

COMMENTARY

# Plight of black Brits similar to their U.S. cousins

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*

London, England—Fifty years ago, 492 Caribbean people arrived in Tilbury, England, on the ship Empire Windrush—and a new phase of British history began. After the coming of the Windrush, hundreds of thousands of Caribbean, African and Asian people would ultimately migrate to Britain, forever transforming that country's racial profile.

I traveled to Britain to learn more about the situation confronting black people there. I came away with a new understanding of the striking parallels of oppression between African-Americans and our sisters and brothers in England. Throughout the twentieth century, restrictive immigration laws and racist policies perpetuated a second class status for blacks in Britain.

The first law restricting

alien entry was passed by the British Parliament in 1905. However, citizens of the British Commonwealth (Canada, Australia, South Africa, etc.) and those defined as "imperial subjects." (such as Jamaicans, etc.) were governed by a more liberal set of rules.

There was a long-standing tradition in the United Kingdom that permitted free migration throughout the empire, including to Britain. Commonwealth citizens, as British subjects, maintained the right to enter British territory freely and retained access to all citizen rights and privileges, including voting. Registration for British citizenship required only 12 months residence.

This was the immediate context for the coming of the Windrush. The door was opened for the immigration of Caribbean, Asian and African people into Britain.

## Along the Color Line

By Dr. Manning Marable



By 1958, 125,000 Caribbean people were British residents. In the 1960s, many thousands more arrived from Asia and Africa.

The racial backlash against non European immigrants began with the economic recession of 1958, followed by Britain's first race riots in Nottingham and London's Notting Hill district. By 1959, some Conservative members of Parliament were making overt appeals to white racism. In Conservative Prime Minister Harold MacMillan's

memoirs, he attributes this quotation to the famous British leader Winston Churchill: "Perhaps the cry of 'Keep Britain White' might be a good slogan."

By 1962, Parliament adopted the restrictive Commonwealth Immigrant Act. The negative impact of this new legislation was immediate.

Net immigration in the six months prior to the implementation of the act was 86,700; for the six months after the act, immigration was 8,290. Between July 1962 and

December 1964, the UK received 444,263 applications for work vouchers, but only 49,951 voucher holders were admitted. Both the Conservative Party and its opposition, the Labor Party, began to capitulate to the racist sentiments of white voters.

In the 1970s, the openly racist National Front emerged, making appeals to white working class voters frightened of losing their jobs to blacks.

Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher warned that white Britain was endangered of being "swamped" by a tidal wave of blacks. The number of all immigrants accepted for settlement, which reached a peak of 92,000 in 1972, fell to its lowest level of 46,000 in 1987. In 1996, 62,000 immigrants were accepted, well below the figure of one

quarter century ago.

An article by Leslie Goffe in *Emerge* documents the current state of the black community in Britain. Statistics from the Commission for Racial Equality, a British government agency, show that black Britons are twice as likely as whites to be unemployed and three times as likely as whites to be homeless.

One quarter of the people stopped and searched by the police here, are black and Asian, according to Commission figures. Yet, several years ago, when the government researched crime and young people, it found that young black people were far less likely to commit crimes than were young whites. Thirty eight percent of all prisoners jailed in London are black. Afro-Caribbean men serve (See Britain, Page 17)

## Carl Rowan's Commentary

### So-called economic gurus at Fed should cease fear-inducing babble

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*

There are simply too many loudmouths on the Federal Reserve's board, using scare phrases to manipulate U.S. stock markets as surely as if they were "fixing" trades on Wall Street.

Federal Reserve Gov. Edward Kelley became the latest to display a lose jawbone

when he told Market News International that it would be premature to assume that the Fed will not raise interest rates again this year. That scared ever-nervous investors into a jittery sell-off that sent the Dow Jones average plunging some 200 points until half the loss was recovered in a late-day rally.

Kelley clearly was taking his cue from Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan, who constantly tries to jawbone the markets down with words of worry. Most of the time, nobody is sure what Greenspan is saying in his economic circumlocution. But almost all sophisticated investors know that he is deeply suspicious of prosperity, and they expect him to inspire foolish sell-offs every time he testifies before Congress or gives a speech.

As someone who has invested in the markets for 34 years. I have enjoyed seeing my little nest egg grow as America has grown, and I don't appreciate paying the salary of bureaucrats who keep suggesting that business successes and continuous growth are bad for my future.

There is no question that the bull market



CARL ROWAN

has spread billions of dollars across America, making a lot of families that always lived hand-to-mouth, paycheck-to-paycheck, feel a bit rich. Those stock profits, even if unrealized, have emboldened such families to buy cars, TV sets, washing machines and revel in the fact that they can indeed send Sally or Little Johnny to college. Is this really bad? Or some grave threat to America's economic future?

I've been led to believe that ours is not a controlled economy, and that the stock markets find their own direction and level. But Greenspan clearly wants to control, by irresponsible rhetoric, markets that he has no business controlling.

That is why I do not swallow the line that he is so responsible for this country's great and growing wealth and its economic stability and that he is irreplaceable as Fed chairman.

I remember when a lot of people were saying that former Fed chairman Paul Volcker was indispensable.

The Fed enjoys great independence in managing the nation's money supply, and in many respects that is good for the nation. But Greenspan and his Fed allies put that independence at risk when they put Joe American's "wealth" at risk by deliberately trying to drive down the prices of stocks.

I'll wager that their garrulous arrogance becomes a major factor in the president's decision whether to reappoint Greenspan.

## The politics of discontent and the discontent with politics

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*

Third parties have been in the news more than ever these days. "Do the American people really want a third party?" the pundits ask. "Will the Black community break its decades-long allegiance to the Democratic Party?" columnists inquire. "With today's strong economy, people are less likely to rock the political boat," the experts declare.

All this speculation is spun in the midst of a twenty-five year downward spiral in voter turnout, where major party candidates target only their core constituencies and hope that everyone else stays

### This Way For Black Empowerment

By Dr. Lenora Fulani



home. Some see this voter trend as an opportunity to tell us that people are happy with the political status quo. But the closer we look at what Americans — as opposed to the two party's pundits — are saying, the more we see movement to break out of the existing political framework.

A recent national poll sponsored by the Council for Excellence in Government reveals some interesting facts. It found that almost two out of every three Americans (64%) feel "distant and disconnected" from the government. Most people see (See Discontent, Page 17)

## Group reverses stance on C.R.A.C.K.

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*

After reviewing "For Sale: Black and Brown Babies," written by syndicated columnist Earl Ofari Hutchinson which detailing efforts of the anti-drug abuse campaign Children Requiring A Caring Community, C.R.A.C.K. and meeting with its founder, the National Alliance for Positive Action retracts its initial stance that the program does not target African-American or Latino drug users for sterilization and does provide a comprehensive program for combating drug abuse.

C.R.A.C.K. personnel have placed billboards in communities offering to pay \$200 to drug users if they agree to long-term birth control. The National Alliance for Positive Action initially criticized this aspect of the program. However, after discussions

with C.R.A.C.K. founder Barbara Harris, the group changed its stance.

"The drug scourge has wreaked massive damage on African-American communities. It is critical that African-Americans support C.R.A.C.K.'s effort to provide drug treatment, counseling, information and referrals for drug users," said Earl Ofari Hutchinson, director of the National Alliance for Positive Action. "I call on health professionals and public officials to provide more resources for C.R.A.C.K.'s legislative campaign for mandatory counseling for long term drug users before pregnancy."

If you have any questions regarding this issue, please contact Ben Jealous, NNPA Executive Director, or LaWanza Spears, NNPA Communications Director, at (202) 588-8764.