



# The Antislavery Usable Past

History's lessons for how we  
end slavery today

Edited by Kevin Bales  
and Zoe Trodd



University of  
Nottingham  
Rights Lab

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We End Slavery Today

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Kevin Bales & Zoe Trodd

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*University of Nottingham, UK*



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**Nottingham**  
Rights Lab

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“It is not light we need, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

“The past is the mirror in which we may discern the dim outlines of the future...”

– *Frederick Douglass, 1852 and 1884*

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## ***Foreword – Burnout***

Kevin Bales

*The black militants of today are standing upon the shoulders of the New Negro radicals of my day, the '20s, '30s and '40s. We stood upon the shoulders of the civil rights fighters of the Reconstruction era, and they stood upon the shoulders of the black abolitionists. These are the interconnections of history.*

— A. Philip Randolph, 1969

*Cold sweats suddenly come upon Me.*

— Thomas Clarkson, 1793

Welcome to the Antislavery Usable Past Reader. You'll find this is not your normal history book. Every chapter has been written by someone who knows a good deal about the antislavery movements of the past, the antislavery movements of the present, or more likely, both. Our aim is for this book to be a useful resource in the truest sense: that you will find in it suggestions, perhaps even answers, to the challenges you face in your antislavery work – whether you work in a charity, a campaigning non-governmental organization, in local, regional, or national government, or just as a citizen committed to the antislavery cause. Thousands of abolitionists and human rights workers have gone before us, but we are rarely aware of their existence, much less the lessons they learned through hard work and experience. We hope to help them speak to us in the present – so that their ideas and struggles,



challenges, failures and triumphs might inspire and guide us.

It can be argued that the world is now embarked upon the fourth major antislavery movement in human history<sup>1</sup>. Each of these movements has pursued the common goal of liberation for slaves; yet each of them has been also been hindered and delayed by, for example, fights over how slaves are to be counted and how slavery or other forms of unfree labour should be defined. Fights between different wings of each of these movements have slowed progress and squandered energy. Prejudices of the day, such as the refusal to seat women delegates to the World Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840, wasted talent. All four antislavery movements have struggled to find the best role for survivors of slavery within the movement. In all four movements, antislavery has been (and is today) exploited as a stalking horse or ventriloquist's dummy for other political or ideological goals.

While these movements achieved great things, each had their energy and resources misused in schism and duplication, with schisms often breaking along the same lines as had previous movements decades before. All have needed a greater understanding of the recurring problems that have stymied previous social reform movements, whatever their aims. One simple and personal anecdote will illustrate the folly of not knowing the history of our own movement(s), and the benefit of even a partial knowledge of the past.

In early 2000 I met with four other people to explore the shared idea of establishing an antislavery organization in the United States. At that time there were very few non-governmental organizations focused on slavery, very little public recognition that

there was such a problem, virtually no acceptance by government or law enforcement that such a crime might exist, and next to no resources available to support antislavery work. The five of us had been testing the waters in different parts of America and felt that an organization that focused its work on the liberation of slaves, and on their rehabilitation and reintegration, was needed to complement the often sensationalist awareness-raising work that a handful of groups were doing. As we laid our plans and allocated jobs, I was assigned the task of being the public spokesperson, the ‘voice’ of the new organization.

The idea, the challenge, of starting a brand new group addressing an issue that had virtually no public recognition, was daunting. So, over the next few weeks, in hopes of learning how it *could* be done, I found and read histories of the previous antislavery movements<sup>2</sup> – from the launch of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade in 1787, through the American abolitionist movement preceding the US Civil War, to the Congo Reform campaign of the early twentieth century, and even the ‘white slavery’ campaigns of the late nineteenth century. There was a great deal to learn from these stories, but one trend surprised me – almost every person who had taken on the role in past movements that I had just assumed in the present movement had had some sort of breakdown. Thomas Clarkson, William Wilberforce, William Lloyd Garrison, E.D. Morel, and others – they all cracked up about ten years into their job. All recovered (though it might be said Roger Casement, an important researcher and campaigner in the early twentieth century, did not) but several had to retire from antislavery work for months or years.

I was no stranger to burnout and breakdown; I had seen it before. In my twenties, working for an American anti-death penalty organization that fought legal cases to stop executions and bring cases against the torture of prison inmates, I'd watched my colleagues break down under the intensive and soul-crushing workload. Faced with the knowledge that someone was going to be executed on a certain day and time, it was no surprise that workers would sacrifice everything – sleep, food, health, family, friendships – to stop that execution from happening. And when the inmate was put to death in spite of every last-ditch and heroic effort, the sense of failure was devastating. That anti-death penalty organization had, after watching a number of workers go to pieces, instituted a mandatory week at a beach house for anyone who seemed on the edge of collapse. It worked for some, but marriages, mental and physical health, and valuable personnel were still regularly lost.

Bringing the other founders of our little organization together, I explained what I had learned. The others had also seen burnout in voluntary groups, and all understood its cost. But what exactly was to be done? We all understood that there would be times when the chance of helping those in slavery come to freedom would and should take priority over everything else, and that all of us were candidates for collapse. But we did agree that 'fore-warned was fore-armed' – that recognizing a historical pattern was the first step to a thoughtful and planned response. For this organization, now known as *Free the Slaves*, that response was firstly to hold the knowledge in readiness, to expect that anyone might start to show the signs of burning out and to accept, recognize, and respond to that need. Understanding that past movements had shown

that burn out was a relatively common ‘occupational hazard’, we agreed we would keep an eye on each other, and speak honestly if we felt someone was losing perspective or nearing collapse.

So, did learning the lesson of the past antislavery movements save us from stress and burnout? In a word, no, but it did mean that while all of us, at one time or another, began to burn out, none were lost and no one broke down – even though some came very near. Those who work in life-and-death situations, whether in medicine, social services, emergency relief, or human rights, know they can’t just stop when things become uncomfortable or pressured, but they *can* learn to rely on others and trust them to step in. As we dealt with times of crisis and extreme stress, a theme we returned to again and again was that the movement needed workers who could stay the course, not just work themselves to collapse over a short time and then need to be replaced. I remember vividly being on the receiving end of just such a conversation, one might say an ‘intervention’, in which it was explained to me that I was needed not just now, but for years to come, and that I had to keep my mental and physical tools sharp. If that meant slowing down, eating better, and taking time off, then so be it.

### **The Challenge**

Every antislavery movement, campaign, and organization has faced the challenge of overwork. Today, nearly every charity and NGO worker can tell a story of overwork and stress. A 2015 survey<sup>3</sup> of voluntary sector workers in the UK found 95% working beyond their contracted hours, 71% saying they had to work extra hours to stay on top of their workload, and 79% reporting that

stress was a ‘fact of life’ in their work. An investigative report<sup>4</sup> in the Chronicle of Philanthropy noted that:

Compassion fatigue, sometimes known as “vicarious trauma” or “secondary traumatic stress,” affects people who are exposed to the traumatic suffering of others, such as doctors, nurses, emergency-service personnel, counsellors, social workers, clergy members, and animal-shelter workers [*one could easily add frontline antislavery, antitrafficking, and human rights workers*]. Left untreated, symptoms can worsen and the condition can evolve into burnout, which can cause employees to quit their jobs.

Compassion fatigue may result in poor job performance and plummeting self-esteem, and thus it can even drive some people who experience it out of their professions entirely ... those who suffer from it can also experience tension in their home lives, or even fall into clinical depression or other mental-health problems.

So what does the antislavery usable past have to tell us about burnout? Thomas Clarkson was the first full-time worker of any antislavery organization, and it can be argued he was also the first ever full-time worker in a non-governmental organization. He had taken up the job as secretary of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade in 1787, and was launched immediately into personally dangerous<sup>5</sup> research on the docks of Liverpool and Bristol and a crushing schedule of speaking and organizing all over Britain. Real progress was made by the Society

over the next five years by publishing Clarkson's solid research and building up a national campaign, but the political and popular atmosphere changed dramatically in early 1793 when Britain declared war on Revolutionary France.

A stiff and rapid lurch to the political right accompanied the declaration of war. 'Radical' ideas, such as the abolition of the slave trade or of slavery itself, were linked in political and public perception to the dangerous principles of liberty and equality championed by the French revolution. For those involved in the slave trade it became much easier to brand abolitionists as fanatics and hypocrites – precisely the words used by the Duke of Clarence (who would later become King William IV) to describe William Wilberforce that year in the House of Lords.<sup>6</sup> As hostilities commenced, the Royal Navy began to sell into slavery any captured French sailors who were free Blacks or mulattos.

In a war “of all peoples against all kings”, the very bedrock of Britain was felt to be threatened, and patriotic fervor erupted into violent attacks, some directed at antislavery supporters. In 1794 the Earl of Abingdon spoke in Parliament<sup>7</sup> specifically denouncing the antislavery movement: “this proposition for the abolition of the slave trade is... grounded in and founded upon French principles... namely, those of insubordination, anarchy, confusion, murder, havock, devastation, and ruin.” In the face of such official suppression and popular suspicion, the antislavery movement faltered and many supporters withdrew into silence.

Clarkson was despondent – it seemed that years of work had all been for nothing. He described his workload he had carried for years: “I had a correspondence to maintain with four hundred

persons with my own hand. I had some book or other annually to write in behalf of the cause. In this time I had travelled more than thirty-five thousand miles in search of evidence, and a great part of these journeys in the night.” He had supported much of this work from his own meagre inheritance. It is no surprise that he reported, “My mind has been literally bent like a Bow to one gloomy subject ... I am often suddenly seized with Giddiness & Cramps. I feel an unpleasant ringing in my Ears, my Hands frequently tremble. Cold sweats suddenly come upon Me. ... I find myself weak, easily fatigued, & out of Breath. My recollection is also on the decline.” In modern terms this description of symptoms rings of exhaustion, depression, and anxiety attacks.

Teetering into illness, and facing what seemed to be complete failure after an immense expenditure of his energies, Clarkson took a series of decisions that reflected his inner turmoil. He announced that he would never enter the Anglican ministry for which he had been trained. This was a dramatic step for the orphan son of a clergyman, and the winner of the most prestigious academic prize at Cambridge for his studies there. As his physical condition worsened, and his doctors ordered him to limit his travel while prescribing rest and cold baths, he decided to retire, aged thirty-three, to the countryside to recover. It would be ten years before he returned to the antislavery movement that he would then serve for a further forty-two years.

Clarkson was not the only antislavery campaigner to struggle with exhaustion. E.D. Morel, the key organiser of the Congo Reform Association, the leading group of the third antislavery movement at the beginning of the twentieth century, had spells of

depression and self-pity,<sup>8</sup> contrasting with periods of nervous self-aggrandizement that led him to clash with others in the movement that he felt were eclipsing his standing.

William Wilberforce, though his biographies tend to diminish his weaknesses, also had periods of collapse and regularly used opium for more than twenty years. William Lloyd Garrison, the instigator of the growing American abolitionist movement in the 1830s, like Clarkson, retreated with his family to the countryside after a traumatic experience in which he was captured by a pro-slavery mob intent on lynching him, then beaten, stripped of his clothing and dragged through the streets with ropes, until he was rescued at the last moment.

For those of us living within the fourth great antislavery movement, these lessons of the past resonate, but at times seem to exist in a different world. It is a world where the descriptions of depression and breakdown are familiar, but the outcomes seem oddly antiquated – who today, for example, has the means to retire for years to the countryside? For that reason it is important to examine one more case from a much more recent usable past.

Three American men, all in their early twenties, one of them named Jason Russell, set up the NGO Invisible Children in 2004. Coming from a background in Christian youth theatre they travelled to Sudan and Northern Uganda as student filmmakers with an idea of, if little plan for, making a documentary. While there they found large numbers of children sleeping together in the streets, seeking safety in numbers against the threat of capture and kidnap by Joseph Kony's rebel militia, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Deeply moved by the plight of these children they focused



their camera and told their stories, following the lives of several of these internally displaced and threatened children.

The resulting film, titled *Invisible Children*, was an idiosyncratic exploration of war, torture and enslavement as seen through the eyes of ‘typical’ American youth. After it was broadcast on the Internet and through DVDs this quirky but heartfelt film became very popular, especially among students, and quickly raised awareness of the situation in Northern Uganda, especially of the brutal deprivations of Joseph Kony and the LRA. On the back of this success the three founded the NGO that was also called *Invisible Children*.

Grassroots campaigning followed: the film was shown in churches, schools and universities, linked merchandise was sold and contributions solicited. As it grew, the organisation devoted funds to further films and to provide humanitarian aid in Northern Uganda. By 2010 campaigning had provoked a large-scale public awareness and concern that generated a political response, and President Obama invited *Invisible Children* staff to be present when he signed into law the “Lord’s Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act.” This law made it US policy to confront Kony and the LRA, and to provide assistance and aid to the region. It authorised up to \$10 million per year for three years to support its provisions. Throughout this period, however, while gaining wide support online and among youth and students, the NGO *Invisible Children* was often criticized for being simplistic about the complex nature of the Sudanese/Uganda conflict, and for reducing those complexities into a simple dichotomy of good versus evil.

In March 2012, *Invisible Children* began another internet-based campaign constructed around a new 30 minute film they

had made entitled *Kony2012*. In the film's opening sequence, over a spinning planet and expansive music, NGO co-founder Jason Russell explains, "Right now there are more people on Facebook than there were on the planet 200 years ago." The film, he goes on to say, "is an experiment" to see if they can make Kony (in)famous, and so bring justice to Northern Uganda. A key premise of the film, aimed at a youth demographic who are fully participating in social media, is that awareness raising is powerful and can bring change – and that the new reality of an internet-connected world makes that possible. Within six days of its release *Kony2012* seemed to prove that assertion. In those six days it was viewed 100 million times, a million people had commented on YouTube, and 11 million people had 'shared' the film with others. It was more than a viral video; it was a global media pandemic.

But within 48 hours of the film's release the NGO was swamped. The *Invisible Children* merchandise team could fulfill 100 orders per day, and they were receiving hundreds of thousands. Their website, designed to be robust, crashed, and then their phone system was overwhelmed. When the organization and its founders were unable to answer questions from the massive volume of media enquiries, some journalists and commentators assumed the worst and began to speculate and circulate stories questioning the 'suspicious' lack of information about the charity. From this lack of response others extrapolated insinuations of fraud and embezzlement and characterized its leaders as naïve hipster Christians with a white saviour complex<sup>9</sup>. The pressure of the massive response, as well as a growing wave of criticism, pushed the NGO into an overheated and reactive stance. As the narrator

of the film, and the ‘face’ of the organization, Jason Russell bore the brunt of the incessant and harsh demands and accusations.

Ten days later, a second viral video surfaced. In this video, informally shot by a bystander on a mobile phone, Jason Russell is clearly having a breakdown on a city street. Having taken off all his clothes, he is gesticulating widely and shouting obscenities. Ultimately led away by police, he was taken to a psychiatric hospital; it was two months before he returned to his family. For much of the public, this very public burnout seemed to confirm the allegations levied at *Invisible Children* and *Kony2012*, and the contributions, product orders, and the public support of the NGO evaporated.

More than a year later, talking to *The Guardian*<sup>10</sup>, Russell described the deterioration of his mental health leading up to the episode, culminating in hearing a ‘voice’ that began to give him orders. Unlike the slow breakdowns of nineteenth century abolitionists that took months and years to play out, Russell demonstrated what burnout might look like in a world of instant and total media attention.

The astounding viral success of *Kony2012* was immediately supplanted by a viral collapse in support. In the wake of these linked events the NGO spiralled downward and at the end of 2014 ‘underwent a dramatic restructuring to its U.S. operations’ including ‘the conclusion of all media and mass awareness programs, moved out of our San Diego office, and executed a significant downsizing of our San Diego staff.’<sup>11</sup> Their on-the-ground programs in Africa were handed off to local offices and became Ugandan organizations and projects. Their founders moved on. In the words of one commentator<sup>12</sup>, “In the context of the Internet, with its high-speed

aggregation of fact-checkers, critics and trolls ... Those who live by slick viral videos can die by them too.”

### **Lessons for Today**

There are at least four lessons to be learned from our antislavery usable past about how burnout can affect human rights campaigners today. The first lesson is to recognize that as workers who confront human suffering, we might be susceptible to the “compassion fatigue, sometimes known as ‘vicarious trauma’ or ‘secondary traumatic stress,’ [that] affects people who are exposed to the traumatic suffering of others” mentioned above. Simply admitting that it could happen to anyone is likely a powerful first step, which makes it easier to identify and confront the issue when poor job performance and plummeting self-esteem begins to be seen in oneself or a co-worker. Understanding that those suffer from it can also “experience tension in their home lives, or even fall into clinical depression or other mental-health problems” is not something that most groups need to dwell on, but it is a fact that should be kept in mind, and perhaps considered at annual or strategic reviews.

A second lesson would be simply to build into the planning of your organisation’s goals and strategy the knowledge that it will almost certainly be, at some point, *overtaken and shaken by outside events over which you and the organization have no control*. Thomas Clarkson and William Wilberforce saw their work not just stopped, but also reversed by the French Revolution and the long period of European war that followed. The Congo Reform Movement was wound down before the First World War, but its follow-up concerns and

campaigns were completely overwhelmed and neglected after the war began in August 1914. The work done within the League of Nations to re-establish slavery as a global issue in the 1920s was again stopped cold in September 1939 with the outbreak of war. Though World War II was marked by the enslavement of some 12 million people by the warring parties, in the Cold War that followed little or no progress was made by the United Nations or any human rights group on slavery, since one set of Cold War belligerents declared that slavery could only exist under capitalism, and the other side argued that the most pernicious form of slavery was the bondage of state communism. Between 1948 and 1990, any move by the United Nations to confront contemporary slavery was vetoed by one side or the other, despite the specific inclusion in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the right not to be enslaved. “Winning” the Cold War, and its very hot and costly sub-conflicts in Africa, South East Asia, and Central America, overshadowed ideas of human rights, and slavery was relegated to the status of an archaic and irrelevant vestige of the pre-Atomic world.

In the nineteenth century, even the end of legal slavery tended to mean a loss of focus and a diminution of efforts against slavery at large. Following the American Civil War, a new form of slavery spread across the Deep South. Often referred to as *peonage*, it was the use of fallacious legal cases to rob African-Americans of their freedom and then allow local sheriffs and magistrates to sell them to businesses or farmers. It was simply slavery by another name<sup>13</sup>, but in the chaos and aftermath of war, both Northerners and Southerners ignored it (or abetted and profited from it) in their rush to put the conflict behind them.

The attacks on New York in September 2001 and the subsequent ‘war on terror,’ as well as the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, also curtailed human rights, diverted resources into armed conflict, and swamped the media, thus shifting public attention away from other issues. Even the near-collapse of the global economy in 2008-9 had the effect of bringing to a halt many antislavery projects as donations and endowment funds dried up. Many NGOs struggled with solvency in the aftermath, and successful antislavery projects were starved into termination.

It is not always possible to predict these large-scale disruptive events, but a third lesson is that there are two key actions that both individuals and voluntary sector organisations can take to reduce their impact. The first is to follow good charity sector advice and build up a strategic reserve. This means not only some money in the bank for the organization, but also a thoughtful assessment by all workers as to what actions they would take if funding were to end suddenly. The second is to step back occasionally from the reactive work most human rights groups are doing – responding to immediate needs and crises – and ensure a strategic vision and plan for the work ahead. Having a sense of core goals and a strategy to achieve them means that when the ground shifts beneath one’s feet, the direction and emphasis of work need not be lost.

Linked to the charges of sensationalism that have plagued many antislavery groups for just over two centuries, it is important to note, as a fourth lesson, that outrage is a reasonable initial response to the fact of slavery, but not a sustainable strategy for its eradication. Today and in the past, sadly, there is and has been a tendency to make slavery simple, to portray this complex social

and economic relationship as an issue in black and white, of good versus evil. The result is often a call for quick, simple answers and worse: an assumption that being morally right transcends the need for truth or logic or careful planning. It is an assumption that ignores the fact that culture and contexts are essential facts of slavery – ones that must be understood to accomplish effective intervention. One of the key reasons why constant debate surrounds the numbers of people in slavery is that many estimates are assertions based on outrage rather than analysis.

It is also true that it is easier to raise funds, recruit supporters, and make headlines when facts are simplified (or fabricated), but such a smokescreen of obfuscation, however well meant, only serves to blind us to the right road to action, whether that is changing policies or direct liberation. Such simplification also tends to generate schism, since those groups most convinced of their moral purity are often the least likely to participate in the give and take of collective decision-making across a wider movement. A desire for change should point activists toward deeper involvement in complex realities rather than toward simplification. These complex realities are challenging. For example, we need to understand the processes through which child slaves in African fishing sometimes become slaveholding fishermen themselves, or the cyclical self-reinforcing processes of forced prostitution, through which brutalized victims can in some cases eventually become sex traffickers, or why slavery in a multi-ethnic, multi-tribal, multi-religious, and multi-lingual regions of North Africa has often been presented as a stark conflict between ‘white Muslims’ intent on enslaving ‘black Christians’. It is worth noting that those who campaign with fast-and-loose facts,

or reduce issues to cosmic dichotomies have also tended to be the people who are more likely to break down, or, more often, simply give up.

The antidote to this type of simplification is to devote energy to study as well as action, and to ask questions of the past as well as the present. The founders of *Invisible Children* were fervent, well meaning, and completely committed agents for change, but from the beginning of their work they were dogged by those who doubted their understanding of the context in which they worked. The long history and the ongoing complexity of the conflict that enveloped Sudan and spread outwards over decades needed deep analysis. The proliferation of that conflict into Darfur, Northern Uganda, and the African Great Lakes region became more tangled and complex as it expanded. Jason Russell and his colleagues were right to want to rescue and protect ‘invisible children’, but that job of rehabilitation, even with adequate resources, could take many years. “Rescue” is always the beginning of a long process. If there is a truth about human rights, it is that few if any of its pressing problems can be solved by a single rescue, rock concert, or viral video. But it is also true that deep analysis and a historical perspective can help build robust strategies that do achieve real and lasting change over time.

What does this have to do with burnout? The answer is encapsulated in the parable of the sower and in the idea that deep roots are needed for long term and successful development and action, while shallow roots may support rapid growth, but lack any staying power, any perseverance. And what is that flash-in-the-pan enthusiasm that is just as quickly abandoned, but a form of burnout?



\* \* \*

Our aim in this book is establish a usable past for the contemporary antislavery movement. We want, with you, to identify and test the lessons of past antislavery movements as a way to care for the future of our movement today. We have many questions that we hope this book might illuminate, and it is likely that you, the reader, will have many of the answers.

To better understand the past and better meet the future, it could be a good idea to know: What is the abolitionist heritage that we have inherited? What role does memory play in the design of a social movement and human rights campaigns? How might one antislavery effort inform the next?

How does contemporary antislavery's protest literature, visual culture, definitional debate, opinion-building work, and commemorative impulse engage with the past? How did earlier abolitionists imagine the future and understand progress? How did this imagining and understanding shape their movement strategies? How do their ideas compare with our contemporary antislavery visions of the future?

Have different antislavery movements depended upon a particular view of history and time? Are memories of slavery and abolitionism handed down across generations and do they inform contemporary slave narratives? Which laws and definitions were useful to earlier antislavery generations, and how might they have been *more* useful today? How far are we basing our own definitions of slavery on the past and how far *should* we do so?

When looking at the antislavery past as used within twentieth-century civil rights movements, which voices were excluded? In

re-using the antislavery past, can today's activists uncover more varied examples, lesser-known figures, long-lost stories, forgotten voices? Can we learn not only from past antislavery examples but from other movements' attempts at a usable antislavery past? And our overarching question is this: can we identify and apply an antislavery usable past? *Can we assemble a tool kit that makes us more resilient and efficient and brings more slaves to freedom sooner? And can we keep ourselves healthy and sound in the process?*

## ***Introduction to Part I – Looking***

Zoe Trodd

A century ago, the historian Van Wyck Brooks demanded a “usable past.” Concerned at the “lack of any sense of inherited resources” in 1918, he wondered how the past could be made to “fertilize the present” so that it would have “living value.” He wished for a “storehouse of apt attitudes and adaptable ideals.” At the centennial of his request, this book offers such a storehouse, and in Part I, the three chapters look at the *imagery* of an antislavery usable past.

Visual culture was central to history’s antislavery campaigns, and numerous artists explicitly claim an antislavery usable past in their work. In 2007, Haitian children and artists with Mario Benjamin created the *Freedom* sculpture from scrap metal and junk found in Port au Prince, Haiti. The angular structure responds to historic and contemporary forms of slavery with its recycled chains, pikes, coils, masks, wheels and candlesticks. Or Jamaica-born Canadian artist Charles Campbell has exhibited his 2011 installation *Transporter*. A painting of sugar cane remnants is the backdrop to standing cardboard globes made of interlacing patterns of shackles, slave ships and migrating birds going in different directions, which Campbell has described as symbolic of on-going forced migration.

In fact, as the chapters in Part I explain, on offer to today’s antislavery movement is a usable past with an *aesthetic of freedom*: a visual culture of survivor and community activism, not one of

passivity and vulnerability. Beyond the explicit uses of history by Mario Benjamin and Charles Campbell, today's campaigns have access to forms and traditions of visual culture that invite solidarity with the enslaved, rather than mere pity. Extending across the past 200 years of antislavery campaigning is a long visual tradition of dignity and empowered resistance, not just a tradition of pleading hands and scarred backs.

For example, in survivors' own artwork, we see the power of imagining freedom—a power that extends back to the famous abolitionist and former slave Frederick Douglass' lifelong love affair with photography, during which he became the most photographed American of the nineteenth century. Across today's movement, artists and activists emphasise survivor self-representation, in the Douglass tradition. The NGO Free the Slaves has run art therapy workshops in India's Uttar Pradesh state that generated new survivor artwork. An exhibit by photographer and artist Kay Chernush called *Bought and Sold* consisted of abstract large-scale images that Chernush made after meeting with survivors of slavery to hear their stories. World Vision and PhotoVoice have sponsored workshops where at-risk street children represent their own perspectives. The project Voice of Freedom enables women survivors to document their lives, feelings and experiences through the camera lens, and supports them as they create texts in their own words to accompany the images. PAG-ASA's Photo-Voice project aims to give a voice to the survivors living in its shelter.

We also see the power of antislavery portraiture to humanise and individualise, in the Douglass tradition, within the best of today's non-survivor photography. Lisa Kristine's photographs, featured in

her *Slavery: The Book* (2010), are intimate, confrontational portraits that focus on faces and eyes. Tom Goldner's *Photo for Freedom* (2011) series about slavery in Ghana includes stark, simple, black-and-white portraits of enslaved individuals who return the viewer's gaze with the self-contained, quizzical expressions of an equal.

Another vibrant form of antislavery visual culture is muralism. In communities' uses of visual culture, we see the potential of local activism—one that extends back through the anti-lynching and civil rights street murals of the twentieth century. Building on this usable past, the Rights Lab at the University of Nottingham has gathered a large collection of murals that focus on modern slavery (<http://rightsandjustice.nottingham.ac.uk/murals>). The collection shows the power of street art to bring together local communities, provide a jumping-off point for community education, and offer art therapy opportunities. The proliferation of these murals suggests that as we work towards a slavery-free world, artists have a key role to play in helping to build slavery-free communities—with the potential for community engagement via an antislavery mural in every town and city.

As these chapters by Hannah Jeffery, Emily Brady, and Katarina Schwarz explain, artists and practitioners are breathing new life into forms of antislavery visual protest. From documentary photography and street art to survivor-generated images, today's antislavery movement has a visual culture that depicts the reality of modern slavery, celebrates everyday efforts to survive, challenges stereotypes, raises awareness and galvanises slavery-free community organising. Now, as across antislavery history, art is asking us to *look*—and to imagine freedom.

## **Chapter 1 – “I am not for sale, I AM PRICELESS”: Antislavery Visual Protest Then and Now**

Hannah Jeffery

Bent over and chained around the neck, the image of a young girl in a red corset and underwear cries. Next to her emotional face is the question “Sexy?” in bold white letters. This mural is one of a seven-part installation series entitled *Journey*. In 2007, seven shipping containers were placed in the middle of Trafalgar Square, and the following three years, the same seven containers lived temporarily in the parks and streets of Vienna, New York, Madrid and The Hague. These shipping containers were covered with powerful murals depicting the horrors of human trafficking—telling one young girl’s story in particular.

Elena lived in a small town in Moldova. She was happy, and she enjoyed school, but after her father passed away, her family became short of money. Elena was sent to work at a market where she was groomed by a woman who promised her a job as a doctor’s receptionist in Great Britain. Elena was told she’d be able to make enough money to go back to school, but after being brought to the UK, her *actual* job became clear. When she refused, her traffickers placed her in solitary confinement and emotionally blackmailed her with threats of violence against her family. Elena was forced to sell her body to strangers for money she was not allowed to keep<sup>14</sup>. She had been trafficked into commercial sexual exploitation at the age of 18.

The mural installation, *Journey*, created by actress and Chair of the Helen Bamber Foundation, Emma Thompson—and designed in union with survivor Elena—depicted seven narrative stages of human trafficking: ‘Hope’, ‘Journey’, ‘Uniform’, ‘Bedroom’, ‘Customer’, ‘Stigma’ and ‘Resurrection’. “I felt very inspired by Elena,” Thompson told the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, “I wanted to do something...I wanted to find a way that I could engage people that wasn’t simple story-telling, but that was a kind of story-telling that came halfway towards you and asked you to fill in the gaps.”<sup>15</sup> *Journey* does just that. Audiences in Trafalgar Square were appalled at the content of the murals—“this can’t go on!” they shouted as they left the Square. Interestingly, the murals seemed to affect men as strongly as they affected women. Whilst women wept in front of the seven shipping containers, according to Thompson, men were equally repelled by the evocative imagery of the installation. ‘Human trafficking is under-discussed in the public sphere, but public murals spark such discussion, helping to solve the problematic lack of public knowledge about modern slavery.

“Modern slavery is inflicted on millions of people all over the world,” *Anti-Slavery International* writes on their website, “but often it’s not called slavery, and many people don’t even know it exists.”<sup>16</sup> In 2016, it was estimated that 40.3 million men, women and children from every corner of the world are victims of modern slavery, and that among these 40.3 million, 10 million are children; 24.9 million are in forced labour; 15.4 million are people in forced marriage; and 4.8 million are in forced sexual exploitation.<sup>17</sup> These facts and figures are abhorrent, and to many people, unbelievable. But they need to become common knowledge and part of the

general discourse in order to tackle the evil of contemporary slavery infecting the world. So how do we go about this? How do we reach the people that don't watch the news, that don't get their information through iPhones, iPads and the rest of the electronic ecosystem that the younger generation are so wholly immersed in? How do we grasp people's attention long enough for them to become emotionally invested? And how do we deliver this information in a responsible, accessible and easily digestible way? One simple answer is: we put it in the streets through murals and public art.

In 2017, every habitable continent in the world housed murals and/or public art installations dedicated raising awareness of contemporary slavery. Texturing the streets of Bluefields, Nicaragua; Miami, US; New Delhi, India; Freetown, Sierra Leone; and Buenos Aires, Argentina, for example, are murals all devoted to raising awareness of modern slavery, and within the last two decades, the efficacy of murals at widening public acknowledgement and calling for the complete abolition of modern-day slavery has been recognised. In 2009, on the occasion of US artist Ross Bleckner becoming the UN Goodwill Ambassador, Antonio Maria Costa, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, impressed the importance of using art to tackle the awareness of human rights issues such as human trafficking and forced labour:

Art is one of the most powerful advocacy tools to raise awareness and move people to take action. A painting says a thousand words. Appointing Ross Bleckner as a UNODC goodwill ambassador...provides a unique



opportunity to implore others to join us in our fight against conscription of children, and other forms of human trafficking and modern day slavery.<sup>18</sup>

Echoing Costa’s sentiments, murals are powerful protest tools to raise awareness of human rights issues like modern slavery. In 2017, there was an initiative, and a push on a more local level, to help eradicate slavery by making cities ‘slavery free.’<sup>19</sup> Launched in Nottingham, UK, it focuses on ensuring contemporary slavery is no longer hidden in plain sight by working closely with businesses and the public sector to help remove modern slavery from supply chains, as well as training individuals to spot the signs of slavery. Enlisting the help of the general public is a very important step in the eradication of contemporary slavery, because as Nishi Kant, the director of the Indian NGO Shakti Vahini, rightly stated, “ordinary citizens [across the world] must understand what it is and recognise when it takes place in their community. They need to have the information about who to inform when a girl disappears, understand that not every job offer is legitimate, and have compassion for returning survivors.”<sup>20</sup> To Nishi Kant “artists have an important role to play” in raising awareness of contemporary slavery, and this is why the initiative for ‘slavery-free cities’ should work closely with murals to make sure slavery is no longer hidden in plain sight, but instead visualised in plain sight.

On display in public spaces, murals demand acknowledgment and attention, and in doing so, they become an unofficial facilitator for open, honest, and often painful discussions. They are barometers for the engagement of local communities because they live

vulnerably in the streets, open to vandalism and defacement, which in turn actually offers us insight into the level of public awareness on the issues depicted. As an awareness tool, murals are also easily digestible. While people may not have time, when rushing to and from work, to read an important news article on sex trafficking in Latin America, or forced labour in Asia, they will have time for a fleeting glance at an evocative mural en route to their office; and images, perhaps more than statistics, will resonate emotionally and linger with us for longer. And considering we are well and truly immersed in the digital age in which information is shared so easily via phones and computers, it works to the benefit of contemporary slavery murals when images of protest art are shared across public platforms like Twitter, Tumblr, Flickr, Facebook and Instagram. These public interfaces allow protest murals to transcend locale-specific boundaries and broaden awareness of local and national issues of contemporary slavery. For example, through the medium of Twitter, a mural in Bluefields, Nicaragua, or New Delhi, India, is accessible from Nottingham, England.

With murals and public art comes great responsibility. Using art as a protest tool is undoubtedly invaluable and can be extremely successful, and such is the case with many of the murals we see today connected to contemporary slavery. But when using murals as a tool to raise awareness of human rights issues such as child labour, human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, a delicate scale needs to be kept in balance between imagery that raises awareness in a successful and digestible way, and imagery that causes discomfort. As Emma Thompson points out to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime when describing

her logic behind the imagery used for Journey, “sometimes when you present things too graphically, people get frightened and they can’t cope with the suffering.”<sup>21</sup> This is exactly what we *don’t* want from public art serving to raise awareness of contemporary slavery. People need to be responsive to the mural in a positive way. They need to be inspired to ask questions and to seek further understanding of the issues. They need to feel emboldened by the visual imagery and to take action. Successful murals therefore are thought-provoking without being overtly aggressive. They are emotive whilst also offering glimmers of hope and optimism. And they are interrogative; making us internally question our own experiences and things we may have seen in our day-to-day life.

Having extensively researched contemporary antislavery murals, I’ve noticed their function mainly falls into two categories: for education, and for rehabilitation. Most commonplace are the murals created for educative purposes. These murals describe the tell-tale signs of modern slavery, the local stories in specific areas, and the various forms that slavery can take, but they also exist simply to insert visual, and sometimes abstract, depictions of modern slavery into the public consciousness in order to raise awareness and catalyse the general population into action. An example of this comes from Buenos Aires in 2013 when a Seattle-based street artist by the pseudonym of No Touching Ground created a lifelike portrait of Susana Trimarco in the downtown area of the city. Trimarco is a human trafficking lobbyist who has extensive personal experience with the sex trafficking industry. She’s survived two murder attempts, multiple death threats and having her house burnt down during the pursuit to find her missing

daughter, Marita. Her 23-year-old daughter was kidnapped by a human trafficking ring in Tucumán in 2002 and was enslaved in commercial sexual exploitation in the city of La Rioja.<sup>22</sup> The elder Trimarco suspected police and government officials were putting obstacles in the way of her own investigation, so she took matters into her own hands. Disguising herself as a madam, Trimarco started visiting bars in La Rioja that doubled as brothels. She then got phone numbers of individuals she thought were responsible for trafficking and called them up under the guise that she was looking to buy girls. By June 2002, she'd established a meeting with a female trafficker, granting her access to a safe house where girls were being sold for \$800 each. Four months later, after Trimarco had started to make progress on her investigation, she and three Chilean journalists went undercover in La Rioja, but were later discovered by men linked to local brothels, who shot at them. Trimarco undertook multiple undercover operations and over the years, became a guardian to 129 former sex slaves, helping them return to their families. In 2007, Trimarco set up the Fundación María de los Ángeles, and a year later, the lobbying efforts of Trimarco helped to make human trafficking a federal crime in the country.<sup>23</sup>

Susana Trimarco is an inspirational and courageous woman and the 10-foot mural adorning the streets of Buenos Aires undoubtedly stands in celebration to her human rights work. But the mural's purpose isn't just to celebrate the bravery of Trimarco. It's also to insert the issue of sex slavery into a public space in order to begin an uncomfortable, but fundamental, communal dialogue that brings awareness to the issue of human trafficking plaguing

the lives of many people throughout the country. The high profile nature of the Trimarco case may mean that locals recognise the life-like portrait painted by No Touching Ground, but to the wealth of tourists visiting the Argentine capital, the story will be new. When they seek to know more about Susana Trimarco, the work she’s done and why her face decorates a busy street in the nation’s capital, people will learn about the high levels of sex trafficking and forced labour throughout the country—and this is why murals are so important. A dialogue opens when tourists and locals learn how “Argentina is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor.”<sup>24</sup> The Susana Trimarco mural helps to pull back the curtain to make sure this issue isn’t being hidden away in a country where “judges receive bribes from traffickers or do not adequately investigate signs of official complicity.”<sup>25</sup> As reported in the July 2015 Department of State *Trafficking in Persons Report*, one of the main problems involved in the sex trafficking industry in Argentina is the reported police complicity in a staggering 40 per cent of sex trafficking cases, either as purchasers of commercial sex or as personal contacts of brothel owners—and the resulting disincentive for victims to report exploitation.<sup>26</sup> In a country with a broken judicial system, these unofficial awareness-raising methods, such murals and public art, are *that* much more important in order to make sure a visual voice is given to those who cannot speak. And for the 3,465 women that were rescued from human trafficking operations in Argentina between 2008 and 2014—this mural tells their story and inserts their voice into the public domain for people to hear.

But contemporary slavery murals don’t just serve to raise

*educational awareness* of the modern slave trade. They also fulfil *rehabilitation* purposes as well, and in January 2017, in Chattanooga, Tennessee, a mural was created with the main aim of inspiring and empowering female human trafficking survivors. Created by 15 women belonging to the Mixed Media Inspired Artists of the same city, the mural was made to represent the cathartic, emotional experience of recovering from trauma. During the creation of their mural, Mixed Media Inspired Artists decided a location for the finished product—Second Life; a Chattanooga non-profit organisation dedicated to housing and counselling human trafficking survivors. At 4ft x 7.5ft, the artwork tries to navigate the emotional intensity experienced by a survivor, and is split into three main panels. The first narrative scene is a desolate cityscape of Chattanooga, where human trafficking is actually the second leading form of crime, behind drugs.<sup>27</sup> In the narrative scene, the city looks lifeless—“a desolate urban world” as artist Sandra Washburn describes it.<sup>28</sup> But as one’s eye drifts across the mural and into the second panel, hope prevails. Thistles emerge from the dank, shadowy undergrowth, and from the darkness of trauma surfaces a new beginning, a new hope, and a new life. “Thistle is a powerful weed. It can push up through the streets,” artist Jeanne Brice suggests. “These girls are fighting to survive,” and the determined thistle metaphorically visualises this when the final panel of the mural depicts an abundance of thistles surrounded by colourful flowers in full bloom. Optimistic and hopeful, the vibrant colours of the plants obscure the sinister, murky undergrowth. The darkness beneath the flowers never quite disappears from view, but instead becomes the bedrock upon which the thistles, sunflowers

and daffodils can grow—from the bleak emptiness of trauma, a new life begins.

Through these two case studies alone, we can see the invaluable role of contemporary slavery murals in today’s society—to teach the signs and multiple forms of modern slavery, to tell local stories, to raise awareness, and to offer a sense of rehabilitation. But as Kevin Bales mentioned in his introduction to this book, “thousands of abolitionists and human rights workers have gone before us, but we are rarely aware of their existence, much less the lesson they learned through hard work and experience.” Antislavery murals have a long lineage stretching back to the 1920s Harlem Renaissance period in the US. So this section of the chapter does just what Kevin suggests—it shows you examples from the past that we can learn from, so that historical “ideas and struggles, challenges, failures and triumphs might inspire and guide us” in the pursuit of raising the greatest awareness of contemporary slavery.

### **The Helping Hand of History**

Between the 1920s and 1970s, there was a groundswell of murals in the US, both inside buildings and in the streets. Many of these were African American murals, depicting nineteenth century antislavery and abolitionist memories of the transatlantic slave trade. During this time period, the term ‘contemporary slavery’ wasn’t in circulation, and the issues of human trafficking, child labour, forced marriage and sex slavery were yet to be recognised in an official capacity. But racism, in every form imaginable, was pervasive throughout the US, and so muralists challenged the ‘neo-slavery’ of the 1930s and 1940s; the economic exploitation and oppression

of black workers from the 1920s-1970s; and the inalienable human rights denied to anyone who wasn't a wealthy white man. They did this by incorporating empowering antislavery/abolitionist memories and figures like Frederick Douglass, Denmark Vesey, Nathaniel Turner, John Brown, Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth into their murals in order to empower African Americans to contest and challenge their situation—predominantly in the late 1960s during the Black Power Movement. Unlike contemporary slavery murals today, antislavery murals of the 1920s-1970s were less about *raising awareness* of the 'neo-slavery' infecting their lives, and more about using an inspirational memory of abolition to *empower* individuals to challenge their daily racism and economic exploitation. Muralists like Charles White, Aaron Douglas, Hale Woodruff, Dewey Crumpler, William Walker, Eugene Eda Wade and Jeff Donaldson, for example, were inspired by the abolitionist work of Douglass, Tubman, Turner and Truth, and so laced their murals with their memory as reminders of the powerful work done by their historical forefathers, hoping that in turn, black America would be encouraged to rise up against their exploitation and contemporary forms of slavery.

Neo-slavery was a term that gained traction in 1930s and 1940s throughout the US. This was a time when the memory of slavery was constantly being reimagined. The year 1931 saw the centennial of Nathaniel Turner's rebellion, and throughout that decade and the decade that followed, Jim Crow, economic depression and deepening unemployment were compared to the debt bondage and chattel slavery of the transatlantic slave trade. 'Surrounded by these oppressions, and amid the spreading threats



of fascism, colonialism, and a world on the brink of war, a collection of radical black artists and activists were inspired to create “a space and a new language for renegotiating their own relationship to the memory of slavery.” They created murals that visually aligned their contemporary situation with the slavery of the past.<sup>29</sup> And by looking at this steady wave of muralism in twentieth century black America, we can draw some important lessons about how murals tried to combat ‘neo-slavery’, how abolitionist memories were successfully woven into these murals to further incite activism, and how murals empowered individuals to rise up against their oppressive situations. From there, we can start to think about how to embed these lessons into campaign work around contemporary slavery awareness today.

One of the most important murals used to combat ‘neo-slavery’/economic depression of the 1930s and 1940s comes from Charles White in 1943. In 1941, White was awarded \$2000 from the Julius Rosenwald Fellowship to create *Contribution of the Negro to Democracy in America*. Inspired to paint a mural that presented the African American’s “active protest against those anti-democratic forces which have sought to keep a strangle hold upon the common people through economic slavery and social and political frustration,” White completed his mural within two years.<sup>30</sup> *Contribution* drew parallels between 1940s industrial labour and chattel slavery, and was created during a time when inequality pervaded every aspect of African American lives—especially employment. In 1937, after joining the Federal Arts Project under the Works Progress Administration, White bore witness to such employment disparities. Moving between the Easel and Mural



*Fig 1: Charles White, "Contribution of the Negro to Democracy in America" (1943)*

divisions, he became aware of the discriminatory practices involved within the project, to the point where he spent more time actually fighting discrimination than he did painting.<sup>31</sup> When a significant number of black artists faced discrimination, a union was formed that picketed the project for unfair practices between races. After A. Philip Randolph’s planned March on Washington in 1941, President Roosevelt was pressed to issue Federal Order 8802, which set out to ban all discriminatory employment practices.

Although African Americans tipped the Order as “the greatest victory since the Emancipation Proclamation,” it failed to find traction in the South, where Southern employers simply ignored it, insisting that “blacks were only fit for certain jobs, and that white workers would never stand the presence of blacks in the same grades.”<sup>32</sup> Employment conditions worsened when African Americans were the last to be hired and typically the first to be fired from industrial jobs. Unemployment among amongst African American men was three times that of their white counterparts. It was this deep vein of inequality running through African American communities in the US that inspired White to create a mural that outlined employment discrimination as a ‘contemporary’ form of slavery.

White used *Contribution* as a chance to raise awareness of the similarities between 1940s employment practises and chattel slavery, and to also empower African Americans to rise up against this form of oppression. To White, the mural commemorated “the untold contributions of shackled slaves, exploited workers and anonymous soldiers alongside the lives of heroic freedom-fighters, to celebrate their shared fight for ‘Democracy in America.’”<sup>33</sup> The mural depicts shackled wrists and oversized hands looming

imposingly over 27 African American bodies as they endlessly struggle for freedom. Commonly in White's artwork, the hands of both male and female figures are intentionally larger than usual to represent the continuous toiling work of black labourers, and *Contribution* adheres to this artistic trait – White inserts two large, angular hands into the mural to highlight the relentless work of factory employees and draw comparisons with slave labour. In the mural, White imprints two identities onto the anonymous manacled figure: the factory worker and the slave labourer. The shadowed, obscured face of the anonymous worker presses firmly against the industrial machine as his large arms envelop it in an attempt to ensure his job remains firmly in his grasp and not in the hands of a white worker. As he grips tightly to the cold, steely machinery that serves as the focal point of the mural, he grits his teeth and winces at the difficulty of maintaining his job in a factory where African Americans are the last to be hired and the first to be fired. The unidentifiable worker is placed in an inferior position, looking up towards the sky, most likely at his boss and allegorical 'slave owner' who stands over him in a hierarchically superior position in both employment and social standing.

Antislavery figures that participated in militant armed rebellion are used to enhance his advocacy of resistance against 1940s unfair employment and 'neo-slavery.' Drawing on the memories of antislavery individuals like Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Denmark Vesey, Nathaniel Turner, and Peter Still, White uses the presence of these revolutionary figures to inspire individuals to fight against unequal employment practices, and these figures all sit entwined in the bottom of the mural,

spanning from the 1830s through to present day in 1943. In a 1940 interview, White underscored the value of applying an antislavery memory to contemporary struggles when he acknowledged the “definite tie-up between all that has happened to the Negro in the past and the whole thinking and acting of the Negro now.”<sup>34</sup>

White uses African American antislavery history to inform contemporary figures about ways to counter Jim Crow and unequal employment practices by putting nineteenth century abolitionists in conversation with twentieth century cultural icons. Former slave turned famous abolitionist Frederick Douglass is featured marginally off-centre in *Contribution*, sandwiched between industrial machinery and manacled hands above him, and American educator and orator Booker T. Washington below. As one of the largest figures in the mural, Douglass immediately captures viewers’ attention through his stoic yet concentrated gaze and crown of grey hair. His straight, oversized hand follows his fixed stare pointing outwards toward the right hand-side of the mural as his other hand curves around Washington on horseback. The likeness of Douglass stands proudly with outstretched arms, almost Christ-like. A giant of black history, he stands with open arms to invite his brothers and sisters into his revolutionary world and follow in his footsteps. White uses the memory of the famed abolitionist to offer a solution to discriminatory employment by visually depicting an act of resistance. Douglass’ straightened right hand stretches across the piece of industrial machinery and reaches for the hanging shackle around the wrist of the unknown figure. The sharp, unswerving shape of Douglass’ arm in conjunction with his determined stare suggests he is attempting to break the

shackles binding people to exploitation in the 1940s in similar fashion to the way he was able to reclaim ownership of himself by escaping slavery in 1838.

Charles White used murals as a medium to align factory labour and black economic depression with a contemporaneous form of servitude classed as ‘neo-slavery.’ And he did this by using an antislavery memory that included abolitionist figures in his work, knitting it with slave iconography like chains and manacles that would empower and inspire African Americans to resist their slavery by another name during the 1940s. Throughout the 1920s-1970s, these types of murals—ones depicting a historic abolitionist memory to empower individuals to rise up against their current state of oppression in an act of self-emancipation—were common, and peaked most prominently (and unsurprisingly) during the Black Power Movement when Black Nationalism was the order of the day. Black communities in the 1960s and 1970s were punctuated with an antislavery visual language that served to inspire and empower individuals.

These murals, depicting abolitionists who fled from slavery to freedom, gave people a sense of hope. African Americans were able to look upon the faces of those who had endured the horrors of slavery and had become free. This gave people promise and strength. In 1991, a prolific muralist by the name of Bill Walker reflected on an anecdote that exemplifies just how important murals were, and still are, in giving people strength to overcome oppression. Walker is talking of the mural the *Wall of Respect* that was painted in 1967. This mural is quite possibly the most famous US mural. Painted at 43rd and Langley in Chicago’s Southside, it lived on

the walls of an impoverished area overlooked by the government and ridden with crime, drug abuse and murder—but the mural provided a sanctuary for the community, as Walker recounts: “I saw a young man sitting [outside] and I was in the television shop, and I walked out of the television shop. He was sitting in front of the wall. So I said, “How are you doing, brother?” [and] he said, “I’m getting my strength.””<sup>35</sup> What we can see here is that to the anonymous man on the street at 43rd and Langley, the historic and empowering antislavery narrative (alongside contemporaneous black narratives) included on the mural created a safe space for the contemplation of his identity and power. He became energised, charged and empowered with the knowledge of a radical black past that could be carried with him throughout the turbulent racial present. And so by looking to the past and understanding the lineage of the antislavery mural, its multifaceted function, and its ubiquitous nature, we are able to use historical antislavery methods to inform present day campaigns against antislavery.

So what can we learn? Of course, it’s clear that the antislavery murals of the past have a different focus from the contemporary slavery murals of today. Whilst historic antislavery murals focused specifically on African American communities collectively living with the memory and generational trauma of the transatlantic slave trade, contemporary antislavery murals have a broader intended audience, reaching a multitude of communities on every habitable continent in the world who live through human trafficking, child labour, sex slavery, debt bondage and forced marriage. Contemporary antislavery murals also have (and absolutely need to have) a stronger focus on *education* and *awareness-*

*raising*, as opposed to *empowering* individuals to overcome forms of oppression aligned with indentured servitude as seen in White's work, for example—but this doesn't mean we can't learn anything from these historic antislavery murals. In fact, quite the opposite. As Kevin Bales suggests, it's important to look to the past, to see what's come before, and to apply the tried and tested strategies from history to the eradication of contemporary slavery. There are four integral lessons from the historic antislavery mural movement that we can learn, use and apply to antislavery muralism today:

- 1) The use of antislavery figures
- 2) Community engagement
- 3) Festivals and dedication ceremonies
- 4) The volume of antislavery murals

### **The Use of Antislavery Figures**

Understandably, the use of historic abolitionist figures and former slaves is significantly more pervasive in African American antislavery murals. But to look at the broader picture, their use in antislavery murals is very successful. These are the figures that stand out most to community members, and that hook individuals into a mural in the first place. This isn't a suggestion that all contemporary slavery murals should include escaped slaves of the transatlantic slave trade, or black abolitionists from the nineteenth century. But if we want to educate individuals on the scale of contemporary slavery, where do we begin and how do we start that dialogue, especially in a visual way that captures attention quickly? One answer is through the faces and visual depictions of antislavery campaigners, abolitionists and activists. These could include



contemporary activists as well as historic individuals. This provides a successful threshold to the wealth of information surrounding the topic, and we’ve actually seen it successfully happen already in Buenos Aires with the mural portrait of Susana Trimarco. More to this point, by using abolitionist figures (perhaps placing historic and contemporary alongside each other), we are able to draw important connections with the past to show that slavery didn’t disappear when the transatlantic slave trade ended, and that it’s even more prevalent today than ever before.

### **Community Engagement**

One of the most important elements of historic antislavery murals—and murals in general—is their engagement of community members. Creating a mural in the 1960s was a collaborative process. Muralists, commonly linked to the community in some capacity, would hold town hall meetings, post flyers and display rough drafts of the mural on posters throughout the neighbourhood to invite community member input. The democratic process of making a mural was fundamental to its survival and without communal approval the wall would be vulnerable to vandalism and whitewashing. As Chicago-based muralist Bill Walker suggested, “any muralist who’s doing anything of a thoughtful nature should always have input from the community. You talk to them and they talk to you... You can’t do things that make people think they’re not a part of things.”<sup>36</sup> People would bring muralists food and water whilst they worked, and in return plied them with questions and suggestions about who should be on the mural and why. An example of this comes from San Francisco-based

artist, Dewey Crumpler. In 1977, Crumpler was painting a mural titled, *The Fire Next Time I* at the Joseph Lee Recreation Center in Hunter's Point-Bayview, when a local resident approached him. The mural depicted predominant antislavery figure Harriet Tubman, alongside Civil Rights activist Paul Robeson, but to the local resident on Oakdale Avenue, these hero choices were initially unsatisfactory: "They don't live here man. You should put up a couple of locals like Richard and Edwina. They're a stone couple." But a few weeks later the opinionated resident returned. Having researched into who Harriet Tubman was and the work she did on the underground railroad, the young man told Crumpler he was right to place Tubman and Robeson upon the wall because "black people needed to know more about important leaders so they could have somebody to respect. And besides...Richard and Edwina have broken up."<sup>37</sup>

Here we see the importance of a community dialogue, not only in gaining approval for the wall to live undamaged and without fear of vandalism in the community, but to also inspire individuals to actively research the mural's topic. It's important therefore that contemporary antislavery murals focus on community engagement—not necessarily asking for ideas and suggestions of individuals that should go on the wall—but as a back-and-forth educative dialogue regarding the prevalence of issues like human trafficking, forced labour, forced marriage or child labour. This type of conversation between artist and local resident will prompt the same sort of reaction as the anonymous resident in San Francisco—a reaction that catalyses the individual's personal research. But sometimes, it may also be less about community

members approaching the mural, and more about muralists bringing artwork to the community, as is the case with Joel Artista in Dayton, Ohio.

In 2013, the muralist partnered with the University of Dayton’s Art Street centre for the Sex Trafficking Awareness Project. In Ohio, and more broadly in the US, the crisis of forced prostitution of women and girls is widespread, but it’s often unknown or misunderstood. So Joel worked with high school students, university freshmen and international students to educate them on this crisis within their own state, using poetry and art. The project culminated with the creation of a mural that depicts the Roman goddess Proserpina in a struggle between her captor (the god of the underworld) and her mother who tries to free her. Joel and his students used this metaphor to illustrate the violent and painful nature of kidnapping and forced prostitution, and in running the project, Joel and the University of Dayton successfully used muralism as a platform upon which to engage, educate and raise awareness regarding sex slavery.

### **Festivals and Dedication Ceremonies**

Historically, when a mural was created, a dedication ceremony took place. This tradition still rings true today when we see grand unveilings of murals in the street or in public buildings. Individuals gather, dedicate the mural, and occasionally have a street festival—as least, this was the done thing back in the 1960s. *The Wall of Respect* dedication ceremony lasted nearly a week, with famous dancers, poets, musicians, and artists all showing up to celebrate black heritage. These festivals and dedication ceremonies

are important, and for the contemporary slavery mural movement, they are integral moments to raise awareness and impart further information regarding the scale of contemporary slavery and human trafficking.

An example of this happening today comes again from Joel Artista. In 2016, Joel journeyed to the eastern Indian state of West Bengal. Beautiful landscapes and incredible mountainous views greeted Joel, but they weren't the reason for his visit. Behind the veil of natural beauty in West Bengal lies the epicentre for human trafficking in South Asia, where tens of thousands of people a year are taken from their communities and trafficked through Siliguri en route to their various destinations. The human trafficking in West Bengal takes many forms: women and underage girls are sold into sex slavery, others are forced to marry older men, and both men and women are sold into forced labour—usually agricultural labourers and domestic maids respectively. Whilst work is being done by NGOs, law enforcement, the Indian government and the international community, the problem rages on, inspiring Joel to visit the area and paint a large-scale mural in a highly visible location in order to raise awareness of the issue.

The mural depicts a formerly trafficked woman named Sangeeta. She is a dancer and now works with Kolata Sanved, an organisation that uses dance as a form of therapy for trafficking survivors. As a part of this organisational work, a photographer by the name of Brooke Shaden works with women and girls to help them create a series of self-portraits that represent the women's individual stories. Selecting the poses themselves, Sangeeta chose an outstretched pose. A threatening hand is gripping her ankle

whilst she extends her arm forward towards another hand for help and support. Moved by this image, Joel Artista gained permission to use it in his mural.

Joel created the mural in tandem with the 2016 International Anti-Human Trafficking Conclave, and on the opening day of the event, a crowd of people gathered in front of the mural surrounded by local musicians and dancers—including a group of women who were human trafficking survivors. To Joel, the festival was “an inspiring moment to witness the power of people who have gone through so much, yet were determined to be part of the solution, and support others who have suffered.”<sup>38</sup> And this example proves why murals are so much more than just an image in the street. They have the ability to bring people together from a multitude of backgrounds and raise awareness of contemporary slavery in a creative, emotional and collaborative way that fosters important international ties. This is the way we are going to rid the world of contemporary slavery—if we, from all walks of life, pull together in the same direction, we can ensure no human being is owned, sold, trafficked, or forced into labour.

### **The Volume of Antislavery Murals**

This lesson seems quite obvious, but it is probably the most important one on the list: we need as many contemporary antislavery murals as possible. Historically, figures of the antislavery past lined the streets of black communities in the urban north in cities like Chicago, Detroit, Harlem, Baltimore, Newark, Boston, St. Louis, Washington D.C., and Philadelphia. These murals all ensured the figures of history that were so commonly left out of America’s

commemorative landscape—through the lack of acknowledgment in statues, plaques or school curricula and textbooks—were finally remembered. These murals unsilenced the hidden voices, and gave visual form to the invisible heroes of America’s black history, and they did so in a plentiful way. Murals became the urban wallpaper of black neighbourhoods. You could walk down the streets of Chicago’s Southside, or around the blocks of Harlem, and see Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass and the unknown heroes who endured the slave trade—and contemporary slavery murals need to do the exact same thing.

With the 2017 initiative to create ‘slavery-free cities,’ murals can be an important catalyst for making this happen. If every major city had an antislavery mural to raise awareness of contemporary slavery, it would help to make sure it was no longer hidden in plain sight. It would help unsilence the shackled voices, and help bring wider public acknowledgement and awareness to the 40.3 million individuals enslaved today. As we’ve seen above, these murals don’t all need to look the same, and in fact they shouldn’t. They just need to be everywhere: in every community, every city, every country and every continent. They can teach the telltale signs of slavery, the local stories and the abolitionists and heroes of the movement, but they can also offer a lifeline to those in need, quite literally. In April 2017, a mural was unveiled on the side of Tampa’s Greyhound bus station that was made to help human trafficking victims find an escape. The mural reads, “I am not for sale, I AM PRICELESS,” alongside the human trafficking hotline number (1-888-373-7888), which was called more than 1,600 times last year in Florida alone.

## **Conclusion**

So we've seen that antislavery murals of the past used their history. They engaged with the community. They created celebratory festivals and dedication ceremonies around each mural, and they lined every street in every community that was physically possible. This chapter wasn't written to suggest that murals will suddenly end contemporary slavery, or that they will immediately change the laws. It was written to help you understand the weight of power behind murals, and to show you the lessons and invaluable strategies learned from their history in the antislavery movement since the 1920s, in the hope that we can use them today. Contemporary antislavery murals live in every habitable continent to raise awareness of the 40.3 million enslaved today. These murals offer educative information on contemporary slavery, rehabilitative support to survivors, and literal lifelines to those who need to find a way out of their current situation—but let's think bigger. By using murals as a part of activist campaigns like 'slavery-free cities', the International Anti-Human Trafficking Conclave or projects for the UNODC, we can make sure antislavery awareness is brought to the general public in **every major city** in the world in order to spread the message loud and clear: “I am not for sale, I AM PRICELESS.”

## **Chapter 2 – “Present in Every Picture”: Photography in the Modern Antislavery Movement**

Emily Brady

For those of us who work to combat modern slavery, photographs of slavery are never far from our mind. Posters, reports, websites – it is impossible to access any anti-slavery media without coming face to face with victims of slavery. Gazing into the eyes of enslaved people as we navigate media has become common practice. Now more than ever, abolitionists attempt to create public sympathy by drawing on the suffering of the enslaved. But with ever increasing representations, so too comes ever increasing responsibility. What does it actually mean to take photographs of enslaved people? How can we ensure that we are behaving ethically? And why should we care about how images are taken, as long as they’re evocative and powerful?

At the end of this chapter, I construct a list of tips on how to use this kind of imagery ethically. This is inspired by a year of research detailed in this chapter. When I began this research, my understanding of abolitionist imagery was rooted in nineteenth century ideas of the abolitionist movement in the United States. This movement relied heavily on imagery; for many people, the image of the kneeling slave, chain hands raised in supplication, asking, “Am I Not a Man and a Brother?” informs their understanding of slavery. This iconic image was designed by prominent white



abolitionist Josiah Wedgewood in 1787. Abolitionists reproduced it countless times in varying capacities, from posters to teapots. Contemporary scholars have often pointed out what a problematic image this is, as we see the semi-naked man in this image as a passive victim, begging for freedom from a paternalistic external force.<sup>39</sup>

In the past, as now, the idea of ‘truth’ was key to abolitionist imagery. No surprise then that the most popular medium through which modern media visually represents slavery is photography. This too was utilised by the nineteenth century abolitionist movement in the United States, in the image of Private Gordon. This photograph shows an African American man who had fled slavery to join the Union Army in the Civil War, with his bare back to the camera displaying his horrific scarring from being whipped. As early as 1863, contemporaries lauded the truthful nature of photography, as the *New York Independent* proclaimed, “This Card Photograph should be multiplied by 100,000 and scattered over the states. It tells the story in a way that even Mrs. Stowe [author of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*] can not approach, because it tells the story to the eye.”<sup>40</sup> Photography was a powerful tool in the abolitionist movement, as abolitionists distributed photographs as evidence of the atrocities carried out under the name of slavery.

We may think that we are ‘above’ such interpretations of slavery in our current context, as I did when I started this research. I was quietly confident that I would not see the mistakes of the past repeated. We have learned from the mistakes of the past, surely, and would not produce such problematic imagery. We may assure ourselves that we no longer rely on photographs of semi-

naked, victimized, and racially ‘othered’ slaves in order to evoke public sympathy. We may use the same methods – with images working to inspire outraged action from the viewer – but with our improved technology and modern understanding of the camera our images cannot possibly be as naively problematic. It is barely even something we need to worry about, as long as the images are aesthetically pleasing and motivate the audience. Right?

Unfortunately, this legacy of victimization frames the modern anti-slavery movement to this day. Take the image of the enslaved man asking ‘Am I Not A Man And A Brother.’<sup>41</sup> In 2007, the National Waterfront Museum in Swansea used the image in banners above its exhibition area. In these banners, each individual figure represented one thousand slaves transported across the Atlantic. Scholars such as Geoffrey Cubit, Laurajane Smith and Ross Wilson have suggested that this “might be criticised for imaginatively reinforcing rather than undermined the commodification of African bodies that the slave trade itself had epitomized.”<sup>42</sup> Over-relying on this image in historical memory of slavery is problematic; if a contemporary audience equate slavery with chains, they will not recognise its modern, often invisible, form (to say nothing of reproducing an image that encourages paternalistic, victimized attitudes).

The novelty of the scientific ‘truth’ the camera presents may have reduced in fervour since the nineteenth century, yet the camera remains a prominent device in the modern fight against slavery. From photojournalists to survivors, countless photographers adopt numerous approaches in an attempt to present slavery to their audience. Some of them will do it astonishingly well, and some of

them will create highly problematic imagery that ultimately harms their subject and the wider movement. In order to embrace images that are respectful of survivors, and to shun those which (perhaps unwittingly) feed the institution of slavery, we need to develop a more responsible photographic culture.

When studying the photographic culture of the movement, I realised that I could broadly fit all the imagery I encountered into four categories. As soon as I did this, some common themes and interesting power dynamics began to emerge. The categories are:

- 1) Documentary photography, which involved a photographer entering a site of slavery and documenting the realities they see, which for the purpose of this essay also includes photojournalism.
- 2) Re-enactment photography, in which scenes of modern slavery are performed to the camera by actors.
- 3) Contextualised photography, in which traditional photographic modes are given an anti-slavery message by the context in which they are produced.
- 4) Survivor produced photography, in which those who have survived slavery utilise photography in order to express their experience. This final category may encompass elements of the other categories, but it is important to distinguish it as separate due to the identity of the photographer informing so directly on the subject matter.

I will explore each of these categories in turn, all the while asking you to remember some images in these categories you may have come across. Often many of these images may not easily fall

into these categories – was that girl I saw in that poster an actor, or a slave? Did the photographer ask for consent before they took that image? Did I treat that image more seriously because of the caption, or because I projected my own meaning onto it? By evaluating some significant photographs and projects that have emerged in recent years, I want to encourage you to ask some of these questions of yourself. In so doing, we can look to create a culture of responsible image use within the modern anti-slavery movement.

### **Documentary Photography**

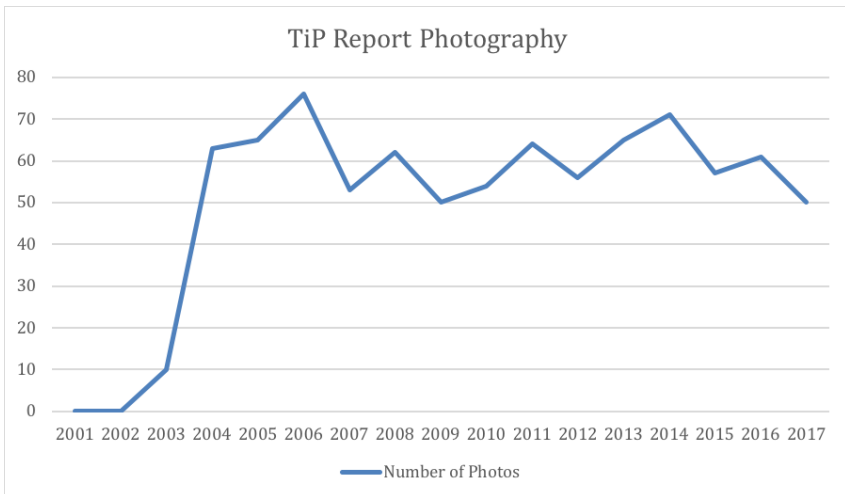
When I began this research, I was astonished at the volume and diversity of images available under the banner of documentary photography. In terms of location, content, and composition, documentary photography can encapsulate a huge range of images and with it a huge range of potential ethical obstacles. Normally, documentary photography involves a photographer entering a space in which slavery is occurring, or engaging with figures who have been involved in slavery, and attempting to document the reality of the situation. This style can take many forms; crucially, some may attempt to engage with their subjects and gain their consent, whilst others believe that overly engaging with subjects will result in inauthentic images. The sheer volume of images was overwhelming. I decided, therefore, to study one publication in detail to see what it could tell me.

### **The Trafficking in Persons Report**

Today, you can barely open any report on human trafficking or modern slavery without encountering documentary photography. Yet to utilise images, and therefore experiences, of those who have

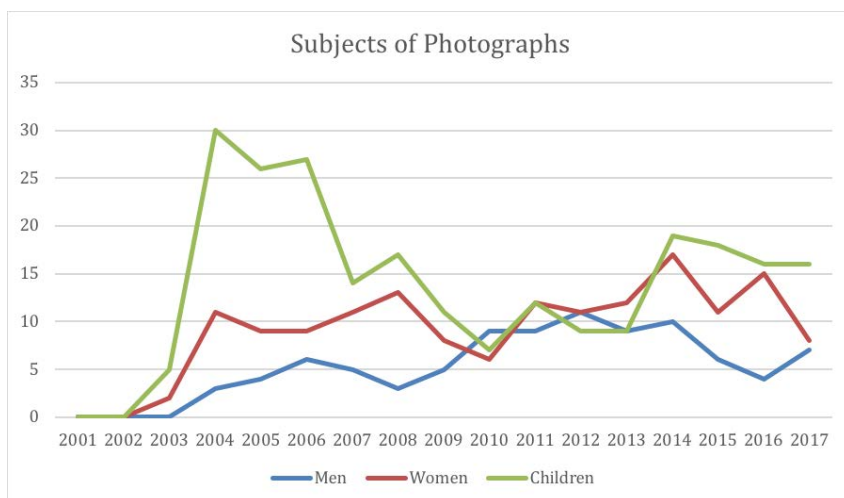
suffered in order to perform a function within a document risks recreating moments of trauma. As the most influential document surrounding government efforts to combat modern day slavery, the Trafficking in Persons Report (TiP Report) creates summaries of the global situation, as well as nuanced narratives outlining the situation in each country. Created annually by the United States’ Department of State, the report increasingly relies on images to convey its message alongside the text. Due to the reports’ global significance, creating a thorough analysis of their use of imagery helps us understand the photographic culture surrounding the modern day anti-slavery movement, and some of the benefits and disadvantages of using documentary photography.

My understanding of my task thus established, I set to work compiling a database of all of the photographs used within the TiP Report. A quick glance at any of the most recent TiP Reports shows that they all utilise a similar kind of imagery on their title page from 2003 onwards.<sup>43</sup> The images are always of a set of four



eyes, looking out directly at the viewer. The people in the image are always diverse, including various races, genders, and ages. The eyes are the only details of these figures visible. The eyes of the people gaze out at the audience, evoking a sense of common humanity. The obscurity of any other part of their body, including their mouths, is suggestive of imprisonment and silencing. The effect surrounding the image – that of a paper rip – suggests that the eyes have burst out of the very paper of the report itself. From the very first, the report demands that we make eye contact implied victims, acknowledging their common humanity.

Looking closer at the reports, I found an increasing trend toward the visual from 2003 onwards, which then reaches a more constant level from 2004 onwards. From 2004 to 2017, there is no exact consistency in the number of photographs used, as the number ranges from 50 to 76 in various reports. Part of the reason for this change is that, although later reports dedicate more space to photography, earlier reports would position photographs in pairs.



For instance, in the 2006 report there are 17 instances of pages featuring more than one photo on it. In 2017, there are only seven. Therefore, the TiP Report dedicates more space to images in later reports, whilst earlier reports position several smaller photographs in pairs. Making images larger, and allowing them more space on the page, is one way to make them more impactful.

Analysing the images in term of subject matter, by categorizing the images into those of men, women, and children, we can see that there are more images of children than any other group.<sup>44</sup> There are only three years in which they do not make the majority of images: in 2010, 2012, and 2013. At this point, the margins are much closer together than any other years. There is only one year (2010) where there are more images of men than any other group. There is also interesting scope to compare the sizes of images, as the larger images are more likely to be of children than of any other group. So, generally the TiP Report utilises more images of children than any other group. Given that the objective of abolitionist imagery is to evoke public sympathy from the viewer, images of children would be the obvious choice. But it evokes questions: can a child ever consent to having their photograph taken? Will it be harmful to them in future to come across these images? And does focussing on the experiences of children paint them as ‘undeserving victims,’ whilst painting the adults as ‘deserving victims’?

It is also worth being aware of our own biases in terms of our geographic location. In the TiP Report, some countries are portrayed negatively whilst some have positive attributes. For instance, most of Western Europe and the United States of America are for the most part absent from the negative images found in other parts of

the world. Crucially, the report relies on images of government officials and protests to create a sense of effort to combat slavery. In addition, the prominent use of historical artefacts and locations rather than contemporary images indicates that the report attempts to create these country's slavery issues as fundamentally based in the past. Granted, slavery is undoubtedly more visible in some countries than others, and so would more readily lend itself to being photographed in countries where slavery can operate out in the open. Nevertheless, the audience may interpret a lack of imagery from some countries as sign that slavery does not, in fact, exist to any significant extent in that country.

### **The Issue of Consent**

Through studying the photojournalism of the modern slavery movement, I came across a case of a photographer who had photo-shopped another artists work into his own images. This, I thought, had the potential to demonstrate that the 'truth' of photography could be easily compromised. Yet by researching this photographer further, I realised the full extent to which photojournalism can be dangerous, and the extent to which we should resist regarding issues of consent as overly fussy box ticking which may prevent powerful imagery from being released. But the issue of consent in photojournalism was brought to the fore last year when photographer Souvid Datta took an image of a sixteen-year-old girl, named 'Beauty,' being raped in a brothel. Datta uploaded the image on his website alongside her age, her name, and her story of having been a sex worker since the age of twelve. Datta claimed that he had 'Beauty's' consent. However, critics have pointed out



the problematic nature of this, as local activist Shreya Bhat states “many of us saw it as someone documenting something illegal, in a rather insensitive fashion, and not taking responsibility [for] any of it by calling the 16-year-old responsible and accountable, instead.”<sup>45</sup> Datta responded to the backlash this photograph created by stating in a now deleted Facebook post: “Beauty, at 16, functioned as more of a responsible and accountable adult than many people I know – crucially holding herself to those standards too. Her participation in this project was fierce and well-informed, and to say otherwise, especially having not met her, is deeply paternalistic and presumptuous.”<sup>46</sup> We can see that the issue of consent has become a fighting ground for whether or not the act of taking an image of an underage person being raped is appropriate by today’s modern standards of photojournalism.

Not only was this image of rape distributed, it was included in Lens Culture’s advert for the Magnum Photo Awards. LensCulture put up a Facebook post featuring this image, reading “Open for entries – the Magnum Photography Awards! One of the best opportunities for photographers around the world to get recognition for their work. Don’t miss out!”<sup>47</sup> That an internationally recognised publication would feel able to use an image of a girl being raped in such a commercialised and insensitive way speaks volumes about the dangers of photojournalism. Capturing the truth of slavery as justification to further compromise individuals’ dignity and freedom is dangerous. Consent is not a blockade to art; it is an invaluable tool, ensuring that image use is responsible. Consent should not be used as a shield to hide behind in order to take advantage of those in slavery. Bhat said it best when they stated,

“Does he not realise that it isn’t ‘sex work’ anymore, but ‘rape’ that he is documenting?... Him being in the room, photographing the client with the minor sex worker makes him party to the rape. Does he not realise these commonplace things?”<sup>48</sup>

### **Re-Enactment Photography**

As is clear to us by Souvid Datta’s images, documentary photography can expose the enslaved to all sorts of compromising and dangerous portrayals. Datta’s images make a compelling case against ‘authentic’ images of modern day slavery. One possible alternative are what I have called re-enactment images, whereby actors perform sites of human trafficking or modern slavery for the camera. These are staged images, relying on research and prior understanding of slavery to present an accurate depiction of what survivors must endure. I can recall sitting on a train and seeing these kind of images on posters, often showing children or women looking sadly out, accompanied by text asking for help. However, the problem with relying entirely on re-enactment photography is that it often involves a kind of visual shorthand, relying on the viewer to understand the images based both on the content of the image and their already existing understanding of slavery. In this way, viewers can have existing stereotypes they hold confirmed.

### **The National Crime Agency**

In early 2018, The National Crime Agency launched a photo series called ‘Invisible People’ that toured the UK. The exhibition “aims to portray the signs of slavery and exploitation.”<sup>49</sup> These images intended to function as warnings to an audience and make

slavery recognisable. In interviews, photographer Rory Carnegie talks about his role working with trafficking survivors, stating “Several years ago I worked on an extended project with young refugees, all without parents, helping them to take photographs and to visualise their feelings. When I was approached for this exhibition, it seemed like a natural extension of that work.”<sup>50</sup> This statement clearly intends to add a degree of authenticity to the images presented. In reality, however, all of the people in this campaign are either actors or friends of the photographer.

The images emphasise theatricality over reality. In one image, the viewer sees a woman, again scantily clad under a jacket, lying on a mattress. This quote from Carnegie evidences that the aesthetics of the image were a priority in its creation:

I wanted the image to show how lonely and eventually numbing that experience is, and for that ugliness to be contrasted against the bright blue of the wig – a fancy dress item that we would usually associate with a fun event – but here is used as a disguise, perhaps of her own identity to herself - to further emphasise how unjust the situation is.<sup>51</sup>

That the woman is wearing a wig to create an artistic effect of contrast speaks to some skewed priorities in the composition of this image. Rather than observing reality, we see a fantastical imagining of a space in which slavery occurs. The sexualisation of slavery is also deeply flawed. In this image, we see a figure in a state of undress in a passive position. Her lack of eye contact with the viewer, her

submissive body language, and the positioning of the camera from the perspective of the perpetrator all serve to disempower her. Her nakedness further runs the risk of creating highly sexualised imagery in an effort to convey vulnerability. Imagery of human trafficking can run the risk of appearing pornographic, due to the theatricality of the imagery and over-reliance on nakedness to suggest vulnerability. This takes us back to the very first images we looked at of 'Am I Not A Man And A Brother.'

Although the role of sex trafficking is undoubtedly a significant component of modern day slavery, and demands recognition, it must be handled sensitively to avoid dangerous stereotypes. The intended oppressive effect of the darkened edges of the image serve to focus the viewer's gaze closer on the figure within the picture. This places the horrors of slavery ever closer on the bodies of the victims, rather than the perpetrators or the complicit consumers. In this way, the photographer presents the suffering of victims to the viewers for consumption rather than the actions of those responsible. This kind of close reading shows to us the extent which re-enactment photography runs the risk of doing more harm than good.

### **Contextualised Photography**

Some projects have avoided this issue by co-opting traditional modes of photography with an anti-slavery message through contextualised photography. Through the context they provide, most commonly by the use of captions, images that seem straightforward and simple are given deeper context and meaning. I came across this mode of photography when I was asked to supply

imagery for a Rights Lab report to a very tight deadline and, in an afternoon of frantic research, came across an unusual set of images that stopped me in my tracks. The Dark Figure\* makes use of the traditional landscape, and The New Abolitionists co-opt the traditional portrait. For those who view them, they provide a disconcerting and surprising view into slavery.

### **The Dark Figure\* and The New Abolitionists**

The Dark Figure\* is a photo project by Amy Romer, who takes photographs of sites of modern slavery. Romer states that she wants “people to be reminded of somewhere they have lived or visited; somewhere they feel safe.”<sup>52</sup> Without context, these images of houses, suburbs, and winding roads are reminiscent of the kind of view one would see on Google Maps. Within the context of the project, the viewer sees that slavery can be hiding in plain sight. The images have a haunting normality which only understanding of Romer’s intent can give. The absence of any people in these images, whilst haunting, speaks to the erasure of survivors upon their discovery.

The New Abolitionists’ images also rely on context to deliver their true message. Upon observing the images in isolation, the viewer will see black and white portraits of individuals, and small groups, facing the camera against a black background. Each image sparks of individuality, with different poses and props in each reflecting the people within. Some figures may be recognisable to the casual viewer – including celebrities such as Yoko Ono and Lin Manuel Miranda– but many will not. Upon considering the captions, we gain a wider understanding of the context of these

photographs. The portraits are all of people who identify as “New Abolitionists,” including survivors, activists, and celebrities, and “celebrates New Abolitionists and their determination to end slavery once and for all in our lifetimes.”<sup>53</sup>

The power, yet also the shortcoming, of these images is their distortion of the viewer’s expectations. We see traditional black and white portraits in a recognisable studio settings, and photography of recognisable streets, and assume an ordinary context. However, the accompanying captions then upset these assumptions by driving home the reality of slavery. The risk is that for those who come across these images out of context they may do little to educate about slavery. In addition, photography runs the risk of erasing those who have not survived slavery by placing emphasis on survivors who are able to contribute to the photographic canon upon their release, whether as photographer or subject. Yet the role of survivors in photography is one that is crucial to the development of anti-slavery photography.

### **Survivor Photography**

By focussing on survivor’s experiences, we gain a new understanding of what trafficking looks like and what individuals have had to endure in order to survive. We also see portrayals that are symbolic of their suffering without having to portray it in a way that re-enacts their trauma. If correctly supported, utilising photography can be an empowering way to give survivors a voice. This can be in the form of giving survivors a camera and empowering them to take their own images, or allowing them to direct the person taking the images to represent their own intentions.

The first time I came across these kinds of images, it was not until I understood the context in which they were produced that their true power hit me. In order to demonstrate this to you, I will discuss the work of PAG-ASA and Voice of Freedom.

### **Voice of Freedom**

Voice of Freedom is one such organisation that has dedicated itself to survivor-generated photography. It takes into account two stages of photography – the choosing and framing of subjects, and the use of the resulting images. The images discussed here are from a series with ten Nigerian women who were trafficked through Libya to Italy. Voice of Freedom defines their photography as:

We work within the discipline of participatory photography – a recognised tool for advocacy and social activism. Participants are supported as they create their own photographic work - a facilitator works with the group, teaching them to use a camera so they can define, communicate and improve their situation.<sup>54</sup>

The names of the photographs come from the individual who took them, so the image “Sarah Oluwatimileyin” is named for the photographer. Without context, the image shows a young woman sitting at a table, eating food. Yet the context of the photographer-provided caption embodies the picture with a sense of tragedy. Oluwatimileyin informs the viewer that when this unnamed woman turns her face in this way, it reminds her of a childhood friend who was sold into slavery. Oluwatimileyin writes, “Meanwhile, later we find out that they took her to one village for slavery—her dad sold

her for slavery so she can bring money. There was no money so that is why they sold the girl.”<sup>55</sup> Giving a survivor of modern slavery a camera transforms an everyday act such as eating at a table into a vigil for the lost woman. This survivor’s lens invites us to mourn the loss of this woman despite her absence even from our sight.

Voice of Freedom’s photographs frequently transform the familiar into sites of atrocity. The photograph “Emmanuel Joyce” appears innocuous, as it shows only an off-screen arm holding up an iron. Yet, as with Oluwatimileyin’s image, the caption provides an unsettling context, which disrupts the everyday familiarity of the object in the image. Joyce details to the audience:

This is an iron that many people use to iron clothes. But there is another thing they use the iron for. Most of the madames that brought guests to Europe used the same iron to maltreat people, especially women that are trafficked—they use this iron on them when they get refused to pay their money. Even a friend of mine, she showed me her back where her madame plugged the iron and press it on her back. It is very bad for a woman to use an iron that is plugged, to put it on someone’s body, all in the name of money.”<sup>56</sup>

In a manner reminiscent of the imagery of *The Dark Figure* and *New Abolitionists*, the caption transforms the audience’s expectations attached to a familiar object. A functional, recognisable item becomes an object of torture. This image is reminiscent of a traditional still life image, whereby a simple object is the subject of the photograph. However, the traumatic nature of the item disrupts this simple style. As the woman chooses to hold up the iron with her arm visible, rather than placing it on a table, it intertwines her with the object. In addition, that the survivors within this project



are able to provide full captions further provides a voice to these survivors and their experiences.

### **PAG-ASA**

Another organisation that dedicates itself to promoting survivor photography is PAG-ASA. PAG-ASA is a specialised centre for victims of human trafficking in Belgium, which offers survivors multiple levels of support, from shelter to psychological counselling to the self-expression through Photo-Voice project. PAG-ASA outlined how, with one of their projects:

11 victims worked with us to create these photos. Each picture depicts an image and a message they wanted to convey. Each picture gives a glimpse of their personal experience and shows what it means to be a victim of human trafficking. The victims are present in every picture, both emotionally and physically, as they envisioned and interpreted them. Their stories are therefore an important means not only to raise awareness on human trafficking, but also to transmit a powerful message of strength.<sup>57</sup>

PAG-ASA differs from Voice of Freedom in that the survivors themselves did not actually take the photographs. A photographer was given specific instructions by the survivors as to what each photograph should contain and what message they wanted to convey, including aspects such as scenery. Yet the role of the survivor as image creator, despite not actually being the photographer, is emphasised by the images being credited to the

survivor's anonymous aliases. Therefore, the role of the survivors in constructing these images and shaping their outcome firmly establishes them as survivor photography.

The photograph 'Deprivation of Liberty,' by Woman from Morocco, demonstrates several of these sensibilities. The photograph shows a woman on the other side of a glass window of a veranda. The woman's raised hand blocks her face. This defends her anonymity, as does her alias as "Woman from Morocco." We can also see hinges on the sides of the door, which is suggestive of locks and restriction. The caption that accompanies this image reflects this: "Whenever the lady of the house left, she would lock me up for hours in the veranda, with only one small bottle of water."<sup>58</sup> The hinges are further emphasised by the use of symmetry in the image; the woman is positioned exactly in the middle of the image with matching wood panels and a paler textured fabric bookmarking the image. This symmetry makes the hinges stand out more, and encloses the figure within the door frame. The photograph has the effect of a mirror, as the woman is placed behind a reflective surface facing the viewer, suggesting that the viewer and the woman are one and the same.

In this series, the photographers depict experiences evocative of their time in slavery utilising black and white photography. When they utilise colour, however, it is in scenes depicting their freedom. 'Hope,' by Woman from China, shows a woman lifted joyfully towards the sky by a group of people. The caption reads, "Thank you to all the people from PAG-ASA who carry me towards the light."<sup>59</sup> The ray of light shining down compounds this message, creating an impression of freedom and joy. The colour of the

woman’s blue headscarf suggests an individuality and freedom of expression which black and white photography would struggle to capture. Images such as these are able to capture both the sorrow of being enslaved and the joy of being free, as PAG-ASA states, “for victims, explaining what they have been through is a complicated and distressing experience; the feeling that words are not enough is often overwhelming.”<sup>60</sup>

Part of the power of images produced by survivor is that they are able to make their experiences relatable to an everyday audience without relying on explicit horror or exploitation. Instead, their camerawork and captions transform recognisable and everyday moments into symbolic representations of their experiences. We have all seen an iron, but an iron as an object of torture is not a situation familiar to us. However, it is unfair to rely solely on those who have survived modern slavery to depict it. Whilst for some survivors it may prove therapeutic, for others it may prove traumatic. In addition, PAG-ASA stresses the fact that survivors should be under no obligation to document their experiences or tell their stories. Creating a photographic culture that relies solely on those who have survived exploitation runs the risk of re-exploitation.

### **Conclusion: Tips for Ethical Image Use**

As we have seen, the current anti-slavery photographic culture is loaded with problems. From issues regarding consent, to images not being ‘truthful,’ to images reinforcing stereotypes, there is no end to the potential damage that photographs have the power to do. But they also have the power to do a lot of good. Those who seek

to take and utilise photography of survivors have a responsibility to those in the images, meaning that the risk of re-exploitation is always present, but so too is the chance for empowerment.

This topic is rife with ethical conundrums. If taking a picture of an enslaved child without consent will help raise awareness of slavery, is it right to take it? Can someone who is enslaved ever truly consent without the pressures of their perpetrators affecting their decision? Does engaging survivors with photography empower them, or force them to recreate sites of trauma?

There are no easy answers to these questions. However, there are some easy tips to bear in mind when selecting images for reports:

- 1) Being **aware of the ethics** and responsibilities of utilising this imagery.
- 2) Utilising **survivors' voices** wherever and whenever possible. For those who wish to use their experiences to empower themselves and others, allowing survivors a seat at the table is the best way to ensure fair image use. This can be both in terms of consultation, but of also seeking out their art.
- 3) Creating an **accountable culture**, by calling out those who utilise or create harmful imagery is the only way in which to prevent it from being distributed.
- 4) **Getting creative** with our photographic imagery, and refusing to rely on atrocity imagery to engage public sympathy.

With every photograph we publish, or take, or distribute, it is important that we ask ourselves who this image is hurting in order

to cultivate a more responsible photographic culture. This is the only way we can avoid the problematic portrayals of the “Am I Not a Man and a Brother” imagery of our forebears.

## **Chapter 3 – Picturing and Voicing Enslavement: Language and Representation**

Katarina Schwarz

Slavery does not exist in a vacuum. It arises from the specific contextual and cultural environments in which it is rooted, and can also be legitimised by those same factors. Too often, the abolition of one form of labour exploitation simply paves the way for another, and campaigners are required to start afresh in their efforts to ensure freedom and justice for vulnerable people. Individual vulnerability, discrimination, and failures of the rule of law all contribute to exploitation, and it would be difficult (if not impossible) for any organisation to overcome all these factors within a single context, let alone nationally or globally. Likewise, antislavery is not a movement that exists in a vacuum. The theories and principles underlying efforts to achieve significant and lasting change constantly collide with the harsh realities of their environments, and the real, lived suffering of the victims. Figuring out how to balance the direct needs of immediate victims with the broader institutional changes necessary to bring an end to modern slavery is a Herculean task. Attempts are always necessary, but immediate, total success unlikely.

Finding a place within a broader network of organisations and movements for structural change is often necessary in order to

contribute to lasting change. No organisation can singlehandedly bring about the complete abolition of human exploitation in all its current and future forms. With the vast numbers of actors in a huge range of fields touching upon modern slavery and in many different places, the development of overarching plans or policies defining the broader movement is implausible. Organisations are often stretched to capacity (and beyond) as it is, leaving little time or resources for higher-level planning of the antislavery movement as a whole. Beyond this, organisations often have their own missions or models for change which are not necessarily in agreement with one another. What is common to most organisations within the area, however, is the centrality of campaigning – of language and representation in working towards the broader antislavery agenda.

Language and representation are powerful tools for drawing attention to a cause, and in creating the necessary conditions for change. Language can, however, be a double-edged sword, and approaches used to abolish a specific practice can also have the destabilising effect of reinforcing the factors which gave rise to that system. This is a particularly serious concern in the antislavery arena, where the underlying economic and ideological factors that drive exploitation simply shift to similar forms of exploitation, but with different names and forms. Slavery becomes peonage or apprenticeship, plantation labour moves to sweatshops and prisons, ownership becomes control and exploitation. As the factors which drive slavery continue, forms of enslavement continue to adapt rather than dying out whenever antislavery campaigners achieve success. Having one eye in the future, as well as two in the present and one in the past, is therefore vital to ensuring continuity and

success for antislavery campaigners (exactly how one might evolve in order to see with four eyes at the same time remains a fundamental question which cannot be addressed in this chapter).

Human exploitation manifests and re-manifests in a continuous cycle where efforts to achieve change are too focused on the abolition of particular acts or institutions. After British abolition in the Caribbean, emancipated slaves were placed into indentured servitude through an apprenticeship system which required them to give 40.5 hours of free labour to their ex-masters in every week. Enforcement of the new rules governing labour were scarcely enforced, and many planters worked their apprentices more harshly than they had when they were still 'slaves', with more brutal punishments. When this system was abolished, newly emancipated people were often sent adrift and left struggling for their lives, as slave holders imported 'Coolies' to fill the labour vacuum. 'Coolies' – indentured servants from the Indian subcontinent or South China imported into what had previously been slave economies – were often worked in conditions very similar to enslavement, and despite the difference in legal status and name, faced many of the same forms of abuse that enslaved people had. Similarly deplorable forms of exploitation immediately took root, despite the formal eradication of 'slavery'.

The Americas tell a similar post-emancipation story. After the American Civil War, systems of peonage took over in the South, functionally returning many African-Americans to a system of slavery by another name. Prison labour systems grew to replace much of the lost 'slave' labour, and in some cases the two systems overlapped. The Louisiana State Penitentiary, for instance, also



known as 'Angola' (a nod to the origins of the 'slaves' that worked the former plantation) began life as four separate plantations (Angola, Belle View, Killarney, and Panola) employing 'slave' labour and bought with the profits from a slave trading firm. After the civil war, the land was run (as a single plantation) using convicts leased from the state and subjected to significant amounts of abuse. The facility opened as a prison in 1901 and continues to employ prison labour in farming and manufacturing. Buttressed by the extreme racism which still pervaded the country after the Civil War, peonage and prison labour practices often closely resembled the systems of enslavement from which they had grown. African-Americans were frequently targeted by the 'justice' system and subjected to new forms of exploitation on the basis of fallacious or malicious cases. Newly freed people in North America, like their Caribbean counterparts, were also left destitute and faced brutal treatment on plantations and in 'contraband camps' near union army bases; hundreds of thousands died from disease and hunger in the aftermath of the Civil War.<sup>61</sup>

In South America and Australia, the rise of 'blackbirding' took up where the transatlantic trade had left off. Peruvian ships in 1862-63 combed the islands of the Pacific, coercing and kidnapping indigenous populations in order to fill extreme labour shortages in Peru (having officially abolished slavery in 1854). In the 1870s, the blackbirding trade dominated the supply of labourers to plantations in the region, particularly sugar cane plantations in Fiji and Queensland. While the British and Queensland governments placed some limits on the recruitment and conditions of labour – requiring that labourers be paid three pounds per year (a white

shepherd would earn ten times that), provided with basic clothing and returned to their villages after the conclusion of three years – this was far from the reality. Workers were often recruited by force or deceit, and living conditions were abysmal. In Fiji the mortality rate amongst labourers was 540 in every 1000<sup>62</sup> – demonstrating the brutality of treatment for indigenous Pacific Island labourers. Blackbirding continues in the present, filling labour needs on plantations in, for instance, Central America where indigenous people are kidnapped or coerced to do gruelling work for minimal pay.<sup>63</sup>

This recycling of exploitation makes it clear that the antislavery movement is already, and continues to be, a long game. It is the complex nature of enslavement that makes careful consideration of the nature of representation particularly important, as it can help to ensure continuity without requiring too much coordination of disparate organisations, communities and groups. Law will always place central importance on naming and defining acts, with both practical and symbolic repercussions. Practices falling into two distinct categories, regardless of how similar the real experience might be, may face entirely different measures and procedures. The abolition of one practice often gives birth to a new practice designed specifically to avoid the laws but continue the underlying practices. The currency of language has already been acknowledged by the modern antislavery movement which reframes practices otherwise described as ‘trafficking’, ‘forced labour’, ‘debt bondage’ and ‘exploitation’ in the language of enslavement in part to improve social and political traction. This description, though controversial, has been employed to achieve continuity in campaigning for the

abolition of practices which themselves are the continuation and legacies of systems of enslavement. Some of the undesired effects of more general language beyond the key terms or ‘buzzwords’, however, is less often explored by organisations working and campaigning on the ground.

### **The Challenge**

Employing language and approaches that serve to empower individuals and communities is a constant challenge for organisations seeking to create meaningful change to systems of exploitation and redress for those enslaved within them. Particularly where organisations come from a position outside of the communities they seek to support, there is a danger that the language employed further reinforces the victimisation of enslaved persons and survivors. The ways in which victims and survivors are represented can have a significant effect not only on their experiences, but on the broader social movement advocating for meaningful change. As recognised by Hockett and Saucier, framing can have a significant impact on whether social hierarchies which perpetuate abuse are reinforced or resisted.<sup>64</sup> It is necessary to maintain a constant dialogue between organisations and affected persons and communities, as well as a recognition of the preferences and will of survivors already expressed.

Language and self-expression have historically been widely repressed in the continued oppression of communities subjected to persistent exploitation. Enslaved Africans within the transatlantic ‘slave trade’ were wrenched from their homelands and denied communication in their mother tongues. Throughout Africa and

the Americas lingua franca, pidgin and creole languages developed as a direct result of the experience of enslavement and colonisation, often usurping native and indigenous languages. Traditional music, dance, and religious practices were broadly suppressed, often under threat of severe punishment. Ensuring ownership and influence over language and self-expression can therefore be vital to empowering victimised people and communities, and a lack of engagement with such can entrench marginalisation. Moreover, the effect of victimisation in itself can often be to deny a person their subjective voice and agency, and thus ensuring an emancipatory discourse around victims and survivors can be central to their recovery and to lasting change.

So what does the antislavery usable past have to tell us about the use of language and representations of enslavement and exploitation?

For centuries, antislavery campaigners have used language and representations of the ‘slave’ as a tool for agitating for change. In an age without internet, video, or instant communication, abolitionists had to make their audiences feel the injustices of enslavement deeply enough that they would put aside their own convenience. They had to disseminate that message as broadly as possible, and beyond their speaking tours had to remain connected to a disparate audience. Like the modern antislavery campaigner, these people had to overcome the apathy of their societies, particularly where the victims were geographically and socially distant. In order to overcome these distances, such campaigners sought to highlight the shared experiences of ‘Negro slaves’ and their white, Western audiences. In many cases, this involved placing

the body of the 'slave' at the centre of the discourse, featuring the violence and brutality committed against them and seeking to elicit a visceral, sympathetic response from the audience. The goal: to shock a complacent Western audience out of their apathy.

The bodies of slaves often feature heavily in antislavery campaigns attempting to arouse the sympathies of a distant audience, whether through images or descriptions of acts of violence and violation. From the abolitionist campaigns of the eighteenth century to the modern antislavery campaigns of the twenty-first century, the primacy of pain and the physical body in agitating for change is consistent. As Carey identifies, "our ability to suffer in our imagination, alongside those who are really suffering"<sup>65</sup> arouses sympathy, potentially creating a pathway for constructive change within the viewers. Sympathy is a mode of communication in itself which may create greater connections between those persons enslaved and a distant audience. This turned the physical body of the 'slave' into a site for activism within the eighteenth century abolitionist movement.

Eighteenth century campaigners highlighted the brutalisation of enslaved persons on plantations, and the horrors of the middle passage. In 1792 Paley described the conditions on board slave ships as "each not having the space a dead body occupies in its coffin".<sup>66</sup> Wilberforce too focused on the horrors of 'slave' transportation in his 1789 speech to Parliament:

Let anyone imagine to himself 6 or 700 of these wretches chained two and two, surrounded with every object that is nauseous and disgusting, diseased, and struggling

under every kind of wretchedness! How can we bear to think of such a scene as this? One would think it had been determined to heap upon them all the varieties of bodily pain, for the purpose of blunting the feelings of the mind...

Brooks' image of a cross section of a slave ship, brought into the House of Commons by William Wilberforce, and published in 1788, illustrated this very concept, and its continuing dominance reinforces its power – some 8000 copies of this image were distributed by the London Committee in 1788 alone. Liisa Malkki in 1996 noted of this image that “Black bodies are pressed together impossibly close” and in such a way that they are not individuals but they “become pure victims in general”.<sup>67</sup> These images and descriptions are tailored to evoke the imagination of the audience, to invite them to picture themselves in that situation. But lacking further supporting materials or context, they also reinforce the idea of ‘Negro slaves’ as un-individuated bodies lacking unique personalities or life stories. The challenge for campaigners lies in achieving a recognition of the broader context and scope of a practice, without losing sight of the individuals who suffer within it.

Abolitionist pamphlets, on the whole, tended towards uncensored description of the treatment of ‘slaves’ in an attempt to shock their Western audiences enough to override their existing apathy. Graphic descriptions of violence and punishments committed against enslaved people beyond the middle passage dominated the eighteenth century campaigns, and continue to feature in those that we see today. One recurring example is the

focus of eighteenth century abolitionists on the whip and the torture it inflicted upon its victims, placing wilful brutality at the forefront. Dickson in 1789 noted that the whip “tears the flesh, and brings blood at every stroke” leaving scars “which the wretches carry to their graves”.<sup>68</sup> Clarkson in 1786 noted that the whip “erases the skin, and cuts out small portions of flesh at almost every stroke”,<sup>69</sup> while Hillier in 1791 expressed the consequences of an enslaved person’s refusal to obey commands whereby “the horrid cart-whip would make long furrows in his flesh; his lacerated body would be washed with brine or sea-water; he might even be tortured with melting wax, or boiling syrup”.<sup>70</sup>

While graphic depictions of the treatment of enslaved people may have helped to overcome the apathy of a distant audience through shock value alone, they often distracted or detracted from attempts to deal with structural and underlying factors, including systemic racism. Such depictions may create enough social-political capital to overturn particular violent practices, but they are not the source of a more complex sympathetic/empathetic connection between those suffering and the (typically Western) audiences. Elaine Scarry notes that another person’s physical pain has a “remote character of some deep subterranean fact, belonging to an invisible geography”,<sup>71</sup> making it uniquely ‘unshareable’. The consequence of this is that the recipient can never appropriately empathise with the experience on an equal level. Representations of suffering may therefore reinforce the ideas of the ‘victims’ as bodies, rather than as complex moral agents with backgrounds and life stories of their own. It can also draw attention away from the structural factors which continue to perpetuate systems of

enslavement when framed as a singular act of violent wrongdoing. What people must be freed from in this viewpoint is not the structural discrimination and exploitation, but simply the violence inflicted upon their bodies.

Abolitionists did not always leave representations of ‘black bodies’ and the violence committed against them to stand for the cause, but also explicitly sought to evoke a sense of commonality in the audience. Clarkson framed the enslaved people as holding ‘the same propensities to pleasure and aversions to pain’ that his (British) audience felt. Through the development of the idea of shared experience, Clarkson invited people to feel the pain of the ‘Negro slaves’ in their own bodies, and thereby to give them human status. Clarkson framed the ‘slaves’ as human subjects who had been denied their rights to personhood in such a way that the freedom of all was undermined – “if shadows can be turned into substances, and virtues into crimes; it is evident that none can be happy, because none can be secure”. Such representations can be problematic however, as they provide enslaved persons with a surrogate form of personhood not defined by their inherent humanity and the Western audience’s capacity to recognise such, but in the sympathetic response to pain and the threat to the security of ‘white’ people.

The physical body of the enslaved African was not always portrayed in such a way as to evoke sympathy; at times abolitionists deliberately cultivated the disgust of their Western audiences in order to agitate for change. Fox, in his 1791 ‘Address to the People of Great Britain’ estimated that people were consuming two ounces of human flesh in every pound of sugar.<sup>72</sup> Booth in 1792 noted



that the “various articles of commerce produced by the sweat, and groans, and tears of the poor Negroes would have been considered by Britons as tinged with human blood”.<sup>73</sup> In particular, the sugar boycott campaigns of 1791-1792 featured the body of the enslaved African not to elicit sympathy, but to create a fear of contagion and absorption through consumption of sugar. Burn went so far as to state in 1792:<sup>74</sup>

I can only say, it is good for the person who superintends this work . . . to keep a little to windward of the dancing Blacks; for the nauseous effluvia emitted from them by excessive Perspiration is almost insupportable. This may indeed evaporate during the exportation home, but the warm stream from whence it proceeds, is evidently all absorbed among the sugar.

Burn went on to suggest that the small, hard lumps found in sugar were congealed sweat, or the dried carcasses of lice or the small insects that swam under the skin of ‘negro slaves’ and created oozing sores.

The shift in the representation of the body of the enslaved African from a site of violence and a pain which could be understood by a Western audience, to a source of disgust aimed towards impacting on consumption, demonstrates the dangers of focusing campaigns upon the bodies of victims without conscious and constant care for the way that these affect the framing of the victims’ humanity. While the sugar boycotts of 1791-1792 made significant inroads into the abolition of ‘slavery’, they also

reinforced ideas of African bodies as ‘other’ and as a source of disgust. The same tool relied upon earlier was adapted to create a new approach, but one which very problematically entrenches ideas about race and humanity. The danger of relying on visceral responses is that the thin line between humanising morality and disgust is crossed.

Much like depictions of the body and suffering, the idea of labelling enslaved African people as ‘Negroes’ and ‘slaves’ was barely challenged in eighteenth century campaigning. In some instances campaigns even highlighted and reinforced the notion that African people were less civilised than their white counterparts, although not deserving of the brutal treatment to which they were subjected. There was often a distinction drawn between race and slavery, whereby those that advocated and fought for abolition could still openly adhere to notions of white superiority. White abolitionists often belittled and silenced their black counterparts, seeking to control and limit their role in the movement. The famous example of Frederick Douglass’ relationship with the Garrisonians highlights the potential for schism between the desires of (white) abolitionists and the wishes of people who had lived through enslavement. Garrisonians reportedly wanted Clarkson to simply get up and tell his story, rather than speaking about the institution of slavery or taking on the whole picture of the antislavery movement.

Beyond tense moments of disagreement about the trajectory of the movement, and the language used to describe enslaved people, abolitionist sections of society often evidenced deep-seated racist attitudes which, while promoting emancipation, did not necessarily stand for equality. One particular example of such

during the Lincoln administration in the United States was Colonel James Montgomery in the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts, the most famous black military unit of the Civil War. Montgomery berated black soldiers on their origins and appearance: “A few years ago your fathers worshipped snakes and crocodiles in Africa”, “You are a race of slaves. Your features partake of a beastly character... Your beauty cannot recommend you. Your yellow faces are evidences of rascality. You should get rid of this bad blood...”<sup>75</sup> Such instances are not only evidence of the complexity of the Civil War, but the potential for abolitionism and racism to live in the same home. Likewise, the attitudes of white suffragists, who had been deeply connected to the abolitionist movement prior to emancipation, often indicated racial prejudices. Suffragette Elizabeth Cady Stanton, when questioned directly on whether she would be willing to have men of colour enfranchised before women responded: “no: I would not trust him with all my rights; degraded, oppressed himself, he would be more despotic with the governing power than even our Saxon rulers are”.<sup>76</sup> This makes clear the need to address both enslavement and discrimination within the antislavery movement, as a more targeted abolitionism may close the door on ‘slavery’ whilst leaving the windows open for various forms of exploitation, discrimination and abuse.

### **Lessons for Today**

There are a number of lessons that can be learned from our antislavery usable past about how to dwell in the space of both activism and empowerment in our choices of language and representation. The first lesson is that we must take care in the

ways that we present and represent the bodies of enslaved persons and the violence committed against them. Enslavement can be understood as the transformation of a human being into an instrument of labour – a shift from subject to object controlled and managed by another. The implications of this for the individuals enslaved is that they are not only denied their freedom, but their agency, reframing them as a mere body, a tool to be used. When dealing with stories and images of violence, we ought to consider the historical context of those bodies and ensure that our accounts of their lives do not reduce them to their experiences of physical exploitation and abuse. While descriptions of violence can evoke a visceral reaction in a distant audience, such a reaction does not necessarily give rise to an empathetic response, nor will it challenge the underlying factors contributing to enslavement and exploitation.

The impact of digital media and the massive exposure of modern audiences to numerous forms of violence did not face eighteenth century campaigners, but for modern activists the new communications industry makes the impact of these representations even more difficult to understand or foresee. Violence is unlikely now to even have the impact that it could hold in the eighteenth century campaigns, making the need for more holistic representations even more acute. We ought to reinforce the notion that enslaved people are subjects and not bodies, focusing on shared humanity over sympathy alone.

The second lesson is that we ought to be careful, and very particular, about the language that we use in advocating for change for marginalised or exploited people. For instance, we can shift

the lens to recognise continued humanity by recognising victims as ‘enslaved’ persons rather than as slaves. The distinction is important because the dehumanisation of the individual is central to the practice of human enslavement. The person becomes a body, they become their labour, and cease to hold the entitlement to their own labour and liberty. Similarly, after escaping from situations of enslavement, particularly in the context of sexual slavery, individuals might identify as ‘survivors’ rather than ‘victims’ in order to affirm that they are agents not defined by their victimisation. In talking about those persons who have escaped from situations of enslavement, we should adopt language which reinforces their humanity and agency, recognising that they are individuals with their own voice first, and a voice for the objectives of organisations second.

The third and related lesson is that we ought to, where possible, seek to provide a platform whereby the humanity of individual victims and survivors can be reaffirmed. Providing space for survivors to share their lived experiences, and a choice as to whether and how they tell their stories, can be hugely beneficial for both the individuals involved and the wider campaign. Acknowledging the primacy of these subjective experiences recognises victims as people first – combating the speechlessness, invisibility and disposability of enslavement.

The fourth lesson to be learnt is that we must always be vigilant to avoid ‘slippage’ in the messages that we send. We must be careful that the voices of our organisations do not become the voice of Andrew Burn pushing effectively for sugar boycotts (immediate practical change) but not for the humanity and dignity of those

enslaved (long-term, meaningful emancipation). Vulnerability and marginalisation are at the heart of enslavement, and if we seek emancipation at the cost of reinforcing those factors, we allow the cycle of exploitation to re-manifest time and time again. This leads into the last lesson to be learnt from our antislavery usable past of language and representation (in this chapter at least) – which is the reminder that the antislavery movement is a colossal campaign which must continuously deal with new branches of exploitation. We should always try not to be (too) disheartened by the task’s immensity, and to try to avoid watering the roots while we attack the leaves.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Ensuring that underlying factors contributing to enslavement are not reinforced through the use of language and representation is one way that organisations can serve the future without having to expend too much of their energies on a larger (potentially global) plan. A little time taken now to attempt to structure language and approaches to public representations of enslavement in a way which contributes to dealing with the underlying factors which drive slavery is a useful tool in crafting change for the future. At the very least, ensuring that the underlying factors (particularly discrimination) are not reinforced by our approaches, ought to be highlighted. While names and words might seem inconsequential in the grander scheme of the antislavery movement, particularly for organisations dealing with victims and survivors, they can serve important functions for law, justice and equality on all scales. It may feel like there is not much between one word and the next,

but words become stories, stories become messages, and messages become ideas. Let our movements be shaped by ideas of true emancipation and meaningful freedom rather than letting 'slaves' become 'indentured servants', 'Coolies', 'sweat shop workers' or 'Negroes'.

## ***Introduction to Part II – Listening***

Minh Dang

*“Deep listening is the kind of listening that can help relieve the suffering of another person. You listen with only one purpose: to help him or her to empty his heart.”*

— Thich Nhat Hanh

Thich Nhat Hanh, a renowned peace activist and Buddhist monk, shares his wisdom about listening to another human being. He invites us to consider a particular type of listening, *deep listening*, as an exercise in sharing the burden of one another’s suffering. Deep listening is about diving below the shallow surface of human interaction, summoning our courage to be vulnerable, and sharing and receiving the pains buried in our hearts.

The chapters in Part 2 reflect the different forms that deep listening can take. Beyond empathically hearing and receiving the stories of survivors of slavery, these chapters transform survivors’ narratives and expressed desires into insights that inform and inspire antislavery efforts.

In deeply listening to survivors’ narratives, Nicholson urges us to hear survivors’ testimonies as public protest. She elevates survivors as their own abolitionists, demonstrating resistance to the destructive forces of slavery through writing and speaking their humanity into being. Through deep engagement with survivors’ words, Nicholson exposes the antislavery roadmaps that survivors have already paved for us.



Nelson shows us that deep listening requires us to hear with all of our senses, including sight and touch. Writing about the material culture of antislavery campaigns, Nelson reminds us that physical objects and the stories that give them meaning are essential to hearing the suffering of survivors of slavery. In addition to hearing the stories of former slaves, seeing and feeling the material culture they lived with, such as a master's whip or an overcrowded ship, can confront listeners with the tangible realities that survivors of slavery faced. In paying attention to the use of objects that give evidence to survivor experiences and encouraging survivors to participate in developing these objects, Nelson provides us with creative ways to move an audience to action.

In this section's final example of deep listening, Schwarz responds to survivors' repeated calls for redress. Understanding that redress can provide survivors with pragmatic resources to respond to their suffering, Schwarz embraces a responsibility of bystanders to contribute to survivors' healing and recovery processes. She takes us outside of the criminal justice system to imagine how reparations can bolster survivors' rehabilitation in ways that legal justice or imprisonment of perpetrators cannot.

Each chapter in this section deploys different strategies of deep listening – listening with our eyes, ears, and hearts, in order to place survivors' experiences at the heart of antislavery efforts. In doing so, the authors not only seek to relieve the suffering of survivors in the act of listening, they seek to act on the knowledge they have gained from listening.

Nicholson, Nelson, and Schwartz demonstrate that it is possible to listen to people who are no longer with us, survivors of

slavery from the eighteenth century, as well as people who might be with us, but whose voices are rarely viewed as rich with insight.

Deep listening may allow survivors of slavery to empty their hearts of pain, but also to fill them back up with hope and joy. As we open our own hearts to receive and share survivors' burdens, survivors can utilize the new space in their hearts to regenerate hope in their fellow humans. Our acts of solidarity can serve as reminders that there is light in the darkest of times. When survivors find it difficult to ignite their own flames, we can keep the fire burning. Slowly, if we *listen* closely in the dark, we may hear a spark catch. And then we know, it's time to pass the torch.

## **Chapter 4 – The Legacy and Application of Survivor Narratives**

Andrea Nicholson

Since the eighteenth century, survivors of slavery have been moved to give voice to their experiences, raising public awareness and challenging the institution of slavery as it existed then and continues to exist now. Through letters, autobiographies, speeches, poems, songs and oral testimony, ex-slaves' narratives were and are key evidence of the wrongs of slavery and were and are an important weapon in the abolitionists' arsenal against slavery. In their struggle to give voice to their experiences, survivors' narratives offer us insights into what it means to be enslaved, because as the prominent survivor and abolitionist Frederick Douglass stated, "it is difficult for a freeman to enter into the feelings of...fugitives. He cannot see things in the same light with the slave, because he does not, cannot, look from the same point from which the slave does."<sup>77</sup>

The narratives of slavery survivors are therefore a powerful means of relating experiences to the outside world, while at the same time naming and validating survivors' experiences.<sup>78</sup> As a record of history, survivor narratives are revelatory first-person accounts that expose the lived reality of enslavement and liberation. They provide key testimony and prompt debates on race, social justice, democracy, poverty and equality.

Today historic narratives provide us with a way to learn about the core experience of slavery. They allow us insights into the way

survivors' stories were gathered and presented, which teach us how we might better approach contemporary narratives as listeners, interpreters and as sponsors today. From the past we can identify the strategies authors and editors employed and learn from the problems associated with some of those approaches. NGOs and governments still draw on survivors' lived experiences to develop antislavery structures and strategies, and more often to illustrate and add emotion to their reports. There's a lot to learn from the historic failures and successes in the gathering and presentation of narratives.

Obviously, slavery did not end with the nineteenth century, but instead continued in many forms, and as our awareness grows, so does the platform for survivor narratives. But survivors of slavery continue to face challenges in expressing their experiences to the objective listener. As the contemporary survivor of child slavery James Kofi Annan explains: 'One of my greatest challenges is getting people to gain insight into what it means, practically, to be a victim of trafficking. No matter how crafty and skilful a writer or an artist may be, nothing on paper can parallel the experience for its length, intensity and emotions.'<sup>79</sup> At the same time we can't underestimate the importance of first person accounts.

Some dismiss narratives simply as testimonies that provide a window into the horror and prevalence of slavery, or as a means of raising awareness, or a means of gathering funds for abolitionist efforts, or used to garner public sympathy. But we also know that survivor testimonies help formulate and change laws and policies, inform support mechanisms, shift prejudices, suggest concrete strategies for abolition, and provide survivors with opportunities

for empowerment. Since the use of narratives continues to form a crucial part of abolition, it is important to reflect on the way historic narratives were influenced, edited, politicized, disseminated, presented and received, and what that means for the ethics of the creation and use of survivor narratives today.

Every successful social movement has been “guided by those directly affected by the injustice [who are] best positioned to determine appropriate strategies and offer visionary solutions.”<sup>80</sup> Where public awareness drives other approaches to abolition,<sup>81</sup> nothing raises awareness more than the stories told by those who have experienced them. Today, survivor narratives are utilised by governmental and non-governmental organisations, alongside survivors working with and within these as consultants and on survivor-led advisory panels.

Their authentic voices expose the subtle and complex facets of enslavement, discovery and freedom. Their narratives have an effect on public consciousness and bring rights into play by providing evidence of human rights violations, and demanding recognition, reparation, and official inquiries. Survivor accounts are powerful – they:

- 1) challenge prejudice and racism
- 2) test international commitment to human rights
- 3) expose official fictions
- 4) unsettle existing beliefs.
- 5) prompt resistance
- 6) and act as a memorial to others lost or left behind

Narratives are recognized as having documentary status<sup>82</sup> and are the evidence that supports arguments for change. Together

historic and contemporary narratives offer one of the largest revelations of the nature of slavery from which the lessons of the past can mould the future.

Narratives are therefore not just a record of someone's life in slavery – they are a way of demanding responsibility. They are effective weapons in attacking the institution of slavery. In the past they were a call for 'civilised' nations to "live up to their moral responsibility".<sup>83</sup> They build connections across movements, demand empathy for slavery's victims, and make words into weapons.<sup>84</sup> The exposure of the conditions of slavery convinces governments and the public to take active roles in abolition.<sup>85</sup> As such, narratives are more than mere stories of capture to emancipation – they are a form of protest, resistance and revolt. For example, Equiano used Anglo-racial discourse to undermine colonial representations and reformulate notions of 'slave' and 'African'.<sup>86</sup> The survivor narrative therefore "functions as a catalyst" and as "a mirror of social change. It not only critiques some aspect of society, but also suggests, either implicitly or explicitly, a solution to society's ills... [it] strives to give voice to a collective consciousness."<sup>87</sup>

Where the enslaved are 'dehumanised' and treated as 'other', narratives have a humanising effect and help survivors to reclaim their identity. Just as the eighteenth and nineteenth century narratives of Olaudah Equiano, Ottobah Cugoano, and Frederick Douglass worked to humanise the African slave, the same applies for contemporary survivors who have been outcast and socially excluded due to mental health, age, illegitimacy, ethnicity, gender, and social status. Through their narratives, survivors challenge societal preconceptions and align themselves with the activist

community. The act of speaking out is an “open act of rebellion. It is a declaration of one’s rights to speak.”<sup>88</sup> It is a means of assuming agency, and a means of effecting change. Narratives are therefore far more complex and influential than we may think.

### **Write myself into being**

Importantly, giving narratives is also valuable to survivors as a form of self-representation and enables them to feel part of something. The significance of telling is not only in the ability to present their experiences to the ‘court of public opinion’,<sup>89</sup> but in that the act of writing has the potential to transform the survivor. Through narratives, survivors can assert themselves as deserving of humanity, as powerful agents for change, and as more than the sum of their enslavement – they are more than victims and more than just survivors, they exist also as mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers; as capable, literate, independent individuals; as activists and experts. Survivors have the opportunity through the giving of narrative to “write themselves into being”<sup>90</sup> and in so doing they assert themselves as equals.

Slaveholders then and now suppress victims’ voices in order to control them, so the act of narrating is itself a type of freedom; it has therapeutic effects, creates a space for self-discovery, and allows survivors a voice that had been denied them during their enslavement. For Frederick Douglass, literacy not only revealed the power he could claim for himself, but also the lack of any natural right his master had to own him. Having discovered Douglass was learning to read and write, his master said “if you give a nigger an inch, he will take an ell [a measure equivalent to six hand

breadths]. 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...if you teach that nigger how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit him to be a slave. He would be unmanageable, and of no value to his master.” Douglass notes that this “called into existence an entirely new train of thought. It was a new and special revelation, explaining dark and mysterious things...I now understood what had been to me a most perplexing difficulty – to wit, the white man’s power to enslave the black man...from that moment, I understood the pathway from slavery to freedom”.<sup>91</sup> Ironically, his master’s words convinced Douglass that literacy would bring him freedom and drove him to continue his learning in secret. His writings and speeches later enabled him to become a celebrated and influential figure in the abolitionist movement.

The act of narrating also enables survivors to act as witness for others that have been silenced or left behind. As a witness to the enslavement, abuse and murder of others, survivors often carry a sense of responsibility to give voice to those unable to bear witness for themselves. Survivors’ drive to narrate extends beyond themselves to the miseries they see around them, and their experiences provide them with a unique authority to challenge the institution of slavery as a whole. Their activism is a recognition of a shared humanity, and their social commitment is the exercise of their freedom. As Nadia explains “it was not only me that suffered, it was a collective suffering.”<sup>92</sup> The impulse to bear witness to their own and others’ experiences, the ‘survivor mission’ to speak, act, and seek justice, is part of their struggle for meaning and a way of



establishing for themselves some measure of a moral universe.<sup>93</sup> It becomes an 'act of solidarity'<sup>94</sup> that holds enormous therapeutic value.<sup>95</sup> Providing a platform for survivors to voice their resistance is therefore fundamental to our aims for abolition, enabling survivors to operate as agents for change. In the words of Shamere McKenzie, it allows survivors to be a "voice for those still enslaved, the voice for those perished while enslaved, and the voice for those who are free but have not the courage to speak up."<sup>96</sup>

How then do we facilitate survivors' voices? And how are narratives affected by the way we gather and represent them? As listeners and sponsors we can look to the past to reflect on the ethics of storytelling for the future. Much is revealed by what is said and by what is not, by who tells us and who does not, and by how we are told and how narratives are gathered. As listeners or sponsors we will always have in mind the complex power balances in the relationship between the narrator and listener(s), and narrator and sponsor, which will naturally affect how narratives are told, heard, and subsequently employed.<sup>97</sup>

A lack of care and attention in portraying survivors' voices can affect the way narratives are received, at times casting doubt on their authenticity and undermining the strength of the body of narratives as a whole. For example, during the nineteenth century when survivor literacy was low, their testimony was typically written by whites, with edits reflecting the author's education, religion, and attitudes to slavery. This caused such significant misrepresentation that the historian Ulrich B Phillips remarked that historic ex-slave narratives in general "were issued with so much abolitionist editing that as a class their authenticity is doubtful".<sup>98</sup> The questions raised

over the authenticity of ex-slave narratives are no better exemplified than in the way in which the Work Projects Administration (WPA) narratives were gathered and reproduced, the ethics of which have been repeatedly brought into question:

During the 1930s the US Federal Government instigated a range of projects to create employment opportunities following the Great Depression, including projects to employ those in the arts. One of these projects was to create a geographical-social-historical portrait of the states, cities, and localities of the entire United States, resulting in the collection of more than 2,300 first-person accounts of slavery and 500 black-and-white photographs of former slaves, collected from seventeen states. Having only previously been available for reference in the Rare Book Division of the Library of Congress, the collection was widely reprinted in 1972, coinciding the resurgence of interest in slavery generated by the Black Protest Movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

However, the untrustworthiness of the collection has been repeatedly noted.<sup>99</sup> In particular problems identified with this collection included the use of leading questions in interviews, the invention of dialect, the exclusion of black interviewers in most states, and a tendency to record only the 'right' answers. Interviewers' prejudice and racism is also evident in places, and many of the narratives were doctored with a failure to record testimony verbatim, portions deleted, and language altered to meet the expectations of the audience.<sup>100</sup> A detailed analysis of the collection undertaken in the 1970's concludes that their uncritical use would "lead almost inevitably to a simplistic and distorted view of the plantation as a paternalistic institution where the chief

feature of life was mutual love and respect between masters and slaves.”<sup>101</sup>

However, even in the absence of such problems, given that slavery was legal and the master’s voice dominant, it took more than mere expression to convince the global community of the authenticity of survivors’ stories. In order to pre-empt or dispel disbelief, historic narrators verified their narratives with photographs, testimonials, declamatory addresses to the reader, letters, bills of sale, notices of slave auctions and escaped slaves, certificates of manumission, and birth, death, and marriage certificates.<sup>102</sup>

While not subject to these problems on the same scale, contemporary narratives have also suffered from similar issues. We continue to see portions of narratives deleted to present digestible and informative short extracts, rather than facilitating and presenting survivors’ full experiences as they wish to tell them. Language is also sometimes amended, and there have been questionable instances where narratives have been sensationalized to capture public empathy.<sup>103</sup> Interview questions are also sometimes understandably devised to extract simple facts for a public audience, but which silence expression by directing survivors to discuss limited aspects of their experiences. Douglass spoke of the fact that sponsors always wished to pin him down to his simple narrative saying “give us the facts...we will take care of the philosophy”, but notes that “it did not entirely satisfy me to narrate wrongs; I felt like denouncing them...I was growing, and needed room.”<sup>104</sup>

Contemporary autobiographies and memoirs still adopt

authenticating strategies too, using statistics, scholarly works, family testimony, faith leaders, NGO leaders, and academics, in place of bills of sale and notices of slave auctions to assert that the stories told were not fiction.<sup>105</sup> In Mende Nazer's autobiography *Slave: A True Story of a Girl's Lost Childhood and her Fight for Survival*, her co-author Damien Lewis still felt a need to demonstrate the authenticity of her account and the rigour of the method used for interpretation. In the Afterword, he notes that when seeking help to escape, Nazer wanted a journalist to witness her rescue so that it was "on the record". He later carefully describes the need to allow Mende the opportunity to tell all of her story from the heart and which could only be done through the trust built between them. Working slowly in English, using an Arab-English dictionary and various books on Sudan, the Nuba Mountains, and slavery, they were able to write her story as accurately as possible. Essentially the explanation in the Afterword achieves two things: it bolsters the reader's belief in Mende's testimony, and it is proof of the authenticity and accuracy of voice despite translation, thereby diminishing any challenges of sensationalism or invention.<sup>106</sup>

While it is heartening to see explicit reference to the careful considerations taken to ensure Nazer's freedom to voice her story in full and to translate her words and meaning as accurately as possible, the continued need for validation of survivor accounts is discouraging. Nevertheless, corroboration remains necessary when attempts to sift survivor testimony for fallacies are not uncommon. A well-known example of such an attempt was seen in the systematic attack on Ishmael Beah's memoir *A Long Way Gone*.<sup>107</sup> Beah's narrative gave an account of his two years as a child

soldier in Sierra Leone's civil war, but in a series of articles three journalists working for the broadsheet *The Australian* identified inconsistencies in his story. They alleged Beah had only been a child soldier for two months and that some of his accounts did not bear up to scrutiny. Beah has vigorously defended his story, as have his agent and his editor, making counter-allegations of falsified evidence. The vitriol of the exchange between these parties lays bare the difficulty survivors can face in recounting their experiences, and exposes a culture of disbelief that continues to invade accounts of 'modern' slavery.

How then do we ensure survivors are supported in their efforts? How can we establish practices that give survivors the opportunity to be heard in full and how might this best be achieved? One way to honour survivors' voices and avoid accusations of doctoring their narratives is to ensure that in gathering their stories we do not inadvertently silence them. Historic narratives were typically limited; they were short and demonstrated an "overwhelming sameness".<sup>108</sup> This was in part because their scope was defined by the audience and by the influence of their sponsors. The majority of historic narratives followed a familiar structure of the day-to-day detail of slavery, the physical and emotional abuse experienced, and the transition from liberty to enslavement, and then to emancipation. But they rarely described their pre-enslavement birth and childhood, or their state of existence post emancipation. In many instances this is still the case today. The difference is that where historic narratives were disseminated through newspapers, pamphlets, lectures, art, some autobiographies, and formal testimony, today's survivors now also have a platform via blogs,

podcasts, films, and videos. Technological advances have given survivors access to an increased variety of platforms for voicing their stories and which have an immediate global presence. Technology has placed the power of communication in the hands of survivors in a way that was not possible during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While the majority of contemporary narratives are similar to historic narratives, and in some cases continue to be constrained by the way in which they are gathered and presented, there are many published contemporary survivor autobiographies, providing rich resources for understanding, and opportunities for survivors to voice their stories in full.

However, where survivors do not have access to those platforms, NGOs, journalists and other sponsors have long provided a valuable megaphone for survivors' voices. Nevertheless, the majority of contemporary narratives available remain brief accounts of practices or repeat the historic journey of capture to liberation. In the face of the limitations placed on interviewers where the time to record lengthy narratives will not always be possible, we can nevertheless ensure that narratives are represented verbatim, that our interview questions are not leading, and that we remain conscious of the influence of our own perspectives. Where a longer narrative sits behind the extract we present, we can also provide a way to access the full narrative. In this way we empower survivors and avoid repeating the errors of the past.

Another approach we can take is to include survivors rather than simply representing them, so that they are seen as more than 'just' a survivor, but in the words of Theresa Flores, as a 'thrivor.'<sup>109</sup> Another question to ask ourselves is how we employ both survivors'

narratives *and* their expertise. Do we minimize their role only to that of survivors, repeatedly defining them by their past, or do we recognize that their experience means they are uniquely placed to offer insights and solutions? Is their only usefulness achieved through repeatedly asking them to revisit their trauma?

We rarely see survivors explicitly defined first and foremost as activists and professionals and we do them a disservice by limiting their narrative to the recurrent theme of capture, enslavement and escape. Douglass noted that “*The man who has suffered the wrong is the man to demand redress – the man STRUCK is the man to CRY OUT—and that he who has endured the cruel pangs of Slavery is the man to advocate Liberty.* It is evident that we must be our own representatives and advocates, but peculiarly – not distinct from – but in connection with our white friends. In the grand struggle for liberty and equality now waging, it is meet, right and essential that there should arise in our ranks authors and editors, as well as orators, for it is in these capacities that the most permanent good can be rendered to our cause.”<sup>110</sup>

Survivors are more than storytellers. Rather than passive victims re-telling the atrocities of their treatment, survivors can be, and are, experts, leaders and scholars. Where language is used to marginalise and deconstruct identity, it can be taken up as a tool by survivors and their sponsors to reconstruct and strengthen identity. Adopting language that claims survivor *and* titles such as thriver, activist, teacher, expert, academic and colleague, is a way of demonstrating their purpose to others and to themselves, and of presenting the full person to the world.

Many survivors have already assumed these roles, suggesting

innovative and concrete strategies for abolition, analysing the roles of governments, and identifying procedural difficulties. Their narratives can be excavated and applied to clarify legal uncertainty and debates on definition<sup>111</sup> and to expose gaps in survivor support, they are used in research and in calling for interventions and improved structures. Survivors have built unions, and argued for decriminalisation of prostitution,<sup>112</sup> for equal property rights and for equal access to education for women. They have called for community activism, monitoring of employment agencies, improved rights for non-national workers, increases in state accountability,<sup>113</sup> greater psychological care, additional funding for specialized accommodation and education,<sup>114</sup> changes to immigration and asylum mechanisms,<sup>115</sup> and improved child protection structures.<sup>116</sup> Survivors therefore make an invaluable contribution to legislation and to global understandings of the risks, indicators and causes of slavery, and also make detailed and strategic suggestions for abolition.

We are now starting to see our antislavery movement populated and developed by survivors, but as yet they do not lead it. It is our role to encourage and support their leadership, particularly as the full effects on survivors of their activism is not yet known. There are, of course, indications that constantly revisiting the past has negative effects. For example, we know that the leading abolitionist George Thompson described Douglass' exhausting lecturing schedule as having "crammed a year's sensations into the last five days,"<sup>117</sup> We also know that as a result Douglass suffered illness and extensive fatigue. "Part of Douglass' celebrated persona – particularly in the press – meant he could not show any signs of



weakness. But there were cracks in this façade through which we can begin to understand the physical and mental toil his tour must have taken upon him. “Defending himself in public against charges of fraud, convincing thousands of people about the true nature of slavery, as well as repeating his traumatic stories was a heavy burden to bear.”<sup>118</sup> In order for survivors to take centre stage in the antislavery movement, we need to support them by helping lift this burden of exposure, ensuring they are not tokenised and providing training and leadership support.<sup>119</sup> Beah describes how valuable it was to him to attend a workshop that taught survivors how to tell stories in a more compelling way,<sup>120</sup> and McKenzie notes that the staff at Shared Hope treated her as an equal and “transformed me into being more than a survivor. They empowered me while teaching me the diplomatic approach to being part of the anti-trafficking movement.”<sup>121</sup>

In a movement that is still dominated by governments, NGOs and academics, it is survivors who are uniquely placed to lead enslaved individuals to freedom through their actions and their voices, by joining grass roots organisations, educating, training and informing members of the antislavery movement, and broadcasting the complexity of enslavement and recovery, to inform approaches to identifying and caring for survivors post-enslavement. The current narrow employment of narratives presents a missed opportunity for survivors to gain meaning through their narratives and for the antislavery community to excavate these valuable resources for solutions.

Survivors are an intrinsic part of abolition and their narratives are a fundamental and underused resource providing

insights into the condition of slavery, providing powerful testimony and collectively providing a roadmap for abolition and recovery. As many already do, working with survivors to ensure they have opportunities to be heard will be fundamental to abolition. It is for those of us gathering, presenting, and providing a platform for survivor narratives to attend to the lessons of the past, reflect on our approaches, and continue to champion ethically robust practices.

# **Chapter 5 – Proving the Point: Antislavery Material Culture Persuasion, Promotion and Providing Evidence**

Rebecca Nelson

## **Introduction**

The antislavery campaign aimed to abolish the British system of transatlantic slavery during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was the world's first truly *popular*, public human rights campaign, capturing the imagination of a large body of “ordinary” people during an era of extreme change and upheaval. In the wake of the industrial revolution there were dramatic developments in technology, transport and communication. Enlightenment thinkers were challenging long-established ideas about societal hierarchies and democracy. There were also key social changes, such as increased provision for education – leading to higher literacy rates – more importance placed on leisure time, and an increasing acknowledgement and awareness of Great Britain as a global power. While all of these factors help to explain why the message of the campaign was able to spread so rapidly and so widely, they do not necessarily account for what made it so *popular*.

In making the abolition of slavery into this truly popular cause, the abolitionists needed to capture the hearts and minds of the British people. One of the most successful and impactful ways they did this was through the production of a vast array of materials

that presented their case and, in some instances, offered evidence to support their point. Today, museums across the world exhibit copious artefacts from the early antislavery movement – many of which bear slogans and images vividly recognisable today. This great swathe of material culture, from badges to banners and sugar bowls to tea spoons, was a key and useful weapon in the armoury of the abolitionist leaders, but one which could be undervalued in today's disposable, consumer-driven society. Despite this threat of the contemporary 'throw-away' notion of physical objects, in a recent conversation with Dr Alicia Kidd, an academic researcher on modern slavery and Vice-Chair of the Humber Modern Slavery Partnership, I was reassured that material culture and the provision of evidence in this way is still an inherently useful part of tackling slavery in the contemporary era. In Kidd's opinion, these are the real tools of persuasion in reinforcing the existence of modern slavery and engaging other people in acknowledging and helping to combat it: 'providing evidence of the real living and working conditions of victims of modern slavery is a much more powerful tool than mere rhetoric; this evidence means that practitioners do not have to rely on their own conviction in persuading others of their cause, but allows the others to make judgements for themselves based on these physical examples'.<sup>122</sup>

This chapter explores the potential for modern campaigners to draw on and use material culture in their own campaigns, providing evidence for the campaign in a tactile, immediate, usable, visual format. The situations faced by historic and modern campaigns may be different: historic campaigns focused on making something legal illegal, whereas modern abolitionism focuses more on

challenging unconcerned lawbreakers with constant reform efforts. But the ‘passion and optimism [of the historic campaigners] are still contagious, and still relevant to our times’.<sup>123</sup> This is especially important when the latest figures estimate around 40.3 million people are still enslaved around the world.<sup>124</sup> The examples in this chapter are taken from British abolitionists and their movement during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – arguably the most effective human rights movement in human history. These examples can all be found in the collections of museums from across the world. Each one focuses on a different aspect of the campaign, and employs a different type of material culture to get its message across. But all have in common their effectiveness as tools in drawing attention to, and inspiring empathy with, the cause of liberation and freedom.

### **Historical Examples**

The three case studies that follow reflect different media that were used during the abolition campaign. Importantly, they also all relate to significant points of the various arguments put forward by the abolitionists – for example, one relates to the terrible conditions for enslaved people during their transportation, while another provides tangible examples of alternative trades with the African continent.

It is important to remember that these examples are very much products of their time. There are many historians who now critique these through modern eyes, in the sense of what they don’t do, or the unconscious messages they demonstrate which seem to contradict their antislavery aim. These criticisms will be included

here, as pointers showing how modern campaigners might improve on what has gone before. There is no denying, however, that all of these examples were incredibly popular in their time, and were successful campaigning tools for the persuasion and promotion of antislavery ideas.

### **Thomas Clarkson's Chest**

There was one man during the abolitionist campaign who seemed to understand the power of the material evidence more than any other. Often forgotten in the shadow of Parliamentary campaigner William Wilberforce, Thomas Clarkson was a vital part of the antislavery campaign. As an undergraduate student in 1785, he won first prize in the annual Cambridge essay competition addressing the question *Anne liceat invito in servitutem dare?* (Is it moral to enslave others against their will?). This provocative question, asking whether it was right, or just, for one people to enslave another, was set by a teacher seeking to confront the established legal slavery of the day, and is a great early example of the power of campaigning educators. For the young Clarkson what started as research purely aimed at academic success soon became a conviction and commitment to which he would dedicate his life. Clarkson was instrumental in gathering evidence to support the campaign, and in 1787 he began a tour of Britain which would eventually see him travel more than 35,000 miles gathering testimonies and collecting items which, he believed strongly, would play a key role in persuading the British population to turn against the 'evil trade'<sup>125</sup>.

During his tour of the country, which began in the port city of Bristol, Clarkson noticed the power of pictures and artefacts

to influence public opinion. In his talks and appearances, he came to find that words alone were not enough to convince the public to turn their backs on a practice that was still seen as a respectable and crucial part of the British economy.<sup>126</sup> He therefore began collecting artefacts that would form a central part of his presentations, displayed together in a chest (Fig. 1). The chest is relatively small – no bigger than a modern-day suitcase.<sup>127</sup> Inside, its contents are split into three trays, the uppermost of which had small boxes built into it. Clarkson himself wrote about the contents of the chest in his 1808 *The History of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade* (Vol. 2, pp13-16). He describes the uppermost layer as being filled with samples of seeds and spices, the second with raw materials like wood and

ivory, and the third with local crafts like woven cotton, ropes, jewellery, fabric and other handcrafted trinkets.

Along with these products of Africa, Clarkson's chest, or 'travelling museum' as it became known, also exhibited a collection of more shocking items,

including things like manacles, whips, brands and slave collars. He used these as visual examples of the horrific brutality of the slave-trading system.



*Fig. 1. A photograph of Thomas Clarkson's chest at the Wisbech and Fenland Museum, where it is currently on display. Photo courtesy of Wisbech and Fenland Museum.*

Central to Clarkson's collection of the objects, and curation of the chest as a whole, was the understanding that abolitionists needed to do two key things to gain public support<sup>128</sup>. First of all, they had to make clear to the public the violence and atrocities that were occurring daily in the slave trade. This was something only rumoured in whispers throughout Britain, with stories passed on from sailors and freed slaves. Clarkson's collection offered the evidence that had been previously lacking to confirm these stories, and turn them from the stuff of nightmares into a certain reality. The second thing Clarkson knew he had to do was to convince British society that slavery was not needed for the economy. This, he knew, would be very difficult, since for many years the slave trade had provided the majority of Britain's national economic profits, employing swathes of men in its upkeep and pouring fortunes into both private pockets and public initiatives. By offering a selection of alternative products that could be traded with the African continent, Clarkson did two things. He drew attention to the other riches of the area, while unconsciously illustrating how human beings became commodities when they were forcefully enslaved. This dual nature of the chest and Clarkson's argument is not so different from what is required today, to change the attitudes of both the legislators to amend current laws on modern slavery, and the public in being better equipped to spot the signs for, and assist the victims of modern slavery.

Some modern historians, however, have criticised this collection of objects, and the ideas behind Clarkson's chest. Marcus Wood believes that Clarkson was solely interested in the employment of Africa [and Africans] within Britain's trade empire for the long



term. The chest, he argues, ‘is an object which quite literally embodies this ambitious proto-Victorian vision, this desire to own and run Africa as a vast trading post...’<sup>129</sup> There is little evidence in Clarkson’s extensive writings that supports this as his intention, however. Clarkson was totally committed to the antislavery values he promoted around the country, but he was using the chest to sway audiences that often held the imperial values of the time. That said, there is a lesson here for the antislavery campaigners of today. As you choose objects or images for your next campaign it is worth asking how the people of the future might see them. Even today the images of the anti-human trafficking campaigns of the 1990s, with their whipped and chained young women, seem offensive and disempowering to modern eyes.

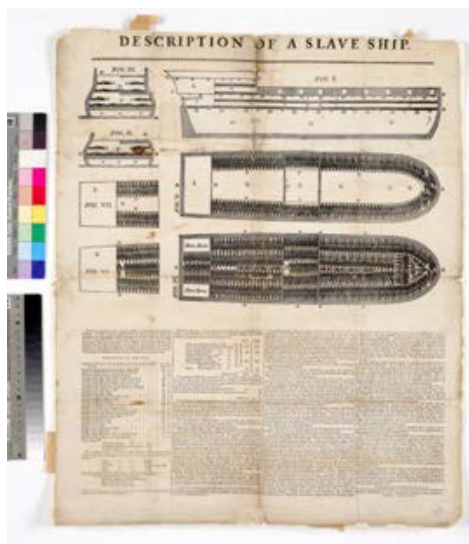
Through the use of the chest in both public and political spheres, and with an understanding of its dual nature (to shock and to sway opinion through the promotion of alternative trades) we can clearly see the importance of material culture in upholding and furthering the abolitionist campaign. It is valuable as both evidence, and as a practical teaching tool - allowing engagement from a wide range of societal groups, across ages, class, literacy levels and political opinion.

### **The Brookes Slave Ship**

This poster, and particularly the image it features, is one of the most famous and instantly recognisable examples of material culture used in abolitionist propaganda. As you can see from Fig. 2, the poster shows the interior cross-section of the Brookes; a slave ship built in Liverpool and named after its owner in 1781. The ship

was infamous for its overcrowding. Between 1781 and 1786, the ship made four voyages between Liverpool, Africa's Gold Coast, and Kingston, Jamaica, carrying no less than 600 individuals on any given journey<sup>130</sup>. The stowage plans for the Brookes were meticulously kept, and these became a vital part of the abolitionist argument against the horrors of the slave trade.

Thomas Clarkson first came across this image as an engraving, at a local antislavery society in Plymouth, 1788. Clarkson, as we know from his work with his chest, clearly possessed a keen eye for the promise of material culture; he was quick to see the potential for the Brookes diagram and commissioned abolitionist publisher James Phillips to reprint an edited version for the London-based Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade (the world's first human rights NGO). In 1808, reflecting on the print in his *History of the Rise, Progress and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade by the British Parliament*, Clarkson wrote that the 'print seemed to make an instantaneous



*Fig 2. 'A Description of a Slave Ship,' showing the Brookes diagram, one of approximately seven thousand posters published by the Society for the Emancipation of the Slave Trade, 1791 © Wilberforce House Museum: Hull Museums.*

impression of horror upon all who saw it, and was therefore instrumental in consequence of the wide circulation given it, in serving the cause of the injured Africans<sup>131</sup>. Today historians still support Clarkson's assessment of the value of the Brookes diagram, with abolition expert John Oldfield arguing that it was the diagram's 'ability to shock and provoke [that] helped make abolition a matter of pressing interest'<sup>132</sup>.

So what was it that made the Brookes diagram so effective? As both campaigners at the time and historians today agree, the key factor in its success was its ability to shock. The diagram on the poster, seen in fig. 3 was one of the first times that the wider public (not those involved in the abolition campaign) was visually shown the horror and brutality of the slave trade. By depicting the 454 enslaved Africans packed tightly into every available space, the diagram clearly showed the inhumane treatment of Africans during the long voyage across the Atlantic.

It is worth considering for a moment why the image was so shocking to the public in the 1790s. While they may have known little about the slave trade, the average person in Britain, a seafaring nation, would have known key facts about sea travel. They would have understood that these slaves would be lying in their own excrement for months, and in such a small wind-driven ship many would be sea-sick and their vomit would also splash and flow in and around them as well. The depth of the deck meant one could barely sit up, and that the damp and foul darkness would be a breeding ground for disease. Spread by the flowing excrement, diarrhoea especially would drain bodies of fluids and bring on an agonising death. Added to this was that anyone who did survive

could be chained to a corpse for days or weeks on end. What a person in the twenty-first century sees as a crowded deck, the person in the eighteenth century recognised as the tortures of hell.

Furthermore, the diagram emphasised the way in which enslaved people were not even considered human, but were simply cargo – property on route to make someone else a profit. The writing below goes on to explain further about the treatment of the enslaved during the middle passage, and therefore, the importance of the abolition campaign. It was an honest depiction; while pressing hard the message of the antislavery campaign, Clarkson and the Committee had taken care not to exaggerate the diagram, showing only the legal limit for slaves within a ship the same size as the *Brookes* (as set out in law in the *Dolben Act of 1788*), rather than the much larger amounts that the ship was commonly known to carry<sup>133</sup>.

It was also effective because of the way in which it pervaded society; the diagram was printed in newspapers, magazines, pamphlets and books, as well as in the form of posters that were displayed in homes as well as public buildings across the UK. By 1790, there were at least four different versions available, including the original *Plymouth* one, the one edited by the committee produced in London, and others in America and France. Oldfield has estimated that during 1791 alone about 20,000 copies of the diagram were produced<sup>134</sup>. As Adam Hochschild goes on to say, because of the extent of the diagram's spread and its hard-hitting imagery, it had an impact that 'reverberated around the Atlantic world'<sup>135</sup>.

As with the critics of Clarkson's chest, there are those in the twenty-first century who criticise the *Brooke's* slave ship diagram

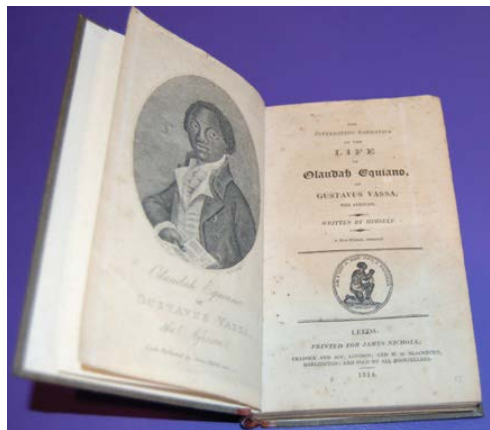
for merely reinforcing the notion of the enslaved as passive victims. Wood has argued that the diagram seems to suggest that the enslaved were waiting for the abolitionists to rescue them, contradicting the reality that they were often the engineers of uprisings on board slave ships<sup>136</sup>. Zoe Trodd has argued that illustrating the enslaved without any distinguishing features denies the slaves their individuality as unique people<sup>137</sup>. It could also be seen to reinforce the idea that the enslaved were not people but property - removing their features making them look much more like mannequins than human beings. Individuals and groups of African heritage have also criticised the image as one that provides only a very limited view of the history of the transatlantic slave trade, undeniably formulated through the eyes of a white abolitionist<sup>138</sup>.

Despite this criticism, it is impossible to deny the longevity of the image – especially given that today it still has impact and resonates with antislavery campaigners. In 2007, the bicentenary of the abolition of the British slave trade, the image was revived and redisplayed in countless heritage institutions across the UK. This suggests it is still impactful to a modern audience, despite being nearly two hundred and fifty years old. It has also been employed by modern campaign groups, with Antislavery International and the organisation CHASTE (Churches Alert to Sex Trafficking Across Europe) using the diagram within modern contexts like aeroplanes, vans and speedboats (both groups also used this in 2007). This shows the potential for future use of the diagram by modern campaigners as a teaching tool about the past, as well as inspiration for your own campaign propaganda and the production of valuable, effective material culture.

## Slave Narratives

The last example of material culture is the prolific number of slave testimonies which, published as books, pamphlets and newspaper serialisations during the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, became instant bestsellers. These texts captured the imaginations of their audience and were often thought to say much more than any white abolitionist could, through their first hand, lived experiences of the horrifying brutalities of the slave trade<sup>139</sup>. Returning to the comment made by Alicia Kidd, at the beginning of this chapter, these testimonies removed, to a degree, the onus on the abolitionist to persuade and even coerce society to their cause solely through their own convictions. By presenting a true (or assumed to be true), eyewitness account, they presented evidence from which the public could make their own decisions. These works also provided support for many of the abolitionist's arguments, complementing the other evidence and material objects gathered by abolitionists.

Fig. 3 shows the cover of arguably the most famous slave narrative known in Britain. The story of Olaudah Equiano played a powerful role in the campaign to abolish the British slave trade and



*Fig. 3. The title page of Equiano's biographical narrative. An instant best-seller, it formed a crucial part of the abolition campaign. This copy dates from 1814 © Wilberforce House Museum: Hull Museums.*

ultimately slavery itself. First published in 1789, the book was well-timed, coinciding with the release of the Brookes slave ship diagram. Equiano's harrowing account of the middle passage added a more personal, deeper understanding of what that diagram truly meant. The political campaigner William Wilberforce was quick to use Equiano's narrative as a source in his parliamentary arguments for abolition that year, and it was also presented as evidence to the Privy Council committee along with Clarkson's chest<sup>140</sup>. Clearly, the leaders of the antislavery movement attached great importance to these narratives.

The book was also extremely popular with the wider public. Between 1789 and 1794 there were nine different editions, and it was translated and printed in many countries across Europe<sup>141</sup>. This was not the first account of slavery from an African point of view – examples from America dated back to the 1760s. Another narrative containing a collection of letters written by Ignatius Sancho, who was brought to England as a child to work for the Duke of Montague, was published in Britain in 1780. Literary scholars suspect that Sancho's work, published after he died, did not have the same impact as Equiano's narrative because it was the product of someone who had experienced a relatively privileged life for someone enslaved. Sancho had been educated well by his master and his letters contain frequent references to parties, operas and other high society events he attended. His letters contain no strong message against his master, or the system of slavery. Equiano's narrative, on the other hand, went into great detail about the trauma of his kidnap and capture in Africa, the horrifying abuse suffered during the middle passage, and the maltreatment he was

subjected to by his numerous masters. Some tens of thousands of British people are thought to have read Equiano's book at the time it was published, and for most it was their first opportunity to experience slavery through the eyes of an enslaved person<sup>142</sup>.

As well as offering support to the abolitionists seeking to destroy the acceptance of slavery as a practice, Equiano's story also appealed because it offered hope and inspiration to many people facing adversity. Although the story's beginning is harrowing, there is a somewhat happy ending, in which Equiano educates himself and raises enough money to buy his own freedom. This story of self-improvement, combined in a tale of adventure and bravery, appealed to Victorian sensibilities, accounting in part for the book's unprecedented popularity. Equiano's was certainly not the only story, but it seems to have been the one with the most impact. Abolitionists offered strong support to Equiano and helped to secure him speaking engagements around the country. Wherever he spoke he attracted large crowds; as a black voice, some of the crowds were certainly attracted by curiosity at hearing this alternative viewpoint.

The power of survivor testimonies to offer balance to the abolitionist argument, particularly in terms of a racialized experience, is something that has continued to be used in today's representations of the subject. With many museum curators 'quick to exploit Equiano's potential as an authentic black voice' in their displays, it is clear that as well as being hugely significant during its time, Equiano's narrative has now become an important site of abolitionist memory in Britain<sup>143</sup>. The book is still in print and continues to attract large numbers of readers today. This is despite



some criticism from historians that the accuracy of the narrative is questionable as it was very probably edited to appeal to Georgian, and then Victorian audiences. While it is highly likely that this is the case, it does not detract from the strong influence that the Equiano narrative had on the wider abolition campaign. Reading a personal account of enslavement, British (and American) people began to see what abolitionist arguments meant in real terms, for individuals. The book, along with others of its kind (for there were many others), directly challenged a long established practice of slavery that had been long held acceptable, by presenting clear instances of inhuman treatment of men, women and children as common occurrences around the world.

Today, where slavery is no longer so explicitly driven by racial prejudice and the system is more of an ‘underground’ criminal activity, slave narratives are all the more important. They can be used to shock, to create empathy, and to educate - particularly to the fact that modern slavery is something still ongoing – and to help the public recognise signs of slavery. Like Equiano’s narrative, modern narratives also provide support to modern campaigners calling for reform – as evidence to depict the weakness of existing laws and show clearly the points at which reform is essential. They can also inspire members of the public to involve themselves in the cause to abolish modern slavery, as well as inspiring hope in those who are, or have been victims, that help is out there and change is being loudly advocated.

## **Reflections and Conclusions**

This emphasis on material objects and their use by the antislavery campaign also reflects some of the other methods used by British abolitionists. For example the boycott of slave-produced sugar in 1791–92, was a distinctly material-driven process (the world's first example of ethical consumerism), as was the creation of numerous petitions. Although not directly thought of as material culture, both these methods showed the power of the material in both defining and securing the eventual success of the popular campaign. Many of the petitions, often of enormous size, are now preserved in museums and archives, along with newspapers and pamphlets praising the sugar boycott. In this way they have now become part of an extended, retrospective material culture available for further study and practical inspiration today.

In an alternative view, the huge collections of material culture relating to antislavery campaigns in museums and other heritage institutions around the world can help us all pause and reflect on what our own legacies will be, for future generations. Will the campaigning materials you produce still be as recognisable and impactful as the Brookes slave diagram? Where will they be held? Who will be their custodian? These are all important reflection points when designing, writing or producing your own materials.

Another reason the abolitionists worked so hard to establish this culture of material was that, as well as capturing the public's imagination, and encouraging people to support their cause, it was also a way for abolitionists to measure and quantify the levels of support, through the numbers of items sold, or distributed (measurements with more reality than the numbers of 'likes' on

a Facebook post). The volume of sales could then be analysed in terms of localities, which helped the abolitionists drive their campaigns in ways that would target specific arguments in specific locations. In today's digital world this could be put to use further, allowing you to generate vital statistics depicting the extent of your campaign, and guide the use of future materials. It may also allow you to highlight areas that you are less successful in, identifying the gaps that need to be filled.

It is clear from this analysis that, as campaigners, you must not undervalue the potential impact of such objects and stories to raise awareness, provide evidence, to persuade, and to inspire action. A well placed poster, or attractive (yet informative) leaflet, with a powerful image and snappy slogan may begin to convert a passive bystander into an active campaigner. An educational resource with objects (or replicas) may help children and adults understand the nature of slavery today. The voice of a survivor of slavery may be a powerful, emotive, and logical tool in raising awareness of the continued existence of a brutality that many people still assume was consigned to history a long time ago. In the twenty-first century, this can be extended well beyond the realms of paper and physical materials, into the digital, virtual world of web campaigns and social media. These new resources will allow campaigns to be even more pervasive, and reach wider and wider audiences. These new media can be incredibly successful, and can also be used for quantitative evaluation.

It is important, though, given that the criticism of all of these items relates to how they represent the survivor or the subject of enslavement, that you think about how your material culture also

represents them. Perhaps you could encourage survivors to assist in the design process, or offer a consultation program that would ask survivors to review the material culture you produce, so the end result can be seen both as propaganda but also as a testimony to those who the system of enslavement did not defeat.

## **Chapter 6 – After Enslavement Ends: Ensuring Redress for Victims**

Katarina Schwarz

The current political climate refutes the claim that ex-slave states wiped the slate clean by enacting abolition. Almost 185 years since the abolition of slavery in the British Empire, 153 since abolition in the United States and between 145 and 170 since abolition in Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch and French territories, the legacies of transatlantic enslavement persist<sup>144</sup>. The racialised system of chattel enslavement which stripped millions of Africans and people of African descent of their homeland, their families, and their lives continues to manifest itself in new ways. The racism that was constructed and supported by the slave trade persists. Discriminatory policies born in slave societies have evolved and thereby endured. Intergenerational inequalities – both psychological and economic – persevere, negatively impacting the lives of generation after generation of people racialised as Black. Emancipation did not breed equality, and for many survivors, freedom from slavery did not constitute freedom from enslavement or exploitation. The long-term realities of the conditions in which liberty was extended to ex-slaves broke the promise of that liberation.

The continuing battle for reparations for people of African descent for the harms and legacies of transatlantic chattel enslavement reveals the failures of emancipation. Forty acres and a mule promised and retracted left many previously enslaved

African-Americans in positions of extreme deprivation, vulnerable to continued exploitation, and unable to access the future opportunities which would enable equality for their descendants. In the Caribbean the creation of ‘apprenticeship’ systems to continue the exploitation of previously enslaved persons and the importation of ‘Coolie’ labourers to replace them, backtracked on the promises of freedom and prevented economic growth and independence for previously enslaved persons. In Brazil, Cuba and Colombia ideologies of racial democracy and *mestizaje* continued post-abolition; freedpeople deprived of material resources and lacking any form of redress for their years of forced labour continued to struggle for citizenship rights for decades. In many instances, governments enacted widespread programmes of reparations for the benefit of slave owners – to compensate for their lost property. Although a few discrete cases of reparations for enslaved persons achieved success, in no instance was an equivalent programme of reparations established for the benefit of the people who had suffered enslavement. Black reparations activists today expose the central failure of abolition’s attempted re-shaping of society – that the harms of slavery were not suspended by emancipation, nor have they been addressed (or redressed) since.

The debate concerning reparations for the system of transatlantic chattel enslavement of Africans and people of African descent remains live, and should not be ignored simply because other injustices exist. Yet this continuing battle for redress also offers valuable insight into the importance of emancipation in practice and not merely in name. In other words, it highlights the central role of support and redress for victims in ensuring that

cycles of exploitation are broken rather than perpetuated. This chapter will focus on the significance of reparations for victims as a mechanism by which the continuum of enslavement can be interrupted and the needs of individual victims satisfied. It places the obligation to ensure remedies for victims within the context of state responsibility in international law. This mechanism may be used to increase pressure on governments to ensure that victims receive effective remedies for violations of their rights to be free from slavery, servitude, forced labour and human trafficking. Further, it considers the ways in which redress may be pursued within existing legal frameworks, highlighting the multiple paths to obtaining reparations in a case.

A movement which focuses on emancipation but fails to provide redress and alternative pathways for survivors is doomed to remain locked in a continuum of exploitation and marginalisation. Enslavement does not exist within a vacuum. It takes advantage of vulnerabilities and inequalities that, left unaddressed, will continue to force people into situations of exploitation. The history of racialised transatlantic enslavement of Africans continues to extend into the present day. The failures of redress left open wounds on the back of justice which continued to fester long after the 1834 Slavery Abolition Act, the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation, the 1926 Slavery Convention, and the 1970 decision of the International Court of Justice declaring slavery to be a universal norm of international law.<sup>145</sup> The focus of abolitionist campaigns was primarily on abolition – the declaration that slavery was unlawful and would be treated as a crime. Yet, very often, these campaigns prioritised emancipation to the exclusion of redress, rather than

seeing the two as complementary or as co-requisites to liberty. Antislavery organisations operating today might view this record not only as impetus to engage with the reparations movement for people of African descent, but as a motivation to ensure that victims of so-called ‘modern slavery’ receive effective remedies to prevent them from being trapped in a similar continuum of exploitation.

### **Why Redress Matters**

Of course the simple assertion that victims of injustice should receive redress for the injuries they suffer will be unsurprising to most organisations now involved in antislavery work. Victims of exploitation have suffered legal wrongs and should be entitled to damages for harms done. They suffer injuries, both physical and psychological, as a direct consequence of the violations committed against them, and should not be left to bear the cost of these themselves. Perpetrators should be held responsible for the damage they cause by their illegal actions, and states should be responsible for their failures to protect individuals. That wrongs necessitate a remedy is one of the most basic assertions of legal systems generally – designed to regulate interactions between people as well as between individuals and the state. Yet, at the same time, most of the emphasis in official responses to ‘modern slavery’ is on criminal justice processes – mechanisms which do not necessarily prioritise the best interests of victims.

Although the testimony of victims is often central to convictions, and international practice increasingly emphasises meaningful participation of victims in the processes of justice, criminal justice is ultimately an interaction between the state and



the perpetrator. Criminal justice reform may be introducing the needs and wishes of victims into these procedures more and more, but the focus of justice in this context generally remains on society at large and not on the case's victim. As Pablo de Greiff frames the dynamic: criminal justice is, in the end, a struggle *against perpetrators*, whereas reparations are an effort *on behalf of victims*.<sup>146</sup> The victim might therefore be left behind if their interests do not align with the system. Moreover, for many victims, criminal justice processes alone do not remedy the injuries they suffered or protect them from future exploitation. Particularly where criminal procedures fail to meaningfully include victims, they may not even obtain the moral or symbolic benefits of having their perpetrators brought to justice.

Where victim support is particularly limited, criminal justice processes may even result in the re-traumatisation of victims who are forced to relive their experiences over and over again in a hostile environment. The adversarial nature of trials in many criminal systems, harmful practices of law enforcement officials and prosecutors, lack of family or community support, forced confrontations between victims and their exploiters and abusers, and a range of other factors can exacerbate trauma suffered by victims.<sup>147</sup> If the individual does not adhere to the stereotype of the 'ideal victim' of the offences, they might additionally face scorn, judgement and humiliation at any or all stages of the criminal justice process. When it comes to travelling through the criminal justice system, it is therefore vital that victims receive support in order to ensure that criminal law constitutes a remedy for the violations committed against them as well as the punishment of perpetrators.

Yet moral and symbolic justice are not the only demands of justice in relation to exploitation, nor are they the most important response for many victims. Material redress is often the top priority of people escaping situations of extreme exploitation. For many victims with backgrounds of deprivation or poverty – one of the ‘push factors’ which leads to exploitation – it is often material support which will make the most meaningful impact and prevent re-victimisation. While some forms of material redress may be available through criminal justice processes, this will depend on the legal frameworks operating in the relevant area. Even where some mechanism for recovery through the criminal justice system is available, this will often be insufficient to meet the needs of victims and to adequately redress the harms that they suffered. It is therefore important that all avenues for obtaining remedies for victims are understood and explored, to ensure that they receive not only nominal compensation for the abuses committed against them, but that these are proportionate to the harms.

Victim recovery and rehabilitation is contingent on having access to support services and resources. Of course, organisations both governmental and non-governmental may provide such services to victims without connecting them to the right to remedy for legal wrongs suffered. Having access to such provisions immediately, and without having to go through the rigours of the criminal justice system, is vital for victims to be able to extricate themselves from exploitation. Yet, at the same time, measures of legal redress are able to contribute something to support measures which need-based mechanisms alone do not – the symbolic value of an official affirmation of legal rights and wrongs. Where violations

deny the recognition of victims as rights-bearers entitled to be free from exploitation, legal processes support the identity, agency, and rights of victims. Where abuses marginalise victims from the civic community of the region or state, confirmation of legal rights recognise them on equal footing with other citizens. Legal processes and recognition can therefore have significant symbolic and psychological benefits which contribute to victim recovery and rehabilitation.

With a growing body of literature recognising the intergenerational impact of trauma and severe abuses, effective redress can be essential in ensuring not only that direct victims are removed from cycles of exploitation, but that their descendants are similarly displaced. Research on the impacts of major trauma suggests that the noxious effects of trauma may be psychologically transmitted from one generation to the next. Increases in depressive and anxiety disorders found amongst survivors of the Jewish holocaust, for instance, can result in damage to the coping strategies and an increase in such disorders amongst children of survivors. This can impact on the structure and mental health of families across generations.<sup>148</sup> In the context of Northern Ireland, the research recognises that transgenerational effects of the conflict can manifest in the forms of economic hardship, psychological impact, and carer responsibilities for parents and grandparents of direct victims.<sup>149</sup> This intergenerational transmission of trauma may make successive generations substantially more vulnerable to exploitation, and makes the provisions of effective redress even more significant in breaking the continuum of exploitation.

### **Advocating for Change: States' International Obligations**

All states have international legal obligations with respect to the prohibition of slavery, which is recognised as a *jus cogens* norm of customary international law entailing obligations *erga omnes*.<sup>150</sup> In other words, a state's membership (or lack thereof) in international treaties specifically concerned with slavery is not necessary in order for it to have obligations with regard to abolition (*jus cogens*). Additionally, all states are considered to have an interest in the norm and therefore could, theoretically, institute proceedings against another state for a breach of the rule irrespective of whether they suffered damage because of it (*erga omnes*). Although no case has ever been brought at the international level where a state not directly engaged or injured invokes responsibility on the basis of a universal norm, it remains possible and therefore shapes states' responsibilities and liability. Even so, the vast majority of states are party to international treaties which require them to take action to ensure the prohibition of slavery, servitude, forced labour, and human trafficking.

The existence of primary international rules (such as the obligation to bring about the complete abolition of slavery) necessarily involves a set of secondary rules which come to play in the instance of a violation. In particular, the right to a remedy has been consistently affirmed as a general principle of international law and a customary norm.<sup>151</sup> The obligation to make reparation arises when a rule is breached, as an 'indispensable complement' of the primary legal rule and need not be specifically articulated in the relevant treaties.<sup>152</sup> The omission of specific redress clauses in the 1926 Slavery Convention (for instance), does not therefore indicate

that there is no obligation to provide such in the instance of a breach. As per the rules on state responsibility, states have an obligation to provide reparations for injuries caused by the wrongdoing.<sup>153</sup> The International Court of Justice – the tribunal primarily responsible for adjudicating disputes relating to the Slavery Convention – may therefore determine not only the outcome of the dispute, but also reparations owing to those injured by the violation.

The obligation to redress wrongdoing is distinct from the rights of parties to invoke the responsibility of perpetrators, meaning that states have a duty to provide redress for injury caused by perpetrators' wrongful acts even if there is no third-party state willing to claim it in an international legal forum. While in practice the absence of legal pressure may result in there being insufficient compulsion for governments to provide redress, the rhetoric of responsibility and international obligation may have some political weight. Organisations may therefore still leverage this responsibility in advocating for governmental action or policy change to support victims and survivors. That most states have committed themselves to obligations in respect of slavery, servitude, forced labour and human trafficking – including obligations to ensure effective remedies – might add additional political pressure to meet the promises made in international arenas.

In formal international legal mechanisms, the formulation of the claim and representation of victims becomes important to the viability of achieving success in an international or domestic court. States are the primary subjects of international law, and claims in relation to breaches of international instruments must predominantly be adjudicated as state-state disputes. Reparations,

however, need not relate to damage suffered by a state as such, but can cover all injury ‘caused’ by the breach of international law.<sup>154</sup> Damage done to individual victims might therefore be reparable under general international law, via the mechanism of a state-state dispute. Although these mechanisms are generally applied by a state to seek damages for harms done to its own citizens or persons on its territory,<sup>155</sup> it is theoretically possible that a state with sufficient interest in the claim could claim for damages to third-party nationals caused by the breach in question. Again, this is a result of the division of the obligation to remedy and the right to invoke responsibility under the rules on state responsibility.

Despite the state-centric nature of international law, individuals may attain some degree of international legal personality through the terms of specific treaties. In relation to extreme forms of human exploitation, individuals’ rights are given voice and placed within the arena of international law through human rights treaties. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), American Convention on Human Rights (ACHR), the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR), and the Arab Charter on Human Rights all guarantee the right to be free from identified forms of extreme human exploitation and enshrine the right to remedy for victims of violations. Moreover, these treaties can give individuals standing to bring a claim to a Court or Commission on the basis of violations of human rights. The First Optional Protocol to the ICCPR gives individuals the right to petition the UN Human Rights Committee in respect of breaches, while the ACHR and ACHPR provide an individual

right to petition the respective commissions which may then bring a claim to the relevant regional court on behalf of the victim. The ECHR takes this one step further, allowing individual applications to the European Court of Human Rights. Only the Arab Charter provides no mechanism for individual petition or participation. These procedures enable victims to hold states accountable for failure to fulfil their positive obligations in relation to the protection of rights to be free from exploitation.

States' duties in human rights law extend beyond the duty to abstain from directly violating rights themselves. The positive obligations on states in this context require the protection of individuals against violations of enshrined rights by the state and its agents, but also protection against abuses by private persons or entities. In relation to more fundamental rights – such as the right to freedom from torture and the right to be free from slavery – the preventative obligation on states may be more extensive than in relation to less severe violations. This obligation to prevent, as the Honourable Court has noted, will entail:<sup>156</sup>

...all those means of a legal, political, administrative and cultural nature that promote the protection of human rights and ensure that any violations are considered and treated as illegal acts, which, as such, may lead to the punishment of those responsible and the obligation to indemnify the victims for damages.

States may therefore breach their obligations in respect of human rights by ‘permitting or failing to take appropriate measures or to exercise due diligence to prevent, punish, investigate or redress the harm caused by such acts by private persons or entities.’<sup>157</sup> Prosecution, punishment and reparation all fall within the ambit of victims’ right to effective remedy, and are therefore obligations owed to victims and not merely to society at large.

Criminal justice processes – the investigation, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators – are a central obligation of states in remedying injuries done to individuals in breach of their rights to be free from slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour, and human trafficking. As the European Court of Human Rights determined in its 2016 judgement in *L.E. v Greece*: “it is penal law which constitutes the adequate recourse for those pleading treatment which can be proven contrary to Article 4 of the Convention” (the prohibition of slavery, servitude and forced labour).<sup>158</sup> Thus, failures by the state to properly investigate, prosecute or punish violations are a breach of the states’ obligations under international human rights law. Given that significant issues with criminal justice processes for cases of human exploitation at all levels have been reported in most States, organisations involved in advocacy work may benefit from the added pressure these obligations may provide. The threat or filing of litigation in a regional human rights court and/or the submission of claims to human rights commissions may supply substantial leverage in seeking official action and reform.

Criminal sanctions against wrongdoers are central in satisfying victims’ right to remedy, but taken alone, cannot be seen as a sufficient realisation of the right in most cases. As well



as the initial obligation to prevent, prosecute and punish abuses, the states' obligation to ensure reparations for victims is central to the human rights framework and to achieving justice for victims. This includes the requirement that mechanisms be in place to allow individuals to make claims against the State, but also for claims between individuals. In its *Juridical Conditions and Rights of Undocumented Migrants Advisory Opinion*, the Inter-American Court recognised this horizontal effect, demanding that the right to remedy be applicable both against "the public authorities and by individuals with regard to other individuals". In other words, systems enabling victims to recover damages directly from perpetrators (as well as the state) must be in place, and where a state has failed to establish these legal processes they will have breached their human rights obligations.

Recovery of damages by victims directly from perpetrators will not be feasible in all cases. In fact, situations in which perpetrators are in a position to indemnify all their victims are likely to be in the minority. It is therefore vital that states have enacted measures for victim support and reparation which stand apart from mechanisms for civil claims between victim and perpetrator. The United Nations Human Rights Commission frames this as an obligation on states under the ICCPR irrespective of whether the state was responsible for the violations – for without reparations the obligation to provide effective remedy cannot be discharged.<sup>159</sup> Although this obligation is not firmly established in international human rights law as a binding rule, it can be seen as a necessary condition for 'adequate, effective and prompt reparation' which is required.<sup>160</sup> Because mechanisms through which victims might claim remedies from

perpetrators are generally complicated legal procedures which may take years to conclude and often rely on successful criminal prosecutions, the requirement of ‘promptness’ cannot be satisfied without some additional measures being in place. The State should therefore ensure interim support and remedy for victims, which may be recouped from perpetrators. This framework of human rights obligations may assist in advocating for such mechanisms to be created by states where they do not already exist.

With regard to the forms of reparation potentially available under international law, compensation should not be seen as the sole mode of redress. In cases of widespread, government-level failures in particular, monetary payments directly to those injured should not be considered the singular focus of reparative efforts. Reparations might consist of measures of restitution, compensation, and/or satisfaction depending on the circumstances of the case.<sup>161</sup> Restitution involves the re-establishment of the situation which existed before the wrongful act was committed, often through the return of property wrongfully expropriated from victims. Compensation, of course, involves monetary redress proportionate to the damage suffered and is often considered the primary legal remedy available, despite the fact that restitution is the first port-of-call in damages considerations in international law. Satisfaction responds to the moral or immaterial dimensions of the injustice through measures such as formal apologies, acknowledgements of breach, and expressions of regret. Satisfaction might also appropriately include measures aimed at the cessation of continuing violations, truth processes, commemorations and tributes to victims and education programmes.<sup>162</sup>

The multiple forms of redress available in international law

allow reparations to be responsive to the circumstances of the wrongdoing and the needs of victims in the case. Particularly where violations are systemic or widespread, measures of satisfaction and cessation targeted towards achieving long-term change may be more valuable for broader advocacy efforts than the decision on a single case. Organisations may therefore consider engaging with the broad frameworks of reparations in international law to connect meaningful, systemic changes to the states' obligation to provide effective remedy. This is particularly true where the state itself has failed to meet its obligation in respect of ensuring rights to be free from exploitation – whether through direct involvement in abuses or through failures in prevention, investigation, prosecution, punishment, or reparation. The additional legal weight of international human rights obligations may assist organisations in advocating for changes to law and policy concerning human exploitation.

### **Obtaining Redress**

Each state has its own systems through which victims of abuses might claim redress for injuries suffered as a result of legal wrongs. Of course, human rights processes provide an important avenue through which reparations are obtained and which might have significant broader impact in terms of reforming law and policy. They allow legal claims to be brought against the state in a range of circumstances, not just when the state directly committed the acts of exploitation, creating more pressure for systemic reform. Human rights trials have many benefits, but they may not meet the needs and desires of victims in all cases. These proceedings are often complicated, adversarial, and not concluded for a substantial

period of time after the exploitation. Rules concerning the frustration of domestic remedies generally require that claimants have gone through every available level of the domestic legal system before they can bring a case to an international human rights body. In the meantime, victims require substantial support in order to remain free from new exploitative situations and to be able to participate in trials – trials which often require them to continue reliving their potentially traumatic experiences of exploitation.

Many of the drawbacks of human rights proceedings also apply to criminal justice processes. They are often similarly drawn-out and require substantial testimony from victims in order to obtain convictions. In both instances, victims alone are unlikely to have the knowledge or resources to navigate the legal system, and require support from external actors, including both governmental and non-governmental organisations. At the end of a criminal trial, the victim may not obtain any redress for the injuries they have suffered, leaving them vulnerable to re-exploitation. Given that all processes involved in responding to human exploitation have their own strengths and weaknesses, it is important to consider the options in light of the needs and desires of the victim being served in the case. Choosing the right path to take in any given set of circumstances requires four steps:

1. Identifying the range of laws under which abuses might fall;
2. Understanding the procedures for obtaining redress through the different legal frameworks;
3. Knowing the contextual factors which impact reparatory processes; and
4. Choosing a pathway which meets the needs of the victim.

### **Identifying the Range of Laws Under Which Abuses Fall**

When operating within the framework of particular kinds of abuses – whether that be slavery, human trafficking, bonded labour, sexual exploitation, child labour, or any of the other categories or sub-categories of violation – it can be easy to focus on a limited set of avenues for dealing with situations of exploitation. Yet, exploitation will often violate a number of criminal and civil laws simultaneously. By identifying the range of laws under which abuses might fall, organisations can expand the possibilities for achieving redress for victims. While provisions directly concerning slavery, servitude, forced labour and human trafficking are naturally the first port-of-call, within the confines of criminal law it is often also possible to frame the abuses as a range of other crimes. Where some elements of the exploitation crime might be more difficult to establish, it may still be possible to pursue criminal justice through alternative offences. In a case of human trafficking, for instance, establishing a crime of trafficking in persons may be difficult because of the multiple elements of the offence (act, means and purpose) which must be established beyond a reasonable doubt. Some elements which might be used in the attempt to establish trafficking might also, however, constitute distinct crimes in themselves – physical assault, sexual assault, fraud, separate offences concerning exploitation, and the list goes on.

Labour laws also serve as an important consideration in formulating legal claims for victims, as situations of exploitation are likely to entail a raft of breaches of labour legislation that regulates the conditions in which people may be required to work and imposes penalties on employers. Labour processes can be

particularly useful in securing remuneration for victims, including back payment of wages which ought to have been paid (including for failure to meet minimum wages) and compensation for overtime in accordance with legislative requirements. In situations of less severe labour exploitation in particular, obtaining the remuneration owed to workers can be the most meaningful response available, reaffirming their legal rights and entitlements and thereby directly countering the abuses. Additionally, the procedures for obtaining back-wages are often administrative rather than judicial, and thus often can be concluded in a much shorter period of time than either criminal or civil trials.

Many states also have specialist legislation and schemes targeting specific forms of abuse and providing forms of interim support for identified victims. In the United Kingdom, for instance, the National Referral Mechanism provides a 45 day reflection and recovery period, with a range of support services available where there are reasonable grounds to believe the person is a victim of 'modern slavery'. This may include a place in a Government-funded safe house, access to legal advice, protection, and independent psychological and practical assistance. After a conclusive decision is made, victims may apply for discretionary leave to remain in the UK or have help and assistance to return home through the Home Office Assisted Voluntary Return of Irregular Migrants process (if they are from beyond the European Economic Area). In India, the Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers (2016) makes cash and non-cash benefits available to released bonded labourers. Although the bulk of support is linked to the criminal conviction of exploiters, immediate assistance of

RS 5,000 from the District Administration may be available as well as care and protection while a criminal trial is pending.

Current estimates of the prevalence and nature of modern slavery globally make it clear that exploitation is a systemic problem, and not simply an exceptional circumstance. The interplay of ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors in creating the conditions for exploitation make efforts purely focused on ‘rescue’ insufficient to tackle the problem. Organisations concerned not only with removing people from situations of exploitation, but with preventing their future re-victimisation must therefore engage with the factors that make people vulnerable to exploitation. Often these are acute economic problems which are not relieved by a rescue operation. Forms of redress which provide material redress to victims in the short-term as well as the long-term are therefore key to breaking the cycle of exploitation for those individual victims.

### **Understanding Procedures for Obtaining Redress**

Different responses to wrongdoing often involve travelling distinctly different pathways in political and legal systems. Human rights processes may involve travelling through each layer of the domestic legal system and international bodies, or engaging with domestic human rights bodies. Criminal justice processes will generally involve investigators (police), prosecutors, judiciary, and legal representatives. There may be space for the involvement of citizens and organisations in these processes, however, through the lodging of reports to police, gathering of evidence, identification of potential victims, or protection and support for identified victims. Labour processes are likely to involve administrative officials and

procedures, and again citizens and organisations may be able to have some degree of involvement. Each pathway will have its own timeline, with different demands on victims at different stages in the process. By developing a coherent understanding of the response frameworks within the jurisdiction, organisations can ensure that they maximise their capacity to support victims through the process and can explain the procedures to victims who are unlikely to have extensive knowledge of the operation of these systems.

### **Knowing the Contextual Factors**

The selection of which mechanisms ought to be adopted in a particular set of circumstances is not only dependent on the legal frameworks, but also on the way these operate in practice. Although a mechanism may theoretically be a perfect fit for a particular case, the way that the processes play out in practice may mean that it is less suitable. Social and cultural understandings of the meaning of particular offences can play a significant role in determining how cases are dealt with, creating a disjunct between legal definitions and practice. For instance, in some contexts human trafficking offences and provisions that include labour trafficking within their terms are interpreted by police and courts to include only child and sexual exploitation. Here, the historical understanding of trafficking in persons influences social understandings, leading to the exclusion of other forms of exploitation. This may effectively render a conviction for labour trafficking impossible or extremely unlikely, and make alternative pathways in cases of labour exploitation preferable.

Perhaps the most significant factor in determining the practical desirability of particular mechanisms is the level



of corruption in those bodies. In countries or regions where corruption is identified as particularly prevalent in judicial and administrative processes, the best course of action may in fact be determined by these factors. Generally, some institutions are likely to be more corrupt than others, making them less desirable avenues for redress in environments where exploiters have significant standing or influence. In rural India, for instance, it has been reported that labour inspectors and local administrative bodies are often influenced by connections with exploiters, making criminal processes a more effective avenue for redress. There may also be ways to offset the impact of corruption on official procedures, for instance through the involvement of legal professionals or national human rights bodies.

Even absent widespread corruption, institutions and mechanisms for resolving cases may have serious effectiveness and efficiency problems. Backlogs, days or hours of operation, level of training and expertise, and the formalistic demands and procedures of the legal process are only a few of the issues which might make some claims less (or more) desirable. These factors must be assessed by those working in the area, for they are only revealed in practice. Organisations operating within an area or region may therefore benefit from sharing information concerning the efficiency of response processes, in order to find the best possible avenue of redress in the circumstances of the case.

### **Satisfying the Needs of Victims**

Ultimately the choice as to which pathway is taken for obtaining redress should be determined with the victim at the heart

of considerations, not merely as the subject of redress, but as the primary participant in decision-making. Of course, the victim is best placed to determine their own needs, and therefore what measures and processes best satisfy those. The value metric for assessing remedies is not objective, but relative to the desires and perceptions of the victim in the case – ‘it is not simply a question of whether any remedy or outcome is produced, but whether that remedy or outcome is the right one for the victim.’<sup>163</sup> Thus, the efficiency and efficacy of remedial efforts are improved by placing victims’ perspectives at the centre of decisions. This participatory role can also have symbolic and psychological impacts which counter, rather than entrench, the dehumanisation and traumatisation of victims of extreme exploitation.

The particular circumstances of the violations have a significant impact on the importance of victim participation and procedural justice in remedies processes. Victims are often ‘selected’ by exploiters because of particular vulnerabilities – whether these be psychological, emotional, economic, social, cultural, or environmental (immigration status being a particularly common factor). A range of coercive measures are used not only to enable the physical exploitation of victims, but to ensure that they are unable or unwilling to leave.<sup>164</sup> The reduction in individual agency and subjugation to the exploiter that results from these crimes is a central element of the trauma experienced by victims.<sup>165</sup> Ensuring that the redress processes prioritise the voices of victims and emphasise their role in choosing how they wish to pursue (or not pursue) their case is therefore vital to counter their victimisation. By engaging victims in decision-making processes, official actors and organisations affirm their status and identity as actors and

subjects rather than as objects that are acted upon, conveying public acknowledgement of suffering and adding to the symbolism attached to measures of redress.<sup>166</sup>

Victims are unlikely to have extensive (or even basic) knowledge of the legal frameworks governing their exploitation. Language and literacy barriers can significantly impair victims' ability to engage with resources or support without programmes of community engagement and outreach conducted by governmental and non-governmental organisations. Understanding the legal frameworks alone can be difficult, let alone trying to understand all the processes and procedures involved in the many different potential pathways for redress. Without a clear understanding of the different avenues and exactly what each will entail, victims will be unable to make a meaningful choice to pursue their own liberation. The role of organisations in reaching out to victims and thoroughly explaining the processes in their own language is vital for the realisation of procedural justice and the right to effective remedy.

### **Concluding Remarks**

For a right that is viewed as an indispensable complement to the existence of legal rules, the right to remedy in cases of human exploitation is often overlooked. While states prioritise rescue and criminal justice processes, victims are overlooked and measures likely to ensure meaningful change for their futures are neglected. It is non-governmental organisations that have frequently been at the forefront of victim protection and support mechanisms, and a continued emphasis on these measures is central to the efforts to break cycles of exploitation and support meaningful, long-term

liberation. Too often states have failed to pay sufficient attention to victims' right to legal remedies, and their need for such. International legal frameworks provide a mechanism for increased pressure on states to rectify this failure – a mechanism which may be leveraged by organisations to advocate for substantial systemic change.

The living history of the failure to redress the horrors of transatlantic chattel enslavement speaks worlds. It speaks of the intergenerational impact of widespread injustices left unchecked and unredressed. It speaks of the criticality of the right to remedy in ensuring that the victims can escape the continuum of evolving exploitation by combating vulnerabilities. It speaks of the significance of symbolic, moral repair in recognising the agency of slavery survivors as rights-bearers and not merely as victims. The persistent demand for reparations for the transatlantic enslavement should not be overlooked but engaged with, not only for what it tells us about redressing the so-called 'transatlantic slave trade' but for what it teaches us about redressing exploitation today: that it is an indispensable complement to abolition in achieving liberation.

## ***Introduction to Part III*** ***– Antislavery Tools***

John Oldfield and Mary Wills

Antislavery's history offers valuable examples to inform and support today's activism. The chapters in Part III look at connections between past and present, and illuminate how the history of antislavery speaks to current, and future, reforming efforts. By harnessing the tools of history, searching the archives and identifying past successes and failures, we can see that antislavery campaigning has rich traditions which can be utilised to inform contemporary debates, providing activists and scholars with a kind of 'usable past.'

For example, the history of former movements – how they were organised and the methods and techniques they used – reveals how campaigners in the past achieved transformational change in public attitudes towards slavery. As John Oldfield argues, opinion building (the art of turning ideas and sentiments into deliberate action) was a skill refined by British and US activists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Through appreciating how people access information, they popularised and politicised abolition, creating a powerful grassroots movement for change. Past movements therefore offer invaluable perspectives for those activists looking to build effective social campaigns that effect meaningful change.

History also offers a toolkit of examples. As Zoe Trodd and Charlotte James show, there is a “storehouse of antislavery tools” that developed during the long history of the antislavery movement. These include activist strategies of providing visualisations of the problem, use of testimonials and campaign imagery, and the role of direct action.

Focusing on the tools used by Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman, Trodd and James show that the past is indeed usable, that it can help us develop tools which are “tried and tested.”

History reveals unexpected chapters in the long story of antislavery, demonstrating that shifts in public understandings of what is possible can take place, if popular opinion and the moral argument for intervention is strong enough. As Mary Wills explains, in the nineteenth century, the British state committed public funds on a now unimaginable scale for the Royal Navy to police the suppression of the transatlantic slave trade from West Africa. The precedents set for international diplomacy around the monitoring of trafficking were of huge significance and highlight that in certain circumstances states can (and will) intervene to reform systems (and attitudes) once thought fixed and immutable.

The past matters, especially when history, memory, politics and activism intertwine. As the historian James Walvin argued when discussing the public dialogues around transatlantic slavery that occurred in 2007, 200 years after the 1807 Abolition Act: “It was as if the historical example of 1807 offered a beacon of what might be achieved if people of good will and political resolve put their strength behind a campaign.”<sup>167</sup>

Of course, the past does not hold all the answers: we are

now mercifully enlightened when it comes to theories of racial science, for example, or what constitutes an abuse of human rights. Fundamentally, the history of antislavery reminds us of the worth of human action: the importance of networking, multi-agency working, resilience in the field, the need to protect victims and deter the perpetrators, however great the challenges. All of this requires effort, as well as grassroots organization. It also helps to have a sense of history. There are no quick fixes. As David Cole, National Legal Director of the ACLU, has recently argued, “A hashtag may be sufficient for a moment or a message, but not for a movement.”<sup>168</sup>

Activists have achieved great things in the past, and will continue to do so in the future. This is *our* past and *our* present – as these chapters show, little is achieved without collective action and meaningful intervention.

## **Chapter 7 – Antislavery Opinion Building**

John Oldfield

One of the challenges facing all social movements is how to create transformational change. Early abolitionists met this challenge head-on, even against great odds. In the late eighteenth century, when organized antislavery took off, transatlantic slavery was considered a highly profitable and, some might have said, necessary adjunct of empire. All of the major European powers (France, Britain, The Netherlands, Spain and Portugal) at one time or another entered the slave trade, just as most of them possessed slave colonies. The rise of plantation complexes in the New World that depended on enslaved labour imported from Africa underpinned imperialistic expansion in the Americas, and simultaneously created important links between economic interests and state power. How antislavery activists set about dismantling this system provides an object lesson in what we would now call ‘opinion building’, and for that reason their pioneering efforts deserve more critical attention, providing NGOs and other interested parties with insights into how history speaks to the present and the future.

Abolition emerged at roughly the same time on both sides of the Atlantic, between 1775 and 1788 – that is, during or shortly after the American Revolution. Debates around taxation and representation unleashed powerful forces that recognized the inherent contradiction in fighting for freedom, while at the same



time enslaving Africans and holding them in bondage. Between 1774 and 1783, no fewer than seven American states banned the importation of slaves, either permanently or temporarily. Moreover, several states, including Vermont, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, went further by abolishing slavery itself, a movement that accelerated even more rapidly after 1783. Most of these states, however, stopped short of immediate emancipation, favouring gradualist approaches that in freeing newborn children tied them to terms of service, effectively a form of apprenticeship. Very few people, it seemed, believed in the wisdom or utility of immediate emancipation; that would come later.

In short, the American Revolution expanded the realm of black freedom and stimulated further reform efforts that, in the longer term, would lead to an attack on plantation slavery in the Southern United States, where it was most firmly entrenched. Britain presents a rather different case study. For the British, slavery was always a colonial rather than a domestic issue, seemingly distant from the concerns of everyday life. Moreover, it was protected by powerful interest groups, among them the West India 'lobby' in the House of Commons and the Society of West India Planters and Merchants, made up of sugar merchants, absentee planters and colonial agents. Yet, here again, the American Revolution shifted the terms of debate. "As long as America was ours," Thomas Clarkson wrote in 1788, "there was no chance that a minister would have attended to the groans of the sons and daughters of Africa, however he might feel for their distress."<sup>169</sup> Now things were very different. The America Revolution effectively divided British America, at the same time halving the number of enslaved

Africans in the British Empire. In short, after 1783, British antislavery activists found themselves operating in a highly charged political climate, one in which formal organization, in the shape of abolitionist societies, seemed not only possible but highly desirable.

Seizing this opportunity, in May 1787 a group of twelve activists, among them Thomas Clarkson and Granville Sharp, organised the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade (SEAST). The title of this new organization is itself revealing. From an early stage, British activists drew an important distinction between ‘emancipation’ and ‘abolition’. Speaking to this very point, Sharp insisted that the emancipation of enslaved Africans was “entirely beyond the business of the SEAST, the sole purpose of whose institution was the abolition of the African slave trade.”<sup>170</sup> Put simply, British activists calculated that attacking colonial slavery head-on would likely result in defeat. Instead, they chose to attack slavery by attacking the slave trade first, the logic being that ‘abolition’ would lead to the eventual dismantling of the Caribbean slave system, if only by cutting off supplies of enslaved Africans (and here it is worth adding that slave populations in the Caribbean, unlike those in North America, were characterised by natural decrease, making the whole system overly reliant on fresh imports). In other words, the aim was to strangle slavery at its source. Over the years, this strategy would become a British orthodoxy; indeed, it represents one of the crucial differences between British and American activists in this formative stage of the antislavery movement.

British abolition proceeded on two fronts. The first, the parliamentary campaign, was led by William Wilberforce. The

second, opinion building, fell to the Clarkson and his colleagues, most of whom were businessmen or had some connection with business. At one level, selling abolition was like selling any other product, and the techniques the SEAST used were remarkably innovative. The key to this quiet revolution was the printed word. The SEAST effectively ran its own publishing house, buying up copyrights, commissioning new titles or simply reprinting old ones. Early efforts were concentrated on producing cheap promotional literature, short tracts that could be distributed through the SEAST's country agents. Thomas Clarkson's *Summary View of the Slave Trade* (1788) and the Dean of Middleton's Letter to the Treasurer of the Society instituted for the Purpose of effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade (1788) both fell into this category. Over 15,000 copies of each of these titles were printed for the SEAST in the fifteen months up to August 1788 alone, and the final figure, particularly in the case of the Letter, was probably closer to 20,000. Running to just sixteen pages and small enough at 110mm x 150 mm to pass easily from hand to hand, these pamphlet-size publications were intended to introduce readers to the subject of the slave trade and arouse their sympathy and interest. More substantial books and pamphlets were available through the SEAST or directly from James Phillips, a Quaker printer. But the hard work of opening up the market was done by Clarkson's *Summary View* and the Dean of Middleham's Letter.

The SEAST revealed a similarly enlightened attitude towards advertising and the mass media. Taking advantage of the proliferation of provincial newspapers, particularly after 1750, the SEAST published notices of its own activities, reports

and subscriptions, as well as foreign news items (the progress of abolition in the United States, for example) calculated to win over potential converts. The SEAST also expended a lot of time and energy on its subscription lists. Between June 1787 and August 1788 no fewer than four different lists were distributed through the SEAST's country agents, each of them longer and more detailed than the last. Subscription lists were important, not simply because of the sums of money involved, but because of the information they supplied about the subscribers themselves, their status, places of residence, and so on. In a bustling consumer society, such details assumed particular significance. Subscribing to any type of project, cultural or otherwise, was a form of self-advertisement; it was helpful, therefore, to be able to recognise names one knew and respected. Numbers were important, too. The subscription list of August 1788 ran to nearly 2,000 names, a level of support that gave the early abolitionist movement credibility as well as respectability.

Activists also made innovative use of images. No one, perhaps, better understood the commercial value of abolition than the Staffordshire potter Josiah Wedgwood, who in August 1787 became an active member of the SEAST. Wedgwood's influence is discernible, above all, in the design of the SEAST's seal, depicting a kneeling slave together with the motto "Am I Not a Man and a Brother," which would become one of the most instantly recognizable of all antislavery images. Remodelled and reworked, it appears time and time again in the abolitionist iconography of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, sometimes as a transfer print on a piece of china, sometimes in the form of a sulphide set in a piece of glass. Equally ubiquitous was the plan and cross

sections of the slave ship *Brookes*, which was originally devised and printed by a group of activists in Plymouth. Again, the image was reworked and reissued. By 1790 there were actually four versions of the *Brookes* in circulation, including versions printed in Philadelphia and Paris. In Edinburgh, the engraving was posted in the streets. Others had it framed and displayed in their homes. Cheap and accessible, these images helped to make abolition fashionable. They also gave the antislavery movement an important visual identity, making explicit the relationship between abolition, commercialisation and popular politics.

Through these different means the SEAST successfully politicised antislavery and created a powerful grassroots movement. These activities also had an important international dimension. Abolition was never a parochially British or American affair. Rather, it rested on dense networks that spanned the Atlantic world, connecting places as far afield as London, Paris, New York, Baltimore and Philadelphia. And through these networks, activists distributed huge amounts of antislavery propaganda: books, pamphlets, prints and newspapers. Abolitionism, as it emerged in the late 1780s, relied heavily on the exchange of ideas and information. Moreover, this information originated all over Europe and the Americas and travelled in different directions, from east to west and west to east. The effort that activists put into developing and sustaining these exchanges speaks for itself. Energetic and resourceful, they succeeded in bridging the gap between the national and the international, in the process nurturing sympathetic connections that gave antislavery an urgent moral force.

Activists channelled this new-found enthusiasm for abolition

into petitioning. At this date, petitions were a recognized and popular way of airing grievances, or simply making demands known, whether those demands were economic or political. In Britain, two early campaigns, the Wilkite movement of the 1760s and the campaign calling for conciliation with the American colonies a decade later, established a pattern that abolitionists were quick to follow. In 1788 and again in 1792, antislavery activists organised two large petition campaigns that at a peak involved over 400,000 people, or roughly thirteen per cent of the adult male population of England, Scotland and Wales. In 1792 alone, over 500 abolitionist petitions were presented to the House of Commons, a staggering number that dwarfed all previous petition campaigns, irrespective of the subject. While the industrial north continued to provide the most vocal support for abolition, every English county was represented in 1792, in addition to which Scotland rose up in favour of abolition of the slave trade. In Edinburgh, 3,865 people signed the local petition “on the spot at different tables, all with the most admirable decorum.”<sup>171</sup> The final figure was 10,885, exceeded only by the 15,000 to 20,000 reported to have signed the Manchester petition. By contrast with 1788, this was truly a nationwide campaign, an extraordinary achievement that spoke volumes for the SEAST’s energy and perseverance.

Petitions were also widely used in the United States, although here it was more usual for antislavery societies to petition, rather than mayors, local assemblies or groups of inhabitants. Only rarely during this period do we come across popular petitions, for the simple reason that antislavery activists feared being dismissed as over-enthusiastic zealots bent on fomenting sectional

discord. Instead, they presented themselves as moderates. As John Stauffer puts it, speaking of these early American campaigners, “they compromised effectively and worked across sectional, and occasionally racial divisions.”<sup>172</sup> Nevertheless, there were exceptions. Robert Pleasants, a prominent Quaker activist, reported in May 1797 that the Virginia petition calling for the gradual abolition of slavery had been signed by “about 500 people, divers of whom are very respectable slaveholders.”<sup>173</sup> Moreover, it is clear that in Virginia, at least, petitions were circulated or left open for signatures, as they were in Britain. Either way, many more people signed the 1797 petition than were ever paid-up members of the Virginia Anti-Slavery Society.

There were many reasons why abolition finally triumphed in 1807/1808, among them domestic concerns and a shifting political context, both at home and abroad (the French invasion of Saint-Domingue in 1801 and the emergence of an independent black republic in the Caribbean was particularly significant). Nevertheless, we should not underestimate the role played by activists in sensitising the British and American publics to abolition. To do this required skill and perseverance. Harnessing some of the latest marketing techniques (cheap disposable literature, subscription lists, inertia selling), British activists popularised abolition, shifting it from the margins to the very heart of political debate. The same was true in the United States and, to a lesser extent, in France, where again abolition gained a foothold in the late eighteenth century. The abolitionist triumph of 1807/1808 might have taken place within legislative halls but, importantly, it rested on a groundswell of public support that for two decades or more had been carefully

nurtured by reformers on both sides of the Atlantic.

What we might describe as the first phase of the antislavery movement came to an end in 1807/1808 with the abolition of the British and American slave trades. The second phase started in 1823 with the organization of the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Dominions. As its name implied, the Anti-Slavery Society was conservative in character, demanding merely the adoption of measures to protect slaves from further mistreatment, together with a plan for gradual emancipation. By the 1820s, therefore, British activists had moved closer to their American counterparts. Yet, at the same time, American abolitionism was also undergoing a transformation. Since the 1780s, 'gradualism' had been an American orthodoxy. By the end of the decade, however, some American activists, led by William Lloyd Garrison, were beginning to question this stance, shifting to a position that became known as 'immediatism', that is, the immediate and unconditional abolition of slavery. Not content with slow progress, in 1832 Garrison and his followers organized the New England Anti-Slavery Society, an immediatist organisation that set American antislavery on an entirely different course. At about the same time, British activists, or at least the younger wing of the movement, also embraced immediatism, although the Emancipation Act of 1833 initially made provision for an apprenticeship scheme that was decidedly gradualist in temper.

As before, activists sought to popularize their different positions (gradualist or immediatist) and to locate them within a broader abolitionist discourse. To do this, they relied on some – by now – familiar techniques and strategies: cheap disposable



literature, petitioning, and the use of antislavery prints and artifacts. Indeed, some of the most important opinion-building techniques of the nineteenth century (the figure of the kneeling slave, for instance) were first devised during the 1780s and 1790s. But at the same time, nineteenth-century activists introduced some new innovations, chief among them a greater reliance on the spoken word. The nineteenth century witnessed a remarkable proliferation of lecturing. Authors, scientists, philosophers and evangelists all took to the lecture circuit, the best of them (Dickens, for example) attracting large and enthusiastic audiences. Concomitantly, there was growing interest in the theory and practice of oratory, as evidenced by the number of manuals published on the subject, many of them based on texts going back to the eighteenth century. Lecture-goers were discerning and, to judge from their letters and diaries, quick to find fault. What they were looking for, it transpires, was eloquence, which they equated with the ability to move audiences and to take them out of themselves, if only for a moment. The eloquent speaker was considered an ‘artist’, capable of bending audiences to his or her will.

Nineteenth-century activists were quick to exploit the opportunities offered by the lecture platform, and it is easy to understand why. Strictly speaking, what became known as the ‘agency system’ had its origins in Britain. In the early summer of 1831, younger and more radical elements of the Anti-Slavery Society organized an Agency Committee, with the aim of appealing directly to the people themselves rather than to their elected representatives. To that end, the new body employed five lecturers, among them George Thompson, an electrifying presence who

captivated audiences wherever he went. Thompson subsequently toured the United States (this was after the British Emancipation Act of 1833) where he is said to have given over 200 lectures. His example proved infectious. By 1837, the American Anti-Slavery Society (AAS) already had 100 agents on its books, many of them ‘travelling’ agents. State and local antislavery societies also employed agents, among them the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. In effect, American activists made the agency system their own. Estimates vary, but it seems possible that over a twenty-five-year period (c.1834-1860) as many as 1,000 people may have been employed, at one time or another, as antislavery agents.

At the outset, all of these agents were white men. By the mid-1840s, however, the agency system was much more diverse, both in terms of race and gender. Several prominent black abolitionists worked as antislavery agents, among them Charles Lennox Remond, Frederick Douglass and William Wells Brown. So too did an increasing number of women. Abbey Kelley, for instance, worked as an agent of the American Anti-Slavery Society for over sixteen years, eventually rising to the position of General Agent. Kelley, in turn, had an influence on two other female suffragists, Lucy Stone and Susan B. Anthony. Stone became an agent of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in 1845, staying on until 1854, even though by this date her commitment to women’s rights was taking up an increasing amount of her time. The same might be said of Susan B. Anthony, who was an AAS agent between 1855 and 1859. These three women – all of them associated with the women’s movement – began their speaking careers as antislavery agents. Around them there were others, including Sallie Holley,

who became an agent in 1852 and worked with the MAS until 1856 and possibly later.

Life as an agent was demanding. The travel, long hours and uncomfortable lodgings inevitably took their toll, as did speaking out-of-doors, particularly in winter. As if all of this were not enough, agents also suffered mental and physical abuse. Most of them encountered some level of intimidation. Often, this came in the form of threats and taunts. Antislavery meetings could prove febrile spaces, eliciting strong passions on both sides. More dangerous still were anti-abolitionist mobs, whose pre-meditated aim was to disrupt antislavery meetings. Mobs smashed windows, intimidated lecturers and, on occasion, drove them out of town, as happened to George Thompson. Garrison narrowly escaped from the hands of a Boston mob in 1835 and might well have perished but for the timely intervention of a rescue party led by two muscular truckmen. All agents lived in fear that something similar might befall them. Some, a very few, rounded on protesters, daring them to do their worst. Stephen Foster, another familiar figure on the lecture circuit, was said to measure the success of antislavery meetings by the number of benches broken by the mob and by the quality of the eggs thrown at the speakers. Not everyone, of course, could live up to such high ideals. For many antislavery agents, the threat of violence must have been a constant source of anxiety; a disturbing reality that made their work all the more challenging.

The job, in other words, required patience and great fortitude. It also required self-discipline and a taste for controversy. Important as these qualities were, however, they did not guarantee success. Something more was needed. Writing to a young recruit

in 1860, Wendell Phillips confessed that in the beginning he and his colleagues had never thought too hard about what they were going to say. Rather, they had “just obeyed an irrepressible impulse, rushed into the fight and struck the best blow, and never considered whether it was scientifically done.” That ‘hot, unconscious earnestness’, Phillips added, ‘has made us all what we are’.<sup>174</sup> Elizur Wright, one of the founders of the AAS, echoed these sentiments. In Wright’s view, agents needed to be able to rouse their audiences, creating through their words and example a sense of being part of a wider movement that brought figures such as Garrison much closer to the masses. To do this successfully required a special kind of talent, hence the preoccupation with eloquence, or what Garrison described as ‘imperial sway’.

The agency system not only helps us to understand how activists shaped a movement but also how they sustained it, through good times and bad. Often, it was the mere presence of an agent that made the difference between success and failure. As Sallie Holley wrote, “it is very grateful (sic) when we go to a family where the woman is cut off from her neighbours’ sympathy on account of her antislavery position, and to see and talk with us is a rare and rich treat.”<sup>175</sup> Put another way, the agency system was the essential glue that held the movement together. Antislavery activists expended a great deal of time and energy on these initiatives, seeing in them an important weapon in their fight against the “peculiar institution.” Rather like civil rights activists in the 1960s, agents were front-line workers whose task it was to create an antislavery public and, in the process, sow the seeds of radical political change. It was demanding and sometimes dangerous work, but the agency system

would prove a vital part of the wider abolitionist effort right up until the eve of the American Civil War.

American activists – certainly the Garrisonian wing of the movement – also made use of meetings and parades to press home their message. It was Garrisonians, for instance, who were largely responsible for elevating 1 August, the anniversary of emancipation in the British West Indies, to a central place in the American abolitionist calendar. Particularly impressive were the annual meetings organised by the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society (MAS), which moved around the state for a time before settling in Abington, south of Boston. Widely publicized, these meetings regularly attracted activists from every quarter of the eastern part of Massachusetts, as well as from New York and Michigan. Given the time of year, Emancipation Day festivals were usually held out of doors; in fact, most of them were advertised as picnics and usually took place in “shady groves” that provided relief from the afternoon sun. Travelling to and from these venues led to a further innovation, namely Emancipation Day parades, accompanied by marching bands, banners and decorations. These commemorative events were an important form of self-advertisement, reminding participants and spectators alike of the importance of the antislavery movement, its past, present and future.

Nineteenth-century abolitionism rested on dense networks of local and regional auxiliaries. Equally significant was the increasing involvement of women in the movement. In Britain, at least, women had played only a peripheral role in the early abolitionist movement. All of this was to change in the nineteenth century, as female antislavery societies began to emerge, some

of them more active than their male counterparts. Women also organized petitions and led the campaign against the consumption of slave-produced goods. In 1833, nearly 300,000 women signed a petition against slavery, the largest single antislavery petition in the movement's history. The same was true in the United States. The second phase of the movement would see women exercising more and more influence, not least as antislavery lecturers. They also set up sewing circles and organised fairs and antislavery bazaars, which united women on both sides of the Atlantic (many British women contributed poems, illustrations and artefacts to the Boston Anti-Slavery Bazaar, for instance). Here again, female activists organized petitions, often canvassing door-to-door. In 1837, the US Congress received 63,178 female signatures on antislavery petitions, compared to just 43,000 from men.

These different activities served as an important backdrop to the political struggles of the 1830s, '40s and '50s. In Britain, popular support for reform fuelled the petition campaigns of the 1820s, just as it fuelled a growing political assertiveness that would see antislavery activists seeking pledges from prospective parliamentary candidates to vote for emancipation, a kind of public shaming that would have an important impact on the composition of the first reformed Parliament, the same Parliament that abolished slavery in the British Caribbean in 1833. In the United States, activists employed many of the same tactics, including what was called the 'interrogatory system', which sought pledges from prospective candidates on a wide range of issues, from the infamous 'Gag Rule', which effectively banned the discussion of antislavery petitions in the US Congress, to the internal slave trade and the pressing issue

of slavery in the District of Columbia. Many American activists used their votes to elect antislavery candidates, even if that meant voting for write-in candidates. Others, however, turned their backs on the two-party system (Whigs and Democrats) in favour of third-party politics, a decision that, in the long term, would hasten the demise of the Whig Party and, with it, the onset of a bloody civil war (1861-65) that would eventually bring slavery to an end.

None of this would have been possible, however, without the opinion-building activities of abolitionists. A lot of this work was carried out behind the scenes, but was no less effective for that. Starting out in the late eighteenth century, abolitionists on both sides of the Atlantic set out to challenge a system that was firmly entrenched, both politically and economically. In pursuit of that aim, they developed a wide range of opinion-building techniques. In many aspects, they were ahead of their times, not least in their use of images and artefacts. Above all, they were responsive to new trends, whether economic (commercialization and improved transportation), social (the growth of the public sphere) or cultural (the increasing importance attached to the lecture circuit and public speaking). Antislavery activists were innovators. Yet at the same time, they were proud of their antecedents and keen to celebrate them at every opportunity. This was particularly true in the United States, where things such as Emancipation Day celebrations played an important part in shaping the political and cultural identity of the American abolitionist movement.

This story has important implications, not least for NGOs. Opinion building – turning ideas and sentiments into deliberate action – is a complex, multi-faceted process, demanding a ready

appreciation of market dynamics, as well as an awareness of social and cultural trends, especially when it comes to understanding how people access information. It also involves creating networks where none have previously existed before. Antislavery activists took these responsibilities very seriously, investing in a wide range of techniques – some more successful than others. ‘Abolition’ undoubtedly spread by word of mouth, just as it rested on the influence of local associations, whether religious or secular. Nevertheless, it is clear that something else was needed to sustain the movement – hence the importance attached to pamphlet campaigns, meetings, parades, oratory and antislavery agents. Today, we are more inclined to turn to new technologies (Twitter, YouTube, Facebook) to do this work for us. The benefits are obvious. Yet, at the same time, we risk losing something. If recent events have shown that powerful alliances can be built inside computers, or across social media platforms, the history of the antislavery movement is a timely reminder that human interaction, at whatever level, is important, too.



## **Chapter 8 – Our Own Tools: Historical Antislavery Techniques for the Contemporary Movement to End Slavery**

Zoe Trodd and Charlotte James

“The tools to those who can use them.” Let every man work for the abolition of slavery in his own way. I would help all and hinder none’

— Frederick Douglass, 1892

“SEND FOR FREDERICK DOUGLASS,  
GARRISON, BEECHER, LOWELL.  
SEND FOR HARRIET TUBMAN, OLD  
SOJOURNER TRUTH...

(And if nobody comes, send for me.)”

— Langston Hughes, 1964

A few days before Barack Obama’s inauguration as the 44<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, two activists wrote public letters to their common abolitionist ancestor. Frederick Douglass’s great-great granddaughter, Nettie Douglass, told her ancestor that the inauguration would begin to fulfil his dream of equality, while Douglass’s great-great-great grandson, Kenneth B. Morris, Jr., wondered what advice Douglass would offer Obama. Morris imagined Douglass recommending integrity, inclusiveness,

communication, adaptation and creativity, then ended his letter by thanking Douglass on behalf of the thousands ‘who have tried to follow your examples ... over generations past.’ Awakening the ancestors, Douglass’s descendants not only position abolitionists as trail-blazers who opened the way for Obama, but create a living protest history. ‘You have always been alive in me,’ Nettie told Douglass, as she offered him as a living presence to the rest of the world, too.<sup>176</sup>

In her letter to Douglass, Nettie also calls herself a twenty-first-century abolitionist. She explains that the Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives does more than bear her famous ancestor’s name: it continues his work against slavery. “We want to do what you and the abolitionists did in the nineteenth century and shed light on the inhumanity of slavery to ... help end it,” Nettie explained of the modern antislavery non-profit organization she co-founded in 2007.<sup>177</sup> Morris also sees the organization as part of Douglass’s legacy. He believes that if Douglass were alive today, he would fight to end the new, globalized slavery of the twenty-first-century. As Douglass’s descendent, he therefore feels “an obligation to stand on the platform [Douglass] built.” Morris knows that “Douglass believed in agitation and he would have expected nothing less from his family.”<sup>178</sup> Douglass and other abolitionists helped to end legalized, institutionalized slavery in the United States. But making slavery illegal did not make it disappear. Once thought to be a problem of the past, contemporary forms of slavery are alive and well across the world today. As Douglass’s descendants know, slavery is not history. However, as they also know and embody, neither is abolitionism.

### **The Antislavery Usable Past**

Over the past 20 years, a new wave of antislavery has experienced exponential growth. There are now antislavery groups in most countries, ranging from the tiny and suppressed El Hor in Mauritania, to the Walk Free campaign and its transnational advocacy network. There are numerous international and domestic antislavery laws, and the new Sustainable Development Goals seek to address modern slavery: target 8.7 is to “end modern slavery and human trafficking.” Although this contemporary movement exhibits new strategies and techniques, it also shares features with past abolitionist efforts. Yet around the world, today’s abolitionists tend to start from scratch rather than learning from earlier antislavery successes and failures. Operating within short time frames, and often focused on urgent liberations and prosecutions, antislavery workers rarely draw on the long history of antislavery experiments and strategies.

That long history has generated a storehouse of antislavery tools. Earlier activists’ definitions and legal battles, religious and philosophical debates, literary devices, rhetoric and imagery, organizational structures and strategies, are an antislavery usable past that belongs to all participants in our contemporary movement, not only to the blood descendants of the great nineteenth-century abolitionists. This idea of a usable past is not a call to triumphant celebration of past activism. A truly usable past includes antislavery’s victories and mistakes. After all, the nineteenth-century abolitionists themselves hoped that future generations would improve upon their work. In July 1865, Wendell Phillips praised fellow abolitionists and then told his youthful crowd

to “copy only the spirit of your fathers, and not their imperfections. ... Be better than we.”<sup>179</sup> Sure enough, the next generation of activists, fighting racist segregation and lynching in the United States, used the memory of abolitionist failures as well as successes to expand the limits of the possible in their own time. For example, when W.E.B Du Bois explained that his early twentieth-century civil rights organization should embrace full and equal power for its black leaders, he used the limited interracialism of antislavery societies as a negative spur: the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) should not be a “group of white philanthropists helping the Negro like the Anti-Slavery societies,” he insisted.<sup>180</sup> Activists knew that history mattered, and that without it they would be unable to imagine the future, in part because its storehouse contained failed visions, activists’ defeats and cautionary tales.

Today the arc of abolitionist ideas and rhetoric bends across the years. It encompasses Du Bois and numerous activists and leaders in the black protest tradition, from the 1870s through the twentieth-century civil rights movement, and many of today’s antislavery workers. For example, founded in 2000, the organization Free the Slaves conducts research, supports grassroots organizations around the world that liberate and rehabilitate slaves, and strategies with governments towards ending slavery. It also draws explicitly from both the British and the US abolitionist traditions. From 2008 onward, it celebrated antislavery leadership with “Freedom Awards.” For several years, it gave the Harriet Tubman Community Award to an organization that works to end slavery, the Frederick Douglass Survivor Award to a former slave

who helps to liberate other slaves, and the William Wilberforce Leadership Award to an individual who has moved a major institution, government, or business to take antislavery action. Announcing and promoting the awards, Free the Slaves circulated lengthy quotations from Tubman, Douglass and Wilberforce.

Free the Slaves began as the US sister group of the British-based organization Anti-Slavery International, which was formed in 1839 as the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Like Free the Slaves, Anti-Slavery International has located itself explicitly in the abolitionist protest tradition. For example, during the bicentennial celebrations of the ending of the British slave trade (1807-2007), Anti-Slavery International proclaimed the work of antislavery to be unfinished and launched a new campaign: “the fight for freedom 1807-2007.” The campaign’s publicity materials drew from British abolitionist imagery, narrated the life histories of several nineteenth-century abolitionists, and explained that Anti-Slavery International aims to revitalize and harness the abolitionist spirit of the nineteenth century. One pamphlet concluded with a series of lessons that nineteenth-century abolitionism can teach contemporary activists: to have clearly defined goals; to realize the vital role of slaves and former slaves themselves (in rebelling, resisting, and campaigning); to use advocacy tools (including investigative research, public petitioning, iconic posters, and the arts); and to believe that individuals and groups “can and do change the world in which we live.”<sup>181</sup>

Beyond these two leading abolitionist organizations, other groups have also summoned the antislavery past. The Jean R. Cadet Restavec Foundation, focused on slavery in Haiti, positioned

itself as an inheritor of the Haitian and US abolitionist traditions. Founder and director Jean-Robert Cadet, who was enslaved in Haiti as a *restavec* (child domestic slave), has explained that “the same specialized whips manufactured to torture the slaves during the 1700s can be purchased today on the streets of Port-au-Prince to torture children in domestic servitude.”<sup>182</sup> Against this symbol of Haiti’s eighteenth-century slavery, Cadet has set the memory of slave rebellion: Haiti should see itself “through the eyes of Toussaint Louverture.”<sup>183</sup> Cadet also remembers black American abolitionists. Brought from Haiti to the US as a slave and eventually freed, he attended a school in New York. In his memoir he describes a history lesson: “I listened to my classmates present about ... Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman and others. When my turn came to speak, I read verbatim what I had learned about Dred Scott. ... I could sense the irony of the moment: Unknown to anyone in that room (except me), a modern-day slave was relating the pain-filled saga of a famous historical slave.”<sup>184</sup> Cadet decided to turn this abolitionist history into his own history and launched his antislavery organization.

Government officials have followed suit and proclaimed themselves twenty-first-century abolitionists. As director of the US State Department’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, John Miller repeatedly positioned today’s movement alongside nineteenth-century abolitionism. In speeches, he summoned the “spirit” of William Lloyd Garrison and Wilberforce, and also called upon abolitionists to have the “dedication and energy” of Douglass.<sup>185</sup> In an article, he insisted that the task for today’s abolitionists is the same as in the nineteenth century: “to awaken

others to an abomination.” The “great cause” of antislavery needs “new champions,” explains the article, because “the abolitionist revolution” remains unfinished.<sup>186</sup> In Britain, Prime Minister Tony Blair called the bicentennial of 2007 a “spur for us to redouble our efforts to stop ... modern slavery” and the government released a booklet that connected “the struggles for justice 200 years ago, and our ongoing concern to tackle ... forms of slavery.”<sup>187</sup> It called the abolition of slavery “unfinished business.”<sup>188</sup> More recently, Prime Minister Theresa May has remembered Britain’s “historic stand to ban slavery two centuries ago,” and pledged that “Britain will once again lead the way in defeating modern slavery.” This attempt to harness the antislavery past has extended to the United Nations (UN) as well, with one UN Secretary, Kofi Annan, calling for a global “pledge to draw on the lessons of history to free our fellow human beings from slavery.”<sup>189</sup> From NGOs to governments and the UN, what unites all these examples is the call upon protest *memory: memory of protest used to protest.*

### **The Abolitionist Toolkit**

As a movement strategy, these explicit reworkings of abolitionism for a contemporary social justice movement allow modern antislavery a much deeper history than its 20-year arc since the late 1990s. It introduces to modern antislavery a sense of time and progress that contextualizes future goals, like the UN target of ending slavery by 2030. By standing on the shoulders of antislavery giants, contemporary abolitionist imaginations can stretch forward to 2030 and beyond, because their big picture now stretches backward to the abolitionist visions and botched

emancipations of the nineteenth century.

But beyond access to this self-positioning of the movement, the tools in the abolitionist storehouse also include specific activist strategies, some of which are already identifiable in contemporary efforts, and many of which could be applied further. For example, from 2017 onwards, researchers with the University of Nottingham's Rights Lab have been mapping slavery from space. Unimaginably to nineteenth-century abolitionists, the project harnesses high-resolution satellite imagery to identify sites of slave labor around the world.<sup>190</sup> However, although this is the first time abolitionists have mapped slavery from space, mapping and visualizing slave labor has a long tradition in abolitionism. Edwin Hergesheimer's map of Southern slavery for the U.S. Coast Survey was printed in 1861. Based on the population statistics gathered in the 1860 Census, it identified the percentage of the population enslaved in each county. Hergesheimer used a relatively new choropleth technique of shading to reveal an America through the lens of slavery. Such was the power of this slavery map that, although it was printed with the simple intention of raising money for northern efforts during the American Civil War, the total number of slaves—four million, up from 700,000 in 1790—prompted national commentary. Viewers could now see at a glance the economic system that kept people in bondage: slavery's concentrations and patterns. The map made the clear visual argument that the destruction of the Confederacy would mean the destruction of slavery.

The map then became a key tool for President Abraham Lincoln. He used it regularly to trace the progress of Union troops through the South and inform decision-making about sending



armies to free slaves in some of the highest density areas in order to destabilize Southern order.<sup>191</sup> As a new technology for knowledge visualization, the slavery map represented the use of statistics to effect change. Today, the presence of historians on the Slavery from Space team has ensured that earth observation scientists work from the start of each observation to deliver actionable findings. They share their results with key policy-makers and opt to map slavery sites where on-the-ground NGOs can offer ground-truthing and liberation. Learning from the transformation of Hergesheimer's fundraising map into an instrument of policy and strategy, their maps of slavery are antislavery tools by design.

Other contemporary techniques have a similar heritage. The possibilities of corpus linguistics, a big data approach to analyzing language patterns across survivor testimonies, media and government discourse and business statements, to better understand perceptions and target resources and pressure, may seem like a new antislavery tool. But even this tool has abolitionist origins in the analytical archive approach of Theodore Weld's epic collection *American Slavery As It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses* (1839). By studying the impact of Weld's collection and analysis, contemporary abolitionists using corpus linguistics can opt for similar or different impacts today.

Equally, it may seem as though today is the first time abolitionists are designing rigorous antislavery monitoring and evaluation tools. But Douglass's careful and telling revisions to the material of his first autobiography, the *Narrative* (1845), in the opening section of his second autobiography, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855), and to *My Bondage* in the first section of his third

autobiography, *The Life and Times* (1881), were a baseline, midline, and endline comparison, written between the lines of his own impact and progression. By understanding Douglass's between-the-lines evaluation of change over time, we can learn from his theory of change.

Or it may seem as though today is the first time abolitionists have thought seriously about the aesthetics of awareness-raising and designed techniques for measuring the immediate and long-term impact of particular campaigns. But Douglass's 50-year process of refining his own public image, discarding photographs that did not resonate with his audience, reprinting those that did, and becoming the most photographed American of the nineteenth century, was an early battle over campaign strategies: between Douglass's images of self-possession and dignity, and other antislavery imagery that stepped into paternalism and voyeurism.<sup>192</sup> By absorbing the lessons that Douglass tried to teach us, with his 50-year campaign to establish the dignity and humanity of survivors through photography, we can apply them in our own antislavery visual culture and prioritize campaign imagery that depicts survivors in an empowering way.<sup>193</sup>

In fact, the history and shape of the modern antislavery movement, from the 1990s to today, has more commonalities with earlier antislavery movements than differences. For example, now as in the nineteenth century, there is a role for direct action. On October 16, 1859, John Brown launched an attack against the institution of slavery. With a band of five black men and 16 whites he captured the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, about 60 miles northwest of Washington, D.C. The band was overpowered early

in the morning on October 18, and Brown was tried for murder, treason and conspiring to incite a slave insurrection. He was executed on December 2 and immediately became one of the most contentious figures in American culture and a national symbol embodying contradiction: a Christ-like hero and satanic demon, a martyr and a madman, a meteor of peace and of war. The raid galvanised the South: six weeks after Brown's capture, secessionist voices had become dominant. One newspaper described this transformation at the time: "The Harpers Ferry invasion has advanced the cause of disunion more than any other event that has happened since the formation of [our] government."<sup>194</sup> Based on the responses to Harpers Ferry, had Brown never lived, the Democratic Party would not have split along section lines and Stephen Douglas almost certainly would have been elected president in 1860, deferring secession, civil war and emancipation for at least another four years—probably more—which may have delayed or disrupted emancipation movements in Brazil, Cuba, and even Russia. Arguably Harpers Ferry altered the course of American history, and John Brown is a testament to ordinary individuals' potential to transform themselves and their world.<sup>195</sup>

In a contemporary example of direct action, in 2000 some of the 220 residents of Sonebarsa, a quarrying village in Uttar Pradesh, India, revolted against their slaveholders. About 40 families lived in Sonebarsa, all of them Kols, an ethnic group near the bottom of India's steep ladder of caste and discrimination, and all locked into hereditary debt bondage. Children worked from the age of three or four, and infant mortality was high. The villagers began meeting with organizers from Sankalp, a grassroots NGO.

Organizers offered the villagers two things initially: an example of another village that had liberated itself, and the question “how long could they live as slaves?” The village residents called a mass meeting and were joined by 3,500 people from 60 villages. Slaveholders interrupted the meeting, attacked the villagers, and shot guns into the air. The villagers retaliated by throwing stones. One of the slave-holders was killed, and his friends set fire to Sonebarsa. Eight men from the village were jailed. After the burning of Sonebarsa, Sankalp assisted the 40 refugee families and helped them form micro-credit unions. The villagers pooled their money and petitioned for a mining lease. The Allahabad Mining Corporation wouldn’t allow leases and so the villagers moved onto unoccupied land in Uttar Pradesh and began mining it. Authorities protested this in court, but a judge ruled that no unauthorized work was being done and signed leases.<sup>196</sup> Today the villagers continue to build their community, which they have named Azad Nagar, “the land which is free,” and Free the Slaves—after studying and working with this and other liberated communities—has built a successful community liberation model that works with communities to chart their own path and achieve sustainable systems of freedom.<sup>197</sup>

### **The Tools of Truth**

The John Brown toolkit of direct action and empowered resistance continues today. So too does the Douglass toolkit of survivor-leadership and targeted political advocacy at the highest levels of government, as embodied by the survivor James Kofi Annan and his leadership of the organization Challenging Heights.<sup>198</sup> Recognizing this activist family tree, Free the Slaves

awarded Annan its Frederick Douglass Survivor Award in 2008. Two other key abolitionist toolkits that antislavery activists employ today originate with female abolitionists, Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth: the only nineteenth-century African American female abolitionists who have an iconic status in public history.

The activism of Tubman and Truth is remembered and celebrated today through numerous sculptures, commemorative stamps and the recent decision to place Tubman on the \$20 bill.<sup>199</sup> Tubman and Truth are often placed together, for example in murals, yet their abolitionist techniques differed. After escaping slavery in around 1849, Tubman was a conductor on the Underground Railroad and aided the escape of approximately 70 other fugitive slaves. Truth was freed by the New York State legislature in 1828 and became a legal actor and powerful speaker who used religion to denounce slavery. Elements of both women's abolitionist techniques are deployed effectively in the modern antislavery movement.

Activists today apply two techniques used by the abolitionist Sojourner Truth: the law and religion. On three occasions Truth initiated court action. She successfully used the law to free her son, sue a white couple for libel and charge a conductor with assault.<sup>200</sup> In the first case, Truth fought the illegal sale of her son Peter to a Southern white man. To circumvent New York emancipation laws, many slave owners sold their slaves to other states where slavery was still legal. When Truth learned of this illegal sale, she sued Peter's new owner and successfully made the case that her role as Peter's mother displaced the custody of the Southern master.<sup>201</sup> In the second case, Truth sued a white couple for slander after they accused her of poisoning and won \$125 in damages. Although no

criminal charges had been brought against Truth, she refused to be called a criminal. The third case came after a conductor threw her from a streetcar and sprained her shoulder. He was dismissed from his job, arrested and charged with assault and battery.<sup>202</sup> Truth was a legal actor who used the courts to free her son, clear her name and pursue personal redress. She had a legal voice and, as a slavery survivor, used legal avenues to reclaim agency.

Using the Truth toolkit, numerous contemporary survivors have restored their agency by becoming educated and using the law to help other survivors. Aside from its use in prosecutions of slaveholders, the law is a contemporary tool for restoring the agency of former slaves. For example, Karla Jacinto Romero was kidnapped at the age of 12 and forced into prostitution in Mexico for four years. Her testimony was used in support of Megan's Law, which requires American sex offenders to register with local law enforcement.<sup>203</sup> On May 14, 2015, Romero spoke at the hearing "A Pathway to Freedom" before the Committee on Foreign Affairs. She explained that she "fell prey to a professional pimp who [...] propped me up on a corner and forced me to work the streets."<sup>204</sup> Romero's account not only allowed her to declare support for a law but also meant: "today I have a voice."<sup>205</sup> There are numerous other examples of survivors giving testimony to aid the prosecution of slaveholders and help create effective antislavery laws and policies, while at the same time voicing the power of giving this testimony for their own recovery process.

The success of Truth's legal efforts came in part from her charisma and strong oratory skills. These were rooted in the religious tradition. The name "Sojourner Truth" literally translates

to “itinerant preacher” and perfectly describes Truth. After she was emancipated in 1827, Truth converted to Christianity and began attending Methodist meetings with her previous owners. In the late 1820s and early 1830s, Truth preached at meetings and believed the Holy Spirit was spreading the word of God through her.<sup>206</sup> Religion was an important part of Truth’s life. She believed that God would “preserve me without weapons” and felt “safe even in the midst of my enemies.”<sup>207</sup> Although she moved away from preaching and towards the antislavery and women’s rights lecture circuit in the 1840s, religious language continued to permeate her speeches. Truth used Biblical passages to proclaim that God was against slavery and in one instance announced that God was condemning the Constitution as a pro-slavery document.<sup>208</sup>

Like many nineteenth-century abolitionists, Truth was adept at turning religion into an antislavery tool. Though less steeped in religion than the nineteenth-century movement, modern antislavery often applies religious condemnations of slavery. Several abolitionist organizations have religious foundations, including the Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH), the Salvation Army’s Freedom Partnership to End Modern Slavery, and the organization Operation Underground Railroad. Tim Ballard said he founded this last organization after being instructed by God to “find the lost children.”<sup>209</sup> A major step towards establishing a faith-based coalition to end slavery came in 2014 with the Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery, which calls modern slavery a crime against humanity and unites all religions against this phenomenon. Religious leaders representing communities of Catholics, Anglicans, Orthodox Christians,

Muslims, Jews, Hindus and Buddhists declared that they wish to “inspire spiritual and practical action by all global faiths and people of good will everywhere to eradicate modern slavery across the world by 2020 and for all time.”<sup>210</sup> Using the Truth toolkit, the declaration condemned slavery for being the antithesis to God’s beliefs and stated that “in the eyes of God each human being is a free person [...] and is destined to exist for the good of all in equality and fraternity.”<sup>211</sup>

One organization that is even more directly in the lineage of Truth is the LifeWay Network. In 2007 Joan Dawber and her fellow sisters formed a coalition of religious congregations to combat human trafficking. They aimed to provide safe housing to female survivors and offer education to the public about modern slavery. Congregations in New York were asked to offer spare rooms in their houses as safe places for women during a short period of time after their initial escape from slavery. Sister Joan soon realized that this emergency housing, while crucial, was not a long-term solution. The LifeWay Network then asked congregations for donations towards the purchase and run of a home that would provide long-term housing, education and care to survivors. Since then the Network has grown to include Lifeway House 1, Lifeway House 2, Aspire Home, and the Emergency Safe Space Program.<sup>212</sup> But the LifeWay Network not only parallels the faith-infused abolitionist techniques of Truth: it also applies the strategies of Harriet Tubman on the Underground Railroad.

### **The Tools of Tubman**

The Underground Railroad was a nineteenth-century network of white and black abolitionists that aided the escape of slaves, initially



to Northern states that were free of slavery and then to Canada after the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. Conductors like Tubman led slaves north along secret, ever-changing routes. Stationmasters, such as Thomas Garrett, provided safe houses and directed the groups to the next station. Information was given out on a need-to-know basis and participants would not know who was involved beyond a few individuals. The Railroad relied upon secrecy and employed covert means of communication. Tubman used songs to communicate with the fugitive slaves on her trips, with certain verses warning of danger or informing the group it was safe to come out of hiding.<sup>213</sup> Today, the LifeWay Network is similarly covert and underground. The locations of the houses are kept secret to protect the survivors and the nuns and volunteers who help to run the homes. The network relies on word-of-mouth within congregations and only a select group of individuals know full details of its activities. As for Tubman in the nineteenth century, the stakes are high for Sister Joan and her colleagues, who risk their own safety.

The dangers and possibilities of this kind of contemporary underground abolitionist network are highlighted further in Melanie Kirkpatrick's 2012 account, *Escape from North Korea*, which explores the "new underground railroad" that North Koreans use to escape across China and into freedom in South Korea or the West.<sup>214</sup> Using interviews from survivors, Kirkpatrick details their escapes, describes the challenges they face in their new lives and records the consequences for those who fail. As Kirkpatrick argues, the contemporary and historical underground railroads both constantly change their routes and safe-houses, and their participants largely work independently.<sup>215</sup> Secrecy is paramount to

both networks and the consequences for failure are just as high. If Tubman had been caught she would have been returned to slavery, while North Koreans who are caught trying to escape are sent to forced labour camps. Like the work of Sister Joan, the North Korean “underground railroad” reveals the presence of modern-day conductors and station masters who still help slaves make their escape and build new lives for themselves.

Covert action was part of Tubman’s larger toolkit, which focused on direct support for survivors. She escaped her slave plantation in Maryland in 1849 but when she crossed the New York State border she found that she was alone: “I was free; but there was no one to welcome me to the land of freedom. I was a stranger in a strange land,” she remembered.<sup>216</sup> Survivors of nineteenth-century slavery struggled to establish new lives for themselves in free states. Laws prohibiting the education of slaves meant many like Tubman were illiterate, making it difficult for survivors to find jobs and support themselves. They also faced the constant threat of re-enslavement, more so after the passing of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act, which mandated that fugitive slaves in free states be returned to their Southern masters. This Act prompted Tubman to take other fugitive slaves, individuals she had brought out of the South, even further north to Canada—as she could no longer “trust Uncle Sam with my people.”<sup>217</sup>

As a survivor herself, Tubman was aware of the loneliness and poverty many survivors faced in their new lives. She used her experience to help others. In 1896 Tubman used the little money she had to buy some land with two houses in Auburn, New York. One became her personal home and another she turned into a

home for elderly, impoverished African Americans. Unfortunately, the Harriet Tubman Home for the Aged drained Tubman's personal finances and in 1903 the deeds to the land were taken over by the AME Zion Church. But although this charity work made her impoverished, Tubman's experience as a survivor of slavery meant she remained determined to help other survivors. She knew first-hand the struggles they faced.

In the modern antislavery movement, this tradition of survivors helping other survivors continues. A key organization in the Tubman mode is Shakti Samuha, an anti-trafficking group established and run by survivors of slavery. It provides shelter to victims, organizes slavery prevention programs and educates those who are at risk of being trafficked. Sunita Danuwar and 15 other women founded the charity when they decided to "fight together and change our fear into power" and they placed survivors at the heart of their organization.<sup>218</sup> They believe that survivors should lead the contemporary antislavery movement, to ensure their own rights and those of others. The organization states that no member will be discriminated against during their service to the group.<sup>219</sup> The leaders' own experiences of slavery shaped the organization and now help other survivors to contend with life after slavery.

Two other individuals in the Tubman mode—building an antislavery activism upon their own slavery experiences, to help others—are Roshan Lal and Polline Akello. Born into slavery, Lal was forced to make bricks, cut stones and harvest crops in an Indian village where forced labour is a common practice. Lal's family escaped bondage with the help of the organization Free the Slaves. Once free, Lal sought an education. After attending

law school he became a paralegal. He set up his own small legal clinic to offer survivors advice about their legal and human rights, helping them to escape slavery in Northern India. Lal observes: “I want to help everyone get their human rights [and] my dream is to bring freedom to everyone who is enslaved.”<sup>220</sup>

Akello tells a similar story. Kidnapped at 12 years old by the Lord’s Resistance Army in Uganda, she was forced to marry a soldier and perform domestic duties for seven years. Akello became seriously ill after childbirth complications and was sent to Kenya for hospital treatment where a nurse helped her to escape.<sup>221</sup> She was supported by War Child and its partner Christian Counselling Fellowship, who paid for her schooling and university education as a lawyer. She aims to support other survivors who have been abused and believes “men who abuse girls should be brought to justice.”<sup>222</sup>

As for the nineteenth-century movement, the role of survivors is key to antislavery today. And like Tubman, contemporary survivors are using their own experiences to help others achieve and build new lives in freedom. The Tubman model of survivor community-building also sits behind a new collection of contemporary slave narratives, which positions survivor voices as part of a long tradition and seeks to place them at the heart of modern abolitionism.<sup>223</sup> Contemporary organizations like the Survivor Alliance are further ensuring that survivor voices are central to any antislavery effort, and the leadership of the Alliance takes regular advice from the minds of Douglass, Tubman and other historical survivor-leaders.<sup>224</sup> For example, quoting Douglass in a 2017 blog, “It is not light that we need, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake,” survivor scholar Minh Dang went on to observe:

“Many survivors came before me and relentlessly advocated for survivor voice and leadership.”<sup>225</sup>

A few months later, Dang launched the Survivor Alliance as a survivor-led global network and NGO. The Alliance is ensuring that survivor voices are part of antislavery efforts, whether through research like Dang’s PhD work highlighting survivors’ self-determined definitions of wellbeing, facilitating survivor feedback on government interventions, or participating in decisions over the allocation of antislavery funding. During the Alliance launch, Dang seemed to summon again the “survivors who came before me again” for her description of a long communal journey: “This journey is not a solo journey. We are nothing without each other, so let us walk together. At the days’ ends, we can return to our homes to live under the roof of our hopes, and rest for another day’s journey.” She continues to wear a Douglass lapel pin that Douglass’ direct descendent Ken Morris gave her when she wants to draw on an antislavery legacy. From Tubman’s journeys back south to accompany enslaved people on their journey north to freedom, and her attempt at founding a home for survivors of slavery, to the new journey of Dang and the Survivor Alliance towards a home “under the roof of our hopes,” survivor leaders walk together.<sup>226</sup>

## **Conclusion**

In August 1859, the black abolitionist Frederick Douglass met the white abolitionist John Brown in a stone quarry in a disused quarry pit in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. Brown was preparing for the raid on Harpers Ferry, scheduled for October. Douglass’s association with Brown had begun in the late 1840s, when Douglass

proposed that they convert the slaveholders instead of trying to free the slaves by force. Brown had proclaimed this was impossible. Douglass had slowly moved closer to embracing Brown's militant approach, even wondering aloud at an antislavery convention in 1850 if slavery could only be destroyed by bloodshed. When they met in the quarry, Brown tried to recruit Douglass for the Harpers Ferry expedition. He entreated: "I will defend you with my life. I want you for a special purpose. When I strike, the bees will begin to swarm, and I shall want you to help me hive them." Douglass refused, calling the plan a "trap of steel."<sup>227</sup> After the raid, facing the very real possibility of arrest and execution, Douglass denied any part in Brown's attempt, though he countered accusations that his friend was insane.

That moment in the quarry marked a turning-point for Douglass. He had to choose between two potential versions of himself: a warrior who would join Brown at Harpers Ferry, try to arm slaves and launch an uprising, or a reformer who would try to end slavery with campaigning and political influence. It was a choice between two quite different abolitionist tools. Brown failed to persuade his friend to take up the sword. Believing the raid was a suicide mission, Douglass chose to live instead. He would work for the end of slavery another way, employ the tools of voice and pen, advise President Lincoln during the Civil War, push for the Constitutional Amendments that abolished slavery and guaranteed citizenship and voting rights to former slaves, then campaign against post-war racism for decades after his friend John Brown hung as a traitor in Virginia. Reflecting on his friend's attempt shortly before his own death in 1895, Douglass observed:

It can never be wrong for the imbruted and whip-scarred slaves, or their friends, to hunt, harass, and even strike down the traffickers in human flesh.... Entertaining these sentiments, I may be asked why I did not join John Brown—the noble old hero whose one right hand had shaken the foundation of the American Union, and whose ghost will haunt the bed-chambers of all the born and unborn slaveholders of Virginia through all their generations, filling them with alarm and consternation. My answer to this has already been given; at least impliedly given—“The tools to those who can use them!” Let every man work for the abolition of slavery in his own way. I would help all and hinder none.<sup>228</sup>

To the abolitionists of the future, Douglass offered here the outlines of a vibrant and usable past: a varied toolkit—all tools to those who can use them—from survivor leadership, political influence and legal action to direct action and covert networks. By accessing that full toolkit, its tools tried and tested by abolitionists before us, contemporary abolitionists can take up the lessons of abolition’s earlier waves. In the twenty-first century, with the work of abolition still incomplete, our antislavery movement can now look backward to move forward. Seeing what was, what should have been, what is, and what should be, we can make the past “useful to the present and to the future,” as Douglass once put it.<sup>229</sup> We can use the resources of our activist heritage to help create a different future: we can make antislavery into a usable past.

## **Chapter 9 – The Role of Military Intervention in Antislavery Campaigns**

Mary Wills

### **Introduction**

The use of military intervention by a state in response to a perceived national problem is a familiar theme to anyone studying the past. This chapter looks at one example from the history of abolitionism. After the Abolition Act of 1807, Britain's Royal Navy was sent to the West African coast to forcibly suppress the transatlantic slave trade – a trade in enslaved African people which, despite British legislation, showed no sign of abating among the merchants of Portugal, Spain, France and Brazil. Between 1811 and 1850, an average of 525,000 captive people per decade were shipped across the Atlantic to the slave plantations of the Americas. The naval campaign was a statement of intent from the British state to follow through on legislation against the slave trade (although importantly, not against the institution of slavery, which continued to be legal throughout the British Empire until 1833) and the first time that state-endorsed military coercion was utilised in antislavery efforts. Notwithstanding the controversial nature of the concept of 'humanitarian military intervention', the nineteenth-century suppression campaign is an early example of extensive military intervention for a humanitarian cause, and arguably



the first time that such intervention had a political platform and popular appeal in Britain. These efforts are made more remarkable by the fundamental turnaround in the Royal Navy's role: before 1807, the navy was instrumental in *protecting* the ships of Britain's booming slave trade and supporting the rights of slavers to move freely around the Atlantic. I will discuss how this state-initiated antislavery activity played out during the nineteenth century, the challenges met, and efforts made to overcome them, before moving on to the lessons offered for today's antislavery efforts.

### **The Challenge**

After the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act of 1807 was passed by British parliament, Royal Navy ships were sent to patrol the seas of the West African coast and capture embarking slave ships. The enslaved peoples found on board – 'recaptives' or 'liberated Africans', as they were known – were transported to live and work in the British colony of Sierra Leone. Initially regarded by many in the British establishment as a relatively simple task (this was, after all, the triumphant navy which had beaten the Franco-Spanish fleet at Trafalgar in 1805), the West Africa squadron was given only a few ships and expected to put an end to the transatlantic slave trade within a matter of months. Instead, British naval officers toiled on the West African, and then East African, coasts and policed the ocean for slave-trade offenders for most of the nineteenth century.

Two important points for context: Firstly, the current consensus among historians is that the British slave trade remained economically viable at the time of its abolition. Europe's desire for rum, coffee, tobacco, and (above all) sugar led to a high demand

for slave labour to facilitate the system of plantation agriculture in the Americas. The transatlantic slave trade may have reached its peak in the eighteenth century, but by no means dwindled in the nineteenth century; focus for trade instead switched from the British Caribbean to the plantations of Cuba and Brazil. Britain, therefore, made an economic sacrifice which, in large part, resulted from a position of moral aversion to the slave trade. These ideas were heavily influenced by the teachings of evangelical religion, and had broad-based public support. Secondly, there was no international agreement to abolish the slave trade. While Denmark and the United States abolished their slave trades at a similar time, other nations – notably France, Spain and Portugal – were far less willing, and continued to trade, legally, in human lives. Britain therefore acted largely on its own against a trade completely entrenched in the colonial and trade networks of the empires of other European powers. It imposed its position on the rest of the world, and used military, diplomatic and ideological pressure to target the slave trades of other nations.<sup>230</sup>

To turn, then, to the methods. First and foremost, the slave trade was presented as morally wrong – an undisputable position today, but a significant shift in Britain's political and cultural narrative at the time. The particular cruelty and high mortality of the slave trade made its suppression both desirable, and crucially from a reformer's perspective, politically attainable. The push for the 1807 Act therefore required the separation of the debate over slavery itself from that about the slave trade – the abolition of slavery in the British colonies did not happen until 1833, and even then it was a gradual process.<sup>231</sup> This was 'triumphant humanitarianism'

in action: the British asserted moral superiority in their abolitionist stance, portraying a nation dedicated to ‘civilised’ values of charity, philanthropy and freedom. The state assumed a moral responsibility, enshrined in law, for enforcing abolition. There was more than a little irony attached to this moral high ground – Britain’s former complicity in the Royal Africa Company and dominance in the slave trade before 1807 were left largely unspoken.

Abolition became entwined in international relations, as the British applied pressure via international diplomacy, backed by legal reform.<sup>232</sup> The Royal Navy was responsible for the military enforcement of these diplomatic commitments. The ‘right of search’ was at the heart of negotiations to create a system of law enforcement, and throughout the first decades of the nineteenth century, a network of bilateral treaties was signed which authorized naval powers to stop, search and seize suspected slave ships of other nations. In practice this meant that Britain, with the dominant naval force, gained the right to search its competitors’ shipping, raising issues of state sovereignty, freedom of the seas, and accusations that Britain was using humanitarian means to achieve commercial advantage. Part of these treaty negotiations also included payments, inducements and bribes to extract concessions from other powers. In many cases these costs greatly exceeded the cost of the naval force. This construction of a diplomatic consensus was overseen by a network of Admiralty Courts and a newly created Slave Trade Department at the Foreign Office.

The role of the Royal Navy became more prominent as it became clear that the treaty-based system was easy for slave traders to undermine – foreign flags were fraudulently hoisted,

slaves were disguised as crew members, papers were falsified, faster slave ships were built for purpose, and so on. In response, from the late 1830s onwards, tactics to suppress the slave trade evolved into more robust, unilateral military intervention. Focus switched to targeting the slave trade at source, in West African territories: the primary aim became stopping the embarkation of slaves in the first place, rather than capturing ships at sea. This so-called 'gunboat diplomacy' led to the blockade of points of embarkation, the targeting of slave barracoons (or holding pens), and the destruction of slave trading vessels, equipment and depots belonging to European traders. It also led to the bombardment of villages and settlements with known slave-trading connections. Furthermore, treaties were pursued with African rulers to stop the supply of enslaved peoples, invariably involving large payouts and expensive gifts of guns, ammunition, and other goods.

'Gunboat diplomacy' was a new policy, conceived in response to the failure of traditional diplomatic means. As Captain Joseph Denman argued about his destruction of the slave barracoons in the River Gallinas in 1843: 'Nothing of the sort had been done before, and therefore I did it under very heavy responsibility. I could not have struck out a new line without some special grounds to go upon'.<sup>233</sup> Local rulers were put under severe pressure, with the threat of heavy sanctions if they broke agreements. A treaty with Kings and Chiefs of Bonny in 1844, for example, asserted that Britain would carry out 'severe acts of displeasure' against them and their subjects if evidence was found of subsequent slave trading.<sup>234</sup> This coercion was in response to African rulers who persisted in supplying slaves to local dealers. Pressure on African

states reached a height in the 1850s when Britain bombarded and then annexed the African territory of Lagos (in Nigeria) as a result of the continuance of slave trading there.<sup>235</sup> On the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, similar intervention took place on the Brazilian coast, where British warships were ordered to destroy slave trading vessels and depots; Buenos Aires was blockaded; and the British operated a network of spies for regular intelligence. Suppression of the slave trade had therefore evolved from a system grounded in international law to one which raised questions of legality in the wilful destruction of property for abolitionist ends.

Clearly such hostilities against other territories would be difficult to justify today; so much of the British action during this period was bound with now thankfully obsolete ideas of imperialism and racial superiority – an arrogant belief that African nations could be somehow ‘civilized’ to a British way of thinking. But what is relevant is the extensive, and expensive, commitment of British forces to this policy of abolitionist intervention. Scholars have termed the sixty-year naval effort ‘costly international moral action’ and the ‘most expensive example recorded in modern history’.<sup>236</sup> In a typical year, the system represented somewhere between 1 and 2% of the total expenditure of British central government, and half of all expenditure of the Admiralty. One poster from 1862 made claims that ‘The African Slave Trade in 1862 costs British tax payers 1,000,000 a year’. This figure is difficult to estimate accurately because alongside the ‘official’ spending related to the naval budget, costs also included high associated expenditure such as treaty payments, bribes, compensation claims for wrongfully seized ships, and other miscellaneous costs.<sup>237</sup> The impact of

such a proportion of the gross national income today towards an antislavery operation would be staggering, somewhere in the region of £500 million. The West Africa squadron's success – in terms of the proportions of slave ships captured and enslaved Africans released – is debatable. The nearly 200,000 Africans released by the navy represents a relatively small share of the estimated 3.2 million embarked as slaves between 1808 and 1863.<sup>238</sup> However, the Atlantic slave trade was by and large at an end by the 1860s – although there is some debate as to whether political changes within the states targeted by Britain were perhaps more influential in its demise.

### **Lessons**

The British state's desire to suppress trades in human lives did not end in the 1860s. Nor did the Royal Navy's pivotal role in enforcing antislavery measures. The work of the West Africa squadron was only one chapter in a long history of naval campaigns directed against international slavery, including the East African trade from the 1870s, and numerous campaigns against slave trades across the Red Sea and Persian Gulf in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>239</sup> Clearly, because so much illegal transportation takes place at sea, naval forces have a long history with anti-trafficking campaigns, the war against drugs and other illegal trades, and in humanitarian campaigns more generally.<sup>240</sup> But what particular lessons can this nineteenth-century story offer for today's campaigns? The Royal Navy's effort is often cited by politicians and commentators as one of the greatest examples of Britain's abolitionist tradition.<sup>241</sup> Beyond the hyperbole, naval suppression of the transatlantic slave trade

can be regarded as one of the first historical examples of ‘military humanitarianism’: that is, coercion based on morally justified arguments of social and moral progress. British methods against the trade became increasingly aggressive, but at all times involved moral authority and ideological pressure. As a rare historical example of state-funded military intervention against slavery, these actions offer revealing lessons for antislavery struggles in our own times.

Firstly, the prevention of a seaborne trade in human lives. Then, as now, it was understood that it is not enough to outlaw a slave trade, but measures must be put in place to forcibly eradicate it. The Royal Navy was at the frontline of the military enforcement of legal reforms, and its interventionist tactics – blockade, bombardments, destruction of barracoons and other infrastructure – were ambitious attempts to combat the sources of the slave trade. The global nature of the transatlantic slave trade also meant that the solution had to extend beyond territories and borders to the high seas – hence the development of a system of international co-operation (to the extent that other nations did cooperate). Creation of communications networks was key, to inform methods of prevention and exchange information on two separate fields: antislavery diplomacy (adopting action at an international level) and antislavery treaties (at ground level to prevent slave trading at its source, often involving coercion, bribes and other incentives). Also essential was the flexibility to change tactics when one route wasn’t having the desired effect. One important legacy of the naval campaign is the establishment of the mutual right of search in the name of humanitarianism. For a recent example, in 2015 it was announced that ‘Operation Sophia’, the EU naval

operation against human smugglers in the Mediterranean, 'will be able to board, search, seize and divert vessels suspected of being used for human smuggling or trafficking on the high seas, in line with international law'.<sup>242</sup> This legacy also includes the interrelated establishment of international courts to enforce 'universal' human rights and international policing to detect and punish international crime. Legal historians today regard the antislavery squadron as setting a precedent in the legality of practices such as trans-border raids.

Secondly, the protection of those released from slavery. British naval officers were tasked with 'liberating' the enslaved Africans found on board seized vessels, via a legal process declared by some scholars to represent the first human rights courts.<sup>243</sup> However, the needs of the 'liberated African' was not a priority for those releasing them. The archives show cases of poor treatment of recaptives on board captured slave vessels by naval officers ill-equipped and untrained in the responsibilities that come with a duty of care for those under their protection. Similarly, there is evidence of abuse and exploitation of formerly enslaved people subsequently apprenticed in Sierra Leone via Britain's Liberated African Department. Britain's broader political and military strategy certainly had a place for the rights of recaptives, but it was a limited one; what constituted 'liberation' meant very different things to nineteenth-century observers, bound with imperial agendas, paternalism and racial attitudes. There was little concern for reparation for victims in the form of compensation, restitution, rehabilitation or resettlement. Beyond the humanitarian narrative, a consideration of Britain's moral standing in the world held



more weight. This is demonstrated by the indifference shown by most Europeans to the expansion of the internal slave trade in many parts of the African continent in the nineteenth century. This growth was in large part in response to the development of 'legitimate' trade introduced by Europeans, and the labour demands of the production of associated crops such as palm oil.<sup>244</sup> In the case of modern Britain, a sense of liberal humanitarianism is integral to perceptions of national identity, finding form today in law enforcement against slavery, action on supply chains and the Modern Slavery Act. However, enacting law is arguably easier than sufficiently caring for the needs of those caught up in slavery, as both historical and modern examples show.<sup>245</sup> These needs should be at the top of any list of state priorities. Appropriate training for military personnel on the front line to deal sensitively with people in a vulnerable state is key, as starkly shown by recent instances of UN peacekeepers implicated in child sex trafficking.

A third lesson from the nineteenth-century naval campaign is how best to manage the tension between persuasion and coercion. After Britain's diplomatic and preventative efforts failed to achieve the desired results, later campaigns on the West African coast saw the use of military intervention as a political instrument, culminating in the annexation of Lagos in 1861. The British were accused of bully tactics, supported by Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston's assertion that 'persuasion seldom succeeds unless there is compulsion of some sort, nearer or further off behind it.'<sup>246</sup> The historian David Brion Davis argued that Britain's post-1807 goal of overturning the slave trade led them to adopt 'a long-range policy of pressuring and bribing other maritime powers, even

at the cost of millions of pounds'.<sup>247</sup> Whether 'pressuring' and 'bribing' belong to persuasion or coercion is another debate, but these actions were part of the tensions inherent in forcing others towards a certain ideological conception of progress, which in the end required force and subversive activity.

Fourthly, and connected to this last point, the challenges balancing 'legality' and 'legitimacy'. Some legitimacy was lent to Britain's unilateralism by support from the public, which, importantly, meant that British abolitionists had buy-in from the state to push for further antislavery measures in the 1830s. This was a two-way process: at the same time, state investment in a moral cause enhanced the public and political profile of the campaigns against slavery and in support of humanitarian intervention. But fundamental difficulties arise when armed intervention, whatever its benevolent intentions, is regarded as a replacement for legal due process. As one of the only states with the maritime power to patrol the Atlantic in this way, the British disregarded the rule of state sovereignty (which ensured that during peacetime, no state had the right to visit and search the ship of another state without their consent) when it served their purpose.<sup>248</sup> Further challenges result from one government attempting to champion a moral principle which conflicts with an existing domestic or international interest of another. This was a battle against the centrality of the trade in human lives to the economic prosperity of other nations. Britain may have taken the elevated moral position, but other nations perceived how British antislavery policies became closely tied to other state concerns in the nineteenth century, not least British imperialism and colonial conquest.<sup>249</sup>

Fifthly, this lesson from history exposes the limits placed on antislavery campaigns, and particularly the need for demonstrable success. Wide-ranging and extensive action against slavery, however principled, will always involve ambiguities and contingencies. But when investment in a campaign is high – and particularly when the investment is taxpayers’ money – so too is the expectation of success. By the 1840s, the public support for the naval suppression campaign was waning, as naval abolitionist policy was increasingly criticized for being too expensive and ineffective. Disapproval peaked in 1845, when there was a parliamentary campaign for the squadron’s total withdrawal.<sup>250</sup> Much of the outcry was due to the well-publicised distress of those at the front line, with disease rife among naval personnel. Critics also claimed that conditions for the enslaved on board slave vessels had been exacerbated by the naval presence as slave traders crowded ships, made longer voyages and kept Africans in barracoons for longer while attempting to evade capture from British patrols. A letter to the press in 1844 from a naval officer declared that the ‘horrors of the slave ship ... have been greatly increased by our meddling, and the result of our “humane policy” may be summed up in an annual loss of British life and health.’<sup>251</sup> To continue the work of the squadron in the face of such criticism says much about British resolve regarding abolitionist policy, but it also shows how easily a campaign can be derailed by the need for demonstrable success.

Where do these lessons leave us? The nineteenth-century model of military intervention against the slave trade was a powerful movement of economics and morality which could be repeated, if modern governments truly wanted to make an impact.

To simplify hugely the nuances of Britain's abolitionist campaign in the nineteenth century, the state recognised there was a problem of morally catastrophic proportions and moved to act: the moral argument for intervention won over other considerations. Governments hold the key to essential resources, not least finances and powerful militaries. One advantage today's abolitionists have over their historical counterparts is that the law against slavery is very firmly on their side. But while it is a given that if laws are in place governments have a social responsibility to enforce them, few governments today want to pursue international conflict without the guarantee of achievable outcomes. In this respect the British state made braver moves in 1807 than many modern governments would. There was no international human rights agenda in 1807, no network of international agencies working to eradicate the slave trade; Britain worked almost entirely alone. Abolitionists from the nineteenth century might ask: as a powerful state on the world stage today, what is the point in expressing support for human rights if, even given a clear international mandate, you consciously choose not to act?

Of course, Britain's military intervention in the nineteenth century was not impartial, or free from economic and political interest, bound as it was with imperial agendas. States today must be wary of such cultural arrogance and imperial chauvinism. Unmandated unilateral action against another country, as seen in the Royal Navy's bombardment and destruction of African towns and villages, is rightly regarded as unacceptable. But in times of moral conflict, what forms of military intervention can be regarded as legitimate? There is much debate as to whether it

is right to use military force for a humanitarian purpose, however well-intentioned. While there are success stories, there have also been disastrous failures (in Somalia or Kosovo, for example). Policing against slavery in international waters, however, as in the nineteenth century, can be justifiable in a humanitarian context. Maritime security and policing the waters is routine business for the Royal Navy; one of its stated aims is ‘combating piracy, terrorism, trafficking and illicit trade’ among the 90% of world trade that is transported by sea.<sup>252</sup> On land, unlike in the nineteenth century, when antislavery intervention became tied with colonialism and foreign invasion for ulterior motives, we need boundaries and guidelines for the involvement of militaries – where civilians are in real and immediate danger, for example.

One final consideration is that state investment does not necessarily translate to success. Kevin Bales has written about the ‘mixed bag’ of government involvement in contemporary campaigns, whereby investment, however crucial, can have counterproductive results.<sup>253</sup> As reflected in the nineteenth century, enforcement can lag behind the passing of laws; principles can give way to political and economic interests; governments may place greater emphasis on apprehending and persecuting slaveholders than assisting victims. The failure of the war on drugs, for example, shows that expenditure is not the catch-all solution. As in the nineteenth century, the difficulties lie in harnessing the capabilities of the state and in identifying the right formulas and tactics – for example, whether to prosecute traffickers caught in the act or find a way to suppress the problem at source. This example from history shows that there are instances when military intervention against

slavery can work (or at least can have a real impact on the world's moral conscience). The struggle today is working out how best to translate the moral argument for intervention into real success stories on the ground.

## ***Introduction to Part IV – Voices from the Field***

Jean Allain

This section of the book sets out a toolkit of lessons learned, strategies used, and understanding which can assist in informing practical ways of addressing the contemporary antislavery movement. It includes chapters by practitioners in the field.

In Chapter 10 – ‘Identifying a Case of Slavery’ – Allain seeks to assist front-line workers in identifying cases of slavery. He provides a framework for what to look for and how to evaluate situations in which one comes into contact with a person who may be held in a condition of slavery. The chapter draws on the understanding of slavery provided in this book’s Appendix 1, *Twelve Practice Points for Understanding Slavery*. These Practice Points emerged from the 2012 *Bellagio-Guidelines on the Legal Parameters of Slavery*, included in the book’s Appendix 2, which provide the legal foundation to understanding what constitutes slavery in a modern context where people are no longer held in legal slavery, but slavery in fact.

Turning to Chapter 11 – ‘Antislavery Organizational Culture’, Kishere provides a number of stepping-stones in building a healthy organizational culture for antislavery NGOs based on his lived experience of more than 30 years of work in the charity sector. In a number of instances, Kishere’s stepping-stones are cautionary tales as what not to do as a leader of an NGO or as an engaged worker in the field. While giving name to instances

of dysfunctional organizational culture, Kishere demonstrates how these can be overcome, so as to ensure that they do not “limit outcomes or our quality of life and work, and worse still, fail those we seek to serve.” Kishere’s chapter provides practical insights into the manner in which approaches, models, and strategies need to be tempered by experience and a recognition that these need to evolve in the context in which they are deployed. The experience gained speaks to Kishere’s recognition that ‘we’ and ‘I’ are also part of that context in which organisations develop and function and that we too need to understand our cultural conditioning so as to be effective and also to ensure we take care of ourselves and those around us working to assist others.

Finally, in Chapter 12, ‘The Impact of the Past on Child Sexual Exploitation,’ practitioners Colley and Stephens chart the shift from Victorian views of children as participants in their exploitation towards recognising them as victims. As they suggest, an awareness of history prevents mistakes being repeated and helps to set issues such as indenture, trafficking and exploitation in their appropriate social and political contexts.



# **Chapter 10 – Identifying a Case of Slavery**

Jean Allain

In practical terms, how does one recognise an enslaved person?

Luckily, today we have the means to a clear answer to this question; and this Chapter guides you, with its final section setting out what to look for in identifying slavery.

It is fundamental to a campaign which aims to eradicate slavery, to know what it is. We need to all be speaking with the same voice when we are speaking of slavery. Having a clear definition is fundamental for several reasons, since:

- 1) it helps avoid sensationalising
- 2) it aims resources toward those who are the focus of our work, and
- 3) it provides the possibility for all those involved in the modern abolition movement to be linked up.

This includes front-line rescuers, human rights organisations, those in social assistance agencies, and the police, judges, and policy-makers.

A shared definition means that when a victim is identified as having been enslaved, this determination will hold throughout the various social interventions that might follow, whether it is assistance to that victim, the prosecution of the perpetrator, an awareness campaign, or a move to address the specifics of the issue through a legal amendment.

However, for nearly a century, in the lead-up to the current antislavery movement, what was defined ‘slavery’ was contested – contested to such an extent, that the leading historian of twentieth century slavery considered the term to be “virtually meaningless”.<sup>254</sup> The visceral value attached to the word ‘slavery’ attracted other groups and issues to co-opt the term to use in their campaigns. As a result, for much of the twentieth century actual slaves were lost in a sea of awareness raising of other social ills, which were generalised into something called ‘slavery’.

This was allowed to happen because the term ‘slavery’ itself was up for grabs, as a result of the successful campaigns of the First and Second Abolitionist Movements which saw the abolition of *legal* slavery throughout the world by way, ultimately, of the 1926 Slavery Convention. *As a result of its legal abolition, so the thinking went, slavery no longer existed.*

And many groups made a ‘grab’ for the word ‘slavery’. ‘Slavery’ was effectively harnessed by the anti-prostitution movement of the late-nineteenth century in what came to be termed internationally: the ‘white slave trade’ – a precursor of today’s anti-trafficking movement. By the 1990s, the very sense of what slavery was had been lost. A United Nations Working Group considered that children in armed conflict (1990); child soldiers (1991); the removal of organs (1992); incest (1993); migrant workers; sex tourism (1994); illegal adoption (1996); and early marriages and detained juveniles (1997) were all ‘contemporary forms of slavery’.

As a result, the challenge of effectively identifying an enslaved person is also the greater challenge of ensuring that the term ‘slavery’ does not become so expansive that it captures everything;

and thus means nothing.

### **The Definition of Slavery**

So how can we clearly identify an enslaved person? The solution lies in what for many was the problem: the legal definition. For much of the twentieth century, it was believed that the definition of slavery found within the 1926 Slavery Convention was only applicable to slavery *in law* – that the convention had only abolished legal slavery.

But consider torture for a moment: despite the fact that it was abolished – *in law* – from the late eighteenth century onwards, no one would say that torture no longer exists. Can we, in the same manner, say as much about slavery: that despite its abolition in law, slavery still exists? The answer is yes, and the law can help us to do so.

The law helps, especially if it is international law, because every country that agrees to a specific law establishes commonalities, opening the possibility of cooperation across borders. In the case of slavery, there is an established definition, a definition which has been scrutinised not only during its writing and publication in 1926, but also through its confirmation within the 1956 UN Supplementary Slavery Convention, and by its inclusion in 1998 as an international crime established by the International Criminal Court. As a result, there is an overwhelming international consensus that the 1926 definition of slavery holds. On the other hand, for a long time, that definition was thought to only apply to *legal* ownership, and thus inapplicable where slavery was illegal – pretty much everywhere. However, this reading of the definition no longer holds.

In law, words matter. Let us return to the case of torture for a moment. Consider the following scenario: you walk into a room in which a person is hanging from the ceiling and another person is whipping that person. Clearly this is torture? Well, as lawyers like to say: it depends! There are in fact three possibilities: 1) that this is some depraved case of consensual sadomasochistic fun: and thus no crime is being committed; 2) that the person with the whip is a robber seeking to extract the safe combination from an unfortunate bank employee: here then is, in law, a common assault and no more; or, finally, 3) that he's a government agent seeking information about the detainee's collaborators. The final instance is, in fact and in law, torture; because the internationally established definition of torture recognises, in this instance, that torture is the infliction of severe pain or suffering to obtain information *by a public official*.<sup>255</sup>

What about walking into a room and finding a person chained to the wall, forced to work at a weaving loom. Is this slavery? In all likelihood, yes, but what about finding a person in inhospitable circumstances in the kitchen of a local restaurant? Or a person working in a mine, on a fishing boat, in a brothel, on a construction site, or any number of other places? Again, it will depend.

How do we identify an enslaved person? Again, words matter. We have an established standard of what constitutes slavery in the 1926 definition. So let's consider the words of that definition of slavery. Doing so you will likely recognise why, for such a long time, it was considered to apply *only* to cases of legal slavery, of legal ownership of slaves. Here is the definition:

Slavery is the status or condition of a person over whom any or

all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised.

Your first impression is probably that this definition is about ownership. So how can it apply today when it is not possible to legally own a person? But let's look a bit closer at the definition. Notice that it takes us down two paths: it is either the *status* of a person ...; or it is the *condition* of a person ... . Here then is the distinction, in lawyer-speak between *de jure* slavery and *de facto* slavery – the distinction between owning a person in law and owning a person in fact. In many ways this is the distinction between old slavery and modern slavery. Before the abolition of slavery, for most of history, slavery was a legal part of society; it was regularised by law. Today, by contrast, since you can no longer own a person in law, slavery is illegal but it still exists in *fact*.

*Status* is a legal term: what is your status?: married, single, widowed, a child, deceased, and so forth. *Condition* is a state of being: is the person ill, lost, happy, recovering, or ... enslaved? Consider the example of a person in *antebellum* USA who is kidnapped and taken to a Southern plantation and forced to work. This man is not a slave by the standard of the day – he lacks the legal status of a slave. But in every way he is treated as a slave, thus finding himself in a condition of enslavement. A concrete example was portrayed in the 2014 Academy Award winning Best Picture: *Twelve Years a Slave*: the lived experience of Solomon Northup was to endure the *condition*, but not the status of a slave.

But how does this work in a court of law? How can you *not* own something in law, but own it in fact? The best analogy is illegal drugs. When a kilo of heroin is brought to court, a judge doesn't decide whether the drug dealer legally 'owns' the heroin –

that's impossible, since it is illegal to own such drugs. Instead, the judge will look to the most fundamental indicator of ownership – *possession* – and ask: 'Who controls these drugs? Who possessed this heroin?' So the drug dealer doesn't legally own the heroin, yet she does 'own' it, *de facto*. Possession, then, which is all about control, constitutes 'ownership' even when such ownership is impossible in law. So possession, contrary to the law, of drugs or guns or radioactive materials or a person, will constitute *de facto* ownership.

Understanding how the law recognises the enslavement of a person without their legal ownership requires us to break down the 1926 definition of ownership into its component parts. The Convention mandates that slavery is the exercise of the 'powers attaching to the right of ownership'. In other words, if you are exercising ownership (whether *de jure* or *de facto*) over a person, what are the powers you have over that person? Looking at the history of slavery, we would say the power to buy and sell a person, to use and abuse them. But it turns out there's more to it than that.

In 2012, a group of legal scholars and experts of slavery old and new, developed the *Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines on the Legal Parameters of Slavery*, and started from a different vantage point. The 1926 definition is a definition of property, applied to persons. Its starting point is not the human being enslaved, rather, it is the application of a property paradigm to a person. As a result, the *Guidelines* start from that property paradigm, with the realisation that the application of the definition will apply to a person when legal ownership is present, but more importantly also when *de facto* ownership is present. The fundamental tenet of ownership is possession – in fact, the leading scholar of property speaks of

possession as “the foundation on which the whole superstructure of ownership rests”.<sup>256</sup> Possession is about control – physical control, no doubt, but other types of control as well. For example, I possess those things in my house or car, because I control access to them via a key. But once control is established over a thing, then you can sell it, use it, profit from it, or even destroy it. These, in property law, are the powers which one exercises as an owner.

What about the powers attaching to the right of ownership when exercised against a human being? Following the property paradigm of the definition, the *Guidelines* recognise the fundamental element of possession. For slavery to exist, as per the definition, there has to be an exercise of *any or all* of the powers attaching to the right of ownership. What the Guidelines make clear is that any or all (of the powers attaching to the right of ownership) is a recognition that *possession* is inherent to ownership.

Since possession is about control, in the context of enslavement we see that *the essence of slavery is found in control tantamount to possession*. Once that control is established – usually achieved through violence or coercion – then other powers may be exercised over the enslaved: the person may then be used, managed, profited from, transferred (i.e.: bought, sold, etc.) or even disposed of.

At the end the day, what the *Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines* achieve – granted in lawyer-speak – is to translate the 1926 definition into language that makes it accessible and applicable in a contemporary context. How do the *Guidelines* understand slavery? They make clear slavery is about the exercise of those powers attaching to the right of ownership:

In cases of slavery, the exercise of ‘the powers attaching to

the right of ownership' should be understood as constituting control over a person in such a way as to significantly deprive that person of his or her individual liberty, with the intent of exploitation through the use, management, profit, transfer or disposal of that person. Usually this exercise will be supported by and obtained through means such as violent force, deception and/or coercion.

Does this mean football players are slaves if they are being 'sold' by one team to another? Probably not; the connotation of 'selling' sports players is just a common turn of phrase. So, while a power of ownership appears to be exercised – the transfer of a person – this will not constitute slavery, unless control is exercised "over a person in such a way as to significantly deprive that person of his or her individual liberty". Football players have rules to follow like most employees, but as the *Guidelines* state, this isn't "control tantamount to possession". If such control were to be at hand, then the transfer of a footballer would indeed constitute enslavement, but football players can quit; they can walk away. If they can do that (even if it means a pay cut), it is not slavery.

Another example would be the manager of a brothel where women are enslaved into commercial sexual exploitation. They can't walk away, they can't quit, and they likely never consented to this 'work'. That means that control tantamount to possession is exercised. In such a situation, the manager, by using and managing the workers would be in fact, and in law, in breach of the prohibition of slavery. Here is the language of the *Guidelines* in regard to the 'Managing of the Use of a Person':



Managing the use of a person may provide evidence of slavery. Having established control tantamount to possession; the act of managing that person will be an act of slavery. Evidence of such management of the use of a person may include indirect management such as a brothel owner delegating power to a day manager in a situation of slavery in the context of sex work.

The *Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines* provide us with the ability to understand what the legal definition of slavery means today, both in legal terms – through the prism of a property paradigm – but also in factual terms, because the *Guidelines* also capture the lived experience of those who are enslaved today. So how do we put these *Guidelines* to use when we are faced with the sometimes baffling decision as to whether someone is or isn't in slavery?

### **Identifying Slavery**

History teaches us that inhumanity can be boundless. As for slavery, it can come about and be enforced through many forms – too many to generalise. Thus, instead of looking to the different forms which slavery might take – bonded labour, child marriage, or trafficking – one should look to the substance of the relation between one person and another person. This gets us away from saying ‘trafficking is slavery’, ‘forced labour is slavery’, or ‘child marriage is slavery’; and instead asks a very simple question: *was a person exercising control tantamount to possession over another person?*<sup>2</sup>

If the type of control being described is what we would recognise as ownership over an object, then this constitutes slavery. This is a rather high threshold; in the language of the *Bellagio-*

*Harvard Guidelines*, it is “control over a person in such a way as to significantly deprive that person of his or her individual liberty”. In other words: to deprive somebody of their autonomy, of their personal agency.

Can we put a boundary on what constitutes slavery? Well a distinction may be made between it and forced labour by recognising that enslavement goes beyond the workplace, whereas, by definition, forced labour does not. In other words, if a person can leave their workplace environment and go home; whether or not they feel compelled to return the next day, they are not enslaved. This speaks to the all-encompassing nature of what is slavery. As the highest Court in Australia said in 2008 “it is important to recognise that harsh and exploitative conditions of labour do not of themselves amount to slavery”.<sup>257</sup> More is needed, the near totality of control over a person’s life: *the exercising of control tantamount to possession over a person*.

### **What to Look for in Identifying a Case of Slavery:**

The following sets out how to determine what in law is called a *prima facie* case of slavery; that is: what on *first look* might be considered slavery. Thus, what follows is meant to assist someone working on the front lines, a person who, let’s say, opens a door and finds a person they believe may be enslaved. How would you decide if this was a case of slavery?

1) *The first element will be the factual:*

*How is the person?* – Does the person show signs of physical or psychological harm, violence or intimidation? Is she or he malnourished, unkempt, or withdrawn? Is the person scared, do

they fail to make eye contact, or look vulnerable? Is there a sense that he or she does not exercise control over his or her own life?

*Where is this person? Look around*—What are her or his living conditions: Is the person hidden away, isolated? Does it look as though the person is being held against her or his will? Does it look like the person is living an independent existence?

2) *The second element is the legal standard:*

This standard is the *exercising of control tantamount to possession*. That type of control is expressed in the *Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines* as follows:

control over a person in such a way as to significantly deprive that person of his or her individual liberty, with the intent of exploitation through the use, management, profit, transfer or disposal of that person. Usually this exercise will be supported by and obtained through means such as violent force, deception and/or coercion.

*Is control present?* Does the person have control over his or her own life? Do they have the freedom to leave the situation? Does it appear as though they no longer have a say in the most basic elements of their life: where to go, what to do, who to speak to?

*How was control established?* Was it through violence, coercion, or threat of violence? But remember that there are innumerable ways in which control can be established, or ways of assisting in the establishment of control: taking away passports; moving to a foreign location; through marriage, debt, religion, isolation; by threatening

loved ones, blackmail, etc. Physical violence is a frequent hallmark, but not necessary to classify a situation as slavery.

### 3) *Applying the legal standard to the factual element*

Seeking to identify whether a given case amounts to slavery is a judgment call (for all of us but a judge, for whom it is a legal determination). Was control tantamount to possession being exercised? How, and by whom?

The *Guidelines* provide assistance in making that assessment, as they give examples of how slavery manifests itself: was the person *bought or sold*, were they *used, managed, profited from*, *were they used as if they were disposable*? These are, of course, only indicators as to the presence of slavery: but they assist in understanding how slavery manifests itself when there is the fundamental element of the exercising of control tantamount to possession.

It should always be recalled that in seeking to identify a case of slavery, that you must go beyond what people are calling it: a marriage, a religion, or a job; or terming it debt bondage, domestic servitude, or (forced) prostitution. Instead, we have to look to the substance and ask a simple question: is one person exercising control tantamount to possession over another person? Is someone being treated as if they are property? Here is where slavery lies.

By applying these means of determination, one can make a *prima facie* determination as to whether slavery appears to exist or not. Ultimately, it will be for a court of law to determine whether the case at hand is indeed a case of slavery. Yet, the ability to work

from an established, objective set of standards means that from the front-line all the way to the judge, everybody is on the same page when they speak of a case of enslavement.

For more depth of understanding as to what constitutes slavery, consider the two appendices to this book.

The first is *Twelve Practice Points for Understanding Slavery*, meant to assist academics in understanding what constitutes slavery. Reference to these points ensures that academics are all ‘speaking the same language’ when they speak of slavery, ensuring consistency and accuracy across disciplines.

The second appendix reproduces the 2012 *Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines on the Legal Parameters of Slavery* which was recognised in the 2016 *Case of the Workers of Fazenda Brasil Verde vs Brazil* before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights as setting out the scope of the definition of slavery in international law.

## **Chapter 11 – Antislavery Organisational Culture**

Garry Kishere

I would describe myself as a practitioner around the issue of human trafficking, though due to my narrow-framed glasses and ability to contribute to complex conversations, people often assume I am an academic. I have a personal aversion to black words on white paper, which I think is an actual condition. It has been interesting for me to find a seat at the table among the learned people of the counter-trafficking community and for me to contextually learn to find my voice amongst others. The journey of academics and practitioners alike is such that we both have something to contribute, and have need of one another.

I have had the privilege of working at the grassroots with a small group of like-minded people who have gone from talking in a pub to collaborating to deliver a government-approved trafficking prevention magazine in Moldova. I have also had the privilege of working with a larger US-based NGO as their European Operations Director, charged with extending their reach and contribution into the UK and other European countries. Both have played a part in enabling me to engage with and support both large and small organisations in Greece, which are working to protect vulnerable refugees.

This chapter draws on my personal journey and my face-to-face learning from 30 years in the charity sector and working

developmentally with individuals. I won't include many historical reference points from past movements (though I know, deeply, that we stand on the shoulders of both giants and exceptional ordinary people), but will instead draw from recent history, current contexts and the wealth of learning from this 'here and now' movement. I've "organised" this chapter into a series of themes I feel are important, but not always grasped within the wider antislavery movement. I think of them as "stepping-stones."

### **Stepping Stones**

I've tended to be a bit of a maverick with a "jump first and worry about getting wet later" approach to life, but even I have the good sense to check my footing. I am not a keen walker by any means but I have come across many streams and multiple stepping-stones laid out by those who have gone before me. My message is about these stepping-stones and our need to check what foundations they have – whether they will provide us with sure footing to get us to the next stage. Have they become eroded and unstable, and no longer fit for purpose? When and how often are we required to lay new stones during our own unique antislavery journey? Perhaps the first stepping-stone (or stumbling block) we might encounter when working against slavery and trafficking is the very human condition of "founder syndrome".

### **Founder Syndrome**

Over the years I've known several founders of NGOs and in fact I have been one myself. I have witnessed repeating cycles of dysfunction which seemed to accumulate around the role of

“founder”. I never had a name for this until recently, when I spent some weeks investing in a team of people who had been left to continue work while their organisation’s founder worked abroad for an extended period. I saw this as an opportunity to engage with them, review their work’s objectives and roles, and help them develop strategy.

I had not appreciated at the time that the founder would continue to control the work from afar and would visit on occasion, often without warning. This became quite disruptive. Founder syndrome stems from when a person initiates an NGO, or a project, or a scheme of work, gathers people around a vision to deliver this plan, and then positions himself or herself at the centre or on top of the work. This in and of itself is not a problem, but it becomes one when the founder’s own sense of worth and identity is too strongly bound up in this role. This is problematic because it leads to a toxic environment for workers, in that they have responsibility in name only, and are often subject to the leader’s ever-changing vision. The founder’s energy comes from continuously proposing vision and direction, but not from delivering a cohesive long-term strategy. Without strategy, the idea or focus point of the organisation can quickly change from month to month. The vision that you begin to own and build can turn into something else at the drop of a hat due to the drive and control of the leader.

It’s a problem when only the founder is allowed to make decisions, big and small. Although some form of consensus process may be used to engage personnel, any true consensus process is generally hijacked or sabotaged by the founder, who has already decided their preferred outcome long before any decision-making



process is completed. Alternatively the founder will suffer the process, hear a team's views and then proceed to do what he or she was going to anyway. The founders who suffer from this syndrome tend to have little or insufficient accountability. They are often the story sharer, the platform filler, the direct contact to donors and the flow of money. Those roles drive them to continue developing new and fresh visions to share. In a classic case of founder syndrome, NGO Board and Trustee members are family or friends chosen to give a thumbs-up to any and every idea presented by the visionary founder. The board's focus is to keep the visionary in their position and to support him or her by discarding those who oppose their views.

What might predict the onset of founder syndrome? One predictor is that there is no plan for succession. Workers are there to deliver the leader's personal vision and whilst they may have defined roles, it will rarely be to take over the 'founder's' work. And even if lip service is given to this, practice proves otherwise. Whilst an NGO's culture may feel like 'all are peers' or 'we're all in this together', the reality is workers are subordinates to supposedly superior knowledge and visionary drive. A second sign of the syndrome is that staff who bravely have the capacity to confront such leadership, those who disagree or those who name 'control' for what it is, don't tend to stick around too long. They find it unworkable or find themselves out of a job.

There seems to be a third predictor in how some founders give the best of themselves in the first three years. After that, they grow stale, and if they do not move on and give birth to other initiatives, they feel the need to keep changing the project they are pushing, so work never comes to maturity. In the resulting insecurity workers

become afraid to make their own decisions since the visionary holds the power. Of course if a work force is truly empowered the evidence shows they can actually contribute more to success and change in the organisation. Alternatively, the founder will keep his or her position long past their vision's 'expiry date' and become an obstacle to organisational growth and reach.

Some founders are able to recognise that the work has outgrown their initial mix of gifts and talents, and instead of allowing the organisation to suffer they will appoint others to take the work further – to their credit. This can work well as long as this transition process is thorough and thoughtful and not simply the dumping of the 'leader' role onto the new person who may be ill-equipped or have conflicting values or methods of operation. Similarly, this can lead to the abdication of responsibility by the founder onto the Board of Trustees, or the need for the Board to take over the organisation when leadership is lost or stuck.

### **Beware Board-Led Organisations**

The role of a board or trustees is that of Governance. They are generally in place to represent the requirements of the government who gave the organisation its recognised charitable status. They are there to ensure good financial management, best practices, and to advise on the project vision and strategy. In many respects it is a support role to those who deliver the work, and boards are often made up of people who have skills they can contribute or an experience base from which to advise. It is not the role of a board to lead the work. I have yet to come across a context either in my own work or in my work with others where a board-led NGO's

behaviour is completely ethical and functional.

Possible reasons for a board to take over running an NGO could be because the founder(s) who established the project chose the board and put them in place. But when the founder (and their vision) have moved on, and are replaced by managers and maintainers, the board has to adopt more of a directing role. Like foster parents, they are now in effect bringing up someone else's child. Other times it can come from an organisation extending its reach into other countries or sectors with the existing NGO's founders or leaders placed on the governing board of the new subsidiary organisation. While beginning with good intentions and quality control, this can simply revert to unhelpful, restrictive control with all new developments limited to the parent group.

A board-led NGO can be a frustrating place for visionary people. There can be an inflexible methodology or practice in place that the Board are fearful of changing. The project and its contribution to the movement has now become a fixed and locked-down institution more focused on preserving its constitution than on the actual ongoing impact of the work. A board-led NGO can also create false accountability. Workers will no longer seek the group's advice or input and will no longer see any point in developing fresh vision – instead, like puppets, they will deliver the *status quo*. Leadership will perform and provide what it feels the board wants to hear, and not actually involve them in helping the work progress. An answer to this came from a co-worker of mine back in my hometown of Bournemouth in the UK. A leader of leaders, he said that 'If we do what we always did, we get what we always got' (imagine a Scottish accent). Simply put, what we have

got, our impact, our outcomes, is not enough. This is a challenge to an overly-commanding institutional Board and the resulting NGO with no ability to self-critique or adjust its vision to reality and context.

### **Collaboration**

My children attended a local school where the banner statement was ‘let us do nothing apart which can better be accomplished together’. It is easy to admire this sentiment but often difficult for organisations to practice it. For some reason from the late 1990s onwards ‘collaboration’ became very trendy and seen as something worth having in an organisation’s portfolio. In fact it is increasingly a requirement of larger funding bodies that projects are out-sourced through collaborations (though sadly these tend to cease when the funding ends). But what you mean by collaboration and what I mean by collaboration may be very different things.

I remember beginning to work in one country where our US sister-organisation was invited to contribute ideas on childcare policy by a member of the Greek Parliament. We began to network and build relationships over a number of years in the south of Greece, looking to identify those who wanted to collaborate on initiatives and ensuring we did not replicate work or compete for resources. It came as a considerable surprise to receive a rude and confrontational letter from the leader of another international organisation in the north of Greece, literally 500 miles from where we were. They asked what we thought we were doing in ‘their’ country and that we were not needed. Further fuel was poured on the fire when the CEO of my own organisation told me that

their CEO had complained stating ‘you guys say you’re into collaboration but you’re not collaborating with us’.

It was such a frustrating exercise, to have to justify that we were, in fact, collaborating with just about everybody, and to demonstrate that this organisation collaborates with nobody. The problem was that our understanding of collaboration was different. As with my first anti-trafficking project in Moldova, our objective from the outset was to engage with an existing organisation and assist them with ideas, resources, and (when possible) funding. It was never our goal to centre ourselves on the other organisation, but instead to serve and address deficits strategically when needed. This other organisation’s idea of collaboration was for others to gather around their ideas to build up their work and their organisation. These two approaches have very different outcomes and two very different starting points.

Returning to the Greek example, some months later I was pleased to have a chance meeting with some of the original founders who had now left that Northern organisation. I was honest about how I perceived their view of other organisations coming to work in the entire country that they considered their turf. As they took ownership, I came to understand that this is how they operated in the past and that they recognised that they had been dealing with their own organisational culture issues.

When I worked on unity-based local partnerships in my own hometown, the reality was that there were often existing organisations with most of their funding and human resources already maxed out in delivering their specific objectives. It is no surprise that unity and collaboration often exist in the realms of

‘what we have left over’ from our own programmes. As a result collaboration is seen as an addition to existing organisation strategy – the icing atop the pre-existing organisational cake, if you will. But what if it isn’t the icing? What if it is the missing ingredient that requires us to remix and re-bake our organisations to more fully work with others? Just a thought!

On reflection I have found it helpful being around the anarchist community in Athens and around others whose collaborative glue is referred to as *Solidarity*. The starting point of these groups is giving everything and truly having a shared objective. Before I saw and experienced this in practice, I used to hope to find what I called a true ‘corporate’, which is where you are as interested in my success as I am in yours, and a win for one is a win for all. Anarchists may have a bad reputation, but in person they’re trying very hard to create a win for one, is a win for all environment.

## **Models**

I have confessed already that I have an aversion to books – I’m probably a one book a year guy – so it is odd that I am contributing to one. My aversion stems from a lack of personal intrigue and the myriad of people who over the years have said ‘Gaz – you will love this one’ when they themselves have not done a single thing with the new learning that they have gained. For some reason, I have chosen primarily to learn by experience, trial and hopefully not too much error.

I find the whole ‘read, learn, action, repeat’ thing makes me itchy. Worse still is that I have found myself surrounded by too many people living in a psychological state that I refer to as

‘deferred hope’, waiting around for the next book and model which will help them do, or become, what the last book promised but failed to deliver.

I believe that models are not something we can wait around for – instead they are what are created as we wrestle our way through the problems and obstacles that our movement faces. Mostly, though, I believe that models show us that something CAN be done, more than giving us a defined road map of how something SHOULD be done. Certainly in counter-trafficking it’s helpful to have the morale boost of significant success stories, but it would be foolish to look at models as something we reproduce without question or contextual scrutiny.

A good example would be the now well-known Swedish anti-trafficking law that came into place in 2002. It criminalised the purchase of sex, which was seen as a balanced approach to the issue as it no longer criminalised those who were selling sex.

I have sat with the government-appointed heads of counter-trafficking in some countries whose primary strategy of hope is to replicate this Swedish Model as it is now referred to. What is often misunderstood about the Swedish model is its cultural and legal context. The law was put in place in a context of 30 years of feminist engagement in politics and sits within a framework of gender equality laws. It was viewed that for either sex, the person with the money paying for services was in a position of power, which created stark inequality.

So why is this a problem? Well, if you simply look to adopt a model of action, without understanding the complex context of its creation, you end up with a gender equality law squeezed

into your own sex crime or sexual violence laws, which are already overwhelmed and not enforced. Rather than looking at existing models for guidance as to how it SHOULD be done, it's more important that we look at models and celebrate that something CAN be done. Then we can take those wins and begin to explore and adapt them in our own unique cultural context.

In his book *Blueprint for Revolution*, Sroja Popovic unpacks how a small group of activists in his hometown of Belgrade, Serbia began a growing movement, which helped to overthrow the dictator Slobodan Milosevic. Later in the book Sroja is taking a group of Egyptian activists around the key places of action in the centre of town. The group were there to see what they could learn from Serbian activism and action to help their small group to overthrow Hosni Mubarak. But every single strategy they heard that the Serbians had employed was met by 'we can't do that – it's different where we are'. It becomes clear in the narrative that this is actually the point. A nonviolent revolution that worked in one context cannot be exactly replicated in another, but you can take the principles of nonviolent and creative protest and do that anywhere – and in fact people have done just that, in many countries.

One final concern with models: I heard a story of an American mother who was preparing a Thanksgiving turkey for the family. During the preparations her daughter watched as she cut off the protruding tail of the bird, a part that I believe is called the 'parson's nose' – considered a delicacy in England. It was strange to her to see this being cut off and discarded. On being asked the reason why, the mother simply replied 'it is an important part of the preparation for cooking – my own mother always did this'. Feeling



the answer was incomplete; the girl called the grandmother into the kitchen and asked why she herself had cut off the parson's nose? 'Oh' she replied, 'it was the only way I could get a turkey to fit into my small pan!' Perhaps a silly illustration, and yet so many people adopt a model or inherit practices without giving sufficient critique as to why we do what we do, or even if the model is beneficial to our working practices and desired outcomes. Adopting models and importing ideas will never be complete without your own deeply important contextual learning in the mix.

### **Caring for Ourselves and Others**

I believe the organisational term is Member Care. One would think that through working in caring contexts for almost three decades, I would know what this is! It is in fact a term I picked up just two years ago from some new friends who found themselves having to drop their work in Afghanistan and exit immediately as their lives were in danger. They used the term to describe how, as frontline care workers, there was an absence of people caring for *them*. I knew this was a need in many areas of justice work and activism, but I had never had a frame of reference. As a result of that conversation, I am now giving 50% of my time to those who have gathered in Greece to work with refugees and the victims of trafficking. Doing so, I have found, as many others have, that you cannot be exposed to the stories or suffering of others who have had traumatic experiences and not have your own vicarious experience of this pain and suffering. This seed of burnout in workers is often referred to as secondary trauma, vicarious trauma or compassion fatigue. I would suggest that it is compassion that

brought us to the work, and it is the exposure to the trauma of others that creates fatigue, and that therefore secondary trauma is the best description.

It may come as a surprise, but it has taken far too long for healthcare and medical organisations in the UK to put care in place for the *carers* – to recognise that if you want people to keep working for you, then you had better help them detach and recover from what they are exposed to on a day-to-day basis. Counsellors, legal workers, and interpreters are among the most strongly affected by their exposure to the suffering of refugees who have fled war, loss, and torture to reach relative safety. Added to this are our own complex internal worlds that we bring with us to the work, which can include the need to be needed, the need to rescue others to fulfil our own sense of purpose, and perhaps a failure to recognise the position of power and inequality that places us in. We need to give serious consideration to how we care for the people we work with. This cannot be lost in the urgency of the work, or our need for funds or drive to deliver the next aspect of vision. It simply lacks consistency and integrity not to have member care in place.

### **Implicit / Explicit Expectations**

As a teenager I found quite quickly that you could climb the ladder of retail management simply by being a nice guy and working like a dog. The extra hours and the cancelled days off to cover for other staff all paid off when I was picked to spend a year at the College for the Distributive Trades in London. I was still only 17. Beginning a career in management had never been on my plan – perhaps because I had no specific plan at this point,

just a good work ethic. I did not bring this behaviour with me, but adopted it early on in my working under the local manager.

It's interesting that he never specifically vocalised that I would need to work like a dog for the company. I learned it by watching him with his late finishes and early starts, with his skipped lunches, and his covered sick days. This was the behaviour he modelled as being a 'good manager'. I see this in non-profit and for-profit groups in the same way today, when the company CEO or project leader works like a dog, and in turn others who want to do well perceive this to be the way to be committed to a cause, and soon follow suit.

The problem, of course, is that it is unsustainable and burns people out very quickly. The worst form of leaders who live out this behaviour find it difficult to break the cycle of hard work, and are more explicit in sharing their frustrations with workers who choose to work in less driven ways. I think the saying that the candle which burns twice as bright burns half as long is pretty accurate, but my primary concern is that such leaders can run so fast that they fail to acknowledge the carnage they leave behind them – viewing other workers who fail to keep up as giving into weakness or lacking commitment.

I remember being in a team with other young people founding a community youth work. We thought we were awesome, that we had been trusted with a new blueprint for working with troubled teenagers and that we could do no wrong. People wrote about our methods in books and spoke about us at conferences. Perhaps it was the pressure of the public profile, which created a 'run fast and burn out quick' work ethic. It was here that I learned about

one of the clearest dangers of running too fast. We developed a culture of team meetings where snap decisions were made, or the visionary leader was already so committed to an idea in his head it was difficult not to agree or offer a counter-suggestion. If you could not keep up or think on your feet, you very quickly found yourself excluded from meetings and decision-making. This in turn meant that ‘processor’ or ‘intuitive’ types never got to bring their more deeply processed and considered ideas or concerns to the table. It was an approach that creates quick outcomes and sustains the idea of success, but fails to understand that the mistakes and failures we make due to the pace, generally all have a face, a name and something they could have contributed as we left them behind. These are not the kind of heroes that I want to follow, nor become.

### **Compassion v. Strategy (Aftercare v. Prevention)**

Not being a statistician, I tend to generalise. One of the contexts for generalisation is the number of faith communities engaged in counter-trafficking around the world. It seems that at least in some national contexts, they constitute up to 50 percent of the personnel engaged in counter-trafficking. The frequency with which I come across them is an indication that they are contributing significantly to the arena of counter-trafficking, and that we would lose a considerable number of engaged activists if they all got up and left.

A point of learning here, which extends beyond practitioners who come from a faith perspective, is that of compassion. The majority of these organisations want to end human trafficking and modern slavery and much of their public-facing publicity tends

to communicate this. However the work they are doing is largely compassion-driven and as such is mostly focused on befriending victims and providing intervention, rescue, and care. If this is where a project begins, it is generally where it ends and if it is the compassion stories which fuel funding, then strategic work will begin to slide down the agenda or even off of it.

I have taken the view over the years that whilst this kind of work is precious and needed, but it is not generally strategically sound in ending or slowing trafficking itself. If the work is primarily the ambulance at the bottom of the trafficking cliff, and not building a fence at the top to stop the next generation falling off, well, we will never have enough ambulances. It is important that we explore more fully the focuses of our organisations and the parts that they are playing, especially if we are presenting ourselves as abolitionists – then we should look to actual abolition not just rescue. Sadly we live in a world where very often donors and funding streams are also compassion-driven rather than strategy-driven, and it will require educating our funding sources as to the need for a balance across counter-trafficking globally, so that there is both intervention, rescue and recovery, alongside education, legislation, cultural shift and loss of income for traffickers.

### **Values as DNA**

I wish this were not true, but sadly, my experience tells me otherwise: if you found or run an organisation that focuses on love, compassion, justice and humanity, please make sure that it is an internal value and not just an external project. No amount of reciting ‘we are a family, we are a community’ will counter an

inconsistency between our work for beneficiaries and our work with one another. The tension this creates for workers within an organisation when leadership talks the talk in terms of its PR and external work, but does not walk the walk with its own personnel can be deeply demoralising. Personally I find this deeply unpalatable, and it very often has an impact on the quality of the work and the level of ownership people place on the organisation and its objectives.

### **Route Maps**

It is important that each of our organisations has at least some sense of why it exists, what it aims to respond to, and what it hopes to contribute to the situation. It's also important, though, that we have the ability to do a complete turnaround if we need to, should we find that our approach is not working or needs reconfiguring in some way. Sometimes we can come to a situation thinking we know how to respond, or perhaps years into our work feel that the approach was correct but it's just the situation that is different. Our ideas need reviewing regularly and it is important that we have the ability to make a cultural shift if we need to.

A cultural shift is best defined in this narrative: A gentleman has just surfaced from the underground at New York's Grand Central Station and is hoping to make his way to Times Square. After 40 minutes of turning this way and that he is becoming frustrated with the map he has brought with him. He has tried his best to get there, paused, prayed, lit a candle, turned around three times and thrown salt over his shoulder, and even cried a little. Finally after an hour has passed, in desperation he approaches a

policeman and asks the officer to sketch out the directions on the map. The officer replied to the traveller, ‘Well, the good thing is that you made it to New York, the bad thing is this is a map of Chicago’. It is important that we have the right tools for where we are and the situation we are in (see Models above). However, unlike models, we often bring our own maps with us to work, and they tend to be based on assumptions and, at times, our own cultural conditioning. Our ideas are our ideas, and it’s right that our ideology has some bearing on our work, but when either of these things becomes irreversibly fixed they become idols and will require an intervention and a new map.

### **Irony**

It is our highest hope that when given the opportunity, victims of trafficking and slavery will come to believe that change is possible, and perhaps risk their lives to exit. We anticipate that given the right environment and people they can trust, they will recover and that slowly a fuller, richer existence will ensue. Shouldn’t we also strive for the same level of bravery, to challenge the structures put in place to serve our objectives, but which have become structures we now serve? In the way that some survivors are given the opportunity or forced to face their exploiters in the court of law, should we not at least find the courage to challenge our leaders when their behaviour or methodologies begin to limit our working lives and outcomes? Sometimes, it is just possible that the greatest hindrances to the modern counter-trafficking movement are those unchallenged elephants in our organisations’ meeting rooms and our failures in dealing with them.

### **Change In Our Lifetime?**

I remember being invited to an event at the Millennium Dome with numerous speakers whose aim was to inspire the youth of London. One person in particular, a football player, stuck out for me, which is strange as I am neither a fan nor follower of football. His name was Cyril Regis and he had been a player for the England squad some years before. He was there to tell us that change is possible and began to unpack how he, a black man, entered onto the very public stage of 'white' English football some 30 years before. At first he played as the only black player in a local team, which exposed him to crowds of 500 where perhaps 50 would shout racist chants and throw bananas onto the pitch to the sound of monkey noises. He then became one of the first 2 black players to play on the England national team where the crowds grew to 50,000 and the racism spewed from more than 5,000 during each game. Cyril went on to state that in those 30 years, racism has gone from acceptable to becoming culturally unacceptable. More than this, it is now illegal and there are consequences enforced both within the sport and within society for the minority who perpetuate racism. Hearing this was a great encouragement to me that perhaps in a lifetime, the exploitation of other human beings for profit could also become just as culturally unacceptable and legally reinforced.

My concern is not the lack of will for such an outcome, but our employment or inheritance of dysfunctional methodologies which limit outcomes and limit our own quality of life and work, and worse still, fail those we seek to serve.

Leadership, vision, structure and strategy must remain flexible and subject to open discourse and scrutiny. The enormity of some



of the cracks and flaws in our organisations or practices can seem overwhelming, but my advice is to pick something and prove that it is not an immovable object. Allow yourselves to take a step forward, even if this only serves to highlight the leg that is now trailing behind. You will find that these are not insurmountable monsters, and draw strength to continue to evolve, sustain momentum and remain a contributor to this ‘now’ movement in society.

### **Movement?**

We throw the word ‘movement’ around too much, perhaps because it gives us a sense of participating in a significant issue during our lifetimes. Only history will determine if this was a movement and it will only do so if there is a significantly notable change. No individual person or organisation is a movement alone, but we – all of us who are in this fight – are partnering with possibility, listening to the echoes of history with a keen ear, and hoping that together, we are worthy of such future recognition. Let us continue to check on the stepping-stones that shape and inform our organisational culture and ensure from time to time, that they are fit for purpose.

## **Chapter 12 – The Impact of the Past on Child Sexual Exploitation**

Sarah Colley and Emma Stephens

Some people might be surprised to find a chapter on child sexual exploitation (CSE) in an antislavery book. Indeed, despite the recent focus, particularly in the UK, on child sexual exploitation, little has been said about it as a form of slavery. As practitioners in the field, we have found this somewhat confusing. ‘Sexual slavery’ has been a feature of discussions relating to slavery and human trafficking outside and into the UK, but consideration of children sexually exploited within our own borders is often missing from this dialogue. However, when the definitions of slavery and child sexual exploitation are compared, the connection is clear:

“**Child slavery** is the enforced exploitation of a child for their labour for someone else’s gain.” Child trafficking is defined as “Trafficking involves transporting, recruiting or harbouring people for the purpose of exploitation, using violence, threats or coercion. When children are trafficked, no violence, deception or coercion needs to be involved, trafficking is merely the act of transporting or harbouring them for exploitative work. When away from their families, they are at the mercy of their employers.”<sup>258</sup>

“**Child sexual exploitation** is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an

imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.”<sup>259</sup>

Both definitions refer to situations where children are exploited for others’ gain. CSE is a specific form of child slavery where the labour is linked to their sexual exploitation. It is important to recognise CSE as a form of slavery as this opens up additional safeguarding and prosecution options.

We have worked with numerous children who have been trapped in exploitative situations – children who have been groomed with offers of love, friendship, fun and excitement only to become the victims of horrific abuse. They are trapped by those they believed would keep them safe, and controlled through manipulation, blackmail, threats and violence. These children are unable or unwilling to seek help for fear of retribution, a lack of awareness of the abuse they are subjected to and/or as a result of their own feelings of guilt and shame.

During the years we’ve spent working in this field, we have learned some valuable lessons. When we started, there was limited research or guidance on how to tackle child sexual exploitation, and our work was informed only by a general understanding of children and abuse. As a result, we faced many challenges, made

many mistakes and experienced much frustration.

Our hope is that by reading this chapter, you can take something from our journey that helps you to avoid our pitfalls. We begin by putting CSE into context and move on to highlight some of the challenges we have faced along the way and how we believe these can be addressed. We conclude by identifying the areas in CSE that we believe need to be urgently tackled to protect children from this appalling crime.

### **History of Child Sexual Exploitation**

In this chapter, we are concerned with the issue across the UK but are aware that CSE takes place across the world in various forms, all of which are equally as damaging to the children concerned.

There is a history of concern and action on CSE in the UK. Investigative journalists and charities, over one hundred years ago, exposed and campaigned against the sexual exploitation of children, and have continued to influence change. In 1885, W.T Stead, in a series of articles for the London newspaper *Pall Mall Gazette*, wrote about the issue of child prostitution (now termed CSE). We believe that recent articles in *The Times* have helped to raise the issue within the UK as well, as they did in the 1970s. CSE is again attracting attention as police, statutory and voluntary agencies (NGOs) recognise that they need to work together to protect exploited children and deter and disrupt perpetrators.

In the 1800s, Stead, and William Booth, of the Salvation Army, were described as wanting “to prove that girls under the age of 16 were being sold in London for the purposes of prostitution

or ‘white slavery’.”<sup>260</sup> To think that sex trafficking of children still goes on in this and other countries more than 130 years later is dispiriting to say the least. The latest figures are that 33% “of all potential victims of modern slavery in the UK were victims of sexual exploitation”,<sup>261</sup> and it is reported that girls make up the majority of the victims.

The move from the term “child prostitution” to “child sexual exploitation” only happened in the twenty-first century, with the UK government’s replacement of their guidance “Safeguarding Children involved in Prostitution”,<sup>262</sup> first published in 2000, with the new and, in our minds, far more appropriate term CSE in their “Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation” of 2009.<sup>263</sup> It is shocking that it is only in the last few years that official use of the term child prostitute has ended, although we still see some examples within the British media, for example “CHILD PROSTITUTION RING: Sheffield girls as young as 12 forced to sell themselves”.<sup>264</sup> This new guidance has meant that we see children (up to the age of 18) as victims of sexual abuse, and that safeguarding agencies are working to apprehend the offenders. There has been a move away from viewing the children as willing participants and towards recognising them as victims.

As practitioners, we feel that despite semantic changes from child prostitution, to child involved in prostitution, to the term child sexual exploitation used today, not enough has changed. Children are now often recognised as victims; the age of sexual consent has been increased from 13 to 16; perpetrators are being imprisoned for the abuse; and internal trafficking is being recognised.

However, victim blaming continues as we will consider later, and there continues to be a grey area of transition from child to adult between the ages of 16 and 18. In addition there are still men, and it is mainly men, who are perpetrating these crimes against children. We are not sure whether we will ever be able to remove the demand for this abuse and exploitation, but we hope that as a society we can work towards deterring offenders.

These changes have come about, in part, due to a series of reports, which seem to have been published on an almost yearly basis, and that have emphasised the need for transformation. Serious Case Reviews have been published in relation to CSE cases in Rotherham, Derby, Oxford, and Rochdale to name but a few, and this has led to the Government commissioning a range of exploratory inquiries.<sup>265</sup> The Serious Crime Act of 2015 removed the term child prostitution from legislation and, although there is no specific crime of child sexual exploitation, it makes clear that children should not be criminalised for being a victim of CSE. Crimes associated with CSE are prosecuted under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, and now with the alternative option of considering the Modern Slavery Act 2015. Despite this, some practitioners who are responsible for safeguarding continue to believe that it doesn't affect them. For example, we have been told by the head teachers of inner-city schools that they shouldn't be concerned about CSE because it is very rare, affecting only one in a million. Obviously, the figures and national reports would challenge this, but it's still a commonly held public view. A similar misconception holds for levels of modern slavery within the UK, a recent study found that "less than one in ten people strongly believe

the true scale of slavery in the UK.”<sup>266</sup>

Trying to estimate the number of young people exploited via CSE is very difficult because the crime has a large dark figure – the majority of the crimes go unreported. The Children’s Society published a report called ‘The Game’s Up: Redefining Child Prostitution’<sup>267</sup> in 1995. In this report they gave figures for girls cautioned and convicted for prostitution. They cite that “in 1989, 104 cautions were issued...[T]his included three 13-year old [children] and nine 14-year old [children]”. We believe that nowadays these children would not be criminalised for being exploited, since children cannot consent to their own abuse. The estimation of children being sexually abused via CSE has also changed over the previous few decades. Brown and Barrett (2002)<sup>268</sup> suggested the figure of 5,000 child victims in Britain, yet in the Jay report of 2014,<sup>269</sup> the author suggested that a “conservative estimate” of the children abused amounts to 1,400 over the period of 1997-2013 in the town of Rotherham alone.

This would suggest that the national prevalence is a great deal higher. In 2012, the Office for the Children’s Commissioner’s Inquiry into CSE in gangs and groups identified “16,500 children from across England ...as being at high risk of child sexual exploitation”.<sup>270</sup> These figures are from a one year period from April 2010 to March 2011, but as they only considered gangs and group exploitation and not online, peer-on-peer, nor cases of individual perpetration during the period, we can extrapolate that the real figure of exploited children runs to many thousands more across the whole of the UK.

### **Constructions of Child Sexual Exploitation**

Shockingly, the echoes of the Victorian view of precocious temptresses luring men into immoral activity can still be heard today.<sup>271</sup> Time and time again, those in a position to safeguard children view child sexual exploitation not as abuse or indeed a form of slavery, but as a ‘lifestyle choice’ made by ‘rebellious’, ‘consenting’ teenagers. Serious case reviews into child sexual exploitation are littered with examples of children being blamed and viewed as complicit in their abuse. For example, Griffiths found that in Rochdale “young people being viewed as problematic and referred to in terms of ‘hard to reach’ ‘rebellious’ ‘challenging behaviour’ rather than by attempting to understand the behaviour and provide sustained support.”<sup>272</sup> Ultimately, the outcome for these children is that they are failed, safeguarding is ineffectual, and the abuse continues.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. To view children as complicit in their abuse is to collude with the perpetrators. A child’s ability to consent is deliberately eroded by perpetrators using the grooming process. During the grooming process, perpetrators use methods such as emotional blackmail, drugs and alcohol, threats, violence, manipulation and coercion to force the child to engage in sexual activities. Put yourself in their shoes – what choice would you have if you were told that if you did not cooperate, you would be dumped by the love of your life, your family’s business would be burnt to the ground with them in it or that photos of you being raped would be put on the Internet for all to see? These are real threats used against actual victims. There is no choice in these situations; children *do not* consent to their own abuse.



Unfortunately, the nuances of sexual consent have often been lost on many professionals in cases of child sexual exploitation. In training sessions, we rarely come across professionals or young people who are aware that the 2003 Sexual Offences Act states that sexual consent can only be given ‘if he agrees by choice, and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice’. In Rotherham, a member of the Police Criminal Investigation Department, who as a police officer should arguably have a good understanding of the law, disputed using the category of ‘sexual abuse’ in a case where a 12-year-old child had intercourse with 5 males because he considered the child to have been “100% consensual in every incident”.<sup>273</sup> Not only was this child under the age of sexual consent (16 years), but she had been groomed into sexual exploitation and was, therefore, incapable of consenting. This is not an isolated incident; other professionals viewing children as consenting to their own abuse has been one of our biggest frustrations while working in the field of child sexual exploitation. Every professional who works to safeguard children should have an in-depth knowledge of sexual consent and be able to recognise situations where it has not been given.

In addition to understanding consent, we believe that professionals need to understand trauma responses. Responses to trauma are extremely complex and we are by no means experts, but what we do know is that victims of child sexual exploitation will be dramatically changed by their experience of abuse. The Office of the Children’s Commissioner’s report into child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups found professionals frequently referring to victims as being “promiscuous”, “liking the glamour”,

engaging in “risky behaviour” and being generally “badly behaved”, without considering these behaviours as reactions to trauma suffered.<sup>274</sup> These behaviours need to be considered within the context of abuse, since aggression, lack of engagement and risk-taking behaviours can all be symptoms of trauma.

Another aspect of victim psychology that must be understood is the reason why a victim may return to a perpetrator. It can be extremely difficult to comprehend why situations such as this might occur: “The officer described how one girl was punished by being taken to a wood and humiliated and raped in different ways by seven men. Left alone, hurt, crying, naked and covered with semen, the person she called for help was not the parents, social worker, police or ambulance, but one of the abusers who had just raped her”.<sup>275</sup> This behaviour can be explained using Stockholm syndrome or betrayal trauma theory. Stockholm syndrome occurs when a victim develops a positive emotional attachment to their perpetrator. It comes about when the perpetrator intersperses their abusive behaviour with small kindnesses, and it is these kindnesses that the victim focuses upon. Betrayal trauma theory describes a situation where the victim is consciously ‘unaware’ of the abuse they are being subjected to, because they believe that they are dependent on the perpetrator for survival. These explanations help us to understand how choice and consent are eroded in cases of child sexual exploitation.

To be an effective practitioner in the area of child sexual exploitation, knowledge of the nuances of consent and the symptoms of trauma is essential. This knowledge is our ammunition against those who continue to promote the extremely harmful attitudes that blame victims for their abuse.

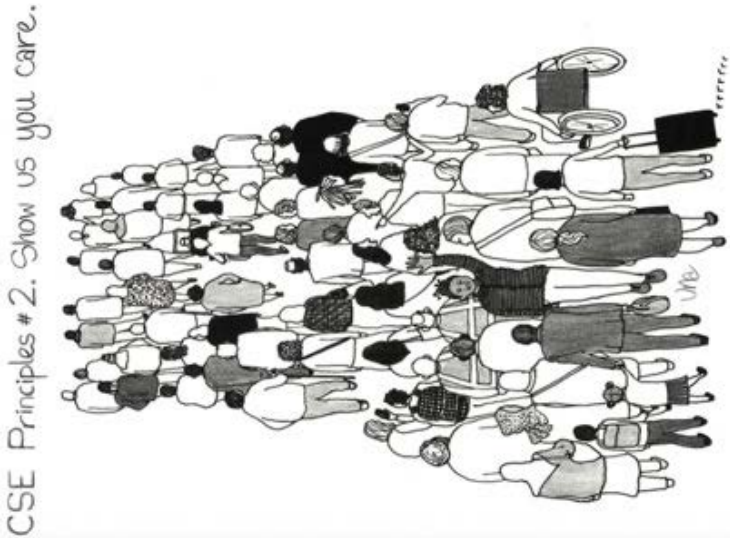
## **Engagement**

Little has been written about engaging young people in the context of CSE, and we have developed strong opinions about this from years of working in the field. Our approach has been child-centred, and this has informed our work. Trust is a huge issue for exploited and abused young people, and we've come to understand that it takes time to get young people to trust us. Perpetrators can also take their time to groom young people with gifts and positive experiences, such as lifts, food, and experiences which most of us would consider fun, such as going to parties or meals, before the abuse starts. To challenge the bond that develops between the groomer and the groomed, we have found that relationship building is the most important aspect of working with children.

The Serious Case Review into the police investigation called Operation Bullfinch in the city of Oxford refers to young people stating that the perpetrators were “kind and nice”, “he was my friend”, “they listened”, “they told me how lovely I was”, “made me trust them for months”, and “I was their friend”.<sup>276</sup> These all refer to positive experiences and relationships that the young people received or felt they had before the abuse started. For those reasons we need to challenge the person they trusted, who was perhaps their only friend at that time, or acted as a substitute for their family or carers, in order to abuse them. This is why building trust is so important, so that we can work on challenging these grooming techniques. See illustration, “CSE Principles 2: Show us you Care”.

Relationship building typically involves spending time with others, listening, and developing rapport. In practice this has

included taking children out to have food and a hot drink and getting to know them and showing that adults can be trusted. This always includes listening to the young people. Another example from the Serious Case Review above illustrates this.



**CSE Principles #2: Show us you care**



There is a clear message from young people affected by child sexual exploitation (CSE) that showing care is really important. This means having a compassionate attitude, but it also means demonstrating care through what is actually done: being kept informed about your case and having your needs noticed and met, for example. Young people value professionals who are able to display genuine understanding and thoughtfulness. Having boundaries is part of this – caring enough to have rules in place to protect a young person.

“They make you feel wanted, at home. If you ask for more help, they’ll give you it and they’ll not make you feel awkward for asking for it...They make you feel like you’re not putting anyone out. So you’re not wasting anyone’s time or anything. They’re always there for you.”  
 (Young person, ‘Helping me find my own way’)

“She [the foster carer] didn’t care to be honest. If I went missing, she’d say ‘Where you been?’ I’d say ‘Out’ and that would be it. She never asked any more questions. She should have convinced me not to, asked me ‘What’s up?’ Sat me down, asked me if I was alright, but she never did.”  
 (Young person, ‘Barnardo’s Safe Accommodation Project Consultation’)

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This is one of ten principles for working with children who are affected by sexual exploitation, created as part of the Alexi Project by the International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking at the University of Bedfordshire. Comic illustrations were produced by Lina and supported by the Young Researcher’s Advisory Panel. To learn more and view the other postcards visit [www.alexiproject.org.uk](http://www.alexiproject.org.uk)  
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A young person commented: “The only person who was any good was [the support worker]. She took me to McDonald’s or Costa Coffee to talk. I wasn’t confident enough to tell her... but she was talking to me and listening”.<sup>277</sup> It is also our understanding that this technique is often used by the perpetrators whom the victims trusted the most.

Practitioners need to be mindful that perpetrators will use similar strategies to build relationships. We have found that working with young people in a safe but neutral environment which *they* choose and are happy in, such as a café or fast-food restaurant, can show that we as workers are willing to give the time and space to young people. It also makes a clear distinction between the behaviour of perpetrators during the grooming process and professional practice. Another place where young people often feel safe is in our cars, and disclosures have often been made in vehicles while driving between appointments. As practitioners, we believe this is to do with the fact that we are not sat opposite the young person, and that our concentration is not felt to be fully on them. It can also demonstrate that we are transporting them in a safe manner rather than to abuse, which is often what the internal trafficking journeys have resulted in.

The victims of CSE can often present difficult and challenging behaviour. We have experienced having doors slammed in our faces, name-calling and bad language, and threats of self-harm. This needs to be met with empathy and understanding. Instead of a childhood filled with age-appropriate activities and positive role models, the victims have had their worlds turned horrifically upside down by the main people they trust. We have to see their behaviour in the

context of an abused child who has experienced some of the most traumatic experiences that one can imagine. This can be a challenge to professionals who normally work with children who they find easier to engage. We must always consider that the behaviours demonstrated by survivors of child sexual exploitation are symptoms of trauma, maladaptive coping strategies or cries for help.

Our experience of working with young people has shown that a full year can pass before disclosures of abuse are made. That simple fact has important implications for a professional's workload. We acknowledge that the voluntary sector and NGOs do well at offering time and a safe space for a young person to trust them, to gain support, and to help address their abuse. In the charitable sector, workers are often part-time, on fixed-term contracts due to the precarious nature of the world of short-term funding. Workers are also subject to considerable stress, which we will touch on later. It is never a good situation to have a list of young people waiting for a specialist CSE worker, but this is what we have regularly experienced. We are aware that whilst young people are waiting for a worker, the abuse often continues, and obviously may continue even while they are working with professionals. A child's engagement with one trusted worker is what all agencies aspire to, but that's not what organisations have always been able to deliver. This needs to be considered before referrals are distributed to individual workers. Can we deliver consistent support for the length of time that the children need it? If not, we also need to consider if there are there other agencies or professionals that might be better placed to offer appropriate support.

## **Staff Resilience**

Bales wrote about ‘burnout’ and resilience in this book’s foreword, and this is something that we think is important, but rarely discussed, in our field. To raise the subject of staff resilience within a chapter on child sexual exploitation might appear misplaced, as it is the resilience of the young victims that deserves attention, but if the workers, whether the police or the statutory or voluntary sector, are not able to do their jobs well, abuse will continue longer without being addressed.

Recent research published in the *Child Abuse Review* on the “wellbeing of professionals working with suspected victims of child sexual exploitation”<sup>278</sup> found that the social workers and police who were interviewed “switched off their emotions when interviewing” and “neglected their emotional preparation”, and that “the CSE work negatively affected the personal lives of more than half the practitioners to the extent that they ‘lived and breathed’ CSE cases for extended periods of time.”<sup>279</sup> This is certainly our experience and, like others in our field, we have both come precariously close to burnout.

Supervision is discussed in many of the Serious Case Reviews and we also feel it deserves consideration. We have witnessed workers suffering from emotional breakdowns following harrowing disclosures and dealing with guilt for not being able to stop abuse or not being able to do more to safeguard a child. Clearly, the weight of responsibility needs to be addressed in a safe professional environment.

Various Serious Case Reviews document the inadequate professional supervision of CSE support workers. The SCR

into Operation Brooke in Bristol noted “where it was identified, professionals did not always receive adequate supervision”,<sup>280</sup> while a Serious Case Review into CSE in Coventry referred to a key staff member “not having supervision and there was no safeguarding supervision”<sup>281</sup> which suggests a lack of importance and priority being attached to this crucial work. The Inquiry into CSE in Rotherham also found “inadequate supervision”<sup>282</sup> during the fifteen-year period of 1998 – 2013, so we see this is a common observation of many of the recent extensive CSE investigations. The government’s recently issued Office for Standards in Education report into CSE states that “The quality of supervision offered to social workers in child sexual exploitation cases was seen to be consistently good in only two of the eight local authorities inspected”.<sup>283</sup> If we believe that supervision for social workers and voluntary sector workers is lacking, then we can understand how staff might feel unsupported, and that they don’t have the guidance and time needed to reflect on practice nor gain insight into how best to support the victims.

Vicarious trauma or burnout due to working with victims of these horrendous crimes is an issue that is little considered. This has also been termed “compassion fatigue”<sup>284</sup> by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC). The NSPCC have published a Research Briefing on compassion fatigue and believe that “rigorous supervision” and “peer support” may provide the best way of dealing with this. We, as practitioners, feel that workers who are dealing with abuse on a day-to-day basis need clinical supervision rather than normal supervision with a manager who may also be suffering from the same compassion fatigue, and



is perhaps more concerned with caseloads and targets. Effective supervision should be offered by professionals such as counsellors who are trained to give this support.

Clinical supervision should be costed into project funding and offered with more regularity if staff are working in CSE and perhaps being stretched to their maximum. This could go some way towards reducing staff sickness, mental health issues and general burnout. This in turn would have a positive impact on children being supported as there would be fewer changes in staff, and practitioners would have the capacity to be emotionally available and tuned in to children's needs. We feel that the idea of peer support is important, but cannot replace professional clinical supervision, and it should not be seen as an option but as a normal part of the practitioner's role.

### **Multi-Agency Working**

The challenges of multi-agency working are nothing new. In the introduction, Bales discussed how progress towards the abolition of slavery has been slowed throughout history by tensions arising between different people and organisations within antislavery movements. Unfortunately, similar tensions are still present today, and not only impede progress towards the abolishment of child sexual exploitation but also put children at risk.

As noted in the Serious Case Reviews in Derby, Rotherham and Coventry, tensions between voluntary sector and government organisations led to delays in safeguarding children. Despite years of experience, in each of these cases initial concerns raised by voluntary sector organisations were ignored by government

agencies, resulting in prolonged abuse for the victims. Although both the voluntary and government sectors' aim is to tackle child sexual exploitation, they often come with different priorities. In general, the voluntary sector focuses on fostering relationships with victims of child sexual exploitation but, due to a lack of authority, can struggle to escalate concerns. Time to build relationships is rarely afforded to local authority workers who operate under the pressure of targets, legal requirements and high caseloads. The dilemma is that we have one sector that is time rich but lacks authority, and one sector that has the authority but is time poor.

The logical solution is for these organisations to work together, taking on tasks they are equipped to fulfil and supporting each other in times of crisis.

In the UK we are starting to see improved coordination between the government and the voluntary sector. Multi-agency, co-located teams are being created where voluntary and government agencies sit side by side. In this environment, organisations are able to develop a better understanding of each other's strengths, capabilities and limitations, and tasks can be allocated to the most appropriate professional, while faceless colleagues become human beings. In our experience, this way of working benefits both the victims of child sexual exploitation and the professionals. Tensions are reduced as professionals become clearer about each other's remits and frustrations. Following on from this is the relationship between academia and practice. Child sexual exploitation is a largely under-researched area. To date, research has been led by organisations such as Barnardo's, The Children's Society and the University of Bedfordshire. However, with an increasing focus on

child sexual exploitation by funders, other organisations are entering the field. For research to be meaningful, academics, practitioners and service-users must work together to create knowledge that can support the abolition of child sexual exploitation. Practitioners' and service users' deep knowledge is as important as research studies and vice versa.

### **Afterword**

Despite the Abolition of Slavery Act in 1833, slavery, including child sexual exploitation, continues to exist. Encouragingly, we are beginning to see an attitudinal change within the UK, in that children are beginning to be recognised as victims. Legislative change has supported this, and we are now working in a more coordinated manner to deter, disrupt and prosecute offenders alongside supporting survivors of child sexual exploitation.

However, we are acutely aware that child sexual exploitation could be viewed as the *topic du jour*, and when another priority (for example terrorism, criminal exploitation of children including the recently reported County Lines issues etc.) takes precedence, where will this leave the multi-agency child sexual exploitation teams, or the funding for CSE support services and research? We hope that the media continue to highlight current and historic child sexual abuse cases in a victim-centred manner to maintain awareness of this issue. As practitioners and academics in the field, we need to continue to campaign to keep children safe from abuse, and support those affected by child sexual exploitation to make their voices heard – see illustration, “CSE principle #7. Give us a voice”.

The key message we hope that you take from this chapter

is that children cannot consent to their own abuse. This must be the starting point in all the work we do in the field of child sexual exploitation, and is the key to safeguarding those at risk or subject to this form of child abuse.



**CSE Principles #7: Give us a voice**

The act of communicating about their experiences can be therapeutic for young people affected by child sexual exploitation (CSE). However, their experience of services often involves being or feeling silenced, and lacking the opportunity or support to speak. Where these opportunities have existed – either through talking or writing or drawing – young people can identify instances where this led to action being taken on their behalf, or simply feeling listened to. Young people have also highlighted the importance of opportunities to ‘speak out’ to help others – they believe in the power of ‘voice’ to create change.

“Like the photography project - that helped me because when it comes to captions – I like writing and I... I didn’t really speak about [sexual exploitation]. I didn’t really do that. I just bottled it up and I needed to get it out in another way and I think if I hadn’t have done it I think I would have just been bubbling it up.”  
 (Young person, ‘Helping me find my own way’)

“My social worker, yeah, when I had sommat to tell her, she wouldn’t listen. She’d just keep going on and on about what she thought... Sometimes you’re in that situation when they think it’s all about what they’re saying, like you don’t get a word in edgeways. They’ve gotta think about how you actually feel telling someone about sommat serious an that”  
 (Young person, ‘It’s wrong...but you get used to it’)

This is one of ten principles for working with children who are affected by sexual exploitation, created as part of the Alexi Project by the ‘International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking’ at the University of Bedfordshire. Comic illustrations were produced by Una and supported by the Young Researcher’s Advisory Panel. To learn more and view the other postcards visit [www.alexiproject.org.uk](http://www.alexiproject.org.uk)  
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## ***Conclusion: The Toolbox Today***

Zoe Trodd and Kevin Bales

Working to end or escape slavery has been a constant part of human existence since the beginning of history. The vast grip of legal slavery held the planet in thrall for millennia. Illegal slavery, in its many forms, plagues humanity today. For thousands of years, ideas, dreams, plans and plots, hopes, warnings, and encouragement have been whispered and signed in hundreds of languages as slaves sought freedom. Almost every one of those words is lost to us now, almost every story of escape or liberation has faded into the past. But every try for freedom, even those that failed, can teach a lesson. We have made this book as one way to preserve and share the lessons of past slavery and liberation with the liberators of today and the future.

The world is now engaged in history's fourth great antislavery campaign. The first campaign began in earnest in 1787, aiming to end the slave trade within the British Empire. This was the first human rights campaign in human history, and the campaigners invented tools and techniques that are still in use today – dramatic images, forceful petitions and demonstrations, consumer boycotts of slave-made goods, hard-hitting compendia of facts, anything that would open the eyes and hearts to the realities of legal slavery. This campaign achieved its goal of ending the slave trade – but not legal slavery – in just twenty years. Its success taught that slavery could be confronted and defeated, but not all of its lessons were carried forward. The second large-scale campaign was centred

on ending legal slavery, especially in the United States. Again there was innovation and progress, but also the terrible fact that this campaign helped spark a tremendously destructive civil war that left a million casualties. In the aftermath of this war, turmoil and chaos led to the re-enslavement of hundreds of thousands of African Americans under illegal but successful forms of state-sponsored slavery. These forms of peonage slavery lasted sixty years, feeding segregation, suppression, and violence.

The third great antislavery campaign is little remembered today. Through duplicity King Leopold of Belgium had taken personal control of the enormous area of the Congo in central Africa in 1885. He then offered large tracts of land to be exploited by those willing to pay – with no questions asked. The result was widespread enslavement of indigenous people, massacres, epidemics, and dislocation. Over a twenty-year period, some 10 million people are thought to have died in the scramble for rubber and minerals. The campaign against these atrocities became global, with new techniques used in the effort, not least of which was the photographic evidence that sealed the case against Leopold. The end of the campaign was soon followed by the outbreak of the First World War, which overshadowed it.

It can be argued that it took the end of the Cold War in 1989 to create the conditions for the emergence of this fourth global antislavery movement. One was the end of casting all issues as somehow part of the war between East and West. Another was an ongoing process of globalization driven by communications technology. Another factor was, from the early 1990s, a slowly growing but irrefutable array of evidence that slavery in many

forms was alive and well on the planet. ‘Human trafficking’ caught the public imagination as globalization opened borders that were quickly penetrated by criminals shifting illicit goods, including people. It was hard to ignore enslavement into sexual exploitation on the streets of major cities in the Rich North – and small campaigns grew and blended, groups formed, split, merged, and regularly attacked each other. Leaders emerged, some were committed and honest, some were not. The voices of survivors of slavery were ignored or silenced; and fights over territory and possessions (including ex-slaves) erupted. In short, as the twentieth century became the twenty-first, the fourth great antislavery movement, began to repeat the faults and failures of past movements, wasting time, resources, and sometimes, lives.

We are writing this in the twentieth year of the twenty-first century. No one can deny that the global antislavery movement has grown and matured since the 1990s, but neither can anyone deny that today’s movement is still re-learning the lessons of the past, and learning the hard way through bitter and painful experience and experimentation.

With a sense of this possibility—of the chance we have to learn from our antislavery ancestors—we often come back to Frederick Douglass’s famous Fourth of July speech. We have done so especially over the past few years, an era of anniversaries. In July 1852, Douglass, the leading US black abolitionist and a former slave, faced his audience in upstate New York and asked them: “what to the slave is your fourth of July?” He answered that for the American slave, July Fourth, Independence Day, was a cruel “sham” and a “hollow mockery.” In 2007, we celebrated the 200-

year anniversary of the 1807 and 1808 acts to abolish the slave trade, in the UK and the US. In 2013 and 2015, we marked the 150th anniversary of the US Emancipation Proclamation and the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery. And as we marked these dates, we kept wanting today's abolitionists to ask, in an echo of Douglass: what to the modern slave are these anniversaries? Slavery still exists, so perhaps these anniversaries were a sham and a mockery, too. But instead we wanted their meaning to be something else: a realization that we might complete the unfinished work of abolitionism.

One final lesson of this book is therefore that our antislavery sense of time and progress *matters*. Our relationship to past antislavery failures and successes will shape our attitudes to future goals, like the Sustainable Development Goal target of ending slavery by 2030. The big picture is that this campaign is stretching forward to 2030 and beyond, and can also stretch backward—can borrow and adapt past antislavery techniques to deliver a sustainable freedom. We can create not just slavery-free communities but slavery-*proof* communities, because, this time around, we know we must deliver a Freedom Dividend that ensures slavery can never again take root.

“The tools to those who can use them,” urged Frederick Douglass shortly before his death, as he laid out for future antislavery generations the idea of a varied toolbox, one that could “help all and hinder none.” In 2020 the toolbox of liberation now includes physical tools like satellites and intellectual and organizational tools such as methods for the monitoring and evaluation, the planning and assessment, of projects for liberation and reintegration. We



have tools that help design laws, and tools that illuminate slavery in supply chains, but these are just the beginning.

We hope the toolbox we offer in this book will increase the learning in the antislavery movement of today. We can make the past “useful to the present and to the future,” concluded Douglass in his famous Fourth of July speech. He was right. There is an antislavery usable past at our fingertips, a deep and rich record that can guide our present and future.

## ***Appendix 1: Twelve Practice Points for Understanding Slavery***

Jean Allain

1) The internationally recognised legal definition of slavery reads:

*'Slavery is the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised.'*

2) A person can be legally held in slavery (the *status* of slavery) or held, in fact, in a *condition* of slavery.

3) The forms of slavery are boundless. Instead of the form, one should look to the substance of the relationship between one person and another person.

4) Fundamentally, slavery transpires when one person treats another as *if* they owned them. This is the exercise of the definition's 'powers attaching to the right of ownership'.

5) Slavery is fundamentally about control.

6) The primary manifestation of this is: the controlling of a person in a near absolute manner.<sup>285</sup>

7) Once such control is established, then a person can do what they want with their victim: they can sell them, use them to exhaustion, and/or manage their every movement.

8) The 'selling' of a person, the using, or managing of that person will not – in and of itself – equate to slavery. More is needed: the overarching control that, if applied to an object, would be recognised as ownership.

9) Degrading, exploitative, or even forced labour is not, in and of itself, slavery.

10) A situation of forced labour will also constitute slavery, if the forced labour is accompanied by an overarching control beyond the workplace, extending to fundamental control over a person's daily life and life choices. That is: control tantamount to possession.

11) Economic necessity is not enough to enslave; for slavery to exist, one person must exercise control tantamount to possession over another person.

12) Slavery will constitute a human rights violation where a state agent is involved; or where slavery is transpiring and having been brought to its attention, the State fails to investigate and prosecute with due diligence.

***Appendix 2:***  
***Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines on the***  
***Legal Parameters of Slavery***

We, the Members of the Research Network on the Legal Parameters of Slavery,

*Recognizing* that there has been a lack of legal clarity with regard to the interpretation of the definition of slavery in international law;

*Conscious* that the starting point for understanding that definition is Article 1(1) of the 1926 Slavery Convention which reads: ‘*Slavery is the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised*’;

*Recalling* that this definition is reproduced in substance in Article 7(a) of the 1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery;

*Also noting* that the 1926 definition of slavery is once again reproduced in substance in the definition of enslavement found in Article 7(2)(c) of the 1998 Statute of the International Criminal Court and developed in more detail in the secondary legislation of the Court, in its Elements of Crimes;

*Bearing in mind* the provisions in international human rights law regarding slavery within the 1948 Universal Declaration and 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; as well as the provisions regarding slavery in regional human rights conventions of the African, European, and Inter-American systems;

*Considering* the inclusion of slavery as an enumerated type of human exploitation in both the 2000 United Nations Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons and the 2005 Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings;

*Mindful* of the pronouncements and case-law related to slavery of international, regional and domestic courts;

Having met to consider the issue at the 2010 symposium entitled: ‘The Parameters of Slavery’ at the Rockefeller Foundation’s Bellagio Conference Centre in Bellagio, Italy; having further deliberated in 2011 at a meeting under the auspices of the Harriet Tubman Institute for Research on the Global Migrations of African Peoples, York University, Canada; and came together once more at a 2011 symposium entitled: ‘The Legal Parameters of Slavery: Historical to the Contemporary’ at Harvard University, under the auspices of the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice, Harvard Law School; the Harvard Sociology Department; the W.E.B. DuBois Institute;

*Recommend the following Guidelines related to the legal parameters of slavery:*

### **Guideline 1 – The Legal Definition**

The legal definition of slavery in international law is found at Article 1(1) of the 1926 Slavery Convention, which reads: ‘Slavery is the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised’.

### **Guideline 2 – The Exercise of the Powers Attaching to the Right of Ownership**

In cases of slavery, the exercise of ‘the powers attaching to the right of ownership’ should be understood as constituting control over a person in such a way as to significantly deprive that person of his or her individual liberty, with the intent of exploitation through the use, management, profit, transfer or disposal of that person. Usually this exercise will be supported by and obtained through means such as violent force, deception and/or coercion.

### **Guideline 3 – Possession is Foundational to Slavery**

Where there is a right of ownership in respect of a thing, ownership implies a background relation of control. That control is the power attaching to the right of ownership known as possession.

Possession is foundational to an understanding of the legal definition of slavery, even when the State does not support a property right in respect of persons. To determine, in law, a case of slavery, one must look for possession.

While the exact form of possession might vary, in essence it supposes control over a person by another such as a person might control a thing. Such control may be physical, but physical constraints will not always be necessary to the maintenance of effective control over a person. More abstract manifestations of control of a person may be evident in attempts to withhold identity documents; or to otherwise restrict free movement or access to state authorities or legal processes; or equally in attempts to forge a new identity through compelling a new religion, language, place of residence, or forcing marriage.

Fundamentally, where such control operates, it will significantly deprive that person of his or her individual liberty for a period of time which is, for that person, indeterminate.

Cases of slavery are to be distinguished from those where, though there has been control exercised, it does not constitute control tantamount to possession, such as where employers make legitimate decisions about the management of workers.

Possession is foundational in that, not only is it a power attaching to the right of ownership, it also creates the factual conditions for the exercise of any or all of other powers attaching to the right of ownership, such as those set out in *Guideline 4*.

#### **Guideline 4 – Further Examples of Powers Attaching to the Right of Ownership**

Where a person controls another such as he or she would control a thing owned, such possession makes possible the exercise of any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership.

Correlatively, the exercise of any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership may serve to indicate the presence of control of a person tantamount to possession, and so provide evidence of slavery.

The following are further examples of powers attaching to the right of ownership:

##### **a) Buying, Selling or Transferring a Person**

Buying, selling or otherwise transferring a person may provide evidence of slavery. Having established control tantamount to possession; the act of buying, selling or transferring that person will be an act of slavery.

Evidence of slavery may also be found in similar transactions, such as bartering, exchanging, or giving or receiving a person as a gift, where control tantamount to possession has been established.

##### **b) Using a Person**

Using a person may provide evidence of slavery. Having established control tantamount to possession; the act of using that person will be an act of slavery.



Evidence of such use of a person may include the derived benefit from the services or labour of that person. In such cases, a person might be used by working for little or no pay, utilised for sexual gratification, or used by providing a service.

### **c) Managing the Use of a Person**

Managing the use of a person may provide evidence of slavery. Having established control tantamount to possession; the act of managing that person will be an act of slavery.

Evidence of such management of the use of a person may include indirect management such as a brothel owner delegating power to a day manager in a situation of slavery in the context of sex work.

### **d) Profiting from the Use of a Person**

Profiting from the use of a person may provide evidence of slavery. Having established control tantamount to possession; the act of profiting from the use of that person will be an act of slavery.

Evidence of profiting from the use of a person may include cases where a person is mortgaged, lent for profit, or used as collateral.

Evidence of profiting from the use of a person may also include making money or deriving any other kind of income or benefit from the use of the person. Such as the use of an agricultural worker in a situation of slavery, where the profit

from the picking of a crop is taken or received by another whether in the form of wages or of the harvest.

**e) Transferring a Person to an Heir or Successor**

Transferring a person to an heir or successor may provide evidence of slavery. Having established control over a person tantamount to possession; the act of willing that person to a child or other heir or successor will be an act of slavery.

Evidence of such transferring of a person may include a case of inheritance where a woman, on the death of her husband, is deemed to be inherited by another person.

Evidence of such a transferring of a person may also include the conveying of a status or condition of a person to that of a successive generation, such as from mother to daughter.

**f) Disposal, Mistreatment or Neglect of a Person**

Disposing of a person following his or her exploitation may provide evidence of slavery. Having established control over a person tantamount to possession; the act of disposing of a person will be an act of slavery.

Mistreatment or neglect of a person may provide evidence of slavery. Having established control tantamount to possession, such disregard may lead to the physical or psychological exhaustion of a person, and ultimately to his or her destruction; accordingly the act of bringing about such exhaustion will be an act of slavery.

Evidence of such mistreatment or neglect may include sustained physical and psychological abuse, whether calculated or indiscriminate; or the imposition of physical demands that severely curtail the capacity of the human body to sustain itself or function effectively.

### **Guideline 5 – Making a Determination as to whether Slavery Exists**

The exercise of any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership just considered shall provide evidence of slavery, insofar as they demonstrate control over a person tantamount to possession.

Accordingly, in determining whether slavery exists in a given case, it is necessary to examine the particular circumstances, asking whether ‘*powers attaching to the right of ownership*’ are being exercised, so as to demonstrate control of a person tantamount to their possession.

In evaluating the particular circumstances to determine whether slavery exists, reference should be made to the substance and not simply to the form of the relationship in question.

The substance of the relationship should be determined by investigating whether in fact there has been an exercise of one or more of the powers attaching to the right of ownership. This will include a determination as to whether control tantamount to possession is present.

**Guideline 6 – Expropriation**

Ordinarily exclusion from expropriation or ‘security of holding’ would be deemed a power attaching to the right of ownership. However, as the State generally does not support a property right in persons, a negative obligation against the State generally no longer exists.

However, the State has at *minimum* the positive obligation to bring about the end of either the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised.

The State may have further positive obligations with regard to the prohibition against slavery on the basis of domestic law as well as regional or international instruments.

**Guideline 7 – Terminology**

The term ‘slavery’ has often been utilised to describe circumstances that go beyond the legal definition as established by the 1926 Slavery Convention.

In law, only ‘slavery’ and ‘institutions and practices similar to slavery’, which is often abbreviated to ‘practices similar to slavery’ have standing and are defined in international law via the 1926 Slavery Convention and the 1956 Supplementary Convention.

### **Guideline 8 – Distinction between Slavery and Forced Labour**

The 1926 Slavery Convention recognises that forced labour can develop ‘into conditions analogous to slavery’.

Although forced or compulsory labour is defined by the 1930 Forced Labour Convention 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’; forced labour will only amount to slavery when, in substance, there is the exercise of the powers attaching to the right of ownership.

Slavery will not be present in cases of forced labour where the control over a person tantamount to possession is not present.

### **Guideline 9 – Distinction between Slavery and ‘Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery’**

Article 1 of the 1956 Supplementary Convention recognises that the ‘institutions and practices similar to slavery’, that is: debt bondage, serfdom, servile marriages, or child exploitation; may be ‘covered by the definition of slavery contained in article 1 of the Slavery Convention of 1926’.

The distinction between these servile statuses as defined by the 1956 Supplementary Convention in the following terms and slavery is that slavery is present where in substance there is the exercise of the powers attaching to the right of ownership.

It should be emphasised that slavery will only be present in cases of such ‘institutions and practices similar to slavery’ where control over a person tantamount to possession is present.

The following are the conventional servitudes set out in the 1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery:

(a) Debt bondage, that is to say, the status or condition arising from a pledge by a debtor of his personal services or of those of a person under his control as security for a debt, if the value of those services as reasonably assessed is not applied towards the liquidation of the debt or the length and nature of those services are not respectively limited and defined;

(b) Serfdom, that is to say, the condition or status of a tenant who is by law, custom or agreement bound to live and labour on land belonging to another person and to render some determinate service to such other person, whether for reward or not, and is not free to change his status;

(c) Any institution or practice whereby:

(i) A woman, without the right to refuse, is promised or given in marriage on payment of a consideration in money or in kind to her parents, guardian, family or any other person or group; or

- (ii) The husband of a woman, his family, or his clan, has the right to transfer her to another person for value received or otherwise; or
- (iii) A woman on the death of her husband is liable to be inherited by another person;
- (d) Any institution or practice whereby a child or young person under the age of 18 years is delivered by either or both of his natural parents or by his guardian to another person, whether for reward or not, with a view to the exploitation of the child or young person or of his labour.

**Guideline 10 – When Slavery and Lesser Servitudes are Present**

Accepting that both slavery and lesser servitudes such as forced labour or ‘institutions and practices similar to slavery’ may be found in substance in a particular circumstance; the manner to proceed is by making reference to that substance and not simply to the form, and first ask whether there has been an exercise of the powers attaching to the right of ownership. If so, then the more serious offence of slavery is present.

If not, reference should be made to the legal definition of the lesser servitude which corresponds in substance to the particular circumstance in question.

*Adopted on this day, 3 March 2012, by the Members of the Research Network on the Legal Parameters of Slavery.*

Jean Allain, Queen's University, Belfast  
Kevin Bales, Free the Slaves  
Annie Bunting, York University  
John Cairns, University of Edinburgh  
William M. Carter Jr., Temple University  
Holly Cullen, University of Western Australia  
Seymour Drescher, University of Pittsburgh  
Stanley Engerman, University of Rochester  
Paul Finkelman, Albany Law School  
Bernard Freamon, Seton Hall University  
Allison Gorsuch, Yale University  
Robin Hickey, Durham University  
Richard Helmholz, University of Chicago  
Antony Honoré, University of Oxford  
Aidan McQuade, Anti-Slavery International  
Orlando Patterson, Harvard University  
James Penner, University College, London  
Joel Quirk, University of Witwatersrand  
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## ***Author Biographies***

**Jean Allain** is a professor with both the Faculty of Law, Monash University, and the Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull. Since 2015, he has been Special Adviser to Anti-Slavery International, the world's oldest human rights NGO. Jean has appeared as an expert witness before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in 2016, where the Court accepted the 2012 Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines on the Legal Parameters of Slavery as the basis for understanding slavery in a world where one person can no longer own another person in law, but rather that a person can be held in a condition of slavery.

**Kevin Bales** is Professor of Contemporary Slavery and Research Director of the Rights Lab at the University of Nottingham. He started researching slavery in the early 1990s. What curiosity first drove soon became a deep engagement and then a way of life.

**Emily Brady** is a Research Fellow in Antislavery Visual Culture at the University of Nottingham's Rights Lab. She is studying for a PhD in American and Canadian Studies, where she researches the works and lives of African American women photographers in the long Civil Rights Movement. Even though she is not a photographer herself, she is always amazed at the power of images to transport us to another time and place.

**Sarah Colley** is a PhD candidate at the University of Hull, where she is researching the perpetrators of organised child sexual exploitation (CSE). She has worked with young people for many years, including victim-survivors of CSE and also as a researcher on the Global Slavery Index.

**Minh Dang** is Executive Director of Survivor Alliance, a non-profit that unites and empowers survivors of slavery around the world. She is also a doctoral researcher with the University of Nottingham's Rights Lab, studying the wellbeing and mental health of survivors of slavery. After a decade in the antislavery field, she continues to believe in the power of expertise that is gained through lived experience, and encourages allies to listen to survivors, without a need for fixing, helping, or giving advice.

**Hannah Jeffery** recently completed an AHRC-funded PhD at the University of Nottingham titled "A Monument to Blackness: Muralism and the Black Freedom Struggle." She completed a BA Hons and MRes in American Studies at the University of Nottingham. Her PhD dissertation looked at the complex relationship between art and memory by examining why murals are an enduring and unique cultural form used throughout the Black Freedom Struggle to remember slavery and abolitionism. She is the creator of the archive Murals: Walls of Slavery, Walls of Freedom ([www.antislavery.ac.uk/murals](http://www.antislavery.ac.uk/murals)) – a constantly growing digital archive that brings together, for the first time, U.S. murals connected to themes of abolition and slavery. She curated an exhibition of Frederick Douglass murals for the Boston Museum of African American History that was on display from 2016-2019.

**Garry (Gaz) Kishere** focussed his work to counter child trafficking across Europe, after a 5,000 mile road trip along Europe's trafficking routes in 2009. He had previously worked in community development for more than 25 years. Through working with Cross Border Initiatives ([www.crossborderinitiatives.org](http://www.crossborderinitiatives.org)) and the international organisation Love146 ([www.love146.org](http://www.love146.org)), he has been developing out-of-the-box approaches and tools to protect children.

**Charlotte James** is a M3C-AHRC-funded PhD student at the University of Nottingham, where she researches the lives and legacies of the historical abolitionists Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth. She curated the Imagining Freedom archive (<http://rightsandjustice.nottingham.ac.uk/murals>), which is the first comprehensive collection of murals focused on modern slavery and human trafficking.

**Rebecca Nelson** recently completed a PhD at the University of Hull's Wilberforce Institute. Her thesis "Legacies on Display: Antislavery in Museums" focuses on the ways in which museums across the UK interpret and engage with antislavery as both an historic and a contemporary issue. Rebecca is also a practicing museum professional and it is from this position that she advocates for the use of material culture in developing an impactful campaign.

**Andrea Nicholson** is a Nottingham Research Fellow and works as part of the Rights Lab's Survivors and Cultures Programme. Her research focuses on the narratives and antislavery ideas of survivors of slavery, and she works closely with government bodies and NGOs on victim support.

**John Oldfield** is Director of the Wilberforce Institute for the Study of Slavery and Emancipation at the University of Hull and has written extensively on slavery and abolition in the Atlantic world during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He remains committed to excavating the history of abolitionist opinion-building, which graphically illustrates the importance of grassroots organization, as well as an understanding of how people access (and process) information.

**Katarina Schwarz** is an Associate Director in the University of Nottingham's Rights Lab and Assistant Professor of Antislavery Law and Policy. Her research reconceptualises the boundaries and contours of slavery and related forms of exploitation, as well as interrogating law and policy frameworks at the global, regional, and national level. Her doctoral research explored the case for reparations for transatlantic enslavement in international law, reconceiving the frameworks of reparatory justice for the *maangamizi*—the African holocaust of chattel, colonial, and neo-colonial enslavement. This research complements her work on the right to remedy and procedural justice for those who have experienced extreme forms of human exploitation. Schwarz also has a background in theatre and the performing arts with a focus on representations of trauma and atrocity on stage, sparking a deep commitment to reflexive and ethical use of language and representation in contexts of injustice and abuse. This approach goes beyond artistic media, infusing her approach to legal analysis and advocacy and her understandings of ethical scholarship.

**Emma Stephens** is a social worker specialising in the area of child sexual exploitation. In 2019, she submitted her thesis on young people's experience of working with professionals in the context of child sexual exploitation.

**Zoe Trodd** directs the Rights Lab at the University of Nottingham. The largest group of modern slavery scholars in the world, and home to the world's leading academic experts on modern slavery, the Rights Lab is underpinning antislavery with an advanced research agenda. As the Rights Lab's projects and programmes unfold, it uses their results to update what it calls a Freedom Blueprint: a plan for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 8.7 – the end of slavery – by 2030. Professor Trodd focuses in her own research on strategies to end modern slavery.

**Mary Wills** is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Wilberforce Institute, University of Hull. Her monograph on the experiences of nineteenth-century British naval personnel serving on antislavery patrols in the Atlantic Ocean was published in 2019. She firmly believes that history has important implications for identifying legacies and meaning in today's antislavery movement.

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Zoe Trodd: Gabriel Bales did superb work as a Rights Lab research intern on copy-editing and page-setting this book. Professor Todd Landman debated many of the ideas in this book, including the nature of antislavery as a social movement.

Sarah Colley and Emma Stephens would like to thank Una for giving permission for her images to be used within their chapter.

These images were created by Una with the Alexi Project and the International Centre: Researching Child Sexual Exploitation, Violence and Trafficking at the University of Bedfordshire. We believe that these principles are really important whilst working with children and young people who have been subject to CSE, and hope that they help to illustrate the experiences detailed in the chapter.

## *Notes*

### *Foreword – Burnout*

- <sup>1</sup> The first movement was the campaign to end the slave trade beginning in 1787; the second was the American abolitionist movement leading up to the US Civil War; the third was the Congo Reform campaign of the early twentieth century. The fourth and current movement began to coalesce in the 1990s. Each of these involved extensive international cooperation and effort.
- <sup>2</sup> See *Suggested Additional Readings* at the end of this Notes section for some of these titles.
- <sup>3</sup> Aimee Meade. “Almost all charity staff work beyond their contracted hours, survey finds.” 10/06/2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/society-professionals/2015/jun/10/almost-all-charity-staff-work-beyond-their-contracted-hours-survey-finds>.
- <sup>4</sup> Heather Joslyn. “How Compassion Fatigue Can Overwhelm Charity Workers -- and What to Do About It.” 03/08/2002. <https://philanthropy.com/article/How-Compassion-Fatigue-Can/183929>.
- <sup>5</sup> In Liverpool, while researching the nature and abuses of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, Clarkson was fortunate to escape from a gang of sailors that may have been paid to assault or kill him. He was alone when attacked by eight or nine men, who attempted to push him off the end of the pier. Clarkson believed that the gang was determined to throw him into the water and make it look like an accident. Despite being beaten by the group, he was able to break away and escape.
- <sup>6</sup> Adam Hochschild, *Bury the Chains* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005) 236.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243.
- <sup>8</sup> Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold’s Ghost* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999) 210.
- <sup>9</sup> See, for example, Teju Cole, “The White-Savior Industrial Complex” *Atlantic Magazine*, 21 March 2012.
- <sup>10</sup> Carole Cadwalladr, “Jason Russell: Kony 2012 and the Fight for Truth” *Guardian*, 3 March 2013.
- <sup>11</sup> Invisible Children website, accessed 12 May, 2016, at: <http://invisiblechildren.com/faq/>.



- <sup>12</sup> Brian Anderson, “Is the Internet Ruining Jason Russell’s Life?” *Motherboard* (18 March, 2012): Accessed 12 May, 2016 <http://motherboard.vice.com/blog/is-the-internet-ruining-jason-russell-s-life>.
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## **Chapter 1 – “I am not for sale, I AM PRICELESS”: Antislavery Visual Protest Then and Now**

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- <sup>15</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>16</sup> Anti-Slavery International. “What is modern slavery?.” Accessed 9/11/2017. <https://www.antislavery.org/slavery-today/>
- <sup>17</sup> Alliance. “2017 Global Estimates.” Accessed 15/11/2017. <http://www.alliance87.org/2017ge/modernslavery#!section=0>.
- <sup>18</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. “Combating Human Trafficking Through Collective Action and Art.” 11 May 2009. Accessed 19/11/2017. <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/combating-human-trafficking-through-collective-action-and-art.html>.
- <sup>19</sup> Alison Gardner, “How the home of Robin Hood is trying to free itself of modern slavery.” *Independent* (21 October 2017): <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/how-the-home-of-robin-hood-is-trying-to-free-itself-of-modern-slavery-a8011481.html> Accessed 28/11/2017.
- <sup>20</sup> Joel Artista. “Combating Human Trafficking Through the Arts.” 18/03/2016. Accessed 28/11/2017. <https://joelartista.com/2016/03/18/combating-human-trafficking-through-the-arts/>.
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- <sup>26</sup> Ibid.
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- <sup>29</sup> Paul Gardullo, "'Just keeps rollin' along': rebellions, revolts and radical black memories of slavery in the 1930s." *Patterns of Prejudice*, 41, no. 3-4 (June 2007): 273.
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- <sup>32</sup> Adam Fairclough, *Better Day Coming* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2001), 186.
- <sup>33</sup> Celeste-Marie Bernier, *African American Visual Arts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, Ltd, 2008) 131.
- <sup>34</sup> Stacy I. Morgan, *Rethinking Social Realism: African American Art and Literature 1930-1953*. (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2004).
- <sup>35</sup> Oral history interview with William Walker, 1991 June 12-14. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.
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- <sup>37</sup> Timothy W. Drescher, *San Francisco Murals: Community Creates Its Muse, 1914-1990*. (Apple Valley, MN: Pogo Press, Inc., 1991) 35.
- <sup>38</sup> Artista, "Combating Human Trafficking Through the Arts".

## **Chapter 2 – "Present in Every Picture": Photography in the Modern Antislavery Movement**

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- <sup>43</sup> The author conducted primary research into all of the imagery in the Trafficking in Persons Reports from 2001 until 2018, from which all subsequent statistics are drawn.
- <sup>44</sup> This analysis is for images where only one group (of men, women, children) are the sole subject of the image. Images where groups interact often posit the male figure as either an ally activist, fellow slave, or the perpetrator and aggressor. Women and children are overwhelmingly either activists in protest or victims of the men. Where women do appear as the perpetrator, it is normally within the context of sexual slavery.
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- <sup>48</sup> Diane Smyth, "Report: Why Souvid Datta's image theft is the least of the problem," *British Journal of Photography*, May 6, 2017, <http://www.bjpp-online.com/2017/05/report-why-souvid-dattas-image-theft-is-the-least-of-the-problem/>.
- <sup>49</sup> May Bulman, "Widespread use of cheap car washes and nail bars is fuelling modern slavery, warns National Crime Agency," *Independent*, January 5, 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/cheap-goods-services-modern-slavery-nca-clothes-nail-parlours-food-national-crime-agency-a8143756.html>.

- <sup>50</sup> “NCA’s ‘Invisible People’ exhibition comes to Lincoln,” *Lincolnshire Today*, February 19, 2018, <https://lincolnshiretoday.net/mag/ncas-invisible-people-exhibition-comes-lincoln/>.
- <sup>51</sup> Bulman, “Cheap Car Washes.”
- <sup>52</sup> “In Britain, the Slavery Next Door: In Conversation with Amy Romer,” *Prison Photography*, February 15, 2017, <https://prisonphotography.org/2017/02/15/in-britain-the-slavery-next-door-in-conversation-with-amy-romer/>.
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- <sup>54</sup> “Voice of Freedom,” *The Rights Lab*, accessed August 15, 2019, <http://rightsandjustice.nottingham.ac.uk/voiceoffreedom>.
- <sup>55</sup> “Sarah Oluwatimileyin, Voice of Freedom,” *The Rights Lab*, accessed August 15, 2019, <http://rightsandjustice.nottingham.ac.uk/items/show/83>.
- <sup>56</sup> “Emmanuel Joyce, Voice of Freedom,” *The Rights Lab*, accessed August 15, 2019, <http://rightsandjustice.nottingham.ac.uk/items/show/82>.
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- <sup>59</sup> “Hope,” *The Rights Lab*, accessed August 15, 2019, <https://rightsandjustice.nottingham.ac.uk/items/show/185>.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid.

### **Chapter 3 – Picturing and Voicing Enslavement: Language and Representation**

- <sup>61</sup> Jim Downs, *Sick from Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
- <sup>62</sup> As listed by Sir William MacGregor, the chief medical officer in Fiji.
- <sup>63</sup> J Timmons Roberts and Nikki Thanos, *Trouble in Paradise: Globalization and Environmental Crises in Latin America* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2003) 7.
- <sup>64</sup> Here, the assessment related to the victims/survivors of rape, with strong analogy to victims/survivors of enslavement. Jericho Hockett and Donald Saucier, ‘A Systematic Literature Review of “Rape Victims” versus “Rape Survivors”: Implications for Theory, Research, and Practice,’ *Aggression and Violent Behaviour* 25, 1 (2015).

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- <sup>67</sup> Liisa Malkki, 'Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization,' *Cultural Anthropology* 11 (1996): 377, 387 & 378.
- <sup>68</sup> William Dickson, *Letters on Slavery* (J. Phillips, 1789), 15.
- <sup>69</sup> Thomas Clarkson, *An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species* (J. Phillips, 1786) 144.
- <sup>70</sup> Richard Hillier, *A Vindication of the Address to the People of Great Britain, on the Use of West India Produce, with Some Observations and Facts Relative to the Situation of Slaves* (2nd edn, M. Gurney, 1791) 18.
- <sup>71</sup> Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: the Making of and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) 3.
- <sup>72</sup> William Fox, *An Address to the People of Great Britain, on the Propriety of Abstaining from West India Sugar and Rum* (6th edn, London 1791).
- <sup>73</sup> Abraham Booth, *Commerce in the Human Species, and the Enslaving of Innocent Persons, Inimical to the Laws of Moses and the Gospel of Christ* (London 1792).
- <sup>74</sup> Andrew Burn, *A Second Address to the People of Great Britain: A New, and Most Powerful Argument to Abstain from the Use of West Indian Sugar* (London 1792).
- <sup>75</sup> Martin Blatt et al. (ed), *Hope and Glory: Essays on the Legacy of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009).
- <sup>76</sup> Lori Ginzberg, *Elizabeth Cady Stanton: An American Life* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2009).

## **Chapter 4 – The Legacy and Application of Survivor Narratives**

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- <sup>78</sup> Katherine Angueira, "To Make the Personal Political: The Use of Testimony as a Consciousness-Raising Tool Against Sexual Aggression in Puerto Rico," *Oral History Review* 16, no. 2 (Fall, 1988): 72.
- <sup>79</sup> Laura T Murphy (ed), *Survivors of Slavery: Modern-Day Slave Narratives* (New York City: Columbia University Press, 2014) 191.

- <sup>80</sup> Toban Black, Stephen D'Arcy, Tony Weis, and Joshua Kahn Russell (eds), *A Line in the Tar Sands, Struggles for Environmental Justice* (PM Press, 2014) 3.
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- <sup>82</sup> James Olney, "'I Was Born': Slave Narratives, Their Status as Autobiography and as Literature," *Callaloo*, 20 (1984).
- <sup>83</sup> Jeffrey Gunn, "Literacy and the Humanizing Project in Olaudah Equiano's The Interesting Narrative and Ottobah Cugoano's Thoughts and Sentiments," *Orality and History* 10 (2017): 12.
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- <sup>85</sup> Jeffrey Gunn, "Literacy and the Humanizing Project in Olaudah Equiano's The Interesting Narrative and Ottobah Cugoano's Thoughts and Sentiments," *Orality and History* 10 (2017): 12.
- <sup>86</sup> Samantha Earley, "Writing From The Centre Or The Margins? Olaudah Equiano's Writing Life Reassessed", *African Studies Review* 46(3): 1-16.
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- <sup>88</sup> Noreen Connell and Cassandra Wilson, Rape: The First Sourcebook for Women by *New York Radical Feminists*, (New York: New American Library, 1974) 27-28.
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- <sup>96</sup> Shamere McKenzie, in *Survivors of Slavery: Modern-Day Slave Narratives*, ed. Laura Murphy (New York City: Columbia University Press, 2014) 53. Shamere McKenzie is a survivor and Chief Executive Officer for the Sun Gate Foundation, an anti-trafficking organization that aims to provide educational opportunities for survivor of human trafficking.
- <sup>97</sup> Kay Shaffer and Sidonie Smith, *Human Rights and Narrated Lives: The Ethics of Recognition* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).
- <sup>98</sup> Ulrich B Phillips, *Life and Labour in the Old South* (Boston, 1929) 219.
- <sup>99</sup> See The WPA and the Slave Narrative Collection at <https://www.loc.gov/collections/slave-narratives-from-the-federal-writers-project-1936-to-1938/articles-and-essays/introduction-to-the-wpa-slave-narratives/wpa-and-the-slave-narrative-collection/>
- <sup>100</sup> See John W Blassingame, "Using the Testimony of Ex Slaves: Approaches and Problems," *The Journal of Southern History*, 41, 4 (Nov, 1975): 482-484.
- <sup>101</sup> John Blassingame (ed) *Slave Testimony, Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Autobiographies and Interviews* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977) Lvi.
- <sup>102</sup> James Olney, "'I Was Born': Slave Narratives, Their Status as Autobiography and as Literature," *Callaloo*, 20 (1984) 49.
- <sup>103</sup> See e.g. the criticism of the publication of a collection of narratives by Jesse Sage and Liora Karsten (eds), *Enslaved: True Stories of Modern Day Slavery* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).
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- <sup>105</sup> See e.g. the narratives of Timea Nagy, *Memoirs of a Sex Slave Survivor* (Communication Dynamics Publishing, 2010); Theresa Flores, *The Slave across the Street: how a 15-Year-Old Girl Became a Sex Slave* (London: Arrow Books, 2013); and Faith J H McDonell and Grace Akallo, *Girl Soldier: A Story of Hope for Northern Uganda's Children* (Michigan: Chosen Books, 2007). For a more detailed analysis see Laura Murphy, "The New Slave Narrative and the Illegibility of Modern Slavery", *Slavery & Abolition* 36:2 (2015).
- <sup>106</sup> Mende Nazer and Damien Lewis, *Slave: The True Story of a Girl's Lost Childhood and Her Fight for Survival* (London: Hachette Digital, 2004).

- <sup>107</sup> Ishmael Beah, *A Long Way Gone: The True Story of a Child Soldier*, (New York City: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007).
- <sup>108</sup> James Olney, ‘“I Was Born”: Slave Narratives, Their Status as Autobiography and as Literature,’ *Callaloo*, 20 (1984) 46.
- <sup>109</sup> A descriptor adopted by the survivor Theresa Flores, 261.
- <sup>110</sup> Frederick Douglass, *The North Star*, 3rd December 1847: 2 <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/douglass/support15.html>
- <sup>111</sup> Andrea Nicholson, Minh Dang and Zoe Trodd ‘A Full Freedom: Contemporary Survivors’ Definitions of Slavery.’ *Human Rights Law Review* 18, no.4 (2018)
- <sup>112</sup> See e.g. the narrative of Dina, in Bales and Trodd (eds), *To Plead Our Own Cause*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008) 105-106.
- <sup>113</sup> Beatrice, in Bales and Trodd (eds), *To Plead Our Own Cause* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008) 162-163.
- <sup>114</sup> Asia Graves, <http://antislavery.ac.uk/items/show/151>
- <sup>115</sup> Nadia, <http://antislavery.ac.uk/items/show/144>
- <sup>116</sup> Withelma, <http://antislavery.ac.uk/items/show/152>
- <sup>117</sup> Philip S Foner (ed), *Frederick Douglass: Selected Speeches and Writings* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1999) 31.
- <sup>118</sup> Murray, Hannah-Rose. ‘“It is Time for the Slaves to Speak”: Transatlantic Abolitionism and African American Resistance in Britain 1835-1895.’ PhD Diss., University of Nottingham, 2018. 158-161.
- <sup>119</sup> Minh Dang in Murphy (ed.) *Survivors of Slavery: Modern-Day Slave Narratives*, (New York City: Columbia University Press, 2014) xvii.
- <sup>120</sup> Ishmael Beah, *A Long Way Gone: The True Story of a Child Soldier* (New York City: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007) 196.
- <sup>121</sup> Shamere McKenzie, in Murphy (ed.) *Survivors of Slavery: Modern-Day Slave Narratives*, (New York City: Columbia University Press, 2014) 52-53.

## **Chapter 5 – Proving the Point: Antislavery Material Culture Persuasion, Promotion and Providing Evidence**

- <sup>122</sup> Alicia Kidd, unrecorded conversation, July 31, 2019.
- <sup>123</sup> Adam Hochschild, *Bury the Chains: The British Struggle to Abolish Slavery* (London: Pan Macmillan, 2006), 4.



- <sup>124</sup> Global Slavery Index (2018), 'Global Findings'. Available online: <https://www.globalslaveryindex.org/2018/findings/global-findings/> [Accessed 31 July, 2019]
- <sup>125</sup> Hochschild, *Bury the Chains*, 4.
- <sup>126</sup> Marcus Wood, 'Packaging Liberty and Marketing the Gift of Freedom: 1807 and the Legacy of Clarkson's Chest'. In *Parliamentary History*, 26 (2007), 203-223
- <sup>127</sup> David C. Devenish, 'The Slave Trade and Thomas Clarkson's Chest'. In *Journal of Museum Ethnography* (1994), 84-90: 85.
- <sup>128</sup> John R. Oldfield, *Popular Politics and British Anti-Slavery: The Mobilisation of Public Opinion Against the Slave Trade, 1787-1807* (London: Routledge, 1998). See especially Chapter 3.
- <sup>129</sup> Wood, 'Packaging Liberty and Marketing the Gift of Freedom,' 212.
- <sup>130</sup> Michael Lombardo, 'Brookes, The'. In Toyin Falola & Amanda Warnock (eds.) *Encyclopaedia of the Middle Passage* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007), 87-89.
- <sup>131</sup> Thomas Clarkson, *The History of the Rise, Progress and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the Slave Trade by the British Parliament*, 2 vols (London, 1808), 111.
- <sup>132</sup> John R. Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism in the Age of Revolution: An International History of Anti-Slavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 62.
- <sup>133</sup> Hochschild, *Bury the Chains*, 155.
- <sup>134</sup> Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism in the Age of Revolution*, 61.
- <sup>135</sup> Hochschild, *Bury the Chains*, 156.
- <sup>136</sup> Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory: Visual representations of slavery in England and America, 1780-1865* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 23.
- <sup>137</sup> Z. Trodd, 'Am I Still Not a Man and a Brother? Protest Memory in Contemporary Antislavery Visual Culture.' In *Slavery & Abolition* 34,2 (2013), 338-352: 346.
- <sup>138</sup> L.M Hudson, 'Exhibition Review.' In *The Journal of American History* 94, 3 (2007), 886-890: 888.
- <sup>139</sup> Hochschild, *Bury the Chains*, 172.
- <sup>140</sup> Hochschild, *Bury the Chains*, 168.
- <sup>141</sup> Vincent Caretta, *Equiano, the African: Biography of A Self-Made Man* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005), 301.
- <sup>142</sup> Hochschild, *Bury the Chains*, 169.

- <sup>143</sup> John R. Oldfield, *Chords of Freedom: Commemoration, Ritual and British Transatlantic Slavery* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 128.

## **Chapter 6 – After Enslavement Ends: Ensuring Redress for Victims**

- <sup>144</sup> British abolition of slavery in all its territories occurred in 1834, the United States in 1865, abolition in all Spanish territories was completed in 1873 (although slavery was abolished in most Spanish colonies in 1837), Portuguese territories in 1869, Dutch territories in 1863, and French territories in 1848.
- <sup>145</sup> *Case concerning the Barcelona Traction, Light and Power Company Ltd (Belgium v Spain)* [1970] ICJ Rep 3, 32 at [34].
- <sup>146</sup> Pablo de Greiff, “Repairing the Past: Compensation for Victims of Human Rights Violations,” in *The Handbook of Reparations*, ed. Pablo de Greiff (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 1-20, 2.
- <sup>147</sup> See Jonathan Todres, ‘Taking Prevention Seriously: Developing a Comprehensive Response to Child Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation’ (2010) 43 *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law* 1, 34-35.
- <sup>148</sup> Fossion P, Leys C, Vandeleur C, Kempenaers C, Braun S, Verbanck and Linkowski P, ‘Transgenerational transmission of trauma in families of Holocaust survivors: The consequences of extreme family functioning on resilience, Sense of Coherence, anxiety and depression’, *Journal Of Affective Disorders*, 171, 48-53.
- <sup>149</sup> *Transgenerational Trauma: Dealing with the Past in Northern Ireland*, WAVE Trauma Centre, March 2014.
- <sup>150</sup> *Case concerning the Barcelona Traction, Light and Power Company Ltd (Belgium v Spain)* [1970] ICJ Rep 3, 32 at [34].
- <sup>151</sup> See for instance *Corfu Channel Case (United Kingdom v Albania) (Merits)* [1949] ICJ Rep 4; and *Ahmadou Sadio Diallo (Republic of Guinea v Democratic Republic of the Congo) (Compensation)* [2012] ICJ Rep 103.
- <sup>152</sup> *Case Concerning the Factory at Chorzów (Germany v Poland) (Merits)* [1928] PCIJ Rep Series A No 17.
- <sup>153</sup> Article 31, International Law Commission, ‘Draft Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts, with Commentaries’ (2001) 2(2) *Yearbook of the International Law Commission* 31, 91.

- <sup>154</sup> Article 31, International Law Commission, ‘Draft Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts, with Commentaries’ (2001) 2(2) *Yearbook of the International Law Commission* 31, 91.
- <sup>155</sup> See for instance *Armed Activities on the Territory of the Congo* in which acts of Uganda in respect of which reparations were due related to injury done to the Democratic Republic of the Congo as a state and to “persons on its territory” as individuals - *Armed Activities on the Territory of the Congo (Democratic Republic of the Congo v. Uganda)* (Judgement) [2005] ICJ Rep 168, 257.
- <sup>156</sup> *Case of Velásquez Rodríguez v. Honduras*, Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Judgement (Merits), 29 July 1988, para. 175.
- <sup>157</sup> UN Human Rights Committee (HRC), General comment no. 31 [80], The nature of the general legal obligation imposed on States Parties to the Covenant, 26 May 2004, CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.13, para 8.
- <sup>158</sup> *L.E. v Greece*, European Court of Human Rights, Application 71545/12, 21 January 2016, para. 121. Translated from French. The provision, in the original, reads: “En effet, la Cour considère que pour se plaindre d’un traitement pouvant s’avérer contraire à l’article 4 de la Convention, c’est la voie pénal qui constitue la voie de recours adéquate”.
- <sup>159</sup> UN Human Rights Committee (HRC), General comment no. 31 [80], The nature of the general legal obligation imposed on States Parties to the Covenant, 26 May 2004, CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.13, para 16.
- <sup>160</sup> Principle 11, UNGA ‘Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law’ (21 March 2006) UN Doc A/RES/60/147 (UNBPG).
- <sup>161</sup> Articles 31 and 34-37, International Law Commission, ‘Draft Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts, with Commentaries’ (2001) 2(2) *Yearbook of the International Law Commission* 31, 91-107.
- <sup>162</sup> Principle 22, UNGA, ‘Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law’ (21 March 2006) UN Doc A/RES/60/147.
- <sup>163</sup> Fiona McKay, “What Outcomes for Victims?” in Dinah Shelton (ed) *The Oxford Handbook of International Human Rights Law* (Oxford University Press 2013) 921, 922.

- <sup>164</sup> Melissa Milam, Nicole Borrello and Jessica Pooler, ‘The Survivor-Centred, Trauma-Informed Approach’ (2017) *United States Attorneys’ Bulletin* 39.
- <sup>165</sup> See R M Hare, ‘What is Wrong with Slavery’ in Tommy Lott (ed), *Subjugation and Bondage: Critical Essays on Slavery and Social Philosophy* (Rowman & Littlefield 1998) 209, 211-12.
- <sup>166</sup> Brandon Hamber, ‘The Dilemmas of Reparations: In Search of a Process-Driven Approach,’ in K De Feyter, S Parmnetier, M Bossuyt and P Lemmens (eds) *Out of the Ashes: Reparation for Victims of Gross and Systematic Human Rights Violations* (Intersentia 2005) 135, 141.
- <sup>167</sup> James Walvin, ‘The Slave Trade, Abolition and Public Memory,’ *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (2009), 145.
- <sup>168</sup> David Cole, ‘The Path of Greatest Resistance,’ *New York Review of Books*, 7 February-20 February 2019, 22.

## Chapter 7 – Antislavery Opinion Building

- <sup>169</sup> Quoted in Andrew O’Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 245.
- <sup>170</sup> Quoted in J.R. Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism in the Age of Revolution: An International History of Anti-Slavery, c. 1787-1820* (Cambridge: CUP, 2013), 77-8.
- <sup>171</sup> J.R. Oldfield, *Popular Politics and British Anti-Slavery: The Mobilisation of Public Opinion against the Slave Trade, 1787-1807* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 114.
- <sup>172</sup> John Stauffer, ‘Fighting the Devil with His Own Fire’, in Andrew Delbanco, John Stauffer, Manisha Sinha, Darryl Pinckney and Wilfred M. McClay, *The Abolitionist Imagination* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012), 71.
- <sup>173</sup> Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism*, 72.
- <sup>174</sup> Quoted in Aaron M. Powell, *Personal Reminiscences of the Anti-Slavery and other Reforms and Reformers* (NY: Caulon Press, 1899), 86.
- <sup>175</sup> Quoted in John Chadwick, *A Life for Liberty: Anti-Slavery and other Letters of Sallie Holley* (NY: G.P. Putnam’s & Sons, 1899), 86.

## Chapter 8 – Our Own Tools: Historical Antislavery Techniques for the Contemporary Movement to End Slavery

- <sup>176</sup> “Frederick Douglass Descendants Reflect on Obama,” *Newsweek*, January 17, 2009 ([www.newsweek.com/id/180268](http://www.newsweek.com/id/180268)).
- <sup>177</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>178</sup> Kenneth B. Morris, Jr., “Abolition Today!” ([http://www.fdfi.org/letter\\_pres.html](http://www.fdfi.org/letter_pres.html)).
- <sup>179</sup> Wendell Phillips, “Address to the Boston School Children” July 28, 1865,” in Theodore C. Pease (ed.), *Wendell Phillips: Speeches, Lectures, and Letters* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1900), 225-30 (229).
- <sup>180</sup> W.E.B. Du Bois, letter to Joel Spingarn, October 28, 1914, in Herbert Aptheker (ed.), *The Correspondence of W. E. B. Du Bois: Volume 1, Selections, 1877-1934* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), 203-07 (206).
- <sup>181</sup> Mike Kaye, *1807—2007: Over 200 Years of Campaigning Against Slavery* (London: ASI, 2005), 35 (<http://www.antislavery.ac.uk/items/show/9>).
- <sup>182</sup> Jean-Robert Cadet, *Haiti’s Invisible Child Slaves* (Geneva: ILO, 2003), 6.
- <sup>183</sup> Cadet, “A Cycle of Slavery,” *Freedom Chronicle*, Fall 2004: n.p.
- <sup>184</sup> Cadet, *My Stone of Hope: From Haitian Slave Child to Abolitionist* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 29.
- <sup>185</sup> John R. Miller, speeches of March 4, 2003, August 23, 2004, and September 30, 2004, Releases and Remarks, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, USDS, National Archives and Records Administration.
- <sup>186</sup> Miller, “Call It Slavery,” *The Wilson Quarterly*, Summer 2008: 52-56 (54, 51, 56).
- <sup>187</sup> Tony Blair, “The Shame of Slavery,” *The New Nation*, November 27, 2006: 2.
- <sup>188</sup> Theresa May, “My Government will lead the way in defeating modern slavery,” *The Telegraph*, July 30, 2016 (<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/07/30/we-will-lead-the-way-in-defeating-modern-slavery/>).
- <sup>189</sup> Kofi Annan, “Information Release 54/06: The International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, December 2, 2006” (Geneva: UN), 1.

- <sup>190</sup> See for example Doreen S. Boyd et al, “Slavery from Space: Demonstrating the role for satellite remote sensing to inform evidence-based action related to UN SDG number 8,” *ISPRS Journal of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing*, volume 142, August 2018: 380-388 (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0924271618300479>).
- <sup>191</sup> See Susan Schulten, *Mapping the Nation: History and Cartography in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), chapter 4.
- <sup>192</sup> For more on Douglass and photographs, see John Stauffer, Zoe Trodd and Celeste-Marie Bernier, *Picturing Frederick Douglass: An Illustrated Biography of the Nineteenth Century’s Most Photographed American* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2015).
- <sup>193</sup> For more on contemporary antislavery visual culture, see Zoe Trodd, “Am I Still Not a Man and a Brother? Protest Memory in Contemporary Antislavery Visual Culture,” *Slavery & Abolition* 34.2, 2013: 338-352.
- <sup>194</sup> *Richmond Enquirer*, October 25, 1859.
- <sup>195</sup> For more on the argument that Brown’s actions sparked the Civil War, see John Stauffer and Zoe Trodd (eds.), *The Tribunal: Responses to John Brown and the Harper Ferry Raid* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012), introduction.
- <sup>196</sup> See the documentary film *Silent Revolution: Sankalp and the Quarry Slaves* (Washington D.C.: Free the Slaves, 2006).
- <sup>197</sup> See <https://www.freetheslaves.net/our-model-for-freedom/community-liberation-initiative/>.
- <sup>198</sup> See <http://challengingheights.org/>
- <sup>199</sup> Sculptures of Tubman include Alison Saar’s *Swing Low* (2007), Fern Cunningham’s *Step on Board* (1999) and Jane DeDecker’s *Harriet Tubman* 2004. Sculptures of Truth include Tina Allen’s *Sojourner Truth* (1999), Thomas Jay Warren’s *Sojourner Truth Memorial Statue* (2002) and Trina Greene’s *Sojourner Truth: Daughter of Esopus* (2013). Tubman was the first African American woman to be honoured with a stamp, made available on February 1, 1978. The second stamp of Tubman was issued on 29th June 1995. Truth was also honoured with a stamp that was made available on 4th February 1986. In April 2016 Secretary Jacob Lew announced that Tubman would replace Andrew Jackson on the \$20 bill.
- <sup>200</sup> Christina Accomando, “Demanding a Voice Among the Pettifoggers: Sojourner Truth as Legal Actor,” *MELUS* 28:1 (2003): 61-86 (65).

- 201 The key point of the case did not centre around the illegal sale but on whether or not Truth was Peter's mother. Slave children followed the status of their slave mother, so proof that Peter was Truth's son meant he was a New York State slave and thus the sale was illegal. See Accomando, 67-69.
- 202 Accomando, 77.
- 203 'Megan's Law' was in response to the rape and murder of Megan Kanka in 1994 by Jesse Timmendequas, who had two previous convictions for the sexual assault of young girls.
- 204 United States. Cong. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs House of Representations, *Hearing on A Pathway to Freedom: Rescue and Refuge for Sex Trafficking Victims, 14th May 2015*. 114th Cong. 1st sess. Washington: GPO, 2015 (statement of Ms. Karla Jacinto Romero, survivor of human trafficking and advocate, Commission United vs. Trafficking).
- 205 Ibid.
- 206 Margaret Washington, *Sojourner Truth's America* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 69.
- 207 Sojourner Truth, *Narrative of Sojourner Truth; A Bondswoman of Olden Time, With a History of Her Labours and Correspondence Drawn from Her "Book of Life"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 140-141.
- 208 Ibid., 147.
- 209 Tim Ballard in Thomas Stackpole, "The New Abolitionists," *Foreign Policy* (<http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/07/22/the-new-abolitionists-mexico-dominican-republic-human-trafficking-mormon-our/>).
- 210 "Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders Against Modern Slavery," December 2, 2014 (<https://www.anglicancentreinrome.org/Publisher/File.aspx?ID=144167>).
- 211 Ibid.
- 212 "Sisters offer hope to survivors of human trafficking in New York City," *Sisters of Charity Federation*, March 2, 2017 (<http://sistersofcharityfederation.org/sisters-offer-hope-to-survivors-of-human-trafficking-in-new-york-city/>).
- 213 Bradford, 16.
- 214 Melanie Kirkpatrick, *Escape from North Korea: The Untold Story of Asia's Underground Railroad* (New York: Encounter Books, 2012), 9.
- 215 Ibid.

- <sup>216</sup> Harriet Tubman in Sarah Hopkins Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman* (Auburn: W.J. Moses, 1869), 17.
- <sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.
- <sup>218</sup> Danuwar in Emma Batha, “Give trafficking victims compensation, Nepalese judge and former sex slave say,” *Reuters*, November 30, 2016 (<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-women-conference-slavery-compensation/give-trafficking-victims-compensation-nepalese-judge-and-former-sex-slave-say-idUKKBN13P2J4>).
- <sup>219</sup> See <http://shaktisamuha.org.np/about-us/introduction>
- <sup>220</sup> Maurice Middleberg, “Your Donations help a Former Slave to Free Others,” *Free The Slaves*, May 15, 2013 (<https://www.freetheslaves.net/your-donations-help-a-former-slave-to-free-others/>).
- <sup>221</sup> Polline Akello, “I was a child soldier. Now I’m pushing for more support for survivors like me,” *The Guardian*, February 12, 2016 (<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/feb/12/child-soldier-support-survivors-raped>).
- <sup>222</sup> Liz Ford, “Polline Akello: Kony commanded someone to look after me...I was lucky,” *The Guardian*, October 9, 2015 (<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/oct/09/polline-akello-joseph-kony-lords-resistance-army-uganda>).
- <sup>223</sup> See <http://antislavery.ac.uk/narratives>
- <sup>224</sup> See <https://survivoralliance.org/>
- <sup>225</sup> Minh Dang, “We need each other,” November 12, 2017 (<https://www.minh-dang.com/blog-1/2017/11/12/we-need-each-other>).
- <sup>226</sup> Dang, “Living under the roof of my hope - Survivor Alliance launches today!,” April 23, 2018 (<https://www.minh-dang.com/blog-1/2018/4/23/living-under-the-roof-of-my-hope-survivor-alliance-launches-today>)
- <sup>227</sup> Frederick Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (Boston: De Wolfe & Fiske Co., 1892), 389-390.
- <sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 381.
- <sup>229</sup> Douglass, “The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro” (1852), in Philip S. Foner (ed.), *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass* (New York: International Publishers, 1950-55), volume II, 181-204 (188).



## Chapter 9 – The Role of Military Intervention in Antislavery Campaigns

- <sup>230</sup> At various times the Royal Navy was joined in suppression efforts by naval forces from France and the US, but Britain's suppression efforts eclipsed those of international rivals. 80% of slave vessels captured under bilateral treaties were taken by ships of the Royal Navy and British ships liberated 90% of all enslaved Africans.
- <sup>231</sup> The movement to abolish slavery in the 1820s and 1830s focused primarily on the British Caribbean. Slavery was not abolished in British territories of the Gold Coast until 1874, or in Southern Nigeria until 1916. Slavery continued to be legal in Gambia and Sierra Leone into the twentieth century.
- <sup>232</sup> The establishment of law regarding the slave trade was a slow process. There was an agreement in principle at the Congress of Vienna in 1814, but it took until 1890, at the Brussels Conference, for this to become a binding instrument.
- <sup>233</sup> In 1840, ships under Captain Denman's command blockaded the River Gallinas (situated near the present Sierra Leone/Liberia border). Denman induced the King there to sign a treaty whereby the slave trade was abolished throughout his territories. Denman was also authorised to destroy the barracoons, release over 800 enslaved Africans and forcibly expel all slave traders. Denman quoted in 'Minutes of Evidence', in *Trial of Pedro de Zulueta, Jun., on a charge of slave trading. On Friday the 27th, Saturday the 28th, and Monday the 30th of October, 1843 at the Central Criminal Court, Old Bailey, London* (London: C. Wood & Co., 1844), pp. 127, 133.
- <sup>234</sup> Marcel Van Der Linden (ed.), *Humanitarian Intervention and Changing Labor Relations: The Long-Term Consequences of the Abolition of the Slave Trade* (Brill, Leiden, 2011) 19-20.
- <sup>235</sup> Lagos was for decades a centre for slave trading, particularly from the Kingdom of Dahomey. British policy-makers identified the area as the gateway of a potentially profitable trade in agricultural products (such as palm oil) with the interior. Many historians have urged that British interference in West Africa, and Lagos in particular, must be regarded within the wider context of European imperialism and commercial change in the mid-nineteenth century. Motivations for British expansion hinged on humanitarian antislavery forces on one hand and commercial, colonial advantage on the other.

- <sup>236</sup> Phrase used by Chaim D. Kaufmann and Robert A. Pape in ‘Explaining costly international moral action’, *International Organization* 53 (1999), p. 631. These are cases where states, motivated by morality, absorb short-term costs even if long-run benefits are uncertain.
- <sup>237</sup> David Eltis, *Economic Growth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 92-94. Sheffield Archives, Poster against the shipping of slaves to Cuba, 1862. Bribes often featured in treaties: Spain was granted payments amounting to £1,134,179 up to 1853; in that same year, Portugal had taken a total of £2,850,965. See Van der Linden, *Humanitarian*, p.7. However, compare all these costs to the £20 million granted to Britain’s slave-owners as ‘compensation’ for the abolition of slavery in 1833, equivalent to 40% of state expenditure.
- <sup>238</sup> David Eltis and David Richardson, *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (London: Yale University Press, 2010) 274.
- <sup>239</sup> See Suzanne Miers, *Slavery in the Twentieth Century: The Evolution of a Global Problem* (California: Altamira Press, 2003).
- <sup>240</sup> See, for example, the work of charities Human Rights at Sea and Slave Free Seas, looking at human rights ambiguities at sea.
- <sup>241</sup> In 2007, the bicentenary of the Abolition Act of 1807, both Tony Blair and Gordon Brown used the example of the West Africa squadron to put forward the idea that Britain was at the forefront of abolitionist thinking.
- <sup>242</sup> EU press release at <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/09/28-eunavfor/>
- <sup>243</sup> Jenny S. Martinez, *The Slave Trade and the Origins of International Human Rights Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
- <sup>244</sup> Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Suzanne Miers has argued that by the end of the nineteenth century, slavery in Africa was a ‘thriving and widely practiced institution’.
- <sup>245</sup> This is not to say, of course, that modern-day care of those released from enslavement is always exemplary. See the headline ‘State “abandons” rescued slaves’ from the *Sunday Times*, 9 October 2016, in relation to the Human Trafficking Foundation report criticising the procedures of the Home Office.
- <sup>246</sup> Quoted in Maeve Ryan, ‘The price of legitimacy in humanitarian intervention: Britain, the European powers and the abolition of the West African slave trade, 1807-1867’, in D. Trim and B. Simms (eds), *Humanitarian*

- Intervention: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 231.
- <sup>247</sup> David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 13.
- <sup>248</sup> Andrea Nicholson, ‘Transformations in the Law concerning Slavery: Legacies of the Nineteenth Century Anti-Slavery Movement’, in W. Mulligan and M. Bric (eds), *A Global History of Anti-Slavery Politics in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
- <sup>249</sup> Many historians have written on this theme, but for a good introduction see Joel Quirk and David Richardson, ‘Anti-Slavery, European Identity and International Society: A Macro-historical Perspective’, *The Journal of Modern European History*, 7:1 (2009).
- <sup>250</sup> A Lords Committee in 1850 narrowly voted for the squadron’s continuation.
- <sup>251</sup> *The Times*, ‘Attempts to Suppress the Slave Trade’, 29 August 1844. This unintended consequence of a rise in prices and suffering as a direct consequence of intervention is mirrored in contemporary trafficking. As Giampaolo Musucemi, co-author of *Confessions of a People Smuggler*, states: ‘When governments shut routes the business just becomes richer, because the journey is longer and more dangerous.’ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-32381101>.
- <sup>252</sup> <http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/what-we-do/providing-security-at-sea>. This also has a humanitarian dimension. For example, in 2015, *HMS Bulwark* was involved in the rescue of 4,000 people fleeing Africa in an operation in waters north of Libya.
- <sup>253</sup> Kevin Bales, Preface to Joel Quirk, *Unfinished Business: A Comparative Survey of Historical and Contemporary Slavery* (UNESCO Publishing, 2009) 13.

## Chapter 10 – Identifying a Case of Slavery

- <sup>254</sup> Suzanne Miers, *Slavery in the Twentieth Century: The Evolution of a Global Problem* (Oxford: Altamira Press, 2003), 453.
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## Chapter 12 – The Impact of the Past on Child Sexual Exploitation

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- <sup>265</sup> Sue Berelowitz, Jenny Clifton, Carlene Firimin, Sandra Gulyurtlu, and Gareth Edwards, *‘If Only Someone had Listened’- Office of the Children’s Commissioner’s Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups Final Report* (London: Office of the Children’s Commissioner, 2013) and Louise Casey, *Report of Inspection of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council* (London: HMSO, 2015).
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- <sup>275</sup> Alan Bedford, *Serious Case Review into Child Sexual Exploitation in Oxfordshire: from the experiences of children A, B, C, D, E, and F* (Oxford: Oxford Safeguarding Children Board, 2015) 39.
- <sup>276</sup> *Ibid.* p.14.
- <sup>277</sup> *Ibid.* p.14.
- <sup>278</sup> Ahern, Elizabeth C., Leslie H. Sadler, Michael E. Lamb, and Gianna M. Gariglietti. “Wellbeing of Professionals Working with Suspected Victims of Child Sexual Exploitation”. *Child Abuse Review* (2016) <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/car.2439> (Accessed 5th November 2016).
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- <sup>282</sup> Alexis Jay, *Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham: 1997 – 2013* (Rotherham: Rotherham Council, 2014) 15.
- <sup>283</sup> Ofsted. “The sexual exploitation of children: it couldn’t happen here, could it?”. Gov.uk. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-exploitation-of-children-ofsted-thematic-report> (Accessed 31st October 2016) point 87
- <sup>284</sup> NSPCC “Vicarious trauma: the consequences of working with abuse”. Nspcc.org.uk. <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/information-service/research-briefing-vicarious-trauma-consequences-working-with-abuse.pdf> (Accessed 1st November 2016) 1-2.

## **Appendix 1: Twelve Practice Points for Understanding Slavery**

- <sup>285</sup> 2012 *The Bellagio-Harvard Guidelines on the Legal Parameters of Slavery*, which have been accepted by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights as defining to concept of slavery, speaks of this control being ‘tantamount to possession’.

## **Suggested Additional Readings**

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