

## London is the Place for Me: Black Britons, Citizenship and the Politics of Race

Kennetta Hammond Perry

Print publication date: 2016

Print ISBN-13: 9780190240202

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: December 2015

DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190240202.001.0001

## “Race Riots” and the Mystique of British Anti-Racism

Kennetta Hammond Perry

DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190240202.003.0004

### Abstract and Keywords

During the summer of 1958, news of “race riots” in Nottingham and London dominated headlines in Britain and beyond. This chapter examines domestic and international responses to news of racial violence in Britain. This chapter argues that as news of violence aimed primarily at people of African descent traveled around the world, the mystique of British anti-racism fractured. While Britain as a nation had historically represented itself through arguably anti-racist tropes emphasizing values connected to liberalism, multiracial inclusivity, and tolerance, news of “race riots” told a different story. International reactions to the violence provide a means of seeing some of the contours of the mystique of British anti-racism. However, domestic commentary seeking to explain the violence as a product of increasing Black migration and deviant working-class masculinities sought to salvage myths about race and nation so as not to tarnish what Britishness stood for in the postwar world.

**Keywords:** race and nation, Britishness, anti-racism, race riots, Notting Hill, Nottingham, Teddy boys, West Indians

On the evening of 1 September 1958, a crowd of approximately three hundred men and women remained barricaded in two adjacent buildings at Blenheim Crescent, prepared to defend themselves to the death against what was described in the local press as a “mob of marauding white rowdies.”<sup>1</sup> Armed with Molotov cocktails and makeshift weapons such as bricks, iron bars, bicycle chains, and milk bottles, the group, largely consisting of West Indians, joined forces in response to a rumored planned attack on Black people in the area

during what had become the third consecutive night of mass racial violence in the streets of West London. Frightened yet resolute in their desire to defend and protect their lives, their property, and their rights as citizens, the members of the group undoubtedly found their courage to stand and fight growing as they overheard an angry White mob that had gathered in the street, surrounding them shouting, “Let’s burn the niggers out!”<sup>2</sup>

The fear that enveloped the men and women who had gathered to confront the White mob at Blenheim Crescent was quite justifiable. Earlier that day, as Seymour Manning exited the Latimer Road Tube Station, he met the taunts and jeers of a vitriolic White crowd incited by the death cheer “lynch him!”<sup>3</sup> Described in press reports as a “young West African student,” Manning had journeyed to Notting Hill for the day from Derby to visit friends but quickly found that the color of his skin was attracting contempt and violence.<sup>4</sup> Manning narrowly escaped a brutal beating by a “gang” of young White men. However, it was only after a local shopkeeper’s wife opened her doors and called police after watching him run for his life and gasping, “Help me. For God’s sake, help me. They are going to kill me,” that Manning found refuge from the racial terror that he had encountered while doing nothing more than being a lone Black man walking the streets of Notting Hill<sup>5</sup> When questioned by a reporter about the reasons for the attack on Manning, one of his attackers boasted, “We’d have tore ‘im apart if it hadn’t been for the police,” while another explained, **(p.90)** “We’ve got a bad enough housing shortage around here without them moving in. Keep Britain white.”<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps some of the men and women assembled in the tenements at Blenheim Crescent had learned of Seymour Manning’s attack and decided that enough was enough. For over a week, reports of anti-Black violence in the streets of Nottingham and West London captured national headlines as news of “Negro-baiting” White mobs and “Teddy boys” brandishing knives, razors, and other weapons of expediency, including bicycle chains and broken bottles, prowling for victims and fueling “race war” circulated in the British press.<sup>7</sup> While patrolling in Notting Hill on the evening before Seymour Manning’s attack, local constables made several arrests as they encountered hundreds of “hostile” Whites, who hurled bottles and iron railings while referring to them as “nigger lovers” as they taunted police for permission to “get at” the “dirty coloured bastards.”<sup>8</sup>

In the hours before a group of West Indians convened at 9 Blenheim Crescent above Totobag’s Café to launch their counterattack on the anti-Black street violence, Jeffrey Hamm, secretary of Oswald Mosley’s Union Movement, a fascist organization that avidly protested the “coloured invasion,” gave a fiery speech condemning Commonwealth “immigrants” and inciting hundreds of Whites who had gathered outside of the Latimer Road Tube Station to “get rid of them.”<sup>9</sup> After a speech that tapped into the fury that had been on display in the streets

by a speaker obviously hoping to cultivate and exploit White anxieties about the consequences of Commonwealth migration, one can imagine that seeing supporters cheer in agreement with Jeffrey Hamm’s incendiary rhetoric only strengthened Black Britons’ resolve to fight back. Whereas on previous evenings Black Britons had oftentimes found themselves largely on the receiving end of mob violence, as darkness fell on the streets of West London on the evening of 1 September 1958, the tide was shifting. Groups of West Indian men entered the streets while challenging Whites to “come and fight!”<sup>10</sup> As homemade petrol bombs cascaded from the rooftop of Totobag’s Café into the streets at Blenheim Crescent, White crowds would, if only temporarily, scatter. In West London, police would amplify their efforts to tame the mobs to restore order in the streets, and the press would declare that in the face of another night of vigilante efforts to “Keep Britain White,” on the evening of 1 September 1958, “this time colored people fought back.”<sup>11</sup>

Within forty-eight hours of what was described as the “siege of Blenheim-Crescent,” the violence between Black and White Londoners began to subside.<sup>12</sup> Evening rains coupled with an intensified police presence helped to calm the atmosphere as ongoing racial strife transitioned from a blistering boil back to a more passive simmer. By the time that the major fighting reached an armistice, police had made 108 arrests, the overwhelming majority **(p.91)** being young White working-class men.<sup>13</sup> As defendants answered to local magistrates on a host of charges, including assault, using insulting behavior, obstructing police, possessing offensive weapons, and “fighting to the terror of Her Majesty’s subjects,” even before the violence tapered, an assortment of commentators both in Britain and beyond began to render opinions about what the news of “race riots” in Nottingham and London meant.<sup>14</sup> Was the violence simply a local story about a sudden, geographically specific “outburst” of racial conflict? Could it be explained as a product of “hooliganism,” the depravities associated with working-class urban life or growing right-wing fascist agitation? Was the so-called colour problem precipitated by a largely Black male Commonwealth “immigrant” population, or did its origins lie elsewhere? More importantly, what did news of “Britain’s race war” say to the world about the nation as a whole?<sup>15</sup>

This chapter focuses on the competing logics offered by both domestic and international audiences to explain and make sense of the causes and consequences of news of “race riots” in Britain. While incidents of anti-Black violence during the summer of 1958 have been customarily viewed as landmark events in charting a social history of White Britons’ hostilities to Commonwealth migration and the growing presence of non-White communities in Britain, this domestically oriented reading obfuscates the transnational political impact that news of “race riots” had on perceptions of race and race relations in Britain.<sup>16</sup> News traveled. And sensational headlines describing the exploits of “lynch mobs” in Nottingham and the “Nazis of Notting Hill” made copy in papers throughout the world and garnered an international audience of observers.<sup>17</sup> As

a decolonizing imperial power and proprietor of Western democracy in a political moment driven by racially charged Cold War imperatives, Third World movements, and debates over the protection of human rights, for Britain—much like the United States—inflammatory images of race and race relations encapsulated in news stories, including those chronicling events such as the desegregation crisis in Little Rock, Arkansas, held the power to potentially compromise the nation’s moral leadership on a world stage.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, news of “race riots” struck at the very heart of postwar discourses about race in Britain, manufactured to recalibrate ideas about the nation’s evolving relationship to a post-imperial Commonwealth community of former colonial states. It is only by incorporating a transnational framework that attends to the interplay between the local and the global through the prism of Empire that the racial conflict that erupted in the streets of Nottingham and Notting Hill during the summer of 1958 can be properly located within a broader history of shifting ideas about the character of Britain as an imperial nation-state and the meaning of Britishness in an age of imperial atrophy.<sup>19</sup> What then emerges from this discussion is a deeper awareness of how the experiences of **(p.92)** Caribbean migrants provide a critical point of entry for examining how race shaped perceptions of what it meant to be British both at home and abroad during the postwar era.

Tracking the range of domestic and international commentary generated in response to the news of “race riots” in Britain captured in press reports, the public statements of Government officials, editorials, cartoons, and diplomatic correspondences brings into sharp focus the gulf between the purported ideals of the nation and the quotidian realities of Black British citizens. Whereas the nation touted values of tolerance, multiracial inclusiveness, and racial progressivism, news of “race riots” told a different story that stood diametrically opposed to this narrative of the nation. To be sure, inasmuch as international responses to the news of “race riots” helped to distill this terrain, they also provide a useful window to gauge the workings of what I term the mystique of British anti-racism. The mystique of British anti-racism is a concept used to describe the collective myths engendered historically that have over time sustained and reinforced anti-racist perceptions of British liberalism, tolerance, and ostensible benevolence toward racialized colonial subjects. Rooted in the reconstituted “moral capital” accrued by Britain’s investments in shaping a humanitarian legacy of abolitionism, the mystique of British anti-racism in the postwar era functioned as a potent element of representations of Britain and Britishness both at home and abroad.<sup>20</sup> News of “race riots” certainly challenged this depiction of race and nation, compromising the legitimacy of the mystique and threatening its survival. Therefore, this chapter is also concerned with the ways in which domestic reaction to the violence was tempered by an attempt to manage the contradictions between the racialized ideals that were tethered to how the British imperial nation-state fashioned itself in an increasingly post-

imperial world and the extant racial realities of metropolitan society embodied in the experiences of Afro-Caribbean migrants.

#### “Race Riots” in Britain as International News

As the intensity of the interracial clashes in Nottingham and London grew during late August and early September 1958, London’s *Daily Herald* reported “world uproar” as news of “Britain’s race war” circulated internationally.<sup>21</sup> Reporting on three consecutive nights of violence in Notting Hill on 3 September 1958, Ghana’s *Daily Graphic* featured the comments of C. J. M. Alport, a Commonwealth Relations Office official, as part of a headline declaring, “Race Riots are unBritish.” Condemning both the incidents of racial violence that had erupted in Nottingham and London in the preceding weeks, as well as the sensational media coverage of the conflicts, Alport insisted that **(p.93)** the very idea of “race riots” in England was “wholly unBritish” and could not be explained as a product or indicator of the existence of “colour prejudice” in Britain.<sup>22</sup> Explicit in Alport’s characterization of the violence was the idea that the very rudiments of what constituted what it meant to be British were antithetical to the realities of violent racial conflict.

The theme of the “unBritish” nature of news of race riots in England resonated in media coverage throughout the world. Whereas an editorialist for *The Star* in Johannesburg assessed that Britain was a nation where racial discrimination was “essentially alien to the whole spirit of the people and the laws,” other international news outlets, including Australia’s *Sydney Morning Herald*, ran headlines announcing, “Race Riots Give Britain a Shock” to capture the unexpected and seemingly foreign concept of violent racial conflict in Britain.<sup>23</sup> This point of view also permeated the filters of British diplomats charged with measuring the pulse of international opinion about the violence and keeping government officials in London abreast of the shifting views of race and race relations in Britain from abroad. From the outset, several British overseas observers reported that much of the commentary surrounding the news of “race riots” centered on the seemingly uncharacteristic nature of images of racial violence in Britain, given the nation’s international reputation as a beacon of liberalism, tolerance, and egalitarianism.

Summarizing the extensive coverage of the violence in the French press, a British diplomat asserted that “the British are renowned in France for their tolerance and liberal outlook and it has come as a shock to many that racialism can rear its ugly head in the country of Wilberforce.”<sup>24</sup> Invoking William Wilberforce, an iconic figure in the history of British abolitionism, as a synecdoche representing the moral and political investments of the nation in the racially charged history of anti-slavery accentuated the racially progressive values associated with British liberalism and ideas of tolerance, which the diplomat concluded had been compromised in his survey of French media. A report on coverage of the violence filed by a British diplomat stationed in New

Zealand expressed similar sentiments and included an excerpt from the *Wellington Dominion* that noted that racial violence in Britain was particularly shocking “because such disorder [was] so out of character with [the] British whole reputation for tolerance,” which the paper added was now “impaired.”<sup>25</sup>

The idea that news of “race riots” loosened the threads of the moral fibers of a British nation that had imagined itself and was regarded as a land governed by its seemingly impartial principles about the significance of race also circulated in US coverage of the violence. *Washington Post* editorials and reports on the violence referenced “the strong British tradition of civil liberties,” which ran counter to the news of racial conflict, a dynamic that the paper described as producing a “sociological shock” to the conscience of a “nation which likes to (p.94) regard itself as wholly free of color bias.”<sup>26</sup> Collating media reports throughout the United States, British diplomats in Washington reported comment in the *Tulsa Tribune* that described how the violence was “searing the conscience of a nation so traditionally dedicated to fair play,” while an editor for the *New York Times* remarked that it would “be interesting to see how the British reassert their normal tolerance and good sense,” given that “no people in the world had achieved a more urbane sense of tolerance than the British.”<sup>27</sup> It was not simply that news of “race riots” challenged the legitimacy of the virtues of tolerance and racially blind liberal justice in Britain, but in doing so, the news also struck at the heart of perceptions of the nation’s role as a political leader internationally.

Commenting on the violence upon arriving in England just days after the dust began to settle in London, Norman Manley, Premier of Jamaica, echoed many of the sentiments expressed in the *New York Times*. Manley declared news of race riots a “tragedy” for a nation that he insisted had “always led the world in tolerance and decency.”<sup>28</sup> Carefully maneuvering the tensions between his diplomatic role as advocate for a largely Jamaican West Indian community in Britain, and broker for the official political interests of the Jamaican nation in the British Commonwealth, in his comments Manley underscored how the racial politics of Britain as a nation was configured in a global political imaginary. Britain was not simply a nation with its moral compass facing forward when it came to (anti)racism, but its imagined national virtues of being tolerant, just, liberal, and decent also translated into a global brand that allowed it to be perceived as racially inclusive, democratic, egalitarian and, most importantly, politically respectable as a type of standard bearer for these desired traits in the eyes of a world community attuned to the politics of race and representations of race relations.

During his visit to England in the days immediately following the height of the London violence, Manley joined a special envoy of West Indian leaders, which included Carl La Corbiniere, Deputy Prime Minister of the newly formed West Indies Federation, and Hugh Cummins, Prime Minister of Barbados, assembled

to investigate the causes and consequences of the violence. In addition to visiting areas most severely affected by racial conflict, including London's Notting Hill district and the St. Ann's Road section of Nottingham, the envoy had as the goal of what became a two-week tour to convey a message of official support for West Indian nationals in Britain. Moreover, the presence of West Indian officials in England served as a public gesture of concern and solidarity that allowed them to harness a type of bully pulpit to lobby British officials on behalf of the interests of their mutual constituencies in Britain and their respective national political interests as members of the Commonwealth. In the course of holding several public meetings attended by hundreds of West Indians during his tours of neighborhoods in (p.95) London and Nottingham, Manley reminded West Indians to remain vigilant and undeterred by the violence. Emphasizing their status as citizens, he urged a crowd convened in London to “exercise every single right you possess,” and reminded a crowd in Nottingham, “you have a right to be and here and you will stay here as long as you want.”<sup>29</sup> In framing his public critique of the violence as both an affront to the citizenship status of West Indian nationals residing in Britain and a product of anti-Black or, at the very least, anti-non-White racism, Manley's narrative about the violence articulated the ways in which West Indians were indeed disenfranchised casualties of racism rather than colonial denizens whose mere presence engendered a racialized “immigrant” problem in British society.

West Indian officials were not alone among predominately non-White Commonwealth governments in their expressions of concern for their nationals residing in Britain in the wake of the violence. African and Asian nations, including Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, and Pakistan, all made direct appeals to British officials to seek clarification on the nature of the violence and the steps being taken to ensure the protection and safety of their nationals.<sup>30</sup> While anxieties about the plight of their respective national constituencies figured most prominently in public and private dialogues between Commonwealth and British officials, these exchanges also highlight a preoccupation with the ways in which the violence marked a particular construction of anti-Black racism that crystallized in specific ways upon the non-White, colonized, working-class bodies of West Indian men of African descent. Acknowledging that “the negroes” appeared to be the “main targets” of the violence, Pakistani diplomats warned the Commonwealth Relations Office that “there is no knowing when the teddy boys will direct their wrath at the large population of Pakistanis” resident in the United Kingdom.<sup>31</sup> In their appeals to British officials, representatives of the High Commissioner of Ghana cited confusion in press reports that did not clearly distinguish between the “different kinds of ‘coloured’ people” involved in the violence, noting that “there was all the difference in the world between Indians and Pakistanis on the one hand, West Africans on another and West Indians in the third place.”<sup>32</sup> As British officials considered these appeals, they too agreed that a finer point should be given to distinguishing between “one type of

coloured person and another,” particularly as it related to the sexual politics of race, concluding that “no Teddy Boy is likely to feel that some undersized little Pakistani or Indian will steal his girl friend from him; but West Africans are almost certainly to be classed with West Indians as the major menace where women are concerned.”<sup>33</sup>

Although Commonwealth nations formed differing opinions about the stakes of the violence rooted in racial classifications of “coloured people”—views that were shaped by ideas about the phenotype, gender, **(p.96)** sexuality, nationality, and socioeconomic status tethered to the Black bodies involved—they did seem to agree that the violence posed a grave threat to the sense of solidarity that governed the principles of a multiracial British Commonwealth. According to Australia’s *Sydney Morning Herald*, the rioting in Britain had aroused “dark subjects['] anxiety” throughout a Commonwealth community with an overwhelming majority of non-White British subjects.<sup>34</sup> Reporting on media coverage of the violence in Pakistan, a British diplomat included excerpts from an article appearing in the *Times of Karachi* that suggested those involved in the violence, namely, “teddy boys,” deserved to be “flogged to within an inch of their lives,” given that “the good work done in our multi-racial association may be now in jeopardy simply because of some teenage wise guys and hoodlums.”<sup>35</sup> Jamaican Premier Norman Manley concurred with this assessment and determined that “the whole future of the British Commonwealth of Nations—much of which is peopled by non-white races—depended on Britain’s conduct in the face of racial incidents.”<sup>36</sup> Just as the British Nationality Act of 1948 institutionalized the notion of a British Commonwealth community of citizens whose ties transcended the boundaries of race, region, and nation, the Commonwealth itself, at least in theory, represented a multiracial political entity comprised of equal nationalities, where markers of race purportedly had no pertinent social value in determining Commonwealth citizenship rights in Britain.

Addressing a largely West Indian audience in London during his two-week tour in the aftermath of the violence, Manley noted that Britain’s open-door migration policy was “a principle which has helped to build the very foundations on which the Commonwealth rests.”<sup>37</sup> Also stressing the importance of migration as an essential element defining Commonwealth relations, a Nigerian official expressed concerns similar to Manley’s, warning that if Britain decided to restrict migration from Commonwealth nationals, it would “do irreparable damage to Commonwealth unity and mutual understanding.”<sup>38</sup> Future Nigerian President Nnamdi Azikiwe agreed. During a state visit as he anticipated his country’s march toward independence, Azikiwe noted that while the British Commonwealth had taken a liberal stance on race relations, a shift in migration policy would fundamentally alter Commonwealth relations. Accordingly, he warned, “We would not like to be in the Commonwealth where we could be second-class citizens.”<sup>39</sup> Since people of color and, more specifically, Afro-



Caribbeans, represented the overwhelming majority of migrants from the Commonwealth in Britain during the 1950s, inherently, the issue of migration, particularly the question of migration restrictions, came embedded with racial undertones. How could British officials consider migration restrictions amid racial conflict involving Black Commonwealth migrants without **(p.97)** signaling that controls were indeed a de facto race policy designed to limit the entry of Black British citizens?

South Africa's *The Star* in Johannesburg addressed this controversial question in an editorial suggesting,

No doubt Britain would be reluctant to depart from the principle of the open door or to give any appearance of racial bias. But when she is faced with an immediate practical problem, the obvious thing is to check the inflow of people whose coming at this moment could only aggravate the troubles of the authorities as well as the non-whites already in the country.”<sup>40</sup>

In an editorial appearing in the leading nationalist pro-Government paper, Cape Town's *Die Burger*, one South African observer attributed the “racial explosion” directly to Britain's reluctance to implement migration controls that would appear to discriminate against the entry of people of color “in the interest of good relations with the multi-racial empire and Commonwealth.” The editorial suggested that, “such intolerance towards people who are coloured is completely in opposition to the picture of a liberal, colour-blind Britain which is shown to the world.”<sup>41</sup> To be sure, British diplomats observed that in general, articles related to incidents of racial violence in Britain reported in the South African press tended to highlight what was regarded as “the very real conflict between the principle of the open door in a multi-racial Commonwealth and the practical problem of controlling the influx of those who are difficult to assimilate.”<sup>42</sup> South African opinion clearly articulated how the news of “race riots” in Britain—the premier Commonwealth state—clearly exposed the ways that the principles governing the Commonwealth ideal formed inextricable ties between race and migration.

As racial conflict and its international implications prompted British officials to more carefully reevaluate the relationship between race and migration within the context of notions of “Commonwealth,” two scenarios emerged. Either migration could continue to function as one of the chief mechanisms through which the ideals of a multiracial egalitarian British Commonwealth community acquired substantive value or, in striking contrast, it could serve as a medium of remapping the racial hierarchies that had defined Empire onto the citizenship rights afforded to Commonwealth nationalities. By even contemplating the latter, particularly in response to racial violence, Britain could not avoid international

conjecture that when it came to freely opening its borders to the Commonwealth community, race did indeed matter.

Not only did South African public opinion emphasize how the violence unearthed tensions between a British migration policy reflecting the ideals of **(p.98)** a multiracial Commonwealth and the practicalities associated with forging a multiracial society but, more importantly, news of “race riots” in Britain offered South African observers an opportunity to attempt to vindicate their own abhorred racial practices and appeal for greater understanding from British critics. J. O. Wright, a representative for the South African High Commission monitoring public opinion in South Africa, noted that after the violence spread from Nottingham to Notting Hill, South African commentators had “a real field day” reporting on the riots.<sup>43</sup> As accounts of violence in Nottingham emerged, *The Times* reported that South African papers referenced the events as “a case of the biter bit.” Under the heading “No more the cry ‘Holier than thou,’” the Johannesburg’s *Star* reprinted a cartoon appearing in Britain’s *Daily Express*, portraying British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan dodging a scuffle between a “Nottingham ‘teddy boy’ and a coloured man” as the Governor of Arkansas, Orval Faubus, who had become legendary for obstructing federal mandates to desegregate public schools in Little Rock, Arkansas, and a figure “vaguely resembling” Nationalist Party leader Charles Swart labeled “South Africa” watched (Figure 3.1).<sup>44</sup>

A British correspondent reporting from Johannesburg explained.

The incidents at Nottingham have roused considerable interest here. . . . Many South Africans feel that as their own racial troubles **(p.99)** develop the British, like the United States, are likely to be more sympathetic to the Union’s [South Africa’s] difficulties, and this gives them a feeling of relief.<sup>45</sup>

Editorial commentary appearing in *Die Burger*, the organ of Afrikaner Nationalists, evoked a similar tone. One writer contended that Britain was “ill-equipped to deal with the problems of a multi-racial community.” The editorialist insisted that because British perspectives of “colour problems” derived chiefly from its role as a colonial power, Britain’s answers to issues of race had been resolved through what the commentator labeled as “total



Figure 3.1 *Daily Express* Cummings cartoon, 1958.

apartheid” rather than through any serious consideration of “multiracial existences.”

(Permission *Daily Express*/Solo Syndication.)

Clearly, the commentator was attuned to the ways that historically, notwithstanding small and oftentimes transient enclaves of seafaring, student, and military communities, Britain’s experience with forging multiracial non-White communities had largely been shaped within the context of an imperial structure in which majority White metropolitan communities were more accustomed to governing from abroad rather than accommodating a sizable population of color on its own shores. The article maintained that, for this reason, British perspectives “on the problems of colour are often stupid and intolerable” and suggested that Britain was unqualified to critique South Africa’s use of apartheid policies to regulate race relations within its borders. Rather, the editorialist concluded, Britons should offer Africa “less advice, but not without greater understanding.”<sup>46</sup>

Just as South African opinion conveyed a hope that the racial violence displayed in Nottingham and Notting Hill might cause British critics of apartheid to reexamine their self-righteous posture on issues pertaining to race, observers in Germany, France, and the US South also expressed a degree of vindication for racial practices and policies scrutinized by the British public. In their surveys of German reaction to news of “race riots” in Britain, British officials reporting from Bonn described what was detected as “an undertone of German satisfaction” that Britain had proven itself “not immune to anti-racial feeling” despite pompous denouncements of Nazi anti-Semitic sentiment in Germany.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, British officials in Paris noticed that a certain degree of *schadenfreude* characterized French reactions to the violence, particularly among “right-wing Frenchmen” who recognized Britain’s self-righteous “tendency to preach to others” on the subject of race and colonialism, as exemplified in British criticisms of French policies in Algeria.<sup>48</sup>

Among US critics, one of the most stinging indictments of what news of race riots in Britain articulated about the nation’s international position as a moral authority on the subject of race came directly from Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus. In the wake of the 1957 Little Rock desegregation debacle, **(p.100)** which seared images of Black students encountering a military-style perimeter as they sought to exercise their right to access the same institutions of public education afforded to their White counterparts into the consciousness of international audiences, Governor Faubus had become for many British observers the embodiment of America’s continuing failure to secure racial equality in a purportedly democratic society. In response to a report in an Arkansas newspaper indicating that Governor Faubus had admonished, “The British had better not point the finger at us anymore,” as news of intensifying racial conflict in Notting Hill had surfaced, a reporter for the *Daily Mail* issued a reply that aimed to make clear distinctions between Jim Crow America and the

streets of Nottingham and London. Presumably addressed to Faubus and any others feeling absolved of British moral indignation about their racist policies and practices, in an article titled “Dear Governor Faubus . . .,” the reporter noted, “There is no law for the white and another for the black in this country.” And while America’s race troubles were compounded in part because local authorities, including Faubus, had “defied the law of the land,” in the case of the recent fighting in Nottingham and London, those who had violated law in Britain by committing acts of violence were not those endowed with the responsibilities of enforcing the laws that governed the nation, but rather were “a bunch of rowdies and no-goods” whose actions would be punished to the full extent of the law.<sup>49</sup> By challenging Faubus’s suggestion that news of “race riots” placed Britain on a similar plane with the United States in respect to the question of racial politics, the reporter hoped to remind Faubus and other international detractors that the violence did not reflect the values of the nation. In doing so, the reporter’s response points to the ways in which news of “race riots” placed the British nation in the precarious position of having to defend the seemingly anti-racist mystique of tolerance, liberality, and multiracial inclusiveness that it touted as the defining features of what it meant to be British in the postwar world.

### Historicizing the Mystique

If one examines international conjecture in the aftermath of the violence in Nottingham and London, three dominant narratives about race and race relations in metropolitan Britain emerge. The first of these narratives focused upon Britain’s image as a racially liberal nation that touted ostensibly progressive values, including tolerance, decency, and equal justice. A second narrative revealed how Britain was envisioned as the “Mother Country” or progenitor of a multiracial Commonwealth defined by a sense of Britishness that was inclusive and universalist, while a third narrative addressed Britain’s image in the **(p.101)** arena of race relations as a foil to the extremes of White supremacy practiced in the Jim Crow South in the United States and under South Africa’s postwar apartheid regime. To be sure, these narratives about race and race relations in Britain did not exist in isolation from one another, nor were they absolute or uncontested. Rather, they functioned as converging discursive frameworks that informed a broader portrait of race and race relations in Britain—a composite portrait that I refer to as the mystique of British antiracism.

As a means to account for the ways in which a litany of foreign observers shared overlapping visions of a racially enlightened British nation, the mystique of British anti-racism describes a powerful constellation of narratives that worked in concert to secure and indeed normalize the credos that sustained the ostensibly racially progressive virtues of British liberalism. Moreover, it is a concept that captures the ever-elusive, unstable, and fungible character of the credos that constituted ideas about what the nation is or what it is perceived to represent both at home and abroad. As conventional definitions suggest, a

mystique carries with it a certain ineffable quality that commands power and, to some extent, reverence even through its very character of being nondescript and normalized oftentimes to the point of a type of common-sense hegemonic invisibility.<sup>50</sup> Thus the mystique of British anti-racism functions as a conceptual device to open up an analytical space to explore the contours of the chasms and contradictions between the purported values and ideas that informed imaginaries of the British nation and what was actually happening within the social and political life of the nation, particularly in respect to questions of race. Whereas the mystique of British anti-racism provided a powerful frame to interpret the politics of race in Britain, under the weight of news of “race riots” the mystique fractured. And on the basis of the responses noted above, it is clear that during the summer of 1958, for many international observers throughout the Commonwealth, Europe and the United States, ideas of a tolerant, just, and liberal Britain simply did not comport with images of mob violence perpetuated in the name of keeping Britain White.

In unearthing what *appeared* to be a dislodging of racial ideals and racialized realities one has to consider how international audiences came to adapt such views of race and nation in postwar Britain—albeit to varying degrees and with different political motivations. It is important to note that the internationally legible discourses that collectively articulated the mystique of British anti-racism did not emerge as a type of spontaneous initial reaction to the violence in London and Nottingham. Rather, when viewed in concert, they were part of a preconditioned schema for thinking about race and nation that was then used by international audiences to read and make sense of the news about “race riots” in Britain. Considering the existence of the mystique of British anti-racism requires paying attention to both the narratives that **(p.102)** constitute its articulation and some of the historical currents that breathed life into these visions of nation, giving them political efficacy and staying power over time. To engage this issue within the context of 1950s Britain, it is first necessary to distill the relationship between the three dominant narratives about race and race relations that framed how international audiences began to respond to news of “race riots” during the summer of 1958. It can be argued that the narratives informing ideas about Britain as the standard-bearer of a multiracial Commonwealth that promoted universalism, egalitarianism, and transracial camaraderie, along with those which emphasized metropolitan Britain’s position as a counterpoint to the racial orders that sanctioned Jim Crow in America and apartheid rule under the National Party in South Africa, were indeed postwar iterations of post-abolitionist narratives about Empire and British racial liberalism shaped by the exigencies of imperial crisis that arose during World War II.

Fortified with the “moral capital” accrued by the politicization of a particular narrative of abolitionism that emphasized humanitarianism, the idea of the Empire as a liberal “anti-slavery state” and benevolent protector supplied the logic and cultivated the rhetorical levers that British imperialists used to qualify

---

their claims to exploit, govern, civilize, and create colonial subjects in Africa, the Caribbean, and Asia throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>51</sup> To be sure, versions of a liberal, abolitionist, and humanitarian British nation also circulated in the metropole during the Victorian era and figured into the political campaigns of anti-lynching crusader Ida B. Wells as a means of highlighting “American atrocities”—as opposed to domestic and imperial racial realities—to gain the sympathies of British audiences in her opposition to racial violence and disenfranchisement as experienced by Black Americans.<sup>52</sup> Although military conflicts such as the Anglo-Boer War and World War I exposed the waning strength of British imperial power and raised questions about its virtues both at home and abroad during the early twentieth century, it was not until World War II that the representations of a benevolent British Empire underwent the most intensive scrutiny.<sup>53</sup> During World War II, the convergence of several factors, including the loss of imperial fronts in the East to the Japanese during the early years of the war, Nazi propaganda, American anti-imperialist rhetoric, and the critique of anti-colonialists in India, the Caribbean, Africa, and within the imperial metropolis, challenged the integrity of this image of Empire.<sup>54</sup> Juxtaposed with the task of defining the Allied cause as one steeped in a defense of wartime credos such as national self-determination, human rights, freedom, and democracy against an enemy that threatened those prospects on a global scale by advocating a racially extreme, violent, and imperialistic brand of fascism, the very idea of Empire found itself imperiled. In response, part of creating an official wartime **(p.103)** propaganda front involved adopting strategies to refurbish the view of Empire by promoting liberality and tolerance as national virtues as a means of branding Britain as a just nation tethered to a “temperate empire that was neither racist nor oppressive.”<sup>55</sup> Tantamount to the project of both reviving and vindicating the virtues of Empire was a move toward the discursive deracialization of imperial relations that involved engendering a new lexicon to describe Britain’s relationship with its Empire.<sup>56</sup>

The first layer of this initiative entailed the adaptation of the universalist language of Commonwealth as shorthand for Empire. During the postwar era, the British Nationality Act of 1948 became the signature policy that institutionalized a narrative about Commonwealth that emphasized the multiracial and inclusive character of Britishness. Driven in part by an attempt to blunt the emergence of racially exclusive British nationalities in the majority White dominions, the British Nationality Act of 1948 fully encapsulated a vision of a “New Commonwealth” that recognized an inclusive and transnational definition of Britishness transcending race and space. And while the passage of the British Nationality Act of 1948 is typically regarded as an attempt to redress the fading image of Britain’s imperial legacy rather than a display of a pressing commitment to the principles of racial democracy, it is important to acknowledge how the embrace of a multiracial Commonwealth ideal managed to resuscitate

post-abolitionist discourses of imperial benevolence and goodwill that explicitly disavowed the violent and oppressive racial ideologies of Empire.

Just as wartime critiques of the practice of Empire prompted a move toward the universalist and egalitarian ethos of Commonwealth, as Sonya Rose notes, fighting a war against the racial prescriptions of Nazi rule “made British tolerance a particularly salient aspect of national identity during the war.”<sup>57</sup> According to Rose, “The British understood themselves to be tolerant of racial difference, identifying racist practices with the United States, Germany and South Africa.”<sup>58</sup> During the war, nothing underscored this claim more pointedly than British reactions to a Jim Crow US military presence in England. Eager to distance themselves from US segregationist policies and the racism of White Americans, the Ministry of Information produced a pamphlet that attempted to make clear distinctions between British dispositions toward African Americans and those found in America. The pamphlet boldly declared, “Any American Negro who comes to Britain must be treated by us on a basis of absolute equality.” Reminding British audiences of proper racial etiquette in Britain, the pamphlet added, “And remember *never* call a negro a ‘nigger.’”<sup>59</sup> Ultimately, by accommodating Jim Crow during the War, but not overtly condoning it, British officials hoped to articulate an ahistorical narrative about the imposition of racism as a burden of war imported by the United States, **(p.104)** an imposition that the British bore as a type of necessary evil associated with allying with American forces in the greater cause of giving a final death blow to Nazi rule. In doing so, this narrative accomplished at least two complementary political agendas. First, it clearly established a barometer for measuring the substance of British notions of tolerance as a Western liberal power. The perception of tolerance is relative. The cultural and political cachet of those who are deemed tolerant is always tethered to the ways in which the tolerant can measure themselves against an intolerant or less tolerant entity of perceivably similar status.<sup>60</sup> For Britain both during and after the war, as its position as a world power dramatically strengthened, Jim Crow America provided the requisite contrast necessary to claim the moral high ground associated with being regarded as a tolerant nation. Although US President Harry Truman would issue an executive order in the years immediately following World War II to desegregate the military and the Supreme Court would render a series of decisions, including the celebrated 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, that would slowly begin to dismantle the legal underpinnings of Jim Crow segregation, over a decade following the war, British audiences could still lay claim to being a more racially “tolerant” nation as stories of Emmett Till’s lynching, images of federal troops escorting Black children to school in Little Rock, Arkansas, and international outrage about the death sentence passed down to Jimmy Wilson for the crime of stealing \$1.95 from a White woman reminded the world that American democracy continued to betray some of its most vulnerable of citizens.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, as news of “race riots” in Britain began to

dominate headlines during the summer of 1958, British audiences would declare that they did not want to see the seeds of “Little Rock” germinate in Britain, to remind themselves and international audiences that racism and racial violence were particularly American social concerns that had no place in British society.<sup>62</sup> And it was the preservation of this narrative of a tolerant, liberal-minded, and comparatively racially progressive Britain—all pillars upholding the mystique of British anti-racism—that British audiences sought to defend as they responded to and account for the news of “race riots.”

### Preserving the Mystique

In the days following the violence in Notting Hill, British Foreign Office officials dispatched a confidential telegram to all Government representatives in Commonwealth territories and those serving in such places as Italy, Japan, the United States, and Russia, with an expressed goal to “dampen down public interest” in the violence that it noted had been “given exaggerated importance in the United Kingdom press.” To further this effort, the telegram included **(p. 105)** a list of talking points that London officials felt would allow overseas representatives to place the news about the violence in its “proper perspective” as they communicated with local officials and media outlets in their respective outposts. First and foremost, British officials hoped to alter international opinion by changing the parlance surrounding how what was happening in the streets of Nottingham and London was being reported. Whereas “race riots” had been one of the most commonly deployed descriptors of the violence, the telegram explained that it was important to emphasize that given the scale of the events, “by foreign standards” the violence occurring in Nottingham and London would not be considered a “riot.” To further underscore the aberrant quality of the incidents, the memo’s talking points were careful to remind international audiences that the violence had been widely denounced and that, unlike places such as the United States and South Africa, “organized racial discrimination has never been part of the pattern of British life, nor of the laws of the country.” While British officials conceded that the “disturbances” had an unspecified “racial aspect,” they noted that race was merely a “pretext” for understanding the violence rather than a determining factor that could account for it. The memo concluded by encouraging foreign representatives to impress upon their local audiences that “all British subjects, white or coloured enjoy absolute equality before the law.”<sup>63</sup>

In addition to offering overseas diplomats succinct talking points on the British Government’s perspective on the violence, Foreign Office officials issued a separate addendum to the same recipients that provided a more detailed statement seeking to clarify media reports related to what they termed the “so-called ‘race riots.’”<sup>64</sup> Whereas the talking points memo had emphasized that the label of “race riot” was inaccurate to describe the conflicts in Nottingham and London, on the basis of how foreign audiences might have understood the use of this appellation in their own domestic contexts, the addendum aimed to provide



specific references to buttress their characterization of the violence as being something other than a “riot,” and certainly not a “race riot” by any standard. Riots conjured mobs of people; however, officials noted that while there had been over a hundred arrests, there were relatively few people injured. Moreover, “race riots” happened in societies brimming with racist bigots and racism. Insisting that Britain was no such place, officials noted, “There is very little racial prejudice” in Britain and suggested that when incidents of racial conflict surfaced between “coloured immigrants” and local White residents, “they have almost invariably arisen from under-currents of jealousy over extraneous things,” such as “accommodation, employment or women,” rather than any entrenched form of racism or racial prejudice.<sup>65</sup>

For further context, the telegram explained that it had been only since the close of World War II that British cities had witnessed a “considerable influx of (p. 106) coloured immigrants”—the majority of whom were “unskilled” West Indian workers—and only recently had this pattern of “immigration” begun to reach “disconcerting proportions” as postwar labor shortages began to level. Foreign Office officials reasoned that because migrants of color were “easily recognizable ‘foreigners’”—and in the particular case of West Indians—were “sometimes more flamboyant in their behavior,” they were “easy targets for hooliganism.” The memo concluded that although “the presence of the city’s coloured population had been used as an excuse to create a violent disturbance” by the dregs of society, the news from Nottingham and London did not reflect widespread racial dispositions among the British public or the character of the nation. Instead, British officials wanted an international public to understand that news of “race riots” cast an unwelcomed “blot on the conscience of Britain.”<sup>66</sup>

The telegrams issued by the Foreign Office in the wake of the violence elucidate at least three key points concerning how one might consider domestic responses to the violence. First, British spectators, particularly those in Government, were acutely sensitive to the impressions that news of “race riots” made among international observers. Although identifying and addressing the sources of racial tensions, as well as reprimanding the perpetrators of violence and devising preventive approaches to subdue future outbreaks all fell within the purview of the domestic community, one cannot ignore the broader international context of British responses and interpretations of the meaning of racial violence. In the postwar world in particular, issues of race could never quite simply be confined to a nation’s domestic sphere. Rather, they represented contested transnational terrain that defined an individual nation’s image in world politics and tested its legitimacy on a host of racially charged international concerns. Intensifying civil rights campaigns in the United States, the inherent racial undertones of the disengagement of European colonial powers in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean, as well as United Nations’ debates concerning South Africa’s apartheid regime, all kept the issue of race firmly

ensconced in an international political landscape defined by shifting and competing Cold War diplomatic alliances. In this climate, questions of race mattered, and Britons certainly knew that when news of “race riots” captured headlines, the world would be watching.

Secondly, British officials were concerned about influencing international perceptions of race and race relations in the wake of the violence. In much the same way that incidents such as the Little Rock debacle served as powerful symbols of race in America providing fodder for international critics to besmirch what Mary Dudziak has referenced as the “image of American democracy,” news of “race riots” potentially threatened to dismantle widely held perceptions of British anti-racism.<sup>67</sup> Just as the real and imagined impact **(p.107)** of racial narratives emerging from Jim Crow America induced US officials to repackage tarnished national myths pertaining to visions of American democracy, it is important to understand that British officials’ reactions to news of “race riots” were also mediated by a desire to preserve certain contested notions of the mystique of British anti-racism. The images of interracial violence projected throughout the world showcased realities of racial conflict that severely crippled the liberal myths of racial tolerance, inclusiveness, egalitarianism, and moral authority fortifying the mystique of British anti-racism. Not only did images of “race riots” run counter to the underlying claim that racial differences had no social value in British society but, more importantly, they also provided alternative narratives of race and race relations that unveiled the existence of anti-Black racial hostilities, prejudice, and discrimination. How could the mystique of British anti-racism survive as a viable optic for imagining the virtues of the nation amid reports of “nigger-hunting,” “race war,” and vigilante campaigns taking place on the streets of Nottingham and London and celebrating the mantra “Keep Britain White!”?<sup>68</sup>

A third theme highlighted in the Foreign Office telegrams is that the narratives about race in British society that were exposed for international consumption during the summer of 1958 represented a critical moment compelling various sectors of a majority White metropolitan British society to take an introspective gaze at the nation and the dilemmas associated with what was more commonly described as the “colour problem.” Whereas London’s *Evening Standard* cast news of “race riots” as “London’s Shame,” a *Daily Express* report noted that while Britons had long “observed the colour problems of the United States and South Africa with an aloof and somewhat superior detachment,” the violence in London and Nottingham had “brought the problem right up to their doorsteps.”<sup>69</sup> As news of the violence spread, White British audiences began to cultivate a media-driven narrative that aimed to reconfigure shattered perceptions of race and race relations and rationalize the violence to circumvent a broad indictment of espoused national values and ideals regarding race. Alongside news of fresh outbreaks of violence in the days and weeks immediately following the initial flare-up of street brawls in the St. Ann’s Well

Road area of Nottingham, newspapers consistently carried headlines including “What Fans the Hate?” “Reasons for Racial Tension,” “Our Colour Problem,” “Who is To Blame?” “Why Racial Clash Occurred,” and “London Racial Outburst Due to Many Factors,” all of which undertook the task of explaining and, to varying degrees, reframing the nature of racial violence in Britain and its broader social and political implications domestically and, perhaps more importantly, for the consumption of international audiences.<sup>70</sup> For many British observers, one of the very tenets of British national identity was at stake in the aftermath of the Nottingham and Notting Hill incidents. **(p.108)** Thus reconciling the violence became a means of safeguarding the mystique of British anti-racism and essentially reifying and retooling the very myths about the nation that silenced a broader imperial history of anti-Black violence and racial hierarchies of power and belonging that also worked in the service of keeping Britain White.<sup>71</sup>

In the weeks immediately following the disturbances in Nottingham and Notting Hill, British observers began to construct an intricate web of social commentary to analyze what was described as the “colour problem” and explain the factors contributing to racial conflict. In the process, two overlapping and somewhat complementary explanations emerged as British officials, media outlets, organizations, and private citizens debated and attempted to account for the sources of racial tensions that led to the outbreak of violence. The first aspect of these explanations emphasized the ways in which the violence could be explained as a series of localized incidents confined to a wayward sector of White society. To frame this argument, observers oftentimes conceded that the violence was, on the whole, the result of racially motivated attacks on Black residents; however, these racist overtures were largely attributed to the reckless actions of “irresponsible youths” commonly described as Teddy boys, who were in no way representative of the larger White society’s values or dispositions toward Black people. Not only did this explanation rely upon caricatures of Teddy boys—who were typically believed to be young White men—who were figured as the primary agents of violent racist behavior, but it also located the emergence of Teddy boy violence as part of a broader context of degenerate conditions characteristic of working-class urban life in particular neighborhoods in Nottingham and West London.

A second and indeed corollary theme emerging from White Britons’ considerations of the causes of racial conflict focused on the ways in which racial conflict could be directly linked to the recent “immigration” of large numbers of people of color from Commonwealth communities—the overwhelming majority being Caribbean men of African descent. Issues of interracial sex, living space, and work dominated this line of discussion. British observers highlighted how sexual relations (real and imagined) between Black men and White women, housing shortages, and employment competition created hostile social relations between Black newcomers and indigenous White

residents. In the process of articulating these two explanations—one of which confined racist behavior to an aberrant sector of White society and another of which attributed racial tensions to the problems of adapting to a new “immigrant” population—British audiences provided a means of accounting for what appeared to be an eruption of racial conflict in Britain and translating its implications for both domestic and international audiences in such a manner that disavowed the racism that news of “race riots” implied had taken root in (p. 109) British society. To be sure, the glue that ultimately held these interlocking narratives together contained a critical subtext about gender, race, and nation that associated the sources of racial violence with male culprits who could be imagined as deviant and categorically un-British in order to preserve and defend the mystique of British anti-racism.

In an article appearing in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* just days after reports of interracial violence in Nottingham surfaced, a special correspondent for the newspaper posed the question, “What produced the tension in this community?” At first glance, the reporter argued that the “real causes” of the violence involved “the whole complex of prejudice, envy, and mutual irritation inadequately known as the ‘colour problem.’” In an attempt to further explain the essential features of the “colour problem” the reporter explained that

many people put the verdict credibly into one word—“women.” You might add as one equal factor general anxiety about the presence of coloured men, or “prejudice”—including white residents’ dislike of mixed marriages. Some distance behind these causes comes a complex of irritations: coloured people’s manners and mannerisms; rivalry for employment in a time of slight recession in the area; and envy of coloured men who have been able to buy houses and ‘flash’ cars.<sup>72</sup>

The report added,

The ‘women problem’ seems to mean no more than that some West Indians and other coloured men have acquired white girl friends. This is resented by some white male residents—vaguely known as ‘teddy boys’ though their age range seems to run from over 20 to at least over 30—who do their best to humiliate coloured men in general.<sup>73</sup>

In an editorial appearing in the following week’s edition of the paper, Myrtle Shaw, a resident of Nottingham, responded to the special correspondent’s arguments concerning the nature of the “colour problem” and suggested that while the article could be commended for its objectivity, “the question ‘What went wrong in Nottingham?’ is not easily answered.” From Shaw’s perspective, “to lay the blame on ‘teddy boys’ or ‘irresponsible’ coloured men, or to conclude that it is due to jealousy over women,” was an inadequate response. Instead, Shaw insisted that any interrogation of the societal problems that the violence

exposed should extend beyond a focus on what she described as “surface causes” and attend to larger socioeconomic problems, including rising unemployment and housing shortages, rather than “hastily concluding that the affair was the handiwork of youth.”<sup>74</sup> Although Myrtle Shaw hoped to **(p.110)** elicit a public dialogue about the violence and highlight some of the structural factors that contributed to the violence, as news of racial conflict spread from Nottingham to London, much of the initial commentary seeking to explain the sources of the violence fixated on personalities rather than conditions. As news of “race riots” in Nottingham and London unfolded, public discourse about the violence captured in press reports framed the story as one of competing deviant masculine personas—young White Teddy boys and West Indian “immigrant” men who competed over urban working-class resources, including White female sexual partners, means of economic mobility in a recessive labor market, living space in era of housing shortages, and the right to articulate their own brand of British masculinity. Even when public chatter raised socioeconomic issues, it typically did so merely to underscore antagonisms between these two deviant masculine personalities—images that ultimately became the central caricatures employed in an intricate set of narratives that worked to absolve the nation of the blemish that news of “race riots” projected to the world.

In a special report on the causes of the violence in Nottingham, a correspondent for *The Times* began by insisting that “Nottingham has had no apparent colour bar.”<sup>75</sup> Instead, the reporter maintained that the reasons for the “racial clash” boiled down to more interpersonal issues of “envy, resentment, and sometimes fear of eventual domination of white by black.” Sampling opinion among White residents in the St. Ann’s Well Road area, where most of the fighting took place, the reporter found that Whites complained of being “elbowed off the pavement by groups of young coloured men, and that [white] girls are accosted and molested.” Moreover, the reporter found that “white people, particularly those of low intelligence” were jealous of the “sight of coloured men walking along with white women,” and especially irritated by Black people who appeared to make “good wages,” purchase homes, drive “flashy” cars, and display a “happy-go-lucky temperament.” Although the reporter noted that West Indians in the area expressed resentments about being misunderstood, humiliated, and attacked by “white toughs,” the crux of the article outlined a rationale about the causes of the violence that envisioned the streets surrounding St. Ann’s Well Road as working-class spaces of masculine aggression. In this narrative, fighting became recourse for weak-minded White men to defend vulnerable White women, their neighborhoods, and their livelihoods against Black male predators who flaunted their access to the spoils of settlement in Britain.<sup>76</sup>

As reports of racial violence spread from Nottingham to London, reporting on the violence fixated on variations of a similar narrative that sought to further explain the “wave of lawlessness” that was sweeping through British cities at the hands of young White male “rowdies” and “irresponsible ruffians” who **(p.111)**

---

comprised a “lunatic fringe” aiming to ‘Keep Britain White.’<sup>77</sup> These behaviors became most associated with Teddy boys, an idiom used to describe the seemingly errant qualities of postwar British youth culture, which, according to Dick Hebdige, reflected broader social anxieties about working-class respectability, imperial decline, and Black “immigration.”<sup>78</sup> In response to a headline raising the question “Who is to blame?” in the days after the violence in London seemed to calm, an editorial in *The Observer* cited Teddy boys as a primary concern. Describing the evolving stereotypes circulating in popular discourse about Teddy boys, the article insisted that the nomenclature had become a “generic term for the Whites who seemed to be leading the riots,” adding that for Americans, the equivalent referent would be “poor white trash.”<sup>79</sup> Referencing research that had been conducted by the Home Office, *The Times* featured an article discussing the Teddy boy phenomenon as part of a broader “Hooligan Age” characterized by increasing rates of crime and delinquency among British youth whose “impressionable years” had been shaped by the dislocations of World War II. The article suggested that it would be short sighted to place blame for the rioting solely at the feet of these “immature and excitable” sectors of society; nevertheless, it concluded that it was important to understand that the source of the outbreaks of racial violence was in fact confined to this “tiny submerged hooligan element” whose antics would continue to reflect the views of an inconsequential minority whose actions deserved the “contempt of the civilized majority” and severe consequences from legal authorities.<sup>80</sup>

Ensuring that international audiences, particularly those in places accustomed to attracting headlines tarnishing their own reputations in the arena of race relations, understood that the violence in Britain could be traced to the likes of a deviant Teddy boy youth subculture was of paramount importance to B. R. Wilson, an affiliate of the University of Leeds who wrote a letter to the editor of the *The Times*, insisting that the “citizens of Bulawayo, Pretoria and Little Rock,” including the infamous Governor Faubus, needed to be clear that “no widespread hostility towards coloured people in Britain” existed. Rather, the problem that the violence exposed was a problem of “ill-disciplined, overpaid, frustrated youth” who had not been properly socialized to “either preserve our traditional values or to effectively forge them for a new way of life.” According to Wilson, the deviant nature of Teddy boys, which had most recently directed its frustrations toward West Indians, was driven in large measure by a shifting postwar socioeconomic climate that offered high wages and economic security through the welfare state to “unskilled, untrained, socially illiterate youth” influenced by an American youth culture that scoffed at authority and a mass-media industry that celebrated violence.<sup>81</sup> Therefore, audiences must not misconstrue the violence as a political statement about race relations in **(p.112)** British society. Instead, as a *Daily Express* cartoon depicting two young men aimlessly smoking on a street corner with the caption “Heads we go to Notting

Hill, tails we go to the pictures,” suggested, Wilson and ostensibly the editors of *The Times* hoped that the “sadly misnamed ‘race riots’” would be viewed as a series of inchoate, reckless choices made by bored young White men flipping coins over whether they should waste an evening at the movies or journey for entertainment by causing trouble in neighborhoods like Notting Hill.<sup>82</sup> In this configuration, young Teds did not possess the political consciousness to contemplate the implications of participating in “race riots” even if racist ideas informed the thrill-seeking violence that they directed toward Black people.

Yet the rebellious nature of violent-prone Teddy boys was only part of the problem. In addition to a fixation on the reckless behavior of Teddy boys, inflamed by the presence of Black newcomers who threatened young White working-class men’s socioeconomic positions and took sexual liberties with White women, the local communities themselves became spaces of degeneracy that served as breeding grounds for socially deviant behavior. Describing the St. Ann’s community, where most of the violence occurred in Nottingham, one paper suggested that episodes of interracial violence erupted in a “squalid district” of the city “where the popular idea of a good time . . . is “beer, fish-and-chips, and a good fight on Saturday night.”<sup>83</sup> No doubt seizing upon historical narratives about Notting Hill dating from Charles Dickens’s mid-nineteenth-century depictions and resurrected in contemporary novels of the mid-1950s, including Colin MacInnes’s *City of Spades*, press commentary about the Notting Hill community was even more condescending. Describing Notting Hill Gate as a neighborhood with decrepit flats, plagued with a history of street violence, and heavily populated by West Indian and Irish men and “others whose roots are not in London,” a reporter for the *Manchester Guardian* concluded that the “very nature of the Notting Hill area must in part be responsible” for the violence.<sup>84</sup> Expressing similar sentiments about the demographics of Notting Hill, a report in *The Times* described Notting Hill as an impoverished area that had “always been tough.” In characterizing the residents of the community, the article explained,

Many of the long-established residents are of gypsy stock settled in the Dale before London filled it. They are, as they say themselves, tough, clannish people. Many of them are self-employed in the used-car trade, which has its lawless fringe. They have no love for the police; several of them have boasted to your Correspondent that “I’ve been in trouble with the bogies all my life.” Many of the newer arrivals are Irish labourers—who work for good money on the building sites, and then many take a week off to drink their earnings.<sup>85</sup>

**(p.113)** Judging from this view, one can understand that the demographics of Notting Hill made it ripe for all sorts of violence—not just racial violence—but the types of violence and social degeneracy that that could be found only amongst foreigners, criminals, shiftless workers, Teddy boys, and other

outsiders on the peripheries of respectable British society. In the press, Notting Hill became more than the geographical location for racial conflict; it became a metonymy marking the undesirable spaces of urbanity within the nation—spaces that did not properly conform to the cultural norms and values of popular conceptions of a “little England.”<sup>86</sup> In the wake of the violence, Notting Hill became the outsider within London to such an extent that one journalist found that even gauging the pulse of the community required the acquisition of a type of cultural knowledge of “the Notting Hill argot,” which included supposedly locally specific lingo like “shackie,” which was used to describe White girls who lived with Black men; “yobbo,” a reference to a Black man known as a pimp or hustler; and “slag,” a more generic term that described White women who were friendly with Black men or women.<sup>87</sup> Inhabiting its own world filled with foreign and rogue personalities who devised parochial dialects that needed to be decoded by reporters, clearly, the Notting Hill that emerged in the British press in the aftermath of news of “race riots” may have been in London, the metropolis of the nation, but it certainly was not London.

In defense of Notting Hill, one resident who had been born in the area suggested that in the wake of the violence, the entire public conversation in the press about the area had shifted from one about the problem of colour prejudice to a narrative “actuated by class prejudice” about the problems of the neighborhood. Describing herself as a “Government clerk, unmarried, supporting a widowed mother,” the resident contended in a letter to the editor of the *Manchester Guardian* that she hardly recognized the images of Notting Hill that had come to dominate headlines. She insisted that one would glean on the basis of press reports that “we in Notting Hill are a brothel-bred rabble inhabiting leprous tenements who have no right to complain of anything.” Challenging this view, she contended that the majority of Notting Hill’s residents were “honest working people” whose sense of security was being threatened by the encroachment of “Jamaicans” acquiring property in the area and attempting to settle in “with their juke boxes and ragged curtains.”<sup>88</sup> From her view, Black newcomers represented the problem that needed attention, not necessarily the White communities whose welcome had been less than inviting.

From the very outset, news of “race riots” in Nottingham and London was framed by a narrative that captured White angst about how Black newcomers would erode a sense of security within the domestic space of the neighborhood and perhaps even the home, as expressed by the unmarried White clerk from (p. 114) Notting Hill. As news of racial fighting in Nottingham broke, the *Daily Express* ran a front-page headline, “Race Riots Terrorise a City” and accompanied the story with a photo (Figure 3.2) of “Mrs. [Mary] Lowndes” and her daughter Josephine, along with the caption “a woman is punched, then violence flares out. . . .”<sup>89</sup>



Although there would be numerous stories that would eventually circulate about the origins of the street fighting, stories of married White women’s proximity to violence involving Black men, including those relayed by Mrs. Mary Lowndes, who described being attacked by a “black man” without provocation as she and her husband returned home to their children, abounded in early reporting.<sup>90</sup> The juxtaposition of married White women, who could be imagined to embody the vulnerabilities of the sacred domestic space of the family, femininity, sexual virtue, and respectability, with the “terror” of street violence, which implicated Black men, buoyed widely held myths about the cultural threat that a largely Black male Caribbean migrant population posed to British society. Journalists covering the violence in Notting Hill and aiming to foreground local perspectives about the causes of racial tensions peppered their reporting with anecdotes describing West Indian men as pimps, sexual predators, and indolent workers who depended on the largesse of the British welfare state and exploited White women’s bodies for their own immoral economic and sexual benefit.<sup>91</sup>

**(p.115)** While most reporters tended to include only local White residents’ opinions about the reasons behind racial tensions in the area, a reporter for the *Manchester Guardian* sought out the perspective of a “young Jamaican” who had opened a garage in Notting Hill, whose opinion projected a host of White anxieties about West Indian men in what had become known as “Brown Town.” The reporter’s informant explained,

“Let’s face it man. Not all West Indians are prepared to work for a living when they get here. Some of them are lazy bums who didn’t fit in at home . . . I don’t blame those English people for getting mad. [Pointing to a house with smashed windows] Everyone here in Brown Town knows there’s three West Indian men living up there, and each one has a white girl living with him as his wife. And every one of those girls has to go out at night and work as a prostitute . . . as long as this goes on people here are going on breaking windows and I don’t blame them. Why can’t those no-good Jamaicans get a decent job?”<sup>92</sup>



Figure 3.2 Daily Express “Race Riot” headline, 1958.

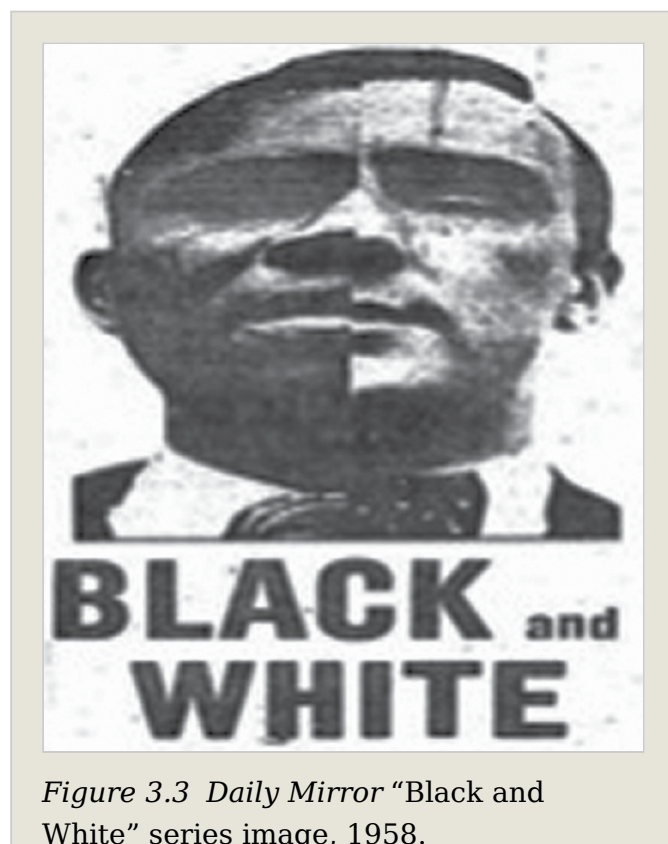
(Permission of Daily Express/Solo Syndication.)

No doubt providing an additional layer of credence to popular stereotypes about Black men by speaking both racially and geographically as a type of cultural insider, the Jamaican mechanic’s comments reinforced popular mythologies about Black masculinity cultivated in the colonial Caribbean context that figured West Indian men as the antithesis of White bourgeois British manhood by being trifling workers, dysfunctional family men, and a dangerous and illicit sexual presence, particularly in proximity to White women. According to Marcus Collins, it was these colonial discourses of Black masculinity that were remapped onto the public imagination of West Indian men and therefore shaped the terms of their experience as newcomers in postwar Britain.<sup>93</sup>

The distinctions between fact and fiction about Black newcomers became the central theme of a *Daily Mirror* series, titled “Black and White,” that sought to address the reasons behind the violence in Nottingham and London. Hoping to contribute to a broader public dialogue about reasons for racial conflict, Keith Waterhouse, the author of the column, designed the series to educate a White public about Black newcomers in an effort to combat the ignorance that the paper asserted “enables thugs—Fascist or otherwise[—]to foment the violence that has disgraced the name of this country throughout the world.”<sup>94</sup> The first article in the series, which adopted the logo of a male figure with his face divided into two halves, each with images of a White and a Black man on opposite sides, featured a headline introducing the “Boys from Jamaica.”

Noting that the overwhelming majority of West Indians in Britain hailed from Jamaica, Waterhouse used the island as a proxy for understanding the economic conditions that shaped Caribbean migration to Britain, including (p.116) high unemployment and depressed wages in a largely agricultural labor market. Waterhouse explained that the search for jobs fueled Caribbean migration and, with little economic incentive for migrants to return to islands like Jamaica, jobs would keep West Indians in Britain.<sup>95</sup>

In contrast to the “Boys from Jamaica,” who would most likely become a permanent fixture in British society, in introducing his audiences to



“The Men Who Come Here from West Africa to Learn,”

(Mirrorpix.)

Waterhouse emphasized that in

West Africa, unlike in the Caribbean, there was “unlimited opportunity for a coloured man” in such nations as Nigeria and newly independent Ghana. Therefore, it should be expected that Britain was a temporary attraction for West African “men” seeking to earn professional credentials and technical skills while gaining a first-person education in British models of civil service, democratic governance, and freedom.<sup>96</sup> Waterhouse’s overt gesture toward distinguishing between the masculinities embodied by “boys from Jamaica” and the “men from West Africa” illuminates the different ways in which nationality shaped popular mythologies about Black men. While the purveyors of anti-Black violence may have made little distinction between the bodies of Black men from Africa and those from the Caribbean, Waterhouse’s column articulated the ways in which West African men could be regarded as migrants arriving in Britain for the noble purpose of seeking education and knowledge that would ultimately be used to complete British Africa’s march toward responsible self-government and inclusion as an equal partner in the Commonwealth.<sup>97</sup> Their status as students made them British men in training and, in comparison with West Indian masculinity, which Waterhouse depicted through a narrative about labor migration and adolescence, West African men **(p.117)** emerged as a more matured example along the spectrum of Black masculinities. To be sure, race precluded either category of Black men from being fully regarded as British men, particularly when their very existence was the subject of public inquiry and explanation.

As Waterhouse attempted to refute popular myths about West Indian men’s criminality, their cultural difference, and their perceived sexual and socioeconomic threat to British society by highlighting that increasing numbers of West Indian women were migrating to join their husbands; most Jamaicans were Christian; those with a criminal past could not migrate; and many West Indians were oftentimes acquiring accommodations that “white people would not take” and jobs that employers could not find White workers to fill, he also showcased the variety of stigmas attached to West Indian masculinity that defined its exclusion from popular ideas about what constituted the most legitimate forms of British masculinity.<sup>98</sup> Likewise, as he reassured White audiences that the British men in training from West Africa were merely a temporary presence, in his column Waterhouse also reaffirmed a notion that African men had no intention to make permanent claims of belonging in Britain as British men, a theory that made their existence more palatable, even if it was not necessarily desirable.

As alluded to earlier, narratives about the deviant British masculinities embodied by Black “immigrant” men and young white Teds were more than media fictions created to rationalize racial violence. Perhaps more germane to understanding

how the nation spoke to the world about what news of “race riots” meant and its broader political implications for measuring the nation’s moral compass on issues pertaining to race and perceptions of race relations, it is critical to track how officialdom appropriated discourses of deviant masculinities to extricate the nation from the violence of racism and to preserve its anti-racist veneer. Hoping to influence “overseas opinion, particularly in the Commonwealth,” Vincent Tewson, General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), one of the most powerful lobbies of British labor interests both domestically and abroad, issued a statement on behalf of the General Council, condemning what he labeled as “isolated outbreaks of vicious hooliganism [in] Nottingham and one area of London.”<sup>99</sup> Hinting of the possibility that the violence might be attributed to Fascist agitation, the official statement issued by the Congress noted, “Evidence is accumulating that elements which propagated racial hatred in Britain and Europe in pre-war days are once more fanning the flames of violence.” As TUC delegates launched their annual Congress meeting during the same week that reports of violence in West London began to surface, the connections that TUC delegates made between the hooliganism that had been associated with Teddy boys and Fascist organizers underscored some of the circulating conjecture illustrated **(p.118)** in a provocative cartoon that appeared on the front page of the *Daily Mirror* during the same week of the Congress meeting that linked the London violence in particular to Fascist groups. The most visible was Oswald Mosley’s Union Movement, which actively promoted a “Keep Britain White” campaign opposing Black “immigration.” The cartoon reminded British audiences that nearly twenty years before, “Adolph Hitler started the Second World War,” and portrayed an image of a White male figure labeled “our own racist thugs” being enjoined by a figure dressed in Nazi military garb resembling Adolph Hitler to take the fight for ideas of “racial persecution, intolerance and prejudice” to the streets as he whispered, “Go on, boy! I may have lost that war, but my ideas seem to be winning . . .”<sup>100</sup>

Not only did TUC delegates appropriate this explanation for the violence—which essentially involved imagining racism to be a foreign social trait that had previously infiltrated British society but was nonetheless (p. 119) fundamentally un-British—but also the organization was careful to remind its imagined domestic and Commonwealth audiences that the Trades Union Movement in Britain had traditionally practiced British ideals of tolerance, as it “freely accepted” migrants from other countries into its ranks and remained outspoken in condemning “every manifestation of racial prejudice and discrimination in any part of the world.” And just as the TUC had remained a bulwark of British values, it suggested that in the wake of the violence, local communities pursue efforts to “further tolerance” and greater understanding of the “difficult problems” facing “immigrants” adjusting to life in Britain.<sup>101</sup>

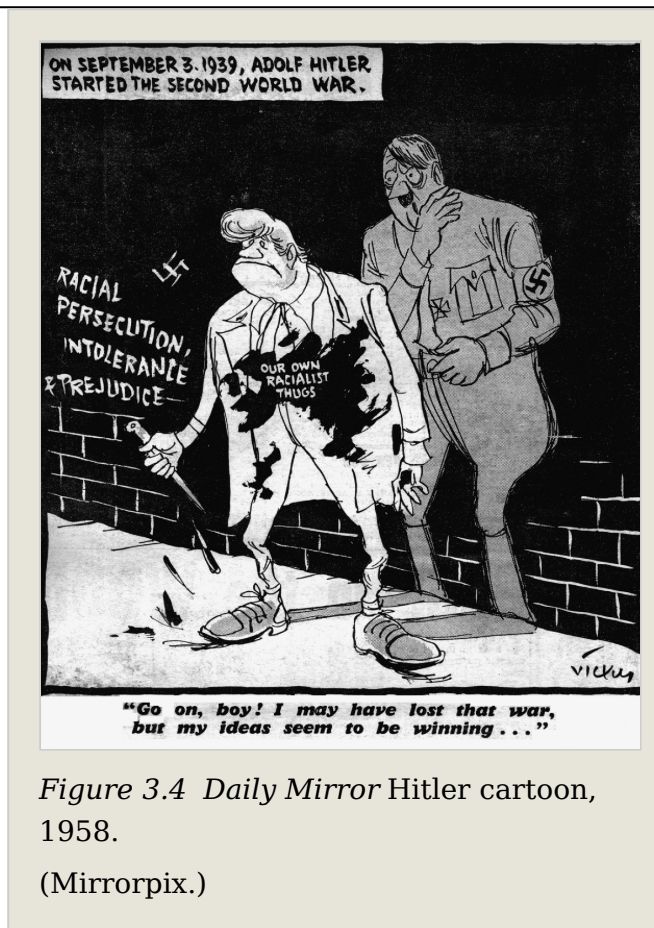


Figure 3.4 Daily Mirror Hitler cartoon, 1958.

(Mirrorpix.)

Just as the TUC understood that its response to the news of “race riots” would be scrutinized by global audiences, the international ramifications of the news of “race riots” also concerned high-ranking Government officials as they too attempted to weigh in on the possible causes of racial conflict and formulate working narratives to publicly account for the violence. Concerned that the violence might be “exaggerated at home or overseas,” the Tory Government, issued its first public response to the violence in a statement issued by Prime Minister Harold Macmillan three days after headlines of violence in London began to circulate. The statement stressed that the most pressing issue involved “the maintenance of law and order.”<sup>102</sup> Avoiding any specific references to the racial undertones of the Nottingham and Notting Hill violence, Macmillan statement characterized the situation as unbridled acts of lawlessness and further implied that the violence was a breach of some sort of established code of social conduct for which the Government and local authorities could and would exercise the “utmost strictness” in restoring through existing legal channels.<sup>103</sup> Hugh Gaitskill, leader of the opposition Labour Party, noted, “Nothing can justify the rioting and hooliganism.” Gaitskill insisted, “Such



behavior can only damage the reputation of our country in the world, weaken the unity of the Commonwealth, and increase racial tension without . . . solving the underlying social and economic problems.”<sup>104</sup> Both Gaitskill and Macmillan tapped into discourses of hooliganism and vigilantism. These discourses appropriated tropes associated with the social deviance ascribed to Teddy boys to mark an imagined boundary of Britishness that encompassed an orderly society with laws intolerant of racial violence, a boundary that the White hooligans responsible for the violence had flagrantly violated.

A report on the violence in Nottingham and London compiled by Home Office officials which informed the Prime Minister’s initial public response underscored this view as it outlined four key factors contributing to racial conflict in Nottingham and London. First, the report that was circulated in the national press listed White men’s jealousy “because white girls are attracted to coloured men.” Second, the report noted that increasing unemployment **(p.120)** and job competition among largely “unskilled” workers “has undoubtedly increased the antagonism between white and coloured.” Third, the report made reference to Teddy boys, who had been induced by “local public opinion to stir up still more trouble” for Black residents in the area already experiencing White apprehensions about their presence. Finally, the report added that in the arena of housing, “where there is overcrowding, whites sometimes become embittered because they feel that the immigrants are increasing their difficulties.”<sup>105</sup> Ultimately, the report aimed to provide a rationale and a context for understanding the behaviors of the instigators involved in the violence who were imagined as gullible White males whose sense of sexual and economic security had been challenged by the presence of Black newcomers. However, as the Prime Minister’s response suggested, the Government wanted the world to be clear that the nation’s rule of law and practice of legal justice would demonstrate that the nation did not sanction the actions of these individuals and that their behaviors and attitudes offended the sensibilities of all that defined what it meant to be British. Indeed, from the perspective of these high-ranking officials, one of the most effective means of demonstrating the deviance of the White masculinities that ostensibly generated news of “race riots” was to convey that the full weight of state power had mobilized against them.

The opportunity to project this message, however, did not emanate from the national level. Instead, it came in the form of decisions by local magistrates in Nottingham and London. Although local magistrates in both cities imposed fines and prison sentences ranging from a couple of weeks to several months for Black and White defendants arrested in the street fighting, Justice Cyril Salmon’s decision at the Old Bailey to sentence nine young men ranging in age from seventeen to twenty to four-year prison terms for their guilty pleas to the crimes of assault and wounding with the purpose of inflicting “grievous bodily harm” attracted the most media attention.<sup>106</sup> As courtroom spectators reportedly gasped in shock and mothers of the defendants shed tears of

disbelief, Salmon spoke on behalf of the interest of the nation to a broader audience vested in how Britons would confront the violence. Recalling the crimes for which the defendants had pled guilty, Salmon reminded them that “[you stand] convicted on your own confessions of a series of extremely grave and brutal crimes” that included attacking “five peaceful, law-abiding citizens without any shadow of an excuse” other than that “their skin happened to be of a colour of which you apparently did not approve.” In a striking admonishment, which would be quoted extensively by British and international news outlets, Salmon charged,

It was you men who started the whole of this violence in Notting Hill. You are a minute and insignificant section of the population who have **(p.121)** brought shame upon the district in which you live, and have filled the whole nation with horror, indignation, and disgust. . . . Everyone, irrespective of the colour of their skin, is entitled to walk through the streets in peace, with their heads erect, and free from fear. That is a right which these courts will always unfailingly uphold. . . . As far as the law is concerned you are entitled to think what you like, however foul your thoughts; to feel what you like, however brutal and debased your emotions; to say what you like providing you do not infringe on the rights of others or imperil the Queen’s peace, but once you translate your dark thoughts and brutal feelings into savage acts such as these the law will be swift to punish you, the guilty and to protect your victims.”<sup>107</sup>

Salmon’s remarks were clearly crafted to capture the umbrage of the nation toward the White culprits who had been found guilty of exacting racial terror on the streets of London. But Salmon was careful not to implicate the nation as a context for fomenting the ideologies that informed the “dark thoughts and brutal feelings” that incited violence against Black people. While the actions of the individual defendants had torn at the moral fibers of the nation, Salmon’s firm sentence offered a type of reminder that the justice of the nation was intolerant of this behavior and would rise to protect the eroded rights of those who fell victim to the violence of racist bigots. In this scenario, racists stood trial for a type of anti-Black racism that was seared into the hearts and minds of a small White few and not embedded in the structure of a nation whose racialized imperial history had wedded Whiteness to the most privileged forms of British national identity.

On the same day that British news outlets printed the magistrate’s remarks, a reprint also appeared in the *Trinidad Guardian*, along with the following editorial commentary:

The Judge’s action should go far in helping not only to nip in the bud the burgeoning of further racial troubles . . . but [also] in restoring to coloured

people in Britain a sense of being under the shelter of the great rock of British justice, which has stood the test of time.”<sup>108</sup>

Two days later, the *Trinidad Guardian* carried an editorial by James Nestor noting that the four-year prison terms issued to the “English hooligans” responsible for attacking Black men in Notting Hill had restored Trinidadians’ “faith in the British Government and “in one breath shown to the world that British justice still remains the highest achievement of man.” Nestor maintained that the triumph of “British Justice” should offer an example to Britain’s “American cousins.” **(p.122)** Citing the looming injustices of American racial politics most recently highlighted in the international coverage of Jimmy Wilson’s death sentence for stealing less than two dollars from a White women, a conviction that was upheld by the Alabama Supreme Court just days before Justice Salmon rendered his decision at the Old Bailey, Nestor reinstated Britain’s position as a morally superior foil to Jim Crow America as he queried, “Could the Americans rise above their sordiness [*sic*] of Jimmy Wilson and Little Rock? Can they really redeem themselves and enforce justice as impartially as the English?”<sup>109</sup>

According to British diplomats, Justice Salmon’s decision also played well to both German and French audiences as part of a redemptive story about what the violence said about the nation. British diplomats in Germany noted that overall in the German press, “the sharp sentences passed at Old Bailey on white youths who beat up coloured people have received wide approval,” adding that this “attitude contrasts with German criticism of [the] latest development at Little Rock.”<sup>110</sup> Similar to the view in Germany, British officials in France suggested, “The bad impression made by these ‘riots’ has since been to some extent corrected by the severity of the sentence passed on four of the ringleaders.”<sup>111</sup> These sorts of remarks suggested that international observers bought into British interpretations that the violence was the result of a breach of law and order instigated by reckless youth rather than any pervasive existence of racism or widespread hostility toward Black people. Moreover, these comments highlight that the punishments meted out by the British legal system to the perpetrators and the restoration of public order in the aftermath of the violence served as means of redeeming the tarnished image of race and nation in Britain.

While both liberal and conservative wings of officialdom appropriated narratives problematizing acts of “hooliganism” committed by Teddy boys bred in urban working-class communities—acts that could best be resolved through the punishments meted out through a legal system that was seemingly intolerant of the injustice of racial violence—for those who chose to concentrate blame largely on Black male West Indian “immigrants” whose presence incited the ire of the likes of Teddy boys and other White locals who perceived them as a social threat, the solution to this problem centered upon controlling and curbing West Indians’ right to migrate to Britain. In a telegram dispatched to all



Commonwealth governments, including colonial territories, sent just one day after news reports began to circulate pertaining to racial violence in Nottingham, an official of the Commonwealth Relations Office noted,

While police reports make it clear that coloured persons involved in last Saturday’s rioting in Nottingham were almost exclusively West Indian, press comment here tends to see this incident in round terms **(p.123)** of coloured versus white. Publicity, is moreover, bound to lead to further pressure for some form of immigration control.<sup>112</sup>

As the violence spread to London, debate over migration restrictions became firmly implanted in public discussions concerning the incidents of racial discrimination. Just two days after the fighting began in Nottingham, J. K. Cordeaux, a Conservative MP for Nottingham Central, linked the conflict to Britain’s open-door Commonwealth migration policy that had in recent years facilitated the growth of an unprecedented Black population in Britain.<sup>113</sup> Cordeaux’s Parliamentary colleague and fellow party member, Norman Panell of Liverpool, agreed with Cordeaux’s logic and maintained, “The Nottingham fighting is a manifestation of the evil results of the present [migration] policy.” Panell reasoned that “unless some restriction is imposed we shall create the colour bar we all want to avoid.”<sup>114</sup> Cyril Osborne, Conservative MP for Louth, proposed a one-year moratorium on all Commonwealth migration except in the case of “*bona fide* students,” imploring that the Nottingham violence should serve as “a red light to all of us.” According to Osborne, the alternative would be devastating to race relations in Britain. Referencing US racial tensions, he insisted, “It will be black against white. We are sowing the seeds of another ‘Little Rock’ and it is tragic.”<sup>115</sup>

When British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan issued his first public statement on the incidents of violence in Nottingham and Notting Hill, although he emphasized that the events represented a breach of law and order requiring “the utmost strictness” by law-enforcing agents, he also noted that the Government had “for some little time” been examining the impact of “the country’s time-honoured practice to allow free entry” to those migrating from Commonwealth territories. Macmillan pointed out that the Government would not make any hasty decision regarding a major policy change on the subject of Commonwealth migration without “careful consideration of the problem as a whole.” But the timing of his comments drew clear connections between racial tensions and the effects of Commonwealth migration.<sup>116</sup> In fact, the subject of Commonwealth migration controls had been actively pursued in various Government departments as early as 1952, when the Ministry of Labour established a commission on the Employment of Coloured People in the United Kingdom to study and collect data pertaining to “coloured immigration,” a study that was later used in Cabinet discussions resulting in a draft immigration restrictions bill in 1955.<sup>117</sup> Racial violence breathed new life into this long-

discussed agenda and, perhaps more importantly, it provided a more volatile and receptive public climate to test the case for restricting Commonwealth migration—in this instance, as **(p.124)** a means of addressing racial tensions and quelling the spread of interracial conflict.

What dominated public debate on the question of migration controls in the wake of the Nottingham and Notting Hill violence was the unavoidable racial undertones that any form of restriction might convey and the larger implications concerning the concept of British citizenship. In an editorial appearing in *The Times*, T. E. M McKitterick summarized this issue in an appeal against the introduction of migration controls. McKitterick concluded that any form of Commonwealth migration restriction “would be a breach in the basic principles behind the phrase ‘citizen’ of the United Kingdom and Colonies.” He further added that “it would inevitably lead to colour discrimination and the creation of two classes of citizenship.”<sup>118</sup> McKitterick’s remarks captured one of the major subjects framing current historical debate over race, citizenship, and migration in postwar Britain. As McKitterick rightly surmised, migration, under the terms of the British Nationality Act of 1948, became an institutionalized right of British citizenship that extended to all nationals of Commonwealth territories. Therefore, the introduction of Commonwealth migration restrictions inherently dismantled the egalitarian principles buttressing the ideal of a transracial, transnational British citizenship by excluding certain categories of Commonwealth nationals from enjoying the migration privileges attached to their British citizenship.

Suggesting that curbing a largely Afro-Caribbean Commonwealth migration might remedy racial conflict represented yet another discursive medium to preserve the mystique of British anti-racism. Reducing the social dilemmas of race and race relations in British society to a problem of migration and the presence of racialized “immigrant” bodies presented an ahistorical narrative implying that racism and racial conflict had no place historically or structurally in British society until the advent of large-scale Caribbean migration and the growth of more visible Black communities in the postwar period. This narrative ignored the long history of negative racial stereotypes about Black colonials circulating in metropolitan culture historically and the history of racial conflict in cities such as Cardiff, Liverpool, and Birmingham during the early twentieth century and in the years immediately following World War II.<sup>119</sup> Moreover, this assumption relied on the notion that Caribbean migrants by virtue of their very presence alone prompted and exacerbated racial conflict and virtually exonerated the nation as a whole from addressing its own history of racial prejudices, stereotypes, stigmas, exclusionary practices, and anti-Black violence.

In the days after the dust began to settle in the wake of mass violence in London, West Indian officials continued to make rounds in the various West Indian enclaves in London. Before launching his tour of Brixton, Jamaican **(p.**

**125)** Premier Norman Manley commented, “I am satisfied the great majority of the English people are not against West Indians, only a narrow section of the community. No doubt this is agitated by the ‘Keep Britain White’ Fascist movement.” Manley’s remarks suggested that he agreed with White British assessments that the violence was indeed the result of an aberrant section of society influenced by extremist propaganda rather than an endemic social problem.<sup>120</sup> Hugh Cummins, the Premier of Barbados, echoed Manley’s position on the causes of the violence. Cummins noted, “We feel that the trouble is the result of gangster-type Teddy boys and probably Fascism. . . . We feel that the average Englishman doesn’t explode into intense racial feeling.”<sup>121</sup> Manley and Cummins’s comments suggest that the rationales for the violence offered by mainstream media outlets and British officials about the causes of the violence held sway among influential international observers. But in many ways these narratives about the virtues of metropolitan culture were not new. They were familiar in that they made it possible to separate socially deviant violent White racists from respectable Englishmen who were thought to embody the highest ideals of Britishness, including the mystique of British antiracism. But news of “race riots” did leave an unsavory residue. And it is clear that the images of race and race relations in Britain that emerged in the aftermath of violent racial conflict between Black and White residents on the streets of Nottingham and Notting Hill in London did much to challenge widely held perceptions of British racial liberalism and tolerance. News of “race riots” put White Britons on the defensive. These news stories contradicted the mystique of British anti-racism that informed the ways that White Britons viewed themselves, their relationship to the Commonwealth, and Britain’s image in international politics. Less than one year after news of “race riots” occasioned White Britons to take an introspective examination to account for images of race relations that countered the mystique of British anti-racism, another instance of racial violence, the murder of Kelso Cochrane, would create a moment when visions of Britishness, race, and nation were fractured, contested, and reconfigured—this time through the grassroots political activism of Black Britons.

Notes:

(1.) “‘Bombs’ in Race Riot,” *Daily Mail*, 2 September 1958.

(2.) Pilkington, *Beyond the Mother Country*, 121–122; “Baron Baker Interview,” *Windrush*, DVD, David Upshal, Director, London: BBC, 1998.

(3.) “‘Lynch Him!’ Heard in London,” *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 4 September 1958.

(4.) Ibid. In another report on this particular incident appearing in the *Daily Mirror*, Manning is described as Jamaican. This discrepancy is indicative of the ways in which categories of race, ethnicity, nationality, and, more precisely,

Blackness were in part matters of perception. See “Riot Gangs Go by Car to Join the Mob,” *Daily Mirror*, 2 September 1958.

(5.) “‘Lynch Him!’ Heard in London,” *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 4 September 1958; “Riot Gangs Go by Car to Join the Mobs,” *Daily Mirror*, 2 September 1958.

(6.) “‘Lynch Him!’ Heard in London,” *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 4 September 1958.

(7.) “New Riot Terror,” *Daily Herald*, 1 September 1958; “Racial Outburst in an English City,” *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 28 August 1958; “Race Violence Grows,” *Daily Express*, 2 September 1958; “Thugs Hunt for Victims,” *Daily Express*, 2 September 1958; “Midnight Riot in London,” *Daily Mail*, 1 September 1958; see also Letter from Nottingham Chief Constable to Under Secretary of State, 2 September 1958, HO 325/8, TNA; and Home Office Memo, 4 September 1958, HO 325/8, TNA.

(8.) Statement of Geoffrey Golding, 1 September 1958, MEPO 2/9838, TNA; Statement of William Powell, 1 September 1958, MEPO 2/9838, TNA; Statement of Raymond Carter, 1 September 1958, MEPO 2/9838, TNA.

(9.) “Mosley’s Man Opens Fire,” *The Observer*, 7 September 1958; “Fight in Barricaded Houses,” *Daily Mail*, 2 September 1958; Colin Eales, “Witness to Violence,” *Kensington News and West London Times*, 5 September 1958.

(10.) Statement of John Meyrick, Notting Hill Police Station, 1 September 1958, MEPO 2/9838, TNA.

(11.) “Keep Britain White” was one of the unofficial mantras of Oswald Moseley’s Union Movement during the late 1950s and was reported as a popular chant heard during the violence of 1958. “London Racial Outburst Due to Many Factors: Hooligan Invaders and Wild Charges,” *The Times*, 3 September 1958; “Race Violence Grows,” *Daily Express*, 2 September 1958.

(12.) “‘Bombs’ in Race Riot,” *Daily Mail*, 2 September 1958.

(13.) Memo to Assistant Chief Constable from Divisional Detective Superintendent, 5 September 1958, MEPO 2/9838, TNA. According to Metropolitan Police records, seventy-two of the perpetrators were white and twenty-six were “coloured.” See also Telegram from Commonwealth Relations Office to Commonwealth Governments, 4 September 1958, DO 35/7992, TNA; and Pilkington, *Beyond the Mother Country*, 128.

(14.) Memo to Assistant Chief Constable from Divisional Detective Superintendent, 5 September 1958, MEPO 2/9838, TNA; “Notting Hill Men on ‘Affray’ Charge,” *Evening Standard*, 4 September 1958. References to “race riots” are used in quotation marks to denote that this was a discursive formation

or media construction of the violence, used to publicly discuss racial conflict between Black and White residents in Nottingham and London during the summer of 1958. On the concept of discursive formations, see Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* (New York: Tavistock Publications, 1972), 31–39.

(15.) “London Racial Outburst Due to Many Factors,” *The Times*, 3 September 1958; “Riots: World Uproar,” *Daily Herald*, 4 September 1958; See also Memo, “Ghana and the Racial Riots,” from A. Snelling to Sir H. Lintott, 4 September 1958, DO 35/7992, TNA. According to the memo, this characterization was also reproduced in Ghanaian papers.

(16.) This is one of the key threads of the only monograph on the riots: Pilkington, *Beyond the Mother Country*. See also Mike Phillips and Trevor Phillips, *Windrush*, 159–180.

(17.) Shirley Graham Dubois, “Howls from Lynch Mobs Shake Composure of British People,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 13 September 1958; “Nazis of Notting Hill,” *Daily Gleaner*, 9 September 1958; “Nazis of Notting Hill,” *The Statesman* (Calcutta), 7 September 1958 (according to the article this title was adopted from an article in *The Economist* with the same headline); “Race Riots Give Britain a Shock,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 September 1958.

(18.) Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, chap. 4; Kennetta Hammond Perry, “‘Little Rock’ in Britain: Jim Crow’s Transatlantic Topographies,” *Journal of British Studies* 51 (January 2012): 155–177.

(19.) Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation-State*, 3–23.

(20.) See Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), epilogue; see also Derek Peterson, ed., *Abolition and Imperialism in Britain, Africa and the Atlantic World* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010), 4–5; J. R. Oldfield, *Chords of Freedom: Commemoration, Ritual and British Transatlantic Slavery* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2007), 1–3, 88–90.

(21.) “Riots: World Uproar,” *Daily Herald*, 4 September 1958.

(22.) “Alport—Race Riots Are UnBritish,” *Daily Graphic*, 3 September 1958.

(23.) “Britain’s Race Troubles,” *Johannesburg Star*, 4 September 1958; “Race Riots Give Britain a Shock,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 September 1958.

(24.) Telegram from Paris, France to the Foreign Office, 6 September 1958, DO 35/7992, TNA.

- (25.) Telegram from Wellington, New Zealand to Commonwealth Relations Office, 8 September 1958, DO 35/7992, TNA.
- (26.) “Letters to the Editor: Britain’s Race Riots,” *Washington Post*, 2 September 1958; “Tolerance Remains High in Britain Despite Increase in Racial Collisions,” *Washington Post*, 26 August 1958.
- (27.) Telegram from Washington to Foreign Office, 4 September 1958, DO 35/7992, TNA.
- (28.) “Manley Sees WI Leaders,” *Trinidad Guardian*, 6 September 1958.
- (29.) “Manley Tells West Indians ‘Fear Nobody,’” *Trinidad Guardian*, 12 September 1958.
- (30.) Letter from M. E. Allen to Mr. Chadwick, 1 September 1958, DO 35/7992, TNA; Confidential Letter from E. O. Asafu-Adjaye to Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, 3 September 1958, DO 35/7992, TNA; Telegram from E. Baring to Colonial Secretary, 31 October 1958, DO 35/7992, TNA; Telegram from Secretary of State for the Colonies to Federation of Nigeria, 5 September 1958, DO 35/7992, TNA.
- (31.) Telegram from Karachi [Pakistan] to Commonwealth Relations Office, 4 September 1958, DO 35/7992, TNA.
- (32.) Memo, “Racial Riots in the U.K.,” 1 September 1958, DO 35/7992, TNA.
- (33.) Memo from A. W. Snelling to Sir H. Lintott, “Ghana and the Racial Riots,” 4 September 1958, DO 35/7992, TNA.
- (34.) “Racial Attacks Cause Empire Crisis,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 September 1958.
- (35.) Telegram from Karachi to Commonwealth Relations Office, 4 September 1958, DO 35/7992, TNA.
- (36.) *Reuters* report, “British Entertainers Attack Race Violence,” *Washington Post*, 11 September 1958.
- (37.) “Manley Addresses London Meeting,” *Daily Gleaner*, 8 September 1958.
- (38.) “MacMillan Discusses Race Riots,” *Trinidad Guardian*, 6 September 1958.
- (39.) “Nigerian’s Warning on Quotas,” *Daily Worker*, 9 September 1958.
- (40.) “Britain’s Race Troubles,” *The Star*, 4 September 1958; see also Letter from J. O. Wright, South African High Commissioner’s Office to W. Preston,

Commonwealth Relations Office, 18 September 1958, DO 35/7992, TNA. This article ran in the *Johannesburg Star* on 4 September 1958.

(41.) Telegram from South Africa to Commonwealth Relations Office, 1 September 1958, DO 35/7992, TNA.

(42.) Letter from J. O. Wright, South African High Commissioner's Office, to W. Preston, Commonwealth Relations Office, 18 September 1958 DO 35/7992, TNA.

(43.) Letter from J. O. Wright, South African High Commissioner's Office to W. Preston, Commonwealth Relations Office, 18 September 1958, DO 35/7992, TNA.

(44.) “Britain’s Racial Problems: S. Africans Now Expect Greater Sympathy,” *The Times*, 29 August 1958. Governor Faubus was the segregationist governor of Arkansas who dispatched the army reserves to stall the integration of Little Rock’s Central High School in accordance with the mandate of *Brown v. Board of Education*. Charles Robberts Swart was the Minister of Justice in South Africa and came into power with the Nationalist Party that institutionalized apartheid in 1948. In 1959, he became the Union of South Africa’s last Governor-General before the government left the British Commonwealth, and he became the first President of the Republic of South Africa, a position that he held until 1967.

(45.) “Britain’s Racial Problems: S. Africans Now Expect Greater Sympathy,” *The Times*, 29 August 1958.

(46.) Telegram from South Africa to Commonwealth Relations Office, 1 September 1958, DO 35/7992, TNA. For a discussion of British reactions to apartheid, see Ronald Hyam and Peter Henshaw, *The Lion and the Springbok: Britain and South Africa since the Boer War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), chap. 13.

(47.) Telegram from Bonn, Germany to the Foreign Office, 25 September 1958, DO 35/7992, TNA.

(48.) Telegram from Paris, France to the Foreign Office, 6 September 1958, DO 35/7992, TNA. For more on British reactions to French policy in Algeria and the Algerian War, see Martin Thomas, “The British Government and the End of French Algeria, 1958–1962,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 25, no. 2 (2002): 172–198; and Christopher Goldsmith, “The British Embassy in Paris and the Algerian War,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 25, no. 2 (2002): 159–171.

(49.) “Dear Governor Faubus . . .,” *Daily Mail*, 6 September 1958. For a full discussion of how discourses about the Little Rock desegregation operated in domestic debate about racial violence in Nottingham and London, see Perry, “‘Little Rock’ in Britain,” 155–117.

(50.) Here, I am drawing upon Antonio Gramsci’s widely cited theories on the invisibility of cultural hegemony. See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quinton Hoare and Geoffrey Smith (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1986). More recently, Georgie Wemyss has also appropriated Gramsci’s concept of hegemony to describe the discursive “invisible empire” that marks Britishness as White, tolerant, and liberal. See Georgie Wemyss, *The Invisible Empire: White Discourse, Tolerance and Belonging* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2009).

(51.) Brown, *Moral Capital*, epilogue; Richard Huzzey, *Freedom Burning: Anti-Slavery and Empire in Victorian Britain* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), chap. 3. See also Derek Peterson, ed., *Abolitionism and Imperialism*, introduction; J. R. Oldfield, *Chords of Freedom*, 1–3; Hall, *Civilizing Subjects*; Metha, *Liberalism and Empire*.

(52.) Teresa Zackdonik, “Ida B. Wells and ‘American Atrocities in Britain,’” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 28, no. 4 (2005): 259–273. See also Sarah Silkey, *Black Woman Reformer: Lynching and Transatlantic Activism* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2015).

(53.) Paula M. Krebs, *Gender, Race and the Writing of Empire: Public Discourse and the Boer War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

(54.) Rich, *Race and Empire in British Politics*, 10, 26–27, 29; Sonya Rose, *Which People’s War? National Identity and Citizenship in Wartime Britain, 1939–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 239; Suke Wolton, *Lord Hailey, the Colonial Office and the Politics of Race and Empire in the Second World War: The Loss of White Prestige* (New York: St. Martins, 2000), 19–34, 151–152.

(55.) Wendy Webster, *Englishness and Empire, 1939–1965* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 28–29; see also Rose, *Which People’s War?*; and Rose, “Race, Empire and British Wartime National Identity, 1939–45,” *Historical Research* 74 (2001): 220–237.

(56.) Wolton, *Lord Hailey, The Colonial Office and the Politics of Race and Empire in the Second World War*, 152–154.

(57.) Rose, *Which People’s War?*, 245.

(58.) *Ibid.*, 258.

(59.) Quoted in Ian McLaine, *Ministry of Morale: Home Front Morale and the Ministry of Information in World War II* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1979), 271. See also Graham Smith, *When Jim Crow Met John Bull: Black American Soldiers in World War II Britain* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1987).



(60.) Wemyss, *The Invisible Empire*, 123–139; see also Wendy Brown, *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).

(61.) Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 1–6, 115–151.

(62.) “Renewed Call for Changes in Immigration Law,” *The Times*, 28 August 1958; Perry, “‘Little Rock’ in Britain, 165–166.

(63.) Telegram from Foreign Office to HMG Representatives, 3 September 1958, DO 35/9506, TNA.

(64.) Telegram from Foreign Office to HMG Representatives, 3 September 1958, DO 35/9506, TNA.

(65.) Ibid.

(66.) Ibid.

(67.) Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, esp. chap. 1 and 2.

(68.) “Four-Year Terms for Nine ‘Nigger-Hunting’ Youths,” *The Times*, 16 September 1958; “Race War in Britain,” *Trinidad Guardian*, 25 August 1958; “‘Keep Britain White’ Call in Notting Hill Area,” *The Times*, 10 September 1958.

(69.) “The Riots That Scar Britain,” *Daily Express*, 25 August 1958.

(70.) “Why? What Fans the Hate? *Daily Express*, 2 September 1958; headline part of larger article entitled “Race Riots Meeting At Chequers,” *London Observer*, 7 September 1958; ‘Our Colour Problem,’ *London Observer*, 7 September 1958; Headline part of larger article entitled “Man’s Inhumanity to Man . . . In England,” *London Observer*, 7 September 1958; “Why Racial Clash Occurred,” *The Times*, 27 August 1958; “London Racial Outburst Due to Many Factors,” *The Times*, 3 September 1958.

(71.) In her discussion of the “invisible empire,” Georgie Wemyss also argues that White liberal discourses about Britishness pivot on the denial of an imperial past rooted in White violence. Wemyss, *Invisible Empire*, 3.

(72.) “Racial Outburst in an English City,” *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 28 August 1958.

(73.) Ibid.

(74.) “Letters to the Editor: Race Prejudice in Britain,” *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 4 September 1958. Home Office records indicate that Myrtle Shaw attended a public meeting held in Nottingham during the same week her editorial appeared in the press, sponsored by the Afro-West Indian Union, which

focused on shifting attention from the “Teddy Boys or the Blacks” to the larger societal issues underlying the causes for the violence. See Report of Afro-West Indian Union to Assistant Chief Constable of the Nottingham Police, 7 September 1958, HO 325/8, TNA.

(75.) “Why Racial Clash Occurred,” *The Times*, 27 August 1958.

(76.) Ibid.

(77.) “Riots That Scar Britain,” *Daily Express*, 25 August 1958; “Prison Sentences for Five Nottingham ‘Rowdies,’” *The Times*, 2 September 1958; “Nottingham Crowd ‘Took Sides with Rowdies,’” *Manchester Guardian*, 2 September 1958; “The Colour Problem: Will It Solve Itself?” *Evening Standard*, 26 August 1958.

(78.) Dick Hebdige, *Subcultures: The Meaning of Style* (London: Routledge, 2002), 50–51, 81.

(79.) “Man’s Inhumanity to Man . . . in England,” *London Sunday Observer*, 7 September 1958.

(80.) “The Hooligan Age,” *The Times*, 3 September 1958. For a discussion of the longer cultural history of discourse of hooliganism in England during the twentieth century, see Bill Schwarz, “Night Battles: Hooligan and Citizen,” in *Modern Times: Reflections on a Century of English Modernity*, ed. Mica Nava and Alan O’Shea (New York: Routledge, 1996).

(81.) “Clashes in the Streets: More Than Racial Issues Involved,” *The Times*, 5 September 1958.

(82.) “Clashes in the Streets,” *The Times*, 5 September 1958; Osbert Lancaster, “Pocket Cartoon,” *Daily Express*, 2 September 1958.

(83.) “Menace behind the Brawl,” *The Observer*, 31 August 1958.

(84.) “The Background of Notting Hill,” *Manchester Guardian*, 2 September 1958.

(85.) “London Racial Outburst Due to Many Factors,” *The Times*, 3 September 1958.

(86.) Webster, *Englishness and Empire*, 129–135.

(87.) “Language of Violence,” *Manchester Guardian*, 11 September 1958.

(88.) “Roots of Racial Prejudice,” *Manchester Guardian*, 18 September 1958.

(89.) “Race Riots Terrorise a City,” *Daily Express*, 25 August 1958.

(90.) "Dozens Hurt in Racial Clash," *The Times*, 25 August 1958. Along with Mrs. Lowndes, *The Times* profiled the stories of Mrs. Ellen Byatt, Mrs. Charles Coyne, Mrs. F. Smith, and a Mrs. Slater, all of whom described either being attacked or witnessing attacks by "coloured men"; see also Majbritt Morrison, *Jungle West* 11 (London: Tandem Books, 1964).

(91.) "Why Racial Clash Occurred," *The Times*, 27 August 1958; "London Racial Outburst Due to Many Factors," *The Times*, 3 September 1958; "What Fans the Hate?" *Daily Express*, 2 September 1958; "Menace behind the Brawl," *The Observer*, 31 August 1958; "The Colour Problem," *Evening Standard*, 26 August 1958.

(92.) "'Brown Town' Speaks for Itself," *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 11 September 1958.

(93.) Collins, "Pride and Prejudice," 391-418.

(94.) "Black and White," *Daily Mirror*, 6 September 1958.

(95.) Keith Waterhouse, "The Boys From Jamaica," *Daily Mirror*, 8 September 1958.

(96.) Keith Waterhouse, "The Men Who Come Here from West Africa to Learn," *Daily Mirror*, 9 September 1958.

(97.) Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire*, 5, 119-131. Bailkin is also careful to note that during this same period the state became quite concerned with distinguishing sojourning students and migrant laborers even among West African newcomers.

(98.) Keith Waterhouse, "The Boys from Jamaica," *Daily Mirror*, 8 September 1958.

(99.) Report of Proceedings at the 90th Annual Trades Union Congress, 1-5 September 1958, 378, 458-460, London Metropolitan University Trades Union Congress Library, London; "T.U.C. Statement," *The Times*, 5 September 1958.

(100.) This cartoon appeared on the front page of the *Daily Mirror*, headlined by an article describing violence in London. See "36 Arrests in New 'Colour Riots,'" *Daily Mirror*, 2 September 1958.

(101.) Report of Proceedings at the 90th Annual Trades Union Congress, 1-5 September 1958, 458-460, London Metropolitan University Trades Union Congress Library, London; "T.U.C. Statement," *The Times*, 5 September 1958.

(102.) "Entry Laws Are Being Revived," *Daily Mirror*, 4 September 1958.

(103.) Ibid.

- (104.) "Government Warning on Race Riots," *The Times*, 4 September 1958.
- (105.) "Race Riots Meeting at Chequers," *The Observer*, 7 September 1958.
- (106.) "Four-Year Terms for Nine 'Nigger-Hunting' Youths," *The Times*, 16 September 1958.
- (107.) "Four-Year Terms for Nine 'Nigger-Hunting' Youths," *The Times* 16 September 1958; "'You Started This Violence'—Judge Tells Gaoled Gang," *Daily Mirror*, 16 September 1958; "Great Britain: The Nigger Hunters," *Time*, 29 September 1958.
- (108.) "9 London Youths Jailed for Colour Manhunt: Judge Says Attacks Were Vicious," *Trinidad Guardian*, 16 September 1958; "Trinidad Praise for British Justice," *The Times*, 17 September 1958.
- (109.) James Nestor, "British Justice Has Justified Our Faith," *Trinidad Guardian*, 20 September 1958. Jimmy Wilson had been convicted of stealing less than \$2.00 from a white woman in Alabama and received the death sentence for his crime. His case drew international headlines and served as a potent symbol of the virulence of American racism.
- (110.) Telegram from Bonn, Germany to the Foreign Office, 25 September 1958, DO 35/7992, TNA.
- (111.) Telegram from Paris to Foreign Office, 25 September 1958, DO 35/7992, TNA.
- (112.) Telegram from Commonwealth Relations Office to Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, India, Pakistan, Ghana, and other Commonwealth countries, 26 August 1958, DO 35/7992, TNA.
- (113.) "Nottingham M.P.s Urge Curb on Entry of Immigrants," *The Times*, 27 August 1958. A similar version of this article appeared in the Jamaican press on the following day. See "Nottingham MPs Seek Curb on Immigrants," *Daily Gleaner*, 28 August 1958.
- (114.) "Renewed Call for Changes in Immigration Law," *The Times*, 28 August 1958.
- (115.) Ibid.
- (116.) "Government Warning on Race Riots," *The Times*, 4 September 1958; see also "Macmillan Warns Govt. Will Use 'All Strictness' to End Clashes," *Daily Gleaner*, 4 September 1958; and "Britain's PM Warns Race 'Troublemakers,'" *Trinidad Guardian*, 4 September 1958.

(117.) James and Harris, *Inside Babylon*, 59–68; Paul, *Whitewashing Britain*. Government consideration of migration controls in the early 1950s will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

(118.) "Easing Racial Tensions," *The Times*, 4 September 1958.

(119.) Fryer, *Staying Power*, 298–310, 367–371; see also Lorimer, *Colour, Class and the Victorians: English Attitudes towards the Negro in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Leicester, UK: Leicester University Press, 1978); Michael Rowe, "The Racialisation of Disorder: Sex, Race and Riot in Liverpool, 1919," *Immigrants and Minorities* (July 2000): 53–70; see also Kevin Searle, "Mixing of the Unmixables: The 1949 Causeway Green 'Riots' in Birmingham," *Race and Class* 54 (2013): 344–364.

(120.) "Nigeria Official Blames Influx of West Indians," *Trinidad Guardian*, 5 September 1958.

(121.) "Barbados Premier Arrives," *The Times*, 8 September 1958.