

Subject Guide



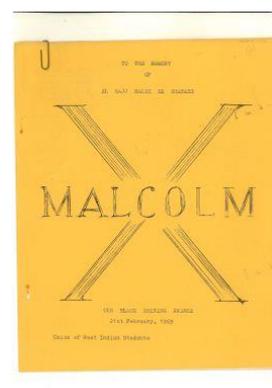
Ansel Wong



WONG/7/70 1973
Black life Brixton



WONG/7/74 1971 Black peoples
news service



WONG/1/6 1969 Malcolm X

Background

This guide aims to provide an overview of Ansel Wong and his collection, highlighting significant moments in his varied career. He was born on 4 October 1945 in San Fernando, Trinidad. He attended the San Fernando Boy's Government School, Trinidad (1953-1958), and Naparima College, Trinidad (1958-1964). In 1965 he arrived in Britain to attend Hull University until 1968. He then went on to study at the Institute of Education University of London (1970 – 1971), as well as Brunel University (1976 – 1978).

Whilst continuing to study he became involved with the West Indian Students' Union in 1969. The West Indian Students' Union, based at The West Indian Students Centre (WISC) in Earls Court, had been formed in 1946 to assist with the expansion of students arriving in London to study in further and higher education. The Union acted as a welfare, political, and social organisation for all West Indian students. In 1959 there were an estimated 2,400 West Indian Students, including nurses, in Britain.¹ He became chairman of this Union not long after joining and edited a number of their publications for example 'Struggle' and 'Nexus'. He also contributed his own articles to the newsletter. His arts organisation, the Black Arts Workshop, regularly held workshop sessions and staged theatre productions with the support of the Union and WISC.

He graduated with a Post Graduate Certificate in Education in 1971 and became heavily involved in education, in particular the supplementary school movement. Until the 1960s the immigration of people from the Commonwealth was limited to either single men, or men and women who had left their children with the intention of returning home a few years later. The Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1961 added further restrictions to entry to only those who held employment vouchers and could support themselves. As a result many people decided to bring their children to Britain before the Act came into effect.

¹ p519. Dabydeen, David et al. *The Oxford Companion to Black British History*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007.

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As a consequence of the Act, it became apparent that the British school system could not adequately cope with the needs of Black children. Not only did the children have to deal with overt racism, the curriculum and approach of teachers often did little to encourage them to succeed. Many teachers had low expectations of the intellectual capabilities of Black children.

This situation led to the rise in parental involvement and the growth of the supplementary school movement. Supplementary schools or Saturday schools were set up by parents and others concerned with education to raise the educational attainment of Black children.

From 1974 – 1976 he became the Education Co-ordinator of the Ahfiwe school, one such supplementary school. The Ahfiwe School was set up in 1974 with a one year grant from the Community Relations Commission, and Saturday classes were held at the Gresham Project and the Santley School. The Ahfiwe School was part of the Gresham project based at 1 Gresham Road, Brixton. The Gresham Youth Centre (Gresham Project) was set up with the assistance of the Home Office under the terms of the Urban Programme. The main clients of the centre were young African-Caribbeans aged 16-25 years. These young people were subject to a multitude of social problems including housing stress, educational deprivation, unemployment, and a lack of social and recreational amenities. The Ahfiwe School sought to address these issues and also ran adult education classes in the evenings as well as an advisory service.

He has had a long and varied career in education and management regarding causes that reflect his beliefs. He has also been involved in a great deal of voluntary and third sector organisations. These range from music related such as Carnival, Opera and Young musicians as well as Caribbean matters including links to Trinidad and Tobago professional networks.

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Key dates

1946	The West Indian Students Union is formed.
1965	Wong arrives in Britain to study at Hull University.
1969	He becomes the Chairman for the West Indian Students' Union and Chairman of the House Committee of the West Indian Students' Centre.
c1970s	He becomes a member of the UK Black Panther movement which started in 1968 until they dissolved in 1972. The British Black Panther movement in Britain developed from the work of the Universal Coloured Peoples Association. Although they were inspired by the ideology of the American Black Panther Party, it was a different type of organisation that responded to the realities facing Black people in Britain.
1971	He becomes a member of the Black Liberation Front which started earlier c1970 alongside the Black Unity and Freedom Party. He also becomes the Editor for the <i>Grassroots</i> Newspaper, the monthly publication of the Black Liberation Front, using the pseudonym of Ade Kimathi.
1971-1973	He is a teacher at Sydenham Girls Secondary School
1974-1976	He becomes the Education Co-ordinator of the Ahfiwe School as part of the Gresham Project.
1977-1982	He becomes Director of Elimu Community Education Centre, Westminster Community Relations Council
1982-1986	He becomes Principal Race Relations Advisor, Greater London Council
1986-1989	He becomes the Head of Race Equality Policy Group of the London Strategic Policy Unit, London Borough of Camden and then Education Officer-Policy, Planning and Personnel, London Borough of Ealing
1989-1991	He becomes the Director Education Policy and Evaluation-Deputy to Chief Education Officer, London Borough of Lambeth
1992-2003	He becomes the Vice Principal of Morley College
2006-2007	He becomes the Managing Director for Purple International Limited. Previous clients have included London Notting Hill Carnival Limited, Slavery Memorial Trust, St Albans Council, and South African Government)
2007-2012	He becomes the Director of Learning & Development, a focus consultancy (2003-2010), clients include Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman, Highbury Grove School, and University College London
2007-2012	He becomes the Company Secretary & Examinations Officer for Savile Row Academy, a training centre for bespoke tailoring and cutting skills
2007-	He is currently the Managing Director of Tsingtac Associates Ltd, a management consultancy. Previous clients have included Carnival Village, Hansib Publications, and Elimu Carnival Band

The papers of Ansel Wong were donated to Black Cultural Archives in December 2008, and we have received further additions in 2010 and 2014. To avoid placing an unintended order on it, the collection was catalogued in series according to the subject matter or type of material.

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WONG/1 West Indian Students Union material 1969-1972

This section contains a variety of copies of the different newsletters that were part of the West Indian Student Union within files WONG/1/1-10. The only other material that relates to this period is correspondence relating to the West Indian Standing Conference. Other related material to this conference can be found in file GARRISON/6/1/6.

WONG/2 Ahfiwe School 1968-1980

This section contains a wealth of newsletters and information attached to the Ahfiwe School, mostly found in files WONG/2/1-2, WONG/2/3-4 and WONG/2/6. The majority of the other files in this section contain an assortment of articles on education that were either collected by Wong, or that he contributed towards.

WONG/3 Reports and conference papers 1969-1974

This section holds copies of all the conferences attended by Wong. Of particular note from WONG/3/4 are copies of each delegates paper presented at the Comparative Institutional Response to Minority Group Demands in Britain and America in 1971.

WONG/4 Creative Writing c1970s-c1980s

Wong encouraged creative writing, as did his friend Len Garrison. Len Garrison, one of the co-founders of Black Cultural Archives, also established the Black Youth Penmanship Awards scheme. This enabled young Black people to be celebrated for their literary achievements. This was achieved through the African-Caribbean Education Research Project (ACER Project) which began in 1976. Wong assisted by being a member of the Board of ACER, reviewing its publications, editing some of Garrison's published works and helping with the Penmanship Awards Scheme by judging entries.

WONG/5 British Black Panther material 1971-1973

Only two items exist within this section. There is a paper related to the second Black Panther Party in America that Wong attended. The other item to the UK Black Panther movement can be discovered within WONG/7. There are also papers from the first regional Conference on Black Power in file WONG/3/6 held in Bermuda in July 1969. A great amount of information on the British Black Panther movement can also be gleaned by looking in the Ephemera collection at WONG/6.

WONG/6 Ephemera 1968-1988

This extensive section shows the involvement of Wong with a variety of Black activist groups, both in Britain and in America. There are also a number of campaign leaflets such as the Mangrove 9 and the Railton 4. A quantity of posters for conferences and demonstrations exist, as well as books.

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WONG/7 Newspapers, journals and newsletters 1967-1982

This section contains a range of unique British newsletters and journals, many of which were hand produced for campaign or activist groups. Titles that exist include the following: *Black Phoenix*, *Backa Yard Newsheet*, *Black Eagles newsletter*, and *Black Ram*. There are also some American and International publications such as *The Communiviews*, *Malcolm X College*, *The African World*, and *Truth*.

WONG/8 Articles and other written work by Ansel Wong 1966-1974

This section includes a variety of handwritten notes and essays by Wong. Of particular note are some typescript notes which relates to WONG/3/21, which is a text on Caribbean Music.

WONG/9 Press Cuttings c1960s-c1980s

This section includes about fifty press cuttings related to a variety of activism events trying to combat racism which occurred in Britain, America and Africa.

WONG/10 Personal material 1966-1971

This section contains a small collection of personal photographs and letters.