Week 1. Introduction to Krio.

Lesson Title: The History and Development of Krio.

Hello everyone. My name is Mohamed Shaw, a senior lecturer in the Sierra Leonean Languages Unit, teaching Krio at the Freetown Teachers College. I’m very pleased to share with you the history and development of the Krio of Sierra Leone. By the Krio of Sierra Leone, we are referring to both the people and the language. It is hoped that by the end of this podcast episode, you should be able to:

* Trace the history and development of Krio.
* Explain how the intermingling of the various groups of freed slaves resulted into what we now know as the Krio of Sierra Leone.

Do you have any knowledge about the Atlantic Slave Trade, its abolition and the founding of the colony of Freetown?

Well, you can’t talk about the history of the Krio without mentioning the Atlantic Slave Trade; which then was a trade in human beings or Africans across the Atlantic Ocean to work as slaves in the Americas, referred to as the New World. For about 400 years that inhuman trade went on. In the process, it is estimated that about 20 million Africans from different linguistic backgrounds were transported to the New World, not to mention those who perished on the high seas.

However, with the intervention of some British philanthropists like William Wilberforce and others who mounted a campaign against the trade in the late 18th. and 19th centuries, it was abolished in Britain.

After Lord Mansfieid’s ruling against slavery in 1772, slaves who had fought on the side of the British during the American War of Independence migrated en masse to England for fear of been victimized by the Americans. Some of them however, moved to Nova Scotia in Canada. Those who moved to England became known as the Black Poor. They were transported to Freetown in 1787. It was hoped that people in this new society would eventually be the agents for the propagation of European civilization. In the words of Prof. A.J.G. Wyse, in his work, The Krio of Sierra Leone, The freed slaves were seen as beacons of light in darkest Africa

We will stop here for today’s lesson, to continue tracing the historical background of the Krio of Sierra Leone in the next podcast episode..