

History of Slavery & Colonialism in Britain, Europe & Asia

A personal search

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*72 slides cut down to 20 for uploading to our site. Ask if
you are interested in the whole presentation*

History of Slavery & Racism – Part I

Transatlantic Slave Trade - Europe to Americas

How did Britain benefit? How was slavery justified?

1. Military
2. Commercial
3. Religious
4. Scientific
5. Socio-philosophical

Slavery in Religious Texts – Old Testament, New Testament

Pseudoscientific theories of Racism – Eugenics

Socio-Philosophical theories of Racism

Connecting the dots: Slavery - Racism - Nazism

Transatlantic Slave Trade

Although slavery took place in the Americas, European countries were at the heart of it.

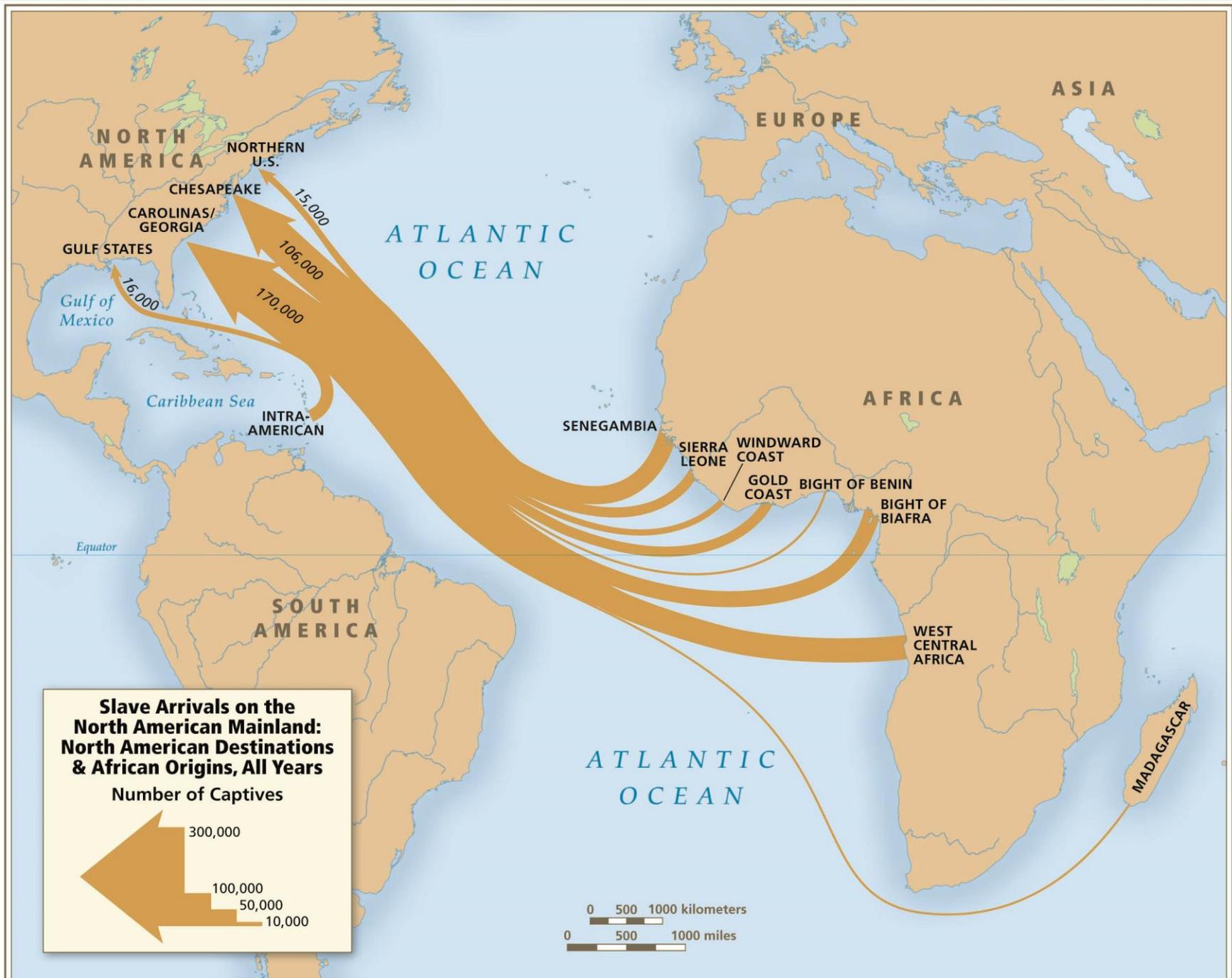
Spain, Portugal, Britain, France & Holland profited immensely.

Out of 12 million Africans shipped, only 10 million made it across.

The Atlantic Ocean is the silent graveyard of 2 million Africans.



For the survivors, the average life span in US plantations was 8 years.



Transatlantic Slave Trade

When?

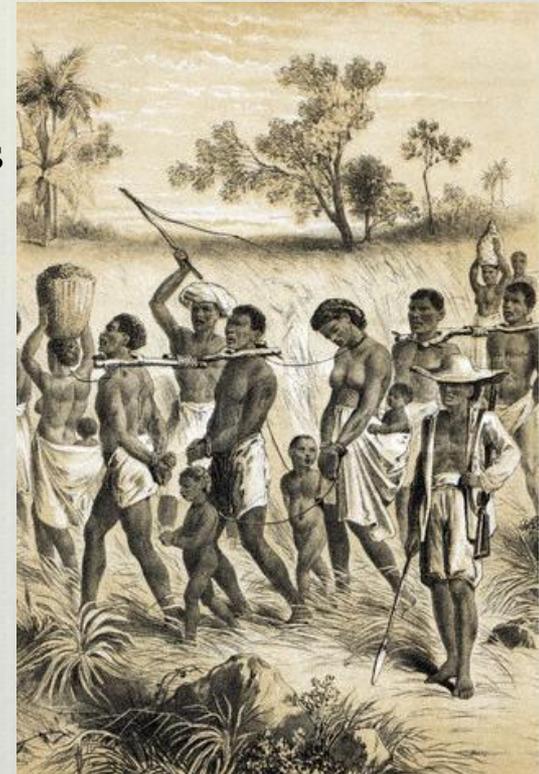
- 1450 - Spanish & Portuguese start slaving in Africa
- 1865 - still smuggling slaves until the end of the US civil war

Why?

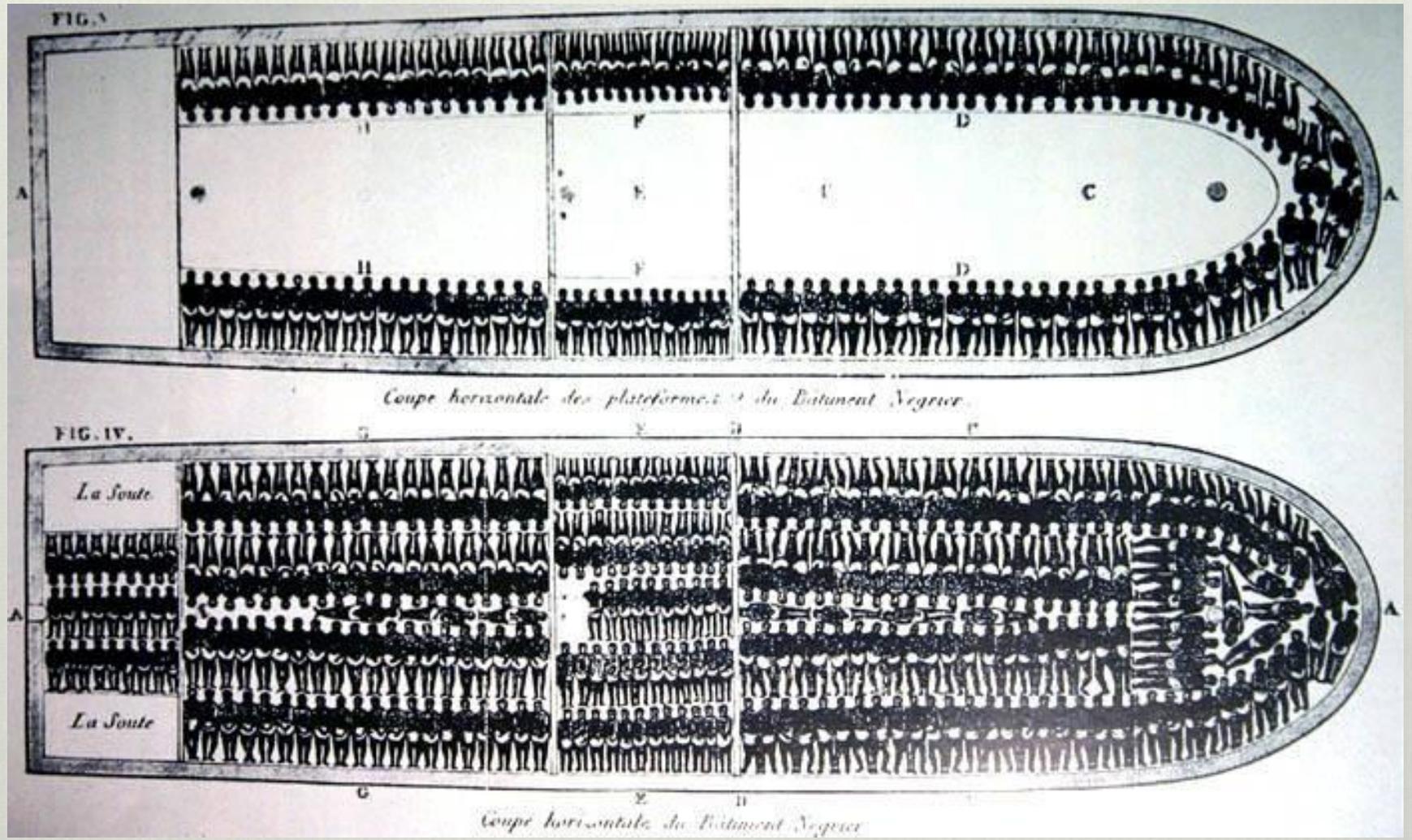
- Labour shortage (not enough workers on plantations)
- Indigenous people fell sick/died from European diseases
- Ethnocentrism – (feelings of superiority)
- Greed

How many?

- 30 million taken from their home
 - 10 million died during capture phase
 - 10 million died during mid-passage
 - 10 million survive to cross the Atlantic Ocean



A famous picture of the Ship's layout

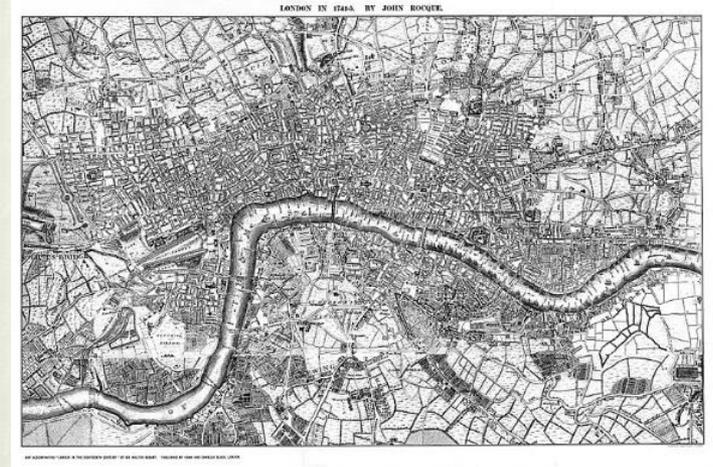


London

The slave trade also helped people set up businesses in London which still exist today.

Finance organisations such as:
Lloyd's,
Barclays Bank,
Barings Bank and
the Bank of England

helped provide finance to
merchants, or were set up
using slave trade money.



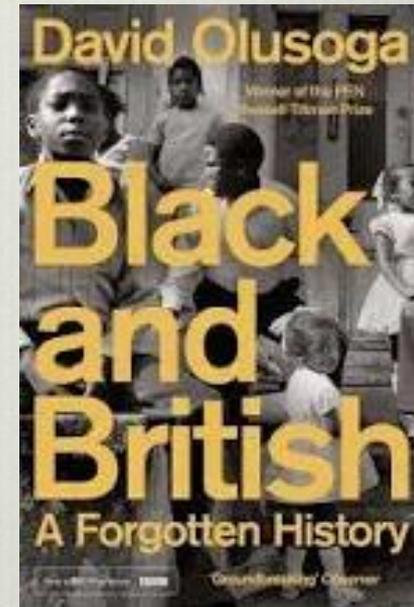
LLOYDS BANK

How did Slavery end in the UK?

UK: Slave Trade Act outlawed slavery in the British Empire in 1807

Did slavery end voluntarily in Britain?

- **Slave owners** were **paid** approximately £20 million in compensation – called “loss of human property”
- Over 40,000 awards were made for enslaved people freed in the colonies of the Caribbean, Mauritius and the Cape of Good Hope
- **Government** census that named all **owners** as of 1 August 1834
- £17bn in today’s money
- In 1833, Britain used 40% of national budget to buy freedom for all slaves in the Empire.
- Such a large sum was paid for the Slavery Abolition Act
- Many “charitable” acts were funded by this compensation money
- **Historian and TV presenter David Olusoga**



Research References

Our fact-check sources:

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/slavery-or-slave-owners/>

[British National Archives, Britain and the Slave Trade](#)

[BBC, British Anti-Slavery](#)

[Ohio State University, Review: After Abolition: Britain and the Slave Trade Since 1807](#)

[Encyclopedia Britannica, Slavery Abolition Act](#)

[Al Jazeera English, Britain was built on the backs, and souls, of slaves](#)

[The Guardian, The Treasury's tweet shows slavery is still misunderstood](#)

[UCL Legacy of British Slave-owners Database](#)

How was slavery justified?

1. Military – We have bigger guns
2. Commercial – Cotton, Sugar, tobacco, coffee
3. Religious – God ordained it; The bible says
4. Scientific hypothesis - Anthropologically inferior race
5. Socio-philosophical – Unable to flourish culturally

Imagine debating with an 18th century slave trader/owner. He makes these three points:

- Africa is poor and uncivilised
- Africans are uneducated
- Africans are heathens (they have no religion)

Slavery in Religious Texts?

- During the period of American slavery, how did slaveholders manage to balance their religious beliefs with the open cruelty?
- For some, that rationalization was right there in the Bible.
- Two favourite texts, one from the beginning of the Old Testament and the other from the end of the New Testament.
- In the words of the King James Bible, which was the version then current, these were, first, Genesis IX, 18–27.

“And the sons of Noah that went forth from the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and Ham is the father of Canaan. These are the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole world overspread. And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: and he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father’s nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years.”

And what about the New Testament?

The other favourite came from the Apostle Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, VI, 5-7:
“Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.”

The rest of the Old Testament was often mined by pro-slavery polemicists for examples proving that slavery was common among the Israelites. The New Testament was largely ignored, except in the negative sense of pointing out that nowhere did Jesus condemn slavery, although the story of Philemon, the runaway who St. Paul returned to his master, was often quoted.

It was also generally accepted that the Latin word *servus*, usually translated as servant, really meant slave.

The Bible was misused to justify slavery ...

But then Africans made it their path to freedom

- The Gospel so many African Americans embraced to sustain them through the horrors of beatings and rapes, separations and lynchings, is the same Gospel used to enslave them.
- So much of early American Christian identity is predicated on a proslavery theology.
- From the naming of the slave ships, to who sponsored some of these journeys including some churches, to the fact that so much of early American religious rhetoric is deeply intertwined . . . with slaveholding.

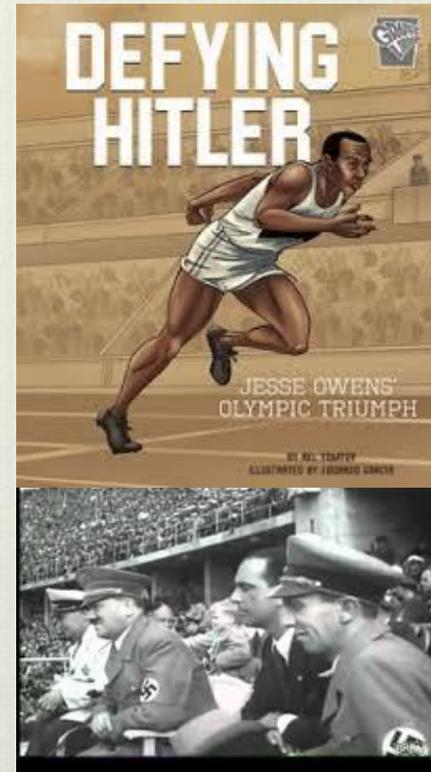


Medicine in the service of slavery

- In 1849, **Samuel Cartwright** was engaged by a Louisiana medical committee to investigate “the diseases and physical peculiarities of our negro population.”
- He seemed well qualified. The 57-year-old native of Fairfax County, Va., had practiced in Natchez, Miss., for 25 years, and his patients included his friend Jefferson Davis, the future president of the Confederacy. The same year the report was issued, he was appointed professor of “diseases of the Negro” at what is now Tulane University.
- He began his report for the Louisiana committee by reviewing “the anatomical and physiological differences between the negro and the white man.”
- Skin color was obvious.
- But “*there are other differences more deep, durable and indelible. The membranes, the muscles, the tendons . . . even the negro’s brain and nerves . . . are tintured with a shade of pervading darkness.*”
- Then there was the true cause of the enslaved person’s “*debasement of mind,*” he wrote.
- “[the] *defective hematosiis, or atmosperization of the blood, conjoined with a deficiency of cerebral matter in the cranium . . . [that] has rendered the people of Africa unable to take care of themselves,*” he claimed.

Slavery → Eugenics → Nazism

- One reader in Germany was especially admiring.
- He too mused about extermination, but of a different “race.”
- His name was **Adolf Hitler**, and reportedly referred to his copy of the book as his Bible.
- In 1936, African American sprinter **Jesse Owens** smashed the ideas of Hitler and Madison when he won four gold medals at the Berlin Olympics.
- But Owens’s own track coach belittled the success of black runners: *“It was not long ago that his ability to sprint and jump was a life-and-death matter to him in the jungle.”*
- The old notion lived on, and so have many white social and economic advantages.



And what does the Qur'an say?

- ❖ *O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know and discover each other. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted with all things.*

Qur'an (49:13)

In the entrance hall of the UN Assembly, NY

“Human beings are members of a whole,
In creation of one essence and soul.

If one member is afflicted with pain,
Other members uneasy will remain.

If you’ve no sympathy for human pain,
The name of human you cannot retain!”

--Saadi--



بنی آدم اعضای یک پیکرند
که در آفرینش ز یک گوهرند
چو عضوی به درد آورد روزگار
دگر عضوها را نماند قرار
تو کز محنت دیگران بی غمی
نشاید که نامت نهند آدمی

History of Slavery & Colonialism – Part II

Slavery in Africa

Slavery in the Arab World

Racism as the root of colonialism

Spanish/Portuguese colonialism

British colonialism

French/Belgian colonialism

Dutch colonialism

Legacy of colonialism in the Middle East

Windrush Scandal

What role for History Education?

Slavery in Africa

Slavery in Africa

How & why was slavery already practised in Africa, before the transatlantic slave trade?

Why did the African tribal rulers cooperate with the European traders?

Do your own research!

Slavery in the Arab World

Slavery in the Arab World

Did the Muslims follow the teachings of the Qur'an and Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)?

Do your own research!

Racism root of colonialism

Slavery as the root of racism &

Racism as the root of colonialism

Timelines of racism and cultural oppression

Legacy of colonialism in Middle East

Sykes-Picot Agreement

also called **Asia Minor Agreement** (May 1916)

Secret convention made during **World War I** between the **UK & France**, with the assent of imperial **Russia**, for the dismemberment of the **Ottoman Empire**.

Divided the Turkish held **Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine** into various French and British-administered areas.



Legacy of colonialism in Middle East

Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916)

- Effectively divided the Ottoman provinces outside the Arabian Peninsula into areas of British & French control and influence.
- Allocated to the UK control of what is today southern **Israel & Palestine, Jordan** and **southern Iraq**, and an additional small area that included the ports of Haifa and Acre to allow access to the Mediterranean.
- France was to control south eastern **Turkey, northern Iraq, Syria** and **Lebanon**.
- Seen as a turning point in Western and Arab relations.
- Negated the UK's promises to Arabs for a national Arab homeland in Greater Syria in exchange for supporting the British against the Ottoman Empire.
- The agreement was made public by the Bolsheviks in Moscow in Nov 1917 and repeated in the British Guardian on 26 November 1917, such that "*the British were embarrassed, the Arabs dismayed and the Turks delighted*".
- The agreement's legacy has led to much resentment in the region, among Arabs in particular but also among **Kurds** who were denied an independent state.

Legacy of colonialism in Middle East

Iran – 1953 coup d'état by UK & USA

19 August 1953

Overthrow of the democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh in favour of strengthening the monarchical rule of the Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

Orchestrated by the US (under the name "Operation Ajax") and the United Kingdom (under the name "Operation Boot").

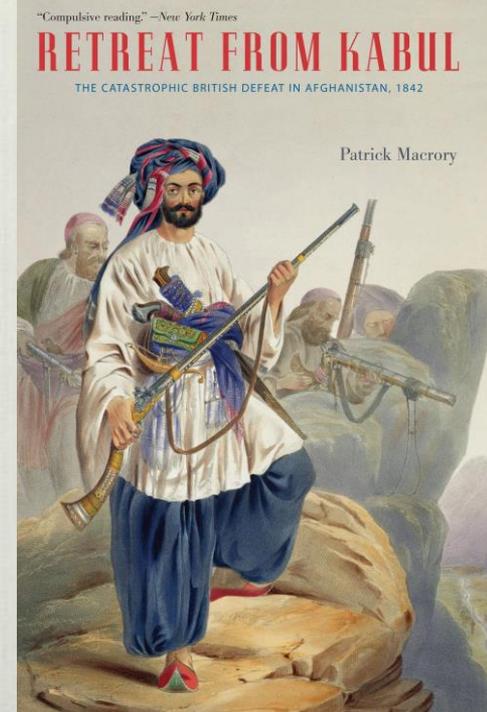


In August 2013 the U.S. government formally acknowledged the U.S. role in the coup by releasing a bulk of previously classified documents that show it was in charge of both the planning and the execution of the coup, including the bribing of Iranian politicians, security and army high-ranking officials.

Legacy of colonialism in Asia

Afghanistan

- On October 1st, 1838, George Eden, aka as Lord Auckland, the British governor-general of India, issued the so-called Simla Manifesto, essentially declaring war on Afghanistan, to safeguard its Indian empire from attacks.
- In Istalif, the British massacred every Afghan adult man and raped hundreds of Afghan women in Istalif (and thousands during the entire course of war), as Arnold Fletcher recounted in his [1965 history of Afghanistan](#).
- The British used rape as a weapon of war against the Afghans. While the destruction of the British army by Afghans is common knowledge, few people are aware of British atrocities in Kabul, Charikar & Istalif.
- Although the war ended in a major strategic defeat for Britain, it left a major scar on the Afghans.
- All foreign powers that have tried to control Afghanistan since the 19th century have all suffered defeat.



The legacy of Colonialism: Nation states in artificial borders – source of conflict



Be suspicious of straight line borders

Natural borders are often mountain ranges, rivers, lakes, coast lines, not straight lines.



Windrush Scandal

- In 2014 – British black citizens were told to prove their legitimate right to stay in the UK
- Burden of proof on them to show documents, tax receipts, NI slips, etc.
- For 4 yrs a “hostile environment” faced the Caribbean community, until Apr 2018 when Theresa May offered an apology to the parliament and compensation.
- Government U-turn but nobody took responsibility.
- A ruthless horrific policy carried on for 4 yrs.
- Access to NHS and social services withdrawn/Indefinite detention and/or deportation
- “Hostile Environment” really started in 50s; 2014 ultimate manifestation of 60 years of racism
- Hostility to Caribbean emigration was a hypocritical policy of the British government
- 60 years of life in Britain, a huge economic/cultural contribution, and a clear British identity. Was this a mistake or intentional?
- Why were records/paperwork destroyed by the Home Office? Highly unusual

What role does history education play ?

An honest and full coverage of colonialism at secondary school:

- Gives teenagers an insight into current affairs
- Shines light on the roots of conflicts
- Provides a sense of belonging
- Develops critical thinking skills
- Enables the younger generation to join the dots in news
- Gives a balanced understanding of human behaviour
- Combats racism and superiority / inferiority complex
- Prevents teenagers from extremist views