

From: Elise Davis [<mailto:elisedavis62@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Monday, July 20, 2020 3:17 PM

To: Auger, Robert <rauger@essex.ca>; Brown, Shelley <sbrown@essex.ca>; Bondy, Sherry <sbondy@essex.ca>

Subject: Re: Delegation or letter to council

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Dear Mr. Auger, Ms. Brown and Council members,

I appreciate the opportunity to have Essex Town Council support my initiative to receive a formal apology from the Canadian Government regarding this Nation's role in enslaving people of African origins. To date, no reply to the attached letter has been received, however, a local Liberal member in good standing, Mr. Bruck Easton, LLB, has contacted me and agrees that an apology should be made to Canada's African Canadian citizens by the present sitting government.

Past feeble reasons for not apologizing are based on the fact that Canada was under British rule when slavery was practiced until Emancipation was decreed in 1833. There are also those who feel because slaves were deemed 'property', that is sub-human, during that ere, no apology is necessary from Canada because they were not actually people at the time.

My reasoning for, Canadians of African origins receiving an apology is based on centuries of the misuse, abuse and unfair benefit enjoyed by the dominant culture (European descent individuals) of the day (1600s-mid 1800s). Both France and Great Britain allowed slavery on this soil during their reign. Great fortunes, property holding, elevated social status and comfortable life styles were accrued. Black and Indigenous slaves received little or no benefit for their labour and dismal lives. Further, once slavery was officially abolished, a continued course of oppression, racist legislations and systemic thinking by many that Blacks were/are inferior to whites, kept up an oppressive regime that marginalized African Canadians. We were not invited to become Canadian citizens until 1911. During both World Wars, our services were not wanted until a shortage of white soldiers caused the military to reluctantly accept the enlistment of Black men into their 'white men's wars'. The service and recorded valour of African Canadians proves our loyalty and bravery even when not respected or appreciated.

Prejudiced legislation kept us from becoming nurses until 1948; biased practices hampered us from purchasing properties in many locations where, in deeds, it was stated---**the purchase of these properties are prohibited to Negros, Jews and people who have committed treason against this country.** That phasing was finally removed from deeds in 1961. The offensive intent of such wording diminished all of the contributions African Canadian have made. As explanation, my father, a decorated veteran, had a German born associate purchase lane in Sandwich West in 1958, then sell it to my parents for "love and Affection".

Where education has been concerned, right here in Essex County, "Negro Sections" were allocated in 1850 for African Canadian families to have schools for their children, as many

whites refused to let their children attend school with blacks. The last Black school in Ontario, SS#11 on the 3rd Concession just outside of Harrow, ON, closed in 1963 by an act of legislation. A new school had been built in the Town of Harrow for students which closed all but SS#11. Imagine the school bus passing by because the Board of Education, Council members and many residents in this area thought Black residents were satisfied with sending their offspring to the segregated Negro Section school down on the 3rd concession that had a tainted well and was rat infested! This was a common condition repeated across Canada in such places as Buxton, ON and Nova Scotia. Our children were "streamed" in many cases, sent to the Technical secondary schools supposedly because they were not bright enough nor desirous of becoming business owner, officials, doctors lawyers and magistrates. Hundreds of years of turning a blind eye to keeping African Canadians down needs to come to an end. Even the United Nations has suggested that Canada apologize for its role in enslaving Blacks in 2017.

I could site many more instances that have kept African Canadians in a type of emotional slavery, perpetrated and condoned by all political parties of our Government up to present day, including the shameful "Blackface Incident" involving the present Prime Minister that exhibits the innocent ignorance that grips our nation which would allow our Leader to think his action(s) were fun and just fine.

I feel that my request for a formal apology is valid and long over due. I have been sending requests for support of this pressing issue to individuals, organizations and communities across Canada. My appeal for support from your body comes with the full backing of the local African Canadian community. When lecturing, I often say, "**Nous sommes aussi Canadiens**", that is, "**We are also Canadians**". An official apology would make African Canadians feel part of Canada's multicultural family.

Please consider, in your roles as elected officials of the Town of Essex and as concerned fellow citizens and neighbours of African Canadians, sending a letter of support for my appeal to the office of the Prime Minister at justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca voicing support for an official apology for slavery.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to receiving your response.

Respectfully,
Elise Harding-Davis
African Canadian Heritage Consultant
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Elise Harding-Davis, African Canadian Heritage Consultant, is one of the foremost authorities on African Canadian history and events connected to the development and progress of North America. Her unique perception reveals the early presence of African origin pioneers and freedom fighters in British Canada revealing the invaluable roles of **“The Black Thread in the Canadian Tapestry”**.

A seventh generation African Canadian born in Windsor, Ontario, she now resides in Harrow, Ontario. Elise retired as the Curator/Administrator of the North American Black Historical Museum & Cultural Centre Ltd. and The Nazery African Methodist Episcopal Church National Historic Site (now The Amherstburg Freedom Museum) after 32 years of dedicated service. Simultaneously, Elise has taught Black Studies at St. Clair College since 1993 and networked widely with numerous international educational facilities. She was also an Executive Administrator at Hotel Dieu Grace Hospital for six years with a portfolio dealing with Physician/Staff complaints and the review/revision of policy and procedure to ensure diversity/cultural competency. Elise also organized/managed the office of the Member of Parliament for the riding of Essex for eight years and acted as his spokesperson throughout the riding.

Ms. Harding-Davis’ passion has given her the opportunity to travel globally, at Universities and Canadian Consulates across North America and to countries including China and the continent of Africa lecturing and promoting the history of people of African descent in Canada. Elise’s impressive volume of work includes numerous guest articles in various newspapers and magazines internationally and several books including, “The Black Presence in the War of 1812” chronicling Black military involvement, and, “The Colors of Essex County” which concentrates on 13 sacred African Canadian cemeteries in Essex County. She has helped to preserve and attain heritage status for these irreplaceable burial sites. Elise was a core member of “The African Canadian Tour Program” and acts as a Tour Guide. Mrs. Harding-Davis worked with Police Forces for several years to devise less biased hiring practises for Women, Indigenous Peoples, Blacks and the Disabled. She has supported and educated minority youth helping them to develop improved selfimage and seek post-secondary education.

Elise has received many awards, letters of appreciation and certificates of merit including both The Golden and Diamond Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Metals for her tireless service in elevating the little know/unappreciated history of her people.

Ms. Harding-Davis feels that all facets of history have a Black component, therefore, in her words, **“Without Black History—All History is Incomplete”**.

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

Raw racism is rearing its foul head promoting destruction and death in so many places. It's all over the news globally, with the gruesome on-air murder of George Floyd by law enforcement in Minnesota. This coverage precipitates more attacks by haters and agitators and fuels well justified fears. There is no denying that similar grievous acts are happening right here in our country. Between 2000 and 2017, police were involved in at least 460 fatal interactions with civilians across Canada. Many of those civilians were Black.

It should be clear, with recent events that African Canadians deserve an apology for Slavery from the Canadian Government immediately. The systemic racism in Canada is a direct result of Slavery in this country. African Canadians have been denied genuine equity in economic growth, social standing, legislative justice and proper regard for our health and well-being throughout Canada's history.

The awful legacy of enslavement has bred a dreadful pervasive hate and disenfranchisement of African Canadians. This attitude enables police, physicians, some employers, industry and legislators to treat African Canadians with disregard at best. Often, colour closes the door to opportunity; black sounding names on resumes eliminate the application. Being judged by prejudicial standards has rendered African Canadians far behind in all things.

African Canadians, many of whose families have lived here since before Canada was an independent country, face abuse and loathing, are taken little or no notice of and are deliberately cut out of educational and employment prospects regularly. Additionally, and factually, African Canadians are targeted and hunted by virtue of the colour of their skin. Imagine waking every day worried about what harassment you might suffer today, fearing for your life or that of your child, African Canadians live such an existence!

When our Prime Minister shamefully appeared in Black-face it insulted and demeaned our sector of the populace. Whether done out of innocent ignorance or a sense of entitlement, these actions damage and hamper African Canadians ability to be a 'regular' part of the mainstream. Either African Canadians are dodging prejudice or mourning those of us who have perished as a result of this hateful thinking. These constant reminders of our supposed inferiority can and do damage our health, wellness and the ability to function effectively.

Ironically African Canadians are 'faceless' in the nation we helped to build. Political parties seldom court us. Industry lags in pursuing or promoting us for administrative positions. Sadly, committees to look into and correct these violations are infrequently made available to African Canadians. The lowliest jobs seem to be assigned to us; an obvious hold over from slavery when Blacks generated the wealth but got none of it.

Unlike the lack of and refusal to remedy racism in the United States, albeit difficult, I believe this festering, pressing issue can be resolved in Canada. I, for one, am willing to work in any capacity to correct systemic prejudice, race baiting and other bad behaviors with the goal of healing old wounds, uplifting African Canadians and progressing toward a world of equality and harmony.

I sincerely feel that a heart-felt public apology for enslavement from the leader of this nation will act as a catalyst to open meaningful dialogue and begin true change toward equity in all the areas that I've mentioned. As long as the powers that be hang on to the privilege of "being better than" black-skinned people and refuse to take accountability for past wrongs, this ugliness will continue to spread, taint society, and worst of all, kill.

I have written to you on this matter several times seeking both acknowledgement of African Canadian worth and a respectful resolution to the *sins of our fathers*. I am imploring to your sense of moral right for a long overdue apology for Slavery in Canada. Now is the time!

Respectfully,

Elise Harding-Davis

African Canadian Heritage Consultant.

Harrow woman seeks Trudeau apology for Canada's history of slavery

Trevor Wilhelm

Updated: October 1, 2019



Elise Harding-Davis is shown at her Harrow home on Monday, September 30, 2019. She has sent three letters to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau demanding an apology for Canada's history of slavery and racism against black people. She only received a response, stating her last letter was received, after the Trudeau blackface scandal. Dan Janisse / Windsor Star

A Harrow woman says her repeated requests for Justin Trudeau to apologize for Canada's history of slavery have been fruitless, despite the prime minister's track record of apologizing for past injustices to other marginalized groups.

"Canada wants to hold itself out as the multicultural country who respects and takes care of all the people that are part of the Canadian panacea," said Elise Harding-Davis. "But they leave us out time and time again. We're one of the four pioneering people of Canada. There have been black people on record in Canada since 1604, and it was a free black man who came with Samuel de Champlain."

The Liberal party did not respond Monday to a request for comment.

Harding-Davis said she has sent three letters to Trudeau since late 2018 calling for an apology to African Canadians. It was not until her last letter, which addressed the Trudeau blackface scandal, that the Liberal government acknowledged they received the correspondence.

"It was just a cursory acknowledgement," said Harding-Davis. "Again, that's what I'm saying. Nobody is taking this seriously. Nobody's respecting the fact that that man blacked himself up and went out in public, hanging over women, having a good time, pretending he was something other than he was because he could go home and wash it off. If he had to live with it as his life's colour, it might be a different process."



We helped make Canada what it is today and we deserve an apology

While it is often overlooked next to the history of racism and slavery in the United States, Canada has its own dark legacy. Slavery was legal throughout the British Empire, including Canadian territory, until the Slavery Abolition Act took effect in 1834.

Elise Harding-Davis is shown at her Harrow home on Monday, September 30, 2019. She has sent three letters to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau demanding an apology for Canada's history of slavery and racism against black people. She only received a response, stating her last letter was received, after the Trudeau blackface scandal. Dan Janisse / Windsor Star

Harding-Davis sent her first letter in November 2018 after Trudeau apologized for Canada turning away a ship full of Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution in 1939. Hundreds of those people were murdered in the Holocaust.

Harding-Davis said the Canadian government has also apologized to Chinese, Italian, and First Nations people for past wrongs — something she wholeheartedly supports — but African Canadians have been repeatedly overlooked.

She sent her third later in the wake of the scandal that engulfed the election campaign when years old photos surfaced of Trudeau in blackface.

“The most recent bit of foolishness, being in blackface, absolutely connects with apologizing for slavery,” said Harding-Davis. “The connect is that never dignifying or respecting the fact that we had slavery in this country, there are those who do think they’re better and will do blackface, will do other acts of disrespect regarding black people and think that it’s fine.”

Harding-Davis believes she received confirmation her last letter was received because it's election time.

“They weren't acknowledging anything in the letter at all,” she said. “They were just acknowledging that the letter came forward. But they were also savvy enough to key into the fact that here's an issue they better start dealing with.”

Harding-Davis said Trudeau is not the first prime minister she has demanded an apology from.

Elise Harding-Davis is shown at her Harrow home on Monday, September 30, 2019. She has sent three letters to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau demanding an apology for Canada's history of slavery and racism against black people. She only received a response, stating her last letter was received, after the Trudeau blackface scandal. Dan Janisse / Windsor Star



“I'm not going to quit,” she said. “We still exist. We are here. We are pioneering members of Canada. We helped make Canada what it is today and we deserve an apology.”

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Most previous apologies made by prime ministers were for incidents that occurred after Confederation in 1867. However, Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized in 2008 for the injustice of the residential schools' system, which dates back to the 1840s, and last year Trudeau apologized and exonerated six Tsilhqot'in chiefs who were tried and hanged in British Columbia in 1864.

In 2007 British Prime Minister Tony Blair apologized for his country's involvement in the transatlantic slave trade between Africa and North America and the Caribbean.

UN Wants Canada To Apologize, Pay Reparations For Black Slavery



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[David Krayden](#) Ottawa Bureau Chief
September 25, 2017 11:46 AM ET

The United Nations Human Rights Council says Canada should apologize and pay reparations for slavery and other forms of “anti-black racism.” [In a report released Monday](#), the U.N. advisory group stated: “History informs anti-black racism and racial stereotypes that are so deeply entrenched in institutions, policies and practices, that its institutional and systemic forms are either functionally normalized or rendered invisible, especially to the dominant group.”

The British empire had already banned slavery in 1834, and Canada had not become a self-governing dominion until 1867. Prior to its abolition, [slavery was never widespread in British North America](#), although it was extensive in tropical colonies like Jamaica. When support for abolitionism grew in the northern U.S., Canada participated in the Underground Railway that moved escaped slaves out of Canada so that they could not be returned to their masters under the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Act.

Nonetheless, the UN says that contemporary Canadian racism “replicates the historical ... conditions and effects of spatial segregation, economic disadvantage and social exclusion. It is important to underline that the experience of African Canadians is unique because of the particular history of anti-black racism in Canada,” suggesting that the government of Canada should “take concrete steps to preserve the history of enslavement and the political, social and economic contributions of African Canadians by establishing monuments in their honour.”

Another one of these concrete steps would be the addition of a new department of African-Canadian affairs to the federal government. The UN council recommends that it resemble the current federal department that serves “Indigenous Peoples.”

Just last week in [his address to the UN General Assembly](#), Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau outlined what he termed “humiliation, neglect and abuse” in the history of addressing the needs of first nations Canadians and he vowed to achieve “reconciliation.” Trudeau did not refer to any further reconciliation with black Canadians.

The report insists that Canadian history is the dark story of white racism, but that racism is to blame for virtually every problem allegedly facing black Canadians today from poverty to bad health.

Yet, the global bureaucracy isn’t nearly finished with issuing recommendations. The UN urges Canada to combat what it calls “environmental racism” that allegedly occurs when waste management sites are placed too closely to black communities.

The report also suggests that Canada address presumed systemic racism in the Canadian criminal justice system because blacks are “extraordinarily overrepresented” when it comes to being targets of police violence.

The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission has been invited to address the human rights council on Monday.

Canada – Apologize For Slavery And Pay Reparations, Says The UN

Published by [opbastard](#) on September 25, 2017 | [Leave a response](#)

We are living in the time of victimization. Everyone is a victim. If you go far enough back in time, you can find something in everyone’s past that provides them justification for claiming victim status.

Failure? Victim. Criminal? Victim. Poor? Victim. Addict? Victim. Murderer? Victim. Rapist? Victim. Nothing is ever your fault. Nothing is never the result of someone making a bad decision or listening to some bad advice. That is the beauty of victimhood. It erases all of your sins.

The UN Human Rights Council is set to discuss a report on issues affecting African-Canadians that makes recommendations to the federal government, including that it apologize for slavery and consider providing reparations for historical injustices.

A UN working group will submit its final report on the human rights situation of people of African descent in Canada to the council Monday based on its consultations with government officials and interest groups during an October 2016 mission to Ottawa, Toronto, Halifax and Montreal.

Some report findings released in August raised deep concerns about Canada's legacy of anti-black racism, which traces its origins to slavery in the 16th century and reverberates into the present day. – Tbnewswatch

read full article [here](#)

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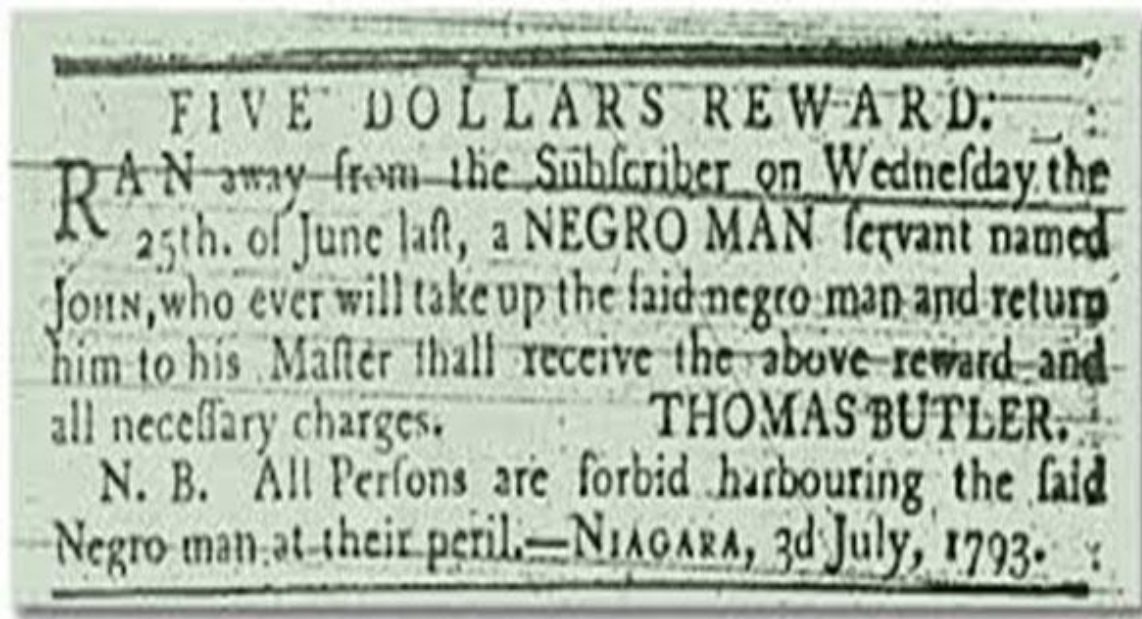
.....makes recommendations to the federal government, including that it apologize for slavery and consider providing reparations for historical injustices.....

Of course. Saudi Arabia is a member of the Human Right Council. Who better to condemn slavery and the mistreatment of anyone? They are leading experts. Especially women.

Maybe the Human Rights Council of the UN can take a look at [what is going on in Israel right now](#). Maybe they can get an apology and reparation payments for the Palestinians that are living in an apartheid regime that is bent on ethnic cleansing.

This latest fad of analyzing history and comparing it to today's standards and ethics is pointless but it does appease the social justice warriors. Is the so-called anti-black racism that is mentioned by the UN, really tied to slavery? Did Canada ever have slavery?

Dear Mr. Prime Minister, When Can African Canadians Expect To Receive An Apology For Slavery?



Dear Mr. Prime Minister, When Can African Canadians Expect To Receive An Apology For Slavery?

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By [Mark Brown](#)

PRIDE Guest Columnist



Chinese head tax, Indigenous residential schools, South Asian Komagata Maru incident.

These are some of the apologies given by current and previous federal governments for historical injustices done to Canadians because of their race, colour, creed and/or religion — atrocities committed during a dark period of Canadian history.

A period when blatant discriminatory practices and policies were written into law and justified as appropriate.

The Chinese head tax was first imposed after the Canadian parliament passed the Chinese Immigration Act in 1885. This tax was meant to discourage Chinese people from immigrating to Canada after the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which they built.

The first anti-Chinese tax of \$50 per person was levied on almost every Chinese person entering Canada. Despite the tax, Chinese immigrants continued to come to Canada. As a result, the tax was increased to \$100 in 1900 and \$500 in 1903. At that time in history \$500 represented two years wages for Chinese labourers.

Indigenous residential schools were government-sponsored religious schools, established to integrate Indigenous children into European-Canadian culture.

It is reported that many children were forcibly taken from their homes and put into these residential schools against their will. It is further reported that this subsequently disrupted the lives and the communities of Canada's Indigenous population, causing long-term problems that continue to this day.

The last residential school closed in 1996. It is believed that 150,000 Indigenous, Inuit, and Métis children attended residential schools.

Former students have strived for recognition and restitution, which resulted in the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement in 2007 and a formal public apology by then Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, in 2008.

The SS Komagata Maru was a chartered ship which brought immigrants, many of whom were of the Sikh religion, to Canada from India. Canada had a policy of excluding immigrants from India.

A showdown took place in the spring and summer of 1914 when a boatload of immigrants arrived in Vancouver. This became a tragic experience for the passengers.

First there was an unsuccessful physical confrontation with police and the military at the Port of Vancouver. This was followed by a deadly encounter with police and troops near Kolkata on the passengers' return trip to India.

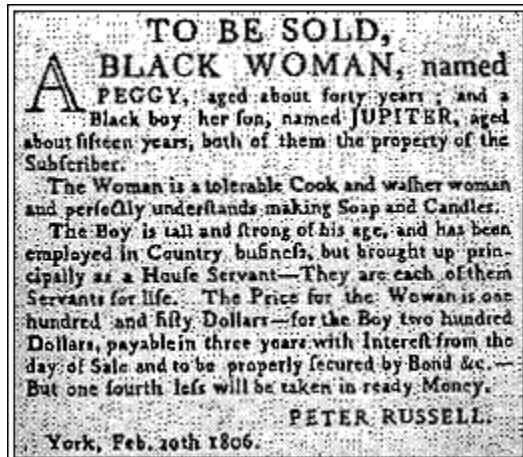
Each of these incidents, along with others not mentioned above, are all worthy of the apology they received.

Many would agree that a boatload of Sikhs being turned away from Canada, purely because of race and religious difference, is not the best example of inclusion that Canada is argumentatively known for.

However many more would argue that none of these atrocities can compare to what African Canadians experienced as a result of Canada's role in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade.

From the 15th to the 19th century, millions of Africans were taken, against their will, chained in the belly of thousands upon thousands of ships, forcibly removed from their homeland and brought to Canada, among other countries.

Many did not survive the journey and their bodies were simply thrown overboard. For those who survived the journey to Canada and other countries, generations of atrocities followed.



The Africans were sold into slavery and became the property of the purchaser. They were recognized as cattle under the law. Their bodies to be used and abused as the purchaser saw fit.

What many today would call physical and sexual abuse, the African called Wednesday. Their children also were the property of the purchaser and were often sold to other slave owners and never seen by their parents again.

Yet for the African Canadian, there appears to be no apology from the federal government on the horizon.

Slavery was abolished in Canada in 1833 however, African Canadians continued to face years of segregation. Businesses and organisations could refuse to provide services to African Canadians as they saw fit. Yet for the African Canadian, there appears to be no apology on the horizon.

Segregation was abolished in Canada in the 1950's nevertheless, African Canadians continue, to this day, to struggle with anti-black racism, which many see as a residual effect of Canada's role in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Yet for the African Canadian, there appears to be no apology on the horizon.

Racial profiling, mass incarceration and over-representation within children's aid societies continue to be seen, by many, as a domino effect of Canada's role in the slave trade.

Yet for the African Canadian, there appears to be no apology on the horizon.

Apologies to Canadians such as this are not limited to the federal government. Recently the Metro Toronto Police Chief, Mark Saunders, apologised to the LGBTQ+ community for raids on gay bathhouses, which took place in Toronto in 1981.

The apology was made at a yearly Pride reception at the Toronto police headquarters on College Street. Chief Saunders is quoted as describing the raids as “one of the largest mass arrests in Canadian history.”

The Metro Toronto police force, along with other police forces, have been under fire for supporting carding. Carding is the police practice of stopping people (disproportionately Black males) and recording their information, even though they may not be suspected of committing a crime.

This leaves the individual “known to police”, which can subsequently negatively affect the individual’s current and future employment.

It is believed, by many, that this extra scrutiny on both Black and Indigenous peoples have contributed to the problems of mass incarceration and higher unemployment within the Black and Indigenous populations. After years of public outcry the carding policy was subsequently changed.

Yet for the African Canadian, there appears to be no apology on the horizon.

Is the disinclination to apologise for Canada’s role in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade and the residual effects of the slave trade, approval by inaction, justification by complacency?

Is this another way of saying that black lives don’t really matter?

I don’t have an answer for that, but what I am confident in, is that the reluctance of our elected officials to appropriately address the issues that negatively affect Canada’s Black community is the same justification as to why the BLACK VOTE MATTERS.

Mark Brown is the Chair of the Toronto and York Region Labour Council’s Equity Committee, a member of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionist (CBTU), An Executive Board Member of the Labour Education Center and a member of the Toronto Local of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. To contact Mark: www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100000658149978; Twitter MarkAAABrown