

## Facts and Figures

- 1562 First English slaving expedition by Sir John Hawkins
- 1619 First recorded cargo of Africans landed in Virginia
- 1625 First English settlement on Barbados
- 1626 First boatload of enslaved Africans to St. Kitts
- 1631 Charles I granted monopoly on Guinea trade to a group of London merchants
- 1655 British capture of Jamaica as part of Cromwell's 'Grand Design'
- 1672 Royal Africa Company granted charter to carry Africans to the Americas
- 1772 Slavery declared illegal in England, Wales & Ireland (the Somerset case)
- 1778 Slavery declared illegal in Scotland
- 1781 Over 100 enslaved Africans thrown overboard from the slave ship Zong
- 1783 Committee on the Slave Trade established by Quakers' Meeting for Sufferings
- 1787 Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade founded: Granville Sharp as president of a mostly Quaker committee
- 1791 23 August - St Domingue (Haiti) slave revolt
- 1792 Resolution for gradual abolition of the slave trade defeated in House of Lords
- 1805 Bill for Abolition passed in Commons, rejected in House of Lords
- 1807 25 March - Slave Trade Abolition Bill passed in the British Parliament
- 1808 US abolished the slave trade
- 1833 Abolition of Slavery British Empire Bill passed, with effect from 1834 and providing for up to six year 'apprentice' transition. £20M voted as compensation to slave owners
- 1838 1 August - enslaved men, women and children in British Empire became free
- 1842 Britain & US signed Webster-Ashburton Treaty, banning slave trade on high seas
- 1848 Emancipation by the French of their slaves
- 1850 The Fugitive Slave Law passed in the United States
- 1865 Slavery finally abolished in United States territories
- 1888 Slavery abolished in Brazil

## The Middle Passage

The Middle Passage was the sailing of slave ships from Africa to the Americas. It is estimated that between nine to 12 million Africans were forced to make this passage. The passage could take anywhere from six weeks to three months. The African captives were considered as 'cargo' and inhumanely packed together below the deck of a ship for most of the journey. The mortality rate for the average journey was 10-15 per cent due to ill treatment, malnutrition and disease. Many Africans rebelled in various ways on the slavers (slave ships). Once the ships arrived at their destination, the surviving Africans were cleaned and prepared for auction.

This is part of a record kept by a Bristol merchant of a cargo list for a ship going to Africa from Bristol in the 18th century.

### *An estimate for a cargo to purchase 250 Negroes at Bonny*

80 rolls of blue chintz cloth	300 muskets black barrels
100 rolls of cotton cloth with fine small stripes (small)	40 pair common large pistols
100 rolls of cotton cloth with fine small stripes (large)	2 tons lead in small bars
100 cotton rolls with red and blue mixed stripes	14 tons iron 1000 copper rods
30 cloths blue and white checked	80 cases bottles of brandy
300 muskets bright barrels	5 cases pipe beads



## Abolition

The case the abolitionists made included:

- The moral argument: slavery is wicked, un-Christian.
- The economic argument: slavery is expensive and inefficient.
- The legal argument: slavery is illegal under British law.
- Problems in the plantations: slaves continued to resist slavery and would not be suppressed.

The campaign to abolish slavery was the first popular peaceful mass protest movement of modern times. Leading white abolitionists were Granville Sharpe, who helped black people fight test cases in the courts; Thomas Clarkson, who collected evidence of the cruelty of the slave trade from all over Britain; William Wilberforce, who fought for legislation in Parliament. They worked with black abolitionist campaigners, such as Olaudah Equiano and Ottobah Cuguano. Mary Prince, a freed slave, wrote an important book about her experiences which helped to influence the eventual abolition of slavery in 1833.

John Wesley's last letter, in 1791, was to William Wilberforce.

*Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But if God be for you, who can be against you? Are all of them together stronger than God? O be not weary of well doing! Go on, in the name of God and in the power of his might, till even American slavery (the vilest that ever saw the sun) shall vanish away before it.*

According to his famous autobiography, written in 1789, Olaudah Equiano (c.1745-1797) was born in what is now Nigeria. Kidnapped and sold into slavery in childhood, he was taken as a slave to the New World. As a slave to a captain in the Royal Navy, and later to a Quaker merchant, he eventually earned the price of his own freedom by careful trading and saving.

*Tortures, murder, and every other imaginable barbarity and iniquity are practised upon the poor slaves with impunity. I hope the slave-trade will be abolished. I pray it may be an event at hand. The great body of manufacturers, uniting in the cause, will considerably facilitate and expedite it; and, as I have already stated, it is most substantially their interest and advantage, and as such the nation's at large. In a short time one sentiment alone will prevail, from motives of interest as well as justice and humanity. Europe contains one hundred and twenty millions of inhabitants. Query. - How many millions doth Africa contain? Supposing the Africans, collectively and individually, to expend £5 a head in raiment and furniture yearly when civilized, &c. an immensity beyond the reach of imagination!*

In *Shanley v Hervey*, March 1762), a court said that:

*"As soon as a man puts foot on English ground, he is free: a Negro may maintain an action against his master for ill usage (modern term, reparations) and may have a Habeas Corpus, if restrained of his liberty."* Three years later, in *Smith v Brown and Cooper* (1765), Chief Justice Holt said *"that as soon as a negro comes into England, he becomes free: one may be a villein [serf] in England, but not a slave."*

On September 9, 1739, twenty black Carolinians led by Jemmy, an Angolan slave, met near the Stono River, twenty miles southwest of Charleston. They marched down the roadway with a banner that read "Liberty!"--they chanted the same word in unison. At the bridge, they seized weapons from a store and killed the two storekeepers. They raised a flag and proceeded towards St. Augustine. On the way, they gathered more recruits, their number now close to 100. They burned the houses of slave owners. South Carolina's Lieutenant Governor, William Bull, and four of his friends ran in to the group on horseback. The Lieutenant Governor fled and warned other slave-holders. They rallied a mob of plantation owners and slave-holders to seek out Jemmy and his freedom-seeking followers.

Late that afternoon, planters on horseback caught up with the group now numbering sixty to one hundred slaves. Twenty white Carolinians and forty of the rebels were killed before the rebellion was suppressed. The captured slaves were then decapitated though some also managed to escape.



## Contemporary Slavery – Taking Action

### Join Anti-Slavery International's campaign

The Make Poverty History Jewish Coalition are supporting Anti-Slavery International's declaration against contemporary slavery. By signing the declaration we can create a new mass movement for change.

- a) Use the Seder as an opportunity to BOTH commemorate the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade AND focus on contemporary issues.
- b) In the period between Pesach and Shavuot work to create signatories for the declaration - friends, family, colleagues and the Jewish community organisations that you belong to.

**Details from:** <http://www.antislavery.org/2007/>

### Combatting economic slavery through promoting fair trade

- a) Encourage your synagogue or organisation to adopt the Fairtrade Synagogue certification. The initial commitments are not onerous and can be adopted by all synagogues from any section of the community.
- b) Extend your fair trade purchasing beyond the well-publicised food products to include such things as clothing (using fair-trade cotton) and footballs (made without illegal oppression of children).

**Details from -** <http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/>

### Campaigning to relieve the international debt crisis

2006 was a year in which much progress was made but the debt crisis is still one of the most debilitating contributory factors causing extreme poverty. In particular focus must be put on the unfair conditions included in most debt relief deals which still leave countries unable to help the poorest groups.

- a) Encourage your synagogue or organisation to join the Jubilee Debt Campaign by become a Jubilee Congregation. This will bring you into a coalition of hundreds of local and national organisations and enable you to receive up to date information effectively.
- b) Make Shabbat Behar-Behukotai – 11-12<sup>th</sup> May 2007 – when the Jubilee is discussed in the Torah, a special time to consider the complex issues of poverty and debt.

**Details from:** <http://www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk/>

