

The struggle for justice in Higher Education

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Unpicking
some
concepts
through a
personal
journey

Privileges

Silences

Appropriations

Pushback

Allyship

Higher Education in the 1990s Sink or Swim for BME students

- Widening participation via Saturday sessions and Summer Schools
- Target students whose parents had not gone to university
- Student profile changed rapidly to become increasingly multicultural
- Students could feel at a loss, lack of provisions and support for them e.g. some were carers
- Supporting services such as writing workshops only a recent phenomenon
- So it was up to students to seek appropriate support

From Student to Visiting Lecturer Senior Lecturer

- I myself was one of those students - mature, juggling PhD research with motherhood...
- Politically driven I was keen to have a role in the WP project
- Visiting lecturer in 4 Higher Institutions at the same time
- The only brown/black face at the time - and this is in Sociology and Criminology
- I didn't have much power or authority to change things but ...
- I introduced modules such as 'Gender, Ethnicity and Cultural Representations' and 'Crossing Border Boundaries'
- Introduced BME and indigenous writers and brought in speakers from ethnic minority backgrounds

Back to those concepts...

- My **privileged** position as a lecturer needs me to acknowledge my **positionality**.... Intersections of gender, race and class
- **Appropriation** of ideas, work....when BME people have to do the labour
- **Pushback** - when the work towards social justice is rejected → Retreat and **Silence** when we need to
- **Imposter Syndrome** - from a sense of not belonging and lack of permission to speak
- We cannot be afraid of **white fragility** but embrace our awkwardness George Floyd <https://youtu.be/vl>
- We need to work together and form alliance with the oppressed dream - and perhaps more power - **allyship** → So
- No more - **Silence**

Setting up BME staff network at Westminster

- Despite high visibility of multicultural profile of students on websites, brochures it was a struggle to set up a BME Staff network ... finally launched its first event in 2016!
- Since then the network has held and sponsored several internal and external events
- Pride taken in its collaborative relationship with the Students Union and other Staff networks
- Active through Teams postings and regular meetings and currently...
- Black History Month events

BME Network: A collective Statement Demands – 22 June 2020

The BME Network has collated our diverse, individual and collective voices. More than 130 colleagues have been consulted through MS Teams and emails to compile a list of actions that will help to address silences, unconscious biases, overt racism and the absence of BME voices in strategic decision-making and thus help the University to realise its purported values of equality, diversity and inclusion and become an anti-racist university as a matter of urgency. We see our demands as going along with those made by our students. We seek the University's clear commitment to action the following, summarised under these headings: Inclusion and Visibility; BME Career Progression; Senior Management and Leadership; Reporting and Indicators; Time, Resources and Complaint Handling; and Training.

University of Westminster in 2020

- University of Westminster published Black Lives Matter commitment plan (1st July 2020)
<https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/news/university-of-westminster-publishes-black-lives-matter-commitment-plan>
- <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/news/black-history-month-2020-recognising-and-celebrating-black-history-at-westminster>
- Equality Diversity and Inclusion ... and Allyship – Berekhet

Impact of such initiatives on student experience

- Still unknown ... work very much still in progress....
- Leading Routes - Broken Pipeline - Looking at Barriers to Black Ph.D students accessing Research Council Funding: [file:///E:/Evolving%20Multicultural%20Dialogues%20chapter/The%20Broken%20Pipeline%20Report%20-%20Sept%202019%20\(120919\).pdf](file:///E:/Evolving%20Multicultural%20Dialogues%20chapter/The%20Broken%20Pipeline%20Report%20-%20Sept%202019%20(120919).pdf)
- Funded studentships targeting BME applicants : <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/news/phd-studentship-for-bme-applicants-in-humanities>
- Decolonising the curriculum toolkit at Westminster: <http://cti.westminster.ac.uk/decolonising-the-curriculum>
- Many obstacles to overcome... e.g. UK Research and Innovation <https://www.researchprofessionalnews.com/views-of-the-uk-2020-8-knowledge-is-power-an-open-letter-to-ukri/>

Significance of Momentum

- Breakdown of European empires....Civil Rights Movement in the USA → Black Power, Black Freedom
- Why is my curriculum white campaign (end of 2014) was a response to lack of diversity in re course content gained momentum in 2015 → Decolonizing the curriculum worldwide
- Rhodes must fall movement began on 9 March 2015 in South Africa at University of Cape Town bringing down statues representing oppression in the UK and elsewhere
- Black Lives Matter, Covid-19 → exposing inequalities, criminalization of already marginalized
- Now over to Berekhet
- [file:///E:/Black%20History%20Month%20talk/UCU_Black_History_365%20Chart%20\(1\).pdf](file:///E:/Black%20History%20Month%20talk/UCU_Black_History_365%20Chart%20(1).pdf)

Black History 365

This timeline is the first of a series produced by UCU in close collaboration with the Black Members' Standing Committee. It is just one of the ways that UCU is taking the lead in highlighting and challenging racial inequality. Smaller portraits of important individuals in black history will be made available in the next 12 months.

shifting helping to shift from Black History Month to Black History 365. Black people have played a pivotal role in human history. A history that especially in the last four centuries has been repressed and marginalised, but now can no longer be ignored.



100,000BC Human beings migrate from Africa

10,000BC Cheddar Man

DNA samples from a man who lived near Cheddar Gorge 10,000 years ago show that the first inhabitants of the British Isles were actually dark-skinned.

5,000BC Africans and the origins of human civilisation

Some of the earliest human civilisations in human history seem to have had their origin in Africa or amongst dark-skinned peoples possibly from Africa. From the early civilisations, from the Kingdom of Kush to ancient Egypt, Africa played a pivotal role in human history for many millennia (check out the 100BC Kingdom of Kush, 100BC Kingdom of Ghana, 100BC 200BC 400BC African emperor Septimius Severus, ruler of the Roman Empire, 1000 AD Great Zimbabwe).

Suffocation begins

C1500 The biggest forced migration in human history

The transatlantic slave trade is established between Europe, Africa, and the Americas. An estimated 12 million enslaved Africans are kidnapped and then sent to the Americas. This creates a wealth in Europe and for foreign states in the Americas.

1588 Elizabeth I removes Africans

Historical records seem to suggest that Elizabeth I signs a decree to remove Africans from her kingdom. Recent research has shown a more complicated picture but undoubtedly this is the first overt piece of legislation in this country that is based on skin colour.

1739 Facing down the Empire

The Maroons, a group of escaped enslaved Africans, form independent communities across the island of Jamaica. Following many years of war with the British, a peace treaty was signed with the Maroons under the leadership of Cudjoe in 1738.

1787 Abolition hits the streets

The abolition movement in the UK gains strength as the Society for the Abolition of Slavery Society is formed. The industrial centres like London and Manchester provide strong support, with many English country being represented by 1792 (substance comes from being made from Scotland and Wales too).

1791 The Haitian revolution: the only successful slave revolt in human history

After 12 years in which the most powerful European powers - France, Spain, Britain - made and lost to repress slavery, the enslaved Africans under the leadership of Toussaint L. Ouertere and Jean-Jacques Dessalines sound the death knell of France's slavery.

1807 Abolition of the slave trade

The slave trade is abolished in the British Empire. The British Empire dominates much of the globe based on white supremacy, a legacy of the Atlantic slave trade.

1831 Sam Sharpe's rebellion

A massive revolt of enslaved Africans involving 20,000 freedom fighters who control parts of the islands under the leadership of Sam Sharpe.

1833 Abolition of slavery

Slavery itself is finally abolished across the British Empire, representing the victory of the combined efforts of enslaved Africans themselves and the abolitionist movement. The slaveholders are paid millions, the formerly enslaved Africans nothing.

but it leaves a legacy

It opens the door to the subjugation of Africa. The depopulation of Africa between 1750-1850 leaves it open to imperialist exploitation in the 19th, 20th and 21st century.

Colourism

Colourism is where Black people with lighter complexions are treated better and afforded more opportunities than darker-skinned Black people. This system arose out of the Slave Trade in which the prospect of whiteness could increase chances of slightly better treatment.

Black skin means a perfect skin properly.

Under this system, proximity to whiteness could increase your chances for freedom.

1833 Indentured Indians are brought to the Caribbean colonies from India

1848 Chartist movement

The Chartist movement, a trade union movement, initiates a fight for working suffrage.

1859 The growth of scientific racism

Scientific explanations are sought to justify white supremacy and empire. Gobson, who founded the journal of Anthropology, argues that Africans are genetically less intelligent than other ethnic groups, pioneering eugenics. These ideas underpinned the racist, and still have many adherents today.

1860 Civil War

The American Civil War ends slavery in the USA. It doesn't, however, end racial inequality.

Suffocation continues

1884-85 Africa dismembered at the Berlin conference

On the 14th of July 1884, the Berlin Conference took place in Berlin. The conference was held to settle European powers with thousands of ethnicities being lumped together in colonies.

1892 The first ethnic minority MP

Dorabhai Poonji is elected to the UK Parliament.

1912 Marcus Garvey's ideas deepen in London

American Marcus Mosiah Garvey helps publish The African Times and Orient Review, the first political journal produced by and for Black people ever published in Britain.

1914-1918 World War I undermines colonialism

The First World War undermines colonial rule. Four million non-white soldiers fought in the war but found themselves discriminated against. An upsurge in anti-colonial resistance explodes in places like India.

1919 Race riots and uprisings

Surplus labour after WWI, led to an outbreak of race riots against Black and other minorities in major seaports in London, Liverpool and Bristol.

sound colonialism's death knell

Many Black people join the war effort but still find the racial discrimination from the First World War. 12,000 plus Black people served in the British air force alone, finding themselves being treated like third class citizens.

1955 The Bandung conference & the start of the civil rights movement

The Bandung conference was held in Bandung, Indonesia, making Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks household names. At the Bandung conference in Indonesia leaders from Africa, Asia and the Asian subcontinent challenge racism.

1957-62 Colonialism ends in Africa and elsewhere

After a bitter struggle the Mau Mau in Kenya the British Empire is forced to grant independence in Ghana and Nigeria, and Gabon become independent from France.

1965 Black nationalist leader Malcolm X visits the UK weeks before his assassination

Malcolm X visits the UK weeks before his assassination. He is a powerful Black nationalist leader.

1966 The Bristol bus boycott

Paul Stephenson leads the struggle to end a legacy of racial inequality and segregation left by the legacy of Edward Colston's slave trade. The boycott is successful.

1968 Martin Luther King is assassinated

An extreme right wing party, the National Front, is stopped from marching down the High Street through Leamington.

1978 Rock Against Racism

The Rock Against Racism concert brings all ethnicities together against racism.

1979 Sisters united against racism & Blair Beach

The South East Black Sisters are formed, winning respect with their uncompromising and racist stance. Blair Beach, a white teacher, is murdered on a demonstration against the National Front.

1981 Brixton uprisings

The year begins with a fire in a house party in New Cross, London where 18 young Black people die in a suspected racist attack. Later, the Brixton riots explode across the UK. The Sunday Mirror leads to the SAS issue that saw young Black people being stopped being effectively stopped.

1987 Election landmark

The First Black History month is marked in the UK as Black ITNs are elected in a racist election.

1991 Bill Morris becomes the first Black person to lead a major Black union

Stephen Lawrence's murder transforms the struggle for racial equality leading to the Macpherson report describing the police as being 'institutionally racist'.

1994 Freedom

Patson Phisoela is released from prison following the end of Apartheid racial segregation in South Africa.

2008 First Black president elected in US

Barack Obama wins the American election and goes on to win again in 2012.

I can't breathe

The BLM are defeated at the polls, and the BLM, on the streets, by the end of the movement in places like Barking, Tower Hamlets, and Bradford.

2010 Stopping of the BLM and ECU

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2011 Mark Duggan

The killing of Mark Duggan by the police leads to riots across the UK.

2012 Trayvon Martin and the rise of Black Lives Matter

The murder of teen Trayvon Martin by George Zimmerman leads to riots across America. It is here that Black Lives Matter slogan first appears.

2014 The Black Cultural Archive opens in Brixton, London

The shooting of Michael Brown by police officers leads to riots and major unrest in Ferguson, Black Lives Matter now an international consciousness.

2015 Still going on off the backs of slavery

The battle to stop off the backs of slavery in some corners in 1833 to accept abolition is finally paid off.

Birth of a movement

The Rhodes Must Fall campaign starts in Cape Town university. It demands that all statues of Cecil Rhodes must be taken down on campus. Decolonise the Curriculum spreads, demanding that universities free themselves from all colonial legacies.

I can't breathe

Eric Garner dies at the hands of the police in the US. Garner's dying words, 'I can't breathe' become a slogan of resistance. This following year Sarah Beaulieu dies at the hands of the London police.

2016 Take the knee

NFL player Colin Kaepernick takes a knee against racism during the American national anthem.

2017 Trump presidency

The Trump presidency brings racial division into the mainstream.

A new course

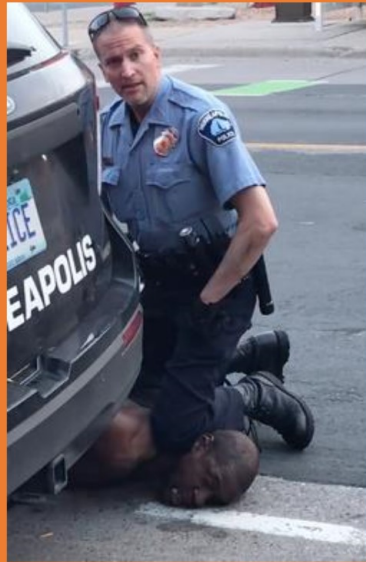
Birmingham City University establishes the first Black studies degree in the UK.



THE POWER OF THE MOMENT!

HOW WORLD EVENTS AND RECEPTIVE LOCAL REALITIES CONSPIRED TO KICK-START A JOURNEY OF POSITIVE CHANGE: THE CASE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN PUBLIC MOOD



RECEPTIVE INTERNAL CHANGES



PEOPLE & WELLBEING
CENTRED VISION



INCREASED
PARTICIPATION

A VISION FOR ALL

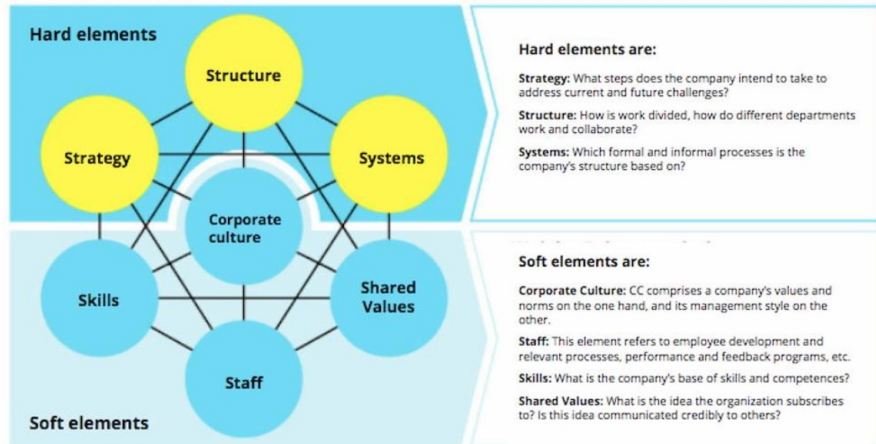


AN ANTI-RACIST UNIVERSITY, READY TO TAKE POSITIVE ACTION



BUILDING ON MOMENTUM THROUGH SMALL BUT SIGNIFICANT WINS

Hard vs. Soft Elements



References

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