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## Glasgow University 'benefited from slave trade profits'

**GLASGOW UNIVERSITY** has published a report that it received the equivalent of up to **£199 million** in today's money from benefactors who made their fortunes from slavery.

It has launched a programme of "reparative justice" after a year-long study into its connections with slavery revealed bequests made in the 18th and 19th centuries by profiteers of slavery and the slave trade. The programme includes the creation of a centre for the study of slavery and a memorial to victims of slavery. The university's plan follows similar actions by universities in the US.

### Significant financial gifts

The report noted that many of its staff "*adopted a clear anti-slavery position*" during the era of slavery, with activity including petitioning the UK Parliament to abolish slavery and awarding an honorary degree to the emancipationist William Wilberforce. However, it acknowledged that the university received "*significant financial gifts and support from people who derived some, or occasionally much, of their wealth from slavery.*"

### Commitment

The report's authors investigated whether donors made money directly from slavery or less directly, through trading in slave-produced goods such as tobacco, sugar and cotton. Glasgow University Principal Prof Sir Anton Muscatelli said: "*This report has been an important undertaking and commitment to find out if the university benefited from slavery in the past.*"

*"Although the university never owned enslaved people or traded in the goods they produced, it is now clear we received significant financial support from people whose wealth came from slavery. The university deeply regrets this as-*

*sociation with historical slavery which clashes with our proud history of support for the abolition of both the slave trade and slavery itself."*

### Welcome

Professor Sir Hilary Beckles, vice-chancellor of the University of the West Indies, welcomed the report, saying: "*I celebrate colleagues in Glasgow for taking these first steps and keenly anticipate working through next steps*".

Sir Geoff Palmer, professor emeritus at the school of life sciences at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh said: "*Some Scots have told me they're mystified why no one told them any of this, but who did they think made the tobacco? Now, I think the country faces a very uncomfortable question which the Glasgow University report has raised once more: to what extent did slavery make Scotland great?*"

Report thanks to the Morning Star, the Guardian and the BBC

*UWI Vice Chancellor Sir Hilary Beckles sought to make that clear on Tuesday, on the heels of a Jamaica Gleaner newspaper article on Sunday, indicating that the university in the United Kingdom had agreed to make the payments. He said that "while the quoted content of the story is correct, the headline that suggests an agreement to pay 200 million pounds to the UWI is not."*

*"The universities are working through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) built upon the principle of 'reparatory justice,' but there is no 'agreement' about the repayment of 200 million pounds to the UWI," he said.*

# US Invasion of Grenada - 35th Anniversary

**It is thirty-five years since the USA and its allies invaded the Caribbean island of Grenada, a Commonwealth country with a British Governor General, without the knowledge and against the wishes of the British Government.**

Documents recently released under the thirty-year rule show conclusively that the justifications put forward by the United States Government for the invasion of this Caribbean island were false and bring into serious question whether the invasion was legal under international law.

## **Justifications**

The justifications given at the time by the US Government for the invasion were:

1. That the request for intervention had been made by the then Governor General of the island, Sir Paul Scoon,
2. That Grenada was a potential threat to other islands in the region because of the construction of a military airbase, and
3. That there was a threat to US citizens and therefore the invasion was necessary to restore order.

Although it is the case that at some point Sir Paul Scoon signed a note seeking assistance, the released documents show that the note was written AFTER the invasion had taken place, not before it, and it seems clear that it was in fact brought to Sir Paul for signature by the invading forces after the event. In a letter to then Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe the High Commissioner to the West Indies, Giles Bullard, wrote: "This attempt to give the intervention a retrospective legality reflects no credit on those concerned."

## **Airport**

Grenada is a small island and at the time of the invasion it had no air force or navy. The US Government claimed the airport under construction at Point Salines was a military installation which was intended for use by the Government of Cuba. In fact, the airport was wholly a civil installation to facilitate the growth in tourism.

The released documents include a very detailed Press Release from a UK company, named Plessy, who were one of the main contractors employed to construct the airport. In this docu-

ment, Plessy explains at length the facilities required for a military airbase all of which were absent from the one being constructed. Remarkably, after the invasion the airport was completed to the original design.

The released documents show that there was no evidence that foreign nationals, or indeed Grenadians, were in any danger. The UK Deputy High Commissioner met with Sir Paul Scoon who confirmed US citizens were not in any danger but went on to voice concerns about potential loss of life if there was an invasion; during this meeting, he did not make any request for foreign assistance or intervention.

## **Tragedy**

Bullard reported that the Revolutionary Military Council (RMC) were temporarily in control of the island after the tragedy on the fort; they made it clear that they were professional soldiers who had intervened to preserve law and order and had no desire for political power.

The bulk of the US citizens on the island were students at the medical school and they were given regular supplies of food and water. Reference in the document is made to the RMCs intention to form a broad based interim Government and hold elections within a short period of time.

## **Legality in doubt**

CHRG has documentary evidence that the RMC held a meeting with Sir Paul Scoon just before the invasion to discuss setting up such a broad based civilian Government within 14 days, and he offered to speak to some of the individuals who were proposed.

In the circumstances, the legality of the invasion of Grenada under international law is seriously in doubt. CHRG now calls upon the US Government to compensate those who suffered loss as a result of their illegal intervention.

*Press statement from The Committee for Human Rights in Grenada*

## ***Black Tudors: The Untold Story* by Miranda Kaufmann**

*A black porter publicly whips a white Englishman in the hall of a Gloucestershire manor house. A Moroccan woman is baptised in a London church. Henry VIII dispatches a Mauritanian diver to salvage lost treasures from the Mary Rose. From long-forgotten records emerge the remarkable stories of Africans who lived free in Tudor England...*

A review by Raphael Andrews

Some were simple servants like Edward Swarthy, the porter who was ordered to take a stick and beat a Tudor gentleman by his master, who was a Justice of the Peace. And he was also called to give evidence in court about the beating he administered. There was also the silk weaver, Reasonable Blackman and the Trumpeter, John Blanke, in the Royal Court of King Henry VIII. Black people were very much a part of Tudor society in large cities and lived and worked in all levels of society not the mere servants and slaves about whom we often read of in books and the recreations of the period. In fact the play "Othello", written by William Shakespeare, is a more accurate depiction of the Tudor Society, where Africans and black people (Moors) were as valued for their skills as their status.

### **Ethiopian trumpeter**

If you could afford to have or employ a person of colour you were either wealthy or connected to wealth, hence the King Henry VIII and his Ethiopian trumpeter dressed in traditional African clothes. The Tudors wanted to shout out their claims that England was an up and coming European nation and no mere province of France or Rome. Africans worked alongside Englishmen and women, indeed they even married English women, as did the Silk Weaver Reasonable Blackman, who lost his wife and two children to disease.

### **People of colour**

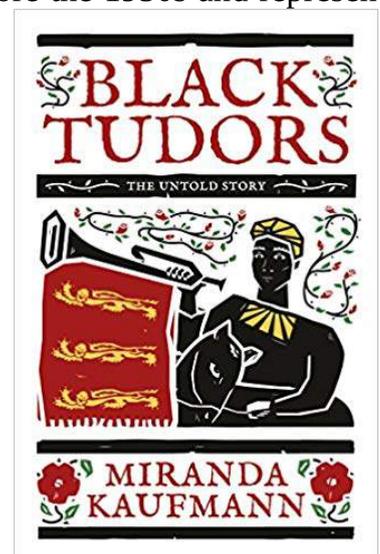
The main point about this book is that in large sea-going towns and cities people of colour would have been a common sight and worked as traders or for high status (royal) people. They would either convert or be baptised into Christianity as religion was more important than race or even status in a society where you could be jailed for wearing the wrong colour clothes. Reds, purple and yellow were colours reserved for the royals and nobility. Anyone who wore

these could be arrested and even jailed if you were not a royal or nobility - a different fashion police to today's Ascot races. Which leads me to Mary Fillis who was born in Morocco but later converted to Christianity after coming to England. The Portuguese, who were trying to enforce a trade monopoly with Morocco, wanted to control the African spice trade with Europe. The Africans wanted to buy more copper and gun powder which the Portuguese did not want to supply to the Africans as they would be aiding a foreign power get stronger in arms. Fillis was part of a group of 135 Africans that were captured with a ship bound from Brazil to Spain in 1590. She found herself in the household of a family called the Barker who raised her as their servant. Fillis not only learned to sew but also to read and write and eventually converted to the Christian faith. Something which was recorded in the records of St. Botolph's Church Aldgate.

### **Evidence**

Records like these leave us a trail of evidence of the part black people played in English and European history that is both significant and important. Here Miranda Kaufmann shows us the footprints and also the significant evidence that African did have a role in Britain going far back before the 1950s and represented Britain taking a place on the world stage of great powers.

So sit back and let Miranda Kaufmann take you on a trip to meet the Black Tudor neighbours you never knew you had in your local history.



At the CLS Meeting on Sunday November 4th, we were honoured by the presence of Her Excellency, Guiselle Morales-Echaverry, Ambassador of the Republic of Nicaragua, who spoke on recent events in her country, including an account of the attempted right-wing coup against the government.

## Nicaragua in the Context of the Failed Coup

She said:

"On April 18th a profound crime was committed against Nicaragua and its people. A progressive Sandinista Government with an effective development model, was targeted by the United States and the radical Nicaraguan opposition because of its success, having garnered national and international recognition, hindering the chances of the right-wing opposition to come to power through the path of constitutional elections. They chose instead the path of violence.

### Rebuilding an Effective State

In 2007, the Government of Nicaragua launched the National Human Development Plan, with the objective of Promoting Economic Growth with Macroeconomic Stability and aimed at targeting specific goals related to employment, poverty reduction, equality, nutrition, access to health and education, citizens security, productivity, investment promotion and trade, among others; stating as a fundamental premise, the need to Recapture the State of Nicaragua as a development actor and not merely an overseer, as it had been during the previous 16 years of neoliberal-right-wing governments.

### Reforms to the Social Security System were just the excuse to launch the Coup

Overthrowing the constitutionally elected Government of Comandante Daniel Ortega has always been the ultimate goal of the perpetrators of the coup. The successful development model, which has been working to the benefit of all sectors of Nicaraguan society, came under attack by the Nicaraguan business sector, as early as December 2017, when they rejected the latest proposals to reduce tax exemptions, exonerations and subsidies, increase minimum wage and reform the social security system, which was and continues to be a requirement to guarantee macroeconomic stability.

As the coup became increasingly violent; public buildings and Sandinista homes and offices, convenience stores and supermarkets were at-

tacked, looted and even burnt. The first person killed in the context of the coup was a 33-year-old Police Officer, whose name was Sub-Inspector Hilton Rafael Manzanares. Over 100 roadblocks were established along the main highways of the country, including the Pan-American Highway, severely damaging the transportation, construction and tourism industries.

### Manipulation and Misinformation - Weaponizing Social Media

The three main opposition newspapers (*Confidencial*, *La Prensa* and *El Nuevo Diario*), which are all heavily funded by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and politically aligned with the right-wing opposition, increased their antigovernment rhetoric and along with the coup-related-social-media-platforms have manipulated and misinformed their national and international partners and audiences, with the purpose of exacerbating antigovernment sentiments, generating chaos and violence.

The manipulation of the number of deaths, false claims of forced disappearances and political prisoners, as well as the staging of mock-attacks during marches and protests, was a common practice during the worst days of the coup, which persisted until July 15th when the last roadblock was removed.

The Government of Nicaragua has defeated the coup by dealing with violence and criminal behavior with justice; and interventionism, with patriotism and overwhelming popular support".



Guiselle Morales-Echaverry with comrades from CLS

# Pollution threatens the Caribbean

The Caribbean coast is being endangered by pollution, development and overuse. The capacity of Caribbean countries to treat sewage has not kept up with the large numbers of tourists. Cruise ships, a major component of the Caribbean's tourism market, are major polluters because they release sewage offshore. Mangrove and coral reef areas have been contaminated by fertiliser from farms, and the reefs have been further degraded by human contact and destructive fishing practices.

## Caribbean Sea under threat

The Caribbean Sea has been listed as one of the areas most seriously damaged by human activity. Pollution from ships, over-fishing and climate change are the three major causes of damage to marine ecosystems in the waters around the region. While subsistence fishing has a limited impact on ocean ecologies, high-impact commercial fishing dumps millions of pounds of unwanted dead fish, birds and mammals back into the ocean. This has threatened many species of turtles, birds, whales, and dolphins with extinction. Shipping traffic is the third largest cause of damage. The fuel gets spilled and there is considerable noise pollution, which has a major affect on the ecosystem.

## Marine pollution

Marine pollution and coastal degradation have become serious development issues in the Caribbean. The Pan American Health Organization estimated that only about 10% of the sewage from the Central American and Caribbean Island countries is properly treated before being released into the Sea.

## Cruise Ship Pollution

Cruise ships generate an astonishing amount of pollution, up to 25,000 gallons of sewage from toilets and 143,000 gallons of sewage from sinks, galleys and showers each day. Currently, lax state and federal laws allow cruise ships to dump untreated sewage from toilets once the ships is three mile from shore. Within three miles, cruise ships can dump sewage from toilets that has been treated, by marine sanitation devices which have been shown to be inad-

quate. In addition, sewage from sinks and showers can be dumped without treatment.

## Plastic Pollution

A huge mass of plastic bottles, cutlery and polystyrene plates has been found floating in the Caribbean. The sea of plastic stretched for miles.

The sea of plastic waste in the Caribbean was photographed by underwater photographer Caroline Power in September last year between the islands Roatan and Cayos Cochinos, off the coast of Honduras.

*"Once the trash is in the ocean, it is incredibly difficult and costly to remove. The key is to stop the trash before it enters the ocean", she said.*

## Regional Initiative

The Regional Expert Workshop on Air Quality and Short-lived Climate Pollutants (21 to 23 March 2018) brought together participants from 12 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean with the goal of strengthening cooperation and promoting the implementation of policies and programs to address pollution.

The workshop provided a platform to discuss key air quality and climate change issues, including the importance of addressing black carbon emissions from the transport and residential energy sectors that negatively impact health, air quality and the climate.

Increased regional collaboration on the improvement of monitoring greenhouse gases and air pollutants, as well atmospheric air quality were outlined as cross-cutting priorities for the region.



# Justice for LGBT

Daily the LGBT community lives with fear and hostility in many Caribbean countries because of a 19th century law, inspired by the 1553 Buggery Act in England. The Law was imposed on all British colonies by the colonial government in Britain in 1861, because they feared that its single expat soldiers and colonial administrators might turn to homosexuality.

Only The Bahamas and Belize, have done away with this archaic law which continues to exist in 10 of the 12 independent Commonwealth Caribbean states.

## Effective response

However, change may be on the way because of the Aids epidemic which disproportionately affects Commonwealth countries; prompting the United Nations, (UN) Eminent Persons Group (EPG) in a 2011 report, to call on Commonwealth Heads of Government to take steps to repeal discriminatory laws that impede the effective response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Added to this the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights- Sept 2018 (IACHR) says it will look into a case challenging Jamaica's anti-buggery law, which has been brought by a gay man living in exile, and a lesbian who was shot multiple times outside her home in 2008 by two men belonging to a homophobic gang, and she was also forced to flee the country.

Of the independent Caribbean nations retaining the anti-buggery law in one form or another Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago are regarded as having some of the harshest legislation, but things may be about to change.

## Caribbean Court of Justice

The Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) in November 2018, ruled that a law in Guyana, which makes it a criminal offence for a man or a woman to appear in a public place while dressed in clothing of the opposite sex for an "improper purpose", is unconstitutional.

The appellants, who identify as transgender persons, were arrested in February 2009 and subsequently convicted and punished under the 1893 Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) Act of

the offence of being a "man" appearing in "female attire" in public for an "improper purpose."

## Guyana

Proceedings were taken to the High Court of Guyana challenging this law on several grounds, including that it is, discriminatory and inconsistent with the Constitution of Guyana. However, both the High Court and the Court of Appeal in Guyana denied the constitutional challenges so the appellants then took their case to the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ).

A majority of the judges of the CCJ upheld the appeal and ordered that Section 153(1)(xlvii) be struck from the laws of Guyana and awarded costs to the appellants.

This judgement followed on the case in Trinidad and Tobago, where a High Court judgement ruled that sections of the existing law, which criminalize buggery between consenting adults, "are unconstitutional and should be struck down".

## Human Rights Obligations

Caribbean Labour Solidarity view with alarm the continued and systematic attacks on the LGBT communities by religious fundamentalists and others in the region. We demand that political leaders in the region honor their human rights obligations by bringing to an end these archaic laws and provide safety and protection for LGBT community.

If you would like to support action to bring about change for LGBT in the Caribbean, please contact us at [www.cls-uk.org.uk](http://www.cls-uk.org.uk)



*CLS on the London Gay Pride March*