

'Writing the Wrongs': Caribbean Publishing in Post-war Britain from a historical perspective

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I, Naomi Jasmin Norris Oppenheim, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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Abstract

This thesis identifies and explores a connected Black/Caribbean publishing tradition, offering a new perspective on this subject as most studies either look at materials published in the Caribbean, or those published by Caribbean people in Britain. Beginning with an analysis of Robert Wedderburn's publication of *The Axe Laid to Root* in 1817 and ending just before the First International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books in 1982, it illustrates how publishing was critical to the formation and dissemination of anti-slavery, anti-colonial, internationalist, Black Nationalist, feminist, anti-racist and Black Power struggles.

Taking a broad view of 'publishing,' this analysis encompasses both the press and publishing houses, in the Caribbean and in Britain, interpreting them as part of a connected and interdependent publishing culture. This research draws on a wide range of sources including periodicals, publishing outputs, archival documents, original oral history interviews and exhibitions. Divided into two parts: Chapters 1-3 explore the establishment and development of Caribbean publishing from the abolition era up to the 1960s, both in the Caribbean and in the diaspora, in Britain. The remainder of the thesis shifts to post-war Britain, with Chapter 4 examining history features in the 'Black' press during the late 1950s and early 1960s, and Chapters 5 and 6 examining publishing houses New Beacon and Bogle L'Ouverture. This study contributes knowledge to three main areas: press and publishing history; literature on Black and Caribbean radical traditions; and scholarship about Caribbean history and historiography.

By examining the dynamics and discourses of Black/Caribbean publishing, this thesis shows how this tradition is: historically grounded in earlier efforts of Caribbean publishers; characterised by interconnectedness; and a politically engaged tradition carried by the work of organic intellectuals who used publishing both as a form of activism and as a route to produce counter-hegemonic knowledge in the service of education.

Impact Statement

A thesis on Caribbean publishing extends a developing field which has appeal to both academic and non-academic constituencies. This research contributes knowledge to a growing interest in Caribbean and Black British publishing, as demonstrated by its coverage in TV and film productions (*Small Axe*), exhibitions (*Life Between Islands: Caribbean-British Art*) and academic scholarship. By making this doctoral research accessible through a range of media, this thesis has reached different audiences and the specific benefits achieved are explained here.

The thesis has already served as a basis for an article in *Immigrants & Minorities* Special Issue: 'Race, Immigration, and the British Media since 1945.' I was invited to contribute a chapter to Kate Quinn's upcoming edited collection, *Circuits of Caribbean Black Power*, published by University of Florida Press, based on my research about Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications (BLP). The thesis will also generate material for future conferences, articles and hopefully a monograph. Presenting at a variety of academic conferences, e.g., the Social History Society, the Society for Caribbean Studies and New Perspectives on the History of African and Caribbean People in Britain, this evidences impact within the fields of Caribbean Studies and modern British history. Methodologically speaking, it combines analysis of materials published in the Caribbean and Britain, and it challenges conventional frameworks of Black and Caribbean intellectual production. Therefore, it may encourage more scholarship on children's literature and popular magazines. The use of original oral history interviews preserves the voices and memories of key publishing figures.

In terms of the impact beyond academia, a range of audiences have been reached through varied impact activities. Volunteering for FHALMA, I used my knowledge of BLP to help plan the Fifteenth Annual Huntley Conference in 2020, alongside other workshops. Furthermore, research has been presented at British Library's Andrew Salkey conference; the Black Cultural Archives; and the Anthony Davis Book Collecting Prize finalist public presentation, all of which had mixed international audiences.

Doing a Collaborative Doctoral Partnership has offered multiple opportunities for wider impact; in particular, using my research to assist the curators the 2018 exhibition, *Windrush: Songs in a Strange Land*. It has also led to non-academic publications; Charlie Brinkhurst-Cuff invited me to contribute to *Mother Country: Real Stories of the Windrush Children*, which brought together my research and familial history. Throughout the PhD I have published blog posts spotlighting Caribbean and Black British stories and collection items on several British Library's blogs. Through a six-month AHRC-funded placement with the Eccles Centre for American Studies, I delivered a project about Caribbean Foodways and a bibliography of Caribbean publishing. These generated and disseminated knowledge of Caribbean history through wide-ranging public engagement, including: a British Library oral history collection; public events (in-person and online); and blog posts. In terms of teaching, this research has contributed to a more diverse curriculum by producing original widening participation modules about pre-1945 Black British history. The range of impacts thus include contributing to knowledge; preserving voices and memory; disseminating knowledge to non-academic audiences; and promoting understandings of Black/Caribbean histories through cultural heritage.

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Introduction

We of the Caribbean are a people more than any other people constructed by history, and therefore any attempt not only to analyse but to carry out political or social activity, in connection with ourselves and in relation to other peoples, any such attempt has got to begin and constantly bear in mind how we came into being, where we have reached, who we are and what we are.

C.L.R. James, 1969¹

In 1969, New Beacon Books republished John Jacob Thomas's *Froudacity: West Indian Fables Explained*, which had been out of print for several decades. The new edition, that included an introductory essay by C.L.R. James, reinvigorated this nineteenth-century anti-imperialist text (initially published in 1889) in the Caribbean post-colonial moment. One of Britain's first independent 'Black' publishing houses, New Beacon Books was founded by John La Rose with Sarah White, in 1966, five years after he moved to London from Trinidad and Tobago. It was named after *The Beacon*, a Trinidadian political-cultural group and journal from the early 1930s, of which C.L.R. James was a member. The naming of the publishing house symbolised how it looked to both the past and to the future; in referencing *The Beacon*, La Rose located it as part of an existing Caribbean intellectual tradition at the same time as staking a claim about its own role in tradition-making through the 'New.' This effort to establish continuities by looking back and looking forward was evident in its mission both to republish out of print texts and to provide a space to publish new ones. It is these processes of intellectual tradition-making that this thesis seeks to examine.

Froudacity was a rousing polemical response to James Anthony Froude's *The English in the West Indies, or the Bow of Ulysses* (1888) – a racist, imperialist and thinly veiled justification for British colonialism and the extension of Crown Colony rule.² First responding to Froude's book through a series of articles in the *St*

¹ C.L.R. James, 'The West Indian Intellectual', *Froudacity: West Indian Fables Explained*, by John Jacob Thomas, rev. edn (London: New Beacon Books, 1969), pp.23-49 (p.46).

² James Anthony Froude, *The English in the West Indies: or the Bow of Ulysses* (London: Longmans & Co., 1888). Kristen Millar argues that the nineteenth-century 'travelogues on Anglo-Caribbean

George's Chronicle and Grenada Gazette, Thomas travelled to London in 1889 to do further research and write a book on the matter. His intellectual journey, as journalist, teacher, schoolmaster and historian, 'without European or university education of any kind,' embodies an organic intellectual tradition that was central to the development of publishing in the region and amongst the diaspora.³ A world apart from his Oxford professor opponent, in terms of educational experience, Thomas's understanding of history and what it meant to be a historian, differed greatly from the dominant modes of imperialist knowledge production in British elite society. As an autodidact, Thomas's approach to history was informed by what James' calls his 'immediate knowledge' i.e. experience and from 'long study.'⁴ This embodied and grounded approach to history is another thread that runs throughout this thesis, which views Black/Caribbean organic intellectuals as re-writing and writing-back histories and ideas of the Caribbean through publishing.⁵ This opening represents one of many moments that Thomas appears in this story – his ideas and writing reverberate throughout the thesis. Taking on different interpretations and meanings over time, Thomas's texts embody the very concept of intellectual tradition-making that this research traces.

James' essay on 'The West Indian Intellectual' that prefaced the 1969 republication of *Froudacity* has led me to ask questions about the place of history in Caribbean publishing since the early nineteenth century, but particularly amongst the Caribbean diaspora in post-war Britain. Much less studied than James' 1963 appendix to *The Black Jacobins*, 'The West Indian Intellectual' represented another moment of historical distillation that produced writing against the empire, which sought to re-present Caribbean history, identity and writing in the post-colonial context.⁶ As expressed in the epigraph above, James believed that history was central to

societies served as an arm of British colonial visual culture propagating harmful racist stereotypes'. Millar, 'Traces Left Behind: The Materiality of White Supremacy in 19th Century Anglo-Caribbean Illustrated Travelogues' (unpublished MA thesis: McGill University, 2016), p.2.

³ James, 'West Indian Intellectual,' p.27.

⁴ Ibid., p.26.

⁵ See Black/Caribbean intellectual tradition, pp.32-39.

⁶ For analysis of the 1963 appendix ('From Toussaint L'Ouverture to Fidel Castro') see Charles Forsdick and Christian Høgsbjerg, ed., *The Black Jacobins Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017) and David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

understanding Caribbean politics, society and identity. This thesis argues that publisher-activists have long engaged with ideas of history from a counter-hegemonic perspective. Hence, this preface embodies two pillars of the thesis: the emergence of a Black/Caribbean publishing tradition and the production of history in these publishing spaces.

Taking issue with James' evocation of an exclusively masculine intellectual tradition, it also seeks to interrogate and shift masculinist histories and ideas of Black/Caribbean intellectual traditions, through the prism of publishing. Writing about the need to have a 'profound historical conception of where the African people are going and where they have come from', James describes an 'ocean of thought' that was shaped by the currents of 'Marcus Garvey, Aimé Césaire, George Padmore, Frantz Fanon.'⁷ He also argued:

I have long believed that there is something in the West Indian past, something in the West Indian environment, something in the West Indian historical development, which compels the West Indian intellectual, when he gets involved with subjects of the kind, to deal with them from a fundamental point of view, *to place ourselves in history*.⁸

James renders the West Indian intellectual, who is a historian by compulsion of the Caribbean experience, as male; it is 'he' who constructs and narrates, doing the critical work of placing 'ourselves in history'. It is the Garveys, Césaires and Lammings, rather than the Marsons, Joneses and Huntleys.⁹ Narrow understandings of intellectual production have served to exclude whole sections of society, and types and genres of publication. Hence, by challenging what we think intellectual production is and where it happens, this thesis contributes to broader scholarship that recognise and publicise the thought and action of Black/Caribbean women.

Tracing the contours of a Black/Caribbean publishing tradition

In a speech given at Ealing Town Hall in 1976, Eric Huntley described how Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications (BLP) – another of Britain's first 'Black' publishing houses –

⁷ James, 'West Indian Intellectual', p.45.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ In reference to Una Marson, Claudia Jones and Jessica Huntley – three central figures in this thesis.

'blazed a trail in publishing, aimed at writing the wrongs of five centuries.'¹⁰

Caribbean publisher-activists envisioned this process of 'writing the wrongs' as a route to reformulate the ways in which the past continued to shape the present.¹¹ In a context where the ideas, history and freedom of Black people in the Caribbean have been denied, restricted and censored, the act of publishing took on profound political importance.¹²

Unlike studies of writing, a focus on publishing delves more fully into the politics of knowledge production: the organisations and individuals who publish texts; the reasons why they publish and the connections they forge with a spectrum of movements and organisations. This study of publishing illuminates the process and connections that shaped the production and circulation of texts, which were pivotal in influencing political consciousness across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While this thesis draws on stories of individual publisher-activists, they are studied as a part of a wider movement and tradition, placing greater emphasis on community rather than individual mind-sets, which a focus on 'the writer' may prevent.

This research began by seeking to understand the development, motivations and dreams of Caribbean publishing and publishers in post-war Britain. As the research progressed, it became clear that this could not be fully understood without reference to a deeper historical tradition of Caribbean publishing that preceded it, and to which it was self-consciously connected. This thesis seeks to document the evolution and development of a distinctive Black/Caribbean publishing tradition, tracing the conditions and networks that shaped it, and its importance as an agent of counter-hegemonic knowledge production. In order to do so, it asks questions about its historical links, diasporic dynamics and political objectives.

¹⁰ 'Eric Huntley at Ealing Town Hall', LMA/4463/F/07/01/004. Huntley's expression, 'writing the wrongs,' is a play on words that invoked Bogle-L'Ouverture Publication's (BLP) publishing vision.

¹¹ David Scott conceptualizes the 'problem-space' as the idea that the questions we ask of the past reflect our political concerns and future hopes. This has informed my understanding of relationship between Caribbean political movements and historical production. Scott, *Conscripts*.

¹² On the history of censorship over Black authorship see Ryan Hanley, *Beyond Slavery and Abolition: Black British Writing, 1770-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p.8.

Firstly, this thesis seeks to understand, to what extent was post-war publishing in Britain part of a longer Caribbean story? Studying publishing outputs in the Caribbean and by Caribbean people in Britain since 1817, has illuminated connections between post-war publishing and earlier practices of political engagement through print. From its inception, the book has acted as a vessel for ideas, beliefs and imaginations. Both a tool of oppression and freedom, printed and bound pages were used to record slave and plantation information – registers that disturbingly listed property (human and otherwise) – but they also became a channel to disseminate subversive theories, literatures and histories. It is the latter that this thesis is concerned with; books and periodicals that sought to understand, critique and transform the absence of social and political freedom throughout the region's history. By considering how historical patterns shaped the work of publisher-activists in post-war Britain, this thesis establishes Caribbean publishing in post-war Britain as part of a broad and unique radical and intellectual tradition that can be traced to the nineteenth century.

Secondly, it asks, what were the connections between publishing in the Anglophone Caribbean and publishing amongst the diaspora in Britain? Given that that most studies look at either materials published in the Caribbean, or those published by Caribbean people in Britain, by bringing together an examination of both, as well as establishing the relationship between the two, it offers a new perspective on what it characterises as a connected Black/Caribbean publishing tradition. Traversing the Atlantic across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it provides a transnational historical perspective of Caribbean diaspora publishing that highlights the circulation of people, ideas and texts between the Caribbean, Britain and wider Black Atlantic. Simultaneously contributing to understandings of modern Britain and the Anglophone Caribbean, it speaks to a rich and rapidly growing historiography that focuses on the agency and intellectuality of Black communities in the face of colonialism, hostility and marginalisation.

Thirdly, it asks, to what extent was publishing a site of counter-hegemonic knowledge production? Viewing this as a politically engaged tradition, this thesis characterises publishing as a form of activism. Publishing had political import through challenging white colonial publishing hegemonies; producing counter-

narratives; and asserting autonomous identities. I explore this question by examining who these publishers were and the ways that they produced counter-hegemonic knowledge, critically through creating counter-narratives of history and centring education.

Critically, this is a tradition that has been generated by publisher-activists – organic intellectuals who used their intellectual labour in the service of the people. Delving into the worlds that world that formed the likes of Robert Wedderburn, William Galwey Donovan, Marcus Garvey, Una Marson, Richard Hart, Claudia Jones, John La Rose, Jessica Huntley, Eric Huntley and Sarah White, this thesis seeks to understand what motivated them and how their publishing projects aligned with their political struggles. They demanded autonomy over the content, language and presentation of writing about Black lives, whether that be in the form of news, history or folktales. Hence, the act of publishing was rooted in demands to reclaim one's identity as a route to regain control of mind, body, community and nation.¹³

In order to determine if and how publishing was a site of counter-hegemonic production, historical content is the main focus because it was both a popular type of content and a productive lens for understanding how publishers 'wrote-back'; asserted autonomous identities; and explicitly engaged with the idea of radical historical traditions. Hence, a core argument of this thesis is about the interrelationship between historical production and publishing. Popular, i.e., non-academic, books and periodicals were a vital channel for re-making history. It seeks to understand how history-making through publishing did not just 'reflect' but actually shaped the social transformations throughout the period of study. This research establishes patterns of history-making and history-telling as a constant though changing part of Caribbean political movements over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. By calling attention to texts of Caribbean history, often published in popular newspapers, this thesis contributes to a wider field of study that examines historical production in the Black press. As this scholarship largely focuses on the United States, by uncovering a similar phenomenon in Britain

¹³ The general lack of profit as a motivator for these publishers, distinguished them from conventional publishing businesses.

and the Caribbean, this study extends knowledge about the formation and circulation of Black history outside of the academy.

Furthermore, this publisher-activist tradition advocated for education in the service of fighting for freedom. The landmark 1980s Black British feminist text, *The Heart of the Race*, reveals the ways that activists have variously articulated this idea throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries:

Education has always been a burning issue for Black women. Viewed in the aftermath of slavery, as virtually the only means for us and our children to escape the burden of poverty and exploitation, it was regarded in the Caribbean as a kind of liberation.¹⁴

This captures how ideas of education as liberation can be traced back to the era of slavery. A time in which the vast majority of enslaved people could neither read nor write, for reading was seen as a route to and a part of being free, practices of listening and storytelling became tools of survival.¹⁵ These rich patterns of oral communication made the later emergence of Black reading publics in the Caribbean possible.¹⁶ Through these oral traditions, practices of alternative knowledge production were passed down through generations, which would later become enshrined through the efforts of publisher-activists. As such, this thesis considers the subversive qualities of education through writing, publishing and reading as a path to liberation. By problematising conventional ideas of publishing through the inclusion of say, children's literature, this thesis highlights the role of previously under-recognised individuals and groups in the development of Caribbean publishing-activism. More than a corrective history, this thesis calls into question the definitions of 'publisher' and 'radical,' thereby making them more inclusive categories.

Overall, by examining the dynamics and discourses of Caribbean publishing, I argue that this tradition is historically grounded in earlier efforts of Caribbean publishers

¹⁴ Beverly Bryan, Stella Dadzie and Susan Scafe, *The Heart of Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain*, 2nd edn (London, Verso, 2018), p.59.

¹⁵ New York Public Library, Toni Morrison and Angela Davis on Connecting for Progress, *Library Talks*, 2 February 2016.

¹⁶ 'From the child to the scientist, reading is preceded and made possible by oral communication, which constitutes the multifarious "authority" that texts almost never cite'. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of the Everyday*, trans. by Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California, 1984), p.168.

stretching back to the nineteenth century; characterised by interconnectedness across the Caribbean and diaspora in Britain; and a politically engaged tradition carried by the work of organic intellectuals who used publishing as a form of activism and as a route to produce counter-hegemonic knowledge in the service of education.

Periodization, terminology and location

Although this thesis is chronologically ordered, it dives into the historical thinking of each era's publishing, which leads to a blurring of past, present, future – what David Scott terms 'futures past.'¹⁷ Each chapter and historical moment seeks to understand the following: who are the key publisher-activists? What world did they come from? Why did they decide to publish? We still do not know enough about or understand the role of publishers across major historical moments. Thus, this thesis seeks to comprehend how the dynamics and discourses of publishing were shaped by the struggles and paradigms of Caribbean and diaspora politics.

The analysis starts in 1817, the year that militant Black abolitionist, Robert Wedderburn, began publishing articles in the Spencean Philanthropist newspaper, *The Axe Laid to Root*.¹⁸ Across the Atlantic, free people of colour were establishing anti-slavery newspapers, marking the early stages of a radical, anti-racist and freedom-seeking publishing culture in the region, which became a critical space for political, historical and cultural knowledge production. Flourishing in the post-emancipation era, this research charts significant shifts in racial-class politics through the lens of publishing. Moving into the twentieth century, it examines the evolution of nationalist and anti-colonial political movements, expressed through the discourse of labour and culture, across a diversity of publications, in the Caribbean and Britain. Connecting these histories to the post-war British story, the second half of the thesis focuses on Caribbean and Black publishing in Britain, from 1958 to 1981. A period of mass migrations and decolonisation, these caused drastic shifts in global cultural, demographic and political landscapes, which were reflected in the

¹⁷ Scott, *Conscripts*, pp. 23-57.

¹⁸ Robert Wedderburn, *The Axe Laid To The Root Or A Fatal Blow to Oppressors: Being an Address to the Planters and Negroes of the Island of Jamaica* (London: Robert Wedderburn, 1817), p.3. Wedderburn is discussed in Chapter 1.

publishing cultures and outputs that are examined here. Finishing before the First International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books (1982) that was organised by New Beacon, Bogle-L'Ouverture and Race Today, this research understands the Book Fairs as an intellectual harvest after seasons of struggles by radical publishers across the world.¹⁹

The 160 years covered by this study witnessed distinct political movements that fought against slavery, colonialism, racism, sexism and racial capitalism. This thesis understands the historical relationship between publisher-activists and large-scale social movements as 'problem-spaces,' defined by Scott as an:

ensemble of questions and answers around which a horizon of identifiable stakes (conceptual as well as ideological-political stakes) hangs ... what defines this discursive context are not only the particular problems as such (the problem of "race," say), but the particular questions that seem worth asking and the kinds of answers that seem worth having.²⁰

The concept of the problem-space historicizes political claim-making around identities of Creole, West Indian, anti-colonial, Caribbean, Black and radical. This thesis is concerned with the historical relationship between publisher-activists and the construction and mobilisation of Black/Caribbean political identities born out of unique historical moments and relations. Publisher-activists operated in fundamentally different temporal and geographical locations, which profoundly affected their political outlooks as well as the practicalities of publishing. However, a constant back and forth conversation with the past characterises each of them. The concept of the problem space, then, not only sheds light on the particularities of Caribbean political identities that emerged over time, but also the centrality of historical consciousness in the construction of Caribbean identities and politics.

This thesis grapples with the complexities of Caribbeanness and Blackness and the relationship between them. Crucially, these terms meant different things across the

¹⁹ The Race Today Collective was a leading political organization and publication based in Railton Road, Brixton, since the 1970s. The Book Fair was a momentous event, opened with a speech by C.L.R. James. It was the first of twelve Book Fairs in London and several connected ones across Britain.

²⁰ Scott, *Conscripts*, p.4.

wide array of historical moments that are studied here. Therefore, this analysis seeks to understand changing constructions, meanings and responses to race and racialisation, in the Caribbean and amongst Caribbean communities in Britain. Examining how publishing-activist traditions both reflected those shifting identifications and were consciously involved in their construction, it tracks the unique ways that race was constructed in the Caribbean, since the abolition of slavery. Whilst the starting point of this study was the Caribbean and Caribbean people in Britain, this is deeply connected to the identities, routes and spaces of Africa, the Black Atlantic and political Blackness.²¹ This thesis does not claim to 'solve' these questions around what it meant to be Caribbean and Black but seeks to explore this relationship through the lens of publishing. Hence, I often refer to a Black/Caribbean publishing tradition, which not only amalgamated these phenomena but helped to realise their expression and development. Moreover, usage of 'Black/Caribbean,' which draws on Carole Boyce-Davies' notion of 'Black/Caribbean' geographies and 'Caribbean/black' intellectual traditions, seeks to emphasise how they evolved together over-time.²²

Mobility and migration were foundational to the development of Caribbean publishing. Traversing the Caribbean and Britain, this thesis interprets post-war Black/Caribbean publishing houses as an extension of the Caribbean through Boyce-Davies' concept of 'Caribbean Spaces' that captures the region's geographical and cultural diversity.²³ Although the 1950s witnessed the beginning of a new era of writing and print in Britain, this thesis challenges classical post-war periodization that sharply distinguishes pre- and post-Windrush. It does this by

²¹ In Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993), he posits that there has been a complex and historic African-diasporic intellectual culture that is expressly transnational. This thesis defines political Blackness as a particular identity and mode of politics that emerged in response to 1960s state racism towards New Commonwealth communities; hence, it has a 'distinct relationship to anti-racism in the UK'. Sivanandan stated that this was a time when 'Black was the colour of our politics not the colour of our skin.' John Narayan, 'British Black Power: The anti-imperialism of political Blackness and the problem of nativist socialism,' *The Sociological Review*, 67 (2019), 945-967 (pp.948-9).

²² Carole Boyce-Davies, *Caribbean Spaces: Escapes from Twilight Zones* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013), p.1. Boyce-Davies refers to this 'Caribbean/black' intellectual tradition in 'Re-grounding the Intellectual-Activist', p.xxi and *Sisters Outside: Tracing the Caribbean/Black Radical Intellectual Tradition*, *Small Axe*, 28 (2009), 217-229.

²³ Fuller discussion of this on p.42.

demonstrating how anti-colonial struggles that were happening long before 1948 profoundly shaped the politics and culture of post-war Britain.²⁴

This thesis examines how and why Caribbean diaspora communities developed, out of necessity, alternative and separate forums to share news, stories and ideas. This need was directly related to the exclusionary and racist commentary of the mainstream press. As Hartman and Husband's 1974 study of *Racism and the Mass Media* concluded, the media 'played an important part in defining for the white public the nature and meaning of the black presence in Britain' tending to associate it as a 'threat and problem,' which conduced feelings of hostility.²⁵ In response to the 1958 Notting Hill Riots – a violent disturbance that was instigated by a group of white Teddy Boys – the press 'stepped up its vitriol against the West Indians.'²⁶ Far-right papers, like *Black and White News* (mouthpiece of the White Defence League), published headlines such as, 'Blacks Invade Britain' and 'Blacks Seek White Women.'²⁷ Alongside the slightly subtler racism of the mainstream news outlets, such as *Daily Mail* article, 'Should we let them keep pouring in?,' these papers whipped up hate and hostility towards Britain's communities of colour.²⁸ Such treatment by the British press highlighted the need for not only a separate press, but one that would challenge the imperialist and anti-immigration messages of the mainstream. Founded in the same year, the *West Indian Gazette and Afro-Asian Caribbean News* did just that; it was envisioned as a paper to fight colonialism and connect up the Caribbean diaspora.

As the first 'Black' newspaper to be sold on the British high-street, many have classified the *Gazette* as the mother of future 'Black' newspapers, magazines and

²⁴ C. L. Innes, *A History of Black and Asian Writing in Britain, 1700-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.233.

²⁵ Paul Hartmann and Charles Husband, *Racism and the Mass Media: A study of the role of the Mass Media in the formation of white beliefs and attitudes in Britain* (London: David-Poynter, 1974), p.208. In an effort to understand the role of mass media the formation of white attitudes towards Black people in Britain, they interviewed secondary school children and analysed *The Times*, *Guardian*, *Daily Express*, *Daily Mirror*.

²⁶ Edward Pilkington, *Beyond the Mother Country: West Indians and the Notting Hill White Riots* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1988), p.97; see also pp.106-124 for a broader overview.

²⁷ *Black and White News*, September 1958, p.1.

²⁸ *Daily Mail*, 2 September 1958, p.4; see also 'Hooligan Invaders and Wild Charges', *The Times*, 3 September 1958, p.7, which more subtly placed the burden of racism on the presence of 'strangers'.

journals.²⁹ In line with post-war migration, the next few decades witnessed a proliferation of publishing-related activities: the emergence of new periodicals; the establishment of 'Black publishing houses,' and the setting up of supplementary schools. The publishing and selling of books, pamphlets and periodicals became fertile political-cultural spaces that facilitated the discussion and dissemination of counter-hegemonic thought.³⁰ Highlighting their role as socio-political hubs of the areas in which they were based, Harry Goulbourne described publishers and bookshops as the new 'Caribbean barbershops.'³¹ This association between barbershops (or hair salons) and bookshops highlights the significance of certain spaces in the development and dissemination of ideas.³² Books, pamphlets and so on, were the main medium through which the better educated could share their skills with the community, and, in return, 'the community grounded them in the realities of political struggle.'³³ This symbiotic relationship between publishing and community struggle was a vital characteristic of the publishing examined here.

I want to be explicit about the London focus of this thesis. When one speaks of 'the Caribbean community' in Britain, this is not homogenous and is not all London-based, and the same goes for publishing. While it does include some examples of Caribbean publishing outside of London, for example the efforts of Pan-Africanist, Ras Makonnen, in Manchester, the vast majority of case studies and examples were publishers who set up shop in London. However, I want to reiterate that being based in London did not prevent these publisher-activists from engaging in national anti-

²⁹ Donald Hinds described it as the 'progenitor of all black journals published in this country', in Hinds, 'The West Indian Gazette: Claudia Jones and the black press in Britain', *Race & Class*, 50 (2008), 88-97 (p.96); Sivanandan said that future papers sprung from 'its loins' in A. Sivanandan, 'From Resistance to Rebellion: Asian and Afro-Caribbean Struggles in Britain', *Race & Class*, 23 (1981), 111-152 (p.117) and it is described as setting 'precedent for West Indian newspaper publishing in Britain in the 1950s', in Lonie Benjamin, *The Black Press in Britain* (Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books, 1995), p.41-2.

³⁰ Since its inception, the printing press has been a vehicle for challenge and expressing currents of radicalism and alternative thought. Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

³¹ Harry Goulbourne, *Caribbean Transnational Experience* (London: Pluto, 2002), p.157. E.g., New Beacon Books in Finsbury Park, Bogle L'Ouverture Bookshop in Ealing and Black Panther Unity Bookshop in Brixton.

³² The exclusion of hair salons – a women's space of leisure and exchange – reiterates this commonplace exclusion of Black women from arenas of intellectual production and constructs of intellectualism.

³³ Sivanandan, 'Resistance to Rebellion', p.143.

racist struggles or from servicing bookshops, libraries and supplementary schools across the country. Moreover, in focusing on the distinct sphere of independent Black/Caribbean publishing it does not include, as a central feature, contributions that existed in the mainstream, for example C.L.R. James' writing in the *Manchester Guardian* or Una Marson, Andrew Salkey and Edward Scobie's work for the BBC. At no point does this thesis claim to provide a comprehensive study of Black/Caribbean publishing in the Caribbean and in Britain, but it does identify some of the main moments, themes and figures that have built and consolidated a distinctly Black/Caribbean publishing tradition.

Literature Review

There are three broad areas of scholarship that this thesis engages with, the most significant being its contribution to understandings of Black/Caribbean publishing and press in the Caribbean and post-war Britain. As such, it is part of a broader field of Black British history, which not only seeks to critically understand and amplify the multiple experiences of Black life in Britain, but also to decolonise modern history.³⁴ Secondly, it examines this history through the eye of the intellectual, drawing on scholarship on Black and Caribbean radical traditions. Thirdly, a transnational approach opened up connections with scholarship on Caribbean cultural production, politics and post/colonial shifts. As part of this inquiry, it is in dialogue with scholars, thinkers and activists who conceptualise Caribbean history and historiography.

³⁴ Bill Schwarz is a key scholar of 'postcolonial' Britain, the intellectual history of West Indians in Britain and of British history as a history of empire. NB. His in-progress trilogy, Schwarz, *Memories of Empire. Volume I. The White Man's World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). See also, Kennetta Hammond Perry, *London is the Place for Me: Black Britons, Citizenship, and the Politics of Race* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Rob Waters, *Thinking Black: Britain, 1964-1985* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018); Shirin Hirsch, *In the shadow of Enoch Powell: Race, locality and resistance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018); Camilla Schofield, *Enoch Powell and the Making of Postcolonial Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Marc Matera, *Black London: The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015); Hakim Adi, ed., *Black British History: New Perspectives* (London: Zed Books Ltd., 2021) and Christienna Fryer's work which argues that British history cannot be understood in isolation from the Caribbean, 'What it means to be Black in the Union Jack', *Decolonization in Action Podcast*, 12 April 202 <<https://www.decolonizationinaction.com/episodes/2020/04/12/season-2-episode-3-what-it-means-to-be-black-in-the-union-jack>>.

Press and Publishing

Partly due to the ‘material conditions of early Caribbean publishing,’ which makes it seem scant in comparison to metropolitan printing hubs, there has been minimal scholarly research dedicated to publishing in the colonial Caribbean.³⁵ While the press fares better, there is still a dearth of literature that attends to more radical elements of the Caribbean press.³⁶ In terms of the nineteenth-century press, I am indebted to the pioneering scholarship of Edward Cox, Kimani Nehusi and Candice Ward who have opened up avenues for understanding the ways in which Caribbean radicals and progressives used the press in their struggles for liberation.³⁷ The work of Leslie James, Roxanne Watson, Raphael Dalleo and Rupert Lewis, who explore the role of the press as a vessel for radical ideas and movements, has been critical to my understanding of twentieth-century Caribbean press.³⁸ However, there is virtually no literature that examines the fuller picture of Caribbean press and publishing. Instead, the focus has been on the early stages of a developing colonial

³⁵ Nicole N. Aljoe, Brycchan Carey and Thomas W. Krise, ‘Introduction’, in *Literary Histories of the Early Anglophone Caribbean: Islands in the Stream*, ed. by Nicole N. Aljoe, Brycchan Carey and Thomas W. Krise (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp.1-10 (p.3).

³⁶ John A. Lent’s scholarship provides the most extensive account of Anglophone Caribbean press development, however it does not attempt to analyse its radical elements. See Lent, *Third World Mass Media and Their Search for Modernity: The Case of Commonwealth Caribbean, 1717-1976* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1977); Lent, ‘Commonwealth Caribbean Mass Media: History and Development’, *International Communication Gazette*, 19 (1973), 91-106; Lent, ‘Oldest Existing Commonwealth Caribbean Newspapers’, *Caribbean Quarterly*, 22 (1976), 90-106.

³⁷ Andrew Lewis, ‘The British West Indian Press in the Age of Abolition’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, Queen Mary University of London, 1993) and his following article ‘An incendiary press’: British West Indian newspapers during the struggle for abolition’, *A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies*, 16 (1995), 346-361. Edward L. Cox, ‘William Galwey Donovan and the Struggle for Political Change in Grenada, 1883-1920’, *Small Axe*, 2011 (11), 17-38; Nehusi Kimani S. K., *A People’s Political History of Guyana 1834-1964* (London: Hansib, 2018); Candice Ward, ‘An Engine of Immense Power”: *The Jamaica Watchman* and Crossings in Nineteenth-Century Colonial Print Culture’, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 51 (2018), 483-503; Alpen Razi, ‘“Coloured Citizens of the World”: The Networks of Empire Loyalism in Emancipation- Era Jamaica and the Rise of the Transnational Black Press’, *American Periodicals*, 23 (2013), 105-124.

³⁸ Raphael Dalleo, ‘The Public Sphere and Jamaican Anticolonial Politics: Public Opinion, Focus, and the Place of the Literary’, *Small Axe* 14 (2010), 6-82; 1971); Roxanne S. Watson, ‘Freedom of the Press under Attack during the 1938 Labor Uprisings in Jamaica: The Prosecution of the Publishers of the *Jamaica Labour Weekly*’, *American Journalism*, 29 (2012), 84-112; Leslie James, *George Padmore and Decolonization from Below: Pan-Africanism, the Cold War, and the End of Empire* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); and Kate Quinn, ed., *Black Power in the Caribbean* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2014). See also Kesewa John, ‘People Papers: The Pan-African Communities and Afro-Caribbean Radicals between Paulette Nardal and George Padmore c.1918-1948’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Chichester, 2021).

press,³⁹ literary publishing,⁴⁰ or focused on individual territories,⁴¹ periodicals or people.⁴² In an effort to bridge these gaps, the first part of this thesis is the outcome of extensive periodical, book and catalogue research, which proves the existence of a rich though restricted Caribbean publishing tradition in the service of liberation.

In the British context, there is increasing attention on histories of Black publishing. In 2020, Steve McQueen's *Education*, which tells a story inspired by New Beacon publication, *How the West Indian Child is Made Educationally Subnormal* (1971), was broadcast on the BBC. Relatedly, UCL's Sarah Parker Remond Centre ran a series of online events entitled 'Books, Violence and Resistance' that featured Eric Huntley, Michael La Rose (director of New Beacon Books and son of John La Rose) and Emmanuel Amezor of Centerprise.⁴³ This popular and academic focus is helping to disseminate important and relevant histories of resistance, radicalism and

³⁹ See Frank Cundall, *A History of Printing In Jamaica from 1717 to 1834* (Kingston: Institute of Jamaica, 1935); Roderick Cave cites Jamaica as being a 'centre of New World printing', in Cave, 'The first printers in Jamaica', *Caribbean Printing Folder*, uncatalogued, British Library [hereafter BL], p.1. For an introductory history of the English, French and Spanish Trinidadian press see Roderick Cave, *Printing and the book trade in the West Indies* (London: Pindar, 1987) and Frank E. Brassington, 'Newspaper History in Trinidad and Tobago', *Caribbean Printing Folder*.

⁴⁰ Raphael Dalleo, 'The Idea of the Literary in the Little Magazines of the 1940s' in *The Routledge Companion to Anglophone Caribbean Literature* Routledge, ed. by Michael A. Bucknor and Alison Donnell (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), pp.609-15; Alison Donnell, *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature: Critical Moments in Anglophone Literary History* (London: Routledge, 2006); Claudette Rhonda Cobham-Sander, 'The Creative Writer and West Indian Society: Jamaica 1900-1950' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of St Andrews, 1981); Mervyn Morris, *Making West Indian Literature* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2005); Edward Baugh, *West Indian Poetry 1900-1970: A Study in Cultural Decolonisation* (Jamaica: Savacou Publications, 1977 Reprint) and Leah Rosenberg, *Nationalism and the Formation of Caribbean Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Kate Quinn, 'I Will Let Down My Bucket Here': Writers and the Conditions of Cultural Production in Post-Independence Trinidad', in *Caribbean Literature after Independence: The Case of Earl Lovelace*, ed. by Bill Schwarz (London: Institute for the Study of the Americas, 2008), pp.21-40; Emilio Jorge Rodríguez, 'An Overview on Caribbean Literary Magazines: Their Liberating Function', *Caribbean Quarterly*, 31 (1985), 83-92; Claire Irving, 'Printing the West Indies: literary magazines and the Anglophone Caribbean, 1920s-1950s' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Newcastle University, 2016);

⁴¹ Mona Telesford, 'Notes on Guyanese Newspapers', (UWI, Library Studies, 1976), *Caribbean Printing Folder*, includes a list of 58 newspapers in Guyana. Cobham-Sander, 'Creative Writer' provides one of the first island-specific analyses of 1900-50, tracing Jamaica-specific trends and regional similarities in literary activity and style e.g. dialect, presentation of women and fictional representations of history.

⁴² Some of the most insightful explorations of the Caribbean press have emerged through biographical approaches, e.g., Edward L. Cox, "'Race Men": The Pan-African Struggles of William Galwey Donovan and Theophilus Albert Marryshow for Political Change On Grenada' *The Journal of Caribbean History*, 2002 (36), 69-99.

⁴³ *Black History Walk*, YouTube <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bqeQPZn2x8>> [accessed on 10 August 2021]. Centerprise was a radical, working-class, cooperative bookshop, café and learning space. See Rosa Schling, *The Lime Green Mystery: an oral history of the Centerprise co-operative* (London: On the Record, 2017).

liberation through publishing. This builds on the work of Brian Alleyne, Colin Beckles, Boyce-Davies, Ruth Bush and Rob Waters, amongst many others, who have been foundational to recovering and interpreting these histories, firmly locating Black/Caribbean publishers as a critical part of broader political and cultural movements in post-war Britain. Whilst most research in this field has taken a literary approach,⁴⁴ there is a sparse yet invigorating literature that takes a historical perspective. The following approaches were identified: writing about individual publishing houses or periodicals;⁴⁵ the Supplementary School Movement;⁴⁶ the space of the bookshop⁴⁷ and biography.⁴⁸ Although critically important, these specific

⁴⁴ Innes, *Black and Asian Writing* marks an important contribution to this field on the idea of 'writing back' and 'writing in'. For a study of how Caribbean and West African writing melded in post-war London see Gail Low, *Publishing the Postcolonial: Anglophone West African and Caribbean Writing in the UK 1948-1968* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

⁴⁵ Zakiya McKenzie's doctoral research on Black British journalism in the post-war period will offer a new perspective of the broader Black press, see McKenzie, 'A few Black British journalists and journalism', *Arts and Culture University of Exeter*, 22 October 2022 <<https://www.artsandcultureexeter.co.uk/news/black-british-journalists-and-journalism>> [accessed on 5 December 2021]. On New Beacon: Brian Alleyne, *Radicals Against Race: Black Activism and Cultural Politics* (Oxford: Berg, 2002); Ruth Bush, *New Beacon in Poetry and Prose: Beacon of Hope* (London: New Beacon Books, 2016); Chris Moffat, 'Against "Cultures of Hiatus": History and the Archive in the Political Thought of John La Rose', *Small Axe*, 55 (2018), 39-54; and Alexa Hazel, 'Out of the George Padmore Institute Archive: Venetta Ross, John La Rose and the Creation of New Roots in the West Indies', *Wasafiri*, 35 (2020), 32-41. On BLP: Margaret Andrews, *Doing nothing is not an option. The Radical Lives of Eric and Jessica Huntley* (Middlesex: Krik Krak, 2014); Michael Cumberbatch, *Swimming Against the Tide: Eric and Jessica Huntley, A Powerful Story of their struggle against colonialism, racism and injustice* (Sheffield: Malcolm Cumberbatch, 2019) and Phillipa Ireland compares New Beacon and Bogle-L'Ouverture in Ireland, 'Material Factors Affecting the Publication of Black British Fiction' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Open University, 2010). There are various articles on individual newspapers e.g. the *West Indian Gazette*, see footnote 55.

⁴⁶ Kehinde Andrews, *Resisting Racism: Race, inequality, and the Black supplementary school movement* (Institute of Education: London, 2013); Jessica Gerrard, 'Self help and protest: the emergence of black supplementary schooling in England', *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 16 (2013), 32-58; and Karen Sands-O'Connor, *Children's Publishing and Black Britain, 1965-2015* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

⁴⁷ Colin Beckles, 'PanAfrican Sites of Resistance: Black Bookstores and The Struggle To Re-Present Black Identity' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of California Los Angeles, 1995); Beckles, 'Black bookstores, black power, and the FBI: The case of drum and spear', *The Western Journal of Black Studies*, 20 (1996), 63-71; Beckles, "'We Shall Not Be Terrorized Out of Existence": The Political Legacy of England's Black Bookshops', *Journal of Black Studies*, 29 (1998), 51-72; Beverley Mason and Margaret Busby, ed., *No Colour Bar: Black British Art in Action 1960-1990: An exhibition held at the Guildhall Art Gallery, 10 July 2015 – 24 January 2016* (London: Friends of the Huntley Archives), which includes essays and photographs from the exhibition's reconstructed Walter Rodney Bookshop. For a broader literature: Lucy Delap, 'Feminist Bookshops, Reading Cultures and the Women's Liberation Movement in Great Britain, c. 1974-2000', *History Workshop Journal*, 81 (2016), 171-196; Junko Onosaka, *Feminist Revolution in Literacy: Women's Bookstores in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2006); and Maisha T. Fisher, 'Earning "Dual Degrees": Black Bookstores as Alternative Knowledge Spaces', *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 37 (2006), 83-99.

⁴⁸ Claudia Tomlinson's forthcoming biography of Jessica Huntley. Biographies of Claudia Jones include Carole Boyce-Davies, *Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life of Black Communist Claudia Jones*

studies have been limited in their ability to garner a sense of the wider publishing culture and the historical traditions from which these cultures emerged. This thesis takes a broader approach that looks beyond the confines of distinct print forms and genres, drawing into a single analytical frame, the book with the periodical, the radical with the commercial, and the publisher with the activist. Therefore, it constitutes one of the first extensive studies of a distinct Black/Caribbean diaspora publishing tradition.⁴⁹

Influenced by scholars that emphasise the interdependence between publishing and activism, this thesis argues that publishing has been an instrumental forum for intellectual tradition-making and counter-hegemonic (i.e. anti-colonial and anti-racist) knowledge production. Beckles' doctoral thesis is the most detailed and coherent comparative study of Britain's Black transnational publishing scene. In it, he identifies Black bookshops in Britain, Jamaica and the United States as 'sites of Pan-African resistance,' i.e., spaces to decolonise the mind, where racist notions of Black identity were deconstructed and refigured, and as meeting, educational and organisational centres.⁵⁰ Hoping to build on Beckles' legacy, I look beyond the format of the bookshop towards the wider process and impact of publishing. Alleyne's interpretation of New Beacon as a 'circle' has been formative in the conceptualisation of publishing houses as fostering wider political networks.⁵¹ Likewise, Goulbourne cites publishing as being uniquely important in the establishment of Caribbean communities in Britain, emphasising the nexus between

(Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Marika Sherwood, *Claudia Jones: A Life in Exile: A Biography* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2000); and Buzz Johnson, *I Think of My Mother: Notes on the Life and Times of Claudia Jones* (London: Karia Press, 1984). Other biographical contributions of note include: 'Slow Builder and Consolidator: A Life History of John La Rose,' in Alleyne, *Radicals Against Race* and Andrews, *Radical Lives*, which examines the Hutleys' private and political lives. Providing valuable personal insight, these biographical investigations are useful for contextualising the personal and emotional tensions that were at play in the world of publishing.

⁴⁹ The following works locate post-war publishing as part of a longer tradition. Asher Hoyles and Martin Hoyles, *Caribbean Publishing in Britain: A tribute to Arif Ali* (London: Hansib, 2011); Benjamin, *Black Press in Britain*; and Johnson, *Claudia Jones*, pp.74-5. Acting as important baselines for further research, these texts do not engage with the wider context, impact and connections. This thesis challenges Innes' argument characterization of that the history of Black and Asian writing in Britain as 'a series of recurring preoccupations and tropes' rather than a 'tradition,' because little was passed on between writers, *Black and Asian Writing*, p.2.

⁵⁰ Beckles, 'PanAfrican Sites of Resistance.'

⁵¹ Alleyne describes the circle's activities as including 'book publishing and selling, community education, and organizing legal defence campaigns and more', p.2.

publishing and activism.⁵² Both of these scholars point to a gap in the literature, with Alleyne stating that a ‘lack of interest in the *intellectual* activity of Caribbean migrants’ has been a persistent issue and Goulbourne arguing that critical publishing histories have been ‘taken for granted within the diaspora.’⁵³ By interpreting publishers as activists, intellectuals and radicals, in their respective contexts and eras, this thesis responds to this call for action, to direct scholarly attention to these obscured histories and to interrogate ideas of who counts as an intellectual and what counts as intellectual activity.

Boyce-Davies’ superb intellectual biography of the Trinidadian Communist, Claudia Jones, highlights the radical potential of the press. Explaining how she used the media as a vital channel through which to articulate her anti-imperialist politics – ‘her basic mode of transmitting her ideas’ – Boyce-Davies’ scholarship has established a foundation for further exploring the connections between press, publishing and activism, and the role of Black/Caribbean women radicals within this.⁵⁴ Adding to this important scholarship, this thesis will expand and deepen knowledge of publishing’s relationship to activism.

Whilst scholarship on the Black British press is limited, periodicals have formed a critical source for historians seeking to understand race in modern Britain.⁵⁵ This use of the periodical as a portal into histories of movement building and cultural politics embodies their role in producing those ideas and movements. For example, Rob Waters’ *Thinking Black* – which traces the development of Blackness as a recognition of ‘how histories of racialized oppression continued to structure social and political life’ – draws on newspapers like *Grassroots* (the newsletter of the Black

⁵² Goulbourne examines publishing outputs, like radical journal, *Black Liberator*, through to the space of the bookshop, *Caribbean Transnational Experience*, p.136.

⁵³ Alleyne, p.7; Goulbourne, *Caribbean Transnational Experience*, p.136. Bill Schwarz, ed., *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003) analyses the intellectual activity of individuals and movements across the inter- and post-war periods.

⁵⁴ Boyce-Davies, *Left of Karl Marx*, p.70.

⁵⁵ See Simon Peplow and E. James West, *Immigrants & Minorities* 2020 Special Issue: Race, Immigration, and the British Media since 1945, *Immigrants & Minorities*, 37 (2019), 131-135. Analysis of Black newspapers in Britain has largely focused on one publication: the pioneering *West Indian Gazette*. Thanks to the important work of Hinds, Boyce-Davies, Bill Schwarz, Marika Sherwood, Edward Pilkington and Buzz Johnson, the *Gazette* is the best-documented newspaper.

Liberation Front) and bookshops, such as Headstart in Tottenham, to demonstrate how these particular modes of thinking and action were brought into being.⁵⁶

In identifying post-war publishing as part of a longer tradition, this research engages with ongoing discussions about the so-called 'Windrush moment.' From Stuart Hall's assertion that Windrush has been constructed as a problematic vantage point from which to imagine the start of multicultural Britain, to Perry's description of the arrival of *SS Empire Windrush* as an 'iconic optic,' this thesis further evidences the complexities and depths of the histories that 'Windrush' fails to capture.⁵⁷ It also contributes to knowledge about how communities challenged state racism and failure through the construction of independent political and cultural movements, which promoted liberation through education, historical awareness and groundedness. These concepts of groundedness and 'grounding' are invoked throughout this thesis, which engages with ideas of organic intellectualism that I will now discuss.

Black/Caribbean intellectual tradition

This study argues that post-war publishing ventures were part of longstanding Black and Caribbean intellectual traditions. Scott's interest in the temporal construct of 'traditions' helped me to think through the tensions of 'radical' and 'tradition' and the 'relations between past, present and future that a tradition comprehends.'⁵⁸ By

⁵⁶ Matera's *Black London* is also hugely reliant on periodicals, from the Ghanaian *Ashanti Pioneer* to *Checkers*. Imaobong D. Umoren, *Race Women Internationalists: Activist-Intellectuals and Global Freedom Struggles* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2018) uses transnational writing as one route to recover histories of Black women intellectuals, Eslanda Robeson, Una Marson and Paulette Nardal. Also, Chapter 7 in Minkah Makalani, *In the Cause of Freedom: Radical Black Internationalism from Harlem to London, 1917-1939* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011) analyses the politics surrounding interwar newspapers such as *WASU*, *The Keys* and *African Sentinel*.

⁵⁷ Perry, *London is the Place*, p.13 and Kennetta Hammond Perry, 'Undoing the Work of the Windrush Narrative', *History Workshop Online*, 11 September 2018, <https://www.historyworkshop.org.uk/undoing-the-work-of-the-windrush-narrative/> [accessed on 20 September 2018]. Recent scholarship that engages with Britain's longer Black history includes: David Olusoga, *Black and British: A Forgotten History* (London: Macmillan, 2016); Miranda Kaufmann, *Black Tudors: The Untold Story* (London: Oneworld, 2017); Caroline Bressey, 'Looking for Work: The Black Presence in Britain, 1860-1920', *Immigrants & Minorities*, 28 (2010), 164-182; and Matera, *Black London*. Pluto's 2018 revised edition of Peter Fryer's *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (1981), speaks to the growing interest in this field.

⁵⁸ David Scott, 'On the Very Idea of Black Radical Tradition', *Small Axe*, 40 (2013), 1-6, (p.2).

characterising publishing as part of a tradition, what insight and knowledge does this bring to bear? Thinking through these intellectual traditions helps one to recognise the ways in which the past and the future are lived in the present and how the future and the present are overlaid on the past – this is history as a lived phenomenon. Ideas of connection, spatial crossover and tradition are foregrounded in this thesis, which seeks to better understand practices of history-making, intellectualism and education as liberation.

Throughout writing this thesis I have continually battled with the question of how to classify the individuals that populate this thesis: Black radicals, Caribbean intellectuals, organic intellectuals or publisher-activists? The latter is mainly used because it embodies the connections between publishing and activism that the people and publications examined here evidence.

This thesis identifies four key characteristics of this publisher-activist tradition: the organic intellectual; women's intellectuality; diaspora and migration; culture and politics.⁵⁹ Whilst part of a broader Black radical tradition, this thesis considers certain Caribbean particularities in this intellectual development, where influences of mixing, migration and particular racial-class constructs have been so fundamental to the region's historical experience. If the Black radical tradition means having 'Africanity in our consciousness,' then those in the Caribbean tradition also have Caribbeanity in their consciousness.⁶⁰ Drawing on the words of Stuart Hall, there is a 'politics of location in thought'; as such, all of these intellectuals were coming to questions of politics and culture through 'the prism of [their] ... Caribbean formation.'⁶¹ Not only formed out of the Caribbean, these were 'colonial subjects,' whose lives were shaped by the 'dislocation' and displacement that colonialism necessarily creates. This formation made a profound imprint on their interests, approaches and linkages – all of which this thesis explores. Examining a period in which the role of the

⁵⁹ There are many more themes that I could have engaged with, but these are the central tenets identified in this course of study.

⁶⁰ Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (London: Zed Books, 1983), p.442.

⁶¹ *Stuart Hall: Through the Prism of an Intellectual Life*, dir. by Sut Jhally (Media Education Foundation, 2021), online film recording, Kanopy < <https://ucl.kanopy.com/video/stuart-hall-through-prism-intellectual-life> > [1 September 2021].

intellectual was under debate, the figures and publications studied here were, in various ways, concerned precisely with what it meant to be Caribbean and with how the Caribbean should be defined. The intellectuals who populate this thesis were themselves part of that debate.

This research is focused on the figure of the intellectual, but it views the intellectual not as someone detached from the society that they are seeking to theorise, but as deeply embedded in the society that they are working to understand and change. Throughout this process, Gramsci's ideas on hegemony and his concept of the organic intellectual have helped me to articulate and locate this particular relationship between 'the masses' and the sort of intellectual that I am interested in, who uses their intellectual labour in the service of 'the masses.' Although this thesis incorporates a combination of autodidacts, Creole pragmatists (see Chapter 1), proletarians and university-educated intellectuals, what unites these diverse minds was the application of their intellectual energy towards struggles for liberation. They were not Western abstracted 'traditional intellectuals,' who see themselves as a distinct class, they were 'organic intellectuals' who were either grounded in or acted in the service of mass society – in the case of the colonial Caribbean, the African majority who had been enslaved for centuries.⁶² The differentiation between the 'traditional' and 'organic' intellectual is about the function they play vis à vis transmitting the values of the dominant class. The intellectuals that I came across in my research all, at some point, sought to challenge hegemonic ideas about race, history and language – to use their knowledge to dismantle neo/colonial systems of power.⁶³ Moreover, the concept of the organic intellectual is a helpful tool for locating these figures, very few of whom fit neatly into party political boxes.⁶⁴ At its core, I

⁶² Antonio Gramsci, 'selections from the *Prison Notebooks*', in *An Anthology of Western Marxism: From Lukács and Gramsci to Socialist-Feminism*, ed. by Roger S. Gottlieb (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp.112-141 (p.113).

⁶³ Organic intellectuals have an important role in 'building counter-hegemonic struggles'. Perry Mars, *Ideology and Change: The Transformation of the Caribbean Left* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1998), p.14.

⁶⁴ The following scholars have helped to think through Gramsci's relevance to the Caribbean, these examples evidence how the 'organic intellectual' is a productive framework for understanding Caribbean thinking and activism. Umoren classifies Robeson, Nardal and Marson 'as organic intellectuals' because their 'ideas and actions regarding feminism, fascism, race, colonialism, Pan-Africanism, and civil rights derived from their everyday experiences' in *Race Women Internationalists*, p.9. Rhoda Reddock categorises figures like Marcus Garvey, Ashwood Garvey, John Jacob Thomas

understand organic intellectualism as firmly rooted in community and struggle – the organic intellectual’s lack of distance, or their grounding, is an essential part of their being.

Given the limitations for Gramscian theory fully comprehending Black struggles, this conceptualisation of publisher-activists is shaped by Black radical tradition literature.⁶⁵ Connected practices of counter-hegemonic thinking, that have often been in conversation with Marxist thought, distorts and disrupts the very concept of a tradition as something past, linear or regressive. Walter Rodney, Boyce-Davies and Bagues each conceive of an intellectual tradition that is connected to the masses. Invested in a practice that drew on the Rastafarian practice of ‘reasoning,’ Rodney’s

and Edward Blyden as ‘Caribbean-born scholar-activists’ and organic intellectuals in, Rheddock, ‘Radical Caribbean social thought: Race, class identity and the postcolonial nation’, *Current Sociology*, 62 (2014), 493-511, (p.494). In Lindon Lewis, ‘Richard B. Moore: The Making of a Caribbean Organic Intellectual: A Review Essay’, *Journal of Black Studies*, 25 (1995), 589-609, he labels Moore as an early- to mid-twentieth century ‘Caribbean Organic Intellectual,’ arguing that Moore’s position enabled him to ‘remain true to the goal of the organic intellectual by engaging in political practice where the people were and not from some comfortable institutional distance’, p.590.

⁶⁵ There is wealth of literature on this topic, so I will just state the texts that have been most significant in my understanding of the Black radical tradition. Robinson, *Black Marxism*, remains an essential tool for understanding its archaeology and historiography. Anthony Bagues has built on Robinson’s work by establishing four themes of the Black radical tradition: establishing ‘*humanness*’ in the face of racism; constructing new historical frameworks; the ‘triangle of liberation’ as reference to the diasporic nature of Black struggles; and the ‘humanist approach’ which represents the centrality of agency to this tradition. Bagues, *Caliban’s Freedom: The Early Political Thought of C.L.R. James* (London: Pluto, 1997), pp.4-5. Carole Boyce-Davies’ various critical examinations of these traditions which bring a much-needed gendered perspective: *Left of Karl Marx*; ‘Sisters Outside: Tracing the Caribbean/Black Radical Intellectual Tradition’, *Small Axe*, 28 (2009), 217-229; ‘Caribbean Left: Diasporic Circulation’, in *The Other Special Relationship: Race, Rights, and Riots in Britain and the United States*, ed. by Robin D. G. Kelley and Stephen Tuck (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp.55-73; and ‘Re-grounding the Intellectual-Activist Model of Walter Rodney’, in *The Groundings with My Brothers*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2019), pp.xii-xxii. Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002) has also been formative in my understanding of the relationships between imagination, intellectualism and tradition. See also Aaron Kamugisha, *Beyond Coloniality: Citizenship and Freedom in the Caribbean Intellectual Tradition (Blacks in the Diaspora)* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019) and his recent Walter Rodney Memorial Lecture on ‘The Responsibility of Caribbean Intellectuals’ <<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/ccs/eventsnew/walterrodneylecture/>> [accessed on 3 January 2022].

Scholars such as Lewis and Reddock have enmeshed Gramscian theory with philosophies of the Black radical tradition, which marks an act of transcendence from Western political thought (another of Bagues’ fundamental characteristics of the Black radical tradition). However, the disinterestedness of Gramsci’s organic intellectual framework vis-à-vis the terms of political engagement, limits its applicability to Black movements, because it misses the rooting of the Black radical intellectual in the ‘struggles for political and human freedom’, Bagues, *Caliban’s Freedom*, p.6. Relatedly, Reddock argues that this theorisation fails to capture the shifting collectives – ‘race’, gender, national/regional identity (that operated locally, regionally, and internationally) – that these intellectuals were embedded in, p.496. See also Stuart Hall, ‘Gramsci’s Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity’, *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 10 (1986), 5-27.

mode of 'grounding' reflected his belief that '*the black intellectual, the black academic, must attach himself to the activity of the black masses.*'⁶⁶ Such ideas of intellectual grounded-ness echo scholarship on connection between thought and praxis. As Boyce-Davies explains in her introduction to the latest edition of *Groundings*, it was the duty of the middle-class Black intellectual to overcome their own class, to make a break with their colonial education and to make 'knowledge serve the liberation of our communities.'⁶⁷ Locating Rodney as a central figure in her conception of the 'Caribbean/black radical tradition,' she asserts the importance of making 'knowledge real.'⁶⁸ Collapsing the 'boundaries between political thought and political action,' Bogue's characterises 'an [heretical] intellectual praxis' of social activism that made conscious interventions into '[cultural,] social and political life.'⁶⁹ Perpetually concerned with questions of politics – namely liberation and justice in the face of colonial, neo-colonial, race, gender and class oppression – these publishers were firmly committed to making knowledge real and accessible, hence why I name them publisher-activists.⁷⁰

Women have always been fundamental to Black/Caribbean intellectuality, a fact that has often been glaringly absent in this scholarship.⁷¹ In Boyce-Davies' formation of

⁶⁶ Rodney, *Groundings* (1983), p.77.

⁶⁷ Boyce-Davies, 'Re-grounding the Intellectual-Activist', p.xi. Boyce-Davies 'combines intellectual and activist work in the service of one's oppressed communities,' Davies, *Left of Karl Marx*, p.8. Connected to Bogue's concept of the 'heretic stream' whereby the Black intellectuals who have been steeped in a 'Western' intellectual tradition return to the 'native lower orders,' Bogue's, *Black Heretics*, p.12. Whilst taking issue with the level of rupture that Bogue identifies between these stages of unlearning and learning (given the continued importance of Marxist thought in the ideas and actions of Caribbean intellectuals in this thesis), I maintain his idea that returning and being of and with the 'masses' was a productive intellectual space for publishers.

⁶⁸ Boyce-Davies, 'Re-grounding the Intellectual-Activist', p.xxi.

⁶⁹ Anthony Bogue's, *Black Heretics, Black Prophets* (New York: Routledge, 2003), p .7. See also the New World Group definition that argued against the idea that intellectualism is a 'vocation that should transcend politics and political commitment', in David de Caires, 'Reflections on Intellectuals, the New World Group and Walter Rodney', in *The Thought of the New World: The Quest for Decolonisation*, ed. by Brian Meeks and Norman Girvan (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2010), pp. 65-70 (p.66).

⁷⁰ Alleyne describes the New Beacon circle has having a 'constant *engagement* with politics' p.173.

⁷¹ Whilst Bogue's thinking on the Black radical tradition has been formative, Boyce-Davies pertinent critique points to a major failure to comprehend these traditions beyond masculinist frameworks with tokenistic inclusions on individual women. The sparse inclusion fails to recognise the fundamental contribution of women to modes of thinking and approaches of action within and beyond Black radical traditions. In her critique of *Black Marxism*, which she describes as limited by its time in terms of gender analysis, Boyce-Davies writes, 'from a reading of this text one would hardly get a sense that women were a part of any black radical tradition', in 'Sisters Outside', p.217. Likewise, Fisher's work on Black women's' organizing in Britain argues that the 'paucity of scholarship' is partly explained by the assumption that it was not seen as 'legitimate knowledge', from Tracy Fisher, *What's Left of*

the Black radical tradition she writes about the ‘resisting black subject ... resisting dominating systems organized and enforced by states, organization, and institutions.’⁷² This is a quality that I see present – to varying degrees – in each of the figures that comprise this thesis. Through publishing-related actions they challenged hegemonic ideas and this, in turn, was part of a wider struggle to resist and transform exploitative systems in both colonial and neo-colonial contexts. Women publisher-activists were ‘sisters outside of the black radical intellectual tradition’ that resisted multiple intersections of oppression (race, gender, class) as part of their contribution to counter-hegemonic knowledge production.⁷³ In agreement with Boyce-Davies’ critique of the gender absences in early Black leftist scholarship, this thesis attempts to do its small part in remedying the erasure of Black/Caribbean women from the history and theory. Hence, it is influenced by the profoundly important work of recovery that explores how Black women intellectuals operated in British and transnational spheres. Here I am referring in particular to Boyce-Davies, Margaret Busby, Imaobong Umoren, Tracy Fisher, Tanisha Ford and Hannah Rose-Murray.⁷⁴

Blackness: Feminisms, Transracial Solidarities, and the Politics of Belonging in Britain (Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, 2012), p.3.

⁷² Boyce-Davies, *Left of Karl Marx*, p.5 (original ellipses).

⁷³ Claudia Jones, ‘An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman!’, *Political Affairs*, June 1949 – reprinted by National Women’s Commission, C.P.U.S.A. Accessed via <https://www.aaihs.org/claudia-jones-feminist-vision-of-emancipation/> [29 April 2020]. Drawing on another sister’s intellectual energy (Audre Lorde), Boyce-Davies describes how Black women ‘have become sisters outside the black radical intellectual tradition; Caribbean women, sisters outside the Caribbean radical tradition,’ in ‘Sisters Outside’, p.218. Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider* (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 1984).

⁷⁴ Margaret Busby, *New Daughters of Africa: An International Anthology of Writing by Woman of African Descent* (Brighton: Myriad Editions, 2019); Imaobong D. Umoren, ‘This is the Age of Woman’: Black Feminism and Black Internationalism in the Works of Una Marson, 1928-1938’, *History of Women in the Americas*, 1(2013), 50-73; Fisher, *What’s Left of Blackness*; Tanisha C. Ford, *Liberated Threads: Black Women, Style, and the Global Politics of Style* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015); Tanisha C. Ford, ‘Violence at Desmond’s Hip City: Gender and Soul Power in London’ in *The Other Special Relationship: Race, Rights, and Riots in Britain and the United States*, ed. by Robin D. G. Kelley and Stephen Tuck (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp.207-224; and Hannah-Rose Murray, *Advocates of Freedom: African American Transatlantic Abolitionism in the British Isles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020). There has also been brilliant scholarship focused on the US context e.g. Brittney C. Cooper, *Beyond Respectability: The Intellectual Thought of Race Women* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017) and Keisha N. Blain, *Set the World on Fire: Black Nationalist Women and the Global Struggle for Freedom* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018)

Migratory cultures and diasporic connections are a central characteristic of Caribbean intellectual traditions. Therefore, we cannot understand or even contemplate post-war Black/Caribbean politics without reference to concepts of diaspora and migration.⁷⁵ As Umoren argues, travel enabled race women internationalists to 'participate in the transnational black public sphere.'⁷⁶ Britain has often acted as a critical space for the fermentation and crosscutting of these ideas and movements that transmitted intellectual traditions and ideas of liberation from the Caribbean, which were in turn rooted in Africa.⁷⁷ It was often through migration, that Caribbean individuals underwent a process of becoming subaltern intellectuals. While they might have been deemed relatively 'privileged' in one context – in terms of class or colourism – they were racialised and thus, often became 'subaltern' upon the journey to Britain.

The refusal to accept culture and politics as distinct forms is a recurring theme within this Black/Caribbean intellectual tradition. From John La Rose's reflection that he 'came to politics through culture,' to Eric Huntley's assertion that to 'to publish is to be radical, to write is a subversive act,' the connections between politics and culture grounded these movements, and hence, this thesis.⁷⁸ Through thinkers like Stuart Hall, who have expanded and applied Gramsci's conception of hegemony, we can theorise the intimate and profound connection between politics and culture. Likewise, in his critique of the modernist and rational separation of culture and politics, Gilroy interprets 'expressive [Black Atlantic] counterculture ... as a philosophical discourse

⁷⁵ See Lara Putnam's 'Circum-Atlantic Print Circuits and Internationalism from the Peripheries in the Interwar Era', in *Print culture Histories beyond the Metropolis*, ed. by James J. Connolly, Patrick Collier, Frank Felsenstein, Kenneth R. Hall and Robert G. Hall (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), pp.215-239; Mary Chamberlain, ed., *Caribbean Migration: Globalized Identities* (London: Routledge, 1998) and Elizabeth Thomas-Hope, *Caribbean Migration* (Mona: University of the West Indies Press, 1992).

⁷⁶ Umoren, *Race Women Internationalists*, p.3.

⁷⁷ Alleyne asserts that 'London, as a long-established centre of media, publishing and the arts, has a long history of hosting major international gatherings of writers and artists; it has had major conventions of radicals, Black writers, and of third-world intellectuals and activists.', p.64. See also Matera, *Black London*; Makalani, *Cause of Freedom*; and Umoren, *Race Women Internationalists*, all of whom posit interwar London/Britain as an epicentre of transnational anti-colonial activism and cultural production.

⁷⁸ Alleyne, p.122.; 'Report on the Second Annual Huntley Conference: *Writing the Wrongs: Fifty Years of Black Radical Publishing in Britain*', <<http://www.transculturalwriting.com/movingmanchester/docs/Report%20-%20Second%20Annual%20Huntley%20conference.doc>> [accessed on 4 April 2018].

which refuses the modern, occidental separation of ethics and aesthetics, culture and politics.⁷⁹ Therefore, the blending and interconnectivity of culture and politics that is evident throughout the history of the Caribbean demonstrates a rejection of the confining and stifling Enlightenment ideas of rationality. Critically, the thought and theory that lay behind this meeting of politics and culture was embodied in the praxis of the publisher-activist.

Caribbean history and historiography

A core strand of this thesis engages with the politics of history, of how history-making was deeply embedded in anti-colonial, anti-racist and community building projects. Seeking out alternative and heretical histories – explorations of the past that were expressed and disseminated outside of the academy and narratives that challenged dominant discourse – these ideas borrow from a canon of literature which explores the meaning of history in the Caribbean. Here, I am referring to the likes of C.L.R. James, Wilson Harris, Derek Walcott, Sylvia Wynter, Rodney, Eric Williams, Elsa Goveia, Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Edward Baugh, Scott and Bogue, amongst many others. As these thinkers, scholars and activists differently explain, the very notions of silence and loss that have shaped Caribbean history mean that traditions of writing and speaking back have been formative in the development of counter-hegemonic knowledge production.⁸⁰ There are numerous ways that this writing back manifests itself, from the educational and nationalistic efforts of Goveia, Williams and

⁷⁹ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993), pp.38-9.

⁸⁰ Derek Walcott explores the notion of loss in 'The Sea is History', which traces the waves of the region's violent 'non'-history through metaphors of the island-landscape. Walcott, *The Star-Apple Kingdom* (London: Johnathan Cape, 1980), pp.25-28 (p.25).

Augier,⁸¹ to the radical thought of James and Rodney,⁸² and the creative work of Harris and Wynter⁸³ – each of these thinkers had particular versions of history. Hence, the power of history is held not just by the oppressors but in the attempts to free such history from their grip.

Critically, this ‘writing back’ has taken place in multiple spaces – through music, carnival, state-led initiatives, literature, periodicals and activism. Baugh’s formative 1977 article, ‘The West Indian Writer and His Quarrel with History,’ speaks to a particularly masculine literary ‘uneasiness, preoccupation, agony concerning history.’⁸⁴ This historical preoccupation has simultaneously created a ‘rich literary culture’ and a ‘complex historical record,’ with literature and imagination forming an ‘important record’ of the region’s past.⁸⁵ Upon reading Baugh’s article, one might think that Caribbean women writers have not been part of this confrontation with history.⁸⁶ Extending Baugh’s ideas beyond its masculinist restrictions, this thesis argues that women – as writers, publishers and journalists – have been critical in

⁸¹ Elsa V. Goveia was the first Caribbean-born Professor of History at UWI, she wrote *Slave Society in the British Leeward Islands at the End of the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965). F. R. Augier et al., *The Making of the West Indies* (Caribbean: Longman, 1960) was a landmark textbook in the Caribbean. In the 1960s Eric Williams gave public history lectures in what became known as the University of Woodford Square, precisely because of Williams and the PNM’s use of the space for public rallies. Read Eric Williams, ‘Massa Day Done: (Public Lecture at Woodford Square, 22 March 1961)’, *Callaloo*, 20 (1997), 724-730 for a sense of this vibrant public history culture and George Lamming, ‘The Legacy of Eric Williams’, *Callaloo*, 20 (1998), 731-736 (p.731). Mary Chamberlain argues that West Indian intellectuals like Goveia played a central role in this ‘task of nation building,’ in Chamberlain, ‘Elsa Goveia: History and Nation’, *History Workshop Journal*, 58 (2004) 167-190, p.183

⁸² Here I am specifically referring to C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1938), Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (London: Bogle L’Ouverture, 1972) and ‘African History in the Service of the Revolution’, a speech printed in Rodney, *Groundings*.

⁸³ Wilson Harris, *Tradition, the writer and society: critical essays* (London; Port-of-Spain: New Beacon, 1967 [reprinted in 1973]), throughout these essays Harris weaves in historical references to slavery, Africa, Haiti and the Middle Passage. An anti-colonial novel, *The Hills of Hebron* by Sylvia Wynter (London: Johnathan Cape, 1962) re-imagines human subjectivity through a story about previously enslaved Jamaicans creating a new life in the face of colonial oppression.

⁸⁴ Edward Baugh, ‘The West Indian Writer and His Quarrel with History’, *Small Axe*, 16 (2012), 60-74 (p.61).

⁸⁵ In line with Donnell’s argument that the consciousness and imagination of ‘literary brilliance’ has become an archive of its own. Donnell, ‘All Friends Now?: Critical Conversations, West Indian Literature, and the “Quarrel with History”’, *Small Axe*, 16 (2012), 75-85 (p.85).

⁸⁶ Baugh addresses this gap in ‘Reflections on “The Quarrel with History”’, *Small Axe*, 16 (2012), 108-118.

writing and speaking back to the historical record. It will explore how controlling the means of literary production, through the establishment of independent publishing houses and periodicals, was one way in which society rose up, in the words of Wynter, ‘against its external authors.’⁸⁷ As these creative writers demonstrate, that which sits outside of convention – historical imagination – has been necessary for producing Caribbean-centred histories. Hence, the thesis looks at history that was told outside of the academy, by creative publishers, writers, journalists and activists.

This Caribbean canon informs more recent thinking on the place of history in post-colonial Caribbean and British contexts. Here I am referring to the work of Scott, Schwarz and Waters, who all consider the Black experience through a prism of temporalities.⁸⁸ In dialogue with these scholars, this thesis reflects on the connections between political presents and the production of history in books, pamphlets and periodicals. Another idea that has shaped this research is reparative history, which Colin Prescod defines as the personal and communal endeavour of him, and other Black British activists, to insert Black people into British history; a challenge which is ‘part and parcel of the journey to belonging in a dignified way. On our own terms.’⁸⁹ This insertion is a response to what Catherine Hall terms disavowal – an amnesia and refusal to acknowledge and interrogate the formative role that race, empire and Black labour, ideas and culture, played in the shaping of global and British identity, capital and history.⁹⁰ As Hall explains, “the question of ‘race’ has been ‘denied and disavowed in British history ... Britain’s domestic history had been systematically demarcated from its imperial history as if the two had nothing to do

⁸⁷ Sylvia Wynter, ‘Novel and History, Plot and Planation’, *Savacou* 8 (1971), 95-102 (p.95).

⁸⁸ Scott, *Conscripts*; Rob Waters, ‘Time Come’: Britain’s black futures past’, *Historical Research*, 92 (2019), 838-850 and Bill Schwarz, ‘C.L.R. James and George Lamming: The Measure of Historical Time’, *Small Axe*, 7 (2003), 30-70.

⁸⁹ Colin Prescod, ‘Archives, race, class and rage’, *Race & Class*, 58 (2017), 76-84 (p.84). Similarly, Rodney viewed the historicization of racial oppression as a means to humanise black people – as a way to speak to the ‘psychological trauma of the black masses’, from Seneca Vaught, ‘Grounding’ Walter Rodney in Critical Pedagogy: Toward Praxis in African History, *South*, 1 (2015), pp.8-11.

⁹⁰ James, *Black Jacobins* and Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1944) locate the ‘Caribbean as the primordial site of Atlantic modernity’, Hilary McD. Beckles, ‘Capitalism, Slavery and Caribbean Modernity’, *Callaloo*, 20 (1997), 777-789 (p.777). Another landmark intervention was Gilroy’s use of the *Black Atlantic* to centre the emergence of this transnational culture within discourses of modernity whilst also interpreting these Black Atlantic formations as ‘counterculture’ to the limitations of the modernity.

with each other.⁹¹ Therefore, the act of insertion, that by necessity becomes an act of restructuring knowledge, was hugely radical in the context of the Notting Hill Riots (1958), Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962, Enoch Powell's *Rivers of Bloods* speech (1968), and the rise of the National Front, that these activist-publishers were operating in.

Methodology

The following section outlines the methodological approach of this thesis, both in terms of the location and types of sources used and the ways that they have been interpreted. Reflective of the Black/Caribbean publishing tradition that this thesis chronicles and analyses, these sources evidence the argument that publishing was much more than the printing of texts, it was also an oral tradition, community organisation and political identity. This is a history of words spoken, shared, printed and imagined.

In attempting to combine an analysis of the Caribbean and its diaspora, in Britain, I return to Boyce-Davies' 'Caribbean Spaces,' which encompasses the 'plural island ... continental ... sociocultural and geopolitical' geographies of the Caribbean.⁹² The 'social and cultural places (spaces) that extend the understanding of the Caribbean beyond' its geographical limits, she posits the publishing house as a location that 'preserve[s] certain visions of Caribbean culture' and as an important 'Caribbean Intellectual Space' that existed outside of the physical Caribbean space.⁹³ Not only preserving, this thesis views publishers as producers of Caribbean culture across 'Caribbean Spaces.' So, while grounded in London, I have travelled to archives in Jamaica and the USA.⁹⁴ When tracing the lives of diasporic organic intellectuals, the scholar has to approach their research in similar ways – to move geographically and to engage with traditional and organic places of knowledge production and collection.

⁹¹ Catherine Hall, 'Doing reparatory history: bringing 'race' and slavery home', *Race & Class*, 60 (2018), 3-21. (p.11).

⁹² Boyce-Davies, *Caribbean Spaces*, p.1.

⁹³ *Ibid*, p.8. References New Beacon in her introduction.

⁹⁴ Research trip to Trinidad and Tobago that was due to take place in April and May 2020 was cancelled due to the pandemic.

This transnational publishing angle has allowed me to consider a broad selection of texts. Encompassing both the press (newspapers, magazines, journals) and publishing houses (books and pamphlets), it interprets them as part of a connected and interdependent publishing culture. Examining national and diaspora newspapers, imprints of mainstream publishing houses, grassroots publishers and self-publishing authors, this thesis emphasises the wide-ranging locations of knowledge production.

Influenced by Haitian anthropologist and philosopher Trouillot's writing on silence and history, this thesis is alert to the ways in which archives reproduce and maintain colonial power dynamics. In *Silencing the Past*, Trouillot uses the Haitian Revolution as a portal through which to examine the inequalities and injustices of historical production, identifying four crucial moments of silencing in this process; as such, my approach of historical enquiry seeks to navigate these limitations:

the moment of fact creation (the making of the *sources*); the moment of fact assembly (the making of *archives*); and the moment of fact retrieval (the making of *narratives*); and the moment of retrospective significance (the making of *history* in the final instance).⁹⁵

Thus, the making of sources, at any moment in time, is inseparable from relations of power.⁹⁶ In its role as a national and legal deposit library, it is the duty of the British

⁹⁵ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon, 1995), p.26.

⁹⁶ A Foucauldian analysis views the archive and the archivist, as tools of state power that are maintained through 'rituals, surveillance, and discipline,' from Eric Ketelaar, 'Archival Temples, Archival Prisons: Modes of Power and Protection', *Archival Science*, 2 (2002), 221-238 (p.221). My practice is informed by decolonial politics – Etienne Joseph, a London-based archivist, considers these approaches from a grassroots perspective, as opposed to the co-opting and watering down of decolonial politics by large institutions. Refuting what he calls a colonial definition of history as something that 'you go to visit in a building ... observe' and then leave, I am influenced by these ideas of active heritage and draw on 'decolonising the archive' praxis as a way to ground my study of Black history as a white woman based in a national library. *Groundings podcast*, 2018 <<http://www.decolonisingthearchive.com/groundings/>> [accessed 10 September 2018]. Besides their historic founding by white men (fact assembly), most of the documents that traditional archives house were produced by these same men (fact creation). My approach to sources has been shaped by scholarship which explicitly engages with questions of contestation and interpretation, particularly Nupur Chaudhuri, Sherry J. Katz, and Mary Elizabeth Perry, ed., *Contesting the Archives: Finding Women in the Sources*, (Champagne-Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010); Marisa Fuentes describes the process of 'reading along the bias grain' as a way to 'push the concept of reading against the grain a little further—from reading "between the lines" to reading what is not between the lines at all' in *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive*, *The Junto*, May 15, 2017 <<https://earlyamericanists.com/2017/05/15/qa-marisa-fuentes-dispossessed-lives/>> [accessed

Library to collect printed material produced by, and representative of, Britain's diverse communities. Whilst the library holds impressive private collections of British-Caribbean cultural figures and a broad range of periodicals, there have been huge limitations in how those items have been catalogued and showcased.⁹⁷ These issues around 'fact assembly' – the 'making of *archives*' – are perpetuated by issues around access, i.e., 'the moment of fact retrieval.' Who is able to retrieve and claim those hidden 'facts'? As a Collaborative Doctoral Student, I have had privileged access to collection items, enabling me to produce 'Publishing in the Colonial Caribbean, 1800 - 1974: A Selective Guide to Materials in the British Library,' which forms a core source base for Chapters 1-3.

State, grassroots, human and creative archives have provided access to a broad range of periodicals, books, ephemera, letters, oral testimony business records, film, exhibitions and public talks. Engaging with such diverse types of sources has helped to circumvent Trouillot's four moments of silencing – whereby creative, oral and grassroots archives act as antidotes to state silencing. Letters have been an especially fertile route to understand and imagine Black/Caribbean transnational circuits of knowledge production and sharing.⁹⁸ Artefacts of mobility, letters hold stories of how dreams and ideas were collectively produced through networks that crossed land and sea. This thesis would not have been possible without the George Padmore Institute (GPI). Based above New Beacon Books, it is a historical-political project to record and make accessible radical histories of Britain and the Caribbean.

on 20 October 2019]; and Ann Stoler asserts that 'imagining what *might be* [is] as important as knowing what was' in Stoler, 'The Pulse of the Archive', *Ab Imperio*, 3 (2007), 225-264 (p.237), p.12.

⁹⁷ The British Library holds the personal archives of Andrew Salkey, James Berry and Andrea Levy. It has taken over ten years to catalogue Salkey's archive, which has meant that access has been highly limited to the public. I have a distinct memory of going to the basement of the British Library to find a copy of *Grassroots* which was stored in protected and out-of-bounds shelves, because of its 'explicit' content. Filed next to porn and gun magazines because it included instructions on how to make a Molotov cocktail (thus falling under anti-terrorism law), this is indicative of wider problems around collection and classification.

⁹⁸ Nalini Mohabir and Ronald Cummings describe letters as one of 'technologies that enable the circulation of ideas along various routes of transnational Black radicalism' in 'Introduction: The Fire that Time' in *The Fire That Time: Transnational Black Radicalism and the Sir George Williams Occupation*, ed. by Ronald Cummings and Nalini Mohabir (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2021), p.9-32 (p.22).

Similarly, FHALMA aims to educate people about African diaspora history through the lives of Jessica and Eric Huntley.

Events and exhibitions were an important part of this research. For example, *Confrontations: UWI Student Protest & the Rodney Disturbances of 1968* (UWI Museum, Mona, 2019) provides a central pool of information and personal testimony in Chapter 6.⁹⁹ Moreover, film showings with post-screening Q&As, such as the Victor Jara Collective organised by the Twelve30 Collective and Colin Prescod's, *Blacks Britannica* (1978) at the Bernie Grant Arts Centre are etched into my memory as critical junctures of intervention, debate and learning.

With holes and silences in the British Library's collections, this research has relied on the Institute of Race Relations (IRR), which has the single biggest holding of Black periodicals in Britain, GPI, the Black Cultural Archives (BCA) and Senate House Special Collections. Likewise, gaps of pre-independence Caribbean periodicals have been narrowed through research at the National Library of Jamaica (NLJ) and University of the West Indies Library (Mona), although many of their collections are also partial. This has also been bolstered by examining printed personal collections in London, Jamaica and New York.

In this thesis, periodicals are treated as the object themselves – examined for their form, content and style. In doing so, it argues that publishing has been of historic significance in shaping Black liberation movements in the Caribbean and Britain.¹⁰⁰ In attempting to provide an overview of publishing in the Caribbean and Britain, from emancipation to the early 1980s, there has been a conscious selection process,

⁹⁹ Exhibition catalogues have also proved particularly useful, Mason and Busby, *No Colour Bar*, Sarah Garrod, Nicole-Rachelle Moore and Sarah White, ed., *Dream to Change the World: The Life & Legacy of John La Rose: The Book of the Exhibition* (London: George Padmore Institute, 2015/2018); and Ceri Hand, Chiedza Mhondoro and Zak Ové, ed., *Get up, Stand Up Now: Generations of Black Creative Pioneers* (London: Somerset House, 2019).

¹⁰⁰ The political importance of the Black press has received far more attention in the USA, e.g., Christopher Tinson, *Radical Intellect: Liberator Magazine and Black Activism in the 1960s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Richard Digby-Junger, 'The Guardian, Crisis, Messenger, and Negro World: The Early-20th-Century Black Radical Press', *Howard Journal of Communications*, 9 (1998), 263-282; James West, *Ebony Magazine and Lerone Bennett Jr.: Popular History in Postwar America* (Urbana: Illinois Press, 2020); and James L. Baughman, Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen and James P. Danky, ed., *Protest on the Page: Essays on Print and the Culture of Dissent Since 1865* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2015).

whereby I have read a range of periodicals – geographically, temporally, politically and in terms of content e.g. literary, political, commercial. Moreover, by using periodicals that represent the shifting and broad ideological spectrum of the Creole, West Indian, anti-colonial, Caribbean and Black press, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this study incorporates analyses of commercial magazines that have often been excluded from this area of enquiry.¹⁰¹

The books that were the output of the very tradition that this thesis identifies have been essential primary sources. Whilst I read many of these books in libraries, when the pandemic struck in early 2020, I started to collect second-hand copies in order to continue researching at home. My bookshelves are now proudly home to New Beacon and Bogle-L'Ouverture publications, which figure as core sources in Chapters 5 and 6, where their content, design, artwork, blurbs and front matter are analysed.

Those that were at the forefront of this struggle inform this history. Whilst the written archive has become a form of legitimised memory, conducting oral history interviews gave me privileged access to the memories of those that helped to create and change Black/Caribbean publishing cultures. So, although this did not begin as an oral history project, it became profoundly important to the thesis and my overall intellectual development. Eight original interviews with a combination of publishers, activists and retired academics have been complemented by sound collections at the British Library, LMA, BCA and the University of the West Indies.¹⁰² Archives of sound have provided critical contextual insight into political cultures of the twentieth-century Caribbean and post-war Britain. Listening and speaking to the publisher-activists who populate this thesis, has been central to my broader appreciation and understanding of their histories, experiences and hopes.

¹⁰¹ On the interdependence between periodicals and popular history, this thesis builds on James West and Pero Gaglo Dagbovie's periodical methodologies but in Caribbean and British contexts. Pero Gaglo Dagbovie, 'Making Black History Practical and Popular: Carter G. Woodson, the Proto Black Studies Movements, and the Struggle for Black Liberation', *Western Journal of Black Studies*, 28 (2004), 372-383.

¹⁰² Edward Baugh, Eric Huntley Rupert Lewis, Mervyn Morris, Christine Randle, Ian Randle, Ewart and Odette Thomas and Sarah White. Used familial contacts and Kate Quinn put me in touch with two participants.

Occurring at various stages: Jamaica (February 2019), London (Summer/Autumn 2019) and over Zoom during pandemic, my approach, technique and analysis has changed and developed.¹⁰³ All of the interviews were semi-structured, with a list of general and tailor-made questions for each participant.¹⁰⁴ Influenced by archival research, these interviews presented a rare opportunity to ask questions of the archive through the memories of its collectors (in the case of Sarah White and Eric Huntley). Viewing my interviewees as participants and collaborators, rather than respondents, they have shaped my methodology, research and ideas in fundamental ways.

Location and place are vitally important, not only in how they set the tone for the interview but in how memory is refracted through space and place. Interviewing Rupert Lewis, at his home in Mona, which was decorated with Caribbean and African art, the interviewer gets a sense of Rupert and Maureen Warner Lewis' cultural and political grounding. Interviews with Eddie Baugh and Mervyn Morris, that took place on campus, included extensive discussion about their time as students and academics, in the very place that I was speaking with them. Baugh took me on a campus tour, pointing out important places and their connection to key political moments. Sat in a classroom with Morris, I felt as though he was teaching me – which he was. Discussing the 1968 Rodney Affair, with Morris, who had been present at the time, was a special moment. Generally, oral history interviews are temporally distant from the things that are being discussed, therefore, being in the same spatial environment with someone that experienced it in that time and place, brought me closer to the event and the imagined feeling of it unfolding. Likewise, when I interviewed Eric Huntley at this home in West Ealing, I sat in an armchair opposite a wall of books from around the world and stacks of BLP publications.

¹⁰³ Drawing on Scott, it might be fruitful to think of each interview stage as reflecting a unique 'problem-space' of the PhD. Whilst there are methodological limitations to a shifting style of interviews, in terms of uniformity and even-handedness, I have taken an open approach to doing oral history throughout this project which has led to organic and productive conversations.

¹⁰⁴ Attended oral history training organised by UCL and the Oral History Society. See also, R. Perks and A. Thomson, ed., *The Oral History Reader* (London: Routledge, 1998); Soon Nam Kim, 'Whose voice is it anyway? Rethinking the oral history method in accounting research on race, ethnicity and gender', *Critical Accounting Perspectives*, 19 (2008), 1346-1369.

Listening to Eric share his and Jessica's life stories gave me such a strong sense of the journey that they came on and the pivotal place of BLP in their personal and political lives. My interview with Sarah White took place in the GPI reading room, where La Rose's presence was felt through her words and the walls that are pasted with red and black posters of the 2015 *Dream to Change the World* exhibition. Speaking to activists and intellectuals from an older generation has been immeasurably valuable. I feel extremely privileged to have met and shared conversations with these people, to have their voices recorded and be able to listen back. In doing so, I have captured important and ageing voices. I acknowledge the responsibility that comes with doing history like this and the sensitivity and commitment that is needed to do it justice. This research methodology is part of a broader vision to produce reparative history that centres these stories in British and global histories – an historical approach that is embedded in wider engagement activities.¹⁰⁵

Chapter Outline

The first half of the thesis contextualises Caribbean publishing in post-war Britain as part of a deep, historical and meaningful tradition that has been generated by a lineage of organic intellectuals. Covering different periods and terrains of struggle, it tracks how the possibilities of change and understandings of freedom were re-imagined and circulated by publisher-activists. Each of these three chapters explore the theme of censorship, which supports the argument that newspapers, publishers and books wielded political and cultural power.

Chapter 1 traces seismic political and social shifts, from the Abolitionist cause to the Emancipation Jubilee in 1888, through the lens of Creole publishing. Divided into four main sections, it chronologically explores these transformative societies, examining key moments, ideas and networks that would shape the development of twentieth-century publishing. It starts with a methodological reflection that establishes the practical and theoretical approach for Chapters 1-3. Rooting this history in slavery and anti-slavery, it classifies Abolitionist newspapers and narratives

¹⁰⁵ I do not claim to come from a 'disinterested' scholar's perspective – I am committed and connected to the activism that BLP continues to do (via FHALMA).

of the enslaved as literary weapons in struggles for freedom. Whilst Emancipation brought legal freedom, the post-emancipation period was a battleground for meaningful freedom: hence, this period saw an upsurge of newspapers that were an instrument of power for the emergent Creole middle-class and a means to challenge the impunity of the plantocracy. Through what I term Creole pragmatism, this chapter examines how this Creole class navigated pragmatically to achieve change. A time of economic stagnation and piecemeal socio-political change, the press simultaneously became a vessel for debates about liberty and an instrument of control and censorship by the planter class that was under threat. It closes by spotlighting a critical press-publishing moment: the appearance of John Jacob Thomas' articles in the *St George's and Grenada Gazette*, in 1888. This is a transnational story, in which people, ideas, and movements reimagined the connections between disparate parts of the British Empire.

Chapter 2 picks up at this end of the century moment, an era that ushered in the expansion of reading, publishing, civil society and, connectedly, the birth of nationalist movements. Examining the development of West Indian publishing – in a period of increasing consciousness – this chapter witnesses the shifting identity, content and aims of publishers. It begins with a contextual examination of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century growth of libraries, interpreting this as a precursor for publishing. Following this, there is a focus on the development of proto nationalism through the press and the creation of political societies. Locating World War One as an imperative moment for the reinvigoration of sedition laws, this contextualised the rise of Garveyism in Jamaica and his publication of *Blackman*, in 1929. Exploring West Indian literary development in the press and metropolitan sojourns in the interwar years, it evidences migration's formative role in the development of Caribbean publishing.

Chapter 3 continues this chronological study through an examination of 'anti-colonial' publishing, which differed from the publishing styles and visions of the earlier period. Tracking its progression from the eruption of labour rebellions in the late 1930s to the eve of independence, it explores trade union politics, cultural nationalism and anti-colonial struggle through four publishing case studies. Whilst structured chronologically, many of the people, publications and politics crossover and

interrelate. Examining several publishing pioneers, they reveal how visions of freedom were frequently bound up with the book – its content, access, censorship and dissemination. The largest case study examines the ‘Labour Press’ by analysing periodicals that embody links between uprising, nationalism and publishing. Following this, connected political movements in Britain are examined through the publishing landscape, which both aided and limited the development of Black Marxist thought. Returning to Jamaica, the last two sections spotlight two formative Jamaican publishing figures: Una Marson and Richard Hart, who made great contributions to cultural nationalism and radical political education through publishing efforts. Each of these case studies shed light on different publishing practices, demonstrating how they both reflect and intervene in society, and with culture.

The second half of this thesis examines three case studies of Caribbean publishing in post-war Britain. Together, they evidence a courageous and varied publishing-activist tradition that engaged with ideas of history, the intellectual, race and nation, during a pivotal period of transformation, both in terms of independence being won in the Caribbean and the establishment and consolidation of Black and multi-cultural communities in Britain.

Chapter 4 explores the development of the Black press in post-war Britain. Examining three periodicals, *West Indian Gazette* (1958-65), *Tropic* (1960) and *Flamingo* (1960-65), it covers a critical end-of-empire moment in the 1950s and 1960s, when discourses of migration, race and nation became front and centre of public debates in Britain. Positing the press as a critical space for the development, articulation and dissemination of historical knowledge, this chapter presents the first analysis of monthly history columns in the Black British press. By analysing this overlooked contribution, it addresses the specific space that was carved out for ‘writing history.’ Whilst it is set in post-war Britain, 1958-1965, this chapter journeys into early modern transnational histories, from the Benin Empire to Georgian Britain, through these history features. It argues that these newspapers and magazines were both architects and outputs of Caribbean community-building in post-war Britain.

Chapter 5 examines ‘Britain’s first Black publishing house,’ New Beacon, founded in 1966. Symbolising a new era for Black/Caribbean publishing, it marked a decided

break with ephemeral publishing approaches and metropolitan publishing monopolies. Whilst active in the local community and Black and leftist politics across Britain, its Caribbean roots and connections have been underestimated. By analysing the years that the publishing house established itself, in the late 1960s and 1970s, it emphasises New Beacon's Caribbean focus. Beginning with the publisher's foundations, this chapter revisits New Beacon's founding story, rooting it in a longer and broader history of political and literary exile; the publishing monopolies of Longman and Heinemann; and anti-colonial/trade union movements in the Caribbean. The second part highlights New Beacon's diasporic organisational structure and the gendered dynamics of publishing in the home. The final section, 'Critical Interventions,' examines four landmark publications, *Froudacity* (1969), *Creole Grammar* (1969), *Marcus Garvey, 1887-1940* (1967) and *How the West Indian child is made Educationally Sub-normal in the British School System* (1971).

Chapter 6 considers the profound contributions of publisher-activists, Jessica and Eric Huntley (alongside many others), through the publishing house, Bogle-L'Ouverture. Founded in 1969, as a response to Jamaican government's expulsion of Walter Rodney, this chapter demonstrates the back and forth between Caribbean politics and publishing in Britain. Addressing the importance of anti-colonial struggles in the shaping of Black activism in post-war Britain, it considers the Huntleys' experience of Guyanese left-wing politics in the 1950s, which prompted their move to Britain. Delivering one of the first extensive analytical reconstructions of the events surrounding the publication of *The Groundings with My Brothers* (1969), this chapter characterises Bogle-L'Ouverture as a grassroots and working-class publishing house. The last section examines children's publishing and the role of women as architects of educational activism, which I argue is a core strand of the Black/Caribbean radical tradition. Committed to the belief that knowledge should serve liberation, this final chapter argues that Bogle-L'Ouverture embodied the nexus between education, liberation and resistance that has been central to broader Caribbean freedom struggles. It stops in 1981, the year that planning was underway for the International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books, because this marked a turning point for Bogle-L'Ouverture and Black/Caribbean publishing in Britain more broadly.

Chapter 1: Creole Publishing: Abolition to the Emancipation Jubilee

Be it known to the world, that, I Robert Wedderburn ... doth charge all potentates, governors, and governments who of every description with felony, who does wickedly violate the sacred rights of man ... Wedderburn demands ... that all slaves be set free

Robert Wedderburn¹

In 1762, 'An oppressed, insulted, and degraded African' was born into a world of slavery.² Robert Wedderburn was the son of Rosanna, an enslaved African woman, and James Wedderburn, 'an extensive proprietor, of sugar estates in Jamaica.' His life is emblematic of the emergence of the Creole 'brown' class during the era of slavery. Born, in his own words, of his father's 'brutal lust' – the rape of his mother – he entered the world enslaved, as she was sold during her pregnancy.³ Released from slavery, when he was two years old, Wedderburn's violent and exploitative origins stayed with him throughout his life, shaping his thinking and actions.⁴ Wedderburn travelled to Britain aged sixteen, and by the late 1700s he was moving among London's underworld of radical reformers. He occupied a prominent position as a largely illiterate yet vocal revolutionary figure, who infused early nineteenth-century British radicalism with his experiences and analyses of slavery. Co-editor of the *Forlorn Hope*, a penny weekly that disseminated the ideas of English radical, Thomas Spence (1750-1814), Wedderburn struck out on his own to publish the *Axe Laid to Root* in 1817.⁵ In 1824, he established his own printing press at No. 23 Russell Court, where he published a scalding autobiographical analysis of slavery:

¹ Wedderburn, *Axe*, p.3.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid, p.4.

⁴ His father paid for his release in 1765. Hanley, *Beyond Slavery*, p.204.

⁵ These periodicals were envisioned as a space to further Spencean thought after he died in 1814, just a year after Wedderburn met him. Often claimed as a proto-revolutionary socialist, 'an embryonic working-class radical or Marxist,' Engels referred to him as 'that glorious old Tom Spence'. <<http://www.thomas-spence-society.co.uk/debates-the-northumbrian-enlightenment/>> [accessed on 3 April 2020].

*The Horrors of Slavery: Exemplified in the Life and History of Rev. Robert Wedderburn.*⁶

While Wedderburn was neither the first nor the last Black abolitionist to write an autobiographical narrative as part of their anti-slavery campaigning, he is one of the only to have self-published his narrative.⁷ He grappled with the ideals and social problems that would come to dominate the work of Creole and Black/Caribbean publishers throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As this chapter examines, the anti-slavery movement spurred the development of the Caribbean press: over double the number of newspapers were published between 1800 and 1850 than during the entire eighteenth century (Figure 1). This rise of print media means that newspapers and publishers were a focal point of what historians now call the post-emancipation period. Contradictory by nature, Creole publications validated elements of colonial culture whilst transgressing colonial politics. This chapter understands the societal and political transformations of the post-emancipation period through the prism of publishing.

It puts forward four main arguments; firstly, that a lack of attention on Caribbean print culture reflects a mistaken but widely held assumption that, for a variety of reasons, the Caribbean does not have a publishing history. In direct challenge to this, it evidences varied Anglophone Caribbean and early Black British interdependent press and publishing traditions. Secondly, it contends that discursive struggles over freedom and justice were the lifeblood of Creole publications; writers, journalists and publishers actively engaged with Enlightenment ideas on their own terms by reframing these concepts in the post-emancipation Caribbean context. Once nominal freedom had been won, new debates, imaginations and restrictions of freedom emerged. What were the subsequent demands, what did visions of Caribbean

⁶ The London Metropolitan Archives [hereafter LMA] hold a legal document registering Wedderburn's publishing activities at 23 Russell Court. Due to the Unlawful Societies Act of 1799, '*An act for the more effectual suppression of societies established for seditious and treasonable purposes, and for Letter preventing treasonable and seditious practices*', publishers were compelled, by law, to write to the '*clerk of the peace for the county of Middlesex.*' MR/L/P/1824/012, LMA.

⁷ In contrast to other slave accounts, such as Mary Prince's that was narrated to Susanna Strickland, Wedderburn was able write his life story in his own voice. Hanley's 'Introduction' in *Beyond Abolition* examines this question of Black authorship and editorship, in the context of slave narratives.

societies look like, and what was the role of print in not only expressing these demands, but functioning as a key symbol in these visions of freedom?

Thirdly, this critical overview of Caribbean publishing signals patterns of historiographical development that have been largely overlooked.⁸ In doing so, it contends with the violent claims of conceited and racist nineteenth- and twentieth-century historians who view descendants of African people in the Americas as having ‘no history.’⁹ Newspapers, pamphlets and books produced some of the earliest records of what would become landmark historical events: the Baptist War (1831-2), Emancipation and the Morant Bay Rebellion (1865). Publishers facilitated and disseminated the chronicling of these important events, helping to shape the very histories that future writers and publishers would continually interrogate. Hence, it queries the tendency to classify pre-1900 Caribbean historiography as exclusively written by European men or the plantocracy by analysing important nineteenth-century historical debates, mainly from newspapers.¹⁰ Lastly, it concludes that these publishing traditions, which directly engaged with questions of liberty and history, were an important arena for self-discovery and self-definition, over a vastly transitional period.

Methodology

Any attempt to write a history of Caribbean publishing must be grounded in the outputs of that tradition.¹¹ This chapter reflects on surveys of the *Axe Laid to Root* (1817), *St George’s Chronicle and Grenada Gazette* (1798-1913), *The Creole* (1856-

⁸ Rare example of a historiographical study of the nineteenth-century Caribbean in B. W. Higman, ‘The Development of Historical Disciplines in the Caribbean’ in *General History of the Caribbean, Volume VI Methodology and Historiography of the Caribbean*, ed. by B. W. Higman (London: UNESCO/Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp.3-19. Elsa Goveia, *A Study of the Historiography of the British West Indies to the end of the nineteenth century* (Mexico: Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia, 1956). In Eric Williams, *British Historians and the West Indies* (Port-of-Spain: P.N.M. Publishing Company Limited, 1964) he castigates the likes of Thomas Carlyle and J. A. Froude, however this political focus on British historians misses the role of Caribbean historians.

⁹ See Walter Rodney’s essay ‘African History of the Service of Black Liberation,’ in *Groundings*.

¹⁰ Higman argues this by setting out his three stages in historiographical development: Columbus to 1900; 1900-1950 and post-1950, in ‘Historical Disciplines’, p.13.

¹¹ Shirley Evelyn classified periodicals and pamphlets as a ‘virtually unexplored historical hinterland of polemic, self-definition and self-analysis throughout the region,’ in Evelyn, *West Indian Social Sciences Index: An Index to four publications* (Association of Caribbean University Research and Institutional Libraries, 1974), p.iv.

1903), the *San Fernando Gazette* (1850-1896), *New Era* (1868-1891) and *Grenada People* (1883-1887). These publications were either owned, edited by or frequently featured the Creole class. Diverting attention away from the colonial giants, like the *Gleaner* and *Trinidad Gazette*, which have long dominated the Caribbean press, this chapter analyses smaller and often subversive publications that challenged the continuation of white planter control.

To help visualise newspaper trends across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, John A. Lent’s extensive though likely not exhaustive list of Caribbean newspapers has been converted into a graph (Fig. 1).¹² Evidencing the correlation between major societal shifts and the expansion of the press, it suggests how rapid socio-political change stimulated the growth of publishing.¹³ Throughout Chapters 1-3, this graph provides a quantitative basis for the qualitative analysis that this research brings to Lent’s foundational work on Caribbean press history.

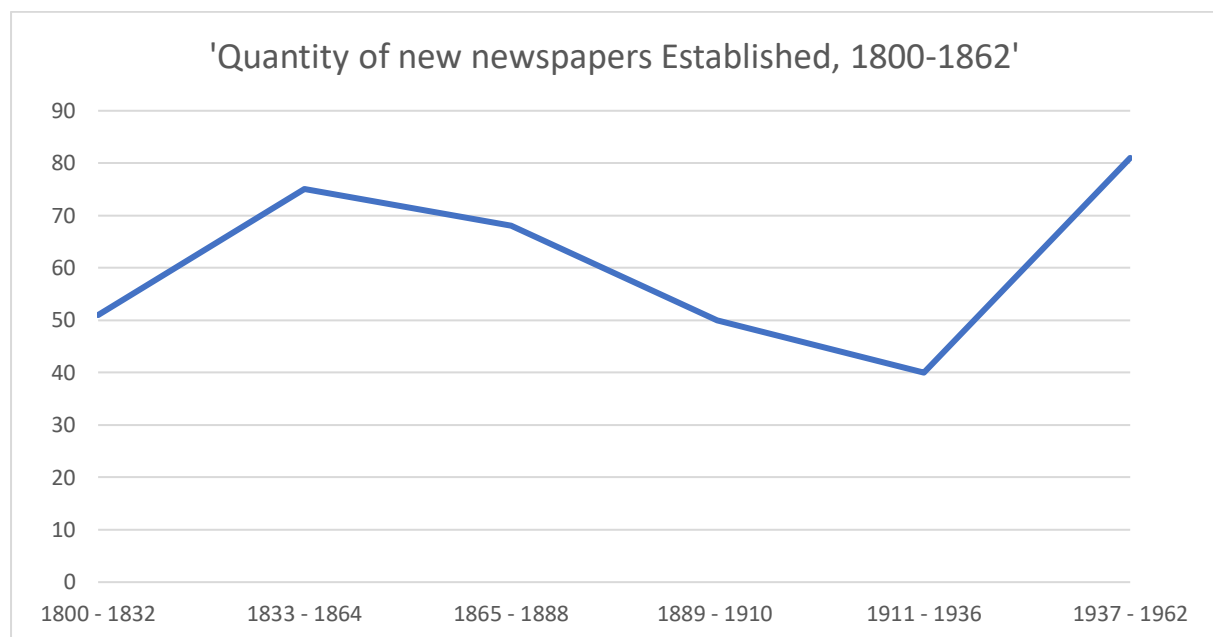


FIGURE 1 LENT’S COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN NEWSPAPERS

¹² Lent, ‘Commonwealth Caribbean Newspapers.’ NB. it does not include British Guianese newspapers.

¹³ Classified as the ‘Crises-oriented press’ in Lent, *Third World*, p.41. As Figure 1 shows, the post-emancipation peak is not matched until the critical decades between the 1930s labour rebellions and independence.

As part of this research, I have produced 'Caribbean Publishing: a selective bibliography of British Library holdings, 1800-1962' that covers Barbados, British Guiana, Grenada, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. A *selective* bibliography, there were some important exclusions, crucially, anything that was published by a 'government printing office.'¹⁴ The discounting of these texts was part of a conscious effort to focus on books that were published outside of the colonial state's direct control. The process of producing this bibliography has given insight into the contours of Caribbean publishing, and the following three chapters are a critical reflection on those findings. As well as compiling one of the first bibliographies of books published in the Caribbean, this bibliographic project includes a subject index that has furthered knowledge of Caribbean historiographical, literary and print trends.¹⁵

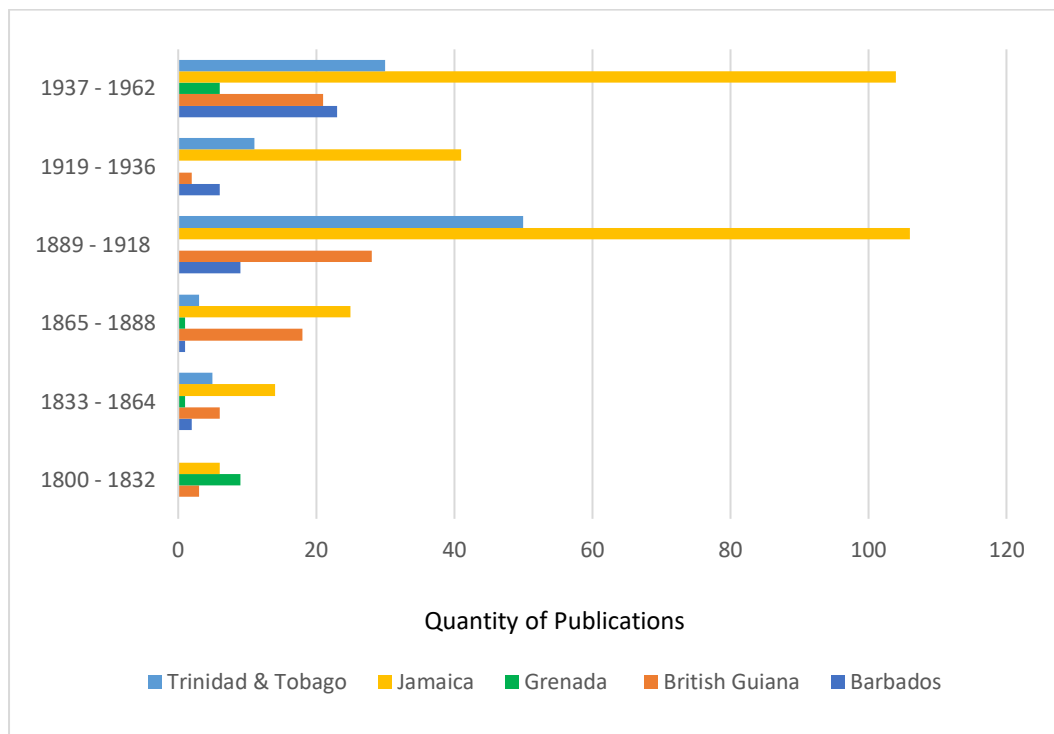


FIGURE 2 CARIBBEAN PUBLICATIONS, 1800-1962

¹⁴ Certain publishers, such as the Argosy Press in British Guiana and The Gleaner in Jamaica, often had government printing contracts, so government publications have not been fully discounted.

¹⁵ Subject index was guided by subject headings and notes in the Aleph catalogue, alongside calling up hundreds of books without subject headings or with sparse, incorrect, outdated catalogue records. Broad subjects included: Bibliography, Cultural, Economics, Education, Geography, History, Legal, Literature, Political, Religion, Social, Travel and Tourism, Miscellaneous. As an inter-genre index, many books came under multiple categories.

Like any research guide, this bibliography has its limitations; from banal methodological problems, such as poor catalogue records to more fundamental questions about creating a bibliography of Caribbean publishing based on British Library collections. As a legal deposit library, publishers across the British Empire were compelled, by law, to send copies of all published works to the Royal Library.¹⁶ So, technically, the British Library should hold a copy of everything that was published in the Caribbean before independence. Unsurprisingly, this is not the case. There are several issues concerning collecting and archiving: ephemeral publications – which likely included radical, unofficial and DIY pamphlets – would have escaped legal deposit, thus, never becoming part of the collection. Even once items arrive safely, they are vulnerable to loss, damage and destruction.¹⁷ To reiterate, this is a selective bibliography that uses a colonial archive as a window on publishing in the colonial period. It is not immune to the ‘big island’ dominance that presents a perpetual problem when researching the Caribbean; over half of the entries (296 out of 532) were published in Jamaica.¹⁸ Kingston was undoubtedly the main publishing hub of the Caribbean, followed by Port-of-Spain and Georgetown. Mapping out the addresses of publishers, printers and newspapers, the spatial politics of downtown Kingston’s reading publics come to life – many were within a few minutes’ walk from each other, implying a level of publishing activity that was far greater than any other city in the Anglophone Caribbean. Hence, much of the analysis in the following chapters is centred on Jamaican publishing, because for all intents and purposes it was the overwhelmingly dominant component of Caribbean publishing during the colonial period (especially in the twentieth century) and is, thus, hugely influential in any generic notion of Caribbean publishing.

The decision to study press and publishing in tandem reflects the interdependence of these two industries in the colonial Caribbean, which this research has found. From the outset, West Indian printers depended on newspapers for their survival as they

¹⁶ The first iteration of legal deposit was established by the Licensing of the Press Act, 1662.

¹⁷ A considerable number of items in this bibliography e.g., cookbooks were marked as destroyed by World War 2 bombing.

¹⁸ In order of volume: Trinidad and Tobago – 99; British Guiana – 78; Barbados – 42; Grenada – 17.

made up the predominant mass of printing work in the region. This interdependency continued into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The dominance of a small number of plantocratic newspaper-owning families gave them a monopoly on printed knowledge production.¹⁹ Moreover, a blurred distinction between books and newspapers meant that many published books were formed of previously printed newspaper articles or letters.²⁰ As such, it is impossible to tell a history of Caribbean publishing without attending to a history of the press. Through a combined analysis, the structures, networks and political cultures of Caribbean print become more visible.

This chapter acknowledges practices of writing, publishing and reading as forms of potentially counter-hegemonic knowledge production. Whilst arguing for the power of print in abolitionist, post-emancipation and proto-nationalist struggles, it is critical to understand the ambiguous status of written forms in the Caribbean. The chronic illiteracy which characterized the majority of the post-emancipation Caribbean meant that access to printed material was highly limited, resulting in the lack of a mass reading public.²¹ A direct outcome of the colonial system and a hangover of slavery, access to education was strictly limited and underfunded. In the absence of formal education, oral cultures flourished across the region, with oral historians being the keepers of indigenous and enslaved histories.²² Therefore, it is important to state that this chapter explicitly focuses on 'the history of history-writing' in the Caribbean, and how that was manifest in periodicals, pamphlets and books.²³

¹⁹ Advocate Co. was an imprint of the *Barbados Advocate*, the island's longest running newspaper. In British Guiana the Argosy family ran three newspapers: *The Argosy* (weekly); *The Daily Argosy*; *The Sportsman Argosy* (weekly) as well as managing government printing contracts through Argosy Press. In Jamaica there was the *Gleaner*, Jamaica Times Printery and Jamaica Tribune Co; and Mirror Printing Works and Guardian Publishing Company in Trinidad and Tobago.

²⁰ See X. BEKE, pseud. [i.e. George Hammond Hawtayne], *West Indian Yarns ... Reprinted, chiefly, from the Demerara "Argosy."* (J. Thomson: Georgetown; Demerara, 1884); *When will the XIXth Century end; and the XXth begin? Reprinted for the author from letters published in the Daily and Triweekly Gleaner* (Kingston: The Gleaner Co., 1899).

²¹ Reinhard W. Sander, 'Introduction: *The Beacon* and the Emergence of West Indian Literature', in *The Beacon Vols I-IV*, New Introductions by Brinsley Samaroo and Reinhard W. Sander (Millwood: Kraus Print Co., 1977), p.xvi-xxiv (p.xvi).

²² Higman, 'Historical Disciplines'.

²³ *Ibid.*, p.3.

The terms 'Creole press' and 'Creole publishing' classify a varied group of middle-class publishers, editors and journalists that originated from free people of colour in the era of slavery.²⁴ The usage of these terms echoes how this Creole middle class both grew and consolidated their positions in the abolitionist and post-emancipation era. An umbrella term for a varied and intermediary grouping of individuals and organisations, it encompasses both those who championed Black pride and others who wanted to disassociate themselves from the Black masses.²⁵ As ownership of the sugar industry became increasingly concentrated, this group was pushed into new occupations, generally small business operations such as 'pharmacies and printers.'²⁶ Their centrality to nineteenth-century Caribbean publishing is important to note as it underlays an argument put forth in this chapter – that this class was fundamental in producing the public sphere.²⁷ Locating press, publishing and the rise of a reading public as enabling the growth of urban culture and production of public opinion, this chapter interprets the publications in this study as the ephemera of this civil society in its youth.²⁸ The periodicals that emerged in the post-emancipation period were an elite and increasingly middle-class space for the expression of competing ideas, with the Creole press emerging in opposition to the well-established, dominant and far better resourced 'planter press.'²⁹

Recognising the '*competing* publics' that co-existed in the nineteenth-century Caribbean, this study is located precisely at that point of tension and contestation,

²⁴ The first official census in the British West Indies Region was conducted under the directive of the British Government in 1844. This marked an explicit differentiation between 'whites, browns and blacks' as part of a broader strategy that utilised racialisation and racism to maintain colonial power in post-emancipation societies. Whilst using the term 'Brown' to refer to people of mixed descent, who made up an increasing proportion of populations across the Anglophone Caribbean, it is important to state that the 'Brown' class was part of a broader colonial construct of a pigmentocracy.

²⁵ Ray Kiely, *The Politics of Labour and Development in Trinidad* (Kingston: The Press University of the West Indies, 1996), p.57.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Jürgen Habermas classically defines the public sphere as a form of imagined community, an intangible 'discursive space' through which public opinion is formed. Peter Hohendahl and Patricia Russian, 'Jürgen Habermas: "The Public Sphere" (1964)', *New German Critique*, 3 (1974), 45-48.

²⁸ See Geoff Eley, 'Nations, Publics, and Political cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century', in *Culture/Power/History: A Reading in Contemporary Social Theory*, ed. by Nicholas B. Dirks, Geoff Eley and Sherry B. Ortner (Princeton: Princeton University, 1994), pp.297-335 (pp.298-9).

²⁹ Very helpful section on 'The Cultural Work of the Pro-Planter Press' which argues that the press was a vehicle to champion colonial power without London interference in Ward, '*Jamaica Watchman*'.

where Creole publishers were negotiating multiple publics.³⁰ Creolized identities and politics are a product of and response to colonial societies, whereby identity and culture are always in a state of becoming, navigating connections and conflicts within a unique Caribbean arena.³¹ Drawing on Nicole N. Aljoe's use of the term 'creole testimonies' to describe the multiple and varied forces that interacted to create Caribbean slave narratives, the term Creole press/publishing is used to encapsulate the similarly diverse dynamics that shaped these print cultures.³² As this chapter shows, the use of Creole incorporates the realities of resistance, acceptance, mimicry, plurality and orality that coalesced to forge Caribbean publishing. Through what I term Creole pragmatism, it examines how this Creole class navigated pragmatically to achieve change.

These concepts of civil society, publics and counterpublics connect to Benedict Anderson's theory of 'imagined communities,' in which the newspaper was vital for imagining – and therefore manufacturing – the nation. But how do we expand these classic understandings of civil society, public and nation to make sense of the colonial Caribbean? And to make sense of emergent Creole and Black identities, communities and intellectual traditions? Always concerned with questions of identity, Hall wrote that the 'question of what constitutes a Caribbean cultural identity has been of extraordinary importance.'³³ As this chapter demonstrates, newspapers and books were an early space in this 'quest for identity' that materialised through discussions about history, literature and constitutional politics. Beyond this, Creole press and publishing facilitated emergent Black Atlantic political cultures, from the transnational anti-slavery movement, to preliminary discussions on Pan-Africanism in the late nineteenth century.

Publishing became an elite and Creole middle-class space to narrate and contest ideas of history. Whilst this written history was not for the masses, it was inevitably

³⁰ Nehusi., p.309.

³¹ Aljoe, *Creole Testimonies*, p.20; also see Richard D. E. Burton, *Power, Opposition and Play in the Caribbean* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

³² Aljoe, *Creole Testimonies*, p.20; In Riaz, 'Transnational Black Press', p.105, he points out the differences of 'black' in the nineteenth-century West Indian context versus North America.

³³ Stuart Hall, 'Negotiating Caribbean Identities', in *New Caribbean Thought: A Reader*, ed. by Brian Meeks and Folke Lindahl (Jamaica: University of the West Indies, 2001), pp.24-39 (p.25-6).

shaped by their actions. The press was critical in the development of a popular historical genre of writing that infused news and political commentary with historical consciousness. History was the often the prism through which island and regional futures were debated, with history series becoming a permanent feature of the Caribbean press. My bibliography subject index reveals that history texts were the most popular genre; they accounted for a quarter of all books published between 1800 and 1974.³⁴ Likewise, another quarter were literary (poetry, fiction, memoir, folktales and plays). It is significant that half of the publications in this bibliography were historical or literary – it speaks to political and social shifts, encompassing a rapidly growing emphasis on self-discovery. Chapters 1-3 analyse this sway towards history and literature, emphasising the role of publishers in creating and circulating counter-hegemonic histories that brought history into the public mind. As this research demonstrates, the ever-changing analysis of events and people past, reflected the problem-spaces of that moment.

Slavery and Abolition: Education as Liberation

In 1829, two young free men of colour, Edward Jordon and Robert Osborn, founded the *Watchman and Jamaica Free Press*. Both zealous anti-slavery campaigners, the paper was a channel for their struggles against the plantocracy and their calls for freedom for enslaved peoples across the British Caribbean. Running for seven years, until 1836, it has been described as ‘Jamaica’s first black and antislavery newspaper.’³⁵ As Ward explains, in her brilliant article on the newspaper, for Jordon and Osborn, the anti-slavery movement ‘was inextricably tied to the future of a free colonial press.’³⁶ Alongside producing a regular periodical, they used the *Watchman*

³⁴ Indicative of global shifts around the professionalization of history and ‘the interest of the state in fostering national historical identities’. Gabriel Lingelbach, ‘The Institutionalization and Professionalization of History in Europe and the United States’, in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing: Volume 4: 1800-1945*, ed. by Stuart Macintyre, Juan Manguashca and Attila Pók (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2015), p.83.

³⁵ Razi, Ward and Lewis all argue that the paper was profoundly important in Jamaica, the Americas and globally. Razi explains how British abolitionists ‘credited’ the paper as ‘providing the accurate reportage they needed to pressure the government’ and further evidencing transnational connectivity, he writes that Phillip Alexander Bell, editor of *Colored American* (1837-42) and *Elevator* (1865-83), described Jordon as ‘the oldest black editor in the Western Hemisphere,’ from ‘Transnational Black Press’, p.105-106.

³⁶ Ward, ‘*Jamaica Watchman*’, p.494.

office to print an account of the Baptist War, from the perspective of Baptist Missionaries.³⁷ This speaks to a wider phenomenon of Creole writers and editors responding to their exclusion from traditional publishing avenues by publishing their own work, thus, eliminating the mediation and censorship that often existed between writer and publisher. Defending the position of the Baptists and asserting the agency of enslaved peoples, it stated that ‘an overwhelming majority of the slaves, who actually rebelled, had never shaken hands with any Missionary on the island.’³⁸ Therefore, insurrection was driven by demands for freedom from the impetus of enslaved peoples, rather than the missionary handshaking that the plantocracy claimed to have ‘given the slaves a notion of equality with the whites.’³⁹ Stating that the book was ‘intended for the perusal of enemies, as well as friends,’ this evidences a conscious awareness of the reader. In the foreboding shadow of the ‘enemy’ planter reader, Jordon and Osborn courageously challenged the plantocracy’s version of events and their domination of the printed word.⁴⁰ The threat that this duo presented to the plantocracy is further evidenced by the perpetual attempts to silence the *Watchman* and all that it stood for, through charges of seditious libel.⁴¹

Another pioneer of the anti-slavery press was Samuel Prescod – the first Barbadian of African descent to become a Parliamentarian. In April 1836, he became an unpaid editor of the *New Times* – the ‘first coloured newspaper in the colony’s history.’⁴² While its name was suggestive of change and transition, it was not ready for Prescod’s view of Barbados and he was ‘discouraged from attacking directly the attitudes of the island’s plantocracy.’⁴³ By January 1837, he was dismissed for being

³⁷ Baptist Missionaries, *A Narrative of Recent Events Connected with the Baptist Mission in This Island, Compromising Also A Sketch of the Mission, From its Commencement, in 1814, to the end of 1831* (Kingston: Edward Jordon and Robert Osborn [printed at the office of the Jamaica Watchman], 1833).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.iv.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.vi

⁴¹ In 1830, Jordon was arrested on a charge of ‘constructive treason’ for an article that declared ‘let the oppressed go free.’ Although acquitted on a technicality (they could not prove he was the editor of the paper), less than a month later he was arrested for libel against a unionist Presbyterian minister, sentenced to twelve months in prison and £100 fine. See ‘Trials, Tribulations, and Triumphs’ in Ward, ‘*Jamaican Watchman*’, pp.490-498.

⁴² Fabriciano Alexander Hoyos, *Our Common Heritage*, with a foreword by G. H. Adams (Bridgetown: Advocate Press, 1953), pp.34-39.

⁴³ Glenn O. Phillips, ‘The Beginnings of Samuel J. Prescod, 1806-1843: Afro-Barbadian Civil Rights Crusader and Activist’, *The Americas*, 38 (1982), 363-378 (p.395-6).

too outspoken and so, the following year he founded *The Liberal*, which he edited for twenty-five years. A ‘spokesman for the laboring and middle classes of all colors,’ he became the island’s leading critic of the plantocracy.⁴⁴ Described as the ‘father of franchise reform,’ Prescod used the newspaper as a space to campaign for abolition, and after that, to call for greater freedom. He became an important asset in global struggles against slavery, with officials from the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and the American Anti-Slavery Society consulting ‘closely with Prescod.’⁴⁵ As Alpen Razi argues, when looked at together, these publishers and editors created the ‘bulwark of liberal non-white periodicals that actively undermined plantocratic hegemony throughout the Caribbean.’⁴⁶ Referring back to Figure 1, these periodicals exemplify the sharp increase in the establishment of newspapers in the run up to Emancipation. While most of these newspapers espoused pro-slavery politics, the newspapers discussed here not only forged the way in the Anglophone Caribbean but were also an important beacon for global anti-slavery movements, a voice on the ground, providing scathing analyses of slavery and apprenticeship.

Across the Atlantic, Wedderburn was similarly using publishing in his fight against the oppression of the labouring classes (enslaved and free). This short case study draws on two of Wedderburn’s self-published works: *The Axe Laid to Root* (1817) and *Horrors of Slavery* (1824) to understand his role as a publisher-activist. As Ryan Hanley argues in his superb chapter on Wedderburn’s ‘radical underworld,’ these publications offer an insight into Wedderburn’s thinking with the least editorial interference.⁴⁷ The timing of these texts was also crucial, *Axe Laid to Root* was published in aftermath of Bussa’s Rebellion (1816) and *Horrors* after the Demerara Rebellion in 1823.⁴⁸ This brief look at Wedderburn explores two points of

⁴⁴ Lent, *Third World*, p.43.

⁴⁵ Phillips, p.396.

⁴⁶ Razi, p.106.

⁴⁷ Robert Wedderburn, *Truth, Self-Supported; or, A Refutation of Certain Doctrinal Errors, Generally Adopted in the Christian Church* (London: Printed for the Author by W. Glindon and G. Riebau, 1802), ‘was far more stylistically refined and full of jargon’ than his self-published writings that were full of grammatical errors and far more reflective of oral rather than written discourse. Hanley, *Beyond Abolition*, p.212.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p.20.

importance: the ways that he enmeshed British and African-Caribbean radical traditions and the contexts in which he operated.

A self-taught thinker, whose ideology was forged from his experiences of poverty, racialised violence and migration, Wedderburn makes for an important case study.⁴⁹ An organic intellectual to the core, Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker describe him as an ‘intellectual organic to the Atlantic proletariat ... [a] central actor in the formation and dissemination of revolutionary traditions.’⁵⁰ Critically intervening in reform and abolition movements, through polemics and publications, Wedderburn defied the respectable politics of Olaudah Equiano.⁵¹ Confrontational in tone and militant in thought, his publications laid bare the myth of British Enlightenment. Alert to the gendered dynamics of this violent system, Wedderburn integrated this into analyses of physical, economic and psychological exploitation. Laying bare the rape, abuse and profits of slavery, Wedderburn used the case of his parents to demonstrate the inhumanity of the planter class. He explained how the impregnation of his mother with more “property” meant that his father’s ‘pleasure was the greater, because he at the same time increased his profits.’⁵² Furthermore, by using the metaphor of a ‘horse or pig’ being sold at Smithfield – Britain’s longest standing meat

⁴⁹ Wedderburn is described as knowing ‘the plantation, the ship, the streets, the chapel, the political club, the workshop, and the prison as settings of proletarian self-activity’ in Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*, rev. ed. (Verso: London, 2012), p.288. Montaz Marché is currently conducting doctoral research at the University of Birmingham on Ann Sancho, including her role as a publisher of Ignatius Sancho’s letters, paper presented at History Matters Presents: 2nd New Perspectives on the History of African and Caribbean People in Britain Conference, 7th-9th October 2021. See also Kate Moffat, ‘A Search for Firm Evidence: Uncovering Ann Sancho, Bookseller’, *The Women’s Print History Project*, 25 June 2020, < <https://womensprinthistoryproject.com/blog/post/20> > [accessed on 3 December 2021] who explains how with her son, William Sancho, who is often referred to as ‘the first black publisher in the Western World,’ they were listed as Castle Street Leicester Square, booksellers, in 1807.

⁵⁰ Linebaugh and Rediker, pp.289.

⁵¹ Paul Edwards posits this as a reason why Equiano was more ‘successful’ as an abolitionist leader in Edwards, *Unreconciled Strivings and Ironic Strategies: Three Afro-British Authors of the Georgian Era; Ignatius Sancho, Olaudah Equiano, Robert Wedderburn* (Edinburgh: Centre of African Studies University of Edinburgh, 1992). Likewise, Wedderburn’s forthright language of injustice is compared to Equiano and Mary Seacole’s self-improvement rhetoric in Innes, *Black and Asian*, p.58.

⁵² Robert Wedderburn. *The Horrors of Slavery; Exemplified in The Life and History of the Rev. Robert Wedderburn* (London: Robert Wedderburn, 1824), p.7.

and livestock market – Wedderburn’s language attempted to relate the system of Transatlantic slavery to his largely London-based audience.⁵³

Known as a great orator, his radical polemics would often attract audiences of over a hundred people.⁵⁴ Wedderburn’s oratory style transported African folklore trickster traditions to the lively alehouse debating culture of nineteenth-century Britain.⁵⁵ From writing in Jamaican Creole to raising money for printing, these oral traditions permeated and bolstered Wedderburn’s publishing. An embodiment of Black/Caribbean and British radicalism, his experience of enslavement and the broader system, in combination with his commitment to Spencean land reform, informed his politics and beliefs. He both drew on tools and ideas from his African grandmother who raised him, Talkee Amy the ‘noted Kingston magic woman’ and orator, and his grounding in London’s reformist underworlds. First-hand knowledge of land and property in Jamaica made him receptive to Spence’s ideas of common land ownership, the end of aristocracy and universal suffrage. He refracted Spencean radicalism through the lens of slavery – a system that was built on, and hugely entrenched, ideas of property, land, wealth and inequality. A migratory body and mind, his life and practice symbolise a conjuncture of working-class solidarity (that is repeatedly denied and whitewashed), which physically and metaphorically crossed racialised fault lines.⁵⁶

As a poverty-stricken man who lived on the fringes of criminality, how did Wedderburn afford to publish and print the *Axe Laid to Root* and *Horrors of Slavery*? Punters who attended alehouse debates and polemical sermons, for example at his chapel in Haymarket, would often pay a small fee on the door for three halfpence or

⁵³ Although Wedderburn imagined an enslaved audience, in reality it was ‘intended for a metropolitan audience ... no evidence has emerged to suggest that a single copy of the *Axe* was ever read in Jamaica’; however, this approach hoped to ‘inspire metropolitan confidence in transatlantic political radicalism,’ Hanley, *Beyond Abolition*, p.211.

⁵⁴ Iain Duncan McCalman, *Radical Underworld: Prophets, Revolutionaries, and Pornographers in London, 1795-1840* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p.125.

⁵⁵ Edwards writes about provocative trickster style sermons and use of the Devil in *Unreconciled Strivings*. He is characterised as part of a ‘tradition in which the memory of struggle was maintained through oral tradition One of the values of the *Axe Laid to Root* lay in Wedderburn’s willingness to bring this knowledge into print’, Linebaugh and Rediker, p.318.

⁵⁶ In *Black Atlantic*, Gilroy includes Wedderburn in his statement about ‘the long-neglected involvement of black slaves and their descendants in the radical history of our country in general and its working-class movements in particular’, p.12.

a monthly ticket for a sixpence.⁵⁷ While this went some way in covering printing costs, radicals were dependent on support from the marginal middle-class component of the popular radical movement.⁵⁸ Such relationships between working-class radicals and moneyed supporters were prevalent throughout the nineteenth, for example, T. Fisher Unwin, who published *Froudacity*. The London-based publisher and husband of Liberal politician Jane Cobden was a great supporter of radical causes. Publishing works such as these was a manifestation of their progressive support.

Furthermore, how did Wedderburn manoeuvre in British radical circles which were becoming increasingly nationalistic in their thinking and approach?⁵⁹ Supposedly radical publications like *The Lion* and *The Hull Packet and Original Weekly Commercial, Literary and General Adviser* remarked on Wedderburn's appearance in deeply racialised language, describing him as 'the colour of a toad's back' whilst castigating him for claiming to be a man of thinking and of importance.⁶⁰ Amongst these vile commentaries about Wedderburn, he simply was referred to as 'the Publisher,' which is revealing of his reputation – aside from these racialised characterisations – as that.⁶¹ Although Wedderburn was working in a very different environment to Jordon, Osborn and Prescod, they similarly had to assert their position in a world dominated by white ideas, power and publications. In the case of Wedderburn, this was within British radical and parliamentary abolitionist networks and for the others, this was against the plantocracy. All of them responded, in varying degrees, through a tactic that I term Creole pragmatism. This pragmatic commitment to freedom meant that these publisher-activists had to be strategic and flexible in their approach. Wedderburn's pragmatism is evidenced by his changing

⁵⁷ McCalman, p.129.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.153.

⁵⁹ Ryan Hanley, 'Slavery and the Birth of Working-Class Racism in England, 1814-1833', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 26 (2016), 103-123.

⁶⁰ *The Hull Packet and Original Weekly Commercial, Literary and General Adviser*, 3 March 1823, p.3, quoted in Hanley, *Beyond Abolition*, p.230. Another example of this racist stereotyping here: 'If Wedderburn's measure of talent were but served up in a better looking vessel,' from *The Lion*, 28 March 1828, p.36.

⁶¹ In the following article 'The Publisher's Preface: To Blincoe's Memoir' he is criticized for being in cahoots with Wilberforce, who is classified as only advocating for slaves of a 'foreign nature' and refusing to 'embrace the region of the home-cotton-slave-trade,' *The Lion*, 1 February 1828, p.145.

tactics, from the full-blown critique of British systems of power in *Axe Laid to Root*, to *Horrors* which was dedicated to William Wilberforce and, finally, *An Address to the Right Honourable Lord Brougham and Vaux* which departed from Wedderburn's anti-slavery and anti-establishmentarianism.⁶²

Black/Caribbean and British radical traditions are interwoven in the writing and publishing of Wedderburn. His work is emblematic of the coalescing of political cultures that transatlantic mobilities cultivated; and his publications exemplify the critical role of publishing in imagining, demanding and enacting freedom.

Post-emancipation and the Meaning of Freedom

Until the nineteenth century, white planter men, the likes of Thomas Thistlewood and Edward Long, who wrote extensive and grotesque journals of plantation life, dominated the vast majority of printed writing in the Caribbean. As the previous section demonstrated, free people of colour began to shift what narratives and perspectives were expressed. In 1838, following the abolition of slavery and apprenticeship in the Anglophone Caribbean, societal shifts laid the foundation for the burgeoning Caribbean press in the mid-nineteenth century, bringing the voices of the region's 'brown' populations into the public domain. As Fig. 1 shows, the post-emancipation period (1833–1865) witnessed the establishment of seventy-five newspapers. By nature of its newly 'free' citizens, the post-emancipation Caribbean saw the evolution of civil society that catalysed the development of cities and towns, and opened up domestic demand of newly freed slaves.⁶³ In classically liberal terms, post-emancipation civil society emerged through the development of the press, the establishment of voluntary groups and the creation of civic places; all of which provided a space from which the 'self-confident middle class began to emerge.'⁶⁴ Gradual attempts to increase educational access were evidenced by the growth of libraries, reading rooms and newspapers, but also specific laws, such as the Negro

⁶² Hanley, *Beyond Abolition*, p.232.

⁶³ Franklin W. Knight, 'The Caribbean in the Age of Enlightenment, 1788-1848', in *A Companion to Latin American Literature and Culture*, ed. by Sara Castro-Klaren (Blackwell, 2008), pp.228-246, (p.242).

⁶⁴ Eley, 'Nations, Publics', p.306.

Education Grant (1835).⁶⁵ Although the construction of free public libraries did not occur until the late nineteenth century, this interest in public reading and knowledge was revealing of a social shift towards bourgeois ideals of knowledge and democracy that echoed patterns of nineteenth-century Britain and were largely aimed at the upper echelons of society. Committed to challenging authority through respectable and pragmatic means, Creole periodicals were interested in what ‘the people’ thought and sought to influence popular judgment of political and social issues. The following section explores the contradictory nature of this new generation of newspapers, whilst arguing for their important role in disrupting discourses of white supremacy and cultivating alternative publics.

The end of slavery ushered in a new brand of racism which freed individual slaves whilst legitimising the domination of a nation.⁶⁶ Different concepts and applications of race and racism came to the fore as a means of engendering an acutely constrained version of freedom, whereby, ‘They would be free, but only after being resocialized to accept the internal discipline that ensured the survival of the existing social order.’⁶⁷ Hence, the newly ‘free’ had to manoeuvre an extremely repressive society, in which the careful negotiation of ‘cultural conditioning,’ ‘social mobility’ and the idea of one’s ‘proper place’ were pivotal for participating in civil society. Publishing was critical in early organised political movements, with newspapers offering a reputable arena to elaborate demands for meaningful freedom. Post-emancipation publications offer an insight into the consolidation of the Creole ‘brown’ class who occupied an ‘intermediary position between the European-oriented governing elites’ and the masses.⁶⁸ Their transitional location is evident in the periodicals observed; whilst

⁶⁵ Three years prior to the first Public Libraries Act in Britain, an act was passed to build free libraries in the Caribbean in 1847. See Beverley Hinds, ‘Historicizing the Carnegie library: The Case of Barbados’, (2008) and ‘Historical overview of public library development in the English-speaking Caribbean’, *Libraries in Central America and the Caribbean Region*, 81 (2011).

⁶⁶ Thomas C. Holt, *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, 1992), p.xviii. Although focused on the post-emancipation Jamaican context, tensions that surrounded race and freedom plagued the region as a whole.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p.53.

⁶⁸ Stuart Hall, *Familiar Stranger: A Life Between Two Islands*, with Bill Schwarz (London: Allen Lane, 2017), p.25. Holt classifies elite ideology as being created in ‘dialectical relation to the thought and action of Afro-Jamaican masses’ in *Problem of Freedom*, p.53 and Nehusi explains how oppression by the planter class fuelled middle- and working-class consciousness in this period in *History of Guyanese*, p.137.

emerging out of a post-emancipation energy to self-represent and challenge the political landscape, they were a continuation of the colonial newspaper tradition.⁶⁹ They are revealing of an inherent contradiction between ideas of liberty and race within the racial capitalist reality of post-emancipation societies. Pushing for freedom within the confines of bourgeois liberal ideals and structures, those very agitators reproduced white, colonial and elitist cultures.

The editors, proprietors and readers of these newspapers were largely the Creole 'brown' middle class. As the population of free people of colour soared between 1780 and 1830, dwarfing white populations on many islands, their struggle for legal equality, economic power and political representation gained momentum.⁷⁰ Heightened by emancipation, the white planter class began to fear the rise of Black and 'brown' power – and, perhaps, retribution.⁷¹ Troubled by the prospect of Black and 'brown' political representation and economic advancement, the plantocracy's ultimate fear was the 'threat to their supremacy.'⁷² Speaking in the post-emancipation period, Jordon classified newspapers like *Jamaica Watchman* as provoking the plantocracy's bitterness towards 'brown men for robbing the whites of their property.'⁷³ Hence, the largely-successful drive to make race and class interchangeable marked an attempt to deter this power shift.⁷⁴ Whilst emancipation had brought the end of slavery these societies were still predominantly structured

⁶⁹ See Cave, 'The first printers' for explanation of how newspaper formats copied the *Weekly Jamaica Courant*.

⁷⁰ For example, in Trinidad the 4,000 free people of colour in 1797 increased to 16,000 by 1829. Similar patterns occurred in Grenada, St. Vincent and Dominica. Kit Candlin and Cassandra Pybus, 'Enterprising Women and War Profiteers: Race, Gender and Power in the Revolutionary Caribbean', in *War, Demobilization and Memory: The Legacy of War in the Era of Atlantic Revolutions*, ed. by Alan Forrest, Karen Hagemann and Michael Rowe (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp.254-270 (p.258); see also Gad Heuman, *The Caribbean: A Brief History*, 2nd edn. (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), chapter 9: Race, racism and equality.

⁷¹ Gad Heuman explains how 'Brown' Assemblymen were a 'potentially significant force in Jamaican politics' who already had 'political experience in organizing their civil rights campaign' Heuman, *"Brown Man" Politics in Post-Emancipation Jamaica* (Kingston, University of the West Indies, Department of History, 1981), p.1. See also Holt, p.217.

⁷² Heuman, *"Brown Man"*, p.11.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.10.

⁷⁴ Holt, p.216; this fear had already been felt through rebellions like the 1831-2 Baptist War and memories of the Haitian Revolution reverberated across the Caribbean.

around the plantation economy, hence, the white planter class remained dominant, economically and politically.

The persistent exclusion of Black and 'brown' people from formal politics through acutely restrictive enfranchisement laws was a key instrument for slowing systemic change.⁷⁵ By excluding the majority of Caribbean society – women and unpropertied men (thus, most Black people) – from conventional political participation, alternative channels for the expression of political concerns had to be established. Hence, the newspaper became a space for political engagement, opening up the floor to those who could not vote and may never get the freedom to do so in their lifetime. Against this backdrop of persistent exclusion, a network of periodicals developed, building on the restricted voice of the 'free coloureds' during the slavery-era. Fulfilling the plantocracy's greatest fear – the loss of their supremacy – these newspapers presented a challenge to white hegemony in the Anglophone Caribbean.

In order to clarify the oppositional quality of the Creole press it is important to understand the media landscape of the Caribbean. Jacob and Joshua deCordova established the *Daily Gleaner and deCordova Advertising Sheet* in 1834. The longest-lasting Caribbean newspaper, it began as a four-page weekly advertising sheet, then expanded to a semi-weekly and fortnightly overseas edition, before becoming a daily news provider and literary outlet. The *Gleaner* ran alongside the longstanding *Jamaica Royal Gazette* (1780-1844) and the daily *Colonial Standard and Jamaica Despatch* (1850-1895) before becoming the island's principal newspaper. Located in downtown Kingston, on Harbour Street, the *Gleaner* offices suffered from a fire (1882) and earthquake (1907), leading to its temporary home in

⁷⁵ This intensified post-Morant Bay Rebellion as George William Jordon (Assemblyman & Baptist Preacher) and Paul Bogle were seen as leaders. In response to the rebellion, Governor Eyre ordered a violent repression which resulted in at least 400 deaths. Whilst Afro-Jamaicans held a significant minority in the mid-nineteenth century, in Governor Eyre's term only eight Black and 'brown' members remained in the House, Heuman, "*Brown Man*", p.18. Crown Colony rule returned to Jamaica and small islands followed suit, Dominica (1865), Antigua, St Kitts, Nevis, Montserrat and British Virgin Isles (1866). Richard Hart explains how even in 1884 only males possessing an income of £150 land, £200 from land/business or £300 from office/business had the right to vote. Hart, *From Occupation to Independence: A Short History of the Peoples of the English-Speaking Caribbean Region* (London: Pluto, 1998), p.84-99.

the Government Printing Office.⁷⁶ This is important to mention, as it indicates the *Gleaner's* position as an intermediary of the colonial state. A deeply conservative newspaper, *The Gleaner* has influenced 'public opinion in a way that no other medium has been able to do.'⁷⁷ Still running today, the paper has held the greatest market share of profits and minds for a long time. In Trinidad, the *Port-of-Spain Gazette* (1821 to 1956) – formerly called the *Trinidad Gazette* – was printed in English and French twice weekly; costing £10/annum it was targeted at upper-class Trinidadians. Published by the Government Printing Office, this further demonstrates the links between the colonial state and the press.⁷⁸ In British Guiana, *The Colonist*, founded in 1848, became the *Demerara Daily Chronicle* in 1884 and the *Daily Chronicle* in 1885 up until 1966.⁷⁹ Owned by planter, George Allamson McKidd, the *Colonist-turned-Chronicle* was a 'mouthpiece of the sugar planters, advocating a liberal immigration ordinance,' that would import cheap Indian (indentured) labour to replace the no longer enslaved Afro-Guyanese.⁸⁰ Founded in 1881, the *Argosy* was an 'undisguised, conservative and often reactionary voice of the planters' that sought to consolidate the position of the ruling class in response to the emergent middle-class.⁸¹ Hence, the printed press was an important arena for competing political movements, ideas and groups. The monopoly that these newspapers and their owners held over public opinion made them powerful political instruments that needed to be confronted.

As the Enlightenment was taking off in Europe, people in the Caribbean were also 'deeply concerned about their world,' with a 'new spirit of self-consciousness' developing in the nineteenth-century Caribbean, where locals expressed ideas about how they perceived their society.⁸² The notion of 'public opinion' was a recurring

⁷⁶ The Gleaner Company, 'Company History' <<http://jamaica-gleaner.com/about>> [accessed on 2 June 2019].

⁷⁷ Linda D. Cameron, ed., *The story of the Gleaner: Memoirs and Reminiscences* ed. by (Kingston: Gleaner Company Limited, 2000), foreword by Howard Cooke, Governor General p.xv.

⁷⁸ Directory of Caribbean Archival Institutions, 'National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago' <http://migan.org/index.php/national-archives-of-trinidad-and-tobago:isdiah?sf_culture=es> [accessed on 20 May 2019].

⁷⁹ Tri-weekly and then a daily from 1886.

⁸⁰ Telesford, p.4.

⁸¹ Nehusi, p.153.

⁸² Knight, 'The Caribbean in the Age of Enlightenment, 1788-1848', pp.231-33.

theme in the editorials, articles and advertisements examined here. What did it mean and what was its significance in the post-emancipation Caribbean? The increasing concern for public opinion demonstrated a desire for an informed citizenry, a recently expanded, yet still relatively restricted, public that could speak truth to power, through the press and other means. The following section examines how debates about the state of the press in *The Creole*, *New Era*, *San Fernando Gazette* and *Grenada People* were an instrument for a more abstract public discourse on the meaning of freedom. Taking a thematic approach, I explore the establishment of consciously independent Creole periodicals; their role in responding to and challenging censorship; and the perceived links between press liberty, progress and democracy.

Several publisher-activists set up newspapers with the explicit aim of representing and defending the rights of Afro-Creoles and the masses. They defined themselves in opposition to the planter class, who sought to thwart the social, political, and economic transformations that they were pushing forwards. In 1856, Clarence Brandon established *The Creole* in Georgetown with a name that revealed its focus on local political issues. The editor, W. S. Stevenson, championed 'the Guyanese-born (particularly those of African stock) against the sugar lobby.'⁸³ Similarly concerned with the vindication and defence of Africa and Africans, Samuel Carter and Joseph Lewis founded *New Era* in 1869.⁸⁴ Stating that 'We are not ashamed of the imputation [that] *New Era* is the organ of the coloured section of the community,' the editors were self-conscious representatives of the Creole middle class.⁸⁵ In 1874, Carter bought the *San Fernando Gazette*, expanding its provincial focus to include island- and region-wide 'constitutional reform, the ending of state-aided Indian

⁸³ Telesford, p.4; *The Creole* became a bi-weekly from 18 July 1857 (may have been earlier but there are gaps in BL holdings); to demonstrate a sense of the newspaper's outlook this article criticised the Governor and the whole administration as being 'at no great pains to conceal, a spirit of dislike or contemptuous aversion to a large class of Her Majesty's subjects', i.e., Black people, *Creole*, 22 November 1856.

⁸⁴ Bridget Brereton, *Race Relations in Colonial Trinidad, 1870-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1979), p.95.

⁸⁵ *New Era*, 6 November 1871. Bridget Brereton identifies *New Era* as consistently upholding the interests of the 'brown' middle class, becoming an important outlet for the 'grievances and aspirations' of 'educated blacks and coloureds,' in *Race Relations*, p.97.

migration, free and compulsory education, the opening up of the Crown lands.⁸⁶ Characterised as ‘the most consistently liberal paper in the later nineteenth century,’ the *San Fernando Gazette* situated the ‘independent press’ – thus, itself – as an unambiguous force for good in Trinidadian society.⁸⁷ Another recurring figure on the nineteenth-century newspaper scene was William Galwey Donovan. Donovan was ‘brown-skinned with a reddish beard’ and grew up with the Wells family, a ‘progressive and politically active family’ who ran the *St George’s Chronicle and Grenada Gazette*, which he regularly contributed to throughout the 1880s.⁸⁸ He went on to set up his own, more radical, paper, *Grenada People*, in 1883, its slogan, ‘A NAKED FREEMAN IS NOBLER THAN A GILDED SLAVE,’ reflected its historical and political origins in the post-emancipation era, positioning itself as a defender of the once-enslaved and their descendants. Although part of an emergent radical press, these newspapers were products of their time, advancing middle-class Creole interests whilst promoting European value systems. Creole publisher-activists perpetually navigated the radical and the respectable through Creole pragmatism.

Censorship and Control

Presenting a challenge to the planter class, the press quickly became subject to control and repression. Fears around censorship and the nullifying of public opinion were not unfounded. Recently ‘free’ – in name only – fears surrounding threats to freedoms were wholly logical. State interference and violent control of the press stretch across the period of this survey, including, but not limited to, incarceration, verbal threats, dismantling of printers, confiscation of funds, withdrawal of advertising, physical attacks and censorship laws. At a most basic level, debates about press liberty were a response to frequent attempts – by governments and powerful individuals – to curtail the freedom of the press.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p.96

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Cox, ‘William’, p.20; whilst the *Chronicle* had a lengthy run, for the purpose of this survey I looked at issues in the 1880s. Edited by Septimus Wells, son of Assemblyman, Dr William Wells, the *Chronicle* was a well-established yet independently-minded newspaper. A politically active family, the Wells supported constitutional change, representative institutions and elected municipal boards. Cox cites Donovan’s early exposure to this family as a contributing factor in his own political thinking – though the Wells were not quite radical enough for Donovan.

One of first mentions I came across was in the *Creole*'s front-page article, 'Freedom of the Press,' that covered an unfolding libel case in London. Expressing relief at the ruling, the article stated that if the case had been won the press 'would have been at the mercy of every wealthy public man.'⁸⁹ This article reflects how global concerns about censorship resonated in British Guiana, especially in a newspaper that was founded to oppose the powerful and wealthy sugar lobby. Thus, the ability to freely critique and hold the powerful to account – a right that was being threatened, even in England – was decisively important to the editors of the *Creole*.

In terms of local infringements, the 1884 Montagu Affair embodied how the close shadow of slavery was used to threaten the freedom of ambitious Afro-Creoles, who represented a threat to white planter control. A spat between Donovan and Governor Sir William Robinson, of the Leeward Islands, unfolded in the pages of the *Grenada People*. By exercising its right to discredit the Governor as a 'liar' who 'lowered the tone of public life in the West Indies' due to his 'immorality, treachery, and meanness,' the newspaper came under fire, with Captain Montagu (a close ally of the Governor) resolving to 'punish the editor of the *Grenada People*.'⁹⁰ On a mission to chastise to Donovan, Montagu 'wrote him a letter threatening to horsewhip him' and made preparation to wreck the newspapers' office.⁹¹ The overtones of racialised violence in Montagu's threat to Donovan were plainly evident.

Writing about the whole affair a few months later, the *Grenada People* stood firm against Montagu's – overt – and Robinson's – covert – attempts to 'intimidate and silence this journal.'⁹² This thwarted attempt to attack the paper was understood as part of a wider effort to quell the free press, for fear of its transgressive impact. To evidence this claim, the article stated that they were 'not the only West Indian journal, which Sir Wm. Robinson, regards with contempt.'⁹³ Likely directed at Montagu's abhorrent horsewhip comment, the *Grenada People* stated

⁸⁹ *Creole*, 24 January 1857, p.1; reprint from the *European Times*.

⁹⁰ *Grenada People*, 8 February 1884; *Grenada People*, 23 May 1884.

⁹¹ *Ibid*.

⁹² *Grenada People*, 15 August 1884.

⁹³ *Ibid*.

By our recent action, we have thoroughly brought home to Capt. Victor Montagu, and others of this stamp, that the people of the West Indian Colonies are no longer serfs, whose rights can be trampled on, or whose liberties can be attacked with impunity.⁹⁴

This statement epitomised how freedom was still being fought for, and still needed to be proclaimed because Montagu, and ‘others of this stamp,’ were stuck in a slavery-era mind-set. The reality of slavery still loomed large, as such, attempts to extend understandings of freedom, beyond mere release from bondage, were ridiculed by the plantocracy through the language of racialised violence.

Hardly an isolated incident, Donovan and the *People* came under fire a few months later, in the Reece Affair. Donovan was sentenced to six months in prison for printing an article which criticised the Acting Chief of Justice of St. Vincent, Mr. Isaac Richard Reece.⁹⁵ This unjust incarceration had an alarming effect on press freedom throughout the British Caribbean.⁹⁶ In typical *Grenada People* style, the paper reflected on the Reece Affair as an example of how ‘History repeats itself in a variety of ways,’ especially in ‘the history of journalism’ where ‘this repetition [is] remarkable.’⁹⁷ Identifying strong commonalities, the article cited Charles Wells, who had been the editor and proprietor of the St Lucian *Palladium*, telling of his three-year incarceration for ‘severely’ denouncing and criticising the conduct of Chief Justice Reddie.⁹⁸ The editorial fought back against this violation by drawing a line between repression and transgressive power:

The summary imprisonment of a journalist, is testimony to the power of the journal with which he is connected. If anything were needed to convince the public of Grenada, and the world at large, of the power and independence of the *Grenada People*, it is the incarceration of its Editor. From the moment the *Grenada People* appeared, it has been vigorous in its denunciation of wickedness in high places. It has spared no one.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ *Grenada People*, 7 November 1884.

⁹⁶ Cox, ‘William’, p.26.

⁹⁷ *Grenada People*, 7 November 1884.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

Persevering, Donovan continued to write from prison about the importance of the press for exposing 'official misconduct', especially in the Caribbean context where public opinion was meagre.⁹⁹ Released on 6 May 1885, Donovan resumed the paper's publication. As these periodic threats to the freedom of the press indicate, the *Grenada People* was a fundamentally progressive force in a deeply conservative society.

Press, Liberty and Progress

Drawing on Maddock Dillon's notion of a 'print public sphere,' where 'publicity and political freedom' intersect, this section views the Creole press as a potential vehicle to extend, shape and create freedom by visibly criticizing the plantocracy and colonial state.¹⁰⁰ As the visions and organisational capacity of the Creole press continued to flourish, it became an important space for discussions about progress and democracy, with each newspaper attempting to politically influence growing readerships. Recurring deliberations on the liberty of the press revealed the expanding significance that was assigned to public opinion. Debates about the public role of responding to political events and shaping communal judgement spoke to a rise of democracy discourse in the Caribbean. These discussions were premised on the idea that press freedoms had, and would, change the course of history. By highlighting the connections between press freedoms, emancipation and fighting future injustices, these publisher-activists presented the free press as a potentially revolutionary force.

The following article, 'Etchings in Trinidad: Public Opinion,' typifies these connections. Highlighting Trinidad's civil and social inertia, *New Era* claimed that it was

⁹⁹ Cox, 'William', p.26.

¹⁰⁰ Elizabeth Dillon Maddock, 'Caribbean Revolution and Print Publics: Leonora Sansay and 'The Secret History of the Haitian Revolution', in *Liberty! Égalité! ¡Independencia!: Print Culture, Enlightenment, and Revolution in the Americas, 1776-1838*, ed. by David S. Shields et al (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 2007), pp.133-153 (p.134). Faith Smith argues that newspapers, during the late-nineteenth century were a foundation from which to enter the public sphere, a 'forum for elevating and deflating men in public life'. Smith, *Creole Recitations: John Jacob Thomas and Colonial Formation in the Late Nineteenth-Century Caribbean* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), p.27.

not alone the nullifying effects of supineness which hindered the growth of progressive ideas in Trinidad; it was rather the want of the proper stimulus to a free, and healthy, exercise of an enlightened Public Opinion ... And is not the Press its marvellous exponent, whose mission is never to let falsehood pass unchallenged? Come, public opinion! Go around the squares, traverse the streets, and stroll along the wharves; have a quiet talk with Tyranny - and bid him desist.¹⁰¹

There are several noteworthy themes, firstly, 'free' public opinion – as aided by the press – is the cog of progress. Secondly, there is a blind faith in 'truth' and the belief that the job of the press is to never 'let falsehood pass unchallenged,' as articulated through Enlightenment language. This attitude reflects the colonial limitations of an elite politics of respectability coming out of this period. The final point surrounds the relationship between printed and oral cultures. The imagery of public opinion going 'around the squares,' traversing 'the streets,' strolling 'along the wharves' and talking back to tyranny, gives importance to the voice of ordinary people. It indicates that whilst public opinion may be directed by the press the actual work was done through movement of language, speeches, conversations and whispers. Moreover, this idea of having a 'quiet talk with Tyranny' emphasised ideals of respectability – do not shout at tyranny, talk quietly. By promoting the idea of upright 'rational' thought as the best challenge to injustice, editors set out to realise the liberal conception of the newspaper. This attitude and approach reflected general ideas about freedom in the period, which, whilst it expanded individual emancipation from bondage, was still understood in largely bourgeois terms. Conceiving the press and public opinion in classically liberal terms, such newspapers viewed certain bourgeois political freedoms – the ability to criticize – as essential in the development of public opinion. There was a strong conviction that a healthy free press would generate much needed public opinion. In turn, this lively culture of public opinion would help these islands and region, as a whole, to 'progress' and 'develop.'

The Emancipation Jubilee: Challenging Eurocentrism?

The following section examines a particular debate around James Anthony Froude's *The English in the West Indies: Or, The Bow of Ulysses* (1888) that unfolded in the

¹⁰¹ *New Era*, 27 March 1871.

Eastern-Caribbean Creole press. Prompting a flurry of responses, it became a critical moment in the development of intellectual challenges to eurocentrism. Occurring precisely at the Emancipation Jubilee, 1888 was a problem-space in which memories, critiques and demands about slavery and emancipation were percolating. It became a moment to debate slavery, political transitions, history and education. Alongside this, the 1880s saw a considerable rise in publishing output, with a cluster of royalist and jubilee inspired poetry, gardening and souvenir books, printed in 1887.¹⁰² The attention paid to Queen Victoria's Jubilee compared to the Emancipation Jubilee is revealing of the colonial mindset that ruled the region and also the way that book publishing lagged, politically, behind the press.

The most famous response to Froude's racist, poorly-researched and Eurocentric book came from J. J. Thomas's series of thirteen letters that were published in the *St George's Chronicle and Grenada Gazette*. A Trinidadian autodidact, schoolteacher and journalist, he moved to Grenada in 1888 for a teaching position. Working closely with the *Grenada People* editor, Donovan, he educated him in race politics and Caribbean history. Letters in nineteenth-century newspapers were an important and necessary space for intellectuals to make progressive arguments and encourage debates about race in the absence of democratic process.¹⁰³ Thomas contributed to Donovan's newspaper and several others including *New Era*. In her extensive exploration of Thomas' life and work, Faith Smith describes him as helping to make 'newspapers a powerful site for the performance of Black and Colored prestige.'¹⁰⁴ An important figure across the region, Thomas became a symbol of pride and of the potential of education.¹⁰⁵

First appearing as a series of thirteen newspaper articles, titled 'Mr. Froude and the Negroes of the British West Indies,' Thomas's public scolding of Froude is, conceivably, the most famous debate in the nineteenth-century Caribbean press. However, scholarly attention has been focused on the resulting book – *Froudacity*:

¹⁰² For example, *A Jubilee guide on Gardening in Jamaica. Twenty Years Experience* (Kingston: A. W. Gardner & Co., 1887) and James Rodway, *Chronological History of the discovery and settlement of Guiana. 1493-1668* (Georgetown; Demerara: Royal Gazette Office, 1888).

¹⁰³ Smith, *Creole Recitations*, pp.27-9.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p.29.

¹⁰⁵ Brereton, *Race Relations*, p.95.

West Indian Fables by James Anthony Froude – that Thomas travelled to London to write and publish in 1889. Describing Froude as an usurper, who disparaged thousands of Black people ‘of whom he knows absolutely nothing,’ Thomas used his historical knowledge to refute the claims made by Froude as ‘fables’ rather than fact.¹⁰⁶ Through this critique, Thomas wrote-back an alternative history of the region, one that considered the impact of slavery and emancipation, the presence of white guilt and the achievements of Black people. Foregrounding slavery in his analyses of the contemporary Caribbean, his writings on the state of freedom explained that ‘The average Negro, as a man, is physically and legally free, but ... it will be a long, long time indeed, before he shall have accomplished the intellectual self-emancipation.’¹⁰⁷ Conscious of the need for educational and psychological emancipation, Thomas recognised that true freedom would only come once they had dismantled the shackles of European modes of thinking, feeling and being. Thomas understood the political worth of history, how it could be manipulated and used to fight injustice. A self-educated man, with limited opportunities in a white man’s colonial world, who used his knowledge in the service of the masses, Thomas’ organic intellectual character is evident. In contrast to much of the Creole class, Thomas championed Black pride; he was part of a wider teacher-led movement including H. A. Nurse (father of George Padmore), Henry Sylvester Williams and Emile Maresse-Paul – one of the few nineteenth-century women intellectuals who, like Thomas, wrote letters and articles for the local press and had her work published in pamphlet form.¹⁰⁸ His ideas, and those of his ilk, spread far and wide, to students, subscribers and readers – in Grenada, the wider Caribbean and further afield. Thomas’ radical thought also translated deep into the twentieth century as an instrument of courage, criticism and canon-making.

Between April and May 1888, the *Chronicle* ran another series that confronted Froude’s book, titled the “‘The Bow of Ulysses’ Broken Up.’ Written by the

¹⁰⁶ *St George’s Chronicle*, 24 March 1888.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Emile Maresse-Paul was from a well-respected family of French free coloureds, from Martinique, and she wrote about education and religion (from an anti-clerical angle). Her known published works are *The Clericals and the Education Questions* (San Fernando, 1888) and *Le Nécessité des enterrements civils, et l’impertinence du clergé Dominicain*. Brereton, *Race Relations*, p.88.

mysterious 'Mars,' he described Froude as a 'historical charlatan' and condemned British colonial violence as well as colonialism's failure to bring advancement.¹⁰⁹ Foreshadowing the later work of Eric Williams in *Capitalism and Slavery*, Mars discussed Caribbean contributions to the 'wealth and power of England' through the slave-trade and sugar production.¹¹⁰ Overall, these printed debates demonstrate discursive activity, with critical engagement providing an opening to write Caribbean-centred histories. In the absence of public engagement with the recent history of slavery, as evidenced by the hostility surrounding proposed jubilee celebrations, newspapers that addressed this history were attempting to shift the historical discourse on slavery and empire.¹¹¹ In a short series of letters that Thomas wrote to the *Grenada People*, which were published as 'The Pioneers and Champions of Negro Emancipation,' he asserted that 'Ignorance holds a thick veil over the truth of the history of the coloured inhabitants of the West Indies.'¹¹² Thomas' sensitivity to historical amnesia and its suffocating effects on the region's Black majority reveals a motivation for writing history, an aspiration to demystify this past in order to help 'youths of colour ... know themselves.'¹¹³ In what would now be classified as a Eurocentric (mis)understanding, Thomas praised the actions of Sharpe, Clarkson and Wilberforce in the struggle for emancipation.¹¹⁴ In the nineteenth-century context, however, to classify emancipation as a cause for celebration was a controversial proclamation at this frictional moment of the 1888 Jubilee. Gordon K. Lewis writes that his premature death 'prevented him from writing the history of emancipation that was to have been his lifework' and given that his earlier series on

¹⁰⁹ *St George's Chronicle*, 28 April 1888. Mars was likely a reference to the Ancient Roman mythology of the god of war.

¹¹⁰ Ibid; Another critical look at Froude's work as a three-part series discussed the reality of colonial violence in the *Grenada People*, 7 June; 14 June and 21 June 1888.

¹¹¹ In 1888 there was ferocious debate in the pages of several newspapers about whether the fiftieth anniversary of Emancipation should be publicly commemorated.

¹¹² *Grenada People*, 28 June 1888; part 2 - 5 July 1888; part 3, 'Respectability and the Emancipation', 12 July 1888; *Grenada People*, 12 July 1888.

¹¹³ *Grenada People*, 12 July 1888.

¹¹⁴ Gordon K. Lewis makes the point that he was far less revolutionary than his Cuban and Puerto Rican counterparts that were waging nationalist struggles. Lewis, *Main Currents in Caribbean Thought: The Historical Evolution of Caribbean Society in Its Ideological Aspects, 1492-1900* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1983), pp.313-4.

Froude led to the publication of a fuller work, it is reasonable to imagine that 'Pioneers and Champions of Negro Emancipation' could have become the same.¹¹⁵

As these examples intimate, challenges to eurocentrism were courageous yet limited. Operating within a colonial world, where cultural and social frameworks were still heavily shaped by the dominant planter / metropolitan classes, the Creole press had to actively and consciously resist the imposition of colonial histories. Just because this was partial and, at times, contradictory, it should not detract from the landmark challenges and transformations that transpired in response to Froude's book.

Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, the nineteenth-century press became an indispensable arena for politicking. With the vast majority of Caribbean people being excluded from conventional political participation, the popular press became an alternative channel for representation; criticism of the government and ruling classes; and expressions of historical consciousness. A channel to explore, interrogate and expand the meanings of freedom and citizenship in post-emancipation period – through various tactics, and to varying degrees – these newspapers began to shift the dominant discourse of white supremacy in the Caribbean.

A productive lens to analyse the cultural, political, social and economic transformations across the nineteenth century, this print prism captures the contradictions between liberalism and race that embody the post-emancipation period. The newspapers and publications examined here perpetually tread a line between transgression and conformity, as Creole publishers attempted to balance the task of appearing respectable whilst advancing their own agendas. The aims of their political pragmatism differed, significantly, from the planter class that they were tactically emulating. What was 'radical' shifted over the period; from the militant abolitionist demands in the early-nineteenth century to more cautious demands for constitutional change in the post-emancipation period.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p.313.

The sometimes ambiguous status of these publishers and their publications should not detract from the radical break that they represented. Through critical and provocative coverage, they risked their personal liberty to expand the freedom of the people. The printed knowledge production that was rooted in the upper echelons of society – white planters, monopolistic newspapers and the merchant classes – did not go unchallenged. Inaugurated by the independent spirit of Caribbean anti-slavery movements, Creole press and publishing marked the advent of a long and varied tradition of struggles for freedom, independence and representation that was centred around but not restricted to the printed word.

Chapter 1 has identified crucial nineteenth-century ideas and cultural networks that shaped the development of later publisher-activists. This provokes a broader consideration of how press and publishing freedoms have functioned at moments of political, social and cultural transition in the Caribbean. Chapter 2 will explore how Creole and increasingly self-consciously West Indian publishing emerged in the dawn of the twentieth century. It analyses how the rise of anti-colonial movements across the region and the increasing mobility of writers, activists and publishers bolstered Caribbean publishing.

Chapter 2: West Indian Publishing: The Closing of the Nineteenth Century to the Interwar Years

*Dere is no land dat can compare
Wid you where'er I roam;
In all de wul' none like you fair,
My native land, my home.*

Claude McKay

*I've a longin' in me dept's of heart dat I can
conquer not,
'Tis a wish dat I've been havin' from since I could
form a t'o't,
'Tis to sail athwart the ocean an' to hear de billows roar,
When dem ride aroun' de steamer, when dem beat
on England's shore.*

Claude McKay¹

Published in Kingston in 1912 by Aston W. Gardner & Co., *Songs of Jamaica* is one of the earliest printed examples of Creole poetry. In the introduction, Walter Jekyll attempted to explain the structure of the Jamaican Creole language, classifying it as a 'feminine version of our masculine language.'¹ Introducing McKay, he informed readers that the volume offered 'the thoughts and feelings of a Jamaican peasant of pure black blood.'² Despite Jekyll's deeply essentializing and gendered framing of McKay's poetry, *Songs of Jamaica* gives us insight into the early blossoming of Creole literature. The duality of 'My Native Land, My Home' and 'Old England,' which is expressed in the combination of vernacular Jamaican language with 'English' verse form, embody the complicated and, at times, conflicting political cultures that this chapter observes. When read together, they signify the simultaneous rising up of national feeling and commitment to 'Mother Country' that proto-nationalist movements represented. Just one out of the 193 books that were published in the

¹ 'My Native Land, My Home' and 'Old England' in Claude McKay, *Songs of Jamaica* (Kingston: A. W. Gardner & Co., 1912). Jekyll was a planter who had a keen interest in collecting the songs and stories of the Jamaican peasantry, writing works that reproduced and appropriated this folk culture, such as, Walter Jekyll, ed., *Jamaican Song and Story: Anancy Stories, Diggins Sings, Ring Tunes and Dancing Tunes* (London: Published for the Folk-Lore Society by David Nutt, 1907).

² McKay, *Songs of Jamaica*, p.9. The book included an appendix of sheet music for certain 'songs.'

period that this chapter examines, it is also indicative of a Caribbean, especially Jamaican, publishing boom (see Fig. 3), with this collection signifying shifts in terms of author, language and audience. *Songs of Jamaica* introduces us to ways in which the dawning of the twentieth century witnessed a reorienting of ideas around nationhood, self-government and race consciousness.

As this chapter explores, this was the period in which federationist ideas started to emerge, with politicians and publishers envisioning future freedoms as taking place in a federal West Indies. A vastly productive publishing moment, this was neither coincidental nor distinguishable from the rise in consciousness that was happening across global, regional, territorial and individual levels.³ Whether it was a consideration of what it meant to be Jamaican, West Indian, Black, a sojourner or a worker, this was a key moment of public introspection, as evidenced by the types of publications that emerged during this time. Hence, this chapter asks, what was the relationship between publishing and the development of proto-nationalist movements? What was the role of history in constructing and imagining identities like 'West Indian'?

The 'West Indian publishing' examined here differed from the 'Creole publishing' in Chapter 1 in a few key ways. These publishers' visions of freedom had expanded beyond ideas during the post-emancipation period – extending their opposition to Crown Colony rule, they articulated the call for self-government. Hence, this era marked a shift away from what can generally be described as the reformist political agendas of the Creole class. The increasing awakening of race and class consciousness by the region's Creole Brown middle class led to a greater focus on the needs and demands of the region's Black masses within publishing content. Intra-Caribbean and diasporic connections were also deepened in this period, with mobility becoming even more central to twentieth-century publishing. The newspapers examined here were modern; they connected disparate peoples, ideas and events that went beyond territorial and imperial borders. Alongside published books, they helped to conceive West Indian and Black Atlantic communities that

³ It was as productive as the period from the labour rebellions to independence, see Fig. 1.

challenged national and imperial boundaries. The period under review in this chapter saw access to and interest in the written word being extended beyond elite and upper-middle-class groups. By tracking these changes, Chapter 2 examines the different ways that publishing functioned as a tool of protest and as a driver of change in the early twentieth century.

This chapter continues to examine the significance of historical thinking and the role of publishing in the creation of West Indian political identities and social structures. As an analysis of this period reveals, developments in civil society, urbanity, technology and education facilitated the emergence of public history through the growth of libraries, books, periodicals and societies. This, in turn, bolstered the very historical consciousness that this thesis argues was formative in the production of counter-identities, which at this moment was a federal West Indianness. Furthermore, it complements and extends recent scholarship on post/colonial print mobilities.⁴ In dialogue with Lara Putnam's critical work on 'circum-Atlantic' print networks and Leslie James' conceptualisation of newspapers as 'an expression' of the 'black international,' this chapter further corroborates how transatlantic webs of information-sharing and knowledge production were essential catalysts in the transformation of domestic and diasporic Caribbean publishing.⁵

The Library: history on the rise

The dawning of the twentieth century saw shifts towards building a 'civilised' and 'cultured' society, in part, through the creation of legal deposit, libraries, reading rooms and political and literary societies, across the region. The West Indian Reference Library was founded in Kingston, in 1894, as a section of the Public

⁴ Derek R. Peterson, Emma Hunter and Stephanie Newell, ed., *African Print Cultures: Newspapers and Their Publics in the Twentieth Century* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016) and James J. Connolly, et al., ed., *Print culture Histories beyond the Metropolis*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016).

⁵ Putnam, 'Circum-Atlantic Print', pp.215-239 and Leslie James, 'Transatlantic Passages: Black Identity Construction in West African and West Indian Newspapers, 1935-1950', in *African Print Cultures: Newspapers and Their Publics in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Derek R. Peterson, Emma Hunter and Stephanie Newell (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), pp.49-74.

Library of the Institute of Jamaica.⁶ In 1906, the first incarnation of the Barbados National Library Service was established in a historic coral-stone building through grant money from Andrew Carnegie (the famous philanthropist).⁷ In the same year, the Georgetown Free Public Library (originally named the Carnegie Free Library) opened its doors to the public.⁸ The development of these institutions were indicative of an elite and middle-class commitment to Enlightenment ideals of truth-seeking and rational knowledge. Almost in anticipation of the West Indian Reference Library's founding, legal deposit was instituted in Jamaica from 1887. Signed and stamped notes from the Registrar-General began appearing in many Jamaican publications, confirming that the book was received under Section 3 of Law 2 of 1887, entitled "A Law to provide for the preservation of copies of Books printed in Jamaica, and for the Registration of such Books." Strangely, I did not come across any equivalent legal deposit stamps in the other areas examined. This is a curious anomaly and may point to a more self-conscious and administrative effort not only to build a library, but to formulate a sense of proto nationhood in Jamaica.

In practice, public libraries were not free and accessible to all. At the West Indian Reference Library, paid library subscriptions started at three shillings for three months (though this works out as cheaper than an annual newspaper subscription at the time) and, unless 'recommended by a member of the Board' a 'deposit of ten shillings' was necessary.⁹ This implied a particular social network that the Institute of Jamaica imagined as its membership. Moreover, subscribers were not allowed to use the reading room facilities unless they paid an extra 'four shillings and sixpence,' or became a member for a fee.¹⁰ The Barbados National Library Service was open

⁶ The West Indian Reference Library's small collection was greatly expanded under Frank Cundall's librarianship from 1891 to 1937. As Cundall explains, the 'nucleus' of the Institute of Jamaica Library were the Libraries of the House of Assembly and the Council. Cundall, *History of Printing*, p.16.

⁷ The Trinidad public library was established in 1851 in Port-of-Spain but the Carnegie Free Library was not established until 1919 in San Fernando. Beverley Hinds, 'A Carnegie in Castries', *Caribbean Library Journal*, 4 (2016), 21-41: 1903-1916 (p.21). Carnegie funds granted to St. Lucia, Barbados, St. Vincent, Dominica, British Guiana and later Guyana and Trinidad. A problematic figure, while Carnegie supported Black communities across the Americas through the creation of libraries, he funded segregated libraries in the United States.

⁸ Georgetown Free Library became the National Library of Guyana.

⁹ Frank Cundall, *Bibliographia Jamaicensis. A list of Jamaican books and pamphlet, magazine, articles, newspapers, and maps, most of which are in the library of the Institute of Jamaica* (Institute of Jamaica: Kingston, 1902), inside cover.

¹⁰ Ibid; see short chapter on the All Jamaica Library in Morris, *West Indian Literature*, pp.46-51.

to the public every weekday from 11am to 5pm, and from 9am to 4pm on Saturdays, which prompts a question of who would have been free to visit the reading rooms at this time of day?¹¹ In all likelihood, the majority of those accessing reading rooms would have been people that did not have to work long days on plantations, as domestic workers, at the docks and so on. To have time to visit a 'free' reading room, at this historical moment, was a preserve of the wealthy and the leisured. Overall, the cost, limitations and rules of these libraries ('Strict silence is to be observed in the library') worked to create an elitist rather than inclusive reading environment that mimicked the ways of the 'Mother Country.'¹² Beyond these barriers, there was the fact that large swathes of the population remained illiterate. However, literacy levels were steadily increasing, reaching around forty per cent in the case of Jamaica (with another thirteen per cent that could read but not write), by 1911, which meant that significant portions of Black populations across the region could read.¹³ Consequently, elitist nineteenth-century reading cultures became increasingly shaped by the emergence of plebeian reading cultures, for example, through the publication of folk tales and books in and about Creole language.¹⁴

In conjunction with the growth of libraries, the publication of catalogues, bibliographies and guidebooks increased.¹⁵ The emergence of the 'guidebook' reflected another socioeconomic change in this moment – the start of the tourism industry. From the late nineteenth century, the Caribbean was set on its path of

¹¹ Rev. J. Evans Walcott, *Catalogue of the Books in the Public Library of Barbados* (London: Waterlow and Sons Limited, 1879).

¹² As Adakole Ochai argues, we must interrogate motives for establishing such libraries and how they became agents of economic exploitation and extraction. Adakole Ochai, 'The purpose of the Library in Colonial Tropical Africa: an Historical Survey', *International Library Review*, 16 (1984), 309-315; Alma Jordan also talks about 'The Library as Instrument for Cultural Diffusion' in 'Public Libraries in the British Caribbean. II. Other British Caribbean Territories' *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy*, 34 (1964), 258-263.

¹³ *The Gleaner Geography and History of Jamaica*, (The Gleaner Co.; Kingston, 1914), p.22.

¹⁴ For example, Michael McTurk, *Essays and fables written in the vernacular of the creoles of British Guiana*. Third Edition (Georgetown; Demerara: Argosy Press, 1899); James Speirs, *The Proverbs of British Guiana, with an index ... and a glossary* (Demerara: Argosy Co., 1902); Izett Anderson. *Jamaica Negro Proverbs and Sayings. Collected and classified according to subjects* (Kingston: Institute of Jamaica, 1910).

¹⁵ Select examples: *Tourist Guide to the island of Jamaica* (Kingston: A. W. Gardner & Co., 1893); *Catalogue of the Books in the Library of the Institute of Jamaica* (Kingston: A. W. Gardner & Co., 1895); T. Fitz-Evan Eversley. *The Trinidad Centenary Pocket Guide-Book* (Port-of-Spain: Daily News Office, 1897) and Frank Cundall, *Bibliography of the West Indies, excluding Jamaica* (Kingston: Institute of Jamaica, 1909).

tourist development that would come to problematically dominate its economy in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. *A Midsummer Trip to the West Indies* (Trinidad, 1891), the *Guidebook of British Guiana* (Georgetown, 1893) and the *Tourist Guide to the island of Jamaica* (Jamaica, 1893) are just a small selection of the travel genre that came to the fore during this period. As the tourism industry started to boom – partly an outcome of improved global transport technologies in steam and shipping – the Caribbean was set in a process of repackaging itself, away from the brutal narrative of slavery and sugar and towards a vision of paradise, bountifulness and fun, that infused paradise with modernity, through the portal of consumption.¹⁶ This emphasis on the guidebook in its various incarnations – travel memoir, directory, island overview and wildlife – continued through the early part of the twentieth century.

The establishment of libraries and rise in publishing went hand in hand. The period 1889 to 1918 was a significantly productive time for local publishing (Fig. 3).¹⁷ Facilitating the development of the historical discipline, libraries and archives provided ‘indispensable material’ for historians that helped them to ‘conduct their research, teach, and publish.’¹⁸ The impressive volume of output from the Jamaican librarian, Frank Cundall, evidenced this drive to define regions and territories culturally, historically and geographically. Given Jamaican dominance in the Caribbean publishing industry, this analysis of ‘national’ histories mainly focuses on the Jamaican context. Largely a result of its size, wealth and comparatively urban culture, it also prompts questions about the relationship between all of the above and the expedience of nationalist politics. This analysis suggests that Jamaica was

¹⁶ Many guidebooks also acted as directories, a clump of pages at the front and back would contain adverts for hotels, shops, eateries, transport etc. See Anyaa Anim-Addo, ‘The Great Event of the Fortnight’: Steamship Rhythms and Colonial Communication’, *Mobilities*, 9 (2014), 369-383 and Ian G Strachan, *Paradise and Plantation: Tourism and Culture in the Anglophone Caribbean* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002).

¹⁷ This increase in publishing coincided with a deterioration in print quality, which reflected the economic decline that the Caribbean faced as it adjusted to post-emancipation labour and social structures, alongside the sharp drop in the price of sugar. Cave describes ‘worn-out types badly set and printed without skill on defective presses by uncaring printers’ in *Printing in the West Indies*, p.16.

¹⁸ Lingelbach, p.88.

ahead of the curve in terms of printed engagement with historical consciousness, or perhaps it simply had the means to publish these texts.

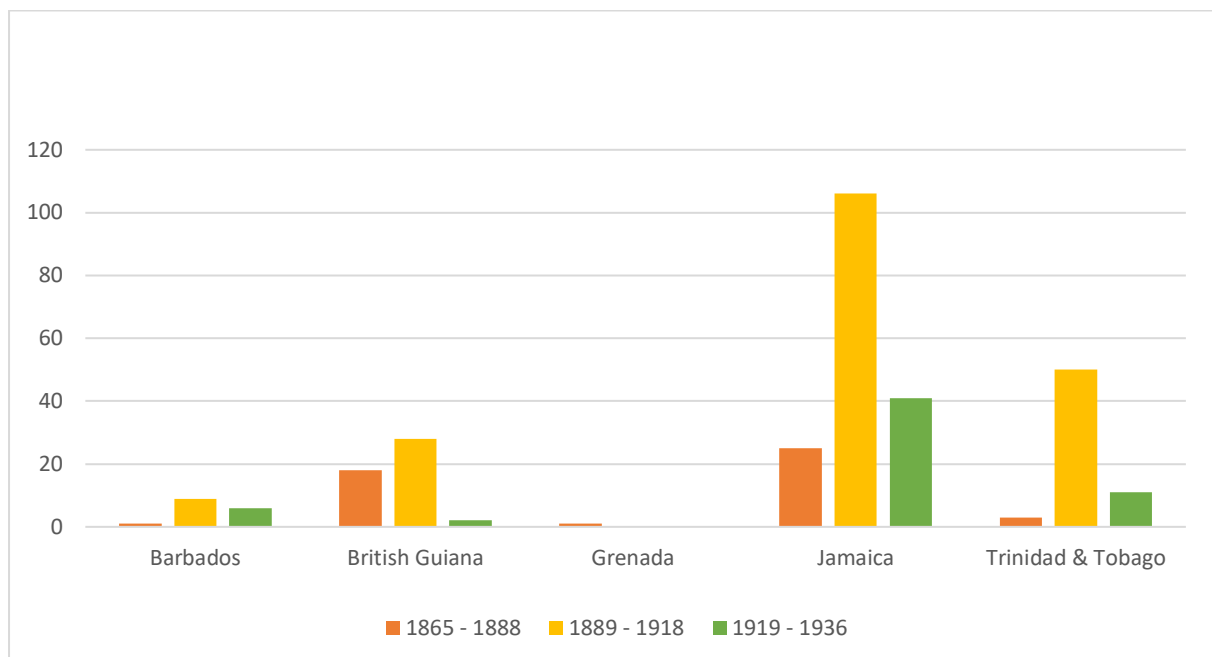


FIGURE 3 CARIBBEAN PUBLISHING, 1865-1936

From island chronicles, to historical novels and critical reappraisals, the idea of history, most frequently, HIStory, loomed large in educated circles. Reflective of an increasing need and desire for the West Indies to ‘know itself,’ competing views of the past and, thus, of the contemporary moment, emerged in publications. Through his position at the Institute of Jamaica, Cundall produced and reproduced a dominant history of Jamaica and the West Indies, which influenced other historians and textbooks. Hence, he was formative in the development of Jamaican and, by proxy, West Indian historical, literary and publishing traditions. Easily the most prolific author in the bibliography, having written thirteen books on Jamaican and West Indian history, in the year of his death, Una Marson asked, ‘where do we stand without the publication of veteran, Mr. Frank Cundall?’¹⁹

Cundall’s historical style memorialised great men as the drivers of history. Take his guide to the Jamaica Portrait Gallery, which elucidated his fervent belief in the history of the great man and the value of biography as a historical tool, by stating

¹⁹ *Public Opinion*, 12 June 1937, p.6.

that 'As mosaics are made up of a number of tesserae ... so is history in a large degree made up of a collection of biographies.'²⁰ Including 'personages' of 'three classes ... whose lives have gone towards making Jamaica history,' Cundall divided these groups into 'natives' who have achieved greatness at home; 'natives of Jamaica who achieved their fame abroad' and 'Englishmen who, as governors, naval and military heroes, ministers of religion, or men of science or letters have exercised an influence, more or less permanent, on the island's history.'²¹ Whilst *Bibliographical Annals* featured the likes of Richard Hill and Mary Seacole, it only included portraits of the English 'class.' This demonstrated a recognition of Jamaica's respectable Black actors yet reinforced a colonial aesthetic of white achievement and representation, whereby only white faces were featured as notable figures in printed books and on gallery walls.

Similarly linear views of Jamaican history, put forth in *The Gleaner Geography and History of Jamaica*, identified four distinct periods: the 'discovery of the island in 1494, to the destruction of Port Royal in 1692'; 'destruction of Port Royal to the abolition of the slave trade in 1807'; 'the years between the abolition of the slave trade and the Morant Bay rebellion' when the 'country passed through many misfortunes, and there was a great deal of misery and ill-feeling'; and 'from 1865 to the present time' in which 'Jamaica has been steadily progressing, and all bitter class feeling and race reeling has disappeared.'²² Initially published in 1914, it was produced as a 'cheap' elementary textbook for teachers and pupils.²³ Hugely successful and in constant demand, the fourth edition appeared in 1944.²⁴ Hence, the *Gleaner's* view of history became official history. The alarming dismissal of emancipation in combination with the assertion that race and class issues had 'disappeared' revealed what institutional historical narratives were being taught in schools and across broader society.

²⁰ Cundall, *Biographical Annals*, p.2.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Gleaner Geography and History*, p.33.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Cameron, *Story of the Gleaner*, pp.10-11. Even in 2000, *The Gleaner Geography and History of Jamaica* was updated and revised.

Histories of resistance were a rare occurrence in colonial Caribbean publishing. For the reasons which will be further explored in Chapter 3, around print monopolies and wider societal forces, this history was being produced and disseminated at the grassroots, through conversations, folktales and music.²⁵ However, there are rare instances of histories of resistance being told and reproduced within institutional history texts. Seventeen pages (a considerable chunk of a sixty-six page book) were dedicated to 'Instances of Resistance' in *The Gleaner Geography and History*.²⁶ From the Maroon Wars of 1728 to the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865, it provided a novel yet superficial index of Maroon and enslaved resistance across the Caribbean. Superficial, not only, because this timeline approach to history failed to understand the complexity that surrounded these moments of powerful insurrection, but also because resistance was only viewed as these intense moments of confrontation. Likewise, *Political and Social Disturbances in the West Indies* (1906) recounted the 'twenty-two disturbances of importance throughout the West Indies' that had taken place since Emancipation.²⁷ Tracing what Cundall classified as 'social disturbances' and post-colonial scholars would term 'uprisings,' the book provided a history of post-emancipation resistance in Jamaica, Trinidad, British Guiana, Dominica, Barbados, St. Kitts and British Honduras. These books went some way in carrying on the important work of J. J. Thomas who devoted time and words to promoting counter-histories. However, it would not be until a later period that writing about histories of resistance would be understood in more complex and holistic ways that truly challenged shallow and ill-informed colonial descriptions of the Caribbean. In due course, linear notions of history, which were markedly distinct from grassroots oral histories, would become challenged and inverted by a new generation of publishers who understood the importance of narrating one's own history.

Proto nationalism: the dawn of the twentieth century

As the previous section began to examine, newspapers, magazines and books are a critical space to understand the birth of 'national' and regional identities, politics and

²⁵ Rupert Lewis, interviewed by author (Kingston, Jamaica, 12 February 2019).

²⁶ *Gleaner Geography and History*, pp.41-58.

²⁷ Frank Cundall, *Political and Social Disturbances in the West Indies. A Brief Account and Bibliography* (Kingston: Institute of Jamaica by the Educational Supply Company, 1906), p.6.

histories. This increasing self-consciousness marked the start of a proto-nationalist spirit and the emergence of distinct 'national' and West Indian identities. The traditional public sphere was expanded through the growth of urban centres, the establishment of reading and writing clubs, trade unions and an increasingly popular press. Here, I examine the *Jamaica Times*, *Federalist* and the mystery surrounding Garvey's first newspaper, *The Watchman*, arguing that these newspapers extended the demands of their predecessors and helped to activate the movement for federation. Following this, there is a brief consideration of the linkages between the press and the emergence of political societies, further illuminating the transitional character of this period.

Whilst fewer newspapers were established in this period than in the preceding decades, it was still a productive time for the Caribbean press.²⁸ A watershed for the establishment of federalist-concerned newspapers, names like *The Federalist* embodied a developing sense of federation and nationhood. Moreover, papers like *The Jamaica Times* and *Jamaica Advocate* embodied a growing sense of nationhood.²⁹ As Fig. 4 shows, nearly all Anglophone territories established newspapers during this time – Jamaica led the way with seventeen. Lent's overview of commonwealth newspapers does not include British Guiana; however, the appearance of newspapers like *Reflector* (1889) and *A Uniao Portuguesa* (1889) reflected the growth of middle-class consciousness.³⁰ This was also manifest in the increasing frequency and length of newspapers. Many newspapers transitioned from monthly to weekly, or weekly to daily, and increased from two pages to four or more.³¹ Furthermore, as prices lowered, they became more economically accessible, meaning that they had a greater influence on public opinion.

²⁸ See Fig. 1.

²⁹ Bahamian Pan-Africanist and politician, Robert Love, who advocated for the rights of Black Jamaicans and educational access, founded the *Advocate*.

³⁰ *Echo* (1887), *Nugget* (1888 – Gold interests), *Gold Mining Gazette* (gold industry and owned by *Echo*), *Liberal*, *The Watchman* (1871 – Portuguese), *O Portuguez* (1880).

³¹ The turn of the century marked a period of consolidation for papers like the *Gleaner*. By 1899 the *Daily Gleaner* had a 'circulation of up to 30,000 Copies Weekly,' making it the 'Largest Paper and the Largest Circulation of Jamaica and the West Indies', *Gleaner*, 3 October 1899. It had also doubled to eight pages and became more focused on publishing literature.

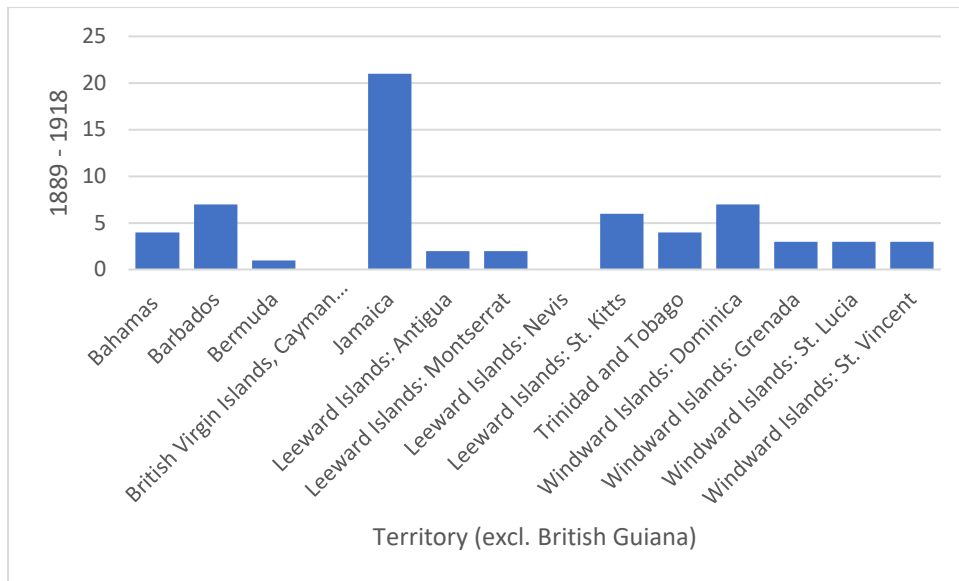


FIGURE 4 CARIBBEAN NEWSPAPER PUBLISHING BY TERRITORY (EXCL. BRITISH GUIANA) 1889-1918

Established in 1899, the weekly *Jamaica Times* had a somewhat rivalrous relationship with the increasingly dominant *Gleaner*. African-Jewish Jamaican novelist and journalist, Herbert George de Lisser, was the first editor of the *Jamaica Times* before being poached by the *Gleaner*, where he was to become their youngest editor-in-chief, a position that he held ‘unchallenged’ for forty years.³² In 1903, Thomas MacDermot – known as Tom Redcam – took over the editorship of the *Jamaica Times*. An early pioneer of literary nationalism, Redcam wrote for the *Jamaican Poet*, *Gleaner* and *Review of Reviews* before taking up the editorship as the *Times*, where he stayed for twenty years.³³ A member of the Jamaica Local Literary Association, founder of the All Jamaica Library and a supporter of the Trade Union of Teachers, he was committed to local issues surrounding education and literature.³⁴ Redcam was ‘Jamaica white,’ a person who looked white but was ‘generally known to be of African descent.’³⁵ A ‘contradictory figure’ with little personal wealth, Redcam became a representative of ‘Afro-creoles and nationalists

³² Rhonda Cobham, ‘Herbert George de Lisser’, in *Fifty Caribbean Writers: A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook*, ed. by Daryl Cumberdance (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), pp.166-177 (p.166).

³³ T. H. MacDermot, *Poems*, Tom Redcam MS241, NLJ, includes a handwritten biographical note on Redcam, ‘born, on the 26th June 1870.’ His paternal side of family were Irish and came to Jamaica in eighteenth century and his father was dedicated to educating ‘newly emancipated peoples, in which scheme he sank all of his property.’

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Rosenberg, *Nationalism*, p.33.

who supported empire,' a position that characterised much early West Indian nationalism.³⁶ Reflecting Redcam's vision, the *Jamaica Times* dedicated large swathes of the newspaper to chapter-by-chapter book publications and printed poems by unpublished authors on the front-page.³⁷ At its most progressive from 1900 to 1914, the *Jamaica Times* was supportive of the 'black struggle,' as well as proto-nationalist movements, like the National Club.³⁸ Redcam's importance goes beyond *Jamaica Times* – Rosenberg's scholarship locates him as a key figure in affirming 'the necessity of local publication,' and as influencing later nationalist-literary publications, like *Public Opinion* and *Focus*.³⁹

Established and edited by Donovan, the *Federalist* was the latest manifestation of his political campaigning. The paper's slogan, '*Unity is Strength; and Liberty is Life, is Progress, is Prosperity,*' symbolised its commitment to the idea of progress through federation. It also signified the appropriation of Enlightenment rhetoric and thought that characterised much of the Caribbean press at this time. More race conscious than its predecessors, the *Federalist* exemplifies the nineteenth-century origins of Pan-Africanism, Federation and Black radicalism. The publication of the *Federalist* was welcomed by radical thinkers at the time. In a letter written by Emile Maresse-Paul, the nineteenth-century intellectual that was briefly mentioned in Chapter 1, she stated her belief in the freedom of the press and self-government. Her letter to the 'Editor of the Federalist,' explained that it was not the lack of a press in Grenada but the fact that many of the existing newspapers were not representative of society because they failed to publish readers' letters.⁴⁰ Therefore, implying that the *Federalist* was a crucial forum for the public expression of ideas and political debate.

Grounded in the Black Atlantic political struggles of the time, the *Federalist* covered stories about South African politics and the trial of King Ja Ja Opobo to 'race riots' in

³⁶ Ibid, p.34.

³⁷ The *Jamaica Times* was 20-25 pages long, it also had a Women's Column, Teacher's Column and two full pages devoted to literary material.

³⁸ Cobham-Sander, 'Creative Writer', p.69 and p.262.

³⁹ Rosenberg, *Nationalism*, p.35.

⁴⁰ *Federalist*, 25 March 1896.

the United States.⁴¹ This was reflective of Donovan's increasing conversion to the Pan-African cause, which provided a framework to understand the linkage between African-Caribbeans and African people on the continent, in the United States and in Britain. This political consciousness became increasingly present across his newspapers. For example, the *Grenada People* extensively covered Henry Sylvester Williams' plans for the First Pan-African Conference that took place in London in July 1900.⁴² Alongside its news coverage, Donovan's papers invoked heroes such as Toussaint L'Ouverture as an assertion of the Caribbean's rich African, radical and cultural legacies.

Another key element of the paper's Black Atlantic approach was the existence of agents that were listed on the front page. For example, in January 1899 there was Mr. E. Maresse-Smith (Port-of-Spain), 'Sub-Agents' Mr. W. N. Allman (San Fernando), Mr. Chas. Lopez (Arima) and Mr. Robert O. James (Princes Town), Mr. Thomas Reeves Blakely (Tobago), Mr. Charles J. McLeod (St. Vincent), Mr. L. T. Augier McVane (St. Lucia) and Messrs C. Mitchell & Co and T. B. Brown based in London.⁴³ Whilst we know little about most of these agents, beyond the fact that they were mostly employed as barristers and solicitors, we have more information about some. Edgar Maresse-Smith, agent for Port-of-Spain, was the son of Emile Maresse-Paul (who had kept her maiden name after marrying Alexander Smith).⁴⁴ Carrying on his mother's radical intellectual tradition, Maresse-Smith became an important political figure in left-wing Trinidadian politics. Hence, his position as an agent for the *Federalist* served to boost the newspaper's radical credentials. The use of agents to improve regional distribution embodied the newspaper's federal vision. Interestingly, this model of agenting to expand outreach was a tactic used by later publishers as part of their diasporic operations and objectives.

⁴¹ E.g., 'Race Riots in New York' (cut from New York *Herald*, August 1), *Federalist*, 29 August 1900. See also Cox, "Race Men", p.76.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p.77.

⁴³ For example, by March 1900, McLeod had stepped down and so, the *Federalist* advertised for a new agent in *Federalist*, 28 March 1900, p.1.

⁴⁴ Bridget Brereton, 'Emilie Maresse-Paul: radical, feminist', *Trinidad Express Newspapers*, 21 December 2011.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20120217165924/http://www.trinidadexpress.com/commentaries/Emilie_Maresse-Paul_radical_feminist-136044628.html> [Accessed on 22 October 21].

Known as the ‘Grandfather of the Federation,’ his distrust of ‘white liberals’ was part of a worldview that saw federation as a means for Black people to gain power and advance politically.⁴⁵ This distrust marked a move away from the Creole pragmatism that characterised the political tone of many nineteenth-century publishers, including Donovan himself. However, an important continuity was the frequent linkage between press liberties and freedom from colonial oppression. Developing this link, the *Federalist* became the home of comparatively radical discussions on what the future held for the Caribbean.⁴⁶ Calls for federation ramped up, with the *Federalist* putting forward proposals for workers’ conditions and land resettlement.⁴⁷ Further voicing demands for democracy, Donovan formed the Grenada Representative Association in 1917, which advocated for a fully elected legislature.⁴⁸ The relationship between press and civil society was one of symbiosis. The press was seen as a mirror onto the social life of the Caribbean and therefore, as having a say on its future. Whilst adhering to, and even shoring up, respectability politics, publications like the *Federalist* harnessed oppositional elements.

The founding story of Marcus Garvey’s ‘first’ newspaper speaks to this oppositional trend. Garvey was a master printer by the age of twenty; he worked at one of Jamaica’s largest manufacturing companies, P. A. Benjamin. In the aftermath of the 1907 earthquake, that shook the capital, damaging every building and killing over a thousand people, workers were impacted by commodity shortages and rising prices.⁴⁹ One of Jamaica’s earliest and ‘most powerful’ unions, the Printers’ Union went on strike to demand higher wages in 1908. Whilst there is some debate over whether Garvey was elected to lead the strike, he certainly played a crucial role.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Cox, ‘William’, p.38. and “Race Men”, p.75.

⁴⁶ *Federalist*, 17 November 1897. - The Power of the Press’ from the St. Lucian newspaper, *Castries*,

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.31.

⁴⁸ Hart, *Occupation to Independence*, p.104. The Grenada Association was representative of similar associations that were formed across the Anglophone Caribbean in response to the curtailment of elected chambers at the end of the nineteenth century.

⁴⁹ For an insight into reverberations from Caribbean disasters, at a personal and societal level, see Christienna Fryar, ‘New Generation Thinkers: The Feurtado’s Fire’, *BBC Sounds*, 19 April 2021 and Hazel V. Carby, *Imperial Intimacies: A Tale of Two Islands* (London: Verso, 2019), pp.37-39

⁵⁰ In David Cronon, *Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1969), Garvey is cited as the leader of the strikes, whereas Adolph Edwards expressed scepticism about this in Edwards, *Marcus Garvey, 1887-1940* (London: New Beacon, 1967), p.7. Rupert Lewis’ most recent work on Garvey states that Garvey was

Blacklisted for his involvement, he eventually found employment at the government printing office before purportedly starting his first periodical, *Garvey's Watchman*, in 1909 or 1910.⁵¹ Its name bore homage to anti-slavery newspaper, *The Watchman and Jamaica Free Press* (Chapter 1) and likely George William Gordon's *The Watchman and People's Free Press* (1865) – a militant newspaper that encouraged the people of St. Ann's to 'protest against the unjust representations' of Governor Eyre, in the period preceding the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865.⁵² Strong political affinities between the Jordon and Gordon (the latter ran as a member of Jordon's Town Party) and the closeness in newspaper names implies a mindful creation of a radical print lineage that symbolised an increasing consciousness of self and of political tradition. By conjuring these newspapers, Garvey invoked a radical tradition of which he would one day be a prophet.

There is some mystery surrounding Garvey's 'first' newspaper. In a letter to the Chief Librarian at the Institute of Jamaica, Richard Hart queried whether the paper was invented by Garvey himself. Enquiring about the reference to *Garvey's Watchman* in Amy Jacques Garvey's *Garvey and Garveyism* (1963), Hart asked if there was 'any truth in this statement,' stating that he was 'sceptical' as he had 'never heard of Garvey's Watchman from any other source ... Except Garvey himself.' Moreover, Amy Jacques Garvey never replied to his letter 'telling her' that he 'was anxious to know more about the *Watchman*' several years prior.⁵³ The belief that the *Watchman* did exist has been reinforced in several biographical works about Garvey.⁵⁴ It was also mentioned in a publication file about Adolphe Edwards' book

'elected vice-president of the compositors' branch of the Kingston Typographical Union', in Lewis, *Marcus Garvey* (Kingston: University of West Indies Press, 2018).

⁵¹ Scholars of Garvey speculate whether this first unsuccessful involvement in a strike shaped his negative views towards trade unions later in life.

⁵² Gad Heuman, '1865: Prologue to the Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica', *New West Indian Guide*, 65 (1991), 107-127 (p.120-121). Colin Grant argues for this connection to Gordon's paper but makes no mention of the anti-slavery *Watchman* in Grant, *Negro with a Hat: The Rise and Fall of Marcus Garvey* (London: Vintage, 2009). For further evidence of this connection see history article on pp.105-6.

⁵³ Hart was referring to Cronon's *Black Moses* where the only citation regarding *Garvey's Watchman* was Garvey's own reference to it in the *New York World* on June 29, 1923. Amy Jacques Garvey, *Garvey and Garveyism* (Kingston: A. Jacques Garvey, 1963). Letter from Richard Hart to Miss Richards, Dep. Chief Librarian, Institute of Ja. 28 December 1972, MST1813, Richard Hart Collection, NLJ.

⁵⁴ There is very brief mention – two sentences – in Amy Jacques Garvey, p.7; Cronon, p.13; Edwards, p.7 Lewis, *Marcus Garvey*, p.6 and Grant, *Negro with a Hat*, p.23.

on Garvey, with a document stating that *Garvey's Watchman* was ultimately 'doomed to failure' due to a lack of capital, which is why Garvey 'packed up and left Jamaica in the hope of making enough money abroad to come back and continue his work.'⁵⁵ According to one of the most up-to-date biographical works about Garvey, written by Rupert Lewis, who assisted Amy Jacques Garvey with her research in the 1960s, *Garvey's Watchman* only lasted for three issues.⁵⁶ Either way, the story of Garvey's 'first' paper embodies the argument that the press was a vital political arena and a medium through which radical traditions were imagined and created.

Alongside publishing and labour agitation, Garvey became involved in the National Club. Acting as the assistant secretary, Garvey issued a pamphlet called *The Struggling Mass*.⁵⁷ Heralded as Jamaica's first twentieth-century political group who expressed nationalistic aspirations, this brings me to a brief consideration of the role that societies and associations played in the development of political and print based movements.⁵⁸ As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the emergence of civil society groups that came together based on job, interest or politics became a common feature in the Caribbean. These were an important precursor to the development of trade unions in the interwar period.

The National Club was launched by Sandy Cox in 1910. Cox, who was elected to the legislative council, also set up his own newspaper, *Our Own*, that was published twice monthly from 1910 to 1911.⁵⁹ Influenced by the Irish nationalist struggle, the

⁵⁵ Marcus Garvey 1887-1940, Publication File: Facts on Jamaica: Marcus Garvey (uncatalogued), George Padmore Institute [hereafter GPI], p.3. First visiting England in 1912, Garvey was confronted with his Blackness, having conversations with African and Indian students, dockworkers. During this first spell in London, he was employed by the *Africa Times and Orient Review* published by Duce Mohammed Ali – an Egyptian scholar. Emphasising the significance of migration and transnational networks in his political development, Edwards view this trip as seeding Garveyism, in *Marcus Garvey*, p.9.

⁵⁶ Lewis, *Marcus Garvey*, p.6.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.6, this pamphlet defended the club's founder, Cox, who had been suspended from the legislative council.

⁵⁸ Through these activities, he encountered Dr Robert Love (publisher of *Advocate*) who was an inspirational figure for Garvey and someone that encouraged him to travel, *ibid.*, p.7; see also Amy Jacques Garvey, p.7.

⁵⁹ According to Grant, 'Garvey lent his expertise in the printing and publication', *Negro with a Hat*, p.21.

paper's title was a mistranslation of Sinn Féin.⁶⁰ Typical of proto-nationalist thinking in this period, the National Club simultaneously put forth a message of independence through self-rule whilst also expressing loyalty to the British Empire.⁶¹ Publishing their manifesto in the *Jamaica Times*, the club required its members to pledge to 'do all he can to secure self government for this island ... to correct abuses by the Government and to put themselves in communication with those Trade Unions in England.'⁶² The desired link with British Trade Unions, in tandem with the push for self-government, uncovered the early role of working-class movements in the long struggle for independence. Whilst advocating for independence within the confines of empire, the National Club boldly restricted membership to Jamaican-born people only, due to a strong feeling that 'white men ... are not in sympathy with our aspirations' for gaining self-government.⁶³ This statement marked an important dissociation between Jamaica and whiteness. In many ways, a rejection of the Creole pragmatism explored in Chapter 1, the National Club identified Jamaicans and Jamaicaness as Black/Brown/non-white. Furthermore, the classification of white men as unsympathetic to the club's aspirations for self-government, i.e., a next step on the road to freedom, illustrates the historical, racial and class consciousness that grounded this proto-nationalist movement. Unsurprisingly, Cox and other club members provoked opposition from officials and local conservatives. 'Constantly under attack from the *Daily Gleaner* and the *Telegraph & Guardian*,' this illustrated how organs of the planter-class frequently defended the colonial state and its opposition to grassroots political change.⁶⁴

Not limited to Jamaica, middle-class mobilisation in British Guiana also came in the form of political groups, such as the British Guianese Political Reform Club (founded in 1887), the British Guiana Constitutional Association (founded 1889) and the British Guiana Progressive Association (founded in 1896).⁶⁵ Like the link between Cox,

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp.197-8. 'We Ourselves' would be a more accurate translation. Garvey was also heavily influenced by the Irish nationalist struggle.

⁶¹ Hart, *Occupation to Independence*, p.103 and pp.165-6.

⁶² *Jamaica Times*, 6 March 1909.

⁶³ Hart, *Occupation to Independence*, p.103.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p.104.

⁶⁵ In Nehusi, *History of Guyana*, he identifies the 1890s as the decade of British Guiana's middle-class maturation.

there was often a connection between publishers and political societies. Patrick Dargan, the mixed-race barrister and publisher of *The Creole* was also the president of the British Guiana Progressive Association and a member of the legislature. Nehusi describes him as the ‘the most dominant and fearless politician in his era.’⁶⁶ Evidently, the last few years of the nineteenth century and the start of the twentieth century ushered in a new cohort of publisher-activists and their associates. These political figures were becoming increasingly explicit and vocal in their class and race consciousness, as was articulated through linkages to pan-Africanism, self-government and trade unions. They were continuing the struggles of the post-emancipation period within broader horizons of what freedom might look like on a national and regional scale, calling for freedom from Crown Colony rule, in the case of some territories, and freedom from colonial governance, across the board.

Reinvigorating sedition in the aftermath of World War One



FIGURE 5 THE WEST INDIAN

This rise of federation and democracy discourse at the start of the twentieth century was temporarily diverted by the outbreak of World War One. The push to get behind the ‘Mother Country’ dampened the political rhetoric of outspoken newspapers, such as the *Federalist*.⁶⁷ This was likely in response to colonial censorship and a shift towards garnering support for war volunteers. Newspaper slogans boldly expressed support for the war effort, such as *The West Indian*’s ‘Send Him Victorious’ and ‘God Save the King.’ Founded by ‘Father of Federation,’ T. A. Marryshow, in 1915, the

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.636. Trinidad and Tobago the Working Men’s Association (precursor to later labour movements) was founded in 1897 and Pan-African Association, in 1902. See also Brinsley Samaroo and Cherita Girvan, ‘The Trinidad Workingmen’s Association and the Origins of Popular Protest in a Crown Colony’, *Social and Economic Studies*, 21 (1972), 205-222.

⁶⁷ Cox argues the *Federalist* became less political from 1914 onwards, in ‘William’, p.32.

pioneering nationalist newspaper's motto was the 'West Indies must be West Indian.' Moreover, the illustration atop each issue (Fig 5) visualised this federal dream of the Caribbean – although it excluded continental territories, British Guiana and British Honduras. Hence, the *West Indian's* support for World War One embodies the synonymy of federationist politics and 'Mother Country' commitment that characterised progressive movements in this period.

From the Bolshevik Revolution to vicious racist riots in port cities and towns across Britain during 1919, the period 1917 to 1921 marked a particular window of global radicalism that was then met with an escalation of suppression.⁶⁸ The interwar period was a volatile yet productive period – both politically and in terms of publishing – ushering in important shifts in periodical production, content and distribution. Upon returning from World War One, soldiers from the West Indies Regiment added to the 'general atmosphere of unrest.'⁶⁹ Strikes in Trinidad, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Trinidad, from 1916 to 1919, were symbolic of the decades that were to come. Whilst Hart characterises these earlier instances of unrest as fleeting in comparison to the 1930s, he acknowledges their foundational role.⁷⁰

In the aftermath of the war, there was a steady decline of newspaper production in the Caribbean; the number of newspapers established per year dropped to the lowest in a century.⁷¹ While there were various reasons for this, censorship rapidly intensified in response to the rise of radical politics and publications, in the region and globally. On 5 March 1920, the Seditious Acts and Publications Ordinance was ratified in Trinidad and Tobago:

An Ordinance to provide for the punishment of Seditious acts and Seditious libel, to facilitate the suppression of Seditious Publications, and

⁶⁸ There was also a mutiny of West Indian soldiers in Taranto, Italy, in December 1918 (and subsequent uprising in Belize involving some of the returned soldiers) and it was the 'Red Summer' of 1919 in the US. See W.F. Elkins, 'A Source of Black Nationalism in the Caribbean: the revolt of the British West Indies Regiment at Taranto, Italy', *Science and Society*, 34 (1970), 99-103; W. F. Elkins, 'Suppression of the Negro World in the British West Indies', *Science and Society*, 35 (1971), 344-347; David Featherstone, 'Politicising In/security: transnational resistance and the 1919 riots in Cardiff and Liverpool', *Small Axe*, 22 (2018), 56-67. Barbara Foley, *Spectres of 1919: Class and Nation in the Making of the New Negro* (Champaign, University of Illinois Press, 2008).

⁶⁹ Hart, *Occupation to Independence*, p.115.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.119.

⁷¹ 1.6 newspapers a year was the same as the period 1800-32.

to provide for the temporary suspension of Newspapers containing Seditious matter.⁷²

The act ‘banned a number of publications and created the offence of “disaffection” against the King, the Government and the Executive ... with penalties of up to two years imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £1,000.’⁷³ In effect, the new law prohibited the distribution of printed material that the state considered subversive, which threatened the freedom of the press and ‘the community at large.’⁷⁴ There was strong local opposition to the act from newspaper publishers and whilst it was not repealed, enforcement was relaxed.⁷⁵ Perhaps due to its oil reserves and refinement plants, Trinidad and Tobago experienced considerably tougher repression in comparison to the rest of the Anglophone Caribbean. Alongside Seditious Laws, there was the Habitual Idlers Ordinance (1919) that discouraged indentured labourers from leaving plantations and the Strikes and Lockouts Ordinance (1920) that prohibited strikes.⁷⁶ Solidifying preceding infringements, the sedition act was one instrument amongst a widespread repression following mounting workers’ resistance. The imposition of this act during a period of labour unrest – and its specific targeting of the certain publications and publishers – indicates the powerful potential that publishing harnessed, with publishers often being forced to battle against the very colonial state repression that they were protesting.

Recent scholarship on Caribbean print mobilities has highlighted the ways in which World War One effected significant change through its connected migrations that facilitated a spread of ideas, enabling a ‘new generation of men from outside elite circles.’⁷⁷ However, it has yet to explore the ways in which this ‘new generation’ not only included but was shaped by women, who became important print media

⁷² Robert A. Hill (ed.). *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers: The Caribbean Diaspora, 1910-1920, Volume XI* (Durham: Duke University, 2011), p.605.

⁷³ Richard Hart, *Caribbean Workers’ Struggles*, (Bogle L’Ouverture Press, 2012), p.60.

⁷⁴ Hill, *Marcus Garvey*, p.616. Hill and several other scholars claim that the act was largely aimed at blocking the sale of the *Negro World* (the voice of the U.N.I.A.), see Cox, “Race Men”, p.85; in Putnam, ‘Circum-Atlantic Print,’ she describes the *Negro World* as being disseminated ‘surreptitiously in the hands of black seamen’, p.218.

⁷⁵ Cox, “Race Men”, p.86.

⁷⁶ Hart, *Occupation to Independence*, p.117.

⁷⁷ Putnam, ‘Circum-Atlantic Print,’ p.221.

figures.⁷⁸ Despite these attempts to censor Caribbean publishing, the interwar years were a critical time for the development of transnational political networks and publishing.

Jamaica in the Interwar years: Foundations of Black consciousness

Founded in 1929, at Edelweiss Park in Kingston (headquarters of the Universal Negro Improvement Association), *The Blackman* was 'A Daily Newspaper Devoted to the Uplift of the Negro Race and the Good of Humanity.'⁷⁹ Costing a penny, the paper was aimed at an audience of reading working- and middle-class Black Jamaicans. This reveals how the UNIA were looking towards the working class for support and to develop their race consciousness.⁸⁰ *The Blackman's* unwavering commitment to Garvey's brand of Black Nationalism followed on the back of over a decade of hugely successful newspaper publishing in the United States and globally, through papers like the *Negro World* (1917-1933).⁸¹ Founded with the help of a thousand members, Amy Jacques Garvey, Marcus Garvey's second wife and intellectual co-conspirator, contributed a vast volume of material to Garvey's publications. The de facto leader of the UNIA following Marcus Garvey's imprisonment, she played a pivotal role in the shaping and dissemination of

⁷⁸ See Irving, 'Women magazine editors in the West Indies' for a rare analysis of Caribbean women editors that connects print spaces and emerging Caribbean feminisms in the first half of the twentieth century, including Aimee Webster (*Caribbean Post*, 1946-50) and Una Marson (*The Cosmopolitan*, 1928-31). It also recognises white women's complicity in the maintenance and protection of colonial thought e.g., a white British expatriate, Esther Chapman's editorship at *The West Indian Review* (1934-75) through which she publicised her pro-imperialist politics.

⁷⁹ Garvey was the owner and manager; John Coleman Beecher was circulation manager; Theophilus Aikman was the literary editor. It marked a shift in the UNIA's 'centre of gravity,' following Garvey's deportation from the USA in 1927. See Robert A. Hill, 'Introduction', in *The Black Man: A Monthly Magazine of Negro Thought and Opinion*, compiled with an introductory essay by Robert A. Hill (Millwood: Kraus-Thomson Organization Limited, 1975), pp.5-29 (pp.6-7). See Lewis, *Marcus Garvey*, pp.64-65 for an overview of the newspaper's set up. The release of the *Blackman* preceded the formation of Jamaica's first modern political party, the People's Political Party (PPP) whose aims were to expand self-government, down the imperialist government and to achieve education, land and labour reform for the Jamaican masses, see Manifesto in Amy Jacques Garvey, *Garveyism*.

⁸⁰ Lewis explains Garvey's political position and ambitions during this time, which included an increasing focus on the 'growing working class in the towns, the agricultural labourers, small proprietors and the intelligentsia', *Marcus Garvey*, pp.66-71.

⁸¹ Claude McKay called it 'the best edited colored weekly in New York' in Edwards, *Marcus Garvey*, p.13.

Garveyist thought, globally and after his death.⁸² A peak circulation of 15,000 evidenced the *Blackman's* success.⁸³ Furthermore, readership may have been larger due to practices of 'collective reception.' Whilst oral traditions were still the main mode of communication and knowledge sharing for large sections of Caribbean society, distinctions between the printed and spoken word were often blurred. Putnam argues that newspapers were an embedded part of working-class social life, being read aloud and debated in rural villages.⁸⁴ A common occurrence for Caribbean newspapers, this challenged dominant habits of reading about public matters in the private sphere, suggesting the possibility of a more 'active' and 'communal' usage of the newspaper.⁸⁵ Garvey's regular speeches and lectures at Edelweiss Park were one of *The Blackman's* main features. It symbolised a merging of oral and print cultures that came to be a prominent feature of Black/Caribbean publishing. Alongside this, it included opinion columns, sports pages, adverts and cuttings from other newspapers.⁸⁶

With race consciousness as the *raison d'être* of its paper and ink, *Blackman* represented a break with the often tempered and cautious mode of Creole politics. Interestingly, Black consciousness was promoted through a discussion of press freedom that was explicitly diasporic in ambition. In its first issue, Garvey defined the newspaper's launch as a 'new epoch in the history of the Negro race,' stating that he intended to have daily Black newspapers in

New York, Chicago, London, Paris, Rome, Capetown, South Africa, Nigeria, West Africa, and every important island of the West Indies, for the

⁸² Keisha N. Blain, 'Uncovering the Silences of Black Women's Voices in the Age of Garvey', *Black Perspectives*, 29 November 2015, <<https://www.aaihs.org/uncovering-the-silences/>> [accessed on 12 June 2019].

⁸³ Watson, 'Marcus Garvey's Trial', p.177.

⁸⁴ Putnam, 'Circum-Atlantic Print', p.224.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.104. This echoes the activities of the nineteenth-century British radical print networks, whereby speeches at 'public assemblies and informal political gatherings' were transcribed in newspapers. In Kevin Gilmartin, *Print Politics: The Press and Radical Opposition in Early Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.68.

⁸⁶ The material analysis of 'cutting' (reprinting articles from other newspapers), in interwar periodicals, reveals the role of this common practice as a new – and necessary – genre of journalism, which connected disparate parts of the African diaspora. James, 'Transatlantic Passages', pp.50-66.

purpose of creating and maintaining that sentiment that will tend to bring about a peaceful and proper solution to our world-wide race problems.⁸⁷

Rather than a mere mouthpiece for struggles against racist imperialism, the paper saw itself as part of the solution to the world's 'race problems.' Likewise, in the article, 'Growth of Negro Consciousness,' he described the journal as an 'unmistakable symptom of this mighty revival' of the 'Negro of ancient achievement and fame.'⁸⁸ This points to another critical purpose of the Black press, as a much-needed public space for vindication and representation. Conceptualising race consciousness through an inherently Black Atlantic framework, newspapers like the *Negro World* and *Blackman* were understood as the 'organ' of the 'consciousness of a 400 million group of the human family that seeks to express itself on the situation and condition of things as they exist in this Island.'⁸⁹ In this article, it is not possible to detach political consciousness from the press; were it not for the growth of race consciousness such newspapers would not exist, but were it not for these newspapers, these ideas would not have global reach. In Garvey's own words, the publication of an unashamedly Black daily newspaper in 1929 Jamaica was a 'fact of tremendous significance.'⁹⁰

Building on this argument about the connections between race consciousness and the liberty of the press, I want to pick up on Garvey's deliberate cultivation of Black historical consciousness by tracing (and therefore actively helping to produce) a Black/Caribbean radical press tradition. In a history article, 'Sweet Reminiscences for Reflection,' Garvey condemned the way that history was taught in Jamaican schools, setting out to educate its readership on 'Edward Jordon C. B. and the part he played in Jamaican History.'⁹¹ The article explained that Jordon held a rare position for a 'man of colour in Jamaica' at a time when 'the Negro, in this Island had no status, no rights, and few friends.'⁹² It described how this fervent anti-slavery campaigner 'used

⁸⁷ *Blackman*, 30 March 1929, p.1.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.4.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Blackman*, 30 August 1929, p.3. See Chapter 1 for contextual discussion of Edward Jordon and the *Watchman*.

⁹² *Blackman*, 30 August 1929, p.3.

his facile pen continuously in espousing the cause of the Negroes – slaves though they may be – and agitated for the abolition of the pernicious system.⁹³ Garvey's history of the *Jamaica Watchman* confirms that newspapers were an important, though scarce, space for opposing slavery. More importantly, is the recognition of this, by a fellow newspaper publisher, roughly a century later. Seeing itself as a vehicle for radical change, the *Blackman* – like *Garvey's Watchman* – situated itself as part of a longer tradition of a subversive Jamaican press. More than this, Garvey saw himself as the embodiment of this heroic story of struggle and, just like Jordon, he would one day be rightfully recognised and remembered. Hence, this article demonstrated Garvey's belief in the liberatory possibilities of the press, and of homage to a tradition on whose shoulders he stood.

Like its predecessors, the authorities and fellow newspapers, such as the *Gleaner*, consistently harassed the paper's owner, editors, contributors and vendors. Part of a general climate of censorship that continued throughout the twentieth century, this was felt through state-initiatives and personal vendettas – often from the merchant and planter class. As part of a wider elite effort to delegitimise Garvey's political movement, the *Gleaner* described Garvey as 'a dangerous element in Jamaica' in 1925.⁹⁴ Furthermore, in the *Blackman*, a notice stated a 'respectable' vendor had been arrested after he finished work at the printer.⁹⁵ Such arrests and extra-legal (although possibly state-sanctioned) attacks on vendors and print workers continued into the 1960s – with publishers and distributors of the Black power newspaper, *Abeng*, experiencing a series of arrests and arson attacks.⁹⁶

In 1930, Garvey, Beecher and Aikman were charged with seditious libel, a key tactic that the colonial state used to suppress challenges to its authority. In the end, the conviction was quashed for procedural reasons, which some scholars interpret as

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Quoted in Roxanne Watson, 'Marcus Garvey's Trial for Seditious Libel in Jamaica', *Journalism History*, 33 (2007), 173-184 (p.173).

⁹⁵ 'Blackman Vendor and Police', *Blackman*, 13 April 1929, p.2.

⁹⁶ The following articles reference *Abeng* officers or workers being attacked or the burning down of its printer: 'ABENG and the Law', *Abeng*, 22 March 1969; 'NOTICE!', *Abeng*, 5 July 1969; 'ABENG TO REORGANISE', *Abeng*, 3 October 1969.

indicating government ‘fear of the political repercussions of his incarceration.’⁹⁷ By galvanizing the masses, the newspaper aggravated and concerned Jamaica’s elites. Whilst the *Blackman* and the PPP laid some groundwork for anti-colonial movements, they also became ammunition for blaming the region’s slow development of trade unionism on Garvey’s particular type of race consciousness.⁹⁸ At its core, the *Blackman* was a racially conscious Black Atlantic newspaper whose existence symbolised the importance of publishing in the emergence of anti-colonialism.

Trinidad in the interwar years: A Beacon for West Indian Literature

The interwar period saw the coming together of a group of Trinidadian intellectual and literary figures who formed the Beacon Group. This was reflective of a flourishing magazine culture that was shaped by growing middle-class literary aspiration and nationalist feeling. The interdependence of ‘West Indian’ literature and publishing reveals a quest for identity through newspapers, magazines, books and pamphlets. In the near-absence of a commercial literary publishing infrastructure, these ‘little magazines’ were self-published as part of a middle-class do-it-yourself cultural imperative that strove to foster the literary tradition that they so dearly wanted.⁹⁹ Magazines like *The Beacon* and then *Public Opinion*, *Kyk-over-al* and *Bim*, that emerged slightly later, encouraged and promoted individual Caribbean writers and the notion of West Indian Literature on a grander scale. The following case study of *The Beacon* shines a light on historical, literary and political development in this moment.

The *Beacon*’s founders, R.A.C. de Boissière, Albert Gomes, Ralph Mentor, C.L.R. James, Alfred Mendes and Hugh Stollmeyer, represented the wide variety of Trinidadian society, in terms of ideology, ethnicity and class.¹⁰⁰ Whilst there was

⁹⁷ Watson, ‘Marcus Garvey’s Trial’, p.179.

⁹⁸ See Richard Hart, *The Origin and Development of the People of Jamaica* (Kingston: Richard Hart, 1951), p.27. ‘Factors Which Retarded Organisation’: Garvey’s Back to Africa and UNIA movement ‘diverted the workers’ attention from local economic problems (though on the other hand it did so much to develop racial self-respect among people without which no popular movement could succeed.)’.

⁹⁹ Irving, p.7.

¹⁰⁰ In Ralph de Boissière, *The autobiography of Ralph de Boissière: Life on the Edge*, ed. by Kenneth Ramchand (Caroni: Lexicon Trinidad, 2010), he calls this chapter ‘I Join the Subversives’, pp.52-78.

considerable understanding and unity amongst the group, tensions were present. In his autobiography, de Boissière describes how he understood C.L.R. James' somewhat tense personal relationship with Alfred Mendes who came from a wealthy and long-established Portuguese family.

Being black he was careful in his dealings with Alfie. He did not call him Alfie but Mendes, and Alfie called him not Nello, as we did, but James. ... he frowned on his flaunting of eccentricities. He had to make his way as a teacher, he had no father to fall back on.¹⁰¹

Lacking in class analysis, de Boissière failed to explicitly recognise how C.L.R. James' racialised positioning in this group, was also profoundly shaped by class differences – with James forging his own path through dedication to teaching and scholarship.

The group's mouthpiece was envisioned as an anti-establishment journal, hence, its 'enmity' with the *Trinidad Guardian* and *Port-of-Spain Gazette*.¹⁰² Published in a Caribbean territory with a large Indian population, the group was committed to representing Black and East Indian majorities and, in fact, attacked any West Indian publication that failed to do so.¹⁰³ Therefore, the *Beacon* was incorporating Trinidad's Indian populations into narratives of what it meant to be Trinidadian and West Indian. Covering literature, philosophy, history and science it was a space for frank and open intellectual debate – from eugenics to the history of East Indians in the Caribbean. 'Under constant attack from the merchant and planter-controlled daily press,' this led to an 'uneven existence.'¹⁰⁴ Samaroo posits that 'Its end came because it dared to challenge the status quo,' with 'fear of police action' intimidating potential contributors and advertisers.¹⁰⁵ This exemplifies how censorship impacted periodical production, whereby power was exercised in a way that curtailed the

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p.59.

¹⁰² Brinsley Samaroo, 'Introduction', in *The Beacon Vols I-IV*, New Introductions by Brinsley Samaroo and Reinhard W. Sander (Millwood: Kraus Print Co., 1977), p.i-xiii (p.i-xii).

¹⁰³ Ibid., p.xxiii.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p.i.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p.xiii.

ability of editors and journalists to write and print freely and regularly. This, in turn, obstructed the access of its readership to a regular journal.

The Beacon offers an interesting example of how written historical narratives developed in the press. Historical discussions cropped up in every issue, it was a literary arena for explorations of Trinidadian and Caribbean history and, by proxy, imaginations of what it meant to be Trinidadian and/or West Indian.¹⁰⁶ Regular features such as 'West Indian Glimpses' reflected on important moments or individuals from the past. The naming of this feature as 'West Indian Glimpses' even though its subject was often Trinidadian, indicates a conscious creation of a West Indian identity – something that *The Beacon* was committed to on a political level, through its support for federation.¹⁰⁷ Another historical feature was 'Trinidad: Then and Now' by G. S. Waby that explored Trinidadian history through his own life.

James' writing in *The Beacon* provides a lens onto his early intellectual development and his innate historical flare that would come to run throughout his thinking and scholarship. Remembered as one of the journal's most impressive and critical contributors, de Boissière wrote of his admiration for James' historically grounded anticolonialism – 'something that none of us possessed' – through which he used to deliver 'telling blows with history.'¹⁰⁸ Whilst his ideas around self-government were developing, it is important to clarify that the James of the early 1930s was not a Marxist. James in this moment was tied to English ideas of intellectualism and political change. Offering a unique glimpse into his non-fiction writing during his relatively short-lived time as a novelist, James described himself as a 'Teacher and free-lance journalist' who was trying to get his fiction published with 'some success.'¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Reinhard W. Sander, 'Introduction: *The Beacon* and the Emergence of West Indian Literature', in *The Beacon Vols I-IV*, New Introductions by Brinsley Samaroo and Reinhard W. Sander (Millwood: Kraus Print Co., 1977), p.xvi-xxiv (p.xi), asserts that the 'modern-day student of West Indian history is deeply indebted to the magazine for its many informed articles on the region's past.'

¹⁰⁷ Capt. A. Cipriani, 'Federation of the British West Indies', *The Beacon*, December 1931, pp.1-2.

¹⁰⁸ de Boissière, *autobiography*, p.59. Important to note that he's writing this with the knowledge that James went on to become an intellectual of global prominence.

¹⁰⁹ *The Beacon*.

James' eight-page piece on Maxwell Philip (1829-1888), Creole Trinidadian QC lawyer, novelist and civil servant who was Solicitor-General from 1871-1886, took up nearly a third of that month's issue. A serious piece of historical writing, for publication in a journal of this era, it marks one of the earliest examples of James' published political and historical writing. His first monograph, *The Life of Captain Cipriani*, was not published until the following year (1932), in London. It is an early example of James' approach to writing 'political biography,' whereby the biography itself was a 'means of doing politics.'¹¹⁰ James' piece starts with a description of Philip's courtroom style before setting out his typical slavery-era Creole origins:

he was a illegitimate child, off-spring of a white owner and a coloured woman on the estate. Nor would this fact be mentioned at all, but for the strong influence that it had on Mr. Philip's outlook on life.¹¹¹

The article covered an interesting mix of his impressive career and inner life yet did not explain very much about this claim that Philip's origins profoundly shaped his outlook – other than a short bit about how 'criticism made against him is that he did little for his people.'¹¹² What is interesting here, is James' deferral to English intellectuals and literature throughout the article. From quoting Shakespeare to writing about the wisdom of Gladstone, the James of *The Beacon* was thoroughly enmeshed in a colonial worldview.¹¹³ In the penultimate page of the piece he even described 'Froude, the Oxford historian, [as] one of the greatest intellectuals of his

¹¹⁰ Andrew Smith critically analyses James' early political development through *The Life of Captain Cipriani: An Account of British Government in the West Indies* in Smith, 'Prising Open the Contradictions of Empire', *Cultural Critique*, 99 (2018), 153-168 (p.154). Ralph Mentor's review of James' *Cipriani* book stated that 'the people of the West Indies must develop a literature and philosophy of their own ... In this crusade for self-expression, talented West Indian writers should invade every field of literature. Biography is by no means an unimportant branch of that art.' *The Beacon*, October-November 1932, pp.15-17 (p.17).

¹¹¹ *The Beacon*, September 1931, pp.16-23.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p.22.

¹¹³ Smith identifies a similar pattern, describing James' tone as 'Edwardian' and comments on his privileging of 'English intellectual authority' in *Life of Captain Cipriani*. Smith, 'Prising Open', pp.158-9. This is also indicative of the world that formed James, one of 'Protestant and middle-class' values and an education at the Queen's Royal College that aspired to 'an idealised kind of middle-class Britishness, and to the ethos of the English public school', in Stephen Howe, 'C. L. R. James: visions of history, visions of Britain', in *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain*, ed. by Bill Schwarz (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp.153-174.

time,' a statement that J. J. Thomas – who James' admired greatly – would no doubt have taken issue with!

Beyond this, he contributed to a vast array of articles, including a strident debate about race science with Dr. Sydney C. Harland.¹¹⁴ In 'The Intelligence of the Negro: A Few Words with Dr. Harland,' James dismantled the logic of scientific racism – debasing Francis Galton's eugenicist ordering of humanity.¹¹⁵ In what would become a definitive James' move, he used Toussaint L'Ouverture – leader of the Haitian Revolution, who 'had one passionate aim – the liberation of the blacks from slavery' – to demolish Harland's racist and idiotic arguments.¹¹⁶ Writing about Harland's absurdity, through the life of L'Ouverture, he captured the preposterousness of classifying L'Ouverture, the great military leader, who against all odds defeated French, Spanish and British forces, as 'Class F [of Galton's scheme], the lowest of the superior classes.'¹¹⁷ At some level, James was humouring Harland by engaging with a debate that he knew to be absurd, countering arguments that did not deserve a considered response. But James was also direct in his dismissal of Harland as an intellectual, moral or trustworthy man, writing: 'But what respect can anyone have for a man who in the midst of what he would have us believe is a scientific dissertation produces such arrant nonsense!'¹¹⁸ His rhetorical and playful tone about such a serious matter, which included lengthy block quotes from various editions of the Encyclopaedia Britannica marked a strategic peacocking of his extensive reading. James seized this expression of racist vitriol to write-back to the colonial canon by producing knowledge of obscured histories of colonial violence, Caribbean revolution and resistance. He highlighted how L'Ouverture, 'from the dregs of humanity into which the slaves had been turned by centuries of unparalleled cruelty ... formed an

¹¹⁴ Multiple articles as part of this debate including: Sidney C. Harland, 'Race Admixture', *The Beacon*, July 1931, pp.25-29, 'Correspondence' including a letter from Alfred Mendes titled 'Is the Negro Inferior?' In *The Beacon*, September 1931, Sidney C. Harland, 'Magna Est Veritas Et Prevalebit: A Reply to Mr. C. L. R. James', *The Beacon*, October, pp.18-20 – there is a note at bottom explaining that 'James will not reply to Dr. Harland and Mr. Alfred H. Mendes Because of pressure brought on by other duties.', p.20.

¹¹⁵ *The Beacon*, August 1931, pp.6-10.

¹¹⁶ *The Beacon*, August 1935, p.8.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.9.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

army. By 1800 he was master of the whole country.¹¹⁹ Beyond L'Ouverture, James also used this intervention to commend Black thinkers such as Booker T. Washington, James Weldon Johnson and W.E.B. DuBois, 'who in the face of every imaginable difficulty have fought and are still fighting the cause of negro emancipation.'¹²⁰ A great tactician in terms of writing, argument and history, James used such moments as an opening to intervene in critical debates around race and Caribbean history. So, while James' Marxist approach to history had not yet developed, the tools for critically and politically engaging with history were present at this stage.

James' debates demonstrate how even the most radical agitators were advocating for self-government rather than outright independence, in this period. So, in this jumble of a racially conscious yet respectable understanding of imperialism and power, the *Beacon* became an organ in the struggle for self-government.

The metropole in the interwar years: Black Nationalist and Feminist sojourns

The interwar period was a time of great mobility, in which writers, journalists and publishers ventured on political, intellectual and literary journeys to Britain, the United States and the USSR. These sojourns were critical to the development of Caribbean publishing, in the region and the diaspora. The following section examines how interwar London was a decisive space in the development of anti-colonial networks and therefore, radical/Black/Caribbean print cultures. This supports Putnam's classification of mobility as critical in 'setting the conditions for a multiplying non-elite press,' with 'Far-travelling editors, migratory readerships, and race-conscious organizing' as contextualising this boom.¹²¹ A time of political vigour, there were several diasporic periodicals being published in interwar London, such as *Wasu* (1926-1945), the organ of the West Africa Students' Union and *The Keys*, the

¹¹⁹ *The Beacon*, August 1935, p.9.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.10.

¹²¹ Putnam, 'Circum-Atlantic Print', pp.219-23; Leslie James also makes this argument in *George Padmore*, p.72, stating the important role of West Indians in the US Black press e.g., Cyril Briggs from Nevis worked for *Amsterdam News* before establishing *The Crusader* in 1918; Claude McKay wrote for the *Liberator*; Wilfrid A. Domingo introduced Garvey to his first printer in New York, then Garvey established the *Negro World*, which Domingo then edited before founding the *Emancipator*.

mouthpiece of the League of Coloured Peoples.¹²² This built on African publishing traditions that were previously established in metropole, for example, *African Times and Orient Review* (1912 – 1920)¹²³ and *African Sentinel* (1920).¹²⁴ This final section examines the relationship between sojourning, print and Black/Caribbean radical thought through Garvey's resuscitation of the Jamaican *Blackman* in London as *The Black Man: A Monthly Magazine of Negro Thought and Opinion*, in 1933, and Una Marson's editorial and publishing work.

In September 1933, Garvey was forced to cease publication of his newspaper, *New Jamaican*, due to the seizure of printing machinery to pay off his debts.¹²⁵ In response to this, it was decided that a 'new journal', *The Black Man: A Monthly Magazine of Negro Thought and Opinion*, would be published. A resuscitation of the 1929 *Blackman* in name only, the new journal had an 'essentially conservative' form.¹²⁶ Aimed at "'serious-minded and thoughtful" readers,' this departed from the mass appeal of his earlier publications.

Initially published in Jamaica, Garvey and the journal moved to Farringdon Road in London, the following November. In this brief examination of *The Black Man 2.0* I ask if and how the journal changed – how was Garvey engaging with African and Caribbean people in Britain and transnationally? Upon moving to London, Garvey sought help from Una Marson, the poet, editor, activist and producer, who had been living there since 1932. A focal member of the League of Coloured Peoples (LCP) and editor of its organ, *The Keys*, Marson was an accomplished journalist.¹²⁷ Temporarily acting as Garvey's personal secretary, in 1935, Marson also wrote articles for *The Black Man*.¹²⁸ Hence, Amy Ashwood and Amy Jacques Garvey were

¹²² In *Black London*, Matera reconstructs interwar 'Black London' as a critical arena in the fermenting of transnational Black politics, intellectual production, artistic creation and diasporic realisation.

¹²³ The British government censored the paper, forcing it to pause for two years during World War 1.

¹²⁴ Published by I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson

¹²⁵ Amy Jacques Garvey, p.218.

¹²⁶ Hill, 'Introduction', pp.15-16. This periodical also saw the articulation of Black fascism, with articles praising Hitler. See also Paul Gilroy, 'Black Fascism', *Transition*, 81/82 (2000), 70-91.

¹²⁷ Marson's first poetry collection, *Tropic Reveries* was published in 1930. Prior to this, she was the editor at *The Cosmopolitan* (1928-1932), the monthly journal for the Jamaica Stenographers' Association. See Leah Rosenberg, 'Modern Romances: the short stories of Una Marson's in "The Cosmopolitan" (1928-1931)', *Journal of West Indian Literature*, 12 (2004), 170-183.

¹²⁸ Rastafari in Motion, 'Three women for Ethiopia' < <http://www.rastafari-in-motion.org/una-marson.html>> [accessed on 13 May 2019].

not the only women that Marcus Garvey relied upon – though often without recognition – to fulfil his political publishing vision.¹²⁹ Robert Hill describes *The Black Man* as his ‘final political organ’ and I view it as Garvey’s last ego project.¹³⁰ The majority of articles were written by him and every front page featured a proverb, poem or motivational saying from the man himself. As the journal developed, an increasing volume of content was authored by others, as well as ‘cutting’ articles from other sources. Although published in London, *The Black Man* was circulated in the USA, as evidenced by a letter from Garvey to Thomas W. Harvey, a magazine distributor based in Philadelphia. Outlining details about payment for Harvey’s ‘sales of Black Man Magazine,’ Garvey informed his distributor that the April 1937 issue would soon be despatched.¹³¹ Reflective of Garvey’s migratory existence, *The Black Man* addressed racial matters through a transnational framework, with an increasing focus on African American achievement as a model for racial uplift.

Part of a broader emergence of twentieth-century Black radical print in the metropole, explicitly demarcated ‘Black’ publications were, in part, a response to the dominance of the ‘white newspapers.’ In an article titled ‘The Press and Its Influence,’ *The Black Man* warned that ‘Negro readers ... should not swallow blindly what is published in white newspapers.’¹³² This statement about not swallowing ‘blindly’ marked an important critique of the media, challenging ideas of universality and conceptualisations of truth which were so often associated with the press. Pointing to the corrupt nature of the daily press, it stressed the problems that arose when all the dailies were ‘under the ownership of big capital.’¹³³ Such a view expressly illustrates why the periodicals in this study should be located in opposition to dominant publishing structures, as they explicitly defined themselves as distinct from the imperial and capitalistic press which so often debased or ignored Black life.

¹²⁹ Garvey’s first wife was Amy Ashwood Garvey with whom he founded the UNIA. Ashwood Garvey became a very important figure in inter-war and post-war Pan-African and British politics and helped to organise and spoke at the critical 1945 Pan-African Congress in Manchester.

¹³⁰ Changed from *Blackman* to *Black Man* after sixth issue.

¹³¹ Letter from Marcus Garvey to Thomas W. Harvey in Philadelphia (on The Black Man headed stationery), April 15, 1937 [Online] <<http://www.garveyfoundation.com/archives/images/journalLetter.gif>> [accessed on 13 May 2019].

¹³² *Black Man*, Late July 1935, p.1.

¹³³ Ibid.

Garvey's last journal signifies a close connection between print, activism and history. Aside from its political utility, he had 'developed an insatiable thirst' for African history since his first London sojourn when he worked for the *African Times and Orient Review*.¹³⁴ *Black Man* offered Garvey a serious space to explore these historical ideas through series and one-off features. Garvey's series, 'A Dialogue: What's the Difference?', used an imaginary conversation between father and son, to discuss African history, the lingering impact of slavery and critiques of mainstream history.¹³⁵ Like much of Garvey's content, it reflected speech and conversation.¹³⁶ Promoting race consciousness and unity through a typical Garveyesque masculinist world view, the father tells his son that

Africa's history, my boy, is really not written, and so you may know very little of the past by the reading of present day books ... You cannot ... trust facts of Africa from the white man's point of view.¹³⁷

Encouraging cultural knowledge reproduction through the family – passing history down from father to son – this series conveyed Garvey's belief in the role of men to 'uplift' the 'race,' during the 1930s. Perhaps this was also a public articulation of Garvey's inner desire to have to learnt about African history this way, from his own father. Furthermore, by alerting the 'son' to the corruption and prejudice that saturated traditional sources of historical knowledge, this series compelled readers to repel the negative impacts that colonial histories engendered by taking a critical interest in history. An earlier article in the series described the 'father' telling his son that 'Instead of wanting to be George Washington and Abraham Lincoln or a Disraeli or Lord Chatham you should try to be a Toussaint L'Ouverture, a Hannibal, a Booker T. Washington.'¹³⁸ Again, this echoes Garvey's Americanised ideas of racial uplift

¹³⁴ Edwards, p.8; see also Amy Jacques Garvey, p.10. He also attended lectures at Birkbeck University.

¹³⁵ *Black Man*, June 1935, pp.10-12: Chapter II – late July 1935, pp.13-16; Chapter III – August-September 1935, pp.12-15; Chapter IV – Late October 1935, pp.19-20; Chapter V – Late December 1935, pp.15-17.

¹³⁶The bulk of material in the *Blackman* and *Black Man* consisted of printed copies of Garvey's speeches, making the journal a kind of halfway point between the spoken and the written.

¹³⁷ *Black Man*, Late October 1935, p.20.

¹³⁸ *Black Man*, June 1935, p.11.

that intensified in the latter period of his life and became increasingly male-focused.¹³⁹

Another standout historical article, 'Why Is the Black Man Here?', came from Chicago-based Peter M. Easley.¹⁴⁰ It castigated the 'Gentile' who 'made a bloody path across Africa and Asia ... his fingers ... dripping in black men's blood.'¹⁴¹ Such vivid imagery of the coloniser 'dripping in black men's blood' is indicative of a masculine mode of anti-colonialism that erased the violence perpetrated against Black women. In similar vein to the Easley article, another frequent contributor, Eric Walrond, wrote articles that connected the contemporary situation of Black people to histories of colonialism.¹⁴² Criticising the falsehood of emancipation, Walrond named the colonial and racialised capitalist system as a key reason for injustice.¹⁴³ For Garvey, history was another means to instil race pride. His location, in London – the imperial metropolis that paid no attention to African and Caribbean history – might also have intensified this need for historical intervention. While Garvey's last journal took an international approach to these histories, it became increasingly Americanised, as much of the content in the journal did.

An increasingly prominent figure in anti-colonial networks, Una Marson served African and Caribbean diasporic communities through her work for *The Black Man*, *The Keys*, *Public Opinion*, International Friends of Abyssinia, assisting Haile Selassie, her poetry and the BBC.¹⁴⁴ An anti-colonial feminist activist, she lived in London for several years during the 1930s and 1940s. During her first London sojourn, Marson travelled through Europe attending feminist conventions, notably

¹³⁹ In Beryl Satter, 'Marcus Garvey, Father Divine and the Gender Politics of Race Difference and Race Neutrality', *American Quarterly*, 48 (1996), pp.43-76 she argues that Garvey lost his interest in 'the role of black women in racial uplift' by the mid-1930 with his School of African Philosophy assuming a male audience, p.60.

¹⁴⁰ *Black Man*, March-April 1937, pp.13-14.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² *Black Man*, August 1937, pp.9-10; Walrond was the assistant editor of the *Negro World*.

¹⁴³ *Black Man*, March 1938, pp.4-5. His Marxist analysis of post-Emancipation society differed from Garvey's standard approach.

¹⁴⁴ See 'Jamaican Girl Who Was Personal Secretary to Haile Selassie', *Daily Gleaner*, 25 September 1936, p.17. For more on Marson see Delia Jarrett-Macauley, *The life of Una Marson 1905-1965* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998) and Alison Donnell, 'Una Marson: feminism, anti-colonialism and a forgotten fight for freedom', in *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain*, ed. by Bill Schwarz (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp.114-131.

visiting Istanbul for an international woman's conference.¹⁴⁵ Internationalist in her outlook, her time abroad had a profound impact on her politics, poetry and personality. Living between London and Jamaica, she became one of the BBC's first Black producers. She produced *Calling the West Indies*, which, under her direction, evolved into *Caribbean Voices*. Instrumental in bolstering Caribbean literature, it is only logical that she continued on this mission upon her return to Jamaica, where she was a driving force in local publishing, as Chapter 3 will explore.

A quarterly magazine, *The Keys* brought together LCP updates, integrationist politics, vindictory news and literature.¹⁴⁶ Although Harold Moody was the president of the LCP, Una Marson played a vital role in the day-to-day running of the journal, starting off as assistant secretary and later becoming editor. A diasporic publication, its editorial board was comprised of members from the Caribbean's smallest islands to West Africa. Couched in an integrationist tone – distancing it from journals like Garvey's *Black Man* – even its name evoked the 'the harmonious co-operation of the races' through the imagery of the black and white keys of a piano.¹⁴⁷ Much like the other publications of this moment, the LCP used its mouthpiece to push for racial justice, in part, by countering the control, censorship and dominance of colonial rule. In 1934, the *Keys* published an editorial about the 'power of the press' in bringing 'our cause before the scattered millions of the British Empire' stating that:

the pigment of our skin bars us from taking our rightful place at the table of Empire...Let the Union Jack wave, but only let it wave over an Empire where there is equality of opportunity regardless of race.¹⁴⁸

Whilst cloaked in language of pro-imperial respectability, the editorial unambiguously invoked a consciousness of racial discrimination.

Upon her return to Jamaica, Marson self-published what would become her best known and most praised poetry collection, *The Moth and the Star* (1937). It was

¹⁴⁵ *Daily Gleaner*, 28 September 1936, p.5.

¹⁴⁶ E.g. LCP Events, conference summaries, speeches and photographs, short stories, poems, international coverage e.g. Labour Rebellions, the Italo-Abyssinian War, history essays, features on black students, predicament of race relations in Britain.

¹⁴⁷ *The Keys*, January 1934, pp.41-2.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

printed by the Gleaner Company but Marson published it herself – which established an important pattern of hers, whereby she strategically used the Gleaner Company to promote her own and Jamaican literature more generally (see Chapter 3). This collection of poems reflected on her racialised experience of London whilst also expressing a belief in Garvey’s Black-is-beautiful ideology. In ‘Kinky Hair Blues’ Marson criticised attempts to de-Africanise appearances; ‘I hate dat ironed hair / And dat bleaching skin’. She also bravely proclaimed; ‘I like me black face / And me kinky hair’.¹⁴⁹ Considering that these poems were self-published in 1937, Marson was espousing messages of Black female empowerment that resisted ‘negative controlling images [...] advanced by white men.’¹⁵⁰ Edgar Mittleholzer also self-published a collection of short fiction, poetry and drama in 1937, he went around selling *Creole Chips* from door to door.¹⁵¹ Another self-published book in interwar period was Herbert George de Lisser’s *Revenge: A Tale of Old Jamaica* (1919). Like Marson’s, this was ‘Printed for the Author by the Gleaner Co.,’ where de Lisser was, in fact, the editor of the company’s daily newspaper.¹⁵² All of these examples speak to a different elements of DIY publishing cultures that would continue to develop and solidify in decades to come, both in the Caribbean and amongst the diaspora in Britain.

Conclusion

To conclude, the period from the end of the nineteenth century to the cusp of the 1937 labour rebellions, saw the emergence of proto-nationalist and anti-colonial political movements, in which ideas of what it meant to be West Indian, Black, Jamaican or Trinidadian etc. were explored in published books and periodicals. This period also saw a shift away from the Creole pragmatism of the nineteenth century towards a more independent and outspoken style of politics that had a new focus:

¹⁴⁹ Una Marson, ‘Kinky Hair Blues’, *The Moth and The Star* (Kingston: Published by the author, 1937), p.91.

¹⁵⁰ Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2002) p.10.

¹⁵¹ Juanita Anne Westmaas, ‘Edgar Mittleholzer (1909-1965) and the shaping of his novels’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Birmingham, 2013) p.47.

¹⁵² Another example is: R. W. MacLarty’s, *Our Present Condition and Crisis* (Kingston: The Author, 1919). There are also seven books in the Caribbean publishing bibliography from this period with no publisher stated, so they may have also been self-published.

self-government. As this examination of publishing traces, understandings of what freedom looked like were transformed over time as more freedoms were won. Critically, this chapter sees a shift of consciousness, in terms of race, class and nation. Classifying these publishers as 'West Indian' rather than 'Creole,' I view this period as an important moment of self-conscious reflection and projection.

This chapter has used periodicals and books to trace how the seedlings of federation discourse and social unrest in the early-twentieth century, were temporarily dampened by World War One and then reignited in the interwar years, which became an important time for transnational publishing development. Locating the people, publications and ideas in this chapter, as a critical precursor to the mid-century anti-colonial struggle, it has argued that writers and publishers in this earlier period helped to shape historical, contemporary and futuristic visions of individual territories and the West Indies as a whole.

The next chapter will carry on this story, examining how intertwined publishing cultures and political movements transformed themselves following the 1930s labour rebellions. Still maintaining important elements of earlier Caribbean publishing traditions, Chapter 3 will develop the argument that publishing was an essential activist tool, both in the region and for the diaspora in Britain. As the rest of the thesis explores, the dynamic and industrious character of interwar London for Caribbean writers, journalists and publishers would continue into the 1940s and onwards.

Chapter 3: Anti-colonial publishing: the Labour Rebellions to Independence

Even before the Emancipation the slaves rebelled frequently, and throughout the last hundred years there have been isolated strikes, riots, political organisations, and even trade unions. But not until recent years has there been anything that could be called a movement.

Arthur Lewis¹

The labour rebellions of the 1930s were a highpoint of historical production. They were history-making, both in and of themselves, but also because the centenary of emancipation provoked analyses and memories of the uprisings as being shaped by the idea of 'History'. Notably, Lewis's *Labour in the West Indies*, originally published in 1939 by the Fabian Society, was one of the first texts to historicize Caribbean resistance. This classic text on the blossoming of Caribbean labour marked an unambiguous assertion of a Caribbean tradition of resistance. As this chapter explores, evocations of resistance to colonial oppression became a dominant trope in Caribbean nationalist historiography. From the labour rebellions to independence, history sowed, watered and sunned the seeds and of anti-colonial nationalist sentiment.

Popular movements around trade unionism and nationalism, comparable to the emancipation cause of the 1830s, stimulated media growth across the Caribbean. Publishing both created and reflected shifts in consciousness and discourses of race, class, gender and nation. In comparison to the Creole and West Indian publishing examined in Chapters 1 and 2, this period witnessed the self-conscious emergence of anti-colonial publishing. Through key case studies, this chapter demonstrates an increasingly heterogeneous publishing landscape – an arena of action and resistance for a wider Caribbean community, as opposed to the elite, middle-class, Creole and secondary-school level educated groups that Caribbean

¹ Lewis, *Labour in the West Indies*, p.77.

publishing mainly mattered to in the earlier periods. From dialect poetry to socialist manifestos, the publications analysed here were indicative of a more accessible terrain for writers and readers.

As anti-colonialism thrived, there was an increasing drive to educate the region's population – to inform people of their history, their rights and to promote their literature.² This signalled a critical shift in the thinking around printing and publishing. From the emergence of new political parties to middle-class reading groups across the political spectrum, the need for local publishing infrastructures mounted. This was not only the outcome of internal forces and shifts, but part of a wider moment in the development of international radical print networks. Given this intertwining of anti-colonialism, education and publishing, a history of Caribbean publishing is revealing of nationalist politics and vice versa.

Labour Rebellions as the birth of the anti-colonial publishing

In the run-up to the centenary of Emancipation, labour rebellions erupted across the Caribbean.³ Strikes and uprisings in 1937-38 have been classically viewed as the 'dawn of political modernity,' however, workers' resistance had been occurring several years prior to this, notably the 1935 Oilfield Workers' hunger march.⁴ They were the outcome of complex factors to do with poverty, land and working conditions, which were understood as being symptomatic of restricted freedom. Hence, their precise timing, around the centenary of Emancipation, provided a symbolic framing that allowed workers, publishers and historians – at the time of the events and in the aftermath – to draw connections between the material conditions of Caribbean workers and those of the enslaved.

² Across these periodicals I encountered 18 history series, 28 one-offs and at least 45 historically related articles.

³ For an analysis of the 1930s rebellions see, Richard Hart, *Towards Decolonisation: Political, Labour, and Economic Development in Jamaica, 1938-1945* (Kingston: Canoe Press, 1999); Ken Post, *Arise Ye Starvelings: The Jamaican Labour Rebellion of 1938 and its Aftermath* (Martinus Nijhoff: The Hague, 1978); Colin Palmer, *Freedom's Children: The 1938 Labour Rebellion and the Birth of Modern Jamaica* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014) and John, 'People Papers'.

⁴ Anthony Bagues, 'History, Decolonization and the Making of Revolution: Reflections on Writing the Popular History of the Jamaican Events of 1938', *Interventions*, 12 (2010), 76-87 (p.77).

Aside from the deep-rooted socio-economic structures that were built and maintained to ensure a racialised hierarchy in the region, there were shorter-term factors, notably the Great Depression, changing immigration laws and rapid urbanization. In the aftershock of the American-turned-global economic downturn, thousands of Caribbean workers returned home. In combination with the United States' tightening immigration laws, this effectively closed off migration from the Caribbean, removing the political safety valve of emigration. In the case of Jamaica, 28,000 people returned from Latin America during the depression, many of whom had experienced a political awakening whilst working abroad on the 'malarial swamps of Panama, the snake infested fields of Costa Rica and Cuba.'⁵ Moreover, rapid and poorly-organised urbanisation produced a mass urban poor, who were unable to subsist on rural provision grounds. These contemporary factors were coarse salt in the wounds of centuries of colonial oppression.

Key figures in the labour movement included Richard Hart, T. A. Marryshow, Grantley Adams, Albert Gomes, Alexander Bustamante and Norman Manley.⁶ Hart, Marryshow and Gomes were all important players in the development of Caribbean publishing, highlighting the nexus between the labour movement and publishing that this chapter examines.⁷ A pivotal moment, the labour rebellions accelerated the awakening of class, race and national consciousness, with the press becoming a vital arena for these political transformations.⁸ As the following section demonstrates, this period witnessed the birth of self-conscious anti-colonial Caribbean publishing.

⁵ Hugh Buchanan, who had himself become radicalised from working abroad, wrote this first editorial. *Jamaica Labour Weekly*, 14 May 1938.

⁶ As depicted in Richard Hart's photograph at the Inaugural Conference of the Caribbean Labour Congress in Barbados 1945 in Lewis, *Labour in the West Indies*, p.48. Marryshow, the 'father of federation' (Chapter 2), Adams was a Barbadian union leader and the nation's first Prime Minister, Gomes was part of the Beacon group (Chapter 2), and Bustamante and Manley were the two main union leaders in Jamaica, the former established the Jamaica Labour Party and the latter formed the People's National Party.

⁷ Susan Craig pinpoints an inherent contradiction in the Caribbean labour movement, with many of its leaders coming from middle-class backgrounds and going on to be the inheritors of colonial power e.g. Bustamante, Manley and Eric Williams. Craig, *Labour in the West Indies*, p.61.

⁸ Bagues identifies three central elements of consciousness: respect, end of racial domination and better wages and land. Bagues, 'History and Decolonization', p.85.

The 'Labour Press'

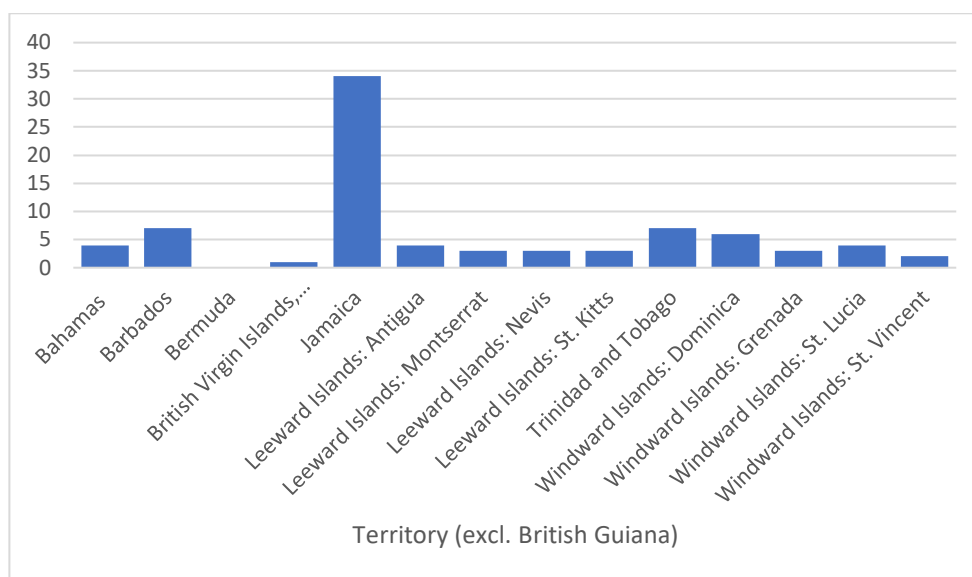


FIGURE 6 CARIBBEAN NEWSPAPER PUBLISHING BY TERRITORY (EXCL. BRITISH GUIANA), 1937-1962

Out of these labour movements, a stream of periodicals emerged. Richard Hart's archive reveals the astonishing popularity of newspapers amongst the region's labour movement; it holds copies of at least twenty-two different labour newspapers, starting in 1938 and continuing into the 1950s.⁹ From the organs of political parties that lasted into the post-colonial period, to fleeting newsletters like *Freedom* (Trinidadian Workers' Freedom Movement), published by John La Rose in the 1940s, the labour press was composed of longstanding and ephemeral publications.¹⁰ Hence, the periodicals studied here *Jamaica Labour Weekly* (1938-1939), *Jamaica Arise* (1947-1950) and *Labour Spokesman* (1957-ongoing) reflect this varied terrain. Their primary function was to represent and circulate the demands of labour movements – a channel to communicate with party and union members; to counteract the negative press of the dominant newspapers; and to awaken other elements of the population. Although not strictly a 'labour newspaper,' I analyse

⁹ Newspapers found include e.g. *Masses: Official Organ of the JA Labour Movement* (1942-45), *Youth Arise* (1952), *Action: Organ of the Jamaica Federation of Trade Unions* (1953), Richard Hart Collection, MS2115 and MS2115a, NLJ. For a good sense of the newspaper landscape in this period see 'Chapter 7: Newspapers and Public Opinion, 1918 to 1939' in James Carnegie, *Some Aspects of Jamaica's Politics: 1918-1938* (Kingston: Institute of Jamaica, Cultural Heritage Series, 1973).

¹⁰ There were only a few published copies of *Freedom*. Unfortunately, I have been unable to track them down, which would have allowed for a comparison between La Rose's publishing practices in 1940s Trinidad and post-war London.

Public Opinion (1937-1974) as part of a broader cultural nationalist movement, which flourished alongside the labour movement. What unites these periodicals was their commitment to challenge the ideological, economic and publishing powers of the ruling class through counter-hegemonic knowledge production.¹¹

Whilst these periodicals represented a break with the old way of politicking, they were also part of a longer tradition, as presented in Chapters 1-2, that challenged the status quo. Continuing the legacy of free people of colour who established newspapers in the era of slavery, the 'spirit' of the labour press marked a further rejection of the press that represented the needs of the plantocracy.¹² As Nehusi writes, *Thunder* (organ of the People's Progressive Party), founded in 1950, 'broke the ideological monopoly of the ruling class in 1950 just as *The People* had done half a century before and *The Freeman's Sentinel* and others further back in Guyanese history.'¹³ Furthermore, the persistence and intensification of a culture of censorship intimates the political and cultural power that these trade unionists, newspapers and publishers wielded.

Jamaica Labour Weekly: 'You have nothing to lose but your economic chains and better living conditions to gain'

In May 1938, 'Jamaica's first active Marxist,' Hugh Buchanan, established the *Jamaica Labour Weekly* together with the like-minded printer, Stennett Kerr-Coombs.¹⁴ By classifying themselves as 'two ordinary workingmen who five years ago saw the necessity of a labour paper, and agreed to publish one,' Buchanan and Kerr-Coombs intimated the importance of identity within labour struggles.¹⁵ The paper's slogan (subtitle) solidified its grounding in the emergent labour movement.

¹¹ The first editorial, "The Call to Unity!," proclaimed '[W]e are the descendants of slaves, a people who have come down the stream of time with great suffering. With the granting of freedom, one hundred years ago, our forefathers settled down to carve themselves a place in the country, alongside of their masters. The present development of the country is ample evidence of black sweat poured out upon the land', *Jamaica Labour Weekly*, 14 May, 1938, p.1.

¹² This challenges Lent's assertion that the labour press was 'contrary to the spirit of the press of earlier times', in Lent, 'Commonwealth Caribbean newspapers', p.99.

¹³ Nehusi, *History of Guyana*, p.380.

¹⁴ Hart described it as 'Jamaica's first 'communist' newspaper' that 'was an important part of the popular awakening and a milestone in labour journalism', in *Rise and Organise: The Birth of The Workers and National Movements in Jamaica (1936-1939)* (London: Karia Press, 1989), p.12.

¹⁵ *Jamaica Labour Weekly*, 14 May 1938, p.2.

The first issue (a double-sided page) described itself as a 'preliminary step towards the production of a genuine Labour Paper.'¹⁶ The result of years of preparation, including purchasing a printing press, sourcing equipment and struggling to fundraise donations, *Labour Weekly* demonstrated the general difficulties of publishing in the Caribbean and specific challenges of leftist publishing.¹⁷

Labour Weekly's self-funding model reflected the paper's aims to challenge the economic and political dominance of the ruling classes. Declaring their objective to publish an 'eight page paper' in the next 'six months' through the help of donations, Buchanan and Kerr-Coombs wrote, 'Your pennies will help us to equip the press, and print a bigger and better paper.'¹⁸ Proving successful, the paper had increased from two to four pages by 21 May 1938, with a circulation figure of 1,500.¹⁹ By funding growth through sales, Buchanan and Kerr-Coombs were not reliant on solo and corporate investment like previous publishers had been. Proclaiming that 'The Labour Weekly is here to stay,' the editorial explained how 'each round of support' would enable them to produce a better newspaper.²⁰ More than a newspaper, *Labour Weekly* was part of a movement that would better the lives of working Jamaicans. Adverts and articles for the 'Save-The-Press Fund,' further evidence *Labour Weekly's* community-funding model. Requesting donations, adverts for the Fund proclaimed that:

We advocate For the cause that needs assistance Gainst' the wrongs that needs Resistance; For the future in the Distance, And the good that we can do.²¹

This poetic call for financial support was also an opportunity to portray the *Labour Weekly* as a heroic force for good and to locate it in opposition to the oppressive elements of society. Printing the names of people that contributed money to the

¹⁶ *Jamaica Labour Weekly*, 14 May 1938, p.2.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Jamaica Labour Weekly*, 21 May 1938. Sold 1500 out of 2000 printed copies.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Jamaica Labour Weekly*, 21 January 1939, p.3.

Fund, this showed how the *Labour Weekly* wanted to centre the importance of community funding to its continued existence.²²

Provoking a famous case of seditious libel, *Labour Weekly* reveals how the colonial state continued using sedition laws to suppress challenges to its authority. A 1938 article, 'Police Terror in St. James,' reporting on police brutality directed against workers in Montego Bay triggered the case.²³ After its publication, Buchanan and Stennett Kerr-Coombs were charged with sedition, they were accused of using 'calculated' language to 'promote public disorder' and sent to Spanish Town Prison.²⁴ Future Prime Minister and budding labour leader, Norman Manley, defended them in court. Stating that 'free speech' was the 'bulwark of freedom and democracy,' he criticised the state's excessive authority as a 'terrible thing for any person living in a supposedly free country.'²⁵ In his moving argument, Manley pinpointed the hypocrisy of the colonial state and questioned the reality of freedom, in the year of the centenary of Emancipation. Censorship was not met with acceptance or defeat; they directly challenged the state in the courts and through continued publication of *Labour Weekly*. A flyer, 'Watch For The Return of the Jamaica Labour Weekly This Week' that was circulated shortly after Kerr-Coombs was sentenced to six months in prison embodies this fighting spirit:

defenders of the rights of labour must face danger. We knew that if our paper was to tell the truth to the world, we would incur the wrath of the capitalists ... We also knew ... that our paper would endear itself to the masses, by exposing the evils from which workers and peasants suffer.²⁶

Continuing censorship woes from the colonial government and opposition newspapers were met with resistance. Viewing the 'Press' – specifically referring to

²² *Jamaica Labour Weekly*, 3 December 1938, p.3.

²³ *Jamaica Labour Weekly*, 18 June 1938, p.4. See also Hart, *Rise and Organise*, p.18 and pp.123-5. For an overview of broader censorship in the period see Edward L. Cox, 'The press and the St. Vincent Labor Disturbances of 1935', Rice University, paper <<http://ufdcimages.uflib.ufl.edu/CA/00/40/01/60/00001/PDF.pdf>>, p.4.

²⁴ When Buchanan and Kerr-Coombs were sent to prison, the front page featured their letters written from prison, 'They Scarified Their Liberty FOR US', *Jamaica Labour Weekly*, 1 April 1939. For a fuller analysis, that identifies connections with the case against Edward Jordan's *Jamaica Watchman*, see Watson, 'Freedom of the Press'.

²⁵ *Daily Gleaner*, 4 October 1938, p.19.

²⁶ 'Watch For the Return of the Jamaica Labour Weekly' flyer, 1938, Richard Hart Collection, NLJ, MS 2115, Box 2.

the *Gleaner* and *Standard* – as one of the ‘powerful enemies’ of ‘Labour in Jamaica,’ the paper argued that

The workers of Jamaica must imitate the workers of England... and build up their own press. Failure to do so leaves them at the mercy of the Capitalist owned and controlled Press.²⁷

This emphasis on creating a separate press was something that the newspaper reinforced through its existence. By consistently connecting the dots of power, capital and suffering, the *Labour Weekly* refused to succumb to the pressure of the colonial elite.

History features were another element of *Labour Weekly*'s radical approach. ‘First and Second Emancipation!’ traced the history of enslavement from an economic perspective, interpreting abolition as a largely financial decision.²⁸ It stated that ‘our ancestors were liberated because the planters found it cheaper to pay a starvation wage than to support their workers.’²⁹ Locating the importation of East Indians and apprenticeship as the start of ‘Economic Slavery,’ this history feature sought to awaken its readers to the longevity of the imperialist capitalist structures that were in place.³⁰ Through such an awareness, unions would ‘work towards new liberation’ on the grounds of class rather than race. The paper used slogans and imagery to assert that ‘we all are one – “workers of the world unite.”’³¹ Kerr-Coombs’ article, ‘From Chattel to Mental and Economic Slavery,’ which promoted histories of resistance to ‘mental and economic slavery,’ told of how ‘The chattel slaves of a hundred years ago were constantly deserting their slave masters and in many instances revolted.’³² Alongside this, the paper advertised ‘Pamphlets of Interest to Readers of The Jamaica Labour Weekly,’ including C.L.R. James’ *A History of Negro Revolt*, priced at 1s and *The Meaning of Karl Marx – A Symposium*, priced at 10d.³³ Thus, history

²⁷ *Jamaica Labour Weekly*, 18 March 1939, p.4.

²⁸ *Jamaica Labour Weekly*, 30 July 1930, p.1 and p.4.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.1.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.* The newspaper always featured a Black and white hand shaking inside a map of Jamaica.

³² *Jamaica Labour Weekly*, 30 July 1938, p.2.

³³ *Jamaica Labour Weekly*, 15 April 1939

provided another tool to realise the *Labour Weekly's* aims to represent and unite the workers of Jamaica.

Jamaica Arise: 'Land of my birth, I pledge to be, Loyal and faithful, true to thee'

Founded in 1938, by fervent nationalist, Osmond Theodore Fairclough, the People's National Party (PNP) was the second political party to emerge after Garvey's People's Political Party.³⁴ The centring of the 'nation' in the PNP's name and of loyalty to homeland in its slogan (subtitle) echoed the nationalist politics that was central to its cause. Whilst the PNP had some unofficial organs, such as *Public Opinion* in the 1930s, *Jamaica Arise: The Political and Labour Guide* was the 'Official Organ of The People's National Party'. Started in March 1947 as a monthly journal with the aim of presenting the views of the PNP, the first editorial described the periodical as being 'born in a time of trouble' but being 'born of faith and belief in our Country and its people.'³⁵ Vocal in its confidence of the nation's potential, its vision for the future was cloaked in a language of throwing down 'the false' to 'find a way to sure and lasting progress.'³⁶ *Jamaica Arise* published much more than political editorials about the PNP, it was a modern magazine with colourful covers and recurring sections on agriculture, Women's pages and history.

One of *Jamaica Arise's* regular features was 'W. Indian History.' Written by A. H., this series of at least nine articles gave an in-depth analysis of the post-emancipation era, building up to a close examination of the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865.³⁷ Across these articles, A. H. established the role of key actors, such as Paul Bogle, George William Gordon, Jordon, Osborn and S. C. Burke. Whilst this represented the most thorough historical examination of the Morant Bay Rebellion in the Caribbean press, this series was part of a longer pattern of contesting the history of

³⁴ Based at Edelweiss Park, home of the UNIA headquarters and *The Blackman*.

³⁵ *Jamaica Arise*, March 1947, p.10.

³⁶ *Ibid*.

³⁷ Most likely, the initials of Arthur Henry, who was later expelled from the PNP, along with Hart, Ken Hill and Frank Hill in 1952 (known as the 4 H's). Irregular holdings in the Senate House Collection: found 'W. Indian History' features in the following issues: Summer 1949, pp.1 & 5; Christmas 1949, pp.6-7; January 1950, pp.14-15; April-May 1950, pp.4-5 (which is marked at the '8th instalment'); Autumn 1950, pp.6-7; and 1950 – 3rd anniversary issue, pp.15-16.

this event through the popular press.³⁸ The magazine's historical engagement did not stop there. A one-off article, 'Tacky & the St. Mary Rebellion of 1760', written by Lancelot DaCosta, told this important story of enslaved resistance.³⁹ DaCosta explained how he compiled his article from Edward Long's *History of Jamaica*; Bryan Edward's *History of the West Indies* and Robert Charles Dallas' *History of the Maroons*. Three works of 'history' written by enslavers, DaCosta's article marked an intervention into this historiography that used the colonial archive to write-back histories of resistance.

***Labour Spokesman: 'Read the "Spokesman" – Thousands do:
Comrades it is good for you; Let your children read it too!'***

Founded in 1957, in Basseterre, St. Kitts, *The Labour Spokesman* was the 'Official Organ of the St. Kitts Nevis Trade & Labour Union.' A daily, costing four cents, the paper's motto (subheading) illustrated an attempt to convey its wholesome character that had universal importance. A classic labour newspaper, couched in the language of comradeship, the *Labour Spokesman's* longevity makes for a rare example as it is still in print today. Examining the paper's first few years of print, coverage included local news, such as hurricane warnings; discussions about Caribbean federation; trade union activities and protests; reprints from British newspapers; and adverts (often for printing and political pamphlets, alongside ice cream and airmail schedules). Here, I focus on the paper's engagement with British racism that connected the Caribbean diaspora through stories of British hostility and Black working-class struggles. From 'Colour Prejudice in Britain,' which castigated the decision of Magistrates in Wolverhampton to uphold the colour bar in a dancehall, to 'The Nazis of Notting Hill,' that covered the Notting Hill Riots of 1958, *Labour Spokesman* spotlighted the harsh realities that Caribbean people faced in Britain.⁴⁰ This candid portrayal of the Caribbean 'migrant' experience contrasted with the

³⁸ Relatedly, for an analysis of how George William Gordon's reputation was rehabilitated in the 'island's newspapers, locally produced historical works, magazines and literary works', see Howard Johnson, 'From Pariah to Patriot: The Posthumous Career of George William Gordon', *NWIG: New West Indian Guide / Nieuwe West-Indische Gids*, 81 (2007), 197-218.

³⁹ *Jamaica Arise*, February 1949, pp.21-22.

⁴⁰ *Labour Spokesman*, 3 July 1958, p.4; *The Labour Spokesman*, 14 September 1958, p.1; also see 'Nine White & Two Coloured Convicted', *The Labour Spokesman*, 7 September 1958, pp.1-2.

dominant idealised imagery of Caribbean people being invited and welcomed into Britain. Analysing the predicament of Caribbean workers, 'New Moves Against Colour Prejudice in Britain' cited the Institute of Race Relations report on growing incidents of 'colour prejudice,' noting that the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers passed an amendment deploring racial prejudice.⁴¹ However, two hundred members from the same union went on strike when a Black man who was not a union member was employed.⁴² This class-race tension, that was manifest in the dynamics of trade union politics in Britain, came to be a damaging undercurrent in leftist politics for much of the post-war period.⁴³

Labour Spokesman's critical coverage of the diasporic experience was not only evidence of its politically conscious outlook but might also suggest a manoeuvre to encourage Kittitians and Nevisians to stay in the Caribbean. 'Recent Migration to Britain' wrote about the impact that this emigration was having on the Caribbean, with the region losing 'some of their valuable human resources ... A high proportion of the migrants are the skilled, better educated individuals in the economically active age group.'⁴⁴ Additionally, the article mentioned how grandparents and other relatives were looking after children who were left behind, whilst the parents emigrated in search of more opportunities and money. Framing this as part of a longer history of Caribbean migration, during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, within the region and to Panama and Costa Rica, *Labour Spokesman* was conscious of Caribbean traditions of mobility and its impact on the region.

Public Opinion: 'The National Weekly'

In tandem with the growth of the labour newspaper, was the continued development of cultural nationalism through the press and book clubs. *Public Opinion* was one of the most important nationalist newspapers. Describing itself as 'The National Weekly' it simultaneously reflected labour politics and literary ambitions, covering labour struggles, calls for self-government and education, alongside publishing short

⁴¹ *Labour Spokesman*, 8 august 1958, p.3-4.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p.4.

⁴³ A similar debate would resurface around the Bristol Bus Boycott in 1963 – see Chapter 4.

⁴⁴ *Labour Spokesman*, 30 August 1958, pp.3-4.

stories, poems, and book and theatre reviews.⁴⁵ The bastion of the 'liberal middle class' – a progressive alternative to *The Gleaner* – the newspaper represented a spectrum of political views, from Marxism to progressive liberalism.⁴⁶ Hart cites O. T. Fairclough, Frank Hill and H.P. Jacobs as the founding members; however, Una Marson and Amy Bailey were also on the original board of members.⁴⁷ Hill (who established the local Left Book Club with Marson),⁴⁸ was the most left wing followed by Fairclough (founder of the PNP) and Jacobs, who was described as a 'middle-of-the-road liberal historian.'⁴⁹ Marson's political grounding is difficult to summarise so succinctly, but she was a committed nationalist and feminist with open misgivings about Marxism. Amy Bailey was also committed to women's rights and an anti-racist campaigner and educator.⁵⁰ It is striking that Jamaica's foremost nationalist newspaper had two of the leading women's rights advocates as original members and columnists. Often in dialogue with one another, Bailey promoted pro-party politics from a women's angle and Marson wrote about broader Jamaican politics from a feminist perspective. Writing about a diversity of topics, from the political situation of women to the education system and racism, the feminist voice had an important platform through *Public Opinion*.⁵¹

⁴⁵ For a brilliant explanation of the paper's shifting dynamics in terms of editorship and content see Dalleo, 'Public Opinion' and Cobham-Sander, 'Creative Writer', pp.95-8.

⁴⁶ Watson, 'Freedom of the Press', p.88.

⁴⁷ Hart, *Towards Decolonization*, p.30.

⁴⁸ There was De Lisser's Readers' and Writers' Club and Una Marson and Frank Hill's Left Book Club (an offshoot of prominent left-wing publisher Victor Gollancz's Left Book Club). An advert, 'Join the Left Book Club', explained how they issued a book monthly for two shillings and sixpence that was 'accompanied free by an important political bulletin of thirty to forty pages' and for anyone that could not afford the cost, they suggested joining collectively. *Jamaica Labour Weekly*, 24 December 1938, p.3.

⁴⁹ H.P. Jacobs had an untitled history series in *Public Opinion* that attempted to tell the last 100 years of Jamaican history. Responding to the labour rebellions, it was based on the premise that history is the best way to make sense of the contemporary situation. The articles appear regularly on p.3 from 10 September 1938 to 1 April 1939. Jacobs had previously written a contemporary political/economic series, but this was his first historical series for *Public Opinion*. H.P. Jacobs 'The History of Jamaica' section in Esther Chapman, *Pleasure Island: The Book of Jamaica*, 5th edn. (Kingston: Arawak Press, 1952) bears strong resemblance to this *Public Opinion* series.

⁵⁰ Co-founder of the Women's Liberal Club.

⁵¹ Selection of Marson and Bailey's columns: Marson, 'Should Our Women Enter Politics', *PO*, 27 February 1937, p.10; Bailey 'Women in Politics', *PO*, 6 March 1937, p.10; Marson, 'Women – Work and Wages', *Public Opinion*, 6 March 1937, p.10; Bailey, 'Our Educational Problems', *PO*, 20 March 1937, p.3, Marson, "Racial Feelings?", *Public Opinion*, 17 July 1937, p.3.

Genre	
Poetry/Verse	31
Novels & Short Stories	13
Biography / Memoir	5
Folk tales / Proverbs / Vernacular	5
Play	3
Grand Total	57

FIGURE 7 LITERARY BOOKS PUBLISHED IN THE CARIBBEAN, 1936-1962⁵²

The labour turn was accompanied by cultural and literary shifts. During the 1930s and 1940s, the idea of a West Indian aesthetic and canon – in terms of literature, culture, criticism and history – gained currency, with Caribbean publishing turning its gaze inwards, onto Caribbean rather than European literary production.⁵³ West Indian literary development is deeply indebted to the growth of nationalist consciousness and vice versa; the cultivation of a ‘West Indian’ identity in this moment facilitated early manifestations of anti-colonial feeling. This growth is vividly obvious in the bibliography of Caribbean publishing and analysis of periodicals like *Public Opinion* that published 205 short stories, 272 poems and 8 plays between February 1937 and April 1944.⁵⁴ As Figure 7 reveals literature – poetry, fiction, folktales – was a hugely popular genre in this period, accounting for nearly a third of all Caribbean publications. During this period, ‘new’ publishers arrived on the scene, such as New Dawn and Pioneer Press, in Jamaica, and Yuille's Printerie and the Trinidad Publishing Company, in Trinidad and Tobago.⁵⁵ These publishers were concerned with publishing books that explored and narrated different ideas of national culture. When looked at alongside the labour press, Yuille Printerie's historical and nature-based publications, and New Dawn Press' promotion of local poetry, exemplify the diversity of Caribbean cultural nationalisms. Overall, the rise of

⁵² Caribbean Publishing: a selective bibliography of British Library holdings, 1800-1962

⁵³ Donnell, *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature*, p.13; also see Baugh, *West Indian Poetry*.

⁵⁴ Taken from Table 1 in Dalleo, 'Public Opinion', p.63.

⁵⁵ Cobham-Sander analyses Jamaican creative writing and society from 1900-50, differentiating between two literary/publishing/political groups: the *Jamaica Times*/Jamaica Poetry League group, associated with New Dawn Press and the All Jamaica Library; and the more left-wing *Public Opinion*/*Focus* group that helped to found Pioneer Press, in Cobham-Sander, 'Creative Writer', (p106).

cultural nationalism was happening at multiple levels, in overt political spaces i.e. protests on the streets, but also in the respectable arena of the 'little magazine.'

Black Marxism? in the Metropole

Getting stories, poetry and non-fiction writing published was no easy feat for Caribbean authors, especially women writers. As such, many writers looked elsewhere to get their work published. Attempts to have writing published in the metropole was a response to limited publishing infrastructures and the exclusive system that was predominantly owned and operated by a small number of newspaper families (see Chapter 1). Furthermore, these writers navigated patriarchal colonial censorship, whereby books (and therefore ideas) that were banned in the Caribbean, were readily available in Britain. Just as in the interwar years, the metropole continued to pull writers, activists, doctors, barristers and other professionals.⁵⁶ The magnetism of the metropole and the contradictory freedom that it gave anti-colonial activists meant that white leftist publishing houses published many of the best-known radical Caribbean works in this period. These migrations made Britain an important space for the development of Black/Caribbean radical traditions. Caribbean figures had been interacting with the British left for decades and, in the interwar period, they rallied around causes such as the Italo-Abyssinian War (1935-36). Whilst there was considerable ideological crossover, many Caribbean sojourners gave scathing reports about the patronising attitudes they encountered in leftist circles in Britain.⁵⁷ World War Two and its aftermath was an intensely fraught time for the British left, with divergent opinions of the USSR and Stalin causing further rifts e.g. between the Labour Party, the Independent Labour Party and the International African Service Bureau.⁵⁸ Despite this reliance on white leftist publishers, there were some key examples of self-publishing. From the

⁵⁶ Robinson explains that 'Only a few among them came for explicitly political purposes. Makonnen and Padmore did' but Williams and James 'acquired those purposes while living in Britain' in *Black Marxism*, p.262.

⁵⁷ See Claude McKay, 'Socialism and the Negro' in *Workers', Dreadnought*, 31 January 1920, pp.1-2.

⁵⁸ For more on this see Minkah Makalani, *Cause of Freedom*, p.198; Theo Paul Williams, 'Each movement will neglect the other at its peril': the International African Service Bureau and British socialism, 1929-1947 (unpublished doctoral thesis, King's College London, 2019); Marc Matera, 'Colonial Subjects: Black Intellectuals and the Development of Colonial Studies in Britain', *Journal of British Studies*, 49 (2010), 388-418.

publication of periodicals and great works of history, to the Pan-African Congress of 1945, the metropole was decisive space for the development of radical thought.

While it was still rare for African and Caribbean intellectuals to have their work published during inter- and post-war Britain, the British Left offered the best chance for funding. Not without its challenges, these activists were already navigating a factional political world, where socialists were smeared as 'Trotskyists' by communist groupings.⁵⁹ Labour Party MP, Fenner Brockway, connected Frederic Warburg, of Secker & Warburg, with the likes of C.L.R. James, George Padmore, Jomo Kenyatta and George Orwell, who were embedded in these political networks.⁶⁰ A young and independent publishing house, Warburg describes their policy of 'anti-fascist publishing which paid no heed to communist susceptibilities.'⁶¹ The publisher's independent positioning (both in its political grounding and publishing infrastructure) meant that it offered more autonomy than Caribbean publishing houses like Argosy Press or the Gleaner Company.⁶² Warburg felt that their limited reputation as a new publishing outfit was the reason that Brockway approached him. In his autobiography, he writes that 'he would never, I felt, have approached me, had he been able to place the work of his members and friends with a stronger and better established house.'⁶³ This sentiment serves to emphasise further the struggles of African and Caribbean writers in this period.

Some of James' and Padmore's most prominent writings were published by Secker & Warburg: *Minty Alley* (1936), *World Revolution* (1937), *The Black Jacobins* (1938) and *Africa and World Peace* (1937). According to Warburg, *Minty Alley* was 'unsuccessful' but it brought him into contact with James, who went onto publish 'two important works with us later.'⁶⁴ Likewise, 'George Padmore's *Africa and World*

⁵⁹ Secker & Warburg are best remembered for publishing George Orwell. In Frederic Warburg, *An Occupation for Gentlemen* (London: Hutchinson, 1959) he discusses the politics around the writers connected with the Independent Labour Party e.g., Padmore and James, via their funding of the IASB, pp.200-210.

⁶⁰ Warburg, p.206.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.221.

⁶² Until it became a part of Heinemann in 1951.

⁶³ Warburg, p.206.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.185.

Peace was a flop.⁶⁵ In contrast, *World Revolution* sold ‘moderately well,’ dedicated to a Marxist group that James was part of it ‘became a kind of Bible of Trotskyism.’⁶⁶ Strangely enough, Warburg does not mention *The Black Jacobins* in his autobiography even though it went on to become one of James’ most important and known works. Perhaps this lack of foresight points to a lapse of judgement or awareness, which limited the ability of white leftist publishers to represent their radical Black authors. It also intimates the profound impact that re-editions of *Black Jacobins* made. Evidently, Warburg’s measures of success were largely numerical and financial, hence why he describes books like *Minty Alley* and *Africa and World Peace* as ‘flops.’ This was at odds with the publishing spirit of independent African and Caribbean publishers, whose emphasis was focused on the importance of these ideas being in print and, thus, accessible.⁶⁷ While Warburg’s publishing of African and Caribbean intellectuals was largely anomalous in Britain at the time, Marc Matera emphasises that his personal judgement of contents and sales predictions restricted what was published.⁶⁸ For example, Warburg rejected Eric Williams’ PhD thesis, ‘The Economic Aspects of the Abolition of the West Indies Slave Trade and Slavery,’ which formed the ‘backbone’ of *Capitalism and Slavery* that was published by the University of North Carolina Press in 1944.⁶⁹ So, whilst leftist publishers like Secker & Warburg provided an important publishing channel, they also acted as gatekeepers of Black radical scholarship.⁷⁰

London-based publisher, Lawrence & Wishart, was also supportive of anti-colonial writing. Guyanese activists looked to them to get their writing published amidst the suspension of the constitution and ‘occupation’ of British Guiana, following the

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.215.

⁶⁶ Ibid, p.211.

⁶⁷ These ideas of what success looked like for Black/Caribbean publishing houses will be explored in chapters 4-6.

⁶⁸ Matera, ‘Colonial Subjects’, p.413.

⁶⁹ Ibid. for more detail on this and Williams’ recollection of an exchange with Warburg. See also article about *Capitalism & Slavery* being published by a mainstream British publisher for the first time in 2022. Donna Ferguson, ‘Groundbreaking work on slave economy finally back on UK shelves’, *Guardian*, 23 January 2022.

⁷⁰ Warburg’s autobiography also reveals different political focuses, writing that ‘Distasteful and alarming as was Mussolini’s African campaign, it was the Spanish Civil War that obsessed me in the first months of the infant firm and dominated its policy for the next three years’ in Warburg, p.196.

democratic election of the PPP in 1953 (see Chapter 6). In 1954, they published Cheddi Jagan's *Forbidden Freedom: The Story of British Guiana* and Martin Carter's *Poems of Resistance from British Guiana*. This embodied the comradeship between internationalist left-wing groups, with publishers offering an alternative avenue for disseminating the anti-colonial thinking that was being generated in the colonies and metropole. Ironically, those caught reading these books, written by and about people in British Guiana, would have been imprisoned, as Eric Huntley was in 1954. Not just a twentieth-century trend, this was part of a Caribbean publishing tradition in which the metropole was a vital channel for recognition and dissemination. If we think back to J. J. Thomas, he travelled to London to get his book published by T. Fisher Unwin. This merging of Black/Caribbean radical and leftist British publishers was symptomatic of Caribbean censorship and publishing inadequacies, but also of a productive internationalist political arena. However, later Black/Caribbean publishers explicitly broke away from this pattern, with self- and community-funding becoming a foundational idea in the post-war period.

An early example of this was Ras Makonnen, a committed publisher-activist, who understood the importance of publishing in a diasporic and internationalist context.⁷¹ George Thomas Nathaniel Griffith arrived in London in 1935 during the Italo-Abyssinian War. As he became 'more deeply involved in the Ethiopian Cause,' he changed his name to Ras Teferi Makonnen, as a symbol of his Pan-African affinity with the Ethiopians that were under attack from fascist and imperial Italian forces.⁷² Settling in Britain for twenty years, he lived in London before moving to Manchester. A Pan-Africanist first and foremost, Makonnen was wary of communist political groups and believed that solidarity and kinship amongst African and African-descended peoples 'overrode class.'⁷³ Born in British Guiana, he studied in the United States, at Howard University, where he became close with George Padmore.⁷⁴ Makonnen collaborated with C.L.R. James and Padmore through his

⁷¹ From the continuation of journals like *Wasu* (1926-1945) to the founding of *International African Opinion* (1938-1939), edited by C.L.R. James, this was a productive political publishing moment.

⁷² Ras Makonnen, *Pan-Africanism From Within*, recorded and ed by Kenneth King (Oxford University Press, Nairobi, 1973), p.17.

⁷³ Robinson, p.263.

⁷⁴ Makonnen, p.17.

involvement with the International African Service-Bureau, the International African Friends of Abyssinia and his publishing activities. As Robinson explains, they ‘helped to constitute that generation of Black intellectuals’ who ‘understood that the project of anti-imperialism had to be centered in the metropole.’⁷⁵ In his autobiography, Makonnen explains how,

The place of the black writer was something else that I felt we should tackle in Britain. ... Of course we had people like C.L.R. James and Cedric Dover in the 1930s, but such writers as there were had to enter a field that was predominantly white—white journals, white publishers, and nearly always white men writing about black.⁷⁶

As the preceding section on Secker & Warburg examines, Makonnen’s concern about the positioning of Black writers in Britain was understandable. Writing about the Left Book Club that was organised by Victor Gollancz, Makonnen argues that even in such radical circles ‘your work had to be read by a white man to see if it had any merit.’⁷⁷ These issues around validity and acceptance through white male leftist gatekeepers are revealing not only of publishing difficulties but of the predicament of the Black radical in the Britain, more generally.

⁷⁵ Robinson, p.262.

⁷⁶ Makonnen, p.144.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.144-5.

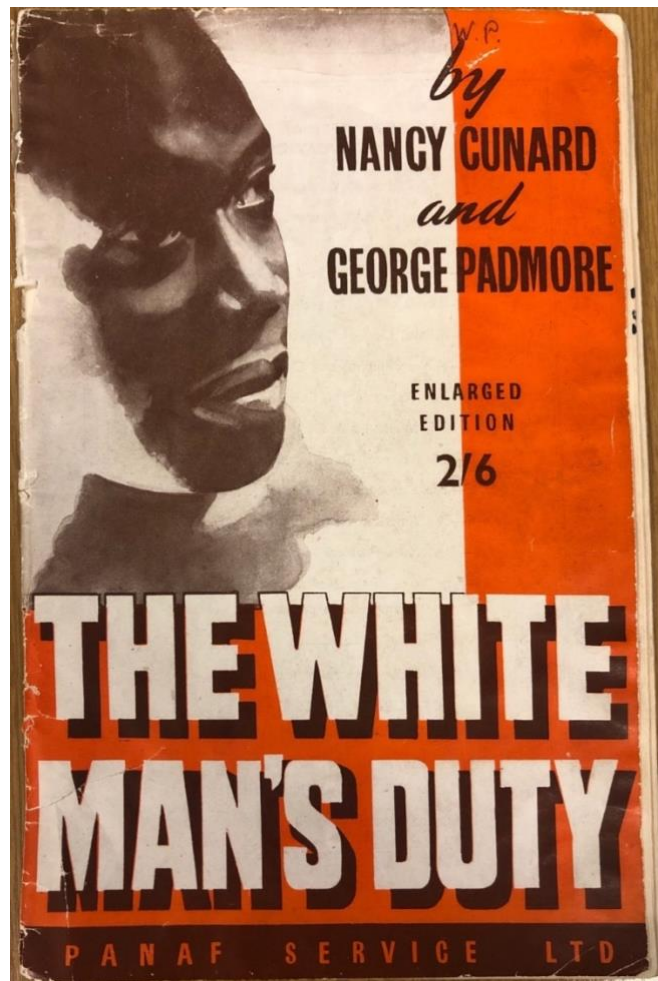


FIGURE 8 THE WHITE MAN'S DUTY (1945), MATERIAL SOURCED FROM THE BRITISH LIBRARY

With his sights on publishing, Makonnen set up the Pan-African Publishing Co. at 58 Oxford Road, Manchester. Padmore, Jomo Kenyatta and Peter Milliard were directors of the company.⁷⁸ Makonnen used the capital from his successful restaurants, also on the Oxford Road, to fund the publishing house.⁷⁹ Developing good relationships with printers who would often lunch at his restaurants, Makonnen used his networking skills to build up the publishing side. Becoming a 'a bona fide member of the publishers' association,' he published Kenyatta's *Kenya: Land of*

⁷⁸ Kenyatta was an anti-colonial activist who became the first Prime Minister of Kenya in 1963 and President in 1964. Milliard was a Guyanese doctor, anti-colonial activist and close friend of Makonnen.

⁷⁹ First opened the Ethiopian Teashop, the success of which generated revenue to open more restaurants, including the Cosmopolitan, the Forum and the Orient, from Makonnen, p.146. For more about The Cosmopolitan and the network that he helped to build see John McLeod, 'A Night at 'The Cosmopolitan': Axes of Transnational Encounter in the 1930s and 1940s', *Interventions*, 4 (2002), 53-67.

Conflict; Eric Williams' *The Negro in the Caribbean*; and *White Man's Duty* by Nancy Cunard and George Padmore (Fig. 8). Describing it as 'a kind of Socratic discussion between Cunard and Padmore on the black man's burden,' Panaf's revised edition of W. H. Allen & Co.'s 1943 pamphlet included two new chapters by Padmore that dealt with 'recent constitutional changes in the West Indies and Africa.'⁸⁰ This edition also had adverts for International African Service-Bureau Publications that were available to buy at 58 Oxford Road. The republication of *White Man's Duty* by Panaf Service marks an early example of bringing Black radical texts back into the fold and under the care of Black/Caribbean publishers. This was characteristic of the strong emphasis on 'making ourselves independent,' politically and financially. Likewise, speaking about his involvement in *International African Opinion*, Makonnen stated 'nobody could suggest it had been produced with Moscow gold or other white funds,' in reference to financial support from British or Soviet channels.⁸¹

Pan-Africa: Journal of Africa Life and Thought (1947-48) started its fleeting life in 1947. Born out of the Fifth Pan-African Congress of 1945, the journal was a continuation of the congress's simultaneous concern for 'international issues' and a 'protest against increasing discrimination in Britain.'⁸² According to Robinson, Makonnen was 'more responsible than anyone else for bringing the movement together at Manchester in 1945.'⁸³ The Fifth Pan-African Congress adopted the position to 'demand for the right of Black people to govern themselves' and so the journal's arrival signified a new phase in Pan-African politics.⁸⁴ It is important to note that Makonnen did not 'expect to make money out of *Pan-Africa*; we thought we'd be lucky to pay our way' and it was 'subsidized' by his other businesses.⁸⁵ At the get go, this distinguishes Makonnen's publishing project from that of Secker & Warburg, who, although sympathetic to the cause, were not embedded in community struggle in the same way.

⁸⁰ Makonnen, p.145.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid., p.146

⁸³ Robinson, p.262. McLeod explains how 'substantial profits' from *The Cosmopolitan* funded to the Conference of 1945, which was held at Chorlton Town Hall. McLeod, 'The Cosmopolitan', p.54.

⁸⁴ Robinson, p.274.

⁸⁵ Makonnen, p.146.

The journal is an important example of Caribbean radical thinkers, such as James and Padmore, being published in the metropole by a Black/Caribbean publisher. The journal embodies the significance of Black published Black radical thought, which was free from the censorship of white (even leftist) publishers and the colonial state. Moreover, *Pan-Africa* packaged Black radical thought through powerful and positive representations of the African diaspora.

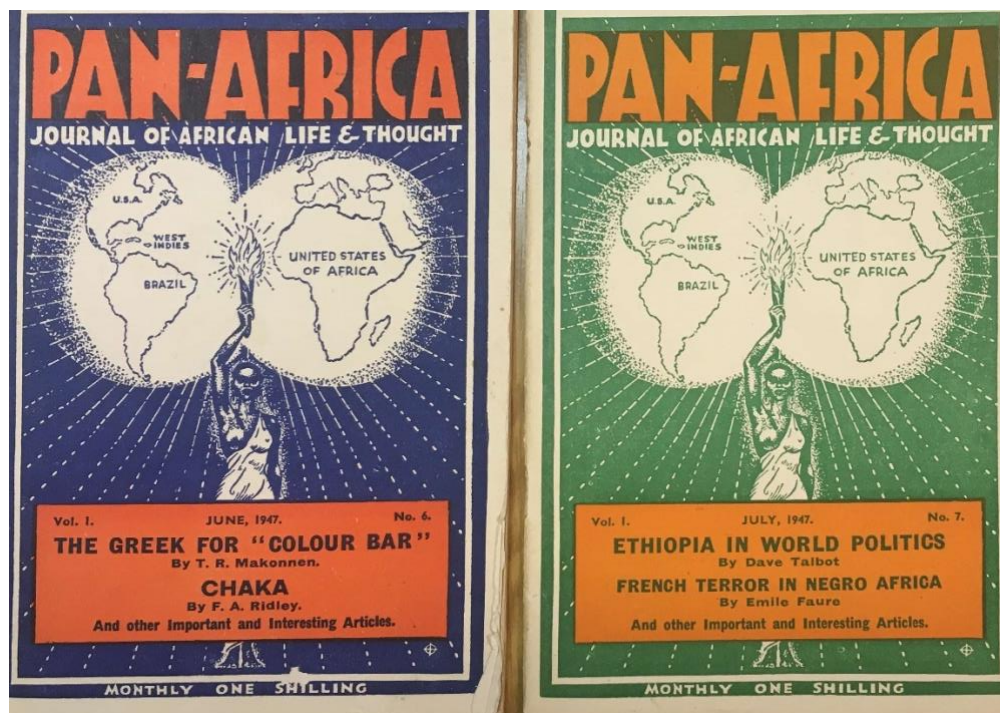


FIGURE 9 PAN-AFRICA, MATERIAL SOURCED FROM UNIVERSITY OF LONDON, SENATE HOUSE LIBRARY

Pan-Africa was an important vehicle for transnational discussions of anti-colonialism, South African apartheid and the need for independent publications. The bright cover image (Fig. 9) of a goddess-like woman holding a torch on a map of the diasporic African world – uniting the ‘United States of Africa’ with the U.S.A., the West Indies and Brazil – reflected its Pan-African grounding. With associate and contributing editors from England, Ethiopia, Barbados, Kenya, Nigeria, British Guiana and the Sudan (with the list changing and expanding in each issue), the journal was representative of the people it employed and the politics it advanced. Advertised on the front-page, *Pan-Africa*’s history series, ‘Chaka-African Master of Total War’

signified the pull of African history to potential readers.⁸⁶ In this series about Chaka, chief of the Zulu clan in South-Eastern Africa during the early-nineteenth century, Western dominance was challenged through an emphasis on Chaka's strength and military prowess, with F. A. Ridley likening Chaka to Napoleon by describing his 'invincible army.'⁸⁷ Although the series inadvertently shored up Western superiority by comparing Chaka to Napoleon, it successfully transgressed the boundaries of conventional associations of power and military might. The Chaka series challenged Eastern Africa's victim status, instead presenting it as a nation capable of inflicting violence against others.

Two of its most prized contributors were Padmore and James, thus, locating *Pan-Africa* as a significant arena for Caribbean intellectual expression and Black radical tradition-making. Writing about the journal, Leslie James notes how Makonnen was able to link up Padmore's 'rhetorical style' with J. J. Thomas.⁸⁸ This affinity between Padmore and Thomas seamlessly captures this thesis' recognition of a Caribbean publishing tradition. This connection between Padmore and Thomas embodies a distinctive yet continuous trend of independent Caribbean journalism. From the emphasis on financial independence to political rather than economic models of success, Black/Caribbean publishers in the post-war period would reinvigorate Makonnen's approach to publishing.

Pioneer Press: 'BOOKS IN EVERY HOME'

Found amongst a pile of typewritten article drafts, covered in pencil drawn corrections, Marson's essay, 'Our first duty is to KNOW OUR HOMELAND,' embodied her commitment to Caribbean publishing. In it, she wrote, 'We need slogans as we move along towards the building of a nation, a 'good' one, I think, would be BOOKS IN EVERY HOME.'⁸⁹ The suggestion that this was a good slogan illustrated the connection between books and freedom. This section examines how

⁸⁶ 'Introduction', *Pan-Africa*, June 1947, pp.35-39; 'The Zulu "Napoleon" and the Black "Grand Army"', July 1947, pp.32-39; 'The Place of Chaka amongst the World's Great Captains', August 1957, pp.7-11.

⁸⁷ *Pan-Africa*, June 1947, p.38.

⁸⁸ Leslie, *George Padmore*, p.71.

⁸⁹ Undated, Una Marson Collection, NLJ, Folder 11, MS1944B, p.2.

Marson shaped Jamaican and Caribbean publishing through a consideration of her educational and feminist politics. Marson's deep commitment to local publishing helped to democratise words, stories and histories. Through her column at *Public Opinion* and Pioneer Press, Marson pushed her nationalist and feminist vision of 'BOOKS IN EVERY HOME.'

In June 1937, Marson's article, 'Wanted: Writers and Publishers,' expressed concern about the lack of local writing and publishing, querying where the voices of Jamaican servicemen, missionaries, teachers and youths were.⁹⁰ In this class-based analysis of Jamaican publishing, Marson portrayed an unequal landscape whereby only 'those people who are possessed of this world's goods can afford to pay the *Gleaner* to print their books,' – something that Marson, herself, had found the funds to do.⁹¹ In this bleak setting, Marson pondered how those that wanted to write were 'deterred by the poor prospect of getting these books on the market.'⁹² Rejecting the *Gleaner's* status as a publisher, Marson explicitly stated that 'in Jamaica we have no publisher.'⁹³ Linking this publishing dearth to the 'awakening in Jamaica to-day,' no doubt in reference to the labour rebellions that swept the region in the 1930s, Marson's call for local publishing was intertwined with an anti-colonial vision that saw literature as a critical means for gaining freedom.⁹⁴ Defining that moment as a 'new era' in which 'literature must take its place,' Marson professed that 'the writing and production of books by us about ourselves and our problems is essential.'⁹⁵ Two years later, Marson described how, as a child 'at school I was taught nothing about my own island' and her 'parents never spoke of past, maybe because it was so sad.'⁹⁶ This assessment of her childhood and the absence of national history is revealing of Marson's later motivations. Her commitment to local publishing, which reflected the experiences and problems of Jamaica, was informed by her own life and travels. This literary politics saw books as a path to freedom. At the end of the

⁹⁰ *Public Opinion*, 12 June 1937, p.6.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* *Tropic Reveries* and *The Moth and the Star* were both self-published by Marson but printed by The Gleaner Company.

⁹² *Public Opinion*, 12 June 1937, p.6.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Una Marson, 'The Story of Jamaica', *The Listener*, 27 July 1939, pp.166-6.

article, she put out an open request, asking ‘Lovers of literature, lovers of Jamaica, can we persuade our thinkers to write, can we form a publishing company?’⁹⁷

Title	Cost	No. Sold	Total (£)
The Arawak Girl	2/-	2526	252.12.0
Caribbean Anthology	2/-	2559	255.18.0
Selected Shorter Poems	2/-	2802	280.4.0
14 Jamaican Short Stories	1/-	527	26.7.0
Maxie Mongoose	1/-	637	31.17.0
Stories & Verses	1/6d	76	5.14.0
Frankie Frog	2/-	1817	181.14.0
Discussion & Natural Progress	2/-	2780	278.0.0
Anancy Stories & Verse	2/-	647	64.14.0
Capture of Jamaica	3/6d	569	99.11.0
Bird Watching in Jamaica	5/-	305	76.5.0
Sir Henry Morgan	2/-	1076	107.12.0
Capitals of Jamaica	2/-	196	19.12.0
Six Great Jamaicans	2/-	1741	174.2.0
A Literature in the Making	3/6d	600	105.0.0
Man of Colour	2/-	513	51.6.0
Pages from our Past	2/-	914	91.8.0
Buccaneer Bay	3/-	2427	364.1.0
Adding Machine	2/-	2993	299.6.0
Your Health in the Caribbean	2/-	2693	269.6.0
Ghost Bank	2/-	2978	297.16.0
Cactus Village	2/-	1577	157.14.0
A Broken Vessel	3/6d	2160	378.0.0
Orange Valley	2/-	656	65.12.0
Single Star	5/-	5827	1321.15.0
Tales from Old Jamaica*	n/a	n/a	n/a
TOTAL		41,055**	5255.0.0**

FIGURE 10 PIONEER PRESS BOOKS⁹⁸

As if in response to her own call twelve years earlier, Marson became involved with Pioneer Press in 1949. Considered Jamaica’s ‘first serious publishing house,’ Pioneer Press was an imprint of the *Gleaner*.⁹⁹ There is a symbolic tension here when we consider Marson’s assessment of the *Gleaner* in 1937. Bemoaning its prohibitive costs, which hindered West Indian literary development, Marson implicitly identified the *Gleaner* as an obstruction to the nationalist project. While it feels

⁹⁷ *Public Opinion*, 12 June 1937, p.6.

⁹⁸ Una Marson Collection, NLJ, Folder 11: *Handwritten added to typewritten page, **excluding Tales from Old Jamaica. From 31 May 1961.

⁹⁹ Mervyn Morris, interviewed by author, Kingston, Jamaica, 14 February 2019.

contradictory that Marson then became the general secretary of Pioneer Press, it is also a shining example of the *Gleaner's* socio-cultural dominance in Jamaica. Already the biggest newspaper on the island, it then became the owner of the biggest publisher – therefore having extensive control and influence over what Jamaicans were reading. Smaller publishers would have found it virtually impossible to compete with these prices and print runs without *Gleaner*-esque economies of scale.

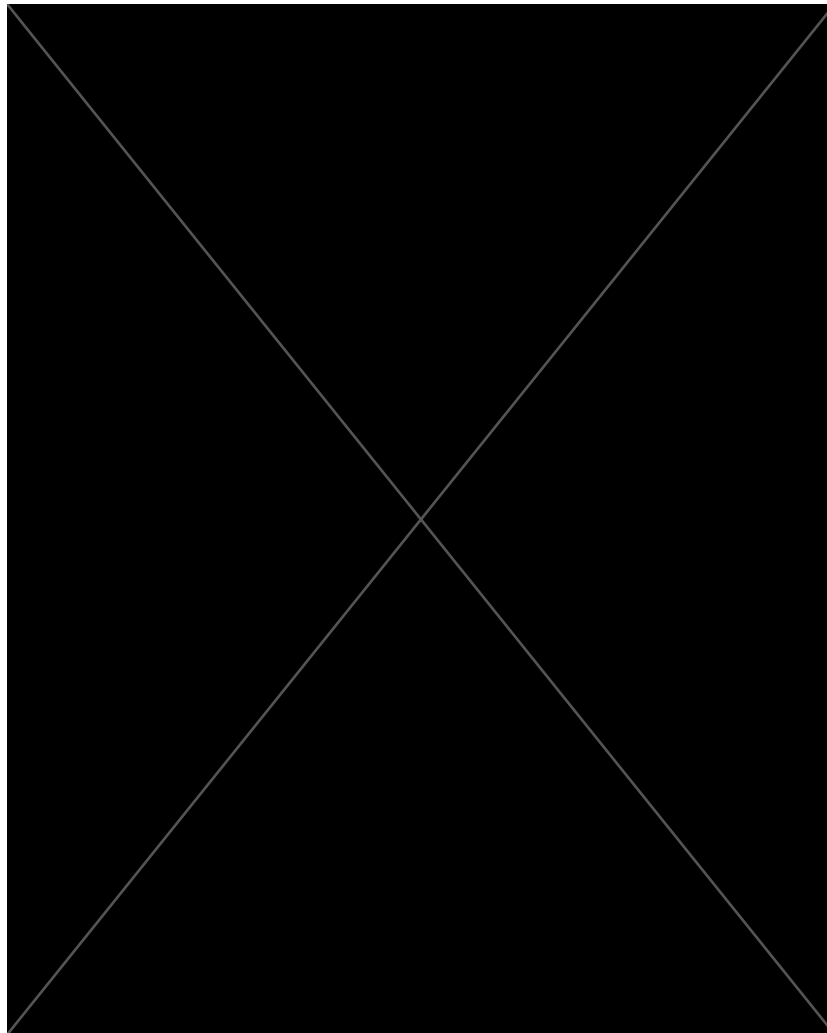


FIGURE 11 PIONEER PRESS FLYER¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Una Marson Collection, Folder 11, NLJ.

As Figure 10 shows, Pioneer Press publications included historical, vernacular, literary and children's explorations of Jamaican culture. Mervyn Morris commented they 'had the good sense to publish Louise Bennett.'¹⁰¹ Pioneer Press demonstrated its commitment to publishing children's literature that reflected West Indian cultural traditions, as rooted in Africa, by publishing *Anancy Stories and Dialect Verse*, *Maxie Mongoose* and *14 Jamaican Short Stories*, alongside others. Furthermore, through slogans like 'A Must for Your Library' and 'At Clubs, At Home, At School,' (Fig. 11) Pioneer Press directly targeted schools, libraries and homes. Costing only one shilling and 6 pence, they were clearly produced for mass purchase. Pioneer Press sold an impressive 41,055 books by May 1961, which evidences its impact on the Jamaican literary, educational and publishing landscape. Being the book publishing department of the *Gleaner* did not prevent Pioneer Press from publishing some landmark publications which celebrated Jamaican folk culture. It had a significant degree of autonomy from the *Gleaner*, with a separate board from the newspaper side of the business. Aside from Marson's involvement as General Secretary, the publisher had the input of fervent supporters of Jamaican literature, though largely from a 'Jamaica white' male perspective.¹⁰²

'A key figure' in Pioneer Press, according to Morris, he notes Marson's dedication to publishing stories, verse and anthologies for children.¹⁰³ A lifelong feminist and educational campaigner, I interpret this as an anti-colonial feminist publishing intervention by Marson, whereby she worked to remedy the deficient colonial education that she received as child by enriching the cultural landscape for the children of the day. Advertised on flyers as 'Books of Jamaica by Jamaicans for Jamaicans and all peoples,' this was a realisation of the vision that Marson put forth in 'Wanted: Writers and Publishers.'¹⁰⁴ Pioneer Press is illustrative of the power that

¹⁰¹ Morris interview.

¹⁰² Advisory board included Philip Sherlock (future Vice Chancellor of UWI) as chair, W. Adolphe Roberts the General Editor (prominent member of the Jamaica Progressive League and was thoroughly embedded in nationalist politics), S. G. Fletcher, Bernard Lewis, R. N. Murray, L. G. Thomas and T. E. Sealy. For more on Roberts see James Millette, 'Nationalism and Imperialism in Caribbean History', in *General History of the Caribbean, Volume VI Methodology and Historiography of the Caribbean*, ed. by B. W. Higman (London: UNESCO/Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp.162-199 (p.187).

¹⁰³ Morris interview. See also Cameron, *Story of the Gleaner*.

¹⁰⁴ Pioneer Press flyer, Una Marson Collection, Folder 11, NLJ.

commercial newspapers continued to wield in the arena of Caribbean publishing. Yet at the same time, it marks an important episode in the history of Caribbean publishing that not only shifted cultural and literary landscapes, but also laid foundations for the publishing of Creole, folk and children's books. Black/Caribbean publishers took up this mantle in post-war Britain. Largely thanks to Pioneer Press, the 1940s and 1950s witnessed more publishing than any other decade in 'Caribbean Publishing: a selective bibliography of British Library holdings, 1800-1962.' This was the result of an invigorated thirst for local stories and histories as independence drew closer.

'HISTORY IS MOVING AT BREAKNECK SPEED': the production of historical consciousness through Richard Hart's political publishing

Beyond newspapers, the labour movement produced pamphlets and educational organisations that were committed to re-educating the labouring class and re-writing Caribbean history. From Richard Hart's *The Origin and Development of the People of Jamaica* (1951), to *Our Common Heritage*, published by the Caribbean Union of Teachers (1953), trade unions were key players in the publication of alternative Caribbean histories. Highlighting Barbados' problem of 'unwritten' history, in *Our Common Heritage*, Grantley Adams wrote that 'A people, who have no history, can never have any self-respect.'¹⁰⁵ This new style of 'national' history became progressively prominent in the mid-twentieth century, evolving in tandem with the growth of nationalist politics. As the reality of independence and federation drew seemingly nearer, an understanding of self, 'nation' and common history became increasingly necessary.

Considered by some to be the most important actor in the Caribbean popular historical tradition, Hart's work exemplifies what Bogue has called the 'inseparable' relationship between history writing and radical political practice in Jamaica.¹⁰⁶

Bogue classifies Hart as *the* most important figure in the emergence of a popular

¹⁰⁵ Fabriciano Alexander Hoyos, *Our Common Heritage* (Bridgetown: Advocate Co., 1953), p.1. Adams was the Prime Minister of the Federation of the West Indies from 1958 to its demise in 1962.

¹⁰⁶ See important analysis of Jamaican history writing and Hart's pamphlet in Bogue, 'History, Decolonization', p.79.

historical tradition in the era of decolonization, from the 1950s to the 1970s.¹⁰⁷ In agreement with this, the final section examines Hart's role in the development of radical and popular Caribbean (specifically Jamaican) history. From his historical writing, to his trade union activity and public education initiatives, Hart was convinced of history's radical potential.

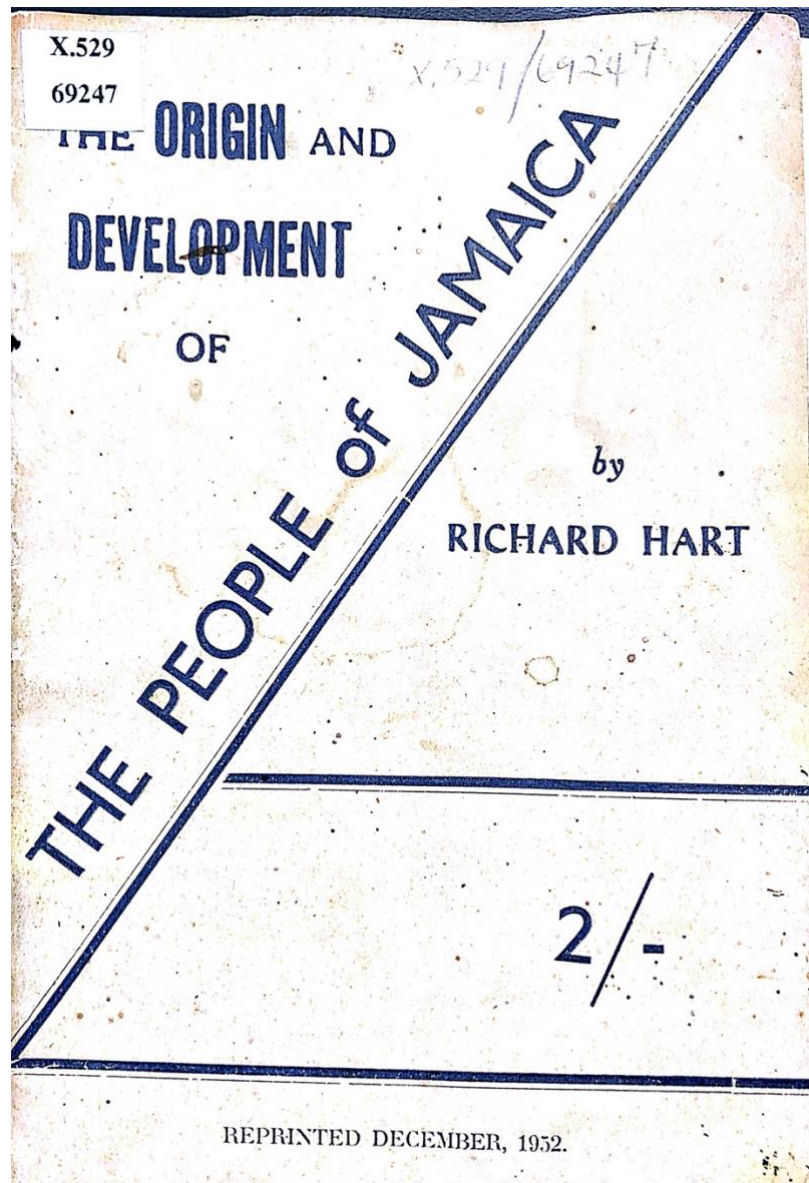


FIGURE 12 THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PEOPLE OF JAMAICA, MATERIAL SOURCED FROM THE BRITISH LIBRARY

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p.78.

Self-published in 1951, and then reprinted in 1952 by the education unit of the Trade Union of Congress Jamaica, Hart's pamphlet (Fig. 12) signified the expansion and innovation of popular Jamaican history and leftist historical consciousness.¹⁰⁸ A landmark historical text, costing only two shillings, it was used in general workers and political education programmes. Hart covered thirty topics, in thirty pages, stretching from Spanish conquest in 1494 to the 'Present Position.' It included short introductions on the Arawaks, plantation society, slavery, 'Why Slavery and not a Wage System,' 'The Resistance of the Slaves,' abolition, Morant Bay, urbanisation and labour organisation. Arguably, the first Marxist history of Jamaica, each section examined the connection between structural economic change and its social impact. Using a presentist mode of history, Hart compared the contemporary experience of the worker to that of the enslaved, writing that

The modern wage earner has won the right to resist the pressure of the employer by organising trade Unions, and can join a political party ... But the slave had no such rights at all. He was debarred from seeking redress in the courts and the word of a Negro was not evidence against a white man. His remedies were rebellion and escape or suicide.

The history of Jamaica, from the introduction of large numbers of slaves in the very early years of British occupation down to Emancipation, is one of numerous uprisings and "Maroon wars" against slavery.¹⁰⁹

Hart's assertion of enslaved agency, as expressed in rebellion, escape, suicide, maroonage and uprisings was an antidote to hegemonic representations of enslaved peoples as voiceless and without agency.¹¹⁰ Taking this further, Hart emphasised the impact of these actions, stating that 'Many of these rebellions were of tremendous proportions causing the slave owners on several occasions to petition the British Government for aid.'¹¹¹ As Bogues explains, Hart's aim was to

recount a historical narrative in which Jamaican history was not a smooth story of colonial occupation ... he furnished a story of struggle and

¹⁰⁸ Published at 117 Tower Street, Kingston Jamaica.

¹⁰⁹ Hart, *Origin and Development*, p.5.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, p.6.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

resistance ... that folded slave resistance into worker rebellions and trade union organizations.¹¹²

Producing a timeline of the workers' movements and of Jamaican resistance, this pamphlet sought to 'provide an elementary outline for the study of our background and development.'¹¹³ In this effort to disrupt, educate and disseminate a history of Jamaican struggle, we see Hart's contribution to the Black/Caribbean radical tradition through publishing.

Shortly after publishing his pamphlet, Hart founded the People's Educational Organisation (PEO) as the educational and community arm of the People's Freedom Movement (PFM). Set up to 'improve the knowledge and education of the people of Jamaica,' its founding represented more than a semantic shift towards freedom.¹¹⁴ Through the PEO, Hart and his comrades exposed the depth of censorship and control in Jamaican society – they intervened in this political arena by offering tangible challenges, from publishing cheap pamphlets to delivering street lectures. Collectively run with a membership fee of one shilling per month, the PEO was accessible to the 'broad masses.'¹¹⁵ Dedicated to the cause of Progressive Adult Education, it marked an endeavour to remedy the non-/mis-education of Jamaica's masses. Just one example of the political publishing that was on rise as nationalist parties emerged across the region, the PEO was a grassroots publisher that used multiple streams of communication to engage communities.¹¹⁶

¹¹² In Bogue's, 'History, Decolonization', pp.78-9 he argues that 'The popular historical writings of Hart are very important in any overall consideration of Caribbean historical writing.' Crucially, Hart's *Origin and Development* predates the much better known *The Making of the West Indies* textbook.

¹¹³ Hart, *Origin and Development*, p.31.

¹¹⁴ Constitution of the People's Educational Organisation [hereafter PEO], Richard Hart Collection, Box 4, MS2115, NLJ. The 'Four Hs' were excluded from the party in 1952 as part of a 'communist' purge that prompted the founding of Jamaica's more radical nationalist party, the People's Freedom Movement. See People's Freedom Movement, *Freedom Now!* (Kingston: People's Freedom Movement, 1956).

¹¹⁵ Though it was expected that friends and supporters with means would pay more, in the first letter they appealed for a target of fundraising £90. Letter from Hart, July 1952. Box 4 – Folder 1, MS2115, NLJ.

¹¹⁶ E.g., the People's National Movement in Trinidad published C.L.R. James, *Modern politics: Being a Series of Lectures on the Subject Given at the Trinidad Public Library, in its adult education programme* (Port-of-Spain: P.N.M. Publishing Co., 1960).

Printed in March 1954, the first PEO newsletter, *Freedom*, declared 'HISTORY IS MOVING AT BREAKNECK SPEED. EVERY YEAR, EVERY DAY, EVERY HOUR COUNTS.'¹¹⁷ This intrepid assertion of history rushing forwards symbolised the radical temporalities that were at play in this period. Conscious that they were living through a moment of rapid change, to the extent that 'every hour counts,' the PEO was committed to using this time effectively. Through newsletters and programming, it set out to resist the censorship that had shackled the Caribbean for centuries and continued to do so, but not for long, in this conjuncture 'where history was moving at breakneck speed.'

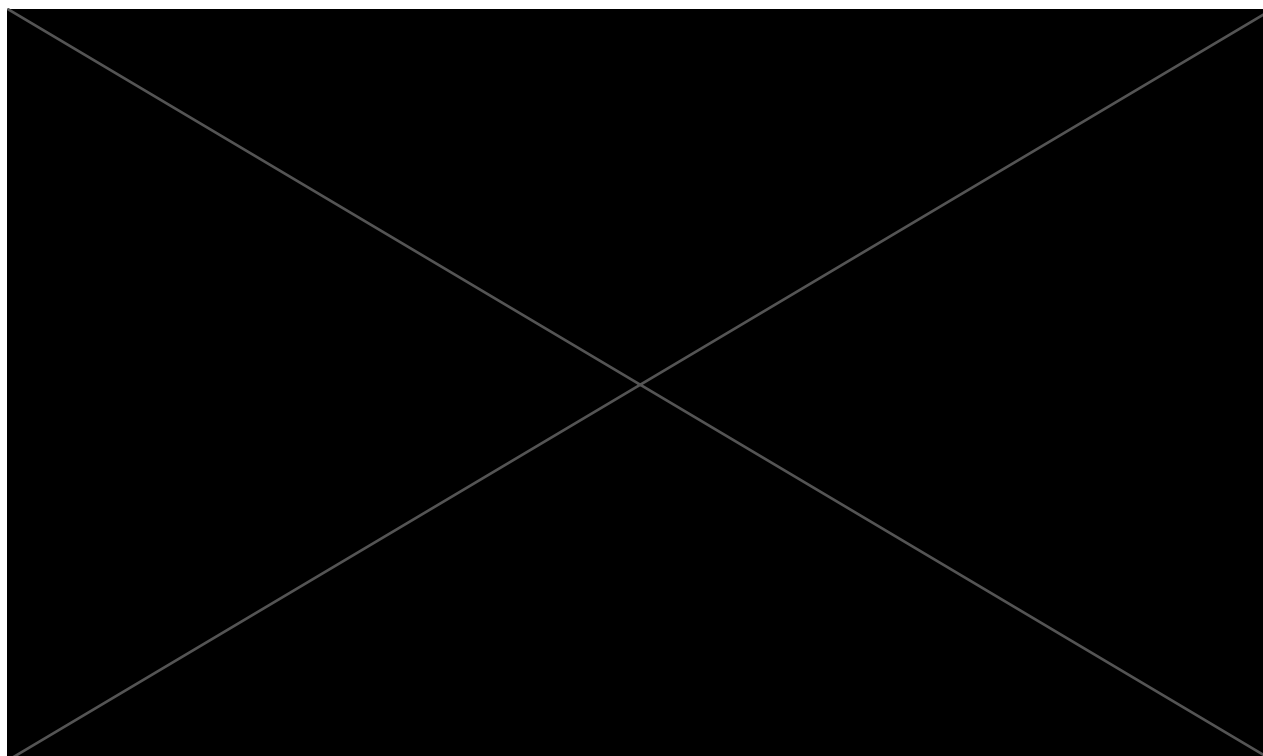


FIGURE 13 FREEDOM NEWSLETTER, OCTOBER 1961¹¹⁸

Much of the PEO's activism was responding to the 'Undesirable Publications Law.' Introduced in 1941, it 'gave the Governor power, by proclamation, to ban the importation, dissemination and possession of any publication.'¹¹⁹ At this moment of constitutional change, on the precipice of independence, this power was passed over

¹¹⁷ Published by the PEO, 64 Barry Street, price 2d. PEO Newsletter, No. 1, March 1954, Box 4, MS2115, NLJ.

¹¹⁸ Richard Hart Collection, Box 2, MS 2115, NLJ.

¹¹⁹ Freedom Newsletter: 'Undesirable Publications' Banned – December 1961 (refer to for chapter 3, docs 9-10), p.3 The law was punishable by one year hard labour in prison and a fine of £100.

from the Governor to the Minister of Home Affairs. Whilst the PNP protested the bill in the 1940s, Hart's newsletter scolded the PNP of the day for 'making extensive use of the Law.'¹²⁰ Raising questions about control and consciousness, the first issue of *Freedom* claimed that '**THESE EVIL FORCES THRIVE ONLY BECAUSE THEY ARE ABLE TO DENY TO THE PEOPLE KNOWLEDGE.**'¹²¹ Whilst conspiratorial in tone, it speaks to the broader Cold War suppression of grassroots political movements. Although *Freedom's* good versus evil analysis lacked nuance, in many ways it was a just and rousing analysis of Jamaican, and, more broadly, colonial, society. The front-page article of the second newsletter, 'Defend Our Civil Liberties!' similarly commented on the 'the intensification of the campaign to stamp out freedom of thought,' in reference to the banning of 'subversive' i.e. in this period, 'communist' literature.¹²² Implemented by a 'reactionary coalition' of British imperialists, capitalist interests and 'unscrupulous politicians who are prepared to do the bidding of the Colonial Office in return for its patronage,' the PEO positioned itself against this unofficial alliance.¹²³ The cartoon (Fig. 13) of 'King Manley' sat atop his throne repelling literal waves of 'progressive ideas' is a comic depiction of the split between the PFM and PNP. Committed to defending workers' and trade union rights, and to challenging the Undesirable Publications Law, the PEO was also established to protect

The rights of the people to read books of their choice, to think freely, to express themselves openly and without fear, to associate with whatever organisations or individuals they please, without fear of victimisation or duress.¹²⁴

Publishing was one of main ways that the PEO attempted to defeat this reactionary perpetuation of ignorance. Envisioning itself as an activist publisher, the PEO constitution stated their 'aims and objectives': 'to publish or assist in the publication

¹²⁰ Ibid, p.4.

¹²¹ Ibid. Bold and capital letters in original.

¹²² PEO Newsletter, No. 2, April-May 1954, Box 4, MS2115.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

of books, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers'; to help establish a 'printer and to print local publications'; and to encourage the distribution of educational texts.¹²⁵

Alongside its publishing objectives, the PEO aimed to 'organise or promote lectures, debates and study classes'; establish 'lending libraries and bookshops' and 'provide facilities for reading, discussion and study.'¹²⁶ The 'Library and Reading Room,' at 64 Barry Street in downtown Kingston provided a space for members to read and borrow books and periodicals about Marxism, history and philosophy.¹²⁷ Supplying radical texts at their library-come-bookstall – literature that was 'generally unavailable' to the Jamaican public – the PEO reading room marked a subversive imitation of the elite, Institute of Jamaica style reading room that was established in the late nineteenth century.¹²⁸ Transgressing the silent reading room, the PEO's holistic educational approach, which incorporated oral and written learning strategies, encouraged debate, discussion and active learning. Putting together a 'programme of street lectures in populous areas' these were such a success that they could not 'afford to provide this service on the scale it is now being demanded,' due to the prohibitive 'cost of hiring a microphone and loudspeaker.'¹²⁹ From Hart's first street lecture series on the 'the struggle of the slaves for freedom in Jamaica,' to a study group series on 'Garvey and the U.N.I.A.,' 'Gordon and the 1865 Rebellion,' 'Cudjoe and the Maroon Wars' and 'Sam Sharpe and the Emancipation Rebellion (1831-1832),' these education programmes produced knowledge of resistance. Committed to mass education, the PEO's street lectures reflected an awareness and connection to Jamaica's grassroots oral culture. This community-rooted mode of educational oralities embodied proto-'groundings' – the informal style of Rastafarian reasoning that Walter Rodney popularised in the late 1960s. Reflective and encouraging of organic intellectual activity, the PEO marked an early example of an activist publishing house that sought to revolutionise through education.

¹²⁵ Constitution of the PEO. Their first publication was *Forward to Freedom*, a pamphlet of speeches made by Hart on the national movement,

¹²⁶ Constitution of the PEO. Letter from Richard Hart to Members, October 1952, Box 4, MS2115, p.2.

¹²⁷ PEO flyer, Richard Hart Collection, File #8, Box 2, MS2115 1954-1962.

¹²⁸ Letter from Richard Hart to Members, October 1952.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

Conclusion

This chapter has identified sojourners, trade unionists, Marxists, Pan-Africanists, feminists and anti-colonial activists as the architects of twentieth-century Caribbean publishing. From Kingston to Manchester, this period witnessed a thriving of anti-colonial publishing. The periodicals and publications examined here, which vary in terms of politics, geography and format, evidence an increasingly heterogeneous publishing terrain. The evolution of this complex and varied publishing landscape was reflective of societal transformations in terms of literacy and consciousness. Hence, the linkages between publishing, politics and education are evidence of an increased reading public. From the labour rebellions to independence, an informed and enfranchised citizenry was created, and for many groups, this was a radical approach to citizenship that demanded freedom from colonial rule.

A great era of radical print, this chapter sheds light on the connection between publishing and freedom. Transformations during this period reveal themselves as a type of awakening, where books and periodicals became a central part of the means to imagine and achieve anti-colonial visions of the Caribbean. This period symbolised a shift from the West Indian publishing approaches examined in Chapter 2, namely through fundamental changes in the articulation of nationalist politics. Moreover, the rise of book publishing in the region marked a distinct shift from Chapters 1 and 2. Chapter 3 saw an intensive drive for public education that expressed itself in periodicals, books, street lectures and political movements. As such, anti-colonial publishing practices in the Caribbean and emergent Black/Caribbean publishing in Britain simultaneously played vital roles in challenging the vested interests of colonialism and, in the case of Britain, 'Mother Country' realities of racism and hostility.

As Chapter 4 examines, the same questions around freedom from colonial rule, racism and class oppression continued to shape the world of Caribbean publishing. Furthermore, it shows how explorations of history became increasingly prominent as people moved to Britain. Focusing solely on Caribbean publishers in Britain, the next three chapters explore this conscious shift to Black publishing in post-war Britain that was indicative of a broader identity shift that diasporization helped to produce.

Chapter 4: 'Know Your History': history features in the Black press, 1958-1965

The history of Bristol has been written with the blood of Africa. Its grandiose municipal buildings were built brick by brick on capital accumulated from the labour of African slaves in the Caribbean. ... So, the advent of coloured people is nothing new and not something which started in the twentieth century after World War II.

Edward Scobie¹

In Bristol, on Sunday 5 May 1963, protest broke out to put an end to the colour bar that was being imposed by the Bristol Omnibus Company. Owned and operated by the British state, the company instigated a ban on 'coloured crews' in 1955.² Angered by this blatant exclusion on the grounds of race, Paul Stephenson joined with four young local Jamaicans – Owen Henry, Roy Hackett, Audley Evans and Prince Brown – to form the West Indian Development Council.³ Inspired by the Montgomery Bus Boycotts in Alabama 1955, the West Indian Development council prompted a boycott of Bristol's buses alongside a demonstration, in April 1963, which gained local and national support.⁴ Launched in 1961 and edited by Dominican-born Edward Scobie, *Flamingo* outlined the historical significance of the boycotts for its readers. 'Bristol's Wealth Came from Slaves' (cited above) conveyed the paradox of the colour bar in a city that owed its prosperity to the Caribbean sugar trade. Illustrative of Scobie's approach more broadly, it embodied how history could and should respond to present concerns, and, in doing so, historicised political struggles.

Flamingo's coverage was critical in a context where even the *Daily Worker* (Britain's Communist Party-affiliated newspaper), was denying the existence of a colour bar. On 7 May 1963, the *Daily Worker* published an article titled 'Economic Ban – – Not

¹ *Flamingo*, July 1963, pp.26-27.

² Ibid.

³ Essex-born son of a West African father and British mother, Stephenson moved to Bristol as a student before becoming a Youth and Community Development Worker.

⁴ Paul Stephenson and Lillieth Morrison, *Memoirs of a Black Englishman* (Bristol: Tangent Books, 2011), pp.50-51.

Colour – – Sir Learie.’ Claudia Jones’ called this out as a tactic of divide and rule, in which ‘the white worker is encouraged in his fears to fight not the bosses, but the coloured man who “threatens” his job.’⁵ Hence, the boycott exemplified the discrimination that Black and Asian people faced at the hands of trade unions. Revealing an alternative reality of racism, hostility and labour tensions, the Bristol Bus Boycott tells a very different migration story to the narrative of West Indians being welcomed into Britain’s transport networks, as conductors and drivers.

It was this backdrop that catalysed the emergence of numerous magazines, newsletters and newspapers that were edited, written and published by Britain’s growing Black/Caribbean communities. Also the outcome of a rich Caribbean publishing tradition (examined Chapters 1-3), these post-war publications used print media as a tool to forge unities, challenge dominant representations of Blackness and hold the powers that be to account. This chapter examines the production of history in the press, through a close analysis of regular history features in three periodicals, from 1958 to 1965: *West Indian Gazette*, *Tropic* and *Flamingo*. From discourses of migration and race, to the coming of independence, these history features reflect the 1950s and 1960s British-Caribbean post-colonial problem space, in which Caribbean and other racialized commonwealth citizens had their rights and humanity contested by state institutions and racist individuals. What was the role of these publications in diasporic community building? What do they reveal of the connections between history, activism and print at this precise conjuncture of late 1950s and early 1960s Britain? This chapter demonstrates how these newspapers and magazines were both architects and products of Caribbean community building in post-war Britain.

This chapter concentrates on the specific space that was carved out for ‘writing history’ by analysing an overlooked contribution – monthly history columns. The fact that the leading Black/Caribbean periodicals allotted space, time, thought and money for publishing history, is significant. Drawing on multiple historical traditions of vindication/contributionism, Marxism, revisionism and narrativization, these features

⁵ Claudia Jones to Editor (*Daily Worker*), 7 May 1963, Claudia Jones Memorial Collection MG692, Schomburg Centre, New York Public Library [hereafter NYPL].

reconstructed untold and marginalised histories of African queens, abolitionists and artists. These historical traditions have been neglected in the scholarship on Caribbean diaspora publishing in post-war Britain because of a reluctance to engage with popular scholarship. More generally, the worth of magazines as historical artefacts is often dismissed. Hence, this research builds on James West's extensive scholarship about Lerone Bennett and *Ebony*, which illustrates the utility of magazine study, especially for understanding popular Black history.⁶ By examining post-war Britain, this chapter explores how the press became a critical space for the development, articulation and dissemination of popular Black history.

Whilst focused on the period 1958-1965, these features provide a window onto earlier historical moments. These articles marked a particular philosophical challenge to the racism of the late 1950s and early 1960s. They were an imaginative space where complex and pertinent pasts were used to raise questions about the present. By disrupting conventional racial chronologies and notions of progress, alternative experiences and imaginations of past, present and future were able to coexist in these magazines. They highlighted the prevalence and multiplicity of racism across time, whilst vindicating Black individuals, past and present. Hence, this chapter continues to engage with Scott's ideas of history and time.⁷ First, examining the periodicals and their creators, in order to locate their political and social positioning, the rest of the chapter examines two main contributions of these history features: staying power and nation building.⁸

The Periodicals

The *Gazette*, *Tropic* and *Flamingo* each played an important role within Black/Caribbean communities in Britain, and further afield. Furthermore, they emerged alongside the formation of new racialised and politicised identities, with people uniting under a collective banner of West Indian, Caribbean or Black. Much like Rachel Yemm's definition of the local press as 'expressing a common

⁶ West, *Ebony Magazine*.

⁷ Scott, *Conscripts*.

⁸ These history features also explored African and African American history; however this will not be specifically addressed here, as I am focused on the role of these periodicals in constructing Caribbean communities in Britain and ideas of nationhood.

experience' of living in a certain place and sharing particular needs, interests and problems, these newspapers articulated a certain kind of diasporic global-locality and Black identity, hence their labelling as the 'Black press.'⁹ They helped articulate the commonalities between communities who shared the material experiences of racism, hostility and colonialism, and cultures of resistance and mobility. These periodicals had a strong community function and were explicitly targeted at an audience with a common experience – being Black/Caribbean (mainly in Britain but also in the Caribbean, USA and Africa).

Furthermore, these publications were a necessary response to the state of play within the mainstream British press. As Scobie asserted, there was a need for a distinct 'Coloured Voice' because 'The white papers of Fleet Street and the rest of Britain do not cater to the black man.'¹⁰ Citing examples of unfair reporting in the 'white press,' *Flamingo* demarcated itself as the magazine that would present Black people as 'ordinary human beings – not just "black" problems.'¹¹ Hence, these publications were a channel for representation as well as news-telling and entertainment.

West Indian Gazette

Of critical difference to those periodicals that Chapters 1-3 analysed, the *West Indian Gazette and Afro-Asian Caribbean News* was the first Black owned newspaper that was sold on Britain's high streets.¹² Founded by communist activist and writer, Claudia Jones with the help of her comrade Amy Ashwood Garvey, the *Gazette* shared news of 'emerging nations from Colonial Bondage.'¹³ Founded in the wake of the 1958 Notting Hill Riots, it was a desperately-needed forum for debate, analysis and hope, Donald Hinds (one the paper's main journalists) described it as 'the only coherent voice from the Black community in Britain.'¹⁴ In agreement with Boyce-

⁹ Rachel Yemm, 'Immigration, race and local media: Smethwick and the 1964 general election' *Contemporary British History*, 33 (2019), 98-122 (p.100).

¹⁰ *Flamingo*, October 1961, p.1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Hinds, 'West Indian Gazette' and McKenzie, 'Black British journalists'.

¹³ *West Indian Gazette*, February 1960, p.10.

¹⁴ Hinds, 'West Indian Gazette', p.95. See Pilkington, *Beyond Mother Country*, p.143.

Davies and Schwarz, I view the *Gazette* as a vehicle for post-colonial community building; more than any other 'Black British' periodical, it was foundational to the emergent Caribbean diaspora in London.¹⁵

It is estimated that by 1958, the year of the paper's founding, '125,000 West Indians had come to Britain.'¹⁶ Hitting a peak circulation of 30,000 in its first year, this settled down to 10,000-15,000.¹⁷ If one assumes that most of its readership were Caribbean people living in Britain (although it was sold in the Caribbean too), this means that at its height, close to a quarter of Britain's Caribbean community were reading the *Gazette*. Even a sustained circulation of 10,000-15,000 meant that a significant proportion of the population were absorbing the same news, adverts and politics, at a sixpence apiece. Given the precarious and superficial nature of circulation figures, which misses their unconventional reach, especially in the Caribbean context (reading aloud and sharing), the full influence of the *Gazette* is hard to assess.¹⁸

Filling a 'Great Need in Lives of West Indians,' the *Gazette* brought 'some of the flavour of the West Indies ... to Britain.'¹⁹ As well as reporting British stories, 'What's Going On in The Caribbean This Month' brought news of Caribbean political struggles and the ever-closer reality of independence. There were also reviews of plays, books, poetry and beauty tips, which widened its appeal beyond a solely political readership. Adverts for the Grimaldi Siosa Line (the main transporter of the Windrush Generation) made up the largest source of revenue.²⁰ Adverts for beauty, food and homeware (straightening creams, Encona hot sauce and sofa sets) were an essential part of the *Gazette*'s aesthetic – directing its readers to Brixton market, Martyn's Barbershop and its own events that were regularly held in Lambeth Town Hall. Hence, the newspaper, which was housed at 250 Brixton Road, played an

¹⁵ Boyce-Davies describes the *Gazette* as helping to constitute Black British communities. Boyce-Davies, *Left of Karl Marx*, p.92. Bill Schwarz, 'Claudia Jones and the West Indian Gazette': Reflections on the Emergence of Post-colonial Britain', *Twentieth Century British History*, 14 (2003), 264–285.

¹⁶ Lambeth Services, The Voice and South London Press, *Forty Winters on: memories of Britain's postwar Caribbean immigrants* (London: Lambeth Council, 1988), p.43.

¹⁷ Hoyles and Hoyles, *Caribbean Publishing*, p.38.

¹⁸ Robert Fraser, *Book History Through Postcolonial Eyes: Rewriting the script* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008) p.123.

¹⁹ *West Indian Gazette*, September 1960, p.3.

²⁰ Hinds, 'West Indian Gazette', p.90.

important role of creating and publicising Black/Caribbean spaces of leisure and consumption.



FIGURE 14 MANU AND CLAUDIA CONFER AT THE WEST INDIAN GAZETTE OFFICE. COLLECTION OF MANU MANCHANDA. COURTESY OF MARX MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Despite its solid circulation and advertising revenues, the paper was riddled with financial woes: Donald Hinds recalled that they often were unable to find £100 to pay the printer. Correspondence between Jones and Abhimanyu Manchanda, known as Manu, highlight these omnipresent financial tensions. A dear comrade and supporter of Jones and the *Gazette* (sat opposite her in Fig. 14), their correspondence reveals a complex and intense relationship – emotionally, politically and financially.²¹ In the following letter, dated 3 March 1959, Manu criticized Jones’

very chaotic, most inefficient, uneconomic, unsystematic and un-business like working of both the West Indian Gazette and the Coloured Peoples

²¹ Ibid.

Publishing House Ltd.; with the result the Company is under heavier debt every day.²²

Whilst praising her hard work and the ‘encouraging response’ that the paper had received, the piling debt was evidently putting a strain on the paper and their friendship. Even at this early stage in the paper’s life, the paper owed £1,490 for printing, phone and rent.²³ This sense of chaos is conceivable from the photograph of the *Gazette* office, with messy piles of paper, receipts and the like. What Jones lacked in business sense, she made up for with determination and intellectual vigour. Like Ras Makonnen and the Black/Caribbean publishers that would be established in the coming years (Chapters 5 and 6), their motivations were political rather than financial. Moreover, the *Gazette* symbolises the economic struggles that most Black publications and publishers had faced in the preceding decades and would continue to experience.²⁴

²² Letter from A. Manchanda to Claudia Jones, 3 March 1959, File: Correspondence Misc (1956-63), MG692, NYPL.

²³ Letter from Claudia Jones to Manu, undated, File: Correspondence Misc (1956-63), MG692, NYPL.

²⁴ They often could not afford £100 to pay printers. Hinds, ‘West Indian Gazette’, p.95.

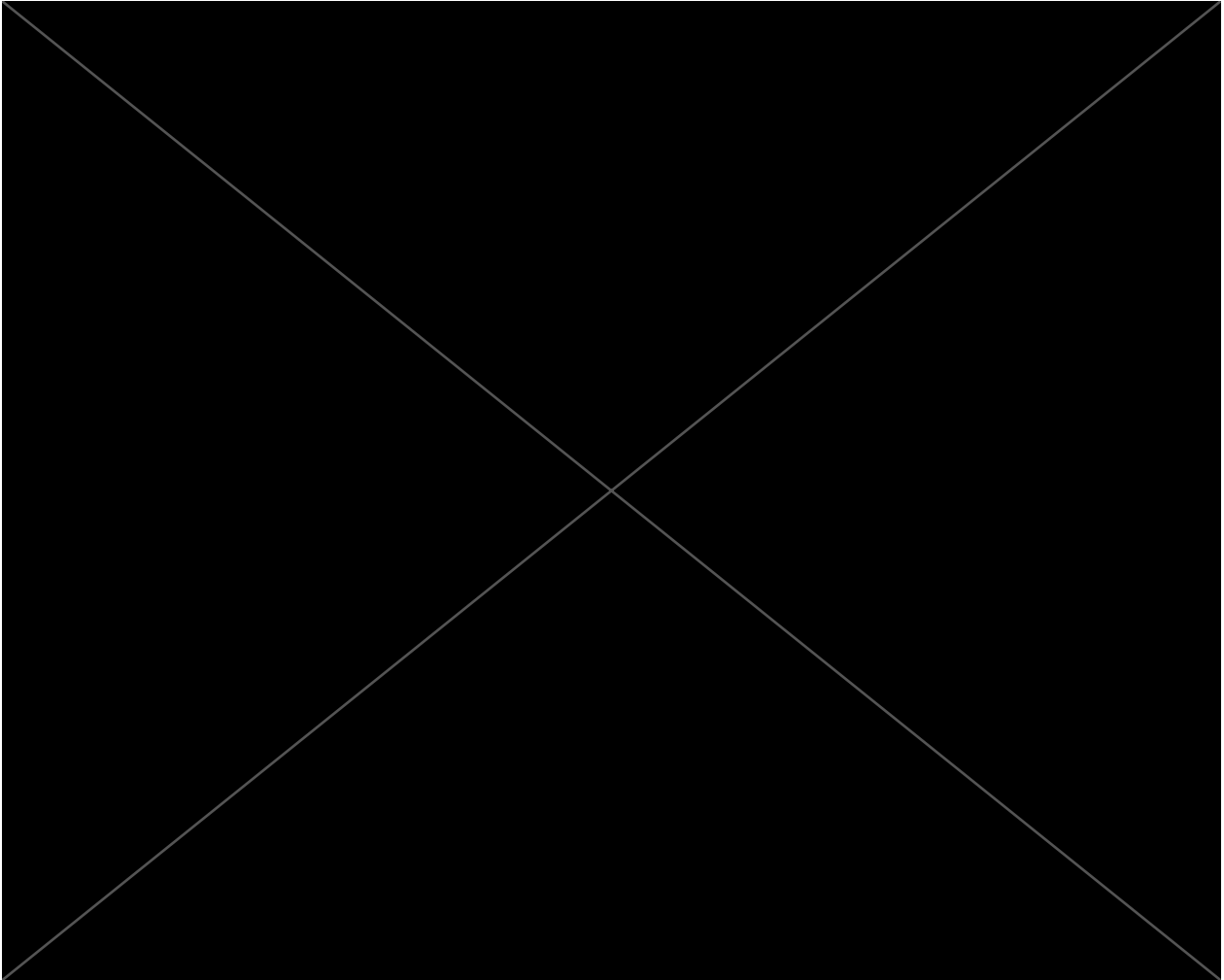


FIGURE 15 CLAUDIA JONES' PASSPORT²⁵

A life-long communist and Black feminist, Jones was an active member in the Communist Party of the USA, from her youth until she was deported, in 1955 (McCarthy era).²⁶ Working for several leftist publications, her impressive journalism career included editing *Weekly Review* (1938-40), *Spotlight* (1943-5), *Negro Affairs Daily Worker* (1945-6), *Negro Affairs Quarterly* (1953) and *Caribbean News* (1952-55).²⁷ We can see that she was a proud journalist from her definite crossing out of 'Typist' under the 'Profession' heading on her passport. Print media was the arena in which she communicated her anti-imperialist and feminist vision. An organic

²⁵ File: Passport and documents, MG692, NYPL.

²⁶ See Charisse Burden-Stell, 'Claudia Jones, the Longue Durée of McCarthyism, and the Threat of US Fascism, *Journal of Intersectionality*, 3 (2019), 46-66. This followed earlier arrests, in 1948 and 1951 for her political and journalistic activity.

²⁷ Autobiographical notes in a letter from Claudia Jones to Comrade Foster, 6 December 1955. File: US Archives (1955-97), Claudia Jones – Marika Sherwood Research Collection MG699, NYPL. *Caribbean News* was the mouthpiece of the Caribbean Labour Congress's London branch.

intellectual in the truest sense, Jones was deeply committed to articulating the feelings and experiences of the masses – Black, women, working class – through her journalism and publishing. Simultaneously an intellectual, activist and theoretician, all of these sides were thoroughly embedded in one another. As such, education was a key purpose of the *Gazette*, which sought to make critical knowledge widely accessible.

One of the ways it did this was through printing history articles. The paper did not shy away from the importance of history and its relevance to the present. In Shirley Gordon's article, the life-long educational activist highlighted the problems of historical neglect and distortion in the Caribbean.²⁸ Gordon wrote that 'a community, like an individual, to grow in wisdom needs to know and accept its own past.'²⁹ Through a life-cycle analogy, relating slavery and post-emancipation society to 'childhood' and 'adolescence,' she depicted history as part of a personal and communal search for identity.³⁰ The case put forward in this article encapsulated the gaps that series like 'Know Your History' were trying to fill. The title of the *Gazette's* history feature is noteworthy; the use of 'Your' was both active and directive. Speaking loudly to the reader, it implied a link between knowledge and ownership of history. By underscoring history's value and importance, it implied that knowledge facilitated ownership – it is the knowing that makes it yours. The segment only appeared in three copies of the newspaper, but it was joined by other history features in special independence issues. Tending to focus on the history of the Caribbean from an internationalist perspective, the *Gazette's* historical content reflected its political roots and a readership that imaginably had stronger connection and attachment to the region than it did to Britain, at this time. Jones died in December 1964, after protracted spells of ill health that had begun during multiple imprisonments in the 1950s. The *WIG* came to an end immediately after the memorial issue that covered her funeral. According to Donald Hinds 'the black community in London was widowed. For a while it was leaderless.'³¹

²⁸ *West Indian Gazette*, May 1961, pp.6-7; *West Indian Gazette*, June 1960, p.4.

²⁹ *West Indian Gazette*, May 1961, p.6.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Hinds, 'West Indian Gazette', p.96.

Tropic and Flamingo

In March 1960, a pricier competitor arrived on the scene – *Tropic*.³² Making its first appearance with striking colour and gloss, the front cover featured an adorable young girl holding a bright red telephone with the caption ‘HELLO! Seen our new magazine for coloured people?’³³ From first glance, *Tropic* invited all people of colour, especially women and families, to pick up the magazine. Founded in 1960, by the Jamaican publisher, Charles I. Ross, with the help of Scobie, Molly Douglas and Patrick Williams (Scobie’s co-editor until September 1960), it described itself as ‘the voice of 250,000 coloured people in Britain,’ standing ‘for coloured people everywhere in their struggle for Independence.’³⁴ A disproportionate and misleading claim, *Tropic* was not aimed at an Asian readership; the content was unmistakably shaped for African and Caribbean audiences, though it also had white readers who made themselves visible in the letters’ pages.³⁵

Designed to have popular appeal, monthly segments included news, sport, short stories (written by the likes of Sam Selvon and Jan Carew), history articles, cultural features on music, art or theatre and ‘Pages for Women,’ which covered beauty, childcare and cooking. Soon after its arrival, Jones expressed concern about this ‘well backed competitor’ which had a similar ‘policy’ to ‘that of the Ebony type magazine showing the rather rosy side of the picture’ that pushed a ‘moderate’ political agenda.³⁶ *Tropic* had a rather more radical view of itself. Allying itself to the Black Atlantic press that was continually under attack, an editorial discussed the ‘dangerous business’ of working for a magazine like ‘DRUM, the South African Negro Journal whose staff gets periodic beatings from Afrikaans and apartheid-swaggering politicians’ or newspapers in the Southern States where workers are ‘almost sure to suffer injury’ or have an office bombed by ‘Ku Klux Klan hoodlums.’³⁷

³² The magazine cost two shillings and six pence.

³³ *Tropic*, March 1960, front cover.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p.1.

³⁵ *Tropic*’s letters pages offer an insight into racialised dynamics between African and ‘West Indian’ communities in Britain; see issues from August to December 1960, always on p.1, for a debate around the use of African languages. Letter writers would often identify themselves as white in their letters of support for or criticism of the magazine. *Tropic*, December 1960, p.1

³⁶ Claudia Jones to Bessie, 6 June 1960, MG692, NYPL.

³⁷ *Tropic*, September 1960, p.3.

Also in danger, a bullet was shot through *Tropic's* office window, to which the police predictably failed to respond. Writing about 'fascist gangsters' in London who were connected to the apartheid politicians and Ku Klux Klan, *Tropic* imagined itself as part of a Black transnational press community.

In December, the final issue described 1960 as a 'year of beginnings for *tropic*'; declaring that 1961 would be a 'year of bright promise. *Tropic* has plans that will make it even more exciting, varied and interesting.'³⁸ Despite its apparent success, the magazine folded without warning, but this marked the demise of *Tropic* in name only. The first issue of *Flamingo* (an unofficial reboot of *Tropic*) was published in September 1961. Similar in terms of content and aesthetic (they had the same editor and contributors), the slightly cheaper magazine, priced at one shilling and sixpence, was also circulated in Britain, the Caribbean, West Africa and the United States.³⁹ In its second issue, *Flamingo* claimed to have sold out of 20,000 copies in Britain and 15,000 in the US.⁴⁰ Owing to the concept of 'pass-on' readership (a popular trend amongst African American periodicals), it is important to note that these figures were likely inflated or underestimated. The statement that 'our print order of 20,000 was sold right out' implies that the readership, once 'pass-on' was factored in, may have been considerably larger.⁴¹

Far more commercial than the *Gazette*, as expressed through their glossy aesthetic and softer political messaging, African American consumer magazines, like *Ebony*, were a focal source of inspiration. This was reflective of the wider ways in which Black British communities looked to African American culture within a larger process of forging a uniquely Black British cultural politics that spoke to specificities of that experience. Like the American magazines that inspired them, *Tropic* and *Flamingo* had monthly history articles that always featured an illustration or artwork, the former was called 'Our Page in History' and, the latter, 'History Feature.'⁴² Generally

³⁸ *Tropic*, December 1960, p.6.

³⁹ *Flamingo* had a Liberian edition that was published in London from July to October 1965. Available at Institute of Race Relations [01-04-03-02-082].

⁴⁰ *Flamingo*, October 1961, p.1.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Lerone Bennett, Jr.'s history series in *Ebony* from 1961-2 included eleven in-depth articles over seventeen months. James West, 'The Books You've Waited For: The Johnson Publishing Book

focused on an individual hero/ine, these articles embodied Scobie's populist approach to writing history that drew heavily on present concerns and demands.

The variety and volume of *Tropic* and *Flamingo*'s commercial content, from Caribbean food to fashion, signalled an editorial and managerial objective to reach a mainstream Black base, with middle-class aspirations of respectability and material accumulation. While both had glamorous 'pin-ups' on their front covers, *Flamingo* featured more women with darker skin tones and natural hair. Although this illustrated some effort to promote Black womanhood and beauty, these cover girls sat alongside adverts for hair relaxants. This simultaneous challenge and confirmation of white beauty standards typifies the contradictory quality of these magazines. *Tropic* and *Flamingo* illustrate a careful negotiation of respectability and resistance – they undertook the challenge of pushing for change whilst being commercially viable. Much like Jones' critique of *Tropic*, radicals in the USA who deplored *Ebony*'s material and aesthetic emphasis branded it as 'antithetical to the struggle of racial equality.'⁴³ Such debates about what publications get to be a part of the 'Black Press' help explain why *Tropic* and *Flamingo* have been disregarded in histories of race and media in Britain. Although popular within the communities that they were aimed at, they have been overlooked in academic study. This acute deficit of literature on the commercial Black British press is likely because it does not fit into a neat narrative about Blackness and resistance.

There is, however, a more dubious story to be told about the emergence of *Flamingo*, which undermines its independent and grassroots positioning. It was recently revealed that Peter Hornsby, supporter and backer of the magazine, was an MI6 agent who sought to establish an anti-communist magazine that was aimed at African and Caribbean readers.⁴⁴ Stephen Dorril, an expert on journalism and intelligence, alludes to an MI6 initiative to 'support black students, writers and aspiring politicians who were on the left but who could be persuaded to oppose

Division and Black Print Culture in the 1960' in Brigitte Fielder and Jonathan Senchyne ed. *African American Expression in Print and Digital Culture* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2018), pp.62-81 (p.67).

⁴³ James West, 'Power is 100 Years Old: Lerone Bennett, Jr., *Ebony* Magazine and the Roots of Black Power', *The Sixties: A Journal of History, Politics and Culture*, 9 (2016), 165-188 (p.167).

⁴⁴ *Guardian*, 26 January 2019.

communism.⁴⁵ This helps to explain Hornsby's collaboration with Scobie. An emerging journalist and broadcaster with strong community connections, yet distinct from the more radical side of Caribbean literary activism, Scobie was a perfect 'target.' As his later career reveals, Scobie's politics was more inclined towards conservatism than communism.⁴⁶

Whilst there is minimal information about *Flamingo's* MI6 connections beyond the *Guardian* article, a close comparative reading of *Flamingo* and *Tropic's* editorials suggest subtle interference. Most likely a result of MI6 funding, *Flamingo* had an unusually healthy and regular run until April 1965, with Scobie at the helm until January 1964. Jennifer Hornsby recalled her husband wanting to create a magazine that 'would make them [Commonwealth citizens] feel welcome and ease their integration into British society.'⁴⁷ The concept of integration is key here. From features like 'Black Angels,' which showed Black nurses and doctors attending to white patients, to articles about 'Mixed Marriages,' with photographs of smiling mixed families, *Flamingo* promoted a 'good immigrant' and harmonious integration narrative.⁴⁸ Whilst critical of government failings, societal racism and 'The Lunatic Fringe' of British politics ('Oswald Mosley and his minions'), *Flamingo's* editorials marked a discreet yet distinct shift away from *Tropic's* more outspoken internationalist and anti-imperialist agenda that was rooted in global events and ideas.⁴⁹ *Flamingo's* focus on domestic issues seemed to reflect Hornsby's integrationist motivations, with editorials such as 'Coloured Voice,' 'Immigrant Ban' and 'History Repeating Itself' – all discussing the politics of immigration.⁵⁰ Thus, these early *Flamingo* editorials presented the magazine as a 'voice' for Black British people and as an arch defender of civil rights and racial equality in Britain. In later years, editorials were sporadic, with some commenting on global politics, presenting

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ In 1968, he and Eugenia Charles founded the Dominica Freedom Party, which opposed government legislation that sought to censor the press.

⁴⁷ *Guardian*, 26 January 2019.

⁴⁸ *Flamingo*, October 1961, pp.4-7 and 34-6.

⁴⁹ *Flamingo*, September 1961, 38-41. *Tropic* editorials include 'Decade of Independence,' *Tropic*, March 1960, p.1, which declared itself as a supporter of the boycott against South African goods; 'Colour Bar in Public Space', *Tropic*, June 1960, p.1, that linked South African Apartheid to the colour bar in Britain; and 'Négritude,' July 1960, p.3, which express its sympathies with Nkrumah.

⁵⁰ *Flamingo*, October 1961, p.1; November 1961, p.1 and December, 1961, p.1.

itself as both a supporter of non-aligned countries and movements, but also a critic of the Soviet Union and Cuba.⁵¹ This analysis suggests that MI6 involvement was detectable in the journal's style, positioning and content.

However, *Flamingo* must be located within a wider intelligence mission to connect with Britain's growing Black communities and spread targeted anti-communist propaganda. The prominence of communist thought and activity across anti-colonial struggles made African and Caribbean communities a special target. *Flamingo* was founded just two years after the Cuban Revolution (1959). A pivotal time when fears about the spread of Caribbean communism were rife, this produced a culture of secretive state (UK and US) intervention across the Caribbean. Clearly, as people from the Caribbean established communities in Britain, these anxieties of Caribbean revolution materialised at home. While there is no evidence that Scobie knew of *Flamingo*'s funding roots, content analysis suggests that its MI6 connections swayed its political messaging. Nonetheless, without evidence, we have to respect that his editorship retained some level of independence. Besides, Hornsby's approaching of Scobie for the job implies that he was 'targeted' because his politics were relatively aligned, as showcased in *Tropic*. More broadly, MI6 and CIA involvement in small journals was endemic in this period. Therefore, *Flamingo*'s MI6 connections might be read as more revealing of a general Cold War culture surveillance and control, than as a conspiracy by Scobie to produce conscious propaganda.

Primarily remembered as a journalist, politician and RAF veteran, Scobie's significant work as a historian has been largely neglected, which is why I will go into a little more about his life and work.⁵² A self-made man, without any formal historical training (before he moved to the US to embark on an academic career in 1972), Scobie's impressive historical knowledge that he disseminated through these magazines, points to his position as an organic intellectual.⁵³ Much more of a

⁵¹ *Flamingo*, December 1962, p.1.

⁵² There is no official archive or biography of Scobie apart from an entry in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.

⁵³ Scobie got his position at Rutgers University because of his work as an independent scholar and journalist and with the help of Jan Carew (*Tropic/Flamingo* contributor) who was 'instrumental in opening the academic doors.' Edward Scobie to Andrew Salkey, 21 November 1972, *Andrew Salkey Archive*, BL.

historian than an activist, Scobie's organic intellectualism was manifest in his commitment to publishing hidden histories of Black life in Britain. An independent scholar for most of his working life, Jan Carew, the Guyanese writer (and friend of Scobie) described him as a 'pioneer' and 'living encyclopaedia in this field' who collected 'materials, artifacts, documents and personal interviews with leading black artists, writers and musicians, to codify and gather together these materials for posterity.'⁵⁴ Scobie 'not only writes history but makes it.'⁵⁵ This admiration for Scobie's historical contributions, which were of profound political and social significance, were echoed by several other figures of note, such as Andrew Salkey.⁵⁶

Like Jones, Scobie had a lengthy journalistic career before editing *Tropic*: during the 1930s, he worked at two of the most prestigious African American newspapers, the *Amsterdam News* and *Chicago Defender*, and later became a special correspondent for *Ebony*, *Tan* and *Jet*.⁵⁷ He was also assistant editor of *Checkers* (1948-49), 'Britain's Premier Negro Magazine,' which incorporated a spectrum of uplift, integrationist and more radical politics.⁵⁸ Alongside this, Scobie worked as a scriptwriter, interviewer, researcher and narrator, at the BBC, from the late 1940s until the mid-1960s. His work for the BBC kindled a pioneering career of popularising Black history – through radio, magazines, books and the academy. His seminal work, *Black Britannia*, marked a culmination of decades of historical research and writing that he initially circulated through his magazines and on the radio.⁵⁹ Through the BBC and print journalism, Scobie became acquainted with fellow Caribbean writers and activists, enmeshing himself in an emergent male literary set, 'which included C.L.R. James, Jan Carew, Andrew Salkey, George Lamming and Eric Williams.'⁶⁰ This is indicative of a wider gender politics in which popular printed Black

⁵⁴ Letter from Jan Carew, 25 April 1972, Box 92 Archives and Special Collections, Chicago State University, Chicago, IL.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Letter of recommendation from Andrew Salkey, Hampshire College, 19 April 1977, *Andrew Salkey Archive*, BL.

⁵⁷ *Flamingo*, October 1961, pp.13-14. By 1956, *The Chicago Daily Defender* was the largest Black-owned daily in the world.

⁵⁸ Scobie is incorrectly cited as the founder and editor of *Checkers*, when he was contributor, July-December, and was Editorial Assistant, October-January.

⁵⁹ Edward Scobie, *Black Britannia: A History of Blacks in Britain* (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company Inc, 1972).

⁶⁰ Leaflet honouring Professor Edward Scobie, 20 September 1985, *Andrew Salkey Archive*, BL.

history and literature, during this period, was largely produced within gendered circles of knowledge and in turn were framed and limited by gendered/heterosexist understandings of the Black/Caribbean pasts.

Staying Power

Britain was no exception to the global transformations that typically characterise the 1960s. Independence was won in parts of the Caribbean and Africa; institutional racism became increasingly entrenched; and fascism was festering at the grassroots. From Notting Hill (1958) to the cementing of nativist discourse in parliamentary politics (1961-64), this period witnessed a significant rise in anti-immigrant feeling, becoming a seminal moment in debates around 'Britishness.'⁶¹ The institutional assault on Commonwealth migration and Britain's communities of colour – from parliament, the press and local communities – was not met with passivity. It stimulated an organised politics of anti-racism and attempts to address its systemic nature, through the Race Relations Act of 1965 and the surfacing of anti-racist and Black Power groups on the ground.

These self-consciously Black *and* British magazines emerged, precisely, at a moment in which Black Commonwealth claims to Britishness were being contested. Reporting on emergent Black British cultures across Britain, in the news and culture sections, *Tropic* and *Flamingo's* dedicated history segments became pertinent discursive spaces to engage in this debate about 'Britishness.' Unequivocal in its mission to avow Commonwealth claims to Britishness, *Flamingo* asserted that 'West Indians, Africans and Asians are as much a part of the British scene as the Welsh, the Scots and the Irish.'⁶² In resistance to the imposed friction of being Black *and* British, Scobie established his publications and himself as opponents of anti-immigration rhetoric and defenders of commonwealth rights. He enacted this role by writing those groups into contemporary and historical narratives of Britain.

⁶¹ The percentage of British population advocating for some degree of immigration control rose from sixty-five per cent in 1958 to ninety-five per cent in 1968. Hartman and Husband, p.18. For a critical analysis of the 1964 general election, which examines the role of the press in engendering racist rhetoric in Smethwick, see Yemm, 'Smethwick'.

⁶² *Flamingo*, September 1961, inside cover.

Through history articles that were published in this moment of precarious citizenship, *Tropic and Flamingo* unsettled the temporal-racial logic that Britain was a white nation before Windrush. This predates Peter Fryer's concept of *Staying Power*, as expressed in his renowned 1984 book, now widely regarded as a foundational Black British history text. As Rob Waters explains, 'staying power' was the idea that asserting 'longevity was in itself an act of defiance.'⁶³ Each 'careful account of a black soldier, drummer, jester or musician in Fryer's book is a riposte to this politics of repatriation.'⁶⁴ Populated by a similar array of Black composers, actors, inventors and writers, Scobie's historical approach was about more than 'staying power,' it also highlighted the imperative role of race as a foundational means of organising and defining Britain. More than a tale of longevity, Scobie brought questions of race to the fore of British and global histories. Analysing numerous Black British history articles, that *Tropic and Flamingo* published between 1960 and 1963, mainly were authored by Scobie, the following section explores two main historical themes: challenging Britain's historic landscape and vindication.

Challenging the Historical Landscape

Through a broad range of history articles, *Tropic and Flamingo* challenged carefully constructed imaginations of Britain's historical, ethnic and moral landscape. From debunking white abolitionist myths to reminding its readers that there were 'Georgian Gentlemen of Colour,' Scobie emphasised the seismic impact of slavery and colonialism on Britain and the agency of those that were either enslaved or otherwise oppressed by the British Empire.

In June 1962, on the eve of the first independences in the British Caribbean, *Flamingo* published 'Freedom Symbol,' an article about 1772 Somerset vs. Stewart ruling that declared slavery illegal on English soil.⁶⁵ Focused on the importance of

⁶³ Rob Waters, 'Thinking Black: Peter Fryer's Staying Power and the Politics of Writing Black British History in the 1980s', *History Workshop Journal*, 82 (2016), 104-120 (108). Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London: Pluto, 1984) was published in Thatcher's Britain, whereby neoliberalism and institutional racism took a firm grip of Britain's supposedly non-existent 'society.'

⁶⁴ Waters, 'Thinking Black'.

⁶⁵ *Flamingo*, June 1962, p.48.

enslaved agency, this article credited the efforts of James Somerset, the ‘runaway slave,’ whose ‘trial was the first major blow to that odious traffic of the slave trade.’⁶⁶ It was an imperative reminder of the presence of enslaved Africans in Britain; a history that had been forcibly forgotten. As a strategy to deflect from Britain’s foundational involvement and profit from transatlantic slavery, dominant historical narratives concentrated on Abolition – through the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act (1807) and the Abolition of Slavery Act (1833-38). By choosing 1772 as a focal point in the longer struggle for freedom, he diverted attention away from British parliamentarians such as William Wilberforce. Part of a concerted effort to unsettle the popular notion that Abolition was a white British parliamentary movement, a myth that continues to be reproduced in the twenty-first century, *Tropic and Flamingo* featured several articles on Black abolitionist figures such as Phyllis Wheatley, Olaudah Equiano, Richard Hill and Frederick Douglass.⁶⁷

Through articles about Black Tudors and Georgians, history features unsettled the idea that Britain was a white nation before recent waves of post-war migration. The historical coverage of the Bristol Bus Boycott identified continuities of racism since the sixteenth century. Referencing the 1596 proclamation that was used to drive out ‘blackamoors’ from early modern England, Scobie compared Queen Elizabeth I’s attitude of “Send the n-----s back home” to the ‘Mosleyites’ of the twentieth century; thus, evidencing an entrenched culture of anti-Blackness.⁶⁸ Further verifying the centuries-old practice of exclusion and oppression, he informed his readers that Africans were enslaved as domestic servants in Bristol. By grounding the unfolding boycott in the city’s extensive colonial history, the article made plain that Bristol’s wealth grew out of racial capitalism; thus, the imposition of a racist colour bar was hardly an aberration in the city’s past. Through a blurring of past and present laws, attitudes and realities, the article ridiculed Britain’s unchanging and archaic white

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ See Bressey, “Legacies of 2007” for a critical analysis of the bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade. ‘Slave Poet’, *Tropic*, December 1960, pp.11-12; ‘History Feature: Slave Abolitionist’, *Flamingo*, January 1962, inside of back cover; ‘History: Jamaican Abolitionist’, *Flamingo*, July 1964, pp.28-29 and ‘History: Frederick Douglass’, *Flamingo*, February 1965, pp.30-31.

⁶⁸ *Flamingo*, July 1963, p.26. In reference to twentieth-century British fascist leader and politician, Oswald Mosley.

supremacy, whilst also signifying the centrality of ideas of race within the development of capitalism and British society.

In an uncommon historical account of the Georgian period, *Tropic* revealed that in 'London, Liverpool and Bristol in the eighteenth century, exactly two hundred years ago – the ratio of coloured people in the population was much higher than it is today.'⁶⁹ Four large images were spread across the four-page article that depicted 'The Chevalier St. George, swordsman, composer and conductor' from Guadeloupe and three scenes of Georgian life in which Black people were present.⁷⁰ From their involvement in 'fashionable life' i.e. elite circles to their hypervisibility in 'gaudy costumes,' these sketches conjure a sense of Georgian Britain as a diverse though intensely polarised society. Black people in these images were generally in positions of service, apart from a sketch of a London tavern where caricatured Black women are dancing amongst white people, which hints at the mixed working-class communities that were formed in Wedderburn's Britain. Beyond challenging the myth of white Britain, this article confronted historical narratives which suggested that any Black presence prior to the post-war period was insignificant. Furthermore, Scobie cited heroic Black British figures like Francis Barber in his claim that the 'majority [were] absorbed into the white population of Britain.'⁷¹ This idea of 'absorption' reinforced Scobie's larger political project that questioned the ethnic composition Britain; he argued it was 'high time that this theory of "pure race" and "true-blue British stock" be debunked forever.'⁷² As these history features argues, how 'white' could Britain really be if tens of thousands of Black people had lived, worked and had families on these islands for centuries? On top of evidencing the existence of Black Britons in the early modern period and the longstanding roots of racialisation and oppression, these articles demonstrated the pivotal importance of Black people in the success and development of Britain.

⁶⁹ *Tropic*, September 1960, p.34.

⁷⁰ Two of the images were credited: 'By courtesy of The London Fencing Club' and another was 'Reproduced by Courtesy of the National Gallery'.

⁷¹ *Tropic*, September 1960, p.37.

⁷² 'How White is This White Man's Country?', *Flamingo*, November 1961, pp.22-23, in this article Scobie explained how 'Negro blood has even penetrated into the Royal Family'.

'Bristol's Wealth Came from Slaves' and 'Georgian Gentlemen of Colour' epitomised how Scobie's approach to history was always in conversation with contemporary protest and actively engaged in the work of historicising political struggles. He used occurrences like the boycott as a moment of inquiry into histories of racism, exploitation and slavery. Popular history was a strategy to support and validate this fight against the 'colour bar,' not only its implementation in the Bristol Omnibus Company, but the concept. By questioning conventional beliefs about Britain's ethnic composition and landscape, in the accessible format of the magazine, Scobie's history features challenged dominant ideas about what it meant to be British. They acted as a direct riposte to anti-immigrant and racist sentiments that were manifest in 'Keep Britain White' graffiti. Painted across walls and buildings, particularly from the 1950s to the 1970s (though racist graffiti remains a permanent feature of British streets), it marked the embodiment of the political attitudes and ideas that haunted and endangered Britain's Black communities. Part of a fallacy that Britain was a white nation before the recent arrival of Commonwealth citizens of colour, *Tropic* and *Flamingo* disproved those hostile sentiments that were being used to threaten safety and citizenship.

Vindicationist History

Writing about his London years, Scobie described it as a trying time for Black people:

his only hope of acceptance by the host population was to get lost and metaphorically "whitewashed." ... he was deliberately setting out to become a "black Englishman." He was discarding – as much as he could – all that was black. He wanted to forget his "blackness".⁷³

Pinpointing the tension that Scobie felt between Blackness and Britishness, it hints at the ambivalence which lay at the foundation of these magazines and the motivation behind publishing history as a remedy to counteract this desire to forget one's 'blackness.' Vindication is a critical part of reparative history; it sets out to defend and endorse Blackness by presenting evidence of its existence, historically. By digging up stories of artists, writers, activists and scholars, Scobie proved the important

⁷³ Scobie, *Black Britannia*, p.292.

contributions of Black people throughout British history. The dissemination of positive representations counteracted mainstream media and history, which vilified or simply ignored Black people. These publications marked a reinterpretation of this typically African American vindication tradition in the post-war British context, which, whilst productive, was not unproblematic.⁷⁴ The following section critically examines Scobie's historical writing on Black Britons of note, with a strong emphasis on music, nobility and education.

Black composers were a recurring theme in Scobie's history features, with several articles examining their lives through the prism of race and class.⁷⁵ These histories had multiple and, at times, conflicting functions: evidencing the contributions of Black people to British history and culture; challenging racial logics by presenting an eighteenth-century world in which Black people were admired and respected; historicizing the practices and impacts of racialisation; and recording examples of resistance.

George Bridgetower, the 'brilliant negro violinist,' was the subject of Scobie's first ever *Tropic* history feature.⁷⁶ Born in Poland, in 1778, he spent most of his life in London. Something of a spectacle, 'Londoners were in raptures over this child prodigy, more so as he was coloured.'⁷⁷ Playing regular concerts for the Prince of Wales, Scobie detailed his impressive connections, most notably, his friendship with Beethoven. Referencing a concert that they gave together in Vienna, he wrote that 'but for a silly quarrel, Beethoven would have dedicated his most famous sonata' to him.⁷⁸ By association, Scobie enshrined Bridgetower in the European classical

⁷⁴ Vindicationist approaches have a strong tradition amongst the African diaspora, especially in the USA, e.g. Carter G. Woodson, 'The Father of Black History,' believed that Black history had profound potential to instil 'a sense of pride and self-worth whilst also helping diminish racist thought'. Dagbovie, 'Making Black History', p.373. Russel Rickford terms this style of history that spotlights industrious and individual Black proto-celebrities as 'contributionism'. Rejected by many American Black nationalists in the 1960s, it was seen as a 'strategy incapable of reconstructing white America', from Rickford, *We Are an African People: Independence Education, Black Power, and the Radical Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), p.50.

⁷⁵ 'BLACK EUROPEANS: A British Library Online Gallery feature by guest curator Mike Phillips', *British Library Online Gallery*, <<https://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/features/blackeuro/homepage.html>> [accessed on 1 May 2021].

⁷⁶ *Tropic*, March 1960, p.31.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* This was the Kreutzer Sonata. Patricia Morrisroe, 'The Black Violinist Who Inspire Beethoven', *New York Times*, 4 September 2020.

canon, therefore detaching him from his African heritage. Bridgetower acted as a device to vindicate Blackness in way that white Britain might sympathise with. Whilst deeply problematic, this infers a strategic move to persuade a wide audience that Black people had made 'valuable' cultural contributions to Britain.

Conversely, the case of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor exemplified Scobie's clever vindication of Black heroes whilst critiquing the Western systems that had diminished them. The article stated that

this great man of Negro origin is something every coloured man of African descent should be proud of ... Samuel Coleridge-Taylor is an ever-lasting reminder that the Negro race has produced men of genius and worth and will continue to do so as long as man inhabits the earth. Despite what muzzle-headed white bigots may think, genius is not only the prerogative of the white man.⁷⁹

Viewing Coleridge-Taylor as a riposte to white superiority, this story reflected the persistence of discrimination. Nicknamed 'coaley' at school, Coleridge, who never knew his Sierra Leonean father, Dr. Daniel Peter Hughes Taylor, bore the weight of racialisation and racism throughout his life.⁸⁰ Scobie argued that all of this 'racial animosity' led him to turn 'away from the classics' and, instead, seek 'inspiration in Negro spirituals,' symbolising a rejection of Western cultural values.⁸¹ He also wrote regularly for *The African Times* and *Orient Review*, demonstrating his Pan-African sympathies. Despite this exclusion, his compositions, such as 'Hiawatha's Wedding,' made great 'contributions' to Britain's musical heritage.⁸² Scobie presented Coleridge-Taylor as a remarkable yet normal Black British family man, who suffered from, and was thus politicised by, the historic and permeating effects of racism. Drawing on Black culture as a survival strategy, Coleridge-Taylor was a relatable and inspirational hero.

Stories of Black noblemen that excelled in British royal and aristocratic circles marked another focus of these history features. *Flamingo's* first history feature,

⁷⁹ *Tropic*, August 1960, p.33.

⁸⁰ 'Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912)', *British Library Online Gallery*.

⁸¹ *Tropic*, August 1960, p.33.

⁸² *Ibid*.

'Negro Dandy,' was about Julius Soubise, an 'ex-slave who became the protégé of one of the most beautiful and wealthy aristocrats of 18th Century Britain – Catherine, Duchess of Queensberry.'⁸³ Described as 'The Black Prince,' Soubise was 'one of the best-liked and most colourful West Indians ever to come to England.'⁸⁴ The embellished emphasis on eighteenth-century elite acceptance was contrasted with the reality that 'over 300,000 West Indians in England' were facing in the post-war period, where 'White landlords [were] refusing to give them accommodation, hotels [were] closing their doors in their face, pubs refusing to serve them.'⁸⁵ In an explicit disruption of the 'logic' of racism – a corruption that the 'march of progress' would eradicate – this article asserted that 'there was a time – nearly 200 years ago when things in England were very different. Colour prejudice as we know it today did not exist.'⁸⁶ Whether accurate or not, this was a strategy to de-naturalise temporal-racial logics. By emphasising that the world was at one point more accepting and less prejudiced, Scobie intimated that we might look to the past rather than the present or the future.

Keen to denote the presence of Black scholars in early modern Britain, four articles explicitly focused on the historic presence of Black pupils in British schools and universities, stretching from 1554 to the contemporary period.⁸⁷ They demonstrated historic Black intellectual capabilities and attainment, something that had been often silenced in the mainstream. Scobie mentioned famous slave scholars including Robert Davis, Francis Williams, Francis Barber, Jacobus Eliza Captain, Prince Lee Boo and Anthony Domingo. Drawing similarities between scholars from diverse temporal and political moments, he argued that 'Throughout their hard years of study they will keep one thought in mind: to work hard, qualify and return home ... to take an active part in the affairs of their country.'⁸⁸ Thus, the imperatives of nation building were invoked in the year of Jamaican and Trinidadian independence. Depicting a

⁸³ *Flamingo*, September 1961, p.9.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Not quoted here but see 'Britain's First Coloured Students', *Tropic*, June 1960, 9; 'Doctor Johnson's Faithful Frank', *Flamingo*, November 1961, p.40 and 'Britain's 18th Century "Slave" Population', *Flamingo*, September 1962, pp.12-13.

⁸⁸ *Flamingo*, October 1962, pp.27-28.

diversity of Black students, enslaved and rich, such histories actively refuted often willingly held colonial misconceptions about the education of Black Commonwealth citizens. Together, these articles worked to produce counter-hegemonic knowledge about Black study and excellence.

While these histories contested the dominant discourse of race and nation, there were also significant limitations. Many of these articles failed to address questions of colourism and fetishization. As Samantha Pinto argues in her critical analysis of representations of Mary Seacole, the ‘hyper-racialisation of the image of Seacole elides white British histories of violent racism and ‘colourism’ that allowed Seacole to thrive where others could not.’⁸⁹ So, whilst the African and European heritage of these figures is noted and paintings were included, there was no discussion of how their complexions may have oiled their navigation of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and twentieth-century Britain and impacted upon their status in British society.

Furthermore, the ‘good citizen’ narrative that these articles professed delegitimised certain people and behaviours through the validation of others. Apart from the case study of Coleridge-Taylor, these articles largely reproduced rather than challenged Western cultural superiority. This type of contributionism rested on a precarious belief that a certain type of history had the potential to magically ‘humanize a racist society.’⁹⁰ Hence, Scobie’s philosophy of history exposed the limits of representation without critical analysis. Whilst representation is a necessary component of Black history, the framing of these histories is just as important. The majority of *Tropic* and *Flamingo*’s history features portrayed a single man as the driver of success, creativity and resistance. Although this highlights the importance of Black heroism as a political tool, it also points to the fact that these ‘great men’ were the ones who left traces in the archive; they were the gatekeepers between the historian and past worlds, which engendered a masculinist style of history, with a common tendency to silence women.

⁸⁹ Samantha Pinto, ‘On representing Mary Seacole: a Jamaican Scottish war heroine, *Art UK*, 12 October 2020 <<https://artuk.org/discover/stories/on-representing-mary-seacole-a-jamaican-scottish-war-heroine#>> [accessed on 4 March 2021].

⁹⁰ Rickford, p.50.

Yet, within these confines, *Tropic* and *Flamingo* were able to present an alternative reality of what it meant to be Black in Britain. They acted as a rebuttal to the values and beliefs that engendered the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act. Their reparative quality facilitated a re-humanising of Blackness. By querying Britain's ethnic landscape, they proclaimed Black people's right to be in and feel a part of Britain. In the context of 1960s Britain, this was certainly a transgressive act.

Caribbean Nation Building

In tandem with establishing communities in Britain these magazines were also invested in Caribbean struggles for independence. In the run up to 1962 – the first stage of independence in the British Caribbean – questions of national identity, culture and history were at the forefront; hence, the timing of these articles is of critical importance.

From the *West Indian Gazette*'s focus on 'emerging nations from Colonial Bondage' to *Tropic* and *Flamingo*'s consistent coverage of West Indian Federation politics, these magazines were thoroughly embedded in Caribbean politics.⁹¹ Beyond the content of their news and cultural coverage, adverts for Caribbean travel agencies spoke to the fluidity of the Caribbean diaspora that these periodicals served. The following section examines several history articles that were explicit articulations of Caribbean nationhood. A comparison of 'foundational tales' that were published in the *Gazette* and smaller-scale history features in Scobie's magazines, highlights the differences between these periodicals in terms of content, form and approach, which indicated different audiences and politics.

Foundational Tales

Welcoming the news of independence, the *Gazette* published two special issue history articles: 'Jamaica's History in a Nutshell' and 'Trinidad and Tobago: From Slavery to Independence,' in August and September 1962. These articles acted as

⁹¹ The topic of the West Indian Federation was featured most months, e.g. 'Caribbean Future', *Tropic*, March 1960, pp.35-4; 'Federation: Will it Last?', *Flamingo*, September 1961, pp.18-19; 'Jamaica OUT', *Flamingo*, November 1961, pp.181-9; and 'Federation: Shadow or Substance?', *Flamingo*, December 1961, pp.46-7.

'foundational tales' that constructed metanarratives of Jamaican and Trinidadian history. Framing independence as the outcome of historic resistance, stretching from the colonial encounter to anti-colonial movements of the twentieth century, the *Gazette's* foundational tales reflected the Marxist historical approach of Richard Hart (Chapter 3), which emphasised the role of the Black masses in pushing for change and portrayed trajectories of resistance as culminating in the dawning of Independence in 1962.⁹² Within this revolutionary ideal, Creole nationalism – the belief that Caribbean identity should rally around its Creoleness/mixedness/hybridity – was a pertinent feature of *Gazette* history features. Creolization theorist, Nigel Bolland, characterises the Creole-society model as offering a solution to the 'desperate need for a coherent national ideology and cultural identity'; it constituted 'a *synthetic* mode of nationalism,' that was used by the region's political and nationalist elites during this critical moment.⁹³ This 'synthetic' nationalism which claimed to represent a multiplicity of ethnic identities – indigenous, African, European, Asian, Syrian and Jewish – was manifest in the history features examined here.

In 1962, 'Out of Many, One People' replaced the original 'INDUS UTERQUE SERVIET UNI' motto on Jamaica's Coat of Arms.⁹⁴ This state-level construction of a Creole national identity was re/produced through history writing. 'Jamaica's History in Nutshell' emphasised the nation's Creole heritage from the very first paragraph, recounting the 'grave puritans from Bermuda, Prisoners taken in the Scots Wars, Quakers from Barbados, and a large number of Jews.'⁹⁵ Interestingly, the author, Vivian Durham, had been Marcus Garvey's campaign manager in the 1930s. Durham asserted that

⁹² Richard Drayton identifies what he calls a 'new Whig history of the Caribbean,' where narratives of English liberty were substituted with the 'rise of Caribbean freedom'. Drayton, 'The Problem of the Hero(ine) in Caribbean History', *Small Axe*, 34 (2011), 26-45 (p.36).

⁹³ Nigel Bolland, 'Creolization and Creole Societies: A Cultural Nationalist View of Caribbean History', in *Intellectuals in the Twentieth Century Caribbean*, Vol.1, ed. by Alistair Hennessy (Macmillan, 1992), pp.50-79 (p.58).

⁹⁴ The first British colony to receive its own arms, in 1661, the original motto meant 'Both Indies will serve as one.'

⁹⁵ *West Indian Gazette*, pp.1&4 (p.1).

The mixed population is characteristic of its history ... There are workers and artisans of Negro blood or Negro descent, Chinese, Syrians, Indians, Jews ... there is both opulence and poverty in Jamaica – castles and hovels – acute housing shortages and tremendous unemployment. The scars of the colonialism survive deep and ugly.⁹⁶

This effort to present a certain brand of Creole nationalism, that emphasised Jamaica's mixed ancestry over its African dominance, is noteworthy given Durham's career and connections to Garvey. It points to the political currency of Creole identity during this particular moment. Aside from this, Durham underlined Jamaica's economic divisions, a place of 'opulence and poverty.' In line with the *Gazette's* political standing, this analysis interpreted the 'deep and ugly' scars of colonialism through the prism of class.

Likewise, mixed heritage was an important feature in 'Trinidad and Tobago: From Slavery to Independence.' Written by P. R. Larode, the Education Secretary for the People's National Movement (PNM), it served the party's political agenda that sought to unite the new nation's ethnically diverse population. The struggle for independence in Trinidad and Tobago necessitated the unification and consolidation of difference. Writing in 1962, Eric Williams called for unity:

There can be no Mother India ... There can be no Mother Africa ... Trinidad society is living a lie and heading for trouble if it seeks to create the impression or to allow others to act under the delusion that Trinidad is an African society ... The only Mother we recognize is Trinidad.⁹⁷

Williams' message encapsulated the efforts of anti- and post-colonial political leaders to soothe ethnic divisions and promote a fair and hybrid Trinidadian culture. In sync with this, the *Gazette's* history feature presented a narrative of the island as being constituted by the Caribs followed by enslaved Africans, and then, as a result of abolition, a vast volume of Indian and then Chinese indentured labourers; after which came Portuguese, Arabs and Jews.⁹⁸ This mirrored a similar pattern to the Jamaican

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Eric Williams, *History of the people of Trinidad and Tobago* (Port of Spain: PNM Publishing, 1962), p.281. See also Ivar Oxaal, *Black Intellectuals Come to Power: The Rise of Creole Nationalism in Trinidad & Tobago* (Cambridge, Mass: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1968).

⁹⁸ *West Indian Gazette*, September 1962, p.6.

independence issue, although it put a greater emphasis on the Indian influx. Trinidad and Tobago, amongst other countries with significant non-African populations, like Guyana, had acute difficulties with forging national identities that were accepted as inclusive by all.

In part due to its anomalous economic structure – that was far more industrialised and diversified than the rest of the region – the development of trade unions was of special significance in Trinidad and Tobago. So, it is unsurprising that the article’s tale of resistance drew on the history of the labour movement. Larode highlighted the importance of the nation’s trade union leaders in the push for independence, citing ‘The Captain,’ Arthur A. Cipriani, as initiating the ‘struggle for constitutional reform’ that not only demanded ‘better pay, and working conditions for the working masses’ but awakened ‘political consciousness.’⁹⁹ Cipriani’s legacy, according to this article, were the future trade unionists like Moses, Rojas and Butler: ‘the heroic struggle started by Cipriani and continued by Butler now culminates in a free and independent state of Trinidad and Tobago, on August 31 1962.’¹⁰⁰ Within this teleology of labour struggles to independence, there was a strong emphasis on mixed labour struggles through a celebration of the nation’s diverse union leaders and the unities across different ethnic groups. Larode wrote about how ‘Workers of both Indian and Negro origin joined forces as one under Butler, a Negro.’¹⁰¹ Stating how a newly independent Trinidad and Tobago would help to ‘solve the world’s problems along with other nations, especially their fellow brothers from Africa and Asia,’ the article also positioned the country as invested in Pan-African and Third-World projects. The economic basis of this foundational tale again points to the *Gazette*’s Marxist roots.¹⁰² Evidently, both of these articles reveal the role of history

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Interestingly, the article raised the issue of compensation. Larode compared the £20,000,000 that was paid to British slave owners after abolition to the current government’s refusal to pay ‘20,000,000 cents to put the former West Indian Federation on its feet.’ Casting a light on the historic injustices that had occurred in the Caribbean, it also foresaw the continued struggles it would face without a financial injection from Britain, by way of reparations (now a key agenda for CARICOM).

in constructing Creole nationalist narratives and the relationship that the *Gazette* had with the political elites of newly independent nations.

Indigenous history

Creole nationalism was also expressed through an affirmation of the region's indigenous past. In doing so, indigenous peoples – Caribs, Arawaks, Tainos – were included in the national story. Permitting a longer trajectory of resistance, Richard Drayton argues that indigenous peoples were inserted into the narrative as 'red-skinned ancestors of our antislavery and anticolonial struggles, a prelude for the national story.'¹⁰³ Habitually simplified and reduced, one should be wary of the often-synthetic insertion of indigenous narratives into national histories. 'The Story of Conquerabia,' a 'Know Your History' feature about Port-of-Spain, investigated this lost city which had once been 'a powerful aboriginal settlement'; explaining how the Caribs and Arawaks travelled from South America and through their military prowess put up a fierce fight against European invasion.¹⁰⁴ Presenting resistance as intrinsic to the region, the article claimed that this 'spirit of freedom,' which the people of these islands still possessed, was a continuation of the Carib spirit.¹⁰⁵ It also mentioned a case-study which explored intermarrying between Caribs and enslaved Africans in St. Vincent.¹⁰⁶ This literal mixing, through love and sex, represented an effort to write the Caribs into the genetic history of the Caribbean. It also directed attention towards a small island like St. Vincent, putting forth a regional rather than island-focused approach to indigenous history.

Published in July 1962, *Flamingo*'s 'First Inhabitants' marked a different example of indigenous nation making. Its strapline denoted an intention to shift the genesis of the Caribbean away from colonialism and towards indigeneity: 'before the arrival of Christopher Columbus the Caribbean islands were inhabited by the Arawaks and the

¹⁰³ Drayton 'Hero(ine)', p.44.

¹⁰⁴ *West Indian Gazette*, December 1960, p.5.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

Caribs. They were the FIRST INHABITANTS.’¹⁰⁷ Criticising the dominance of ‘Europeans, Chinese, Coloured, Negroes,’ it stated that,

the Arawaks and Caribs roamed the Caribbean long before their arrival. In fact, centuries before discovery by Columbus, the Caribs would sail from the Americas from island to island in their canoes and wage war on the Arawaks.¹⁰⁸

Through a series of photographs that depicted Carib life across the region, it shed light on the living indigenous population that was often erased in the Caribbean imagination. Whilst intended to illuminate these ‘forgotten’ communities, the article fell into a common trap of othering and essentializing – as is often the case with histories about indigenous people. From the assertion that Arawaks in Guyana hunt and fish ‘in the manner of their ancestors’ and captions like: ‘The Caribs there still make boats in the fashion of their forbears from the single trunk of the Gomier tree,’ it presented a narrative of unchanging indigeneity. Nevertheless, the exploration of indigenous peoples, living and dead, on the cusp of independence, emphasised the fact that the Caribbean existed before Columbus – colonialism was not the whole story. By considering the continuities of indigenous peoples and cultures in the region, it went beyond the practice of tacking these people onto the start of a national history without considering the longer story.

Conversely, this indigenous focus, at the critical moment of independence, might also be interpreted as an erasure of Black nationalism. When read together, these articles put forth a Creole national narrative, one that, at times, appeared synthetically inclusive. One of the most famous challenges to this came from Walter Rodney. An advocate of Black Power and mass education, he called out ‘the myth of a harmonious, multi-racial national society – “Out of Many, One People”, as the National Motto pretends’ that was designed to legitimise the continued exploitation of the Black masses.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ *Flamingo*, July 1962, pp.9-11.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p.9.

¹⁰⁹ Rodney, *Groundings* (1969), p.12. See all of ‘Statement on the Jamaica Situation.’

Interestingly, the *Gazette*'s second history feature published in the special Jamaican independence issue, in August 1962, placed a greater emphasis on Jamaica's African roots. 'Originally brought as slaves from Africa, the courageous Maroons of Jamaica wrote an unforgettable saga in Jamaica's history'; gaining their freedom in 1738, a century before the abolition of slavery, the Maroons were celebrated for their 'relentless fight for liberty and freedom.'¹¹⁰ Alongside asserting the African heritage of Maroons and their tradition of rebellion and isolation, this article predicted that 'the day will come when the Maroons and their history will be made compulsory, in the textbooks of our children.'¹¹¹ This statement revealed a desire for Black resistance figures to be embedded in the national story. Echoing a 'Know Your History' article from 1959, 'Barely 100 Years Ago ... We Fought for the Right to Vote in the Morant Bay Rebellion,' these histories exemplified the *Gazette*'s presentist concerns.¹¹² The 1959 article asserted that Paul Bogle and George Wilson Gordon's spirits lived on and were 'an inspiration to the people of Jamaica whose struggles for independence continue under the leadership of the Peoples National Movement.'¹¹³ Not only expressing sympathies with the PNP, this article staged Morant Bay as an event along the path to independence.

Heroic Individuals

In contrast to the *Gazette*'s grand narratives, *Flamingo* recounted tales of individual Caribbean heroes. Articles about Olaudah Equiano, George William Gordon, Mary Seacole and many more were all published in the months preceding independence. Part of *Flamingo*'s vindicationist style, they sought to construct a history that would instil national and regional pride, during pivotal moments of nation creation.

'Proud Heritage,' brought together heroic individuals from across the Black Atlantic, praising the work of African-American inventors such as Benjamin Banneker and Dr. George Washington Carver alongside Caribbean heroes: Mary Seacole, Richard Hill,

¹¹⁰ *West Indian Gazette*, 1 August 1962, p.3.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *West Indian Gazette*, November 1959, p.4.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

Edward Wilmot Blyden and Toussaint L'Ouverture.¹¹⁴ Described as the 'distinguished sons and daughters' of the West Indies, who 'lie forgotten' as result of the West Indies' 'tragic lack of historical tradition,' *Flamingo* positioned itself as frontrunners in the creation of a West Indian/Caribbean historical tradition.¹¹⁵ The reasoning for publishing these heroic histories was as follows: 'It is because of men and women like these and many more that Negroes in the world today need not feel ashamed of their past for they have been blessed with a proud heritage.'¹¹⁶ Accompanying images of Toussaint L'Ouverture, Bridgetower, Ira Aldridge (actor), Jacob Capitein ('a slave who became one of the leading divines in Holland during the eighteenth century') and Tom Molineaux ('a prize fighter from Virginia'), reinforced this idea of individual heroism – the great man – that Scobie's history features professed. The article failed to visually represent either of the women that it listed – Seacole or Wheatley ('the slave poet').¹¹⁷ Whilst this criticism of the region's historical tradition was part of *Flamingo's* political project to bolster Black history and Caribbean nation-building, it revealed a dismissal of the multiple oral, performative and artistic historical traditions – from storytelling to carnival – that shaped the region's political and cultural identities.

A few months later, *Flamingo* published an article which retorted denigrating claims that the region was without history. The feature on George William Gordon, one of the leaders of the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865, was used to refute the demeaning claims of Ruth Glass that had been made on the BBC, about West Indians having 'no history.'¹¹⁸ Scobie declared:

Jamaicans of all classes proclaim ... that they were proud of their Jamaican heritage, a heritage which began taking root from the time that the first African slaves landed on the island's shore.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ *Flamingo*, February 1962, p.13; see Dagbovie, 'Making Black History', pp.375-376 for more about Negro History Week, which was founded in 1926 by Carter G. Woodson.

¹¹⁵ *Flamingo*, February 1962, p.13.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.12-13.

¹¹⁸ *Flamingo*, April 1962, pp.28-29. Glass was an established sociologist and author of *Newcomers: the West Indians in London* (London: Centre for Urban Studies & George Allen & Unwin, 1960).

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Through the life of George William Gordon, *Flamingo* recounted a historical trajectory of resistance that directly challenged Glass's claims, which were reflective of a wider colonial delusion that the Caribbean had no history.

Flamingo's August 1962 Jamaican independence feature, 'Jamaica's Florence Nightingale,' was about Mary Seacole.¹²⁰ Nightingale is viewed as a British national hero; so, portraying Seacole as a Jamaican version marked an effort to make her a national hero in this new nation. The image of Seacole in the article depicts her as covered in, what appear to be, pearl necklaces, earrings and hair pieces. This image contradicts the destitution that she faced following her investment in the British Hotel, near Sebastopol, that she ran during the Crimean War (1853-56). Hence, the depiction of Seacole – in line with *Flamingo*'s usual approach – emphasised her respectable and aspirational qualities. Framed as a response to Jamaica's newly ordained independence, the article remarked that it is 'only fit and proper that amidst the merry-making and rejoicing we should pause long enough to pay tribute to a few Jamaicans who helped to build the island.'¹²¹ This sentence is revealing of *Flamingo*'s individualistic understanding of history as driven by important individuals. Alongside Seacole's story, the article referenced other Jamaican heroes, such as Captain Cudjoe – 'the Maroon Chief who led the people into the hills to freedom almost a full century before the emancipation of the slaves' – and Richard Hill – 'the anti-slavery agitator and naturalist'.¹²² Interestingly, the other main image was a print of the main square in Spanish Town from 1838, the year of Emancipation.¹²³ By promoting these Jamaican heroes and connecting Abolition to independence, *Flamingo*'s articles denoted a wider post-colonial historical project that sought to reimagine the nation through a vindicated past.

By analysing the *Gazette* and *Flamingo* in tandem, we can see the important role of British-based publications in post-colonial nation building projects. Helping to enrich a written record of the region's rebellious history, these periodicals built on the print media culture of earlier anti-colonial movements (Chapter 3). This analysis also

¹²⁰ *Flamingo*, August 1963, pp.33-34.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p.33.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p.34

reveals political differences in terms of historical approach and readership appeal. *Flamingo's* focus on the individual hero/ine was reflective the magazine's aspirational tone – they offered contributionist accounts of impressive individuals that its readers could admire and aspire to. By comparison, the *Gazette's* approach of historical materialism was manifest in its economic focus and scale. Its grand historical narratives, which placed political struggles as steppingstones on the path to independence, revealed a mode of progressive history that was shaped by class conflicts. This was fitting with the paper's political positioning and reflected a broader historical-political moment, during the 1960s, when bottom-up Marxist-inspired historiography was on the rise.

Conclusion

Important artefacts of post-war Britain, these periodicals recorded the history of the present through news and cultural items. Moreover, as this chapter has explored, they were repositories for a longer history of Britain and the Caribbean. They have offered an insight into the quotidian world of Black Britain, where the newly arrived were largely engaged in the task of settling down, working, consuming and surviving. A product of a specific historical conjuncture, these publications were characterised by independence hopes and frustrations, 'Mother Country' disappointments and Black Atlantic political activity. They provide a popular intellectual map onto 1960s Black Britain, capturing an essence of 1960s popular Black media, alongside a diasporic understanding of what Caribbean independence meant.

Whilst all three of these periodicals were invested in popular historical production, they engaged with history very differently. The *Gazette's* collective and economic focus contrasted with *Tropic* and *Flamingo's* individualized and visualised histories that were reliant on the use of images and artwork to promote Black hero/ines of time's past. Calling Britain's whiteness into question, the collapsing of temporal distinctions, through varying modes of contrast and continuity, evidenced that Black people had been living and surviving in Britain for centuries. Driven by the desire to challenge a hostile climate that was maintained through historical falsehoods, Scobie's history articles were in conversation with the politics race and nation. They were a direct riposte to the anti-immigrant and anti-Black culture that was being emboldened by state policy. This style of history unsettled expectations by shattering

myths of progress. Schwarz argues that it is through a 'more ambivalent ... conception of the temporal' that the past becomes much harder to abandon and discard.¹²⁴ I interpret these articles as doing just that, using history to hold the past to account through the present, and the present to account through the past.

Although this chapter argues for the importance of popular periodicals in the development of Black British and Caribbean historiography, it also recognises limitations of Black popular magazines as an outlet for rigorous historical scholarship. The fact that these history articles appeared next to fluff pieces and advertisements is not something to be dismissed; their proximity to vacuous and trivial content threatened to diminish their radical potential. While magazines like *Tropic* and *Flamingo* engendered Black solidarity and uplift whilst reinforcing bourgeois capitalist ideals of individualism and aspiration, this is not applicable to the *Gazette's* more serious and politically minded tone.

Following in the footsteps of the *Black Man*, *The Keys* and *Checkers*, these publications, in turn, forged a path for later periodicals. The concept of the history feature was continued in 1970s and 1980s publications: *West Indian World* ran a series called 'Genesis' (1972) and *Black Voice* published 'Our True Heroes' (1975-1981) and later 'BLACKS in BRITAIN 1500-1980s' (1981-85). Thus, the *Gazette*, *Tropic* and *Flamingo* must be viewed as part of a long, rich and varied tradition of the Black British press that engaged with history. The following chapter will explore how Britain's first 'Black' publishing house – New Beacon – built on this historical, national and political project through the more permanent medium of the book.

¹²⁴ Schwarz, "Historical Time," 64.

Chapter 5: Building *Foundations*: New Beacon's early years as a battleground of consciousness

*Child of the self-conscious
I remake the mind
In my own image;
 This is my time.
I am the child of history
Migratory through centuries.*

Anthony La Rose¹

In 1966, John La Rose published his first volume of poetry, *Foundations*. Also, New Beacon Books' first publication, it is evocative of the publisher's commitment to 'remake the mind, In my own image' – to tell their own stories, ideas and histories. The collection is a window onto La Rose's understanding of the world, his politics and his soul. Published under his middle name, Anthony, it reveals the complex terrain of post/colonial, Marxist and diasporic politics that La Rose was fully embedded in and constantly navigating.² As an active trade unionist, La Rose occupied an important position within Trinidadian anti-colonial politics. Following his move to London, in 1961, La Rose became a pivotal political and cultural organiser amongst Britain's growing Black communities, whilst remaining dedicated to Caribbean struggles. This chapter is located within a critical end-of-empire moment that encompassed Caribbean nation-building alongside diasporic community-building amongst Caribbean, Black, politically Black and working-class peoples in Britain.

New Beacon, like its founder, was a beacon of connectivity that linked Britain and the Caribbean, the Caribbean and the world, but also past, present and future. Following our next set of publisher-activists, this chapter examines the work of John La Rose (1927-2006) and Sarah White (La Rose's partner in love and publishing, 1941-2022),

¹ Me As Well – The Blackman. Anthony La Rose, *Foundations: a book of poems*. (London: New Beacon Publications, 1966), p.36.

² Sarah White, interviewed by author, London, 5 June 2019. White explains that he published under this name so that his literary efforts were not dismissed for political reasons.

who worked together to challenge white middle- and upper-class hegemony through their political and cultural publishing interventions. This landmark publishing house dreamed to change the world by publishing old and new texts that would help to construct and circulate a Caribbean intellectual tradition. New Beacon's publishing vision was founded upon the very idea that this tradition existed, but that Caribbean people across the diaspora could not access and, hence, comprehend it. Thus, New Beacon publications supported postcolonial nation-building and Black British community-consolidation. Differing, significantly, to what had come before, New Beacon brought key texts, writers and thinkers into the fold: its founding symbolised a new era for Black/Caribbean publishing.

While Chapters 1-4 explored successful printing and literary ventures by Caribbean progressives and radicals in the preceding decades, the establishment of New Beacon marked a decided break with ephemeral publishing approaches, Caribbean newspaper dominance and metropolitan publishing monopolies. In contrast to newspapers, books are made to endure, be shared and live in people's collections for decades. This late-1960s publishing emphasis was symbolic of the growing and increasingly settled Black communities in Britain that needed more permanent evidence, recognition and reflection of their experiences. The previous chapter examined the important role of the press in re/constructing Black histories and communities in Britain. Whilst emerging out of and in response to these earlier Black/Caribbean political print cultures, New Beacon re/constructed and disseminated radical Black/Caribbean histories and narratives in more critical and nuanced ways. By re-printing and re-framing classic Caribbean texts, together with the publication of new works – histories, poetry, social commentary and literary criticism – New Beacon helped to produce knowledge about a rich and complex Black/Caribbean intellectual tradition.

Whilst New Beacon's labelling as 'Britain's first Black publishing house' diminishes earlier efforts of Caribbean publishers in Britain, it is accurate to describe it as the first publishing house in Britain that rallied around political and cultural ideas of Blackness. Prior to this, Caribbean publishers in Britain identified with the West Indies, Commonwealth, individual territories, political movements – anti-slavery, Black Nationalism, Pan-Africanism – or events, such as the Italo-Abyssinian War.

Speaking about this in our interview, Sarah White emphasised the cohesive and political definition of 'Black' that represented New Beacon. Describing 'Black' as a 'convenient label' that has been increasingly applied to New Beacon in recent years, White stressed their understanding as being inclusive of African, Caribbean and Asian people in Britain. She also emphasised the breadth of their offering that

concentrated on bringing books of Black origin or subject matter to people's attention from all over the world, and it would also include radical books and South American books, and obviously Asian ones too, and that was all seen as part of the whole movement. Though the concentration would be on the Caribbean, the Black British – those were our two main, you could say, the main specialities.³

The creation and circulation of these texts through publishing, bookselling and supplementary schools helped communities to understand and expand ideas of the Caribbean and what it meant to be Black in Britain. La Rose's cultivation of radical Black writing within this critical period of Blackness that was, in part, generated by New Beacon is why it has been heralded as 'Britain's first Black publishing house.'⁴ Despite this label, New Beacon was embedded in Caribbean politics, and by focusing on these connections, this chapter departs from much of the existing scholarship.⁵

In Horace Ové's 2003 film, *Dream to Change the World*, La Rose explained that 'to validate one's own culture and one's own self, you had to publish.'⁶ Hence, this chapter examines New Beacon's role as a consciousness-raising and counter-hegemonic cultural force that re/constructed and transported anti-colonial Caribbean traditions to post-war Britain. This research has provoked the following questions: what types of knowledge and histories did New Beacon make available? How did New Beacon connect to and diverge from previous Caribbean publishing traditions?

³ White interview.

⁴ See Waters discussion of 'Black Writing and Black Education' in *Thinking Black*, pp.143-148.

⁵ La Rose took a broader view of the Caribbean beyond Anglophone territories.

⁶ *Dream to Change the World*, dir. by Horace Ové film (African and Asian Visual Artists' Archive/Red Box Productions, 2003), online film recording, YouTube, 14 April 2019, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6rav7zvJJk>> [accessed on 1 September 2019]. The phrase originates from Martin Carter's 1951 poem 'Looking at Your Hands' – 'I do not sleep to dream, but dream to change the world.'

How were diasporic dynamics culturally and politically productive? What does New Beacon simultaneously reveal about this period (1960s/70s) of the newly independent Caribbean and the emergence of Black Britishness? Exploring these questions, this chapter demonstrates how New Beacon marked a distinctive intervention into Caribbean publishing: it expanded and consolidated transnational connections; reinvigorated a Caribbean intellectual tradition; and cultivated Black British cultural politics.⁷

This chapter focuses on the period that New Beacon established itself in the late 1960s and 1970s. Divided into three sections, it traces New Beacon's radical foundations; diasporic formation; and four landmark publications. Through this evaluation of New Beacon's early years, this chapter not only deepens our understanding of the publishing house, but of Black/Caribbean publishing more broadly and the relationship between Caribbean nation-building and diasporic community formation.

The emergence of New Beacon

Founding Story

Sarah White's Honda 50 motorbike is often cited in New Beacon's founding story: 'John had an M&S bag ... that he put on the back' to carry around a selection of 'important radical Black books,' which he would display and sell at relevant events.⁸ In their roles as booksellers, White and La Rose would sell hard-to-find radical books at political conferences, meetings and from their bedsit on Hornsey Lane. Gus John, the educational activist, recalls how 'One came to expect John La Rose and Sarah White to dismount from the small motorbike clutching these carrier bags full of the

⁷ Gilroy writes of how 'the culture and politics of black America and the Caribbean have become raw materials for creative processes which redefine what it means to be black, adapting it to distinctively British experiences and meaning. Black culture is actively made and remade'. Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (London, Routledge, 2002), p.202. New Beacon was part of this process of making and remaking, transporting raw materials of Caribbean cultural politics to Britain.

⁸ White interview.

latest literary offerings.⁹ The Honda story conveys how DIY-culture was at the core of New Beacon, which began as a ‘hobby’ that La Rose and White did from their bedsit and in their own time. Furthermore, it signifies how uses of the home amongst the ‘Windrush Generation’ confounded Eurocentric ideas of public and private spheres and of the ‘where the line dividing politics and culture should fall.’¹⁰ Hence, the nurturing of New Beacon in their home exemplifies wider migratory patterns of community formation, where in the face of hostility and exclusion, homes became places of security, leisure and activism.

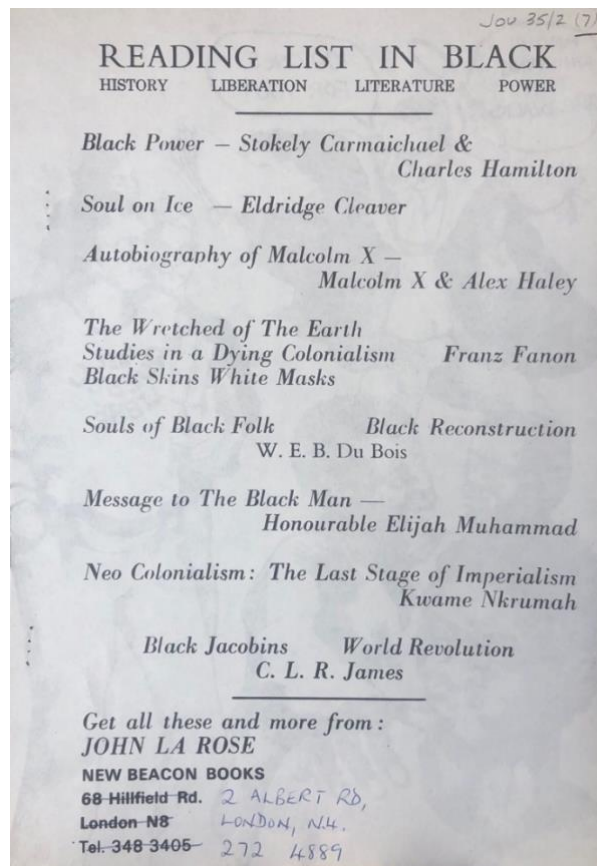


FIGURE 16 BLACK DIMENSION, MARCH 1969, JOU 35/2/1, GPI

While their radical bookselling and publishing venture started in 1966, White posits 1967 as a major turning point, owing to two landmark conferences: Dialectics of Liberation, which took place at the Roundhouse, Camden, and the first Caribbean

⁹ *Foundations of a Movement: A Tribute to John La Rose on the occasion of the 10th International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books* (London: John La Rose Tribute Committee, 1991), p.74.

¹⁰ Gilroy, *Ain't No Black*, p.34.

Artists' Movement (CAM) conference, at the University of Kent.¹¹ Stokely Carmichael's speech at the Roundhouse, together with an earlier visit from Malcolm X, in 1965, roused the British Black Power movement. From the publication of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* in 1965, to English translations of Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* in 1963 and *Black Skin, White Masks* in 1967 this was an intensive era of radical Black literary production.¹² This created a demand that La Rose and White were equipped to respond to, as evidenced by Figure 16. Set up to promote Caribbean art in its varied forms and ferment a discourse of cultural criticism, CAM presented a market to 'expose' New Beacon's books to an 'interested audience'; hence, the two bodies 'worked off each other and supported each other.'¹³ Having been asked to provide a bookstall at the CAM conference, La Rose and White ordered a range of stock on sale or return, but decided to keep the bulk, which became their 'core stock.'¹⁴ After the conference, Brathwaite wrote to John:

On behalf of CAM, I'd like to thank you and New Beacon Books Ltd for that very careful, loving Exhibition of books that added a new dimension to the Conference. It fully justified our belief in self-help, in tunnelling under the established structures towards a new order of our own. No commercial bookshop could have created your kind of display and demonstrated Caribbean literary achievement in the way you did..¹⁵

Connecting the two movements, Brathwaite's letter captures New Beacon's splendid debut into Caribbean diaspora cultural politics in Britain.

Alongside bookselling, La Rose and White began to develop the publishing side. In 1969, they moved to Albert Road where they set up shop on the ground floor and lived upstairs until New Beacon Books found its current home, at 76 Stroud Green Road, in 1973. A 'micro-publisher,' New Beacon published sixty-five books between 1966 and 2012.¹⁶ Figure 16 provides a categorised list of New Beacon's first

¹¹ CAM was born out of a discussion between himself, Andrew Salkey and Edward Kamau Brathwaite in the latter's Bloomsbury basement flat in 1966. See Waters, *Thinking Black*, 'Chapter One: Becoming Black in the Era of Civil Rights and Black Power in'.

¹² Hence, the latter part of the 1960s was an important moment for the spread of Fanonian ideas to Anglophone audiences.

¹³ White interview.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Letter from Eddie to John, 19 September 1967, LRA/01/143/04, GPI.

¹⁶ Bush, *New Beacon*, p.11.

seventeen publications, from 1966 to 1978.¹⁷ Classified by genre or type of publication, this table attests to the initial emphasis on reprinting Caribbean classics, which accounted for nearly a quarter of the publications in this period.

Poetry	John La Rose, <i>Foundations</i> (1966) Mervyn Morris, <i>The Pond</i> (1973) Martin Carter, <i>Poems of Succession</i> (1977)
Reprint	J. J. Thomas, <i>Froudacity</i> (1969) J. J. Thomas, <i>The Theory and Practice of Creole Grammar</i> (1969) C.L.R. James, <i>Minty Alley</i> (1971) Arthur Lewis, <i>Labour in the West Indies</i> (1977)
Novel/Short Stories	Petronella Breinburg, <i>Legends of Suriname</i> (1971) Andrew Salkey, <i>A Quality of Violence</i> (1978)
Literary Criticism	Wilson Harris, <i>Tradition, the Writer & Society</i> (1967) <i>New Beacon Review. Collection One</i> (1968) Ivan Van Sertima, <i>Caribbean Writers: Critical Essays</i> (1968) Dennis Sardinha, <i>The Poetry of Nicolás Guillén. An Introduction</i> (1976)
History/Politics	Adolph Edwards, <i>Marcus Garvey, 1887-1940</i> (1967) Edward Brathwaite, <i>Folk Culture of the Slaves in Jamaica</i> (1971) Bernard Coard, <i>How the West Indian child is made Educationally Sub-normal in the British School System</i> (1971) Andrew Salkey, <i>Georgetown Journal</i> (1972)

FIGURE 17 NEW BEACON PUBLICATIONS, 1966-1975

Beyond publishing and bookselling, the New Beacon circle was embedded in extensive and varied modes of activism.¹⁸ There were the George Padmore and Albertina Sylvester Supplementary Schools, Black Parents Movement, Black Education Movement and New Cross Massacre Campaign. Through these wide-ranging actions New Beacon actively sought to ‘create alternative systems of value and community.’¹⁹ La Rose and White’s mutual desire to facilitate, disseminate and support ‘art,’ in combination with their experience of political struggle speaks to their position as organic intellectuals.

¹⁷ 1978 has been chosen as a cut-off point because this was the year that La Rose took a Caribbean trip that provides important data on New Beacon’s connections to bookshops and libraries in the region.

¹⁸ The phrase ‘New Beacon Circle’ encapsulates the extent and fluidity of the publishing–activist network. Alleyne, p.2.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Publishing in Exile

La Rose's publishing ventures began in Trinidad; however, moving to London offered a new space, one that was larger and, in some ways, freer.²⁰ This migratory search for 'space' – literary and political opportunity – because conditions for publishing were so limited in the Caribbean, was a common phenomenon for this generation and earlier literary voyagers.²¹ La Rose felt that emigration was a central theme in Caribbean and Caribbean diaspora 'cultural activity.' He spoke of a 'generation of West Indian writers' that migrated to Britain during the 1950s – writers, journalists and activists that would become part of the New Beacon circle.²² Whilst mobility within the British Empire, and then Commonwealth, offered new opportunities, these were shaped by feelings of displacement and limited by the dictates of metropolitan publishing tastes. These themes are a common motif across New Beacon publications. Writing in his *Georgetown Journal* that 'Living abroad may not be like living at home, but sometimes home is like abroad, alien and painful, for a great many people,' Salkey conveyed the dual feelings of diasporic displacement.²³ Viewing this dislocation as a productive space, La Rose explained how

the distance you have from your past focusses attention more seriously on it. ... I have found that in my separation from the Caribbean, I have understood the Caribbean better and myself better and have been able to contribute to the situation in the Caribbean and to the situation in Britain much better.²⁴

Paving a new path in Black/Caribbean publishing, New Beacon represented a sharp break with the dominance of newspaper and metropolitan publishers that had for so

²⁰ He was involved in a small bookselling operation on Prince Street, Port-of-Spain, in 1957 where they sold Nkrumah's autobiography with the help of money he sent back from Venezuela. *Dream to Change the World* (2003 film) and White interview.

²¹ See Quinn, 'Writers and Conditions'.

²² 'Interview with Archipelago, June 1983' in *The New Cross Massacre Story: Interviews with John La Rose* (London: New Beacon Books, 2011), p.36.

²³ Andrew Salkey, *Georgetown Journal: A Caribbean Writer's Journey from London via Port of Spain to Georgetown, Guyana, 1970*. (London: New Beacon Books, 1972), p.173. This reflection follows the first school visit whereby Salkey was quizzed about 'the irony of Caribbean writers writing about the Caribbean, while living, for so many years, away from the Area', p.168.

²⁴ *New Cross Massacre Story*, p.42.

long controlled publishing in Caribbean.²⁵ Furthermore, its emergence was rooted in a colonial world where publishers like Longmans ‘not only gave us the word but told us how to use it.’²⁶ This metropolitan publishing tradition was symbolic of the extractive plantation economy that had ruled the Caribbean since the sixteenth century. It characterised the dominant pattern in which Caribbean writers, ideas and words were extracted from the roots which had produced them and were then ‘refined’ (i.e. turned into book form) in Britain, before being sent back to the Caribbean at an inflated price. Hence, Caribbean thought – like sugar, tobacco and coffee – was extracted and then sold back at an inaccessible price. In response to these entrenched patterns, La Rose’s dream was to demystify Caribbean history and culture through the ‘appropriating and validating of our word.’²⁷ By taking back control of the Caribbean ‘word’ – in its multiple lexicons, languages and meanings – New Beacon was part of longer and broader anti- and post-colonial struggles.

During this period, publishing houses like Heinemann and Collins realised the commercial viability of specialised series. Heinemann’s African Writers’ Series (1962) led to the publication of over two hundred books by African writers. It encouraged new writings and provided effective distribution networks with large print runs of economical paperbacks. Despite this ‘shared context,’ New Beacon had ‘very different goals’ to these publishers.²⁸ Rather than trying to compete with metropolitan publishers, commercially, New Beacon was a concrete response to the ‘metropolitan ownership of the means of book production,’ and thus, knowledge production.²⁹ New Beacon symbolised an activist response to the metropolitan monopolisation of publishing, which had given these publishers the power to decide what was, and what was not, worth publishing. In a letter to his ‘brother’ John, Brathwaite expressed his vexation about the publishing status quo:

All this make me sad sad sad. Thank god wid me, I’d rather starve than tek that sort of shit from anybody. That is why I going resign from the university; why I going to cuss off oxford, yale, doublebay, Longmans and

²⁵ See Chapter 2.

²⁶ Letter from John La Rose to Venetta Ross, 3 March 1969, LRA/01/0687, GPI.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Bush, *New Beacon*, p.11.

²⁹ Ibid, p.11.

a whole set of exploiters who reject my white power in j'ca:
them doan want we to say what we got to say. And what base not on
fancy but on dem hard hard document:

In anycase, is we to speak to we now: that is why new beacon must
survive and grow; why bogel must survive and grow; why Savacou must
survive and grow.³⁰

Brathwaite's denunciation gets to the crux of the political publishing space that sparked New Beacon. He not only asserted their dominance, but the often-exploitative nature of a publishing market that was not genuinely invested in supporting Black writers. Despite their critiques of metropolitan publishing giants, New Beacon and CAM did not exist on a publishing island. From the very beginning, important relationships were established with publishing houses and representatives; notably, Anne Walmsley who was an important figure in CAM.³¹ New Beacon must be located in the broader publishing arena, as a force that challenged metropolitan dominance not only by offering an alternative space for Black writers but by forcing other publishers to reorient their positions.

In a tribute to La Rose, Wilson Harris stated that the establishment of this small publishing house within the metropolitan scene was a great achievement.³² In the same vein, Brathwaite's credited 'John the Conqueror' as loving and 'xpose[ing]' the narratives and imaginations of Caribbean writers like James, Lamming and Harris.³³ By the time La Rose attended the founding of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, Mark Longman (chair of Longman) was being squeezed out of Caribbean literary/publishing conversations.³⁴ Whilst there were an array of reasons for this, it

³⁰ Letter from Eddie to John, 19 October 1967, LRA/01/143/04, GPI.

³¹ Anne Walmsley, *The Caribbean Artists Movement, 1966-1972: A Literary and Cultural History* (London: New Beacon Books, 1992). Hazel makes the important point that representatives from Longman, Heinemann, Macmillan and Faber & Faber all attended the first CAM conference and that it catalysed creation of Longman's Caribbean Writers Series by James Currey. Hazel, 'George Padmore Institute Archive', p.35.

³² *Foundations of a Movement*, p.65.

³³ *Ibid*, p.21.

³⁴ Salkey tells an interesting story about Longman apparently feigning a 'diplomatic illness' when he was due to speak at the Convention. This followed rumours of a boycott by some delegates and fear of the 'extraordinary embarrassment it might cause the new Co-operative Republic with its built-in Black Power tolerance, to have Mark Longman appear, as a guest speaker'. Salkey, *Georgetown Journal*, p.271.

was a sign that the New Beacon operation was having a tangible impact in the Caribbean publishing arena.

'We didn't come alive in England!'

The New Beacon story does not begin at its official registration as a company on 1 August 1967.³⁵ It emerged out of La Rose's work and activism in Trinidad, Venezuela and London, from the 1940s to the 1960s, alongside the commitment, energy and radical thought of many others. New Beacon, through the person of La Rose, is connected to two currents of Trinidadian publishing: the 'little magazine' literary tradition (*The Beacon*) and publishing associated with trade unions (Chapter 3). Discussions about Black British political movements often disregard or minimise the experience of Caribbean anti-colonial politics.³⁶ In recognition of this backstory, Linton Kwesi Johnson, the dub poet and activist, affirms that 'we didn't come alive in England, we didn't start our struggles here, we have a history of struggle against colonialism.'³⁷ Hence, the following section examines La Rose's grounding in the Trinidadian trade union movement, as a budding intellectual and a political voyager.

Born into a region on the cusp of a nationalist awakening, in Arima, Trinidad, in 1927, La Rose lived through major economic and political shifts during this end of empire moment. The son of two trained teachers (though his father worked as a cocoa trader), La Rose also became a teacher, in the broadest sense. Dedicating much of his adult life to trade union politics and education, he became politically active in the 1940s and 1950s. A tumultuous period of trade union politicking, it was characterised by racial divisions, ideological rivalry, personality conflicts and attempts to depoliticise those trade unions that were increasingly articulating labour demands in anti-colonial terms.³⁸

³⁵ La Rose and White were equal shareholders.

³⁶ Recent scholarship has been challenging this separation. See a brilliant example of this in "We did not come alive in Britain": histories of Black resistance to British policing' in Adam Elliot-Cooper, *Black Resistance to British Policing* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021).

³⁷ *Dream to Change the World* (2003 film).

³⁸ Kiely, p.103. Scott B. MacDonald reviews disunity between the Butlerites, UF, socialist-OWTU alliance (Oilfields Workers Trade Union) and further divisions within these groups that reduced the effectiveness of trade unions (echoing similar patterns across the region and globally). MacDonald,

In the 1940s, La Rose joined the Workers Freedom Movement, where he edited its newsletter, *Freedom*.³⁹ Following this, he became an executive member of the Federated Workers Trade Union before establishing the Marxist-oriented West Indian Independence Party (WIIP) with Lennox Pierre in 1956.⁴⁰ La Rose differentiated the WIIP from other Marxist-oriented political parties, such as the People's Progressive Party (led by Cheddi Jagan) and the Worker's Party of Jamaica (Trevor Munroe). He emphasised their (his and Pierre's) positioning as

independent Marxists ... more than independent Marxists, in the sense that we were people who attached great importance to questions of the popular culture, I mean, we were involved in it, I was involved with local and popular culture.⁴¹

This captures La Rose's cultural grounding which continued to shape his politics. In the same interview, he described his ideological, cultural and social position as grounded in workers' struggle, as evidenced by his unwavering commitment to Trinidadian trade union politics.⁴²

In 1958, he and Irma La Rose, his first wife, were metaphorically exiled to Venezuela, where he returned to teaching (having previously taught at St Mary's College in Port-of-Spain).⁴³ A few years later, in 1961, La Rose moved to London to study law, with the intention, like many Caribbean voyagers, of returning home.

Trinidad and Tobago: Democracy and Development in the Caribbean (New York: Praeger, 1986), p.74.

³⁹ New Beacon Press, 'A Profile of John La Rose', *The Black Scholar*, 26 (1996), 27-28 (p.27). As Chapter 3 explored, there is a longstanding trend of trade unions investing in publishing as a means to educate the masses – union leaders were often publishers and printers.

⁴⁰ Kiely summarises other political parties in this period e.g. PNM and explains that La Rose stood in the 1956 election. Kiely, pp.92-3.

⁴¹ John La Rose interviewed by Ron Ramdin, 28 April 1992, track 1, C1172/14, BL. By 1970 La Rose was more critical of the 1950s revolutionary Marxist movement, describing this mode of Caribbean Marxism as 'mimetic' and detached from the 'Mass' who were focussed on 'fighting the Colonial regime.' From 'Appendix E: A Letter from John La Rose to Edward Brathwaite – London 25 May 1970' in *Georgetown Journal*, p.404.

⁴² La Rose interview [BL]. He was part of the 1960s movement for more democratic and representative trade unions within the OWTU, one of Trinidad and Tobago's main four unions. Served as the OWTU's European Representative from 1962 until he died in 2006. There is a tribute from the OWTU in *Foundations*, pp.135-8.

⁴³ La Rose attended this same school. They left during the Caribbean 'Red Scare,' which was partly a reaction to President Jacobo Árbenz coming to power in Guatemala (1951-54) and the People's Progressive Party in British Guiana (1953 elections). This put pressure on left-wing union leaders, forcing their withdrawal from International Workers Union (Soviet-dominated), with Marxist organisers being 'harassed by the police and forced to curtail their activities.' MacDonald, p.86,

Although Irma and his two children – Michael and Keith – later joined him, the marriage did not survive; they maintained strong bonds through familial love and political work. La Rose cites the importance of his organisational and cultural experience in Trinidad, with these political groundings and links becoming the foundation of New Beacon. Culturally speaking, La Rose was profoundly shaped by his Pan-Caribbean/Latin American experiences, with his interest and attention to the ‘local and popular culture’ being a fundamental part of his independent Marxist thinking. This Pan-American interest was realised through New Beacon’s publication of Cuban authors, such as the poet Nicolás Guillén, and stocking of Latin American texts in the Bookshop.⁴⁴ Informing his British reality, through a persistent interest in Creole languages and cultures, La Rose continued to see culture and politics as intertwined entities.⁴⁵ It was through New Beacon that he was most able to fulfil this vision of cultural-political change. An autodidact, his political activism, extensive reading and cultural engagement were all conveyed in his unique ideology and praxis.⁴⁶ Avowing his political and cultural importance, Linton Kwesi Johnson classifies him as ‘singularly the most influential person in the history of Black people in this country, in the second half of the twentieth century ... without any doubt, there’s nobody comparable to him.’⁴⁷

Building a diasporic revolutionary organisation

John La Rose has been a vital link between the Caribbean and a new community in Britain

Harry Goulbourne⁴⁸

New Beacon relied on a complex and extensive network of publishers, intellectuals, writers, activists and educators. Thriving from the connections it made between Britain, the Caribbean and beyond, this next section argues that New Beacon was a

⁴⁴ Guillén was a leader of the Afro-Cuban movement.

⁴⁵ Alleyne, pp.114-25.

⁴⁶ See Anton L. Allahar, ‘John Anthony La Rose’, *Caribbean Quarterly*, 63 (2017), 109-121, for a thorough analysis of La Rose’s political roots, reading and praxis.

⁴⁷ *Dream to Change the World* (2003).

⁴⁸ *Foundations of a Movement*, p.56.

radical force precisely because of its diasporic organisational structure.⁴⁹ A revolutionary project, New Beacon's inner workings were informed by the politics and culture of its founders and allied movements. The case of New Beacon supports the broader thesis that print mobilities have been pivotal to the development of Black/Caribbean publishing. Here, I consider the following questions: How did New Beacon build and bridge communities and ideas between Britain and the Caribbean? How was the formation, organisation and running New Beacon reflective of its ethos?

The characterisation of La Rose as a 'vital link' between the Caribbean and emerging political communities of Black Britons encapsulates New Beacon's diasporic roots. Transnational coalition building was a critical part of its philosophy, which sought to generate a Caribbean culture of mass activity and engagement that had been stifled by colonial education.⁵⁰ This is why New Beacon made connections with Caribbean institutions and individuals, through representatives; Caribbean voyages and the University of the West Indies (UWI). La Rose's mode of thinking and, hence, New Beacon's ideology, was grounded in Third World, Marxist and Pan-African struggles, which was further embodied in its rejection of profit-making goals.⁵¹ This examination reveals how they brought new meaning to metropole-peripheral relations by redefining the link between Britain and the independent Caribbean, on its own terms.

Caribbean Representatives

Sitting in the George Padmore Institute, I was engulfed by zealous and thoughtful letters that had traversed the Atlantic. Reinforcing the idea of 'the personal letter as a technology of transnational Black radicalism,' these correspondence files are the material fragments of Caribbean representatives who were tasked with translating and disseminating the New Beacon project across the diaspora.⁵² Occupying an

⁴⁹ Much of the research on New Beacon has focused on its connections to CAM and its role as an activist organisation in Britain e.g. Alleyne; Andrews, *Black supplementary school movement* and Walmsley, *Caribbean Artists Movement*.

⁵⁰ John La Rose to Venetta Ross, 3 March 1969.

⁵¹ Bush, *New Beacon*, p.12.

⁵² Mohabir and Cummings, p.23.

informal and shifting space, the representative's role was to facilitate connections and coalitions in the Caribbean. Although an informal and unpaid position, it denoted New Beacon's resourceful approach to transnational publishing, as necessitated by the shoestring system they were operating with compared to better resourced metropolitan publishers. This analysis includes three representatives: Edward Kamau Braithwaite (based in the History Department, UWI Mona campus); Doris Monica Brathwaite (CAM member, obscured literary editor, publisher of *Savacou*, archivist, bibliographer and wife of Brathwaite) and Venetta Ross (a civil servant and a teacher from St. Kitts). Their letters illuminate how New Beacon connected itself to UWI, government ministries, bookshops, libraries and political organisations based in the Caribbean.⁵³

Requests for New Beacon publications and other texts to be shipped to the Caribbean stimulated the idea for recruiting Caribbean representatives. Before La Rose officially asked Doris and Eddie (as La Rose called him) to be their 'representatives' Brathwaite was already sending 'URGENT BOOKS ORDERS'; for example, twelve copies of Walter Rodney, *West Africa and the Slave Trade* for UWI and the Institute of Jamaica.⁵⁴ Following the move to Albert Road in 1969, New Beacon became more established as a publishing house, which led to an increased impetus and capacity for strengthening Caribbean relationships. Inviting the Brathwaites to become their 'representatives in Jamaica,' this signified a step-up in the business. They explained how the extra space meant they would be 'expanding ... supplies' and would 'like to have a small supply [of *Froudacity*] in Jamaica on call soon after publication.'⁵⁵ Accepting the invitation, the Brathwaites offered a £25 contribution and a further potential £25 of investment in exchange for becoming part of the organisation.⁵⁶ Aside from their political and time commitment, the monetary

⁵³ For more about Doris Brathwaite's 'literary and artistic talents, her presence as center of energy at literary gatherings, and her partnership in his [Edward Kamau Brathwaite] creative, publishing, and archiving enterprises' see Jenny Sharpe, *Immaterial Archives: An African Diaspora Poetics of Loss* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2020), p.134. See also Walmsley, *Caribbean Artists Movement*, p.40. Her bibliography of Kamau's work was published shortly after her death: Doris Monica Brathwaite, *A Descriptive and Chronological Bibliography (1950-1982) of the work of Edward Kamau Brathwaite* (London: New Beacon Books, 1988).

⁵⁴ Letter from Eddie to Brother John la Rose, 17 May 1967, LRA/01/143/04, GPI.

⁵⁵ Letter from John to Eddie, 2 May 1969, LRA/01/143/04, GPI.

⁵⁶ Letter from Eddie to John, 7 December 1969, LRA/01/143/04, GPI..

donation was a community-funding avenue. This pledge of support demonstrates how representatives solidified and extended links between New Beacon and the Caribbean through an on-the-ground intellectual network.

Nearly a thousand miles eastwards, Venetta Ross had been corresponding with New Beacon since 1967. Trying to source out-of-print texts for the West Indian history A-level, their letters, that span four years (1967-70), are a window onto the changing educational culture in the post-colonial Caribbean that sought to throw off the mental shackles of colonial curricula.⁵⁷ As such, it reveals the essential role of books in creation of a new consciousness.⁵⁸ After writing to each other for a couple of years, La Rose voiced the idea of a Caribbean agency in the Leeward Islands:

My proposition is, if you are willing, that you become our New Beacon representative in Antigua, St. Kitts, Nevis. ... We haven't had representatives really so far, but we will need them if we are to make any serious progress from a publishing point of view. The old publishing firms like Longmans ... grew up within the colonial preferential market, and not only gave us the world but told us how to use it. New Beacon, in a very real sense is a demystification of the word ... if our publications enter into the general education of the cultural system of the Caribbean, we also create the basis for a more extended operations and a consequent extension in the field of response to the needs of the creative artists and the pursuit of the creative principle in general mass activity.⁵⁹

This embodied La Rose's vision to reclaim Caribbean languages as part of a revolutionary belief in mass culture and his strategy was to permeate Caribbean educational systems through the supply of New Beacon texts, helped by regional representatives.

He set out the demands and practicalities of being a New Beacon representative: to get New Beacon books onto bookshop shelves; ensure that reviews were printed in local newspapers and magazines; and to approach radios for 'serialization.'⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Explored more on pp.229-30

⁵⁸ Hazel examines this correspondence and the importance of texts in broader consciousness-raising projects in 'George Padmore Institute Archive', p.39. Landmark history textbook, *Making of the West Indies*, signifies this relationship between texts and consciousness.

⁵⁹ John La Rose to Venetta Ross, 3 March 1969.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Admittedly, 'a very tall order,' perhaps it is not surprising that the Caribbean representatives system never fully got off the ground in any formal sense.⁶¹ Writing back, Ross said this proposition had made her 'seriously' consider 'leaving the Civil Service and teaching as a full-time job.'⁶² Ross' positive response was illustrative of her commitment to the work that New Beacon were doing and to wider radical Caribbean movements. Embedded in the Caribbean Black Power movement, Ross was close to Walter and Patricia Rodney. Staying with them in 1968, she told John about:

my talks with Walter + my observations of what he was doing were very encouraging. ... I believe that Black Power as an ideology and a programme has so great a potential for cataclysmic change on all fronts wherever blacks are.⁶³

Not only a supporter of New Beacon, Ross had contact with Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications. In December 1971, she put in an order for twenty-four of their greetings cards that showcased Black artists' work.⁶⁴ Although she is still a largely hidden figure, her commitment to this political movement was evidenced in her educational efforts and through her backing of Black/Caribbean publishing in Britain. Ross, La Rose and White continued to write letters, advising each other on local politics and education, yet her position as a representative was never formally realised. Whilst New Beacon gained and offered support, from and to, local political ventures, the vision of having multiple representatives across the Caribbean, was more of a dream than an ongoing reality. Despite this, the initial recruitment embodied New Beacon's mission to effect change in the Caribbean and to build a transatlantic organisation.

Voyages

La Rose's personal, political and business trips to the lesser Antilles (particularly Trinidad) were another part of New Beacon's diasporic framework. New Beacon decentred Jamaica in British manifestations of what it meant it meant to be

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Letter from Venetta Ross to John La Rose, 10 March 1969, LRA/01/0687, GPI.

⁶³ Letter from Venetta to John, 25 November 1968.

⁶⁴ 'Sales Ledger Sheets, 1970-79', LMA/4462/B/03/001, LMA.

Caribbean, coming to represent a specific North London – Trinidad connection, in the way that Bogle-L'Ouverture signified a West London – Guyana link.⁶⁵ This was largely due to La Rose's familial connections, as well as geography and colonial airline routes (intra-Caribbean travel is still expensive and limited).⁶⁶ One of six children, all of La Rose's siblings, apart from one who had died young, lived in Trinidad along with his nieces and nephews; hence, his 'Caribbean Trips' always had a familial rhythm of visiting 'home.'⁶⁷ Trips were often aligned with political and cultural events, from the Cultural Congress of Havana (1968) to the founding of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana and the Caribbean Writers and Artists Conference (1970).⁶⁸

⁶⁵ In our interview, White cites the main difference as 'we were in North London and they were in West London, they came, originally, from Guyana, John from Trinidad.'

⁶⁶ Colonial infrastructure made travel between 'peripheral' areas and the metropole more accessible than inter-island travel.

⁶⁷ White interview.

⁶⁸ Andrew Salkey, *Havana Journal* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971).

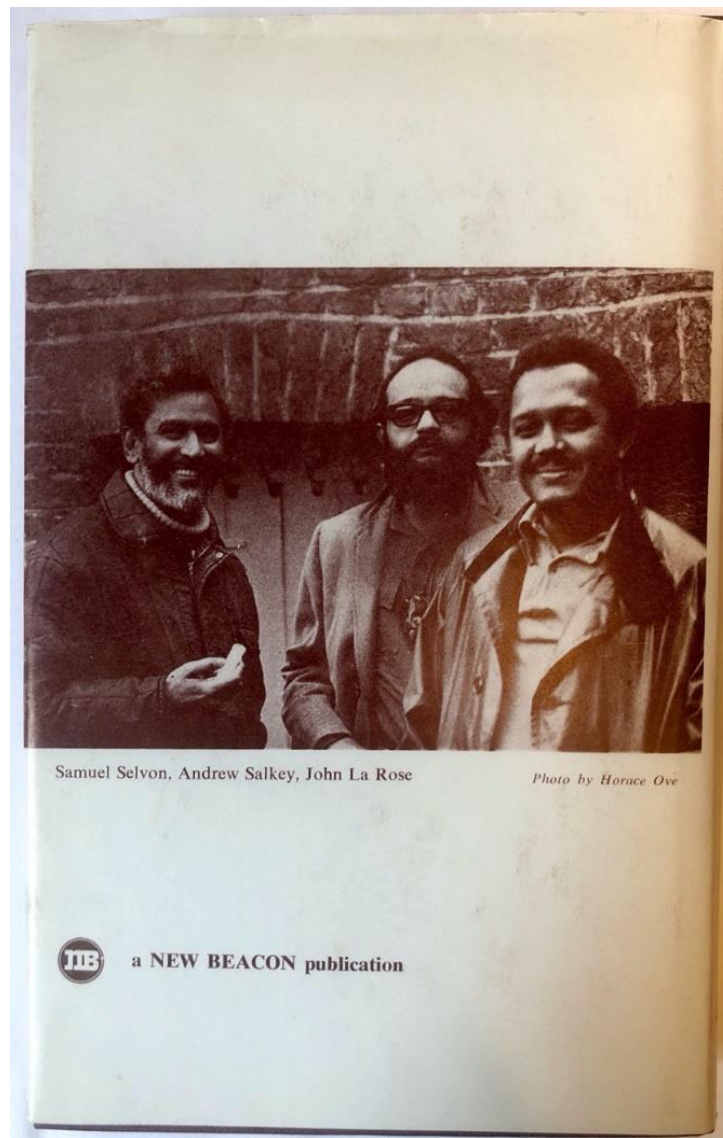


FIGURE 18 BACK COVER OF **GEORGETOWN JOURNAL**, AUTHOR'S COPY, PHOTOGRAPH © **HORACE OVÉ**

Focusing briefly on the latter trip, which Andrew Salkey insightfully recorded in his *Georgetown Journal* (published by New Beacon in 1972), I want to highlight the specific post-colonial nation-building moment that birthed New Beacon. A collection of interviews, anecdotes and considered reflections on the celebrations that marked the founding of the Co-Operative Republic of Guyana, *Georgetown Journal* gives an incisive lens onto an intensely complicated period of fraught (ideologically, racially, geographically), contradictory (anti-colonial, neo-colonial, capitalistic) and exciting (independent, productive, subversive) cultural politics. It is so revealing of a nation, peoples, region and world in transition and of authentic and superficial attempts to dismantle neo/colonial power. Embedded in this transitory world, it was a time in which the interrogation, re-writing and democratising of history and literature felt

pertinent. It was also a moment in which debates about the role of the intellectual in 'developing' societies were taking place. One of these debates was about Wilson Harris, the Guyanese writer, who was charged with becoming 'wilfully obscurantist.'⁶⁹ This aversion to Harris' intellectuality was evident in the sparsely populated auditoriums during his series of memorial lectures as part of the celebrations.⁷⁰ Attending all of his lectures and critical of what Salkey called a Stalinist style purging of Wilson's work, *Georgetown Journal* gives an insight into the political openness of La Rose and thus, New Beacon, during these debates. This support for Harris' distinctive expression of a Caribbean voice was part of La Rose and the Georgetown group's (see Fig. 18) belief in the power of books to effect changes in consciousness. Their faith in the power of texts was evident during a visit to Saint Joseph's School for Girls in Georgetown: a teacher asked Salkey: "Do you really hope to influence people, in the Caribbean, for the better, with your books, with the books written by all the other writers, too?"⁷¹ To which he responded: "I think we all fancy there's that chance ... if some of our best writers are taken seriously, beginning [with young readers at] ... secondary schools, maybe, yes."⁷² This discussion about the connection between books and change spoke to the ethos of New Beacon as a revolutionary publisher that sought to transform cultures of education and reading in the Caribbean.

Whilst in Georgetown, La Rose and Salkey visited the SPCK bookshop (book shop in a department store) where they noted that hardly any books by Caribbean authors were stocked. Salkey recalled 'a lone title of mine, an old anthology of short stories drowned in a sea of Caribbean travel books and histories by British authors.'⁷³ Describing the 'bookshop' as profiting from the 'continuing Colonial *status quo*, in commercial-cultural terms,' Salkey asked 'What's a Caribbean bookshop worth to our society without the books of Roger Mais and Samuel Selvon?'⁷⁴ This Georgetown 'bookshop' was precisely what New Beacon was realised to counter.

⁶⁹ Salkey, *Georgetown Journal*, pp.169-7.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.168.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.287.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.287-8.

New Beacon existed to dismantle the colonial status quo and build an independent Caribbean historical, literary and publishing culture.

In contrast to the Georgetown 'bookshop' experience, La Rose formed connections with grassroots booksellers and committed librarians through voyages and correspondence. Many letters between Ross and himself concerned a bookshop that a 'small number of the brothers' were trying to set up in St. Kitts.⁷⁵ Wanting to offer paperbacks, a suitable discussion space and Black newspapers from the Britain, the United States and Canada, Ross looked to La Rose for help and he shared advice about the practicalities of such a venture, offering his support. In terms of more established bookshops in the Caribbean (of which there were and remain very few), New Beacon's links were recorded in notebooks and business cards from these voyages. La Rose harnessed and strengthened these relationships through the trips that he took in the 1970s, sometimes with White and their son, Wole, and other times alone. Describing these visits, White explains that they would get orders from 'about 4 or 5 different bookshops within Trinidad, and a number of others in St. Lucia and Barbados,' but that 'you didn't get up to Jamaica' because it was too far to travel.⁷⁶ Again, New Beacon's connections orbited around La Rose's roots in Trinidad.

Compiled from handwritten forms, from the 1978 Caribbean trip, Figure 19 provides insight into what books were sold and where. This data supports White's point that they would only visit places in the Lesser Antilles during these trips. Evidently, Trinidad and Barbados made the most orders, accounting for nearly sixty per cent and twenty-five per cent respectively. Reflective of Trinidad and Barbados' larger size in terms of space, economy, people, infrastructure and the key fact that both have UWI campuses, it may also have been because La Rose visited these places the most. This data also reveals what books were popular across the region: *Minty Alley* was the most popular, however nearly seventy-five per cent of these orders were for Trinidad – the birthplace of James. Likewise, orders for *Froudacity* and *Creole Grammar* all came from Trinidad, except two copies in St. Vincent.

⁷⁵ Letter from Venetta to John, 29 January 1969, LRA/01/0687; Letter from John to Venetta, 20 March 1970, LRA/01/0687, GPI.

⁷⁶ White interview.

Everywhere apart from Grenada ordered *Marcus Garvey*, *Georgetown Journal* and *The Pond*. Hence, New Beacon published books that were relevant across different parts of the Caribbean – even texts which were about the British education system. Through their distribution networks, New Beacon made a material intervention into Caribbean reading publics, circulating Caribbean intellectual trends and traditions.

Title	Barbados	Grenada	St. Lucia	St. Vincent	Trinidad	Total
<i>Marcus Garvey, 1877-1940</i>	15		5	13	32	65
<i>Tradition, the Writer & Society</i>	10		2		32	44
<i>Froudacity</i>				2	20	22
<i>Creole Grammar</i>					12	12
<i>Folk Culture of the Slaves in Jamaica</i>	25				20	45
<i>How the West Indian Child is Made Educationally Sub-normal</i>	10	20	5	6	24	65
<i>Minty Alley</i>	20		5	14	112	151
<i>Georgetown Journal</i>	10		5	9	32	56
<i>The Pond</i>	10		3	5	33	51
<i>The Poetry of Nicolás Guillén</i>	10		7			17
<i>Labour in the West Indies</i>	30		5	11	65	111
<i>Poems of Succession</i>	10		3	5	25	43
<i>Eternity to Season</i>	10				21	31
<i>A Quality of Violence</i>	40			3	37	80
Total	200	20	40	68	465	793

FIGURE 19 CARIBBEAN BOOKSHOP ORDERS (1978)⁷⁷

Bookshops and libraries were the gatekeepers to Caribbean reading publics; thus, establishing links with them was essential if New Beacon was to have any significant impact in the region. Notebooks from these Caribbean trips evidence the connections that New Beacon was able to establish with libraries across the region. There were notes about Ms. Forde, the librarian, and Mrs Felix, the Deputy Librarian,

⁷⁷ Handwritten order forms for: Cloister Bookstore, Bridgetown (Barbados); Advocate Bookshop, Bridgetown (Barbados); UWI Bookshop, Cave Hill (Barbados); Seachange Ltd, St George's (Grenada); Sunshine Bookshop, Castries (St Lucia); The Bookshop, Kingstown (St. Vincent); Wayfarer Bookstore, Kingstown, (St. Vincent); George Robertson's Bookstore, Kingstown (St. Vincent); Metropolitan Book Supplies, Port of Spain (Trinidad); Charrau's Bookshop, St James (Trinidad); Victor Manhin, San Fernando (Trinidad); and Ishmael Khan, San Fernando (Trinidad). 184: Caribbean Trip June-July 1978: Barbados, Trinidad, St Vincent (uncatalogued), GPI.

of Nlorne Educational Complex Library, Castries, St. Lucia.⁷⁸ He also had links with Mrs Prescod at the Central Library of St. Lucia and there was a note under 'People in St Lucia' about Pat Charles of the Extra Mural Department, hinting at other avenues for educational links.⁷⁹ In Trinidad, there was Mrs Hutcheon, librarian of the Carnegie Free Library in San Fernando and in Kingston, there was a note about Lynette Hutchinson, Director of Library Services at the Carnegie Library on Granby Street, who had put in an 'order for Race Today.'⁸⁰ Likely the buyers of New Beacon hardbacks, libraries have an important function of making knowledge accessible to those that cannot afford to purchase their own books.⁸¹ A largely female-run space, La Rose's notes about his Caribbean library connections further highlights the pivotal role of women in educational activism. New Beacon's positioning amongst this web of libraries was a concrete part of its strategy to 'enter into the general education of the cultural system of the Caribbean.'⁸²

New Beacon also forged links with emerging independent publishers, such as Yoruba Press, which was set up in Bridgetown, Barbados.⁸³ On one of these trips, Lloyd Best and Allan Harris took La Rose out to lunch. Founders of Tapia House Publishing Company, this was formed out of the New World Group (NWG, 1963-72), who advocated for independent thought and liberation in the Caribbean.⁸⁴ As result of political and conceptual splits, the formal movement collapsed in Trinidad by 1970, with Best establishing Tapia and James Millette (another NWG founder) starting the United National Independence Party. Both of these splinter organisations had popular publications, *Tapia* and *Moko*.⁸⁵ Commenting that Best and Harris were the 'only booksellers or publishers' to take them out for lunch infers their political alignment.⁸⁶ New Beacon and Tapia had convergent interests surrounding

⁷⁸ Shorthand notebooks, 184: Caribbean Trip June-July 1978.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ In our interview, Ian Randle spoke extensively about the historic and current deficit of bookshops across the region. Ian Randle, interviewed by author (Kingston, Jamaica, 15 February 2019).

⁸² John La Rose to Venetta Ross, 3 March 1969.

⁸³ Note – Yoruba Press, 184: Caribbean Trip June-July 1978.

⁸⁴ NWG's organs were *New World Quarterly* and *New World Fortnightly*. Brian Meeks and Norman Girvan, ed., *The Thought of the New World: The Quest for Decolonisation* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2010)

⁸⁵ Similarly, George Beckford gave up editorship of *New World Quarterly* to join Abeng collective.

⁸⁶ Notebook: New Beacon Books.

Caribbean development and independent thought. One of reasons for the NWG split was to do with a disagreement between Best's school of thought about the essentialness of epistemic independence as opposed to the Marxist view that believed in the value of applying methods of historical materialism to Caribbean society.⁸⁷ The idea that the 'root of the Caribbean's problems lay in the colonial cast of mind' aligned to La Rose's poetic assertion to 'remake the mind, In my own image.'⁸⁸ There was also a shared belief of the 'power of ideas to effect change,' which meant that the figure of the intellectual was poised to take on an important role in shaping of developing societies.⁸⁹ Hence, I locate New Beacon as part of the NWG's intellectual world-view, but from a diasporic positioning, in Britain. La Rose's navigation of this political-literary spectrum, from lunch with Best to the publishing of Harris' work speaks to his intellectual agility.

University of the West Indies

Very much a university-based movement, conversations on Best's veranda at College Common on the Mona campus laid the foundations for NWG thought.⁹⁰ This speaks to the fact that UWI was a centre of gravity for intellectual development in the Caribbean. Hence, it was an essential institution for New Beacon to have political, personal and commercial relationships with, if it was to be successful in the Caribbean book trade. The close bond between La Rose and Brathwaite facilitated all of the above; which meant that from its inception, UWI was one of New Beacon's best customers.

The strength of this link was largely due to academics like Brathwaite putting New Beacon publications on course reading lists. Brathwaite was not only committed to getting his own work, such as *Folk Culture of the Slaves of Jamaica* (1971) on reading lists, but also *Froudacity*, *Creole Grammar* and *Georgetown Journal* (1972). In May 1969, Brathwaite wrote to La Rose that he 'would like to include his [*Folk*

⁸⁷ Norman Girvan, 'New World and its Critics' in *The Thought of the New World: The Quest for Decolonisation*, ed. by Brian Meeks and Norman Girvan (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2010), pp.3-29 (p.6; p.13).

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.6.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.8.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.4.

Culture] on UWI booklist for October 1969 ... Teaching course on Lit. and Society. Would bring in big sale. Can you manage this?⁹¹ Writing again, a few weeks later, he proposed putting *Froudacity* on the same list.⁹² Whilst *Folk Culture* took longer to publish than planned, it sold quickly when it was eventually published in 1971.⁹³ As this letter to La Rose explained,

All 50 copies of Folk Culture gone and the students now really beginning to clamour. Can you send at least 12 by AIR at once please. Sangster's Harbour St had ordered quite a lot, I gather but they all went in a few days. They say they've ordered a lot more; but it will be too late to satisfy the present demand. So pls send help.⁹⁴

This close connection between New Beacon and UWI is further evidenced by the rumour that La Rose might be 'asked to run the Campus bookshop,' because Sangster's – who were running it at the time – was looking to pull out.⁹⁵ In many ways, La Rose and Brathwaite personified the shared beliefs held by New Beacon and UWI.⁹⁶ Both parties were jointly interested in the reclamation of Caribbean history, the production of important Caribbean texts and passing those ideas onto young minds.

Overall, whilst the sales numbers in Figure 19 were small, they were not insignificant, especially when considering the purchasing of these books by libraries, universities and schools, which meant they would have reached a much wider readership. It demonstrates New Beacon's effective coalition building with a diverse combination of individuals and institutions, which facilitated their most important objective – the circulation of Caribbean texts.

⁹¹ Letter from Eddie to John, 8 May 1969, LRA/01/143/04, GPI.

⁹² Eddie to John la Rose, 17 May 1967.

⁹³ Letter from Eddie to John, 20 September 1970, LRA/01/143/04, GPI. A copyright misunderstanding with Clarendon/OUP, publishers of Brathwaite's *Creole Culture*, delayed the publication of *Folk Culture of the Slaves*.

⁹⁴ Letter from Eddie to John, 27 November 1970, LRA/01/143/04, GPI. Sangster's still has a branch on Harbour St in Kingston and several others in Jamaica.

⁹⁵ Letter from Eddie to John, 6 Feb 1969, GPI, LRA/01/143/04.

⁹⁶ See Chapter 6 for a fuller discussion of UWI as a flawed anti-colonial project.

The kitchen table

sitting at yr kitchen table & listening to how yr mind wheels back/ fast forwards into infinite remembrances of people places things.

Kamau Brathwaite⁹⁷

In 2015, La Rose and White's kitchen table was replicated in the *Dream to Change the World* exhibition at Islington Museum.⁹⁸ Sitting around the kitchen table was a common theme in the exhibition catalogue and amongst tributes to La Rose. A symbol of the New Beacon's origins and ethos, it collapsed boundaries between public and private, political and personal. From starting the bookshop in the living room, to editing and typing manuscripts in their own time, printing political flyers on inky Gestetner duplicating machines and inviting comrades to eat, drink and theorise around the kitchen table, New Beacon was a 'politicization of private space.'⁹⁹ Part of a Caribbean tradition of running churches, restaurants, social clubs, blues parties, political movements, bookshops and publishing houses within the home, it also echoes the practices of oppressed (often diasporic) groups throughout world history; who, in response to discrimination and limited access in the public sphere, have used homes as a safe space for organising. The exclusion of Black men, in particular, from pubs, social clubs and nightclubs, disturbed the feminised construction of home.¹⁰⁰ In her recollection of the front room, Denise Noble described how 'Caribbean men created a masculine social world and culture inside the feminised space of the front room', bringing men under the female gaze because they were pushed out of public spaces.¹⁰¹ If we apply this idea to the political discussions that happened around the kitchen table, it hints at how this created a

⁹⁷ Sarah Garrod, Nicole-Rachelle Moore and Sarah White, ed., *Dream to Change the World: The Life & Legacy of John La Rose: The Book of the Exhibition* (London: George Padmore Institute, 2015/2018), p.25

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.25.

⁹⁹ *Foundations of a Movement*, p.10.

¹⁰⁰ For a critical analysis of the relationship between gender and space see Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: SAGE, 2005), p.179.

¹⁰¹ Denise Noble, 'A Room Her Own': Gendering the Front Room', in *The Front Room: Migrant Aesthetics in the Home*, ed. by Michael McMillan (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2009), pp.85-93 (p.88).

more gender neutral political space, within the home, that women could more readily engage with.

The emblem of the kitchen table has domestic connotations but was reclaimed as a feminist space by Barbara Smith and Audre Lorde's founding of Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press in 1980. A self-described 'grass roots operation' that was set up to publish books by women of colour, Smith explains that they chose name because 'the kitchen is centre of the home, the place where women in particular work and communicate with each other.'¹⁰² Much like New Beacon, the publisher started its life in Smith's home.¹⁰³ Another example was the Sabarr Bookshop – a hub of the Brixton Black Women's Group – based in the 121 Railton Road Squat that Olive Morris set up in the 1970s.¹⁰⁴ These similarities echo the ways that radical publishers and booksellers have drawn on their limited resources to produce and circulate texts from within the home.

Alongside welcoming activists, authors and comrades from around the world into their home, White was La Rose's publishing partner and backer. White's work has been overlooked, in terms of both her organisational and financial contributions (she was the main breadwinner) and her ideological vigour and commitment.¹⁰⁵ This tendency to downplay White's role is echoed by White herself. During our interview I asked her about the division of labour within New Beacon and she described John as having the 'vision' and she as the 'more practical person,' doing administrative and accounting tasks.¹⁰⁶ In the early years and heyday of New Beacon 'somebody had to earn money to pay the bills,' so she worked at the *New Scientist* as a journalist and then as a part-time consultant once Wole was born. Though perhaps overly dichotomised, with the impression of John as the visionary editor and Sarah as the practically minded breadwinner, she told me that they made a 'good couple,

¹⁰² Barbara Smith, 'A Press of Our Own Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press', *FRONTIERS*, X (1989), 11-13 (p.11).

¹⁰³ Jaime M. Grant, 'Building Community-Based Coalitions from Academe: The Union Institute and the Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press Transition Coalition', *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 21 (1996), 1024-1033 (p.1025).

¹⁰⁴ For more on Sabarr see Delap, 'Feminist Bookshops'.

¹⁰⁵ Roxy Harris' tribute supports this. *Foundations of a Movement*, p.64.

¹⁰⁶ White interview.

we complemented each other' in work and life.¹⁰⁷ This echoes a gendered perception of the division of labour – particularly within in political movements – whereby men do the mental/intellectual work and women do the practical/organisational labour.¹⁰⁸ However, it did subvert expectations of the man as breadwinner, with White's income enabling her husband to focus on publishing. There were of course additional racial and national dynamics, La Rose was coming out of the experience that they were engaged in publishing, whereas White was an ally of this political-cultural movement.

White's political commitment pre-dated her relationship with John; she joined the Communist Party, anti-Apartheid campaign and volunteered on an anti-colonial exhibition at the Africa Centre, which was where they met.¹⁰⁹ Roxy Harris – part of the New Beacon circle – locates White in a 'tradition' of white British middle-class women supporting Black radicals e.g. James and Padmore around the Abyssinian campaign in the 1930s.¹¹⁰ Once married, White navigated a complex terrain of Black Power politics, where white allies and partners or spouses were at times dismissed. She recalls John threatening to leave a meeting when someone said that 'all the whites should leave the room.'¹¹¹ Reflecting on her own vision and context, White's activism continues to be sensitive and informed; always listening, never trying to 'interfere' and understanding that people 'needed to be able to rewrite it [history] themselves.'¹¹² One only needs to read a few letters to grasp her pivotal role, not only in terms of organising work and family life and replying to letters that John had put off for too long, but in forging deep connections and trust with local and international comrades, writers and customers. Deeply admiring of her late partner, in interviews, discussions and public talks, White, at times, minimises the extent of her own contributions to New Beacon and the anti-racist struggle in post-war Britain. As Linton Kwesi Johnson – a regular guest around their kitchen table – said, 'I can't

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Gail Lewis talks about this in her interview with Rachel Cohen as part of Sisterhood and After: The Women's Liberation Oral History Project (2011), C1420/14, BL.

¹⁰⁹ Bush, *New Beacon*, pp.16-17.

¹¹⁰ *Foundations of a Movement*, pp.63-4.

¹¹¹ Ansel Wong also speaks about this in Rob Waters, 'Student politics, teaching politics, black politics: an interview with Ansel Wong', *Race and Class*, 58 (2016), 17-33.

¹¹² White interview.

think of any other woman who has done more to advance the struggles of black people, in this country, than Sarah White.¹¹³ Around the kitchen table, they built an organisation, a family and a network that had roots in Britain and the Caribbean.

Critical Interventions

The final part of this chapter examines four New Beacon publications: *Froudacity* (1969), *Creole Grammar* (1969), *Marcus Garvey, 1887-1940* (1967) and *How the West Indian child is made Educationally Sub-normal in the British School System* (1971). Each of these differently demonstrate how the content of New Beacon publications were acts of intervention and protest. By publishing books that established the histories and literatures of the Caribbean, New Beacon helped to forge and consolidate Caribbean diaspora identities, communities and connections. Capturing the vision of New Beacon, La Rose highlighted the problem of “discontinuity of information from generation to generation,” stating that “Publishing, therefore, was a vehicle to give an independent validation to one’s own culture, history, politics – a sense of self.”¹¹⁴ Focusing on reprints and educational texts, this analysis highlights the multiple ways that the publisher intervened in Caribbean and British politics, history and culture. Examining the context, content and sales of these books, these case studies echo what was going on in this moment, politically and culturally. This final section also examines the democratising drive that underlay paperback printing of these four publications and the publisher as a whole.

In February 1967, La Rose stated: ‘We are a modest publishing venture and our intention is to publish solely in paperback and to make our publications available to the Caribbean and an extra-Caribbean public at a reasonable cost.’¹¹⁵ Releasing first editions in paperback was a radical move – standard practice was always to publish first editions in hard copy. One of the earlier publishers to do this, New Beacon extended the ‘paperback revolution,’ helping to kindle a wave of radical paperback publishing that was taken up by the likes of Bogle-L’Ouverture (1968), Pluto (1969)

¹¹³ *Dream to Change the World* (2003).

¹¹⁴ Interview with La Rose quoted in Celia Sankar, ‘A Caribbean publisher’s radical beacon’, *Americas*, 48 (1996), 22-27 (p.25).

¹¹⁵ Letter from John La Rose to Dr Gertrud Buscher, 28 February 1967, Creole Grammar Publication File, GB 2904 NBB/01/07, GPI [NBB/01/07].

and Virago (1973).¹¹⁶ The focality of the paperback was symbolic of all that New Beacon stood for – their publishing venture was about ‘ordinary’ people having access to these books in schools, libraries, at universities and in their homes, so that they might read them to their children and reinvigorate Caribbean intellectual traditions. Whilst paperbacks were their main mode of production, as part of its canon-making ambitions, New Beacon printed a small number of hardbacks for most of its publications.

Reprints

Our Jacob was not coatless;
our Jacob Thomas wrote a grammar
in patois
to remove the scales from justice’s eyes
for peasants
who spoke no word of English
in milord’s court.’
And Jacob answered proud England’s Froude
for his ‘froudacity’
in challenging our right in revolt
to rule our land.
Still each generation lives its present,
in huge hiatus,
unaware.

Anthony La Rose¹¹⁷

La Rose’s conceptualisation of a Caribbean radical tradition as connecting Toussaint L’Ouverture (Haitian Revolution), Paul Bogle (Morant Bay) and John Jacob Thomas is laid bare in ‘Song to an Imperishable Sunlight.’ This epic poem of Caribbean resistance embodies the *raison d’être* of the reprint – a means to make present generations aware of their own history of ‘Motley blackmen of the past, forever nameless.’¹¹⁸ Through their ‘Lost Literature’ series, ghosts of Caribbean intellectual

¹¹⁶ Founder of Penguin Books, Allen Lane, is credited for creating ‘paperback revolution.’ In relation to printing first editions in paperback, Simone Murray asserts that ‘paperback original editions’ were one of the four key elements which ‘underlie Virago’s marketing success,’ in Murray, *Mixed Media: Feminist Presses and Publishing Politics* (London: Pluto, 2004), p.56.

¹¹⁷ La Rose, *Foundations*, pp.45-6.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

thought were given a much-needed home in New Beacon's thoughtfully designed and introduced reprints. New Beacon was invested in the idea of creating a canon, History with a big 'H' that was distinct from more grassroots forms of politics. Aside from this ideological ambition, pragmatic considerations likely drove this 'Lost Literature' series. Reprints offered a cost-effective, practical and speedy way to incubate new content.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, they were a means to establish themselves and their reputation before being in a position to persuade writers to jump ship from metropolitan publishers.

This section examines New Beacon's 1969 reprints of *Froudacity* (published in 1888 by T. Fisher Unwin) and *The Theory and Practice of Creole Grammar* (published in 1868 by the Chronicle publishing office, in Trinidad). Promotional material described Thomas as 'an unusual West Indian. He was a school teacher, journalist, polemicist, grammarian and public servant.'¹²⁰ The reprinting of Thomas' works classified him as West Indian (rather than Trinidadian), casting him as an organic intellectual who wrote for the people and that deserved recognition in contemporary Caribbean consciousness. Commenting on such representations of Thomas as, '*educated, black, West Indian*' and from a 'nonacademic foundation,' Faith Smith argues that in the 1960s Black Power context, 'Thomas is at once a late-nineteenth-century pan-Africanist precursor for Marcus Garvey' – an anti-colonial hero for a post-colonial dawning.¹²¹ This commitment to promoting Thomas's writing and ideas located him near the start of a printed Caribbean intellectual tradition that was continued by the distinctive and original Caribbean voices of Marcus Garvey and Wilson Harris (subjects / authors of New Beacon books).¹²²

¹¹⁹ There are fewer copyright issues when publishing long dead authors.

¹²⁰ Promotional Material found in letter from John La Rose to Professor Whinnom (Spanish Dept, Mona), 12 February 1967, NBB/01/07.

¹²¹ Smith also notes that the 1950s/60s were a key moment in the celebration of figures like Thomas; citing New Beacon's republications and 1960's political struggles as a site for the 'intellectual abilities of the Black man, past and present' to be 'rehearsed.' Smith, *Creole Recitations*, p.xv. See also Rupert Lewis, 'J. J. Thomas and Political Thought in the Caribbean', *Caribbean Quarterly*, 36 (1990), pp.46-58.

¹²² Edwards, *Marcus Garvey and Wilson Harris, Tradition, the writer and society: critical essays* (London; Port-of-Spain: New Beacon, 1967 [reprinted in 1973]).

These books amounted to a critical intervention for several reasons. Firstly, they made a break with the tradition of British leftist and liberal publishers having ownership of Black/Caribbean radical thought (Chapter 3). Secondly, they reintroduced Thomas to new generations who would not have had access to his ideas and writing. Thirdly, the reprint had the power to actually make texts important, with these works becoming recognisable Caribbean classics in the twentieth and twenty first centuries. In bringing Thomas home to the 'Caribbean,' New Beacon reprints mediated historic flows of Caribbean ideas, texts and people.

The process of reframing Caribbean classics in a post-colonial moment incubated the production of new content; it offered an opportunity for the creation of new content and packaging – intellectually and aesthetically. The introductory essay, biographical note and cover design were three ways that New Beacon actively intervened to construct a certain type of Caribbean intellectual tradition. For both of the Thomas reprints, New Beacon commissioned introductions from Caribbean intellectual giants. Printed at the front, biographical notes marked the production of new historical knowledge. Reprints also involved a total re-design of the front cover that used contemporary artwork by Caribbean artists to re-package these ideas in ways that were reflective of the creative mood of the era. Both reprints had cover designs by Art Derry, one of CAM's less established visual artists. Together these strategies helped to make *Froudacity* and *Creole Grammar* recognisable as Caribbean classics. Without New Beacon's reprint they would not have become seminal works of nineteenth-century Caribbean thought because they simply would not have been available.

Mr La Rose, Block for Cover arrived too late to include with rest of Cover proofs.

A.C.

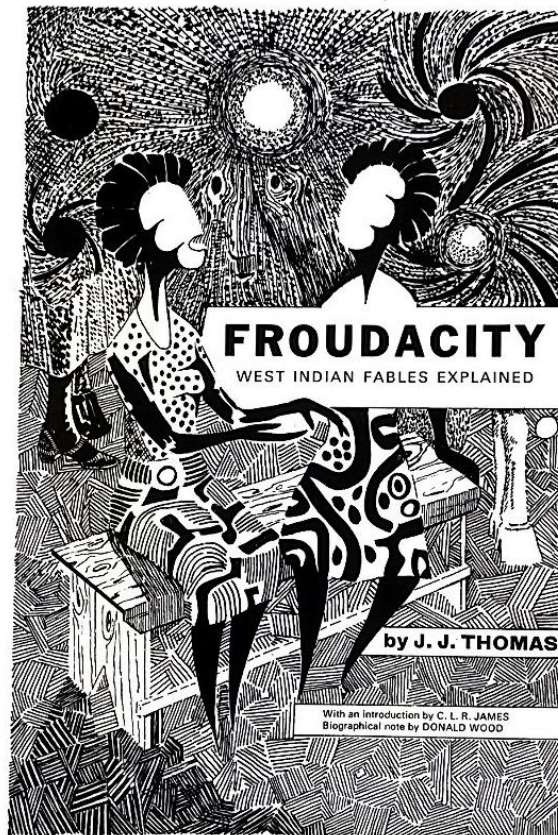


FIGURE 20 FROUDACITY COVER PROOF, GB 2904 NBB/01/06/03/01¹²³

The republication of *Froudacity* was especially evocative of the Caribbean's culturally rich yet violent history of movement and exchange. La Rose, like his Trinidadian forebearer – Thomas – was committed to making sense of and democratising access to the past. Not alone in recognising *Froudacity's* relevance, Brathwaite declared how 'important [it was to] add to our black and Carib. Bibliog.'¹²⁴ The task of reprinting *Froudacity* began with the search for a giant of Caribbean history to write the introduction. La Rose initially asked Professor Elsa Goveia – the first Caribbean-born professor of West Indian history and the first woman professor at the University College of the West Indies (before it became UWI) – if she would write the

¹²³ Described as 'one of the most memorable in the New Beacon catalogue,' the cover for *Froudacity* was taken from Derry's painting 'The Gossip' (1962). An abstract drawing of two women in conversation on a bench, Derry's cover reflects the dialogic nature of the book.

¹²⁴ Eddie to Brother John la Rose, 17 May 1967.

introduction.¹²⁵ Unable to do it, La Rose asked his good friend C.L.R. James, who agreed. His introduction, 'The West Indian Intellectual,' became an essay worthy of study in its own right (see introduction).

Moreover, Donald Wood's thirteen-page biography followed by a page of footnotes, originally commissioned as a short note that 'should be no more than a page,' exemplified New Beacon's editorial style that gave writers creative freedom.¹²⁶ Making the case for a longer biography, Wood reasoned that 'it would be a contribution to knowledge and would place this remarkable man in his context very well.'¹²⁷ Thus, Wood himself recognised the potential value of this concrete historical contribution, which would be, in the words of La Rose, 'the first study of its kind to be published on Thomas's life.'¹²⁸ The importance of Wood's contribution is evidenced in letters sent and received by La Rose. Thanking him profusely for his copy of *Froudacity*, Brathwaite wrote that 'important Intros by Donald and CLR make it even MORE important. Could have been issued as sep. pamphlet. CONGRATS AGAIN to New Beacon.'¹²⁹ Confirming this view in a letter to Venetta Ross, La Rose claimed that Donald Wood's biographical note, especially, 'enhances the value of this early work of Caribbean scholarship by John Jacob Thomas.'¹³⁰

¹²⁵ Letter from John La Rose to Professor Elsa Gouveia, 13 March 1967, GB 2904 NBB/01/06, GPI [hereafter NBB/01/06].

¹²⁶ Letter from John La Rose to Donald Wood, 29 May 1968, NBB/01/06. Wood was key figure in Caribbean studies in British universities from the late 1960s. See Peter D Fraser, 'Obituary: Donald Wood', *Guardian*, 20 January 2003.

¹²⁷ Letter from Donald Wood to John La Rose, 3 June 1968, NBB/01/06.

¹²⁸ Promotional Material, 12 February 1967.

¹²⁹ Eddie to John La Rose, 17 May 1967.

¹³⁰ John La Rose to Venetta Ross, 3 March 1969.

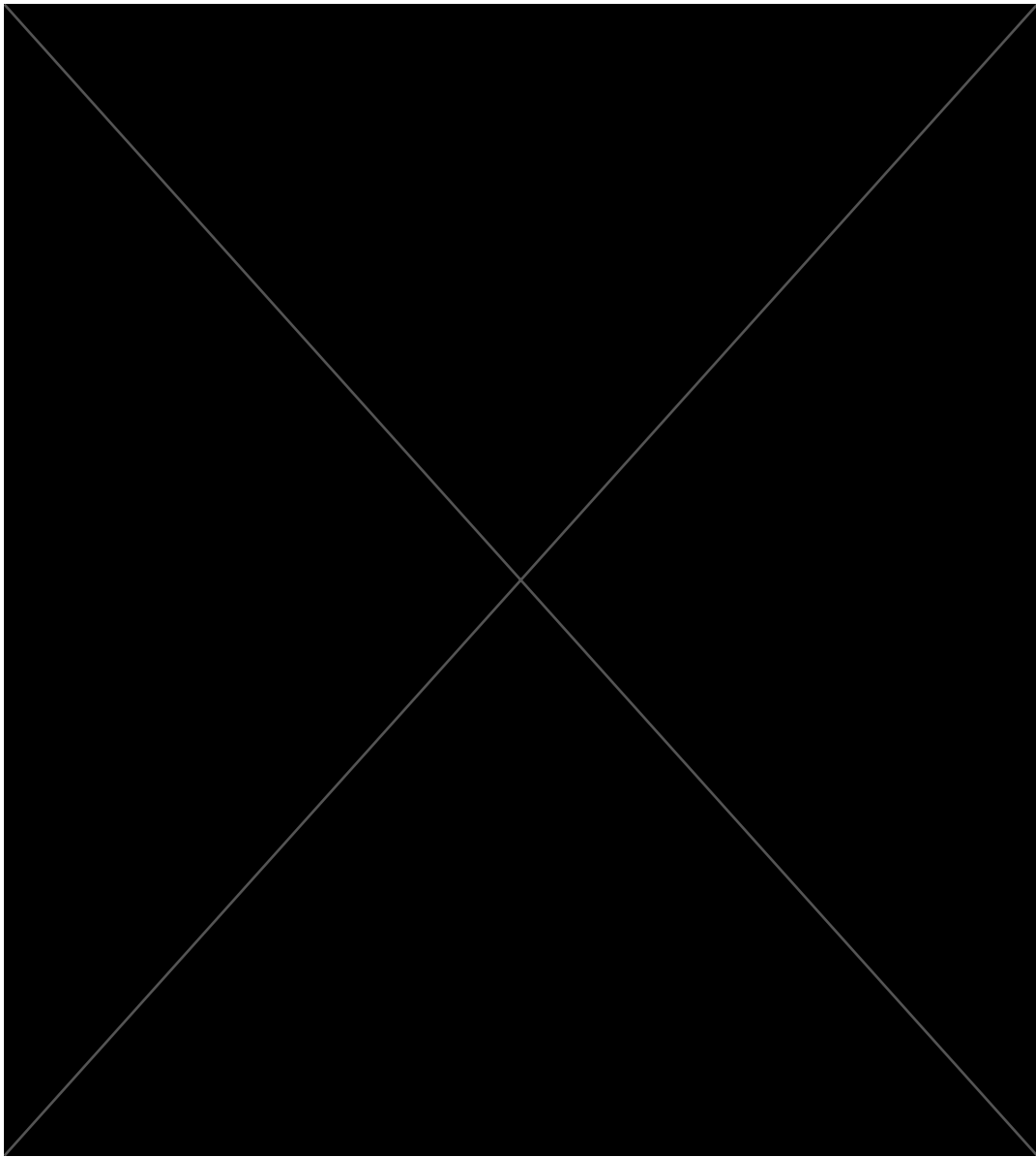


FIGURE 21 CREOLE GRAMMAR UNUSED COVER DESIGN, GB 2904 NBB/01/07/03/01¹³¹

A 'pioneer of linguistic studies on the American continent' Thomas' *Theory and Practice of Creole Grammar* was the first dictionary of the Creole language.¹³² Defining Creole as a 'dialect framed by Africans from a European tongue' Thomas hoped that the book would offer a manual for the Creole language, aiding 'everyday communication in a multilingual society.'¹³³ Interest in Thomas's Creole dictionary

¹³¹ NBB/01/07. Design symbolised the centrality of penmanship to Thomas's life and work. Depicted with a transparent ink well, through which you can see the quill, Derry's art signified how Thomas' writing, especially this book, helped to produce knowledge about Caribbean history. Whilst it did not make the final cut, it illustrates the thought, time and energy that went into designing these covers.

¹³² Promotional Material, 12 February 1967.

¹³³ John Jacob Thomas, *The Theory and Practice of Creole Grammar*, rev. edn (London: New Beacon, 1969), p.1.

resurfaced during an era of literary and cultural anti-colonial/nationalist movements. La Rose described having to type the whole of *Creole Grammar* for his Trinidadian book group because that was 'the only way you could have read it' – there were no copy machines.¹³⁴ The group was reading Thomas to 'try to grasp an understanding of Trinidadian society'; they discovered 'a lot from reading it ... especially those of us that were interested in the folklore and culture.'¹³⁵ Speaking about the same group, White cites Irma La Rose as the one who typed out these rare Caribbean texts and was, thus, a critical facilitator when it came to helping La Rose re/construct a Caribbean intellectual tradition.¹³⁶ He felt that these were 'a very important part of the history of the Caribbean' that should not be 'lost,' which is why his first undertaking was to 'reprint a number of key documents.'¹³⁷ In carrying over and expanding this tradition, La Rose drew connections between Caribbean pasts and presents. From a small cultural-political group in Trinidad to a diasporic publishing network that was established in Britain, La Rose's connection to Caribbean intellectual ghosts was vital to the grounding of New Beacon.

This renewed focus on Caribbean linguistic roots was part of a conscious drive for self-discovery, representation and nation building. The publication of *Creole Grammar* coincided with Brathwaite's distinguished writings on Nation language, creolisation and the folk cultures of the enslaved.¹³⁸ Encapsulating this fascination with Caribbean identity and origins, Brathwaite told La Rose about his current book project, *African in the Caribbean*. Brathwaite made the point that it 'should do well because there has been considerable interest in these ideas over here,' (about roots and identity, such as cultural retention and creolisation) from various places, like the *New World* alongside Rex Nettleford's *Mirror Mirror*, published by Sangster/Collins.¹³⁹

¹³⁴ La Rose interview [BL].

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ White interview.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Edward Kamau Brathwaite, *Folk Culture of the Slaves in Jamaica* (London: New Beacon Books, 1971). See later New Beacon publication, Edward Kamau Brathwaite, *History of the Voice: The Development of Nation Language in Anglophone Caribbean Poetry* (London: New Beacon, 1984).

¹³⁹ Eddie to John, 7 December 1969; in his critique of Nettleford's work, Brathwaite describes it as 'his Jamaican identity thing' which had a 'more negative emphasis'.

Reprinting presented some practical problems. The struggle to track down these texts highlighted the very reason for reprinting them. As the republication of *Creole Grammar* was being put into motion, La Rose told Gertrud Buscher (lecturer in French at UWI), who was commissioned to write the book's introduction, that the 'only copy of this work at present available to us is the copy in typewritten form which the Trinidadian Folklorists were circulating in the 1950s.'¹⁴⁰ This not only illustrates the obscurity of this text but the significance of Thomas' work in this moment as evidenced by this pursuit of such material. Half a year later, Buscher wrote to La Rose about the copy she had found in the Institute of Jamaica that was in relatively good condition but had 'mould spots' and 'damaged pages.'¹⁴¹ Unable to copy the book, La Rose tracked down a perfect version in Cambridge.¹⁴² This copy of *Creole Grammar*, which came in the form of litho-negatives, cost a considerable sum; La Rose wrote a cheque for £68.0s.0d to J. C. T. Oates, the Cambridge librarian, for the copying and publication fee.¹⁴³ The protracted and costly process of reprinting *Creole Grammar*, for a publishing house of limited means, highlighted the difficulty of accessing this text and, thus, the importance of republishing it. Thomas's work had been consigned to the dusty archive; his words were locked away in remote corners of the library. Dislocated from the quotidian Creole world that Thomas wrote about, New Beacon's intervention brought his work home.

A pioneer in the field of Caribbean French Creole language, Buscher was doing field-work in Trinidad when La Rose asked her to write the introduction, following a recommendation from Professor Keith Whinnom (UWI Department of Spanish).¹⁴⁴ Around the same time that New Beacon thought to reprint *Creole Grammar*, Dr Albert Valdman was in the process of doing a reedition for Indiana University Press that included a long introduction of about 50 pages and was due to cost \$5.¹⁴⁵ Advising La Rose on the New Beacon reprint, Whinnom suggested that if they produced a 'reprint at the same kind of modest price as your other publications ...

¹⁴⁰ John La Rose to Dr Gertrud Buscher, 28 February 1967.

¹⁴¹ Letter from Gertrud Buscher to John La Rose, 9 October 1967, NBB/01/07.

¹⁴² Letter from John La Rose to Mrs Buscher, 20 November 1967, NBB/01/07.

¹⁴³ Letter from John La Rose to J. C. T. Oates, 28 January 1969, NBB/01/07.

¹⁴⁴ Letter from Professor Keith Whinnom to John La Rose, 16 February 1967, NBB/01/07.

¹⁴⁵ Keith Whinnom to John La Rose, 16 February 1967.

with an introduction aimed an intelligent layman, you would meet a demand and find a market which would not necessarily conflict with Valdman's.¹⁴⁶ Hence, the unpretentious introduction by 'a very ordinary lecturer' signified the editorial direction of the reprint.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, it was an example of how New Beacon gave opportunities to less established and previously unpublished writers, who would have been overlooked by publishing giants. Asserting the relevance of Thomas's work for the contemporary moment, Buscher noted the recent acceptance of 'Pidgin and Creole languages' as a respected subject of study, remarking that 'the time is not very long past' when 'only 'proper' literary languages were considered worthy of serious attention.'¹⁴⁸ Like *Froudacity*, Buscher's introduction brought Thomas' work into the twentieth century, enlivening the contemporary relevance of this 'historic document' by connecting it to the in-vogue topic of Creole cultures in the post-colonial Caribbean.

	Paperback	Hardback	Total
UK	249	94	343
West Indies	379	74	453
USA	40	13	53
Total	668	181	849

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ This is how Buscher describes herself in Letter from Dr Buscher to John La Rose, 5 July 1968, NBB/01/07.

¹⁴⁸ Gertrud Buscher, 'Introduction', in *Creole Grammar*, p.iii.

FIGURE 22 SALES OF FROUDACITY: PUBLICATION DATE (FEBRUARY 1969) – 30 JUNE 1971¹⁴⁹

	UK	West Indies	USA
Paperback	20/	18/	22/11
Hardback	45/	41/8	50/

FIGURE 23 FROUDACITY GLOBAL COSTS IN POUNDS/SHILLINGS

	Paperback	Hardback	Total
UK	87	68	155
West Indies	208	65	273
USA	19	15	34
Total	314	148	462

FIGURE 24 SALES OF CREOLE GRAMMAR: PUBLICATION DATE (APRIL 1969) – 30 JUNE 1971¹⁵⁰

	UK	WI	USA
Paperback	17/6	15/8	20/
Hardback	45/	41/8	50/

FIGURE 25 CREOLE GRAMMAR GLOBAL COSTS IN POUNDS/SHILLINGS

Within two years of their release, *Froudacity* sold 849 copies and *Creole Grammar* sold 462; in these first two years, fifty-five per cent of *Froudacity* (Fig. 22) and fifty-nine per cent of *Creole Grammar* (Fig. 24) sales were in the West Indies.¹⁵¹ There were also significant price differences, hardbacks cost more than double paperbacks. Price differences were also geographical, Caribbean copies were the cheapest and American the dearest (Figs. 23 and 25). The cheaper cost of these texts in the Caribbean – in both paperback and hardback versions – indicated New Beacon’s effort to promote and distribute their publications in the Caribbean. Initially the Caribbean was New Beacon’s primary market, particularly for reprints, thus, aiding the consolidation of Caribbean classics. What is also interesting is the

¹⁴⁹ Calculated from royalty notes: Letter from La Rose to Donald Wood, 26 January 1970; undated; 12 August 1971. NBB/01/06.

¹⁵⁰ Calculated from royalty notes: Letter from La Rose to Gertrud Buscher, 16 October 1970; 11 February 1971; 12 August 1971. NBB/01/07.

¹⁵¹ Calculated from royalty letters: La Rose to Donald Wood, 26 January 1970; undated; 12 August 1971. NBB/01/06. Letter from La Rose to Gertrud Buscher, 16 October 1970; 11 February 1971; 12 August 1971. NBB/01/07.

predominance of the paperback in the Caribbean market.¹⁵² Moreover, as the data tells us, New Beacon had not tapped into the US market in any significant way. By re-importing Caribbean writing to Britain, and to the Caribbean, the reprint embodied the complexities of metropole-periphery connections and the often-manipulated flow of ideas and goods within this relationship. These sales figures point to the re-circulation and to a degree the repatriation of Thomas' thought.

Educational Activism

For all I was the thing
in history –
the barbaric; the semi-barbaric; the savage
that was me.

Or so they said of me to me
Till I plunged into my past
and theirs
The skeletons were sad to see.

The vision was the self-righteous prism
Of Europe's narcissism.

Anthony La Rose¹⁵³

This poem captures La Rose's ambition to rewrite the history of the coloniser that told him he was a 'savage.' 'Me as Well – The Blackman' plunges into entangled colonial pasts to uncover 'skeletons' lurking in the closet of Europe's history of enslavement, violence and domination. This critique of European history symbolises colonial patterns that have denied the subaltern their history. Thus, I see this poem as emblematic of La Rose's struggle to disrupt the hegemonic control of history through publishing, campaigning and teaching. This final section examines *Marcus Garvey, 1887-1940* and *How the West Indian child is made educationally subnormal in the British school system* as two distinct examples of New Beacon's educational

¹⁵² Take *Froudacity* sales (Fig. 22) eighty-one per cent of all copies sold were paperback; this went up to eighty-four per cent in the Caribbean and down to seventy-three per cent in the UK. For *Creole Grammar* (Fig. 22), sixty-eight per cent of sales were paperback, going up to seventy-six per cent in the Caribbean and down to 56 per cent in the UK.

¹⁵³ La Rose, *Foundations*, p.37.

activism, arguing that they were an active response to colonial and metropolitan systems of education.

Through the provision of alternative texts, New Beacon sought to disrupt Caribbean curriculums from primary to university levels. This was a response to being educated under a colonial regime and anxieties Black children in the British education system. In the post-independence era of the 1960s and 1970s, tides of history curriculums were changing, as demonstrated by Ross' demands for Caribbean history texts. Telling La Rose of the 'crisis in the Education Dept.' Ross noted that Fitzroy Bryant (Minister for Education for the Leeward Islands) was 'well aware of the need for some dynamic change in our educational system and is amenable to positive suggestions.'¹⁵⁴ Ross asked if New Beacon was in a position to reprint 'important works needed in schools,' explaining that 'Right now, only a few islands offer the West Indian History paper at "A" level simply BECAUSE they do not have the material, and what is available is too expensive.'¹⁵⁵ Ross' depiction of the educational landscape denotes the publishing vacuum that existed in the Caribbean and, therefore, the tangible and intellectual space that New Beacon might occupy.

New Beacon's second publication, *Marcus Garvey, 1887-1940* by Adolph Edwards, (Jamaican Barrister, PhD and member of C.L.R. James' London study group) marked a response to neo/colonial curriculums and this scarcity of Caribbean history texts.¹⁵⁶ Emerging out of James' study group, where it was first given as a paper, it demonstrated New Beacon's links to Caribbean intellectual networks.¹⁵⁷ Edwards' accessible biography helped to cement Garvey's place in the lexicon of Black/Caribbean radical history.¹⁵⁸ The book was a recurring subject of discussion in correspondence with Ross and Brathwaite. Writing to Ross on 20 November 1967, La Rose raised his concern that they had 'received no orders yet for our own publications from St. Kitts,' even though Bryant (Education Minister) had obtained a

¹⁵⁴ Venetta Ross to John La Rose, 10 March 1969.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Edwards' PhD thesis was about the development of criminal law in Jamaica.

¹⁵⁷ La Rose interview, BL. This famed reading group was attended by Walter Rodney.

¹⁵⁸ This fits with the 1960s revival of interest in Garvey more broadly e.g. the repatriation of his body from Britain to Jamaica in 1964 and becoming a National Hero. Walter Rodney and others criticized this co-opting of Black Power symbols by the Jamaica government.

copy of *Marcus Garvey* alongside other New Beacon publications on a trip to London.¹⁵⁹ La Rose explained that the government of Trinidad and Tobago had already 'agreed to place it in the library of each of their 50 secondary schools and both Jamaica and Ghana are considering using it in their school system.'¹⁶⁰ This positive reception by two independent Caribbean governments and the independent Ghanaian government illustrated national appetites for books about Black (radical) history. In March 1968, White pressed Ross on the issue again. She relayed that Guyana and Jamaica had 'expressed interest in using Adolph Edwards MARCUS GARVEY as a supplementary text for late primary and early secondary schools,' urging Ross to discuss it again with Minister Bryant.¹⁶¹ Writing to La Rose the following March, Ross assured him that 'I will myself speak to him about using Marcus Garvey 1887-1940 in the schools.'¹⁶² Likewise, Jamaican distribution was discussed with Brathwaite, La Rose asked if they could get 'Adolph's book on Marcus Garvey into any of the schools or Teacher's colleges?'¹⁶³ The marketing of *Marcus Garvey* as a school text, indicated New Beacon's aspiration to alter Caribbean historical consciousness by raising awareness of the region's radical history in the school space. New Beacon's bestseller, it sold over 10,000 copies, was reprinted four times (1967, 1969, 1972, 1987) and was translated into French (1983).¹⁶⁴

Focusing on the British context, *How the West Indian child ...* by Coard spoke to New Beacon's commitment to educational activism in their local setting. It was published in 1971 on behalf of the Caribbean Education and Community Workers' Association (CECWA), a collective of teachers, social workers and educational psychologists. CECWA's three main functions were to 'carry out research'; to inform Black parents of what is happening in schools and of their rights; and to 'help set up

¹⁵⁹ Letter from John to Venetta, 20 November 1967, LRA/01/0687, GPI.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. Nb. Nkrumah was an admirer of Garvey; he incorporated the Black Star into the Ghanaian flag. Hence, the Ghana connection was not just Trinidad-Ghana via Padmore, but also Jamaica-Ghana via admiration for Garvey.

¹⁶¹ Letter from Sarah White to Venetta Ross, 26 March 1968, LRA/01/0687, GPI.

¹⁶² Venetta to John, 10 March 1969.

¹⁶³ Letter from John to Eddie, 4 June 1969, LRA/01/143/04, GPI.

¹⁶⁴ Marcus Garvey 1887-1940, *George Padmore Institute* <<https://www.georgepadmoreinstitute.org/the-pioneering-years/gallery-of-publications/marcus-garvey-1887-1940-1967>> [accessed on 10 Feb 2019].

parents and youth organizations all over the country to meet the needs of the Black child.¹⁶⁵ New Beacon and Bogle-L'Ouverture were instrumental in CECWA's campaign against the discriminatory education system that was failing young Black people in Britain. Their involvement is emblematic of the interconnection between publishing and educational activism, which will be explored further in the next chapter.¹⁶⁶ The establishment of grassroots organisations like CECWA (1971) and the Black Parents Movement (1975) are revealing of generational shifts amongst Britain's Black communities that led to a reorientation of political campaigning. This was a period in which a new generation of Black Britons – second generation migrants – came into existence, alongside the arrival of sent-for children by parents who had emigrated in the post-war period and were now settled or resigned to stay.¹⁶⁷ This new generation experienced different forms of racism to that of their parents but they also had raised expectations and claims of belonging to Britishness.

Coard's book is an outcome of these demographic and political shifts. In 1967, the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) produced a report, *The Education of Immigrant Pupils in Special Schools for Educationally Subnormal Children* (ILEA 657). A friend of Coard's cousin who was an ILEA employee leaked the report to Coard, who was studying for his PhD at Sussex.¹⁶⁸ As he sets out in the first chapter, twenty-eight per cent of students in ILEA ESNs were 'immigrant' as compared to fifteen per cent in 'ordinary schools.'¹⁶⁹ Of the twenty-eight per cent in these ESNs, seventy-five per cent were West Indian, even though they made up half of the 'immigrant population,' implying a tendency to discriminate against young Black students.¹⁷⁰ The pamphlet described how ESN schools taught a form of '*social adjustment*' rather than an education in any traditional sense; 'pupils' were prepared

¹⁶⁵ Appendix II: 'The Caribbean Education and Community Workers' Association' in Bernard Coard, *How the West Indian Child is made Educationally Sub-normal in the British School System* (London: New Beacon Books, 1971), p.45.

¹⁶⁶ Dedication in Coard, *West Indian Child*, p.4 'I am indebted to John La Rose and Jessica Huntley for the inspiration and encouragement for writing this book'.

¹⁶⁷ Elliot-Cooper mentions how children and mothers were reunited once they were financially secure enough to send for them, in *Black Resistance to British Policing*, pp.66-7. Many of sent-for children that arrived between 1962 and 1973 have been victims of the Windrush Scandal.

¹⁶⁸ The Production of a Seminal Text: *The Groundings with My Brothers* @ 50 Ewart Thomas, Stanford University, (Presented at the Walter Rodney Symposium, Atlanta, GA, 3/23/18).

¹⁶⁹ Coard, *West Indian child*, p.5.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

to do menial minimum wage jobs so as not to become a drain on the welfare state.¹⁷¹ Hence, this division of education aided the capitalist division of labour, between 'skilled' and 'unskilled' workers. Highlighting state complacency around the issue of education, Coard stated that there were no 'urgent recommendations' in the ILEA report.¹⁷² This demonstrates New Beacon's involvement with campaigns which highlighted and challenged state failure.¹⁷³

Much of Coard's analysis of the British education system (both ESN and mainstream schools) examined questions of identity, culture and history. Engaging with Fanon's theory of the 'inferiority complex,' Coard wrote: 'The Black child's true identity is denied daily in the classroom. In so far as he is given an identity, a false one. He is made to feel inferior in everyway.'¹⁷⁴ This denial of identity refers to what Coard termed 'a white middle-class curriculum' that:

by totally ignoring the Black child's language, history, culture, identity. Through the choice of teaching materials, the society emphasizes who and what it thinks is important – and by implication, by omission, who and what it thinks is unimportant, infinitesimal, irrelevant. ... one can destroy perhaps the most important aspect of a person's personality – his sense of identity, of who he is. Without this, he will get nowhere.¹⁷⁵

This refusal to accept the normalisation of white middle-class cultures echoes La Rose's conceptualisation of the imperial-cultural arena in which New Beacon was operating. To challenge this, Coard suggested several approaches, from teaching Black history to setting up supplementary schools. Describing the curricula of the time as 'nothing short of criminal negligence (or prejudice) in the educational sphere,' Coard argued that 'Black history and culture ... should be made part of the curriculum of *all* schools, for the benefit of the Black *and* white children.'¹⁷⁶ The back of the pamphlet featured a 'Book List for Parents: West Indian Literature for Children' that encouraged people to visit New Beacon Books.¹⁷⁷ In the 'History' list, *Marcus*

¹⁷¹ Ibid, p.8.

¹⁷² Ibid, p.11.

¹⁷³ For example, the New Cross Massacre campaign.

¹⁷⁴ Coard, *West Indian Child*, p.28.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, p.31.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, pp.38-39: this is an ongoing battle, see organisations like Fill in the Blanks.

¹⁷⁷ Coard, *West Indian Child*, pp.46-7.

Garvey, 1887-1940 is described as 'The story of the life of the man who preached Black Pride ... and opened our eyes.'¹⁷⁸ This exemplifies New Beacon's involvement in educational struggles on multiple fronts, from campaigning with groups like CECWA to the work of publishing books that would help parents, teachers and students action Coard's suggestions to tackle Britain's racist education system.

As this examination of four New Beacon publications demonstrates, their publishing decisions reflected an ardent appeal to contest and alter the disjointedness that haunted Caribbean historical consciousness. Furthermore, New Beacon publications reflected and shaped the big ideas of this moment: Creole cultures, Black history and national roots. By publishing works of Thomas – the Trinidadian autodidact – and a biography of Marcus Garvey – the Jamaican Black Nationalist – New Beacon helped to construct an organic intellectual Caribbean tradition. These ideas were distributed at a critical moment of independence and migration through various channels – bookshops, schools and word of mouth. The act of publishing these texts produced counterhegemonic knowledge, which shifted educational, literary and political cultures, in Britain and the Caribbean.

Conclusion

While New Beacon was active in the local community and Black and radical politics across the country, its Caribbean roots and connections have been underestimated. By examining links with representatives, bookshops, libraries, schools and UWI, this research positions New Beacon as an important player within Caribbean educational and publishing circles.

In his tribute to John la Rose, the Guyanese novelist and thinker, Wilson Harris, described him as an 'artist of politics.'¹⁷⁹ Convinced of the necessity of art and imagination within political thinking, Harris spoke of the cultural politics to which La Rose was thoroughly committed. This cultural politics runs throughout the New Beacon story and speaks to its groundings in creative and educational modes of struggle. Operating in a newly post-colonial world, La Rose and White built a

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, p.47.

¹⁷⁹ *Foundations*, p.66.

diasporic revolutionary organisation that was firmly rooted and routed in transnational struggles for freedom. At its core, New Beacon was an educational organisation – a consciousness-raising and counter-hegemonic cultural force – that reoriented anti-colonial politics and cultures in post-colonial Britain.

Architects of a Caribbean intellectual tradition at ‘home,’ and in Britain, New Beacon publications sought to remember and reinvigorate Caribbean traditions and stories, in a new a location and problem-space. From *Froudacity* to *Marcus Garvey*, these books re-appropriated the extraction and exploitation of Caribbean writing and thinking. Part of the very same Caribbean intellectual tradition that they were helping to consolidate, I observe a symmetry between La Rose and Thomas – both Trinidadian autodidacts, teachers, thoughtful spectators and revolutionaries of their own era. As Chapter 6 continues to explore, Caribbean roots and routes were decisive factors in emergence of ‘Black British’ publishing houses. Bogle L’Ouverture was inseparable from its Guyanese groundings and the actions of Walter Rodney, just as New Beacon was from Trinidad and the writings of Thomas.

Chapter 6: 'To publish is to be radical': the emergence of Bogle-L'Ouverture as an activist publishing house

You were our guerrilla educator –

Publishing and plotting in the battle of ideas,

Selling books to open minds / conquer lies and under mind oppressions tide,

Opening doors for our warriors of the word,

Planting thought seeds of victory and transformation of humanity

Makeda Coaston¹

In her 'Ode to Queen Mother Jessica Huntley,' Makeda Coaston captures Huntley's tremendous contribution to the world – as a publisher, educator, activist, sister, thinker and revolutionary. Coaston writes '**We will remember –** A woman with revolutionary spirit ... **We will remember –** A woman standing proud in deep ebony radiance.' Delivered after her funeral, in 2013, Coaston's tribute speaks to Huntley's impact in her fight for freedom, justice and education. A pioneer in Caribbean diaspora publishing, Huntley founded Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications (BLP) in 1969, nurturing it with the support of her husband, Eric Huntley, and the broader community.² BLP embodies the nexus between resistance and education that has long been central to Black/Caribbean freedom struggles. Often led, organised and developed by women, educational activism illustrates of the pivotal yet obscured role of women as architects of Black/Caribbean intellectual traditions.

A Black Power venture, BLP emerged as a direct response to the banning of Walter Rodney, from Jamaica, in October 1968. Its name commemorated 'two outstanding revolutionary heroes of the Caribbean' – Paul Bogle and Toussaint L'Ouverture – dedicating 'itself to upholding the high ideals for which they lived and died.'³ This

¹ Mason and Busby, *No Colour Bar*, p.24. Bold text in original.

² Eric Huntley played a vital though secondary role until he quit his 'day job' in 1976.

³ 'Bogle-L'Ouverture Tenth Anniversary invite and brochure, 1979', in Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications: File 4 – Tenth Anniversary, LRA/01/0127/3, GPI. Bogle was a Baptist Preacher and leader of the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865 and L'Ouverture was a leader of the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804).

evocation of Caribbean revolutionaries is indicative of BLP's conscious grounding in histories of Caribbean resistance. This chapter explores BLP's emergence as an activist publishing house by examining its Caribbean roots and diasporic mobilisation, in post-war Britain. Assessing the ideas and strategies that came out of BLP, rather than claiming to analyse its impact in any methodical sense, it explores the politics, identities and histories and that BLP helped to produce and disseminate through publishing. Rodney's contention that 'It is as though no black man can see another black man except by looking through a white person,' was precisely what BLP was attempting to change, via publishing books by, about and for Black people.⁴

Eric Huntley's assertion that to 'to publish is to be radical, to write is a subversive act' demonstrates the deep connection between politics and culture that grounded BLP and the broader radical publishing movement.⁵ In recognition of their ideological and community positioning, Boyce-Davies classifies the Huntleys as epitomising 'the link between Caribbean scholarship and activism.'⁶ This bridging between academy and community, scholar and activist, theory and praxis is central to BLP. Continuing the work of Rodney's 'groundings' – the practice of making 'knowledge real' by reasoning with grassroots communities – the Huntleys were committed to the belief that knowledge should serve liberation.⁷ Hence, I view BLP as manifesting different traditions of 'Black Marxism,' whereby the Huntleys' activism transcended traditional Marxist analysis, and, in doing so, they expanded ideas and modes of struggle and freedom. Their conscious strategy of publishing children's literature expanded the realms of Black/Caribbean intellectual production, both in terms of authors and readers. One of BLP's most important contributions, a focus on their children's books challenges conventional notions of canon making and knowledge production. Tracking the publisher's period of establishment and consolidation, from 1969 to 1981, before the era of the Book Fairs, this chapter argues that BLP was an activist publishing house. In these developmental years, relevant transnational contexts

⁴ Rodney, *Groundings* (1983), p.45.

⁵ 'Report on the Second Annual Huntley Conference: *Writing the Wrongs: Fifty Years of Black Radical Publishing in Britain*', <<http://www.transculturalwriting.com/movingmanchester/docs/Report%20-%20Second%20Annual%20Huntley%20conference.doc>> [accessed on 4 April 2018].

⁶ Boyce-Davies, 'Re-grounding', p.xii.

⁷ *Ibid*, p.xi.

include the 'global 1968', global Black Power, the 'long 1970s', the challenges of post-independence and the leftwards shift in the Caribbean (Michael Manley and the Grenada Revolution).⁸ In Britain, there was the rise of the National Front and the anti-fascist response, the coming of age of a new generation of Black Britons, the New Cross Fire and Black People's Day of Action.⁹ Hence, BLP operated across multiple problem-spaces, which profoundly shaped their politics and publications.

Alongside New Beacon, Allison & Busby (founded 1967), Hansib (1970) and other publishing and bookselling outlets, BLP was at the centre of an emergent independent 'Black' publishing community in Britain. Like New Beacon, the contemporaneous defining of BLP as a 'Black publishing house' signalled a more fundamental political shift away from territorial Caribbean identities towards Black consciousness, in post-war Britain, that was connected to the rise of global Black Power. Eric echoed this in our interview, explaining the shift of orientation from class to race when he came to England. This resonates with Hall's thoughts on the 'rediscovery of the black subject' through migration; explaining how many people did not identify as Black in the Caribbean, and that it was not until the late 1960s that people 'came to think of themselves as black.'¹⁰ Hence, Caribbean publishing underwent a connected process, where publishers, publishing houses and publications also became Black. Much more African-centric than New Beacon, BLP was a vector of transnational Black Power, their publications both produced and circulated Black radical knowledge.

Foreshadowing the wider boom of radical publishers and bookshops in the late 1970s and 1980s, several feminist and gay publishers and booksellers emerged in the decade after BLP was founded.¹¹ As new 'Black' publishers came on the scene, connections were forged amongst what Margaret Busby, of Allison & Busby, calls the 'extended publishing family,' with much 'overlap' in terms of authors, jacket designers and the common printer – John Sankey of Villiers Press.¹² Advice and

⁸ See Quinn, ed., *Black Power*.

⁹ See Waters, *Thinking Black* and Hirsch, *Enoch Powell*.

¹⁰ Stuart Hall and Les Back, 'At home and not at home: Stuart Hall in Conversation with Les Back', *Cultural Studies*, 23 (2009), 658-687 (p.662).

¹¹ E.g. Sisterwrite, Virago, Gay's the Word. Villiers also printed New Beacon's books.

¹² Mason and Busby, *No Colour Bar*, pp.21-22.

support from Busby embodied a key relationship of sisterhood within publishing, where women strove to lift each other up.¹³ Guidance from La Rose was part of a longer journey of Caribbean connectivity and comradely spirit. More than a 'London based publisher,' the Huntleys were also in touch with Black publishers in the U.S., such as Drum and Spear, which located them in a transnational Black publishing movement.

Whilst intimately connected to New Beacon, this research explores the similarities and differences between two of Britain's first Black publishing houses. This chapter explores Jessica Huntley's claim that 'New Beacon ... started on a different level ... because ours grew out of a political situation, and New Beacon was that literary tradition from which he [La Rose] came.'¹⁴ While both publishers were politically active, they came from different contexts (familial, political and cultural) and had different ambitions. In combination, they created distinctive and supportive publishing houses. As the previous chapter explores, New Beacon emerged gradually as a realisation of La Rose's cultural literary dreams. By comparison, BLP materialised, rapidly, as a response to the banning of Walter Rodney, and all that the ban symbolised. The similarities and distinctions between New Beacon and Bogle-L'Ouverture will emerge throughout this chapter, as will the intimate political and familial connections between the Huntleys and the La Roses/White.

Guyanese roots

The story of Bogle-L'Ouverture is a history of the interrelationship between family, love and political struggle. Often described as a remarkable couple, their relationship shines through this history. Jessica was born in British Guiana in 1927 and, Eric, in 1929. Raised in Georgetown on meagre incomes – with Jessica's father dying when she was three and Eric being the youngest of ten siblings – they both left school at a young age. From Jessica's instigation of a strike at the Briana Shirt Factory, to Eric's

¹³ Letter from Jessica to Walter Rodney, 1 February 1973, LMA/4462/C/01/096, LMA. Jessica writes about Busby here. Explicitly Black feminist publishing ventures started to emerge in the late 1970s, e.g. the Sabarr Bookshop at the 121 Railton Road squat and the organ of the Black Liberation Front, *Grass Roots*.

¹⁴ Eric and Jessica Huntley Interviews with Harry Goulbourne, LMA/4463/F/07/01/0001/F [side B], LMA.

involvement in the Post Office Workers' Trade Union, they were separately rooted in Guyanese labour politics. Thus, Britain did not mark the Huntleys first exposure to radical politics and books or the even the world of publishing.

A volatile period, the 1950s laid the foundations of the modern Guyanese political arena. Cheddi Jagan and Forbes Burnham founded Guyana's 'first modern political party,' the People's Progressive Party (PPP), in 1950.¹⁵ Informed by Marxist thinking, the PPP drew on these ideas as a way to transcend ethnic divisions and envisage 'the unity and mobilisation of the working people.'¹⁶ The Huntleys were important figures within the party; alongside the likes of Martin Carter and Eusi Kwayana (Sydney King), Eric was part of the 'ultra left' faction that was 'steeped in Marxism-Leninism.'¹⁷ Beyond this, the PPP was a broad-church of revolutionary and progressive minds who were all united under the banner of anti-colonialism.

On 27 April 1953, British Guiana held its first election under universal suffrage. The PPP gained eighteen out of twenty-four constituencies and Jagan became Prime Minister.¹⁸ Quickly becoming an enemy of the British Guianese establishment and therefore, the press, the leading paper, *Daily Argosy*, persistently attacked the PPP.¹⁹ The rise and subsequent election of the PPP was met with suspicion and then violent repression. A hundred and thirty-three days after their election, an 'imperial coup d'État' unfolded.²⁰ As a result, the constitution was suspended, local leaders were imprisoned and factionalism deepened.

¹⁵ Colin A. Palmer, *Cheddi Jagan and the Politics of Power* (University of North Carolina: Chapel Hill, 2010), p.9.

¹⁶ Nehusi, *History of Guyana*, p.352. Described as the only mass political movement in the Caribbean at that time, which opened the 'common people to the world of Marxist/Socialist thought'. Vincent Harding, Robert Hill and William Strickland, 'Foreword' [1981], in *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, rev. edn. (London: Verso, 2018), pp.xv-xxxiii (p.xviii).

¹⁷ Nehusi, *History of Guyana*, p.370. Other keys figures were Keith Jeffrey, Rory Westmaas and Lionell Jeffrey (focal member of the Communist Party in Britain).

¹⁸ British Guiana was still a colony; this was an election for the House of Assembly (lower chamber).

¹⁹ *Argosy* classified as the 'most stridently anti-PPP' in Palmer, *Cheddi Jagan*, p.17. Other leading papers in this group were *The Guiana Graphic*, *The Daily Chronicle* and ZFY (lone radio station). Examples of PPP reforms included: repealing the 1952 Undesirable Publications Ordinance; rescinding the ban on 'communists' entering British Guiana; and Burnham's (Minister for Education) opposition to denominational schools and proposed new curriculum.

²⁰ Palmer, *Cheddi Jagan*, p.9. British Guiana was not self-governing again until 1961.

A movement that was invested in cultural politics, spoken word was seen as a tool to break down confrontations between African and Indian working classes. The PPP 'saw the poet as an artist of a peculiar kind of sensitivity, who could make the reality clearer to the rest of us'; hence, poems that had been censored would be read aloud at meetings to 'give hope to these working people in struggle.'²¹ A response to an increasingly censored society, King's/Kwayana's foreword to Carter's poetry collection asserted: 'The imperialists know quite well the influence of artists. This is why Martin Carter was put in detention camp ... [and] why his *Poems of Resistance* were banned in Guiana.'²² Embodying a nexus between what Eric Huntley calls art and revolution, the PPP's cultural roots were hugely formative in the Huntleys' own view of culture and politics as being co-constitutive.

Alongside her involvement in trade union activism and the PPP, Jessica Huntley was a founding member of the Women's Political and Economic Organization (WPEO) that was established in 1946 to promote women's education, 'economic welfare and their political and social emancipation and betterment.'²³ At its most radical, the organisation understood that Guyanese women were oppressed in terms of gender, race and class; therefore, women were tasked with fighting their own liberation and 'national liberation from colonialism.'²⁴ By framing women's oppression within structures of colonialism and agitating for women's rights as part of an anti-colonial vision, it signified an early example of postcolonial or Third World feminism.²⁵ Dissolved in 1949, the Women's Progressive Organization was set up as an arm of the PPP in 1953. While this marked an important recognition of the predicament of Guyanese women inside the PPP, in practice, the 'ultra-left' failed to articulate a position on these matters. As a result, the PPP was simultaneously 'gender blind'

²¹ *Terror and the Time*, dir. by Victor Jara Film Collective (1977). Carter's 'Poems of Resistance' are the soundtrack to the film. See Vibert C. Cambridge, *Musical Life in Guyana: History and Politics of Controlling Creativity* (Jackson: University of Mississippi, 2015) for general history of music in Guyana, he discusses the central place of 'Recorded music, chants, slogans, folksongs, school yard ditties and political songs' in PPP communication, p.216; see also Nehusi, *History of Guyana*, p.345.

²² Martin Carter, *Poems of Resistance* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1954).

²³ Nehusi, *History of Guyana*, p.333.

²⁴ Described by Commissioner of the Police, Colonel W.A. Orrette as "a body with far left ideas". Ibid., p.333-4.

²⁵ See Lorde, 'The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House', in *Sister Outsider*, pp.110-14.

whilst adopting the ‘masculinist terminology’ that had come to dominate Caribbean anti-colonial discourse.²⁶ Huntley’s positioning as a working-class African Guyanese woman within a largely middle-class women-led leadership and a broader male-led party machinery is an example of what Jones’ termed ‘superexploitation’: the system by which ‘Negro women, as workers, as Negroes, and as women — are the most oppressed stratum of the whole population.’²⁷ As Nehusi asks, why was Jessica, ‘a genuine representative of the two largest and most underrepresented social forces in the country’ (women and workers), not given more opportunity to speak and act?²⁸ Through these concurrent experiences of worker and activist, struggling against colonial, class, race and gender oppression, Huntley became attuned to their intersecting nature. Settling in Britain, this framework for understanding and placing oneself in the world had to be translated and realigned, leading to a centring of Huntley’s Blackness.

Eric Huntley’s political formation in British Guiana acted as a chance apprenticeship in the printing and dissemination of books and periodicals. When working for the Post Office, he imported ‘pocketbooks from America which sold for 25 cents each.’²⁹ Thus, through his small-scale book business, he contributed to the increasing democratisation of knowledge.³⁰ Developing his book trade further, Huntley ‘bought a duplicating machine from Bookers [which cost most of his salary] and published a magazine for post office workers.’³¹ Thanks to the short-lived repealing of the Undesirable Publications Ordinance, in 1953, Eric was tasked with selling PPP literature – mostly Lenin and Marx – in country districts.³² A decisive period in their political development, the Huntleys became acquainted with Marxist-Leninist and anti-colonial ideas. Forging Marxist reading publics of their own, the Huntleys would

²⁶ Nehusi, *History of Guyana*, p.359.

²⁷ Claudia Jones, ‘An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman!’, *Political Affairs*, June 1949, p.4.

²⁸ Nehusi, *History of Guyana*, p.528.

²⁹ Eric Huntley interviewed by author, 6 November 2019.

³⁰ See Ben Mercer, ‘The Paperback Revolution: Mass-Circulation Books and the Cultural Origins of 1968 in Western Europe’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 72 (2011), 613-636.

³¹ Eric Huntley interview.

³² ‘Interview about CAM with Eric Huntley at Walter Rodney Bookshop’, 28 April 1986, CAM/6/31, GPI, p.3.

'organise study circles' where the literature would be read and discussed.³³ Eric helped to publish *Thunder*, the PPP's most ardently Marxist mouthpiece, he recalls folding newspapers and 'doing little bits and pieces' at the printer.³⁴ In 1954, Eric went to prison for a year, for the possession of 'subversive literature.' Like many of his comrades, Eric cites prison as his most formative introduction to reading, following a childhood in which there were 'hardly any' books.³⁵ In our interview, Eric explained how through 'publishing, writing, and printing, I became associated with it before leaving Guyana,' but he also warned me of the pitfalls of looking back in hindsight, emphasising that 'there may be a link, there may not be, that's the story.'³⁶ Therefore, this research evaluates the centrality of the Huntleys' Guyanese experiences to the organising that occurred in Britain whilst also recognising the organic and often random way in which lives unfold.

Steadfast in owning their working-class roots, the Huntleys distinguished themselves as 'a rarity' from many of the Caribbean activists that they later connected with in Britain.³⁷ Stipulating that she was not 'part of a literary circle,' Jessica cast herself as a political activist on the factory floor and within the PPP.³⁸ Likewise, Eric comments on a certain 'social distance' by drawing a distinction between 'them' – working class and 'very grassroots oriented' – and other publishers, such as La Rose, who was 'much more intellectual' and came from a 'different background' and, Busby, who was the daughter of a doctor.³⁹ This conscious separation suggests multiple things: the Huntleys' Marxist orientation through which class was a primary way of interpreting the world; the difference and perhaps inferiority that they might have felt when they came to England and were confronted with middle-class and university-educated Africans and Caribbeans; and, their desire to distance themselves from this at times elitist Caribbean intellectual culture. Eric classifies La Rose but not

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Eric Huntley interview; Nehusi, *History of Guyana*, p.379.

³⁵ Eric Huntley interview.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ 'Anne Walmsley: Notes of a talk with Jessica Huntley of Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications and the Walter Rodney Bookshop', 22 November 1985, CAM/6/32, GPI, pp.1-2.

³⁹ Eric Huntley interview.

themselves as ‘intellectual’; however, I identify the Huntleys as organic intellectuals. Darcus Howe described them as

“proletarian intellectuals” because they dared to publish, to write and to speak with defiance and authority, without having attended the elite colleges associated with “West Indian” intellectuals.⁴⁰

Whilst this affirms their role as grassroots intellectuals without formal training, which sets them apart from the Rhodes scholars who have come to dominate discourse on Caribbean intellectual traditions, it fails to acknowledge the more important element of their organic intellectualism – their integral and persistent connection to community struggle. Even the naming of their children embodies their entanglement in Black Marxist traditions. Their first son (1951), Karl, was named after Marx; their second son is called Chauncey (1952); and their daughter, Accabre, born in London (1967), was named after a rebel from the eighteenth-century Berbice slavery uprising in Guyana.

Love, voyages, activism

Targets of the cloak of repression that fell over the lives of many political activists in British Guiana, the Huntleys decided to leave for Britain in the late 1950s. Through patterns of intra-Caribbean and ‘Mother Country’ movement, the Huntleys’ migration would lead them to connect with Walter Rodney, La Rose and many others. By moving to London, the Huntleys – like La Rose – were able to carve out their own political-cultural space. Echoing Eric Huntley’s analysis that ‘migrants disturb the stillness,’ I see them as part of a wave of migration that carried a Caribbean radical spirit to Britain.⁴¹

It was during Eric Huntley’s voyage to Britain that he first met La Rose. Leaving for Britain in January 1957, Eric stopped off in Trinidad where he fortuitously ended up staying with the fellow trade unionist. The week that Eric stayed with La Rose marked the start of a lasting and striking friendship between two of Britain’s first

⁴⁰ Andrews, *Radical Lives*, pp.169-70.

⁴¹ Black History Month event, Beverley Mason, Eric Huntley, Leila Hassan, Gunnersbury Park Museum, 6 October 2019.

Black publishing houses. Jessica joined Eric in London the following year and they bought a house in Walthamstow, which they later sold due to high mortgage repayments and the difficulty of obtaining permanent work (a common experience for Caribbean people in post-war Britain).⁴² In 1961, the Huntleys moved in with John and Irma La Rose, where they stayed for about two years, living communally with their children and visiting students from the Caribbean. At any given time, there would be three or four other people living in the house. The transient presence of 'West Indian' students in London illustrates migration's centrality to this story. These ephemeral yet meaningful migratory flows were creatively and politically productive. La Rose would discuss Venezuelan politics and other Latin American revolutionary movements, helping them to broaden their 'perspective of the region' and enriching the Huntleys' internationalism.⁴³ Perhaps the most important meeting at Uplands Road was with Walter Rodney, who was studying for his PhD at SOAS.⁴⁴ There is no BLP without *Groundings* (and vice versa), and there is no *Groundings* without Rodney. Hence, the comradely atmosphere of Uplands Road was an important space for the fermentation of ideas and action. It is another example of how the diasporic condition disrupts traditional functions of the home, with the traditionally private domestic space becoming a place for socialising, politicking and publishing.

The move to Britain reoriented their anti-colonial and class-based ideology towards a politics of anti-racism. Recalling the signs which read 'No Blacks, No Irish, No Dogs, No Children,' Eric describes how they 'became aware of the issue [racism] when we came to England.'⁴⁵ Part and parcel of this different 'racial' politics, one gets a sense of an often confusing political recalibration with Eric explaining that they 'couldn't find any space within the established political [or social] organisations ... for us to function in.'⁴⁶ Upon arrival, most radicals gravitated towards the Communist Party – even those who did not identify as communist. However, attendance at various meetings and campaigning efforts left the Huntleys feeling politically homeless.

⁴² Eric Huntley interview.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ These were formative years for Rodney, where he attended reading groups at C.L.R. and Selma James' home, debating Caribbean and immigrant workers' struggles and spoke at Hyde Park, developing his oratory skills, which would prove formative in later years.

⁴⁵ Eric Huntley interview.

⁴⁶ LMA/4463/F/07/01/0001/C (side A).

Describing their internationalist politics (which many British political groups failed to capture) Jessica spoke of their interest in West Indian Federation, South African apartheid, the Mau Mau in Kenya, Vietnam, China and India – ‘that was our politics.’⁴⁷ This Third World and internationalist politics influenced the subsequent ideology of BLP.

In the 1960s, a group of Caribbean radicals, including Eric Huntley and La Rose, secretly worked towards setting up a Communist Party of the West Indies, to ensure that their voices and specific concerns would be heard.⁴⁸ In 1965, they organised the Guyana Symposium that brought together various speakers, including Walter Rodney, Norman Girvan (NWG economist) and Eric Huntley, who presented ‘Notes on a popular history of Guyana.’⁴⁹ A direct intervention into the fraught politics of Guyana’s recent history, the symposium was critical of Jagan and the PPP, and, as such, marked an unacceptable challenge to the Communist Party line. The social and discursive space of the symposium solidified links between the Huntleys and Rodney. Met with resistance from the Communist Party of the West Indies, Huntley wrote that

The Secretary was strongly against the activities of John La Rose and myself in organising a symposium since neither himself nor the committee were aware of such activities. ... For he saw the whole business as ‘a La Rose.’⁵⁰

This demonstrates the level of control and restriction that even the short-lived Communist Party of the West Indies exerted over Caribbean activists. Furthermore, it suggests a pejorative perception of La Rose as acting in his own self-interest. This occurrence elucidates why many West Indians felt that they needed to create their own political and cultural spaces that were outside of fractious communist politics. Britain altered the Huntleys’ outlook; as the idea of returning ‘home’ became

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ The group included Lionel Jeffrey (Secretary), Peter Blackman and C. Taylor (Secretariat). I found secret code sheets that inferred a high level of secrecy surrounding these communications. Notes, minutes and correspondence relating to organisation of Guyana Symposium, LMA/4463/B/06/01/001, LMA.

⁴⁹ ‘Notes on the Popular History of Guyana by Eric Huntley’, LMA/4463/B/06/02/001, LMA.

⁵⁰ Typed letter from 10 April 1965, LMA/4463/B/06/01/00, LMA.

increasingly distant there was an inward shift that looked to 'Black Britain' as the focus of their political energies.

Groundings: 'It was Walter that started the publishing'

BLP's familiar founding story is cited in conversations, catalogues, letters, promotional material, speeches, interviews, anniversary reflections and inside book covers. It goes:

The banning of Walter Rodney from re-entering Jamaica in 1968 has had its reverberations as far a-field as London, in an area one least expected. For it was an effort to meet the challenge of this ban, that a group of West Indians in London, got together with the aim of making public, speeches and articles of Walter Rodney. The outcome was the birth of what is familiarly known as BLP.⁵¹

It was out of this that *The Groundings with My Brothers* was born. A collection of Rodney's lectures and writings that engaged with ideas of Black Power, history and neo-colonialism, it is still the most legendary Caribbean Black Power text ever published. By contextualising BLP in this 'groundings' moment, I chart Eric's notion that 'It was Walter that started the publishing,' whilst emphasizing that it was also Jessica's vision and labour that 'started the publishing.'⁵²

Shortly after completing his PhD in London, Rodney took up a lectureship in the history department at UWI. Bursting the Mona bubble that was a world away from bustling and poor downtown Kingston, he challenged the idea of the university as an uptown and self-contained space where lecturers and students did 'distant' and 'theoretical' work. Rodney stated (Fig. 26):

Some of my most profound experiences have been the sessions of reasoning or 'grounding' black brothers, squatting on an old car tire or a rusty five gallon can. It was this 'grounding' with my black brothers that the regime considered sinister and subversive.

As Patricia Rodney, his widow, explains, groundings were based on 'mutual respect and solidarity; one cannot measure the organic and intimately personal connection

⁵¹ Tenth Anniversary invite, LRA/01/0127/3, GPI.

⁵² CAM/6/32, p.1.

Walter had felt with brethren as he immersed himself in the historical context of their condition.⁵³ The volume and spread of places that Rodney spoke included Rasta camps, churches, theatres, gullies, the 'dungle' (rubbish dumps where people lived), community centres, street corners, homes and of course, several locations on the Mona campus. Rodney was conversing with political and theological Rastafarians, students, Marxists and anyone else who wanted to engage in these types of conversations – conversations about knowing yourself and your history that were entangled with sharp critiques of neo/colonialism. These 'groundings' were distinct to the orthodox Marxist way of doing politics. Symbolising a key Caribbean contribution to radical politics, this lively and discursive mode of activism were evocative of the Black radical tradition.

⁵³ Patricia Rodney, *Groundings* (2019), p.80.

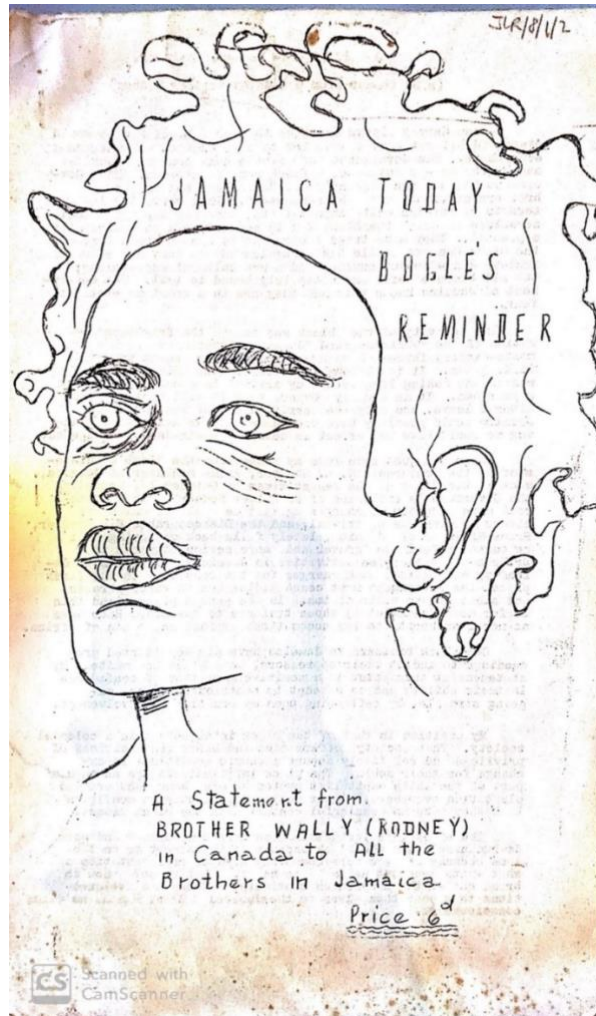


FIGURE 26 'JAMAICA TODAY: BOGLE'S REMINDER – A STATEMENT FROM BROTHER WALLY (RODNEY) IN CANADA TO ALL THE BROTHERS IN JAMAICA', JLR/8/1/2, GPI

This bridging of 'town and gown' that literally and metaphorically merged the people and ideas of 'town,' i.e. working-class, urban and Rastafarian with 'gown,' i.e. middle-class, suburban and academic (often Marxist), made Rodney a threat to the governing classes.⁵⁴ This was an alliance that had the potential to destabilise the newly formed neo-colonial state that Rodney described as made up of 'white hearted black men.'⁵⁵ These groundings were an essential backdrop to the Rodney Affair. In October 1968, Rodney returned from the Congress of Black Writers in Montreal, where he had delivered 'Statement on the Jamaica Situation' (co-authored with

⁵⁴ 'Town and Gown' was the main thread running through the 2018-19 UWI exhibition.

⁵⁵ Rodney, *Groundings* (1983), p.33.

Robert Hill) and 'African History in the Service of Black Liberation.'⁵⁶ Upon his arrival (15 October), the Jamaican government declared him a *persona non grata*.⁵⁷ Prime Minister, Hugh Shearer, accused Rodney of being 'at the centre of plots and plans to promote a Castro-type revolution in Jamaica.'⁵⁸ In addition to the investigations via UWI, the Special Branch of the Jamaican police force had been surveilling Rodney for months prior to the Affair. In the immediate wake of the ban, students organised a demonstration 'Against the Unjust Treatment of Dr. Rodney Who Has Been Barred from Re-Entering Jamaica.'⁵⁹ In a sartorial expression of Rodney's 'town and gown' philosophy, students wore their gowns and carried I.D. cards. Stressing the importance of solidarity, the memo stated that 'Other Brothers and Sisters sympathetic to Dr. Rodney's cause are expected to be present.'⁶⁰ The image of robed students protesting alongside their Rastafarian 'Brothers and Sisters' conjures a visual embodiment of the revolutionary politics that Rodney was beginning to foster through 'grounding.' Though a vital trigger for the ensuing protests, Rodney's ban was a catalyst for longer-term 'social malaise' and 'revolutionary activity.'⁶¹ The days of 'rioting,' the deaths and the \$1 million damage that was incurred – including destruction or damage to nearly a hundred buses – were about much more than Rodney's ban.⁶² This moment marked a radical rupture in terms of global Black Power.

⁵⁶ Both of these speeches became chapters in *Groundings*. David Austin describes it as a landmark Black radical event, where the torch was passed from the older generation of Black intellectuals e.g. C.L.R. James to the new generation, e.g. Rodney. He also notes the profound absence of women as official speakers, which was indicative of wider limitations of the movement. Austin, ed., *Moving Against the System: The 1968 Congress of Black Writers and the Making of Global Consciousness* (London: Pluto, 2018) brings together surviving speeches of the Congress.

⁵⁷ For fuller analysis see Rupert Lewis, 'Walter Rodney: 1968 Revisited', *Social and Economic Studies*, 43 (1994), 7-56 and *Walter Rodney's Intellectual and Political Thought* (Mona: The Press University of the West Indies, 1998).

⁵⁸ *Gleaner*, 18 October 1968, p.1. This was part of the JLP's targeting of specific leftist individuals, such as Dr George Beckford and Dr Leroy Taylor, who had their passports withheld due to a trip to Cuba.

⁵⁹ 'Demonstration by the Students of U.W.I. Against the Unjust Treatment of Dr. Rodney Who Has Been Barred from Re-Entering Jamaica', 16 October 1968, UWI Exhibition 2019, UWI Mona Archive.

⁶⁰ Rodney asserted, 'Let us stop calling it 'student riots' in *Groundings* (1983), p.80.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.81.

⁶² Two people were reported dead on 18 October. Rodney connected bus vandalism to previous strikes at the Jamaican Omnibus Company and a hike in fares. *Ibid.*, p.81. He was 'depicted as the evil-mind behind the violent resistance' and 'vilified' as a non-Jamaican foreigner, as were non-Jamaican university students and lecturers. Lewis, '1968 Revisited', p.49. This reflected the nationalist problem-space following the collapse of the West Indian Federation.

As soon as the news reached Britain a group of organisations and individuals sent this telegram to Vice Chancellor of UWI Mona, Philip Sherlock: 'WE CALL ON UNIVERISTY AUTHORITIES TO DO ALL POSSIBLE TO ENSURE THAT DOCTOR WALTER RODNEY IS ALLOWED TO RETURN TO JAMAICA TO CONTINUE HIS VALUABLE PIONEERING ACADEMIC WORK.'⁶³ Its signatories included Andrew Salkey, Richard Small, John La Rose, George Lamming, and Jessica and Eric Huntley – many of whom formed the founding collective of BLP. A tangible vector of Black Power, this telegram alerts us to the technologies of diasporic dialogues and calls to action in the 1960s. Citing the police and military 'brutality' that was occurring in Jamaica, the organisers connected common struggles and called for immediate action: 'Jamaicans and West Indians, abroad, must ... attack those policies of the Jamaican Government which violate the rights & liberties of our Brothers, at home.'⁶⁴ Repression was not only reserve of the Jamaican state, the police arrested 'Andrew [Salkey], John [La Rose] ... Selma [James] ... Richard [Small]' for demonstrating outside of the Jamaican Tourist Board.⁶⁵ The culture of censorship and repression that characterised the neo-colonial Caribbean and, increasingly, post-colonial Britain, was an imperative backdrop to radical publishing in Britain.⁶⁶

Following the ban, Rodney returned to Montreal where he outlined his predicament, stating that that 'The government of Jamaica, which is Garvey's homeland, has seen it fit to ban me, a Guyanese, a black man, and an African.'⁶⁷ Moving back to Tanzania, Rodney flew to London en route, where he entrusted his friend and comrade, Jessica Huntley, with 'papers ... of talks that he was giving in Jamaica.'⁶⁸ A collection of writings and speeches that he gave in Jamaica and Montreal, *Groundings* was simultaneously a history text, a call to arms and a manifesto. Rodney confronted his own, and the general position of the 'intellectual' stating the

⁶³ 'Telegram from London to Sir Philip Sherlock Vice Chancellor UWI Mona', UWI Exhibition 2019, UWI Mona Archives.

⁶⁴ 'Protest Oppression by the Jamaican Government', undated, in Walter Rodney: How Europe Underdeveloped Africa: Banning of Walter Rodney', LMA/4462/C/01/104, LMA.

⁶⁵ LMA/4463/F/07/01/0001/C (side B).

⁶⁶ Another example of Caribbean and British circuits of Black Power was a petition (August 1968) concerning the censorship of 'Stokely Carmichael, Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad's' writings. 'Petition Handed to the Jamaica High Commissioner', 15 August 1968, LMA/4462/C/01/104, LMA.

⁶⁷ Rodney, *Groundings* (1983), p.74.

⁶⁸ Jessica Huntley, LMA/4463/F/07/01/0001/C (side B).

need and the means to resist white imperialist knowledge and culture, namely by grounding with brethren and diverting knowledge to the cause of the Black masses. Through an interweaving of Garvey, Rastafarianism, Fanon and Marx, Rodney's unique voice was thrust upon the world. His panache for history rejected Western conceptions of civilization through counter-histories of African society, people and struggles. His assertion that historical knowledge must be used as a 'weapon in our struggle,' to expose imperialist myths and overcome the inferiority complex, embodied his approach to history as a means for radicalism, reparation and resistance.

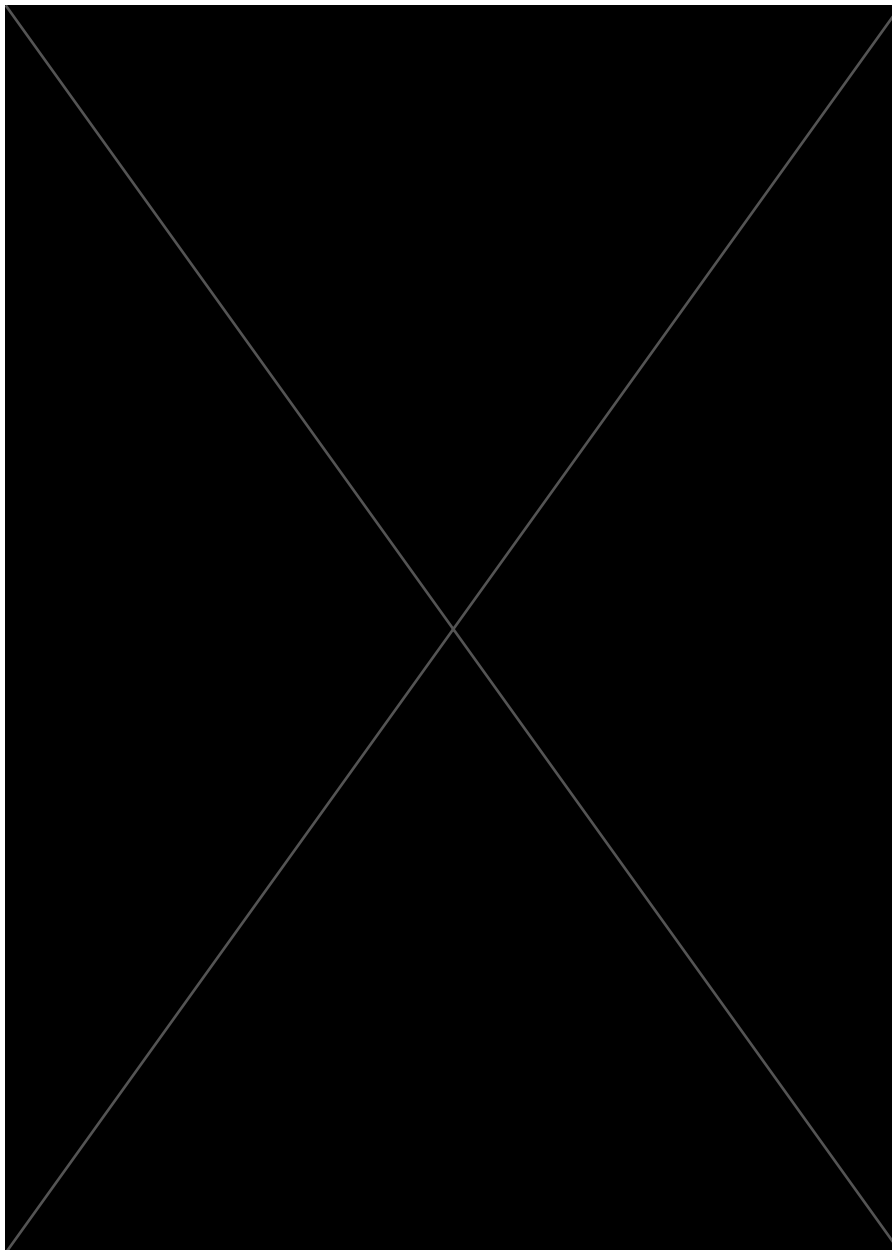


FIGURE 27 GESTETNER DUPLICATING COPY⁶⁹

Once Jessica had Rodney's papers, it was 'agreed to circulate these documents' and Eric 'sat up all night painstakingly typing it out.'⁷⁰ Figure 27 gives an example of how Gestetner duplication – the precursor to modern document-reproduction technology – worked, with the use of wax stencil paper that had reversed text on one side and ink on the other. This copy shows us how letters about the publication of *Groundings* would have been duplicated, in order to circulate, far and wide, the news about BLP's first publication. A vital piece of equipment for grassroots printers and

⁶⁹ Publications, LMA/4462/E/05/003, LMA.

⁷⁰ Ibid. Handwritten and undated note, LMA/4462/C/01/104, LMA.

publishers, the Tottenham-based duplicating company removed the drudgery of handwriting copies and made it possible for small organisations to reproduce copies that were of similar quality to large-scale printed books and newspapers.⁷¹ Whilst the duplicating machine was useful for small runs of promotional material and letters, Jessica ‘decided to have material printed and published,’ professionally, by John Sankey of Villiers Publications Ltd.⁷² The transformation of Rodney’s foolscap papers (the conventional size of paper in British ex-colonies at the time) into a cohesive text was a collective effort; Rodney’s ‘brother,’ Richard Small, wrote the foreword and others were involved in the work of editing and proof reading.⁷³ His school friend, Ewart Thomas, recalls how Rodney asked that he be involved because he knew that ‘I could transform a set of lectures into copy ready texts.’⁷⁴ Ewart explains how a ‘little bit of translation is necessary, not too much, but the words you speak aren’t necessarily exactly the same as the words you write.’⁷⁵ Alongside copyediting, he came up with titles for the lectures-turned-chapters. A huge amount of work was involved – Rodney’s ‘groundings’ would not have become an enduring Black Power text without the BLP community.⁷⁶

The book was originally going to be called *Walter Rodney Speaks*, but, during a phone call between himself and Jessica, Ewart said, “I’ve got a title for this book,” we’ll call it *The Groundings with my Brothers*,’ and that was the title that ‘rang a bell for everyone.’⁷⁷ Recounting his lightbulb moment to me over Zoom, he explained

⁷¹ Alan Swain, *Gestetner Duplicators Tottenham* (2013), <https://tottenham-summerhillroad.com/gestetner_duplicators_tottenham.htm> [accessed on 24 October 2021] website features wonderful photographs of Tottenham factory that had 3,000 employees in 1973. British Pathé, *Gestetner Works*, (1927), <<https://www.britishpathe.com/video/gestetner-works>> [accessed on 20 November 2021].

⁷² Handwritten and undated note.

⁷³ ‘Groundings Publicity Material’ (handwritten), Bogle-L’Ouverture Publications: File 2 – Books/Publications, LRA/01/0127/02, GPI. Small and Rodney met in Leningrad in 1962 and both attended James’ reading group. A committed lawyer and activist, Small later edited *Abeng* and defended Rodney when he was on trial for arson in Guyana in 1979-80. Lewis, *Rodney’s Intellectual and Political Thought*, pp.88-9. Barbara and Locksley Comrie (Jamaican student and friend of Small) would come over after work to ‘proof it’.

⁷⁴ Ewart Thomas, interviewed by author (11 March 2021).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ A turning point in Rodney’s career, BLP played an important role in bolstering Rodney’s revolutionary fame. *Groundings* became a cornerstone of his identity. Extensive correspondence between Rodney and Jessica Huntley shows the profound role that they each played in each other’s lives.

⁷⁷ Jessica Huntley, LMA/4463/F/07/01/0001/C (side B).

how the speech that Rodney gave upon his return to Montreal, 'The Grounding with My Brothers' (Chapter 6 in the book) was the 'crescendo.' Deciding that 'grounding' was the 'operative word' Thomas thought 'it should be plural'; thus leading to usage of 'groundings' in the title.⁷⁸ Fascinatingly, a decade after the book was published, Rodney told Thomas that he would have named the book 'Grounding With my Brothers,' in the singular, because for him it was the 'process of grounding' that was important, rather than the attempt to link 'disparate chapters' together in what he saw as a 'set of groundings.'⁷⁹

While the transformation of *Groundings* from a collection of speeches to a text was a communal effort, it was ultimately Jessica's idea to publish it as a book. According to her, apart from Richard Small, everyone was 'flabbergasted' by this idea – paying a printer and setting up a serious publishing house must have seemed inconceivable in this moment.⁸⁰ A disappointing, though understandable reaction, according to Jessica, Small worried that upon his return to Jamaica, she would not have the 'support' of people who shared her publishing vision. However, people continued to support the publishing vision, especially Thomas who remembers drawing the BLP logo at his flat in Hampstead, superimposing 'the BL and the P ... on top of each other.'⁸¹ This was part of an effort – in his eyes – to echo what other publishers were doing and it speaks to his commitment during BLP's early stages. Tasked with raising funds, Jessica Huntley recalled this as a period in which 'very many disagreements took place,' with 'sisters and brothers' participating irregularly and many dropping out.⁸² After some disagreement, the group decided that they would not accept 'white people's money' and, in doing so, consciously broke with a typical strategy of getting money from the 'White Left' – instead invoking the 'independent spirit that we came with from Guyana.'⁸³ Thomas' description of this money-raising as 'just elbow grease and walking up and down the street,' reaffirms the hesitancy

⁷⁸ Ewart Thomas interview.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Jessica Huntley, LMA/4463/F/07/01/0001/C (side B)..;

⁸¹ Ewart Thomas interview.

⁸² 'Overview of the founding of BLP', LMA/4462/C/01/107, LMA, p.2.

⁸³ Eric Huntley interview; similar to New Beacon's funding model, however, Sarah White's family money/connections and her wage from *New Scientist* were financially beneficial.

that Jessica articulated.⁸⁴ By tapping into their networks, through fundraising, parties and donations, they raised the initial funds of £500 to print the book. This community spirit, independent drive and emphasis on cheap printing set the tone for future Bogle-L'Ouverture publications.

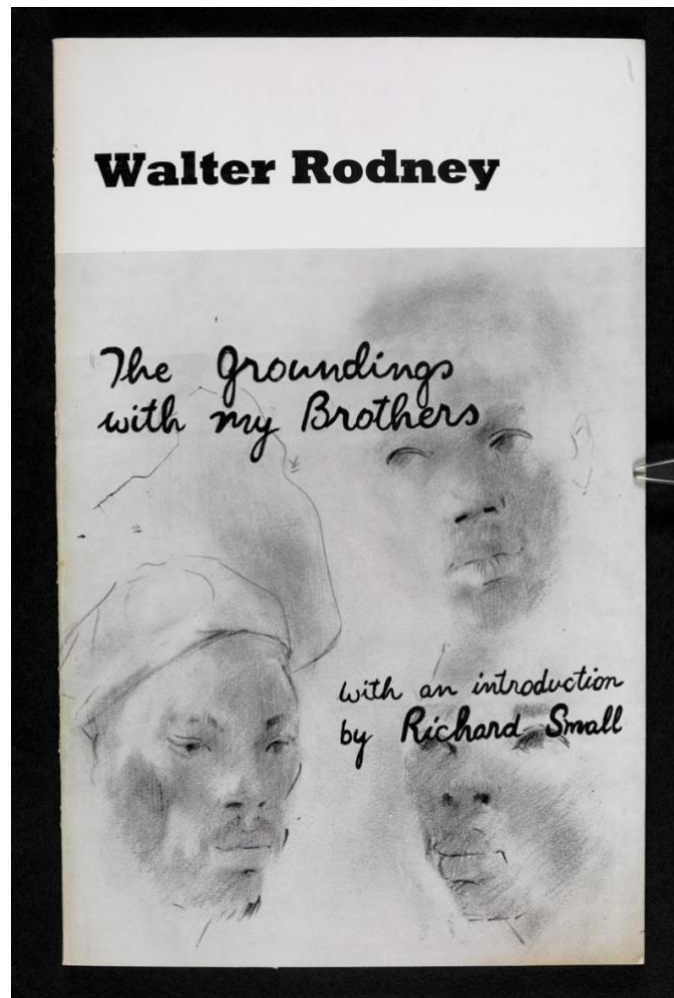


FIGURE 28 ARTWORK FOR THE COVER DESIGN OF 'THE GROUNDINGS WITH MY BROTHERS' BY WALTER RODNEY © ERROL LLOYD

Errol Lloyd, the Jamaican artist and CAMbassador (Caribbean Artists Movement), created the artwork for the cover.⁸⁵ The soft shading of pensive 'brothers' including a

⁸⁴ Ewart Thomas interview.

⁸⁵ Taught and influenced by the likes of Aubrey Williams (Guyanese painter), Ronald Moody (Jamaican sculptor) and Ras Daniel Heartman (Jamaican Rastafarian and artist). See his contribution to *Get Up Stand Up Now* exhibition catalogue – 'Caribbean Artists Movement: Life Lessons', pp.16-17. Lloyd also produced book covers for Allison & Busby and his artworks were sold as greetings cards by BLP.

recognisable Rastafarian with covered locks evoked the grounding that the book contained. Jessica Huntley explains that it was 'Greeted with much joy and great satisfaction by all. Telegrams and telephone messages from here and overseas gave much encouragement.'⁸⁶ This reaction reveals the publication's relevance for global Black Power activists. There were concerns that the 'book would have been banned in Jamaica' and whilst it was not, newspapers ignored review copies that were sent.⁸⁷ Constant demand meant that 'copies of the second printing' went fast.⁸⁸ Aiming 'to produce works by Us as cheap as can be,' the book was under-costed and was thus a 'loss in terms of finance.'⁸⁹ As she implied in her letter to Rodney, the loss was purely financial. Discussions and offers were made about translating and distributing *Groundings* outside of the UK and the Caribbean. Rodney refused to accept royalties, demanding that 'whatever monies made of this book, must be ploughed back into BLP.'⁹⁰ Rodney's books were two of BLP's greatest success stories; *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972) became their best seller. *Groundings'* success is inseparable from any future victories of BLP; it marked a radical debut into the world of publishing.

One Love: the evolution of a community publishing house

The process of publishing *Groundings* was a blueprint for BLP's independent publishing model. Resourced and funded by fellow Black activists, readers and teachers, it was a grassroots organisation in the truest sense, serving the community that built it. As BLP explained, 'We cannot hope to compete with the large multi-million publishing houses, by offering the same terms to Black authors.'⁹¹ Rather than using the 'masters' tools' i.e. the same strategies of large-scale publishing houses, that had comparatively endless budgets and resources (for advances, marketing and printing), and likewise divergent aims and motivations, BLP forged a new path. This model offered their writers more autonomy and cultural

⁸⁶ 'Overview of the founding of BLP', p.3.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ 'Publicity for Groundings', October 1969, Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications: File 2 – Books/Publications, LRA/01/0127/02, GPI.

⁸⁹ 'Letter from Jessica to Walter', 5 October 1971, in Walter Rodney: 'How Europe Underdeveloped Africa': correspondence, permissions, royalties, LMA/4462/C/01/092, LMA.

⁹⁰ 'Overview of the founding of BLP', p.5.

⁹¹ Ibid., p.6.

understanding, and for their readers, affordable books filled with content and images that did not exist elsewhere. A pattern in small and independent publishing, more broadly, Jessica Huntley not only selected and edited, but also ‘controlled production on all levels’ – from marketing to distribution.⁹² Besides its organisational structure, BLP was also grassroots in terms of the books and images that it published.

In June 1971, Jessica Huntley set out the ‘formal structure’ of BLP in a letter to Rodney.⁹³ She hoped to establish it as a ‘Limited Liability Company’ that would be ‘legally formed and registered in the U.K., U.S., Jamaica and Guyana, simultaneously, if possible ... [to] prevent anyone cashing in on the BLP name.’⁹⁴ Thus, at its inception, Bogle-L’Ouverture was envisioned as a diasporic venture. Denoting its community spirit, prospective directors included Walter Rodney, Patricia Rodney, Ewart Thomas, Andrew Salkey and Jessica Huntley. BLP set out three objectives in its constitution: ‘Publishing literature of educational, social, cultural and political nature’; publishing ‘photographs and prints of Black peoples and Black Themes’; and ‘Giving financial aid to causes and persons considered (by its members) worthy of such aid.’⁹⁵ Their vision was:

- To educate our Black World
- To revolutionise our Black World
- To give confidence to our Black World
- To initiate and develop political and social awareness throughout our Black World
- Publishing works by Third World Peoples
- To manage and operate its own bookshops and libraries
- To manage and operate its own printing establishment, which will help stabilise and further the setting up of such projects.⁹⁶

⁹² This was especially true in the first decade. bell hooks noted the importance of feminist publishers having control over book production. hooks, *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2000), p.20.

⁹³ Letter from Jessica to Walter, 3 June 1971 in Walter Rodney: ‘How Europe Underdeveloped Africa’: Tanzania Publishing House: Correspondence, Permissions, Royalties, LMA/4462/C/01/096, LMA.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ ‘Constitution of The Bogle-L’Ouverture Publications’, Bogle-L’Ouverture Publications: File 1 – History, LRA/01/0127/01, GPI.

⁹⁶ ‘BLP Draft Statement’, LMA/4462/C/01/096; this mission statement reminds me of Claudia Jones’ statement that ‘As mother, as Negro, and as worker, the Negro woman fights against the wiping out of

Explicitly challenging the market principles of 'conventional' publishing, BLP sought to confront issues of social justice through educational activism. These mission statements reflect the praxis and politics that were born out of publishing *Groundings* and mark the early stages of constructing an activist publishing house. Responding to British and Caribbean problem-spaces, Eric Huntley discussed the importance of 'publishing and bookselling activities as part of the search for answers to the impasse that confronts us since so-called independence.'⁹⁷ Hence, publishing was a tool to understand and challenge political and historical predicaments. Specialising in 'social and political commentary and children's books,' they wanted to provide these books for 'our base ... the Black working class.'⁹⁸ In doing so, BLP positioned itself differently and complementarily to New Beacon.

On its tenth anniversary, BLP described itself as a 'Black Community Publisher' that survived 'on many hours of unpaid labour' – 'Ninety five percent of the work which is involved is done on a voluntary and an unpaid basis.'⁹⁹ Huntley did not pay herself until 1974-75, which is the first time a budget line for 'Directors Renumeration' appears. Only paying herself £2,929 for over five years of work, it was a nominal amount.¹⁰⁰ In many ways, the Huntleys' working and domestic lives were exceptional and evaded conventional gendered norms, of the time. Speaking about this, Eric describes Jessica as 'the sole person' – the heart and *soul* of BLP.¹⁰¹ A family venture, it relied on the love and support of Jessica's immediate family and the wider community. When she was working in the shop, Eric would take her breakfast or lunch and pick up their daughter, Accabre, from school. Jessica paid tribute to this emotional and domestic support, writing that 'Eric Huntley, has given me the maximum of strength and his behind the scenes work we will always remember.'¹⁰²

Negro family ... which destroys the health, morale, and very life of millions of her sisters, brothers, and children,' in Jones, 'Negro Woman!', p.4.

⁹⁷ 'Eric Huntley at Ealing Town Hall', 15 May 1986.

⁹⁸ 'Overview of the founding of BLP', p.5; CAM/6/32, p.9.

⁹⁹ Press Statement: Black Community Publishers Celebrate Tenth Anniversary, LRA/01/0127/04, LMA.

¹⁰⁰ 'Annual Accounts, 1975', LMA/4462/B/01/006, LMA. Thereafter, a portion of the annual costs would be 'Director Renumeration' steadily rising to £6,970 by 1981, though by this point it was also Eric's full-time job. 'Annual Accounts 1982', LMA/4462/B/01/0012, LMA.

¹⁰¹ Eric Huntley, LMA/4463/F/07/01/0001/F (side A).

¹⁰² 'Overview of the founding of BLP', p.7.

Again, this represents a reversal of conventional gendered roles, especially in a political context, where women were classically identified as doing ‘behind the scenes work.’ Moreover, the publishing house eluded the standard profit-making model of a business. Combining elements of political organisation, charity (reliance on donations) and business, BLP rejected capitalist notions of business and success – just as the Huntleys disrupted capitalist gendered divisions of labour.

Also reliant on community funding, ‘when Bogle was first founded the idea was that it should be a communal effort in publishers and authors, it wasn’t seen as a commercial venture.’¹⁰³ In its first year of business, BLP made a net profit of £358 from a combination of sales (£583), donations (£362) and stock (£21).¹⁰⁴ The first year was the only one in which cash donations made up a significant proportion of income, waning to £28 by 1973 and then ceasing to feature in later annual accounts. Support was also gathered through appeals to ‘sisters and brothers, whose special skills [are] in writing [and] drawing’ to ‘donate at least one Manuscript towards furthering this cause.’¹⁰⁵ Never claiming royalties, Andrew Salkey ‘donated’ several books to BLP. In addition, Thomas continued to help Jessica from afar; once he had returned to the United States, she would ask him for ‘comments on manuscripts.’¹⁰⁶ In indication of their growing success, BLP was spending a considerable sum on paying royalties by 1973; a cost that continued to rise as sales increased and they took on authors whose books were not donations.¹⁰⁷ The business continued to grow steadily throughout the 1970s. To give a sense of BLP’s growth, by 1974 gross sales had risen to £18,161 and running costs, to £19,717.¹⁰⁸ Throughout the 1970s the biggest cost was ‘Printing & Artistic Works’ and this shot up drastically as they took

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Running costs were £563, from ‘Annual Accounts, 1970’, LMA/4462/B/01/001, LMA.

¹⁰⁵ ‘Overview of the founding of BLP’, p.6.; Eric Huntley described Sankey (printer) as a supportive figure, stating that ‘he gave both of us a chance to become publishers ... took us through the ropes to become publishers’. Eric Huntley interview.

¹⁰⁶ Ewart Thomas Interview. Richard Small and Elaine Neufville also helped from afar, handling Jamaican distribution with the hope that they would go onto manage distribution for the Caribbean region.

¹⁰⁷ Royalties for the year 1973-74 were £870 and this rose to £1,085 the following tax year.

¹⁰⁸ ‘Annual Accounts, 1974’, LMA/4462/B/01/005, LMA.

on more authors and books. From the tax year ending March 1975, BLP made losses on and off (and remained in debt) for the next for the next six years.¹⁰⁹

Part of these financial difficulties were a result of BLP's political decision to that move away from 'white money', the hardback and the conventional bookshop model.¹¹⁰ As stated in its founding story, 'BLP's sheet anchor rests on the condition that we will continue to seek financial aid and support from Black People only.'¹¹¹ The refusal to accept donations or funding from the 'white left' distinguished BLP from earlier Black radical publishing traditions. As explored in Chapter 3, white left-wing publishers, such as Secker & Warburg were gatekeepers for radical intellectuals like C.L.R. James and George Padmore to get published during the mid-twentieth century. This decisive financial break was representative of a deeper divide that was felt between Black radicals and the often-disappointing actions and efforts of white leftist political movements in Britain. Laid out above, the community structure of BLP was what facilitated its financial, political and editorial independence. Without this support, BLP would not have been able to evolve into one of Britain's most memorable small publishers.

Customer	Location	Country	Type
Afro-Am Publishing	Chicago	USA	Black / Educational
Allison & Busby	London	UK	Independent / Black
Barbados Public Library	Bridgetown	Barbados	Library
Belsize Books	London	UK	Independent
Blackwell's	London	UK	Academic
Broadside Press	Detroit	USA	Radical Black
Centerprise	London	UK	Independent / Leftist
Central Books	London	UK	Independent / Leftist
Collet's	London	UK	Independent / Leftist
Compendium	London	UK	Independent / Leftist
Dillons University Shop	London	UK	Academic
Drum and Spear	Washington D.C.	USA	Radical Black
Extra Mural Department, UWI	Cave Hill	Barbados	Academic

¹⁰⁹ From 1976, 'Bad Debts' which amounted to £2,187 at the time began to appear as a regular feature. 'Annual Accounts, 1976', LMA/4462/B/01/007, LMA.

¹¹⁰ This model changed slightly during the 1980s (not a period that I examine). Reflective of broader societal shifts, from the 'riots' to the creation of the Greater London Council, there was an awareness of 'the need for black literature to get into schools.' BLP received support from Urban Aid and many more libraries and schools bought their books thanks to organisations like the National Association of Multicultural Education (NAME) and a 'number of black librarians during the 80s and 90s who would have connected with us.' Eric Huntley interview.

¹¹¹ 'Overview of the founding of BLP', p.6.

Faber & Faber	London	UK	Mainstream
Fogarty's	Georgetown	Guyana	Department Store
George Allen & Unwin	London	UK	Independent
Ghana Publishing House	Accra	Ghana	Radical Black
Gollancz	London	UK	Independent / Leftist
Grass Roots	Manchester	UK	Radical Black
Harvard Educational	Cambridge, MA	USA	Academic
Headstart	London	UK	Radical Black
Housmans	London	UK	Independent / Leftist
Howard Unviersity Press	Washington D.C.	USA	Academic
Hulton Educational	London	UK	Educational
Institute of Race Relations	London	UK	Radical Black
Kraus Reprint	New York	USA	Antiquarian / Reprints
Longmans	Harlow	UK	Mainstream / Education
Macmillan	London	UK	Mainstream / 'Big Five'
Michael Ford Bookshop	Georgetown	Guyana	General
Nairobi Bookstore	Nairobi	Kenya	General
New Beacon	London	UK	Radical Black
Oxford University Press	Oxford	UK	Academic
Panaf Books	Bedford	UK	Radical Black
Penguin Books	London	UK	Mainstream / 'Big Five'
Présence Africaine	Paris	France	Radical Black
Race Today	London	UK	Radical Black
Routledge	Abingdon-on-Thames	UK	Academic
Sabarr	London	UK	Radical Black
Sangster's Bookstore	Kingston	Jamaica	Independent
Scholastic Ltd	London	UK	Mainstream
SPCK	Georgetown	Guyana	Department Store
SPCK	Port-of-Spain	Trinidad	Department Store
SPCK	Bridgetown	Barbados	Department Store
The Dashiki Project	New Orleans	USA	Radical Black
Third World Books	Chicago	USA	Radical Black
Timbuktu Bookstore	Timbuktu	Mali	General
Ujamma Bookstore	Nottingham	UK	Radical Black
Unity (Black Panther)	London	UK	Radical Black
University Books Dar-es-Salaam	Dar-es-Salaam	Tanzania	Academic
University of Missouri	Missouri	USA	Academic
University of Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh	USA	Academic
UWI Bookshop Jamaica	Kingston	Jamaica	Academic

FIGURE 29 SELECTION OF BLP'S CUSTOMERS¹¹²

Spanning beyond Britain's shores, Figure 29 demonstrates BLP's versatile engagement with grassroots and established bookshops, presses, universities and

¹¹² This table is a selective representation of organisations and institutions that were listed as customers on a variety of documents in 'Sales Ledger Sheets, 1970-79.'

libraries. While radical Black organisations made up their main network, both in London (e.g. New Beacon, Race Today, Sabarr and Unity) and further afield (e.g. Présence Africaine in Paris and Afro-Am Publishing in Chicago), BLP had a web of connections with academic, leftist and commercial institutions. Links with universities, academic publishers and bookshops were an important part of BLP business. Likewise, support and custom from independent leftist bookshops and distributors in Britain, such as Central Books, locate BLP in broader world of radical bookselling and knowledge production. Aside from this, sales ledgers include countless individual customers that further enshrine BLP's community rooting. From Gus John – the educational campaigner who played a significant role in Black British publishing – to Barbara Smith – a founder of Kitchen Table: Women of Colour Press in New York – it is evident that BLP was an important source of information and cultural production for activists across the Atlantic. Moreover, the frequency with which names like Andrew Salkey, Theo Campbell, Ansel Wong and Donald Hinds appear in these ledgers reinforces the idea that many of BLP's customers were involved in the same struggle for freedom and were even key members of the publishing house.¹¹³

Letters further evidence BLP's global publishing connections. From Ric Ricard, the Afro-American who set up a publishing co-op in Sweden, to Harry Braverman at Monthly Review Press (the longest standing socialist magazine and publisher in the United States) and Charles Harris from Howard University Press, Jessica Huntley corresponded with publishers from across the world about potential translations, reprints and collaborations.¹¹⁴ These conversations varied greatly, from comradely laments and pep talks with fellow Black publishers, to sharp disagreements over advances, printing runs and politics.¹¹⁵

Huntley's navigation of this publishing world marked a bold new way to respond to dictates of commercial publishing. During her correspondence with Howard

¹¹³ Other individuals spotted in the ledgers include, Roy Sawh, Samuel Selvon, Ewart Thomas, June Hinds, Shirley Richards and Jeremy Poynting (who would go on to start Peepal Tree Press in 1985).

¹¹⁴ See these two folders especially: LMA/4462/C/01/096 and LMA/4462/C/01/100.

¹¹⁵ Jessica Huntley and Rodney had a falling out over Tanzania Press, see letters in LMA/4462/C/01/096, LMA.

University Press, who wanted to purchase the rights to publish *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* in the United States, the question of the paperback came up.¹¹⁶ As stated in her letter to Harris, 'it has always been our concern, and that of the author, that the book should be as widely available and read as possible, which was our reason for publishing it initially in paperback.'¹¹⁷ This explains BLP's preference for paperback publishing and sets it apart from New Beacon's printing approach, in this initial period, which always included a small run of hardbacks. Part of a wider movement, the 1960s 'paperback revolution' democratised knowledge, reflecting the development of mass culture that characterised the late 1960s.¹¹⁸ As independent 'paperback entrepreneurs,' BLP mediated the 'co-production' of knowledge between readers and experts by bringing the worlds of the writer, reader, teacher and activist together.¹¹⁹ Although BLP continued to publish and print in paperback – a core strategy of its accessibility philosophy, they began to print more in hardback towards the latter part of the 1970s. This was likely a response to their changing clientele that included an increasing number of libraries (in areas with sizeable Black populations), who would generally purchase cloth-cover copies, such as Ealing Central Library, Lambeth Public Library, Brent Central Library, Shepherd's Bush and Wandsworth Public Library.¹²⁰

One of the main ways that BLP disseminated radical knowledge was through the Bogle-L'Ouverture Bookshop.¹²¹ Starting its existence in the Huntleys' front room on Coldershaw Road, Ealing, this mirrored a very similar pattern to New Beacon's early years, where the home was a safe space (with reduced financial risk) to explore political and business ventures. Following an official complaint from their neighbour, the bookshop found a more official home in Chigwell Place in 1974.¹²² 'Ill-prepared'

¹¹⁶ Although there was disagreement over this and advance fee, Howard University Press published *HEUA* in 1974.

¹¹⁷ Jessica Huntley to Charles Harris, 31 January 1973, LMA/4462/C/01/096, LMA.

¹¹⁸ See Mercer, 'Paperback Revolution', p.615.

¹¹⁹ Peter Mandler, 'Good Reading for the Million: the 'paperback revolution' and the co-production of academic knowledge in mid twentieth-century Britain and America', *Past & Present*, p.269.

¹²⁰ BLP also printed cloth editions of their older publications. In the late 1970s many more schools ordered BLP books, for example, Brixton College, Dalston Mount School, Tottenham College, Acland Burghley, Willesden High School. 'Sales Ledger Sheets, 1970-79'.

¹²¹ Renamed the Walter Rodney Bookshop in 1980, following his assassination.

¹²² Council gave them six months to move.

for the move, the costs of operating a bookshop outside of the home, with overheads such as rent and business rates meant that the first few years were tough.¹²³ Turning a profit before 1975 (without any wage costs), average annual costs rose from £52 to £1653 – an increase of more than thirty times – when they moved to Chigwell Place.¹²⁴ Eric Huntley tells me that ‘what sustained us was the ... the politics of it, because we were so active politically we didn’t count the financial cost of it, and it was just as well!’¹²⁵ Although the bookshop moved out of the Huntleys’ home, it continued to function as a community hub – an accessible learning environment for students, teachers, writers, artists and parents.¹²⁶ Although the bookshop was not in the best location (a cul-de-sac with no foot traffic) it became known as a place to ‘drop in’ if you wanted to learn about ‘African history’ or to get advice and support.¹²⁷ Branching out into bookselling, in 1973, due to demand from teachers for books about, for and by Black people, the bookshop stocked Bogle-L’Ouverture publications alongside other relevant books and magazines.¹²⁸

Not long after its establishment, the bookshop came under attack. From racist graffiti to firebombing, Black bookshops became a site of contestation in the late 1970s.¹²⁹ This violent response is revealing of the ‘threat’ that was felt by the publishing and dissemination of certain books and ideas; therefore, illuminating how the bookshop acted as a space of powerful resistance. Uniting with others to form the Bookshop Joint Action Committee, they released the statement ‘we will not be terrorized out of existence.’¹³⁰ Reflective of BLP’s continuing political development in the face of violence, this statement contained multiple meanings about ‘existence’ in terms of

¹²³ Eric Huntley interview.

¹²⁴ ‘Annual Accounts, 1975’, LMA/4462/B/01/006 and ‘Annual Accounts, 1976’.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ There has been more written on the bookshop than the publishing arm. Colin Beckles’ thesis is insightful and interesting; Cumberbatch, *Swimming Against the Tide*, gives a strong sense of what the Huntleys did for Britain and the African diaspora and the commitment and drive that lay behind their activism. The energetic and homely quality of the bookshop was enshrined in Michael McMillian’s Walter Rodney Bookshop installation in the 2015/16 ‘No Colour Bar’ exhibition. See Michael McMillan, ‘Curating the Walter Rodney Bookshop installation’ in catalogue, pp.42-45.

¹²⁷ Jessica Huntley, LMA/4463/F/07/01/0001/F (side A).

¹²⁸ CAM/6/31, p.8.

¹²⁹ Not alone in this fight, many other bookshops were attacked, e.g. New Beacon Book and Black Panther Unity bookshop.

¹³⁰ See Beckles, “‘We Shall Not’”.

the physical space but also about existence being actualised and legitimised through the publishing and selling of books.

‘Getting to Know Ourselves’: the commitment to Children’s Publishing

Children’s books were a very conscious part of BLP’s Black Power publishing project. It adhered to the founding objectives to ‘educate,’ ‘revolutionise’ and ‘develop political and social awareness throughout our Black World.’¹³¹ Between 1969 and 1981 nearly half of BLP’s publications had young readers in mind (Fig. 30). Not only did it mark a radical re-imagining of the neo/colonial publishing model, it challenged conventional spaces of Black/Caribbean radicalism, activism and intellectualism to include mothers, teachers and children. Echoed in bell hooks arguments about children’s literature; she described it as ‘one of the most crucial sites for feminist education for critical consciousness.’¹³² A stage of life where ‘beliefs and identities are still being formed,’ such books offer a genuine opportunity for public education and the creation of an ‘unbiased curriculum.’¹³³

	Author	Title	Genre	Paperback	Hardback
1969	Walter Rodney	<i>Groundings With my Brothers</i>	History / Politics	£1.00 3 rd Reprint: 50p	3 rd Reprint: £1.50
1971	Andrew Salkey (editor)	<i>One Love</i>	Poetry	65p / \$2.20	
1972	Phyllis and Bernard Coard	<i>Getting to Know Ourselves</i>	Children	30p	
1972	Walter Rodney	<i>How Europe Underdeveloped Africa</i>	History / Politics	65p (2 nd reprint)	
1973	Andrew Salkey	<i>Anancy’s Score</i>	Folktales / Children	90p / \$2.50	£3.50 / \$7.50
1974	Andrew Salkey	<i>Joey Tyson</i>	Children / Historical novel	£1.25 / \$2.75	
1975	Odette Thomas	<i>Rain Falling, Sun Shining</i>	Children / Poetry	90p / \$2.50	

¹³¹ ‘BLP Draft Statement.’

¹³² hooks, p.23.

¹³³ Ibid.

1975	Samuel Ochola	<i>Minerals in African Underdevelopment</i>	Politics / Economics	£1.25 / \$3	£3.50 / \$7.50
1976	Walter Rodney	<i>The Groundings with My Brothers</i> (with new Introduction by Omawale)	History / Politics	£1 / \$2.50	
1976	Linton Kwesi Johnson	<i>Dread Beat and Blood</i>	Poetry	£1 / \$2.25	£4.95
1976	Sam Greenlee	<i>Ammunition!</i>	Poetry	£1 / \$2.25	£2.50 / \$5.50
1977	Accabre Huntley	<i>At School Today</i>	Poetry / Children	£1.20	
1977	Andrew Salkey	<i>Writing in Cuba Since the Revolution</i>	Poetry / Short Stories	£1.90	£5.75
1978	Randall Robinson	<i>The Emancipation of Wakefield Clay</i>	Novel	£1.95	£3.95
1980 ¹³⁴	Andrew Salkey	<i>The River that Disappeared</i>	Historical novel / Children	£2.95	£5.95
1980	Andrew Salkey	<i>Caribbean Folk Tales and Legends</i>	Folktales / Children	£2.95	£5.95
1980	Andrew Salkey	<i>Danny Jones</i>	Children's/Young adult	£2.85	£5.95
1980	Johan Galtung, Peter O'Brien and Roy Preiswrk (eds.)	<i>Self-Reliance: A Strategy for Development</i>	Politics	£5.25	
1981 ¹³⁵	Neville Farki	<i>Countryman Karl Black</i>	Fiction	£2.95	£6.95

FIGURE 30 BLP PUBLICATIONS, 1969-1979¹³⁶

Jessica Huntley had long term plans to publish a Children's Series.¹³⁷ *Getting to Know Ourselves* (1972), *Rain Falling Sun Shining* (1975), *Joey Tyson* (1975), *The River That Disappeared* (1980) and *Danny Jones* (1980) covered Black history, rural Caribbean life, folk culture, social unrest and the struggles of being Black in Britain. The centring of Black children and recognition of children's' subjectivity was an

¹³⁴ 'Errata. Page 2. Copyright 1980 Andrew Salkey. Published in 1980.' This note is stuck at the bottom of the title page.

¹³⁵ Copyright page notes that it was written in 1973.

¹³⁶ Information gathered from 'Book lists and new titles', LMA/4462/E/04/001-015, LMA. Need to consider inflation when comparing these prices as they come from a variety of catalogues.

¹³⁷ See Sands-O'Connor, pp.53-82.

integral part of the Huntleys' politics, for it rejected 'White supremacist capitalist patriarchal cultures,' that perpetually deny children's rights and agency.¹³⁸ Moreover, it marked BLP's commitment to challenge dominant histories and expose children to African and Caribbean cultures.¹³⁹ These books were grounded in folk tales and histories, with memories of slavery and resistance woven throughout. Attuned to intersectional oppressions, they built a publishing house that struggled for equality and recognition for Black people, for working class people, for women and for children.

¹³⁸ hooks, p.73.

¹³⁹ Stocked two important African American children's magazines, *Golden Legacy* and *Ebony Junior* in the bookshop. The former was a history series that included issues on Harriet Tubman, Toussaint L'Ouverture, and Frederick Douglass. Letter from J. Huntley to Connie Van Brunt Johnson (editor, *Ebony Junior*, Chicago), 7 January 1975, LMA/4462/C/01/161, LMA.

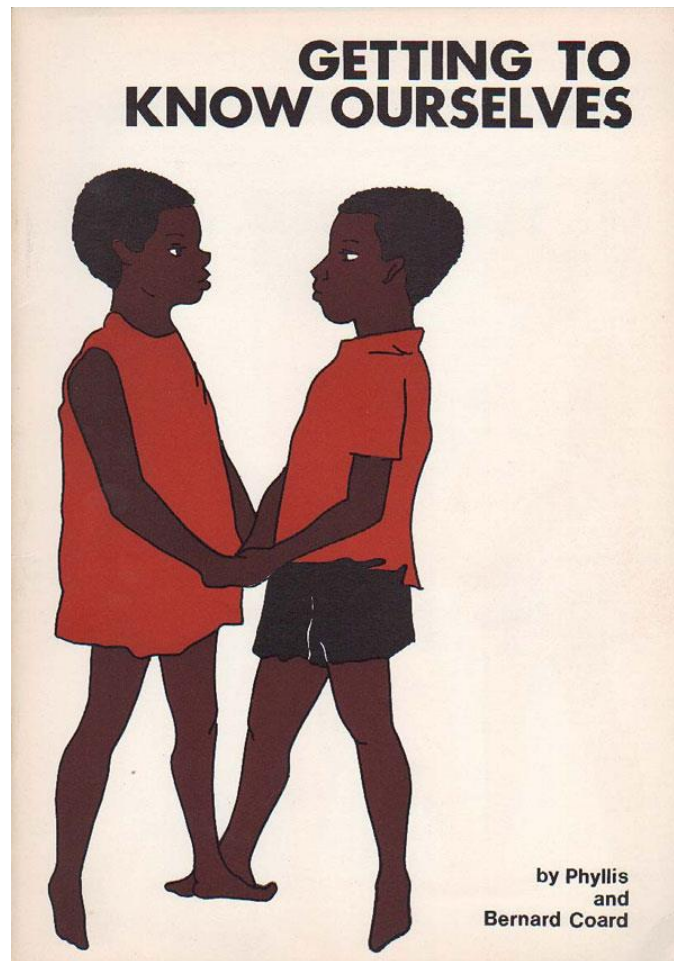


FIGURE 31 GETTING TO KNOW OURSELVES, AUTHOR'S COPY

BLP's publishing choices are revealing of the mid-1970s Black British problem-space. A period in which a new generation of Black Britons were growing up – surrounded by racist police, teachers and neighbours – the raising of Black consciousness was deemed essential amongst certain communities, and this was not going to happen in the classroom.¹⁴⁰ From racist and excluding curriculums to 'physical and psychological attacks on our sense of place and identity,' as exposed in Coard's 1971 pamphlet, the school was far from being a safe, educational and

¹⁴⁰ See *Pressure*, dir. Horace Ové, (BFI, 1975) for an insight into this problem-space. There was some interest from educational publishers, e.g. Third World Publications in Birmingham, who were "producing a series of multi-cultural readers packs for schools." Letter from Third World Publications (Birmingham) to BLP, 4 august 1976, Andrew Salkey: 'Joey Tyson': correspondence, permission requests, LMA/4462/C/01/161, LMA. Macmillan Education wanted to include it in their Topliners series, but were in a dispute about royalties. Letter from Martin Pick (Macmillan Education) to BLP, 7 November 1975.

open environment.¹⁴¹ In response to this, Black mothers, fathers and teachers protested school exclusions and the placing of children in educationally subnormal schools (ESNs). Connected through the same concerns, BLP, New Beacon and the wider community came together to establish the Black Parents Movement in 1974.¹⁴² Inseparable from the Supplementary School Movement (SSM), the Huntleys set up the Marcus Garvey School with Bernard and Phyllis Coard, in 1972.¹⁴³ A source of materials for the SSM, BLP published and sold books that symbolised the embracing of Blackness that characterised this period. Through these connected movements they were ‘fighting on the two main fronts – education and against police harassment.’¹⁴⁴ Emulating global Black Power, BLP’s community positioning worked to challenge on-the-ground problems, such as state violence and poor education, which had international resonance.

Not only ‘writing’ the wrongs through words, BLP enacted its pledge ‘To give confidence to our Black World’ visually, through book covers and greetings cards. Eric contextualises this in a time when ‘we were not accustomed to see Black images ... we were not accustomed to see ourselves in print.’¹⁴⁵ Interestingly, greetings cards were one of their most popular orders: a sales ledger sheet from October and November in 1971 shows that customers ordered 1,597 cards.¹⁴⁶ This confirms Eric’s feelings that these greetings card were a much-needed intervention. It also conjures a warming picture of BLP greetings cards sat atop mantelpieces, bookcases and tables in Britain and the Caribbean during the 1971 Christmas period. An invocation of Garvey’s ‘Black is beautiful’ mantra and ideology, BLP was

¹⁴¹ Accounts of children at school during 60s and 70s being called “golliwog” and asked to “Speak English” and “Do you live in trees?”. Bryan, Dadzie and Scafe, *Heart of Race* (2018), pp.62-3.

¹⁴² Publisher’s Note – handwritten corrections (Groundings, 5th edition) in Walter Rodney: ‘Groundings with My Brothers’: draft manuscripts, LMA/4462/C/01/094A, LMA.

¹⁴³ Future ministers of the People’s Revolutionary Government in Grenada (1979-83) who were teaching in England at the time. For further information on the SSM see Sands-O’Connor and Andrews, *Black supplementary school movement* (Institute of Education: London, 2013).

¹⁴⁴ Publisher’s Note – handwritten corrections (Groundings, 5th edition).

¹⁴⁵ Eric Huntley interview. This is something Barbara Smith spoke about in relation to Kitchen Table Press: ‘We also keep our target audience in mind when we design our books and advertising. We are all too aware of the inaccurate and denigrating images of women of color and people of color, generally, in all aspects of the media. From the very beginning, we wanted our books to reflect, visually, the writings they contained’. Smith, ‘Kitchen Table,’ p.12.

¹⁴⁶ Example of one pay ledger sheet which a combination of dates in November and October 1971, from ‘Sales Ledger Sheets, 1970-79’.

wholeheartedly committed to applying this idea of 'see[ing] ourselves in print' through the artwork in its children's series. BLP produced books through which young Black readers would see themselves reflected psychologically and experientially, but also aesthetically. From the two children holding hands on the cover of *Getting to Know Ourselves* (Fig. 31) to the young people protesting on the cover of *Joey Tyson* (Fig. 34), these books marked a rare aesthetic intervention into children's publishing, where Black children were the protagonists. Designed by the likes of Errol Lloyd and Ras Daniel Heartman, posters, covers and greetings cards were a channel for Black artists to promote their work.¹⁴⁷

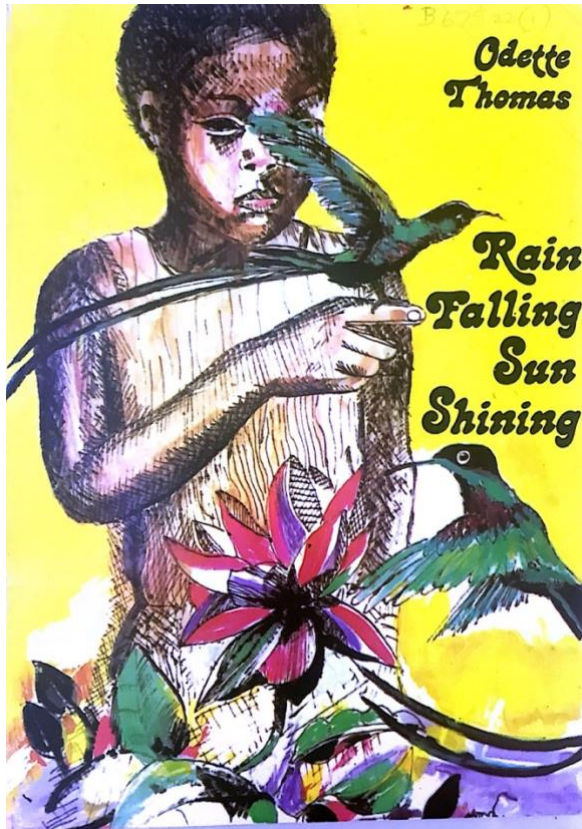
Bogle-L'Ouverture publications were also shaped by African and Caribbean oral traditions. Eric Huntley explained how 'the task of writing and publishing' has problems to overcome in Africa, because the 'society has a much stronger oral tradition, where the spoken word in drama and poetry is much closer to the people than the published word.'¹⁴⁸ This task of 'taking on' oral cultures, whether that be folktales, music or poetry, was a vital part of BLP's publishing tradition, as manifested in books such as *Rain Falling*, *Sun Shining*, *Dread Beat and Blood*, and *Ammunition!*¹⁴⁹ Their emphasis on poetry, song and the voice, amplified these oral traditions. As such, BLP grappled with colonial-metropolitan publishing practices that 'virtually pushed' English-language textbooks 'down the throats of peoples and students.'¹⁵⁰ This conscious attempt to bridge the oral-print gap, a deep flaw that limited the ability of metropolitan publishers to holistically publish Black voices, was a distinctive feature of BLP. It marked the formation of a publisher that was committed to supporting and distributing products of the Caribbean intellectual tradition in their complex forms.

¹⁴⁷ Renowned artist of the Rastafarian arts movement. BLP sold his prints to fund publications. E.g. An advert for 'Proud and defiant Rastafarian Mother and Child' stated that 'proceeds of sales will be used to fund HOW EUROPE UNDERDEVELOPED AFRICA.' LRA/01/0127/02, GPI.

¹⁴⁸ 'Eric Huntley at Ealing Town Hall'.

¹⁴⁹ E.g. One of BLP's most successful authors, Johnson, went on to be the only Black poet published in the Penguin Modern Classics series. Their early investment in, and appreciation of, dub poetry laid the groundwork for an increasingly popular cultural phenomenon.

¹⁵⁰ 'Eric Huntley at Ealing Town Hall.'



CANE

I like to run and pull a cane
 When the cane-cart passing down
 The man does crack his whip sometimes
 So I does pull and run.

Moderate

Gtr chords

I like to run and pull the cane when the
 cane cart pass-ing down, -The man does crack his whip some-times so
 I does pull and run so I does pull and run I'd

33

FIGURE 32 RAIN FALLING, SUN SHINING, AUTHOR'S COPY

Rain Falling, Sun Shining was inspired by Odette and Ewart Thomas' honeymoon to Guyana in 1972. The trip prompted her to think about 'the children in Guyana reading books about themselves and their environment' and the 'sights and sounds' of her childhood and thinking.¹⁵¹ A donation to the publishing house, like all of the children's series, Thomas had minimal involvement beyond the writing: once she sent the manuscript she said 'this is your book Jessica, use it however you need to.'¹⁵² One of the decisions that Jessica made was to have a musician write accompanying music for the rhymes.

Through Odette's evocative stories and Jessica's publishing choices, the book encouraged and enabled storytelling and musical engagement.

The rhymes in this book were written for Children, to be read and sung by them as well as to them. ... As we know, the natural way of expressing

¹⁵¹ Odette Thomas, interviewed by author (11 March 2021).

¹⁵² Ibid.

childhood stories is different from the standard way in which our schools teach us to speak and write.¹⁵³

The underlining of 'by' emphasised that children should not only be read and sung to but should be actively engaged in reading and singing themselves. The distinction between natural and standard – 'standard' being the term used to describe the formal colonial English language – highlighted the suppression of Creole languages in Caribbean and British education systems. Promoting this oral-print unity even further, Gloria and Chris Cameron's music score (see Fig. 32) was described as a 'new feature' that was 'bound to generate much fun as the youth get to know themselves.'¹⁵⁴ Music was not only a 'fun' activity, it was an integral part of 'getting to know' oneself in the diasporic context. Songs included, 'Cane,' which invoked histories of sugar, slavery and resistance, and 'Full Moon,' which summoned memories of nighttime storytelling in the rural Caribbean. Stating its pedagogical value, Huntley picked out certain songs as a 'welcome stimulant in the classroom.' Also worthwhile for adults, she wrote that it would 'bring back happy childhood memories, while to the young, this collection will help bridge the gap between their world and that of their parents.'¹⁵⁵ Hence, BLP was consciously trying to strengthen Caribbean diaspora families that were disconnected by place and generation.

¹⁵³ 'Rain Falling, Sun Shining flyer', LRA/01/0127/02, GPI.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Odette Thomas, *Rain Falling Sun Shining* (London: Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications, 1975).

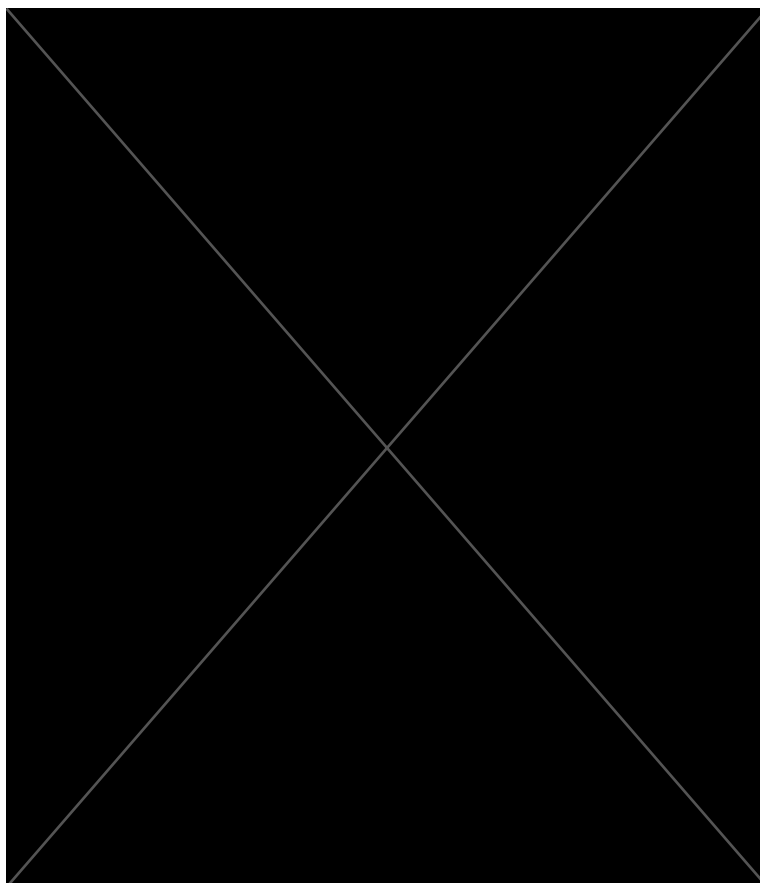


FIGURE 33 JESSICA AND ACCABRE HUNTLEY, COURTESY OF FHALMA

Published in 1977, *At School Today* marked an especially radical approach to children's publishing, for it centred the child as author. Accabre Huntley's poems explored the subjectivity of being a Black girl in Britain where 'she finds that it is impossible to be just a little girl.'¹⁵⁶ Proudly proclaiming her Blackness and asserting her freedom, she writes:

*I am black
as I thought
My lids are brown
as I thought
My hair is curled
as I thought
I am Free
as I know!*¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ 'Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications Ltd. Catalogue', LRA/01/0127/02.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

The publication of her daughter's poetry recognised children as artists and activists. The book also symbolised Jessica Huntley as a Black activist mother, committed helping to all children of African descent.

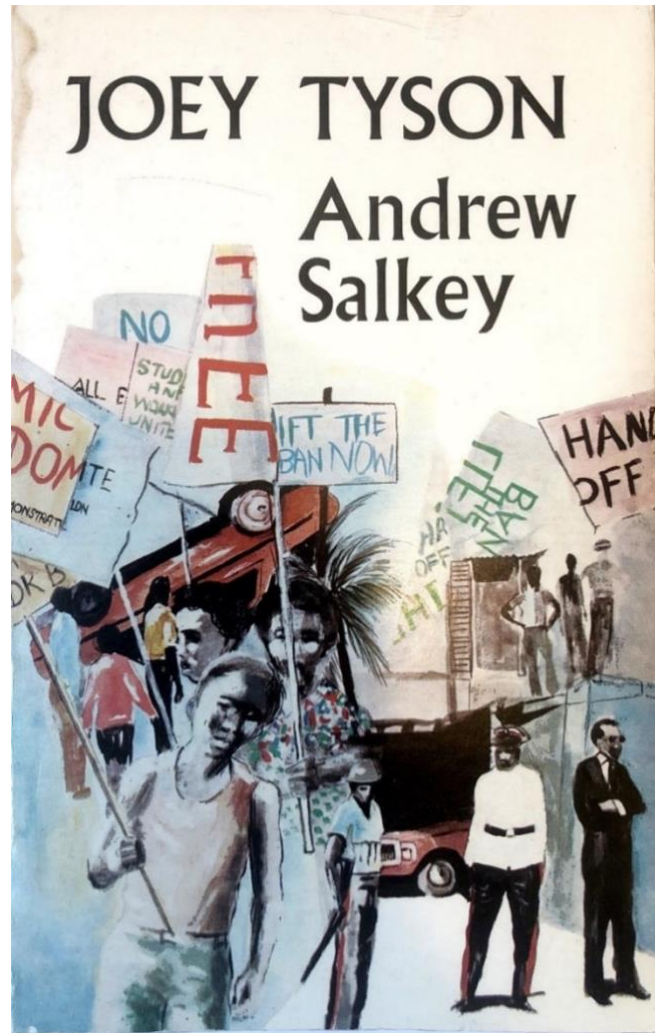


FIGURE 34 JOEY TYSON, AUTHOR'S COPY

A critical reading experience for young readers, *Joey Tyson* reflected the Huntleys' and Salkey's commitment to education and challenging police brutality. A bold intervention into the recent history of Jamaica, the young reader is taken through the violent Rodney Affair through the lens of one family, the Tysons.¹⁵⁸ Split into three

¹⁵⁸ There is minimal scholarship on *Joey Tyson* beyond Sands-O'Connor, pp.71-3; one footnote in Lewis, *Walter Rodney's Intellectual and Political Thought*, p.253; a brief mention in David Austin, *Fear of a Black Nation: Race, Sex, and Security in Sixties Montreal* (Toronto, Between the Lines, 2013), p.24; and Mohammed Labo, 'Black Consciousness in Caribbean literature: A critical examination of Sylvia Wynter's *The Hills of Hebron*, John Hearne's *Land of the Living*, and Andrew Salkey's *Joey Tyson* (unpublished MA thesis), Ahmadu Bello University (2012).

sections: *Tuesday, 15th October, 1968*; *Wednesday, 16th October, 1968*; and *Thursday, 17th October, 1968*, the novel reconstructs Rodney's ban and the ensuing uprising through the fictional character of Dr. Paul Bogle Buxton (Rodney). Immediately, the naming of this character reaches back into histories of resistance. Like the naming of the publisher, Paul Bogle was a reference to the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865, and his fictional surname, Buxton, was a reference to a village set up by freed Africans after Emancipation. Moreover, this was where the Huntleys lived when they were first married, and where Eric became heavily involved in local politics.¹⁵⁹ This novel was emblematic of BLP's mission to memorialize, construct and encourage historical, contemporary and future traditions of resistance.

Tracing Joey and his school friends' participation in the protests, Salkey tells a story of youth power. Painting a vivid picture of town and gown solidarity, the narrator describes a 'very large crowd of university students in their scarlet undergraduate gowns [and] transport workers from the local bus depot.'¹⁶⁰ From accounts of 'pistols, rifles, tear gas canisters and bombs,' to conversations about continuous run-ins with the police, the brute force of state power runs throughout.¹⁶¹ By setting it over three days, there is an intense sense of rupture. When Mr Tyson explains how 'people like me in a big hurry, you see. We been getting fooled for such a long time, and by your own too, that patience and time-taking looking like enemy,' there is a profound sense of oppression's temporal quality.¹⁶² If 'time-taking looking like enemy' then speed and rupture was the temporality of resistance.

Women and girls are especially prominent in this tale. Lisa and Dr. Buxton's wife march together with her placard that reads 'WHERE IS MY HUSBAND?'¹⁶³ In admiration of her, Joey's friend, Colin, says, 'Boy, she's fantastic. She going to have a baby and still she marching for her husband. All the tear gas can't stop her. She mean business.'¹⁶⁴ This representation of mother-activist is resonant of not only Patricia Rodney, but also Jessica Huntley – Accabre was a baby when BLP was

¹⁵⁹ Andrews, *Radical Lives*, p.49.

¹⁶⁰ Andrew Salkey, *Joey Tyson* (London: Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications, 1974), p.53.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 93.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp.30-1.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.31.

founded – and countless other women who were embedded in liberation struggles. Another example, is when Joey comes across a ‘Rastafarian sister’ reasoning during the protest, she says: “I care for you pickney. I clean you house. I wash you car. I cook you food. I deliver you mail, you *Gleaner* ... I cut you cane ... I work like a bitch f’get two shilling.’¹⁶⁵ Through such glimpses, Salkey gives an insight into the experience of Black working-class women in Jamaica. Later, Miss D plays a vital role in protecting Joey, by hiding his dad and telling Anancy stories as the police search the house for ‘looters.’ After a third search, the police find and shoot Mr. Tyson. In this traumatic and violent ending, Salkey shows us how the innocent are accused – as backed up by the state and the media – as a means to justify police violence.

Immersing young readers in a Caribbean cultural world filled with patois and Anancy, the novel is a lesson in solidarity. Mr. Tyson tells Joey and his friends about the importance of youth action: ‘When you young people start to move ‘mongst you’selves with one heart, one love and one mind ... it going be the bigges’ move this country ever see.’¹⁶⁶ Both a historical reconstruction and a story of love, family and suffering, *Joey Tyson* is a literary embodiment of BLP’s founding story that brought the publisher’s context to life for young readers in Britain.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p.46.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p.84.

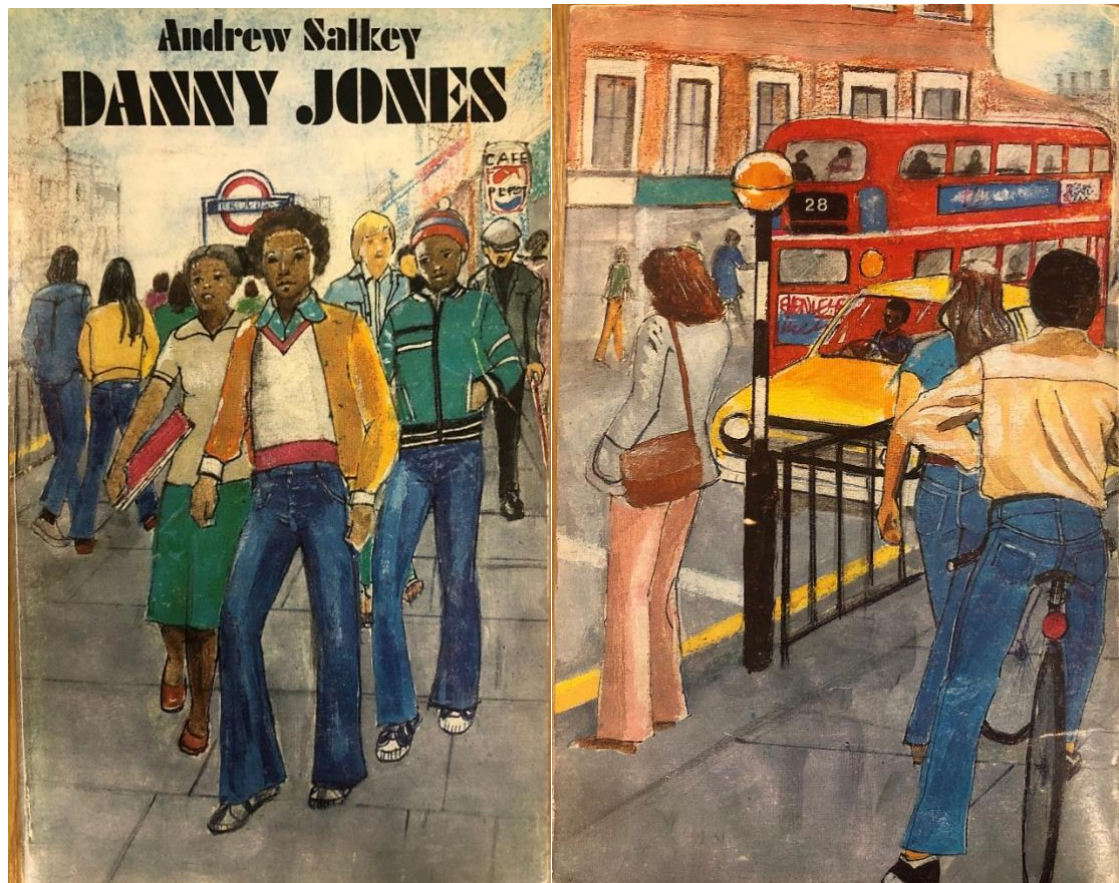


FIGURE 35 DANNY JONES, AUTHOR'S COPY

Another work of young adult fiction, Salkey's *Danny Jones* is about the 'day-to-day life and experiences of a black teenager.'¹⁶⁷ Set in the 'Ladbroke Grove Area,' the novel features a familiar story for many young Black readers, where teachers labelled them as 'problems.'¹⁶⁸ Lloyd's cover artwork is representative of a generation of British-born Black people that were becoming teenagers in the 1970s and 1980s. On the cover, a group of three friends are walking down a street with the recognisable London underground sign in the background. All well turned out, it depicts a stylish yet studious (the girl in the green skirt is holding what looks like a folder of work) group of friends. On the back cover, we can see the number 28 bus, a route that goes through Westbourne Park and Notting Hill – hubs of Black London. Aside from these very intentional symbols of a youthful Black London identity, one gets a sense of the ordinariness of multicultural London.

¹⁶⁷ Andrew Salkey, *Danny Jones* (London: Bogle-L'Ouverture, 1980), inside cover.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

As this case study has shown, the children's series embodied the visions and objectives that were set out when the publishing house was established. Committed to educating Black children that were born and raised in Britain, BLP was determined to counter the estrangement that these children felt from the Caribbean cultural world that their parents and grandparents knew. Jessica Huntley saw BLP as providing a unique service by 'paying special attention to the publishing of books for African children, books which have relevance and meaning to our children's past, present and future.'¹⁶⁹ Speaking about these publications, Jessica Huntley stated that 'the politics come through ... even the children's books.'¹⁷⁰ This focus on publishing children's books was by no means a shying away from politics, instead it signalled a creative and bold approach to radical activism. It also distinguished BLP from conventional leftist British publishing that had virtually no tradition of publishing children's books. Additionally, the explicit African orientation and commitment to children's publishing signified further distinctions between BLP and New Beacon. Children's books were a radical means to engage in process of reparative history, orality and self-representation, which are fundamental characteristics of Black/Caribbean intellectual traditions.

Conclusion: "We will remember – A woman determined and defiant"

By the early 1980s, BLP had firmly established itself. In publishing terms, it would be their most successful period; Eric states that 'We published more books in the 80s than in every other decade.'¹⁷¹ Over a quarter of the books published in the twelve years between 1969 and 1981 were released in 1980 and 1981 (Fig. 30). A zenith for BLP's publishing and Black publishing more generally, BLP formalised its connections to New Beacon and Race Today through the First International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books, in 1982. I end this chapter of BLP's story here, as the Book Fairs ushered in a new era of publishing processes, funding models and political dynamics.

¹⁶⁹ Tenth Anniversary invite, LRA/01/0127/3.

¹⁷⁰ Jessica Huntley, LMA/4463/F/07/01/0001/F (side B).

¹⁷¹ Eric Huntley interview.

Reading a selection of his Anancy stories on the radio, Salkey began with a dedication to Jessica and Eric Huntley:

I want to express to you the gratitude and the profound love that we have shared over the years. It's not always a going thing for an author to express love of a publisher, these two people are not merely publishers they're friends. ... I can only say that the books that Bogle L'Ouverture have produced are books that ... mean a great deal to our community here in Britain and overseas in African countries and Canada, United States, the Caribbean.¹⁷²

Encapsulating the profound impact that the Huntleys had on their authors and diasporic communities, Salkey's words evoke the bonds of comradeship that were at the heart of this political publishing movement. His expressions of love and gratitude are evidence of the unique publishing atmosphere that the Huntleys created through BLP. While they did not intentionally set out to create a canon in the way that La Rose did through New Beacon, they cultivated a canon of radical Black/Caribbean adult and children's books that 'mean a great deal to' the communities that they served.

The story of BLP emphasises the profound influence that Caribbean modes of anti-colonial struggle had on politics in post-war Britain. It was through their journey to Britain that the Huntleys were able to build their own organisations that drew on Guyanese struggles alongside the experience of new battles in Britain. At its core, BLP was an activist formation and radical project that emerged directly out of Caribbean and diaspora protests. The commitment to publishing varied and honest representations of Black people and of Black history was about 'writing the wrongs' that had been done to Black people for centuries.

BLP's success should be judged not by its sales or financial accomplishment but by its commitment to the objectives that it set. As Eric Huntley reflected, when 65,000 books are published in the UK every year (interview from 1992) 'it's very difficult to really assess the impact we've made.'¹⁷³ In modest reflection, he described it as

¹⁷² 'Anancy Traveller' C54, Andrew Salkey Archive, C1839/58, BL.

¹⁷³ EH, LMA/4463/F/07/01/0001/F – Side B.

'very minimal, but it was a necessary impact, that had to be made and ought to be continued to be made.'¹⁷⁴ The necessity of their impact is key; BLP was a pioneering force, fulfilling needs that no other organisation did. Aware of their limitations, Jessica categorised BLP as doing 'extremely well ... given that society is racist by nature,' because they were able to influence people's minds through books.¹⁷⁵ In calling out the problem-space in which they operated – where the possibility of truly radical change seemed to diminish throughout the 1970s and 1980s – she highlighted the relative success of the publishing house within this context. Speaking of themselves and New Beacon as taking over from a longer trend, Jessica invoked the tradition-making that this thesis has examined.

As this chapter has shown, the Huntleys manoeuvred and translated an often-masculinist anti-colonial politics into an accessible, grounded and educational movement. A labour of love, their unwavering commitment to children and learning found an outlet through BLP and it spoke to the Huntleys' foundational role in community building and Black/Caribbean intellectual production. As evidenced by the Black feminist movements of the late 1970s and 1980s, education was a constant focus for Black women in Britain, and this was a type of activism that the Huntleys helped to shape and build.¹⁷⁶ In the words of bell hooks, 'To be truly visionary we have to root our imagination in our concrete reality while simultaneously imagining possibilities beyond that reality.'¹⁷⁷ Always aware of their 'concrete reality,' the Huntleys were still able to not only envision, but help to bring about, a better world.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Jessica Huntley, LMA/4463/F/07/01/0001/F (side B).

¹⁷⁶ See Bryan, Dadzie and Scafe.

¹⁷⁷ hooks, p.110.

Conclusion

This thesis has made four main claims. First, that the development and transformation of a Black/Caribbean publishing tradition was a constitutive element of the freedom struggles that characterised each era examined, from anti-slavery to anti-racism. Second, Caribbean publishing is inherently diasporic. Caribbean publishing in post-war Britain can only be fully understood in light of both historical and contemporary intellectual trends and political shifts that took place in the Caribbean and mainland Britain. Third, Caribbean publishing has been profoundly concerned with questions of history, which was manifest in the volume and spread of books, magazines, pamphlets and newspapers that tackled historical topics, from fifteenth-century Benin to the Labour Rebellions of the 1930s. Fourth, through their production and circulation of texts, this thesis has found that publisher-activists were architects of Black/Caribbean intellectual traditions and producers of counter-hegemonic knowledge. By looking back and reaching forwards, publishers challenged colonial versions of history by unearthing and creating stories of resistance as a means to invigorate and contextualise contemporary political movements that were fighting for a freer future. In the process, they redefined what such freedom looked like and what it might become.

Chapter 1 showed that counter-hegemonic Caribbean publishing grew roots in anti-slavery and abolitionist movements through the establishment of newspapers from the 1830s onwards by free people of colour. Through the related case of Robert Wedderburn in early nineteenth-century Britain, this chapter contributes to scholarship that challenges the de-intellectualization of Black, working-class and enslaved anti-slavery movements. As Hilary Beckles argues, these have been mischaracterised as ‘a lower species of political behaviour, lacking in ideological cohesion, intellectual qualities and a philosophical direction.’¹⁷⁸ The press was also a vital forum of debate for the Creole middle class, who consolidated its position in the post-emancipation era. Chapter 2 charted the emergence of debates around what it meant to be West Indian in the press and a rise in local publishing that highlighted

¹⁷⁸ Hilary Beckles, ‘The Self-Liberation Ethos of Enslaved Blacks’, *Journal of Caribbean History*, 22 (1988), pp. 1-19, p. 3.

the complex relationship between early nationalism and deference to the so-called 'Mother Country.' It also examined the significance of migration to the development of Caribbean publishing and politics – in the region and in Britain. Chapter 3 explored how and why publishing was a crucial part of anti-colonial political and cultural movements. From the labour press to Caribbean vernacular literature, it embodied the interrelationship between Caribbean publishing and new forms of political consciousness and mobilisations. Chapter 3 explored this through analysing Una Marson's cultural nationalist publishing project, which was largely aimed at children, and Richard Hart's role in the writing and publishing of histories of resistance that would be critical when the independent Caribbean engaged in nation-building projects during the 1960s and 1970s. Chapter 4 revealed the centrality of historical discussions in the emergent Black British press. By examining history features in the *West Indian Gazette*, *Tropic* and *Flamingo*, it argues there was a fundamental connection between the creation of a collective historical consciousness and the contemporary politics of 'staying power' and Caribbean nation-building. Chapters 5 and 6 shed light on the critical role that Britain's early Black publishing houses played in both Black British and radical Caribbean political-cultural movements. Both characterised by their focus on self-sufficiency and independence; these chapters explored how Caribbean publishing changed in the post-war and then post-colonial periods. The last section of the thesis also argued that Caribbean publishing in post-war Britain was not homogenous by examining the important differences between *New Beacon* and *Bogle-L'Ouverture* in terms of their origins, objectives and outputs. Through the circulation of Caribbean texts, these publishers helped to bring historical Black/Caribbean intellectual traditions into being.

The first key argument of this thesis is that Caribbean publishing is a historic tradition, grounded in the earlier efforts of Caribbean publishers stretching back to the nineteenth century. As a lens onto understanding the emergence and significance of this tradition, it has revealed the ways that Caribbean publishing, in the traditional sense of book publishing, has been inseparable from the development of the press. Tied to the philosophy, capital and readership of newspapers, Caribbean publishing was an interdependent industry of newspapers, magazines, books and pamphlets; all of which were critical in the creation of multiple Caribbean identities and political movements. Through an analysis of nineteenth-century Creole

press and publishing as a critical precursor to West Indian, anti-colonial and Black/Caribbean publishing, this research creates a lineage of intellectual traditions that engaged with practices of representation, historical consciousness and resistance. The result is an intellectual history that recognises experiences of slavery/unfreedom/intellectual repression and anti-slavery movements/resistance/consciousness as formative in fusing the association of education, publishing, reading and freedom that runs throughout this thesis.

Through the process of tracing the Caribbean's publishing history, connections between post-war Black British struggles and the Caribbean pasts, presents and futures become distilled. Experiences of anti-colonial and radical political engagement in the Caribbean and beyond laid the foundations and shaped the practices and ideas of Caribbean publishing in post-war Britain. By identifying these connections, this thesis engaged with Linton Kwesi John's assertion, 'We didn't come alive in England.' It refutes the separation between Black British political movements in the post-war era and Caribbean anti-colonial struggle. Considering the focus on intellectual-activists who came to publishing through the prism of their Caribbean formation, this thesis has shown their roots in Caribbean societies, cultures and histories – in a region ravaged by colonial violence and slavery, but also a space that has produced spectacular creative and intellectual traditions. The value of illuminating these connections has been to better understand individual contributions as well as the bigger picture of Caribbean publishing and its associated political organising. Hence, another focal argument is that Caribbean publishing is diasporic by definition. One of the distinct features of this approach has been to analyse publishing in the Caribbean and in the diaspora together, as well as establishing the relationship between the two. In doing so, it demonstrated how publisher-activists that were based in Britain had an 'important role in shaping ideas, not only in the literary field but in politics and in other areas of life' in the newly independent Caribbean.¹⁷⁹ As such, it has simultaneously shown how historic struggles were formative in shaping the Caribbean experience in Britain, which was, in turn, critical in the development of the Caribbean region. Furthermore, by

¹⁷⁹ Aggrey Burke in *Foundations of Movements*, p.26.

examining the material conditions of cultural production, this is not an intellectual history detached from reality, it's a history of ideas that were grounded in complex and arduous realities.

A third argument that this thesis has made was that publishing was a form of history-making, which reshaped ideas of self, region and nation. Telling me about his own experience of learning history at school in Portland, Jamaica, during the 1940s and 1950s, Edward Baugh described a history curriculum which allowed him to 'recite the kings and queens of England,' whilst knowing 'very little about ... one's own history.'¹⁸⁰ Attending school a few years later, Mervyn Morris similarly recalled a history education that, like the island itself, had been dominated by the British.¹⁸¹ The crippling dislocation of history in the region's textbooks, curriculum and collective consciousness, even by the mid-twentieth century, stimulated an alternative historical culture. Whilst oral, ritual and performative practices led the way, newspapers, pamphlets and books were another critical space for historical production.

Varying over time, publishers engaged with histories that were salient during their lives and the different political outlooks that they articulated through those histories. History was a central feature of these periodicals and publications, materialising in recurrent series, one-off articles, the republication of out of print texts and historical engagements with contemporary events. Illustrating the extent of the press as a vital channel for the production and dissemination of history, this thesis is a lens onto the spaces, paths and political utility of popular history. Thus, it challenges conceptions of what comprises historical scholarship and where it might be found.

Across periods of Caribbean and Caribbean diaspora struggle, from anti-slavery to anti-colonialism, the narration of self, nation and history became increasingly significant. On the topic of Caribbean intellectuals, Hall praised their

enormously important work of trying to write the history of the Caribbean in the period of independence ... including writing its past from the

¹⁸⁰ Edward Baugh, interviewed by author (Kingston, Jamaica, 14 February 2019).

¹⁸¹ Mervyn Morris, interviewed by author.

perspective of an independent nation ... the project of writing the history of the nation.¹⁸²

The publisher-activists that populate this thesis, Jessica Huntley, Claudia Jones, Una Marson, John La Rose, Edward Scobie and Richard Hart, amongst many others, were vital to these projects of 'writing [and circulating] the history of the nation.' Caribbean publishers in post-war Britain reinvigorated longstanding traditions of evoking history in political and literary publications. From the circulation of Wedderburn's personal history in British chapels and alehouses, to African-centric folktales in BLP's children's series that were published in the 1970s, history was made relevant and its supposed neutrality was questioned. Throughout these waves of change, the Caribbean continued to have a tempestuous relationship to its past, to how it is told, to what is hidden and what is commemorated. The Caribbean quarrel with history exists in its deep anger towards the violence it has endured and resisted but also in its challenging of what history means.

Bringing these strands together, the fourth main argument of this thesis is that publisher-activists were architects of Black/Caribbean intellectual traditions. Identifying and defining the figure of the publisher-activist, this thesis enriches understandings of the connections between publishing and politics, and it lends itself to scholarship that broadens understandings of who is considered an intellectual and what counts as intellectual activity. Contending that the figure of the organic intellectual has been the driver of counter-hegemonic publishing activity, this thesis locates them as being central to the historical evolution of Black/Caribbean intellectual traditions, both in the Caribbean and in Britain. The publications examined across this period helped to formulate 'counter-identities' that contested colonial knowledges.¹⁸³ Through the inclusion of children's books, this thesis challenges boundaries of where Black/Caribbean intellectual knowledge gets produced and probes conventional notions of what is validated as Black/Caribbean intellectual production. In doing so, it sees previously excluded teachers, publishers, journalists and poets (who were often women) as intellectuals. Therefore, this thesis

¹⁸² *Stuart Hall: Through the Prism of an Intellectual Life*.

¹⁸³ Hall, 'Negotiating Caribbean Identities'.

challenges how we think about canons of the Black/Caribbean intellectual tradition. Through the circulation of texts and the formation of publishing houses that also acted as political organisations, publishers helped to shape embryonic proto-diasporic, Caribbean, Black Atlantic, transnational, Black British and radical communities. From Garvey's evocation of the abolition-era *Jamaica Watchman* to John La Rose's reinvigoration of the 1930s Trinidadian journal, *The Beacon*, publisher-activists consciously drew on their publishing ancestors. Therefore, this thesis builds on nuanced understandings of 'tradition' and tradition-making that emphasise the function of tradition as comprehending relations between past, present, future, rather than as antithetical to radicalism and progression.¹⁸⁴

Due to constraints of time, space and the Covid-19 pandemic, this thesis could not include further research on Caribbean publishing outside of Jamaica.¹⁸⁵ Even though Jamaica was the dominant place for publishing, my original hope was to explore, more fully, examples of Caribbean publishing in other regions, from the nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. Whilst Chapters 1-3 included extensive research on the press across the region and the broad publishing landscape, through 'Caribbean Publishing: a selective bibliography of British Library holdings, 1800-1962,' the main case studies were Jamaican. Another limitation, due to lack of space, is that the thesis does not comprehensively engage with regional Caribbean publishing in the independence era. Hence, the next step for this research would be to examine the local publishing landscape in the post-colonial Caribbean.¹⁸⁶ As Colin Prescod's 1976 interview with Walter Rodney revealed, publishing by certain groups and individuals continued to be viewed as a threat, as something that needed to be censored by the state. During the government's suppression of the Working People's Alliance (socialist Guyanese party, set up in 1974), police were instructed to search for and seize 'paper, Gestetner ink, Gestetner machines and typewriters.'¹⁸⁷ So, the natural progression for this research would be to understand the continuities and

¹⁸⁴ Scott, 'Black Radical Tradition'.

¹⁸⁵ Cancelled 2020 research trip to Trinidad and Tobago.

¹⁸⁶ I have already identified history features in Caribbean Black Power periodicals such as *Moko* and *Abeng* that I hope to examine.

¹⁸⁷ Colin Prescod, 'Guyana's socialism: an interview with Walter Rodney', *Race & Class*, 18 (1976), 109-128., p.121.

shifts in terms of how publisher-activists worked with and against neo-colonial states in the Caribbean, using publishing a lens onto the radicalised (pre-1983) and then neo-liberalised Caribbean region (post-1983).¹⁸⁸ Moreover, this would provide an opening to further understand connections between Caribbean publishers in Britain and nation-building in the Caribbean. As La Rose's relationship with the Tapia Publishing House (Chapter 5) intimated, Caribbean publishers in Britain formed alliances with radical publishers in the region. An exploration of publishing in the Caribbean, during this era, would allow me to investigate the pioneering Jamaican publisher, Ian Randle's claim that there was 'no publishing in the region at all.'¹⁸⁹

This thesis stops before the International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books began, in 1982. The Book Fair was envisioned as both a political 'continuation of ... the 1945 Pan African Congress ... the Caribbean Artists Movement,' and an emblem of the 'new and expanding phase of the growth of radical ideas and concepts, and their expression in literature, music, art, politics and social life.'¹⁹⁰ This perception of the Book Fair as a new expression of historic and futuristic traditions captures the radical potential of tradition-making explored in this thesis. Furthermore, the conviction that it marked the start of a new publishing era, as connected to wider shifts around community funding and neoliberalism, influenced the decision to end before this momentous publishing event. However, the Book Fair – as alluded to in my final paragraph – is a potential avenue of future enquiry. Further analysis of this historic event would enable an exploration into and interrogation of the argument that it marked a 'new era', as well as an examination of how New Beacon and Bogle-L'Ouverture developed and changed as they became increasingly established publishers who were operating in different political and cultural contexts.

On 30 March 1982, Jamaican dub poet Michael Smith gave an electrifying performance at an Evening of International Poetry that was part of the first Book Fair. Standing in front of the bright red Book Fair banner, he opened by singing Bob

¹⁸⁸ David Scott, *Omens of Adversity: Tragedy, Time, Memory, Justice* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

¹⁸⁹ Randle interview.

¹⁹⁰ Sarah White, Roxy Harris and Sharmilla Beezmohun, *A Meeting of the Continents: The International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books 1982-1995 Revisited* (New Beacon: London, 2005), pp. 1-3.

Marley and the Wailers' 'Redemption Song' before launching into his poem, 'Say, Natty-Natty.'¹⁹¹ Seamlessly moving from the distinctive tones and tempos of 'I An I Alone' to 'Me Cyann Believe It' and then back to 'Redemption Song,' Smith's performance leaves you feeling stunned at his playful command of language and rhythm in this expression of the Black/Caribbean experience. Drawing together questions of oppression, poverty, struggle, migration, roots and culture, Smith's poetry echoes the political dynamics and discourses of the Black/Caribbean publishing that this thesis has traced. His dub poetry has left an indelible mark on peoples' memories of the first Book Fair. The Book Fair opening embodies the connections between publishing and counter-hegemonic knowledge production that the thesis has demonstrated. By publishing their own histories, narratives and ideas, publisher-activists challenged hegemonic ways of understanding the world. Together, they facilitated the development of Black/Caribbean intellectual traditions that have perpetually sought to reimagine past, present and future.

¹⁹¹ 'Michael Smith performing at the First International Bookfair of Radical Black and Third World Books', *No Colour Bar Black British Art in Action* (2017), YouTube <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16NCbskV-w4>> [accessed on 7 September 2018]. See also Michael Smith, *It a Come: Poems by Michael Smith* (London: Race Today Publications, 1986).

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Jamaica Labour Weekly
The New Jamaican

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Exhibitions and Events

A New Beacon: Caribbean Artists Movement' – Sarah White and Sarah Garrod
(National Theatre, London, 23 May 2019)

Black History Month Discussion Panel – Saying it Proud, Saying it in Black
(Gunnersbury Park Museum, 6 October 2019)

Books, Violence and Resistance: New Beacon (UCL Sarah Parker Remond Centre /
Black History Walks, 30 April 2021)

Books, Violence and Resistance: Eric Huntley (UCL Sarah Parker Remond Centre /
Black History Walks, 16 and 23 April 2021)

Confrontations: UWI Student Protest & the Rodney Disturbances of 1968 (UWI
Museum, Mona, 2019)

Get Up, Stand Up Now (Somerset House, London, 2019)

Life Between Islands: Caribbean-British Arts, 1950s – Now (Tate Britain, London,
2021/22)

Windrush: Songs in a Strange Land (British Library, London, 2018)

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