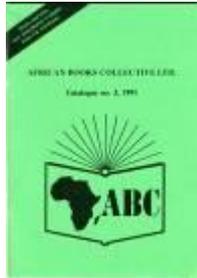


## Publishing

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Ref. Ephemera/370

© African Books Collective



Ref. Ephemera/370

© HANSIB Publications



Ref. DADZIE/3

© Stella Dadzie

## Background

There has been a Black publishing presence in the United Kingdom stretching back to the eighteenth century. However, the variety and popularity of Black publishing and press exploded in the 1960's and 1970's as a direct result of the political and press climate at the time. The media, when reporting on Black and ethnic minorities, often stereotyped these communities as problems particularly focussing on immigration and crime.

Reports on immigration often referred to “floods” of immigrants and were generally reported in terms of a stress on public services. The reporting also focused on the “privileged” status of immigrants at the expense of the white community. It portrayed the white community as victims of anti-racist legislation which put the rights of ethnic minorities above those of the rest of the population.

The reporting of crime was also heavily biased against the Black community. In relation to the uprisings of the 1980's, *The Sun* published an article claiming that the former MP Enoch Powell's predictions had come true and re-printed his “Rivers of Blood” speech, which served to give further publicity to right-wing views. However there was no space given to the underlying causes surrounding the uprisings<sup>1</sup> such as the problems around ‘SUS’ and racially aggravated crimes that were perpetrated against the Black and ethnic minority communities on an almost daily basis.

It has also been argued that positive stories were also only reported when they shared the value and ideals of the newspaper, such as stories around financial success, and when they conform to ideas of what it means to be British.<sup>2</sup> This often underpinned the idea that migrants to Britain need to assimilate into British culture and that being British is a privilege which needs to be earned. Newspapers also ran stories or profiles which served to re-affirm certain stereotypes, such as the sporting prowess of members of the Black community.

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<sup>1</sup> The Press and Black People in Britain, Paul Gordon and David Rosenberg, (Runnymede Trust, 1989) p. 23

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, page 57

# Subject Guide



Black publishing re-dresses these negative stereotypes and stories by promoting positive images and voices. Gaps in the mainstream publishing market are filled, principally the presence of Black voices in literature. This allows for children and adults to see their experiences and way of life reflected affirmatively and as part of a wider British culture. It also provides a counter-balance for all members of British society to learn about Black and ethnic minority communities in a way presented by these communities.

In spite of the high expenses attached to print and distribute, a wealth of community publishing organisations, such as Centreprise, grew up in the 1970's. They focussed on local or regional publishing, with the emphasis on writing by the working class, and a management infrastructure usually based on a not-for-profit status.

These publishers and newspapers have emerged to fulfil and address the needs of the community by producing work which speaks to members of the community itself. Newspapers provide relevant news and information, including international news relating to Africa and the Caribbean. During the 1970's and 1980's many Black newspapers highlighted the problem of racially aggravated crimes and which were occasionally picked up by the mainstream newspapers. Many publishers operated bookshops, which also served as a medium and meeting point for social gatherings and information.

Black publishing also benefits Black business by providing advertising space, and in the case of *Caribbean Times* giving generous discounts and credit tolerance for advertising.<sup>3</sup> Publishing houses can also give Black and ethnic minority journalists the chance to learn journalism skills through apprenticeships; a chance which would not necessarily be otherwise afforded to them.

By providing a forum to re-balance the negative portrayals in the mainstream press, Black newspapers and periodicals highlight the achievements and diversity within the community. It also promotes the richness of Black and ethnic minority culture whilst placing it within wider British culture.

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<sup>3</sup> Caribbean Publishing in Britain: A Tribute to Arif Ali. Asher and Martin Hoyles (Hansib, 2011) p. 132

## Brief overview of some key publishing dates<sup>4</sup>

1958	Claudia Jones launches the West Indian Gazette, a campaigning Black newspaper. Born in Trinidad, Jones came to the UK in 1956, following a period of time in the USA where she became active in the Communist Party.
1965	Britain's youngest and first Black woman publisher, Margaret Busby meets Clive Allison at Cambridge University to form the publishing company, Allison and Busby.
1966	The Caribbean Artists' Movement (CAM) is officially formed, although Caribbean arts had already been established in the UK. The movement grew out of the disaffection of Black artists and intellectuals and who wanted to create art forms not tied to Europe.
1969	Eric and Jessica Huntley establish Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications
1970	Arif Ali starts Hansib Publications. The first book was a 'who's who' of West Indian people.
1971	Around this time <i>Black Voice</i> begins publication. Arif Ali starts publishing the <i>Westindian Digest</i> . <i>Grassroots</i> is published by the Black Liberation Front.
1973	New Beacon Books open a book shop in North London. It remains the one of the foremost bookshops in the United Kingdom selling books written by and about people of African and Asian descent.
1975	Centreprise Publications is established by Glen Thompson but the company ceased publishing in the early 1990s, but still remains as a bookshop.
1976	Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers is formed.
1977	Commonword is started in Manchester.
c. 1980	Peckham Publishing Project based at the Bookplace bookshop captures the lives of West Indian migrants in books such as <i>Captain Blackbeard's Beef Creole</i> .
1981	Arif Ali starts publishing <i>Caribbean Times</i> newspaper.
1982	Bogle- L'ouverture, New Beacon and Race Today Publications work together in setting up the International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books. Bogle- L'ouverture opens a bookshop in West London, which ran for nine years.

<sup>4</sup> Compiled using the Oxford Companion to Black British History, (Oxford University Press, 2007): Publishing

# Subject Guide

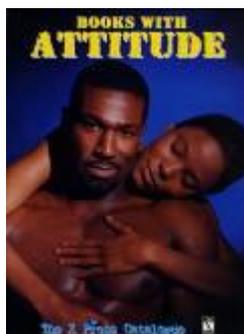


	<p><i>The Voice</i> newspaper is founded in September by Val McCalla.</p>
1983	<p>Arif Ali adds <i>African Times</i> newspaper to his holdings.</p>
1987	<p>Tamarind, a multicultural children's book publisher is established by Verna Annette Wilkins</p>
1991	<p>The Association for the Study of African, Caribbean and Asian Culture History In Britain (now Black and Asian Studies Association) is formed to "<i>encourage research and disseminate information on the history of Black and Asian peoples in Britain.</i>"</p> <p>Xpress Publications is formed by Steve Pope and Dotun Adebayo.</p>
1992	<p>Black Skin Books is established by Vastiana Belfon to publish erotic fiction by women of colour.</p>
1994	<p>ARP is established by Angela Royal.</p>
	<p>Mongrel Press is formed to promote UK Black writing.</p>
1996	<p>The <i>New Nation</i> newspaper is launched.</p>
1998	<p>BlackAmber is launched in 1998 by Rosemarie Hudson.</p>
2003	<p>Becky Clarke set up Ayebia Clarke Literary Agency to publish works by writers of African descent.</p>
2005	<p>The Independent Black Publisher's Association is set up. Its objectives include collaborating on initiatives and planning ways of advancing black publishing.</p>

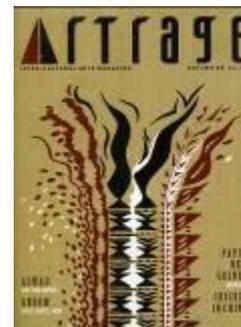
## Collections



Ref. WONG/2/2



Ref. Ephemera/370  
© Xpress Publishing



Ref. Ephemera/370  
© MAAS

### 3.1 Periodicals

BCA holds a large collection of publications and periodicals which feature national and grass roots publications. This series features over 100 periodical titles from BCA's collection and the Runnymede collection.

#### Periodicals

Periodicals of particular interest from BCA's collection are:

**PERIODICALS/1:** *The Voice*

**PERIODICALS/2:** *New Nation*

**PERIODICALS/14:** *Black Voice*

**PERIODICALS/18:** *The Alarm: Awakening our Nation*

**PERIODICALS/36:** *Flamingo*

We also have a large collection of single issues of publications, including some rare and one-off issues. (**Periodicals/124-130**).

#### Runnymede (ref. RC/PERIODICALS)

The Runnymede Periodicals collection also holds a wide range of periodicals which shows the variety of issues and interest within the community, for example *Artrage* (**RC/PERIODICALS/26**), *Dragon's Teeth* (**RC/PERIODICALS/122**) and *Black Eye* (**RC/PERIODICALS/41**).

### 3.2 The Papers of HANSIB (Ref. HANSIB)

Hansib Publications was founded in 1970 by Guyana-born Arif Ali.

In 1971 Hansib launched its first title '*West Indian Digest*' before shortly expanding to produce magazines, newspapers and books for Britain's Caribbean, Asian and African communities. These titles included *Caribbean Times*, *Asian Times*, *African Times*, *Asian Digest*, *Root Magazine* and *West Indian World*. Hansib are noted for launching the careers of Isabel Appio, BBC producer Abiola Awojobi and former Chair of the Labour party Black section, Marc Wadsworth.

In 1997, after twenty-four years of publishing newspapers, Hansib Publications sold its three weekly titles and thereby concluded its interest in newspaper publishing.

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Since the early 1980s, Hansib has published more than two hundred books and specialist titles and is widely acknowledged as being a significant brand in Black publishing in the United Kingdom.

BCA holds incomplete runs of *Caribbean Times*, *African Times* and *Asian Times* (Ref. HANSIB/1) and a number of HANSIB publications.

### 3.3 The Papers of BASA (Ref. BASA)

BASA was established in 1991 as the Association for the Study of African, Caribbean and Asian Culture and History in Britain (ASACACHIB) to encourage research and disseminating information on the history of Black and Asian peoples.

In 1997 it changed its name to the Black and Asian Studies Association (BASA) and is now a membership organisation. It focuses and campaigns on education related issues; particularly on the school curriculum and publishing of books for schools. BASA also undertook a survey of London Libraries policies and their procedures on acquiring Black and Asian book resources.

BASA also holds general research and education related conferences and produces its own newsletter.

In addition to organisational records, BCA holds many of BASA's newsletters (**Ref. BASA/6/1**) along with many of the papers on the work on the curriculum (**Ref. BASA/2**).

### 3.4 Records of Minority Arts Advisory Services (Ref. MAAS)

The Minority Arts Advisory Service came into existence as a result of meetings that were held for a report titled "The Arts Britain Ignores", by Naseem Khan, published in 1976. The main aims of the organisation were to maintain registers of artists, give advice to artists and arts organisations, and publicise activities. MAAS started as a very small operation in 1976, and became an official legal entity in January 1977. It was initially funded by the ACGB, Gulbenkian Foundation and Marks & Spencer. It ceased to operate due to insufficient funding.

In addition to holding copies of *Artrage* (please see 3.1), BCA also holds Annual Reports from 1977-1985 (**Ref. MAAS/2**) and documents relating to the contributions to *Artrage* (**Ref. MAAS/7-10**).

### 3.5 Ephemera Collection (Ref. Ephemera)

BCA holds many leaflets and posters relating to book fairs and Black writers. Particular items of interest may be 'A Press of the Margins: The Black Press in, and out of Britain' by Paul E. Martin (**Ref. Ephemera/112**), catalogues and book release notices (**Ref. Ephemera/370, Ephemera/371 and Ephemera/378**) and posters relating to African book festivals (**Ref. Ephemera/244**)

## Further Reading

- *Black Writers in Britain: 1760-1890*. Paul Edwards, (1995, Edinburgh University Press) **(Ref. 928)**.
- *Caribbean Publishing in Britain: A tribute to Arif Ali*. Asher and Martin Hoyles, (Hansib, 2011).
- *Daily Racism: The press and Black people in Britain*. Paul Gordon and David Rosenberg, (Runnymede Trust, 1989) **(Ref. 11.2 GOR)**.
- *Ethnic Minority Broadcasting: A Research Report*. Muhammad Anwar, (Commission for Racial Equality, 1983) **(Ref. 11.2 ANW)**.
- *Media, Politics and Culture: A Socialist View*. Carl Gardner ed., (Macmillan, 1979) **(Ref. 11.1 GAR)**.
- *Publish and be damned?* Peter Evans, (Runnymede Trust, 1976) **(Ref. 11.2 EVA)**.
- *Racism and the Press in Thatcher's Britain*. Nancy Murray and Chris Searle, (Institute of Race Relations, 1989) **(Ref. 11.2 MUR)**.
- *Racism in Books*. Book Branch's Racism in Books Committee, (NUJ's Race Relations Working Party, 1980) **(11.2 NAT)**.
- *The Black Press in Britain*. Ionie Benjamin, (Trentham Books, 1995) **(Ref. 11.2 BEN)**.
- *The Oxford Companion to Black British History*. David Dabydeen, John Gilmore and Cecily Jones eds, (Oxford University Press, 2007).
- *The Politics of the Media*. John Whale, (Fontana, 1977) **(Ref. 11.1 WHA)**.
- *The Press and Black People in Britain*. Paul Gordon and David Rosenberg, (Runnymede Trust, 1989) **(Ref. 11.2 GOR)**.
- *Towards Press Freedom*. Campaign for Press Freedom, (Hadleigh, 1979) **(11.1 CAM)**.

## Books available elsewhere:

- *Radical Narratives of the Black Atlantic*. Alan Rice, (London: New York, 2003).
- *Write Black, Write British: From post colonial to Black British literature*. Kadija Sesay (Hansib, 2005).

## Other Sources

Black and Asian Studies Association: <http://www.blackandasianstudies.org/>

British Library: [http://explore.bl.uk/primo\\_library/libweb/action/search.do?vid=BLVU1](http://explore.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?vid=BLVU1)

George Padmore Institute (and New Beacon Books): <http://www.georgepadmoreinstitute.org/>

HANSIB: <http://www.hansib-books.com/index.htm>

London Metropolitan Archives: The Papers of Eric and Jessica Huntley, especially papers relating to Bogle- L'ouverture LMA/4462

<http://search.lma.gov.uk/scripts/mwimain.dll/487/2/1/4247?RECORD>

Minority Arts Advisory Service (at Warwick):

<http://dscalm.warwick.ac.uk/Dserve/dserve.exe?dsqIni=Dserve.ini&dsqApp=Archive&dsqDb=Catalog&dsqCmd=NaviTree.tcl&dsqField=RefNo&dsqItem=MAA#HERE>