

## Lord Herman Ouseley



When Queen Elizabeth 1st pronounced, at the end of the 16th century, that there were too many "Blackamoors" on the shores of England and that they should be removed, she was reflecting the mood that still prevails today, despite the social, economic, and cultural contributions made by Black people over the centuries.

The many people from the Caribbean who arrived enthusiastically to England in 1948 were motivated to work and help Britain's rebuilding following the second world war. Many of those who travelled on the SS Windrush had previously served in the armed services during the war and looked forward to coming back to the "mother country". On arrival, they found hostility in a country that had no anti-discrimination laws, were denied access to public housing, and faced blatantly racist signs everywhere stating, "no blacks, no coloureds and no dogs"! The new arrivals faced up to the struggles ahead and engaged energetically in tearing down the barriers of race hate as they fought to achieve a better society in which everyone, whatever their background or circumstances, should be treated equally and fairly and be able to go about their lives without the fear of discrimination, harassment, and violence.

Among the early settlers of the Windrush Generation were young Black women and men who demonstrated leadership in campaigning for equal access, representing their communities, setting up community-based projects and providing advocacy to those who were being harassed by the police and extreme racist groups. Those leaders and the Windrush generation deserve the thanks and respect for being in the struggle that helped to make Britain a better place now than it was in 1948. There is still more to be done as exemplified by the disgraceful policy recently created by the government and known as "the Hostile Environment". This has led to families who have been legally settled in Britain since the 1950s, and who have worked, paid their taxes, and contributed to the country being determined as "illegally resident" and ending up being deported, losing their jobs, income, and homes.

In 2023, the struggles are still with us, and we salute the Windrush Generation and all those who provided us with their shoulders so that we can stand tall, be proud of who we are and to be respected for our valuable contributions as citizens of the UK and, indeed, the world!

*Herman George Ouseley, Baron Ouseley Kt is a British parliamentarian, who has run public authorities, including local councils and is an adviser and reviewer of public services organisations. Lord Ouseley has expertise in equality and diversity issues and has been at the forefront of challenging institutional racism in organisations and is an advocate on behalf of individuals from disadvantaged and deprived backgrounds. He sat in the House of Lords as a crossbencher from 2001 until his retirement in 2019. He was also included in the 2003 list of "100 Great Black Britons". , He's the founder of Kick it Out, and former Chair and CEO for the Commission for Racial Equality from 1993 to 2000.*