

Windrush sources

Source 1

needs of applicants 2 and

The s.s. Empire Windrush arrived at Tilbury on the 22nd June - the total number of passengers concerned was 492 and there were also some 20 stowaways. The boarding party actually had to deal with the following numbers:-

Category A - Volunteers for the Armed Forces	-	52
" C B - Those who had nowhere to go and who were accommodated in the Clapham deep shelter	-	236
" A G - Those who had places to go to and were dispersed direct from Tilbury	-	204

/The

Credit: The National Archives

Memorandum from the Assistance Board about arrangements for the Windrush passengers, 1948.

Source 2

The Approach to London

After several hours' travelling we got into London. Frankly, this first sight of the world's largest city, especially by rail, was disappointing. About half an hour before reaching the terminus I became aware that we were passing through something; there were rather more houses, and the nearer we got to London the greater their density. To me the buildings looked all the same. Row after row of rather dreary brick houses, all with chimney-pots some six or more to the house and with the washing hanging out in the back garden, which overlooks the railway line. In English towns the houses are usually run together, and bungalows or detached houses such as we have at home, each standing in its own yard, are less common.

As you approach, you will not come suddenly into a world of skyscrapers. No Statue of Liberty will rise from the sea to greet you. Your entry will be casual and undramatic. For all that the place will grow upon you, and you will come to love certain parts of it, such as the view at Westminster, where the Houses of Parliament and Big Ben, with Westminster Abbey in the background, rise quite as dramatically from the river as the Statue of Liberty, and their delicate spires and traceries, black with age, form a pretty picture against the background of clouds, whether the sky is dull or grey, or, as sometimes happens, when a perfectly blue or cloudless day occurs and the wonderful stonework gleams bronze and gold on the blue background. The light in England is never as fierce in intensity and brilliance as it is at home, nor is the range of natural colours as great. Instead there is a soft pastel effect, with light blues and greys, and days of really brilliant sunshine are so rare that when they do come the entire scene is transformed and seems quite strange and foreign. On the whole the softer light is kinder and more suited to the old weathered-stone buildings and the mellow brick to be seen in most quarters of London.

As you get closer into London, you may begin to notice the effect of the blitz. Several houses and warehouses beside the railway lines are mere shells, completely burnt out and gutted,

Credit: The National Archives

Extract from an information booklet called 'A West Indian in England.' The booklet aimed to give immigrants information about British life in 1949.

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Source 3

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FOR the past eight months — since I arrived in Birmingham in search of a job—I have lived in the Causeway Green Hostel where the recent racial disturbances have occurred.

The problem of Causeway Green is by no means unique in this country. It is an example of Great Britain's colour bar. Similar instances are constantly arising in other parts of the country.

My 60 fellow West Indians in the hostel know only too well that the ill-feeling and fighting of the past week cannot be blamed on individual differences of opinion and local domestic arguments.

The cause of the Polish-Jamaican dispute goes deeper than that. It is a result of cumulative ill-feeling and resentment, which has grown steadily for more than six months.

Fundamentally it boils down to two main factors—accommodation and employment.

Credit: The National Archives

I have lived in Birmingham for eight months at Causeway Green looking for work where the fighting between Poles and Jamaicans took place. Disturbances like this are not unusual. It is an example of Great Britain's colour bar [unfair treatment based on their race, colour or country of birth].

Events like this are common in other parts of the country. The 60 West Indians in the hostel know well that the bad feeling and fighting last week cannot be blamed on individual differences of opinion and argument in the area. The cause of the Polish-Jamaican dispute goes deeper than that. It is the result of growing bad feelings and rage which has grown steadily for more than six months. Simply, it comes down to two main things - accommodation and employment.

Simplified version of an extract printed in the Birmingham Gazette, 1949.

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Source 4



Credit: M&N / Alamy Stock Photo

3

A black worker, part of the 'Windrush generation', working on a moccasin in a shoe factory, Leicester, 1959.

Source 5



700 work-wanting Jamaicans land at Southampton

Nearly 700 Jamaicans, the biggest party to this country in one ship, sailed into Southampton on Saturday in the Dutch liner Zuiderkruis. All of them hoping to get work in Britain. The party comprised 493 men, 229 women, four married couples, and 16 children. Many of the Jamaicans were met at the Docks by relatives or friends who have come to this country since the war, and others were met at Waterloo. Colonial officials estimated that only about a dozen would need hostel accommodation in London.

The bright dresses and hats of the women made a gay splash of colour in the dock shed as the Jamaicans came ashore for Customs examination before leaving in two trains.

£90 Fare

Majority of the women were dressmakers. All said they were very keen to get work.

The fare from Jamaica to New York by air and to Southampton by sea cost about £90. Since the war, 20,000 people from the West Indies have come to Britain, and only a few have become chargeable to public assistance.

Credit: The National Archives

Newspaper story from the 'Southern Daily Echo' (Southampton), 1954.