguan-born Kelso Benjamin Cochrane. One local newspaper remarked that although the Prime Minister of the West Indies Federation, the High Commissioner of Ghana, and the Mayor of Kensington took part in the interment displaying a casket adorned with a wreath "From the Martyrs and Victims of Oppression" in Nyasaland, sympathy messages from the People's National Party in Trinidad, and condolences from the Liberian Government, Cochrane's "only claim to national fame was that he became the murder victim of a gang of white boys."[306] According to Olivia Ellington, his fiancée, Cochrane left home around eleven on the evening of May 17, 1959 headed for St. Mary's Hospital in Paddington, to receive treatment for a broken thumb, but never returned home. Just hours later, Joy Okine, one of the few witnesses to the murder, recalled hearing the words "Hey Jim Crow" shouted from the direction of five or six young white men who then attacked Cochrane from behind in a brief scuffle which left him lying on the pavement with a single stab wound to the chest.[307] While law enforcement officials acknowledged that Cochrane's murder was the result of an "inter-racial fight,"[308] police detectives suggested that the murder had

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[306] "1,200 Mourn Cochrane: Scene at Graveside," *The Kensington News and West London Times* 12 June 1959. For other news reports detailing the funeral of Kelso Cochrane see "800 Mourners March to Graveside: Elaborate Precautions Against Any Disorder," *Kensington Post* 12 June 1959; "Big Crowd at West Indian's Burial" *London Times* 8 June 1959; "PM at Kelso's Burial," *Sunday Guardian* 7 June 1959.

[307] "Jamaican is Stabbed to Death in Fight at Notting Hill," *News Chronicle and Daily Dispatch* 18 May 1959; "Coloured Man Stabbed to Death," *London Times* 18 May 1959; "WI Groom-To-Be Dies After Attack," *Trinidad Guardian* 18 May 1959.

[308] "More Violence in North Kensington," *London Times* 18 May 1959.

"absolutely nothing to do with racial conflict," but was more likely motivated by robbery.[309] Although law enforcement officials attempted to minimize issues of race as mitigating factors related to the Cochrane murder, voices from within migrant communities of African descent in Britain interpreted Cochrane's tragic death as yet another example of the problem of race in British society.

On the day following Kelso Cochrane's murder, Alao Bashorn of the Committee of African Organizations and representatives of various African and West Indian organizations met and drafted an open letter to British Prime Minster, Harold MacMillan addressing the racial undertones of the murder. The letter stated emphatically, "There is evidence to show that Kelso Cochrane was murdered because he was colored," which could be attributed in part to the presence of "brazenly active" organized racist campaigns in North Kensington and greater London including the Empire Loyalists and the White Defense League. In an adjunct statement, the organizations declared that the Cochrane murder, "rivals what we have seen or heard in Little Rock or the recent lynching of Mr M.C. Parker of Poplarville Mississippi."[310] By equating their plight with those of disfranchised black Americans in the Jim Crow South, black migrants made implicit references to the ways that racism was embedded in the overall structure of British society, despite the egalitarian ideologies of citizenship policies. Recalling the

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[309] "Race Tension Increased By Murder," *London Times* 19 May 1959.

[310] "Coloured People 'Have Lost Confidence' in Police: Open Letter to the Prime Minister," *Manchester Guardian* 19 May 1959. Mack Parker was a black man accused of raping a white woman. While being held in a Poplarville, Mississippi jail, Parker was abducted by a lynch mob, beaten, shot and eventually carried across state lines. His body was later found in the Pearl River. When the FBI withdrew from investigating the Mack Parker's lynching, the case rejuvenated the long held campaign championed by Ida B. Wells in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century for federal anti-lynching legislation. See also "Anti-Lynching Law," *London Times* 28 May 1959 and Howard Smead, *Blood Justice: The Lynching of Mack Charles Parker* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

ways in which the murder conjured images of racial violence which had received widespread attention both in Britain in abroad less than a year earlier, the letter directed to the Prime Minister stated, "Hardly the ink has dried on the screaming headlines in the national press, about the racist disgrace of Nottingham and Notting Hill Gate of last August, [and] another heinous crime has been committed." The organizations urged that Government officials "condemn publicly this murder as a sign that at topmost levels, the rights of Commonwealth citizens, irrespective of colour are held sacred" revealing that, "feeling runs high and Africans and West Indians are bitter over the murder of one who, but for the Grace of God, might have been any one of us," leaving many asking, "'*Are we to be mauled down just because we are black?*"[311]

In addition to urging Government officials to take a proactive stance in the search to bring Cochrane's murderers to justice, the letter demanded that the Government provide "adequate police protection" for black citizens and support of legislation addressing racial discrimination and incitement." The organizations reminded the Prime Minister that the Government's stance towards issues pertaining to race relations had implications that extended beyond the shores of the British Isles. The organizations explained,

> The peoples of this Commonwealth, the overwhelming majority of whom are of Afro-Asian Caribbean descent are looking towards this British Government to insure that for which we fought against in 1939-1945 is not allowed to rear its ugly head again and that the British Government is serious about its professions of a multi-racial Commonwealth of equal peoples.[312]

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[311]Emphasis added. PRO CO 1028/50 Letter from Alao Bashorn to Harold MacMillan dated 18 May 1959; "Coloured People 'Have Lost Confidence' in Police: Open Letter to the Prime Minister," *Manchester Guardian* 19 May 1959; "Coloured Folk Have Lost Confidence," *Kensington Post* 22 May 1959; "Race Tensions Increased By Murder," *London Times* 19 May 1959; "2 Detained in Notting Hill Murder Probe," *Trinidad Guardian* 20 May 1959.

[312] PRO CO 1028/50 Letter from Alao Bashorn to Harold MacMillan dated 18 May 1959; "Coloured People 'Have Lost Confidence' in Police: Open Letter to the Prime Minister," *Manchester Guardian* 19

In the weeks that followed, images of the murdered body of Kelso Cochrane became critical channels through which black political agents in postwar Britain demonstrated their alignment with an ongoing diasporic struggle against the interfaces of global racisms that sought to contain, exclude, and demean peoples of African descent in their quest for social equity, political rights, full citizenship, and racial democracy. Throughout London, grassroots political campaigns in black communities used vigils, marches and memorials, including a funeral, to shape a transnational dialogue on race in Britain by transforming the body and memory of Kelso Cochrane into a political site representing a broad range of experiences of black people in not only Britain, but also the Caribbean, Africa, the United States and the larger Diaspora.

This chapter explores how the aftermath of the murder of Kelso Cochrane served as a critical moment of political mobilization among black communities in postwar Britain. While police and other public officials dismissed the Cochrane murder as a random act of violence, this chapter focuses on how black migrants interpreted his murder and used it as a context to articulate issues including racial violence, discrimination and the struggle for black citizenship rights. In addition to illuminating black political activity in postwar Britain, examining the political implications of the murder of Kelso Cochrane also unearths a broader narrative about the transnational and diasporic nature of issues of race and citizenship in the postwar world. What did it mean for Africans and West Indians to pose the question *"Are we to be mauled down just because we are black?"* as part of a political dialogue between black communities and

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May 1959; "Coloured Folk Have Lost Confidence," *Kensington Post* 22 May 1959; "Race Tensions Increased By Murder," *London Times* 19 May 1959; "2 Detained in Notting Hill Murder Probe," *Trinidad Guardian* 20 May 1959.

the British Government at a particular historical juncture when discourses of blackness permeated the internationally-recognized racial politics of decolonization, the U.S. Civil Rights Movement and anti-apartheid? Moreover, what did it mean for the gendered and racialized murdered body of Kelso Cochrane to be appropriated as a political representation of the plight and interests of black communities in Britain and beyond? This chapter uses these questions as interpretive guides to situate the murder of Kelso Cochrane as a point of departure to examine the global dimensions of local race politics and gendered strategies of black political mobilization in postwar Britain.

The chapter begins with a broad overview of the global politics of race in the period leading up to Kelso Cochrane's senseless murder. At the time of Kelso Cochrane's untimely death, the international politics of race had reached climatic proportions to the extent that many could find much veracity in Dubois prophetic declaration that indeed, "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line."[313] Cochrane died at a volatile political moment when the global structures buttressing white supremacy were steadily becoming unglued. This section of the chapter pays particular attention to the ways that race became a prevailing subject of interest and debate as the world community began to recover from World War II, make sense of its causes and substantiate the ideological principles of anti-fascism, democracy, self-determination and freedom which had defined the Allied credo during the war. The struggles of people of African descent around the world for human rights, civil rights, social justice and racial equality prominently figured into international debates surrounding these issues. As a result, the glaring problems of race epitomized by Jim

[313] This statement was used in the preface of the 1900 Pan African Conference Address to the Nations of the World authored by W.E.B. Dubois. W.E.B. Dubois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Bantom Books, 1989), xxxi.

Crow America, South African apartheid and Britain and other European powers' racialized colonial regimes in Africa and the Caribbean were now the subjects of international scrutiny and became powerful representations of a nation's image in global politics. When black activists in Britain declared Kelso Cochrane's death a "race murder," they no doubt understood the international implications of this statement, and indeed hoped to garner worldwide attention to the struggles of black people in Britain by positioning them within broader ongoing transnational dialogues about questions of race and rights.

To be sure, black activists around the world had long blurred the boundaries between the domestic and the international politics of race in framing the struggles of black communities. Elaborating on his oft-cited proclamation defining race or the "color line" as the paramount problem of the twentieth century, in 1906 W. E. B. DuBois explained that "The Negro problem in America is but a local phase of a world problem."[314] As black political organs in Britain reacted to the death of Kelso Cochrane and transformed his body into a political platform to engage larger social issues affecting black communities in Britain including racial violence, inadequate police protection, housing and employment discrimination and the need for anti-discrimination legislation they too, understood the plight of black migrants as a segment of a global racial dilemma witnessed by black migrants in Britain and shared by black people in such places including the United States, the Caribbean and Africa.

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[314] W. E. B. DuBois, "The Color Line Belts the World," in *W. E. B. DuBois*, ed. David Levering Lewis, 42; For a more detailed historiographical treatment of DuBois's theme see Robin D. G. Kelley, "'But a Local Phase of a World Problem': Black History's Global Vision, 1883-1950," *Journal of American History* 86 (December, 1999): 1045-1077.

The second half of this chapter examines the process through which Kelso Cochrane became a symbol of the politics of race as experienced by black migrants in Britain. To engage this issue, the chapter examines the evolution of what Alrick Cambridge has referred to as a "black body politics." Cambridge has argued that the perceived mistreatment of black bodies can serve as a powerful centrifuge around which the defense of the 'black community' is organized. In serving this purpose, Cambridge noted that the natural physical black body can be transformed into a symbol of the experiences and historical realities of a broader political, cultural, and ideological social body. Thus, the physical black body becomes a site for the articulation of discourses of racism and simultaneously anti-racism.[315] In tracing the process through which black organizations used the murder of Kelso Cochrane to launch a "black body politics" campaign, this chapter pays close attention to the ways in the politicization of Kelso Cochrane's body unveils a gendered arrangement involving black women's use of a black male body for political engagement is unveiled. This chapter examines this issue and uses it as a starting point to suggest how historians might reassess the gendered images of black community life and the nature, scope, and complexity of black women's political participation.

The Global Politics of Race in the Postwar World

On 14 August 1941, U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill issued a joint statement of "common principles" which they intended to use to guide national policy and to ultimately pursue "their hopes for a better future for the world." Written on the eve of Pearl Harbor and as just as much of Europe

[315]Alrick Cambridge, "Black Body Politics" in *Where You Belong: Government and Black Culture* eds. Alrick Cambridge and Stephan Feuchtwang (Aldershot: Avebury, 1992), 108-110.

remained engulfed in the fight against Hitler's Nazi regime, in what became known as the Atlantic Charter, Roosevelt and Churchill expressed their respect of the principle of national self-determination and declared a belief in "the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live." Months later, the United States and Britain along with eventually forty-four nations including Liberia, Haiti and Ethiopia united in a pledge to uphold the tenets of the Atlantic Charter and "to preserve human rights and justice in their own lands as well as in other lands" as a part of the Declaration of the United Nations.[316]

These two pronouncements formed the basic ideological commitments that would shape the emergence of the United Nations in the postwar world. To be sure, in a fight against the spread of German Nazism and fascist terror and repression, these lofty principles provided a means to distinguish and authenticate the Allied cause. Self-determination, human rights and justice all constituted discourses that promoted the inextricable ideals of freedom, democracy and equality. As such, these ascribed principles supplied those struggling to promote and attain these ideals with an internationally-sanctioned language of possibilities. While World War II served as a catalyst for the development of an international dialogue on questions related to basic human rights, social justice and a group of people's entitlement to chose their own form of government, qualifying the meaning of these espoused principles and translating them into collective action remained a paramount task confronting the postwar international community.

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[316] For full text of the Atlantic Charter see Douglas Brinkley and David R. Farcey-Crowther, eds., *The Atlantic Charter* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), xvii-xviii; Lauren, *Power and Prejudice*, 146.

Even before the close of World War II, the racial implications of the provisions outlined in the Atlantic charter and the Declaration of the United Nations began to unfold. Whereas British labor leader and future Prime Minister, Clement Atlee declared that the Atlantic Charter's support of national self-determination was "equally applicable to all races, including Asiatics and Africans," Churchill later explained to the House of Commons that the charter concerned "primarily, the restoration of the sovereignty, self-government, and natural life of the States and nations of Europe...under Nazi yoke," and therefore did not apply to the "separate problem" of the "progressive evolution of self-governing institutions in the regions and peoples which owe allegiance to the British crown."[317] In subsequent statements, Churchill suggested that he envisioned the war as a means to sustain, rather than dismantle European empires in Africa, the Caribbean and Asia. He noted that his wartime agenda involved the restoration of France "with her empire gathered around her" and further maintained that he had no intentions of presiding over "the liquidation of the British Empire."[318] Although Churchill made it clear that he viewed the Atlantic Charter as more of a tool of war, rather than a broader referendum on imperialism, and certainly not the hierarchies of race and power which held them intact, Paul Gordon Lauren has noted that the rhetoric of the charter accentuated the rising tide of nationalist sentiment in the colonies and beyond, and laid a critical ideological

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[317] House of Commons Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 374 cols. 68-69. Also quoted in Charles Lutton, "The 'Atlantic Charter' Smokescreen: History As a Press Release *Journal of Historical Review* (Winter, 1984): 203.

[318] "'Great Design' in Africa: Mr. Churchill on Allied Plan," *London Times* 11 November 1942.

foundation for the flurry of decolonization movements which eventually swept through Asia, Africa and the Caribbean in the 1950s and 1960s.[319]

In 1944, Harold Moody and the London-based League of Coloured People held a three day conference in which delegates devised a "Charter for Coloured People." Invoking the ideals expressed in the Atlantic Charter, the charter demanded that the British Government grant colonials "full self-government...at the earliest possible opportunity." In addition, the charter maintained that "The same economic, educational, legal and political rights" should "be enjoyed by all persons, male and female, whatever their colour," and insisted that "All discrimination in employment, in places of public entertainment and refreshment, or in other public places, shall be illegal and shall be punished."[320] Just weeks later, when representatives from Britain, the Soviet Union, China and the United States gathered for the Dumbarton Oaks Conference to map out a blueprint to implement the principles outlined in the Atlantic Charter and the Declaration of the United Nations, reminiscent of the League of Coloured People's "Charter for Coloured People," delegates also confronted the relationship between the rights of national self-determination, human rights and race. Chinese delegates proposed that the new international body—which would eventually become the United Nations— should incorporate an explicit commitment to promoting racial equality as part of wider agenda promoting global peace, self-determination, human rights and international collective security . Although delegates from the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union rejected the inclusion of specific references to race at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference

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[319] Lauren, *Power and Prejudice*, 211.

[320] Quoted from Fryer, *Staying Power*, 334; See also Schwartz, *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain*, 65; Lauren, *Power and Prejudice*, 155-156.

when a broader and more diverse coalition of nations convened in San Francisco less than one year later to officially establish the United Nations, race became an unavoidable subject of debate and remained firmly entrenched in the agenda to define the ideals which would guide and define international politics in the postwar world.[321]

When the final draft of the United Nations charter had been approved, the first article clearly relayed a commitment to the principles of "equal rights and self-determination" as a means of procuring international peace and security, and acknowledged that harmonious international relations depended upon "promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion."[322] The inclusion of explicit references to race in the charter resulted from extensive debates— many of which were initiated by majority non-white nations including India and declarations issued by representatives of non-governmental organizations including the NAACP—that highlighted the ways that the ideological battle accompanying World War II centered squarely on issues of racial superiority and race-based practices of discrimination, exclusion repression and genocide. Paul Gordon Lauren has astutely observed, as Western powers including Britain and the United States sharply criticized the racist policies and practices of Nazi Germany and attempted to stake their international legitimacy on being the antithesis of German Fascism, World War II provided a mirror for Allied supporters to examine the contradictions between their espoused anti-fascist, anti-racist critique of Nazism and their

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[321] Lauren, *Power and Prejudice*, 158-164.

[322] Robert F. Gorman, *Great Debates at the United Nations: An Encyclopedia of Fifty Key Issues, 1945-2000* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 391-415; See also Lauren, *Power and Prejudice* 165.

own racially discriminatory and exclusionary policies and practices.[323] The United Nations charter reflected the ways in which World War II prompted new transnational dialogues on race and, at least in theory, made individual nations accountable to the standards of racial equality established by the international community. However, despite this internationally-sanctioned conceptual leap in the potential for global racial progress, the United Nations had its limitations. At the same time that the founding principles of the organization touted the international community's commitment to safeguarding human rights and defending the rights of self-determination across the color line, the United Nations had no intrinsic authority to enforce the institution of these ideals and remained wedded to upholding the sovereign rights of nations to devise and adhere to their own standards of rights and freedoms, even when they stood in stark contrast to those set forth in the charter.[324]

Even though the United Nations had no jurisdiction to directly intervene in matters concerning an individual nation's racial policies and practices, for black activists around the world, the organization provided a critical forum to direct their protest against the overlapping issues of racial discrimination, race-based second class citizenship status and racialized colonial systems— all of which effectively circumscribed access to opportunities and stifled political participation, social mobility and economic development among people of African descent around the world. The organization's mandate transformed it into a promising ally in the struggle against global racisms and a

[323] Lauren, *Power and Prejudice*, 145-153.

[324] Ibid., 166-170.

critical medium to attract international attention and broader coalitions of support for the struggles and interests of black communities.[325]

Within months of the founding meeting of the United Nations, W.E.B. Dubois presented a petition to the new organization initiated by the delegates of the historic Manchester Pan-African Congress, on behalf nearly fifty black organizations "representing or supporting the rights of African Negroes and descendents of Africans in the West Indies and the United States of America." The petition refuted the "widespread assumption that Negroes lack the intelligence to express their views and can only be represented by imperial governments or by other spokesmen not of their own choosing," and called for greater representation of "African colonial peoples" in international politics "to the maximum extent possible under the present charter of the United Nations, so that the grievances and demands of Africans can be freely expressed."[326] Two years later in October of 1947, Dubois, in concert with the NAACP, submitted "An Appeal to the World" to the United Nation in which he exposed the hypocrisy of America's professed democratic ideals, citing the historic systematic disfranchisement of black Americans and the de facto sanctioning of racial violence including lynching. While the NAACP's petition focused specifically on circumstances defining "the Case of Citizens of Negro Descent" in the United States, the petition was supported by a transnational coalition of black organizations including the Caribbean Labour Congress, the League of Coloured People (London, UK) , the Pan-African Federation (Manchester, UK), the Non-

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[325] Ibid., 155,178, 204.

[326] For full text see George Padmore, ed. *Colonial and Coloured Unity, A Programme of Action: History of the Pan-African Congress*, 2nd edition (London: Hammersmith Bookshop, 1963), 8-10. Also reprinted in Hakim Adi and Marika Sherwood, *The 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress Revisited* (London: New Beacon Books, 1995), 57-59.

European Unity Committee (Union of South Africa), the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons and the Nyasaland African Congress.[327]

The NAACP's appeal to the United Nations came on the heels of similar racially charged petitions issued by the National Negro Congress and the Indian Government in 1946, both of which condemned the racial policies and practices of the United States and South Africa respectively. Historian Carol Anderson has noted that while the petition of the National Negro Congress did draw international attention to the glaring inconsistencies between the American credo of liberty and democracy for all and the historic oppression endured by nearly thirteen million of its black citizens, as a source of international debate over domestic race policy at the UN, it was largely overshadowed by India's complaint against South Africa's burgeoning apartheid regime.

When Vijaya Pandit, sister of Indian nationalist Jawaharlal Nehru, addressed the UN General Assembly in June of 1946, she issued a searing indictment of South Africa's history of discrimination against Indians and other people of color in an overwhelming black African nation dominated by coalition of whites of Dutch and English descent. Pandit accused South Africa of flagrantly violating the underlying principles expressed in the UN charter. In doing so, she forcefully interpreted racially discriminatory policies and practices which privileged those of European descent to the detriment of people of color as blatant assaults on basic human rights. To be sure, Pandit did not simply frame India's condemnation of the South African government as a problem between two nations with differing positions on the question of race, but more broadly, she presented her case

[327] Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize*, 94-109; Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 179-182; Lauren, *Power and Prejudice*, 184-185.

as a compelling example of an issue—the practice of racial discrimination— that essentially engulfed the entire world. Pandit urged her political colleagues to

> Remember that, in the present case, the minds of millions of people in India and in other parts of Asia and Africa have been moved to intense indignation at all forms of racial discrimination which stand focused on the problem of South Africa. This is a test case.[328]

In much the same way that the NAACP petition of 1947 would highlight the plight of black Americans, yet garner endorsements throughout the Diaspora because it spoke to historic power relations that subjugated people of African descent around the world, the Indian delegation clearly used South Africa's treatment of Indians as a mechanism to both examine the impact of white supremacy on people of color throughout the world and challenge the international community to confront the transnational effects of prejudice and racial discrimination.[329]

As would be the case with the NAACP petition submitted in 1947, debate over the UN's prerogatives, and essentially the international community's role in tackling the question of race as it pertained to the domestic policies and practices of individual nations became contested terrain which emboldened emerging Cold War rivalries. While the United States, Britain and the majority white nations of the British Commonwealth sided with South Africa on the principle that the UN had no jurisdiction pertaining to matters concerning an individual nation's domestic affairs, the Soviet Union, the Communist

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[328] Lauren, *Power and Prejudice*, 180-183; Anderson *Eyes Off the Prize*, 86; Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 170-171.

[329] Lauren, *Power and Prejudice*, 180-183; Brenda Gayle Plummer has noted that in reference to the Indian delegation's denunciation of South African racial policy, Indian leader Jawaharlal Nehru later wrote that the delegation "did not intend [to] raise the Negro issue, but it was not possible to tone down our opposition on the South African question because the Americans might feel uncomfortable," yet Vijaya Pandit's statements to the General Assembly do suggest that India's attack on South Africa did intentionally broach the issue of racial discrimination as it affected non-whites throughout the world. See Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 170.

nations of Eastern Europe along with a cadre of smaller nations with majority non-white populations supported India's position.[330] Even though South Africa's alliance with Britain and the United States was based on their shared commitment to preserve the domestic jurisdiction of sovereign states rather than a defense of apartheid or racial discrimination, the stage was set for the Soviet Union to use the contentious issue of race to denigrate the validity of Western democracy and strategically align itself with an increasingly influential bloc of non-white nations which would become prized allies in the developing postwar struggle between East and West.

After heated debate, the General Assembly finally passed a resolution urging South Africa to reexamine the inconsistencies between the international standards of human rights and social justice conveyed in the UN charter and the conditions experienced by Indians in South Africa. Although the resolution did not include any binding or enforceable provisions, and ultimately only represented a formal statement of concern on the specific issue of the treatment of Indians in South Africa, the simple fact that the UN indulged an explicit debate over the global significance of racial discrimination and its particular manifestations illuminates the ways in which the postwar period ushered in a new era of international relations where questions of race took center stage.[331] No longer could nations including the United States and Britain turn a blind eye to the problem of race. In the postwar world, the international political community's willingness to grapple with issues of race and actively promote anti-racist ideals—despite the practical limitations of the UN authority— created a ripe climate of opportunity for

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[330] Lauren, *Power and Prejudice*, 183; Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize*,

[331] Lauren, *Power and Prejudice*, 183; Plummer, *Rising Wind*, 170.

black activists around the world to amplify historic agendas for racial justice in the form of equitable citizenship rights, self-government, non-discriminatory social policy and the official prohibition of race-based exclusionary practices.[332]

Throughout the 1950s the racist and discriminatory policies associated with South Africa's system of apartheid consistently remained an issue of debate among United Nations delegates. In 1952, the General Assembly again voted to censure the South African Government, and in particular their enforcement of the Group Areas Act which mandated racially segregated residential and commercial areas and effectively barred non-whites from living and working in the most economically-viable regions of the country.[333] In a General Assembly debate in 1958, representatives from the newly independent nation of Ghana along with those from Ceylon, Bulgaria, Ethiopia and Ireland asserted that South Africa's racial policies "constituted a threat to international peace and security, as well as race relations throughout the world." Supporting this view, at the same meeting, representatives from the Soviet Union insisted that the United Nations "had an obligation to continue to denounce and condemn the apartheid policy" as long as the South Africa continued to enforce it.[334] Despite strong arguments generally waged by nations including the United Kingdom, France, Australia, and to a certain extent, the United States, regarding the incompetence of the United Nations to intervene on any level in matters concerning an individual nation's domestic policy, the majority of United Nations delegates supported various forms of official protest during the 1950s

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[332] For a summary of India's protest and the ensuing debate on racial discrimination in South Africa see *Yearbook of the United Nations, 1946-1947* (Lake Success, NY: Department of Publish Information, United Nations, 1947), 144-149.

[333] *Yearbook of the United Nations, 1952* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), 291-306.

[334] *Yearbook of the United Nations*, 1958 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 84-85.

against apartheid. Most did so on the premise that the United Nation's charter empowered the organization to take action to ensure that nations sought conformity to the human rights provisions outlined in the organization's charter and further stipulated in the Universal Declarations of Human Rights approved by the General Assembly in 1948. Although the United Nations, as an official body could not unilaterally force South Africa to outlaw the system of apartheid, the numerous declarations and resolutions issued in opposition to the nation's domestic policies certainly raised global awareness of the problem of ideologies of white supremacy and racial discrimination, and no doubt drew international attention to its specific effects on the lives of people of African descent.

International interest in domestic race relations of individual nations was not confined to institutionalized political arenas. Instead, as noted in an earlier chapter, in the postwar period questions concerning the relationship between race, human rights, civil rights, and democracy constituted issues important to a broader international public sphere that intensely scrutinized various events laced with implications concerning race. Just as international audiences digested news of "race riots" in Britain at the end of summer in 1958, the world also became fixated on the case of Jimmy Wilson. Wilson, a black man had been convicted by an all-white jury for stealing less than $2 from an elderly white woman and sentenced to death by an Alabama court. After losing an appeal to the state Supreme Court to overturn the conviction, Wilson's dismal fate was ultimately reversed in large part because the indignation of the international community, whose protest pressured the Governor of Alabama to grant clemency.

In her analysis of the historical significance of the Jimmy Wilson trial, historian Mary Dudziak has suggested that the outcome of the Wilson case demonstrated how

issues of race prefigured into international perceptions of American democracy and influenced America's moral and political legitimacy in world affairs. In making this argument, Dudziak presents a world in which images of race mattered and garnered international scrutiny.[335] Moreover, this was a world in which the interests of politically disfranchised, economically exploited, and socially marginalized black people around the globe provided a touchstone to examine widely held notions of democracy, human rights, justice, citizenship and equality. When black activists in Britain posed the question *"Are We To Be Mauled Down Just Because We Are Black?,* in the aftermath of the murder of Kelso Cochrane and less than a year after weeks of "race riots" involving attacks on black migrants by indigenous white Britons, they too were acutely aware of this world and no doubt intended that it might work to the advantage of the cause of black rights in Britain in much the same way that it had the previous year for Jimmy Wilson.

Black Body Politics and Diaspora Activism in Twentieth Century Britain

Less than one year after the Notting Hill "race riots", the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the *London Times* and the *Trinidad Guardian* all carried reports of heightened racial tensions in London as a result of the murder of Kelso Benjamin Cochrane on May 17, 1959.[336] It is likely that news of what police labeled as an "inter-racial fight" did not prove shocking to many in London and especially those residing in Notting Hill and the larger North Kensington borough. Just days earlier in a press conference held by the British Caribbean Association, Labour M.P. Charles Royle along with Tory M.P. Nigel Fisher

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[335] Mary Dudziak *Cold War Civil Rights*, 1-6.

[336] "Race Tension in London at New Height," *Pittsburgh Courier* 30 May 1959; "Race Tension Increased by Murder," *London Times* 19 May 1959; "WI Groom-To-Be Dies After Attack: Tension Mounts in Britain" *Trinidad Guardian* 18 May 1959; " 'Racial Tension' On in UK," *Trinidad Guardian* 23 May 1959; "Jamaican is Stabbed to Death in Fight at Notting Hill," *News Chronicle and Daily Dispatch* 18 May 1959.

implored British newspapers to give more attention to increasing unrest in Notting Hill as a means of thwarting ongoing violence in the area.[337] Likewise, a similar issue had been noted by Robert Lightbourne in West Indian Federal Parliament discussions of services available to West Indian migrants. He suggested that more attention be devoted to addressing the needs and interests of West Indians in Britain, alleging that "far more incidents [involving West Indian migrants] were being kept quiet in the English Press than published."[338] In a visit to Notting Hill just ten days prior to the murder of Kelso Cochrane, Herbert Hill, Labor Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in the United States also warned that racial hostilities remained and predicted that new waves of violence were imminent.[339] However, while blacks and whites in Notting Hill might have been accustomed to the persistence of interracial conflicts especially in the wake of the "race riots" of 1958, with the murder of Kelso Cochrane, racial violence in Britain now had a more intimate nomenclature.

On May 18, 1959 at the same meeting in which members of the Committee of African Organizations (CAO) drafted an open letter of protest following the Cochrane murder, the group also formed a burial committee responsible for assisting the family of Kelso Cochrane with funeral arrangements. This sub-committee later became known as the Inter-Racial Friendship Coordinating Council (IRFCC) and eventually functioned as the central liaison for an estimated 46 organizations concerned with race relations and the

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[337] "Teddy Boys Thought that Beatings Would Be Allowed," *Daily Gleaner* 15 May 1959; See also PRO CO 1028/50 Letter from Alao Bashorn to Harold MacMillam 18 May 1959 which also references the British Caribbean Association's warnings of worsening violence in North Kensington.

[338] "Migrant Service: New Study Urged," *Daily Gleaner*, 14 May 1959.

[339] "Slaying Stirs London Fears of Violence," *Washington Post* 18 May 1959; See reference to this survey in "Teddy Boys Thought That Beatings Would Be Allowed," *Daily Gleaner,* 15 May 1959.

struggle against racial discrimination in Britain including the Committee of African Organizations, the Movement for Colonial Freedom, the National Council for Civil Liberties, the Coloured Peoples Progressive Association and the Association for the Advancement of Coloured People.[340] Although the CAO's letter to the Prime Minister clearly invoked the murder of Kelso Cochrane as a pretext to underscore demands for a government response to racism and discrimination as experienced in black communities, at a meeting held two days later, David Pitt, prominent West Indian physician, local political leader, and Labour candidate for the Hampstead district insisted that only with relatives' permission should the members of the organization get involved with the funeral preparations for Kelso Cochrane arguing that, "No political capital was to be made out of the most solemn affair, otherwise the whole object of obtaining public sympathy would be destroyed."[341] While historical records of the CAO's meetings following the Cochrane murder reflect only Pitt's opinion of what course the IRFCC's role in the funeral of Kelso Cochrane should take, the tenor of his statements suggests that there might have been some debate as to the manner in which the organization should attempt to strike a middle ground between commemorating the death of a "quiet and pleasant...young carpenter" from Antigua and the explicitly political agenda of marking an occasion to highlight the effects of contentious race relations, racial discrimination, violence and marginal citizenship for black migrants.[342] To reconcile these complementary, yet distinctly autonomous programs, in lieu of assisting the

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[340] PRO HO 325/9 *Special Branch Report, Scotland Yard* 28 May 1959; PRO HO 325/9 *Special Branch Report, Scotland Yard* 17 June 1959.

[341] PRO HO 325/9 Special Branch Report, New Scotland Yard, dated 28 May 1959.

[342] PRO CO 1028/50 Letter from Alao Bashorn to Harold MacMillan dated 18 May 1959. This is the one of the descriptions of Kelso Cochrane used in the letter sent from the Committee of African Organizations to the Prime Minister on the day following the murder.

Cochrane family with funeral preparations, members of the IRFCC agreed to hold a public memorial service that would expressly confront the racial politics surrounding Kelso Cochrane's murder. To be sure, as the IRFCC publicized plans for the memorial service and continued to dialogue with Government officials, local authorities and the press, the funeral of Kelso Cochrane was nothing less than a climatic moment in a series of strategic maneuvers which transformed his body into a political focal point symbolizing the consequences of blackness in Britain and a platform to advocate for the recognition of black citizenship rights.

Less than one week after the Committee of African Organization's open letter of grievance reached the office of the Prime Minister, members of the IRFCC arranged for a deputation to meet with Home Office officials on 27 May 1959. In a memorandum issued to Home Secretary, R. A. Butler in his absence, IRFCC representatives explained that their purpose in meeting with Home Office officials was to discuss steps that the government might take to address, the "serious situation of insecurity facing the coloured minorities in London, particularly in the Notting Hill area, as well as the obvious weaknesses in the law-enforcing authorities to curb racist propaganda which," according to the IRFCC "resulted in the murder...of Kelso Benjamin Cochrane." The memo highlighted the increasing influence of organized racist campaigns in the area including the White Defence League, the Union Movement and the Ku Klux Klan and suggested that police apathy towards the potential of these groups to prompt violent encounters along racial lines has generated a "loss of confidence" in local authorities' ability to adequately provide protection for black citizens "in the face of organised attempts to stir up race hatred against them by certain fascists groups." According to the IRFCC, all of

these factors had culminated in "a situation in which ordinary citizens of all races cannot walk the streets without fear of being involved in disturbances."[343]

It is important to note that throughout the memo, the IRFCC consistently invoked the language of citizenship as a means to frame the problem of racial violence, and more importantly as a vehicle to demand Government action. In particular, the organization drew attention to the ways in which escalating racial conflict coupled with inadequate police protection had effectively eroded their citizenship right to a sense of security. The memo cited insufficient police patrols in certain areas and "police bias" as contributing factors in the creation of a "situation of lawlessness" which had resulted in "a growing lack of confidence by all citizens in the law enforcing agencies." As a possible remedy for this increasingly disconcerting state of affairs, IRFCC officials suggested that the Government urge local authorities to increase the number of constables assigned to patrol "troubled areas" and support the introduction of "special constables" comprised of "responsible citizens of all races" to assist the regular patrols. The IRFCC explained, "It is, we consider both our right and our duty as citizens to demand that such duty should be fulfilled, and to offer assistance if we feel that the safety of citizens demands it."[344] In a statement to the *London Times* CAO chairman, Alao Bashorn announced that if the

[343] PRO HO 325/9 Memorandum of a Deputation Representing Interracial Friendship Co-Ordinating Council For Presentation to the Honourable R.A. Butler, Secretary of State for Home Affairs, Special Branch Report, New Scotland Yard, dated 28 May 1959; "Coloured Plea to Mr. Butler," *London Times* 28 May 1959.

[344] PRO HO 325/9 Memorandum of a Deputation Representing Interracial Friendship Co-Ordinating Council For Presentation to the Honourable R.A. Butler, Secretary of State for Home Affairs, Special Branch Report, New Scotland Yard, 28 May 1959.

Government failed to consider requests for additional patrols, the IRFCC would seek "full permission to organize our own defense."[345]

To demonstrate the growing cadre of local support for the IRFCC's anti-racist political campaign, along with the memorandum, the IRFCC submitted a petition to the Home Secretary that had been circulated by members of the CAO. Echoing many of the sentiments expressed in the IRFCC memo and Alao Bashorn's press statements, the petitioners noted that the "race-murder in cold blood of young Kelso Cochrane" had occasioned the need for the British Government to take immediate action to protect, "our persons, property and rights...from violence," and requested that "if the authorities are unable to do so with existing resources, that citizens such as ourselves be given authority as special constables to protect ourselves and our community."[346] By translating the problem of racial violence as an infringement on the basic rights of protection and security due to all British citizens, the IRFCC challenged the notion that issues of race were simply matters of interpersonal relations beyond the purview of official regulation, and therefore asserted the idea that Government had a responsibility, and indeed an obligation to address race relations and more specifically the ways in which British society cultivated an environment hostile towards its black citizens.

In addition to expanding patrol units in certain areas with consistent patterns of racial violence, the deputation recommended that government officials appoint a Select Committee to collect evidence "from residents of all races" in areas with significant black

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[345] "Defence Group For Coloured People," *London Times* 22 May 1959; See also "Defense Committee For West Indians," *Daily Gleaner* 22 May 1959.

[346] "Petition to the Right Honorable Mr. R.A. Butler, Home Secretary, Government of the United Kingdom," Claudia Jones Memorial Collection, Box 1, Folder 25 Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, NY.

communities including Notting Hill, where there existed, "an immediate problem of racial tension," to make more informative assessments of local issues concerning race. Moreover, the committee urged that officials support a bill criminalizing racial discrimination and propaganda and other activities that might incite racial conflict.[347] In appealing to the sentiments of government officials, the IRFCC contended that "the eyes of the world are on Notting Hill and the good name of Britain as a democratic nation in which all can live together in mutual respect, equality and dignity" suggesting that a response to developing issues related to race was not simply a national concern, but rather a question of international political significance.[348]

While a survey of newspaper reports referencing the meeting do not reveal all of the names of the seven member IRFCC deputation, it is important to emphasize those who did attend and speculate on the input of others who may have been a part of the deputation and or key figures in shaping the IRFCC's platform and agenda at the time.[349] Published reports on the IRFCC's meeting with Home Office officials reveal that David Pitt served as spokesperson among a deputation that included Amy Ashwood Garvey, Claudia Jones, Frances Ezrecco, Donald Ezrecco and Alao Bashorn. While Pitt was the publicly acknowledged spokesperson for the IRFCC, black women overwhelmingly dominated the leadership of the IRFCC and undoubtedly played important roles in

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[347] "Home Office Deputation," *Kensington News and West London Times* 5 June 1959; "A Petition to the Right Honorable Mr. R.A. Butler, Home Secretary, Government of the United Kingdom," Claudia Jones Memorial Collection, Box 1, Folder 25 Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, NY; Marika Sherwood, *Claudia Jones: A Life in Exile* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1999), 95.

[348] PRO HO 325/9 Memorandum of a Deputation Representing Interracial Friendship Co-Ordinating Council For Presentation to the Honourable R.A. Butler, Secretary of State for Home Affairs, Special Branch Report, New Scotland Yard, 28 May 1959.

[349] "Home Office Deputation," *Kensington News and West London Times* 5 June 1959; "Coloured Plea to Mr. Butler," *London Times* 28 May 1959; "Murder Search Goes On," *Kensington Post* 29 May 1959.

shaping the direction and content of the organization's early activities. The first elected executive committee of the IRFCC included Amy Ashwood Garvey as Chairman, Claudia Jones, as Vice Chairman, Eleanor Ettlinger as second Vice Chairman, Alao Bashorun as Secretary, Abhimanyu Manchanda as Assistant Secretary, Pearl Connor as Treasurer, and Frances Ezzreco, L.A. St. Villo and Dorothy Case as Committee Members.[350]

Amy Ashwood Garvey, the first wife of Marcus Garvey and co-founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association had a long tenure of political activism which spanned the Caribbean, the United States, Africa, and Britain. During Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia Garvey was treasurer of the International African Friends of Abyssinia a Pan-African anti-colonial network which was the predecessor to the International Service Bureau founded in 1937 by George Padmore. In 1945, Garvey served as a delegate to the Manchester Pan-African Congress and in lieu of several sojourns to the Caribbean, Ghana, and Liberia during the 1950s, she also managed to found the Association for the Advancement of Coloured People in London in 1958.[351]

Similar to Amy Ashwood Garvey, Claudia Jones also had an extensive international political résumé. Deported from the United States in 1955 for her involvement with Communist Party, Jones, a native of Trinidad, was convicted under the

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[350]PRO HO 325/9 Special Branch Report, New Scotland Yard, dated July 21, 1959; PRO HO 325/9 Special Branch Report Report, New Scotland Yard, dated 10 November, 1959; Memo, "Inter-Racial Friendship Co-Ordinating Council: Central Executive Committee," undated Claudia Jones Memorial Collection Box 1, Folder 27 Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. The first Central Executive Committee for the organization was elected at a meeting held on July 14, 1959. According to this memo, which announced the first meeting of the Central Executive Committee, both Eleanor Ettlinger and Claudia Jones were listed as Vice-Chairmen and J. Eber, Manchanda and Bashorn were listed as joint secretaries. See also Sherwood, *Claudia Jones*, 94-95.

[351] Fryer, *Staying Power*, 344-349; Sherwood, *Claudia Jones*, 44-45, 92-3; Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey*, 171-173; Ramdin, *The Making of the Black Working Class in Britain*, 224; See also Lionel M. Yard, *Biography of Amy Ashwood Garvey: Co-Founder of the UNIA* (New York: Associated Publishers, 1990).

Smith Act of advocating the overthrow of the United States government during the height of McCarthyism. While in the United States, where Jones spent the majority of her years, she held a range of positions in a number of organizations including the National Negro Congress and the Southern Negro Youth Congress. As a member of the Communist Party Jones assumed national leadership roles as executive secretary of both the National Negro Commission and the National Women's Commission. In the months preceding the racial clashes of 1958 in Notting Hill, Jones launched the *West Indian Gazette*, one of the earliest black newspapers circulated during the postwar era which advocated for, anti-colonialist and anti-racist causes around the world.[352]

On the day following the meeting with Home Office Officials the IRFCC sponsored a memorial service for Kelso Cochrane. According to one local newspaper the IRFCC titled the event, simply "We mourn Cochrane."[353] By orchestrating a public event honoring the memory of Kelso Cochrane the organization effectively created a political forum to attract an international audience to the concerns of black communities in Britain. The list of speakers at the service included a range of prominent political voices including Carl La Corbiniere, Deputy Prime Minister of the West Indies Federation, Labour M.P. Stephen Swingler, Conservative M.P. Richard Hornsby, David Pitt and distinguished Pan-Africanist Eslanda Goode Robeson. In particular, the presence of Carl La Corbiniere and Eslanda Robeson was indicative of both the growing influence of the IRFCC and the political affiliations of pivotal individuals shaping the direction of the organization's agenda in the aftermath of the Cochrane murder.

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[352] Buzz Johnson, *"I Think of My Mother": Notes on the Life of Claudia Jones* (London: Karia Press, 1985) and Sherwood, *Claudia Jones: A Life in Exile* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1999).

[353] "Many Voices on Notting Hill," *Kensington News and West London Times* 29 May 1959.

The decision to invite Eslanda Robeson was most likely connected to the persuasive powers of Claudia Jones. Both Eslanda and her husband, world-renowned artist and activist Paul Robeson, were close and personal friends of Claudia Jones, whom she met during her tenure in the United States. Speaking to an audience of nearly five hundred in front of a "larger-than-life portrait"[354] of Kelso Cochrane, Eslanda Robeson underscored the racial character of his murder stating, "I believe that Kelso Cochrane was killed because he was coloured. He died because of racial prejudice and hatred."[355] Eslanda Robeson's involvement in the IRFCC grassroots anti-racist political campaign in the wake of the Cochrane murder underscores the extent to which domestic race politics in postwar Britain evolved in relation to both a national agenda advocating for full citizenship rights for black communities in Britain, and simultaneously, a transnational struggle against the vestiges of white supremacy in the forms of European imperialism and institutionalized racism and racial discrimination being waged by black communities around the world. Having served as an official delegate to the historic All Africa People's Conference held in Accra, Ghana in December of 1958, the first continental-based meeting espousing Pan-African unity, Robeson had developed an international reputation as a staunch defender of civil rights for black Americans and African nationalism and had become a leading member of the U.S.-based anti-colonial organ, the Council of African Affairs. Robeson's presence at the IRFCC public memorial firmly implanted the organization's anti-racist platform of black civil rights within a diasporic context that transformed the political implications of the Cochrane murder into a

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[354] "Deputy PM Blames Facists," *Trinidad Guardian* 29 May 1959.

[355] "Cochrane 'killed because of colour,'" *News Chronicle and Daily Dispatch* 29 May 1959.

transnational problem of race that linked the struggles of black communities in Britain, the United States, the Caribbean and Africa.[356]

Upon his arrival in Britain, Deputy Prime Minister of the West Indies Federal Government, Carl La Corbiniere explained that an important aspect of his visit would entail a government-sponsored investigation of the problems facing West Indian migrants.[357] In lieu of the Cochrane murder, several members of the West Indies Federal Parliament including A.U. Belinfanti of Jamaica contended that government officials had a duty to send the British Government a clear message regarding their dissatisfaction with the conditions faced by West Indian migrants in Britain. Belinfanti argued that "the time had almost passed when they [West Indians] look on Britons as their imperial masters and oppressors" insisting that West Indians now viewed themselves as a part of a brotherhood "and expected to be treated as equals."[358] Appearing at the memorial as a representative of a transnational West Indian community dispersed largely throughout Britain, the United States, and the Caribbean, Carl La Corbiniere argued, "You will find it impossible to convince any West Indians that this was not a race murder."[359] His presence at the IRFCC memorial service only reaffirmed this position. The IRFCC was political product of the Cochrane murder and at the center of the organization's initial mandate was to facilitate a public commemoration of the body of Kelso Cochrane which

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[356]For more on the All African People's Conference see "All African People's Conference," *International Organization* Vol. 16, No.2 (Spring, 1962): 429-431; Lauren, *Power and Prejudice*, 229. A biography of Eslanda Robeson is much needed, however Martin Duberman's work on Paul Robeson offers the most comprehensive treatment of her life. See Martin Bauml Duberman, *Paul Robeson: A Biography* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1989).

[357] "West Indies Call For Ruthless Suppression of Race Hostility: Deputy Premier Visits London With Mandate to Take Action," *London Times* 25 May 1959.

[358] "WI Concerned Over Migrants," *Trinidad Guardian* 21 May 1959.

[359] "Many Voices on Notting Hill," *Kensington News and West London Times* 29 May 1959.

inherently involved connecting the racial character of the murder with broader political issues related to race and the experiences of black migrants in Britain. La Corbiniere's remarks emphasized that the murder was "a tragic incident in the history of the world."[360] The fact that La Corbiniere spoke at the IRFCC's memorial service suggests that he might have viewed the organization as an important conduit of black political interests. His appearance allowed him an opportunity to publicly communicate a message of solidarity between West Indians in the Caribbean and Britain and simultaneously gave official legitimacy to the political agenda of the IRFCC and its leadership.

On June 1, 1959, the Coloured People's Progressive Association (CPPA) sponsored a twelve hour vigil outside Whitehall. Frances Ezrecco was a leading personality in both the CPPA and the IRFCC. In the aftermath of the racial violence of 1958 in Notting Hill, she and her husband, Donald Ezrecco, founded the CPPA for the purposes of promoting democracy, interracial unity, social incorporation for black migrants, equal employment opportunities regardless of race, and unrestricted Commonwealth migration.[361] In a report on community relations in North Kensington released just days before the vigil, officials of the organization echoed many of the sentiments expressed in the Committee of African Organization's open letter to the Prime Minister and the IRFCC's memo to the Home Secretary. The report addressed the need for more adequate police protection for black people in North Kensington and noted that

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[360] "Cochrane 'killed because of colour,'" *News Chronicle and Daily Dispatch* 29 May 1959; "Coloured Plea to Mr. Butler," *London Times* 28 May 1959.

[361] Letter from Donald Ezzreco, Coloured People's Progressive Association, to Labour Party dated 23 October 1958, Labour History Archive and Study Center, Manchester, UK; Coloured People's Progressive Association Flyer, undated, Claudia Jones Memorial Collection, Box 1, Folder 23 Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, NY; "Will Too Many Do-Gooders Pave the Path to Notting Hell?," *Kensington News and West London Times* 30 October 1959.

the Cochrane murder was only the "latest outrage against the coloured people" since the "riots" of the previous year. In announcing plans for the vigil, an unnamed spokesperson for the organization insisted that the purpose for the event was "to make clear the concern felt by our organization regarding the explosive situation, and also to espress (sic) lack of confidence in the arrangements for security of coloured people and all members of the community."[362]

Demonstrating at times in pouring rain beginning at six in the morning, supporters of the Coloured People's Progressive Association vigil carried placards displaying slogans such as "Only One Race—The Human Race", "Racial Discrimination is Illegal" while one person communicated poignant message without words by carrying a placard bearing only the face of Kelso Cochrane.[363] The tone of the vigil echoed a common theme of many voices representing how black communities interpreted the murder of Kelso Cochrane. The body of Kelso Cochrane was not merely a site of an individual experience, but rather through a process of public politicization, black activists transformed it into a political motif, symbolizing the racial elements of violence, discrimination, and citizenship as experienced by black people in Britain.

Described by a local newspaper as "Organised with a thoroughness usually associated with a demonstration," the funeral of Kelso Cochrane held on June 6, 1959 represented a definitive moment in the IRFCC's "black body politics" campaign.[364] Because the IRFCC coordinated most of the arrangements and fulfilled all of the

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[362] "Many Voices on Notting Hill: Have We Failed?," *Kensington News and West London Times* 29 May 1959, p.6.

[363] "Home Office Deputation," *Kensington News and West London Times* 5 June 1959; Sherwood, *Claudia Jones*, 96.

[364] "Elaborate Precautions Against Any Disorder," *Kensington Post* 12 June 1959.

financial obligations for the burial of Kelso Cochrane's body, the funeral provides an instructive historical moment for understanding the process in which Kelso Cochrane's body and subsequently the memory of his body, were reconstructed into political images of black life in postwar Britain. According to IRFCC records, in addition to assuming the cost of the funeral services, transportation for family members, wreaths, and handbills "in respect of [the] funeral", the organization also provided support for Kelso Cochrane's brother to supplement lost wages and covered the expense of advertising the memorial service and funeral in the *New Statesman*, and sending cablegrams to officials in Jamaica, Trinidad, Antigua, Ghana, Cairo, Paris, India, and Liberia.[365] By assuming responsibility for the burial of Cochrane's body, the IRFCC made a public claim on the final interpretations of Kelso Cochrane's life and death. In making these claims on Cochrane's body in death, the organization actively shaped the terms by which Kelso Cochrane's life, and particularly the circumstances in which it was ended would be remembered.

Even though Kelso Cochrane's brother and fiancé attended the services and were recognized as the chief mourners, the predominance of the IRFCC's role in publicizing and more importantly, politicizing the body of Kelso Cochrane through their interchanges with government officials and memorial activities in the days leading up to the funeral, transformed the final remembrance of Kelso Cochrane's body into a public ceremony that commemorated both the personal loss of a loved one, and a public tragedy that encompassed the interests of an entire community. As hundreds of mourners crowded into the St. Michaels and All Angels church, they were directed by well-dressed IRFCC

[365] Inter-Racial Friendship Co-Ordinating Council Report of Income and Expenditures through June 30 1959, Claudia Jones Memorial Collection, Box 1, Folder 27 Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

stewards including Pearl Connor wearing brightly colored dresses with either a black armband or a patch stitched into their sleeve symbolizing their affiliation with the organization.[366] Upon viewing Cochrane's casket draped in purple and gold fabric, those involved in the procession most likely took notice one of many wreaths sent in memory of Kelso Cochrane including one from "West Indian sympathisers at Paddington Post Office" and another, from Harold Sharp, bearing the inscription: "Ever-loving memory. Your death was by the hand of a blind man. His terrible deed has drawn innumerable warm hearts to love towards you and yours."[367] Contrary to some West Indian officials' speculations that the IRFCC would only exploit the funeral for political gain, the IRFCC did not use the funeral as a forum for open protest, but rather ingeniously crafted a grassroots anti-racist campaign that embraced Kelso Cochrane as an emblem for the state of race and community relations in postwar Britain.[368] To be sure, the council reserved Cochrane's funeral for a symbolic outpouring of sympathy for not only his senseless murdered black body, but also the plight of all black citizens of Britain.

Gender and the Invention of "Black Body Politics"

Most recent histories detailing the long history of black communities in Britain reference the murder of Kelso Cochrane as key moment of black political mobilization that drew greater public attention to the impact of racial discrimination and violence as

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[366] "1,200 Mourn Cochrane: Scene At Graveside," *Kensington News and West London Times* 12 June 1959; Trevor Phillips and Mike Phillips, *Windrush*, 186.

[367] "800 Mourners March to Graveside: Elaborate Precautions Against Any Disorder," *Kensington Post* 12 June 1959.

[368] PRO CO 1031/2541, Notes from meeting, "Situation in Notting Hill" held in Colonial Office dated 5 June 1959. This meeting was attended by Grantley Adams, Carl Corbiniere and Garnet Gordon. All three expressed concern about the IRFCC's exploitation of the funeral of Kelso Cochrane.

experienced by black migrants.[369] In the recent BBC sponsored volume on the postwar emergence of multiracial communities in Britain in the wake of unprecedented arrivals of non-white migrants from the Commonwealth, journalists Mike Phillips and Trevor Phillips explained,

> The death of Kelso Cochrane—an obscure carpenter from Antigua—and the mourning which followed it was a revelation which helped create popular revulsion against the street violence and harassment the migrants had experienced during the fifties. It also helped to move the argument about their presence on to a new plane. Political interest in the conditions which characterised Notting Dale had increased and become the subject of fierce debate.[370]

Although Kelso Cochrane, had a rather ordinary existence which most likely would not have distinguished him in the eyes of history, he died a most remarkable death that transformed him into a martyr for social justice and a symbol of the consequences of race in postwar Britain as experienced by tens of thousands of black migrants.

In the final chapter of his groundbreaking work on the Mississippi organizing tradition, sociologist Charles Payne has emphasized the extent to which the history of the civil rights movement in America has been constructed as a series of media flash points and lacks a sustained consideration of the intricate social processes that laid the foundations for more publicly acclaimed events including the Brown decision, the Montgomery bus boycott, the Little Rock crisis, and Freedom Summer. He notes that media accounts and ultimately the historical narratives of the modern civil rights movement that have emerged from them "frame the story in terms of Big Events, in terms of what white people did, in terms of traditional leaders and organizations, in terms of

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[369] Fryer, *Staying Power*; Ramdin, *The Making of the Black Working Class*; Ron Ramdin, *Reimagining Britain: Five Hundred Years of Black and Asian History* (London: Pluto Press, 1999).

[370] Mike Phillips and Trevor Phillips, *Windrush*, 187.

what happened after 1955, in terms of southern backwardness, in terms of violence-nonviolence," and in turn, replicate the "biases of race, gender and class, and relegated to secondary importance the themes that would have been important from a community-organizing perspective.[371] Payne's critical analysis reflects a keen awareness and appreciation for the ways that the history of transformative moments and watershed events is wrought with layers of equally, if not more significant, processes of development that contribute to our understanding of the past. In the case of Kelso Cochrane, the interpretation of his historical legacies is complicated, and indeed to a certain extent, defined by the process through which his body became socially reconstructed and transfigured into a political site symbolizing the consequences of race as experience by one individual and simultaneously an entire collectivity of people.

Considering the IRFCC's "black body politics" campaign in the aftermath of the Cochrane murder offers historians a critical vehicle for examining the complex relationships existing between gender and grassroots political mobilization. At the center of this campaign was a nuanced interplay of gender dynamics which entailed an organization— whose leadership and political agenda was dominated by black women— using a black male body to construct a political movement concerning race and citizenship in postwar Britain. Although black women were not necessarily the sole participants in the council's early evolution, the fact that women including Amy Ashwood Garvey and Claudia Jones occupied top positions in the hierarchy of the council's formal leadership suggests that they were fundamental in shaping organizational agendas and strategies particularly in the wake of the Cochrane murder.

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[371] Charles Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 392-404. Quotation comes from pages 403-404.

Scholars have noted that gender is associated with a number of components of social movements including, but not limited to composition, goals, and tactics.[372] In the case of Kelso Cochrane and the IRFCC's "black body politics" campaign, a gendered analysis reveals a textured politicization process in which a masculine corporeal space became a conduit for female political engagement. The body of Kelso Cochrane represented a contested terrain manipulated and molded primarily by black women to publicly expose racial violence and discrimination and make claims on the rights of black citizens to adequate police protection and legal recourse to counter discrimination and racist propaganda. Surely, IRFCC officials including Pearl Connor and Frances Ezzrecco found the problem of race in Britain compelling enough to meet with local authorities officials, hold public protest meetings and lobby Parliament well before the murder of Kelso Cochrane, however, it was their success in recasting the murder of Kelso Cochrane which provided an entry point to disseminate their own politics of race and promote an anti-racist agenda to an engaged public sphere comprised of Government officials, media outlets, black communities (both in Britain and beyond) and a host of other domestic and international observers. If one simply considers the image of Kelso Cochrane's death, rather than the process through which that image was made and assigned public meaning as the point of departure to understand the history of grassroots race politics in postwar Britain, one actively participates in the silencing of the voices of black women whose organizing and strategies of mobilization were instrumental in transforming Kelso Cochrane's body and memory into an iconic referent for the struggle of black communities in postwar Britain.

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[372] Rachel L. Einwohner, Jocelyn A. Hollander and Toska Olson, "Engendering Social Movements: Cultural Images and Movement Dynamics," *Gender and Society* 14 (October, 2000): 684-690.

CHAPTER FIVE

In this country we do not brutally insist 'WHITES ONLY,' politely we say 'Sorry no coloured.'[373]

-Mervyn Jones, 1961

The Evolution of Official Race Policy

Even before the arrival of the *Empire Windrush* on British shores carrying 492 Caribbean migrants in June of 1948, British policy makers expressed concerns about the social, political, economic and cultural implications of black migration.[374] Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, successive British Governments considered the possible consequences of black migration and actively sought various measures to curb unsponsored black migration from the Commonwealth and, in effect, stifle the growth of black communities in Britain. As noted in earlier chapters, according to the terms of the British Nationality Act of 1948, black Commonwealth migrants—by virtue of their British citizenship—had a legal right to migrate, settle and work in Britain with the same citizenship privileges extended to metropolitan Britons. Whereas the British Nationality Act of 1948 established a legal foundation for the idea of a multiracial egalitarian British community of citizens, black Commonwealth migration served as the vehicle through which metropolitan Britain became one of the critical testing grounds exposing the tensions between the ideal of a trans-racial British citizenship and the realities of race-based discrimination, violence, exclusion and marginalization as experienced by people of African descent which had long defined the history of Empire.

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[373] Mervyn Jones, "Coloured People in Britain: Barriers on the Doorstep," *The Observer* 5 March 1961.

[374] Policy makers' initial reactions to the arrival of the *Empire Windrush* are discussed in Chapter 2. See also Clive Harris, "Post-War Migration and the Industrial Reserve Army," 21-26.

With the passage of the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 and the adoption of the Race Relations Act of 1965, the British Government sanctioned a new chapter in the representation of race and race relations in official policy. While the British Nationality Act of 1948 codified a discourse of British citizenship espousing principles congruent with the vision of a racially egalitarian civic community, the unspoken, yet clearly discernable intent and ramifications of the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 effectively fractured, and all but nullified the universalism inherent in the British Nationality Act of 1948, and used the citizenship right of migration as an instrument to institutionalize separate categories of British citizenship which limited British citizens of Commonwealth countries from accessing their right to settle, work and substantiate the meaning of their British citizenship in Britain on the same terms as their metropolitan counterparts. While the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 did not specifically make any references to race, and in fact regulated migration based on a potential migrants' relationship to the British labor market and perceived economic value in predetermined professional and industrial sectors of the British economy, the manner in which policy makers went about crafting the legislation, its eventual impact on black migration patterns and most importantly, the ways in which black migrant communities interpreted the introduction of the controls, highlights the extent to which the act did indeed represent an official race policy. As such, the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 made an official statement about the receptiveness of mainstream British society to the growth of black communities in Britain and provided a legal mechanism sanctioning a broader infringement upon an essential

right—the right of migration—defining black Commonwealth migrants claims to and expressions of their British citizenship.

Just three years after the initiation of the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962, the British Government passed the first national officially-recognized race policy—the Race Relations Act of 1965. Whereas the form of the Commonwealth Immigration Act obscured the racial character of migration controls, the Race Relations Act of 1965 explicitly addressed issues of race and drew attention to the existence of racial prejudice and discrimination in Britain. The act resulted in the creation of a national Race Relations Board which was to serve as a forum to mediate issues concerning racial discrimination in public places.[375]. In doing so, this piece of legislation represented a formal acknowledgment of the social relations conditioned by race which, in turn, facilitated racism and the potential for acts of racial discrimination in Britain.

In considering the Race Relations Act of 1965 as an official statement about race and race relations in Britain, it is important to note that in much the way that the outer appearance of the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 did not reflect the racial agenda that Commonwealth migration controls would ultimately serve, neither did the Race Relations Act. While clearly espousing anti-racist principles, the timing of the bill's introduction in Parliament— in conjunction with the extension of Commonwealth immigration controls— and more importantly, the glaring failure of the act to address racial discrimination in the critical areas of housing and employment suggest that the bill's anti-racist overtures were not necessarily meant to provide an avenue to actually dismantle the structural enablers of racism or even provide any remedies for the practice of racial discrimination in the arenas where it mattered most.

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[375] Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain*, 138-140, 144-146.

This chapter uses both the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 and the Race Relations Act of 1965 as points of departure to analyze the interplay between ideologies of racism and anti-racism in the evolution of official race policies in postwar Britain. Currently, the key debate framing much of the scholarship on the politics of race and migration in postwar Britain centers on the extent to which policy makers actively participated in shaping and institutionalizing a marginal citizenship status for black Commonwealth migrants through the introduction of racially motivated restrictive migration controls in the early 1960s.[376] More recently, Randall Hansen has raised new questions which serve to complicate the ways in which what has been portrayed as a linear march towards race-based Commonwealth migration restrictions lead entirely by British officials maybe reconfigured. While the dominant interpretation of the state's response to black migration focuses largely on the ways in which policy makers expressed hostility towards the growing black presence during the 1950s and consequentially constructed and appropriated racialized images and stereotypes of black migrants—particularly those from the Caribbean colonies—to then manufacture and justify the case for migration controls, Hansen suggests that this paradigm does not account for the diversity of opinions characterizing government officials' considerations of Commonwealth migration. Instead, Hanson draws attention to the plurality of opinions existing within the confines of Cabinet discussions and Parliamentary debates about the dilemmas of black migration. Hansen finds that at every critical juncture that policy makers contemplated introducing migration controls throughout the 1950s and

[376] For examples of this interpretation see Bob Carter, Clive Harris and Shirley Joshi, "The 1951-55 Conservative Government and the Racialization of Black Immigration," ed., Winston James and Clive Harris, *Inside Babylon: The Caribbean Diaspora in Britain* (London: Verso Press, 1993), 55-72; Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*; Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, esp. chapters 5-6.

even during the debates of the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962, there were always forceful voices of protest challenging the racially discriminatory character of both the idea and the means of migration restrictions. In addition, Hansen is also careful to point out that in their preoccupation with demonstrating state-sponsored racism, scholars including Kathleen Paul and Ian Spencer have presented a narrative of postwar black migration that overemphasizes the role of officialdom as an agent of postwar racism. Instead he argues that a "complex of factors influenced government policy." In the process of ignoring these factors, Hanson insists that scholars have camouflaged the broader setting of policy makers' conceptions of race, the potential consequences of a growing black population and the wider British public's own expressions of opposition to black migration which, in turn, has "impeded a balanced and comprehensive understanding of British migration and race relations policy."[377]

Although Hanson's study reproduces many of the shortcomings of previous accounts by framing the history of postwar black migration wholly from the perspective of policy makers, his study raises two critical points that inform the central concerns of this chapter. The first involves the issue of historical agency, while the second relates to historical context. Certainly, the passage of the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 to a large extent reflected official consensus about the need for, and the utility of Commonwealth migration restrictions; however, the manner in which historians portray the evolution of this policy as a pivotal chapter in the history of race, citizenship and migration in postwar Britain should reflect the constellation of voices who were invested and who weighed in on the bill's implications and effects—both actual and imagined. Hansen cites a number of examples where influential government figures including

[377] Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain*, 10-16.

successive Colonial Secretaries and members of the Labour Party took what he refers to as "a principled stand...against racism," in their rejection of measures intended to control black migration.[378] Although Hansen does not consistently distinguish between these officials' objections to the intent or simply the form and public presentation of restrictive migration controls, his work does attempt to demonstrate the existence and significance of voices of dissent. Contrary to the impression that Hansen's study gives— because of its focus on the activities of policy makers—the dissenters were not limited to Whitehall. This chapter emphasizes how West Indian officials and black migrant communities voiced their concerns about the introduction of Commonwealth migration restrictions and demonstrates the ways in which they actively participated in shaping British officials' considerations of the dilemmas and possible approaches for addressing Commonwealth migration. Excavating and interrogating these crucial, yet all too often forgotten voices offers a fresh perspective for understanding the politics of black migration and therefore provides a more nuanced discussion of the boundaries of policy makers' considerations of the available possibilities and strategies for regulating and controlling black migration.

In addition to recognizing the historical agency of a broad range of voices of dissent in the evolution of postwar race policy, Hansen's study also draws attention to the need to reframe the broader historical context in which British officials pondered and crafted racially charged legislation. Hansen insists that it is "untenable" to assert that the development of overlapping policies addressing migration and issues of race occurred absent from what was happening in the larger society and some extent the broader

[378] Ibid., 13.

Commonwealth and international community.[379] Hansen notes that the timing of the Cabinet's announcement of their intentions to introduce a bill regulating Commonwealth migration in 1961 was closely entangled with discussions and plans related to the future of the West Indies Federation. His study also points out that by the early 1960s, Britain was moving towards closer association with the European Economic Community and indicates that to some extent British officials were less wedded to the mission of fortifying the ties of Commonwealth than they had been in previous years. Hansen suggests that British officials' shift towards prioritizing continental political and economic relations over those of Commonwealth might account for their willingness to introduce a migration policy that would categorically redefine a central right of association which had long characterized imperial and Commonwealth relations. These international conditions are certainly key to understanding the pace, the form and the content that migration controls would take in their route to becoming official policy, however they do fully explain the broader historical context framing the manner in which British government officials meditated on the relationship between race, citizenship, migration, and most importantly, the transformation of British cities into multiracial communities.

In addition to refocusing the lens through which one may observe the evolution of the adoption of official race policy, a second goal of this chapter entails situating this process within a transnational context that appreciates not only how Britain's shifting relationship with the Commonwealth and European Economic Community affected policy initiatives, but also the ways in which the postwar international community's preoccupation with questions of race, human rights, citizenship and democracy

[379] Ibid., 14.

prefigured into domestic policy agendas involving race relations. In 1965 when the Labour Government issued a new White Paper titled "Immigration From the Commonwealth," it outlined a two-pronged political compromise that involved implementing a program involving "control on the entry of immigrants so that it does not outrun Britain's capacity to absorb them" and adopting "*positive* measures designed to secure for the immigrants and their children their *rightful* place in *our* society."[380] In announcing this agenda, the White paper set forth two seemingly ideologically contrasting pieces of legislation—one, a restrictionist and inherently discriminatory migration policy reinforcing the racialized notions of British citizenship which marginalized non-white Commonwealth nationals and had been institutionalized in the Commonwealth Immigration Act of1962, and another, an integrationist bill with anti-racist overtures that alluded to the egalitarian potential of British multiracialism and eventually resulted in the passage of the Race Relations Act of 1965. This chapter emphasizes that in order to begin to unravel the complexities of the public presentation of institutionalized competing ideologies racism and simultaneously anti-racism, the political significance of race in postwar Britain must be read against the dynamics of global race politics. It is no accident that policy makers would find it necessary to pair what would surely be perceived as a racist immigration policy with an anti-racist Race Relations Act less than two years after the United Nations issued the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and on the heels of the United States Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965.

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[380] "Immigration From the Commonwealth," Cmd. 2739, Parliamentary Papers, August, 1965. Emphasis added.

The Road To Commonwealth Migration Restrictions

Even though unsponsored non-white Commonwealth migration did not occur en masse until after World War II, controlling the entrance of and regulating the terms of settlement for migrant workers of color was a concern of British policy makers throughout the early twentieth century and especially during the interwar period. Although the exigencies of war required that Britain welcome numerous non-white colonial workers to Britain as soldiers, non-combatant military support, medical personnel and merchant seamen to aid in the Allied cause during World War I, when the War ended, British officials took a keen interest in curbing the entrance of non-white workers and policing their residency in British cities. Coming on the heels of episodes of racial violence occurring between indigenous white residents and seafaring workers of color, in port cities including Cardiff and Liverpool in 1919, the Aliens Order of 1920 empowered immigration officer to refuse entry to any arriving "Arab seamen" who could not provide proof of British nationality. In January of 1921, this policy was extended to apply to all incoming "coloured" seamen, regardless of ethnicity or port of origin. Four years later, under the provisions of Special Restriction (Coloured Alien Seamen) Order of 1925, the Home Office again codified a policy rooted in racial difference that effectively used race as a means to denaturalized a large segment of non-white British subjects and reinforce a racial hierarchy of British citizenship that privileged whiteness.[381]

The terms of the 1925 order required that all non-white seamen resident in British ports present local authorities with documentary evidence of their British nationality or

[381] Tabili, " *'We Ask For British,* 117-121; Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939,* 10-11. Tabili notes that non-white interwar maritime community was multi-ethnic and included Arabian, Indian, Caribbean, West African seamen.

register as aliens with the police. Not only did this measure continue to make it difficult for non-white seamen, including those who were bona fide British subjects to enter Britain, but because—as many government officials were well aware—customarily, few sailors, white or non-white carried passports and instead used discharge books documenting their voyages as their only travel documents. Therefore, many non-white British subjects were forced to relinquish their claims to citizenship, face possible deportation or register as aliens because they could not provide acceptable proof of their British nationality. The economic ramifications of this policy for seamen of color came to a head in 1935 with the passage of the British Shipping (Assistance) Act. This act made it illegal for shipping companies to claim government subsidies if they employed alien seamen and as a result, virtually shut out many non-white maritime workers— both undocumented British subjects and alien workers—from employment opportunities on state-subsidized vessels.[382]

Laura Tabili has suggested that the structure, implementation and consequences of the Coloured Alien Seamen Order of 1925 makes the act an important precursor to understanding many of the issues that would come to define postwar considerations of race, migration, citizenship and national belonging. Tabili is careful to point out that specific historical conditions mediated by the interwar economy, the demands of shipping industry, tensions within local labor markets juxtaposed with the historic racial dynamics of empire coalesced at a particular moment in such a way as to prompt government officials to institutionalize policies founded upon racial difference which redefined the boundaries of British national identity and in turn the citizenship privileges granted to

[382] Tabili, *'We Ask For British Justice'*, 120-122; Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, 10-12; See also Laura Tabili, "The Construction of Racial Difference in Twentieth Century Britain" *Journal of British Studies* 33, 1 (January, 1994): 54-98; Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 113.

non-white British subjects during the 1920s and 1930s. While the policy did not completely prevent non-white British seamen from migrating and working in Britain, it most certainly relied upon racial categories to differentiate between the ways in which white British seamen experienced their British nationality and the manner in which colonial seamen of color could lay claim to and access the opportunities associated with their status as British subjects.

As noted in earlier chapters, in the early postwar period up until the 1960s Caribbean migrants of African descent—and more particularly Jamaicans—represented the overwhelming majority of Commonwealth citizens of color moving to Britain. To understand why this occurred, in addition to analyzing the socio-economic conditions in the Caribbean colonies informing migration, one must also note the ways in which differing emigration procedures in certain imperial and Commonwealth outposts shaped the possibilities for travel to Britain. Although imperial relations allowed colonial and dominion residents free entrance to Britain well before the codification of migration as a citizenship right under the British Nationality Act of 1948, throughout the interwar period, Ian Spencer has noted the existence of de facto policies of obstruction designed to curb migration to Britain from parts of the Empire with majority non-white populations. During the 1930s, Spencer notes that the British Government made arrangements with colonial governments including India and Pakistan that required potential migrants to obtain certain endorsements by colonial authorities before journeying to Britain. In the case of Cypriots, in addition to certain passport endorsements, potential migrants were required to post a security bond and in some instances provide documentation from a

resident in Britain stating that they would sponsor the migrant until he/she found employment in Britain.[383]

In 1950, the Colonial Office urged all colonial governments to enforce procedures that would limit the issuance of passports to those "whose financial position was not sound" and or those who could not demonstrate steady employment.[384] By that time, High Commissions in the newly independent nations of India and Pakistan were selectively issuing British passports to primarily white applicants or those who could demonstrate that they were a descendant of someone born or naturalized in Britain. While West African governments such as Nigeria generally complied with the requests of the Colonial Office, on the whole, West Indian governments were generally less cooperative in introducing formal administrative procedures to limit emigration. In heavily populated islands including Jamaica emigration served as a vital form of economic relief; instead of implementing official measures to prevent certain groups from migrating to Britain, Jamaican authorities did make some efforts to publicize the potential obstacles facing migrants including the inability to secure employment or suitable housing.[385]

The reluctance of West Indian governments to impose measures that would limit emigration to Britain even as unparalleled numbers of Caribbean men and women chose to pursue work opportunities and settle in Britain during the 1950s provides an important

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[383] Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939,* 23-24, 41.

[384] Ibid., 31.

[385] Ibid., 31-32; Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 153; Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain,* 66. Hansen notes that according to a Cabinet report in 1953 all of the African colonies were refusing passports to those who did not have stable employment or for those potential migrants who could not demonstrate a certain degree of financial solvency. This is also referenced in PRO CAB 129/65 Memo, "Employment of Coloured People"by D. Maxwell Fyfe 30 January 1954.

example illuminating the ways in which the early postwar period marked a critical shift in imperial relations. Although the British Government proved to be successful at influencing some Commonwealth governments to institute administrative measures that would thwart emigration to Britain—and simultaneously preserve the appearance of Britain's open door Commonwealth migration policy—Ian Spencer also maintains that West Indian governments' unwillingness to indulged British officials' request to strictly regulate emigration embodied the shift towards national self-determination as self-governing colonies began to define and exercise policies that more clearly distinguished their own social, political and economic interests apart from those of the imperial government.[386] Considering this crucial argument complicates how one may interpret postwar black migration as part of a chapter in the history of race and empire. Not only did mass black migration from the Caribbean reconfigure metropolitan Britain a space exemplifying to a greater extent than ever before the historic multiracialism which had characterized the Empire, but also it served as a reminder of the ways in which black people of the empire consistently contested the racialized limitations imposed by imperial authority even as they strategically positioned themselves within and against the confines of the imperial community of citizens. In doing so, black migrants from the Caribbean fractured and expanded the boundaries of a British identity and challenged an imperial system founded upon racial hierarchies of race and place.

By 1961, when the Home Secretary introduced the first Cabinet-approved legislation to Parliament intended to regulate Commonwealth migration, "coloured immigration" had been the subject of Cabinet discussions no less than thirty seven times since 1945. The peak of these discussions occurred between 1954 and 1955 when the

[386] Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, 22, 44.

Cabinet debated a proposal for migration controls drafted in consultation with ministers overseeing the Home Office, the Colonial Office and the Commonwealth Relations Office.[387] According to migration statistics maintained by the House of Commons between 1953 and 1954 the number of migrants entering Britain from the Caribbean increased more than five fold, from and estimated 2,000 to 11,000. By 1955, the number of Caribbean arrivals had more than doubled from the previous year totaling approximately 27,500 accounting for nearly two thirds of all migrants entering Britain from the Commonwealth.[388] For some Cabinet members, including Lord Salisbury, the leader of the House of Lords and a prominent voice within the Conservative government during the 1950s, these figures were alarming and justified cause for action.

In March of 1954 in a memo to Lord Swinton, the Commonwealth Relations Secretary, Lord Salisbury noted, that the figures pertaining to Commonwealth migration "make it clear that we are faced with a problem which...may easily come to fill the whole political horizon."[389] Well aware that the Cabinet had recently charged Swinton along with Alan Lennox-Boyd, the Colonial Secretary with compiling a summary of Commonwealth deportation procedures applicable to British subjects which Britain might be able to draw from to formulate a domestic deportation policy that would most likely apply to criminals, vagrants, and other "undesirable British subjects",[390] Salisbury expressed his dissatisfaction with the notion that deportation would severely curb Commonwealth migration, maintaining that only "far reaching action" was necessary to

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[387] Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, 51.

[388] Layton-Henry, *The Politics of Immigration*, 13. See Appendix.

[389] PRO DO 35/5216 Letter From Lord Salisbury to Lord Swinton dated 20 March 1954.

[390] PRO CAB 128/27/1 Memo, "Coloured Workers: Cabinet Conclusions" dated 3 February 1954.

accomplish this goal. In explaining the problems prompting and associated with escalating Commonwealth migration, Salisbury reasoned,

> We might well be faced with very much the same type of appalling issue that is now causing such great difficulties for the United States. The main cause of this sudden increase of the inflow of Blacks is of course the Welfare State. So long as the antiquated rule obtains that any British subject can come into this Country without any limitation at all, these people will pour in to take advantage of our social services and other amenities, and we shall have no protection at all.[391]

Referencing the widely supported Cabinet suggestion to adopt deportation legislation akin to those used by other Commonwealth governments Salisbury conceded, "It is true that under your proposed Bill we can get rid of the worst characters," but contended, "It is for me not merely a question of whether criminal negroes should be allowed in or not; it is a question whether great quantities of negroes, criminal or not, should be allowed to come in."[392]

Although Lord Salisbury represented one of the most outspoken proponents of restrictions during the early 1950s, it is important to point out how his comments demonstrate the specificity of Government concerns related to the dilemmas associated with Commonwealth migration. For Lord Salisbury, and presumably other supporters of various forms of Commonwealth migration controls, at a moment when Caribbean migrants comprised the majority of Britain's expanding non-white Commonwealth migrant community, the problem of Commonwealth migration was inherently tied to the problem of growing populations of African descent in Britain. Not only did the problem of black migration require that a majority white British society integrate darker complexioned people of African descent, but to be sure, the racial imagery associated

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[391] PRO DO 35/5216 Letter From Lord Salisbury to Lord Swinton 20 March 1954.

[392] PRO DO 35/5216 Letter From Lord Salisbury to Lord Swinton 20 March 1954.

with the phenotypical markers of blackness in postwar Britain, prescribed that mainstream society incorporate a particular type of stigmatized racial outsiders whose presence would lead to interracial tensions, serve as a drain on public resources and pose a general threat to the life of society. Although Cabinet members consistently referenced their inability to measure the broader public's concerns about the problems of black migration, the conclusions and assumptions about the social implications of black migration articulated by Lord Salisbury went well beyond the confines of Whitehall.

In a pamphlet issued by the Conservative Commonwealth Association of Liverpool titled, *The Problem of Colonial Immigrants* characterizing the conditions associated with black settlement in the area, members of the organization explained,

> Liverpool is admittedly one of the chief centres of coloured settlement and a new Harlem is being created in a decayed residential quarter of the city, where rooms in large and dilapidated houses are sub let at high rentals to coloured immigrants who exist in conditions of the utmost squalor. Vice and crime are rampant and social responsibilities are largely ignored. Hundreds of children of negroid or mixed parentage eventually find their way to the various homes to be maintained by the corporation, to be reared to unhappy maturity at great public expense. Large numbers of the adults are in receipt of unemployment benefit or National Assistance and many are engaged in the drug traffic or supplement their incomes by running illicit drinking dens or prostitution.[393]

Referencing 'Harlem,' a major black enclave in the United States, and in particular, a hub of Caribbean settlement, to describe black communities in Liverpool would no doubt conjure images of race in America, which during the postwar period would have corresponded with a history of racial tension and violence prominently on display as the Civil Rights Movement gained international currency. In doing so, similar to Lord Salisbury, the organization indirectly asserted the idea that the growth of black communities alone, rather than any sort of comparable degrees of racial prejudice or

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[393] Quoted in Bob Carter, Clive Harris and Shirley Joshi, "The 1951-55 Conservative Government and the Racialization of Black Immigration," 62-63; See also Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, 63.

structures of racial discrimination might lead to the types of interracial conflicts and hostilities associated with American society. To be sure, however, the characterization of the problem of black migration provided by the Conservative Commonwealth Association appropriated and reproduced an assortment of racial imagery consistent with the perceived socio-economic consequences of increasing black migration and in the process, adapted and reconfigured many of the historic stigmas of blackness present in the empire to construct black migrants as debased social degenerates contributing little if anything of value to society.

Examining a host of social texts created by both white and West Indian authors including contemporary sociological studies of West Indian migrants and literature, Marcus Collins has demonstrated that throughout the early postwar period, images of unskilled, unemployed, shiftless and economically dependent West Indian migrant permeated British society. Likewise, both Collins and Wendy Webster have noted the ways in which perceptions of an overwhelming male-dominated black migrant population during the 1950s included representations of unstable and defective black families damaged by absentee and or irresponsible black fathers. In addition to pointing out how ideas about black masculinity produced gendered constructions of both the stigmas of blackness and the problem of black migration, Collins, in particular is mindful of the ways in which these images, bred in the colonial context translated into the very premises used to justify discriminatory attitudes, practices and build the case for anti-migrant legislation.[394]

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[394] Marcus Collins, "Pride and Prejudice: West Indian Men in Mid-Twentieth Century Britain," 391-418; Wendy Webster " 'There'll Always Be an England': Representations of Colonial Wars and Immigration, 1948-1968" *Journal of British Studies* (October, 2001): 560-2, 573-574. It is important to note that Collins pays particular attention to the ways in which negative images of black migrants produced by West Indians

Considering Collins's argument is useful in unraveling the process by which a British society that staked its own national identity on its propensity towards racial liberalism and 'tolerance' could allow landlords and employers to openly practice racial discrimination and policy makers to consider legislation designed to exclude black migrants—and to be sure, black British citizens—from settling in Britain. As the pamphlet issued by the Conservative Commonwealth Association suggests, it was not just that migrants were a racial 'other', but the stereotypes associated with their racial 'otherness' made it feasible to think of them as a socio-economic threat to the sustenance of metropolitan values, culture and society. Collins emphasizes the ways in which ideas about black people, and black men in particular, present in postwar Britain were manufactured by both actual and ideological colonial encounters.[395]

Little more than a decade before mass black migration from the Caribbean, the investigations of the Moyne Commission which eventually lead to the Colonial Welfare and Development Act of 1940 had highlighted the deficiencies of Caribbean economies, labor markets and social welfare infrastructures. Convened in large part in response to working class protests occurring throughout the Caribbean islands in the 1930s and eventually culminating in the infamous Jamaican labor rebellion of 1938, the Moyne Commission served as an official dispatch of the imperial government charged with surveying the conditions faced by Caribbean communities and making recommendations for new colonial policy. At the same time that the Commission provided a window into

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themselves were oftentimes created in the process by which some West Indian men attempted to assert their own claims to respectable manhood by disassociating themselves from the very typecasts of West Indian men existing in the broader society. Collins also highlights the work of black sociologists including Stuart Hall who suggested that one of the effects of a lack of suitable skilled labor opportunities was the rise of West Indian "hustlers" essentially sought autonomy and self-respect outside of the socially acceptable confines of a labor market that devalued black labor.

[395] Marcus Collins, "Pride and Prejudice: West Indian Men in Mid-Twentieth Century Britain," 391-418

the inadequacies of the colonial government, it simultaneously showcased a socially and economically depraved majority black Caribbean colonial populace plagued by high rates of unemployment, low wages, poor educational systems and inadequate health care.[396] It is reasonable to suggest that the recent images of the colonies— and essentially colonial people— represented in the Moyne Commission reports, set against a long memory of white British rule and perceived colonial dependence (as opposed to metropolitan-colonial interdependence) might have easily influenced the ways in which white metropolitan Britons encountered black colonial Britons upon their arrival in Britain in significant numbers in the postwar period.

By January of 1955, the Cabinet had requested that the Home Office and the Colonial Office begin preparing a draft bill to regulate Commonwealth migration. A memo summarizing a Cabinet meeting held on 13 January 1955 concerning 'colonial immigrants' noted,

> There was general support for the view that the social consequences of the increasing flow of *West Indian immigrants* into this country were sufficiently serious to compel the Government to take such action as was open to them, or at least to make their attitude on the matter clear to the public.[397]

The memo added that "the form of the proposed legislation should be kept as general as possible" to avoid "means that might be found in practice to allow the movement of British subjects between the United Kingdom and *independent Commonwealth countries*

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[396] For more on the Moyne Commission see "West India Royal Commission Report," Cmd. 6607, Parliamentary Papers, 1945; O. Nigel Bolland, *On the March: Labour Rebellions in the British Caribbean, 1934-1939* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1995).

[397] PRO CAB 128/28 Memo, "Colonial Immigrants: Cabinet Conclusions," 13 January 1955. Emphasis added.

to continue without hindrance."[398] In April of 1955, the retirement of Prime Minister Winston Churchill— who had consistently supported controlling black migration during the early 1950s and had insisted in an interview taken in 1954 that immigration was "the most important subject facing this country"—followed by general elections one month later slowed the pace of government action pertaining to Commonwealth migration, but did not change its course. By June of 1955, the Cabinet had appointed an Interdepartmental Working Party to draft a definitive statement "on the growing influx into the United Kingdom of coloured worker from other Commonwealth countries and of the social and economic problems to which this was giving rise." The Cabinet agreed that that the central purpose of the report was "to ensure that the public throughout the country were made aware of the nature and extent of the problem" of black migration and essentially provide a platform to launch a public campaign to justify the case for migration controls.[399]

Although it is clear that in June of 1955 the consensus of the Cabinet ministers favored the move towards investigating the means by which an overwhelmingly black colonial Commonwealth migration might be regulated, when the Cabinet convened in November of 1955 to consider a "draft bill to restrict colonial immigration," in light of "the rapid increase in immigration from the West Indies," instead of moving forward, officials elected to table the issue. Under the provisions of the bill, all Commonwealth migrants would be required to provide immigration officers with evidence that they had arranged "authorized employment" and "satisfactory housing" in Britain before being

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[398] PRO CAB 128/28 Memo, "Colonial Immigrants: Cabinet Conclusions," 13 January 1955. Emphasis added.

[399] PRO CAB 128/29 Memo, "Colonial Immigrants: Cabinet Conclusions on a Committee of Inquiry into Colonial Immigrants," 14 June 1955

admitted.[400] A constellation of factors help to explain why Cabinet ministers, who had been intent on exploring various options for controlling black migration and building a publicly acceptable case for legislation opted not to move forward with the bill at the end of 1955.

First, the Interdepartmental Working Party's report on the problems associated with black migration left much to be desired in terms of providing a smoking gun to galvanize public support in favor of migration controls. The Working Party report noted that despite the sharp increases in black migration between 1953 and 1955, unemployment among migrants did not present a serious concern as most migrants had secured employment. Citing information gleaned from records of the National Assistance Board and the National Health Services, migration had not proven to yield an excessive strain on public resources nor had it produced evidence of severe racial tensions. The only significant social problem which the report could only indirectly attribute to migration was overcrowding in impoverished urban areas, which was also inherently tied to a broader postwar housing shortage. In terms of casting black migration as a social problem that required immediate attention, the most that the Working Party's report offered were speculations about the potential future outcomes of current migration patterns including the possibilities of black urban enclaves, economic distress and racial conflict.[401] Well aware that while black migration did generate some public concern, but "had not yet aroused general public anxiety,"[402] without an

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[400] PRO CAB 128/29 Memo, "Colonial Immigrants: Cabinet Conclusions on a Draft Bill to Restrict Colonial Immigration," 3 November 1955.

[401] Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, 78-79.

[402] PRO CAB 128/29 "Colonial Immigrants: Cabinet Conclusions on a Draft Bill to Restrict Colonial Immigration," 3 November 1955

authoritative statement characterizing the problems of black migration as exigent circumstances, or a means of measuring the pulse of the public on the subject of migration control, there was essentially no way to account for any potential public backlash.[403]

Another important factor explaining why officials shelved the 1955 bill centered on the inability of Cabinet ministers to find consensus about the form that the controls should take. Some of the lingering questions still up for debate related to whether or not the bill would apply specifically to colonial migrants (who were the real targets of controls) or all migrants from Commonwealth countries. Additionally, members also pondered how controls regulating Commonwealth migration might affect citizens of the Irish Republic, who had an ambiguous relationship to Commonwealth, yet had a historic pattern of migration to Britain and provided a valued labor resource for the British economy.[404] Some members challenged whether or not the bill should regulate entrance based on a migrants housing or employment status or a combination of both. To be sure, however, at the heart of discussions concerning the framework for exercising controls remained the issue of how to construct a policy that would align with the intent of curbing black migration, yet appear to be race neutral.

Doubtful that the draft bill would effectively serve the goal of controlling West Indian migration, Alan Lennox-Boyd, the Colonial Secretary noted that legislation limited to colonial 'immigrants', "would certainly be criticised as racial discrimination,"

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[403] Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, 79-80; Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 142, 145.

[404] PRO CAB 128/29 "Colonial Immigrants: Cabinet Conclusions on a Draft Bill to Restrict Colonial Immigration," 3 November 1955. The memo noted that since 1945, an estimated 750,000 Irish had migrated to Britain and approximately 60,000 had applied for National Insurance between the middle of 1954 and 1955.

as it would largely apply to a migration stream that was overwhelmingly non-white. In addition, he suggested that any measure specifically targeting colonial migrants, the majority of whom hailed from the Caribbean "would have a particularly unfortunate effect" on Britain's relationship to colonial governments in that region and "prejudice the future association of the proposed West Indian Federation with the Commonwealth."[405] Randall Hansen has noted that Lennox-Boyd's stance on the issue fit within a longer tradition of resistance to migration controls in the early 1950s held by Commonwealth Relations ministers and Colonial Office officials, including his predecessor Oliver Lyttleton. This cadre of Cabinet ministers whose major responsibilities included serving as the chief liaisons between the British Government and colonial and dominion governments envisioned that regulations applying solely to colonials might damage Commonwealth relations and essentially Britain's position as the embodiment of Commonwealth ideals of multiracial egalitarianism.

While Hansen references these "anti-restrictionist" positions to counter the notion of a monolithic official mind on the subject of Commonwealth migration, he is somewhat dismissive in clearly establishing the extent to which these policy makers' reservations were guided by anti-racist principles or simply a desire to avoid introducing legislations that would be perceived as racially discriminatory. Disentangling the two is essential to understanding why the regulation of black migration was merely obstructed during the 1950s, rather than abandoned. The 1955 Conservative government maintained an ideological and political commitment to sustaining and fortifying the bonds of Commonwealth as a means of preserving, restoring and recasting Britain's national prestige and imperial heritage in response to an overall postwar moment of imperial

[405] Ibid.

decline. Moreover, remaining in a position to entice newly independent non-white nations in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean to maintain close ties to the Commonwealth during and after the political process of decolonization became integral to Britain's international image not only as the head of a multiracial Commonwealth but also— in the midst of burgeoning Cold War rivalries—as an emblem of the cause of Western democracy.

The historic 1955 Bandung Conference, held just months before Cabinet members considered the ramifications of the draft 'immigration' bill, sent a powerful message to both East and West about the potentialities of Third World Afro-Asian alliances and served as reminder to Britain and its Western allies of the importance of images of anti-racism in building spheres of influence for Western democracy and deflecting Communist encroachment. Likewise, in an international political climate sensitive to questions of race, rights and democracy, particularly as they pertained to issues of historic white imperial rule over majority non-white colonial populations and blatantly discriminatory policies such as those practice by South Africa's apartheid regime, even the appearance of a racially discriminatory policy—and particularly one that targeted a specific non-white segment of a civic community—would draw serious international scrutiny and no doubt affect Britain's overseas relationships both within the Commonwealth and beyond.

The reflections of Lord Swinton on the subject of 'immigration' legislation, captured in a memo to prominent migration control advocate and fellow Cabinet member, Lord Salisbury in 1954 are especially revealing. Swinton reasoned,

> If we legislate on immigration, though we can draft it in non-discriminatory terms, we cannot conceal the obvious fact that the object is to keep out coloured

> people. Unless there is really a strong case for this, it would surely be an unwise moment to raise the issue when we are preaching, and trying to practise, partnership, and the abolition of the colour bar.[406]

Essentially, by late 1955, Cabinet members surmised that indeed it was "an unwise moment" to pursue legislation for which they could not definitively justify to both domestic and international audiences. Controlling Commonwealth migration involved altering a fundamental relationship that had historically characterized the relationship between Britain and the Empire/Commonwealth.

During the mid 1950s British officials remained wedded to keeping these relationships intact even as they underwent significant changes in the midst of the move towards decolonization. Because officials could not find consensus about the form that restrictions should take it, as they remained committed to avoiding the public consideration of a bill that could be easily interpreted as racist and or institutionalized race-based exclusion, to circumvent the possible domestic and international consequences including a widespread public backlash, discord among Commonwealth governments and weakened international credibility on pressing international issues laced with racial undertones such as apartheid and Cold War alliances, officials decided to wait. Timing was everything. The Cabinet resigned to postpone legislation in 1955, but migration controls did not disappear from their agenda.

By the end of November, Churchill's successor, Anthony Eden, had appointed another interdepartmental special committee to continue to investigate "the problems which would have to be solved if we decided to introduce [immigration] legislation."[407] By 1961when Prime Minister Harold Macmillan announced intentions to proceed with

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[406] PRO DO 35/5216 Letter from Lord Swinton to Lord Salisbury 15 March 1954.

[407] PRO CAB 129/78 Memo, "Colonial Immigrants" by Anthony Eden 23 November 1955.

legislation to control Commonwealth 'immigration' the landscape had changed. New developments in the colonies and shifting international commitments significantly altered the context in which migration restriction would be received domestically and internationally. Most importantly, due to the incidents of racial violence during the final weeks of summer occurring between black and white residents in Nottingham and Notting Hill, the issue of migration had clearly made the transition from being the subject of private discussions among government officials to being firmly entrenched topic which distinctly resonated in the public consciousness.

Although news of 'race riots' in 1958 might have provided an opportune time to revisit and actively pursue migration controls, the opposite occurred. As noted in an earlier chapter, the subject of 'immigration' became an integral component of public debates among British observers about the social meaning of racial conflict in postwar Britain, its causes and potential remedies to prevent future similar outbreaks. In the aftermath of the violence, 'immigration' became a racialized subject that garnered great public interest and likewise was associated specifically with the growth of black, majority West Indian, communities in urban areas. A Gallup poll conducted in the early weeks after the violence subsided in Notting Hill reported that while 92% of people had knowledge of the violence, only 9% attributed the violence to black residents, yet nearly 80% favored 'immigration' controls.[408] Even though the poll suggests that many British observers did not directly place blame for the eruption of violence on black residents of Nottingham and Notting Hill, there seems to be some correlation between the news of 'race riots' and public support for the idea of migration restrictions.

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[408] Layton-Henry, *The Politics of Immigration*, 40.

In 1955, there had been no singular event or cohesive narrative available for policy makers to draw upon to measure or shape the broader society's disposition towards restricting migration, but the 'riots' created a moment when this changed. Whereas Lord Salisbury could only speculate that the increase in Britain's black population and essentially the growth of multiracial communities in Britain might contribute to large-scale social unrest in the early 1950s, the racial violence of 1958 gave his arguments a new degree of credibility which extended beyond an elite inner circle of government officials and resonated among the wider British public. After the racial conflict, Lord Salisbury was in a position to openly and publicly state his views about the reasons for and purpose of migration controls. Urging that the 'race riots' occasioned legislation to control black migration, in an editorial appearing in the *London Times* Salisbury explained that he was, "extremely apprehensive of the results economic and social, for Europeans and Africans alike, that are likely to flow from an unrestricted immigration of men and women of [the] African race into Britain."[409]

At the same time that news of 'race riots' gave public credence to the idea that racial conflict and social unrest was a likely consequence of 'immigration,' as several scholars have observed, increased public support for controls in the aftermath of racial conflict actually had the inverse effect on the government's ability to act. Historians have noted that government discussions concerning controls after the violence demonstrated a sense of wariness on the part of many officials to introduce legislation that might easily be viewed by domestic and overseas audiences as a reaction to racial

[409] Lord Salisbury, "Inter-Racial Tensions: Need to Control Immigration" *London Times* 2 September 1958.

extremism.[410] In addition to restraining British officials from introducing policy in light of calls to "Keep Britain White", it is also important to note the ways in which the public racialization of the problem of Commonwealth 'immigration' itself became conflated with the presence of black migrants from the Caribbean in much the same manner that it had among Cabinet members in the late 1940s and early 1950s. As Kathleen Paul has noted, the violence in Nottingham and Notting Hill transformed 'immigrant' into a code word for 'coloured.'[411]

Because West Indians were numerically the largest community of 'coloured immigrants' and generally cited as either perpetrators and or victims in areas where episodes of racial violence erupted in 1958, it is reasonable to suggest that in lieu of the violence they became the archetypical representation of the problem of 'immigration' and therefore would likely be viewed as the potential targets for any form of migration control that might be considered in the aftermath of the violence. Paradoxically, just as the racial character of Commonwealth 'immigration'—and in particular black migration from the Caribbean— provided impetus for officials to consider controlling the entrance of British citizens, in 1958, the public appropriation of this same rationale became a deterrent for moving forward with legislation.

In addition to the steering away from introducing controls in the aftermath of the news of 'race riots' that might appear as a capitulation to racist behaviors, attitudes or propaganda despite increasing public support for 'immigration' restrictions, another very practical reason for avoiding legislation in the late 1950s involved the overall decline in

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[410] Layton-Henry, *The Politics of Immigration*, 38-41; Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, 98-102.

[411] Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 158.

migration from the Commonwealth, including the Caribbean. In 1956, Commonwealth migration peaked for the decade at 46,800, with roughly 29,800 or 64% of migrants arriving from the Caribbean. Whereas in previous years, Commonwealth migration had shown steady increases, between 1956 and 1959, the numbers began to show significant decreases. By 1959, the total number of Commonwealth migrants entering Britain was estimated at 21,600, less than half of the 1956 figure including 16,400 migrants from the Caribbean. This suggested to some that the trends of the early 1950s might be reversing.[412]

As noted earlier in 1955, after Cabinet agreed to shelve plans for introducing a draft bill to restrict Commonwealth migration, Prime Minister Anthony Eden commissioned a Working Party to continue to report to Cabinet ministers about the social and economic impact of black migration. Between 1959 and 1961 this Working Party produced a report on "coloured immigration" every four to six months with the implicit purpose of forging a justifiable case for regulating black migration. In general, all of the reports contained the same topical references to migration statistics, migrant relations with the indigenous white population; crime; housing; employment/unemployment; health; welfare arrangements available for migrants and speculations about future prospects based on contemporary migration trends.[413]

In February of 1961 when Tory M.P. Cyril Osborne stood before Parliament and introduced a motion to urging the Government "to take powers to control immigration into the United Kingdom from all Commonwealth countries irrespective of race, colour or creed," he cited "the enormous increase in immigration" as cause for action. Alluding

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[412] Layton-Henry, *The Politics of Immigration*, 13. See also appendix.

[413] Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, 109.

to many of the issues under investigation by the Working Party, Osborne moved that Parliament seek legislation that would require every 'immigrant' to provide proof of "a guaranteed job; adequate housing, accommodation; a clean bill of heath; a clear criminal record; and a cash deposit for two years sufficient to pay their return fare is they became a charge on public funds."[414] In response to Osborne's motion, the Labour, M.P. for Paddington North sought an amendment to the motion that would reject "any proposal which implies that the social and economic problems of this country are caused or aggravated by immigrants" suggesting that any "social and economic distress in overcrowded areas can be dealt with by the existing powers of central and local government.[415] In the course of the debate over the motions several members weighed in.

Speaking as a representative of the Cabinet, David Renton, Under-Secretary for the Home Office noted that the Government had been "closely watching" 'immigration.' Renton highlighted the relatively higher rates of unemployment among "the West Indian labour force" as compared to the general population and the small number who lived off "immoral earnings" and profited from the trafficking of Indian hemp, yet he concluded that "immigration did not create new social problems, but increased existing ones." Conservative M.P. Hugh Lucas-Tooth and a fellow Labour colleague expressed that since 'immigration' represented a "Commonwealth problem," the issue should be considered at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers meeting before any action was taken. Amid cheers from some Parliament members, Conservative M.P. Nigel Fisher, who was a leading personality in the anti-colonial movement in Britain, insisted that despite Osborne's

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[414] "Difficulties In Control of Immigration," *London Times* 18 February 1961. Report of House of Commons debate.

[415] Ibid.

pledge to explore migration controls that did not appeal to race, his motion to restrict migration was specifically "aimed at restricting coloured immigration from the West Indies," where it was "strongly resented." No doubt considering the links between 'immigration' and race relations firmly implanted in the public consciousness since the Nottingham and Notting Hill violence of 1958, Fisher maintained that Osborne's proposal "constituted a deliberate unimaginative, and defeatist evasion of the whole problem of race relations" which he considered, "one of the greatest problems of the second half of the century."[416]

Fisher's comments most directly pointed to the obvious racial implications buttressing any discussions of 'immigration' control; however, most of the Parliament members who commented on the subject expressed hesitancy about accepting a proposal to legislate on the issue because there seemed to be no exigent circumstances resulting from migration that would compel Government to depart from tradition without further examination of the problem and the potential effects that restrictions might have on Commonwealth and international relations. In the midst of the debate, Osborne, eventually withdrew his motion before a formal vote was taken. Although the reactions of government officials and Parliament members to Osborne's motion to implement Commonwealth 'immigration' controls in February of 1961 might suggest that Government was well-aware of the significant increase in non-white Commonwealth migration, but was not yet receptive to the idea of introducing controls, by the close of the year the full Cabinet had agreed upon a draft proposal to regulate 'immigration' and announced their intention to legislate during the following session of Parliament.

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[416] Ibid.

Armed with a new report from the Working Party examining 'coloured immigration' which included projections from the Government Actuary estimating that at the current rate of migration, in twenty years the number of 'coloured British subjects' residing in Britain could rise to 1.5 million, on the day before Cyril Osborne presented his motion in the House of Commons, Cabinet ministers had agreed that the Government spokesperson—who happened to be Home Office Under-Secretary, David Renton—"should temporise" during the Parliamentary debate on the motion in order to delay any vote on 'immigration' legislation.' To be sure, while Cabinet officials had not supported the idea of presenting a formal position in Parliament about their intentions concerning 'immigration', they did, however, determine that the Lord Chancellor should arrange for a Commonwealth Migrants Committee to consider the form that legislation controlling Commonwealth 'immigration' should take and report back to the Cabinet "in due course."[417]

When Cabinet ministers convened three months later on 30 May 1961, the Lord Chancellor reported "a startling increase in the number of coloured immigrants," since the beginning of 1961 and projected an annual total that might reach 200,000, thus accelerating a rate of migration that might yield a non-white population of nearly two million in fifteen years. Given the steady increases in migration from majority non-white Commonwealth areas, which was still dominated by West Indians, with greater arrivals from India and Pakistan than in previous years, the Lord Chancellor stated that the

[417] PRO LAB 13/1528 Working Party Report on the Social and Economic Problems Arising From the Growing Influx Into the United Kingdom of Coloured Workers From Other Commonwealth Countries, dated January, 1961; PRO CAB 128/35/1 Possible Legislation on Commonwealth Immigrants: Cabinet Conclusions dated 16 February 1961. The Cabinet had initially agreed to establish the Commonwealth Migrants Committee in November of 1960. The Committee was to be chaired by the Lord Chancellor and included the Home Secretary, the Commonwealth Relations Secretary, Colonial Secretary, Minister of Housing, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Minister of Health and the Attorney General. See also PRO LAB 13/1528 Norman Brook, Memo, "Commonwealth Migrants" 30 November 1960.

Committee on Commonwealth Migrants had concluded that "this movement was reaching a stage at which the Government would be obliged to introduce legislation." The committee recommended that employment stipulations presented the best mediums for exercising controls and suggested a form of regulation that would allow skilled workers and 'immigrants coming to specified employment for which no resident labour was available," to continue to enter freely, but would require all others to obtain a work permit from the Ministry of Labour as a condition of entry.[418]

In response to the Lord Chancellor's committee's suggestions Ian Macleod, the Colonial Secretary, expressed a general concern about the timing of any announcement referencing the Government's intention to introduce legislation to control Commonwealth migration. Indicating no opposition to consideration of controls intended to limit black migration, Macleod only objected to any immediate action that would publicize the Government's interests in pursuing restrictions insisting that "any early announcement of a decision to legislate...would prejudice the formation of the [West Indies] Federation." Formally established in January of 1958, in accordance with the provisions of the British Caribbean Federation Act of 1956, the West Indies Federation, was a centralized self-governing political unit comprised of representatives of most of the British Caribbean colonies through which the British Government intended to negotiate the transition towards full independence for a single West Indian nation-state.[419] To be

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[418] PRO CAB 128/35/1 Memo, Possible Legislation on Commonwealth Immigrants: Cabinet Conclusions dated 30 May 1961.

[419] The territories which comprised the West Indies Federation included Antigua, Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, Anguilla, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago. For more on the West Indies Federation see Cary Fraser, *Ambivalent Anti-Colonialism: The United States and the Genesis of West Indian Independence, 1940-1964* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press); David Lowenthal, ed. *The West Indies Federation: Perspectives of a New Nation*

sure, the West Indies Federation movement constituted a broader agenda of British decolonization during the late 1950s and 1960s which by May 1961 had culminated in successful independence movements in Sudan (1956), Ghana (1957), Nigeria (1960) and Sierra Leone (April, 1961).

Macleod's concerns about the potential effects of announcing legislation that would undoubtedly have its greatest impact in the West Indies, the homeland of the overwhelming majority of Commonwealth migrants, were especially relevant given that the West Indies Constitutional Conference was to begin on the following day in London. During the course of the conference, designed to assemble British and West Indian officials to discuss the incentives and potential setbacks facing a federated independent West Indian nation-state, Grantley Adams, Federal Prime Minister, drew clear links between the economic solvency of a future an independent West Indian nation-state and the ability for West Indian migrants to continue to exercise their historic right to migrate to Britain. Adams contended,

> At the moment of independence we need a period of time in which to deal with the grave responsibilities of nationhood without having to suffer the indignity of having a door that has traditionally and generously been kept open now slammed in our faces. Our history has been too closely intertwined to make us think that Britain would wish to mar the moment of rejoicing with the ill tidings that a curtain is to be drawn between the peoples of our countries. We do not think migration is the solution of our economic difficulties, but we want at least time to show that the other remedies which we are preparing can make our people want to stay at home because home is able to give them opportunities which they now seek here [Britain].[420]

(New York: Oxford University Press, 1961); Elisabeth Wallace, *The British Caribbean: From the Decline of Colonialism to the End of Federation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977).

[420] "W. Indies Appeal For Britain to Keep Door Open," *London Times* 1 June 1961. See also "No Time To Curb Immigration," *West Indian Gazette* June, 1961.

Adams's comments highlighted the extent to which migration to Britain provided much-needed economic relief for Caribbean colonies including Jamaica by serving as an additional employment market for West Indian workers and a source of indirect monetary subsidies for struggling Caribbean economies in the form of remittances which in 1960 had totaled nearly 5.5 million pounds in 1961.[421] Adams's opinion on the importance of migration to the survival of an independent West Indian state reiterated the position that West Indian officials had outlined in recent talks with British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan during his tour of the Caribbean in March of 1961 and coincided with the reluctance of governments including Jamaica, to introduce firm administrative controls to limit emigration even in the wake of the highly publicized violence in 1958.[422] Considering the context and the tenor of Adams's comments on the topic migration, Ian MacCleod, the Colonial Secretary and chief negotiator for the imperial government in the transition to independence in the West Indies, most certainly understood that for West Indian officials, any overture that might negatively affect the current legal structure of West Indian migration to Britain was not merely an unwarranted barrier to economic

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[421] Claude D. Ramsey, ed. "London Newsletter: Organ of the Standing Conference of Organisations Concerned With West Indians in Britain," dated February, 1962 Edric and Pearl Connor Papers, Box 4, Folder 5 Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Harlem, NY. This figure is an estimate of "postal remittances." In an article appearing in the West Indian Gazette, prominent West Indian political leader David Pitt noted that the annual figures for remittances were nearly as much as the total amount of colonial development and welfare funding given to the West Indies by Britain during the 1950s. Considering this Pitt concluded that migrants "are therefore making a substantial contribution to bridging the gap between the poverty of the Wet Indies and the comparative wealth of Britain." See "David Pitt Says: W.I. Contribution Aids Britain," *West Indian Gazette* October 1961.

[422] "West Indians Oppose Barriers to British Immigration," *London Times* 27 March 1961. In the aftermath of the 'race riots', British officials met with West Indian officials who came to Britain to survey the situation including Norman Manley of Jamaica and West Indies Deputy Premier Carl La Corbiniere, requesting that they support measures of discourage emigration. Although the West Indies Federation Government refused to implement administrative controls that would severely curb emigration, they did agree to continue to publicize unemployment among West Indians in Britain and the difficulties associated with securing housing. A few weeks after the violence, the Colonial Office urged West Indian governors to seek to regulate the pace that passports were being issued by considering whether or not applicants had "reasonably confident prospects of a job and of suitable accommodation" in Britain. See also PRO CO 1032/196 Circular to West Indian Governors and Lord Hailes dated 24 September 1958.

opportunities for West Indian workers, but more importantly, it was also viewed as a potential act of sabotage to the economic viability of a future independent West Indian nation-state.

Noting Macleod's well-taken position about the timing of any announcement concerning even the possibility that Government might introduce legislation to control Commonwealth migration, the Cabinet also wanted the Commonwealth Migrants Committee to further examine several issues germane to the task of implementing the type of controls suggested in their proposal. Cabinet ministers had raised a number of questions about the nature of employment-based controls. What specific method(s) would be used to identify those Commonwealth migrants whose employment qualifications did not subject them to restrictions? How would the selection of "unskilled" 'immigrants' for work permits through the Ministry of Labour proceed? How would controls affect those migrating from the Irish Republic? Would legislation address the possibilities for deportation?

In addition to these questions, Cabinet members also discussed the need to reconcile the form of any new migration policy with any potential new commitments regarding continental labor migration that might arise in connection with Britain's move towards integration in the European Economic Community.[423] As Ian Spencer has noted, the 1956 Suez crisis severely diminished Britain's fading imperial position and thus marked a critical turning point towards the prospects of forging greater economic alliances with European powers. In 1960, the Cabinet voted to develop closer association with the European Economic Community and by August of 1961 had submitted a formal

[423] PRO CAB 128/35/2 Memo, "Possible Legislation on Commonwealth Immigrants: Cabinet Conclusions" 30 May 1961.

application for membership.[424] With little more than a proposed framework and major structural issues to account for concerning the implementation of legislation to control migration, the Cabinet instructed the Commonwealth Migrants Committee to continue to investigate "the practicability" restrictions.[425] By May of 1961, with steadily rising rates of migration, it was clearly no longer a matter of deciding if restrictions were warranted, but rather it was an issue of timing exactly when the Government might be in the best position to legislate. The investigative committee needed time to resolve the anticipated dilemmas concerning how controls might be carried out. Moreover, government officials wanted to find an optimal moment to announce their intentions to introduce legislation that would certainly be viewed by West Indians as a threat to their economic security, both as individual workers and as a collective independent nation.

On 11 October 1961, Home Secretary, R.A. Butler presented a motion to introduce legislation "to control, but not to stop" Commonwealth 'immigration' to Britain at the Conservative conference of Parliament members. Addressing rank and file members of the Conservative caucus in Parliament, Butler estimated that total migration from the West Indies, India and Pakistan would topple 100,000 and suggested that in lieu of current trends, the slightest economic downturn may create difficult and possibly dangerous social conditions which the Government had to seek to circumvent. Appealing for support of the motion Butler maintained that the employment sector presented "the only effective way" to control 'immigration' and encouraged his colleagues "to think like a jury whether you are going to support this resolution." Alluding to the notion that the

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[424]Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, 126-127.

[425] PRO CAB 128/35/2 "Possible Legislation on Commonwealth Immigrants: Cabinet Conclusions" 30 May 1961.

rising numbers of unprecedented migration from the Commonwealth—which still represented an overwhelmingly non-white, majority black migration from the Caribbean colonies—unequivocally made the case for restrictions exigent and compelling, Butler insisted that while the Government would be "departing from a great tradition...we might be able to work out a system which is humane, unprejudiced, and sensible which might help to meet economic problems that might be too much for our country, " and the motion "overwhelmingly" passed.[426]

On the previous day, the full Cabinet had agreed that the Government would introduce legislation to control Commonwealth migration in the next session of Parliament in accordance with the recommendations of the Commonwealth Migrants Committee and in consultation with the Working Party examining the socio-economic impact of "the growing influx...of coloured workers" from the Commonwealth. On 26 September 1961, the Working Party had submitted its latest report for Cabinet review. In it, the Working Party noted that during the month of August 1961, there was "a net inward movement of coloured people from the Commonwealth" of 15,700 which was the "highest monthly figure ever recorded." Of that total, approximately 7,700 migrated from the Caribbean, 2,400 from India and 3,000 from Pakistan. The report mentioned that despite an increasing influx of non-white Commonwealth migration there had been "no serious racial disorders since 1958" and "remarkably little unemployment."[427] Despite their inability to pinpoint any concrete social or economic conditions

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[426] "Early Law to Control Immigration: Jobs Must Be Waiting or Services in Demand," *London Times* 12 October 1961

[427] PRO CAB 128/35/2 "Commonwealth Immigrants, Recommended Legislation: Cabinet Conclusions" 10 October 1961; PRO LAB 8/2704 Working Party Report on the Social and Economic Problems Arising From the Growing Influx into the United Kingdom of Coloured Workers From Other Commonwealth Countries 26 September 1961

necessitating immediate controls of Commonwealth migration beyond the fact that it had brought an unparalleled number of non-white British citizens to Britain in steadily increasing proportions since the late 1940s, the Working Party recommended the adoption of "flexible employment" controls ultimately designed to limit the migration of people of color and in effect stifle the growth of multiracial communities in Britain.

Under the proposal submitted by the Working Party and later adapted as the framework for legislation by the Cabinet, a potential migrants' relationship to the British labor market determined whether or not he/she would be subject to restrictions. The proposal outlined three categories of Commonwealth migrants. Category A comprised those migrants who had a job awaiting them in Britain upon their arrival. Category B encompassed, "those who have undergone apprenticeship or training or have professional or educational qualifications or experience accepted as likely to be useful" in Britain, while Category C constituted all other migrants and presumably "unskilled" laborers seeking to enter Britain. According to the Working Party's proposal, those who fell into Categories A and B would not be subject to controls and would be freely admitted to Britain under the same provisions codified under the British Nationality Act of 1948. However, those in Category C would be allowed entry on a first come, first serve basis within the parameters of a predetermined quota established by the Ministry of Labour. In addition to creating an instrument to regulate inward movement from the Commonwealth, the Working Party's proposal also contained a component that would

empower the Home Secretary to deport 'immigrants' convicted of offences punishable by any term of imprisonment.[428]

While the Working Party's proposal—which members of the Commonwealth Migrants Committee actually presented to the full Cabinet— appeared race-neutral in that it would apply universally to all Commonwealth migrants regardless of race or country of origin, in practice Government officials seemed to be convinced that it might serve the dual purpose of limiting non-white migration and simultaneously preserving an open door policy for more desirable migrants moving from majority non-white regions of the Old Commonwealth. During Cabinet discussions Butler maintained that, "the bill itself applied to all Commonwealth citizens irrespective of colour," however, "it would be evident in its operation that the control was being applied in practice only to coloured people."[429] It is quite likely that Butler was familiar with the conclusions of an earlier Working Party report that had anticipated that higher proportions of migrants from majority white regions in the Old Commonwealth would either be skilled laborers or have prearranged employment before their arrival, thus excluding them from restrictions. Keeping this in mind, members of the Working Party surmised that employment-based controls would offer the most viable option to because they could be applied "equally to all parts of the Commonwealth, without distinction on grounds of race and colour," yet

[428] PRO LAB 8/2704 Working Party Report on the Social and Economic Problems Arising From the Growing Influx into the United Kingdom of Coloured Workers From Other Commonwealth Countries 26 September 1961

[429] PRO CAB 128/35/2 "Commonwealth Immigrants, Recommended Legislation: Cabinet Conclusions" 10 October 1961

"in practice...[they] would interfere to the minimum extent with the entry of persons from the 'old' Commonwealth countries."[430]

Voices of Dissent and the Construction of Official Race Policy

The period between Home Secretary R.A. Butler's announcement of the Government's intentions to implement an official policy regulating Commonwealth migration in October of 1961 and the final vote on the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 in Parliament represents an interesting moment to examine the range of voices that must be considered in understanding the relationship between the politics of race, migration and British citizenship. Whereas much of the scholarly literature on this subject tends to conflate the point at which the British Government publicly expressed their intentions to legislate Commonwealth migration and the passage of the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 as a single definitive political moment shaping the history of race, migration and citizenship in postwar Britain, in order to fully comprehend the process in which the act came to represent an official statement on race and race relations in Britain, it is important to highlight the ways in which voices of dissent—regardless of their inability to thwart the bill's passage—mattered in terms of the ways in which the bill was viewed and interpreted both domestically and abroad. Without voices of dissent, Government officials might have succeeded in passing legislation with the racially biased intent of curtailing black migration, yet appearing, or at least publicly interpreted as race neutral because it applied universally to all Commonwealth subjects. Voices of dissent exposed for public consumption the obscured objectives and hidden transcripts shielded by a migration policy structured to favor those

[430] Quoted from Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, 116. This quote is from a Working Party report from April, 1961.

with prearranged employment or skills deemed beneficial to the British economy, but nonetheless inherently designed to establish an undetectable racially inspired barrier to limit black migration and the growth of black communities in Britain. In doing so, voices of dissent provide an important, yet all too often overlooked trajectory to analyze the process in which 'immigration' restrictions became a publicly recognized discourse of institutionalized racism despite certain policy makers' desire to frame the public presentation of controls as a color-blind initiative.

While it is clear that news of the Nottingham and Notting Hill 'race riots' certainly heightened a public consciousness of the relationship between race and 'immigration' it was precisely this connection that policy makers' advocating legislation to control Commonwealth migration in 1961 hoped to downplay as the bill moved through Parliamentary channels and circulated in the public sphere in the process of becoming adopted into law. Voices of dissent made this impossible, and likewise framed their opposition to the bill largely on the racial character of the bill and the manner in which the bill served as an official policy of racial discrimination and exclusion that would preclude non-white migrants— and more specifically black migrants from the Caribbean— from accessing and exercising their right of migration in accordance with the terms of their British citizenship guaranteed under the British Nationality Act of 1948. There are at least four significant groups of dissenters that merit attention: black newcomers, British Parliamentary critics, West Indian officials and black political agents in Britain. All of these groups in different ways challenged the underlying premise of a migration policy that would inherently denaturalize a category of citizens on the basis of their national origin in civic body politic whose borders were to transcend the boundaries

of nation-states and unite a transnational, trans-regional, trans-racial community of British citizens. In doing so, not only did each of these groups of dissenters assert a fading, yet publicly and politically viable concept of Britain as a space embodying Commonwealth ideals of multiracial egalitarianism, but more importantly, in the process, they constructed the Commonwealth Immigration bill as the antithesis to these ideals and thus a political tool of institutionalized racism.

In introducing the provisions of the Commonwealth Immigrants Bill for a second reading in the House of Commons, Home Secretary R.A. Butler emphasized the escalating rates of Commonwealth migration and reminded his Parliamentary colleagues that while the British economy was currently experiencing full employment, in the event of recession, increased employment competition coupled with an already strained housing market would lead to dire social conditions. Butler maintained that the possible outcomes of increasing migration warranted immediate attention as a preventive measure in reducing the possibilities of an unmanageable socio-economic situation exacerbated by newcomers. Butler maintained that "the justification for the control...is that a sizable part of the entire population of the earth is a present legally entitled to come and stay in this already densely populated country."[431] Conceding the fact that Commonwealth migrant workers were valued contributors to the British economy, particularly in the arenas of health care and public transportation, Butler, however, argued the increasing proportion of incoming migrants "have presented the country with an intensified social

[431] Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, 1961-1962 (649) col. 687-689.

problem...by the sheer weight of the numbers," that undermined efforts to improve social conditions related to such areas including housing and urban renewal.[432]

As noted earlier, although public receptiveness to migration control peaked in the aftermath of the Nottingham and Notting Hill violence of 1958, between 1956 and 1959, the annual totals for Commonwealth migration declined significantly. By the end of 1960, this trend had reversed. In the final report issued by the Cabinet's Working Party on Commonwealth migrants, officials framed the urgency for legislation largely in terms of the dramatic increases in the rates of migration since 1959 and the rising monthly totals for non-white Commonwealth migration during the first eight months of 1961. Although Commonwealth migration slowed in the late 1950s, at the end of 1960 government records indicated that no less than 49,650 West Indians of a total of 57,700 Commonwealth migrants entered Britain. One year later, the total figures for Commonwealth migration had more than doubled at 136,400. While Caribbean migrants still dominated with 66,300 net arrivals, there were significant increases in migration from India and Pakistan.[433]

Although one may not have a written record to glean what black newcomers arriving in Britain in the wake of speculations about and considerations of restrictions in

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[432] Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, 1961-1962 (694) cols. 694-695.

[433] Layton-Henry, *The Politics of Immigration*, 13; PRO LAB 8/2704 Working Party Report on the Social and Economic Problems Arising From the Growing Influx Into the United Kingdom of Coloured Workers From Other Commonwealth Countries 26 September 1961. It is clear that the Working Party report issued in September 1961 followed the pattern of previous reports issued during the late 1950s by paying particular attention to the higher rates of West Indian migration in framing "the social and economic problems" of Commonwealth migration; however, it should be noted that the report did find "the substantial increase in the number of people from the Indian sub-continent...particularly disturbing since many of these people do not speak English, and they are the more difficult group to assimilate." This is an important conclusion to highlight because although black migration from the Caribbean might have been the initial targeted population of migration controls due to the higher rates of their migration to Britain during the 1950s and early 1960s, as Indian and Pakistani migration begins to surpass West Indian migration in the mid 1960s, South Asian migrants become more prominently integrated into social narratives problematizing 'immigration.' See Appendix,

the early 1960s thought about the specific intent of the Commonwealth Immigrants Bill and its role as an official race policy, their individual decisions to journey to Britain in an effort to 'beat the ban' speaks volumes about the ways in which they might have imagined how the policy would restructure their position within the British citizenry and prevent them from exercising their right to migrate and settle in Britain. As noted in an earlier chapter, as black migrants from the Caribbean made choices to migrate for a host of reasons during the 1950s and early 1960s, they did so with a consciousness of their status as British citizens and an awareness of the fact that their citizenship granted them the right to live and work in Britain. Just as one can assert that black newcomers' individual acts of migration gave substantive meaning to the idea of a multi-racial transnational British citizenry institutionalized by the British Nationality Act of 1948, it is equally as important to underscore how the continuation, and indeed intensification of this process of claim-making during the consideration of the Commonwealth Immigration bill functioned a medium through which black migrants explicitly challenged the policy's intent to contain the growth of black communities in Britain and the evolution of Britain as a multiracial society.

When black newcomers crossed the borders of the British Isles in record numbers during the early 1960s before the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 went into effect in July of 1962, they expressed their understanding of the ways in which migration controls would alter their relationship to Britain and subsequently dilute the material value of their British citizenship in the colonial context. Although they would still be considered members of the British Commonwealth community of citizens, migration restrictions which prevented them free entry to Britain reinforced the hierarchies of race

and place that had historically fractured the experience of imperial belonging for black colonial subjects. Whether it was to seek better employment opportunities, join family members, escape difficult living conditions or simply to live in closer proximity to Buckingham Palace, Big Ben and the Tower of London, as black migrants clamored onto boats and planes in unrivaled numbers in the period preceding the passage of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962, they staked claims on their rights as British citizens and in the process, simultaneously refuted the fundamental concept of Commonwealth migration controls which essentially used national origin as a means to differentiate shared rights in what was ideally a transnational, trans-racial egalitarian community of British citizens.

As the Commonwealth Immigration Bill made its way through Parliament, some of its most vocal opponents included members of the Labour Party. During the second reading of the bill, the most extensive debate of the bill took place in the full House of Commons. In the course of the debate dissenters honed in on the racial character of the bill and the potentially devastating effects of the bill on Caribbean economics, Commonwealth relations and international issues concerning race relations. Leading the charge against the bill for the Opposition Party, Labour M.P. and former Commonwealth Relations Secretary, Patrick Gordon Walker outlined a number of points of contention with the introduction of migration restrictions and the proposed formula for exercising controls. Walker noted that Cabinet members proceeded with the bill "without adequate inquiry" and or consultation with Commonwealth governments. He insisted that because the bill revoked "the long standing right of free entry to Britain" held by Commonwealth citizens, it essentially would "undermine the strength and unity of the Commonwealth.

In addition, Walker also pointed out to his Parliamentary colleagues that the bill, in its present form, granted the executive government "excessive discretionary powers" and introduced "a colour bar into our legislation," while at the same time failing to address the real origins of "the deplorable social and housing conditions under which recent Commonwealth immigrants and other subjects of Her Majesty are living." For Walker, all of these considerations provided grounds for Parliament to reject the bill during it Second Reading. [434]

In response to the Home Secretary's statistical rationale for legislation, Walker agreed that the "net figure of migration" was "absolutely critical" to any decision to regulate Commonwealth migration, but suggested that the Home Secretary's appraisals were somewhat inflated and presented a "wholly exaggerated" portrait of the potential impact of the current state of Commonwealth migration.[435] Citing a study conducted by the Economist Intelligence Unit, Walker insisted that Government figures for migration did not account for return migration among West Indians which was estimated at no less that 20% between 1955 and 1960. Moreover, Walker asserted a laissez-faire economic argument that market relations alone would regulate acceptable levels of migration. He insisted, "There is a direct relation between labour demand and immigration."[436] While Butler had carefully noted that "one-quarter of the population of the globe" currently had the right to enter Britain,[437] Walker retorted,

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[434] *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Commons, 1961-1963 (694) col. 705.

[435] *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Commons, 1961-1963 (694) col. 710.

[436] *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Commons, 1961-1962 (687), col. 710.

[437] *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Commons, 1961-1962 (687), col. 687.

> Many people talk about millions of people coming here; he [Butler] talked about a quarter of the population of the world coming here. But a limit is set on the numbers coming here by the economy itself, by the need of the economy for labour...The truth is that there is a fairly quick adaptation of the numbers to the movement of the economy to and fro.[438]

Walker's strongest criticisms of the Commonwealth Immigrants bill, centered on the racial undertones implicit in its structure. Reiterating the rationale used by the Commonwealth Migrants Committee to recommend employment-based restrictions during Cabinet discussions that would appear race-neutral, yet most likely affect migration patterns along race lines, Walker also surmised that under the bill, "Australians, Canadians and New Zealanders will overwhelmingly fall into the acceptable categories," and certainly "Some coloured immigrants will come in because they have jobs and voucher." However, he insisted, "the overwhelming majority of those trying to get in on the open quota will be coloured people," and concluded, "The net effect of the Bill is that a negligible number of white people will be kept out and almost all those kept out by the Bill will be coloured."[439]

Aside from the actual design of the controls, what most clearly exposed the racialized intention of bill for Walker was the exclusion of Irish migrants from any of the regulations included in the legislation. Initially, Cabinet ministers had suggested that Irish migrants—whom the Home Secretary estimated entered Britain at a rate of between 60,000-70,000 annually— would be subject to controls in the same manner as all other Commonwealth citizens; however, given the tremendous strain that regulating such a heavy, and to be sure welcomed, flow would place on the Ministry of Labour,

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[438] *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Commons, 1961-1962 (687), col. 710.

[439] *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Commons, 1961-1962 (687), col. 709.

Government officials decided to exempt movement from the Irish Republic from controls.[440] In response to this exclusion, Walker maintained, "before the Irish were taken out, the Bill was very careful to cover up this racial discrimination,"[441] but in its new form by exempting the Irish, Walker accused the Home Secretary of advocating "a Bill which contains bare-faced, open racial discrimination...written—not only into its spirit and its practice, but into its very letter."[442]

Walker was not alone in his condemnation of the racial dimensions of the bill. Fellow Labour Party member Charles Royle suggested that the bill amounted to official capitulation to the type of racial extremism promoted by "Fascist thugs" and seconded Walker's contention that with the exclusion of the Irish, the bill would disproportionately affect non-white migrants and therefore operate as "a colour bar bill."[443] Conservative M.P. Nigel Fisher, who along with Royle maintained membership in the British Caribbean Association, a Parliament lobby sympathetic to West Indian interests, suggested that the very idea of legislation ending unrestricted entry for Commonwealth citizens was "quite inimical to our whole concept of a multi-racial Commonwealth." For Fisher, the Commonwealth ideal of multiracialism served as a powerful internationally-recognized example of anti-racism and provided a means of validating British moral legitimacy in the arena of race relations. In his opinion, Commonwealth migration restrictions—and particularly those structured to excluded non-white migrants—struck at

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[440] *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Commons, 1961-1962 (649) col. 688.

[441] *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Commons, 1961-1962 (649) col. 708.

[442] *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Commons, 1961-1962 (649) col. 706.

[443] *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Commons, 1961-1962 (649) cols. 744, 747-748. Royle also noted that Irish migration to Britain at 353,000 between 1945 and 1959 exceeded total Commonwealth migration at 333,000 during the same years.

the heart of the Commonwealth model and thus undermined Britain's position as a moral arbiter on issues of race in world politics. Alluding to what he viewed as the blatant hypocrisy of the Commonwealth Immigrants bill Fisher explained:

> It seems strange to me that in Africa we attack apartheid and preach partnership, but in the United Kingdom we are today taking powers to exclude coloured British citizens, which is really a form of apartheid, and are evading our opportunity, that splendid opportunity, to practise partnership and so make our contribution to the improvement of race relations throughout the world. Our words to Africa are inconsistent with our action today in the House of Commons.[444]

Elaborating on a point that had been raised during Patrick Gordon Walker's diatribe against the bill, Fisher also agreed that that the structure of the bill did not favor West Indian migration in particular. Fisher insisted that because West Indians did not generally arrive in Britain with prearranged jobs and were less likely to meet British standards of "skilled" labor, it was most probable that Caribbean migrants would only gain entry though undefined quotas.[445] While Fisher qualified this assertion with a simple reference to the differing interpretations of "skilled" labor as defined by Caribbean economies, industries and labor markets as compared to those in Britain, his comments highlight an even more complicated relationship between ideas of "skilled" labor, race and the systematic processes of exclusion affecting black migrants which the Commonwealth Immigrants bill purposed to exploit.

Clive Harris has noted that black migrants entered a British labor market that, by design, facilitated their concentration in jobs considered as semi-skilled or unskilled. Highlighting a host of factors including the unwillingness of unions and employers to

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[444] *Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 1961-1962 (649) cols. 778-779.

[445] Parliamentary Debates, *House of Commons*, 1961-1962 (649) col. 785.

accept apprenticeship credentials obtained in the Caribbean or recruit black workers into training programs for "skilled" occupations, along with the persistence of racist stereotypes about black migrants' work ethic and their abilities as compared to their white counterparts, Harris maintains that not only did these practices result in the deskilling of black migrant labor, but it also channeled black workers into less desirable, lower paid "unskilled" jobs. In doing so, he notes that the definition of "skilled" labor became "saturated with a credo of racialized meanings such that certain types of work [were] deemed to be unsuitable for some [black] workers and unskilled by virtue of the occupants who performed them."[446]

Harris's point is critical to understanding the rationale behind implementing employment controls as a means to exclude black workers. The logic of the bill rested upon the notion that black workers were inherently "unskilled," based in large part by their position within the British labor market. In much the same way that racialized assumptions about black migrant laborers provided the basis for their systematic exclusion from accessing certain occupational opportunities in a British labor market in which they had a right to expect full incorporation, the architects of the Commonwealth Immigrants bill used a similar reasoning in crafting legislation that, in practice, would largely exclude a presumably "unskilled" black migrant working class. To be sure, this same rationale formed the basis for Parliament members including Patrick Gordon Walker and Nigel Fisher to express their opposition to the inherent racial character of the legislation.

Hugh Gaitskill, leader of the Labour Party also weighed in and focused his opposition to the bill on issues of race. Gaitskill insisted that the social "harmony" of any

[446] Clive Harris, "Post-War Migration and the Industrial Reserve Army," 27-30, 50.

multiracial society depended on the principle on "non-discrimination." Gaitskill contended, "the test of a civilised country is how it behaves to all its citizens of different race, religion and colour," and concluded, "By this test the Bill fails, and that is why we deplore it." Alluding to similar comparisons between the bill's intent and the racially discriminatory policies and practices of South Africa's apartheid regime, Gaitskill predicted that upon the Bill's passage, "the Nationalists in South Africa will be rubbing their hands and saying, 'You see, even the British are beginning to learn at last.'"[447]

In addition to reiterating many of the racially discriminatory features of the Bill highlighted by his Labour colleague Patrick Gordon Walker, Gaitskill also paid careful attention to the potentially devastating economic impact of migration restrictions in the West Indies. Referencing the high unemployment rates in the more heavily populated islands including Jamaica, Trinidad and Barbados, Gaitskill rehashed similar arguments asserted by West Indian officials who maintained that migration to Britain provided a vital source of economic relief. For these reasons, Gaitskill beseeched the Government to "drop this miserable, shameful, shabby Bill...before they deal another deadly blow at the Commonwealth."[448]

Official protest against the bill on the grounds of race was not limited to Labour Party members and moderate Conservatives in Parliament. In many ways, Parliament members, including Gaitskill, articulated points of contention that explicitly addressed the concerns regarding the impact of the bill as viewed through the eyes of West Indian officials and other prominent spokespersons for West Indian communities in Britain and

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[447] Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, 1961-1962 (649) col. 802

[448] Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons, 1961-1962 (649) col. 800,803. See also "Commons Storm Over Immigration," *London Times* 17 November 1961.

the Caribbean. In a telegram to the national secretary of the Labour Party dated just weeks after Home Secretary, R.A. Butler had received approval to move forward with introducing legislation to control Commonwealth migration, Jamaican Premier, Norman Manley expressed his apprehension about the implications of such legislation as the related to issues of race and Commonwealth relations. Manley noted:

> This proposal we are certain will be a damaging blow to the Commonwealth. Moreover [the] proposal will vitally injure Jamaica and other parts of the West Indies at this critical moment in our history. We cannot see any economic reason for curbing migration now and recruitment in the West Indies for the British [labor] Army underlines [the] employment situation in England.[449]

In soliciting Parliamentary support against the bill Manley reminded Labour Party leader that from the perspective of many West Indians, the, "Decision [to legislate] will be interpreted widely as based on colour."[450]

When news of the Conservative conference's acceptance of the Home Secretary's recommendation to pursue migration controls reached Jamaica's Opposition Party leader Alexander Bustamante, he immediately issued a telegram to the Prime Minister condemning restrictions on Commonwealth migration. Bustamante noted Commonwealth migration to Britain had been a common practice for decades, yet it appeared that it was only the recent increases in West Indian arrivals which seemed to occasion the Government's interest in limiting this tradition. Bustamante maintained that it was obvious that any restrictions on Commonwealth migration would in fact "be only a

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[449] Telegram from Norman Manley to the Secretary of the Labour Party 26 October 1961, Labour Party International Department Records, Box 1, File: Jamaica: Correspondence and Documents, 1955-1963, Manchester Labour History Archives, Manchester UK.

[450] Telegram from Norman Manley to the Secretary of the Labour Party 26 October 1961, Labour Party International Department Records, Box 1, File: Jamaica: Correspondence and Documents, 1955-1963, Manchester Labour History Archives, Manchester UK.

camouflage for colour discrimination," which he "vigorously" protested.[451] Bustamante's political rival, Jamaican Premier, Norman Manley concurred with his assessment and insisted that, "the decision to limit migration to Britain would not have been made if the migrants had been people of European origin."[452] By November of 1961, Manley had announced the commission of a Working Party established to examine the implications of the Commonwealth Immigrants bill and the potential impact on the Jamaican economy. From Manley's perspective, migration to Britain was unequivocally an "economic necessity" which provided relief for overloaded Caribbean markets and a supply of workers to fulfill labor shortages in British industries.[453]

Although Jamaican migrants represented the overwhelming majority of West Indian migrants who journeyed to Britain during the early postwar period, the range of protests against the racial character of migration controls and their potential economic impact on Caribbean economies demonstrates the ways in which the issue represented a centripetal force uniting West Indian leaders and communities across island differences. While Colonial Secretary Ian Macleod had been successful in halting the announcement of the Government's intentions to legislate in this arena during the midst of key discussions concerning the transitions towards independence in the British Caribbean in the form of a federated West Indian nation, when Jamaica, withdrew in September of 1961 following a popular vote against a referendum to remain apart of the association, Cabinet members decided that there was no longer a pressing agenda that would prevent an announcement of their intentions to pursue controls in the upcoming session of

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[451] PRO PREM 11/3405 Telegram to the Colonial Secretary from K. Blackburne 12 October 1961.

[452] "West Indies Government Oppose Colour-Bar Bill," *West Indian Gazette* December 1961.

[453] "West Indies Government Oppose Colour-Bar Bill," *West Indian Gazette* December 1961

Parliament. As one traces dissent among West Indian officials, it is interesting to note that precisely when Jamaica's withdrawal from the West Indies Federation effectively served to diminish the concept of a West Indian nation of people united by common interests which transcended island insularities, paradoxically, the subject of Commonwealth migration to Britain provided a medium through which West Indian officials articulated the overlapping interests of a West Indian community whose borders traversed regional distinctions.

On the day following the first extensive Parliamentary considerations of the Commonwealth Immigration Bill, Grantley Adams registered an official protest to the consideration of migration controls in his capacity as Prime Minister of the West Indies Federation. In a scathing dispatch to British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan, Adams characterized the bill as a "flagrant disregard of every liberal principle on which Britain has based its customs and traditions since Lord Mansfield's famous judgment of 1772." Speaking on behalf of a transnational West Indian migrant community, both in Britain and beyond, Adams insisted, "West Indians are firmly convinced that by this action Britain has begun to take steps which are no different in kind to the basis on which the system of apartheid in South Africa is based." Adams concluded his remarks by noting, "It will in [the] future be difficult for any person from the Commonwealth to accept unreflectingly the oft-repeated assertion of a multi-racial partnership."[454]

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[454] "W. Indies Protest to MacMillan," *London Times* 18 November 1961. Adams's reference to Lord Mansfield is a reference to the Somerset case, discussed in Chapter 1, in which the English courts found that an enslaved person could not be forcibly sent out of England to be reenslaved in the colonies if he/she deserted their service in England. Although Mansfield's decision did not outlaw the practice of slavery in England, because it granted James Somerset freedom from enslavement and carved a new space to frame anti-slavery as antithetical to British law and tradition, it became a cause celebre in the history the abolition of slavery in the British Empire. See also David Lorimer, "Black Slaves and English Liberty: A Re-Examination of Racial Slavery in England,"121-150; William R. Cotter, "The Somerset Case and the Abolition of Slavery in England" *History* 79 (February, 1994): 31-56.

Barbadian Premier, Hugh Cummins shared Adams's concerns about the ways in which migration controls would "do irreparable harm to Commonwealth unity," as they would devalue the meaning of British citizenship for people of African and Asian descent from the Caribbean.[455] Speaking on behalf of the government of British Guiana, Brindley Binn suggested that migration control represented a form of economic divestment in the Caribbean. Binn's remarks drew attention to the ways in which Britain's tradition of open door migration policies for British Commonwealth citizens had long offered West Indian workers employment opportunities and routes towards social mobility outside of the limits of struggling Caribbean economies which had in turn benefited not only individual workers and their families, but also the broader economic infrastructure of Caribbean societies. To be sure, Binn also noted that the manner in which the bill would curtail the freedom of movement of "British subjects and citizens" between the Caribbean and Britain also introduced an "undesirable colour-bar" into British policy which contradicted the basic foundations of Commonwealth solidarity.[456]

For Garnet Gordon, High Commissioner for the West Indies Federal Government, the timing of the bill was especially germane to West Indian opposition to the bill. Gordon drew attention to the fact that just as the British Government planned to pursue a program of migration controls structured to excluded certain categories of British citizens largely on the premise that the British economy would eventually become unable to withstand the strains of integrating rising proportions of migrant labor to the detriment of already disconcerting social conditions, the Tory Government began the process of

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[455] "West Indies Government Oppose Colour-Bar Bill," *West Indian Gazette* December, 1961.

[456] Ibid.

cementing their integration within the European Economic Community (Common Market). Established in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of Rome in 1957, the European Economic Community sought greater economic cooperation between Western European states and supported the free movement of European workers among its member states. In August of 1961, the British Government submitted a formal application for membership in the European Economic Community which would no doubt entail the consideration of immigration policies that would allow for greater freedom of movement for continental migrants seeking employment in British industries.[457] Garnet Gordon found this coincidence especially troubling. Gordon suggested that even the "possibility of non-British Europeans, exercising rights permitted to citizens of the Commonwealth restrictively, calls for much explanation." Yet clearly aware of a broader racial undercurrent guiding the British government's seemingly contradictory actions, Gordon noted, "But then, of course, the immigration from Europe would not be coloured."[458]

In addition to official protest from West Indian government officials, black political leaders and organizations in Britain also registered public opposition to the introduction of legislation to curtail Commonwealth migration. Just days following the announcement of plans to pursue legislation in upcoming session of Parliament, *West Indian Gazette* editor Claudia Jones spoke at a protest meeting convened by the Movement for Colonial Freedom, an anti-colonial pressure group chaired by Labour, M.P. Fenner Brockway. Speaking on a platform which included Trinidadian activist and

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[457] Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, 127.

[458] "West Indies Governments Oppose Colour-Bar Bill," *West Indian Gazette* December 1961.

local councilor, David Pitt, Jones insisted that the Commonwealth Immigrants Bill "reflected the fear of unity of coloured and white workers and people," and "aimed at spreading racialist divisions."[459]

Even before the Tory Government publicly committed to introducing a new Commonwealth migration policy, Jones's *West Indian Gazette*, which had become a leading conduit of black political activity in Britain in the aftermath of the murder of Kelso Cochrane, had taken a stance against any proposal that would infringement upon the rights of Commonwealth citizens to enter Britain. An article appearing in the *Gazette* in September of 1961 maintained that for many migrants, movement to Britain was an economic "necessity" mediated by the dire social and economic conditions resulting from centuries of imperial rule in the Caribbean colonies. The article cited an interview by one Jamaican newcomer who explained, that he would "sweep trash on the streets of England," because in his opinion, "To stay at home is to die." In addition to highlighting the ways in which migration to Britain provided economic opportunities—even the most basic—unavailable for many West Indian workers in their homelands, the article also reminded black migrants in Britain that above all, "As British Commonwealth citizens, we have a right to come" and therefore should "be asked to apologise for our numbers."[460]

Once the Home Secretary had publicly asserted the Government's intentions to pursue legislation, the *West Indian Gazette* intensified its critique of migration controls and centered their opposition squarely on the ways in which the bill would serve as an

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[459] Sherwood, *Claudia Jones*, 98. See also "Hecklers Grapple With Dr. Soper," *London Times* 3 November 1961.

[460] "New Arguments Against Migration Restriction," *West Indian Gazette* September, 1961.

official policy of racial discrimination which would preclude black migrants from exercising their rights as British citizens and effectively diminish the principles of racial egalitarianism which buttressed the Commonwealth ideal of multiracialism. In the October, 1961 issue of the *Gazette,* Jones ran an article that insisted,

> A bill to ban coloured immigrants no matter how disguised or covered up with generalities is still a colour bar bill. It is widely feared that its passage would cultivate just the opposite of those 'virtues' which Her Majesty held to be essential to Commonwealth unity. For it would promote racialism, and disunite the Commonwealth peoples based on the colour of a man's skin, and his origin, rather than his worth.[461]

On 14 January 1962 Claudia Jones and supporters of the *West Indian Gazette* participated in a protest against the Commonwealth Immigrants Bill sponsored by the Movement for Colonial Freedom. Following the protest, the London branch of the Trinidadian-based Peoples National Movement hosted a joint Conference on Immigration and West Indian Federation which convened representatives from a number of West Indian, African and Asian organizations and activists throughout Britain including Jones and staff of the *West Indian Gazette*, the West Indian Students Union, the Conference of African Organizations, the Standing Conference on West Indian Organizations, the British Guiana Freedom Association, the Indian Workers Association and the newly formed Pakistani Workers' Association and West Indian Workers' Association, both of which had been established in Birmingham in opposition to the Commonwealth Immigrants bill. This meeting resulted in the formation of the Afro-Asian Caribbean Conference (AACC) which pledged to serve as a united front against the implementation of racially discriminatory migration policy that would disproportionately affect Commonwealth migrants of African and Asian descent. The Conference resolved that

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[461] "Bill to Ban Us Expected," *West Indian Gazette* October, 1961.

the Commonwealth Immigration Bill, "when stripped of its fine phrases is nothing but a legalizing of race prejudice and Colour discrimination," that represented a "departure" from the "avowed" British "tradition of non-discrimination."[462]

When the AACC reconvened four days later to formulate a plan of action to galvanize support against the introduction of what was regarded as "legalized apartheid", the conference decided to organize a series of public demonstrations to expose the racial character of the Commonwealth Immigrants bill's intent and to rally public support in order to pressure Government officials to withdraw the legislation from Parliamentary consideration.[463] The members of the AACC agreed to sponsor a two day vigil outside of Admiralty House, where Cabinet meetings were generally held, and the Home Office on beginning on 10 February 1962. Timed to coincide with the last day that the Commonwealth Immigrants Bill would be debated in a House of Commons committee before a vote by the full House, the Conference also planned a mass Commonwealth lobby which was to be followed by a public protest meeting on 13 February 1962.[464]

As a means of gaining greater political legitimacy and a broader audience and coalition of support for the anti-restriction and essentially anti-racist platform promoted by the AACC campaign against the Commonwealth Immigrants Bill, the organization invited the High Commissions of India Nigeria and the West Indies to participate in protest activities, offer financial support and issue public statements condemning the racial undertones inherent in the bill's intent and structure. Claudia Jones initiated much

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[462] Claude D. Ramey, ed. "London Newsletter: Organ of the Standing Conference of Organisations Concerned with West Indian in Britan," November, 1962 Edric and Pearl Connor Papers, Box 4, Folder 5, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture; "What is the Afro-Asian-Caribbean Conference," *West Indian Gazette* February 1962; Sherwood, *Claudia Jones*, 98-99.

[463] "Anti-Colour-Bill-Lobby-Feb 13" *West Indian Gazette* February, 1962.

[464] Ibid.; Sherwood, *Claudia Jones*, 98-99.

of the correspondence with Commonwealth government officials, trades unions and other anti-racist sympathizers including members of the Labour Party. Echoing many of the sentiments expressed by Parliament members including Nigel Fisher and Hugh Gaitskill expressed in earlier debates about the Commonwealth Immigrants Bill, in a letter urging support for the AACC campaign to have the bill withdrawn, Jones characterized the bill as an "obnoxious piece of legislation [that] knocks down the very foundation of the Commonwealth." In addition to being "anti-British" in the sense that it departed from Commonwealth traditions of universalism and multiracialism by undermining the citizenship rights of certain categories of British citizens in such a way that would disproportionately affect people of color, Jones considered the potential effects of the bill as a threat to the possibilities of working class interracial unity. Moreover, she maintained that the bill represented a "discriminatory move" that essentially "flouts the U.N. Charter of Human Rights, is an insult to human dignity and is a slur to the fair name of this Country, the citadel of democracy."[465]

In response to the request of the AACC, government representatives from India, Nigeria and the West Indies issued public statements condemning the bill specifically because of its racial implications. Indian officials expressed objections to "any kind of control based on race or colour discrimination" and maintained that if such measures took effect public pressure might compel the Indian Government to "contemplate reciprocal action." Representatives from the newly independent Nigerian Government maintained, "Nigeria deplores the racial overtones of the bill and the encouragement which it may

[465] Claudia Jones (on behalf of the Afro-Asian Caribbean Conference) to Unknown Addressee 31 January 1962 Claudia Jones Memorial Collection, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture; Sherwood, *Claudia Jones*, 99.

give and in fact has given to racialist and fascist elements in the country," while Garnet Gordon of the West Indies High Commission reiterated the West Indies Federal Government's "unequivocal stand against the Bill."[466]

In crafting a public message against the Commonwealth Immigration's Bill, not only did the AACC oppose the systematic, and no doubt, intentional disfranchisement of non-white British Commonwealth citizens by revoking their rights to migrate and settle in Britain, but the organization also closely scrutinized the process by which the bill would facilitate and essentially sanction racially discriminatory social practices to the detriment of black migrants already resident in Britain. In particular, a public statement distributed in conjunction with the AACC House of Common's lobby, drew specific attention to a provision of the bill that made it a criminal offense for a person to "knowingly" harbor another person whom he/she has "reasonable grounds" to believe was residing in Britain unlawfully. The organization contended that the phrase "knowingly" had virtually no "practical value" and therefore would serve as a tool to perpetuate and essentially reinforce racially discriminatory social practices against black migrants already in Britain. The AACC reasoned that since "certain landlords and landladies already practice colour discrimination," the bill reinforced their exclusionary racial practices and essentially gave them leverage to refuse housing to black migrants.[467] In making this point, AACC members highlighted the process in which the potential outcomes of the Commonwealth Immigrants bill affected the citizenship rights for black migrants seeking to journey to Britain, and those already residing in British communities.

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[466] "Anti-Colour-Bill-Lobby-Feb 13," *West Indian Gazette* February, 1962.

[467] Statement on Commonwealth Immigration Bill, undated, but references the House of Commons Lobby on 13 February 1962, Claudia Jones Memorial Collection, Schomburg Center for Research on Black Culture, New York, NY.

The Race Relations Act of 1965 and the Transnational Politics of Race

Because the Tory-controlled Government eventually succeeded in passing the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 into law, one might find it easy to conclude that voices of dissent played insignificant roles in influencing the institutionalized politics of race, migration and citizenship in the early postwar period. In fact, although Randall Hansen's recent analysis of these overlapping issues points to a lack of scholarly attention to the multiplicity of opinions shaping the evolution of postwar Commonwealth migration policy, his own treatment of dissent among members of British officialdom concludes that "In the end, the sound and fury" of Parliament members including Labour Party leader Hugh Gaitskell's "embittered attack on immigration control signified nothing, and both parties settled into a quiet acceptance of the 1962 system of control."[468] While this argument may be tenable if one focuses solely on the implementation of official policy, it is rather dismissive of the ways in which an assortment of voices of dissent facilitated a public dialogue about the racial character of Commonwealth migration restrictions that indeed framed the policy as a government-sanctioned discourse of institutionalized racism.

Although Cabinet members purposed to introduce a migration policy whose public presentation camouflaged their intent of curbing a predominately black Commonwealth migration, this feat could not be accomplished to a large extent because of the ways in which voices of dissent emanating from Parliament, the West Indies and black communities in Britain publicly exposed the racially discriminatory undertones obscured by the bill's structure. In opposing the bill on the grounds of its racial implications at a moment when people of African descent from the Caribbean represented

[468] Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain*, 127.

the greatest proportions of Commonwealth newcomers, voices of dissent disseminated a particular conceptualization of 'immigration' controls as an anti-black policy of institutionalized racism.

The process by which 'immigration' controls became public symbols of institutionalized racism and racial discrimination is key in considering the how British Government officials came to embrace anti-racist integrationist policies beginning with the passage of the Race Relations Act of 1965. At the same time that Cabinet members of successive Conservative Governments debated and strategized about how to best implement seemingly race-neutral policies designed to limit black migration during the 1950s, they also consistently rejected anti-discrimination measures introduced in Parliament during that same period. By February of 1964 when the Labour Party committed to introducing anti-discrimination legislation patterned after a proposal submitted by left-wing anti-colonial advocate and Labour M.P. Fenner Brockway, Brockway had presented similar Private Member's bills to outlaw racial discrimination in public places in nine previous Parliamentary sessions, the first which was put forth in 1955.[469] A complimentary logic helps to account for why British officials shied away from anti-discrimination policies at the same time that they avoided pursuing migration controls. Essentially, both legislative discourses— one racially exclusionary, and another racially integrationist— would function to destabilized the Commonwealth ideology of multiracial egalitarianism. Just as migration controls represented a departure from the traditions of citizenship rights and privileges which had fortified Britain's historic role as the centrifuge of the Commonwealth by creating disparate rights of migration for British

[469] Ramdin, *The Making of the Black Working Class in Britain*, 213-214; Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain*, 139.

citizens, largely on the basis of race, the utility of a national race policy that would address, and more importantly, acknowledge racial discrimination was also perceived as antithetical to Britain's role as a beacon and defender of Commonwealth racial democracy.

The Race Relations Act of 1965 emerged as part of a two-pronged "package deal" initiated by Labour Home Secretary Frank Soskice and detailed in a White Paper on "Immigration in the Commonwealth" issued in August of 1965. [470] The first part of the policy proposal described measures intended "to control...the entry of immigrants so that it does not outrun Britain's capacity to absorb them," while the secondary portion the White Paper detailed "*positive* measures designed to secure for the immigrants and their children their rightful place in *our* society."[471] Although Labour Party officials had initially made public pronouncements that the Party would rescind the Tory-backed Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962, by 1965 when Labour had regained control of Government, the position of the Party had shifted and the provisions outlined in the 1962 were extended to place even greater restrictions on Commonwealth migration to Britain.[472] Under the 1962 legislation, only migrants who had made prior employment

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[470] PRO PREM 13/382 Letter from Home Secretary, Frank Soskice to Prime Minister, Harold Wilson 4 January 1965; FO 371/178454 Letter from K.R.C. Pridham of the Foreign Office to Lord Caradon, British Representative to the United Nations 1 January 1965.

[471] Parliamentary Sessional Papers, vol. xxviii, 1964-1965 Cmnd. 2739 (London: HMSO, 1965).

[472] Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain*, 119, 129-131; Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, 134-136; Layton-Henry, *The Politics of Immigration*, 77. Scholars have cited a number of reasons which contributed to the shift in the Labour Party's position on Commonwealth migration controls between 1962 and 1964 when the Party stated the necessity of controls as part of its platform during the 1964 election. In 1963 the Parliamentary leader of the Labour Party, Hugh Gaitskill died in January of 1963. As noted earlier Gaitskell had been an outspoken critic of the migration controls and was influential in shaping the Labour Party's anti-restrictionist platform concerning controls during the early 1960s. Scholars have noted that Gaitskell's predecessor, Harold Wilson did not necessarily share the same zeal about opposing the issue. To be sure, another point worthy of mention is that Gallup poll surveys

arrangements (Category A), workers with skills deemed most valuable to the British economy (Category B), as well as spouses and dependant family members were exempt from restrictions; all others (Category C) were selectively admitted on a first come, first served basis by applying for a predetermined annual allotment of vouchers distributed by the Ministry of Labour. The White Paper of 1965 announced the Government's intentions to prescribe an annual quota of 8500 for Category A and Category B workers and completely abolished Category C vouchers. Likewise, considering the significant numbers of family reunification migrations, estimated at roughly 30,000 annually, the White Paper also included plans to restrict the entry of dependents to exclude extended family members and children over 16.[473]

It is important to note that in introducing the new provisions associated with the 1965 White Paper on "Immigration From the Commonwealth" Home Secretary Frank Soskice found it imperative that a proposal to enforce tighter migration controls be counter-balanced with "positive" anti-discrimination to receive bi-partisan support in Parliament and wide-ranging public support. In lieu of this rationale, Soskice put forth the Race Relations Bill which, in its original form, criminalized activities which might incite racial hatred and discrimination in the public sector. Scholars have described Soskice's pairing of immigration restrictions and anti-discrimination legislation as a political maneuver designed to depoliticize race and 'immigration' in the wake of the

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taken after the passage of controls showed more than 60% of the public supported the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962.

[473] Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, 134-136; Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain*, 109-111, 129, 150-152; Layton-Henry, *The Politics of Immigration*, 75-78; Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*, 166, 174.

1964 Smethwick campaign.[474] As a result of the 1964 election, popular Labour incumbent Patrick Gordon Walker, who had been tapped by Labour Party leaders to become Foreign Secretary, was defeated by Peter Griffiths, a lesser known political outsider. While nationally the Labour Party gained seats in Parliament, Griffiths, won on an anti-black platform that incorporated the infamous slogan, "If you want a nigger for a neighbor, vote Labour."[475] From the perspective of Labour leaders the Smethwick debacle served as a potent reminder of the increasing political stakes of race and 'immigration.' Even before the general election, the Labour Party surveyed the Smethwick community and found that residents were less inclined to support Patrick Gordon Walker because of his voting record on the issue of migration which many believed dramatically compounded housing difficulties in the area.[476] Given the considerable national public support of controls the Labour Party did not necessarily want to compromise its Parliamentary majority by positioning itself as an anti-restrictions Party. The defeat of Patrick Gordon Walker, who had been a steadfast opponent of Commonwealth migration control, particularly because of their racially exclusionary and discriminatory intent had proven the extent to which the politics of race and migration

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[474] Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration*, 132-141; Layton-Henry, 77-78; Spencer, *British Immigration Policy Since 1939*, 136. For more on race, party politics and the 1964 Smethwick campaign see also Nicholas Deakin, ed. *Colour and the British Electorate 1964: Six Case Studies* (London: Pall Mall, 1965) and Anthony Messina, *Race and Party Competition in Britain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[475] "Immigrants Main Election Issue At Smethwick," *London Times* 9 March 1964.

[476] Smethwick Survey Summary Report 13 October 1964, Labour Party Records Related to the 1964 General Elections, Manchester Labour History Archives, Manchester, UK. The survey also found that "traditional supports" of the Labour Party in the areas also felt "alienated" because of a perceived sympathy towards "coloured immigrants from the Commonwealth" in the area.

mattered and constituted a divisive set of issues that could determine electoral outcomes and shift power dynamics in Government.[477]

While it is certainly feasible to conclude that Soskice's "package deal" of migration controls and anti-discrimination legislation was simply a politically expedient attempt to reframe the Labour Party's image in relation to the issue of 'immigration', while preserving its avowed commitment to anti-racism, this argument does not account the ways in which policy makers anticipated the international implications of backing migration controls that had been publicly exposed and interpreted as racially discriminatory in both domestic and overseas. In a speech given at a meeting of the Socialist International held in Amsterdam in September of 1964, Labour leader and future Prime Minister Harold Wilson outlined what he perceived to be "major themes of world affairs." Citing international concerns including disarmament, nuclear proliferation and aid for developing countries, Wilson's final point dealt with the issue of race relations. Paying homage to "all those who played a part in the great Washington Freedom March," Wilson used the case of South Africa as talking point to discuss the ways that the issue of race relations had become a defining component of world politics. He explained:

> ...increasingly race relations present us with a challenge in terms of relations between countries. The prospects in South Africa grow darker daily. Dr. Verwoerd is now outraging the whole of Africa by his naked racialism and is not threatening the integrity of neighboring territories including Bechuanaland, Basutoland and Swaziland. What is happening in South Africa is no longer an

[477] In addition to opposing the Commonwealth Immigrants in Parliament, even after its passage, the Labour Party continued to condemn the bill on the grounds of its racial intent during the second half of 1962 and 1963, which transformed the Party into somewhat of an anti-restrictions faction. A Labour Party pamphlet issued during this period stated, "By restraining the right of Commonwealth citizens to come to Britain, the Conservative Government has given way to the pressure of colour prejudice. The Labour Party is determined to oppose any form of color prejudice." See pamphlet, *Immigration... The Facts*, undated, Labour Party Archives Research Department Files on Race Relations and Immigration, Box One, File Dates, 1962-1963, Manchester Labour History Archives, Manchester, UK.

> internal matter. It presents a challenge to the whole of the free world and to the great principles of the U.N.[478]

To be sure, the United Nations agreed with Wilson's position and in fact had staked its international legitimacy largely on its willingness to engage questions of race. Less than a year before Wilson's speech, the General Assembly of the United Nations unanimously adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Reaffirming the international body's commitment to upholding anti-discriminatory and anti-racist principles in accordance with the tenets of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the declaration on racial discrimination resolved "to adopt all necessary measures for speedily eliminating racial discrimination in all its forms and manifestations, and to prevent and combat racist doctrines and practices in order to promote understanding between races and to build an international community free from all forms of racial segregation and racial discrimination."[479] The declaration defined "racial discrimination" as, "any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life."[480]

To be sure, the adoption of the Declaration represented the culmination of decades of struggle, protest and petitioning by black communities throughout the world

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[478] Harold Wilson, Speech on "Major Themes of World Affairs" given at the Socialist International meeting in Amsterdam 9 September 1964, Papers Related to the 1964 General Elections, Labour Party Records, Manchester Labour History Archives, Manchester, UK.

[479] PRO LAB 13/1936 United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

[480] Ibid.

and demonstrated the growing international influence of an expanding contingent of newly independent Afro-Asian states who had remained steadfast in keeping the overlapping global issues of colonialism and racism firmly planted in international politics.[481] The spirit of the U.N. Declaration manifested itself in historic civil rights legislation in the United States and the reversal of immigration policies designed to limit the influx of non-whites in such places including the United States and Canada.[482] Situating the Labour Government's decision to couple 'immigration' restrictions and anti-discrimination legislation within this pivotal international political moment is key to unpacking the complexity of race politics in postwar Britain.

During considerations of the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 a host of voices of dissent had successfully framed migration controls as policies of institutionalized racism and racial discrimination. Surely Labour Party leaders were well aware that there would be a degree of public backlash, particularly among Commonwealth audiences, that would highlight the ways in which British migration policies embodied racist undertones just as the international community was intensifying its support for nations to institute anti-racist policies and to eliminate all manifestations of racial discrimination in the public sphere. It is against this backdrop that one must consider the ways that the Race Relations Act of 1965 functioned as an anti-racist gesture which paradoxically facilitated the furtherance of a racist and racially exclusionary political agenda.

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[481] Lauren, *Power and Prejudice*, 239-248; See also Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize* and Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind.*

[482] Lauren, *Power and Prejudice*, 246.

In its final form, the Race Relations Act of 1965 was severely diluted as it was originally conceived by the Home Secretary. Where Soskice had purposed to criminalize activities inciting racial hatred and the practice of discrimination in public places, instead the bill, established a national Race Relations board that would serve as an agent of conciliation to mediate disputes involving issues related to racial incitement and discrimination. Absent from the legislation was reference to mechanisms to address racial discrimination in the key areas of housing and employment. As noted in earlier chapters, for black migrants, this is where policies addressing racial discrimination mattered most. Because of this glaring omission, black and Asian migrant coalitions including the nationally supported Campaign Against Racial Discrimination (CARD) opposed the legislation.[483]

For the Labour Party leaders, the introduction of a Race Relations policy was inextricably bound with the international political community's preoccupation with issues of race and the problem of racial discrimination. In a confidential memo to a Cabinet official, K.R.C. Pridham of the Foreign Office noted that it was important to time the introduction of anti-discrimination legislation so that Parliamentary debate on the bill would coincide with U.N. General Assembly debates on the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Pridham explained,

> Although we can expect to gain some credit in the U.N. for the decision to legislate against racial discrimination, much of the credit may be lost if, when the domestic legislation is introduced into Parliament it is seen that little or no account has been taken of the draft U.N. Convention. Many delegations-

[483] Letter to CARD Membership from CARD Organizing Secretary 28 April 1965 The letter noted, "Because...the Bill refers only to discrimination in public places, parliamentary procedure makes it impossible for the Bill to be amended to include housing, employment and the other main areas that our proposal and petition demand."

> especially the Afro-Asians—are likely to take the line that a good opportunity was being lost.[484]

Pridham's memo is suggestive of the ways in which the evolution of anti-discrimination legislation in Britain was not merely domestic in scope, but was meant to conform to a broader international political current seeking to remedy historic problems of race. This is an important point to consider when examining the postwar politics of race and migration.

By the mid 1960s migration had become a racially charged public issue, wrought with racist undertones. Taking a cue from the Smethwick campaign of 1964, when Harold Wilson's Labour Government purposed to extend the provisions of the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 to level a political playing field stacked against the Labour Party concerning the volatile issue of 'immigration,' coupling it with the Race Relations Act provided a means to balance the public presentation of a policy of institutionalized racial discrimination with an anti-racist policy of integration that would not appear to alienate British policy from international trends related to the elimination of racial discrimination and exclusion. It is only when one broadens the scope of analysis to locate the transnational politics of race in the postwar period, that one can examine how both grassroots black political agents and British officials acted in relation to an international climate sensitive to questions of race to shape and influence domestic political agendas related to black migration.

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[484] PRO FO 371/178454 Letter from K.R.C. Pridham, Foreign Office to Home Office 8 December 1964.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has attempted to narrate and analyze two intertwining histories. One is a story of Caribbean people of African descent and their struggles and negotiations to substantiate the meaning of their membership in an imperial community of British citizens. Just as the rhetoric of a transatlantic anti-slavery movement manufactured universalizing discourses of citizenship which supplied enslaved black laborers and freed people with a language to envision, articulate, and seek to actualize a British citizenship status that permitted them certain rights, privileges and entitlements, similarly, the ideals of a postwar multiracial Commonwealth reinvented the historic concept of a trans-racial British citizenship status and guaranteed its official legitimacy under the provisions of the British Nationality Act of 1948. Although British policy makers did not necessarily imagine how the meaning and the actuality of the citizenship right of migration to metropolitan Britain might facilitate the transformation of British cities into reconfigured imperial spaces reflecting more of the racial and ethnic diversity which had long defined Empire, for Caribbean migrants, their postwar migrations to Britain demonstrated a clear understanding of their relationship in the imperial community of citizens and represented an act through which they made claims upon and sought to validate what it meant to be British on their own terms.

Having exercised a claim to British citizenship by traveling to Britain, many black migrants from the Caribbean found striking discrepancies between their expectations of life in Britain and the realities of racial prejudice, discrimination and exclusion, coupled with feelings of exile and non-belonging. It was not necessarily that black migrants came to Britain with the expectation that life in Britain would not have its difficulties, stages of

adjustments and even disappointments, but rather, they came with a desire to at least belong and to maximize the opportunities available for social and economic mobility. Author Donald Hinds, who migrated to Britain from Jamaica to join his mother in 1955, explains:

> When a migrant makes up his mind that he is going to Britain, he hardly expects to find an earthly paradise. He expects to work for his living, and doubtless to do royally well...He believes he ought to be accepted, and his being a British subject is reason enough.[485]

Hinds's insightful comments draw attention to the notion that it was not enough for migrants to simply have the opportunity to move to Britain to substantiate their status as British citizens, but just as important, migrants intended that their movement and settlement would be qualified by the experience of being "accepted" as workers, neighbors, patrons, entrepreneurs, men, women and children on a similar basis as their white metropolitan counterparts. Confronting a labor market that, by design, channeled migrants into lower paying, less desirable jobs, and a housing market plagued by massive shortages, the impact of racial prejudice and discrimination cemented the marginal citizenship status of black Commonwealth migrants in British society; but nothing confirmed this more than acts of racial violence.

The Nottingham and Notting Hill violence, which largely involved attacks on black migrants by indigenous white residents, motivated by a mantra to "Keep Britain White," followed by the senseless and unsolved murder of Kelso Cochrane less than a year later at the hands of "a gang of white boys," energized grassroots black political

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[485] Hinds, *Journey To An Illusion*, 35.

organizations in Britain.[486] The politicization of the Cochrane murder and the "black body politics" campaigns waged through the efforts of activists including Claudia Jones, Frances Ezzrecco and members, supporters and sympathizers of the Inter-Racial Friendship and Coordinating Council and the Coloured People's Progressive Association, provided yet another means through which black migrant communities made claims upon their citizenship status and sense of their rights of settlement and belonging. More importantly, black migrants' political activities in the aftermath of the death of Kelso Cochrane carefully articulated the ways in which migrants felt that many of their rights of citizenship remained unfulfilled due to inadequate police protection, a lack of anti-discrimination legislation and the existence of unchecked organized racist campaigns.

But what did it mean for black migrants to assert these sorts of claims on their British citizenship and expose the inconsistencies between the ideal of Commonwealth racial democracy and the existence of racial prejudice, violence, discrimination, and exclusion at a particular historical juncture when the international community carefully scrutinized questions of race and judged a nation's international legitimacy in world affairs based on the representation of their domestic race relations? The second storyline interwoven throughout this study concerns the ways in which black migrants, white Britons, and British policy makers confronted and contested the racial character of ideas of 'Britishness' and British citizenship, both as an ideal and a lived experience at a particular moment when issues of race and race relations mattered and remained integral to international politics. Anticipated by the pronunciations of the Atlantic Charter (1941) and crystallized in the United Nations Charter (1945), the Universal Declaration of

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[486] " 'Keep Britain White' Call in Notting Hill Area," *London Times* 10 September 1958; "1,200 Mourn Cochrane: Scene at Graveside," *The Kensington News and West London Times* 12 June 1959,

Human Rights (1948), and the emergence of the United Nations as a forum for anti-racist and anti-colonial debate in the aftermath of a War fought in defense of human rights and to preserve a respect for national self-determination, the early postwar period signaled a profound shift in the international political community's willingness to engage the effects of racism and racial discrimination. To be sure, the images and personalities associated with historic social movements for black rights waged by and within black communities throughout the world including the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, nationalist movements in Africa and the Caribbean, and anti-apartheid campaigns in South Africa became a vital means through which the world came to view and access the "problem of race" and its manifestations.

In much the same way that images of "Little Rock" became inscribed into international dialogues about race in such a way that tarnished visions of American democracy, news of young, working class white "teddy boys" attacking black migrants in Notting Hill without provocation, threatened to dismantle "the mystique of British anti-racism," and undermined Britain's position as a historic beacon of racial liberalism and 'tolerance.' The responses of white British observers and officials were conditioned, to a large extent, by a need to reconcile the news of 'race riots' with internationally-recognized national myths about British racial attitudes and race relations in Britain. White British audiences were well aware that the international community would have much to say about the highly publicized news of 'race riots' in Britain and likely criticize the nation's reputation for racial liberalism as compared to other nations including the United States and South Africa, as well as its tendency to proffer itself as the embodiment of Commonwealth ideals of racial egalitarianism. To account for the glaring

discrepancies between racially-motivated violence against black migrants and notions of an anti-racist metropolitan British society, a range of British commentators and officials offered a constellation of interpretations of the meaning and implications of racial violence in Britain which essentially ascribed the origins of the racial conflict to the actions of a deviant section of white society reacting to social problems exacerbated by increasing black migration. In the process, the broader society was absolved from confronting the existence of embedded structural patterns and quotidian practices of racism and discrimination present in British society, and thus was able, to a certain extent, to preserve the "mystique of anti-racism" and reconfigure a shattered notion of what it meant for white Britons to be British.

Just as a race-sensitive international climate mediated the reactions of white Britons to news of 'race riots', this same context provided black migrants with a forum to lodge their discontent with their marginal citizenship status and draw international attention to the cause of black rights in Britain. The process by which black activists transformed Kelso Cochrane's murdered black body into a political site representing the interests and concerns of black communities in Britain involved the appropriation of images of a transnational global black struggle which positioned the experiences of black migrants in Britain with those of black Americans, oppressed black Africans in such places including South Africa and Nyasaland, and anti-colonial movements the Caribbean and Africa. In doing so, black migrants made their struggle to qualify the meaning of their British citizenship into a domestic cause illustrative of a broader, transnational problem of race experienced by black communities throughout the African Diaspora.

The evolution of official race policies discussed during the 1950s and later implemented during the 1960s, served as a crucial backdrop which placed the survival of black migrants' claims to and means of substantiating the rights of a multiracial British citizenship into a clear contest with a racially exclusive vision of Britishness founded upon imperial hierarchies of race. To be sure, this struggle involving race and the meaning of British citizenship did not take place in a domestic political vacuum, but rather was attuned to the potential international consequences of race politics. When black migrants joined a chorus of dissenters including British Labour Party leaders and West Indian officials in opposing the introduction of Commonwealth migration restrictions on the grounds that the policies were inherently designed and intended to limit the entrance of a largely black population of Commonwealth migrants, they successfully transformed the issue of 'immigration' controls into an officially sanctioned symbol of institutionalized racism and racial discrimination.

When the new Labour Government revisited the issue of migration controls in 1965 after the defeat of a popular Labour candidate in the racially charged 1964 Smethwick campaign and in the wake of unwavering popular support of migration restrictions, despite their racist and racially discriminatory implications, Cabinet officials felt that it was necessary to package race-based controls with anti-discrimination legislation. The international politics of race buttressing the coupling of these two seemingly disparate pieces of legislation should not be underestimated. Just when the growing influence of a steadily increasing contingent of Afro-Asian states facilitated the adoption of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and nations including the U.S. and Canada introduced civil rights and new migration policies

congruent with the ideals of integration and multiracialism, the introduction of an official policy of anti-discrimination was a politically expedient means of remaining within an international trend towards state action supporting the elimination of racism and discrimination. Thus a policy espousing anti-racist principles became part of the public presentation of the means through which the British Government hoped to strengthen a policy which had been publicly exposed as racially discriminatory.

This study concludes with the introduction of the Race Relations Act of 1965 and therefore positions its emergence as the culmination of nearly two decades of contestation over the meaning of British citizenship prompted by the migration of an unprecedented number of black migrants largely from the Caribbean colonies to Britain. On the one hand the Race Relations Act of 1965 served as a historic declaration that racism, and racial prejudice and discrimination were part of the fabric of British society and signaled that the British Government was willing to regulate is impact on the lives of racial minorities in Britain. In this sense, the legislation spoke to a tradition and legacy of claim making by people of African descent in the Empire to integrate and incorporate themselves into what it meant to be British and to possess British citizenship. However, the fact that the Labour Government pursued anti-discrimination legislation as part of a broader political agenda of furthering racially exclusive migration controls gives the policy a very different meaning. When considered as part of a "package deal" to promote a vision of British citizenship that marginalized people of African descent and other Commonwealth populations of color, the origins of the Race Relations Act of 1965 point to a long history of the "tensions of Empire" and the "dialectics of inclusion and exclusion," which have historically framed black communities relationships to notions of

Britishness and membership within the imperial community of British citizens.[487] This dissertation hopes to have provided a starting point to rethink the politics of black migration, issues of citizenship and race in postwar Britain. First and foremost, this study demonstrates that the voices, perspectives, activities and experiences of black migrants mattered and held transformative power. In making claims to British citizenship through the act of migration black migrants flexed the boundaries of what it meant to British *in Britain* and called into question exclusive notions of Britishness that marginalized people of African descent and to be sure, all non-white British Commonwealth citizens.

[487] Frederick Cooper and Ann Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1-37

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ESTIMATED NET COMMONWEALTH MIGRATION (1953-1962)

	West Indies	India	Pakistan	Others	Totals
1953	2000				2000
1954	11000				11000
1955	27500	5800	1850	7500	42650
1956	29800	5600	2050	9350	46800
1957	23000	6600	5200	7600	42400
1958	15000	6200	4700	3950	29850
1959	16400	2950	850	1400	21600
1960	49650	5900	2500	-350	57700
1961	66300	23750	25100	21250	136400
1962*	31800	19050	25080	18970	94900
Totals	**272450**	**75850**	**67330**	**69670**	**485300**

*These figures represent net arrivals for the first six months of 1962 before the Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 took effect in July of 1962.

Source: Zig Layton-Henry, *The Politics of Immigration: Immigration, 'Race' and 'Race Relations in Postwar Britain.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1992), 13. These statistics are based on records maintained by the House of Commons.

APPENDIX B

NEW COMMONWEALTH MIGRATION (AUGUST 1960-AUGUST 1961)

	West Indies	India	Pakistan	Totals
Aug-60	5800	550	340	6690
Sept-60	7900	1100	400	9400
Oct-60	5350	340	300	5990
Nov-60	3300	640	400	4340
Dec-60	2900	1050	760	4710
Jan-61	1900	560	400	2860
Feb-61	2500	1200	650	4350
Mar-61	5800	1750	2100	9650
Apr-61	8300	1400	1660	11360
May-61	7450	1750	1180	10380
Jun-61	3850	2150	1850	7850
Jul-61	6150	2250	2300	10700
Aug-61	7700	2410	3000	13110
Totals	**68900**	**17150**	**15340**	**101390**

Note: These figures represent gross arrivals and do not account for return migration.

Source: PRO LAB 8/2704 Working Party Report on the Social and Economic Problems Arising From the Growing Influx Into the United Kingdom of Coloured workers From Other Commonwealth Countries 26 September 1961.

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