NEGRO IMMIGRANTS IN A DOCKLAND AREA

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In a badly blitzed part of London, half a mile to the east of the Tower and close to the docks, lies a huddle of mean streets where some three to four hundred West Africans and West Indians have made their home. It is not a coloured ghetto but a depressed working class area sheltering residents of many races and nation-:alities, and one with a past little different from its present. The West Africans and West Indians who have settled there are not representative of the Negro population of the United Kingdom for they include in their number - inevitably - a high proportion of immigrants who lack the earning power or the social skills to lead a satisfying life in any other sort of district. Most of the West Africans were stowaways who landed in the years immediately following the war; some of the West Indians also stowed away but the number of those who landed as fare-paying passengers and as discharged seamen is greater. Both groups were attracted by their belief in Britain as an El Dorado, thinking that as British sub-:jects they would be welcome, and impelled by the rising level of unemployment in their own countries after the cessation of host-:ilities. They suffer certain disabilities in employment owing to their lack of skill and their being unused to the kind of work that is required of them, while many employers are reluctant to engage them. Conventional British attitudes towards coloured people are such that few women will have anything to do with them; those who do are mostly women who have failed to find a satisfying role in English society and their unstable temperament lies at

the root of the unhappiness in many mixed marriages. The colour antipathies of British people are unpredictable in their operation and combine with the strange social environment to create a situation of stress to which each individual must adjust in his own way. The adjustment of some is characterized by a striving after the prestige and status symbols of their white neighbours, of others by a sus-:picion of all whites, resentment of British attitudes and political nationalism. Most immigrants, especially in the first years, are of an individualistic and competitive disposition, little inclined to band together. The experience of social pressure exerted by the white group leads them later to develop a sentiment of solidarity with all coloured people. Within their own neighbourhood, however, and for one generation at least, social organization remains on a basis of segmentary opposition.

In the pages that follow I have attempted to describe and interpret the social life of the Negro grouping in this neighbour-:hood. In particular, I have considered how far the immigrants are being assimilated to the settled population, what are the obstacles to assimilation and what the conditions which favour its progress. Before commencing this research I had not previously associated with coloured people, nor been greatly interested in race relations, but I had been acquainted with the district and was aware that the coloured grouping was coming to be regarded as something of a social problem. I had also been impressed by American studies of similar situations, some of which are so vivid that the reader can project himself into the situation and think and feel with those whose life is described as with characters in a play. East

London's coloured quarter represented for me a cultural rather than a racial enclave; I hoped that a study of it would reveal features of anthropological interest and that in addition it might be a contribution to the understanding of the problems involved.

I do not claim that this book is objective, but it ought to be more nearly objective than a similar study would be if carried out by someone without any training in the social sciences[1]. The difficulty of avoiding subjective valuations is sometimes held up as a reproach to the social sciences but no branch of science is entirely free from political influences and value judgements. According to reputable methodologists, the so-called objectivity of natural science is in fact an 'inter-subjectivity' of method due to the way different workers in similar fields are able to check up on one another's observations and inferences. The same holds good in social science though we do not have the techniques of measurement and controlled experiment which permit so exact a checking. The research worker is involved in continuous discussion with colleagues who criticize and question his conclusions on a basis of their knowledge of comparable situations. Moreover, the research worker in the social sciences is trained to look for his own bias and to be on his guard against it.

In my own case I believe I started off with some bias in

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1. The reader may compare my account with part of another book which describes conditions in the vicinity of the coloured quarter and has something to say about the immigrants: A. T. Collis and V. Poole, <u>These Our Children</u>, 1950. The first two chapters should be noted for the way the writer has presented the material so as to exclude any perspective but her own; selective and inaccurate reporting of this kind gives a picture of the neighbourhood unfair to its residents and misleading to the reader.

favour of the immigrants - more from sympathy with the 'under dog' than for any other reason - and I was probably inclined to look for the explanation of many of the causes of discontent in the bureaucratic attitudes of officialdom. My subsequent experiences did a great deal to purge me of both these forms of bias. From the outset I saw much of the work of persons in various official positions and acquired a great respect for the work they did. My personal experiences with the immigrants also tended to correct my initial outlook. On the one hand I made fast friends with some and heard sufficient cases of their dis-:criminatory and prejudiced treatment from whites to maintain my sympathy with their point of view. On the other hand I had sufficient experience of behaviour on the part of some immigrants of the sort which is condemned by white and coloured alike, to prevent me from seeing the situation as the opposition of two groups where there is a clear majority of right on one side, or to prevent me from failing to understand the attitude of local people who associated the immigrants with various forms of un-:desirable behaviour.

The difficulty of obtaining objectivity is increased by the method which I have used in the interpretation of social life in the coloured quarter. The study of race relations is one of the least systematized spheres of social science. Existing theories help the research worker very little and I have relied largely upon the phenomenological analysis of individual experience. Phenomenological not after the manner of Husserl, in attempting to reduce phenomena to their essences, but in the refusal to

accept sense data as independent of the observer, or to accept "social facts" as "things" as Durkheim would have had us do. An event as seen and interpreted by an actor in a given situation may differ from the same event as witnessed by an observer. Thus in many passages in the later part of the work I have tried to present the material by reference to what the immigrants themselves consider significant. Man's propensity for conceptualizing phenomena abstractly and for classifying them into generalized categories, is one of the factors basic to all social behaviour. It results in the formation of stereotyped conceptions of other groups, and of the person's own, which in everyday language make it difficult for him to see another person's point of view. Thus the study of the objective aspects of conflict situations is inadequate unless supplemented by the consideration of the significance which is attached - subjectively - to certain forms of behaviour.

In West Africa the word Negro is disliked because of its associations with slavery, and people prefer to describe themselves according to their nationality. It would be preferable in such a study as this always to speak of "West Africans and West Indians" but as the repetition of the phrase becomes tiresome the term Negro is occasionally used as a substitute. It is in any case advisable to avoid using zoological expressions to describe social groups if for no other reason than because zoologists and physical anthropologists are not in agreement regarding the use of the term 'race', or as to the level at which mankind is to be classified into races. One anthropologist named Negroes as a race distinct from Nilotes, Hamites, Bantu,

etc., whereas a more recent writer groups the latter as sub-species of the Negro race.[1]

It will be apparent to the reader that by the time I made my enquiry (October 1950 - September 1952) conditions were in many ways different from those of the years just after the war when most of the immigrants were new to the country. Doubtless immigrant adjustment will continue and the description here be soon out of date. The plans of the London County Council for the reconstruction of the locality mean that in any event its character will be transformed and perhaps by the time this study is available to the public the coloured quarter as I knew it will no longer exist. But in view of the similarity of the problems associated with Negro immigration over two and a half centuries it is difficult to believe that they will not continue in some form or another.

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1. C.G.Seligman, Races of Africa, 1930; J.C.Trevor, article "Race", Chambers Encyclopaedia, 1950. See also the correspondence in Man for 1950 and 1951.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY OF THE COLOURED QUARTER IN STEPNEY

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Reactions to Immigration

West Africans and West Indians in Stepney today are often reproached with the question "Why don't you go home?" If they knew it they could point out that the Negro has had a place in the life of Stepney for over two centuries, indeed the number of coloured men there today is not very much greater than it has been at several earlier periods. Moreover, the history of the Borough of Stepney could be written very largely in terms of the successive inflow and assimilation of widely different groups of immigrants. Each group has made its contribution to the life of the area, and in each case the natives of the Borough have expressed resentment of the newcomers. Antagonism towards immigrants is the rule, not the exception.

The history of earlier Negro immigration into East London provides many points of comparison with the recent movement and helps to place the latter in perspective. It illustrates the changes in English people's attitude towards the Negro, as after the abolition of slavery when he lost the benefit of the philanthropists' agitation on his behalf. It illustrates the changes in the Negro's demands upon the imperial country: before the war the coloured men to be seen in the streets were mostly seamen whose chances of employment were poor, while since 1945 they have been represented by young men dissatisfied with colonial status who are challenging the Englishman for social equality. It very often happens that in a question of the relations between two groups which are of different origin, far too much significance is attached to any racial differences between them. A historical

approach which compares to some slight extent the reception accorded to immigrants of origin similar to the natives', corrects any tendency to see Negro immigration in entirely racial terms.

It is easy to forget that there have always been very many foreigners in the metropolis. Despite the recent heavy wave of immigration from Eastern Europe, the proportion of aliens in London in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been much lower than it was in the sixteenth century. Four hundred years ago, the immigrant Flemings were a commercial asset to the capital, yet legislators thought it ground for complaint that they came "with their Wyfes Children and Household, and wilnot take uppon Theym any laborious occupacion as Cartyng and Plowynge... but use makyng of Clothe and other handicraftis, and easy occupacions." [1]
In 1514 the Londoners told the King "the land is so inhabited with a great multitude of needy people, strangers of divers nations... that your liege people, Englishmen, cannot imagine or tell whereto, or to what occupation they shall use or put their children, to learn or occupy within your said Cities and Boroughs." Echoes of this protest have been heard in every century, but from the earliest times it was the policy of the wisest English kings to ignore local prejudice and encourage the immigration of skilled foreigners.

After the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes large numbers of the Protestant Huguenots emigrated from France despite their government's attempts to stop them. In the year 1687 alone some 13,000 of them settled in East London.[2] The Bishop of London had earlier

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1. Statute of 1. Richard III cap 9.

2. For Huguenot immigration see H. Llewllyn Smith, History of East London, 1939, pp. 242-52.

extolled the immigrants' virtues, but the people who had them as neighbours were far from sharing his enthusiasm.[1] Some of the hostility was due to the Huguenots' exclusiveness: they brought with them their own special trade, established their own churches, and held themselves apart from the other East Londoners. The earliest immigrants did not want to be assimilated to the local population, but the passage of time weakened the bonds that held their group together as a separate entity. In 1782, one of their pastors complained of the "growing aversion of the young for the language of their fathers from whom they seem almost ashamed to be descended." Then in 1819, their last church was taken over by the Methodists. Yet it is said that down to the middle of the nineteenth century, there were French, Irish and English streets in Bethnal Green which were frequently at odds with one another "on purely radical grounds" and that old women were occasionally found who spoke no English, but only a curious Anglo-French patois?[2]

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1. The Bishop held that "they beg not in our streets, nor crave anything at our hands, but to breathe our air and see our sun. They are good examples of virtue, travail, faith and patience. The towers im which they abide are happy, for God doth follow them with His Blessings." With this may be contrasted the view of the Rector of the local church (St. Mary Matfelon, in present day Stepney). "This set of rabble are the very offal of the earth, who cannot be content to be safe here from that justice and beggary from which they fled, and to be fattened on what belongs to the poor of our own land and to grow rich at our expense, but they needs must rob us of our religion too."

2. Charles McNaught, East London Observer 22.4.1911. Between the years 1910 and 1916 this newspaper published many valuable articles on local history by McNaught which appear to be derived from reliable and often original sources; they are available found and indexed at Bancroft Road Library, E.1.

Situated close to the river and the docks, Stepney was a district likely to attract immigration settlement. In the eighteenth century Germans, Danes and Swedes were numerous enough to have their own churches. Belgians were working in the sugar refining trade which had been established by the Germans. The immigrant population was increased by refugees from the Palatinate and Ashkenazi Jews from Germany. The restraints and observances of Jewish ritual were such as to make it impossible for a parent to apprentice his son to a trade unless he could find a co-religionist for his master and this led the Jewish immigrants to concentrate upon obtaining work in the clothing trade at an early date. Anti-Jewish feeling was very high in the seventeen fifties, sixties and seventies, but the dislike of all foreigners was so intense that a Frenchman who came to London in 1765 observed:

> "My French air, notwithstanding the simplicity of my dress, drew upon me at every corner of every street a volley of abusive litanies in the midst of which I slipped on, returning thanks to God that I did not understand English"(1.)

Contemporaries maintain that from this time onwards hostility towards foreigners decreased and by the end of the century visitors no comment upon it.

During the eighteenth century there was a very heavy migration into London, and into East London in particular, of persons from the country districts of England and from Ireland. The employing classes held the Irish immigration to be an economic necessity for they were physically strong and made good labourers, but the English workers accused them of cutting wage rates. When trouble broke out

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1. M. Dorothy George, London Life in the Eighteenth Century, 1925 p. 133.

on this score in Spitalfields in 1736, there were pitched battles on two successive days and the Guards had to be called from the Tower before the mob could be dispersed. Dorothy George declared "the Irish in London were a police problem, a sanitary problem, a poor-law problem, and an industrial problem" while a contemporary describing the Irish lodging houses as they were in 1751, wrote :

> "If one consiers the destruction of all morality, decency and modesty, the swearing, whoredom and drunkenness which is eternally carrying on in their houses on the one hand, and the excessive poverty and misery of most of the inhabitants on the other, it seems doubtful whether they are most the objects of destation or compassion... (1)

The Irish were disliked also for their Catholicism and during the Gordon riots of 1780 their two small chapels in Stepney were wrecked by the mob. After the turn of the century ruffianism declined and the numbers of "industrious Irish" increased. Though there are few distinguishing characteristics, except religion, to mark off those who are of Irish descent, the Irish have maintained a partially separate existence in East London up to the present day.

The amount of hostility which one group will display towards another does not depend upon the predispositions of the group who are in possession when the immigrants arrive, but is the product of the interaction between the two groups, If the immigrants keep tightly together trading only with one another, they may increase the antagonism towards themselves; on the other hand, hostility may force them together. Xenophobia is greater at some times than at others, but it is easy to be wise after the event and noteworthy that those who complained about the evils which the immigrants brought in their train were unable to see the contributions which in the long run the strangers were to make.

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1. Ibid. pp. 120.

Early African Immigrants

The first recorded instance of Negroes coming to England is of the five "blacke slaves" brought by the London merchant John Lok from the Guinea Coast in 1555. They were to be interpreters and assistants to the merchants and were maintained in Britain "till they could speak the language, and then they should be brought again to be a helpe to Englishmen in this country" (West Africa). They were afterwards returned to their homes.[1] Then from about 1659 onwards numbers of young Africans were brought to England and kept in London as domestic servants, their possession being regarded as a mark of social distinction.[2]

Coloured men were to be found in Stepney from the beginning of the eighteenth century. Some were slaves, others seamen. A local historian has recorded some advertisements of the time: in 1707 -

> "Went away from his Master Yesterday Morning, at 4 o'clock, an East Indian Boy, nam'd Caesar, About the Age of 16, wearing his own short Hair, a sad-coloured Fustian Frock over a black waistcoat, a Fustian pair of Breeches, and Grey Stockings. He has a handsome Face and is tall for his Age. Whoever takes him up, and brings him to Mr. John Waterhouse's in Aylif Street, Goodmans Fields, shall have ten shillings Reward."

and a few years later -

> "A Slender Middle-sized India Black, in a dark grey livery with Brass Buttons, went from Mrs. Thwaits, in Stepney, the 4th of June, and is Suppos'd to be gone on board some Ship in the Downs; whosoever secures and gives notice of him to Mrs. Thwaits or Mr. Tresham, two doors within Aldgate, shall have 10s reward and reasonable Charges."

> "Run away from his Master about a Fortnight since, a lusty Negroe Boy, about 18 years of Age, full of pock holes; had a silver collar about his neck engrav'd Capt. Thos. Mitchel's Negroe, living in Griffith Street, in Shadwell."

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1. J.W.Blake, Europeans in West Africa 1450-1560, The Hakluyt Society, 1946, pp. 345, 382 and 399.
2. Kenneth L.Little, Negroes in Britain, 1948, p. 165ff.

> "A Negro Boy, about 12 years of age, that speaks English, is to be Sold. Enquire of Mr. Step Rayner, a Watchmaker, at the sign of the Dial, without Bishopsgate." (1)

According to local tradition there were two inns by the river in Wapping which made a market for the sale of young slaves as domestic servants. There was some traffic in the opposite direction also, for slaves were sometimes sent from the gaols to work on the plantations of Virginia and Maryland, being euphemistically referred to as "apprentices".

At the same time coloured seamen were coming into the port and spreading into the nearby parishes. One of the curates of a Stepney clergyman, Dr. Mayo (1733-91), wrote of him:

> "He was particularly kind to the negroes and uninstructed men of colour, who, employed generally on board of ship, occasionally resided in his parish, which is full of seafaring people. I suppose no clergyman in England ever baptized so many black men and Mulattoes; nor did he at any time baptize them without very much previous preparation...The attachment of these poor people to him was very great. Several of them never came into the Port of London, without waiting upon him, by way of testifying the respect in which they held him." (2)

On the first page of the burial register of St. Anne's Church, Limehouse, appears the name of an Indian seamen buried in October 1730 and a few pages later follow the names of two Negroes.[3]

After 1767 Granville Sharp was active in the cause of coloured slaves. In 1771 he was able to bring before the courts the case of a Negro, James Somersett, who had been brought to England, escaped, recaptured, and was about to be taken back to the plantat-:ions of Jamaica. Sharp's biographer states that in the 1760's there were at least 14,000 slaves in England[4] and in the course of

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1. McNaught, loc. cit., 21.11.1914 and 25.2.1911.
2. The Orthodox Churchman's Magazine, 1802, vol ii, p.30, quoted in Millicent Rose, The East End of London, 1951, p.102.
3. J.G. Birch, Limehouse Through Five Centuries, 1930, p.142.
4. E.C.P.Lascelles, Granville Sharp and the Freedom of the Slaves in England, 1928, p. 16.

the Somersett trial Lord Mansfield accepted a figure of 14-15,000;[1] a large proportion of these men appear to have lived in St. Giles and the riverside parishes of the east of London. Sharp won his case and those who had owned slaves in Britain lost their control over them.

Coloured men who lacked domestic employment quickly fell into distress. The number of the "Black Poor" was increased further by the bringing to London of some of the Negro soldiers who had fought on the British side in America prior to the peace of 1873 and by a steady stream from the West Indies which seems to have included not a few stowaways.[2] Under the poor law of the day paupers were to be repatriated to the parish of their birth, so perhaps it is not surprising that when the "Committee for Relieving the Black Poor" considered "by what means a support might be given to the Blacks who seek the protection of this Government", they found "that no place is so fit and proper (for them) as the Grain Coast of Africa." Over 400 hundred of them were eventually taken to found the settlement afterwards known as Freetown. Some went to the West Indies where they worked as free labourers, but many

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1. T.B.Howell, State Trials, XX p.72.
2. A Swedish observer wrote: "The blacks living in London are generally profligate, because uninstructed, and vitiated by slavery...some of these fellows contrive to conceal themselves or are concealed by others on board ships on the point of sailing; a better sort come to attend children and sick persons on board, and others are brought by their masters by way of parade. Many of these naturally enough, but perhaps without sufficient reflection, prefer "a crust of bread and liberty" in Old England, to ease, plenty, and slavery in the West Indies... In London being friendless and despised, on account of their complexion, and too many of them being really in-:capable of any really useful occupation, they sink into abject poverty and soon become St. Giles' black-birds." C.B.Wadstrom, An Essay on Colonisation, London 1794, Pt II pp 227-8.

"blacks" continued as crossing sweepers, entertainers, sellers of tracts, and beggars in the London streets. Some of these latter achieved a certain fame amongst the London public and the portraits of two of them, Charles M'Gee and Joseph Johnson, appear in a work published in 1817.[1] Some of the crossing sweepers made a small fortune in the trade and one West Indian returned to his native country carrying with him, as the savings of a long prof-:essional life, over £1,500;[2] another, who died in poverty, left behind him no less than £8,000,[3] but this was unusual for most of the Negroes seem to have enjoyed spending their money. Black men were favoured by the passers-by and some white beggars fortunate enough to possess flat noses and curly hair tried to disguise them-:selves as Negroes![4] By the end of the Napoleonic wars there were large numbers of beggars - white and black - in London, and the sale of crossing sweepers' pitches had become a scandal. The officers of the Society for the Suppression of Mendicity were zealous in discharge of their duties and after a few years little more is heard of the black beggars.[5]

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1. J.T.Smith, Vagabondia, or Mendicant Wanderers through the Streets of London, 1817, pp 33-4, plates 11 and 12.
2. J.Grant, Sketches in London, 1850, p 27.
3. See Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 1837, vol XLII p. 168, quoted in my "The Changing Position of the Negro in Britain", Phylon, Vol XIV (1953) No 1 (q.v.).
4. Grant, op. cit. p. 42. Henry Mayhew, London Labour and the London Poor, 1862 edn. Vol IV p. 425.
5. References to the number of destitute coloured men are to be found in the reports of two Parliamentary Committees published in 1815; Lascars and Other Asiatic Seamen (p.6) and The State of Mendicity in the Metropolis (pp.84-5). See also the reports of the Mendicity Society, e.g. Third Report pp 27-8, where it is said that in arresting a native of St. Domingo their officers were compelled to use staves "in consequence of four or five other blacks attempting a rescue."

The initial effect of emancipation was to increase destit-:ution among the Negroes. The long term effect was to remove them from the centre of the stage as a special category of man-:kind and to promote their assimilation into the working class. From now on it is the parishes of the East End which are thought of as the home of the Negro immigrants.

The early years of the nineteenth century saw continued hostility between the different ethnic groups in East London. In 1808 and 1809 the weavers of Bethnal Green rioted against the Irish and whole regions barricaded their doors and windows while stones were torn from pavements for use in the fight. Down in Ratcliffe Highway the Lascars and Chinese had a pitched battle involving several hundred men. The shortage of recruits for the armed forces during the Napoleonic wars led to the empressment of merchant seamen, and the East India Company was forced to employ Indians to man many of their ships. In London, the Company quartered the men in a barrack-like building in the notorious Ratcliffe Highway. Conditions there appear to have been poor and "A Memorial concerning Asiatic Sailors...drawn up at the instance of a society formed for their Protection" is to be found in The Times for the 9th December 1814. It bears the names of twenty-three gentlemen, most of whom gave addresses in the eastern parishes. The Memorial alleges that many of the men were press-ganged in India, that they were exploited by the Serangs who acted as boatswains, by the Masters, by the Company Agents, and that they were cruelly treated in the barracks. Moreover, "the consequence of their promiscuous intercourse with the most abandoned

females to which that situation of their residence affords them many facilities, is most pernicious to their health, and eventually is more fatal to them than any other calamity under which they labour." The Company indignantly rebutted the charges about "the custom of boarding and lodging the healthy in the same apartment with the sick, the dying and the dead...alike necessitated to lie on bare and damp floors...even during the winter season when six, eight, and ten, night after night, have been found dead" (almost certainly an exaggeration). The Company alleged in turn that "the insubordination has been of late much increased by the injudicious though well meant interference of the society for the protection of Asiatic seamen" and referred to "the danger of teaching Lascars that they had to look to any authority superior to that of the Company, their native protectors." The Company wished that work could be found for these men while on shore, though "the men themselves are perfectly convinced that the English and Irish labourers would prevent their working" and an example was adduced of an occasion on which this occurred. However, the sympathies of the Government did not lie with the Company.[1]

At this time there was a cosmopolitan group of ex-seamen in Stepney, of Negroes, Indians, and sailors of all nationalities. It was alleged by a magistrate in 1817 as an excuse for licensing scandals in the Tower Hamlets, that "little good can be done by taking away the licences of houses in Shadwell for this reason, that the population consists entirely of foreign sailors, Lascars,

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1. Correspondence between the Commissioners for the affairs of India, and any other public body, relative to the care and maintainence of Lascar sailors during their stay in England, 1816.

Chinese, Greeks, and other filthy dirty people of that description" ...[1]. In 1821 Pierce Egan writes of an East End party "Lascars, blacks, jack tars, coal heavers, dustmen, women of colour, old and young, and a sprinkling of the remnants of once fine girls, etc. were all jigging together, provided the teazer of the cat gut was not bilked of his duce."[2] Individual Negroes achieved fame in the boxing ring and on the London stage, others were prominent in the labour movement, but their numbers declined rapidly for the death rate in London was high and there was little fresh immigration. In the forties and fifties Lascars were frequently found in Stepney streets dead from cold and starvation, and their evident distress led to the opening, in 1857, of "The Strangers' Home for Asiatics, Africans and South Sea Islanders" in the West India Dock Road. This home does not appear to have been much used by Africans but it repatriated many Asiatics and in a period of sixteen years upwards of £16,000 of cash and property was deposited there by men who wished to take their earnings back to their families.[3] Living conditions in Blue Gate Fields, Tiger Bay and the Ratcliffe Highway were bad for immigrants and natives alike. Some idea of what they were like at their worst may be gained from an account in The Times' Police Reports for 1855 of the prosecution of an Irishman who kept a common lodging house. The floors and stairs "were in a filthy and dilapidated condition, covered with slime, dirt, excrement, and all kinds of odious substances." The Police found

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1. Quoted in George, op. cit. p. 362.
2. Pierce Egan, Life in London, 1821, p. 321.
3. W. Salter, The Asiatic in London, 1873, p. 3.

there 15 Lascars, 9 Chinese, 2 prostitutes, 1 poor Irish widow and 2 dead bodies; had the house been registered, 12 lodgers would have been permitted.[1]

In the middle years of the nineteenth century there were very few Negro beggars and those that there were had mostly come from America - sometimes as stowaways.[2] It is probable that some of the Negroes who settled in Stepney married local women and that a measure of amalgamation occurred. In 1884 it was said of Cable Street (the heart of the present day coloured quarter) that "numbers of these houses are common lodging houses occupied by English, Scotch, Irish, Welsh, Americans, Germans, Norwegians, Flemish, Chinese, West Indians and others."[3] From the comments scattered in many descriptions of this neighbourhood in the latter half of the century it may be inferred that there were many Negroes there, living not as a separate group but mixed in with the other immigrants and the natives of the area. Further downstream in Limehouse there was an Asian group with a scattering of Negroes. A few West African seamen of the Kru tribe used to stay in a seaman's lodging house in West India Dock Road known as "Green's Home" which was open between 1854 and 1873. It seems that some Kru seamen came to Britain in naval vessels from the West African station which were due to re-commission and to return to the same station.

A small Negro settlement grew up towards the end of the century near the docks in Canning Town. The men were mostly West Indians

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1. The Times, 10.5.1855.
2. Mayhew, loc. cit. Also C.M.Smith, Curiosities of London Life, 1853, p. 45.
3. McNaught, loc. cit. 25.5.1912.

and seamen, so it may have been them that one writer had in mind when he wrote:

> "Black Jack, very woolly-headed, and ivory grindered, cooking, fiddling, and singing, as it seems the nature of Black Jack to cook, fiddle, and sing. Where the union-jack flies Nigger Jack is well treated. English sailors do not disdain to drink with him, work with him, and sing with him..."

and he went on to contrast this with the treatment they received on board American ships.[1] Some of the oldest coloured people alive in Stepney today were born in Canning Town about this time and they say that the white and coloured people in the neighbourhood were on very good terms and there was little colour consciousness, but that relations deteriorated later. In some respects the Negro appeared the same then as he had a hundred years before and was to appear fifty years afterwards. Arthur Morrison, the novelist, declared:

> "The best dressed, and the worst, were the negroes; for the black cook that was flush went in for ornaments that no other sailor man would have dreamed of: a white shirt, a flaming tie, a black coat with satin facings - even a white waistcoat and a top hat. While the cleaned out and shipless nigger was a sad spectacle indeed" (2)

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1. G.A. Sala, Gaslight and Daylight, 1872, P. 57

2. The Hole in the Wall, 1902, P.65 (1947 edn.)

Population Changes at the end of the Nineteenth Century

When the Sierra Leone Company was floated in 1792 for trade with West Africa there were six subscribers from Wellclose Square and 26 more with addresses in other parts of Stepney. In the 1830's there were still middle-class merchants and manufacturers living in St. George's in the East, but they moved out as the pressure of population became heavier and the district became a less desirable one to live in. After the potato famine of 1846 Irish immigration was redoubled and the newcomers who had been used to a very low standard of living forced down that of the people already established there. By 1880, all the old sea captains and their families had gone from Wellclose Square, leaving the Borough uniformly working class. All the characteristic industries were well established by this time, small firms were becoming joint stock companies, workshops were springing up like mushrooms in back yards and increasing the shortage of space. Housing conditions were attracting the attention of the philanthropists and huge blocks of model dwellings went up, bearing the gratuitous advice "Be Sober, Be Vigilant, Be Pitiful, Be Courteous" engraven in ornate characters on the walls, or perhaps more simply "Work, Wait, Win"! The activities of the charitable bodies beneficial as they largely were, the construction of the huge Rowton House in 1892, and the disorganisation caused by the heavy Jewish immigration of 1880 to 1905 combined to establish Stepney as the home of the strangers, the shiftless and the derelict.

Between 1881 and 1901, the number of aliens in the two Stepney wards of Whitechapel and St. George's increased by 37% and 28% consequent upon the persecution of Jews in Russia and Eastern Europe.[1] In 1900, it was reliably estimated that there were 100,000 Jews in East London, nearly all of whom lived in Stepney, and slightly over half of whom were aliens. Russell, an author who was very sympathetic towards the immigrants concluded that "dirt, overcrowding, industry and sobriety must be set down as the most conspicuous features of these foreign settlements". He pointed out that undesirable as some of these features were, the immigrants usually replaced residents who were far less law-abiding than themselves.[2] But the displaced English did not lack their champions who saw matters in another light.

The East London Jews lived a life apart from the remainder of the local population, at work and in leisure, and the recently arrived immigrants were the most exclusive of all. They scorned what they considered the unorthodoxy and back-sliding of the English Jews and set up their own places of worship. The twin factors of religion and language were the foundations upon which their group life and their separateness were built. Household ritual is very important in the Jewish religion and such ceremonies as the weekly lighting of the Sabbath lamp after which the cup of wine is drunk and the father pronounces his

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1. For successive analyses of the volume and effects of the move-:ment see: Select Committee on Alien Immigration, 1888-89; Charles Booth, Life and Labour of the People in London, 1903, Series I Vol. III; Board of Trade Report, 1894; Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, 1903.
2. C. Russell and H.S. Lewis, The Jew in London, 1900, p.13.

blessing on his children, set up in-group ties which are not easily broken in one generation.[1] At the end of a sympathetic study, Beatrice Webb observed that the immigrant Jew ignored "all social obligations other than keeping the law of the land, the maintenance of his own family, and the charitable relief of co-religionists."[2] The immigrants had no need of any language other than Yiddish and in 1911 a reporter wrote of them

> "They work for Yiddish employers, read Yiddish newspapers, buy in Yiddish shops, and enjoy themselves in Yiddish clubs and theatres. Public notices are published in Yiddish for them; the very public houses announce their prices in Yiddish; there are even, quite rightly, policemen specially taught Yiddish to help them in their trouble." (3)

How was an immigrant group of this character received by the local population? Some writers deny that there was any anti-Semitic feeling but in Russell's own book it is said that Jews who moved into Irish districts had the windows of their houses broken and pressure was used to make them leave.[4] His collaborator, Lewis, said before the Royal Commission that there was considerable antagonism but that it was not anti-Semitism; he attributed it entirely to competition for housing and there is undoubtedly much

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1. This is brilliantly portrayed by the contemporary Jewish novelist, Israel Zangwill, in Children of the Ghetto, 1892.
2. Booth, loc. cit., p. 191.
3. The Times, 16.3.1911.
4. op. cit. p. xxxix.

evidence for this point of view.[1] However it seems fairly certain that as many or more people believed that the Jews were undesirable immigrants as those who believe the same of the Negroes today. Robb quotes a news report in the East London Advertiser for 7th May 1904 which writes of "several thousands of 'Yids' - undersized, ill-fed, and dirty... talking all kinds of tongues except English" and is full of resentment of their presence.[2] Ben Tillet, too, gave evidence of an attitude which is typical of nearly all labour leaders faced with problems of immigration when he told the Jewish workers "Yes, you are our brothers and we will do our duty by you. But we wish you had not come to this country."[3]

The assimilation of the Jewish group posed a problem which is neatly illustrated in the divergent attitudes of the co-authors who discussed it. Russell, a Gentile, spoke of the process of Anglicization, but Lewis, a Jew, objected to this "painless

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1. Minutes of Evidence, Questions 17455-59. When the Royal Commission held its hearings the following evils were attributed to the immigrants: (i) they became a burden on the rates; (ii) introduced diseases; (iii) included many criminals and bad characters. These three charges were dismissed as unfounded. (iv) They were said to undercut wage rates for both skilled and unskilled workers. This was confirmed but it was not proved that it had resulted in any displacement of English workmen. They were said (v) to interfere with the observance of the Christian Sunday; (vi) to bid up the price of housing and to have introduced 'key money' payments; (vii) by overcrowded and insanitary living conditions to take over whole streets and force other residents to leave; (viii) not to trade with native shopkeepers; (ix) to form compact non-assimilating communities, refusing to intermarry and displaying contempt for the English. The Commission found that unfavourable conditions among the immigrants were due to their poverty and not their character, and that as their earnings increased so they became commendable citizens.
2. J.H.Robb, Anti-Semitism in a Working Class Area (forthcoming).
3. Quoted Russell and Lewis, op.cit. p. 198.

euthanasia" and insisted that the immigrant remained a Jew. Many of the immigrants were Zionists who maintained that "there is no such things as an English Jew, just as there is no such thing as a German Chinaman". They proclaimed that "the glory of Zionism" was that it had "called a halt to the assimilators".[1] Nevertheless it looks as if in the long run it was the Gentile whose assessment of the situation was the more nearly correct. The Jewish immigrant group was first of an "accommodating" nature: the immigrant lived in a Yiddish world, he despised the goyim and the heretical Anglicised Jews, he followed English ways of behaviour only to gain his own ends. The sums of money spent on missions for the conversion of the Jews seem only to have aroused resentment on the part of the immigrants and to have increased their solidarity. But the second generation of immigrants, and the third in a more marked degree, have orient-:ated their behaviour according to English values. Yiddish has declined (there is now only one weekly newspaper in Yiddish and one Yiddish theatre), some of the immigrants have dispersed to areas of higher social standing and religious practices are less strictly observed. Nevertheless many still feel that membership of the Jewish group is more important than English nationality, and there is still a certain amount of hostility towards them among the native population, as the anti-semitic outbreaks in the late thirties and to a lesser extent after 1945 have shown.

Little is heard of Negroes in East London immediately prior to 1910, when a Parliamentary Committee enquired into the position

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1. Russell and Lewis, op. cit. pp. 108 and 110-1.

of "Distressed Colonial and Indian Subjects". Owing to the uneven value of the data they collected and the fact that they were concerned only with distressed persons it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from their report as to the overall position, but it seems as if there were at that time more coloured people in East London than in either Liverpool or Cardiff, the other principal settlements. The Strangers' Home in Stepney reported that during the previous five years 200 destitute persons had been admitted - 88 Indians, 33 Ceylonese, 22 Japanese, 14 from Mauritius, 18 from Africa, and 25 others (West Indians were not included in the Home's sphere of activities). The Chinese population in Limehouse was growing and there was an increasing number of West Indians, mainly Jamaicans and Barbadians, many of whom were unable to get sea-going employment. A witness reported that "West Indian and West African seamen have right-:fully or wrongfully acquired the reputation of being troublesome, so much so that no ship master will carry them twice..." "When a coloured man is discharged in London or other ports, he finds it almost impossible to re-ship and soon exhausts what little money he was paid off with, pawns his clothes, and becomes destitute". The same view was expressed then as forty years later, that as "they are all under the impression they can better their condition in England there is no difficulty in persuading them to take their discharge." The same suggestion was made then, as later, that publicity be undertaken in the West Indies to inform people of the difficulty of obtaining work in Great Britain. Some seamen got into distress through no fault of their own, others - if it be considered a fault - deserted,

though speaking of this latter group one witness added "but there are so many people in this country who always have a help-:ing hand for the poor black man that they do not do so badly". Nevertheless the general impression gained from reading the report is that there was a less favourable attitude than a century before towards coloured men, and perhaps towards all the "lower classes". Witnesses spoke of discrimination against them in employment and of white seamen who refused to sail with col-:oured men.[1]

The motley collection of immigrants in Stepney played a part in winning the East End its fearsome reputation. The name alone acquired the strongest emotional associations for people who had never been there. Conditions were just as bad in other districts but as the people told Booth's investigators "We are just as poor but our poverty excites no interest. We are not the East End." This reputation has lingered well into the twentieth century and has done a great deal of harm. It is well to point out the responsibility which rests upon the press in the creation or avoidance of such reputations. One "well known Fleet Street journalist" has written that when he first came to London he and his colleagues could always rely, if news was dull, upon giving the front page "the necessary lurid touch" by "hitting up" the East End police court reports "or sending a man down there to discover a 'den' or a 'gang' or a 'thieves kitchen'."[2] What sort of stories did such people write? Here is an example from the same author, who talks of "the infernal diligence of Jewry" and

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1. Minutes of Evidence, Cd. 5134
2. H. Thorogood, East of Aldgate, 1935, p. 92.

continues:

> "they have spread like a creeping flood from Aldgate, Commercial Road and Whitechapel; and it is not pleasant to an Englishman to know that his own people have been pushed out of their ancient and historic places, mean though they are, by this unprepossessing invasion. For they are not pleasing to the eye, with their predatory noses, and the features which the word 'alien' describes with such peculiar felicity. One seems to be in a hostile tribal encampment, and it makes one afraid, not of them personally, but of the obvious tenacity, the leech-like grip of a people, who, one feels in one's English bones, flourish best on the decay of their hosts, like a malignant bacilli in the blood." (1)

This is no exceptional passage: in the reporter's biology the Chinese are a "lower type". His remarks are only partly directed against the Jews, to a considerable extent they are no more than an exploitation of popular sentiments for the reporter's own ends and they could equally well have been written against the Irish or the Negroes. Frustrations of all sorts can be worked off by attacking stranger groups and some sections of the public are only too easily led.

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1. Ibid. p. 83.

Negro Seamen Between the Wars

The 1914-18 war led to a great increase in the number of coloured men in Britain. Many seamen deserted or left their ships to take up shore work at the current high rates of pay, others worked their passage to Britain having heard of the opportunities for employment there.[1] A number of ships with coloured crews were taken over by the Government for transport purposes and their crews put ashore. Some of the coloured men seeking work were recruited into labour battalions for overseas service and later demobilized in Britain. After the war the shipping industry was forced to contract and with the de-:mobilization of ex-servicemen the level of unemployment rose everywhere. Trade Unions insisted upon the prior employment of Englishmen and large numbers of coloured men were unable to get work. In 1919 severe rioting broke out in Liverpool, Cardiff, Newport and Glasgow, and shortly afterwards there is a record of 95 West Africans being repatriated "on account of recent street disturbances in Liverpool and Cardiff" and more were expected to follow.[2] The principal shipping line trading with West Africa was willing to repatriate without charge all men who had been in their regular employ; between January 1920 and August 1921, 627 returned in this way.[3]

Street disturbances appear to have been fairly general and in 1919 an East London newspaper reports "Serious Rioting at Canning Town - Revolvers, Choppers and Steels at Play". According to the report of proceedings at the Police Court a West Indian

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1. West Africa, 1921, p. 860.
2. Ibid, 1919, p. 486.
3. Ibid, 1921, p. 860.

was standing in the doorway of his house when the accused (who was a local workman) made an insulting remark and passed on down the street, only to return and accuse the coloured man of having laughed at him and to hit him on the chest. The West Indian hit back and was pulled into his house by his friends, whereupon the white man smashed the window and started to damage some of his property. A large and disorderly crowd then assembled and coloured men were attacked wherever they were found, the police soon being powerless to check the disorder. Some coloured men fired re-:volvers over the heads of the crowd. The man accused of the attack was asked by the magistrate what work he did during the war, and replied "Stevedoring". "Making good money while other men were risking their lives!" retorted the magistrate. These inhabitants of Jamaica, he said, were British subjects and entitled to equal treatment by the law. During the war the col-:oured races had done splendid service and it was a very shabby thing for those who had loafed about the docks to turn round on them. The accused would be sent to prison for two months with hard labour.[1] (It may be noted that though the newspaper spoke of "Severe Rioting" no person was seriously injured). A year later there was a similar disturbance in the St. George's area.

In 1919 the "United African Brotherhood Society" was formed in Stepney and achieved a membership of 150. Conditions steadily deteriorated though it was not until 1921 that they attracted widespread notice. The "Committee for the Welfare of Africans in

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1. East London Observer 16.8.1919

Europe"[1] organized further repatriation and the newspaper West Africa publicised the plight of the stranded seamen.[2] Some men made great efforts to get work and one case was cited of a Gold Coast seaman who had walked from London to Southampton in the hopes of a ship and then back again. The Trade Unions were firm in demanding preference for their men and when as in one case a captain asked for coloured labour for his ship in East London, feeling rose to the point of rioting. The situation was neatly summarized in the words of an Ijaw seaman who said "When white man finish you get job. White man never finish." His unemployment pay had been stopped. Many of the men in Stepney were hungry and homeless; they walked the streets at night, from Stepney to Poplar, backwards and forwards, and at first were often arrested by the police as being suspicious characters. Nevertheless according to one newspaper there was "a spirit of genuine comradeship among these stranded sailors, and at meal times it is a common thing to see those who can afford to pay for food sharing it with those who cannot".[3] This state of affairs attracted attention in West Africa and money was sent to enable the men to be repatriated.[4]

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1. This committee was formed by members of the Anti-Slavery Society when it was learned that coloured South Africans were being brought to Europe to do labouring work behind the lines in France. See The Anti-Slavery Reporter and Aborigenes Friend: Jan 1917 pp. 88-9, also Sir H.C. Sloley "The African Native Labour Contingent and the Welfare Committee" Journal of the African Society, Vol XVII (1918). The Committee had little to do as far as the South Africans were concerned but found a great deal to do in Britain after the war, with both seamen and students.
2. West Africa, 1921, pp. 798, 801, 845, 860, 908, 963, 1040, 1048.
3. The Star, 28.8.1921
4. West Africa, 1921, pp. 1073, 1090, 1300; 1922, p.493.

Apart from the seamen, there seems to have been a general increase in the number of Africans in London, people who were presumably clerical workers, students and others.[1] The "African Progress Union" was formed, likewise the "Union of Students of African Descent". By the end of 1922 it was said that the reception of coloured people by the London public was much less hostile.[2]

In the dockland areas relations did not improve. Most of the seamen stranded in Stepney either accepted repatriation or moved to other ports. Tension was greatest in Cardiff and when the Aliens Order of 1925, relating to coloured alien seamen, was issued, the Cardiff police were energetic in their efforts to apply it to coloured British seamen. British passports and other evidences of nationality were taken from the men and Aliens Cards issued in their place, thus decreasing further their chances of employment, for when the Government subsequently gave a subsidy to the industry restrictive stipulations were made regarding the employment of non-British seamen.[3] Hostility towards coloured immigrants seems to have reached its highest point in the period between the wars. In 1929 an official of the British Council for the Welfare of the Mercantile Marine could write:

> "At Cardiff, and to a certain extent at Manchester, difficulties are increasing in connection with the association of coloured seamen with white women and the consequent growth of a half-caste population, alien in sentiment and habits to the native white inhabitants. The Chief Constable of Cardiff has reported to the Watch Committee and suggested the desirability of bringing

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1. Ibid, 1920, 8th May.
2. Ibid, 1922, p. 1615.
3. see Little, op. cit.

into existence legislation similar to that found necessary in South Africa to check this demoralizing development." (1)

Writing in 1952 when the consequences of the South African legislation have become clear, such sentiments - especially in an official report - have an air of unreality about them.

Similar attitudes were reflected in two reports which appeared in the 1930's and bear upon the West African-West Indian immigrant group in East London; both instance the presence of a sea-faring group in Canning Town without mentioning any appreciable settlement to the west. The first report, written by Miss M.E. Fletcher, was chiefly concerned with the situation in Liverpool,[2] the second, by Captain F.A. Richardson, gave the results of a survey of "the social conditions met with by seafarers...and the amenities of social life available to seamen and their families who dwell in the vicinity of the docks".[3] Neither were trained social scientists and in both cases the results were presented in a framework of the writer's own value judgements about morally desirable and undesirable behaviour. Miss Fletcher pays a morbid attention to sexual matters and declares "a white woman who has once mixed with coloured men is unable to break away and is never safe in a house if her husband is away for any length of time". Of the coloured men she says "their sexual demands impose a continual strain on white

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1. General Welfare Conditions in the Ports of Great Britain, by F. Bowes, for the Second Conference on the Health and Welfare of Merchant Seamen, Geneva, 1929.
2. Report on an Investigation into the Colour Problem in Liverpool and Other Ports, issued by the Liverpool Association for the Welfare of Half-Caste Children, 1930.
3. Social Conditions in Ports and Dockland Areas, A survey for the Joint Council of the British Social Hygiene Council and the British Council for the Welfare of the Mercantile Marine, 1935.

women". No consideration is given to the sort of women who feature in such situations or the social and economic factors which lie at their foundations. Evidence for such assertions is lacking and both are contrary to the writer's conclusions from his field-:work twenty years later but in very similar circumstances.

Captain Richardson, after writing of "types who would be a danger to any community", goes straight on to say:

> "In London there are hundreds of coloured men of all types who have drifted in from the sea, and who are now the accepted inhabitants of the dockland districts. The number of Indians is increasing weekly, attracted by the possibility of an easy life of idleness and the comparative wealth that is presented to them by the money obtainable from unemployment benefit or public relief."

Richardson relied upon the police for much of his information and had very little personal contact with the people he was describing. All the evidence is that Indian migrant workers in Britain save money and return to their homeland to spend it, but appearances can be deceptive. He writes further:

> "There are 100 Chinese, all in Limehouse; 200 Negroes, nearly all in Canning Town. The number of Indians is not known. The Chinese have decreased in numbers very considerably. The number of Negroes remains about the same, but the number of half-caste children has increased. The number of Indians has increased by hundreds, and is still increasing. These types probably attract women of low type, particularly the Indians. The Indian and Negro seamen are more attractive to the prostitutes than are the aliens and British seamen. Once a girl has been in company with a coloured man she seems to prefer them to other types of seamen. A constant supply of fresh girls arrive and are possibly supplied without intent by the domestic agencies who send girls in large numbers to London to take up positions. These girls often drift towards the East End, attracted by the easy money to be obtained by immoral practices."

Richardson's statements about the relationship between coloured seamen and white women remain at the best half-truths when no evidence is made available about financial inducements and cir-:cumstantial factors. The value of his observations may be gauged

from the last one. Do girls become prostitutes because of the money to be earned in this way? People who have studied the question do not think so and Richardson gives no evidence for his facile rationalisation.

More reliable information about the life of the coloured immigrants is to be obtained from the work of Mrs. Nancy Hare who was well acquainted with the people about whom she wrote.[1] She stresses the poor material surroundings but says "the men are generally really attached to their homes and spend much of their time there, they are affectionate and kind and make much of their wives". Mrs. Hare is acquainted with local societies run by the coloured men, the Canning Town branch of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and another of the "Elks"; Fletcher and Richardson are either unaware of such organizations or do not think them worthy of mention. Mrs. Hare's work was published in a relatively obscure fashion whereas the other reports were reviewed at length in the press and lent authority to the unfavourable stereotypes in the public mind.

In the mid 1930's another employment crisis developed in the shipping industry which affected coloured seamen in all the ports. In London five hundred coloured men were said to be "on the beach" and one of those ephemeral organizations sprang up which express the Negro protest in times of trouble and wilt away once the crisis is over.[2] The chief concentrations of working class coloured people in London at this time seem to have been in King's Cross,

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1. "The Prospects for Coloured Children in England", The Keys (Journal of the League of Coloured Peoples) September 1937.
2. It was known as "The Coloured Seaman's Association". See The Keys, March 1937.

Canning Town and Shoreditch. The economic difficulties of the period were exploited by a politician whose programme excited racial animosity. On October 4th 1936 Sir Oswald Mosley's "British Union of Fascists" attempted to march through Stepney; at the beginning of Cable Street they were met by a barricade of uptorn paving stones, an overturned lorry, timber torn from wherever available and with the approach strewn with broken glass.[1] The Jews were the scapegoats, but after the war Mosley declared himself in favour of "apartheid" and in a recent issue of a popular magazine a photograph is reproduced of the letters "K.B.W." painted on a wall in Brixton near where a number of coloured people live. It is said that "To Brixton Fascists the letters mean 'Keep Britain White'".[2]

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1. F. Mullally, Fascism inside England, 1946, pp. 73-5.
2. Picture Post, 6.9.1952

CHAPTER III

THE SOURCES AND CHARACTER OF RECENT MIGRATION

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The Political Element

A migratory movement is a highly complex social phenomenon requiring a social explanation. Neither economic circumstances nor individual motives are by themselves sufficient to explain population movements. Poverty and low standards of living cannot alone cause people to migrate without some ideological spark which fires the tinder, and this spark cannot fall from nowhere but must itself arise from the social relationships entered into by the people in question. Thus an explanation of recent colonial migration to Britain has to be sought within the historical and cultural matrix of the relationship between the imperial country and each colony. The power of the former dominates the relationship and the way in which it is exercised determines the course of social change in the subordinate society. In following through the effects of this superior power it is important to make allowance for social differentiation and class structure within both societies and to avoid the facile conception of one unitary culture impinging upon another. The character of European influence in West Africa was determined more by the interests of the European financial and exporting classes than by the working classes, and its effects were channelized by the structure of the indigenous societies.

The values of any society are to a very great extent determined by groups within that society; if the aristocrats are agricultur-:alists this kind of occupation is highly thought of, if a warrior class is dominant then military virtues are most esteemed. When a ruling class which has previously set the standards is subordinated by an attacking force their followers take their cue

from the invaders. One class is deposed, another arises which imitates the practices of the invaders, living in uneasy reflexion of their glory and attempting to impose the same standards upon the remainder of the society. In Toynbee's analogy it is a "transformer class" transforming the current from outside to the right voltage for the indigenous society.[1] French colonial policy in Africa was epitomised by one of their administrators in the words "instruire la masse et degager l'elite" and their aim has been to associate this elite with French policy.[2] British policy has been based on the attempt to use the native ruling class as administrative agents and to preserve the structure of indigenous society as far as possible. The rising class of educated colonials have been left to make a place for themselves in the new order. In West Africa they tended, at first, to align themselves with the superior power and to strive after European symbols of status, but of late they have identified themselves politically with the indigenous masses whilst wholeheartedly accepting Western technol-:ogical values. To learn the techniques of the industrial age the colonial travels to the imperial country because it is in the language of that country that he has received his education. Having acquired this training he returns to a relatively exalted position in his own society. This transformation is in the eyes of the masses the natural consequence of his contact with the all powerful imperial country. Consciously or unconsciously these "transformer classes" have propagated a conception of the marvels of Britain such as to attract would-be migrants.

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1. See A Study of History, Vol V, pp. 154-7 for an interesting discussion of this phenomenon.
2. Quoted in F.J. Pedler, West Africa, 1951, see pp. 155-170

In the early years of African colonization civilisation was not a white monopoly which needed defending but a morally preferable way of life. "As Roman imperialism laid the foundations of modern civilisation, and led the wild barbarians of these islands in the path of progress, so in Africa today, we" wrote Lord Lugard, "are repaying the debt and bringing to the dark places of the earth, the abode of barbarism and cruelty, the torch of culture and progress while ministering to the material needs of our own civilization."[1] It was the inevitable consequence of the political relationship that the young West African should be taught to value the connection with the "mother country" and to announce with pride the twentieth century equivalent of 'Civis Romanus Sum'. There is a general tendency for imperial countries to attract migrants from their colonies and for small colonial enclaves to develop which are not necessarily connected with trade between the countries concerned. It may be noted that the post-war movement of French North African subjects to France has been far greater than that of British colonials to Britain. Under post-war legislation Algerians and Moroccans are citizens of metropolitan France and have migrated there in such numbers that by 1950 there were at least 350,000 and two years later a less reliable estimate could put their numbers at 800,000. They are mostly unskilled, in poor health, live in very crowded conditions and lend a ready ear to Communist propaganda. Though economic conditions in Algeria and Morocco have favoured

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1. F.D. Lugard, The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa, 1929, p. 618.

emigration the most powerful influence upon the individual has been the idea of France, in the words of a North African writer, as "un paradis, un Eldorado".[1]

The imperial-colonial relationship also conditions the relations between the colonial immigrants and the natives of the imperial country. Politically conscious immigrants impatient for self government are apt to vent these sentiments in non-political matters and to be less friendly towards English people than they otherwise would. The latter, having been taught that the colonies have gained more from the relationship than the "mother country" are inclined to be patronising.[2] Englishmen who have served in positions of authority in the colonies often add fuel to this feeling with their stories of colonial backwardness and they themselves are often less tolerant of the immigrants.[3] Colonial status has much to do with this. Professor Toynbee thinks there has been an improvement in relations between Englishmen and Indians following upon the independence of India, and many would agree with him.[4] The burden of resentment has

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1. See M'hamed Ferid Ghazi, "Doublement Proletaires" in Esprit, February 1952 p. 222 and elsewhere in the same volume. The French North Africans are for the most part migrant workers maintaining strong ties with their homeland and planning to return there.
2. Ogden Nash, the writer of comic verse has declared:
   "Englishmen are distinguished by their traditions
   and ceremonials,
   And also by their affection for their colonies
   and their contempt for the colonials."
3. Cf. Toynbee, op. cit. Vol I p. 210: "public opinion among white people at home is prone to acquiesce in the attitude and policy, with regard to Race, which are pressed upon them by white people who have settled in countries overseas".
4. See The Listener 24.5.1951.

been lifted from the Indian and the Englishman must perforce regard with more respect the representative of an independent nation.

Both West Africa and the West Indies were particularly susceptible to British influence, lacking the cultural counter weights of a developed but independent religion or sentiments of membership in an alternative large-scale political unit or culture. In terms of physical distance and ease of communic-:ation they are closer to the United Kingdom than are other colonies and the 1939-45 war intensified their contact with the imperial country. West Indians served in the Royal Air Force in Britain and greater numbers of West African seamen visited British ports, while British, American and Allied troops were stationed in the Caribbean and in West Africa. A barrage of publicity associated the colonial subjects with the "mother country" in her fight against the Axis powers, and they heard much about standards of living, high wages, etc., in Britain. For some people this translated an emotional disposition into a picture of the country clear enough for them to consider migration; for many the war gave them their first chance of doing so.

Migration from West Africa

The ideological impact of Western culture has, in West Africa, been greatest in the coastal towns and upon the rising professional and clerical classes. The attitudes of many untutored Africans towards Europeans are founded on the belief that the white man has some secret power which enables him to live in luxury with a minimum of physical effort. The literate has, through his knowledge of the language, taken the first steps towards acquiring similar power. Clerical work, book-learning and occupations associated with European technical skills have been highly esteemed. Those who pursue them have been criticised for their sedulous imitation of things European by Africans and Englishmen alike. Kobina Sekyi, the Gold Coast barrister, has described the development of an ambitious youth in the nineteen-twenties -

> "Kwesi affects a knife and fork at his meals, boots, collars, and ties for daily wear, and aspires to pyjamas for sleeping purposes; only he does not dare adopt the latter affectation, which would perhaps be too much even for his much-Europeanized people. The noon-day sun is too hot for him in his accoutrements; he therefore takes to carrying an umbrella over his head when going to and from school...Clubs are formed with the avowed object of cultivating the accomplishments of the perfect European gentleman."(1)

This is no longer true to the same extent. No African nationalist has proposed a return to some equivalent of the Ghandian spinning wheel but the desire for Western technical knowledge leads to the copying of other institutions. A recent novel clearly based upon an intimate knowledge of the Gold Coast has portrayed a situation not so very different from that described by Sekyi.[2]

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1. "Extracts from the 'Anglo-Fanti'" in N. Cunard, Negro. An Anthology, 1933, pp. 774-9.
2. Mark Fresfield, The Stormy Dawn, 1946.

The instruction in schools gives pupils an impression of London as the place of Buckingham Palace, the Houses of Parliament, the Tower of London, the source of English power and the depository of its secrets. There is an interesting account of the ambitions and values of young literates in the Sierra Leone Protectorate in Little's analysis of some essays written by older secondary school pupils.[1] Fourteen out of thirty-four announced their intention of continuing their studies 'overseas', that is, in the United Kingdom, which appeared to them as a veritable "El Dorado...almost as if the mere touch of English soil wrought a subtle alchemy in the individual's personality and his future prospects". Little states that "perhaps the most common assumptions are that, in England, education is available to everyone, almost without exception, to a University level; that the government controls everything; it finds you a good job and helps to maintain you; and that nearly everybody in England has a 'white collar' job or has something to do with machines". The Government is all-powerful - a conclusion which is easily drawn. Visiting educationists have thought it quite understandable that "there should exist in many colonies a strong tendency to regard the Government as chiefly, if not solely, responsible for all initiative, as possessing unlimited funds and being the source of all benefits."[2] The graduate returning from England may possibly bring with him a European wife; in any event his stay

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1. K.L. Little, The Mende of Sierra Leone: A West African People in Transition, 1951, pp. 258-62.
2. Education for Citizenship in Africa, Colonial No 216, 1948, p. 9.

in the imperial country will of itself serve to heighten his prestige, he will be introduced to strangers as someone who "has been to England" and will be regarded by the girls as a particularly desirable husband. It is to the advantage of these men to foster the belief in the marvels of England, and they do not fail to do so. They have helped spread the ideas of the imperial country as an El Dorado and that by visiting it a man can improve his status or make his fortune. A similar function was served by the seamen who spread amongst the illiterate popul-:ation exaggerated tales of a luxurious standard of living in Britain. After the outbreak of hostilities it was easier for the young African to get work as a seaman and there were frequent cargo boat sailings between West Africa and the United Kingdom. The seamen not only fanned the desire to migrate but showed how in the circumstances of the time it was almost as easy to travel the 3,900 miles from Takoradi to London as the 350 miles from Takoradi to Tamale in the interior of the same colony.

The shipping company which employs most West African seamen for the United Kingdom route used to sign on its seamen at different rates of pay, their wages being related to those current in the port where they were taken on. In 1940 firemen engaged in the United Kingdom were paid £11.2s.6d. per month plus £3 War Risk Bonus paid by the Company; firemen engaged in Freetown were paid £7.12s.6d. plus £3 per month, and engine room ratings engaged in Lagos received £4.10s.0d. plus £2 per month. By 1942 European seamen had received increases amounting to an extra £9 per month, Africans on Freetown articles £5, and on

Lagos articles £3. This differential was maintained in successive war-time increases but subsequently reduced and by 1952 was very much less.[1] The African rates at all times compared very favourably with those current in the ports of engagement, but it was a source of very considerable irritation to the Africans that they should be paid so much less than European firemen for doing the same, or nearly the same work. Seamen are not allowed to carry passports, and the African's means of identification ashore was a company card; nevertheless many of them managed to desert, or by one means or another to become domiciled in the United Kingdom, in order to sign on at the more favourable rates of pay. Sometimes a ship was taken on government charter and the contract of employment was terminated by the employers in a United Kingdom port, in which case the African seamen had the option of repatriation or discharge in the British port. The economic motive for becoming domiciled in the United Kingdom was undoubtedly a strong one, but the Africans wanted the higher rate of pay not so much because of its purchasing power as because they felt they were entitled to it and were being cheated of it. The idea of settling in Britain was attractive in many other ways at that time, for money was plentiful, housing and employment were no problem for the seaman, and the bustle of the industrial cities appealed to the African's curiosity. At first, the seaman tended to take a room ashore and continue going to sea,

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1. In 1952 the basic rates of pay for European and African firemen were £24.10s.0d. and £18.7s.6d. per month respectively. These figures have been kindly supplied by Elder Dempster Lines Limited, who state that the ratings engaged in Lagos during the early years of the war were not sufficiently experienced to act as firemen and were engaged only as cleaners in motor vessels.

but after a while and perhaps after forming a liason with a woman, he would take shore work and settle down to life in the new country. Between 1944 and 1948 several hundreds settled in English dockland areas in this way.

A high proportion of the seamen were of the Kru tribe which originates in Liberia but has an offshoot in Sierra Leone. Other seamen were signed on in Lagos and Port Harcourt, and included a significant proportion from the Ijaw tribe who inhabit the Niger delta. The seamen spent short periods of leave ashore in Britain with a lot of money to spend, and in Nigeria and Gold Coast they gave their friends a distorted picture of what they had seen. Sometimes they boasted in a most imaginative way: the streets were paved with gold and along the pavement ran a moving belt with chairs attached so that if you were too tired to walk you could travel seated; there was a part of London called 'Angel' where angels lived; employers begged them to leave their ships and work ashore, and if you saw a number of girls walking down the street all you had to do was to whistle and they would turn round, smile at you and ask 'Do you want me?' The stories which the seamen told induced some Africans to stow away on ships bound for British ports. The earlier stowaways were men with two different types of back-:ground, some were unemployed migratory workers, others were adolescent delinquents. The war had intensified the drift to the towns, created more employment and pushed up the cost of living. Then the war machine was unwound, and thousands of men for whom there was no work were thrown onto the labour market - in Nigeria alone 96,000 men had been demobilised by the end of

1946. Some tribes are accustomed to going far afield in order to obtain work - the Ijaw, for example, specialise in working as cooks and stewards for Europeans and travel far from the Niger. These men were particularly hard hit by the post-war recession in employment and were very ready to go somewhere where work was said to be abundant; one of them, looking back on those days, said with a note of bitterness in his voice, "Those seamens - they are the ones that mugged us".

The war hastened the tempo of social change and accentuated some of the problems arising from it. The process of urbanization in the Gold Coast, says Busia, strikes at the root of a political authority based on the matrilineal lineage and lineage membership; the breakdown of the extended family system contributes to the growing evasion of parental responsibilities and to the frequency of divorce; "in the country the traditional restraints exercised by families and tribal authorities still have considerable effect, but in the towns, these restraints have either been weakened or have ceased to operate as sanctions".[1] Socially isolated newcomers to the towns more readily become criminals, prostitution increases, bribery is widespread. The weakened parental control and the general disorganization of wartime led to the growth of gangs of juvenile delinquents in all the ports of West Africa, their members being variously known as 'pilot boys', 'bummer boys', 'rarray boys', 'King Jimmy Boys', etc.[2] The name 'pilot boys' derived from their function of piloting European sailors to prostitutes, but their organization had grown to cover more extensive activities. In

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1. K.A. Busia, Report on a Social Survey of Sekondi-Takoradi, 1950, p. 30
2. Ibid, pp. 96-100

some places prostitutes were forced to 'register' with the gangs if they were to get any customers and the boys took a standard percentage of the earnings. The gangs were composed of young men of 12-19 years of age who led a life to themselves of lawless adventure; many of them slept in market stalls, in lorries and on verandahs. Some of the gangs specialised in certain kinds of theft, such as motor accessories, and developed embryonic codes of honour covering such points as not stealing from the market women but concentrating upon the American soldiers whose mannerisms and dress they imitated. Many of the pilot boys in Takoradi, Lagos,[1] and Freetown[2] had only come to the towns in recent years, often their parents were elsewhere and their guardians had no control over them. But a significant proportion of them were well-schooled, came of good family, and had played truant because they were unable to satisfy their ambitions and desire for prestige at home. "You hear more big English in King Jimmy than anywhere" observed one stowaway who had led such a life himself.

If a stowaway can satisfy the Immigration Officer that he is a British subject or a British protected person he cannot be refused entry to the United Kingdom.[3] He will usually, but not invariably, be prosecuted by the shipping company under Section

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1. Donald Faulkner, "Social Welfare and Juvenile Delinquency in Lagos, Nigeria", The Howard Journal, 1944-5, pp 192-6
2. Alexander Patterson, Report on Penal and Welfare Services in Sierra Leone, Sierra Leone Government Sessional Paper No 3 of 1944.
3. The Home Secretary observed in answer to a question on this subject "There is no power to refuse admission to this country or to return to their own country persons who on arrival in this country can produce satisfactory evidence that they are British subjects". Parliamentary Debates, H. of C. 25.1.1951.

237 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, and can be punished by fine or imprisonment not exceeding four weeks. If the stowaway's national status is in doubt (and under Section I (4) of the Aliens Restriction Act, 1914, the onus of proof of nationality lies on the person concerned), he will be treated as an alien. In this event he will be refused leave to land; he may be imprisoned before being returned to the port of embarkation, but more usually he will be left on board the same ship or repatriated under arrangements made by the shipowners, upon whom this duty falls. During the war when manpower was in short supply, the legal requirements were not strictly enforced, but owing to the large numbers of stowaways in the years following the war, a tightening up was ordered. Since early 1949 both the shipping companies and the colonial governments have been taking preventive measures at ports of embarkation, and persons applying for passports have been required to show themselves bona fide travellers.[1] Stowaways who have no documentary proof of their national status as British subjects (and a birth certificate is not sufficient) have then been refused leave to land. This is a purely administrative means of restriction as their nationality is rarely in doubt.

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1. On the difficulty of satisfying African authorities as to a would-be traveller's bona fides see a letter from "Nigerian" in The New Statesman and Nation for 4.8.1951, which concludes "Nigeria is the most difficult place in the British Empire to get out of if you happen to be a Nigerian".

Colonial Stowaways 1946-51

	Landed.					Refused leave to land.		
	1946-48	av. 46-48	1949	1950	1951	July-Dec. 1949	1950	1951
West Africa.	800	267	254	135	113	22	67	36
Nigeria	267	89	125	90	51	7	20	18
Gold Coast	213	71	69	19	34	9	6	8
Sierra Leone	211	70	37	3	18	4	37	7
Gambia	109	36	23	23	14	-	4	3
Unspecified	-	-	-	-	1	2	5	-
West Indies.	330	110	78	161	62	6	35	19
Jamaica	281	94	66	150	51	6	25	14
Barbados	14	5	4	4	2	-	7	-
Trinidad	20	7	4	1	4	-	2	3
British Guiana	15	5	-	3	2	-	-	1
Elsewhere	-	-	4	3	3	-	-	1
Others.	91	30	31	7	4	12	6	20
East & S. Africa	15	5	8	1	-	-	-	-
Aden	30	10	5	-	2	1	-	3
British Somaliland	45	15	13	-	4	5	-	14
Malta	-	-	4	4	-	6	3	-
Elsewhere	1	-	1	2	2	-	3	3
	1,221	407	363	303	179	40	108	75

Source: Colonial Office records.

The majority of the West African stowaways were young men from the coastal towns. In the first years there was a small proportion of older men but this gradually declined. Data available about 123 West African stowaways landed in 1950 give their ages as:

Over 30 years	- 4
26-30	- 24
21-25	- 60
Under 21	- 33

On the West Coast a very definite glamour attached to the idea of stowing away to Britain, and both Azikiwe and Nkrumah, the nationalist leaders, were reputed to have first left their countries in this way (how true this is the writer does not know). Though some of the stowaways were not even literate, most of them came with ambitions of studying and becoming doctors, lawyers, etc., and returning to become leaders of their people. They expected that the standard of living in Britain would correspond to that of Britons in Africa and some of them thought that as the British are favoured in the colonies, so would the colonials be in Britain. Some believed that if they could return with a European wife they would be given a better job so that they could support her in a European style of living. One stowaway who had been a personal servant to Englishmen had been impressed by how they waited for letters from home and how glad they were when they could go on leave. When he asked them about England they told him of underground trains, trolley buses and the high rates of pay but if they told him anything of the proportionately high cost of living his mind was not disposed to remember it. He expressed his curiosity about England in saying

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"We come here to get sense" (sc. knowledge). But perhaps the most graphic account of a West African's expectations of Britain, and one which throws some light on the stowaway traffic, is contained in the following report: "One Captain knew he had stowaways on board but could not find them. He left one West African port and within three days had found one man. Calling in at another port he dropped anchor, pointed out the shore to his stowaway and said "There we are, good old England at last! If you have any pals aboard go and tell them to hurry up unless they want to come with me over to the European Continent!" The man soon brought up five other stowaways and they were all rowed ashore. The following letter was found on the first stowaway prepared for posting in England:

"Dear Akambi,

I am just writing to you these few lines only to assure you that I have reached England safely.

How can I thank you for your great love and kindness your love makes it possible for me to reach a grad which will make me not to forget you for ever. I have been in thinking about to months ago and you have made me to be glad now.

I left Lagos ... of ... 1949 and I reached here on the ... of ... 1949. We are 10 in the ... and when we root out the Capt. and the crews were saying nonsense and I darmed them and we spend three days in the ship we reached England and the Immigration Office took us to the Police Station. There we were fined £2.10.0 each. As soon as we are fined a young girl came and paid for me and I was then taking to an hostel and the other 9 boys is paid by one Millioner in this country and in that evening as I was sitting outside the hostel and girl who paid my fine came and gave me a parcel and a cheque of £20. In the parcel are the following, coat, trousers, shirts, ties, socks, hollywood round neck singlet and one droose and the second day I went to his house and call him to lead me to the passport office to change my passport and then on the way I chase her and the reply in positive and now we were loving one another. The bed I sleep is made of silver and I don't think Oba Falolu can sleep on that till heaven.

On my way yesterday I met Ayinde my second and we walk to the post office to buy stamp.

Well next time I because it is time for tea.

Better news next time

I remain, yours sincerely,

Jimmy K ..."

It was believed in some quarters that there were definite syndicates in West Africa for organizing the stowaway traffic, but it is almost certain that there was nothing more than the petty bribery of ship's personnel and of go-between men would introduce a stowaway to someone who would put him in a good hiding place. Sometimes the stowaways were assisted by fellow countrymen among the ship's crew but often they managed by themselves, and when discovered by a member of the crew after putting to sea would threaten that unless he brought them food they would declare that it was he who brought them on board. Once the ship had left the last African port (often Freetown) they could come out on deck with very little risk of being put on shore before the ship reached Britain. To escape detection during the first week or ten days many stowaways endured remarkable privations. A ship's officer wrote "They covered themselves with iron ore and were breathing through straws while the ship was being searched. It took the firemen 1½ hours to dig out one stowaway". Usually they were able to bring very little food and water with them when they came aboard the ship. They were found hiding in cable lockers, submerged in the bilge water, and "deep down in the hold of the ship in a shored-up hiding place amongst sacks of merchandise; one hiding place collapsed and a man was found

dead beneath the sacks". Such was the determination of these men to get to Britain.

A case has been quoted of a stowaway who introduced himself with the words "Me same as other passengers but me no pay"[1] but it would be truer to say that nearly all of them knew that they were committing an offence but believed that it was only a technical one and thought that they were morally justified in using this method of getting to Britain. Here the political element enters in again. Many believed that the home government had a special affection for its subjects in the colonies. They had heard from nationalist leaders that England had derived great wealth from her colonies and this line of thought is made quite clear in a typewritten document addressed to "Your worship", a defence which one man had prepared in advance and which contains not a little of the philosophy of the Nigerian stowaway movement; among other things he wrote:

> AIM:- Our aim of .....[2] to the British Zone is first, to educate our selves through the aid of the British Government from the Nigeria Revenue in any suitable field of modern and civilization. Secondly, to return to our country and help our people in the fight for "FREEDOM".
>
> The relationship of Nigeria to Britain is so gret that Britain can do away with the rest of her colonies but not "Our dear Nigeria". Because she has her artificial power materials, living maintainances; Britain if ignorant of these material facts would be or is becoming a thoughtless and ungrateful Britain, and definitely she is. Now Britain bringing us in court ..... for trial which during the last world war according to Dr. Namidi Azikiwe, when these Nigerian ..... fought together with the rest of millions of Nigerian soldiers and saved Britain from the claws of "Hitlerism Could such not happen again?
>
> We refer to this question of Punishing Nigerian Freedom

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1. Lloyds Daily List, letter to the editor, 4.1.1951.
2. These spaces appear to have been left for filling in subsequently.

Seekers or stowaways the house of Lords and Commons. Is life so sweet or peace so dear as to be purchased at the prize of chains and slvary forbid it it God for I know what cause others may take but as for we Give us liberty or death.

Aide-toi let Ciel t'aidera (French Proverb) Help yourself and Heaven will help you. We have helped ourselves being in search of something to come to Britain. It is now left for Britain to help us to achieve our aims.

In similar fashion many former stowaways believe that having got to Britain their right to remain there is only a moral one without legal foundation.

Many stowaways hid their documents of identity and would not show them to ships' officers for fear that they would take them and destroy them, and very often it was not until the stowaways were taken to the Immigration Officer that the documents were produced from inside the heel of a shoe or some other ingenious hiding place. One stowaway who could not prove his nationality and was refused leave to land wrote from prison in protest:

Sir,

With most respectfully I write this letter to you Sir. The day of my discharged coming soon, and I thing you sure of my notion now, that I am a British Subject. And I also sure one thing, that you, no that am a British Subject surely.

But one thing that if you send me back, I am comming back again. It may be am not going to land at Southampton, I may land at Clasgow, or Liverpool, or London etc. But I sure that am comming-back again, unless my people tye me with rope, and if they tye me I must cut and come back to Europe again.

Because you no we are all under British Empire and you still rulling us, and I wonder why an British Subject will game to England and you will refused to land him.
But my is sure, if you send me back am comming again. Because am under Union Jack.

I said to you, I don't come in England for Steeling. I make my mind for work and I say if you could put me at coal-mine I will be able to do, or any work.

Yours truly,
Amos O...
Stowaway

N.B. Don't think if you send me back to Lagos I will not come back. I am comming back because I still under Union Jack.
God time is best.
God save our Queen.

Some of those who were sent back were able to get new documents and tried again and again. The contest between the would-be stowaways trying to outwit the shipping companies and the ships' officers trying to prevent this traffic was followed with interest by the stowaways' colleagues ashore in the coastal towns. They told with delight the story of the policeman who stowed away and arrived in Liverpool still in uniform, and of the would-be girl stowaway who escaped detection for several days by mingling with the passengers. The stowaways' behaviour on board ship varied from that of the willing hand to the truculent mob: it is easier to sympathise with the two Gold Coastians charged with assaulting the Master who declared that their reason for not leaving the ship at Amsterdam when required to do so, was that they had no boots, that the streets were icy and that they did not want to be removed to a Dutch prison; and more difficult to sympathise with the West Indian stowaways - 21 on one ship - who caused trouble because they were not given sugar with their porridge.

The stowaways from West Africa in the years immediately following the war were mostly unemployed workers used to moving about, and ex-pilot boys. Among the latter rather more than half were illiterate and their hopes of educating themselves were no more than day dreams; disconcerted in finding life in Britain less easy than they had expected, many reverted to a delinquent career. These were, however, only one section of the stowaway population; some, ex-pilots included, became assiduous students at evening classes run by the local authorities;

a number have done very well for themselves. In recent years nearly all the stowaways have been ambitious young literates. The view held by some persons in official positions that the stowaways are the 'dregs' of their own countries cannot be upheld.

The number of West Africans coming to study in British universities and colleges has increased many times over since before the war. During the academic year 1951-52 2,000 were known to the British Council which organises measures for their welfare, These are not all. Some young men have paid their fare to come to Britain, taking a job, and studying in their spare time. A few stowaways who were turned back succeeded later in finding a relative to pay for their passage. Some men who came first as students and who failed to pass their examinations or whose allowance from home came to an end, have been reluctant to return and have remained almost indefinitely. A few who have obtained a professional qualification, such as in medicine, have remained in Britain to practise.

Migration from the West Indies

The ideological spark which, in the West Indian situation, sets light to the tinder of potential emigration, is much the same as that in West Africa, but in this case there is far more tinder. From both groups of colonies it is the young men who migrate first, but the West Indians have families and relatives who will follow them if this seems to be a satisfactory way of avoiding the economic blizzard which has hit their own country. In his 1950 report, the Comptroller of Development and Welfare quotes reliable estimates that if the present ratio of reproduction is maintained, the population of the British West Indies will increase by nearly 25% in ten years and may be doubled in thirty. So rapid an increase has serious effects upon the employment situation, and the efforts of the government of Jamaica to attract and encourage industry have failed to keep pace with the demand for work. Migration to Britain has been heaviest from Jamaica where conditions are not dissimilar from the other islands, but which has been in closer touch with the United Kingdom. Jamaica has a population of nearly one and a half millions in an area about half the size of Wales much of which is unsuitable for farming. The country has been largely dependent upon an unstable agriculture and upon heavy exports of sugar, rum and molasses, though the tourist industry has been expanding greatly and now brings in a revenue nearly equal to that from sugar. Agriculture is hampered by lack of capital, deforestation and erosion. In 1950 there was an adverse trade balance of £8,608,000 with exports valued at £14,772,000 and

imports at £22,380,000; over half of the revenue has come from Customs and Excise duties. The terms of trade are worsening and the hurricane of 1951 has caused great damage. In eleven Jamaican towns surveyed in 1946, 30,000 men and women were act-:ively looking for jobs and could not find them; these rep-:resented 15.8% of the population over the age of 14 in the areas in question.[1] Chronic unemployment bore heavily upon the worker, for once he lost a job he might not get another for a very long time - sometimes a matter of years. The Annual Report of the Labour Department for 1947 speaks of "a large surplus population" and that for 1948 records increasing unemploy-:ment with the return of the R.A.F. and Army personnel and the decline in the recruitment of labour for military work. The same report for 1949 states that "it is difficult to get a worthwhile appreciation of the unemployment situation as there is no machinery for keeping track of unemployed persons. During the year conditions continued to deteriorate amongst the working classes as resources accumulated during the war years dwindled." The Colony Report for Jamaica for 1950 draws attention to the appearance of 'shanty towns' in and near Kingston.

A traditional West Indian solution to the problem of finding work has been that of emigration, though usually the men have returned to their home country after accumulating small sums of money; in the countries to which they go they have been migrant workers rather than immigrants. Prior to 1920 large numbers of workers went annually to Central and Southern America; as opportunities there have declined they have gone increasingly

1. For a useful analysis of the economic background to emigration see G.E.Cumper, The Social Structure of Jamaica, 1949, (a Caribbean Affairs booklet published by the University College of the West Indies).

to the United States, and inter-island migration is also high. In Jamaica before the war over 60,000 persons left the island in search of work annually, and Cumper can firmly declare "migration is a definite part of the social pattern of Jamaica; at least one working man in five has been accustomed to seek work either outside his parish or outside the island".[1] Since the war the opportunities for this have declined and the Colony Report for 1950 regrets that "the number of workers sent to the United States annually has been reduced considerably and in 1950 only 1,345 workers were contracted in Jamaica, the lowest figure for any one year since the commencement of the pro-:gramme". In recent years migrant workers have been employed as follows:

U.S. Naval and Air Base, Vernamfield - peak figure	9,000
Employment with Panama Canal	4,893
Royal Air Force	4,690
Munitions and Miscellaneous work	1,022
Agricultural work in U.S.A. 1943-50	62,439

The idea of Britain as the "mother country" is perhaps stronger in the West Indies than in West Africa, and though the people do not have such exalted notions of life in Britain, there is a tendency to take British values as axiomatic. Simey writes of the "blind copying of Western institutions" and says that:

> "The chief barrier to stability in the social structure has come from the imposing of standards from the outside world which are a crushing burden for West Indian peoples to bear... 'Outside' standards are applied through the medium of the middle and upper classes, who in a materialistic and competitive age see by the urban communities of Great Britain no alternative to the standards of living which have been set up

1. Cumper, op.cit. p.17.

> and North America. The motor car, the radio, the refrigerator, the suburban house of a type quite grotesquely unsuited to the tropical climate, all these are the hall marks of success in the West Indies."(1)

It is argued by Simey and others that members of the Jamaican lower middle class and upward-mobile persons of proletarian origin are made highly individualistic and aggressive by the free-enterprise Jamaican economy, and by the constant struggle to maintain or improve their economic position and their social standing in between the coloured working class and the white colonists.[2] Among the ambitious "marrying light" becomes a means of social climbing:

> "If one is not fortunate enough to have a white skin, the next best thing is a partner with a white skin. Married to a white woman, a young Negro rapidly ascends the latter of success. How could it be otherwise? If the white skin means superiority, then the white woman, in the interest of white prestige, must be given an opportunity to live in a way and on a standard compatible with white dignity". (3)

Simey concludes that "a society cannot be a healthy one in which so many people suffer from a constant regret that they are what they are, and do their best to give their children characteristics commonly supposed to be better than their own".[4] The hypersensitivity and "touchiness" attributed to the West Indian, is, according to this argument, due to the fact that a distinctive West Indian culture has not yet taken shape,

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1. T.S. Simey, Welfare and Planning in the West Indies, 1946, pp.235, 159-60. See also E.E. Williams, The Negro in the Caribbean, 1942, pp. 60ff.
2. See C.V.D. Hadley, "Personality Patterns, Social Class and Aggression in the British West Indies", Human Relations Vol II (1949).
3. Williams, op.cit. p.64
4. Simey, op. cit, p.20.

so that the social values are confused; also many people resent a slave inheritance brought to an end by moral condemnation from without.

Many of the airmen who came to Britain during the war, especially in the latter drafts, were from the lower middle class, and the contact between the two countries which they established was an important precursor to the migratory movement. In addition 345 technicians were brought to work in English munitions factories. Persons ambitious to improve their economic and social position, whose position was threatened by the slow rate of economic expansion in their own island, came to see in migration to the United Kingdom a means of securing their own future. Some of the West Indian airmen accepted demobilization in Great Britain, others went back to their home countries, and, being discouraged by the shortage of employment, used whatever they may have had left of their gratuities to come back to Britain. Some were able to borrow money or sell their goods, others came as stowaways. Between January 1947 and December 1948 the Jamaican cost of living index rose from 178 points to 251. As economic conditions deteriorated so the number of stowaways increased until in 1950 they outnumbered the West Africans. The majority of stowaways had not previously been in the United Kingdom, they had heard that Britain was short of workers and was importing labour from the Continent and the attraction of the "mother country" was powerful. Passports were more easily obtainable than in West Africa, and men who worked as porters loading bananas into

the holds of cargo vessels were often able to hide with the cargo, that is, until the ship had put to sea and the refrigeration of the holds commenced.

The West Indian stowaway movement was, however, subsidiary to the passenger migration; conditions and causes were much the same and those who could not find the ready cash came by the illegal method. The wave of passenger migration may be said to have started with the arrival of S.S. Empire Windrush in June 1948, bringing 492 passengers from the West Indies (mostly Jamaicans). The majority of these men were skilled or semi-skilled workmen, and half of them had made arrangements in advance to join friends or take up work with particular firms; the reception of the remainder was arranged by the Welfare Department of the Colonial Office, and within three weeks they had all been found work - in agriculture, foundries, welding, railways, carpentering, bricklaying, painting and tailoring. The following September, S.S. Orbita brought a further 108 Jamaicans, and this movement has continued up to the time of writing. The shortage of manpower in Britain, and the relative ease with which the migrants were found work, were publicized in the Jamaican newspapers, and a shipping line and an air transport company advertised charter passages to Britain at reduced rates. The governments tried in vain to discourage the movement, pointing out that other difficulties were attached to settling in Britain, and that the demand for workmen was to a great extent for skilled in men in trades in which Jamaicans had little experience. No exact figures

can be compiled but such as are available indicate that by 1951 the migration had reached a volume of 1,750 per annum, though there are some signs that it may now be decreasing. At first it was a movement of young men only, but in recent years there has been an increasing proportion of women who have either migrated with their husbands (and perhaps with their children too), or have come to join male relatives who have already established themselves. The migrants have been mostly skilled and semi-skilled workers - tailors, masons, mechanics and carpenters among the men, dressmakers and stenographers among the women. Frequently they sold most of their possessions to raise the price of the passage, for migration wasfor them a capital investment. The cost of migration rose until in 1951 a single passage cost £70; some were impatient enough to pay £120 and come by air. A few migrants were so disappointed with what they found in Britain that they returned very quickly, others have written home warning their fellow-countrymen not to repeat the mistake which they have made. But they find that the myth of Britain carries more weight than their advice, and that the would-be migrants conclude that the writers must be trying to prevent others from sharing their good fortune.

There have been a few government schemes to bring West Indian workers to Britain since the war, but they have not accounted for any large numbers: 100 farm workers from St. Helena and Barbados, 52 domestic workers from the same islands, 50 apprentices from the dockyard in Bermuda; most of these

people will return to their home countries. When positions for 33 women hospital workers were advertised in Barbados, no less than 534 applications were received within three days. It is a source of very great irritation to many West Indians that no more has been done in this respect when the government has imported workers from non-Commonwealth countries.[1] It is doubtful, however, whether anything could be arranged on a scale large enough to make an appreciable difference to the problems of islands such as Jamaica and Barbados, where industry cannot keep up with population growth. There is more to be said for such schemes as that which neatly absorbed the surplus female labour of the small island of St. Helena and put an end to the activities of certain private agents who had been recruiting labour for domestic work in Britain at rates of pay sometimes reminiscent of the nineteenth century.

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1. See the letter from L.N. Constantine to The Manchester Guardian 27th March 1951.

Migration from Other Territories

West Africans and West Indians are not the only coloured or colonial immigrant groups to be found in the dockland areas of Cardiff, Liverpool, London, and other ports. Often there is a group of men from British Somaliland: they are mostly from the interior of the country and emigrate from a sense of adventure and on account of that intrepid curiosity about the source of British power which is exhibited by many of the African peoples who have come under British rule. Sometimes there are numbers of East Africans of Negro descent, mainly from the island of Zanzibar. These men are all seamen, or have been seamen, for the United Kingdom is much less accessible to the would-be migrant with limited resources in the more distant parts of the Commonwealth. Nor in East Africa has the impingement of European culture been so intimately felt; no African educated class has arisen comparable to that in the West and it is doubtful if the people feel the same attraction of an imperial El Dorado.

Pakistani immigration has increased very greatly within the last ten years. During the war the desertion rate among Indian seamen (as they then were) became so high as to cause the authorities considerable alarm and special regulations were introduced to check this. Sometimes the greater part of a crew deserted and the ship was unable to sail. This has continued up to the present with desertions amounting to 500-600 per annum; two thirds of them succeed in settling in the country, the remainder are compulsorily repatriated and there

is a small voluntary return movement; the net immigration rate is approximately 400 per annum. The great majority of "Indian and Pakistani" seamen come from the region of Sylhet in East Pakistan, near the delta of the Ganges; this district is one of the poorest and its people are generally despised. The next most numerous group among the seamen is that of the Pathans, from West Pakistan, also originating from an impoverished region. Compared with the Pakistanis, there are very few Indian immi-:grants, most of whom are Sikhs; the disturbances following upon the partition of India led to a wave of immigration by Sikh and Pathan refugees.

Immigration from Mediterranean countries has also increased. 12,000 persons from Gibraltar were evacuated to the United Kingdom in 1940, 3,000 of whom remained after the end of the war. Though the year 1950 was probably not representative in this respect, there is reason to believe that there were some 500 Maltese, Cypriot and Adenese immigrants. The largest proportion came from Malta, a small territory with a rapidly expanding population which is economically dependent upon the use made of the island's military and strategic facilities. Contraction of employment in the naval dockyard after the war was severely felt but continuous emigration had already become a necessity. Between January 1948 and December 1950 17,021 emigrants left the island, over 1,700 to Australia and 3,020 to the United Kingdom. Arab migrants from Aden and Yemen are not so numerous though their numbers have also increased; a high proportion are seamen and permanent settlement has been on a small scale.

CHAPTER IV

THE PATTERN OF SETTLEMENT IN BRITAIN

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Immigration and Selective Settlement

The stowaway immigrants' first two or three weeks in Britain are passed in prison. Some people have argued that such a reception disposes them towards anti-social behaviour from the beginning, but the truth of the matter is that most of them have taken the experience in their stride. One West Indian stowaway described his experiences to a friend as follows:

> "The prison is like Pt. Antonio in size you play football, table tennis, and you get sixpence a week for the work you do in there and you go to church and you see pictures and you have canteen where you can buy sweets and tobacco, because you don't get cigarte in there. When the 13th day came, a Welfare Officer came and told me that I will getting a suit of clouthe and 10/- when I am coming out and I got it and that sent me to an Ostel to stay ...."

Two Nigerian ex-stowaways were in conversation when the question of the prison sentence was brought up; the first was quite unconcerned about it and said that it was "very nice" except that they locked your "room" at 4 p.m. and then "you only had book, but it was good for you". The second man would not have owned to having been a stowaway had his friend not implicated him; he was deeply ashamed of having been in prison, but it could not be said to have influenced him towards lawless behav-:iour, if anything the reverse. Nevertheless, a prison sentence for these stowaways does not fulfil any of the recognised funct-:ions of punishment - neither deterrence, retribution, nor reform.

Very many of the West Indian immigrants, passengers and stowaways, have the address of some relative or friend who may be expecting them or whom they may seek out on arrival. When

large numbers have arrived in one ship, the Ministry of Labour have taken special steps to interview and place in work those who may have made no advance arrangements. Many have arrived with very little luggage or warm clothing and have gone straight to the Colonial Office expecting that department to provide them with everything necessary. The West African immigrants do not so often have the addresses of any friends who may have preceded them, and being possessed of fewer of the social skills required for living in an industrialised country they tend to remain in the dockland areas. If a stowaway who has served his sentence in a London prison knows of nowhere to go on discharge, he is directed to the London County Council's department for the Homeless Poor, or straight to the Reception Centre set up under the National Assistance Act for such persons. In the course of the next few days he will speak to any coloured men he sees about in the streets, asking them for advice and enquiring after people from his home town. Many get in touch with friends, or make new friends, in this way. In London they are often directed to the coloured quarter in Stepney by English people or fellow immigrants. The London County Council has recently established a small reception centre in Stepney for coloured stowaways and others; they stay there for three weeks during which time they can be found suitable work and be assisted to make a good beginning.

The immigrants have not necessarily settled in the port at which they disembarked; some have travelled straight to

another town where fellow countrymen of their's were living; others have moved from place to place until they found a district to their liking. This settlement of the coloured immigrants in the different towns of Britain constitutes a pattern and is not the product of chance. The pattern cannot be delineated with any accuracy for though the social assimilation of the immigrants is only partial, their statistical assimilation is complete. Census returns do not take account of racial descent though they provide some information regarding places of birth. No record is taken of persons entering or leaving the country who are holders of British passports. We know neither the total number of coloured persons in Britain, nor how they are distributed between different parts of the country. The Registrar-General's decennial censuses give the following figures of colonial born persons resident in the United Kingdom:

	1911	1921		1931	
West African Colonies	1,121	1,906	(72%)	5,232	(58%)
Other African Colonies	3,426	3,037@	(57%)		
West Indian Colonies	9,189	9,054	(51%)	8,595	(51%)

The figures in brackets state the percentage of male persons

@ 1921 figures include persons born in Mandated territories which were not under British control in 1911.

As these are totals of persons born in the colonies and living in Britain at the time of the censuses they include persons of European descent and exclude coloured persons born in the United Kingdom. There were greater concentrations of colonial born persons in ports, university towns, health resorts, and

a greater proportion in the southern parts of England. The persons living in health resorts may have been mostly colonial born Europeans, or children staying with parents in retirement from the Colonial Service. Where the masculinity ratio is higher a greater proportion may be coloured immigrants as doubtless all those born in West Africa would be. Perhaps half of those born in the West Indies were coloured. The six London boroughs which in 1931 housed the greatest number of these persons were Kensington, Holborn, Hampstead, Paddington, Westminister and St. Marylebone; these are the districts where overseas students would be likely to reside and Stepney is not mentioned. Pending the publication of the 1951 census material, the best of several not very reliable estimates is that by a special correspondent of The Times who puts the population of coloured persons of colonial descent in Britain as at least 60,000[1]; as there are some 30-40,000 Pakistanis the number of persons conventionally regarded as coloured must on this count be over 100,000.

The pattern of settlement in Britain shows a number of concentrations of coloured people in the dockland areas of most ports and certain industrial towns. In such areas there is usually a number of streets in which the proportion of coloured residents may exceed 50% but the majority of the coloured people live scattered over a much larger region. If there are as many as 30,000 West Africans and West Indians resident in Britain (excluding students), then less than half of them live within

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1. The Times, 11.1.1951. I am inclined to consider this estimate too high.

the orbit of such concentrations and the remainder must be even more widely scattered. Settlement is selective: the dockland areas and the neighbourhoods of dense settlement contain a higher proportion of West Africans, of ex-seamen, of illiterates, and of men who offend against the laws and conventions of the country. The more ambitious immigrants, including a high proportion of West Indians, strike out into districts where there are few coloured men as there they are not hindered by their association with the misdemeanours of persons of similar appearance and can more easily climb in the social scale. In places where the coloured men are few in number a relative inter-racial harmony prevails because the immigrants are temperamentally better able to mix with the local peo le. Among West Africans, the proportion of immigrants from the Gold Coast appears to be lower in districts of the dockland type and if this is so the explanation may lie in the comparative wealth of the Gold Coast and the higher level of literacy there. Similarly the proportion of Gambians is higher in London. The composition of the coloured population in the various dockland areas usually reflects the shipping connections of the port. Liverpool and Manchester are the principal merchant centres for trade with West Africa and the largest vessels on the West African route sail out of Liverpool: the great majority of the Negro population of the region is comprised of West Africans and their descendants. Cardiff, a port which is much used by tramp steamers, contains a motley assortment of seamen of all nationalities. Despite the important uniformities among

the dockland settlements as a whole each district has its distinctive character.

The largest Negro group is that in Liverpool, where, according to Richmond's estimate, there are about 1,750 West African males, 600 West Indian males and about 2,500 Liverpool-born coloured males and females.[1] The largest concentrated area of Negro settlement in Britain is that in the South End of Liverpool. In the last ten years the Negro population of Manchester has grown greatly and a recent estimate puts the West African and West Indian population of Manchester and its environs at 3,200.[2] The coloured quarter of Cardiff presents many interesting features, the Negro population being confined to an artificial peninsula in the docks which houses in all about 8,000 persons. Different ethnic groups predominate in successive neighbourhoods, first the Greeks, then the Cypriots, Maltese, Arabs and Somalis, Africans and West Indians, Scandinavians, and finally Spaniards and Latin people - these distinctions are not, however, very rigid and there is a liberal scattering of Welsh and English people throughout. Owing partly to the geographical separateness of the settlement area the Negro grouping has remained at about 2,000 and migration towards the Midlands has been sufficient to check tendencies making for an increase. The Cardiff grouping has been described by Little[3] and the conditions of which he writes are not greatly dissimilar for the smaller groups in the other ports of that

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1. A.H. Richmond, "Economic Insecurity and Stereotypes as Factors in Colour Prejudice", Sociological Review, 1950, Section 8.
2. E.B. Ndem, Negro Immigrants in Manchester, Unpublished M.A. thesis, London 1953.
3. Little, op.cit. (1948).

region - Swansea, Barry, Neath, Bristol, etc. Small Negro groupings are also to be found in certain ports on the north-east coast, Hull, Middlesborough and Tyneside.[1]

During the last years of the war and immediately afterwards many Negro immigrants moved to the large industrial cities of the North and the Midlands, in particular Leeds, Sheffield[2] and Birmingham. In these cities employment opportunities have been at their best and the housing situation at its worst. In the coastal towns the coloured man has always been thought of as a seaman, or an ex-seaman likely to return to the sea, or in any case as someone likely to return to the country from which he has come; thus the partial segregation and social avoidance of the coloured grouping has always been explained away. So when col-:oured immigrants settle in areas remote from the sea and have no connection with the shipping industry, this brings up squarely the issue of social and economic equality. The authorities have to consider whether they are to attempt to promote the assimilation of the new element in the population and the ways in which this might be done.

This new phase in the history of Negro immigration is well illustrated by the recent growth of the West African and West Indian grouping in Birmingham. Before the outbreak of war in 1939 there had been a small number of Pakistanis and Indians living in the Balsall Heath area; there were large numbers of

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1. S.F. Collins estimates that in Tyneside there is a 'Negro' grouping of 150 and a 'Moslem' grouping of 1,000 (inclusive of wives, consorts and children irrespective of descent). "Social Processes Integrating Coloured People in Britain", British Journal of Sociology Vol III (1952) No 1. (cited infra as 1952a). See also the same author's 'Negro' and 'Moslem' Groupings on Tyneside, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Edinburgh, 1952b.
2. See "Sheffield's Africa", The New Statesman and Nation, 4.10.1952. There is also a small but well-established group in Bolton.

Irish immigrant workers but very few Negroes. During the latter half of the war United States Negro troops used to visit the city and a number of coloured professional people formed a league of peoples of African descent to arrange hospitality for them. From this time onwards there was a steady but growing influx of West Africans, ex-seamen and stowaways, who frequently came down from Liverpool after hearing that employment opportunities were better in the Mid-:lands. This movement was most marked between 1946 and 1948 but it did not account for so many men as the wave of West Indian immigration following upon demobilization. Many Jamaican airforcemen had been stationed in the vicinity and returned there to settle, their numbers being greatly augmented by the movement from Jamaica which started in 1948. In 1951 it was estimated by the President of the African League that there were approximately 500 Africans and 1,250 West Indians in the Birmingham area.

Jobs were plentiful in Birmingham and houses scarce so the immigrants were scattered all over the city wherever they could get rooms. The West Indians frequently settled in the outlying parts but some Africans and West Indians concentrated in the Balsall Heath district; the low degree of concentration is partially due to the Irish immigrants' also living in poor and overcrowded conditions so that there is just as much pressure of demand upon the poorest quality housing. The number of coloured people in the Balsall Heath district increased further

with a movement of Arab and Somali ex-seamen up from Cardiff, and the district has come to resemble Stepney in that it serves as a social centre for immigrants while the proportion of coloured residents relative to the local population is low. The City Council have opened an Evening Institute for coloured people in this district which has gained good support.[1] Most of the single immigrants have to stay in lodgings and this results in a social life different from that of the dockland areas where the men usually rent rooms of their own, do their own cooking and have girls in to live with them if they wish. Landladies do not usually allow boarders to take girls to their rooms at all. In a few cases immigrants rent their own houses and in others landlords make very considerable profits by opening large houses to coloured lodgers, installing a manager who provides food and sleeping them eight or nine or more to a room. Residential hostels in the city are normally fully booked, the largest of them has never admitted coloured men, one has restricted them to a quota of six and the others have refused them owing to trouble experienced with coloured men or between them and other residents. When West Indians have attempted to purchase properties in districts where there have not previously been any coloured residents, people have put difficulties in their way. A Jamaican was told by an estate agent that if he were to purchase and occupy a certain house it would lower the value of the properties on either side by £100 or more. In such circumstances estate agents may be less helpful when it comes to arranging a mortgage. To have

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1. Birmingham Post, 6.2.1951.

coloured people living next door would suggest to many people that they were residing in a poor class neighbourhood and they might move elsewhere. The individual is influenced by his fears of what other people will think more than by his own feelings. As immigrants tend to take over the least attractive neighbourhoods there is logic in this train of thought. At other times, however, a district may have been declining for many years; when coloured people move in the residents blame them for the decline though they are its result, not its cause.

Tension between the coloured immigrants and the whites - especially the Irish - was very much higher in the Midlands than in the ports and was particularly evident over relations between coloured men and white women; in such matters great pressure was brought to bear on the girl by the behaviour of bystanders.[1] Incidents of malicious behaviour on the part of prejudiced individuals were more frequent there than elsewhere and there was more discrimination by managers of licensed premises, who it is said, were afraid that if they developed a coloured clientele at the expense of local customers they might be left stranded when the coloured men "went home". The general expectation that the immigrants would not stay long was due to the fact that there had not previously been any Negroes living there and was partly an expression of a desire

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1. An employer speaking of the engaging of coloured workmen said: "It's asking for trouble if you have any female labour - not because the coloured men misbehave, but because the girls and white chaps believe they might." Sunday Mercury, 25.2.1951. See also Birmingham Post, 22.1.1951.

to be rid of them. The manager of the public house where they congregated most had felt it advisable to protect himself by consulting with the brewery before "making over" one bar - the one where the highest prices were charged - for the immigrants' use. Whites are not excluded from this bar but coloured men are informally excluded from the other ones.

In London, the coloured population has been increasing rapidly. During the academic year 1951-52 half of the 5,000 colonial students known to the British Council were staying in the London area[1], a high proportion of them being in the Kensington and Earls Court districts. Groups of working class immigrants have grown up in Stepney, Camden Town, Paddington, Brixton, Westbourne Park and elsewhere. A small group in Deptford attracted attention in August 1949 when there was fighting between the immigrants and local men.[2] The Brixton settlement was also in the news in June 1951 as a result of a petition forwarded by twenty-seven residents drawing attention to what were termed "the appalling conditions" which prevailed at a house where a large number of coloured men were living. It was said that young white girls frequently lived on the premises and caused fights to occur. It was alleged that the language used and the distasteful incidents which occurred at the premises had an adverse effect on young children who unavoidably witnessed them. The Lambeth Borough Council adopted the report of the General Purposes Committee which spoke of:

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1. The Times, 13.12.1951.
2. The Times, 2.8.1949.

> "the remarkable increase in the coloured population, particularly in the Brixton area, where there are now large numbers of West Africans, West Indians and other coloured people in residence. A great proportion of these persons, whilst no doubt being British subjects, appear to be admitted into the country without having any employment in prospect and, in a number of cases, seem to spend their days loafing about the amusement halls and to exist on support obtained from the Public Assistance Authorities". (1)

An investigation failed to substantiate these charges. Brixton is primarily an area of West Indian settlement, though the house about which the complaints were made was inhabited by Africans.

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1. Lambeth Borough Council, Proceedings, 20.6.1951. See also The Brixton Free Press. 22.6.1951

Initial Orientation

The political element which plays so important a part in causing West Africans and West Indians to migrate to Britain also influences their attitudes towards participation in British social life and social assimilation. There is a striking contrast between their orientation, as a group, to the values of British society and the orientation of the Sikh and Pakistani groups which are to be found in very close proximity to the Negro settlements in many parts of the country. This contrast highlights many of the special characteristics of the West African - West Indian grouping; it is significant from a theoretical point of view and for the conceptualization of the processes involved in social assimilation.

The reasons which make an immigrant group either desire or resist assimilation are to be s ught in the cultural sphere. If they accept the norms, the value judgements, the philosophy underlying the social life of the host country, the immigrants will want to be assimilated, otherwise not. The Pakistanis and Sikhs are examples of non-assimilating or accommodating as opposed to adapting groups. Many of them are migrant workers who will return to their homeland when they have saved sufficient money, but those who remain still seek to preserve a group life of their own. In the Gorbals area of Glasgow, for example, there are about a thousand Indians and Pakistanis, very many of whom are employed as pedlars and penetrate right into the Highlands; they may learn to speak Gaelic better than English if it helps them to sell their wares. Some have become

wealthy but continue to lead a working class life and to help new arrivals to set up in business. Similar groups of pedlars are to be found all over the country.[1] An important part in maintaining the separateness of the life of such groups is played by their adherence to a religion different from that of the local people; the religion is not responsible for the exclusiveness of the group but is one aspect of the different culture; in their religious practices migrants may express their desire to remain separate.

The West African and West Indian immigrants begin with an entirely different outlook. One of the factors encouraging them to leave the colonies was their idealization of Britain and their acceptance of many aspects of British culture as superior to their own. They believed that the "mother country" owed certain obligations to them as colonials and as British subjects. Whereas the members of an accommodating group will behave according to the conventions of the country of immigration because it suits their purpose, and only so far as this is the case, those of an adapting group behave in that way because they believe it right to do so. The Negro immigrants see no reason for separate practices. Britain is not an alien land but in their view stands in reciprocal relationship with each colony; they may argue "we will go back when all the white men have left our country", or "we haven't made so many babies here as the Englishmen have in Africa". The Negro immigrants expect social equality in Britain and want to be as anyone else.

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1. See The Manchester Guardian, 3.11.1951 for a brief description of a group in Manchester.

That the West Africans and West Indians are properly immigrants rather than migrant workers is evident from their attitudes towards their homeland. All the West Africans entertain the idea of returning to the country of their birth but very few of them have any specific plans for doing so - and in this respect behaviour is a better guide than verbal statements of intentions or hopes. Many of them while often talking of the prospect of going back to Africa, are building up family ties and habits which pull in the opposite direction, and few of them save any money. They talk of the possibility of winning the football pools and going to Africa for a holiday, or of taking their wives there to see if they would like it, but it is clear that they are unwilling to return unless they can do so as successful figures - for England is the country where men make their fortunes. Past experience teaches that even in times of economic depression colonials will resist repatriation <u>because</u> they are down and out. Among the West Indians the situation is not very different, and while many would like to return it is doubtful whether more than a small proportion will ever do so unless employment opportunities in the West Indies improve or they are able to save larger sums from their earnings in Britain than is at present possible.

West African and West Indian immigrants are surprised to find that the majority of English people regard them as strangers and have little occasion to enter into relations with newcomers. Only after reacting against this reception

and after seeing what life in the imperial country is really like, do they come to realise that there is something in their own culture which they wish to preserve. But at any rate in the initial stages the obstacle which checks their desire for assimilation is the witholding of social acceptance on the part of the white majority group. This is the reverse of the usual position in which it is the immigrants who resist assimilation. In such a situation as this inter-group relations are at work on several different levels. On the biological plane there is the process of amalgamation which refers to the mingling of ethnic stocks. On the sociological plane there are the dual processes of modification on the part of the groups interacting. The immigrants adapt their social life so that the language, customs and institutions of their adopted country become their own in some more thoroughgoing way than mere use implies; the natives become acquainted with the newcomers, perhaps learning something from them, and ultimately they come to accept them as socially their equals, as guests at their tables and as conceivable relatives by marriage. Social acceptance can, however, be withdrawn in times of stress so long as the immigrants can be distinguished from the natives.[1] Social assimilation as the end state produced by the operation of these dual processes may be defined as a state of affairs in which a person's membership of the immigrant grouping does not in any way hinder him in his relations with non-immigrants; it requires not that the immigrant

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1. It is surely wrong to follow R.E. Park in applying the term to individuals. It is invidious to call a single person "assimilated" because his personal qualities enable him to mix with other people on equal terms, when the same acceptance is denied to his fellows possessing the same group characteristics. See Park's article "Assimilation, Social" in the Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, 1930.

forget his own culture but that he be fully at home in that of his adopted land. On the psychological plane there is a process of adjustment by which the individual relates his behaviour to the requirements of the surroundings. Every living being is continuously adjusting to a changing environment, but to an environment as he sees it - to the neighbours in the street and the men at work, not to 'British society'. Immigrants may adjust to life in dockland and be relatively unadjusted in some of the other neighbourhoods of the city. It is through this process of adjustment that immigrants enter the native class structure. The concept cannot be qualified except by introducing specific criteria, for the Colonial Office official and the West African nationalist leader would probably have quite different ideas about what constituted "good" and "bad" adjustment to the situation in Britain. Though adjustment is a continuous process there is an initial stage in which the immigrant has to adjust to major changes in environment. He may take several years to settle down but having once accomplished this he has much less difficulty in adjusting to later experiences.

The Growth of the Coloured Quarter in Stepney 1940-50

An account of how the Negro immigrants partially took over a small section of Stepney and the reactions which this provoked, will explain some of the characteristics of the coloured quarter as it is at present and illustrate how such quarters develop. Many parallels could be found in other areas of immigrant settlement.

In 1939 there were only a few West Africans and West Indians resident in Stepney, and they were mostly to be found in Golding Street, Greenfield Street and Cable Street. The big exodus occasioned by mobilization and evacuation reduced the population of the Borough from 200,000 to 60,000. With the revival in the shipping industry there was an increasing number of coloured seamen coming into the neighbourhood though it was probably some while before this began to take effect as the men would spend only a short time ashore.

After the severe air raids of early 1941 the colonials living in the area started to agitate and raised a number of complaints: firstly, they were isolated and needed some sort of club where they could meet; comfortable lodgings could not be obtained and there was no alternative to spending the evening in the public houses and cafes. Secondly, they complained about colour discrimination and said they experienced it particularly from Jews and over air raid shelter accommodation. The Air Raid Precautions authorities had offered them a separate shelter which was inferior in comfort and protection from attack. Apparently these complaints were justified though accusations that Jews show colour prejudice are relatively rare; it may be that the tension at the time of Dunkirk was causing them to lose some of the feeling of being a

minority and to take on some of the majority group's attitudes to "outsiders". In the times when people were living in shelters for perhaps ten hours a day they became closely knit, intimate and exclusive little groups and to refuse admittance to colonials may not be evidence of as virulent a prejudice as it may at first appear. Thirdly, the coloured men complained of police interference alleging that constables were very hard on them for minor offences, especially Jewish War Reserve police-:men. This complaint too, seems to have been justified: a zealous new constable may not have appreciated the fact that these men had few places to go to in the evening. Fourthly, there was already concern about what would happen immediately after the end of the war because several of the men remembered the bitter prejudice and discrimination of 1919 and the years after. It is difficult to obtain a reliable estimate of the numbers of colonials in this district at the time: there were 40-60 employed at a local gasworks and about 50 coloured children in the neighbourhood, but many of the residents may have been away at sea for long periods. The only available estimate, of 350 West Africans and West Indians, must refer to an area much greater than that of western Stepney alone. As a result of the representations made to them the Colonial Office opened a hostel in Leman Street at the end of July 1942 which provided recreational facilities for colonials and sleeping accommodation for thirteen seamen; though nominally a seamen's hostel, the residents were often shore workers.

In 1939 the principal coloured settlement had been further

east, in Canning Town, which was closer to the docks; this district, however, suffered severely from bombing and the population were evacuated, many of the coloured people being moved northwards to Finchley. The seamen tended to spend their shore-leave nearer to the centre of the city and congregated in south-western Stepney (St. George's) in the same area where the coloured population had previously been. Other immigrants, mostly Pakistanis, Arabs, and Maltese, opened cafes from which they made a profitable business and the reduced pressure on housing - many houses were standing empty owing to evacuation - enabled the immigrants more easily to find accommodation. The Neighbourhood was not attractive to other groups as the proximity of the main-line railway makes it dirty and dingy in appearance. The cafes not only served refreshments but acted as centres for the prostitutes and rooms were sometimes let out to seamen. Numerous though the cafes were, trade was brisk and they frequently changed hands for large sums. Seamen were away at sea for long periods and came ashore with a great deal of money to spend. "Taxis", so it was said, "flowed up and down the street. Couples would take a cab 300 yards, pay it off and shout up another."[1]

It has been alleged that organized gangs existed which contacted seamen, provided them with a girl and somewhere to stay -

> "Sometimes with £150. or more in their pockets after long voyages the men are brought by touts from the docks to Cable Street. Then they are introduced to men of one of those gangs which control vice in the neighbourhood. White women are allotted to them for the length of their stay in London. Sooner or later the man realized that all his money has been "spent" for him. And then the trouble starts". (2)

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1. The Leader, 13.12.1947.
2. News of the World, 2.11.1947; see also Daily Mail, 31.10.1947.

It is most improbable that such a state of affairs existed at any time; the appearance of gang organizations probably derived from the activities of a section of the coloured men and the cafe proprietors. Men who had lived as "pilot boys" in West African ports attempted to continue their occupation in Stepney. Any newcomer could be shown round, or a girl found for him at a fee (she probably would not stay with him long), and a particularly lucrative living was made from U.S. Negro troops in this way. The area attracted professional prostitutes from other parts of the country, and many of those footloose girls who lived as semi-prostitutes and circulated from one port or military town to anothe r. In some cases cafes in the different towns were linked with one another, either by ownership or acquaintance - for the majority were run by Maltese and Pakistanis - and girls arrived in a new dist-:rict with the address of a cafe which would help them to obtain accommodation. Much of the prostitution and gambling was organized through the cafes and at times there were sideline rackets in scarce goods such as cigarettes, liquor, nylons and drugs - as there often are in any port. Apart from visiting the cafes and public houses there were few alternative ways in which the seamen could spend their leisure time unless they went to a different neighbourhood. Some of the local settlements, missions, and clubs would have discouraged coloured members, some would have made them welcome had they arrived, but none tried to attract the coloured seamen, and in a strange country people do not readily approach public institutions.

Towards the end of 1943 a Committee was formed by some of the local clergy, social workers and other people who were concerned

about the course events were taking. They commissioned Mrs. Phyllis Young to carry out a survey of the Cable Street area. The report which was subsequently issued contains many of the unsubstantiated characterizations of the writer untrained in the social sciences but it also sets out valuable information about the size and developing character of the immigrant grouping.[1] At the beginning of 1944 there were at least 400 coloured people resident in the area, including 12 women and 136 children.[2] It was possible to obtain details about only 130 of the resident males but it is claimed that they were a representative sample; they were composed as follows:

64 Indians	41 West Africans
7 Other coloured	10 West Indians
	8 Other colonials.

There was a large number of Maltese in the vicinity. At that time the district usually housed a floating non-resident population of 150 Colonial seamen and 150 U.S. Negro troops.

> "Their homes generally consist of one or two poorly furnished rooms in dilapidated and overcrowded houses in one of the back streets. Those who rent the whole house usually let rooms to friends, leaving themselves and their families one or two rooms only. A few are more fortunate in having flats in the older blocks of buildings in the area, but even if the family should want good housing accommodation they are unlikely to obtain it as most of the landlords of the better type of property do not want coloured men as tenants. This is chiefly due to the fact that the coloured man, in the minds of the landlords, is

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1. K.P.M. Young,: Report on an Investigation into the Conditions of the Coloured Population in a Stepney area, 1944. Privately Published.

2. Mrs. Young's figures were obtained by noting names in the National Registration records which appeared to be those of coloured men and then trying to get information about them through other official and personal channels. As so many Africans and West Indians have English names this method cannot be considered reliable.

> connected with the promiscuous living in the neighbourhood; investigation has shown that a very large percentage of the coloured men in the area are living promiscuous lives while some of the white women with children consort with other men while their husbands or unmarried partners are away at sea." (1)

Mrs. Young writes of the "friction, insecurity and anxiety in mixed marriages" and ascribes it to these factors: (a) the woman is generally ostracised by white women who are not connected with the coloured community; (b) the overcrowded conditions in which they live; (c) the woman is rarely of the type who can make a comfortable home; (d) in some instances the woman is worried about her children's future, realising that the colour bar may handicap them throughout their lives; (e) the man's attitude towards the woman is not the same as that of a white man; and although she may feel that he is a good husband, the woman does not consider him her equal.

At this time only 20% of the men were in regular shore employment, in the building trade, as stokers, or in tailoring workshops; colour discrimination restricted the lodging facilities for seamen. There were no suitable recreation centres and their place was taken by the cafes which

> "...perform the functions of local clubs, for the men and women stay in them for hours at a time, chatting with friends and drinking no more than a cup of tea... It is to these cafes that women coming into the area from outside are directed; here, by either the cafe proprietor or one of the other women, they are given an address at which they may stay... A seaman may also obtain an address here, or he may be given a room above the cafe to which later he may take a woman. In 1943, 12 convictions were secured for carrying on brothels in or just near the area". (2)

Few of the women were brought up locally, many came from other

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1. Ibid, p. 10.
2. Ibid, p. 24.

sea ports, from North East England and from severely bombed regions: an influx of girls under 22 years old coming from Coventry and Hull was noted at this time. The report concluded with a discussion of the problems surrounding half-caste children as being of increasing importance. It is said that towards the close of the war years the prostitutes were doing a thriving trade and were conspicuous on account of their flashy clothes and extravagant behaviour. Attempts were made to direct some of them into the women's military services as conscription was then in force but morale was high among the profession - when called upon to state their occupation the women insisted on declaring themselves prostitutes and the Services declined to pursue the matter further.

During this time there was a steadily rising resentment on the part of the local residents towards the coloured immigrants. The major irritant was that women of any age walking along Cable Street were liable to be accosted; this is more likely than anything else to raise feeling, but there were other causes for annoyance. Indecent behaviour in the alleys and bombed buildings was frequent and the district gained a bad reputation; one resident complained that her friends would no longer come there to visit her. Many of these complaints were made to the secretary of the local ward of the majority political party who was also associated with the local Catholic Church; some of the congregation complained of molestation when returning home through Cable Street at night. The Borough Council would not take any action in the matter, nor would it admit that anything was amiss, so

at the end of October 1947 the Ward Secretary prepared a petition which he and some helpers took round the district in the attempt to collect a sufficient number of signatures to prove that they had just cause to complain. They collected 1,200 signatures to a memorial which ran as follows:

> "We wish to protest to the Council about the conditions at present existing in Cable Street between Christian Street and Leman Street. Grave moral and physical danger exists both for young and old people in this area and we demand that the Borough Council take active steps in consultation with the Home Office and the Food Ministry to rid us of this pestilence. We express the opinion that contributory causes are the excessive number of cafes open at a late hour, and the disgusting conditions in the public houses."

The organizers denied any colour prejudice on their part, basing their action upon the undoubted frequency with which women were accosted and the desirability of stopping this. They have said that several coloured people were among the signatories to the memorial and that it had been arranged for one of them to form part of the deputation which presented the memorial at a meeting of the Borough Council. By this time, however, the matter was widely regarded as a racial issue, the coloured man withdrew and it was not possible to replace him. It should be noted that the memorial was worded in such a way as to arouse racial antagonism in its use of terms such as "pestilence" and that by referring to the coloured men's cafes they associated the alleged moral and physical danger with the immigrants rather than with general conditions in the locality. There is no doubt that the local population regarded it as directed against the immigrants: persons collecting signatures were received at the door with remarks such as "Oh, you've come

about the petition to get rid of the blacks?" An offer was made to one of the organizers that 100 men could be found to march down Cable Street one evening; they would visit all the cafes and public houses telling those persons whom they saw inside that they were going to return the following evening and would "deal with" any of these people whom they found on the premises again. Some of the coloured people heard of this plan and boarded themselves in. The originator of the petition then realized that it had become a racial issue and that his course of action had not been the most judicious.

A feature of the incident was the irresponsible attitude adopted by those newspapers which saw in it an opportunity to pander to the section of the public that has an insatiable appetite for stories of vice; the newspapers themselves could at the same time pose detachedly as the guardians of public morality. There was talk that "if nothing were done people would take the matter into their own hands"[1] and a national newspaper described the district in such a way as to increase the tension, saying that "Stepney folk have already decided that unless authority steps in 'war' will be declared,"[2] and "Stepney is determined that this dangerous element must be wiped out."[3] The reporter so distorted one remark that it became a complete fabrication and in speaking of the cafes, repeated the myth that "Thousands of pounds has been paid for such a room." This newspaper repeated the popular story that "the police have found the district so

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1. East End News, 7.11.1947.
2. Mabel Elliott in the News Chronicle, 28.10.1947.
3. Ibid., remark attributed to one of the organizers.

so tough that they rarely patrol these streets except in twos and threes", a fabrication to which another newspaper replied with a photograph of a solitary police constable in Cable Street at night.[1] Another reporter wrote "Seamen all over the world know of Cable Street, and, if their tastes lie that way, make for it as soon as their ships dock. Some of them are coloured boys just off their first ship. A few months ago they were still half naked in the bush."[2]

It was not surprising that some people who visited Cable Street out of curiosity were of the opinion that these stories were greatly exaggerated because the petition and the threat of fighting had alarmed the immigrants and they kept indoors or away from the centre of disturbance until matters had quietened down. Those who publicised the incident were mostly concerned to lay the blame on some section of the population or another and little attempt was ever made to expose the underlying factors and forces which kept so many of the immigrants in the Cable Street area. Some of the blame was shifted from the coloured men to the girls,[3] "The girls who haunt the cafes and pubs are not London girls, they come from South Shields, Newcastle, Cardiff, Liverpool; many of them are on the run and some have escaped from remand homes. They are safe in Cable Street. Most

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1. Reynolds News, 2.11.1947. See also letter in Daily Mail, 4.11.1947.
2. Vivien Batchelor in John Bull, 6.12.1947. But by far the most unsympathetic account of the Negro population in this area and one that is far more inaccurate than any that has appeared in the sensationalist press, is that by a Negro American, Roi Ottley, No Green Pastures, 1952.
3. Daily Herald, Evening Star, 30.10.1947. Also letter to East End News, 9.11.1947.

of them are teen-agers, they get drunk and the coloured seamen they are with get jealous."[1] When the petition was presented a Councillor referred to the "young girls, mostly from approved schools, taunting the men"[2] and one of the organisers subsequently said "We feel that the blame for the evil which goes on must be laid on the white girls who entice the seamen when they come ashore. If these men had proper hostels ..."[3]

Despite the furore which it caused at the time, little came out of this petition; the Borough Council referred it to the Finance Committee (the newspaper which had described the incident in the sensationalist vein reported this by saying "A special committee has been appointed to consider this petition"[4]). Ultimately the Council requested increased police protection. The publicity aroused the resentment of the law abiding coloured folk[5] and the shopkeepers, to some of whom it caused surprise[6]. It may be taken as supporting the reported opinion of one police constable that "You can't stamp out these things in a dock area. You can only localize them and advise people to keep away."[7] Both the petition and the newspaper publicity were well remembered by the coloured people of the area in 1951 when there was still a decided hostility towards any publicity and suspicion of reporters. Patrick O'Donovan's very balanced broadcast on

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1. Daily Mail, 31.10.1947.
2. East London Advertizer, 31.10.1947.
3. John Bull, 6.12.1947.
4. News Chronicle, 6.11.1947.
5. Borough Council meeting, 18.3.1948.
6. The Leader, 13.12.1947.
7. Ibid., cf. Little, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

Cable Street[1] caused anger amongst some sections of the coloured population because he drew attention to their poor living conditions; immigrants are likely to feel such comments as slights upon themselves. The apprehension to which the incident of the Petition gave rise caused some coloured men to leave the area but in doing this it only emphasized the normal tendency for immigrants to move out of a reception area. African immigration continued and that of West Indians increased, so that the number of coloured people reached its peak in 1949; after then the outward movement was the stronger.

In the autumn of 1949 a six week, part time investigation was carried out by an East African student, Derek Bamuta;[2] obviously, in so short a time only a few impressions could be gathered, but some extracts may be of interest:

> "I became friendly with four Indian lads who had come over as ship's cooks and seemed to enjoy their life immensely; it was divided between attending cinema shows, walking about the streets looking for girls, and smoking Indian hemp (hashish). A fellow Indian owned a dilapidated four-roomed house: he sub-let one room with two double beds to my friends for £2. per week. If one of them brought in a woman the others had to sit on the door-step or stand at the street corner. There was an adapted gas ring on which they cooked all their meals. The house was probably condemned and the sanitary arrangements were filthy nevertheless they gave me the impression that their living conditions were far better than in India."

Of the West Africans, Bamuta noted "I have reason to suspect that a lot of them actually sleep in bombed houses; it would appear that they hang about the streets until 1-2 a.m. and then find a reasonably sheltered spot for a night's rest. Their main

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1. The Listener, 16.2.1950.

2. Bamuta, D.: "Report on an Investigation into conditions of the coloured people in Stepney", 1949. Prepared for the Warden of the Bernhard Baron Settlement, E.1., and published anonymously in Social Work, January 1950, pp.387-395.

amusement is sitting in cafes, drinking tea and talking; later in the evening they go into pubs for a drink and to look for girls. They are not as a rule heavy drinkers and in pubs usually ask for half a pint, but they indulge in hashish or Indian hemp which they buy from very well "kept" places at a rate of 2/6d. for sufficient to cover a 6d. piece. It is rolled into a cigarette and passed round for all to have a puff; my friends said it was something that gave them strength and at the same time they could control themselves, "not like drink that made you sway or would not let you stand up."

Bamuta observes that landlords are reluctant to take coloured men as they are "afraid of 'goings-on' as they put it, i.e. women who are after these men." "Women make their contacts with men in cafes, and then invite themselves to drinks in the evening, and if the man has a room of his own and takes the woman back with him he is as good as married, because once the woman is sure of a place to live she will stick to him like a limpet; once you get one she will not leave until she has taken all you have, and no amount of beating will get rid of her." He points out that the newly arrived West African has a glorified image of the white woman and is unprepared for the unscrupulous behaviour of prostitutes to whom he falls a ready prey and later becomes extremely contemptuous of white women because of this. "I know of one woman who had no scruples at all: I heard her tell a friend how she had stolen some money from a Dutch seaman and furnished a basement as a gambling den. After closing time she could charge extra for beer and cigarettes and would go

round the pubs before they shut telling men they could come down the basement for some fun as they could get drinks and so forth. She charged an initial entrance fee of 5/-. and on pay nights would get men to deposit money with her for a full week's gambling." Bamuta claims that there is very little colour prejudice amongst men but that it is easily aroused in competition, either side belittling the other to their women. "I saw one girl standing at the corner of a street and when spoken to by a coloured man, said: 'I don't talk with coloured men'. This was for the benefit of a group of young white men a few paces away and as soon as they had moved she went off on the arm of the coloured man." Bamuta's judgments of his fellow countrymen give the impression that as a student he was very conscious of the superiority of his own status.

The Colonial Office hostel in Leman Street was open for recreational purposes to non-residents and was a centre for some sections of the population. It was not an easy hostel to run and on occasion the Warden had to remove electric bulbs from stairs, ablution places, and lavatories in the attempt to stop men from gambling there. In December 1949 the Colonial Office decided to close the hostel in the face of vigorous protests from several local bodies who contended that the Colonial Office had a moral responsibility towards the Colonial community in the area. The official reply was that the hostel had been opened for colonial seamen, that very few seamen now used it and that adequate accommodation for them existed elsewhere. The incident adds point to the remark of a Times correspondent:

"During the war and the years immediately following, the Colonial Office tended to treat the coloured colonials as a specially favoured group and often used its influence to obtain jobs for them. Recently the department seems to have changed its policy and taken the view that Colonials - like all others in the country - should look for jobs in the usual manner through labour exchanges and other employment agencies. The loss of the favoured position is naturally felt, especially as this change of policy is not understood and has never at any time been clearly explained to those whom it affected." (1)

The closing of the Colonial Office hostel probably marked the end of the period of a growing coloured population. Since 1949 the number of immigrants resident there has been steadily declining due in part to the poor housing of the locality and the demolition of property in redevelopment areas. The building previously used for the hostel was taken over by a West Indian who continued to provide accommodation there, chiefly for his fellow countrymen, until September 1951 when the property was acquired by the London County Council to establish the reception centre for stowaways. When they had to vacate the premises most of the residents moved to other districts. Thus the study of the coloured quarter that follows is one of a reception area in its second phase when the biggest bulge of immigrants has already passed through and the more enduring neighbourhood characteristics are beginning to make themselves apparent.

Most of the immigrants by this time had experienced the difficulties of finding a consort with whom they could live in harmony; some had entered on a stable relationship with a woman whom they either had married or were subsequently to marry, but families were small. Many of the later arrivals were still unable to settle to a steady job while nearly all the immigrants were

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1. The Times, 11.1.1951.

dissatisfied with their housing and prone to change their residence or go to another town at short notice. The women who were prepared to live with coloured men were, as a class, an even less stable element in the population, and some of both sexes were only just beginning to realize that they could no longer make so easy a living as during the war. The spontaneous social groups consisted each of only a handful of individuals coming from the same district in one of the colonies or having a common tribal allegiance, such as the United Kroo National Society, the weekly "meeting" of a group of men from part of Ijaw territory (Nigeria), or a group of friends from the same district in Jamaica. Where there are kinship relations - even of the most tenuous sort - between two immigrants, the tie is a binding one, but no effective structural links of a more inclusive nature have yet come into being. By 1950 the cafes functioned as social centres for only some visitors and a few residents; many of the coloured men resident in the neighbourhood preferred never to go in these cafes. Structural fragmentation was increased by the mistrust bred of broken obligations, for most of the immigrants found themselves subject in Britain to weaker social controls than those to which they had been accustomed before migration, and the less responsible had been inclined to take advantage of any willingness on the part of the fellow countrymen to help them. The immigrants took little interest in local politics. It so happened that a coloured man who had been born in the vicinity was serving on the Borough Council at the time when many of them settled in Stepney. He did not try to make himself their

leader, nor did the immigrants go to him; most of them had never heard of him.

The Englishman unacquainted with life in the coloured quarter tends to think that all its coloured residents are similar: he has a romanticised notion of a little self-contained community. But the coloured men comprise one grouping only in the eyes of the British public; in reality they come from differing lands and peoples and often have little in common with one another. Looked at from the inside the picture is one of relative disorganization. At first the immigrants are suspicious of one another and unwilling to co-operate, but what is little more than a category of people of similar appearance is made into a self-conscious social group by the attitudes shown towards them by the British public, and the ties of sentiment are strengthened by the shared experience of a disadvantaged economic position.

CHAPTER V

THE COLOURED QUARTER IN STEPNEY

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The People

In 1931 the population of Stepney included the highest proportion of aliens of any census district in the United Kingdom: 25,341, constituting over 11% of the total. In 1951 there were about 15,000 registered aliens, but owing to the reduction in the population of the Borough they now accounted for 15% of the total; four fifths of them were Jewish immigrants who had been in the country for many years but had not taken out naturalization papers. The total population of Stepney west of the Metropolitan railway and exclusive of Wapping was at this time about 40,000 of whom about 25,000 were Jewish. Within this area the total number of coloured people (including Africans, West Indians, Pakistanis and Sikhs, but not Mediterraneans) did not exceed 1,500.

It is extremely difficult to arrive at an accurate calculation of the size of the coloured population in any part of Britain as no record of a man's skin colour is kept in official documents. In a district such as Stepney it is even more difficult owing to the frequency with which some immigrants change their places of residence and the general instability which prevents residents from knowing very much of the whereabouts and doings even of their fellow countrymen. At the end of 1951 the coloured population was composed approximately as follows:

West Africans (males) ...	145*
West Indians (males) ...	174*
U.K.-born (males) ...	9*
E. & S. Africa (Negroid) (males) ...	18*
Others (males)	4*
Somalis (males)	40
Seamen (all groups) ...	30
Females	30
Juveniles aged 15 - 18 ...	10

These figures are of varying degrees of accuracy, but they indicate a total Negro adult and juvenile population of 450 - 470. Other immigrant groups are of the following approximate sizes:

Pakistanis	...	750	(mostly from East Pakistan)
Indians	...	100	(mostly Sikhs; a few Ceylonese)
Maltese	...	750	(this estimate is not reliable; the number might be as low as 500 or as high as 1,000)
Other Mediterraneans		100	(Cypriots, Greeks, Italians)
Arabs	...	10	(Yemenis, Adenese, Egyptians)

The estimates marked with an asterisk were derived from an analysis of the registers of the local Employment Exchange. Although no separate records are kept of coloured workmen, the Exchange has established a special sub-division to meet their particular needs; it was possible to trace the records of applicants who had been dealt with by this section and thus to arrive at estimates which were as accurate as was possible in view of the difficulties mentioned. The estimates of the sizes of the other immigrant groups are of a lower order of reliability. The figure of 750 Pakistanis is based upon the number of addresses given by Pakistanis in Employment Exchange records, with allowance for the fact that in many houses the number of occupants is very much higher than among the Afro-West Indian grouping. A similar method of estimation was employed in the case of the other groups and the figures were discussed with members of the groups or bodies having responsibility for them. On the basis of Employment Exchange addresses it would appear that the Maltese group is no larger than 500, but in view of the likelihood of more of these men being employed without being on the Employment Exchange registers, the recent high rate of immigration, and the fact that many of them are not outwardly distinguishable from the non-immigrant population,

a higher estimate would seem advisable.

Notes were taken of all coloured persons on the unemployed register for a period of two weeks, and of all applicants at the local offices of the National Assistance Board during the same period; five months later a check was made of all coloured men on the unemployed register and of all the records referring to coloured men in the dormant register, which is comprised of all persons who have been placed in employment by the Exchange during the previous four years who have not subsequently registered at another Exchange. From inspection of the cases, comparison with the earlier sample, and comparisons with the names of coloured residents known personally to the investigator, it was apparent that the dormant register included records of men who were no longer resident in Stepney and did not include records of some who were. This was to be expected as since the termination of the Control of Engagement Order men had been able to obtain work without registering at an Employment Exchange. No precise standards could be used for the correction and elimination of the records of men considered to have left the district but the internal evidence of the case papers provided a fairly reliable guide. For example, if a man had given as his address that of one of the hostels and his record showed that he was prone to move from town to town without remaining in any one job for more than a few weeks, but nothing further had been heard of him within the previous two years, he was taken to have left the area. The dormant and unemployed registers included 157 West Africans, from which figure 34 cases were subtracted of men presumed to have

left the area. Fifteen cases of West Africans known personally to the investigator who were not on either register and who were living within the area were added. It may be presumed that there were more such cases unknown to the investigator but as there would also be cases of men who had left the district only recently and who appeared from their records to be still in Stepney these two factors probably cancelled one another out. Eighteen cases included in the earlier check were not found and of them it appeared that seven should be added. Of the West Indian cases, 52 were eliminated and only four added. Among the South Africans three men apparently of Indian descent were excluded. The cases in the corrected total were then analysed for further information regarding country of origin, age, sex, etc.

The countries of origin of the West Africans were as follows:

Sierra Leone ...	46
Nigeria	37
Gambia	35
Gold Coast ...	15
Unspecified ...	12
	145

and of the West Indians:

Jamaica	99
British Guiana...	15
Trinidad	9
British Honduras.	7
St. Lucia ...	5
Dominica	1
Barbados	1
Bermuda	1
Grenada	1
French Guiana ...	1
Unspecified ...	34
	174

The dates and places of birth of the U.K.-born coloureds were:

1900	-	London	1923	-	London
1922	-	London	1928	-	Unspecified
1922	-	Liverpool	1928	-	Manchester
1923	-	London	1929	-	Liverpool
			1932	-	Liverpool

Of the 12 East Africans, at least 5 were from Zanzibar and the 4 persons in the category "others" were from Mauritius (2), Southern Rhodesia and the Seychelles Islands. The Somalis were in most cases ex-seamen. Most of the coloured women were between the ages of 20 and 40, but there were some older persons, one of whom stated that her mother was born in London in 1862 of a U.K.-born coloured mother and a Jamaican father. About half of the coloured women were born in the United Kingdom, frequently of a white mother, and the others were mostly Jamaicans who have immigrated with their husbands or had come to stay with immigrant relatives. In addition to the juveniles there were a number of children between the ages of 5 and 15 who were of Negro descent but they were relatively few compared with those whose fathers had been Pakistanis or of non-Negro origin.

Analysis of the corrected totals and of the cases which had been eliminated yielded further data which has been tabulated as follows:

WEST AFRICANS (Residents)

Year of Birth		Age on Immigration (or taking shore work)			YEAR AND MODE OF IMMIGRATION						
						not known	stowaway	claims worked passage	ex seaman	passenger	Total
1892-96	1	45-49	1	(1 ex seaman)	pre '40	5	.	.	.		5
97-1901	3	40-44	1	(1 " ")	1943	.	.	1	1		2
1902-06	1	35-39	7	(3 " ")	44	3	.	1	4		8
					45	2	1	1	2		6
07-11	5	30-34	19	(8 " ")	46	12	5	1	2		20
12-16	10	25-29	31	(5 " ")	47	13	2	5	5		25
17-21	35	20-24	39	(3 " ")	48	9	4	1	6		20
22-26	49	15-19	14	-	49	5	11	2	2	1	21
27-31	22				50	.	6	1	4		11
not known	16	not known	33		51	2	.	.	1		3
					not known	24					24
	145		145								145

NOTE: Ages are as declared by immigrants and are unreliable; immigrants if young, frequently declare their age to be greater than it actually is, and vice versa.

In the case of seamen, the men may have been domiciled in Britain for many years prior to the war; no accurate figures are available which might permit this to be taken into account. The 'not known' column of 'mode of immigration' probably contains a high proportion of stowaways.

YEAR AND MODE OF IMMIGRATION

Year of Birth		Age on immigration (or taking shore work)				not known	stowaway	claims worked passage	ex seaman	passen-ger	Total
1882-86	1	55-59	2	(2 ex seamen)	pre 1940	4	•	•	•	•	4
87-91	3	50-54	6	(2 " ")	1940	1					1
92-96	5	45-49	5	(1 " ")	41	1	•	•	•	•	1
97-1901	7	40-44	14	(5 " ")	42	•	•	•	•	•	•
1902-06	8	35-39	13	(6 " ")	43	•	•	•	1	•	1
07-11	19	30-34	32	(12 " ")	44	•	•	•	5	•	5
12-16	19	25-29	43	(8 " ")	45	1	•	•	4	•	5
17-21	49	20-24	38	(3 " ")	46	5	1	1	4	•	11
					47	20	2	•	9	2	33
22-26	42	15-19	5	-	48	19	3	•	6	1	29
					49	10	3	1	6	1	21
not known	1	not known	16		50	5	8	•	8	8	29
					51	4	2	1	3	11	21
	174		174		not known	13	•	•	•	•	13
											174

NOTE: In many cases seamen had been domiciled in Britain for many years before the war. The stowaways were mostly younger men but several were in the 30's. Note the four cases of non seamen immigrants in the 50-54 age group. At least 4 of the 1950 and 2 of the 1951 passenger immigrants came by air. At least seven of the West Indians (p.) had served in the Royal Air Force and 5 in the Army. Two came to Britain from the United States, 2 had been back to the West Indies for short visits and 1 had lived in Britain for ten months, returned to Jamaica and came back to Britain two and a half years later. This second date was counted for his year and age of immigration. Half of the ex-service personnel took their discharge in the United Kingdom: this has been recorded in the 'not known' column for mode of immigration. Two further cases recorded similarly for 1940-41 relate to men entering the country with the British Honduras Forestry Unit.

Comparison of the two tables indicates that the West Indian population of Stepney is older than the West African; it contains a higher proportion of ex-seamen and of recent immigr-:ants. The men whose record cards were still with the Employment Exchange probably represent in the aggregate a less settled section of the coloured population by comparison with those who had remained in Stepney. The two following tables are included for such light as they cast upon these differences. The 44 cases of West Africans considered to have left the district are comprised of 34 from the dormant files of persons placed in employment, plus 10 cases found in the first but not in the second count; only 5 of the West Indian cases come from this latter source.

WEST AFRICANS (ex-residents)

YEAR AND MODE OF IMMIGRATION

Year of Birth		Age on Immigration (or taking shore work)								
						not known	stowaway	claims worked passage	ex seaman	Total
1912-16	1	35-39	1	(1 ex seaman)	1944	1	.	.	.	1
					45	1	.	.	2	3
17-21	7	30-34	1	-	46	3	.	.	.	3
22-26	26	25-29	12	(3 ex seamen)	47	8	3	1	1	13
					48	6	1	1	2	10
27-31	9	20-24	19	(2 ex seamen)	49	2	2	.	1	5
		15-19	4	-	50	1	1	.	1	3
not known	1	not known	7		not known	6				6
	44		44							44

NOTE: At least six of these immigrants claimed to be clerks or typists who had probably migrated with the intention of studying and who moved to a neighbourhood with a higher social status. The majority of these men were living in hostels or lodging houses and a third of them had worked in other towns and moved around the country. Although these men are younger and more recently arrived than the residents considered in an earlier table, they include a high proportion of men who arrived about 1947, at an early age and who failed to make a satisfactory adjustment; some of these have prison records. 12 were from Gambia; 10 from Sierra Leone; 9 from Nigeria; 5 from the Gold Coast and 8 not specified.

YEAR AND MODE OF IMMIGRATION

Year of Birth		Age on Immigration (or taking shore work)			Year of Immigration		claims not known	stowaway	worked passage	ex seaman	passage	Total
1892-96	1	50-54	1		1944	1	.	.	.	.		1
97-1901	.	45-49	.		45	1	.	.	.	.		1
1902-06	.	40-44	1		46	.	.	.	1	.		1
07-11	3	35-39	2	(1 ex seaman)	47	12	1	.	2	.		15
12-16	8	30-34	5	(1 " ")	48	10	.	.	2	.		12
17-21	5	25-29	11	(3 " ")	49	3	1	1	2	.		7
22-26	20	20-24	23	(2 " ")	50	4	1	.	1	4		10
27-31	18	18-19	7	(1 " ")	51	.	.	.	.	3		3
not known	2	not known	7		not known	7						7
	57					57						57

NOTE: 8 of these men had served in the Royal Air Force, 1 in the Army. A smaller proportion than among the comparable group of West Africans were living in hostels and lodging houses or had been moving between different towns: it would appear that movement outwards from Stepney among West Indians is less frequently due to incomplete adjustment than among West Africans though the evidence for this is not very great. It will be noticed that, as in the case of the West Africans, this group contains a higher proportion of young immigrants and, proportionately, more of the immigrants who entered the United Kingdom in the post war period 1947-48 than the recent wave of passenger immigrants 1950-51.

The Neighbourhood

The celebrated "Petticoat Lane" street market is held in the North West of Stepney - a neighbourhood of small workshops and busy streets. In the South West, where the coloured quarter is found, industry predominates. The districts to the East are quieter and more residential, there the population is mainly English with small groups of Irish and the well known Chinese group on the eastern boundary. In the South, Wapping is almost an island cut off by the docks and poorly served by transport facilities; the population there is predominantly Irish. Col-:oured residents are scattered throughout the western end of the Borough and one or more could probably be found in half the streets of larger size. In no case, however, do they amount to as much as half the population of a street, even where material conditions are poorest. The houses occupied by coloured immigrants are situated amongst ones occupied by Jewish and Eng-:lish residents, in very few cases are there as many as four successive houses occupied by coloured people.

The expression "coloured quarter" is not often used by people living in Stepney and there is no very definite conception of such a neighbourhood with distinct boundaries; Cable Street is regarded by local whites as being full of coloured residents - though most of the coloured men to be seen there do not live in the street and frequently reside outside the Borough. The expression "coloured quarter" will be used here to refer to the area bounded by Commercial Road in the North, Hungerford Street and Canon Street Road in the East, the docks in the South and

Leman Street in the West (see Map p.118). This district appears drab and derelict (apart from where new flats have been constructed) and many Stepney people never go there; the general public and the Stepney public too, have exaggerated ideas of what goes on in the district and believe the number of coloured residents to be far greater than it actually is.

During the daytime the big offices in Leman Street and the warehouses surrounding the railway goods depot are alive with busy activity. A great volume of heavy motor traffic passes along Cable Street coming from and going to the docks, or by-passing the congestion of Commercial Road. It is a commercial area and relatively few coloured people are to be seen in the daytime. At the end of the afternoon there is a general movement towards the railway stations and the bus routes; most of those who work in the neighbourhood live elsewhere and they retire to other districts as the men who live in this part of Stepney come back from their work in other parts. The social life of the area comes into its own as the business of getting a living and the economic life of the area decline. The streets with the long rows of warehouses down either side are ill-lit and deserted, in other streets where bombs had fallen the gaps in the rows of houses seem more ugly and the hollow shells of derelict buildings more gaunt. Cable Street is picked out by the lights of the public houses and cafes, and the greater number of people on the pavements - walking along or lounging at a corner. The cafes are curtained off so that the passer-by can see little of the interior except when a door is opened and gives a momentary glimpse of numbers of coloured men.

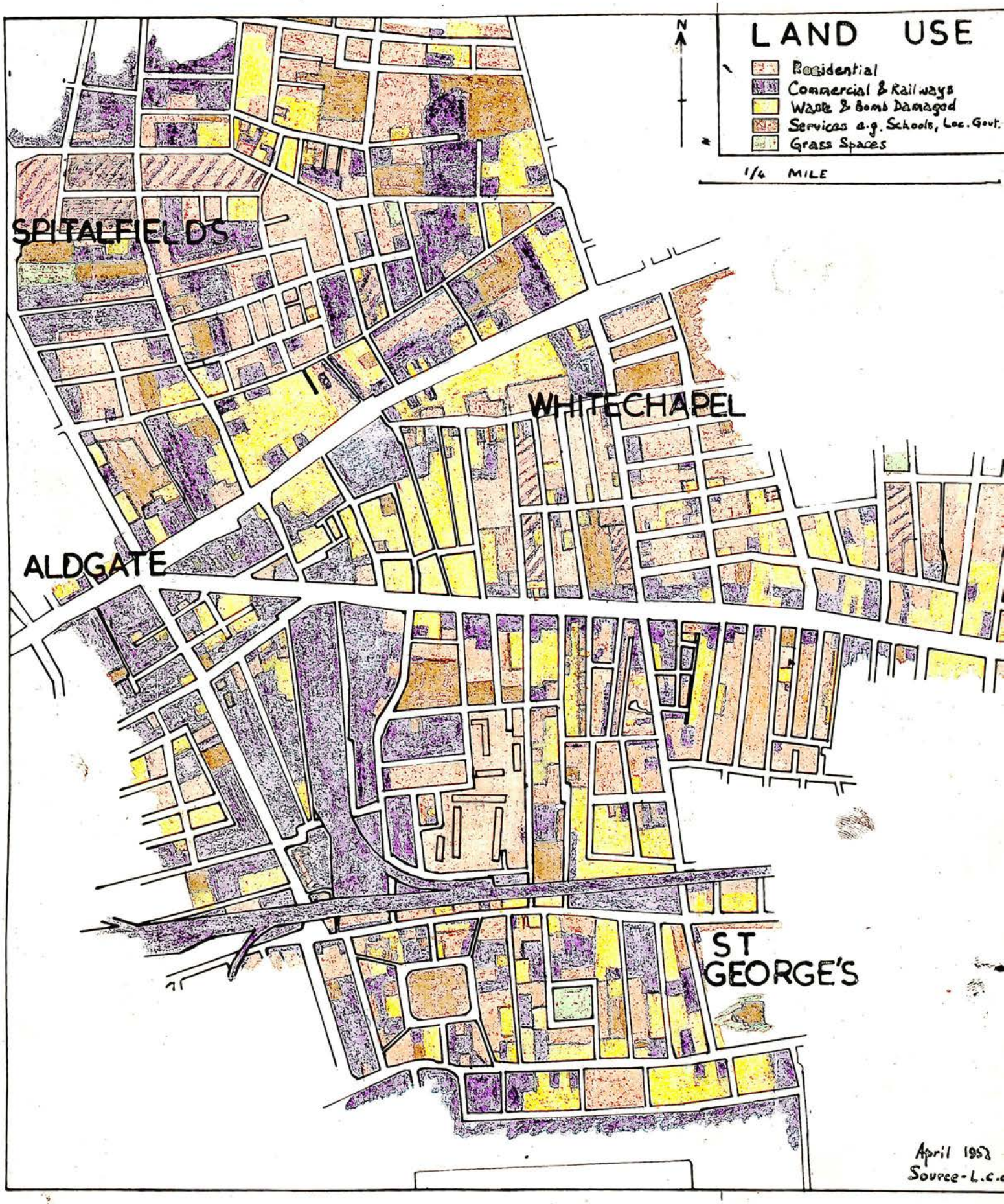
Later in the evening it is not unusual to hear a raucous woman screaming abuse, a loud altercation between a couple of immigrants or a party of men and women coming down the street singing at the tops of their voices. To the passer-by the area is a strange and definitely a frightening one; if he enters a cafe or a public house the other customers will scrutinize him thoroughly and there is an atmosphere so hostile that anyone but a coloured man, a seaman, or one of the poorest of the native population, will come to feel that he does not "belong" there and that he is not wanted. To the ordinary Englishman used to a humdrum existence, this is the sort of place where anything might happen, and, if the things in the magazines do happen, then they must happen here; this is due more to the atmosphere and appearance of the area than to the presence of coloured men though the two factors are not unrelated.

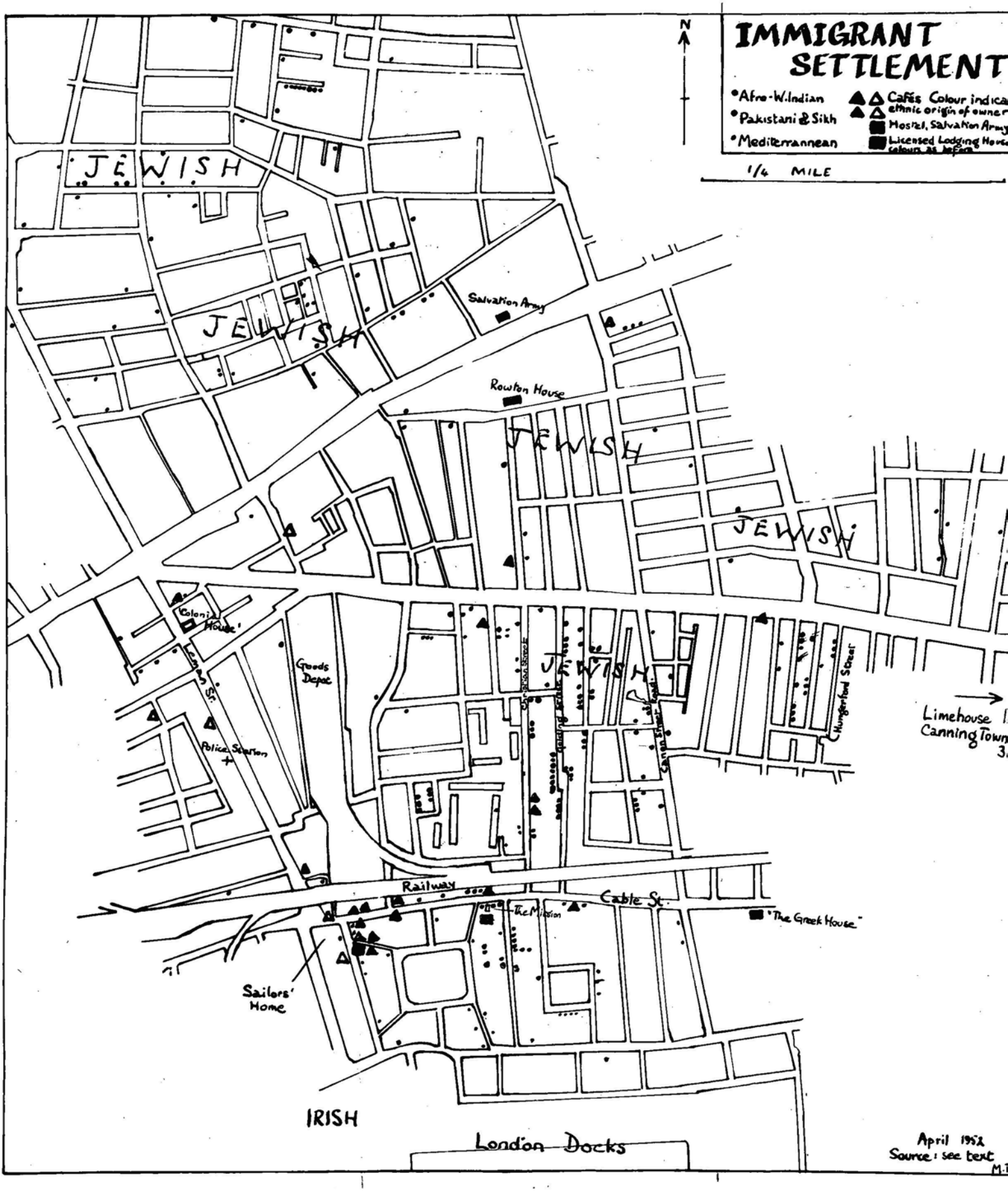
The cosmopolitan character of the neighbourhood is well illustrated by the first quarter mile of Cable Street. Many of the buildings in this short stretch have been damaged by bombing; the proximity of the railway and the heavy traffic borne by so narrow a street make it unattractive as a residential area. Before the war the population was predominantly Jewish and though most of these residents left during the war the Jewish element remains as large as that of any other group. In this quarter mile there are four public houses, two of which are well patron-:ized by coloured men, one near the Sailors' Home in Dock Street, the other a dirty place where the amenities are poorest and the prices highest, which has few customers among the whites but many among the coloured men who are able to have the place to themselves.

Coloured men tend to prefer the saloon bars in most public houses and it seems that many will pay more or will accept poorer service if thereby they can escape the feeling of being circumscribed by the numerically much larger white grouping. Others frequent the more expensive bars as a reaction against the low place they receive in public esteem. In no public house is there any segregation, of coloured men or of women, formal or informal, and even in the houses most patronized by coloured men ~~where~~ there are always a few whites. In this stretch of Cable Street there are also five Maltese cafes each of which provides lodgings for six to twelve young males whose womanizing activities have given two of the cafes a particularly bad reputation. There is a Maltese-run fish and chip shop, an Italian restaurant which opens during the daytime for a white clientele, and a Greek cafe. Shops at the beginning of the street are of Jewish andEnglish ownership and have a small retail trade in grocery, baking, secondhand clothes, bicycles, greengrocery, etc. A side turning leads down to a Somali cafe, a Greek cafe, and a Pakistani cafe-cum-lodging house. A little further up the street is a general store run by a French family, two hairdressers - one an Arab, the other from Trinidad - a Dyers and Cleaners run by a Guianese, and a Pakistani cafe with an African and West Indian clientele. Another side turning leads to the Somali lodging house and the premises of the club for coloured men run by the Anglican Mission; the Mission has a shop front in Cable Street which displays strip cartoons illustrating stories from the Bible, with a few pictures, and, at Christmas-time, a model crib. A large

house just here is owned by an East African and rooms are let out to Africans and West Indians; a few other houses are occupied by West Africans and another by West Indians - for the two groups tend to keep separate. Further up the street the bomb damage has been heavier and alongside the railway arches is an open yard full of old horse-drawn wagons taken there for repair or breaking up. Further along is the Greek seamen's lodging house and from there onwards there are few immigrants of any grouping, the road winds on as undistinguished as any in East London.

The map on page 117 brings out the complexity of land use in this portion of Stepney and the predominance of commercial property in the coloured quarter, though owing to the scale of the map it is not possible to show how like an interlocking jig-saw puzzle the actual picture is. Many houses are put to more than one use; it is not uncommon for the top floor of a residence to be used as a tailoring workshop or for a small workshop to have been constructed in the yard at the back; originally the resident and the manufacturer were one and the same, but as businesses have prospered so have manufacturers gone to live elsewhere and the residential property has become less attractive to tenants with no interest in the business. In other cases people live in basements underneath a shop or a workshop; some properties scheduled as derelict are partially occupied and in many of these cases the tenants must be squatters. Comparison of the Land Use and Settlement maps will show that the immigrants have mostly settled in the poorest housing property close to factories, warehouses and the railway; a higher proportion of them are to be found in houses than in "buildings" or blocks of flats.


LAND USE
Residential
Commercial & Railways
Waste & Bomb Damaged
Services e.g. Schools, Loc. Govt.
Grass Spaces
N
1/4 MILE
SPITALFIELDS
WHITECHAPEL
ALDGATE
ST GEORGE'S
April 1953
Source - L.C.C.


IMMIGRANT SETTLEMENT
N
•Afro-W.Indian
•Pakistani & Sikh
•Mediterrannean
Cafés Colour indica
ethnic origin of owner
Hostel, Salvation Army
Licensed Lodging Hous
colours as before
1/4 MILE
JEWISH
JEWISH
JEWISH
JEWISH
JEWISH
Salvation Army
Rowton House
Colonial House
Leman St.
Police Station
Goods Depot
Commercial Road
Cannon Street Road
Hungerford Street
Limehouse
Canning Town
3
Railway
Cable St.
The Mission
"The Greek House"
Sailors' Home
IRISH
London Docks
April 1952
Source: see text
M.1

(above) The approach to the Coloured Quarter from the City: a view down Leman Street. Mostly commercial property, some people living over the shops to the left.

(below) Warehouses and Bomb damage. The building on the right-hand side of the road is used for residential purposes - the only one in the street.

(above) Cable Street on a Sunday afternoon

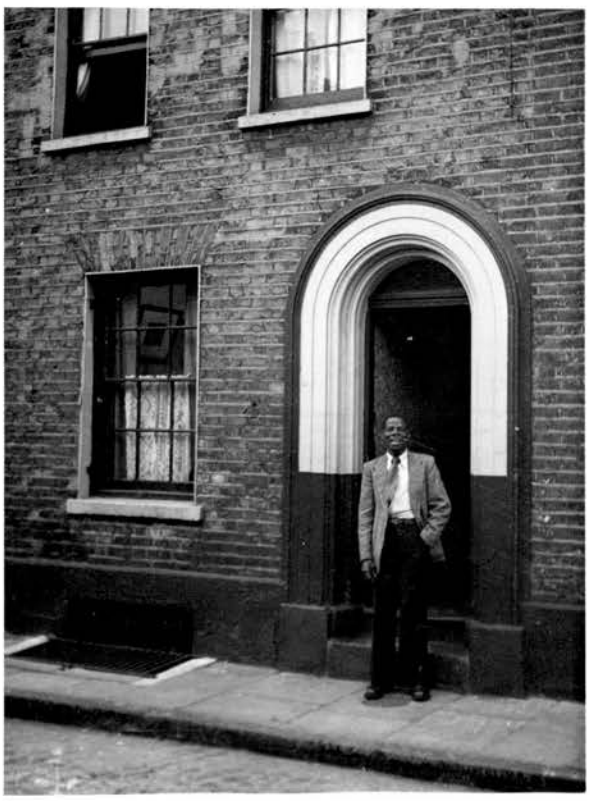
(below) From Cable Street, looking up one of the adjoining roads. The darkness and lifelessness of the bridges and the tall warehouses make the district seem frightening to a stranger who goes there on a winter evening

(above) Cottage dwellings, some uninhabitable, some still occupied. This row has been due for demolition for several years and it is worth no one's while to keep the houses in good repair.

(below) Whitechapel: in the 1880's the Jewish immigrants moved in and took over this and adjoining streets; seventy years afterwards West Indians are moving in. The street still retain's the characteristics of Zangwill's East London Ghetto: Yiddish is the principal language and the market held in the narrow street is entirely Jewish. Some of these houses are now let out room by room to coloured people.

(above) Notice the row of small dwelling houses at the back of the row next to the street, and approached only by a narrow alley. Air raid damage has exposed them to view from the road.

(below) A cottage dwelling in good condition struct--urally. Some of the better houses are very well furnished inside, especially by some of the coloured people.



(above) Commercial Road. Part of the Amusement Park can be seen on the extreme left.

(below) The New rises amid the Old

Housing density varies greatly; in some streets there are short rows of small houses occupied by single families, and "buildings" or tenements - comprising forty to fifty flats. It is impossible accurately to depict the proportion of immigrants to natives without using a map of a scale large enough for the size of individual houses to be indicated. The map of Immigrant Settle-:ment (page 118) is based upon addresses of immigrants obtained in analysing Employment Exchange records. One dot indicates one dwelling in which the majority of the residents are immigrants. Their origin is indicated by the colour of the dot. The addresses available were those of adult males and for the purpose of calc-:ulating the majority wives and female consorts have been considered as of the same ethnic origin as the men; though in many cases these women have been born in Britain they are subject to the same restrictions regarding housing as the immigrants if they are to live with them. Calculation of the majority had to be based on the investigator's knowledge of the capacity of the house and some-:times upon assumptions regarding wives and consorts, though this issue was rarely in question. It was not possible to arrive at any fully adequate definition of a "dwelling" owing to variations in housing density, but in most cases a separate address has been counted as a separate dwelling. Some of the large houses are sub-let room by room to ten or twelve sub-tenants, all having the same front door and the same address; this has been treated as one dwelling. A block of flats in a tenement may accommodate several immigrant households, each with a separate address, and to give a separate dot for each gives the false impression of a higher

proportion of immigrants than where the dwellings are separate houses; in such cases - which are few - the number of dots used has been restricted to give the eye a more reliable impression of the real proportion. The "Afro-West Indian" grouping for the purposes of this map has been taken to include Somalis, Arabs, East Africans, and South Africans of Negro descent. The "Pakistani-Sikh" grouping includes South Africans of Indian descent and the "Mediterrannean" grouping includes Maltese, Cypriots, Greeks and Italians.

It was necessary to check the original data by every available means owing to the high margin of possible error. The record of addresses was neither up-to-date nor fully reliable as a man might have moved to a new address since his last appearance at the Exchange or he might have given the address of a friend if he himself had no fixed abode. Moreover the rate of residential turnover is very high. At the time of the Parliamentary election of 1951 a check was made of the number of persons still resident in certain streets eleven months after the compilation of the Electors' lists. In the street with the greatest proportion of coloured people 49 per cent of the 127 persons on the list had left; among the coloured population the turnover figure reached 51 per cent.[1] New Electors' lists were published shortly afterwards and these were checked against the results obtained by personal enquiry and found unreliable; it appeared that in many

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1. The investigator acted as a canvasser for one of the local political parties, and in this way was able to obtain information about the number of coloured people and the sizes of their households in houses where he had been unable to make contact with any of the residents. The reception given to a canvasser was friendly and showed how much easier it was to obtain rapport in such a role.

cases tenants had failed to include the names of their sub-tenants and in some cases had made no return at all. The most reliable checks were provided by the investigator's personal knowledge and informal enquiries.

In comparing the sizes of the different ethnic groups shown on the map of settlement it should be borne in mind that the map was drawn up so as to include as much as possible of the area occupied by the Afro-West Indian grouping. Areas further to the north-west where there are many Pakistanis and Sikhs, and to the south and east where there are more Mediterranneans, are not shown. It will be noticed that areas of Afro-West Indian settlement correlate superficially with areas of Jewish residence, Pakistanis slightly less so, and Mediterranneans least of all. More Maltese are to be found near the Irish districts and there would appear to be less friction between Irish and Maltese than Irish and coloured; this may be partly accounted for by their professing the same religion.

Those cafes which have been indicated on the map with a hollow triangle are ones catering primarily to a non-immigrant clientele, and those shown by a solid triangle are frequented mostly by immigrants and tend to serve as social centres for men of the same origin as the proprietor. Two of the cafes and the lodging house coloured red are run by Somalis and the third cafe in this group by an Egyptian who has a Somali clientele. No West Africans or West Indians run cafes and immigrants of these groups gather in Pakistani or Maltese cafes; no West African has a retail trading business in the area though there is an East African butcher to whom many of the Muslims go for their meat.

The coloured quarter in Stepney serves a double function for the Negro immigrants. In the first place it is a transition area where the immigrants first settle and from which the more ambitious and able newcomers soon depart for districts of higher social standing. This results in a creaming off of the potential leaders and those who stay behind are not typical of the immigrant population as a whole. After he has been in Britain for a while the immigrant comes to appreciate things which earlier he regarded as luxuries: he becomes accustomed to conditions of employment and as his earning power increases he finds the new satisfactions worth striving after. The new wants correspond with the facilities provided in residential areas of higher status and the immigrants escape from dockland and its associations. However, many of the immigrants living in better residential neighbourhoods come back to Stepney in the evenings and at the weekends to meet their friends, so that the coloured quarter serves the second function of being a social centre for far more Negroes than those who actually live there. The first function produces a centrifugal effect as immigrants scatter, the second a centripetal one as it draws them in. Especially at weekends, coloured men come there from other parts of London for African-style food, for girls, and for relaxation in a neighbourhood where their different appearance does not make them objects of particular attention. There is a definite feeling among them - especially among some of the less sophisticated immigrants - that Stepney is the coloured man's district, that they have occupied it and made it their own, and they behave there with much greater freedom than they do

elsewhere.

They tend to congregate on the pavement of Commercial Road near the top of Golding Street where there are two public houses patronised by coloured people and a Pakistani cafe where many take their meals. A nearby stretch of the road is also used by many of the prostitutes for soliciting, not because the coloured men are about so much as because there are many passers-by and close at hand are some bombed houses where they can take their clients. A coloured man from one part of London hoping to meet another who lives elsewhere may hang around at this point hoping to see him go by; the spot has come to be a focal point for visitors and many residents.[1] Visitors to the neighbourhood include United States Negro servicemen and coloured seamen. Some of the coloured men resident in Stepney claim that the men whose behaviour gets them a bad reputation are mostly visitors to the coloured quarter. Many coloured men are to be seen out and about in this neighbourhood during the evenings. The recent immigrant is interested to see what is going on and those with poor housing accommodation spend little time at home. Men who are unemployed may come there from other districts during the daytime. Coloured men are, to the Englishman, more conspicuous than white and their individual features are less easily recognised so that he tends to count the same man twice and think there are hundreds of coloured immigrants living in the locality.

The same sentiment of Stepney's being the coloured man's district which draws visitors, also leads some immigrants to

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1. This may not last long as there are plans for extensive re-building in this vicinity.

prefer residing there. One man who was helped to get a flat about a mile from the coloured quarter told a social worker that he wanted to go home; she said that she would see what she could do about a ship but he replied "Ship? You don't want ship to get from Poplar to Aldgate. Aldgate is coloured man's home!" Another who is keen to appear respectable said that if he moved out of the district he would still come back occasionally to walk round, even if he never talked to the coloured men there, for he would derive a feeling of support from having them about him. The district's cosmopolitan character gives it a permissive atmosphere and informal social pressures are weaker than in middle class districts: the labourer who lives in the "West End" (the term is used loosely) changes into respectable clothes before he goes home from work; the Stepney man, if he likes, can spend all day in his overalls. A Nigerian who bought a house in South London (with his winnings from the football pools) found it difficult at first to get tenants. Those men he approached complained that it was too far from their places of work, or that they would miss the life of the coloured quarter if they were to leave Stepney. Many coloured men work in the districts to the east of Stepney and in the borough itself they are able to get cheaper accommodation than in most parts of London.

Mutual adjustment between natives and immigrants has gone further in Stepney and as the immigrant grouping develops its own social mechanisms it becomes easier for the immigrants to live there, to enjoy themselves if they have money, or to fall back on friends if they have none. On the other hand, the continuous movement in and out of the coloured quarter prevents its population

from constituting a self-contained group and there is little spontaneous solidarity. Most items of news with racial significance are spread rapidly but communication is established at places of work to a greater extent than in the locality of residence. News of a personal nature travels slowly and though one man may know by sight many other coloured immigrants the circle of people with whom he is on terms of friendship is very restricted. The geo-:graphical area of the coloured quarter does not correspond with the structure of social relationships. The resident's relation-:ships outside the area may be more important to him than those within it, while much of the social interaction between coloured men that occurs within the geographical area features persons who live far away. Thus the colouredquarter in Stepney needs to be considered in relation to London as a whole and the factor of differential settlement to be borne in mind.

Housing

The two principal factors influencing the pattern of immigrant settlement have been the operation of the Rent Restriction Acts and colour discrimination on the part of land-:lords. The function of the Rent Restriction Acts during wartime was to keep rents low and prevent inflation, but the Acts have not applied to new properties coming onto the market for letting and thus they, and the heavily subsidized letting of council flats, have led to the growth of two separate markets in housing accommodation. Firstly, there are council flats and properties at pre-war rents in which the tenant pays less than the full cost of construction and maintenance. Council flats are allocated from a waiting list so that few immigrants have been qualified for this variety of housing. Where people are living in properties detrimental to the health of their children, or in properties acquired by the local authorities for demolition in the course of redevelopment, they will be re-housed by the local authority in council flats of pre-war construction; alternative accommodation for such persons is only made available to those who have been living in the property concerned for the two years previous and is not available to "lodgers" so that the immigrants - among whom the residential turnover rate is so high - are at a disadvantage in this respect also. The demand for dwellings at pre-war rents is very much greater than the supply, and thus allocation cannot be achieved by price-fixing. Tenancies pass by private arrange-:ment between friends and relatives; new-comers to the district will have either to pay "key money" or to take more expensive accommodation.

Unfurnished properties are normally let at controlled rents but a landlord, by providing a little furniture - a bed, a chair, and a table - can let the rooms "furnished", charge a much higher rent and escape certain restriction upon his powers. Housing accommodation being hard to find, a tenant may pay more than is equitable; many coloured immigrants have appealed to the Rent Tribunal for a reduction of their rent but the unscrupulous landlord is in a strong position. In many cases immigrants have sub-let rooms to their fellows at rents which bring them in far more than the rent which they themselves have to pay for the whole house. An official of the local authority made these notes on three adjoining houses acquired for demolition:

> House containing one room and scullery in basement, one room on ground floor, two on first and two on second. The tenant is an Indian earning £10. per week and paying a rent of £1.10.-. p.w. 5 rooms are sub-let to Indian lodgers, 2 of whom are co-habiting with white women; the rents vary from 4/-. p.w. for the basement to 21/-. p.w. for the first front room.
>
> Similar house where the tenant is a Negro married to a white woman, rent 25/-. p.w. 4 rooms sub-let to couples at 20/-., 20/-., 18/-, and 15/-. rents.
>
> Similar house, tenant an Indian paying 30/-. p.w. Nine sub-tenants paying 7/-. to 20/-. p.w.

Very few African and West Indian immigrants have become house owners and those most likely to do so are those least likely to stay in a district like Stepney; a number do, however, act as managers of houses for the owner or tenant of the property.

Jewish landlords are, according to the coloured people, more willing than Gentiles to let their rooms to coloured men. There is a well-known reluctance on the part of English landlords and landladies to taking coloured lodgers, which, in the case of the

students has recently received nation-wide publicity; this reluctance is the more noteworthy in that letting rooms to persons who, through discrimination, are forced to pay higher prices, can be a profitable business and is so exploited by a few. Many of the houses in Stepney which are let to coloured people are owned by Jews and it is noticeable how frequently West Africans and West Indians have Jewish people for neighbours in the next door house. No cases are known of there being active resentment over coloured people moving into a street[1], but it would appear from observation that the Jewish people in that particular quarter are more ready to have them as neighbours. The large tenement blocks of flats referred to as "buildings" which are owned by private companies, contain relatively few coloured people, but this is not so much evidence of discrimin-:ation as of the letting by private arrangement. These flats are of two or three small rooms and are let unfurnished at 15/-. to 18/-. per week, which is below the usual rent for a furnished room in houses more in need of repair and with poorer sanitary facilities.

The bulk of coloured immigrants in Stepney live in houses at least a hundred years old, though some of the larger and more attractive houses date from the eighteenth century when building standards were higher and these houses are often superior

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1. In one instance tenants of a block of council flats organized a rent strike because some Pakistanis had been moved into one of the flats; the resentment seems to have arisen because one unmarried English woman was living with them and it was wrongly assumed that she was acting as a mistress to all of the men.

to ones of more recent construction.[1] Housing accommodation falls roughly into three categories: (a) residential property above shops, or in buildings which have been partly converted to commercial use; (b) large houses where single rooms are let out and where there may be as many as ten or twelve separate households, usually of one or two persons; (c) cottage dwellings with the landlord living on the premises and letting rooms to two to six tenants, or where the tenant of the whole house sub-lets in a similar fashion; in such cases tenants or sub-tenants often share a communal kitchen. In all categories there will usually be one water closet for the whole house, and this will be outside in the yard. Very few dwellings in Stepney, except the most recent, have any bathroom.

Where rooms are let furnished the furniture provided is usually meagre and is likely to consist of the linoleum on the floor, a double bed and mattress, a couple of wooden chairs and a ricketty table. Frequently this is supplemented by furniture purchased by the tenant who will often repaper the walls and repaint the room himself. The degree of material comfort usually reflects the personality of the occupant or occupants and where there has been little attempt to make the rooms attractive, either because of the rottenness of the structure or lack of interest on the part of the tenant, they can be peculiarly depressing. Landlords do not readily spend money on repairs when the whole structure is dilapidated and demolition is imminent. It would

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1. For general studies of housing in Stepney see: Munby, D.L., Industry and Planning in Stepney, 1951, and Barna, T., "Rebuilding London: A Survey in Stepney," Review of Economic Studies Vol XIII (1946) No. 2.

seem that at one time surplus ex-army goods sold in the neighbour-:hood included a supply of fire control panoramas: these are large oblong stylised pictures of town and country scenes on thick paper which are used for teaching soldiers how to indicate targets when giving fire control orders. These papers were bought up by some people and used for papering the walls of their rooms, creating an extraordinarily bizarre effect, matched only by a basement room which had been papered entirely with pictures cut from magazines. However, most coloured immigrants, given the incentive and social stability, decorate and furnish their rooms rather better than most of the local population. The houses were not built for subdivision with separate households in each room and in very many cases water has to be fetched from a tap in the yard or on the landing, and a bucket of fresh water is kept in the room; the poor washing facilities are an especial hindrance for the women. Gas stoves or gas rings have been installed in most of the rooms of this sort but there are obvious disadvantages to having to cook, sleep and entertain in the same room.

The poor housing facilities are partly responsible for the instability of the life led by many of the immigrants and for the high rate of residential turnover. Men who have a tenancy at a favourable rent do not change their residence frequently, but women who are personally unstable may circulate rapidly between different men who can give them a home. In the immediate post-war years some men used to reside in the locality for only a very short length of time staying in a hostel, furnished rooms, or in the temporary shelter of a friend's room. Then they would move on to another town or port perhaps returning after awhile to Stepney.

There are many men's hostels in Stepney and they introduce a distinctive element into the population - decrepit old men and irresponsible younger men as well as law-abiding but shiftless persons. Rowton House accommodates over 800 men and there is one Church Army and two Salvation Army hostels in the vicinity of the coloured quarter. They are not popular with the coloured men, probably because their fellow lodgers are so obviously the least respectable of the native population and the hostels are looked down upon by the other people of the neighbourhood. Most of the immigrants are sensitive to the criteria of "respectability" and many will give a friend's address rather than reveal that they are staying at a hostel. In January 1950 there were usually fifty coloured men staying in the hostels in Stepney, another thirteen at "Colonial House" and more in hostels a short distance away. Two years later the first number had dropped by half and "Colonial House" was closed. Some coloured men gave trouble to the hostel authorities (thefts, fighting, refusal to get out of bed, etc.,) and in some cases the management would not take more than a certain proportion of coloured lodgers.

At some periods the shortage of housing for coloured immigrants has been so acute that they have been unable to obtain any lodgings at all and have slept in bombed buildings or over the tables of two Maltese cafes which used to remain open all night. Sometimes they have walked the streets all night - as they did in 1921 - and an independent observer has reported encountering two, three, four and five men at four o'clock in the morning on almost

successive days in the summer of 1949, who said that they had been out all night. Most of the derelict buildings had been demolished by 1951 but previously some had been occupied by squatters. In one instance a Gambian obtained control over a building which provided accommodation for two dozen couples, though there was no sanitation. Prostitutes would take their customers or their friends there and the self-appointed landlord was able to exact small charges, but in the autumn of 1950 the Police had the place rendered completely uninhabitable. Under recent legislation local authorities have a statutory obligation to provide accommodation for the homeless; in this case such accommodation is available at the Reception Centre in Peckham, over half an hour's journey away. The centre is the successor to the workhouse, the building is the same, and despite the efforts of the staff they have been able to change the atmosphere of the place relatively little; most coloured men would prefer anything rather than go there.

The Investigator's Role

The biggest problem with which the investigator is faced in attempting a study of such a neighbourhood is that of finding some suitable role for him to play. He wants to be in a position in which he can gather information about the local people without arousing their suspicion or hostility. He cannot, however, get all the information he requires from within the social grouping in question but, especially for gathering quantitative data, needs to work with the officials of the various governmental bodies of whom the immigrants are usually suspicious. I was made very conscious of this difficulty at the outset by the impossibility of getting even a moderately reliable estimate of the number of Negroes living in the locality. The estimates I received from various local bodies and officials ranged from two hundred to two thousand. Had I attempted to carry out a house-to-house canvass to gather statistics which might form a foundation for my enquiries, it is certain that I would have been received with hostility, that information would sometimes have been refused and in other cases would have been totally unreliable. Having become associated with so suspicious a manoeuvre it would have been extremely difficult to establish rapport with the local people in the ordinary way. I did, however, go out with some of the Sanitary Inspectors, who in the normal course of their duties took me into some of the premises where coloured people were living; as this was before I had begun to frequent the neighbourhood and it was during the daytime when most of the men were away, I was able to get a preliminary view of the situation without, so far as I know, being subsequently recognized as

someone who apparently had some official capacity. Both coloured men and whites, when they are not experienced in the matter, have difficulty in recognizing individuals of the other group unless they have had occasion to take particular notice of them, their clothes and manner; thus when the investigator enters such a field as this the coloured men may fail to identify him for a while.

Having found out as much as possible from official sources I began my fieldwork by trying to copy the anthropologist's technique of observing and participating in the life of a small self-contained society. I tried to obtain lodgings as near as possible to the heart of the coloured quarter, but owing to the shortage of housing and the fact that I would need certain amenities if I were to carry out other aspects of the investigation, I was obliged to take accommodation a short distance away. The Principal of the local Evening Institute who had been interested in the coloured population for many years and had been associated with the earlier investigation, was able to provide me with a number of valuable introductions to coloured people; I went round in the evenings to the homes of these people introducing myself as a friend of this lady and saying that I was interested in the position and problems of the coloured people. I anticipated that there would be difficulty in establishing rapport with informants but it was impossible to find any more satisfactory role which would explain my presence and enable me to get the information in which I was interested. In a society having recognised leaders an investigator might be able to obtain from the leaders of the group signs of approval which would ensure his acceptance by the other

members without its being necessary to go through the same process of winning confidence from each individual. I thought that in Stepney once I had gained the confidence of my initial informants it would be possible to extend my contacts to their acquaintances and in this way to get to know a high proportion of the immigrants. I expected also that my contact with these first few informants would suggest to me the most suitable sort of role to adopt and tactics of getting particular sorts of information.

At the beginning I did not visit informants with a view to obtaining answers to specific questions but attempted through ordinary conversation to build up a case history of each one, men and women, their past experiences, their present position and their general outlook. This approach had the advantage of leading me on to some conception of the most important things in their lives and as time went on I was able to develop a more systematic approach, cross-checking information and setting out to obtain answers to particular questions. Some mistakes were made at first through the use of leading questions for there was a general tendency on the part of informants to agree to any suggestion put to them, sometimes on most specific matters where this would not be expected. Direct questioning, or the semblance of it, had to be restricted as the relationship was of a friendly nature. Information obtained from these unguided interviews was recorded as soon as possible afterwards.

It very quickly became apparent that the analogy of the anthropologist working in a small self-contained society was not applicable, and that there was no ideal role for an investigator.

The anthropologist working among a preliterate people does not become an ordinary accepted member of the group but he is in a position to see most of the social life of that group and to draw his inferences from observed behaviour. The anthropologist who works in an urban society can see only a fraction of the social life and the members of that society can keep him at a distance if they wish. Participant observation has to be complete if it is to be successful; the observer can only ask those questions appropriate to his role and in urban living many more matters are thought to be a person's private business. On the other hand, valuable information can be obtained by the use of participant observation techniques in the urban situation by the worker who can give only part of his time to research and who is able to continue this for several years. But there is a tendency to glamourize the technique of obtaining information by which the investigator disguises himself as one of the group he studies, and to over-estimate the usefulness of this approach: the investigator, be he white or coloured, will almost always stand out from his informants. The advantage which a coloured investigator would have in working with the immigrants is certain to be offset by reticence on the part of officials and by hostility from some elements in the coloured population itself.

The suspicion of officialdom and, among some sections, of all whites, is a major characteristic of the life of the coloured quarter; it develops after immigration and is most pronounced among the younger immigrants and those with the least personal security.

The Colonial Office is particularly suspect and the Government is credited with vast powers, a great body of spies, and a particular interest in the activities of the coloured immigrants. I am of the opinion that this is not due to any specific fears but is produced mainly by the frustration of their high hopes and acts as a form of compensation in their personal adjustment to the inferior status accorded them. It was commented upon by Bamuta, himself an African, who wrote:

> "These people are very suspicious of a newcomer. The first few weeks I tried to make friends I drew blank as they thought I was a spy or a detective. If I walked into a pub they would put out their cigarettes; later I learned that this was because they smoked hashish in them". (1)

Illegal activities may account for some of the suspicion and the fear of plans for their repatriation may also be influential, but much of it is due to their sensitiveness about lack of education, living conditions, the behaviour of other coloured men, etc. Suspicion is particularly strong in connection with the press and publicity, as Little has already remarked: "the investigator would be wise ... to remove any suspicion that unwelcome publicity will follow closely upon his visit. The community as a whole is under no misapprehension as to what a large portion of the town thinks of it, and is correspondingly resentful of any unwarranted attempt to pry into its affairs."[2] Some informants wish to spotlight their grievances, others wish to influence the investigator's conclusions in the direction they think most desirable; many argue that no useful results are likely to follow even from an

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1. op. cit. This explanation of the hostility would be applicable in very few cases.
2. op. cit., 1948, p.29.

objective analysis of their position and that the Government is likely to use the information in order to keep the coloured immigrants in a state of subjection.

There was a predisposition on the part of many immigrants to believe that I was a police spy and after I thought I had gained their confidence some men would revert to such a belief on account of a vague rumour. When one section of the population circulates so rapidly and there are so many coloured visitors in the district it takes a longer time to build up confidence, but only once was the suspicion made a public issue in a cafe. My informants some-:times brought these rumours to my attention; for example, one arose from an action in a magistrate's court when A, a West African whom I knew slightly, was summoned by B, another African who lived in the same house, for using threatening behaviour towards him. At A's invitation, I agreed to attend the court and stood in the public gallery. Two or three weeks later I met B at the house of a third informant and he was quite friendly towards me. Shortly afterwards I heard that B was telling people that I was a police spy and that I had 'spoiled his case'; he said that during the case I had given a note to an attendant to be passed to the solicitor who gave it to the magistrate who ~~then~~ looked very sternly towards B and then became hostile to him. (There was no conceivable explanation of how I could be thought to have sent such a note to the magistrate and there was no solicitor in court. Both litigants were bound over.). B is a literate and intelligent man and the story he was spreading obtained some credence. The wheel turned full circle on A, who had earlier suspected me of being a police spy and was then thought to be a police informer because of his association with me. This suspicion is associated with class as

well as colour differences for my informants were several times questioned by local whites as to whether I was a "plain clothes man" and some warned coloured men that I was a detective. Extreme suspicion is characteristic only of one section of the coloured population but it is a vocal section.

White the investigator is suspected by the immigrants of representing the officials, he is sometimes suspected by the officials of representing the immigrants. Officials of Government departments, "civil servants", are frequently the scapegoats of the general public and they are sensitive to ill-informed criticism: as an individual the official is rarely responsible for the policy he has to implement. It is as important to gain the confidence of officials and employers in the impartiality of the investigation as it is to maintain friendly relations with the immigrants. One clerk in an official department who seemed to deal with coloured men in a conscientious and sympathetic fashion projected something of his personal conflict onto the investigator on one occasion after hours when he had a small audience and made the accusation "You're all for the Blacks, you are. I'm all against them".

After several months when I felt I had gained the confidence of my initial informants I gradually indicated to them what it was that interested me and why, and I made a practice of telling new contacts a short while after the first meeting. I felt that it was necessary to establish a personal relationship first of all and to allow details of my work to come out in as natural a manner as possible; in describing it I stressed the scientific nature of the enquiry and the fact that any eventual publication would not be such that individuals could be recognized. Reactions to

this varied: in some cases informants were glad of the opportunity to ask me questions, in other cases informants who had previously talked quite freely put themselves on their guard and would not talk about anything which they thought might appear detrimental to the immigrants. This information did not allay suspicion very much and it was still possible for people to conclude that I must therefore be some sort of "private C.I.D."

This change of role was progressive, as I gradually became more and more open in talking of my work and in trying to identify my informants with it by asking them to find out certain information for me.[1] When I first made contact with coloured people in Stepney I presumed that it would be best to keep the fact that I had received a University education well in the background in case it was thought that I was showing off. This and similar information leaked out, especially as I became more open about my aims, but it was with some surprise that I learned from some informants that in the heated arguments in which they had been involved with others who were suspicious of me, one of the strongest points in my favour was that I held a University degree - a qualification which was highly valued by ambitious young Africans.[2] The assumption of a higher and more definite status in the eyes of my informants made relationships easier, not more difficult, and amounted to the recognition of a social distance which could not be dealt with by

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1. Mr. A. H. Richmond who made an investigation in Liverpool, based largely upon contacts made through the Community Centre, felt unable to adopt an open role as an investigator for nearly twelve months.
2. Dr. S.F. Collins had very similar experiences while carrying out fieldwork in Tyneside; he quotes the case of a man who enquired rather suspiciously who he was, only to be told: "See here, that's a University man!" op.cit. 1952b p.14.

failing to acknowledge its existence.[1] The element of geo-:graphical distance, in living a short distance from the coloured quarter, also proved advantageous as it did not prevent my inform-:ants visiting me occasionally but corresponded to the status difference and made it more easy for me to keep in touch with different groups and divisions among the coloured population.

At the beginning I found the coloured quarter a little frightening because of its strangeness and it took a little courage to enter one of the coloured men's cafes or public houses for the first time. Strangers do attract attention but the visitor who is self-conscious because he feels he does not belong exaggerates the interest of other people in his presence.[2] It would have been very difficult for me to adopt an open role from the beginning and I experienced a definite guilt about my real role and was reluctant to reveal it. Coming out into the open was associated with an accession of confidence on my part and an increased ability in managing the relationship between me and my informants. In any consideration of roles adopted by investigators this factor of personal confidence must be allowed an important place.

In establishing rapport with informants, the investigator inevitably becomes involved in personal relationships; this involve-:ment is necessary and he must both exploit it and be able to

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1. The investigator's role is not decided by his choice, so much as by the reactions of his informants. The investigator must accept the fact that the society is bound to place him in a certain social category and must deviate from what is expected of him sufficiently to obtain individual rather than stereotyped responses.
2. Nowhere has this been more vividly described than in The Road to Wigan Pier, 1937, pp. 182-3, where George Orwell gives an account of his visit to a "common lodging house" in Limehouse Causeway. He expected that "the people would spot that I was not one of themselves and immediately infer that I had come to spy on them, then they would set upon me and throw me out..."

detach himself from it in order to assess those elements which are of sociological significance. I was able to obtain some insight into the immigrants' difficulties by helping them in many ways, in the filling up of forms, in dealings with official-:dom, and, on one occasion getting up at 12.30 a.m. in answer to a telephone request to go and bail out an informant from the cells in the Police Station. It was noticeable that many informants projected onto me their own aspirations to become respectable and to gain in social status. The way in which whites will not normally strike up friendships with coloured people is reflected in the value which some immigrants set upon having a respectable white friend. From the investigator's point of view this must not be allowed to go too far otherwise the informant may become more reluctant to talk about some matters, either because he is ashamed of them or because he thinks they may give rise to friction. This waswhat one man apparently had in mind when he said "It is not good that you should know what some of your countrymen have done to we Africans." Informants do not want to talk about matters of colour all the time and in order to maintain rapport it is necessary to devote much time to activities which are not directly productive of information.

Sometimes in the early stages of a contact, informants would express opinions bitterly critical of England and the English: I was expected to argue back, but if I showed signs of being willing to listen to such criticisms without getting angry, the projected hostility declined rapidly and the relationship became progressively easier. It was a method used by some immigrants

of testing a possible friend which must sometimes work to their own disadvantage. On the whole I avoided such arguments and did not consider it part of my responsibility to try to correct more than a few of the misconceptions that were prev-:alent. I found that I was identifying myself with the immigrants in many ways, one of which was brought home to me one afternoon when I was hanging around on a street corner talking with a small group of them and as a policeman came along the pavement I said rather guiltily "We'd better move on" and shuffled off as sheepishly as any of them. It was difficult not to take some of the slights one received in a personal fashion but with practice it became easier to test out people's reactions on particular points and note them in a detached fashion.

Informants will give personal information much more readily to a sympathetic stranger than to a "participant observer" and by adopting the more distant role I have been able to obtain information which would not otherwise have been forthcoming. As my confidence in playing this role and in answering objections increased, I found it easier to approach people with a simple demand for information about their experiences whom I would never have met had I waited to meet them through my initial contacts. Many immigrants say they have only a very few friends in the locality and this, while being an interesting comment on the lack of institutions to facilitate contact and communication, points out the difficulties of using a participant role. I was able to discuss problems of investigation quite openly with some of my informants and showed them a preliminary account

of my enquiry[1] which mentioned some matters which they found a little distasteful but they did not object to the way they were presented. If correct interpretations are to be made and the task of fieldwork is to be made any easier it is desirable that investigators should take their public more into their confidence than is at present usual. The romantic idea of the investigator who gets his information by going around in disguise has been badly overworked.

For a period of nearly two years I spent about three evenings a week, and sometimes seven evenings as well as Saturday and Sunday afternoons, in the coloured quarter of Stepney, visiting people, drinking in the pubs, eating in the cafes, picking up the gossip; in addition I spent several weeks staying in the houses of informants, and in local lodging houses. The data presented is based upon informal interviews with some sixty informants and information collected about others whom I knew slightly or who were known to my informants. How far these men were representative of the coloured population it is difficult to say: they included a higher proportion of West Africans than West Indians and of settled residents than of the floating population. No statistical check on representative-:ness can be made in such a situation but the views of one informant were continually checked against those of others to minimize this inevitable deficiency.

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1. "Negro Workers in Britain", The Twentieth Century, January 1952.

Inter-Group Relations

Nearly all coloured people in the country believe that there is a "colour bar" in Britain. Different people, however, understand different things by this expression. Earlier chapters have shown that there is usually some hostility towards immigrants apart from the question of colour. Resistance towards them also arises from the fear of competition over jobs, women, etc., and present-day coloured immigrants are affected by the carry-over of past associations. Subsequent chapters consider the influence of racial differences upon the employment, family life and recreation of the immigrants. In view of the different meanings given to "colour bar" and allied terms it will be advis-:able first to break it down into its component parts and introduce the concepts used by the social scientist in the study of this sphere of inter-group relations.

The objective component of colour bar is discrimination. To say that an action is discriminatory imputes no motive to the actor; he may discriminate because he is emotionally biased or he may have no such bias. The subjective component, that is, the bias, may be described as prejudice in its stronger form, and antipathy in its milder.

To describe an action as discriminatory is not necessarily to imply that is morally wrong. An attempt has indeed been made to define it in a pejorative sense by a Sub-Commission appointed by the United Nations, but their formulation is patently un-:satisfactory.

Their Memorandum states:[1]

> "Discriminatory practices are those detrimental distinctions which do not take account of the particular characteristics of an individual as such, but take into account only collective qualifications deriving from his membership in a certain social or other group.
>
> "Certain distinctions, which do not constitute discriminations, are justified. These include: (1) differences of conduct imputable or attributable to an individual, that is to say, controlled by him (i.e. industriousness, idleness; carefulness, carelessness; decency, indecency; merit, demerit; lawfulness, deliquence); and (2) differences in individual qualities not imputable to the person, but having a social value (physical or mental capacity.)
>
> "Thus discrimination might be defined as a detrimental distinction based on grounds which may not be attributed to the individual and which have no justified consequences in social, political or legal relations (colour, race, sex, etc.) or on grounds of membership in social categories (cultural, language, religious, political or other opinion, national circle, social origin, social class, property, birth or other status)."

This definition is inadequate because while deliberately using the term in a pejorative sense it attempts to define it objectively and does not relate it to the moral precepts from which the sense of wrongfulness is derived. Two examples will illustrate this. A seamen's hostel refused accommodation to some Pakistani seamen because, as they followed the orthodox Muslim practice of the territory from which they came in not sitting on the seat of a water closet but squatting with their feet on the seat, they were likely to leave the lavatory cubicle in a state objectionable to anybody who wanted to use it after them. Presumably this refusal

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1. United Nations: The Main Types and Causes of Discrimination (Memorandum submitted by the Secretary-General, E/CN.4/Sub. 2/40/Rev.1) 1949, p. 26.

was justified as "a distinction based on grounds ... having justified consequences in social relations". It might be considered justified if there was alternative accommodation for such men, but would it be if there was no other alternative accommodation whatsoever? For a second example, consider the case of small employers who have engaged a number of coloured workmen and found them all unsatisfactory and who, without believing that their defects are due to racial origin, conclude that the probability of members of this category being unsatis-:factory workmen is so high that it would be foolish to employ more of them. If an employer had engaged fifty coloured workmen and they had all proved unsatisfactory an independent observer might decide that he was justified in taking such a course, but how many must he try before this is the case? The small employer could not risk trying so many as the large employer. There can be no objective definition of standards deriving from moral values. The hotel manager who refused coloured people discriminates, whether he does so because of his own feelings, or because he genuinely believes that his trade would suffer if he did not, and whether he individually, is to be blamed, are separate questions.

Prejudice may be distinguished from antipathy by the actor's reaction to events running contrary to his bias. Lancelot Hogben has given a witty description of his experiences with prejudiced persons in South Africa:

> "The form of sport to which I am most addicted is consequential conversation. I was deprived of it during four years' sojourn among the Pigmentocracy of South Africa by repeated attempts to communicate through the medium of a dialogue conducted like this:

Any South African Graduate: 'If you had lived in this country as long as I have you would know that a native can't be taught to read or write'.

Myself: 'Have you ever visited Fort Hare Missionary College?'

South African Graduate: 'Don't talk to me about missionaries!'

Myself: 'Well, I have. I have seen a class of pure blood Bantu students from the Cis-Kei working out differential equations'.

South African Graduate: 'What would you do if a black man raped your sister?' (1)

Antipathy, on the other hand, is a predisposition unfavourable to a particular group which may be lessened by favourable experiences of them. An English schoolboy's opinions may illustrate this. He said:

"I've only seen Negroes on the pictures and they're cruel. It was in Africa and they were cruel even to their own little black children - whipped them. And they made them carry heavy loads that are too big for them. They're savages."

Later his class was put temporally in the charge of two Gold Coast women school teachers. After they had gone he expressed very different feelings:

"They were nice, because they talked to us and told us a lot of things about their country and different customs of their people. They were friendly - they were nice to us, joked and laughed with us. They were VERY nice! I like that colour - I like it more now because it was their colour, and I thought they looked nice. I never thought Africans were like that... I think black people are my favourite foreigners." (2)

No very hard and fast line can be drawn between prejudice and

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1. Preface to Dover, op.cit. For accounts of recent research into stereotyping see the Autumn 1951 number of the International Social Science Bulletin.
2. H.E.O. James and Cora Tenen, The Teacher Was Black, 1953, pp. 32-3.

antipathy because the development of a person's attitudes will depend upon the stimulus to which he is subject as well as his predispositions. Nevertheless, the distinction is of value when characterising the general attitude of a group.

Prejudice, antipathy and discrimination are exercised against persons who are members of certain groups or categories marked off from the dominant group because they are members of such groups or categories. Prejudice, antipathy and discrimination are therefore characteristics of social relations and not of inter-individual relations; it is not chance which determines which groups will suffer. Most forms of rivalry, economic, social, sexual, etc., excite hostility, and the situation in which such hostility occurs will influence its expression.[1] Cultural factors may also play a part in that a group whose values are thought to be in opposition to those of the majority group are more likely to be discriminated against (e.g. British scorn of the Japanese seemed to be based partly on their small stature and reputed 'slyness' which were in opposition to the British values of being big, healthy, and straight-forward). Ethnocentrism on the part of a group or race may attract prejudice towards itself and some groups may suffer from unconscious symbolic associations on the part of the majority group (e.g. in Britain 'blackness' is associated with undesirable features). The 'out-group' must of course be fairly readily distinguishable.

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1. Cox describes seven type-situations: (i) the stranger situation; (ii) the original contact situation; (iii) the slavery situation; (iv) the ruling class situation; (v) the bipartite situation; (vi) the amalgamative situation; (vii) the nationalistic situation. O.C. Cox,: Caste, Class and Race, 1948, pp. 351-2.

Thus prejudice must be considered in terms of the situation in that particular case. As a second step it is then possible to account in some degree for the variations between the expressions of different members of the prejudiced group. Direct aggression against a group may arise from competition for employment, power, or some other cause, but it will always be supplemented by some displaced aggression which adds additional force to the attach.[1] Individuals of certain personality types and individuals who have suffered severe deprivations or feel themselves personally insecure, are prone to displace their own discontents onto a group who constitute a permissive target (a 'scapegoat' as Carey McWilliams has said, is always a 'safe-:goat'). Horowitz sums up the position in saying that the extent to which individuals display prejudice would appear to correspond with their rating on a general tolerance-intolerance scale, and that the general level of this scale may be lowered throughout the country in times of tension. The determinants of this scale appear to be: (i) tendency to conform; (ii) degree of frustration or deprivation; (iii) personal experience of the out-group; (iv) unconscious identifications.[2] More recent research suggests that actual knowledge of, or acquaintance with, the out-group is not a determining factor of any importance, and Robb found when

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1. J. Dollard, "Hostility and Fear in Social Life", 1938, (Social Forces Vol 17) p. 19. J. Dollard et al. Frustration and Aggression, 1939 pp.28-38.
2. E.L. Horowitz: "Race Attitudes" pp.244-47 (in Klineberg, O. (ed) Characteristics of the American Negro, 1944).

studying anti-semitism in a borough adjacent to Stepney that the extent of personal experience of dealings with Jews which the extreme anti-semites had, was no greater than that of the less prejudiced.[1] Prejudice becomes a psychological necessity to the subject and its manifestations are not rational but pathological, as can be seen in the extreme examples presented by the Nazis' hatred of the Jews. Characteristic of prejudice is the existence in the actor's mind of a stereotyped conception of the group against whom he is prejudiced. The whole of mental and social life is based upon man's ability to conceptualize abstract phenomena, to group them under certain headings; "the receptive function of the brain", so the President of the Royal College of Physicians has said, is to provide us with a symbolical representation of the physical world outside it"[2]. The group against whom prejudice is directed may be so closely associated with certain unfavourable symbols that the evidence has to be twisted to make it fit into the already fixed mental pigeonholes that admit of no evidence contrary to the person's prejudice.

Attitude tests and questionnaires measure predispositions to certain courses of action, but actual behaviour is often determined more by the structure of the situation in which contact occurs than by fundamental dispositions. Many people have a predisposition

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1. Robb, op. cit.

2. The Listener, 26.4.1951. For the function of symbols in culture see Ernst Cassirer, An Essay on Man, 1944. A brilliant analysis of stereotyped thinking in a situation of conflict is given by B. Bettleheim, "The Dynamism of Anti-Semitism in Gentile and Jew", Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology Vol 32 (1947).

to behave in a certain way during the initial stages of contact with a coloured man but their subsequent behaviour depends almost entirely upon the impression they form of him during the first minutes. Employers in the Stepney area, and other members of the public too, often say that there are two "types" of coloured man, one good, the other bad, and much of their behaviour will depend upon the category in which they place any coloured man with whom they come into contact. The writer has been struck in conversation with persons who have had some dealings with coloured immigrants how time after time they would open with disapproving statements about them, but later on would come round - without prompting - to a much more sympathetic attitude. Conventionally it is safer and more respectable to start by expressing mild disapproval and if the other person holds no strong opinions to make reservations later. In the course of a conversation a speaker may shift his ground to identify himself with the coloured men in terms of "we, the working class", against the "upper class imperialists" but he usually opens by talking in terms of "we, the whites".

CHAPTER VI

THE IMMIGRANTS IN INDUSTRY

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Seamen and Shore-workers

In 1919 when there were fewer jobs for merchant seamen and the returned ex-servicemen were finding it difficult to get work, the coloured men were the objects of street brawls and widespread disturbances in Liverpool,[1] Cardiff,[2] Newport,[3] South Shields,[4] Glasgow, Stepney, Canning Town and, apparently almost everywhere where their numbers were appreciable[5]. The incidents which provoked these outbreaks were varied and inconsequent, but the background was one of competition for jobs. Seamen could not get shipping employment and employers ashore were afraid of trouble if they gave jobs to coloured men or continued to employ them. According to one newspaper, writing of the Liverpool disturbances:

> "Last week more than 100 black men were at work, but in consequence of the disturbances, none is now employed, and they are thrown on unemployment allowance." (6)

Between the wars the coloured immigrants were "last hired and first fired" and the economic situation engendered hostility between them and the natives of the country. Not until 1938-39 when the prospects of the shipping industry began to improve again were the coloured seamen able to obtain economic and social equality with the other seamen. During the war a party of West Indian technicians was brought over to work in war factories and

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1. Richmond, op. cit. p.10.
2. Little, op.cit. (1948) pp. 57-66
3. Daily Express 9.6.1919
4. Collins, op. cit. (1952b) pp.270-2.
5. The disturbances in Cardiff were repeated in similar circumstances in 1935. See St. Clair Drake, The Cardiff Crisis of 1935. Unpublished Ms. Also Little, op. cit. (1948) pp. 67-77
6. Morning Post, 11.6.1919.

the official in charge of this scheme attributed its success mainly to the absence of unemployment. He said

> "Even measured by the difficulties we now encounter - for the workers do not forget the days of unemployment - we can see that before the war, this experiment would have been doomed to frustration: the right to work did not belong to the worker, although he depended upon working for his living, and consequently each negro's job would have been held - so it would have seemed- by taking the bread out of the white man's mouth. Then we should have heard of racial discrimination; then we should have heard the coloured man discussed as a 'problem' as if he were some peculiar form of blight that was attacking the crops of this country. But to-day unemployment is an incompatible with the requirements of the war organization of production as were the methods of feudalism, with those the Industrial Revolution introduced. Temporarily at least we have found the prerequisite in industrial conditions. Negro and white man and woman can now work in the same shop". (1)

Since 1945 unemployment has occurred only in pockets, notable in the Merseyside region and it is in Liverpool that the only serious racial troubles have taken place.[2]

In Stepney and in many other parts of the country the general public have tended to think of the coloured men as being seamen by trade and by nature, who, though they may take work ashore, are never permanent residents. In this way people have been able to 'place' the coloured men in the social structure even if they did not always fit very well into this category.[3] Since 1945 however, the proportion of coloured men working ashore has increased so greatly that the shipping industry now provided employment for only a fraction of the coloured population. After the cessation of hostilities employment remained at a high level in the shipping industry though on occasion it has been difficult to find ships

1. A.R. Watson, West Indian Workers in Britain, 1942, p.13.
2. See the News Letter of the League of Coloured Peoples Vol XVII (1948) No 103. Also Richmond, op. cit., p. 20.
3. Coloured men working ashore sometimes take advantage of this association; wishing to get money due to them from an employer as quickly as possible after leaving a firm, they have declared that they were joining a ship the next day. Others who have not wished to state their reason for leaving have offered the same excuse.

for coloured seamen. Some shipowners will not engage coloured men as they have the reputation of being troublesome and liable to violence; this is said to apply particularly to Somalis.[1] Those ship-owners who do employ coloured men employ them below deck only, in the engine room and galley, with a white crew on deck; they believe that it is not possible to mix these men and employ them together in the same department. The proportion of oil-burning ships sailing out of London is increasing and there is a slight tendency for employment opportunities on coal-burning ships to contract, and it is upon these ships that the coloured seamen mostly serve. Where, as in Stepney, there is only a small proportion of coloured seamen, and a correspondingly small number of jobs is reserved for them, fluctuations in demand are bound to be severe; if a ship with a coloured engine room crew goes out of service, no more coloured men can be taken into the industry until this other group has been found work. Owing to this division into two categories white men may be taken into the "pool" while coloured men are being refused (though the term "pool" is no longer correct it is still widely used to refer to the register of established seamen). Such a situation inevitable leads people to suspect discrimination or bribery. The practice of segregation results in hardship to the coloured seamen and is not inevitable, for coloured and white seamen can work together and do so on occasion. The responsibility does not lie with individuals or with particular sections, but with the whole industry - employers, trade unions, ships' officers, and with the Ministry of Transport.

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1. I am told that the reverse is the case in Liverpool.

Coloured seamen domiciled in Britain allege that they are subject to many acts of individual discrimination on the part of particular ships' officers and others; they tell the investigator "When there's a war on you say we're British and you want us to fight, but after the war you say 'Why don't you go back home?'" The older men have bitter memories of the inter-war employment slump and many of the men have become more colour conscious after visiting ports in the United States and the Union of South Africa where they have had to conform to the segregation enforced upon coloured people living in those countries. The frequent charges of partiality made against the officials of the Shipping Federation are usually unsupported by any evidence but they are indications of the dissatisfaction prevalent among coloured seamen. The Engineer Officer is responsible for engaging the engine room crew and it is alleged that many of the officers in this post will accept bribes;[1] it is widely alleged also that Arab seamen obtain preferential treatment by clubbing together and subscribing sums for this purpose. Somali, West African and West Indian seamen say that they would rather be unemployed than hand over money in this way.

The Shipping Industry does not offer a very good opening for United Kingdom-born coloured juveniles because statutory provisions prevent ship-owners from employing persons under the age of 18 in the Engine Room and they are not willing to employ them on deck. Officials discourage juveniles from entering the industry because - so it is said - prospects for them are so poor; were there more of them employed it might show more clearly that the segregation is not

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1. Cf. Little, op. cit. (1948) p.39

between persons of European and non-European birth and training, but is solely on the basis of colour.

In 1947 seamen who had been on the wartime employment pool were able to choose between becoming "established" or "unestablished" seamen: the former sign a contract for two years' service, they get extra payment when unemployed and preference in employment, but they can be directed to serve in any ship; the latter lack the privileged position of the established seamen but have free-:dom of choice. It is said that a smaller proportion of coloured seamen hoped for establishment as they did not want to be subject to direction, but there have been many counter-allegations of discrimination in the matter. At the end of 1951 there were about 30 African (including Somali) and West Indian seamen signing on under United Kingdom articles from Stepney, together with a small number of Pakistani and other coloured seamen of different origin. In addition there was a number of men who sailed on non-British ships. Pakistani seamen on ships calling at the port are often accommodated in two lodging houses in the coloured quarter, but these men are still under contract to the company. Ships from West Africa berth further down the river and seamen from them come up to Stepney to visit their fellow countrymen; the African members of the crews of these vessels are recruited in West Africa and are domiciled there. Ships with West Indian crews call occasionally. The seamen exercise a considerable influence upon the life of the coloured quarter and constitute the best link that many colonials have with their home country. They bring with them newspapers, tropical fruits and foods and the latest news about events in the colonies.

The Coloured Labour Force

Industry in Stepney reflects three of the principal aspects of the activity of the metropolis - the port, the commerce of the City, and the market created by the demand of the inhabitants. In character it has changed relatively little during the past sixty years, developments have occurred within industries but the same industries are still predominant, now as then, and new ones have been unable to establish themselves in the area.[1] Old firms have stayed in sites which have become congested and in premises which require re-building. In the clothing and small manufacturing industries portions of houses have been converted for use as work-:shops and small buildings have been erected in what little free space existed at the backs of dwelling houses. This small scale production, organized largely on the principle of contracting out work, is extremely sensitive to market fluctuations; seasonal or cyclical changes rapidly produce unemployment (for under-employ-:ment can rarely occur with so flexible an organization), and at other times will produce a state of feverish over-employment and unusually high earnings. The balance between industry and population has not been a good one, and, largely because of the poor quality of the housing, skilled workers and professional people who work in the area prefer to live elsewhere thus reinforc-:ing the uniformly working class character of the borough. Before the war Stepney had the largest numbers of persons living in over-crowded conditions of any London borough, labour was abundant but Stepney workers had the reputation among employers of being difficult to handle. Land values were high, not

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1. Munby, op. cit. pp. 105ff.

because Stepney was considered a desirable residential neighbour-:hood, but because the capitalized value of incomes from over-:crowded housing properties was considerable, and the centrally placed industrial sites were particularly valuable to business concerns which were not called upon to pay the full social cost of this location.[1]

The employment figures for 1931 showed a considerable disparity between the occupations of persons living in Stepney, 44.7% of whom were engaged in non-manufacturing and 43.2% in manufacturing industries, and the average figures for Greater London, which were 62.5% and 28.7% respectively. Subsequently this disparity has been reduced and the situation in 1951 was as follows:

Insured employment in the Stepney Employment Exchange Area (males over the age of 18), based upon exchange of insurance books, March 1951.

Non-Manufacturing Industries

Transport and Distribution	37%
Various Services	7%
Administration	5%
Building	5%

Manufacturing Industries

Clothing	15%
Food, Drink, Tobacco	9%
Wood and Leather	9%
Metals	6%
Chemicals	3%
Printing	2%
Miscellaneous	2%

At this date the total number of persons employed amounted to approximately 104,000, 58% of whom were males and 35% females over the age of 18. This total exceeds the total population

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1. Munby, op. cit. p.8.

of the Borough (men, women and children) by 3,000, indicating a considerable net movement into the Borough for work. It may be remarked that 39% of the women employed in Stepney worked in the clothing industry.

During the post-war period demand for labour has at most times been in excess of supply though by the time the interviews were being carried out employers thought that this situation was coming to an end. The work available for coloured immigrants has been mostly of a rough labouring nature and this has influenced the composition of the coloured population. Moreover, the employment position of the district as a whole is not a good guide to the position of minorities within it, for some firms after having found coloured workmen unsatisfactory, have preferred to keep vacancies open rather than engage others.

As described in the preceding chapter, the investigator was able to examine Employment Exchange records and reach the following estimates of the size of certain sections of the coloured male labour force:

	West Africans	West Indians	U.K.-born Negroes	E.&S.Africans	Somalis
Number	145	174	9	18	40

Few of the 30 coloured women register for employment and until the 1951 slump in the clothing trade they could usually obtain it without difficulty. Few juveniles have sought help from the Youth Employment Bureau and while there has been no difficulty in finding them work it has been harder to obtain openings for them in which they would have good prospects of advancement.

The great majority of West Africans and West Indians in Stepney are employed in unskilled or semi-skilled work. The Employment Exchange figures, however, over-emphasize the proportion of unskilled workers because men might have been up-graded since engagement, and because skilled men are more likely to obtain work privately. Another measure of the proportions in different grades may be obtained from the table on page 356. Employment Exchange records permitted the analysis of the coloured labour force in the following categories:

Occupation	West Africans	West Indians
Unskilled and semi-skilled work as Labourers, Stokers, Porters, Factory Labourers, Kitchen Porters, etc.	75%	65%
Clothing Industry: Baisters, Pressers, Under-Pressers, etc.	8%	10%
Building and Woodworking trades: Painters, Carpenters, Cabinet Makers, French Polishers, etc.	5% -	5% 7%
Miscellaneous occupations: Fitters, Turners, Mechanics, Electricians, Drivers, Bricklayers, Clerks, Cooks, Musicians, etc.	12%	13%

Casual work of a lucrative nature is sometimes available for coloured men as film extras and by doing odd jobs of various kinds a little extra employment may be obtained. It is impossible to obtain any accurate estimate of the incidence of unemployment among the Negro grouping because of the high proportion of persons prone to move from one district to another. A slight seasonal variation in the level of employment may be noted as the coloured men are often reluctant to work out of doors in the cold weather, but during 1951 the proportion unemployed appears not to have varied greatly from a mean of about 15%. Some of the immigrants

with good records are rarely unemployed and if out of work are able to get another job almost immiately, thus the figure of 15% is made up mostly of the less settled immigrants.

In placing the immigrants in work the local Employment Exchange has experienced more difficulty from the side of the men themselves than from that of the employers. Some employers have been unwilling to engage coloured men and some will not countenance the idea, but it should be noticed that in East London at least, there has been a sufficient number of firms willing to engage coloured men for their absorption to have been nearly complete had they been found as satisfactory as local labour. Many firms have given coloured men a trial but after a while have refused to engage any others, with a result that the Employment Exchange has had to go further and further afield to get the men placed, and has sometimes sent too many men to a willing employer. The major difficulties in placing the immigrants arise from their unfamiliarity with the kind of work which is required of them: they are said to be inefficient and indolent and handicapped in some cases (especially the Somalis) by inability to read and write English with any fluency. Cases have occurred of other workers objecting to the employment of coloured men and also of employers dismissing a whole batch of coloured workers because of the faults of a few. Friction sometimes develops between different groups of coloured workers at a firm, and between them and other employees or between them and the charge hand or foreman. Many of the coloured men are said to develop a "chip on the shoulder" attitude and to ask for their cards on the slightest provocation.

The problems of the coloured workers have received sympathetic attention from the local Employment Exchange. Some years after the war arrangements were made for the interviewing and placing of coloured colonial and commonwealth workers to be done by one group of clerks. Thus the officials of the "colonial section" have been able to learn the peculiarities of the immigrants, have come to know many of them as individuals, and have become practised in dealing with employers on this question; they have been able to concentrate upon making openings for coloured workers and the level of employment has been higher than it might otherwise have been. However, in the eyes of some of the men this separate section is an example of "Jim Crow" segregation and a minority complain bitterly. In the years following the war a great deal of aggression was shown by immigrants towards the Employment Exchange officials, both in physical behaviour and in verbal abuse.[1] If there were a general fall in employment and fewer jobs were open to coloured men, the existence of a separate section might make it appear as if the Employment Exchange were aiding and abetting in colour discrimination. It is believed that this is the only Exchange in the country which has established a section of this kind.

Soon after the war the Ministry of Labour and National Service recognized that pockets of chronic unemployment might develop in areas such as the coloured quarter of Stepney if the demand for labour were to fall off. The various labour districts of the

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1. See East End News, 23.9.1949, when an African was sentenced to two months' imprisonment for causing "grievous bodily harm" to an official of the Employment Exchange.

country co-operated in an attempt to start dispersing immigrants by moving them in teams to other parts of the country. This action was based on the assumption that the immigrants could more easily be assimilated in areas where they constituted a smaller proportion of the labour force. The first schemes met with little success and very little more has been done in this direction. It is very doubtful if such schemes can ever be successful for the parties of men sent to the new districts are not natural social groups and do not form themselves into such groups: the men likely to be selected will come from the ranks of the unemployed and will thus be less likely to include men who can easily adjust to the British industrial milieu; they will probably be single men without the stabilising influence of family responsibilities. Conflict may occur between immigrants from different regions, social control will be low and the worst influences will probably prevail. On the other hand, in the area from which they are taken, even if the degree of organisation is as low as in Stepney, they do have something of a natural social group, they have friends and leaders, there is a pattern of life to which they have adjusted, and white and coloured groups have achieved a certain mutual accommodation.

The relatively high unemployment rate among coloured workers is due more to the frequency with which they leave one job for another than to any reluctance to work. A report of the Local Employment Committee guardedly stated:

> "Many of the Colonial workers registered at the Exchange are unskilled and inexperienced, and are prone to leave their employment without good reason after a few days, or possibly a few weeks' work. During the quarter 435 were placed in

> employment. This position, in addition to the steady stream of new arrivals in the area (95 in the last quarter) results in a fairly constant level in the number of Colonial workers remaining on the unemployed register. On the other hand it should be mentioned that a large number of Colonial workers are in regular employment and giving satisfactory service." (1)

The Colonial workers were not the only ones with a high turnover rate and speaking of the main body of the labour force, the report states:

> "A fair number of the men registered as unemployed are of the migratory type, and seek the help of the Employment Exchange while residing in the men's hostels in the district. This constant movement of men into and out of the area results in an increase in the number of applications for unemployment benefit and national assistance. Many of the claims to unemployment insurance benefit were referred to the local insurance officer and disallowed because the conditions for the benefit were not satisfied. The total number disallowed was 1,056* the majority relating to workers leaving employment voluntarily without just cause, or being discharged for industrial misconduct."
>
> (* some 3,800 placings were effected during the quarter.)

While some immigrants can be found to correspond with all grades of local workmen in satisfaction given, it would appear that a greater proportion of the immigrants are to be placed in the less satisfactory categories. The high employment turnover rate of the coloured workers must also be attributed partly to the fact that they are often employed in trades with a discontinuous labour demand in which workers are liable to be laid off on the expiration of a contract.

To the individual immigrant the task of getting and keeping a job is a problem of adjusting his expectations to the opportunities open to him, and of becoming accustomed to what is required of the industrial worker. The worker who is born and

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1. East End News, 7.4.1951.

brought up in Britain knows in advance the sorts of job for which he will be eligible; he knows something of what working conditions will be like and in many small unnoticed ways he is trained for the social as well as the technical aspects of his occupation. The African immigrant knows nothing of this. Said one "I think that when you walk in the streets you pick up gold - I don't know that you have to work harder than in my country". He is frequently surprised also by the English puritan belief that there is a virtue in working. The West Indian has a more realistic picture of life in Britain but he too is astonished by the unpleasantness of the kinds of task he finds himself expected to perform. "It was very embarassing to me" were the words used by one in describing the labouring work in the first two factories to which he had been sent and in which he felt quite unable to continue. Labouring work in some of the East London industries is admittedly unpleasant by any standards and the turnover rate amongst the workers in one large firm interviewed was said to reach 30% per week for both white and coloured. It is very difficult for newly arrived coloured immigrants to get any job except of an unskilled nature and Africans who have held no job other than that of clerk may find themselves given a pick or shovel for the first time in their lives; very often, and quite understandably, they do not come back next day. The barriers to vertical mobility in industry are strong. The unskilled worker may rise to the semi-skilled grade but it is very difficult for him to become a skilled man and in some industries impossible. The ambitious immigrants find these restrictions frustrating and for a time they cannot

believe that all jobs are as unrewarding as those they have tried. This leads them to change from one to another "in the expectation of getting the right job some day" as an in-:vestigator in Birmingham has also concluded.[1]

Because they are sensitive of the low status accorded them many of the immigrants are unwilling to do work which appears to them degrading or to strengthen the idea that coloured men are the most suited for dirty work. One who had overcome his initial reactions remarked "This my job - it dirty! You like a pig! I don't think any other coloured man do this job." He knew his fellows, for shortly afterwards he was able to say that the management had sent along another coloured man but he had refused to do the work. Personal worries often make it harder for immigrants to respond to such opportunities as are open to them and often they do not attempt to explain their difficulties to the management. If a man needs time off to move house, or because he feels unwell, or because he has to go off and help a fellow countryman, or for any other petty reason, he may not offer this an excuse but will risk discharge for absenting himself. Some immigrants never leave employment voluntarily but invite discharge so that they will not be disqualified for unemployment benefit. For example, a party of men were being employed as film extras in the production of a film about some tropical region; one of them described the matter as follows -

> "They wanted us to do a 'monkey dance' but we didn't want to, so we said we would only do it if in the dance we could kiss

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1. S.S. Allonah, Report of a Survey relating to some Coloured Workers in Birmingham, 1950, Unpublished Ms.

all the girls. They said no, so we wouldn't do it. It was all arranged."

Their real motive for inviting discharge - that they did not wish to do something which they thought derogatory to their race, was reasonable, but the impression they gave the employer must have been much less worthy. Doubtless such incidents would have been fewer had the immigrants come at a time when employment was harder to obtain. Experience of colour discrimination at work may cause some to withdraw within themselves rather than expose themselves to the risk of further incidents and thus they may appear unresponsive. On the other hand, many people have noticed that the Africans try to humanise their work and take more pride in it than the local men; they wear uniforms smartly and are sensitive to the good opinion of their supervisors.

The distinction between the attitudes of the "accommodating" Pakistani immigrants and the "adapting" West African and West Indian immigrants which has been drawn earlier in this study is particularly apparent in the industrial sphere. In almost every case where an employer has had experience of both groups he has noticed the difference. The Pakistani will put up with conditions to which the African objects; the former avoids conflict and makes few demands, he is out to get what he can from an alien land. One firm which employed many Pakistanis reported that if one of them was sick or had left, another always arrived to fill his place, and that there appeared to be a high level of informal organization among them. The African or West Indian, however, tends to think that Britain owes him a job and if he cannot get a suitable one

this may make him adopt a hostile attitude towards the government and the nation; some employers in East London have found this aggressiveness more prevalent among West Indians than Africans. Though the social organization of the West Africans and West Indians is not so inclusive as that of the Pakistanis some of the Negro workers do help their fellow-countrymen to get jobs. They may take them round and recommend them to firms where they themselves are employed or to firms where they used to work and where they got on well with the manager. One West African said that he preferred to find his own job and thought that employers were more likely to take a man who applied on his own initiative. He thought that some employers had had unfortunate experience of Employment Exchange drafts as they include the sort of men who figure most frequently on the unemployed register. He said that if a coloured man applies by himself "they feel sorry for the 'poor darkie'. Sometimes they call you back - they say 'no', and then they feel sorry for you." The individual immigrant who can make a personal appeal and can exploit the Englishman's stereotype of the Negro can sometimes get a job with a firm which has no vacancies or with one which will tell the Employment Exchange that they are not willing to take coloured men.

Few of the West Africans and West Indians save any portion of their earnings in cash form and the general uncertainty of their position leads them to prefer maximum earnings in the present to any sacrifice for the sake of a more secure or remunerative job in the future. When in work they display a marked inclination to take on as much overtime working as possible; this preference

applies on the margin between work and more work - or rather between money and more money - for some colonials would sooner remain unemployed than take jobs which do not bring in a worthwhile income. In Stepney, in 1951, many of the immigrants regarded a wage of £6. as minimal but when employed would work through Saturday and perhaps Sunday if they had the chance. There are a few colonials who want to live off Britain and the British, regarding this as a way of getting their own back for the exploit-:ation of their people, but their numbers are small, and the impression current in some circles that a high proportion of the coloured men are living off the National Assistance Board is far removed from reality and does scant justice to both the coloured population and to the officials of the Board.[1]

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1. See an article "A Nice Pair of Socks for Eightball" in the Evening News, 30.11.1949, which paints a picture of this colonial with the curious name standing in front of an outfitter's shop wondering which of the pairs of the gaudily coloured socks he was going to buy with his assistance money. According to this article 65% of the colonials in Britain were living off the Assistance Board. This is nonsense.

The Position in Industry

In order to assess the amount of discrimination against the coloured immigrant worker in East London and the extent to which he was being absorbed into the local labour force, enquiries were made in three branches of industry. Examination of the occupations of coloured workers shows that in only two industries - Clothing and Building - is there any appreciable number of coloured men employed, and in these cases random samples were constructed from the Employment Exchange's register of employers. Questionnaires were sent out to forty employers in these industries. Where coloured men had been employed a follow-up interview was sought and obtained in every case but one; employers who had not engaged coloured men were also interviewed if they showed particular interest in the enquiry. The demand for labourers came mostly from firms outside the area of the Employment Exchange, so, with the help of the officials of the Exchange, a list was compiled of the ten firms which had engaged the greatest numbers of coloured workmen for this purpose, and the Personnel Managers of each of these firms were interviewed. It was not practicable to ask for precise details of numbers of coloured men employed in the past, or the length of time they had been with the firm and in most cases the inter-:viewer had to be content with the Manager's impressions and recollections. The interview schedule employed consisted mostly of "open-ended" questions designed to elicit the general trend of affairs rather than to attempt to measure a fluid and rapidly changing situation. In this way a large amount of data was collected which cannot easily be quantified.

The sample taken of employers in the Clothing Industry was limited to the Men's Tailoring section. The firms in this category fall into two groups: the large firms or clothing factories employing a higher proportion of the less skilled workers, and the small highly specialised workshops in which some ten or twelve persons are employed under the personal supervision of an employer who himself works at a bench with the others. The small firms work on a contract basis, probably "making up" a quantity of garments from pieces of cloth which have already been cut to shape; employment is not continuous and the employer will lay off workers when trade is slack, or at the expiration of a contract. Nine of the twenty-five firms in the sample had employed Negro workers and these nine included the only two factories in the sample, all the other firms being small workshops. Employers' answers covered forty-five coloured workers, seven of whom had been employed for more than a year and twenty-five for less than a year but more than a month. One of the nine employers was not prepared to engage any more coloured workmen but the remaining eight had no objection, although some of them were unwilling to take learners; when they had done this in the past and trained the men up to an adequate standard they had found them liable to leave in search of better wages elsewhere. The factories are more readily able to take men for training than the workshops. Vertical mobility can be achieved by entering the trade as a soaper, then picking up what is required of the next grade - under-presser - and so on, but it would appear that many of the immigrants have tried to climb too fast, exaggerating their abilities and increasing the

employers' suspicion that the newcomers are insufficiently skilled. The Manager of the larger of the factories, which was the only firm to have employed an appreciable number of coloured men, said that he had not found the labour turnover rate any higher among them than other workers. He added "But especially after they have been here for a little time, they tend to develop a persecution complex which is quite unjustified. If you point out to them that their work is not up to standard they say 'You're only picking on me because of my colour'".

Four of the twenty-five employers would not take on coloured men, and of the remaining twenty-one it is possible that some would find justifications for refusing them when it came to the point. However it was notable that employers - who in this case are almost entirely Jewish - showed a marked reluctance to ascribe the failings of coloured workmen to any particular cause despite probing for racialist beliefs. Some had made a special effort to help coloured men and the most typical attitude was that of one employer who had trained two West Indians, and who said "It's chiefly inexperience - one of the men had been a seaman before." It would appear therefore that the coloured man is at little disadvantage in the Stepney clothing industry, but it is well to remember that discrimination is uneven in its incidence. One immigrant known to the writer who has had many years' experience as a tailor in the West Indies and in India was quite unable to get any work as a tailor. Finally he took a job as an under-presser; his employer put him on to tailoring work but would not pay him the rate for the job, so eventually he left the trade altogether.

There was a considerably greater resistance to the idea of engaging coloured workers on the part of employers in the Building and Contracting Industry, though this may be partly explained by circumstantial factors. Firms in this trade also may be divided into two categories, firstly the large constructional firm with a headquarters outside Stepney, which undertakes building contracts in different areas and engages men on the site; these firms employ many Stepney workers but employment with them is not continuous - bricklayers, labourers, joiners, painters, and others are taken on and laid off according to the progress of the contract. Secondly there is the small Stepney "jobbing" firm which specialises in maintenance work; such firms employ a small number of highly skilled workmen who become accustomed to working together and may stay with the same firm for very long periods indeed. As might be expected, it was found that very few coloured men were employed in the small firms.

Four cases from the original sample of nineteen Building firms had to be discarded for various reasons, leaving fifteen firms, twelve of which may be considered "small" and three "large". Of the small firms, only one had employed coloured men during the past three years - two carpenters, one french polisher, one painter and one labourer. All of them had been discharged within one month and it was said that none of them was clean, that they only wanted to sit and smoke or to sleep, that they immediately claimed the highest rates of pay current in the trade and were liable to be very threatening and abusive. The other employees were said to have been not unfriendly towards them and in one case

"the foreman tried to help him out all he could". This employer said that he was not prepared to engage other coloured workers unless he was absolutely certain that they were properly qualified and he had refused offers of coloured labour from the Employment Exchange. Six of the small firms would not take coloured workers and two others expressed hesitation. The reasons which the employers gave for this reluctance were, firstly, that many of them undertook repairs on the premises of other firms, or in private houses, and were afraid that their clients might object (one employer added "I doubt if you'd get any objections from the Yiddish firms, though"). Another said that his firm had been doing interior work in a high-class residential area where some of the flats were occupied by single women who "would not feel safe if left alone with a coloured man working in the flat". Secondly there were fears of objections on the part of other employees which one employer expressed by writing that he would engage coloured workmen "as a last resort". I consider that the criterion here is not so much the quality of the individual as his acceptability amongst the existing staff. Refusal here might be disastrous". And another: "You have to consider how other people would feel, especially the other employees. There's not enough work for English people and many of the coloured people only got here by smuggling themselves away". Thirdly, it was generally believed that owing to lack of experience and training the immigrant workmen were not up to requisite standards of skill. This is often true but it was unusual for an employer to be able to advance any definite example to substantiate his belief. Most

of the coloured workers in the building trade are employed in the larger firms where there is less demand for skill. Two of the three large firms were employing, or had recently employed coloured men, and none of them had any objection to taking on others, though as the site-agent remarked in one case "On contract work we're only too glad to take anyone we can get". He said that the men got on well together but believed that the whites would never accept a coloured man as chargehand. The largest of the firms employed many hundreds of men in the docks, skilled and unskilled, and reported the extremely high labour turnover rate of 30% per week - about the same for white and coloured. In no case did employers justify their preference for English workmen by reference to any belief in the racial inferiority of coloured men but it would appear from the small numbers employed that there is probably a fair amount of discrimination in employment in this trade and that in a time of unemployment it would increase.

The ten firms which were visited as representing the principal employers of unskilled coloured workmen showed considerable similarity in the experience they reported, although there were notable differences varying with the nature and mode of employment and the attitudes on the part of the management. Within the previous six years, and mostly within the previous four, these firms had employed close on a thousand coloured workers though the same men might have been employed by several firms. At the time of interviewing a total of 127 were employed, 5 of these were skilled, the remainder were semi-skilled and unskilled. In eight

of the ten cases employers stated that they employed coloured workmen as a last resort and in some cases they looked forward to an easing of the labour shortage which would enable them to engage white labour for all jobs. In all cases but one it was said that the labour turnover rate was very much higher among the West African and West Indian workers. This rate was particularly high in firms requiring men for unpleasant or dirty work: an employer who had engaged coloured men for cleaning out dirty oil drums estimated that 60% had left within a week although some English workers had stayed on this job for over ten years. In another case the Personnel Manager said that the work was "the heaviest type of labouring - local labour won't look at it and I don't blame them", it was such that no-one could regard it as anything but "a grind".

However, one firm which had employed coloured workers as stokers found the turnover rate relatively low, perhaps because many of the men whom they had employed had previously been ships' firemen. This firm had decided not to engage any more coloured men, apart from applicants with previous service in the firm, because other workers objected to their body odour. "They don't like black men in general; don't forget that all the men on the shift have to work, eat and bath all very close together, and there is something about them which is different, and which people object to". The Personnel Manager said that the coloured men were not quite as good workers as the whites and added "these people have no roots in this country. They're probably living with a woman in a one-roomed place in Stepney and have got no home life. In

these circumstances they are bound to be less responsible and less reliable. The one or two men we've had who've been good, have been men who have got married and got a family and have some responsibilities to live up to".

An attitude not representative of employers as a whole was expressed by one Works Manager who said that he had been out in India and Africa; he said that "the intelligent native is a very good fellow, but the nearer they are to nature, and the nearer they are to the Equator, the better they are". When asked about the failings of coloured men he had employed, he explained "they're not far enough along the scale of civilisation". He was the only person interviewed who expressed such views, the great majority of employers adopted a strongly empiricist approach and attempted no generalisations. Some referred to the social environment of the immigrants, to rent exploitation, and to the influence of some of the women in the area in which they lived. The two firms with the most liberal attitudes were both firms where the employers were themselves immigrants from the Continent. The Manager of the oil drum cleaning firm reflected "I really did want to make a go with them, but it was no good". Asked about employing others he remarked "experience speaks against it - at any rate not more than two at a time. It's the same with the Irish: if you take in certain minorities they seem to stick together, and if you have too many, the worst influence seems to prevail. If they are isolated and put to work on their own they get ahead". Many employers referred to an "inferiority complex", but in this case the Manager, who was Jewish and perhaps a little more inclined to

ponder these matters, added: "It must be something which grows in them here because I've seen them in their own countries and I couldn't see anything like that. Partly, I suppose, it's because of a certain hostileness in the English character - they're tolerant but seem to say at the same time 'we know you're different'". In the other firm managed by immigrants from the Continent coloured workers were employed operating factory machines and labour re-:lations were relatively very good. The labour turnover rate amongst coloured workers there was low relative to other firms but "very much higher" than that for local labour in the same firm.

It was interesting to observe the contrast between two departments of a large nationalised concern: in the first depart-:ment the men were employed as factory labourers inside a large block of buildings and supervision was not difficult; there had been a little trouble at first but they discovered that this could be reduced by putting the men to work singly, separating the good workmen from the bad, and prohibiting the use of expressions such as "nigger" on the part of other workmen. In this way they had winnowed out a number of coloured employees whom they found quite satisfactory. In the other department the men were employed in gangs at a distance from the depot. The work was poorly paid and the local labour employed was considered to be not the most satis-:factory. When the gangs were away from the depot both chargehands and men were very liable to victimize any coloured men who might be allocated to their group; the Manager knew well in which gangs victimization could be expected but found it difficult to prevent it. Furthermore, there had been frequent fights between different

groups of coloured men when employed together and misunderstandings of income tax deductions had more than once led to crowds of angry coloured men causing such trouble in the office that the Police ~~has~~ had to be called. Though they badly needed more men the department was keeping vacancies open rather than engage coloured workers.

Most employers did not differentiate between coloured immigrants from different regions though there were some who expressed a preference for West Africans rather than Jamaicans who were said to be very aggressive and touchy, "the slightest thing and they go up in the air". One firm had found it better to employ Pakistanis only. Though suspicious of the efficiency of coloured workers in the aggregate, employers are very frequently willing to give a trial to a coloured man who strikes them favourably. A recommendation makes all the difference. Several times to the writer's knowledge employers have engaged individual coloured men on the strength of a telephone recommendation from an apparently responsible person - even when there has been no advertised vacancy.[1]

Coloured men say that at their places of work they are often ostracised by the white workers who try to have as little as possible to do with them, and will sometimes blame their own mistakes onto them or fail to stand by them when there is trouble with the management. Very often the majority of the other workers are willing to be friendly but may be influenced by one of their number who has an irrational dislike for coloured men and who makes trouble for them. Coloured men say that one or two biassed men may influence the behaviour of all the others. A very frequent

1. One coloured man applied for a job only to be told that it had been filled. He did not believe this and got his English wife to telephone the firm. She said that she had a coloured lodger who was a good worker and asked if they would consider him. The man put on a different suit of clothes, went round and got the job.

source of misunderstanding or conflict between the two groups is what the immigrants regard as the "stupid questions" about their homeland and about the "jungle" - sometimes out of ignorance, sometimes in jest. Africans have said that the English sense of humour is different from their own and that their fellows sometimes misinterpret the ideas behind remarks made to them.

In some cases coloured workers become extremely popular with the management and with their fellow workers, most frequently when the coloured man is the only one in the firm and the others got to know him as an individual. A number of immigrants have said that they have been getting on well in some firm when more coloured men have come there who have behaved badly and made things worse for all the coloured men. It should be remembered though, that the immigrants who can manage their relations with whites easily are the most likely to strike out on their own. The more easy-going immigrant who can ride out the first gusts of antagonism and does not react against the patronising attitudes which others sometimes adopt towards him, may become very popular, and there are numerous cases of coloured men acting as chargehands or in some skilled capacity in which they have white workers under their direction. Some of these men make much better workmen than their white counterparts. Being popular with the other workers does not mean that the immigrant has to adopt the white man's point of view; some get on very well with the local workmen while expressing the strongest opposition to the policies of their government. The immigrants who are the most highly thought of are usually those who have the most stable home life, who have a circle

of friends who will help them when in difficulty, a settled home and the more definite objectives.[1] This reinforces the view that the immigrants' position in industry cannot be divorced from that in other spheres, and that their industrial absorption cannot be achieved until the special difficulties which face them outside their places of work are overcome.

The skilled man who is a member of a Trade Union has relatively little to worry about in the way of discrimination from employers, and immigrants have quoted many cases to the writer of Union officials responding quickly and very firmly to incidents of sus-:pected colour discrimination against their members. West Indians who have served an apprenticeship in their own country and can produce evidence of this, are, after some trouble, able to get them-:selves accepted into craft unions. The majority of the immigrants, being unskilled, join the appropriate Union only after a firm has engaged them.

It is important to recognise that the discriminatory policy practised by many employers is not based upon racial prejudice, nor upon the personal whims of the man who engages staff, but upon a preference for local labour which, whether justified or not, can be rationally defended. This preference arises from two principal sources: firstly, employers have what one of them called "a leaning towards our own folks", a feeling that workers who have been living in the country all their lives and who "belong" there, have a stronger moral claim to employment than have recently arrived immigrants. Secondly, Negro immigrant workers usually leave their

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1. Cf. A.H. Richmond, "Relation between Skill and Adjustment of a Group of West Indian Negroes in Britain", Occupational Psychology, Vol 25 (1951) No 3.

jobs more quickly and are less efficient, partly because they are unaccustomed to the work, partly because the social situation of the industrial worker is not one in which the immigrant from the tropics can produce his best. During the interviews it was noticeable that some employers were conscious of a conflict between the policies they felt they had to pursue as employers, and those which, as citizens, they felt they would have liked to have seen followed. They would set out reasons showing how it was uneconomic for them to employ coloured labour when whites were available, but were uncomfortable about the implications of this if all the employers were to do the same. Discrimination cannot be reduced by expecting individual employers to pursue policies inimical to their own interests, and the organisation of the economic system is such that, if present circumstances continue, it will be a long time before coloured workers are regarded as anything but a "last resort".

CHAPTER VII

THE BACKGROUND TO INTERMARRIAGE

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The Influence of Racial Attitudes

English people have been heard to criticize the immigrants for consorting with the "lowest type" of the local women and to imply that many of their difficulties arise from their doing so. This is only half of the picture. Conventional attitudes operate so as to restrain any English woman from consorting with a coloured man and it is only those women who rebel or those whom the white group has rejected and over whom it has lost the power of restraint, who will go out with any of the immigrants. One of the principal manifestations of "colour bar" in the eyes of many immigrants is the way in which social equality is denied to them in this respect. Promiscuity has to be seen in terms of this situation. Short acquaintance with coloured people living in Britain is enough for anyone to hear many stories of hostility directed by Britishers against white girls who go with or marry coloured men, and against the men involved. Action is frequently taken by persons in semi-official or official capacities which is said to be for the girl's "own good" that has the effect of breaking up such unions; in many cases such action is justified by accepted standards but in others it savours of interference to the persons concerned. The coloured people in Stepney and elsewhere allege that individual police officers go to great lengths to try to separate the women from the men when opportunity arises.[1] When she is seen in the streets with her man the woman is often made to feel acutely conscious of her position by the remarks and stares of bystanders and sometimes men

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1. Cf. Fletcher, op. cit., Appendix II, where the police in one town are referred to as discouraging the growth of such unions.

spit in her path.[1] A white girl working in a factory who lives with a coloured man will normally try to keep this a secret from her fellow workers; if the others girls find out they are liable to make her life a misery, for though many of them are curious about the relationship, and some of them are jealous, they regard her as a traitor to her "own" kind.

Well-intentioned people have suggested that boatloads of coloured women be brought so that coloured men would be able to marry among their "own" colour. Apart from the ludicrous flavour and impracticable nature of the idea, such a scheme would mean that coloured people would be permanently regarded as outsiders. Were it attempted, the coloured women would undoubtedly receive a great deal of attention from white men and this would arouse the hostility of English women. Just as white and coloured men do not get on well together where women of one group are involved, so white and coloured women do not get on where men are present. Each group tries to preserve its own identity and to prevent any of its members from breaking away: the man is jealous of the women 'belonging' to his own group and tries to keep them within the group; the women feel similarly about the men where there is any question of

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1. In the matter of sexual relations with European women also there are interesting resemblances in the position of North Africans in France. The colonial immigrants there (a) are sometimes supposed to have a powerful sexual appetite, (b) they strike up liasons with the same type of women, and (c) they are said to be persecuted for having anything to do with these women. Esprit, February 1952, pp. 244 and 249-51.

competition.[1] The individual, however, is curious about the members of the opposite group and the strength of the sanctions against relationships with them increases his or her curiosity; he or she may also be jealous of a member of his or her own sex who throws off the control and has relations with members of the stranger group. For the man this is often regarded as venial, but not for the woman. There are widespread beliefs among Englishmen that a coloured woman is more satisfying sexually and corresponding ideas occur among Englishwomen, often supplemented by the belief that the Negro male's genitals are larger (I understand that physiological research has not substantiated this)[2]. Mistaken ideas about biological differences contribute to the passion which this subject arouses. A Divorce Commissioner recently said:

> "And if it be true, that man has been guilty of the most unjustifiable insults to his wife and the mother of his children. He was accusing her of consorting with people of a coloured race with a suggestion of immorality behind it. It was one of the most monstrous suggestions that a husband could make against his wife." (3)

The last sentence clearly implies that for a white woman to commit adultery with a coloured man is worse than for her to do so with a white man. Mistaken beliefs are also used to discourage girls from going out with coloured men. A girl friendly with a

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1. Negro immigrants in Britain are conscious of this competition for women and resent restrictions on contact. One Stepney West African when asked why he disapproved of the Jews, said simply: "They won't let us have their women". The situation may in some respects be compared with the antagonism which, in Continental countries under military occupation during or after the recent war, was directed against women who associated with occupation troops. The hostility is said to have been greater on the part of the men.
2. Cf. Shakespeare, Henry VIII, Act II Scene iii 32-9. The association between dark skin colour and sexual potency appears not to be of recent growth.
3. Commissioner Bush-James as reported in the Evening Standard, 14.11.1951.

coloured man wrote to a woman's paper for advice; she was not a bit worried by racial differences and asked about something else, but the adviser added the gratuitous and erroneous advice:

> "Many coloured men are fine people, but they do come from a different race, with a very different background and upbringing. Besides scientists do not yet know if it is wise for two such very different races as whites and blacks to marry, for sometimes children of mixed marriages seem to inherit the worst characteristics of each race." (1)

Comments which appear in the newspapers usually have a superficial reasonableness and they compare favourably with the curious tales that circulate in working class districts and obtain a ready credence there. Another and powerful argument used to discourage sexual association between members of widely separate groups is that advanced ostensibly on behalf of the children. This will be considered later. It is sufficient for the moment to point out that racial attitudes in Britain serve strongly to discourage girls from going out with coloured men and thereby restrict the possible spouses available to the immigrants. Strong forces must have been at work before a woman is no longer sensible of these group controls, or before she renounces them.

One of the most impressive characteristics of the coloured quarter in Stepney is the great variety among the kind of people to be found there, they and their behaviour vary from the notorious to the impeccably respectable; this is true of both the men and the women. There are a number of women - often foreigners - whose marriages to coloured men may be ascribed to purely personal factors of mutual attraction,

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1. Glamour, 20.11.1951, p.15

but the position of the majority of the women, and their histories, casts an illuminating light on some uniformities produced by the social structure of Britain. There are two outstanding characteristics of the female population which have pre-disposed them to consort with coloured men: firstly, and inferior economic position and low earning power, secondly, emotional insecurity and a background of personal rejection. The two are closely related and the vicious spiral runs something like this: The girl denied affection by her parents is more likely to have an illegitimate child; the girl with an illegitimate child is more likely to be rejected by her relatives and denied the affection she needs; without the support of a family or a consort she will have difficulty in making a living, especially if she still has the child (women's wages in Stepney rarely exceeded £4 per week for the unskilled worker and after allowing for various deductions she would be left with about £3.15/-). Thus the single isolated girl is likely to strike up a relationship with a man for economic as well as other reasons and her last state may be worse than the first. The great majority of the women consorting with coloured men in Stepney have come from other parts of the country, Northern towns and ports, the Birmingham area, Glasgow and Ireland. Most of those with whom I became acquainted had experienced personal rejection - very frequently as a result of an illegitimate child - and most of them either still sought or had only recently found emotional security in a stable relationship with a coloured man. Some of the women attracted

to coloured men appear to be nymphomaniacs; the majority display a widespread ignorance of sexual matters and sometimes attribute many of their troubles to the lack of proper sex education. Old wives' tales about sexual matters are frequently believed (though this is probably characteristic of most working class society) and there is little knowledge of contraceptive measures, except for condoms which are expensive, and "female pills" or "Red Lavender" which may be used to produce an abortion.

Though background factors are the same in so many cases, considerable allowance must be made for the play of personal characteristics, of temperament and strength of character. This is often the only difference in the situation of the woman who recovers after a period of personal hardship and another who becomes a prostitute and becomes less and less secure and stable in her outlook. This can best be illustrated not by generalities but by quoting a small number of specimen case histories. In them it is important to distinguish between the neces/sary conditions, or predisposing factors, and the effective cause which results in her coming to the neighbourhood and living with a coloured man. Many of these cases exhibit a crisis situation where the influence of the predisposing factors can be clearly seen.

Joyce comes from Lancashire and was born in 1926. Her mother died when she was aged 8 and her father re-married very shortly afterwards, his second wife giving birth to a child within nine months of the marriage; Joyce's grandmother has hinted that her father may have had something to do with the

mother's early death. Joyce would not call her stepmother "Mum" and persisted in saying "You're not my Mum. They took my Mum away in a box". As a result her stepmother ill-treated her in a systematic manner, forcing her to scrub the floors, clean the windows, etc. (only the back windows, because she did not want the neighbours to see the child working!) from the age of 9; the stepmother never called her any name but "Big 'Un" and once hit her so hard as to give her a permanent, though slight, disability. Her father did nothing to dispel the memory of her mother. When she was 13 her grandmother took her away and at the age of 19 she ran away from her grandmother with a friend who said she would take her to see London; the friend took her straight to a house in the coloured quarter and after two days disappeared. Joyce, however, had got a job as soon as she arrived and remained in these lodgings; she was going out with a Pakistani and had a child by him but he went away and the baby died shortly after birth. Another woman in the house who was married to an African introduced her to one of her husband's countrymen who subsequently invited them all to the pictures and then back to his room for a cup of tea. After tea he gave the married couple the hint to leave and Joyce stayed behind, returning to her lodgings later in the evening to fetch her things, announcing "He wants me". After eighteen months and several rows they got used to one another and were married. She once remarked "I've never been used to affection at any time during my life"; This, and the experiences of her youth were bound to have an unsettling effect which could not

be quickly overcome. Even after being married for five years she confessed that she often felt "browned off" and in such moods wanted to run away though she had no other home to go to.

Connie was one of twenty children in a family in a Welsh mining village who came to England and was employed in domestic service. She married and had two children but she and her husband were divorced and the children were put in a home. She went to live in lodgings in East London and then one evening when there was nothing on the wireless except a symphony concert and she felt thoroughly bored, a friend persuaded her to go to a fun-fair near the coloured quarter. There she met a West Indian who was attracted to her, he followed her around and took her up on some mechanical swings when her friend was afraid to accompany her. The West Indian visited her lodgings several times, trying to persuade her to go and live with him, though - according to Connie - she used to avoid him in a very pointed fashion. However, she is of a very impetuous nature and one night she had a big row with the people with whom she stayed and walked out of the house refusing to stay there a minute longer. She came to the West Indian's lodgings and announced simply "I've come". He wants her to marry him as he is afraid she might run away.

June met her future husband at a dance in Tottenham Court Road three years after the war when she was living with her parents in North-East London. The man was a seaman who had a flat in Stepney and he tried to get her to live there with him, succeeding about eighteen months later when she was expecting a child by him. Some local people procured an abortion

in an amateurish fashion and her friends say that she "nearly died". Two years later she arranged for her mother to visit them and told her just beforehand that it was a coloured man she was staying with: her father will have no more to do with her because of this, and will not visit them though her mother comes round weekly. When June became pregnant a second time they got married.

Mary is from Ireland, and was working in a Midlands town when a fellow lodger, a woman with a baby, announced that she had decided to go back to her husband. She asked Mary to come with her, and promised her free lodging at the husband's house. The friend took her straight to a lodging house in the coloured quarter and went onto the streets. Mary quickly dis-:covered that her friend was a prostitute though up to that time she had not known what the word meant, but being of a compliant and non-resisting nature she stayed with the girl and used to try to look after the baby which was neglected by its mother. They shared a room and Mary had to do all the work. The other girl affected not to like coloured men but used to do business with an African who was staying with a friend of his in a house not far away. The two Africans separated and the second one invited Mary to live with him but she was too frightened. The two girls were in continual trouble with land-:lords because of the prostitute's slovenliness and unruly behaviour so that after they had been thrown out of their lodgings for the third time Mary decided she must break away.

She was shy, ignorant of any hostels for the homeless and saw no alternative but to go and live with the African. The relationship proved to be a stable one; after two and a half years she bore a child and after three they got married. Her sister is married to a Pakistani living in another town.

Sally was the daughter of a prostitute in a Welsh seaport, she herself was sent to a Junior Approved School until the age of 16. After she had left the school and was working as a nursemaid, a friend gave her the address of a man in Stepney who fixed her up with a job as a waitress in a cafe near to the coloured quarter. She tired of her job very rapidly and when after about nine days she met a coloured man in the street who had been one of her mother's clients and who invited her to live with him, she accepted. She has been with him most of the time for the past three years, breaking away for a few weeks but returning to the man who is about ten years older than she is and has a strong hold over her. She has been intermittently "on the game" (i.e. a prostitute) and though the man has benefited from this, he does not respect her enough to want to marry her.

Christina is of Swedish birth, aged about 40. She was married to an Englishman who drank heavily and maltreated her. She left him and came to London, staying in a Bloomsbury hotel where her money rapidly dwindled as she was sick and did not seek work. She enquired for cheaper lodgings and upon someone's suggestion came out to Stepney where she arrived by chance - so she said - in the coloured quarter. She had difficulty in finding accommodation and enquired in a cafe; an African who was

there invited her to live with him and thinking of this as a temporary expedient she agreed. The National Assistance Board tried to help her and get her away to another district but she took to living as a prostitute with seamen and coloured men.

Ann was born in what is now the coloured quarter and is 32; one member of her family is out on licence from a mental home and she herself is mentally retarded. No other members of the family have anything to do with coloured people. Ann is married to a Pakistani who has left her; she has had six children none of whom are any longer in her care, mostly having been taken as being in need of care and protection. She was violent and uncontrollable when she went back to live with her parents so they refused to let her stay there any longer and the family will have nothing more to do with her. She went to live with a West African but ran away from him stealing many of his belongings; later on she found she was pregnant but right up to the last moment made no preparations whatsoever for the birth of the child, being finally taken to hospital from her place of work in an ambulance. After leaving hospital she was walking round the streets when she met this African and told him "I've got a baby for you", he was surprised by the news and allowed her to come back and live with him. She neglected the child, leaving it alone in the house and spending her time in the cafes. The man was unable to control her; he would give her practically all the money he had and she would waste it but would not bother to draw her own maternity benefit money. He took to coming home during his lunch

hour knowing that the baby had probably been left unattended while she went out with another man, and became so worried, he said, that he never wore his best suit for over a month. He tried using physical force on her equally without success and on one occasion a violent altercation developed involving some of the other people in the house, Ann was hysterically shouting that the coloured men were "savages", "black bastards", telling them to "go back to Africa" and threatening to kill one of them (meanwhile the writer had to nurse the baby). Encouraged by her mother (who would not have her daughter in her own house but would take her side against other people), Ann said she would go, and would leave the baby with the father; she took with her as much of the man's property as she could, even attempting to remove the electric light bulb. However, next morning she way-:laid him on his way to work and said she wanted to come back, he was willing to take her but the landlord objected; after a while they found accommodation in another part of the town and disappeared.

Every case is unique and individual but most of the girls' stories are made up of the same material, similar events and items but arranged in different patterns. These histories are not to be accepted without independent confirmation of the important points as some of the women are adept at telling a story so that it sounds truthful and arouses pity or sympathy. Very rarely do any of them speak of "home"; sometimes a father or a relative is mentioned but their family life was not something shared, something to which they belonged. In a majority of cases the women are no longer in any more than occasional contact

with their parents and very often one or both of them are dead.

Coloured women born and brought up in the United Kingdom have often had such women for mothers, they have been brought up in circumstances which make it very difficult for the mother to bring up the child in the way she wants. Throughout the inter-war period it was extremely difficult for coloured girls to obtain employment and institutional bodies did more in the way of deploring the situation than of trying to change it. One coloured woman in Stepney who was brought up in an orphanage remembers how as a child she used to be taken to missionary meetings and placed on the table while one of the clergymen used to appeal for funds; in the orphanage she was segregated from the other girls. Most of the United Kingdom-born coloured women in Stepney suffer from personal instability; if they go on the streets they often do very good trade with white men - especially middle class whites.

One of my more perceptive informants among the coloured men was once listing all the types of women to be found in the coloured quarter and he ended up by saying "... and then there are the 'utilities' - they've got nowhere to go." The 'utilities' in his terminology are women usually in their late teens or twenties who have almost always a family background of deprivation and rejection, who are personally unstable and have no settled residence. They arrive in Stepney and hang around the cafes for two or three weeks, staying perhaps for a time with some coloured man, and then run off to Cardiff or somewhere similar.

Frequently they are mentally and educationally sub-normal - such as Ann - and very few of them, for example, would feel at all at home on a dance floor. In some ways they act as if they were obeying a series of compulsions far stronger than their own powers of self-control; their career is one of drift and abandon. They display in acute form many of the symptoms of deprivation, which, to a lesser extent, are evident also in the behaviour of many of the more typical female inhabitants of the coloured quarter. They display a great deal of assertion, trying to draw attention to themselves, to make themselves feel that they matter, lying for no good reason, thieving when they are not in need. Often romantic, they lack the peace of mind to be able to apologize or make concessions to keep a relation-:ship going, and thus, willy-nilly, they are sometimes unable to accept that offer of a stable relationship which they want most profoundly. Many coloured immigrants have stopped consorting with 'utilities' but there are some who still hope to find a suitable wife from among them. The majority of these women would be incapable of maintaining a stable relationship with an Englishman and the immigrants profess the greatest difficulty in understanding their behaviour. One young African who had had such a woman staying with him for several weeks asked the investigator when she had gone out of the house "You were born here, you understand these girls; tell me, is she a good one?" Sometimes these women will get the address of a single coloured man from a friend and will go round to ask to stay with him. Immigrants very frequently have their money or possessions stolen by such women and they adopt a harsh attitude towards them as a rule;

sometimes on slight provocation a woman may be put out at any time of the day or night and as she usually possesses very few belongings - perhaps one suitcase - this is not difficult to do. When a man goes to work he may be unwilling to leave his girl in his room for fear of theft and will tell her to come back in the evening; sometimes he locks her in the room.

The 'utilities' solicit on the streets when they can find no one to provide for them, but they cannot be considered prostitutes in the usual sense of the term because their soliciting is not a conscious and deliberate activity so much as one aspect of a totally disorganized social and personal life. There are not very many full-time professional prostitutes in the coloured quarter who make a regular income in this way which is sufficient to maintain them; most of the trade is carried on by amateurs who go on the streets occasionally. I asked someone living in the heart of the coloured quarter and well acquainted with its people to write some notes about the background of the better known prostitutes; they ran as follows -

S. is a private worker; born in Newcastle of a white woman and an African father; married a well-to-do man who owned a night club, used her for the streets ... she served time, came out and changed her trade to the East End; at first was particular in men, now takes any nationality.

D. From Cardiff, white; married to a Somali, 2 children; ran to London with a West Indian; now thoroughly bad, takes anybody.

W. No chance from birth; born in Canada of a white mother and a coloured man. Mother was a legalised prostitute. W. goes with both sexes, is still young but very disillusioned with life and once attempted suicide; prefers whites.

C. Born in the East End. Arab father, white mother. Spoilt by the Arabs when she was a child. Had a good time with U.S.

troops; married a West African; goes out with coloured men, husband consents.

G. Old woman. Now retired. She is French and is married to a Greek who gets young girls for Greeks and Maltese.

T. Single, from South Shields. Superficially the motherly type, but rotten to the core. When I first came down here she tried to sell me. Has served time.

R. Travels round with the men, to Liverpool, to South Shields with a man, then comes back with a girl whom she puts on the game.

E. A West Indian girl who works during the day. Makes no profit from the men but likes different ones to sleep with.

A. I first knew this girl when she was only 15; I had been sent to help her when she came to the Salvation Army for help. On going to this girl's home about ten in the morning, I found this youngster with a little boy who was unclothed, and an Irish girl in bed with an Indian, also with no clothes on. She was wearing some kind of shift. She went to the same bed, got in, and then what went on I can't describe for it was impossible to believe, and I did not like to go back to the Major and say anything for I did not think - and still do not - that anyone would believe me. I was sorry for the child, so I cleaned the place, washed and tried to dress the child, but there were no proper clothes for it. I stuck it for a week but it made me really sick; there was no life, only the bed, and pictures, and food, nothing else; and one was expected to go back at night to the Salvation Army and pray to God and thank Him. This girl came from Port Talbot from a decent working class family, though very poor; she came to London with another girl who was a pro. and was picked up by this man in a fun-fair in Aldgate. She had one child at 13. I lost touch with her after 1940 until 1944 when I saw her working the streets for a living. She still does so and now has three Indian children.

The last case has been quoted in full because it describes the reactions of a woman who at the time was not placed very differently from the person she described, but had more strength of character.

Coloured men do not often trade with a prostitute but are more likely to take a woman back to their room and repay her with a good meal; as a prostitute herself remarked "Oh, the coloured

men don't pay you anything for that". There is a belief in some quarters that the West Africans and West Indians get girls with the intention of sending them on the streets and that the majority of immigrants make their living by 'poncing'. This is far from the truth; as in so many other cases, evidence relating to a small minority is generalized and applied to the majority even by responsible persons.[1] The number of coloured men in Stepney who live on immoral earnings would appear to have declined as the immigrants adjusted to their new surroundings and it should be remembered that some newcomers were received into company which regarded this as normal; for some it was a form of counter-aggression against whites in general and a compensation for wrongs which they thought had been done to them. Some of the 'ponces' are simply opportunists and it is far from clear that when a girl who is consorting with a coloured man goes on the streets, it is the man who is responsible. In many cases the woman does not want to do unskilled work in a factory and it seems foolish not to take advantage of this easy way of making money by doing something which has long since ceased to have any emotional significance for her and to which she is probably reconciled; she may want to give her man something to redress her own emotional dependence on him, or she may want money for her own purposes. Sometimes when the man is earning a steady income and wants to be thought respectable, he goes to great lengths to try and stop the girl from going on the streets; he may have to tolerate it if he is going to have the woman living with him

1. The immigrant group which is responsible for most 'poncing' is not that of the Africans and West Indians.

and he may think that if he puts her out he will not be able to get anyone better. Physical violence is sometimes used but it does not seem to be very effective; one African informant was certain that many of the women like being beaten and quoted the case of the man who lived in the room above him, who, he said, treated his women gently. On one occasion this man's girl was getting restive and finally paraded up and down the street hand in hand with someone else so that her man would see this; the girl sent a friend round to the informant with a message to be passed on, to the effect that she wanted to be beaten; she was, and apparently it satisfied her. In another case a woman had been so badly beaten that he was detained in hospital for several weeks, but the police were not able to persuade her to let them prosecute and she went back to live with the man. This informant himself one day found that his own girl had left £8 on the mantelpiece for him and shortly afterwards put her out, though he did not tell her that he was doing so because she tried to give him money obtained by pros-:titution. If a man accepts a woman's 'immoral earnings' it gives her a very great power over him for she can report him to the police and have him sent to prison if he fails to do what she wants.

Marital Selection and Adjustment

The newly arrived immigrant brought from the colonies an unreal conception of the white woman. A few Africans in their first month in Britain paid pretty girls to come to be photographed in their company so that they could send a copy of the photograph back to their relatives. A Nigerian

I knew paid a girl £7 for this. His countrymen thought him "crazy". The colonial seaman who was new to the country was fair game to the loose woman, she singled him out and flattered him by her attentions. If he had a room she would go there to live with him and at the first opportunity would disappear taking with her whatever he had of value. The newcomer could be taken advantage of in many ways and quickly learned to be suspicious of those white women who showed an interest in him. After speaking of such incidents, Bamuta, the African student, observed:

> "This kind of awakening to the white people makes them so embittered that after a time they lose all respect for white women, and although they will continue to consort with them, they treat them with the greatest contempt."

Not very many men migrated to Britain with the definite objective of marrying European women. What happened to one who did was described by an informant:

> M. A West African stowaway who arrived in 1945 aged 22. A good boy. When asked why he came to England, he openly stated that it was to marry a white woman. He was not colour conscious and was not offended if his boss called him "Sambo" or "Darkie" or "Blackie". He found a white girl in an Indian cafe; she was not a prostitute, but was mentally deficient. When she had a baby the Government took it as being in need of care and protection and the wife was taken to a Mental Institution. M. came and told me all his troubles: says white woman no good, all she wants is bed, cannot cook, keep place clean or look after a baby. I asked him why he was so struck on marrying a white girl and gather that it's because it would enable him to get a better job and rise his social position when he goes back to Africa. M. said 'no more white women for him', if he wanted a woman he would pay and finish. He has now paid his own passage and returned to Africa.

The status of a white woman in the colonies can easily work to the disadvantage of her coloured husband. I heard of a West Indian school teacher who took a white wife back to his country and was subject to strong disapproval from his fellow-countrymen

because he could not provide her with the standard of living which convention prescribed for a white woman. The European woman who has married a coloured man is unlikely to be well received by the other colonists and if her husband cannot offer her a standard of living comparable to their's she is likely to return to her homeland and let the marriage break up.

Quite quickly the coloured immigrants come to recognize the sort of women with whom they have to deal. As strangers, they soon become aware of class values and the significance of different styles of dress; as one said "the women in this part of London are only the very common people. You should see some of the nice women in the West End". There is a process of selection by which they usually have several women to live with them before they strike up a relationship with one more to their liking, and in the course of so doing they select the women best able to make a success of a permanent relationship. There are a number of factors which for the colonial immigrant in the United Kingdom, intensify the problem of finding a mate. For him to have a reliable wife or consort represents a very important gain in emotional security. A satisfying sexual life is a strong compensatory influence for a person who suffers frustration in other spheres. In this sense it is irrelevant whether a coloured man's female consort is also coloured or is white, but as the frustration he experiences is identified with white people, he may obtain compensation from the sexual possession of a woman of the same skin colour as the people whom he regards as hostile. This association may also be seen in the remark of the immigrant who said that he was revenging himself on the English-

:men by sending their sisters on the streets; the women are often seen as objects of sexual competition between the two groups. On the other hand, the immigrant who rejects British values, the nationalist who does not want to be assimilated, will probably not want to have any obligations towards a white woman and will be disposed towards marrying a coloured woman. At the other end of the scale, the man who does not strive for acceptance but accepts the majority group's denial of social equality, will probably prefer a coloured woman as this relationship will give rise to less friction in his dealings with whites. There are very few coloured women in proportion to the number of male immigrants and factors of individual temperament and circumstances play so great a part in marital selection that it is extremely doubtful if such generalizations could be established empirically.

In African life the woman's sphere and the man's sphere are more separate than in England. The immigrant may be used to leaving certain things to a wife or consort: some things are "women's work" and he will do them only with reluctance. It is noticeable in Stepney how the immigrant who lives by himself often takes no pride in furnishing his room and making it comfortable, not that he lets it get very dirty but so much of the furniture and fittings are primitive and very, very ugly. When he has a girl with him - even if she herself is unprepossessing - the room takes on more of an air of being lived in: perhaps there are saucers to go with the cups, a small coloured mat over the linoleum, and a more tidy appearance. For many single men their room is somewhere they go to sleep and sometimes to cook. This difference is not, of course, confined to colonials, it applies t

many bachelors and especially to people who are strangers to the urban way of life, but it illustrates a powerful, though not necessarily conscious, influence in the immigrant's search for a consort. If he gets a good looking girl to come out with him, or to live with him, this will bring the immigrant prestige in the eyes of his fellows. A dependable and well-tempered wife will also improve his position with the native population, except in so far as it arouses sexual jealousy. This gain is in the first place tactical: a white woman may be able to get things from people who would be antagonistic to a coloured man, and having been brought up in the country she will understand the social conventions much better. Sometimes if they are looking for lodgings the wife may go to see the landlord and try to obtain the tenancy without revealing the fact that her husband is coloured; this illustrates a pattern which is found in other spheres also - a wife may go to the Employment Exchange or to the Shipping Office to try to sort out a misunderstanding or to help her husband. She can advise him about many things, and if he is not literate, can write letters for him, fill up income tax forms, etc. In the second place, having a pleasant and personable wife may help the immigrant to strike up acquaintance with more of the local people. She will play an important part in his adaptation and in the tendency towards assimilation.

It is not easy for the stranger who comes to the city to make friends and to get to know the people who live round about him; even in the institutionalized centres of contact - public houses, dance halls, church socials, etc. - it is a slow process.

It is particularly difficult for the coloured immigrant whose opportunities for meeting girls are limited to dance halls and casual contacts in the area in which they live; the few who are able to get to know people some other way, either through acquaintance or because they have a certain personal charm and self-assurance which enables them to "get off" with girls in other situations, have a great advantage. Any woman who goes, unescorted, to one of the cafes with an almost exclusively coloured clientele, or who goes into a public house of the same order is assumed to be receptive to the advances of coloured men; this is almost invariably the case, for the girls who are found in these places are mostly unattached (coloured men would not willingly permit their wives or consorts to go to these places by themselves) and they usually go there in order to make contact with someone, to get "picked up". Girls new to the area with nowhere to go may sometimes be noticed in the street and a few coloured men spend many hours on street corners hanging around looking for a likely girl; one man who has met many newly arrived girls in this way said that his usual approach is to ask such a girl if she would like to come and have a cup of tea with him; if she is agreeable he takes her to a cafe and if she shows a passive demeanour it is safe to assume that she has nowhere to go; all he has to do is say "Come on, let's go home" and she will follow. This sort of contact rarely produces a lasting, stable relationship and might be regarded as a form of prostitution. Some will pay other men to get them girls, though the pimps are all very amateurish and little money changes hands. The main-line railway terminals

are profitable places for the man who can distinguish the girl with nowhere to go.[1] Girls who have previously been seen with coloured men may be accosted in the street. As the immigrants have settled down these methods have been used less and less as means of making contact with a prospective consort, for the women who could be met in such a way have not been the sort who would make satisfactory mates.

In many cases contact has been by means of an introduction and the chances of a stable relationship developing as a result have been much greater. Perhaps a man knows two girls and agrees to bring a friend along, or a woman who is living with a coloured man hears from another woman that she would like to be introduced to a coloured man. In one case a girl, Pat, who was living with a Nigerian, met another girl, Jean, who was separated from her husband and was walking the streets with nowhere to go, so Pat took her back to stay with them (this meant sleeping three in a double bed and sharing a basement room). The man knew a fellow countryman who was looking for a girl and introduced him, he said that Jean "would do" and invited her to come and live with him. Before she left the first Nigerian gave Jean a slightly ceremonial "charge', telling her that if she behaved rightly by her man and he put her out without cause she could always come back to stay with them, but that if it was she who was at fault then she must look elsewhere for help.

Coloured men in Stepney have developed a strong preference

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1. Cf. an article in Svenska Dagbladet, 13.7.1951, where a correspondent states that North Africans in Paris meet trains at the Gare du Nord and try to take advantage of unescorted Swedish girl tourists.

for foreign girls, in the realization that they are usually able to get a consort of better character and background from amongst girls who are strangers and who do not share the conventional English attitudes. They may also be lonely and receptive to advances. One case came to light of a low class Englishwoman who realized this preference and tried to pass herself off as being of Spanish descent. A coloured informant listed seven reasons why foreign girls were to be preferred: they were less colour-conscious, less pro-British, more reliable and less likely to flirt with other men, they shared their life and possessions more generously with their consort, they were also strangers to the country, were usually of better class and education than the Englishwomen of the neighbourhood but were less status-conscious and condescending; "the semi-big[1] are the worst" he said. To this another informant added another advantage - that they have no relations in the country, expressing the view that the family loyalties of an Englishwoman married to a coloured man often operate to his disadvantage.

The task of marital selection falls chiefly on the man. In the beginning he is in the stronger bargaining position, possessed as he is of a degree of economic security and somewhere to stay. He can if he wishes adopt the attitude of the Pakistani ho was heard asking in a cafe "Why you worry about woman? One go, another one come". This is not to say that the man who wishes to settle down does not have to play the part of the suitor in many ways, for most of the women require a deal of personal

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1. "Big" in the patois of the West African coast means 'important'.

attention. If a man leaves his girl on her own and does not take her out occasionally to the pictures and suchlike, she is bound to leave him. The poor housing conditions drive women who have nothing better to do into the cafés for company while the influence of the poor housing and sanitary facilities in aggravating the promiscuous sex life of the district should not be overlooked. Usually the woman wants to get married as it strengthens her position, but the man is wary, knowing of the difficulties which many coloured men have had with English women as wives, and seeing no great advantage in matrimony. Sometime, however, it is the man who is anxious, fearing that the woman may leave him if he does not have some hold over her, or accepting the conventional English view of legalized marriage as the proper and respectable course: in such cases men have been known to propose within a few days of first acquaintance. Usually the man uses the initial period of cohabitation as a trial and if after a year or so the relationship is satisfactory, he will then propose marriage.

The principal factors attracting English women to coloured immigrants are social in origin: when a white woman has lost all status with her own people she can still go to a coloured man and receive a certain amount of attention. As an African put it: "They know that the coloured men don't spit on them". In most cases they have lost all status among whites before associating with coloured men, but once they have done so it is almost impossible for them to recross this Rubicon unless they move to

a district where their previous history is unknown. Although she may experience hostility from whites on account of it, there are many compensations the woman receives for taking this step. These are largely personal: she acquires an emotional and economic security which she may not have had before and which is of the greatest importance. She is treated with more consideration by a coloured man than she would be by a white - though there are exceptions to this. The women feel themselves freer to behave as they like with coloured men and are able to relax the inhibitions, sexual and otherwise, which restricted their behaviour with whites, while they may come to like the cheerful and spontaneous temperament of the immigrants. A great deal of nonsense is talked about the sexual superiority of coloured people and while it is not impossible that males from tropical areas are relatively more active, there are social factors which go a long way towards explaining this belief. Once a woman has started consorting with a coloured man she is forced to identify herself with him and will rationalize her position; she may defend the cause of the coloured men against the whites and foster the beliefs about their sexual capability by declaring that she likes them better. The fact that it is a relative preference is often lost sight of but was expressed in the argument of one woman who when someone remonstrated with her for going with a coloured man retorted hotly "If you knew what I've been through with my own colour, you wouldn't say that". Their loyalty in this respect was conceded by a West African who added "One thing about these women, they will testify for you when you're in court". The extent to which the women feel

ostracised and believe others to be hostile to them is proportionately greater than the extent to which hostile behaviour is outwardly manifested. Identification with the coloured people is never so complete in Stepney as in the older settlements such as Tyneside where, among other things, women have accepted Islam with alacrity, declaring "Before we were only Arab's wives but after that experience we felt that we belonged to something too".[1] The alienation of these women from the white group and their consequent identification with the immigrants is responsible for the oft-heard statement that once they have been with coloured men the women never revert to whites. In the investigator's experience, the women were glad of the company of a white man who showed no disposition to be hostile, and they often made very good informants because they valued the sympathy of one of their fellow country people. The status which a white woman has in the coloured group varies with her personal qualities; often it is greater in her own eyes than in those of her consort and his associates and she may presume upon it to insult him in a dispute.

As a social institution legal marriage is not of great importance in this area and a woman who co-habits with a coloured man without being married to him does not suffer on this score. In a dispute, however, this is as good a stick with which to beat an opponent as any other. Marriages of immigrants to local women are simple in performance, they are usually carried out at a

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1. S.F. Collins "The Social Position of White and 'Half Caste' Women in Coloured Groupings in Britain", American Sociological Review, Vol 16 (1951) No 6.

Registry Office and are followed by a small party given by the couple to their friends; perhaps ten to twenty people call in the course of the evening and the furniture is pushed back to permit dancing to a radiogram in their room or in that of a friend. In the majority of cases the couple will have been cohabiting before the marriage and on the following day life will continue very much as usual. It is interesting to compare the social attributes of consorts for in the essentials the men and women are far more similar than consideration in terms of colour would suggest. The women are usually of working class origin and their fathers probably earned less per week than their husbands do now, even after allowance is made for changes in purchasing power. The immigrants at first lack many of the technical skills required for life in an English city, knowledge of how to use a telephone, ability to fill up forms, acquaintance with the regulations of the local authorities, etc., but after a few years most of the West Africans and West Indians are more confident in handling such matters than are their consorts. Many of the Irish and country girls came to London expecting to find the streets paved with gold and with ideas as unreal as the Africans'. They may be just as superstitious in their belief in charms and curses and the things they avoid when pregnant. The only difference is that in their case such practices are not called 'juju' or by some such name. Besides the technical skills, the 'know how' of modern life, there are also the social skills which are manifested in the individual's ability to enter into satisfactory relationships

with others, to 'get on' with his or her fellows, to give other people the desired impressions, and to participate in shared activities.[1] The coloured immigrant often has far more of the social skills than his consort and in the long run this is of more significance in keeping the marriage going than the initial help which the woman can offer in dealing with problems requiring technical skills.

The burden of marital adjustment tends to fall more heavily on the woman who has to make many concessions to her consort's tastes and customs, though she learns a great deal from him, how to cook 'foo-foo' and curry stew and a little of his language if an African, or how to cook rice and peas and some of the other traditional dishes of the Carribean. With an African consort one of the most important things for her to learn is the nature and extent of her obligations towards her consort's fellow countrymen; normally she is expected to show every consideration to them and to leave the making of any definite arrangements to be settled between the menfolk; she does not normally have the right to take the initiative in these matters unless her consort has told her to restrict hospitality to certain people. Sometimes a man will not allow his female consort or wife to let any men into the house if he is not present. The woman has to get used to sitting silent while her man and his fellows countrymen discuss matters in their own language and sometimes she puts up with a lot of harsh treatment. The man

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1. Cf. Elton Mayo, The Social Problems of an Industrial Civilization, 1945, p. 12ff.

does not have to adjust so much to his consort as to the general social situation and conventions of the new country; in very many cases the woman has no near relations with whom she is in close contact, if she has they tend to reduce her dependance upon her man while their expectations of him often give rise to friction. The following instance described in writing by an informant shows many of these difficulties:

> J. West African stowaway who got a good job in the Ministry of Food offices; he worked there for quite a long time, fell for one of the typists and started courting her - "must play straight with this girl, Missus, she comes from a good family; I want to marry her, English fashion" - they married and went to live in Westbourne Park, in a nice flat. They had a baby girl but the husband got fed up with 'English fashion' and used to come down here and sit in the cafes with his countrymen. He said the English were hypocrites and when I commented that he had done well enough for himself in England, he said his wife tried to play too big, that her family were against him. He said that in Africa the man is in charge but here the women rule the men. "What's that to do with your wife"? I asked. He said that when she is married a woman should not want to go out by herself. Her family are very nice, but he knows that they watch him to see if he does anything different. "What do you mean 'different'"? I asked. He said they were surprised that his behaviour was just like their's, as if he had never lived in a house before. "Because I held my house to be my own and thought my own colour had a right to be as free in it as my wife's friends were, they said it was not fair to my wife". I asked my wife if she was going to listen to me, her husband, or to her family. She told me that she could not change her ways as she was English and English women were different from African women.

African immigrants have more clearly defined ideas about what constitutes the woman's sphere; in African society this division works so as to give the women a great measure of equality, but torn out of context and applied in Britain it causes friction. An informant spoke of the very great indignation he felt against a fellow countryman to whom he had gone to ask to borrow some meat when this man suggested that

he ask his wife about it, and recollection of a similar incident caused another informant to reflect "I'm fed up with all this business of 'Missis say ...' I've lived in too many old-timer's houses in Liverpool not to know what it's like; these things should be man to man and woman to woman". The wife of the "old-timer" in the older settlements is frequently an interesting example of marital adjustment, for often she comes to acquire the respect of her husband's fellow countrymen and becomes a fairly powerful figure in domestic affairs.

The process of mutual adjustment between a coloured immigrant and an English wife is a complicated one which may become easier if the immigrant takes on English ways and tries to build up a circle of English friends, but tension may grow if the man pays little attention to his wife and she proves unable to settle down for a long period. Men accept a woman's previous children and show them no less affection than their own and children generally have a stabilizing effect upon the relationship. The marriage failure rate is high, but there are few of the sanctions and conventions which in Africa and in most parts of England support it as a social institution. Those people who object to mixed marriages and who base their objections upon the number of such marriages, which in areas like Stepney, break down, or lead to obvious unhappiness, are usually judging them by reference to a middle-class ideal of what a marriage should be. Frequently this approach leads them to a discussion of whether the break-downs are usually the fault of the man or the woman. In reality the middle-class ideal is far removed both from the girl, who

in all probability knows that she has little or no chance of making a match with any white husband likely to prove a better partner, and from the immigrant, who is well aware that his chances of getting anybody else are poor. In such a situation marriage must serve a different function. In any event middle-class conceptions of success and failure in marriage are often unreal, often based upon a higher estimation of outward appearances, and it is difficult to arrive at any criterion of failure except that of separation or divorce, which is patently unsatisfactory. All marriages of any kind are to some extent 'mixed' though the differences may be those of temperament, class, or background instead of skin colour. Differences may act as a stimulus and create a polarity in the relationship which suits some peoples' make-up. Much depends upon the individuals concerned, some have the character and strength of feeling to make a success of a marriage in which the differences are such as would have defeated another couple. It would be unwise to attribute to differences of colour or culture what would appear to most English people as the unhappiness of the majority of mixed marriages in Stepney. The key is to be found in the significance which is placed upon colour in the British social structure; it is not that other peoples' attitudes are an insuperable obstacle for the individual couple, but that the social system brings together the sort of coloured men and the sort of white women who, in the circumstances, are not likely to make successful matches.

The system of relationships between white woman and coloured men in Stepney is determined, in the aggregate, by the inferior position accorded to the coloured men. Were his status to be

raised and the immigrant to have wider scope in the choice of a wife, the relationships would approximate more closely to those prevailing in the corresponding income groups. In the individual case, however, the predominant factor determining how successful a relationship is likely to prove, is that of the personality and social position of the woman concerned. Personality and social position usually go hand in hand in this matter, for the lower middle or working class girl will almost certainly have the chance of marrying a white man and if she chooses to marry a coloured man, will do so from personal preference, whereas the girl who has fallen to the very bottom of the class structure until she no longer has a place in working class society, or any other kind of society, is almost invariably of a personality type such that she is unlikely to be able to maintain a harmonious relation-:ship with anyone. The immigrant's adjustment, in both the marital and social spheres, is influenced very greatly by the sort of woman - or women - with whom he strikes up a relationship; some whose only experience is of the 'utilities', are disgusted by them, others respond warmly to the friends ip of a girl whom they can respect.

The Household

Most of the immigrants came to Britain in the years 1946-50 and some did not settle in Stepney immediately so thereare not as yet very many families with a coloured father or many children of Negro descent in the schools. The quantitative data on which Chapter V is based is not sufficiently reliable in the inform-:ation it provides about marital status to permit any accurate

computation of the proportion of immigrants who are married, co-habiting, and single, but from personal observation it appears that these three groups are roughly equal in size. Proportionately more of the West Africans are married and more of the West Indians single. The category of persons co-habiting will include a number who have achieved a stable relationship which might be termed 'common law marriage' and a large number of men who have girls living with them for short periods.

Where a man is living on his own he is likely to cook for himself, occasionally to sit and listen to the radio or have a friend come to visit him and to spend much of the remaining time either working overtime, or out of the house with his friends; thus there is very little to be said about his household which will not be considered under separate topics. It is of interest, however, to quote the informal house rules of a twenty-three year old West African who rented a small house and, acting as landlord, sub-let two rooms to tenants, for they illustrate well, among other things, the way he guarded against the potentially disruptive influence of casual associations with local women. The rules were:

(i) Strictly business relationship between landlord and tenant even if they have previously been friends.

(ii) No smoking "Banga" (Indian hemp, more commonly referred to in Stepney as "ganjer").

(iii) All three (landlord and two tenants) must take it in turns to do the weekly scrubbing of the stairs and landing; if a man has no girl with him he must do it himself.

(iv) Tenants may bring in girls, but only one at a time and it is preferable that they should each have a permanent girl. No putting out a girl who has done nothing wrong, simply because they have seen a more

attractive one. (The landlord says that if this were to happen he would put the man out as well, and that this rule is necessary because some girls are unscrupulous and will chase after a man they like even though he already has a girl).

(v) No man living in the house shall bring in any girl whom one of the other men has already had in the house. (It is necessary, he says, for the men to preserve their solidarity and that such girls would tell tales about the other men and put them against each other).

Where an immigrant has a woman co-habiting with him he usually continues to take the principal part in managing the household: in the first place this is due to the instability of most of the girls who are liable to spend on themselves the money that is given them for the houseekeeping and are not able to budget in any systematic way; in the second place the West Africans continue to exercise a general supervision over their wives and consorts in many matters where the West Indians are more ready to let the woman manage the household affairs. Practically all the West Africans prefer to eat African dishes which they usually cook themselves; most of them are good cooks by English standards and do most of the household cooking. The most popular dishes are curried fish or meat with semolina or rice. The semolina, which resembles the West African cereal garri or grated cassada is served in stodgy balls as 'foo-foo'. The woman will always be expected to do the cleaning and the more menial tasks though some of the immigrants will execute these in scrupulous fashion if they are living by themselves.

Patterns of household earning and spending are, in the coloured quarter, extremely varied and uncertain: disposable income varies with the amount of overtime a man is able to work

and with the uncertain incidence of some socially obligatory payments which may take precedence over more normal varieties of expenditure: a loan to a fellow countryman or expenses which a man feels he is bound to incur in order to entertain friends will be met even if he has to go short of what he normally considers necessities. In the same way, a radiogram or suit may be put into pawn to ride him over an emergency. Expenditure is determined more by the amount of money left from the week's wages after the most immediate payments (rent, purchase of rationed goods) have been met and may vary very greatly. It is not possible to determine the subsistence minimum, but especially for a single man it is a very low one; no very rigid consumption habits have been formed and men who are accustomed to smoking large numbers of cigarettes will restrict their expenditure on this item drastically if it is absolutely necessary.[1] There is little saving in cash or in a Savings Bank but a fair amount by hire purchase of radiograms, furniture, etc.; payments for suits may be made by instalments and some immigrants get other people to keep their savings for them, most usually by having the firm deduct money from their wages and retain it for them. In many minor ways the immigrants take up the customs and practices of working class whites and the only ways in which, in this respect, their behaviour diverges from a purely class

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1. Doubtless influenced by Rowntree's important work on 'primary' and 'secondary' poverty in a fairly homogeneous area with developed consumption habits there has been a tendency for investigators to set too much store by specimen family budgets which recent investigations have corrected, e.g. F. Zweig, Labor, Life, and Poverty, 1948, pp. 8-14.

norm is in its variability during the first years of adjustment.

There are about eighty coloured juveniles between the ages of 5 and 16 in the western half of Stepney, of whom only a small minority are of Negro descent, the greater part having Pakistani forbears. Enquiries were made at 15 local schools regarding the ages of children of mixed descent. Information was obtained from 12 of them which may be recorded as follows:

Ages	Negro descent		Indo-Pakistani descent	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Five - Seven	4	5	8	10
Eight - Eleven	3	-	14	8
Twelve - Fifteen	-	3	7	7
	7	8	29	25

Some of these children are of very light skin pigmentation and as genealogies are often complicated few generalizations could be based upon figures of the juvenile population. Superficial observation suggests that the "hybrid vigour" or "heterosis" manifest in the greater size and weight of hybrid children, which Little found in Cardiff and Liverpool, is no less present in Stepney.[1] The proportion of children of Negro descent increases in the lower age categories and among infants, and it might well be higher were it not for the fact that many women may have borne illegitimate coloured babies and had them adopted by the local authority.[2]

Child training is in the hands of the mothers and varies greatly, for cases have been observed of children being partially

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1. K.L. Little, "Racial Mixture in Great Britain", Eugenics Review, Vol. 33 (1942).
2. The League of Coloured Peoples in 1940 published a report, Illegitimate Children born in Britain of English Mothers and Coloured Americans, and has since been active in the welfare of unwanted coloured children. No cases were known in Stepney during 1950-52 of children whose fathers were Negro Americans.

breast fed at eighteen months and others of being weaned by two months, such variations being due to individual and not social factors. On the whole the child training conforms to the local working class patterns in being permissive but liable to occasional violence. The men invariably take a great interest in the children, others as well as their own, and are inclined to be very indulgent towards them though they are generally said to be more conscientious parents than the women. Some of the children of Negro descent were born in the West Indies and have coloured women for mothers. The number of children with coloured fathers and English mothers is too small for any general characteristics to be apparent.

It is interesting to observe that when intelligence tests were administered to some Limehouse school children it was found that the Anglo-Chinese children scored better on most of the tests than the local born English children.[1] The investigator attributed this to the way in which consciousness of racial differences can stimulate children to extra effort in order to prove that they are in no way inferior; teachers were unanimously of the opinion that Anglo-Chinese children were extremely amenable to discipline. The Chinese immigrants being an accommodating group, it is probable that the children's home life would be more stable than is usually the case with the Negro immigrants. Though colour antipathy among children is very rare, unless induced, teachers of history and geography

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1. P.C. Hu,: "A Study of the Intelligence of Anglo-Chinese Children", Eugenics Review, Vol. 30 (1939)

often give their pupils a distorted impression of the lives of coloured peoples of other countries. The coloured people's society formed in Stepney adopted as one of its original aims a policy of calling such incidents to the attention of Head Teachers. A mother gave three examples of incidents in connection with her coloured son, Alan: once when she went to meet him from school some of his classmates came up to her and asked, "You people don't worship God, do you, Miss?" She asked how they got this idea and they said: "Teacher says you black people worship idols and eat people". Once the children had to copy from the blackboard "The Black Men in Australia are cannibals"; Alan wrote: "The Coloured man in Australia is a good man". He was told to re-write this and refused; then he was brought to the front of the class and told to read what was on the board but he still refused, whereupon another boy got up and said: "Please, sir, you should call them 'niggers' shouldn't you?" The strain was too much for Alan and reduced him to tears. On another occasion a teacher was relating his wartime exploits in Africa and spoke of some black soldiers who were afraid at the sound of the guns going off, threw down their rifles and had to be beaten to make them fight. Alan did not believe him; he put up his hand and told the teacher he was a liar, for which he got the cane. Such incidents are trivial to the onlooker but important to the child and his parents. Usually it is not until he leaves school that a child is made really conscious of his colour.

It is impossible to say how much children born of racially mixed marriages do suffer. In all probability they suffer less on account of the colour factor than on account of the disadvantages entailed by their position in the economic and social structure. The argument that a mixed marriage is inadvisable because it entails suffering for the children has some validity in the individual case but in the aggregate it is invalid for there are bound to be mixed marriages. It would be easier in the long run to change the climate of opinion than to prevent them.

Leisure-time activities in the whole district conform fairly closely to a weekly cycle: wages are paid on Thursday in some cases, but usually on Fridays, and the week's principal expend-:itures are made immediately afterwards. Much of what remains will be quickly spent and the public houses and cafes do a good trade over the week-end, for the population is increased by the proportionately large number of coloured men who come to Stepney from other districts. Single men may spend some of their time in gambling: - usually of an illegal nature: the most favoured forms are poker, which may be played in one of the Maltese cafes, or crap-shooting which, on summer evenings, attracts little knots of men in two of the alleys off Cable Street. Married men go in more for the legitimate forms of gambling: the football pools, horse and dog racing. Gambling plays an important part in the leisure activities of most immigrants - especially the West Africans - who derive pleasure and excitement from it. "A day I don't bet is a day wasted", says an African who can read and write very little but telephones his bookmaker frequently to

place small bets of one or two shillings; despite his lack of reading ability he can fill in the pools coupon or decipher the name of a winner in a very short time. Dog racing attracts a few enthusiasts from among the Africans and Pakistanis and most of them bet on a numbers system rather than attempting to study form. Relatively large sums of money may be lost and won by gameing among the younger men and it is possible that this serves to some extent as a mechanism of re-distribution, for as one observed: "When you haven't got much money you must play gamble".

Single men spend much of their leisure time visiting dance halls and amusement arcades in the centre of the city and though some of them frequent the public houses they drink relatively little compared with most of the local population. The pubs and the cafes are primarily social centres where the immigrants go to meet their friends and perhaps to find girls, and the publicans let coloured men come into the bar for a chat, a sit down, or to try to sell something when they are hard up, without pressing them to buy a drink.

Married couples sometimes visit the quieter public houses over the week-end but the most usual form of entertainment for couples, or for a man to entertain a girl whom he has "picked up", is the cinema. The films shown at the nearest cinema meet the taste of the immigrants well, featuring slapstick, romance (for the women), and Westerns. Some idea of the importance of the cinema in local entertainment may be obtained from the results of a survey carried out in an adjoining neighbourhood

where 305 out of 367 people named the cinema and the live stage as regular places of entertainment.[1] The analysis was as follows

	Cinema		Live Stage	
	Local	City	Local	City
Monthly or less	46	5	13	20
Fortnightly	6	3	2)	11
Weekly	131	21)	10)	
Twice a week	69)	4)		
More often	13)			

Married couples may continue to go dancing but the birth of children restricts them from going far away from home. Partly as a result of their isolation many of the women read many newspapers and magazines of the sensationalist and romantic variety; the men as a rule do not read so much, and then only newspapers, but as might be expected, there are great variations in this respect and some of the men display a wide and fairly detailed knowledge about the position of coloured people in different parts of the world, their objectives and difficulties.

Shared leisure time activity is of great significance in the mutual adjustment of couples, the more activities that are shared the more harmonious the relationship usually is. Women make the acquaintance of others who are married to, or living with, coloured men and, with the husband's contacts in addition, most families know a few other households which they will visit or from which they will receive visits. Callers are received with great hospitality and while Charles Booth described "the friendly glass of beer" as "the primordial cell of British social life", there can be little doubt that in working class areas its position has

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1. Barne, op. cit.

largely been usurped by the cup of tea. Among the immigrants this is a ritual offering that the caller cannot decline without giving offence.

The development of family ties and the consequences of this for social behaviour are of the foremost importance in the processes of adaptation and assimilation and they show more clearly than any other feature how the immigrants are absorbed into the class structure of English society. In very few important ways do the immigrants' households differ from the English ones around them and these differences decrease as the immigrants adjust themselves to the new conditions of life.[1] A father's obligations to his family grow in importance and loyalties based upon pre-migration ties must decline. Through the family the immigrant manifests his own desire for acceptance and respect-:ability by trying to ensure that his children are at least as well looked after as those of his neighbours. The husband - especially among the West Africans - is usually the more status conscious social climber and his aspirations influence the whole of the family life. Stable family relationships assist adjust-:ment, focussing the immigrant's aspirations and providing a steady incentive to adaptation.

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1. There is a paucity of information about the English working class family. A little is to be found in E. Slater, and M. Woodside: Patterns of Marriage, 1951.

CHAPTER VIII

SOCIAL TRANSITION

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Attitudes Towards Negroes

Mild colour antipathy exists as a social norm among many sections of the English population. Like anti-semitism, it is quite respectable in many circles which would object to its practice in a more extreme form. However, as far as the writer has been able to judge, few people have a fixed dis-:position towards prejudice; there are many who hold contrary opinions and the antipathy of most of the remainder is super-:ficial.

There is a general sympathy throughout Britain for those coloured people who are regarded as oppressed minorities in other countries. Both officially and unofficially the Negro G.I. received a friendly welcome during the Second World War.[1] But British people would side with Negro Americans against white Americans where they will not side with Negro British Colonials against white Britishers. An attitude frequently displayed is that which favours a return to the status quo ante: the answer to the "stowaway problem" is that "they should not be allowed to come" and in any awkward situation the best policy is "send them back home". Colour discrimination may be depre-:cated but open opposition to it is also viewed with disapproval. For instance, a coloured student who was refused service in a public house got his M.P. to go there with him: next day the following advice appeared in a newspaper published for the

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1. Walter White, A Rising Wind, 1945, pp.27 and passim.

licensing trade:

> "...a word to the student. If I, a white man, happened to be resident in Nigeria, I should avoid raising issues which would cause considerable embarrassment to my coloured fellow citizens of the British Empire, especially if the issue I raised was one which was calculated to arouse elements of bitter controversy". (1)

Such advice appears innocuous but it is by such attitudes that discriminatory practices are perpetuated.

The national assumption of responsibility for colonial peoples is conducive to patronage. Persons who have served in official capacity in the colonies are often unaware of the strength of the forces changing the colonial scene and sometimes have stereotyped ideas about coloured people derived perhaps from seeing them in the least favourable circumstances and without insight into the influence of factors of environment, culture, nutrition, etc.; these ideas they may consider valid for all persons of the same race in almost any circumstances. One employer who had served in both Africa and India pointed out to me that his Chief Clerk was biassed in his dealings with Negroes. This, and the reasons for it, he could recognize. Apparently he did not think the same was true in his own case, but he had much to say on these matters:

> "I can make a nigger do anything, it's easy once you know how. They work well provided you show an interest in them but once you stop holding their hand or shouting at them they stop, just like children, but where a child would go off and play they will probably go to sleep. It will take us thousands of years to get them where the white man is now. People talk about the American Negro boxers but you've got to remember they've had at least three generations of American culture and training, really these coloured races are weaker,.."

From the coloured men's point of view, he may not have been a

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1. The Morning Advertiser, 22.9.1950.

bad employer, nor would he necessarily have been bound to discriminate against them. Many of them would have found such a man easier to deal with than someone who was clumsily sympathetic.

Plain ignorance is responsible for some of the unfavourable attitudes towards Negroes and for inter-group friction. The immigrants in Stepney complain of the Englishman's ignorance about life in the colonies and are exasperated by questions about wild animals roaming round their homes, and about the 'jungle' - which is a particular cause of irritation. "I've never seen any 'jungle'" shouted one African, "We farm, yes, and every year we cut down the bush, but this jungle business...!" Many people are unaware that English is the only language known to or spoken by most West Indians, but it was a little surprising to find a note in some official documents concerning a Jamaican saying "Took English at school". The West Indian does not expect to find people of the "mother country" so ignorant about his homeland.

The use of expressions such as "nigger" and "sambo" gives great offence, though in very many cases this is not intended.[1] People in Stepney have said they thought these expressions equivalent to "Jock", "Paddy", "Taffy", etc. On the other hand, West Africans who have entered the country believing the word "nigger" to be playful rather than insulting and taking no very strong exception to it, have protested that it is the manner in which it is used in England which makes it give offence. Most

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1. The writer confesses that until just before he started this study he was unaware that the term "nigger" was considered so objectionable.

of the people in areas such as Stepney have learned of their reactions to these epithets and as a result they are less frequently used. Another expression widely used by coloured men as well as white, and which is undesirable, is 'half-caste'. It introduces an element of moral disapprobation, implying that the relationship between the person's parents was irregular. Nor as a term does it indicate the principal characteristics of its subject. In Stepney the principal sociological characteristics of such people are that they have been born and brought up in Britain as members of a group which obtains only partial social recognition, and that their skin colour is usually intermediate between that of the two groups. In appearance they are indistinguishable from many Jamaicans. If they are described as "United Kingdom-born coloured" persons this does at least bring out the most important facts about them.

The symbolic organization of observations in the mind introduces a variety of emotional associations with particular phenomena. The quality of blackness is associated in everyday speech with many undesirable characteristics.[1] Whiteness is associated with purity and uprightness - "playing the white man" - as was evident in the comment of someone who was saying that a number of coloured people used to travel on a bus he used and that they behaved in a very gentlemanly fashion: "they are all white people on that bus", he said. This association is significant and E.M. Forster makes his characters in the Chandrapore

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1. See Sir Alan Burns, Colour Prejudice, 1948, p. 114; Little, op. cit. (1948) pp. 230-1; G. Myrdal, An American Dilemma, pp. 697 and 1382.

Club react strongly when an unconventional member fails to play up to it.

> "The remark which did him most harm at the club was a silly aside to the effect that the so-called white races are really pinko-grey. He only said this to be cheery, he did not realize that 'white' has no more to do with a colour than 'God Save the King' with a god". (1)

In truth, 'pink' would be a more accurate denotation of the skin colour of English people and there is a moral as well as logical case for introducing it in school instruction and in organizations avowedly seeking to improve relations between different groups. 'Black' is no more accurate as a description of Negro skin colouring, but the terminology used in this sphere is determined less by the appearance of the person described then by the speaker's attitudes. The boundary between who is to be considered 'coloured' and who is not, is by no means clear.

The different skin colour of the Negro is so striking a characteristic to someone unused to inter-racial contacts that he tends to notice nothing else about a person save his skin. Whites say that all coloured men look alike. A Nigerian seaman said that when he was new to Britain he often failed to recognize girls whom he had arranged to meet in a dance hall and had to admit to them "You all look alike to me". This apparent similarity causes people on both sides to attribute certain characteristics to all members of the other group (though it is usually the unfavourable characteristics that are generalized), and it causes English people to over-estimate the numbers of coloured people they see. Many fail to make any distinction between Negroes and

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1. A Passage to India, 1924, p. 50 (Everyman edition).

coloured men of Indian or Pakistani descent; some labour under the impression that most coloured men speak the same language.

Minor officials frequently hold a more strongly stereotyped view of the coloured man than the man in the street: they have to deal more frequently with those immigrants who change their jobs in rapid succession and get into most difficulties; they tend to under-estimate the proportion of coloured men who never need come near their offices. This provokes the circular reasoning of one who asserted "they are happier living in dirty conditions in Golding Street because it is more akin to their nature". The proof that they are happier living there and that it is akin to their nature, is that two dozen or so do live in Golding Street.(1) The police officer who believes that the Cable Street area is a "den of iniquity" is at the same time giving the impression that he must be doing very well to keep order, and such a belief validates the rough treatment of people who are regarded as potentially dangerous. Coloured people in many parts of Britain allege that individual police officers are disposed to believe them guilty of offences from the outset and to handle them with unecessary roughness. Mary Trevelyan noted a case:

> "H., a senior student, doing medical research, has been had up by the police for 'soliciting' in Tottenham Court Road last night. There is not, we are convinced, a word of truth in the story, for he had arranged to meet a friend, but it was a dark night, and he is very short-sighted. His solicitor tells me privately that he thinks a conviction a certainty, knowing the magistrate's prejudice against coloured men". (1)

On learning that I was interested in the question of why colonial

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1. From the Ends of the Earth, 1942, p. 54.

migrants came to Britain, one unimportant official - whose opinion had not been asked - enquired "Don't you know? I can tell you that! They come here because they know they can live off white women without doing any work. Eighty per cent of these niggers are doing it". Others may take it upon themselves to make declarations of high-level governmental policy, as with the magistrate who told a group of newly arrived stowaways:

> "None of you is wanted over here but the unfortunate thing is that as British subjects we can't get rid of you". (1)

The part played by the press is often one which is likely to bolster up the stereotype of the likeable but childish Negro. The following extract from what was probably intended to be a sympathetic account of proceedings in an East End Magistrate's court is an example:

> "All this time Sam had been sighing heavily in the dock, his strong chest heaving under the stress of his husbandly emotions and the whites of his eyes calling on the dome of the court for aid. The Magistrate said to him: "Do you want to put any questions to the Constable?"
> Sam brushed these technicalities on one side. "Ah want to give a statement, sah" he crooned sadly.
> "No questions then?"
> "Ah want to give my speech, sah". (2)

An experiment recently carried out in a school near London throws considerable light upon popular attitudes towards coloured people. Fifty-seven children between the ages of 12 and 14 were twice interviewed - one at a time, informally, and without any set questions - about their attitudes towards strangers, Germans, Chinese, Africans, etc. These two classes were then put in the

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1. Mr. R.H. Blundell as reported in The East End News, 11.9.1951.
2. Evening News, 6.9.1951. The investigator was present during the hearing of this case. The defendant did not 'croon sadly'; he had not been told that he would have an opportunity to make a statement later and consequently tried to do this instead of putting questions to the witness. When this was disallowed he became excited and angry. The journalist's altered account does not place the coloured man in a more favourable light.

charge of two African women teachers for a fortnight and twice afterwards the children were interviewed again. In the subsequent interviews there was an almost complete disappearance of earlier remarks indicating dislike and fear of Negroes, their colour, or their being wild, savage, fierce and uncivilized. In summing up the difference between the first and second sets of interviews the writers throw into relief the earlier mild antipathy of the children towards coloured people.

> "There is the significant admission by 54 out of 57 pupils that they now thought Negroes to be better, i.e., nicer, more likeable, more civilised, better educated and more like themselves than they had expected them to be; in detail, forty-one found them nicer, twenty-seven less savage and fierce, and forty-six more civilised than they had expected. It is not surprising that fifty-two now declared that Negroes are as good as us, or, as they often put it, as good as us except for their colour... There is also a marked improvement in attitudes towards colour..." (1)

The mildly antipathetic attitudes at the beginning of the experiment were towards peoples of whom the children had little or no experience other than the characterizations of the cinema screen; personal experience of a favourable nature changed their attitudes markedly. Among themselves children show no colour prejudice.[2]

Adults are prone to regard Negroes as childish but the behaviour which is cited to justify this description can usually be explained circumstantially. By categorizing Negroes as childish, people put themselves into a parental role and tend to perpetuate the dependence-superiority relationship. The coloured immigrant knows this attitude well and often exploits it, deliberately appearing childish in order better to obtain what

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1. James and Tenen, op. cit., p. 40.
2. A recent investigation, though not conclusive, offers supporting evidence: L. Silberman and B. Spice, Colour and Class in Six Liverpool Schools, 1950.

he wants.

Many English people are sympathetic towards coloured people but never have any occasion to meet them, and do not know how they could do so without giving the impression that they are being friendly just because the other person is coloured. Many have definite ideas about the kind of behaviour towards coloured people which is appropriate to different situations: a coloured man might be invited to tea but not allowed to go out with any daughters of marriageable age. To the whites this seems reasonable; to the coloured man it is often a source of bewilderment and anger.

Popular attitudes towards coloured people in Stepney show the same influences as those sketched above of the wider public, but they are more tolerant, especially in view of the undoubted provocation given by one section of the immigrants. The local newspapers for the post-war years contain very many accounts of coloured men convicted for drug trafficking, assault, disturbances of the peace, etc., which in other districts might have led to open antagonism. Coloured people probably benefit from the presence of so many other immigrants who are less likely to attack people in a position similar to their own. Religious differences may add to this for the Jew expects a higher standard of behaviour from the Jew than from the "goy", and other people are not greatly concerned about what the coloured people do amongst themselves. Coloured people are not such a strange sight in Stepney, and, speaking of a coloured husband and coloured wife both of whom had been born and lived all their lives there, someone even protested "Oh, but you can't call

them coloured. Don't forget that they went to school with the people of the district and they've all grown up together". Probably there are few who would make such a distinction as this but it is interesting that one person at least thinks of colour primarily in terms of strangeness to the neighbourhood. Much of the relative tolerance must be due to the greater experience the different racial groups there have of dealing with one another. The local people, coming into daily contact with the immigrants find that the majority are not to be identified with the activities of the trouble-makers, and many are conscious of a certain solidarity, holding the immigrants to be "working class people like ourselves". Landlords are reluctant to take coloured people as tenants, or landlords to take them as lodgers, but there is an excess of demand for housing and white people can be expected to apply. The preference for whites is not necessarily dictated by the personal element for there is a greater probability of a landlord having trouble with a coloured tenant. Some of the older residents blame the coloured men for Stepney's position at the bottom of the scale of neighbourhood respectability, but this is partly due to the popular imagination which <u>wants</u> to think that some areas are terribly vicious and casts Stepney in the role of the villain.

Whether more or less colour antipathy is shown by working class people than by those of other classes cannot easily be decided. People towards the upper end of the social scale, benefitting from better facilities for education and travel, and following less restricted occupations, tend to be the more

cosmopolitan. Probably they show less antipathy on grounds of colour, perhaps more on account of the identification of the Negro immigrants with what are thought of as the lowest classes. Many people have observed open colour antipathy among the working classes and conclude that it is greater there.[1] In the writer's personal opinion they more readily show such sentiments but probably are also more ready to discard them. Were they better acquainted with the lives and countries of other peoples they might prove more sympathetic than peoples of other classes, but comparisons of this kind must be based on so many assumptions as to be valueless.

The Immigrants' Reactions

Whether such beliefs were justified in the first place or not, it cannot be denied that the immigrant is profoundly influenced by his disappointment that England is not all what he expected it to be. This discovery is one that he makes in his first few hours. One African who came as a fare-paying passenger had just come off his ship and was travelling on the underground; he had placed some of his luggage on the seat next to him and did not notice that the coach filled up until there were no vacant seats. A woman came up and tried to indicate, first by sign language, then in "pidgin English" that she wanted to sit on the seat where he had put his parcel. The immigrant was mystified by her gesticulations and asked her what she wanted. Her surprise that he spoke English was no greater than his

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1. Cf. A.B.C. Merriman-Labor, Britons through Negro Spectacles, n.d. circa 1905. p. 175.

astonishment that English people should expect the contrary. In the first few weeks there are further disappointments, the difficulty of getting housing accommodation, of getting any job except as a labourer, the extremely high cost of living, occasional signs of hostility from white people, etc. Perhaps the immigrant will fall in with other coloured men who will assure him that the country is "no good", that coloured men can't get anywhere because of prejudice and that the only course is to fight back and take any opportunity of getting round the law. This was particularly the case during the war years and immediately afterwards when the opportunities for black market deals in goods from the docks and various forms of minor offences were considerably greater.

Colour antipathy is important not only as a characteristic of the patterns of thought of the majority group. It has a considerable and important effect upon the whole lives of the people against whom it is exercised and sets up a complicated series of reactions, defences and compensations. The most striking thing about the colour bar in Britain with regard to inter-group relations is its uncertainty. Some individuals are friendly, some are not, and when a coloured man goes to see an official he never knows quite what sort of reception he will receive. This leads many immigrants to claim that the colour bar is worse in Britain than in the United States; they say that there the discrimination is open and honest, the whites tell you what their policy is and you know what course to take, but in Britain the whites are hypocritical because they will not tell you to your face and "prejudice is deep in their hearts."

Moreover, the existence in the United States of two almost separate social worlds, white and coloured, means that the coloured man has a better opportunity of improving his position. To a non-coloured observer these opinions seem a little ex-:aggerated for in a society where there is no overt discrimination coloured men can often turn their different appearance to profit-:able account; but it is easier to understand this point of view when one remembers that the uncertainty of discrimination makes unpleasant incidents seem all the worse. A position of subordin-:ation provokes less anxiety than one of uncertain treatment. The effect of such incidents has been vividly described by Mr. Learie Constantine, a West Indian, who said in a broadcast:

> "These daily humiliations hurt, you know, and make you bitter if you aren't careful ... Not long ago I was dancing after work one evening at a hostel. Someone - he was not English, though he was in uniform - someone came up to me and said 'Get out. You're not allowed in here.' I didn't get out - but after an incident like that I go home and I can't eat or sleep; you wake up in the middle of the night and it's there. I remembered that particular incident for about three nights. I used to wake up in the middle of the night and see it there in front of me. That did hurt." (1)

A factor which among the less educated immigrants causes small incidents to take on greater importance is that the immigrants coming as they do from a smaller scale and simpler society tend to personalize the issues and allow insufficient importance to the purely accidental way in which things can happen in a bureaucratic society. They tend to ask "Why are Englishmen prejudiced?", assuming that they are and that other peoples are

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1. Home Service, 3.9.1943.

not, and to seek an explanation in the English character. A West Indian complained that at the school his two little daughters attended, the pupils had shown a film depicting primitive living conditions in Africa; the teacher had not explained that living conditions in Africa vary greatly and that the scenes shown in the film could not be taken as typifying the life of all coloured peoples. After school the other children asked his daughters "Do you wear clothes where you come from? Do you sleep in a tree?" and this caused pain to the girls. Their father asked "Why do they do it? Why don't they teach them better?" He thought it could only be deliberate and did not allow for ignorance or thoughtlessness on the part of the teacher. The colonials have learned a very great deal about Britain before migration and are astonished that British people know so little about the colonies. Having started with a rather grandiose conception of Britain, many presume that whatever happens is in accordance with an overall and deliberate policy which is planned and systematically carried out by "the Government." The Colonial Office, as the principal agent of this policy is hated accordingly.

The Englishman tends to build up a stereotyped conception of the coloured man, believing that all or most of them are of a particular type and treating them accordingly; the immigrant develops a corresponding stereotype of the Englishman and tends to explain everything in terms of this belief. The writer was working in the local offices of a public department when there was a knock at the door and after a minute or two a coloured man stepped in and stood by the door waiting. Then one of the

officials noticed him and told him this was a private room and he was not allowed in there. The coloured man said he had come because he wanted to appeal against a decision on an application he had made in the interviewing room next door. He was told "You are not allowed in here; please go". And when he persisted, "If you don't get out I'll call the police and have you put out". The coloured man then went away; presumably he left the building still unaware of how he could lodge an appeal. This official held the view that it is necessary to deal very firmly with coloured immigrants because they are argument-:ative; some coloured men he had to deal with previously had been troublesome and so he expected the worst. In this way he and others create the truculent attitude in immigrants and cause them to develop a counter-stereotype of the official as someone who does not want to help coloured men if he can avoid doing so. The immigrant's counter-stereotype of the British official, and particularly the government official, is often reinforced by ignorance and by incorrect information received from others.[1] An immigrant who knows how to get round the Englishman's stereo-:type when it comes to getting a job may behave less sagaciously in other circumstances; by standing on his dignity and taking up a confident manner he irritates the policeman or the official who thinks that he is getting "fresh". Once such a system of conflicting stereotypes has been set in motion it is very

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1. Many immigrants believe that any money they may receive from the National Assistance Board comes from Colonial government funds, a confusion probably arising from the war-time practice by which certain extra allowances could be paid to colonials through the Colonial Office.

difficult for a single individual - on either side - to break through the barriers of suspicion.

The attitude common among some British people of denying full social equality to the Negro but being very friendly, if patronizing, towards him if he keeps his distance, is one which works to the advantage of the coloured man in some respects. Africans in Stepney sometimes refer to themselves, jokingly, as "poor darkie" and they know well how to arouse sympathy for themselves from many Englishmen, whether tolerant or prejudiced. It is not unusual today to see a film advertised as 'primitive' in depicting human passions, and some Africans exploit the popular association between their skin colour and primitiveness. One of the more intelligent immigrants in Stepney who had sized up the Englishwoman's idea of the Negro very accurately, used to play up to it deliberately when trying to strike up a relationship. He would speak in slightly broken English, displaying the whites of his eyes, talking with feeling of the "blues" and the American cotton plantations and expressing affection in a more open and flattering way than Englishmen might be expected to. Not all are able to do this, however, and a coloured professional man who has been in an excellent position to observe the behaviour of recent immigrants once said that he had come to the conclusion that the more sophisticated West Indian's inclination to show off and to stand on his dignity did not stand him in nearly such good stead as the more subtle tactics of Africans who might be illiterate and far less skilled. A Negro boot black on a street corner does better trade than his white counterpart and he gets bigger tips

from people who are sorry for the "poor darkie". Coloured doctors in general practice are very popular in working class areas, partly perhaps because of vague magical beliefs among the population, partly because they are often more cheerful and sympathetic, and partly perhaps the very fact of being different attracts attention. Other coloured men - though the number is not large - have exploited this by living as quack doctors, peddlers of patent medicine, etc., and where an easy going coloured man is on his own amongst a group of whites he very frequently becomes outstandingly popular. A coloured colonial is, of course, always assured of a sympathetic welcome from left-wing politicians and intellectuals.

The influence of English colour values must not be over-estimated as a factor bearing upon the immigrants' adjustment and behaviour. They have to adjust to many things that are new to them, climatic change may influence one man's ability to work, dietary change might have an effect upon another, but the most important of them is the change in the pattern of social life. The immigrants come not only to a strange country but to a society where the individual stands in somewhat different relationship to his fellows, has different obligations to them and different rights in return. An English city is organized on different principles from tropical towns or villages, with their more personal, smaller scale society. In the village if an individual feels that he is no longer part of society this is bound to have a demoralizing effect upon him personally and his sense of obligation towards other people will be weakened - a state of

affairs which comes about far more readily in city living and which is the cause of a great deal of crime and friction in social life. Describing the effect of city life upon the individual Simmel says: "On the one hand life is made infinitely easy for the personality in that stimulations .. are offered from all sides. On the other hand, however, life is composed more and more of these impersonal contents and offerings which tend to displace the genuine personal colourations and incomparabilities. This results in the individual's summoning the utmost in uniqueness and particularization in order to preserve his most personal core. He has to exaggerate this personal element in order to remain audible even to himself."[1] The impersonality of the city will strongly affect immigrant groups accustomed to a less anonymous life. In their study of the disintegration of the Polish immigrant group in the Chicago environment Thomas and Znaniecki write: "The prevalent general social unrest and demoralization is due to the decay of the primary group organization which gave the individual a sense of responsibility and security because he belonged to something." [2] When a group of West Africans in Stepney try to get all the men from their tribe to co-operate and to maintain a benefit fund for the support of any member in difficulties they are in part reacting against the atomization of city life as well as against pressure from other groups.

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1. K.H. Wolff (ed), The Sociology of Georg Simmel, 1943, p. 422.
2. W.I. Thomas and F. Znaniecki: The Polish Peasant in Europe and America, 1929, Vol. II p. 1826.

Wirth has pointed out that the orientation to utility and money value characteristic of the city involves the progressive dissociation of spheres of work and leisure, riches and poverty; principles of behaviour between friends differ from those between persons in a business relationship.[1] African immigrants in London seem very quickly to have realised the money value which can be set upon most objects or actions and the following incident indicates the length to which it can be carried: A West African seaman from another port enquired after one of his friends from another West African standing outside the Colonial Seamen's Hostel in Stepney, (this was during the war).

> "Do you know Asafu-Adeogun? Could you tall me how I could get in touch with him?"
>
> "Sure, I know Asafu-Adeogun. He lives over in Westbourne Park. Do you know this town?"
>
> "No. I'm just down from Liverpool."
>
> "I can't take you round straight away; we don't do things like that in this town. He would be very angry with me if we called unexpectedly. He's got a girl living with him and you can't do things like that; we shall have to write or send him a telegram. It will cost you some money."
>
> "How much?"
>
> "Ten shillings and a packet of American Ships' fags."
>
> "What! And you a coloured man like me?"
>
> "Man, you don't realize, things cost money here in this town; why I wouldn't even take a man over to the bus stop for nothing. You ask these others ..."

Many immigrants are very conscious of the money value of goods and services and will leave a job if they think they can get

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1. L. Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life", American Journal of Sociology, Vol. XLVI, (1938).

higher wages elsewhere without always calculating what the attendant disadvantages may be. However in other respects some immigrants set aside certain spheres of friendship obligation, etc. as overriding any consideration of money value. Stepney is not a district typical of the rather artificial construction of 'urbanism': people share many services in common and live close together in social as well as spatial terms; many of them have been used to a more communal life than is found in suburbia and the frequency of interaction between them is much greater. Nevertheless life there is far more urban than that to which most of the immigrants have been accustomed. City living is dependent upon certain skills which are the product of training, such as the ability to read and write and some immigrants do not possess all these skills fully. More important is the unconscious training which from childhood accustoms people to urban conventions and enables them to get the most out of the situation; this the immigrant has missed, and it takes him time to adjust to the new circumstances.

The frustration experienced by the immigrant on account of his disadvantaged position for employment, housing and association with women, and the occasional incidents which he interprets as prejudice directed against him, tend to build up a situation of stress. The effect of this must be understood and borne in mind in any consideration of the immigrant's reactions and behaviour. One matter which has attracted popular attention and has done much to give the impression that the coloured immigrants are not desirable residents has been the connection of some of them with

the trafficking of narcotics. A Government report to the United Nations states that illicit traffic in Indian hemp in the years up to 1950 has increased considerably and adds "Whereas the traffic in opium is still almost entirely confined to the seaports, the traffic in hemp has spread to all parts of the country where there is a large coloured population."[1] This traffic received great publicity from a trial at the Old Bailey as a result of which a West African was convicted for supplying some of this drug to two adolescent girls.[2] As far as Stepney is concerned the drug scare has been greatly overworked. According to the statements of a number of men who have taken hemp either on a few occasions or who take it regularly, its effects vary from individual to individual; when under the influence of the drug some men feel quietly serene and prefer to keep to themselves, others find it sexually stimulating. Some immigrants have been used to hemp before migration, others are introduced to it after arrival in the United Kingdom, when it more frequently has a harmful effect. It is said that the circumstances in which many of the immigrants find themselves encourage addiction. One factor which has not been considered previously at any length and is relevant to the drug question is that of social isolation: the immigrant has few opportunities for building up any circle of friends and friendship is very important to anyone in his

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1. The Times, 27.10.1951.
2. For a newspaper report see Daily Telegraph, 23.11.1951.

position. When I invited one West Indian to my flat he responded spontaneously, "Well, that's the first time a white man's invited me to his home all the time I've been in this country." The significant thing is not that he should have thought this but that he should have felt so strongly that he made this remark outright and immediately. This sort of isolation - the more acute because the migrants have mostly been used to living as members of large kin groups - is accentuated by the extent to which coloured people are stared at. The stares may not be hostile, they may be inspired only by curiosity, but the cumulative effect of having everyone look at him every time he steps into an underground train or onto a bus is felt severe-:ly by some immigrants. Some are very nervous in making an approach to a woman and need something to give them 'courage' and in such cases the drug is not taken for its aphrodisiac value. Nervousness and consciousness of being stared at makes some coloured people very sensitive and sometimes leads them to see hostility in the manner of a person who is quite friendly. Some immigrants find that the stimulus provided by Indian Hemp is a welcome comfort and defence against a hostile environment,

Though its use does lead to crime and it is sometimes administered to persons unused to it this is not generally the case in Stepney; the drug is taken as a stimulant in just the same way as others indulge in alcohol and tobacco and in the vast majority of cases has an effect no more harmful than alcohol. Small scale consumption is not so important as the

trafficking of the drug and in this respect it would appear that the few Negroes affected are only responsible for disposing of very small quantities and there is nothing to suggest that persons responsible for bulk importation (if this does in fact occur) are Africans or West Indians.

Religion and politics are two forms of activity which are very frequently used as emotional outlets in situations of stress. The pattern of exotic and emotional Negro cults which occurs in the United States has not been repeated in Britain in any way at all and the history of the League of Coloured Peoples (a national organization which started with a strongly religious colouring) suggests a gradual transition to the use of politics for emotional outlet. Those immigrants in Stepney who display an interest in politics are, if Africans, invariably nationalists, upholders of an African mystique and enthusiastic for total independence from Britain. West Indians also wish for independence though their nationalism is never as strong as the West Africans'. Among the Somalis and other groups, politics take on an Islamic hue.

Discrimination and prejudice, whether real or imagined, are bound to have an effect upon the persons against whom they are directed, sometimes in a complex of defence mechanisms which may conveniently be called 'counter-prejudice', sometimes both may be present together. Counter-prejudice is only rarely of a rabid nature, it runs the same gamut of degrees of antipathy as occurs in the antipathy of the dominant group, and it also may only be evoked occasionally, or only in certain situations.

This has not passed unnoticed and might one day be used as an argument to justify those very antipathies on the part of the whites which created it. A Negro author from South Africa, Mr. Peter Abrahams spoke of this in a vivid and pointed broadcast talk. He said

> "In the struggle to be free, many Negroes have arrived at a position where they would counter the white bigot's race-hatred with a race-hatred against whites; many who have been humiliated because of their colour, joy openly at the humiliation of a white person <u>because</u> he is white ... Large numbers of Negroes today counterpose a black humanity against a white humanity." (1)

This, he said, leads Negroes to "reach out for prejudice even when it is not there", to be double-faced in their dealings with non-Negroes and to build up a colour bar of their own.

In Stepney this counter-prejudice sometimes occurs in the extreme form of the belief that a hatred of coloured men is inherent in whites and perhaps that there is an inherent hatred on the part of the coloured men, but this is very rare and defensive beliefs are almost always of a nationalistic and not a racialist nature. Colonials sympathise with any nation who find themselves in opposition to the British. "The British are the Negro's Number One Enemy" said one who proceeded to defend Hitler as one of the greatest men who had ever lived. The source of all evil in the world is to be found in the racial character of the British. When a man believed to be Maltese, who had been continually named in Sunday newspapers as the leader of a vice-ring, was finally convicted he was regarded as a hero by some Negroes for having outwitted the

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1. <u>The Listener</u>, 21.2.1952.

British for such a long time. Many Africans believe in a future day when Africa will rule the world and recent developments have transformed their nationalism into a very positive sentiment for their homeland; many will argue that an African child learns more quickly than a European child and the successes of coloured people in different spheres - sport, scholarship, politics, etc. - are matters of great interest, and sometimes used as arguments to show the superiority of the Negro.[1]

The Englishman's stereotype of the Negro is countered with the coloured man's stereotype of the Englishman. The African or West Indian in Stepney frequently displays extreme suspicion of any action of an Englishman's and attributes duplicity to apparently disinterested behaviour with all the more vehemence if he cannot provide a plausible explanation of his suspicion. This is found much more among the less stable immigrants, the cafe society of men without any home-life, among them 'colour bar' becomes a panacea explaining all their failures. Delusional explanation of this sort, where a man will go to great lengths rather than ever concede a good motive to the person against whom he is prejudiced, who when confronted with

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1. The cultural aspect of this elevation of "black" values as opposed to "white" values has been expressed by Jean-Paul Sartre in Hegelian terms: "La Négritude apparaît comme le temps faible d'une progression dialectique: l'affirmation theoretique et pratique de la suprematie du blanc est la thèse; la position de la Negritude comme valeur antithetique est le momment de la negativité. Mais ce momment négatif n'a pas de suffisance par lui-meme et les noirs qui en usent le savent fort bien; ils savent qu'il vise à preparer la synthèse ou réalisation de l'humain dans une societe sans races". In "Orphée Noir" (p. xli), preface to: Sédar-Senghor, L: Anthologie de la Nouvelle Poésie Nègre et Malgache, 1948 (Presses Universitaires de France).

an action contradictory to his belief is convinced that the person concerned must have been 'bought off', is identical with that of the rabid anti-Semite. More usually, however, the immigrant develops mild stereotypes of the employer and the official which can be modified with greater experience. A common view is that the coloured man never gets his deserts if he does not throw his weight around and threatens to make trouble unless he gets what is due to him; this usually makes matters worse but the belief is too firmly held to be readily abandoned.

The presence of so large a Jewish population in the neighbourhood has undoubtedly influenced the growth of the coloured quarter in that much of the housing property is owned by Jewish landlords, who, according to the coloured people, are more ready to rent them accommodation than are Gentiles. The fact that coloured immigrant settlement has been primarily in Jewish areas and the evidence of greater sympathy shown to coloured workmen by Jewish employers are better indications of relations between the two groups than informants' expressions of opinion, which vary greatly. Some Negro immigrants allege that Jews take advantage of them to drive very hard bargains and express disapproval of them in terms suggesting that they have been influenced by the opinions of workmates or have sensed the fairly general if mild disapproval of Jews by the British. The majority of the immigrants speak well of the Jews and quote examples of cases when they have gone to great lengths to help coloured people. Some Jews have been critical

of the recent immigrants but there is usually some sympathy between minorities though the distinction between Jew and Gentile is, for the Jew, more important than differences among Gentiles. In the streets of the coloured quarter, Jewish and Negro residents mix together more than Negroes and Gentiles.

Personal Adjustment

The immigrant cannot adjust to the various new influences - new environment, city living, colour antipathy, etc. - separately. They make up a total situation and he must adjust in such a way as to achieve a personal balance both within himself and between himself and his surroundings. There is very considerable uncertainty about the status of the Negro resident in Britain, nobody seems to know quite how to place him, "The Negro thousands in the United Kingdom", says Landes, "are not assisted into an established relationship within British home society. They belong vaguely, if beautifully, to the Crown: never, unhappily, to the country."[1] If the immigrant has a clear conception of a role he can fill and can plan his future with some degree of certainty it will be less difficult for him to adjust to living in the new society. If he cannot find such a role and comes to believe that there is no place for him in the country, matters will be more difficult.

The immigrant's experience in the country from which he comes will influence his post-migration behaviour in many ways. This is particularly noticeable with the African; used to living in a much less mechanical society he tries to personalize his life in a British city and his relationships

1. The Manchester Guardian, 7.6.1952.

with the people with whom he has to deal. Hostels are disliked because of their impersonal nature and most immigrants prefer to live near to "their people". Many things are explained as the result of purely personal intentions or characteristics when this is scarcely appropriate. For example, an African described Dakar as a fine city and said that this was because the tribes in the vicinity were very warlike and the French had thought it advisable to placate them. Mis-:understandings of impersonal operations may lead to trouble, as in the case of an African who was working for a firm which paid half wages to employees who were sick. This African was ill and after recovering decided that he did not want to return to his old firm and when told that he was not, therefore, entitled to the half pay for the previous period he concluded that the Works Manager was taking the money for himself, and tried to attack him. The African probably failed to realize that his wages remained figures in books; he thought the money had been created and if it was not given to him someone else must have taken it. Similarly an immigrant sometimes knows the result of certain actions without understanding the under-:lying processes and reasons, reminiscent of Frazerian theory about magic in primitive societies. Though he appreciates the value of money in some spheres, the African does not adopt the fetish attitude towards it or towards time (evinced in ultra-punctuality and the "time is money" outlook) which is found in developed capitalist societies. Commenting on the large sums risked in gambling (which is fairly prevalent among Negro immigrants) Little writes: "It has to be remembered that

the cultural attitude in the West towards money has about it something almost sacred. Consequently to the ordinary Western observer there is a strong element of sacrilege in the treat-:ment of large sums of money without appropriate care and respect."[1] For the African immigrant neither money nor its use are invested with this moral significance.

Beliefs in magical practices play no part in the social life of the Negro immigrants in Stepney though coloured seamen from the East may be susceptible to threats of a curse having been put on them. West Indians say that there are many spirits in their land and most of the Africans believe that 'juju' works, or sometimes works, in Africa, though they doubt if such powers would ever be effective in Britain. A number of myths and semi-mythical beliefs have been told to the investigator, but they have mostly been of little anthropological interest. A Nigerian explained the relative backwardness of his tribe as follows:

> "When Queen Victoria come round Africa all the peoples ran away as she come, except the Ijaw who weren't afraid but come up and felt her skin and said 'Ooh, white skin! Can't be strong! So Queen Victoria said 'Don't teach this people anything or they get civilization too quick.' That's why they got no schools in Ijaw right up to the time I come away - or so they tell me."

The variations in the adjustment effected by different immigrants are extremely interesting but as different and apparently contradictory elements are found in the same individual, there can be no 'types' but only 'characteristics' of adjustment. These fall into two categories: firstly, behaviour implying the acceptance of the standards set by the

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1. Op. cit. (1948) p. 142

dominant group and the attempt to gain prestige and self-esteem in socially approved ways. Secondly, the rejection of the values of the dominant group and the assertion of the individual's own personality, often without reference to any coherent set of values, but simply as a personal reaction. The more an immigrant's behaviour falls in the conforming category the more is an Englishman likely to call him "well-adjusted" but his own values obtrude in such a judgment and the behaviour of which he approves might appear most unnatural to West Africans.

One of the more readily apparent forms of conforming adjustment is the stress on formality. Feeling that they are treated with scant respect by the whites, many immigrants behave towards one another in a very formal way, observing every nicety of behaviour so that it flatters both recipient and performer, and they never question the whims or wishes of a friend. Fairly intimate friends refer to one another as "Mr". In some situations there is an avoidance of any criticism or any question which might cause shame; the bonds of friendship are sometimes very tenuous and to ask someone why he failed to attend a meeting at which he was expected may make him angry unless tact is used. One African excusing his failure to write to a fellow countryman who used to be a great friend of his and who lived in another part of the country, to tell this friend that he had got married, said "You see, marriage in this country is so unreliable ..... maybe next time I see him I should have to say 'my wife has left me'." One of the commonest means of gaining prestige

among fellow immigrants is through ostentation, conspicuous expenditure and boasting: this does not occur between friends who know one another's position. Some working class immigrants believe that their difficulties are due more to factors of social class and lack of skill than to colour, but nevertheless an immigrant's adjustment must enable him to come to terms with his colour for it can never be completely forgotten. Fighting against the symbolic association of dark skin colour with dirt, some coloured men will not accept employment which involves their getting very dirty, and it has been said that a coloured man coming home in his working clothes will not always be acknowledged by an acquaintance who is dressed up smartly. These statements, however, require some qualification in view of the habits of cleanliness to which African children are educated. Moreover, the immigrants take a greater pleasure in attractive and brightly coloured clothes than most Englishmen, and greatly enjoy wearing them. A few of those in Stepney of a conforming nature prefer more conventional black suits and striped trousers, perhaps with a rolled umbrella. The best explanation of the importance of fine clothes was given by a man who shows very little sign of colour-consciousness but who could say "Our colour has already disfigured us, so we must have clothes which look smart"; he went on to point out that if a coloured child is maltreated or wheeled about in a shabby pram, people will talk about it, though if it was a white child it would not be noticed. In the effort to "remain audible to themselves" a few immigrants develop attitudes of dependence, but no-one corresponding to

the American type of the "white man's nigger" is to be found in Stepney. There are relatively few cases of strain producing the personal idiosyncrasies which Simmel suggests as a normal reaction to the conditions of city living, but one rather older immigrant has his small room filled with cheap bric-a-brac, brushes, boxes, tea-sets, six mirrors and no less than thirty-three small pictures or framed photographs; but perhaps such a collection might be found in many quite different neighbourhoods of London.

Adjustment characteristics implying rejection of the English conventional values are most noticeable in the extremist behaviour of some immigrants who go out of their way to cause offence. Some, in a work's canteen, or suchlike, will not sit at the table in the usual way but sit on the backs of the benches with their feet on the seat, and eat with their hats on.[1] This point was discussed with one informant who explained it as a form of defiance of the whites and said that if other men go to remonstrate with them, the immigrants are abusive and court a fight. Abuse and truculence are common, supported as they often are by the belief that the coloured man must throw his weight around if he is to get his due. British prosperity is sometimes thought to be founded on "gold from Africa" and the immigrant who can extract money from the British is recovering some of the wealth which Britain has stolen from Africa. Less conspicuous forms of assertion cannot so readily be distinguished

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1. The posture is similar to that of a person sitting on a low seat and eating from the floor to which some of the Africans will formerly have been accustomed.

because they may take on an idiosyncratic appearance or they may be found in situations where there is also a rational ground for assertion; for instance, many immigrants maintain a strong control over their wives or consorts, - this may contain elements of self-assertion but as so many of the women are from their point of view unreliable and apt to run away, such control would seem natural. Nevertheless assertion and personal aggressiveness seem to be characteristic of many relationships with and between coloured immigrants and this is reflected in the individualism of their society.

Personal adjustment improves greatly with time; after an initial period of growing dissatisfaction most immigrants gradually become more certain of themselves and of the sort of behaviour which is likely to be shown to them in different situations.[1] Immigrants who have been behaving violently with one man immediately become much more moderate if a colleague of his appears whom they know and trust. In the early stages of a friendship with an English person, immigrants may adopt a rather aggressive demeanour which declines noticeably afterwards. It is not that immigrants become assured of the good intentions of the natives with the passage of time - sometimes the process is in the other direction - but they gain confidence. It is easier for an investigator to approach a coloured man who has been long in Britain for though he may be more critical of the British than one who came a year or two before, he can more easily size up a questioner and will speak with more confidence. One old African said "We meet a man and we see his hand

1. Mr. L.N. Constantine, from his intimate experience of the position of coloured people in Britain, finds that it takes up to three years for an immigrant to achieve a stable adjustment and by that time it is fairly clear how he is going to develop.

and his teeth but we cannot tell if he greets us in his heart" and he went on to say how he tested Europeans, not by the words they used, but by the simplicity and directness of their behaviour. Purely intellectual capacity for learning facilitates adjustment, and over a period of time the immigrant obtains a better understanding of the structure of native society. One may note in passing the testimony of a young West African who said that when he was "J.J.C." (a colloquial abbreviation for the expression "Johnny Just Come") he used always to give up his seat in the underground if a woman was standing up; after a while he noticed that English people never did, so he stopped doing so.

At the beginning of the investigation some attention was paid to the apparently high rate of mental disorder - especially Schizophrenia - among coloured immigrants It seemed probably that the environment of the immigrants would bring out any latent disposition towards such disorders. One immigrant who had himself earlier remarked "This London too big for me" pointed out a fellow West African who used to wander silently around the cafes wearing a dirty and curious hat and with a foreshortened pipe in his mouth, and said "This place makes some of we boys go crazy like that". He expressed the opinion that worrying over women was a frequent cause of disorder but one would expect this to be only one aspect of more general feelings of the swamping of the self. Available evidence suggests that mental disorders are more prevalent in West Africa[1] than they

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1. G. Tooth, Studies in Mental Illness in the Gold Coast, 1950, Colonial Research Publications No. 6.

are amongst the population of the United Kingdom, but there are no reliable figures, and as it is not certain that those who migrate are fully representative of the population in this respect - either from Africa or the West Indies - it would be difficult to make a statistically adequate study. Signs of strain might be expected to show more readily among neurotics than psychotics; immigrants suffering from neurosis are less likely than natives to come to hospitals for treatment, and the difficulty of cross-cultural diagnosis complicates matters further. An African medical practitioner and the present writer together examined six Negro patients in a local mental hospital with a view to seeing if colour consciousness had played any part in their disorder.[1] The results were entirely negative, and though the original hypothesis was never properly tested, further contact with the immigrants suggests that while their behaviour may be influenced by the expectation of hostility, their personalities are affected to a lesser extent and their feelings of aggression are fairly readily externalized.

The stereotyped idea that the immigrants are "all the same" is a travesty of the real position, for the men differ from one another in personality far more than the members of any sample group of English people would. The task of adjusting to the same social and material situation does to some extent make them come to resemble one another more, though on the other hand this additional variable produces a further range of differences in

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1. Dr. Davidson Nicol kindly assisted in this.

other respects. Richmond's research with West Indian immigrants shows that the skilled worker, who usually has greater security in employment and a higher income than the unskilled man, has easier relations with the native group. There is a positive correlation between individuals' degree of skill at work and the adequacy of their social adjustment as assessed by reference to specific standards chosen by the investigator and representing socially approved behaviour.[1] Some immigrants have the personal qualities which make them adaptable, they get ahead and frequently leave Stepney for another district. Others cannot fit in and are unable to use the opportunities they are offered. Some try to get on by accepting British standards - at least in their outward appearance. Others take every opportunity to show a scorn of the British. It is very difficult to see in all these cases any factor which will explain the variations except that of individual personality differences, or to find any principle for assessing this important factor of adjustment. It does, however, appear that immigrants are more settled in their behaviour and their personal lives are more independent of worries about material things such as money, jobs, housing, etc., if they are members of a small face-to-face group such as that of Africans of the same tribe. In the material sphere such membership increases personal security in that an individual will be lent cash or goods, or otherwise helped if he is in difficulty. In the non-material sphere identification with such a group appears to aid

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1. Colour Prejudice in Britain, 1954.

emotional security and to give a man a feeling of belonging to something. The man who has a nigh proportion of such friendships will feel the effects of colour prejudice or antipathy to a lesser extent, for these antagonisms are characteristic of social relationships, not of inter-individual relationships.[1]

1. i.e. Prejudice is directed against a man as a member of a category, not as an individual; if most of the people he has to deal with know him as an individual he will not suffer from this generalized antagonism and an emotional counter-balance to such antagonism can be found in friendship. See U.N. Memorandum, The Main Types and Causes of Discrimination, op. cit., p. 6

CHAPTER IX

THE STRUCTURE OF THE IMMIGRANT GROUPING

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Social Stratification

Social adjustment is the obverse side of the process of personal adjustment, for the individual in relating his behaviour to his changing surroundings is not only striking his own balance but he is also influencing the situation to which others have to adjust. Social structure is dependent upon the individual's being able to predict the behaviour and reactions of others. As he works out his own adjustment the individual is adopting a social role and establishing a certain pattern of relationships with the other persons with whom he comes into contact so that they can predict how he will behave. The greater the range of predictability the more inclusive the social structure. The emergence of structure in the immigrant group will be correlative to the adjustment of its members; this adjustment may not be uniform in that all the immigrants tend to adopt the same attitudes, for it may be that several different sub-groups appear, each possessing different attitudes and in partial opposition to one another.

There are a number of factors which tend to make the immigrants adjust in an individualistic rather than in a group-conscious fashion and this results in an atomistic and fragmented social structure. Most of these factors have already been discussed at length in other contexts: regarding the West Africans it may be observed that they came from a society which for many of them, was disorganized, and the system of tribal and kinship rights and obligations was weakening. As

individuals, many of the migrants felt a sense of loyalty to these groups but either by conditions preceding migration or by the action itself, they had been lifted out of an organic society and placed in the sort of situation to which these attitudes bore no relation. The aspirations which influenced their migration were individualistic, for the men were pursuing their own good and breaking away from the traditional system whereby status is obtained by activity within the group and where there is no conflict between the aspirations of the individual and the good of the society. In Britain they were at first very suspicious of Africans belonging to other tribes and would not trust their statements believing that if the other man had discovered anything advantageous he would try to keep it to himself: the disorganized conditions in Stepney were such as to promote this mistrust but it has gradually declined as immigrants have become personally acquainted with one another. Moreover, the men quickly learned to recognize the class distinctions in London and to value the symbols of status; immigrants compete with one another for prestige, and men will sometimes boast that they are earning remarkable sums of money where they work, causing others to leave their work to go to the same firm only to be disappointed.[1]

The material conditions of life have a further influence in the same direction for the African and West Indian immigrants do not at first see any advantage to be gained from co-operation;

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1. I have seen men behave similarly in West Africa.

their objectives are derived from British values and they do not wish to combine to preserve their own culture. Many of the functions served in Africa by tribal and kin groups are dealt with in the United Kingdom by the Employment Exchanges, the National Assistance Board and other agencies of the Welfare State. Their personal difficulties are not ones which membership of a small group would help them to solve - or so it appears to them at first: they work long hours of overtime, they have great difficulty over the unreliable behaviour of female consorts, over housing accommodation, and so on. In the individualistic life of the city these are things which an individual immigrant has to deal with by himself and in his own way.

The attitudes of the young West African immigrants towards authority also made for individualism: they were of such the same age and did not recognize any of their fellow immigrants as possessing any authority over them; they were often already rebels against authority and they resented the attitude of the "old timers" - immigrants who settled in Britain before the 1939 war - who attempted to guide the "new comers" and expected a certain deference from them. The resulting situation was fairly summarized by one "old timer" who said:

> "These young boys just come are spoiling everything - it's our brothers who spoil us. I used to have respect and think of my brother coming after me, and leave things clean so he would be treated properly, but these boys don't. We have made the way smooth for them, but they say it's them who made things better for us, that we've been here all this time and we've done nothing."

The older men came into a society in which their position, if

unfavourable, was more clearly and rigidly defined; in another old timer's words:

> "When we come here we had to submit to every kind of hardship, we had to use every kind of diplomatic way ... but these young fellers just come, they bring with them this inferior-complex and they won't listen ... They find they are free to bawl here."

In the case of the Africans the old timers obtained some respect from the new comers of their own tribe, but circumstances were not such that strong tribal groups could develop rapidly. The men were from many different tribes and the social controls associated with tribal life were no longer operative; if one man failed to observe his obligations to the others there was not very much they could do except ostracize him.

The West Indian immigrants had a less disorganized back-:ground but they all brought with them a firm belief in the virtues of private enterprise; they tended at first to be as individualistic as the Africans without their sense of tribal member-ship, but with the passage of time they built up friendship groups with like-minded fellow countrymen. Among the old timers, Africans and West Indians find more important common ground in age than in country of origin.

In Tyneside, where there are relatively few coloured people, one coloured man passing another in the street who is a stranger to him is nevertheless expected to nod or smile to him[1] but this is far from the case in London. The immigrant settlement has no focal points or effective channels of communication except for the Mission, the loose gatherings

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1. Collins, op. cit. (1952b)

inside and on the pavement outside certain public houses, and personal friendships between fellow countrymen and men who work at the same firm. This is largely because of the unbalanced composition of the grouping which lacks its own shopkeepers, tradespeople, etc. Many immigrants are acquainted with very few of their fellows, in some cases because they want to keep to themselves, more often because they know of no satisfactory way of getting into touch with other men except through personal introductions and are suspicious of any coloured man who tries to strike up an acquaintance with them for no obvious reason, for they think he may want something from them or may try to trick them. This suspicion of others is qualified by a number of factors, not the least of which is the extent to which the man in question has been taken advantage of before. Tribal loyalties are of primary importance for the West African, and if one man speaks the other's African tongue they will be more disposed to be friendly. In a situation - at work or elsewhere - in which there are only a few coloured men and they feel the pressure of antagonism from the whites, they are inclined to stand together. But on the whole, the coloured quarter in Stepney is characterized by a high degree of social fragmentation; the coloured men are split up into little groups, often, in the case of the Africans, based upon a common language, and they know personally only a few of the coloured men they see around. Probably fragmentation is higher in Stepney than in any other locality where there is a large coloured group, and the wary attitude of some of the immigrants towards one another can be

traced to the recent growth of the settlement and the unsettling effect of the flow in from, and out to, other parts of London.

The different forms and stages of adjustment of immigrants to this situation results in a growing cleavage between two sections of the population of post-war immigrants; the cleavage contributes to the atomistic nature of the social life of the coloured quarter in the short run, but given time, it is likely to favour the emergence of a more inclusive social structure. The split has been on the part of the older, more stable immigrants who find that if they get "mixed up" with other coloured men it only involves them in trouble and so they prefer to keep to themselves and to a small group of tested friends. In the eyes of many of them this isolationism is a cause for self-congratulation - "Nobody knows me around here" a man may say with pride, for it is often the notorious who are "known". This isolationism is to be distinguished from the individualism or egocentricity of the men whose failure to live up to their obligations has caused the split. Thus a degree of stratification has developed, though the distinctions between the different strata, or a particular individual's classification, are not always precise. At the bottom is the 'cafe society', or "ruffian boys" as one Nigerian calls them; next, those of recent immigrants who wish to be "respectable"; then the old timers; finally those coloured students who come to Stepney occasionally from the "West End" - they are not really a stratum of Stepney society but they represent that higher status

given to some coloured men from other districts especially those who are well educated. Tribal loyalties and those deriving from pre-migration circumstances cross these categories and make an uneven pattern.

The 'cafe society' includes the individuals who do most to give the immigrants a bad name; it is made up principally of young West Africans from Freetown and Bathurst who were previously pilot boys, plus a number of West Indians and Africans from other areas. These men are for the most part single or without any stable relationship with a female consort, and spend much of their time hanging around pubs, cafes and street corners in Cable Street or going into the Mission club for a game of billiards and a chat by the fireside in the patois of the West Coast. Unemployment is heaviest in this stratum and these men are seen in the streets during the daytime more than the others are. For many of them, belief in 'colour bar' becomes a panacea explaining all their difficulties and the desire to compensate themselves at the expense of the British is with them at its strongest. Inevitably this group becomes something of a community of misfortune, influenced most by the more extreme opinions and interpretations. Relations between the different men in the stratum are not harmonious, they are only thrown together and there are many causes for offence; in dispute one may reproach another "What are you doing here anyway". You're only a stowaway!" though this particular accusation cannot be used by very many. Fights over women and over what are taken as insults are not infrequent and sometimes

there are cases of immigrants thieving from, or robbing, one another. The behaviour of the "ruffian boys" is markedly egocentric and to the English observer often seems nearly paranoic, especially in the lies they will tell. Africans who have been questioned on this point think that such men persuade themselves to believe their own lies and profess their own difficulty in understanding the lengths to which this may be carried, and their great caution in accepting the statement of any man but one they know to be reliable; this form of behaviour does however seem to be an initial reaction which declines after a few years. This stratum is not given any particular name by the other immigrants though they are becoming more and more aware of the differences between it and the next one.

The "respectable" stratum consists of those wartime and post-war immigrants with a stable home - they may be single men who rarely have a female consort, but mostly are married men, (usually legally but occasionally in a 'common law' relationship), who are trying to achieve a higher status. On the whole, they are older than the 'cafe society'; they include West Indian families and a proportion of West Africans who maintain uneasy relations with those of their fellow countrymen who fall within the lower category. The break between the two sections is occasioned by the high expectations some immigrants have of the duties of their fellow countrymen towards them and their failure to live up to their reciprocal obligations. One West African who was ready to help his fellows

complained that if he lent a man money and "made a paper" that man would tell everyone that he would not trust a fellow country-:man, but if he did not get a receipt he never got his money back. An immigrant with a coloured man for a landlord expects far more from him, more lenient treatment, and as one put it, wants his room to be furnished "down to a needle". These expectations are strongest between fellow countrymen: on one occasion a man from the Gold Coast agreed to look after the suitcase of another West African; a Nigerian who lives in the same house observed in an aside to the writer "He's very foolish to do that for someone who isn't his countryman; when the other man comes to get his case back he may accuse him of having stolen something from it".

There are several immigrants who as landlords might be accorded the status of the second stratum but are not fully accepted; they have the reputation of exploiting their tenants and one of them runs a house of accommodation to which a man may take a prostitute for the night. All the immigrants are willing to give advice to their fellows but the members of the 'cafe society' will rebuff anyone who tries to tell them what to do. Those immigrants in the 'respectable' stratum are noticeably less colour conscious than either those of the cafe society or the students: sometimes it seems as if their desire for status by British standards leads them to deny the existence of any colour bar. They tend to make a virtue of isolationism in the attempt to break away from the unfavourable stereotype of the Negro immigrant, but nevertheless are, as individuals, probably more willing to help other coloured men when they are in

difficulty. Many of them establish friendly relations with white men whom they meet at work and may visit them and be visited at each others' homes. Few of the African immigrants come from families which are important in their home country, but where this is the case, they are paid a certain amount of respect by their countrymen. Being a landlord gives a man status among the coloured and among the local whites as well, because the friendship of a man who has rooms to let is valuable.

The old timers are men over the age of sixty who have almost invariably a long seafaring career behind them and sometimes continue to go to sea. This gives them a common interest and a shared recollection of colour discrimination in the shipping industry and of a hundred little incidents of prejudice on the part of whites. Such experience has sharpened their wits and matured their personalities so that they manage their relationships with whites with a degree of self-assurance not possessed by the younger men. They are less concerned to gain status than the 'respectable' stratum of post-war immigrants. Only a minority of the West African students are in touch with fellow countrymen in Stepney but there are some who visit the district occasionally.

Social Groupings

The various degrees of cohesion shown by the social groups to be found among the Negro immigrants can be best explained by comparing them with those of the other coloured immigrants who share the same material conditions but whose organization and behaviour are so different. There is an even scale: Sikhs, Pakistanis, Somalis, West Africans, West Indians, in

descending order of social cohesion. This scale also represents the extent to which European influences have disrupted the culture of the c untry of origin and it appears to relate closely to the attitudes adopted by the immigrants after arrival in the United Kingdom. Sikh culture has been affected less than that of any other group and a migrant in Britain who disliked his daughter's being educated in a school where she "picked up bad English ways" sent her to a relative in India. The Sikh is not greatly disturbed by the display of colour prejudice towards him, for his objectives are limited to the economic sphere. The Pakistani migrant, it should be remembered is usually from the district north-east of Calcutta where European influences will have been greater than in some other parts of the country. At the other end of the scale is the West Indian who has been uprooted from Africa and has had the white man's culture imposed upon him; he has the reputation of reacting the most strongly of all the immigrants to anything considered as a slight or insult. This same relationship between culture contact and attitudes is found among the West African tribal groups; those which have been least disturbed by European influences are most solidary and appear least antagonistic towards the British. It was this difference in the degrees of solidarity which led the writer to make the distinction between the accommodating and adapting groups advanced earlier; it is not a precise distinction but it is helpful for explaining the differences between the groups at either end of the scale. It is not a distinction which can be applied to

individuals for some men adopt an attitude different from that of most of the other members of their group, but it has some validity in the aggregate. It should be remembered that the Pakistanis, Africans and West Indians come from different strata of the countries of emigration and are not therefore equally representative of those countries.

The Sikhs in Stepney number little more than one hundred and are mostly self-employed as pedlars with a lucrative side-line in fortune-telling. Caste distinctions are preserved; the members of the higher castes keep to themselves, and the majority, who are of low caste, congregate according to villages and districts of origin. Religion operates as a strongly integrative factor and all migrants look forward to returning home when they have accumulated money; they will go to great lengths to do this, living in verminous conditions, dossing down on an overcoat and saving every penny. The informal leaders of the Pakistani groups are the men who have been in the country longest and are in the best position to help more recent arrivals, irrespective of their status in Pakistan. To become a landlord is one of the principal ambitions of the immigrant, and working as an unskilled labourer he is frequently able to save £600. in three years. Most of their savings are remitted to their families in Pakistan and as a minimum figure it is estimated that at least 10,000 Pakistanis send £4 per head per month. As there are thought to be 30 - 40,000 Pakistanis in Britain it is estimated by a responsible authority that the figure for monthly remittances

may well be £80,000. This relatively high rate of saving is made possible by their overcrowded and cheap housing accommodation and their restricted expenditure upon luxuries. A Pakistani barrister well acquainted with this group writes:

> "Usually rooms are used as dormitories. In one 10' x 8' room about 10 people are accommodated. In some of these houses, our people share beds. The landlords do not hesitate even to put three people in one bed. Sometimes one bed is used by six people, three at a time ...According to the bye-laws to prevent overcrowding, such a room cannot be used to accommo-:date more than two persons. As our people have a perfect fellow-feeling, nobody reports the matter to the local author-:ities. If by chance a representative of the Borough Council visits the premises, these landlords manage to overcome the difficulties somehow or other; perhaps it is said that the beds are kept for emergencies for the people who may arrive all of a sudden from ships ... The landlords collect a very low rent from each lodger, who therefore does not mind living in a crowded room... Some houses belonging to our people are, of course, run in a decent way and according to the strict bye-laws." (1)

Though none of them wishes to make a permanent home in the United Kingdom, the Pakistani migrants may remain in the country for the greater part of their working life perhaps running an established business, a restaurant or very often a textile tradi ng business; this a man will hand over to his son or other relative when he wishes to retire, though this happens less frequently in Stepney for most of them there work as labourers. It is uncertain what is likely to be the position where Pakistanis have married Englishwomen, as has happened in a number of cases. A demand has been raised for them to go with the man to Pakistan: "The first and foremost duty is to return early and safely and to take with us all those men and women, boys and girls, who *de jure* belong to us."[2] Islam operates as an integrating force within the group

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1. M. Abbas-Ali, Unpublished MS.
2. The Pakistan Education Movement in Great Britain, 1949, a pamphlet prepared by Mr. M. Abbas-Ali.

and though the creation of the Muslim state has reduced the antagonism between the different sections this is still considerable. Sylhet and Pathan seamen will not serve together on the same ships for each section accuses the other of being ignorant; further distinctions are maintained within the section, for the firemen will not eat from the same table as the "topaz" who cleans the latrines.

The Somali group is very compact and maintains close contact with groups in other ports; any important information will be passed by telephone to or from one of the cafes in South Shields, Cardiff, Birmingham, or elsewhere. The Somalis maintain organizations on tribal lines for the collection of dues for mutual aid but preserve a united front to the outsider; they will adjudicate between members who have a dispute and will follow up their decision with material assistance to an injured party. The group is composed almost entirely of males who rarely marry in Britain and even if they should acquire property generally expect to return eventually to their native land, so it may fairly be considered an accommodating group. The Somalis have the reputation of being very intelligent and liable to be troublesome; perhaps for that reason, or perhaps because they come from a colony, they do not exhibit accommodating attitudes to the same extent as the Pakistanis but are more resentful of anything they consider discriminatory. Anti-British and anti-imperialist sentiment runs strongly in their group.

The total of 145 West Africans was composed approximately as follows: there were 50 from Sierra Leone, of whom 22 were

Kru and the remainder mostly Temne and Mende, with a few Limba. Fourty from Nigeria, of whom 15 were Ijaw, 5 Ibo, 1 Hausa, and remainder mostly Yoruba. Thirty-seven from the Gambia, being mostly Jolof with some Mandinka and a few Fula. Eighteen from the Gold Coast, chiefly Ga, a few Fanti, and one Ewe. The small number of Africans from the same tribe limits the possibilities fro associations on tribal lines and there is little co-operation for this purpose between the men in Stepney and those living in other parts of London. In Liverpool and Manchester where there are more West Africans there are correspondingly more tribal associations.[1]

Tribal associations in Stepney follow closely the recent West African urban pattern of the tribal union or "meeting". In a town like Lagos there are many such unions composed of men usually from a particular town or district. In 1948, 31 of them were co-operating with the officers of the Welfare Department in helping their members, sometimes financially, at other times settling disputes, paying for the education of youths, and in some cases repatriating men and women regarded as being undesirable characters.[2] West African workers in Britain run "meetings" on these same lines with which the members are acquainted and of which the obligations are clearly understood, though they are more reluctant to admit members of other tribes than some of the Lagos unions appear to be. Where

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1. An African in Liverpool stated in 1952 that there were then 30 tribal organizations there.
2. S. Comhaire-Sylvain, "Associations on the Basis of Origin in Lagos, Nigeria." American Catholic Sociological Review, Vol XI (1950), pp. 234-6.

there are only two or three fellow countrymen they may undertake to pay a contribution to one of their number each week, taking it in turns to be the recipient (esusu).

The tribal association in Stepney which is the best organized is that of the Kru. They have the largest numbers of any tribe in the neighbourhood, and despite the tribe's extensive contact with European influences, they have, from the earliest times, had a tradition of intense solidarity. The Kru come from Liberia but there is a settlement of some eight thousand in Freetown where many of them sign on as seamen. In Britain they have an organization legally incorporated as a Friendly Society to which they pay regular dues and upon which they can call when they are sick or unemployed. This, the United Kroo National Society, has branches throughout the United Kingdom which keep in close touch with one another.[1] In Stepney the most important figure was an "old-timer" whom all groups throughout the country acknowledged as their leader. He kept in touch with his fellow countrymen in Freetown and had on occasion acted on their behalf in the United Kingdom.[2] He believed that the continued association of the British and the Kru on ships, and in colonial wars, had brought the two peoples close to one another so that the British and the Kru stood together in opposition to "the natives". Believing fervently in the need for education he had established the

1. When, in 1952, a Kru political leader arrived from America, representatives from all the many groups of Krumen scattered throughout Britain assembled in Liverpool and spent several days discussing affairs in Liberia. For an interview with this gentleman see West Africa 15.10.1952.
2. In 1922 some Krumen in Freetown were in trouble and he had a question asked in the House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates, H. of C., 20.3.1922, Col. 60.

Kroo Student Society which aims to assist the younger immigrants to study in their spare time and is also registered under the Friendly Societies Act. Most of the younger men, however, think of themselves as Africans and colonials in opposition to the British, and the Student Society does not prosper like the National Society. Yet the old man had gathered round him a small group in which rank was determined by the values of their homeland and which received Kru visitors in a manner incorporating certain traditional elements, such as the spilling of a little gin on the doorsten before any of the persons present drink of the contents. In such ways some of the group have succeeded in transplanting part of the body of collective attitudes upon which the unity of their tribe is founded.

A tribal group more representative of West Africans in Britain is that of the Ijaw who come from the western part of the Niger delta. They have certain points of similarity with the Kru, for like them, many of their tribe are seamen and used to migrating in search of work; they are not advanced educationally and are sometimes looked down upon by other groups. Most of the Ijaw in East London settled there just after the war, and for the first four to five years group loyalties steadily declined. This was owing partly to the individuals' personal difficulties, and partly to the fact that they were often let down by the men who appealed to their African loyalties. One Ijaw who was acting as a landlord was at first unable to trust any but his fellow countrymen, and when a stranger came to him for a room he would

reflect "This man doesn't speak one language with me. No, I don't know how he will treat me", and the would-be tenant was turned away.[1] But after a while he found that he had nothing but trouble from his fellow countrymen and began to think it might be better to avoid having business dealings with them. "My people don't show you respect" he said. It can be very much more difficult to collect the rent, or to recover a debt, from a man who claims to be your brother, and it is usually the less responsible person who appeals to the obligations of the relationship. The Ijaw used to hold a weekly "meeting" when each man paid in two shillings and could borrow money from the fund when he was in need, but the number supporting it got smaller and smaller until the subscription had to be reduced to one shill-:ing, and then after a while the surviving members had to wind it up. Men who failed continually to live up to their obligations were ostracized by the others so that the pattern came to resemble that of a core surrounded by a small number of isolates. Within the core no one was recognised as senior and a desperate equality prevailed, thus while collective sentiment was not dead, relation-:ships between members of the group were on an inter-personal plane. Some stimuli would have evoked that sentiment: they would have gone to the help of most of their fellow countrymen if they were in trouble, and would have contributed to the expenses of a

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1. This is an interesting illustration of an important theoretidal point. When speaking in a foreign language a man is less aware of the social controls restraining him from telling a lie, because language is not a vehicle of thought so much as a mode of action. Cf. Malinowski's essay, "The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages".

funeral for a member of the tribe no matter how much they had disliked him when he was alive.

In early 1952 group cohesion began to increase again. Some of the older men were in a better position to help others and were accorded a certain deference by the younger men falling into the category of "Johnny Just Come". A new "meeting" was started with a membership of thirteen and some of the local men who had been ostracized were not invited. One member of the group thought this decision wrong but he did not press his point. His unwillingness to come to judgement on a fellow tribesman was shown in the opinion he once expressed of a fellow countryman who spent much of his time gambling, who used to live a riotous life with women and gave no indication of settling down: "I don't say he's doing wrong", he said, "London is a big place and there's room for all of us. He's been unfortunate, but his way is completely different from ours'". At the same time as the new "meeting" was started two more Ijaw immigrants arrived and in a short space of time were provided by their fellows with good housing accommodation and were drawn into a group life, which, as strangers to the country, meant a great deal to them. Making weekly contributions to a benefit fund is not only a form of insurance but an incentive to saving greatly valued by some of the men; one of them explained that if he lent a man money and it was paid back in instalments he was inclined to spend the instalments as they came in and thus the sum of these payments was not worth so much as the original loan.

Some of the Yoruba used at one time to hold a "meeting", but

as some of their number moved out of the neighbourhood they did not continue it. It is interesting to note that in this instance an important part in the accounting was performed by the European wife of one of the men; normally the wives are not admitted because they rarely speak the language, they are generally considered untrustworthy and are said always to cause trouble. None of the other West African groups in East London maintains any tribal association. There are appreciable numbers of immigrants of the same tribe from Freetown and Bathurst but these men are always referred to by the others as "Freetown boys" and "Bathurst boys" without any distinction as to tribe. Some of the Freetonians prefer to use the coastal patois in talking to fellow countrymen and can, indeed, speak their tribal language only with difficulty. Nearly all of them were "pilots" or "parray boys" before they migrated, usually as stowaways; they possess little common culture and show much less cohesion than other groups.

The position of European wives in the tribal group has already been touched upon; they identify themselves with the cause of the coloured man and if reliable, gradually obtain an honorary place in the system of tribal loyalties, but in many ways the demands they make upon their husbands conflict with the obligations the men feel they owe to their fellow countrymen. The sanctions which the tribal group can wield against wrongdoers may be extended to cover the wives of the members of the group. The wife of one Ijaw immigrant has disgraced herself in the eyes of the other men, so her husband cannot take her with him when he goes to visit them, but must go alone. Knowledge

of such sanctions is likely to deter a wife from any step which might involve her in a fall from grace, where her husband by himself might be powerless to prevent her doing such things. Where a group is fairly cohesive and some sanctions can be applied to enforce group norms, an element of social control is brought into the situation in which the purely external means of control - such as the police - are ineffective. Such sanctions, the refusal to help people, the withdrawal of recognition, etc., are not powerful, but in the long run they can have an important influence in bringing miscreants to heel.

The West Indian immigrants strike up friendships more readily with others coming from the same island or colony but the extent to which a common country of origin makes immigrants feel they have an obligation to one another will vary from one individual to another. They deny that there is any differentiation among themselves on a basis of light or dark skin colour and the investigator has never heard of its occurring in Stepney. West Indians in the United Kingdom assist friends and relatives who wish to migrate and frequently arrange for their reception. Such a high proportion of the West Indians in Stepney are Jamaicans that the effectiveness of a common country of origin as a basis for group formation is weak and West Indians are seen as a group only in opposition to West Africans: only rarely do members of the two different groups live in the same house and in their leisure time activities they keep fairly separate. A clique or circle of friends among West Indian immigrants lacks the firm basis of African tribal sentiment.

English Institutions

English religious, political and social institutions exert little influence upon the life of the coloured quarter and the immigrants participate in their activities relatively little. A coloured person who sees a great deal of the life of the coloured quarter, and who was asked to make some notes about the influence of outside institutions, wrote as follows with regard to religious influences:

> "The Mohammedan[1] thinks that Christianity in England is really a business based on outward show; they often come and ask me why it is that people who call themselves Christians can be so cruel to one another, and then they go on Sunday to Hyde Park and hear all the different denominations decry each other ... There are several individuals who work among seamen, they make a habit of going the rounds of cafes and any lodging houses distributing tracts in various languages ... When the men are in hospital they cannot reconcile why it is that a man supposed to be a padre comes round with a haversack filled with cigarettes and tracts, and when he asks a man what religion he is and he says he is a Mohammedan just gives him a tract but the next man gets cigarettes because he says he's a Christian ... I'm afraid, too, that from their point of view they don't find us brothers and are not drawn to religion except to keep in with the padre as he's paid and kept, and used, by the government as a spy, to get all the people's ideas - coloured or white. (2)
>
> West Indians in general have a completely different view coming from a land where Christianity is not a strange thing and those who profess it follow it to the letter. These people on coming to England get a real jolt and if they continue their old habits and attend church they are surprised at their emptiness and coldness in friendship. They tend to take the motto "When in Rome, do as Rome does" and altogether they are a bit disillusioned ...
>
> The West Africans in general think it complete bunkum and when asked why, say that it was through religion that they lost Africa ..."

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1. Many Muslims object to the use of the name 'Mohammedan' because it is thought to imply worship of the Prophet, who is not regarded as an incarnation of the deity.
2. The belief that clergymen function in some way as agents of governmental authority is not uncommon in the coloured quarter.

The statement by this informant is partisan but not altogether untrue. The majority of Africans profess Christianity and have been baptized, frequently by a Roman Catholic priest or missionary, but probably less than a dozen maintain any active connection with a religious body in the United Kingdom (apart from with the Mission which will be mentioned later). None of the West Africans who profess Islam support the Mosque, and few of the Somalis, though some of the East Africans are more active. West Indians may have been more strongly influenced by religion before migration and in some cases maintain an active support of non-conformist churches or religious organi-:zations in Britain. The religious beliefs of the Negro immigrants are in most cases monotheistic rather than Christian or atheist and tend to the naturalist rather than the sacramental view of life.

One of the results of the Report written by Mrs. Young in 1944 was that a 'high-church' Anglican order was persuaded to send a small team of members - they wear the habit and are known throughout the district as "the Fathers" - to live in the coloured quarter and run a social club for the men which would form part of a mission to the coloured people of the locality. The house they bought had a little earlier been a brothel and conditions were primitive, but the Mission has not set out to attract attention and has tried to avoid immigrants' getting the impression that it might be a source of financial instead of moral support; members of the Order renounce personal possessions but this has not prevented some people believing that they are really rich. The Mission has catered to the material as well

as the spiritual needs of coloured men who have gone there for help and while often having personal doubts about the objectives of the Mission, all immigrants will testify to the valuable assistance which "the Fathers" have given to many of their number when they have been in difficulties. Club facil-:ities are provided in an adjacent building - a billiard table, table tennis, a small canteen, etc. and evening classes are run to provide instruction in reading, writing, and elementary subjects. The social facilities are used primarily by the young and less settled immigrants who lack a stable home back-:ground. Thus the Mission has come to be part of the social structure of the neighbourhood which is used by the immigrants, and only to a small degree can it be regarded as part of the structure of the immigrant group. Because "the Fathers" will not permit men to produce narcotics on the premises and they show a strong disapproval of illegal behaviour they are in some quarters regarded as being in league with the police; not only illiterate West Africans but also white women who have been born and schooled in England have been heard to express the view that "the Fathers" are detectives.

While the social and welfare facilities have been a great help to many individuals, it is doubtful if the Mission has had many positive results in the religious field. For example, one East African who had been brought up in the Muslim faith and had known nothing of Christianity before migration was quite willing to profess Christian values, but after some further questioning confessed that his experience of

the two religions was such that he no longer thought either of these organized religions to be true though he thought "religion" itself to be "true". This is perhaps typical of the fairly easy-going monotheism and eclecticism of many of the immigrants. The stories told by the coloured people suggest that they have met as much colour antipathy in religious circles as in any other. One coloured woman has said that as a girl she was receiving Communion at the altar rail of an Anglican church when the man at her side refused to receive the sacrament from the same chalice as she had used; his deliberately placing himself in this position and provoking such an incident is surprising, and the action of the priest in fetching and consecrating another chalice was bound to appear as supporting the man's protest in the eyes of the person against whom it was directed. As a general rule religious beliefs persist although religious institutions are fiercely criticized. The bewilder-:ment of some Muslims at the behaviour of Christian representatives which is suggested in the story about the padre in the hospital is borne out in a tale told by a woman who one evening saw a white man kneeling immobile in a waste patch at the side of the road in an attitude which might have been one of prayer, but without any trousers and with his buttocks fully exposed. A short while afterwards some Somalis asked her "Missis, Missis! Outside - man pray. What religion? What Church?"

There are said to be 2,000-3,000 Muslims in East London, mainly Pakistanis, though there are representatives of many of the Muslim countries, East Africans, Somalis and others. They

meet for worship in a house which was converted into a Mosque in 1940, and as Islam has never known any system of consecrated priesthood and small communities have always been self governing, they choose one of their own number to conduct the service. They speak many different languages and though the person conducting the service may lead prayers in his own tongue, the address is usually in English. The room used for worship is of extreme simplicity with nothing but the arch (Mihrab) on the East wall to indicate the direction of Mecca which the worship-:pers face while sitting in lines across the carpet. About sixty worshippers gather every Friday. At Id-ul-Fitri, the festival of thanksgiving which ends the month-long fast of Ramadan, nearly a thousand worshippers attend the Mosque and overflow rooms about and beside it, which, fitted with amplifiers for the purpose, have to be opened so that all can take part in the service. At this and other festivals meals are given to the poor and to guests. Members of the congregation subscribe to burial and relief funds for the assistance of the poor. Islam sets great value upon the ideal of brotherhood and retains a strong hold over those who have been brought up in its doctrines, so that the Mosque functions as a strongly integrative factor in the life of the Muslim group.

In addition to the Mosque, there is a small Zawiyah, or praying room maintained by an Arab cafe proprietor in the coloured quarter. This is similar to that in Tyneside described by Collins,[1] with the provision of facilities for ritual washing,

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1. Op. cit. (1951).

for the keeping of praying garments and caps, etc. The Zawiyah is patronized by the Somalis and Arabs and only rarely by the Pakistanis who prefer the Mosque. Few of the Somalis maintain their religious practices with any rigour though this is not due to any great weakening in belief; "this country too hard to pray" said one of them when trying to explain how in his country his whole social life was oriented towards such practices but in Britain there was neither the atmosphere nor the supporting institutions.

The informant referred to earlier wrote the following when asked about political influences upon the life of the coloured quarter:

> Tremendous influence. For instance, the affairs in the Middle East, in Persia, Libya, Arabia, India and Pakistan are raising the men's hopes. There is a sense of freedom in the air, not on account of any political party, but as a feeling of shaking the white man off their backs, and of all coloured being one when it comes to a joint issue of Black or White. Politics they eat, sleep and drink.

This observation is apt to be misleading for it will be observed that it has been written with Pakistanis and Somalis in mind rather than Africans and West Indians, yet it applies to them also in its main essentials. Politics are often discussed but they are not British party-politics and few immigrants have any connection with any political party. There are more followers of Marx and Lenin, and defenders of the Soviet Union than there are adherents of the Communist Party, but Communist doctrines have exercised a powerful attraction because of their anti-imperialism and because any act of racial discrimination is a punishable offence in the U.S.S.R. Some immigrants have an indistinct idea of a heaven to come which they call "Communism"

> add that they were some of our sophisticated 'wide-boys', West Indians at that, and that they had weighed her up quickly and answered with great solemnity "Yes, mam". "Well, why do you go out with white girls?" I do not know what the answer was, but she went on to say that if she could fight the temptation, with the help of the Lord, although at times she found it very hard, why couldn't the boys. On that one of the boys offered to take her round the corner and see who would win, God, or the devil ... What impression of the Social Worker would the boys get from her? ... Another instance - a coloured man came to my house one Christmas Eve with his small boy stating that his wife had left the child and he could not keep it, could I help him? On my phoning the social worker she said she was very sorry it was too late that evening and she could not do anything the next two days as they were holidays, but could the man come after then to her office. I invited her down so as to break the ice over a cup of tea - the poor man had a terrible suspicion that these social workers are police in disguise - but no, the man must call officially or not at all. Eventually the child was cared for through other channels. ⇐

The only social institution, however, which does have an appreciable influence is the public house, for there are none of the dance halls or sophisticated places of entertainment on the east side of the city and very few clubs. Settlements have done nothing to attract coloured people to their functions and many such bodies would have great difficulties in drawing them into their activities if they did attend. Organizations under the control of the County Council, such as the Evening Institutes, are the most effective in drawing coloured people into their activities, for the Council's purpose in organizing evening classes is not open to misconstruction and the relation-:ship between the organizers and the clients is more clearly defined than in privately managed institutions.

Contracts between immigrants and natives at places of work are particularly important for very often the immigrant sees little of his neighbours. If relations at work are good

but the name is scarcely relevant to the image and the attitude of mind would have been dismissed by Engels as 'utopian'. Communism may, of course, be used as a stick with which to beat the British: a West Indian was heard to declare in the Employment Exchange when he was not getting the assistance he expected, "If I have to become a Communist before I get anything I might as well start now". Among single men (and it is these that are referred to in the quotation) nationalism is usually much stronger than among the immigrants who have a family and other cares, but the influence of British political institutions upon the social life of the coloured groups is negligible.

A question as to the influence of social institutions was interpreted in a narrow sense but the informant's answer is interesting as expressing a point of view that is not often heard:

> The situation as far as social workers is concerned is peculiar. The men will often consult them willingly when in trouble with their wives, or there is something wrong with the children; the men go out of their way to trust these people against their prejudice (i.e., the men overcome their own distrust of social workers). They are met with the attitude of trying to take their girl away, or if she is married, saying to the girl "Why did a nice girl like you marry a coloured man?" I know personally one Children's Social Worker who one day came into the house in high dudgeon, saying that never in all her life had she been so insulted by the blacks - in spite of the fact that I whom she was addressing am coloured ... It appeared that her visit that day was to a family who owned a cafe where a lot of our boys go, and the owner pressed her to a cup of tea; she saw several of the men sitting down with their girl friends who were white, goes over to be friendly and show them the light as she said. I must mention she was highly religious and well over fifty. She started her good work: "Do you boys believe in the Lord Jesus?" I must

there is more likelihood of an immigrant's being invited to visit the home of a workmate than of a white living in the neighbourhood. Friendships with neighbours or near neighbours are sometimes struck up through chance encounters and common interest, and sometimes through the public houses. The public houses in or near the coloured quarter are to a great extent frequented by the older people who are in one of the more comfortable stages of the cycle of working class life, when the children are independent of the parents and before the bread-winner's wage-earning power starts to decline. These people are economically and emotionally secure and are tolerant towards the immigrants. It is a source of amusement to all to see a spirited woman in her sixties doing a burlesque of jitter-bugging with a coloured man for her partner. A number of white homosexuals come round the cafes and the public houses of the coloured quarter looking for coloured "friends". It is noticeable that many of the whites who are interested to make contact with coloured people are themselves neurotic or otherwise not representative of the white population.

Immigrant Organization

One factor in the new situation which promotes the growth of in-group sentiments and organization throughout the West African - West Indian grouping, is the shared experience of colour antipathy and discrimination. This is neither strong nor frequent enough to create any continuing organization amongst the Negro grouping, but occasional incidents may unite the

immigrants in opposition to the whites. Antagonism may develop between West Africans and West Indians or between Africans from different colonies or tribes. Thus the coloured population in East London can be thought of as a society based upon segmentary opposition in some ways similar to that found in more homogeneous non-literate societies.[1]

The Yoruba may be hostile towards the Ibo on matters affecting Nigeria and may carry over this feeling into his social relations in Britain, but they both feel themselves at one in opposition to the Gold Coastians. After a Gambian had been arrested on a charge of murdering a Gold Coastian, the West Africans in a firm employing many coloured men for a time considered forming a gang and attaching all the "Bathurst boys". All the West Africans feel themselves members of one group in opposition to the West Indians and hostility frequently develops between them, both on board ships and ashore. Many West Indians are brought up to hold the same stereotype of the barbarous African savage as prevails in some parts of Britain; according to the West Africans they think themselves superior and accuse the Africans of being jungle people, to which the Africans reply that they are only the descendents of their ancestors' slaves. The West Indians say that the Africans will not listen when they try to point things out to them for their own benefit. A West African enquired about a coloured peoples' society that was being formed in Stepney and added

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1. Cf. E.E. Evans-Pritchard, The Nuer, 1941, pp. 139-150, and M.M. Green, Ibo Village Affairs, pp. 139-145.

guardedly that if it was any of "this Jamaican business" he was not going to have anything to do with it. After a time the West Indians often come to feel closer to African culture and many on both sides think that their similarity in colour is more important than the differences between them. All Negroes feel that they belong together in opposition to the Pakistanis and all coloured people in opposition to the whites. This principle is a general one in many forms of society but it is more than usually noticeable in this case: segmentation occurs also along class lines, for in times of great stress working class and middle class coloured men have a common interest and will combine. This segmentation is not perfectly balanced as among the Nuer, where after a period of coalescence the segments return to the status quo ante. In port areas where there has been a greater concentration of coloured men, greater tension, and more discrimination, the coalescence of segments occurs more easily with the passage of time; bonds which are established in times of solidarity are never quite broken again. In other districts the desire for social acceptance may progressively woo immigrants away from their traditional loyalties and a stronger stimulus may be necessary to make the separate sections combine.

The Coloured Peoples' Society which came into existence in 1951 with the assistance of several non-coloured local people who thought it would serve a useful function, held a series of introductory discussion meetings in a room provided by the Mission before drawing up any constitution or electing

officers. The foundation members adopted four principal objectives for the society:

(i) and (ii) The improvement of housing opportunities and educational facilities. In these matters the Society was to work with the local authorities.

(iii) A Parents' Committee to watch over the welfare of coloured children and their schooling.

(iv) The organization of social and cultural entertainment.

Nine persons were elected to the Executive Committee, three West Indians, three West Africans, one Somali, one United Kingdom-born coloured person, and one white. The filling of offices, such as Chairman, Secretary, etc., was to be decided within the committee; the committee invited the writer to attend the first committee meetings to help establish rules and procedures.

From the beginning the Society encountered difficulties in getting more than luke-warm support from the majority of the local coloured people, for there was no strong stimulus to coalescence and the society had little to offer its members. Some coloured men showed great suspicion of the Society when it was known that several whites were associated with it, and assumed that the whites were in control. Members had great difficulty in getting more than a minority of the coloured people aware of the society's formation and in persuading them to come to a meeting; in a number of cases the wives of coloured men displayed more interest than their

husbands. At the early meetings there was confusion about the correct procedure and a great deal of parliamentary analogy; one of the leading members appeared to believe that rules for the conduct of meetings were part of a written British Constitution.[1] The members of the committee did not at first work well together and many unexpected difficulties arose as when one who was a supporter of the Salvation Army resigned from the committee as soon as it proposed to organize a dance. Some members were strongly motivated by the desire to gain personal prestige through the society and there was a series of powerful bids by persons who attempted to gain personal ascendancy over the committee; these persons then developed a strong antagonism towards the investigator whom they regarded as a rival in the struggle for influence, though this subsided as he gradually withdrew. Occasional popular functions were organized by the Society, which was better supported by West Africans than West Indians. At one stage it looked as if it was going to take on more of the form of a West African "meeting" to which members would bring contributions and from which they could obtain money when in difficulty.

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1. Members showed great respect for what was taken to the law in these matters. Cf. a nineteenth century observation "It is certain that the Negro here (Jamaica) as elsewhere, is greatly addicted to law; and the hold which Baptist ministers have obtained upon the country population is said to be largely owing to the fact that they explain regularly from the pulpit, and comment upon, every fresh insular enactment. One old Negro asked to explain his disapproval of a certain local minister, answered, "Marsa, him preach only gawspel, him no gib us de law". Conde Williams, 'From Journalist to Judge', quoted in Notes and Queries, 12.3. 1904, p. 206.

The Society has not yet been in existence long enough for its organization to show what sort of people emerge as leaders. When it was founded the Committee members were indirectly selected by the activities of the more interested persons in drawing in their friends: since then many have resigned and other members of the committee have found substitutes for them from amongst their own acquaintances. The numbers attending general meetings have been so small as to make their confirmation in office a formality. Reasons for resignation have been personal ones. There has been no attempt to take over the control of the Society by any group of left wing politically minded individuals such as are found in other coloured quarters. Those men responsible for running the affairs of the Society said within a few weeks of its being founded that it had already done them personally a great deal of good in introducing them to other coloured men whom they would never have met in the ordinary way and with whom they had become friendly. The lack of leaders appears to be partly due to the low level of communication within the immigrant group.

One of the most difficult problems of any organization such as the Coloured People's Society is that of deciding the attitude it is to adopt towards other coloured people in the locality who behave in a way of which they cannot approve and who draw protests from the whites. To attempt to censure them when the society itself is not strong will be ineffective and

will prevent the society from ever gaining their support, for it will be branded henceforward as something subservient to the whites. The Society was faced with just such a problem when complaints were made to it about the behaviour of some immigrantswho play dice in a side street outside one of the public houses and whose language was said to have an undesirable influence upon the children whose homes were in that street. One or two of the committee members had their own misgivings but they decided unanimously to write a letter on behalf of the Society to the publican concerned asking him to try and stop it. In addition they printed handbills addressed "To All Coloured People In Stepney" saying that gambling in the streets got coloured people a bad name, and that if men must gamble they should not do so in public. These handbills were passed round and a few were stuck up as posters in the vicinity of Cable Street. The committee received no reply from the publican and it is doubtful if the poster had any effect at all except to gain them the approval of a few local whites - which they did not really want anyway. Some of the coloured men in the locality complained about the publicity this occasioned; their argument was that a white man might be able to use this incident against a coloured man and say "There you are, you see that even your own people are against you" and thus break the solidarity which all coloured peoples must maintain when faced with any criticism from whites.[1] Shortly

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1. Cf. Myrdal: "the arrested Negro often acquires the prestige of a victim, a martyr, or a hero, even when he is simply a criminal". op. cit. p. 525 Also Burns, op. cit. pp. 93-4.

after this incident some reference was made in the local paper to the social problems of this area, to which the Chairman of the Society replied saying that the only solution was that the immigrant group should control its own members and that control from without would never be effective, especially when material conditions were so bad. He argued that the Society should receive support from the local authorities, thus rejecting a possible function for the Society as a means of voicing what American writers term "The Negro Protest".

In the re-creation of the tribal group among the Ijaw immigrants can be seen an emergent form of social structure which may be a pointer to future developments in other ways. In the appearance and activities of the Coloured Peoples' Society is found an emergent form of social organization, in that this is planned activity in support of specific aims as opposed to the multi-purpose, inclusive nature of the tribal group. West Africans and West Indians remain separate social groups but there is an increasing sentiment of belonging together which such a society seeks to develop. Both forms are of importance to the individual member in providing him with material and moral assistance, and they are of importance socially in that they develop controls over the behaviour of members and establish norms of conduct. Cohesion will always be weaker in an adapting group for the major interests of the members lie outside the group. The degree of opposition from outside the group will then be the principal factor in determining the extent to which mutual support can benefit the immigrants.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

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The Conditions for Social Assimilation

In an earlier chapter a preliminary definition of assimilation was offered. It was said that a group had been assimilated when an individual's membership of it did not in any way hinder him in his relations with non-immigrants. For many purposes this is too inclusive a definition and some index is required which is susceptible to measurement and can be used for the comparison of different cases and stages of the assimilative process. Ability in the use of the language of the country of immigration, naturalization, intermarriage, patterns of expenditure,[1] etc., can be used, but the phenomena measured by such indices are not always interdependent with the process of assimilation which has different meanings in different contexts. Dieulefait has argued with justice that assimilation should be treated as a function of many variables, each of which could be measured, but without any initial definition of assimilation as such. In this way social, cultural, political and other aspects of assimilation may be kept separate. "Total" assimilation may then be regarded as the resultant of a series of variables, the variables not being selected to conform to the categories of an *a priori* definition.[2]

Professor Savorgnan has pointed out that social intercourse and inter-marriage are easier for the immigrant who is wealthy and that upper class immigrants are more quickly assimilated. Irrespective of wealth some groups are more readily accepted

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1. For an interesting study see H. Staehle, "The Reactions of Consumers to Changes in Prices and Income: A Quantitative Study in Immigrants' Behaviour", *Econometrica*, Vol II (1934).
2. *Cultural Assimilation of Immigrants*, p. 3, being papers read to the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, published as a Supplement to *Population Studies*, Vol III (1950).

than others; his study of immigrant marriages in Boston and Buenos Aires shows that marriage with other nationalities was much higher among those immigrant groups which were socially acceptable. He concludes "in the case of those nationalities which are uneducated and poor, assimilation (i.e. the adoption of the language, customs, etc. of the country of immigration) is the premise to amalgamation", (i.e. by inter-marriage), "in the case of cultured and wealthy nationalities assimilation is the consequency of amalgamation".[1] Recasting this in the terms used in this study, one would say that the assimilation of the nationalities considered desirable is a function of their adapting themselves to the ways and values of the new society; the assimilation of the nationalities considered undesirable is a function of their acceptance by the natives. Acceptance may lag far behind the rate at which such a nationality adopts these ways and customs.

Collins has stated quite correctly that in districts of Britain where coloured groups are small, dispersed and little organized, conflicts between them and the whites occur less frequently than in areas where coloured people are concentrated.[2] He writes that greater harmony in factories and the mens' places of work is obtained when there are relatively few coloured men, "the larger the number, of course, the more likely they are to co-operate in seeking to avenge ills, real or imaginary, suffered from the majority group". There is truth in this

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1. Franco Savorgnan, "Matrimonial Selection and the Amalgamation of Heterogeneous Groups", in Cultural Assimilation of Immigrants, op. cit.
2. Op. cit., (1952a) pp. 27-8.

argument in that in areas of low concentration less direct and probably less displaced aggression is likely to be directed against them, but the implication that assimilation is facilitated by dispersal is gravely open to question. This view is in line with the conception of assimilation as a one-way process requiring no modifications from the majority group but only good behaviour on the part of the immigrants. I contend that on the contrary the principal obstacle to assimilation is the attitude of English people towards coloured persons. The conception of social assimilation as a one-way process leads also to the view that social control can only be effected through the institutions of the majority group, a submission which I have already contested.

A parallel to the dispersal controversy may be seen in the case of the Polish workmen in France which Mauco discusses[1]. In 1927-8 public outcry about Polish 'gansters' and 'madmen' drew attention to the fact that the proportions of delinquency and mental deficiency among Polish immigrants were twice as high as among Frenchmen of the same age. Enquiry revealed that the immigrants were predominantly employed as agricultural labourers and had been sent to work on lonely farms under rural supervisors in conditions bordering on solitary confinement. Hedged in by their ignorance of the language and by an unfamiliar environment, the immigrants soon felt completely lost and either withdrew within themselves or reacted violently.

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1. Georges Mauco, "The Assimilation of Foreigners in France", in Cultural Assimilation of Immigrants, op. cit.

Some, reacting against a society which upset their habits and gave them no opportunity for a satisfying social life, fled to look for fellow countrymen with whom they could mix and to whom they could vent their grievances. To test this explanation of the problem the social circumstances of the Polish agricult-:ural workers were improved in the six departements where they were most numerous, they were to be grouped so as to ensure the possibility of social intercourse and interpreters were to visit employers and advise them concerning the mentality and habits of Polish workers. Within twelve months the proportion of delinquents and mental defectives among the immigrants in these departements fell by 68%, whereas in other parts of the country it remained stationary. So Lauco seems justified in asserting that "the over-sudden transplanting of uncultured immigrants without any intermediate phase, to unfamiliar surroundings, is little better than solitary confinement or degradation to the status of outcasts. The psychological effects are disast-:rous, nervous repression and anti-social behaviour being the outcome in many cases".

It was the belief that dispersal assists assimilation which prompted the Ministry of Labour's scheme to send batches of workmen to towns where there were few coloured men, and which had to be dropped because the first trials failed so quickly. The writer submits that the coloured populations of dockland areas are not comparable with those dispersed in areas of low concentration. It may be true that there is less conflict in districts where there are only a few coloured

men, but these are usually the ambitious immigrants who can get on well with English people and in whose individual interest it is to move into better class areas. For recreation they may come to a neighbourhood such as Stepney and behave there in a way they would not do where they live. Those who have neither the earning power nor the social skills to fit into the life of a middle-class district will inevitably return to a dockland area where they have developed a small society of their own. Potential leaders move out of dockland areas and there is none of the regard for convention and public opinion which supports the law in other districts. There are reasons other than that of their numerical strength explaining why conflict should occur there more frequently.

In many ways the migration of West Africans and West Indians, and their reception in Britain, presents features not to be found in most cases of immigration. The migrants have already been educated in the language and values of the imperial country and they are equal with its inhabitants before the law. The process of adaptation has started before they migrate and on arrival in the United Kingdom their loyalty to the Crown is in no way less than that of other British subjects. The initial obstacle to their assimilation, and the most important, is the withholding of acceptance and social equality by the British public. Their attitude is to some extent one of indifference: the Englishman keeps to himself and assumes that the immigrant has friends in his own group

whom he finds more congenial. He does not feel bound to accept the immigrants on equal terms just because they are British subjects. Educational differences between most English people and the working class immigrants are very great. "We never asked them to come" some people might say, "why should we be expected to assimilate them immediately? Their behaviour is not all that it might be". This attitude is understandable and in saying that the principal barrier to the assimilation of the immigrants is the withholding of acceptance, I mean this as a statement of fact and not as a criticism.

Colour discrimination occurs in Britain in all sorts of ways many of which seem trivial, but, though its extent is exaggerated by many coloured people, it has a potent influence. Discrimination occurs mostly in spheres which are of particular importance to the coloured population - employment, especially in shipping, the letting of housing accommodation, relationships with English women; its absence in other spheres of less importance does not mean so much. In the writer's opinion it is justifiable to speak of the existence of a 'colour bar' in Britain provided it is made clear that this is taken to mean no more than that there is a significant probability of discrimination in certain spheres.

Many of the difficulties are of the immigrants' own making though it would be unjust to hold them, as individuals, responsible for them. Their disqualifications would not be so important were their expectations of the 'mother country' not so high; the frustration of their hopes and the denial of what

they feel due to them as British subjects has a profound imp-:ortance. Many of the stowaways were delinquents in their own countries and have only continued in the sort of behaviour to which they were accustomed. The inferior social position which is allotted to Negroes as a whole produces a hostility which is exacerbated by incidents of antipathy and discrimination, real or imagined, and immigrants of a character far from that of the 'pilot boys' are apt at times to offend English suscept-:ibilities. Their reactions make it more difficult for the native group to accept the immigrants. Amongst a considerable section of the coloured population initial feelings of loyalty to the Crown decline and are replaced by resentment, by a belief that the colonies are plundered by the imperial power and that friendly relations between coloured peoples and whites only occur when it is in the material interest of one group to make up to the other. The sentiment of political opposition grows. Rejected, the colonial demands political independence as a precondition to friendship, and obstacles to the assimilation of the immigrants multiply.

The Conclusions for Social Policy

The basic dilemma of the government in dealing with the problems of the coloured minority in the United Kingdom has been that of deciding whether to treat them as ordinary citizens of the country or to recognise them as a special category, thus admitting that the doctrine of British citizen-:ship does not work out so well as it is supposed to, and perhaps by this special treatment making it more difficult for

them to be assimilated into the everyday life of the country. The policy adopted has been one of cautious inaction. Cautious, in that the government has not looked for a facile solution to a complex problem but has waited until matters take a specific form. Inaction, because there has never been any fully thought out policy related to explicit objectives. The laissez faire attitude has failed in so far as a high proportion of immigrants develop an antagonism towards the British Government, and a resentment of treatment inferior to that which they think they have reason to expect. It fails in so far as advantage is not taken to encourage feelings of common purpose and the brotherhood of different peoples expressed in the declarations of the United Nations, and in so far as inter-group antagonism is actually increased. The division of responsibiltiies between the Home Office and the Colonial Office has never been made clear; the lack of a more positive policy exasperates some of the officials of the Borough Councils where immigrant settlements are growing in size, and they blame the Colonial Office.

The attempt to treat the immigrants as ordinary citizens bears no relation to the disadvantages suffered by them in dealings with individuals who take a view different from the government's. Coming into the English economic and social structure as an adult the immigrant has missed the training which others had in their youth; his unequal position is not made up for by equality of citizenship. In the case of the colonial students the government has had to abandon the policy

of not to treating them as a special category and political expediency may yet force them to recognize the working class immigrants as such. An important difference between the two cases, however, is that the student immigration is restricted and only those who are accepted at higher educational institutions are considered as students, whereas any colonial may enter the country as an ordinary passenger immigrant, or perhaps as a stowaway. Among the various factors bearing upon the working class migration there has been none which tended to select the most suitable persons as migrants.

This question of restriction of immigration was brought up by the resolution of the Lambeth Borough Council, referred to earlier, which ended by recommending that the attention of local government authorities be drawn to the "problem" and that they should be asked to

> "consider what representations can be made to ensure the regulation of the flow of coloured people to London, with a view to admissions being confined to persons who have regular employment in prospect and who are likely to become useful and responsible citizens. We also suggest that the attention of the Colonial Office should be drawn forthwith to the foregoing conditions and, in particular, to the effect and unhappy results in the Borough of Lambeth". (1)

When a councillor suggested that "trouble arose as a result of the passing of the British Nationality Act, 1948, which gave people the right to come to Britain "without let or hindrance'", his tactless approach was deprecated by other speakers. [2] Politically, the doctrine of the equality of British citizenship is considered of the greatest importance

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1. Lambeth Borough Council Proceedings 20.6.1951.
2. Brixton Free Press 22.6.1951.

and no government would willingly qualify it, as the effects in the colonies would be most unfavourable. Nor has the volume of migration from the colonies been sufficiently large for such a measure to appear necessary. From January 1946 to December 1949, 173,733 more aliens entered the country than left [1]; in the same period about 200,000 foreigners were found work in Britain under official schemes; while between 1945 and 1952 less than 10,000 West Africans and West Indians settled in the country.

The arrival of coloured colonials has given rise to a number of problems, which, some people feel, would not have arisen had the colonials not come, so they argue that they would be solved if the colonials were to leave. Many of the complaints are about the behaviour of a minority and coloured students have themselves been heard to complain bitterly about how some of the ex-stowaways give all coloured people a bad name. The evidence suggests that this sort of immigrant came chiefly in the unsettled years at the end of the war and just afterwards. Very few immigrants of this type have entered the country since 1948 for most of the recent stowaways have been ambitious youths in search of education. There is no need to slam the stable door when the horse has bolted. It is said that if immigration was reduced the local authorities might be able to cope with the existing problem. Yet present numbers are not so great as is often suggested in emotional argument, and they would not seem so large if they were viewed from the standpoint

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1. N.H. Carrier and J.R. Jeffery, External Migration: A Study of the Available Statistics, 1815-1950. General Register Office Studies on Medical and Population Subjects, No. 6, 1953.

of a constructive policy having in mind that the colonies will one day be independent. The Commonwealth contains people of many races and the presence of groups from other Commonwealth countries could be a source of strength. Whether or not to permit further immigration is a straight-:forward political choice, but the problem of the social position of the immigrants who are already in the country is another matter. Everything points to the conclusion that the present colonial population of Britain is there to stay and that the solution to any problems arising from this must be sought in Britain and not in the colonies.

No policy will be successful which overlooks the fundament-:ally political nature of the problem, for the colonials are in many respects a political as well as a racial minority. When colonials so resent their political status that they will do anything to goad the whites to leave their countries, harmonious relations between an immigrant colonial population in the United Kingdom and the other residents of that country are no longer possible, for the immigrants will alienate whatever friends they may have among Englishmen.

It has been argued that nothing should be done to make the colonial immigrants into a special category because this would mark them off and hinder assimilation. The United Nations sub-commission which considered this question in its general aspects did not see any dilemma in this and preferred instead to distinguish between two kinds of policy appropriate to such situations: the prev ntion of discrimination and the

protection of minorities.[1] The former policy aims at improving group relations by suppressing certain kinds of actions, the latter policy is one of rendering such service to the minority as will enable it to stand well with the majority group. The protection of minorities does not mean making them into a special category, but means recognizing that two categories exist, in social life if not in law, and by taking steps to make them one, to remove the causes of discrimination. In my personal opinion action on both these lines is desirable in Britain. (I assume here that harmonious relations between the two groups are possible. Some would argue that as representatives of the large masses of exploited colonials the immigrants must always be fundamentally in opposition to an imperialist power.)

Passing a law against colour discrimination would not prevent it, but it would reduce discrimination and would help create an atmosphere unfavourable to such practices. The present situation is confused. In November 1949 the Attorney-General was asked if he would introduce legislation to make illegal restrictive covenants drawn up by property owners to prevent letting to coloured people. Sir Hartley Shawcross declined to do this, but said he thought that such covenants might well be void as contrary to public policy.[2] If they are, this presumably applies to other forms of colour discrimination.

When the Home Secretary has been questioned on the more general issue of anti-discriminatory action, he has replied

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1. The Main Types and Causes of Discrimination, op. cit. , p.3
2. Parliamentary Debates, H. of C., 21.11.1949.

either that his department possesses no powers to take such action, or that he thinks this matter is not best dealt with by legislation but should be regulated by the influence of enlightened public opinion.[1] No one has yet asked him whether he considers the government should give any lead to public opinion. The general view among the legal profession seems to be that anti-discriminatory legislation would fail because it could not get at the root of the trouble and because such laws could not be properly enforced. With this verdict many sociologists are bound to be in disagreement, for while none would question the lawyers' knowledge of their own subject, they are no experts upon the nature and cause of colour discrimination. One lawyer, in the course of a sympathetic discussion of "Human Rights and the Colour Problem",[2] dismisses this question with a quotation from Bryce to the effect that "Good feeling and good manners cannot be imposed by statute". The legal view confounds discrimination with prejudice or antipathy, believing discrim-:inatory actions to be simply the result of the emotional views of individuals, whereas the real relationship is far more complex and varied. Furthermore, it is incorrect to regard the law as being simply the outgrowth of the mores of a society and as a purely passive factor where the attitudes of individuals are concerned.[3] Prejudice and antipathy are social as well as individual phenomena; prejudice may breed discrimination but

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1. e.g. Parliamentary Debates, H. of C., 6.3.1952.
2. L.C. Green, "Human Rights and the Colour Problem", in G.W. Keeton, and G. Schwarzenberger, (eds) Current Legal Problems, 1950.
3. See C. McWilliams, "Race Discrimination and the Law", Science and Society, Vol. 9 (1945)

equally so may discrimination breed prejudice by attracting displaced aggression onto a particular target, and by acting as a medium of indoctrination. Much of the discrimination is practised by people who are not themselves prejudiced but are afraid of other peoples' views on the subject; thus there is a danger that the standards of the country will be set by the most prejudiced. In the case of violently prejudiced individuals all that the law can do is to limit their activities in the same way as it discourages them from committing larceny[1], but where the vast majority of the people are concerned, the law has an important function in setting a standard of behaviour. Moreover, many authorities have come to the conclusion that it is better to attack individual prejudices by preventing discrimination and changing the social context which nearly always tends to favour the perpetuation of existing conventions. The well-known sociologist MacIver has written "Wherever the direct attack is feasible, that is the attack on discrimination itself, it is more promising than the indirect attack, that is, the attack on prejudice as such",[2] and this view finds expression in United States civil rights legislation. The French government has also intervened directly in cases of colour discrimination.[3]

The writers of the United Nations Memorandum on Discrimination come out unequivocally in favour of legislative action. They say that while it may not be possible to eradicate discrimination

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1. For discussion of the pre-requisitions for the elimination of the pathological forms of prejudice, see B. Bettelheim, and M. Janowitz, The Dynamics of Anti-Semitism, 1949, esp. concluding chapter.
2. The More Perfect Union, 1948. p. 247. See also, G.B. Watson, Action for Unity, 1947, p. 148.
3. See Cunard, op. cit., p. 554, and Ottley, op. cit., p. 85.

by law, there are four principal ways in which legislation can assist in preventing it:

> "(a) It fosters the conviction that discrimination is wrong by fixing standards which are respected by the great majority of people.
>
> (b) People who have little respect for the law are nevertheless afraid of the consequences of unlawful conduct; they therefore obey the law in order to avoid its penalties.
>
> (c) In both cases and whatever the motive, the resulting daily behaviour tends to create social customs which are in harmony with the law; these customs constitute a powerful collective force.
>
> (d) The law can also help repair the harm produced by unlawful conduct, in so far as it can provide indemnities and reparation for the person wronged." (1)

A group of Members of Parliament, led by Mr. R. W. Sorenson, recently presented a "Colour Bar Bill" but no time was available on the day allocated for its Second Reading, so it is still in suspension.[2] The Bill declared that:

> "... a person exercises racial discrimination where he refuses, witholds or denies to any person accommodation, advantages, facilities or privileges on account of the race or colour of that person."

and went on to prescribe a fine of not exceeding five pounds for the first offence of any person found guilty of an offence under this Act. It would be impossible to enforce such an act in its entirety, for an employer could not be forced to engage a particular coloured man, nor a landlady to take a coloured lodger, but it could be used in the more clear-cut cases of refusal of admittance to dance halls, restaurants and hotels. It is important to remember that Mr. Constantine only

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1. op. cit. p. 43
2. The bill was to have had its second reading on 6.4.1951.

won his action against Imperial Hotels Ltd. on a technical and purely legal point. Lawyers might object that a law which can be only partially enforced is a bad law, but against this should be set the unquestionably great effect it would have with the coloured minority in providing tangible evidence for the often voiced claim that Britain does not believe in colour bar. Civil Rights legislation in the United States has achieved many successes but it is directed against the more open forms of discrimination where the law can be much more effective.[1] In Britain, legal action is of only limited value and is not by itself sufficient, but it has its part to play.

A more active policy of assisting the colonial minority is as important, or more important, than the prevention of discrim-:ination. A department of the central government could be made responsible for advising local authorities and for seeing that they take action to assist the assimilation of colonial immigrant groups, as groups. Many facilities already exist for individuals in distress. Nothing need be done to diminish the responsibility or municipal authorities for the work which is to be done in their districts but these bodies are often vastly ignorant of the true character of the problems and need advice and prompting. It does not matter greatly which department is given this res-:ponsibility. The Colonial Office would have a certain difficulty in doing the work because of the suspicion with which it is viewed by so many immigrants, but it has experience in this work and people look to it in such matters. The role of

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1. For the credit and debit sides of the balance, see: J.H. Burma, "Race Relations and Anti-Discriminatory Legislation", American Journal of Sociology, Vol LXI (1951) and Green, op. cit.

the central body must be active, not passive; it must not be merely a clearing house for a number of ineffective local committees but must see that their goodwill and their efforts are put to the best possible use, advising them of the progress of other programmes in other parts of the country and making sure that the local offices of other government departments play their part. This sort of policy would not entail any great increase in expenditure and could combine direct action with the influencing of public opinion. The existing situation - or problem as it is loosely called - has its moral as well as its political aspects and the energies of those people who are not at present satisfied that the country has fulfilled its moral obligations to the colonial immigrants could find a place in a government programme on these lines.

If local committees are to be effective they will have to co-operate with the leaders of the coloured groups whether they like their politics or not. There is a dangerous argument which is sometimes advanced by official bodies which are not prepared to work with the leader of a coloured organization. They say that he is not truly representative of his people, that he is not responsible, that he does not concentrate upon the sort of work he might most usefully do, etc., and there is often much truth in this. But there is no other coloured man's leader that they could work with, so they wait for the ideal man to appear from nowhere. It is inevitable that in the present situation of many of the coloured settlements in Britain they should throw up only a certain type of leader. His voice is

one of uncompromising protest and his tongue is bitter. As long as the official and semi-official bodies show no proof of willingness to negotiate, no more moderate leader can ever command a following. Placed in the frustrating position in which no one but his followers will listen to him, the leader's voice becomes shriller and his manner more intractable, but in one dockland area 'extremist' leaders had the chance of co-operating in the more positive work of running a Corporation-financed community centre for the coloured people, and they threw themselves into the task with enthusiasm. The coloured leader is an important man in any programme for improving inter-group relations and the position of the coloured minority (the two go together), for he has the confidence of those elements most ready with criticism and he may be able to bring them in to use their abilities more constructively. But he is in a very delicate position in negotiating with the authorities, for if he is too compliant and fails to voice the protest of his people, they will accuse him of having been bought off and of being an "Uncle Tom". Despite the difficulties in this it is important to encourage the growth in the coloured minority of representative leadership; nothing would be worse than to try to build up the "Uncle Toms" or those who are, as colonials in Stepney say, "John Bull".

The author of a recent pamphlet about coloured people in Britain,[1] after paying a tribute to the work of the Employment Exchanges and offices of the National Assistance Board

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1. A. McCowan: Coloured Peoples in Britain, 1952, A Bow Group Pamphlet

which in the opinion of the present writer is well deserved, goes on to make four proposals for the improvement of the situation. Firstly, "the provision of extra hostel accommodation". Secondly, "an eye must be kept on the slum landlords - the local authority should be available with advice as to their legal rights, and ready, if necessary, to refer lettings themselves to the Rent Tribunal". Thirdly, "where coloured people are eating in cafes which are plainly unhygienic, the local authority has a duty to close them". Fourthly, "the local authority in places where there are many coloured illiterates, should provide evening classes". These suggestions all seem to miss the point and to be based on very little personal acquaintance with the life of the immigrants. They may be answered shortly: in the first place immigrants who have been in this country for any length of time do not want to live in hostels and it is only the shiftless who will live in local authority hostels of the type envisaged; they would be doomed to failure. In the second place the immigrants are more conscious of their legal rights than many of the natives and they are very quick to take their landlords to the Rent Tribunal. In the third place, it is very doubtful how many of these cafes the author has ever entered, let alone inspected the kitchens, for he says elsewhere that "in the East End some of the cafes are hardly fit to eat in". Are the coloured man's cafes any worse than most of the cafes in Stepney? The present writer doubts it very much, and in any case the author of the pamphlet is silent on the fundamental reasons which make the cafes the social centres of the least

settled men and women. In the fourth place, there are not so many illiterates as is often thought, and the local authorities do provide classes; if these classes could be linked with the coloured men's organizations so that the immigrant did not feel shy about going there, they might draw a larger number of coloured men.

Specific proposals must be drawn up for particular neighbourhoods for problems vary from one town to another. Nor will it be of any use providing particular facilities if the coloured people do not want them. Among the general measures that might be taken would be for official bodies to pay more attention to the attitudes of their staff, for it sometimes happens that an individual in the lower ranks of the hierarchy has his own ideas about the right way to treat coloured people, or he draws conclusions from his own experience which make it likely that he will treat them unfairly. Senior officials should not regard the personal views of their juniors as irrelevent to their efficiency in the job as far as this matter is concerned, and they should prevent the growth of unfavourable stereotypes of the coloured man. Officials who are personally hostile to coloured people may not deal with them in an equitable fashion. Even the private conversation of the clerks in the canteen may be important, for if they refer to the immigrants as "niggers" in private this is likely to influence their manner and actions when working in an official capacity.
Of all the non-governmental bodies the most important ones for the improvement of inter-group relations are the Trades Unions, not only because they are often made the channel by

which workers express their fear of competition from immigrants, but because they are in a position to help them gain social acceptance from the other workers. Those immigrants who are skilled workers need not fear discrimination by employers if they have a Union to support them, and in the United States some Unions have made an impressive contribution to the struggle against colour discrimination. The conscientious shop steward in Britain sometimes helps the coloured worker in many ways and sets an invaluable example. The Trades Union Congress has been spending considerable sums for assisting the development in the colonies and it would be illogical if they were to tolerate discrimination at home - yet sections of the movement have demanded or supported discriminatory policies.

The Press has a vested interest in the sensational, but many newspapers have adopted a very responsible attitude and the recent inauguration of a body which proposes to "police" press reports and make representations where necessary is a useful step.[1]

It is sometimes said that if the children were taught not to be antipathetic towards coloured people while they are at school, all would be well when they grow up. There are a number of fallacies in this argument which overlooks the fact that antipathy in young people appears to increase after they leave school and as they learn the views of their elders. Many stories are told by United Kingdom-born coloured people, or by their mothers, how it is just after they leave school that the

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1. Racial Unity

trouble starts. The research of James and Tenen shows that such antipathy as is found among school children is due to lack of acquaintance with coloured people and points the moral that more coloured teaching students might profitably be employed for short periods in English schools. The same applies to the children's parents who are equally unaccustomed to seeing coloured people in responsible positions; the employment of more of them in visible work of a non-labouring nature, such as clerks behind the counter in the Post Office, would help reduce the stereotype of the coloured man as good only for labouring. Several years ago the League of Coloured Peoples produced an excellent booklet entitled Race Relations and the Schools in which a number of teachers examined the way in which school history and geography books treated colonial matters. They found that many of them did so in a way which was bound to give the children an unfavourable impression of coloured people. Ignorance about the colonies is widespread in the British public and this undoubtedly contributes to the antipathy. The informal channels of adult education, such as the pulpit and the social club might be used more than they are for imparting such knowledge and for pointing out some of the questions of etiquette involved in contacts with particular groups of strangers. Educational programmes would do well to be based upon the material which has been provided by U.N.E.S.C.O. in its campaign to improve inter-group relations.

Public bodies have a great advantage over private organizations in dealing with coloured immigrants, for in many ways the coloured man will prefer the impersonal atmosphere of the

government office to the overpersonal atmosphere of an organization which is being friendly towards him because he is coloured. Private agencies can do work which governmental bodies never can, but they are also capable of doing great harm through lack of tact or feeling for the sensitivities of the minority group.[1] Good intentions are not sufficient and they are frequently open to misinterpretation. The evangelical approach is likely to run foul of the immigrants' desire to keep their own self-respect and pride, and trying to do this they may refuse genuine offers of friendship from other people. There are obvious difficulties in bringing ~~to~~ groups together with the object of creating friendship; where two groups come together in pursuit of a common aim the friendships which are formed will be more spontaneous and with less of the flavour of artificiality.

In any discussion of social policy towards the coloured

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1. Henry Mayhew, in the course of his monumental study, London Labour and the London Poor, was approached by many people who wished to make gifts of money to some of the unfortunate characters he had described. On the back pages of the cover of the twopenny parts in which it was published in 1851, Mayhew replied to correspondents, telling them that such gifts would do more harm than good; instead he set up a fund for making loans to people who might benefit from having a small amount of capital to establish a small business. Loans were made only to people whose projects had a good chance of success and who would repay the fund. How much has been learned in the last hundred years? Such a scheme to-day could do much to help the more deserving immigrants to escape from the poor living conditions to which they are condemned, and indeed, a private person in Stepney has been able to do a little in the way of lending money for the purchase of houses with notable success. The administration of such schemes would not be easy, and they would, of course, leave some of the underlying causes of trouble untouched.

minority the thorny question of the repatriation of immigrants considered undesirable is certain to be raised. By itself it is no solution though the attaining of self government by some colonies may draw back a few of their expatriates. In a brief return visit to the coloured quarter of Stepney in 1954 I obtained the impression that the methods used in suppressing Mau Mau had exacerbated anti-British feeling amongst the coloured population, but at the same time the gap between the 'respectable' stratum and the men who offend against British social conventions had widened. If immigrants of the latter category could be induced to accept repatriation when their personal circumstancesdispose them towards it, this would make matters easier for their more law-abiding brethren. If such a policy should ever be contemplated it should not be restricted to coloured persons but should include Maltese, among others. In the present state of inter-group relations it can safely be prophesied that a policy of repatriation would be viewed with suspicion by responsible coloured opinion if voluntary, and bitterly opposed if it were made compulsory.

The most harmonious relations between the two groups are to be obtained neither by dispersal nor by the creation of English Harlems. Lack of organization on the part of the immigrants does not aid assimilation when the principal obstacle to this is the unwillingness of the other group to accept them, and so long as such unwillingness prevails immigrant organizations have an important part to play in helping individuals and in fighting for equality. They can also be a means whereby the

immigrants can discipline those of their number who get them a bad name and this will be to the benefit of both parties. Asdand if assimilation proceeds, immigrant organizations founded purely on a basis of colour should wither away.

Many people believe that "something should be done" about the coloured groups in dockland areas and their conditions, but there can be no immediate solution to the problems involved. It is, therefore, all the more important that any programmes which are put into practice are based upon a realistic assess-:ment of the situation and an acceptance of the fact that only limited success can be achieved in alleviating the symptoms of a major political and economic disequilibrium.

APPENDIX

INTERVIEWS WITH EMPLOYERS

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APPENDIX : INTERVIEWS WITH EMPLOYERS

METHOD OF ENQUIRY

From the analysis of the occupations of coloured workmen it was apparent that only in the Clothing and Building industries would there be a sufficient proportion of coloured employees for quantitative data regarding discrimination to be of any significance. Circumstances vary so much between the different industries that they cannot be lumped together. Random samples giving a representative selection of firms in each of these industries were constructed from the Employment Exchange's register of employers. Being based on the number of firms, rather than the distribution of the labour force, the samples tend to underweight the larger firms and these are more likely to employ coloured men than the smaller firms.

Altogether there were 505 firms in the Men's Tailoring section of the Clothing industry, employing 11% of the male and 21% of the female labour force. (Figures for March 1951 before the recession in trade which occurred later in the year: 6,589 males and 7,522 females were employed). There were 37 Building and Contracting firms employing 5% of the male labour force (2,408 persons), and a small number of females. Questionnaires were sent out to every twentieth firm in the Men's Tailoring section of the Clothing industry and every second firm in the Building and Contracting industry; replies were obtained in every case, either by post or by a personal call. Whenever an employer had engaged coloured workmen a personal interview was sought and in only one case was this refused, though in two others employers were reluctant to receive the investigator

and the information had to be obtained over the telephone. Several employers who had had no direct experience of coloured workers nevertheless made some interesting observations in completing the questionnaire and in these cases also were interviews obtained. The questionnaire and interview schedule used are reproduced on pages 395 - 397.

Demand for unskilled labour is not concentrated in any one industry, and as most of the unskilled coloured workers find their work outside the boundaries of Stepney it was not possible to conduct this part of the enquiry on the basis of a random sample. Acting on the advice of the Employment Exchange officials, a list was compiled of the ten firms which had employed the largest number of coloured labourers, separate letters were written to the Personnel Managers of each firm and in all cases interviews were granted.

Thus the fifty firms covered by the enquiry fall into three radically different and contrasting categories. The Clothing industry is highly specialized, work is contracted out to small workshops and the industry is very sensitive to market fluctuations. Little equipment is necessary and suitable premises can be rented for short periods, with the result that small firms spring up to meet a temporary demand, then after a period of perhaps less than three months trading they may close down; the premises are vacated and the employer looks to an opportunity in another branch of the trade. The employers are almost entirely Jewish: workers are engaged only for such periods as work is available and during that time they have to work very hard. "Sweating" has died away but the conditions that gave rise to it have not entirely disappeared and something

of the atmosphere lingers still. The workshops are mostly small, work is individual and a man's position dependsupon his skill: the employer usually works at a bench himself and is in close contact with his employees who may number ten to twelve. In the Building Industry, however, the employers are almost invariably Gentiles and the work demands a different physique and a different set of attitudes. A Building and Contracting firm needs much more valuable capital equipment and employers cannot afford to disperse a trained staff accustomed to working together whenever demand falls off. In the small firms engaged on repair work it is common for a vacancy to be filled by a member of the staff's introducing someone known to him. In many ways the differences in the economic structures of small Tailoring and Building firms produce different kinds of relationships between the workers in them. The firms employing coloured men as labourers were for the most part large concerns and the work for which they were required was of a particularly rough or unpleasant nature for which the employers found it difficult to get workers of any sort. The workmen could never obtain any personal satisfaction from such work and relationships with the foreman would often be hostile or negative.

Wages in the Clothing industry were high but uncertain and they depended upon the amount of work which was available. At the time when the interviews were carried out an Under-Presser might bring in £10 for a week's work whereas a qualified painter who worked the normal hours on weekdays, plus Saturday morning, would earn £7 - £8. An unskilled labourer would bepaid about £5. 15/- but overtime might bring this up to £6.10/-, and by

working all day Saturday and Sunday - as some colonials do - he might approach the £10 figure. These figures are for earnings before taxation.

In interviewing employers the schedule was used as a guide and not as a questionnaire, for circumstances vary between firms and industries and so do the responses of employers. The aim of the interview was to discover what the person interviewed - usually the manager - knew of the coloured workmen he had employed, the positions they had held and the opportunities open to them. It was considered preferable to employ "open-ended" questions and observe what things the employer thought significant regarding the matter, rather than to insist on an answer to a question which might never have occurred to the employer in the same form. ~~An employer's action is based upon his knowledge of the situation and his construction of it.~~ There is a danger in pressing for information in that some employers are resistant to the demands of the research worker: it is unwise to impose upon them or to antagonize them because another investigator may want to interview them on some future occasion.

In the first question, a note was made of the period of time to which the answer referred, frequently the origin of immigrants could not be elicited with any accuracy. Question Four had to be answered by estimation as too much work would have been involved to give any precise calculation except in the cases where only a few men had been employed: estimation is not a reliable measure of turnover and there may have been a tendency to magnify the turnover rate. Some questions, such as Nine and Thirteen, were not always asked because in

the clothing industry, for example, they will not reveal any variation. In other cases questions were anticipated by observations in answer to previous questions. Question Eleven was included so as to bring out stereotyped conceptions of the Negro immigrant. One general conclusion from the interviews was that the more analytic questions, such as number Eight, and the vague questions, such as number Seventeen, were not very successful: managers usually did not know a great deal about the subject and were chary of expressing their personal opinion, perhaps because they were interviewed in their official capacity.

THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

From: 39 Horton Road,
London, E.8

1st October, 1951

Dear Sir,

The University of Edinburgh is organizing research into the present situation of coloured colonial persons in this country; the work is being done with the approval and assistance of the Government departments concerned. We have chosen a small sample representative of employers in Stepney and are asking if you would help us by completing and returning the lower portion of this page; a stamped addressed envelope is enclosed. Individual replies will be treated in strict confidence.

. . . . . .

Questionnaire No. .....

(a) Have you employed any coloured persons of Negro descent during the past ten years?
..... Males .....Females

(b) If you have <u>not</u> employed any, has this been because -
(a) there have been no qualified applicants .....
(b) any other reason (please state) .....

(c) Are you willing to engage such people at present if there is work to be done and they are able to do it? .....
Or would you require them to fulfil any particular conditions? .....

(d) Would you be willing to give a short interview to a University investigator for the purpose of obtaining other relevant information? .....

Interview Schedule No. .....

Check completion of questionnaire

1. How many of the following categories have you employed?

	Males	Females
West Indians	.....	.....
West Africans	.....	.....
Somalis	.....	.....
Pakistanis	.....	.....
Maltese	.....	.....
Others	.....	.....

2. How many Negroes are you employing at present? .....

3. In what kind of Work? .....

4. In how many cases, past and present, has employment lasted -

   (a) Less than one week .....
   (b) More than one week, less than one month .....
   (c) More than one month, less than one year .....
   (d) More than one year .....

5. For what reasons has employment been terminated?

6. Are you willing to engage others if qualified? .....
   Would you require any particular conditions to be fulfilled?

7. What are the comparative labour turnover rates with British workers of comparable categories? .....

8. Have any of the men shown an attitude towards work and wage earning different from British workers? .....
   Preference for working overtime? .....

9. How many have become, or are likely to become, suitable for promotion or responsibility? .....

10. Have they shown any particular characteristics as workmen, such as slowness, ambition, thoroughness, reluctance to change, etc.?

11. To what do you attribute their failings?

12. How many apply for employment independently of the Employment Exchange? Do you find that they make better employees?

13. Do you find it better to arrange their employment in any particular way, such as singly, or in teams of men of the same colour?

14. What have been the reactions of other employees to
(a) the idea of employing coloured persons?
(b) the individuals employed?

15. Have the trade unions taken any interest or action in this matter?

16. Are you able to make any comparisons between Negro workers and other non-Europeans? or
Other immigrant groups, such as the Poles?

17. Can you offer any other information or observations regarding the employment of coloured immigrants and likely future developments which you may feel to be relevant?

THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY

By taking every twentieth firm in category W.A. (of the Standard Industrial Classification) appearing in the Employment Exchange register a sample was obtained consisting of twenty-five firms; one was a large factory employing several hundreds, one a smaller factory (47 men, 47 women) and the remaining 23 were small workshops (average 6 men, 5 women). The sample was taken at a time when trade was slack, but numbers of employees per firm were reported several months earlier when trade conditions were better.

Nine of the 25 employers had employed Negroes, and of these, one stated that he was not prepared to engage others. As he was unwilling to give an interview, the extent of his experience could not be ascertained, but he reported that men had been employed "only for short periods due to inefficiency" and "in my opinion they are not skilled enough for my type of work". In another case, a firm had employed a coloured man for the last four years, but only for sweeping out the premises.

Two of the remaining seven firms were employing coloured men at the time of interviewing; the large factory was employing four as pressers, and one workshop employed one presser and one tailor. That no more were employed in the sample may have been due to the slack state of the trade: coloured employees are likely to be laid off first because they have not been with the firm so long as some of the local employees and often they are not of equal skill. When asked how many Negroes had been employed, all these employers gave numbers referring to the previous 3 - 5 years and it would appear that

the entry of Negroes into the clothing trade is of recent date. It was impossible to be certain whether the man they had employed had been West Africans or West Indians, but the total number of Negroes employed by these seven firms, over about 4 years, was 28 men and 14 women. One firm had engaged 4 Pakistanis but there were no reports of Somalis or Maltese. Of the 28, four had been employed as tailors, one as a baister and the remainder as pressers or underpressers. Some women were employed as felling hands, but the majority were machinists. These seven firms did not appear to be in any way different from those firms which had employed no coloured men; in this seven were included the two big employers, but the five workshops were of slightly below average size. Employment of coloured men did not correlate with the employment of either a large or a small female staff, nor apparently with all-Jewish firms, though in any case, Jewish influence has moulded the whole of the clothing industry in Stepney.

Employers relied upon their memory to give information about how long coloured men had remained in their employ; their answers may be expressed as follows:

	Total	Firm 1 (large factory)	Firm 2 (small factory)	Firms 3 (workshops)	4	5	6	7
Less than one week	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
More than one week less than one month)	8	5	-	-	-	3	-	-
More than one month less than one year)	29	18	4	2	2	1	-	2
More than one year	7	2	2	-	-	-	3	-

No significant comparisons can be based upon so small a sample; differences such as that between firms 5 and 6 may be due to conditions of employment rather than the adjustment

of the employees, though, as it happens, the possibility in this particular case was not confirmed by answers to other questions during the interview. Firm One had discharged one man for repeatedly leaving the building without permission; the remainder had "mostly left of their own accord, after coming as trainees and gaining a little experience they think they are worth more"; four were still employed. Firm Two: one man left "on account of his feeling that all the world was against him", three failed to return after a slack period during which they had been laid off. It was thought that one man whom they had employed several years previously had been discharged. Firm Three: the employer said he had spent time and trouble training these two men, but during a boom period they left him to work where they could get higher wages; this work lasted only three weeks and then they came and asked for their old jobs back (without success). Firm Four stated that employees had left of their own accord. Firm Five stated that two of the men had been discharged because they worked too slowly. Firm Six was still employing two of the men, the third had not returned after having been laid off. With case of Firm Seven employment had been terminated during slack periods. Only in the case of Firm One could any answer about comparative turnover rates be of significance, and in this case it was reported that white and coloured turnover rates were "about the same".

All these seven employers were willing to engage other coloured men; one made the reservation (Firm Three) that he was not prepared to engage men who would require training and

another (Firm Seven) that though he had engaged one coloured woman he had turned away others because, he said, there was not much work for women and he was afraid of the girls on his staff objecting if too many were employed. This employer reported that he had had several coloured women living in other districts come round enquiring for work; in the late afternoon there appears to be quite a high proportion of coloured women walking along the streets or standing at bus stops as if they have finished their day's work and are off home. If, as appears probable, there is a slight concentration of women employees in the area, the women obtain their work independently of the Employment Exchange and it is more probably due to the amount of work available to machinists, etc. in the dressmaking trade than to employers in this area being so much more favourably inclined towards coloured people.

It would have been difficult to get specific answers to question ten and subsequent questions, indeed there was little point in asking number thirteen in the clothing workshops because each employee works at his own bench and the work cannot be organized in any other way. However it was interesting to get the employer's general reactions and to see which points came first to his mind. Arising from questions eight and ten the following general opinions emerged:

> Coloured employees are very keen on bargaining over wage rates, they object to deductions but may be unwilling to make up lost time; they are well conversant with wages offered by other firms and will readily move when they see a chance of betterment - one employer (not Firm One, already

> referred to in this context) said "Once you teach them they go away". There are individual variations in speed and thoroughness but there is a general tendency for the coloured men(especially the West Africans) to be slow workers. One employer thought it worth remarking that one West African had been very anti-British and the manager of this large factory said "Especially after they have been here for a little time, they tend to develop a persecution complex which is quite unjustified. If you point out to them that their work is not up to standard they say 'You're only picking on me because of my colour' ".

Employers in the clothing trade showed a marked reluctance to ascribe failings of coloured workmen to any particular cause. Question eleven was inserted to get information about stereotyped views of coloured people, but all that one employer could say was "Its chiefly inexperience, one of the men had been a seaman before"; another added "They're naturally slow, it may be their upbringing", but the great majority disclaimed any knowledge of these matters.

Promotion in the sense of moving from Under-Presser to Top-Presser is open to anyone, but there will be no promotion to supervisory work except in a few cases in factories or if a man sets up a workshop of his own. It is common for firms to obtain employees through advertising rather than through the Employment Exchange, and in some cases through the Trade Union, so no difference was observed between men "from the Exchange"

and those who sought their own work. No Trade Union interest or action was reported. No employer instanced any case of conflict or antagonism from non-coloured towards coloured workers, and several stated that the former had been very friendly and accepted the latter as fellow workers without any trouble. The interviews yielded no reliable data about the comparative ability of immigrant workers of different ethnic origin, one firm preferred Pakistanis to West Africans or West Indians, but another firm thought them of lower intelligence. The last question provoked only three responses. "We find 'em O.K."; "if they could rid themselves of this persecution complex there would be no difficulty" and a third "a lot of people think this part is becoming degraded. There are a lot of girls from the North preying on the seamen - you see a lot of them at night".

Sixteen firms out of the 25 stated that they had employed no coloured persons. Twelve of them said this was because there had been no qualified applicants and that they were willing to engage coloured people without requiring them to fulfil any particular conditions. One firm had employed Pakistanis and was willing to take Negroes. One employer expressed the doubt that none of the coloured men were sufficiently skilled to do the top grade work in which his firm specializes. In two cases it was said that while there was no objection this firm was small andhardly likely to take on new employees of any sort. Additional to the 12 was one case where the employer replied "We have had no occasion to add to our small staff of three during the past ten years and are hardly likely to change - whether white or coloured".

In reply to the question was he willing to engage coloured people, he wrote "Am not sure if we would. From our very limited experience we think the language difficulty would greatly prevent engaging any" (sic).

The remaining three cases were of an unequivocal refusal to engage coloured men from firms who had not previously employed them; in all cases the firms were workshops of below average size. The first employer said that his staff might object, that he required only experienced men and none of the coloured men were experienced enough, that his was a small specialized firm and that "they might be alright in a factory". The second said that once or twice the Employment Exchange had sent round coloured men but they were not skilled enough and he had not engaged them; he added that the other employees might object to his employing men below the required standard of skill and would regard it as a form of wage cutting and competition. The third employer was unwilling to give any reasons for his refusal.

These results cannot be summarized in any simple manner. Of 25 firms, four refused to take coloured men, one of these four had employed some, one may have had a little experience, two had none. Both these employers gave somewhat inconsistent replies which appeared to be justifications for a policy based upon other reasons. The employers have not yet accepted the entry of coloured immigrants into the trade and are reluctant to believe that they possess the necessary skill. Of the 21 non-discriminating firms a fair proportion would not take coloured men with any readiness and might find reasons for

refusing the individual applicant. However, this 21 includes the two employers with a combined staff many times greater than that of all the others put together; the large firms feel the labourshortage more acutely and they can afford to train and supervise underskilled employees.

On the other hand it is clear that many of the coloured people are below prevailing standards of skill. West Indians may have been machinists before migration but many immigrants enter the trade as a soaper and try to pick up what is required of the next grade - Under Presser; then they may persuade an employer to take them as Under Pressers on probation and while the job may not last long they may, nevertheless, gain experience and obtain some instruction. Entering the trade in this manner is a logical course for the immigrant but it is unlikely to appeal to the employer. Discrimination is uneven in its incidence and one immigrant known to the investigator who had many years' experience as a tailor in the West Indies and in India proved quite unable to get any work as a tailor; he took a job finally as an Under Presser and the employer put him on tailoring work but would not pay him the rate for the job, so eventually he left the industry altogether.

THE BUILDING INDUSTRY

A sample was taken of every second firm in category AB of the Standard Industrial Classification, producing 19 cases; of these one firm had closed down and one hadleft the district since the compilation of the register, no substitutions were made. Two further cases were discarded - one two-man plumbing firm with no employees, one firm which contracts out and engages no staff, leaving a final sample of 15 firms. These fall into two categories, the small jobbing firm with few employees and a low proportion of unskilled or semi-skilled men, secondly, contract work where a large firm with head-quarters outside the area is responsible for building a block of flats, or suchlike, and maintains an agent who hires labour accordingly to requirements; in this case more unskilled men will be required and less exacting standards may in some cases be required of those who are rated as skilled; the number of men employed will fluctuate.

Of the 15 firms in the sample, 12 fall within the first category and 4 of these had employed coloured workmen. Firm Twentysix is marginal as the man was engaged over six years previously when labour was particularly scarce. The employer stated that relations between the coloured man and the other workers were not good and that he had to take the foreman to task for using "objectionable expressions". He avoided any direct answer when asked if he were willing to engage coloured men, saying "there are no skilled men among them - if there were we wouldn't hesitate". In Firm Twentyseven a coloured man was employed as a labourer and left of his own accord after two months; relations between him and the other employees

were "not too bad". The firm is however unwilling to engage others because they have to work on their clients premises andare afraid of objections from them. Firm Twentyeight engaged two coloured men as painters over six years ago, employment lasted in one case between a week and a month and in the other over a year: both men were discharged as being not up to the required standards of skill. The foreman said that there were no conflicts with the other employees and both the men were very willing to slapdash and with "little ambition" - he attributes this to "lack of experience and general understanding". The Manager said he was willing to engage others but "had his doubts about it"; he said he himself had no objections but his clients might; his firm had been doing some interior work in a high-class residential area where some of the flats were occupied by single women who "would not feel safe" if left alone with a coloured man working in a flat". Firm Twentynine had employed five Negro males during the past three years, two as carpenters, one French Polisher, one painter and one labourer. In one case a man was discharged within a week, in the other cases within a month; their behaviour was said to have been such as to invite discharge and the turnover rate amongst the coloured men had been much higher than that which they would normally expect. In answer to question six the employer said he was willing to engage coloured men if it was absolutely certain that they were properly qualified; but it transpired in the course of the interview that on more than one occasion the Employment Exchange had offered to send round a coloured applicant and this had

been refused. It was said that none of the five men hadbeen clean, that at first they were subdued but afterwards became aggressive and that some of them wanted to sit and sleep all the time. They immediately claimed the highest rates of pay current in the trade and were liable to be very threatening and abusive. Their behaviour was attribued to strangeness to the country and being away from hom - "the only dark ones amongst whites". The other employees were said not to mind the employment of coloured men, "the foreman helped one of them all he could" and they mixed well together. The employer was keen to point out this "we're not slave drivers here" and claimed that there was no colour prejudice on his part. He thought the local authority should establish some scheme of training and testing these men, saying that if the present position continued all employers would refuse to take them.

Of the eight small firms with no experience of coloured workmen, 5 stated that they were willing to employ them and 3 were not. Two of the five cases are not beyond doubt. Firm Thirtythree specializes in the building of Bakery Ovens and believes there are no coloured men with the requisite experience, but even then "our staff might object". Firm Thirtyfour employs a large number of skilled men for the maintenance of house property and declares that no colour discrimination will be practised yet it is impossible to be sure that the foreman, or a low ranking official responsible for engaging labour, may not have other ideas. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the forced-answer questionnaire or interview does not correspond to the situation in which the real

decisions are made. When questioned, the employer is inclined to disavow discrimination; in practice he may rationalize it and this may have been the case when, telephoning a firm to ask them to return the questionnaire and taking the opportunity to ask if they would employ coloured men, I was told "I don't think so" but the questionnaire came back "yes". The person who answered the telephone may not have been in a position to state the employer's policy but a more likely explanation is unwillingness to admit to the likelihood of discrimination when the employer has never had to consider the engagement of a coloured workman in practice.

Three firms had not employed any coloured workmen and were not willing to do so: Firm Thirtyfive was willing to engage them "as a last resort. I consider that the criterion here is not so much the quality of the individual as his acceptability amongst the existing staff. Refusal here might be disastrous". Employers who had not employed coloured men were not usually interviewed but an exception was made in this case. The work of the firm consisted of maintenance and repair work in the premises of other firms and the employer was afraid that some of his clients might object and this was a risk he could not afford to take. He volunteered the opinion that there would be no objection from Jewish clients but only from the "ill-educated sort" who would simply say "I don't want a nigger in my place" and refuse any explanation. Firm Thirty-six provided a similar reply "we are a jobbing shop and we think clients might object if we sent coloured men on their premises" In the case of Firm Thirtyseven the employer was very

month and one year, before becoming redundant. The agent, the man on the spot, was willing to engage others but said he thought the other workmen would never accept a coloured man as chargehand. As workmen, he found the immigrants slow, "they're plodders, but they do their best. Ambition isn't in them". He said he was aware that many coloured men especially Indians, were very well educated and were intellectuals "but these men aren't really educated well enough for work in the building class". Relations with other employees had been good. In his answer to the last question there was a reflection of the general labour situation when he said "on contract work we're only too glad to take anyone we can get". Firm Forty is a very large firm indeed, employing many labourers in the docks; the administrative department had wished to take on some coloured students at one time, for short period clerical work, but this had been vetoed by the Head Office "because it leads to trouble". A few coloured workmen had been employed as fitters with whites acting as fitters' mates which led to some tension, but the great majority had been employed as labourers. Despite considerable persistence on the part of the investigator it proved impossible to get any detailed information. The firm had to draw upon a large pool of casual labour in which the coloured men were only "a drop in the ocean" and there was a turnover rate of about 50% per week for both coloured and whites which entailed considerable expense in the payment of National Insurance stamps for broken periods. The local manager considered that about ten coloured workmen were employed at that time, and that there had been about a hundred in the past six years, but very

few labourers of any origin remained for any length of time.

In view of the fact that over 7% of the coloured labour force are registered as workers in the Building trade (painters, carpenters, bricklayers, etc.), apart from large numbers of labourers, it is striking that only four of the twelve small firms had ever engaged coloured workmen, and that in three of these cases their experience of coloured workmen had been minute and had only occurred at a time of general labour scarcity. Only one firm had a definitely discouraging experience of them. Three of the other eight small firms admit discrimination and several of the others express doubts. To say that "the criterion is not so much the quality of the individual as his acceptability ..." is a formula for discrimination which a number of employers adopt without their knowing any case of a coloured workman proving unacceptable to workers or clients. Discrimination is not justified by racialist doctrines but by circumstantial arguments and there is a general conviction that no coloured men are likely to be skilled in their trade; this may be true, but the employers who advance this argument are usually without any evidence for it. Coloured labour is regarded as a last resort and those coloured men who are employed in the trade are nearly all employed by the larger firms and contractors who feel the shortage of labour more acutely. There is reason to think that on the whole, coloured workmen in this trade are below average standards of skill and some have taken advantage of a loosening of requirements to become registered as painters, but this does not justify discrimination which is always practised against individuals and not against averages.

Though the enquiry did not reveal many cases of employers turning down coloured applicants there would appear to be, either potentially or in fact, widespread discrimination in the building industry in this neighbourhood.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF LABOURERS

Seventy per cent of the coloured labour force is unskilled and finds employment as labourers, stokers, porters, and machine operators; a large proportion of these men are employed outside the Borough of Stepney in large factories further to the east, which, having a heavy demand for unskilled labour, have been hard pressed to get as many workers as they have required. A list was compiled of the more important of these firms and interviews obtained with the personnel managers Most of this data will have to be presented separately in conjunction with other information about the firm but the following table may present an overall picture of certain factors.

	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
males employed at time of interview	21	1	1	7	16	25	31	0	25	0
in the past	NA	10	10	80	100	NA	NA	90	100	150
Work	unskilled	u/sk	1 s/sk	u/sk	1 sk 15 u/sk	2 sk 7 s/sk 16 u/sk	2 sk 29 u/sk	-	u/sk & s/sk	u/sk
Length of employment (approx.) (a)	10% 80% 6% 4%	-	40% 60%	25% 45% 10% 0%	2% (b) 3% " 5% " 90% "	0(c) 0 " 16 " 9 "	0(c) 2 " 23 " 6 "	60% 30% 10% -	0% 5% 90% 5%	2% 20% 58% 2%
Comparative turnover of Negro workers	x5 higher	x2 higher	higher	equal	higher now falling	higher now falling	Incomparably higher.	very much higher	much higher	

NA - Not Available.

(a) in four categories as in interview schedule
Under one week
Under one week less than one month) by estimation.
Under one month less than one year)
Over one year

(b) Wartime experience under control of engagements order

(c) Categorized according to length of employment of those currently employed.

The Personnel Manager of Firm Fortyone was very frank; he said that after the war they had experienced an acute shortage of labour and they took on two batches of coloured workmen, the first of about 20 Negroes, none of whom lasted more than a week, then of a much larger number of Pakistanis none of whom were strong enough to do the work, which is the "heaviest type of labouring - local labour won't look at it and I don't blame them". The firm had to turn to coloured men in times of labour shortage but they preferred whites, not on racial grounds but because of their greater continuity in employment. More recently about 50 coloured men, mostly West Africans had been employed: the personnel manager estimated that of these five had remained less than one week, 40 less than one week, more than one month, 3 more than one month less than one year, and 3 more than one year; this turnover was at least five times higher than the turnover rate with local labour. The coloured men, he said, tended to work for a week or two and after drawing their wages stop work of their own accord, very few were even sacked and then only for continued absenteeism. While they were in work they showed a preference for "all imaginable" overtime and a desire to earn as much as possible, but the work itself was such that no one could take a pride in it or regard it as anything but "a grind". None of the coloured workers had become suitable for promotion but one might possibly be appointed in charge of a shift. He said that as workmen their principal characteristic was discontinuity and went on to observe "those who speak good English and are bright, usually ask after a while if they can be transferred to the top shop and we have to

refuse them because the others would want to go too. The work in the top shop is much lighter, in fact we've got girls doing some of it and we have no difficulty in getting staff for the top shop, its only in the bottom one where there are vacancies. In effect this is a colour bar and I can't say I like it". When asked to what he attributed the failings of coloured men he replied "You're asking me to find fault with my fellow human beings"; he attributed the trouble to the irregularity of work in West Africa and suggested that the men were not used to continuous work. Before engaging any man this firm insisted on having a reference from his previous employer, if it was a bad one in all probability they would still engage him, but"we know where we stand". Coloured men were spread out evenly over the various shifts rather than being grouped together; in the event of a fight both men would be discharged without any attempt to assess responsibility. There had been some resentment ~~as~~ over the employment of coloured labour but for the most part the attitude was one of "don't care" and one coloured workman who was "better balanced" had become very popular. The Manager responsible for the selection of chargehands, however, was prejudiced against coloured men which restricted their opportunities of advancement. At one time the staff believed one "coloured boy" to have severe venereal disease and tended to generalize that they must all have it; from this arose a demand for separate lavatory accommodation which, however, was never pressed. Summing up the experience of his firm the personnel manager concluded that for the coloured

population "there will be friction in any time of stress". At the time of interview Firm Fortytwo made a practice of employing Pakistanis but not West Africans or West Indians; before the war they had engaged two UK-born Negroes who had been good and popular workmen and one was still with the firm. During the war they had employed some West Africans whom they found "difficult to handle" and "belligerent". The work for which the men were required was of a very unskilled nature feeding machines, and the manager of the machine floor had said that he didn't want any more Negroes, so the firm had drawn entirely upon Pakistanis. It is interesting to note that the superior officials of the firm responsible for engaging men had not questioned this refusal, nor did they know on what grounds it was based. Altogether they had employed about ten Negroes and more than 100 Pakistanis among whom the labour turnover rate was approximately 5% - 42% - 43% - 10% in the four categories of the schedule. The firm preferred white employees as no language difficulty arose but the labour turnover rate of whites had been worse during recent months; this was attributed to a "bad spell" and a preference for outdoor work in summer. For the first time in many years there were no vacancies and a preference for whites could be exercised. The Pakistanis would work twenty four hours a day if they could, they sometimes worked double shifts and did all the overtime they could get, but they were rather slow in their work and the only man to be promoted to the operator grade has been a Ceylonese. It was stated that, presumably on account of families in Pakistan, very few of them paid Income Tax, that

this might explain their greater demand for overtime, that they boasted of their exemption in this respect and that it aroused jealousy from the whites. Otherwise relations with the staff appeared to be "fairly good". The Pakistanis used separate lavatories (it should be noticed that these men follow an orthodox Muslim practice in the use of a W.C. of squatting with the feet on the seat, and often leave it in a condition objectionable to a subsequent user. This does not apply in the case of West Africans or West Indians and it is always important to note this distinction when there is any question of separate lavatory accommodation). There had once been a protest from the Shop Steward over the increased proportion of coloured labour employed but it was explained that no other labour was available and this was accepted. The Manager said that in the event of one being sick of going away one of his countrymen always turned up to take his place and it appeared that bribery was sometimes involved; this would indicate considerable informal organization among these immigrants. The Manager believed that most of the coloured men in the district were seamen ashore for short periods awaiting the turn-round of their ship.

Firm Fortythree had employed coloured workmen only during the previous two and a half years, and were prepared to take them on "to a limited extent if no other labour is available". They had employed ten Negroes, four of whom had been there between a week and a month, six between a month and a year, one of whom was still employed and was on semi-skilled work; this turnover rate was twice as high as would be expected with whites. The men had left of their own accord, apparently

because they thought they could get higher money elsewhere. "They seem to know what they can get anywhere and are up to all the moves of getting round the Assistance Board and Employment Exchange. They know they're given the benefit of the doubt more than the white man". Speaking more generally the Personnel Manager said:

> " They're sensitive and don't want to work in the open but prefer to be somewhere out of sight. They work slowly on a basis of 'little and often' just like the ordinary coolie labourer. They've got no initiative, but those that have been in the country for any length of time are generally pretty steady. The one man who's been with us for six months has settled down, but he's been in the country for ten years. Then, they're accustomed to living with very few amenities - one man set himself to get £25 for his mother in Sierra Leone and he lived on next to nothing until he'd got it. It only took him about six weeks but he only brought bread with him to eat. They can live on next to nothing down in Stepney. One man turned out to be an epileptic - they're funny like that you know, you never know where you are with them".

He attributed these failings to the fact that "they're not far enough along the scale of civilisation, it's their general living conditions and education". Chances of promotion were slight and rather than finding that men who applied for work independently of the Employment Exchange made better employees, it was sometimes the reverse, and some workers would tell a friend to come round and then declare 'I won't come unless he comes too'. The immigrants work better entirely on their own and "if they can be put in a little place of their own they go on quietly. They don't mix well, he said, or work in with the whites, and show no team spirit; the whites are tolerant and have no great objections but there is little contact and the men tend to segregate in the canteen. In conclusion the Personnel Manager said:

" We would prefer not to employ them, we've got a leaning towards our own folks. Now, when I was on the Merseyside I had one coloured man who made an excellent night storekeeper, it fitted in with his type of mentality. He was reliable and neat - more so than some of the whites - and all he had to do was to hand out tools as they were required. He was one of the best types I've ever come across. Of course, I've been out in India and Africa and have seen some very skilled coloured men, especially in Calcutta, and the intelligent native is a very good fellow, but the nearer they are to nature, and the nearer they are to the Equator, the better they are, and the more they're left to their own kind of labour the better it is. I've had quite a lot of experience of coolie labour at sea, too, and if you treat 'em right, they're O.K.".

Firm Fortyfour has employed about 100 coloured men since the war, and about 80 of these have been Negroes. At the time of the interview seven Negroes were employed there and it was said that they would be engaged only as a last resort. Approximate length of employment has been 25% - 45% - 10% - 0%, in the categories of the schedule and when asked how this compared with local labour the Manager replied "This is a bad area for white labour, but worse for Negroes: altogether its pretty chronic". In about one case in ten men have been discharged on disciplinary grounds, in almost all the others the men have left of their own accord. This occurs frequently after a refusal to make advance payments out of wages and by leaving the firm a man may expect to get his money more quickly. The Manager believed that many of the men were seamen who were ashore for a short period only. The work is unskilled foundry labouring and the firm tries to upgrade men where possible but the only coloured man who had been found suitable was a U.S. Negro. As workmen, he said, the Negroes are dreadfully slow, lacking in intelligence and will to work, "they have no ambition—

work is just a horrible necessity", but they very quickly demand a 'sub' (i.e. an advance of wages). He attributed their feelings to "the way they've been brought up in their own country. They don't have to work hard there, there's plenty of cheap labour, plenty of men to do one job". He said he had heard that in one foundry in India "they" were not intelligent enough to use wheelbarrows and that carrying work had to be done by hand. The other workmen regarded the employment of Negroes as a necessary evil, but they got on alright because they were all of much the same type; they mixed together during the lunch break and the skilled men were only too pleased to have any kind of labourers to help them in their work. The Manager concluded "they are only employed as an absolute expedient but we would always choose the better man whether coloured or white ... some of them are very communistic, you know".

Since the beginning of the war Firm Fortyfive had employed about 100 Negroes for labouring work for a very warm nature, akin to stoking. There had been a smaller proportion of good workmen among them than among the whites but labour turnover had been equal at about 2% - 5% - 5% - 88% in the four categories of the schedule - this had been chiefly during the war when the Control of Engagement Order was in force and the only men to leave after a short period had been seamen, most of the others had left of their own accord. The policy of the firm was not to engage any more coloured men except in unusual cases, such as when men had been with the firm before and had a good record. This change in policy was due to the objections

of other workmen: the warm work made the mean sweat profusely, and having to be together in a confined space for long periods the white workers complained of the body odour of the Negroes and would tolerate only one per shift - at a maximum. The Personnel Manager thought this complaint was justified. Chances of promotion for a coloured men to the supervision of a shift were "nil - the other men would not stand for it", and in this trade there was little chance of upgrading to a more remunerative kind of work. Overtime was not available but Negroes had shown a high demand for money earnings, "they are out for all they can get hold of - more than any other group". As workmen "they will do what they're told and nothing more" ~~else~~": during the war these men - who mostly came from Stepney - were unreliable in attendance. Their failings, the Personnel Manager said, were "in some cases due to lack of education, they develop an inferiority complex and when you pull them up for something they say 'You only do this to me because I'm coloured' and sometimes they get very arrogant". Speaking of the reaction of other employees, he said, "They don't like black men in general;don't forget that all the men on the one shift have to work, eat and bath all very close together and there is something about them which is different and which some people object to. But if a coloured man is a good type he will be allowed to mix in with the others freely". In general, he concluded, "these people have no roots in this country, they're probably living with a woman in a one-roomed place in Stepney and have got no home life.

In these circumstances they're bound to be less responsible and less reliable. The one or two men we've had who've been good have been men who have married and got a family and have some responsibilities to live up to. When these men have got no roots you can understand this attitude of theirs and their absenteeism".

Firms Fortysix and Fortyseven are separate departments of the same large concern, but they pursue independent policies with regard to the engagement of labour; there are other departments which have suffered less from shortage of labour and have been more reluctant or have refused to take coloured men. (In one case a department said "don't send any coloured men to X - not where the girls are"). In neither of the two departments of which the Personnel Officers were interviewed was any information available about the numbers of Negroes who had been employed in the past (which in each case must have exceeded 100) but data was available concerning those in employment at the time of interview. In both departments men were said to leave mostly of their own accord, in the first department ("Firm Fortysix") often owing to the heavy nature of the work, while in the second ("Firm Fortyseven") a number had been discharged for disciplinary reasons. After a week or two, men were required to pass a medical examination and a proportion failed either because of venereal disease or inability to pass the eyesight test. Failure in this might be due to illiteracy or difficulty in understanding the chart, but all employees should be able to read so that they can pay attention to various written rules and instructions. In both cases the

labour turnover rate had been much higher and was falling steadily. Firm Fortysix was employing coloured men as follows:

	Skilled	Semi-skilled	Un-skilled	Employment had lasted for under one week	week/ month	month/ year	over one year
West Indians	2	2	4	-	-	4	4
West Africans	-	5	12	-	-	12	5
East Africans	-	-	1	-	-	1	-
"Anglo-Indian" (- Eurasian?)	2	1	-	-	-	1	2
Maltese	-	-	1	-	-	1	-

Eleven men have been or are likely to be upgraded fromunskilled to semi-skilled but further promotion is almost impossible and there is at present no chance of any coloured man being appointed a chargehand or to any position when he would be responsible over white workmen. Some men had given trouble and hadnot stayed long but over a period of time the firm had obtained a proportion of coloured employees with whom it was well satisfied and was willing to engage others on the strict understanding that they were qualified. Among the coloured workmen "the value of labour in relation to earnings was not appreciated" and the men were usually slow, lacking in ambition and reluctant to change any job to which they had become accustomed. Trouble arose from antagonism between coloured men of different origin and it was found most definitely better to employ them singly. Some men were said to suffer severely from exploitation by landlords. All the work was carried out in one block of buildings and though the foremen had at first been dubious and there was at the beginning one incident arising from the use of the epithet "nigger", relationships had

steadily improved. Coloured craftsmen were said to be "definitely up to the standard of whites" and amongother grades the West Africans were the best of the immigrant workmen.

Firm Fortyseven was employing 31 men, 2 in skilled work and 29 as labourers; these men had been with the firm in 2 cases between a week and a month, in 23 cases between a month and a year and in six cases over a year. They were not willing to engage other coloured workmen unless they had very good recommendations or as a last resort. Opportunities of supervisory work were out of the question and of upgrading to semi-skilled work, negligible, as this could only be done by transfer to another department. There was a strong demand for money earnings (but "they don't know the value of money") and in a few cases for security the men were considered slow and lacking in ambition. The Personnel Manager thought the manner of living was to blame, women, gambling, rent-exploitation and in some cases lack of sufficient sleep at night. On engagement few men were able to produce evidence of their Income Tax Code Number and deductions had to be made on an emergency basis which frequently resulted in over-taxing during the first few weeks. This was a frequent source of trouble as the men rarely understood such matters and thought they were being defrauded; such incidents had on occasion given rise to minor riots in which the officers had been forcibly entered, the girls "chased out" and the police had had to be called. Trouble had also arisen from forming teams in which

West Africans and West Indians or other groups were mixed, this had given rise to fighting and the firm found it better to employ the men singly, indeed some men on applying asked to be allowed to work by themselves. The work is done in groups of about fifteen sometimes at a very great distance from the depot, in the open with only small shelter accommodation and with a chargehand in complete command. It had happened several times that a gang would not accept a coloured labourer and used every unpleasantness (such as not letting him come inside the shelter) in order to make him leave. This sort of thing might happen in half the gangs operating from the depot and was said to be very difficult to deal with when labour was in short supply. Foremen had objected to Negroes on grounds of their slowness and lack of understanding which held up the team. Use of the terms "nigger" and "sambo" had been prohibited by the management because they had caused so much trouble. There had been complaints about body odour and one or two Negroeshad actually been discharged because they were vermin-infested. A demand for separate washing facilities arose because one man had an unpleasant skin rash but this was proved to be innocuous and the result of nervous shock after being torpedoed at sea during the war. The work and the wages paid by this firm have not attracted any but the least able workmen of any origin and the management have found it difficult to control trouble between groups.

Firm Fortyeight had employed 80 - 100 Negroes since 1945 in the cleaning of oil drums, a dirty but well paid job. Labour turnover among coloured workers has been "incomparably"

higher than among whites: 60% - 30% - 10% - 0% in the categories of the schedule and at the time of the interview no Negroes were employed there. The Manager was prepared to engage other coloured men but said "experience speaks against it - at any rate it would be unwise to take more than two at a time. It's the same with the Irish; if you take in certain minorities they seem to stick together and if you have too many the worst influence seems to prevail. If they are isolated and put to work on their own, they get ahead, but if they are altogether they start to complain and become touchy. They always find a spokesman. I had one West African who was a good worker but after about three weeks he suddenly started to complain about discrimination and his work fell off. I tried to show him there wasn't any discrimination but it wasn't any good". The Manager said the coloured men showed little enthusiasm for overtime and employment terminated because "they just cleared out". There were no opportunities for promotion. As workmen, the major trouble was their tendency to leave so quickly but at work "many of them try to do as little as possible". He attributed this to a "kind of inferiority complex which makes them jumpy and irritable; it must be something which grows in them here because I've seen them in their own countries and I couldn't see anything like that. Partly I suppose it's because of a certain hostileness in the English character - they're tolerant but seem to say at the same time 'we know you're different' ". (The Manager was Continental-Jewish). "They usually have trouble over being exploited for their lodgings, I had one case of five or six men sharing a room in Cable Street and

paying £5 per week rent. Then some of these dark ones mix with rather low type women who clear out their cash". He found it better to put immigrants to work singly and said "our people have been very good to them and those who have been good workmen have always been treated as equals". They mix together at meal-times, there have been no fights and the Manager has tried to encourage comradeship, he said, "there is no discrimination over colour or wages and no picking out the dirty work for the coloured men". He concluded by saying that he would be very reluctant to employ coloured men in any numbers - it was just throwing money into the drain. "It would not be a loss if we did not have them, we could always import labour from the continent - some North Italians are very good. Of course, some employers are taking advantage of coloured men. I really did want to make a go with them".

Firm Fortynine has since 1948 employed about 130 coloured men and 5 - 6 women in unskilled work operating machines in a manufacturing establishment. It was believed that the majority had been West Africans and most of the remainder Pakistanis, some Jamaicans and a few Somalis. At the time of interview 30 coloured men and 4 women were employed there. Of the Negroes 5% were said to remain more than a week and less than a month, 90% between that and a year and 5% over a year. In most cases they leave of their own accord, often saying that they are joining a ship next day but it is noticed that they are usually able to come back on the following pay day when their money has been made up. This turnover rate is "very much higher" than with local labour. They are keen on

overtime and on money-earnings and it is said that most have high code numbers - "taking ofmoney, the thing that's amazed us is that on Monday they may not have two halfpennies for a penny but by Wednesday they may have as much as £16 or £17. Then its quite regular for them to take one day off each week - none of the white men can afford to do that". The firm was willing to engage other coloured workers as necessary but were disconcerted by the way sometimes five of them would leave in a single day. "The Employment Exchange only send us coloured men now". It was impossible that any would become foremen, but "two or three are in the chargehand class". There was some divergence of opinion about the abilities of the different groups, but the foreman of the machine shop finds West Africans the better workers. Language difficulties arose with Pakistanis and it was difficult to get Somalis to understand what was required of them. The few Jamaicans they had tried had not been satisfactory, they had been very aggressive and had been involved in knife fights (in the case of fighting both men would be discharged) "the slightest thing and they go up in the air." The Negro workers were considered to be slow though some were very good indeed by any standards; it had not been noticed that ability at work correlated with any other characteristics such as family responsibilities, and the foreman commented "they don't seem to have any sense of responsibility - one of the men has a wife who's just recently had a baby but he hasn't done a full day's work since. No perhaps I should say they have one responsibility, their mother. Some of them think a lot of their mothers".

It was said that some workers, men and women, were very slow

in machine operating and some seem very dreamy - "it may be this marihujana, we caught one of them smoking it the other week". No explanation was offered for any of the alleged failings of coloured men, and when asked in question 13 if it worked better to employ the men singly, "No , not a lot in that - one little fellow seems quitehappy working on his own with a lot of white girls" (contrast this with the usual view that it would disturb the girls). Relations with other employees were apparently good and they all mixed together in the canteen. Two years ago there had been some trouble hut none since; there had been one man who was prone to use the word "nigger" but he had now left and if anything like that happened now "they just treat it as ignorance on our part and let the foreman know of it". "We make a point of not differentiating between employees and we had one coloured men who works somewhere else come here with his wife to see if she could get a job, he said it was well-known that we didn't discriminate and thanked us for it". (It is interesting to note that the managers of this firm, which is a new one, are themselves relatively recent immigrants from the Continent). The Personnel Manager summarized the situation, saying, "they're not a lot of trouble except in this coming and going. Then in a slack period we have to lay off the coloured men who're slow workers first and they think its prejudice".

It was less easy to obtain an interview with Firm Fifty where the Chief Clerk was finally interviewed: he said that since 1945 they had employed over 200 coloured men (almost certainly an overestimate) in labouring work - loading and unloading scrap metal. He claimed to see quite a lot of

the coloured employees and to know how they get on, but could not give any estimate of the proportion who had been Negroes. None were employed at the time of the interview. Turnover was estimated at 20% - 20% - 58% and 2% in the four categories of the schedule, this rate is high - "local labour sticks to the job much better and we find them better men to employ". The firm was prepared to engage other coloured men - "the employment exchange send us what men are available and of late it's been only coloured men"; prospects of promotion for them were nil. Employment has terminated of the men's own accord - "we put up with them to the last minute". When asked "why do you think they leave?" the Chief Clerk replied "I've no idea. We do know two left last month because the police caught them; they rang us up and said they were going to deport them". (There is no legal power of deportation, - see Chapter Three; but it was insisted that this is what the police had said). "The coloured workers", he said, don't exert themselves, they're slow"; when asked to what he ascribed this he replied "Oh lord, don't ask me that, I haven't made a study". There had not been any objections from foremen or other employees and though the coloured men have not been popular and there has been trouble among them "they haven't made themselves a nuisance".

Some questions in this interview schedule did not produce very much information and have been omitted from the foregoing summaries. Some firms display a suspicion of the Employment Exchange -"they've only got the worst men on the Exchange" and have found those who apply independently the

better workers but this is not generally the case. Negro workmen do often bring one of their friends along when they know of a vacancy but informal organization in this respect is not comparable with that among Pakistanis. Question 15 revealed no cases of official Trade Union action though in one or two cases shop stewards had protested at the employment of a high proportion of coloured workmen. Question 16 revealed conflicting opinions and confusion, few firms distinguish between West Africans and West Indians or know very much about the background of immigrants. Somalis are recognized to be in a difficult position because of language. Employers speak well of Pakistanis for their quietness but say they are unable to do any heavy labouring work. Maltese are considered difficult to manage though a minority are good workers. Of all the immigrant groups, the Poles are much the most highly thought of and it is interesting to note that with them the language handicap has other effects; in one firm there are several groups of Poles and a member of each acts as interpreter, they work hard and are afraid to lose their job because they think they would have difficulty to get another as they cannot understand the language well.

Previous to the interviews recorded above 'pilot' interviews were tried with two employers, of a large firm and of a small firm. Some observations from the first interview have been recorded in Chapter Eight. As the data from the small firm was particularly interesting it is given here, though this firm ~~small firm~~ was not contacted through the sample but by personal introduction from someone who knew the manager had employed Negroes with some satisfaction. Firm Fiftyone had in the past ten years employed 10 Negroes and at the time of

the interview employed three West Africans in a firm of 15-16 employees. They were unwilling to take more for fear of being considered a "black" firm, "we are a small firm and we feel that three coloured men are enough". Subsequently an attempt was made to introduce a fourth but it was opposed by the other employees. Turnover in the categories of the schedule had been 6% - 10% - 70% - 20% (of 10 men); the men had left of their own accord and it was remarked that the best of the coloured employees had come through the personal recommendation of a West African who had been with the firm for six years and was in the chargehand class. "One man has shown that he is above average in intelligence and understanding the others havebeen average workers ... the Africans see a cheerful willing group ... the West Indians have been rather unpleasant". The other employees "do not object to a small number of coloured men but, owing to the fact that they work hard, and are not very interested in money, they feel that if we had too high a proportion of coloured men the wage rates would not keep pace with other firms employing white men only". This remark about money-earnings is unusual and may refer more to the relative importance of money, for the Works Manager made the interesting comment - "they appear to value their position in the firm very much more than their pay. For instance, one expressed his intention of leaving - he had just been granted a substantial increase in pay, unasked - but a white man whose job he considered less important than his own, had been granted thesame increase".

No generalization could be permitted from this one case but it differs from the previous cases in a startling fashion. The men employed there were known to the investigator personally and the three principal reasons for the difference would appear to be :

(a) the work is of a semi-skilled nature and in a small firm where it is easier for them to see their contribution to the output and functioning of the firm:

(b) continuity is greater in that the senior coloured man has been there six years, the other two West Africans are fellow countrymen of his whom he has introduced and all three live close together:

(c) all three have made a satisfactory adjustment in their private lives, having stable homes, adequate housing and some security.

It is interesting to note that none can read or write properly but by their informal organization and comradeship they have developed a defence against some of the factors likely to unsettle immigrants. This lends support to the hypothesis that adjustment is aided by membership of a small cohesive group.

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