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NEGROES IN BRITAIN

A Study of Racial Relations in English Society

by

KENNETH LITTLE

Revised Edition with a new Introduction by
LEONARD BLOOM



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PREFACE

In my original preface to *Negroes in Britain* I endeavoured to draw anthropological and sociological attention to race relations in this country and to urban problems in the then colonial countries. In the meantime, a good deal of research has been carried out in both those fields, and so this present preface takes the form mainly of a few personal reminiscences. I offer them in order to link the past with the present, because my field work in Cardiff was undertaken about a quarter of a century ago, and it was, in fact, entirely fortuitous that I ever studied racial problems at all. Before going up to Cambridge I had never met a person of African descent and had never given a single thought to Africa. Also, my first visit to Cardiff was made on the strength of my physical anthropology paper in the Archaeology and Anthropology Tripos. In other words, the original intention was not to examine relationships between white and black, but to measure the heads of the latter's children. What I immediately experienced in Cardiff was a slice of the reality about which my African friends in Cambridge had told me, and so I decided to pursue my research in a sociological form. The main reason was that the Tiger Bay community offered, in a sense, a challenge that I was unable to resist. Consequently, although still interested in physical anthropology, I changed my coat and became instead a social anthropologist.

A further point is that, as Leonard Bloom's Introduction declares, there was in those days very little interest indeed in race relations: race relations was "the Colour Problem at the Ports". One could write, lecture and predict, but it was exceedingly difficult to persuade people that a racial situation such as existed in Cardiff might have wider repercussions. This apparent apathy obtained even in those quarters of the Government most intimately concerned with the then Colonial peoples because, instead of treating the existence of colour bars as urgent, the tendency was to brush the whole troublesome business under the carpet. A particular experience in this connection illustrates the last point rather strikingly, because on one occasion a number of African and West Indian spokesmen and I called on a high

official in order to ask if something could be done to censor film stereotypes of the American Negro. In those days Hollywood invariably depicted coloured people in the United States solely as servants, pugilists, or as eyeball-rolling "coons". We argued, therefore, that it was in the interest of good relations between the Mother Country and her Colonial subjects for people of colour to be represented in a more dignified way. Possibly this was to the Colonial Office a novel idea because it obviously provoked a good deal of thought. However, the answer eventually came, and when it did the explanation was not concerned with the difficulties of curbing a major industry. It merely announced in somewhat solemn language that, American Negroes not being British subjects, there was nothing that H.M.G. could do about it.

Of course, there were plenty of people of good will, including a not inconsiderable number whose interest in Africans and West Indians was "normal" and not just paternalistic. I recall among them parliamentarians like the late Lord Sorenson and also Mr. James Callaghan. It so happened that it was in Mr. Callaghan's constituency that my field work was carried out and he was one of the first people to question me further when *Negroes in Britain* was published. Naturally, this was long before Mr. Callaghan rose to Labour's Front Benches and became Home Secretary. So far as the so-called racial problem is concerned, my own feeling is that the Socialists have been just as negligent and unimaginative, and just as lacking in prescience as the Tories, but it is wholly wrong to generalize about politicians as a group.

I should also like to mention in appreciative terms Dr. Leslie Farrer-Brown, formerly Director of the Nuffield Foundation. The Foundation has donated some large sums of money in recent years, but what is not so widely known is that Nuffield underwrote a good deal of race relations research well before the time that "race" received recognition as a national problem. The Noel Buxton Trust was another body which helped at a time when other responsible trusts and organizations were apparently still in doubt about the academic respectability of race relations research and the significance of such matters for this country.

This brings me to questions of methodology because my own priorities are scientific. As a human being and private citizen I am personally humiliated and shamed by the indignities to which West Indians and others are sometimes subjected, but my belief

as a social anthropologist is that race relations research has its contribution to make to the general understanding of society. For this reason, therefore, I should like to reiterate my theoretical position which is that racial relationships are to be conceived of as a function of the wider socio-politico-economic system in which they occur. The corollary of this—and it is very important—is that relationships between different sections of *the white community itself* may be just as significant for race problems as group relationships between the black and white populations themselves.* Consequently, in looking at London, Birmingham, or any other city where there are both non-white and white communities, it is necessary *as a preliminary step* to examine with special care the latter's social structure.

This is essential because what in Britain is called the "race problem" is really an *inversion* of phenomena known in historical parlance as "the Colonial situation". In other words, whites went from this country to the former Colonies mainly in order to improve their economic position; and non-whites from the West Indies, Pakistan and India have migrated to Britain mainly for similar reasons. The difference is that whereas the migratory whites moved mostly into upper-class positions, the migratory non-whites found themselves here socially and economically at the bottom. This was certainly the case at the start of non-white immigration and a report by Senior and Manley is illustrative of it. It shows that there was at that time a considerable shortage of workers for unskilled jobs with non-whites moving into what the white workers did not want—poorly paid work under unpleasant conditions of labour. True, many of the incoming non-whites were technically and educationally unequipped for more lucrative types of employment, but improvements in the non-whites' general situation since, for instance, 1955, have not been very impressive. Certainly, individual non-whites have done well for themselves, and examples are not lacking of white and non-white inhabitants of the same city living and working amicably together. Yet, overall in Britain today, there is a

* For data offering support for this hypothesis see, *inter alios*, John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*, New York: Harper, 1937; Paul Mercier, "The European Community of Dakar", in Pierre Van Den Berghe (ed.), *Africa: Social Problems of Change and Conflict*, Oxford University Press, 1965; and Sheila T. L. Van der Horst, "The Effects of Industrialization on Race Relations in South Africa", in Guy Hunter (ed.), *Industrialization and Race Relations*, Oxford University Press, 1965.

good deal of resistance to the advancement of non-whites as a group.

I personally consider that the explanation of this is not wholly contemporary and that it originates in an acute and almost unique sense of class consciousness. This was something that developed, especially in England, mainly as the product of multiple forces during the Industrial Revolution. The latter involved a *social* as well as an economic upheaval, in the course of which North-country manufacturers and other businessmen gained control of as much money as many of the landed gentry, thereby casting doubt on the validity of wealth and its possession as a major criterion of social position. Since they were busily converting themselves into "gentlemen", this state of affairs affected the rising middle classes in particular. It meant that the latter felt continuously sensitive about their status and were correspondingly anxious to assert it. Largely, therefore, as a consequence of this, other and more subtle traits of social superiority—possession of education and the appropriate performance of social etiquette and rituals—assured an intrinsic importance of their own in helping to distinguish society. In such insignia, the "black man" and the "aboriginal" were plainly lacking; and so, as I indicate more fully in the text, they fitted in only on the bottom rung of the social ladder.

A result of all this is that many attitudes displayed in Britain have their basis in "class" as much as in "race" and they affect keenly relationships between English people themselves. This means, in fact, that the degree of respect and esteem given to a particular individual depends quite largely upon his particular behaviour—upon the way in which he wears his clothes; upon the style of his speech and the manner in which he addresses another person; upon his deportment and general bearing; and, above all, upon the extent to which he displays confidence in himself. These are all attributes of "class" in our society and they affect the social position of white as well as coloured people and whether the latter are favourably or unfavourably received by strangers. Indeed, so far as racial contacts are concerned, my personal conviction is that coloured individuals who are self-assured and confident in themselves complain very much less about colour prejudice than those who, from the English "class" point of view, lack confidence. In other words, although there

is no doubt at all that coloured people in this country do indeed experience prejudice and discrimination, part of the reason is their failure, conscious or unconscious, to measure up to English "class" standards.

This point brings me finally to the title of my book because I know from a personal conversation with Mr. James Baldwin that the expression "Negro" is hateful to him and to many others like him who are sensitive about racial issues. Apparently, its use invokes memories of the plantation and servitude although the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary's* description (Volume II) is quite specific. It defines "Negro" merely as "An individual (esp. a male), belonging to the African race of mankind, which is distinguished by a black skin, black woolly hair, flat nose, and thick protruding lips."

Provided the connotation is sufficiently clear I personally believe that people should be called by whatever name they themselves wish to be known. The difficulty is that my book is mainly about relationships between the native population of this country and people of African descent. Some of the latter hailed from the West Indies; others from several regions of Africa; and others, again, had one parent who was "white" and another who was of African descent. This study of mine was made, of course, long before the development of "Black Power" or the idea of "black" being "beautiful"; and so "Negro" seemed the most appropriate term at that time. Its use caused no embarrassment among, for example, the coloured population of the United States where, despite their high level of racial consciousness, coloured leaders and writers took a good deal of pride in calling themselves "Negro".

It is possible now that if I were writing about race relations in contemporary terms I should find some other expression for people who are darker in colour than most Europeans, but I consider that *Negroes in Britain* has to be taken in its context. Moreover, those who are disturbed by the *Oxford Dictionary's* definition may take comfort from the fact that in most of the physical characteristics attributed to the "Negro" he is anthropologically less "primitive" and less "simian" than the so-called white races.

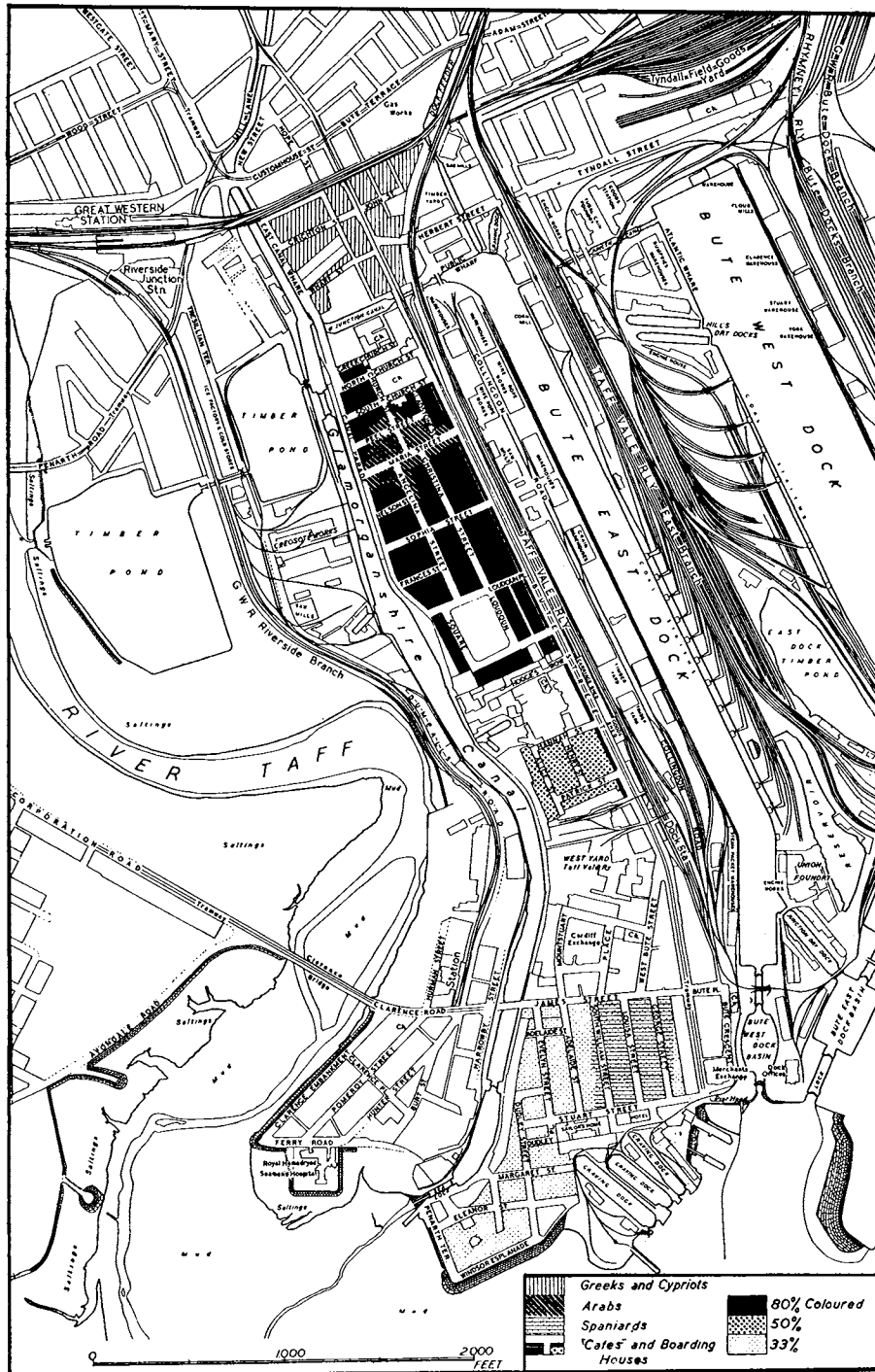
KENNETH LITTLE

Edinburgh, March 1972

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Among many others who helped me in various ways and whom I should also like to thank particularly are my former wife, Mrs. Birte Little; the late Dr. Harold Moody, M.D., B.S., President of the League of Coloured People, for affording me access to the files and publications of the League; members and students of the Workers Educational Association; officials of the Cardiff Corporation; Miss Nancie Sharpe; the Librarian, and members of the staff of the Cardiff Public Library, and last but not least, many members of the coloured community in Cardiff, whose interest and help in my enquiry require special acknowledgment.



CARDIFF : AREA OCCUPIED BY THE COLOURED COMMUNITY.

INTRODUCTION

BY LEONARD BLOOM

Negroes in Britain was first published two years after the ending of World War II. At that time the problems of race relations in Britain were of interest only to those people who experienced harm because of their "race", and those who had moral or political interests in race relations. Little's pioneering study—a major contribution to the urban studies of a community passing through economic and social change and stagnation—introduced the dimension of change into studies where before it was missing, and utilized the anthropological analysis of society in terms of its structure and the functions it subserves into a topic in which it had barely begun to be seen as relevant.

The main aim of the study was to "examine the social interactions and reactions resulting from the presence of coloured people in Britain, choosing as a specific example a coloured community in the dockland of Cardiff". This particular area was chosen because within a well-defined area there was a long-settled coloured community, and the patterns of coloured-white relations could add to the political awareness and understanding of a social problem, a detached appraisal of the processes of community relations.

For Little, the narrow problems of race relations could not be answered outside the broader context of urban development and decay—even though urban development *per se* was no more in 1947 than in 1971 adequate as an explanatory analytical framework. *Negroes in Britain* removed race relations out of the obsession with sterile moralizing and the endless analyses of the motivations of participants in race relations situations. His study was one of the first to subordinate morals and psychology to sociology and economics: he attempted systematically with empirical techniques to trace the historical, economic and socio-political conditions in which a *specific* colour problem arose and by which it has continued to function. Although he is an anthropologist, Little does not accept the optimistic ideology of the classical assimilationist or acculturationist school: contact

does not necessarily minimize conflict, nor does it *a fortiori* eliminate it. Nor does contact inevitably create harmonious conformity. Little's analysis of the functioning of colour differentiation within a highly developed, highly competitive economic system, showed how the operations of the system were responsible for the conflict, which no amount of living or working together would resolve.

Independently of the work of Oliver Cromwell Cox, Little initiated in Britain studies that asked: "who gains and who loses by the persistence of the pattern of race relations?", and that traced the development of the situations leading to the present relationships. It is now accepted that in studies of race relations the dimension of social class membership must be included, and in both the USA and in Great Britain the relationships of blacks and whites have grown almost synonymous with socio-economic class relationships. Little, without following a simplistic Marxist or neo-Marxist point of view, related the colour problems of Cardiff to economic competition between black and white seamen in a shrinking industry, and by implication drew attention to the future possibility of racial friction in Britain if fundamental economic inequalities and insecurities were not remedied.

In the 1940s interest in race relations was spasmodic in England, though in the USA Ray Stannard Baker's *Following the Color Line* was first published in 1908, and in 1944 Myrdal's *An American Dilemma* provided an 1,100-page description of a complex of situations which could develop outside the USA—and have, in fact, developed as disruptively though usually less violently.

It was not until 1954 that another major study of a settled coloured community in Britain was published. Anthony Richmond's *Colour prejudice in Britain*, based upon research in Liverpool was also the first investigation of the psychological and social adjustment of West Indians to life in Britain, and was particularly interesting in relating personal adjustment to the individual's success or failure to fit into the industrial system. Richmond's study included evidence of the employment problems of coloured workers, and of the number of employers with a "determination not to employ coloured men". *Colour prejudice in Britain* attempts a theory of prejudice, fundamentally psychological, which relates prejudice to the individual's sense of security. The individual

who is insecure in his identification with his own group will tend to project this insecurity in the form of hostility towards other groups: other groups are threatening to his group and his group identification is shaky enough not to withstand any challenge. Richmond discussed the social circumstances that threatened the group's sense of security, for example economic competition and emphasized "the fact that the coloured workers are associated in the minds of others with menial tasks and inferior status, as well as with competition, which provides the real threat to the white worker's sense of security". Apart from the insistence upon a rather simple psychology, Richmond made a valuable contribution in his empirical attempt to relate socio-economic insecurity to the individual's sense of threat.

Picture Post, a radical illustrated weekly in the UK, was bold to ask bluntly in 1949: "Is there a British colour bar?" It answered that there was: "invisible, but like Wells's invisible man it is hard and real to the touch . . . and it is when you get lower down the social scale that you find it hits the hardest".¹ At that time according to *Picture Post* there were an estimated 20–25,000 coloured people in Great Britain, but there was no more certainty about the figures than there was agreement about who should be included in the description "coloured". In the article, Africans, West Indians, Somalis and Sudanese Arabs were mentioned, and the author observed that there were people of different races from more than fifty colonies in Great Britain. Only two large, settled communities were named: Tiger Bay, Cardiff, with a population of about 7,000, and the South End of Liverpool with a population of about 8,000. Other smaller communities, some of long settlement, were described as scattered throughout Great Britain mainly in the major seaports, including the very old settlements in London's East End and the more recent communities in the industrial areas of the Midlands and the North East.

Even by 1951, compared with the figures for 1971, the total number of coloured people was tiny. The Census of 1951 enumerated *net* arrivals from India and Pakistan, Ceylon, the Caribbean, British West Africa and the Far East (excluding whites from India and Pakistan), and reached a total of about 74,500. Add

¹ *Picture Post*, 2 July 1949; reprinted in T. Hopkinson (ed.), *Picture Post: 1938–1950*. Penguin, 1970.

to this figure the estimated 20–25,000 coloured people already in the country and there was a grand total of barely 100,000.

Yet despite the insignificant proportion of people from overseas, prejudice and discrimination existed. *Picture Post* offered a simple and direct explanation: ignorance. It was argued that the solution lies mainly in encouraging white and coloured people to live together on equal terms, and legislation should be enacted to make discrimination illegal. More provocatively, it was suggested that “one of the most permanent and symbolic obstacles to progress is perhaps the existence of segregated communities. The close coloured communities of Cardiff and Liverpool may give a sense of defensive security to the coloured people who live in them. But, quite apart from the danger of their becoming forgotten communities where conditions, such as housing, can deteriorate without the white community feeling responsible . . . this situation fosters ignorance and thus prejudice.”

Negroes in Britain explored further and more systematically the explanation of prejudice cogently suggested by *Picture Post*, and was one of the earliest treatments of race relations which implicitly rejected the unrealistic and inadequate liberal solutions that advocated the *laissez-faire* policy of allowing (or even encouraging gently) the development of segregated communities in which people could maintain their own customs and beliefs, emerging peacefully to go to work or to school. In 1970 a prominent Conservative MP, much concerned with race relations, published an article entitled “But will immigrants ever be assimilated?”¹ to which the pessimistic answer was that assimilation was improbable and that the very notion of assimilation is a “provocative doctrine”. Little has demonstrated (by implication) the folly of *laissez-faire*, of not taking positive steps to facilitate assimilation and integration, because the experience of Cardiff suggests that the socio-dynamics of race relations (if left to themselves) will create an inflexible and hierarchical society at the base of which coloured and other (unaccepted) newcomers and settlers will cluster.

After *Negroes in Britain* it is no longer intellectually and politically plausible to treat race relations in Britain as though discrimination and prejudice were no more than perverse and quirky lapses from liberal traditions. The study (and many of

¹ W. F. Deedes in the *Daily Telegraph*, 16 April 1970.

those that have followed it) shows that only with difficulty can an encapsulated community within a hierarchical urban-industrial society emerge from the status of inferiority. Inferior status and the associated exclusion from full and effective participation in economic, political and social life of the wider society of which the subcommunity forms a part, exacerbates the psychological tendency to withdraw *as a community*. That Cardiff has one coloured city councillor does little to pierce the economic and social integument that effectively and persistently seals off the docks area (i.e. the main coloured quarter) from the wider city.

There is neither academic anodyne nor polemical politicizing in *Negroes in Britain*: the anthropological approach is far from the work of novelists, social workers, administrators, reformers and missionaries who, for their various motives, have been interested in race relations. Little's work opened the way in British urban studies for what had already been attempted in South Africa by Ellen Hellmann in her studies of African slums in Johannesburg.¹ But the author's sense of concern about a social problem did not prevent him from carrying out a research project in a sound and professional manner. The material that was gathered indeed revealed "problems" of which politicians were then quite unaware. Remarkable foresight was shown, for example, in perceiving that "future alignments of mankind will form themselves on colour lines", and in observing that "in many parts of the British colonial empire, particularly in the West Indies, West and East Africa, there is a popular stirring in terms of racial and class loyalties which calls for study with special regard to its social and psychological implications". This was written at a time when even the well-informed and sympathetic *Picture Post* had never heard of Kwame Nkrumah and thought that Jomo Kenyatta was an Abyssinian!

Negroes in Britain is a study of the social and psychological consequences of socio-geographical urban isolation, and anticipates such later community studies as Gans's of Italian-Americans, which questioned the application of middle-class solutions to

¹ E. Hellman, "Native life in a Johannesburg slum yard", *Africa*, 1935, 8, 34-62; E. Hellman, *Rooyard, a sociological survey of an urban slum yard*, Rhodes-Livingstone Paper, No. 13, Manchester U.P., 1948.

the problems of poor areas. Gans¹ comments in the preface to his study that he wanted to study the way of life of poor populations because of the assumption of many of those in authority that this way of life is a "deviant form" of the dominant middle-class way of life. He wanted to test the manner in which the way of life was a result partly of deprivation and lack of access to good living conditions, and partly a result of lack of access to social services. He observed of the Italian-American group he studied that "their way of life constituted a distinct and independent working-class subculture that bore little resemblance to the middle-class". In other words, Gans was studying a group of people as a class *per se*, and not by direct comparison with the norms and values of another class. There is a meaningful *gestalt* or totality of a subculture, a common background of experience, which in the 1940s was rarely studied in urban areas, although this approach was becoming commonplace among social anthropologists. It was not moreover until 1967 that an empirical answer was attempted to the question: "Do the people of a subculture perceive themselves as 'deprived' and underprivileged?" Little found that there was a marked "sentiment of local association", particularly among the young. This pride of belonging to the area has still not entirely vanished: the docks area *was* poor, but it was not without its own merit and its satisfactions for its population. There is a partial similarity here with the later findings of Wolf and Lebaux;² and with those of Safer³ who made the salutary retort that "the poor are like everyone else, Oscar", to the Culture of Poverty school made almost fashionable by the anthropologist Oscar Lewis.⁴ Wolf and Lebaux found a "striking contrast" in the USA between poor black neighbourhoods and those which were mainly populated by a single language group, e.g. Puerto Rican areas in New York. The people of the old style linguistic-ethnic neighbourhoods regarded their way of life as different and distinct (in some ways) from the way of life of their neighbours, but they did not

¹ H. J. Gans, *The Urban Villagers—group and class in the life of Italian-Americans*, New York, The Free Press, 1962.

² E. P. Wolf & C. N. Lebaux, "On the destruction of poor neighbourhoods by urban renewal", *Social Problems*, 1967, 15, 1, 3-8.

³ H. I. Safer, "The poor are like everyone else, Oscar", *Psychology Today*, 1970, 4, 4, 26-32.

⁴ O. Lewis, see for example *The Children of Sanchez*, Penguin Books, 1964.

regard this as indicating that they were in any way inferior or "deprived". They felt different. But not worse!

In the 1940s the coloured quarter of Cardiff was almost unique in Britain, but by the 1970s a coloured quarter has become a familiar part of many of the larger cities. In the city of Cardiff as the economic and social structure and activities have changed since the 1940s, so have the reciprocal relationships of the city and the coloured quarter. But the distinctive quality of apartness of the coloured quarter, and its association with the poorer sector of the city has not been dispelled. The coloured quarter has failed to become an integrated and socially valued and esteemed part of the city.

A question unanswerable in the 1940s and just beginning to be posed again is: how far is the history of a coloured quarter such as that of Cardiff a paradigm for the future of urban development in the country as a whole? It is astonishing—even regrettable—that there have been no longitudinal studies of, for example, Liverpool's District 8 or of Southall or Islington, which might (when compared and contrasted with Cardiff) offer a first approximation to an answer. One of the few studies of immigrant communities which in effect extends the ecological-sociological analysis that Little inaugurated is Jones's monograph of Birmingham.¹ Jones asserts that the "problem of immigration is essentially an urban one" and slightly unexpectedly demonstrates the "overall similarity of the social and geographical distribution of the immigration population to that of the home-born". He interestingly compares the history of Irish migration with that of coloured migration, and though there are some similarities the major difference is that the coloureds have a far more pronounced pattern of segregation, and of all the non-whites the West Indians have the most pronounced pattern. In effect, the problem of coloured settlement is the growth of lower status wards in the inner and middle rings of a city which are mostly clustered *outside* comprehensive development areas. It may be that in Britain we are in the earliest stages of the drift of the better-off to the suburbs, leaving the central sectors of the cities ill-financed and ill-served. Jones disapproves of the unrigorous use of the term "ghetto" in Britain: "no cluster is overwhelmingly

¹ P. N. Jones, *The segregation of immigrant communities in the city of Birmingham, 1961*. University of Hull: Occasional Papers in Geography, No. 7.

a coloured quarter. The description 'ghetto' . . . is unjustifiable historically . . . Within Britain all the clusters of coloured immigrants are areas of *mixture* surrounded by a white population." However, he believes that areas will tend to become increasingly concentrated and mono-ethnic, and they will also grow in area and therefore become more visible.

There seems little useful purpose in intricate analysis of the term "ghetto". Jones's study agrees in broad principle with Little's findings. The coloured quarter of Cardiff is unquestionably mixed, but more important is the segregation, the socio-economic stagnation and the persistent association with lower-status. The ghetto quality is as much a social phenomenon as a geographical-ecological. The people *feel* as though they live in what they describe as a ghetto, and their social behaviour is correspondingly distorted. Jones suggests that the observer looks for signs of the "emergence of community sentiment", e.g. places of worship such as mosques, cinemas showing national films and schools teaching the language and culture of a group. But, he warns, these signs of community sentiment do not necessarily indicate that the area has a social coherence similar to that of, say, a slowly growing council housing estate. The quasi-ghetto is rarely homogenous, but is, like Cardiff's dock area, made of many separate and separable populations from widely disparate geographical, social and "racial" origins. Moreover these are often areas in which community ties are fragile, and in which the cultural differences between the peoples make it difficult to create a strong sense of local political and social concern. Finally, the physical deterioration and obsolescence, the lack of facilities and services, are obstacles to the formation of local meetings: there are few satisfactory places in which to meet.

In Cardiff there are many lessons to be learned by the inventors of race relations policies. One is that race relations and community relations may overlap but they are not identical. Although the problems of race relations are urban problems, they are more than residual aspects of urban squalor. There is little squalor left in Cardiff, though there is no lack of inadequate housing and servicing. There is, however, evidence of a persistent ghetto ambience in the docks area which causes coloured people to feel differently from their white neighbours, and which is brought about by their differential treatment. When all possible

allowances are made for social class and urban decay, colour or "race" discrimination and prejudice remain. And the negligent acceptance by civic authorities of a quasi-ghetto in Cardiff, repeated in other cities such as Birmingham (see, for example, on housing policy and powers, the Birmingham Corporation Act 1965, Eliz. 2, ch. XXII), offers little encouragement for the solution of urban discrimination and prejudice.

On a less practical level *Negroes in Britain* was an early attempt to introduce modern methods of anthropology and social psychology into an urban situation, and deserves to be coupled with other methodological innovations, e.g. Dollard's *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*. Social scientists in Britain have modified their methods as a consequence of Little's enterprise, and it is interesting (and instructive) to trace briefly how he anticipated many of the difficulties encountered in urban sociology. There has, for example, been concern recently about the difficulty of reaching a coloured population, and much discussion of the "Black backlash". Coloured people, it is said, tend to vanish, literally or figuratively, when approached by interviewers.

Finally, *Negroes in Britain* introduced some theoretical explanations of the development of race relations in Britain, which have influenced later students. Banton, in particular, was stimulated by Little to carry out both empirical and theoretical studies. No appraisal of *Negroes in Britain* would be adequate that omitted a brief account of some of the theoretical approaches that have emerged in Britain since the 1940s.

In summary: *Negroes in Britain* is a study of both the social and the psychological consequences of social-geographical isolation, and of belonging to a minority group with inferior status. It is both an historical interpretation and an analytical description. It describes some of the relatively unsophisticated surveys of race attitudes of the time, which, however their crudity of technique, provided a base line against which to measure later findings. Overall, it undertook the attempt (then rare) to relate attitudes and behaviour to a changing economic and social structure.

1. THE DOCKS AREA SINCE THE 1940S

Bute Street is still the spine of the area, but would be almost unrecognizable to the visitor who returned there after an absence

of some thirty years. Despite the lorries that thunder along it on their way to and from the city, the impression has not been dissipated that the area and the city are socially and geographically separated and only tenuously linked.

Walking into the area one still passes beneath the railway bridge, past a few depressing cafés with tattered and grubby curtains, a handful of small shops and a few shops that have stood empty for two or more years and are now without windows and plastered with posters and children's scribbles such as "Elsie loves Ahmet". At the edge of the area an Asiatic grocery shop advertises itself as the agent for the Royal Jordanian Airlines, and on a hand-written sign another small general store offers "Economy tours to Athens". This uninviting first hundred yards is punctuated by a vast Victorian greystone church, its surrounding grass wildly unkempt and its trees shaggy. Only a few notices about the current local government elections indicate that the church is still alive.

Then suddenly the cries of young children at play indicates the new, bright primary school. And beyond the school is the newly developed area of Bute Street. The warren of cosy and insanitary tiny houses (occupied as recently as two years ago) has gone. The crowded squalor, grey stone and brick, has been replaced by honey-coloured brick, spaciousness and cleanliness. And whether one agrees with a local newspaper that the development is a "modern planner's dream", or whether one agrees with the implicit criticism of a resident that "you can go down there now and it's like going into an estate like Llanrumney", one's first impression must be one of relief that a neglected slum has been removed.

But apart from the housing, the area looks empty, bare and less intimate and inviting than before. Only a few shops remain. There are no longer "cafés where you step over the threshold and wonder if you've been magic-carpeted to Cairo. No aromatic little shops where you feel you're nearer Constantinople than Cardiff . . ." (*South Wales Echo*, 2 October 1970). But in many of those little cafés and shops, the local authority was often as busily ridding the cellars of rats as are the authorities in Cairo and Constantinople. The tuberculosis rate was higher than anywhere else in Cardiff—a reliable indication of poor living conditions. Near the docks the shops include some still selling ships' outfitting and nautical manuals and equipment. But the pubs and the clubs,

so similar to those dotted throughout South Wales, have dwindled in number and are sad in their loneliness. The new pubs lack the cosiness that one expects of a good neighbourhood pub, though they still have a clientele racially, nationally and ethnically very mixed and lively.

Already the *graffiti* have appeared on the garages of the new maisonettes—in various languages and in Arabic script, and at the time of the local elections many windows displayed posters of one of the major political parties. The pretty green and white mosque is close enough to both the “Bosun” public house and the Greek Orthodox church to testify to the enduring cultural complexity of the area.

But on the midweek day when I last visited the area, the central shopping centre was devoid of any of the busy-ness and bustle of shopping centres in many “immigrant” areas, although it was acquiring such indications of being a social centre as notices (some handwritten) of local events. Housewives of different “colours” were shopping and chatting, a few boys (coloured and white) were sipping bottles of Coke in the Crescent Café, and nearby men and women from the old people’s home sunned themselves on hard benches in a cheerless square. A *halal* butcher’s shop and an English; clean and pleasant grocers’ shops selling English, West Indian and Asian groceries; Costa’s hairdressing salon . . . the shopping centre is as multi-ethnic as the area that it serves, but has still to acquire the patina of a matured neighbourhood.

Moving down Bute Street towards the docks area, few changes are immediately apparent, but there are signs that change is imminent. A slice of a wall of a demolished house still shows the pink and green paint once the pride of its owners, in the middle of a heap of dusty rubble. A few of the old, dark shops and cafés linger on. The railway station is superfluously marked “unstaffed” on an official notice, the broken window panes, ancient notices and crumbling paintwork symbolizing the slothful slide into neglect of the area during most of the past two generations. An improbable number of consular plates can be seen on the office buildings near the docks including the most unlikely, Turkish. The massive Missions to Seamen, once a vivid blue, is now boarded up and greying, overlooking a disused dock that is gradually being filled with old bricks and rubble. The once

main door of the offices of the National Union of Seamen is now the entrance to a betting shop, and Mountstuart Square, once the heart of shipping and commerce in Cardiff, is decaying so rapidly as to necessitate the demolition of almost half of the buildings, unless an improbably accelerated development in the area were to occur.

2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOCKS AREA

Except for spasmodic rehousing between the wars and shortly thereafter, there was little systematic municipal concern with the area as a whole until the debates on the city's development plan at the end of 1952. The plan became operative at the end of 1959, and has recently moved towards completion. Although it appears modest, the plan's consequences are considerable. It proposes replacing 1,500 "obsolescent and unfit houses" at a rate of 75 building dwellings a year in the period ended 1971, and it is the intention that people displaced from unfit houses should be rehoused within the redeveloped neighbourhood. New primary schools were planned, but neither major public buildings nor post-primary schools were included. The Bute Town area was said to be one of the most densely populated and under-serviced areas in the city, with parts having more than 140 people to the acre.

The plan included a lengthy rationale for the policy of rehousing, which later plans have repeated (with modifications), of which the most striking observation is the implicit belief that Bute Town will continue to be an insulated area with a distinctive composition and ethos. It was—and still seems to be—accepted that Bute Town will persist (or stagnate) as an area of mixed race and culture but of predominantly non-white peoples "who rarely venture beyond the confines of the neighbourhood and have developed their own cultural and religious affinities . . . It would appear that the great majority of the people residing in the area desire to remain, in consequence of which the housing needs of the indigenous population have not been catered for to anything approaching the extent of that of other parts of the city."

The plan reports the grievous deficiency of housing and notes that there have been "relatively few applications for housing

accommodation", making only the most superficial attempt to enquire into the economic and social reasons for this remarkable communal indifference or passivity. It seems to have been accepted that there were no city-wide economic, social or political causes, the result of the history of the area, that could explain the apparent withdrawal from participation in the services offered by the city. The question appears never to have been asked: "Are there peculiar factors to discourage people in the area from taking up their civic rights?" Little mentioned "the possibility of a correlation between (the) migratory tendency and certain economic factors", i.e. there was some tendency for the poorer areas to be also areas catering for more transient inhabitants, and the increase in the general economic level may, therefore, play some part in the relatively static population in the last decade. But he is equally sensitive to the withdrawal syndrome: the reluctance of non-whites to hazard upon living outside the areas in which they have long settled.

The position is made even more doubtful by the finding in 1970 that approximately 60 per cent of the families in the area of South Bute Town due to be developed expressed the wish to stay in Bute Town, which implies that the unexpectedly high figure of 40 per cent either wished to leave the area or were not certain what they wanted to do. The report which gives this finding continued that "when clearance of the remainder of Bute Town is carried out, a ratio of 5 families wishing to remain in the area to every three preferring to move away might be an appropriate standard to adopt in assessing the need for rehousing in the district".¹ Why, one may well ask, has it suddenly been discovered that a high proportion of dwellers in this slum area now wish to live elsewhere if they are offered a realistic chance to move?

Whatever the reasons for this static state, the results are the persistence of an insulated and congested quasi-ghetto. It is perhaps noteworthy that whereas neighbouring Canton is being cleared for redevelopment regardless of the wishes of the white inhabitants, there has always been the strongly argued policy to allow black Bute Town to remain an enclave.

The plan lamented the "marked deficiency of basic manufacturing industry for a city and a port capable of offering

¹ *South Bute Town: an appraisal*, Cardiff, City Planning Department, 1971.

excellent facilities", and pointed out that the numbers then employed in engineering, ship-building and repairing and in the manufacture of electrical goods was only 4 per cent of the working population compared with about 9 per cent in the country as a whole. An insignificant 1.5 per cent of the working population was employed in ship repairing. These figures are more significant if it is noted that even as recently as the late 1960s over half the employment in the city was concentrated south of the main London-South Wales railway line, i.e. on towards the area including Bute Town.

The first stage of the development plan has been almost completed, and controversy has already arisen about the next stage. Towards the end of 1964, a Cardiff Development and Transportation Study was commissioned by the city council, the main recommendations of which were accepted in principle in June 1968. Towards the end of 1970 the proposed £47 million plan for the redevelopment of the entire centre of Cardiff was published, and this set limits to the development of the remaining undeveloped area of Bute Town.

The broad proposals for development in Bute Town were: (1) to increase the population to nearly 13,000; (2) to introduce new light industry; and (3) to increase local services, e.g. to build at least one more school. It was therefore envisaged that the area would remain heavily populated, but that it would be expanded into "a complete new community with the opportunity of acquiring its own distinctive characteristics and attributes which overcome the social drawbacks which are currently associated with living south of the railway line".¹

The plan accepts a continuing decline in the docks, and in 1969 Ted Rowlands, MP, was one of the many objectors to the plan who demanded that steps be taken to prevent "employment from drifting from the city and to maintain the ship repairing industries of the docks". In March 1969, a group of students of city planning proposed an alternative to the plan, in which by building a zoo, a maritime and industrial museum, renovating and using fully the splendid buildings of Mountstuart Square (among the few architecturally interesting buildings in the city), and modernizing and preserving the handsome terraces south and west of the area, and (above all) extending and diversifying

¹ *Ibid*, p. 36.

industry, the area might become integrated with the wider city. The students asserted that the plan would needlessly run down the docks and convert the area into another dormitory estate.

Nevertheless, regardless of the wishes of the municipality or even the residents of the area, the area's long dependence upon shipping and ancillary industries continued (and continues) to decline, and the area continues its metamorphosis into a working-class suburb with a lurid history and a drab present. In 1920 there were still 115 shipping companies which owned a total of 382 vessels. By January 1967 there were 23 vessels registered in Cardiff, in 1968 there were 22, and in 1969 there were 21 with a total gross tonnage of 292,931.¹

Yet as recently as early 1969, the *Western Mail* was still running lengthy articles about the shipping industry, revealing ambivalent attitudes towards it. On the one hand the caption to an illustration announces that "Cardiff Docks keep in the picture by speedy handling of new cars and tractors for the vital American market", and the article informs the reader that Cardiff can handle ships of up to 32,000 tons. On the other hand, and less encouragingly, it is admitted that *all* the ports of South Wales annually handle about 19 million tons: "a shadow of past performance", and of this shadow in 1968 Cardiff's wispy share was less than 3 million tons.

It is difficult to understand the rationale of the attempts during the past thirty years to revive the moribund docks of Cardiff, except as a sentimental lingering in the boisterous (and prosperous) days of pre-World War I. Now that dredging operations in Milford Haven will permit oil tankers of 250,000 tons to dock, it seems unrealistic to sigh regretfully for the vanished splendours and fortunes of ship and dock owners of long past years. No regrets need to be uttered for the equally vanished poverty and exploitation of the workers who made the grandeur possible.

By the autumn of 1970 the decline of the docks edged another inch forward. Ninety acres of Bute West dock were finally filled with half a million tons of rubble, and on the reclaimed land the Docks Board planned to encourage light engineering works, paint manufacturing and scrap merchants, the area becoming

¹ W. Rees, *Cardiff—a history of the city*, City of Cardiff, 1969. It is perhaps significant that of this book of 344 pages, less than five treat the period from World War I.

the first state of "a New Look port system with docks and industries working side by side" (*South Wales Echo*, 3 September 1970).

Until this intention becomes reality the docks are confined almost entirely to minor shipping and storage (including cold storage for meat, dairy produce, fruit and other perishables); there is also specialized car handling equipment, Gulf and Conoc have oil storage facilities for 12½ million gallons, marine engines are exported and there is a vestigial ship repairing industry. But the "Maritime setting" of Little's study has almost completely vanished. The area is ringed about by light industries and its workers are increasingly working outside the area, thereby establishing social and inter-ethnic contacts that were almost non-existent in the 1940s.

In the 1940s the only considerably settled "immigrant" communities were in Cardiff and in Liverpool, and both have suffered by their earlier dependence upon one major economic activity. In the 1970s there are many communities almost as encapsulated as the Cardiff of the 1940s, e.g. Southall and Bradford both have well-defined communities dependent for their livelihood on a small number of local trades or industries, and living their own lives in a manner that is almost inconceivable to one who has not visited them. These later areas, like Bute Town, tend to be areas in decline, and were there to be marked economic difficulties or economic structural changes, there could well rapidly be created depressed coloured areas as difficult to remedy as, but less easy to ignore than, the declining Bute Town. The Labour government's urban development plan, though less than vigorous in its execution, was an indication of the potential gravity of a situation long anticipated by Cardiff's experience.

3. THE PEOPLE OF BUTE TOWN

In the 1940s Little found that it was "very difficult to obtain even an approximate idea of the exact size and composition of the community", and he computed population estimates from sources, now no longer helpful, as e.g. the "Live Register" of seamen unable to prove their British nationality, the lists of residents of the many lodging houses, and some vague estimates

provided by the police. In the 1970s the situation is not much more precise. Little estimated the total population to be about 6,000; its bewildering mixture of racial and national origins would daunt even an anthropologist with a compulsive zeal for classification. The area is now no less mixed than it was in the 1940s but it seems probable that the mixture has not been substantially augmented by the recent influxes from overseas that have expanded (or even created) "immigrant" communities in other parts of Britain.

In the 1953 development plan of the city of Cardiff, the total population of Bute Town was estimated as 7,360 of "mixed race and culture". In the sample census of 1966, South Ward, which includes Bute Town, had an estimated population of 10,810. During the previous five years an estimated 590 people had moved into the census area, and during the previous year an estimated 200 people had moved. The census figures do not distinguish where the newcomers came from, so these small numbers include not only people from overseas, but some who entered from elsewhere in Cardiff or elsewhere in the British Isles. The sample census also shows that of the total Cardiff population of 297,000 about 7,760 residents were born outside the British Isles. The main numbers are shown in the table below.

RESIDENTS OF CARDIFF BORN OUTSIDE THE BRITISH ISLES*

<i>Birthplace</i>	<i>No.</i>
<i>Commonwealth:</i>	
<i>Africa</i> (not South Africa)	210
<i>America</i> (Barbados, British Guiana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, other countries in the Caribbean)	920
<i>Asia</i> (India and Pakistan)	890
<i>Europe</i> (Malta and Gozo, 440; Gibraltar, 40)	480
<i>Europe—total</i>	3,340
Greece	870
Italy	610
Germany	470
Poland	330
Spain	290
Other	770

*Source: Extracts from Sample Census, 1966—Cardiff, C.B., Table 17U.

Of Cardiff's total population, nearly 2.5 per cent therefore were born outside the British Isles, and of these a remarkably small part was living in South Ward at the time of the sample census. It is not unreasonable to suppose that in recent years the population of South Ward has remained as static as that of the city. If the coloured newcomers are aggregated (i.e. those from the Caribbean, British Guiana, India and Pakistan) they total about 1,810, i.e. less than 1 per cent of Cardiff's total population. Another indication of the static nature of the population of the city is the Department of Education and Science's figures of (defined) "immigrant pupils". In the late 1960s the total for the whole of Wales was only 744, and in the city of Cardiff they comprised less than 2 per cent of the school-children.

Communities of Indians and Pakistanis have grown outside Bute Town, and there are probably about 1,000 Muslims of all nationalities in Cardiff, whose contact with the old centre is focused on the Welsh Islamic Centre in Bute Town. This Centre cost about £11,000 and includes a *Zaouia* (school) for teaching the Quran to children of about 4 years; it caters for Moslems of Arab, Pakistani, Indian, Malayan, Somali and African origin.

4. HOUSING AND HOMES

A crucial indication of the social health of a community is the state of its housing and social services. When Little described the area he was astonished at the official boast that the city had no slums comparable with those of other seaports. But the conditions he described were far from satisfactory even by the laxer standards of the 1940s.

In simple numerical terms, the 1966 census suggests that housing and amenities have much improved. There is, however, in human terms a more complicated balance to draw between the physical improvement of development and the social disadvantages of housing schemes that seem to have minimized the socio-geographical factors that make for the growth of a community, integrated within itself and with the wider society.

It is uncomfortable to consider that in the 1966 census there were still in South Ward 30 households with no w.c., and that 620 shared an outside w.c. An inside w.c. was shared by 310