

Foreword

I am a cisgender woman and able-bodied history student at the University of Waterloo. Born in Canada, I am the first in my Vietnamese immigrant family to receive post-secondary education. Initially having earned a degree in chemistry from McMaster University, I felt that my curiosity about the world and my place in it had not yet been satisfied. My studies in the humanities focus on the intersection of marginalized groups and the law. This article is not an attempt to tell anyone else's story by validation through a Eurocentric academic model, nor is it to speak on behalf of Black communities. Rather, its purpose is to educate myself on the historical processes of colonialism from which I am not exempt.

Migration is entrenched in colonialism and Black history. In *The Devil You Know*, Charles Blow (2021), a columnist for the New York Times, discusses the exodus of Black people from the American South. The movement is preponderantly one of single men and, just as the Middle Passage drained Africa of its young, stunted its growth, and reshaped its culture, the South became a world shaped by vacancy. Black people fled and continue to flee the racist South for liberal cities of the North and West in what Blow calls the “Great Migration” (Blow, 2021, “One: The Past as Prologue,” para. 7). He equates the South to an old man. There, racism hasn’t vanished but it has come to terms with itself and its history. In the North, particularly in destination cities, racism is a teenage boy, acting out as the old man did years ago. White people, particularly white millennials are having their own “Great Migration” as they flood out of small towns and into big cities, reversing decades of white flight and creating housing pressure and higher prices, as well as displacing established residents by gentrifying areas long inhabited by Black and brown people.

Rather than contributing to the downward pressure on wages and the scarcity of suitable housing, Blow proposes that the young and restless move out of the packed powder kegs in the North and back to the American South. Blow, inspired by James F. Blumstein’s and James Phelan’s 1971 paper entitled “Jamestown Seventy,” published in the *Yale Review of Law and Social Action*, advocates for “the migration of large numbers of people to a single state for the express purpose of effecting the peaceful political take-over of that state through the elective process” (Blow, 2021, p. 29). Apparently, only two groups show strong liberal tendencies: adults with postgraduate education and Blacks. But Black people, in general, have been Democrats by necessity,

not by nature (Blow, 2021, “Two: The Proposition”). What Blow means is that the values of the Democratic Party appeal to many Black voters, but that does not mean that all Black voters are liberal. Vermont is one of eight states that are over 90 percent white and control one out of every six senate seats in America (Blow, 2021, “Two: The Proposition,” para. 10). Between 1965 and 1975, 100,000 young white liberals moved en masse to Vermont and elected more progressive politicians, resulting in the state ranking among the most liberal states (Blow, 2021, “Two: The Proposition,” para. 27). Using this as a precedent, Blow suggests that Black people could colonize and control the Southern states, which they would have controlled if they had not fled them.

Stories of the South conveniently omit Black administrative success, while profit off of Black talent in the country rarely makes its way into Black communities. Black athletic talent draws billions of dollars of revenue to overwhelmingly white schools and media groups but historically, Black colleges and universities receive little of the benefit from these Black athletes’ talents. Blow provides hip-hop/R&B as another example of a creation and expression of Black culture that influences music, fashion, and style around the globe. Yet, because money and talent do not remain within Black communities and does not revolve internally between Black people and Black businesses, Black communities cannot and do not benefit. Bringing athletic and other talent back to Black colleges and communities would therefore have potent downstream economic effects, according to Blow.

However, if revolution doesn’t extend beyond household self-sufficiency and reach into the power structures that govern, then “revolutionaries” are as part of this system as any white person gentrifying the cities. Blow believes that the constitutional

seizure of power is central to Black liberation in America. But reaching into the power structures that govern would only enable Blacks and other marginalized groups to carve out a sphere of independence within a colonial framework. It is not an act of decolonization itself: they would still be a part of the very system that oppresses since white supremacy is a governing structure, not just a belief. According to Blow, Southern cities like Atlanta and New Orleans have majority-Black police forces but still, policing is congenitally hostile to Black people, regardless of who wears the uniform.

One of the major migrations of African Americans occurred after the American Revolutionary War. The British offered freedom to enslaved Africans in America who joined the British side during the war and eventually ten percent of the Loyalists who came to the Maritimes were Black (Government of Canada, 2021). Nova Scotia, therefore, has historical significance in Black Canadian history. Black Loyalists arrived in Canada with a promise of land and an escape from enslavement and racism, but no sooner than they arrived, many quickly came to the realization that Nova Scotia was not the Promised Land. A number left to search for a better life elsewhere, but whether it be across the Atlantic or in other parts of Canada, Black settlements continue to struggle into the present day within the very same colonial power structure that governs the States. So what would Blow's proposition look like if it were to be applied to Canada? What if Black Canadians were to return to Nova Scotia with the intent of a peaceful political takeover of the province much like Blow's proposal for African Americans to seize constitutional power in the South?

This article seeks to fulfil three purposes. The first is to examine the plausibility of Blow's proposal to seize constitutional power by using Black settlements, with a focus

on Sierra Leone and Africville, as case studies. When Black Loyalists from Nova Scotia settled with the Sierra Leone Company in the late 18th century, it was as British agents of colonization rather than returning descendants of Africa. Nearly two centuries later, the Black settlement of Africville near Halifax, Nova Scotia was systematically turned into a slum and then razed under the guise of desegregation. The second purpose is to emphasize the importance of considering land distribution, economy and employment, education, and relations with indigenous inhabitants when planning and building settlements by applying Garveyism and other critical thought to the case studies. And lastly, this article will argue that seizing constitutional power in a peaceful political takeover is not an act of decolonization but rather an attempt to carve out a sphere of independence within a colonial framework as agents of colonization.

Sierra Leone

After the American Revolution, Nova Scotia offered refuge to four thousand free Blacks including Black Loyalists from New York and the three thousand listed in the Book of Negroes (Gilbert, 2012, p. 240). Black loyalists were considered an insignificant group of ex-slaves by the ruling class and were therefore overlooked for estates and high positions. Without these, they were unable to demand for themselves the immediate attention of Nova Scotia's officials (Walker, 2017, p. 21). Land had long been the Black Loyalists' desired object because it was a symbol of independence and security and it was the major motive for both immigration to and emigration from Nova Scotia. Port Roseway in Nova Scotia was an advantageous location for shipping and fisheries and

the white settlement was named Shelburne (Walker, 2017, p. 22). But the surrounding countryside with its swamps and forests was unsuitable for agriculture and on the northwestern outskirts of Shelburne was the designated Black settlement named Birchtown.

Birchtown, Brindley Town, and Little Tracadie were the only all-Black settlements in Loyalist Nova Scotia and the only grants of land made directly to Black people (Walker, 2017, p. 28). A special board was established in Shelburne to process applications for land and there was an attempt by a surveyor to include Birchtown in the grants to whites. White loyalists were settled within two years by the board but Birchtown only had some small town lots while farmland remained beneath “deep swamps” and “impenetrable woods” (Walker, 2017, p. 22). White Loyalists had suffered delays, were assigned poor land, or had no land at all, but Black loyalists suffered even less favourable conditions. They faced discrimination on top of it all and it was clear that they were not equal citizens after all. Many were encouraged to complete their escape from enslavement and achieve independence on their own rather than look to the governor and so in 1791, 151 men applied for passage to Sierra Leone (Walker, 2017, p. 24).

The Sierra Leone Company was a British philanthropic and commercial organization. Its philanthropic goals included abolition the creation of a colony of free Blacks in West Africa, but it was a corporate body with commercial interests by nature. The establishment in Africa of Black freemen became the Sierra Leone Company’s instrument toward three goals: abolition, commerce, and civilization (Walker, 2017, pp. 102, 155). The first was abolition of the slave trade in Africa. By substituting the

illegitimate slave trade with legitimate trade would draw the African people into other forms of trade as an alternative source of African profit for Europeans since Africans as customers created more profit than Africans as commodity. The Company was therefore an instrument to encourage the development of a flourishing trade between England and West Africa. Commerce would furthermore introduce to Africa the perceived 'higher' form of European standards and racialized ideals of whiteness under the guise of civilization, and thereby make the continent more receptive to Christianity. This would have the added benefit of assuaging white guilt and seemingly make amends to Africa for all the evil perpetrated by European slave traders. The proposal was to form a colony for freed slaves in Sierra Leone by purchasing land in Africa for former slaves. The colonization program memorandum detailed the form of government the settlement should follow (Walker, 2017, p. 97), however, a government commission to explore the possibilities of the African coast for use as a convict settlement after the American Revolution (which deprived Britain of a convenient dumping ground for unwanted citizens) led to the rejection of West Africa as a new home for British miscreants because of hostility from indigenous African groups such as the Temme (Walker, 2017, p. 104). So Sierra Leone was deemed not safe enough to be a convict colony, but it made a fine choice for a Black Loyalist colony.

In the late 18th century, Nova Scotia's economy had crashed and often the only available land was not arable (Gilbert, 2012, p. 241). Afflicted by misery, landlessness, racism, and violence, 1193 Blacks migrated to Sierra Leone on January 15, 1792 aboard 15 ships, but not without meeting violent opposition from white landowners who profited off cheap Black labour (Gilbert, 2012, pp. 241, 253, 255). Nova Scotians in

Sierra Leone had been promised equality with whites, the right to participate in their own government, and to be appointed as magistrates. But without a democratic election process, only whites were placed in official positions (Walker, 2017, p. 167). In 1792, settlers attempted to establish a representative system to express the settlers' wishes to the Company and so it was suggested by the chief surveyor, Richard Dawes, that every 10 Nova Scotian households should annually elect a *tythingman* and every 10 *tythingmen* should choose one *hundredor* whose duties would be to "keep the peace and decide causes of less importance" (Walker, 2017, p. 168). Dawes did not intend for the individuals elected to assume any degree of authority; instead they were little more than an elaboration on Company constables because their chief concern was the enforcement of company rules and to relieve the pressure on the Company courts by hearing petty cases. The Nova Scotian Loyalists had been conditioned to accepting orders and abdicating responsibility to an overseer, and the settlement in Sierra Leone amounted to a slave parallel with the Company as the new overseer.

Land had long been the Black Loyalists' desired object because it was a symbol of independence and security. Land is not only a source of livelihood but also a source of rent which can be accumulated into wealth, it can operate as collateral in capital lending, and it can be passed on through generations. The promise of land, which took on the meaning of a "Promised Land", had been the major motive for emigration from Nova Scotia. However, in Sierra Leone, there had been insufficient contiguous land for all the settlers, a thick undergrowth which prevented clearing, delays caused by rains and the illness of the surveyor, and interference from indigenous inhabitants further in from the shore, which prevented any farms from being laid out during the first season in

Africa (Walker, 2017, p. 151). The delay in assigning the farms and the size and condition of the plots when they were finally assigned made it impossible for the Nova Scotians to sustain themselves by agriculture in Sierra Leone. To earn wages, they had to work for the Company where they weren't paid in wages, but rather they were paid in the form of credit at the Company store (Walker, 2017, p. 153). Wages and prices set by the Company left them with less freedom than they had enjoyed back in Nova Scotia where at least there was an opportunity to bargain for their labour.

Nova Scotians in Sierra Leone were victims of a 'slave parallel' established by the Company. In addition to wages and prices being set by the Company, the kind of work they were required to perform was, in their opinion, suited for slaves and not for freemen (Walker, 2017, p. 154). Any regulations and requirements placed on them were regarded as restrictions on their freedom, aspects of a slave-like condition and suggestive of enslavement. However, despite the 'slave parallel' they themselves were also essentially acting agents of colonization. The Sierra Leone colonists failed to behave as tenants which led to future disputes with the local Africans who, despite the purchase agreement, continued to regard the land as their own (Walker, 2017, p. 99). The lesson here is that land is more than just a deed. There are countless facets that tie people to their land and give it significance. To the Nova Scotians, land was key to independence and security, but to the indigenous Africans, the land was not theirs to buy or take, a sentiment that was echoed and resonated with indigenous North Americans. The company could not civilize Africa or end the slave trade in isolation from the African people: external forces must work with the indigenous peoples to maximize self determination and minimize colonization. Langley (1969) argued that "the salvation

of the Africans in the world cannot but be most materially assisted by the Africans in America but must be controlled and directed from African Africa and thoroughly African Africans.” African Americans were Americans first and so political leadership of Africa must come from within Africa.

The Nova Scotians came to believe that without Company restrictions, they could realize their goal of complete independence by attempting to insert themselves within the framework of company control. They attacked the most immediate and frustrating economic issues (high prices and low wages) and demanded to share in the Company’s power (Walker, 2017, p. 177). Some settlers like Robert Keeling left the colony to live among friendly Africans where they farmed land freely, but the majority remained in the colony where they “attempted to develop a sphere of independence within the overall framework of company control” (Walker, 2017, p. 184). In 1794, the company explicitly rejected the settlers’ claim for greater participation in control of the colony (Walker, 2017, p. 190), but events and circumstances created a situation in which the Black population was enabled to carve out a sphere of independence of considerable significance. The first was that the Company was unable and disinclined to supervise every intimate aspect of settler life, and the second was that the settlers made a positive decision to recognize the company’s jurisdiction in constitutional matters, provided it did not conflict with their social and religious integrity as a separate people. The cost of independence was, ironically, to accept a greater authority.

In 1795, Governor Macaulay made it his policy not to hire a European for any work that could be performed as effectively by a Nova Scotian. In order to ensure that they would be qualified, he instituted a program of apprenticing young settlers to white

artisans such as apothecaries, surgeons, and shipwrights, with the expressed intentions that, when trained, they should take over those positions from the whites (Walker, 2017, p. 191). When Blacks occupied more senior positions, the racial divisions were lessened, and a core group of educated and influential Nova Scotians was created. The discovery of wild coffee beans and prospect of a cash crop tempted more Nova Scotians onto settler farms than subsistence agriculture (Walker, 2017, p. 193), but agriculture was an unsatisfactory vehicle for economic independence. Many displayed prejudice against agricultural labour because it was reminiscent of plantation enslavement and because it was less profitable than the commercial pursuits of the European elite who traded with surrounding indigenous nations. Farms were increasingly abandoned in favour of trade which offered prestige, profit, and adventure, so the independence expected from land was actually found in trade.

Marcus Garvey's economic policies in the 20th century reflect upon this same idea that commercial transactions run for and by Africans in a separate economy would result in empowerment. Garveyism, the pan-African movement that would later influence the growth of race consciousness and nationalist thought and politics in Africa, did not have permanent influence but was regarded as "facilitating and giving us more and brighter prospects as Africans in our commercial transactions" (Langley, 1969, p. 157). The economic aspects of Garveyism and the idea of establishing businesses owned and controlled by Africans was an echo of both past and future economic independence found in the case of Sierra Leone and what Blow hopes will be found in Black communities in the U.S. Kobina Sekyi, Gold Coast philosopher and lawyer had a bourgeois nationalist view of the idea of Negro emigration to Africa, arguing that the

most they can allow is to “open a way for the influx of the money of the capitalists of our own race in American and the West Indies” in order to compete with England’s legalized monopoly of trade (Langley, 1969, p. 168). He recognized that trade and economic independence is necessary to maintain political independence, but control of Africa must come from within Africa, not outside. Americans should have sought to Africanize America instead of Americanizing Africa. In other words, to remain truly sovereign, they should supplement African democracy with European knowledge rather than dominate Africa with European politics.

With this newly found sphere of economic independence, there was a retrenchment of social distinctions brought from North America. There were African servants in affluent settler homes and with their strange dress, non-Christian religion and unintelligible speech, the Africans were regarded by the Nova Scotians as an inferior civilization. Like the Europeans, the Nova Scotians accepted themselves as the elite in their relationship with the indigenous Africans. They had created almost identical doctrines, styles, and organizations. They taught Africans in school, preached to them, and punished them. In their own eyes, Nova Scotians were convinced they stood apart from other Blacks as much as they did from whites and considered themselves as Sierra Leone’s Black aristocracy. Europeans, however, declined to regard it as an independent culture at all. They were considered lazy and degenerate (Walker, 2017, p. 307) because of their almost universal neglect of agriculture, an industry in which the Europeans thought of as the only form of “honest labour” appropriate for Black settlers. The Europeans believed that the settlers’ behaviour, manners, and attitudes were a parody of white society and regarded them as imitators rather than equals. Still, the

Europeans stood to benefit from the lack of solidarity between the Nova Scotians and indigenous Africans. Sekyi argued: “any manifestation of solidarity between Africans and other Negroes was generally regarded with great suspicion by the white man” (Langley, 1969, pp. 164-165). It was better for the Europeans if the Nova Scotians thought of themselves more like the Europeans than the indigenous Africans because they were crucial to spreading the Company’s goals of commerce and civilization. The Nova Scotians were used by the Company to Europeanize Africa, but if they aligned themselves numerically and socially with the indigenous Africans, then instead the threat would be the reverse: the Africanization of the Nova Scotians.

By 1825, Nova Scotians in Sierra Leone were united, conscious of their identity, and lived according to a pattern that served as a model to other Blacks in the colony (Walker, 2017, p. 321). The Nova Scotian way of life was a reflection of white society as a result of what had happened to them during the preceding generation in 1795, but favourable though their situation was, the Nova Scotians had not deliberately chosen it. To exact significant change and influence as a new settlement would take more than thirty years today, perhaps hundreds before we can see the emergence of political change in a province like Nova Scotia, and even then change will only be to the extent that is influenced by a continuing adaptation to the environment. Nova Scotian society in Sierra Leone was an intermediate alternative between the European and the indigenous African, but their organization was colonialist. Nova Scotians had attempted to exert a political influence, mobilizing Black public opinion against what they considered to be arbitrary acts of racial discrimination (Walker, 2017, p. 338) and despite their numerical position, they could arouse public dissatisfaction. But whether this can be considered a

political victory is up for debate because they could only take what was given by the Company that governed.

By the 50th year in Sierra Leone, the Nova Scotian community had been displaced economically and politically. Most of the remaining Nova Scotians and their descendants were poor and they clung desperately to the way of life they could no longer afford (Walker, 2017, p. 343). Their social position relative to indigenous Africans was in danger and starting in 1850, the Nova Scotians began to be displaced from Freetown which became increasingly in the possession of Liberated Africans. Many Nova Scotians lost their homes due to the inability to pay “quit-rents” (a medieval invention whereby a peasant proprietor was quit of any other obligation to his lord by paying an annual fee) and taxes (Walker, 2017, p. 350), and the Liberated Africans, removed from their own traditional culture, rapidly accepted many aspects of the Nova Scotian lifestyle and soon became indistinguishable from its originators (Walker, 2017, p. 361). The Liberated Africans sought to purchase Nova Scotian homes and even when they built their own, they copied Nova Scotian architectural styles. The colonization of Africa using Black Loyalists was thus somewhat successful. Even though as a separate group, the Nova Scotians would eventually cease to have any meaningful existence having been superficially conquered and replaced by Liberated Africans, they themselves were the ‘conquerors’ because the succeeding Creole society half a century later would have been easily recognizable to a Nova Scotian (Walker, 2017, p. 375). Creoledom was characterized by religious observances, drumming and dancing, the love of fine clothes and houses, material ambition, desire for education, exclusiveness, jealousy of freedom, imperial loyalty, missionary enterprise, and the urge to share in

government power (Walker, 2017, p. 375). And Creole society, which was a preservation of Nova Scotian society, was later fused into a larger British African society where they incorporated the Nova Scotian settlers' criteria of Black colonial elites.

Africville

Africville's story began back in Nova Scotia proper around the time of the Nova Scotian community's end in Sierra Leone. If Sierra Leone was a story of using Black Loyalists as agents of colonization in the name of philanthropy, Africville was a systematic destruction of a Black community under the guise of desegregation. The original Africville settlers were former residents of the refugee settlements at Preston and Hammonds Plains who moved to Africville in order to escape the economic hardships encountered on rocky and barren land (Clairmont & Magill, 1974, p. 32). The Halifax area was convenient for fishing and for wage labour and the establishment of a steamship line for mail service in 1839 created an economic boom that accounted for part of the migration to Africville (Clairmont & Magill, 1974, p. 33). Blacks in Nova Scotia have been poorer than the average white Nova Scotian who, in turn, over the past hundred years have been poorer than the average Canadian (Clairmont & Magill, 1974, p. 25). Throughout their settlement in Nova Scotia, Blacks have faced prejudice, discrimination, and oppression.

Nova Scotian Blacks became marginal people in a relatively depressed region, clustered in isolated rural areas on the fringes of white towns with inferior housing and lacking public services (Clairmont & Magill, 1974, p. 25). French historian and

philosopher Michel Foucault addressed the link between spatial segregation and “subjected” bodies: discipline produces subjects that can be governed and specific spaces where the confinement and discipline of groups are accomplished include the prison, the school, and the asylum (Nelson, 2008, p. 33). In the case of Africville, racism served to justify the spatial segregation and then the eradication of populations that are seen to impede the survival and development of the rest. Segregation can also trace its roots back to colonialism. In colonial spaces, cartography was the measure between human and non-human, civilized and savage: the solid lines that cartography drew between people and land also reinforced the lines drawn between European white subjects and “others” (Nelson, 2008, p. 34). Much like “Africville”, the term “Chinatown” has been reclaimed by their occupants but was originally a racial marker attributed from *outside* of the communities to signify their essential difference (Nelson, 2008, p. 43). In more recent times, Vancouver’s Chinatown became an identifiable area for prostitution, drug abuse, and other illegal activity (Nelson, 2008, p. 47).

As in the case of Sierra Leone, the issue of land also rears its head in Africville’s history. It is difficult to unravel property claims in Africville due to the informal conveyance of property, patterns of inheritance, extensive kinship ties, profound changes in land use, unrecorded original purchases, and the occasional squatting that occurred (Clairmont & Magill, 1974, p. 35). Because of the convoluted and ambiguous property claims, Africville gained the public image as a community of transients and squatters and became socially differentiated as a slum. Africville was predominantly a small Black community, most of whose population was interrelated through kinship ties and possessed an exceptional sense of historical continuity, but through poverty and

racism its people had virtually been fated for the eventual Relocation. Africville's establishment and eradication is about white people's self-proclaimed right to land that was not theirs (Nelson, 2008, p. 28). Africville residents were oppressed by poverty and neglect. Although other areas of Halifax were provided with facilities and standard public services, Africville lacked water, sewerage, fire protection, recreational facilities, police protection, and in the years immediately preceding the Relocation, a number of Africville people who should have received welfare assistance were not given it (Clairmont & Magill, 1974, p. 49). The encroachment of Africville had already begun by 1901 when the city had forced five families to move to make way for more railroad tracks which had been built through the centre of Africville, forcing residents to cross them to visit neighbours or attend school (Nelson, 2008, p. 81).

Worsening economic conditions and continuing city neglect was strategic. Africville was seen as a wonderful place to go when drunk because there was no law enforcement (Clairmont & Magill, 1974, p. 122). The city's constant threats to relocate the community deterred people from investing in the construction and upkeep of their homes. This further stigmatized the community because quality of housing was the most visually concrete and public indicator of Africville's slum condition. Some Africville residents could not even obtain car insurance because they "lived in an undesirable area" (Clairmont & Magill, 1974, p. 128). In the mid 1950s, the city council moved the open city dump to the Africville area and although Africville residents did not ask for the dump be relocated on their doorstep, the survival oriented behaviour of some residents who scavenged and salvaged was ironically reinterpreted as being the *raison d'être* of the community itself. A local newspaper wrote in 1961: "If the city dump was eliminated

or policed more efficiently, part of the desire of some of the people living at Africville to stay there would be eliminated as a number of them make their living by scavenging on the dump” (Clairmont & Magill, 1974, p. 118). Unbelievably, this painted an exaggerated picture of Africville residents as profiteers of the dump and encroachers of the area rather than inhabitants.

The marginality of Africville residents was shaped by the negative exchange system with the outside world and reinforced by the social processes through which they made out economically and educationally (Clairmont & Magill, 1974, p. 90). Marxist thinker Henri Lefebvre suggests that communities occupying marginal space have a potentially clear vantage point on the dominant society’s motives and actions (Nelson, 2008, p. 31). While the margin is often thought of as a site to which socially underprivileged groups are relegated, the margin can be repositioned as a potentially empowering locale from which groups and individuals are able to enact resistance. However, the historical processes of external encroachment and of internal deprivation resulted in stigmatization of Africville’s residents. Many of the Africville residents who were relatively high achievers, especially the young single adults and those possessing special work skills, began to move out of Africville in the decades immediately before the Relocation. They moved to large urban centres such as Montreal, Toronto, and Winnipeg in search of a new and better life, and to obtain the benefit of urban facilities and escape the stigma of living in Africville.

Marcus Garvey (1926) emphasized the importance of education and its role as a carrier for social mobility. “In your homes and everywhere possible you must teach the higher development of science to your children; and be sure to develop a race of

scientists par excellence, for in science and religion lies our only hope to withstand the evil designs of modern materialism.” Fanon (2008, p. 199) would agree that intellectual alienation is a creation of bourgeois society. “The Black [sic] man wants to be like the white man. For the Black [sic] man, there is but one destiny. And it is white. A long time ago the Black [sic] man acknowledged the undeniable superiority of the white man, and all his endeavors aim at achieving a white existence” (Fanon, 2008, p. 202). Migration data shows that slightly better educated children would have left the community upon or shortly after leaving school (Clairmont & Magill, 1974, p. 107), a trend similar to what Blow (2017) described as being part of the “Great Migration”. Garvey (1926) said that Black people “must elevate to positions of fame and honor Black [sic] men and women who have made their distinct contributions to our racial history.” This required leaving Africville as much as the American South.

Africville was a social problem because the city, by discrimination, neglect, and refusal to provide Africville with standard services, was actively allowing this kind of condition to exist. Due to systemic poverty caused by the policies and practices of local governments, Africville appeared and eventually became unsafe, unclean, and associated with disease, moral deficiency, and crime (Nelson, 2008, p. 41). Africville was treated as a repository for the wastes of the dominant society. However, rather than providing Africville with standard public facilities and services, the city sought to relocate Africville residents from the poor living conditions in which it helped to create under the liberal-welfare rhetoric that it was in the best interests of the people. The rhetoric was rooted in liberal ideology (to end segregation and provide improved opportunities for the disadvantaged) and welfare planning (to coordinate employment, educational, and

rehabilitative programs with the rehousing of residents) (Clairmont & Magill, 1974, p. 155). Desegregation, presented as a positive liberal aim, actually camouflaged the common rhetoric of Black degeneracy with its abolition contingent upon white example and rescue (Nelson, 2008, p. 103). In other words, Africville was in the way of industrial development but its relocation was explained with the excuse of improving upon the degenerate living conditions of Black people in Black settlements by desegregation and integration into white society. It was considered a program of social change that was being carried out with good intentions in the interests of the people, but this public definition of the situation omitted the city's real estate pressures to clear the community within a specified period of time (Clairmont & Magill, 1974, p. 190).

Many Africville residents found themselves in a bureaucratic maze; a world of expertise and power in which they had little to no experience. Black residents had virtually no financial assets, leadership, or community infrastructure resources, placing them in a weak bargaining position with city officials who could draw upon legal, financial, and technical knowledge resources (Clairmont & Magill, 1974, p. 136). Outside experts accepted the erroneous assumptions that Africville was a community of transients and squatters. The Africville relocation appeared progressive mainly because of the establishment of the Halifax Human Rights Advisory Committee and its involvement in the relocation decision making (Clairmont & Magill, 1974, p. 173), but there was little meaningful participation by Africville members of the committee. It was a "citizens-at-large" committee rather than an indigenous Africville organization, and so there was no authoritative Africville voice and no clear-cut mandate on behalf of Africville residents in the HHRAC (Clairmont & Magill, 1974, pp. 182-183). In the

decades leading up to Africville's destruction, various negotiations between the city and industries took place over the use of its land, none of which involved discussion with residents themselves (Nelson, 2008, p. 82). The Committee consulted Albert Rose from the University of Toronto as an expert housing consultant in 1963 (Nelson, 2008, p. 87). Rose told Clairmont and Magill that he had spent no more than two hours in Africville before describing it as "the worst urban appendage [he] had ever seen" and a "bottomless pit" in which resources investment would be wasted (Clairmont & Magill, 1971).

Africville residents were forcefully relocated over a period of two years and 9 months (Clairmont & Magill, 1974, p. 167). A chief strategy used by city officials was visible demolition: after a resident moved, his or her dwelling was immediately demolished by a bulldozer or burned by the city fire department (Clairmont & Magill, 1974, p. 192). The demolition resulted in the elimination of nearby wells and psychologically affected the remaining residents who had to watch as their community was slowly demolished. Since commercial movers were reluctant to provide the service, one resident said the city people sent a garbage truck to move her furniture which humiliated her (Clairmont & Magill, 1974, p. 195). But according to Halifax mayor John E. Lloyd in 1962, "If people in the southern U.S. treated Negroes as well as we do in Halifax, they would have no racial problem. And you can quote me on that" (Nelson, 2008, p. 79). Attitudes like Lloyd's dismiss the existing racial problems and audaciously suggest that: 1) Negroes should be thankful for what they have because it could be worse, and 2) that this is the best they can and should hope for. David Lewis Stein

(1962), assistant editor at *Maclean's Magazine*, stated that this kind of attitude is what "[freezes] most Negroes into their slum streets and their unskilled jobs."

Africville's destruction must be understood at the juncture where the history of slum establishment and management meets that of urban cleanup and the reconfinement of racialized communities in the slums (Nelson, 2008, pp. 49-50). Shifting strategies of containment that served to effectively maintain segregation throughout the 20th century in response to the increased migration of Southern U.S. Blacks to Northern cities led to a reconfiguration of geographic boundaries within the city. This is essentially a new mode of segregation spurred by white panic over the increased migration north, combined with political and economic interests. A combination of economic-driven public policy and physical violence characterized the creation of the era's urban ghetto (Nelson, 2008, pp. 49-50). Garvey (1926) said, "They stole our arts and sciences from Africa... Their modern improvements are but duplicates of a grander civilization that we reflected thousands of years ago, without the advantage of what is buried and still hidden, to be resurrected and reintroduced by the intelligence of our generation and our posterity."

Africville's destruction was part of a grander pattern of colonialism in which negative spaces were created for Black people in order to justify systemic change motivated by white self-interest as acts of salvation. Africville was allowed to deteriorate until it was a slum but still white people entered Africville for fun. They passed out drunk on doorsteps and left their garbage behind, and when it became too visibly defiled, they removed people, flattened homes and deliberately transformed the land. Today, Nova Scotia has a population of less than one million. Its homes are below the national

average and unemployment is high, but it has become a popular vacation spot and summer residence for wealthy Americans and other Canadians. It has the oldest long-established Black community in Canada and Halifax sits on the coast where Europeans first landed, but it is noticeable how little non-white skin there is in Halifax compared to Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal (Nelson, 2008, p. 51).

Africville people were judged against white middle-class family values and dominant racial discourses (Nelson, 2008, p. 97). These middle-class family values are often used to judge Nova Scotia, where the sluggish regional economy and condition of subsistence poverty and marginality of Blacks in the 1840s has continued into the present day. The work activity of residents over the past 125 years reflects the Black-white social relations that channeled Blacks into specific occupations such as labourers (Clairmont & Magill, 1974, p. 99). Africville's relocation was a program of eradication masquerading as rescue where white officials were concerned with improving the conditions of Blacks and wished to integrate them into white society. Africville was born from enslavement and segregation, and the alleged concern for racial equality was a discussion in which Blacks themselves had little voice in. It was suggested that since Blacks are influenced by the civilized society of whites, integration will bring positive results (Nelson, 2008, p. 104). The process of demolishing Africville was a program planned by whites and bolstered by racial discourses to shift the strategies used to contain a small Black community. It was camouflaged by the promise of racial integration and attempted to save face for the city by hiding its racial problem yet made no move toward systemic change. Instead, the focus on slum clearance masked the city's role in creating the impoverished conditions in the first place. It was a program of

white displacement of Black people which maintained their spatial regulation and social disenfranchisement (Nelson, 2008, p. 115).

Together, the cases of Sierra Leone and Africville display “the problem of the colonized”. Fanon (1994) argues that Africans do not come with a substratum common to his or her race, but on a foundation built by the European. In other words, by the very fact of appearing, they spontaneously enter into a pre-existing framework in which there are already predisposed opinions. This colonial framework is what many attempts to gain independence are carving out of, and regardless of if seizing constitutional power in a peaceful political takeover is successful, it will be done as agents of colonization. Slavery was never instituted by statute or legalized by legislature in Nova Scotia, yet it was practiced in Halifax and other parts of the province for five decades (Clairmont & Magill, 1974, p. 26). Even though lack of agricultural potential in the rocky terrain of Nova Scotia prevented enslavement from developing on a plantation scale, enslavement cannot exist without a slave society whose values at least tolerate enslavement. In Sierra Leone, the Company promoted the vision of a free democratic Black colony, but a natural mirroring of government segregation was observed where Blacks kept their distance from whites (Gilbert, 2012, p. 242). The political experiment of British abolitionism in Sierra Leone was one of the great attempts by poor people to organize a decent, nonhierarchical regime (Gilbert, 2012, p. 258). Blacks had fought for equality in North America and for democracy in Sierra Leone, and yet Loyalists still had to buy from and work for the Company.

According to Galli & Ronnback (2021, p. 115), Sierra Leone has been considered the epitome of a failing African state, with violence and poverty spiraling out of control

on several occasions. Struggles over resource distribution have fuelled conflicts between groups ever since the country was unified in 1896. Colonialism is one element that scholars have identified as influencing inequality. The colonial institutional framework tends to persist long after independence, effectively influencing resource distribution and development in the long run and one key contributor to economic inequality is land distribution (Galli & Ronnback, 2021, p.116). As discussed in the case of Sierra Leone, and was a symbol of independence and security to Black people. And although it may not have been for these exact reasons, land is a source of livelihood in agricultural communities, as well as a source of rent which can be accumulated into wealth and passed on through generations. Land operates as collateral in capital lending, further deepening inequality, and inequalities stemming from inegalitarian land distribution tend to persist over time and contribute to wealth inequality. Encroachment, observed in the cases of both Sierra Leone and Africville, led to an inevitable clash with the entrenched interests of long established religion and ideology. Newcomers won resentment from old settlers who already considered themselves a neglected lower class and Nova Scotian nationalism, like most modern nationalisms, was a response to external subordination (Walker, 2017, pp. 66, 228).

The battle against colonialism includes devoting energies to ending certain definite abuses, including forced labour, corporal punishment, inequality of salaries, limitation of political rights, etc. (Fanon, 1963, p. 148), so in many ways this is still a current battle. Fanon's study of the pitfalls of national consciousness can be applied to Blow's proposal for a political takeover of the South as well as the modified context of Nova Scotia. He argued "The objective of nationalist parties is strictly national. They

mobilize the people with slogans of independence and when such parties are questioned on the economic program of the state that they are clamoring for, or on the nature of the regime which they propose to install, they are incapable of replying because they are completely ignorant of the economy of their own country. They have nothing more than an approximate bookish acquaintance with the actual and potential resources of their country's soil and mineral deposits; and therefore they can only speak of these resources on a general and abstract plane" (Fanon, 1963, pp. 150-151). The resulting behaviour which resembles that of national landed proprietors is practically identical with that of the middle classes of the towns. If the colonialism of land distribution was observed in Sierra Leone, then the colonialism of gentrification was made clear in Africville.

Settler colonialism erects a new colonial society on the expropriated land base (Wolfe, 2006, p. 388). Settler colonizers come to stay and their invasion is a structure, not an event. Theodor Herzl, the founding father of Zionism, observed in his allegorical manifesto, "If I wish to substitute a new building for an old one, I must demolish before I construct" (Wolfe, 2006, p. 388). What Blow (2021) proposes can thus be seen as a renovation of the current building. It may look more modern and refined, but what maintains the building's structural integrity is still the same old framework. Many African religious beliefs and practices did not survive either the Middle Passage or the subsequent experience of enslavement in the early South and British Caribbean (Grey, 1998, p. xi). Africans, African Americans, and Afro-Caribbeans have always been depicted as reactive rather than as proactive, as having been shaped by rather than having helped to shape colonial ideologies. Settler colonizers destroy to replace,

beginning with land distribution and encroachment. History has observed many times over how agriculture progressively eats into Indigenous territory until the Indigenous people are rendered dependent on the introduced economy. White labourers are often the most racist element in society since an ethnic minority is vulnerable to accepting a lower wage than majority workers (Walker, 1997, p. 48).

The study of colonialism and racism is an exercise in understanding the historical processes from which we are not exempt. In 1938, the German government sought advice on the introduction and implementation of racially discriminatory legislation and one of the places they turned to was Canada (Walker, 1997, p. 23). Canadian attitudes and practices are a fragment of a globally pervasive paradigm, and the challenge of enacting change is to understand the importance of considering land distribution, economy and employment, education, and relations with indigenous inhabitants, all of which cannot be understood in isolation.

References

- Blow, C. (2021). *The Devil you know: A Black power manifesto*. HarperCollins.
- Bramble, L. (1988, June 1). *Black fugitive slaves in early Canada*. Vanwell.
- Buxton Museum. *What was the dawn settlement?*
- Buxton Museum. *When did people settle in the dawn settlement?*
- Buxton Museum. *Where was the dawn settlement?*
- Buxton Museum. *Who settled in the dawn settlement?*
- Carlesimo, P. (1973). The refugee home society: Its origin, operation and results, 1851-1876. *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. <https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/etd/4196>
- Clairmont, D. H. J., & Magill, D. W. (1971). *Africville relocation report*. Institute of Public Affairs, Dalhousie University.
- Clairmont, D. H. J., & Magill, D. W. (1974). *Africville: The life and death of a Canadian Black community*. McClelland and Stewart.
- Fanon, F. (2008). *Black skin, white masks* (R. Philcox, Trans.). Grove Press. (Original work published 1952)
- Fanon, F. (1963). *The wretched of the earth* (C. Farrington, Trans.). Grove Press. (Original work published 1961)
- Fanon, F. (1994). *Toward the African revolution* (H. Chevalier, Trans.). Grove Press. (Original work published 1964)
- Francis, D., & Klayton M., (2012, October 18). *Dresden*. The Canadian Encyclopedia. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/dresden>
- Galli, S., & Klas R. (2021). Land distribution and inequality in a Black settler colony: the case of Sierra Leone, 1792-1831. *The Economic History Review*, 74(1), 115-137. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ehr.13020>
- Garvey, M. (1926, June 6). African fundamentalism. *The Negro World*, Front Page Editorial.
- Gilbert, A. (2012). *Black patriots and loyalists: Fighting for emancipation in the war for independence*. University of Chicago Press.

- Government of Canada, (2021, February 16). *Historic Black Canadian communities*.
<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/Black-history-month/historic-Black-communities.html>
- Grey, S. R., & Wood, B. (1998). *Come shouting to zion: African American Protestantism in the American south and British Caribbean to 1830*. University of North Carolina Press.
- Langley, J. A. (1969). Garveyism and African nationalism. *Race & Class*, 11(2).
<https://doi.org/10.1177/030639686901100202>
- Nelson, J. J. (2008). *Razing Africville a geography of racism*. University of Toronto Press.
- Nova Scotia Museum. (2001). *Who were the Black Loyalists?* Nova Scotia.
<https://novascotia.ca/museum/Blackloyalists/who.htm>
- Ontario Heritage Trust. *The dawn settlement*.
<https://www.heritagetrust.on.ca/en/plaques/the-dawn-settlement>
- Prince, S. (2021, March 22). *Elgin settlement*. The Canadian Encyclopedia.
<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/elgin-settlement>
- Purcell, V. (2010). *Wilberforce beginnings: The Wilberforce settlement & Butler family legacy*. First Choice Books.
- Riendeau, R. (1984). *An enduring heritage: Black contributions to early Ontario*. Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture.
- Stein, D. L. (1962, October 20). The Counterattack on Diehard Racism. *Maclean's*.
<https://archive.macleans.ca/article/1962/10/20/the-counterattack-on-diehard-racism>
- Walker, J. W. St. G. (1997). *"Race," rights and the law in the Supreme Court of Canada: historical case studies*. The Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History and Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Walker, J. W. St. G. (2017). *The Black loyalists: The search for a promised land in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone, 1783-1870*. University of Toronto Press.
- Walton, J. W. (1979). *Blacks in Buxton and Chatham, Ontario 1830-1890: Did the 49th Parallel make a difference?*. Princeton University.
- Wolfe, P. (2006). Settler colonialism and the elimination of the indigenous. *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8(4), 387-409. DOI: 10.1080/14623520601056240