

Shine Bright LLCE Cycle Terminal

File 8 From isle to isle

UK-Caribbean relations, 1 p. 95

UK signs trade continuity agreement¹ with Caribbean countries

The UK has today signed a trade continuity agreement maintaining current arrangements with countries in the Caribbean soon after Britain leaves the EU. Trade Policy Minister George Hollingbery signed the CARIFORUM-UK Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) today with Ministers and representatives from Barbados, Belize, The Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, The Republic of Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Christopher and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The news has been welcomed by businesses and business groups including the West Indies Rum & Spirits Producers Association (WIRSPA), one of the oldest private sector trade associations in the Caribbean. [...] The UK is an important export market for the Caribbean, and the UK bought 100% of Saint Lucia's banana exports, as well as 69% of Belize's banana exports in 2017. In addition, 81% of Guyanan, and 64% Jamaican sugar cane exports went to the UK.

gov.uk, March 22, 2019

1. treaty

Welcome, Boris – Holness says Ja¹ stands ready to work with new British PM

Prime Minister Andrew Holness has offered congratulations to the new British Prime Minister Boris Johnson. [...] Holness said that Jamaica highly values the United Kingdom as a close and dependable² partner and friend. “Our long-standing³ relations extend across a wide gamut⁴ of areas which remain crucial to both our countries. I assure you of our commitment to continued close collaboration at the bilateral, regional, and multilateral levels,” he added.

jamaica-gleaner.com, July 25, 2019

1. Jamaica 2. *fiable* 3. enduring 4. *gamme*

Depicting the colonial Caribbean p. 96

By depicting an entirely new geographical setting unknown to British audiences, Brunias¹ tapped into the nation's projected fantasies of the 'exotic', while portraying the West Indies as a (largely fictionalised) tropical, harmonious land of abundance and prosperity.

[He] conjured up romanticised visions of an idyllic, exotic, colonial life in the West Indies for his prospective buyers living in or travelling through its islands.

Aesthetically pleasing, yet not without political intent, Brunias' paintings served as a form of propaganda. [He] promoted the West Indies as a 'thriving² colonial economy', a place of opportunity where the generations of deported African peoples were not resisting their enslavement.

Rather than presenting an objective reality – he painted in the tradition of 'vérité ethnographique' (meaning 'ethnographic truth') – his works omitted the violent realities, punishment and discipline of enslaved labour. Instead, Brunias captured diverse and joyous social gatherings³ of slaves, freed people of colour and colonisers, mirroring images of the refinement and respectability found in Europe.

Lydia Figes, *artuk.org*, July 25, 2019

1. a London-based painter (1730-1796) 2. vigorous 3. assemblies

Looking across the sea p. 97

Grandbois, Barbados, late 1830s. Antoinette Cosway, a white Creole woman born in Jamaica, is disillusioned with her recent marriage to Englishman Edward Rochester. Antoinette confides in Christophine, her childhood nurse and lifelong family servant.

“When must I go, where must I go?”

“But look me trouble, a rich white girl like you and more foolish than the rest. A man don’t treat you good, pick up your skirt and walk out. Do it and he come after you.”

“He will not come after me. And you must understand I am not rich now, I have no money of my own at all, everything I had belongs to him.”

“What you tell me there?” she said sharply.

“That is English law.”

“Law! The Mason boy¹ fix it, that boy worse than Satan and he burn in Hell one of these fine nights. Listen to me now and I advise you what to do. Tell your husband you feeling sick, you want to visit your cousin in Martinique. Ask him pretty for some of your own money, the man not bad-hearted, he give it. When you get away, stay away. Ask more. He give again and well satisfy. In the end he come to find out what you do, how you get on without him and if he see you fat and happy he want you back. Men like that. Better not stay in that old house. Go from that house, I tell you.”

“You think I must leave him?”

“You ask me so I answer.”

“Yes,” I said. “After all I could, but why should I go to Martinique? I wish to see England, I might be able to borrow money for that. Not from him but I know how I might get it. I must travel far, if I go.”

I have been too unhappy, I thought, it cannot last, being so unhappy, it would kill you. I will be a different person when I live in England and different things will happen to me ... England, rosy pink in the geography book map, but on the page

opposite the words are closely crowded, heavy looking. Exports, coal, iron, wool. Then Imports and Character of Inhabitants. Names, Essex, Chelmsford on the Chelmer. [...] Cool green leaves in the short cool summer. Summer. There are fields of corn like sugar-cane fields, but gold colour and not so tall. After summer the trees are bare, then winter and snow. White feathers falling? Torn pieces of paper falling? They say frost makes flower patterns on the window panes. I must know more than I know already. For I know that house where I will be cold and not belonging, the bed I shall lie in has red curtains and I have slept there many times before, long ago. How long ago? In that bed I will dream the end of my dream. But my dream has nothing to do with England and I must not think like this. I must remember about chandeliers and dancing, about swans² and roses and snow. And snow. "England," said Christophine, who was watching me. "You think there is such a place?"

Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, 1966

1. Antoinette's stepbrother who arranged the marriage 2. *cygnes*

Going to Britain? p. 98

Originally a series of radio broadcasts, this pamphlet was primarily written by Caribbean men who were already living in London.

The People around You

From the time you start to live in England it is as if a sea of white faces is always around you. Don't forget this is no small island. In London alone there are more than eight million people living. [...]

You are the Stranger

However, your greater problem will be getting along with your white neighbours. One thing you must always keep in mind is that their knowledge of your country is much less than your knowledge of theirs. [...] There are some parts of England where the sight of a coloured man is still an uncommon thing. [...] Children especially can be very curious about your colour. A child may point you out to its mother and exclaim: 'Look at that black man, mummy!'

No Offence Meant¹

Don't take offence at things like these. If in the house where you live, you see one or two of them whispering and pointing to you, it may well be that they are wondering why you wear your hat with the brim² turned up all around, for instance: it doesn't have to mean they are making fun of you. You may be surprised at some of the questions they may ask you, and you might feel that they are insulting you on the sly³, but it is only their ignorance of you and your country. I know a Barbadian who was asked, in all seriousness, if the people in his country lived in houses or if they lived in the jungle, and also, if he had ever worn clothes before he came to England.

Politeness is the Key

The way how people live here, you can be in the same house for years and never share a word with the other tenants⁴. Respect that privacy. [...] They don't stand up on the doorstep gossiping, or form a crowd on the pavement to talk about the latest

ballad. I notice some West Indians still have that habit and I can tell you it isn't one that English people like. What they like is politeness.

Going to Britain?, BBC Caribbean Service, 1959

1. intended 2. bord 3. in secret 4. locataires

A lonely Londoner p. 99

Moses migrated to London from Trinidad 10 years ago. He often meets new arrivals from the Caribbean and helps them when he can with his knowledge of living and working in England.

“Sometimes I look back at all the years I spend in Brit’n” Moses say, “and I surprise that so many years gone by. Looking at things in general, life really hard for the boys in London. This is a lonely miserable city, if it was that we didn’t get together now and then to talk about things back home, we would suffer like hell. Here is not like home where you have friends all about. In the beginning you would think that is a good thing, that nobody minding your business, but after a while you want to get in company, you want to go to somebody house and eat a meal, you want to go on excursion to the sea, you want to go and play football and cricket. Nobody in London does really accept you. They tolerate you, yes, but you can’t go in their house and eat or sit down and talk. It ain’t have no sort of family life for us here. Look at Joseph. He married to a English girl and they have four children, and they living in two rooms in Paddington. He apply to the LCC¹ for a flat, but it look like he would never get one. Now the children big enough to go to school, and what you think? Is big fight everyday because the other children calling him darkie.” [...]

The changing of the seasons, the cold slicing winds, the falling leaves, sunlight on green grass, snow on the land, London particular. Oh what it is and where it is and why it is, no one knows, but to have said: “I walked on Waterloo Bridge,” “I rendezvoused at Charing Cross,” “Piccadilly Circus is my playground,” to say these things, to have lived these things, to have lived in the great city of London, centre of the world. To one day lean against the wind walking up Bayswater Road (destination unknown), to see the leaves swirl and dance and spin on the pavement (sight unseeing), to write a casual letter home beginning: “Last night in Trafalgar Square...” [...]

One night of any night, liming² on the Embankment near to Chelsea, he³ stand on the bank of the river, watching the lights of the buildings reflected in the water,

thinking what he must do, if he should save up money and go back home, if he should try to make it by next year before he change his mind again.

Sam Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners*, 1956

1. London County Council 2. hanging around 3. Moses

The Arrival of Brighteye p. 100

My mommy gone over de ocean
My mommy gone over de sea
she gawn dere to work for some money
and den she gawn sen back for me

one year
two year
tree year gawn
four year
five year
soon six year come

granny seh it don't matter
but supposin I forget her
Blinky, Blinky, one two tree
Blinky, Blinky, remember me

Mommy sen dis dress fah ma seventh birthday. Ah born de day before christmas and she sen de shoes and de hat to match.

Ah wear it dat very christmas Sunday, an wen ah come out into de square, on de way to church wid Granny, all de ole man dem laughing and chanting¹

Brighteye Brighteye
red white an blue
Brighteye Brighteye
yuh pretty fi true

an Granny seh don't walk so boasy², mind ah buk up mi toe and fall down an tear up de dress pon³ rockstone because she going to fold it up an wrap it up back in de crepe paper wid two camphor ball an put it back in de suitcase, dis very evening, as soon as ah tek it aff, put it back in de suitcase dat ah going to carry to Englan.

Jean 'Binta' Breeze, "The Arrival of Brighteye", 2000

1. *scander* 2. boastful, proud 3. upon

On Seeing England for the First Time p. 102-103

This essay gives an account of the personal journey and reflection by Caribbean American writer Jamaica Kincaid when she finally sees England for herself.

When I saw England for the first time, I was a child in school sitting at a desk. The England I was looking at was laid out on a map gently, beautifully, delicately, a very special jewel; it lay on a bed of sky blue – the background of the map – its yellow form mysterious, because though it looked like a leg of mutton, it could not really look like anything so familiar as a leg of mutton because it was England – with shadings of pink and green, unlike any shadings of pink and green I had ever seen before, squiggly veins of red running in every direction. England was a special jewel all right, and only special people got to wear it. The people who got to wear England were English people. They wore it well and they wore it everywhere: in jungles, in deserts, on plains, on the top of the highest mountains, on all the oceans, on all the seas, in places where they were not welcome, in places they should not have been. When my teacher had pinned this map up on the blackboard, she said, 'This is England' - and she said it with authority, seriousness, and adoration, and we all sat up. [...]

And so finally, when I was a grown-up woman, the mother of two children, the wife of someone, [...] finally then, I saw England, the real England, not a picture, not a painting, not through a story in a book, but England, for the first time. In me, the space between the idea of it and its reality had become filled with hatred, and so when at last I saw it I wanted to take it into my hands and tear it into little pieces and then crumble it up as if it were clay, child's clay. That was impossible, and so I could only indulge in not-favorable opinions.

There were monuments everywhere; they commemorated victories, battles fought between them and the people who lived across the sea from them, all vile people, fought over which of them would have dominion over the people who looked like me. The monuments were useless now, people sat on them and ate their lunch. They were like markers on an old useless trail, like a piece of old string tied to a finger to jog the memory, like old decoration in an old house, dirty, useless, in the

way. Their skins were so pale, it made them look so fragile, so weak, so ugly. What if I had the power to simply banish them from their land, send boat after boatload of them on a voyage that in fact had no destination, forced them to live in a place where the sun's presence was a constant? This would rid them of their pale complexion and make them more like me, make them look more like the people I love and treasure and hold dear, more like the people who occupy the near and far reaches of my imagination, my history, my geography, and reduce them to everything they have ever known to figurines as evidence that I was in divine favour, what if all this was in my power? Could I resist? No one ever has.

And they were rude, they were rude to each other. They didn't like each other very much. They didn't like each other in the way they didn't like me, and it occurred to me that their dislike for me was one of the few things they agreed on.

I was on the train in England with a friend, an English woman. Before we were in England she liked me very much. In England she didn't like me at all. She didn't like the claim I said I had on England, she didn't like the views I had of England. I didn't like England, she didn't like England, but didn't like me not liking it too. She said 'I want to show you my England. I want to show the England that I know and love.' I had told her many times before that I knew England and I didn't want to love it anyway. She no longer lived in England; it was her own country, but it had not been kind to her, so she left. On the train, the conductor was rude to her; she asked something, and he responded in a rude way. She became ashamed. She was ashamed at the way he treated her; she was ashamed at the way he behaved. 'This is the new England,' she said.

Jamaica Kincaid, *On Seeing England for the First Time*, 1991