



Recovered Histories: Reawakening the narratives of enslavement, resistance and the fight for freedom

Teaching enslavement and its legacies
across the curriculum

**In dedication and thanks to all the enslaved Africans,
freedom fighters and abolitionists
who sacrificed their lives for freedom and equality.**

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Printed by the Printed Word, Horsham

ISBN: IS 9780 900918 67 5

October 2008

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Anti-Slavery International would like to thank the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding this project.



LOTTERY FUNDED

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1. Introduction

Background and Context

During 2007 the UK commemorated the 200th anniversary of the passing of the 1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade Act. The commemoration paved the way for plenty of discussion around the issue of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and Britain's involvement in this most heinous of histories. Whilst there will be dissent around any issue as sensitive as the history of the mass forced capture, transportation, enslavement and brutalisation of people 2007 also gave way to constructive debate and discussions around a tangible way of dealing with the history and addressing its legacies.

One of the legacies coming out of 2007 was the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) decision to include the teaching of the Transatlantic Slave Trade as a statutory part of the Key Stage Three History Curriculum. This decision was made after extensive lobbying by organisations and groups including Anti-Slavery International. From September 2008, all English schools will be required to teach the history of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, alongside other sensitive historical subjects like World War II and the Holocaust.

Resource Overview

Concept

The education resource, *Recovered Histories: Reawakening the narratives of enslavement, resistance and the fight for freedom* was produced to accompany the website and exhibition of the same name. Its aim is to encourage educators and students alike to undertake research on the Transatlantic Slave Trade using primary sources consisting of narratives and images from enslaved Africans, anti-slavery campaigners, plantation owners, ship

captains and freedom fighters and African leaders. These narratives bring the history to life using the voices of those present at the time.

Aim

The resource is aimed at educators teaching students at Key Stage 3. It will enable students to discuss, interpret and evaluate issues relating to the Transatlantic Slave Trade within historical contexts and the impact of the legacies on modern life. The resource tackles the subject sensitively and accurately and encourages students to grapple with a sensitive and difficult subject, while also ensuring that they meet learning objectives within different subject areas, primarily History, but also across Citizenship, Geography and also utilising skills in English and ICT. Whilst aimed primarily at Key Stage 3 subjects, they can also be adapted for other Key Stages, as well as use for informal education (youth clubs and Sunday schools). The resource can also be adapted to fit the curriculum in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Resource Guide

The Recovered Histories: Reawakening the narratives of enslavement, resistance and the fight for freedom education pack covers ten themes and each theme includes:

- Background Information (adapted from the excellent UNESCO sponsored Breaking the Silence website, www.breakingthesilence.org)
- A comprehensive lesson plan which can be adapted for different Key Stages
- A Resource Sheet (including narratives and images from the www.recoveredhistories.org and excerpts from www.breakingthesilence.org)
- Worksheet (where applicable)



Each chapter should be covered as ordered, progressing from the previous lesson. Copies of the *Recovered Histories* exhibition can be borrowed from Anti-Slavery International and can be used during the lessons or for display in the school.

Teaching emotional and controversial history

Whilst the inclusion of the Transatlantic Slave Trade into the National Curriculum is long overdue, the Historical Association T.E.A.C.H (Teaching Emotional and Controversial History) report supported the view that making students learn about the Transatlantic Slave Trade could ultimately be damaging if taught inaccurately or insensitively, reinforcing negative racist stereotypes and invoking emotions of guilt and victimhood amongst students.

The history of the Transatlantic Slave Trade is fraught with violence, dehumanisation, and the worst forms of human rights abuses towards Africans. This is the history that is most commonly told, and telling this version of history would only serve to bring into reality the damage the Historical Association predicted. There are additional strands to

- the history, which includes:

- The tenacity and agency shown by African people in resisting enslavement, striving to maintain their culture and identity, escaping from slavery, creating and

- settling in self governing communities

The creation of the first independent African republic outside of the African continent in the form of Haiti which emancipated itself from slavery three years before the passing of the 1807

- Abolition of the Slave Trade Act

The first mass human rights movement and first fair-trade movement in Britain which saw hundreds of thousands of ordinary men and women becoming involved in the fight against the slave trade and slavery and refusing to buy products made by enslaved Africans.

This history also involves the contribution (albeit through forced labour) of Africans to the growth of wealth and industry in Britain, as their labour on sugar and cotton plantations created profits for the British plantation owners who reinvested the money into British industry. This history is not just confined to the pages of history books, as its legacies bears a direct relevance on all of our lives today, from the built environment in cities like Liverpool, Bristol and London, from the inception of our high-street banks, to the Notting Hill Carnival, the world's biggest street carnival second only to that in Brazil. The tools used by the anti-slavery campaigners are still relevant and being used today by all campaigning groups. These are examples of the subject matter which can be included within the teaching of the Transatlantic Slave Trade to foster greater community cohesion between students from different backgrounds. It can also minimise feelings of guilt, anger and resentment amongst students, as long as they are allowed to express their emotions and channel it positively.

It is very strongly advised that teachers avoid teaching about the Transatlantic Slave Trade during Black History Month only, as it will reinforce the view that pupils of African descent have no history other than the slave trade. Black History Month can be used to teach about African kingdoms and inventions and the contribution of African people in the world of Science, Literature and Politics. Teaching about African civilisations prior to the Transatlantic Slave Trade is vital in contextualising history and contemporary issues, in view of how the slave trade and colonialism created the conditions for the economic poverty that befalls Africa today. Students can be inspired to honour the spirits of the abolitionists to fight against global injustices today.

Images

The resource does not detail any obviously harrowing images of torture and brutality. This is done in order to sanitise the horrors and suffering inflicted upon enslaved



Africans. The narratives speak of this suffering, but it was felt that the images of shackles and chains have been used time and time again and a balance of images to dignify and illustrate the humanity of the enslaved people was needed.

Terminology

The narratives are historical and have not been changed and so depicts language and views that would not be used or voiced widely today. It is important that students are aware that this language was used to reflect historical accuracy. It is also important that students and educators alike are aware of the importance of the impact that words can have. Enslaved African/s has been used throughout to illustrate the fact that Africans were bought and sold and subjugated to the process of slavery as opposed to being consenting which the term slave would infer.

The Understanding Slavery Initiative has a good guide on the use of language

www.understandingslavery.com/teachingslavetrade/detail/useoflanguage
well as a comprehensive glossary at

<http://www.understandingslavery.com/teachingslavetrade/introduction/glossary/>



Recovered Histories and Quality Curriculum Authority (QCA) Links

Topic	Curriculum subject	QCA links
Africa	History	Unit 14: (3) - The British Empire Unit 15: (2-3) - Black peoples of America - from slavery to equality
	Geography	Unit 1: (2-3) - Making Connections Unit 12: (1-5) - Images of a country Unit 20: (1-10) - Comparing countries
Capture and Enslavement	History	Unit 14: (3) - The British Empire Unit 15: (1-4) - Black peoples of America - from slavery to equality
	Citizenship	Unit 3: (1-4) - Human Rights
	Geography	Unit 1: (2-3) - Making Connections
The Middle Passage	History	Unit 14: (3) - The British Empire Unit 15: (1,4) - Black peoples of America - from slavery to equality Unit 22: (2-4) - The role of the individual for good or ill
	Citizenship	Unit 3: (1-4) - Human Rights
	Geography	Unit 1: (2-3) - Making Connections Unit 12: (1-5) - Images of a country Unit 20 (1-10) - Comparing countries
Enslavement in the Caribbean	History	Unit 15: (4) Black peoples of America - from slavery to equality Unit 22: (2-4) - The role of the individual for good or ill
	Citizenship	Unit 3: (1-4) - Human Rights
Resistance and Rebellion	History	Unit 15: (5) - Black peoples of America - from slavery to equality Unit 22: (1-6) - The role of the individual for good or ill
	Citizenship	Unit 3: (1-4) - Human Rights



Topic	Curriculum subject	QCA links
The Anti-Slavery Movement	History Citizenship	Unit 7: (3-6) - Images of an age; what can we learn from portraits 1500-1750? Unit 14: (2) - The British Empire Unit 15: (5) - Black peoples of America - from slavery to equality Unit 22: (1-6) - The role of the individual for good or ill Unit 3: (1-4) - Human Rights Unit 4: (6-7) - Britain - a diverse society Unit 7: (3) - Local democracy Unit 9: (1-2) - The significance of the media in society Unit 12: (1, 2, 5, 6, 9) Why did women and some men have to struggle for the vote in Britain? What is the point of voting today? Unit 16: (1) - The franchise; why did it take so much longer for British women to get the vote?
The Pro-Slavery lobby	History Citizenship	Unit 7: (3-6) - Images of an age - what can we learn from portraits 1500-1750? Unit 11: (3-4) - How industrialised was Britain by 1850? Unit 14: (1-2) - The British Empire Unit 15: (4) - Black peoples of America - from slavery to equality Unit 22: (1-6) - The role of the individual for good or ill Unit 3: (1-4) - Human Rights Unit 9: (1-2) - The significance of the media in society
Religion	History Citizenship	Unit 15: (4-5) - Black peoples of America - from slavery to equality Unit 3: (1-4) - Human Rights Unit 9: (1-2) - The significance of the media in society
Abolition and Emancipation	History Citizenship	Unit 15: (5-6) - Black peoples of America - from slavery to equality Unit 22: (1-6) - The role of the individual for good or ill Unit 3: (1-4) - Human Rights



Topic	Curriculum subject	QCA links
Legacies in a Global World	History Citizenship	Unit 14: (1-4) - The British Empire Unit 15: (6-7) - Black peoples of America Unit 3: (1-4) - Human Rights Unit 4: (1-7) - Britain - a diverse society Unit 7: (1-3) - Local democracy Unit 9: (1-2) - The significance of the media in society Unit 16: (1-3) - Celebrating human rights - citizenship activities for the whole school



2. Africa before the Transatlantic Slave Trade

Summary

The word *Africa* today conjures up images of famine, poverty and conflict. This image is a sharp contrast to the pre-transatlantic slave trade Africa that European explorers lauded for its wealth, abundance in food and great leaders. Initial trade relations between Europeans and Africans were on an equal basis, but the pioneering of a transatlantic trade in human beings by the Portuguese in the 15th century changed the dynamics of the relationship. Some African leaders succumbed to the greed of wealth from trading in their subjects, many more were pressured into entering the slave trade to protect their own subjects from becoming victims of slavery, by providing traders with slaves kidnapped from neighbouring villages. Some leaders however resisted and fought against the buying and selling of human beings. As other European nations entered the 'trade' racism came to underpin the system, justifying the commodification of human beings, by denying that Africans had any history or culture. The impact of the Transatlantic Slave Trade on Africa is still visible today; slavery paved the way for colonialism resulting in the continued depletion of human and material resources, and the imposition of despotic leaders friendly to European interests. The impact on Europe is also visible in the many majestic historical buildings funded by the profits of slavery and the many successful companies which can trace their origins to involvement in the slave trade.

African Civilisations

Africa's great civilisations made an immense contribution to the world, which are still marvelled at today. Fossil evidence in 2002 indicates that the first humans evolved in the area that is now Chad about six to seven

million years ago. Settled civilisations date from 7,000 to 12,000 years ago in the Sahara which was then a fertile farming area. Ancient Egypt first developed over 5,000 years ago, is one of the most notable of these civilisations and boasted one of the first monarchies anywhere in the world. Pharoanic Egypt is best known for its great monuments and feats of engineering such as the Pyramids, but it also made great advances in many other fields too.

The Egyptians produced early forms of paper and a written script. They developed the calendar and made important contributions in various branches of mathematics, such as geometry, algebra and also in mechanics, philosophy, irrigation and architecture. In medicine, the Egyptians understood the body's dependence on the brain over 1,000 years before the Greek scholar Democritus. Some historians believe that ancient Egypt had an important influence on ancient Greece, and they point to the fact that Greek scholars such as Pythagoras and Archimedes studied in Egypt, and argue that the work of Aristotle and Plato was largely based on earlier scholarship in Egypt. For example, what is commonly known as Pythagoras' theorem, was known to the ancient Egyptians hundreds of years before Pythagoras' birth in Athens.

Some of the world's other great civilisations, such as Kush, Axum, Ghana, Mali, and Great Zimbabwe, also flourished in Africa and some major scientific advances were known in Africa long before they were known in Europe. Towards the middle of the 12th century, the north African scientist, Al Idrisi, wrote, '*What results from the opinion of philosophers, learned men and those skilled in observation of the heavenly*



bodies, is that the world is as round as a sphere, of which the waters are adherent and maintained upon its surface by natural equilibrium'. Africans were certainly involved in trans-oceanic travel long before Europeans and there is some evidence to suggest that Africans crossed the Atlantic and reached the American continent, perhaps even north America, as early as 500 BC. In the 14th century, the Syrian writer, al-

Umari, wrote about the voyage of the Emperor of Mali who crossed the Atlantic with 2000 ships but failed to return. Africans in east and south-eastern Africa also set up great civilisations that established important trading links with the kingdoms and empires of India and China long before Europeans had learned how to navigate the Atlantic ocean.

It was gold from the great empires of west Africa, Ghana, Mali and Songhay, which provided the means for the economic take off of Europe in the 13th and 14th centuries and aroused the interest of Europeans in western Africa. An early historian in the 9th century wrote '*the king of Ghana is a great king. In his territory are mines of gold*'. When the famous historian of Muslim Spain, al-Bakri wrote about Ghana in the 11th century, he reported that its king '*rules an enormous kingdom and has great power*'.

In the 14th century, the west African empire of Mali was larger than western Europe and reputed to be one of the largest, richest and most powerful states in the world. When the emperor of Mali, Mansa Musa visited Cairo in 1324, it was said that he brought so much gold with him that its price fell dramatically and had not recovered its value even 12 years later. The empire of Songhay was known, amongst other things, for the famous University of Sankore based in Timbuktu.

In the 16th century one of its most famous scholars, Ahmed Baba, is said to have written more than 40 major books on subjects such as astronomy, history and theology and he had his own private library that held over 1,500 volumes. One of the

first reports of Timbuktu to reach Europe was by Leo Africanus. In his book, published in 1550, he says of the town: '*There you will find many judges, professors and devout men, all handsomely maintained by the king, who holds scholars in much honour. There too they sell many handwritten north African books, and more profit is to be made there from the sale of books than from any other branch of trade*'.

African knowledge was transported to Europe as a result of the North African or Moorish conquest of the Iberian peninsula in the 8th century. There were several such conquests including two by the Berber dynasties in the 11th and 12th centuries. The Muslim invasion of Europe, and the founding of the state of Cordoba, re-introduced all the learning of the ancient world as well as the various contributions made by Islamic scholars and linked Europe much more closely with north and west Africa. Arabic numerals based on those used in India were introduced and they helped simplify mathematical calculations. Europe was also introduced to the learning of ancient world mainly through translations in Arabic of works in medicine, chemistry, astronomy, mathematics and philosophy. So important was the knowledge found in Muslim Spain, that one Christian monk - Adelard of Bath - disguised himself as a Muslim in order to study at the university at Cordoba. Many historians believe that it was this knowledge, brought to Europe through Muslim Spain, which not only created the conditions for the Renaissance but also for the eventual expansion of Europe overseas in the 15th century.

The origins of the Transatlantic Slave Trade

Africans and Europeans traded and interacted on equal levels and trading expeditions were made from Europe to Africa with regularity. As such when Prince Henry the Navigator of Portugal sent a trading expedition to Africa for search for gold in 1441 there was nothing out of the ordinary. However the expedition returned with 10 Africans as a gift for Prince Henry,



who, unsatisfied with such a small number, led a slaving expedition to Africa, captured 235 Africans as slaves and took them back to Portugal. This signalled the start of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, although it did not fully develop for another 100 years. The Spanish and other European powers followed. By the 17th century the Dutch were pre-eminent, closely followed by the French and the English in 1562 with John Hawkins' vigilante capture of 1,200 Africans between 1664 and 1669, who were sold to Spanish settlers in the Caribbean island of Hispaniola.

The search for African slaves was fuelled by the need to supply cheap labour for the plantations started by Europeans outside their own borders. The first to use slave labour were the Portuguese and Spanish in their Atlantic territories such as the Canaries and the Azores. It then moved to their Caribbean and American colonies, where tobacco, spices, coffee and sugar were initially cultivated. The Portuguese and Spanish soon found that indigenous Amerindians did not have the immunity from European diseases to make a dependable slave force. The systematic forced labour imposed by the early European colonists further devastated these peoples, who were largely accustomed to lives as hunters and gatherers.

It was the Spanish priest Bartolomé de las Casas who first suggested using Africans as a 'humane' alternative to enslaving Amerindians. Africans, it was argued - though they came from a broad range of political and economic regimes and varied widely in their linguistic and ethnic make-up - were generally more exposed to methods of cultivation, and more resistant to European diseases. Proponents also argued that various forms of indigenous and Arab slavery had long been in existence in Africa. However transatlantic demand would certainly introduce slavery on a scale and intensity that had not existed before. Indigenous slavery in Africa took various forms such as forced marriage, slavery for debt and as punishment for crime, however it was on a much smaller scale and involved

little more than a few thousand people a year. The Islamic slave trade began around 800 CE which enslaved Africans for sexual or domestic purposes, and took the enslaved to the North and East of Africa and to Asia.

Trading companies and the ruling classes

In early modern Europe, the monarch had to give formal permission (in the form of a Royal charter) for overseas trade to be legal. The charters showed that this was an age of state-regulated trade, also known as 'mercantilism'. In England, various groups of merchants and 'venturers' petitioned the King to form joint companies, which would have sole rights to trade with a particular area, such as west Africa, the West Indies or Virginia. One of these companies was the 'Company of Adventurers' to 'Gynny and Bynny' (old names for two areas of the west African coast). This company was set up in 1619 by Robert Rich, the owner of a tobacco plantation in Virginia, and who later became the Earl of Warwick. Rich's company claimed to only be interested in gold and ivory but it appears to have transported enslaved Africans to Virginia.

At the time there were also white *indentured servants*, who were people that agreed to work as 'fixed contract' or 'temporary' slaves, but they were few and never enough for the work on the plantations.

The most famous and important company involved in the slave trade was the Royal African Company, which was founded in 1672 and enjoyed a monopoly until 1698. The Royal African Company set up and administered fortified trading posts on the west African coast and was empowered to seize any English ships, other than its own, which were involved in slaving ventures. The Company was founded just as the move to sugar cultivation had taken off in the British Caribbean. This had increased the demand for enslaved African workers to cultivate this labour-intensive crop. The trustees and officers of this powerful and influential company included James Duke of York (later James II), Sir Benjamin Bathurst



whose name used to denote the city now known as Banjul in the Gambia and Edward Colston, the Bristol-born philanthropist. Humphrey Morrice, who founded the Bank of England in 1694, was an early member, as was the philosopher John Locke.

'Free trading' in slaves

The Bristol and Liverpool merchants fought long and hard to open out the 'African trade' to their own provincial ports. After years of lobbying and petitions from local MP's and bodies such as the Company of Merchant Venturers of the City of Bristol, the Royal African Company's exclusive monopoly was finally ended. By 1698, private traders were allowed to operate freely in and out of Africa on payment of a duty of 10 percent of the value of their cargoes as a contribution to the upkeep of the Company's forts. But although they had lost their monopoly, the Company's revenues received a considerable boost in 1713. In that year the British Government was able to exert sufficient pressure on the Spanish Government to obtain the transfer of the Asiento, held by French merchants since 1702, to the Company.

These provincial ports saw themselves as enemies of London privilege and champions of 'free trade'. In 1713 the British won the right to supply Spanish ports with slaves, which generated a higher volume of slaving ventures than ever before.

By 1750, 'free trade' of sorts was finally established more fully, with the 'outports' securing full permission to trade in Africa and the 'New World'. From here on, the African trade was managed through a new body comprised of merchants from London, Bristol and Liverpool, called the Company of Merchants Trading to Africa.

The idea of a 'free trade' in enslavement seems contradictory and perverse. Yet for many people living in the port cities of Britain, this 'slave economy' meant freedom from poverty. For example jobs had become available in shipbuilding, manufacture and commerce. Freedom from an oppressively regulatory central government, also seemed attractive to many.



Lesson Plan: Africa before the Transatlantic Slave Trade

Lesson objectives - students will:

- Gain awareness of the existence of functioning and successful west African societies before the onset of the Transatlantic Slave Trade.
- Learn about African contributions to civilization and begin to assess how the slave trade interrupted development in later lessons.
- Start thinking about how and why geographical shifts occur and begin to understand the impact of the slave trade on the geography of the African continent.

Preparation

- Read background information on Africa before the Transatlantic Slave Trade and Legacies of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in a Global World. Make four copies of **Resource Sheet One**.
- Obtain a contemporary map of Africa and make four copies.
- Obtain a contemporary negative image (depicting famine, conflict in a backdrop of a poor city) of Africa and a contemporary African city image (try <http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?t=157401&page=3>) of Africa, make four copies.

Introduction (2 mins)

Introduce the lesson using information from the background paper and explain that you will be using a number of historical and geographical tools and terminology to discuss west African kingdoms prior to the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

Activity 1 (25 mins) - Tools of historical research and views of Africa

1. Introduce the tools of historical research and discuss the following questions with students:
 - What resources would you use to find out about events or societies in the past?
 - How should we judge primary or secondary resources?
 - How can we test historical sources for reliability and validity?
2. Divide students into four groups and ask each group to read the narratives on **Resource Sheet One** and discuss the CB Wadstrom's view of Guinea. Allow 15 minutes for reading and discussion and allocate each group three minutes to feedback to the rest of the class. Ask students to discuss the following questions:
 - What positive features does Wadstrom note about Guinea?
 - What negative features does Wadstrom note about Guinea?
 - How reliable is this source as a primary source? (Consider author, target audience and purpose).



Activity 2 (30 mins) - Images of Africa, past and present

1. Distribute a copy of the sourced negative image of contemporary Africa, the sourced contemporary city image, and **Image A** from **Resource Sheet One**. Ensure that references are masked and avoid inferences to the geographical location. Ask students to discuss the images in their groups for 10 minutes and complete the grid below. Each group should be given five minutes to present their findings to the rest of the class.
2. Distribute copies of a contemporary map of Africa and ask students to compare. Allow five minutes for discussion and two minutes for feedback around the following questions:
 - What immediate differences do you notice between the two maps? (More countries and different boundaries).
 - How and why do geographical shifts occur?
 - How are boundaries decided and why are maps redrawn?

The aim is to have students think about how and why changes occur, so they may come up with things like conflict, population increases/decreases due to war, migration and famine, drought, or too much rainfall. Students may not think of colonialism and this only needs to be mentioned at a very introductory level as it will be covered in Chapter 11:

Image	Place	Time	People & Society	Technology	Purpose of Image and Audience
A					
B					
C					

Follow up/Homework (5 minutes)

Ask students to undertake a research project on any of the following African kingdoms:

- Mali
- Ife and Benin
- The Kingdom of Ghana

Ask them to produce a 500 word brochure consisting of text and images to inform an audience of the kingdom's people, culture, language, leadership and wealth. How did the kingdom grow and what led to its demise?

Closing (3 minutes)

Ensure that students are aware of historical and geographical tools and their uses. Conclude the lesson by stating that this introduction to Africa is important in ensuring that history presents and respects the achievements of each nation and continent in order to foster globally and historically aware citizens who learn from the lessons of history to make the right choices in ensuring a better future for all.



Resource Sheet One: Africa

Observations on the slave trade from the coast of Guinea, during a voyage made in 1787 and 1788, by CB Wadstrom (1789)

The whole coast is abundantly stocked with sheep, hogs, and all sorts of poultry, which propagate with astonishing rapidity. Fishing and hunting are most eagerly pursued ...of the prodigious shoals of numberless kinds of fish, I could have formed no idea without having seen them with my own eyes.

Millet, rice, potatoes, pulse, and many other excellent vegetables are cultivated on the coast with very little trouble, and in profusion perfectly astonishing to a European. Such indeed is the plenty which prevails on the coast, that all the European ships are victualled, without the smallest inconvenience to the inhabitants. There is also abundance of the most wholesome and delicious fruit; articles of no less consequence than those just mentioned. Sugar canes grow wild in many places, which with a little cultivation might have rendered extremely valuable and productive.

An Essay on the impolicy of the African slave trade, in two parts, by the Rev. Thomas Clarkson (1788)

That Africa abounds with hidden treasure...which accident has already discovered. It is certain, however, that this extensive continent is as yet unexplored. The vegetable productions are but little known, and the fossils less. The barks, woods, roots, fruits and leaves have hardly been noticed by any naturalist; and the stones, earths, bitumens and ores, have not been so much as seen by the eye of a chemical observer.

Pieter de Marees, *Description of Guinea, 1602*

At first the town seems to be very large; when one enters it one comes into a great broad street which appears to be seven or eight times broader than the Warme Street in Amsterdam; this extends straight out, and when one has walked a quarter of an hour along it he still does not see the end of the street ...the houses in this town stand in good order, one close to the other, like houses in Holland.

Leo Africanus - Timbuktu 1526

The king at his own expense liberally maintaineth here great numbers of doctors, judges, priests and other learned men. There are manuscripts or written books, brought hither out of Barbery which are sold for more money than other merchandise. Instead of money, they use bars of gold.



Images

Image A - European map depicting Africa before colonialism

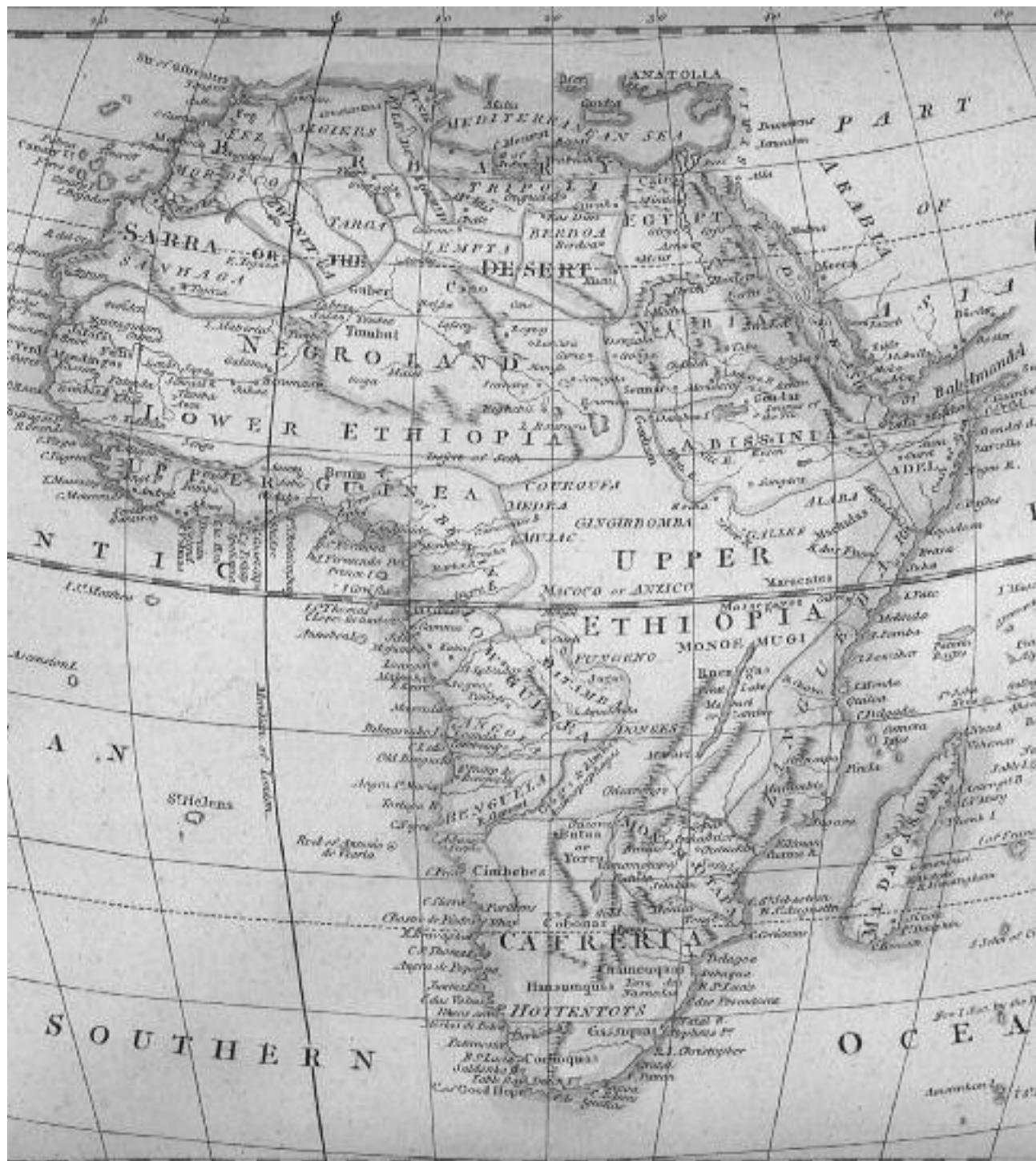
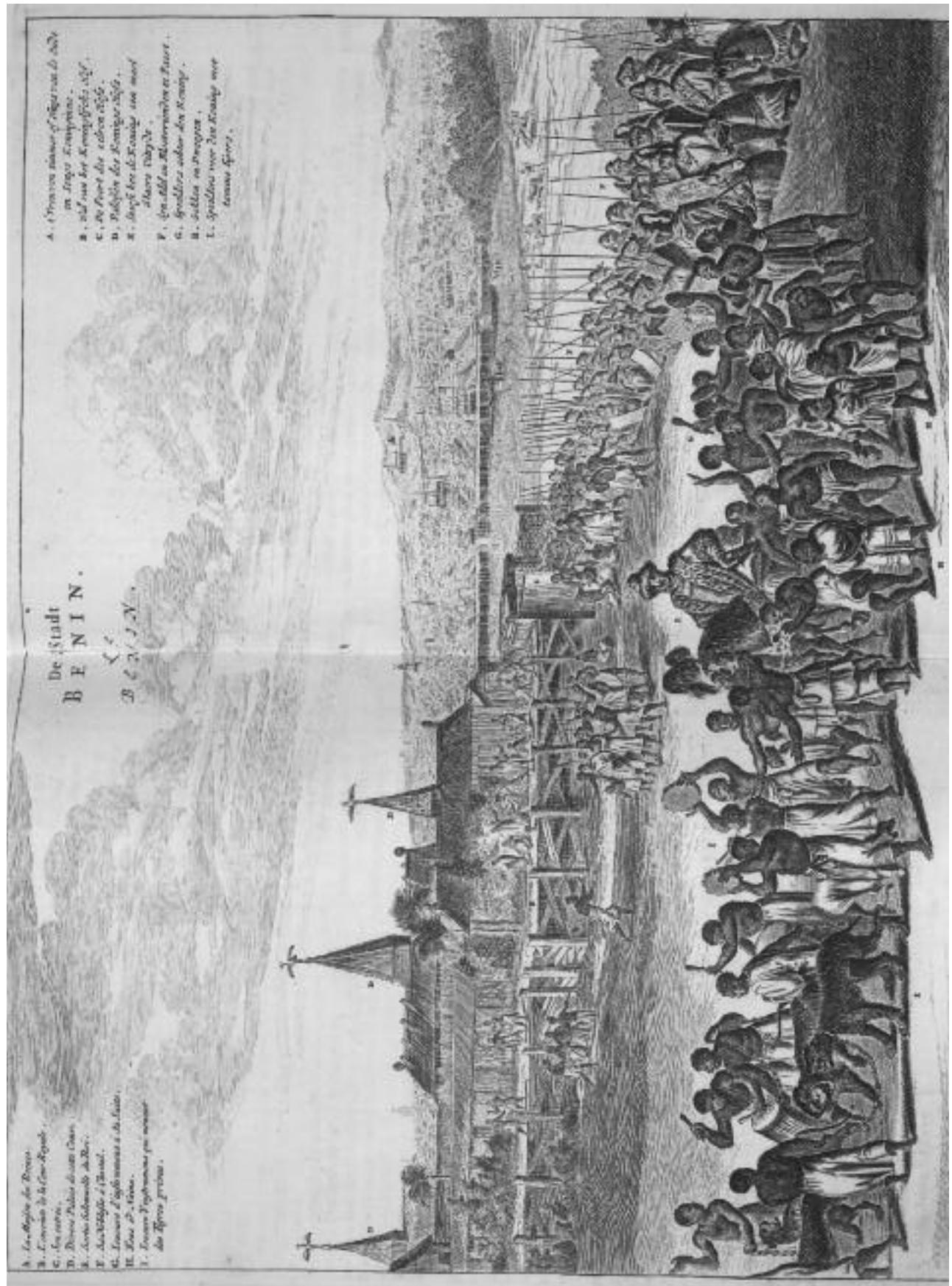


Image B - Benin City in the 17th Century ©The British Library



3. Capture and Enslavement

Summary

To paint a romanticised picture of an idyllic homogenous African society untarnished by conflict or slavery until contact with Europeans would be historically inaccurate and misleading. Africans societies, like all other societies around the world suffered from internal conflict and practiced forms of slavery including debt bondage, enslavement of prisoners of war and forced marriage. However this was on a comparatively small scale and a fundamental difference between African systems of slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, was that the enslaved in Africa could, in most cases, retain his or her name and cultural practices and could gain freedom and marry into and rise to leadership within the community into which he or she was enslaved. The racist rhetoric which underpinned the Transatlantic Slave Trade system prevented the vast majority of Africans from ever obtaining their freedom let alone being able to marry into a slave owning family or holding any positions of power in European society.

Capture

Henry the Navigator and John Hawkins both captured Africans in raids. However, slave traders subsequently realised that an easier way to obtain slaves was to form alliances with African leaders who they supplied with arms and encouraged to make war on their neighbours. They could then purchase their prisoners of war from their allies and obtain a supply of slaves without having to fire a shot themselves. Sometimes Europeans would moor their ships off the coast and make deals with Africans who came up to the ships by canoe. Other times, they would go ashore to trade directly with local people. In both cases, Europeans were often dependent on the cooperation of west Africans for their safety and success. In

particular, west African rulers and their appointed traders or '*cabouceers*' - themselves of west African and African-European backgrounds, also exploited the trade for their own profit.

It is probable that in the wars and raids to obtain prisoners for sale as many or more were killed as were taken alive. In five expeditions by the soldiers of the rulers of Bornu (a state in what is now northern Nigeria), 15,000 prisoners were captured for sale and 20,000 others were killed. But deaths occurred not only in battle. Sometimes as many as forty percent of those captured by the Bornu soldiers, perished on the journey to the coast. Of wars in the hinterland of the so-called Windward or Grain Coast (Sierra Leone), where operations were on a somewhat smaller scale, the slave trader John Newton wrote: '*Though they do not bring legions into the field, their wars are bloody. I believe the captives reserved for sale are fewer than the slain*'.

The Ashantis of Ghana for example, developed formidable military capabilities with the help of European guns to protect themselves from slave raiders, eventually using these to participate in the trade themselves, this time as suppliers. West African elite players were also very skilful in speaking various trading languages and were often successful in playing Europeans off against each other. The Efik in the Calabar Delta region were an example of this and their ruling elite capitalised on the increased European demand for labour. One opinion is that west African elites were able to regulate the supply of slaves to European traders, who were often dependent on them for obtaining slaves.



Holding Forts on the Coast

For the journey to the coast enslaved Africans (who could have been bought, sold, captured, kidnapped, enslaved as punishment or for acts of war) were taken by African traders or middlemen and marched or rowed by river canoe, to be sold to European traders. For the march, also known as the *coffle*, Africans would be chained together in either two's or three's or as many as 30 or 40. Sometimes they were forced to carry items on their heads, such as bundles of elephants' teeth, corn, ivory and hides or water in skin bags. They would be forced to walk or march through the interior for many days or weeks until they reached the coast. Some would be chained and crowded into river canoes and sailed along routes from the interior to awaiting European slavers on the coast. Others were taken to the forts to await sale. At the slave forts the enslaved Africans were placed in *barracoons* or holding cells, where they sometimes waited for many days or weeks for the slave ships to collect them. Sometimes slavers would come from different ports to collect their human cargo, although by the mid 18th century, the Captain would send out boats to collect up to 50 enslaved Africans at one time. During the period of the illegal slave trade, enslaved Africans spent longer in the barracoons, as captains often picked up many of their human cargo together so as to avoid interference from the British navy.

The conditions in the forts for the enslaved women, men and children were inhumane. Having arrived from the long march or by river canoe, they were exhausted and hungry as well as disheartened and mentally and emotionally distressed. Many bore open wounds from their capture either by raid or war. A ship's surgeon would carry out an examination and eliminate those who were not fit for the journey. As a result of the suffocating and unhealthy conditions in the barracoons, many Africans died while waiting to be collected. There were also gender differences in the experiences of the enslaved, for example the women were targets for rape and physical abuse. Conditions were made worse by the long

waiting period, which could vary from days to weeks or months.

African elites and the slave trade

Some African rulers, such as Nazinga Mvemba, King of Bakongo, refused to participate in the slave trade and in 1526 declared: "*It is our will that in these kingdoms there should not be any trade in slaves nor market for slaves.*" Queen Nzingha organised the Kingdom of Matamba and ruled that ex-slaves could live freely in the Kingdom of Ndongo (now Angola). She led her troops into battle and declared that she should be called King instead of Queen. She continued to oppose European slavers for 30 years, only signing a peace treaty with Portugal in 1657.

However, many local leaders succumbed to the temptation to acquire arms and European manufactures in this way. William Pitt, British Prime Minister between 1784-1805, blamed the slave trade for "*those dreadful enormities on that unhappy continent*". Referring to a tribal war on the Kameroun River in the House of Commons in 1792, he said: "*I have no more doubt that they are British arms put into the hands of Africans, which promote universal war and desolation.*"



Lesson Plan: Capture and Enslavement

Lesson objectives - students will:

- Contextualise different forms of historical slavery that affected Africans - that in Africa, slavery was a temporary condition within specified time limits and that European incursion changed the nature of African slavery.
- Understand the start of the dehumanising effects of slavery upon Africans.
- Gain greater understanding of the processes involved and the motivation of participants involved in initial capture and enslavement.
- Understand the active resistance of some African leaders to the slave trade.
- Understand that Africans were not passive subjects in enslavement but active resistors and that some African leaders were greatly opposed to the slave trade.

Activity 1 (40 mins) - Forms of slavery

Divide class into four groups and distribute **Resource Sheet Two** to each group. Ask students to read the first three narratives and answer the following questions. Allow each group five minutes to present a summary of their findings to the class:

- What is the relationship between the enslaved and the master in the system of African slavery?
- How does this contrast with the relationship between the kidnapper and the enslaved?
- How and why has the process of capture changed with the Transatlantic Slave Trade?
- What are the human rights being violated with both forms of slavery?
- What types of historical documentations are these? Can they be verified?

Introduction (15 mins)

Begin with a whole class discussion about freedom and slavery around the following questions:

- What does it mean to be free and what does it mean to be enslaved?
- What are human rights and how can human rights be denied?
- Introduce the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on **Resource Sheet Three** and ask students to read the underlined articles relating to slavery. Discuss the denial of the fundamental right of freedom to introduce the system of the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

Activity 2 (25 mins) - Analysing the motivation for capture and enslavement of Africans

Ask groups to read William Pitt's commentary on the tribal war in Kameroun River in 1792 and Dr Trotter's account on **Resource Sheet Two**, discuss the following questions and feedback to class.

- What were the main reasons for African involvement in the capturing and enslavement of other Africans?
Encourage students to think about the supply of guns and the protection of one's own village by capturing inhabitants from other villages, elements of personal greed)
- From the knowledge about African forms of slavery (i.e servitude) - what kind of slavery might the African kidnappers and traders have envisaged for those they had captured?

To what extend does demand drive

- the supply of people as commodities?



Activity 3 (10 mins) - Dissecting imagery and the violation of human rights

Ask groups to study Image A - '*Captured Africans being transported to the coast for sale to Europeans*' discuss the following questions and feedback answers to class:

- Without prior knowledge of the slave trade, what would you imagine is happening?
- Are images or artists impressions a useful way of documenting historical events?
- In what ways could images provide accurate historical accounts?
- Using Image A and Captain W.F.W Owen's narrative discuss the geographical results of the capture and enslavement of African people in terms of development, agriculture and social structure of the areas of Africa affected by slavery.

Follow up/Homework (5 minutes)

Further individual study - African abolitionists

"It is our will that in these kingdoms, there should not be any trade in slaves, nor market for slave". Nazinga Mvemba, King of Bakongo 1526.

Ask student to research any of the following Africans state leaders using the Recovered Histories and Breaking the Silence websites:

(Queen Nzingha of Angola, Afonso I, King of Kongo, King Tanja Musa and Nazinga Mvemba, King of Bakongo) who resisted against the capture and enslavement of his/her subjects. Students should write a 600 word essay answering the following questions:

- Who was the leader, what territory did they control and what was their objection to the slave trade?
- What motivated the fight against slavery? Was resistance successful?
- What sources have you used? Were you able to find any primary sources?
- Why might there be such few sources or information available?
- What is the role of history and what motivates the recording of certain historical events?

Closing (5 minutes)

Have a roundtable asking students to each recall one fact they have learned from the lesson. Ensure that they are left with the following information:

- That the indigenous African system of slavery in its process of capture, humanity and routes to freedom was different to the processes of the Transatlantic Slave Trade
- That Africans resisted capture and many African leaders were against the system of slavery
- That a slavery economy fuelled the demand and supply of enslaved Africans
- That historical sources need to be analysed in order to be useful.



Resource Sheet Two: Capture and Enslavement

An Account of the Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa by Alexander Falconbridge (1788)

A man and his son, according to their own information were seized by professed kidnappers while they were planting yams, and sold for slaves.

Continual enmity is [thus] fostered among the negroes of Africa, and all social intercourse between them destroyed. Previous to being in this employ, I entertained a belief...that the kings and principal men breed Negroes for sale, as we do cattle. All the information I could procure confirms me in the belief that to kidnapping, the slave trade owes its chief support.

An essay on the comparative efficiency of Regulation or Abolition, as applied to the slave trade, by the Rev. Thomas Clarkson (1789)

October 19th 1787 - Inquiring today of a negro lad, how he came into the situation of a slave, he informed me, that he had been stolen from his parents in the interior country of Cape Rouge; that the inhabitants of the shore usually came up in bodies for this purpose, and that they unfortunately met with him, and brought him to Goree in company with others, whom they had taken in the same manner.

November 7th 1787 - The king promised today, that he would divide his military tomorrow into more parties than before, and that he would set them upon several villages at once, and assured the embassy, that he could not fail of receiving a sufficient number of negroes to discharge his debts, as well as to return for the presents brought him.

December 6th 1787 - A young Negro from the village, of Rupsk was purchased today, who was brought down from Dakard. He was on a visit at the latter place when the chief, incited by a merchant from Goree, obtained the consent of the inhabitants, and treacherously as well as forcibly seized him, and sold him for a slave.

In the year 1787 - I was lying at Cape Palmas. I was told by the natives there that they intended to attack a village on the third night. I asked them if the inhabitants had done them any injury. They replied no; but that there were a considerable number of fine stout young men belonging to it, who were good for trade. This was their only reason.

William Pitt British Prime Minister (1784-1805)

William Pitt, blamed the slave trade for ‘those dreadful enormities on that unhappy continent’. Referring to a tribal war on the Kameroun River in the House of Commons in 1792, he declared: “I have no more doubt that they are British arms put into the hands of Africans, which promote universal war and desolation”.



An abstract of the evidence delivered before a select committee of the House of Commons in the years 1790 and 1791, on the part of the petitioners for the abolition of the slave trade

Dr Trotter asking a black trader, what they made of their slaves when the English and French were at war, was answered, "when ships ceased to come, slaves ceased to be taken".

Mr Wadstrom says, that King Barbesin was unwilling to pillage his subjects, but he was excited to it by means of a constant intoxication, kept up by the French and mulattoes of the embassy; when sober, he always expressed a reluctance to harass his people.

Mr Ellison says, when he was lying at Yanamaroo, in the Gambia, slaves were brought down. The traders raised the price. The captains would not give it, but thought to compel them by firing upon the town. They fired red hot shot from the ship, and set several houses on fire.

Isaac Parker says the Guinea captains lying in old Calabar River fixed on a certain price...agreed to lie under a £.50 bond, in consequence of which, the natives did not readily bring slaves on board to sell at those prices; the captains used to row guard at night, to take the canoes as they passed the ships, and so stopping the slaves from getting to their towns and prevent the traders from getting them. They kept them till the traders agreed to slave at these old prices.

Captain W.F.W. Owen, British Naval Officer, 1820s

Quilimane, on the coast of modern Mozambique, is now the greatest mart for slaves on the east coast... The riches of Quilimane consisted, in a trifling degree, of gold and silver, but principally of grain, which was produced in such quantities to supply Mozambique. But the introduction of the slave trade stopped the pursuits of industry, and changed those places where peace and agriculture had reigned into a seat of war and bloodshed. Contending tribes are now constantly striving to obtain mutual conflict prisoners as slaves for sale to the Portuguese, who excite these wars and fatten on the blood and wretchedness they produce. The slave trade has been a blight on its prosperity; for at present Quilimane and Portuguese possessions in the whole colony of the Rios de Senna do not supply themselves with sufficient corn for their own consumption.

A letter on the abolition of the slave trade, addressed to the freeholders and other inhabitants of Yorkshire, by W. Wilberforce Esq. (London 1807)

They seldom sell their family slaves, except for great crimes - some of them have a good many house slaves, in which they place a great pride; and these slaves live so well and easy, that it is hard to know them from their owners, being often better clothed, especially the females, who have sometimes coral, amber, and silver necklaces and ornaments.

The author never heard of but one that ever sold a family slave, except for such crimes as they would have been sold for if they had been free. If one of the family slaves commits a crime and the master sells him without the consent of the rest, they will all run away, and be protected in the next kingdom.



Resource Sheet Three: Universal Declaration of Human Rights

On December 10, 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights the full text of which appears in the following pages. Following this historic act the Assembly called upon all Member countries to publicise the text of the Declaration and ‘to cause it to be disseminated, displayed, read and expounded principally in schools and other educational institutions, without distinction based on the political status of countries or territories’.

Preamble

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1 All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.



Article 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6. Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7. All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8. Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 9. Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent

Article 10. and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

(1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 12.

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 13.

(1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution. (2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

(1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.



Article 15. (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

(1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or

Article 16. religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

(1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with

Article 17. others.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right

Article 18. includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes

Article 19. freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

Article 20. (2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

(1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or

Article 21. through freely chosen representatives.

(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to

Article 22. realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

(1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

Article 23. (2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of



Article 24. working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-

Article 25. being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the

Article 26. elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

(1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community,

Article 27. to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 28.

(1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

Article 29. (2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

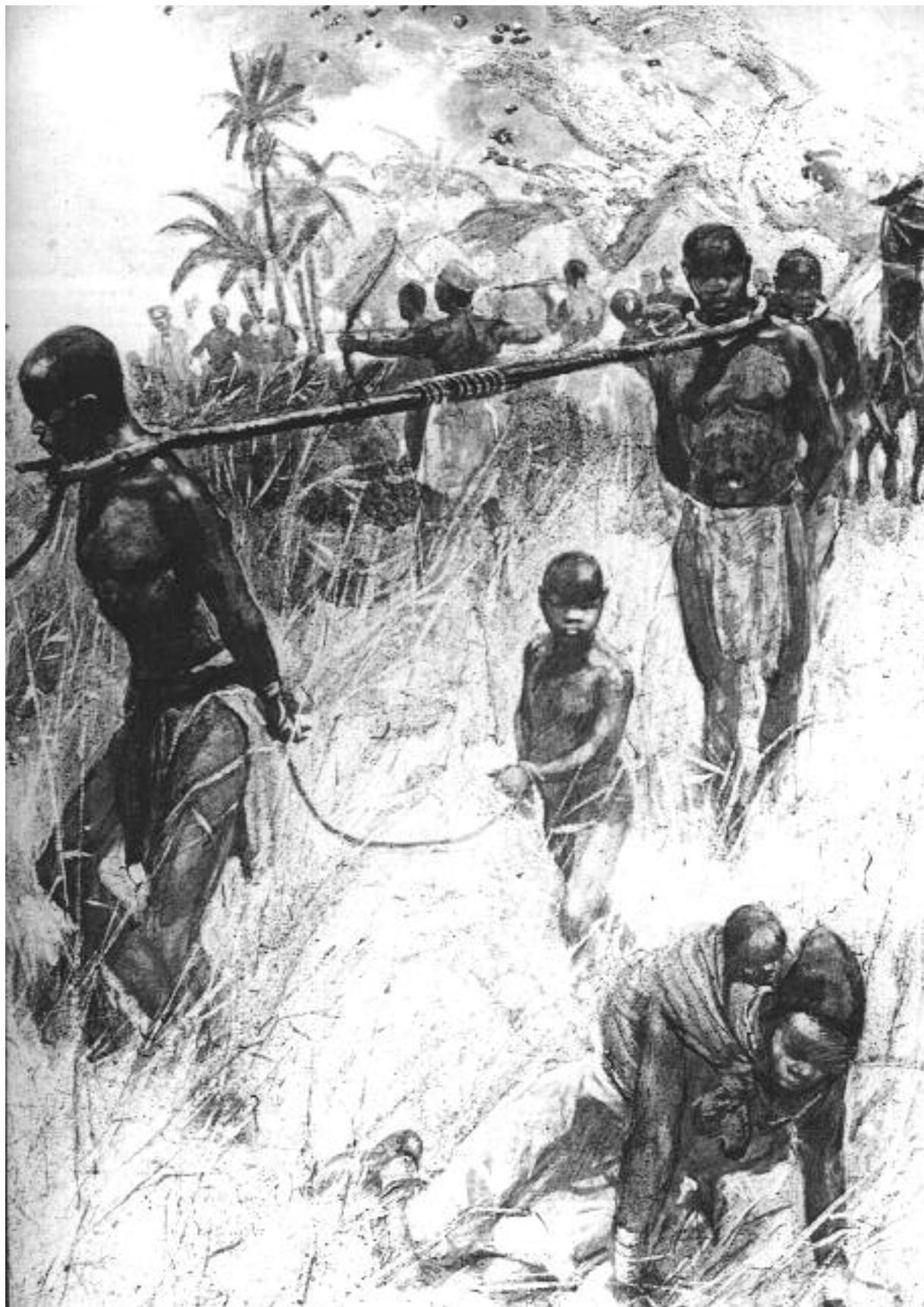
(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the

Article 30. destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.



Image A - Captured Africans being transported to the coast for sale to Europeans. Millions of Africans died resisting capture in Africa, during their transport to the coast or while being held in slave forts or elsewhere before making the transatlantic crossing, © Anti-Slavery International



4. The Middle Passage

Summary

The Middle Passage is so named as it conveys the mid-point of the slavery triangle. The triangle consisted of ships setting sail from European ports bound for Africa, loaded with guns, chains, glass beads and alcohol. The second leg of the triangle involved the capture and transportation of enslaved Africans to the Caribbean and American colonies. The triangle was completed with the ships returning back to European ports full of the goods such as sugar, tobacco and cotton obtained from the labour of the enslaved Africans.

Africans who had survived the march to the forts were boarded onto the ships and packed like sardines to maximise profit and made to lie in their own and the filth of their fellow captives for the duration of the voyage as they were shackled close to each other and denied freedom of movement. Many deaths occurred during this voyage, both from Africans choosing to kill themselves rather than be enslaved and from the ship's crew disdain for the lives of their 'cargo' and from revolts. Africans persisted in fighting for their freedom; despite a lack of success revolts were a common occurrence on board slave ships.

Slave Ships

As the Slave Trade grew and became more organised, ships were especially built for the journey. By the 1770s most ships built in Liverpool were for slave trading. The area below deck was designed to hold the maximum number of enslaved Africans. With the high mortality rates in the early period of the trade, some Liverpool ships added ventilation, hoping to reduce deaths during the voyage. The 17th century 'flute ship' a large square-rigged vessel, with three masts was a partially armed ship

designed for war, and had, by the 18th century, become the popular choice.

The Middle Passage - A Way of Death

The now famous 18th century British Anti-Slavery model of a slave ship (*the Brookes*) with enslaved Africans packed below deck like sardines provides the most graphic image of the Middle Passage. The men were packed and secured in irons to platforms below deck, and had to either crouch or lie down in the tightly confined space. They were made to lie in their own vomit and filth due to the cramped conditions. The women and children were placed in a separate section below deck or in a secured area above. The unhygienic and overcrowded conditions led to the spread of such diseases as dysentery, known as the flux, infected people being forced to stay below deck, sometimes until death. Their bodies would eventually be removed and thrown overboard and the living would witness the pain and agony of the sick and dying.

The ship's crew sailed the ship, attended to naval duties and policed the enslaved Africans. They whipped, punished and ridiculed the Africans, and played an integral role in maintaining their inhumane conditions. With an early estimate of one death in every five crew members, the Middle Passage was much despised among seamen. It became difficult for ship Captains to recruit men for the journey, and they often had to resort to capturing men for the job. Many seamen jumped ship when the opportunity arose to escape the cruel treatment and harrowing conditions. Ironically, this played a key role in galvanising support for the anti-slavery movement.



The case of the Zong

Africans were seen and treated as expendable cargo by ship captains and crews and this is horribly illustrated by the case of the Zong. In 1781, Luke Collingwood, captain of the slave ship Zong was sailing from west Africa to Jamaica with 440 Africans on board and a crew of 17. His inexperience and bad weather meant that the journey took four months, twice as long as usual. 60 of the enslaved Africans had died three months into the journey and many more looked likely to follow the same fate. Collingwood was paid £5 a month plus a share of the owner's profits, however delivering dead captives meant no profit. Collingwood reasoned that as the captured Africans were insured for £30 each, he could claim insurance on his losses. As death from natural causes was not covered by the insurance, Collingwood instructed his crew to throw the sickest captives overboard and if asked later to say it was necessary to safeguard the limited water supplies as the journey had taken so long. When the Zong landed in Jamaica, 131 Africans had been murdered by drowning. The owners William Gregson, a Liverpool banker and slave trader and his colleague filed an insurance claim. John Lee, the Solicitor General argued that the Africans were cargo and hence no different from any other insured goods that had been lost.

'What is this claim that human people have been thrown overboard? This is a case of chattels or goods. Blacks are goods and property: it is madness to accuse these well serving honourable men of murder. They acted out of necessity and in the most appropriate manner for the cause. The case is the same as if horses had been thrown overboard.'

The insurance case found in favour of the owners but the insurers appealed and the original decision was later overturned. It was Olaudah Equiano who brought the case to the attention of Granville Sharp. When Sharp heard the details of the Zong, he was outraged that the case was one of an insurance claim rather than a murder investigation. He tried unsuccessfully to get

a murder prosecution, but Captain Collingwood had died and the loss of the lives of slaves seen as an economic issue rather than a moral one. After the case of the Zong, the government intervened to regulate slave insurance and an Act of Parliament in 1790 specified that 'no loss or damage shall be recoverable on account of the mortality of slaves by natural death or ill treatment or against loss by throwing overboard of slaves on any account whatsoever'.

Revolts and Punishments

A large number of revolts took place while the slave ship was still in view of the African coastline, and sometimes communities on the coast would help the enslaved on the ship. In 1773, the enslaved Africans from Gambia killed all but two crew members and forced them to sail the ship back to Sierra Leone. The most famous open sea revolt was led by an enslaved African named Cinque aboard the Amistad when the crew was overthrown. However, the ship was sailed to the United States and the Africans were arrested and subjected to trial, eventually gaining their freedom. Europeans were very wary of revolt and the crew regularly inspected their ships for weapons, punishing the enslaved Africans who resisted authority. Punishments varied in severity and much depended on the character of ship's captain. John Newton for example, a famous Liverpool Captain, put the enslaved young males '*slightly in thumb screws to obtain confession*'. Teeth chisels were sometimes used to force enslaved Africans who went on hunger strike, to eat. Whips, such as the 'cat-o-nine-tails' and the manatea, a whip made from the hide of a manatee, were also used. The enslaved were also placed in shackles and irons as punishment. Africans took every opportunity they could to resist their enslavement. Sometimes individuals and groups of chained Africans threw themselves overboard in what they saw as physical and spiritual redemption from the horrendous experiences of the Middle Passage.

Seasoning and Preparation for



Sale

Once they had arrived in the Americas or Caribbean, the ritual of preparing the enslaved for sale would begin. The focus was on reducing the obvious effects of the journey on the body of the African. The enslaved were washed, shaved and ‘oiled’ for example with *palm oil*. Sometimes they were fed fresh fruit like oranges to try to improve the appearance of the skin. The enslaved were also made to ‘exercise’ to stretch the muscles and get them back into working order. It is believed that the limbo, the dance now known for the display of great dexterity and flexibility, evolved from the series of exercises practised by the crew in preparing the African for sale. If this was not the end of their journey, enslaved Africans would be placed in holding bays in ports. For example, Barbados had barracoons where Africans would wait for ships to take them to Brazil.



Lesson Plan: The Middle Passage

Lesson objectives - students will:

- Learn how captive Africans were packed into the holds of ships as cargo to be transported from west Africa to the Caribbean.
- Understand from first hand accounts the appalling conditions endured by Africans on board a slave ship.
- Explore through language what it might feel like to be subjected to this treatment.
- Begin to examine how images such as the ‘Brookes’ ship-plan became powerful pieces of propaganda to publicize the injustices of the slave trade.
- Clarify that the transportation of Africans during the Middle Passage was unique and not voluntary migration, such as the case of the indentured workers of Ireland during the Potato Famine who were treated appallingly.

Introduction and Activity 1

(15 mins) - Literary historical descriptions and moral questions of the experience of enslaved Africans during the Middle Passage

Introduce the lesson and relay facts from the background information to explain the Middle Passage (the transportation of captured Africans from Africa to the Caribbean via the Atlantic Ocean hence Transatlantic Slavery). Distribute a copy of **Resource Sheet Four** and ask different students to read a narrative. Engage the class in discussion around the following questions:

- What do the primary sources tell us about the experience of the Middle Passage?
- What part did the Middle Passage play in the Transatlantic Slave Trade?
- How did the experience of the Middle Passage differ between age and gender?
- How and why were Africans categorised and treated as ‘cargo’ rather than human beings?

Activity 2 (40 mins) - Fictional writing: The forms of resistance against enslavement during the Middle Passage

Ask students to write a first person account as a participant onboard a slave ship rebellion using information from **Resource Sheet Four**. Students can use the following points as a guide:

- Describe the conditions on board the slave ship - why would you consider risking your life to take part in a rebellion?
- Describe how you were able to plot a rebellion
- Describe how you communicated with others who spoke a different language to avoid alerting the ships crew
- Describe your emotions during the revolt
- Describe your emotions after having overcome your oppressors.



Activity 3 (15 mins) - Analysing historical imagery

Ask students to study Image A - '*Brookes ship*' on **Resource Sheet Four**. Engage students in a discussion about the image by asking the following questions:

- What does the image portray about the conditions on the slave ships?
- What does the image fail to tell us?
- What are the advantages of using an image as a primary source and what are the disadvantages?
- What might this image have been used for?
- What additional information would be needed to make this image both reliable and valid?

Closing (5 minutes)

Ensure that students are aware of:

- The differences between forced and voluntary migration
- The role of the Middle Passage in the term 'Transatlantic Slave Trade'
- The derogatory words used during the Middle Passage, such as 'cargo' when referring to a human being and its impact both on Africans and the ship's crew
- The purpose of questioning primary historical material to assess reliability and validity.



Resource Sheet Four: The Middle Passage

An Account of the Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa, by Alexander Falconbridge (1788)

Upon the Negroes refusal to take sustenance, I have seen coals of fire, glowing hot, put on a shovel, and placed so near their lips, as to scorch and burn them.

The hardships and inconveniences suffered by the Negroes during the passage are scarcely to be enumerated or conceived - the exclusion of fresh air the most intolerable.

The deck...was so covered with the blood and mucus which had proceeded from them in consequence of the flux (dysentery) that it resembled a slaughterhouse.

An essay on the comparative efficiency of Regulation or Abolition, as applied to the slave trade, by the Rev. Thomas Clarkson (1789) The Middle Passage - from a witness account

The misery which the slaves endure in consequence of too close a stowage is not easy to be described...in one of my voyages, which was particularly unhealthy, we have found eight or ten dead in a morning. In the _____ we purchased 350 slaves, and buried 6; in a second voyage, in the same ship we purchased 350, and buried 200; and in the _____ we purchased about 370 and buried about 100.

An abstract of the evidence delivered before a select committee of the House of Commons in the years 1790 and 1791, on the part of the petitioners for the abolition of the slave trade

On being brought on board, says Dr Trotter [the enslaved Africans] show signs of extreme distress and despair, from a feeling of their situation, and regret at being torn from their friends and connections...many retain those impressions for a long time...making a howling melancholic noise, expressive of extreme anguish...owing to their having dreamt they were in their own country again, and finding themselves when awake, in the hold of a slave ship. This exquisite sensibility was particularly observable among the women, any of whom on such occasions he found in hysterical fits.

www.antislavery.org/breakingthesilence

The now famous 18th century British Anti-Slavery model of a slave ship (the *Brookes* model) with enslaved Africans packed below deck like sardines provides the most graphic image of the Middle Passage. The men were packed and secured in irons to platforms below deck, and had to either crouch or lie down in the tightly confined space. They were made to lie in their own vomit and filth. The women and children were placed in a separate section below deck or in a secured area above. The unhygienic and overcrowded conditions led to the spread of such diseases like dysentery, or the flux, infected people being forced to stay below deck, sometimes until death. Their bodies would eventually be removed and thrown overboard.



An Account of the Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa, by Alexander Falconbridge (1788)

As very few of the negroes can so far brook the loss of their liberty, and the hardships endure as to bear them with any degree of patience, they are ever upon the watch to take advantage of the least negligence in their oppressors.

Insurrections are frequently the consequence; which are seldom suppressed without much bloodshed. Sometimes these are successful and the whole ships company is cut off.

www.antislavery.org/breakingthesilence

A large number of revolts took place while the slave ship was still in view of the African coastline, and sometimes communities on the coast would help the enslaved on the ship. In 1773, the enslaved Africans from Gambia killed all but two crew members and forced them to sail the ship back to Sierra Leone. The most famous open sea revolt was led by an enslaved African named Cinque aboard the *Amistad* when most of the crew were overthrown.

Observations on the slave trade from the coast of Guinea, during a voyage made in 1787 and 1788, by CB Wadstrom

About two years ago, a slave vessel belonging to Brest, having been becalmed in the Middle Passage fell short of provisions and water. The Captain on this occasion had recourse to poison, by which so great a number was dispatched, that of *five hundred slaves*, only *twenty one* arrived at Cape Francois.

Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavas Vassa, the African, as written by himself* (1789)

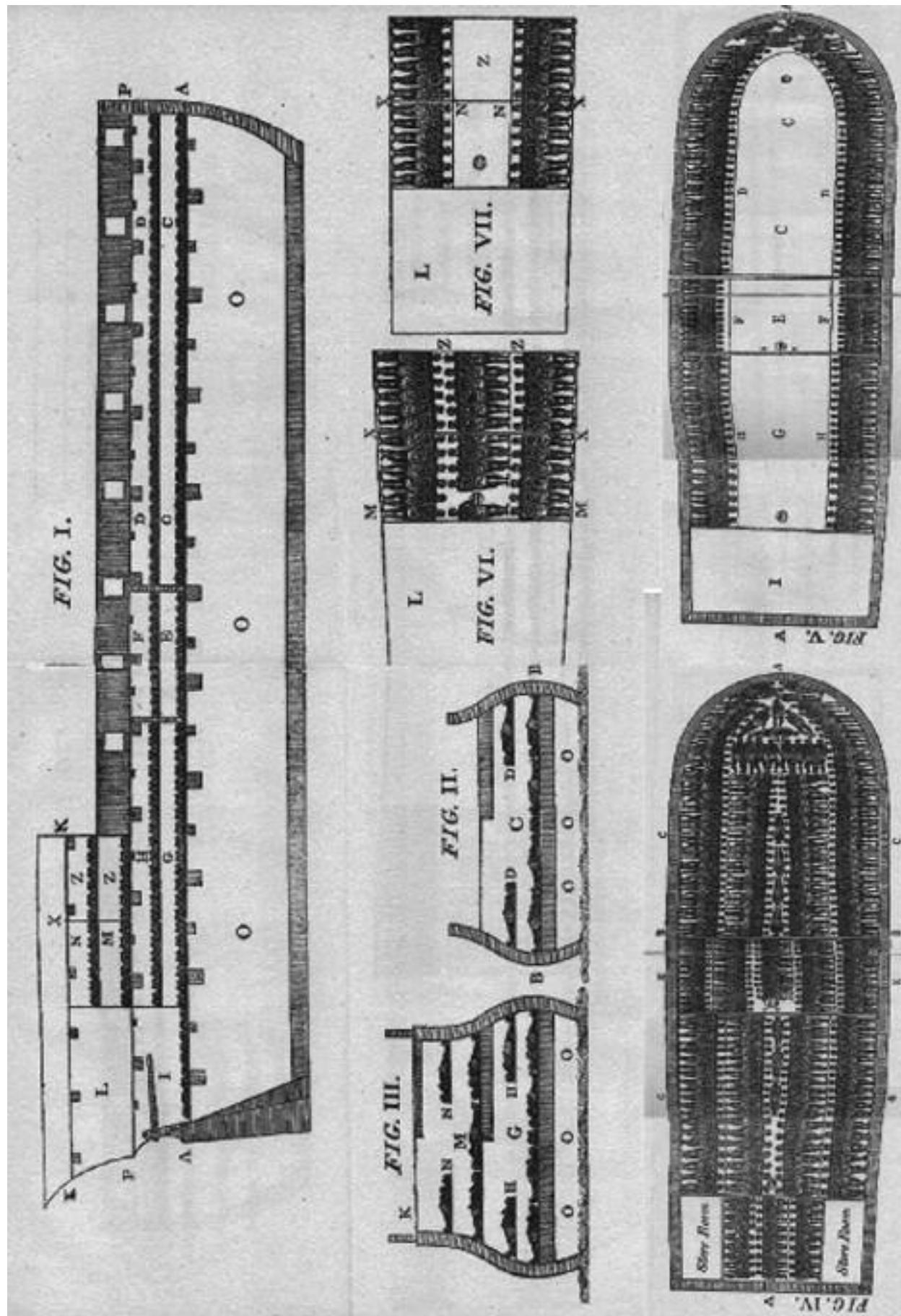
At last, when the ship we were in had got in all her cargo, they made ready with many fearful noises, and we were all put under deck, so that we could not see how they managed the vessel. But this disappointment was the least of my sorrow. The stench of the hold while we were on the coast was so intolerably loathsome, that it was dangerous to remain there for any time, and some of us had been permitted to stay on the deck for the fresh air; but now that the whole ship's cargo were confined together, it became absolutely pestilential.

The closeness of the place, and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us. This produced copious perspirations, so that the air soon became unfit for respiration, from a variety of loathsome smells, and brought on a sickness among the slaves, of which many died, thus falling victims to the improvident avarice, as I may call it, of their purchasers.

This wretched situation was again aggravated by the galling of the chains, now become insupportable; and the filth of the necessary tubs, into which the children often fell, and were almost suffocated. The shrieks of the women, and the groans of the dying, rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable. Happily perhaps for myself I was soon reduced so low here that it was thought necessary to keep me almost always on deck; and from my extreme youth I was not put in fetters. In this situation I expected every hour to share the fate of my companions, some of whom were almost daily brought upon deck at the point of death, which I began to hope would soon put an end to my miseries. Often did I think many of the inhabitants of the deep much more happy than myself; I envied them the freedom they enjoyed, and as often wished I could change my condition for theirs.



Image A - The Brookes Ship. In 1789, 700 posters were printed showing 482 slaves crammed on board. This picture shocked people at the time and remains one of the most enduring images associated with the Transatlantic Slave Trade, © Anti-Slavery International



5. Enslavement in the Caribbean

Summary

The demand for labour on Caribbean plantations led to the forced importation and enslavement of Africans. On arrival the captured Africans were auctioned to plantation owners who sometimes physically branded their 'property' with hot irons, bearing the owners' initials. Africans were forced to adopt European names reinforcing the subordination in the owner/slave dynamic. Enslaved Africans worked on plantations cultivating crops such as cotton, tobacco and sugar, the products were sent to Europe, the profits from which fuelled the Industrial Revolution. Africans were treated brutally on plantations but many managed to retain their culture and passed it down through generations despite the suppression by slave masters.

Demand for labour on the Plantations

The islands and mainland territories of the Caribbean region had been inhabited by indigenous people who supported themselves by subsistence agriculture, hunting and fishing. Few indigenous people in the islands survived after contact with the early European settlers. Some who resisted the invaders died in the conflict that followed. Many died because they had no natural immunity to diseases that arrived with Europeans and had not been known in the Americas. In the mainland colonies, the survival of indigenous populations was greater because they could retreat into the interior. But, one way or another, by the time that the commercial production of sugar had begun to be developed, there was little or no indigenous labour available. If Europeans were to cultivate their sugar plantations, the importation of labourers was essential. This demand led to the start of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and the arrival of enslaved Africans in the 'New World'.

Auctions

Planters and their agents checked the health of newly arrived Africans using humiliating examinations. Slave traders would use many tricks to disguise ailments that might prevent a sale, grey hair was dyed black and palm oil rubbed onto skin to create a healthy looking shine. Others who were sick, injured or elderly were called 'refuse slaves' and could take weeks to sell.

Africans were also renamed as part of a process to deny identity thereby reinforcing the ownership element of slavery. Africans would be given European names or non-descript names like Nobody or Gift. Ironically, many enslaved Africans like Equiano's given name of Gustavus Vassa, were named after prime ministers or great emperors. Many Africans however managed to keep their own names and pass them down through generations, an assertion of their personal identity and their link to their African culture and ancestry.

Familial separation occurred at every stage of the enslavement process. On plantations, enslaved Africans could be sold on a master's whim, again reinforcing their position as possessions rather than people. A historian talking about the effect on children born into slavery said: *'This generation won't know Africa in the same way that their parents knew Africa.... The child also won't know freedom in the same way that a parent knew freedom... Because a child sees daily the whippings, the brutality of the system, sees their parents coming under the authority, coming under the rule of the whip of the overseer, even. So it's very difficult. But at the same time, I think parents teach children what it is to be about the slave community. And that's family. That's religion. And that's togetherness'*.



Field Work on Plantations

As slavery evolved and grew, complicated systems of social status developed on plantations. The lowest ranking slaves, the backbone of the plantation economy, were the field slaves. The field slaves were divided into ‘gangs’ according to their physical strength and ability, with the strongest and fittest males and females in the first gang. The highest ranking slaves were the domestic servants who worked in the owner’s house. The difference in status between field and domestic slaves caused a division between the slaves on most plantations.

Field work on the sugar plantations was intense and exhausting, particularly the digging of holes for planting and the cutting of canes when it was time to reap them. Hard work was enforced through regular whippings by drivers, who were ‘privileged’ slaves under the overseer’s supervision. Drivers used a cart whip usually used on horses to establish a climate of fear and unquestioned obedience amongst the enslaved. During crop time, work in the factories was equally intense, hours were long and injury and death were frequent. The cruel pace at which slaves were driven effectively shortened their lives, and this continued to be the case despite legislation, which claimed to restrict how severely enslaved Africans were treated.

Plantations throughout the Caribbean were organised in much the same way, though there were differences amongst the islands. In Puerto Rico for example, the Spanish established slave codes that gave enslaved Africans more rights than in many other colonies. These codes allowed some enslaved Africans to own property, grow food on small plots of land, and live together with families. This ‘stability’ enabled slave families to grow without planters having to import more African labour. Cuba by contrast, was one of the richest slave colonies, and wealthy plantation owners could afford to import large numbers of African slaves. As more Africans were brought to the island, the Spanish army was kept there to defend the Cuban Creoles and

whites against the possibility of a slave revolt. During the mid 1800’s the many mixed-raced enslaved in Cuba enjoyed better lives and were generally wealthier than the field slaves.

In Barbados women did most of the field labour, while men did more skilled work. Enslaved Africans suffered some of the harshest conditions in Barbados during the sugar boom where, unlike Puerto Rico, slave families were not allowed to live together.

Resistance on Plantations

The inhuman, harsh and intolerable conditions on these plantations led to rebellion and revolt. The laws and punishments of the 1733 ‘Slave Codes’ in the Caribbean were some of the most severe ever known, and were the main cause of the St. John Revolt (1733-34). The newly arrived ‘Animas’ or ‘Minas’ (as the slaves were then called) from Africa refused to accept the horrifying conditions of slavery and life on the plantations. Most of these revolts ended in failure, and slave owners’ revenge was immediate and brutal. Enslaved ‘rebels’ were put to death on the spot, and many committed suicide rather than suffer such unspeakable brutality of punishment or a return to slavery.

On plantations, Africans also resisted their enslavement in a number of ways. Sometimes they deliberately damaged property - including livestock, others ate dirt to make themselves ill and unable to work. Women even found ways of killing their unborn children to prevent them from being born into slavery.

Sometimes slaves ‘temporarily’ ran away from the plantations as a way of bargaining with the plantation owner or his attorney. They would find a sympathetic free person to bargain on their behalf for a number of things, for example better treatment, less severe working conditions, sometimes for bigger food rations or even for a particularly cruel overseer to be dismissed. Sometimes it worked and the enslaved African would return to the plantation, but this kind of



tactic was risky. It was difficult to find a safe hiding place and the punishment for running away could be severe.

On the Amity Hall plantation in Vere, Jamaica, there were normally about 300 slaves. In April 1802 Alex Moir, the manager of a neighbouring estate who had formerly been an overseer on Amity Hall, wrote a letter to the owner of the plantation. He reported that the overseer at Amity Hall was treating the slaves with great cruelty and that as a consequence '*the number of runaways increased to an unexampled degree - there being no fewer than from 25 to 30 continually absent.*' He said that several of the runaways had '*come to me with whom they are acquainted...*' A month later Moir wrote to her again:

'I here enclose a list of all your Slaves now runaways - many of them I have very lately seen, & they are determined to suffer death rather than return to their duty ... They declare that the moment any other person is appointed to the management of it they will return... and when they have such a person ... they will behave as well as any Slave in the Island.'

Beyond the plantation

Despite the horrific conditions that millions were forced to endure, they were able to create ways of coping with their situations that gave expression to their humanity and creativity and maintained their African heritage and identity.

Initially black and white artisans worked side by side, but gradually the community of enslaved Africans began to dominate the Caribbean and southern states of the United States of America. Enslaved Africans sold good in markets and other bartering and economic systems operated autonomously from plantation dominated authorities. Enslaved Africans worked six days a week, with only Sundays for themselves. On Sundays they tended their own plots of land to supplement their limited food supplies and to sell any surplus to generate a small income. Sundays also provided an opportunity to engage in African traditions

such as cooking, hair-braiding, wood carving and the use of herbal remedies. Story-telling ensured that traditional west African tales passed down through generations.

Many Africans became fluent in European languages and although not formally allowed to read and write many found ways to learn. In time, many of the enslaved as well as the emancipated had diversified into a wide range of occupations, ranging from sailors to cowboys. White owners often encouraged and trained chosen slaves to become skilled musicians and by the mid-eighteenth century, black musicians were a common sight in Britain.



Lesson Plan: Enslavement in the Caribbean

Lesson objectives - students will:

- Use a range of source material to make conclusions about the experiences of enslaved Africans on plantations in the Caribbean.
- Evaluate a range of sources on slavery as part of an investigation, select relevant information and reach a conclusion.
- Start thinking about differences between the forced labour conditions and dehumanization suffered by the enslaved Africans and the appalling working conditions of the working poor in the United Kingdom.
- Assess the different aspects of plantation life and analyse the impact on family life, working life, powerlessness and forms of agency experienced.
- Acquire knowledge that Africans were not passive subjects in enslavement but active resistors.

NB - This topic and narratives tell of harrowing violence and dehumanisation. Ensure that students tackle the subject sensitively and allow for discussion on emotions triggered by the narratives. At the end of the lesson, reinforce the fact that history is fraught with violent events and the purpose of our learning about them is to empathise with victims and to ensure that those events are never repeated again.

Activity 1 (25 mins) - Literary historical description: the daily workings of plantation life

Divide students into four groups and ask each group to read the narratives by Mary Prince and Adam Hochschild on **Resource Sheet Five**. Allow 15 minutes for reading and discussion, and allocate each group three minutes to give feedback to whole class. Ask students to discuss the following questions:

- What did the daily life of an enslaved African consist of?
- How did the concept of family, neighbourhood and kinship operate between Africans on a plantation?
- How might this have affected relationships between enslaved Africans?

Activity 2 (25 mins) - Reading for meaning: systems of punishments on plantations

Ask students to read the rest of the narratives on **Resource Sheet Five**. Allow 15 minutes for reading and discussion and allocate the questions according to each group who will then give feedback to the rest of the class.

- **Group 1:** Note the ‘crime’ and the accompanying punishment. Can the severity of the punishments ever be justified?
- **Group 2:** How valuable was the life of an enslaved African to an enraged owner?
- **Group 3:** How vital do you think a climate of fear and brutality was to maintaining the plantation system and slavery?
- **Group 4:** What characteristics would an enslaved African have had to adopt to best avoid brutal punishments?



Activity 3 (15 mins) - Images of resistance and agency

Inform students that enslaved Africans demonstrated different forms of agency (maintaining a sense of self determination) including running away as depicted by the Image A 'The Runaway' on plantations and developed inventive ways of showing resistance. The class should discuss the following questions:

- What form of agency is being shown in Image A?
- How successful do you think this form of agency might have been?
- What other ways might enslaved Africans have demonstrated a show of self determination?
- What might have been the benefits of maintaining a sense of agency to the enslaved person's sense of self and worth?

Follow up/Homework (5 minutes)

Ask students to complete the following activity:

Using the narratives and other research from the Recovered Histories and Breaking the Silence websites, write a 500 word newspaper article describing life on a plantation to inform the English public about the conditions faced by enslaved Africans on British owned plantations. Think about the audience you are writing for; include quotes and perhaps a case study of a family. Use rhetorical questions and factual information.

Closing (2 minutes)

Ensure that students are aware of the following facts:

- Life on the plantation was complex and varied and the enslaved Africans not only encountered physical abuse and separation of families, they also had to work long hours with no pay
- Enslaved Africans struggled to maintain some sense of agency by challenging plantation owners in different ways which will be examined further during the next lesson.



Resource Sheet Five: Enslavement in the Caribbean

Mary Prince - The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave, related by herself (1831)

Domestic enjoyment [for the enslaved married couple] is impossible...[the wife] cannot obey the wishes of her husband...her body, strength and time are the possession of another...the husband has to witness the woman whom he loves urged on to her tasks by the cart whip. She may be thrown to the ground, her person exposed, and her flesh lacerated before his eyes, and he dares not even attempt to defend her... they have as much authority over their children as a cow has over her calf.

If the mother be three degrees removed from the black, her child by a white man is free, and classes, in point of privilege, with Whites White men occasionally give freedom to their mistresses and their children. But this, in all cases where the mistress and her children are not the slaves of the white man must be affected by purchase, and of course, with the owner's consent.

The black morning at length came; it came too soon for my poor mother and us. Whilst she was putting on us the new osnaburgs (coarse cloth) in which we were to be sold, she said in a sorrowful voice (I shall never forget it!), 'see, I am shrouding my poor children; what a task for a mother!' She then called Miss Betsey to take leave of us 'I am going to carry my little chickens to market', (these were her very words) 'take your last look of them, maybe you will see them no more.' My mother called the rest of the slaves to bid us goodbye. One of them, a woman called Moll, came with her infant in her arms. 'Ay!' said my mother, seeing her turn away and look at her child with tears in her eyes, 'your turn will come next'.

The slaves could do nothing to comfort us; they could only weep and lament with us. When I left my dear little brothers and the house in which I had been brought up, I thought my heart would burst.

Adam Hochschild - Bury the chains: the British struggle to abolish slavery

Caribbean slavery was, by every measure, far more deadly than in the American south...because cultivating sugar cane by hand was - and still is - one of the hardest ways of life on earth. The most intense work came during the high pressure five month harvesting and processing season. Hour after hour in the hot sun, [enslaved Africans] had to bend over to slash at the base of the stalks with a heavy machete while clearing aside the cut canes with the other hand. Sugar cane leaves have knife like edges and sharp points that can jab the eye, cheek or ear of a tired or unwary cutter.

The murder of enslaved workers noted by Lord Seaforth, Governor of Barbados

A man of the name of Nowell...was in the habit of behaving brutally towards his wife, and one day went so far as to lock her in her room and confine her in chains. A Negro woman belonging to this man, touched with compassion for her unfortunate mistress, undertook privately to release her. Nowell found it out and in order to punish her, obliged her to put her tongue through a hole in a board, to which he fastened it on the other side with a fork, and left her in that situation for some time. He afterwards cut out her tongue nearly by the root, of which she almost instantly died.



Notes on the two reports from the Committee of the Honourable House of Assembly of Jamaica

To people in Britain it must appear strange...that there should be a necessity for a law to punish masters for mutilating and dismembering their servants; and stranger still, that a law should be extant for inflicting such punishment...and that great numbers of instances should be notoriously known to magistrates and judges...of people having mutilated their negroes without any person recollecting at the time when such instances made it necessary to put the law in force, that there was such a law...such inquiry would have convinced them that the minds of men become indurated by the habitual prospect of oppression and misery....I know two men, now living, whose neighbours say positively, and everybody believes, that each of them have murdered scores of their own negroes. One of these monsters had been heard to say that since he became a planter...he had buried, as he termed it 357 negroes...the wonder was not that he had buried so many, that he had any above ground.

A man at enmity with his neighbour, sees that a particular negro is of the utmost consequence to his master, who, by means of that negro, enjoys some advantage over his neighbours; perhaps he is an excellent sugar boiler, a good distiller, cooper, mason, carpenter; somehow or other he is the cause of envy to some person. That man's ox is killed and he by rewards or the fear of punishment induces one of his Negroes to inform that the envied Negro has killed it. He is thereupon committed to jail, where, no longer exciting envy, he is forgotten; his master dies, or leaves the island; and the Negro remains years in prison.

I have already hinted at men now living, which have not only dismembered, but murdered scores of Negroes, and yet have never been called to account. On this head, let one instance suffice: a Jew determined to whip one of his negroes to death, and avowed that determination; he began the lingering murder with his own hands, and whipped until his strength was exhausted, and then put the whip into other hands successively, and urged them on until the tragedy was completed in his own presence, and by his own order - all which was proved on his trial, all of which he was found GUILTY, convicted and sentenced; What? Imprisonment for life? No: for seven years? No: He was fined for all he had? No: In what? FIVE POUNDS! With this mockery of God and justice, that he should be imprisoned until he paid the fine, which he did instantly, and went out laughing.

I once saw a very fine young woman in the island of Barbados, for a very slight offence to her mistress, stretched out with her belly to the ground, and quite naked, receive thirty nine lashes. Every cut of the whip fetched blood from her flesh.

Slaves who are marked for punishment are flogged in different ways...some are stretched out with their bellies on the ground, with four negroes to hold them down, one at each hand and foot - in this posture the whip is applied to their backs. At other times their hands are fastened, by means of irons, to a kind of gallows. They are suspended there for a while...confined in this manner, they receive the lash. The whip generally takes out a piece of flesh at every stroke.

Letters on slavery, by William Dickson, formerly Private Secretary to the late Hon. Edward Hay, Governor of Barbados.

In the year 1774, an overseer on a cotton place was murdered by the negroes, who were said to have been driven to that act of violence, by oppression and hunger...for this murder five negro men were gibbeted alive, and a negro woman whose guilt was not fully proved, was chained to the gallows, to be a spectator of their prolonged tortures.



Image A - The Runaway. A depiction of a runaway slave which was often used in notices offering a reward for their return. Escaping slavery was a difficult and dangerous endeavour, which on recapture would be severely punished, and could be fatal, but the desire to find freedom was powerful and consuming, © Anti-Slavery International



6. Resistance and Rebellion

Summary

Whilst religious groups like the Quakers from the 17th century called for the moderation of the use of slaves, the most intense opposition was by the enslaved Africans themselves and their resistance, together with abolitionists across Europe and the United States, was eventually enough to bring the trade to an end. European opposition to slavery was important, but only within the wider campaign against the trade. Ultimately, the people who did most to fight the trade, and who paid the heaviest price for doing so, were the Africans themselves.

The Africans caught up in the Transatlantic Slave Trade did not want to be enslaved. They rebelled whenever they could and their resistance showed how individuals and communities completely rejected their enslavement. Resistance took on many forms, from individuals escaping, to armed revolt, depending on a number of different factors. Despite the role played by the African elites in supplying slaves to the European traders, the Transatlantic Slave Trade was imposed upon village communities through violence and terror.

There were four main times when resistance took place:

- when slaves were captured and sold
- on the way to the coast and in the barracoons
- on board the ships during the Middle Passage
- on arrival in the Americas or Caribbean

Sometimes European enslavers provided arms to regional groups (or States) so that they could violently raid neighbouring states and capture slaves for the trade. Many states like this sprang up near the coastal slave forts and also in the interior. The Bambara State of Segu, for example,

formed in about 1712, has been described as '*an enormous machine to produce slaves*'. Slave raiding and trading were crucial parts of its economy and Europeans provided arms for this purpose. Similarly, the ruler of Dahomey (after he had led the capture of Ouidah in 1727) sold large numbers of military captives, who he considered to be his personal property, to the Europeans. But even these military campaigns could not provide enough slaves to satisfy the demand and this forced the king to buy Africans from independent slave raiders and resell them to the Europeans.

Whether they lived inside or outside these (European sponsored) 'raiding states', African populations were exposed to raids from professional warriors. One of the primary roles of these new states that were developed from Senegal to Angola, was to undermine and displace states and leaders that were opposed to the slave trade. However, local communities also learnt how to defend themselves within this new context, and developed an extremely strong culture of resistance to both their European and African captors.

Resistance at the Coast

At every stage of their enslavement, Africans resisted, including on the coast, and particularly in the forts. Descriptions of these revolts are vivid and show how Africans took every possible opportunity to free themselves.

The records of the English Royal African Company are full of stories of protest and rebellion. In 1703, for example, Africans overpowered the guards at the Company's fort at Sekondi on the Gold Coast and beheaded its governor. In the same year a European agent was captured in Anamabo and forced to buy his life with the money he had brought with him to buy slaves. 382 slave-ship revolts have been recorded, two-



thirds of which took place at the loading port or within a week of setting sail. When such revolts were stopped, they usually resulted in the death of many enslaved Africans. It is estimated that an average of 57 slaves died per incident in 18 revolts on ships in the Senegambia region, compared to 24 per incident in 49 revolts elsewhere on the coast.

In 1730, Captain Adrien Vanvoorn - a Dutch slaver and owner of the *Phoenix* from Nantes in France - was moored at the mouth of the River Volta in west Africa, negotiating the purchase of slaves from a King in the area. Without warning, a group of Africans appeared from nowhere, burnt the ship and killed many members of the crew. Similarly, Captain William Potter of the *Perfect*, a slave ship registered in the English port of Liverpool, had a similar experience in 1758 on the River Gambia, when his ship was attacked by local Africans, who had witnessed the sale taking place. Potter had almost finished purchasing over 300 slaves and was preparing to sail to Charleston, South Carolina. The entire crew was killed in the assault. Ten years after this event, the *Côte d'or*, a 200-ton vessel belonging to Rafael Mendez of Bordeaux in France, was attacked by warriors in rafts on the River Bonny. Heavily armed with guns and knives, they boarded the ship and freed the enslaved Africans. When an English vessel approached, the Africans fled and the crew were able to escape.

Hundreds of similar instances were reported, but some events had a greater impact on the trade than others. One well-documented event took place at Calabar in 1767, when seven English ships - five from Liverpool, one from Bristol and one from London - were waiting for slave cargoes on the Old Calabar River. A group of armed Africans from Old Calabar attacked the English, but they were unsuccessful because the King's soldiers helped the English slavers. The leader of the Old Calabar warriors was then beheaded, and the survivors were sold into slavery in the West Indies.

Resistance during the Middle Passage

There are also many detailed descriptions of revolts that took place during the early stages of the Middle Passage. In 1776, for example, an English Captain, Peleg Clarke, described how slaves aboard his vessel rose up, struggled with the crew, and jumped overboard. Of these slaves, 28 men and two women drowned, but six survived and were recaptured. In 1765, Captain Hopkins of the *Sally* arrived on the island of Antigua in the Caribbean and described an insurrection (see glossary) that had taken place on board his vessel four hours after leaving Calabar. A number of the captive Africans, who were vomiting from seasickness, had been allowed on deck to be tended to by healthy slaves. Somehow these enslaved Africans managed to free the entire group, though in the resulting struggle Hopkins forced 80 Africans overboard to their deaths.

Whatever the outcome was, the vast majority of rebellions resulted in bloodshed. If the enslaved got the upper hand, even temporarily, most of the crew could expect to be killed and if the crew kept control, the death of the rebel leaders was almost inevitable. If the captains or the crew were less vigilant or used less force, it often resulted in rebellion.

If they failed to free themselves, enslaved Africans could expect the most gruesome punishments at the hands of the Europeans, often meant to serve as an example to others. The captain of a Danish vessel, for example, Fredericus Ovartus, after suppressing an African uprising on board his ship, removed the limbs of his captives over a period of three days, in front of others on board. On the fourth day, their heads were cut off. A French captain who had successfully stopped a rebellion on board his ship, hanged the rebel leaders by their feet and whipped them to death. A Dutch captain who survived a revolt, hanged an Ashanti rebel leader by his arms after cutting off his hands. The leader was left to bleed to death in front of the other enslaved Africans.

Appalling violence like this continued on the Atlantic voyage to the New World and



maximum security was imposed on every part of the journey. Slavers used the ship's guns, and even cannons mounted on deck pointing at the slave holds, to keep order. But even so, the records of the Dutch West India Company list 15 major revolts on board ships between the years 1751-75, most of them taking place while the ships were still near to the African coast. It is thought that at least one insurrection took place every 8-10 journeys for Dutch slavers, and one for every 25 voyages for French.

The European slavers only rarely reported accounts of successful African rebellions. One of the earliest incidents that took place was in 1532, when a Portuguese vessel, the *Misericordia* (its Captain was Estevão Carreira), was transporting 109 slaves from São Tomé to Elmina. Somehow, the Africans freed themselves, killed all the crew except for the navigators, and vanished. The navigators later reached Elmina in a lifeboat, but nothing more was ever heard of either the *Misericordia* or of its human cargo. Something similar happened in 1752 on the British ship the *Marlborough*, which was registered in Bristol. The 400 slaves on board, who were being transported from Elmina on the Gold Coast and Bonny on the Niger Delta, rose up and killed 33 of the 35 crew - the two remaining crew were kept alive to navigate. The ship then started its return voyage to Bonny, but there was a violent disagreement about the destination of the ship and the result was the death of 98 people. The Gold Coast group finally took control of the ship and headed for Elmina with one of the navigators. This group, too, vanished from written history.

Runaways and Maroon Wars, 1600-1800

Many slaves ran away from the plantations with the intention of permanently gaining their freedom. They did this either individually or in groups, sometimes in secret or in the course of a rebellion. Many rebellions were planned and carried out, particularly in the colonies where sugar production was the main form of economic activity.

The *Maroons* were former slaves (and their descendants) who had escaped from slavery and established their own free settlements. The word *maroon* comes from the Spanish word 'cimarrón', meaning wild or untamed. At first it was used to describe Amerindians who the Spanish could not control. Settlements of escaped slaves were established in the British colonies of Jamaica and Dominica and what were then the Dutch colonies of Suriname and Berbice in northern South America.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, there were rebellions throughout the Caribbean. They were all suppressed, but the two rebellions in Jamaica in 1760, were powerful enough to threaten the colonial establishment.

The First Maroon War started in Jamaica in 1728 and lasted for ten years. It was an attempt to disperse the Maroon settlements and re-enslave their occupants. But finally in 1739, the British signed peace treaties with the leaders of the undefeated Maroons from the two major Maroon settlements. Freedom and land were granted to the inhabitants of these settlements and under the terms of one of these treaties, the inhabitants of Accompong still pay no taxes today.

The rebellion in Berbice in 1763 developed into a War of Liberation. The rebel slave forces drove the Dutch northwards down the Berbice River to the coast, and set up rebel headquarters at Fort Nassau. From there, the rebel leader Cuffee, wrote to the Dutch Governor, claiming the whole colony and signing the letter as 'Governor of Berbice'. Then he suggested a compromise - that the southern half should be free and ruled by the Blacks and the northern half by the Whites. But then Dutch reinforcements arrived and there was conflict within the rebel leadership. Finally, the Dutch regained control. In 1804 the British forces occupied Berbice, and the Dutch colonies of Essequibo and Demerara to the west of it. In 1814, the Dutch handed them over to Britain and in 1831 they became known as British Guiana.



In the Dutch colony of Suriname, lying to the east of Berbice, escaped slaves were even more successful. There, in the interior, they not only formed several stable Maroon settlements, but they also established them as free self-governing African communities. The Dutch were never able to suppress or conquer these communities, and they still exist today.

While the British and French fought over the island of Dominica between 1763 and 1783, settlements established by escaped slaves continued to grow. By 1785 there were several Maroon settlements in the mountainous centre of the island. However, military expeditions were sent to disperse them and capture their leaders, which they did successfully by 1786.

The island of Grenada had also been fought over by the French and British. In 1795 the mulatto plantation owner Julien Fedon, freed his slaves and formed an army together with enslaved Africans from other plantations and some French settlers. For a time they controlled most of the island, until finally the British regained their control and re-enslaved the Africans who had been freed.

The Haitian Revolution

The most decisive of all the slave rebellions in the region happened in the French colony of Saint Domingue. It began in 1791 as an ordinary slave uprising, but over the course of the next few years, it became a struggle not only against the slave owners and slave owning interests, but also a struggle for national liberation from French power. Led by Toussaint L’Ouverture, the enslaved Africans forced the abolition of slavery, expelled the French plantation owners, and took all their property. In 1798 the British tried to capture the island but Toussaint forced them to withdraw. In 1804, Napoleon sent his forces to recover the island and restore slavery. But the army of former slaves led by Dessalines - Toussaint’s successor - defeated them, and the independent Republic of Haiti was established. The new Haitian Constitution of 1805 declared that any black person who

arrived in the country would automatically become a citizen. This effectively abolished slavery and granted nationhood and citizenship on all former slaves. This was revolutionary and as a result, slaves from many societies in the Americas fled to Haiti in search of liberty and citizenship, the country becoming a beacon of black liberation.

Continuing revolts after 1807

Another very important example was the rebellion that took place in Western Jamaica in 1831-1832, involving about 20,000 slaves. Its inspirer and principal organiser was the slave Sam Sharpe, a Baptist lay preacher who also had contacts with the so-called ‘Native Baptists’. Sharpe led the slaves to strike against any further work unless the plantation owners agreed to pay them wages. And if they refused they said they would fight for their freedom.

This rebellion did go ahead on the night of 27 December, 1831, but was crushed by the overwhelming British military forces. By the middle of February 1832 only small parties of rebels were still active and by two months later, all resistance had ended. Sharpe was captured and executed on 23 May 1832. Approximately 750 slaves and 14 free persons were convicted, in both the military and slave courts, for participation in the rebellion. Most of those placed on trial, were sentenced to death. Other sentences were so severe that only the strongest could have survived. The Methodist missionary Henry Bleby, who interviewed Sam Sharpe while he was in prison at Montego Bay awaiting execution, recorded his famous defiant statement: *‘I would rather die upon yonder gallows than live in slavery...’*



Lesson Plan: Resistance and Rebellion

Lesson objectives - students will:

- Identify and assess the different manifestations of resistance to slavery
- Identify the plantation authorities' reaction to resistance by enslaved Africans.
- Gain knowledge of the role of women in resistance.
- Assess the affect of resistance of the enslaved Africans to the abolition of the slave trade.
- Understand that freedom was not granted to, but accomplished by the resistance of enslaved Africans in Haiti.

Activity 1 (30 mins) - Forms and consequences of resistance

Introduce the lesson to students by providing an overview of the lesson and the outcomes. Taking turns, students should read through the narratives on **Resource Sheet Six** aloud and discuss the following questions:

- What are the different forms of rebellion that enslaved Africans undertook? (i.e. poisoning masters and working slowly)
- What motivated the enslaved Africans to resist enslavement in the manner that they did?
- What were the consequences of each form of resistance for the enslaved Africans and for the plantation owners?

Activity 2 (40 mins) - Literary historical description and imagery and the role of the individual in history

Introduce the role of the individual in history. The main criteria of significance are that an individual's life:

- Affected a great number of people
- Had a profound impact on other people's lives at the time
- Has had a long-lasting impact.

Divide students into groups of four and have a quick fire round to see which team can match the description of the individual and the corresponding image on **Resource Sheet Six**.

Descriptions

Mary Prince

Mary Prince's narrative, 'The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave as narrated by herself' was the first narrative to be published by an African-Caribbean woman in Britain. Running into three editions in the year of its publication, it recounted the experiences of Prince as an enslaved woman in the Caribbean and in Britain. Born into slavery and separated from her parents as a young girl, Prince was owned by five different people who mistreated her.



Toussaint L'Ouverture

Toussaint L'Ouverture played a key role in the first successful slave revolt that resulted in the creation of the first independent African republic outside of the African continent.

Born in 1743 on the Breda plantation in the north of St. Domingue, Toussaint joined the revolution in 1791 and rose quickly in the ranks, receiving his own command in 1792. He was successful in leading his small band of troops against an army of British soldiers that was 10,000 strong.

He often switched sides as part of his military strategy; declaring allegiance and signing treaties with the British, French, and Spanish to order to gain advantages. His secret negotiations with the British resulted in their withdrawal from the island in 1798, and, ignoring the commands of Napoleon Bonaparte, freed the slaves in neighbouring Spanish Santo Domingo in 1801.

In 1802 Charles Leclerc, Napoleon's brother in law sailed with an army to Haiti to regain French control of the island; he was defeated. In May of that year Toussaint signed a treaty with the French with the condition that there would be no return to slavery on the island. He was betrayed and captured and brought to France where he died of pneumonia in prison in April 1803.

Sam Sharpe

Sam Sharpe was a respected Baptist deacon among many Africans who were involved in rebellion and resistance efforts on the slave plantations. He triggered a rebellion of thousands of slaves in Jamaica in 1831. He reportedly told the slaves that they had been freed and that they should stop work and claim their freedom. Before his own execution, Sharpe is quoted as saying "I would rather die upon yonder gallows than live in slavery".

Nanny of the Maroons

Born in Africa to the Ashanti tribe and brought to Jamaica as an enslaved worker, Nanny escaped from slavery with her brothers Cudjoe, Accompong, Johnny Cuffy and Quao and they became Maroon leaders. Maroons were enslaved workers that escaped from the plantations and formed communities in the interior of the islands which were often overgrown and difficult to get to.

By 1720 Nanny and Quao had organised and gained control of a town of Maroons located in the Blue Mountains which they named Nanny Town and from 1728 to 1734, they successfully defended themselves against British attack, as they were better equipped and more knowledgeable of the mountainous terrain.

Nanny was known as an outstanding military leader and became a symbol of unity and strength for her people during times of crisis. She was skilled at organising guerrilla warfare, and has been credited with freeing over 800 slaves over a 50 year period.



Answers

Image A - Sam Sharpe

Image B - Front cover of Mary Prince's book (no images are available of Mary, but this image is commonly associated with her - A campaigning banner calling for the end to the apprenticeship system, which operated between 1834 and 1838)

Image C - Nanny of the Maroons

Activity 3 (30 mins) - An analysis of historical recordings of heroes

Engage the whole class in discussion with the following questions:

- Why are these figures of liberation less known than the English heroes of abolition? (Wilberforce, Clarkson)
- Who decides what is recorded as historical truth? Do the most accessible records of history tell the full story?
- What was the role of women in the resistance movement?
- What has finding out about these African abolitionists taught you about the agency of enslaved Africans?
- What is significant about the history of Toussaint L'Overture and the Haitian revolution? (If students are not forthcoming, steer them towards thinking about the year of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act and the year of Haiti's self-declared emancipation and independence).

Follow up/Homework (5 minutes)

History represented through contemporary images

Ask students to undertake a research project on one of the following leaders of a rebellion using a number of websites including *Recovered Histories* and *Breaking the Silence*:

- Bussa
- Sam Sharpe
- Nanny of the Maroons
- Toussaint L'Overture

Using the information researched, produce a 500 word obituary on the individual's contribution to the struggle for emancipation including their strategies, victories and losses. Include an assessment of the level of information available on the chosen individual and how they have been kept hidden in historical study.

Closing (5 minutes)

Ask each student to identify a fact they have learned from the lesson. Ensure that students are aware that enslaved Africans resisted their conditions on plantations in the Caribbean and that their resistance and rebellion against enslavement resulted in a large number gaining their freedom and settling in Maroon communities before the 1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade Act.



Resource Sheet Six: Resistance and Rebellion

Letters on slavery, by William Dickson, formerly Private Secretary to the late Hon. Edward Hay, Governor of Barbados (1789)

A few years ago, a most shocking murder was committed by the Negroes on a medical gentleman of acknowledged worth and humanity...various were the conjectures on the motives which could instigate the Negroes to commit this horrid assassination. For my own part I had, and still have my doubts, respecting that mysterious affair...it appeared extraordinary that the doctor, though murdered, was not robbed.

A favourite young wench, who had the care of her master's child, disliked the employment so much that she poisoned the infant with laudanum. This was not the first child of her masters whom she was suspected to have thus destroyed; and the last fact was fully proved. At the request of her humane mistress, she was hanged.

An abstract of the evidence delivered before a select committee of the House of Commons in the years 1790 and 1791, on the part of the petitioners for the abolition of the slave trade

Evidence from a Mr Morley:

He says also, of another part of the coast, that a Mr Walker, master of a ship, was on board the Jolly Prince, when the King of Nazareth stabbed the captain at his own table, and took the vessel, putting all the whites to death, except the cook, a boy, and he believes, one man. Captain Walker, being asked why the King of Nazareth took this step, said it was on account of the people who had been carried from Gabon and Cape Lopez the voyage before.

Falconbridge relates an instance of a young woman who cried and pined away after being brought on board, who recovered when put on shore, and who hung herself when informed she was to be sent again to the ship.

Mr Fitzmaurice has known too many suicides, both by hanging themselves and dirt eating, which they knew to be fatal. He lost one year twelve new Negroes by it, though he fed them well. On his remonstrating, they constantly told him they preferred dying to living.



An enquiry: which of the two parties is best entitled to freedom? The slave or the slave holder, from an impartial examination of the conduct of each party at the bar of public justice (London 1824)

They seized such arms as they could obtain; which, however, were few in number, and they confined in the stocks several overseers and managers, who were either resisting their proceedings or quitting the estates to spread the alarm of insurrection.

A particular account of the commencement and progress of the insurrection of the Negroes in St. Domingo, which began August 1791

The General Assembly of the French part of St. Domingo...arriving on the 16 August...were witnesses of the burning of a trash house on Chabaud's plantation. The incendiary was a Negro driver ...being interrogated, he deposed 'that all the drivers, coachmen, domestics, and confidential Negroes of the neighbouring plantations and adjacent districts had formed a plot to set fire to the plantations and murder all the whites.'

In the night between the 22nd and 23rd (August) twelve Negroes reached the sugar house of Noe's plantation at Acul, seized upon the apprentice refiner; dragged him before the great house, where he expired under their wounds. His cries brought out the attorney of the estate, who was laid breathless on the ground by two muskets. The wretches proceeded to the apartment of the head refiner, and assassinated him in his bed.

Mr Odeluc, a member of the general assembly and attorney for the Galist plantation... escorted by a patrol, reached the plantation, seized the ringleaders, and returned at their head to the town. Immediately he went out again, with twenty men in arms that he might restore tranquillity and maintain order. But the Negroes were all embodied, and attacked him...addressing himself to his coachman, whom he perceived among the foremost, exclaimed, "Wretch, I have treated thee ever with kindness, why dost thou seek my death?" "True", he replied, "but I have promised to cut your throat", and at that instant, a hundred weapons were upon him.

Mr Cagnet, inhabitant of Acul, seeking to escape these horrors, embarked for the Cape. His domestic Negro begged permission to attend him. Such a mark of attachment determined his master to leave him as a guard upon the plantation that he might endeavour to preserve it. But he had hardly set foot on board, when he saw that slave, with a torch in his hand, setting fire to his property.



Image A - © Val Lyons







Image D - © Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.



7. The Anti-Slavery Movement

Summary

Although there had been some criticisms of, and protests against the slave trade from religious groups during the early 17th century, the first mass anti-slavery society was formed in 1787 by 12 men including Thomas Clarkson and Granville Sharp named The Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade. The group recruited William Wilberforce to act as its political mouthpiece in Parliament. The anti-slavery movement initiated a number of campaigning tools including galvanising the public to sign petitions calling for the end of the slave trade, encouraging the boycott of sugar produced by slave labour and creating a brand identity through the use of the Wedgwood design *Am I not a man and a brother image*. British women and the work of free Africans like Cuguano Ottabah and Olaudah Equiano were crucial to the success of the campaign which at its height, resulted in over half a million ordinary Britons signing a petition calling for the end of the slave trade.

Philosophical arguments against slavery

Some of the 18th century French Enlightenment philosophers such as Voltaire, Montesquieu, Diderot and Rousseau were generally in favour of the abolition of the slave trade. They wrote about the immorality of imposing inequality based on race, and of taking away people's liberty and described the slave trade as '*corrupting to civilization and degrading to all those who engaged in it*'. Voltaire in particular, rejected racist ideas ridiculing the idea that whites should be entitled to enslave blacks questioning the whole concept of 'race'. He thought it was a sign of ignorance that people considered skin colour, hair texture or facial structure, as important indicators of how civilised

someone was, and he criticised the slavers for using these arguments to justify their trade. Montesquieu, another French philosopher, was also hostile to slavery. He wrote about the brutalising nature of slavery, saying that it victimised both slaver and the slave, in a relationship of mutual violence. He believed that this was a moral crisis for Europeans and that greed had led to the destruction of indigenous Americans and the enslavement of the Africans. He also pointed out the irony that such an unsavoury business could lead to the mass consumption of cheap sugar. The writings of these philosophers were later valuable weapons in the fight to abolish both slavery and the slave trade.

European opposition to the Transatlantic Slave Trade developed slowly, and for a long time it was not effective because of the economic interests involved. There had always been individuals in Europe, and among the European settlers in the Americas, who had voiced their opposition to the trade and to the institution of slavery. But it was not until the late 18th century that anything resembling a serious political movement against slavery, began in Europe.

The birth of the anti-slavery movement

In the 1600's for example, the Quakers in the English Caribbean colonies called for 'moderation' in their use of slaves, which meant making provisions to free loyal or responsible slaves. Although the Quakers at this time were not opposed to the slave trade, or to slavery in general, the British slave owners saw this as an attempt to threaten their property rights, and they persecuted and forced out members of the Caribbean Quaker community as a result.

In May 1787, a group of men met at 2 George Yard in East London and founded



the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, where the minutes recorded ‘the said trade was both impolitick and unjust’. The group was mainly made up of Quakers who already had a century of experience as a pressure group. They mobilised their existing networks, and shaped the campaign but relied on figureheads such as Thomas Clarkson and William Wilberforce from the established Anglican faith to bring the cause to mainstream attention.

The Anti-Slavery Society was supported in Parliament by Wilberforce, the Member of Parliament for the town of Hull, and by the Prime Minister, William Pitt. Clarkson campaigned that the slave trade was unprofitable and morally wrong. He argued that it led to many of the English crew losing their lives on the slave ships, and that it damaged both African and European colonial societies. Pitt, always thinking about the economic side, argued that the evil of the trade should be stopped, provided that English financial interests did not suffer.

The tools of the abolitionists

Abolitionists engaged the public using leaflets, posters petitions, pin badges and boycotts. This was the first mass human rights movement in history and pioneered the use of campaigning tools that are still used today. The numbers involved in the anti-slavery movement is remarkable as so many people were outraged over issues of human rights. The success of these campaigns is evidenced by the fact that as early as 1792, after the first abolition bill to Parliament was defeated, it is estimated 400,000 Britons refused to eat slave grown sugar. This action was initiated and carried out by women and it quickly swept across the country. Many did abstain from using plantation grown sugar during the abolition period but many also switched to using East Indian grown sugar grown by free labour as a substitute. In the course of the campaign, Parliament was flooded by far more signatures on petitions against slavery than on any other subject, and often the number of signatures totalled half a million. Every

major town and city had an anti-slavery movement linked to London.

As the main buyers and consumers of sugar, women came to play an important role in the antislavery campaign, particularly between 1807 and 1838 when they grew impatient with the male dominated society’s gradual approach to ending slavery and campaigned for immediate emancipation.

The famous image of an African man kneeling and in chains, raising his hands in supplication to be freed was designed by a craftsman working for renowned ceramicist Josiah Wedgwood, who brought what we would now call marketing and public relations acumen to the abolitionist campaign. Designed initially as a seal for closing envelopes, the image became used ubiquitously as a logo for the abolitionist movement. It was used on publications, on snuff boxes, tea sets and cufflinks. Women wore the medallions as jewellery to show their support for the cause. They later adapted the image to show a kneeling female with the words *Am I not a woman and a sister?* This passive view of Africans suited the religious fervour and moral campaign of the white abolitionists to generate sympathy and support based on helping the downtrodden, rather than creating an attitude of equality for all.

The contribution of Africans to the anti-slavery movement

The anti-slavery movement in Britain was a largely white enterprise; however there were a number of freed slaves who contributed significantly to the effectiveness of the abolitionist campaign, although not always in partnership. The upper class leaders of both Parliament and the Anti-Slavery Committee might have been moved by sympathy for the enslaved, but they were not motivated by the issue of equality.

Ottobah Cugoano was the first black voice to be heard when he published the first directly abolitionist book in English by an African in 1787, *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery*



and Commerce of the Human Species. He was progressive in his approach, challenging the abolitionist line of only seeking to abolish the trade in slaves and called for the end of slavery itself: ‘I would propose that...universal emancipation of slaves should begin’.

Olaudah Equiano wrote about his life experiences of capture, slavery and freedom and in 1789 he published *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus the African* as well as campaigning for abolition. Members of the official Anti-Slavery Committee (except Granville Sharp) showed little interest in Equiano and did not campaign alongside him. But he became the principal spokesman of Britain’s African communities and thereby represented another important constituency who opposed the slave trade.

Mary Prince who came to Britain later in the course of the abolition campaign in 1828 was one free slave who did work with the Anti-Slavery Society. A Quaker, Susanna Strickland documented her life story in 1831 and *The History of Mary Prince: A West Indian Slave* became an important part of the abolitionists’ campaign. Mary Prince was the first woman to present an anti-slavery petition to Parliament.

Although the black voice was heard through individuals in Britain, the actions of the enslaved in resisting and rebelling against slavery in the colonies contributed more to bringing about an end to slavery. It is important to note that there are few historical records relating to the role of Africans in the abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, due in part to the way in which elements of the history were selected for documentation.



Lesson Plan: The Anti-Slavery Movement

Lesson objectives - students will:

- Identify and assess the different campaigning tools employed by British abolitionists
- Highlight the mass movement which included disenfranchised people including women as well as exceptional individuals
- Highlight the role of ordinary Britons' contribution to the abolition movement
- Gain an understanding of the role played by formerly enslaved African abolitionists.

Activity 2 (40 mins) - Tools of campaigning to be completed lessons and perhaps presented at an assembly to the rest of the school

Divide students into three groups. Each group will have a task to perform using the information provided on **Resource Sheets Seven and Eight** and information from previous lessons.

Group 1: Design a pamphlet to inform and educate people about the horrors of the slave trade, to be distributed across the country with the aim of encouraging people to join the anti-slavery campaign.

Important note: The audience is the general public who may know nothing or little about slavery - you need to link the choices that people make in drinking coffee, smoking tobacco and wearing cotton. You need to convince people that slavery is wrong and must be abolished. Use images, logos and statements to get your point across.

Group 2: Images were used to communicate messages to the general public. As noted in the 'Tools of the Abolitionists' handouts, the Wedgwood seal was very popular and used to galvanise support for the anti-slavery movement. However, it was

Introduction and Activity 1 (15 mins) - A question of enlightenment

Introduce the lesson to students using the background information. Ask students to read the narratives on **Resource Sheet Seven**. Then engage the class in a discussion on the reasons for the emergence of opposition to slavery and the slave trade. Assess issues like morality, ethics, a shared common humanity and economics.

misrepresentative in showing a docile African begging for his freedom as opposed to one who actively fought for his or her own freedom.

Design an image that is non-paternalistic and appealing to the general public. The image should send a clear message that slavery is wrong and should be abolished. Include a slogan that is catchy and also has an impact.

Group 3: Writing and performing a speech: Testimonies were an important factor in the anti-slavery movement and were used to invoke empathy. Using the excerpts from Mary Prince, Olaudah Equiano and Ottobah Cugoano design a speech to persuade the people of London who grew wealthy from the profits of sugar grown by slave labour in the Caribbean, to join the anti-slavery movement. Use techniques to persuade your audience including:

- Making points easy to follow by using short and punchy sentences
- Create thought provoking images or pictures in the audiences mind
- Use words that convey a joint humanity such as 'we' or 'us'
- Use repetition - the same word or phrase more than once for emphasis.



Activity 3 (25 mins) - The role of the individual for good or evil

Divide the class into four groups and ask each group to research the following abolitionists using the *Recovered Histories* and *Breaking the Silence* websites as a homework activity.

Group 1 - Olaudah Equiano

Group 2 - Elizabeth Heyrick

Group 3 - Mary Prince

Group 4 - Thomas Clarkson

Ask the groups to research and prepare a presentation for the rest of the class for the next lesson, answering the following questions:

- What was the contribution of the individuals to the anti-slavery movement?
- What campaigning tool did the individual adopt?
- How successful was the individual in galvanising support for the anti-slavery movement
- How well known are they today?
- What lessons can we learn from the individual that we can utilise to inform modern day campaigning?

Closing (5 minutes)

Ask students to give an example of:

- The historical tools used to assess the role of an individual
- The contribution of white abolitionists, the British public, former enslaved Africans, and women to the anti-slavery movement.



Resource Sheet Seven: The Anti-Slavery Movement

Sermon preached before the University of Cambridge by Peter Peckard, Master of Magdalen College (1788)

It has also been pretended that they [Africans] are of lower intellectual abilities than the rest of mankind...But this is absolutely false - God made of one blood all the sons of men, and many instances have appeared to prove that with respect to mental powers they want only equal information to equal the inhabitants of the more enlightened inhabitants of the earth.

An address to the inhabitants of Europe on the iniquity of the Slave Trade; issued by the Religious Society of Friends, commonly called Quakers in Great Britain and Ireland (1822)

The nations of Europe owe indeed a heavy debt to Africa. Instead of improving the opportunity of their commercial intercourse with that unoffending people, to exemplify the excellence of the Christian religion by the kindness of their conduct....many of them have gone forth to plunder and to ravage, to spread desolation and terror, to practice injustice and cruelty in their most odious forms; and thus have caused the name of Christ to be blasphemed among the gentiles through them.

An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human species, particularly the African by Thomas Clarkson (London 1786)

...if liberty is only an adventitious right; if men are by no means superior to brutes; if every social duty is a curse; if cruelty is highly to be esteemed; if murder is strictly honourable, and Christianity is a lie [sic]; then it is evident, that the African slavery may be pursued, without the remorse of conscience...but if the contrary of this is true, which reason must immediately evince, it is evident that no custom established among men was ever more impious.

An enquiry: which of the two parties is best entitled to freedom? The slave or the slave holder, from an impartial examination of the conduct of each party at the bar of public justice (London 1824)

Martial law, blood, slaughter, summary and sweeping executions are promptly resorted to by the local authorities of Demerara. And the audacity of the negro of having indulged even a thought or a dream of freedom and in having dared, somewhat irregularly, to demand what it was which the reported benevolence of his Sovereign really designed for him, must be expiated by rivers of blood.



Second Report of the Committee of the society of the mitigation and gradual abolition of slavery throughout the British dominions, read at the general meeting of the society held on the 30th day of April 1825 (London 1825)

Let us look again to Hayti [sic]....twenty years of sanguinary conflict of the most barbarizing description, sometimes with foreign, sometimes with domestic enemies...And yet what do we witness in their case? They have contrived...to maintain themselves without foreign aid. They have not only abundantly supplied their wants by their own labour, but they have nearly, if not more than doubled their numbers in twenty years...they have been advancing in intelligence, respectability and wealth...a plan is now in progress, for removing the black and coloured population of the United States to that island.

Immediate not gradual abolition; or an inquiry into the shortest, safest, and most effectual means of getting rid of West Indian slavery, by Elizabeth Heyrick (London 1824)

Before we can have any rational hope of prevailing on our guilty neighbours to abandon this atrocious commerce...we must purge ourselves from these pollutions; we must break the iron yoke from off the neck of our own slaves, and let the wretched captives in our own islands go free.

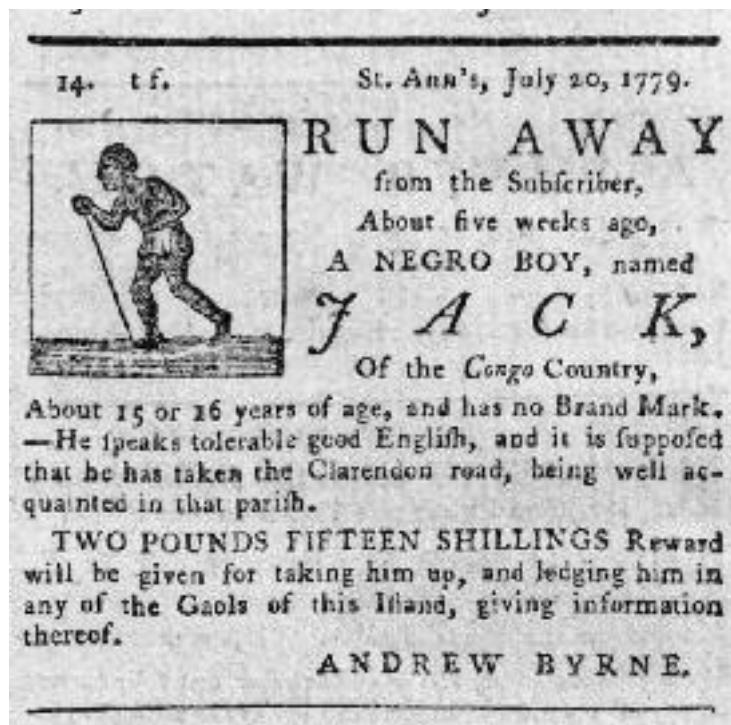
The perpetuation of slavery in our West India colonies is not an abstract question, to be settled between Government and the planters, it is a question which we are all implicated; we are all guilty of supporting and perpetuating slavery. The West Indian planter and the people of this country, stand in the same moral relation to each other, as the thief and receiver of stolen goods.

Are there no tests to prove our sincerity [to help end slavery], no sacrifices to be offered as confirmation of our zeal? Yes, there is one - It is ABSTINENCE FROM THE USE OF WEST INDIAN PRODUCTIONS, sugar especially...when there is no longer a market for the productions of slave labour, then, and not till then, will the slaves be emancipated.

Great effects often result from small beginnings. Your resolution (not to use slave produced goods) will influence that of your friends and neighbours; each of them will, in like manner, influence their friends and neighbours; the example will spread from house to house, from city to city, till, among those who have any claim to humanity, there will be but one heart and one mind, one resolution. *Thus by means the most simple and easy, would West Indian slavery be most safely and speedily abolished.*



Resource Sheet Eight: Tools of the Abolitionists

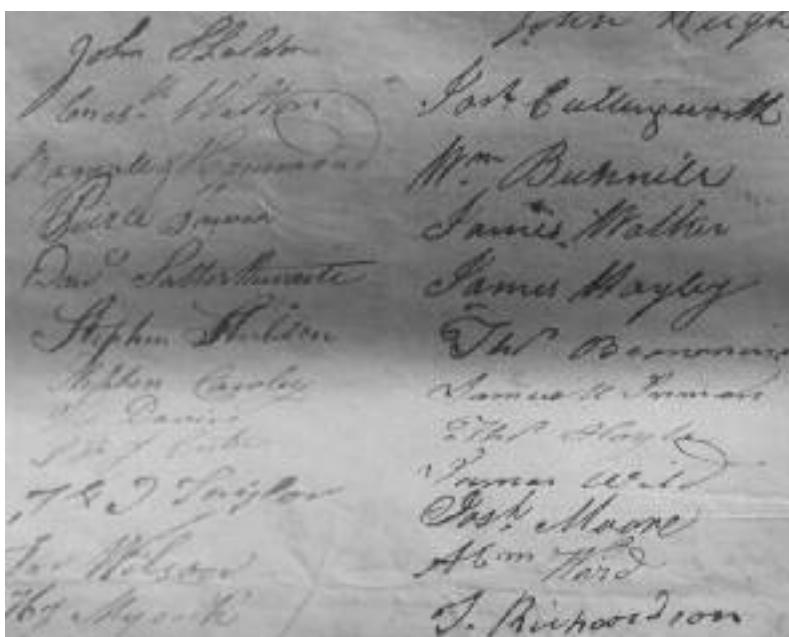


Judicial challenges

Africans seeking to escape slavery were pursued by their former masters (as illustrated by the advert) and the courts were used as a means to try and protect Africans from being forced back into slavery, © National Maritime Museum

Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade

On 22 May 1787, the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade was formed. Most of the 12 founder members were Quakers, but for reasons of political expediency, two Anglicans, Granville Sharp and Thomas Clarkson, were chosen to represent the committee. The 1787 committee functioned much like a modern day non-governmental organisation (NGO). **It was a single-interest pressure group with a clearly defined goal.** It was also a membership organisation, with local groups and a newsletter to inform its members about the campaign's progress. The committee also sent letters to existing donors appealing for funds.



Organised Campaigning

A section of a petition to Parliament in support of the proposed 1806 Bill. This petition was signed by approximately 2,300 people from Manchester. A pro-slavery petition sent to Parliament at the same time only had 112 signatures, © Anti-Slavery International





A Negro Festival Drawn from Nature in the Island of St. Vincent, depicting slavery as a life of leisure, taken from the pro-slavery book *The History of the British Colonies in the West Indies* by Bryan Edwards, 1797, © Anti-Slavery International

Evidence

In the 1780's, slavery was regarded as normal, legitimate, profitable and even 'genteel' employment. The pro-slavery lobby attempted to dehumanise Africans by claiming that they had no native society, lived like savages, were grateful for the opportunity to escape Africa, enjoyed the crossing and benefited from a good life on the plantations (as in the depiction above).

The abolitionists sought to provide evidence to show that none of these things were true. Thomas Clarkson set about doing this by interviewing sailors, ships' doctors and traders to document the treatment of enslaved people. He also used objects such as a device for force-feeding slaves who went on hunger strike, to provide physical evidence of abuse and confirmed the testimonies he collected.

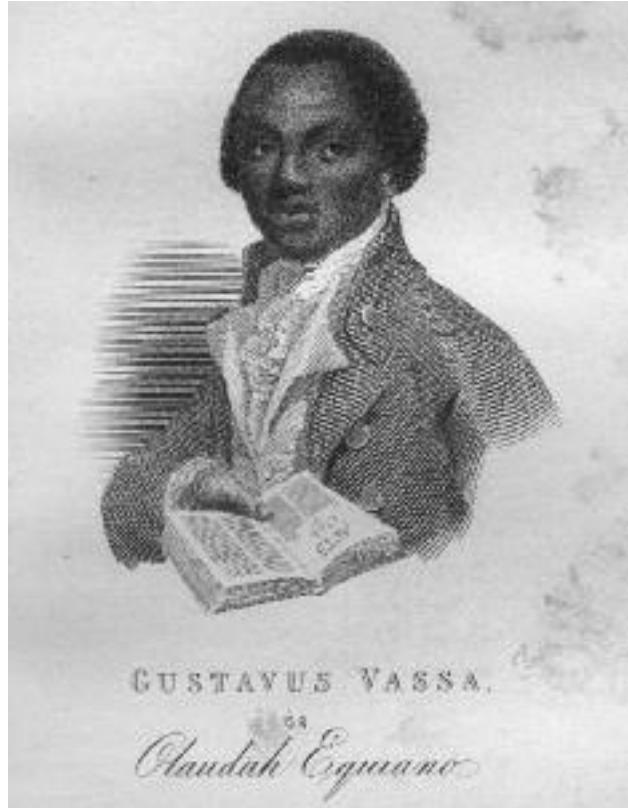
Clarkson also documented the **brutal treatment of the slave ships' crews** by demonstrating that, on average, 20 percent of each crew died from disease or ill treatment before the ship returned. His evidence **demolished the myth** that the slave trade provided useful training for Britain's seamen and showed that the trade was bad for sailors as well as Africans. In contrast to the prevalent style of the times, **Clarkson's analysis was neutral in tone, relying on facts, statistics and physical evidence rather than emotion or religious and moral exhortations.** He presented his information in such a way that it gained the attention of different key audiences - those concerned about the treatment of Africans and those concerned about the treatment of British sailors.

Personal Testimony

Abolitionists undermined the claims of the pro-slavery lobby by publishing books and pamphlets **written by people who had witnessed the realities of the trade first-hand.**

Olaudah Equiano (pictured below), a former slave, published his autobiography in 1789. It would have been difficult for readers not to identify with the author. Equiano was courageous, resourceful, literate, cultured and Christian - all the qualities that British people admired and aspired to. The book, which became a bestseller, fundamentally challenged some of the widely held assumptions of that time about Africans and the slave trade.

The abolitionists realised that **personal testimonies** were an incredibly **powerful way of communicating the direct experiences** of those subjected to the horrors of the slave trade. **It allowed British people to relate to them as fellow human beings.**



The engraving from the title page from 'The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African', published in 1789, © Anti-Slavery International



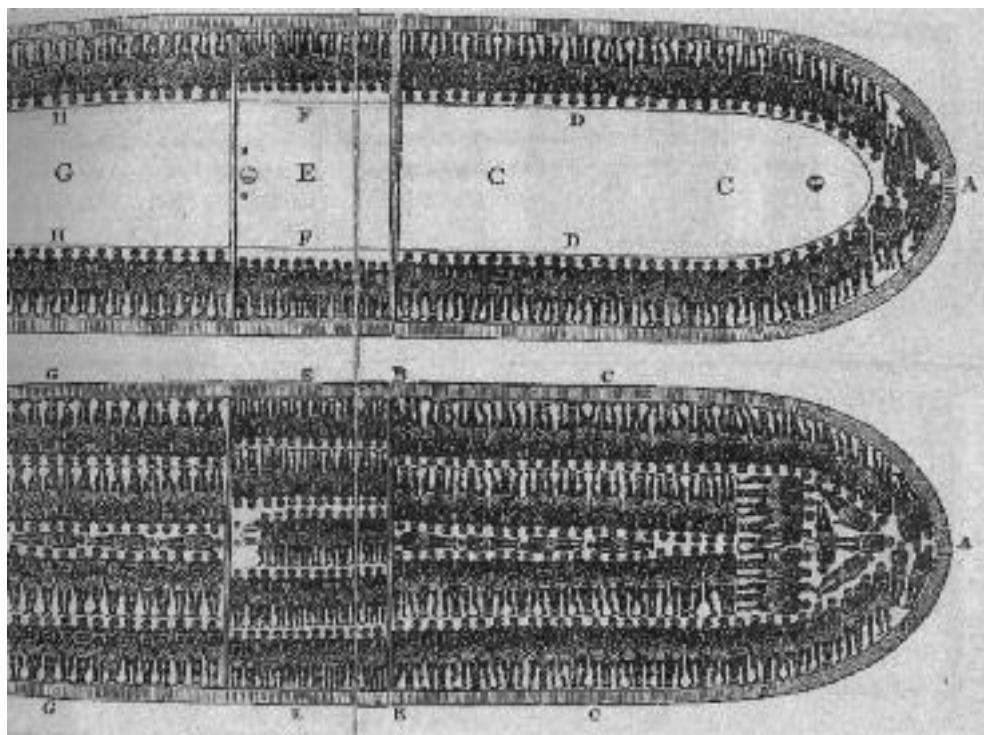
Popular Campaigning

The abolitionists were accomplished at **disseminating the printed word**, but only around half of the British population was literate. It was therefore essential that the movement used other ways to get its message across.

One such way was **an image showing a cross-section of the slave ship 'Brookes' packed with 482 enslaved people (as shown below)**. In 1789, the abolitionists printed 7,000 posters of the ship and distributed them across the country.

The arts were also **a good way of reaching different audiences**. Some anti-slavery **poems** like Cowper's 'The Negro's Complaint', were even set to **music**.

These **tools were important because** they engaged people on an emotional level. They **evoked sympathy and horror** and did not rely on individuals taking part in debates or analysing statistical information.



A poster of the 'Brookes' slave ship showing how enslaved people were transported in dreadful conditions, © Anti-Slavery International

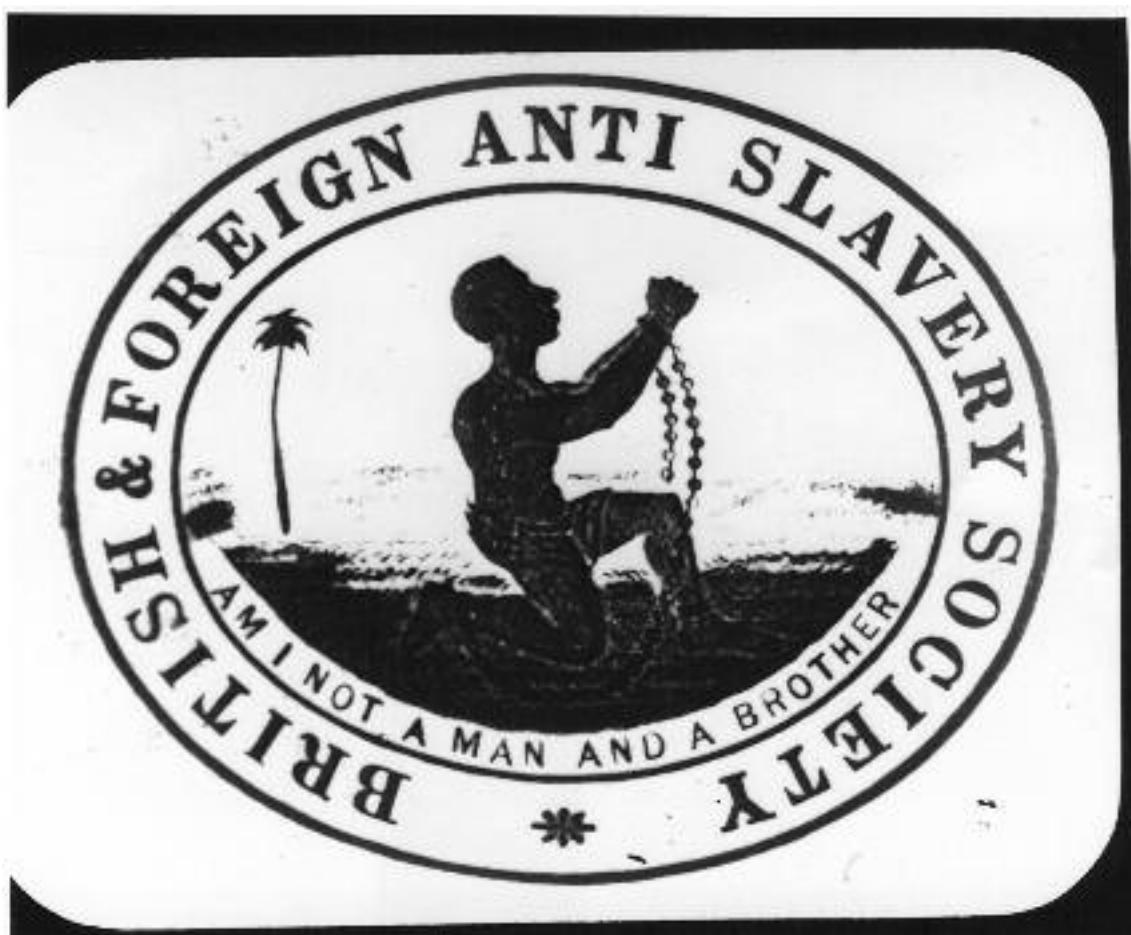
The Logo

In 1787, Josiah Wedgwood **designed a seal for the anti-slavery campaign**. The image (shown below) depicts an African man kneeling in supplication under the slogan ‘Am I not a man and a brother?’

The African slave is presented as passive rather than rebellious, and is therefore non-threatening. This appealed to those opinion formers with a paternalistic attitude towards slaves. The pose also evokes prayer and resonates with those who felt that slavery went against Christian values. Finally, **the logo’s slogan appealed to all those who felt a basic solidarity with their fellow human beings**.

The Wedgwood seal ignores the fact that some Africans were actively engaged in challenging the system of slavery through rebellions, personal acts of resistance and as abolitionists. Instead, it depicts an image which was likely to engage the maximum number of white, British people in the campaign. This approach was effective, but **serves to reinforce negative stereotypes of Africans as helpless and dependent, as indeed do some fundraising campaigns today**.

The image was adopted as the **abolition movement’s logo** and **used to brand publications, chinaware, snuffboxes, cufflinks, bracelets, medallions and banners**. The logo became both a political and a fashion statement and **helped to popularise opposition to slavery**.



The *Am I not a Man and a Brother* logo used by the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. © Anti-Slavery International



Mobilising the public

In 1791, thousands of pamphlets were printed which encouraged people to boycott sugar produced by slaves. Estimates suggest some 300,000 people abandoned sugar, with sales dropping by a third to a half. Some shops advertised goods which had been produced by 'freemen' and sales of sugar from India, where slavery was not used, increased tenfold over two years.

Hundreds of thousands of people also signed petitions calling for the abolition of the slave trade. Many supported the campaign against their own interests. For example, in Manchester (which sold some £200,000 worth of goods each year to slave ships) roughly 20 percent of the city's population signed petitions in support of abolition. The size and strength of feeling demonstrated by these popular protests made even pro-slavery politicians consider the consequences of ignoring public opinion. One pro-slavery lobbyist of the time noted that the '*Press teems with pamphlets upon the subject ... The stream of popularity runs against us.*'



An earthenware sugar bowl with the words 'East India Sugar Not Made by Slaves' inscribed on the side © Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery, Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service

Parliamentary Lobbying

The abolitionist movement began in the Quaker meeting houses of the 1770s, with the establishment of the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

Olaudah Equiano and Thomas Clarkson were both adept at getting decision makers to take up the slavery issue. They **worked in the same way that political lobbyists do today**.

Equiano regularly lobbied members of parliament on slavery issues and led a delegation to the House of Commons to support a bill to improve conditions on slave ships. While there, he met the prime minister and other MPs.

Clarkson helped to persuade the MP William Wilberforce to become the parliamentary spokesperson for the campaign. He also organised witnesses and evidence for the House of Commons committee hearings on the slave trade.



This oil painting by Karl Anton Hickel shows William Pitt addressing the House of Commons after the French declaration of war in 1793 © National Portrait Gallery

Consciousness Raising

It could be argued that the passage of the 1807 Act owed more to the slave rebellions in the Caribbean and the successful revolution by former slaves in Haiti than it did to the abolitionists in Britain, but this should in no way undermine the achievements of the campaign.

From the first meeting of the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade to the passage of the 1807 Act, it took just 20 years. In that time the campaign challenged assumptions that had been embedded over hundreds of years and convinced many thousands of people that not only was slavery wrong, but that they had an obligation to try to end it.

The long-term impact of the campaign was particularly significant, because it firmly established anti-slavery sentiment in the national consciousness. This was important since slavery remained legal, it was just the Transatlantic Slave Trade that was illegal. It was the new generation of anti-slavery campaigners who provided the impetus to take the issue forward. The abolitionist leadership was persuaded by the 'grass roots', particularly women's local groups, to abandon its gradualist approach in favour of an immediate end to slavery throughout the British colonies.

This was finally achieved in 1838 and the following year the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society was set up (known today as **Anti-Slavery International**) to **work for the global eradication of slavery**. Anti-Slavery International **continues to work for the elimination of all contemporary forms of slavery**, which are estimated to affect a minimum of 12.3 million people around the world today.

Currently, it is collecting signatures for its *No slavery No exceptions* Campaign, to work for the eradication of the discriminative practices which underpin all forms of slavery today.



This French engraving depicts the slave uprising on St Domingue in 1791 © Bridgeman Art Library

8. The Pro-Slavery Lobby

Summary

The pro-slavery lobby had a great interest in maintaining British involvement in the slave trade as the supply of forced African labour was vital to maintaining the sugar and tobacco plantations which provided a massive injection into the industrialisation and economic growth of Britain. The slave trade pervaded most of British society. Apart from the port cities of Liverpool, Bristol and London whose ship-building industries benefited, the effects were felt in surrounding cities like Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle where the local population gained employment producing guns, shackles for export to Africa and then refining the cotton brought from the Caribbean, and packaging tobacco and sugar for sale to the British public. To justify the continued supply of enslaved Africans, pro-slavery supporters, made up of the landed gentry, Members of Parliament, investors and ship captains employed a number of tactics to dissuade the government and the public from abolishing the slave trade and emancipating the slaves.

Pro-slavery propaganda

The pro-slavery lobby employed propaganda and racist rhetoric to justify the enslavement of Africans. African societies and cultures were attacked as being base and savage, as a justification for tearing Africans from their homes and treating them as chattel as opposed to fellow human beings. Africa was linked with slavery and oppression, as Europeans had witnessed Africans enslaving each other. This was despite the fact that those enslaved in Africa were usually prisoners of war or victims of political or judicial punishment, and were sometimes able to marry into the 'owning' family and could keep their names

and identity. These were rights not afforded to Africans enslaved by Europeans.

Ironically, European philosophers who wrote about human liberty, social freedom and justice, also supported and participated in the slave trade. John Locke, for example, the English philosopher, was involved in the slave trade, as was Thomas Hobbes, also an English philosopher. He wrote about Africans as captives of war who had been defeated by a dominant state, and so their enslavement was lawful and moral. For both Hobbes and Locke, it was better to enslave prisoners of war than to put them to death, as had previously been the case. Enslaving them was more enlightened because it also exposed Africans to European civilization. To counter reports of the brutality heaped on Africans on Caribbean plantations, the pro-slavery lobby used imagery depicting a romanticised version of life on the plantations, with enslaved Africans dressing up in fineries for feasts and the generous planter who took great care of his flock of slaves. These images and text aimed to inform the British public that the life of a slave was a charmed one in comparison to the lives of the English working classes and that Africans benefited from a system of slavery which afforded them with rights and luxuries that they were unaccustomed to in Africa. Liverpool merchant Michael Renwick Sergant. Summed up this view. '*We ought to consider whether the negroes in a well regulated plantation, under the protection of a kind master, do not enjoy as great, nay, even greater advantages than when under their own despotic governments.*'

Pro-slavery supporters

The pro-slavery lobby frequently appealed to nationalist sensitivities and argued that the growth of British industry, employment and wealth depended upon the profits made from African labour in Caribbean plantations. According to Samuel Taylor '*The value of goods annually supplied from*



Manchester and the neighbourhood for Africa is about £200,000... This value of manufacturers employs immediately about 18,000 of His Majesty's subjects, men, women and children'. By the 18th century, slavery was seen as essential to Britain's economy and power, and therefore accepted as the norm. The profits had given merchants and planters involved enough wealth and power to found banks and other financial institutions, and acquire immense political power. Between 1787 and 1807 all the Mayors of Liverpool were involved in the slave trade and 50 or 60 MPs represented slave plantations. They were able to build stately homes, marry into the aristocracy, and invest in industrial enterprises. William Beckford, twice Lord Mayor of London and owner of a 22,000 acre estate in Jamaica, left his son one million pounds and £100,000 a year in his will.

Liverpool was particularly pro-slavery and John Tarleton a leading slave-trader spent over three hours in 1788 trying to persuade Prime Minister Pitt that abolition would bring 'total ruin'. As well as the port cities, anti-abolition sentiments were evident in urban centres such as Birmingham and Manchester and the North West where jobs depended on manufacturing goods for export or processing the imported raw products (particularly cotton in Lancashire). When it appeared that the 1807 'Bill for the Abolition of the Slave Trade' would be passed, 439 mill owners in Manchester petitioned against it to Parliament and within a few hours a counter-petition of 2354 names was presented.

The trade helped strengthen Britain's domestic economy, with 150,000 guns each year being exported to Africa from Birmingham alone. As well as making a fortune in the trading of Africans, Birmingham also dominated copper manufacture, as this metal was highly valued by Africans and was used for trade. The custom duties on slave grown imports were an important source of government income. The Church also had plantations, for example the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel owned the Codrington estate

in Barbados.



Lesson Plan: The Pro-Slavery Lobby

Lesson objectives - students will:

- Examine the pro-slavery lobby and its successes.
- Assess the reasons why slavery and the slave trade was defended.
- Assess the legitimacy of the arguments purported by the pro-slavery movement
- Examine how historical images and texts were used for propaganda purposes.

Activity 1 (*40 mins*) - Assessing propaganda tools

Preparation - Photocopy three sets of **Resource Sheets Nine and Ten**, and cut the description and name cards before the lesson.

Divide students into teams of four and ask them to read the narratives. Discuss the answers and complete the grid below in their teams.

Allow 20 minutes for discussion and five minutes for each group to present a different argument. Counter arguments and evidence can be based on information garnered so far in class and, or any other historical knowledge.

Pro-slavery argument	Evidence to support argument	Counter anti-slavery argument	Evidence to support argument
Group 1 - Religious argument			
Group 2 - Africans have been saved from a worse fate			
Group 3 - Maintaining Britain's economic prestige			
Group 4 - Africans are lesser humans			



Activity 2 (20 mins) - Images of propaganda

Ask class to study Image A - The Generous Planter, and Image B - A Negro Festival on **Resource Sheet Nine** and engage students in discussion around the following questions:

- What is the depiction of the life of the enslaved African on a Caribbean plantation?
- Why have these images been produced and who would the target audience have been?
- How do these images contrast with your knowledge of life on the plantation for enslaved Africans?
- How reliable are images as primary sources when learning about an historical event?
- What other sources would be useful to aid a more accurate understanding of plantation life?

Activity 3 (20 mins) - Beneficiaries of the Transatlantic Slave Trade

Divide students into three groups and give each group a set of the prepared description and name cards. Explain that this is a quick exercise for them to match the descriptions to the names. It does not matter if they get the answers wrong as long as they work in a team and think logically. They have ten minutes to complete the exercise. After ten minutes stop the groups and ask them to see how many they guessed correctly as you read out the answers.

Engage the whole class in discussion around the following questions:

- Why was the continuation of the slave trade and slavery so important to some members of the British public?
- Which of the institutions/ people/ places identified continue to impact on British society today?
- How far did the profits from the slave trade impact on the building of wealthy Britain?

ANSWERS

Description Card 1 - Bartolomé de las Casas
Description Card 2 - John Hawkins
Description Card 3 - Royal African Society
Description Card 4 - John Locke
Description Card 5 - Lloyds of London

Description Card 6 - Bank of England
Description Card 7 - Lascelles
Description Card 8 - Christopher Codrington
Description Card 9 - Edward Colston

Closing (5 minutes)

Ensure you leave students thinking how profits from the Transatlantic Slave Trade are still evident in British society today and they should also think about the effects of the slave trade on the Americas, the Caribbean and Africa which will be discussed more fully in Chapter 11: Legacies of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in a contemporary global world.



Resource Sheet Nine: The Pro-Slavery Lobby

Observations occasioned by the attempts made in England to affect the abolition of the slave trade

Fully am I convinced, in the present state of the world, of the impracticability of a nation existing without soldiers or sailors; but I insist upon it, they are in a state of slavery. The labourer in England, who is the slave of necessity, serves a harder task master than the African finds in the West Indies. Is purchasing Negroes in Africa, and keeping them in slavery, so great an act as cruelty as the declaring of them free, and then suffering them to perish with cold, hunger and disease, in the streets of the metropolis? Such is too frequently the lot of the poor of Great Britain.

If the commerce in Africa was not carried on by Great Britain, it would be by our commercial rivals the French and the Dutch, from whom we must be contented to get a clandestine supply of Negroes or our colonies would decline so rapidly, as to be no longer worth the national attention or regard.

It will not be doubted by you, gentlemen, that a regard to his interest makes the farmer take care of his horses, even if possessed of little or no humanity; and it is to be supposed that a planter, a man of education and of common sense who knows, that without the assistance of his negroes, the work of his plantations cannot go on; who also knows, that an able working negro out of the ship will cost him forty to forty five pounds sterling, and that such negro, when seasoned, as it is called, to his estate, and used to that kind of labour necessary in the colonies, will be worth near double the money, shall have so little regard to his own interest as to starve, abuse, ill treat and mutilate these people, and thus ruin himself and his family.

An address to the inhabitants in general of great Britain and Ireland by Michael Renwick Sergent (1788)

We ought to consider whether the negroes in a well regulated plantation, under the protection of a kind master, do not enjoy as great, nay, even greater advantages than when under their own despotic governments.

No foreign nation ought to deprive the Africans of their natural privileges without their consent, that it is fair and just for these people to dispose of their slaves, prisoners of war and felons according to their own established laws and customs; that it is lawful for any foreign nation to purchase slaves for the consideration agreed on by each party provided that their nation is not restrained from so doing...this right is founded on the great and general law of nations.



Fugitive thoughts on the African slave trade, interspersed with cursory remarks on the manners, customs and commerce of the African and American Indians (1792)

Commerce is to Great Britain as the veins, arteries, and blood vessels are to the human body; the Metropolis the head, Liverpool and Bristol the arms, and manufacture the heart.

If such foreign woes create that excess of compassion, the abolitioners pretend to feel for the black race, let them view an embarkation of troops, and behold the tear, reluctant stealing down the soldier's manly cheek ...see the chained culprits shipping for a climate infinitely worse than their own, with all the horrors of starving or being destroyed by cannibals and barbarians.....in every other respect, they have a deeper sense of their wretched fate than a black could possibly have.

Observations on the project for abolishing the slave trade, and on the reasonableness of attempting some practicable mode of relieving the Negroes (anonymous)

Although we have no right to determine or choose for the Negroes, in respect to their removal from Africa to the West Indies, yet there seems little doubt that their situation is in general changed much for the better. They are slaves in Africa and their lives as much at the mercy of their uncivilised owners as those of their cattle. They are slaves still, but to civilised masters. They are protected, and their servitude protected by law.

It has already been observed, that British laws alone cannot abolish the slave trade, but that they may, in the attempt, discourage British shipping, and turn over the African trade entirely to foreigners.

Cursory remarks on the emancipation of slaves (1824)

I here solemnly declare, that I would rather be a slave to an indulgent master in the West Indies than a sailor subject to impressment. Of the three states of slavery, first, as it exists among Negroes in the West Indies by purchase; secondly, as arising from casts in India; thirdly, as arising from impressment in Great Britain, the lot of the negro is best.

It would be as vain to enforce a code of laws on the inhabitants of the moon as to civilise Africans, and render them sensible of the blessings which Europeans enjoy from their industry, and superior civil and religious institutions; the climate they inhabit is wholly opposed to it.



Colonel Tarleton, On the 18th of April, 1791, on a Motion made by Mr.

Wilberforce, for the Abolition of The Slave Trade

The convenient embellishment of African poetry, and African battles, and all the hideous phantoms of imaginary woe, I leave to minds open to incredulity. Such weak devices may influence those who are not well informed in the African Trade, who from habit and connexion may be prejudiced against it; or those who, from nature and education, yield instant admiration to the descriptive flights of a towering imagination.

I believe I can state with the greatest accuracy and truth that the number of deaths in every hundred slaves transported by Liverpool merchants since the last regulation took place has not reached the average of four and one half in every hundred.

The House will please observe that the exports from Liverpool, consisting of the manufactures of Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield and other neighbouring towns, which amount to a very considerable sum annually, are not noticed, and other material circumstances.

The correspondence between John Gladstone Esq. M.P. and James Cropper Esq. on the present state of slavery in the British West Indies

Mr Cropper boldly states that were the Negroes free, they would be both more willing and better labourers than they are in their present situation. Everyone who has been to the West Indies...assures me that the fact is quite contrary...in general, the manumitted Negroes are idle, indolent and slothful...though they possessed good characters while they were slaves.



Images

Image A - 'The Generous Planter' Anti-Slavery Record August 1835, © Anti-Slavery International

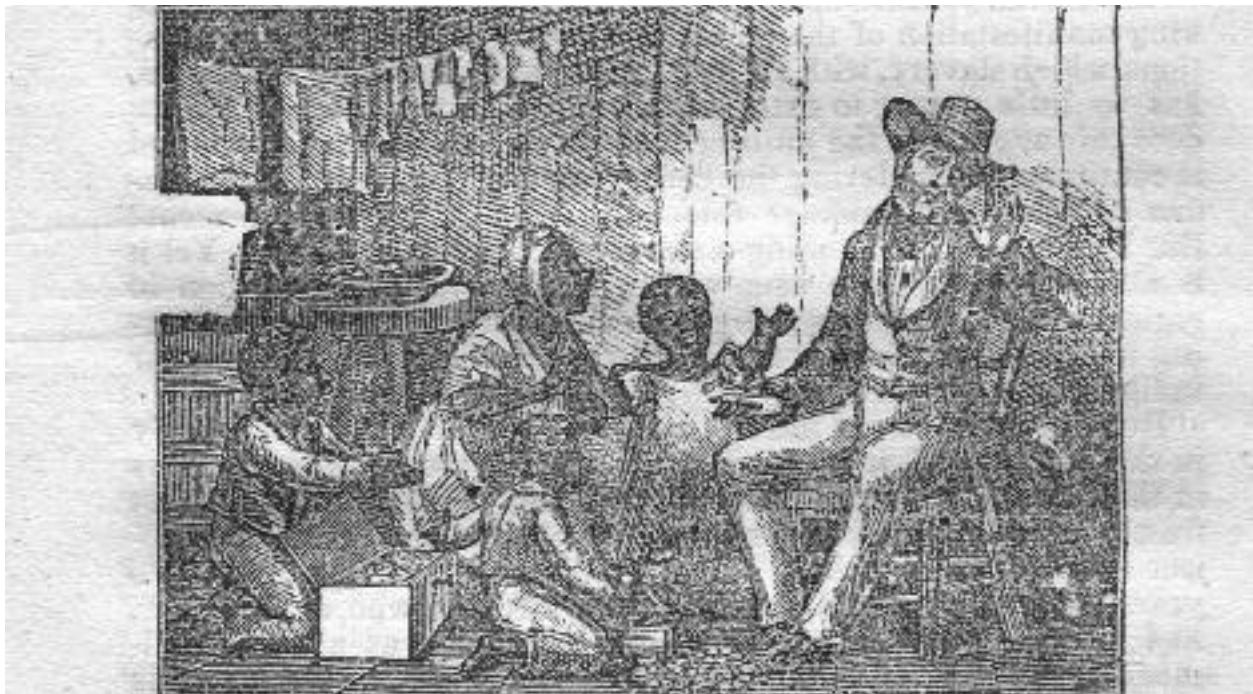


Image B - 'A Negro Festival Drawn from Nature in the Island of St. Vincent', depicting slavery as a life of leisure, taken from the pro-slavery book 'The History of the British Colonies in the West Indies' by Bryan Edwards, 1797, © Anti-Slavery International



Participants and Profitability Description Cards

1. This Spanish Priest suggested that using Africans was a 'humane' alternative to using the Amerindians in the American colonies. He argued that Africans made better labourers because they were more exposed to cultivation and more resistant to European diseases.

2. This Englishman launched three expeditions to the west Coast of Africa in the 1560s, which slaved and looted the west African Coast and brought its treasures to Europe and the New World. His ventures received the support of Queen Elizabeth I and his first trip to Africa was backed by the merchant and Lord Mayor of London. He was knighted after his successful second African venture and his coat of arms showed the head of an African woman with a chain around her neck.

3. This organisation, the most famous and important company involved in the slave trade, was founded in 1672 and held a monopoly until 1698. It set up and administered trading posts on the west African coast and could seize any ship other than its own that was involved in slaving ventures.

4. A member of the Royal African Company and a prominent philosopher, he is seen as one of the founding fathers of 'democratic' government'. He developed the idea that if people were willing to obey their government and give up some of their liberties, then the government would protect them from disorder and violence. If the people felt that the government was not delivering on its part of the bargain then it would lose credibility.

5. Slave ships and cargo (enslaved Africans) could be insured against loss and theft. Maritime insurance thrived on the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and this well-known high-street bank made enormous profits from insuring slave ships.



6. This national bank which sets interest rates for the country was set up in 1694 and underpinned commercial credit during the slave trade for its wealthy members who had amassed fortunes from involvement in the slave trade. This bank stabilised national finances to protect the transatlantic slave routes and plantation economies.

7. This family owned Harewood House, a grand English stately home which was financed by plantations using slavery, in the Caribbean. In 1838, the family received £26,000 compensation for the emancipation of their 1,277 slaves whilst the emancipated Africans received nothing.

8. Educated at Christ Church College Oxford and later becoming a Fellow of All Souls, this Barbados born Governor-General's father was one of the wealthiest planters in Barbados. Upon his death, he left a legacy of £10,000 and 12,000 book volumes to All Souls College, Oxford. £6,000 was used to build a grand library in 1751, which has been used by scholars since.

9. This Bristol born merchant was a member of the Royal African Company. In 1684 he inherited his brother's mercantile business and was a partner in a sugar refinery in St. Peter's Churchyard; shipping sugar from St. Kitts. He is remembered as a generous philanthropist who founded schools and gave money to hospitals, churches and various charities.

Participants and Profitability Name List

Edward Colston

Christopher Codrington

Lascelles

The Bank Of England

Lloyds Bank

John Locke

The Royal African Company

John Hawkins

Bartolomé de las Casas



9. Religion

Summary

Religion played a pivotal role not only in anti-slavery and pro-slavery propaganda but also in the lives of the enslaved Africans. The pro-slavery lobby used passages from the Bible to justify slavery as an ordained act blessed by God generally, and the enslavement of Africans specifically. The anti-slavery lobby also used the Bible to condemn the act of slavery. As part of the dehumanisation process necessary for compliant slaves, enslaved Africans were prevented from practicing their indigenous religions or speaking their own languages on plantations. They were instead sold the Biblical idea that heaven was not present on earth, but that they would reach their emancipation and receive heavenly rewards if they served their masters well. Most Africans eventually acquiesced and found solace in a Christian faith, but many resisted and continued practicing their religions or interspersing elements of their indigenous religions with traditional Christianity. Many also adopted the Christian messages of brotherhood and justice to demand their freedom from slavery.

Religion and the pro-slavery lobby

The Spanish priest Bartolomé de las Casas initiated the religious justification for using Africans as slaves. Out of concern for the increasing death of the indigenous Hispaniola population, he suggested the transatlantic transportation of Africans for work on plantations as a more ‘humane’ alternative in the 16th century. Pro-slavery proponents in later years used religion to justify the enslavement of Africans. The book of Genesis was understood to suggest the descendants of Ham were condemned to slavery; Noah ‘curses’ his son Ham for not averting his eyes from his father’s

nakedness, and so Ham is destined to be a slave of his brothers. Supporters of slavery linked the condemnation of Ham with Africans, claiming that the Hamites were Africans. They asserted that their skin colour signified darkness, evil, sin and the devil, while white skin signified purity, innocence and light. Other passages from the Bible were used to support this claim that African enslavement was ordained - the story of Joseph, for example was often used by supporters of the slave trade:

‘A further scriptural evidence that the conduct of Joseph in purchasing so many millions of his fellow creatures and reducing them to the conditions of slaves met the entire approbation of God and was therefore perfectly consonant to the sacred laws of nature is that remarkable declaration on the word of God registered in the first book of Chronicles,’ stated Reverend Harris in Liverpool in 1788.

Religion and the anti-slavery lobby

Ironically, the scriptures that were used to justify enslavement were also used to condemn it. Passages in Exodus were used to demonstrate the enslavement of a fellow countryman or someone of the same religion as wrong. Therefore Africans who were baptised believed that they could not be enslaved. A church parish record of baptised Africans in England is evidence of this. In the Caribbean, the authorities were suspicious of missionaries wanting to spread the word of God amongst the enslaved workers. *‘We have had occasion repeatedly to express our opinion of the sectarian propagandists, who send forth their missionaries out of a pretended zeal for the salvation of souls. The influence they possess over the minds of the Negroes is more widely ramified than imagined, or would be readily believed. Let them be looked after now more strictly than ever’,* an



outraged planter wrote in the Guiana Chronicle.

The Reverend James Dore used the story of the Tyrians' destruction as punishment for the enslavement of the children of Jerusalem, as his condemnation of the slave trade. *'The idea of trading persons of men should kindle detestation in the breasts of men - especially of Britons, and above all Christians'*, he said.

In a sermon preached before Cambridge University in 1788, Peter Peckard asserted that *"it is not too late to return to God. We are assured that when the wicked turneth away from his wickedness and doeth that which is right, he shall save his soul"*.

Religion as a tool of resistance and emancipation

Enslaved Africans were forbidden to practice their own religions or communicate in African languages. Many resisted this oppression and passed on knowledge of their indigenous identity down through generations. Maintaining one's own religion amidst oppression was immensely difficult, but as highly spiritual people, Africans fought to retain aspects of their cultural identity.

Vodun meaning spirit (commonly known as voodoo) is the primary culture and religion of more than 8 million people of Haiti and the Haitian diaspora. Around 70 percent of the Haitian population practice *Vodun* of whom many claim to be Catholic or another religion. In April 2003, the Haitian government officially sanctioned it, allowing priests for the first time to legally perform marriages.

Today Haitian *Vodun* represents the pressures many different cultures and ethnicities of people feel having been uprooted from Africa and taken to Haiti during the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Under slavery, African cultures and religions were suppressed, lineages were fragmented, and people pooled their religious knowledge. Out of this fragmentation they became culturally unified. In addition to combining

the spirits of many different African and *Taino* peoples, and pieces of Catholic liturgy have been incorporated to replace lost prayers or elements. In addition images of Catholic saints are used to represent various spirits or *misteh* (mysteries), and many saints themselves are honoured in *Vodun* in their own right. This syncretism allows *Vodun* to encompass the African, the *Taino* and the European ancestors in a whole and complete way.

The majority of Africans however were forcibly converted to Christianity and many embraced it as a way of feeding their need for spirituality. Many also utilised the teachings of the Bible to preach the idea of a common humanity and freedom to the other enslaved Africans. The Jamaican Baptist preacher and activist Sam Sharpe was one such enslaved African who believed from his reading of the Bible that slavery was morally wrong. He helped to spread the view that the Crown had already freed the slaves and that the local white people were withholding that freedom. He planned a campaign of passive resistance during Christmas 1831, which escalated into a full scale rebellion. Although Sharpe was hanged in 1832 the uprising had a significant effect in promoting the cause of emancipation.



Lesson Plan: Religion

Lesson objectives - students will:

- Understand how religion was used to justify the slave trade and slavery, and also used to condemn both.
- Assess how enslaved Africans used Christianity as a tool to argue for their emancipation.
- Appreciate how different cultures and practices were used by enslaved Africans to create new religions.
- Identify and assess imagery used by the anti-slavery movement and their presentation of enslaved Africans.

Activity 1 (40 mins) - Literary historical description and reading for arguments

Divide students into three teams and ask them to read the narratives on **Resource Sheet Eleven** and discuss the answers and complete the grid below in their groups.

Allow 20 minutes for discussion and five minutes for each group to present a different argument. As a class discuss the following questions:

- How did the anti-slavery and pro-slavery camps both use the Bible to justify their position?
- What lessons does that give us when we hear sensationalist media stories about different religions and accepted practices?
- Is the enslavement and dehumanisation of a fellow human being ever justifiable?

Argument	Evidence in the Bible	Counter argument	Supporting human rights article or any other religious scripture
1. Africans are the cursed descendants of Ham and their enslavement is ordained by the Bible			
2. Joseph was blessed by God after he enslaved Egyptians			
3. Abraham owned slaves and was not punished by God			



Activity 2 (30 mins) - Using historical facts to debate a religious issue

To follow up from Activity 1, using the information gathered select six students to form two debating teams on the topic **'This house declares that all human beings are created as equals and no one should be subject to enslavement'.**

Explain the rules of debating, see (www.britishdebate.com/universities/resources/ox_roughguide.pdf) for a guide and the rest of the class should act as the audience and you assume the role of chair.

Activity 3 (15mins) - African and European attitudes to religion

Ask two students to read aloud the information on Sam Sharpe and vodun to the rest of the class. Engage the whole class in discussion around the following questions:

- What does the description of Sam Sharpe and the description of vodun tell us about how enslaved Africans viewed religion?
- Why might the plantation owners have wanted to suppress Africans practicing their indigenous religions?

Activity 4 (15mins) - Religion as used by the anti-slavery movement

Ask students to discuss Image A: *Am I not a man and a brother?* which depicts a kneeling enslaved African and was widely used by the anti-slavery movement. Engage the whole class in discussion around the following questions:

- Why did the anti-slavery movement choose this kind of image?
- What type of 'slave' were they trying to portray and who might have been the target audience for the image?
- How might the target audience identify with the enslaved African?
- Does this image represent an accurate portrayal of enslaved Africans attitude to religion?

Follow up/Homework (5 minutes) Individual research and homework/project idea

Ask students to conduct research on the Codrington Estate and design and produce an information sheet detailing the Church's involvement and profits made from the slave trade:

The sheet should include the following information:

- The history of the Codrington Estate
- The church's justification of enslavement on its estate
- Goods produced on the estate and the use of profit
- The Church of England's apology in 2006 for the church's role during slavery.

Closing (5 minutes)

Ensure that students are aware that most religious texts do not justify slavery and that religious texts can be manipulated for political and economic justifications. Explain that many Africans converted to Christianity and used their faith to preach the message of fraternity and freedom.



Resource Sheet Eleven: Religion

Observations occasioned by the attempts made in England to affect the abolition of the slave trade

The eldest born of Ham, who was accursed by his father, was called Cush, which, in the Hebrew language signifies black. Ethiopia, under which name it is supposed Africa is included, is called in Scripture, the land of Cush, and the inhabitants *Cushim*, or *Cushites*. Is it an improbable conjecture that the Negroes are descendants of Ham, by his eldest son Cush? Which may, perhaps, account for the degraded situation those people have ever continued in.

Scriptural researches on the licitness of the slave trade, delineated in the sacred writings of the word of God, by the Rev. R Harris (Liverpool 1788)

A further scriptural evidence that the conduct of Joseph in purchasing so many millions of his fellow creatures and reducing them to the conditions of slaves met the entire approbation of God and was therefore perfectly consonant to the sacred laws of nature is that remarkable declaration on the word of God registered in the First Book of Chronicles.

A blessing was bestowed upon Joseph and his brethren about four or five years after Joseph had enslaved all the inhabitants of Egypt.

But, were the slave trade as criminal in its nature as pretended, were it a pursuit hateful in the sight of God, and an atrocious encroachment on the sacred rights of justice and humanity, would Jacob, or rather, would God, who spoke by his mouth, have overlooked the atrocity of a crime big with such an accumulation of guilt?

Second edition of the above pamphlet, to which are added scriptural directions for the proper treatment of slaves, and a review of some scurrilous pamphlets, by Rev. R Harris (Liverpool 1788)

It is very remarkable, that among the works of Abraham...who constantly obeyed the voice of God...that there should be found among his works the practice of dealing in human flesh, the practice of purchasing with money those of his own species, and making them bond slaves, without the least intimation that his conduct...was ever reproved, or even discountenanced...by any private or public intimation of God's displeasure.

The West Indies as they are; or, a real picture of slavery: but more particularly as it exists in the island of Jamaica, in three parts, by the Rev. R Bickell

The hearts of the Negroes appear to be open to conviction, and seem prepared for the reception of the great truths of the Gospel...they seem to reanimated and transformed into different beings when told that Christ died for them, and that by faith and grace they may be saved as well as we.



Report of the agency committee of the anti slavery society, established in June 1831, for the purpose of disseminating information by lectures on colonial slavery

O thou God of love, who art loving to every man, and whose mercy is over all thy works; have compassion upon these outcasts of men, who are trodden down as dung upon the earth! Arise and help these that have no helper, whose blood is spilt upon the ground like water! Are not these also the works of thine own hands the purchase of thy son's blood? Stir them up to cry unto thee in the land of their captivity; and let their complaint come up before thee; let it enter thy ears!

The Negro and the Free Born Briton compared; or a vindication of the African slave trade, proving that it is lawful and right, in a religious, in a political and in a commercial view

The slave trade...was evidently tolerated and approved of by God Almighty in the days of Abraham, and was confirmed 600 years afterwards, at Mount Sinai; where God, by his servant Moses, enacted wholesome regulating laws, for the purchase and usage of the slaves.

Leviticus 25, v44 - Both thy bond men and bond maids which thou shalt have, shall be of the Heathen that are round about you. Of them shall ye buy, bond men and bond maids.

The London Missionary Society's report of the proceedings against the late Rev. J. Smith of Demerara, minister of the gospel, condemned to death, on a charge of assisting in a rebellion of the Negro slaves - Extract from the Guiana Chronicle, 1822

We have had occasion repeatedly to express our opinion of the Sectarian Propagandists, who send forth their missionaries out of a pretended zeal for the salvation of souls. The influence they possess over the minds of the Negroes is more widely ramified than imagined, or would be readily believed. Let then be looked after now more strictly than ever.

A caution to Great Britain and her colonies in a short representation of the calamitous state of the enslaved Negroes in the British dominions, by Antony Benezet (1767)

If we carefully examine the scriptures we shall find that slavery and oppression were ever abominable in the sight of God...for though the Jews were permitted to keep slaves, there was no inherent right of service to be implied from this permission, because whenever the slave could escape he was esteemed free; and it was absolutely unlawful for any man to deliver him up again to his master.



Voodun - adapted from

www.antislavery.org/breakingthesilence/slave_routes/slave_routes_haiti.shtml

Vodun (commonly known as voodoo) is the primary culture and religion of more than eight million people of Haiti and the Haitian diaspora. In Haiti around 70 percent of the population practice *Vodun* to some extent, including many who claim to be Catholic or another religion. In April 2003, the Haitian government officially sanctioned it, allowing priests for the first time to legally perform marriages.

Today Haitian *Vodun* represents the pressures many different cultures and ethnicities of people feel having been uprooted from Africa and taken to Haiti during the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Under slavery, African cultures and religions were suppressed, lineages were fragmented, and people pooled their religious knowledge. Out of this fragmentation they became culturally unified. In addition to combining the spirits of many different African and *Taino* peoples, pieces of Catholic liturgy have been incorporated to replace lost prayers or elements. In addition images of Catholic saints are used to represent various spirits or *misteh* (mysteries), and many saints themselves are honoured in *Vodun* in their own right. This syncretism allows *Vodun* to encompass the African, the *Taino* and the European ancestors in a whole and complete way.

Sam Sharpe (Jamaican anti-slavery freedom fighter)

Sam Sharpe was a respected Baptist deacon who was among many Africans who were involved in rebellion and resistance efforts on the slave plantations. He triggered a rebellion of thousands of slaves in Jamaica in 1831. He reportedly told the slaves that they had been freed and that they should stop work and claim their freedom. Before his own execution, Sharpe is quoted as saying “I would rather die upon yonder gallows than live in slavery”.



Image A - The 'Am I not a Man and a Brother' logo used by the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, © Anti-Slavery International



10. Abolition and Emancipation

Summary

The first Bill to abolish the slave trade was introduced in the House of Commons in 1791 by William Wilberforce but it was rejected. The following year the House of Commons voted in favour of abolishing the slave trade but the bill was rejected by the House of Lords. Despite several more failed attempts the abolitionists persevered and finally, in 1807, helped in large part by the successful revolution in Haiti the British Parliament passed an Act on the 25th March and made it illegal for British owned ships to transport enslaved Africans. Although this theoretically ended the transportation of Africans across the Atlantic, it did not stop other European countries trading nor did it end the institution of slavery itself. It was not until 1833 that an Act of Parliament was passed which, when it became law in 1834, ended slavery itself. Even then, full emancipation was not realized until 1838 when a system of apprenticeship was abolished after continued revolts from the enslaved and strong campaigning by female British abolitionists.

British abolition of the slave trade

Britain was not the first European country to abolish its slave trade. Denmark had ended its more modest trade in 1803. The 1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade Act did not end slavery as an institution in British colonies. A quarter of all Africans who were enslaved in the period 1500-1870 were transported across the Atlantic after 1807. In 1808 the US banned the trade in people from Africa, but not internally or from the Caribbean. Although the British were no longer trading legally, an illegal trade evolved, and other European countries stepped up their activities to meet the ongoing demand from plantation owners for slaves.

In 1808 The British west Africa Squadron

was established at Sierra Leone (declared a crown colony the previous year to retain Britain's trading links with Africa) in order to suppress illegal slave trading by the British. Royal Navy ships were designated to patrol the west Coast of Africa and the Atlantic Ocean. Between 1820 and 1870 they seized over 1500 ships and freed 150,000 Africans destined for the Caribbean and the Americas. The British government signed anti-slavery treaties with over 50 African rulers but the British motives were not entirely altruistic; they hoped to end European involvement in the slave trade so as to open up a free trade market with Africa. However trading in people actually increased in the 1830s and 1840s through demand in the United States to increase cotton production. The Navy was overwhelmed with the scale of the enterprise that it had to patrol. For 80 years naval ships continued to chase and capture slaving vessels around Africa but without international support they could not stop the trade, only discourage it.

Women's involvement in the post-1807 campaign for emancipation

The leading female anti-slavery campaigners in Britain formed 73 female societies nationwide. Women's anti-slavery societies attracted women from all walks of life, not just the middle and upper classes. Key figures emerged, often from Quaker backgrounds, including Lucy Townsend who, inspired by Thomas Clarkson, founded the first British women's anti-slavery society in Birmingham in 1825, Jane Smeal who formed the Glasgow Ladies Emancipation Society, and Anne Knight founder of the Chelmsford Female Anti-Slavery Society. From its founding in 1787 the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade had been an exclusively male organisation.

The Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery Throughout the British



Dominions was formed in London in 1823 to campaign for total abolition of slavery. It was led by Thomas Buxton, who had taken on the role of anti-slavery leader in Parliament following Wilberforce's retirement. Women were able to join as members, but not as leaders. Women, as Elizabeth Heyrick wrote were, 'especially qualified...to plead for the oppressed'.

In 1824 Heyrick published a pamphlet *Immediate not Gradual Abolition*. The male leadership of the official Anti-Slavery Society tried to suppress the distribution of the pamphlet, and Wilberforce instructed the leadership not to speak at women's meetings. In 1827 the Sheffield Female Anti-Slavery Society demanded the immediate emancipation of all enslaved people in British colonies and other female societies followed. This differed from the official policy of the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery which believed in gradual emancipation. Because of this, women came into conflict with Thomas Fowell Buxton, William Wilberforce and others. Elizabeth Heyrick, as treasurer of the Female Society for Birmingham, threatened to withdraw funding from the female societies unless the male leadership reconsidered. As the female associations supplied over a fifth of all donations to central funds this action would have had a big impact on resources. In 1830 the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery agreed to drop the words gradual abolition from its title and to support the Female Society's plan for a new campaign to bring about immediate emancipation.

Several of the women went on to use their experience in the support of other issues including factory reform, the end of the Corn Laws and the campaign for Parliamentary Reform. An attempt to prevent women from participating in the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840 drove inspired Anne Knight to start a campaign for equal rights for women and in 1847 she published what is believed to be the first ever leaflet on women's suffrage.

Ongoing resistance and rebellions

The period post 1807 was not quiet on the plantations. The successful revolution in Haiti and the British abolition of the slave trade had raised hopes that an end to slavery was achievable. There were slave rebellions in 1815 in Jamaica and 1816 in Barbados. There were further rebellions in Jamaica in 1823 and 1824. In 1823 an uprising in Demerara (now Guyana) was brutally suppressed by British forces. 250 enslaved Africans died, and the Reverend John Smith of the London Missionary Society was sentenced to death for his part in the uprising, causing outrage in Britain. The most significant rebellion in forcing the final step in the emancipation of slaves and the end of slavery in British colonies was the 1831-32 Baptist War in Jamaica led by Samuel Sharpe. He was temporarily in charge of the Baptist chapel in Montego Bay in 1831 when Christmas Day fell on a Sunday and slaves were not given an extra day's holiday. This, along with rumours that emancipation had been granted in London, but was being withheld locally, fuelled their discontent.

The rebellion, known as the 'Baptist War', escalated to be the greatest uprising seen in the British Caribbean. In a week over 20,000 rebels took over a third of Jamaica and 200 slaves and 14 whites were killed. Sharpe was hanged and a further 344 rebels executed. The white authorities blamed the missionaries for inciting the rebellion, and burned down 20 Baptist and Methodist chapels. These recriminations against the missionaries inflamed public opinion in Britain, particularly among the lower middle class and working class chapel-goers, and added more weight to the anti-slavery campaign. Parliament voted to abolish slavery within a year.

The 1833 Emancipation Act and Apprenticeship

In 1832 the Great Reform Act introduced a wider range of members to Parliament than those who previously from the upper classes had bought or inherited their seats. These elected members were more likely to oppose slavery. The new Parliament met in 1833, and faced renewed pressure from the



anti-slavery lobby. A demonstration marched to Downing Street and the elderly Wilberforce was persuaded to initiate a petition - before he died later the same year, three days after the Emancipation Bill was finally passed. The debate in Parliament over emancipation lasted more than three months, one of the longest sessions in history. As freedom for slaves seemed to become inevitable, the pro-slavery lobby switched its tactics to requesting compensation for the human 'property' that was about to be taken from the plantation owners. commercial gain mattered most to the absentee plantation owners in London, or those with economic interests in the Caribbean. The Emancipation Bill was passed in the House of Commons and the House of Lords in the summer of 1833. One and a half million Britons signed petitions for this last step. But Parliament also voted to pay the plantation owners £20 million in government bonds, almost 40 percent of the national budget at the time. No payment to the ex-slaves, as Elizabeth Heyrick had advocated a decade earlier - '*let compensation be first made to the slave*' - was made. Paying such large compensation to slave owners endorsed public opinion but by doing so it advocated that the enslaved people were property. The Bill did not become law until the Emancipation Act took effect on the 1 August 1834. Even then freedom for slaves in the British Caribbean was not immediate. To pacify the concerns of the plantation owners slaves, other than those under six, would have to work full time as apprentices without pay for six years for their former owners before they would be finally free.

Plantation owners abused the conditions of the transition leading to further revolts. There was no real difference between slavery and this system of apprenticeship. Women anti-slavery campaigners generated half a million signatures on a petition to end apprenticeship.

Emancipation and inequality

Full emancipation was granted in the British Caribbean on 31 July 1938 after the revolts

and campaigning led to the demise of the apprenticeship system. Thomas Clarkson was the only member of the original Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade set up in 1787 who was still alive to see full emancipation achieved in British colonies.

However, the conditions for the emancipated Africans were exploited by embittered plantation owners who charged for food and housing that had once been free. Shops were set up on estates that more than recouped any wages the slaves were paid, forcing them into debt. Coupled with government imposed taxes the emancipated Africans found themselves unemployed, indebted and marginalized in post-slavery Caribbean society.

The abolitionists had fought a campaign for freedom, but not for equal rights for all. As emancipated Africans faced competition for jobs from increased mechanization as well as the influx of indentured labourers so they became more marginalized in society.

Ex-slaves were exposed to, and alienated by, colonials and their attitudes of superiority. Outrage grew in the face of harsh labour laws that bore close similarities to the conditions that prevailed at the time of slavery which resulted in people migrating out of the Caribbean to seek try to make a life in other countries. Those who stayed were obliged to work in subservient roles as a means to survive.

Inequality, white racism and the introduction of the system of indenture, led again to a number of revolts, particularly in those islands where slave uprisings had previously been strongest; Jamaica, Barbados and Demerara. In 1865 there was a massive uprising by black Jamaicans in Morant Bay against the unjust and ruthless tactics employed by the British authorities and the governor, Eyre. The crowd attacked the police station and courthouse killing 17 whites (including the magistrates) and wounding 32. The authorities reacted violently, executed the ringleaders and declared martial law leading to the death of 400 Africans. Moreover, they executed a



mixed-race Baptist minister, William Gordon, who had not been involved in the riots, but had made speeches supporting the cause. This racial inequality became a legacy of slavery and fuelled the wider civil rights agendas in Britain, the Caribbean and the North America.

Indenture

Hundreds of thousands of indentured labourers were imported to the Caribbean, to effectively subsidise the plantation owners. There was also a significant number of German labourers imported to supplement the labour supply in the apprenticeship period between 1834-1838. They, and other Europeans, were treated favourably because they were not black, and it was hoped they would 'set a good example' to freed slaves. Other groups included people from Lebanon, Syria and Palestine fleeing oppression from Turkey. But the largest numbers of indentured labourers were from India. Between 1845 and 1917 over a half a million Indians were taken to the Caribbean, particularly to British Guyana, Trinidad and Jamaica. Indentured labourers were free to return to their homelands after five years, although few did. Those who were successful could return home with an average of two years' wages in savings, but others returned with nothing. Many labourers who were successful, opted to stay in the Caribbean after the five years of indenture, and developed their previous trades especially fishing, metalworking, merchandising and finance, and became an integral part of Caribbean society. In most cases, however, the economic success of plantation society did not benefit those who laboured on the land. Low wages and prejudicial attitudes excluded these communities from the more economically profitable occupations.

The British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society was formed on 17 April 1839, declaring its commitment to abolishing slavery throughout the world. In 1990 it became Anti-Slavery International, the world's oldest human rights organisation.



Lesson Plan: Abolition and Emancipation

Lesson objectives - students will:

- Learn about the 1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade Act and its impact on the lives of enslaved Africans.
- Understand the 1833 Act for the Abolition of slavery through the Colonies and its limitations for the freedom of the enslaved Africans.
- To compare and contrast the Maroon Treaty 1738-9 with the 1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade Act and 1833 Act for the Abolition of slavery through the Colonies.

Activity 1 (20 mins) - Analysing historical acts of Parliament and reading for understanding

Divide students into three groups and allocate each group the following literature from **Resource Sheets Thirteen and Fourteen**:

Group 1: 1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade Act

Group 2: 1833 Act for the Abolition of slavery through the Colonies

Group 3: Maroon Treaty 1738-9, information on Cudjoe and the Maroons and Image C - The Maroon Treaty 1738-9

Each group should present their answers to the questions below to the rest of the class.

- How did each Act benefit enslaved Africans?
- How did each Act benefit plantation owners?
- What freedoms did each act offer enslaved Africans?
- What would true freedom mean?

Activity 2 (20 mins) - From abolition to emancipation

Engage whole class in discussion after a collective reading of the narratives on **Resource Sheet Twelve** around the following questions:

- Why were anti-slavery supporters dissatisfied with the provisions of the 1833 Act?
- Why might the treatment of the enslaved Africans have worsened during the apprenticeship system?
- How did the actions of the enslaved Africans accelerate the move from apprenticeship system to emancipation in 1838?



Activity 3 (20 mins) - Depictions of abolition and emancipation

Facilitate whole class discussion around Image A and Image B on **Resource Sheet Twelve** around the following questions:

- What key messages does the image convey?
- Do the images identify Britain's role in the enslavement of Africans on its Caribbean plantations?
- Do the images convey any sense of agency for enslaved Africans who fought for their own freedom? How would you design a more historically accurate image depicting all the different factors leading to the abolition and emancipation acts?

Closing (5 minutes)

Ensure that students become aware that the 1807 and 1833 Acts actually did very little to improve the conditions for enslaved Africans and that anti-slavery supporters especially women were very disappointed with the outcome and continued campaigning for meaningful freedom. Also emphasise that enslaved Africans gained their own freedom and settled in Maroon communities (link to lesson on Resistance and Rebellion), and continued their demand for freedom on plantations, and that continued pressure led to a shortened apprenticeship period and accelerated emancipation.



Resource Sheet Twelve: Abolition and Emancipation

Cudjoe of the Maroons

In 1690 a large group of slaves in Clarendon, Jamaica consisting mainly of Coromantees an extremely brave and warlike people from Africa's Gold Coast, rebelled and escaped into the dense woods.

Under the able leadership of one of their number named Cudjoe. Cudjoe, with the help of his two brothers Accompong and Johnny (in the west or Leeward side), and two sub-chiefs Quao and Cuffee (in the East or Windward side), began a campaign of murder and robbery known to history as the First Maroon War.

Disguised from head to foot with leaves and cunningly concealed, the Maroons chose to attack from ambush. This form of warfare along with their skill in woodcraft and familiarity with the untracked forests along with their legendary skill as marksman baffled and confounded those sent to fight them.

Keen-eyed lookouts would spot an approaching force long before their arrival and spread the warning through the abeng horn, a kind of bugle made from a cow's horn. Skilled horn blowers could use particular calls to summon each member of their party from long distances as if they were face-to-face.

The English forces suffered huge losses both from the Maroons and the tropical diseases that were very common at that time. The English came to realise that making peace with the Maroons was the only possible solution.

This treaty was the first of its kind and it demonstrated that a group of rebellious ex-slaves had forced a powerful class of planters to come to terms. One of the stipulations of the treaty was that: "If any a white man shall do any manner of injury to Captain Cudjoe, his successors, or any of his or their people, shall apply to any commanding officer or magistrate in the neighbourhood for justice".

A narrative of events since 1 August 1834 by James Williams

I have been very ill treated by Mr Senior and the magistrates since the law come in. Apprentices get a great deal more punishment now than they did when they was slaves; the master take spite, and do all he can to hurt them than before the free come.

The permanent laws of the emancipated colonies (London 1838)

The evidence on this subject is of a substantive character, and in the opinion of the Anti-Slavery Committee, it fully establishes the fact not only of a future intention to infringe the rights of the emancipated classes, but of the actual commencement and the extensive progress of a colonial system for that purpose.

...the Jamaica legislature's [objective] had been to frame laws with such adroitness that they might re-enact as much as possible of the ancient system of slavery under a new name, that at the expiration of the apprenticeship they would not leave an act in which they would not try to introduce some system which should interfere with the future liberty of the negroes.



Resource Sheet Thirteen: The Maroon Treaty (1738-9)

At the camp near Trelawny Town, March 1, 1738. In the name of God, Amen.

Whereas Captain Cudjoe, Captain Accompong, Captain Johnny, Captain Cuffee, Captain Quace, and several other negroes, their descendants and adherents, have been in a state of war and hostility, for several years past against our sovereign Lord, the King and the inhabitants of this Island; and whereas peace and friendship among mankind, and preventing the effusion of blood, is agreeable to God, consonant to reason, and desired by every man; and whereas 'His Majesty' George the Second, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, and of Jamaica Lord Ec. Has, by his letter patent, dated February 24, 1738, in the twelfth year of his reign, granted full power and authority to John Guthrie and Francis Saddler, Esq. to negotiate and finally conclude a treaty of peace and friendship with the aforesaid Captain Cudjoe, and the rest of his captains adherents, and others of his men; they mutually, sincerely, and amicably, have agreed to the following articles:

First

That all hostility shall cease forever.

Second

That the said Captain Cudjoe, the rest of his Captains, adherents, and men, shall be forever, hereafter in a perfect state of freedom and liberty, excepting those who have been taken by them, within two years last past, if such are willing to return to their said masters and owners, with full pardon and indemnity from their said masters or owners for what is past, provided always, that, if they are not willing to return, they shall remain in subjection to Captain Cudjoe and in friendship with us, according to the form and tenor of this Treaty.

Third

That they shall enjoy and possess, and their posterity for ever, all the lands situate and lying between Trelawny Town and the Cockpits, to the amount of fifteen hundred acres, bearing north-west from the said Trelawny Town.

Fourth

That they shall have liberty to plant the said lands with coffee, cocoa, ginger, tobacco and cotton, and to breed cattle, hogs, goats, or any other flock, and dispose of the produce or increase of the said commodities to the inhabitants of the Island; provided always that when they bring the said commodities to market, they shall apply first to the custos, or any other magistrate of the respective parishes where they expose their goods to sale, for a license to vend the same.

Fifth

That Captain Cudjoe, and all the Captains, adherents and people now in subjection to him, shall all live together within the bounds of Trelawny town, and that they have liberty to farm where they shall think fit, except within three miles of any settlement, crowd or pen; provided always, that in case the hunters of Captain Cudjoe, and those of other settlements meet them the hogs to be equally divided between both parties.



Sixth

That the said **CAPTAIN CUDJOE**, and his successors, do use their best endeavour to take, kill, suppress, or destroy, either by themselves or jointly with any other number of men, commanded on that service by his Excellency the governor, or commander-in-chief for the time being, all rebels whatsoever they be, throughout this island, unless they submit to the same terms of accommodation granted to Captain Cudjoe and his successors.

Seventh

That in case this Island be invaded by any foreign enemy, the said Captain Cudjoe and his successors hereinafter named or to be appointed, shall then, upon notice given, immediately repair to any place the Governor for the time being shall appoint, in order to repel the said with his or their utmost force, or to submit to the order of the commander-in-chief on this occasion.

Eighth

That if any white man shall do any manner of injury to Captain Cudjoe, his successors or any of his or their people they shall apply to any commanding officer or magistrate in the neighbourhood for justice, and in case Captain Cudjoe or any of his people, shall do any injury to any white person, he shall submit himself or deliver up such offender to justice.

Ninth

That if any Negroes shall hereafter run away from their masters or owners and fall into Captain Cudjoe's hands, he shall immediately be sent back to the chief magistrate of the next parish where they are taken; and those that bring them are to be satisfied for their trouble, and the legislature shall appoint.

Tenth

That all Negroes taken since the raising of this party by Cudjoe's people shall immediately be returned.

Eleventh

That Captain Cudjoe and his successors shall wait on his Excellency of the commander-in-chief for the time being, once every year, if there upon required.

Twelfth

That Captain Cudjoe, during his life, and the captain succeeding him, shall have full power to inflict any punishment they think proper for crimes committed by their men among themselves, death only excepted; in which case of the captain thinks they deserve death, he shall be obliged to bring them before any justice of the peace who shall order proceedings on their trial equal to those of other free Negroes.

Thirteenth

That Captain Cudjoe with his people, shall cut, clear and keep open, large and convenient roads from Trelawny town to Westmoreland, and St. James and if possible to St. Elizabeth.

Fourteenth

That two white men, to be nominated by his Excellence, or the commander-in-chief for the time being, shall constantly live and reside with Captain Cudjoe and his successors, in order to maintain a friendly correspondence with the inhabitants of this island.

Fifteenth

That Captain Cudjoe shall, during his life, be chief commander in Trelawny Town; after his decease, the command be to his brother Captain Accompong, and in case of his decease, on his next brother, Captain Johnny and failing him, Captain Cuffee shall succeed; who is to be succeeded by Captain Quoce; and after all their demise the Governor or commander-in-chief for the time being, shall appoint from time to time, whom he thinks fit for the command.

In testimony of the above presents, we have herewith set our hands and seal the day and date above written.

The mark of L X

John Guthrie, L.S.

Francis Saddle, I. S.

Captain Cudjoe



Resource Sheet Fourteen: Abolition Acts

Excerpts from An Act for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Colonies; for promoting the Industry of the manumitted Slaves; and for compensating the Persons hitherto entitled to the Services of such Slaves 1833

The purposes of the Abolition of Slavery Act 1833 were described in the preamble as:

- * the abolition of slavery throughout the British colonies
- * for promoting the industry of the manumitted slaves (achieved by providing for a period of apprenticeship)
- * for compensating the persons hitherto entitled to the services of such slaves (achieved by appropriating £20 million to compensate slave owners).

WHEREAS divers Persons are holden in Slavery within divers of His Majesty's Colonies, and it is just and expedient that all such Persons should be manumitted and set free, and that a reasonable Compensation should be made to the Persons hitherto entitled to the Services of such Slaves for the Loss which they will incur by being deprived of their Right to such Services: And whereas it is also expedient that Provision should be made for promoting the Industry and securing the good Conduct of the Persons so to be manumitted, for a limited Period after such their Manumission: And whereas it is necessary that the Laws now in force in the said several Colonies should forthwith be adapted to the new State and Relations of Society therein which will follow upon such general Manumission as aforesaid of the said Slaves; and that, in order to afford the necessary Time for such Adaptation of the said Laws, a short Interval should elapse before such Manumission should take effect.

Be it therefore enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the Authority of the same, That from and after the first Day of August One thousand eight hundred and thirty-four all Persons who in conformity with the Laws now in force in the said Colonies respectively shall on or before the first Day of August One thousand eight hundred and thirty-four have been duly registered as Slaves in any such Colony, and who on the said first Day of August One thousand eight hundred and thirty-four shall be actually within any such Colony, and who shall by such Registries appear to be on the said first Day of August One thousand eight hundred and thirty-four of the full Age of Six Years or upwards, shall by force and virtue of this Act, and without the previous Execution of any Indenture of Apprenticeship, or other Deed or Instrument for that Purpose, become and be apprenticed Labourers; provided that, for the Purposes aforesaid, every Slave engaged in his ordinary Occupation on the Seas shall be deemed and taken to be within the Colony to which such Slave shall belong.

All Persons who on the 1 August 1834 shall have been registered as Slaves, and shall appear on the Registry to be Six Years old or upwards, shall from that Day become apprenticed Labourers.



And whereas, towards compensating the Persons at present entitled to the Services of the Slaves to be manumitted and set free by virtue of this Act for the Loss of such Services, His Majesty's most dutiful and loyal Subjects the Commons of *Great Britain* and *Ireland* in Parliament assembled have resolved to give and grant to His Majesty the Sum of Twenty Millions Pounds Sterling; be it enacted, That the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury of the United Kingdom of *Great Britain* and *Ireland* may raise such Sum or Sums of Money as shall be required from Time to Time under the Provisions of this Act, and may grant as the Consideration for such Sum or Sums of Money Redeemable Perpetual Annuities or Annuities for Terms of Years (which said Annuities reflectively shall be transferable and payable at the Bank of *England*).

Excerpts from, An Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade - 25 March 1807

I. 'Whereas the Two Houses of Parliament did, by their Resolutions of the Tenth and Twenty-fourth days of June One Thousand eight hundred and six, severally resolve, upon certain Grounds therein mentioned, that they would, with all practicable Expedition, take effectual Measures for the Abolition of the African Slave Trade in such Manner, and at such Period as might be deemed advisable, And whereas it is fit upon all and each of the Grounds mentioned in the said Resolutions, that the same should be forthwith abolished and prohibited, and declared to be unlawful'.

VI. Provided always, That nothing herein contained shall extend, or be deemed or construed to extend, to prohibit or render unlawful the dealing or trading in the Purchase, Sale, Barter, or Transfer, or the carrying away or removing for the Purpose of being sold, transferred, used, or dealt with as Slaves, or the detaining or confining for the Purpose of being so carried away or removed, of any Slaves which shall be exported, carried, or removed from *Africa*, in any Ship or Vessel which, on or before the said First Day of *May* One thousand eight hundred and seven, shall have been lawfully cleared out from *Great Britain* according to the Law now in force for regulating the carrying of Slaves from Africa, or to prohibit or render unlawful the manning or navigating any such Ship or Vessel, or to make void any Insurance thereon, so as the Slaves to be carried therein shall be finally landed in the *West Indies* on or before the First Day of *March* One thousand eight hundred and eight, unless prevented by Capture, the Loss of the Vessel, by the Appearance of an Enemy upon the Coast, or other unavoidable Necessity, the Proof whereof shall lie upon the Party charged; any Thing herein-before contained to the contrary notwithstanding.

Act shall not affect the trading in Slaves, exported from Africa in Vessels cleared out from Great Britain on or before May 1, 1807, and landed in the West Indies by March 1, 1808, &c.

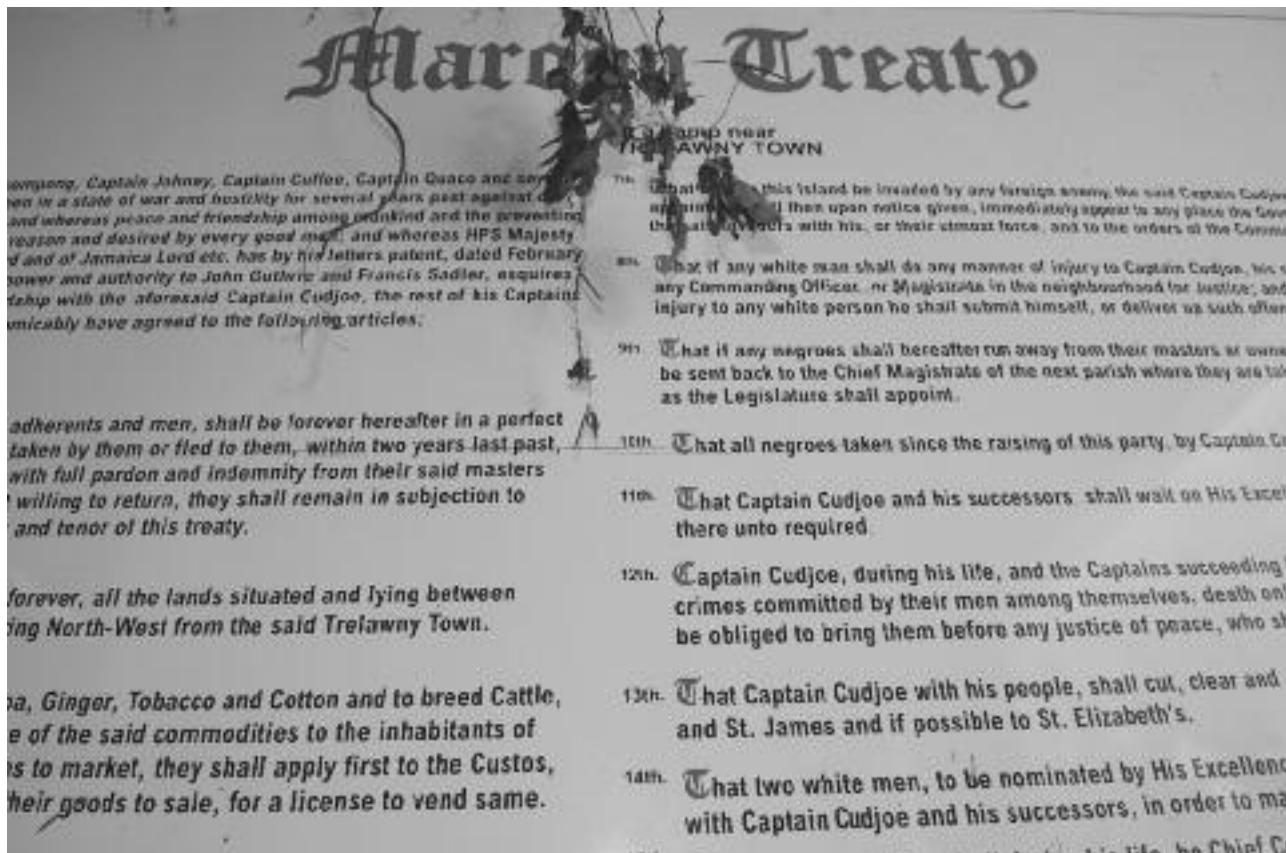


Image A - Image of Britannia celebrating the abolition of the slave trade with a bust of William Wilberforce, © Wilberforce House Museum, Hull City Council



Image B - Black Africa pleads with Her Britannic Majesty to stop the nefarious traffic in human Beings, © Anti-Slavery International





11. Legacies of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in a Global World

Summary

From King Henry the Navigator's slaving expedition in 1441 to the abolition of slavery in Brazil in 1888, the Transatlantic Slave Trade lasted for approximately 500 years. The legacies of the heinous period continue to reverberate in most corners of the earth, including nations that were not directly involved in the trade. As with any historical tragedy, the ensuing legacies of the slave trade are overwhelmingly negative, resulting in racism, discrimination, destruction of cultures and economic exploitation. However the enslaved Africans and their descendants have also left the world with a culture of resistance, inspired leaders and cultural traditions such as reggae music. The anti-slavery movement's lasting legacies can be seen in the adoption of their campaigning tools by all modern campaigning organisations.

Impact on Africa

The trade had a costly and negative demographic impact on west and central Africa. It caused large-scale atrocities, population levels fell in some places, it destroyed growth in most places, and it seriously distorted the concept of family and society everywhere and as a result had devastating effects on local communities and national life. The impact of the slave trade on the African demographic was extremely negative because it removed so many of the continents young and healthy from the workforce. Slave buyers sought captives between the ages of 15 and 35, preferably in their early twenties, the gender ratio being about two men to one woman. Europeans often accepted younger African children, but rarely an older person. Wherever it was possible, they shipped the healthiest, and some even went to the trouble to get Africans who had survived small pox so that they would be immune to

one of the world's greatest killer diseases. Removing such large proportions of Africa's workforce drained the continent of its skills and abilities. It reduced the productivity of the population as a whole and left a continent without the necessary human resources for sustainable development. Europeans who were not involved in the Transatlantic Slave Trade could see the benefits of it everywhere in their societies, especially in port towns. But the experience for Africans was terror, flight, rebellion and general mayhem all around them and throughout west Africa. Evidence of this destruction can still be seen. People escaping from slave raiders left massive stretches of empty fertile land behind them. For example in Mahi, to the north west of the Abomey plateau, there is still a great 'empty belt' of land running through the sub-Saharan regions of Ghana, Togo, Dahomey and Nigeria, in other words through the main slave-raiding areas of west Africa. There are also spaces of virtually empty land in South-Eastern Ghana and in South-Western Togo. It is not because this land is infertile, but is because people fled from the trade.

Escaping slave capture meant that many Africans were forced to move from their communities to safer places in the interior in order to survive. They had to abandon their farmlands, their means of producing food and any economic stability they had. The internal African food-distribution system was severely damaged by the slave trade, and new less efficient trade routes were developed. The result was food shortages, and famine became frequent in many places. In fact, there are several cases of Europeans in forts such as Elmina having to release slaves waiting for the Atlantic crossing, because there was simply no food to feed them.

Impact on Europe and the



Americas

The obvious and initial impact on Europe was that new forms of economic and social power developed. Commercial and maritime companies (often with royal or governmental backing) grew wealthy through slave trading and slave-based activities in Africa and the Caribbean. Clearly not everyone involved in the Transatlantic Slave Trade got rich, but many did and some to a spectacular degree. Some families were able to transform themselves from humble traders and gentry into aristocrats at the very top of European societies. Companies grew rich on the back of slavery, investing their profits in the urban and trading fabric of the country. In Britain they spread their profits across the country, investing in farms and schools, stately homes and grand London residences. West Indian 'entrepreneurs' became a favourite caricature of mid-18th century cartoonists and commentators, who mocked their social pretensions yet sometimes envied their wealth.

Few doubted that sugar was a source of great prosperity. And no one questioned that the sugar empire of the Caribbean was all made possible by Africans imported as slaves. Between 1650-1800, the wealthy Caribbean islands became known as the 'best of the West', because of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Throughout what became known as 'Plantation America', which included the southern parts of the United States, the slave trade provided labour for large-scale agricultural production. At the same time, the Brazilian colonial economy, which was based first on sugar plantations but later on gold mining and coffee, was only made possible and profitable because of the slave trade. Without the institution of slavery and the transatlantic slavery that fed it, the rapid expansion and development of the economies of Americas and Europe would not have been possible.

The most striking impact of the Transatlantic Slave Trade on Britain was the rise of the commercial fleet to sustain the slave empire, by shipping ever more Africans from

their homelands into the colonies, and returning with slave-grown produce. Of the 27,000 known voyages, 12,000 were British and half of those began in Liverpool. First London, then Bristol and finally Liverpool dominated the British slave trade. But many other ports, from Lancaster to Lyme Regis dabbled in the Transatlantic Slave Trade. There were tens of thousands of British sailors who worked at some point in the Transatlantic Slave Trade. And those ships were financed and sustained in their home ports by a complicated local and regional economic system. This involved backers who invested in the ships and their cargoes, manufacturers and traders who filled the holds with goods destined for west Africa and the Caribbean, and merchants and manufacturers who received, processed and sold the imported produce from the slave colonies. Ports and their immediate neighbourhoods were clearly caught up in the process of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in ways that are not immediately obvious such as the steel mills of Birmingham which produced the chains and shackles used to restrict the movement of captured Africans.

The birth of racism

More subtle but less concrete was the influence of European attitudes which underpinned the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The shipping and controlling of millions of Africans was not simply an accidental branch of trade and commerce. It was specifically organised and regulated by European governments. But still it came up against a lot of criticism and so the slave trading and plantation interests had to find a way to rationalise it. The differences in appearance and complexion between enslaved Africans and their European oppressors, made it possible for these spokesmen to popularise the idea that Africans were a lower form of human life or even not human at all. In effect, the spokesmen for the slave trading and plantation interests developed and carried out over a long period a well financed brain-washing public relations exercise to justify enslaving Africans for their profit. Edward Long a slave owning planter wrote about Africans and helped to influence



public opinion:

'In general, they are void of genius, and seem almost incapable of making any progress in civility or science. They have no plan or system of morality among them. Their barbarity to their children debases their nature even below that of brutes. They have no moral sensations, no taste but for women, gormandising, and drinking to excess; no wish but to be idle... They are represented by all authors as the vilest of the human kind, to which they have little more pretension of resemblance than what arises from their exterior form'.

And so it was that Europeans came to believe that they governed, even owned, their slaves because they were white, and therefore superior. These racial attitudes put white mankind above all others and helped to secure and justify the Transatlantic Slave Trade for centuries.

The Transatlantic Slave Trade effectively racialised the Atlantic world, casting Africans and their descendants to the lowest layer of mankind, while confirming the dominant superiority of whites, and of the western world they represented. One of the most persistent, insidious and complex consequences of the Transatlantic Slave Trade was to racialise humankind in ways that we still see in the modern world.

Impact on the Caribbean and South America

The demographic of the Caribbean and the Americas was significantly changed due to the impact of the slave trade. The rapid decline of the indigenous populations working under forced labour conditions in Hispaniola prompted Spanish priest, Bartomelew de las Casas to advocate for the importation of Africans to replace the dying indigenous populations. Over the 500 years (approx) that the slave trade continued, Africans soon outnumbered the plantocracy and the indigenous populations. The Africans brought with them food stuffs like cassava and yam and their traditional ways of cooking. Africans, Europeans and the indigenous populations

learned from each other and a cultural evolution occurred to form new cultures. This is very apparent in the Americas where food, art, music and culture evolved to create the celebrated culture made famous by Creole cooking, carnivals, and Samba music and dance. The increasingly popular martial art form of Capoeira also owes its origins and global transportation to the slave trade, where enslaved Africans from Angola who were taken to Brazil, sought to find ways of defending themselves against overseers and so developed a fight disguised as a dance accompanied by music.

Civic rights in the wider world

The enslaved Africans in the Caribbean, while they faced brutality, resisted enslavement and fought to maintain elements of their culture. They created communities of resistance based on ideas about autonomy and self-determination for people of African descent which evolved into civil rights movements that have impacted on the world. We know the names of the famous, but we should also remember the efforts of those many thousands who struggled without reward, without credit, without fame or fortune, but who made it possible for the famous to become famous.

Many also point to the fact that the process of enslavement resulted in generational poverty, racism and discrimination where the descendants of the enslaved Africans have become disadvantaged in the global socioeconomic system. In South America and the Caribbean, the areas that were exploited and abandoned by the nations which profited from the slave trade, economies remain underdeveloped and stagnant. People occupy shanty-town dwellings and there is inadequate provision for the education and health needs of children. Also the Haitian government continued paying the French government up until 1948 for the privilege of not being invaded by France! This demand was made in 1825 for the sum of 150 million francs alongside the demand that French ships and commercial goods entering and leaving



Haiti would be discounted at 50 percent, thereby further weakening Haiti's ability to pay. Today Haiti, due to its debt and other factors stands as one of the poorest nations in the world.

Continuing legacies in the world

The slave trade has ironically produced some positive legacies which one may not immediately associate with it. The British anti-slavery lobby launched the first mass human rights movement in the world, galvanising over half a million British people in the fight against slavery. The campaign was branded through the use of the logo *Am I not a man and a brother?*, women advocated the first Fair Trade movement by boycotting sugar grown using slave labour and instead urging for the use of sugar produced 'not by slaves'. The lobbying techniques used, public education, the use of narratives from the enslaved Africans, and collecting signatures for petitions are all tools employed by the abolitionists which still inform contemporary campaigns today such as Fair Trade, *Stop the War* and *Make Poverty History*. The anti-slavery movement was also the first political involvement that many disenfranchised British women participated in which informed their involvement in later political campaigns including factory reform, and the campaign for Parliamentary Reform. History recorded that an attempt to prevent women from participating in the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840 inspired Anne Knight to start a campaign for equal rights for women and in 1847 she published what is believed to be the first ever leaflet on women's suffrage. The legacy of women's involvement in the anti-slavery movement can be seen in the increasing number of women standing for UK parliamentary seats.

The UK is an increasingly multicultural society with many immigrating from across the world to settle in the UK. The first mass migration to take place in the twentieth century however occurred in 1949, when Britain asked the '*children of the empire*', namely the descendants of enslaved Africans in the Caribbean to come to help

rebuild the country after the devastation of World War II. Most of the migrants intended to stay for a few years, but many settled in the UK amidst the most appalling experiences of racism yet maintained a culture of resistance and exchange, leaving Britain with the world's second largest carnival in Notting Hill, making up a significant percentage of the London population and influencing music like ska and punk.

Debates

25 March 2007 marked the 200th anniversary of the passing of the 1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade Act. Plenty of events were held across the UK and three contentious points of debates were:

Whether 1807 should be celebrated or commemorated;

Whether Britain should apologise for the role it played in the enslavement of

- African people;
- And whether the societies and communities most negatively affected by Transatlantic Slave Trade should be compensated or receive reparations.
-

Some among the British population felt that Britain's role as one of the first of the European nations to legislate against the slave trade should be celebrated as tribute to the British men and women who campaigned to bring an end to the slave trade, and the British parliament's foresight and concern for humanity. Others argued that a celebration was inappropriate as it failed to address the deaths and enslavement of millions of Africans, and that the 1807 Act whilst significant, merely ended British involvement in the slave trade and did not free enslaved Africans. They also felt that the chosen date, 25 March was in line with the actions of the British government and failed to acknowledge the actions that the enslaved Africans took in fighting for and gaining emancipation. 23 August is the UNESCO recognised date for the commemoration of the slave trade and coincides with the date of the successful Haitian revolution.



Debates raged across the country as to whether the British government should issue a public apology for its complicity and involvement during the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Proponents of an apology felt that it would be an acknowledgement of how the brutality during the slave trade contributed to the development of a wealthy Britain while simultaneously leading to the underdevelopment of Africa and its descendants. Many people however felt that it was unnecessary to apologise for something which the British government helped to end over 200 years ago and fail to see what impact the Transatlantic Slave Trade still has today.

The socioeconomic disadvantage faced by descendants of the enslaved Africans has led some to call for compensation or reparations to be paid to the descendants of the enslaved. Proponents of an apology feel that only a meaningful apology should be issued and recognition of the legacies of the slave trade should be coupled with adequate compensation such as that received by the Jewish victims of the Nazi Holocaust and Japanese interned during the Second World War. Reparations would take the form of tangible investments in education, health, housing and development projects for the countries and communities unfairly affected by the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

Prime Minister Tony Blair issued a ‘statement of regret’ about Britain’s involvement in 2007 but refused to comment on the issue of compensation. Former London Mayor Ken Livingstone made an apology to the descendants of the enslaved Africans and added that the 23 August would be recognised as London’s official day to commemorate the Transatlantic Slave Trade. This has since been adopted as the national day of commemoration.



Lesson Plan: Legacies of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in a Global World

Lesson objectives - students will:

- Understand that racist attitudes and values were developed in the course of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and used to justify its continuation.
- See how the history of the Transatlantic Slave Trade has affected the subsequent histories and experiences of many countries and individuals around the world.
- Make links between contemporary cultural traditions such as carnival and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

NB

This lesson has to be handled sensitively as it might stir up feelings of blame, guilt and discrimination amongst students. Attempt to control for this by referring to previous lessons and highlighting the importance of recalling history accurately to ensure that mistakes of the past are not repeated today and to understand the history of racism and discrimination.

Activity 1 (20 mins) - Definitions of legacies

Distribute **Resource Sheet Sixteen** (Worksheet) to each student and ask them to complete it individually. Allow 15 minutes for completion. Discuss answers (see page 112) as a class and complete the grid on the right with students' answers and discuss, identifying both negative and positive legacies.

Participant	Legacies
Britain, Europe and America	
Caribbean	
Africa	

Activity 2 (30 mins) - The legacy of slavery

Distribute **Resource Sheet Fifteen** and ask students to read the narratives and answer the following questions:

- What attitude does William Wilberforce hold towards immediate emancipation for enslaved Africans?
- What would you classify this attitude as: paternalism, brotherhood, concern or racial prejudice?

What type of relationship is being demonstrated in the narratives and Images A and B? And how representative do you think these attitudes are of:

- White abolitionists towards the intellectual capacity of emancipated Africans?
- Emancipated Africans towards feelings of racial equality?
- Have these attitudes disappeared from British society today?
- What can we do to ensure that racism and discrimination is eradicated from British society today?



ANSWERS (Activity 1 - Resource Sheet Sixteen)

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 - Freetown | 6 - Colonisation and Colonialism |
| 2 - Colston Hall | 7 - Mass-movement |
| 3 - Capoeira | 8 - Discrimination (both answers) |
| 4 - Carnivals | 9 - Diaspora |
| 5 - Reparation | 10 - Pan Africanism |

Activity 3 (30 mins) - Using the lessons of the past for good today

One of the legacies of the Transatlantic Slave Trade is the use of campaigning tools that was utilised by both white and black abolitionists. Distribute the *Tools of the Abolitionists* handout from *Chapter Seven* and ask students in four different groups, to honour the legacies of the abolitionists by designing a campaign to address one of the contemporary forms of slavery (see website (www.antislavery.org) for Fact Sheets on modern day slavery).

Follow up/Homework (5 minutes)

Show Image C to class and ask them to discuss what they think the image is displaying. Explain that it is a contemporary image of a Maroon ceremony in Jamaica, honouring the Maroons who founded free settlements. Explain that legacies of the slave trade are still apparent in societies affected, and introduce homework.

Ask students to undertake research the following two British institutions:

- Lloyds Bank
- Notting Hill Carnival

Compare and contrast them and by answering the following questions:

- In what ways do they provide evidence of the enduring legacies of the slave trade?
- How does the form they take today differ from their original forms?
- What is the importance of learning about the history behind buildings, events, institutions and culture that affects our lives today?

Closing (5 minutes)

Ask students to identify the legacy that is most important to them and suggest how they can make others aware of the positive legacies and take action on addressing the negative legacies.



Resource Sheet Fifteen: Legacies

Substance of the proceedings in the House of Commons on Thursday 25 July 1822 on the occasion of two addresses to His Majesty, one moved by Mr William Wilberforce, for preventing the Extension of slavery at the Cape of Good Hope

...where the distinction between the races of so marked a character as in the case of the white and black population of our transatlantic colonies - a sudden emancipation of the slaves would not only be injurious to their masters, but might also be ruinous to themselves.

Facts illustrative of the conditions of the Negro slaves in Jamaica, with notes and an appendix, by Thomas Cooper (London 1824)

I was invited by a Brown man to attend the christening of his child...he informed me that the ceremony would take place at his father's house, and that he expected a number of White gentlemen to be present...we were directed to take our seats at the upper part of the room; the Brown people.



Images

**Image A - Celebration of the 1 August 1838 at Dawkins Caymanas, near Spanish Town, Jamaica,
© Anti-Slavery International**

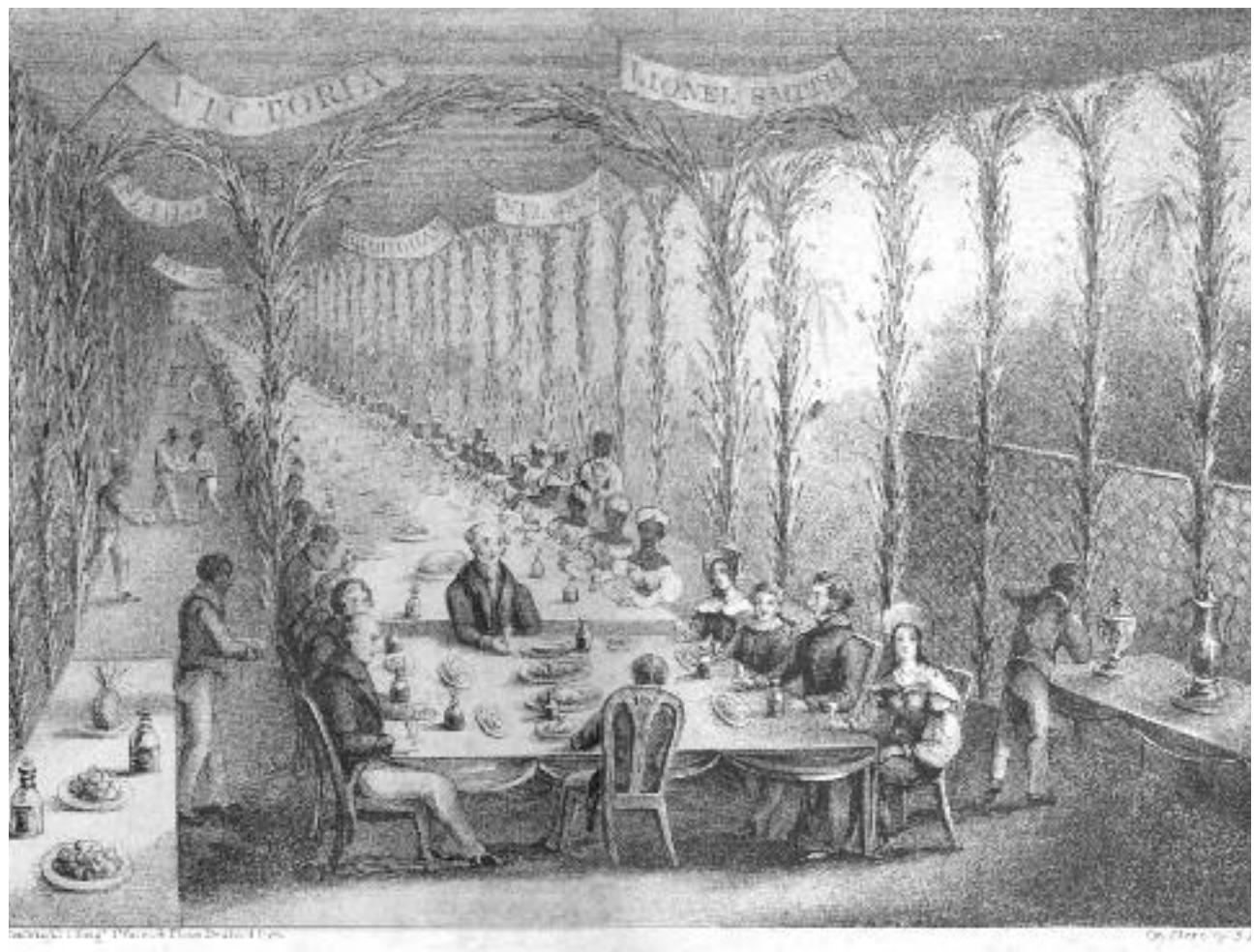


Image B - Racist ideologies developed to justify slavery were also used to perpetuate colonialism, as in this 1917 book, © Anti-Slavery International

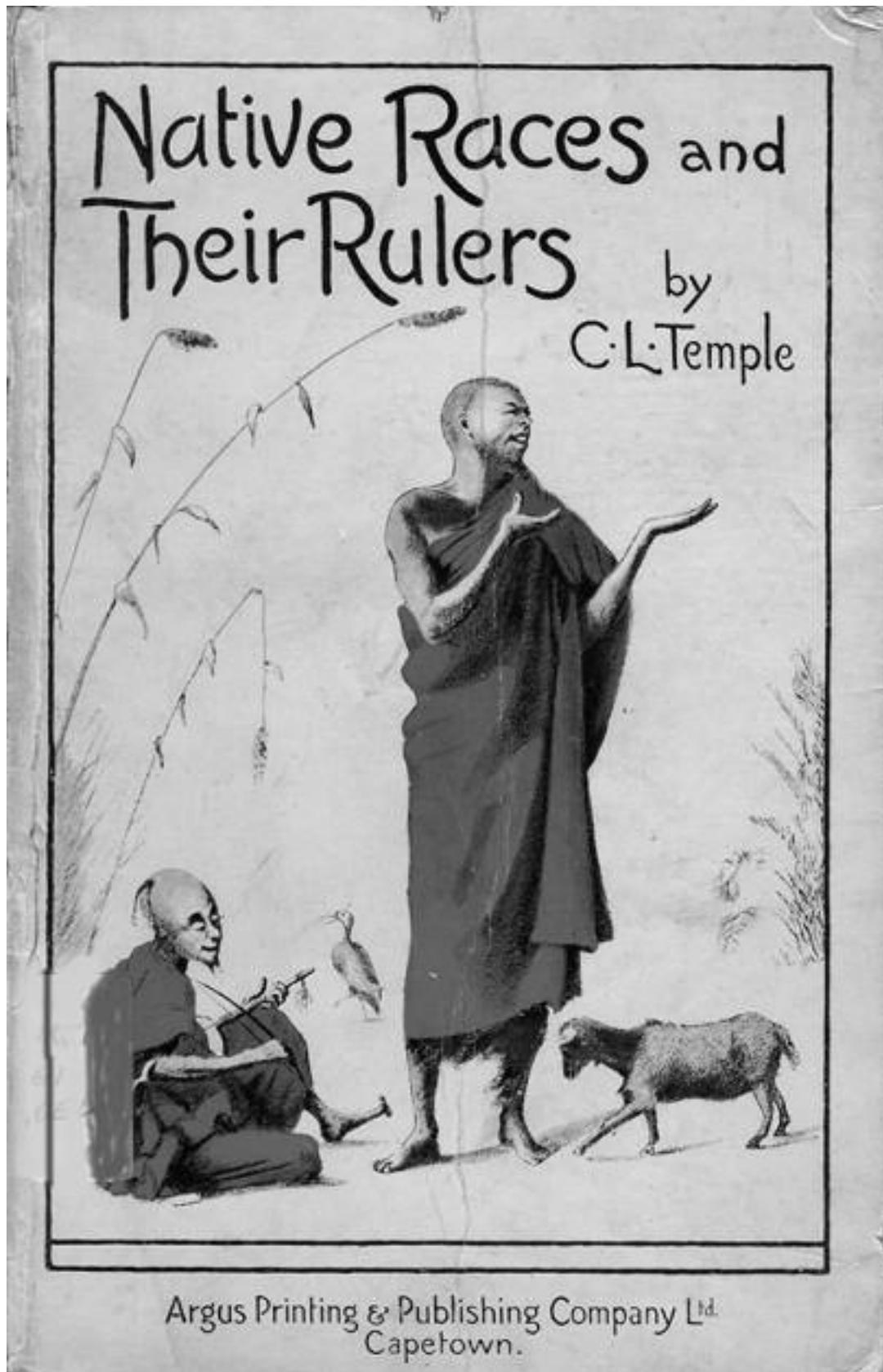


Image C - Official Abeng Blower, Ralston at the annual Maroon festival in Accompong, © Jennie Baptiste



Resource Sheet Sixteen: Legacies worksheet

Put in the correct word in the blank space (see page 115).

1. Africans were kidnapped from this west African coast, enslaved and transported by Europeans to the Caribbean. _____ was established as the capital city of Sierra Leone which became a British Crown colony in 1808. The country gained independence from Britain in 1961, after 150 years under British colonization and has since been subject to abject poverty and a twelve year long civil war.
2. A controversial venue in Bristol named after a merchant who made his fortunes from the Transatlantic Slave Trade. _____ was boycotted by the group Massive Attack who believe that it is an insult to the memories of the enslaved Africans for tax payers to be funding a public building that bears the name of a prominent enslaver.
3. A martial art form that is gaining worldwide popularity, _____ was initially developed in 1630 by enslaved Africans who escaped to the mountains of Brazil. From there they were attacked by Portuguese and Dutch armies, but the Africans developed a system of fighting which was a symbol of freedom.
4. The End of the Slave Trade Act 1807 abolished British participation in the slave trade but did not end the practice of slavery in the colonies. The full emancipation of enslaved Africans took place in 1838 and the African people living in the Caribbean began to host elaborate _____ borrowing from European traditions but with a strong African influence. This was to celebrate not only their freedom, but also to maintain some of the African dances, and songs which they had been denied from practising during enslavement. This event is practised annually in all of the Caribbean islands and the version in London has become Europe's biggest street festival.
5. Some people believe that the African community should receive a form of compensation called _____ from the governments that were engaged in the enslavement of African people. After the abolition of slavery, plantation owners were paid £20 million for the loss of their property and the emancipated Africans received nothing to help them make a new start in life.
6. At the 1884 Berlin Conference, Africa was divided amongst the European powers who argued that this process of _____ would ensure that the African 'natives' would become civilised, stop practices like slavery and become good Christians. _____ was in fact a ploy to extract valuable natural resources from Africa in order to continue the economic growth that Europe and the United States of America had become accustomed to as a result of slavery. Ghana was the first state to gain its independence in 1957 and Zimbabwe the last state in 1980. As a result most African states are only 50 years old and many of the ensuing problems faced by modern Africa directly stem from the process.



7. The abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade came about for a number of reasons. Fundamentally the enslaved Africans' continuous revolts and fight for their freedom led to a decline in profitability of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. They were supported by a _____ which included ordinary people and women.

This was significant as women were not allowed to vote, but used their economic power to boycott sugar made by enslaved Africans and organised the signing of mass petitions. This was the first mass organised form of campaigning and has been adopted as a benchmark for present campaigns on a number of issues.

8. One of the legacies of the Transatlantic Slave Trade has been the systematic _____ faced by people of African descent in the countries where their ancestor were enslaved. In the United States of America, African-Americans were not allowed to vote until the 1965 Voting Rights Act was passed. They were segregated in ghettos and unable to attend certain schools or universities. _____, however is not a historical notion and still exists today in the United Kingdom, where boys of Caribbean origin underachieve at school, Black people are more likely to be unemployed and are under-represented in key institutions such as parliament, the senior judiciary and police force.

9. Enslaved Africans were taken to Europe, the Caribbean and the Americas where they now make up a _____ community. Due to the dehumanizing process of slavery, enslaved Africans, were prevented from using their original language and bore the names of slave masters. Slavery has left African descendants in places like Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad, Brazil and Cuba who have created new identities comprised of some memories of African culture and tradition and the European culture they encountered on their enslavement

10. The concept of _____ grew out of 19th century efforts to end slavery and the slave trade. The onset of colonialism also spurred Black people worldwide to realise that they faced common problems (slavery, colonisation, and racism), and that it would be to their benefit to work together in an effort to solve these problems. This concept resulted in the creation of the Organisation for African Unity (now the African Union) which works on the same model as the European Union.

Words

Pan-Africanism

Diaspora

Mass-movement

Capoeira

Carnivals

Colonialism

Freetown

Colonisation

Reparation

Colston Hall

Discrimination



12. Useful Resources

Breaking the Silence

Breaking the Silence is a web based resource to help teachers and educators to Break the Silence that continues to surround the story of the enslavement of Africa that began over 500 years ago. It is designed to provide teachers with a variety of resources and ideas about how to teach the subject holistically, accurately and truthfully. It aims to represent the voices that are not usually heard. It has been developed in connection with UNESCO Associated Schools Transatlantic Slave Trade Education Project.

Recovered Histories

Recovered Histories is a free resource from Anti-Slavery International on the Transatlantic Slave Trade that captures the narratives of the enslaved, enslavers, slave ship surgeons, abolitionists, parliamentarians, clergy, planters and freedom fighters.

Imagined Voices

The core purpose of the Imagined Voices pack is to facilitate students' creative, personal or political connection with the Transatlantic Slave Trade, or *Maafa* (the Kiswahilli term meaning disaster, or terrible occurrence). Key to each activity is the development of emotional literacy: empathy and understanding. The pack is aimed at teachers of English, Drama and Citizenship. It contains lessons, discussion points, activities and drama exercises for use with secondary school students. The pack was created and developed by Rommi Smith, Parliamentary Writer in Residence to the exhibition: The British Slave Trade: Abolition, Parliament and People.

Understanding Slavery Initiative

The Understanding Slavery website is a free resource for teachers and educators planning lessons on the Transatlantic Slave Trade for young people at Key Stage 3 and 4. It includes the Citizen website which is accompanied by a teaching resource for KS3 History and Citizenship teachers to support the effective study of the history and legacies of the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

The impact of the Transatlantic Slave Trade on the built environment

English Heritage has developed web pages with activities focusing on the following themes 'The High Street', 'Buildings', 'Landscape' and 'The Past and the Present'.

International Slavery Museum, Liverpool

The International Slavery Museum explores both the historical and contemporary aspects of slavery, addressing the many legacies of the slave trade and telling stories of bravery and rebellion amongst the enslaved people. These are stories which have been largely untold. The museum offers a wide range of sessions and resources specially tailored to the National Curriculum or college requirements. The museum takes part in Black History Month each year with a series of activities and talks across its venues.

The National Maritime Museum, Greenwich

The National Maritime Museum offers facilitated sessions exploring the history and legacy of the Transatlantic Slave Trade through examination of museum objects. The museum uses the Understanding Slavery pack and the Freedom pack according to the curriculum needs and ability of the visiting groups. The Freedom pack gives students the opportunity to explore 50 objects about the Transatlantic Slave Trade and create their own exhibition that can be presented to the class on-screen or printable format.



Bristol City's Museums, Galleries and Archive

Available workshops look at Bristol's role in the Transatlantic Slave Trade giving young people the opportunity to work with original artefacts to research the impact this history had on the development of the city.

Hull City Museums and Art Gallery

Wilberforce House Museum is the birthplace of slavery abolitionist William Wilberforce. The museum explores the history of slavery, abolition and the legacy of slavery today.

Museum in Docklands, London

London, Sugar & Slavery is the only permanent exhibition to examine London's involvement in transatlantic slavery in the thought-provoking new gallery at the Museum in Docklands. In the setting of a historic sugar warehouse, challenge long-held beliefs that abolition was initiated by politicians and be touched by the real objects, personal stories and vibrant art and music that have left their legacy on the capital today.

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Beloved by Toni Morrison (Knopf 1987)



Recovered Histories: Reawakening the narratives of enslavement, resistance and the fight for freedom.

This is a **cross-curricular** resource to encourage **community cohesion** and **citizenship** through teaching about enslavement. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a duty on all maintained schools in England to promote community cohesion and this education pack can help teachers deliver this. It provides activities that engage students in the history of Britain and its involvement in the slave trade, the role of ordinary British people in fighting for the abolition of the slave trade, the role of both black, white, female and male abolitionists and promoting the agency of the enslaved Africans in gaining their freedom as well as their contribution to the industrialisation of Britain.

Produced to accompany the website and exhibition of the same name, its aim is to encourage educators and students alike to undertake research on the Transatlantic Slave Trade using primary sources consisting of narratives and images from enslaved Africans, anti-slavery campaigners, plantation owners, ships captains and freedom fighters and African leaders. These narratives bring the history to life using the voices of those present at the time.

The resource is aimed at educators teaching students at Key Stage 3. It will enable students to discuss, interpret and evaluate issues relating to the Transatlantic Slave Trade within historical contexts and the impact of the legacies on modern life. The resource tackles the subject sensitively and accurately and encourages students to grapple with a sensitive and difficult subject, while also ensuring that they meet learning objectives within different subject areas, primarily **History**, but also across **Citizenship, Geography** and also utilising skills in **English** and **ICT**. Whilst aimed primarily at Key Stage 3 subjects, they can also be adapted for other Key Stages, as well as use for informal education (youth clubs and Sunday schools) and to fit the Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland curricular.



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