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Black History Month Special



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Black History Month Editorial Team

Jenny Ellis

Charlotte England

Sam Lloyd

Sarah Pedder

Sam Woodhams

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Graphics by Alex Millington

Letter From the Editor

Welcome to the first History Student Times of 2016/17!

It was important to me to publish an issue dedicated to Black History Month, especially considering the inspirational growth of the Black Lives Matter movement and its evolution here in the UK. Now, more than ever, it felt like the right time to challenge the dominance of white history to commemorate and celebrate the histories of black communities around the world.

Our writers have explored a range of topics, themes, eras and regions and produced some really interesting and thought-provoking pieces of which I am incredibly proud. From highlighting the legacy of icons like Jesse Owens, to remembering the battles against slavery, colonisation and segregation, these pieces explore the challenges which have marred black history and the resilience black communities have shown and continue to show in the face of adversity. However, as the interview with gal-dem editor Charlie proposes, its essential these histories are not confined to Black History Month but are given equal attention all year around.

I would like to say a huge thank you to all the writers and my wonderful editorial team, as well as to Alex Millington for the shiny new graphics and visual identity. It has been a wonderful experience to see the articles and magazine come together over the last month. I hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as I have!

Liz

This Month In History

The Rivonia Trial

Katrina Richardson

October 1963 marked the beginning of the Rivonia Trial in South Africa.

During this trial Nelson Mandela and ten fellow African National Congress (ANC) members were accused of multiple crimes for which they faced being sentenced to death. Since 1948 the South African government enforced the apartheid system upon its people, with white supremacy dictated at every possible turn. As a result of this African Nationalists, including Mandela, banded together and created the ANC in an attempt to oppose the oppressive apartheid system.

The Rivonia Trial was, however, not Mandela's first disagreement with the law. Prior to this point Mandela and many of the other accused ANC members were already serving prison sentences for leaving South Africa illegally whilst under banning orders, and additionally for inciting members of the public to strike. During this earlier trial Mandela made the profound statement: **'I was made, by the law, a criminal, not because of what I stood for but because of what I thought, because of my conscience'**, therefore publicly announcing his disagreement with the laws in South Africa which existed mainly to criminalize

black South Africans.

In the Rivonia trial the government's case against the ANC members was mainly based on tenuous links between the ANC and the practice of guerilla warfare. But despite their case being flimsy at best for several of those being convicted, the South African government seemed determined to condemn the ANC members to death. Facing the overwhelming prospect of the death penalty Mandela decided not to defend himself in the legal sense. Instead he used the trial as a platform for the dissemination of the ANC's core beliefs, saying in one of his speeches: **'the African Nationalism for which the ANC stands is the concept of freedom and fulfillment for the African people in their own land'**.

Mandela's statements were ultimately futile, as the large majority of the ANC members were sentenced to life imprisonment. Although to anyone else that would be the most depressing of prospects, Mandela treated the sentence as a blessing, instead choosing to view it as being sentenced to live, meaning he could continue his struggle against the apartheid system.

Joint Honours Feature

Fact and Fiction: *Twelve Years a Slave*

Emily Whitaker

Winning two hundred and thirty seven awards, including the 'Best Motion Picture' Academy Oscar Award in 2013, it is clear to see that *Twelve Years a Slave* created a long lasting impact upon the international audiences that viewed it.

Alongside the appraisal of actors such as Chiwetel Ejifor (Solomon), Lupita Nyong'O (Patsy) and the work of Steve McQueen, the opening lines are enough to create the emotional impact desired; 'based on true events'.

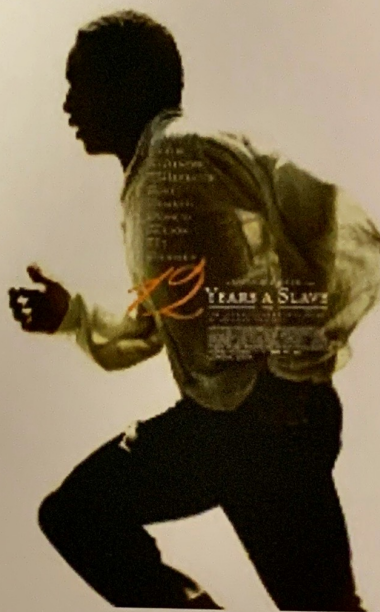
Often for the audiences of Hollywood films, the greatest way to truly feel an emotional connection with historical events is through the feeling of empathy we gain for singular characters such as Solomon and Patsy, the two main slaves concentrated on by the film. We tend to focus our view of history such as the slave trade upon these individuals before taking a panoramic view which brings into question other historical experiences that would have followed a similar pattern to the one we have just witnessed.

One of the criticisms of this film, however, is to

what extent McQueen and his screenwriters have correctly depicted Solomon's history; and with that, the history of the slave trade itself. In an article in *The Atlantic* (2013), Noah Berlatsky refers to a number of moments found within the film that are different from Solomon Northrup's original autobiography. In particular, the scene in which Patsy begs for Solomon to aid in her suicide, is one of the hardest hitting moments of the film, quoted by lead critic Susan Wloszczyna as feeling as if you have 'actually witnessed American slavery in all its appalling horror for the first time'. However, in Northrup's autobiography, this encounter never truly happened. In fact, it was the wife of plantation owner Epps, jealous of the attention paid to Patsy by her husband, who begged Solomon to assist in Patsy's death. For such a key moment of the film, which we be-

lieve to follow true accounts, to then become altered for Hollywood entertainment may cause unrest among viewers, alongside historians.

Bearing this in mind as historians, we must ask ourselves whether we reject such accounts due to historical inaccuracy, or whether we instead take from art forms such as film and literature an emotional understanding of the time period we are studying. As a student studying both English and History, I am



keenly aware of the emotional relationship between literature and history. Although *Twelve Years a Slave* is not one hundred percent factually correct, as viewers we are still exposed to the brutal and barbaric experiences of slavery, enhancing our understanding of this time period. Hayden White argues in *Literature as a Historical Artefact* (1974) that despite literature sometimes failing to keep in line with historical accuracy, 'the manner of making sense of history is the same'. Taking this into account alongside the film *Twelve Years a Slave* it is plausible to suggest that despite points of inaccuracy, a powerful awareness of the horrors of slavery is still created for the audience, opening our eyes and allowing us to make sense of this history.

On the other hand, one might argue that history is something that cannot and should not be changed. In this respect, altering historical events for entertainment value is a corruption of history itself. Especially considering the film is based upon an autobiography, keeping the facts next to the truth should be easily accomplished. Instead, there is a digression from the true events of Northrup's autobiography. This reduces the extent to which his story is a lived experience, moving away from historical fact and rather changing his life into a spectacle to be consumed by viewers as entertainment.

In summary, the relationship between film and literature, and the extent to which we can value these art forms for portraying history is a long lasting de-

bate. To a certain extent, it could be viewed that the major value of these art forms is to create the emotional response to historical periods, furthering our understanding of history through emotion, rather than fact. On the other hand, films and literature are never entirely "make believe", they do, as Hayden White suggests, portray true history and further our understanding of this. In addition, we must question the extent to which we can ever find the "true facts" of history; history remains subject to the memory of the teller, or bias of the historian, raising the question of whether we can never know the absolute historical truth.

With this in mind, I believe that film and literature remain valuable mediums through which to engage a wide audience in historical issues. As readers and viewers, we connect with history in a different format; growing emotional bonds with characters which further our understanding of a historical period. Although the facts of history are essential, the emotional understanding we gain through film and literature is perhaps equally as important.



SOLOMON IN HIS PLANTATION SUIT.

Solomon Northrup

Interested in writing for History Student Times? The next edition will be published in January.

Until then, check out our blog

historystudenttimes.wordpress.com

We are currently looking for submissions on the theme of 'Elections and Political Personalities'.

Get in touch at: historyatudenttimes@leeds.ac.uk

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The Hidden Tudors- the Presence of Black people in Tudor England

Lauren Hunter

Black historian Onyeka Nubia (2013) has recently claimed that there exists a misconception concerning the historical presence of black people in England. Many believe that, prior to the slave trading activities of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, English society of the medieval and Tudor periods was all-white, with little or no representation of ethnic minorities. However, recent research has begun to argue that this was not the case, and that many Africans lived and worked in England both prior to and throughout the Tudor period.

A 1924 study claimed that African people settled in England as a result of the slave trade. This statement implies that before the era of slavery, there was no such representation in our population. So how is this claim to be understood, and for what reason was it put forward? Onyeka (who publishes under his first name only) argues that it is a result of deep-rooted problems regarding prejudice and the presence of racism in Western historiography. He claims in his 2013 book *Blackmoores; Africans in Tudor England* that black history is severely under-represented in Western historiography, arguing that an 'all white' school of historians conducted the 1924 original research, and were not willing to acknowledge the presence of black people in England without the tag of slavery attached. Onyeka therefore attempts to uncover the history of Black Africans and reconstruct our perception of them in relation to the history that we know and with which we are already familiar.

It has been discovered that African people entered English and European society, if only in small numbers, around the late fourteenth century. This marked the beginning of the Age of Discovery, which saw Europeans making new journeys during which they came into con-

tact with Africa for the first time. A famous example of such an explorer was the Portuguese Prince Henry the Navigator, a great-grandson of King Edward III of England, who explored West Africa and conducted much trade with the kingdoms with whom he came into contact.

African people travelled to Europe on the return journeys of these voyages for several reasons, most prominently trade. The kingdoms of West Africa, such as the Benin Empire and the Kingdom of Ghana, were wealthy and previously untouched by the effects of imperialism and colonisation. The Benin Empire was an especially powerful state, and its ruler was respected by Europeans as a major controller of trade. The economic activity brought benefits for both Europeans and West Africans, as both were able to access commodities which had never before been available to them. It has also been suggested that the Kings of West Africa respected the Europeans as powerful allies in the event of war, and were therefore more than willing to trade with them in order to build upon and benefit from this relationship. Commodities such as gold and brass were traded, and this activity resulted in the travel of African people to Europe.

Africans who made these journeys across the seas found themselves in a variety of occupations and situations when they arrived and began to build new lives in Europe. Records from Tudor England beginning in 1558 show that many people of African origin were buried in parish ground in and around London, and in no small numbers. Despite the common misconception that Africans in England at this time were slaves, there were in fact no laws discriminating against black people in Tudor England, and many enjoyed a status higher than that of their English counterparts. Baptism records show that many were employed during this time, and possessed sought-after skills and talents. For example, Sir Francis Drake praised a black employee who had 'special skills in the erection of small houses'. Many also found employ-

Has quality of life improved for black America under President Obama?

Jack Walker

The election of Barack Obama in 2008 was heralded as a watershed moment for America. For the first time in history, a non-white man was elected to be President. Fast forward eight years and the world is still waking up to news of African Americans being killed by police, and with an election approaching on November 8th, facts are being twisted in the media and in party speeches. Here, I want to assess whether President Obama is due some credit for helping to improve the lives of black Americans or if conditions have stagnated in black communities over the course of his presidency.

One of the most prominent factors used to judge quality of life are economic considerations, specifically employment. President Obama inherited one of the worst financial disasters the United States had ever seen when he was elected in 2008, so naturally the statistics for unemployment, whether specifically focused on black America or the country as a whole, are not positive. However, when looking at the numbers released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics between 2008 and 2016 we can see that every year, whether unemployment rises or falls, the lev-



'Final pre-election visit by Barak Obama to Iowa'

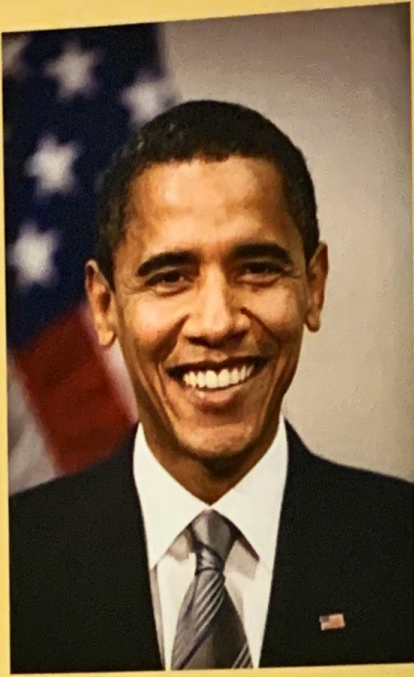
el of unemployment amongst the black community is roughly double that of America as a whole. For example, in 2010 when the Great Recession was most badly felt, unemployment across America stood at 9.6%. However for black America the unemployment rate was at 16%. When we combine this with the average wage across America viewed from a purely racial perspective (which, in 2014, for Asian-Americans was \$91,000, for whites was \$80,000 and for blacks was \$50,000), racial econom-

(Continued on page 8)

ment as servants, musicians and tailors, both at lower levels of society, and right up to employment at the court of Queen Catherine of Aragon.

Onyeka argues that this dimension of black history is missing from school curriculums here in Britain, and that as a result, black pupils believe that their culture and heritage 'does not exist' in the history books. He claims that this results in a 'missing' part of the picture in the

context of education, which serves to perpetuate the belief that black people in Early Modern Europe were indeed only slaves. It is paradoxical that as a society, we aim to rejoice in our diversity; however, this diversity also existed in Tudor England but goes generally unrepresented. It is essential that, as historians, we follow Onyeka's example to rectify this discrepancy.



(Continued from page 7)

ic disparity is clear to see. However, President Obama's economic strategy has seen unemployment fall across the board, including for black Americans, so some credit must be given to Obama and the U.S. Treasury. It was also announced recently that middle-class Americans have seen their biggest average pay rise for the first time since the 1960s.

Perhaps the most controversial and widely publicised factor of African American life is how the black community within America faces injustice. The expectation when President Obama was elected was that he would be able to de-escalate racial tensions across America. However, the sad reality is that since his election in 2008, racial tensions appear to have deteriorated. According to the *Huffington Post*, U.S. police had killed 196 black Americans by September in 2016. Yet according to a Wikipedia page which compiles the number of deaths by law enforcement per year in America, only 27 people in total were killed by law enforcement in 2008. The reasons for this alarming rise in the number of citizens (but especially African Americans) being killed by police is notoriously difficult to pin down. The police refuse to accept that their institution is systematically racist, and usually claim that they felt threatened by their target. How often this is true, or how often race plays a part in the murder of citizens, is unfortunately still a matter of

opinion. What can statistically be confirmed, however, is that when black Americans are caught in possession of drugs, they can expect to face disproportionately longer sentences in prison than a white American convicted of the same crime. Even more outrageously, studies continue to show that white Americans are more likely to have used drugs than black Americans, yet sentences for black Americans are much harsher. Nevertheless, President Obama deserves some credit for making it a requirement for police to wear body cameras when on duty, thus hopefully reducing the number of racially motivated killings.

Finally, poverty levels in the United States can be used as a means to judge quality of life. Being able to rise from poverty into the middle classes is one of the ideals of the famed 'American Dream'; anyone if they work hard enough can succeed in America. But this is often easier said than done. We must once again bear in mind the devastating impact of the recession President Obama was left to deal with, which pushed already-rising poverty levels in the U.S. from roughly 12% in 2007 to a decade-high 15% in 2013. However, levels of poverty within the black community were, perhaps unsurprisingly, much higher than the national average. In 2010, according to stateofworkingamerica.com, 27.4% of African Americans lived in poverty, almost double the national average. Nevertheless, the increase in poverty within America should not be blamed on President Obama when the crash of 2008 was inevitably going to push poverty levels higher in general.

It is clear that life has improved in some aspects, yet worsened in others for black America since the election of President Obama in 2008. As with most topics in politics, where one good thing becomes apparent, there is something equally as bad occurring. A CNN poll taken in October 2016 showed that most Americans surveyed (54%) believed that race relations under Obama had gotten worse since 2008. Looking to the future, what is clear is that whoever the next president is, they will have a big challenge on their hands to create an environment where U.S. citizens of all races and ethnicities can live comfortably side by side.

Interview with Jack Noe

Brogan Coulson-Haggins

Jack Noe is a PhD student specialising in post-Civil War American History and American nationalism. He is also a tutor, examining the accounts of former slaves for his first year Primary Sources students.

Could you please explain the nature of your research in a nutshell?

My research is essentially about American nationalism in the post-Civil War South, specifically looking at it through the lens of the Centennial celebrations of 1876. 1876 was the 100th anniversary of American independence. There was the huge World's Fair in Philadelphia, the first one in the United States. The idea of it was that every state would have its own special exhibition building there, but there was a lot of debate in the South over whether they should participate at all because they thought it was a scam for Yankees to make money, and money was a big motivation behind it so there was lots and lots of debate in the Southern press about whether to go. Essentially, the Fair was everywhere in 1876, even those who were not interested were talking about it. That's the nature of my research, in a nutshell.

Does your research look at both the white and black Southern population?

Yes

In what context?

I have a chapter on the Fourth of July celebrations because after the Civil War white southerners stopped celebrating the Fourth of July; they saw it as a Yankee holiday and also a black holiday because the newly freed slaves really embraced that day and celebrated it themselves. As the Democratic party, who identified with the white power structure in the south, slowly regained their political power as reconstruction ended, white people started to re-embrace the Fourth of July -

it's all tied in with politics and identity. I also have a chapter on African Americans in the Centennial. It's sad because they really wanted to use the Centennial to claim their place as American citizens, they wanted to demonstrate that they had been in America from the beginning and that they had always been Americans. The Centennial organisers were all uninterested, they were keen to encourage white southerners to get involved, who were very ambivalent about it, but these African Americans wanted to be a part of it and were pretty much shut out.

Do you think History is too white-orientated? And have you found this a difficulty in your research?

I don't think it is now, but it has been historically. A lot of the material we look at that predates the 1970s or 80s tends to either ignore or objectify black people but I do think that's changing and has been changing for years now. In my research I don't think it's affected it that much, although when I'm looking at black people in the Centennial it is mostly Northern black people that I'm looking at because most of the black people in the South could not read or write and there's no way of gauging what they thought about much of anything.

As a tutor, how important is it for you that your students engage with Black History?

It's very important, my Primary Sources module is about hearing the voices of those people [ex-American slaves]. That's why I loved it, it's about getting the chance to really hear these people. It brings these people to life again.

You talk about Southern Nationalism and African American Nationalism in your research, do you think African Americans have found their 'place' in American society?

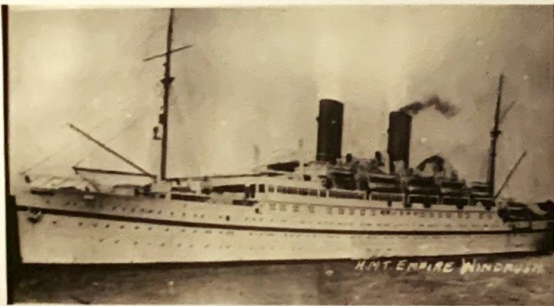
I think they've found it, but I don't know whether others have recognised that.

Remembering the Windrush Generation

Nathan Aubrey

On the 22nd June 1948, the HMT *Empire Windrush* arrived in England at the port of Tilbury and brought with it an estimated 492 Caribbean immigrants, who would form the foundations of Britain's black communities which helped to make it the multicultural society it is today.

These new arrivals were enlisted to help rebuild Britain's war damaged infrastructure by providing labor for vital services such as the development of railways and hospitals. At the time, the importance placed upon these immigrants, and the many who came after them, was limited. They were met with overwhelming hostility when arriving on British shores, particularly from the impoverished working classes, who saw the *Windrush* arrivals as their competition for housing and jobs. However the impact of the Windrush generation on British society, as well as the harsh adversity they faced, is largely overlooked when it comes to the history of race relations, with many schools in the UK placing a larger focus on the



'HMT Empire Windrush, Underway'

American Civil Rights movement than on Black British history.

Whilst it is true that the Windrush arrivals never faced the monumental obstacle of legal segregation, acts of racial violence and abuse were still very common. For example, many people are aware of the history of police brutality towards black men in America but may

not realise that abusive crimes occurred in Leeds too. For example, there was the case of David Oluwale, who was beaten by police, urinated on and drowned in the River Aire here in Leeds in 1969. Oluwale arrived in Britain a year after the *Windrush*; he made up part of the resilient Caribbean community that struggled to deal with atrocities like this but which were far from isolated. The suspected bombing of an apartment of 13 young black people in London's New Cross in 1981 is a case much less famous than the similar bombing of a church in Alabama in 1963.

As well as remembering the obstacles the Windrush generation had to face, we should also take time to recognize the lasting legacy they left on Britain. Their political impact can be seen through the various integral pieces of legislation that protect the rights of minorities currently in the UK, such as the 1976 Race Relations Act. Their cultural influence on Britain is also evident in several areas, a prominent example being the Notting Hill Carnival. It was created to show community pride in the face of racism, as the year before the area was the site of race riots. Now it sees over 2 million visitors every year enjoying a celebration of West Indian identity.

Above all this, perhaps the largest contribution of the Windrush generation, and one that affects us all, was the tireless work these Caribbean migrants did to support the NHS. By 1965 there were 3,000 to 5,000 Jamaican nurses working in British hospitals and by 1977 West Indian migrants made up 66% of all overseas NHS recruits. At a special 2015 Windrush Day commemoration event at St. Thomas's Hospital in London, Patrick Vernon OBE encouraged all public bodies to work 'in partnership with the local community to celebrate this contribution... in shaping the nature of multicultural Britain' in reference to the work of the Windrush generation.

This is something we should continue to do when celebrating black history in the UK.

From Slavery to Segregation: The impact of Jim Crow

Stephanie Bennett

For many of us, it is perhaps a challenge to imagine the harsh and haunting reality that many African Americans faced daily in the American south in the 17th and 18th centuries. For others, this history may be **only too tangible**. Despite the supposed expiration of slavery, freedom remained unattainable for African Americans due to the Jim Crow laws. For a country renowned as being 'the Land of the Free' it is ironic to note that America's success is partly due to the suppression and captivity of millions of African slaves and their descendants. Ironic, and poignant.

After the American Civil War 1861 – 1865 and the instalment of Reconstruction (1865-77), it was believed that slaves forced into servitude would be safeguarded and freed from the white hegemony concentrated particularly in the South. However, this hope was extinguished with the introduction of the Black Codes in 1865 and 1866. They were calculated to confine black people and ensure that they were unable to support themselves without returning to the plantations that they had originally been liberated from because of low wages and crushing debt.

However, it was when Reconstruction ended in 1877 that segregation was truly heightened through the Jim Crow laws. Wrought by racial prejudice, the laws legitimised and enforced an all-encompassing public segregation that surpassed law and twisted into an unwritten ideal of social decorum. A black man could not even glance at a white woman for too long without being accused of an exceedingly inappropriate sexual advance, resulting in extreme violence. Sexually motivated attacks against black women from white men however, were repugnantly frequent. While the punishment for a black man raping a white woman was indisputably lynching, white men were above the law in most cases and received little penalty for their abuse.

'Double standard' doesn't come close to such prejudicial brutality.

Despite the supposed advancement of the 14th Amendment that declared that colour was no longer an obstacle to full citizenship, and the 15th that stated that it was forbidden to deny anyone to vote based on race, the unparalleled supremacy of white southerners at the pinnacle of the racial hierarchy was undeniable. Black people were denied the right to vote through strict testing and taxes, while white terrorism was enforced as a preventative measure to the point that only 1,300 African Americans voted in 1905 compared to the previous 130,000 registered to vote in 1896.



Segregation in the South

The development of Jim Crow was just an altered form of slavery; black people were still subjected to white tyranny, and while they were technically "free" from their previous restraints, they had only evolved into invisible fetters. All of the Southern states had a variation of Jim Crow by 1915, from black people having to enter an establishment from a back alley or even barred from the building altogether because it was only for white people. Jim Crow's insidious legacy of institutionalised racial discrimination still lingers in the 21st century, and while we mainly reside in the periphery of such prejudice, acts of such abuse are not extinct. If history is meant to be remembered, then the impact of Jim Crow and the instilled cruelty it endorsed should not, and cannot, be disregarded.

Interview

gal-dem and the Importance of Black History Month

Erin Cobby



gal-dem, an online publication celebrating the coming together and expression of women of

colour just released their first ever print magazine, marking their one year anniversary. Since the site was launched it has received a staggering amount of attention from all corners of the media world, winning many awards and celebrity accolades. I caught up with Charlie, the opinions editor of *gal-dem* to hear about what Black History Month means to her and how *gal-dem* are celebrating it.

What drew you to *gal-dem*?

It was more that they drew me in. I had a mutual friend already involved and they had seen some of the articles I'd written for outlets including VICE. I went along to one of the first ever meetings in Brixton and was immediately enthused. There hadn't been a platform in which to create something for other girls like me, and very quickly I became an editor.

What do you think is the importance of Black History Month?

I grew up in Scotland, which, when I moved up, was something like 98.1% white. We didn't really celebrate up there. When I moved back down to London I became able to celebrate Black History Month in a much wider way. I was able to learn about my culture and more

about myself, which has been great. The important thing to do now is to spread this awareness outside the confines of Black History Month and work within communities to encourage further consciousness of these issues.

Prior to *gal-dem* did you have a space in which you felt you could celebrate black history month?

I started attending University of Goldsmiths in 2011 and feel like Black History Month was always celebrated there. It was a really confirming experience.

While attending university did you feel your curriculum was representative of more marginal cultures/ethnicities?

No, not at all. I studied English Literature and for the first two years I think I only read only one text by a black person, let alone a black woman. It wasn't until my final year, when I could choose a module focused on black women writers (run by Joan Anim-Addo who has now started up the first Black British Writing MA), that this changed.

The module was a great chance for the five or so women of colour on my course to come together and finally discuss literature that was important to us. However, it isn't just the curriculum that needs changing. My Renaissance lecturer actually told me that there were basically no women in the period worth studying and used the terms 'negro' and 'coloured' like they were completely acceptable.

We need more diversity in universities, not only with what people are teaching, but who is teaching it. And we need professors who care about all types of literature, not only those which reside in their own demographic.

What do you think are the possible concerns connecting to Black History Month? Can it be seen as too homogenising or is it a celebratory coming together of subliminal cultures?

I don't think that it is homogenising at all, and I don't think Black History Month tries to reflect that all black experience is the same. While in the main we all have

the shared experience of racism, it is possible to be individualistic within Black History Month.

What are your feelings concerning the lack of awareness of black culture and history in Britain?

There's actually a great series of documentaries coming out in November that should raise awareness called Black And British, talking about black legacy before Windrush. It has a piece on the first ever recorded black person in the UK, the Beachy Head woman, who was around in Roman times, and gives a great historical look at black culture without just focusing on slavery and colonialism. However, in general there isn't enough awareness of black cul-

ture and history in Britain and that's why we need to work to get these themes noticed outside of Black History Month.

What is *gal-dem* focusing on for your black history month issue?

gal-dem is choosing to focus on black individuals who have been forgotten by history. On our Instagram we are uploading a series of photos and short bios which focus on different figures, with an emphasis on black women.

Remembering Anti-Apartheid Activism in Leeds

Fiona Linnard

July 7th, 1950: South Africa passes the Population Registration Act, requiring its population be registered and classified according to each person's racial characteristics. It was immediately dangerous and signposted a slippery descent into one of the most prolific legalised segregation systems in recent history.

By 1978, the 19 million black population received less than 20% of national income compared to the 75% share of the 4.5 million white population, and had an infant mortality rate of 3 deaths per 10 births.

It's no surprise the laws elicited strong reactions all over the world. A global Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAP) arose in resistance, from New Zealand and Australia to the United States and here in Britain.

Leeds itself was home to a substantial movement as early as 1969 when the Swarthmore Centre staged a demonstration against the 1969 tour by the South African rugby team. However, the issue was not one-sided: following the suggested naming of Mandela Gardens in Potternewton in the 1980s, the Yorkshire Evening Standard ran a campaign for alternatives, asserting that 'nobody was interested in Nelson Mandela'. A bold assertion to make, and untrue to say the least: Leeds's con-

nections to the black struggle in South Africa were numerous. Frances Bernstein, the daughter of Lionel 'Rusty' Bernstein, who was on trial with Mandela, has been an active member Leeds Women Against Apartheid for over four decades.

Leeds Women Against Apartheid (LWAA) is an often neglected subsidiary of the AAP, active from 1976 to 1994. A more casual form of meeting, it led, as the name would suggest, a solely women's campaign against segregation as well as other issues, including rising numbers of cases of AIDS and the plight of orphans. But there was no competition with the main movement, a representative at the 'Remembering Anti-Apartheid Activism in Leeds' discussion panel, stresses. 'It gave women a chance to speak up', and aimed to draw in women who may not have initially considered joining. Most of all, they aimed to make campaigning *fun*. Indeed, the LWAA was the very definition of grass roots activism and was instrumental in the Leeds campaign. As the panel progressed, they felt instrumental not only due to their activities, but because of the ethos they represented: get involved, get stuck in, and make a real difference.

As Frances Bernstein reflected: 'it just... it just felt like the right thing to do'.

For more information, on events about the anti-Apartheid Movement in Leeds, visit Leeds University Centre for African Studies website.

Rosa Parks: 'The First Lady of Civil Rights'

Alexa Clark

Rosa Parks is one of the most iconic figures of the Civil Rights Movement in America. She is instantly recognizable as the woman who refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery bus in December 1955, when she and three other black passengers were told by the driver to make way so that the rest of the white passengers could sit down. This is, undoubtedly, the single event for which she is most famous.

Yet, this is to seriously underestimate the achievements of one of the most important civil rights campaigners in history. The infamous nature of the Montgomery episode has all but relegated Parks' other, highly significant contributions to the sidelines of the history of the Civil Rights Movement. Parks made countless other achievements to improve race relations in the US during her lifetime. She was more than just a woman who refused to give up her seat on a bus.

Indeed, the United States Congress named Parks as 'the First Lady of civil rights' and the 'mother of the freedom movement'. Parks worked tirelessly with other civil rights activists - including Martin Luther King, Jr. - to campaign for equality for black people in the US.

She was secretary of the Montgomery chapter of the NAACP (arguably the most famous civil rights organisation in the US). One of her more significant contributions in this role was, in 1944, to investigate the gang-rape of Recy Taylor, a black woman from Alabama. Parks and other activists launched the Alabama Committee for

Equal Justice, which was labelled by the *Chicago Defender* as 'the strongest campaign for equal justice to be seen in a decade'.

When she moved to Detroit, Parks also campaigned on more local level issues which affected daily life for African Americans, such as her participation in the movement for open and fair housing. Despite having moved to the supposedly more tolerant north from a racially hostile south, in 1964 she said to an interviewer that 'I don't feel a great deal of difference here... Housing segregation is just as bad, and it seems more noticeable in the larger cities'.



However, the significance of Parks' refusal to give up her seat on that bus in Montgomery should not be undermined. Parks' individual refusal that day sparked a much wider protest: the infamous 13 month Montgomery Bus Boycott resulted in the legal integration of buses in Montgomery on 21st December 1956. This was undoubtedly a triumph for the Civil Rights Movement as a whole and a great personal feat for Rosa Parks herself.

Parks' actions to improve the everyday situation for blacks in the US is a significant effort for us to consider. Whereas activists like Martin Luther King are remembered for their infamous national achievements towards racial equality in the US, it is often forgotten that individuals such as Rosa Parks worked tirelessly on a local level to improve everyday life for blacks. This is highly important as it was often local issues, such as fair housing, that mattered more to African-Americans. It was injustices like these that they had to struggle through which had a great impact on their lives. That is why Rosa Parks is such an important figure in the history of US race relations, as her campaigning improved everyday life for

A Forgotten Footnote of the First World War: Colonial Soldiers and the East African Campaign

Natascha Allen-Smith

Over the last two years, countless monuments, exhibitions, documentaries and public ceremonies have been commissioned to commemorate the centenary of World War I. Yet in scholarship and popular culture alike, one important group of soldiers has been consigned to the footnotes of history: the colonial troops who fought and died in the service of the indifferent empires of Europe.

The East African Campaign is often forgotten in discussions of World War I, but it had a profound impact on those who lived through it. Throughout most of the conflict, the German commander, Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, led his *Schutztruppe* in a four-year game of cat-and-mouse against the numerically superior British and Belgian forces. Many of the soldiers on both sides were recruited from modern-day Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda and the rest of the Great Lakes region. The campaign consisted primarily of endless gruelling marches across vast swathes of the continent, peppered with short skirmishes which were nevertheless deadly –

3,300 soldiers were killed at the Battle of Mahiwa alone. Perhaps the most tragic aspect of this operation was just how pointless it was as in terms of strategically useful gains; Lettow-Vorbeck was simply trying to drain Allied resources by forcing them to divert more troops to Africa. Nor were the casualties only among the soldiers: conscription depopulated entire villages, farms were ravaged by passing forces, and the underpaid (or, in the case of many African porters in the German forces, entirely unpaid) marchers resorted to stealing food and cattle. The resulting food shortage, combined with a lack of rain in 1917, led to a famine which killed 300,000 civilians in what was then German East Africa.

East African soldiers, better known as askaris, were paid relatively well compared to their countrymen in other trades, and sometimes received small pensions or exemption from colonial taxes. However, they were treated, as so often in colonial history, as inferior beings. Their units were kept separate from those of the powers they served, and they were equipped with older weapons, simplified uniforms and only rudimentary technical training. Those who fared worst were the porters em-

(Continued on page 16)



'Rosa Parks being fingerprinted by Deputy Sheriff D.H. Lackey after being arrested for boycotting public transportation, Montgomery, Alabama, February, 1956'

blacks in the USA in a way that national campaigners like King could not.

Racial segregation is an idea so appalling that it is unthinkable in our modern society. Yet, rewind just over half a century and it was still a system which was very much thriving in the US. Rosa Parks was born into it, lived through it, campaigned against it and saw it abolished. For one woman to campaign so tirelessly, so selflessly, and so determinedly for racial equality is an achievement in itself. For her efforts to be so successful and to have such a lasting impact both in legal and cultural memory is something for which we should all be forever grateful, and that we should never forget. Rosa Parks truly was, and continues to be, 'The First Lady of Civil Rights'.



General Paul Emil von Lettow-Vorbeck surrendering his forces to the British at Abercon (present-day Mbala) in Northern Rhodesia

(Continued from page 15)

employed to build roads and carry equipment and supplies. Despite their backbreaking work lugging ammunition through hostile countryside in equatorial heat, they were allotted fewer calories than their European counterparts, and often received completely inadequate medical care – at the start of the war, there was only one doctor per 1,000 carriers in some units. They conse-

quently suffered huge losses through malnutrition, illness and exhaustion. As many as 95,000 porters had died by 1918, including a shocking 20% of Britain's Carrier Corps. The exact statistics for the wider campaign are not known, but there were around 22,000 casualties in the British fighting forces alone, including over 11,000 deaths.

In a war catalysed by the shooting of an Archduke they had never heard of, centred around the squabbles of distant empires which treated them with more contempt than gratitude, the experience of the askaris involved great bravery and suffering, and yet it remains largely forgotten. Nor did their story end in 1918 – over 1 million African soldiers went on to fight in the Second World War. So perhaps, on November 11th, when we remember those who died on the fields of Flanders, we can also think of those who lost their lives on the savannahs of East Africa, and give some long-overdue acknowledgement to their service .

Women and Resistance in the Caribbean

Lucy Hu

Often when we think of black resistance, we visualize male figures rising up as fighters of freedom. However, alongside this, women have always been present and active in fighting back against the oppression of their race, and this was true even during the era of slavery in the Caribbean. Despite historiography often relegating them to the margins of history, women were at the forefront of many battles for equality and this was especially evident during the period of escalating resistance in the Caribbean after the success of the Haitian Revolution.

Women were subject to the worst abuses during slavery and endured not only the hardships of everyday conditions, both on the slave ship and during plantation labour, but also the additional trauma of sexual predation from their masters. Therefore black women were consigned to a life of sexual exploitation, their slave

experience defined by the double inferiority of being both black and female, rooted in a patriarchal culture which treated all women as property. However, while the treatment of black women during slavery paints them as weak victims of circumstance, they were not completely helpless and broken in spirit. Many exerted strength and power by finding ways to resist and undermine the institution of slavery in their everyday lives. These women should be acknowledged as agents of power as well as victims of cruelty.

One significant way women resisted slavery and countered the culture of sexual exploitation in the Caribbean was through gynaecological resistance, opposing reproduction and taking control of their own fertility. Frustrated with planters' pro-natalist policies which encouraged women to birth more children during times of labour shortages, women consciously avoided pregnancy through methods such as abstinence or concealed abortions thus reclaiming their own bodies. Deciding to abort a baby was never an easy decision but

Making History

Rosie Plummer

The logo for Black Lives Matter, featuring the words "BLACK", "LIVES", and "MATTER" stacked vertically in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The text is set against a bright yellow rectangular background.

The statement “Black Lives Matter” should be an obvious and universally accepted one.

However this group is causing waves of controversy four years after their formation.

The movement was established in 2012 by three black American women, with the hashtag #blacklivesmatter after Trayvon Martin’s murderer was proclaimed innocent. The movement now campaigns internationally against racism. Since the Ferguson riots in 2014 (over the shooting of Michael Brown) the movement has increased in intensity. Black Lives Matter is a new form of Civil Rights campaigning, combining social media, direct action and protest to achieve racial justice.

The true struggle of #blacklivesmatter of course begins long before the murder of Martin in February 2012. We all know of America’s history of slavery and subsequent African-American struggle, first for freedom and then for Civil Rights. Black Lives Matter are the third wave of this struggle, a struggle for justice. The more controversial Civil Rights movements within the twentieth century were influenced by Malcolm X’s work. The Black Panthers were famously inspired by X, and were described as the ‘most effective black revolutionary organisation of the twentieth century’ (Jeffries). The Black Lives Matter movement can be seen as stemming from the Panthers, and looks set to become the most effective revolutionary organisation of this century.

Trayvon Martin

Martin was shot at the age of seventeen in 2012, by a white man named George Zimmerman. Zimmerman was originally not tried for murder because police claimed that there was no evidence to dispute his claim of self-defence. Only after national media focus was Zimmerman finally tried in July 2013, but shockingly found innocent. Many criticisms have been raised surrounding this case, especially the use of a virtually all white jury and the fact that racial motivations were not taken into account.

In the same year as Martin’s death there were 313 killings of black individuals by police in the USA alone. Black Lives Matter is a movement designed to raise awareness about this cycle of injustice.

How does this relate to the UK?

Martin’s case is particularly tragic; a young man murdered at the hands of an authority figure intended to protect him. But it is not isolated. In the UK we often view racism within the judiciary as an American problem, however it was only in 2012 that Stephen Lawrence’s murderers were finally convicted nineteen years after his death. In the UK black ethnic minorities are underrepresented in every position of power, but most notably within the judiciary, with David Lammy’s research finding that all top judges in 2012 were white. Police stop and search still focuses primarily on young black males, with some reports from the *Guardian* stating that black men are seven times more likely to be stopped by police than whites.

The UK branch of the Black Lives Matter was only established this year, but it already caused controversy in September, when protesters invaded an airport runway to display how air pollution negatively impacts BME around the world. The movement tweeted about this incident ‘the climate crisis is a racist crisis’, highlighting that 7/10 of the countries most affected by climate change are in sub-Saharan Africa.

So why the controversy??

Those opposed to the Black Lives Matter movement,

Black Lives Matter

view the group as trouble-makers. This accusation lacks substance when we consider that anyone in history who wanted to create change was a "trouble-maker", from the suffragettes to Martin Luther King. Without these "trouble-makers" women would not have the vote, apartheid would not have ended in South Africa and it is unlikely that America would have a black President. While this group have caused unrest, one only has to Google the list of recent killings of black youth by white American police to realise that racism is far more disruptive than any protest movement. The lists of names are depressingly long, so many "Trayvon's" whose lives were totally overlooked by police. White people are failing to realise that black lives do matter. That each individual that they shoot because they 'looked threatening' is not only someone's child, but also a living person with hopes, dreams and ambitions. A person with whom, if they actually engage them in conversation rather than draw a gun out of fear, they might be able to relate to and connect. Black Lives Matter is a way of fighting the stereotypes and outdated attitudes towards race which many have inherited.

Black Lives Matter has also been criticised for the inter-racial violence, especially towards white police which has emerged recently alongside this movement. Generally the violence involved has however been provoked, such as in Ferguson when tear gas was used against peaceful protestors. While the movements' founders condemn violence in the name of Black Lives Matter, many individuals feel that they have been pushed too far by figures of authority.

All Lives Matter

One of the main reasons for controversy however, is through the backlash from 'All Lives Matter' protests. The majority of Americans claim that they believe more in the 'All Lives Matter' movement than in the 'Black Lives Matter' movement.

Yes, all lives do matter. But the hashtag did not spring up until #blacklivesmatter was trending and so should be understood as entirely reactionary. Black Lives Matter in no way lessens the importance of white lives, something which Trump supporters at a recent rally seemed unable to grasp when they mobbed and attacked an individual wearing a 'Black Lives Matter' shirt, while chanting 'All Lives Matter'. All lives do matter, but this statement has become a racist one, a socially acceptable way of saying 'white lives matter more'.



Yes all lives do matter. But where were 'All Lives Matter' proponents when white unarmed teen Hammond was shot in 2015? This shooting of an unarmed white teenager by police was completely overlooked, proving that the supporters don't actually care for 'All Lives' they just wish to re-assert dominance over the BME community.

This was reinstated earlier this year when another unarmed white 19 year old, Dylan Noble was also shot dead by police. It was the Black Lives Matter movement who spoke out against this injustice, while All Lives Matter supporters remained silent.

Yes, all lives do matter. But it is black lives which are being routinely disrupted and destroyed by white figures of authority within the USA. The 'All Lives Matter' movement can be seen as a denial by the white community, that racism is still prominent within the USA and indeed the world.

No matter what controversy it has caused, we can all applaud Patrisse Cullors, Alicia Garze and Opal Tometi for starting a movement which has become so influential in such a short space of time. Let us all keep strongly and unapologetically affirming that Black Lives Matter.

#blacklivesmatter

In the Shadow of Rulers: A History of Swaziland

Joey Wright

King Mswati III now rules Swaziland, a country originally created for black South Africans, which has struggled with its proximity to apartheid and now lives in the shadow of royal hegemony. Landlocked and surrounded by South Africa and Mozambique, Swaziland has been used by South Africa and Britain in ways ranging from natural resources to war. However, despite boasting the longest reigning monarch in world history and being the last absolute monarchy in Africa, the history of Swaziland is still relatively unknown to most people. Smaller than Wales and Kruger National Park, land-locked Swaziland has lived a quiet life eclipsed by its African neighbours. Dwarfed by South Africa's global presence for centuries, Swaziland's history deserves to be known.

Swaziland's journey as a nation towards independence in 1968 began in 1740 when first ruler, Dlamini arrived into modern-day Swaziland from Mozambique. Surrounded by competing clans, his son Mswati II gained a large proportion of land in the 19th century by invading neighbours, vastly expanding the Swazi territory. South Africa was becoming a republic at this time supported by the Dutch and British, however Swaziland asserted its self-sufficiency by defying an attempted annexation by the South African Republic in 1868. Following this attempt, black South Africans saw *de facto* enforced displacement to Swaziland which was undertaken to reinforce white South African power. This has led to the ethnic prevalence of blacks in Swaziland even to the present day making up 97% of the population.



Two wars revealed the influential role Britain would play in the making of Swaziland. By supporting British forces in the Anglo-Zulu war of 1879, Britain repaid the favour and the Swazi nation obtained much needed protection from their Zulu and Boer neighbours. During the Second Boer War (1899-1902) Swaziland was brought into the wider world as the nation struggled to remain neutral during a time of monarchical crisis. King Bhunu died from what was reported as sorcery. Britain remained important in supporting the Queen Regent through the monarchical crisis until the baby King Sobhuza II could rule as a child king. Simultaneously, the Boers and the British used the country as a gateway to Mozambique, and Swazi warriors were recruited to fight for the British which made a nonaligned stance in the war difficult. Swaziland thus became a British protectorate in 1903 following the war.

Incorporated into the empire, Britain took full advantage of its important role in the region. Despite formally only

being a protectorate, a British resident commissioner ruled with the support of the royal family. As part of this, 1909 saw the partition of Swaziland with two thirds placed under European occupation and only the royal heartlands of Hhohho remaining Swazi. This continued even until after the Second World War. In the 1960s, Sobhuza dramatically increased the pressure on the British for elections to decide the leaders of the nation. Due to the king's democratic intentions and the issue of severe racial discrimination in South Africa barring the merging of the two countries, Britain allowed the election. The king's Imbokodvo National Movement group, which closely aligned itself with the traditional Swazi way of life, won all the elective seats in the 1964 election. But the king was not satisfied and clamoured for his own rule. Britain agreed to Sobhuza's constitutional monarchy but after receiving a mere 75% of the vote, within 5 years Sobhuza revoked the 1968 constitution. He absorbed all governmental power and removed all alternative political activities. In many ways, this has continued to the present day. This moment of independence represents a significant initial move away from the shadow of larger external powers, but highlights the increasing political domination of the monarchy.

Despite British withdrawal, former British dominion South Africa has remained an influential force in Swaziland. Today, South African cultural domination through television is so thorough that there is only one nationally owned Swazi channel available to Swazis. There is also economic domination regarding natural resources. Swaziland is abundant with lakes in the middle and western regions, but this water must first be sent to South Africa before returning to supply Swaziland. The clearest example of South African influence also highlights royal importance through the figure of Nelson Mandela. Initially positive, Nelson Mandela's daughter married a Swazi prince while Mandela was in prison. The survival of this marriage suggested a successful collaboration for South

Africa and Swaziland. However, after his death, King Mswati III has been reported to have banned prayers for Mandela in Manzini without explanation causing friction between the population and royalty. A picture emerges of a nation seeking independence from and equality with external influences, only to be thwarted by the absolute power of the monarch.

Independence, rather than granting freedom, therefore took Swazis towards a monarch who although embodying Swazi culture and traditions, also exerted complete control. A polygamous culture, King Sobhuza II married seventy wives according to Swaziland National

Trust Commission and from this over two hundred children have led to Sobhuza having over a thousand grandchildren at his death in 1982. This reflects the monarchy's adherence to traditional cultural practices, while also ruling as a leader with complete control. His son Mswati has continued this trend in marriage but has also continued the hegemony exerted by the king of Swaziland. The king has the monopoly of mobile networks in the country; owning and regulating the only network ('MTN'), he can effectively control the fastest growing industry in the country, purging any South African alternatives. Examples such as these illustrate that while independence has given Swaziland the chance to return to the traditional way of life it desires, the country remains a site of struggle for political hegemony. Stronger external powers such as South Africa as well as the king maintain an interest and a say in how the country develops.

Swaziland remains in a unique bubble of traditional Southern African life. While the king seems to have control, and wants to retain this, outside influences are creeping in. The days of empires and outside rulers may be over, but the reign of the king and his complete control of his kingdom means that Swazis have always lived in the shadow of power and will continue to for the foreseeable future.



Overcoming Every Obstacle: The Legacy of Jesse Owens

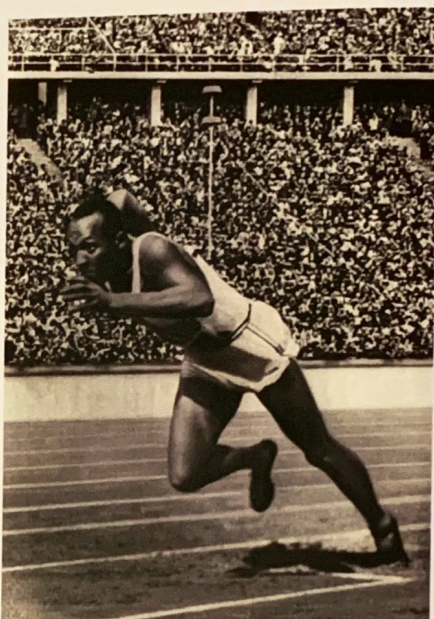
Harry Brown

Randall Island Stadium, New York City: the venue for the 1936 U.S. Olympic trials.

The Olympics of 1936 were to take place in Berlin, a city immersed in a Nazi dictatorship. This hardly seemed like the place an African American would want to go but for Jesse Owens it was his dream. All the hardships he had gone through in his life had all come down to this one race to become an Olympian.

Owens is a hero of the Civil Rights Movement despite not being directly involved himself. Owens' story is one many black Americans could relate to and this contributed to why he became such an idol to so many people. Born in Oakville, Alabama, James Cleveland Owens did not have the best childhood. As an African American family living in a Southern state in the early 20th century, the Owens family were no exception to rule and lived in poverty with little or no rights. Owens' father, Henry, was a sharecropper, an occupation closely tied to the legacy of slavery across the South. He could not afford to look after his family because of the payments he had to make to his landowner. To help out the family, Jesse and his brothers would work in the fields but this would not always be possible for young Jesse as he was a very sick child and was rarely able to assist with such physically gruelling work.

Here we can see the tremendous hardship that Owens lived through all before the age of 10. This contributed to the commitment and desire he exhibited as an athlete. He was known for fighting through pain to succeed, the greatest example being the 'Big 10' College



Jesse Owens at start of record breaking 200 meter race during the Olympic games 1936 in Berlin

championships of 1935. Owens was to compete in four events in the space of 45 minutes, all with an injury to his tailbone. Not only did he manage to compete in all four events but Owens won all four, broke world records in three and tied the world record in the fourth. Owens' desire to compete through injury could have cost him his career but it confirmed him as a legend because without focus and desire he wouldn't have gone on to achieve what he did as an athlete. This also distinguishes him in popular culture because he was able to fight through all adversity placed in front of him. He was the ultimate underdog.

Owens always had laser focus and this was even further displayed whilst he undertook his college education. Jesse was fortunate enough that his athletic ability al-

lowed him to gain a place at college, however due to segregation he had to live off campus making it harder for him to train and study. Furthermore, he was separated from his fellow athletes by having to eat at different times and travel in different ways. Not even one of the most talented athletes ever could escape the racism that was rife across America at this time.

These were not even the toughest obstacles he had to face in his college life. Owens had to work in order to pay his college tuition fees. This meant that Owens was not only pushing himself to the limit as a student and an athlete but also he had to work any job he could in order to get himself through college. Here again we witness the adversity and desire Owens had which is why he was and still is revered by so many. Owens showed that if you want something enough you can go and get it, the ultimate example of the 'American Dream' he grew up hearing about during the Great Depression.

Again the evidence explains why Owens is so loved, because he lived through hardships to which most black people could relate. As a celebrity he was likeable and someone to whom the common man could relate. Living through the years of the Jim Crow laws and little to no rights for African Americans was something every person like Owens had experienced. People could relate to his hardships, his knockbacks, his journey. For example, the Owens family decided to move north to Ohio which, as part of the Great Migration, was something that 6 million other African American people had done. People could really understand everything Owens had achieved and therefore it was easier to get behind him and hold him up as a real people's champion.

Owens' greatest achievement came at the 1936 Olympics. In an arena where Hitler had wanted to show off Aryan supremacy, Jesse Owens won 4 gold medals. An African American had stepped into the cauldron of racial hatred and performed when it truly mattered under immense pressure. Accounts from the Olympics reveal that the Nazi crowd even began to clap and cheer Owens such was the marvel of his athletic ability.

Owens' Olympic victory made him an important example of success and protest for African Americans. This meant that throughout the Civil Rights movement, Owens was

used as an example of one of the first people to actively stand up to the establishment and succeed. His likeability and the way people could relate to him as a person were also important factors in the fact he was a hero and an idol for so many. Owens himself most likely did not go to Berlin with any political agenda or with the purpose of proving Hitler wrong. However it was a case of right place, right time for Owens as he became a beacon of hope against the Nazi regime and for the Civil Rights movement. It was no surprise that Owens went out and did what he had been doing his whole life, seeing an obstacle and overcoming it.



*Owens Performing long jump at the Olympic games
1936*

The Disturbed Perception of Race

Justine Brooks

In 1619, Jamestown, America accepted the first ship loaded with enslaved Africans.

This moment instigated a series of nightmarish episodes in which enslaved women were stripped, touched, and institutionally raped. The unjustifiable was justified by the formation of a new image: the hypersexualised black person, a being so erotic and impious that they were considered 'unrapeable'. But today we enjoy a new age of racial respect – or do we?

Whether willingly or otherwise, many of us have been exposed to racialized sexual imagery. From being draped over expensive cars to being lyrically abused in hip hop, it is clear that modern media fails to represent black women as sentient beings. Toying with the blurred lines of racism prevails, and foggy, even sugar-coated racial prejudice is still present in our day to day lives.

It was common during the antebellum period for plantation owners in the US to use black female slaves for sex. The erotic image of the 'Jezebel', a promiscuous slave with a great sexual appetite, was used to justify their abuse. This image spawns from Europeans travelling to Africa and misinterpreting the Africans' semi-nudity as sexual promiscuity, polygamy as unrestrained lust, and tribal dances as orgies. While the link between 19th century slave owners and modern day fetishism is arguably rather tenuous, the common theme is still clear: dehumanisation. The spectre of the 'Jezebel' haunts us through Miley Cyrus surrounding herself by nameless, sensual black dancers in an attempt to signify deviance and sexual appeal.

However, there is no singular, all-inclusive experience of discrimination. Historically, pigment can determine privilege, and according to P. Mohammed, 'the lighter the shade, the higher was the person's rank on the social ladder' in the Caribbean, resulting from early racial mixing in slave society. Lighter skinned slaves were usually the result of white plantation owners having sexual relations with black slaves, and so there was a greater sense of relatability. These slaves were therefore kept closer to

their masters, and would generally work in the house as 'sub-humans', while the darkest skinned slaves worked in the field as 'non-humans'. The former were more commonly raped and used sexually due to their close proximity. Having lighter skin during the antebellum period in America was sometimes the key to more education, less strenuous physical labour, and better housing. Slaveholders used physical features to create a hierarchy of beauty within the enslaved community, and a premise that has left a sinister aftertaste in today's society. This includes the success of hair straightening and skin bleaching products aimed at a black market, enforcing the idea that whiteness is tantamount to normality. According to Black Enterprise, 35% of black women in South Africa bleach their skin. With brand names such as 'Skin So White' and 'White Perfect', the message to young black women is both clear and scathing.

Coloristic pressure takes a more vocal form in Kevin Hart, who in 2010 tweeted that 'dark skinned women take a punch @ da face better than light-skinned women'. Again, dark-skinned women are represented as brutish, while lighter-skinned women are seen as domestic. In this context, the blacker a person is, the more of a threat they are perceived to be, and so 'Africa' becomes synonymous with 'savage'. Even our system of justice is impacted by this – Villanova University found that light skinned women are sentenced to approximately 12% less time behind bars than darker skinned women. Many African Americans today can recall being discouraged from playing in the sun as children by their parents, as discussed by Dr Carolyn West, and so from a young age have been taught to resent the skin they live in. Perhaps we have not ideologically progressed since the Transatlantic Slave Trade as much as we would like to think.

We must ask ourselves why dark skinned women are treated the harshest by the judicial system and employers, and why black people are commonly used as props in music videos. It is dehumanisation at its most covert, racism at its most tolerated. It is time we differentiate between what is a compliment and what is a fetish, what is civilised and what is a disturbed perception of race.

Public Enemy – *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back*

Jack Perry

Released in 1988, *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* is arguably the most politically and historically charged hip-hop album of all time. It contains numerous excerpts from civil rights leaders' speeches and raises several issues that are still pertinent today. Chuck D and Flavor Flav defy the common misconception that rappers only focus on topics such as drugs, sex and violence. They explore issues of racial discrimination, police brutality and cultural pride which are as relevant now as they were twenty-seven years ago.

The album itself caused controversy largely because of the uncompromising claims about the FBI and CIA. On the track 'Louder Than A Bomb', Chuck D states 'Your CIA, you see I ain't kidding' followed by the assertion that they 'got rid of King and X'. This particular track explores the theme of the US government targeting black leaders and Chuck includes himself in this, claiming that the FBI is tapping his phone. One of the most hard-hitting lines on the album also features in this song. The beat stops as Chuck raps 'Cause every brother mans' life is like swinging the dice right?' touching on the idea that a black man's survival is completely dependent on chance.

The current storm in the US surrounding the recurrent killing of unarmed black men finds a historical precedent within the subject matter of the album. Chuck D raps 'Five-O said freeze and I got numb // Can I tell 'em I really never had a gun?'. In this line the use of the past tense implies Chuck D is denied the right to prove he



does not have a weapon before being shot, highlighting the continuation of similarly distressing stories being recounted in the US today.

Flavor Flav, however, also gives some advice for America's youth on 'She Watch Channel Zero?!' when he says 'Read about yourself, learn your culture'. This sentiment is reflected later on the album with 'They tell lies in the books that you're reading // it's knowledge of yourself that you're needing'. It is not just bold criticisms of America; Public Enemy are also suggesting ways the youth can overcome what they see as a corrupt system.

There is a real sense of anger and urgency that comes through not only in the lyrics but in the instrumentals too. Almost every song is heavy with aggressive snares and trumpet samples that gives an energetic feel alongside Chuck's emphatic delivery. This urgency is what makes this project particularly poignant as much of the content on this album is still so current and the themes chosen by Public Enemy retain real significance today.

My History Hero

ELLA BAKER

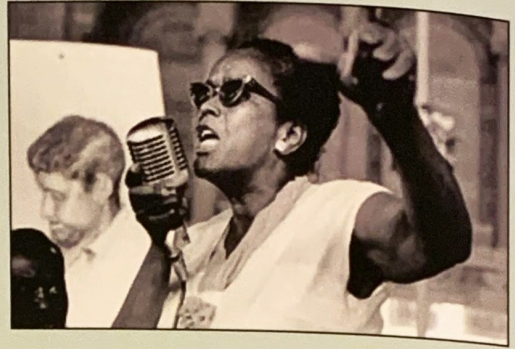
Sam Lloyd

Black History Month offers the ideal opportunity to commemorate Ella Baker, an unsung hero of the twentieth century African-American freedom struggle.

Born in 1903, Baker engaged in civil rights activism throughout her adult life, including a period working for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) during the 1940s. In 1957, Baker joined the fledgling Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), established by Martin Luther King Jr. in the wake of the successful Montgomery Bus Boycott. In 1960, frustrated with the SCLC, she convened a meeting of student leaders from the desegregation sit-in movement, which led to the establishment of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

In facilitating the founding of SNCC, Ella Baker made a significant contribution to the civil rights struggle in the implementation of a distinctive leadership philosophy. Believing that 'strong people don't need strong leaders', Baker advised her students to follow the principles of participatory democracy and group leadership in internal decision-making. She counselled against falling under the influence of the SCLC, who sought to command media attention with short-term campaigns, often focusing on legislative issues. Instead SNCC operated at a grassroots level for longer

periods of time. Amongst their most notable campaigns was the Freedom Summer of 1964 in Mississippi concerning voter registration, the culmination of several years of community activism. Baker's insistence on collective decision-making was instrumental in the creation of a relatively egalitarian internal



framework within SNCC, and female activists operated with more freedom than in other contemporary civil rights organisations. Baker served as a trusted adult advisor to SNCC during the 1960s, before moving to New York towards the end of the decade. She passed away in 1986, still engaged in civil rights activism.

Scholarship in the immediate aftermath of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s quickly identified an elite group of charismatic men, including King, as the leaders responsible for legislative gains such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. While these contributions must not be overlooked, revisionist historiography in recent decades has eschewed this gendered 'top-down' notion of leadership in favour of an examination of the many and varied contributions of women to the African-American freedom struggle. Arguably invisible in popular history narratives, Ella Baker's pioneering civil rights work is testament to this tradition, and that's why she's my History Hero.

History Society Letter



At the time of writing this, it's been a couple of weeks since the end of Welcome Week/Freshers and what a week it was. You may have seen myself and the other nine members of the committee speaking at your Welcome Talks and wandering round campus in our maroon t-shirts. Between the ten of us (we're a mixture of second and third years), we run your socials, careers events, Christmas Ball, trip abroad and sports teams. We were elected to our posts in March 2016 and will spend the next few months ensuring that you all get the most that you can out of your membership. Our aim is to combine a variety of events, from typical student nights out to careers events with top graduate recruiters, to cover the range of interests that the History student body holds.

Firstly, I would like to say a huge congratulations to everyone who was selected for the society's football and netball teams. Football Sports Secretary Charlie saw an astounding 51 players try out for 23 places, whilst Ellie, our netball Sports Secretary, welcomed an amazing 43 players who tried out for 23 places. As well as playing their usual weekly league games, the teams are currently gearing up to face the English Society in November at our History Vs English Sports tournament and social. Just a month later in December, the HistSoc football boys will face the HistSoc netball girls at their annual netball match. The girls won the 2014 and 2015 matches, so we will see what 2016 brings.

Secondly, we'll give a nod to our socials. We kicked off the year with the Sixties' themed Otley Run, and followed it up with a pub quiz and night out to Wire in week three. First term *always* includes a Deadline Day social in week nine and then, of course, the incredible Christmas Ball in the final week of term. This has been booked for Tuesday 6th December at the Royal Armouries and will be a stunning occasion. Joanna, who is in charge of the event, has chosen a Gatsby's Winter Wonderland theme.

Ultimately however, we're here to achieve a fantastic degree and, for many of us, that will help in securing a grad job at the end. I'm very proud of our Sponsorship Secretary, Beth, who spent many hours over summer approaching huge companies to sell the prospect of a link with the society. She signed sponsorship contracts with two Magic Circle law firms (Allen & Overy and Clifford Chance), professional services firm EY (formerly Ernst & Young) and TeachFirst. Throughout the year, Beth will run various networking or workshop events with our sponsors, including our key employability event of the year, the Careers Networking Dinner, at the end of October.

Make sure you keep an eye on our social media accounts this year for the most up to date news. Madi, our Media Secretary, is always on the look out for new ways to market events and has been trialling the society's Snapchat (leedshistorysoc) account this term too.

Any questions for me? Don't hesitate to get in touch via hy14emp@leeds.ac.uk

Elli (HistSoc President)



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