



**1958**  
There were about 1,500 West Indians in Bristol, still less than 1% of the city's population.  
  
Researcher Jessie Hood, informed the committee for the welfare of colonial workers that "In fear of growing unemployment, many English people are becoming more conscious of the presence of West Indians."

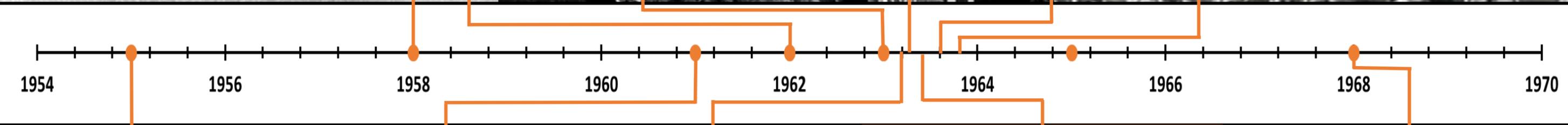
**1963**  
Displeased with the West Indian Association's lack of progress in fighting discrimination. An action group was formed consisting of four young West Indian men, Owen Henry, Roy Hackett, Audley Evans and Prince Brown, later called the West Indian Development Council.  
  
Owen Henry then met Paul Stephenson and it was decided that the articulate Stephenson should speak on their behalf.

**1963 (1<sup>st</sup> May)**  
On the 1st May Nethercott, South West regional secretary of the union, was reportedly "furious" as about a hundred university students marched on both the bus station and the TGWU headquarters at Transport House.

**1963 (28<sup>th</sup> August)**  
With all of the solidarity towards the West Indian Association against the 'colour bar' there was even more pressure on the Bristol Omnibus Company to respond.  
  
An agreement to end the colour bar was reached at a meeting between 500 bus workers and the city Labour establishment after months of negotiations.  
  
On 28th August 1963, a ban on discrimination in hiring bus crews was announced. This was the same day that Martin Luther King delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

**1963 (17<sup>th</sup> September)**  
Shortly after this the company employed Sikh graduate, Ragbir Singh as Bristol's first bus conductor of colour. Several other conductors were hired shortly after, including Norman Samuels and Norris Edwards from Jamaica and Mohammed Raschid and Abbas Ali, from Pakistan.

**1962**  
Despite a labour shortage on buses, Ena Hackett, Roy Hackett's wife, applied for a job as a bus conductress in 1962 but was rejected.



**1955**  
Within Bristol, England the (TGWU) Transport and General Workers Union had passed a resolution prohibiting the employment of "coloured" workers as bus crews.  
  
The curator of the Bristol Industrial Mission, Andrew Hake, recalled "According to the city's TGWU, every wheel will stop if one black man steps on the platform as a conductor".

**1961**  
Despite being exposed by the Bristol Evening Post, company manager Ian Patey defended this racist policy.  
  
Patey argued that Bristol's Black workers were deemed unqualified for front-line jobs of drivers and conductors. His fear was that it was inappropriate for white bus conductresses to work with Black male drivers.  
  
The policy was even endorsed by the local council.

**1963 (29<sup>th</sup> April)**  
In order to prove the existence of the colour bar, Stephenson tested this by arranging an interview for Guy Bailey with the bus company. Although Bailey was a young warehouseman and boys' Brigade officer, the interview was cancelled when Stephenson informed the company that Bailey was West Indian.  
  
Inspired by Rosa Parks refusal to give up her seat on a bus in Alabama in 1955, leading to the Montgomery bus boycott, the activists agreed on a bus boycott in Bristol. On the 29th of April 1963 this was announced at a press conference.

**1963 (7<sup>th</sup> May)**  
National and international media attention was generated by the protest. Even prominent figures like Harold Wilson, local MP Tony Benn and famous West Indian cricketer and diplomat Sir Learie Constantine offered their support.  
  
During that time, Constantine served as Trinidad and Tobago's High Commissioner. He wrote letters to both the bus company and Stephenson. During the West Indies versus Gloucestershire cricket match, held from the 4th to 7th of May at the County Ground, he also spoke out against the colour bar to reporters. There was no public support for the boycott from the West Indies team, as they thought that sport and politics did not mix.  
  
Leaflets were distributed during the game by members of the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination (CARD) encouraging spectators to support the cause.

**1965-68**  
Although the Bristol Bus Boycott was a huge success in fighting discrimination of course racism was still very prevalent. Even so, it did contribute to the UK's Race Relations Acts of 1965 and 1968. By taking action in solidarity against social injustice, the Bristol Bus Boycott demonstrated that lasting change can be achieved.



**Bibliography**  
1 *Black-white-buses.pdf* (1986/2013), <[black-white-buses.pdf \(libcom.org\)](#)> [Accessed 5 August 2022].  
2 *Bristol Bus Boycott* (2022), <[Bristol Bus Boycott - Wikipedia](#)> [Accessed 11 August 2022].  
3 Dresser, Madge, *Bristol's Free Museums and Historic Houses* <[The Bristol Bus Boycott | Stories | Bristol Museums](#)> [Accessed 11 August 2022].  
4 Jones, Elizabeth, *The Bristol Bus Boycott of 1963* (2022) <[The Bristol Bus Boycott of 1963 - Black History Month 2022](#)> [Accessed 11 August 2022].

# The Bristol Bus Boycott