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THE GROWTH OF CORPORATE BLACK IDENTITY
AMONG AFRO-CARIBBEAN PEOPLE IN
BIRMINGHAM, ENGLAND

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B. I. HENRY

THE GROWTH OF CORPORATE BLACK IDENTITY AMONG AFRO-CARIBBEAN
PEOPLE IN BIRMINGHAM, ENGLAND

SUMMARY

This work charts the development of corporate "Black" identity among Afro-Caribbean people in Birmingham. It begins with a theoretical appraisal of the concept of identity and offers a sociological definition in terms of the conscious projection of a shared and worthy self-image into social reality. In selecting Afro-Caribbean people as a case-study, a historical and international perspective is adopted. Even though the peculiar mode of incorporating Africans into British slave-based societies suggested that a Sambo/Quashie identity resonant with the dominant "White" structures would emerge, it is argued that more positive identities were cultivated among the blacks and transmitted to their descendants by means of "creole" cultures. Such syncretic cultures provided complex links with the countries from which the resources came. The British elements presumably reinforced the objective economic and political forces that accounted for the migration of black British subjects from the colonies to the metropolis after World War II. However, the low social placement of these migrants together with their depiction in local newspapers as non-white, troublesome, alien and unwanted "guests" created identity problems for them. The empirical data of this study show that they drew resources from black reference groups abroad to assert a number of more positive and meaningful identities that ranged from avoidance, through acceptance and toleration, to suspicion and rejection of the status quo. As conditions worsen and as "racialist" structures congeal during the current economic recession, it is contended that this typology will contract into a characteristic Pan-African identity among Afro-Caribbean people resident in Britain. The anti-imperial component of this identity implies that the struggle for liberation will be brought home to the metropolis and mark the final stage of the British imperial adventure.

A PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

During the 1950's and early 1960's identity seems to have been a private problem for Afro-Caribbean migrants to Britain. According to their recollections, there was some shock at finding themselves to be ignored or subjected to racial dishonour and discrimination in the "Mother Country". The transition from being members of insular communities to being clearly identifiable "newcomers" with low status in a mass society seems to have been a traumatic one.

Faced with the reality of increasing "marginalization" and rejection, black migrants avoided, as far as was possible those situations that challenged and questioned their identity. Whatever damage was done to their self-respect in the unavoidable encounters at work, in the streets, and in negotiations with the gate-keepers of society, was repaired within the small informal groupings of relatives, friends and acquaintances from "back home" in the lodging-house districts of large cities.

When even these preserves were penetrated by the mass media with negative images and accounts of black people, the migrants rationalised this "knowledge" and reduced the cognitive dissonance in a variety of ways. One method was to try to distance themselves from those who were depicted as "troublesome, alien, immigrants", and to believe that in time British society would accept them as decent, hard-working citizens.

This adjustment was initially offered to new Afro-Caribbean immigrants by their more settled compatriots. And to me it seemed acceptable until I took up a teaching post in Handsworth, Birmingham, in 1971. After getting involved in the lives of the children, adolescents and adults of the area, I found the old arrangement wanting.

By then black identity had become a social issue of some import. Three significant changes had taken place which made the simple solution of withdrawal and avoidance unworkable.

First was the changed climate of "race relations". The widely debated Commonwealth Immigration Acts demonstrated that black immigrants were unwanted in British society. The Race Relations Acts which followed them, and which purported to protect the rights of those blacks settled in Britain appeared to many to be comparatively palliative.

Second, by then, there were enough black people in several areas of settlement (like Handsworth) to constitute a community. Concentration in large numbers brought a certain security and the confidence to try other solutions. Greater knowledge of other models from Third World and other countries was more readily available.

Third, was the growing numbers of young black people coming of age in Britain without an actual insular identity to fall back on. The search for a meaningful identity to facilitate a realistic adjustment to, or perhaps rejection of, British society was intense among them.

This involvement as teacher, friend, enemy, threat, intruder, identity-sounder and fellow-searcher heightened my interest in the subject. This abiding interest finally led me to undertake a formal study of the phenomenon in 1975 among the Afro-Caribbean population of Handsworth.

From the very beginning it was recognised that my route to the study and the very nature of the subject would create certain methodological problems for me. In this case the normal problem of involvement versus detachment - "subjectivity" versus "objectivity" - that all sociologists experience because they are both members of society and yet "outside" it was especially compounded. As a black immigrant in search of identity, as participant in various reference groups, as an inevitable change agent, and as observer, made it difficult for me to secure a completely detached account of the events described.

My familiarity with the members of groups of people in search of meaningful identities together with my reading of the literature enabled me to draw up the following hypotheses that guided me through this study, the evidence of which finally refuted or supported them.

- (i) Society and the self are inter-dependent parts of the same social process and identity is the emergent social self which has currency at any one point in time.
- (ii) In stratified, heterogeneous societies, identity problems emerge because the socialisation process

presents certain prescriptive identities to the incumbents of low positions that militate against their self-respect and their basic human need to consider and present themselves in the most favourable light.

- (iii) This problem is coped with initially by the cultivation of identities clandestinely within the interstices of the established social structure.
- (iv) This cultivation of identities is given high priority by the actors and may even detract from full involvement in other social processes.
- (v) These identities are by nature precarious and so, attempts are made to make them less vulnerable by rooting them in reference groups, building "plausibility structures" and "symbolic universes" that may be articulated to social formations distant in time and space.

- (vi) The overt expression of these identities is a function of the amount of relevant knowledge available and the lines of communication established with reference groups.
- (vii) The behaviour congruent with these identities range from the fatalistic to the revolutionary - from acceptance to the rejection of the status quo - and are often dependent on the calculation of the sanctions that the given political authorities are expected to use to achieve conformity.
- (viii) The flowering of these identities together with the emergence of the groupings with which they could be identified are indices of tension and change within the given society.
- (ix) This process of identity assertion is itself an important catalyst of social change.
- (x) When race becomes an essential element of these identities the historical power relations between the two groups are thoroughly investigated and subjected to varying interpretations.
- (xi) Identity is then seen as a keenly contested symbolic trophy indicating the positions and world-views of actors through time.
- (xii) The assertion of particular identities by black people

in Britain throws into sharp relief all the above propositions.

These insights have been developed in the following Chapters and the major hypotheses tested in an empirical study.

In Chapter 1, the complex problem of identity is discussed. Attempts are made to rescue the subject from the terrain of psychoanalysis which treats it as an internally determined phenomenon inaccessible to the sociologist and the layman. Drawing on the work of G. H. Mead, an effort is made to show the social - and researchable - origins and nature of identity. Identity is understood as emerging out of the same social process that accounts for the formation of society. The argument is then developed to show that identity is not mechanically, socially determined - not a mere reflection of the social structure coterminous with role - but often at odds with the given society. Whatever the nature of identity, whatever stance it offers to society, is shown to be dependent on support from and within reference groups which also help to "define the situation" preliminary to any act of behaviour. Locating the study of identity within the realms of the Sociology of Knowledge and within "Verstehen" Sociology in particular, a position is established from which the literature is reviewed and subjected to criticism showing the redundant psychoanalytical assumptions of many writers on the subject.

In Chapter 2, these theoretical formulations are applied to the "African identity" in the Diaspora, and the effects of European cultural hegemony on this phenomenon, discussed. It is argued that hegemony was never fully achieved but that the identity of the slaves and their descendants was "creolized" without the loss of ALL African traits. Consequently, a variety of identities having little in common with the stereotype of the "Sambo/Quashie" which was expected to emerge under the avowed social condi-

tions, are shown to have been present among the slaves and to have been transmitted to their descendants - many of whom migrated to Britain after 1950. But more was involved in creole identities than the retention and reworking of African traits. The Afro-Caribbean people who subscribed to these identities and who had lived under British rule for many years had undoubtedly acquired enough British characteristics to enable them to consider themselves as British subjects and to be so considered by others. This may have been the aspiration of those who migrated to the metropolis.

In Chapter 3 the real outcomes for these immigrants are described. Contrary to their expectations they were denied certain opportunities and experienced a generally low social placement in the metropolitan context. This lowly and disadvantaged position in Britain required some explanation. For the society as a whole this was given in terms of the "newness" and "strangeness" of the immigrants and their propensity to "cause trouble".

In Chapter 4 it is argued that the role played by the local newspapers (in particular) was that of reinforcing a stereotype of black-skinned - "black"- people and portraying them in terms detrimental to their acceptance as normal people constituting an integral part of British society. An analysis of the contents of the local newspapers is presented to defend the case.

Faced with such a negative image in the mass media, black people felt rejected. This amplified the identity problem that demanded a solution. Denied the support for the cultivation of a positive identity in Britain they were forced to look elsewhere for resources to reinforce and legitimate their positive, collective, self-images.

In Chapter 5 it is argued that they looked to reference groups in the West Indies, Africa and the U.S.A. for materials and methods to construct particular "Black" identities (and the encompassing social realities) and the symbols to express them.

Using data from a survey carried out in an area of the settlement, the sociological referents of these Black identities are investigated in Chapter 6. Then, using these relatively decisive indicators of corporate identities among the Afro-Caribbean residents of Handsworth, a typology of these identities is presented in Chapter 7.

Having discussed and demonstrated the dynamics of identity formation and expression, and traced the growth of corporate identities among a distinct group of people in Britain, some general comments are then made. Hence the last Chapter concludes the thesis by summarising the principal arguments and findings of the study and drawing attention to the need for further research into as yet uncharted areas of the study of Black identity formation and assertion. It ends speculatively with a discussion of likely changes in the future.

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM OF IDENTITY

Identity is generally considered as referring to the "self". This self is often treated as a unique phenomenon with its origin and location deep in the human psyche. Following Freud, several writers have dealt with it as co-terminous with the "Ego" and the outcome of an incessant battle between the "Id" and the "Super ego".⁽¹⁾ In such psycho-analytical treatments the Ego is seen as primarily determined by instinctual drives which are precariously held in check by forces emanating from outside the individual in the form of society's moral prohibitions. This battle taking place in the unconscious is seldom revealed in normal circumstances. However, in dreams - "the royal road to the unconscious" - and in slips of the tongue, access is gained to this forbidden realm. In comparison with what takes place here, the structure of society and its culture(s) appear as purely incidental and are treated as aberrations or sublimations of instinctual drives. This interference with natural development during the vulnerable period of childhood is assumed to make an indelible mark on the Ego and by extension on the self and identity throughout life.

When called upon to explain phenomena outside the restricted confines of bourgeois Viennese Society, these theories proved inadequate. And when radical changes in the self and identity were observed to be consciously related to social changes that were baffling social scientists, other explanations were sought. However, whenever the self or identity were involved in explanations, these concepts proved to be so complex and elusive that resort was often made, either wholly or partially, to analyses and definitions in terms of the unknowable depths of the human psyche. Much of the literature dealing with the self and identity therefore still contain

residual psychoanalytical themes.

During the past two centuries, the accumulation of data suggesting the formative and facilitative role of society in human affairs has also led to the formulation of hypotheses and theories accounting for the conscious "construction" of the self and identity. Some of the most stimulating of these accounts have been those of the social behaviourist G. H. Mead and the School of Symbolic Interaction within which his insights and ideas have been developed. Their major postulate was that the self and society are both emergent properties of the same social process.

The three interlocking key concepts in Mead's work are the "mind", the "self" and "society". Mead dismissed as inadequate the Watsonian treatment of observable behaviour as completely and exclusively constituting the field of the scientific study of man. The operation of the mind and its effect on behaviour were considered by him to be of utmost importance.

For Mead, the distinguishing characteristic of man was his possession of a mind which developed in a social process or context of experience. Unlike animals who merely responded to external stimuli, man communicated by means of "significant symbols" which had the same effect on the individual to whom they were addressed or who explicitly responded to them as they had on the individual making them. This process both accounted for the emergence, and indicated the existence, of the mind.

At a more advanced stage, the mind developed these significant symbols into a "universe of discourse". For Mead, the universe was constituted by a group of individuals carrying on and participating in a common social process of experience and behaviour within which certain symbols had the same

common meanings for all the members of that group, whether they made or addressed them to other individuals or whether they overtly responded to them as made or addressed to them by other individuals. The existence of common meanings not only aided communication and interaction but also enabled individuals to think in terms similar to those of other interactants. The more universal the discourse the more general did the "other" become. This cumulative process led to the development of that key figure the "Generalised Other". Mead argued:-

The very universality and impersonality of thought and reason is from the behaviourist stand-point the result of the given individual taking the attitudes of others toward himself and of his finally crystallising all these particular attitudes into a single attitude or stand-point which may be called that of the Generalised Other.⁽²⁾

The mind emerged from receiving and crystallising data from the empirical world of interaction and an important subject about which information was collected was the self. Thereby the individual became an object to himself. Mead elaborated on the process thus:-

The individual experiences himself as such not directly, but only indirectly, from the particular stand-points of other individual members of the same social group or from the generalised stand-point of the social group as a whole to which he belongs ... and he becomes an object to himself only by taking the attitudes of other individuals toward himself within a social environment or context of experience and behaviour in which both he and they are involved.⁽³⁾

For Mead, the self was something which had a development. It was not initially there at birth, but arose in the process of social experience and behaviour. It developed in the given individual as a result of his relations to the social process as a whole and to other individuals within that process.

The meaning of the self at any particular point in time was to be found within the symbolic universe or language used within the group. However, each agreed meaning had to be constantly reinforced in interaction. Any creeping ambiguity or uncertainty of the meaning of a name or title referring to the self had to be clarified in experiential behaviour. Two important activities within which the meaning of the self was indicated and fortified were (the) "play" and the "game". These two processes formed distinct stages in the development of the self. At an early age children played out certain roles and measured the responses of others to them. These responses indicated what were and were not acceptable aspects of the self. At a later stage, in "the game of life" the individual had to take into consideration not only the particular attitudes of others but also the generalised social attitudes of the Generalised Other. It was only when the individual was able to do so, that he became a full member of society.

The pre-condition for the emergence of the "social self" or the identity of a person was the existence of the Generalised Other and the ability and willingness to take the role of the Generalised Other. Mead considered the Generalised Other as nothing more than the personification of society and he saw society as the necessary means by which basic physiological or biological needs were met. All these needs had social implications since they involved or required social situations and relations for their satisfaction. Hence ...

All organised human society is in a sense merely an extension and ramification of those simple and basic socio-physiological relations among its individual members, upon which it is founded and from which it originates. (4)

Man needed society in order to realise his potential as a social being. But society also depended on individuals behaving in a certain way. Mead explained that:

... on the other hand, the complex co-operative processes and activities and institutional functionings of organised human society are also possible only in so far as every individual involved in them or belonging to that society can take the general attitudes of all other such individuals with reference to these processes and activities and institutional functionings and to the organised social whole of experiential relations and interactions thereby constituted - and can direct his own behaviour accordingly. (5)

There was therefore a mutual dependence between the social self and society. But this neat symmetrical arrangement suggests that the social self was considered as a true reflection of society and as nothing more than the sum of the roles the individual played. It is precisely at this point in the development of the theory of the social self or identity that problems arose. Many Symbolic Interactionists and other social scientists who accepted that the self had a social origin found difficulty in avoiding the simplistic equation between the self and society.

Many writers, confronted with data which did not fit into the

equation, sought other explanations but in so doing fell into the trap of using partially psychoanalytical modifications. For example, Dennis Wrong claimed that the bulk of current social theory offered an "over-socialised" view of man in accounting for conformity and the existence of society. He rejected the notion that social norms were constitutive rather than regulative or that man as a role player consistently strove to maximise favourable attitudes from others. Instead he emphasised the forces in man that resisted socialisation and that were identified with the "Id". He therefore accounted for conformity in terms of coercion rather than conviction - in terms of "politics" rather than "education".⁽⁶⁾

At this point it is worth noting that Mead also made allowance for the unknown and the anti-social in man. He made a clear distinction between the "me" and the "I". He argued that the two components of the self were the "me" which was a reflection of the social structure or the composite of the many roles offered by society and the "I" which was the principle of action and impulse. The "I" was considered by him to be an unknown, creative agent that was capable of continually modifying the social process itself. It could only be grasped retrospectively, and when subjected to the social processes of consciousness and reflection became a "me". This Meadean analysis of the social self avoided both psychological and sociological reductionism.

Another insight beneficial to this thesis is Mead's recognition of the co-existence of several "me's" in a state of conflict, and even diametrically opposed to each other in the same society. Holding as axiomatic the need for human beings to present themselves in the most favourable light, he realised that problems would emerge when incumbents of low positions in a stratified society were offered certain unacceptable "me's". Mead suggested a possible solution.

A man has to keep his self-respect and it may be that he has to fly in the face of the whole community in preserving this self-respect. But he does it from the point of view of what he considers a higher and better society than that which exists.⁽⁷⁾

This last point is crucial. Man does not necessarily resolve the contradictions between his own self-respect/self-evaluation and society's evaluation of him in an individualistic manner. He does not necessarily isolate himself from society and live in a fantasy world. He does not necessarily separate himself from his punishing situation in such a way that the experience is no longer his experience but that of "somebody else". He does not necessarily visit his psychoanalyst or psychiatrist to learn how to adjust to the situation. He often fights back in a variety of ways, both covert and overt, which automatically meets with the disapproval of society. When this happens he has to relate to another community or society for support. This explains how people with low status, a low class position, and little power survive in a hostile society. They identify with exalted collectivities that may be different in terms of culture and structure from the ones they are living in. Whether or not identifying with or joining groups to validate or enhance favourable conceptions of the self is collective self-delusion is not the concern of this thesis.⁽⁸⁾ The point is that belonging to a group is the normal way of realising and magnifying the social self. However, having suggested this feasible solution to the problem Mead failed to develop it and it is therefore to other writers that one must look for a full understanding of the importance of groups for identity formation and articulation.

The groups Mead referred to have been called "reference groups" by others. Reference groups are generally considered as those groups and their attitudes that are significant for the socialisation of the individual. The

term was coined by H. H. Hyman and used with great precision by Stouffler and his associates in their studies of relative deprivation in the American army.⁽⁹⁾ More recently, Tamotsu Shibutani has been using the term in an illuminating way. According to him a reference group can be:-

- (a) That group which serves as a point of reference in making comparisons or contrasts, in forming judgements about one's self or one's status.
- (b) That group in which one desires to participate or aspires to.
- (c) Any collectivity real or imagined, envied or despised, whose perspective is assumed by the actor.⁽¹⁰⁾

Shibutani found the last definition to be of the greatest heuristic value. In a later revised version of his 1955 essay he offered the following definition:-

A reference group is that group whose presumed perspective is used by an actor as the frame of reference in the organisation of his perceptual field. A reference group is an audience consisting of real or imaginary personifications to whom certain values are imputed. It is an audience before whom a person tries to maintain or enhance his standing.⁽¹¹⁾

The perspective of a reference group need not be the "real" one of that group, neither must the group be real. A reference group can therefore be a social construct transcending the limitations of the given social

structure. Shibutani argued that:-

Each social world then is a cultural area, the boundaries of which are set neither by territory or formal group membership, but as the limits of effective communication. (12)

This picture is similar to that of Georg Simmel who depicted individuals as being at the centre of intersecting circles drawn in a situation of social conflict. (13) This general situation can only be understood or defined with reference to these collectivities.

The importance of defining the situation has been highlighted by W. I. Thomas, who argued:-

Preliminary to any act of behaviour is always a stage of examination and deliberation which we may call the definition of the situation. (14)

Defining the situation or weighing up the pros and cons of acting in a particular way would seem to be an essential precursor to behaviour.

Shibutani made the link between reference groups and social behaviour thus:-

In the analysis of the behaviour of man in mass societies the crucial problem is that of ascertaining how a person defines a situation, which perspective he uses in arriving at such a definition, and who constitutes the audience whose response provide the necessary confirmation and support for his position. This calls for focussing attention upon the expectations the actor imputes to others, the communication channels in which he participates and relations with those with whom he identifies himself. (15)

It would appear that defining the situation is not only a precursor but also a determinant of social action. This relationship is aptly summed up in the Thomas Theorem that "if men define situations as real they are real in their consequences". This insight is of some importance to this thesis and can be seen operating in the similar problematic facing W. I. Thomas and F. Znaniecki in their analysis of phenomena thrown up by Polish peasants migrating from Europe and settling in America.⁽¹⁶⁾ All during this process the "Poles" chose reference groups from both inside and outside of America which had a decisive effect on their behaviour.

R. K. Merton developed a similar formula which he called the "self-fulfilling prophecy". Without subscribing fully to Merton's thesis, it is worth observing what he had to say on this particular subject:-

Men respond not only to the objective features of a situation but also and at times primarily to the meaning this situation has for them. And once they have assigned some meaning to the situation, their consequent behaviour and some of the consequences of that behaviour are determined by that ascribed meaning ... The self-fulfilling prophecy is, in the beginning, a false definition of the situation evoking a new behaviour which makes the original false conception come true.⁽¹⁷⁾

The "objective features" of the situation obviously refer to the structural and particularly the political features. The most powerful groups in society are most likely to fulfil their prophecies and hinder or retard the fulfilment of others. This political dimension which is an essential component of this thesis is not being overlooked but is, as it were, bracketed for later development.

Several other writers have shown the importance of reference groups and related definitions of the situation as cues to behaviour (including the decision not to act). W. G. Runciman used this analysis to show how expressed grievances among lower classes in Britain came to be disproportionate to the amount of inequality in society. He found that "oppressed" members of the society compared themselves with people like themselves and thought that they were faring well and so had little incentive to protest about their social conditions.⁽¹⁸⁾

In a different context T. S. Kuhn showed how among natural scientists reference groups helped to decide whether or not increasing anomalies would be dismissed as irrelevant or used as guides to a revolutionary shift from an old to a new paradigm.⁽¹⁹⁾

This emphasis on the meanings collectively attributed to phenomena, particularly the self, has taken us fully into the field of the "Sociology of Knowledge". Peter Berger, writing in the Sociology of Knowledge tradition, recognised this link between the two approaches and observed:-

... it is rather remarkable that the theoretical affinity between the Sociology of Knowledge and Social Psychology in the Meadian tradition has not been widely recognised.⁽²⁰⁾

For him, the "social construction of the self" as shown by Mead is closely linked to the "social construction of reality" in general, as shown by Alfred Schutz. He argued that whereas Symbolic Interaction is concerned with the dialectical relationship between the self and society, the Sociology of Knowledge is concerned with a related but broader dialectic - that between the "Worlds" in which individuals live and the social structure. For him, the social self or identity is an essential part of a wider socially constructed

reality which acts back on society. Also at a certain level of sophistication, theoretical models have what he called "self realising potency" (like Merton's self-fulfilling prophecies).

Having established the link between Symbolic Interaction and the Sociology of Knowledge, it is legitimate to draw selectively from the latter in order to amplify the theoretical model being developed in this thesis. The Sociology of Knowledge has many tributaries to be found in the works of Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Scheler, Mannheim and Schutz. Without minimising the real theoretical differences between these writers it is fair to say that they all treat ideas or knowledge as epi-phenomenal and social structure as the true underlying reality. But it was Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann who emphasised the dialectical relationship between socially constructed reality and the social structure, thereby placing the Sociology of Knowledge at the centre of Sociological Theory.

Berger and Luckmann defined reality as "a quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognise as having a being independent of our own volition" and knowledge as "the certainty that phenomena are real and that they possess specific characteristics".⁽²¹⁾ To have knowledge about something is to be certain of its reality and to be able to "take it for granted". They argued that this "taken-for-grantedness" is embedded in everyday language which gives meaning and continuity to human life. An analysis of ordinary people's language is therefore an effective means of understanding their lives and the realities associated with them.

Berger and Luckmann stressed that these realities are socially constructed but acquire a thing-like nature for reasons to do with man's assumed need for security. They accounted for reality by means of the three moments

of the dialectical process namely:-

- (a) "Externalisation".
- (b) "Objectivation".
- (c) "Internalisation".

This complex process showing how man is both creator and product of social reality is the key to their work. They explained that since all human activity is subject to habituation, institutionalisation occurs whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualised action by types of actors. In other words, actions become roles which are the building blocks of institutions, which taken together, constitute society. This on-going process appears to the observer or the newcomer to be thing-like, external and coercive. A creation of man thus becomes an object to him. Later this is internalised as objective reality with unquestionable authority during the early stages of socialisation.

It was the apprehension of human creations as though they were things which Berger and Luckmann referred to as "reification". They argued that reification makes man forget his own authorship of the human world and the dialectical relationship between what men think and do. However, they recognised that reification served the useful function of helping man to forget the precariousness of his socially constructed reality and escape the "horror" of learning that the taken-for-granted world is contingent and vulnerable. This precariousness is reduced by legitimating socially constructed reality by means of certain cognitive and normative mechanisms. First, the socially constructed reality is linked to "plausibility structures" defined as "the specific social base and social process required for the maintenance of reality". And second, socially constructed reality is given permanence by being justified in terms of a "symbolic universe" which transposes an empirical community on to

a cosmic plane. Every day reality consequently appears to be what it is by supernatural design, and as inevitable.

Having debunked and demythologised popular conceptions of reality in this way, Peter Berger made the following plea:-

The sociological understanding ought always to be humanising, that is, ought to refer back the imposing configurations of social structure to the living human beings who have created them. ⁽²²⁾

This admonition to take cognizance of the social structure as well as the creative and purposeful endeavours of human actors is resonant with the theoretical contributions to sociology of C. Wright Mills ⁽²³⁾ and above all Max Weber ⁽²⁴⁾. The avoidance of mono-causal explanations is the hallmark of Weberian Verstehen sociology which deals with the "elective affinity" between ideas, social action and social theory. Without elaborating on the wider issues of Weberian theories and methods, suffice it to say that his inspiring work on the development of capitalism in Western societies has helped to establish the principle that sociologists must give explanations which are adequate on the level of meaning as well as being causally adequate ⁽²⁵⁾. This principle underpins the argument of this thesis that the social structure together with whatever social constructs, must be taken into consideration when analysing the formation of identity.

It has already been argued that the social structure does not absolutely determine a person's identity, for identity is not a mere reflection of the position a person holds or the roles he plays in society's institutional orders. The social structure gives or denies plausibility to the socially constructed reality within which identity is located. On the other hand, the

social structure was presented as relatively malleable and amenable to change.

In trying to reconcile this apparent dilemma it is necessary to pay attention to the propensity for the definition of reality of the most powerful groups and categories in society to ossify or reify and to exert pressure on others to conform. This conformity is sought by means of political coercion and cognitive manipulation. There is an abundant literature dealing with these processes and debating whether or not the powerful succeed in convincing the powerless that the status quo is legitimate and just. It should however be clear by now that the theoretical frame of reference being developed holds as axiomatic the universal need for man to consider and present himself in the most favourable light despite the fact that he may experience low social placement in the given society, and hence that efforts by dominant or super-ordinate strata or groups to convince these incumbents that such is their rightful place are not always successful.

Several writers have stressed this political dimension of identity formation and articulation. For example, Ralph Turner observed:-

The restricting impact of the consistency norm on behaviour tends to be greater under conditions of dominance, whether authoritarian or instrumental, when participants are sensitised to interpret deviations from the standard roles as symbolic denials of the dominance - submission relationship. (26)

In situations of domination, considerable effort is expended to ensure that people are sensitised to interpret "unexpected" behaviour and those acting in such a way as "deviant", and at the same time these "deviants"

are conditioned to accept this definition. This process takes place within the major institutions of society. This social control function was analysed by E. W. Burgess, thus:-

The institutions of a society - economic, educational, religious, political - act in general to maintain the existing values ... The mores are the dominant values of a society. They are accepted as the conduct making for the welfare of a society. They have the acceptance of the great majority of the members of society or of its dominant classes. Deviations from them are condemned and entail social if not legal penalty. (27)

But despite this, an endemic tension remains which expresses itself not only in the private domain but in public, socially constructed forms. Howard Brotz's explanation is relevant here:-

No society can so control a man's mind that it cannot prevent him from making a private judgement about the worth of himself and others, and very few if any, do not think that they are better than they are actually treated ... But for social stratification to emerge it must be more than completely subjective or private. It must be social. It must, that is, rest upon shared opinions which thus presupposes some institutions or more or less informal groups to fix them and to be their carriers. (28)

This passage succinctly shows the difference between that understanding of identity which is being rejected and that being proposed in this

thesis.

When Peter Berger and associates directed their attention to identity per se they argued that the structures of modernity, particularly technological and bureaucratic institutions and their related components of consciousness have undermined religion and the traditional plausibility structures that provided certainty amid the exigencies of the human condition. They found that modern society was characterised by a pluralisation of social life-worlds which forced the individual to reflect on the meaning of life and in particular the self. They concluded that there is a built-in identity crisis in the contemporary situation.

The reciprocity between individual and society, between subjective identity and objective identification, now comes to be experienced as a sort of struggle ... Institutions cease to be the home of the self; instead they become oppressive realities that distort and estrange the self. (29)

They argued that this problem, the dichotemisation between private and public spheres was solved by emphasising experiences in the private sphere and using private activities to compensate for the discontents brought about by the large structures of modern society. Hence:-

A specific private identity provides shelter from the threats of anonymity ... A limited number of highly significant relationships, most of them chosen voluntarily by the individual, provides the emotional resource for coping with the multi-relational reality outside. (30)

However, as a consequence of investing heavily in the private sphere, it becomes more and more like the public sphere and does more than merely enable the individual to cope. In turn:-

The private sphere, originally serving as a refuge from the discontents of modernity now gives birth to violent reactions against the structures generating these discontents. (31)

This metamorphosis is associated with categorical reclassifications of all elements of reality, of all that makes up a "Weltanschauung" within which identity is embedded. And it brings with it the possibility of liberation from social and political oppression.

It is such an understanding of identity in relation to its social context and the dialectic relationship between the two that distinguishes the sociologically adequate from inadequate treatment of the subject. And it is from this position that the other literature on identity will be approached with the intention of gleaning more insights to clarify this complex concept further and to contribute towards an operational definition of it. The literature can be dealt with under four headings according to which aspect of the subject has been stressed ... namely:-

- (a) Identity formation.
- (b) Social placement and identity.
- (c) Identity change.
- (d) Behaviour emanating from identity assertion.

This classification is borrowed by J. W. Kinch who used these

categories to construct the following theory of identity:-

The actual responses of others to the individual will be important in determining how the individual will perceive himself; this perception will influence his self concept which in turn will guide his behaviour. (32)

Having shown the importance of identity for social behaviour Kinch failed to explore the social ramifications of identity formation and maintenance. However, Kinch's categories provide a useful framework for a cursory review of the literature.

(a) IDENTITY FORMATION

Erik Erikson is reputed to have brought the problem of identity into the limelight of sociology. He distinguished between three kinds of identity, namely:-

- (i) Identity per se, which suggested a name and position in society.
- (ii) Personal identity, which he described as a subjective sense of continuous existence and a coherent memory.
- (iii) Psychological identity, which had even more elusive characteristics, being at once subjective and objective, individual and social.

Even though he recognised the importance of social processes in the formation of identity he was more concerned with the "givens". For him identity generally:-

... expresses such a mutual relation in that it connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself (self sameness) and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others. (33)

The key terms here are "persistent" and "essential". This allows for little real change in identity. Indeed Erikson argued that the core of identity which he called "ego identity" is developed during childhood as a result of social experiences and remains virtually fixed for the rest of life. Hence:-

Identity formation arises from the selective repudiation and mutual assimilations of childhood identifications and their absorption in a new configuration, which in turn is dependent on the process by which a society (often through sub-societies) identifies the young individual, recognising him as somebody who had to become the way he is and who, being the way he is, is taken for granted. (34)

This pre-occupation with childhood indentations is the major defect of Erikson's thesis which can be refuted with evidence drawn from that increasing number of adults who migrate across cultures and societies and experience major changes in their identity.

Allen Wheelis highlighted this point in his attack on psychoanalysis when he observed:-

Identity is not, therefore, to be found; it is to be created and achieved. (35)

He defined identity as ...

... a coherent sense of self. It depends upon the awareness that one's endeavours and one's life make sense, that they are meaningful in the context in which they are lived. It depends also upon stable values, and upon the conviction that one's actions and values are harmoniously related. It is a sense of wholeness, of integration, of knowing what is right and what is wrong and of being able to choose. (36)

This quest for meaning, stable values and a purpose in life is undoubtedly an adult enterprise and becomes more acute as society changes. Security is invariably sought in the private collectivities referred to by Peter Berger et. al. above.

Another major contributor to the literature is Erving Goffman. He classified identities as:-

- (i) Virtual social identity or the character we impute to the individual.
- (ii) Actual social identity or the category and attributes he could in fact be proved to possess.
- (iii) Personal identity, or the positive marks or identity pegs, and the unique combination of life-history items forming a dossier.
- (iv) Ego identity, or the subjective sense of one's own situation and worth. (37)

These distinctions and the reservation about "actual social identity" are essential to Goffman's work which depicts the individual as, to all intents and purposes, accepting the identity imputed to him. Goffman's work however, is primarily to do with social placement and its impact on

identity.

(b) SOCIAL PLACEMENT AND IDENTITY

Goffman saw the individual as being placed - given an identity - in every encounter:-

When an individual enters the presence of others, they commonly seek to acquire information about him already possessed. Many sources of information become accessible and many carriers (or sign vehicles) become available for conveying this information ... untested stereotypes may be applied to him. (38)

Needless to say, the mass media are important sources of information about the particular actor. This insight is a useful contribution by Goffman. His treatment of inmates of "total institutions", stigmatized members of society, the "mark" of the criminal, displays a measure of sensitivity to this process. (39) Goffman generally presents the massively conformist demands of society as confronting the individual as oppressive. And yet he realises that there is a basic need for the individual to present himself in the most favourable light, "to keep his chin up and make the best of it". Inevitably there is tension. One constantly expects Goffman to investigate all the means of reducing this tension and resolving the conflict. But instead Goffman concentrates on portraying the individual as a frivolous actor performing little rituals and exerting considerable effort on impression management. In all public arenas one sees Goffman's actors putting on a performance which upholds the official definition of the situation and the central values of society. Their real or genuine identity is only displayed on the back stage and seldom impinges on the social structure. The idea of those defined as

"deviant" joining groups and exerting pressure on established institutions is foreign to Goffman's thinking.

In contrast to Goffman's treatment of appearance as engineered to mislead is G. P. Stone's analysis of appearance as a reliable cue to identity. In doing so he offered an interesting definition of identity:-

Almost all writers using the term imply that identity establishes WHAT and WHERE the person is in social terms. It is not a substitute for the word self. Instead when one has identity, one is situated - that is cast in the shape of a social object by the acknowledgement of his participation or membership in social relations. One's identity is established when others place him as a social object by assigning him the same words of identity that he appropriates for himself or announces. It is in the coincidence of placements and announcements that identity becomes a meaning of the self and often such placements and announcements are aroused by apparent symbols such as uniforms. (40)

Stone argued that even before there is discourse, identities are announced by means of outward appearances, according to which people are placed, attitudes anticipated and behaviour predicted. If skin colour is taken as such a symbol it follows that if, for whatever reason, certain values and modes of behaviour are associated with this, then the coincidence of placement and announcement would not be automatic. In the next Chapter the historical factors making it highly probable that black-skinned people would

experience identity problems in British society will be discussed.

Helen Lynd developed the theme of linkage by treating identity as the correspondence between the inner and outer worlds. As the outer world becomes more complex and unstable this correspondence becomes problematic. Hence:-

One may transgress no code, commit no prescribed act, meet all the standards of society and of the experts in personality and yet feel a meanness or inadequacy which violates the core of oneself.⁽⁴¹⁾

The sudden awareness of the incongruity between oneself and the social situation finds expression in what Lynd called "feelings of shame". For her, shame is based upon "disapproval coming from outside, from other persons" and is in effect a wound to one's self-esteem. It interrupts an unquestioning, unaware sense of oneself and ushers in a painful feeling of being in a situation that incurs the scorn or contempt of others. Her calculus of shame shows the growth of awareness of the problem of identity:-

The greater the expectation, the more acute the shame, the greater the discrepancy between one's image of oneself and the image others have of one, the more one has to put on a brave face.⁽⁴²⁾

An interesting point here is that the discrepancy or mis-match does not lead to "guilt" which is based on the internalisation of the dominant values. Instead the individual is "shamed", he recognises the external sources, of the problem and responds appropriately. Lynd suggests that the shamed

individual tries desperately to convert this shame into "pride" which is basically "the defiance of shame". In doing so the individual draws on the values of his "exalted" reference group. However, because Lynd is primarily concerned with the analysis of shame she fails to develop a case for the resolution of the problem.

O. Klapp also treated identity as being a social construct closely related to the social placement of the individual. He defined identity as a symbolic matter, a measure attached to a person, or which he is able to attach to himself, according to the responses he gets from others. Hence identity is a socially confirmed concept of the self or all those things which a person may legitimately or reliably say about himself - his status, his name, his personality, his past life. It therefore requires a certain conjuncture or coincidence between what a person claims for himself and where others place him. Identity problems arise when there is a discrepancy between these two requirements, from defective symbolic responses of one kind or another. Klapp listed the symptoms of identity problems as:- (43)

- (i) Feelings of being blemished or stigmatised.
- (ii) Self-hatred.
- (iii) Over sensitivity.
- (iv) Excessive self-concern or narcissism.
- (v) Feelings of alienation.
- (vi) Feelings of unrealised potential.
- (vii) Hankering to be someone else.
- (viii) Excessive consciousness of role-playing.
- (ix) Excessive other-directedness.
- (x) Absence of grounds of one's self-assurance.
- (xi) Ethical dilemma.
- (xii) Despair.

These symptoms, particularly that of a feeling of unrealised potential, have been repeatedly encountered during the research for this thesis. However, the solutions offered by Klapp are less true to the reality of my respondents and interactants. Klapp suggested that identity problems are solved by "existentialism, insulationism, sectarianism and plunging into encounters of one sort or another in an open manner". The rationale for such behaviour, defined by society as deviant, was given by Klapp to be:-

If the social order denies me a feeling of integrity as a person, something is wrong with it, therefore I have the right to go outside its codes to the extent necessary to find myself. ⁽⁴⁴⁾

This deviant behaviour was considered by Klapp as an individual effort to find "higher" experience by those who felt cheated.

When Klapp's analysis is subjected to thorough scrutiny it transpires that he is concerned with those individuals who have a tolerable identity but who consider the world as "banal" and therefore embark on a search for "higher", that is, religious experiences. He has little to say about those members of society who are denied a basic identity because of the intolerable "virtual social identity" attributed to them by society.

(c) IDENTITY CHANGE

It should be clear by now that an element of the argument being developed is that identity change is liable at any point in one's life history and not restricted to adolescence. Even though those experiencing radical change in their identity are prone to reinterpret their life history

to show continuity, there is usually a point at which change can be objectively identified. Those writers who have concentrated on identity change emphasise the radical break or departure from old identities and the heavy reliance on significant others or reference groups during the metamorphosis.

Among these would be A. L. Strauss who defended the case by stating that:-

Personality theories ought not to hide behind the notion that changes in later life are merely variants of earlier more basic developments. (45)

Strauss used the change of name as an indication of adults making a drastic break with their past identity. For him:-

Terminological shifts necessitate, but also signalise, new evaluations: of self and others, of events, acts and objects; and the transformation of perception is irreversible; once having changed, there is no going back. One can look back but he can evaluate only from his new status. (46)

Such a break with the past (observed time and again while collecting the data for this thesis) amounts to a "status passage" and is preceded by shock, chagrin, anxiety, tension, bafflement and self-questioning. These abnormal states are corrected by heavy involvement in groups. According to Strauss:-

... one gathers around him those supporters who validate his conception of himself from corrosive criticism, as well as from perversely frightening promises of liberation from a current self.⁽⁴⁷⁾

When this support is guaranteed one is able to make a massive frontal attack on old identities now seen as stereotypes. The new man disowns those inconsistent aspects of his former self - as well as those structures and agents defending the old situation.

H. Garfinkel analysed identity in the same manner:-

A new identity does not involve the supplanting, substitution or supplementation of the old identity but its destruction and replacement by a new one ... In the social calculus of reality representations and tests, the former identity stands as accidental. What he is now is what after all he was all along.⁽⁴⁸⁾

This passage clearly demonstrates that reality and its key-stone, identity, are socially constructed. Several writers have indicated how this operates in cases familiar to sociology.

Irwin Deutcher, for example, showed how reference groups helped ordinary people to become delinquents:-

Misbehaviour is of the same nature as any other kind of behaviour and arises through the same general processes of socialisation. Regardless of personal traits and characteristics, any individual given the proper configuration of

circumstances and associations can become a criminal, a drug addict, a drunk, a delinquent. (49)

And indeed, Daniel Glazer developed this insight into "the differential identification theory of crime" to explain much of the crime in modern society:-

A person pursues criminal behaviour to the extent that he identifies himself with real or imaginary persons from whose perspective his criminal behaviour seems acceptable. (50)

Criminal behaviour would seem to be normal for those committed to crime.

Similarly, Howard Becker has shown how new marihuana smokers depend on the company and perspectives of fellow smokers for a rationalisation of their past, present and future. This enables them to "flout society's basic values and norms" in a way they would not have done before. (51)

Even in the status passage associated with old age there is a need for individuals to have significant groups to support and normalise new identities. Ruth Cavan in analysing people's adjustment to old age observed:-

The necessary elements for forming, maintaining or modifying self-conceptions are, socially approved self-images and social roles for their expression, and a group that supports these self-images and roles. To achieve or modify a self-image, the person must value the group's evaluation of himself. He will then incorporate within himself the self-image approved by the group. He will need continued

membership and the opportunity to enact an appropriate role. (52)

In society at large voluntary associations, informal groupings or more rigid institutions serve this function. They therefore constitute an essential factor in the analysis of identity.

(d) BEHAVIOUR

Underlying the above treatments of identity was the suggestion that identity is a precondition and an important determinant of decisive social action. Indeed most writers on identity in sociology realise the importance of this state of well-being and the social consequences deriving from the formation and assertion of identity. But one of the most powerful treatments of the subject is that of Nelson Foote.

Foote argued that role theory suffered from its inception from a lack of a satisfactory account of motivation. Accepting that one learns many more roles than one ever plays overtly and that roles do not provide their own motives, he wanted to know why some individuals play certain (often proscribed) roles with great energy and enthusiasm. Foote made the following proposition:-

The reason why he limits his real or realistic behaviour to a selected few of all the roles he has learned is that he knows and defines only these certain ones as his own. And he can only ascertain which role is his in each situation by knowing who he is with considerable conviction and clarity, if his behaviour is to exhibit definiteness and force, which is to say, degree of motivation. (53)

The highly motivated individual "identifies" with those roles he considers as his own. Foote defined "identification" as "the appropriation of and commitment to a particular identity or series of identities". He argued that identities are symbolised by names, and hence classifications and language in general, are important factors in the study of identity:-

If regularities in human behaviour are organised responses to situations which have been classified more or less in common by actors in them, then names motivate behaviour. It is (therefore) by analysis of the function of language and especially of names ascribed to categories of people, that we can dispense with predispositions and yet maintain a theory of motivation subject to empirical testing - not throwing the baby out with the bath water as the positivists do. (54)

Elaborating on the importance of naming among human beings Foote observed:-

Every man must categorise his fellows in order to interact with them. We never approach another person purely as a human being or purely as an individual ... A rose by any other name may smell as sweet, but a person by another name will act according to that name. The regularities in our behaviour toward him are necessarily based on our expectation of regularities in his behaviour. The regularities in his behaviour toward us are in turn based in the same way upon his sharing our conception of his identity and his expectation that we share his conception of his identity. (55)

This reciprocity is an essential aspect of human society. Functionalists would even go further and argue that society is only possible when this occurs. However, the empirical evidence shows that this relationship often breaks down and that there are occasions when there is a mis-match in the conceptions of identities. If the expected reflections do not come from others then the actor questions his self-worth and major identity problems set in with certain consequences. According to Foote:-

When doubt of identity creeps in, action is paralysed. Only full commitment to one's identity permits a full picture of motivation. Faith in one's conception of one's self is the key which unlocks the physiological resources of the human organism, releases the energy ... to perform the indicated act. Doubt of identity, or confusion, where it does not cause complete dis-orientation, certainly drains action of its meaning, and thus limits mobilisation of the organic correlates of emotion, drive and energy which constitute the introspectively-sensed push of motivated action.⁽⁵⁶⁾

To depend on others whose responses are unfavourable causes one to doubt one's identity and to be reduced to a pathological state. As will be shown in the following Chapters much of the literature on unpopular groups in society - that is low-status, oppressed groups - is saturated with either presumptions or "findings" about their pathological behaviour.

Foote, however, developed the argument in an illuminating way. When identity problems emerge there is renewed effort to solve them by a process of trial and error. The individual continually sounds out others

until he finds those significant ones and that situation most conducive to the development of a meaningful identity. As he becomes conscious of the transition, the process takes on a political orientation:-

Of course as soon as he is released from such preconscious bondage to any particular concept of himself, thenceforth his identities accrue from more conscious choice and pursuit of the values he has discovered in his experience ... Moreover it is only through identification as the sharing of identity that individual motives become social values, and social values individual motives ... It is only commitment to his identity which makes him subject without physical compulsion to the control of the groups to which he belongs or arouses his antagonism to members of a category construed as inimical to his category. (56)

This last quotation from Foote brings identity out of the private domain of the human psyche and fully into the socio-political arena. Hence identity becomes a key to understanding modern society and offers valid explanations for social order and conflict. In particular this treatment of identity promises to be useful in studying the definitions and political behaviour of black-skinned people in Britain.

In this Chapter an attempt has been made to articulate a conception of identity that relates to the social processes in contemporary society characterised by change and the collective search for meaning. Hence, definitions of identity in terms of the private fantasies and dreams of isolated individuals, researchable by psychoanalysts only, have been rejected not only because this is obviously a sociological thesis but because the argument advanced and the empirical evidence available suggest that it is more clearly understood in terms of a Durkheimian "social fact". (57)

Drawing heavily on the work of G. H. Mead and the School of Symbolic Interaction, the case has been made that identity has a social origin and has important implications for the study of society. Having accepted that identity and society are part of the same social process the simplistic proposition that it is a reflection of society in the minds of the members of that society has been modified to show how some identities depart from the norm. In stratified societies in which certain identities are offered to those with low status, tension arises because of the universal and perennial human need to consider oneself and to present oneself in the most favourable light. In such societies considerable political, cognitive and evaluative pressure is exerted to engineer conformity. But even though it would appear as though low status groups accept the status quo, in fact they resist in a variety of covert and overt ways.

Important factors that determine the level of overt resistance are the calculation of the sanctions that would be used to achieve conformity (if resistance means death *then it is only human to comply until "better" times*) and the choice of reference groups. These reference groups can transcend cultural as well as spatial and temporal boundaries. Their efficacy depends on the channels of communication established with them. They may also be those collectivities within which individuals live out their lives. And it is within such groups that definitions of the situation are made and the appropriate responses calculated.

Indeed this process amounts to a social construction of reality which, for reasons of security, is systematically denied malleability and contingency in the moment of its creation. This objectivation and legitimation provide a base for alternative perspectives on the status quo and related social action.

At historically specific conjunctures, political conflict emerges between those institutions and agents of control and those members of society who by necessity have to resist the habitualisation process. An important trophy and site of this confrontation is identity. Identity therefore becomes a symbol of worth and the collective political stance of those who subscribe to it. It becomes a cue to the definition of the situation and the response deemed appropriate.

And because this conjuncture occurs at any point in a person's life-history identity must be considered as liable to change according to social circumstances. Thus, those notions of identity which treat it as being formed in childhood and lasting forever are rejected in favour of a consideration of identity as an alterable social construct.

Identity has been accepted as the result of an on-going effort to achieve a correspondence between what people ideally think of themselves and the social environment within which they live out their lives. *The suggestion* that this process begins on the back-stage has been regarded favourably but not the assumption that it remains there indefinitely. In modern society the definitions of the dominant groups penetrate even the back-stage by means of the mass media and make it necessary for low status groups to fight back wherever possible. The political behaviour simultaneously undertaken in defence and as a result of cultivating meaningful identities therefore constitute an essential part of the study of the phenomenon.

The critical review of the literature undertaken in this Chapter provided a number of important points which have been used to arrive at an operational definition of identity. Henceforth identity will be considered as the conscious projection of a shared self-image and a sense of personal

worth into social reality. It draws sustenance and requires reinforcement from reference groups. It is the dynamic link between the group's past, present and future. At any point in time it offers a definition of the situation, a stance towards the status quo and the motivation for action leading to a meaningful relationship to a given society ranging from acceptance to rejection of its social and cultural arrangements.

It is hoped that these propositions about the nature of identity will become clearer when applied to the case of phenotypically "black" people living in societies controlled by white people originating in Europe. In Chapter 2 the origins of the identity problems facing black-skinned Afro-Caribbean people in modern Britain will be discussed.

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CHAPTER 2

THE CREOLISATION OF AFRICAN IDENTITIES IN THE DIASPORA

The argument that "African identities" were preserved intact by African slaves and their descendants in plantation societies in the Diaspora cannot be sustained for any length of time. The nature of plantation societies and the methods of incorporating captured slaves into such societies impinged relentlessly on the plausibility structures and the symbolic universes necessary for the retention of African identities. Indeed, slavery itself rested on the denial of African identities to the slaves.

The implementation of slavery and the establishment of plantation societies in the Americas meant that particular relations of production became fixed in terms of white superordination and black subordination. Around them presumably developed a culture within which black skin became the symbol of a low class position, low status and political impotence. And even when the relations of production were altered in the direction of a freer labour market these values persisted.

The implication of this for the slave was that he was confronted with an ascribed identity that militated against his self-respect as a human being. How he responded to this particular situation in a historically specific social formation and how his descendants operated in colonial societies developing from a slave plantation base, is the major concern of this Chapter.

It is often argued that the origins of the identity problems facing black-skinned African descended people in modern Britain are to be found in slavery - for two specific reasons. The one reason is expressed in terms of cultural continuities among the dominant sections of society and the

other in terms of political and economic necessities.

Those writers emphasising the cultural roots and cultural determinants of the problem argue that dominant sections of European culture predispose all those who subscribe to them to hold black people in contempt as being biologically inferior and uncivilised. For example, D. Brian Davis⁽¹⁾ and Winthrop Jordan⁽²⁾ doing independent research in this area came to similar conclusions. Davis summed up his study thus:-

Our information is still highly fragmentary, but it is possible there was something in the culture of Western Europe that inclined white men to look with contempt on the physical and cultural traits of Africans.⁽³⁾

This suggests that even before sustained contact between white Europeans and black Africans, "black" was a negative symbol, a contrast conception firmly established in European culture. Apparently phobias of the dark, religious imagery, geographical and cultural isolation, fear of the unknown, compounded by the fantastic stories of the few inter-continental travellers as well as the obvious physical differences between the two racial types, contributed to "black" becoming the symbol of all that was evil, unknown and despised, while "white" became the symbol of the good, the pure, the familiar and the virtuous. The carry-over to black people was assumed to be automatic.

The theme of "Negro" inferiority found widespread expression in the works of philosophers, theologians and natural scientists. For example, David Hume, abandoning his normal skepticism, categorically stated that:-

I am apt to suspect Negroes ... to be naturally inferior to whites. There was never a civilised nation of any other complexion than white, or even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufacturer among them, no arts, no sciences.⁽⁴⁾

Less explicit were statements in the Bible, particularly the King James' Version which could be interpreted as the ultimate justification of Negro inferiority. One understanding of Genesis 9 and 10 was that God himself had punished Ham and his descendants with "blackness" and servitude. And even when Solomon admitted that he was black he qualified it with the reminder ... "but comely" implying that he was unlike other blacks assumed to be "uncomely".⁽⁵⁾

This theme was amplified by John Bunyan (1628 - 1688) in the widely read "Pilgrim's Progress", thus:-

And as they were thinking about the way, behold a man, black of flesh, but covered with a very light robe, came to them and asked them why they stood there. They answered they were going to the celestial city, but knew not which of the ways to take. "Follow me", said the man, "it is thither that I am going". So they followed him in the way that by now came into the road, which by degrees turned and turned them so from the city that they desired to go to, that in a little time, their faces were turned away from it; yet they followed him. But by-and-by before they were aware, he led them both within the compass of a net, in which they were both so entangled, that they knew not what to do; and with that the white robe fell off the man's back. Then they saw where they

were. Wherefore, there they lay crying some time, for they could not get themselves out. (6)

(Emphasis mine)

Bunyan made it clear that his black man was the devil disguised in a white robe.

In the realm of science considerable effort was expended on "proving" the inferiority of the Negro. Writers like Linnaeus and Buffon argued that since Negroes and apes were "discovered" in the same geographical area that they were contiguous links in the chain of being.

Other writers held that the very appearance of the Negro provided enough reason to avoid and exclude him from "normal" human affairs. For example, Edmund Burke declared that:-

... The colour black causes an optical shock evoking emotions of pain and terror. (7)

But despite all this, a careful analysis of the literature shows that this treatment of the concept "black" and, by extension this evaluation of black people, was not universal. In contrast to Hume, for example, some philosophers looked favourably on Africa and the contributions of Africans to World civilisation. Among them was J. S. Mill who wrote:-

It is curious withal, that the earliest known civilisation was, we have the strongest reason to believe, a Negro civilisation. The original Egyptians are inferred, from their sculptures and scriptures to have been a Negro race; it was from

the Negroes therefore that the Greeks learned their lessons in civilisation.⁽⁸⁾

The evidence drawn from religious literature is suspect because it amounted to mere interpretations of ambiguous Biblical passages. In any case these interpretations were often marshalled after the event of enslaving black people when such justifications were necessary.

In science, the Linnæus and Buffon theses were never fully accepted. Several scientists have shown that there is no scientific foundation for the unequal treatment of any one group on spurious "racial" grounds. The post World War II U.N.E.S.C.O. pronouncements on these issues were widely considered to be definitive.

In the realm of social interaction there are many historical records of encounters between representatives of black African nations and those of European nations based on mutual respect. Shakespeare, for example, captured this spirit in his "Othello".

The case that white people had a predisposition towards abusing black people even before their penetration of Africa in search of profit is therefore only partly true. The fundamental cause of the negative evaluation of black people must be sought elsewhere. It is significant that Negro-phobia found widespread expression during the reign of Elizabeth I, that period of intense nationalism. It may be that the process of nation-building required a clear definition of the English as a white, masterly and generally virtuous people. In saying what they thought themselves to have been, they also had to say what they were not - for example, black, weak and vicious. This projection of "un-English" characteristics onto a vulnerable people also occurred when England was embarking on a programme of expansion. There were therefore

ulterior motives behind Elizabeth I's proclamation in 1601 caricaturing Negroes and ordering "all blackamoors out of the Kingdom".⁽⁹⁾ One obvious ulterior motive was economic.

The cultural explanations by themselves have been rejected because attitudes and evaluations divorced from related politico-economic structures are of little significance in human affairs. This is one of the important Marxist contributions to Sociology which have been more fully developed in the Sociology of Knowledge. In trying to explain why certain ideas and evaluations of black people have come together and persisted in certain European cultures, some consideration must be given to the underlying economic and political structures.

Eric Williams focussed on economic forces in his analysis of the relations between blacks and whites during slavery.⁽¹⁰⁾ He argued that certain economic forces operating in Europe, America and the West Indies together with political tensions and conducive conditions in Africa made slavery almost inevitable. In the "New World" in particular, the abundance of fertile land, the shortage of labour and the absence of machinery made the importation of unfree labour and the excessive use of force logical. When the attempted enslavement of native Indians resulted in extermination, and the curtailment of the freedom of some white people (as slaves and indentured labourers) proved impracticable, resort was made to capturing and enslaving Africans by ruthless economic entrepreneurs operating in a cultural vacuum without social or moral constraints. The enslavement of Negroes, according to Williams, therefore had more to do with the availability and cheapness of their labour, than the colour of their skin. By extension the abolition of slavery and the subsequent experiences of Negroes can only be adequately explained in terms of changes in the economic sub-structure of society.

Other sensitive Marxist writers on the subject, such as Oliver C. Cox⁽¹¹⁾ and Eugene Genovese⁽¹²⁾ explain slavery and its related "Weltanschauung" by emphasising the decisiveness of economic forces as against the role played by cultural factors. It is significant that all these European nations - despite their cultural differences - that were capable of solving the logistic problems of transporting labour across the Atlantic cashed in on slavery. The emergent ideology called "racism"⁽¹³⁾ therefore did not predate nor cause slavery. In brief, capitalism generated slavery and slavery generated racism. Racism of one sort or another would therefore persist wherever capitalist structures with foundations historically based on black slavery survive.

But economic or any other mono-causal explanation cannot fully account for the "race relations situations"⁽¹⁴⁾ that characterise the relations between blacks and whites in the Americas, the Caribbean and in modern Britain. These situations were so complex and varied that some concession must be made to the operation of the previously discussed cultural factors.

An important question that needs to be answered is why slavery and its consequences varied from one part of the New World to another. Why was just the labour of the slave exploited in one place and his whole being, his identity, attacked in another? Why was it relatively easier for a slave to become a full citizen on gaining his freedom in one society and almost impossible in another? In trying to answer this question, Frank Tannenbaum made a distinction between slavery in the British and Iberian hemispheres. He placed the British and the Dutch at one end of the continuum of severity and the Portuguese and the Spanish at the other. He argued that, unlike the British, the Iberians had the traditions, the law and the institutions to ensure that the slave was treated as a moral being and actually provided incentives and easy access to manumission and citizenship.

By contrast, in the British Colonies, the Negro was a slave who was a Negro. According to Tannenbaum:-

In the Southern parts of the United States the position of the slave was closely similar to that in the British West Indies. What is important to note is the tendency to identify the Negro with the slave. The mere fact of being a Negro was presumptive of a slave status. South Carolina in 1740 (similarly Georgia and Mississippi) provided that "all Negroes, Indians (those now free excepted) ... Mulattoes or mestizos who are or shall hereafter be in the province, and all their issue and off-spring, born or to be born, shall be and they are hereby declared to be and remain forever hereafter absolute slaves and shall follow the condition of the mother".⁽¹⁵⁾

This linking of unfreedom with unwhiteness seems to have been a crucial determining characteristic of British slave societies. So though there were obvious demographic, geographical, legal and customary differences between North American and British West Indian slave societies, there were enough similarities to enable one to draw on, and test theories developed in North America against evidence from the British West Indies.

In support of Tannenbaum, Gilberto Freyre argued that Brazilian slave society made allowance for an African contribution to be made to the culture, and that this has resulted in "better race relations" there and the strong identification of people of African descent with that society. Freyre held that:-

With respect to the arts and crafts, cultivation of vegetables, domestication of zoological species, family and tribal

organisation, astronomical knowledge, creation of language and legends, the blacks were superior to the Indians and even the Portuguese.⁽¹⁶⁾

Other people's findings tarnish the idealised and romantic picture of the relations between the races in Brazil, but all are agreed that even though the severity of slavery varied in Brazil according to time, geographical area, and the types of crops grown, that the social structure and culture of Brazil offered roles and resources that enabled the slave to maintain his self-respect and preserve many items from his African past.⁽¹⁷⁾

The consequences of the same institution in the two hemispheres were different. If we take language to be the repository of values and a guide to action, then it is significant, as Freyre showed, that the term "Negro" in Portuguese has affectionate connotations and that Brazilian letters often end with the phrase "Saduso primo e minto sen negro" (your affectionate cousin and very much your negro). In English the term Negro would never be used in such a context. To this day the word Negro lies fossilised in pejorative terms like "denigrate" or abusive ones like "nigger". The associated word black is often used in a derogatory sense.

It would therefore appear that black slavery elicited attitudes, values and tendencies half-buried in British culture and crystallised them into a racist ideology to justify the inhuman exploitation of people with black skin. The society built on plantation slavery threw up evidence in abundance to reinforce, substantiate and prove the ideological assumptions right. White observers and isolated blacks could not help but conclude that black people were inferior. For example, U. B. Phillips, basing his thesis on his observations, argued that the Negro was naturally debased, demoralised and uncouth and that slavery was the best means of civilising him.⁽¹⁸⁾ Similarly, in the West

Indies, Edward Long defined the Negroes as:-

... a brutish, idle, crafty, treacherous, bloody,
thievish, untrustworthy, superstitious people.⁽¹⁹⁾

Apparently, even black people themselves succumbed to these definitions of the situation and held similar views of other blacks. For example, there is the case of one Francis Williams, a black slave who was sent to be educated at Cambridge by the Duke of Montague as an experiment. The result was that Mr. Williams internalised the values of his sponsor's class and on returning to Jamaica showed great hatred for black people and treated his parents, children and slaves with contempt.⁽²⁰⁾

But what about the other slaves? An authoritative treatment of the effects of slavery on the identity of those who went through the process argues that slavery had a devastating and lasting effect on black people. In brief - particularly in the British Colonies - the blacks lost their African identity once and forever. This is the thesis of S. M. Elkins.⁽²¹⁾ He began by making an analogy between the German concentration camps of the 20th Century and British slavery in the "New World". He drew heavily on the works of survivors of the concentration camps, like Bruno Bettelheim and Elie Cohen, but ignored the material written by the survivors of slavery. Nevertheless, his work is stimulating for the following reasons:-

- (i) It shows the systematic nature of the mechanisms used in an attempt to reduce human beings to chattel slaves.
- (ii) It makes a contribution to the theories of control, infantilisation and dissociation.

(iii) It has implications for the descendants of slaves.

(iv) It provoked a serious review of slavery.

Elkins admitted that the cultural diversity among African tribes made it difficult to generalise but he argued nonetheless that the prospective slaves were anything but the "Samboes" found throughout the British Colonies in the "New World". In looking at the noble, heroic, purposeful and often militaristic characteristics of West Africans and their cultures he asked:-

... How is it ever possible that all this native resourcefulness and vitality could have been brought to such a point of utter stultification in America?⁽²²⁾

He guessed that:-

Something very profound ... would have had to interfere in order to obliterate all this and to produce, on the American plantation a society of helpless dependents.⁽²³⁾

He explained that this "something profound" was a series of six shocks with the "Sambo" as the end result. These six shocks were:-

- (i) Capture in battles or raids.
- (ii) The gruelling march to the sea.
- (iii) The animal-like sale to European slavers.
- (iv) The prolonged shock of the middle passage (lasting about two months).

(v) The traumatic shock of resale by means of the "Scramble".

(vi) The harsh seasoning period on the plantations.

According to him, so little attention was paid to human life during this process that something like two-thirds of the 15 million migrants were lost through death⁽²⁴⁾. Other scholars, like Philip Curtin, dispute these numbers⁽²⁵⁾ but the point remains that in trying to meet the demand for labour on the plantations, scant regard was paid to the life or other attributes of the captive Africans coming from what was considered a limitless reservoir.

The overall intention was to create the "perfect slave", or the "Sambo". Elkins defined the "Sambo" as:-

... docile but irresponsible, loyal but lazy, humble but chronically given to lying and stealing; his behaviour was full of infantile silliness and his talk inflated with childish exaggeration. His relationship with his master was one of utter dependence and child-like attachment; it was indeed this child-like quality that was the very key to his being.⁽²⁶⁾

This phenomenon contrasts sharply with the typical West African tribesman who, according to Elkins, was:-

... a distinctly warlike individual; he had a profound sense of family and family authority; he took hard work for granted; and he was accustomed to live by a highly formalised set of rules which he himself often helped to

administer. (27)

In accounting for the metamorphosis Elkins addressed himself to the perennial sociological problem of explaining how to get unwilling people to comply with certain wishes. It is basically the problem of order, of converting naked power into authority or the semblance thereof. Drawing eclectically on Freud's Theory of surrendering for survival's sake and identifying with the aggressor, Sullivan's theory of identifying with Significant Others and Gerth and Mills' Role Theory emphasising the normative nature of roles, Elkins concluded that, given the Social Structure of slavery "Sambo" was inevitable. He observed:-

... The new adjustments (for physical and psychic survival) to absolute power in a closed system, involved infantilisation, and the detachment was so complete that little trace of prior (and thus alternative) cultural sanctions for behaviour and personality remained for the descendants of the first generation. (28)

Then, adding some sophistication to the argument, Elkins made a few concessions to the possibility of slaves retaining some of their African cultural traits ... but:-

Not that he had really forgotten all these things - his family and kinship arrangements, his language, the tribal religion, the taboos, the name he had once borne and so on - but none of it any longer carried much meaning. The old values, the sanctions, the standards, already unreal, could no longer furnish him guides for conduct, for adjusting to the expectations of a completely new life. Where was

he to look for new standards, new cues - who would furnish them now? He could now look to none but the master, the one man to whom the system had committed his entire being: The man upon whose will depended his food, his shelter, his sexual connections, whatever moral instructions he might be offered, whatever "success" was possible within the system, his very security - in short everything. (29)

This argument, which becomes more plausible as it develops, is based on the assumption that the slave was isolated and under constant surveillance; in short that the system was completely closed. Indeed, for Elkins the closedness of the system is more important than the cruelty. It therefore follows that if the system can be shown to have been less closed than is assumed, then the Elkins' thesis would accordingly be weakened.

Kenneth M. Stamp, a major authority on slavery showed that Elkins' analysis is incomplete. In reviewing the Samboification thesis he observed:-

Here then was the way to produce the perfect slave: accustom him to rigid discipline, demand from him unconditional submission, impress on him his innate inferiority, develop in him a paralysing fear of white men, train him to adopt the master's code of good behaviour, and instill in him a sense of complete dependence. This at least was the goal. But the goal was seldom reached. Every master knew that the average slave was only an imperfect copy of the model. He knew that some bondsmen yielded only to superior power - and yielded reluctantly. This complicated his problem of control. (30)

Controlling the slave was a never-ending problem simply because slavery was not a closed system. This was not due to the shortage of fortifications, for there was a formidable array of forces arranged against the slave, making it difficult for him to escape. Even though the slave population was in the majority in several colonies, the technological superiority of the weapons the whites monopolised, the dangers lurking in the unknown terrain, the legal sanctions and the symbolic nature of a black skin militated against slave rebellion and escape. As Genovese rightly observed:-

In general the balance of forces was such that revolt meant suicide. (31)

Ordinarily the black man had to come to terms with working for the white man and preserve his humanity without always attracting hostility from the master. The methods adopted were unique and specifically related to the given conditions.

One mode of accommodation was what appeared to be a detachment or dissociation from what was happening to the body (as did the victims of the concentration camps). This involved a heavy investment in activities related to the spiritual realm - individually in witchcraft/superstition or collectively in other worldly, chiliastic religions. To the observer such behaviour helped to reinforce the Sambo stereotype. But in fact this behaviour did not constitute a major departure from traditional African religious practices. G. Parrinder held that the definitive characteristic of traditional West African religions was a belief in a supreme being together with a pantheon of lesser gods and spirits, including ancestor spirits, who were worshipped whenever and wherever it was thought necessary. (32) The religious activities of the slaves therefore helped them to cope in a

difficult situation and to maintain links with their past. This theme of African retentions in the culture of Afro-Caribbean people will be developed later in the Chapter.

But there were other ways of subverting the system, of salvaging and putting together almost invisibly, various other cultural items to form a "creole" culture and community that cradled and reinforced a peculiar identity or range of identities.⁽³³⁾ This creative enterprise eventually led to the formation of distinct black communities held together by syncretic cultures that were intricately and complexly fashioned to meet the needs of the slaves and their descendants. The result was the emergence of phenomena that were neither African nor European but "creole", as can be gleaned from the following accounts.

Commenting on the American slave, Sterling Stuckey concluded:-

My thesis, which rests on an examination of folk songs and tales, is that slaves were able to fashion a life-style, and set of values - an ethos - which prevented them from being imprisoned altogether by the definitions which the larger society sought to impose ... Through their folk-lore black slaves affirmed their humanity and left a lasting imprint on American culture.⁽³⁴⁾

He argued that the system was perforated by means of magic, music, language, dance, folk-lore, religion and the arts in general, which were tolerated by the master as innocent past-times or dismissed as "infantile silliness".

Another account of what really happened is given by Roy Simon

Bryce-Laporte thus:-

We concur that the duration of confinement, breadth of control, and extent of pervasiveness of the slave plantation must have had an intense mortifying and dehumanizing impact on the slaves and their off-spring. However, had slaves fully succumbed to those conditions they would have all been zombified or psychologically dead, and to have fully resisted they would have all been physically dead or absent by way of escape, exodus or revolution. Slave literature also illustrates and implies that many more fell somewhere between the two extremes ... It is our thesis that the impact of the slave plantation is more appropriately understood in terms of alternative and varied behavioural mechanisms used by slaves rather than the prevalence of a fixed personality-type derived from the contrived, dichotomy of choices between killing or being killed. (35)

An assumption that persists throughout this passage is that the master's structures and his definitions of the situation were all-persuasive. Several scholars have found that the slaves spent much of their time in social enclaves and cultural worlds that were alien to the master. John Blassingame argued that the slaves had a certain privacy in their huts, compounds and villages some distance from the master's house, and that they had Saturday afternoons, Sundays and holidays free for black community pursuits. On such occasions the slaves did things which they could not do most of the time, that is they played music, practised religion and cultivated the arts in general. In time these activities were institutionalised and offered to the participants a sense of belonging. Even the family was strengthened among the slaves. Though a certain precariousness remained (because it was obviously not

sanctioned by Law), it was encouraged by the master because it tied the slave closer to the plantation and operated against rebellious acts (not always successfully as will be shown below). This background had important implications for the identity of the slaves and their descendants.

According to Blassingame:-

The more his cultural forms differed from those of the master, and the more they were immune from the control of the whites the more the slave gained in personal autonomy and positive self-concepts. (36)

Thus the black community bolstered the slave's self-esteem, courage and confidence and served as a counterbalance to the personal and social degradation he experienced in "white society". Blassingame therefore concluded that there was not one slave character but at least three, namely:-

- (i) Jack - who worked faithfully as long as he was well treated. He was proud, stubborn and conscious of the constraints operating against him.
- (ii) Nat - he was revengeful, blood-thirsty, cunning, treacherous and savage.
- (iii) Sambo - the congenital docile clown, the Uncle Remus, the Uncle Tom, the converted.

If a generalisation had to be made, Blassingame thought that:-

The typical slave used his wits to escape from work, and punishment, preserved his man-hood in the quarters, feigned humility, identified with masters and worked industriously ONLY when he was treated humanely, was hostilely submissive and occasionally obstinate, ungovernable and rebellious. (37)

It would therefore appear that the slave did not have a fixed identity but adopted an appropriate one from a range of clearly understood identities to suit the occasion. In an attack on Elkins, E. E. Thorpe made this point succinctly thus:-

Elkins fails to recognise properly the complexity of the slave personality. The bondsman wore many faces, of which Sambo usually was only his public and not his private one. (38)

These "faces" were fashioned and learned in the black communities. The significant others doing the fashioning and teaching were black authority figures somewhat removed from the Samboes Elkins posited. The importance of these models to the emergence of more than one identity in the same society has been emphasised by Anne Lane. Hence:-

The more diverse the symbols of authority the greater the possible variety of adjustments to them and consequently the wider the margin of individuality. (39)

Even when evidence is marshalled to show that there was a variety of slave responses to the regime, detractors from the thesis of "corporate black identity" argue that these responses were not collective nor revolutionary but

individualistic, intransigent and hedonistic, posing no real threats to the system. They argue that if the typical slave was not a Sambo, then he was a "Brer Rabbit" or "Brer Anancy" who acted on his own for his own self-satisfaction. To illustrate this I quote G. M. Fredrickson and C. Lasch:-

The slaves acquired a rudimentary sense of justice entirely within the system of slavery itself ... (which) gave rise to a pattern of intransigence which is hedonistic rather than revolutionary ... sporadic non-co-operation within a broad framework of accommodation was the natural and inevitable response to plantation slavery. (40)

These authors also suggest that this individual intransigence, this element of naive individualism is a "pathological" survival among the descendants of slaves preventing them from engaging in concerted political action.

This argument has been widely refuted by scholars like H. Apthekar. He held that knowledge of most slave rebellions and other militant co-operative ventures has been systematically suppressed because of the effects this would have had on both the blacks and the whites. The authorities feared that the dissemination of such knowledge would have inspired other blacks to rebel and also would have created cognitive dissonance in the minds of the whites.

However, one case did escape censorship - that of Nat Turner. This rebellion was planned by a group of black people many days in advance and the long-term objective of the conspirators was the liberation of the "Negro people" in general by revolutionary means. (41) The rebellion failed, but contrary to expectations, it was well publicised by the authorities. This anomaly can be explained by noting that Nat Turner's uprising in 1832 was

preceded by a series of disturbances the most important of which were led by Gabriel Prosser in 1800 and Denmark Vessey in 1822 - neither of which were widely publicised. So thoroughly was knowledge of these uprisings suppressed that T. R. Gray, the recorder of Nat Turner's "Confessions" believed that Nat Turner's was "the first instance in our history of an open rebellion of the slaves"⁽⁴²⁾ Despite the suppression, the disquiet among the slaves escalated. It was therefore decided that 1832 was an appropriate time to deter slaves far and wide by a campaign of terror. The inflammatory reports on the rebellion prepared the ground for the widespread murder, intimidation and humiliation of Negroes that followed. It was also an attempt to discredit the growing abolition movement.

A further refutation of the Sambo and related theses is the fact that considerable effort was expended on punishing slaves and breaking up groups of them throughout slavery. This prompted M. A. Lewis to declare:-

If the Sambo role were internalised, then the use of force would not have been as prevalent as the literature reveals.⁽⁴³⁾

She concluded that a viable self-perpetuating slave culture did emerge to compete with the slave-owners' authority and significance. Out of it, sprang a type of identity characterised by opposition to the status quo.

However, the most consistent attack on the Sambo thesis comes from Eugene Genovese. He observed that for most of the time the plantation was a social system with a certain vested interest in preserving life (especially after the abolition of the British slave trade in 1807), whereas the concentration camp was a particularly vicious death cell. Hence the two

institutions are not analagous. Sambo could not therefore be the only product of the system. Sambo was more like the object of wishful thinking on the part of the slave owner:-

On close inspection the Sambo personality turns out to be neither more nor less than the slavish personality. Wherever slavery has existed, Sambo also has. ⁽⁴⁴⁾

And to show how this image was also used as a mask by the slave he noted that:-

The historical record is full of people who were model slaves, right up until the moment they killed their overseer, ran away, burned down the Big House or joined an insurrection. ⁽⁴⁵⁾

This discrepancy between observed behaviour in standard situations by people who had access to a range of identities and collective behaviour in more propitious circumstances recurs throughout the history of black people in the Diaspora.

Elkins' reply to these many criticisms was to admit that Goffman's "total institution" would have been a better analogy of slavery than the concentration camp. ⁽⁴⁶⁾ Hence Goffman's range of responses or types of accommodation would have been more likely - namely:-

- (i) Situational Withdrawal - showing a fatalistic apathy, dissociation or regression.
- (ii) Colonisation - convincing oneself that life is better inside than outside.

- (iii) Conversion - internalization of the official view of oneself.
- (iv) Intransigence - non-co-operation, adopting a personal strategy for survival and vengeance.
- (v) Playing it cool - being opportunistic and two-faced.⁽⁴⁷⁾

This analysis constitutes a concession but it is still based on the psychological reductionism rejected in Chapter 1. Even when Elkins considered the Goffmanesque concepts of "back-stage" and "front-stage" his thesis fails to do justice to the evidence presented above to show that even during slavery there flourished a viable underlife that supported a variety of identities that enabled the slaves not only to cope but also to attack the system when the occasion or opportunity arose.

The last concession that Elkins is prepared to make is that there were many opportunists among the slaves who became adept actors and who were conscious of playing the part of Sambo when in the presence of the master. But he clung to his untenable position thus:-

How much of the system's infinite variety of coercions could the individual slave absorb without his finally internalising the very role he was being forced to play? ... I remain uncertain and can only repeat my willingness to settle for a broad belt of indeterminacy between mere acting and the true self.⁽⁴⁸⁾

This last comment about the "true self" refers to the mystification surrounding the "self" and by extension, identity, dealt with in the

first Chapter and needs no further comment here. But the notion of the "broad belt of indeterminacy" is a reminder of the complexity of the subject and prevents an unthinking departure into idealism. When operating in an overarching system of oppression it is difficult for members of oppressed groups, whether they be Jews⁽⁴⁹⁾ or blacks, not to internalise some aspects of their stereotype. Allowance will therefore be made for this when constructing a typology of black identities in later Chapters.

JAMAICA

The Samboification thesis, with all its implications for the identity of the descendants of slaves, has been applied to the British West Indies (more often implicitly in the form of assumptions) because these societies were built on the foundations of slavery and because they were British. Though certain key social structures and values were common to both the U.S.A. and the British West Indies, and power was unevenly distributed along the lines of race and colour, the conditions under which the masters and the slaves operated in the West Indies were such that the attempt to create the perfect slave was more likely to fail thereby making the argument about infantilisation even less tenable. To demonstrate this, historical evidence will be taken mainly from the island of Jamaica, because it is from that island that the majority of the migrants to Britain from that area originated and from among whom empirical data will be drawn to test the afore-mentioned hypotheses.

In Jamaica there were certain factors operating to cushion the impact of slavery and to aid the establishment of autonomous sources for the cultivation of a variety of positive black identities. First, the blacks were always in a majority - on average 10 : 1 - on the island and so total surveillance was almost impossible. What is more, there were never enough white people to

fill all the "non-slave" roles and hence the myth of the naturally clumsy, stupid and incompetent black was hard to sustain when black people were seen daily performing important roles. Second, there was a high level of absenteeism on the part of the slave-owners. While the master was away in England the Estate was run by itinerant attorneys and overseers. Thus there was neither paternalism nor absolute control, the conditions under which internalisation usually takes place. Third, there was initially much rivalry between Spain and England, (and other mercantile powers in other islands in the area) with the one giving support to the blacks to organise and undermine the other's regime. Fourth, there was the forbidding terrain that has sheltered dissident groups from the Maroons of the 17th Century to the Rastafarians of the 1960's.

Black authority figures abounded in Jamaican slave society. On the plantations, blacks performed the vital roles of carpenters, smiths, coopers, masons, doctors and nurses. Plantations could not function without the boilermen and drivers who were almost invariably black. These roles were often augmented by the same actors operating in the distinct institutions of the slave quarters. In the relative privacy of the slave compounds a variety of black religious functionaries mediated between the African Gods and Spirits. When these practices and beliefs were influenced by Christianity they offered more venerated and acceptable leadership roles for black incumbents.

An essential adjunct to the British West Indian form of slavery was the provision of small plots of land on which the slaves could grow some of their own food. This obviously lowered the cost of reproduction. But it also brought benefits to the slaves in that it led to the creation of a black economy that has remained a feature of Jamaican society to this day. On Saturdays and Sundays the slaves were free to cultivate their plots and to

indulge in purposeful activities that gave meaning to their lives and offered opportunities for enhancing self-respect.

The recreational patterns fashioned around dances, songs, stories and games suggest the social construction of a reality dramatically opposed to the punishing work-dominated life of the slaves. The semi-religious rituals practised on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and at Easter have been found to be similar to the traditional West African masked dances and have survived in Jamaica as "John Canoe" (or "tilt-man" in other islands). The continuity or retention is indisputable.

In establishing communities, the slaves used ostracism, derision and gossip as internal means of control. These sanctions, unlike the economic and political ones were the only ones the master could not over-rule. Gradually, social and cultural fortifications were established within which a variety of actors unlike Sambo were to be found. It was from this base that slaves made inroads into the social constructions of the master. The slaves learned how to resist the Samboification process and avoided the impact of the daily routines and conditions of slavery by means of:-

... systematic avoidance, adept lying, cunning, irresponsibility, phoney incomprehension, assumed stupidity, violent twists of temperament and unpredictability, sheer bloody-minded mulishness. (50)

The ignorant observer could have interpreted this behaviour to reinforce the Sambo Stereotype. Orlando Patterson argues that it was the inability of the master to understand the world of the slave, or to empathize with him, that has led to the development of the "Quashie" stereotype, the Jamaican version of Sambo. He thought that Quashie existed on three levels,

namely:-

- (i) As a stereotype conception held by the whites of their slaves.
- (ii) As a response on the part of the slaves to this stereotype.
- (iii) As a psychological function of the real-life situation of the slave.

Apparently, Quashie emerged as a result of the symbolic interaction between the master, with powerful expectations, and the often compliant slave. But the slave remained conscious of the act he was performing throughout the encounter, for according to Patterson, he knew that:-

- (i) The master was pleased when he played the part of Quashie.
- (ii) By playing the part of Quashie he was disguising his true feelings and gaining the psychological satisfaction of duping the master.
- (iii) Playing the perfect Quashie was one way of getting rid of an unpopular overseer - because an efficient plantation required responsible slaves.

So even though the slaves regularly played the Quashie part, they did not internalise it. Patterson concludes:-

The data in no way suggest that Negro slaves internalised the colour ideals ... If anything they seemed to have completely rejected it, were biased towards their own racial type and felt little sense of racial inferiority in the face of discrimination towards them on the part of both the white and coloured groups. (51)

However, the clearest indication of the rejection of the dominant values was the organisation and execution of violent acts against the system. If organised violence was considered beyond the capability of Samboes and Quashies then there was much happening in Jamaica to force those who held this image of the black slave to reconsider their position. From an early point in the history of Jamaican slave society, the "Maroons" broke out of the confines of slavery and repeatedly undermined the system. In doing so they left an indelible mark on the society and the character of its members. Carey Robinson summed up the importance of the Maroons thus:-

The Maroon spirit is the leaven of Jamaican society. (52)

It is true that the Maroons were used by the British to put down black rebellions in 1760, 1831 and 1865. But, nonetheless, their colonies served as models and reference groups motivating slaves to resist the system in a variety of ways. Running away from plantations and seeking refuge with the Maroons, "illegally" after 1739, was so common that in 1812 it was estimated that there were 2,555 slaves at large in Jamaica. (53)

In addition to this there was throughout the period of slavery a constant significant infusion of new Africans into the society, a process which militated against the formation of a universal Quashie identity. F. W. Pitman estimated that in 1690 Jamaica had 40,000 slaves and that between that date and

1820, 800,000 slaves were imported. However, in 1820 there were only 340,000 slaves on the island.⁽⁵⁴⁾ The constant arrival of mature Africans is partly responsible for the survival of many "Africanisms" in Jamaica, which provided the slaves with resources for the construction of an alternative world-view, an alternative reality which by definition was opposed to that of the master. It is for these reasons that Jamaica never enjoyed a single decade of peace from 1655 to 1838.

When the yoke of slavery was lifted (gradually between 1833 and 1838) all the aspirations, strains and contradictions held at bay by an oppressive regime unfolded in a spectacular fashion, a process that is not yet fully completed. Three significant successive phases can be highlighted as:-

- (i) The formation of two or three cultural segments held together by certain key institutions.
- (ii) The gradual acculturation and incorporation of increasing numbers of black people into a social order characterised by stratification along the lines of colour and a culture with a "white bias" and "anti-black" values.
- (iii) The final "revalorization"⁽⁵⁵⁾ of certain black cultural elements that were preserved among unpopular groups, without the concomitant altering of the structure of the society.

(i) SEGMENTATION

A number of scholars use the concept "plural society" as a tool for analysing Jamaican society. This concept was first used by J. S. Furnivall with reference to Far Eastern colonial societies made up of various, distinct, mutually exclusive groups that were held together by the political domination of the Europeans, and what is often overlooked, structural ties established in the market place.⁽⁵⁶⁾ In applying it to the West Indies, M. G. Smith argued that Jamaican society after slavery was split into three socially - and hence culturally - plural groups namely, the "whites", the "browns" and the "blacks". According to Smith, each group was characterised by distinct kinship, religious, educational, economic and recreational institutions as well as different material cultures and values.⁽⁵⁷⁾

In fact, reality was not so neatly compartmentalised. In post-slavery Jamaica, there were many common institutions, much miscegenation, if not intermarriage, and mounting interpenetration of cultures. "Brown culture" was especially hard to define.

After the abolition of slavery there was a large exodus from the plantations and the settlement of black Jamaicans in the empty hills which led to the flowering of communities more African than European, but definitely "Creole". This flight from and rejection of the norms associated with the plantation was referred to by contemporary writers. For example, Thomas Carlyle castigated "Quashie" for eating easily cultivated pumpkins and living an "easy life" while the plantations became "ruinate".⁽⁵⁸⁾ The scale of the migration from the plantations can be estimated from the need to import over 500,000 indentured labourers from Asia to work the plantations between 1838 and 1917. Meanwhile the number of small-holdings owned by blacks increased. In 1860 there were about 200,000 peasant small-holdings of about three acres each in Jamaica.⁽⁵⁹⁾ But this exodus and establishment of separate institutions

was restricted by several factors.

First was the paternalistic concerns of members of the master class, the self-appointed guardians of the blacks. Anthony Trollope expressed their concern thus:-

The Negro (since emancipation) has had an unbounded facility for squatting and has availed himself of it freely. To recede from civilisation and become again savage - as savage as the laws of the community will permit - has been his taste. I believe that he will altogether retrograde if left to himself. (60)

Many desperately poor ex-slaves took whatever help was offered. The Baptist Church capitalised on this need, bought up large quantities of land and sold it in small portions to the blacks in an effort to retain control over them. Many blacks also sold their sugar canes and other surplus goods from these small-holdings to the plantations thereby remaining part of the white economy and sharing important institutions.

The second factor restricting the total segmentation of the society was religious. Many ex-slaves remained on or near the plantations because their ancestors were buried there, and many of them used the Churches the whites established nearby.

A third obvious factor was that work was still available on the plantations. Many slaves succumbed to the pressure to earn an honest living in a familiar fashion without forfeiting their black identity. Several craftsmen remained.

In emphasising these factors Philip Curtin came to the conclusions that there was cultural rather than social pluralism and that Jamaica was divided into two and not three culturally plural groups, the European oriented whites and browns/coloured, and the African-oriented "blacks". He wrote:-

Of the three divisions the whites and the coloured people had something in common, as the heirs of European culture as it existed in Jamaica. The Negroes stood apart as a separate group ... because their cultural heritage was largely African ... the blacks were illiterate and left no records of their own. The white and coloured writers who left some record of Negro culture were cut off, as members of a higher caste, from knowing much of Negro life, and as members of an alien culture from understanding much of what they knew ... the result is a sketchy one-sided record, mainly touching Negro life only when it touched the life of other castes. (61)

Curtin's comments suggest a useful definition of "creole" as referring to the case in which a "traditional culture" is altered in changed conditions. The passage also suggests why the nature and history of "Negro" culture are still contentious issues in some academic circles.

Curtin developed his argument for cultural segmentation in Jamaica by commenting on the struggle for religious hegemony. According to him, the missionaries, the only group of Europeans who were in close and friendly contact with the Negroes, tried to acculturate them by means of religious conversion . But because religion was an area in which African survivals were strongest, they failed. The outcome was that there was an African take-over of European forms which were subsequently used to satisfy certain needs and serve black community functions. For example,

the Baptist rituals and organisations became more and more African and were used as bases for mounting black rebellions.

(ii) ACCULTURATION

Where religion failed, the emergent economic structures and bourgeois education succeeded. And it was in these institutional orders that the "brown" Jamaicans were dominant and through which they approached hegemony. Throughout slavery the off-spring of mixed unions were favoured by their white fathers and masters and often received European education, indoctrination and training as allies of the whites. Without their allegiance and loyalty, Jamaican society could not function. Immediately after slavery and more so during the Crown Colony Era, they gained increasing access to power.

To facilitate the spread of the new urban-based capitalist economy, the education system had to be expanded. The browns became the educators and gate-keepers of the new society. Education became an important means of upward social mobility. And because this education was European-oriented a "white bias" was diffused throughout the society. Indeed there was a close association between "education" and having a light complexion. Brown teachers acting as models for all Jamaicans, penetrated even the most remote villages. In observing the process, E. R. Braithwaite singled out colonial education as the most effective attack on "positive black identity".⁽⁶²⁾

Meanwhile the new economy continued to encroach on the physical space occupied by black people cultivating a distinct culture. As the towns grew and prospered, peasant farmers produced more for the market than for consumption. They became increasingly dependent on the brown merchants (and other non-black groups like the Chinese) for consumer goods. The inevitable drift to urban centres increased this dependence.

Politically the browns were also at an advantage. Even during slavery they established a tradition of agitation for more and more freedom and later for the vote. At other times they acted as mediators between the whites and the blacks and at all times tried to build up a strong bargaining position. It was therefore inevitable that they would dominate politics in Jamaica once universal suffrage was achieved.

Since the 19th Century there was a widespread belief in Jamaica that "the lighter was the better". The structure of the society reinforced this notion for at the top of the pyramid were a few whites, followed by a larger brown middle class and a broad base made up mainly of black Jamaicans. The effects on the upwardly mobile blacks was predictable. Katrin Norris observed:-

There is no doubt that the upper class Negro had to use visual means to indicate his class status if he wanted to be treated according to his station. (63)

The visual means used included dress, conspicuous consumption and a wife of a light complexion. According to Katrin Norris, the incorporation of black people into the upper strata required or forced the "Negro" to "despise everything that was characteristic of himself". (64) He learned to hate Negro hair, lips, eyes, nose and general habits. Herein lies the roots of the popular Jamaican proverbs "Ebery John Crow tink him pickney white" and "Ebery Jackass tink him cubby horse".

But was this belief and the other related values universal? It must be conceded that there was a great amount of cultural interpenetration during the 19th and 20th Centuries. Yet certain African-based norms persisted.

These have been extensively catalogued by M. W. Beckwith⁽⁶⁵⁾. Indeed what amounted to an alternative ethos became manifest during the 20th Century in the face of opposition from the authorities. And even though it was associated with poverty, squalour and degradation it maintained its hold on the Jamaican masses, and acted as the last safety net and a potential foetus for a new social order. By this I mean the neo-African social and cultural remnants.

(iii) REVALORIZATION

Early in the 20th Century these found expression in the form of the Garvey Movement. Even though Garvey achieved more in America than in his homeland, his impact on Jamaican society must not be under-estimated. His first stay in England from 1912 to 1914 and his meeting with "Continental" African students there undoubtedly had the effect of heightening his black consciousness. When he drew up the Manifesto for the Universal Negro Improvement Association in Jamaica in 1914 he was drawing on the rich African resources engrained in Jamaican folk culture. These were clearly expressed in the aims of the U.N.I.A. thus:-

To establish a universal confraternity among the race;
to promote the spirit of race pride and love; to reclaim
the fallen of the race; to administer and assist the
needy; to assist in civilising the backward tribes of
Africa; to strengthen the imperialism of independent
African states; to establish Commissionaries and Agencies
in the principal countries of the world for the protec-
tion of all Negroes irrespective of nationality; to
promote a conscientious Christian worship among the
native tribes of Africa; to establish Universities,
Colleges, and Secondary School for the further education

and culture of the boys and girls of the race; to conduct a world-wide commercial and industrial intercourse ... One God, One Aim, One Destiny in Africa, at home and abroad. (66)

The peculiar structure of Jamaican society and the relative complacency of the black masses robbed this message of its poignancy and relevance.

But the situation in the U.S.A. was ripe for Garveyite intervention. Hundreds of thousands of black Americans were migrating from the South to the North during the post-war depression and finding stiff competition for scarce resources from white workers. This conflict found expression in widespread racial discrimination and the heightening of racial consciousness among the Negroes. In the black ghettos the Garvey message made sense. It suggested to them not only how they could improve their material condition but also how they could overcome the stigma attached to black skin in the wider society. Garvey's relative success in the U.S.A. is therefore a commentary on certain processes taking place there.

His spectacular failure to mobilise the masses and to realise his objectives in Jamaica during his life-time were due partly to the strength of the "white bias" in the various institutional structures of that society and the allowance made for the incorporation of significant numbers of black people into the upper strata of society.

But if Garvey is dismissed for his lack of practical achievements in Jamaica, credit must be given to him for his contribution to the growth of "black" consciousness in recent years. It is claimed by scholars like Theodore G. Vincent that the "black" revolutionary movements in America, the West Indies, Britain and elsewhere are "mere footnotes to Garveyism" (67)

Garvey's influence is evident on black leaders like Stokeley Carmichael and all Pan-Africanists who believe that once a strong African nation is established Negroes everywhere would automatically gain the much needed prestige and strength and could look to it for protection and refuge when necessary. Even African leaders like Kwame Nkrumah and Jomo Kenyatta have been inspired by his preaching that:-

I am the fore-runner of an awakened Africa that shall never go back to sleep.⁽⁶⁸⁾

In Jamaica itself Garvey helped to crystallise certain beliefs and values into what can be tentatively called "Rastafarianism", the doctrine around which the Rastafarian Movement revolves.⁽⁶⁹⁾ Let it not be thought that Marcus Garvey "invented" Rastafarianism. The seeds of Rastafarianism have always been present in black communities. The fundamental tenets of this doctrine were arrived at by reason and a particular interpretation of Biblical passages. They took root and flowered into social movements at those times and in those contexts when evidence of their correctness became available.

One such occasion was the 1930's. It made sense to the average black man in Jamaica when Garvey said:-

The time has come for the Negro to forget and cast behind him his hero worship and adoration of other races and to start out immediately to create and emulate heroes of his own. We must canonise our own saints, create our own martyrs and saints, and elevate to positions of fame and honour black men and women who have made their distinct contributions to our racial history. Sojourner Truth is worthy of

the place of sainthood alongside of Joan of Arc, Crispus Atticks and George William Gordon are entitled to a halo of martyrdom with no less glory than that of the martyrs of any race. Toussainte L'Ouverture's brilliancy as a soldier and a statesman outshone that of Cromwell, Napoleon and Washington; hence he is entitled to the highest place as a hero among men. Africa has produced countless numbers of men and women, in war and in peace, whose lustre and bravery outshone that of any other people. Then why not see good and perfection in ourselves? We must inspire a literature and promulgate a doctrine of our own without any apologies to the powers that be. The right is ours and God's. Let contrary sentiment and cross opinion go to the winds. Opposition to race independence is the weapon of the enemy to defeat the hopes of an unfortunate people. We are entitled to our own opinions and not obligated to or bound by the opinions of others. (70)

These opinions were meaningful though idealistic in the context of British imperialism. Almost everywhere black people were in subjugation. And as is the wont of the oppressed, solace was sought in religion. However, the irony was that certain ambiguous passages in the Bible were open to an interpretation that could fuel a movement opposed to the distribution of power and other scarce resources in the given society, if not the World. For example, Bible-thumping blacks had long taught that the black people in the Diaspora were like the Israelites who would one day return to the promised land. They also pondered on the meaning of Psalm 68, Verse 31, which said:-

Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hand unto God .

Garvey's explanation of this riddle was simple. The salvation of black people lay in Africa. He preached:-

Look to Africa when a black King shall be crowned for the day of deliverance is near .⁽⁷¹⁾

In due course KNOWLEDGE of events in Africa started percolating down to the masses. It appeared as a fulfilment of the Garvey prophecy and a confirmation of half-believed legends that members of the black community had clung to for many years. For the first time the black masses took serious notice of Haile Selassie, a black king, the proclaimed descendant of the offspring of the union of Solomon and Sheba, who was crowned King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Conquering Lion of Judah and Emperor of Ethiopia in 1930. The day of deliverance seemed nearer. To hasten it, preachers like The Reverends L. P. Howell, J. Hibbert, H. A. Dunkley, R. Hinds and Johnson went around preaching the divinity of Haile Selassie, and their followers began to adopt the pre-coronation noble name of Selassie and to call themselves Ras Tafarians.

The University of the West Indies Report on Rastafarianism singled out three reasons for the growth of the movement in Jamaica as follows:-

- (a) It represented the coming together of religious convictions and secular needs.
- (b) It was a response to the widespread exposure of Ethiopian life in the newspapers.
- (c) The persecution of the Rastafarians by the Jamaican

Authorities convinced more and more people of the truth of the doctrine that the faithful must suffer.

(a) Convictions and Needs

There is a consensus among social scientists that the most fundamental beliefs of an oppressed people are the religious ones. In the case of West Indians, religion constitutes the most resilient aspect of their culture. The widespread nature of religious beliefs and practices in West Indian societies led the Herskovits to single out religion as the "culture focus" of black people in the New World.⁽⁷²⁾ Millenarian beliefs in the return of Christ, a cataclysmic over-turning of society and the transportation of the sufferers, who had remained faithful, to the promised land, abounded in the society. The origins, poverty, suffering and identity crises of black people in the Diaspora heightened the appeal of these doctrines. The general theme lent itself to being fashioned into an African religious Odyssey. Rastafarians consequently adapted it to meet their own needs, thus:-

The black race having sinned was punished by God the Father. Punishment was meted out in the form of slavery, conquest and control by the white man. The four pirates, John Hawkins, Cecil Rhodes, Livingstone and Grant brought the Africans to the Western World as slaves under Elizabeth I who has been reincarnated as Elizabeth II.⁽⁷³⁾

To complete the story, they held that Ras Tafari is God, the Messiah. One day, "Babylon" (white dominated society) would be destroyed partly by its own internal irreconcilable contradictions and partly by divine intervention. Then black people, by definition, a people with divine potential (since God

is black), would reveal themselves as the real Israelites and ~~make~~ an exodus to Africa, the Promised Land.

Such a doctrine gave meaning to an ordinarily meaningless existence within a social structure which, as it existed, could not satisfy the needs of the black masses. Neither was there much hope of changing it by force.

(b) Factual Knowledge of Africa

The Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 and the subsequent heroic struggles of a peasant militia against a modern army was sensational news throughout the World. The "Jamaican Gleaner" followed the story assiduously, publishing pictures and stories of Massai, Somali and Galla tribesmen with braided locks on the warpath. This gave rise to the "Nyabinghi" (meaning death to white oppression) Movement in Jamaica. Jamaican blacks, hungry for a relevant reference group, adopted the symbols of the Ethiopian warriors as their own. They grew their hair and braided it into locks; and they displayed the colours of the Ethiopian flag - red, green and gold - as an indication of identity and solidarity with the African "brethren". They soon acquired the name of "Dreadlocks".

The Ethiopian World Federation, a politico-religious body emanating from Ethiopia and affiliated to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, capitalised on this expression of support and established a number of "locals" or cells in Jamaica, from 1938 onwards. A number of Rastafarians consequently institutionalised their practices and beliefs in keeping with the dictates of this body, and became devout adherents of the Coptic Church. But this form of organisation satisfied the needs of only a minority of Rastafarians. The vast majority reserved the right to interpret phenomena and to behave in ways they thought appropriate.

Thus it can be seen how knowledge emanating from outside the given society activated certain latent forces and led to unpredictable social consequences.

(c) Persecution

Rastafarian symbols and behaviour became highly visible and disturbing phenomena in Jamaica. The Authorities responded by persecuting the Rastafarians because they constituted a real threat to the status quo. Rastafarians were in effect, emphasising what the brown Jamaicans wanted to forget or to repress - the African connection, the trauma of slavery and the psychological and social injustices of Jamaican, and most other ex-slave societies. In his analysis of that society Rex Nettleford wrote:-

Essentially, the existence of the Rastafari is a token of our tacit spiritual denial of our African past ... The Rastafarians have been the barometer of social and economic pressures in the society chiefly among that segment of the population which has long nurtured the feeling of having been wronged and deprived .⁽⁷⁴⁾

The presence of Rastafarians, indicting and rejecting a society for despising everything that was characteristic of the majority of its population, colluding in its own oppression, tolerating high levels of unemployment and suffering - at a time when strenuous efforts were being made by the Authorities to present a national bourgeois identity - elicited a predictable response. Allegiance to a foreign Government, the illegal smoking of ganja and going about unkempt were listed as the reasons for the persecution that followed. And the society was so structured that the Rastafarians themselves began to throw up evidence to reinforce the beliefs of the Jamaican elite that they were dirty, lazy and uncouth.

In 1940, the Reverend L. P. Howell bought Pinnacle estate and established a Rastafarian Community based on the Maroon Villages that existed in Jamaica. This settlement soon gained widespread notoriety for its reputed cultivation of, and trafficking in, ganja. The Rastafarians resisted the verbal attack by claiming that ganja was a sacred herb and quoted passages from the Bible to support their claim. The conflict became violent when in 1954 the police raided Pinnacle and broke up the settlement by arresting some and scattering the rest of the Rastafarians throughout Jamaica, mainly to the towns. Howell, the leader was incarcerated in a mental asylum. The U.W.I. Report claimed that it was the large-scale imprisonment in penal and mental institutions that habituated Rastafarians to crime and other abnormal behaviour by forcing them to live among hardened criminals and insane people. (75)

Throughout the period, several preachers, including Rev. Howell, cashed in on the general state of anomie and expectancy by declaring a date for the return to Africa, encouraging people to sell all their belongings and congregate on the Kingston Waterfront, and selling post-card sized pictures of Haile Selassie as pass-ports and tickets to Africa. Many rural Rastafarians were left stranded in Kingston as a result. As is quite often the case with millenarian movements, there was a grain of truth in the teachings of the leaders. There existed a 600-acre estate in Ethiopia called Shashamene which was donated by Selassie "to the black people of the West", waiting for people to cultivate it.

In the late 1950's the situation was ripe for the intervention of the latest of the apocalyptic prophets - The Reverend Claudius Henry, the "Repairer of the Breach" who returned from the United States in 1959. His activities led to a confrontation with the Authorities, a defeat for Rastafarians and a further scattering of the gullible, and an inevitable loss of faith in self-proclaimed leaders. This disturbance led to the demand for

a Report on the Rastafarians.

The Report which the University of the West Indies presented in 1960 allayed the fears of the Authorities. First, it underestimated the number of Rastafarians as being between 10,000 and 15,000. Second, it claimed that the Rastafarians were poorly organised, without understanding that apparent poor organisation enhances the chances of survival for a vulnerable minority. Third, it showed the heterogeneous nature of Rastafarians and implied that this was a sign of disunity. Fourth, it took at face value the Rastafarian greeting, such as "peace and love", as an indication of pacific intention in all circumstances.

During the early 1960's the Rastafarians kept a low profile differentiating themselves into "Baldheads", "Beardmen" and Rasta Sympathisers in order to avoid detection and persecution. Many retained their locks and gravitated to "Back-O-Wall" and "The Dungle", the Shanty Towns of appalling squalour in West Kingston. (76)

Cut off from mainstream society, they constituted what amounts to "the lumpenproletariat" eking out a living by begging, conning and various petty crimes. The Rastafarian gradually became the bogey-man of Jamaica.

In 1966 Haile Selassie visited Jamaica (and other islands) presumably at the invitation of the Authorities to detract from the belief in his divinity still firmly held by many black people. But ironically this visit had the opposite effect. It demonstrated beyond doubt the true numbers of Rastafarians (far in excess of 15,000), the strength of their conviction that he was God and above all the overwhelming need of black Jamaicans to identify with something positively African. They had seen the black God-King with their own eyes. Jamaican society could never be the same again.

The Opposition Party did not miss the point and began to capitalise on the Rastafarian potential. There was evidently a demand for a clearly defined black ethos with which the black Jamaican could identify. Certain political entrepreneurs went about meeting this demand for obvious reasons. The result was a transformed People's National Party abandoning its traditional conservative ideology and adopting utopian and Pan-African rhetoric. Popular black symbols and means of communication were used to convey new promises in the new P.N.P. manifesto. Victory at the polls was achieved in 1972 and this was converted into a P.N.P. landslide in 1976. Michael Manley, the P.N.P. leader, presented himself as the champion of Third World causes. On the way to popularity he repeated many Rastafarian demands. He was also instrumental in uplifting many African symbols into the mainstream of Jamaican life. For example, the "African Rod of Joshua" became a potent symbol and Rastafarian expressions like "under heavy manners" entered the Jamaican vocabulary. The Rastafarian music "Reggae" became the national music. Garvey was reinstated and his body returned to Jamaica amid the pomp and ceremony befitting a national hero. His visage appeared on currency notes and coins and his teachings acquired new salience.

Thus by the second half of the 20th Century Jamaica had witnessed the "revalorisation" of many traditional black symbols. But the old structure and culture were not radically transformed. The rising expectations of the masses found expression in "flight" through migration rather than "fight".

The Jamaican social structure they were escaping was typical of a society built on black slavery and with black people in the majority. The situation appeared to lend itself to a Marxist analysis and ripe for revolution. For example, Trevor Munroe and Don Robotham observed:-

Around the time of the revolt in 1938, the average size of the piece of land on which the rural poor had to squeeze out an existence was 1.4 acres ... the average size of the land held by the big land-barons was 2,000 acres.⁽⁷⁷⁾

In the process of consolidating the large estates more and more small farmers and squatters were bought out and uprooted. These dispossessed Jamaicans were invariably black while those who owned the land and other means of production and who controlled the polity, were visibly non-black. Tension was in the air.

A reasonable prediction would have been that conflict leading to revolution was inevitable. Jamaican society should have been torn assunder by the black proletarian masses rising up against the exploiting class. This would have been the case if there was a one to one relationship between social position, culture and identity. But the situation was far too complex and the society held together by cross-cutting ties.

In commenting on this structure John Rex held that:-

The overall effect is of too much overlap and interpenetration to justify us calling it a caste system and too much closure of avenues of mobility for us to call it a system of social stratification in the sense in which that term is used in American sociology. It is also much too complex involving different overlapping modes of production for it to be described as a situation of class struggle in the Marxist sense.⁽⁷⁸⁾

These themes have been fully developed by Ken Post in his authoritative account of the labour rebellion of 1938.⁽⁷⁹⁾ Three basic reasons were given by Post for the failure of this rebellion, namely:-

- (i) The presence of a weak capitalist class.
- (ii) A working class imperfectly differentiated from the peasantry or the poorest of the non-agricultural petty bourgeoisie.
- (iii) Internal divisions along the lines of race, religion, district, etc., and a diversity of consciousness.

The capitalist class in Jamaica was small partly because the society was under-developed and partly because the owners of the means of production were non-residential individuals and companies. For example, the foreign bauxite companies and many of the hotel owners were residents of Canada, the U.S.A. and Britain. They were simply not available to become targets of the fury of the dispossessed. The confrontation between the two antagonistic classes was therefore muted by intermediaries.

These intermediaries were often people who had strong ties with the masses, kinship ties as well as patronage ties. The class lines in Jamaica had become transparent by the degree of mobility allowed to the able and ambitious. Throughout the 20th Century increasing numbers of people from the lower strata had achieved upward social mobility by means of education, and political or commercial entrepreneurship. The successful black Jamaicans often intermarried with the brown elite thereby establishing links and acting as models for others. Many socially mobile Jamaicans also retained links with the land that made it difficult for them to be classified as peasants, proletarians or petty bourgeoisie. Segmentation was therefore particularly difficult.

The third reason for the failure of the rebellion was given in terms of the cognitive practices of the Jamaicans, that is the production and reproduction of the consciousness of their material existence. Though orthodox Marxists consider this realm to be of secondary importance because it does not create classes, it was however decisive in the context of Jamaica during the 1930's. Ken Post made allowance for this in his observation that:-

Within a single contradiction then, the perceptions of class consciousness may be refracted from the material relations which produce the contradiction onto some appearance of that reality.⁽⁸⁰⁾

Indeed the appearances onto which the perceptions of reality converged were race, religion and anything but class. On the subject of race, Post held that:-

In Jamaica the crucial "superstructural" factor was racial consciousness which proved a constant point of focus for perception and source of interpretation.⁽⁸¹⁾

Since members of the "black race" were to be found in all classes the class enemy could not be defined solely in racial terms. Racial consciousness merely mystified the issues. Moreover, when major collective demands were made, when programmes of action were drawn up they were invariably in terms of replacing the holders of prestigious positions, of inverting the racial order, rather than radically altering the structure of society. However, in a different context when the members of one race are systematically debarred from gaining admission to higher classes, and with little possibility of serving and holding power, racial consciousness could

have revolutionary implications - as will be shown in later Chapters when looking at the political stance of certain sections of the black population in Britain.

Post also held that Pocomania, Revivalism and Rastafarianism played an important part in refocussing the consciousness of the rural and urban poor through structures of cognition derived from the slave period and particularly the Afro-Christianity of the later "Creole" phase. In the case of the Rastafarians, consciousness was directed away from the material conditions of Jamaica onto the ancient Kingdom of Ethiopia. He called this ideology

... a false cognition of reality in the sense that between that reality and action it interposes imaginary motive forces like the will of God.⁽⁸²⁾

Rastafarians could not therefore mount any real opposition, based on their own efforts, capable of overthrowing the system. Whether or not this is also the case in Britain will be discussed in later Chapters.

In addition to all this, there was a variety of regional ideologies that ultimately refracted and atomised collective class consciousness.

Ken Post's problematic was given in terms of explaining why the labour rebellion of 1938 failed. In doing so he ignored the more relevant question of why the rebellion occurred in the first place. If it is assumed that a society made up mainly of the descendants of slaves is characterised by the Sambo/Quashie syndrome, debilitating the masses and preventing them from sustaining a movement, then the 1938 rebellion provides strong evidence

to refute that thesis. Indeed it could be argued that the rebellion was a clear manifestation of the existence of corporate black identities making powerful demands on a hide-bound system.

The rebellion also failed because there was a certain centrality of culture. The culture of Jamaica was like a stream fed by many tributaries. That there was a culture with which all Jamaicans could identify and which had the capacity to absorb almost every contribution, is best illustrated by the acculturation of Indian, Chinese, Syrian and other immigrant cultures and their bearers. In supporting this case, Adam Kuper pointed out that in a properly plural society, these immigrants would have been accommodated as communities rather than being assimilated as individuals.⁽⁸³⁾ L. Braithwaite found the same processes operating in multi-racial Trinidad.⁽⁸⁴⁾

By the second half of the 20th Century the majority of Jamaicans were subscribing to and identifying with a culture that was syncretic and uniquely Jamaican. Orlando Patterson in clarifying the concept "Creole", referred to this culture as "synthetic creole", meaning the process whereby a local culture is forged, combining elements drawn from all available sources. He explained that

Synthetic creole draws heavily on Euro-West Indian culture for its instrumental components (e.g. political, economic, educational and legal institutions) and on Afro-West Indian segmentary culture for its expressive institutions and symbols (e.g. language, theatre, music, dance, art and literature).⁽⁸⁵⁾

What then did it mean to call oneself Jamaican? What could be pointed to as peculiarly Jamaican? What were the essential elements of a

Jamaican identity? The vast majority of Jamaicans were able to recognise and accept as belonging to them:-

(A) A particular dialect and language.

(B) A kind of music and dance.

(C) An intense religiosity and certain beliefs and practices.

(D) A tolerance for a variety of family structures.

(A) Dialect And Language

Drawing heavily on the work of G. H. Mead and the School of Symbolic Interaction it was argued in Chapter 1 that language is the vehicle of a community's culture, that is the repository of its values. In the West Indies it was therefore an important weapon in the arsenal of the slave-master in his efforts to convert citizens of Africa into chattel slaves - and the slaves were conscious of this. It was also a tool used by the slaves to project their identity and to fight back. E. Braithwaite summed up the double-edged nature of language thus:-

It was in language that the slave was perhaps most successfully imprisoned by the master; and it was in his use of it that he perhaps most effectively rebelled. (86)

The slave had to learn his master's language to survive and to communicate with fellow slaves carefully selected from different tribes; but in this process he created a unique dialect on its way to becoming a language in its own right. Several linguists have found that this "language" had an English vocabulary but an African syntax. Melville Herskovits' study of this phenomenon in the West Indies concluded that the syntax was almost identical to that of Twi, the West African language. For example, he offered the following comparisons to show that Jamaican "dialect" in particular was not broken English.⁽⁸⁷⁾

Twi	Jamaican	English
Fa bra	Take come	Bring
Djuane ko	Run go	Run away
Okom di mi	Hunger eat me	I am hungry
Oye Kwasi a do do	He is fool too much	He is very foolish

Source: M. Herskovits (1941)

Here language is seen as a good example to support the argument that even though slavery had a devastating effect on the African people transported across the Atlantic, that it was virtually impossible to destroy in 300 years what took over 300,000 years to develop. F. G. Cassidy substantiates this claim by showing that the African element in the Jamaican vocabulary (let alone the syntax) is larger than all the other non-English ones put together.⁽⁸⁸⁾ This becomes more significant when it is remembered that Spanish was the national language of Jamaica before 1655. One example of the survival of African words is that of Anancy, the "Ananse" of the Akan, a popular character throughout the West Indies.

In addition to the African survivals, the language was enriched by juxtaposing certain English words to give a new meaning and by inventing new words which were often used for satirical purposes. "Buckra" (the white

man), "Babylon" (white society), "Zion" (the Promised Land) are well-known examples of the esoteric use of language.

But as formal education spread and became a means of upward social mobility, an ambivalence towards the dialect developed. The use of "dialect" betrayed one's social origin. Then when Jamaica was searching desperately for a national identity, the potential of the dialect was realised. Louise Bennett, in the face of initial stiff opposition, contributed greatly to the elevation, the renewed appreciation, of "Jamaica talk" as something approaching a "nation language" and not a mere bastardisation of the English language. Rex Nettleford, in an introduction to Ms. Bennett's collected works, credits her with capturing in poetry, her uprooted, poor, but proud compatriots' will to survive. He wrote:-

It is in poems like these that Louise Bennett tells the truth about us and tells it wickedly. (Here) ... The comedy contains the tragedy, and even overpowers it in complex forms of expression . (89)

Here is an interesting, representative example of her use of language in commenting on topical issues:-

COLONISATION IN REVERSE (90)

What a joyful news, Miss Mattie,
I feel like me heart gwine burs'
Jamaica people colonisin
Englan in reverse.

By de hundred, by de t'ousan
From country and from town,
By de ship-load, by de plane-load
Jamaica is Englan boun.

Dem a-pour out o'Jamaica,
Everybody future plan
Is fe get big-time job
And settle in de mother lan.

What a islan! What a people!
Man an woman, old an young
Jusa pack dem bag an baggage
An tun history upside dung!

Some people don't like travel,
But fe show dem loyalty
Dem all a-open up cheap-fare -
To-Englan agency.

An week by week dem shippin off
Dem countryman like fire,
Fe immigrate an populate
De seat o' de Empire.

Oonoo see how life is funny,
Oonoo see de tunabout,
Jamaica live fe box bread
Out a English people mout'.

For wen dem catch a Englan,
An start play dem different role,
Some will settle down to work
And some will settle fe de dole.

Jane say de dole is not too bad
Because dey payin' she
Two pounds a week fe seek a job
Dat suit her dignity.

Me say Jane will never find work
At the rate how she dah-look,
For all day she stay pon Aunt Fan couch
An read love-story book.

Wat a devilment a Englan!
Dem face war an brave de worse,
But I'm wonderin' how dem gwine stan'
Colonizin' in reverse.

Throughout this poem is the theme of the historical oppression of black people by the British. Of particular interest is the use of the first person objective - 'ME' - instead of the subjective - 'I' . It is true that the Jamaican "me" is phonetically the same as the Twi "mi". But it can also be argued that it is used to refer to the temporal, suffering self while the "I" is reserved for the creative self, particularly in a religious context. The Rastafarians emphasise this difference. And it is significant that the same distinction is made by G. H. Mead who distinguishes between the "me" or social empirical self and the "I" or the unknown, creative, resourceful, unpredictable self. (91)

There are several other items of the Jamaican "nation language" which would appear to the outsider to be grammatical mistakes but which are in fact consciously injected to serve particular purposes. Even the most educated Jamaican is familiar with the language and uses it occasionally to delineate certain social boundaries.

(B) Music and Dance

Like language, music and dance were important aspects of the non-material culture of Africans that were likely to survive in a modified form. There is a debate over whether the vigour and spontaneity of the singing and dancing were a carry-over from an African past or a response to the nature of slave work and an outlet for frustration and aggression. Whatever the source was, music and dancing were tolerated by the slave-master as "general merry-making" and have become important aspects of West Indian culture. It was in music and dance that suffering, sorrows, yearnings, joy and general happiness found expression. Locked up in the plaintive worksongs and the happy rhythms lies the history of black people in the Diaspora. It is in this form that such knowledge is transmitted.

Traditionally, leisure time was partly filled in by singing and dancing. During the public holidays, spontaneous expressions or organised artistic forms like the "John Canoe" took to the streets. Despite the changes in the mode of production from capitalism using unfree labour to using free labour, Saturday night and Bank Holidays were reserved for "parties". And by the middle of the 20th Century such entertainment was not only a means of enjoyment but also a means of livelihood for many.

The development of the mass media of communication contributed to the emergence of a phenomenon in Jamaica - namely the birth of one sensational musical form after another. In trying to express the hopes,

aspirations, sufferings and pleasures of the masses in the traditional way several artists used the available cultural material and blended it creatively with borrowings from abroad like the American Rhythm and Blues to produce something new. First there was "Blue Beat", then "Ska", then "Rock Steady" and now "Reggae". Each of these art forms propelled into stardom people like Millie, Desmond Dekker, Big Youth, Toots and the Maytals, and Bob Marley and the Wailers. The success of these individuals and groups has made singing and music-making the most sought after career in Jamaica.

In most of the recorded lyrics the Jamaican dialect is used as a means of communication. In essence, recorded music has become the most effective means of transmitting across vast distances a strong and unbroken culture of resistance.⁽⁹²⁾ Through it the level of consciousness of the descendants of people who experienced slavery in the West Indies can be raised. Consider these lines from a Bob Marley and the Wailers' song:-

WAR⁽⁹³⁾

What life has taught me
I would like to share with
Those who want to learn ...

Until the philosophy which holds
One race superior and another inferior
Is finally and permanently discredited
And abandoned
That until there are no longer
First class and second class citizen
Of any nation
Until the colour of a man's skin

Is of no more significance than
The colour of his eyes
That until the basic human rights
Are equally guaranteed to all
Without regard to race

That until that day,
The dream of lasting peace, World
Citizenship and the rule of
International morality
Will remain but a fleeting illusion
To be pursued, but never attained

And until the ignoble and unhappy
Regime that now hold our brothers
In Angola, In Mozambique, South Africa
In sub-human bondage, have been
Toppled and utterly destroyed

Until that day the African continent
Will not know peace
We Africans will fight, if necessary
And we know we shall win
As we are confident of the victory of
Good over evil, of good over evil.

Records like this were directly responsible for providing knowledge
and symbols for the clarification of particular identities among West
Indians and other black people because of the wider Pan-African sentiments.

(c) Religion

One of the generalisations that can be made about West Indians is that they are very religious, in terms both of Church attendance and belief in the supernatural. Statistics on religious affiliation are hard to come by and misleading because of the likelihood of dual attendance and the non-religious ulterior motives for attending Church. However, Ivor Morrish provides some figures based on two censuses held in Jamaica in 1943 and 1960.⁽⁹⁴⁾ (See Table 1 below).

The interesting observations here are:-

- (a) The variety of religious groups.
- (b) The small percentage claiming to have no religion.

It must be kept in mind that there is no "established" Church in Jamaica (the Church of England having been disestablished in 1870), and that there is thus no affiliation by default..

The high religiosity, and the nature of religion has been explained in terms of religion being the "culture focus" of the black people of the Diaspora. Melville Herskovits argues that because religion was such a powerful force in the lives of West Africans, the religious leaders were feared and so they were sold into slavery rather than killed when captured in war.⁽⁹⁵⁾ Hence there was a disproportionately large number of religious functionaries among the slaves brought over to the New World. These leaders subsequently dominated the black communities.

To constitute an explanation this suggestion needs to be complemented by an understanding of the nature of the religions the Africans

Table 2.1 Religious Affiliation In Jamaica

Religious Denomination or Sect	1943 Census % of all Religious Groups	1960 Census %
Anglican	28.3	19.7
Baptist	25.8	19.0
Methodist	8.9	6.8
Presbyterian	7.5	5.1
Roman Catholic	5.7	7.2
Moravian	4.1	3.25
Church of God	3.5	4.9
Seventh Day Adventist	2.2	4.9
Congregationalist	1.7	1.39
Salvation Army	1.1	0.64
Pentecostal	0.4	0.91
Plymouth Brethren	0.3	0.9
Friends	0.3	0.25
Christian Science	*	0.02
Pocomania	0.3	0.05
Christian Brethren	0.5	0.05
Evangelical Association	0.4	-
Bible Student	0.1	-
Mission	0.1	-
Jewish	0.1	0.04
Bedwardite	*	-
Hindu	0.3	0.07
Buddhist	*	-
Confucian	2.1	-
Other Religions	1.6	0.92
No Religion	**4.0	11.4
Not Specified	0.3	5.56

*Denotes very small percentage.

**This big increase will be dealt with in later Chapters.

Source: Ivor Morrish (1971)

brought with them and the social conditions under which they lived. From the very beginning religion and religious institutions were tolerated and later actively encouraged among the blacks.

African "religions" covered a broad spectrum of belief systems and practices. There was no polarisation between good and bad but a belief that in reality there is no absolute good and no absolute evil - that nothing can exert an influence for good without at the very least causing inconvenience elsewhere or that nothing is so evil that it cannot be found to have worked benefit to some one. As mentioned before, the traditional religions of Africa were world-affirming, postulating a supreme being together with a pantheon of lesser Gods and Spirits, including ancestor spirits, which inhabited natural phenomena and lived among men.⁽⁹⁶⁾ According to Parrinder, God was both transcendent and immanent, capable of infinite veneration and human manipulation. Supernatural powers could thus be used as both a shield and a sword. Religious practice was an everyday occurrence taking place in a dyadic and/or collective relationship, at work and at other times. The collective ceremonies were accompanied by music and dancing. Several of them involved the use of "living waters" and the majority held spirit possession to be the supreme religious experience.

The peculiar conditions of slavery and colonisation lent themselves to this kind of religious worship. Orlando Patterson showed how the Jamaican slave was able to practice his religion as he worked because it was conducive to hard work in gangs, and in his leisure time because certain activities like possession by the spirit were dismissed by the master as childish past-times.⁽⁹⁷⁾

Moreover, religious sanctions were often the only sanctions operative within the black community, giving authority and prestige to certain black

people. On the one hand was the "Obeahman"⁽⁹⁸⁾ who used his powers to bring about outcomes for his clients, outcomes which were often anti-social. At times of intense frustration and powerlessness, the Obeahman kept hope alive and sustained the notion of having control over one's destiny. The Obeahman also reduced suspicion and tension by providing scapegoats. But on the other hand, the Obeahman created anxieties and fears of being the victim of his handiwork. This fear kept alive the "Myal" movement which is sometimes called "Pocomania";⁽⁹⁹⁾ for Pocomania offered open protection from Obeah to all its adherents. In Pocomania, good spirits were invited to enter the bodies of the worshippers and to guard them from evil spirits.

The interpenetration of these belief systems with Christianity has been traced back to the coming of the Moravians to the West Indies in 1756. Prior to that the established Church had made no moves to convert the slaves because of the potentially subversive nature of a particular interpretation of the Bible advocating the equality of all men before God.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ Hence, O. Patterson could claim:-

Until the end of the 18th Century one of the most striking features of Jamaican society was that the entire slave population remained ignorant of the religion of their masters .⁽¹⁰¹⁾

Then a boost to evangelism occurred when American Empire Loyalists fled the revolution and settled with their Christian slaves in the West Indies. The significance of this development was based on two factors. First, was the demonstration that conversion and baptism did not necessarily mean manumission; and that in fact, Christianity could make an "unwilling" slave a "good" slave.⁽¹⁰²⁾ Second, black slaves and ex-slaves started proselytising among the black masses. From 1783 preachers like George Lisle,

George Lewis, George Gibbs and Moses Baker took Christianity to the hearts of the black Communities.

The outcome of this evangelical work was the creolisation of Christianity which emerged in the form of the African Baptist Sect. This phenomenon was characterised by many Africanisms like spirit possession, an ecstatic form of workship with musical accompaniment, full-immersion baptism and above all the "ticket and leader" system of organisation. In this system, black leaders were given authority over the teaching and supervision of novices and converts. The political implications of this were obvious and led the Jamaican Assembly to forbid these leaders from preaching between sunset and dawn - the only time when the slaves were free from work.⁽¹⁰³⁾ But it was difficult to administer such a law and the reality made a mockery of it. The black religious leaders continued to mobilise and politicize the masses. They were directly responsible for many revolts on the island, the most famous of which were:-

- (a) The 1831 Rebellion called "The Baptist War" because most of the leaders, like Samuel Sharpe, were Baptist class leaders.
- (b) The 1865 Morant Bay Rebellion led by William Gordon and Paul Bogle, the famous Baptist Minister.

These men helped to establish a tradition that was followed by others like Marcus Garvey, L. P. Howell and C. Henry. Their authority was primarily religious but subsequently put to political uses, thereby supporting the thesis that religion is a focus for pre-political organisation among oppressed people.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

An added boost to Christianity in the West Indies came during the last quarter of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th Century when Christianity was at a low ebb in industrialising Britain and the abolition cause and missionary work were seized as excellent opportunities to revitalise it. As a result of pulpit propoganda, the abolition of slavery and freedom in general came to be identified almost exclusively with Christianity. Factors like changes in the mode of production and the unceasing opposition and intransigence of the slaves were minimised. In any case, when slavery was abolished the slaves "gave thanks for their freedom in Churches all over the island."⁽¹⁰⁵⁾

A further intensification of religiosity came with the Great Revival of 1860 - 1 which saw the fusion of American-type fundamentalism with what already abounded in the society. It led to the revitalisation of Christianity by giving vent to powerful sentiments in the society. Barrett commented:-

The Great Revival allowed the African religious dynamic - long repressed - to assert itself in a Christian guise and capture what might have been a missionary victory .⁽¹⁰⁶⁾

The association of this type of religion with respectable and established Christian institutions in the U.S.A. amounted to a legitimation of the movement. The Evangelical vigour, support, organisation and prestige of the American Sects helped to embed Christianity indelibly in the culture of Jamaican (and West Indian) society. The phenomenal growth of the Pentecostal, Holiness, Seventh Day Adventist and Jehovah Witness Churches can be accounted for in these terms.

Thus, by the middle of the 20th Century the Churches were dominant

institutions in West Indian society providing ideologies, prestigious roles and important reference groups for the masses. Religion was of major significance to West Indians because it:-

- (a) Satisfied certain psychological needs.
- (b) Was the source of many social sanctions.
- (c) Provided several roles the acquisition of which constituted a degree of upward social mobility.

(D) The Family

The black family in the Diaspora is often dealt with either as a survival of traditional West African kinship systems or as a pathological deviant from some supposed norm characteristic of middle class Western Europeans living in urban industrial areas. Seldom is it treated in its own right as an expression of a people's identity in certain social contexts, and having its own internal logic and legitimation.

Melville Herskovits singled out the relatively strong position of women in West Indian families as the definitive characteristic and traced this feature back to traditional West African family systems.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ He argued that among the Akan and Ashanti, for example, the pull of matrilineal ties were decisive. Even in those male-dominated societies, women enjoyed a relatively high level of independence in the compounds of their husbands.

Opposed to Herskovits are scholars like Franklin Frazier,⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ Gunnar Myrdal⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ and with reference to Jamaican Society, F. Henriques,⁽¹¹⁰⁾ who blame slavery for the many "deviant" forms of the black family. Following

them a number of politicians and policy-oriented sociologists have highlighted the supposed indicies of disorganisation such as high rates of illegitimacy, weak father-child and husband-wife relationships and the general matri-centrality of the black family throughout the Diaspora.

Some writers have gone on to relate the structure of the black family to its function in a mechanistic fashion. For example, D. P. Moynihan in reviewing the effect of Federal Aid on the impoverished black community wrote:-

It was by destroying the Negro family under slavery that white America broke the will of the Negro people ... the deterioration of the Negro family is the fundamental source of weakness of the Negro community at the present time ... Unless the damage is repaired all other efforts to improve the condition of the Negroes will be in vain. ⁽¹¹¹⁾

The family is here being treated as of crucial importance to the structuring of society, of causing black people to remain at the bottom of the social pile.

Like Moynihan, Lee Rainwater attached great importance to the family but unlike him, he presented a structural analysis of the society showing how it operated against black progress. According to him, the response of black people is to internalise the dominant values and to perpetuate the stereotypes of black people. He wrote:-

It is the central thesis of this paper that the caste-facilitated infliction of suffering by Negroes on other Negroes and on themselves appears most poignantly within the confines of the family and that the victimisation

process as it operates in families prepares and toughens its members to function in the ghetto world, at the same time that it seriously interferes with the ability to operate in any other world. (112)

In developing his thesis further, he wrote:-

To those living in the heart of the ghetto, "black" comes to mean not just "stay back" but also membership in a community of persons who think poorly of each other, who attack and manipulate each other, who give each other small comfort in a desperate world. (113)

Rainwater subsequently showed how this negative black identity contributed to the process of ghettoisation on a housing estate trapping large numbers of blacks in a hopeless situation. (114)

In looking critically at the literature one is left with the question as to whether or not it is possible to talk about the black family; and whether or not the family is the paramount institution within which an identity is acquired. It is beyond doubt that slavery had a levelling effect on the structure of black institutions, particularly the family. Marriage was illegal and all illegal unions and other social arrangements for sexual gratification and procreation were rendered precarious by the power of the master to sell individual slaves when he wished. Thus, without the necessary macro-social sanctions and supports all family units were unstable.

Under such conditions the family unit was normally found to be

composed of mother and child(ren) - and even this was liable to disruption by the master. Hence, in black communities women played an exaggerated role. Women acquired a degree of freedom, independence and power in situations in which they had little or no choice. Such was the inheritance of slavery, made salient in modern times when the men have to migrate to earn a decent living.

To recognise the impact of slavery on black communities is correct: but to go on to argue or even to suggest that slavery created the archetypal and characteristic family structure for black people in the Diaspora is false. A variety of models have been made available and have historically been found in abundance and with the appropriate sanctions in West Indian societies.

Over and above the economic and legal constraints that helped to fashion the family, were certain socio-cultural factors that must be taken into consideration. On the one hand were those factors associated with traditional West African ancestor worship such as a respect for and a desire to care for the old who were soon to become ancestral spirits themselves. Closely linked to this was a love of children, and the conviction that a large kinship group was the best insurance for survival and well-being. These factors favoured the large extended family. On the other hand was the association of the nuclear family of the Europeans with success and prosperity. This ever-present implicit lesson became explicit at times. Ever since the abolition of slavery strenuous efforts were made to get black people married and to live in European-type units. The latest effort was in 1944 when a Lady Higgins mounted an abortive mass marriage movement in Jamaica to "improve the conditions of the blacks". Persuasion alone was not enough to make the nuclear family the statistical mode.

Throughout history a variety of family structures have been observed in West Indian societies, which lend themselves to the following categorisation:-

- (i) "The unstable family" made up of mother and children. The father is usually marginal showing more loyalty to his consanguinal family than to the unit of procreation. He may even become itinerant practising serial monogamy because the society denies him the resources to play the role of bread-winning husband and father. This type was found common in new areas of settlement both rural and urban, particularly where there was economic insecurity.

- (ii) The stable matrifocal family or household comprised of grand-mother, her children and her children's children together with other blood relations. In such families adult males performed the important roles of uncle and surrogate father. These men may have had their women and children living in other households. This form of visiting relationship was often a rational solution to a problem, for matrifocal families were often based on "family land" and there was a fear of outsiders alienating this land. This type of family may have become common, if not the norm, in Jamaica where farmsteads were established in the hills after slavery and women became relatively independent from growing and selling provisions.

- (iii) The nuclear family maintaining strong links with families of origin, often giving shelter and sustenance to individual relatives on both sides. The inherent tensions in such an arrangement are obvious. It depended on the couple achieving material success and at the same time taxed this affluence heavily.

- (iv) The mobile independent nuclear family escaping from the demands of the wider kin group. Dependence on kin during long periods of education and training made it difficult to adopt this way of life. Migrants to distant countries were most likely to establish nuclear units, particularly if this was the norm in those countries and there was a degree of economic security.

- (v) The joint extended patriarchal family based on collectively owned property. This type was common among the wealthy land-owners and those successful in politics and/or commerce.

This typology suggests that economic factors were decisive in shaping the family. If so, then it draws on a rich vein of West Indian scholarship. With particular reference to extra-residential, non-legal unions, S. M. Greenfield,⁽¹¹⁵⁾ G. E. Cumper,⁽¹¹⁶⁾ and Edith Clarke⁽¹¹⁷⁾ (among others) have observed that in the West Indies of the 20th Century the nuclear family has been "the ideal" and that the lack of income for men has distorted the family into the various structures encountered. With reference to Jamaica, Edith Clarke found a close correlation between the

economic bases and the common family types. As one moved from Sugar Town characterised by seasonal plantation labour, to Mocho, a peasant small-holding area, to Organge Grove, with its sizeable farms, one experienced the family types in the above categorisation.

More recently, Judith Blake tried to come to terms with the complexity of the West Indian family. Even though she seems to be pre-occupied with birth-control, she gives some insights into the West Indian family. She quotes the 1943 census in Jamaica as finding the following distribution: (118)

Table 2.2 Marital Status Of Mothers In Jamaica

Marital Status of all Mothers Aged 15 - 45	%
Single	35.6
Married	33.1
Common Law	29.2
Separated, Widowed, Divorced	2.1

Source: Judith Blake (1961)

She discovered that even though most children were born out of wedlock, their status was changed later by the marriage of their parents, for by the age of 50, over 60% of the population was married. But instead of explaining this as a peculiar West Indian phenomenon Blake attributed it to pathological causes and defined it as a state of shameful dis-organisation. She concluded:-

Everything indicates that their actual behaviour is NOT the way Jamaicans prefer to do things, but, for the lower class, their high ideals, their economic circumstances and their historical past all conspire to bring them to a dis-organised condition in which the postponement of legal marriage is linked with precocity in illegitimate reproduction. (119)

This implies that the behaviour of the Jamaican masses was based on a false identity and conducted within a meaningless context, made chaotic by naked economic forces.

A mono-causal economic explanation fails to account for the fact that many poor West Indians do get married and that some affluent West Indians refuse to get married or to live in nuclear families⁽¹²⁰⁾.

The operation of micro-social forces based on rationality or tradition or both must be taken into consideration. For example, Edith Clarke found strong ideological justifications and community sanctions for each of the types she identified. Even in Sugar Town, people were able to justify their sexual arrangements. The women claimed that marriage was the enslavement of women. The men claimed that even though they could afford a modest wedding and a family they could not afford the type of wedding celebration they preferred. In any case there is within West Indian societies enough evidence to substantiate a claim that more than one identifiable mode of socio-sexual relationship is traditional and hence the expression of a particular collective identity.

And what about the function of any West Indian family? All writers agree that children were highly valued for religious, social and economic reasons throughout the West Indies. It is very unlikely that within such families children would be socialised to hate themselves, their kin and their kind as the above literature on American blacks would lead us to believe.

West Indians migrating to Britain in the 1950's and 1960's did not travel with an empty cultural baggage: neither did they come with a rigid, inflexible, exclusive culture. The important elements of their cultural

repertoire, with respect to the family were:-

- (a) A feeling for kin, particularly the consanguinal ones.
- (b) A tolerance for various types of family structure and coherent sanctions for any one type.
- (c) A high premium placed on children.

And the safest prediction that could be made would be that initially they would conform to the British norm and live in nuclear families, but at a later point would begin to use a type other than the nuclear one as a means of expressing a particular identity.

In this Chapter an attempt has been made to refute the Sambofication thesis and its implications for the descendants of slaves, and to show how these people of African ancestry used whatever material was available in the given contexts to forge unique "creole" cultures. The key-stone of such cultures was an identity or range of identities that could only with great difficulty be called "African". It was conceded that slavery had a major effect on the identity of those reared in Africa but that instead of there being established a universal Sambo/-Quashie identity under British slavery, the slaves created COLLECTIVE identities (and the vehicles to transmit them to future generations) that were somewhat removed from the Sambo stereotype.

Evidence to support the case was drawn from various sources, particularly British colonies in the "New World". This was done at the expense of belittling the historical, geographical and circumstantial specificity of the societies. But this was justified because British/-English culture - institutions as well as values - was held responsible for the emergence of the Sambo/Quashie phenomenon.

At a later stage, attention was focussed on the British West Indies, and Jamaica in particular, because it was from that island that most West Indian migrants to Britain originated.

Since identity formation draws on historical data, a historical perspective was adopted. A summary investigation was made of the contents of the cultural baggage the migrants brought with them from the West Indies to Britain: for these were the basic ingredients that were to go into the social construction of reality in the British context. The nature of British society and the social placement of black immigrants within it will be the subjects of the next Chapter.

REFERENCES

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2. A very similar analysis can be found in Winthrop Jordan, White Over Black, University of North Carolina Press, 1968.
3. D. B. Davis, *op. cit.*
4. David Hume, Essays Moral, Political and Literacy, Vol. I: 1741; Vol. II: 1742.
5. See Song of Solomon, Chapter 1, Verse 5.
6. See John Bunyan, Pilgrim's Progress. Frederick Warne and Co., London, 1878, pp. 147 - 8.
7. Edmund Burke, A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful. Dodsley, London, 1767.
8. See J. S. Mill's essay "On the Negro Question" in Frazer's Magazine, 1850. He was here drawing on knowledge gleaned from philosophers and historians like El Bekri and Ibn Battuta.
9. See James Walvin, The Black Presence, Obach and Chambers, London, 1971, Chapter 3.
10. Eric Williams, Capitalism and Slavery, University of North Carolina Press, 1944.

11. See O. C. Cox, Caste, Class and Race, Doubleday, New York, 1948, for a Marxist analysis of these three concepts which are often used interchangeably.

12. A stimulating account of slavery can be found in Eugene Genovese, In Red and Black. Marxian Explorations in Southern and Afro-American History, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1971

13. This understanding of racism as an ideology or doctrine is taken from discussions in Sami Zubaida (ed) Race and Racialism, Tavistock, London, 1970.

14. See John Rex, Race Relations in Sociological Theory, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1970 for a theoretical analysis of race relations. According to him, "race relations situations" occur when certain identifiable groups compete for scarce resources, and are characterised by:-
 - (i) Two or more groups with distinct identities and recognisable characteristics are forced by economic or political circumstances to live together in a society.

 - (ii) A high degree of conflict between the groups where ascriptive criteria are used to mark out members of each group for special treatment.

 - (iii) Practices of ascriptive allocation of roles and rights are justified in terms of some kind of deterministic theory - of a scientific, religious, cultural, historical, ideological

or sociological kind. This may be highly systematised or exist only on the everyday level of folk wisdom or as the foreshortened factual or theoretical models presented by the media.

15. Frank Tannenbaum, Slave and Citizen, The Negro in the Americas, Vintage Books, New York, 1946, pp. 66 - 67.
16. See Gilberto Freyre, The Masters and the Slaves; A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilisation (translated by Samuel Putman), New York, 1946.
17. See for example C. R. Boxer:-
 - (i) The Golden Age of Brazil, 1695 - 1750: Growing pains of a Colonial Society, Berkeley, 1962.
 - (ii) Race Relations in the Portugese Colonial Empire 1415 - 1825. Oxford, 1963.
18. See U. B. Phillips, American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labour as Determined by the Plantation Regime, D. Appleton, New York, 1918.
19. Long thought that this was the natural character of Negroes, having nothing to do with slavery. Hence, he referred to Africa as "that parent of all that is monstrous", a country in which it was not unusual for the Orang Utang to mate with native women. For a catalogue of these prejudices see Edward Long, History of Jamaica, London, 1774.

20. See D. B. Davis, *op. cit.*
21. This thesis is developed in S. Elkins, Slavery. A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life, University of Chicago Press, 1959.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 98 - 101.
25. See Philip Curtin, The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census, University of Wisconsin Press, 1969.
26. S. Elkins, *op. cit.*, p. 82.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 97 - 98.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 88 - 89.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 101 - 102.
30. Kenneth M. Stamp, The Peculiar Institution, Eyre and Spottiswoode, London, 1964, p. 148.
31. See Eugene Genovese, "American Slaves and Their History" in A. J. Lane (ed) The Debate Over Slavery, University of Illinois Press, 1971, p. 320.

32. See G. Parrinder, Religion in Africa, Penguin, 1959.

33. The concept "creole" is being used here to refer to a phenomenon that was created from all available material to suit the conditions under which the actors operated. Indeed this entire chapter is an attempt to define this concept with reference to culture and identity.

Useful clarifications can be found in:-

- (i) Lloyd Braithwaite, Social Stratification in Trinidad, Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica, 1953.
- (ii) E. R. Braithwaite, Folk Culture of the Slaves in Jamaica, New Beacon Books, London, 1970.
- (iii) Philip D. Curtin, The Two Jamaicas: The Role of Ideas in a Tropical Colony, 1830 - 1865, Atheneum, New York, 1970.
- (iv) Orlando Patterson, "Conflict and Choice in Ethnic Allegiance; A Theoretical Framework and Caribbean Case Study" in N. Glazer and D. Moynihan (eds), Ethnicity: Theory and Experience, Harvard University Press, 1975.
- (v) M. M. Horowitz (ed) Peoples and Cultures of The Caribbean, The Natural History Press, New York, 1971.
- (vi) Ken Pryce, Endless Pressure, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1979.

34. See Sterling Stuckey, "Through the Prism of Folklore" in A. Lane (ed) op. cit., pp. 246 - 7 and p. 267.
35. Roy Simon Bryce-Laporte, "Slaves as Inmates, Slaves as Men" in A. Lane (ed), op. cit., p. 270.
36. John W. Blassingame, The Slave Community. Plantation Life in the Ante-Bellum South, Oxford University Press, 1972, p. 105.
37. Ibid., p. 216.
38. E. E. Thorpe, "Chattel Slavery and Concentration Camps" in A. J. Lane (ed) op. cit., p. 27.
39. A. Lane (ed), op. cit., "Introduction", p. 6.
40. G. M. Fredrickson and C. Lasch, "Resistance to Slavery" in A. Lane, op. cit., pp. 237 - 8.
41. H. Apthekar, Nat Turner's Slave Rebellion, Humanities Press Inc., New York, 1966, p. 35.
42. Ibid., p. 128.
43. M. A. Lewis, "Slavery and Personality" in A. Lane (ed) op. cit., p. 81.
44. Eugene Genovese, "Rebelliousness and Docility in the Negro Slave" in A. Lane (ed), op. cit., p. 49.

45. Eugene Genovese, "American Slaves and Their History" in A. Lane (ed),
op. cit., p. 299.
46. See Elkins' reply in "Slavery and Ideology" in A. Lane (ed),
op. cit., pp. 353 +.
47. See Erving Goffman, Assylums: Essays on the Social Situation of
Mental Patients and Other Inmates, Garden City, New York, 1961.
Here he described a "total institution" as "a place of residence and
work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from
the wider society for an appreciable period of time, lead an
enclosed formally administered round of life".
48. S. Elkins in A. Lane (ed), op. cit., p. 359.
49. See Kurt Lewin, Self Hatred Among Jews, Pamphlet published by
the Information Department of the South African Federation of Student
Jewish and Zionist Associations, for an analysis of the forces both
attracting and repelling certain Jews from Jewish groups.
50. See Orlando Patterson, The Sociology of Slavery, McGibbon and Kee,
London, 1967. "Quashie" like "Cubbah" in Barbados and St. Kitts
were terms of derision which originally were West African names
given to children according to the day on which they were born, i.e.:-

Male	Female	Day
Cudjoe	Juba	Monday
Cubbenah	Beneba	Tuesday
Quaco	Cuba*	Wednesday
Quao	Abba	Thursday
Cuffee	Phibba	Friday
Quamin	Mimba	Saturday
Quashie*	Quasheba	Sunday

51. Ibid., p. 64.
52. See Carey Robinson, The Fighting Maroons of Jamaica, William Collins and Sangster Limited, Jamaica, 1969.
53. See Orlando Patterson (1967), Chapter IX. In reviewing the history of strife on the island, Patterson thought that most of the collective violence had limited objectives. He considered the uprising under Tackey, the Coromantee leader, as the only attempted revolution aimed at changing the structure of society radically. It involved 1,000 slaves and was planned to eliminate the entire white population and destroy their social institutions. It succeeded in killing 60 whites and did £100,000 worth of damage. It was followed by mass suicide among the slaves to escape the horrific revenge by the white rulers.
54. See F. W. Pitman, "Slavery in the British West Indian Plantations in the 18th Century" in Journal of Negro History, Vol. XI, 1926.
55. See F. Fanon, Toward The African Revolution, (translated by Haakon Chevalier), Pelican Books, 1970, p. 52 for a definition of this concept. Fanon used it to mean recovering or reinstating the former value of cultural items as in ... "The customs, traditions, beliefs, formerly denied and passed over in silence are violently valorized and affirmed".
56. J. S. Furnivall, Colonial Policy and Practice, Cambridge University Press, 1948.

57. See M. G. Smith, The Plural Society in the British West Indies, University of California Press, 1965. Here Smith uses the Malinowskian model which makes no distinction between social structures and "cultures" - between institutional configurations and systems of values. It is rather mechanistic because it blurs the difference between the various "realities" that may exist in one society and rules out the possibility of different plural groups sharing common institutions.
58. See Thomas Carlyle, "Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question", in Frazer's Magazine, Vol. XL, December, 1849.
59. M. G. Smith, *op. cit.*
60. Anthony Trollope, The West Indies and The Spanish Main, London, 1859, pp. 55 - 69.
61. Philip D. Curtin (1970), p. 23.
62. See E. R. Braithwaite (1970).
63. Katrin Norris, Jamaica: The Search for an Identity, Oxford University Press for the Institute of Race Relations, 1962, p. 62.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
65. See M. W. Beckwith, Black Roadways, Chapel Hill, 1929.
66. See E. D. Cronon Black Moses: The Story of Marcus Garvey and the U.N.I.A., University of Wisconsin Press, 1955, p. 17.

67. Theodore G. Vincent, Black Power and the Garvey Movement, Ramparts, California, 1972, traced the roots of the Black Power Movement back to the ideas of Garvey as expressed in:-
- (a) Contemporary Magazines and Newspapers like "The Negro World".
 - (b) The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, edited by Amy Jacques Garvey, Volume I (1923) and Volume II (1926), Universal Publishing House.
 - (c) Garvey and Garveyism, by Amy Jacques Garvey, Kingston, Jamaica, 1963.
68. E. D. Cronon, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
69. There are certain differences between orthodox Garveyites and Rastafarians over religion, in that Garvey and many of his followers were Catholic while Catholicism was anathema to Rastafarians; and over the use of modern technology which the Garveyites wanted to master while the Rastafarians wanted to avoid it. But these differences were relatively minor in comparison with their common attitudes to Africa and the "black" race.
70. This quotation is taken from a popular Garveyite document found framed in the home of a Jamaican Rastafarian.
71. See E. D. Cronon, *op. cit.*

72. See M. J. and F. S. Herskovits, Trinidad Village, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1947.
73. The University of the West Indies Report on The Rastafarian Movement in Kingston, Jamaica, by Roy Augier, M. G. Smith and Rex Nettleford, Jamaica, 1960, p. 19.
74. Rex Nettleford, Mirror Mirror, Identity, Race and Protest in Jamaica, William Collins and Sangster, Jamaica, 1970, p. 100.
75. U.W.I. Report, op. cit., p. 14.
76. See Orlando Patterson, The Children of Sisyphus, Bolivar Press, Jamaica, 1971, for a description of the life-styles of the Rastafarians in such surroundings.
77. Trevor Munroe and Don Robotham, Struggles of the Jamaican People, Workers' Liberation League, Kingston, Jamaica, 1977, p. 101.
78. See John Rex "New Nations and Ethnic Minorities" in UNESCO, Race and Class in Post-Colonial Society, Paris, 1977.
79. Ken Post, Arise Ye Starvelings. The Jamaican Labour Rebellion of 1938 and Its Aftermath, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1978.
80. Ibid., p. 67.
81. Ibid., p. 59.
82. Ibid., p. 167.

83. Adam Kuper, "Race, Class and Culture in Jamaica" in UNESCO, Race and Class in Post Colonial Society, Paris, 1977, p. 10.
84. L. Braithwaite (1953), *op. cit.*
85. O. Patterson, "Conflict and Choice in Ethnic Allegiance; A Theoretical Framework and Caribbean Case Study" in N. Glazer and D. Moynihan (eds) *op. cit.*, p. 319.
86. See E. R. Braithwaite, *op. cit.*, Chapter XIII.
87. M. Herskovits, The Myth of the Negro Past, Harper, New York, 1941, Chapter 8.
88. See F. G. Cassidy, Jamaica Talk. Three Hundred Years of the English Language in Jamaica, McMillan, London, 1968.
89. See Louise Bennett, Jamaica Labrish, Sangsters, Jamaica, 1966, p. 15.
90. *Ibid.*, pp. 179 - 180.
91. G. H. Mead, *op. cit.*
92. This culture of resistance is similar to Milton Yinger's "Contra-Culture". He made a useful distinction between "sub-culture" meaning a set of norms deriving from standard socialisation and "contra-culture" which develops when norms stem from conflict and frustration in the experience of those who share many of the values of the whole society but are thwarted in their efforts to achieve those values. See Milton Yinger, "Contra-culture and Sub-Culture",

American Sociological Review, Volume 25, Number 5, October, 1960, pp. 625 - 635.

93. This quotation is taken from the Bob Marley and the Wailers record "Rastaman Vibrations" (Island Records, Inc., 1976) and based on a speech delivered by H. I. M. Haile Selassie in California, February, 1968.
94. See Ivor Morrish, The Background Of Immigrant Children, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1971, p. 38. These figures were based on surveys carried out by F. Henriques in 1943 and Ivor Morrish in 1960.
95. M. Herskovits (1941), *op. cit.*, Chapter 4.
96. G. Parrinder, *op. cit.*
97. Orlando Patterson (1967), *op. cit.*
98. Ivor Morrish, defines "obeah" as "a magical means by which the individual may obtain his personal desires, eradicate ill-health, obtain good fortune in life and business, turn the affections of the object of his love towards himself, evince revenge or retribution upon his enemies, and generally manipulate the spiritual forces of the cosmos in order to obtain his will". See Ivor Morrish, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
99. Fernando Henriques defines "Pocomania" as "a type of Christian revivalism combined with certain specific West African religious devices, such as the use of trance. Its origins can possibly be traced back to the myal movement of slavery days. Myal was a

quasi-religious movement of the slaves which was directed against practitioners of witchcraft, the obeah men". See Fernando Henriques, Family and Colour in Jamaica, London, 1953, pp. 84 - 85. In this definition Pocomania is offered as a good example of a "creole" phenomenon.

100. The one exception to this was the effort of Codrington College and Estate in Barbados. This property was left in the will of Christopher Codrington in 1710, "For the Propagation of Christian Religion in Foreign Parts", particularly in slave societies. See F. R. Angier and S. C. Gordon, Sources of West Indian History, Longmans, London, 1962, pp. 157 - 8.
101. O. Patterson (1967), *op. cit.*, p. 207.
102. As early as 1667 a Virginia Law was passed allowing the conversion of slaves, but it was not until 1788 that the Jamaican legislators thought it wise to permit the religious instruction and conversion of their slaves. See F. R. Augier and S. C. Gordon, *op. cit.*
103. *Ibid.*, pp. 147 - 8.
104. See Peter Worsley, The Trumpet Shall Sound, McGibbon and Kee Limited, London, 1957.
105. See Ivor Morrish, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
106. L. Barrett, The Rastafarians: The Dreadlocks of Jamaica, Sangsters, Jamaica, 1977.
107. M. Herskovits, (1941), *op. cit.*, Chapter 6.

108. See F. Frazier, The Negro Family in the United States, University of Chicago Press, 1939.
109. Gunnar Myrdal held that "American Negro Culture is not something independent of general American culture. It is a distorted development, a pathological condition, of the general American culture". See G. Myrdal, An American Dilemma, Harper Brothers, New York, 1944, p. 928.
110. F. Henriques, *op. cit.*
111. Lee Rainwater and William Yancey, The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy (including the Text of D. P. Moynihan's, "The Negro Family, the Case for National Action"), Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1967, p. 76. This treatment of the black family is very similar to that of H. Rodman, Lower Class Families. The Culture of Poverty in Negro Trinidad, Oxford University Press, 1971.
112. See Lee Rainwater, "Crucible of Identity: The Negro Lower Class Family", DAEDALUS, 95, 1966, p. 176.
113. *Ibid.*, p. 205.
114. See Lee Rainwater, Behind Ghetto Walls, Aldine Publishing Co., Chicago, 1970.
115. S. M. Greenfield, "Industrialisation and the Family in Sociological Theory", American Journal of Sociology, Volume LXVII, November, 1961.

116. G. E. Cumper, "Household and Occupation in Barbados", in "Working Papers in Caribbean Social Organisation", being a special number of S. Mintz and W. Davenport (eds) Social and Economic Studies, University of Washington Press, 1962.
117. Edith Clarke, My Mother who Fathered Me, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1957.
118. Judith Blake, Family Structure in Jamaica, Free Press of Glencoe, Inc. New York, 1961, Chapter 1.
119. Ibid., pp. 147 - 8.
120. Blake's use of the nuclear family as a universal, normative and "good" model ignores the growing disenchantment with it in Western industrial societies, particularly among women. It also overlooks the powerful and popular reasons behind the decision of the Jamaican Government to abolish the legal category "illegitimate".

CHAPTER 3

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT AND PLACEMENT OF AFRO-CARIBBEAN
MIGRANTS IN BRITAIN

Having established in Chapter 1 that identity formation and assertion do not occur in a vacuum, this study of the growth of corporate black identity in Britain must pay careful attention to the wider social context within which black migrants operated.

It is beyond doubt that there were certain cultural factors predisposing black British subjects to migrate to the metropolis, as indicated in Chapter 2. How these links between British West Indian subjects and Britain were activated by the mass media in the West Indies during the period after World War II when Britain needed replacement labour will be dealt with in a separate publication by the author. The point, however, is that the decisive factors were not cultural, but economic and political - and emanating from Britain. These forces continued to feature prominently in the lives of black settlers. Hence, whatever expectations they may have had of Britain, whatever identities they may have possessed, underwent distillation through the social structures and processes of modern Britain.

The people and their ideas to be processed through these filters (in this case, the Afro-Caribbean migrants), came from a collection of British colonies and ex-colonies spread over a distance of about 2,500 miles of the Caribbean Sea from the Yucatan tip of Mexico to the mouth of the Orinoco River in Venezuela. Their countries of origin and the proportion of each country's population migrating to Britain up to the coming of the Commonwealth Immigration Bill of 1961 are given below. (1)

Table 3.1 Emigrants as a Percentage of West Indian Populations

Country	Population from 1961 Census	Total Emigration to U.K. up to 1961	Percentage of Populations
Jamaica	1,609,814	148,369	9.2
Barbados	232,085	18,741	8.1
Trinidad and Tobago	827,700	9,610	1.2
Br. Guiana	558,796	7,141	1.3
LEEWARDS	122,920	16,025	13.0
(Antigua	54,060	4,687	8.7
Montserrat	12,167	3,855	31.5
St. Kitts, Nevis and Anguilla	56,693	7,503	13.2
WINDWARDS	314,995	27,154	8.6
(Dominica	59,479	7,915	13.3
Grenada	88,617	7,663	8.6
St. Lucia	86,194	7,291	8.5
(St. Vincent	80,705	4,285	5.3

Source: C. Peach (1968)

The vast majority of these migrants were "Jamaicans" and they were later to constitute the numerical majority in most West Indian settlements in Britain - which had many other common characteristics. They were also to provide the dominant symbols, legends, heroes, ideologies and reference groups, for the formation of corporate black identities, as well as causes for concern in some quarters. By 1971 they were still in the majority accounting for 64% of West Indian migrants in Britain. (2)

The early West Indian migrants seem to have been enterprising and ambitious people drawn from particular strata of West Indian societies. With the exception of Montserrat, there is little evidence of whole villages or large sections thereof migrating, as was the case with, for example, the Kashmiris. They were people like carpenters, clerks, small farmers and dress-makers who would save or raise the money and made a conscious decision to migrate. Even

in Barbados, where the Government gave financial assistance to emigrants, from 1956, there was little variation in their socio-economic back-ground. The archetypal emigrants were the members of the West Indian contingent carefully selected for war service during World War II, who had their horizons widened by travelling to Europe, and who would have found it difficult to settle back into a relatively stagnant, Colonial society.⁽³⁾ Many returned to Britain on demobilisation. People from different strata went to North America or stayed at home.

Ceri Peach argues that these migrants were not driven out by the usual economic or political factors of migration but were "pulled" out by forces operating in Britain. The importance of economic opportunities in Britain can be seen in the close correlation below between advertised vacancies for jobs in Britain and the arrival of West Indians.⁽⁴⁾

Table 3.2 Index of Employment and Immigration, 1956 - 1960

Year	Employment Index (Vacancies)	Arrivals from the West Indies
1956	934,111	26,441
1957	725,271	22,473
1958	535,186	16,511
1959	653,120	20,397
1960	848,542	45,706
1961	848,298	61,749

Source: C. Peach (1968)

The pattern was disturbed by the 1961 Commonwealth Immigration Bill which encouraged people from various other strata to "beat-the-ban" in getting into Britain. A wider cross-section of West Indian societies (and others) then came.

This initial selective process of migration was to have far-reaching cultural and social implications for race relations in Britain. These early migrants were favourably disposed towards Britain and saw it as a land of opportunity.

A sample, when asked why West Indians migrated to Britain, gave reasons in terms of taking advantage of opportunities and improving themselves⁽⁵⁾ as shown in table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3 Reasons given for West Indians Migrating to Britain

Reasons	No.	%
For money/work	51	34.0
For an improved standard of living	49	32.7
Because they were recruited/invited/forced*	26	17.3
Fascination with Britain/desire for experience	14	9.3
Neglect by West Indian Governments*	2	1.3
Fulfilment of prophecy*	2	1.3
Don't know	6	4.0
	n = 150	99.9

Source: Question 66 of Author's Interview Schedule

Apart from those (19.9%)* who mentioned political or religious factors, the majority in retrospect seem to have had little idea of the social realities of contemporary Britain.

It would be reasonable to speculate that most of the early migrants believed the propoganda disseminated about Britain as the centre of a multi-racial Commonwealth and with many virtues. They therefore had little conception of the British social structure, the processes operative there and the salience of race and class in the major allocative systems.

They obviously knew that in Britain they would be interacting with white people but the kind of white people they may have had in mind were the elusive paternalistic white West Indian elites and the wealthy tourists they had met. The relationship between black and white in the relatively stable colonial societies in the West Indies was inadequate preparation for life in Metropolitan Britain. The table below shows what kinds of white people my sample interacted with before migrating.

Table 3.4 Relationships with White People before Migrating to Britain

Roles Played by Whites	No.	%
Employers	73	54.5
Civil Servants/Government Officials	9	6.7
Religious Functionaries	7	5.2
Teachers	5	3.7
As equals and competitors	4	3.0
Tourists	3	2.2
Shop keepers	2	1.5
Expatriate Specialists	1	0.7
Very distant or no relationship	14	10.4
Can't remember	16	11.9
	134	99.8

Source: Question 2 of Author's Interview Schedule

Most of them had met white people before migrating but they had interacted with them as providers of much needed employment or benevolent religious and educational functionaries. Only 3% had experienced white people as competitors.

Their attitudes towards them were generally favourable as shown in table 3.5

Table 3.5 Attitudes towards White People before Migrating to Britain

Answers	No.	%
Helpful/friendly good people	37	27.6
More advanced/worthy of respect	27	20.1
Powerful/rich	22	16.4
Like ordinary people	7	5.2
Hostile/mean/arrogant	6	4.5
No opinion/too young	35	26.1
	134	99.9

Source: Question 3 of Author's Interview Schedule

Only 4.5% held unfavourable attitudes towards white people or carried bad recollections of them. It was therefore reasonable for them to expect favourable treatment in Britain and to achieve their goals.

Social scientists were also optimistic about the outcomes for them. Sheila Patterson, in particular, using the immigrant-host framework of Michael Banton predicted that the "accommodation" of the first generation immigrants would be followed by the "assimilation" of their children as was the case of the 10,000 Negroes in 19th Century London.⁽⁶⁾ She singled out the factors of:-

- (a) Small size;
- (b) Wide dispersion;
- (c) Poor organisation;
- (d) Upward social mobility of leaders;
- (e) The English bias of their culture;

as contributing to the ultimate absorption of blacks into a homogeneous society.

The basic assumptions that Britain was an "open", homogeneous society and that black people were strangers were without foundation and based on ignorance. This parochial, ahistorical analysis led Patterson into the inevitable extrapolation trap. Despite the psychological drives and the subjective definition of the situation by West Indians and the good intentions of liberal white writers, there were certain socio-political forces operating in Britain which were to determine the life chances of black migrants.

My hypothesis is that the initial euphoria of West Indian migrants would soon disappear in contact with the realities of a highly stratified and comparatively rigid social structure in Britain. In such conditions the racial chauvinism of an imperial order would crystallise into racism and racialism. Thus black immigrant workers would have the disadvantages of class compounded by those of race. The likely responses of the black migrants would cover a wide range of political stances expressive of corporate identities. In this way the initial personal troubles of the milieu would be translated into public issues of social structure, and public issues into the terms of their human meaning for a variety of individuals.⁽⁷⁾ In other words collective identity would become an important issue in the lives of black people caught up in the British social situation.

This situation considered in structural rather than personal terms was made up of a number of complexly inter-related institutional orders, spheres, and processes which can be separated for analytical clarification. The most decisive one of these was the economic order.

The Economic Order

Talcott Parsons argues that the history of the West is characterised by the increasing differentiation of one sub-system in society from the other.⁽⁸⁾ Without subscribing fully to his systems sociology, one can accept that military, political, educational and economic activities have escaped from the control of religious institutions since the Middle Ages. But if this process of differentiation implies increasing autonomy for the different areas of social life then one must reject the Parsonian thesis because there is an abundance of evidence to show that the economic order has achieved hegemony in the Capitalist Societies of the West. The major exponent of this thesis was Karl Marx who held that the history of "all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggle". He analysed capitalist society in terms of the conflict between two mutually antagonistic classes, the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat, two categories of people possessing status and power derived from their relation to the means of production. Once the Proletariat became conscious and gained control of the economic sub-structure of society then the whole super-structure would collapse in the welter of the revolution that would alter the nature and course of human history.⁽⁹⁾

Many scholars have tried to modify or refute the Marxist theory⁽¹⁰⁾ but the point remains that there is something inherent in the nature of Capitalist society that leads to the exploitation of one category by another and the mystification of the underlying conflict by means of "false" ideologies.

In stratified capitalist societies it is relatively easy to demarcate one category or group from another. In Britain the Registrar General's Classification based on economic factors is a meaningful one. In addition to this the Gallup and other polls have shown that British people can classify themselves and others into classes according to economic criteria.

West Indian migrants to Britain were attracted by the wages they could earn even in the least pleasant and worst-paid jobs, which were in fact well-paid relative to wages in the West Indies. In performing the role of replacement workers they were concentrated into the lowest occupational strata. W. Daniel found that in the standard economic institution, managers classified employees into five main groups, namely:-

- (a) Managerial, executive and specialised staff ;
- (b) Clerical and official staff ;
- (c) Supervisory staff ;
- (d) Skilled workers ;
- (e) Semi-skilled/unskilled manual workers ;

and that West Indians and other "blacks" were most acceptable as manual workers.⁽¹¹⁾ The general distribution of West Indians according to occupation was found to be as shown in table 3.6 below.⁽¹²⁾

Table 3.6 Percentage Socio-Economic Distribution for Different Immigrant Groups for Selected Areas. (Selected Midlands Wards)

	India	Pakistan	All Caribbean	England & Wales
Number Economically Active	8,260	8,860	12,840	138,740
<u>Category</u>	%	%	%	%
1. Professional Workers	1.4	-	0.4	3.0
2. Employers and Managers	1.0	1.1	-	7.0
3. Non-Manual	3.5	2.0	1.7	14.2
4. Skilled Manual and Foremen	41.5	15.5	46.1	47.0
5. Semi-skilled Manual	20.4	24.5	26.2	19.9
6. Unskilled Manual	31.1	55.1	22.2	7.0
7. Armed Forces/Inadequately defined	1.8	1.9	3.1	1.0

Source: E. J. B. Rose et al (1969)

Put another way, as E. J. B. Rose et al have observed, 2.1% of immigrants from the Caribbean were found to be in the Middle Class and 94.5% in the Working Class, compared with 24.2% and 74.6% respectively for people in England and Wales as a whole.⁽¹³⁾ (Figures for early 1960's)

The concentration of West Indians in the lower rungs of the employment ladder could have been explained in terms of the recency of their arrival in Britain, and, all things being equal there should have been some alteration in the pattern over time. But in the mid-1970's the second Political and Economic Planning Report found that racial discrimination was contributing to the persistence of this pattern and creating frustration for the most able of the immigrants. The distribution then was as follows.⁽¹⁴⁾

Table 3.7 Occupational Distribution of:

	Whites	West Indians	Pakistanis/ Bangla Deshis	Indians*
	%	%	%	%
Professional/Managerial	23	2	4	8
White Collar	17	6	4	12
Skilled Manual	42	59	33	44
Semi-Skilled Manual	12	23	38	27
Unskilled Manual	6	9	20	9

*Excluding African Asians

Source: D. J. Smith (1977)

These figures show that over 90% of West Indians could then be classified as being "Working Class", but fail to show that even at that level there were obstacles to their advancement. D. J. Smith observed:-

In short there is little evidence that racial inequalities in the employment field will be quickly corrected by upward social mobility of Asians and West Indians. There is resistance among employers to promoting Asians and West Indians to supervisory positions in which they would usually be responsible for white workers. (15)

He found that what little promotion there was, took place where sections of production were manned by blacks.

The usual justification given for discrimination by employers was the fear of opposition from white workers. This implies that racial prejudice and discrimination are normal aspects of British society resulting from an uncritical internalization of the culture and competition for scarce resources. Employers often had to choose between maximising profits and

employing/promoting blacks with the risk of antagonising white workers. But these two options were not always mutually exclusive. The social context had to be taken into consideration in trying to predict their behaviour. D. J. Smith found their individual attitudes to be the dependent variable. Hence:-

In response to a series of questions about their attitudes to minority groups, about half the managers interviewed in the survey of employers avoided committing themselves to over-simplified or prejudiced views, but the other half showed that they held views of this kind which were unfavourable to the minorities generally, and to West Indians in particular.⁽¹⁶⁾

The availability of jobs during the economic boom of the 1950's played a major part in the migration of black people to Britain despite whatever latent feelings there may have been towards them. But during a period of recession it was likely that anti-immigrant feelings would be expressed. During the 1960's and more so during the 1970's, these found expression in terms of the policy of "last in first out". More and more black people found themselves unemployed as the economy receded. And exacerbating the problem was the tendency for "gate-keepers" to put off black applicants at the earliest job-seeking stages. The P. E. P. Reports, using situational tests in which applicants were comparable in all attributes and variables except race and culture found that the ratio of success when an Englishman, a white alien and a West Indian applied for jobs was 15 : 10 : 1 respectively.⁽¹⁷⁾ Most older immigrants never underwent this ordeal because they kept the jobs they first got during periods of "full employment" or they got jobs through people already employed at the factory or other place of work. But the majority of young blacks coming on to the job market during the recession had to present themselves for interview and undoubtedly met with discrimination. It is logical to deduce therefore

that racial discrimination played some part in determining the comparatively high incidence of unemployment among young blacks.⁽¹⁸⁾

Table 3.8 Unemployment Among Young Black Migrants. Percentage of Economically Active Who Were Unemployed by Place of Birth

Aged up to 20	Place of Birth			
	"West Indian"	"Indian"	"Pakistani/ Bangla Deshi"	"All"
Men	16.9	6.9	7.4	8.6
Women	18.3	13.8	22.6	7.3

Source: D. J. Smith (1977)

These figures for "West Indians" excluded those of the same racial group who were born in Britain, and are therefore under-estimates. These statistics which referred to the period 1972 - 1975 became much higher by 1980. The Runymede Trust and the Radical Statistics Race Group found that according to Department of Employment figures, between November 1973 and February 1980 total unemployment doubled while the number of black people on the register quadrupled. Hardest hit were those black youngsters aged 18 - 24 and in particular those under 20, many of whom were not registered.⁽¹⁹⁾ The association between these high rates of unemployment among young blacks and the articulation of particular types of identity will be investigated in Chapter 6.

D. J. Smith suggested that managers could have made a principled stand against racial discrimination at the work-place, but with rising general unemployment this became more and more unrealistic.

The other solution to the problem suggested Trade Union defence of black workers. A fundamental principle of the movement is "internationalism" clearly expressed in this T.U.C. resolution:-

This Congress condemns all manifestations of racial discrimination or colour prejudice whether by Governments, employers or workers. It urges the Government to lose no opportunity to make Trade Union attitudes on this issue perfectly clear and to give special attention to the problems emerging in this country from the influx of FELLOW WORKERS OF OTHER RACES with a view to removing the causes of friction and preventing exploitation (emphasis mine).

This resolution has regularly been affirmed. But resolutions in themselves cannot solve problems. The Trade Union is the major institution of working class culture through which white workers have traditionally achieved concessions, upward social mobility and a general rise in the standard of living.

Given that white working class sentiments were anti-black, the presence of black workers created a dilemma for the Trade Unions. The P.E.P. Report found that the Trade Unions at local level were not acting in accordance with official policy and that Union Officials saw "coloured immigrants" as alien groups who did not share the traditions, values or norms of the British Working Class. Unions supported black members only when there was a coincidence of interests. On issues of racial discrimination, Union officials tended to side with management and white workers. Hence there is a long list of occasions including those at Courtaulds in Preston and Woolfs in London in 1965 and Imperial Typewriters in Leicester more recently, when Unions have failed to give support to black workers, thus forcing them to rely on their own organisations for support and muscle.

The argument put forward by some white Trade Union leaders is that

the Unions are democratic and can therefore only act in accordance with the wishes of the majority, and that the membership is not yet ready to accept specific policies of equality of opportunity. W. Daniel recorded one local Trade Union representative as saying:-

Union members are people you know. You don't turn
into a bloody angel just because you join a Union. (20)

This statement gave some insight into the taken-for-granted world of race relations in Britain. Even if the demands of unionised workers were magnified to the extent whereby they could not be met without revolutionary changes in the social structure, these residual attitudes towards black people would most likely persist.

My respondents were under no illusion about the state of affairs in the employment field. They tended to see the situation much worse than they really were. For example, when asked what type of work they thought "West Indians" did, they answered as follows:-

Table 3.9 The Kind of Work Respondents thought "West Indians" did

Answers	No.	%
Professional	1	0.7
Skilled	2	1.3
All Sorts	7	4.7
The worst/hardest/dirtiest jobs	135	90.0
Don't know	5	3.3
n =	150	100.0

Source: Question 60 of Author's Interview Schedule

The reasons given for this abnormal distribution were:-

Table 3.10 Reasons given for West Indians Getting Certain Types Of Jobs

Reasons Given	No.	%
Racial Discrimination	89	59.3
Lack of skills/qualifications	32	21.3
Easy money/warm work	13	8.7
Easily satisfied/did not try hard enough	7	4.7
They wanted this type of work	3	2
Don't know	6	4
n =	150	100.0

Source: Question 61 of Author's Interview Schedule

These varying responses including the conviction that West Indians did not try hard enough or did not have the necessary skills or qualifications indicate different definitions of the situation and suggest plural reactions to it.

By the late 1970's the general situation was one in which black people occupied lowly positions in the dominant economic order. Their low placement was being perpetuated by racial discrimination and a deepening recession, and was expressing itself in terms of frustration at work and rising levels of unemployment, particularly among young blacks. That they were relatively conscious of these processes and conditions suggest that resort would be made to means of alleviating or solving the problem.

Housing

Inequality is most vividly displayed in Britain in terms of the type of housing people live in. The built environment is a result of the conflicts taking place in the past and present between those with different degrees of

power in society. Housing in turn has ramification into other areas of social life, for the kind of house a person lives in and its location betray his class position, suggest the party he is likely to vote for, and affect the quality of education, friends and future prospects of his children. In short, a person's house places him socially.

It is for this reason that John Rex and Robert Moore chose housing as the crucial variable in race relations in Britain. Their typology of housing classes contained two categories at the bottom, in which black immigrants were over-represented.⁽²¹⁾ In geographical terms immigrants were concentrated in an ecological zone of the city in the worst type of housing, for which they had to pay more than was expected for that quality of housing. Their findings have been confirmed by those of the two P.E.P. Reports. What was the process of allocation and social placement in the housing market?

The process involved the operation of market forces and political decisions. Ceri Peach showed how West Indians were attracted to particular areas where jobs were available. It was precisely in these areas where competition for housing was greatest, probably due to the rising standard of living of the native workers. Early writers like Sheila Patterson and Ruth Glass⁽²²⁾ explained how immigrant workers had to be put up in the old air-raid shelter on Clapham Common. Lambeth in 1955 had over 10,000 people on its waiting list for council housing and there was a three year residence qualification.

A theoretical alternative was to enter the market as a house buyer. But the stringent criteria for receiving mortgages militated against the immigrant worker and the high price of houses prevented him from buying outright. The measures resorted to are graphically described by Rex and Moore, showing how the immigrant entrepreneur was forced to buy old cheap houses which he had to sub-let in order to meet the high repayments on loans. The demand for

housing and loyalty to fellow countrymen made over-crowding and physical neglect of the building inevitable. The public image of immigrants became closely identified with decaying lodging houses.

Political involvement was initially at the local level in response to the complaints of residents and their fear of the spread of the "lodging house syndrome" to their part of the City. In Birmingham for example, the Local Authority acquired power over and above those given by the 1961 Housing Act. The Birmingham Corporation Housing Act of 1965 was based upon the principle of compulsory registration of lodging houses and empowered the Council to refuse permission to run a lodging house on any one of several grounds. A possible development from the exercise of this power was the containment of black immigrants in "twilight zones" of the City.

Political intervention was also apparent in the allocation of council housing. The Council, the biggest landlord in Britain, decided on the length of time people had to be resident in the area before qualifying for a place on the waiting list.

In Birmingham the period of waiting was set at five years for many reasons which were not directly related to black immigrants. But in effect it was a political decision which militated against the newly-arrived blacks who were desperately poor and who had few alternative means of getting a roof over their head.

A long lasting effect of this five-year eligibility period of waiting was that black immigrants were forced to solve their housing problem by default in ways which later worked against them. Initially there was the lodging-house solution which caused another stigma based on empirical evidence to be attached to black people. But later as families came they were forced to move

out of lodging houses and buy old family houses. The Local Council helped immigrants by giving mortgages to buy old housing which Estate Agents were reluctant to finance. Many of these houses, too small to convert to lodging houses, were to be found in areas near the lodging houses. Permanent black areas were developing. And later when these areas were earmarked for re-development, owner-occupation was a penalty in the competition for council housing.

Discrimination also played its part. It operated in every sector of housing. In the privately rented sector it appeared blatantly in advertisements before the 1968 Race Relations Act. W. Daniel reported that of those lettings which did not exclude black people publicly, West Indians were discriminated against in 45 out of 60 cases. In 20 out of 30 cases Estate Agents discriminated against West Indians and in some cases directed them to purchase housing in areas of black settlement. West Indian experience of discrimination in housing, compared with a Hungarian, was 15 : 1 when done by personal appearance.⁽²³⁾

There was also opportunity for discrimination in the allocation of council housing. The key role-player here was the housing visitor who gave as well as collected information from applicants. A multitude of personal and cultural factors could have contributed to a large proportion of black immigrants being placed in due course in the worst types of council owned property.

Two qualifying factors should be mentioned in connection with this process. First, some legislation existed to protect the tenants and the Rent Tribunal was available for redress. But these were often ignored due to the desperate need for housing. Second, immigrants were not always forced to desperate measures. Some contributed to the process as was explained by

J. Davis and Taylor.⁽²⁴⁾ Apart from making a commercial virtue out of necessity, many immigrants chose to congregate in particular areas for sentimental, security and cultural reasons.

By 1971 the housing pattern was as follows:-⁽²⁵⁾

Table 3.11. Housing Tenure

Housing	West Indian	Asian	White
Owner Occupied	50	76	50
Council	26	4	28
Privately Rented	24	19	22

Source: D. J. Smith (1977)

These raw figures must be qualified by looking at the quality of housing. A first indication can be gleaned from observing the sources of mortgages. D. J. Smith found the following distribution:-⁽²⁶⁾

Table 3.12 Sources of Mortgage

	West Indians	Asians	Whites
Building Society	51	43	73
G.L.C.	23	8	1
Local Authority	16	25	12
Insurance Company	1	2	9
Bank	2	15	4
Private Mortgage	6	6	1
Other	1	2	2

Source: D. J. Smith (1977)

If we keep in mind that Building Societies normally give mortgages for relatively new houses and those with good structures, and that it is

easier to get a Local Authority mortgage on an old house, then the connection between these figures and the following indices of housing deprivation becomes clear.

A number of important investigations have shown that black immigrants were faring badly in the housing market. For example, in the 1960's E. J. B. Rose (et al) found that there was relatively acute overcrowding among West Indians (and other black immigrant groups).⁽²⁷⁾

Table 3,13 Indices of Over-crowding Among West Indians

	West Indians	English
Persons per room, 1966 (West Midlands Conurbation)	1.09	0.58
% sharing households - London	70.8	31.2
- West Midlands	43.1	4.2

Source: E. J. B. Rose et al (1969)

Nearly ten years later D. J. Smith found that the quality of housing black immigrants were occupying compared badly with that of their white counterparts. Even though a large percentage of them were owner-occupiers their homes were situated in the run-down parts of large cities, comprised mainly of old terraced housing.⁽²⁸⁾ An indication of this is given in table 3.14 below:-

Table 3,14 Housing Tenure by West Indians, Asians and Whites
(The Quality Of Housing)

	West Indians	Asians	Whites
<u>OWNER-OCCUPIED</u>			
Terraced	→ 66% ←		30%
Built before 1914	→ 46% ←		24%
Households with 2+ persons per bedroom	34%	41%	11%
<u>COUNCIL TENANTS</u>			
Households in shared dwellings	10%	18%	0.6%
Built after 1940	→ 38% ←		75%
<u>PRIVATELY RENTED</u>			
Dwellings shared	75%	62%	13.5%
Not having exclusive use of 3 basic amenities	77%	65%	45.3%
Median number of persons per bedroom	2.03	2.05	1.35
Median rent (1974)	→ £6.39 ←		£3.93

Source: D. J. Smith (1977)

With respect to Handsworth where my survey was carried out, it was found that 67.3% were living in owner-occupied housing while 32.7% were renting. This high level of owner-occupation of less desirable housing is consistent with the findings of others discussed above. Another indication of the poor quality of these houses was the finding that Building Societies provided mortgages for around 46% of my Handsworth respondents (much less than the national average).

Those in the sample who were renting got their accommodation from the following bodies:-

Table 3.15 "Owners" of Property Rented by Respondents

Owners	No.	%
Private Landlords	21	42.8
Housing Associations	17	34.7
Local Authority	6	12.2
Relative	4	8.2
Friend	1	2.0
	49	99.9

Source: Question 33 of Author's Interview Schedule

Private Landlords and Housing Associations were found to be the major providers of accommodation in this area even though the Local Authority is the largest landlord in the city. Many black residents still did not qualify for Council housing.

The sample as a whole was reluctant to complain about their housing. In fact, only one-third made the following complaints:-

Table 3.16 Housing Complaints Made By Respondents

	No.	%
Too small	22	41.5
Needs modernising	18	33.9
It's in a bad area	5	9.4
The rent is too high	3	5.7
Problems with the Landlords	2	3.8
Problems with the neighbours	2	3.8
Problems with parents	1	1.9
n =	53	100.0

Source: Question 69 of Author's Interview Schedule

This apparent complacency about their housing accommodation was undoubtedly caused by comparisons with the kind of housing available to early migrants from the West Indies. When these people occupying the worst housing in this City compared themselves with the early migrants who shared single rooms rather than houses they could justifiably feel they had achieved something. If and when they chose other reference groups the situation would be different.

The Political Order

Max Weber defined power in terms of the probability of persons imposing their will on others even against their will.⁽²⁹⁾ Though most conflicts in the market place are political in nature, there is to be found in modern stable societies a political institutional order which determines the norms according to which competition takes place. In a mixed economy the political order often intervenes with authority in the economic affairs of the nation state.

The parliamentary system of a unitary state like Britain operates by means of the formal institutions of government and a multitude of informal political institutions throughout the country. The distribution and exercise of power are best understood in terms of four processes listed by Rush and Althoff as "political socialisation, political participation, political recruitment and political communication".⁽³⁰⁾ These processes, by their very nature, militate against millions of native white people who do not possess the attributes necessary to belong to a group of people which, even though it has become larger over the Centuries, still constitutes a "political elite". It would be fair to say that the system is one in which power is democratically based but is exercised oligarchically.⁽³¹⁾ Most people participate only at the level of exercising their voting rights periodically. It is reasonable to predict that newly-arrived black working class subjects

would get involved at this level or below, showing symptoms of political apathy and alienation.

However, the presence of under two million black people has been a catalyst in British political life causing certain changes in political ideologies and the emergence of new institutions to deal with "the problems of race relations". By 1948 three distinct ideologies in relation to race had become dominant. These have been listed by J. Rex and S. Tomlinson as "conservative imperialism", "liberal individualism" and "socialism".⁽³²⁾ It would be understandable, but wrong nonetheless, to assign these three ideologies exclusively to the Conservative, Liberal and Labour Parties, respectively, for extreme wings of each Party were likely to subscribe to ideologies other than that of the mainstream.

Central to the ideology of conservative imperialism was the belief that within the British Empire, the claim "Civis Britannicus Sum" was a claim which entitled a man to quite definite rights before the law. These abstract legal rights were not to be taken to mean equality of life-chances among citizens for it was understood and expected that colonial natives would keep their place and that white British emigrants and settlers would enjoy a variety of privileges in the colonies.

In the second half of the 20th Century liberal individualism had evolved from a stage of simple Social Darwinism to one in which it was recognised that freedom of contract and equality of opportunity could only be assured through considerable state intervention. This ideology emphasised the basic human rights of all citizens particularly within the boundaries of a nation state. These common rights were not to be denied a person because of colour or creed.

An important characteristic of socialism was its attempt to transcend nationalism by "internationalism". It was stressed that a universal wrong had been committed against workers and that only the solidarity of workers and unity across national boundaries could rectify the situation. Metropolitan white workers had an obligation, according to this doctrine, not to exclude or help to enchain further their black brothers in struggle from the colonies.

However, a fourth latent ideology has been articulated during the past thirty years as more and more Commonwealth subjects settled in Britain. This ideology, best classified as "racist nationalism" defines Britishness in terms of racial characteristics, seeks to deny black people in Britain their citizenship rights, advocates the termination of immigration from the New Commonwealth, and the repatriation of black people by means of persuasion, terror and ultimately by legislation. This ideology first found expression in the neo-Nazi Organisations like Moseley's Union Movement, A. Fontaine's National Labour Party, Colin Jordan's White Defence League, the League of Empire Loyalists and later the Ku Klux Klan. Their ideas contributed to the racial brawls in public houses in Nottingham and the attack on black people and their property in Notting Hill in 1958. It is significant that these extremist organisations held annual meetings on the site in London where a West Indian was killed by white youths in 1959.⁽³³⁾

In the 1960's pressure groups like the Immigration Control Association and the Southall Residents Association alerted the major parties to the intensity of feeling about the immigration of black people. Then when Peter Griffiths won the Smethwick seat for the Conservatives on an anti-immigration campaign in 1964, the political consensus that the established politicians had achieved after 1958 was shattered. Harold Wilson's reference to Griffiths as being a parliamentary leper did not prevent other opportunists

from realising the political import of issues to do with immigration and race. Foremost among these was Enoch Powell, who in all fairness, may have stumbled on the power of this ideology to mobilise large numbers of ordinary people in his intellectual efforts to clarify the meaning of "British Citizenship".⁽³⁴⁾ His famous Birmingham speech containing inflammatory rhetoric about a nation "building its own funeral pyre" and presenting himself as the only British leader aware of what was going on, placed him outside the Conservative Party and established him as the champion of that constituency of British people who saw the presence of over one million (1.4 million according to the 1971 Census) black people as the biggest problem facing the nation of 55 million. When Edward Heath dismissed him from the Shadow Cabinet the true extent of support for Powell became clear as thousands of workers downed tools and marched in protest, and opinion polls recorded 74% of their sample supporting him.

In a later speech, Powell declared: "The West Indian or Asian does not by being born in England become an Englishman. In Law he becomes a United Kingdom citizen by birth; in fact he is a West Indian or Asian still".⁽³⁵⁾ His subsequent proposal for a ministry to deal with "repatriation" and his prediction that there will be a national catastrophe following the influx of immigrants - in particular Asians from East Africa - may have contributed to the increase of "Paki-bashing" incidents in the early years of the 1970's. His voluntary exile to Northern Ireland did not stop the development of racist nationalism on the mainland as can be seen in the growth of the National Front.

The turning point for the National Front was 1973 when its candidate Martin Webster saved his deposit in the West Bromwich by-election. Then in 1975, Robert Relf, convinced by National Front propaganda that legislation was placing black people in a favoured position in Britain, flouted the 1968 Race Relations Act by advertising his house for sale to English people only.

His subsequent imprisonment and hunger strike evoked sympathy and large popular demonstrations in his support.

The ideology found further expression in 1976 when an Asian youth was stabbed to death in Southall and a National Front leader declared publicly: "One down, a million to go". That decision-makers in high places subscribed to this ideology became clear when in 1977 Judge Gwynne Morris advocated the setting up of vigilante groups to protect white women from muggers after sentencing six West Indian youths for robbery, and Judge McKinnon was quoted as wishing a National Front activist well in his work.

The National Front went from strength to strength in 1977 almost establishing themselves as the third Party in by-elections in Stechford, Ladywood and Lewisham. These election campaigns saw the escalation of conflict between the National Front on the one side and black organisations and Socialist groups on the other, as National Front supporters marched through areas of black settlement in an attempt to terrorise black people into silence or flight.

In Britain during the second half of the 20th Century, no Party wishing to come to power by democratic means could ignore the rising tide of anti-immigration feelings. Even the Conservative Party, the major exponent of the conservative imperialist ideology paid attention to the changing political climate. As early as 1961 at the Conservative Conference there were calls for the control of Commonwealth immigration. The Commonwealth Immigration Act of 1962 made entry subject to the holding of employment vouchers. In 1964 control was extended by restricting vouchers to Category A for people from the Commonwealth with special skills and Category B for those with pre-arranged jobs. Then the election victory for the Conservative candidate Peter Griffiths based on an anti-immigration

campaign in Smethwick, against Patrick Gordon Walker, a senior Labour Party ex-minister, demonstrated that for a large number of people, these controls were not stringent enough to appease the masses.

The Labour Party responded to this pressure by reducing the number of vouchers issued annually to 8,500 of which 1,000 were to be reserved for Maltese. But the pressure continued, getting a boost from the alarmist speeches of Enoch Powell during 1968, warning of an invasion of immigrants. The Labour Party, in power, hurriedly introduced the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act with the racist "patrials" clause which in effect reserved freedom of entry for those Commonwealth citizens with parents or grandparents born in Britain.

In the Conservative Party, Edward Heath had to assert himself as leader and risked defeat by sacking Enoch Powell. However, in a major speech in Walsall in 1969, he made so many concessions to Powellism that observers wondered when he would re-admit Enoch Powell to the Shadow Cabinet.⁽³⁶⁾ On winning the next election, the Conservatives introduced the 1971 Immigration Act which replaced the Aliens Restriction Act of 1914 and the Commonwealth Immigration Acts of 1962 and 1968. In effect Commonwealth migrants were placed on the same footing as aliens. The old ties and obligations to the Commonwealth seemed to have been finally jettisoned when the Home Secretary, William Whitelaw, said in Leicester in 1976: "The British Empire has now paid its debts".

However, the conservative imperialist ideology still lingers on in the residual idea of a common Commonwealth citizenship, but within this common citizenship, different classes of citizens are created - based on their genetic relation to an assumed Anglo-Saxon norm - each having different and unequal rights.

The ideology of liberal individualism has never been the prerogative of any one Party but has found champions in a segment of the Labour Party. Though the Commonwealth Immigrants Advisory Council was set up under a Conservative Government to advise the Home Secretary, most legislation and institutions to defend the rights of immigrants were passed under Labour Governments. These measures failed to achieve full impact because they were passed in conjunction with anti-immigration legislation which may have lost the government (both Conservative and Labour) some credibility among immigrants already in Britain.

In the first years of the 1960's Hugh Gaitskell saw economic forces as the adequate regulator of the flow of immigrants to Britain and therefore saw no need for further control by legislation. His successor, Harold Wilson met immigration control as a fait accompli and so emphasised the other side of the coin by committing Labour to legislation against racial discrimination. Members of Parliament like Reginald Sorenson and Fenner Brockway had thought such legislation necessary since 1950. The Labour Party in power finally passed the Race Relations Act of 1965 which outlawed racial discrimination in public places. In addition to this, it established the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants to advise the Government on relevant matters, and the Race Relations Board with machinery for dealing with cases of racial discrimination, with the objective of bringing about conciliation. Racial discrimination was therefore not a criminal act necessitating punitive sanctions.

The 1965 Race Relations Act was considered by many as a declaration of public policy and an attempt to define good civic behaviour in race relations. But it did not cover the important areas of employment, housing and commercial services. And when the first P.E.P. Report showed that racial discrimination in these areas was extreme and causing most concern, a government, committed to defending the basic human rights of its citizens was

called upon to respond. The subsequent Race Relations Act of 1968 outlawed intentional acts of racial discrimination in these vital areas and replaced the N.C.C.I. with the Community Relations Commission.

By 1968 the Labour Government had reached the conclusion that the root cause of the problems of race relations was urban decay and therefore set aside funds for the rejuvenation of those zones of cities where immigrants had settled. While this was taking place, good relations between the communities had to be cultivated. This was the task of the C.R.C.. But black settlers were defining the situation differently. What they wanted was an institution through which they could articulate their grievances and win concessions in the local political arena. The C.R.C. could not play this role because its brief was not to dabble in politics and because the local Community Relations Committees were partially dependent on the Local Authorities. These constraints forced the C.R.C. to overlook, to ignore, to avoid the militant and representative black grass-roots leaders. Yet it had to show that it does have some relationship with black people. This it does by recruiting able and frustrated black workers and offering them employment commensurate with their qualifications. Despite the good intentions, this practice has had certain disturbing effects. It has siphoned off and bribed into silence, potential black leaders and now relates to its clients in a paternalistic manner. Leadership of certain black communities has fallen by default on the shoulders of people who fear that any involvement with the authorities would lead to "Uncle Tomification" and who therefore emphasise their role of protesting and neglect the consolidation of their organisations and movements. The lack of political linkages between the Government and black communities makes violence as a means of communication a highly possible outcome. (37)

The second P.E.P. Report showed that there were many loopholes in

the existing legislation and that racial discrimination was still widespread and under-reported. The recently passed 1976 Race Relations Act is an attempt to rectify the situation. The main function of this Act is to provide the machinery for a strategic assault on patterns of institutionalised discrimination. The crucial innovations include the following:- First, unlawful discrimination is defined so as to include acts which have a disproportionately bad effect on particular groups or which incite racial hatred regardless of the intentions of the actor. Second, it sets up the Commission for Racial Equality to tackle wider discrimination, by helping individual complainants and by exercising powers of enforcement similar to those of the Equal Opportunities Commission established under the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975 (The C.R.E. merges, replaces and extends the work of the R.R.B. and C.R.C.). Third, it enables individual complainants to take their own cases to court or to industrial tribunals. Fourth, it encourages statutory and other bodies to practice positive discrimination in training, education, welfare, etc.

It is too early to comment on the effect of this new legislation. Its success will depend on black people making complaints, an efficient administration of justice, the support of the masses of white voters and certain structural changes in society. Experience has taught that these are not readily forthcoming. Thus the liberal human rights ideology has led to legislation against racial discrimination but this legislation has been modified and weakened so as not to appear as positive discrimination for blacks against whites. The institutions that have been established to realise the ideal have been paternalistic and lack the necessary political orientation and personnel.

The socialist ideology has traditionally been embraced by the Labour Movement and has found expression in one wing of the Labour Party. Their

theoretical stance was put to the test by the presence of black immigrant workers and the crystallization of a racist nationalist ideology and the emergence of right-wing institutions. The reluctance of Trade Unions to help black workers fight discrimination indicates that their members and leaders have fallen victim to their own and other people's prejudices. But other leaders in society were in a position to make a principled stand against the growing wave of anti-immigration and anti-immigrant feelings. Many succumbed to the pressure. It is significant that in 1967 representatives of the T.U.C., the C.B.I. and nationalised industry made a statement to the Minister of Labour opposing the extension of anti-discrimination legislation to the employment field. The elected legislators themselves had to make concessions to these bodies and though the legislation was extended to employment, it was modified so as not to appear as creating extra rights for blacks.

The ideology is now being defended by Socialist Parties outside the mainstream of politics. The Socialist Unity and Socialist Workers Parties are now recruiting young blacks and oppose the National Front in word and in direct action on the streets. They have sponsored black candidates in recent elections and seem to have a small but significant black following, if their presence at demonstrations against the National Front is a reliable indicator. (38)

In general, though the socialist ideal of the brotherhood of all working men survives in the ritualistic utterances of Trades Unionists and Labour Politicians, the rank and file native workers believe that immigrants are in effect "black legs" who will undercut the price of labour and take an unfair share of the welfare rights which have been won in the course of bitter working class struggle.

Over the years consistent and vociferous efforts have given way to

sporadic attempts to oppose Peter Griffiths and Enoch Powell and the later exponents of a racist nationalism. More recently, the denunciations of the National Front have been superseded by interviews on the mass media which amount to Party Political Broadcasts.⁽³⁹⁾ A certain convergence has taken place in that racist views have become the common currency of political debate. This can be seen in the words of both the leaders of the Conservative Party and the Labour Party. The consensus is that immigration must be limited, that nothing must stand in the way of immigrants returning "home", and that any good to black people must be done by stealth. For example, the current Inner City Partnership Programme is designed to stop urban decay and not specifically to help black settlers.

And yet it is difficult for a black person to meet an avowed racist in Britain. Quite often the blame is passed on to the people next door, the workers, the customers or to the decision makers on the rung above. Those administering power in Britain often operate in a context of bureaucracy which has its own norms that tend to shroud the practice of overt racialism. Other decision makers are professionals who have a code of conduct which in theory militates against the differential treatment of people according to race. In addition to this, the established etiquette is such that discrimination is often carried out most politely. Black people are aware of this but tend to under-estimate the extent of racial discrimination. They are often confused by the hypoërisy and are likely to be ambivalent to certain aspects of life in this society. The one exception is the relationship of black people, particularly young blacks, with the police - the most visible agent of the State.

The Police

The policeman is a symbol of authority and is likely to be that agent of political administration with whom the citizen in the street comes into

contact most often. His work involves law enforcement, crime detection, crime prevention, maintaining law and order, keeping the peace and giving advice. But on a higher level his work is to do with upholding value systems, maintaining a status quo, supporting established authority and protecting the sacred conventions of a society.

In theory the police can perform this task by stressing police-community relations, developing a structure of communication and liaison between the officer and members of the community and by so doing develop trust and confidence between the two. Then the community would be helping to police itself. Alternatively, the police can stress the law-enforcement aspects of their work, deal with members of the public in a detached manner and so multiply the opportunities for misunderstanding and mutual distrust.

Traditionally the policeman was part of the community he policed. He knew the people he dealt with and showed much discretion in defining what was "crime" and in carrying out his duties. Then after World War II the rising standard of living enabled the middle classes to make use of better transport facilities and to move out to the better housing available in the outer zones of the city, With them went the policemen together with certain attitudes towards the housing and people they left behind. But the nature of the policeman's work was such that it was concentrated in those areas in which the poor, the old, the transient, the unsuccessful and the newly-arrived had to live and where the officer had very few normal contacts. It was most likely that his method of performing his role would be less community-oriented and more detached patrolling.

John Lambert in his research in "F" Division of Birmingham in the 1960's found that the crime rate among "coloured immigrants" was surprisingly low even though they lived in areas that were notorious for their high crime

rates.⁽⁴⁰⁾ The police operating in such areas were forced to use methods like "preventive spot-checking" in an attempt to reduce the crime rates and to detect criminals. There was a high probability that law-abiding immigrants would be stopped in a routine manner. In such an encounter would be the policeman sharing the prejudices of his society and having certain expectations of the black "stranger" in a shady district. He may have had certain experiences which provided him with selective evidence to reinforce the received stereotype of the black man. On the other hand would be the immigrant coming from a society where police were likely to be corrupt and violent. He may even have heard stories from his mates about British police handling black people roughly. In a situation where both actors expected the worst, misunderstanding, often due to language difficulties invariably developed into confrontations which made police-immigrant relationships worse.

In the 1970's Robert Moore discovered that the police saw themselves as being in the front line of defence of society against the blacks.⁽⁴¹⁾ In areas like Handsworth the relationship between sections of the black community and the police had reached the stage of naked confrontation. The recent John Brown Report⁽⁴²⁾ gave an insight into how the traditional policing methods are being replaced by modern methods which contribute to polarisation. The police, with few exceptions stereotyped black people as either young, criminal, arrogant, extremely violent trouble-makers or as older, idiotic domino-slammers. They were expected to be excitable and violent.

On the other hand, young blacks describe the police as their major enemy. Any one doing research in areas of black settlement is soon bombarded by stories of police harassment, beatings-up and victimisation. The researcher recalls an incident in 1974 when a group of black students he had just finished teaching at a Secondary School in Handsworth accompanied him to

the bus-stop. The group had to walk along a middle-class avenue en route. The school had recently taken a large number of black children from a school which had closed down. It was known that the residents had complained about large numbers of "noisy coloured kids congregating outside their houses". On this occasion the children were neither noisy nor congregating, but moving steadily in a group. Soon a panda car arrived and a police officer jumped out and started to ask a series of questions. One youngster whispered to me: "Here comes trouble". I observed the police officer search their bags and ask them where they were going. An argument started when the officer told them to disperse in different directions. I kept quiet until the situation was about to escalate into assault, with the officer ready to call for reinforcements. I then told him that I was a school teacher, had seen all that took place and had made a record of his number. He then asked me to get the youngsters into single file, jumped into the car and left.

A recent publication of interviews with black youngsters talking about their experiences with the police shows that they expect any encounter to lead to harassment until they retaliate, followed by arrest, beating-up in the Police Station, and later victimisation in the courts.⁽⁴³⁾ The police are seen as the embodiment of "Babylon", the symbol of coercion and the defenders of an unjust order.

Many attempts have been made to prevent the situation from deteriorating. Senior officers have tried to gain a better understanding of immigrants. But there is a disjunction between the ethos of policing projected by senior officers and the behaviour of young uniformed officers in Panda Cars. Second, police officers have tried to establish on-going relationships with grass-roots leaders and other members of the black community. When such blacks acquire the label of "informer" the relationship has to be broken off due to the exercise of one of the most powerful means of social control available in

the black community. Third, attempts have been made to recruit black people as police officers to police their own communities. These attempts have been unsuccessful. In Handsworth and elsewhere it was thought that black recruits who were not directly accountable to black organisations would succumb to police training and operate on the same stereotypes as their white teachers and colleagues. Hence the notion of "community policing" is meaningless in a situation in which members of the police force do not belong to the community and are not accountable to community organisations.

Without adding unprofitably to the complex colour imagery used in reports about the relationship between "blacks" and the boys in "blue" the question now being asked is "which is the red rag and which is the bull"?

Stuart Hall (et al) in an illuminating analysis of the crisis facing capitalism in Britain, observed that the strengthening of the police force and the adoption of hitherto unacceptable methods to maintain law and order are logical developments.⁽⁴⁴⁾ The confrontation in Bristol in 1980 is a possible precursor to events to be expected as the recession deepens. Violent confrontations between young blacks and the police could become a common form of political dialogue in the Inner City.

My Handsworth survey showed that there was a relatively low level of involvement in the major political institutions by black people. None of the sample was a card-carrying member of an established party. In addition to this 44% said that they did not vote in local elections and 34% said they did not do so even in general elections.

They seemed conscious of the development of racist nationalism and were able to talk at length about the role of Enoch Powell in making them aware of some of the feelings and attitudes of the British public towards black people. Their attitudes to Enoch Powell were as follows:-

Table 3.17 Attitudes to Enoch Powell Expressed by Respondents

	No.	%
He is an honest, outspoken, truthful man	50	33.3
He is dangerous/racialist/fascist/troublesome	33	22.0
He is a pathetic figure doing all he can to win votes	24	16.0
Don't like him	21	14.0
He helps us to identify the enemy	7	4.7
No comment/not interested/don't know	15	10.0
n =	150	100.0

Source: Question 77 of Author's Interview Schedule

The fact that 38% of the respondents saw Mr. Powell in a favourable light and actually clarifying issues for them is a measure of the drift away from assimilation that has taken place among black people in Britain.

They were also conscious of the political role of the police. Most respondents spoke about them in ways consistent with the analysis presented above. Indeed the largest cluster considered the police as that group "doing least for black people".

This apparent alienation of black people from the established political institutions and processes in Britain implies that their political energy was being directed elsewhere. This aspect of their lives will be dealt with more fully in Chapter 6 because political orientation and behaviour are considered key elements of identity formation and projection.

The Religious Order

There is a status hierarchy of religious affiliation in Britain as there is in most countries where people have freedom of worship. In the 19th Century when religious attendance was over 40% the Anglican Church was

described as the Tory Party at prayer while the Non-Conformist Denominations and Sects catered for appreciable numbers of the Working Class masses. The fact that deferential workers attended the Anglican Church and High Church rebels like John Wesley founded and supported Non-Conformist Denominations has contributed to the complex religious and social structures that persisted well into the 20th Century. Margaret Stacey, carrying out research in Banbury found that there was not a superimposition of clear lines of demarcation in all spheres of social life.⁽⁴⁵⁾

In any case, religion and religious institutions have become less important in the secular society that has developed in Britain. Though there is much debate over the meaning of the concept "Secularisation",⁽⁴⁶⁾ Brian Wilson argues that in modern industrial societies, a process is taking place "whereby religious thinking, practices and institutions lose social significance".⁽⁴⁷⁾ Even though many American Churches have recorded increasing numbers of worshippers in the past 60 years and on average 45% attend church each week, "the sense of the sacred, of the sanctity of life and deep religiosity are most conspicuously absent". In the U.S.A. "religion does not dictate its values to society but reflects the materialistic, acquisitive, competitive values of society" and the Church has become "the last community" in a society characterised by mobility. In Britain this process has expressed itself in falling attendance rates indicated by the fact that between 5 to 10% of the population attend Church and on most Sundays Church buildings are almost empty and clergymen have to seek other means of justifying their existence in society.

In contrast, secularisation was not a major problem in the neglected poverty-stricken societies from which West Indians migrated. The table in Chapter 2 shows that in 1943 and in 1960 the attendance rate in Jamaica was high in a society where there is no established Church and where affiliation by

default does not inflate the figures. People attended a wide variety of religious services and not only the high status ones or the "native" ones. This high religiosity has been explained in terms of religion being the cultural focus of people of African descent. Others have explained it in terms of religion being used as a means of social control, the opium of the people in situations of acute deprivation that characterise the history of the West Indies. But there are a number of anomalies that question this thesis. For example, religion has acted as a revolutionary tool in the history of Jamaica throwing up leaders like Sharpe, Gordon, Bogle, Garvey and Bedward. More recently it has been a dynamic force among ghetto blacks in the U.S.A.. The debate over the function of religion, championed by Karl Marx, and the role of religion in being a social catalyst, championed by Max Weber, continues.

In Britain religious attendance has grown rapidly among black people in a context of secularisation. The most spectacular growth rates have been observed in black-led Churches - to the dismay of liberal well-wishers who thought that the established Churches had the ideology, the respect and the personnel to help black Christian immigrants to integrate into British society. Sheila Patterson, for example, thought that the Church by its message was best able to help with the initial accommodation and ultimate assimilation of West Indians.⁽⁴⁸⁾ How can the apparently opposite phenomenon be accounted for?

Clifford Hill argues that the black Churches and in particular the "Pentecostal" Movement, have grown rapidly because of racial discrimination practised inside the established Churches. According to him the available data "reveal the almost unanimous verdict of rejection by West Indian Christians of the English counterpart of those Churches they once supported in the Caribbean".⁽⁴⁹⁾ He pinpoints 1964 as the crucial date when race and immigra-

tion became issues in British politics and race relations began to deteriorate. Black Church attendances are claimed to reflect this situation dramatically. He showed that membership of the New Testament Church of God, the largest West Indian Sect, grew from under 5,000 in 1964 to over 20,000 by 1970.

This plausible thesis can be refuted on the following grounds:-

- (i) The years 1958, 1962 and 1968 were equally if not more, important watersheds in the history of Race Relations in Britain and the growth rates do not reflect this.
- (ii) It assumes that West Indians came to Britain with an empty cultural baggage and were only capable of institution building in a desperate response to racialism.
- (iii) Sect leaders invariably define their role as missionary involving the conversion of the English to the true religion of which they are practitioners. Hence white visitors attending West Indian Church services are given an enthusiastic welcome as the first of many potential converts.
- (iv) West Indians are still to be found in large numbers attending and belonging to established Churches. John Rex and Robert Moore found that West Indians made up 30% of the Anglican Church and 70% of the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Sparkbrook. (50) My own research in

Handsworth found that between 30% and 95% of the congregations of Anglican, Methodist, Baptist and Seventh Day Adventist Churches were West Indians (in that order). This is not to say that racial discrimination is absent from these Churches. It is significant that none of the Ministers of these Churches was black.

More acceptable is Malcolm Calley's thesis that the growth of the black-led Churches was a natural development best explained in terms of the formation of West Indian families and in particular the coming of children which accentuated the role parents feel obliged to play.⁽⁵¹⁾ This growth could also be explained in terms of the time it took to acquire Church property, which then led to a rapid increase in the attendance rates. Moreover West Indians needed time to decide what kind of religious organisation best met their peculiar needs in Britain. The general social placement of West Indians in Britain and its perpetuation by means of racial discrimination made it necessary for them to establish their own institutions in areas of settlement.

The growth of black-led Churches in Britain is consistent with the argument developed in Chapter 2 that there is a tradition among West Indians of using religion for pre-political social organisation. More pointedly, religious organisations have mushroomed among black people in Britain because they were the most likely immigrant innovations to be tolerated in a secular society. Roswith Girloff commented on the issue thus:-

This reflects an interesting and embarrassing fact: many of us do not take religion or the religious life of people as seriously as we are used to taking political,

social and economic facts. We dismiss this whole area as irrelevant or belonging to people's private spheres. (52)

This neo-Weberian treatment of religious phenomena is insightful. The function, role and consequences of these black institutions will be dealt with more fully in Chapters 6 and 7.

The data from the Handsworth sample show that even though Church attendance is still comparatively high among West Indians, it has fallen off dramatically since the migration to Britain.

Table 3.18 Church Attendance Among West Indians

	In the W. Indies		In Britain	
	No.	%	No.	%
Attended every Sunday/Saturday/ more often	111	82.8	30	20
Attended regularly (e.g. every other Sunday)	6	4.5	21	14
Attended irregularly (on big occasions)	10	7.5	45	30
Never attended	1	0.7	43	28.7
Can't remember/other	6	4.5	11	7.3
	n=134	100.0	n=150	100.0

Source: Questions 40 and 43 of Author's Interview Schedule

The Church has ceased to be the central institution in the lives of the majority of West Indians; and over a quarter claimed that they never attend Church in Britain. Reasons for this change are often given in terms of secularisation but a more adequate explanation will have to be given in terms of the new non-religious identities that are being created among black people in Britain.

The Kinship Order

Traditionally the family was the most important institution in British society having a distinct structure, function and power over its members. The patriarchal family, most commonly found in the upper strata of society, often found places for sons in the Church and the Army, and for daughters in chosen households. It has even been argued that the great migrations of the past and the more recent naval explorations were due to pressure to find livelihoods by extra sons. Ronald Frankenberg found traces of this traditional arrangement surviving in the rural Celtic fringes of modern Britain.⁽⁵³⁾ In Southern Ireland, for example, the family still provided employment for children, determined their religion, arranged marriages for heirs, decided when younger children had to leave home and generally articulated them to the wider society. In such circumstances life chances depended on the type of family one was born into.

Elsewhere in Britain, industrialisation, urbanisation and differentiation have stripped the family of most of its roles leaving only the core ones of procreation and the sustenance of the young child. Ascription has been largely replaced by achievement.

There is considerable debate over the changes that have taken place in the structure and power of the family. It is argued that the patriarchal extended family was best suited to an agrarian economy characterised by little social and geographical movement. To go on from this to say that such a type was both the ideal and the statistical norm is a mistake. Peter Laslett has shown that the widespread poverty, squatting rights and the short life-span ensured that most people in the lower strata actually lived out their lives in "nuclear-type" families.⁽⁵⁴⁾

A similar mistake is being made in connection with the nuclear family made up of parents and their off-spring living in their own home. Talcott Parsons and others have argued that the nuclear family is functionally best suited for life in urban industrial societies characterised by the social and geographical mobility of individuals,⁽⁵⁵⁾ (more often the men rather than the women or both!), But there is much evidence of extended families surviving and functioning well in highly industrialised societies, particularly in settled communities.⁽⁵⁶⁾ It has even been argued that industrialisation and the improvement of means of communication facilitate the strengthening of extended family bonds. Eugene Litwak found that in the most industrialised country of the World, efficient means of communication enabled nuclear units of extended families to relate to each other in such a way that members were conscious of belonging to a unit larger than the nuclear family.⁽⁵⁷⁾ In such families financial and other support was given and much pressure exerted on individuals to act in particular ways.

However, in modern Britain, certain values, economic incentives, widespread mobility and physical limitations like the size of living units operate in such a way as to make the nuclear family the norm. And though the family does not directly determine the future prospects of children, it does so indirectly by means of primary socialisation and choosing the home and area in which the child will be educated, make friends and interact with a particular type of person. On becoming adults such children have a limited amount of freedom in the choice of spouse - even though it would appear otherwise.

The type of family out of which West Indian migrants came was a poor indicator of what would happen in Britain. West Indians migrated to Britain as young individuals, occasionally as couples and rarely as complete family units travelling together. In the British context they were exposed to the

same social forces leading to the formation of nuclear family units. Sheila Patterson, an early researcher, predicted that isolation in Britain, improved economic conditions, local mores, the initial high ratio of men to women, and the shortage of living space would make the West Indian family indistinguishable from the average English family - in due course.⁽⁵⁸⁾ Subsequent investigations have found that the vast majority of West Indians in Britain were living, legally married in nuclear family units. Sometimes these families had to accommodate relatives as lodgers, but such an arrangement was often seen as temporary. The other extreme - the denuded family - was not found to be common either. D. J. Smith recently found that there were only 13% of West Indian households with children headed by single parents - compared with 9% for the general population.⁽⁵⁹⁾

A number of factors present in the situation would have led one to predict that West Indians would be integrated into British society as members of multi-racial nuclear families. One factor was the similarity of attitudes towards the nuclear family characterised by freedom of choice of partners. The second was the initial surplus of West Indian men over West Indian women and the relatively large number of white spinsters available in Britain. The third was the reputed white bias that West Indians internalised before migrating to Britain. Indeed F. M. Henriques suggested that since a light complexion was a highly valued asset among West Indians, often improving one's life chances, there was a propensity for "dark" West Indians to "marry light".⁽⁶⁰⁾

In fact, the opposite outcome seems to be the case. Mixed marriages are not at all common. A recent survey found that 8% of West Indian men and 1% of West Indian women were married to white persons.⁽⁶¹⁾ Several explanations have been put forward for this. First, it is argued that the early correction of the demographic imbalance between the sexes

among West Indians in Britain prevented the men from marrying white women. But the presence of black women does not necessarily mean that black men would marry them. A second explanation is given in terms of white racial discrimination and the low status or rejection of children of mixed racial origin. A third is given in terms of the few opportunities potential partners from different races have to interact with each other in a meaningful way. Seldom are explanations given which show black people consciously choosing to marry people "like themselves" in terms of culture and race, and as a means of announcing their identity.

The structure(s) of "the West Indian family" discussed in Chapter 2 are often said to be vulnerable to pressures in the social environment capable of reducing them to a pathological state. Despite the cultural, structural and demographic differences between American and British societies certain processes are considered operative in both societies. As shown in Chapter 2 the declared paradigm is that the black descendants of slaves living in "white" societies would find outlet for their frustration and related aggression among themselves in ways detrimental to the "normal" family unit.⁽⁶²⁾ The family structure would become unstable and the child would be socialised to consider himself as a bad person. One sibling would normally refer to another in terms like:-

He is a little ugly black bastard and no brother
of mine .⁽⁶³⁾

This process, said to have been established during slavery,⁽⁶⁴⁾ was considered as the decisive factor maintaining blacks at the bottom of the social pile.⁽⁶⁵⁾ As a "tangle of pathologies" the black family could not provide its members with the resources to take advantage of opportunities in American society.⁽⁶⁶⁾ Would the same happen to black people in Britain?

The "Handsworth" data indicate that a measure of fragmentation was present among black families. As of 1976 the situation was as follows:-

Table 3.19 Family Cohesion in the Handsworth Area

Answers	No.	%
All living together	63	42
Members elsewhere, in the U.K.	46	30.7
Members elsewhere, in the West Indies	35	23.3
Members elsewhere, in the U.S.A.	4	2.7
N/A / no information	2	1.3
	n = 150	100.0

Source: Questions 16 and 17 of Author's Interview Structure

These figures must be interpreted with caution. Because of immigration controls some families were never completed in Britain. Also, some members of these families, on reaching maturity in Britain dispersed naturally. In some cases fathers or mothers deserted their families or children left home prematurely. But in most cases West Indians have spent a significant part of their lives in Britain in nuclear family units. The importance or (unimportance) of this experience to them will be shown in Chapter 6.

The Educational Sphere

Gerth and Mills chose to call the educational institutional arrangement a "sphere" as opposed to an "order" because, normally, it does not enjoy autonomy, but is the handmaiden of the social orders.⁽⁶⁷⁾ In Britain the education system has developed over the years in response to kinship, economic and political needs. The early Public Schools (and Universities) catered for the needs of the ruling families in preparing their

children for important roles in politics and administration, in the forces and in the Church. More emphasis was put on socialisation, that is the training of spirited gentlemen, than on the acquisition of practical useful knowledge. Distinction on the cricket or rugby field, in the debating chambers or drawing rooms, was more important than success in examinations.⁽⁶⁸⁾ But the industrial revolution making Britain the workshop of, and the model for a changing world necessitated the formal education of an ever-increasing number of people to understand and contribute to the cumulative commercial, organisational and technological revolution. The extension of the franchise and the democratisation of the political system also required the decision-makers "to educate their masters". The "power elite" could no longer recruit solely from the traditionally small stratum. Thus the 1870 Education Act which made it the statutory duty of authorities to educate the children of the masses was a watershed in the history of education leading to great expansion in the system.

This expansion did not bring "equality of opportunity" within the system, for the Public Schools, offering a special education to the privileged were endorsed. The philosophy of education that children are unequally endowed with ability was well established. So well established was it that it found expression in 1944 at a time characterised by a new upsurge of that democratic, egalitarian ideal that often surfaces when a nation is faced with the great social leveller of indiscriminate killing in modern warfare. The 1944 Education Act sanctioned the inegalitarian system and added to its complexity. It left the privileged Public and "Direct Grant" Schools to continue channelling new recruits into the elite, and concerned itself mainly with the State Schools that produced people to fill a hierarchy of positions necessary for the functioning of a stratified society. It provided secondary education for all in different types of School. The mechanism of selection was the "11-plus" examination which was the sole means of determining

whether a child became "Grammar", "Technical" or "Modern". Children did not necessarily pass or fail examinations at this stage, but gave an indication of the type of secondary education that would suit them best. And when a Labour Government tried to introduce the Comprehensive system of education after 1964 it met with opposition from politicians without, and from teachers within the education system. Some Local Authorities have persisted with the old system, preserving their prestigious Grammar Schools at all cost. In some areas where comprehensivisation has taken place a muted form of the old order lives on by means of the provision of differential education under one roof.

This system militated against working class children in ways that meant that most of them went to the Secondary Modern Schools, and later certain Comprehensive Schools, where "inferior education" was given. Not enough allowance was made for the possibility of "late development". The curriculum was not fully oriented to the General Certificate of Education which increasingly became the passport to desirable occupations. And even though some of the "modern" children were able to avoid the educational cul-de-sacs that led to the worst jobs and to get on to other routes leading to better, secure, employment, for the majority, school was a place where one had to spend one's adolescence by law before going on to one's assigned station in life. The tremendous wastage of talent was highlighted by a succession of reports including the Crowther Report of 1959 and the Newsom and Robbins Report of 1963.

The two major barriers to working class children realising their educational potential at school were physical and cultural. Urban ecology reflected the unequal distribution of power in society. The worst schools, by all the indices of deprivation, tended to be located in working class districts. And when a prestigious Grammar School was located in such a district it catered for the children of the middle classes who lived elsewhere. The Plowden Report

in 1967 recognised that a vicious circle was operating as early as at the primary stage and advocated the practice of "positive discrimination" to improve the material (and human) resources in schools in depressed areas. Economic constraints prevented this recommendation from being fully carried out.

Moreover, this handicap was compounded by the clash of cultures within the school, which proved detrimental to the communication and trust that is necessary for successful education. Most teachers were born or socialised into the middle class and so created an ethos with which the working class child was unfamiliar and which he had to master in order to succeed. Basil Bernstein analysed this conflict in terms of the difference between the "elaborated code" of communication of the middle class and the "restricted code" of the working class.⁽⁶⁹⁾ And even though this hurdle was surmountable by the bright working-class child it had far-reaching effects on the successful. Those who overcame it were likely to find it a traumatic experience.

Researchers like B. Jackson and D. Marsden⁽⁷⁰⁾ and Colin Lacey⁽⁷¹⁾ found that one of the penalties of success for the working class child was isolation at the Grammar School, in stark contrast to the solidarity that was a characteristic of his working class culture. One such child observed: "We did not have friends, we only had rivals". To such children support was vital. But of more importance was the fact that the educational system was robbing the working class of its potential leaders. Colin Lacey in particular, argued that the socialisation process to which the successful working class child was subjected encouraged him to look on his less successful peers as failures.

It was into such a system that increasing numbers of black children of working class immigrants, came during the 1960's. The outline and operation

of the system became clear as significant numbers of mixed ability black children got onto the conveyor belt of the twilight zones that picked them up as new-comers and took them into the "Secondary Modern" type of school.

It is at this point that the question of the autonomy of the education system, and the school in particular has to be raised again. The school certainly cannot ignore the dictates of decision-makers like politicians, but it must also respond to pressure from other sources. The 1965 Education White Paper is a case in point. It stipulated that the number of "immigrant pupils" in any school should not exceed one-third its population. But it was difficult to carry out this policy because it involved bussing children to schools in other areas. In Birmingham, some headmasters, with the support of parents, refused to accept black children bussed from the twilight zones of the city. The real solution to the problem was to house immigrants away from the areas of forced concentration but this was politically unrealistic. There was no dispersion, and so headmasters in "immigrant-majority" schools had to cope as best they could. The basic choice was between changing the structure and culture of the school, and no change.

The prevailing educational policy was one of assimilation meaning the uniform socialisation of children regardless of their backgrounds and needs. At one level this found expression in the Second Report by the Commonwealth Immigrants Advisory Council of February 1964, thus:-

A national system of education must aim at producing citizens who can take their place in society properly equipped to exercise rights and perform duties the same as those of other citizens. If their parents were brought up in another culture and another tradition, children should be encouraged to respect it, but

a national system cannot be expected to perpetuate the different values of immigrant groups. (72)

Headmasters themselves believed that the role of the school was to convert "immigrant children" into English persons by ignoring their special needs. Recently one headmaster declared:-

I do not consider it the responsibility of an English State School to cater for the development of cultures and customs of a foreign nature. I believe our duty is to prepare children for citizenship in a free, Christian, democratic society according to British standards and customs and that any sectarian needs should be met by denominational foundations supported by the people of that particular sect. (73)

At school all children were to be treated the same and the motto of teachers was: "Colour does not matter to us". This policy decision was not taken randomly. Two important reasons have to be stressed. First, was the macrostructural implications. One function of the education system is to maintain the class structure. To help a large proportion of black children to overcome their handicaps in the educational sphere could have repercussions in the economic and political orders. Tamotsu Shibutani and Kwan were referring to this when they observed:-

Power comes from control over the education system. Dominant groups defend their ascendancy through differential education. (74)

It is in the interest of the defenders of the status quo that large numbers of black children fail to realise their educational potential.

Secondly, the alternative was fraught with dangers at the local institutional level. Initiating change meant going against convention, upsetting parents and staff and above all finding extra work for hard-pressed staff.

However, the pressure for change built up as one moved from the primary to the secondary stage. At the primary stage policy was dominated by the conviction that children were unaware of racial difference despite evidence to the contrary. In the U.S.A., Mary Goodman found that even though young children performed in tests in ways that would lead one to conclude that they were not conscious of racial differences, in fact the opposite was the case:-

The relative inaccuracy of Negro identification reflects not simple ignorance of self, but unwillingness or psychological inability to identify with the brown doll because the child wants to look like the white doll.⁽⁷⁵⁾

K. B. and M. P. Clark found in their detailed study that by the age of 7 children knew what it meant to be black. Some Negro children broke down and cried or became negativistic when they were required to make self-identifications.⁽⁷⁶⁾

In Britain David Milner found evidence from his study of 5 to 8 year olds for him to conclude:-

Black children are showing essentially the same reaction

to racism as their American counterparts, namely a strong preference for the dominant white majority-group and a tendency to devalue their own group.⁽⁷⁷⁾

Even some teachers in British Primary Schools had noticed this development. One observed:-

In our experience it was not true that young children are free from racial consciousness. Both immigrant and English children were influenced by their parents' views, and events.⁽⁷⁸⁾

In any case, the organisation of the Primary School, placing children in the care of one teacher for most of the time and the limited extra-mural experiences of children that would make them even more aware of race, helped to reduce the pressure for a new approach to education for life in a multi-racial society. But the close relationship between the usually white primary teacher and her black charges only partially contained the problem. That this was not completely so is clear from the findings of Bernard Coard. He showed that the problems caused by black children becoming aware of their position in white society can elicit diagnostic responses from teachers that could be detrimental to their educational careers.⁽⁷⁹⁾

At the Secondary stage however, the situation becomes untenable resulting in the failure of schools to socialise children either into the "British way of life" or to reinforce fully their own ethnicity. This experience leaves them in a state of confusion over their identity which prevents them from realising their academic potential at school. It is possible that concentration might exacerbate the problem.

A case in point is the William Murdock Secondary School in Handsworth, Birmingham. Even though in 1975 only 18.2% of the Birmingham school population were children with both parents born in the New Commonwealth, such children constituted over 65% of the William Murdock school population. The headmaster, George Meredith, in reviewing the changes his school underwent from 1958 to 1970 shows how a relatively autonomous headmaster has limited choices.⁽⁸⁰⁾ Such a headmaster can choose to establish a more authoritarian regime at the risk of alienating the youngsters, or begin to transform the school to meet the new needs at the risk of antagonising teachers and parents. Mr. Meredith chose the latter and found that the minor, isolated changes he introduced at school were incapable of solving the problem, and highlighted the need for more drastic changes both within the school and in the society at large.

According to Mr. Meredith the numbers of children from the West Indies and the Indian Sub-Continent grew from negligible proportions in 1958 to a situation in 1969 in which the school population was comprised of 45% of West Indian origin, 20% Asian, and 35% white. The first problem was that of language, particularly in the case of Asian children. The identification of this specific problem enabled the local education authority to expand the teaching of English as a Second Language (E.2.L.) facility based at the Language Centre. All schools, including William Murdock, benefited from having non-English speaking children withdrawn from normal classes for special lessons until they acquired an acceptable competence in English.

The second problem was that of falling morale among teachers. Their initial response was one of dismay and a feeling of loss of prestige as "immigrant children" became the majority. The old teaching methods developed to serve a relatively homogeneous "British population" were routinely continued with decreasing success. Teachers later responded by

leaving the school; and the rapid turnover of staff made it difficult to build on experience. New teachers, many of whom were probationers came into the school and found themselves being required to do a job for which they were not trained.

The school also lost prestige in the society at large particularly among local white parents. Hence,

... the situation became much more serious, with not only an intensification of the actual problems but resentment and hostility from the local population, and anxiety among English parents about the education of their own children.⁽⁸¹⁾

White parents responded by withdrawing their children from the school, thereby causing the proportion of black children to rise.

There was also the problem of high expectations among the "immigrant children" and their parents. The headmaster recalled:-

Girls wished to become nurses or secretaries; boys saw themselves as electrical or mechanical engineers. Such ambitions were difficult enough to fulfil, and impossible for the majority of these pupils; to parents and children this frustration and disappointment left its mark with apathy and resentment. ... The result was that many boys and girls felt they were victims of discrimination when they failed to secure the kind of job they wanted ... In retrospect, I am

sure that although we had the best intentions, and a genuine desire to help, we failed to understand the position of the parents, just as we failed to understand the needs of the children. (82)

To prevent the total social disintegration of the school, the headmaster introduced a few structural and curricular changes. Having observed that rigid "streaming" was leading to the concentration of "coloured" children in the lowest streams regardless of their basic intelligence, he abandoned this practice and replaced it by "setting". Children were placed in sets for particular subjects, and slow learners allocated to remedial units from which they were taken as they improved. Ideally, sets were to be multi-racial.

Having recognised that the education offered was geared to the background and needs of English children and not to the majority of the school population, cumulative changes in the curriculum were introduced. At first, minor changes were made by introducing material about the "homelands of immigrant pupils". This eventually led to the establishment of a Social Education Department oriented towards the needs of "black Britons" - which only helped to articulate more clearly the needs of this group (as will be shown in Chapter 5).

By 1970 other changes were made, inclusive of:-

- (a) A new structure for pastoral care whereby teachers were given form groups with whom they were expected to interact intensely and get to know well.
- (b) A School Council which met weekly to discuss topics of the pupils' own choosing.

- (c) A School Councillor who was appointed to help build an environment offering security to the children and stability to the school.

The feed-back through these channels of communication enabled the headmaster to understand more fully the historical and political dimensions of migration, to grasp more fully the consequent problems of identity, and to depart from the old policy of assimilation, thus:-

Finally we have abandoned the belief that it is sufficient to treat all children alike. This belief denied many of the children the opportunity to reveal skills or talents which would help them feel a sense of success or achievement. As we now see it, the task of the school is to recognise in much more positive ways than before, the group identity which the pupils have through their family history and their home culture.⁽⁸³⁾

Inertia in the school prevented these decisions from being fully implemented. For example, "setting" was replaced by "banding" whereby children were categorised into "examination types" who were prepared for competitive examinations in sets, and "non-examination types" who were given a vocation oriented education which was generally considered as inferior. Moreover, West Indian pupils were concentrated in the lower-band classes and became the source of disciplinary and other problems at school. According to the headmaster, the West Indian girls were "sullen, insolent and quarrelsome" while the boys played truant and fell foul of the law outside school, and displayed aggression inside the school. He concluded:-

We faced a continuing lack of success in motivating children who have the ability to achieve much more than they do now ... The response of both boys and girls to our traditional relationship between teachers and pupils was to abuse or deride it.⁽⁸⁴⁾

That these were not unexpected or isolated developments is worth repeating. The first P.E.P. Report predicted that ...

... It is unlikely that the children born and educated here will be equally docile when faced with the frustrations and humiliations of discrimination; anger and violence, rather than self-effacement may seem to them a more realistic response.⁽⁸⁵⁾

One year later E.J.B. Rose and his associates, after conducting a national survey, concluded:-

Children of West Indian parents, the largest of all immigrant groups have been a source of bafflement, embarrassment and despair in the education system.⁽⁸⁶⁾

The overall result was that a small proportion of West Indian children, much smaller than would have been expected according to the laws of probability, were making it through inner city schools and into high status jobs - despite the good intentions and wishful thinking of individual teachers.⁽⁸⁷⁾

By 1976 the parents were becoming more knowledgeable of the processes through which their children were passing and much less docile.

When asked by the researcher about the educational provision in the area his respondents replied as follows:-

Table 3.20 Evaluation of Local Facilities for Young People

FACILITIES	Pre-School		School		Youth Employment		Youth Recreation	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Good	9	6	8	5.3	3	2	3	2.0
Satisfactory	39	26	69	46.0	24	16	28	18.7
Poor	68	45.3	64	42.7	81	54	84	56.0
Don't know	34	22.7	9	9	42	28	35	23.3
	150	100.0	150	100.0	150	100.0	150	100.0

Source: Question 81 of Author's Interview Schedule

There was a widespread feeling that the poor facilities at school, and outside the school for school leavers, were partly responsible for the failure of their children to get qualifications and (decent) jobs.

In all quarters there seemed to be an admission that black youngsters, particularly those of West Indian origin, were being consigned to a social position as low or lower than that of their parents. This outcome called into question those sociological theories that held that the initial low social placement of black people - as newcomers - would last for one generation. An alternative explanation of the situation was that inferior education was contributing to the formation of a permanent black under class.⁽⁸⁸⁾ Both these analyses ignored the tensions created in the West Indian community by the denial of an acceptable black identity in British society and the need to explore and articulate a more meaningful identity by black people

themselves - as will be shown in succeeding Chapters.

In this Chapter an attempt has been made to trace the early placement of black people as replacement workers occupying the lowest rungs of the occupational hierarchy in British society, with little prospects of promotion.

A related process was that of the concentration of black people in rundown areas of large cities characterised by poor housing and inadequate facilities. Poverty and the attachment of a stigma to such areas and their residents prevented normal dispersion to better areas.

Even though there were political institutions capable of redressing grievances, both their commitment to black causes, and black involvement in them were found to be minimal.

The religious institutions in general were found to be impotent partly as a result of secularisation. Where religious fervour was found among black people it expressed itself in terms of creating specific religious institutions to suit their needs.

In the British context the nuclear family was found to be the norm, and the black family approached this norm. Whether or not this will be the case for succeeding generations is disputable.

The educational system was found to be perpetuating the low social placement of black people by means of inadequate education. Considerable despair and speculation surrounded the likely responses and outcomes for future black generations.

Having shown the structural constraints under which black people operated in Britain, the thesis can progress to looking at the social dynamics of identity formation and articulation within the black community. But first, the attitudes of the "Generalised Other" as expressed in the mass media, must be reviewed. How they depicted black people and how they reinforced their low social placement will be the concern of Chapter 4.

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55. See T. Parsons, "The Kinship System of the Contemporary United States" being a chapter of his Essays in Sociological Theory Pure and Applied, The Free Press of Glencoe, Illinois, 1949. The growing Women's Liberation Movement's opposition to certain oppressive normative forces in the nuclear family is leading sociologists and others to reassess this institution.
56. See, for example:-
 - (a) M. Young and P. Willmott, Family and Kinship in East London,

Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1957.

- (b) P. Willmott and M. Young, Family and Class in a London Suburb, R.K.P., London, 1960.

Much of this data is now dated but still useful as a means of challenging deterministic assumptions.

57. E. Litwak, "Geographical Mobility and Extended Family Cohesion", American Sociological Review, 25, June, 1960; and "Occupational Mobility and Extended Family Cohesion", American Sociological Review, 25, February, 1960.
58. See Sheila Patterson, *op. cit.*, Chapter 15.
59. See D. J. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
60. F. M. Henriques, Family and Colour in Jamaica, Eyre and Spottiswoode, London, 1953.
61. D. J. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
62. Lee Rainwater: "Crucible of Identity; The Negro Lower Class Family" in DAEDALUS, 95, 1966, p. 176.
63. Lee Rainwater: Behind Ghetto Walls, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1971, p. 202.
64. See Franklin Frazier, The Negro Family in the United States, Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., New York, 1948.

65. See G. Myrdal, An American Dilemma, Harper Brothers, New York, 1944.
66. See Lee Rainwater and W. Yancey, The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1967.
67. See H. Gerth and C. W. Mills, Character and Social Structure, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1954, Chapter IX.
68. See P. Elliott, The Sociology of the Professions, McMillan, London, 1972, Chapter 2.
69. See Basil Bernstein, Class, Codes and Control, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1971, Vol. 1, Part III, Chapter 9.
70. B. Jackson and D. Marsden, Education and the Working Class, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1962.
71. Colin Lacey, Hightown Grammar, University of Manchester Press, 1970.
72. See The Second Report of the Commonwealth Immigrants Advisory Council, H.M.S.O., London, 1964, paragraph 10.
73. See Raymond Giles, The West Indian Experience in British Schools, Heinemann, London, 1967, p. 100.
74. See T. Shibutani and K. Kwan, Ethnic Stratification, McMillan, Canada, 1965.
75. Mary Goodman, Race Awareness in Young Children, Collier-MacMillan, 1964.

76. K. B. Clark and M. P. Clark, "Racial Identification and Preference in Negro Children" in T. M. Newcombe and E. L. Hartley (eds) Readings in Social Psychology, Holt, New York, 1947.
77. See David Milner, Children and Race, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1975.
78. Julia McNeal and M. Rogers (eds), The Multi-Racial School, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1971, p. 34.
79. See Bernard Coard, How the West Indian Child is Made Educationally Sub-Normal in the British School System, New Beacon Books, London, 1971.
80. See George Meredith, "The Changing Response of A Secondary School in Handsworth, 1958 - 1970", being Chapter 4 of Julia McNeal and Margaret Rogers (eds), op cit.
81. Ibid. p. 89.
82. Ibid. p. 93.
83. Ibid. p. 103.
84. Ibid, p. 92.
85. W. Daniel, op. cit., p. 14.
86. E. J. B. Rose et. al., op. cit., p. 281.

87. See the Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration, The West Indian Community, H.M.S.O., London, 1977 for the findings of an enquiry into the under-achievement of West Indian children. The case of over-achievement among some West Indians (girls in particular) presented by G. Driver is an isolated one, and attempts to generalise from it have been severely criticised. See G. Driver, "Culture Competence, Social Power, and School Achievement: West Indian pupils in the West Midlands", New Community, Vol. 5, No. 4, 1977, pp. 353 - 9; also "How West Indians do better at school (especially the girls)", New Society, 17th January 1980, pp. 111 - 114.
88. This concept has been used by Rex and Tomlinson to refer to the formation of a "separate, under-privileged class" of blacks. For them this seems to be the only alternative to being "absorbed into the working class" and "identifying with working class culture, community and politics". Later in this thesis it will be shown how a whole range of cultures, political stances, identifications and articulations to British society have been developed by blacks. See J. Rex and S. Tomlinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 275 - 6 for a definition of their "underclass".

CHAPTER 4

THE DEPICTION OF BLACK PEOPLE IN THE BIRMINGHAM NEWSPAPERS

The objective social placement of black people in British society was one matter, the interpretation and mediation of this process was another. Closely linked to the processes analysed in Chapter 3 were certain definitions of black people and particular attitudes towards them and their place in British society which were expressed with varying degrees of clarity but which always informed and/or justified social action.

The presence of noticeable numbers of phenotypically different, black-skinned people in Britain during the second half of the 20th Century is often considered a new phenomenon despite historical references to significant numbers of them living in Britain before the 20th Century.

In commenting on the presence of black people in Britain over several Centuries, James Walvin argued that attitudes towards them were determined by structural changes taking place in the society. For example, in 1601, Elizabeth I issued a Royal Proclamation ordering all "blackamoors" out of the Kingdom during a period of nation-building when it was deemed necessary to define unambiguously who the English were and what they were not.⁽¹⁾ In contrast, during the expansion of the British Empire in the 18th and 19th Centuries the society was able to extend certain rights to black subjects resident in Britain. The 1762 ruling by Lord Chancellor Henley that "as soon as a man sets foot on English soil he is free", the celebrated 1772 ruling by Judge Mansfield that the master had no right to re-enslave Somerset (a fugitive black man living in Britain), the humanitarian impulse contributing to the abolition of the Slave Trade in 1807 and of slavery itself in 1833, the protection of the fugitive blacks by ordinary members of society and even the keeping of blacks as mascots by the rich, are all evidence of the wider defini-

tion of "British" and the absence of a universal pejorative attitude towards black people. The racial characteristics of 10,000 "Negroes" said to be living in London (alone) during the 19th Century do not appear to have been of much importance in locating them within the structure of the society.⁽²⁾

Despite this, several writers argue that there has been and is a central tendency in British culture towards ostracising the "Negro", as has been shown in Chapter 2. Referring, specifically to the situation in Britain, Walvin observed:-

There is a legacy of English racial attitudes towards the Negro, the roots of which go deep into the age of European expansion in the 16th and 17th Centuries and find their origins in misunderstandings, fears and commercial exploitation.⁽³⁾

Apparently the negative attitudes of the 16th and 17th Centuries were replaced by paternalistic ones during the 18th and 19th Centuries when European overlordship was being established in various parts of the World. But even during this period negative attitudes towards black people found violent expression. In Britain, as Kenneth Little has shown, there were periodic race riots in those ports where "Negroes" had settled for many years.⁽⁴⁾ In such areas, even though there was no slavery, there seems to have been a general belief that "all Africans were potential slaves".

The post-1945 black immigrants settled not in these port areas but in the industrial conurbations of Britain because jobs were available there.⁽⁵⁾ And soon the old attitudes towards black people, and those of The African Diaspora in particular, began to surface again. For example, Ruth Glass, an early writer on the black "newcomers" commented:-

An African, an Indian or a Pakistani in this Country can find refuge in his own religion and language. The West Indian who has no distinct culture of his own, can easily develop a nagging anxiety complex which works itself out in a series of complaints.⁽⁶⁾

This assumption of a lack of normative guidelines and sanctions among West Indians often led to the expectation of immoral behaviour on their part and the building up of stereotypes, like, for example, "the coloured man who induces white girls to become prostitutes and live off immoral earnings."⁽⁷⁾ Other stereotypes were revealed in the following quotations of two white workers by W. W. Daniel:-

They are lazy, arrogant, shifty, difficult and dirty. You can only get a day's work out of them if you stand over them.⁽⁸⁾

And ...

The only time when they are sharp is when they are thinking up the latest dodge. Apart from that they are either asleep or looking for sex.⁽⁹⁾

How widely and how strongly these attitudes were held is debatable.. The complex nature of urban industrial society, the conflict of interests and the constant realignment of groups in pursuit of stated objectives, suggest that attitudes would change when expedient. In an attempt to measure attitudes towards black people, the 1958 Gallup Poll, analysed by Ruth Glass, found that 71% of the sample were against inter-marriage, 61% against "coloured people" coming to live in their district, 30% against having "a

coloured" neighbour, and 7% against integration at school.⁽¹⁰⁾ Varying degrees of hostility to black people were expressed according to the situation.

The large survey by E. J. B. Rose and others in the 1960's concluded that the British public could be divided into four categories according to the number of hostile replies made to questions about "coloured" people.⁽¹¹⁾

Table 4.1 Attitudes to "Coloured" Immigrants

Number of Hostile Replies	%	Category
None	35	Tolerant
1	38	Tolerant inclined
2	17	Prejudiced inclined
3-4	10	Prejudiced

Source: E. J. B. Rose et. al., 1969

Using these same figures, Nicholas Deakin interpreted them to mean that 35% were tolerant while the other 65% were either "mildly" prejudiced, just prejudiced or "intensely" prejudiced, respectively.⁽¹²⁾ The point however is that all were not prejudiced and that there were varying degrees of prejudice.

But over and above these varying attitudes and degrees of prejudice was the attitude of the Generalised Other which all members of society had to take into consideration. That members of society were conscious of this general attitude can be seen in the comment by a "coloured" immigrant quoted by Ruth Glass:-

Since I come 'ere I never met a single person who 'ad any colour prejudice. Once I walked the whole length

of a street looking for a room and everyone told me that he or she 'ad no prejudice against coloured people. It was the neighbour who was stupid. If we could only find the neighbour we could solve the entire problem. But to find him is the trouble.⁽¹³⁾

Almost one decade later this elusive but influential opinion leader was still at large! W. Daniel observed that the white respondents in his sample "tended to base their acceptance of discrimination on the grounds that, despite their own preference for equality of treatment, they were the prisoners of other people's prejudices."⁽¹⁴⁾

In this Chapter it will be argued that these "other people" represented the Generalised Other. The attitudes of the Generalised Other need to be seriously considered because, as shown in Chapter 1, they are crucial in the process of identity formation. Moreover, these attitudes found expression in the mass media of communication which not only strove for consensus but also transmitted these attitudes even into the "back stages" of people's lives.⁽¹⁵⁾

What then was the general image of black people in the mass media? What impact did the message of the media have on their identity? A satisfactory answer to these questions could only be given by studying what appeared about and by black people in the mass media over a given period of time.

In particular, an analysis of articles concerning black immigrants in the local Birmingham newspapers from 1952 to 1976 has been undertaken to show the growth and establishment of society's image of black people. A "content analysis" was made of 1,260 newspaper cuttings kept in three volumes in the Birmingham Central Library, Local Studies Department. It appears that selection

by the Library's staff was based on "key" words like "race", "coloured", "the coloured problem", "immigrants", "immigration" and "black" which captured their attention. Though this method of selection would not necessarily satisfy a social scientist interested in contents analysis, per se, we can assume that these key words were similar to the ones that would have attracted members of the public to read these articles. The 24-year period of collection by different librarians also served to reduce the systematic biases in selection procedure.

The articles were taken mainly from the local newspapers but a few were drawn from national newspapers because they referred specifically to local matters. The distribution was as follows:-

Table 4.2 The Distribution of Cuttings About Coloured Immigrants By Newspaper

Newspapers	Items
The Express and Star	1
The Daily Herald	1
The Sketch	1
The People	1
The Sunday Companion	1
The Sunday Graphic	1
The Empire News	1
The New Statesman	1
The Erdington News	2
The News Chronicle	2
Unknown	3
The Sunday Observer	4
The Birmingham Planet	5
The Evening Despatch	15
The Guardian	16
The Sunday / Telegraph	25
The Sunday / Times	38
The Sunday Mercury	46
The Birmingham Post	416
The Birmingham Evening Mail	680
	1260

Source: The Collection of Newspaper Cuttings in Birmingham Central Library (Local Studies Department), 1952 - 1976. (All other tables in this Chapter are from the same source)

If it is kept in mind that the Evening Despatch merged with the Birmingham Mail to become the Birmingham Evening Mail in 1963, then some 91.8% of the cuttings came from the last three Birmingham newspapers. Moreover, all these three Newspapers were owned by the same Company, The Birmingham Post and Mail Group Limited. What are the implications of this near-monopoly situation?

A simplistic answer would be that consensus was engineered from

above, that these newspapers transmitted the ideology of the owning and ruling class in a conspiratorial fashion. However, this conspiracy theory ignores consumer power and belittles the role of Editors and Journalists. People can choose to buy the national newspapers. But they tend to buy local Newspapers in large numbers. Why?

A recent study of the provincial press found a higher overall sale for local newspapers than for the daily nationals, and a higher percentage of "household" readership.⁽¹⁶⁾ In 1963, the Birmingham Evening Mail had an average daily circulation of 404,169 compared with the Guardian's 266, 243 and the Daily Mirror's 4,630,964 (nationally). Assuming that the "household" readership of the local Birmingham Evening Mail was high, that is that the same Newspaper was read by several members of the same family, it has been estimated that at least 928,000 people in the Birmingham area read the newspaper daily. This meant that most people in the area read it. This finding is consistent with that of the Skiffington Committee on Public Participation in Planning which estimated that "something approaching 90% of the adult population are likely to read at least one local newspaper".⁽¹⁷⁾

Two reasons for the popularity of the local newspapers are, their monopoly over "hot" news and advertisements, and their presentation of local radio and television programmes in a clear form. The observer, enquiring about the presence of the Evening Mail in most West Indian homes in the Birmingham Area will get answers along these lines.

But a more important reason is that the local newspapers specialise in local news, often even managing to establish a local link with sensational "distant" events. The Birmingham Post, in its Centenary Edition of 7th December, 1957, wrote:-

The strength of the provincial Newspaper lies in the service that it gives to its own Region, a service which cannot be offered by Newspapers published elsewhere. While a provincial must aim at being a "complete" Newspaper it must provide its readers with news of their own local and district affairs, in short, become "their Newspaper". It must mirror the Region it serves and while aiming to command its readers' interest, must labour to deserve their trust. (18)

This implies that local newspapers print what people want to read, merely reflecting the ideology of its readership. The reputed means of doing this is by recruiting from the local population Journalists who are products of the sub-culture and who live in and/or keep in touch with the local community. But this explanation, though plausible, denies Editors and Journalists the relatively autonomous role of "campaigning" or consciously influencing public opinion.

Is it the case then that almighty Editors and Journalists "manufacture" news? The situation is more complex and relates to the social production of news. It must be kept in mind that events are never in themselves newsworthy. At any one point in time, thousands of news items exist out of which only a few are selected for publication. What then are the criteria and processes of selection?

In general, newspapers have to serve many masters including the readers and their decision-making "representatives" or leaders in the dominant institutional orders of society. Newspapers constantly pay reference to validating statements by Politicians and representatives of organised interest groups like the C.B.I., the T.U.C. and in matters of race, the leaders of

"immigrant organisations" and/or "race relations" bodies. Statements by opposing groups are often quoted to give the appearance of balance and impartiality. Recognition is then paid to the readers by translating these statements into the idiom of the local population. This peculiar role of the media was summed up by Stuart Hall and others, thus:-

... in a critical sense, the media are frequently not the primary definers of news events at all; but their structured relationship to power has the effect of making them play a crucial but secondary role in reproducing the definitions of those who have privileged access, as a right to the media, as "accredited sources". From this point of view, in the moment of news production, the media stand in a position of structured subordination to the primary definers. (19)

Furthermore ...

The media thus help to reproduce and sustain the definitions of the situation which favour the powerful, not only by actively recruiting the powerful in the initial stages where topics are structured, but by favouring certain ways of setting up topics and maintaining certain areas of strategic silence. (20)

In effect what appears in the media is not due to random causes but is carefully selected to reinforce and maintain the status quo. In settled and apparently homogeneous mass society, the media play this important role by means of certain devices. By definition they have to deal with the new, the bizarre and the violent, because these are the main characteristics of "newsworthiness". The media must deal with these items even though they

threaten the taken-for-granted world of the readers. They do this by identifying and labelling the new, assigning it to a social context or framework familiar to the readers and finally placing it within or without the moral order. The progression is one of first shocking the readership with the possibility of disorder, then reassuring them that the "Gemeinschaft" of their yesteryears continues. With the possible exception of community newspapers, local newspapers are by nature conservative and serve the purpose of restoring an ordered definition of the situation. They serve the social function of glossing over conflict, solidifying the group against potential threats and re-establishing an assumed consensus. This apparent consensus has far reaching implications in a "race relations" situation. Stuart Hall et al referred to it thus:-

This consensual viewpoint has important political consequences when used as the taken-for-granted basis of communication. It carries the assumption that we have roughly the same interests in the society, and that we all have an equal share of power in the society. This is the essence of the idea of political consensus. (21)

It is unlikely that most black people would subscribe to what was being said about them in the local newspapers over the period under consideration. What then was being said?

The first volume of newspaper cuttings (up to 1968) was significantly referred to as "The Colour Problem". Thereafter the title was changed to the "Coloured Population". Within them were a large number of cuttings with contents that made categorisation difficult. More often than not they were symptom-oriented and seldom dealt with under-lying causes. For example, an article may deal with homelessness and crime among West Indian youths in

Handsworth, without paying reference to the structural economic, political and historical causes. Should such an article be classified under homelessness, crime, youths or the area in which the event took place?

However, a simple and stylised classification is possible by putting the article under the heading of the topic given greatest emphasis. Since most of these topics were symptom-oriented they lent themselves to simple solutions like "send them back where they came from" or "bring in more policemen". The consequences of the depiction of black people in the Birmingham newspapers will be discussed at the end of the Chapter; but first the depiction.

A break-down of the data was decided upon after much juggling and is not too dissimilar to that of other analysts.⁽²²⁾ The distribution was as follows:-

Table 4.3 The Distribution Of Items By Topic

Topic		Items	Order	%
(i)	Human Interest Stories/Rights/Needs	149	5	10.5
(ii)	Immigration and Repatriation	217	1	15.3
(iii)	Numbers of Immigrants	52	8	3.7
(iv)	Employment	89	7	6.3
(v)	Housing	116	6	8.2
(vi)	Voting	12	15	0.8
(vii)	The Established Church	20	13	1.4
(viii)	Education	166	4	11.7
(ix)	Prejudice and Discrimination	46	9	3.2
(x)	White Women and Immigrants	11	16	0.8
(xi)	Crime	30	11	2.1
(xii)	Noise	10	17	0.7
(xiii)	Health	23	12	1.6
(xiv)	Social Services	16	14	1.1
(xv)	Other Problems	202	3	14.3
(xvi)	Immigrant Organisations and Leaders	214	2	15.1
(xvii)	Handsworth	41	10	2.9
		*	1414	99.7

*Sometimes more than one topic was stressed in one article

The five most popular topics appear to be:-

- (a) Immigration and Repatriation.
- (b) Immigrant Organisations and Leaders.
- (c) The General Problem of Immigrants.
- (d) Education and Immigrants.
- (e) Human Interest Stories/Rights/Needs of Immigrants.

The build-up of these topics started with a few human stories about black people, treating them as novelties attracting both favourable and hostile attention in the first half of the 1950's, reached a climax with a pre-occupation with immigration and repatriation and ended with concern about "Second generation immigrants" and their leaders. The variation in the number of topics appearing over the years are shown in Table 4.4 below.

The peak years for the appearance of articles about "coloured immigrants" are those which have totals higher than preceding and succeeding years and are found to have been 1958 (the year of the Nottingham and Nottingham Hill Gate riots), 1962 (the year of the anti-immigration legislation), 1968 (the year of the East African Asian "influx" and the Second Immigration Act), 1972 (the year of the Ugandan Asian "crisis"), and 1976 (the year of street battles between the National Front and their opposers and between the police and black groups).

During the years under consideration the terminology used when referring to people from the "New Commonwealth" and their children included titles like Negro, Jamaican, Barbadian and other insular ones, West Indian, Indian, Sikh, Pakistani, Bangla Deshi, Asian, Immigrants, Coloured and Coloured Immigrants. In time Coloured Immigrants came to be the most popular "label" and at times "Immigrants" was used synonymously with "Coloured Immigrants". A distinction was often made between West Indians and the various types of Asians. In presenting a composite picture of West Indians, assumed to constitute one homogeneous group, comparisons were overtly or covertly made with Asians. In analysing the contents of news items under the above headings this comparison will be commented on.

Table 4.4 The Distribution Of Cuttings About "Coloured Immigrants" By Year

Year	Number
1952	0
1953	1
1954	6
1955	9
1956	2
1957	2
1958	12*
1959	4
1960	3
1961	7
1962	26*
1963	10
1964	12
1965	34
1966	50
1967	54
1968	146*
1969	129
1970	132
1971	83
1972	129*
1973	109
1974	63
1975	85
1976	143
Date Unclear	9
	1260

*Peak Year

(i) Human Interest Stories/Rights/Needs

This topic accounted for 10.5% of the total and has been divided into two sub-topics, namely:-

(a) Human Interest Stories.

(b) Rights/Needs.

It can be further broken down according to the group referred to.

Table 4.5 Human Interest Stories By Group

Group	Items
Asians	34
West Indians	15
Immigrants	2
Other (Nigerian, etc.)	1
Total	52

(i) (a) Human Interest Stories

The earliest human stories were of decent Jamaican men coming to terms with life in Britain. There is the story of Roy Terrelonge from Jamaica who first came to Britain to join the R.A.F. and was stationed near Birmingham during the War. In 1954 he was working as a mechanic for the Bus Company during the controversy over the employment of coloured men as conductors. He was depicted as a "splendid chap", "well-liked by the clippies". (News Chronicle, 1st March, 1954). The next day there was the story of the Morgans - Jamaican husband and Irish wife who was a "clippie". They had two children, owned their house and kept to themselves, (News Chronicle, 2nd March, 1954). Many years later the Lannamans were presented as a "normal" family. Olympic sprinter Sonia (with other members of her family) was at the passing out parade of her

brother. (Birmingham Evening Mail, 9th February, 1973).

Asians appeared more than twice as often as West Indians as subjects of human stories. For example, during the near panic over the arrival of East African Asians in 1972 the Sunday Mercury carried an article dealing sympathetically with "The Three Worlds of Prafulbhai" - Africa, India and Birmingham. (20th August, 1972). Then in 1973 when Bakhshish Singh, the Separatist Sikh Leader was in India to attend a funeral he was arrested by the Indian Government. The Post reported that: "The British High Commission in Delhi has asked the Indian Government for a full report and details of charges concerning the imprisonment of a Birmingham Post Office worker". This concern for an ordinary Birmingham citizen was unusual. Other references were to successful Asians.

(i) (b) Rights And Needs

References were made to the different groups as follows:-

Table 4.6 Items On Rights And Needs By Group

Group	Number
West Indians	5
Asians	68
Immigrants	24
Total	97

In referring to the arrival of West Indians the Post announced: "They are British Citizens with the same rights as the Englishman. Industry needs them, but accommodation is scarce". (13th October, 1954). The point was reiterated for "immigrants" later in the declaration that ... "All are members of the Commonwealth with equal privileges and rights". (Post, 17th January, 1955) In 1961 Mr. Donald Chapman, M.P. for Northfield paid a visit to Jamaica and

subsequently wrote a number of serious indepth articles on the situation there which contributed to the migration of West Indians. He wrote:-

Jamaicans today are the descendants of the slaves we brought from Africa in days gone by and in conditions too terrible to remember. It is our responsibility that they are here, our responsibility to help them now in any way we can. (Mail, 2nd February, 1961)

References to Asians were in terms of their needs and rights to keep up their customs in Britain. It was said that Asian women needed to be taught English at home by people interested in their native language, that the Gas, Electricity and Water Boards should print their leaflets in Asian languages, that a language bank was needed, and that Sikhs should be exempted from rules which interferred with their wearing of the turban. For example, the case claiming that it was impossible for Sikhs to wear a motor cycle crash-helmet over the turban was put forward in the Birmingham Evening Mail of 9th September, 1973.

But while these requests and claims were being made, others thought that immigrants were being placed in a privileged position. A letter to the Post argued:-

We feel we should protest against the sacking of Mr. Powell ... the New Race Relations Bill ... (will be) ... giving coloured people more rights than white.

(Post, 24th April, 1968)

(ii) Immigration And Repatriation

There were 179 references made to immigration and 38 to repatriation as issues. Both these topics were discussed long before the famous speeches of

Enoch Powell. Initially the groups referred to were Coloureds, Negroes, West Indians but after 1968 all the above were subsumed under "immigrants", and Kenya and Uganda Asians were often specified as the target groups when "immigration" was mentioned. The following distribution tries to show who said things about whom. What was said about immigration was that it should be stopped because it was creating problems "in this already over-crowded island". A few tried in vain to explode the myth.

Table 4.7 Comments Made Concerning Immigration By Group And Opinion Leader

About Whom	By Whom								
	M.P.s	Local Politicians	News-papers	Let-ters	Polls Work-ers	Police	Asians	West Indian	Other
Coloureds	1	1	1						
Negroes								1	
West Indians	1		2						
Immigrants (particularly E. African Asians)	32	34	65	12	10	4	6		9
Totals	34	35	68	12	10	4	6	1	9

n = 179

The major contributors to this very heated and one-sided debate were the Politicians (38.5% of references) and the Newspaper Editors and Journalists (37.9%).

As early as 1958, the Evening Despatch quoted Mr. Dennis Howell, M.P. for All Saints as saying:-

No more (coloured) people should be allowed into the country upon a permanent basis unless they can satisfy three conditions ((a) they have a job to come to, (b) they are in good

health, (c) they have suitable accommodation) ... I would also prepare a scheme for assisted passage facilities for those folks already here who are without work and want to return home .

(4th September, 1958)

Seven years later the Birmingham Evening Mail reported:-

A public opinion survey taken in Birmingham shortly before the General Election last October, showed that a majority of those interviewed gave immigration problems as the issue with which they are most concerned .

(31st March, 1965)

Two years later a leading official of the Sparkbrook Association gave up in desperation and left for Australia. She wrote:-

Our work has been almost pointless, however, because so many new immigrants are arriving every week. They are obviously coming in hundreds not just ones and twos ... Mrs. Tyler added that she was convinced that the majority of new immigrants in the area were "illegal entrants".

(Post, 4th September, 1967)

This was one of the first references to "illegal immigrants" a term that was to sour race relations in Britain for many years.

From 1968 onwards Mr. Enoch Powell, M.P. for Wolverhampton (and elsewhere later) dominated the discussion about immigration. Even those who argued against what he said had to concede that immigration was a problem and

should not be allowed to go on indefinitely. He picked up an old issue and electrified it by injecting his scholarly and rhetorical talents into the debate. Starting with "the evil of immigration" he went on to claim that it amounted to building up one's own "funeral pyre". His inflammatory speeches have been dealt with elsewhere. Of more importance is their development from a request to stop immigration to a suggestion that repatriation is the only way to end immigration. This progression was picked up by local people, local Politicians and M.P.'s who tended to use the same emotional language. For example, an "I am backing Powell" Campaign spread to many factories in the area where "Hundreds of workers staged token strikes and signed petitions in protest against the sacking of Mr. Enoch Powell from the Shadow Cabinet". (Mail, 25th April, 1968). Later that year the Birmingham Post received a number of letters like:-

We the British people, want a complete stop to further immigration. We want repatriation (compulsory if necessary) of all immigrants. In spite of all the efforts of the controlling minority we will never accept integration ... This is our country, the land for which we fought and died, and we shall continue to fight this menace from within until the traitors who are trying to destroy this nation have been finally and irrevocably defeated .

and ...

For God's sake put us first and not the bloody immigrants .

(Post, 21st November, 1968)

The local Politicians like Councillor Wallace Lawler appealed for a

total ban of immigration to Birmingham and the Black Country (Mail, 2nd May, 1968) and Alderman Frank Griffin argued that:-

If the Government failed to heed the call to restrict the flow of immigrants into Birmingham, the only other way to do it was to turn the City into a "Police State" and issue special identity cards .

(Post, 15th May, 1968)

From the Summer of 1972 there was near panic over the influx of Uganda Asians. The newspapers contibuted to this state of affairs by printing a succession of stories with headlines like: "City cannot cope with Asian influx" (Mail, 21st August, 1972): "Keep Asians out" (Mail, 22nd August, 1972): "Uganda Asians: City prepares" (Mail, 24th August, 1972): "How ready?" (Post, 24th August, 1972), and publishing letters with statements such as "We are now almost at the point of no return" (Post, 4th September, 1972). Walking through the City during those months, one expected to see thousands of immigrants marching up New Street.

And then the emphasis was put on illegal immigrants. One read that:-

It is thought that a proportion as high as 1 : 5 of the total pupulation of Pakistani and Indian immigrants living in the West Midlands arrived in Britain illegally .

(Mail, 12th March, 1973)

and that:-

More than 600 illegal immigrants who had been hiding in

the Midlands for more than three years have come out into the open and contacted the Home Office .

(Mail, 12th January, 1976)

One stout champion of the anti-immigration cause was Mr. John Stokes (M.P. for Halesowen and Stourbridge) who had been campaigning for a total ban on immigration since 1971. Then in an immigration debate in the House of Commons he declared:-

I regard the violation of the rights of English people, the alteration to their towns, cities and districts, the new mosques which have been built, the new restaurants, cinemas and other establishments, as nothing less than a rape of the English race .

(Mail, 6th July, 1976)

Repatriation

There is a logical development from a demand for the termination of immigration to a campaign for repatriation (first voluntarily and then by force) in a race relations situation characterised by widespread prejudice and discrimination. The breakdown of the data dealing with repatriation is as follows:-

Table 4.8 The Debate Over Repatriation By Opinion Leaders

Repatriation	For	Against
<u>Expressed by:-</u>		
M.P.'s	7	1
Local Politicians	3	-
Immigrants	4	2
The Newspapers	3	3
Letters	2	12
Industrialists	1	-
	20	18

n = 38

All the statements of the Politicians (except that of Mr. Brian Waldron, M.P. for All Saints denouncing Mr. Enoch Powell) were for repatriation. The idea surfaced as early as 1958 but received respectability after Mr. Enoch Powell suggested a Ministry of Repatriation in the Eastbourne Speech of November 1968. Then in a speech at Wulfrum Hall, Wolverhampton in June, 1969, Mr. Powell explained carefully the feasibility and economics of a repatriation programme thus:-

... The other (way to solve the problem) is to facilitate the voluntary return to their own countries of as many as possible of the immigrants and their children who are already here. Without repatriation the prospective danger which I have delineated will materialise, whatever may be done about further intake in the future ... Financially if one estimates that 600,000 to 700,000 would be involved, and that the average size of family is five, then to give each family £2,000 for passage and re-settlement would cost £260 million. Raise this to £300 million to include all the costs of administration, etc., and it would

still represent only the cost of 18 months' aid to underdeveloped Countries at the present rate ... This might well last 10 years or more ... The consequences of the blindness and self-delusion which created that menace without the consent or even knowledge of the Nation, can still be retrieved ... But time is running against us .

(Post, 9th June, 1969)

This apparent humane offer appealed to many people. There was the case of:-

A Jamaican living in London visited Birmingham seeking support for a voluntary repatriation scheme for coloured people in Britain. He said "there are many more young people like myself (Rastafarians) who would like to return, but cannot afford it ... (and) It is in Britain's interest to do so with all the Asians coming here".

(Mail, 2nd September, 1972)

This West Indian, like the other immigrants who wrote to Mr. Powell for help, may have known that Clause 29 of the 1971 Immigration Act empowered the Home Secretary, with Treasury approval to meet or provide for expenses of persons who leave the U.K. for a Country or territory where they intend to reside permanently, but they certainly did not know that the Government was using the International Social Services of Great Britain to administer the aid scheme.

The overall message was that immigrants were unwanted, immigration should be stopped and that this could only be achieved by mounting a repatria-

tion scheme, both voluntary and involuntary. So vociferous was the attack on immigration and immigrants (many of whom were considered to have entered illegally) that "immigrants" already in Britain began to dissociate themselves from potential "immigrants". For example, one read that, like their white counterparts in factories and the inner rings of the City, "Immigrants sign plea to keep Asians out" (Mail, 2nd September, 1972). This process of rejecting the group as defined by the Press, and dissociating oneself from "them" has been observed to occur regularly throughout the period under consideration.

(iii) Numbers

The debate over numbers was closely linked to that of repatriation and figures were quoted out of context to justify repatriation. The major problem in getting the "right number" was one of definition. Quite often different categories were being discussed, like:-

- (a) The number of people born abroad living in Britain.
- (b) The number of people with "non-white" skin born abroad and living in Britain.
- (c) The number of New Commonwealth citizens residing in Britain.
- (d) The number of people with non-white skin living in Britain, whether born abroad or in Britain.

The term "immigrant" was often used to cover all these groups but gradually became synonymous with category (d).

On most occasions the figures were presented as facts produced by statisticians but in about one-third of the cases, Politicians, particularly Mr. Enoch Powell, produced the figures. Newspaper Journalists joined the "numbers game" less often.

The message was that the number of immigrants in Birmingham was growing rapidly. The table below shows how the picture was built up:-

Table 4.9 The Apparent Growth Of The Coloured Population In Birmingham

Category	Year	Number	Total Birmingham Population	Authority
Coloureds	1955	11,000	1,109,000	Daily Herald
Coloureds	1959	35,200		L. A. Gibbs
Coloureds	1962	60,000	1,115,080	L. Collins
Coloureds	1965	70,000	1,106,040 in 1964	Conservatives
"Immigrants born abroad"	1966	99,842		Statistician
"Immigrant population"	1967	72,000		{ Councillor Franklin
" "	1968	84,000		
Coloured Immigrants	1969	80,000		Ald. B. Dark
Coloured pop'n.	1970	95,000		Cllr. Franklin
Coloureds	1971	95,000	1,841,180	Statistician
Coloured People	1973	90,000- 100,000		Mail
Immigrant pop'n.	1976	116,000		Mail
" "	1991	165,000		Mail

Many of these figures included white immigrants like the Irish but this was not always made clear.

The numbers were said to be increasing not only by people "flooding in" but also by the high birth-rate of immigrants. Seldom was it explained that a baby-bulge is inevitable among fecund immigrants and that the birth-

rate would soon normalise. For example, one read:- "In Birmingham the 77,000 immigrants (constituting) 8% of the City's population accounted for nearly 20% of the births" (Sunday Mercury, 8th December, 1968); "More than 30% of the babies born in Birmingham in the six months up to September, 1969 were to mothers from the New Commonwealth countries" (Post, 9th March, 1970); "Nearly 1 in 3 babies born in Birmingham in 1973 had immigrant mothers, Government statistics revealed today" (Mail, 24th April, 1975); and finally, "Fears of a population explosion amongst the immigrant communities are shown to be groundless in the latest abstract of statistics for Birmingham (the numbers were falling)" (Post, 11th October, 1976).

Not only did Mr. Enoch Powell produce his own figures but also accused the Registrar General, the Government and others of under-estimating and falsifying the figures thereby showing "sheer incomprehension of the very magnitude of the danger itself" (Post, 9th June, 1969). His complex statistical analysis of the coloured population in the Southport speech (Post, 2nd May, 1970) was followed by a prediction that by 1985, 7% or 4 million of Britain's population would be coloured (Mail, 16th February, 1971). These figures produced by Mr. Powell were blown out of all proportion by many people like the Southampton Scientist who claimed that in 50 years' time Birmingham could have more coloured people than whites (Mail, 11th August, 1970).

A number of people like Dipak Nandy (Mail, 17th March, 1971) questioned these figures, but once the primary definition of the problem was made they had to concede that the very presence of numbers of non-white people was a problem.

(iv) Employment

The Employment sub-topics have been classified as follows:-

Table 4.10 Items Relating To Employment

Sub-Topics		Items
1.	Discrimination	29
2.	Unemployment	21
3.	Tension at the work place	15
4.	Job prospects improving/no problem	7
5.	Trade Union problems	6
6.	Competing for jobs	4
7.	Filling vacancies	3
8.	Good Race Relations at work	2
9.	Black strike	2
TOTAL		89

The articles started with stories of coloured workers filling vacancies. But the kinds of jobs they were getting were badly paid, forcing them to exist on very stringent budgets. For example, this was the budget of a coloured immigrant in 1955. George earned £9.17s. a week and spent it on:-

Table 4.11 George's Budget

Rent	£1.10.0
Groceries	£2.10.0
Meals in Cafés	£1.03.0
Coal	£0.05.0
Clothes	£0.10.0
Amusements	£1.00.0
Cigarettes and sweets	£1.00.0
Newspapers and sundries	£0.07.6
TOTAL	£8.05.6

He then had £1.11s.6d. to spend on transport and to meet the normal obligation of sending money back home to dependent relatives (sometimes a whole

family) - among other things.

In general, the Politicians contributed very little to industrial matters, leaving the tackling of the problem to autonomous employers and the building up of images of immigrant groups to the newspaper journalists and others. The picture of Asians was one of being concentrated in certain industries and being neglected by the Unions in their demands for better pay and conditions in Foundries, for example. In 1969, Mr. J. Joshi, Secretary of the Indian Workers' Association said in Birmingham:-

There have been instances of coloured workers being miserably treated and shamefully let down by Trade Unions .
(Mail, 31st March, 1969)

Then there was the sensational news of:-

A deputation of women workers has complained to Union Officials about a "colour bar in reverse" at a Birmingham factory ... they say a majority of Asian workers blocked a return to work after a strike by voting as a body to continue the dispute .

(Mail, 16th May, 1974)

This growing solidarity led to claims that the development of "separate black Trade Unions would lead to confrontations of the worst kind". (Post, 16th December, 1974).

The problems facing West Indians or posed by West Indians were radically different. In 1962 a law student claimed that West Indians were being barred from membership of the Trade Unions (Mail, 19th February, 1962).

By then the controversy over whether or not they should be employed as conductors on the buses (Observer, 21st February, 1954) had been resolved in their favour and they seemed to have settled down contentedly to their menial economic tasks. Then there emerged the problem of employing their children, the young school leavers. A typical story is as follows:-

Lillian Simpson wore her best trouser suit yesterday. She wears it every Wednesday and Friday to look her best for the job interviews. She hopes luck will come her way. She is sixteen, pretty, articulate, West Indian. Unlucky too. Because Lillian, of Murdock Road, Handsworth, has been unable to find a job since leaving school in July. ... "I worked so hard at shorthand and typing at the Technical School I attended during my last year at School" she said. ... "The trouble was, we didn't take examinations in these subjects. This means I've no certificates to show people who might give me a job. The Youth Employment Office has sent me to about 15 jobs. In each case they seem to have been filled while I was on the bus. People are always nice but they have to tell me the vacancy has been filled".

Then Lillian went to a Coffee Bar, put her name down for a game of table tennis. Until she finds a job she will sign on twice a week in Birmingham Youth Employment Services latest aid to soothe the jar on joblessness - at Oaklands Sports and Social Centre.

(There) None of the half-a-dozen boys I approached at random was a school-leaver looking for work, but unemployed young workers. Youths who had had jobs they had left through

boredom, redundancy or the sack.

"Black power" were words they used a lot to describe their interests and explain their aims. White people they felt, didn't know how to live.

A boy with no shirt and a long scarf first swore, then spoke to me. He was 17, left school two years ago, says he "is supposed to be looking for a job with radio and television" ... "I got a job in a factory though. Then I got the sack for fighting. Then I got another job, then I got the sack for the same thing. Here I am. I have been in this country since 1964 and I want to go home to Jamaica". (Mail, 30th September, 1971)

The above story is quoted at length because it touches on a number of important issues. The location is Handsworth. Here is a young West Indian girl having great expectations while at school, only to learn on leaving that she had spent her time in a "non-examination class". Having no qualifications she ventures out into the world of work and comes face to face with job refusals which she thinks are caused by racial discrimination. She drifts around coffee bars and becomes dependent on statutory bodies whose response to the situation is to offer facilities for passing the time away. Such girls soon become pregnant.

The progression for boys is different. By then they had reached the stage of refusing the available work, the "shit-work". The youngster in question wants a progressive job, he wants to be a communications technician but gets one routine factory job after another. He is sacked for fighting (most likely because he did not find the racial jokes funny). He is representa-

tive of those West Indian children who were left behind by parents migrating to Britain and sent for before the 12th birthday (children under 12 travelled at half the usual price). He feels rejected by the society and in turn rejects his rejectors. He is becoming aware of the black experience and is bitter about it. He is interested in "Black Power" and likely to join groups subscribing to this ideology.

Some years later one read about the same type of youngsters getting out of Handsworth, drifting into the city centre and congregating in the prestigious Bull Ring Centre. The traders protested because the youngsters were disrupting trade and appealed for help. Then:-

A Birmingham Community Group has launched an all-out effort to find work for unemployed black youngsters who hang around the Bull Ring Centre ... The West Indian Federation has been "rounding up" the youngsters and taking them away from the Centre. ... Nicknamed the "tea cosy kids" because of their headgear, they are all unemployed, and aged between 17 and 20. Mr. James Hunte, President of the Federation said:- ... "We have got to get them ready to work at any time - they want to show they can be of use to the community ... We know of a Church and Church Yard in Aston that badly needs clearing and cleaning up, and these boys are prepared to do it".

(Mail, 31st March, 1976)

This was a political strategy by Mr. Hunte to show the public that the "tea cosy kids" were willing to work, to do any kind of work; but it was not the truth.

A more imaginative response to the problem was that of Mr. Ben Leigh, Chairman of the Afro-Caribbean Association for Economic and Social Security. He suggested that the Government should provide the money for his Organisation "to establish a work-training and leisure centre in an empty factory and office building in Gooch Street in the City Centre" (Post, 6th September, 1976). This theme of jobless, young West Indians was soon to be injected with stories of crime, ("mugging" in particular) and squatting.

In the face of this worsening situation the Youth Employment Office and the CRC kept insisting that there was no problem of jobless young coloured people (Mail, 11th June, 1974) and that in fact the youngsters were being placed in jobs - many of which involved skill training - quickly (Mail, 19th March, 1975). The reason for this discrepancy was that some West Indian youngsters had given up registering with Youth Employment Offices. It was revealed as early as 1972 that figures based on the workless registering for unemployment benefit at Youth Employment Offices were less than half the real figures thrown up by the census (Mercury, 19th November, 1972).

(v) Housing

Housing was an important issue in the Newspapers during the years under review and Politicians were responsible for nearly half (46) of the statements made. Since people had to make rapid decisions about getting a roof over their head, any procrastination by statutory bodies like the Housing Departments of Local Authorities would have long-lasting effects. Immigrants were forced to solve their housing problems in ways that could later influence policy makers and provide material for building or reinforcing stereotypes. The items were arranged under the following sub-topics:-

Table 4.12 References To Housing By Opinion Leaders

Sub-Topic	Items	Opinion Leaders		
	Total	Politicians	Newspapers	Other
Description of housing	17	7	9	1
Immigrants creating problems	15	7	4	4
Immigrants forced into situation	13		1	12
Discrimination by Local Authorities	12	12		
Discrimination by others	6		6	
Dispersal debate	36	18	9	9
Prices	4	1	1	2
Illegal occupation (Asians)	5		5	
Homelessness/squatting (West Indians)	7	1	5	1
Black people rejecting each other	1			1
	116	46	40	30

By the end of the 1950's three major themes had emerged in the discussion about "immigrant housing", namely:-

- (a) That coloured immigrants were living in appalling conditions. (Post, 17th January, 1955).
- (b) That they were creating "Little Harlems" (Evening Despatch, 25th February, 1955).
- (c) That they should have a particular area like Balsall Heath all to themselves. (Evening Despatch, 18th July, 1958).

There were many lurid descriptions of "immigrant housing" in areas like Balsall Heath but the first real analysis of what was taking place came from Mr. Harold Gurden, M.P. in a letter to the Times:-

The results of our investigations and the report published by the Council indicate that, so far as Birmingham is concerned, we are getting very near the saturation point and that the problems are threatening to become unmanageable. One of the reports to the City Council states that in areas occupied overwhelmingly by immigrants "living conditions have become physically much worse in those houses commonly known as slums ... The disturbing thing about all this is that the situation exists at a time when the total housing accommodation in the City is greater than ever before and the normal population has been progressively falling in recent years. (Times, 13th December, 1960).

Were the immigrants themselves responsible for this state of affairs?

Many people, from Politicians to Churchmen, were convinced that the immigrants were creating slums. Councillor E. P. Franklin argued that because of the problems created by immigrants, "Birmingham citizens were being forced to move out to areas where the value of properties would not deteriorate". (Mail, 12th December, 1968). Then in 1969 a Church Missionary Society Report declared that Asian landlords were practising "Rachmanism" in housing immigrant families in rooms. (Mail, 16th December, 1969).

If immigrants were creating the problems everywhere they settled then it made sense that they should be contained in one particular area and prevented from spreading to others. This seems to have been the rationale behind the Birmingham Corporation Act which required the registration of all multi-occupied houses and granted the Authority the power to prevent "the amenity or character of a locality from being injured by the spread of multi-occupied homes". (Observer, 31st October, 1965). This was spelt out clearly by Councillor Collett who argued that "immigrants should have areas of their own to live happily apart from us and yet with us and without offence to their neighbours". (Post, 19th August, 1967).

It was first pointed out by Professor John Rex that the overlooking of the disparate housing needs of immigrants together with the above policy of containment amounted to Birmingham Housing Corporation creating twilight zones and doing an injustice to a valuable part of the labour force of the present and future. (Observer, 7th November, 1965). This kind of analysis was heavily criticised by Academics, Politicians and Churchmen and may have done little to change the attitude of the ordinary Englishman to black people moving into his area.

This was made clear in 1969 when the controversy over the dispersal of immigrants broke out. By then, large numbers of black people were qualifying for housing allocation by the City Council and were being distributed randomly over the City. This led to the "concentration" of more than one coloured family in a block of maisonettes in Ladywood. One read:-

The Chairman of Birmingham Housing Committee, Alderman Beaumont Dark, today took a firm stand on the rehousing of coloured families. He did so in rejecting a protest by a group of maisonette tenants in Ladywood who are

threatening to withhold their rents if another coloured family is moved into their block ... He warned the Ladywood tenants: Any one who does not pay his rent because someone's colour is different will face the possibility of eviction .

(Mail, 13th February, 1969)

The tenants were terrified of being "over-run by coloured families" (Mail, 13th February, 1969) but eventually had to submit and learn to live with their new neighbours who proved to be the opposite of what they expected. This supports the argument that a frightening picture of black people had been established in the minds of the local people. Even some black people internalised these attitudes and showed rejection towards each other. For example, the first black family in the Ladywood block of maisonettes did not show solidarity with the newcomers. The mother, Mrs. Pearly Pinnock said:-

I get on well with my neighbours and don't want any more coloured families here. It doesn't make sense. This is upsetting everyone in the block and I shall give the white tenants my support in this .

(Mail, 14th February, 1969)

This incident led to the adoption of a coding policy to prevent too many black tenants being placed together. When it was discovered accidentally by an Irish woman and her black husband, it ushered in an inconclusive debate. On the one hand the Corporation argued that their policy prevented the formation of ghettos. Black leaders like Mr. Maurice Andrews of the Black Community Workers argued that this was racist for:-

If you follow the dispersal theory through then if

a Local Authority were to build a new housing estate with fine amenities and fill it with black people it would still be a ghetto. In other words, ghetto is synonymous with black and that is racist .

(Times, 26th October, 1975)

Others argued that dispersal delayed the rehousing of blacks and was therefore discriminatory. Still others argued that black people did not want to be dispersed for fear of harassment in white areas and that the Asians in particular wanted to stay together in the areas of initial settlement for cultural, social and business reasons. (Mail, 4th January, 1971), and (Guardian, 23th October, 1975). The Race Relations Board and the Home Office intervened indecisively in the controversy (Telegraph, 20th October, 1975)

Most references were made to immigrants indiscriminately but some did specify Asians or West Indians. The Asians were accused of being unscrupulous landlords "packing" immigrants into lodging houses and later of occupying houses illegally. One read in 1975 that:-

The Birmingham Housing Committee has been told of a growing problem of Asian tenants vacating council owned homes to return to their home countries and leaving other families in occupation .

(Mail, 25th April, 1975)

On the other hand the West Indians were associated with homelessness and squatting. Many of these stories have been allocated to other topics because such topics like crime and young people in Handsworth were stressed more than squatting. The gravity of the problem facing West Indians was made clear by Mr. Peter Walker, M.P. for Worcester, who said:-

The proportion of West Indian families living in over-crowded conditions is 10-fold that of the population as a whole. Of the late teenagers in certain districts, as many as 1 in 5 could be defined as homeless . (Mail, 17th June, 1976)

One response to this state of affairs was squatting. The West Indian homeless youngsters, particularly the males, began to squat in increasing numbers. Even the girls were forced to this solution. For example, one read:-

Olivia Dickson, Angela Holness and Marcia Brown typify the desparate situation young blacks are facing in Handsworth. Driven out of the security of their families by the frustration of social problems and parental discipline which they regard as stifling they find themselves squatting - surviving on the breadline. Today they are squatting together at a house in Handsworth ... These girls have known each other since primary school and have been squatting for a year ... The girls said that they did not receive unemployment or social security money and managed to survive with "help from our friends" (including one parent). (Mail, 20th October, 1976)

This case of black social solidarity in the face of social dis-organisation and risk will be developed fully in a later Chapter.

The newspapers also referred to other attempts to solve the problem. In 1973 the Mail paid reference to the setting up of a voluntary housing

association - Harambee. It was being set up to provide accommodation for homeless youths. (Mail, 3rd February, 1973).

(vi) Voting

There were 12 references to the voting behaviour of immigrants and the general message was they were either apolitical or too divided among themselves to make any impact on the established political institutions and processes of Britain. In 1964 one read that:-

It is estimated that in Birmingham itself no less than 70,000 non-white immigrants who are qualified by age and length of residence to cast a vote in the City's Election ... (However) between 45 and 50% of this body appears to have forfeited its right to vote through the simple act of failing to register.

(Birmingham Planet, 23rd January, 1964)

The theme was taken up again by the Mail in 1974 when it was said that Birmingham had 60,000 coloured immigrants of voting age but:-

Despite the big immigrant vote Birmingham has not a single black Councillor .

(Mail, 24th September, 1974)

The difference between Asians and West Indians was that the former were less divided than the latter. In 1973 a row broke out over an allegation that the Liberals told white voters in Birmingham that Labour was assured of a block vote of Asians in the All Saints Constituency (Mail, 13th May, 1973). Then in 1974 one read that the Asians in marginal seats were divided into Kashmiris, Sikhs, Hindus and Moslems who, quite often "do not want to

integrate with British Society" (Mail, 24th September, 1974). Nevertheless the potential for block voting along ethnic lines was apparent.

As far as the West Indians were concerned, it appeared as though "they had no united voice". In 1970 Mr. Valentine Cato of the West Indian Welfare Committee said:-

I think there needs to be much more unity among the black community. I think this is one of the main troubles. The 70's should produce this unity. Let's organise a block vote. We just want enough to prove that we can win a seat for a Political Party . (Mail, 7th January, 1970)

By 1974 this unity had not been achieved. Brian Priestley of the Birmingham Evening Mail wrote:-

Examine marginal Handsworth. About 7,000 of the voters are West Indians, but there is no such thing as a solid "West Indian vote". West Indians are often deeply divided by the generation gap and the fact that they come from different islands. West Indians may be young, ardent Black Power enthusiasts, apathetic housewives, or members of a big Pentecostal Church who are concerned more with salvation than with the sinful affairs of the World. They can be infinitely different .

(Mail, 24th September, 1974)

Was this apparent division among the immigrants a permanent feature or a means to a more realistic mode of accommodation to life in a new society?

(vii) The Established Church

The discussion in the mass media over the years centered around the question whether the Church was meeting the needs of immigrants or not. The count resulted in 16 opinion leaders giving a negative answer while 4 thought the Church was doing a good job. The Church was expected to make a firm stand against racialism on the assumption that its authority was still great, even in a secular society. It was also expected to help the Uganda Asians "flooding" into Britain in 1972 with facilities like housing (Daily Telegraph, 13th September, 1972).

There was a general feeling that the Church had failed the Christian West Indians on many grounds. This was articulated by the Rev. Fitzallen John, the Methodist Minister for Community Relations in Birmingham - himself a West Indian. He said:-

A situation like Handsworth gives the Church a golden opportunity to make a comeback. But the Church is not doing half enough and the majority of West Indians are now feeling that they are not wanted by the Church . (Mail, 7th January, 1970)

The Church remained aloof or even hostile to the newcomers. Its justifications for this stance were consistent with the premise of the thesis that British people have a propensity to be ethnocentric and prejudiced towards their former black colonial subjects. For example, an Anglican Vicar said in 1969:-

I cannot subscribe to the belief that all Religions are leading their followers to Heaven .

(Post, 2nd October, 1969)

Later that year Rev. Nock explained:-

The Church is designed to cope with the normal problems of a normal area. To do a great deal more than we are doing we are going to need a great deal more specialised people. (Post, 17th December, 1969)

It seems as though there was a consensus that the "immigrants", their areas of settlement and related "problems" were "abnormal" and that there was little The Established Church could do about it. The few references to the Church substantiate this.

(viii) Education

Education is of crucial importance to coloured immigrants. It is one of the assumed means of transcending a negative social identity. To acquire a profession and win a place in a professional reference group is considered to be a great achievement. Immigrant parents and some liberal opinion believe that the school can compensate for short-comings in society. Did this happen in Britain during the third quarter of the 20th Century?

Initially there were general statements in the Newspapers about "immigrant children". This was followed by a debate about whether or not to disperse these immigrant children to ensure that at no school did they form more than one third of the population. Over time, distinct statements were made about Asian and West Indian children.

There was widespread political intervention and indeed education became a major political issue in the city. In the debate, the differential provision of education according to class and group became clearer. The Church became involved because of the existence of some Church schools -

particularly Catholic ones - which attracted white pupils from the state schools where there were many black children. The teaching profession campaigned for dispersion and some employers were said to discriminate against children from certain schools. The Department of Education issued a Circular (7/65) recommending that no school should have more than 30% "immigrant children", while the Local Authority remained adamant that black children would not be dispersed from the twilight zones to "white areas". Parents protested about one thing or another.

The data have been broken down into the following categories:-

Table 4.13 References To The Education Of Immigrants By Topic

Topic		References	
(a)	<u>Immigrant Children</u>		
	Having special needs	39	
	Creating problems	8	
	Dragging down standards	6	
	Doing well/integrating/treated the same	3	
	Being discriminated against	3	
	Suffering disadvantages	2	
		<u>61</u>	61
(b)	<u>Concentration/Dispersion</u>	47	47
(c)	<u>Asian Children</u>		
	Have special needs	8	
	Living in two Worlds (school and home)	6	
	Creating problems	5	
	Doing well at school	3	
		<u>22</u>	22
(d)	<u>West Indian Children</u>		
	Creating problems	12	
	Not doing well at school	6	
	Becoming belligerent	4	
	Disadvantaged	3	
	Living in two Worlds (school and home)	3	
	Posing a psychological problem	2	
	Having unrealistic job expectations	2	
	Doing well in sports (except swimming)	2	
	Lacking concentration and staying power (non-academic)	1	
	Need help with English	1	
		<u>36</u>	<u>36</u>
			n = 166

(a) The overall message was that immigrant children had special needs, the meeting of which would cause standards to fall. Headmasters and School

Teachers and even the experts in multi-racial education, like Mr. Bob Chapman, believed that all children should be treated the same, that colour should not matter (Mail, 24th March, 1962). In any case problems did develop and a number of people made statements about falling standards. It appears as though the very presence of the coloured children was causing a problem, that children were a problem in themselves. In 1965 one read:-

"White children's education was being retarded because of the excessive numbers of immigrant children in his school," Mr. Owen Davis, an English Teacher at the William Murdock Secondary School in Rookery Road, Handsworth, said today. Mr. Davis who has been at the school for 17 years, is leaving at the end of this term to take up a post in Johannesburg. Mr. Davis said that about 50% of the children in the William Murdock School were immigrants and that the bottom stream was virtually all immigrant. "I have no colour prejudices" he said. "I am a friend of the coloured teacher who is a member of the staff". (Mail, 1st July, 1965)

Why then one may speculate, did he choose to go to South Africa?

(b) A more heated debate centred over the natural build up of immigrant children in particular schools in the twilight zones. In 1965, the year of the issuing of Circular 7/65, Miss Wilkes of Grove Lane Primary School discovered that 80% of her pupils were coloured. She said:-

"Now all we do is lose white children and take in immigrant ones". She (also) thought that it would take another generation to bring standards up to what

they were before the immigrant invasion .

(Mail, 1st November, 1965)

There was an angry confrontation between the white parents and the Headmistress (Post, 9th November, 1965). The white parents decided to send their children to Catholic Schools and highlighted the role of the Church in enabling white children to withdraw from schools leaving the impression that "a majority black school was a bad school". The only three white children entering the Grove Primary School left for the Catholic School within a fortnight. (Guardian, 11th February, 1967).

This concentration of black children in certain Birmingham Schools was taking place on a significant scale. One new Primary School in Handsworth had an intake of 75% coloured on the day it opened its doors (Post, 13th January, 1967). And there were at least 45 schools in Birmingham where the population was between 30% and 80% coloured (Daily Telegraph, 4th November, 1965). And still they kept coming. One read that Birmingham was facing the problem of "finding school places for 60 new immigrant children every week" (Mail, 2nd April, 1968). Councillor N. Scrimshaw, the Primary Education Sub-Committee Chairman said:-

We are worried that the point is likely to arrive when we cannot handle the numbers wanting to enter schools .

(Mail, 13th December, 1968)

An increasing number of people advocated dispersal as the solution. The M.P., Roy Hattersley, the National Union of Teachers (Post, 27th September, 1966), The National Association of Schoolmasters (Mail, 21st October, 1966), Valentine Cato of the West Indian Welfare Committee (Post, 30th September, 1966) and even immigrant parents (Guardian, 13th November, 1965) saw dispersal as the best means of raising educational standards and aiding

integration.

One lone voice cried out that if integration was the objective then the parents and not the children should be dispersed. Professor John Rex wrote:-

I cannot imagine a more vicious racist policy than that of dispersal (of children). I believe it is supported by people who think it is a liberal thing to do. But how does a West Indian boy feel if he hears that his school is bad and he is being moved to another because he is part of the cause?

(Post, 21st February, 1967)

But for a multitude of reasons the Local Authority refused to disperse children by bussing them to school even though the experiment was "succeeding" in nearby West Bromwich. One read:-

Birmingham Education Committee however has staunchly refused to disperse, maintaining that the present provision of peripatetic teachers of English, extra capitation allowances and an attempt to get the teachers concerned more pay were sufficient .

(Post, 21st November, 1968)

(c) The special needs of Asian children were first diagnosed as having to do with learning a foreign language and it was reasonably easy to meet this need. A peripatetic unit to teach English to Asian pupils was set up in 1960 under the direction of Mr. Robert Chapman who received an M.B.E. for his work

in 1970 (Mail, 13th June, 1970). A reception centre for newly arrived Asian children was soon established in any area with a large concentration of Asians. The reception centres fed these children back into normal schools as they learned the English language. This is not to say that all the problems of Asian children were overcome this way. There were reports of Asian children torn between two cultures and some, particularly girls, "leading dreadfully unhappy lives in two worlds" (Mail, 7th January, 1971). But there was emerging the general picture of Asian pupils coping with the many cultural conflicts calmly and doing well at school. Mr. George Meredith of the William Murdock School found them, particularly the Sikhs, to be "highly intelligent, industrious and responsible". (Post, 26th August, 1971). Then one later read:-

Asian youngsters are leaving the youth of this country behind in the desire to get on in life, according to a survey by Birmingham Youth Employment Sub-Committee among 16,000 potential school leavers .

(Daily Telegraph, 23rd October, 1972)

(d) West Indian children were singled out as posing an almost insoluble problem because they were caught up in a vicious circle. In 1967 the Times observed:-

If one is looking for potential failures, the baby is likely to be West Indian. (Over-crowded housing, child-minding in unstimulating paraffin-heated rooms, a Pentecostal-fundamentalist upbringing, broken families and poor school facilities were mentioned as causing this state of affairs).

By 12 the West Indian boy is often bitter about the world

in general, the white people he has encountered so glancingly and his parents. They in turn sometimes resent the fact that although they sent him to school he shows no sign of becoming an engineer or doctor . (Times, 14th February, 1967)

This "pop" sociological analysis can be compared with the racist analysis presented in the local newspapers:-

The major problem with the West Indian children as they grow up is temperament. They lack control over their emotions on the one hand and have an apathy towards work which is so different from the normal junior child who is bursting with the desire to learn. The West Indian, excellent at sports and games and developing fast physically makes a great fuss over a small hurt. ... One tiny Indian boy (once) slipped and broke off several teeth at the gums, I was told. He stifled his tears in a moment or two. A West Indian boy would have screamed and screamed. The West Indian child tends to do only what he can get away with, the Indian to demand the teacher's attention all the time .

(Mail, 17th December, 1962)

By 1967 teachers were observing that "second generation children were becoming belligerent in the face of prejudice and discrimination" (Post, 21st July, 1967). Their explanations, recorded by David Beetham, were that "the West Indian child seems to lack concentration and staying power. By nature the West Indian is emotional and exuberant and this leads to behaviour problems

at school"(especially it was said in "permissive" class-rooms) (Mail, 6th March, 1978). Then Gus John's Report describing the conditions under which West Indians had to live in areas like Handsworth forced people to look at the multiple deprivations and attribute some of the causes of the problem to them. (Mail, 6th January, 1970). There was a consensus of opinion that life for a West Indian in a white society amounted to an "attack on his identity" (Mail, 6th January, 1970). Children of West Indian origin were said to be most concerned about the meaning and social import of being black in Britain. This line of thought got extensive coverage in the Birmingham Evening Mail during January, 1970 and led some teachers at a local school to experiment with teaching "Black Studies". Then one read in 1973 that the Chief Education Officer had to intervene in a dispute at the William Murdock Secondary School where the Headmaster and some members of staff objected to the teaching of "Black Studies" (Mercury, 7th January, 1973). Why was "Black Studies" subsequently banned? This question will be answered in the next Chapter.

Attempts were later made to continue to meet the needs of black children in Handsworth by means of running holiday schools. Then in 1975 a campaign of vilification was directed by the local press at the Harambee Organisation which was running an Easter School for deprived children in the area. One read:-

There was an angry reaction to the disclosure that Asian and English children are being excluded from a holiday course organised at a Handsworth School by a West Indian group ... School Headmaster Mr. D. R. Winkley said Harambee was an exclusive West Indian Organisation ... Mr. Andrews, an Official of Harambee, said in reply to a question about Black Power behind the scheme ... "What is wrong with Black Power ... you have White Power".

(Mail, 13th March, 1975)

The image of fanatical Black Power rebels indoctrinating youngsters to hate white people was being developed.

Towards the end of the period it was discovered by an N.F.E.R. Researcher that:-

West Indian children living in Birmingham face a crippling educational handicap because of difficulties in making themselves understood ... although it was assumed at first that they spoke English, teachers discovered that many had West Indian dialects which handicapped them in speaking, listening, reading and writing.

(Mail, 6th January, 1965)

There was some consolation for West Indians. One learned that coloured children in Birmingham had a much better chance of avoiding a school for the educationally sub-normal than in many other Cities. In Birmingham, West Indian children accounted for 9.5% of the children in ordinary schools and 9.5% of children in E.S.N. schools compared with 17% and 31% respectively in London. However, in Birmingham the "neurological unit" which saved West Indian children from being labelled E.S.N. had a composition which was 50% West Indian. (Post, 9th April, 1973).

In addition to this, West Indian children were doing very well in some sports. (Times, 3rd September, 1970). Birmingham's Chief Education Officer and a number of teachers were concerned that they were not excelling at swimming. So in December of that year one read:-

Research teams are to go to Midland schools on a £6,000 study of physical education and immigrant children. A lot of teachers have reported that West

Indian children in particular seem to have difficulty in learning to swim. (Mail, 22nd December, 1970)

The stereotype of the West Indian child as the stupid, boisterous, trouble maker who was good only at sports, had emerged.

(ix) Prejudice And Discrimination

These subjects received relatively little publicity in the press. The myth that it wasn't British to show prejudice or practise discrimination persisted.

(a) Prejudice

As early as 1954 prejudice was revealed in a statement made by a citizen during the controversy over whether or not black people should be employed as conductors. One letter writer declared:-

No smelly nigger is going to help me off a bus .

(News Chronicle, 1st March, 1954)

The Birmingham M.P., Brian Waldron argued:-

It is an established tenet of liberal belief that the so-called colour problem in Britain is in essence a problem of white racial prejudice .

(Guardian, 10th July, 1969)

Two solutions were offered by well-meaning citizens, namely: laugh at it (Post, 22nd October, 1969) and invite immigrants into British people's homes..

(b) Discrimination

There was an assumption that initially there was little discrimination practised against coloured immigrants and that this was being dealt with by the Race Relations Acts which seemed to be getting tougher and tougher. The data can be classified as follows:-

Table 4.14 Items Of Discrimination By Topic

Topics	Items
Discrimination in clubs	15
Discrimination in hotels and boarding houses	6
Attacks on black people in street	2
Discrimination in dance halls	2
Discrimination in insurance	1
Discrimination in politics	1
Discrimination at meetings	1
Discrimination in teaching profession	1
Discrimination in legal profession	1
Discrimination in courts	1
Little or no discrimination exists	1
More discrimination than reported	9
TOTAL	41

Before the 1968 Race Relations Act there were several cases of coloured people being turned away from Birmingham hotels like the Gillot Lodge Hotel and the hoteliers being threatened with removal from the official Birmingham Corporation Hotel List. (Mail, 22n February, 1967). Then the focus shifted to dance halls. After one complaint against Mecca, the Chairman, Eric Morley was quoted as saying:-

Frankly I am sick and tired of certain coloured people flying to the Race Relations Board if they are refused admission to a place of entertainment .

(Mail, 12th November, 1974)

Finally many cases were brought against Working Men's Clubs, which were presented as the last bastions of English decency about to be broken down by distant Politicians to let in a flood of immigrants. In 1975, Working Men's Clubs were found to be devising a number of tactics to enable them to side-step any new legislation attempting to deny them the right to discriminate (Mail, 15th September, 1975). In one celebrated case, a West Indian lady was granted 5/- damages against a Club which refused her entry (Post, 10th April, 1970).

An apparent anomaly was that the Race Relations Board reported a drop in complaints (100 in 1972 and 92 in 1973) while at the same time claiming that discrimination was still rampant (Mail, 6th June, 1974). This can be resolved by pointing out that the natural response is to suppress and even repress experiences of racial discrimination, and not to report them. In any case, many victims of racial discrimination had not heard of the Race Relations Board or had lost faith in it.

Only two cases of assaults on black people are recorded during a period spanning the phenomena of the "Teddy Boys" and "Paki-Bashing".

(x) White Women

Most Race Relations situations are characterised by interdictions against miscegenation and the depiction of black men as lusting after white women. Britain is no exception. But there were relatively few articles on the subject. White women were depicted as:-

Table 4.15 References To White Women And Immigrants

Sub-Topic	Item
Facing a threat from black men	6
Degenerating to the state of preferring black men	3
Being bought and used by black men	1
Meeting hostility from black women	1
TOTAL	11

During the dispute over the hiring of black bus-conductors, a Trade Union District Secretary claimed that he had the feelings of the husbands of the 14,000 clippies in mind when he refused to hire black bus drivers. He asked:-

Would you want them leaving a Depot late at night with a coloured driver? (News Chronicle, 22nd March, 1954)

In 1956 Councillor Mrs. J. Tomkinson listed relations between black men and "a certain type of white women" and the appearance of "half-caste" children, among the "evils of Birmingham". Later, Mr. A. Jones of the Midland Immigration Association became disillusioned when a "brothel" for West Indians opened near his home and his wife and daughters (aged 16 and 14) were approached by coloured men (Times, 15th May, 1961). In 1965 the Ku Klux Klan promised to be "flinging burning crosses into the homes of Jamaican apes who live with white women". (Times, 16th August, 1965).

(xi) Crime

The researcher who read local newspapers over the years was surprised to find only 30 items classified under "crime". However, this low figure can be explained in two ways:-

- (a) Quite often the ethnic origin of the criminal cannot be gleaned from the article title, so fewer than a full census of articles were collected.
- (b) Criminal stories could be classified under different, but related headings like "Problems" or "Handsworth". However, a criminal profile of coloured immigrants could be built up from the following data:-

Table 4.16 References To Immigrants And Crime

Sub-Topics	Items
Criminal activities of coloureds	2
Criminal activities of immigrants	4
Criminal activities of Asians	8
Criminal activities of West Indians	13
Attack on criminal statistics	2
Other	1
TOTAL	30

In the 1950's it was said that coloured people (mainly West Indians) accounted for most of the convictions of possessing drugs. (Times, 15th July, 1957).

Some years later, Councillor Frank Carter claimed that of the 156 serious woundings in Birmingham, 34% were committed by the 10% immigrant population, as was 50% of the rapes, 18% of robberies and 27% of violent crimes (Mail, 3rd October, 1973). These figures were challenged by Mr. J. Lee, prospective Labour Candidate for Handsworth and by immigrant leaders like Dr. Prem who declared that Asians were "among the most law abiding people in the country" and Mr. J. Humte who pointed out that the crime rate among West Indians was "not more than 6% of the City's total" (Mail, 4th October, 1973).

In general, the Asians appeared to be involved in white collar crime, e.g. providing false insurance cards for illegal immigrants (Mail, 16th January, 1975) and organising tax evasion techniques (Mail, 4th December, 1970).

On the other hand, West Indians were involved in violent crimes like knifing and "mugging" for insignificant sums of money. The years 1972 - 1973 witnessed a moral panic about mugging. The "mugging" incident in Handsworth in 1972 and the sentences of between 10 and 20 years given to Paul Storey, James Dingnan and Mustafa Fuat by Mr. Justice Croom-Johnson focussed more attention on Handsworth. By 1976 one read:-

There is a brand of crime, violent robberies and mugging, which seems to be associated mainly with unemployed West Indian adolescents - by Mr. Ernest Bond who had 30 years experience in youth work. (Mail, 11th May, 1976)

(xii) Noise

There were 10 references to noise made by the groups under consideration. In four cases neighbours were *complaining about religious noises coming from Asian Mosques*. In the other six cases people were complaining about the secular noises made by West Indians. During the opening of the West Indian Federation Association Community Centre in Winson Green the Lord Mayor of Birmingham took the opportunity to comment:-

You are a very happy folk from the West Indies ... You like to sing a lot. To those who have their parties in their houses I would ask ... 'Please do not let them go on too late'. Sometimes I get letters from people who say they could not sleep because of the party next door.

I say this in a very friendly way .

(Post, 26th February, 1962)

Later, in one of its many focuses on Handsworth the Mail reported:-

A rowdy three day long party has brought calls for police protection from frightened residents in a Handsworth Street ... For the West Indian "Shebeen" flared into violence early today resulting in a vicious assault on a teenage police officer. There were gangs of young West Indians - many of them girls - hurling half-bricks at cars ... I was threatened with a knife at one point. I saw the policeman on the ground being kicked in turn by several youths. (Mail, 9th February, 1976)

A number of pathological "ghetto-related" factors were presented in this story.

(xiii) Health

There were 23 references to health in connection with coloured immigrants. These can be broken down according to the group mentioned.

Table 4.17 References To The Health Problems Of Immigrant Groups

Group	Items
Immigrants	10
Asians	8
Coloureds	3
Other	2
	23

Of the immigrants it was said that they were exploited by doctors, had to put up with slum surgeries and accounted for most of the typhoid cases. In addition to these, Councillor Wallace Lawler declared that "V.D. is terrifyingly high among immigrants" (Mail, 2nd May, 1968). Tighter health screens for immigrants were therefore advocated.

The Asians were said to be using dangerous medicines, showing a high risk of rickets, and suffering exploitation at the hands of rogue Doctors. The Pakistanis in particular were found to have an incidence of T.B. 20 times higher than among the general population (Post, 2nd February, 1965).

The coloureds in general were placing a strain on the Health Services. One read:-

20% of new patients at Birmingham's Children's Hospital are of Asian or Negro descent .

(Mail, 3rd November, 1973)

This point was made and remembered despite the long established fact admitted by Councillor Franklin himself that ... "The local Hospital service for instance would collapse without them (immigrants)" (Mail, 12th December, 1968).

(xiv) Social Services

All the references to the Social Services, except one, were making the statement that coloured immigrants were straining them to the limit. The data have been broken down as follows:-

Table 4.18 Items Referring To The Effect Immigrants Were Having On The Social Services, By Group

STATEMENTS ↓ ABOUT	BY →	Local Politicians	Other
Coloured Immigrants		7	4
West Indians		1	1
Uganda Asians		1	1
Other			1
	TOTAL	9	7

Data were often presented as a prelude to making cash demands or firm action from the Central Government. For example, Councillor Beaumont-Dark (by then an Alderman) claimed that:-

The rising cost of providing adequate Social Services for the rising number of coloured immigrants in Birmingham could be in excess of £1 million a year .

(Mercury, 3rd May, 1970)

One year later, Alderman Mrs. Freda Cocks warned:-

Any new influx of immigrants into Birmingham could lead to a breakdown in the Welfare Services .

She called on the Government to direct future immigrants away from Birmingham (Post, 10th February, 1971).

It was left to a private citizen with very little authority to write a letter to the newspaper explaining that the cost per head of the immigrant population for Social Services was lower than that for the host

population (Mail, 15th May, 1968).

(xv) Other Problems

In addition to the problems relating specifically to topics in the list, there were 202 references to other problems created by or associated with "coloured immigrants". And Politicians were responsible for making or were linked with about one third of them. A breakdown according to groups and what was said has been attempted thus:-

Table 4.19 Miscellaneous Problems Of Immigrant Groups

Group		Items	
(a)	<u>Immigrants</u>		
	Association with complex problems	40	
	Having problems with the police and the law	5	
	Must surrender their culture	1	
	Disliked by the average Englishman	1	
	Have been uprooted	1	
	Suffering from many deprivations	1	
	Forming own groups	1	
	Colonising Britain	1	
	Concentrating in certain areas	1	
	Fighting among themselves	1	
	Having problems with the language	1	
	Having child-rearing problems	1	
	Are unassimilable	1	
	Are undesirable	1	
	Are a menace	1	
	TOTAL	58	58
(b)	<u>Coloureds</u>		
	Facing problems of integration	5	
	Below British standard of civilisation	2	
	Have illegitimate children	3	
	Experiencing marriage difficulties	1	
	Attract hostile attention	1	
	Are disenchanted with Britain	1	
	TOTAL	13	13
(c)	<u>West Indians</u>		
	Demonstrating or complaining about police treatment	13	
	Facing complex problems	5	
	Are being exploited	2	
	Involved in gang fights	2	
	Are trapped in a hostile society	1	
	Have an inferiority complex	1	
	Damage school buildings let to them	1	
	Are asserting their pride	1	
	TOTAL	26	26

Group		Items	
(d)	<u>Asians</u>		
	Meeting with problems due to religious factors	19	
	Involved in the civil war at home	16	
	Experiencing culture conflicts	9	
	Facing business problems	6	
	Meeting with language difficulties	4	
	Being exploited in their own cinemas	4	
	Meeting with driving problems	2	
	Are attacked in the streets	1	
	Are divided	1	
	Are anxious about legal status	1	
	Are still in settlement camps	1	
	Are the biggest threat to Britain	1	
	TOTAL	65	65
(e)	<u>Race Relations</u>		
	Getting worse	35	
	Getting better	5	
	TOTAL	40	40
			202

The general opinion was that race relations were getting worse. The following statements have been selected to demonstrate this.

(a) In 1964 Alderman Watton claimed that the Birmingham Liaison Officer for Commonwealth Immigrants had handled over 130,000 problems brought to him by individual families (Mail, 15th September, 1964). Little was said about the nature of these problems or whether the Liaison Officer was able to solve any of them. However, local Politicians continued to press Central Government for aid to deal with the problems created by immigrants. After Enoch Powell's famous Birmingham Speech one read:-

The Government's Bill to authorise special grants to aid Local Authorities with social problems CAUSED by large immigrant populations was being presented to the Commons and published this afternoon. (The figure of £25m was mentioned - Mail, 20th November, 1968).

This did not seem to be enough, for Councillor Frank Griffin warned:

The rates in Birmingham and Dudley and West Bromwich may have to go up unless the Government make a special contribution to the cost of providing services for immigrants .

(Sunday Mercury, 22nd December, 1968)

(b) As early as 1952 Alderman Simpson stated:-

Many coloured people at present are not up to British standards of civilisation and their coming has raised the question of coloured and white marriages, which is an entirely new issue for Birmingham. Their commercial morality, too, in some cases is not ours .

(Post, 12th November, 1952)

It was therefore not surprising to learn that integration was not going well and that there was in fact a "growing feeling of disenchantment" among coloured people ... (Mr. Mark Bonham-Carter of the CRC - Mail, 9th February, 1972).

(c) After carrying out a survey among 150 West Indians aged 16 - 24 in the Handsworth area, "Marplan" discovered that relations with the police was the

most sensitive issue. To the question ... "Is justice the same for everybody"? half the young people said "No" and 64% of them said they had received unfair treatment from the police ... "Ninety per cent (90%) said they would have to fight for their rights as black men" (Mail, 26th February, 1971). The Parliamentary Select Committee on Race Relations reiterated this point one year later. It wrote:-

The Committee was told that there were 250 - 300 unattached West Indian youths in the Handsworth Suburb of Birmingham. Many feel that discrimination is practiced against them by the police .

(Mail, 13th September, 1972)

Little heed was paid to this warning until 1976 when one read:-

About 500 teenagers - mainly of West Indian parentage, wanted to form up outside Thornhill Road Police Station, Handsworth, while Spokesmen went inside to protest against alleged police discrimination ... Most would have been members of the Dreads, a growing group, who wear knitted hats, no socks and three-quarter length trousers. The group, chiefly comprised out-of-work youths and girls, some living in commune-style surroundings, claim they are being "picked on" by police and treated unfairly at employment exchanges and over housing .

(Mail, 5th March, 1976)

The demonstration was banned by the police.

The older West Indians remained unobtrusive until the "Pyramid

"Selling Scandal" broke in 1973. It was found that large numbers of people were persuaded to part with their life savings and/or induced to take out second mortgages on their homes as investment in "shady deals". Many were ruined. Mr. Corbyn Barrow, Chairman of the Birmingham CRC wrote:-

My evidence is that the main target in Birmingham is the West Indian Community. People involved appear to be using emotional selling methods which appeal to West Indians .
(Mail, 16th May, 1973)

The situation facing West Indians in Britain was spelt out by the Conservative M.P., Mr. Peter Walker in 1976:-

We are in danger of losing a substantial proportion of a whole generation of young West Indians to prisons, Borstal and psychiatric units. We are bound to pay a heavy price if a generation of young people is lost this way ... The realities of the West Indian young are that they are frequently badly educated, have little motivation, no skills, are homeless, devoid of guidance and more and more devoid of hope ... In such conditions they are increasingly becoming positively hostile to the white population and particularly to white authority .

(Post, 18th June, 1976)

(d) The problems "created" by Asians were considered to be those that result from a clash of cultures. One read about Sikhs protesting about proscriptions against the wearing of the turban, of demonstrations against the Indo-Pakistani war, of poor facilities in Asian cinemas and of Asian women being isolated at home because they could not speak English. But these issues

received less coverage than the emotional outbursts of Mr. Enoch Powell. Speaking in Southall he said:-

Asians pose more of a threat to Britain than Black Power. Our towns and cities are being taken over and transformed not by the Caribbean but by Asia ... It is by Black Power that the headlines are caught, and under the shape of the Negro that the consequences for Britain of immigration and what is miscalled "Race" are popularly depicted. Yet it is more truly when he looks into the eyes of Asians that the Englishman comes face to face with those who will dispute with him the possession of his native land .

(Times, 5th November, 1971)

The Asian was depicted as the number one enemy.

(e) Such speeches did irreparable harm to race relations. After such a speech it was impossible to return to the preceding state of relative innocence. Such a speech and not the race relations legislation Powell attacked in 1968 "was like throwing a match to gunpowder". The 1976 unrest in Southall bore this out. Most commentators thought that race relations were getting worse. And Birmingham demanded more money from the Government to deal with "the problem caused by immigrants in the City". (Mail, 1st July, 1976). Mr. Alex Lyon thought that £50 million would do. (Mail, 29th November, 1976).

(xvi) Organisations And Leaders

The general picture was of a harmonious British society being "invaded by coloured immigrants" who created many problems and had various

organisations and leaders to defend their rights and help them to make greater and greater encroachments on the British way of life. Opposed to them were a few British right-wing Parties or Movements which tried to present themselves as the champions of native British rights. A list, starting with the latter was compiled showing the number of times mention was made of them in the newspapers. The leader appearing most often in the newspapers was the West Indian, Mr. James Hunte who deserves a category to himself. He first appeared on the scene in October, 1971 but outpaced old campaigners like Dr. Prem who had been publicly fighting for better race relations from about 1955.

Table 4.20 References To Organisations And Leaders

Sub-topics	Items
<p>(a) <u>British Right-Wing Parties/Movements</u></p> <p>British Action Party (1962 +) 1</p> <p>British Immigration Control Association (1960) (Mr. J. Sanders) 1</p> <p>Midland Immigration Association 1</p> <p>Ku Klux Klan (1965 +) 2</p> <p>English Rights Association (1965) (Mr. Don Finney) 1</p> <p>Racial Preservation Society (1965 +) 3</p> <p>British Movement (mentioned 1968 +) (re Mr. Colin Jordan) 5 (re Mr. Robert Relf) 6</p> <p>National Front (mentioned 1970 +) (re Mr. Robert Relf) 4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TOTAL</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">24</p>
<p>(b) <u>Statutory "Race Relations" Bodies</u></p> <p>Birmingham Liaison Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants (1965) 18</p> <p>West Midlands Conciliation Committee of the R. R. Board (1966) (Mr. Oscar Hahn, Mr. A. McHugh, Prof. Clegg) 13</p> <p>CRC (Birmingham, 1968 +) (Mr. J. Traxson, Mr. D. Chakravarth) 11</p> <p>CDP (Saltley, 1972 +) 4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TOTAL</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">46</p>
<p>(c) <u>Voluntary (White Controlled) "Race Relations" Associations</u></p> <p>Sparkbrook Association (1962 +) (Miss E. Tomkins) 2</p> <p>Balsall Heath Association (1962 +) 2</p> <p>Handsworth Community Venture (1962 +) 1</p> <p>Birmingham Anti-Apartheid Movement (1966 +) 1</p> <p>Co-ordinating Committee Against Racial Discrimination (1967 +) (Mr. M. Ludmer) 7</p> <p>Birmingham Area Civil Rights Campaign (1968 +) 1</p> <p>Westminster Endeavour for Liaison and Development (1971 +) 1</p> <p>All Faiths for One Race (1972 +) (Mr. J. Plummer) 2</p> <p>Universal Brotherhood (1976 +) 1</p> <p>Defence League against Racialism (1976 +) 1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TOTAL</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">19</p>

Sub-topics		Items	
(d)	<u>British Left-Wing Parties/Movements</u>		
	Socialist Unity Movement (1969 +)	2	
	International Socialists and Marxists (1973 +)	1	
	Committee for Racial Harmony Against Fascism (1976 +)	1	
	TOTAL	4	
(e)	<u>Asian</u>		
	Indian Workers Association (founded 1940's - mentioned 1962 +) (Mr. J. Joshi)	8	
	Dr. D. Prem (of many associations and bodies) (1955 +)	14	
	Indian High Commissioner	1	
	Indian Medical Association (1967 +) (Dr. L. Jain)	2	
	National Federation of Pakistani Associations (1968 +) (Mr. T. Hug)	5	
	Punjabi Tigers (1968 +)	1	
	Birmingham Indian Association (founded 1920's)	5	
	Overseas Teachers Circle (mainly Asian ... 1969 +) (Mr. D. Bhogal)	3	
	Federation of Indian Associations (1976 +) (Dr. Prem)	1	
		TOTAL	40
	(f)	<u>Afro-Caribbean</u>	
Afro-Caribbean Society (1955 +) (Dr. Piliso)		2	
West Indian Federation Association (1962 +) (Mr. N. Edwards, Mr. R. Pitters)		2	
West Indian Unity Association (1963 +) (Mr. L. Thomas)		3	
Jamaican Ambassadors Association (1967 +) (Mr. R. Clarke)		1	
Jamaican High Commissioner		2	
Jamaican Consultate in Birmingham (1964 +) (Mr. A. Bethume)		2	
Happy Link Club (1964 +)		1	
West Indian Standing Conference (1965 +) (Mr. J. Crawford)		3	
Central Council of West Indian Organisations (1966 +)		1	
West Indian Welfare Committee (1967 +) (Mr. V. Catò)		6	
West Indian Peoples Union (1968 +) (Mr. G. Archer)		4	
		TOTAL	27
		Caribbean Association (1968 +) (Mr. L. Dunkley)	1
		West Indian Students Society (1968 +) (Mr. O. Leach)	2
	National Association of Caribbean People's Congress (1969 +)	1	

Sub-topics	Items
Jamaican Community Service Group (1970 +) (Dr. Thompson) (Mr. Vic Fennel)	3
Afro-Caribbean Circle (1970 +) (Mr. J. Hughes)	1
Handsworth Black Power Group (1972 +) "ACSHO?"	1
Afro-Caribbean Co-ordinating Committee (1972 +) (Mr. M. Taitt)	2
Black Community Workers - Harambee (1973 +) (Mr. M. Andrews)	4
A C.A.F.E.S.S. (1976 +) (Mr. Ben Leigh)	1
"Republic of New Africa" (1976 +) (Mr. Sebastian Godwin)	2
TOTAL	18
(g) <u>Afro-Caribbean-Asian/Black Power</u>	
Roy Sawh (formerly of R.A.A.S.) (1968 +)	6
Black People's Alliance (1969 +) (Mr. J. Joshi)	3
Association of West Indian and Afro-Asian Minorities (1969 +) (Dr. Napal)	2
National Council of Afro-Asian-Caribbean People (1976 +)	1
TOTAL	12
(h) <u>Mr. James Hunte of W.I.F.A. and A.C.C.C.</u>	
<u>Occasion:-</u>	
Nurses at Selly Oak Hospital (1971)	1
Dialect Book used by police	1
Christmas Trip Swindle	1
9 year old West Indian boy refused entry	1
Police brutality	4
West Indian youngsters driven to crime	1
Racist material used at school	1
Use of superstition by Headmistress	1
Questioning West Indian crime figures	1
Discrimination by Solicitors	1
Conflict with Harambee	1
Unemployed youth	2
Sacked from A.C.C.C. over "repatriation"	1
Attacking racial violence	1
Denies Black Strike plans	1
No objection to Council's dispersal policy	1
Accused of mis-management of funds	1
Threatened to resign from W.I.F.A.	1

Sub-topics	Items
Cause of fight at meeting	1
Accounts to be investigated	1
TOTAL	24
GRAND TOTAL	214

Mr. Hunte's opinion was sought on several occasions by the press. But it could be argued that Mr. Hunte's over-exposure in the mass media created problems for him and may have contributed to the general impression that West Indians lacked unity, organising ability, integrity and decorum. After building up an image as an aware and respectable leader of the West Indian Community he was drawn into denouncing "Harambee" in public (Mail, 13th March, 1975). The apparent divisions in the West Indian Community were highlighted when he defended the young Rastafarians wanting to be repatriated, thereby alienating himself from the older West Indians heavily involved in British society. He was subsequently "thrown off" the Afro-Caribbean Co-ordinating Committee (Mail, 6th July, 1976). His career reached a new low when he was accused of mis-managing funds by fellow members of the West Indian Federation Association (Post, 2nd November, 1976). Fighting broke out at a reconciliation meeting (Post, 15th November, 1976) and a local Councillor was asked to investigate the accounts (Post, 18th November, 1976). However, he did show great resilience in winning back the confidence of his followers whom he had organised after they had lost money in the Pyramid Selling Scandal.

In general, societies/organisations and leaders were presented as springing up only in response to a crisis, like immediately after the speeches of Enoch Powell. On one such occasion one read of Roy Sawh, The Black Power Leader, the once right-hand man of Michael X who advocated that "Black people should take over certain areas of Birmingham" (Mail, 2nd December, 1968).

Little more was heard of Mr. Sawh after a threat to his life was made (Mail, 13th December, 1968).

(xvii) Handsworth

During the 1960's Handsworth was occasionally mentioned as an area of deprivation but had to compete for notoriety with Balsall Heath and Sparkbrook. In 1968 one read:-

A Handsworth man was today meeting his Local M.P., Sir Edward Boyle - after 7 years of letters to him complaining that coloured immigrants were 'ruining the whole aspect of the area. Handsworth is being spoilt by an influx of coloured immigrants who bring with them a certain amount of vice'

(Mail, 18th May, 1968)

The Birmingham Evening Mail took up the theme in a long article entitled "The Bitter Young Men Of Handsworth". In it one read:-

Birmingham detectives warned today that teenage knife gangs are roaming through City Suburbs robbing victims in quiet side streets. There are probably as many as 30 young West Indians committing these offences, moving about in small gangs, but all loosely connected .

(Mail, 12th August, 1969)

Handsworth was also depicted as the "Shebeen" area of Birmingham. One read:-

Illegal drinking parties organised by groups of immigrants in twilight areas of Birmingham are being

raided by the police at the rate of two or three a month. The parties usually attended by over 200 people are held in private houses. Most of the parties (mainly in Handsworth) are known to be run by West Indians. The type of men who organise these parties rarely work. During police raids there has been evidence of drug-taking. Every square inch of room is taken up - even the stairs where often men and women have been found in various stages of love-making .

(Post, 19th September, 1969)

Then at the beginning of 1970 a furore broke out over the Gus John Report. In it Mr. John tried to explain the historical and environmental factors leading young and disadvantaged West Indians into crime and conflict with the police. It was dismissed as "impressionistic". But it helped to establish Handsworth as the race relations capital of the West Midlands. It sparked off a long campaign of articles in the Birmingham Evening Mail. On the one hand, Handsworth was depicted as the place where the worst evils associated with coloured immigrants were concentrated. This once respectable Suburb had been turned into a "black ghetto". So effective was this campaign of vilification that West Indian readers of the local newspapers who lived outside the area were terrified of going there. The Politicians also took part in the campaign. Councillor Beaumont Dark observed:-

The downhill slide in Handsworth can be halted only with Central Government help .

(Mail, 6th January, 1970)

Councillor Franklin said:-

We need to make Handsworth the sort of place it was say 10 or 15 years ago .

(Mail, 6th January, 1970)

On the other hand, the newspaper did attempt to make an analysis of what was going on. For example, one read:-

Many members of the West Indian Community are feeling bitter about Britain at the moment. But what has really brought matters to a head in the West Indian Community is the conflict over generations. Young people may have more of a point when they argue that the sort of jobs on offer are often not good enough. But the main problem may be the difficulty of knowing who he is and where he belongs. He feels different from his parents. If he returns to the West Indies he no longer finds himself at home there. England is where he has lived all or most of his life, yet this is not his country or his society. Nor is history of any help. A West Indian has his ancestors' slavery to look back on. And sometimes he feels ashamed. The prophets of black revolution in the States, who often talk in terms of violence, are listened to here and discussed here. So we have small groups of young people in Birmingham who believe that all white people are wicked, that any attempt to co-operate with white society is hopeless. They are equivalent, perhaps to those few white people who look upon all West Indians as being sub-human, morally depraved. We have other young West Indians who are basically looking back into their history to try to

build themselves an identity. One group is discovering and recreating West Indian Culture.

Another is looking back to the African origins of the West Indian. And not unnaturally they often come to the conclusion that the people of their race have for hundreds of years been exploited by the white man . (Mail, 6th January, 1970)

This analysis, though interesting was based on two false assumptions:

- (a) That West Indians were re-discovering a culture as though they had ever lost it.
- (b) That the dividing line between West Indians was one of age, that at a particular point the bitter young West Indian magically turned into a complacent old "immigrant worker".

On several occasions, West Indians appeared in the media as ordinary concerned people. One read of a West Indian teacher commenting that "Black children who were considered G.C.E. material in the West Indies were not thought to be G.C.E. material when they come to Birmingham"; of a 17-year-old Jamaican saying "I have had 13 jobs in a year. I did not like the jobs I was doing. They were boring. I was stacking paper then I was stock-taking and then a capstan machinist. I am going to take evening lessons to become a mechanic"; of a middle aged Barbadian saying "When you ask someone to integrate into this society you are really asking them to sink their identity"; Of a black man taking a white reporter to an all-black party and explaining to him, "We have much patience, we have to relax sometimes and this is where we relax. I will not betray my people by giving you information which might hurt them.

We are black and proud of it". (Mail, 6th January, 1970).

Following these series of articles there were many other attempts to explain the problem. For example, the Rev. Alfred Howell concluded that in the face of almost insurmountable obstacles "Many young black people were starting to rebel in whatever ways they can". (Mail, 6th January, 1970). Councillor Price blamed the many deprivations of the area and advocated as solutions more policemen, all-black schools and more West Indian businesses. (Mail, 12th January, 1970).

In 1972 there was another spotlight on Handsworth reminding us that the problem had not gone away. The Parliamentary Select Committee on Race Relations warned of an explosive situation in Handsworth involving 250 - 300 homeless, unemployed young West Indians (Mail and Post, 14th September, 1972). Later that year the Sunday Telegraph made capital out of Handsworth. Their Reporter wrote:-

Our photographer, working in the streets of Handsworth, a largely immigrant Suburb of Birmingham, was attacked and his camera equipment smashed by half-a-dozen young West Indians who presumably resented the intrusion of a white face. In Handsworth, Black Power operates from a small, terraced house in one of the better-tended streets. It produces its own Newspaper, "Harambee", which condemns black prostitution, alleges racial discrimination in the City's police and welfare services, and carries in its latest issue copious reports of the progress of black "freedom fighters" in Mozambique .

(Sunday Telegraph, 10th December, 1972)

Handsworth continued to capture people's imagination with stories throughout 1973 like: "Crisis in Police-Black Relations in Handsworth" (Mail, 12th February, 1973): Or like "Uproar at Talks on Immigrants and Police", (Post, 19th February, 1973). Here one read of a noisy confrontation between the police led by the Deputy Chief Constable of Birmingham and various Community Leaders at what was supposed to have been a teach-in entitled "Police Power and Community Relations" organised by the Forty-Hall-Road Group and A.F.F.O.R.

The period came to an end, (but not the campaign), with another series of articles in the Birmingham Evening Mail about Handsworth, "The Angry Suburb". One white resident wrote:-

Do the residents of Handsworth realise they are paying rates towards a park - Handsworth Park - which can now only be used with safety by West Indian children. My 12-year-old son was attacked by a dozen West Indian youths. He needed medical attention for a cut ear and bruised chest, and had his football stolen. I went to the Park and spoke to the Security Officers who informed me it was a common occurrence and added that a 67-year-old gardener had been kicked unconscious by a group of West Indian youths only the day before, and that they themselves were afraid of serious injury and were trying to get transferred from the District. I fear for the safety of my family and property .

(Mail, 11th May, 1976)

It was easy to identify this group of trouble-makers. One read:-

They have been dubbed 'The Tea Cosy Mob' - young West Indians with colourful woollen hats. Many people (both white and black) now regard the woollen hat as some kind of symbol - a gesture of defiance towards authority .

(Mail, 11th May, 1976)

In the West Indian Community, the process of dissociation was well developed following reports like these. For example, after reading a description of a group of young "Dreads" who were squatting in Turville Road, Handsworth, and facing charges of wounding and robbery, a representative of the Jamaican Consulate in Birmingham was quoted as saying:-

... There are other people who try to hide under the Rastafarian umbrella and may not be Rastafarians at all ... I don't know of the presence of any proper Rastafarians in Britain.

(Mail, 10th March, 1976)

The general impression was of lawless West Indians, particularly the young ones who had chosen to destroy/ruin Handsworth - and bring shame to their parents and fellow countrymen, and disgrace to themselves.

From whatever angle black people were mentioned in the local newspapers the general message was that:-

- (a) They constituted a social problem.
- (b) They created a political problem of great importance.

There gradually developed an image of them as strange, troublesome people disturbing the peace and quiet of Britain, an "alien wedge" posing great threats to the future of Britain defined without reference to its black citizens. The newspapers provided their white readers with evidence to sustain anti-black prejudices and to strengthen the case against "immigration" and black immigrants. Thus they made a contribution to those social processes that relegated blacks to the lowest positions or excluded them. On the other hand the cumulative effect on black readers was to highlight the normally taken-for-granted subject of identity and to make it the most salient factor in their lives.

That this particular orientation of the newspapers was closely linked to certain macro-structural changes in society is worth repeating. It is often argued that it was part of the superstructural, ideological expression of the "crisis of capitalism" during the period under consideration. For example, Sivanandan argued that this attack on black people's social and other basic rights, was a necessary programme concomitant with the creation of an "internal colony" for the better regulation of the labour supply.⁽²³⁾

This theme was later developed by Stuart Hall and others, thus:-

The political restrictions on blacks, the growth of racist ideology and the explicit anti-immigrant organisations, the toughening of social discipline in the areas of black residence, the general unsettling of the black population cannot therefore be attributed solely to "discriminatory attitudes" on the part of individuals or employers. It is a structural feature of the way in which black labour has been subsumed into metropolitan capital in the post-war

period. As has happened before, the conditions of economic recession are being used to drive through a major "recomposition" of black labour by capital itself through the political and ideological forces aligned with its long-term needs.⁽²⁴⁾

The economic determinants of the low social placement of black people are widely recognised. Some writers have however, gone on to argue that black people in Britain have been trapped in this position and collude in their own oppression. W. W. Daniel for example, held that:-

Even more significant than the impact which the existence of discrimination has upon people's feelings is the impact it has upon their collective behaviour. It both forces them towards self-supporting, separate groups in society, separate groups with a definable status, function and level of influence, that is to say the lowest status, the most menial function and the lowest level of influence. They begin to form a new social class, a new proletariat, defined by barriers, harder than any other in a modern industrial society, and consequently more difficult to break.⁽²⁵⁾

Furthermore, he wrote:-

In all areas studied ... discrimination prevailed ... among the immigrants many accepted this unpleasant reality in the sense that as far as possible they circumscribed their lives so as to avoid situations in which their humiliation and

rejection were directly reaffirmed.⁽²⁶⁾

This analysis has found its fullest development in the recent work of J. Rex and S. Tomlinson in which they concluded that black people were forming an "underclass" divorced from the rest of British society.⁽²⁷⁾ Unlike others who recognise the disadvantages black people face in Britain, they refuse to treat them as a defeated mass but instead credit them with revolutionary "potential." Whether or not this is so will be dealt with in later Chapters.

However, at this point it is worth stating that all black people have not internalised the dominant values of British society nor accepted the definitions discussed above. A creative tension exists between them and the rest of society as a result of their drawing different definitions and resources from other social formations. This tension is heightened by:-

- (a) The apparent decline of British power and the redefinition of "British" in terms of "the European race".
- (b) The simultaneous ascendancy of other powers defined as either anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, anti-European, Third-World or "Black", and the identification with these powers by black people in Britain.

The loss of the colonies, the relative decline of Britain as a world power, and the crisis of capital expressed in terms of the deepening recession have undoubtedly forced the British to take stock of their position in the world. The entry into the European Economic Community has been seen as a logical development and an added reason to clarify the identity of the "British". The obligation to comply with the common European labour policy and the ability to draw labour from the "population surpluses" of the poorer

European member countries have led to the cessation of recruitment from the ex-Colonies and by extension the curtailment of the freedom of black people resident in Britain and the advocacy of repatriation. The re-definition of "British" in such a context pays little or no reference to those criteria that were useful and meaningful when Britain was the centre of a powerful, multi-racial empire needing cheap labour at the core.

During the same period an increasing number of British colonies gained their independence and were seen by black people as throwing off the European yoke and ushering in an age of freedom and contribution to world affairs (though these developments were seen and presented in other ways by the British Press). It was inevitable that black people in Britain would be influenced by these events. Solidarity and identification with people similar to themselves in terms of race and experience contributed to the growing consciousness of black people and their refusal to submit to exploitation and derision in Britain. The importance of race in this situation has been emphasised by Stuart Hall et al thus:-

It is through the modality of race that blacks comprehend, handle and then begin to resist the exploitation which is an objective feature of their class situation ...
It is through the counter-ideology of race, colour and ethnicity that the black working class becomes conscious of the contradictions of its objective situation and organises to fight it through. Thus, it is primarily in and through the modality of race that resistance, opposition and rebellion first expresses itself.⁽²⁸⁾

This passage draws attention to the possible consequences of the compounding and complementarity of class and race consciousness.

In this Chapter an attempt has been made to present the general picture of black people as expressed in the local newspapers. This exercise has been undertaken to highlight the attitude of the Generalised Other towards black people and to explain why the response towards them by the average reader of the newspapers in question was likely to be one of suspicion if not hostility based on the negative image of them that was disseminated. Of some concern must be the impact this image was having on black people themselves.

In the next Chapter, it will be shown how blacks shifted their attention from this source of identity and drew resources selectively from alternative sources outside Britain.

REFERENCES

1. See James Walvin, The Black Presence, Obach and Chambers, London, 1971.
2. See Sheila Patterson, Dark Strangers, Penguin, 1963, Chapter 1. She claims that these black people were completely assimilated during the 19th Century and predicted that the same would happen to the new black immigrants in time.
3. J. Walvin, op. cit., p. 5.
4. See Kenneth Little, Negroes in Britain, (Revised edition), Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1972.
5. According to the 1971 Census, the distribution of New Commonwealth immigrants by area was as follows:-

Area	% of West Indians	% of Asians
South East	66	40
East Midlands	6	6
West Midlands	17	27
North West	4	9
Yorkshire and Humberside	4	15
Rest of England and Wales	3	3
	100	100

6. Ruth Glass, Newcomers, George Allen and Unwin Limited, London, 1960, p. 105.
7. Ibid., p. 150.

8. W. Daniel, Racial Discrimination in England, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1968, p. 88.
9. Ibid., p. 89.
10. See Ruth Glass op. cit., Chapter IV.
11. See E. J. B. Rose et. al., Colour and Citizenship, Oxford University Press for the Institute of Race Relations, London, 1969, Chapter 28.
12. See N. Deakin, Colour, Citizenship and British Society, Panther Books, London, 1970.
13. Ruth Glass, op. cit., p. 108.
14. W. Daniel, op. cit., p. 13.
15. This meant that black people using the mass media could not escape the definitions and attitudes of the Generalised Other.
16. See Chas Critcher, M. Parker and R. Sondhi, Race in the Provincial Press, University of Birmingham Centre for Contemporary and Cultural Studies, 1975, pp. 36 - 37. For further discussions on the production of news and the social consequences see:- J. D. Halloran, The Effects of Mass Communication, Leicester University Press, 1965; J. D. Halloran et. al., Demonstrations and Communication: A Case Study, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1970; R. Boston (ed) The Press We Deserve, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1970; D. McQuail, Sociology of Mass Communications, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1972;

Stanley Cohen and Jock Young, (eds), The Manufacture of News, Constable, London, 1973; Peter Golding, The Mass Media, Longman, London, 1974.

17. See The Skæffington Report on "Public Participation in Planning", People and Planning, H.M.S.O., London, 1969.
18. C. Critcher, et. al., op. cit., p. 39.
19. Stuart Hall, C. Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clark, Brian Roberts, Policing the Crisis, McMillan, London, 1978, p. 59.
20. Ibid., p. 65.
21. Ibid., p. 55.
22. See, for example, that of C. Critcher et. al., op. cit., (1975), p. 76
23. See A. Sivanandan, "Race, Class and the State: The Black Experience in Britain", Race and Class, Volume 17, Number 4, Spring, 1976, pp. 347 - 368.
24. See S. Hall, et. al., op. cit., p. 344.
25. W. W. Daniel, op. cit., p. 218.
26. Ibid., p. 13.
27. For a definition of J. Rex and S. Tomlinson's "Underclass" See Colonial Immigrants in a British City. A Class Analysis, Routledge

and Kegan Paul, London, 1979, pp. 275 - 6.

28. S. Hall et. al., op. cit., p. 347.

CHAPTER 5

THE SHIFT FROM OLD TO NEW SOURCES OF IDENTITY

Just as the local newspapers selected data from the welter of information to construct an image of black people (and to reinforce a "British" construction of reality), so too did the black residents of Handsworth. Whatever gap there was between these two sets of construction is a measure of the rejection black people felt in British society. The data already presented in Chapters 3 and 4 indicate that this gap would be wide.

The method adopted to discover the image of black people in British society was to analyse the relevant newspaper cuttings which were kept in the Birmingham Central Library. This method was inappropriate to find out how black people defined themselves, what identities they had and what reference groups they chose to buttress these identities. By definition, these could only be found out by means of "Participant Observation".⁽¹⁾ This involved living among them, discussing those issues they thought important and relevant, and generally participating in the creative venture of identity formation and articulation. These sensitive, every day, encounters were not the subject matter of popular newspapers even if, as was not the case, a widely read and much respected black newspaper was available.

This Chapter is therefore an attempt to record how, in the given situation defined in Chapters 3 and 4, the black people of Handsworth shored up their identities by drawing material in a HIGHLY SELECTIVE manner from several sources. The contents of this Chapter should not be considered as a record of what actually happened in the world but a stylised ordering of events which the people themselves thought relevant and which they were willing to discuss with the researcher in the everyday encounters of an "identity-sounding"

nature. The human necessity for selecting knowledge and experiences to compensate for the attribution of a stereotype has been discussed in Chapter 1. How this was done by a resourceful people having links with various other societies outside Britain is now to be explained.

In the "short" history of their settlement in Britain some phenomenal changes have taken place among the Afro-Caribbean people under consideration. In the 1950's one of the most effective ways of insulting most of them was to call them "black". In the 1970's to call the majority of them anything but "black"⁽²⁾ was to patronise them and to insult their dignity. For example, all the respondents born in the West Indies were asked the question: "Suppose I had met you on your first trip to England and had asked you 'What are you?' How would you have answered?"⁽³⁾ In reply to this question 79.1% gave indications of having an insular identity (e.g. Jamaican, "Bajan") while only one person said that he would have considered himself as "black". In 1976, 51.4% of the sample defined themselves as "black". What then was the nature of their original insular identity? What accounted for the change in identity over the years?

The early migrants from the British West Indies belonged to ever-widening social circles beginning with the residential kin-group and ending with the British Commonwealth of Nations or "the black race" - with related identities that could be emphasised according to circumstances.

The primary unit, which was not necessarily the nuclear family was closely bound up with a larger unit best described as "family". This consanguineous collectivity, with members living within easy walking distance of each other, was maintained by a high degree of interaction and the exchange of goods and services. Grand-parents were often the foci of this interaction performing important roles to do with the rearing of children,

the transmission of knowledge and the distribution of scarce resources like land. So important was the dependence on and loyalty to the family of procreation that it often militated against the establishment of conjugal ties and contributed to the proliferation of matrilineal units: hence the low rates of marriage in the West Indies. Being a Johnson for example referred to certain rights and obligations within the Johnson unit.

The next important collectivity was the village or district to which the prospective migrants belonged in a "Gemeinschaft-like" manner. This was the largest meaningful social group within which people received their primary socialisation. Such units were characterised by cross-cutting and unifying social ties of great intensity built up over several generations of settlement. Such communities were often associated with the land. Thus when a person said he was from Crafts Hill or Mocho or Dash Valley, it referred to a collectivity the members of which had certain obligations to each other.

A much larger unit was the Parish which became salient to the geographically mobile. For many of the Afro-Caribbean migrants to Britain, migration was a two-step process. At the first stage, the prospective migrants got involved with the capital city of their island through having to visit it regularly for information and travel documents. A significant number actually lived in the capital - as a result of the processes described in Chapter 2 - before moving on to Britain. And it was at this stage that belonging to a Parish became meaningful as large numbers of "different" people mingled and competed with each other in an urban setting.

The next largest unit of which people were conscious of belonging to was the island. They were obviously aware of the existence of other islands and countries with differences far greater than those existing between groups within their island of origin. There was, however, a tendency to magnify these

inter-island differences (as will be shown later).

There was some uncertainty over what was the ultimate supra-national or supra-insular unit to which they belonged, and the related identity. It must not be forgotten that the experience in the British West Indies qualified them to identify with Africa, the Caribbean and/or Britain. The debate over this pre-migration identity has been dealt with elsewhere. The important point though, is that those people preparing to migrate to Britain were likely to emphasise their links with the "Mother Country" and to subscribe to the "British world-view" that was being disseminated through the local newspapers. The receipt of a passport, the final down-payment for the passage and the cumulative process of extrication from the community may have resolved any lingering ambivalence about their social identity in favour of considering themselves "British". These migrants were essentially islanders belonging to the British Commonwealth.

Officially they were British subjects, they spoke English of a sort and were familiar with instrumental British institutions. But in other more meaningful respects they were islanders. They were voluntarily leaving their homes for specific reasons, mainly to do with economic progress. At home their upward social mobility was blocked because of colonial under-development and the structural and cultural arrangements that gave access to scarce resources to the few. Migration to Britain was seen as a means of achieving the goals that eluded them in their homelands. To achieve those goals they were willing to make sacrifices - even to surrender the old identities. Hence they migrated not as cohesive groups but as collections of individuals.

But the macro-structural and cultural constraints operative in Britain made it difficult for them to realise their ambitions. Instead of success and

recognition they met with failure, disappointment, frustration and perceived ostracism. From the beginning, the housing and general social situation led to an intense dependence on relatives, peers and fellow countrymen. For many, this resulted in a "regression" to identification and maximum social involvement with members of primary groups from back home. Living in over-crowded lodging houses in designated areas with relatives or friends from back home was the characteristic mode of accommodation to life in Britain. For example, in answer to the question "With whom did you live when you first arrived"? 72% said that they lived with relatives and 18% said that they shared accommodation with friends from back home.⁽³⁾ If the 16 British-born members of the sample are deleted because they most likely first lived with their parents, then no less than 88.1% of the migrants from the West Indies relied on relatives and friends from back home for accommodation when they first arrived in Britain.

It is difficult to calculate accurately the overall effect of life in the lodging houses in conditions of the acute shortage of space, and the dependence on each other for companionship, consolation, entertainment and protection. In addition to maintaining strong consanguinal and peer group bonds, it may have also strengthened the conjugal bonds as indicated by the relatively high rates of marriage and the development of joint conjugal role relationships among migrants from the West Indies (as will be shown more fully later). This may appear contradictory in the light of research that shows a tendency for extra-marital social relationships to militate against the sharing of roles in the nuclear unit.⁽⁴⁾ These findings suggest that both developments occur simultaneously when a group is living in a hostile, yet venerated, society.

Outside the lodging houses certain forces were at work extending the "group of belongingness" and solidifying segments of it along lines other

than kin, village, parish or island. These forces were responsible for the placement of "black immigrants" within the wider stratified society and in particular, their concentration in the "twilight zones" of the city. Despite individual and insular differences, immigrants from the West Indies appeared to share the same fate. They had little choice over the kind of work they did or over place of residence. For example, the 1961 and 1971 Census figures show that the majority of these immigrants were concentrated in particular Wards of large Cities and in the case of Birmingham, the three adjacent Wards of Soho, Handsworth and Sandwell (always constituting less than 12% of the total population of each Ward). Some roads and even enumeration districts in these Wards were almost exclusively populated by immigrants. Table 5.1 shows the distribution of Afro-Caribbean people in the Birmingham Wards.

These figures show that over the decade Aston ceased to be a major area of settlement for these migrants. Most likely the re-zoning and re-development of Aston and the competition for the space and improved housing by more powerful groups led to the movement of West Indians to the nearby Wards of Handsworth and Sandwell which showed striking increases. However, the important point is that West Indians were not evenly dispersed over the 39 Wards but were highly concentrated in a few clusters. The largest cluster in the north is made up of the three Wards of Handsworth, Soho and Sandwell which are referred to colloqually as "Handsworth" or "The Handsworth Area".

Table 5.1 Numbers And Location Of People Born In Caribbean Territories

Ward	1961	% Of Total Ward Popn.	Order	1971	% Of Total Ward Popn.	Order
Soho	2749	9.92	1	2904	11.19	2
Handsworth	2307	7.58	2	3291	11.85	1
Aston	1243	4.17	3	80	0.57	34
Rotton Park	1119	3.82	4	1341	6.68	4
Sparkbrook	1052	3.43	5	1195	4.98	8
Sandwell	1027	3.92	6	2086	7.26	3
Edgbaston	987	3.85	7	586	2.21	
Deritend	830	2.47	8	251	1.35	
Moseley	690	2.41	9	843	3.04	9
Small Heath	658	2.20	10	1235	4.65	7
(Intermediate Wards)						
Longbridge	21	0.07	30	135	0.41	
Perry Barr	14	0.05	31	263	1.08	
Sheldon	11	0.04	32	108	0.42	31
Billesley	10	0.04	33	67	0.24	36
Weoley	9	0.03	34	79	0.21	35
Yardley	8	0.03	35	66	0.24	37
Northfield	7	0.02	36	98	0.28	33
Quinton	7	0.03	37	44	0.18	38
Shard End	4	0.01	38	109	0.30	30
Kingstanding	3	0.01	39	42	0.18	39

Source: Census of Population, 1961 and 1971, Small Area Statistics

Most of them, 76.8%, arrived in Britain before the end of 1962 (the year of the first Immigration Legislation) and the majority settled in the Handsworth area as can be seen in Table 5.2 below:-

Table 5.2 Area Of Residence On "Arrival"

Place	Number	%
Around the Handsworth Area	100	66.7
Elsewhere in Birmingham	19	12.7
Elsewhere in the West Midlands	11	7.3
Other major City apart from London	10	6.7
London	5	3.3
Elsewhere	2	1.3
Can't remember	3	2.0
	150	100.0

Source: Question 7 of Author's Interview Schedule

This does not necessarily mean that they remained in the same house. In fact there was a considerable amount of movement from lodging house to lodging house to privately owned and occupied house. But most of it took place within a defined area.

The reasons for living in Handsworth were given as shown in Table 5.3 below:-

Table 5.3 Reasons Given By Respondents For Settling In Handsworth

Reasons	Number	%
To join relatives (other than parents)	42	28.0
For better rented accommodation	25	16.7
My parents lived there	24	16.0
To join friends	15	10.0
Bought a house there	13	8.7
To be close to work	12	8.0
For a change	7	4.7
For independence	1	0.7
Don't know	11	7.3
	150	100.1

Source: Question 11 of Author's Interview Schedule

These figures show how once an area had become a place of settlement for black migrants, a designated "black" area, cultural factors would lead to further concentration and the attribution of causes to the latter cultural forces.

In general the social conditions in Britain threw West Indians together and contributed to the reinforcement and development of corporate/collective identities. This supports the thesis that people with common attributes and similar life-chances and life-styles would establish collective identities if they have to conduct their activities and live out their lives in close proximity to each other. But living together under the same conditions could also have a repellent effect if the people do not share highly valued cultural characteristics and institutions. The case stands if and only if the people in question preferred to live with each other where they were. To discover this, the respondents were asked the hypothetical question "Where would you like to live"?(3) and their replies were as shown in Table 5.4 Even though this question should have been followed with one to find out with which group of people, it revealed that nearly half were happy living in Handsworth. Some expressed what can be called a "normal" longing to live in the capital city, out in the country or in a new town. There was therefore no panic to get out of Handsworth. However, a significant minority (17.4%) wanted to leave Handsworth because it was:-

- (a) Over-crowded.
- (b) Noisy.
- (c) Segregated.
- (d) Without good schools.

Table 5.4 Preferred Place Of Residence

Place	Number	%
Handsworth - "happy here"	70	46.7
Outside Handsworth but in Birmingham	29	19.3
Anywhere I can get a house	13	8.7
London or other major City	12	8.0
Another county/out in the country	7	4.7
Any quiet place	6	4.0
A new town with new houses	3	2.0
An integrated area	3	2.0
Anywhere near a good school	4	2.7
Don't know	3	2.0
	150	100.1

Source: Question 70 of Author's Interview Schedule

One stated reason for wanting to remain in Handsworth was to be near friends, relatives and other West Indian people. Another was the availability of cultural items, particularly groceries. If food is taken as a basic indicator of a distinct culture then the old notion that West Indian culture was non-existent or indistinguishable from English culture is untenable. The great demand for West Indian food among West Indians has been partially met by shopkeepers in Handsworth - most of whom are Asian. Tropical food-stuffs spill out of the shops of Handsworth and friendships are formed and renewed in shopping for them. That West Indians chose to do their shopping for groceries in Handsworth can be seen in the replies to the questions "where do you do your shopping for ...

- (a) Groceries?
- (b) Goods other than groceries?"

Table 5.5 Places Where Shopping Was Done

Places	For Groceries		Other Goods	
	No.	%	No.	%
Soho Road and other Handsworth Roads	92	61.3	17	11.3
Perry Barr/Small Heath/West Bromwich/New Town	15	10.0	2	1.5
City Centre	24	16.0	103	68.7
Anywhere	19	12.7	28	18.7
	150	100.0	150	100.0

Source: Question 72 of Author's Interview Schedule

Even though the majority could have bought all their goods including groceries in the city centre (with which they were familiar) they tended to purchase their foodstuff in the streets of Handsworth because the shops there catered for their culinary needs.

It could be argued that claiming to like living in Handsworth was a rationalisation, a means of coping in an uncontrollable situation. If so it still remains to be explained how West Indians managed to stave off the total social and personal disorganisation that could result from living as widely acknowledged stigmatised immigrants in a notoriously deprived area, exposed to all the vices of urban industrial society, and being constantly bombarded with information about their ascribed, negative social identity. It overlooks the many sources of vitality and resilience that even the casual observer finds among West Indians living in Handsworth (and other areas of settlement). To explain this phenomenon - this apparent anomaly - would require a better understanding of West Indian culture, an understanding of the potency of the rallying points of identity formation and expression which they brought with them or acquired, and the related social constructions among them.

Furthermore, it would require a recognition of the part played by

the anti-imperialist revolution that has been erupting in the Caribbean, Africa and America throwing up new ideologies, new symbols and new reference groups with which West Indians in Britain could legitimately identify. In short, to explain what has been going on in Handsworth (and other places like it) would require an analysis of the growth of corporate black identities and the social constructions established to support and to offer consensual validation to these distinct identities, the embryonic forms of which may have long existed among the people.

It is here being postulated that migration to Britain required the suppression or dismantling of black identities but, at a later point, necessitated their "revalorisation" or reconstruction in changed conditions. These identities fed on material from several sources. These items of identity were intricately interwoven to result in the articulation of novel, competing and yet over-lapping forms.

But before these corporate identities are analysed two tasks need to be undertaken:-

- (A) First, it will be shown what "knowledge" and other resources from the vast array of data available were selected for identity construction and articulation.
- (B) Second it will be shown how the search for identity became desperate in a situation of social rejection and how important the selected data were for the most vulnerable section of the black population - adolescents growing up in the area of settlement.

(A) SOME NEW SOURCES OF IDENTITY

When experience did not live up to expectations, when social interaction led to a questioning and undermining of the old identities, and when

it became necessary to reformulate their identities to suit the changed conditions, where could black people look for resources to help build and legitimize their fragile creations? Very little help was forthcoming from British society. And so other sources were drawn upon. Foremost among these were:-

- (1) The West Indies, those islands where most of the black people in question originated.
- (2) Africa, the ancestral homeland of many West Indians, whether or not they acknowledge it.
- (3) The United States of America where many West Indians had relatives, friends and heroes, and where a similar drama was being played out.

To interact with West Indians during the 1960's and 1970's was to discover how pre-occupied and conversant they were with events taking place in other parts of the World, especially those places where people like themselves were living. Even the most casual conversation often ended with a discussion of what black people back home, or in Africa, or in America were doing - and how this related to what was taking place in Britain. Many of them got their information from the mass media; but certain opinion leaders appeared to have access to more information about the same events, than what was available to the public. It became clear that this knowledge, and the interpretation thereof, was carefully selected and structured - for obvious reasons - roughly along the following lines:-

(1) Developments In The West Indies

It would appear that while the emigrants from the West Indies were

settling down in Britain certain developments in their islands of origin were taking place; and because they were in constant contact and communication with friends and relatives there, these did not escape their notice. The social forces unleashed in the 1930's were still dismantling the traditional social barriers between groups defined in terms of race or class. The riots in the islands in the 1930's were linked with the names of Uriah Butler, Clement Payne and Alexander Bustamante and led to the Moyne Commission of 1938 which did not publish its findings until 1945. This significant indictment of Crown Colony Government contributed to the constitutional changes and the transfer of responsibility from the Colonial Office to leaders elected for the first time on a universal suffrage.⁽⁵⁾ A succession of leaders with whom the people could identify more closely - like Grantley Adams, Norman Manley, Eric Williams, Cheddi Jagan, Eric Gairy, Forbes Burnham, Robert Bradshaw - became household names in their respective countries and beyond.

The route from self-government to independence was via regional integration, an integration that with hindsight may be considered imposed from outside before the societies were "ready". The British Government had for many years advocated and attempted the unification of several islands in the area for administrative convenience. However, the infra-structure for unification had never been established and it remained a fact that communication from one island to another was often quicker via an American or European city. Nevertheless, during the 1950's, so great was the quest for autonomy, for the exercise of real power, that local politicians were willing to consider any means to this end. The British Government had recently negotiated sugar quotas and prices with representatives of West Indian producers on a REGIONAL basis and so many participants in the exchanges thought the time ripe for another experiment in unification. As a result, a Federation of 10 British Islands - Antigua, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Trinidad-Tobago (the homelands

of the vast majority of West Indian migrants in Britain) - was established in 1958.

But the dearth of Federal institutions incorporating people at all levels in these societies, the lack of awareness of things in common, and the insular jealousy and suspicion based on isolation and poverty made the Federation unworkable. Then when these differences were played upon by political entrepreneurs in search of the popular vote the hurriedly built edifice collapsed in 1962.

An immediate outcome of the failure of Federation was the pursuit of independence by the larger islands, and some kind of semi-independence by the lesser ones. These were achieved in the following order:-

- 1962 Jamaica; Trinidad and Tobago.
- 1966 Guyana; Barbados.
- 1967 Montserrat; Antigua; Dominica; Grenada; St. Lucia; St. Vincent; St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla became "non-dependent" separate states.
- 1974 Grenada.

The process of fission reached a peak in 1967 when tiny Anguilla declared U.D.I. and broke away from St. Kitts-Nevis. The situation became ridiculous but informative when Britain subsequently sent in troops and policemen after refusing to follow similar action in Rhodesia.

Then the process of fusion set in finding expression in the growing importance of and contribution to regional development by The University of the West Indies, the establishment of the Caribbean Free Trade Area (CARIFTA) in 1968 and the Caribbean Economic Community (CARICOM) in 1973. In addition to this, a succession of leaders - particularly Michael Manley in Jamaica in

1972 - proclaimed a commitment to "Socialism" and a greater co-operation between the territories of the Caribbean. This involved a closer association with nearby Communist Cuba, with implications for the entire region. It was widely believed that as these countries escaped from the orbits of their imperial masters, economic and social necessity together with a growing awareness of things in common would enable them to transcend ideological differences varying from Communism and Democratic Socialism to Liberalism and Conservatism and bring about a meaningful and lasting integration.

These changes were apparent to West Indians returning on holiday. In 1976 I visited Jamaica as part of my research programme. While there I experienced the acting out of two important dramas that were to have reverberations throughout the Caribbean. And because all parties involved indulged in the spectacular manipulation of symbols, the events could not help but affect the identities of all concerned.

The one drama can be called "The Struggle Against Imperialism". During the build-up to the 1972 elections, the leader of the People's National Party, Michael Manley made several promises to the electorate. Included among these was the promise to sever the imperial links with Britain and North America and to stimulate the economy of Jamaica. A corollary of this was the closer integration of Jamaica with its neighbours, particularly its nearest neighbour, Cuba.

By 1976 it was debatable as to what extent these promises were fulfilled. The evidence available to the public included the many strident anti-imperialist speeches of Michael Manley, several anti-American and anti-British slogans daubed on walls and the conspicuous absence of tourists. Jamaica appeared to be anything but the sun-drenched, deferential and peaceful play-ground of the rich. Considerable effort was being expended on getting local people to use the tourist facilities and to seek other forms of employ-

ment, particularly on the land and in community development.

1976 was also the year of the Caribbean Festival of Arts (CARIFESTA) which was staged by Jamaica. This event lasting from 23rd July to 2nd August drew contributions and spectators from over 30 Caribbean and Latin American Countries. It was an extravaganza of their music, dance, drama, film, photography, fine arts, craft and literature. But above all, it was an opportunity for interaction between people who had several things in common.

It was also a political platform for the Socialists and Communists who dictated the terms of reference within which discussion took place. Throughout the Festival (which reached out to the Jamaican masses from the Suburbs of Kingston to the Shanty Town of the Dungle), pride of place was given to the Cubans. Everywhere the message was that Cuba and Jamaica were partners in the development of a new society in Jamaica and a new order throughout the Caribbean. This message was reinforced by the presence of Cuban technicians in hospitals, in clinics, in schools, on building sites and on agricultural schemes. There was also a regular exchange of visits between Jamaica and Cuba by large parties of young people.

The other drama being played out was the struggle for hegemony between two important reference groups. Throughout the region black consciousness had found expression in several movements which articulated the dissatisfaction of the masses, the disillusionment with token independence, and the renewed quest for modernisation linked closely to the "revalorisation" of "native" cultures. Significant pointers to this tension were the "Black Power Crisis" in Trinidad in 1970 and the later Walter Rodney protests in Guyana and Jamaica. In Trinidad, a crisis situation was reached when Afro-Caribbean groups, some Asian workers and students put aside their traditional animosities and marched together against a "black" Government comprised of a disproportion-

ate number of "Afro-Saxons".⁽⁶⁾ Similarly when Walter Rodney, a Black Guyanese lecturer was refused entry to Jamaica by a "black" Government there were popular protests in several countries. All these events indicated that the inherited programme for development was being questioned if not rejected. A new identity and a new direction in the Caribbean were being sought after.

Once again, the struggle reached a climax in Jamaica. The contending parties were the Creole Middle Class and the Rastafarians and Rastafarian sympathisers. Jamaica in 1976 was on a "thin wire".⁽⁷⁾ Conflict had escalated so rapidly that even the relatively progressive Government of Michael Manley had to declare a state of emergency and bring armed police and soldiers in armoured cars on to the streets. Even so the subterranean tension and violence rumbled beneath the veneer of engineered tranquility. And both contending parties seemed to be using the truce to strengthen their positions. They did this mainly by recruiting adherents from outside their traditional strata.

During my visit to Jamaica in 1976 one of the first observations I made was that the crucial social division in the island was along the lines of class rather than race per se. The dominant sector of the society was growing in numbers by incorporating people with diverse social characteristics but displaying a common life style. Since 1945 an increasing number of phenotypically black Jamaicans had achieved upward social mobility by means of education and/or success in commerce and politics.

The changing nature of the society can probably be best illustrated by the case of the Chinese in Jamaica. By 1945 they had come to dominate the commercial life of the island but chose to remain aloof as a distinct ethnic group. Then there was a dramatic change in their mode of accommodation

to Jamaican society. There came a point when it was in their interest to adopt the life-style of the elite. Orlando Patterson concluded his study of the Chinese Jamaicans thus:-

The Chinese within a period of 15 years have ceased to be a cultural group, no longer define their ethnicity in cultural terms, and have become instead an integral part of the bourgeoisie, practising in full measure, the synthetic creole and middle-class life-style of that group .⁽⁸⁾

The Chinese and several other groups like the Syrians and Lebanese appeared to be fully assimilated into the dominant strata of Jamaican society. This gave some credence and vindication to the national motto:- "Out of many, One People" - at least in the upper strata.

The racially mixed, and varied Jamaican bourgeoisie arrogantly flaunted its status by means of the conspicuous consumption of material goods. The members of this category lived in luxurious houses in attractive neighbourhoods, notably on the hills surrounding Kingston. To drive along the streets of these exclusive suburbs was to feel that the owners of the houses were trying to out-do each other in style. Each suburb had its futuristic shopping precincts specialising in high quality goods from several parts of the world. The high prices of even basic household goods effectively excluded the poor from these places. In any case, the custom was for the rich to do their shopping and have them delivered to their large cars outside the shops. These large cars were important status symbols for the successful. They also enabled them to avoid the masses, for while the poor pushed and fought each other in the streets for space on the delapidated public transport, the rich drove by in their modern cars.

There were various routes to this stratum and life-style but the standard passport was a formal qualification, preferably a University Degree. It was widely propagated that the society was "open" and "free" and that any one with ability could achieve much and should enjoy the benefits of his talent and labour. The staunchest defenders of the status quo were the black "nouveaux riches" because judging from their own experience it was a highly fluid system. They were highly conscious of being a reference group and hoped that their success would motivate others to work hard and try to emulate rather than envy them. And because their quest for qualifications required, and their standard of living afforded travelling abroad, they were performing and acting as a reference group for an audience beyond the shores of Jamaica, particularly in those areas of North America and Britain where people from Jamaica had settled.

But the economy was not expanding at a rate sufficient to allow for significant group mobility among the black masses in the lower classes. Furthermore the expanding educational facilities were raising the expectations of the people and educating them out of their rural environment without adequate provision being made to satisfy their wants. The drift to the city in a futile search for employment commensurate with neo-colonial secondary education resulted in the usual problems of urbanisation in a Third World country, namely, unemployment, squalour, crime, disillusionment and discontent.⁽⁹⁾ It became abundantly clear that the problems could not be solved within the social structures bequeathed by the Colonial masters. A new beginning was required: and the pre-condition for this was a meaningful identity. One section of the society that seemed to be forging an identity alternative to that of the Jamaicans who "were making it" was the Rastafarians.

In 1976 the ranks of the Rastafarians were being swollen by the

influx of rural migrants who had met with disappointment in the cities and towns of Jamaica. The growing numbers together with the cumulative relative deprivation began to exert pressure on the Rastafarian movement to transcend the religious boundaries within which it was confined by previous Governments.

At the same time there appeared to be a convergence between the world views of Michael Manley's P.N.P. and the Rastafarians. Their declared interest in "the people" and in African affairs were partly responsible for this. It may also have been the result of a conscious decision by the P.N.P. to preempt the demands of the Rastafarians as a means of winning votes. In any case, Michael Manley in 1976 was using the rhetoric, the music and the imagery of the Rastafarians and sharing platforms with many of their artists.

Rastafarians were also recruiting members or adherents from a wider cross-section of the society, particularly intellectuals and students from the University of the West Indies, who were disenchanted with the modernisation methods adopted by the Jamaican elites. These new articulate and politically aware spokesmen were helping to define the terms in which the debate about the future of Jamaica was taking place. To this end, three principles were distilled to the masses:-

- (a) That the future must grow dialectically out of the past.
- (b) That Capitalism was an imposition resulting in slavery, exploitation and alienation.
- (c) That those attributes most characteristic of the Jamaican people, namely their black skin and African heritage, were not in themselves despicable or deterministic.

Certain activities followed logically from these axioms.

The economic activities of the Rastafarians were observed to be small-scale and independence-oriented. They included farming small plots of land, carving at home, making music, producing and selling handicrafts, preparing and selling Rastafarian or "Ital" (meaning pure, fresh, natural) food, and performing services like driving taxis and mini-buses. In the Jamaican context they were relatively self-sufficient and avoided any kind of work that smacked of slavery. In general they lived off their skills and wits in the city and off the land in the country.

Much of their time was spent on "reasoning" with each other and potential recruits. They were almost pre-occupied with social, intellectual, and cultural matters. It seemed obligatory for them to share ideas and other resources with anyone, even a total stranger, who identified with the movement. In the streets they would seek out each other according to the overt display of the sacred symbols of the movement like the "Colours" (Red, Green, Gold and Black), the "Dreadlocks" and/or the "Black Lion", symbolizing Haile Selassie. Allegiance to the group was communicated less conspicuously by means of the language used, the *taboo on eating certain food like pork*, and the insistence on eating Ital food.

The staging of CARIFESTA in Jamaica in 1976 gave added impetus to the expression of Rastafarian culture in the main thoroughfares of Jamaica. Their official contribution to the festival was significant enough for visitors to conclude that Rastafarian culture was the characteristic culture of the Jamaican poor.

That Rastafarians represented an unbroken link with Africa through slavery can be seen in the staging of the annual Nyabinghi celebrations. In 1976 the Nyabinghi was held in rural St. Mary over the three days covering the 1st August, ostensibly to commemorate the abolition of slavery in 1838. As will be shown, it also celebrated the on-going resistance to "European" hegemony.

The route to the Nyabinghi was indicated not by standard directions, but by Rastafarian symbols. On arrival participants were greeted by drumming, public announcements, warm embraces and cups of ganja tea. As Rastafarians arrived from all parts of the island by various means of transport they took off their head-gear, shook out their dreadlocks and struck up friendships. People of all age groups brought food and other items of consumption which they gave to the organisers.

The centre of activity was a large green tent with a bamboo structure held together by string instead of nails or screws. A large Rastafarian flag fluttered over the compound and the whole camp-site was festooned with the Rastafarian colours and pictures of Haile Selassie. Under the central tent sat rows of musicians, mainly drummers and singers. Rotation ensured that the music never stopped during the three-day event. Old sages, majestic women in intricate head-ties, vigorous youngsters and frolicsome children danced defiantly to the music. Several fires were kept burning and large pots of food simmered. Food and herbs were freely distributed and consumed. Away from the main tent, family groups, peer groups and assorted clusters of people, reasoning with each other, spread out over the hillside overlooking the sea. Individuals moved freely from group to group.

At one point during the first night when the congregation reached about 500, an old, male, "Senior Head" beckoned to the musicians and the tempo of the music changed. Attention was focussed on him as he started to chant

the Rastagarian prayer.⁽¹⁰⁾ He then gave a speech in which he mentioned their African origins and charted their history through slavery to the present. He explained how the slaves "won" their freedom and lamented that in modern Jamaica only the Rastafarians remembered slavery and recognised the modern form as exploitative and as soul-destroying as the old form. He then recited passages from the Bible and made several references to "Babylon" on the road to destruction. Several encouraging interjections were made by the audience. Finally, he praised Haile Selassie as the living God. Then the music took over again and group discussion ensued. This pattern was repeated several times over the three-day event.

This event has been singled out for treatment because it substantiates the thesis that Rastafarians are the conscious carriers of an African-based culture that enables them to articulate a distinct, black identity. The Nyabinghi showed the Rastafarians as being organised as an acephalous unit without a rigid hierarchical structure and a single leader. Behaviour was organised around traditional beliefs and African symbols, mainly Ethiopian. Reputedly African practices like venerating the old, dominating the women, being indulgent towards children, beating the drum and dancing as a form of expression featured prominently. These traditions were claimed to have been preserved by the Rastafarians. As they recognised their African origins and allegiances they repeatedly condemned slavery and rejected those European-derived cultural forms that were imposed on the rest of Jamaica. Hence they stressed their communality and avoided modern technology, choosing instead to use natural, locally produced goods and a medium of exchange other than money. The ultimate sanction for their behaviour was drawn from the Bible which they interpreted to refer to themselves as the true Israelites.

The Rastafarian world views and life styles had political implications for the whole of Jamaica and the entire Caribbean. In the urban shantytowns their ethos appealed to the poor black masses because it made sense of their plight, satisfied their craving for meaningful knowledge and offered

hope. It also appealed to the criminal and the inadequate: and it furnished them with powerful justifications for anti-social behaviour. Inevitably the term "Rastafarianism" was subjected to various interpretations. This enabled critics to claim that most Rastafarians were bogus and that there were in fact only a few genuine Rastafarians. This oft-repeated statement overlooked the essence of the concept and the strength of the movement which is the creative response of black people to varying situations of oppression that deny them a wholesome African past and the benefits that flow from having an identity sanctioned by tradition.

That the Rastafarian package was exportable can be seen in the "Desmond Trotter Affair" in Dominica. Indeed throughout the Caribbean and wherever in the world West Indians settled, Rastafarianism was to act as a barometer of felt injustice. Using recorded music as the major form of communication, Jamaican Rastafarians were to act as a reference group for black youngsters searching for an identity in several societies, including Britain.

West Indian people in Britain closely followed these developments "back home" through the West Indian newspapers, through letters, and by the personal communication of people returning from holidays. Inevitably these events had some effect on their identity. Some were heartened by these developments and became anxious to return. Others were repelled by what was happening and vowed never to return. Some planned to remain permanently in Britain while others decided to move on elsewhere. Many found a compromise by deciding to migrate to other Caribbean countries like Guyana, which was trying to attract West Indian migrants from Britain to settle on virgin land.⁽¹¹⁾ All these new referents added complexity to black identity in ways to be shown in greater detail in the next Chapters.

(2) The Re-emergence Of African Nation-States

It was generally accepted among many black people in Handsworth that an important method used by the European masters in the creolization of black identity in the Diaspora was the withholding and distortion of knowledge about Africa as a means of denying their black slaves and subjects a wholesome past against which their situation in the New World would be perceived as oppressive. The more Africa was presented as barbarous, the more plausible and acceptable the claim that slavery was a form of salvation. On the other hand, the more black people abroad knew of the real Africa, the more difficult it would be to control them in those societies where both their labour and their humanity were exploited.

Such an understanding of race relations motivated Marcus Garvey to take an interest in African history and affairs. The essence of his ideology was that the progress of "Africans at home and abroad" was dependent on the liberation of the African Continent, and the political unity and solidarity of her peoples. Marcus Garvey himself considered it necessary to visit Africa to "see for himself" and to establish networks of communication. The political capital that could have been made out of this by the Garveyites and the consequent subversive effect on the imperial order were not over-looked by the European powers. Marcus Garvey therefore found it difficult to travel to Africa, and after being ostracized in the U.S.A. and his native Jamaica, died in relative social isolation in Britain in 1940.

At a later point, particularly during the 1970's the career of Marcus Garvey was presented by black activists as a commentary on the changing balance of power between the African and European peoples. From a pre-1940 situation of the domination of Africa by European powers there had developed one of the re-emergence of African nation-states.

An important watershed was the Second World War which witnessed the distraction and weakening of the European powers. The spectacular rise of Japan and the dismantling of the European Empires in the East taught non-white peoples that European nations were not invincible. In particular these developments gave considerable impetus to the Pan African Movement which found full expression in the 1945 Pan African Conference in Manchester.⁽¹²⁾ This Conference brought together formidable champions of the cause like W. E. B. Dubois, George Padmore, Harold Moody, Kwame Nkrumah and Jomo Kenyatta.

But by then several poets had addressed themselves to the existential nature of being "black" in "white" societies. Men like Sekou Toure, Leopold Senghor, Aimé Césaire and Felix Houphouët-Boigny had articulated the challenges and joys of being black - contrary to the expectations deriving

from the stereotype of the "Negro". In defiance of the expected, these advocates forged the concepts "Negritude", "la présence africaine" and "the African personality" to celebrate their pride in being "black".

Together, these intellectual and cultural phenomena served as essential pre-requisites for political activity in Africa and the Diaspora. They were directly related to the political organisations and protests against European rule. For example, no matter how weak Britain may have been after World War Two it was not inevitable that the Mau Mau "emergency", nay rebellion, would have taken place from 1952 to 1956. A people and their leaders who identified with their European rulers or who were ambivalent of their identity could not have mounted such a programme.

A similar relationship can also be seen operating in other African Countries leading to the transfer of some (though not total) power to people identified as Africans. At the beginning of 1957 there were only 8 "independent" African states namely Ethiopia, Liberia (self-governed since 1847), Egypt (1922), Libya (1951), Eritrea (1952), Morocco (1956), Tunisia (1956), Sudan (1956). Then Ghana, under Kwame Nkrumah, achieved independence in 1957 and the sub-Saharan Colonial political dam was broken. Moreover Nkrumah, regarded Ghanaian independence merely as a means to a greater end, the complete liberation of Africa from colonialism and the achievement of the widest possible measure of political unity among the African peoples. Ghana became a psychological and political catalyst for the rest of Africa. The other countries subsequently gained independence as follows:-⁽¹³⁾

1958 Guinea.

1959 Mali, Senegal.

1960 Mauretania, Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, Togo, Dahomey, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Cameroun, Central African Republic, Gabon,

Congo (Brazzaville), Congo (Leopoldville), Somalia,
Madagascar.

- 1961 Sierra Leone, Tanganyika (Tanzania).
- 1962 Algeria, Uganda.
- 1963 Kenya.
- 1964 Malawi, Zambia.
- 1965 Gambia.
- 1966 Botswana, Lesotho.
- 1968 Swaziland.
- 1974 Guinea Bissau.
- 1975 Mozambique, Angola.
- 1980 Zimbabwe.

In charting this apparent political revolution in Africa, many black opinion leaders pin-pointed 1975 as another water-shed in African history. They linked the death of Haile Selassie (that widely acclaimed symbol of African independence) in 1975 with the completion of the first phase of African resurgence. They associated the second phase with Africans dealing with the entrenched white regimes in Rhodesia and South Africa. South Africa's ability and willingness to crush internal protest movements by force as at Sharpville in 1960 and Soweto in 1976 were perceived as demonstrating that the struggle for African liberation in such countries would be protracted and bloody.

As a result of these political developments in Africa the Pan African movement was seen as taking on a new dimension. This Movement had gained wider acceptance by the formation of the Organisation for African Unity in 1963 and the staging of the 6th Pan African Conference in Dar-es-Salaam in 1974. In the light of the political realities of that vast Continent the doctrine was presented an eclectic, romantic one woven

together by various exiles in different social contexts with one objective - the transfer of power to Africans. It was claimed that after the epoch of constitutional decolonisation it had to compete with other ideologies like nationalism, communism, socialism, humanism, African socialism, liberalism and in an increasing number of cases, the absence of any clear ideology as one country after another fell victim to military coups motivated by self-interest, military interests and tribal interests.⁽¹⁴⁾

But from the perspective of Africans of the Diaspora, Pan Africanism continued to offer some framework for dealing with changes on the Continent. Pan Africanism enabled them to organise "knowledge" from the vast array of data coming out of the Continent.

In particular, two spectacular developments provided a link with Africa and powerful resources to buttress their identity. These were:-

- (a) The cultural assertion of certain nation states.
- (b) The political intervention of certain strategic nation states in the liberation movement on the Continent.

The cultural re-assertion in countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania and Kenya after independence found a response among black people in Britain. These countries provided certain life-styles and supplied cultural artefacts which were widely copied and consumed in Britain. Not only did the large number of African students in Britain display these resources but an increasing number of Afro-Caribbean people ate African food-stuffs, wore Dashikis and gowns, plaited their hair in African styles or wore the "Afro", displayed African sculpture and handicrafts in their homes, listened to African music

and even adopted African names. A high-point in this identification and communication with Africa was reached during the late 1970's when the above countries successively played host to the major Pan-African cultural festivals.

Moreover, the natural resources like oil in Nigeria and Angola, copper in Zambia and the various mineral deposits in Zaire made these countries important to the developed countries of the World. The militarily strategic location of countries bordering the Indian Ocean and the vast consumer markets in developing African countries made them keenly sought-after partners for many "First World" and "Second World" countries. These factors enabled them to intervene decisively in international affairs. Of major significance was the role played by Nigeria (and the "Front Line" states) at the Commonwealth Summit in Lusaka in 1979. Nigeria (the major trading partner of Britain in Africa) undoubtedly exerted pressure on the Conservative Government to reach a favourable decision on the Rhodesian issue and helped the "Freedom Fighters" to achieve independence for Zimbabwe in 1980. These widely publicised expressions of the Pan African principle strengthened the movement among black people in Britain.

Needless to say, the mass media in Britain continued to provide material and their own definition of the situation in such a way as to reinforce an image of Africa as incorrigibly divided along tribal lines, as backward and barbaric - particularly during the Civil Wars in the Congo, Nigeria and Uganda - so that the above picture as it appeared to some black people was at odds with the dominant British view.

(3) Developments In The U.S.A.

Another source of knowledge for black people adjusting to their situation in Britain was the U.S.A.. Developments in Race Relations there had a great impact on black migrants to Britain for several reasons. First,

events there received extensive coverage in the mass media - vividly and almost instantaneously in the case of the television. Second, there was a facile comparison between the two societies implying that what was then happening in the U.S.A. would soon happen in Britain. Third, West Indians in Britain took notice of what was taking place in the U.S.A. because many of them had relatives and friends there and some even aspired to migrating to North America. Finally, they thought that they could learn from the black experience there, what to expect from a majority white society in the second half of the 20th Century.

The following events were singled out for discussion among black people in areas of settlement in Britain:-

1954: The Supreme Court decision in the case of "Brown v The Board of Education" declared that:-

In the field of public education the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.

This was seen as a reversal of the segregationist "Plessy v Fergusson" ruling of 1896 and the initiation of a policy of desegregation in public schools. The consequent bussing of children to schools outside their district in the face of stiff opposition from white Americans indicated to black people the Federal Government's commitment to racial integration. It was with the expectation of continued Federal support that black Americans subsequently increased their demands for civil rights.

1955: The Montgomery bus boycott was reported as developing from the refusal of the Negress, Mrs. Rosa Parks, to sit in the back of the bus as

was the custom. The campaign became politically important and helped to establish Martin Luther King as a National Leader.

1957: The Little Rock Crisis received widespread media coverage and exposed to what lengths Local Authorities would go to resist integration in educational institutions.

1960: This year marked the development of the Civil Rights Movement in American Society. This movement was spearheaded by:-

- (a) The National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (N.A.A.C.P., founded in 1909) which concentrated on gaining legal recognition of the civil rights of coloured Americans.
- (b) The National Urban League (founded in 1910) which campaigned for equality of opportunity in employment, housing and education.
- (c) The Congress of Racial Equality (C.O.R.E., founded in 1942) which used direct action tactics to challenge the practice of racial discrimination in various public institutions.
- (d) The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (S.C.L.C., founded in 1957) which used non-violent resistance as a means to integration.
- (e) The Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee (S.N.C.C., founded in 1960) which got students involved in the struggle for civil rights.

1960 was also the year in which President J. F. Kennedy was

elected on a Civil Rights platform.

1963: By 1963 the Civil Rights Bill was drawn up: but President Kennedy was assassinated. This event was interpreted as a measure of the intransigence of some sections of American society and the need for more militant action on the part of black Americans. Two immediate responses were the rise in popularity of the "Black Muslims" (see below) particularly after the recruitment of the World Heavy Weight Champion, Muhammed Ali, and the march of 200,000 people to Washington demanding justice for black Americans.

1964: Martin Luther King received the Nobel Peace Prize: Malcolm X, having been expelled from the "Black Muslims", formed the Organisation for Afro-American Unity following his widely publicised visit to Africa and the Middle East: Riots occurred in Harlem, Brooklyn, Rochester, New Jersey, Philadelphia and Los Angeles: The Civil Rights Act was passed.

1965: Malcolm X was murdered: A major race riot occurred in the Watts District of Los Angeles and much property was destroyed by fire to the accompaniment of the slogan "Burn Baby, Burn": Another Civil Rights Act was passed.

1966: The term "Black Power" came into prominence and referred to an ideology defining black people as forming an internal colony which could be "liberated" only by political means: simultaneously, the term "Black is Beautiful" gained widespread currency as a code for the "revalorization" of "Black Culture": The Black Panther Party (see below) was founded by Huey Newton, Bobby Seale, Eldridge Cleaver and others: Major riots occurred in Cities like Chicago, Cleveland, New York, Atlanta and San Francisco: Civil Rights Leaders made a joint statement reaffirming their commitment to racial integration by peaceful means: Stokeley Carmichael of S.N.C.C. left the U.S.A.

to live in Guinea, West Africa.

1967: Several race riots occurred in major Cities during the summer.

1968: Martin Luther King was assassinated: Racial violence broke out in 110 Cities: There was another march on Washington begging for justice: Black Athletes made a Black Power gesture at the Mexico Olympics thereby drawing World-wide attention to their cause: Eldridge Cleaver fled to Algeria, North Africa: Another Civil Rights Act was passed.

1969: There were several gun battles between the Black Panthers and the police: Many Black Panther Leaders were shot dead and several others arrested.

1970: Johnathan Jackson attempted to free his brother, George, and other "Solidad Brothers" from Prison by violent means: Angela Davis was arrested on a charge of conspiracy to murder in connection with the Johnathan Jackson incident.

1971: Huey Newton and other Black Panthers were acquitted of all charges: George Jackson died in prison.

1972: Angela Davis was tried and acquitted of all charges: The National Black Convention decided to work within the Americal Political System rather than form a separate "black" Political Party.

During the first half of the 1970's when black groups sat down to make sense of and learn from what had taken place in the U.S.A. over the two decades, there appeared to be several fairly clear American-based Corporate

Black identities with related World-views and ideologies that provided those who subscribed to them with meaning and motivation for a particular line of action. A participant observer interacting with the several black groups in places like Handsworth, Birmingham, would have become aware of distinct black American identities enjoying wide currency and fitting into the following typology:-

(i) The Civil Rights Assimilationists

The Civil Rights Assimilationists stressed the "American" component of their identity and subscribed to a sense of belonging once expressed by Booker T. Washington, thus:-

In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as fingers yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress. (15)

It is true that since the days of Booker T. Washington the definition of "things essential" had been widened to include several areas of life that had previously been considered "purely social". Hence under the leadership of Martin Luther King the Civil Rights Movement demanded the equal incorporation of black people into American society. Indeed, Martin Luther King dreamt of black and white Americans having equal opportunities and identical access to the benefits of the richest and most industrialised nation in the West. He therefore mobilised blacks against specific injustices and not the system itself. And because the demands were limited there were many successes. Through the large and efficient Civil Rights Organisations, black Americans won certain concessions through legislation, litigation and systematic appeal to the conscience of the nation.

Prior to 1964 black activists drew heavily on an abundant source of theoretical knowledge to justify and legitimate their strategies. The widely accepted thesis was that black Americans would pursue only those goals sanctioned by the white majority and would only succeed with the support of that majority. Gunnar Myrdal argued that the "American Negro" was an "exaggerated American" who did not wish to antagonise his dominant countrymen. He concluded:-

... in any case a Negro movement is doomed to ultimate dissolution and collapse if it cannot gain white support. (16)

But when the Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964 and did not effectively change the conditions under which the black masses lived it became clear that fundamental change for an oppressed people was not possible under a system within which the oppression occurred and was sustained. This awareness led to the questioning of the Civil Rights ideology and more immediately the abandonment of the strategy of passive resistance. Martin Luther King was rejected as a leader and the black masses embarked on a campaign of unprecedented violence. The goal of gaining access to the "American Dream" remained the same but the means to this end became the riot which was in effect the only weapon available to a people without control over economic or political bases in the society.

The many devastating riots of the 1960's, though of major political significance, amounted to a rebellion rather than a revolution. The Civil Rights identity, though modified, remained the dominant one among black Americans. This was the conclusion reached in the influential Kerner Report on the riots:-

... Rather than rejecting the American system, the rioters were anxious to obtain a place in it for themselves.⁽¹⁷⁾

Even Robert Fogleson who criticised the report as being liberal agreed thus:-

The violence was directed at the system's abuses and not the system itself because the rioters were trying to alert the society rather than over-turn it.⁽¹⁸⁾

For black people and others wishing to emulate the Civil Rights Assimilationists, there appeared to be available a clear programme beginning with passive resistance and moving on to violent protest against the injustices of an accepted system. And to reinforce this strategy there began to flow out of the U.S.A. a number of documents claiming that the black rebellion of the 1960's resulted in the achievement of upward social mobility for many black Americans. For example, Martin Kilson claimed that black Americans have made considerable political progress since the early 1960's and pointed to the many electoral successes of black American politicians.⁽¹⁹⁾ Others have referred to the positive discrimination (later "affirmative action") policies of the Federal Government and in particular the quota system which is reputed to have resulted in more than half the black population entering the American "middle class".⁽²⁰⁾

What progress there was is difficult to measure. But it would be a distortion of reality to claim that all the concessions won were due to the activities of the Civil Rights Assimilations. Credit must be given to more radical activists subscribing to different black identities.

(ii) The Black Power Accommodationists

The Black Power Movement provided abundant evidence to refute the Smaboification thesis of Stanley Elkins and showed that blacks were by no means a people without a culture and hence a demoralised, inert mass. Indeed the second half of the 1960's was characterised by Black Power activists snatching the initiative from the Civil Rights Leaders, redefining the identity of Negroes as "American Blacks" and giving stimulus to a process of ethno-genesis.⁽²¹⁾ The strategy was:-

- (a) To "revalorize" those cultural items of black people living in the U.S.A.
- (b) To seize political power in areas of black settlement and to forge a new mode of accommodation.

Drawing heavily on certain aspects of the Garvey Movement of the 1920's, Black Power Leaders drew attention to the peculiar African-based culture of American Blacks. The slogan "Black Is Beautiful" was used to advertise the "revalorisation" of a way of life that had previously been considered a bastardisation of mainstream American culture. Blacks in increasing numbers began to display a variety of cultural items which they considered to be their own. African clothes, African names, "soul" food, "soul" music, black hairstyles, black studies, ghetto-specific modes of behaviour and speech became mandatory for "enlightened" blacks. Shame gave way to pride.

But the essence of Black Power was not confined to anthropological interests. There developed an ideology depicting blacks as forming an internal colony to be liberated by political means. One leader, Stokely Carmichael defined Black Power as:-

... a call for black people in this country to unite, to recognise their heritage, to build a sense of community ... a call to reject the racist institutions, and values of this society.⁽²²⁾

The message was that blacks should build power bases in their communities and seize control over the institutions that regulated their lives without necessarily going outside the mainstream political, economic and other institutional orders. Carmichael proclaimed that there was a need for Black Power bases before black people could enter into meaningful and fruitful coalition with poor whites to bring about change in the society.⁽²³⁾ The campaign to get blacks registered as voters and elected as black representatives was consistent with this view. And indeed there were spectacular political successes across the country throwing up black Mayors and other representatives. Thus American Blacks looked in on themselves, learned to reevaluate their common attributes and characteristics more favourably and became more of a "group for itself".

In retrospect it was argued that the Black Power movement was doomed to failure because American Blacks were still exposed to the propaganda that beauty, high status, security and power were the prerogatives of American Whites. In any case the centralisation of power in the U.S.A. created certain limitations on what they could achieve. In emphasising the importance of political power, Robert Fogelson commented:-

... Municipal Government has been centralised, professionalised and bureaucratised. In the process, power has been transferred from the elected officials to Civil Servants, from Municipal Agencies to Public Authorities and from neighbourhoods and cities to the

States and Federal Government. (24)

Ira Katznelson offered a similar political analysis and showed that by the time blacks gained control of their communities, power was lodged elsewhere. He concluded:-

It is significant that only after the traditional party machines lost their primary position of influence were blacks permitted to participate on terms of near equality ... The new foci of power in New York are the centralised, over-institutionalised, bureaucracies, and there the City's blacks remain essentially without power. (25)

These frustrations may have caused Stokeley Carmichael to leave the Country and settle in Africa. But by then he had been converted to the Pan-Africanism of Marcus Garvey ... and other black groups had become prominent in the black communities.

(iii) The Black Nationalists

Black Nationalism has always existed in the cultural life of American Blacks but was never taken seriously by White Americans until it broke out of its cultural confines and took on a socio-political and economic dimension.

During the 1960's the best example of a Black Nationalist Group was the Nation of Islam, the members of which called themselves Black Muslims. Black Muslims under the leadership of Elijah Mohammed and the early Malcolm X broke out of the hidebound religious confines bequeathed to them by W. D. Fard and offered a total solution to the urban deprivations and hopeless frustrations which "so-called American Negroes" were experiencing. They developed

an ideology that defined American Blacks as a distinct nation with its own culture and demanded political autonomy on the American mainland. Their immediate goal was to purge from the Negroes' mind all notions of white superiority and black inferiority, while their long-term objective was to establish a separate black state.

They systematically recruited the worst casualties of the society - from prisons and the other pathological depositories of the ghettos - and introduced them to a version of Islam which they believed to be the ancestral religion of blacks. The central tenet of their doctrine was that Allah was the "Supreme Black Man" against whom the mad scientist, Yakub, rebelled by creating the inferior white race. The package also included a body of rules to regulate their lives.

Armed with this powerful sanction they embarked on a ritualistic programme which was intended to endow blacks with the virtues of self-respect, hard work and thrift. In pursuit of the long-term goal of establishing a separate nation-state they set about forming "self-sufficient" groups with their own religious, economic, political and social institutions. They tried as best they could to free blacks from dependence on White Americans for not only their values but also their livelihood. And indeed, their efforts were successful in enabling some blacks to achieve upward social mobility from the wealth created by their Newspapers, Restaurants, Laundries and other businesses. But they fell short of extricating a significant number of blacks from American society.

The dilemma faced by many Black Muslims in the short term was that while they were re-socialised to hate "White Devils" they were still dependent on them for a livelihood. To a certain extent they were able to disengage themselves from some dominant white values and to relinquish participation in

the electoral system: but they were still totally involved in the American economy.

Essien-Udom commented on this dilemma thus:-

It may be that Black Nationalism is a tortuous route to social mobility, recognition and status or a spurious way by which the Black Nationalists seek to gain a sense of identity and membership in American society.⁽²⁶⁾

This assessment was objectively correct but it failed to recognise or appreciate the important psychological and consequent social benefits deriving from the acquisition of a defined black identity to counteract the ascribed stereotype that would have otherwise helped to reduce certain sections of the black community to a pathological state.

(iv) The Black Revolutionaries

The final group fashioning and offering an identity for black people was made up of Black Revolutionaries. Their ideology and activities directed the social ferment among American Blacks full circle back to a reliance on white support.

The Black Revolutionaries, exemplified by the Black Panthers, were opposed to Stokeley Carmichael and other Black Power Leaders for failing to transcend their pre-occupation with race and black culture onto the plane of class struggle. Using a neo-Marxist analysis and in particular the work of Frantz Fanon, they recognised that both black and white workers were exploited by the owners of the means of production - of whatever colour these capitalists happened to be - and so advocated inter-racial unity and solidarity in all

efforts to overthrow the capitalist order. They argued that blacks as a minority could not, by themselves, dismantle the old order and reconstruct a socialist society in America. Their reputed strategy was for black militants to spark off the revolution by attacking the custodians of the capitalist order, drawing in the white and other working class masses and paving the way to a Proletarian victory.

In the beginning the Black Panthers defied the Law and when the State reacted violently they manfully engaged the Police in gun battles. However, their white and other comrades did not follow suit to the extent required.

In the end the movement failed because the lines of class division in the U.S.A. were blurred by a belief in the possibility of rapid upward social mobility and the actual achievement of such mobility by many Americans. In addition to this, American society has developed with racial tensions overshadowing tension between the classes. In other words class conflict has traditionally been displaced by racial conflict. And to the majority of black people, class conflict has been mediated by or even reduced to racial conflict. This consciousness was an essential part of the given reality - a social fact - and to call it "false" would be to beg the question.

Notwithstanding this state of affairs, the Black Panthers forged ahead with their programme and after the initial set-backs, purged the Party of what they called "opportunists" and renewed their battle with the agents of the State. They then moved from optimism to suicidal desperation as can be traced in the writings of Bobby Seale, through to those of Angela Davis, George Jackson and finally Huey Newton.⁽²⁷⁾

The final outcome was containment and pacification by murder and imprisonment. The survivors then resorted to what they called "The Survival

Program", meaning social work. And when they displayed a willingness to work within the system, they were tolerated.

Even though these events and the activities of black groups in America were treated with great foreboding in the British mass media, they were seen as positive developments by many Afro-Caribbean people in Britain. Indeed, several people I knew in Handsworth copied the symbols and styles of their American reference groups and adopted their strategies as means of reinforcing their identity.

(B) THE IMPACT OF NEW RESOURCES ON BLACK IDENTITIES

The developments outlined above had a "domino" effect on the people of African descent in the Diaspora. The importance of new reference groups, of relevant knowledge and other resources, and the impact of these on black people in different social contexts have been dealt with in the case of America but remains to be done for Britain (the hitherto relative homogeneity of the British population was partly responsible for this).

In America there was a marked development from the traditional small-scale intransigence and emotional protest of black people to an intellectual exposure of the falseness of the absurd doctrines of European racial superiority which denied black people their dignity as human beings, to a peaceful mass resistance and finally to a militant cultural and political challenge to European hegemony.

This transition was partly dependent on structural changes in the major institutional orders and spheres of American society but the motivation to seize the opportunity to participate in those changes and to demand greater changes originated elsewhere. This vital catalyst was the gaining of independence by African nations which highlighted the relative social and political

deprivation of American Blacks, inspired them to articulate their suffering and to demand a greater share of the nation's resources.

The importance of Africa to black people in the Diaspora has been stressed by several writers, before, during and after the decades of de-colonisation in Africa. During World War Two, Gunnar Myrdal made the link between a colonised Africa and the socially immobile American Black masses thus:-

The American Negroes do not, like the Japanese or Chinese, have a politically organised nation and an accepted culture of their own outside America to fall back on. (28)

To Myrdal, the political state of Africa and the lack of identification and alignment with African culture, which in any case was taken as having a low status among American Blacks, was the crucial difference between them and other racial and ethnic minorities.

At a later date, just before the decade of black resistance in America Harold Isaacs observed:-

The downfall of the white supremacy system in the rest of the World makes its survival in the U.S.A. suddenly and painfully conspicuous. (29)

More pointedly, R. Emerson and M. Kilson recognised the close subterranean ties between Africa and blacks abroad and prophesied:-

... for many and probably for most, a sense of racial community with Africa and some vicarious sharing in the sovereignty of African states will be a significant part of their social awareness. (30)

Black people needed an "independent" Africa with which to identify, and to teach them that they were not an isolated and vulnerable minority. It was therefore through a realignment with a resurgent Africa that they gained the confidence to assert their black identity and develop the sanctions for an identity that motivated them to demand changes in their society. Essien Udom showed clearly that this was the key to the successes of the Nation of Islam. He concluded:-

The Liberation Movements and the independent African States have had a significant impact on the Negro's total re-definition of himself in relation to both his situation in America and Africa. (31)

And in looking at the social unrest in America the authoritative Kerner Report admitted that the emergence of independent African States contributed to the increasing militancy and new social constructions among American Blacks. (32)

My contention is that events in Africa and related societies had a great impact on the identity of black people living in Britain. Given the social conditions in Britain and the increasing marginalisation of black immigrants from the West Indies (shown above) it was inevitable that great importance would be attached to what was happening elsewhere.

During the period under consideration there was a widespread

harvesting of material from all the sources mentioned above for the reconstruction of black identities. In particular, this activity became frantic among young blacks who were then at the most crucial stage of identity formation.

One important arena where this drama was played out was the Secondary school in areas of black settlement. It was in such schools that the battles for the minds of future black citizens and workers were fought and the resistance against efforts to socialise them in particular directions were observed.

An interesting and representative case study is that of the William Murdock School referred to in Chapters 3 and 4.

The School As A Crucible Of Identity

In the almost laboratory conditions of this School, the impact of new knowledge on identity can be fairly accurately measured.

By 1971 the proportion of coloured children in this Secondary school of about 550 pupils had increased to nearly 75%. But despite the changing racial and ethnic composition, the curriculum retained its Eurocentric bias. Even though the headmaster had abandoned the policy of assimilation, the vast majority of teachers still subscribed to it and continued the old practice of ignoring the needs of children from distinct ethnic minorities. The contradiction between what was taught at school and what was learned outside revealed itself in the polarisation of groups of children along racial and ethnic lines and the formation of a "plural society" at school.⁽³³⁾ As the headmaster observed (see Chapter 3) there was an increase in tension and hostility and a growing disrespect for teachers and what they taught.

With a few exceptions the white children got some ethnic reinforcement and satisfaction from what was taught. The Asian children, with an apparent abundance of extra-mural plausibility structures and resources for their Sikh, Hindu or Moslem identity, saw school education as strictly instrumental and so responded positively to it. This is not to say that White and Asian children had no identity problems, but such problems did not seem to be severe enough to interfere with their academic work as was the case with the West Indian children.

The West Indian children gave a more varied and complex response to the situation as was to be expected from the data presented in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. There was a general discontent and uncertainty among them arising from the growing consciousness of the social import of being "black" in a "white" society.

On recognising a possible source of the problem the headmaster established a Social Education Department as the institution through which a new approach could be worked out to meet the needs of the largest proportion of his pupils.

The Social Education Department was made up of six social scientists, the head of which was a White American who had spent several years in Africa, and his deputy a West Indian teacher. The group met weekly to review its work and to build up solidarity. Each term the Department drew up and published an "Interim Statement of Policy and Programme". For example in February, 1972 a statement clarified its position thus:-

... Our policy must take account of the needs of these pupils, many of whom come from families disoriented by geographical and social circumstances. Racial prejudice

and currently high rates of unemployment among school leavers, in particular, are seen to have great impact by increasing the unsureness of a rising generation of coloured young people about their identity as persons in British society. In these circumstances, it seems necessary to promote in our nonwhite pupils, especially in the West Indian pupils, a more positive view of themselves as participants in our predominantly white society. The promotion of black as opposed to white identity is central to any work we do in preparing our nonwhite pupils for life as jobholders, community participants and leisure-time consumers. (34)

The Department decided that there was a need for positive ethnic reinforcement to prevent moral and social ambiguity, and so help to motivate pupils. This task required the provision of relevant knowledge, the creation of opportunities to adopt values and take up positions, and the involvement of teachers, pupils, parents and community leaders in these processes.

With this commitment to change, the Social Education Department developed a two-year course leading to a Mode 3 Certificate of Secondary Education available to all children regardless of their classification. The majority choosing the subject were "nonexamination" types, and as shown in Chapter 3, "non-white". The syllabus was comprised of:-

- (i) Two continuously assessed folders containing work on "Leisure" and "Civilisation". The work on "Leisure" enabled pupils to gather knowledge about work and leisure in modern Britain, while the "Civilisation" folder required that they learn facts about ancient civilisations in Africa and Asia. These folders earned

55% of the marks.

- (ii) An examination on South Africa and Sikh leaders, earning 30% of the marks.

- (iii) An "Initiative Component" earning 15% of the marks. This involved going out into the community to collect information about people, community groups and career prospects. Pupils were tested by means of two recorded interviews, one during the first year and the other during the second year.

Every week, time was set aside for discussions on the values, institutions and aspirations of groups in cosmopolitan Birmingham. Students were taught to take up and defend positions.

The community outside the school became involved in the learning process in several ways. First, visits were made to the children's homes by all the teachers in the Department. Second, parents were invited into the school and special efforts made to make them feel welcome. Third, community leaders were invited to speak to classes and a detached youth worker was invited to participate in the proceedings of the Department. Clear lines of communication were established with the various communities.

All these exercises encouraged pupils to do their own research and to bring documentary, visual and oral evidence into the class-room. By means of role playing, every attempt was made to get them to articulate the perspectives and needs of young black Britons. The Department became a resource centre for the whole of the school. Of some importance, the Departments' record player and tape recorder were used to play ethnic music. At first, American records were played and youngsters tended to identify with American reference groups. Then "Reggae" with Rastafarian messages became

popular, and increasing numbers of black youngsters started identifying with Rastafarians. The pupils doing Social Education also set up a "black" library and a school bank.

These changes brought with them many problems. For example, the absence of documentary evidence about African civilisations (in particular), in a form suitable for secondary schools forced the members of the Department to do their own research and to present information on simple work-sheets. Some pupils initially accused them of "making it all up" - until the books in question were shown to them.

The material on South Africa also caused some friction in the class. There were accusations of name calling and identifying with South African groups. It is at that point that teachers could have abandoned the exercise as being divisive. But the members of the Department persevered until the next stage was reached. Gradually a consensus emerged about the forces of Apartheid which, once set in motion, constrain people to think and behave in certain ways. Interesting and objective comparisons with Britain were made at the end of the course.

The greatest problem was that of children identifying with militant black American groups and bringing to school literature and badges with slogans like, "Black is Beautiful", "Say it Clear and say it loud, I am Black and I am Proud", "Soledad Brother", "Free Angela Davis", "The Black Panthers". Some teachers wanted them banned while the Social Education Department saw them as teaching aids. This led to polarisation and ostracism of the members of the Department.

An important lesson learned through the badges was the meaning of the term "black" in the English language. Children were asked to list

and discuss all those expressions containing the term; and it was discovered that the term had derogatory connotations in every case except the one when one's bank account is "in the black". Of particular concern was the conviction by the pupils that such negative meanings were also applied to black people. At that point it was collectively decided to create another context in which the term would be used in a positive sense and to rename the Social Education Course as "Black Studies". This was obviously due to American influences .

"Black Studies" was defined as ...

... The search for, and organisation of knowledge about the experiences and cultures of colonised people, particularly those of African descent living in various parts of the world. It is interdisciplinary in methodology and action-oriented. It is intended to fill a vacuum in knowledge about social reality and to motivate those who identify with its content. (35)

In keeping with the declared policy of the Department, lessons and other meetings with the pupils became a two-way traffic of ideas and the forum for the expression of their needs. The course was therefore revised so that:-

- (i) The two folders became "Civilisations" and "The Black Triangle". Emphasis in the former remained on ancient black civilisations while the latter folder tried to trace the links between West Africa, the West Indies and the West Midlands.
- (ii) The subject for examination became Tanzania, a modern African nation state.

- (iii) The Initiative Component provided opportunities for the playing out of adult roles and the criticism thereof on tape.

"The Black Triangle" folder dealing with slavery required careful teaching and the ability to prevent slavery from being used only as a justification for discontent.

A highwater mark for the Department was its contribution to the school's "Handsworth Festival" in June, 1972. Previous efforts had failed to attract parents from the ethnic minorities, and had been criticised as being token gestures to the living cultures of the area. The Department took on the responsibility of organising the event called "Spotlight on the West Indies", planned for Wednesday 14th June. As a result of contacts with the community, carefully built up over the years, the Department got parents and children involved in the planning and publicising of the event.

The programme for the night included an address by Conrad Hunte, the famous West Indian cricketer, on the importance of cricket and religion to West Indians. Another speaker was James Hunte, a community leader, who lectured on local politics. Local artists like the "Singing Stewarts", "The West Indian Narratives" and "George Burnette and the Tropical Harmonies" sang songs covering a wide range of West Indian music from folk songs, to Calypso to Reggae. A local Rastafarian read his own poems and expounded the Rastafarian doctrine. West Indian pupils put on plays and one West Indian pupil played recorded music on the sound system he had built. A film on the West Indies was shown. During the interval, West Indian food was served and Black Studies books were displayed and sold. Over 400 people attended, making the event the most successful part

of the Festival. Judging from the subsequent feed-back and the volume of writing the pupils produced about it, it had a great impact on the community.

In this way the Social Education Department was giving vent and recognition to the hidden resources and needs of the West Indian community, and above all, giving youngsters access to a vast cultural heritage. The West Indian pupils themselves began to assert a wide range of identities associated with Africa, their islands of origin, America and/or Britain. For example, some of them wanted to find out more about ancient and modern Africa. Others became pre-occupied with the West Indies and identified with the good things they heard about the islands. The more militant ones wanted all lessons to deal with racial discrimination and "Black Power" because they saw these topics as crucial. Others avoided these issues because they felt that pre-occupation with them would prevent them from "getting on with teachers, doing well in examinations, and getting a decent job". There was much shifting of position. But the emerging consensus was that there was a need for West Indians to emulate the Asians who "defended their culture" and seemed to be benefiting from doing so.

The work of the Department was widely publicised through "Teachers Against Racism" (T.A.R.), the national pressure group trying to expose racial bias and stereotyping in school text-books. This publicity brought a stream of visitors to the school, and some satisfaction to the old headmaster, Mr. Meredith.

This headmaster retired in 1972 and was succeeded by someone who subscribed to the old policy of assimilation. He adopted the other of the two options referred to in Chapter 3 and established a more authoritarian regime to contain the tensions within his multi-racial and multi-cultural school population. The Social Education Department was accused of:

- (i) Teaching Black Power in the school;
- (ii) Collecting and displaying inflammatory visual aids especially about slavery;
- (iii) Encouraging children to be critical of established teaching methods and materials;
- (iv) Undermining the authority of the headmaster and senior members of staff;
- (v) Isolating members of the Social Education Department from their colleagues; and, above all,
- (vi) Causing racial friction in the school and a break-down in discipline.

These accusations were communicated to the Chief Education Officer of Birmingham, and on 18th December, 1972, this Officer and three other Senior Officers visited the school as part of a thorough investigation. The Social Education Department rejected the malicious accusations and argued strongly that, in the long run, it would be better for the

school to address itself to the needs of its pupils. But a decision was made to phase out the Department. The only concession won was that courses started in 1972 would be followed through to completion in 1974. This was achieved even though the William Murdock School ceased to exist in 1973 when it was closed, staff relocated, and children transferred to a neighbouring school as part of city-wide re-organisation.

In this Chapter two tasks have been undertaken. The one was to show what external events and issues were selected as significant by my interactants during the early 1970's. The other was to show how this selective knowledge was percolating down to the young generation of black Britons and what impact it was having on their identity. Adolescents at school were chosen because they constituted a test case in conditions ideal for observation, and because developments among them indicated future trends in British society. However, these adolescent identities were relatively precarious by nature and highly dependent on postschool experiences in the more lasting identity groups that were being established among their parents and other significant adults in the Handsworth area. It is therefore to these groups that I turn in Chapters 6 and 7.

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CHAPTER 6

THE SOCIOLOGICAL REFERENTS OF IDENTITY

An attempt was made in 1976 to test the hypothesis that people of Afro-Caribbean descent have persistently cultivated and transmitted a positive identity despite the existence of economic, political and cultural structures and processes that militated against the articulation of such a non-stereotyped identity in the Diaspora. A sample of 150 people with an Afro-Caribbean background was chosen from the population of the Handsworth area and interviewed about their definition of the social self and of their situation in British society (and in general).⁽¹⁾

The 150 respondents were drawn from the three adjacent Wards of "Handsworth", "Soho", and "Sandwell" covering an area generally referred to as "Handsworth" and situated in the northern sector of Birmingham. These Wards had the largest settlements of West Indian and Afro-Caribbean people as shown in Chapter 5. However, they did not live evenly scattered over these Wards but were concentrated in certain Enumeration Districts and certain roads thereof, making it relatively easy to find a representative sample by quasi-random means.

These respondents were aged 17 to 67 with the following distribution:-

Table 6.1 Age Of Respondents

Age	Number	%	% Cumulative Frequency
17 - 21	43	28.7	28.7
22 - 29	14	9.3	38
30 - 39	31	20.7	58.7
40 - 49	41	27.3	86
50 - 59	14	9.3	95.3
60 and above	7	4.7	100
TOTAL	150	100	

Source: Calculation from Questions 6 and 9 of Author's Interview Schedule

The vast majority were in the economically active age group with some experience of negotiating entry into the labour market and earning a living. The majority were aged under 39 with the largest cluster between 17 and 21. The mean age was 36.2 years and the median 35.8 years. Less than 5% had reached the age of retirement but were not all retired.

The sample was almost equally divided between the sexes, 74 being female and 76 male. Only 16 were born in Britain.

In trying to look at identity dynamically - over a period of time - the respondents were asked how they would have defined themselves on arrival in Britain and then how they classified themselves in 1976. Given that some were born in Britain (10.7%) and that some were too young to classify themselves on arrival in Britain, meaningful responses were not forthcoming from all. In addition to this, time and subsequent experience may have influenced their memory. However, their responses to the first question were as follows:-

Table 6.2 Definitions Of Self On Arrival In Britain

Definition	Number	%
In terms of island of origin	106	79.1
West Indian	2	1.5
In terms of occupation	1	0.7
Black	1	0.7
British	0	0.0
Too young/don't know	24 *	17.9
TOTAL	134	99.9

*16 born in Britain

Source: Question 52 of Author's Interview Schedule

A number of important points need to be made here. First, though they were all "from the West Indies" only two people considered themselves West Indian. This label, which was to become very popular after years of residence in Britain and exposure to the various unifying influences in areas of settlement, had little meaning for them on migrating.

Second, though the majority were migrating to Britain to seek work only one person defined himself in terms of occupation.

Third, only one person thought that he would have called himself "black" then. This individual was born in St. Vincent and travelled to Britain at the age of 12. In 1976 aged 28, he was actively involved in a militant "black" organisation and this may have affected his memory. Even so, the general finding supports the argument that before the semantic revolution and other socio-political changes (referred to in Chapter 5) of the 1960's and 1970's, Afro-Caribbean people avoided using the term "black" as a means of identifying themselves because of its pejorative and dangerous connotations. They were familiar with the dominant values of their society and responded by

avoiding the use of assertive terms, particularly in public. It was only after the gaining of confidence in a changed environment and by drawing on new sources of identity that were often associated with political changes abroad that they were able to "revalorise" old cultural items, infuse them with particular meanings and make a frontal attack on received values by defining "black" as a positive concept and adopting it as an identity title for themselves. This finding therefore reinforces the above argument developed in Chapter 5.

Fourth, no one defined himself as British despite the fact that the vast majority of them either travelled to Britain with a British passport or were born here.

Fifth, the vast majority defined themselves in terms of island of origin. As argued in previous Chapters, these migrants were strongly attached to their islands of origin. Their particular island meant more to them than class, race, the collection of Caribbean islands known as the West Indies or the British Commonwealth of Nations, the ultimate political entity to which they belonged. This insular identity was to have important implications for the patterns of early settlement in Britain. These migrants tended to live with and interact with people from their island of origin.

By 1976 their orientations had changed drastically. During the interview, respondents were given TWO chances out of a large number of possibilities to choose titles that defined the best of all.⁽²⁾ Because of this restriction, equal weight was given to their two choices which were

distributed as shown in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3 Definitions Of Self In 1976

Definition	1st Choice		2nd Choice		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%*
Working Class	8	5.3	14	9.3	22	14.7
Middle Class	3	2.0	8	5.3	11	7.3
Citizen	1	0.7	7	4.7	8	5.3
English/British	3	2.0	8	5.3	11	7.3
In terms of Island	34	22.7	4	2.7	38	25.3
West Indian	48	32	26	17.3	74	49.3
Immigrant	4	2.7	12	8.0	16	10.7
Coloured	8	5.3	13	8.7	21	14.0
Black	34	22.7	43	28.7	77	51.4
Of African Descent	7	4.7	15	10	22	14.7
TOTAL	150	100.1	150	100	300	200.0

Source: Questions 53 and 55 of Author's Interview Schedule

(* These percentages refer to those PEOPLE choosing these titles in either the first or second instance)

The first observation is that the term "Negro" (with or without the capital N) which was once acceptable to many Afro-Caribbean people ceased to have currency. Even the most casual relationship with opinion leaders and ordinary people of the "Handsworth population" made it clear that that term had become pejorative and referred to their "virtual social identity" when in fact they were trying to assert their "actual social identity". To them the Negro was associated with the fictitious Sambo character that had more to do with the imagination and values of patronising whites than with the meaningful social constructions of their community. Instead, a variety of terms, not necessarily mutually exclusive, ranging from some slightly less pejorative

than "Negro" to those synonymous with the "militant black" were found to be in popular use. All these terms were applicable to the Afro-Caribbean settlers as a whole.

Second, there was a reluctance on the part of the respondents to define themselves in class terms even when given a second choice.⁽³⁾ Though the society was stratified along the lines of class and most, if not all the respondents, and people like themselves were objectively in the Working Class, only 5.3% identified themselves as such in their first replies. As a second choice another 9.3% classified themselves as Working Class. The others did not consider themselves Middle Class either. In fact only 2% called themselves Middle Class in the first instance and another 5.3% did so as a second choice. The vast majority defined themselves in other ways, thereby demonstrating that the major contradictions and the social issues in Britain were being mediated to Afro-Caribbean people in terms other than class. This finding supports the well-known argument that the British Working Class is fractioned along several lines.

Third, only a small percentage, 0.7% plus 4.7%, conceived of themselves as British citizens and slightly more, 2% plus 5.3%, defined themselves as "English" or "British". As legal immigrants and/or British born subjects, all were qualified to consider themselves as British citizens. Even though many may have opted for citizenship of their country of origin after independence, the majority had achieved the residential qualification for British citizenship. The widespread refusal to conceive of themselves as British citizens was undoubtedly associated with the experience of social rejection by the White British. Several respondents commented on the popular support for the Powellist definition of the British as "white" and of "non-white immigrants" as "alien".

Fourth, more people defined themselves as West Indian than as Jamaican or other Islander. The fact that 32% plus another 17.3% chose to call themselves West Indian and only 22.7% plus 2.7% chose insular titles is a measure of the profound changes in their conceptions since migrating to Britain. As shown earlier, 79.1% came to Britain with one or other distinct insular identity and with little or no conception of being West Indian. However, in the context of metropolitan Britain "West Indian" became a more appropriate title reflecting the social reality of being perceived by the "Generalised Other" as migrating from one Country as an undifferentiated mass, and indeed having a common fate related to skin colour and powerlessness.

Fifth, very few spontaneously defined themselves as "immigrant" even though this was one of the most popular labels used in the mass media to refer to them. Only a total of 10.7% considered this an appropriate definition of themselves. All of those calling themselves "immigrants" expressed a desire to move on to North America or to return to the West Indies "some time".

Sixth, 5.3% and a further 8.7% called themselves "coloured". This title has had an interesting history in Britain. Initially it was preferred by many Afro-Caribbean people because it was one of the most polite terms for them in the English vocabulary. Compared with names like "wog", "coon", "nigger", "jungle-baby", and even "black" before the redefinition of the term by black people themselves, "coloured" was a salutary appellation. Among a section of the sample it retained that association; and also among those white people who did not want to offend. These two categories of people were often linked in complementary colonial role-set relationships. But for the majority of Afro-Caribbean people it referred to a mish-mash of people who had little in common apart from their "non-whiteness". It was therefore rejected by all those who wanted to assert a distinct and meaningful identity.

Seventh, a total of 14.7% chose to emphasise their African ancestry. This figure is significant in light of the lingering assumptions of Samboification dealt with in Chapter 2.

Eighth, and most crucial was the willingness of 22.7% to define themselves as "black" in the first instance and another 28.7% to do so as a second choice. This meant that a total of 51.4%, the majority of the sample, considered "black" as the most appropriate title of the lot to define themselves and people like them. For them "black" was a term charged with meaning and referring to essential elements of their identity. It enhanced their dignity and boosted their pride. When asked why they chose this title, they invariably replied: "Because I am proud to be black". Hence "black" ceased to be a badge of shame and had become a banner of pride.

But "black" continued to be a pejorative term in standard English, while these respondents were using it as a positive concept and nomenclature. This semantic disjuncture was the clearest possible indication of the conflict and tension between "black" people and the society at large. It represented the endemic social conflict, both overt and covert, existing between a subordinate and superordinate group and drew attention to the use of cognitive and evaluative weapons to help reduce the subordinate group to a state of ignorance, self-hatred, fatalism and resigned impotence.

Hence, when Afro-Caribbean people used "black" as an identity title they were turning the value system on its head and asserting a counter-consciousness that referred to their awareness of the historical struggles of their people against the social and cultural oppression perpetrated by rulers who often asserted a white identity in the enjoyment and justification of their position. Asserting a "black" identity was therefore a conscious identification with the resistance - in a variety of forms - that "black" people had put up in several parts of the Diaspora and a commitment to continuing the struggle in Britain.

The use of the term "black" will henceforth be used as a measure of the consciousness of the members of the various sociological categories among the respondents. In addition to this the figure of 51.4% will be taken as the average level of the assertion of a black identity thereby helping to indicate whether or not any one group was more or less black conscious than average. While carrying out a series of cross tabulations it should become clear which identity titles were associated with what sociological variables.

British-born

As mentioned above, 16 respondents were born in Britain, all of whom were aged 17 to 21 in 1976. An important question that follows from this is whether or not this factor was related to the choosing of particular identity titles. The choices of titles by this group were as shown in Table 6.4.⁽⁴⁾

Table 6.4 Identity Titles Chosen By The British-Born Respondents

Title	1st Choice	2nd Choice	Total	Total
	Number	Number	Number	%
Working Class	-	1	1	6.3
Citizen	-	1	1	6.3
English/British	2	4	6	37.5
West Indian	2	1	3	18.8
Coloured	2	-	2	12.5
Black	5	7	12	75.0
Of African Descent	5	2	7	43.8
TOTAL	16	16	32	200.20

Source: Questions 53 and 55 cross-tabulated with question 1 of Author's Interview Schedule

The most popular title chosen by these respondents was "black". Indeed, a higher proportion than average, 75%, defined themselves as black either in the first or second instance. The second most popular choice was "Of African Descent", in 43.8% of the cases. This was closely followed by the 37.5% who considered themselves "English/British". An implication of these findings is that, all things being equal, as a larger proportion of Afro-Caribbean people become British-born the more universal and acceptable will the title black become among them - with all the consequences. More of them may also recognise their African ancestry.

The 17 - 21-Year-Old West Indian Born

In comparison, the identity titles chosen by those of the same age but born outside Britain were as follows. ⁽⁴⁾

Table 6.5 Identity Titles Chosen By The 17 - 21 Year Old West Indian-Born Respondents

Title	1st Choice	2nd Choice	Total	Total
	Number	Number	Number	%
Working Class	1	2	3	11.1
Middle Class	1	1	2	7.4
Citizen	1	3	4	14.8
English/British	1	1	2	7.4
In terms of Island	2	1	3	11.1
West Indian	7	5	12	44.4
Immigrant	0	4	4	14.8
Coloured	2	2	4	14.8
Black	12	5	17	63.0
Of African Descent	0	3	3	11.1
TOTAL	27	27	54	199.9

Source: Questions 53 and 55 cross-tabulated with questions 1, 6 and 9 of Author's Interview Schedule

The most popular title chosen by this group was black and this choice was made in 63% of the cases. This was followed by 44.4% who used "West Indian" as an appropriate title. Only 14.8% defined themselves as citizens and 7.4% called themselves "English/British" even though they spent many of their formative years in Britain. 11.1% mentioned their African ancestry.

It would thus appear that all those aged 17 - 21 were more likely to stress their blackness, the British-born more so than the West Indian born. Moreover, those born in England tended to emphasise their African ancestry, while those born in the West Indies indicated some attachment to that society.

All Those Born Outside Britain

It follows that if a larger than average proportion of the British-born were stressing their blackness then those born outside Britain were less

likely to do so. The origins of this group were as follows, (Table 6.6). These explanations, given by the respondents themselves are of some importance.

Table 6.6 Origins Of The Respondents

Origins	Number	%
Born in the West Indies but came before 12	29	21.6
Born in the West Indies but came aged 12 - 16 years	12	8.9
Came as an adult from Kingston, Jamaica	15	11.2
Came as an adult from elsewhere in Jamaica	68	50.7
Came as an adult from St. Kitts-Nevis	6	4.5
Came as an adult from Barbados	1	0.7
Came as an adult from elsewhere	3	2.2
	*	
	134	99.8

* 16 born in Britain

Source: Question 1 of Author's Interview Schedule

Those born in different islands but migrating before the age of 16 showed a similarity of outlook. The largest percentage of adults came from the non-urban (rural) parts of Jamaica and they stressed their black identity more so than those coming as adults from other Islands of the West Indies. The latter emphasised their West Indian identity. However, this non-Jamaican group was too small for generalisations to be made about such people.

Pre-Migration Contact With Whites

Nearly all those who were born in the West Indies had some contact with white people there. Those white people with whom they had relationships in the West Indies were mainly employers (54.5%), Civil Servants, Religious Leaders and Teachers. Only 4 respondents claimed to have interacted with whites as equals - "as ordinary people" - before migrating. And in general the

opinions held of them were very favourable. A mere six people claimed that the whites they met were hostile, mean or arrogant. This experience did not result in a higher than average proportion asserting a black identity.

Only 10.5% claimed that they had no relationship with white people outside Britain. And that factor had little or no direct bearing on their identity. Though the majority of these considered themselves West Indian in the first or second instance, 50% considered themselves black.

Reasons For Migrating And Plans

When asked why they decided to migrate to Britain the sample responded as shown in Table 6.7. Though the largest proportion said that they personally came because parents or relatives or partners sent for them (43.3%) and only 29% gave purely economic reasons, their answers were different when asked why West Indians in general came.

Table 6.7 Personal Reasons For Migrating To Britain

Reasons Given	Number	%
Parents sent for me	45	33.6
For work and money	22	16.4
For experience	15	11.2
Because it was fashionable/friends came	13	9.7
For a better standard of living	12	8.9
To join a partner	11	8.2
For education	9	6.7
Because of "push" factors back home	5	3.7
To join relatives	2	1.5
	*	
	134	99.9

* 16 born in Britain

Source: Question 4 of Author's Interview Schedule

In comparison to these private reasons given for migrating, 84% of the sample said that West Indians came to Britain either for work, money, a better standard of living or that they were recruited to do certain kinds of work.

The private plans of the respondents closely approximated their understanding of why West Indians migrated. Their plans on arrival in Britain were as shown in Table 6.8.

Table 6.8 Plans On Setting Out For England

Plans	Number	%
To work, save and return sometime	46	34.3
To study and acquire a skill/profession	12	8.9
To work, save and return within five years	11	8.2
To acquire a skill/profession and return	7	5.2
To better myself	6	4.5
To move on to North America	2	1.5
To enjoy life	1	0.7
To get back as soon as possible	1	0.7
Too young to plan	48	35.8
	*	
	134	99.8

* 16 born in Britain

Source: Question 5 of Author's Interview Schedule

The general plan seemed to have been to acquire either money or qualifications and return sometime. In most cases these aspirations had not been fulfilled as quickly as envisaged or not at all. For many, the date of return has been endlessly postponed. Others had given up the dream, several of whom confided: "I am ashamed to return just as poor as I left".

Dates Of Arrival

The dates of arrival in Britain and settlement in Handsworth were as follows:-

Table 6.9 Dates Of Arrival

Date	Arrival In Britain		Arrival In Handsworth	
	Number	%	Number	%
1944	2		0	
1952	1		0	
1953	1		1	
1954	2		2	
1955	18		8	
1956	8		8	
1957	11		9	
1958	4		5	
1959	5		5	
1960	21		14	
1961	17		17	
1962	13		6	
	103	76.9	75	50
1963	3		7	
1964	1		3	
1965	9		9	
1966	6		7	
1967	4		8	
1968	1		3	
1969	5		4	
1970	1		6	
1971			3	
1972			4	
1973			2	
1974	1		5	
1975			6	
N/A	*		8	
	31	23.1	75	50
	134	100.0	150	100

* 16 were born in Britain

Source: Questions 6 and 10 of Author's Interview Schedule

These dates of arrival are quite consistent with those patterns for the national population of West Indians showing a significant increase after

1954 and a decrease after the passing of the Commonwealth Immigration Act in 1962.⁽⁵⁾

When the responses of those migrants who arrived in Britain after 1962 were considered it was found that 58% defined themselves as "black" either in the first or second instance. The second most popular title was "West Indian". This finding taken together with the high incidence of black-conscious respondents among the British-born, clearly indicates that there is a strong association between arriving before 1962 and defining oneself in terms other than "black".

Of some importance is the observation that Handsworth continued to be an area of settlement for West Indians/Afro-Caribbean people after such people ceased to migrate to Britain in large numbers. Two-thirds of the sample came to live in the Handsworth area on arrival while the others moved there from elsewhere in Britain, mainly the West Midlands.

Age On Arrival And The Importance Of Kin

Their ages on arrival in Britain were as shown in Table 6.10.

Table 6.10 Ages On Arrival In Britain

Age	Number	%
Under 12	29	21.6
12 - 19	31	23.1
20 - 29	44	32.8
30 - 39	20	14.9
40 - 49	8	5.9
Don't know	2	1.5
	*	
	134	99.8

* 16 born in Britain

Source: Question 9 of Author's Interview Schedule

This relatively young population with few resources to enable them to enter the housing market decisively relied on family and Island contacts for housing (some of which housing may have been owned by other landlords). However, accommodation was shared with, or provided by, the following people:-

Table 6.11 People With Whom Respondents First Lived

People	Number	%
Parents	59	39.3
Other Relatives	21	14.0
Spouse	16	10.7
Siblings	8	5.3
In-laws	4	2.7
Friends from back home	27	18.0
Strangers	7	4.7
Other	8	5.3
	150	100.0

Source: Question 8 of Author's Interview Schedule

The vast majority (72.0%) first lived with relatives. This finding supports the argument developed in Chapter 3 that Afro-Caribbean migrants had to solve their housing problems in whatever way they could and that kin loyalties played an important part.

Similarly the vast majority said that they settled in Handsworth because relatives (and friends) were living there, while only 8% said they chose to live there because it was close to work. However, when asked why West Indians/Afro-Caribbean people as a whole settled there their replies were different, as shown in Table 6.12.

Table 6.12 Reasons Given For The Settlement Of West Indians In Handsworth

Reasons Given	Number	%
Housing accommodation available there	58	38.7
Because family and friends were there	35	23.3
Customary to live together	25	16.7
Because of the services and facilities there	13	8.7
For security and protection	9	6.0
Don't know	10	6.7
	150	100.0

Source: Question 67 of Author's Interview Schedule

In this case the presence of family and friends meant the same as the availability of accommodation because of the obligation on settled migrants to provide accommodation for relatives (and friends) in need.

The majority of the sample 58%, were married. 17.5% were married before migrating, while 40.3% married in Britain. All except 2 were married to an Afro-Caribbean partner. Most of the sample, 68.6% had children. The average number of children per family was 4. Some of these children were still in the West Indies or had moved on to live in other parts of Britain. Only 42% of the respondents claimed that their nuclear family unit was intact.

Though the majority of the sample had lived in Britain for more than 14 years only 34.7% had returned for a holiday. However, 94% said that they still maintained contact with relatives, friends and events "back home" by means of the telephone, letters and newspapers. Relatives back home and in other parts of Britain featured prominently in the discussions.

The importance of kin to this group meant that several cultural items were transmitted from one generation to another, many of which were re-worked in changed situations.

Education In Britain

A popular subject of discussion in the area was the education of children with an Afro-Caribbean background.⁽⁶⁾ Even though the vast majority of the respondents, 63.3%, had no first hand experience of the educational process in Britain, most of the sample felt qualified to comment on the facilities available in the area. Their evaluations were as follows:-

Table 6.13 Evaluation Of Educational Facilities

	Pre-School Facilities		School Facilities	
	Number	%	Number	%
Poor	68	45.3	64	42.7
Satisfactory	39	26.0	69	46.0
Good	9	6.0	8	5.3
Don't know	34	22.7	9	6.0
	150	100.0	150	100.0

Source: Question 81 of Author's Interview Schedule

Whereas the largest number (45.3%) thought that the pre-school facilities were poor, 46% thought that the school facilities were satisfactory. The number thinking that school facilities were satisfactory was closely followed by 42.7% who thought that they were poor. It is significant that no more than 6% could categorically state that these facilities were good.⁽⁷⁾

And yet when asked about what was having the greatest effect on youngsters in the area very little blame was put on education. Most people - 60.1% - premised their replies by saying that the "youths" were "no good", "not trying hard enough", or "very confused", then went on to attribute blame as shown in Table 6.14.

Table 6.14 Factors Influencing "Youngsters" In The Handsworth Area

Factors	Number	%
Bad company	24	16.
Culture conflict	23	15.3
Boredom/Idleness	21	14.0
Violence	19	12.7
Parents	18	12.0
Prejudice/Discrimination	14	9.3
The Government	8	5.3
Bad education	6	4.
Don't know	17	11.3
	150	99.9

Source: Question 80 of Author's Interview Schedule

In general, people thought that in a context of conflict and uncertainty, peer-groups ("bad company") were becoming powerful and having a "detrimental" effect on youngsters.

In contrast to the opinion of the youngsters, most people (50.7%) thought that the older generations were better brought up and were trying their best. Only 12% thought that they were apathetic or were bad models for their children.

When the youngsters themselves were asked about their education in Britain the largest proportion, 41.8%, remembered making friends as the most important thing in their school career. The next most important things for them were the sports and games and the lessons, in that order.

On the other hand, 27.2% remembered the lessons as being hard or irrelevant, while 20% recalled relationships with teachers as being the most unpleasant aspect of their schooling. Only 21.8% recalled their schooling

without unpleasant memories.

These experiences of heavy involvement with peer groups, irrelevant lessons and poor relationships with teachers must have contributed to a larger than average proportion of Afro-Caribbean people between 17 and 21 asserting their black identity as shown above.

Employment

The fact that the economic structure is the decisive institutional order in the given society and that objectively the search for regular employment was the driving force behind the migration of people from the West Indies, it was to be expected that employment would feature prominently in their lives. Their experiences and attitudes to work were worth charting. In doing so, classifications peculiar to the West Indies and other under-developed countries were used to measure what progress if any, was achieved by migrating. The kinds of work done by the sample before leaving the West Indies were as follows. (8)

Table 6.15 Types Of Work Done In The West Indies

Types	Number	%
"Professional"	6	4.5
Non-Manual/White Collar	10	7.5
Modern Industrial Skill	5	3.7
Traditional Skills (Carpenter etc.)	21	15.7
Farmer/Cultivator	15	11.2
Fisherman/Butcher	3	2.2
Unskilled Factory Worker	8	6.0
Domestic	9	6.7
Unemployed/Housewife	13	9.7
Too young	44	32.8
	*	
	134	100.0

* 16 born in Britain

Source: Question 20 of Author's Interview Schedule

It would thus appear that the migrants who came were mainly those who were in employment in the West Indies and who could afford the passage. Only 9.7% were actually unemployed and a proportion of these were housewives and most likely to have been the wives (or daughters) of small farmers who needed them at home to help cultivate the land and sell the produce.

The 4.5% who claimed to have been professionals were either teachers or nurses. It must be reiterated that in the West Indian context where the truly professional jobs were done by the members of a small elite or by expatriates, certain lower-ranking occupations like teaching and nursing constituted the occupational ceiling for many and therefore carried a high status. This evaluation continued to have currency among Afro-Caribbean people in Britain. In any case this small number (6 in all) reinforces the argument that West Indian migrants came from the middle categories of the international occupational classification. Hence, a large number of the migrants were traditional craftsmen like carpenters, tailors, masons, dress-makers, painters, as well as small farmers and some white-collar workers.

The first kind of work these migrants did on arrival in Britain was mainly routine factory work. When a comparison was made with the kind of work they were doing in 1976 it emerged that they had achieved some upward social mobility since their arrival in Britain, as shown below.⁽⁹⁾

Table 6.16 Kinds Of Work Done

Work Done	On Arrival		In 1976	
	Number	%	Number	%
"Professional" (teacher/nurse)	7	5.2	13	8.7
Skilled Manual	9	6.7	22	14.7
Services	15	11.2	11	7.3
Transport	6	4.5		
Routine Factory	55	41.0	39	26.0
Armed Forces	2	1.5	1	0.7
Further Education	—	—	9	6.0
Unemployed/housewife	1	0.7	45	30.0
Too young	39	29.1	—	—
Ill/retired	—	—	10	6.7
	134	99.9	150	100.0

Source: Questions 21 and 23 of Author's Interview Schedule

The numbers in the "professional" category had almost doubled and whereas those doing routine unskilled factory work had decreased, those doing skilled work had more than doubled. Six per cent, mainly the children of immigrants, were in further education.

It was also found that 6.7% of the sample were either retired or taken out of the labour market by long-term illness. This category of Afro-Caribbean people, particularly the retired, will increase in the future and pose new problems for the community.

The major finding, however, was that 30% of the sample were away from the workplace either because they were housewives (4%) or actually unemployed (26%). Even though this figure may have been high partly due to the research design in that the unemployed were more readily available for interviews, it was a fair reflection of the heavy impact the recession was having on a

marginal section of the working class. The vulnerability of migrant workers was responsible for there being nearly five times the national rate of unemployment among them.⁽¹⁰⁾

This sub-sample was then examined to see if unemployment was influencing their choice of identity titles. The findings are presented in Table 6.17 below.

The first observation is that only a small proportion defined themselves as working class and at a time when working class consciousness and solidarity were essential.

In contrast, 38.5% chose the title "black" in the first instance and a further 25.6% in the second instance. Thus 64.1% (much higher than the average) chose to call themselves black over and above everything else they could have called themselves.

Table 6.17 Identity Titles Chosen By The Unemployed

Title	1st Choice	2nd Choice	Total	%
Working Class	-	2	2	5.1
Middle Class	2	1	3	7.7
Citizen	-	2	2	5.1
English/British	2	3	5	12.8
Jamaican/Other Islander	4	1	5	12.8
West Indian	8	6	14	35.9
Immigrant	-	4	4	10.3
Coloured	4	3	7	18.0
Black	15	10	25	64.1
Off African Descent	4	7	11	28.2
	39	39	78	200.0

Source: Questions 53 and 55 cross-tabulated with Question 23 of Author's Interview Schedule

The next popular choices were "West Indian", followed by "Of African Descent". An inference from this is that unemployment was contributing significantly to the decision to call themselves black.⁽¹¹⁾

An attempt was then made to chart their experience of unemployment. A comparison was made between the respondents' longest spells of unemployment in the West Indies and in Britain. The results were as shown in Table 6.18.

Table 6.18 Longest Spells Of Unemployment

Longest Spell	In West Indies		In Britain	
	Number	%	Number	%
Never	28	20.9	25	16.7
Just enough for having children	2	1.5	43	28.7
Seasonal	43	32.1	—	—
< 1 year	3	2.2	52	34.7
> 1 year	6	4.5	22	14.7
Too young/n.a.	52	38.8	8	5.3
	134	100.0	150	100.1

Source: Question 24 of Author's Interview Schedule

The important observation here is that whereas only 4.5% of the sample had experienced long-term unemployment in the West Indies no less than 14.7% had experienced spells of unemployment lasting for more than one year in Britain.

A widely known characteristic of West Indian workers in Britain is that in most cases both husband and wife were in full-time employment.⁽¹²⁾

When asked whether or not their partners worked the respondents replied in the affirmative in 55.3% of the cases. In only 8.7% of the cases did only one partner work. For the others without partners this question did not apply (36% single).

Where both partners worked and there were children in the household, either the husband or wife looked after them according to shift worked or called upon relatives to help. Only 7 people or 4.7% said that they relied on child-minders and an equal number got places in Nurseries.

No less than 90% of the sample thought that "West Indians" as a

whole did the worst kinds of work available. However, when asked why this was so 59.3% thought that this was all they could get while 21.3% thought that this was all they could do.

And yet when the respondents were asked about their work they seemed relatively satisfied in that only 8% said that they were unhappy with their work. The main reasons given for this contentedness with their work were in terms of the opportunities available for meeting people.

However, when attention was drawn to the employment prospects of the youth of the area, most respondents expressed grave concern. They thought that the employment and recreational facilities for the youth were very poor. Only 3% thought that they were good. Several respondents were able to make a link between high levels of unemployment, poor facilities and the articulation of a black identity and racial awareness.

Housing

By 1976 the Handsworth area had become an area of long-term settlement for Afro-Caribbean people (and other migrants, like the Asians). The nature of that settlement in terms of the type of accommodation used was of some importance to this study. It was found that in the majority of cases the respondents were living in households, the heads of which were buying their houses ⁽¹³⁾ (67.3%). Only 32.7% were living in rented accommodation.

The sources of mortgages for buying these houses were as shown in Table 6.19 below. ⁽¹⁴⁾

Table 6.19 Sources Of Mortgage

Sources	Number	%
Building Societies	46	45.5
Local Authorities	23	22.7
Finance Companies	11	10.9
Don't know	20	19.8
Other	1	1.0
	*	
	101	99.9

* 49 were renting

Source: Question 31 of Author's Interview Schedule

The majority seemed to have got their mortgages from Building Societies and Local Authorities. Furthermore, of the 101 who were owner-occupiers, 88% said that they did not sub-let any part of their house. And of those few who were sub-letting, all but one claimed that their lodgers were friends or relatives. It would thus appear from these findings that Afro-Caribbean householders in the Handsworth area had settled down in family homes and were not using their houses as a source of income from sub-letting. As the pressure for housing continued, the problem was being solved by other means in the area.

Those 49 (or 32.7%) of the sample who were renting were living in ... rooms (18 people), flats (17 people) and houses (14 people). The majority were renting from private landlords (in 21 cases), Housing Associations (17 cases), the Local Authority (6 cases), relatives (4 cases) and friends (1 case).

The majority were glad to get any kind of accommodation. Those expressing unhappiness did so in terms such as: "The place is too small" or "it needs repairing" and/or "the rent is too high".

When all the respondents were asked where they would like to live, 47% said categorically that they were happy living in Handsworth. The others preferred to live elsewhere in Birmingham (19.3%), anywhere they could get decent housing (13%), and in London or other city where conditions were better.

An attempt was then made to investigate whether being a renter had any link with the choice of identity titles.

When the two choices of the renting respondents were considered the following distribution was found:-

Table 6.20 Identity Titles Chosen By Renting Respondents

Title	1st Choice	2nd Choice	Total	%
Working Class	4	9	13	26.5
Middle Class	1	1	2	4.1
Citizen	1	-	1	2.0
English/British	2	3	5	10.2
Jamaican/Other Islander	7	1	8	16.3
West Indian	14	7	21	42.9
Immigrant	-	7	7	14.3
Coloured	2	2	4	8.2
Black	13	14	27	55.1
Of African Ancestry	5	5	10	20.4
	49	49	98	200.0

Source: Questions 53 and 55 cross-tabulated with Question 29 of Author's Interview Schedule

55.1% asserted a black identity while 42.9% called themselves "West Indian". 26.5% mentioned their working class position, while 20.4% stressed their African ancestry. Since the percentage calling themselves black was higher than that for the whole sample it follows that people living in rented accommodation were more willing to select black as an identity tag than people who were buying their own homes.

Of some interest was the finding that 13 out of the 22 in the whole sample who considered themselves Working Class were to be found in this category. A reasonable inference and a cue for further research would be that living in rented accommodation was conducive to the heightening of an awareness of the social contradiction of society along class lines (particularly if the landlords were of the same racial/ethnic group).

Politics

Since the constitutional changes in the West Indies during the 1940's the level of political participation increased dramatically and indeed politics became a means of upward social mobility for many. The close identification with political parties led by charismatic leaders was a well-known phenomenon of West Indian politics. Since most of the respondents came from Jamaica, questions to do with loyalty to parties in that island were most relevant. It was found that the respondents' support for parties was as shown in Table 6.21.

Table 6.21 Political Parties Supported In The West Indies

Parties	Number	%
Jamaica Labour Party	23	32.9
People's National Party	13	18.6
Either	4	5.7
Other	3	4.3
Can't remember	2	2.9
None	25	35.7
Too young to vote/Born in Britain	*	
	70	100.1

* 80 were too young to vote/born in Britain

Source: Question 34 of Author's Interview Schedule

The J.L.P. was the most popular party, followed by the P.N.P. . 35.7% claim to have supported no party at all and a mere 5.7% could be classified as "floating voters".

In comparison, the support for British political parties was distributed as shown in Table 6.22.

Table 6.22 Political Parties Supported In Britain

Parties	Number	%
Labour	91	60.7
Conservative	—	—
Liberal	1	0.7
Any one	12	8.0
Don't know	5	3.3
Inelligible	7	4.7
None (though registered)	13	8.7
Never registered	21	14.0
	150	100.1

Source: Question 35 of Author's Interview Schedule

The first observation is that the majority supported the Labour Party and, all things being equal, voted for that Party.⁽¹⁵⁾ Many respondents commented that they supported the Labour Party because this Party appeared to be "less against immigrants" than the Conservative Party. In addition to this they felt that the Labour Party was the traditional "Champion of the Working Man's Rights". None in the sample supported the Conservative Party.

Second, a larger proportion, 8%, could be considered "floating voters". However, it would appear that they "floated" not between Parties but between supporting the Labour Party and opting out completely.

Third, was the observation that 22.7% of the sample were alienated from standard political processes in Britain.⁽¹⁶⁾ They had either registered and failed to support any Party or never bothered to register for a variety of reasons. This category of people was further investigated to see if there was any link between alienation from the established political system and the choice of identity titles.

When those who were registered but supported no Party were compared with those who never registered the following "facts" were discovered.

Table 6.23 Identity Titles Chosen By Those Who Supported No Parties

Titles	Registered		Unregistered		Sub-Sample Total %	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Working Class	2	15.4	3	14.3	5	14.7
Middle Class	0	0.0	2	9.5	2	5.9
Citizen	1	7.7	2	9.5	3	8.8
English/British	0	0.0	4	19.0	4	11.8
Jamaican/Other Islander	4	30.8	2	9.5	6	17.6
West Indian	6	46.1	4	19.0	10	29.4
Immigrant	1	7.7	4	19.0	5	14.7
Coloured	2	15.4	0	0.0	2	5.9
Black	8	61.5	13	61.9	21	61.8
Of African Descent	2	15.4	8	38.1	10	29.4
Total Replies =	26	200.0	42	199.8	68	200.0
= n =	13		21		34	

Source: Questions 53 and 55 cross-tabulated with Question 35 of Author's Interview Schedule

Of those who were registered but did not support any Party, 61.5% defined themselves as black whereas 61.9% of the unregistered called themselves black. Of the registered non-voters 46.1% called themselves West Indian while only 19% of the unregistered did so. Also only 15.4% of the registered non-voters acknowledged their African ancestry while 38.1% of the unregistered did so.

All in all, the test on those who were alienated from the British political system (registered and unregistered) showed that there was a propensity for them to emphasize their black identity. Whereas those who were registered to vote but failed to support any political party were likely to stress their West Indian identity as well, those who were unregistered stressed their African ancestry.

The involvement or participation of the whole sample in political processes was minimal. The majority, 98%, were neither card-holding members nor attenders of political meetings. Involvement was limited to voting. 44% said that they did not vote in local elections while 34% said that they did not vote in General Elections.

The 34% not voting in General Elections were investigated vis a vis identity titles chosen. Their choices were as shown in Table 6.24.

Table 6.24 Identity Titles Chosen By Those Who Did Not Vote In General Elections

Titles	1st Choice Number	2nd Choice Number	Totals	
			Total	%
Working Class	1	4	5	9.8
Middle Class	-	3	3	5.9
Citizen	1	3	4	7.8
English/British	3	2	5	9.8
Jamaican/Other Islander	6	2	8	15.7
West Indian	16	6	22	43.1
Immigrant	1	6	7	13.7
Coloured	1	4	5	9.8
Black	16	16	32	62.7
Of African Descent	6	5	11	21.6
n = 51	51	51	102	99.9

Source: Questions 53 and 55 cross-tabulated with Question 38 of Author's Interview Schedule

The most popular title was black, chosen in 62.7% of the cases. This was followed by 43.1% who called themselves West Indian and 21.6% who mentioned their African ancestry. Thus there was a stronger than average tendency for those who did not vote in General Elections to articulate a black identity and stress their African origins.

Despite the relatively large numbers who appeared to have been alienated from the political system, the majority of the sample, 83.3%, thought that their people should take part in British politics. The reasons given for this were that it was their right "to express their views", "to influence outcomes" and "to get representatives to look after their interests".

The 19 who thought that black people should not take part in politics were found to be highly conscious of their black identity. It transpired that nearly all - 89.5% - considered themselves as "black" as shown in Table 6.25.

Table 6.25 Identity Titles Chosen By Those Who Thought Their People Should Not Take Part In British Politics

Title	Number	%
Middle Class	1	5.3
Jamaican/Other Islander	4	21.0
West Indian	6	31.6
Immigrant	3	15.8
Coloured	2	10.5
Black	17	89.5
Of African Descent	5	26.3
n = 19	38	200.0

Source: Questions 53 and 55 cross-tabulated with Question 75 of Author's Interview Schedule

Other titles chosen were "West Indian" (31.6%) and "Of African Descent" (26.3%). Stating that Afro-Caribbean people should not take part in British politics seemed to have been a very clear indication of a particular type of black identity.

One important subject that most people were able to comment on was Mr. Enoch Powell and what he stood for. The largest proportion (33.3%)

thought that he was an honest man expressing the views of large numbers of English people while a significant proportion thought that he was a pathetic figure doing anything to win votes. 14% of the respondents just did not like him. Many however thought that, for better or for worse, he had helped to stimulate all immigrants into thinking about who they really were and what place they had in British society. He was thus an important catalyst in the realm of identity cultivation and articulation.

Religious Affiliation

As shown in Chapter 2 religion has acted as a double-edged sword throughout the history of Jamaica. It has served both as a means of social control and a base for solidarity capable of precipitating a rebellion. For a variety of historical reasons most West Indians considered themselves religious and identified with a particular Church, denomination or sect.

In considering their settlement in Britain two important questions needed to be answered. First, would the affiliation to religious bodies continue to be strong and widespread? This question was directly related to the secularization thesis discussed in Chapter 3. The second question was about the role religion would play among Afro-Caribbean people in Britain.

An attempt was made to answer the first question by asking about the religious affiliation of the sample over the period of migration and settlement. The changes in affiliation can be seen in Table 6.26 below. (17)

The first observation is that whereas all but one belonged to some religious group in the West Indies, as many as 36.7% had no religious affiliation in Britain in 1976. If affiliation to a religious group is taken as a measure of religiosity then the figures indicate that secularisation had increased among the sample over the period, as it had in the society in general.

Table 6.26 Religious Affiliation Over Time

Religious Group	Affiliation in the W.I./On Arrival/1976					
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Baptist	32	23.9	23	15.3	13	8.7
Church of England	25	18.7	29	19.3	13	8.7
Pentecostal/Church of God	21	15.7	40	26.7	27	18.0
Methodist	17	12.7	21	14.0	18	12.0
Catholic	6	4.5	6	4.0	5	3.3
Seventh Day Adventist	6	4.5	3	2.0	3	2.0
Ethiopian Orthodox	—	—	0	—	4	2.7
Other	14	10.4	8	5.3	7	4.7
Any/Several	6	4.5	8	5.3	5	3.3
None	1	0.7	5	3.3	55	36.7
Can't remember	6	4.5	7	4.7	—	—
*	—	—	—	—	—	—
	134	100.1	150	99.9	150	100.1

* 16 born in Britain

Source: Questions 39, 41 and 42 of Author's Interview Schedule

The second observation is that most religious groups lost members or failed to recruit new members from this population over the years. The only exception was the Pentecostal Church and the Church of God which experienced an appreciable increase of members. (These two Churches are being treated as one, despite theological differences, because they have much in common as "black-led" Churches). This finding is consistent with the observations of several researchers dealt with earlier.

Why Afro-Caribbean people changed to these Churches has been widely debated. The respondents themselves thought highly of them. No less than 54% of the sample commended them for "preaching the true doctrines", "holding lively meetings", "making people feel at home" and "helping their members". A minority thought that they exploited their members by levying tithes and

ignoring social issues.

Another important change that had taken place among Afro-Caribbean people was the regularity of attending Church. Whereas 86.7% said that they attended Church once or more times a week in the West Indies only 20% claimed that they did so often in Britain. Moreover, it was those who belonged to the Pentecostal/Church of God who attended most regularly, and a greater proportion of them held office in their Church than in any other Church. It would thus appear that these Churches were winning new members in Britain, building up solidarity among them and providing them with satisfying roles of responsibility.

Against a background of secularisation the Pentecostal/Church of God was maintaining a high degree of religiosity among Afro-Caribbean people and was considered by them as an expression of an essential element of their collective identity. When this group of religious adherents was further investigated it was found that the choice of identity titles was indicative. The religious respondents who belonged to the Pentecostal/Church of God chose the following identity titles.

Table 6.27 Identity Titles Chosen By Members Of The Pentecostal Church/Church Of God

Title	1st Choice	2nd Choice	Totals	
	Number	Number	Number	%
Working Class	2	2	4	14.8
Middle Class	0	3	3	11.1
Citizen	-	1	1	3.7
English/British	-	1	1	3.7
Jamaican/Other Islander	7	1	8	29.6
West Indian	11	1	12	44.4
Immigrant	1	3	4	14.8
Coloured	1	4	5	18.5
Black	5	9	14	51.8
Of African Descent	-	2	2	7.4
	27	27	54	199.8

Source: Questions 53 and 55 cross-tabulated with Question 42 of Author's Interview Schedule

The proportion choosing "black" as an identity title was similar to that of the population as a whole. The second most popular title was West Indian, chosen by 44.4%. Indeed, this group was very similar to the whole population in all choices except that of African descent. Only 7.4% chose this title compared with 14.7% of the whole sample.

This group seemed to represent those Afro-Caribbean people who were using a particular type of religion to reinforce their identity. Those others who did not belong to these Churches were undoubtedly getting support from secular sources.

Social Networks And Support Groups

It has been argued in Chapter 1 that an identity needs constant confirmation and support from reference groups. It was therefore necessary to investigate what social networks existed among the sample in Handsworth, what

groups they identified with and what heroes they had.

Since many of them said they migrated to Britain for "family" reasons and the majority first lived with relatives, it was logical to assume that kinship networks and kin groups were important to them and were indeed the source of their primary identity. It was found that all but 13.3% had relatives living nearby. Over 52% said they saw their relatives every day. Moreover, 62% claimed that some member of their family was the most important person in their lives, and no less than 58% said that if they were in "trouble" the first person they would turn to for help would be a relative. This attachment to kin meant that it was relatively difficult for the group to jettison feelings, values and memories - world-views in general - which were inherited. Indeed much of their culture was inherited from older generations, contrary to popular belief.

But the respondents also relied on friends for reinforcing their identity, particularly outside the home. These friends were made around the neighbourhood, at school and college and at work. And because of the nature of settlement of Afro-Caribbean people in Britain, the types of work they did, and the salience of race in their experiences, it was predictable that most of their friends would be from the same group. When asked about their closest friends 69.3% said they were all "West Indian", 20.7% said that theirs were "West Indian" and "English" and 10% said theirs were "West Indian", "English" and "Asian".

It can safely be assumed that those having only West Indians as their closest friends would consider themselves in those terms. It was however, worth investigating how those with mixed friends defined themselves. The identity titles chosen by these two groups were as follows:-

Table 6.28 Identity Titles Chosen By Respondents With Friends From More Than One Racial Group

Title	With ... West Indian And English Friends		West Indian, English And Asian Friends	
	Number	%	Number	%
Working Class	7	22.6	2	13.3
Middle Class	3	9.7	1	6.7
Citizen	1	3.2	3	20.0
English/British	4	12.9	1	6.7
Jamaican/Other Islander	10	32.3	6	40.0
West Indian	14	45.2	7	46.7
Immigrant	4	12.9	1	6.7
Coloured	5	16.1	0	0.0
Black	10	32.3	9	60.0
Of African Descent	4	12.9	0	0.0
Replies	62	200.1	30	200.1
n =	31		15	

Source: Questions 53 and 55 cross-tabulated with Question 51 of Author's Interview Schedule

The identity titles of those having West Indian and English friends were "West Indian" in 45.2% of the cases, followed by "Jamaican" or other islanders by 32.3% and "black" in equal numbers (much lower than average).

Those with close friends of all three races chose "black", in 60% of the cases, followed by "West Indian" in 46.7% of the cases and "Jamaican" or other islanders in 40% of the cases.

An inference from these findings is that people with closest friends English and West Indian would be reluctant to define themselves as black whereas those with their closest friends drawn from the three racial groups would

consider themselves "black" rather than "West Indian".

Despite the high percentage having only West Indians as their closest friends, the majority of the whole sample (94%) said they believed in integration. But by integration they meant "mixing up to a particular point". This did not include intermarriage for only 28.7% said they believed in intermarriage, while 44% said they were definitely against it. 27.3% said it was up to the individual. Only a small number (6%) did not believe in integration at all and among these were that 3.3% of the respondents who said that black people should live separately from white people. All these stressed their black identity.

Regardless of the identity titles chosen, all the respondents believed that conditions were poor in the area. The things they thought necessary to improve the area were as listed in Table 6.29.

Top of the priority list was employment, closely followed by education and housing. These basic necessities were seen by them as essential buttresses to one's self-respect and identity in general.

Table 6.29 Improvements Advocated By Respondents

Improvements	Number	%
More jobs	52	34.7
Better education	37	24.7
Better housing	25	16.7
More black consciousness and unity	10	6.7
Better race relations	9	6.0
More black organisations	2	1.3
Dispersal of immigrants	1	0.7
More black policemen	1	0.7
Don't know	7	4.7
Nothing can be done	6	4.0
	150	100.2

Source: Question 88 of Author's Interview Schedule

Most of the respondents were able to refer to the differential impact social conditions were having on people in the area. Indeed, when they compared people like themselves with others, the results were as shown in Table 6.30.

Table 6.30 Comparison With Other Categories

Comparisons	People Back Home		Asians		English	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Worse off than	75	50	136	90.7	49	32.7
Same as	47	31.3	9	6.0	76	50.7
Better off than	22	14.7	2	1.3	20	13.3
Don't know	6	4.0	3	2.0	5	3.3
	150	100.0	150	100.0	150	100.0

Source: Question 95 of Author's Interview Schedule

The first point to be made is that only 14.7% though that they were better off than people back home while half thought they were worse off, and the

rest that they were in the same position. This is a measure of the disappointment Afro-Caribbean people felt about their experience in Britain. After all, most of them came with ambitious plans for achieving what they thought they could not achieve at home.

Second, only 32.7% thought that they were worse off than the English. Contrary to popular belief, there was little expression of relative material deprivation vis a vis the English, for 50.7% saw them as being in the same position.⁽¹⁸⁾ When the discussion was extended, it transpired that many respondents saw the difference between themselves and their English working class fellow-workers and neighbours in terms of status.

Third, most of them (90.7%) thought that they were worse off than the Asians. When making this comparison several respondents commented that the Asians had their own culture and institutions. In brief, they referred to the Asians having a distinct identity legitimated by tradition and maintained in the contemporary situation. This in turn was understood as motivating them to succeed in Britain. Evidence of this was provided in terms of the many successful Asian shops and other ventures that were meeting their needs, reinforcing their identity and above all, providing work for their people. Many thought that Afro-Caribbean people should copy the Asians.

Many said bitterly that they did their shopping in Asian shops because they had no choice. Consequently, no less than 78% said that what the area needed most of all were "more black/West Indian/African shops". The reasons stated for this were:-

- (a) To prevent an Asian monopoly (20%)
- (b) To see our people succeeding (19.3%)
- (c) To prove that "we" can do business (14%)
- (d) To offer greater variety

This racial consciousness and identification with the African race expressed itself in terms of the four standard racial groups. When asked which they preferred most of all they replied as shown below:-

Table 6.31 Racial Group Preferred Most

Racial Groups	Number	%
Africans	55	36.7
Europeans	37	24.7
Asians	7	4.7
Chinese	5	3.3
All the same to me	46	30.7
	150	100.1

Source: Question 97 of Author's Interview Schedule

The racial group they preferred most were the Africans and least, the Chinese. Nearly one quarter preferred Europeans and only 4.7% preferred the "Asians". However, over 30% said that all were the same to them.

All the respondents believed that people like themselves in the area should organise themselves and try to improve conditions. But when asked what they were doing to improve the situation, 39.3% admitted that they were not doing enough collectively. Many thought that what they were doing on an individual basis was enough. Some said that they were attending evening classes and/or learning a skill (14.7%); others were working hard and saving money (12%); others were bringing up their children the best they could (12%). Only 6% said that they were actively involved in an organisation that was committed to improving conditions.

Even though the majority were not actively engaged in organisations, they were cognizant of organisations in the area and expressed solidarity with

and admiration for particular ones. When asked which organisations were doing most locally, their replies were as shown in Table 6.32 (19)

Table 6.32 Organisations Mentioned As Doing Most Locally

Organisation	Number	%
Harambee	46	30.7
James Hunte's Organisations	32	21.3
"The Churches"	7	4.7
A.C.S.H.O.	6	4.0
F.C.F.	4	2.7
W.E.L.D./A.F.F.O.R./Other Multi-racial Organisation	2	1.3
A.C.A.F.E.S.S.	1	0.7
The Lodges	1	0.7
Oaklands	1	0.7
Don't know	50	33.3
	150	100.1

Source: Question 92 of Author's Interview Schedule

Harambee appeared to have been the most popular organisation in the area. However, the largest proportion (33.3%) said that they did not know which organisation was doing most locally. No one thought that the C.R.C. or Race Relations Board was doing anything of significance in the area.

When the work of organisations on a national basis was considered, 30.7% said that James Hunte's organisation was doing most; 4.7% said the Churches and 3.3% said the C.R.C. and R.R.B. No less than 53.3% could not name an organisation that was doing something worthwhile nationally.

When the emphasis was shifted to which organisation was doing least for people like themselves, 64.7% could not comment. The next largest proportion, 10%, claimed that the police were doing least.

Most of them thought that in the event of "trouble", people like themselves would need "help".⁽²⁰⁾ The organisations they though black people could rely on in times of "need" were as listed in Table 6.33.

Table 6.33 Organisations To Be Relied On In Times Of Need

Organisation	Number	%
Citizen's Advice Bureau	55	36.7
The Unions	25	16.7
The British Government/M.P.'s/The Law	13	8.7
Local West Indian Organisations	10	6.7
The Churches	5	3.3
C.R.C./R.R.B.	4	2.7
Friends	3	2.0
The Police	2	1.3
Don't know	33	22.0
	150	100.1

Source: Question 86 of Author's Interview Schedule

Most of them appeared to have faith in organisations set up to aid the public at large. Of some interest was the fact that 16.7% expected help from the Unions and 18.6% actually belonged to Trades Unions.⁽²¹⁾

An awareness of the limitations of local Afro-Caribbean Organisations in the event of "trouble", meaning public conflagration, should not detract from the influence of these organisations in the realm of identity formation and articulation.⁽²²⁾ Most of the sample expressed some knowledge of these organisations, some understanding of what they stood for and a measure of identification with them as shown in Table 6.32. The identity titles chosen by people thinking highly of particular local organisations were analysed as shown in Table 6.34 below.

Table 6.34 Identity Titles Chosen By Adherents To Particular Local Organisations

Organisation	Harambee		James Hunte's Organisation		The Churches		A.C.S.H.O.		F.C.F.		W.E.L.D. A.F.F.O.R. etc.		A.C.A.F.E.S.S.		The Lodges		Oaklands S & S Club		Don't Know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Working Class	3	6.5	6	18.7	3	43	2	33	2	50					1	100	6	12		
Middle Class	3	6.5	4	12.5					1	25							3	6		
Citizen	3	6.5	1	3.1													4	8		
English/ British	3	6.5	3	9.4							1	50					4	8		
Jamaican/ Other Island	11	23.9	10	31.2					1	25										
West Indian	17	37.0	17	53.1	3	43	3	50	3	75	1	50	1	100	1	100	28	56		
Immigrant	6	13.0	1	3.1													9	18		
Coloured	5	10.9	4	12.5					1	25										
Black	30	65.2	17	53.1	4	57	5	83			1	50			1	100	19	38		
Of African Descent	11	23.9	1	3.1	4	57	2	33									2	4		
	92	n = 46	64	n = 32	14	n = 7	12	n = 6	8	n = 4	4	n = 2	2	n = 1	2	n = 1	100	n = 50	2	n = 1

Source: Questions 53 and 55 cross-tabulated with Question 92 of Author's Interview Schedule

Harambee

It was found that 65.2% of those considering Harambee to be doing most locally chose black as an identity title either as a first or second choice. The next most popular titles were "West Indian" (37%) Insular (23.9%) and "Of African Descent" (23.9%). Harambee could therefore be considered as a significant reference group for those asserting a black identity, and the associated consciousness. Because a smaller proportion than average - 37% compared with 49.3% of the whole sample - called themselves West Indian it can be deduced that Harambee did not appeal to those Afro-Caribbean people stressing their West Indian identity.

This organisation which provided housing accommodation, educational facilities, legal and general advice and sold black literature and cultural artifacts in Handsworth had undoubtedly acted as a stimulant to the articulation of a black identity.

James Hunte's Organisations

James Hunte's "Action Group" and other organisations under his control had received much publicity in the media as bodies campaigning against injustices to Afro-Caribbean and other people. Even so, such organisations were seen as second to Harambee in doing the most locally. The national orientation of this group may have detracted from its local work. However, those expressing admiration for them gave equal emphasis to a "West Indian" and black identity (53.3%). The next popular title was that of island of origin (chosen by 31.2%). Such organisations seemed to appeal to West Indians concerned about securing the Civil Rights of black people.

The Churches

Those people mentioning the Churches as doing most locally were either Rastafarians or militant members of the Pentecostal Church/Church of God who

thought that the "Church" should transcend its assumed religious role and become political. These numbers were small (7 in all) but revealing. All those Rastafarians in this group (3) defined themselves as "Of African Descent" in the first instance and "black" second. The militant "Pentecostals" stressed their working class and West Indian background.

A.C.S.H.O.

Those empathizing with and admiring A.C.S.H.O. (Afro-Caribbean Self-Help Organisation) stressed their black identity most of all. Nearly all (83%) of this group used black as an identity title. A.C.S.H.O. appeared to be the spearhead of a particular ultra-black identity movement in the area. Other titles chosen by this group were "West Indian", "Of African Descent" and "Working Class", in that order.

F.C.F.

The Faith and Confidence Finance Club was a well-known West Indian Working Men's Club. Its orientation was to the Caribbean, and many of its members were making provision for settling there some time. It was a place where West Indian food, drinks and other cultural items were to be had. It was therefore not surprising that those who mentioned it as the most important organisation in Handsworth stressed their West Indian identity (75% of the cases), and their working class connections (50%). None chose "black" as an identity title. F.C.F. was therefore a reference group for traditional working class West Indians.

W.E.L.D., A.F.F.O.R. and Other Multi-Racial Organisations

Those mentioning the Westminster Endeavour for Liaison and Development, All Faiths for One Race, and other multi-racial organisations defined themselves as:

(a) British Islander and

(b) West Indian black.

No real conclusions could be drawn from so few responses.

A.C.A.F.E.S.S.

The single A.C.A.F.E.S.S. (Afro-Caribbean Association for Economic and Social Security) adherent defined himself as a West Indian of African descent. The fact that the leader of this self-help group was African-born, partly accounts for this choice. Not much significance should be attached to such a small sample.

The Lodges

The one person saying that the Lodges were doing most locally defined himself as a black islander. The Lodges appeared to be of little importance for identity formation in the area at that time.

Oaklands Sports And Social Club

Similarly the Oaklands Club got one admirer. He defined himself as a working class West Indian.

Don't Knows

Of some concern was the fact that 50 people did not know which Organisation was doing most locally. It was found that 56% of these called themselves "West Indian" while 28% chose insular titles. A lower than average percentage, 38%, chose "black" as an identity title. Moreover, 22% chose the title "coloured" and 18% called themselves immigrants - much higher proportions than for the whole sample. The one inference that could be made from this was that there was a tendency for those who were ignorant of associations in their area to call themselves "coloured" and to consider themselves immigrants.

Heroes

The relationship between heroes and identity titles was also worth

investigating. When asked to mention their most important hero the following replies were made:-

Table 6.35 Important Heroes Chosen

Heroes	Number	%
Martin Luther King	41	27.3
Marcus Garvey	32	21.3
John F. Kennedy	19	12.7
Harold Wilson	13	8.7
Michael Manley	11	7.3
Winston Churchill	8	5.3
Haile Selassie	6	4.0
Other	6	4.0
Malcolm X	5	3.3
Angela Davis	5	3.3
Don't know	4	2.7
	150	99.9

Source: Question 99 of Author's Interview Schedule

Martin Luther King was undoubtedly the most popular hero, followed by Marcus Garvey and John F. Kennedy. Of some importance was the finding that Harold Wilson was considered by a not insignificant number as being important, more important than the then Jamaican Prime Minister. This indicated that many in the sample recognised the Leader of the British Labour Party as a decisive actor in their lives. The types of identity titles chosen by these leaders' admirers were then considered and found to be as shown in Table 6.36 below.

It was found that of the 41 people who singled out Martin Luther King as the most important person, 63.4% chose "black" as an identity title. This was closely followed by 56.1% who called themselves "West Indian". The third most popular title was "working class" which was chosen by 19.5% of the group.

None here called themselves English/British. There was therefore some association between admiring Martin Luther King and calling oneself "black" and "West Indian".

Thirty-two people selected Marcus Garvey as most important. The most popular identity title among this group was "black", in 50% of the cases. A significant proportion, 46.9%, nearly twice as high as the average, emphasised their Jamaican identity. Those emphasising their African ancestry (21.9%) constituted a proportion much higher than the average. 34.4% called themselves "West Indian". This finding was interesting in that a smaller proportion of the "Garveyites" than average chose "black" as an identity title. It would appear that Marcus Garvey appealed mainly to black Jamaican nationals.

Of the 19 selecting John F. Kennedy as most important, 42.1% called themselves "West Indian" and 36.8% adopted an insular identity. Only 31.6%, much lower than average, called themselves "black". An equal number called themselves "coloured". J. F. Kennedy therefore appeared to appeal to people who were more prepared to call themselves "coloured" than "black".

The people who chose Harold Wilson called themselves "West Indian" (76.9%). Only 30.8% called themselves "black" while 23.1% referred to their working class position. Harold Wilson therefore appealed to working class West Indians.

Those admiring Michael Manley stressed their Jamaican (45.5%) and West Indian (45.5%) identity. Only 36.4% called themselves "black". It would therefore appear that Michael Manley had no strong appeal among the respondents and when he did it was to Jamaican nationals.

Winston Churchill, like Harold Wilson appealed mainly to people calling themselves "West Indian". The proportion calling themselves "black"

Table 6.36 Identity Titles Chosen By Admirers Of Certain Heroes

Heroes	Identity Title		Don't Know		Angela Davis		Malcolm X		Other		Haile Selassie		Winston Churchill		Michael Manley		Harold Wilson		John F. Kennedy		Marcus Garvey		Martin Luther King	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Working Class	8	19.5	1	20.0	1	20.0	1	12.5	3	27.3	3	23.1	3	15.8	2	6.3	3	15.8	3	15.8	2	6.3	8	19.5
Middle Class	4	9.8	1	20.0	1	20.0	1	25.0	1	9.1	1	7.7	1	7.7	1	7.7	1	7.7	1	7.7	1	3.1	4	9.8
Citizen	4	9.8	1	20.0	1	20.0	1	12.5	1	9.1	1	9.1	1	9.1	1	9.1	1	9.1	1	5.3	1	5.3	4	9.8
English/British			1	16.7	1	16.7	1	12.5	2	15.4	2	15.4	2	10.5	2	15.4	2	15.4	2	10.5	3	9.4	3	9.4
Jamaican/Other Islander	6	14.6	2	40.0	2	40.0	5	62.5	5	45.5	5	45.5	5	36.8	7	36.8	7	36.8	7	36.8	15	46.9	6	14.6
West Indian	23	56.1	5	100.0	5	100.0	4	66.7	10	76.9	10	76.9	8	42.1	8	42.1	8	42.1	8	42.1	11	34.4	23	56.1
Immigrant	4	9.8	2	50	2	50	1	12.5	1	16.7	1	16.7	2	10.5	2	10.5	2	10.5	2	10.5	4	12.5	4	9.8
Coloured	3	7.3	1	25	1	25	1	25.0	3	27.3	3	27.3	6	31.6	6	31.6	6	31.6	6	31.6	5	15.6	3	7.3
Black	26	63.4	2	40.0	2	40.0	4	50.0	4	36.4	4	36.4	5	83.3	5	83.3	4	30.8	4	30.8	16	50.0	26	63.4
Of African Descent	4	9.8	1	20.0	1	20.0	1	16.7	1	16.7	1	16.7	5	83.3	5	83.3	1	7.7	3	15.8	7	21.9	4	9.8
	82		10		10		16		22		22		38		38		26		38		64		82	
	n = 41		n = 5		n = 5		n = 8		n = 11		n = 11		n = 19		n = 19		n = 13		n = 19		n = 32		n = 41	

Source: Questions 53 and 55 cross-tabulated with Question 99 of Author's Interview Schedule

was just below average.

Of some importance was the similarity among those elevating Haile Selassie to the most important position. They were obviously Rastafarians and they called themselves "black" and "Of African descent" (83.3% each). There was therefore a strong correlation between admiring Haile Selassie and calling oneself "black" and "Of African descent".

Those considering Malcolm X as most important, called themselves "black" in every case. The other titles they adopted were "Jamaican", "Working Class", "Middle Class" and "Of African descent" in that order. There was therefore a perfect correlation between admiring Malcolm X and stressing one's black identity.

Similarly those selecting Angela Davis as most important called themselves "West Indian" in every case. Other titles applicable were "black", "working class", "citizen", "English/British" in that order. There was therefore a high correlation between admiring Angela Davis and calling oneself "West Indian" (only two of these respondents were women).

Most Favoured Country

Another cue to the identity of the respondents was the country they preferred to live in most of all. Their replies were as shown in Table 6.37.

Table 6.37 Most Favoured Country

Country	Number	%
Jamaica or other island	82	54.7
England	16	10.7
Canada	15	10
U.S.A.	12	8
Africa	7	4.7
Any where	5	3.3
Don't know	5	3.3
Europe	4	2.7
Ethiopia	2	1.3
Other	2	1.3
	150	100.0

Source: Question 100 of Author's Interview Schedule

The majority wanting ideally to return to Jamaica or other West Indian island said so for a variety of reasons. Only 10.7% said that they would ideally want to live in England. When the choice of a particular country was cross-tabulated with the selection of identity titles the results were as shown in Table 6.38 below.

Of those preferring a West Indian Island, 53.7% chose "black" as an identity title. This was just above average. It was, however, a larger proportion than for those choosing to call themselves "West Indian" (52.4%).

Those 16 preferring to live in England called themselves "West Indian" in 56.2% of the cases. This was followed by the 31.2% referring to themselves as "working class" and a similar proportion using insular titles. Only 25% considered themselves "black" and 12.5% "English/British". Thus the people liking England most of all were primarily "West Indian" and conscious of their working class conditions.

Table 6.38 Identity Titles Chosen By Those Preferring To Live In Certain Countries Most Of All

COUNTRY	Jamaica Or Other Island		England		Canada		U.S.A.		Africa		Anywhere		Don't Know		Europe		Ethiopia		Other		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
IDENTITY TITLE	7	8.5	5	31.2	4	26.7					1	20	2	40	2	50			1	50	
Working Class	7	8.5			1	6.7	1	8.3			1	20	1	20							
Middle Class	2	2.4	1	6.3	1	6.7	1	8.3			1	20	1	20	1	25					
Citizen	3	3.7	2	12.5	1	6.7	3	25.0							1	25			1	50	
English/British																					
Jamaican/Other Islander	26	31.7	5	31.2	2	13.3			2	28.7	1	20	1	25	1	25			1	50	
West Indian	43	52.4	9	56.2	8	53.3	6	50.0	1	14.3	2	40	2	40	2	50	1	50			
Immigrant	11	13.4			4	26.7	1	8.3													
Coloured	11	13.4	3	18.7	4	26.7	2	16.7										1	50		
Black	44	53.7	4	25.0	4	26.7	8	66.7	6	85.7	4	80	4	80	1	25	1	50	1	50	
Of African Descent	10	12.2	3	18.7	1	6.7	2	16.7	5	71.4									1	50	
	n = 82		n = 16		n = 15		n = 12		n = 7		n = 5		n = 5		n = 4		n = 2		n = 2		n = 2

Source: Questions 53 and 55 cross-tabulated with Question 100 of Author's Interview Schedule

Fifteen respondents favoured Canada above all other countries. Of these, 53.3% used "West Indian" as an identity title whilst 26.7% said they were "black". An equal proportion used terms like "immigrant" and "coloured" to define themselves. Thus, Canada appealed to West Indian immigrants who were likely to play down their black identity in favour of a term like "coloured".

In contrast 66.7% of those preferring to live in the U.S.A. used "black" as an identity title. This was closely followed by 50% who considered themselves as "West Indian". Thus, wanting to settle in America was correlated with cultivating a black identity.

Of the 7 who said they would ideally like to live in Africa, 85.7% called themselves "black". This was closely followed by 71.4% who defined themselves as being "Of African Descent" (only one person defined himself as "West Indian" and two used insular terms). Thus, the group to whom Africa appealed had jettisoned the West Indian identity in favour of considering themselves as "black" and "Of African Descent".

Similarly, those who wanted to live in Ethiopia stressed their blackness and their African origins.

Those wanting to live in another European country were mainly Working Class West Indians. Only 25% of this group (one person) adopted "black" as an identity title.

Those who thought they could live anywhere or who couldn't name a particular country tended to score highly on the choice of "black" as an identity title. 80% did so in each case. Thus this group was made up essentially of Black West Indians.

Nearly all in the sample, 92.7%, planned to return to the West Indies some time. Those 11 (or 7.3%) who had no intention of returning were investigated. Their choice of identity titles were as shown in Table 6.39.

Table 6.39 Identity Titles Of Those With No Plans Of Returning To The West Indies

Identity Title	Number	%
Working Class	2	18.2
Citizen	1	9.1
English/British	3	27.3
Jamaican/Other Islander	2	18.2
West Indian	7	63.4
Coloured	2	18.2
Black	4	36.4
Of African Descent	1	9.1
	22	199.9
	n = 11	

Source: Questions 53 and 55 cross-tabulated with Question 102 of Author's Interview Schedule

Over sixty-three per cent considered themselves "West Indian". The next popular title was "black" which was chosen by 36.4% of the group, a considerably lower proportion than average. However, a higher proportion than average - 27.3% compared with 7.3% - called themselves "English/British", as expected.

The respondents gave varying answers to the question when they planned to return to the West Indies. Of some interest were those who indicated that they would be returning "any time now". When these were investigated it was found that a higher proportion than average (57.1%) considered themselves "black", as shown in Table 6.40.

Table 6.40 Identity Titles Of Those Planning To Return To The West Indies "Any Time Now"

Identity Title	Number	%
Working Class	7	25.0
Middle Class	3	10.7
English/British	1	3.6
Jamaican/Other Islander	8	28.6
West Indian	10	35.7
Immigrant	4	14.3
Coloured	2	7.1
Black	16	57.1
Of African Descent	5	17.9
	56	200.0
	n = 28	

Source: Questions 53 and 55 cross-tabulated with Question 103 of Author's Interview Schedule

This was followed by 35.7% who called themselves "West Indian" (lower than average) and 28.6% who used insular titles. Thus, this group of people who may be called the true West Indians had acquired a measure of black identity while in Britain.

When the sample as a whole was asked why they wanted to return, the largest proportion said to settle (43.3%). This was closely followed by 25.3% who wanted to go for a holiday. The intention to settle taken together with wanting to return "any time now" clearly demarcated the "true" West Indians. Ten people were in this category.

When all the respondents were asked to consider the future for themselves and others in various places, they replied as follows.

Table 6.41 Opinions Of The Future

Opinions Of The Future	For Self		For People Like Oneself			
	Number	%	In Britain		In The World	
			Number	%	Number	%
Worse	20	13.3	92	61.3	26	17.3
No Change		3.3	1	0.7	8	5.3
Better	95	63.3	40	26.7	99	66.0
Depends	2	1.3	9	6.0	6	4.0
Don't know	28	18.7	8	5.3	11	7.3
	150	99.9	150	100.0	150	99.9

Source: Question 108 of Author's Interview Schedule

The majority thought that things would improve for themselves and for people like themselves throughout the world, but not in Britain. The significant point was that people were quite pessimistic about their future in Britain.

In this Chapter the various sociological referents have been investigated in relation to the clearly positive identity titles chosen by respondents. In most cases, it has been found that there was a correlation between the two. However, there was much over-lap between choosing particular identity titles and having certain characteristics. Even so, enough light has been shed on the subject to enable me to use certain cues to draw profiles of the significant corporate identities existing among Afro-Caribbean people in the Handsworth area. These cues can be listed as:-

- (i) Titles chosen.
- (ii) Place of birth.
- (iii) Age - under or over 21.
- (iv) Whether unemployed or not.

- (v) Whether renting or not.
- (vi) Voting behaviour.
- (vii) Opinion on participation in politics.
- (viii) Religious allegiance.
- (ix) Race of friends.
- (x) Comparison of group with other categories/groups.
- (xi) Racial preference.
- (xii) Adherence to local organisations.
- (xiii) Knowledge of organisations in the area.
- (xiv) Heroes chosen.
- (xv) Country of preference.
- (xvi) Intention to return to the West Indies.
- (xvii) Reasons for returning to the West Indies.
- (xviii) Timing of return to the West Indies.

In the following Chapter these relatively decisive indicators of identity will be used to pull out and define the major types of identity existing among Afro-Caribbean people in the Handsworth area.

REFERENCES

1. How and why this sample was selected is explained in the Appendix.
2. See the Appendix for a discussion of how this list was drawn up.
3. See the Appendix for a copy of the interview schedule.
4. These replies should be compared with those of J. Rex and S. Tomlinson who found the perceptions of ethnic identity of 25 16 - 21 year-old West Indians to be:-

Ethnic Identity	Number
West Indian	4
Jamaican	7
British	1
Black British	10
Black	2
Other	2
Don't Know	1
n = 25	27

(More than one mention permitted)

The use of a complex title like "Black British" enabled Rex and Tomlinson to conclude that a "fair number" of West Indians saw themselves as "British". In fact what these youngsters were stressing was their "blackness" rather than their "Britishness" and so these findings are consistent with my own. See J. Rex and S. Tomlinson, Colonial Immigrants in a British City, Routledge and Paul, London, 1979, p. 228.

5. The approximate figures for West Indian migration to Britain are as follows:-

Year	Number
1951	1,000
1952	2,200
1953	2,300
1954	9,200
1955	24,400
1956	26,400
1957	22,500
1958	16,500
1959	20,400
1960	52,700
1961	61,600
1962	35,000

See Sheila Patterson, Dark Strangers, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1963. (The figures for West Indian migrants continued to decline after 1962 showing a net loss from 1970).

6. From their conversations it appeared as though West Indian adults had great expectations of the British education system to enable their children to achieve the things which they themselves did not have, e.g. a good education and decent jobs.

7. Rex and Tomlinson's figures of 74.4% of West Indian parents being satisfied with their children's education and 17.5% being dissatisfied under-estimate the degree of disappointment expressed among my sample. The fact that few, if any, of Rex and Tomlinson's sample had any first hand experience of the British educational process may account for this high level of satisfaction. See J. Rex and S. Tomlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

8. These occupational classifications were the ones used by the respondents themselves and are similar to those widely accepted in the

West Indies by, for example, G. W. Roberts and D. O. Mills, Study Of External Migration Affecting Jamaica, Institute of Social and Economic Research, University College of the West Indies, Jamaica, 1958, pp. 48 - 52.

9. When an attempt was made to fit these categories, used by the respondents, into a standard scale it was found that the proportion of skilled manual workers was lower, and that of semi-skilled and unskilled workers higher than in D. J. Smith's national sample reproduced in Chapter 3.
10. The official rates of unemployment in 1976 were 5.6% for Great Britain and 5.8% for the West Midlands. Rex and Tomlinson's finding of 19% unemployment among their sample of 395 "heads of households" is understandably lower than mine of 26% because of the greater representation of younger people, including school leavers in my sample, who were experiencing very high rates of unemployment. See J. Rex and S. Tomlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 111.
11. Many of the respondents who were unemployed made a link between unemployment and a growing awareness of the problem of identity. Becoming unemployed seems to have severed some of their moorings to British society and forced them to reconsider their place and role in a society that appeared to deny them the basic right to work.
12. This high rate of economic activity among West Indian women is associated with a relative independence of thought and action which made sex an unimportant identity referent - as will be shown more fully in Chapter 7.
13. The official figures for housing tenure in 1976 for Great Britain were

53% owner-occupied and 47% rented (32% from Local Authorities and 15% from private landlords). See Social Trends, H.M.S.O., 1977. The relatively high rate of owner occupation among my sample was due to factors related to the quality of housing occupied, the designation of Handsworth as an immigrant area, and the lack of alternative housing facilities, as discussed in Chapter 3.

14. This pattern of acquiring mortgages is similar to that found among the West Indians of Rex and Tomlinson's sample. See J. Rex and S. Tomlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 146.
15. The tendency for black workers to vote Labour is widely recognised. See, for example, R. Miles and Phizacklea, "Class, Race, Ethnicity and Political Action", Political Studies, Volume XXV, Number 4, 1977.
16. The political attitudes expressed by this sub-sample, rather than their not voting, indicated that they were alienated from standard political processes. Some argued that it made little or no difference to the position of black people which Party was in power.
17. The major differences between these figures (for 1976) and those of Rex and Tomlinson are:-

A larger proportion (22.3%) affiliated to the Church of England and a smaller proportion (12.4%) claiming to have no religion.

These differences can be accounted for in terms of the preponderance of older, religious-oriented people in their sample. See J. Rex and S. Tomlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

18. With this definition of the situation prevalent among West Indians the use of a concept like "underclass" to refer to them can only be seen as an imposition. These West Indians felt at a disadvantage vis a vis the white middle class and not the white working class people among whom they lived. For a definition of "underclass" see J. Rex and S. Tomlinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 275 - 6.
19. See the Appendix for a discussion of the reliability and validity of these figures.
20. The kind of "trouble" they meant was racial conflagration. Whatever that could be done to restore the peace in a just manner was considered "help".
21. This figure is considerably lower than that of Rex and Tomlinson because of the large number of young, unemployed people in my sample. Moreover, half my sample were women who are normally employed in industries characterised by non-unionisation. See J. Rex and S. Tomlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
22. No less than 16% of the sample said they would rely exclusively on West Indian Organisations for help in "normal" circumstances. Hence, to conduct research in Handsworth using standard political models and to measure the importance of these groups in terms of the number of members and the similarity of their objectives and styles of operation to those of British political groups is to miss the point. For an alternative assessment of these groups see G. J. Weaver, Political Groups and Young Blacks In Handsworth, Discussion Paper Series C, Number 38, Faculty of Commerce and Social Science, University of Birmingham, 1980.

CHAPTER 7

A TYPOLOGY OF CORPORATE IDENTITIES AMONG THE AFRO-CARIBBEAN
PEOPLE OF HANDSWORTH

The sociological referents examined in the previous Chapter indicated the presence of particular groupings in the Handsworth area with distinct identities. The grid shown in Table 7.1 below was consequently drawn up to help classify the respondents as belonging to one or other identity group. As shown in Table 7.1 variables such as age, place of birth, political attitudes etc., can be "clustered" to provide a composite category. None of these referents by itself could have identified particular groupings but, taken together, they demarcate the following identity groupings:-

(i)	The West Indian Returnees	(13.3%)
(ii)	The West Indian Migrants	(27.3%)
(iii)	The Colonial Settlers	(14.0%)
(iv)	The Civil Rights Blacks	(17.3%)
(v)	The Black Nationalists	(18.0%)
(vi)	The African Nationalists	(6.0%)
(vii)	The Rastafarians	(4.0%)

These classificatory terms were not in all cases used by the respondents themselves but, with the possible exception of "Colonial Settlers", would in my view, be acceptable to them. Similarly, the distinctions between them were based on an examination of survey responses and not imposed by means of a mechanistic formula.⁽¹⁾

It was found that several of these groupings, particularly the contiguous ones, had much in common. This was only to be expected of a people as a whole, who shared many objective characteristics. The significant differences were in their beliefs, attitudes and behaviour. Such differences were specifi-

cally related to:-

- (a) Their interpretation of the past.
- (b) Their definition of the contemporary British situation.
- (c) Their stance towards the status quo.
- (d) Their significant reference group.
- (e) Their actual and proposed behaviour.

On closer inspection, it was found that there was enough similarity between the first two groupings to justify commenting on them generally as "West Indians" and the last two as "Pan Africanists". Thus, although the data in Table 1 are presented in terms of the larger typology, subsequent discussion in this Chapter is narrowed down to five categories as follows:-

- (i) The West Indians.
- (ii) The Colonial Settlers.
- (iii) The Civil Rights Blacks.
- (iv) The Black Nationalists.
- (v) The Pan Africanists.

A portrait of these types of Afro-Caribbean people and an account of the social implications of these corporate identities will now be presented in the light of the foregoing discussions in the earlier Chapters of this thesis.

(i) The West Indians

The Afro-Caribbean people of Handsworth did not constitute an undifferentiated, homogeneous, inert mass which could be referred to as immigrants or blacks or West Indians. The "West Indians" proper were one of many identity groupings which had particular "life plans".

Table 7.1

		IDENTITY GROUPINGS							
Empirical Referents	The West Indian Returnees	The West Indian Migrants	The Colonial Settlers	The Civil Rights Blacks	The Black Nationalists	The African Nationalists	The Rastafarians		
Identify Titles Chosen	West Indian, Jamaican etc.	West Indian, Jamaican etc.	Citizen, English, British, Coloured	Black	Black	Black, Of African Descent	Black, Of African Descent		
Age (Median Age)	Over 21 (49)	Over 21 (37)	Over 21 (22)	Over 21 (39)	Over 21 (32)	Under 21 (20)	Under 21 (20)		
Place of Birth	West Indies	West Indies	West Indies	West Indies	West Indies	West Indies, Britain	West Indies, Britain		
Employment Situation	Routine Employment	Varied	Varied	Varied	Varied	Skilled Emp.	Unemployed		
Housing Situation	Purchasing	Purchasing	Renting	Purchasing	Renting, Purchasing	Purchasing, Renting	Renting		
Voting Behaviour	Voted Labour	Voted Labour	Voted Labour	Voted Labour	Voted Labour	Did not vote	Did not vote		
Attitude to British Politics	Nominal Participation	Nominal Participation	Nominal Participation	Full Participation	Ambivalent	No Participation	No Participation		
Religious Affiliation	Mainly Pentecostal	Pentecostal	None	None	Varied or None	None	Ethiopian Orthodox Church		
Race of Closest Friend	All Races	West Indian	West Indian, English	All Races	West Indian	West Indian	West Indian		

Table 7.1 (continued)

IDENTITY GROUPINGS										
	The West Indian Returnees	The West Indian Migrants	The Colonial Settlers	The Civil Rights Blacks	The Black Nationalists	The African Nationalists	The Rastafarians			
Empirical Referents										
Racial Group Preferred	No Preference	No Preference	European	No Preference	African	African	African			
Heroes	Marcus Garvey M. King, M. Manley	M. Garvey, M. King	J.F.Kennedy Harold Wilson, Winston Churchill	Martin L. King J.F.Kennedy	Martin L. King Marcus Garvey	Marcus Garvey Malcolm X	Haile Selassie			
Local Organization Preferred	James Humte's F.C.F.	James Humte's Harambee, F.C.F.	None Multi-Race	James Humte's	Harambee	ACSHO	Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Cults			
Country Preferred	Jamaica, etc.	Jamaica, Canada	England	West Indies, Britain, U.S.A.	Any	Africa	Ethiopia, (Africa)			
Plan to return to W.I.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Probably	No			
Anticipated return to W.I.	Any time now. As soon as possible	One day	Not applicable	One day	One day	One day	Not applicable			

Source: Questions from the Author's Interview Schedule

The West Indians primarily defined themselves as "West Indians" and qualified this by mentioning their blackness or their island of origin. The group was, however, made up of two types of people. One type was represented by those who intended returning to the West Indies "any time now" or "as soon as possible" to settle. These I called the "West Indian Returnees". The others were similar in outlook but had decided to stay much longer in Britain or move on to another country, preferably North America, before finally retiring in the West Indies. These I called the "West Indian Migrants".

(a) The West Indian Returnees

The West Indian Returnees (forming 13.3% of the sample) were aged 33 to 66 in 1976 with a median age of 49. They were predominantly male and were all born in the West Indies. They travelled to Britain as adults mainly from the rural parts of Jamaica and other islands.

Most of them married in Britain and were bringing up (or had brought up) their children in family homes (which they were buying), in the Handsworth area. As both husband and wife were working they shared the domestic chores in a situation in which the nuclear family was the norm even though other relatives were living nearby.

All of them were in employment doing routine factory or domestic work. Their low income barely covered outgoings and little was left for savings. However, one widely used method of accumulating funds was the traditional "partner" or "susu" system whereby a group of trusted friends would "throw" (contribute) a fixed sum each week and let one member in turn "draw" the "hand". A consequence of this practice was that close friends interacted regularly and so reinforced a "West Indian" identity.

The political stance of these West Indians towards British society

was that of nominal involvement without any marked hostility. They tended to vote Labour and respect Labour leaders like Harold Wilson.

Their religious affiliation was varied but a significant proportion of them belonged to the Pentecostal Church. Very few of them held office in their Church. Many of them said that they no longer attended Church in Britain.

The West Indian Returnees in general presented a low profile in British society. They seldom belonged to organisations. The characteristic collectivity among them was the informal groupings of relatives and friends. During holidays and on special occasions they would meet privately in each other's homes to drink, eat West Indian delicacies and to talk about life in the West Indies. When they ventured out they did so as individuals, always trying to avoid situations that could lead to embarrassment or conflict. They dreaded falling foul of the law.

All their actions were geared towards their anticipated return to the West Indies. When forced to compare themselves with their peers back home they sadly concluded that their condition in England was worse. This was one of the reasons why they wanted to return as soon as possible. However, they had no regrets about the time they had spent in England. They invariably thought that they would have been poorer - in many respects - without the experience.

(b) The West Indian Migrants

The West Indian Migrants (forming 27.3% of the sample) shared many characteristics with the West Indian Returnees. In 1976 the group was aged 18 to 67 with a median age of 37. The majority originated from rural Jamaica and came to England as adults. Only one was born in Britain.

Most of them married in Britain and were living in the Handsworth area in small owner-occupied houses. Nearly all of them had relatives living nearby whom they saw regularly.

The members of this group did a wide cross-section of jobs ranging from teaching and nursing, through skilled manual employment to routine factory and domestic work. Only a small proportion of them were unemployed in 1976.

Their involvement in British politics was limited to voting, and the majority of them voted Labour. There was no real hostility in this group to the established political order.

Even though these West Indians initially belonged to a variety of religious denominations, they had, over the years of residence in Britain, shifted their allegiance to the Pentecostal Church. Indeed, the Pentecostal Church came to be the characteristic organisation among the West Indian Migrants and the most effective means of expressing a West Indian identity. They, more than the West Indian Returnees, tended to invest a considerable amount of money and energy into the establishment of this institution which was available for use by all West Indians and their descendents.

The results of their efforts could be seen in the fact that during the early 1970's Handsworth was well served by the Pentecostal Churches and was the headquarters for the New Testament Church of God, the First United Church of Christ Apostolic, and the Church of God of Prophecy.⁽²⁾

Despite the doctrinal differences of these "Trinitarian" and "Christ Only" Churches there was considerable similarity in their function of giving expression to a West Indian identity and providing the social support

for that identity.

On any Sunday, groups of well-dressed West Indians, both adults and children could be seen making their way to Church by all means of transport including mini-buses owned by the Churches. In any of the Churches they attended the congregation would be all-black apart from the occasional white person who invariably received a warm welcome as the first of an anticipated flow of white converts.

The services were structured so as to get maximum participation by the worshippers. The pastor delegated responsibility to the deacons, the elders the "mothers", the "sisters" and the "brothers". Different individuals started the service with a song, read the Bible, supervised the giving of testimonies, conducted the choir, led the prayer, exhorted the congregation to good works, collected the tithes and other monies, made the announcements, etc.

The well-known liveliness of these services was enhanced by the free expression of emotions. The regular out-pouring of grief and happiness - nay ecstasy - indicated that the Church was a "back-stage" outlet for frustration and anxiety.

The members of these Churches were subject to strict rules that prohibited smoking, drinking alcohol, visiting the cinema, attending dances and parties, straightening the hair, fornicating, gambling, swearing and many other practices that seemed to outsiders to be a normal part of life in the poorer districts of major cities. To adhere to these rules was to set oneself apart, to see the rest of society as evil and in need of salvation.

One dilemma faced by such Churches was that they were training more people for full leadership than there were opportunities to use this skill. Concomitant with this problem was the tendency for relations to become

impersonal and the sense of belonging to diminish as the Church grew beyond an optimum size. A logical consequence was fission. Ambitious religious entrepreneurs, keen to have their own flock and a more "red-hot" Church, often broke away and kept services in their own homes or school halls. They rationalised their actions in terms of theological deviations and "this - worldliness" in the parent Church. This process ensured that the Pentecostal Church would continue to grow and proliferate the streets of Handsworth.⁽³⁾

At the same time the Pentecostal Church was growing, mainly among the very old and the very young, an increasing number of Afro-Caribbean people were admitting that they belonged to no Church. They therefore looked to secular organisations to serve the same function which the Church was doing for the religious. Initially, West Indians outside the Church looked to the weekend "Blues" for entertainment outside the home, and for the perpetuation of a well-established Caribbean custom of letting-off steam on a Saturday night. In the context of metropolitan Britain the Blues also served as an outlet for commercial talents - with little or no overheads. Originally it was the only means of meeting the demand for West Indian music and dance, and the need to come together in a situation governed by the West Indians' own rules. Increasing numbers of entrepreneurs set up or hired sound systems, arranged things in their own or empty houses and spread the word around. People came from miles around to enjoy themselves by buying drinks (illegally), eating West Indian food, listening to the latest West Indian records and "dancing the night away". It was in such conditions that the sounds of "Ska", "Blue Beat", "Rock Steady" and "Reggae" were first heard.

West Indian Blues in Handsworth have decreased in direct proportion to the establishment of legal West Indian-run places of entertainment in the area. West Indians have over the years become landlords of several Public Houses along the Soho Road and its arteries. Places like the "Beehive", the "Ivy House",

the "Frighted Horse", and the "Barrel" provide entertainment for West Indians. So do white-run Public Houses with a large West Indian clientele - like the "White Swan" and the "Crompton Arms".

Several West Indian Clubs have also been established - like the "Rio Grande", the "Monte Carlo" and the "Santa Rosa". But the Club that most clearly expressed a "West Indian Migrant" identity was the "Faith and Confidence Finance Club".

This co-operatively owned Working Men's Club was established by a group of people who had lived through the worst years of personal racial discrimination when it was difficult for black people to gain admission to public places of entertainment. It also emerged out of a felt need for West Indians to be thrifty and spend their money in ways that would be beneficial to the group.

When the Club was officially opened in 1972 it reserved the right to refuse entry to people who were considered "unfit", "unruly", or "likely to cause trouble". Rastafarians wearing "tams" have reputedly been turned away. Those belonging to the Club and/or using the facilities tended to be black adults familiar with West Indian culture. This culture expressed in terms of music, drinks, food, dress, games, language, legends, hopes and aspirations flourished in the Club.

The other West Indian Migrants who neither belonged to this Club or the Pentecostal Churches thought highly of James Hunte's Organisations and Harambee. But they were in the minority.

The heroes of the group as a whole were Martin Luther King, John F. Kennedy and Marcus Garvey.

Ideally they wanted to settle back in the West Indies but not immediately. Another popular country for them was Canada.

General Comments

The West Indian Migrants together with the West Indian Returnees (forming 40.6% of the sample) subscribed to and cultivated a West Indian identity that served as a reference point for all other identities in the area. This identity was not a private fabrication in the minds of isolated individuals but was noticeably expressed in terms of shared experiences, widely discussed interpretations of history, a particular mode of adjustment to British Society and rational plans for the future. It had its own symbols and life-styles. Like the social identity discussed in Chapter 1, it was kept alive by intensive social interaction and constituted the central feature of a socially constructed reality which needed constant reinforcement. The differences between this reality and that of the "Generalised Other" were minimised by avoiding those situations that threatened it. The result of this was the tenuous involvement of West Indians in the established institutions of British society. West Indians therefore made few demands of British society, chose to withdraw into their own families and other small groupings and made plans to return to their Islands of origin sometime (sooner or later).

The West Indians came to terms with their tortured history by accepting the Caribbean bourgeois interpretation of it as a creolising, harmonising experience. They were not ignorant of their African and slave past but thought it best to suppress, if not repress, such knowledge for fear of its bitter consequences and losing sight of the "benefits" of the black experience in the Diaspora. One respondent expressed this attitude clearly when asked during the interview about his African origins. He exclaimed:-

Don't mention Africa to me. Whenever I think of Africa
I think of slavery and foolishness. Don't mention

slavery to me either; it makes me angry. I want to go out and kill somebody when I hear about what they did to slaves. I am a West Indian born and bred. I am a true Jamaican national. It is there that I was born and where I want to lay down my bones. All I want is to make it back and enjoy myself.

Such people saw their stay in Britain as a temporary sojourn to accumulate enough money to enable them to live comfortably back in the West Indies. They were far from the Sambo or Quashie some literature would lead one to expect. They were purposeful and determined in their behaviour. They saw themselves as intelligent and masterly survivors, making the most of a trying situation.

They were cognizant of the forces that took them from their island homes and deposited them in the twilight zones of the metropolis. They admitted that they were taken in by the promises of a good life in Britain and expressed disappointment with the outcome. They commented on the fact that it had taken them so long to get back because they were poor.

They knew of the stereotypes of black people that were disseminated in the mass media. They lamented that some West Indians, like the "muggers" and others with criminal tendencies, reinforced these images of black people and "made it bad for all". They were therefore very circumspect in their dealings with white people, always trying to demonstrate that all black people were not the same.

Their most important reference groups were comprised of compatriots who kept up the traditions in Britain and those who were succeeding at home.

Their knowledge and involvement with issues back home were extensive. They kept in touch by means of personal contact, telephone conversations, letters and newspapers like the "Gleaner", the "Advocate" and the "Nation". For them, life in Britain enhanced an appreciation of things back home which they had once taken for granted.

For those not returning in the near future there was great pressure to build around them in Britain a cocoon to act as a buffer against the hostile lances of a society which appeared reluctant to accept black people as an integral part of the British nation.

(ii) The Colonial Settlers

"The Colonial Settlers" were those Afro-Caribbean people who admired the achievements of the British Empire and were glad to be living in Britain. They believed that they and/or their parents had migrated from the West Indies to escape the terrible conditions there and destined to settle permanently regardless of their exotic dreams of return.

The titles chosen by this group were "West Indian", "Coloured", "English" and "British". If "West Indian" here is taken as a residual category then "Coloured" was the most popular title. They hated calling themselves "black" because they associated unpleasant things with that term. This was a consequence of the uncritical internalisation of the dominant values of the society.

In 1976 they were aged 17 to 63 with a median age of 22. Most were born in the West Indies and came either as children or adults to live in Britain. A small proportion were born in Britain.

Two-thirds of the group were female and most of these were unmarried.

Some were living as unmarried mothers with 2 or 3 children in rented accommodation. The majority of those in this state were unemployed and totally dependent on the State. The others did a variety of jobs, mainly in the service industries.

As was to be expected they preferred living in Britain over and above anywhere else. They thought highly of Winston Churchill and Harold Wilson. Several of them had no plans of ever returning to the West Indies.

The majority said they usually voted in General and Local Elections but some never bothered to register to vote. They were generally content to let others make decisions for them.

Their knowledge of local organisations was scanty and their attachment low. They thought that it wasn't worth it to organise and protest because there was little that people in Handsworth could do about the situation.

They thought race should be ignored because all people were the same. And yet they said that they preferred white people and counted many of them among their best friends.

These respondents were adamant that they were in the same position as English people. They were able to describe the conditions in which their English Working Class neighbours lived and even concluded that some white people were living in worse conditions than coloured people.

They were generally optimistic about the future of Britain. They thought that some solution would soon be found for the economic problems that were plaguing the country. Whatever the future held for Britain would also apply to them.

General Comments

There was little or no tension between those with a Colonial Settler identity and the society at large. They had adopted the values and attitudes of the dominant groups and the deferential sections of the British Working Class. More than any other group in the sample they highlighted the ability of the Generalised Other to penetrate the minds of members of society and force them to try to rationalise and reconcile blatant contradictions. Here was a group of black people refusing to consider themselves black and adopting the identity title "coloured" which was euphemistically used by the Generalised Other.

Their own knowledge of the history of the West Indies was biased and scanty. The perspective used in standard history books was unquestioningly accepted and hence the black experience in the Caribbean was seen as a progression from barbarism to discipline, to civilisation, and ultimately migration to a metropolis considered as the source from which all things venerated had originated over the centuries. They saw history as revealing itself in terms of the incorporation and assimilation of people from the periphery to the core of the Empire.

When confronted with notions of the low social placement of black people in Britain they questioned the assumption and tried to explain the poverty of individuals in terms of low ability and the shortness of their period of residence in Britain. They were adamant that poverty was no respecter of colour.

The accounts of the mass media were invariably believed by the Colonial Settlers. They were ready to admit that there were several black people who had a chip on their shoulder and were in fact letting the side down. They thought that the publication of anti-social behaviour carried out by black

people would deter potentially rebellious youngsters from behaving in a disreputable manner. They thought that there was no legitimate justification for the way how some "deviants" in the area were behaving.

The Colonial Settlers had no need to look outside Britain for reference groups and aids to expressing their identity. Their reference groups were drawn from among the British Working Class and on comparing themselves with them they felt little or no deprivation. They also thought that life for coloured people here was better than anywhere else. They regularly commented on the trouble in various ex-colonies caused by what they called "incompetence" since independence. In particular they mentioned the poverty and insecurity in Jamaica during the 1970's and refused to associate themselves with that state.

Their overall objective in Britain was assimilation. It was significant that the only members of the sample married to white people were in this group. This form of integration was often advocated as a fool-proof means whereby coloured people could gain full-membership of British society. They therefore expressed a Colonial Settler identity that appeared to be a temporary phenomenon characterised by the increasing erosion of its residual elements until it became indistinguishable from that of a particular section of the British Working Class.

(iii) The Civil Rights Blacks

The Civil Rights Blacks were militant members of the Afro-Caribbean population who were reluctant to suffer in silence. Their strategy, based on a belief in justice, was to articulate the suffering of their people and to hope that the Government would do something to alleviate it.

Most of these respondents called themselves black but qualified this in terms of their West Indian and working class origins.

In 1976 the Civil Rights Blacks were aged 18 to 60, with a median age of 39. The majority came as children or adults from the rural parts of Jamaica. Only two were born in Britain.

About two-thirds were female and married with children. As many of them married at home as in England. All were married to Afro-Caribbean people. Most of them had relatives living nearby whom they saw regularly. The majority were living in owner-occupied houses in the area.

Most of them were in employment doing a wide range of jobs. There was no particular clustering in any one type of work.

Their political behaviour was similar to that of most people in the sample in that they voted Labour in Local and National Elections. They were, however, anxious to see black people becoming more active in British Politics and having their own representatives in the Local Council and even in Parliament.

The group showed no marked allegiance to any one Church. Indeed the largest proportion belonged to no Church at all. The others attended services occasionally at any Church.

The hero of the group was Martin Luther King. The others mentioned were J. F. Kennedy and Marcus Garvey.

At the local level, the overwhelming majority thought that James Hunte and his various organisations were doing most for black people. These organisations were constantly referred to as making a stand for the rights of black people in Britain and so deserve some consideration.

James Hunte's involvement with the people of Handsworth started during

the late 1960's when he was a prominent member of the "West Indian Federation Association" (W.I.F.A.) in Winson Green. This association was founded in the 1950's as the "Afro-West Indian Association" and was led by West Indian professionals like Drs. Pilgrim, Pilisoe and Thompson and teachers like Nat Edwards, Keith Webster, and Ken Allen. The principal aim of the Association was to foster better relations between West Indians and the "host" society. Activities were restricted to holding dances, discussing popular subjects and running a youth club. These events were attended by people of all races.

Then in 1961 the Association changed its name to W.I.F.A. as a result of the political changes in the West Indies and the merging of attitudes among the different islanders. The next year the Association acquired a building in Winson Green to be used as a Community Centre. This building was formally opened to the public by the Lord Mayor of Birmingham. Leadership remained in the hands of the traditional West Indian elite and W.I.F.A. continued to be a symbol of a West Indian identity committed to the multi-racial ideal characterised by tolerance and patience.

Then from 1963, as a result of the politicisation of race and the growth of racist nationalism in Britain, the function of W.I.F.A. changed drastically. It became the forum for expressing the bitterness of black people and a base for black solidarity in defence against a hostile-appearing society. The week-end dances became ritualistic and educational as grass-roots leaders and vocal disk-jockeys gave vent to their feelings. Speeches were spiced with rhetoric containing militant racial overtones. The initiative was snatched from the moderate traditional leaders and new militant leaders who worked on the buses, the building sites and the factories with the black masses came to the forefront. They copied many of the strategies of the Civil Rights Leaders in the U.S.A. James Hunte became the Chairman in 1971 and remained in this position until 1976. From this base, he organised black people to

protest against, "police harassment", unlawful eviction, unfair dismissal from work and many other forms of reputed victimisation.

But his activities at W.I.F.A. were overtaken by his involvement in the national protest against Pyramid Selling Companies like "Holiday Magic" and "World-Wide Products" and against fringe banks like "Julian Hodge" which financed these undertakings.

By 1974 James Hunte had collected a dossier on all those people, among whom were many West Indians, who had suffered financial loss as a result of their speculation with Pyramid Selling Companies.

Initially these Companies appealed to black people because they sold cosmetics and other products specifically suited to black complexions. They also offered black people the rare opportunity of selling something that was in great demand and making money on the side. The high-powered salesmanship drives, the promise of wealth and responsibility - real upward social mobility - persuaded many ambitious black people to part with their savings or to take out second mortgages, at times without even telling their partners. Finance was often quickly arranged after promotion meetings.

But the market was soon saturated and then shrank rapidly as a result of the "Black is Beautiful" campaign which spread to Britain from the U.S.A. and which, among other things, encouraged blacks not to use hair straighteners, skin lighteners and other goods previously sought after by black people to make them look less black. The salesmen just couldn't sell their goods; but they still had to make the high repayments on their loans. The Finance Companies, some of which had high ranking politicians, like James Callaghan, on their Boards of Directors, began to foreclose on debts. Many people were ruined, some even having their homes taken off them. But they were

too ashamed to admit and publicise that they were taken in by what then appeared to be a con trick.

James Hunte took up the challenge. He systematically broke down the fear, shame and isolation and whipped the victims into an organised group. First he formed the "Action Group Against Pyramid Selling" and then the more comprehensive and less issue-oriented "Mutual Protection Association". More important, he persuaded the local "Evening Mail" and the national "West Indian World" to take up and publicise the cases of suffering. In particular the "West Indian World" became the mouth-piece of the Civil Rights Blacks and James Hunte became a national figure symbolising hope for over 20,000 people.

Hunte's strategy appeared to have been to try to "hold Julian Hodge and others to ransom", and the victims in suspense while he established himself as the undisputed leader of Afro-Caribbean people in Britain. He would contact the Banks by telephone about particular cases of hardship, threaten them with exposure in the mass media and exact concessions from them. These concessions were usually in the form of writing off or freezing debts. Then he would call a mass meeting of members of the Association and read out the names of those lucky ones who had recently got their debts written off. He would also expose those members who had left the Association once they got their specific problems solved.

A high-water mark for the Civil Rights Blacks was reached on 9th May, 1975 when the members of Hunte's Association marched through the centre of Birmingham. It was a publicity stunt, partly to thank the "Evening Mail" for taking up the Pyramid Selling story and partly to announce the presence of deprived black people in Birmingham. Over one thousand people marched through the City Centre during the rush-hour, singing to the accompaniment of steel bands, the famous West Indian song with the lines:-

The Lion of Judah
Shall break every chain,
And lead us to victory
Again and again.

Then the demonstration moved on to the W.I.F.A. building in Winson Green. There James Hunte played out his ascribed role of "charismatic" leader.⁽⁴⁾ Free food and drinks were served by admirers of the "champion". His most trusted lieutenants whipped the audience into a frenzied expectancy - and then the leader appeared. Quoting liberally and aptly from the Bible he pleaded for unity and courage. He then narrated stories of suffering involving suicides, divorces, separations, fights and harsh words between couples when they discovered that partners had lost money. He read out the names of the latest lucky ones who did not have to make any more repayments. He then begged for support to pursue the other objectives of gaining recognition for black people in Britain. He received a long ovation at the end of his speech. All those present then departed to their various parts of the country. As shown in Chapter 4, these events were widely publicised in the mass media.

It was for these reasons that the Civil Rights Blacks singled out James Hunte's Organisations as doing most for black people in 1976. The group as a whole thought that black people were doing worse than people back home and certainly much worse off than the Asians among whom they lived. But they felt that they were in the same position as certain sections of the white Working Class.

Ideally most of the Civil Rights Blacks would have liked to live in the West Indies. But they were fairly pragmatic about the persistence of the poor conditions there that persuaded them or their parents to migrate. They thought that there were still more opportunities in developed countries than

in under-developed ones. It was for this reason that a significant number said that they would like to live in the U.S.A.

General Comments

The Civil Rights Blacks were therefore committed to protesting and campaigning for better conditions for black people wherever they lived. Their activities were not aimed at changing the structure of society but directed at the blatant injustices of the established order. They were convinced that their demands could be met within the existing arrangement and had faith in the good nature of the decision-makers to grant concessions once they knew the facts of the situation facing black people. They also thought that they could be integrated into the society without necessarily forfeiting their black identity.

The Civil Rights Blacks saw their identity as directly related to their material conditions and the need to make society better for the disadvantaged. An improvement in their standard of living would enhance rather than dissolve their role. A permanently stratified society would always need champions of the poor who had the courage to appeal to the conscience of members of the dominant strata and to take up a strident stance against injustice.

An essential element of their identity was their "blackness". Their understanding of "blackness" was in terms of a constant struggle using whatever legitimate means were available. For them this struggle started during slavery and persisted over Centuries resulting in cumulative progress. This spirit, they thought, was a valuable contribution they were making to British society.

Migration to Britain was considered by the Civil Rights Blacks as a new challenge and equated with the opening up of new opportunities. The

obvious failure to translate aspirations into outcomes was explained in terms of fear and complacency on the part of the early migrants and ignorance and fear on the part of the British. The solution to the problem was the removal of blockages to communication by means of peaceful protest. Their reference group and model of successful campaigners were the American Civil Rights Blacks.

Their involvement with the mass media was designed to destroy the stereotypes of "black" people held by the Generalised Other. They wanted to advertise that "black" people could be law-abiding, purposeful and responsible citizens who wanted to become an integral part of society. In this way they hoped to teach the public the true nature and intentions of black people and force white people to question their taken-for-granted assumptions. Reciprocally the mass media were interested in their stories and their definitions of the situation because they posed no real threat to the status quo. The Civil Rights Blacks became the terminal point up to which the mass media were prepared to go to alter their image in a favourable direction towards Afro-Caribbean people. Other black groups remained "beyond the pale".

(iv) The Black Nationalists

The Black Nationalists differed from the Civil Rights Blacks in that they believed that the time for protesting was over. They thought that history had shown that black people could not make real progress in white-controlled societies without seizing power and exerting a measure of control over the institutions that regulated their lives. Their objective was therefore to gain control over those structures that operated in the districts where black people lived. They envisaged that a re-education of black people was also necessary and that confrontation with local white authorities was inevitable. Their justifications for this were given in terms of the thesis that privileged groups never concede power without a struggle. They thought that,

racially and culturally, black people constituted a nation in Britain.

All of the Black Nationalists called themselves "black". Other identity titles considered were "West Indian", "Jamaican", etc., "Of African Descent", and "Working Class" in that order.

The numbers of people in this group were 27 representing 18% of the sample. In 1976 they were aged 17 to 61 with a median age of 32.

All except two were born in the West Indies. The majority came from rural Jamaica. Over half migrated to Britain as adults; about one quarter came as children under twelve.

Just under half were female and about half of these were married with children. The majority married in Britain. A small proportion were unmarried mothers.

Nearly half of the Black Nationalists had some form of compulsory education in Britain. On leaving school, the majority went into skilled or white collar work with only a few going into routine factory work.

In 1976 one third of the group were unemployed. The others did a variety of jobs.

Their housing situation was similar to that of the whole sample. About two-thirds were living in owner-occupied houses while the others rented mainly from Housing Associations.

Their voting behaviour was unspectacular in that the majority ritualistically voted Labour at election time. However, a significant propor-

tion thought that black people should not participate in British Political processes.

Nearly half said that they did not belong to any Church. The others attended a wide range of Churches on special occasions. There was a small clustering of Pentecostalists among them. This latter factor indicated that the Black Nationalists had something in common with the "West Indians".

The heroes admired among them were Martin Luther King and Marcus Garvey. Other heroes mentioned were Malcolm X and Michael Manley.

The local figures and organisations admired by them were related to "Harambee". Indeed two-thirds mentioned "Harambee" as doing most for black people in the area and so this organisation deserves treatment as the best example of a Black Nationalist expression.

The name "Harambee" meaning "let us work together" was taken from the Swahili language and used as a symbol for black people addressing themselves to their social situation in Britain. The prime movers of this organisation first called themselves the "Black Community Workers" in 1972 but after exposure to the thoughts of Marcus Garvey, Frantz Fanon, Jomo Kenyatta, Julius Nyerere, and the literature coming out of the United States in the early 1970's decided to call their organisation "Harambee" in 1973.

From its inception, Harambee was a democratically run organisation made up of people in the black community who were concerned about the problems facing black youngsters in the area. Many of its prominent members were black "professionals" like social workers, teachers and lawyers who had to deal with the problems of black people every day. They were also acutely aware of the potential of black people.

Over the years Harambee displayed two important traits:-

- (a) A tendency to expand into one area of social life after another.
- (b) An uncompromising stand on certain issues which led to political skirmishes and confrontations with the upholders of the status quo.

These developments were inevitable since Harambee was opposed to the systematic creation of an internal black colony to supply capital with replacement workers and to enable the economy to move smoothly from boom to slump and back again without having to import workers.

The major aim of Harambee came to be:-

... To establish a viable black community and to defend it from racist attack and exploitation.

This aim and the ideology of the organisation were publicly announced to the nation in a B.B.C. "Open Door" Broadcast by Harambee representatives in 1977.

To achieve its objectives the organisation argued that it was necessary to develop and plough back the resources of the community to improve the quality of life of black people in Britain.

During the early 1970's the most urgent problem facing black people and indicating the break-up of the community was the growing numbers of black youngsters who had attended local schools, failed to realise their potential and were almost totally alienated from their parents. Many of them were getting into trouble associated with "hustling"⁽⁵⁾ for a living and being committed to

penal institutions simply because there were no supporting facilities available for them to be placed on probation. Acting on this information about youngsters at risk it was decided to do something constructive about the situation.

The outcome was the establishment of the Harambee Housing Association in 1973 with the following objectives:-

- (a) Setting up a short-stay hostel to accommodate the homeless youngsters (maximum period of residence, four weeks).
- (b) Setting up intermediary facilities offering a longer period of residence.
- (c) Acquiring all sorts of property to let as permanent accommodation.

By May, 1973 a large 15-place hostel called "Harambee House" was opened by the Association. Initially it was supported by the Birmingham Social Services Department because it suggested that it could reduce the problem of placing black youngsters at risk by creating an environment that was conducive to their development (if not rehabilitation).

In due course, Harambee House became a Community Centre responding (imaginatively) to the expressed needs of the community. Within the first year of its operation it was forced by the demand of its clients to deviate from the previous understanding with the Social Services Department. In particular it had to:-

- (a) Admit females as well as males.
- (b) Extend the period of residence from four weeks.
- (c) Provide more than just bed and breakfast facilities.

These changes came to the attention of the Social Services Department, and in February, 1974, a letter was sent by the Director of Social Services to the Harambee Housing Association threatening that if the Hostel did not revert to a single-sex, short-stay hostel and did not invite representatives of the Department to sit on the Management Committee, then an authorised grant of £500 towards running costs would be withheld by the Department.

The Harambee Association immediately replied to this letter rejecting the grant on the terms outlined and giving a full justification for the policy decisions made by the Management Committee and based on the experience of running a hostel for black youngsters. Harambee made it clear that it was unwilling to compromise on principles.

After this confrontation, Harambee acquired the reputation among the gate-keepers of society and local residents of being an "exclusive Black Power Organisation", and a haven for criminals. The building was searched by the police in 1974, 1975 and 1976 ostensibly in pursuit of suspected offenders.

The second area Harambee expanded into - in response to demand - was supplementary education. The members built up a caseload of parents and pupils who were unhappy about the performance of black children at school. In an attempt to meet the need for "relevant education", Harambee set up a Library of Black Literature, organised evening classes in Black Studies, English and Mathematics and showed films at the hostel from 1974. The classes were successful in getting school children, young mothers and older members of the Black Community involved in formal education.

It was soon realised that since education started from the cradle, one of the greatest needs of the community was for Nursery education. Following the findings of research carried out in 1974 and 1975, plans were made to set up a Black Nursery. By 1976 the Marcus Garvey Nursery and Day Care Centre began catering for local pre-school children. The building was formally opened by the Jamaican High Commissioner in November, 1976.

Harambee also ran supplementary schools for children during the Easter and Summer holidays. Developing out of previous local ventures, a large Summer School was held from 29th July to 23rd August 1974 at Wilkes Green Junior School. A nucleus of six trained black teachers assisted by parents and sixth-formers organised classes for a maximum of 350 children. The curriculum, based on ideas developed in the Black Studies Course at the William Murdock School, was geared to the specific needs of the children and the community. The mornings were devoted to academic work - mainly Mathematics, English and History - while the afternoons were given over to "free activity" which had a cultural orientation in terms of music, poetry, drama and games. Sorties were made to the park, swimming baths, community centres, shops and places of interest in the City. The climax of the Summer School was an outing by the whole school to Colwyn Bay on the 15th August to celebrate the anniversary of the birth of Marcus Garvey.

The 1975 Easter School held from 2nd to 11th April catered for about 150 children and was based on the same principles. The high points of this were a sponsored walk to raise money for an Ujaama School in Tanzania and the staging of a black cultural event in the community.

The 1975 Summer School held from 28th July to 22nd August was more elaborate. On the first day 257 children turned up and before the end, as many as 485 children were in attendance. During the last week some important out-

door activities were organised to enhance the solidarity of the group. These included an excursion to Cannock Chase, a local beauty spot; a sports day at the nearby Oaklands Sports Centre; a fair on a vacant piece of land; and an outing to Blackpool by 400 parents and children to commemorate the birth of Marcus Garvey.

Harambee also expanded its services by giving free advice on education, careers, employment, housing, marriage, the police, social security, etc. from its Advice Centre in Grove Lane. A central feature of the Centre was the provision of free legal advice by qualified black lawyers on Saturdays. This service was followed up by attending the courts and visiting black inmates of penal institutions.

Another contribution to community growth was the establishment of a shop in Grove Lane that sold books, journals, newspapers, greetings cards, locally made clothes, posters and other Afro-Caribbean cultural artefacts, many of which could not have been acquired anywhere else in Birmingham.

These initiatives featured prominently in adverse reports in the local newspapers, as shown in Chapter 4. They often depicted members of Harambee as hostile "Black Power" activists trying to establish exclusively black institutions. Attempts were made by people like Ms. Sheila Wright, a local white politician, to investigate and refute these accusations.

On another plane, Harambee's work met with opposition from ordinary white people at places like the Lickey Hills (Easter, 1975) and Blackpool (August, 1975) when parties of black children and adults experienced a hostile reception.

However, these widely publicised activities won much admiration for Harambee within the black community, especially among those I call the Black Nationalists. In casual conversations and during interviews they said that it was time that a black organisation "did something and stood up for black people".

These Black Nationalists believed that life for black people in Britain would be "one long struggle" against the odds. Even though they said that they would ideally like to live in a black-ruled country, they did not indicate that they were anxious to migrate. They argued that black people had to make a stand wherever they found themselves.

General Comments

In general the Black Nationalists showed that in articulating a black identity, political engagement and confrontation were highly probable. They recognised that this process could not be undertaken individually, but by means of a corporate entity, preferably an organisation that was prepared to provide services and goods to meet the peculiar needs of the black community. In effect, a meaningful and viable identity simultaneously needed and expressed itself in terms of a socially constructed reality supported by firm plausibility structures.

The Black Nationalists were almost pre-occupied with the historical, structural and cultural roots of the situation in Handsworth. They interpreted the history of black people in terms of systematic attempts to subordinate them, and understood black culture as both a buffer and a weapon fashioned from whatever was retained or available in a hostile environment.

The important links between black people in Britain and the rest of the world were recognised. Yet there was no support among them for migration as a means of escaping the reality of being black and tied up in Britain. Some means (preferably the one advocated by the Black Nationalists) had to be worked out to make the most of the situation.

The low social placement of black people in Britain was taken as given. The Black Nationalists did not believe that this could be altered by tinkering with education or promoting a few successful blacks. Black people as a whole could not escape their poverty and low status without controlling or

even altering the established structures. And because they could not do this from thin air, black social bases were necessary. This definition of the situation motivated Black Nationalists to create new institutions to act as models for others and from which they could exert pressure for change.

It was predictable that this orientation would be seen as an attack on the status quo and elicit opposition. The attacks on the Black Nationalists in the local newspapers were consistent with their role as the mouthpiece of the Generalised Other. The Black Nationalists constituted an image of the black man too far removed from the stereotype to be acceptable to those representing the Generalised Other. Hence the attempts to negate their efforts.

This lack of support from sources of power within the society drove the Black Nationalists to rely on solidarity and legitimacy from reference groups outside Britain. Black-ruled countries in the Caribbean and Africa, and politicised sections of the black population of the U.S.A. were essential sources of identity raw materials for the Black Nationalists. These elements were woven together with others to form a distinct identity.

(v) The Pan-Africanists

All the corporate identities above indicated a willingness to accept favours or to win concessions to enable blacks to lead a better life in Britain (with the exception of the West Indian Returnees). However, with the Pan-Africanists, there was a major departure from this objective in that they considered the material existence of Africa and the cultures it once supported or the socio-political arrangements it was currently undergoing as of more significance to their future well-being than anything in Britain.

Their pre-occupation with Africa meant that they had retraced the link through slavery, refound and nourished their African roots and considered

Africa their inheritance. In doing so they had to relive the traumatic experience of slavery, open up the old sores and come face to face with the bitterness buried in their culture. For them, slavery was the rape of the African race. The extent of the havoc wrecked by that rupture was measured in terms of the almost successful destruction of an African ethnic identity among the slaves and their descendants. The Pan-Africanists were appalled by the abnormality for many African people of the Western Diaspora to call themselves and to be referred to as Africans. This disjuncture with reality was considered as an indication of an identity crisis and the cause of the failure of such people to realise their potential.

This African orientation among the Pan-Africanists was the characteristic symbol of a contra -culture that motivated them to take on the dominant groups of European-oriented societies and to escalate the struggle for liberation and recognition despite the odds. (6)

Two particular groups belonging to this category were to be found among the sample of Afro-Caribbean people in Handsworth. One was the "African Nationalists" and the other was the "Rastafarians".

(a) The African Nationalists

The African Nationalists were fired by the revolutions and other struggles in Africa since 1958 and thought the time appropriate to reappraise their situation and to assert an African identity that may have been dormant for many years. They stressed the need to identify with Africa, to derive vicarious satisfaction from her historical and contemporary achievements and to gain the confidence (and possibly the assistance) to tackle their own problems in Britain. They pointed out that Indians and Chinese were referred to and called themselves ancestral names no matter how far they travelled or how long they lived abroad, and that this identification provided them with highly-

valued attributes around which they could organise for their own survival, material benefit and general well-being. Africans needed to do the same.

The number of African Nationalists was small simply because many Afro-Caribbean people preferred the easier identity options. However, the nine respondents were representative of a group that will grow as Africa develops economically and politically and reaches out to her children in the Diaspora.

The characteristic combination of identity titles chosen by the African Nationalists was "Black Person of African Descent". Those few not announcing themselves as such chose "West Indian/Working Class Black".

In 1976 the African Nationalists were aged 17 to 26 with a median age of 20. Nearly half were born in Britain while the others travelled to Britain either as infants or adolescents under 16.

The group was almost evenly divided into males and females. None of them were legally married but two of the females had children. All of them had members of the extended family living nearby.

They all had some form of compulsory education in Britain and just over half went into training for skilled manual work on leaving school. However, in 1976 nearly half of them were unemployed while a significant number were undergoing training or further education. Only one person in the group was doing routine manual work.

Just under half of them were living in rented accommodation and most of these renters were unemployed. The compounding of these two variables was linked to the particular identity of the group.

That identity expressed itself in the attitudes and political behaviour of the African Nationalists. The vast majority did not take part in standard political processes. Indeed they advocated vociferously that black people should not participate in British Politics. They saw that systems as illegitimate and oppressive to black people.

The group was also very critical of religious institutions, even the West Indian ones. They saw Christianity as an alienating force, a powerful means of social control traditionally used by white people to contain blacks and distort their identity. They therefore saw black Christians as totally brainwashed. Black Churches were considered guilty of misleading black people and distracting their attention from the important facts of life. Needless to say most of them claimed that they had no religious affiliation.

The heroes for the group were Marcus Garvey and Malcolm X. The African orientation and racial pride of these two leaders were emphasised. Their world-views undoubtedly had some effect on the development of an African Nationalist identity.

On the local level these respondents singled out two organisations as doing most for black people and contributing to the crystallization of a black identity. These organisations were Harambee and the Afro-Caribbean Self-Help Organisation. But of these two, A.C.S.H.O. more clearly expressed an African Nationalist identity (as the name suggested).

A.C.S.H.O. was praised by Gus John in the early 1970's as:-

... the most hopeful growing point for an active and relevant community self-help effort.⁽⁷⁾

He wrote that the group would accept "Black Power" as a description of themselves then. The meaning of this expression, the ideologies and the activities of the group were widely advertised in their newspapers and magazines called "Harambee", "Paw", and "The African".

The organisation was set up in 1966 when a group of young black people in Handsworth met to discuss seriously the problem facing them, particularly those growing up in the streets of Handsworth. They looked critically at the experience of black people in various parts of the world and decided that the progress and security of people of African descent scattered across the world were directly dependent on the resurgence of African nation states and the capability and willingness of at least one of those nations to defend and harbour their own kind.

Over the years the group used school halls and occupied property successively in various parts of Handsworth. Their aims were listed in their 1970 newspapers as to provide playgroups, nurseries, day care centres, parents' associations and supplementary schools, a community centre for various activities including the giving of legal and general advice, tenants' associations, hostels, a library, youth clubs, business co-operatives - all of which were to meet the defined needs of the black community. Knowledge relevant to their African identity was to be disseminated through black community newspapers and magazines.

The group was firmly led by a tight core of political cadres who insisted on strict discipline and the systematic re-education of members. Over the years they have achieved many of their objectives.

By 1976 they were providing day-care facilities in a large building owned by the group. Children spent part of their day in an environment that re-inforced their identity as an African people. Of some importance, the mothers of these children were involved in activities which brought them out of their isolation and motivated them to re-organise their lives.

Supplementary schools were also run for school children. In addition to standard subjects, children were taught about "Black Culture". An essential part of the syllabus was the "Seven Principles" which were intended to help them "to grow up with understanding of their heritage and love and consideration for their black brothers and sisters". The supplementary schools found fulfilment in the holiday schools A.C.S.H.O. ran that were similar to those of Harambee.

The A.C.S.H.O. building was also used as a centre for unemployed youths. It became a centre for leisure and learning. During the refurbishment of the building, many youngsters learned useful skills.

Every effort was made to enlighten youngsters about Africa, and to present a realistic political picture of the Continent (as opposed to a mythical semi-religious one). In fact, A.C.S.H.O. became a centre for current information about Africa. Newspaper and magazine cuttings, books, films and speeches on "Africa in struggle" were available in their Library. In particular, the struggle in Mozambique and Angola were carefully monitored and widely discussed. There was a marked contrast between the accounts of the British mass media and those by A.C.S.H.O. An indication of the pre-occupation of A.C.S.H.O. with developments in Southern Africa was to be found in their newspaper called "The African". A 1974 edition carried long articles on the wars against white imperialism and domination in Africa. It featured the progress being made by F.R.E.L.I.M.O. in Mozambique, M.P.L.A. in Angola, S.W.A.P.O. in Namibia, P.A.C. in Azania, P.F.L.O.A.G. in Oman, Z.A.N.U. in Zimbabwe, and P.A.I.G.C. in Guinea-Bissau. It also advertised the 6th Pan-African Conference to be held in Dar-es-Salaam.

Their magazine "Harambee" was more concerned with local news. Regular features were done on "police harassment of black youths". One such story was about the "Hatfield 7" and narrated how seven youngsters were arrested and beaten up by the police after a party in Hatfield Road, Handsworth on Sunday 22nd May, 1977. A.C.S.H.O. often organised demonstrations against these inci-

dents and advocated self-defence.

The links between these incidents and those in Africa were made clear by A.C.S.H.O. Every year the "Sharpsville massacre" of the 21st March, 1960, was remembered by them. On such occasions guest speakers from South Africa and elsewhere were invited to address meetings. In return, travellers were expected to explain the situation facing blacks in Britain. This was effectively done at the 6th Pan-African Conference in Tanzania in 1974.

The commitment to African development was reiterated on the back of every edition of "The African" thus:-

Support the African Liberation. The A.C.S.H.O. is appealing to you for donations to help freedom fighters in the armed struggle against white racist regimes in Southern Africa. Your donation will be used in the liberated zones in the following programmes - rehabilitation and reconstruction, administration, education, medical services, social services and community work, food production, etc. Let us help to rebuild a new Africa.

To facilitate this contribution to the development of Africa, the organisation embarked on the establishment of business co-operatives. In 1976 efforts were being concentrated on the building trades and groceries. The organisation aspired to self-reliance and economic independence.

The African Nationalists of the area gave full expression to their solidarity during the African Liberation Day celebrations held in Britain each year. Since 1973, May 25th was set aside by African leaders as the day on

which all African peoples were to celebrate:-

... the great victories we have won in our struggle against colonialism, racism and apartheid, zionism, and all other forces of foreign domination ... The day on which we reaffirm our determination to overrun the last colonialist outposts, liberate our motherland from the yoke of foreign monopoly capital in the new form known as neo-colonialism. It is a day of international solidarity with the African Liberation Movements. (8)

All Pan-Africanist organisations (particularly A.C.S.H.O.) participated in these events.

The 1977 African Liberation Day celebrations were held in Handsworth over the week-end 4th - 6th June. The major venue was a building owned by West Indians and capable of seating over 1,000 people. The threeday event was comprised of drama, poetry, dance, music, revolutionary songs, films and workshops. The pervading theme, most clearly expressed in speeches, was on Africans in struggle "at home and abroad". All these events were well-attended and nearly half the audience at any one time were Rastafarians.

The climax was the rally in Handsworth Park on Monday 6th June. Between 1,500 and 2,000 people turned up for the march through the streets of Handsworth from a local school to the park. The procession was led by drummers and flag-bearers. The police cleared the streets of traffic and directed the marchers along the route but kept a low profile in the park. There, the audience was presented with serious analyses of the situation facing blacks and treated to various expressions of their culture. The importance of culture for identity and political action was repeatedly stressed.

These A.L.D. celebrations in Handsworth demonstrated several important facts. First, was the underlying unity of Afro-Caribbean peoples. African Nationalists, Rastafarians, Black Nationalists, Civil Rights Blacks and West Indians co-operated in various activities over the festive week-end.

Second, was the behaviour of the police in dealing with organised blacks. There was no trouble between them and black youths during the event.

Third, was the lack of interest by the local newspapers in an event of major importance to black people. It may have been the case that they ignored the celebrations because evidence of large numbers of Afro-Caribbean people collectively and publicly identifying with their ancestral home-land would have been a fatal blow to the stereotype that was disseminated in the local newspapers as shown above.

What the African Nationalists were doing was similar to what many national minorities in exile normally do. Yet they were met with what they considered to be more than normal "disrespect and harassment". For example, A.C.S.H.O. members complained that they were accused of "teaching racial hatred", training youngsters in the use of fire-arms and "raising funds by illegal means". After the appearance of the "Gus John Report" in 1970,⁽⁹⁾ a local newspaper sent a scantily clad female reporter to investigate the A.C.S.H.O. Headquarters. The Organisation had made it clear beforehand that their work could not be furthered by the presence and interference of such information gatherers and so they saw the incident as an act of provocation. The journalist was refused entry and returned with reports that A.C.S.H.O. was an exclusive, anti-white organisation. These stories were widely circulated and discussed in the community.

The African Nationalists saw conditions in Britain as getting worse. They predicted that as the liberation struggles in Southern Africa intensified, many white settlers would return to Britain and swell the ranks of right wing extremists. They saw these developments ultimately leading to forced repatriation or worse for black people in Britain. It is for these reasons that they thought that it was vital to have a strong African nation to ensure that these measures were not taken to the extremity because there was no country willing to accept them.

(b) The Rastafarians

The origins of the Rastafarian Movement in Jamaica have been referred to in Chapter 2. Over the years the image of the Rastafarians and their stance towards the Jamaican Government vacillated from one extreme to another. Initially, they were seen as poor amiable fools who worshipped Haile Selassie and dreamed of a miraculous return to Africa. At other times, when they took up a militant stance to the Government, they were seen as subversive threats to the very existence of the society. And when the leaders were eliminated, they were seen as criminals in disguise, motivated to acts of violence under the unfluence of ganja. At other times, they were considered as mentally-ill tramps who appear on the streets dirty and unkempt. During the early 1970's after they had established some common ground with the P.N.P., they were recognised as a creative force making a distinct contribution to Jamaican culture and development as shown in Chapter 5.

The transplant of Rastafarian doctrines from Jamaica to Britain was not automatic with the arrival of *Afro-Caribbean migrants*. *The seeds of the Movement* were brought over the Atlantic in the womb of West Indian culture but germinated slowly because of the aspirations of the early migrants to adopt the English way of life and become full members of the society.

However, with the increasing marginalisation and disappointment of black people in Britain, resort was made to Rastafarian beliefs and practices which gave an adequate explanation to new members of the community for the presence and future of black people in Britain. This explanation which represented a central tenet of Rastafarian ideology was what Ernest Cashmore called "the Babylonian Conspiracy".⁽¹⁰⁾ Its major formulations were that evil white men fearing the potential of black people had conspired to enslave them, destroy their culture and trap them in mental, physical and social slavery so that they could exploit their labour. But since it was part of the divine scheme that blacks, being the chosen people, would one day escape from Babylon and consummate the perfect society in Zion, such knowledge (which the white man apparently possessed) had to be concealed from blacks. However, Rastafarians, by means of the sacred herb ganja had discovered in the cryptographic passages in the Bible that the black God-King Haile Selassie would one day liberate them and lead them triumphantly out of a fallen Babylon and joyfully into the Promised Land. Thus, the smoking of ganja was considered by them to be penalised not because it was harmful but because it gave access to "dangerous" knowledge.

The expression and adherence to this belief has traditionally been done by the wearing of the "colours" (red, green, gold and black) and the growing of the locks. The conscious decision to adopt this appearance constituted the "rite of passage" from being an "ordinary black person" to becoming a Rastafarian.⁽¹¹⁾ And so the history of the movement in Britain could be

charted by means of the appearance of people in the streets with the "dreadlocks and the colours". In Handsworth in particular there was one known dreadlock Rastafarian in 1972. Youngsters at the William Murdock School talked knowledgeably about him though many were born in Britain (thereby indicating the transmission of West Indian culture from the old to the young in Britain). When this Rastafarian was invited to take part in the cultural festival called "Spotlight on the West Indies" in June, 1972 he had a great impact on the audience. Reading his own poems in a dignified manner, he articulated the sufferings and aspirations, fears and hopes of his people. The feed-back afterwards indicated that responses to him ranged from hostility, through shock, to admiration. Soon after the event, Reggae records appeared in increasing numbers on the market and were even played on the mass media of radio and television. By the summer of 1973, Rastafarian symbols became the popular expression of a black identity among large sections of the young Afro-Caribbean population throughout Britain. Rastafarians picked out each other in the street and invited others for "reasoning" sessions. During those sessions the "Babylonian Conspiracy Theory" was endlessly refined.

Two important consequences logically followed. One was that since God was considered black, and white men evil, then the whole European ethno-centric value system would be turned on its head with black becoming the symbol of all that was virtuous. The Rastafarians in Britain like those in Jamaica expressed this consciousness in their use of language and indeed developed a stylised version of Jamaican "Creole" that effectively excluded outsiders. Central to this use of language was the rejection of European names and the adoption of African ones.

The other consequence was to consider the very structures as, after all, illegitimate. Where others saw authority, they saw naked power. Flouting the established system inevitably led to confrontation and suffering for the Rastafarians - which only reinforced their belief that the children of Africa must suffer in Babylon. The circle was complete. The Rastafarian movement once taken root was bound to spread under the given conditions.

It spread by means of contagion. Young blacks in search of answers to the question of identity picked up a few Rastafarian ideas and pondered on them. When finally confronted with the social reality of being black in British society, they retreated further into the Rastafarian world. At first they announced their willingness to accept the Babylonian Conspiracy story by displaying the Rastafarian colours moderately - the odd badge, or belt or record or expression. But they found that the smallest indication of accepting the Rastafarian world-view simultaneously changed them and elicited unfavourable responses from parents, teachers, employers, landlords and members of the general public. The consequence of this was rapid propulsion into becoming fully-fledged Rastafarians defiantly and proudly displaying the appropriate symbols. (12)

In rejecting their rejecters, Rastafarians found themselves alienated from the gate-keepers of society and left in a state of deprivation. Their rejection of the norms of the society enabled them to carry out acts to satisfy their basic needs without considering them criminal. Squatting in empty houses (called "capturing" homes) and stealing food and other goods (called "hustling") were not uncommon among them.

The police response was predictable. "Law breakers" had to be apprehended. The conflict escalated throughout the late 1970's but reached a peak in 1977-1978. At about that time the John Brown "Report"⁽¹³⁾ appeared and was followed by several articles in the local newspapers. They depicted Rastas as hard-core criminals organised into mafia-type groups bent on terrorising old defenceless white people and respectable members of the Asian and Afro-Caribbean communities. The police, called upon to uphold law and order, arbitrarily divided Rastafarians into "real Rastas" (the few) and "fashion Rastas" who were using the symbols as a mask for criminal behaviour. This provided them with the justification to exert pressure on the latter. Such a "Rastafarian" became the "bête noir" of British society.

Against this background it was difficult for most people to conceive of Rastafarians as ordinary youngsters in search of an identity as black people in British society. My own insights indicated above were strongly supported by the findings of my research in 1976.

On the whole, Rastafarians were more prepared to reason for long periods of time, to narrate their life story, and relate life to the universe and the cosmos than to answer pre-arranged questions. However, a few were prepared to subject themselves to the interview schedule. The six cases in this sub-sample were found to be representative of a large group constituting a significant proportion of young Afro-Caribbean people in Handsworth.

The characteristic identity title of the respondents was "black person of African descent". Other titles considered were black West Indian and immigrant of African descent.

These Rastafarians were aged 18-22 with a median age of 20. Half of them were born in Britain while the others travelled from the West Indies as children under 12. Two-thirds were male. Most of them were unmarried and without children.

All of them had some form of compulsory education in Britain and had graduated to employment in the service industries, skilled trades and further education. Even though only one became unemployed on leaving school, nearly all were unemployed in 1976. All of them were living in rented accommodation.

Their attitude to employment was unusual. They were willing to do that kind of work which gave an outlet to their creative ability. Standard wage labour was considered as "shit work" and a form of modern slavery.

Their stance to the established political institutions and processes was uniform. They believed that the system was undemocratic and that black people should have no truck with it. As a result they never bothered to register to vote.

The Rastafarians in the sample were very critical of British and West Indian religions. Indeed they saw the British version of Christianity as downright detrimental to the formation of a black identity and the realisation of black potential. They castigated black Christians for worshipping a white God and colluding in their own oppression. Hence most of them said that they belonged to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church because it practised an untainted version of Christianity or said that they had no religion at all.

The Rastafarians were unanimous in their choice of Haile Selassie as their most important hero. The other hero mentioned was Marcus Garvey. They saw both of these as emissaries and exemplary leaders who brought enlightenment and hope to black people. However, they were divided on the subject of the divinity of Haile Selassie. Some saw him as an extraordinary Emperor of a unique country, while others saw him as God incarnate.

By extension most of them said that they would ideally like to live in Ethiopia (Africa). However, a small minority said that they were not ready for Africa yet and would like to live in Jamaica or the U.S.A.

The Rastafarians were adamant about the conditions of black people in Britain, arguing that they would change from bad to worse. The only sensible thing to do in such a situation was to seek and spread enlightenment and orient themselves towards their African heritage and destiny. The key organisations

they saw doing anything worthwhile were the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and Harambee. The one was trying to meet their spiritual needs while the other was addressing itself to their material needs.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church held meetings in an African Nationalist building before moving to an Anglican Church Hall in Erdington. The Church came under the aegis of the Ethiopian World Federation, Incorporated (Emperor Yohannes Local 33) which had offices in London. Affiliation to this body established for the Rastafarians a direct link with Ethiopia and endowed the movement with a traditional legitimacy. It enabled them to transcend the traumatic interruption of slavery and derive satisfaction and pride from the knowledge that black people founded this Church as part of a "glorious" civilisation when white people were still barbaric.

At the E.O.C. services, men sat apart from women who had to cover their heads. The services, conducted in Amharic by a priest clad in formal traditional robes, were long and solemn giving little opportunity for deviation and free expression.

But below the surface four tensions simmered. One was concerning the divinity of Haile Selassie. The E.O.C. recognised the late Emperor as the Patriarch of the Church but not God. On the other hand some Rastafarians considered the divinity of the Black Emperor as the nucleus of the Rastafarian faith and were reluctant to relinquish this conviction.

Second, the E.O.C. did not endorse the growing of locks and exerted considerable pressure on black members to shear their dreadlocks. But for many Rastafarians, the wearing the the dreadlocks was a decisive indication of commitment to the faith and a protection against social forces leading blacks to become ashamed of their natural characteristics and wanting to look white.

Third, several Rastafarians objected to the hierarchical structure of the Church. They saw all men as equally related to God and so entitled to having equal access to decision-making.

Fourth, the orthodoxy of the E.O.C. militated against the creative disposition of Rastafarians and cramped their style. The situation in Britain required a creative response and not an imposed formula, they argued.

These tensions simmered in the movement for some time and ensured that in the long run the E.O.C. would lose favour among the mass of Rastafarians in Britain as it did in Jamaica.

A more characteristic expression of Rastafarian organisation was the "cult" based in their homes. These cults made up of about 10 at the core and several more at the periphery were the dynamic forces behind the growth of the movement. These small acephalous groups constituted the corporate entities within which key issues were debated and collective decisions made.⁽¹⁴⁾ They all had links with each other.

The growth of these cults is best explained in terms of the inter-generational tensions within the West Indian community and the availability of accommodation in the area.

As shown above, the early West Indian migrants came to Britain with great expectations which they could not realise in the British social context. Disappointment was stifled by the hope of their children's achievements in the venerated educational and economic structures. But the outcomes for these children were worse. Indeed their experience forced them to ask fundamental questions about the generally low social placement of black people, the alienation of Afro-Caribbean people from their African roots and their relative

spiritual and material deprivation. In short, they were faced with an identity crisis poorly understood by parents.

It was in this state that they were exposed to Rastafarian ideas. As conflicts between parents and children escalated over education and employment, parents resorted to using the strongest sanction they had - the threat of evicting their children from the parental home. Feeling rejected by both parents and society at large the black youngsters tried to maintain their self-respect by rejecting their rejecters and negating their accusations. The Rastafarian doctrine provided them with the means of doing so and they began wearing the colours and growing the locks.

These symbols evoked in the parents the old Jamaican images of tramps living on charity, of criminals hunted by the police and of dirty, lazy, unkempt ganja-smokers. They saw their children as idiotic in trying to solve whatever problems they had by attracting adverse attention to themselves and creating more problems for themselves. The youngsters in turn considered their parents as "brainwashed bald-heads" who were physically and mentally enslaved, and willing to accept the notion of black inferiority. The polarisation invariably led to the eviction of the youngsters. Many respondents traced this route to Rastafarian cults in their life story.

Thrown on to the streets many first lived with friends without the knowledge of the friends' parents. They told of "hustling" to survive and indulgence in a variety of acts like handbag-snatching and stealing from shops. But another problem was that of long-term accommodation.

Many of them eventually got rented accommodation legally from Housing Associations. But an intermediate stage many of them passed through was living in "captured" property or "squats". Along the streets of Handsworth

many empty houses owned by Housing Associations were left vacant for long periods of time awaiting planning permission for converting them into flats. In that state they were often occupied by a variety of squatters (like tramps) who did damage to them either wilfully or through neglect and carelessness. By 1976, the Housing Associations decided to cut their losses by overlooking the presence of known squatters who promised not to damage the property and to move out when planning permission was obtained. Many of these new squatters were Rastafarians. And it was in such squats offering more freedom than security that they worked on their identity and ventured forth to announce their presence in the thoroughfares of British society.

I became quite involved in the life of the small groups living in such squats in 1976. One representative group decided to decorate the building they were occupying and to use it as a base for meaningful economic activity. After getting money from a Charitable Trust to buy tools and raw materials the group refurbished the interior of the house and started making sound systems for sale. A variety of talents were developed and products of a high quality made as and when "the spirit moved them to work". Sometimes they worked through the night and at other times did no work for days. The proceeds from these efforts were often spent on food, clothes and other essentials not only for the members at the core but for countless others on the periphery. This benevolence reached a climax each year on the 23rd July, the anniversary of the birth of Haile Selassie, when free food, gifts and musical entertainment were lavished on Rastafarian guests and potential converts.

Most of the time in the squat was spent on interpreting the Bible. Several claimed that they learned to read in such sessions. Each person was asked to read a passage and lead a discussion on its meaning. They argued that the King James Version of the Bible needed "cleaning up" and asked me on several occasions to get an original version of the Bible for them from the University

Library.

Their presence in squats, however, attracted the attention and complaints of neighbours, particularly old white ones, who objected to their noise. But of more concern was the fact that nearly every case of handbag-snatching in the city was followed by an investigation by the police of those present in known squats. Quite often I arrived to find police cars parked outside Rastafarian houses claiming that the description given of the "mugger" fitted someone (anyone) living there. I often acted as an intermediary with limited success.

One particular case led to the imprisonment of a Rastafarian who claimed that he was innocent. Sometime later the group asked me to hire a minibus to take them to visit him. The preparations for the visit were methodical and when I arrived with the vehicle they had food prepared and the route worked out. The females prepared the "ital" food and the males did the organising. On arrival at the destination there was an emotional reunion and the sharing of experiences. The inmate talked about constant "harassment" and pressure to make Rastafarians eat pork and cut their locks. He described the penal institution as an expression of Babylon providing evidence of the "Babylonian Conspiracy" and helping to convert black offenders to the faith.

This Rastafarian collectivity was all-male. But girl-friends who lived elsewhere spent much of their time at the squat helping to prepare the meals and cleaning the house. Seldom did they interact with the males on equal terms. Even their "reasoning" sessions were separate. They peacefully accepted their role as "daughters" or "queens" which ironically meant the humbling of themselves and the lionisation of their males.

Such groups made up of youngsters alienated from the rest of society looked to each other for support during the intense period of identity crystallisation. With the coming of children the males often succumbed to the pressure

to move out of the squat and set up home with their "daughters" in converted flats. However, they seldom completely severed links with their peers repeatedly trying to clarify a Rastafarian identity in contemporary Britain.

General Comments

The cultivation and assertion of a Pan-African identity of one sort or another in Handsworth, threw into sharp relief several of the issues developed in the previous Chapters of this thesis. The Crystallisation of such an identity highlighted the historical and social origins of the phenomenon. The process showed that identity was not a private possession given at birth and secretly residing in the minds of individuals but a social fact involving groups and categories of like-minded persons interacting with each other in the pursuit of spiritual and material well-being. This identity did not spring fully formed out of the social situation in which people found themselves but was fashioned from various resources drawn from many sources. It was a constantly and rigorously reworked appraisal of their history, their social situation and their future. Even though this appraisal had to take into account the given social arrangements it was not a mere reflection of it. Indeed, in the case of Pan-African identities it was a negation of the definition of the place and image of Afro-Caribbean people by the Generalised Other in British society.

The Pan-Africanists, in their attempt to assert an African identity, showed a clear understanding of the particular mode of incorporating African slaves into white-controlled pre-capitalist and capitalist social formations in the Diaspora. They recognised that this required the systematic breaking of links with Africa, the denigration of African cultures, and the superimposition of European cultures as a means of social control. It followed that if they were to break out of that syndrome either at the overtly political or cultural level they would be seen as subversive by defenders of the status quo. Therefore confrontation with the agents of the state was inevitable. The conflict between the Pan-African groups and the police in Handsworth indicated that neither side was willing to compromise.

The strength of the links with Britain could be measured in terms of the very presence of Pan-Africanists in the major cities. If it was a situation in which there were no ties to Britain then the Pan-Africanist ranks would have been drastically reduced by an exodus to Southern Africa or Ethiopia. At a pragmatic level many of the Pan-Africanists were pursuing the dream of early migrants to "achieve something" in Britain - at one extreme seeing the total collapse of Babylon - before moving on. Their low social placement in Britain ensured that concomitant with the extension of their sojourn, their disappointment and bitterness would increase. The more they were marginalised in the various institutional orders of the society, the more conscious would they become and the more difficult would it be for them to escape by means of upward and outward social mobility.

The increasing polarisation and confrontation between the Pan-Africanists and the rest of society provided overwhelming evidence for the mass media to reinforce the stereotype of black people. The lack of communication with the rest of society through the normal channels meant that there was little coming out of Handsworth to challenge this image. Whereas some allowance was made for a re-appraisal of some blacks, like the Civil Rights Blacks, little or no empathy was possible with the Pan-Africanists. Their positive characteristics and good behaviour were ignored as at the African Liberation Day Celebrations in 1977.

It therefore meant that they had to rely on communication with reference groups outside Britain for the sustenance of their identity. There was also pressure on the Pan-Africanists to create social defences in Britain to shut out countervailing forces encouraging them to "sell out" for the sake of a few minor favours. Those who succumbed did so at their own peril.

On the whole, the Pan-Africanists of one sort or another served as an

important catalyst in the Handsworth Community. They defined membership of the "African race" together with African-based cultures as the definitive elements of a meaningful identity. In this way they were beginning to fortify the boundaries of a wider Afro-Caribbean racial/ethnic identity that could encompass all the other identities dealt with in this Chapter.

Having identified and presented these various corporate identities among Afro-Caribbean people, ranging through several degrees of articulation to British society, what needs to be done now is to consider the wider implications of their formation in the given context. This will be attempted in the Conclusion of this thesis.

REFERENCES

1. Ken Pryce, under the influence of American writers like Ulf Hannerz, has drawn up a similar typology of West Indians in Bristol. (See K. Pryce's Endless Pressure, Penguin, 1979). Even though this work is concerned with the criminal elements because of Pryce's training and interest in criminology it is widely used by students and policy-makers to refer to black people in general. Rather than criticising it for its obvious pre-occupation with those blacks with an "expressive-disreputable orientation" it would be more fruitful to question his criteria for separating the "Hustlers" and "Teenyboppers" from those blacks with a "stable law-abiding orientation". Pryce argues that the difference between the two broad categories is that between those who work and those who don't. This explanation is far too mechanistic and would be found wanting in a situation of high unemployment in which unemployed "Proletarian Respectables" do not become "expressive-disreputables" without changing their reference groups and undergoing a measure of resocialisation.
2. See Roswith Girloff, "Black Christian Communities in Birmingham. The Problem of Basic Recognition", in Alan Bryman (ed), Religion in the Birmingham Area. Essays in the Sociology of Religion, University of Birmingham, 1973. Ms. Girloff estimated that there were 89 Black Christian Communities in Birmingham in 1972 - 1973 and that 14 were located in Handsworth.
3. At times the process of fusion was seen to operate in the area. For example, in 1973 a number of "black-led" Churches agreed to establish the inter-denominational "Central Bible Institute" in Birmingham to train leaders to serve their respective Churches more effectively. They also established at a later date, the "United Evangelical Youth .

Project" in Handsworth to "deal with the problems of youth".

4. James Hunte has been referred to as a "charismatic" leader partly because of the special qualities attributed to him by his followers and admirers. The concept is being used here with the necessary caution and impartiality advocated by Max Weber when applying the same concept to some modern leaders as to those men who "according to conventional judgements are the greatest heroes, prophets and saviours". In addition to this, Mr. Hunte, has been classified as a charismatic leader, by a process of elimination, because in 1976 he did not satisfy the criteria for any of the other types of leadership defined by Weber. For an analysis of the three "types of authority and imperative co-ordination" see Max Weber, The Theory Of Social And Economic Organisation, Oxford University Press, New York, 1947, Chapter III and in particular pp. 323 - 373.
5. Ken Pryce used the term "hustle" to refer to robbery, conning, drug peddling and poncing. According to him ... "the hustle for the hustler, makes up for all the intrinsic and extrinsic deprivation of work (mainly "shit-work"). It restores the hustler's sense of pride and his feeling of mastery and authority". (op. cit., p. 68). The hustlers of Handsworth were involved mainly in petty "crimes".
6. See J. M. Yinger, "Contra-Culture and Sub-Culture" in American Sociological Review, Volume 25, Number 5, October, 1960, pp. 625 - 635. Here Yinger makes a useful distinction between "sub-culture" meaning a variant of the larger culture and

"contra-culture" which refers to a situation in which the normative system of a group contains as a primary element a theme of conflict with the values of the total society.

7. Gus John's research in Handsworth and subsequent publications tried to articulate what it felt like to be black in Britain. This quotation is from his Race in the Inner City, Runnymede Trust, 1972, p. 23.
8. The Pan African Congress Movement distributed leaflets with this quotation as a means of publicising the event.
9. See Derek Humphry and Gus John, Because They're Black, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1971. The findings of these authors were serialised in the Evening Mail in 1970.
10. See Ernest Cashmore: Rastaman. The Rastafarian Movement in England, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1979, Chapter 7.
11. Contrary to Cashmore's argument that accepting Haile Selassie constituted the "rite of passage" to becoming a real Rasta, I found that the conscious decision to wear the colours and grow the locks, with all that these entailed, marked that point when an Afro-Caribbean youngster "became" a Rastafarian (Even though Rastafarians often argued that "Rasta" was always inside them waiting to come out). See Cashmore, op. cit., p. 6.
12. Once again Cashmore under-estimated the rapid cumulative propulsion into the Rastafarian world by calling it a process of "drift". See Cashmore, op. cit., Chapter 5.

13. For a clear description of the image of Rastafarians held by the local police see John Brown, Shades of Grey: Police - West Indian Relations in Handsworth, Cranfield Police Studies, 1977.

14. In an almost contradictory passage, Cashmore (in an otherwise illuminating and stimulating sociological treatment of the movement) defined the "cult" as being based on "epistemological individualism" with the individual as the final authority for an interpretation of the doctrine. If this was so then there would have been no need for cults. Instead, the collective "reasonings" within the cults provided the supra-individual legitimation necessary for the survival of the movement in Britain. See Cashmore, op. cit., p. 7.

CONCLUSION

This thesis used the conceptual tool of identity as a means of analysing the post-World War Two experience of Afro-Caribbean people in Britain. The complex nature of identity posed considerable problems from the beginning and necessitated the employment of a heuristic definition of the concept.

Some of the literature surveyed indicated that since the carriers of identity are individuals that the concept was often treated as being internally determined and the unchanging possession of individuals. It was therefore defined in terms of persistence, continuity, consistency and essence. It was generally thought that, since it was a "given", the correct method of studying it and its associated problems was psychoanalysis.

This position was, however, unacceptable to those social scientists who were familiar with the empirical evidence showing that identity was changeable and was in fact socially determined at any point in the lives of individuals, particularly those who were geographically and socially mobile. In an attempt to explain such data some Symbolic Interactionists argued that identity or the social self was negotiated and achieved in interacting with others and learning to take the role of the "Generalised Other" as a pre-condition for becoming full members of society.

This achievement was considered by many as non-problematic and led to the definition of the concept as a sharing of essential characteristics, as a correspondence between the inner and outer worlds of individuals, as the co-incidence of placement and announcement, as the unity of the personal and the social, as the accurate reflection of a positive self-image in the mirror of social reality, and as the identity of subjective and objective realities.

A basic assumption behind all these definitions was an image of society as homogeneous, harmonious and static. Under such conditions identity formation was considered as unconscious and natural, and the symmetry between the two components of any of the sets outlined above achieved with little difficulty.

But if society is considered to be heterogeneous, stratified, conflict-ridden and dynamic⁽¹⁾ then it follows that identity achievement would be far more problematic. On the one hand, would be the individual trying to present himself in the most favourable light while on the other hand, would be the society or the dominant group ascribing to him a role and a related image of himself militating against his self-respect. In such a situation, the affinity between the individual and his society would be destroyed. The assumed sharing, correspondence, co-incidence, unity and reflection would no longer hold. Logically, Goffmanesque stigmatisation and impression management would follow.

However, several writers have indicated that this discrepancy, this abnormality, could be over-come in other ways. It was argued that such individuals would seek out others like themselves, form groups and set up communities that in a sense "out-vote the one they found". The joining or forming of groups, (together with the selection of particular reference groups) was taken in Chapter 1 as the most effective means of solving the problem. Then drawing on work from the Sociology of Knowledge, these groups were considered as creating realities that stood in a dialectical relationship with that reality constructed by the most powerful group.

It was at this point in the development of the argument that the social structural implications of identity formation and assertion became clear. The social structure initially determined the identities of all members of society. Those performing low status roles were expected to reject those

identities that corresponded with their status and position and to cultivate alternative identities in small groups. To reduce the precariousness and vulnerability of these groups they were forced to articulate their social constructions to social structures and symbolic universes that were outside the given universe. Drawing strength from these sources, their constructions coagulated. Individuals reacted to the given social structure by maintaining it, modifying it or even reshaping it, according to the ideology adopted and the political possibilities within the structure.

Identity was finally defined not as a mere coincidence of variables but as the conscious projection of a shared self-image into social reality. It was therefore considered as a dynamic entity and its formation and assertion a distinctly collective and creative human enterprise with political implications.

When the concept was applied to the history of black people of the African Diaspora, its defined character became clearer. Here was a people who had been incorporated into a ruthlessly exploitative capitalist order based on slave labour. Over and above the exploitation of the labour of those who toiled, was the denial of their humanity.

In Chapter 2 it was argued that a systematic attempt was made to destroy African peoples' natal culture and to shatter the foundations and the plausibility structures of a human identity. The ideal pursued in the British slave colonies by means of the hegemonic plantation project was the establishment of a capitalist order permanently stratified along the lines of race and colour. According to the logic of the rejected paradigm on identity, what should have emerged under such conditions was a slave identity, the personification of which would be Sambo or Quashie.

However, it was argued that this project was not successful. Despite

the efforts to stamp out African retentions and to stifle what was created to sustain meaningful black identities, the blacks were shown to have succeeded in creating black identities during slavery and colonialism and to have transmitted them to their descendants. Initially, these identities were cultivated clandestinely within the interstices of the institutional orders. Occasionally they were asserted at those moments in history when the calculation of the power of the authorities or the sanctions they were expected to use in retaliation indicated that open rebellion was appropriate and the modification of the social structure feasible.⁽²⁾ Indeed, the histories of several such societies have been made by black people with non-Sambo/Quashie identities.

In the British West Indies the cocoon of these identities and the vehicle for their transmission was a creole culture, the essential characteristics of which were its creativity, its synthesis and its dynamism. It was created under conditions of subordination and so, in addition to retaining "invisible" elements of the ancestral culture, it drew resources of necessity from the dominant culture.⁽³⁾ As the conditions changed so did the culture. At any point in time it amounted to a storehouse of the values and experiences of the group over time. When this vast array of symbolic representations was telescoped into the present, it offered resources for the cultivation of a range of identities by groups of people who considered it their heritage. In brief, the creole culture of Afro-Caribbean people whose history spanned centuries of domination by the British, enabled them to call themselves African, Jamaican, Bajan, Kittitian, etc., and British with varying degrees of conviction.

It can be assumed that those migrating to Britain were conscious of the British contribution to their creole culture and identity. However, two important processes soon undermined this identity, ruptured

the lines of reciprocity between the subjective and objective dimensions of identity and created severe identity problems for those Afro-Caribbean people who settled in Britain after World War II. This was clearly demonstrated by the low social placement and marginalisation of Afro-Caribbean migrants within the British social structure. In all the institutional orders and realms of British society certain structural forces relegated them to the lowest positions. The massive amount of evidence collected in the two P.E.P. Reports, and discussed in Chapter 3, showed that black migrants were suffering severe disadvantages in the society. This objective and convincing evidence was familiar to researchers before and after the P.E.P. Surveys (1966 and 1974), and it lent itself to a variety of explanations.

The first school of thought represented by the "Assimilationists", whose progenitor was Robert E. Park, included Michael Banton, Ruth Glass and Sheila Patterson.⁽⁴⁾ This school gave explanations in terms of the "strangeness" and "newness" of black immigrants in British society. And consistent with the theory of Robert Park, they argued that black immigrants would go through the stages of contact, competition, conflict, accommodation and finally assimilation. In time the xenophobia towards "coloured" people would diminish and acculturation and assimilation would result. Coloured settlers would then achieve upward social mobility and recognition in Britain, according to ability. To hasten this process they advocated an unequivocal code of tolerance instituted by Parliament.

The second school of thought, represented by, among others, W. Daniel, E. J. B. Rose and D. Smith,⁽⁵⁾ argued that disadvantage was caused by racial discrimination. If only prejudice and discrimination could be reduced - by enlightenment on the part of the host society - then the disadvantages experienced by black people would approach the norm and blacks would be fully integrated into society.

The third school, comprised of neo-Marxists like S. Castles and G. Kosack⁽⁶⁾ argued that the chief determinant of disadvantage was not attitudes and individual behaviour (like racial prejudice and discrimination) but the function immigrants served. They showed that immigrants of all colours were experiencing low social placement in several developed countries of Western Europe. These immigrants were entering societies that were not homogeneous and peaceful but characterised by class conflict. In such societies all immigrant workers did low status work, experienced social segregation and were used as replacement labour. Their willingness to do such work enabled the indigenous working class to achieve upward social mobility. Their presence also increased and reinforced the splits in the working class and in working class consciousness. This fracturing of the working class movement was designed by, and proved advantageous to the owners of the means of production. The refocussing of working class bitterness onto immigrants meant that a sustained attack on the structure of capitalist society was not forthcoming in the foreseeable future.

The fourth, and most complex theoretical appraisal, was that of John Rex and his various associates who observed that "colour" in the British social formation was serving the same function as "rotation" in those industrial nations of Western Europe that retained a white industrial reserve army. Their sophisticated analysis was based on two theoretical refinements. First, was the abandonment of the orthodox Marxist class analysis within the paradigm of the

reproduction of two diametrically opposed and increasingly hostile camps in capitalist formations, and the adoption of a Weberian class analysis in terms of the market place. For them, wherever there was a market there would develop a range of competing classes engaged in limited conflict. The second refinement was that of race relations in the metropolitan context. Hence the deprivations suffered by black colonial immigrants in British cities was not due to prejudice and discrimination deriving immediately from their colour but were determined by the historical relationships between white colonisers and colonised blacks. Over the Centuries the British had established the structural bases of racism and racialism which in the metropolitan context would ensure that blacks occupied the lowest positions and constituted the lowest classes in all markets for scarce resources, and most poignantly in the housing market. British society was therefore "a race relations structure in so far as the inequalities and differentiation inherent in it were related to physical and cultural criteria of an ascriptive kind and rationalised in terms of deterministic belief systems, of which the most usual in recent years has made reference to biological science".⁽⁷⁾ Given the pre-existing economically and historically caused tensions, the industrial cities of Britain provided the social mechanisms whereby racial confrontations were organised and racial conflicts inevitable.⁽⁸⁾

In charting developments in the "Sparkbrooks"⁽⁹⁾ of the 1960's to those of the "Handsworths"⁽¹⁰⁾ of the 1970's, Rex and Tomlinson concluded that blacks in Britain had become an "underclass" in the social structure. This concept was used to suggest that black minorities were systematically at a disadvantage compared with working class whites and that instead of identifying with working class culture, community and politics they formed their own organisations and became in effect a separate under-privileged class. Cut off from the mainstream of political life in Britain they had their life chances determined by more powerful groups. Only a moratorium on race politics - a

truce - by the major Political Parties would lead to an improvement in the conditions of black immigrants.

All these explanations had one thing in common - an agreement that black people were among the most disadvantaged sections of the society. However, at the popular level, this fact was mediated in terms of deterministic notions of the essential characteristics of "black immigrants", and allowance was made for the man in the street to believe that blacks were in fact getting more than they deserved in British society. In Chapter 4, the second process of depicting black in negative terms was described. In it, a content analysis of cuttings on "coloured immigrants" was undertaken. It showed that black people were usually depicted in the local newspapers (in particular) as migrating in large waves, causing severe problems in every area of social life, creating a political problem that threatened the existence of British society, and stretching the tolerance of the British to its limits. This cognitive and affective onslaught was considered as being closely linked to the political and other structural changes that Britain, as a poor member of the European Economic Community, was undergoing. Since black replacement labour was no longer needed, black migrants had to be re-composed as an industrial reserve army, or an under-class, barracked in the twilight zones of large cities. The process of labelling them as unwanted, un-British and troublesome, was a necessary corollary and a possible pre-requisite for the widely advocated solution of repatriation.

By definition, such a label was unacceptable to those people who had consciously decided, at one point or another, to migrate to Britain or to remain in Britain as normal citizens. The neat symmetry between the conditions in which they found themselves and the labels ascribed to them was ruptured by the formation of positive, corporate black identities that drew resources from elsewhere and were built on non-British foundations. Faced with the situation of rejection, black people shifted their attention away from Britain, and to

those societies where significant black struggles were taking place.

In Chapter 5, it was argued that they looked to reference groups in the West Indies, Africa and the United States, for models, materials and methods for the construction of black identities and the social realities to buttress them, and the symbols to express them. These groups were essentially organised on "racial" grounds and in identifying with them black people resident in Britain adopted a racial identity that cut across political and territorial boundaries. In doing so they ceased to consider themselves as an isolated subordinated minority or a rejected underclass, and instead came to realise that they were part of a large and resurgent race on the international scene.

The empirical data presented in Chapter 6 showed that the majority of the respondents in the sample of Afro-Caribbean people considered themselves as "black" and a significant proportion stressed their African ancestry. However, the complexity of the conditions in Britain and the variegated nature of their creole culture meant that not one but several identities would be cultivated among them. And indeed, in the survey carried out among them, it was found that groups of Afro-Caribbean people were pre-occupied with the social issues associated with forming and articulating a range of identities and desperately trying to anchor them in plausibility structures and symbolic universes. Lines of communication were being established with reference groups abroad, libraries of knowledge accumulated and symbols borrowed from them. Each identity offered a particular stance towards British society ranging from the fatalistic to the revolutionary.⁽¹¹⁾ A number of sociological variables demarcated distinct corporate identities among the Afro-Caribbean people in Handsworth.

In Chapter 7, a typology of these identities and the groups that cultivated them was presented. The first group was called "The West Indians"

because their orientation was towards their island of origin in the West Indies. They belittled the significance of both Africa and Britain in their life plans and suggested that they could only realise their full potential and achieve a meaningful identity with those people and under those conditions assumed to hold in the West Indies. In their "temporary" sojourn in Britain, identity was achieved in terms of shared cultural characteristics, shared experiences, and participation in distinctly West Indian institutions like the Pentecostal Church and other small secular collectivities. They found great difficulty in identifying with British society, with the jobs they did, with the Districts in which they lived and the image of black people disseminated in the mass media. They therefore used their apolitical social constructions as means of enhancing their self-respect, to offer rewarding roles and to shield them from the hostile rays of racial dishonour and rejection coming from the society at large.

This identity, the parent identity of all Afro-Caribbean identities, was adopted and maintained by the "transient" members of the sample who wanted to avoid, rather than engage, the society in which they found themselves. It was the identity of "guest workers" and similar to that of other "guest workers" in Western Europe. How long it could be maintained by *those who do not make it* "back home" is questionable.

The second group was called the "Colonial Settlers" and they were found to have succeeded in forging an identity with British society. In considering themselves as a segment of the British working class, they were able to accept their lowly position and to reduce the discrepancy between the socially constructed reality of the majority of Afro-Caribbean people and the objective reality of the dominant white British by an ingenious sleight of hand. First, they rejected "black" culture and the black perspective as anachronistic and troublesome. They understood the migration of British West

Indians to Britain as a clear indication of the aspiration to become fully British and to adopt the British way of life that was once venerated in the Colonies. For them, migration was therefore coterminous with fulfilment. Second, the objective reality of disadvantage was rationalised in terms of the recency of their arrival. Relative to their white working class reference groups, they were not disadvantaged. When confronted with stories and images of "black immigrants" in the mass media they took these messages as referring to "the few misguided militant blacks with chips on their shoulders" and not to themselves who were "coloured settlers", the colonial children of the Mother Country, who had finally come home. This identity finds resonance in the work of the "assimilationists" and those who hold notions of black people constituting an inert segment of the lower section of a stratified society characterised by value consensus. The assertion of this identity holds no promises of modifying the social structure. In any case, it is unlikely to survive under worsening economic conditions and the growth of white racist nationalism in Britain.

The third group was referred to as the "Civil Rights Blacks". The identity of these blacks was based on the sharing of cultural and political characteristics and styles that were acquired as members of a race that had struggled for Centuries to achieve concessions from a hidebound but not necessarily "evil" white social order. The essential element of their identity was their "blackness" which they understood in terms of a constant fight using whatever legitimate means that were available. For them, this started during slavery and persisted over the Centuries resulting in cumulative progress. This spirit, this will to overcome by "peaceful" means, they thought, was a valuable contribution they were making to British society.

Migration to Britain was considered by them as a new challenge and equated with the opening up of new opportunities. The obvious failure to

translate aspirations into outcomes was explained in terms of the fear and complacency of the early immigrants, and ignorance on the part of the host society. The solution to the problem was the removal of blockages to communication by means of peaceful protest and the exertion of pressure on the legislators to draw up a code of tolerance and to embark on a re-education programme. Their immediate reference groups were those Black Americans who mounted the Civil Rights Campaign there, and who are reputed to have won major concessions for all black people in America.

This identity was consistent with the literature analysing the situation in terms of prejudice and discrimination and the reformist thinking behind the Race Relations legislation and those institutions set up to improve "community relations" in Britain. It posed no real threat to the structure because it achieved a correspondence between the need of some black people to campaign for better conditions and society's need for strident reformers (still subscribing to the norms of the society) to champion the cause of justice. Those adopting this identity demonstrated that black people were law-abiding and responsible citizens who could easily be integrated within the society without necessitating any major structural transformations.

The fourth identity group was called the "Black Nationalists". This identity was based on the sharing of racial, cultural and political characteristics. For them the racial characteristics were given while the cultural characteristics were forged during a history of conflict with white super-ordinate groups. This identity was also achieved by recognising the common low social placement of black people throughout the history of the relationship between black people and the white British nation. Indeed, the Black Nationalists argued that history had taught that black people could not achieve a correspondence between their self image and "the World the slave masters made" without controlling the institutions that regulated their lives.

Having analysed the situation in terms of institutionalised racism and racialism accruing from the imperial adventure of enslaving and colonising people of a different race and culture, they held that black people could not realise their potential in white dominated social structures. Black institutions were necessary.

Because their race and culture were distinct from those of the British nation they believed that they constituted a separate nation. Moreover, their identification with, and knowledge of national resurgence in the colonies demonstrated to them that nation-building on black foundations was feasible. This project of transforming a "group in itself" to a "group for itself" posed some political threats to the status quo and meant that the conflict for scarce resources in the metropolitan context would be intensified. It amounted to the magnification of black demands and the bringing home of the anti-imperial struggle right into the hear of the metropolis.

The response of the defenders of the status quo was predictable. Politically, the social behaviour based on a Black Nationalist identity was considered subversive and the demand for and construction of black institutions opposed as an unnecessary duplication of services in the areas of settlement. Consequently, the resources needed to establish and run black projects were withheld. In addition, more rigorous policing measures were adopted to "keep blacks in their place".

At the ideological level the society branded the Black Nationalist perspective as "Black Power", defined in terms of a virulent hatred of white people. Hence, in the local newspapers, such black people and their activities were negatively depicted as posing an intolerable and unjustifiable threat to British society. Herein was to be found the legitimation for the activities of the agents of the state considered by many as "racist attacks on black people".

The intensification of the conflict between threatened whites and uncompromising blacks served to strengthen the Black Nationalist identity. It suggested and proved that black people would have a common fate in white society and so had the capacity of binding members of the black nation together. One destiny suggested one solution and one purpose: the purpose of nation-building wherever black people found themselves living in significant numbers.

This definition of the situation finds echoes in the political sociology of John Rex and his associates. The difference, however, is that the latter extraneously imposed the concept of an "underclass".⁽¹²⁾ Despite the claim by Rex and Tomlinson that they were fulfilling the requirements of "Schutz's postulate of adequacy" they were indeed applying a concept to black people that is unacceptable to them. In relating themselves to a resurgent race and embarking on a political programme of nation-building, they were more likely to consider themselves as a militant and purposeful segment of the society than as a demoralised and inert "underclass".

There were many similarities between the Black Nationalist identity and the Pan-Africanist identity, the final identity analysed. The crucial distinction between these two, however, was that the latter rejected the possibility of achieving an identity in British society even in an altered form. Nothing short of the total collapse of the imperial order could enable the Pan-Africanist identity to reach fulfilment.

The Pan Africanist identity was tentatively achieved by the sharing and correspondence of a number of factors. First was that of race. The Pan-Africanists believed that all those people of African descent shared an essential characteristic with each other. In addition to this, the socio-political dimension of the Pan-Africanist identity emphasised the sharing of

certain cultural traits that were in fact contra-cultural because they had developed over the Centuries in diametrical opposition to those structures and cultures based on the unfree labour of Africans. The consummation of this process would be the utter destruction and annihilation of the slave-based social formation.

The socio-religious dimension of the Pan-Africanist identity credited all black people with divine characteristics. The historical denial of these virtues and the ascription of evil characters to black people within white dominated societies implied that white people were in fact agents of the devil. Black enlightenment was therefore defined in terms of exposing the "Babylonian conspiracy" and turning the white value system on its head. When the conflict was transposed onto a cosmological plane, legitimation was found for opposing the status quo and rejecting white values and white authority. Since it was held that good would ultimately triumph over evil, the Babylonian citadel the whites had built was heading for destruction.

There was also an identity between black people of African descent and the Continent of Africa. If white society was by definition and by nature oppressive and evil, then the full potential of black people could only be realised in Africa, seen either as the centre of the Third World Revolution or "Zion", the virtuous society. However, the dream of exodus to Africa was made difficult to realise by blacks being trapped in Britain and serving the essential function of doing the low status work that white people were reluctant to do. If such a society depended for its very existence on this category of workers then it follows that escape would only be possible after the destruction of the fetters and the obviation of this need. This could be accomplished by means of the working through to their logical conclusion of the irreconcilable, antagonistic contradictions of the capitalist order or the supernatural, millenarian, intervention of the God-Emperor. In any case the society, as we

know it, would not survive.

This Pan-Africanist identity was being advertised and asserted "up front" in the main thoroughfares of British society. The militant and aggressive bearers of this identity were doing so by means of potent symbols and an uncompromising and revolutionary stance towards British society at a time when Britain was at her weakest international position. The response of the authorities in such a situation turned out to be hostile. However, the perceived "pressure" exerted on militant blacks in all areas of social life to get them to conform only aggravated the situation. The confrontation between the defenders of the status quo - particularly the police - and the Pan-Africanists provided both parties with evidence to reinforce the respective stereotypes. This conflict in which a poorly armed but uncompromising minority was likely to come off worse, also convinced the Pan-Africanists of the truth of those doctrines which held that black people would suffer acute deprivation until they escaped from a doomed Babylon and enter triumphantly into the Black Zion.

Though at this stage, any firm predictions must of necessity be speculative, a number of the findings indicate that the Pan-Africanist identity will, all things being equal, become the characteristic identity of Afro-Caribbean people in Britain.

First, there is little doubt that the themes of African ancestry and a resurgent Africa as the centre of the Third World Revolution, which constitute the key elements of the Pan-Africanist identity, are appealing to an increasing number of black people in Britain. Even though all of them do not necessarily call themselves "Africans" or "Rastafarians" the vociferous announcements, logical "reasonings" and defiant behaviour of these groups are making all black

people stand up and take notice. An increasing number of them are being shocked or persuaded to recognise and to consider membership of the African race and African-based cultures as the most meaningful and legitimate things they could claim for themselves. This awakening is constantly being reinforced by the perceived developments in modern Africa and the forging of links between groups of black people in the Diaspora and certain nations in Africa.⁽¹³⁾ Hence the Pan-Africanists are performing the role of catalyst in the black community, and helping to fortify the boundaries of a wider Afro-Caribbean "ethnic" identity that could encompass and absorb all the other identities.

Second, the immediate appeal of the Pan-Africanist World-view is to young blacks, as shown in Chapters 6 and 7. As the older West Indians die out or emigrate, as the statistics show,⁽¹⁴⁾ young blacks will constitute a larger and larger proportion of the black population of Britain. In time, therefore, the Pan-Africanist identity could be borne by the majority of Afro-Caribbean people in Britain.

Third, as shown in Chapters 6 and 7, the Pan-Africanist identity tends to be cultivated by black people in conditions of acute deprivation. If the present economic trends continue, as conditions worsen, an increasing number of black people will become unemployed and suffer disadvantages even worse than those described in Chapter 3. Under such conditions the Pan-Africanist explanations of the suffering of black people and the suggested solution to the problem would make sense to more people and so win many more converts.

Finally, if white racist nationalism continues to gain respectability in Britain and finds expression at the highest level in terms of legislation, then the overwhelming response of black people will be in similar terms. For example, if and when the Nationality Bill (announced in 1981), with its racist clauses becomes Law, it will amount to the clearest statement yet that blacks

are not considered as first class citizens - meaning both white and British - and rather are consigned to a second class "black" status. This will even convince the Colonial Settlers of the salience of racial classifications.

If it is conceded that the end result of these processes could be the formation of a dominant, characteristic, or even a single Pan-Africanist collectivity among Afro-Caribbean people in Britain, then how should this phenomenon be analysed and how significant will it be? These questions become more pertinent when it is taken into consideration that already 51.4% of the sample of Afro-Caribbean people use "black" as an identity title thereby indicating a certain commonalty and a degree of "consciousness".

The probable developments in black consciousness and organisation in Britain thus takes the analysis firmly back into the literature concerned with the relative salience of "race", "class" and "ethnicity" as significant lines of social division. This thesis will therefore conclude with a brief discussion of the various approaches and suggest in what areas research still needs to be done.

The designation "black" often refers to, and was taken by respondents to signify membership of the "black", and particularly "African" race. Several sociologists have taken race to be an independent basis of power and a determinant of the structure of society. For example, Leo Kuper, in referring specifically to societies in Africa, argued that:-

Racial differences are of a more enduring nature than class differences, and there are very extensive correlates of racial differences in racially structured societies. In some critical respects relevant to conceptions, class structures and racial structures

constitute different systems of stratification, however much they may overlap.

... The essence of the distinction is that class structures are intrinsic to interaction in the society, whereas racial structures are in some measure extrinsic or have a point of reference outside the interaction ...

... racial differences which are societally elaborated, have preceded that interaction.⁽¹⁵⁾

To impose such an analysis in toto to British society would be difficult in view of the common agreement that British society is essentially structured along the lines of class. In any case, as has been argued throughout this thesis, race as a single over-riding concept can tell us little about social behaviour.

An alternative mode of analysis is one in terms of class, whether of a Weberian or Marxist kind. Because the life styles and expressed grievances of black people relate directly to their position in the class structure, and much of their collective, political behaviour is in pursuit of material interests it could be argued that class is the appropriate analytical tool. Indeed Rex and Tomlinson have followed this logic in defining blacks as forming an underclass in British society. This mode of analysis has been rejected because it does not satisfy the requirement of the Sociological postulate of "adequacy" that is essential to a study of the all-important process of identity formation and assertion current among black people. In addition to this, the notion of an underclass overlooks the fact that because blacks have a common relationship with working class whites to the means of production, they constitute a segment of the British working class, and are therefore not outside it.

This fact, however, does not justify the reduction of "Race Relations" in Britain to class relations. To do so as Marxists, drawing, for example, on the work of Oliver C. Cox,⁽¹⁶⁾ suggest, would be an injustice to the real social, cultural and ideological differences between blacks and whites in British society. Indeed the substance of my thesis indicates that class is only one of the factors operative in the restructuring of post-imperial British society.

It is true that orthodox Marxism is being subjected to theoretical modifications on the Continent of Europe. Some illuminating "non-reductionist" theoretical formulations have been developed by A. Gramsci, N. Poulantzas and L. Althusser. In Britain, significant theoretical work is also being done by Stuart Hall.⁽¹⁷⁾ But this kind of analysis is yet to be widely applied and tends to avoid taking seriously the role of black actors.

The crucial dimension, however, which is often overlooked when considering Race Relations in Britain is that of culture and more broadly ethnicity among the Afro-Caribbean people resident there. This factor, repeatedly emphasised by respondents and expressing itself massively in the data discussed in Chapters 6 and 7 deserves some attention in making general statements about the phenomenal developments in the Inner Cities of Britain. How useful then is the concept of ethnicity in analysing the situation?

Most writers on ethnicity are agreed that there are three essential features of an ethnic group, namely:-

- (i) Common ancestry.
- (ii) Cultural distinctiveness.
- (iii) Communalism or a "we feeling".

A seminal definition of ethnicity by F. Barth was given in terms of

the boundaries or criteria for membership. For Barth,

... the critical focus of investigation from this point of view becomes the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses ... what is more, the ethnic boundary canalises social life.⁽¹⁸⁾

Obviously ancestry can be such a boundary once it is recognised as being valuable.

In addition to this, an ethnic group should possess certain cultural traits that distinguish it from other groups. E. K. Francis held that:-

An ethnic group is not a race, if we take race in the anthropological sense as a group of people with common physical characteristics. Moreover, an ethnic group is not a nation ... An ethnic group is not a local/regional community nor a patriarchal family, nor a clan nor similar face-to-face groups ... It is a Gemeinschaft not a Gesellschaft ... Based on emotional bonds and endowed with a homogeneous cultural heritage, the community (Gemeinschaft) aims at the preservation of the group.⁽¹⁹⁾

The important criteria here seem to be the possession of a homogeneous cultural heritage and the desire to preserve the group (for its own sake?).

The generally accepted definition of an ethnic group appears to be that of Shibutani and Kwan. They argued that:-

An ethnic group consists of those who conceive of themselves as being alike by virtue of their common ancestry, real or fictitious, and who are so regarded by others.⁽²⁰⁾

The key criterion here is the reciprocal assessment of the group by members and by others. Evidently the same factors in British society that resulted in the denial of a positive black identity would prevent Afro-Caribbean people from being considered as an ethnic group. And indeed several writers have argued the case that West Indians do not, and cannot, constitute an ethnic group. Michael Lyon, for example, made a distinction between a residual racial category and an ethnic group and concluded that West Indians in Britain were nothing more than a racial category. His basic argument was that:-

Ethnicity necessarily involves allegiance to ancestral descent. Racialism is characteristically enforced by the majority against the wishes of the minority, who may therefore be ashamed of their racial identity and origins. Ethnic appearance is usually recognisable by cultural not physiological signs, primarily because ethnic minorities maintain their own cultural identity, whereas racial minorities (such as Negroes in the United States and West Indians in Britain) may scarcely have a distinctive culture and their separateness accordingly cannot be maintained from within but only enforced from without - by the racialist majority using the relatively permanent signs of minority identity - black skins - to render a position of subjection unavoidable. The crucial difference then is that racial boundaries are, when necessary, enforced from without, whereas the boundaries of

ethnic minorities must be self-maintained.⁽²¹⁾

The empirical basis for this argument was that:-

Whilst British West Indians judge their worth in imperial terms, their identity as a black ex-slave people is negative. Yet as colonial subjects West Indians have accepted racial values, such as the importance of whitening, and therefore more easily accommodate to British metropolitan racism.⁽²²⁾

The data presented in Chapters 6 and 7 of this thesis resoundingly refute this argument.

In any case all these definitions of ethnicity appear to be static and apolitical. As such I agree with Jenny Bourne, who rejected ethnic analyses as leading to a cul-de-sac of cultural nationalism and defeatism, and capable of doing everything except change power relations in society.⁽²³⁾ All that ethnic groups seem to require is a safe niche in the social order.

On closer inspection of the data in this thesis, it becomes clear that Afro-Caribbean people, particularly the growing body of Pan-Africanists are demanding more. Moreover, the process of identity formation and articulation among them is being fuelled by grievances derived from both racial oppression and class exploitation and is being consciously expressed in cultural and "neo-ethnic" terms. This means that a new form of analysis is necessary.

Several suggestions have already been made as to how militant blacks in white dominated societies should be considered in their attempts to break

out of the deathly embrace with such societies.

A useful insight came from Orlando Patterson in his redefinition of the concept of ethnicity. He argued that:-

... ethnicity can only be understood in terms of a dynamic and contextual view of group allegiances; that what is critical about an ethnic group is not the particular set of symbolic objects which distinguishes it, but the social uses of these objects; and that ethnic loyalties reflect, and are maintained by, the underlying socio-economic interests of group members.⁽²⁴⁾

For blacks caught up in a situation of racist subordination in a capitalist society, I would add that cultural symbols are being used to weld the members of the group together, and as a means of liberation.

This important political process has been alluded to by Martin Kilson as "neo-ethnicity"⁽²⁵⁾ and by Lester Singer as "ethnogenesis". Singer defined ethnogenesis as:-

The process whereby a people, that is an ethnic group, comes into being.⁽²⁶⁾

Then, after reviewing the developments among "Negro Americans" in recent history he conceded that despite the experience of slavery and continuing racial dishonour and exploitation Black Americans were gradually becoming a fully-fledged ethnic group...

... whose character as an emergent ethnic group is the consequence of factors outside themselves as well as their responses to these factors. (27)

This cautious treatment of the phenomenon seems, however, unnecessary in other situations. The theoretical developments consistent with my thesis are those which recognise how ethnic conflicts have become the significant and meaningful form in which material and political interests are pursued. In an enlightening treatment of ethnic identity, D. Bell observed that:-

In the last decade there has been a resurgence of ethnic identification as the basis for effective political action in widely divergent societies. (28)

For him, ethnicity has become more salient because it can combine an interest with an affective tie.

In amplification of this analysis has been Glazer and Moynihan's contention that ethnic identity formation and assertion in conditions of political oppression is the point at which basic group cohesion and politics meet. They observed that:-

As against class-based forms of social identification and conflict - which of course continue to exist - we have been surprised by the persistence and salience of ethnic-based forms of social identification and conflict. (29)

Then turning their attention to situations similar to the one under consideration they held that:-

In the most natural way the unsuccessful group has the best chance of changing the system if it behaves as a group. It is as a group that its struggles become not merely against the norms of some other group, but in favour of the already established norms of its own. One of the difficulties of social class as an organising principle surely is that there just is not that much conflict of norm between most social classes. (30)

The identification of the white British working class with their masters who are of the same race and an almost identical culture, suggests that if there is to be structural change in the society it must be spearheaded by the oppressed and ostracised blacks operating from Pan-African cultural bases.

This is precisely the point made by Marcuse in his analysis of the reputedly "one-dimensional" society. He argued that in the rich capitalist countries of Europe, domination functions as administration and that in the over-developed areas of mass-consumption the administered life has become the "good life" of the whole, in the defence of which the opposites are united. This, for him, is the "pure" form of domination. Hence, it was impossible for such administered individuals to liberate themselves from themselves, as well as from their masters. This role of liberation was handed to the excluded blacks thus:-

However, underneath the conservative popular base is the substratum of outcasts and outsiders, the exploited and persecuted of other races and other colours, the unemployed and unemployable. They exist outside the

democratic process; their life is the most immediate and the most real need for ending intolerable conditions, and institutions. Thus their opposition is revolutionary even if their consciousness is not. Their opposition hits the system from without and is therefore not deflected by the system; it is an elementary force which violates the rules of the game and in doing so, reveals it as a rigged game ... The fact that they start refusing to play the game may be the fact which marks the beginning of the end of a period ... Nothing indicates that it will be a good end. (31)

As the data in this thesis demonstrate, the consciousness of blacks, particularly the Pan-Africanists, is already becoming revolutionary. Drawing on peculiar "ethnic" resources they have begun to fracture and disrupt the racist, imperial relationship that depends for its survival on their submission. This resistance that is generated in the processes of identity formation and articulation in a situation of oppression and exploitation signals the end of the imperial era. Indeed, the anti-imperial impulse and the decolonisation process have been let loose in the heart of the metropolis.

The history and mechanism of this process have been charted by Frantz Fanon as they expressed themselves in the Colonies. Beginning with psychoanalytical conceptions, he classified "Negroes" initially as "white men in black skins" and as aspiring to become white by means of social, cultural and biological assimilation. (32) Then as a result of living through the Algerian experience, the cultural and political renaissance of Africa, and observing the developmental link between cultural revalorisation and on-going political liberation, he succeeded in transcending his analysis from the

subjective and raw existentialist stage on to the planes of objective analysis in terms of the permanent revolution of "the wretched of the earth".⁽³³⁾ His final analysis indicated that there were three important stages that had to be passed through on the way to the free society, namely:-

- (i) Colonisation,
- (ii) Cultural nationalism, and finally
- (iii) Liberation.

For him, the liberation of colonial countries would usher in man's total liberation.

This liberation however, was not inevitable. His contention was that:-

It is rigorously true that decolonisation is proceeding, but it is rigorously false to pretend and to believe that this decolonisation is the fruit of an objective dialectic which more or less rapidly assumes the appearance of an absolutely inevitable mechanism.⁽³⁴⁾

At the periphery of the imperial order in Africa, the revolution had to be made. The national bourgeoisie, the lackeys of the international bourgeoisie, were always ready to mystify and misguide the masses. The revolution could only therefore be accomplished by uncompromising actors with identities capable of motivating them to act, to seize the time, and to make history by violent means, for after all:-

Life can only spring up again out of the rotting corpse of the settler.⁽³⁵⁾

This analysis is resonant with the nascent ideological formulations and behaviour of the Pan-Africanists discussed above and shown to be becoming dominant among Afro-Caribbean people in Britain. In both scenarios the realisation of black potential, and meaningful, secure, black identities are dependent on the transformation of the structures and cultures that have historically denied them fulfilment.

How this will be achieved in the metropolitan context and who will be their allies in this monumental human endeavour is the problem facing those sociologists whose research interests lie in the decolonisation processes of capitalist, racist, metropolitan Britain, and in the ultimate consummation of a Pan-Africanist identity. The task of this thesis, now completed, was to show how and why such an identity was being developed under the given social conditions.

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1. See L. A. Coser, The Functions Of Social Conflict, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1956, for an acceptable defence of this position. He argued that conflict is endemic in society because of the scarcity of resources, prestige and power.

2. This point has been made by Milton Gordon thus:-

There is a pronounced tendency in recent sociological writings to minimise the role of perceived sanctions in human action and to conceive of the human actor as responding largely to valuations, ideologies, and emotional forces in actualising behaviour. ... Our hypothesis is that, statistically speaking, perceived power sanctions substantially reduce the level of overt violent conflict between competing or potentially conflicting individuals and groups.

See Milton M. Gordon, "Toward A General Theory Of Racial And Ethnic Group Relations" in Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan (eds), Ethnicity, Theory and Experience, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1975, p. 101.

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Even though slavery very often represents the extreme of absolute inner hostility, its occasion nevertheless

produces a sociological condition, and thus quite frequently its own attenuation.

See Georg Simmel, Conflict And The Web Of Group Affiliation, (translated by K. Wolff and R. Bendix), The Free Press, New York, 1955, p. 27.

4. See Michael Banton, The Coloured Quarter: Negro Immigrants In An English City, Cape, London, 1955; Ruth Glass, Newcomers, Allen and Unwin, London, 1960; Sheila Patterson, Dark Strangers: A Study Of West Indians In London, Oxford University Press, London, 1965. Ruth Glass, for example, argued that "discrimination is not institutionalised in British society" (op. cit., p. 218).
5. See W. Daniel, Racial Discrimination In Britain, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1968; E. J. B. Rose, et. al., Colour And Citizenship: A Report On British Race Relations, Oxford University Press, London, 1969; D. Smith, Racial Disadvantage In Britain, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1977.
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7. See J. Rex, "The Concept Of Race in Sociological Theory" in S. Zubaida, Race And Racialism, Tavistock, London, 1970, p. 39.
8. See J. Rex, Race Relations In Sociological Theory, Weidenfield and Nicholson, London, 1970; J. Rex, Race, Colonialism And The City, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1973.

9. See J. Rex and R. Moore, Race, Community and Conflict, Oxford University Press and Institute of Race Relations, London, 1967.
10. See J. Rex and S. Tomlinson, Colonial Immigrants in a British City. A Class Analysis, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1979.
11. This typology is similar to that of Louis Wirth who classified "minorities" according to their orientation towards the majority society, namely:-
 - (i) Assimilationist.
 - (ii) Pluralist.
 - (iii) Secessionist.
 - (iv) Militant.

See Louis Wirth, "The Problem of Minority Groups" in R. Linton (ed), The Science of Man in the World Crisis, Columbia University Press, New York, 1945.
12. The fact that it came as a revelation to Rex and Tomlinson that black people, whose culture was forged under conditions of British slavery and colonialism, would refuse to identify with white working class culture, community and politics and form their own organisations indicate a measure of ethnocentrism. See J. Rex and S. Tomlinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 275 - 6 for a discussion of the concept of "under-class"
13. The publication of Alex Haley's book and the showing of the film "Roots" on British television have given legitimacy to this trend.

14. The official figures on West Indian migrants show a net loss of West Indians since 1970. For example, between 1971 and 1973, 9,000 West Indians entered Britain while 14,000 left. See Population Trends, H.M.S.O., London, 1975, p. 4. Those remaining tend to be comparatively young. It has been estimated that 41% of the black population of Great Britain were aged under 15 in 1971 and a further 49% were aged from 15 to 44. For Great Britain as a whole, these proportions were 24% and 39%. See The Runnymede Trust and The Radical Statistics Race Group, Britain's Black Population, Heinemann Educational Books, London, 1980, p. 9.
15. Leo Kuper, Race, Class and Power, Duckworth, London, 1974, p. 61.
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23. See Jenny Bourne, "Cheerleaders and Ombudsmen: The Sociology of Race Relations in Britain". Race and Class, Volume XXI, Number 4, Spring, 1980, p. 345.
24. See Orlando Patterson, "Context and Choice in Ethnic Allegiance: A theoretical Framework and Caribbean Case Study", in N. Glazer and D. Moynihan, (eds.) Ethnicity, Theory and Experience, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1975, p. 305.
25. See Martin Kilson, "Blacks and Neo-ethnicity in American Political Life", in N. Glazer and D. Moynihan (eds), op. cit., p. 236. His definition of "neo-ethnicity" was in terms of the revitalisation of weak ethnic collectivities or the rehabilitation of dwindling ethnic cohesiveness. He even credited "Negro Americans" with initiating the current flurry of neo-ethnicity in American political life.
26. See Lester Singer, "Ethnogenesis and Negro Americans Today", Social Research, 29, 1962, p. 423.
27. Ibid., p. 428.
28. D. Bell, "Ethnic and Social Change" in N. Glazer, and D. Moynihan, (eds.) op. cit., p. 141.

29. N. Glazer and D. Moynihan (eds), *op. cit.*, p. 7.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
31. See Herbert Marcuse, One Dimensional Man, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1964, pp. 256 - 7.
32. See Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks (translated by C. L. Markman), Grove Press, Inc., New York, 1967.
33. See Frantz Fanon, A Dying Colonialism (translated by Haakon Chevalier), Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1970; and The Wretched Of The Earth, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1967.
34. Frantz Fanon, Toward The African Revolution, (translated by Haakon Chevalier), Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1970, p. 180.
35. Frantz Fanon, *op. cit.*, 1967, p. 73.

APPENDIX I

A METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

In recent years a number of methodological critiques have been levelled at those sociologists who have endeavoured to generate "knowledge" without paying due care and attention to the many problems involved in such an enterprise. In "doing sociology" they have failed to make explicit what they considered to be its subject-matter, concealed their theoretical assumptions, and over-looked the need to give an account of the procedural rules followed in accumulating and interpreting data. Their critics have argued that they have even been unaware of the problematic nature of the very language of their discourse.

It may be that some of these sociologists had consciously bracketed the philosophical imponderables of human existence and stalled the propulsion into an area that is fraught with difficulty - and justifiably so. On the other hand, some may have preferred to follow intuition for fear of the fate of "the centipede who lost the ability to walk when asked in which order he moved his feet". But as Lazarsfeld and Rozenberg argued, the consequences of outlining the objectives and methods of "doing something" is, more often than not, a general improvement in performing the taken-for-granted activity.⁽¹⁾ This certainly applies to the study of identity formation.

Even if some kind of consistent methodology is essential for scientific progress, the task facing the social scientist is to decide what kind of methodology would be appropriate for his particular research undertaking. Methodology in sociology, and more generally in the social sciences, often borders on philosophical speculation, the function of which is to examine the methods which are used and/or to prescribe those which should be used to generate "valid" knowledge.⁽²⁾ Whatever method is used to generate knowledge,

it is rooted in one or other theory of society and undoubtedly has philosophical underpinnings. The fact that several methodologies and "paradigms" exist in the social sciences simultaneously suggest that social phenomena are infinitely complex and possibly beyond the comprehension of the social scientist, qua scientist. This observation has led to the development of a critical approach to social reality and all existing definitions thereof, with the objective of debunking established methodologies and intended to free man from dogmatism, and ultimately from political domination.⁽³⁾ This critical approach to methodology is not understood as an injunction to abandon all efforts to seek knowledge of social reality, but an admonition to tread carefully. Familiarity with this debate over fundamental issues in social science should provide the researcher with an awareness, and prevent him from adopting any one methodology blindly. The outcome could be an imaginative and flexible approach to social reality that stimulates empirical enquiry and analytical rigour rather than stultifies them. The fact that commitment to the search for new approaches often comes as a result of dissatisfaction with the results of established methodologies indicates the need for exploration during the early stages of "learning sociology".⁽⁴⁾

The dominant methodological stand-point in sociology today emerged out of the wish to establish a natural science of society, which would possess the same sort of logical structure, use the same methods and enjoy the same achievements as the sciences of nature. Since Comte's attempt to establish sociology as "the science of society" representing the highest stage in the development of human thought, varying schools of positivism, logical positivism and empiricism have advocated or implicitly subscribed to particular methodologies. These methodologies often amounted to a set of techniques for catching the unchanging properties of a solid factual world⁽⁵⁾ and sometimes led to abstract typifications somewhat removed from social reality. However, the "classical school" of sociology which treats social facts as things, which rests all interpretation of the world exclusively on "experience" and which leaps

from a few observed cases to the most general axioms has been systematically attacked not only by the afore-mentioned critical theorists but also by scholars working within the Sociology of Knowledge tradition.

A significant means of undermining the foundations of that branch of sociology that aped the natural sciences was to demonstrate that even in their model, exemplary, disciplines there was no undisputable, rational or coherent prescriptive methodology. As Kuhn argued, progress in the natural sciences was not achieved by increments following the use of universally accepted methods but by means of revolutionary paradigm shifts within the scientific community.⁽⁶⁾ Scientific knowledge therefore had no special epistemological status but was socially contingent. Repeated assaults on the assumed certainties of the natural sciences demonstrated how the empirical conclusions of science were indeed interpretative constructions dependent for the meaning upon, and limited by the cultural resources available to a particular social group at a particular point in time.⁽⁷⁾ Apparent truths were often reducible to collective agreement.

If it is conceded that natural phenomena are intrinsically meaningless with meaning being imputed by the human agent and that social phenomena are intrinsically meaningful, then it is to be expected that the problems of meaning and interpretation in the social sciences would be infinitely compounded. In short, the sociological enterprise is doubly contingent. This observation has led to direct assaults on the orthodoxies of the "classical school of sociology" referred to above. The empiricist method of blindly collecting "facts" and arbitrarily classifying them into some pre-conceived order was undoubtedly based on a conception of society as a massive facticity determining the behaviour of man. Viewing this activity from the perspective of the Sociology of Knowledge Cicourel argued that:-

... the world of observables is not simply "out there"

to be described and measured with the measurement systems of modern science, but the course of historical events and the ideologies of a given era can influence what is "out there" and how these objects and events are perceived, evaluated, described and measured.⁽⁸⁾

Having questioned an established method in sociology, Cicourel recommended the alternative "social psychological" view as providing a more appropriate theoretical frame of reference and related methods for generating knowledge of social reality. Whereas the positivists and empiricists posit a world out there which more or less determines human behaviour, the alternative school, by whatever name, considers the world out there to be socially constructed by conscious actors. In interacting with others in pursuit of values, such actors impute meaning to nature and create those social phenomena that are the subject-matter of sociology. Thus, as John Rex observed, any subject-matter under investigation is difficult to define and in the last analysis depends on the attainment of theoretical clarity.⁽⁹⁾

The very nature of identity suggested that the empiricist method would be inadequate as a means of generating knowledge about this subject. In the Introduction to this thesis, the adopted operational definition was that it was "a conscious projection of a shared self-image into social reality". This definition meant that the study of the process of identity formation and articulation would involve a qualitative analysis of an intersubjective phenomenon and the treatment of its carriers as purposive actors operating in a meaningful world, engaged in a creative enterprise. In effect, this definition betrayed a theoretical position (discussed in Chapter 1) and certain methods that were consciously adopted from various sources - and used cautiously throughout the study.

The major propositions of the Sociology of Knowledge concerning the social construction of reality and the social contingency of knowledge were accepted from the beginning. From within this school of thought, Weberian Verstehen Sociology was considered for its insights into the meaningful nature of social existence. For Weber, the defining feature of human action was its meaningfulness. Such action was in fact social action because the individual actor took into account the action of others and oriented his behaviour to theirs. Hence, sociology was defined as the science which aims at the interpretative understanding of social behaviour in order to gain an explanation of its causes, its course and its effects.⁽¹⁰⁾

In generating knowledge in sociology, Weber considered it imperative that the sociologist grasp the subjective meaning and explain an activity causally. One method advocated for proceeding from subjective understanding to objective explanation was that of constructing "ideal types" and, in the case of actors, a hypothetical actor who acted "rationally". However, in progressing from one to the other, Weber seemed to leap from the phenomenal to the transcendental and implied that social reality was in the last analysis beyond the full comprehension of the empirical actor. Thus, I agree with Hindess that even though Weber's work is a major "progression" from merely observing human behaviour, he nevertheless presents a model which suggests that:-

... to each phenomenal human animal there corresponds
a transcendental rational being which expresses itself
in and through the behaviour of that animal.⁽¹¹⁾

To argue that the ideal typifications are only heuristic does not constitute an adequate justification for their imposition in the first place.

It is precisely this haunting neo-Kantian bifurcation of social

reality that the phenomenologists have tried to obviate. Drawing selectively on the philosophical work of Husserl, Schutz, a major exponent of phenomenological sociology, considered the lived world as both the starting point and end point for all sociological explanations. The crux of his model is a rational creative actor accomplishing social interaction on the basis of implicit yet sophisticated theories. The task of the sociologist is therefore to make explicit these theories used by the actor in his every day taken-for-granted activities. Hence, whereas the "relevances" of lay members of society are geared into the practical tasks of day-to-day social life, those of the sociologist are cognitive or theoretical. Put briefly, the social scientist uses the first order constructs of ordinary actors to arrive at second order, objective constructs. However, these latter constructs are not arbitrarily chosen. They are subject to the postulate of logical consistency. Compliance with this postulate warrants the objective validity of the thought objects constructed by the social scientist. The possible gulf between the first order and second order constructs are bridged by Schutz's postulate of "adequacy", defined as follows:-

Each term in a scientific model of human action must be constructed in such a way that a human act performed within the life-world by an individual actor in the way indicated by the typical construct would be understandable by the actor himself as well as for fellow-men in terms of common-sense interpretations of everyday life. Compliance with this postulate warrants consistency of the constructs of the sociologist with the constructs of common-sense experience of the social reality.⁽¹²⁾

Thus, while Weberian methodology opens up the possibility of imposing an ideal type on social reality, the phenomenological expositions of Schutz (and his followers) consider the actor as the final arbiter, and by extension reduces sociology to common-sense and intuition. In addition to this weakness in phenomenology, it has been found difficult to adopt this approach for two other reasons.

First, the phenomenologists ask the social scientist to suspend all presuppositions, to bracket all values, and to hold in abeyance all theoretical frames of reference in approaching social reality. As a member of society and as an essential part of his subject matter caught up in the flow of social reality, this is an almost impossible position for the sociologist to take. Rather than enter the field as some pure visitor from outer space it would be more reasonable to ask the sociologist to make his value promises explicit and invite others to judge the results in this light.⁽¹³⁾

Another defect of phenomenological sociology is its pre-occupation with the condition of social action and not its consequences. Even though it is illuminating to show how actors accomplish social interaction, and to highlight the problematic nature of this enterprise, a full account of social processes should pay attention to the consequences of social interaction, namely the complex institutional arrangements and the emergent norms which have the potential of acting back and exerting a degree of constraint on the behaviour of individuals involved in social interaction.

An interesting development within the phenomenological tradition is the "Ethnomethodological" School in Sociology. Even though the concerns of ethnomethodology are similar to those of phenomenological sociology the ethnomethodologists seem to concentrate on giving an account of the development of first order constructs. Garfinkel, one of the major exponents of this

school, holds that even the most apparently mundane and common-place, every day, activities of social interaction have a highly systematic and organised character. The aim of ethnomethodology is therefore to make the accountability of social practices itself accountable, but not to try to remedy "indexical" expressions - in all their specificity, uniqueness and contextuality - in the manner of theories which try to classify and explain these practices on the general level.⁽¹⁴⁾ Ethnomethodology is therefore the descriptive study of indexical expressions in all their empirical variety and richness.

My major criticism of ethnomethodology is that even though it rightly demonstrates the unresolved problematics of the taken-for-granted world, it fails to transcend this position into helping the social scientist to make sense of the flux and complexity of social reality. In denying the sociologist a distinct role in the generation of knowledge, ethnomethodology has made it possible for an endless number of laymen to give their descriptive accounts of social accomplishments without advancing our knowledge of social reality. In short, the ethnomethodologists fail to relate the personal troubles and achievements of milieux to the public issues of social structure - which Mills considers to be the crucial role of the sociologist.⁽¹⁵⁾

The significant defect, however, of the phenomenological schools, of whatever persuasion, is the failure to recognise the centrality of power in social life. Thus, when a theoretical frame of reference was being established for the study of identity, political insights had to be sought elsewhere. In examining the processes of identity formation and articulation, it became clear that the problem originated within a social structure in which individuals and groups have unequal amounts of power. In particular, the allocation of unacceptable roles and the generally low social placement of black people appeared to militate against their own self-conceptions, created tensions between them and their society, and emphasised the need to create meaningful

alternative identities.

This political dimension of social interaction and the use of cognitive weapons in an effort to realise interests have been widely discussed and developed within the Sociology of Knowledge. Mannheim, for example, in relating social thought directly to the social position and interests of the author and the category or group to which he belonged, made a crucial distinction between "ideology" and "utopia", and suggested that only the free-floating intellectual was to be relied on to produce "factual", "objective" knowledge.⁽¹⁶⁾

When these insights are applied to the study of black people in white majority societies, they pose major methodological problems. At one extreme they can lead to a call for a "Black Sociology" to deal adequately with the social interaction of black people in white dominated societies. In taking up such a position, Robert Staples argued that the black sociologist should begin by unmasking the ideologies behind those bodies of thought that try to account for black behaviour in race relations situations. In particular, he isolated the "Race Relations Cycle" of Robert Park, "Structural Functionalism" in general and the "Culture of Poverty" school of thought as examples of white "ideologies" fabricated to maintain the status quo.⁽¹⁷⁾ He concluded that as white sociology has been a tool of oppression, Afro-American (black) sociology must become an instrument of liberation.

This position cannot be fully adopted for the simple reason that, by the same token, "Black Sociology" would become nothing more than a "utopian" distortion of social reality. The significant point Staples made, however, is that the black sociologist, in analysing the social interaction and social constructions of fellow blacks, must:-

- (a) Get involved.

- (b) Treat seriously the accounts of his respondents.
- (c) Make himself accountable to his subject community.

In short, "Black Sociology" must be a unity of theory and action. Hence, if the subject of study is the projection of a shared self-image and the construction of plausibility structures to buttress this phenomenon then, in order to satisfy the postulate of adequacy (borrowed from Schutz), the black researcher must inevitably get drawn into these processes. He has no alternative but to swim with the tide. To resist overtures to get involved would be to stand out like a sore thumb and to frustrate his interactants - in a misguided endeavour to remain "objective". This I find reasonable and acceptable.

METHODS

The widely recognised method of gathering qualitative data in sociology is that of "Participant Observation". It was therefore ideally suitable for a study of identity formation. This method is generally understood in terms of the researcher joining the daily life of the group being studied and sharing in the activities and sentiments of the people in a face-to-face relationship. This implies a conscious decision to enter this world for the purpose of gathering authentic data that would not have been amenable to other methods. As such, the Participant Observer passes through the three stages of entering the field, maintaining contact with interactants and terminating the research.

In the case of a black researcher carrying out research in his own community, this method requires some modification. He neither faces the problem of entering the field nor terminating his involvement. His research constitutes a more conscious reflection on the everyday activities of the members of his community and finally relating them to extra-communal processes and structures,

and the wider public issues of the society. At all times, in white dominated societies, he remains a black man, a member of the "black community".

In this study of identity formation among Afro-Caribbean people in Handsworth, I started the research from a position of familiarity with the people and culture of the community. Having spent several years as a teacher and member of various community groups in the area, I took on, more explicitly, the role of "Participant as Observer" in 1976. Of the four roles available to the Participant Observer, and listed by S. T. Bruyn as ...

- (i) Complete Participation,
- (ii) Participation as Observer,
- (iii) Observer as Participant, and
- (iv) Complete Observer,⁽¹⁸⁾

... that of "Participant as Observer" seemed the most appropriate in that it made allowance for observation and later reflection as a trained sociologist. This, however, created a number of problems and increased the possibility of bias. The main problems were associated with:-

- (a) Adopting the perspective of the group to which I belonged and overlooking those of others.
- (b) Accepting roles of responsibility within the group and so becoming a change-agent in the very situation I was studying.

The tendency to be "taken in and taken over" by a group has been recognised by several researchers using the method of Participant Observation.⁽¹⁹⁾ To restrict oneself to a particular sub-group or group is to run the

risk of carrying out small-scale studies that are interesting in themselves but if used to make generalisations, do so erroneously. This awareness made me try to break out of the confines of the group by a variety of means to be discussed below.

The other danger facing the Participant Observer is that of being offered roles of responsibility by his interactants. The dilemma facing the standard Participant Observer is that even though an important role places him in a strategic position to observe his community more fully, it also enables him to exert influence and to become a change-agent in that community. In the classic study by W. F. Whyte into the social structure of an Italian Slum, he reported that at one time he was nominated Secretary of the Italian Community Club. At another time he was asked to make a decision - like any ordinary person - and later recoiled in horror when he realised that:-

I had violated a cardinal rule of Participant Observation. I sought actively to influence events. (20)

The contradiction between being a member of a community and simultaneously shirking the responsibilities that accompany that role can only be resolved by modifying the concept of Participant Observation. If the theoretical model is that of an actor engaged in meaningful and purposeful social interaction with his fellow men then it is inevitable that the social scientist, qua human being, will be drawn into the processes and will temporarily have to abandon that "objective" role that only the robot is capable of performing.

I therefore make no apology for my involvement with the several organisations encountered in the field in Handsworth. Objectivity was pursued

not by "spying" on the people of Handsworth, but by extending the research population from small groups to a more representative sample by means of a survey using an interview schedule, and later by reflecting on the material and relating it to wider societal issues.

The justifications for carrying out a sample survey in Handsworth can be given in terms of supplementing the data derived from Participant Observation, using one set of data to check the other and providing basic statistical material to reinforce arguments. Cicourel advocated the use of both Participant Observation and interviewing thus:-

In field research the two procedures ideally would be complementary. Intensive participation restricts the standardisation that interviewing permits, but participation provides a more intimate view of social process. Without some kinds of systematic probes and questions during Participant Observation the method would be of limited value for testing hypotheses.⁽²¹⁾

Drawing heavily on the insights of Cicourel, it was early decided that interviewing was more useful as a test of hypotheses than as a fool-proof method of collecting facts that are amenable to sophisticated statistical analysis. In his criticism of the latter method, Cicourel dismissed the notion of an interview as:-

... Something that springs from the soul of the respondent to the notebook of the interviewer without encountering any contaminating influences on route.⁽²²⁾

For Cicourel, the interview was a human encounter involving a variety of interpersonal transactions about which social science possessed little knowledge. The best that could be expected from such social interaction was the test of certain hypotheses and the gaining of new knowledge in this field. The specific hypotheses tested in this survey have been outlined in the Introduction to this thesis, and relate to the contention that identity is an emergent property requiring consensual validation and expressing itself in political terms. Having drawn up a number of hypotheses for testing, the next problem was the selection of the sample.

THE SAMPLE

The absence of a sampling frame and the nature of settlement of Afro-Caribbean people in Birmingham made it difficult to select a sample by purely random means. Even though the Handsworth area (made up of parts of the three Wards of Handsworth, Soho and Sandwell) had the greatest concentration of Afro-Caribbean people (as shown in Chapter 5), there were no Districts populated exclusively by them. However, in each of the three Wards there were certain Enumeration Districts and particular roads thereof, in which the probability of finding Afro-Caribbean residents in any house was relatively high. Ten Enumeration Districts with the highest percentages of Afro-Caribbean people were chosen from each of the three Wards and a sampling fraction of between 1 : 10 and 1 : 17 was chosen to get a total of 150 respondents. Every n^{th} house was visited and an interview carried out or arranged with any Afro-Caribbean person over the age of 16 and willing to participate in an interview. If the n^{th} house did not have any Afro-Caribbean people living there, then the nearest one to that house was chosen.

It must be reiterated that the exercise was not to collect data for the carrying out of sophisticated statistical analysis but to reach out to a more representative sample of Afro-Caribbean people in an area of high concentra-

tion than could have been obtained by Participant Observation over a limited period of time. The sample survey also enabled me to present my findings in terms more precise and meaningful than "a lot", "the majority", "most", "many", etc. Even so, "bias" had to be reduced where possible.⁽²³⁾

One source of bias in the research design was the exclusion of Afro-Caribbean people living outside the areas of high concentration. This was reduced by the fact that the vast majority of Afro-Caribbean people lived, not randomly scattered over the City, but in concentrated pockets in the Inner City. In any case my familiarity with such people living in the Suburbs indicated that they were aligned to those concensuses of opinion held by the sample and cultivated a range of identities not dissimilar to those of the sample. There was no marked correlation between living outside Handsworth and asserting any one identity.

Another possible source of bias was that of selecting a sample in which the unemployed or housewives or some other category was over-represented because visits were made at those times when only such people were at home. This possibility was reduced by visiting homes at all times, including the evenings and week-ends. If the prospective respondent was too busy to talk on the first visit, arrangements were made to conduct the interview at a more convenient time.

THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The interview schedule, or questionnaire, (Reproduced in Appendix II), used to guide the conversation and general interaction between me and my respondents was based on experience derived from training as a Sociologist and also on insights and understandings gained from casual conversations and unstructured interviews carried out as a Participant Observer. It was finally tested in a pilot study undertaken in February, 1976. Even so the pre-coded

questions were kept to a minimum for fear of imposing a grid on reality and filtering out essential data that had not surfaced in previous encounters.

Particular attention was paid to starting the interview on the right footing and to make sure that it flowed. Even though it is widely recognised that "black people are not strangers to each other",⁽²⁴⁾ it was necessary to establish rapport by means of discussing a popular subject. In the case of Afro-Caribbean people, the magical conversation piece is that place where they or their parents call "home". A logical development out of this discussion of the familiar was a comparison between "Race Relations" in the West Indies and Britain.

Then a personal account of migration was sought. This decisive turning point in the life-history of respondents was expected to be clearly remembered. *Indeed it was used as a means of double-checking on their age.* Replies to questions about this "rite of passage" were subsequently used to outline a pattern of settlement of Afro-Caribbean migrants.

Having by then established a community of interest and concern with the respondent, personal questions were introduced. Just in case these questions became too personal (e.g.: How many children do you have?) the discussion was swung back to the generally popular subject of returning "home" for a holiday (Question 18). This theme of life back home was also used to introduce questions about their social placement in the major allocative systems of British society.

The first area dealt with was that of employment because that was, after all, the umbilical link between immigrants and British society. This was followed by a discussion of education, housing, politics and social networks in that order. In all cases except housing, a longitudinal account and a comp-

arison between experiences in the West Indies and in Britain were asked for. No enquiries were asked about housing facilities in the West Indies for the simple reason that a "house" means different things in the two societies.

When attention was shifted to attitudes, an open-ended question was asked about the identity title or label they may have used on migrating to Britain. In contrast, those titles or labels current in 1976 were pre-coded because the range was fairly well known to me. These titles were not arbitrarily drawn up from the limitless number of names they could have called themselves but were based on replies made and concepts used in the large number of situations in which I discussed the subject of identity with black people. A card containing a manageable and representative catalogue of titles was presented to filter out possible answers in terms of intelligence, height, emotional state, sex, specific role, individual idiosyncrasies and other characteristics and variables that were not directly related to corporate identity. And because answers to these questions constituted key indicators of identity, the question "Why"? was asked on both occasions when respondents chose a title.

These questions were followed by those seeking their opinions on "Race Relations" in Britain. Then questions were asked about their own individual social placement and that of people like themselves in the institutional orders of employment, housing, politics, religion, education and the Handsworth area generally.

The sensitive subject of organisations was introduced in terms of offering help in times of trouble. This was closely followed by questions about changing the situation in Handsworth because organisations were often discussed in terms of "doing something for the people of the area".

In question 89 a stark choice was given to respondents in an effort to measure their level of consciousness. It transpired that all the respondents rejected the notion that things will get better by themselves and decided instead that people like themselves should try to improve things for themselves .

An effort was then made to find out how they were trying to make things better. This was followed by a series of questions to gauge their felt deprivation vis a vis other groups.

Comparison with other groups led logically to a choice of racial categories or groups and of individual heroes representing those groups. Once again heroes were presented in a pre-selected list. These listed heroes represented those people widely discussed and generally considered as important by a wide cross-section of people in the area. The inclusion of John Voster in a list of "heroes" is justifiable by the fact that many respondents, in casual encounters, thought him a shameless racist who clarified the racial issue for them.

In concluding the discussion where it started, resort was made to the familiar theme of settling down in a favourite country - most likely the West Indies. A final reflection on the experience in Britain was sought by asking questions about the significant values, persons, incidents and literature in their lives. The final question invited them to make a prediction about the future for themselves and people like themselves, in Britain and elsewhere.

This interview schedule was designed to cover the significant sociological referents of identity formation and articulation. The use of open-ended questions wherever possible was intended to give respondents an opportunity to talk at length about a subject of major concern. The sequence of questions and the development of the discussion from past experience, through

the present situation to future scenarios, were considered logical.

THE INTERVIEWS

The interviews themselves (carried out in Spring, 1976), lasted from one hour each to about five hours in some cases. All were conducted by myself and so the completed forms contained much more information than appeared on paper. Every interview was a unique encounter. In the initial stages, roles were allocated and readjusted until a role-set approximating that of two people trying to clarify their own identity was established. As a result only one person refused to co-operate. Indeed, so central to their lives was the subject of identity that respondents (and other members of their family who were not included in the sample) readily talked about it and extended the interview for much longer than was anticipated. Hence, these interviews not only provided quantitative data but supported the hypotheses that identity is of major concern to Afro-Caribbean people in Britain, that it is an intersubjective phenomenon and that it is presented in a favourable rather than a pathological light.

There were many opportunities for bias to emerge throughout these interviews. One possible source of bias was my own physical characteristics. It is often argued that in a "race relations" situation, different answers are given to the same question according to the racial (or class) characteristics of the interviewer. My findings could therefore be criticised on the grounds of black respondents telling a black interviewer more or less than they would have told a white researcher. But this was precisely what the study was all about - how black people project themselves and define their situation to each other as actual or potential members of their identity group. The contention that the same answers can be obtained from the same respondent by different interviewers of different races is untenable, not only because of the time factor (the same interviewer asking the same questions at different times is more likely than not to get different answers), but also because it amounts to

saying that "in a racist society race does not matter". Hence, when a researcher sends out white, middle-class, National Opinion Polls interviewers to collect "data" from black people in Handsworth, it must be recognised that what is being done is finding out how black people respond to the representatives of British society and little more.⁽²⁵⁾

A second possible source of bias was that of being recognised and identified as a member of "Harambee", and so prejudice the responses. In particular, this could have made respondents exaggerate the importance of this organisation in doing something constructive for black people locally. However, this possibility was reduced by my involvement in several other organisations in the area at one time or another. In addition to this, if they knew of my involvement with a particular organisation, by the same token, I also knew of theirs and this knowledge could have deterred them from saying only what they thought I expected to hear. In any case, Handsworth is part of an urban industrial society and not a rural community in which everyone knows everyone else intimately, and so, many people did not know of my association with any one organisation.

The editing and coding of the survey data was done by myself and checked by a colleague. An awareness was kept of the many problems discussed earlier and an effort made to reduce the data to a digestible and readable form without severing the accounts from those of the respondents themselves. The final sociological presentation of the data was neither an abstract typification of what was experienced and observed, nor indexical accounts of respondents, but an analysis of Afro-Caribbean people according to their "responses to the world".⁽²⁶⁾ Where possible, use was made of the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (Version 5) and the University's Burroughs 6700 Computer.

OTHER DATA

Other data used in the study were newspaper statements. As shown in Chapter 1, the labels attributed to the group by the Generalised Other are of crucial importance in estimating the status and place of its members in society. It was therefore necessary to study the popular newspaper accounts during the period when migration to Britain was being encouraged in Jamaica and during the period of settlement in Britain.

In the summer of 1976, a visit was made to Jamaica to study as comprehensively as possible the context of emigration, the operation of certain "creole" phenomena in their natal environment and the behaviour of important reference groups. The latter were conducted by means of Participant Observation, and reported on in Chapter 5, but the context, and particularly the "Zeitgeist",⁽²⁷⁾ of emigration during the 1950's was discernible by means of a "content analysis" of the newspapers read or assumed to have been read and discussed during those years when emigration to Britain became a public issue and a feasible enterprise. In full awareness of the problematics involved in using such "manufactured" data, it was found that the period 1953-1955 marked the point when attention was shifted from the U.S.A. and other nearby countries to Britain as a destination for migrants. This period showed a phenomenal resurgence of external migration, this time to the "Mother Country", and was accompanied by a heated discussion of the "true" identity of the migrants in the pages of the only daily newspaper, the Jamaican "Gleaner". These discussions had implications for the expectations of the migrants, briefly referred to in Chapter 5 and due to appear more fully in a separate publication.

A study was also made of the accounts and depiction of black people in the local Birmingham newspapers. All the cuttings referring to black people from 1952 to 1976 that were kept in the Birmingham Reference Library were analysed to find out how black people were publicly portrayed. These statements were used - with the necessary caution - and presented in Chapter 4 to substantiate the argument that the interaction between black and white people in Birmingham was influenced by mutual expectations based on what was considered as "knowledge" because it appeared in the mass media.

In addition to this, pamphlets, newspapers and the occasional letter written by respondents and the members of their identity groups were studied.

My findings were also compared with those of others who had carried out research in Handsworth. In particular the works of Augustine John (1971 and 1972), John Rex and Sally Tomlinson (1979), Ernest Cashmore (1979), and Peter Ratcliffe (forthcoming) were carefully studied.

Finally, the rich and complex data derived from my study of Handsworth were subjected to the sociological craftsmanship of standing back from the flow of events within the socially constructed world of the respondents and articulating it to the wider issues, movements and structures of "race relations" in Britain during the 1970's.

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APPENDIX II

THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Name

Address

.....

1. Can you please give me the name and address of the place you grew up in; where you would say your roots are to be found?

2. What were your relationships with white people before you came to England?

3. What did you think of those white people you knew?

4. Why did you decide to go to England?

5. What were your plans on setting out for England?

6. When did you arrive in England?

7. Where did you live when you first arrived?

8. With whom?

9. How old were you then?

10. When did you first arrive in Handsworth?

11. Why did you come to Handsworth?

12. Are you married?

13. Were you married at home or in England?

14. Is your partner black or white?

15. How many children do you have?

16. Are any of your children living away from home?

IF UNMARRIED/WITHOUT CHILDREN:

Are any of your brothers and sisters living away from your parents' home?

17. Where are they?

18. When did you return home on holiday?

19. What links do you maintain with back home?

EMPLOYMENT

20. What kind of work did you do in the West Indies before migrating to England?

21. What work did you do on arrival in England?

OR

(a) What school/college did you attend?

(b) What job did you do on leaving school?

22. What were:-

(a) The good things about your schooling in England?

(b) The bad things about your schooling in England?

23. What kind of work are you doing now?

24. What was your longest spell of unemployment:

(a) In the West Indies?

(b) In England?

25. Does your partner work?

26. Are you ever both at work at the same time?

27. Who looks after the children then?

28. What is your take-home pay? (to the nearest £5.00)

HOUSING

29. Are you buying this flat/house?

IF "YES"

30. Is it:

- (a) Used by family only?
 - (b) Sub-let to relatives?
 - (c) Sub-let to friends?
 - (d) Sub-let to others?
-

31. Was the mortgage (if any) acquired from:

- (a) Local Authority?
 - (b) Building Society?
 - (c) Finance Company?
 - (d) Other?
-

IF RENTING:

32. What is your accommodation:
- (a) Room?
 - (b) Flat?
 - (c) House?
-

33. From whom do you rent?
- (a) Local Authority.
 - (b) Housing Association.
 - (c) Private Landlord.
 - (d) Friend.
 - (e) Relative.
 - (f) Other.
-

POLITICS

34. Which political party back home did/do you support?
-

35. (a) Which political party in England do you support?
(b) Are you registered to vote?
(c) Are you a card-holding member of any party?
-

36. Do you attend political meetings in England?
-

37. (a) Do you vote in local elections?
(b) Did you vote in the last local election?
-

38. (a) Do you vote in general elections?
(b) Did you vote in the last general election?

RELIGION

39. What Church did you belong to in the West Indies?

40. How often did you go to Church back home?

41. Which Church did you attend when you first came to England?

42. Which Church do you belong to now?

43. How often do you go to Church?

44. What offices do you hold in the Church?

SOCIAL NETWORKS

45. Do you have any relatives living nearby?

46. How often do you see members of your "family" and what do you do with them?

Person	Times seen per wk./mth. etc.	Activity	Place

47. Have you made any close friends at work?

IF "YES" TO 47

48. Do you mix with them during work breaks or after work?

49. Where else have you made your other good friends?

50. Where do you normally spend your spare time?

51. Can you please tell me about your closest friends?

Race of Friend	Place of Meeting	Main Joint Activity

ATTITUDES

52. Suppose I had met you on your first trip to England and had asked you, "What are you?" How would you have answered?

53. Which one of these labels NOW defines you best of all?

(SHOW CARD 1)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| (a) English | (g) Black |
| (b) Working Class | (h) Middle Class |
| (c) British | (i) Of African Descent |
| (d) Immigrant | (j) Coloured |
| (e) Jamaican/Barbadian/Kittician etc. | (k) West Indian |
| (f) Citizen | (l) Other |

54. Why did you chose this label?

55. Which combination of two labels do you prefer?

56. Why?

57. Do you believe in integration?

58. Do you believe in intermarriage?

59. How would you describe the best possible relationship between black people and white people in England?

* Use racial or national term given in answer to Question 53, and which comes closest to "black migrant" to replace X in subsequent questions.

60. What kind of work do you think most X's do?

61. Why?

62. Are you happy with your work?

63. Why/why not?

64. How would you go about improving conditions at work?

(a) For yourself

(b) In general

65. Now what about relationships at work?
Do you think they need improving and how?
-
66. Can you tell me why there are numbers of X's living
in England?
-
67. Why are there more X's living in Handsworth than in
other areas?
-
68. Are you satisfied with your housing accommodation?
-
69. If "No", what complaints have you?
-
70. Where would you like to live?
-
71. In what kind of accommodation?
-
72. Where do you do your shopping?
(a) Grocery
(b) Other
-
73. What kinds of shops do you think are wanted in greater
numbers around here?
-
74. Why?
-
75. Do you think X's should take part in British politics?

76. Why/why not?

77. What do you think of Enoch Powell?

78. Why do you OR don't you go to Church?

79. What do you think of the West Indian Pentecostal Church in England?

Now I would like to ask you about children growing up in Handsworth.

80. (a) What do you think is the major influence in their lives?

(b) Is this a good or bad influence?

81. Please comment on the following facilities in the area.

Facilities	Comment whether good/just satisfactory/poor
(a) Pre-school	
(b) School	
(c) Youth employment	
(d) Youth recreation	

82. What do you think of X youth?

83. What comments would you make about the older generation of X's?

84. If you were in trouble who would you turn to for help?

85. Which organisation would you rely on?

86. If X people in England were in trouble, which group or organisation could they expect help from?

87. Which organisations do you belong to and what support do you give them?

Organisation	Type	Person's Attendance	Person's Role

88. In what ways would you like to see things improved in Handsworth?

89. Which one of these statements do you agree with:-

(SHOW CARD 2)

(a) "Left to themselves things will get better".

(b) "X people must try to improve things for themselves".

90. If (b), how do you see X people improving things for themselves?

91. What are you doing to make things better?

92. Which organisation do you think is doing most for X people?

(a) In Handsworth.

(b) In Britain.

93. Which organisation is doing least for X people?

94. Why do you say so?

95. How do X's compare with these groups economically?

Group	Same	Worse off than	Better off than
(a) People back home			
(b) English people here			
(c) Asian people here			

96. Why is this so?

(a)

(b)

(c)

97. On a larger scale, in what order of preference would you place these groups?

(SHOW CARD 3)

(a) Indians.

(b) Europeans.

(c) Africans.

(d) Chinese.

98. Why do you place them in this order?

Comment on: (1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

99. Thinking now of individuals, I would like you to pick out the people in this list you know and place them in order of importance.

(SHOW CARD 4)

Knows		Order of Importance	Short Comment
	John Voster		
	Malcolm X		
	George Best		
	Augustin Neto		
	Winston Churchill		
	Julius Nyerere		
	Harold Wilson		
	Marcus Garvey		
	President Kennaedy		
	Angela Davis		
	Michael Manley		
	Hailie Selassie		
	The Supremes		
	Martin Luther King		
	The Jackson Five		
	The Bay City Rollers		

100. Which country would you like to live in most of all?

101. Why?

102. Do you plan to go back to the West Indies?

103. When?

104. Why?

105. What do you think is most important?

- (a) Wealth
 - (b) Friends
 - (c) Salvation
 - (d) Health
 - (e) Other
-

106. Which person/incident/journal/article/book would you consider as having the greatest influence on you?

- (a) Person:
 - (b) Incident:
 - (c) Literature:
-

107. Why?

- Comment on:-
- (a)
 - (b)
 - (c)
-

108. What do you think of the future?

- (a) For yourself:
- (b) For X people in Britain:
- (c) For X people throughout the World:

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