

WESTMINSTER

*the Transatlantic
& Slave Trade*



Westminster & the Transatlantic Slave Trade

*An exhibition held at the City of Westminster Archives Centre
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Text by Rory Lalwan

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INTRODUCTION

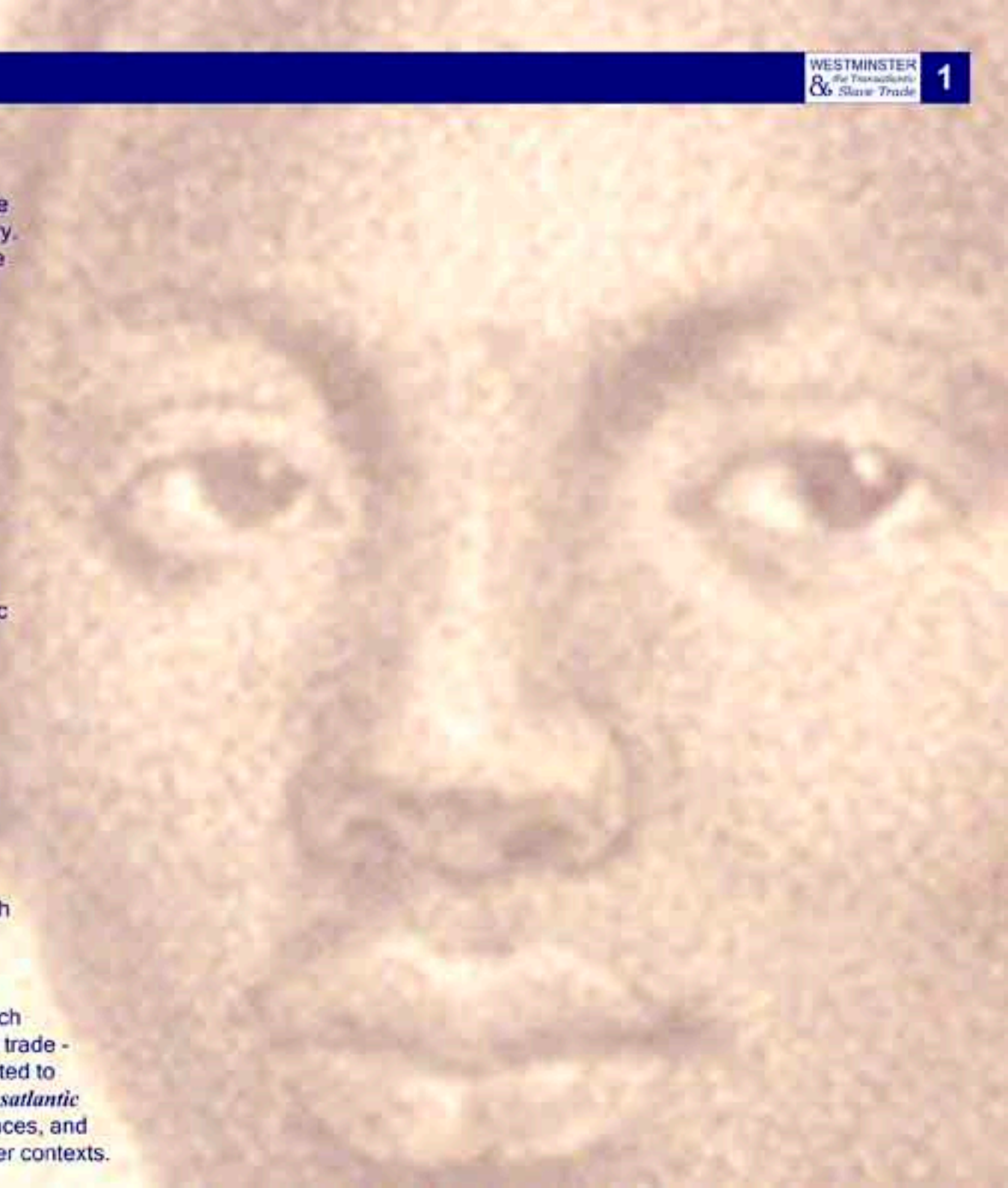
The human trade in African men, women and children was the largest enforced migration of peoples in recorded world history. The trade included the mass trafficking of Africans, across the Atlantic Ocean to European possessions in the Americas and across the Red Sea and Indian Ocean to Arab and Islamic lands.

The European transatlantic trade in Africans, beginning in the 16th century, transformed, in scale and character, the forms of slavery that already existed in Africa. Under European inducement or duress African elites were to supply white traders and merchants with their human cargoes.

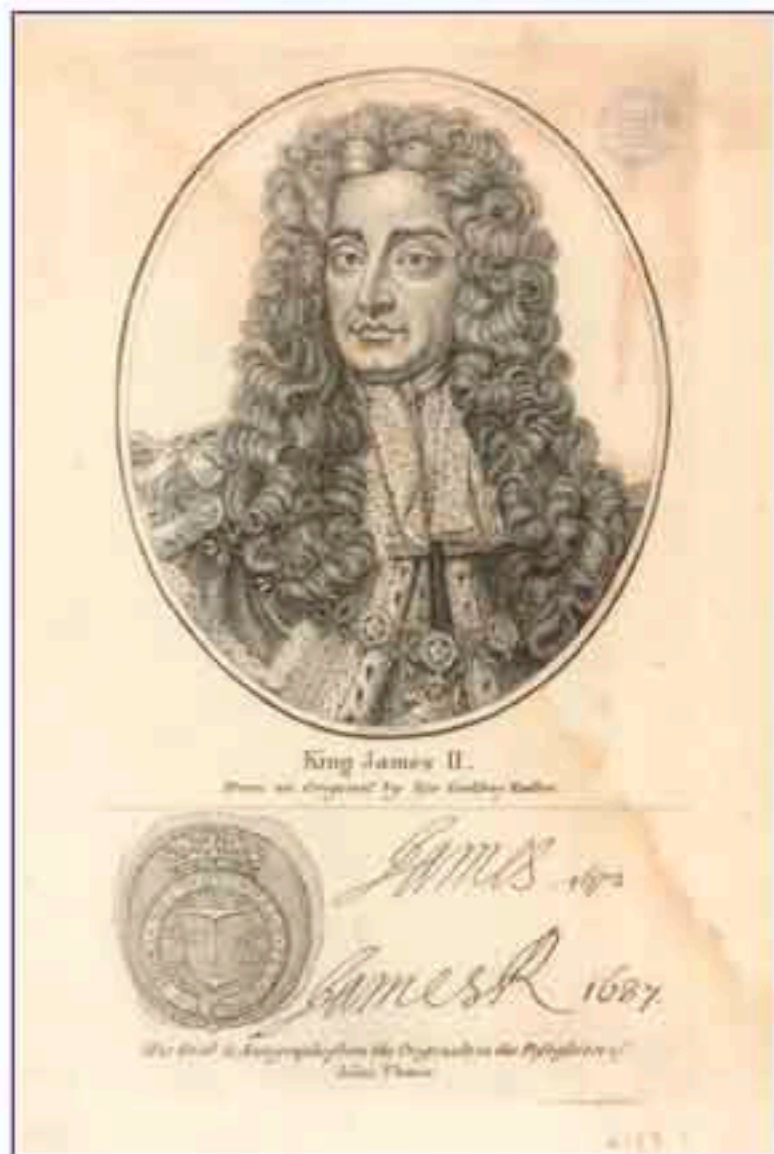
Untold Africans died resisting capture, on the forced marches to the coast and during incarceration there. In the transatlantic slave trade, shipping records indicate that in excess of 12 million African men, women and children were boarded on European ships. Between 10% and 20% did not survive the torments of the sea journey. On the plantations, one in three did not survive the first three years of enslavement.

The transatlantic slave trade met with continual resistance by the enslaved - against their domination and the assaults and violations to their persons - in Africa, on the slave ships and on the plantations. The trade and chattel slavery in the Americas was not finally suppressed until the close of the 19th century. But profound legacies remain - for Africa and for peoples of the African Diaspora.

2007 marks the bicentenary of a British Act of Parliament which aimed to end Britain's pre-eminence in the transatlantic slave trade - it is estimated that more than 3 million Africans were transported to slavery in British ships. The exhibition *Westminster & the Transatlantic Slave Trade* highlights, at a local level, some of the people, places, and events associated with the slave trade - and sets them in wider contexts.



A NATIONAL ENTERPRISE



King James II, governor of the Royal African Company from its establishment in 1672 until his flight in December 1688. He sold his shares in the company, in exile, in 1689.

[L132.1 James II]

In 1562 John Hawkins led the first known English major transatlantic slaving expedition, seizing 300 enslaved Africans from a Portuguese ship and selling them in the Spanish Caribbean colony of Hispaniola. But English participation in slaving remained fitful until the conquest, in the mid-17th century, of islands in the Caribbean and the introduction there of sugar plantations.

Under the prerogative of Charles II, the Company of the Royal Adventurers Trading in Africa was established in 1663 and given a monopoly to buy and sell African men, women and children for slave labour in England's possessions in the Americas. More than half the shareholders of the Company were peers, members of the royal family, or members of the royal household at Westminster. The Company soon collapsed and was re-constituted as the Royal African Company in 1672, with the Duke of York (the future James II) as its governor and largest shareholder. Prominent among the Company's first shareholders were Westminster courtiers and government ministers.

In 1698, answering complaints that the Company could not satisfy the demand for forced African labour in the English plantations, the trade in African peoples was opened to all English merchants and traders, on payment of a 10% levy to the Company. It has been estimated that the Company itself delivered between 125,000 and 150,000 Africans into slave labour.

The transatlantic slave trade had become a national enterprise. In the 19th century, a major argument advanced by planters against the abolition of the slavery and in support of their demands for compensation was that the slave plantations were national projects, encouraged and supported by successive monarchs and Acts of Parliament.

“Whereas all ... the regions, dominions, territories, continents, coasts and places now or at any time heretofore called or known by the name or names of Guinny, Binny, Angola or South Barbary ... and all singular ports, havens, rivers, creeks, islands and places in the parts of Africa to them or any of them belonging ... the sole trade and traffic thereof, are the undoubted right of Us, our heirs and successors and are and have been enjoyed by Us and our predecessors for many years past [and] is in the right of this our Crown of England ... the trade of the said regions, countries and places is of great advantage to our subjects of this Kingdom ”

From: *The Charter of the Royal African Company of England (Patent Rolls, 24 Car. II, pt. iii), 1672*

TOBACCO



Trade card, no date [Gardner 63/28b]



Trade card, no date [Gardner 63/33d]



Trade card, no date [Gardner 63/33f]

English settlers in north American colony of Virginia began to specialise in producing tobacco early in the 17th century. Dependent at first on indentured white labour, by the late 17th century the tobacco plantations in Britain's American colonies had become reliant on African slave labour. By 1750 145,000 people were enslaved in the tobacco fields of the British colonies of Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina.

By the middle of the 17th century tobacco was consumed on a massive scale in Britain. Though by the late 18th century it had lost its fashionability - being replaced by snuff - but it remained a staple pleasure for the common man.

The British fashion for employing Africans as household servants in the late 17th century and the 18th century was mirrored by innkeepers and other tradesmen, who commonly introduced caricatures of Africans into their signboards and trade cards.

COFFEE

“ Any person that has an Indian or Negro Boy to dispose of reasonably from 12 to 16 years old may hear of a purchaser by directing a line to R.P. at Forest’s Coffee House, Charing Cross ”

From: the Daily Advertiser, 6 May 1757

J A M A I C A.

To be Sold by Voluntary Public AUCTION,
The 11th Day of October, 1770, in the Jamaica Coffee-house, London,

THE Lands and Negroes, which belonged to the deceased WILLIAM MILNE, late PLANTER, in St. James’s Parish, Jamaica. The Land is adjoining to Hampden Estate, in the said Parish, and consists of 450 Acres, or more, of excellent Soil; whereof 70 Acres in Plantain Walk and Cocoa’s, 25 Acres in Guinea Grass, fenced with a Stone Wall; and 25 Acres in Plantain Walk, and Guinea Grass, divided into two Pastures. The rest Wood Land, whereon there is a considerable Quantity of useful and valuable Timber: Likewise a Dwelling and some other Houses; it was intended, and is very fit for a Sugar Work; being only about three Miles of fine Road from a Barquedere.

The Negroes are all well seasoned; the whole Number 111, amongst whom, six Carpenters, four Coopers, and two Masons; they are considered as the best Parcel of Slaves of the Number in the Parish.

A small Part of the Value will be required to be paid down at the Sale, and the Remainder of the Price at three Payments, at the End of one, two, and three Years, with Interest at five per Cent. per Annum until paid.

Any Person inclining a Purchase, may see an Appraisalment of the Negroes, with Mr. Price, Salters-hall, London; and may order proper Enquiries in Jamaica, both as to Land and Negroes.

At the same Time and Place will be sold 600 Acres of Wood Land, in St. George’s Parish, which belonged to the said William Milne.

Coffee was second in importance only to sugar in Britain’s West Indian plantations. Grown where optimum conditions for sugar cultivation did not prevail, as in the high lands of Jamaica, where it was introduced in 1721, and in Dominica, where it became the major crop. By the early C19th there were over 20,000 Africans enslaved on coffee plantations in Jamaica alone.

The growth of coffee produced by Africans enslaved in the Caribbean paralleled the rise of the coffee house in Britain. By 1740 there were over 500 coffee houses in London. The houses were meeting places - where business might be conducted, newspapers read, notices and advertisements displayed, and post collected.

The Jamaica Coffee House, St Michael’s Alley, came into existence between 1674 and 1680. It became a favoured meeting place for those involved in the slave trade to Jamaica. A directory of 1798 describes the house as “frequented by West India merchants in general; policy and ship-insurance brokers, owners & commanders of ships trading to the West Indies & Leeward Islands and also brokers and dealers in the produce of those place”

An advertisement from Lloyd’s Evening Post, 1770.

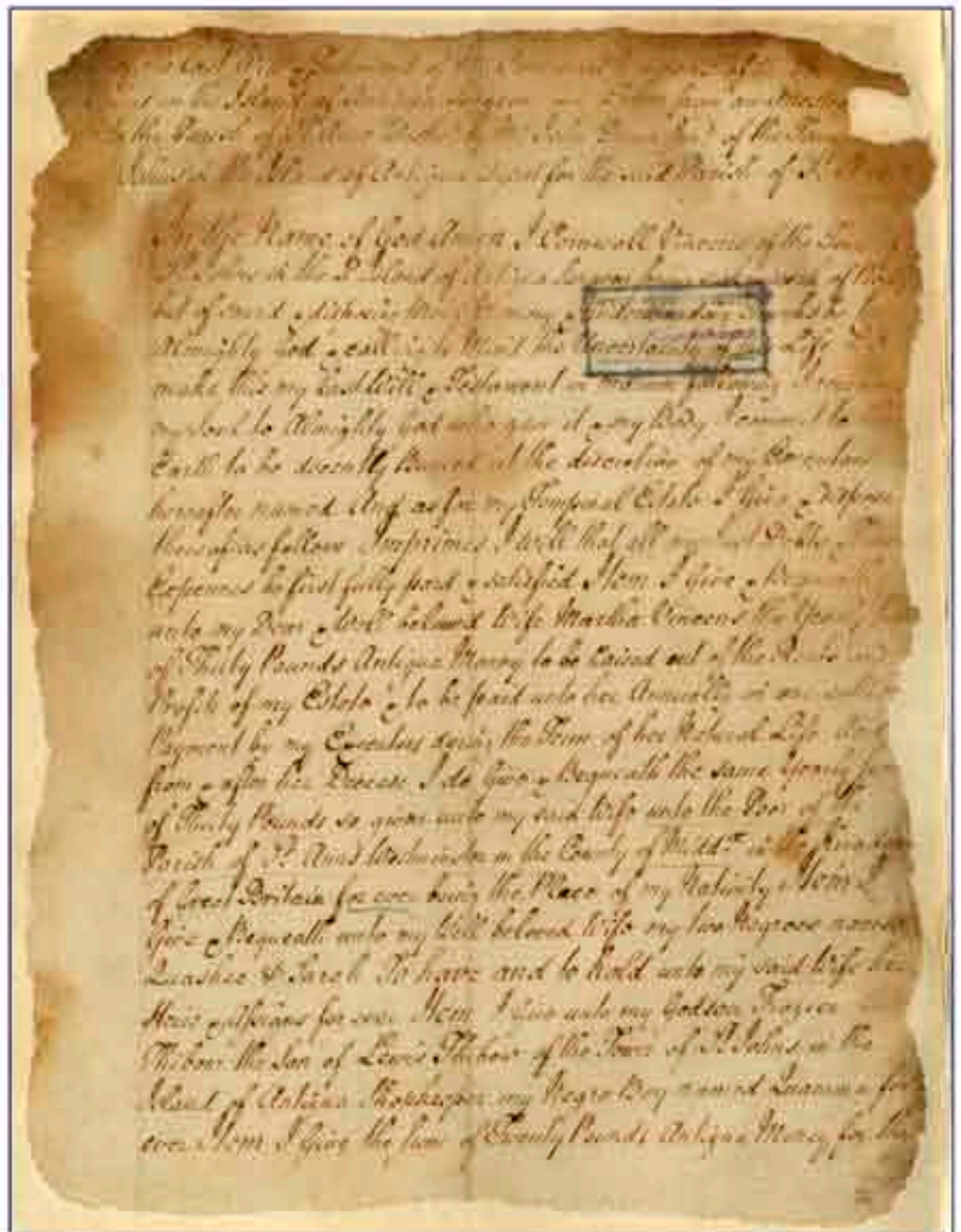
“ To be sold, a Black Girl, the property of J.B. - eleven years of age, who is extremely handy, works at her needle tolerably, and speaks English perfectly well; is of an excellent temper and willing disposition. Inquire at the Angel Inn, behind St Clement’s Church in the Strand ”

From: the Public Advertiser, 28 March 1769

ST ANNE SOHO - ST JOHN'S ANTIGUA

“ I give and bequeath unto my dear beloved wife, Martha Vincens, £30 a year Antigua money from the rents of my estate for her life, and after her death this £30 is to be given to the Poor of the Parish of St Anne’s Westminster, for ever, being the Place of my Nativity. I also give to my wife my 2 Negroes named Quashee & Sarah. I give to my godson Frazier Thibow, the son of Lewis Thibow of St John’s Antigua, shopkeeper, my Negro Boy named Quamma for ever. I give £20 Antigua Money for the schooling of poor children of St Johns. I give to William Lenine, the son of John Lenine of this Island, Mariner, £20. I give & my Mind & Will is that my Negro Woman named Teresa do hold and enjoy her freedom from the time of my Death for ever. My will is that my Executors do sell & dispose of all the rest of Negro slaves, and the rest of my real estate in Antigua I give to the poor of St Anne Westminster for ever ”

In his will of 1730, the Antigua planter Cornwall Vincens became a benefactor of the parish of St Anne Soho. The holding of plantations in the West Indies by the Church of England was commonplace. In the 1780s, on the island of Barbados, the foremost slave owner was the Rev. John Braithwaite, an Anglican clergyman: he owned six estates and more than 2,000 African slaves. The trade in and enslavement of African peoples was considered to be primarily an economic matter, until it came under sustained attack in the later 18th century, when it came to be defended on moral grounds, not least by clergymen.



From: *The last will and testament of Mr Cornwall Vincens of the Town of St John's in the island of Antigua* [Acc A2266]

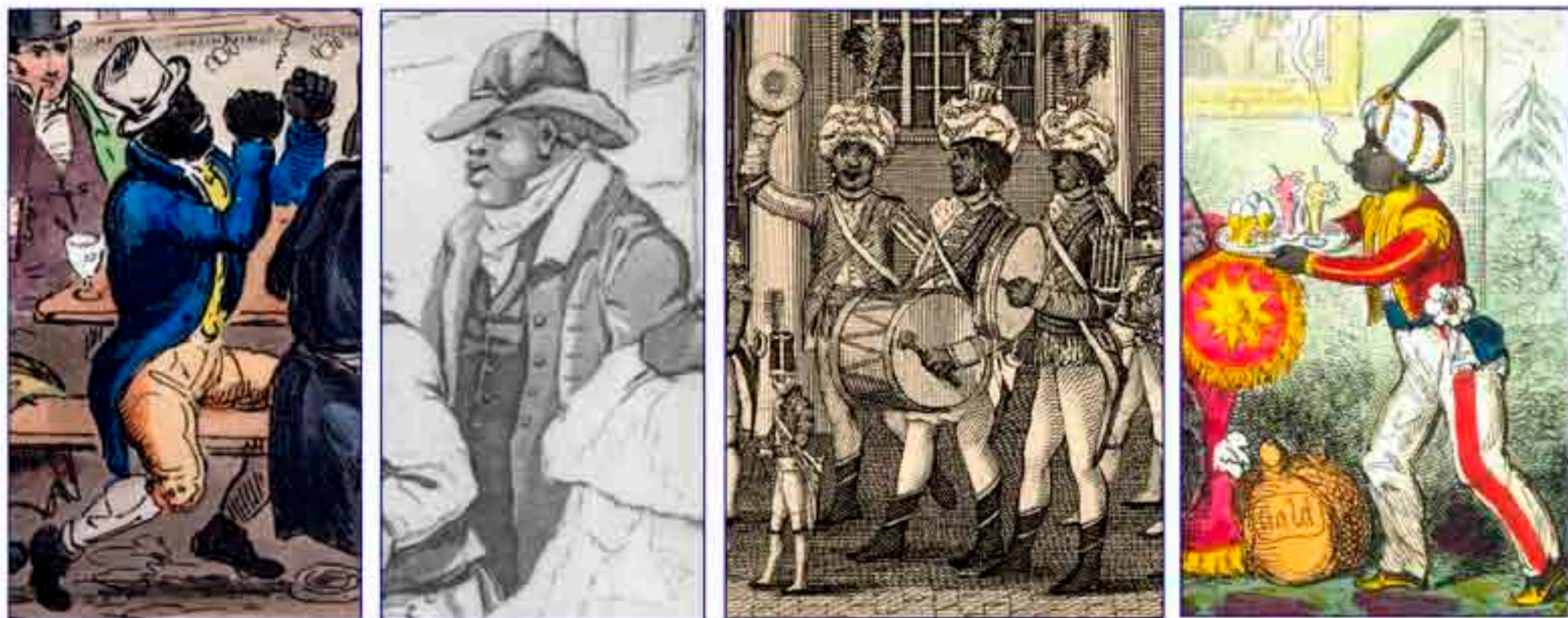
“ I have sufficiently demonstrated, I think, from the Scriptural account,.. that the SLAVE-TRADE has the indisputable sanction of Divine Authority, and is in exact conformity with the Principles of the Law of Nature, as delineated in the Sacred Writings of the Word of God ”

FROM: *Scriptural Researches on the Licitness of the Slave Trade, shewing its Conformity with the principles of Natural and Revealed Religion, delineated in the Sacred Writings of the Word of God*, by the Rev. R. Harris (1788)

“ The buying of a slave is taking him as what he is; and the sale does but signify, that his owner is willing to part with, and another has a mind to have him. Here then is no violation of humanity; and the property in such individual is transferable, like all other property ”

From: *The African Trade for Negro Slaves, shewn to be consistent with principles of Humanity and the Laws of Revealed Religion*, by the Rev. Thomas Thompson (1772)

THE AFRICAN PRESENCE IN WESTMINSTER



It is estimated that there were 10,000 - 15,000 African and south Asian people living in Britain towards the end of the 18th century, with several thousand living in London. Their presence is documented in parish baptism registers and in poor law and petty sessions records; they are recorded in contemporary newspapers, journals, and letters; and they are commonly depicted as part of the social scene in prints and drawings of the period.

Overwhelmingly, Africans had come to Britain as a consequence of the transatlantic slave trade. A minority had come as free men and women, but most had come as the property of returning planters, merchants, sea captains, and naval and army officers.

The commonest occupation of African people in Westminster in the 18th century was in domestic service - they served as pages, valets, footmen, coachmen, cooks, and maids. In the 18th century black household servants became emblems of wealth and status - perhaps no where more evident than in St James's, Mayfair, Marylebone and other affluent districts of Westminster. African people were also found working as sailors, soldiers, labourers, tinkers, musicians, street vendors, and prize fighters.



THE AFRICAN PRESENCE IN WESTMINSTER

The life of black people, free and unfree, in Britain in the 18th century was often fraught with insult, insecurity and hardship. They might be ill-treated or exploited by their owners or employers; be forcibly returned to slavery in the Americas; and find it difficult to find employment outside of domestic service or serving on British ships. Many avenues of employment were closed - the Lord Mayor of London had, in 1731, ordered that no black person should be bound as an apprentice within the City of London. In spite of these restrictions, black people do not appear to be disproportionately represented in parish poor law and petty session records - until the 1780s. At the end of the War of American Independence, several thousand black loyalists who had served Britain in the war were, as they had been promised, given their freedom. Many moved to Canada and Nova Scotia, but very few received the compensation grants that some had been promised. Several hundred black loyalists found their way to London. In 1786 a Committee for the Relief of the Black Poor was formed by a group of London merchants and tradesmen - and relief was doled out at two London public houses: the Yorkshire Stingo in Lisson Green, Marylebone and the White Raven in Whitechapel. Many of those in receipt of relief were induced to join and were later to perish in the disastrous first Sierra Leone resettlement scheme.



The Yorkshire Stingo, Lisson Grove, in 1794. A few years prior, a place disbursement of poor relief to several hundred black people - many of whom had served Britain in the recent American war.



Farthing Pie House Gate, Marylebone Turnpike, William earl of Bessborough on horseback at the end of Great Portland Street, distributing alms to the destitute, including an African, 1780s [Ashbridge 334.91]



"Wm. Powell whipped & sent to Cmte for Relief of Black poor" - St James Piccadilly, Petty Sessions [D1848, p134]



"A Black to be sent to Whitechapel" - St James Piccadilly, Petty Sessions [D1848]

RESISTANCE & SELF-EMANCIPATION

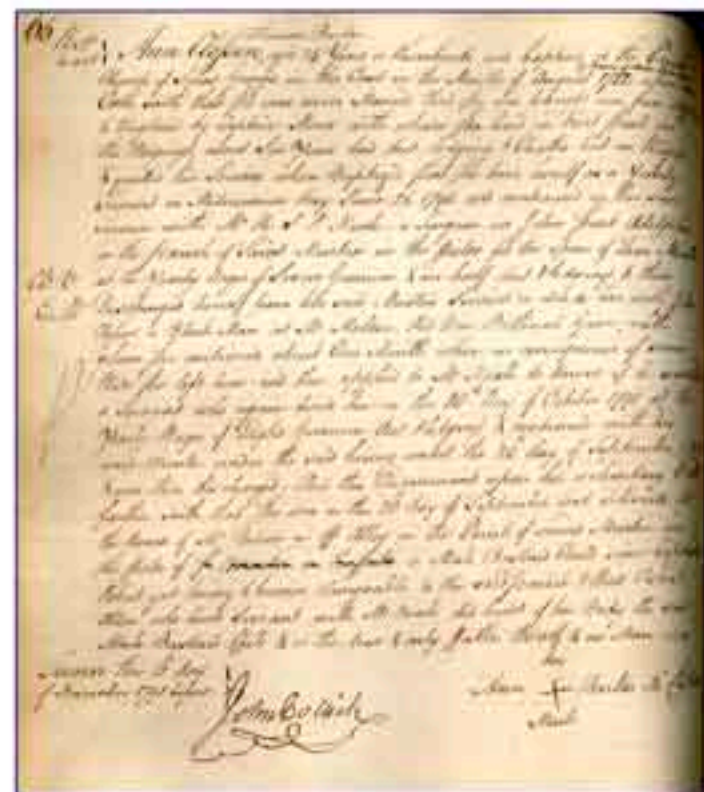
Whilst few European voices were raised against slavery until the later C18th, the first recorded organised resistance by the enslaved was within a few years of Africans being transported: in 1521 forty Africans rebelled on an estate belonging to the son of Christopher Columbus. Revolts and insurrections were to become a constant in the Americas for the next three and a half centuries. The enslaved resisted their domination too by running away from the plantations, by acts of arson and sabotage, by non-cooperation, and by acts of self-injury.

Africans living in Britain had been emancipating themselves from slavery throughout the age of the slave trade: by running away from their masters. Often they left servitude on becoming baptised - following the popular belief that conversion to Christianity merited emancipation from slavery. There is evidence that Africans supported and sustained one another in their newly won liberty, especially in London, where they formed networks of support.

The African presence in Britain was to become an essential condition for the rise and progress of the movement to abolish the slave trade, and the efforts of many of their number were central to the struggle to suppress it. Their presence was a primary reason why the slave trade was to come to public prominence and scrutiny - initially through their struggles to retain their liberty in Britain.



Three engravings by the poet William Blake. FROM: *Narrative, of a five years expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam, in Guiana ... from the year 1772, to 1777* (London; 1792)



FROM: *St Martin-in-the-Fields poor law settlement examination of Anne Classen, 1791. 'Brought over from Africa to England by Captain Moore ... and quitted his service when baptised'* [Acc. FS074, p65]

A Black about 25 years of Age, well set, has a broad Nose, can't speak English, his Name Salvador, in a strip'd Druggers Suit, or a Cinamon-colour outlandish Cloth, went away Thursday May 26. from Graveyard. Whoever brings him to Mr. Peter Hubbard in Sice-lane, shall have a Guinea Reward.

L Oft on Saturday last out of a Gentlemans Pocket, a Letter Case, with several Bills and Bonds in it. Whoever brings it to Mr. Tho. Newington, Grocer, at the Bell and Sugar-loaf in Cannon-street, shall have a Guinea Reward.

FROM: *The London Gazette, 19-23 May 1692*

JAMES SOMERSET & GRANVILLE SHARP



Granville Sharp (1753-1813), the first British abolitionist to gain public prominence; chairman of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade; founder member of the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery Throughout the British Dominions.

Black self-emancipation in Britain was given encouragement in 1772 by a legal ruling given at the Court of the King's Bench in Westminster.

The legal status of enslaved Africans who had been brought to Britain was uncertain. Whilst slavery had no basis in English law, a legal pronouncement of 1729 had declared that the law of property confirmed the chattel status of enslaved Africans who had been brought to England.

The abolitionist Granville Sharp had brought a series of cases to court in defence of Africans who were, against their will, to be returned from Britain to slavery in the Americas. While Sharp had been largely successful, no definite ruling had been given on the status of the enslaved in England or the legality of their enforced return to the Americas.

In 1781 James Somerset, the property of one Charles Stewart, had run away but was shortly thereafter recaptured and was destined to be forcibly sent to Jamaica. Brought to Sharp's attention, he was instrumental in having the case brought before Lord Chief Justice Mansfield. After months of deliberation, Mansfield ruled that a slave could not be removed from England against his or her will. The case received great publicity and the ruling was celebrated by Africans in London as a decisive victory. The ruling was popularly interpreted as freeing all African slaves in England. It failed to do this and there were still to be cases of forcible returns to the Americas. However, before the prohibition of the British slave trade in 1807, Africans living in Britain had, in large numbers, freed themselves

On Saturday last came on in the King's Bench, before Lord Mansfield, and the rest of the Judges of that Court, the much talked of case of Somerset the black, against — Stuart, Esq; &c. matter, which was, by mutual consent, put off from the latter till — Mr. Mansfield counsel for the plaintiff, went very spiritedly into the natural rights and privileges of mankind, particularly of those subject to the laws of Great Britain, whom he proved to be peculiarly protected in the uncontrolled exercise of their freedom. He observed, that perpetual service was not even the idea of French government, and instanced a case of a slave's escaping from Germany to France, where he was immediately emancipated, and protected: he likewise observed, in the case of guilty slaves, those, who by similar crimes are here punished with death, would they by any means escape, they were not obliged to resume their slavery, but are carried to the benefits of liberty. — Has there ever been an instance, continued Mr. Mansfield, of a merchant bringing over a number of slaves directly from Africa here, and selling them in open market? — No, — the meaning Britain would take her at such a sight. — Where then is the mighty magic of the air of the West Indies, that by transporting them for a while there, they should become the absolute property here? The Council on the same side not being well enough to attend, the final hearing of this important case is further postponed till the latter end of this week.

A report on the progress of the Somerset case, from the Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, May 13 1772. The importance of the case's implications for the British slave trade were recognised and the case received extensive coverage in contemporary newspapers

“ No master was ever allowed here to take a slave by force to be sold abroad because he deserted from his service, or for any other reason whatever; we cannot say, the cause set forth by this return is allowed or approved by the laws of this kingdom, and therefore the man must be discharged ”

The concluding sentence of Lord Chief Justice Mansfield in the case of Somerset v. Knowles, 1772

IGNATIUS SANCHO

In the later 18th century, a number of Africans were, through their work and achievements, to gain public prominence in Britain. Among the first was Ignatius Sancho (c1729-1780). Thought to have been born aboard a slave ship on its journey across the Atlantic. He was brought to Britain as an infant and given to serve three spinster sisters in Greenwich. The sisters wilfully frustrated his attempts to educate himself, but his amiability and intelligence attracted the patronage of the Montagu family, in whose household, in the Privy Gardens in Whitehall, he gained employment. When ill health prompted his retirement from service, Sancho, with the help of George Brudenell, Duke of Montagu, opened a grocer's shop in nearby Charles Street, Westminster.

Sancho became a respected figure in several London literary, artistic and musical circles, forming friendships with, for example, Laurence Sterne, David Garrick, Samuel Johnson, and Joseph Nollekens. A selection of his letters were published posthumously in 1782.

Whilst Sancho's life was exceptional, he was nevertheless, as his letters reveal, subject to many of the tensions and insecurities commonly experienced by Africans living in Britain during the age of the slave trade. After his death, his achievements were advanced by slavery abolitionists as a refutation of the racist views held by many defenders of the slave trade.



© National Portrait Gallery, London



Broadway Chapel, Westminster - where Ignatius Sancho was buried. Built in 1642, the chapel was reconstructed as Christ Church, Broadway in the early 1840s. Christ Church was destroyed by enemy action in WWII. Today the site is Christchurch Gardens, a public open space maintained by Westminster City Council.

“ the unchristian and most diabolical usage of my brother Negroes - the illegality - the horrid wickedness of the traffic - the cruel carnage and depopulations of the human species would produce remorse in every enlightened and candid reader ”

FROM: Letter LVII, To Mr F[isher], Charles Street, 1778.

OTTOBAH CUGOANO

“ I was early snatched away from my native country, with about eighteen or twenty more boys and girls, as we were playing in a field ” FROM: *Cugoano's 'Thoughts & Sentiments'*

Ottobah Cugoano (b1757?) was born in what is today Ghana. As a boy, he was kidnapped by African raiders, sold into slavery, and transported to the West Indies. In 1772 his owner, Alexander Campbell, brought him to England, where he was baptised as John Stuart in 1773, at the church of St James, Piccadilly. Later, Cugoano was employed as a servant to the fashionable society painters Richard and Maria Cosway, in their home at Schomberg House, Pall Mall.

Cugoano became one of the most prominent of the African activists campaigning in Britain against the slave trade. In 1787 he published *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil and Wicked Traffic of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species*. The work, possibly written in collaboration with Equiano, is a powerful and influential polemic against not only the slave trade and the institution of slavery, but also against contemporary European colonialism.

Cugoano was active in lobbying, lecturing and debating to further the abolitionist cause and challenging the arguments of pro-slavery commentators

Schomberg House, Pall Mall, home of Richard & Maria Cosway, the employers of Ottobah Cugoano. The Cosways were portrait painters to the Court and the aristocracy. During the Cosways' residency, the house became a fashionable aristocratic rendezvous, where concerts and assemblies were held. Cugoano was later to petition some of the Cosways' patrons in promotion of the abolitionist cause.



[D137 Schomberg House (1)]

“ The case of the poor, whatever their hardships may be, in free countries, is widely different from that of the West-India slaves, who like animals, are bought and sold, and dealt with as their capricious owners may think fit, even in torturing and tearing them to pieces, and wearing them out with hard labour, hunger and oppression ” FROM: *Cugoano's 'Thoughts & Sentiments'*

OLAUDAH EQUIANO

“I was born, in the year 1745, in a charming fruitful vale, named Essaka”



FROM: the frontispiece to *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself, 1789*
© National Portrait Gallery, London

The writings and political activism of Olaudah Equiano (c1745-1797) in the 1780s and early 1790s was to make him the best known and most influential African voice in the campaign to abolish the slave trade in Britain. His autobiography, *The Interesting Narrative*, is generally considered to be the single most important literary contribution to the British abolitionist campaign.

In *The Interesting Narrative*, Equiano includes a first hand account of the slave trade and slavery - documenting the extreme violations and cruelties that had been and continued to be endured by enslaved Africans. The book, a bestseller, was first published in 1789 and went through nine editions during Equiano's lifetime.

Equiano was active in lecturing, lobbying, organising, and petitioning in furtherance of the abolitionist cause in Britain. He worked collaboratively with African and Quaker activists and with Granville Sharp, Thomas Clarkson and other prominent abolitionists. He was instrumental in bringing to public attention the Zong massacre, where 132 Africans had been forcibly drowned so that shipowners might collect insurance on a 'lost cargo'. In 1787 he was appointed as Commissary to the Sierra Leone resettlement project - but was dismissed because of his conscientious defence of African interests. Equiano was baptised at St Margaret, Westminster, on 9 February 1759. He lived or worked at various places in Westminster and he died, in 1797, at his home in Paddington Street, Marylebone. His place of burial is unknown.

“ 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 was 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 a sickness among the slaves, of which many died, thus falling victims to the improvident avarice, as I may call it, of their purchasers. The 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 ”

FROM: *The Interesting Narrative*

SONS OF AFRICA

“SCHOOL OF ELOQUENCE, PANTON-STRET, HAYMARKET. Adjourned from last evening. TOMORROW Evening will be debated - “Can the Slave Trade be justified on the principles of Justice, Christianity, Policy or Humanity?” ... Many ingenious arguments were adduced in favour of the Slave Trade - many powerful appeals to the feelings were urged against it - Among the foremost were those of an ingenious African. He contributed much information on the subject (being the result of his own experience) ” FROM: *The Morning Post, February 19, 1788*

In the 1780s a group of African activists had formed around Equiano and Cugoana. In some of their letters to the press they styled themselves 'Sons of Africa'. Among their number were Bernard Elliot, Daniel Christopher, George Robert Mandeville, George Wallace, Cojoh Ammere (George Williams), James Bailey, James Forster, James Frazer, Broughwar Johngensmel (Jasper Goree), John Adams, John Christopher, Jorge Dent, Yahne Aelane (Joseph Almaze), Thomas Carlisle, Thomas Cooper, Thomas Jones, Thomas Oxford, William Greek, and William Stevens.

Little is known about them individually. But there is evidence of some of their activities: they provided testimonies of their experience of the slave trade and slavery in the Americas; they were an important channel of information to abolitionists in Parliament and to members of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade; they participated in public debates on the morality of the slave trade; they wrote open letters to London and national newspapers.

¹At least two appear to have been baptised, and were presumably living contemporaneously, in Marylebone: James Bailey, a black aged 23 years, 13 April 1783; George Williams a black Man, aged 19 years, December 1782.

“ A QUESTION of GREAT IMPORTANCE, at THE WESTMINSTER FORUM, SPRING-GARDENS, ON MONDAY next, will be debated, the following Question, viz “Can any political or commercial advantages justify a free people in continuing the Slave Trade” A NATIVE OF AFRICA, many years a Slave in the West-Indies, will attend and communicate to the audience a number of very remarkable circumstances respecting the treatment of the Negroe Slaves, and particularly of his being forcibly taken from his family and friends, on the coast of Africa, and sold as a Slave - of the manner in which he was treated while in captivity, and the means by which he obtained his emancipation; together with several interesting circumstances relative to the conduct of the Slave-holders towards the African women ..” From: *The Morning Post, February 23, 1788*

“ AN IMPORTANT APPEAL TO THE PUBLIC. May 7, 1789 - Coachmakers Hall - “Would not the abolition of the Slave Trade be yielding to the principles of Mistaken Humanity, and highly injurious to the Interests of this Country?” one gentleman only opposed the Abolition, which he did in a Speech of great Fluency and Strength of Reasoning. He was replied to by an African (not Gustavus Vassa) who discovered much strong natural Sense, and spoke with wonderful Facility ”

FROM: *The Daily Advertiser, May 14, 1789*

THE ABOLITION MOVEMENT

SLAVE TRADE.
This day is published, price 1s.
F RAGMENT of an original LETTER
on the SLAVERY of the NEGROES.
By THOMAS DAY, Esq.
London: Printed for John Stockdale, opposite Burlington-house, Piccadilly.
Of whom may be had, by the same Author,
FOUR TRACTS,
In one volume octavo, price 9s. in boards,
Alse, the History of Sandford and Merton, in two volumes, price 7s. bound.

FROM: *The Morning Chronicle & London Advertiser* March 14, 1788

This day is published,
Price Two Shillings.
T HE WRONGS of AFRICA.
A POEM.
PART SECOND.
Printed for R. Faulder, New Bond street; B. Law,
Ave-Maria-lane; and T. Phillips, George-yard, Lombard-
street.
Where may be had,
Wrongs of Africa, A Poem, Part I. Price 2s.
And, A General View of the Slave Trade. Price 6s.

FROM: *The Morning Chronicle & London Advertiser* March 1, 1788

To the PROPRIETORS of, and others interested in
WEST INDIA STATES;
And to the Pe & owners of the University of Cambridge,
the County of Huntingdon, the City of York, &c. &c.
in particular and the Nation in general.
The nature and tenure of West India Estates, and natural
and civil liberties, are fairly and constitutionally touched,
In a Work published this day, price 1s. 6d.
A COOL ADDRESS to the PEOPLE of
ENGLAND on the SLAVE TRADE.
" To see the sufferings of my fellow creatures,
" And own myself a man."
By THOMAS MAXWELL ADAMS, Esq.
Printed for R. Faulder, New Bond-street, and J. Stockdale,
Piccadilly.

FROM: *The Morning Chronicle & London Advertiser* March 13, 1788

Whilst isolated voices were heard in Britain in opposition to slavery, it is not until the second half of the 18th century that there is evidence of a wider change in certain European attitudes and assumptions.

In 1761 the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) declared that participation of its members in the slave trade was incompatible with the movement's beliefs. In 1767 the evangelical Anglican Granville Sharp, following his efforts in support for fugitive slaves, published his *On the Injustice Tolerating Slavery in Britain*. In 1774 the Methodist leader John Wesley published an influential anti-slavery tract *Thoughts upon Slavery*.

In 1783 the Quakers set up their own committee to further the abolitionist cause - this evolved in 1787 into the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade. In the next two decades the Society was to be in the vanguard of the abolition movement. At the centre of the Society's efforts was Thomas Clarkson (1760-1846), who became its principal researcher and publicist. His pamphlet *A Summary View of the Slave Trade and of the Probable Consequences of its Abolition* (1787) gave a detailed and graphic account of the horrors of the trade.

Soon a national campaign, organised through networks of local abolition societies, correspondents, chapels, churches, and meeting houses was to make the slave trade the foremost political issue of the day, receiving extensive coverage in contemporary newspapers, and accompanied by an outpouring of books, tracts, speeches, sermons, testimonies, and poems commenting on the morality of the slave trade. The shift in social attitudes and a growth in political assertiveness was reflected in the large numbers of anti-slave trade petitions presented to Parliament.

FROM: *The Annual Register*, 1783

The PETITION of the People called
QUAKERS.

To the Commons of Great Britain,
in Parliament.

Sheweth,

T HAT your petitioners meet
in this their annual assembly,
having solemnly considered
the state of the enslaved negroes,
conscience themselves engaged in
religious duty, to lay the follow-
ing Situation of that unhappy peo-
ple before you, as a subject loudly
calling for the humane interposi-
tion of the legislature.

Your petitioners request that a
nation professing the Christian
faith, should be far from neglecting
the principles of humanity and justice
as by a cruel treatment of this op-
pressed race, and to fill their minds
with prejudices against the mild
and beneficent doctrines of the
gospel.

Under the countenance of the
laws of this country, many thou-
sands of their own fellow-crea-
tures, entitled to the natural
rights of mankind, are held, as
personal property, in cruel bond-
age; and your petitioners being
informed, that a bill for the regu-
lation of the African trade is
now before the house, containing
a clause which restrains the officers
of the African company from
exporting negroes; your peti-
tioners, deeply affected with a
consideration of the rapine, op-
pression, and bloodshed attending
this traffick, humbly request that
this restriction may be extended
to all persons whatsoever, so that
the house would grant such other
relief in the premises, as in its
wisdom may seem meet.

Signed in and on behalf of our
yearly meeting, held in Lon-
don, the 10th day of 6th
month, 1783.

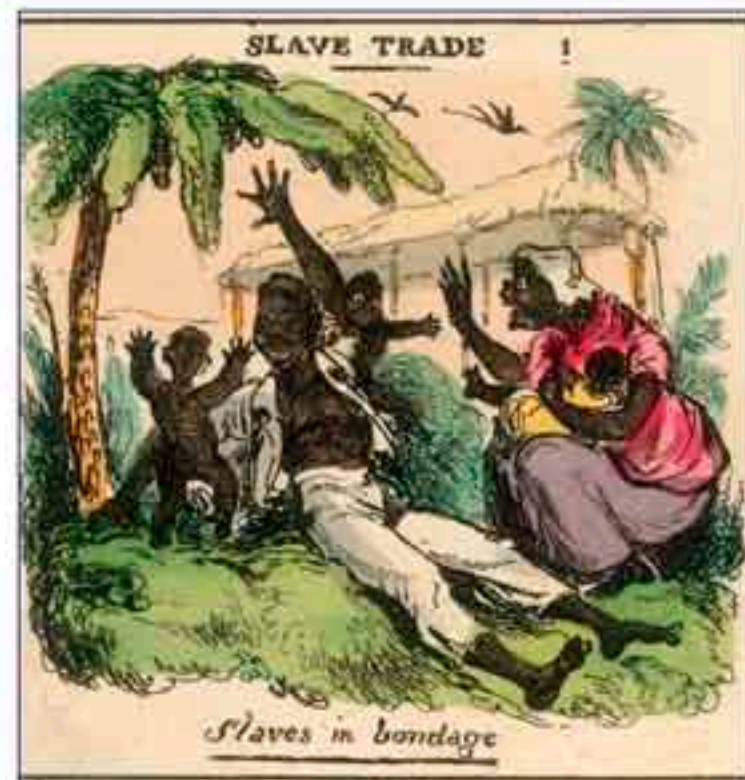
PRO SLAVERY VOICES

An intensive defence of the trade in Africans was mounted by the vested interests of planters, merchants, manufacturers, tradesmen, shipbuilders, investors, and financiers. There was a hugely influential body of planters and their agents within Parliament. In the period 1790-1820 about 75 MPs owned, were heir to or had married into plantations in the Caribbean.

Defenders of the trade insisted on its importance to the British economy, to the economies of Britain's West Indian possessions, and the prosperity of its major slave trading ports and their hinterlands. And if Britain's prime role in the trade were to be abandoned, a vacuum would be created, it was said - to be readily filled by Britain's imperial competitors.

The claims of abolitionists that violence and brutality were endemic to the trade and to the plantations were denied as untrue, exaggerated, or existing only as exceptions. Furthermore, it was commonly argued, working and living conditions on the plantations were better or at least no worse than those of the labouring people in Britain. It was said by some that punishments dealt to Africans on the plantations were generally less severe than those that might be meted out to transgressors in the British army or navy. It was frequently said that Africans had been uplifted by their removal from a heathen and barbaric Africa.

'Moderate' pro-slavers countenanced reform: mortality rates on the middle passage might be reduced by a kinder regulation of transportation, but abolition of the slave trade was not warranted; the severity of conditions on the plantations might be eased by a more humane regime, it was said, but the abolition of slavery was not justified.



*A satirical print, pressing the view, repeatedly heard from pro-slavers that the plantation regimes were neither violent nor oppressive.
[Broadley BP2, p188]*

DEFENCE OF THE PLANTERS.
To-morrow will be published,
A DEFENCE of the PLANTERS in the WEST INDIES, comprised in Four Arguments.
1^o. On Comparative Humanity.
2^d. On Comparative Slavery.
3^d. On the African Slave Trade.
4th. On the Condition of the Negroes in the West Indies.
By JESSE FOOT, Surgeon.
Printed for J. Debratt, opposite Burlington-house, Piccadilly.

FROM: *The Diary, or Woodfall's Register*
March 26, 1792

This day is published,
Price One Shilling,
OBSERVATIONS upon the AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE, and on the Situation of Negroes in the West-Indies; with some proposed Regulations for a more mild and humane treatment of them, &c.
By a JAMAICA PLANTER.
Printed for the Author, and sold by B. Law, Ave-Mary-lane; R. Faulder, New Bond-street; W. Lowndes, Fleet-street; and I. Delighton, Holborn.

FROM: *The Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*
March 31, 1788

This day is published, price One Shilling,
SLAVERY OR OPPRESSION,
or some new Arguments and Opinions against the Idea of African Liberty.
Dedicated, by permission, to the Committee of the Company that trade to AFRICA.
"And he that believeth in the Lord God of Sharr; and Cassan shall be his servant, God shall enlarge Ja-pheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Cassan shall be his servant."
Printed for Lowndes and Christie, No. 66, Drury-Lane; and for Nichol, No. 51, St. Paul's Church-yard.
Where also may be had,
The Ombra, a mock-heroic poem, with a learned Preface on the Art Gymnastic.

FROM: *The Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*
March 22, 1788

MARYLEBONE PLANTERS



Wimpole Street, 1793 - described in the text accompanying the print as "these piles of building, which unite beauty with convenience, have arisen within these few years, and are at once proofs of the opulence and taste of the Nation"
[Ashbridge 120 DEY]

In the late 18th century and early 19th century a large circle of planters and their agents were living in Marylebone. They included two with homes in Wimpole Street: Edward Long and Gilbert Francklyn

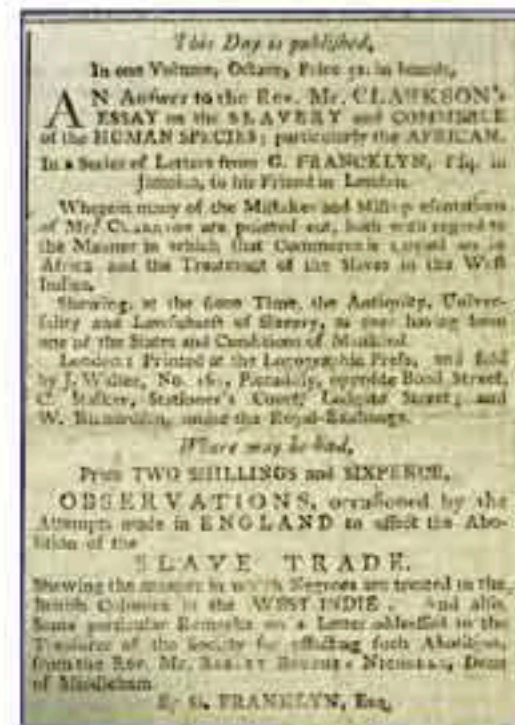
Edward Long (1734-1813), who has been described as the 'father of English racism', was among the most extreme of the defenders of the slave trade. Long, whose great-grandfather had taken part in the conquest of Jamaica in 1655, owned the Lucky Valley plantation in Clarendon, Jamaica. A prominent member of the Jamaican House of Assembly, he managed the plantation between 1757 and 1769, when he returned to Britain, to become one of the most active and influential of pro-slavery publicists. In 1772 Long's tract *Candid Reflections* deplored the Mansfield decision, the very presence of Africans in Britain - and the threat ('a venomous and dangerous ulcer') he considered they posed to English racial purity - a threat expressed by numerous other contemporary commentators.

Elaborating on his views in his *History of Jamaica*, Long portrayed Africa as anarchic and barbaric, Africans as a sub-species of humanity, and slavery in the West Indies as benevolent.

“ We observe the gradation of intellectual faculty, from the first rudiments perceived in the monkey kind, to the more advanced stages of it in apes, in the orang-outang, and the Guiney Negroe; and ascending from the varieties of this class to the lighter casts, until we mark its utmost limit of perfection in the white ”

FROM: *History of Jamaica, or, General Survey of the Antient and Modern State of that Island*, by Edward Long, 1774

Gilbert Francklyn, a Jamaica planter and prominent publicist for the West India Planters and Merchants, wrote a series of pamphlets promoting a medley of pro-slavery arguments: that slavery was supported by Scripture and 'permitted by God'; that 'slavery was ever a condition of human life'; that Africans would not work without compulsion and if enslaved Africans were set free 'their ruin will be immediate'; that slavery in the West Indies was a benign institution; and that the planters had been traduced and libelled by abolitionists like Thomas Clarkson.



FROM: *Evening Mail*, 6-8 May, 1789

PARLIAMENT & ABOLITION

In 1788 the British Parliament received 102 anti-slave trade petitions bearing 60,000 signatures. In 1792, 519 petitions were received, bearing 350,000 signatures. In 1788, a committee of the Privy Council was appointed to consider the state of the slave trade - and two years later a House of Commons Select Committee was appointed to examine the Trade. The parliamentary reports compiled on the slave trade documented in great detail both the extent of Britain's involvement and the depravity of the trafficking.

William Wilberforce, the leader of the abolitionist cause in the House of Commons, unsuccessfully introduced an abolition motion in 1789. Wilberforce and his allies were unsuccessful in securing the passage of a bill between 1790 and 1792.

Arguments advanced in Parliament against the slave trade included: the disastrous effects of the trade on African Society; how the trade might be replaced by a "fair and honourable" trade with Africa; the violence and suffering inflicted upon the enslaved during capture & transportation; the high mortality rates of British seamen employed in the trade; the severity of life on the plantations, where Africans were subject to excessive labour, malnutrition, disease, and harsh discipline. Counter arguments concentrated on the economic costs of quitting the trade, for British ports, manufactures, planters, merchants, and financiers: "it would render the City of London one scene of bankruptcy and ruin"

A motion for the gradual abolition of the slave trade was passed in 1792, but in the following years, with the outbreak of war with revolutionary France, Parliament refused to countenance further measures. France abolished slavery in 1794 (later re-established) and the abolitionist cause became tainted by an imputed association with radicalism and the unpatriotic. Furthermore, the momentous insurrection in the French colony of Saint Domingue (later Haiti) which began in 1792, the Jamaican Maroon war of 1795, and unrest in the British colonies of Grenada and St Vincent, persuaded many MPs that abolition might encourage further resistance and bids for liberty in the West Indies.

This day is published, price 1s. 6d.

THE SPEECH of WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, Esq.
Representative for the County of York, on Wednesday the 13th of May, 1789, on the Question of the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

To which are added,
The Resolutions then moved, and a Short Sketch of the Speeches of the other Members.

London: Printed at the Logographic Press, and sold by J. Walter, No. 160, opposite Old Bond-street, Piccadilly; W. Richardson, under the Royal-Exchange; and C. Stalker, Stationers-court, Ludgate-street.

The Public are desired to enquire for that printed at the Logographic Press.

As the Slave-Trade is now the topic of general conversation, it may not be unacceptable to our Readers, to inform them that, from February the 9th to March the 31st, Petitions to Parliament, praying for the Abolition of the Slave-Trade, were presented from the following places.

Leicester	Coggeshall
Nottingham	Widom
Uxbridge	Penrith
Roydon	E. Devonham
York (Mayor, &c.)	Bolton
Glasgow (University)	Barton on Trent
Cardiff	Coventry (Mayor, &c.)
Leeds	Coventry (City)
Plymouth	Chesterfield
Lewes	Alton
Cambridge (Town)	Congleton
Barnard Castle	and Billport
York (City)	Forfar
Birmingham	Hersford (City)
Hull (Mayor, &c.)	Cirencester
Kendall	Stockton on Tees
Bridgnorth	N. Shields
Hertford	Alnwick
Yarmouth	Belford
Hedon	Newcastle on Tyne
Warwick	Helstone
Hull (Town)	Ludlow
Tewksbury	Stow in the Wolds
Chipping Wycomb	Sturwbury
Sunderland	Norwich (Mayor, &c.)
Aberdeen (Presbytery)	Norwich (City)
Carlisle	Difs
Canterbury	New Buckingham
Truro	Harleston
Berwick upon Tweed	Yarm
Lynn (Town)	Rothesham
Lynn (Mayor, &c.)	Oskham
Llandaff	King'sbridge
Painwick	Colchester
Needham Market	Droitwich
Launceston	Kirby Lonsdale
Sudbury	

Making, in all, Seventy-three Petitions.

FROM: *Lloyd's Evening Post*, March 9-12, 1792

From February the 9th, to March the 14th, we stated in our Paper that 154 Petitions had been laid on the Table of the House of Commons, praying for the ABOLITION of the SLAVE TRADE. From the 14th to the 19th instant, Petitions from the following Places and Bodies were delivered.

Perry	Glasgow (Shinner's Wyndham Co.)	Swaffham
Reaumur		Bridgewater
Warleworth	Glasgow (Trades House)	Becheur
Wooler	Worcester	Merrick
Bilbiscay	Northampton	Castle Cary
Caloupey	Chelmsford	Bruton
Spanish	Grampound	S. Petherton
Essex	Portoy	Wellington
Bath (Parish)	Penryce (Presb.)	Charlton
Bath (County)	Mantole (Corp.)	Stratford on Avon
Wigan (Presbytery)	Newbury	Bishop Auckland
Durham (ditto)	Thirsk (Presb.)	Alton under Line
Warrington (ditto)	Alford (ditto)	Manchester
Goswick (ditto)	Rushington (Corp.)	Salop (County)
Salley (ditto)	Holt	Lancaster
Walsby	Cheltenham	Dover and
Warrington	Penrith	Tiverton
Glasgow (Presb.)		

Making in all Two Hundred and Six Petitions.

N. B. This is precisely double the number of those sent to Parliament in the Year 1788.

FROM: *The Diary, or Woodfall's Register*, Marcy 26, 1792

FROM: *The Morning Herald*, May 30, 1789

AN ACT TO ABOLISH THE SLAVE TRADE, 1807

“... from and after the First Day of May, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Seven, the African Slave Trade, and all manner of dealing and trading in the Purchase, Sale, Barter or Transfer of Slaves, or of Persons intended to be sold, transferred, used, or dealt with as Slaves, practised or carried on, in, at, to or from any Part of the Coast or Countries of Africa, shall be, and the same is hereby utterly abolished, prohibited, and declared to be unlawful”

FROM: An Act to Abolish the Slave Trade, 1807



A contemporary commemorative medallion, proclaiming "Slave Trade Abolished by Great Britain 1807" and "We are all Brethren". But a British clandestine trade continued and chattel slavery remained in the British West Indies for another three decades.

The abolition movement regained momentum in 1804 and renewed popular pressures were exerted upon Parliament. After initial failures, an Act to abolish the British transatlantic slave trade was finally passed in 1807, receiving its royal assent on 25 March, 1807, after passing through the House of Commons by 283 to 16 and through the Lords by 100 to 30.

The Act made illegal British participation in the slave trade, but enforcement of the Act was not vigorous and it was widely flouted. The Royal Navy began patrols on the West African coast and British captains convicted of involvement in the trade were fined £100. Many British ships circumvented the new law by flying flags of convenience. Slave ships continued to be constructed in British dockyards and the trade continued to be financed and insured through the City of London.

In the years immediately following 1807, further measures were instituted to counter the ineffectiveness of the Act. But some abolitionists argued that the slave trade would only be suppressed when the demand for African slave labour ceased - when slavery itself was abolished.

THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

After the Act of 1807, resistance against slavery continued in the West Indies, with rebellions in Jamaica in 1815, in Barbados in 1816 (in which one white was killed and over 200 blacks executed), in Guiana in 1823, again in Jamaica in 1823, in Barbados and Antigua in 1832, and in 1831-32, a momentous rising in Jamaica.

The strength of the risings and the bloody fury with which they were repressed energised the popular abolitionist movement in Britain and further alienated the West Indian planters and their supporters from popular sympathy. There came too a political recognition that slavery could be maintained only by costly military interventions

In 1823 the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery was formed, with an initial aim of reforming rather than forcing immediate abolition of slavery. In 1824, the Quaker Elizabeth Heyrick published an influential pamphlet *Immediate Not Gradual Abolition* criticising the policy adopted by the predominantly male leadership of the Society. The Society attempted to suppress her views, which were shared by many women's abolitionist groups (by 1831 there were 73 women's organisations campaigning against slavery). In 1831 the Agency Anti-Slavery Committee seceded from the Society and, under the leadership of Thomas Clarkson, demanded an immediate and unconditional end to slavery. In 1833, five thousand petitions, containing one and a half million signatures, calling for an end to slavery in the British empire, were submitted to Parliament

WEST INDIES.

Insurrection in Jamaica.—By despatches from the Governor of Jamaica, intelligence has been received of a partial insurrection of the slaves, principally those of St. James's, Portland, and Trelawney parishes. Shortly after the 20th of December, the slaves on several estates refused to go to their work, and large bodies of them met together, and set fire to many plantation buildings. On the 30th of December martial law was proclaimed, the several corps of militia were called out, and Sir W. Cotton, the commander of the forces, proceeded with 300 or 400 troops of the line to Montego Bay, accompanied by Commodore Farquhar, in his Majesty's ship *Blanche*. The arrival of Sir Willoughby Cotton seems to have had an immediate effect in suppressing the insurrection. Two negroes were executed under sentence of a court martial.

The destruction of the half of St. Thomas's by fire, took place on the 31st of December. In that part of the town called the Garden, about 600 or 700 houses were burnt. The loss of property in buildings, &c., has been estimated at from two to three millions of dollars. There was only one death by accident. The flames were visible at a distance of forty-two miles.

JAMAICA.

The Legislative Assembly closed its sittings on the 18th of April, with a report of the committee appointed to inquire into the causes and consequences of the late rebellion. The delusion had spread among the slaves that freedom was to be theirs at Christmas, "but," says the report, "the primary and most powerful cause arose from an evil excitement, created in the minds of our slaves generally, by the unceasing and unconstitutional interference of his Majesty's ministers with our local legislature, in regard to the passing of laws for their government; with the intemperate expression of the sentiments of the present ministers, as well as other individuals in the Commons House of Parliament, in Great Britain, on the subject of slavery; such discussions, coupled with the false and wicked reports of the Anti-slavery Society, having been industriously circulated by the aid of the press throughout this island, as well as the British empire."

Two reports from the Gentleman's Magazine, February & June 1832, on the 1831-32 rebellion in Jamaica, known as the Baptist War, some 60,000 of the enslaved rose, led by Samuel Sharp, a black Baptist deacon. A dozen whites were killed; two hundred blacks were killed by local militia and troops; a further 340 blacks were executed after having surrendered. The rising was to speed progress towards emancipation in the British Caribbean.

THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

On 29 August 1833 the British Parliament passed an *Act for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British colonies; for promoting the Industry of manumitted Slaves; and for compensating the Persons hitherto entitled to the Services of such slaves*. The Act declared that from 1834 all enslaved peoples in most British controlled territories would be emancipated. However, in the West Indies a system of enforced "apprenticeships" was introduced for all enslaved people aged over the age of 6 and to last until 1840, before full freedom would be granted. Compensation to the value £20,000,000 was allocated for slave owners - a sum amounting to half the annual budget. There were abolitionists in the House of Commons who opposed both the compensation to be paid to slave owners and the apprenticeship scheme, with Thomas Foxwell Buxton arguing that the enslaved were, in effect, being made to pay for their liberty. The apprenticeships were abolished in 1838, two years earlier than originally intended. Full emancipation was then granted but new vagrancy laws were introduced to preserve the plantation system.

May 10. A meeting of West India proprietors was held, to consider the propositions of Government for the emancipation of the Negroes. The impression of the meeting was, that if the plan is executed, the Colonies must cease to be cultivated; that it is one of spoliation of property, and calculated to make Foreign Slave Colonies flourish at the expense of our own.

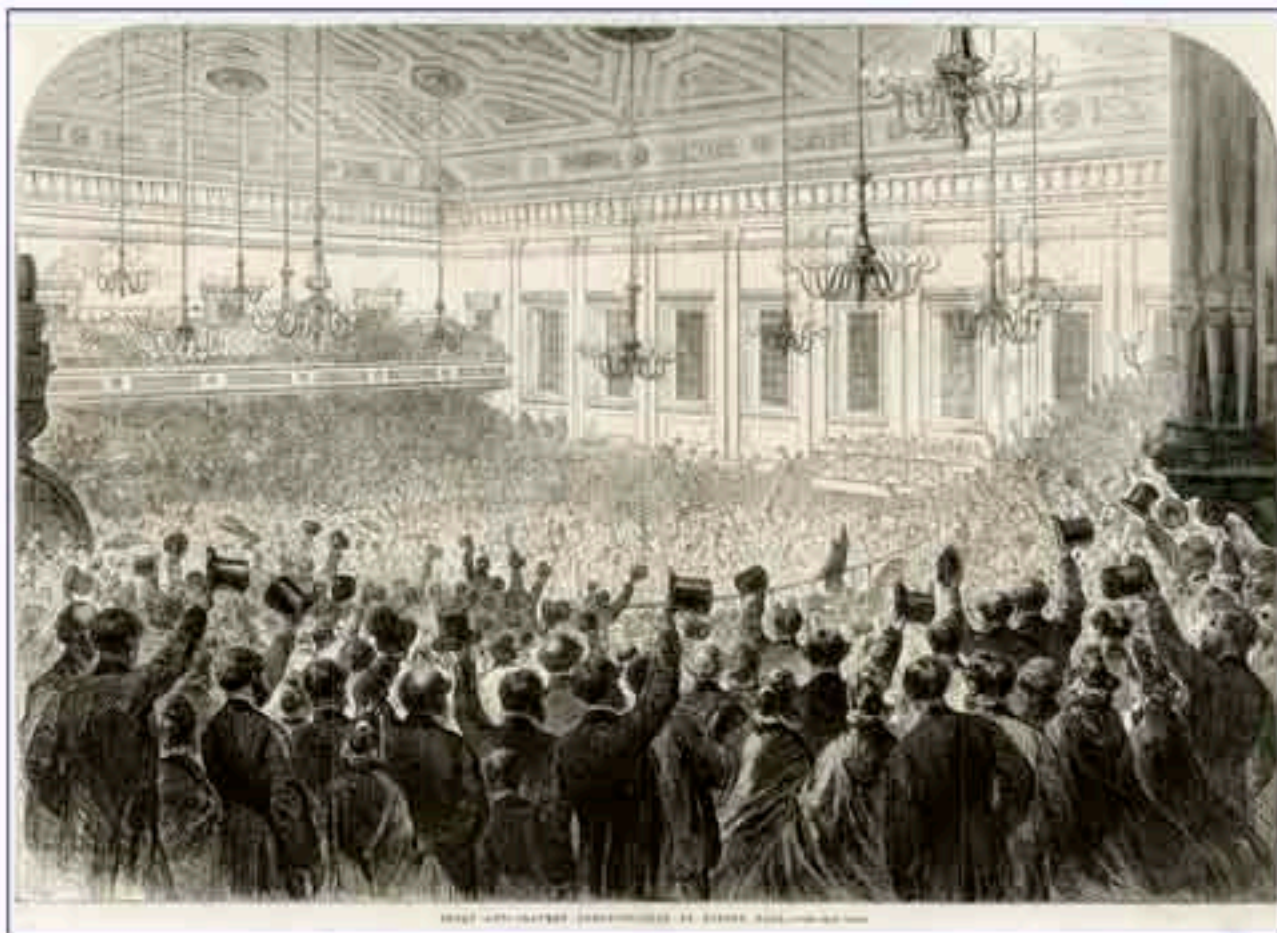
FROM: *The Annual Register, May 1833*

In lobbying against abolition and in support of compensation, the West India Committee resolved: "there is a numerous class of persons scattered throughout Great Britain, consisting of widows, orphans, minors, annuitants, and other claimants under wills and settlements, who have no support for themselves and their families, except a charge upon colonial property on the faith of existing laws, and who must therefore be reduced to beggary by any ill-advised or precipitate measure of emancipation ... [emancipation] puts a stop to the progressive civilization of the negroes in our own colonies, while at the same time it directly encourages the slave-trade and slavery in foreign countries ... the proprietors of Negro slaves possess those slaves under the sanction of British laws which enabled and especially encouraged the people of Great Britain to convey slaves from Africa, and to sell them to their fellow-subjects in the colonies. And this meeting looking at the rights which have been acquired, do solemnly protest against any measure which takes away the property of their fellow-subjects"

“To throw the slave suddenly into freedom would be to destroy all his inclinations to industry; it would expose him to the temptation of recurring to his primitive habits of savage life, from which he has but lately reclaimed. Therefore some restriction is necessary for a time, both for the masters, and for the good of the slaves themselves”

Edward Stanley, Secretary of State for the Colonies, and the proponent of the 1833 abolition Act, arguing for the Act's provisions for "apprenticeships".

A PATRIOTIC VIEW



*Great anti-slavery demonstration at Exeter Hall (from the **Illustrated London News**, 7 February, 1853)*

Exeter Hall was for several decades a primary London venue for mass meetings of slave trade and slavery abolitionists. The Hall was too a favoured venue for meetings of various philanthropic and religious organisations, including the Ragged School Union, the Bible Society, and the Temperance Society. Demolished in 1907, the Strand Palace Hotel now stands on the site.

An anti-slavery movement continued in Britain, after the ending of chattel slavery in 1838 in the British West Indies. The movement's energies were directed against the continued involvement, legal and illegal, of British individuals and firms in the foreign slave trade and against those nations, like the USA, Brazil and Spain, which still engaged in the slave trade or where slavery still existed.

In spite of Britain's continued involvements in the slave trade, the popular patriotic view was that Britain, through its moral integrity alone, had abolished the slave trade and provided altruistic leadership for its international suppression. Largely excluded from these views was a recognition of other factors which had contributed to the ending of British slavery, for example, the chronic instabilities induced by African resistance in the West Indies, changing British imperial interests, priorities & security needs, and the decline in the importance of West Indian sugar in an age in which Britain championed free trade.

LEGACIES OF THE SLAVE TRADE

Following the rise to independence of African and Caribbean nations and the movement for black civil rights, recent decades have seen a growth in debates on the enduring effects of the mass enslavement of African peoples. The debates focus on the lasting benefits for the nations who profited from slavery, on the trade's damaging legacies for Africa, and on the effects and consequences of slavery for people of African descent in the Americas and throughout the African diaspora.

Some historians argue that the transatlantic slave trade was critical to Britain's emergence as the first industrialised nation - in the great stimulus it provided to manufacturing, to the growth of the banking and financial services, and in the supply of cheaper food and raw materials. While this is disputed by other commentators, all agree that the slave trade & the plantations greatly enriched Britain and was the source of many individual fortunes. Scarcely a town or city in Britain is without some evidence of the profits generated by African slave labour.

The vast scale of the trade and its horrifying violence were a catastrophe for African civil societies. The internecine warfare created in Africa by the demands for slave labour was to dissolve social and cultural life in parts of the continent. The death or enslavement of untold millions of Africans brought about a disastrous fall in population, with a resultant economic retardation. The depredations of the trade were to prevent the development of a more socially beneficial economic growth. It is the view of many commentators that the disasters visited upon Africans during the age of the slave trade, and by the exploitations of the age of European colonialism, can be directly associated with poverty and economic underdevelopment in Africa today.

The struggles for civil rights and against racial prejudice and discrimination in the USA the Caribbean, Latin America and Europe have continued to encounter the racial ideologies and outlooks which were intrinsic to transatlantic slavery and colonialism.

The debates about the several legacies of slavery inform current arguments that reparations, in their many possible forms and dimensions, could be made for the wrongs perpetrated and their continuing effects

“ the results of slavery on Caribbean society may be seen in terms of race relations, in terms of Black people struggling to rethink who they are, to build new identities and to find a place for themselves in a wider African world. Echoes of slavery can be felt in these societies every day - in the language, the literature, the music. Wherever there is creative expression the presence of slavery emerges ” S.L. Martin, in *Britain's Slave Trade* (1999), p162

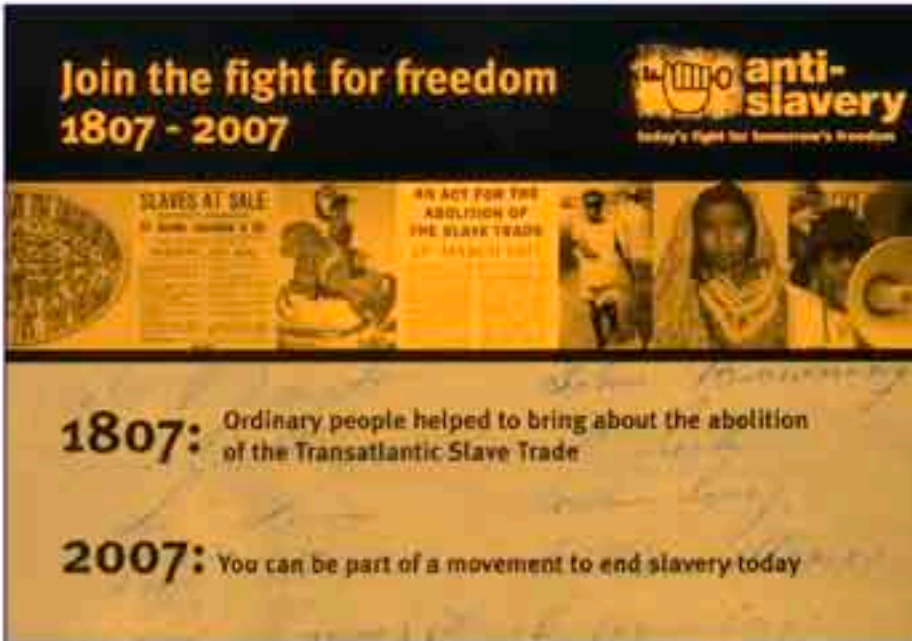
SLAVERY TODAY

Forms of slavery pre-dated the African slave trade and indeed have been a norm in human societies, until recent centuries. But the transatlantic slave trade in African peoples was unique in its scale, its chattel nature, its racial character, and its importance in the formation of the contemporary world.

Types of slavery continue to flourish today, albeit illegally.

Anti-Slavery International, founded in 1839, works to eliminate all forms of contemporary slavery. Opposite is a summary description of slavery today, taken from the organisation's Annual Review 2005

- **bonded labour:** millions of people are forced by poverty, or are tricked into taking a small loan vital for their survival which can lead to a family being enslaved for generations;
- **forced labour:** at least 12.3 million* people throughout the world are forced to do work through the threat or use of violence or other punishment;
- **forced marriage:** girls and women are married without choice and are forced into a life of servitude often dominated by violence;
- **worst forms of child labour:** an estimated 179 million* children around the world are in work that is harmful to their health and welfare;
- **human trafficking:** at least 2.4 million* women, children and men are trafficked throughout the world, taken from one area to another and forced into slavery;
- **slavery by descent:** people are either born into a slave class or are from a 'group' that society views as suited to be used as slave labour.



Join the fight for freedom
1807 - 2007

anti-slavery
today's fight for tomorrow's freedom

SLAVES AT SALE
AN ACT FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE

1807: Ordinary people helped to bring about the abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade

2007: You can be part of a movement to end slavery today

Anti-Slavery International
Thomas Clarkson House
The Stableyard, Broomgrove Road
LONDON
SW9 9TL

tel: 020 7501 8920
email: info@antislavery.org
web: www.antislavery.org