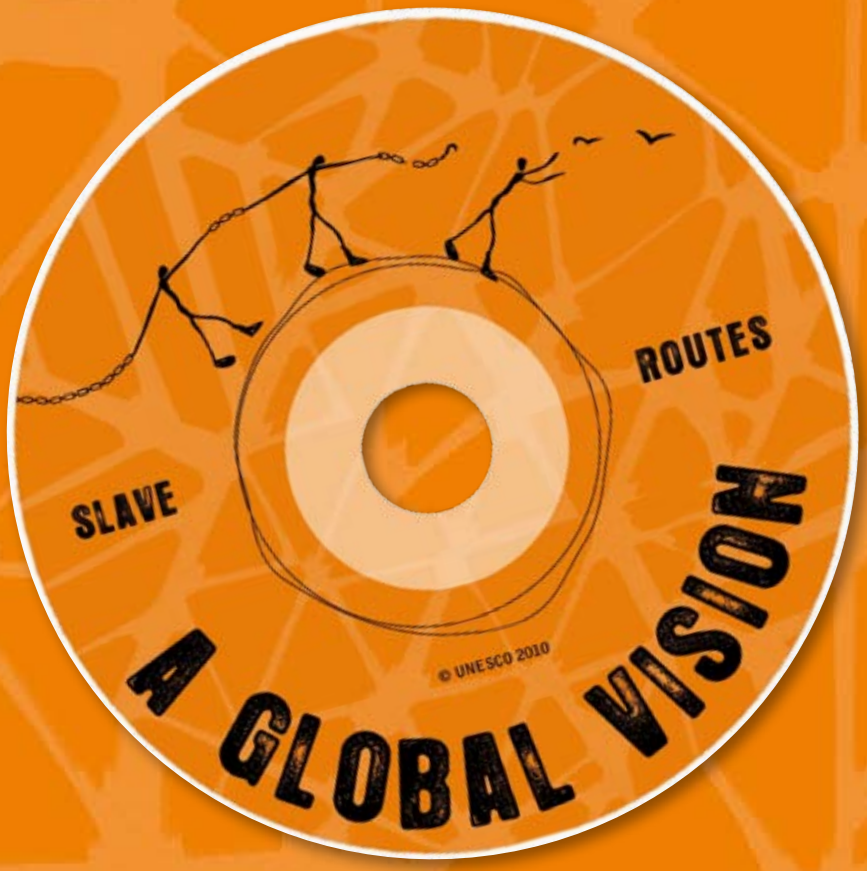
ENSLAVEMENT

KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT FACT SHEETS

Film Fact Sheets



by Nelly SCHMIDT

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
The Slave Route

INTRODUCTION

The following sheets have been designed as a connecting link between the film and the film booklet, drafted by the members of the International Scientific Committee of UNESCO's Slave Route Project.
The goal is to provide a compendium of knowledge and questions that give food for thought on the content of the film and booklet.

A constant feature of human history

Enslavement seems to have featured in human history since time immemorial. Physical and political domination and enslavement of the vanquished have, since Antiquity, been among the consequences of war, territorial conquest and economic expansion. Enslavement of the other has thus taken a variety of forms and has affected population groups of different geographical origins.

History and its sources

The history of human trafficking and enslavement is founded on many sources. Archives, books and all sorts of other written accounts are the primary reference documents used by historians.
Archaeological research, too, provides key facts in Europe, Africa and the Americas. The excavation of a slave ship off the European, African or Caribbean and American coasts, the location of slave convoy traces in Africa, the remains of certain plantations in the Americas and the few slave cemeteries found constitute evidence that has decisively shaped recent developments in historical research.
Lastly, oral traditions collected in Europe and in coastal areas and ports in Africa and the Americas provide accounts that historians, linguists and sociologists analyse and place in their specific contexts.

History and image

The images contained in the film or used to illustrate these fact sheets can be analysed critically and interestingly. They all convey information on the subject in question, on their author in the case of a work of art, on the context in which they were produced and on the target audience. For example, many eighteenth-century pictures of European ports, such as Liverpool in Great Britain or Bordeaux in France, were intended to display the prosperity of colonial maritime trade.
Conversely, cross sections of slavers disseminated as from the late eighteenth century in Europe were antislavery propaganda images. Certain scenes of punishment, produced in particularly large numbers, were intended in some cases as evidence of strong social control policies in the colonies and in others as instruments of antislavery propaganda.

1 HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Background

In ancient times, European and African slaves in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece and the Roman Empire had been captured in raiding expeditions or acts of war and were made to work in agriculture, in construction, on ships, as soldiers and as domestic slaves. In Europe during the Middle Ages there were networks of Slav captives (hence the word *sclavus*), who were not serfs (from the Latin *servus*).
The Mediterranean Sea was plied by ships transporting slaves between North Africa, Southern Europe and the Near East. The ports of Catalonia and Italy, Genoa and Venice in particular, were constantly used as the starting points for these trade flows. Slaves in the Ottoman Empire came mainly from Central Asia, the Balkans, Russia and Poland.

Africa

Africa is the continent that has suffered most from human trafficking, in terms of numbers and for the longest time. Enslavement of prisoners of war and subjugation to a wide variety of forms of bondage had been practised there for centuries. They were incorporated into many trade flows within the continent and constituted a large pool of labour in some major kingdoms. The slaves' status and positions differed considerably, ranging from hard labourers with no rights whatsoever to "domestic" servants and advisers to some dignitaries. These very complex slavery systems cannot reliably be quantified owing to the lack of written sources on the subject.

African population groups were also taken towards the north and east of the continent in order to supply the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean slave trade, before the inception of the transatlantic slave trade towards the Americas, conducted on a much larger and more intensive scale from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries.

The Iberians controlled the first shipments of captives to the Seville and Lisbon markets from the West African coasts in the 1440s. They and Italian merchants soon invested in the cultivation of sugar cane on the islands of Cape Verde and Madeira.

From Africa to the East

From the seventh century, the Arab empires wrested control of this trade from the Byzantines. The captives were taken by land routes from the African deserts to Central Asia and from Western Europe as far as Baghdad; and by sea routes through the Red Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Persian Gulf and from the East African coast. Thus two major parallel human trafficking routes persisted in Africa until the end of the nineteenth century – one towards the Indian Ocean and the other across the Sahara – and onwards to the Ottoman Empire and India. According to rough estimates owing to the lack of documents, 6 to 7 million people were taken through the eastern route while some 8 million people were trafficked between sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa.

2-1 THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

The most intensive

The transatlantic slave trade, the most intensive and massive of all, brought about the transportation, spread over four centuries, from the sixteenth to the nineteenth, of 12.5 to 15 million people. It also induced an upstream intensification of human trafficking within the continent.

After the Portuguese and the French established initial trade relations and made the first purchases of captives along the West African coast in the mid-fifteenth century, the conquest of the Americas led to transportation on a massive scale without precedent. Unlike previous slave trading, this human trade had a great impact on the demography and economic, social and political development of Africa and of the Americas, where Europe established its colonies. Contrary to the received wisdom, the slave-trading route was only occasionally "triangular". Ships fitted out in Brazil, for example, sailed directly to the African coasts to pick up their supply of captives. After sailing from European ports, along the African coast and across the Atlantic, slave ships often sailed from the Caribbean to trade along the North America coast before returning to their home ports.

A specific economic system

The transatlantic slave trade was also organized legally by European States and was one of the main pillars of the development of their possessions across the Atlantic and of the prosperity of their colonial trade. Portugal, Spain, France, Great Britain, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Germany were directly involved, establishing trading posts and forts along the west coast of Africa.

This trade involved much of Europe's economic resources and channels from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Port economics, maritime techniques, financing and insurance processes, trade and accounting techniques were adapted to those special channels. Owing to numerous manufacturing processes producing goods such as the shackles and fetters for the holds in northern Germany, Sweden and Spain, Venetian rassades and glassware, weapons in England, Holland and Denmark, alcohol and various fabrics such as calico and other types of cloth in France, Holland or England, many small industries in the European hinterland were involved in the various channels of the transatlantic slave trade.

Major State and later private trading companies were founded in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe in order to secure control of the channels and expected profits.

In the Americas, intensive mining and sugar production sustained hitherto unprecedented financial and commercial networks too. The labour-intensive mines and plantations required constantly renewed inflows of slaves supplied by the slave trade. The economic rationale underlying this deadly system was not one of affording protection to the worker from whom a profit was made, but one of intensifying production, which entailed a perpetual financial reinvestment in the purchase of brawn power.
The slave trade is estimated to have yielded profits ranging from 5 to 10%, but some slave trading campaigns might have yielded much higher profits. An average of 6% of slave ships was lost at sea.

Evaluation of the consequences in Africa

While the human and social cost of the transatlantic slave trade to the African continent cannot be evaluated, this intensive human outflow undoubtedly had major long-term social and economic effects.

2-2 THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE: HIGHLIGHTS IN FIGURES

Some estimates

It is estimated that 12 to 15 million captives were shipped from West Africa to the Americas during the transatlantic slave trade, with 60% arriving during the eighteenth century and more than 30% during the nineteenth century when the trade had in theory become illegal. From the early sixteenth century to the late nineteenth century, it accounted for three quarters of the Africans leaving the continent. They came mainly from central West Africa, the Bight of Biafra, the Bight of Benin, the Gold Coast, Guinea, Angola, Senegal and Gambia. The decades from the 1780s to the 1820s were the most intense and the most prosperous. The number of African captives shipped out through the illegal slave trade in the nineteenth century is estimated at 2 to 4 million.

Destinations

More than half of the captives were shipped to Brazil, while the others were sent to the Caribbean islands and, to a lesser extent, to North America and to Spanish colonies in South America.

Port activity

The ports of Liverpool, London and Bristol (United Kingdom), Nantes, Le Havre, Bordeaux, La Rochelle, Saint-Malo, Honfleur, Lorient and Marseille (France), Zeeland, Amsterdam and Rotterdam (the Netherlands), Lisbon (Portugal), Cadiz (Spain) and those of Denmark were most active in the trade. Other ships were fitted out by more short-lived companies as in Brandenburg (Germany). All European countries invested financially in the slave trade. Portugal, Brazil, the United Kingdom, France and the United States of America controlled the transatlantic slave trade routes until the years 1860-1870.

Death before boarding for Middle Passage

As a result of this human trafficking, for every captive reaching the Americas alive, four to five died in the course of being captured or taken in convoy to the coast, while being held in *baracoons* (barracks built along the western coasts), awaiting the slave ships or during the crossing and in uprisings aboard.

Survival aboard and mutinies

The average mortality aboard slavers is estimated at 15 to 35%, depending on the period. The "human cargo" was completely destroyed in some uprisings. About 10% of slave ships reported a mutiny on board. Mutinies occurred mainly before embarkation or during the first few weeks at sea.

When the slave trade became illegal, some slavers pursued by enforcement cruisers, would throw all captives aboard into the sea.

Life expectancy

Historians and demographers estimate that a slave arriving at plantations or mines in the Americas had a life expectancy of four to six years. Nearly half of those *bossales* barely survived for one year after arrival at the mines or plantations.

THE SLAVE TRADE

Further information and themes for thought

Only late in the history of the slave routes linking Europe, Africa and the Caribbean and the Americas were the conditions in which Africans were captured, imprisoned and shipped across the Atlantic brought to the awareness of a wider audience than the governments, ship-owners, shipbuilders, crews and plantation-owners involved.

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The first pictures and posters showing cross-sections of slave ships and the way captives were stowed were circulated in the late eighteenth century. The purpose was to make the public aware of the conditions in which slaves were transported from Africa to the Caribbean.

A slave ship might hold up to 600 captives and a crew of 90. But most of them carried 250-300 captives and a crew of 35-40.

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❶ Extract from "The file of captives. Negro Slaves during the Voyage", anon., XVIIIth century ❷ The Middle Passage. Dancing Negroes
All images of these Fact Sheets come from the UNESCO/The Slave Route Fund.

A gauge barrel (1.44 m3), used to measure a ship's usable volume, should contain as many as three captives.

A slaving voyage from a European port could last up to 18 months or two years. After six weeks at sea to reach the West African coast, a slave ship might spend between two and eight months along the coast to fill its hold with captives.

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The Atlantic crossing, or Middle Passage, could last between one and three months, depending on the ship's speed and the weather conditions.

The captives were usually sold on board when the ship reached its destination. Some had to put into several ports to sell their cargo. Brazilian shippers established direct relations with the African trading posts.

Ships that plied the slave route from Europe to Africa and on to the Caribbean and the Americas often made trading voyages to North America before returning to Europe with cargoes of colonial goods.

Most of the ships used for the slave trade were old. As from the late eighteenth century, some were relatively new and fast, cutting the voyage time and enabling them to escape the British and French navies' antislavery ships sent to pursue them in the nineteenth century.

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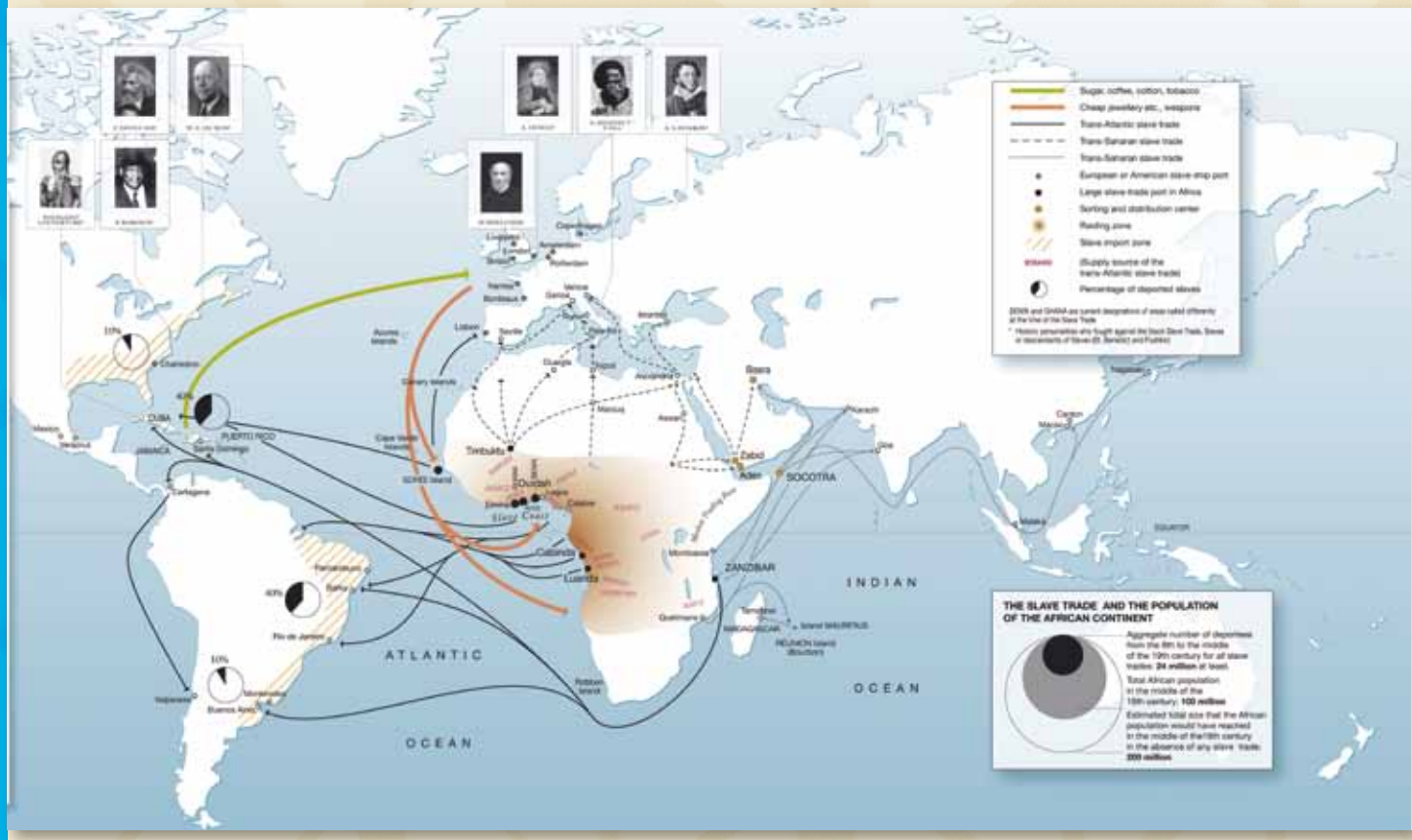
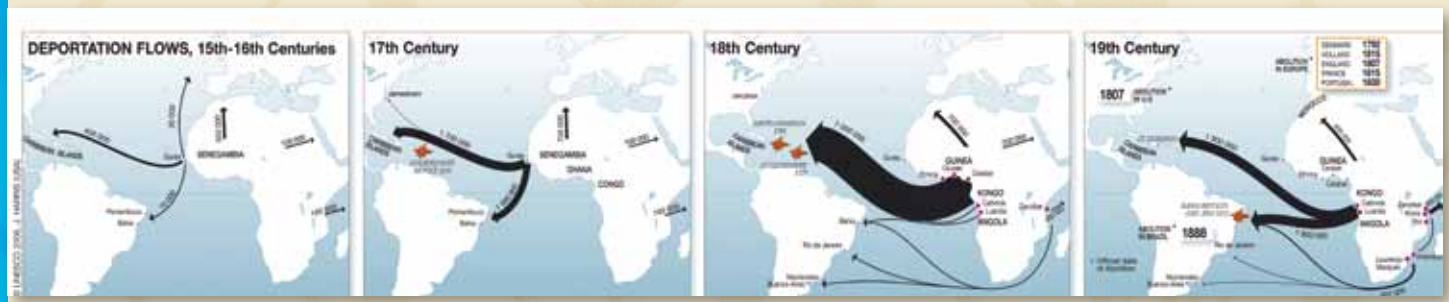
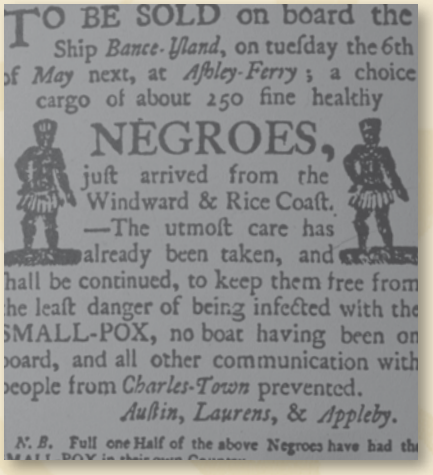
❶ Cross-section of a slave ship ❷ A slave ship taking on cargo ❸ A slave ship

MAP OF THE SLAVE ROUTES





SALE OF SLAVES


TO BE SOLD on board the
Ship *Bance-Island*, on tueſday the 6th
of *May* next, at *Aſhley-Ferry*; a choice
cargo of about 250 fine healthy
NEGROES,
juſt arrived from the
Windward & Rice Coaſt.
—The utmoſt care has
already been taken, and
hall be continued, to keep them free from
he leaſt danger of being infected with the
SMALL-POX, no boat having been on
oard, and all other communication with
eople from *Charles-Town* prevented.
Auſtin, Laurens, & Appleby.
N. B. Full one Half of the above Negroes have had th

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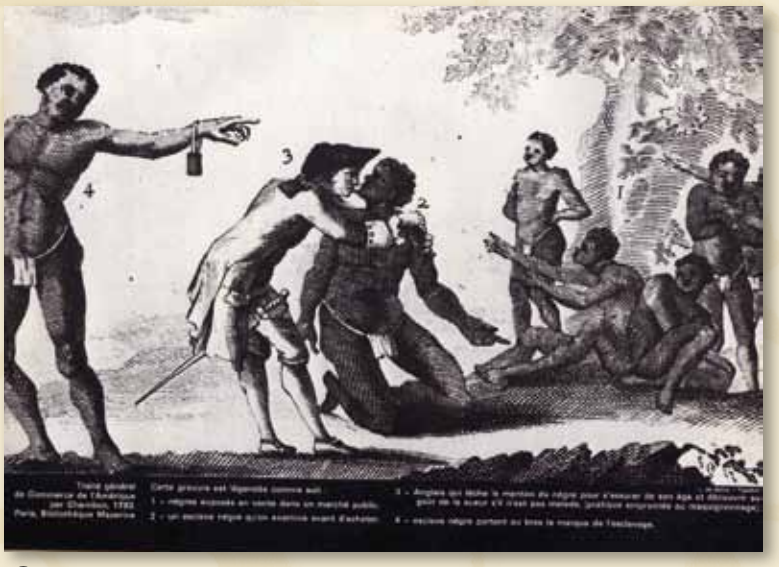

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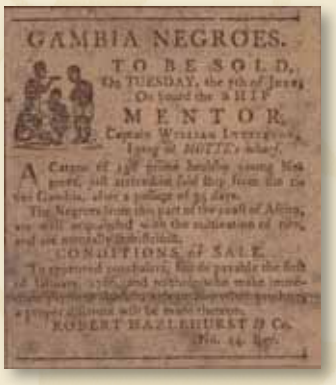
GAMBIA NEGROES.
TO BE SOLD,
MENTOR,
CONDITIONS OF SALE.
ROBERT HAZLEHURST & Co.

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Further information and themes for thought

The information provided to potential buyers at the sale of a slave comprised: the slave's approximate age, state of health, strength, submissiveness to authority, any experience of work in a mine or on a plantation, asking price and, in the case of women, their aptitude for field work but also for domestic work were factors in their sale.

1 Negroes to be sold on board 2 A Slave Sale 3 "Sale of slaves at public market», extr. from Chambon, *Traité général de commerce de l'Amérique,* France, 1783 4 Gambia Negroes to be sold

THE BEGINNINGS OF SLAVERY IN THE CARIBBEAN

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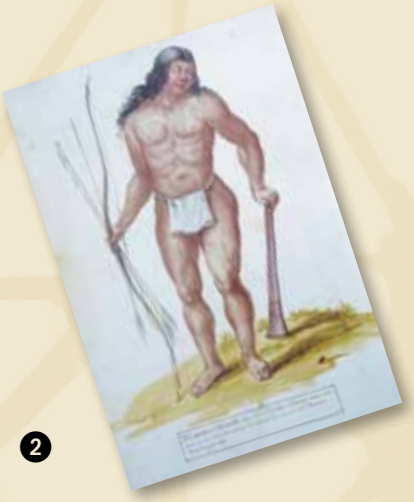

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Further information and themes for thought

What was the fate of the indigenous inhabitants of the Caribbean and Central and South America when the Europeans began to arrive at the end of the fifteenth century?

From the onset of colonization they suffered a major demographic decrease with as much as 60% of the total population dying in a few decades, owing to the war waged on them by the Iberians, French, English and Dutch, to diseases against which they had no immunity and to forced labour.

In the Eastern Caribbean some were collected into reservations. Following their attacks on European settlements, the Black Caribs of St Vincent, the offspring of intermarriage between Caribs and maroons, or runaway slaves, were deported by the British to the Bay of Honduras where they formed the Garifuna population in Belize.

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Recruited in vast numbers to work in the precious metal mines of Central and South America, they were subject to the laws of the *encomienda*, the right that the Spanish Crown granted to colonists to reduce them to slavery, and the *repartimiento*, which allocated a certain number of workers to those colonists.

As from the early sixteenth century, their high mortality rate led the Portuguese and Spaniards, and later the French, English and Dutch, to seek labour on the coasts of Africa. This gave unprecedented scale to the trade in captives that had been plied between West Africa and the Iberian Peninsula since the mid-fifteenth century.

❶ Carib Woman ❷ A Carib Man ❸ Indian Female ❹ Indian Family ❺ Battle between Spaniards and Caribs

3-1 SLAVERY

Colonization and slavery

Slavery in ancient societies differed from the form of slavery found in African societies and from that which developed in the Americas from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. All forms were linked, however, to relations of dominance, related principles of submission and the desire to make human beings work at minimum cost and to dominate subjugated peoples physically, morally and economically.

The slave system that developed in the Americas was unique. It was indissociable from the development of European colonies in that part of the world.

In the Caribbean, where all European countries had colonies or powerful financial and trade interests, 65% to 90% of the population came from Africa or were of African descent, were enslaved and worked for four centuries to produce commodities for export.

It was a powerful yet fragile economic motor, regulated by very strict and constantly revised social control legislation, indispensable for the system's sustainability, an economic motor that survived only because of the slaves' *social death.*

The "rules" of productivity

Three key rules governed colonial operations in the Americas: productivity of the mines or agricultural commodities, such as sugar, coffee, cotton, indigo and tobacco, that sustained a particularly profitable colonial trade; incessant renewal of the labour force; and violence, both physical and moral, against slaves. Order and violence were imposed by military force (army, gendarmerie and militias) and entailed increasingly numerous and coercive rules and regulations.

3-2 SLAVERY AND SOCIAL DEATH

Loss of identity and social death

Slavery in the Americas has been described as a total system of exploitation. It entailed the captive's social death, loss of identity, loss of name if born in Africa and loss of culture, mother language and beliefs. It rested on denial of social recognition to the slave who was condemned to a chattel system in a highly codified colonial world, founded on discrimination.

Codified violence

From the earliest years of European colonial settlement in the Americas, slave labour implied a series of locally enacted rules that were soon incorporated into codes. The Kingdom of Spain's *Siete Partidas* were adapted for the first colonies, while *the Slave Laws* were enacted in the British possessions. In 1685, the *Code Noir* was promulgated by the King of France. The latter edict, regulating the rights and duties of planters and their slaves – the latter being deemed "chattels" – influenced other codes up till the end of the eighteenth century. In 1789, a *Codigo Negro* or "Royal edict on the education, treatment and occupations of slaves" was drawn up for the Spanish colonies and was amended in Cuba in the early nineteenth century after a sharp rise in the island's sugar production and the number of slaves. Codes thus established the means by which the colonial slave system would survive through physical force and social control.

Discriminations

The *Codes* and *Slave Laws* imposed a series of obligations and prohibitions on slaves and some obligations on their masters. Those laws were often disregarded, however, out of preference for local customs that led to even worse discrimination and violence. In particular, they gave plantation masters full power regarding the punishment, life and death of their slaves, enabling them to act with impunity in those matters.

Until the nineteenth century, extremely harsh rules discriminating not only against slaves but also coloured "freedmen" were enacted and strengthened. Slaves freed by their masters were subject to specific rules and regulations, comprising prohibitions relating to every act of life: profession, marriage, possession of property and inheritance.

After abolition, such discrimination did not cease. In the United States of America, social life, especially in the southern states, was regulated by the Jim Crow and segregation laws.

BLACK CODES, SLAVE CODES AND DISCRIMINATORY MEASURES

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LE
CODE NOIR,
OU
RECUEIL
DES REGLEMENS
A PARIS,
M. DCC. LXVII.
AVEC PRIVILEGE DU ROI.

Further information and themes for thought

The survival of the slavery system for four centuries required a constantly renewed system of discrimination in the colonies.

From their arrival in the colonies – or from birth – slaves endured social death. They were stripped of any genuine identity, all rights, all recognition except their master's identity, the first name he or the plantation overseer gave them and their registry number.

Every act of freed slaves, or "free people of colour", was the target of discriminatory measures such as prohibiting their access to certain professions relating to precious metals, finance or medicine, or access to their father's inheritance should he be a colonist.

The *Codes noirs (Black Codes)* of the French colonies between 1685, 1723 and 1724, the 1789 *Codigo negro (Black Code)* of the Spanish possessions, which followed on from the local adaptation of *Las Siete Partidas*, the *Slave Laws* in the British or American possessions (British West Indies, southern states of the United States of America) or the adaptation of the Cuban Code when the number of slaves increased in the early nineteenth century, all had common characteristics, including:

- a futile attempt to synthesize and unify the "colonial customs", that is the body of rules formulated locally by the colonists themselves and their assemblies;
- a will to impose and maintain order, to protect economic and landed interests, e.g. through a graduated scale of punishments for runaway slaves, restrictions on the potential division of land, or prohibition of bequests to the children of planters and slave women;
- a will to discriminate and to reject miscegenation or the social advancement of "free people of colour", viewed as politically dangerous;

❶ The *Black Code,* drawing, end of the XVIIIth century ❷ Slave with a rope around the neck ❸ First page of the 1685 French *Black Code*

- absolute ineffectiveness with regard to the right of life and death that the plantation owners always asserted, until abolition, over their human livestock inside the closed enclaves of their plantations. Laws and codes were loosely observed in such matters as the clothing and food that the masters owed their slaves. They were carefully observed in respect of the prohibitions they imposed on slaves, but they remained dead letters with respect to the few rights granted to slaves in respect of labour restriction or the regulation of authorized punishments. Although some observers thought that the French and Spanish Codes gave slaves greater protection than the Slave Laws of the British West Indies or the English colonies in North America, the reality was identical and slave masters everywhere retained excessive powers and guaranteed immunity.

The Spanish *Codigo negro* of 1789, or Royal Decree "concerning the education, treatment and occupation of slaves", included the following sections: Education; Food and Clothing of slaves; Recreation of slaves; Rooms and the Infirmary; Old people and the very ill; Marriage of slaves; Obligations of slaves and corrective punishments; Condemnation to severe punishment; Oversight or excess by masters or overseers; Mistreatment of Slaves.

It drew on the French *Code Noir* of 1685, a few extracts from which follow:

I II. All slaves that shall be in our islands shall be baptized and instructed in the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Faith. We enjoin inhabitants who shall purchase newly-arrived Negroes to inform the Governor and Intendant of the said islands of this fact within eight days at most, on pain of an arbitrary fine, and they shall give the necessary orders to have them instructed and baptized in the suitable time.

(...)

IX. Free men who shall have one or several children of their concubinage with their slaves, together with their masters who shall have suffered it, shall each be condemned to a fine of two thousand pounds of sugar, and if they are the masters of the slave of whom they had the said children, we desire that in addition to the fine, they shall be deprived of the slave and the children and that she and they be confiscated for the profit of the Royal Hospital, never able to be freed. We do not intend, however, the present article to be applied when the man, who was not married to another person during his concubinage with his slave, shall marry in the forms practised by the Church his said slave, who shall by this means be freed and the children be made free and legitimate.

(...)

XV. We forbid slaves from carrying any offensive weapons or large sticks, on pain of the whip; and of confiscation of the weapons to the profit of him who shall seize them; excepting only those who shall be sent to the hunt by their Master and who shall bear his note or known marks.

XVI. We also forbid slaves belonging to different Masters to gather together, either during the day or at night, under the pretext of a wedding or otherwise, either at one of their Master's houses or elsewhere, and the less so on the highways or isolated places, on pain of corporal punishment that shall not be less than the whip and the fleur de lys, and for frequent recidivists and in other aggravating circumstances, they may be punished with death, which decision we leave to the Judges. We enjoin all our subjects to run to the offenders, arrest them, and take them to prison, even though they are not officers and there is yet no decree against them.

(…)

XIX. We also forbid them to set out for sale at the Market, or to carry to private houses to sell them, any manner of goods, even fruit, vegetables, firewood, herbs for their food and beasts for their manufactures, without express permission of their Master by a note or known marks, on pain of reclaim of the things thus sold, without restitution of the price by their Masters, and a fine of six pounds to their profit against the buyers.

(…)

XXII. Masters shall be obliged to provide to their Slaves aged 10 years or more for their food each week two and a half pots in the country's measure of cassava meal, or three cassavas weighing each one two and a half pounds at least, or equivalent things, with two pounds of salt beef, or three pounds of fish or other thing in proportion, and to children from weaning to the age of 10 years, half of the aforesaid provisions.

(…)

XXVII. Slaves who are infirm due to age, sickness or other reason, whether the sickness is incurable or not, shall be nourished and cared for by their masters, and should they be abandoned, said slaves shall be awarded to the Royal Hospital, to which their master shall be required to pay six sols each day for the care and feeding of each slave.

(…)

XXVIII. The fugitive slave who has been at large for one month from the day his master shall have denounced him in Justice, shall have his ears cut off, and shall be branded with a fleur de lys on one shoulder; and if he offends again for another month, still counting from the day he is denounced, he shall have his hamstring cut and be branded with a fleur de lys on the other shoulder; and the third time, he shall be punished by death.

(…)

XLII. The Masters may also, when they believe that their slaves so deserve, have them chained and have them beaten with rods or ropes, but they shall be forbidden from torturing them or mutilating any limb, on pain of confiscation of the Slaves and of extraordinary proceedings against the Masters.

(…)

XLIV. We declare slaves to be possessions, and as such to enter into community property, not to be pledged in mortgage, and to be shared equally between the co-inheritors.

SLAVES' WORK ON A PLANTATION

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Further information and themes for thought

Some 70% of slaves in the Americas were employed on sugar cane plantations. The remainder were spread across cotton, rice, indigo or coffee plantations or in the mines. The whip and the plantation bell measured out life and work.

Not all plantation owners in the Caribbean lived on their lands, and many lived in Europe. Their plantations were run by a manager. The slaves' work was directed by an overseer, most often himself a slave.

As from the eighteenth century intensive colonial trade was established between Europe and the Caribbean and Americas. The African slave trade and slavery were its economic and human mainstays.

1 Cultivation of sugar cane 2 Going to the fields 3 Caribbean plantation, Italian drawing, 1820 4 Inside a sugar mill 5 Rollers of a sugar mill 6 A Negro cabin

IRONS AND SHACKLES

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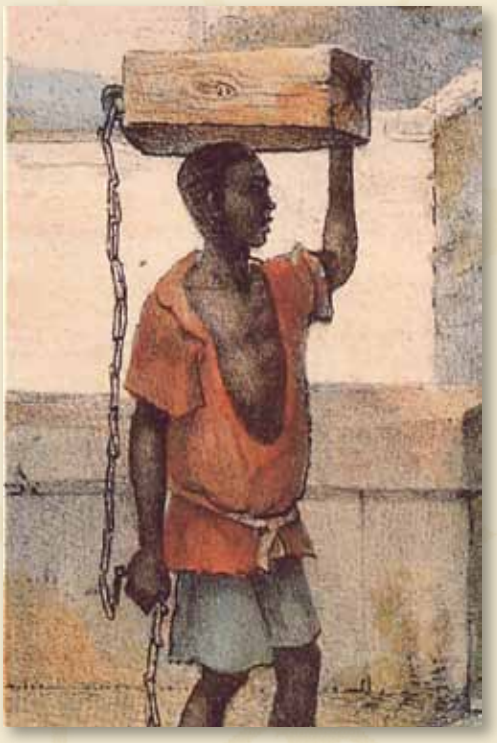

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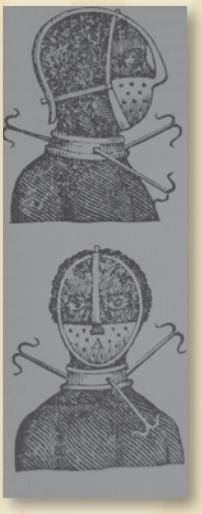

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Further information and themes for thought

Several European countries specialized in supplying irons and shackles for holds and plantations from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Prussia, Sweden, Spain and France supplied the slaving ports and the colonial mines and plantations.

From the hold shackle, fastened to ankles and wrists, to the branched collars attached to the necks of recaptured runaways or the heavy blocks imposed on them during working hours, down the centuries techniques for chaining slaves and reducing them to impotence were perfected. Metal masks were frequently set on them – for example, when a slave was caught eating a piece of sugar cane.

Today, these metal objects are rarely found in museums that dedicate a few rooms or showcases to slavery. Enormous quantities of them were melted down or thrown into the sea at the time of abolition, and today they form unusual testimony to practices that were, none the less, routine for four centuries.

❶ and ❷ Slave Punishments in Brazil : neck-collar with branches and punishment of the block for runaway slaves, extr. from Jean-Baptiste DEBRET, *Voyage pittoresque au Brésil, 1835* ❸ Mask and neck-collar with branches, detail

PUNISHMENTS

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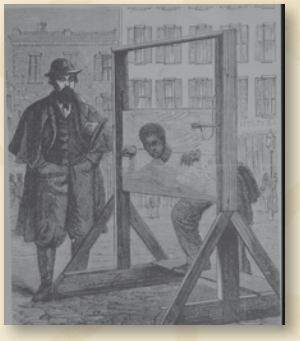

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Further information and themes for thought

The *Codes noirs* and *Slave Laws* of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries remained entirely theoretical guidance documents. The plantation masters retained the right of punishment, life and death over the slaves on their plantations without reference to the colonial authorities. Each plantation had its “police room”, that is, its goal and often its dungeons.

Punishments were often meted out in public, or on plantations in the presence of all slaves in the “workforce”. These practices were designed as punishment, but also as deterrents and demonstrations of masters’ and the colonial authorities’ power.

1 A whip of overseer from Martinique, Victor Schœlcher’s Collections, Quai Branly Museum, Paris 2 Flogging scene 3 "The dreams" 4 Dungeons on the Dubuc plantation, Martinique 5 Extract from John Gabriel Stedman, *Narrative of a Five Years Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam,* 1796 6 Slave in shackles, neck and wrists

4-1 RESISTANCE – Survival

The first antislavery voices

Captives and slaves were the first to object to slavery, expressing their rejection of such bondage in various ways in all parts of the world and in every epoch. Archives and the collective memory contain traces of some major revolts: the revolt by Spartacus in Antiquity, the Zanj slaves in the Basra sugar cane growing region (Lower Iraq) in the ninth century, the slaves in Saint-Domingue (today's Haiti) in 1791, the captives aboard the *Amistad* and by Nat Turner in the south of the United States of America in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Oral tradition and archaeological research in Africa attest to entire villages fighting against raiding expeditions and to resistance by the captives in the barracks along the coasts. European admiralty registers contain records of many mutinies aboard slave ships and of the death tolls.

Daily survival

Their daily lot was to survive the uprooting, transportation, separation, pace of work, malnutrition, disease and ill treatment, the violence of punishment and the whip that governed plantation life.

The slaves sometimes expressed rejection of enslavement by poisoning livestock and even human beings, by infanticide or suicide.

Specific social relations, sometimes qualified as "underground", were established, however, among slaves and were often tolerated by the authorities out of fear of revolts.

Religious beliefs in Yoruba divinities – expressed *in voodoo* (Haiti), *santeria* (Cuba and other Caribbean countries), *candomblé* (Brazil) – songs, tales and various ceremonies, at burials in particular, still reflect those survival networks.

4.2 RESISTANCE – Rejection

Rebellion

The first African slave revolts occurred in the Spanish colonies at La Española (Santo Domingo), Cuba, Mexico and Colombia, and then in the Caribbean islands of Barbados, St Kitts, Guadeloupe and Martinique in particular. The first in a long series of revolts in Jamaica occurred in 1673. The last, in 1831, involved 20,000 slaves. Its scale contributed to speedy action by the British Parliament to abolish slavery in 1833.

In the Eastern Caribbean, the Caribs joined forces with fugitive slaves. The Black Caribs found refuge in neutral islands, such as Saint Vincent, from which they were shipped by the British to the Bay of Honduras in the late eighteenth century.

Rebellions in the first half of the nineteenth century in Cuba (the 1812 Aponte conspiracy and the 1843-1844 Escalera conspiracy) and in the United States of America (Virginia: Gabriel Prosser in 1800, Nat Turner in 1831 and John Brown in 1859; and South Carolina: Denmark Vesey in 1822) shook a system that nonetheless remained in place for another few decades.

The maroons

The *kilombos* of the Angolares of São Tomé, off the African coast, were the forerunners of the enormous camps in the Americas in which tens of thousands of runaway slaves lived for centuries.

The forested mountainous relief of most of the colonies was conducive to flight from the mines and plantations and to the establishment of clandestine settlements by runaway slaves. The resistance that some settlements put up to searches and warfare by the colonial authorities forced the latter to enter into truces and peace treaties with the fugitives.

Some *palenques* in La Española and Central America, the *quilombos* in Brazil, such as Palmares in the seventeenth century led by Ganga Zumba, and some large camps in the Eastern Caribbean, genuine fortified villages, withstood onslaughts by English, Dutch, Portuguese and French troops for decades.

The first Maroon War in Jamaica ended with recognition of the freedom of the runaway slaves and the granting of land.

In the Guianas, some black communities established by runaway slaves survive to this day: in Suriname, Saramaka, Djuka and the Boni were recognized in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

RESISTANCE

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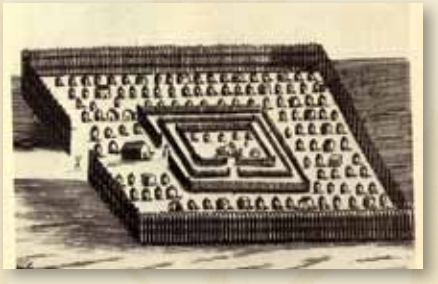
Further information and themes for thought

How did the Negro maroons survive? Runaways from plantations could be recaptured very quickly, in a few days, by beats organized to hunt them down. Punishment could range from imprisonment in the plantation dungeons to shackling or amputation of a limb.

Fugitives might manage to survive for longer in the "large camps" hidden in the mountain forests. Others joined *quilombos* or *palenques*, fortified villages inspired by the *kilombos* of Africa. In the Guianas – and Jamaica – established communities of Negro maroons forced the Europeans to make peace treaties and grant lands.

An African kilombo:



Cimarron Negroes, fugitives from the slave-owning mines or plantations, built large fortified camps in Brazil, Central America, Ayti (the original name of Saint-Domingue) and Jamaica. They were given the names of *quilombos* or *palenques.* They used the building processes, defensive methods, agrarian techniques and survival methods tested in the fortified villages of Africa as described by some seventeenth century observers. The most famous of them, the *quilombo* of Palmarès in Brazil, resisted military attacks from the Dutch and the Portuguese for several decades.

Shown here, in an illustration taken from the *Historia dei regni dei Congo, Matamba i Angola* by Cavazzi da Montecuccolo (Milan, 1690), is one of these African fortified villages or *kilombos.*

❶ Negro maroon fleeing the militia ❷ Hunting the Negro maroons ❸ Hunted Slaves ❹ The Fugitive Slave ❺ Running away

5 TOWARDS ABOLITION

Many factors

It was only in the late eighteenth century and during the nineteenth century that decisive blows were struck against the system.

Slaves resistance, whether daily or through sporadic rebellions, had undermined the system from the outset by exerting constant social tensions. This was a longstanding feature, reaching flashpoint on several occasions, as in the Caribbean islands in the 1730s and throughout the Caribbean and in the United States of America during the first half of the nineteenth century.

In the early nineteenth century, the economic interests of the colonizing powers shifted as British interests, for example, turned eastwards, and this was a decisive factor in the abolition of slavery in the West Indies.

Owing to the antislavery sentiment that emerged in the Thirteen North American Colonies, in Great Britain and in France, the first set of measures against slavery and the transatlantic slave trade were taken in the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century.

The 1791 slave rebellion in Saint-Domingue (today's Haiti) marked the beginning of a long century of emancipation in the Americas, which ended with the promulgation of abolition in Cuba in 1886 and in Brazil in 1888 (see the timeline).

Voices calling for freedom

The voice of the slaves was heard only rarely, when insurgents were put on trial. The voice of antislavery campaigners was, however, heard constantly from the mid-eighteenth century. From the late seventeenth century, the Quakers in Pennsylvania forbad their members to be involved in any way whatsoever in the slave trade and in the possession of slaves. During the Enlightenment, texts denouncing human trafficking and slavery were published, for example, in Diderot's *Encyclopaedia* (1755), *A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies* by the Abbé Raynal (1770) and in *Reflections on Negro Slavery* by Condorcet (1781, under the pen name Joachim Schwarz). In Great Britain, Thomas Clarkson, James Ramsay, Granville Sharp and William Wilberforce undertook a wide-ranging campaign against the slave trade and the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade was founded in London in 1787 while the *Société des Amis des Noirs* (Society of the Friends of the Blacks), whose main members were Brissot, Abbé Grégoire, Condorcet and Mirabeau, was formed in Paris in 1788.

The main, primarily moral and religious, arguments against slavery were expounded at that time. Clarkson and Wilberforce were involved in the British abolitionist movement

until it ended in 1833, while Alphonse de Lamartine, Cyrille Bissette and Victor Schœlcher, together with many parliamentarians, called for freedom in the French colonies.
In the United States of America, William Lloyd Garrison, the Tappan brothers and the *Underground Railroad* leaders (Harriet Tubman in particular) were involved in the movement launched in the seventeenth century by the Quakers. Segismundo Moret in Spain and Joaquim Nabuco in Brazil, furthered abolitionist arguments in the Iberian colonies in the Americas.

Prohibition of the slave trade

The first official acts against the trade took the form of the abolition of the slave trade by Denmark (1803), and by Great Britain and the United States of America (1807). In 1815, the Congress of Vienna called on the main European countries to take action to prohibit the slave trade. Large-scale illegal slave trade networks, mainly supplying Brazil, the United States of America and the Danish and French colonies in the Caribbean until the end of the century, then emerged.

Attitude of the Church

The Christian churches did not condemn slavery until quite late in the day. It is not forbidden by the Scriptures. Islamic law recognizes the institution of slavery but forbids enslavement of Muslims.
In 1454, Pope Nicholas V considered that the Portuguese practice of trading in African captives was legal. It was only in 1839 that Pope Gregory XVI condemned enslavement practices.
However, the first petition against slavery was signed by the Germantown Quakers in Pennsylvania in 1688.
In the British West Indies, Baptists and Moravians joined the abolitionist campaign and began to educate slaves in the nineteenth century.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ABOLITIONISTS

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Further information and themes for thought

The first wave of Western abolitionism in the eighteenth century formulated a definition of slavery for the long term which still figures in international conventions today.

Writing in Diderot's *Encyclopédie*, published in Paris in 1755, the Chevalier de Jaucourt opined that to enslave someone was tantamount to a declaration of war. In 1781 Condorcet, under the pseudonym of Joachim Schwarz, published his *Réflexions sur l'esclavage des Nègres [Reflections on Negro slavery],* in which he wrote:

"To reduce a man to slavery, to buy him, to sell him, to keep him in bondage, these are true crimes and crimes worse than theft. Indeed, the slave is deprived not merely of all movable or land property, but of the ability to acquire any, of ownership of his own time, his strength, of all that nature has given him to preserve his life or meet his needs. To this wrong is added that of depriving the slave of the right to dispose of his person".

Indeed the first abolitionists, the slaves themselves, denied any means of addressing the governments and populations of the Western colonial powers, had tested this reality through their resistance.

A network of ideas was woven between the Philadelphia Quakers, the first to forbid their brethren to engage in human trafficking and slavery, and Europe of the Enlightenment. In London, and subsequently in Paris, very durable arguments were created, some of which are still used today.

❶ "You shall be free at last" ❷ N.A. Monsiau, "The Convention abolishing Slavery", Paris, 4 february 1794 ❸ Thomas Clarkson and William Wilberforce
❹ "Am I not a Man and a Brother?", Medallion inspired of Th. Wedgwood

Abbé Henri GRÉGOIRE (1750-1831)

Starting out as parish priest of Emberménil, in Eastern France, Abbé Grégoire was elected a clerical representative to the Estates General in 1789. A supporter of the cause of the Third Estate, he defended the Jews in 1788, the Protestants and then the slaves in the French colonies. Through this he became a member of the Society of Friends of the Blacks which Brissot founded in Paris in 1788 and contributed to the drafting of the first French decree abolishing slavery, passed by the Convention on 4 February 1794.

He opposed Napoleon Bonaparte's re-establishment of slavery in 1802 and published many works demonstrating the equality between Blacks and Whites and more broadly among all the "human races", including *De la littérature des Nègres, ou recherches sur leurs facultés intellectuelles, leurs qualités morales et leur littérature [On the literature of Negroes, or research into their intellectual faculties, their moral qualities and their literature]* (1808), *Des peines infâmantes à infliger aux négriers [On the humiliating punishments to be inflicted on slave-traders]* (1822), *and De la noblesse de la peau ou du préjugé des blancs contre la couleur des Africains et celle de leurs descendants noirs et sang-mêlés [On the nobility of skin, or the prejudice of Whites against the colour of Africans and of their black or mixed-blood descendants]* (1826).

William WILBERFORCE (1759-1833)

Born to a well-to-do family in Kingston upon Hull, in the north-east of England, William Wilberforce was educated in Cambridge where he became a friend of William Pitt, the future Prime Minister. Elected to the House of Commons in 1780, whilst he remained politically allied with the "independents", his conversion to evangelical Christianity and the Clapham Sect in 1784 changed the course of his life and his political commitment. His priorities came to be the need for social, educational and penal reform and the struggle against child labour. His principal action was the constant campaign that he waged from that time on for the suppression of the African slave trade and of slavery. In that period he made the acquaintance of the abolitionist Thomas Clarkson. He then became the Parliamentary specialist on abolitionism, tabling his first bill to that end during the 1788-1789 session. On that occasion he made a long and memorable speech, telling his colleagues that "you can never again say that you did not know". The arguments he put forward were essentially religious and humanitarian in nature.

In 1791 he joined the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade. After a campaign against the slave trade which was renewed each year from 1790 to 1806, it was only in 1807 that Great Britain introduced a ban on the slave trade. On that occasion, Wilberforce published *A Letter on the Abolition of the Slave Trade,* which summarized the arguments of the campaign. In 1823, when the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery (the forerunner of the Anti-slavery Society) was founded, slavery was still in existence in the British colonies. However, abolition plans proliferated after Wilberforce published his *Appeal to the Religion, Justice and Humanity of the Inhabitants of the British Empire in Behalf of the Negro Slaves in the West Indies.* He presented slavery as a national crime which Parliament alone could legally remedy. Retiring from politics in 1825, he made a final speech in favour of abolition in April 1833. The Bill for the Abolition of Slavery was tabled in Parliament in May 1833. Wilberforce died three days after Parliament passed the Bill, in July 1833.

6 THE REBELLION OF SAINT-DOMINGUE, THE RESTORATION OF SLAVERY AND THE BIRTH OF HAITI

Rebellion and repression

Saint-Domingue, a rich French colony inhabited by 500,000 slaves, saw a succession of rebellions in the eighteenth century up to that which broke out in the night of 22 to 23 August 1791. That vast movement imposed the abolition of slavery locally, in 1793, and the confirmation there of in Paris by the revolutionary Convention of 4 February 1794. That first French abolition, under the pressure of revolt and threats of invasion of the colony by Great Britain and Spain, was soon followed, eight years later, by the re-establishment of slavery by decree of Napoleon Bonaparte on 20 May 1802.

Colonial war in Guadeloupe and Saint-Domingue (Haiti)

While Toussaint Louverture, appointed general in charge of the army of Saint-Domingue, decreed a constitution in 1801, Napoleon Bonaparte, in reaction to that advance towards autonomous power in the colony, decided to restore French authority. He dispatched two military expeditions to the Caribbean, one to Guadeloupe and the other to Saint-Domingue. They conducted a colonial war there and engaged in unprecedented repression against the freed slaves, whose watchword of “Freedom or death” spread throughout the Caribbean.

In Guadeloupe, slavery was re-established in 1802 at the cost of a ferocious campaign to hunt down the “rebels”. In Saint-Domingue, Toussaint Louverture was captured in 1802 and transferred to France. Imprisoned at Fort de Joux in the Jura, he died on 7 April 1803. The war continued in Saint-Domingue up to the end of 1803 with the defeat of the French troops and a death toll of 50,000. Slavery was not re-established there.

Repercussions and influence of the Haitian Revolution

After the proclamation of the independence of Saint-Domingue under the name of Haiti on 1 January 1804, the repercussions of those events spread throughout the Americas for over a century. Uprisings of slaves echoing the watchwords of the Haitian rebels took place in the United States of America in the Caribbean islands and in South America.

Everywhere, up to the early twentieth century, the French, British, Spanish, Dutch, Danish and Portuguese authorities were afraid of the influence of Haitian “agents” coming to stir the slaves of their colonies to revolt.

Another consequence of those events was economic. The fall in sugar production in Saint-Domingue caused it to boom in Cuba, whence many plantation owners had emigrated – as well as to Louisiana – with their workshops of slaves.

SAINT-DOMINGUE/HAITI

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Further information and themes for thought

There were several kinds of conflict in the Caribbean and American colonies. A long period of territorial conquest pitted the European powers against each other in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Only from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries did colonial possessions become stable. Until then they were marked by conflicts to gain or defend ownership of the islands, and by troop expeditions to put down disturbances and wage war against the Caribs and the Negro maroons.

Two major conflicts occurred in 1802-1803 in the French colonies of Guadeloupe and Saint-Domingue. Napoleon Bonaparte dispatched two powerful military expeditions to reinstate slavery and colonial order. The cruel repression that took place in Guadeloupe caused thousands of deaths and slavery was re-established. Conversely, the colonial war in Saint-Domingue was a failure for the French troops, and ended with the independence of Saint-Domingue some months after Toussaint Louverture had died imprisoned in Fort de Joux in France.

❶ The burning of Cap Français, 21 june 1793 ❷ War in Saint-Domingue ❸ Guillaume Guillon-Lethière, « The Oath of the Elders », 1822. Symbol of the alliance between Alexandre Petion and Jean-Jacques Dessalines, a lieutenant of Toussaint Louverture in 1802 to throw back the French troops and maintain the abolition of slavery. This artwork was offered to Haiti in 1823 by its author, a Guadeloupe-born painter. Restored in Paris in 1998 (Museums of France), it was exposed at the Louvre museum, at Unesco and in Guadeloupe, before joining back the National Museum of Haiti.

Text of the first decree of abolition in Saint-Domingue, 29 August 1793 :
"In the name of the French Republic. Proclamation.
We Léger-Félicité Sonthonax, Commissioner of the Republic, delegate to the French Leeward Islands of America, to restore order and public calm there. Men are born and remain free and equal in rights: that, citizens, is the Gospel of France: it is high time for it to be proclaimed in all departments of the Republic. Sent by the Nation as civil commissioners to Saint-Domingue, our mission was to have the law of 4 April executed there, to have it reign in its full force and to prepare gradually, without wrench or upheaval, for the general freeing of the slaves. The French Republic desires liberty and equality among all men regardless of colour. (...) However, do not think that the liberty which you will enjoy is a state of indolence or idleness. In France, everyone is free and everyone works. In Saint-Domingue, submitted to the same laws, you will follow the same example. Liberty changes you from nothing to being: show yourselves worthy of it foreswear indolence and brigandage for ever; have the courage to wish to be a people and you will soon equal the European nations. (...)
Have ordered and order the following to be executed in the North province
Article 1: The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen shall be printed, published and displayed, wherever need may be, in towns and boroughs by the care of municipalities, and in camps and posts by that of military commanders.

Article 2: All Negroes and mixed-bloods now in slavery are declared free to enjoy all the rights attached to the quality of French citizen; they shall, however, be subject to a system the provisions of which are contained in the following articles. (...)

Article 9: The Negroes presently attached to the plantations of their former Masters shall be obliged to remain there: they shall be employed in cultivating the land. (...)

Article 11: The former land-working slaves shall be engaged for one year, during which time they may change plantation only with permission of the justices of the peace. (...)

Article 12: The revenues of each plantation shall be divided into three equal portions, after deduction of taxes which shall be levied on the totality. One third remains allocated to the ownership of the land and shall belong to the owner; he shall have the enjoyment of another third for the costs of enhancement; the remaining third shall be divided among the land-workers in the manner which shall be fixed. (...)

Article 27: Correction by the whip is absolutely prohibited: it shall be replaced for offences against discipline by the bar for one, two or three days, as the case shall require. The heaviest punishment shall be the loss of a part or the whole of the wages. (...)

Article 38: The provisions of the Black Code remain provisionally abrogated.
The present proclamation shall be printed and displayed wherever need may be. It shall be proclaimed at the crossroads and public places of towns and boroughs of the North province, by municipal officers wearing sashes, preceded by the Liberty Bonnet carried atop a pike.
We order the intermediary commission, the administrative and judiciary bodies to have it transcribed on their registers, published and displayed. We order every military commander to assist fully in its execution.
At Le Cap, 29th August 1793, Year Two of the French Republic.
Sonthonax »

TOUSSAINT LOUVERTURE (c.1743-1803)

Born a slave on the Bréda plantation in the French colony of Saint-Domingue, François Dominique Toussaint worked as a coachman there. He was freed in 1776 by the Comte de Noé, having learnt to read and write. In 1791 he joined the uprising that the slaves had just started with the revolt of the night of 22-23 August, and moved to the Spanish part of the Island. After abolition, he returned to the French part, became a division General and then, in 1797, Governor of the Colony. At the head of an army of former slaves of which he was, within the French army, the General-in-Chief, he became Governor-General of Saint-Domingue in 1799. After annexing the Spanish part of the island, in 1801 he published a constitution of the colony which gave it autonomous status. He drew up a forced labour regulation and had himself proclaimed Governor for life by the local assembly.
Napoleon Bonaparte's reaction was to send a powerful military expedition charged with restoring French colonial order and slavery. The troops commanded by General Leclerc waged a full-scale colonial war in Saint-Domingue. Toussaint Louverture was captured in June 1802 and taken to France where he died in Fort de Joux, in the Jura Mountains, on 7 April 1803.

7-1 THE CENTURY OF EMANCIPATION
The procedures

Various modes of elimination of slavery

After the 1793 abolition in Saint-Domingue, where the slaves imposed their freedom by the scale of their rebellion, three main forms of eliminating slavery were used.

In 1833 the British voted for gradual abolition, obliging the slaves to serve a four-year apprenticeship with their former masters and compensating the planters so dispossessed.

The French decree of 1848 introducing "immediate" abolition, without any apprenticeship, also provided for compensation for the planters and gave the former slaves the right to vote.

In the Spanish colonies, where the Moret law providing for gradual abolition as of 1870 was applied, the conflicts between some colonies and the Spanish monarchy gave rise to promises of freedom for slaves enlisting in the local armies. Such was the case for instance in South America in the time of Simón Bolívar and during the Ten-Year War in Cuba (1868-1878). The gradual Spanish abolition was nevertheless applied to Puerto Rico in 1873 and to Cuba between 1880 and 1886 (see chronology).

End of slavery in the United States

In the United States, where the industrializing northern states voted to end slavery as of the late eighteenth century, the abolitionist movement which succeeded the first engagements of the Quakers emerged in the 1830s.

The *Underground Railroad* organization, to which such a woman as Harriet Tubman devoted her energy, helped fugitive slaves from the south to reach the northern states and Canada.

In 1854 the Republican Party included the abolition of slavery in its programme. In 1865 President Abraham Lincoln, in the wake of the Civil War, extended the measure to the entire Union through the 13th Amendment to the Constitution.

The same period saw the birth of the Ku Klux Klan in Tennessee, which refused the freed slaves any rights. A century of segregation followed abolition.

7-2 THE CENTURY OF EMANCIPATION
Consequences of abolition

Order and production

The emancipation decrees all contained measures for maintaining order and work in the colonies where the slave-holding structure had disappeared. The planters' lobbies made representations to central governments, obtaining the dispatch of troops and financial and commercial concessions.

A policy of social control was drawn up in all colonies. The "new freemen" were put under constant surveillance and their movements and employment subjected to the supervision and authorization of the planters and mayors. A far-reaching social crisis affected these territories, where paid work took years to become properly organized.

In colonies like Cuba or the French possessions, a process of industrialization and intensification of sugar production developed, establishing the fragile vocation of single-crop farming for the small islands.

Calls for a new underpaid workforce

In all the colonies of the Caribbean and South America, the call went out following the abolition of slavery for contract labour brought in from Africa, India, Indonesia, Malaya, Indo-China, China and Europe. Ships loaded with Indonesian workers docked in the Dutch Caribbean colonies up to 1933. Their pay was often a quarter of the legal wage. While their contracts offered the possibility of a return home after their period of engagement, scarcely 10% of them went back to their countries of origin. Their living and working conditions were, as of the nineteenth century, described by many observers as a "second slavery".

Repression of slavery and colonization

The antislavery movement in Europe, did not disappear with the abolition decrees. The British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, forerunner of the present Anti-Slavery International, drew up a report annually on the remnants of slavery in the world. In Africa the struggle against slavery and bondage, or against arms trafficking, was very often linked to the colonization of the continent in the late nineteenth century. The British and French Christian missions did much to bolster that process in the second half of the nineteenth century, with the action of such figures as David Livingstone and Charles Lavigerie. In parallel, the Paris, London and Brussels antislavery congresses were held.

Trafficking in persons and bondage subsist

Trafficking in and the enslavement of human beings did not cease at the end of the nineteenth century. They changed and took different forms. The networks grew in number and became ever more complex and hard to identify and curb.

The international organizations established in the twentieth century all drew up conventions to combat “contemporary” or “modern” forms of human trafficking and bondage.

THE CENTURY OF ABOLITION

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Further information and themes for thought

The nineteenth century was one of abolition of slavery in the Americas, ushered in by the slaves' rebellion in Saint-Domingue in 1791, the local abolition in 1793 and its confirmation by the Convention in Paris on 4 February 1794.

After slavery was re-established by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802, and Saint-Domingue had become independent as Haiti, there followed the British (1833), Swedish (1847), French (1848), Danish (1848), Dutch (1863) and Spanish (1870) decrees of abolition, the application of the last to Puerto Rico (1873), then to Cuba (1886) and then abolition in Brazil (1888).

The granting of freedom took several forms: immediate abolition (Haiti and the French colonies), gradual abolition (British colonies and Spanish colonies applying the Moret law), and abolition in exchange for engagement in the armies of liberation against the Spanish crown (Cuba and South America – see the timeline in the Booklet).

In the British and French colonies, the colonists were given a substantial compensation on being deprived of their slaves. The slaves, on the other hand, received no compensation in land or money.

❶ « Liberty travelling round the world », France, 1848 ❷ North American poster: "Emancipation" United States, 1865

Cyrille BISSETTE (1795-1858)

Born in Saint-Pierre, Martinique, Cyrille Charles Auguste Bissette was subjected to a series of famous political trials between 1823 and 1827 on charges of having distributed in the colony in 1823 a brochure entitled *De la situation des gens de couleur libres aux Antilles françaises [The situation of free people of colour in the French Antilles].* Together with his fellow accused, he was sentenced to forced labour, branded and imprisoned in the fort of Brest. Banned from the French colonies, he settled in Paris where, in 1832, he founded a Society of Men of Colour, and then, in 1834, the famous *Revue des Colonies [Review of the Colonies],* a quarterly which was published until 1843. He used it to advocate, in a manner completely new to France, the full and immediate abolition of slavery in the French colonies. He came across Victor Schoelcher as of 1842, when he published an acerbic critique of the latter's work *Colonies étrangères et Haïti [Foreign colonies and Haiti].* This gave rise to a constant rivalry between the two, with Schoelcher being upset by Bissette's work and commitment to abolitionism. Campaigning in Guadeloupe and Martinique as a candidate at the legislative elections of 1848-1849, he inspired the establishment of a "bissettist" party, opposed to the "schoelcherists", and was elected representative of Martinique in 1849. Wishing to show his contemporaries the reality of slavery, he regularly published scenes of work and punishment of slaves in Guadeloupe and Martinique.

Victor SCHŒLCHER (1804-1893)

Victor Schoelcher was born to a porcelain-making family in Paris, and studied briefly before leaving for Mexico in 1828-1829 as commercial representative for his family's business. On this first journey to the Americas, he discovered slavery in the United States of America, Cuba and Central America, and he published his first articles on the subject then. A second journey to the Caribbean in 1840-1841 allowed him to study the survival of slavery in the French, Dutch and Spanish colonies, as well as the workings of freedom in the British colonies and Haiti. Returning to Europe, he published such works as Des colonies françaises. Abolition immédiate de l'esclavage [The French colonies: immediate abolition of slavery] (1842), Colonies étrangères et Haïti [Foreign colonies and Haiti] (1842-1843) and Histoire de l'esclavage pendant les deux dernières années [History of slavery in the last two years] (1847), which remain outstanding testimonies to the slavery system and the organization of freedom.

Appointed by the Provisional Government of 1848 as Under-Secretary of State for the Navy with responsibility for the Colonies, Chairman of the Commission for the Abolition of Slavery which drafted the abolition decree of 27 April 1848, he was elected representative of Martinique in the same year.
Exiled to London during the Second Empire, he resumed his colonial activities on returning in 1870 and in 1871 he was re-elected representative of Martinique in the National Assembly, where he sat with the extreme left, and then became senator for life.
He produced a virulent critique of post-1848 colonial policy and championed the principle of colonial assimilation and expansion in Africa, India and Indochina by means of the ballot paper, education and military conscription.

William Lloyd GARRISON (1805-1879)

Born in Massachusetts in 1805, William Lloyd Garrison first sold lemonade and delivered wood to help his family after his father had left home. Apprenticed in a print-shop at the age of 14, he soon wrote his first articles and then founded a newspaper. In 1828 he was writing in the Boston *National Philanthropist* and he joined the movement for the abolition of slavery in 1830. He then became the co-editor, with Benjamin Lundy, of the Quaker journal *The Genius of Universal Emancipation,* published in Baltimore. He soon became convinced that slavery must be abolished immediately rather than gradually, as advocated by Lundy or the brothers Arthur and Lewis Tappan. In *The Genius* Garrison regularly published "The Black List", in which he reported the punishments and ill-treatments inflicted on slaves in the Southern States. In 1832 he founded the New England Antislavery Society and he helped to establish the American Antislavery Society in 1832. In 1831 he had founded his own newspaper, *The Liberator,* in New England, which became a reference-point for the North American abolitionist movement until the adoption of the Thirteen Amendment to the Constitution of the United States which, in late 1865, recognized the abolition of slavery.

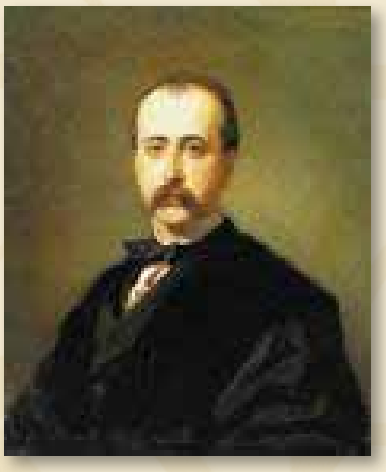
Harriet TUBMAN (c.1820-1913)

Born a slave around 1820 in the county of Dorchester, Maryland, in the United States, Araminta Ross married John Tubman, a free Black, around 1844. Bearing her husband's name, she borrowed her mother's first name. In 1849 Harriet Tubman decided to flee the plantation to which she belonged, leaving behind her husband and brothers. She was helped to reach the North by the Underground Railroad. Although sought by the planters, she subsequently contributed actively to this network of assistance and refuge which helped slaves to escape to the Northern United States of America and Canada. She made several round trips from North to South, saving more than 300 slaves. A militant for the abolition of slavery, she gave many lectures in the northern states and then worked for the Union Army during the Civil War. She published her autobiography, *Harriet Tubman, the Moses of her People,* in 1839, before transforming her house in Auburn (New York State) into a refuge for indigent and old people. She died there on 10 March 1913.

Sojourner TRUTH (c.1797-1883)

Isabella Baumfree was born a slave in Swartekill, New York State. At the age of nine she was sold to a particularly cruel master, and then sold to two other owners before fleeing in 1826 with one of her children, her daughter Sophia. She brought a case for maltreatment and illegal sale against the owner of her son, Peter, which she won. In 1843 she changed her name to Sojourner Truth, became a Methodist and joined the Association of Education and Industry in Massachusetts, which advocated women's rights and religious tolerance. She notably met there Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison who in 1850 published her book, *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth: A Northern Slave.* The same year she attended the National Women's Rights Convention and subsequently, in 1851, she delivered a noted speech in Akron, Ohio, which is still famous under the title "Ain't I a Woman?" Her social and political commitment related to the fight against slavery, for women's rights, for prison reform and against capital punishment.

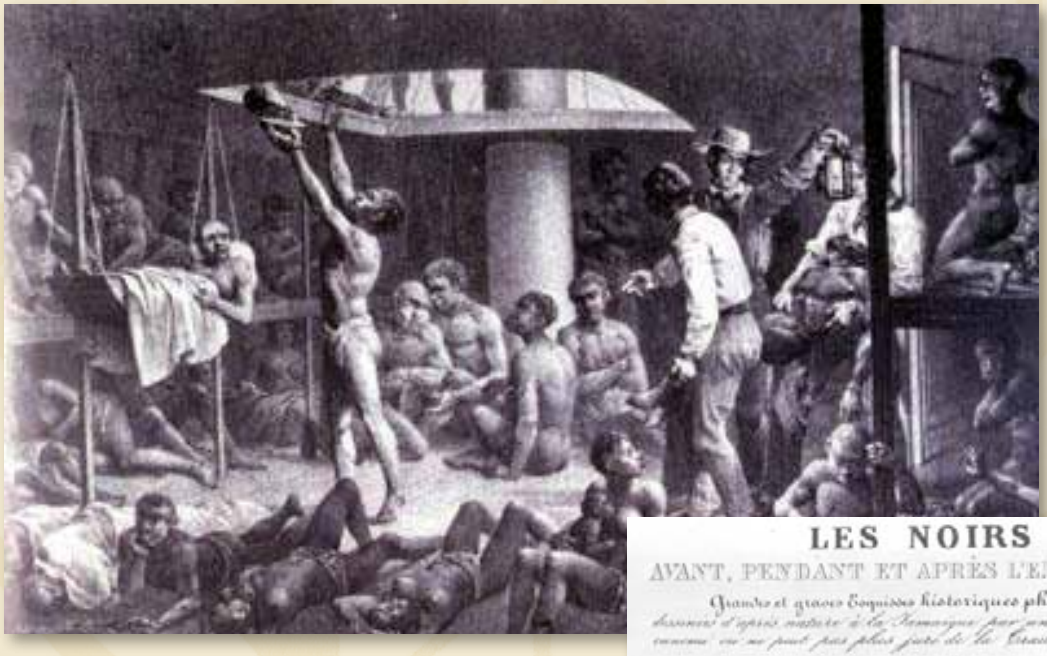
During the Civil War Sojourner Truth helped to recruit black troops for the Union Army and in 1864 she gave her support to the National Freedman's Relief Association, which set itself the task of helping the African Americans of the United States.



Segismundo MORET (1833-1913)

Segismundo Moret y Prendergast, born in Cadiz in 1833, became a professor of political economy before turning to politics and being elected as a representative to the Cortès in 1863 and again in 1868. Appointed Minister of Overseas Colonies in General Prim's government in 1870, he successfully sponsored a gradual abolition of slavery that was applied to Puerto Rico in 1873 and to Cuba between 1880 and 1886. This measure, which took account of the pressure of slave rebellions and the opposition of Cuban colonists, provided for the slaves to achieve freedom slowly, notably as a function of their age. In 1897 he proposed autonomy for Cuba and Puerto Rico to prevent them from becoming independent. He was twice Prime Minister of Spain, in 1905 and 1909.

The struggle against the illegal slave trade



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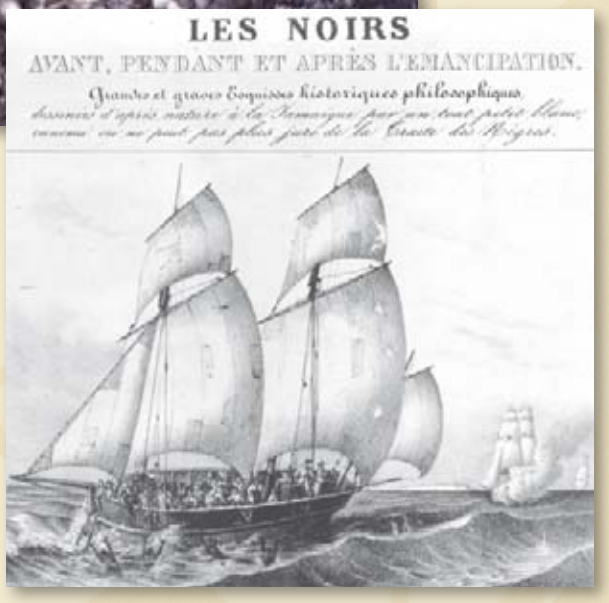

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Further information and themes for thought

In 1807 Britain and the United States of America forbad their ships to take part in the slave trade. Until abolition in 1865, the latter received slaves transported by Portuguese, Spanish or French ships. In 1815, the European powers gathered at the Congress of Vienna undertook to ban the slave trade, each being required to draw up the legislation it thought most expedient.

The British set up surveillance and repression patrols off the West African coasts in the first half of the nineteenth century. They intercepted only 4% of slave ships, although the conditions of the Middle Passage became increasingly difficult.

❶ "Negroes in the hold", by Johann-Moritz Rugendas, 1835 ❷ Ship throwing captives overboard

THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY ANTISLAVERY MOVEMENT

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Further information and themes for thought

The prevention of human trafficking, slavery and the arms trade was among the objectives set for the West in the late nineteenth century at the Berlin Conference in 1884-1885 and subsequently at the Paris and Brussels antislavery conferences in 1889 and 1890. It served to justify many territorial conquests and the penetration of the African continent.

❶ Young slaves at Zanzibar, end of XIXth century ❷ Slave shackle, Africa XIXth century ❸ The Antislavery Congress at the French Geographical Society, end of the XIXth century

POST-ABOLITION LABOUR MIGRATION TO THE CARIBBEAN

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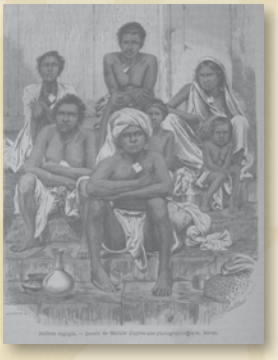

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Further information and themes for thought

Between the 1820s and the start of the 1930s, free workers from Africa, Madagascar, India, China, Indochina, Malaysia, Indonesia or Japan, recruited on contracts, signed up for the Caribbean colonies.

Boarding ship without really knowing where they were going or the living and working conditions waiting for them, on ships with up to 800 passengers, they left for a period of five to eight years, for irregularly paid wages that were often four times lower than the legal wages.

Barely 10% of them were able to return home when their contracts expired. Their working conditions and the social status granted them were often described as a "second slavery". The French abolitionist Victor Schœlcher wrote this about the immigrant contract workers recruited in India for the French Caribbean colonies:
"The present-day immigrant is not a man with civil rights. He is reduced to the condition of a minor who can do nothing by himself.
Ill-fed, ill-clothed, mistreated, beaten, he has no right to complain to the courts. Frankly, what difference is there between a slave and an employee of this kind?"
Extract from *"L'immigration aux colonies [Immigration to the colonies]"*, in *Le Moniteur des Colonies,* Paris, 7 June 1885.

❶ Indian Coolies arriving in Guadeloupe ❷ Indian immigrants ❸ Chinese immigrants in Guadeloupe

8-1 CONTEMPORARY BONDAGE

Avoiding generalizations

As a first necessary clarification, there is no longer today any slavery system equivalent to that which developed in the Caribbean and the American continent between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. There is no longer today any mass-scale, legal deportation of human beings from one continent to another nor any such mass enslavement in order to sustain such a system. But the number of "modern" slaves is higher than ever. The economic networks exploiting them are ever more complex.

Each international organization, in the twentieth century, issued its definition of slavery extending it to several practices of enslavement and trafficking in human beings.

Quantitative estimates

The British organization Anti-Slavery International estimates that there are at present 27 million adults in the world who are subjected to so-called traditional slavery.

The International Labour Office and UNICEF put at between 250 and 300 million the number of children and adolescents, aged from 5 to 17 years, who today work in conditions comparable to slavery as it was still practised in the nineteenth century.

Location and factors of contemporary bondage

Economic hardship, a context of war, even minimal family indebtedness, and the consequent vulnerability are today the essential causes of human trafficking and enslavement.

Debt bondage is particularly widespread in South Asia, India, Pakistan (despite the 1992 ban), Africa and Indonesia. In South America, the enganche affects the miners of Peru and obtains in the Brazilian Amazon region. The peonage system attaches the tenant farmers or share-croppers to their land.

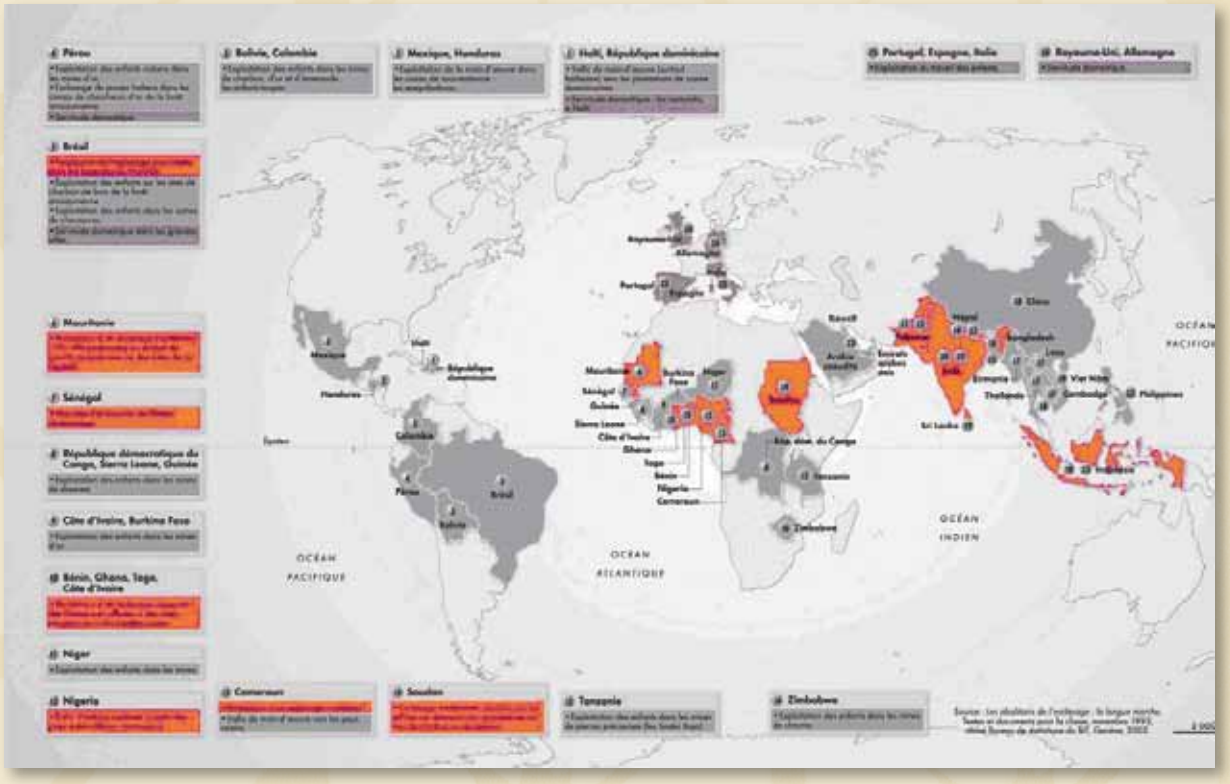
In the Dominican Republic, more than 500,000 Haitians work in near-slavery conditions as braceros on the sugar-cane plantations.

The Sudanese context of conflict aggravates the phenomena of population displacements and enslavement.

Forced migrations of women and children are particularly frequent towards the Middle East and from eastern to western Europe.

Such trafficking also concerns the Mexicans and Peruvians who work on the plantations of the southern United States or become hawkers.

PRESENT-DAY SLAVERY



World Map of Contemporary Slavery, taken from Oruno D. Lara and Nelly Schmidt, *Les abolitions de l'esclavage. La longue marche [Abolitions of slavery: the long march], in the Textes et Documents pour la Classe [Classroom Texts and Documents]* collection, Paris, Centre National de Documentation Pédagogique, November 1993, re-edited and supplemented on the basis of statistics from the International Labour Office (Geneva, 2002) for publication in the *Atlas des esclavages [Atlas of slavery],* Paris, Autrement, 2006.

8-2 THE INTERNATIONAL ANTISLAVERY CONVENTIONS OF THE TWENTIETH AND TWENTY-FIRST CENTURIES

The League of Nations

After the Berlin and Brussels Congresses, which in the late nineteenth century combined steps to counter human trafficking and bondage on the one hand with, on the other, the advance of European colonization in Africa, the first definition of slavery drawn up by an international body was published by the League of Nations, which issued a convention on 25 September 1926. It condemned the ownership, capture, purchase or sale of an individual and "every act of trade or transport in slaves". The International Labour Office was established for the purpose, in particular, of opposing forced labour and the remnants of slavery.

International Labour Organization

Convention No. 29 of the International Labour Organization defined forced labour, in 1930, as "all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily". ILO abolished forced labour in 1957 (Convention No. 105).

The United Nations

In 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, stated that "No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms" (Art. 4).

In 1949, the United Nations Economic and Social Council established an Ad Hoc Committee on Slavery. By a Convention complementary to that of 1926, the United Nations took account, in 1956, of a whole body of "servile conditions" and "practices similar to slavery": debt bondage, serfdom, forced marriage of women, sale of a woman to a third party, her transmission by succession, and the sale of children or of their labour.

In 1974, the United Nations set up in Geneva a Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery under the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The social

practices liable to be termed slavery were extended to include apartheid, colonialism and the exploitation of drug addicts.

In 1982, the United Nations described as slavery "any form of dealing with human beings leading to the forced exploitation of their labour"
(United Nations, E/CN.4/Sub.2/1982/20/Add. 1, 7 July 1982).

In 1998, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which makes enslavement a crime against humanity, defines it as "the exercise of any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership over a person and includes the exercise of such power in the course of trafficking in persons, in particular women and children".

In 2000, a specific provision on slavery, in the Additional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, makes a criminal offence of "Trafficking in persons […] for the purpose of exploitation", including 'the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs" (Res. 55/25, UNGA, 15 November 2000).

The European Commission

In 2000, the European Commission opted in favour of economic sanctions against countries in which serious violations of human rights were observed, notably child labour.

8-3 CHILD BONDAGE

The "worst forms" of labour

November 2000 saw the entry into force of the ILO Convention (No. 182) on "the elimination of the worst forms of child labour" – which covers slavery, war, prostitution and drug trafficking – together with the United Nations protocol punishing traffic in women and children.

ILO estimates that one child out of eight, in the world, is today subjected to these "worst forms of labour". Child bondage is widespread, particularly in Africa (with nearly 100 million children under 14 working and suffering a high death rate), in India, in South and South-East Asia, and in Central and South America. Children are left with the drudgery in agriculture, industry, low-paid manual work in the construction, industry, the manufacture of bricks, balls and carpets, and quarrying and mining. In Haiti, over 100,000 young children from poor families, *the restavek,* are exploited as domestics. Prostitution networks make use of displaced children, and other networks use them as soldiers. About 300,000 children are said to be involved in some 30 conflicts in the world.

Child labour also exists in Western countries with high living standards, within family businesses, on large plantations, in some factories and in domestic service.

9 BREAKING THE SILENCE

Common circumstances

Poverty, a context of conflict, transplantation far from home, maintained isolation, the youth of the victims, economic exploitation, forced labour, the fact of no pay for the work and no recognition of social rights, physical and mental violence, and the law of silence observed on these phenomena are essential common factors in the slavery of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries and in contemporary bondage.

Watchdog bodies

According to Anti-Slavery International, the term slavery can today be applied to the following situations: "A slave is: forced to work – through mental or physical threat; owned or controlled by an 'employer', usually through mental or physical abuse or threatened abuse; dehumanized, treated as a commodity or bought and sold as 'property'; physically constrained or has restrictions placed on his/her freedom of movement."

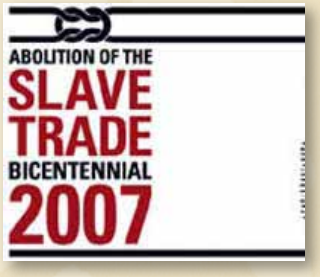
Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International issue reports and location material for all bondage phenomena.

In 2003, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights published a summary of the information available and recommendations made by the international entities concerned with the matter, on the subject of contemporary bondage.

10 FOR COMMEMORATION

A few international commemoration dates have been established by the United Nations:

> **25 MARCH:** International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, decided on following the resolution of 28 November 2006 entitled "Commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade" (1807-2007).



> **23 AUGUST:** International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition, commemorating the start of the rebellion of the slaves of Saint-Domingue (Haiti) in the night of 22-23 August 1791 which led to the 1793 abolition in Saint-Domingue, upheld by the Convention assembly in Paris on 4 February 1794.

> **2 DECEMBER:** International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, commemorating the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly, on 2 December 1949, of the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.

> **THE YEAR 2004:** The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2004, the year of the two-hundredth anniversary of Haiti, International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition.

> **THE YEAR 2007:** Bicentennial of the Abolition of the transatlantic Slave Trade by United Kingdom.

> **THE YEAR 2008:** Bicentennial of the Abolition of the transatlantic Slave Trade by the United States of America.

> **THE YEAR 2011:** International Year for People of African Descent, adopted by the UN General Assembly (A/RES/64/169) of 20th November 2009.

11 SLAVES' TESTIMONY

Further information and themes for thought

The most numerous and decisive protagonists in this story, the slaves, were reduced to silence by their very status and its rigors. For example, at least until the first phase of abolition in the mid nineteenth century, they were forbidden to testify at trials in which they were involved. They were also forbidden to learn to read and write. In effect, their enslavement deprived them of any means of expression.

Some none the less left writings or oral evidence that has been transcribed. This was the case, for example, of Olaudah Equiano in the late eighteenth century, of Frederick Douglass, Anthony Burns, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth or Harriet Jacobs in the nineteenth century or of the Cuban Esteban Montejo more recently.

While these were authentic testimonies, dozens of other writings were, conversely, drafted with the assistance of antislavery committees or quite simply composed by them. These were therefore abolitionist propaganda pieces. The intention was indeed praiseworthy, but the documents lost considerable authenticity.

In the 1930s, a Works Progress Administration programme in the United States of America, established under the New Deal Agency, supported a campaign of recordings of former slaves' recollections. Of course, the interviewees had only known slavery in their childhood, but they also knew stories about the final years of slavery told by their immediate circle. These recordings, transcribed and preserved at the Library of Congress, now constitute outstanding sources.

Olaudah EQUIANO (c.1745-1797)

In 1789 a book was published entitled *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African.* This was one of many testimonies by slaves that were published in England in the late eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth. The author relates his childhood, capture, sale and Atlantic crossing in a slave ship, and his life as a slave and subsequently as a free man.

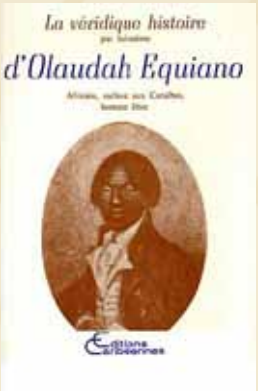
This son of an African chief appears to have started life in Guinea, where he was born around 1745. He was reportedly kidnapped at the age of 11, together with his sisters, by slave hunters.

He was sold in 1754 to a Royal Navy officer who named him Gustavus Vassa, after a Swedish nobleman who fought for his country's independence from Denmark in the sixteenth century. He learned to read and write in a London school and followed his master to several parts of the world during the Seven Years' War - Canada, the Mediterranean – as an employee in the naval artillery. He was then sold to another navy captain who took him to Montserrat Island in the Caribbean, where he was sold on to a Quaker, Robert King. Employed to supervise production in the plantation, he bore witness to the slaves' toil in the sugar cane plantations and the punishments inflicted on them. Three years later, in 1766, he bought his freedom.

After a journey in the Caribbean, in 1773 he accompanied a British exploratory expedition to the North Pole looking for a passage to India. On returning to London, Equiano became involved, together with Granville Sharp in the campaign to abolish the slave trade and slavery. In 1775 he left again for the Caribbean, where he set up a plantation on the Caribbean coast of Central America (probably in present-day Nicaragua). Of this episode, he said that he had tried to improve the living conditions of the slaves bought for the plantation. Returning to London, he became involved in implementing the British abolitionists' project to found a colony in Sierra Leone.

His biography was published in the middle of the campaign to ban the slave trade as one of 100 or so other works of this type, including the testimonies by Ignatius Sancho and by Quobna Ottobah Cugoano. His book's success enabled Equiano to marry in 1792 and to leave a comfortable inheritance to his daughter when he died in March 1797.

Extract from *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African,* 1789:



"Thus I continued to travel, sometimes by land, sometimes by water, through different countries and various nations, till, at the end of six or seven months after I had been kidnapped, I arrived at the sea coast. (…)

The first object which saluted my eyes when I arrived on the coast was the sea, and a slave ship, which was then riding at anchor, and waiting for its cargo. These filled me with astonishment, which was soon converted into terror when I was carried on board.

I was immediately handled and tossed up to see if I were sound by some of the crew; and I was now persuaded that I had come into a world of bad spirits, and that they were going to kill me.

Their complexions, too, differing so much from ours, their long hair, and the language they spoke (which was very different from any I had ever heard), united to confirm me in this belief. Indeed such were the horrors of my views and fears at the moment, that, if ten thousand worlds had been my own I would have freely parted with them all to have

exchanged my condition with that of the meanest slave in my own country.

When I looked round the ship too and saw a large furnace or copper boiling, and a multitude of black people of every description chained together, everyone of their countenances expressing dejection and sorrow, I no longer doubted of my fate; and quite overpowered with horror and anguish, I fell motionless on the deck and fainted. When I recovered a little I found some black people about me, who I believed were some of those who brought me on board, and had been receiving their pay; they talked to me in order to cheer me, but all in vain.

I asked them if we were not to be eaten by those white men with horrible looks, red faces, and loose hair.

They told me I was not; and one of the crew brought me a small portion of spirituous liquor in a wine glass; but, being afraid of him, I would not take it out of his hand. One of the blacks therefore took it from him and gave it to me, and I took a little down my palate, which, instead of reviving me, as they thought it would, threw me into the greatest consternation at the strange feeling it produced having never tasted any such liquor before.

Soon after this the blacks who brought me on board went off, and left me abandoned to despair.

I now saw myself deprived of all chance of returning to my native country, or even the least glimpse of hope of gaining the shore which I now considered as friendly; and I even wished for my former slavery in preference to my present situation, which was filled with horrors of every kind, still heightened by my ignorance of what I was to undergo. I was not long suffered to indulge my grief; I was soon put down under the decks, and there I received such a salutation in my nostrils as I had never experienced in my life: so that, with the loathsomeness of the stench and crying together, I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat, nor had I the least desire to taste anything. I now wished for the last friend, death, to relieve me ...”

Frederick DOUGLASS (c.1817-1895)

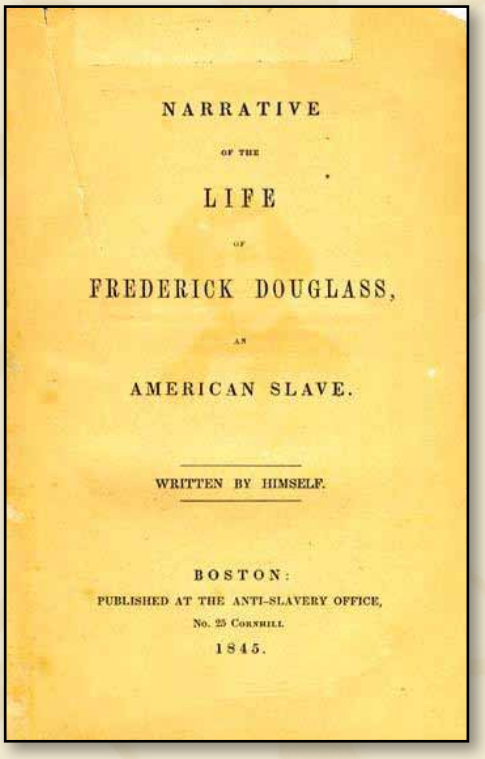
Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey was born in Maryland in the United States of America in 1817 and was placed at the age of eight with masters in Baltimore. He ran away in 1838 and settled in Massachusetts. An active member of the antislavery movement, he became one of the principal Black American abolitionist leaders in that State. Inspired by the arguments propounded by William Lloyd Garrison, in 1843 he decided to travel

through the United States of America speaking at antislavery conventions organized by the American Antislavery Society.

After spending two years in Ireland and England for fear of reprisals by his former owner, he returned to the United States of America and settled in Rochester, New York State, from where he actively assisted the Underground Railroad network. Founder of the journal *The North Star,* he became a diplomat after the Civil War and the abolition of slavery. He became Marshal of the District of Columbia in 1877 and was appointed Consul of the United States of America to Haiti in 1889.

His fight for the end of slavery was the most consistent and famous. He also championed recognition of women's rights and enfranchisement. In 1845 he published the story of his life as a slave and his flight to freedom under the title *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave.* In 1855 he published *My Bondage and My Freedom* and, in 1881, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass.*

Extract from ***Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave,*** **1845** ***:***


NARRATIVE

OF THE

LIFE

OF

FREDERICK DOUGLASS,

AN

AMERICAN SLAVE.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

BOSTON:

PUBLISHED AT THE ANTI-SLAVERY OFFICE,

No. 25 Cornhill

1845.

"I never saw my mother, to know her as such, more than four or five times in my life; and each of these times was very short in duration, and at night. She was hired by a Mr Stewart, who lived about twelve miles from my home. She made her journeys to me in the night, travelling the whole distance on foot, after the performance of her day's work. (...) I do not recollect of ever seeing my mother by the light of day. She was with me in the night. She would lie down with me, and get me to sleep, but long before I waked she was gone. (...) Death soon ended what little we could have while she lived, and with it her hardships and suffering. (...)

Very soon after I went to live with Mr and Mrs Auld, she very kindly commenced to teach me the A,B,C. After I had learned this, she assisted me in learning to spell words of three or four letters. Just at this point of my progress, Mr Auld found out what was going on, and at once forbade Mrs Auld to instruct me further, telling her, among other things, that it was unlawful, as well as unsafe, to teach a slave to read. To use his own words, further, he said: "If you give a nigger an inch, he will take an ell. A nigger should know nothing but to obey his master – to do as he is told to do. Learning would spoil the best nigger in the world. Now," said he, "if you teach that nigger (speaking of myself) how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit him to be a slave. He would become at once unmanageable, and of no value to his master. As to himself, it could do him no good, but a great deal of harm. It would make him discontented

and unhappy." These words sank deep into my heart, stirred up sentiments within that lay slumbering, and called into existence an entirely new train of thought. It was a new and special revelation, explaining dark and mysterious things, with which my youthful understanding had struggled, but struggled in vain."

Esteban MONTEJO (1860-1973)

Esteban Montejo was born a slave in Cuba in 1860. He lived and worked on sugar cane plantations, and lived through the period of abolition as a runaway (Cimarrón) and later Cuba's War of Independence against Spain between 1895 and 1898. In 1963, the ethnologist Miguel Barnet studied his history and his testimony, which he published in 1966 under the title *Biografia de un cimarrón [Biography of a maroon].*

Extract from *Biografia de un cimarrón,* published by Miguel Barnet :

"Because of being a runaway I never saw my parents. I never even saw them. But this is not sad, because it is true.
Like all children born into slavery, criollitos as they called them, I was born in an infirmary where they took the pregnant Negresses to give birth. I think it was the Santa Teresa plantation, but I am not sure. I do remember my godparents talking a lot about this plantation and its owners, people called La Ronda. My godparents were called by this name for a long time, till slavery left Cuba.

Negroes were sold like pigs, and they sold me at once, which is why I remember nothing about the place. I know it was somewhere in the region where I was born, in the upper part of Las Villas, Zulueta, Remedios, Caibarién, all the villages before you come to the sea. Then the picture of another plantation comes to mind: the Flor de Sagua. I don't know if that was the place where I worked for the first time, but I do remember running away from there once; I decided I'd had enough of that bloody place, and I was off! But they caught me without a struggle, clapped a pair of shackles on me (I can still feel them when I think back), screwed them up tight and sent me back to work wearing them. You talk about this sort of thing today and people don't believe you, but it happened to me and I have to say so. (…)

All the slaves lived in barracoons. These dwelling places no longer exist, so one cannot see them. But I saw them and I never thought well of them. The masters, of course, said they were as clean as new pins. The slaves disliked living under those conditions: being locked up stifled them. The barracoons were large, though some plantations had smaller ones; it depended on the number of slaves in the settlement. Around two hundred slaves

of all colors lived in the Flor de Sagua barracoon. This was laid out in rows: two rows facing each other with a door in the middle and a massive padlock to shut the slaves in at night. There were barracoons of wood and barracoons of masonry with tiled roofs. Both types had mud floors and were dirty as hell. (…)
The bell was at the entrance to the mill. The deputy overseer used to ring it. At four-thirty in the morning they rang the Ave Maria – I think there were nine strokes of the bell – and one had to get up immediately. At six they rang another bell called the line-up bell, and everyone had to form up in a place just outside the barracoon, men on one side, women the other. Then off to the cane fields till eleven, when we ate jerked beef, vegetables, and bread. Then, at sunset, came the prayer bell. At half-past eight they rang the last bell for everyone to go to sleep, the silence bell.
The deputy overseer slept in the barracoon and kept watch. In the mill town there was a white watchman, a Spaniard, to keep an eye on things. Everything was based on watchfulness and the whip. (…)

I have never forgotten the first time I tried to escape. That time I failed, and I stayed a slave for several years longer from fear of having the shackles put on me again. But I had the spirit of a runaway watching over me, which never left me. And I kept my plans for myself, so that no one could give me away. I thought of nothing else; the idea went round and round in my head and would not leave me in peace; nothing could get rid of it, at times it almost tormented me. The old Negroes did not care for escaping, the women still less. There were few runaways. People were afraid of the forest. They said anyone who ran away was bound to be recaptured. (…)

All my life I have liked the forest, but when slavery ended I stopped being a runaway. I realized from the way the people were cheering and shouting that slavery had ended, and so I came out of the forest. They were shouting, 'We're free now'. But I didn't join in, I thought it might be a lie. I don't know… anyway, I went up to a plantation and let my head appear little by little till I was out in the open. That was while Martinez Campos was Governor, the slaves said that it was he who had freed them. All the same, years passed and there were still slaves in Cuba.

When I left the forest and began walking, I met an old woman carrying two children in her arms. I called to her, and when she came up I asked her, "Tell me, is it true we are no longer slaves?'. She replied, 'No, son, we are free now'. I went on walking the way I was going and began to look for work. Lots of Negroes wanted to be friends with me, and they used to ask me what I had done as a runaway. I told them, 'Nothing'. I have always been one for my independence. Idle gossip never helped anyone. I went for years and years without talking to anyone at all."

12 FOR IMMEDIATE INFORMATION

Several websites offer information on the factual side of human trafficking and enslavement in the world. Others present a historical perspective on these phenomena. They include:

The UNESCO Slave Route Project : http://www.unesco.org/culture/slaveroute

All the folders and texts of international conventions on the site of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (Geneva): http://www.ohchr.org (/law/slavery; /law/abolition; /law/slavetrade; /law/trafficpersons; /law/forcedlabour; /law/protocoltraffic; /law/childlabour).

Anti-Slavery International: http://www.antislavery.org

Human Rights Watch: http://www.hrw.org
http://www.victimes-of-trafficking.org

Amnesty International: http://www.amnesty.org

Comité contre l'Esclavage Moderne (France): http://www.esclavagemoderne.org

UNICEF: http://www.unicef.org

Bureau International du Travail, International Labour Office: http://www.ilo.org

European Commission, Daphne Project – Programme Daphné, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), against modern slavery and human trafficking: http://www.victimes-of-trafficking.org

End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography, and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes, ECPAT: http://www.ecpat.org

CLT/CPD/DIA/2010/154