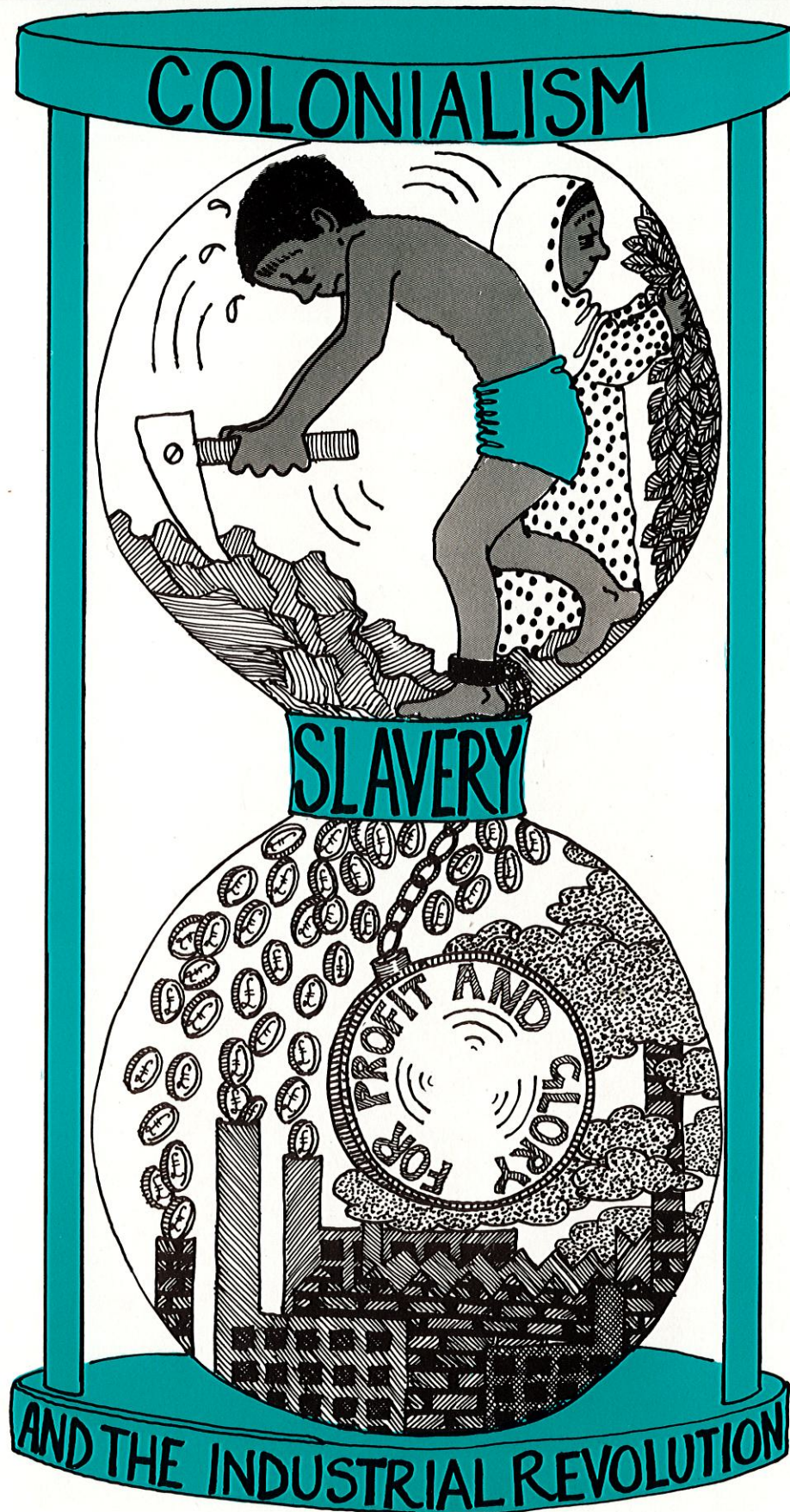


SUITABLE FOR
KS3 HISTORY
Also A-Level, Adult & Further Education



A CASE STUDY:
THE EMPIRE IN SOUTH YORKSHIRE 1700–1860

Units One and Two

**Colonialism, Slavery and the
Industrial Revolution
1700-1860**

**A Case Study:
The Empire in South Yorkshire**

Units 1 and 2

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Colonialism, Slavery and the Industrial Revolution 1700-1860

A Case Study: The Empire in South Yorkshire

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Introduction

The Empire in South Yorkshire is a history teaching pack which explores the relationship between Britain's Industrial Revolution and colonialism in the Caribbean, Ireland and India. The pack has been developed in close collaboration with history teachers in the context of the debates about the History National Curriculum. It contains a set of documents and a Teachers' book, which provides background information to the documents and a number of activity-based exercises for students. These activities have been developed and trialled with students in Years 8 and 9 (Key stage 3) in a number of schools.

The aims of the pack are as follows:

- To provide a unit of work which can both supplement and form a critique of the narrow and exclusive definition of 'British History' within the National Curriculum, with particular reference to Key Stage 3 core study unit *Expansion, Trade and Industry*.
- To enable students to understand the significance of colonialism, not as a 'dimension' of British History but as central to the economic, political and cultural development of Britain and of continuing significance in the shaping of experience today.
- To help students to understand the links between industrialisation in Britain and colonial underdevelopment in countries of the "South" and to see how world inequalities have arisen largely as a result of this process.
- To help students to understand that 'the colonial experience' involved everyone, in both colonising and colonised countries, but that its meaning differed both within and between nations according to issues of race, class and gender.
- To enable students to look critically at the notion of 'British history', developing an understanding of Britain as having no single, homogeneous culture.
- To provide an anti-racist framework which enables students to acknowledge the existence of racism in British society. To gain an understanding of the development and functions of racism. To look at the ways in which Black and Irish people have resisted racism. To challenge the distortions which have represented the history of imperialism as white people's history and created myths of cultural inferiority, backwardness and passivity.
- To help students to develop skills as historians. For example, the abilities to acquire and interpret information; be familiar with different forms of evidence; identify different

view-points; recognise bias, over-simplification and propaganda; recognise their own values and how these are influenced; use imagination to empathise with people in other historical situations; identify causes and consequences; analyse and form conclusions; confidently express themselves; articulate opinions and arguments and listen to those of others; work with others co-operatively.

- To help students explore a number of ideas and concepts, such as: power (and its distribution), change, continuity; industrialisation, colonialism, underdevelopment, exploitation, resistance and racism.
- To facilitate the development of curiosity, questioning, self awareness, anti-oppressive values and practices, desire for justice and equality, respect for others.
- To facilitate an understanding that there is no such thing as value-free education.

The pack is organised into four units:

Unit One places **Britain's Industrial Revolution** in a global context, focusing on the importance for Britain of the wealth created by trade and colonialism in the 18th and 19th centuries and the influence of the Revolution on people's lives in Britain, Ireland and India.

Unit Two explores economic and political connections between **Britain and the Caribbean and West Africa** in the late eighteenth century, looking at (a) the involvement of a local merchant in the Triangular Trade; (b) the experience of slavery and the development of racism and c) the connections between black resistance in the Caribbean and radical European movements, focusing on anti-slavery activity in Sheffield in the 1790's.

Unit Three focuses on the relationship between colonialism in **Ireland and India** and the Industrial Revolution in Britain, from the eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries. The central theme is that development in Britain was crucially linked to the process of colonial underdevelopment. This is explored through documents relating to, for example, the involvement of a local regiment in campaigns in India (including the suppression of the rebellion of 1857) and the Irish estates of a South Yorkshire land-owner.

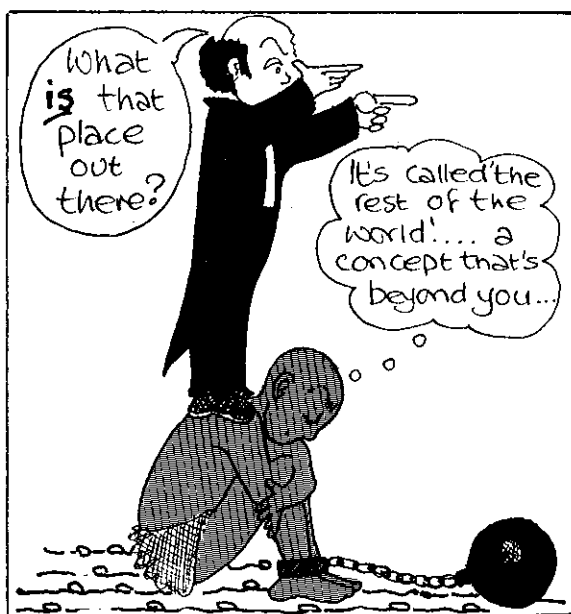
Unit Four draws together some of the major themes of the pack by looking at the **Great Exhibition of 1851**. The Exhibition, organised as a celebration of Britain's wealth, progress and greatness as an industrial and colonial power, is used to raise important questions about who benefited from the Industrial Revolution.

This Teachers' Book contains a commentary on documents, outlines of activities for use by teachers and photocopiable activity pages to be used with students. *To avoid confusion we have denoted teachers' pages with a 'T' in the top outside corner of each page.*

The National Curriculum

The pack originated in discussions between teachers and Development Education workers about the lack of resources which address the historical background to global inequality. Although intended to be flexible enough to be used in many educational contexts, the pack has been developed in close collaboration with history teachers with the intention of addressing issues raised by the debates over the National Curriculum.

It is specifically designed to provide a course of work which can both supplement and provide a critique of the narrow definition of 'British History' within the National Curriculum KS3 core study unit entitled *Expansion, Trade and Industry*. Exploring the relationship between local, national and global histories, the pack presents colonialism and its twentieth century repercussions as not merely 'dimensions' of British History but as central to the economic, political and cultural development of Britain.



The pack can also be used to supplement a number of other study units within the History National Curriculum - most obviously *Culture and Society in Ireland*, *The Impact of the Industrial Revolution on a local area* and *Black Peoples of the Americas* at Key Stages 3 and 4.

Anti-Racist History

The pack is intended to enable both teachers and students to discuss and challenge racism and other oppressions. The definition of 'British History' employed by the National Curriculum makes it difficult for teachers both to include marginalised histories - of black people and women particularly - and to challenge the processes through which they have become marginalised. The study unit *Expansion, Trade and Industry* focuses solely on the implications of the industrial revolution and colonialism for 'progress' in Britain, excluding any discussion of its effects in India, Ireland or the Caribbean and failing to address the issue of the role of the development of racism in enabling this 'expansion'. We feel that providing a safe but challenging environment for the discussion of racism and its connections with issues of class and gender is crucial for anti-racist practice. This structure is important both in supporting the needs of black students and in enabling white students to see for themselves positions from which they can oppose oppressive ideas and practices in the classroom and beyond.

This pack aims to address these issues in a number of ways. Firstly by illustrating the central role played by the development of racist ideology in British history during this period. Secondly by emphasising the connections between the enslavement and exploitation of black, Irish and British working class people. (The notion of 'separate races' based on biological difference was developed and applied - with differing content - to black, Irish and working class people generally. We feel that it is important to emphasise this in order to enable students to question the ideas of 'natural' differences identifiable by colour on which the twentieth century 'common-sense' definition of race is based.) Thirdly the pack is organised around material and activities which emphasise the importance of resistance, thus providing positive images of black and Irish people as active in the making of their own histories. It also shows that at different times in history white people were

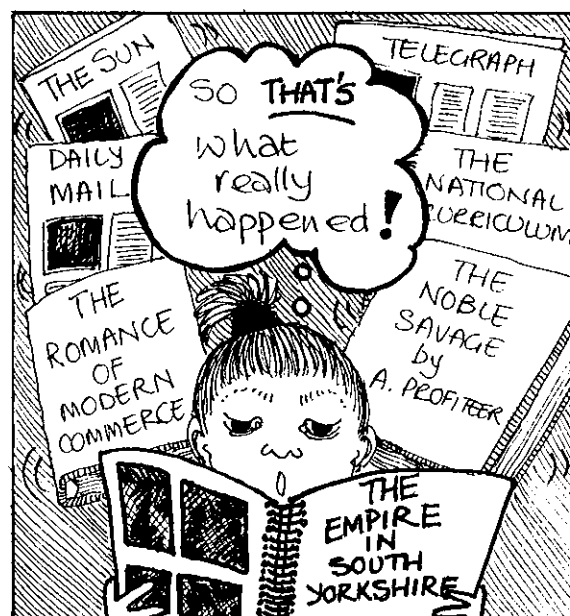
actively involved in making connections with black struggles. We feel this is important not only because of its historical accuracy but also because it serves a purpose within the classroom by allowing white students to see white people both developing and opposing racist ideas and practice.

The Activities

The pack is shaped by the concerns of Development Education, which can be defined as an approach to education which places learner-centred teaching methods within a global framework. The activities included emphasise the learning process through a focus on enquiry, experiential discussion and small group work. Teachers may wish to adapt activities to suit students differing needs and abilities; some already include suggestions. In drawing up these activities we have followed the successful format used in *World Studies 8-13* (S Fisher and D Hicks 1985). Other activities to support this work can be found in this handbook.

Local/Global

The emphasis on the connections between local, national and global histories is also influenced by Development Education's understanding of the world as a single system. Although the documentary evidence relates to South Yorkshire, it is not our intention to suggest that the pack is relevant only to history teachers in this locality. The pack is a case study of the economic, political and cultural connections between local and global histories to be found in the history of one region. A glance through the papers of big land-owners, merchants or political movements held in the Local Studies Library or City Archive in any locality in Britain would reveal similar material. It is hoped that the Teachers' book, in providing a framework for the interpretation of such documentary evidence, will enable teachers to undertake such studies in their own areas if they so wish.

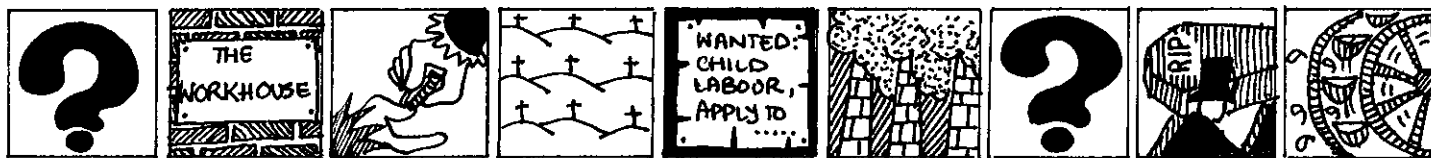


A Note on 'Balance and Neutrality'

It is important to emphasise that we are not presenting this work as in any sense a complete 'History of Empire'. It is as partial as any history - though arguably more representative in its focus on the experiences of black and white people. The pack is intended for use both to redress the balance in the kinds of history available for use in schools and to offer a critique of those histories, particularly those set down in the National Curriculum. We anticipate that this pack will be used as historical source material itself, juxtaposed with 'official' histories to enable students to grapple with issues of representation and historical 'truth'. We believe that no education is value-free; it is influenced by the values of those who write it, of those who use it and of the institutions in which it takes place. We hope that the values underlying this pack are those of opposition to oppression. We hope that by being explicit about the role of interpretation and selection in history the materials will help to develop participants' critical awareness, so that they become skilled at recognising the, often unstated, assumptions which inform all educational - and indeed cultural - products.

THE EQUAL AREA ECKERT IV PROJECTION [A]





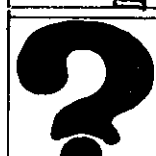
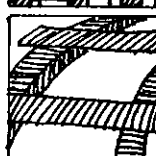
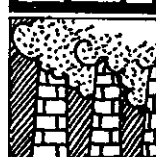
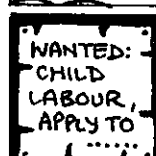
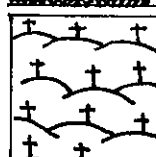
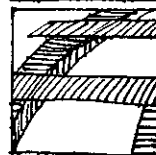
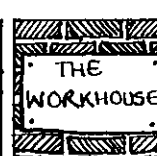
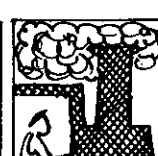
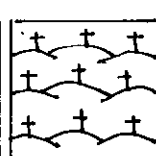
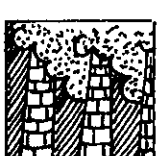
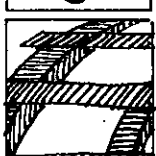
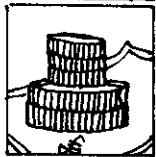
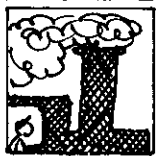
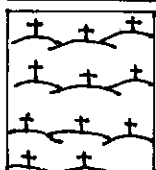
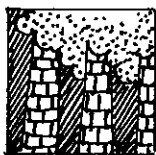
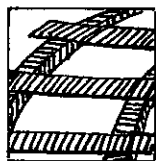
Unit 1: Britain's Industrial Revolution

Unit One consists of:

- Background information to **documents 1 to 6**, which are advertisements and news articles relating to imported goods from India, Ireland and the Caribbean, published in the *Sheffield Register* in the 1780's
- Activities 1, 2 and 3 which explore the global context of the Industrial Revolution, the issue of selection in history and the role of colonialism in creating wealth for Britain

The aims of this Unit are:

- to identify the main characteristics of the Industrial Revolution and explore its influence on the lives of people in Britain, India and Ireland
- to focus on the role of colonialism in the making of the Industrial Revolution and thereby place the Revolution within a global context
- to examine the role of selection in history
- to raise issues of change, inequality, wealth creation and power, thus introducing the central theme of the pack - that development in Britain was crucially linked to colonial underdevelopment



Britain's Industrial Revolution: Documents 1-6

Documents 1 to 6 are all taken from the *Sheffield Register* of the 1780's and relate to the importation of consumer goods produced in the Caribbean, Ireland and India. The Unit is organised around these documents; they are used directly in Activity 3, and goods mentioned in them feature in the 'Spot the Difference!' pictures and in Activity 2.

This focus on colonial produce is intended to enable the teacher to place the Industrial Revolution in a global context. It draws on recent challenges to conventional interpretations of the Industrial Revolution which, by

emphasising new technology, cotton, factories, great men, fast change and inevitability, represented the revolution as part of a 'forward march of Progress' produced by British inventors. The re-interpretation of the revolution represents it instead as the result of a much slower and more gradual process which involved the coming together of factors such as sympathetic government policies, available resources (and technological changes to make the most of them), agricultural improvement and changes in transport. In particular it emphasises the ability of the new merchant-capitalist class to harness for investment the wealth produced by the skill and labour of working men and women in both the old cottage industries and newer factories of Britain, and in the Caribbean, Ireland and India.

Activity 1: Spot the Difference!

Time: allow at least one double lesson for this activity

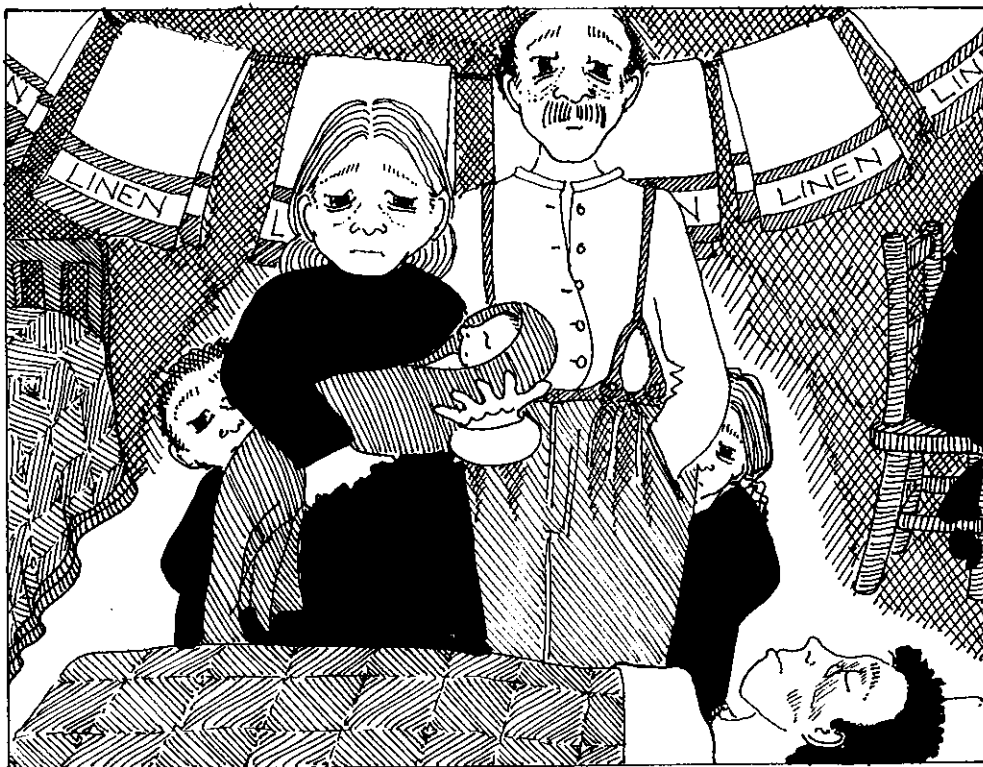
- Purpose:** To enable students to (a) gain an understanding of the Industrial Revolution in terms of both general and class specific changes in people's lives in Britain between 1700 - 1860 and (b) to contrast those changes with the process of underdevelopment occurring in India and Ireland during the same period.
- Preparation:** Photocopy the four sets of pictures on the following 8 pages. (See below for quantities). In trialling this activity we found that it worked well when preceded by a very traditional video on the Industrial Revolution. This not only set the scene but also provided a way in to discussing issues of selection and interpretation of evidence in history.
- Procedure:**
1. The class is split into four groups: a) British working class people; b) British middle class people; c) Indian working class people; d) Irish working class people. In pairs within these groups students examine the relevant pictures and answer the questions on page 11.
 2. Students feed back to the whole class, building up an understanding of change and how this change affected social groups differently.
 3. In pairs, students write down three questions they would like to ask in relation to this exercise. These questions are then discussed in class.

The pictures

In drawing up this activity, we recognise that it is based on a simplification of the experience of change. We are aware that there were great differences - both within working and middle class experiences of industrialisation, and in Indian and Irish experiences of colonisation - in terms of wealth, region and the pace of change.

worked for a living and those who, by the mid-nineteenth century, did not need to. This is the sense in which the term is used.

Ultimately, we felt that the main point that the pictures need to illustrate is that colonialism and the Industrial Revolution had a negative impact on India and Ireland, and the main beneficiary from them was the British middle class.



The omission of evidence of the wealth of Indian and Irish people of other social groups is an important drawback; ideally there would be two other pictures showing the impact of colonialism and the industrial revolution on wealthier groups in Irish and Indian society. We are also aware that the use of the term 'class' is - arguably - problematic, especially for the first picture in each series. We decided, however, that it was preferable to other alternatives - such as labourers, merchants, 'ordinary' people, peasants etc. - in that it makes a distinction between people who

The four sets of illustrations successfully represent this general pattern of change, showing that whether people benefitted from the industrial revolution depended largely on who and where they were in relation to it. The student pages also emphasise that not all families were the same, but that these general changes did happen for most people over generations. It is hoped that teachers will pick up on these points during class discussion, using the pictures critically, as with any other historical source material. The pictures are summarised below:

British middle class people

These pictures show the great increase in wealth among the middle class, which consolidated its power and identity during this period. They contain clues to general changes - such as that from a hard-working merchant family to an employer with servant(s); the move from the town centre to a villa with a garden on the outskirts; changes in fashions in furnishings (eg mahogany tables, high and decorative ceilings) and in dress (from brightly coloured chintzes to silk); and in availability of tea and coffee, which in 1700, as luxuries, would be kept under lock and key. *(NB The Bible has been included in the graphics to illustrate both the involvement of missionaries in the process of colonisation and the role of religion in the establishment of middle class power and identity at this time.)*

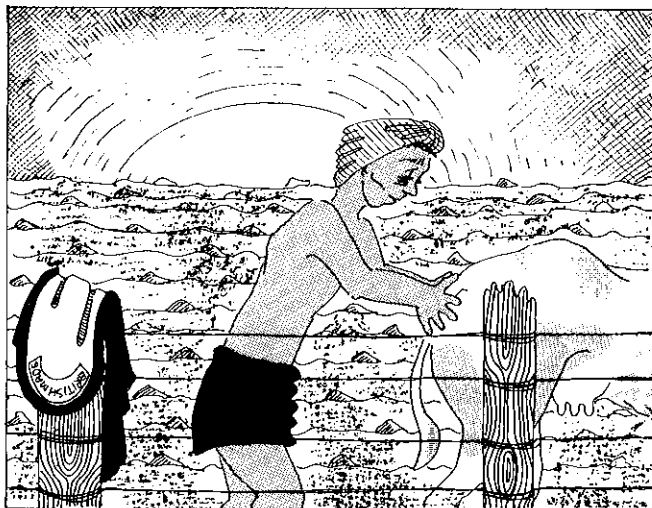
British working class people

These pictures show the change from a predominantly rural to an overcrowded urban environment and the change in employment patterns, which saw an increasingly high proportion of the population engaged in industrial rather than agricultural or small-scale industrial work organised in the domestic system. They are intended to show that while the mid-nineteenth century working class gained some benefits (in terms of more consumer goods), the experience of the early industrial period was on the whole quite negative.

The pictures contain a number of 'clues' which are intended both to point to general changes - for example: the steel-capped boots provide an indication of the man's employment, and can also suggest technological changes such as steam power, crucible steel etc; the linen suggests that the woman's work involved both caring for children and taking in washing; the consumer goods in the house are suggestive of colonial trade (e.g. tobacco, linen, tea and sugar). In trialling these, we found that students picked out most of these points and also raised issues regarding, for example, women's employment and the structure of the family.

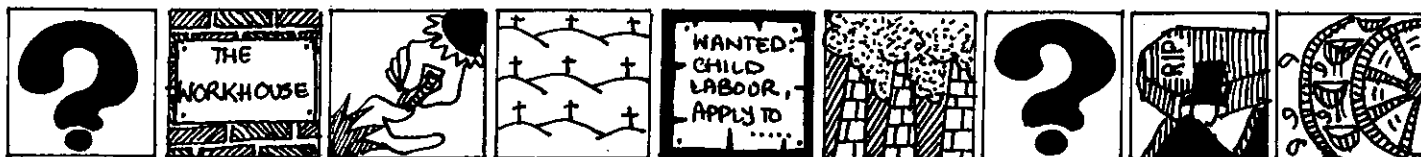
Indian working class people

These pictures show the effects of the relationship between the Industrial Revolution and colonialism in India. They are intended to indicate the destruction of the urbanised Bengal textile industry which resulted in people being forced onto the land. The relative wealth of early eighteenth century India is indicated by people's dress and their homes, positioned in a town square. Similarly the poverty of the mid-nineteenth century is illustrated by the poor crops, the cattle, the distant village, and the label on the woman's shawl - indicating the import of cotton goods from Manchester.



Irish working class people

As one of Britain's first colonies, Ireland was already undergoing the process of underdevelopment by 1700. Irish people were also arguably less wealthy than many of the textile workers of Bengal prior to colonisation and so the contrast is less stark than in the India pictures. While the first picture illustrates the possibility of making a living through farming and the woollen industry in the early years of British rule, the second indicates the destitution of the famine years of the 1840's which was the result of increasing landlessness and economic underdevelopment.



Spot the Difference!

- How has life changed for these families between 1700 and 1860 in terms of :

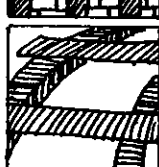
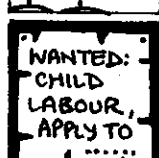
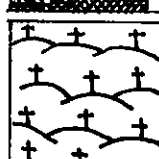
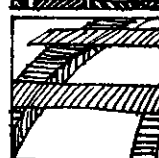
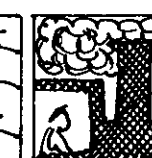
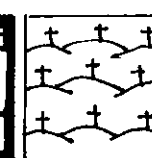
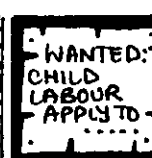
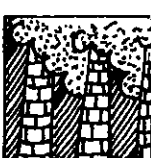
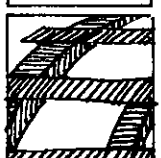
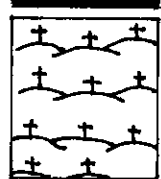
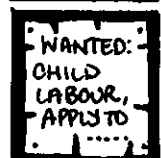
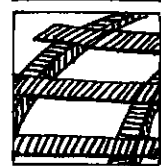
- the clothes they wear?
- the houses they live in?
- the work they do (both the women and the men)?
- the goods they have in the house?
- the environment?

- Would you say that this family generally became richer or poorer?

- Can you see ways in which life for this family

- became better?
- became worse?

- Are there any other changes you can see which are not mentioned above?





British middle class people, 1700



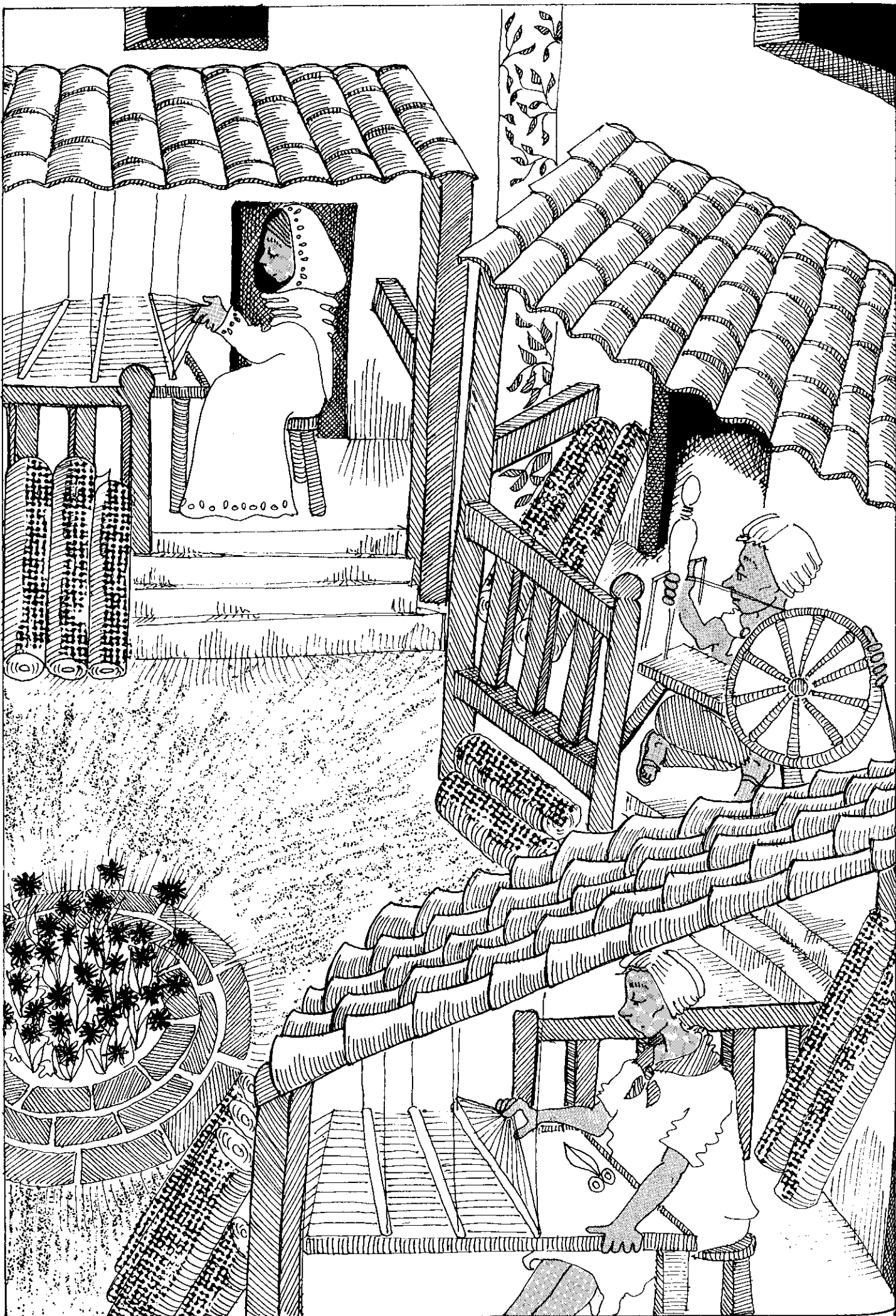
British middle class people, 1860



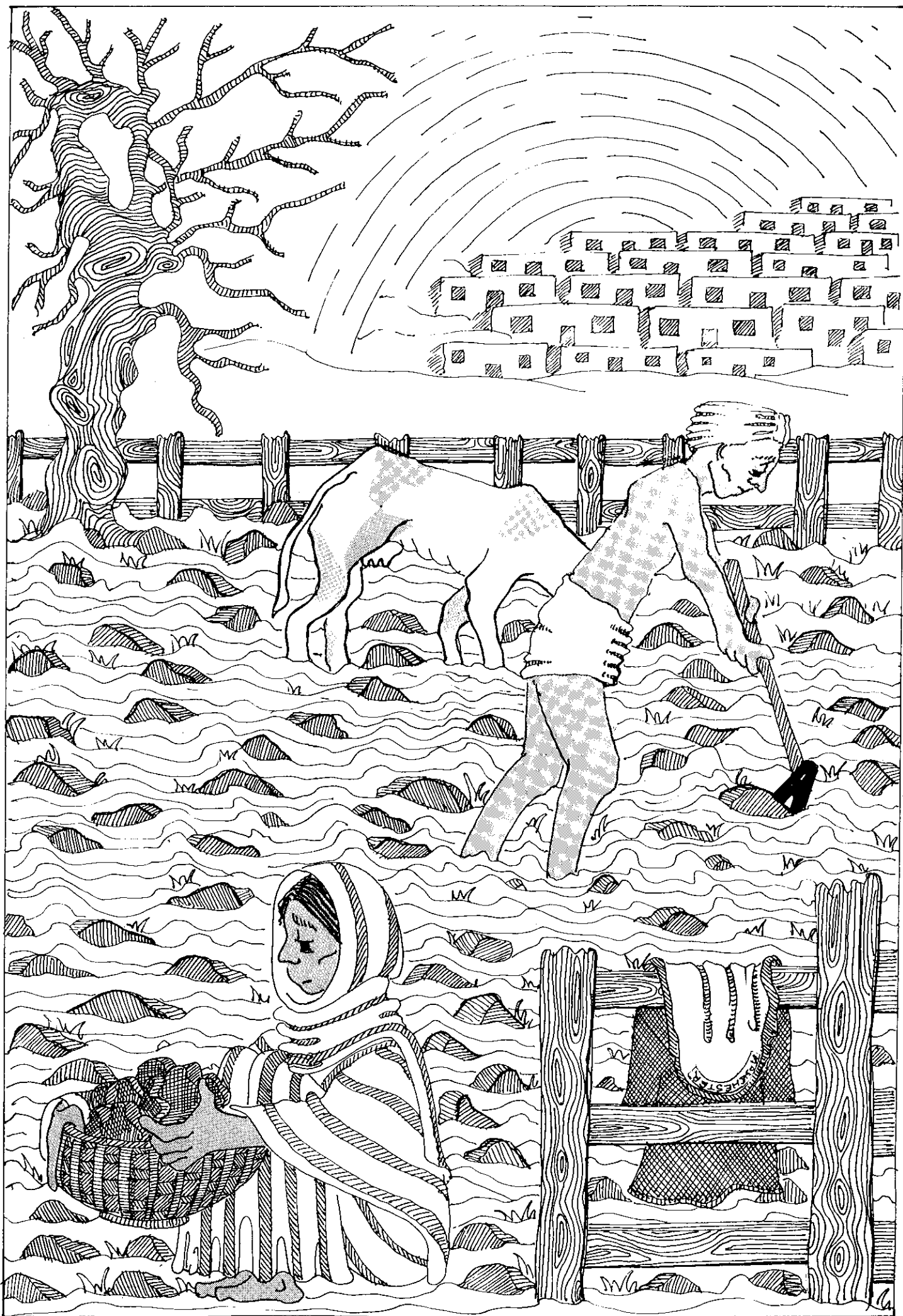
British working class people, 1700



British working class people, 1860



Indian working class people, 1700



Indian working class people, 1860



Irish working class people, 1700

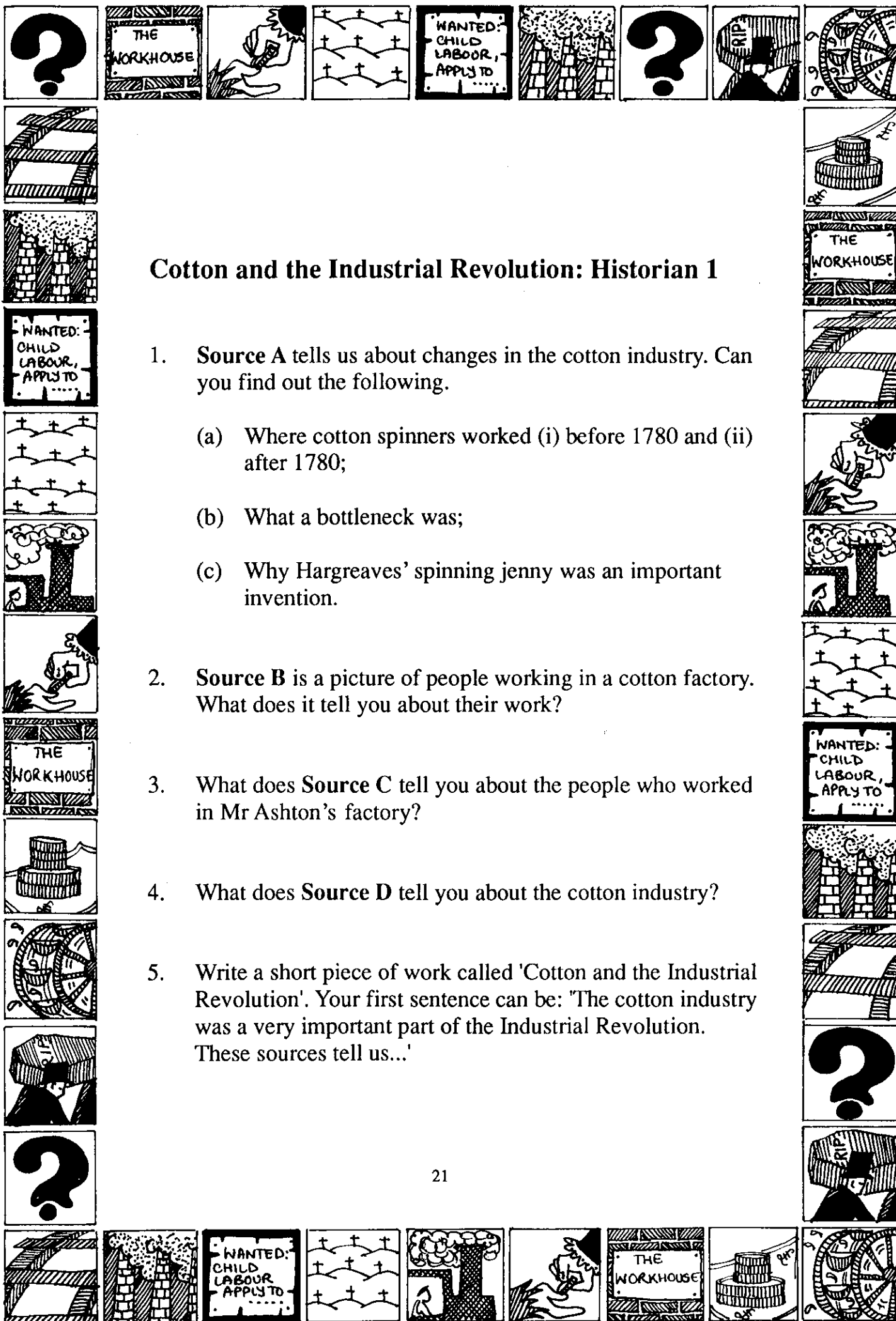


Irish working class people, 1840

Activity 2: The Historian and Selection

Time: allow a double lesson for this activity.

- Purpose:** To examine:
- (a) how the selection of evidence can change our view of the past;
 - (b) to begin to ask questions about the motives of historians in selecting their evidence.
- Preparation:** Photocopies of pages 21 to 26. (See below for quantities).
- Procedure:**
1. Discussion of selection - maybe using the previous session as an example - leading into discussion of the question 'What should the historian be trying to do?'
 2. Half of the class is given the A3 sheet and A4 questions relating to 'Historian 1' (pages 21–23), the other half those relating to 'Historian 2' (pages 24–26). These pages contain contrasting perspectives on the Industrial Revolution. 'Historian 1' is designed using information taken from a reasonably traditional school text-book and emphasises the conventional 'Great Men and Progress' interpretation of the revolution. 'Historian 2' contains four pieces of evidence drawn from a variety of sources which aim to (a) place inventions within the social context of technology, emphasising the financial power of the merchant and also the role of women in developing ideas for inventions, and (b) emphasise the development of the Lancashire cotton industry at the expense of that in India. Students can be given various combinations of these extracts according to their differing abilities e.g. less able students could work from the table on page 22 or the cartoon on page 25.
 3. In pairs students examine their set of evidence and write short answers to the questions on pages 21 and 26.
 4. Reading through their answers, each pair writes up a short piece entitled 'Cotton and the Industrial Revolution', beginning with the following sentence: 'The cotton industry was a very important part of the Industrial Revolution. Our documents tell us...'
 5. A selection of work is then read out to the class, leading into a discussion around the following points:
 - (a) the differences and similarities between pieces of work;
 - (b) why the students have made different interpretations;
 - (c) why the authors made different selections and interpretations;
 - (d) What this tells us about the selection and interpretation of material for (i) KS3 Core Study Unit 4 (Expansion, Trade and Industry) and (ii) 'The Empire in South Yorkshire'.



Cotton and the Industrial Revolution: Historian 1

1. **Source A** tells us about changes in the cotton industry. Can you find out the following.
 - (a) Where cotton spinners worked (i) before 1780 and (ii) after 1780;
 - (b) What a bottleneck was;
 - (c) Why Hargreaves' spinning jenny was an important invention.
2. **Source B** is a picture of people working in a cotton factory. What does it tell you about their work?
3. What does **Source C** tell you about the people who worked in Mr Ashton's factory?
4. What does **Source D** tell you about the cotton industry?
5. Write a short piece of work called 'Cotton and the Industrial Revolution'. Your first sentence can be: 'The cotton industry was a very important part of the Industrial Revolution. These sources tell us...'

Cotton and the Industrial Revolution: Historian 1

| Source A | | | |
|-----------|--|---|--|
| Date | Nature of Spinning and Weaving | Bottleneck or Hold up | Solution to the Problem |
| 1730 | Workers spun and wove raw cotton at home on spinning wheels and handlooms. Merchants paid them to do this, and sold their cloth. | Spinning and weaving by hand too slow to meet the increase in <i>demand</i> for cotton goods. Their import from India had made them very popular. | 1733: Kay's <i>Flying Shuttle</i> . Kay was a weaver. He fixed a hammer to each side of his loom. This meant he could weave a wider cloth, and that the weaver could weave much more quickly. |
| 1735-1770 | Workers still spun and wove at home. The flying shuttle had doubled the speed of weaving. | Because of the increase in the speed of weaving, and the growth in demand for cotton cloth, the spinners were unable to spin enough thread for the weavers. | 1763: Hargreaves invented the <i>Spinning Jenny</i> . This was a modified spinning wheel which could spin <i>eight</i> threads instead of <i>one</i> . 1769: Richard Arkwright invented the <i>Water Frame</i> . This used water power, and made much better thread than the <i>Spinning Jenny</i> . 1779: Crompton invented the <i>Mule</i> . This combined the ideas of Hargreaves and Arkwright. It made a high quality thread. |
| 1780-1814 | The spinning of cotton was now carried on in <i>factories</i> . These were usually built on streams, and water powered the machines. Weavers still worked at home, although some cotton-spinning factories had sheds built for weavers to work in. | Demand for cotton cloth still growing. Water power could not be trusted all the year round. Weavers could not weave all the thread being made. | 1781: Boulton and Watt developed a <i>steam engine</i> which was easy to use in cotton factories. 1785: Cartwright patented a <i>power loom</i> for weaving cotton cloth. This meant cotton cloth could be now woven in factories. 1804: Horrocks improved the power loom. 1813: Roberts modified the power loom - they could now do work as good as hand loom weavers. |

Source B



Source C

At Hyde

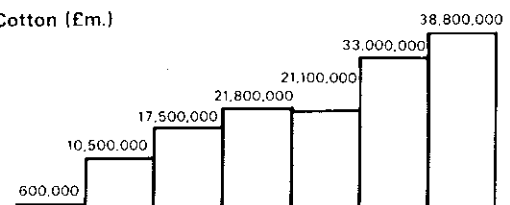
The head of the factory, Mr Thomas Ashton, has built himself a charming village in the midst of gardens and plantations, and on the other side of the road are two factories, sited between a torrent which supplies the engines with water, and two coal mines, which supply fuel.

Mr T. Ashton employs 1500 work people of both sexes. One immense room, filled with looms, contains four hundred of them..... The houses lived in by the work people form long and large streets. Mr Ashton has built three hundred of them which he lets at 3s (15p) or 3s 6d (17p) per week. Each house contains upon the ground floor a sitting room, a kitchen and a back yard, and above are two or three bedrooms.

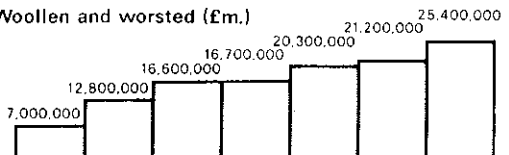
Source D

The growth of the textile industry

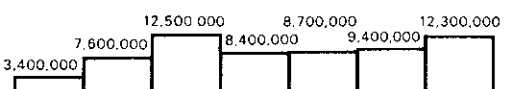
Cotton (£m.)



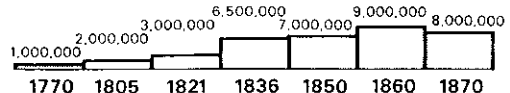
Woollen and worsted (£m.)



Linen (£m.)



Silk (£m.)



Cotton and the Industrial Revolution: Historian 2

Source A

James Hargreaves was a weaver and carpenter from Blackburn who is famous as the inventor of the 'Spinning Jenny'. His wife, Jenny, was a spinner who, like all other spinners, used a spinning wheel before the invention of the Spinning Jenny. The Spinning Jenny was much faster than the spinning wheel, which meant that the spinners could produce much more thread. James Hargreaves first got the idea for the invention while watching Jenny spin. One day, when the spinning wheel was knocked over by mistake, they noticed how it continued to turn round. James had the idea that if a number of spindles were put in a frame together much more thread could be spun at once.

However, although it was an important invention, it did not make the Hargreaves very wealthy. After James began selling the Jenny in 1767, their home was broken into and his machines were smashed by angry women spinners who thought that the invention would lead to unemployment. Eventually he and Jenny were forced to move to Nottingham. Then, although Hargreaves invented the Spinning Jenny, he could not afford to take a patent out on his machine. Local manufacturers who could afford the patent then copied it, and made profits for themselves. James Hargreaves did not reap the benefits of his invention.

Source: Unknown

Source B

In 1840 a man called R. Montgomery Martin gave evidence about the cotton industry in India to a Select Committee of the House of Commons. This is a summary of what he said:

"In 1832, Indian weavers in Calcutta sent a petition to Parliament to complain about the state of the Indian cotton industry. They said that the government encourages cotton goods made in England to be exported from England to India. Because recent inventions in England mean that they can produce their cotton much more cheaply and in much larger quantities, the manufacturers of cotton goods in India are being made unemployed. Both the spinners and the growers of cotton are becoming more and more poor. They are having to leave the cities where they used to live and work to try to find work in the countryside. This means that towns and cities such as Surat, Dacca and Moorshedabad are being destroyed. I do not think that this has been fair; I think it has been the power of the stronger exercised over the weaker."

Source: India Office Records

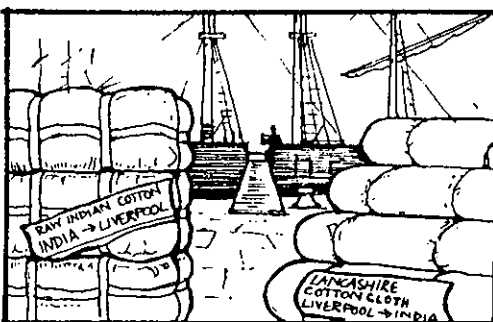
Source C



EUROPEAN TRADERS USED TO GO TO INDIA TO BUY THE BEST CLOTH IN THE WORLD; MUSLIN, VELVETS, COTTON OF ALL KINDS.



BUT THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION IN BRITAIN ENABLED THE LANCASHIRE TEXTILE FACTORIES TO MAKE A GREAT DEAL OF COTTON CLOTH BY MACHINES.



THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, NOW RULING INDIA, TAXED INDIAN CLOTH HEAVILY. IT WAS CHEAPER FOR INDIANS TO SEND RAW COTTON TO LANCASHIRE TO BE WOVEN; THE CLOTH WAS SENT BACK TO INDIA.



INDIA NOW BOUGHT LANCASHIRE COTTON. IN THIS WAY THE LANCASHIRE MEN & WOMEN GOT JOBS, THE BRITISH COTTON MERCHANTS AND SHIPPERS GOT THE PROFITS, AND THE INDIANS WENT OUT OF BUSINESS, BRITAIN GOT RICHER, INDIA GOT POORER.

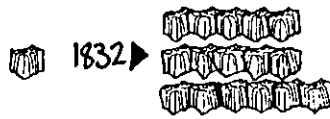
CHANGES IN THE INDIAN AND BRITISH CLOTH TRADE

BETWEEN 1815 & 1832 COTTON EXPORTS FROM INDIA FELL 13 TIMES WHILE COTTON IMPORTS INTO INDIA FROM BRITAIN ROSE 16 TIMES.

INDIAN EXPORTS TO BRITAIN - 1815 ▶ 1832 ▶



BRITISH EXPORTS TO INDIA - 1815 ▶ 1832 ▶



Source: Manchester D.E.P.

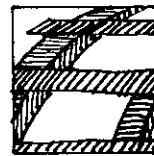
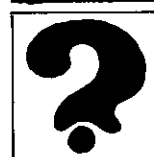
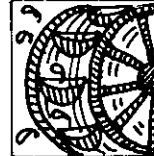
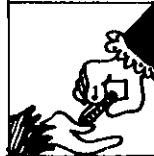
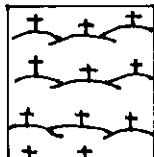
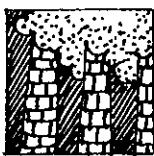
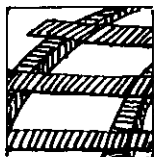
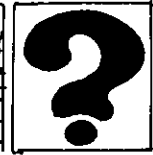
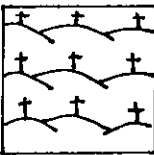
Teaching Development Issues: Colonialism

Source D

Thomas Cope, a silk weaver from Macclesfield, giving evidence before the Select Committee, 1840.

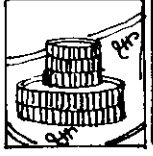
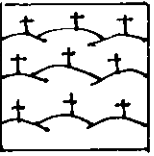
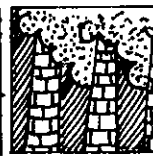
- Q. Do you think that a labourer in this country..... has a right to say, we will keep the labourer in the East Indies in that position in which he shall be able to get nothing for his food than rice?
- A. I certainly pity the East Indian labourer, but at the same time I have a greater feeling for my own family than I have for the East Indian labourer's family. I think it is wrong to sacrifice the comforts of my family for the sake of the East Indian labourer, because his condition happens to be worse than mine, and I think it is not good legislation to take away our labour and give it to the East Indian, because his condition is worse than ours. To raise his condition equal to ours, would be to make us destitute of employment, and throw us upon the rest of society to support us by charity, and this I hope will never take place in this country.

Source: India Office Records



Cotton and the Industrial Revolution: Historian 2

1. Write a sentence on what **Source A** tells you about each of the following:
 - (a) Whether Jenny Hargreaves might have been involved in developing the ideas for the Spinning Jenny;
 - (b) The two reasons why James Hargreaves did not make much money from inventing the Spinning Jenny.
2. Read **Source B** and write a sentence about each of the following:
 - (a) What happened to people who worked in the Indian cotton industry in the early 1800's;
 - (b) The reasons Mr Montgomery Martin gives for this.
3. **Source C** shows the effect of the Industrial Revolution in Britain on the cotton industry in India. What does it say about:
 - (a) cotton exports from India to Britain;
 - (b) cotton exports from Britain to India;
 - (c) the role of the government in this;
 - (d) the role of machines like Hargreaves' Spinning Jenny in this.
4. What does Thomas Cope (**Source D**) feel about the situation in India?
5. Write a short piece of work called 'Cotton and the Industrial Revolution'. Your first sentence can be: 'The cotton industry was a very important part of the Industrial Revolution. These sources tell us...'



Activity 3: 'Goods for Sale'

Time: allow at least a single lesson for this activity.

- Purpose:** To enable students to use **documents 1 to 6** as source material to:
- (a) examine the connections between Britain's increased wealth in the late eighteenth century and the expansion of trade;
 - (b) relate commodities for sale in Britain to the geographical location of the country of origin; and
 - (c) raise questions about trade and the process of wealth creation.
- Preparation:** Photocopies of set of **documents 1 to 6** and world map overleaf. (See below for quantities.)
- Procedure:**
1. Discussion of what we mean by 'wealth', 'trade' and 'consumption'.
 2. As a class read through the documents. There are some difficult areas. Many of the original documents show the use, in certain circumstances, of the uncrossed 'f' as an 's'. **Document 1** details the name of the ship, then the owner, the place the ship has sailed from, then the goods on board. In **document 2**, both hogsheads and tierces refer to measures of liquid - in this case containers carrying, probably, liquor. Thorne Wharfe (**document 3**) is on the River Trent, some twenty miles from Sheffield, and was the most inland point for large ships travelling from the Humber. In **document 5**, Florentines, Nankins and Calicos refer to silk and cotton cloth from Florence (Italy), Nanking (China) and Calicut (India) respectively. Students may need help to link silk and cotton goods with India as this is not made explicit in documents 4 and 5.
 3. In pairs, students re-read the documents and match the goods mentioned in them with the boxes on the maps. The emphasis here is on scanning rather than a thorough reading of the documents.
 4. Students feed back their findings to the class, building up a map linking commodity with country of origin.
 5. In pairs again, students write down three conclusions they can make and three questions they can ask in connection with this exercise. In trialling this activity we found that students did ask questions about why the trade focused on particular areas and about the relationship between Britain and those countries.

GOODS FOR SALE!

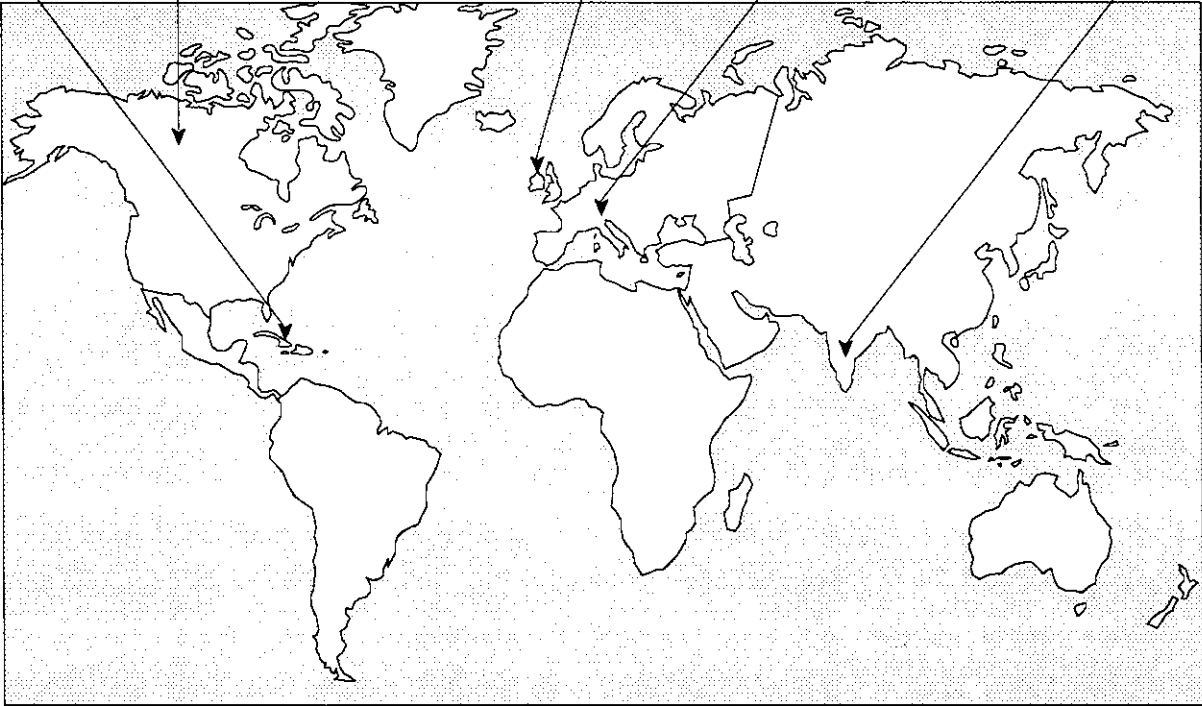
| NORTH AMERICA |
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| EUROPE |
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Colonialism in the Caribbean

This double page consists of background information which locates the documents and activities in Unit 2 within the context of colonialism in the Caribbean. It provides a brief summary of (a) the myths about Columbus and (b) the relationship between slavery, the sugar trade and economic development in Europe.

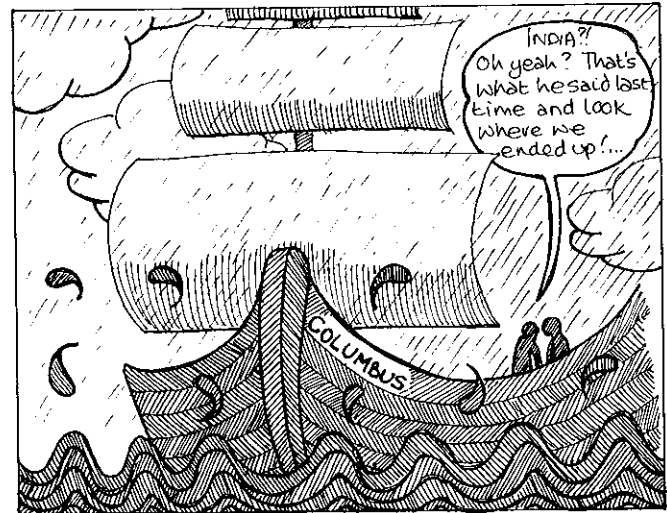
The Columbus Myths

There are a number of myths surrounding Columbus and the issue of 'exploration or encounter' which have been very influential in shaping European understanding of colonialism in the Americas.

Firstly there is the suggestion that Columbus and other so-called 'explorers' were engaged in sea-voyages merely because of curiosity and the desire to 'explore'. While these factors were undoubtedly present over-emphasis on them obscures the primacy of the economic motivation for these voyages. Europe in the fifteenth century was recovering from a major crisis in which a decline in agricultural production, population and trade had resulted in famine, plague, wars, revolts and the consequent break up of the feudal system. The expansion of trade, especially with the countries of the East, was a very desirable way of generating new wealth. Goods such as spices, silks and precious stones from India and China were in demand among the wealthy in Europe, but the overland trade route was long, dangerous and expensive. Hence the Spanish and the Portuguese began the search for a sea route to India and the East. Columbus and his Spanish crew stumbled across the Caribbean islands whilst looking for a sea route to India by travelling westwards. This was in 1492 - the same year that the Portuguese made their way via the tip of Africa to India.

Secondly despite research showing that (i) there were ancient civilisations living in the

Caribbean and the Americas, and (ii) African and European peoples made the voyage to the Americas centuries before Columbus, the success of the Spanish and other European peoples in having their 'encounters' represented as 'discoveries' is still resonant today. For example, a column entitled 'Tomorrow's Anniversaries' in the *Sheffield Star* (12/12/1991) includes: 'New Zealand discovered, 1642'.



Thirdly the indigenous inhabitants of the Caribbean and Central and South America have been represented in terms of myths which come directly from Columbus. The Arawaks - who initially welcomed the Spanish to the Bahamas - were portrayed as docile and passive; by contrast the Caribs - who led the resistance fight after the Spanish had responded to Arawak hospitality by enslaving them - became 'cannibals' and a 'warring tribe'. Ideas about cultural inferiority were later used again by the Spanish to justify the plunder of the highly developed Aztec and Inca empires in Mexico and Peru. Evidence shows that these civilisations developed industries and welfare provisions for their peoples. As with the Arawaks and Caribs, they fought long wars of resistance but were eventually subjected to the same process of decimation by plunder, murder, disease and enslavement.

The 1992 'Celebrations' provide a stark illustration of these myths, suggesting that Europeans not only discovered and brought

civilisation to the Caribbean, but also that this was the beginning of a mutually beneficial relationship. The response to the 'Celebrations' in Central and South America has been to celebrate 11th October 1492 as the last day of freedom and October 12th as the start of '500 years of Resistance'.



Sugar and Slavery

By the end of the sixteenth century the Spanish had begun to settle on the Caribbean islands, forcing enslaved Native Americans to work in the production of crops wanted in Spain. The British, French and Dutch, recognising that the Caribbean was an important source of wealth, made alliances which aimed to destroy both the Spanish monopoly and the remaining Caribbean resistance. The process of war, settlement and economic change whereby the Caribbean became involved in an unequal economic relationship with Europe was thus begun.

Britain's involvement in the wars and settlement in the Caribbean can be seen in a wider context of both colonial and capitalist expansion. It was the same increasingly-powerful merchant class which was spearheading both capitalist economic development in Britain and colonial expansion in Ireland and India.

During the 1620's and 1630's the British settled in St Christopher (St Kitts), Barbados, Nevis, Montserrat, and Antigua; the Caribs were successful in preventing them from settling in St Lucia (despite three attempts), Guyana and Grenada. British merchant companies, such as Spencer's, provided the money for settlement i.e. for land clearance, the provision of tools and servants, and the collection and marketing of the crop. The planters introduced crops which were in demand in Europe - firstly tobacco and then, when demand fell, cotton and, finally, sugar. While other crops - mainly tobacco, cotton, indigo, ginger, cocoa and coffee - were all important exports, it was sugar, known as 'white gold', which was crucial to the Caribbean economy, making the region a very dynamic trading area by the mid-seventeenth century. By the eighteenth century Britain, having fought other Europeans for control of both colonies and the carrying trade, emerged as the main colonising power in the Caribbean.

The sugar and slave trades were crucially linked, forming two sides of the triangular trade. Although the first cargo of slaves had been transported to the Caribbean by the Spanish in 1518 it was the 'sugar revolution' of 1640-1660 that led to its large scale development. To be profitable the sugar plantations needed to be large enough to carry out the first stage of the refining process; they thus required both investment and cheap labour. Although investment was easy to come by, the planters were dissatisfied with the workforce provided by the merchant companies. The British and Irish prisoners, (often political 'trouble-makers') shipped to the Caribbean as punishment, could only be hired on contracts of five to ten years; the enslaved Native Americans either resisted slavery or died from diseases brought by the Europeans. Hence the planters turned to Africa for another source of cheap labour. With the money which might pay for labourers for ten years the planters were able to buy a slave, his/her labour and also extensive agricultural skills, for life.

2.1 The Triangular Trade in 1755–56: Documents 7 to 16

The next two pages provide background information for documents 7 to 16 and activities 4 to 6.

Documents 7 to 16 are taken from the papers of Benjamin Spencer, a South Yorkshire merchant who was involved in the slave trade. Spencer was one of two merchant sons of the iron master and land owner William Spencer, who lived at Cannon Hall near Barnsley.

The documents follow each leg of the 'triangular' route from Britain to West Africa, to Antigua and North America in 1755–56.

The three central documents are numbers 7, 11 and 15 which concentrate on the exchange of goods at each stage. The other documents support these, giving evidence of the different groups of people involved and of the different terms of their involvement. We feel that this emphasis is important, not only because it is historically accurate and under-represented in much school literature on slavery, but also because it allows students to develop a more complex understanding which focuses on power and the development of structures, rather than on simplistic notions of good or bad individuals. Thus, although the whole of Britain was in some way implicated in the slave trade (in that all sections of the British economy benefitted from it directly or indirectly, and most people bought sugar and other goods), the merchant and the white labouring man and woman were involved in very different ways.

These issues are developed in Activities 4, 5 and 6. Activities 4 and 5 focus on contrasting the meaning of the trade for enslaved African people and for merchants who regarded them solely as merchandise. Activity 6 explores issues of power and profit.

Leg 1: Documents 7–10 - London to West Africa

Document 7 tells us that on the 14 May 1755, the 'Cannon Hall', owned by Benjamin Spencer & Co, was waiting in the River Thames, London, to set sail for West Africa. The ship, captained by Stephen Chamney, carried three bales and one chest of merchandise to be delivered to Captain James Gaul in West Africa.

Document 8 refers to some of the merchandise on board the ship to be exchanged for slaves at James Fort on the River Gambia, West Africa. The contents included textiles, various arms and manufactured produce, including 'a travelling copper kitchen complete'. This example has been included to suggest local involvement in the trade: it is likely that the guns and muskets were manufactured in Birmingham, the cloth in the West Riding and the knives and steels in Sheffield.

Document 9 is a copy of the sailing agreement between the master (Stephen Chamney) and the crew of Thomas Goodaker (the Captain's mate), Edward Rogers (the foremastman), James Hambrook (an ordinary sailor), Thomas Smith (the land man), and another ordinary sailor. Document 10 tells that the ship carried seven men: it is likely, therefore, that another sailor was enlisted nearer to the time of sailing. The terms of employment of these white sailors needs to be emphasised. The merchant would be making considerable sums of money from his involvement in the West India trade, the sailor often joined up as a result of poverty and unemployment (and probably quite frequently because of the press-gang). He was subject to horrific treatment and would be very likely to die before he returned to Britain. Without denying that working people benefitted from colonialism or that they acquired racist ideas during the course of the nineteenth century, the power differentials between them and the merchants are significant. There is a sense in which the condition of the white sailors is more easily

comparable to that of the slaves than much of the school literature on slavery allows.

Document 10 is a list of supplies for the journey, examined on 21 May. It includes candles; food, such as cheese, beef, fruit, salt, and three barrels of strong beer. It is again illustrative of the extent of British economic involvement in the trade.

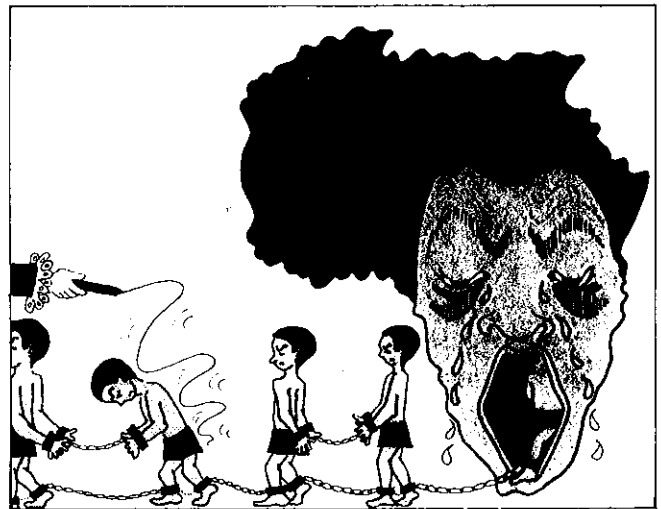
Leg 2: Documents 11-13 - West Africa, the Caribbean and North America

Document 11 gives details of another ship - the 'Africa' - which, on 20 September 1755, was waiting in the River Gambia, West Africa, to begin the second leg of the Triangular Trade. Usually the same ship would do all three journeys. The 'Cannon Hall' followed this ship, carrying more slaves for Spencer and captained by a merchant called Charles Quinsac. Unfortunately, the document for this journey is not available (this could be used as an illustration of the difficulties of historical research!) It would seem (from correspondence between David Warner in Antigua and Spencer) that the 'Cannon Hall' was delayed because both ship and crew were in bad condition. On board the 'Africa' waiting to sail for Antigua were 25 African people who had been bought with the profit from the sale of Spencer's merchandise in Africa. The 15 men, 5 women, 3 girls and 2 boys would sail with hundreds of other slaves on the 'Africa'. To distinguish them as 'belonging' to Benjamin Spencer, they were branded on the right buttock. Spencer's slaves were to be received by Daniel Warner in Antigua, who would then sell them to planters.

Document 12 is an extract from a letter to Benjamin Spencer from Daniel Warner in Antigua. Although it is dated 14 March 1756 it refers to the arrival of the 'Africa' at the end of October 1755. It has been included as an illustration of (a) the conditions on the Middle Passage, during which seven of Spencer's 'cargo' of 25 slaves died, followed by two more on arrival in Antigua, and (b) the

competition from other slave traders, in this case the arrival of two French ships carrying 850 slaves. Thus, although Warner had managed to sell ten of Spencer's slaves prior to this, he had decided to send the remaining eight to South Carolina, along with another 'parcel of slaves' (unfortunately there are no details) who had just arrived with Quinsac on Spencer's 'Cannon Hall'. The letter also refers to the poor condition of the 'Cannon Hall' and its crew.

Document 13 is an extract from a letter to Benjamin Spencer from John Guerard in South Carolina, who received the slaves on Spencer's account. The letter, written in December 1755, informs Spencer that the slaves - now mainly women (presumably most of the men had not survived the Middle Passage or were among the ten sold in Antigua) - were very ill, and unlikely to fetch very good prices.



Leg 3: Documents 14-16—South Carolina to London:

Document 14 is an extract of a letter to Benjamin Spencer from John Guerard in South Carolina, written in February 1756. It informs Spencer that the remaining thirteen slaves had been sold, and that rice and indigo had been bought with the profit.

Document 15 tells us that the newly repaired 'Cannon Hall' is waiting in the harbour at Charlestown, South Carolina, ready to sail

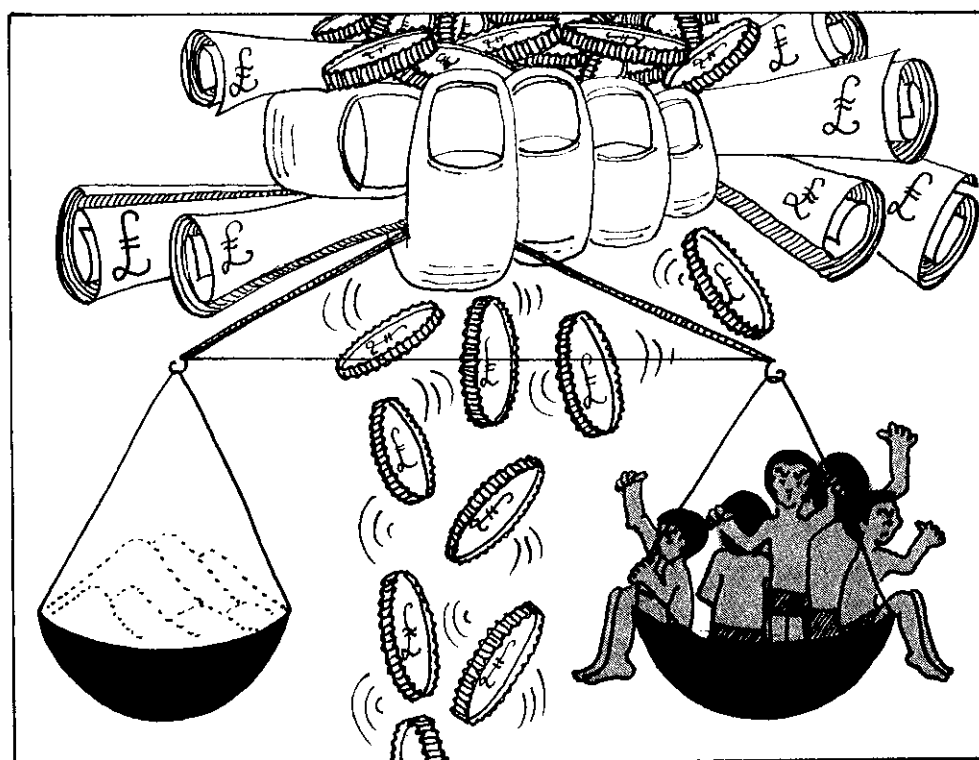
back to England. It is carrying 58 barrels and 26 half-barrels of rice and three casks of indigo.

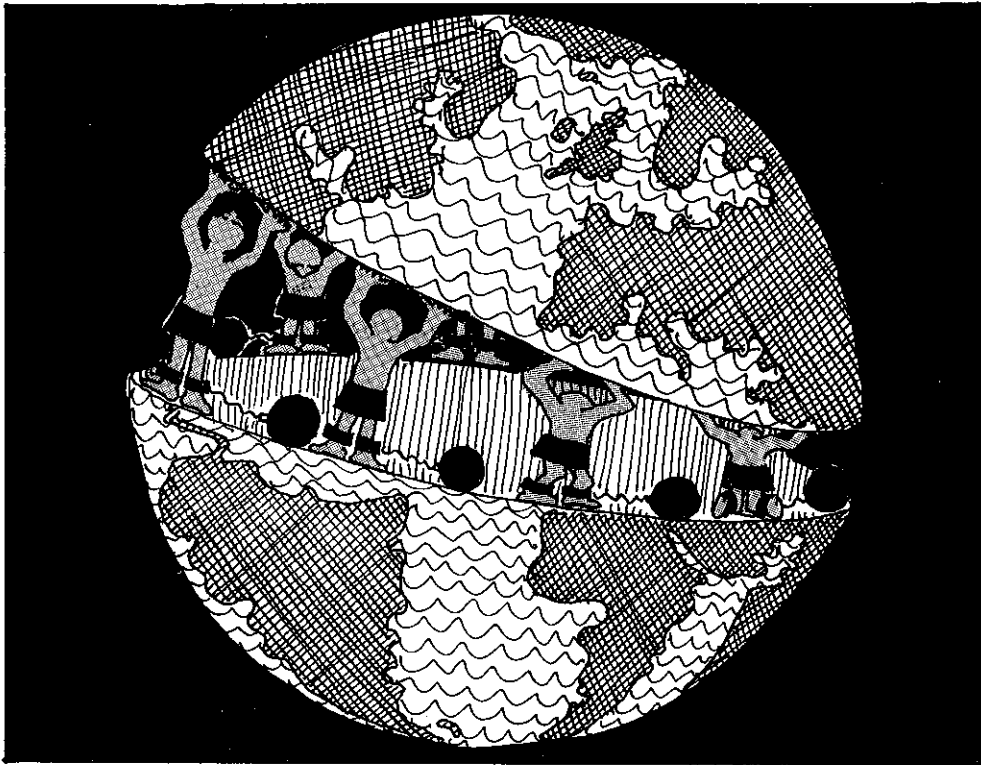
Document 16 tells us that the captain of the ship is called Durrell Clews. We know of only one of the sailors, a mariner, named King. As far as we know none of the original sailors went back to England on this ship. It could be that they returned on a different ship. It could be that they all died. Also in the collection are bills for admission to Greenwich Hospital for Sailors, suggestive of the poor state of health of many of those who did return.

Spencer's Profit

It is, unfortunately, not possible to work out Spencer's actual profit from this journey, or

how many of 'his' slaves died on the Middle Passage or on arriving in the Caribbean. Indeed the indications are that Spencer did not make the profit he expected on this occasion: there are references to storm damage to cargo on the way back to London, and also correspondence suggesting that Spencer thought Quinsac was cheating him, telling him more slaves had died than really had. However, there are two important points: firstly, this was not Spencer's only voyage, and although his main interests were elsewhere and investment in the slave trade was very much a 'side-line' for him, he would not have continued with his involvement if he was bound to lose money. Secondly, by the second half of the eighteenth century the slave trade was becoming a less profitable venture; maybe the precariousness of Spencer's profit margins in 1755-6 are suggestive of some of the reasons for the ending of the trade in 1807.





Development and Underdevelopment

There is, however, no doubt that the triangular trade - despite its risks - was a crucial means of wealth creation, not only for individuals (ie individual merchants rather than individual sailors or West African leaders involved in the trade), but also for British industry and government. The slave trade was a national economic venture, involving people in many areas of economic life in Britain - from traders, planters and merchants, involved in kitting out the ships, to consumers. Many of the planters used their profits to build huge estates in England. Merchants used profit from the trade to invest in agricultural experiments, the development of banking and insurance (both Barclays and Lloyds made their initial profit out of the slave trade), and in funding the developments in science and technology (James Watts' steam engine was developed using money made out of the West Indies trade). In Sheffield some of the investment in Thorncliffe Iron Works at Chapelton, which produced iron rails for the South Yorkshire colliery wagon-ways, came from Henry

Longden, who is described by one historian as 'a wealthy West India merchant of Sheffield.' (*T. S. Ashton*) These enterprises formed part of the basis of the Industrial Revolution in Britain.

The counterbalance to the process of development in Britain was underdevelopment and dependency in West Africa and the Caribbean. West African societies lost 40-50 million people as a result of the trade and activities connected with it (*Walter Rodney*). The loss of millions of young and fit men and women, and the consequent repercussions for industry, agriculture and development, had a devastating impact on African economies. The Caribbean economy, sustained by the import of African slave labour, was gradually reorganised around the export of cash crops becoming increasingly dependent on an unequal relationship with Europe. The result of this process is evident in the world today: in the relative poverty, dependency and political instability of areas of Africa and the Caribbean.

Activity 4: 'Capture and Escape'

Time: allow 20 minutes for this activity

- Purpose:** To encourage empathy.
- Preparation:** The teacher needs to be familiar with the script below.
- Procedure:**
1. Introduce activity - the time it will take and that it involves sitting quietly and using the imagination.
 2. Read through the script slowly and in a confident voice, taking care to pause for a long enough time where indicated.
 3. Class discussion - on what they found hard or easy to imagine; what connections they can make between this exercise and real life situations.

The Script:

Right, I'd like you to listen very carefully. Get yourselves comfortable on your chairs. If you want to, rest your head on your arms on the table in front of you...but make sure you are sitting in a way in which you will be comfortable for twenty minutes...sitting so that you will not need to move or disturb other people during that time. (Pause while people get into comfortable positions).

Close your eyes gently and concentrate on the thoughts inside your head. Find out what all the different things are, that are going on inside your head, worries, fears, excitements. Whatever they are imagine that you can collect them up in your hands and put them into an imaginary suitcase beside you. (Pause.) Any noises you can hear in the room or outside, collect them up as well and put them into your suitcase. (Pause.) Now close your suitcase and put it to one side, its quite safe, you can open it again later if you want to. (Pause.)

Now concentrate on your own breathing...As you breath in, feel the fresh air going into you; with it comes calmness and relaxation...As you breath out, your tensions and stresses leave you. (Pause.) And now imagine yourself in your favourite place... It could be real, maybe in your favourite room at home, or somewhere else you really like to be; it could even be an imaginary place...But in this place you feel at home, relaxed, calm and contented. Take time to look at your surroundings, all the things around you that help make where you are a special place. Maybe there are people around who are special to you; imagine the people, if there are any, smiling at you; they are also happy and contented. (Pause.) Now you hear a noise, it's faint at first, but it's getting closer, there are lots more noises all around you, you are surrounded. Strong hands and arms clasp hold of you and pull you away from your special place. You can't see what these people are like but they are talking in rough voices.

They are taking you away from your special place... you try and struggle but it is useless...there are too many people holding you; the more you struggle the tighter they hold on to you and the

more it hurts. You notice that one of your friends has also been caught, this friend is being taken in the other direction from you. How do you feel about your friends being taken away. (Pause.)

Soon you find yourself tied up, your legs first and then your arms, then you are put onto a cold surface. You feel that the floor is vibrating and you hear the noise of an engine. You feel that you are moving along, maybe in the back of a van... You look around you and in the dim light you notice other faces, people you don't know, sitting or lying down. What are their faces like? What are their expressions like?

The van seems to keep going for hours before it stops. When it does stop, after a while you notice a different vibration deep below the van... You are being moved again, this time forwards and side to side... You begin to feel sick but there is nothing you can do about it - there are people all around you. You realise you must be on a ship.

The journey seems to take days or even weeks, you can't be sure. Sometimes the door of the van is opened and a bag of sliced bread is thrown in, it's dry with nothing on it. There's also a bottle of water, but that's all. Take some time to imagine what it is like living like this for many days or even weeks. Imagine how uncomfortable you feel, imagine how hot it is and what the smell is like. (Pause.)

After a long time the engine of the van starts again and you feel that you are leaving the ship. After quite a short journey, the door is opened and light floods in. What is it like on your eyes? The strong hands and arms grasp you and take you to this big building. In the building are rows and rows of tables with stacks of plastic boxes on them. A big, fierce-sounding, person picks you up and makes you stand next to a table. What is this person like? (Pause.)

You are feeling very weak after your journey and you don't have the energy to struggle. The person picks up a plastic box and into it puts a board with electronics on it. The person screws the board into place inside the box then screws the box shut. The person then turns to you and gives you a plastic box and waits. You collapse exhausted in a heap on the floor. You feel a hard slap across your face and then nothing...there is darkness for a long time. (Pause.)

You gradually pull yourself up and see a big building full of people about your own age putting things into plastic boxes and screwing them up. The person sitting next to you, who is quite friendly, shows you exactly what to do. Imagine yourself picking up a plastic box. What colour is it?... picking up a circuit board; what is it like? Fitting it into the box, into some grooves, then screwing it tightly in place then closing the top of the box and screwing that down. What is the box like? What do you think it does? This work seems to go on and on for ages. As you look around you see people with guns watching you, there seems to be no way to escape. As you work you remember your special place back home...What does it feel like now? How do you feel now? (Pause.)

One day, after many many weeks working, you smell smoke. As you look around you, you notice all the guards have rushed to the corner of the room where someone has connected a big pile of circuit boards to a thick wire. There is a loud bang and fire breaks out, shots are fired. You see others rushing for the door, you go with them... You are outside, where do you go next? You are free, you now find yourself among a group of friendly people, some of them you recognise as your friends from back home. You walk and hitch-hike together until you are back at your special place. (Pause.) That's it. (Pause.) When you are ready gradually bring your attention back to this room, back to the people who are here. Open your eyes and look around you.

Activity 5: Equiano's Story

Time: allow a double lesson for this activity.

- Purpose:** To enable students to acknowledge and challenge racist ideas as part of a teacher-controlled introduction to the topic.
- Preparation:** Teacher needs (i) **document 25** (the photograph of Olaudah Equiano); (ii) the extract from Equiano's account of the Middle Passage, included here on pages 39–41; and (iii) enough photocopies of **document 11** (the shipping agreement for the transporting of slaves from West Africa to the Caribbean) for students to read in pairs.
- Procedure:**
1. Teacher uses **document 25** to introduce the topic. Equiano links the sections on the triangular trade with the anti-slavery movement, and his story can be used to give an overview (see page 60). From our experience of trialling these documents we are aware that some white students will respond with racist comments and sniggers about Equiano being dressed in clothes they associate with women or wealthy white men etc. We feel that this is a good starting point from which teachers can (a) acknowledge the racism, and (b) challenge it by placing it in a historical context (see section 2.2 on the development of racism). We suggest that teachers challenge racist comments immediately in a way that is non-threatening, ie by asking questions (That's interesting, why do you think that? Where do you get that information from? etc) and then saying 'We are going to look at how such ideas came about as a result of Europeans needing to justify the slave trade.' This is important not only to enable white students to question their racist assumptions, but also to provide a safer environment for black students who, especially if in a predominantly white school, may find the teaching of these issues problematic.
 2. The teacher can then use Equiano's description of the Middle Passage to introduce the topic on the triangular trade. In our experience the response to this provides a powerful contrast to 1.
 3. The teacher then hands out enough copies of **document 11** for students to look at in pairs. Then go through the document, picking out the main points - the date, the name of the ship, the merchandise, the reference to branding, the beginning and destination of the journey etc.
 4. Class discussion about the different ideas and feelings they have about the slave trade after reading these two accounts.

Extract from *The Life of Olaudah Equiano*, Paul Edwards (ed.)
Longman 1988, pp 22-28.

The first object which saluted my eyes when I arrived on the coast was the sea, and a slave ship, which was then riding at anchor, and waiting for its cargo. These filled me with astonishment, which was soon converted into terror when I was carried on board. I was immediately handled and tossed up to see if I were sound by some of the crew; and I was now persuaded that I had gotten into a world of bad spirits, and that they were going to kill me. Their complexions too differing so much from ours, their long hair, and the language they spoke, (which was very different from any I had ever heard) united to confirm me in this belief. Indeed such were the horrors of my views and fears at the moment, that, if ten thousand worlds had been my own, I would have freely parted with them all to have exchanged my condition with that of the meanest slave in my own country. When I looked round the ship too and saw a large furnace or copper boiling, and a multitude of black people of every description chained together, every one of their countenances expressing dejection and sorrow, I no longer doubted of my fate; and, quite overpowered with horror and anguish, I fell motionless on the deck and fainted. When I recovered a little I found some black people about me, who I believe were some of those who brought me on board; and had been receiving their pay; they talked to me in order to cheer me, but all in vain. I asked them if we were not to be eaten by those white men with horrible looks, red faces, and loose hair. They told me I was not; and one of the crew brought me a small portion of spirituous liquor in a wine glass; but, being afraid of him, I would not take-it out of his hand. One of the blacks therefore took it from him and gave it to me, and I took a little down my palate, which, instead of reviving me, as they thought it would, threw me into the greatest consternation at the strange feeling it produced, having never tasted any such liquor before. Soon after this the blacks who brought me on board went off, and left me abandoned to despair. I now saw myself deprived of all chance of returning to my native country, or even the least glimpse of hope of gaining the shore, which I now considered as friendly; and I even wished for my former slavery in preference to my present situation, which was filled with horrors of every kind, still heightened by my ignorance of what I was to undergo. I was not long suffered to indulge my grief; I was soon put down under the decks, and there I received such a salutation in my nostrils as I had never experienced in my life, so that, with the loathsomeness of

the stench, and crying together, I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat, nor had I the least desire to taste any thing. I now wished for the last friend, death, to relieve me; but soon, to my grief, two of the white men offered me eatables; and, on my refusing to eat, one of them held me fast by the hands, and laid me across I think the windlass, and tied my feet, while the other flogged me severely. I had never experienced any thing of this kind before; and although, not being used to the water, I naturally feared that element the first time I saw it, yet nevertheless, could I have got over the nettings, I would have jumped over the side, but I could not; and, besides, the crew used to watch us very closely who were not chained down to the decks, lest we should leap into the water: and I have seen some of these poor African prisoners most severely cut for attempting to do so, and hourly whipped for not eating. This indeed was often the case with myself. In a little time after, amongst the poor chained men, I found some of my own nation, which in a small degree gave ease to my mind. I inquired of these what was to be done with us; they gave me to understand we were to be carried to these white people's country to work for them. I then was a little revived, and thought, if it were no worse than working, my situation was not so desperate: but still I feared I should be put to death, the white people looked and acted, as I thought, in so savage a manner; for I had never seen among any people such instances of brutal cruelty; and this not only shewn towards us blacks, but also to some of the whites themselves. One white man in particular I saw, when we were permitted to be on deck, flogged so unmercifully with a large rope near the foremast, that he died in consequence of it; and they tossed him over the side as they would have done a brute. This made me fear these people the more; and I expected nothing less than to be treated in the same manner. I could not help expressing my fears and apprehensions to some of my countrymen: I asked them if these people had no country, but lived in this hollow place (the ship): they told me they did not, but came from a distant one. 'Then,' said I, 'how comes it in all our country we never heard of them?' They told me because they lived so very far off. I then asked where were their women? Had they any like themselves? I was told they had: 'and why,' said I, 'do we not see them?' They answered, because they were left behind. I asked how the vessel could go? They told me they could not tell; but that there were cloths put on the mast by the help of the ropes I saw, and then the vessel went on, and the white men had some spell or magic they put in the water when they

liked in order to stop the vessel. I was exceedingly amazed at this account, and really thought they were spirits. I therefore wished much to be from amongst them, for I expected they would sacrifice me: but my wishes were vain; for we were so quartered that it was impossible for any of us to make our escape. While we stayed on the coast I was mostly on deck; and one day, to my great astonishment, I saw one of these vessels coming in with the sails up. As soon as the whites saw it, they gave a great shout, at which we were amazed, and the more so as the vessel appeared larger by approaching nearer. At last she came to an anchor in my sight, and when the anchor was let go, I and my countrymen who saw it were lost in astonishment to observe the vessel stop; and were now convinced it was done by magic. Soon after this the other ship got her boats out, and they came on board of us, and the people of both ships seemed very glad to see each other. Several of the strangers also shook hands with us black people, and made motions with their hands, signifying I suppose we were to go to their country; but we did not understand them. At last, when the ship we were in had got in all her cargo, they made ready with many fearful noises, and we were all put under deck, so that we could not see how they managed the vessel. But this disappointment was the least of my sorrow. The stench of the hold while we were on the coast was so intolerably loathsome, that it was dangerous to remain there for any time, and some of us had been permitted to stay on the deck for the fresh air; but now that the whole ship's cargo were confined together, it became absolutely pestilential. The closeness of the place, and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us. This produced copious perspirations, so that the air soon became unfit for respiration, from a variety of loathsome smells, and brought on a sickness among the slaves, of which many died, thus falling victims to the improvident avarice, as I may call it, of their purchasers. This wretched situation was again aggravated by the galling of the chains, now become insupportable; and the filth of the necessary tubs, into which the children often fell, and were almost suffocated. The shrieks of the women, and the groans of the dying, rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable.

Happily perhaps for myself I was soon reduced so low here that it was thought necessary to keep me almost always on deck; and from my extreme youth I was not put in fetters. In this situation I expected every hour to share the fate of my companions, some of whom were almost daily brought upon deck at the point of death, which I began to hope would soon put an end to my miseries: Often did I think many of the inhabitants of the deep much more happy than myself. I envied them the freedom they enjoyed, and as often wished I could change my condition for theirs. Every circumstance I met with served only to render my state more painful, and heighten my apprehensions, and my opinion of the cruelty of the whites. One day they had taken a number of fishes; and when they had killed and satisfied themselves with as many as they thought fit, to our astonishment who were on the deck, rather than give any of them to us to eat as we expected, they tossed the remaining fish into the sea again, although we begged and prayed for some as well as we could, but in vain; and some of my countrymen, being pressed by hunger, took an opportunity, when they thought no one saw them, of trying to get a little privately; but they were discovered, and the attempt procured them some very severe floggings. One day, when we had a smooth sea and moderate wind, two of my wearied countrymen who were chained together (I was near them at the time), preferring death to such a life of misery, somehow made through the nettings and jumped into the sea: immediately another quite dejected fellow, who, on account of his illness, was suffered to be out of irons, also followed their example; and I believe many more would very soon have done the same if they had not been prevented by the ship's crew, who were instantly alarmed. Those of us that were the most active were in a moment put down under the deck, and there was such a noise and confusion amongst the people of the ship as I never heard before, to stop her, and get the boat out to go after the slaves. However two of the wretches were drowned, but they got the other, and afterwards flogged him unmercifully for thus attempting to prefer death to slavery. In this manner we continued to undergo more hardships than I can now relate, hardships which are inseparable from this accursed trade. Many a time we were near suffocation from the want of fresh air, which we were often without for whole days together. This, and the stench of the necessary tubs, carried off many. During our passage I first saw flying fishes, which surprised me very much: they used frequently to fly across the ship, and many of them fell on the deck. I also now first saw the use of

the quadrant: I had often with astonishment seen the mariners make observations with it, and I could not think what it meant. They at last took notice of my surprise; and one of them, willing to increase it, as well as to gratify my curiosity, made me one day look through it: The clouds appeared to me to be land, which disappeared as they passed along. This heightened my wonder; and I was now more persuaded than ever that I was in another world, and that every thing about me was magic. At last we came in sight of the island of Barbados, at which the whites on board gave a great shout, and made many signs of joy to us. We did not know what to think of this; but as the vessel drew nearer we plainly saw the harbour, and other ships of different kinds and sizes; and we soon anchored amongst them off Bridge Town. Many merchants and planters now came on board, though it was in the evening. They put us in separate parcels, and examined us attentively. They also made us jump, and pointed to the land, signifying we were to go there. We thought by this we should be eaten by these ugly men, as they appeared to us; and, when soon after we were all put down under the deck again, there was much dread and trembling among us, and nothing but bitter cries to be heard all the night from these apprehensions, insomuch that at last the white people got some old slaves from the land to pacify us. They told us we were not to be eaten, but to work, and were soon to go on land, where we should see many of our country people. This report eased us much; and sure enough, soon after we were landed, there came to us Africans of all languages. We were conducted immediately to the merchant's yard, where we were pent up altogether like so many sheep in a fold, without regard to sex or age. As every object was new to me everything I saw filled me with surprise. What struck me first was that the houses were built with stories, and in every respect different from those in Africa: but I was still more astonished on seeing people on horseback. I did not know what this could mean; and indeed I thought these people were full of nothing but magical arts. While I was in this astonishment one of my fellow prisoners spoke to a countryman of his about the horses, who said they were the same kind they had in their country. I understood them, though they were from a distant part of Africa, and I thought it odd that I had not seen any horses there; but afterwards, when I came to converse with different Africans, I found they had many horses amongst them, and much larger than those I then saw. We were not many days in the merchant's custody before we were sold after their usual manner, which is this: On a signal given, (as the beat of a drum) the buyers rush at once into the yard where the slaves are confined, and make a choice of that parcel they like best. The noise and clamour with which this is attended, and the eagerness visible

in the countenances of the buyers, serve not a little to increase the apprehensions of the terrified Africans who may well be supposed to consider them as the ministers of that destruction to which they think themselves devoted. In this manner, without scruple, are relations and friends separated, most of them never to see each other again. I remember in the vessel in which I was brought over, in the men's apartment, there were several brothers, who, in the sale, were sold in different lots; and it was very moving on this occasion to see and hear their cries at parting. O, ye nominal Christians! might not an African ask you, learned you this from your God, who says unto you, Do unto all men as you would men should do unto you.

Is it not enough that we are torn from our country and friends to toil for your luxury and lust of gain? Must every tender feeling be likewise sacrificed to your avarice? Are the dearest friends and relations, now rendered more dear by their separation from their kindred still to be parted from each other, and thus prevented from cheering the gloom of slavery with the small comfort of being together and mingling their sufferings and sorrows? Why are parents to lose their children, brothers their sisters, or husbands their wives? Surely this is a new refinement in cruelty which, while it has no advantage to atone for it, thus aggravates distress, and adds fresh horrors even to the wretchedness of slavery.

Activity 6: Spencer's Venture

Time: allow 30 minutes for Part (a); an hour for Part (b)

Purpose: To enable students to (a) extract information from documents; and (b) use that information to examine involvement in the triangular trade from a perspective which differentiates not only in terms of race but also of gender and, specifically, class.

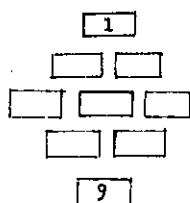
Preparation: This activity requires quite a lot of photocopying as each group needs (a) a set of documents (either 7-10, 11-13 or 14-16) and (b) a set of 'diamond ranking' cards (on the following three pages). The teacher requires a photocopy of the map of the triangular trade on p49. Some of these documents are quite complicated (particularly numbers 11-13). Detailed introductory paragraphs have been added to them which explain what the document is about. While more able students should be encouraged to grapple with the document itself (in some cases, the introductory paragraph could be masked), less able students could use the introductions to gain information. It is also possible for the sets to be further subdivided to enable their use with students with differing abilities.

Procedure:

Part (a)

1. The class is split into thirds, with students in each third working in pairs or small groups.
2. Each group is given a set of documents referring to one leg of the triangular journey.
3. Students examine the documents in their groups and answer the questions on the relevant page (p46, 47 or 48).
4. Students feed back into the main group, explaining what their documents were about, the people and goods mentioned in them, and locating their leg of the journey on a world map, thus building up a picture of the trade as a whole.

Part (b)



5. Students move on to a diamond-ranking exercise. Working in pairs they arrange cards in a diamond according to the notion of profit, ie the people they think benefitted most go at the top, least go at the bottom, with the rest ordered in between.
6. Students are encouraged to think of another possible group to fill in the blank card e.g. factory workers in Britain.
7. Students use their 'diamond' to write a short piece entitled 'Profit and the Slave Trade'.
8. Students feed back into the larger group, summing up the main points relating to the involvement of different groups of people.

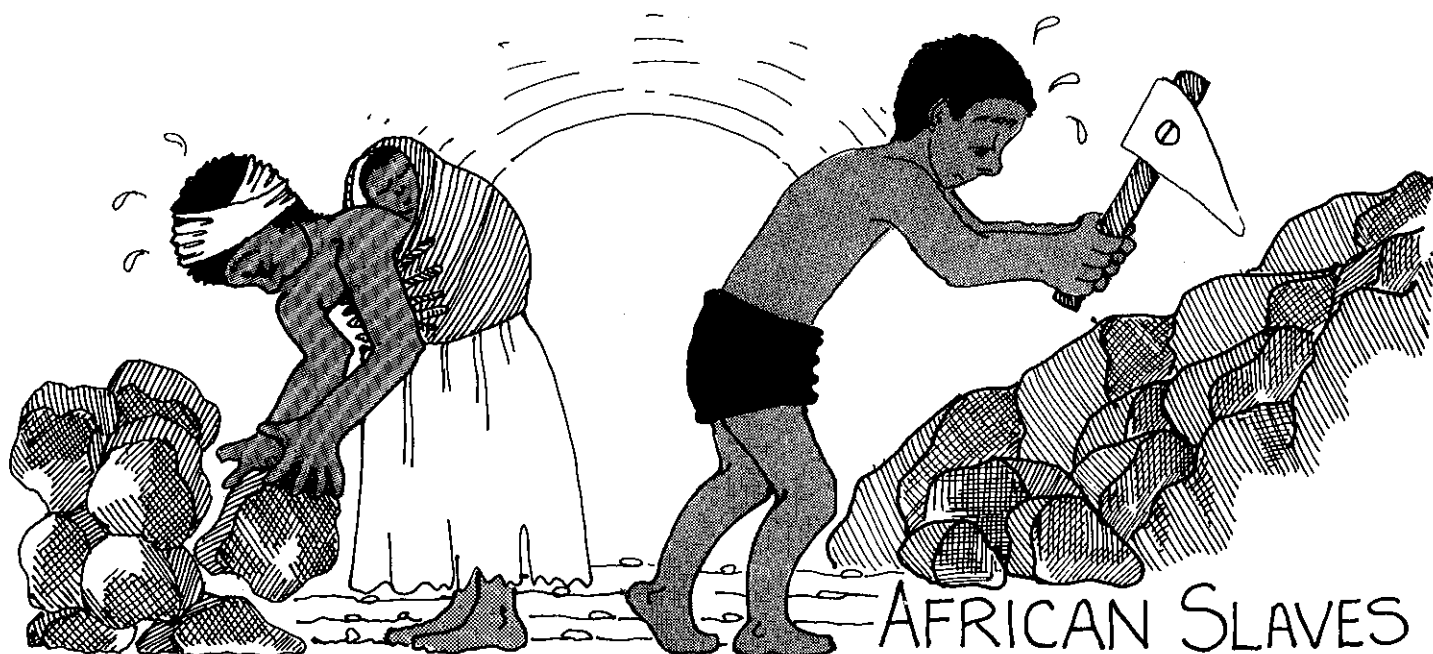
NB Confusion may be caused by the dates on the documents. Often 1755 reads - because of the nature of the script - like 1756. This is not the case. Only documents 12, 14 and 15 are dated 1756!



SUGAR
PLANTATION
OWNER



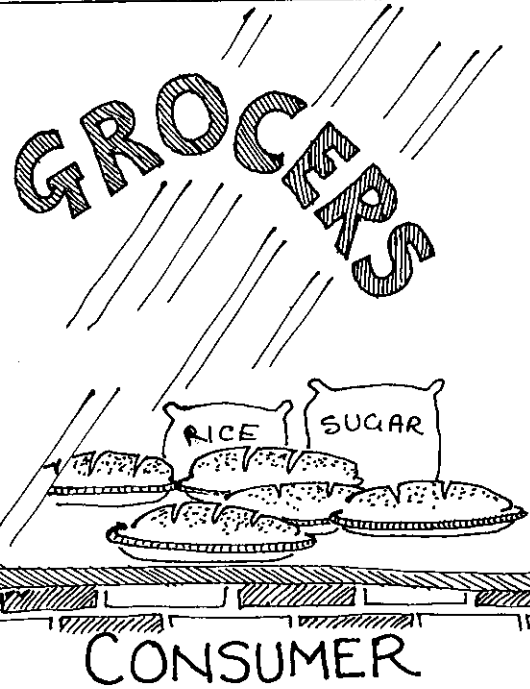
WEST
AFRICAN
LEADERS



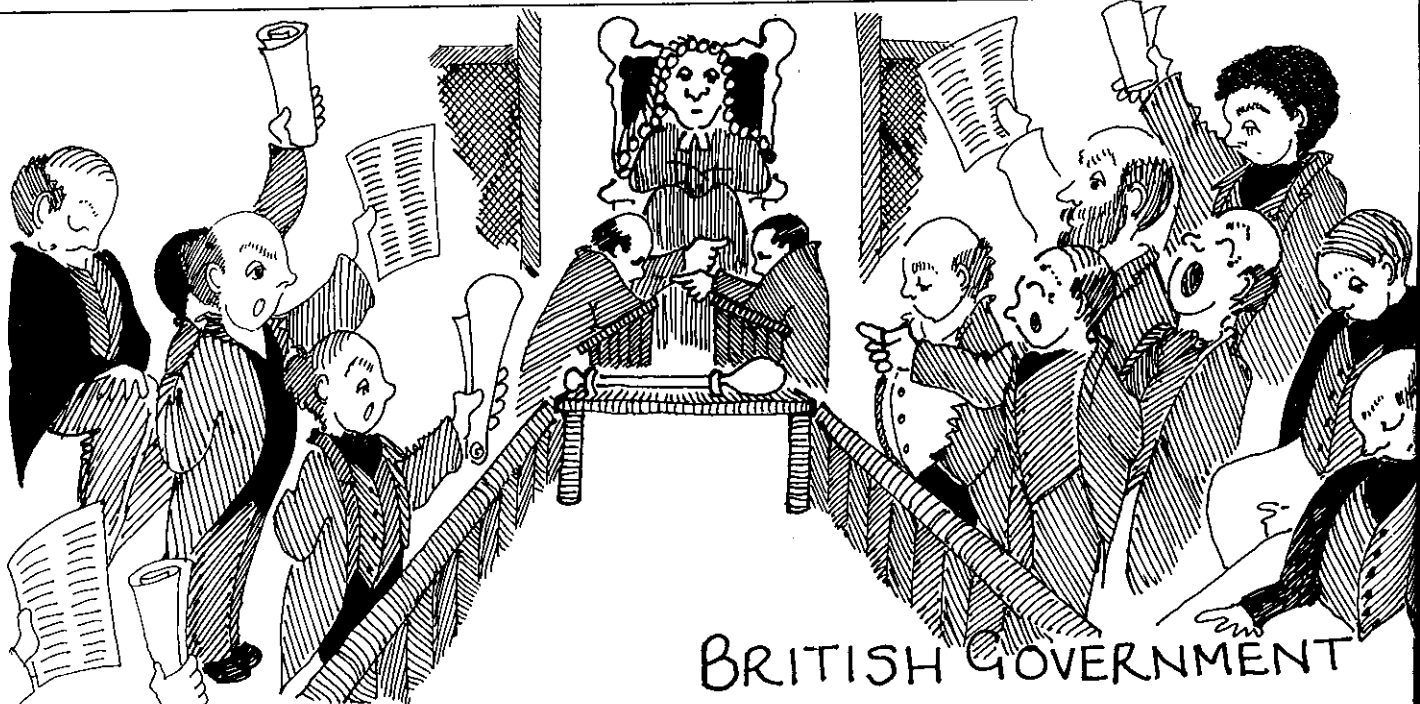
AFRICAN SLAVES



WHITE SAILOR

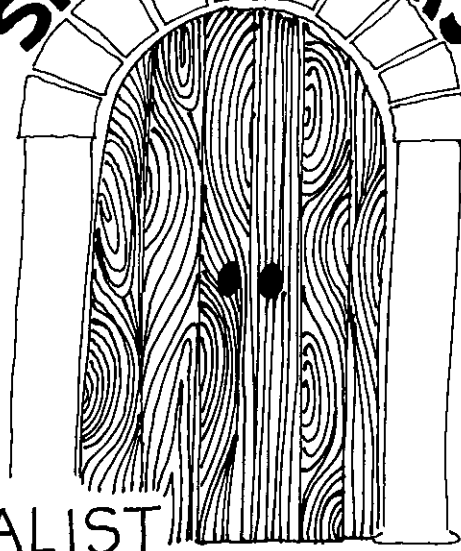


CONSUMER



BRITISH GOVERNMENT

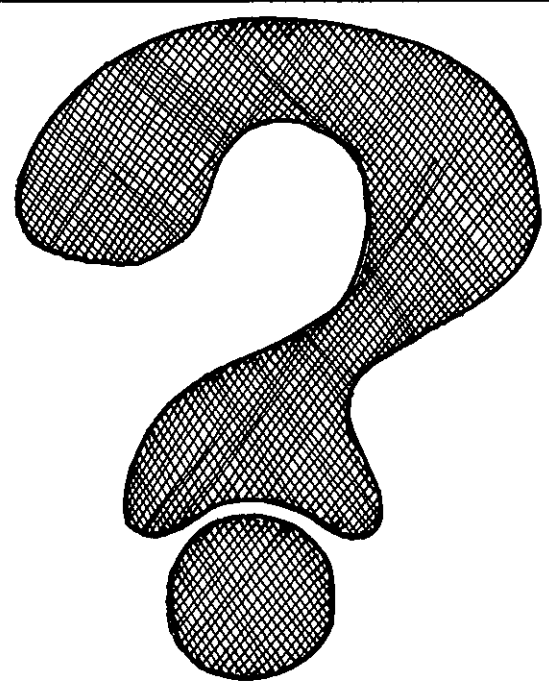
STEEL WORKS

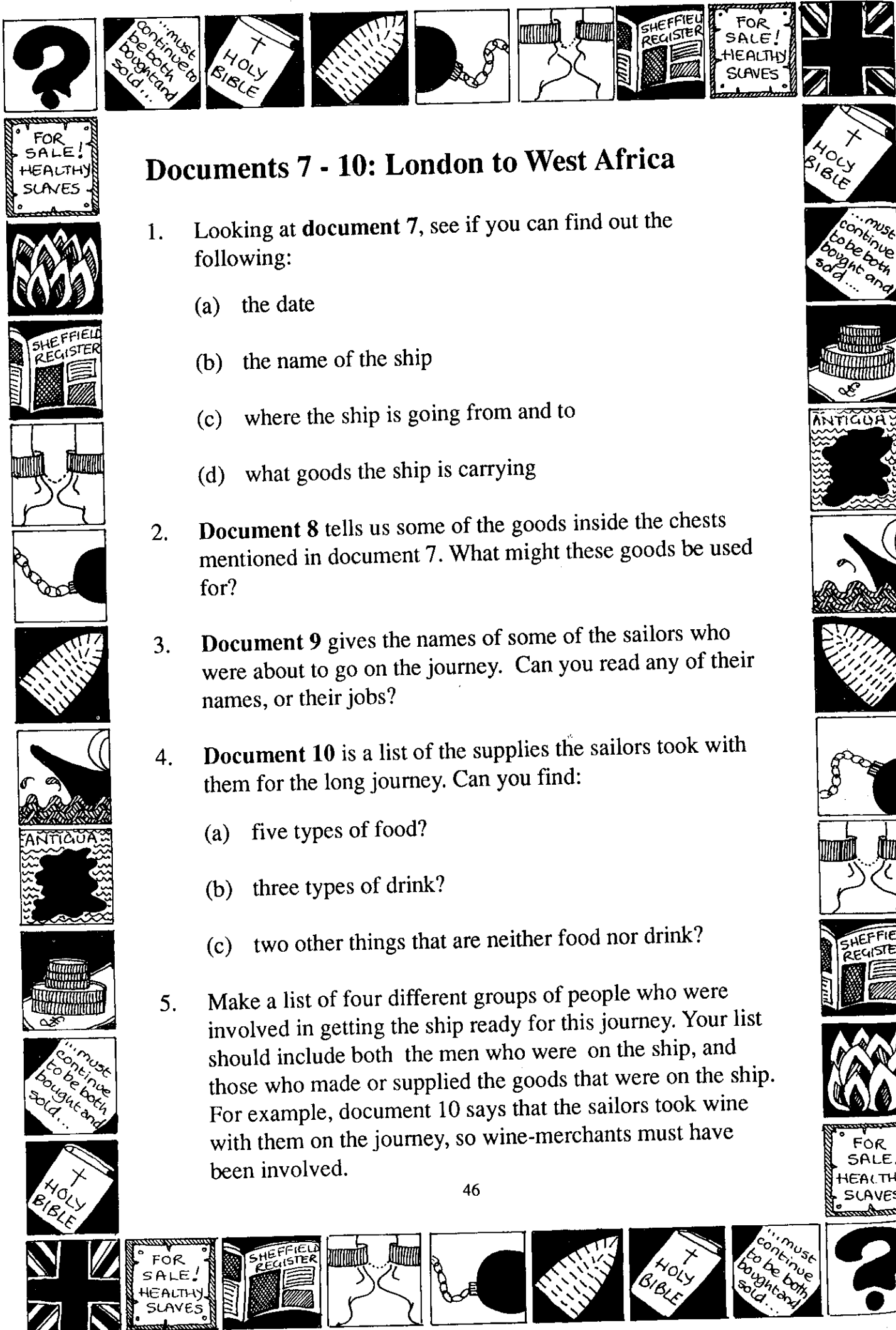


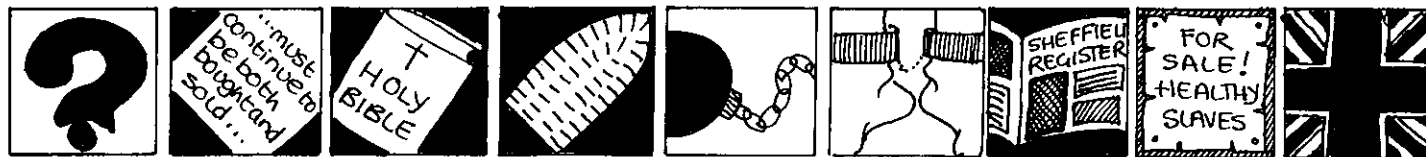
INDUSTRIALIST



MERCHANT







Documents 11 - 13: West Africa to Antigua and South Carolina

- Looking at **document 11**, see if you can find out the following:

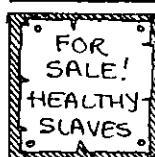
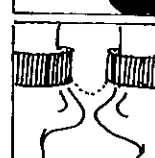
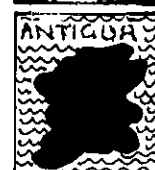
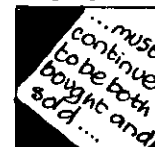
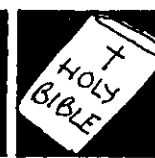
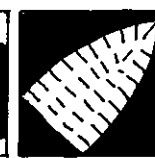
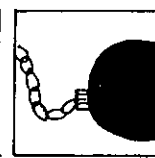
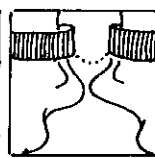
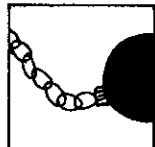
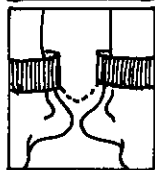
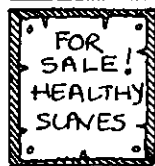
- the date
- the name of the ship
- where the ship is going from and to
- what goods the ship is carrying

- Document 12** is part of a letter to Benjamin Spencer in London from a merchant called Daniel Warner in Antigua. It is written in March 1756, but it is about the arrival of the 25 slaves in Antigua in October 1755. It also tells us that another merchant (Mr Charles Quinsac) arrived in Benjamin Spencer's ship the 'Cannon Hall' with some more slaves. See if you can find out:

- how many of the 25 slaves died on the journey
- how many were sold on the 31st October, 1755
- what happened on November 1st to make it difficult to sell any more slaves
- whether the slaves were fit and healthy when they arrived
- whether the crew of the 'Cannon Hall' were fit and healthy when they arrived
- what Daniel Warner decided to do when he realised he could not sell any more slaves in Antigua

- Document 13** is part of a letter written to Benjamin Spencer in London from John Guerard in South Carolina. He tells us what happened to the slaves after Daniel Warner sent them on to him to be sold in South Carolina. See if you can find out what sort of condition the slaves were in when they arrived in South Carolina.

- Make a list of three different groups of people who were involved in the journey from Africa to Antigua and America. For example, one group could be the people who bought the slaves to work on their plantations (they were called planters).



Documents 14 - 16: South Carolina to London

1. **Document 14** is a letter to Benjamin Spencer in London from a man called John Guerard who was a merchant in South Carolina. It tells Spencer that slaves have been sold. Can you find out:

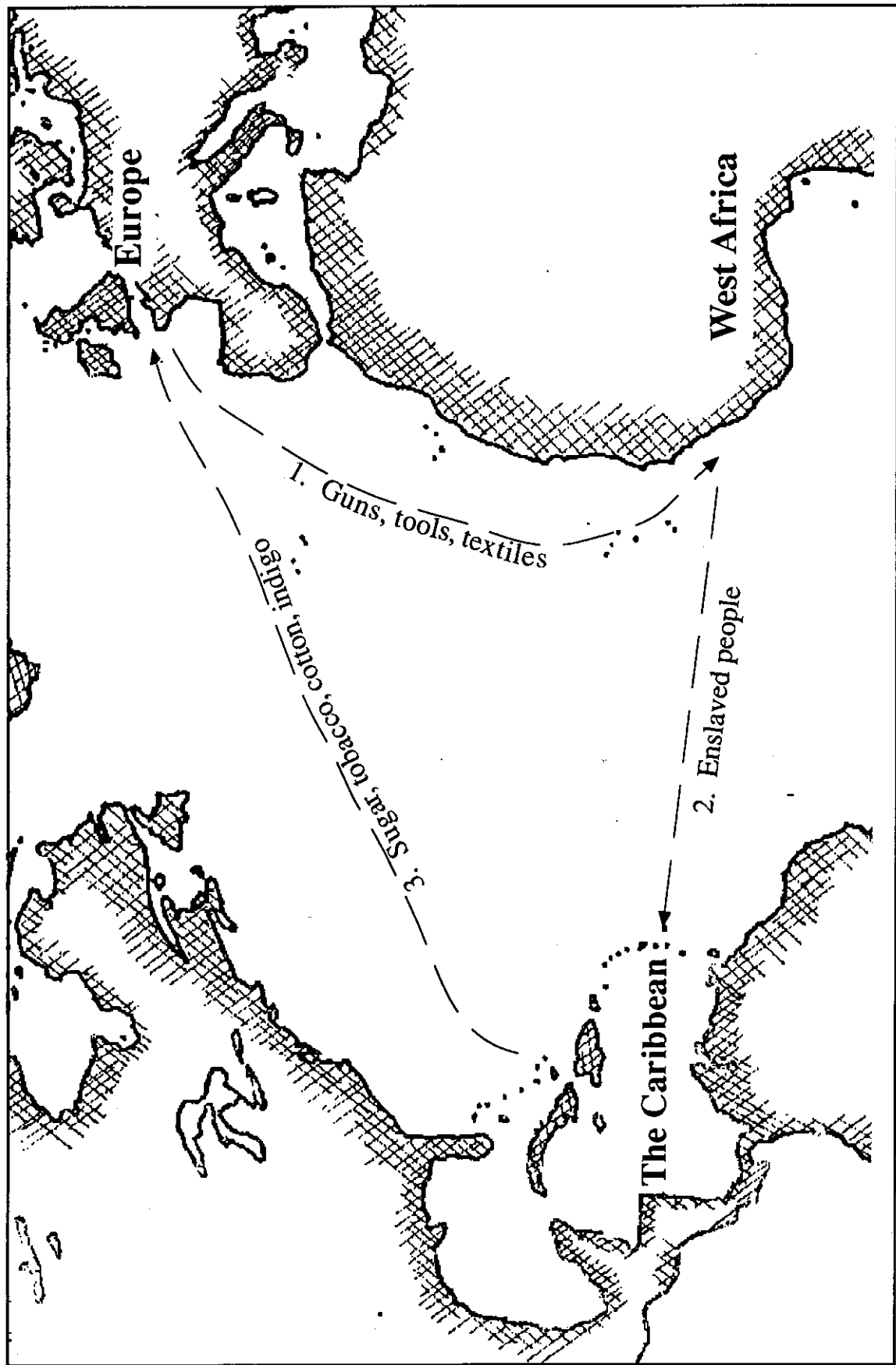
- (a) what was bought with the money from the slaves?
- (b) how much profit Spencer made?

2. Looking at **document 15**, see if you can find out the following:

- (a) the date
- (b) the name of the ship
- (c) where the ship is going from and to
- (d) what goods the ship is carrying

3. **Document 16** gives the names of some of the sailors who were about to go on the journey. Can you read any of their names, or their jobs?

The Triangular Trade



2.2 The Development of Racism

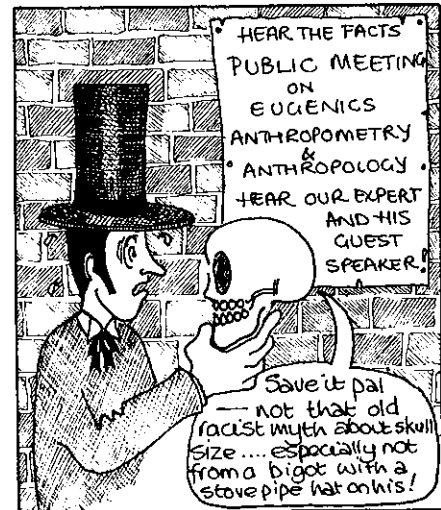
This section provides background information for activities 7 and 8 and document 17.

Document 17 is a news article published in the *Sheffield Register* in January 1788 about the 'fate' of some eminent Portuguese colonialists who, returning to Europe from India in the late 1500's, were shipwrecked off the south coast of Africa and murdered. The two hundred year time lag between the supposed event and the writing of the story is important. This story was written in the 1780's to support an expression of horror at a recent event - 'the melancholy fate of the Grosvenor East Indiaman' - presumably in this case the murder of the crew on a British ship, about which we have no information. It is worth noting how the *Sheffield Register*, a radical paper, still contributed to the dissemination of racist ideas (see section on anti-Irish racism). Although referring to the late 1500's this article is very much a product of the racist ideology which was developing by the late eighteenth century. It could not have been written in the 1580's as such ideas were not then in common currency.

During the sixteenth century, the first Europeans to travel to Africa (who were, incidentally, the Portuguese) marvelled at the magnificent African civilisations, flourishing industries, such as gold-mining, textiles, iron-working, as well as different forms of agriculture. They were keen to trade with African people, who they experienced as wealthy, civilised and hospitable. By the late eighteenth century, however, the attitudes of the Europeans had changed. As they began to make vast profits out of the colonial and slave trades, Europeans began to develop stereotypes of black people which allowed them to rob, plunder and enslave.

To do this Europeans were able to draw upon and transform a tradition, already in existence within European culture, in which different cultures were understood in terms of their

relation to Christianity. Thus, as with the Irish and the Native Americans, information about African cultures was understood in terms of sets of ideas about paganism. These ideas claimed that non-Christians were worth less in the eyes of God; moreover the Christian tradition associated blackness with darkness and evil.



During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the slave traders began to transform these ideas into an ideology of racial superiority. They argued that although black people were human, they were inferior, barbaric, uncivilised and animal-like. They were stupid but strong, therefore fitted to slavery. These ideas are expressed in **document 17** in which African people (referred to here as Ethiopians - presumably the name used by Europeans for Africans generally) are described as 'deceitful savages' and 'brutal negroes' comparable only to wild beasts and contrasted to the (white) delicacy of Leonora, wife of Don Emmanuel De Souza.

Developments after the 1780's saw the increasing popularisation of ideas of (white) racial superiority. It was around this time that scientists began to claim that there were different biological 'races'. Although the word 'race' had been used in the English language from the sixteenth century to mean a 'type', from the late eighteenth century it began to be associated with ideas of biological difference, as scientists divided the world into 'races' and argued that different physical characteristics were proof of black inferiority.

These ideas found expression throughout the nineteenth century in the work of historians, politicians, missionaries and scientists who claimed that evidence of inferiority could be found in black culture, political systems, religion, the shape and size of skulls etc. The growth of these ideas can be seen to parallel the expansion - numerically and in terms of power - of the middle class, who began to define themselves as superior not only to black people but also to the Irish and the British

working class. All were on the receiving end of the middle class 'civilising mission'.

As part of the process of expanding their wealth and power, the middle class re-ordered the world into a hierarchy of races, placing themselves at the top and black people at the bottom with the Irish and the British poor somewhere in between. Hence, by the mid nineteenth century, the British middle class saw itself as fit to rule the world.

Activity 7: Sets and Corners

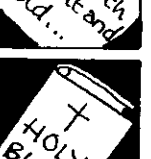
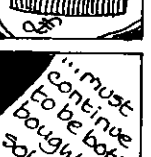
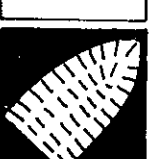
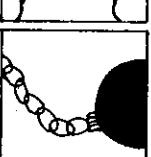
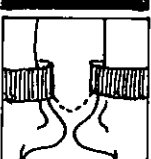
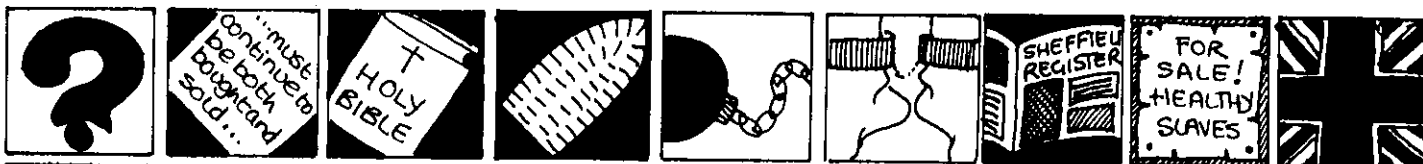
Time: allow a double lesson for this activity.

- Purpose:** To enable students to examine how people select information to confirm certain viewpoints or stereotypes.
- Preparation:** Classroom needs dividing into four corners. Each corner needs a pen and 3 large sheets of paper. The teacher and the students need to have decided on four labels for groups of people, ensuring that everyone in the class will be able to identify with at least one, e.g. footballers, girls who listen to music, people who watch 'Neighbours', eldest child in family.
- Procedure:**
1. Students allocate themselves to one of the four groups. (The numbers need not be equal). Each group elects someone to do the writing.
 2. Each group brainstorms the things they don't want people to say, think or do against members of their group. The scribe writes these down on a sheet of paper. On another sheet of paper each group lists in more detail who might say such things, thinking of some possible reasons why. Each group then lists what they want the world to know about their group on a third sheet of paper.
 3. Groups feed back into big group, firstly what they don't want to hear people say, think or do against their group and secondly, what they want the world to know about their group. They should then try to build a picture of stereotypes and peoples' reasons for subscribing to them. The teacher could then try to lead in to why some of these stereotypes stick, i.e. who has the power to make them stick?
 4. In trialling this activity, we found that this discussion worked really well when moved on to the subject of gender stereotypes. Having already understood the concept of stereotyping, the class were enthusiastic about discussing how ideas about men and women and boys and girls did or did not fit them. This can then be related to the issue of race in the next activity.

Activity 8: The Racemakers

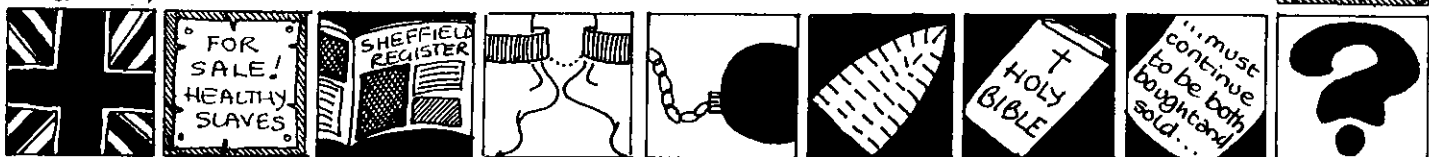
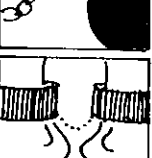
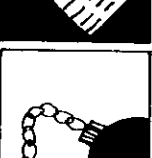
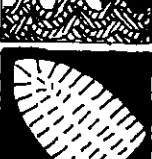
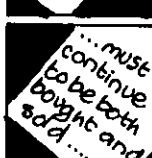
Time: allow at least one double lesson for this activity.

- Purpose:** To (a) examine where racist stereotypes come from and why they were developed, and (b) to understand that the categorisation of the world in terms of different 'races' is the result of political and economic motives rather than biological fact.
- Preparation:** Photocopy the following A3 sheet (p 54-55) on slavery and racism and the relevant question sheet (p 53). Also copy the A3 sheets and question sheets on racism and colonialism in Ireland and India in Unit 3, to be found on pp 102-107 of the second booklet. All of these are required for this activity. (See below for quantities.)
- Procedure:**
1. The class is divided into three groups (looking at Africa, India and Ireland), within which students work in pairs.
 2. Each pair is given one A3 sheet and the relevant question sheet. Students work through the sheets and questions.
 3. Students feed their answers into a group discussion which focuses on the similarities in content and motive for the development of racial stereotypes. Teacher tries to draw out the idea that in the twentieth century the idea of biologically distinct racial groups has been disproved.
 4. The teacher reads out document 17, saying where it came from and when. The students should now be in a position to discuss it as a story which supports racist ideas about African people at a time when the slave trade was being challenged.



Racism (1)

1. Why were the first Europeans who travelled to Africa keen to trade with African people?
2. (a) What did Europeans begin to say about African people in the late eighteenth century?
(b) Why did their attitudes change?
3. (a) How is the way the British portray Cetshwayo in Source C different from the photograph of him (Source B)?
(b) Why did the British claim that Africans were savages?
4. Source D is from a children's book of 1902. From reading this, what ideas would a young child get about:
 - (a) a child from the Sudan?
 - (b) a child from Fiji?
 - (c) an English child?
5. (a) Why did 'The Sun' newspaper print a picture of Winston Silcott smiling?
(b) Do you think this might have affected the decision to charge him with murder? Give reasons for your answer.

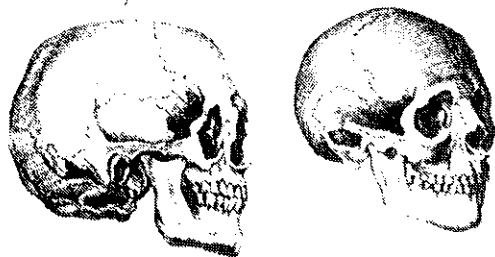


RACISM (1)

When Europeans first travelled to Africa in the sixteenth century, they discovered that African people had many skills. Their farming methods were very advanced and they also had industries such as gold-mining, iron-working and textiles. Because of this the Europeans were very keen to trade with them.

But Europeans' attitudes towards Africans had changed by the end of the eighteenth century. They then said that African people were inferior, uncivilised and stupid. There were reasons for this. By this time Europeans were making a lot of money from capturing African people and selling them as slaves in the Caribbean and America. If they could persuade people that Africans were uncivilised these Europeans would be able to continue to make money out of the slave trade because nobody would protest about it.

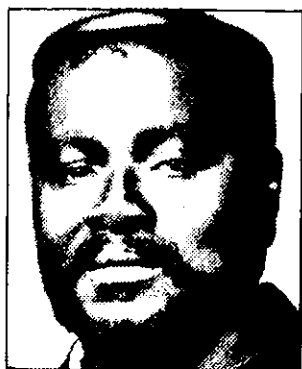
SOURCE A



1. Crâne d'après L'Apollon
2. Crâne de Géorgienne
3. Crâne de Nègre

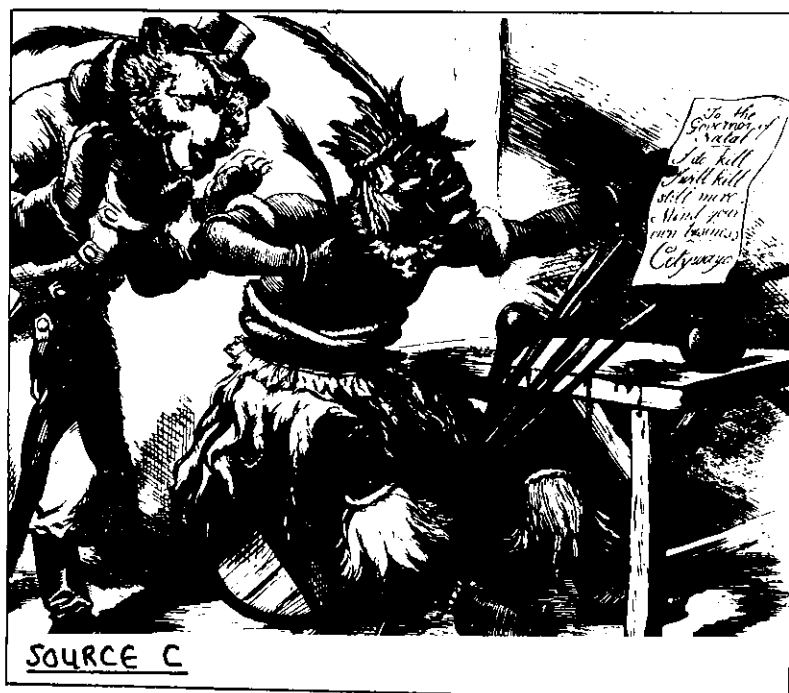
J.J. Virey, Histoire Naturelle de Genre Humain, 1824.

Many Europeans began to argue that the world was split into different groups of people, which they called 'races'. They said that white people belonged to one race and black people belonged to another. The white race, they claimed, was superior. They tried to prove this by saying that white people's skulls were bigger and more developed. SOURCE A is an example of this. It is taken from a book which was published in 1824.



SOURCE B

By the late nineteenth century, Europeans wanted to take



SOURCE C

control of large areas of Africa. So that people would not criticise them for doing this, they argued that black people were savages who needed civilising. One group of people that the British fought against were the Zulus. SOURCE B is a photograph of Cetshwayo, the Zulu leader. SOURCE C is an example of how he was shown in British newspapers.

SOURCE D

D is a Dervish from sunny Soudan;
He dances no more his eccentric can-can,
But, trained to our manners, is eagerly fain,
When Britain once calls him, to dance in her train.

E is an English babe, ready to take
The yoke of the world for humanity's sake,
So that every one knows, be it dreary or bright,
When it's England that leads him, the road must be right.

F's a Fijian, her hair like a mop;
Let others spin yarns, she can spin like a top!
Now she's winning her way to a place in our nation
By skipping from frenzy to civilization.

T. Stevens, 'Babes of the Empire A-Z', 1902.

These ideas about black people could soon be found in songs, stories, advertisements and children's books such as the one in SOURCE D. Most white people soon believed that black people needed to be ruled by the British because they were not fit to rule themselves.

These ideas are still very common

today. For example, in 1986 a black man called Winston Silcott was sent to prison for the murder of a policeman. He served five years in prison before it was shown that he did not commit the crime. 'The Sun' somehow got hold of an old photograph of Silcott. They printed it to suggest he was smiling because a policeman had been murdered. 'The Sun' also called Winston Silcott a 'savage'.

2.3 Resistance and the Campaign against Slavery: Documents 18 to 26

This section (pages 56 to 61) provides background information for **documents 18 to 28** and **activities 9 and 10**.

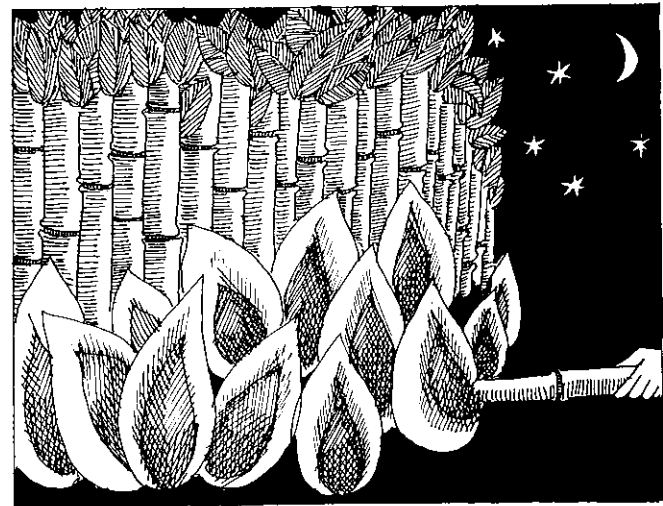
Documents 19 to 28 focus on anti-slavery activity in Sheffield in the 1790's. Many are selected from the *Sheffield Register*, a popular radical newspaper. Their content generally focuses on the connections between radical class politics in Britain and slave resistance in the Caribbean and the Americas which developed in the climate of political radicalism at the end of the eighteenth century.

This emphasis on anti-slavery campaigns other than those of the abolitionists is quite deliberate. It is not intended to discredit the significance of Wilberforce et al, but to place other anti-slavery movements, those of working class radicals in Britain and especially of slaves in the Caribbean and the Americas, in a more central position. These movements are often under-represented in school history books, which have traditionally shown the ending of the slave trade in 1808 and the plantation system in 1833 as the outcome of years of dedicated campaigning by British abolitionists alone. The aim here is to both supplement this perspective and raise questions about how and why it achieved such prominence in subsequent histories of the anti-slavery movement.

The Ending of Slavery

In researching the background to the documents in this section we have drawn on the work of a number of historians - most notably Eric Williams (*Capitalism and Slavery*, 1944), CLR James (*The Black Jacobins*, 1938), Eugene Genovese (*From Rebellion to Revolution*, 1979) and Robin Blackburn (*The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery*, 1938) - which challenge the

'abolitionist' perspective. These writers argue that slavery was abolished for economic and political reasons rather than from humanitarian concerns. They emphasise the role of the slaves themselves in creating a situation of economic unprofitability and political instability in which slavery could be abolished. Williams, commenting that the traditional British view of the ending of slavery was "written almost as if Britain had introduced Negro slavery solely for the satisfaction of abolishing it", puts forward the thesis that slavery was abolished because it was made unprofitable by the decline of the plantation system. In places where it continued to make a profit - Cuba, Brazil and North America - the plantation system was not abolished until some time after, in 1833. Unrest among the slaves in the Caribbean was an important factor in this unprofitability, alongside the loss of the American colonies after the War of Independence (which meant that the planter no longer had access to cheap food and other supplies) and competition from the larger, more recently planted, and therefore more efficient, French islands.



These historians emphasise the political importance of slave insurgency, particularly from the 1790's when it became linked with radical movements in Europe. They describe the widespread occurrence of slave resistance - in Africa, on the Middle Passage (during which there were suicides, frequent acts of rebellion and in some cases actual uprisings aboard ship) and in the Caribbean and North

America, where slaves engaged in diverse acts of rebellion. These included running away and joining Maroon communities, stealing food, sabotaging machinery, committing suicide, attacking and poisoning the planters and burning their houses and many uprisings. Peter Fryer has estimated that there was a slave revolt once every two and half years in the British West Indies between 1638 and 1837.

Document 18 is an extract from a report written by Hannah Kilham, a Quaker from Sheffield, whose interest in learning West African languages took her to Sierra Leone where she was involved in missionary work in the 1820's and 1830's. She witnessed an uprising whereby African people took control of a French slave ship and sailed it back to the African coast.



These acts of resistance challenged the racist myths which claimed that Africans were more suited to slave labour and that they accepted their enslavement and the abuse and violence it entailed. Similarly, the way in which slave communities drew on African cultural forms - music, festivals and folk tales - in the construction of a culture of resistance which was beyond the planter's control denies racist ideas about Africa's 'lack' of a cultural heritage prior to colonialism. Barbara Bush (*Slave Women in Caribbean Society*, 1990) emphasises the central role played by women in slave resistance - both in outright rebellion and, in their domestic roles as wives and

mothers, in preserving and building on a cultural identity which was crucial to their own survival and that of their families and communities.

The connections between slave insurgency and European radicalism are perhaps most apparent in the Haitian Revolution of 1791-95 in which black people in the French colony of St Domingue (later Haiti) defeated the two imperial powers, Britain and France, and set up their own republic. The early nineteenth century slave revolts, such as those in Barbados (1816), Guyana (1823), and Jamaica (1831-2), also posed enormous challenges to the plantation system, making the position of the slave master increasingly vulnerable.

In the light of these connections, it is perhaps interesting to consider forty years in the 'career' of the 84th Regiment of Foot (later the 2nd Battalion of the Yorks and Lancaster Regiment) whose records are displayed at Rotherham Military Museum. Engaged in the repression of slave rebellions in the Caribbean in the 1820's, the 84th returned to Britain in the late 1830's to put down the Chartist rebellion in Lancashire. After a spell guarding convict ships (holding many political prisoners) bound for Australia, it was sent to India in the 1850's and was involved in the suppression of the 1857-8 Rebellion. The political links between domestic and slave or colonial insurgency were not only perceived by the radicals, but by the Establishment they were challenging.

Anti-slavery activity in Sheffield is discussed on the following pages in the context of the flow of radical ideas across the Atlantic in the late eighteenth century.

Anti-Slavery activity in Sheffield in the 1790's

Anti-slavery and the *Sheffield Register*

People in Sheffield in the late eighteenth century would have obtained their information about international politics from a number of sources, including itinerant speakers (such as Olaudah Equiano who toured the country preaching liberty and anti-slavery), political pamphlets and the local press.

In Sheffield in the 1790's the most popular local paper was the *Sheffield Register* which, in common with other late eighteenth century newspapers, carried news from the locality, from other parts of the country and from overseas. The *Register* first appeared in June 1787 and soon established itself among the most successful of the provincial papers. Its editor, Joseph Gales, was a Unitarian dissenter and the paper reflected his political position which, prior to the French Revolution, focused on support for the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts and for abolition of the slave trade. From 1789, however, Gales was profoundly influenced by the French Revolution, becoming involved in the radical political culture which was a strong feature of Sheffield life for much of the 1790's. In Sheffield for most of the 1790's there were two organisations campaigning for the ending of the slave trade, the 'respectable' **Abolition Society** and the radical **Sheffield Society for Constitutional Information**.

Documents 19 - 21 refer to the Sheffield Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, formed in January 1788. An off-shoot of the London based society, the Sheffield Society was composed of a similarly respectable middle class membership which focused solely on the issue of slavery. Prior to the French Revolution, the society dominated the anti-slavery movement, both nationally and in Sheffield. Its members held debates, wrote to local papers, organised petitions to Parliament

and collected money to assist the London Society in its work publicising the horrors of the Middle Passage and trying to prevent slave owners from using the law to keep people in slavery.

The *Sheffield Register* supported the Society, publicising its aims and activities. With the establishment of the Society in January 1788, for example, the Register carried a debate on the issue of slavery. **Documents 20 - 21** are extracts from the two main correspondents in the debate - someone calling him/herself 'Reason' is dubious about the claims of the anti-slavery campaign, and 'A Friend to Liberty', is a supporter of the movement. The following month the paper reported that the Sheffield Society had organised a petition calling for the end of the trade with 2000 signatories, and had donated nearly 100 guineas to the London Society. (**Document 19.**)

The political emphasis of the *Sheffield Register* changed with the impact of the French Revolution in 1789. Gales began to print extracts from the speeches and writings of leading reformers in France and Britain, and in 1791 was involved in the dissemination of Tom Paine's influential political work, *The Rights of Man*. Paine's fundamental argument for the principle of democratic republicanism - that all men had a natural right to have a say in their own government, and that governments which were not founded on this principle lacked legitimacy - was supported by the paper and was influential in the establishment of reform societies up and down the country. (Mary Wollstonecraft published her *Vindication of the Rights of Women* in 1792 in which she applied the same egalitarian principles to women; we have not yet seen a reference to this in the paper.)

The Register continued to support the aims of the Abolition Society, indicating that there was some overlap of interest in this in period. **Document 22** is an extract from an 'address' to the people of Britain asking them to boycott goods which were the product of

slavery. Printed by Gales in 1791, the 'address' had presumably been in circulation for a while (this is the sixth edition). However, as the radical movement grew and acquired a much wider following the place of anti-slavery within political life changed. By 1791, when the Sheffield Society for Constitutional Information was formed, the *Register* had become the mouthpiece for the radical movement.

The Sheffield Society for Constitutional Information

In Sheffield support for Paine's ideas was reflected in the setting up of the Sheffield Society for Constitutional Information in December 1791. This came at the end of a year which saw major riots against enclosure, unemployment, high taxes and high prices. The SSCI held meetings in various inns and taverns and expanded rapidly in 1792. Concentrating on the publication and dissemination of literature supporting parliamentary reform, the Society was involved in a national network of similar organisations.

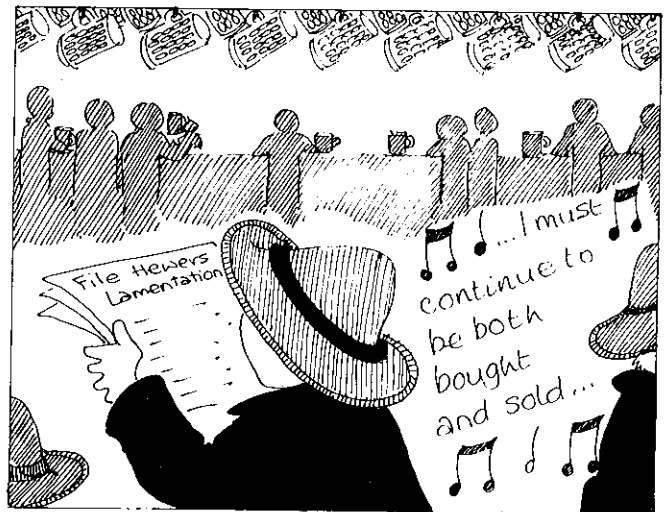
Despite the rise of loyalist opinion in Britain during the events in France in 1792, the SSCI continued to display its support for the new French Republic, holding a series of street fetes in October and November 1792 to celebrate French successes. As the war with France got under way in 1793, the Society combined its campaigning work for parliamentary reform (organising a petition signed by 10,000 people in May of that year) with organising opposition to the war, which was beginning to cause considerable hardship through unemployment, high taxes and high food prices.

Drawing upon this considerable discontent, the SSCI organised large open air meetings, such as that at Castle Hill on April 7 1794, where 10-12,000 people assembled to hear the radical orator Henry 'Redhead' Yorke condemn taxation without representation and demand universal suffrage, an end to the persecution of

radicals and the abolition of the slave trade.

Document 23 is an extract from the anti-slavery resolution passed at this meeting. Discussing the connections between class oppression in Europe and slavery in the Americas, the resolution places slavery within a wider political perspective which focuses on the 'Rights of Man'.

This theme is taken up in **document 24**, an extract from a song written by Joseph Mather, the Sheffield file-smith and street and tavern entertainer and member of the SSCI. It is a view which is evident in slave resistance in the Caribbean during the 1790's and demonstrated in the Haitian Revolution of 1798. This alliance between slave insurgency and European republicanism was created and re-inforced by a flow of radical ideas back and forth across the Atlantic.



Greatly influential in developing and disseminating these ideas were those members of the black community in Britain who travelled the country addressing meetings on the issue of slavery, drawing on their own experiences of enslavement and resistance. One such campaigner, Olaudah Equiano, visited Sheffield on his speaking tour of 1790.

Olaudah Equiano in Sheffield

Olaudah Equiano, like many of the black people living in London at the end of the eighteenth century, had first come to England as a slave. (See **document 25**, from a painting of him). Born in what is now eastern Nigeria in about 1745, Equiano and his sister were captured by slave traders when he was about 11, taken (separately) on journeys to the coast, and put on board ships bound for the Caribbean. His autobiography, *The Life of Olaudah Equiano*, tells of his experience of the 'Middle Passage', of his work as a slave on plantations in Barbados and Montserrat and his travels in Europe and America, including England, with a new owner, a British Naval Lieutenant who re-named him Gustavus Vasa and beat him until he would answer to his new name. Finally buying his freedom, Equiano returned to England, where he worked as a hairdresser, a servant, a coal-miner, and a ship's steward before being appointed Commissary of Provisions and Stores on board a ship which, anchored in London, was bound for Sierra Leone. The Sierra Leone resettlement scheme had been developed as an eighteenth century equivalent of repatriation, a racist measure to deal with what was becoming known among the English middle class as 'the problem of the black poor' in London. After discovering that the white agent was selling the provisions and pocketing the profits, Equiano reported him and was sacked from his post.



By this time (the 1780's) Equiano was a well known representative of the black community - estimated by Granville Sharpe to have been 20,000 strong in London at the end of the eighteenth century. His anti-slavery work had begun in the 1770's when he had become involved in campaigns to prevent owners from recapturing their freed or escaped slaves and servants.

Many black people had come to England either with sailors and planters from the Caribbean or with members of the East India Company. It was very fashionable at this time for wealthy families to have a black servant working for them in their houses. At Chatsworth House, near Sheffield, the 'Lady of the House', Georgiana Cavendish, was 'offered' a black servant boy in the 1780's, but for some reason her husband would not let her keep/employ him. As she could not "bear the thought of the poor wretch being ill-used," she wrote to her mother, asking if she wanted him. "If you liked him", she wrote, "I will send him, he will be a cheap servant and you will make a Christian of him and a good boy; if you don't like him they say Lady Rockingham wants one" (*Peter Fryer*). Whether Lady Rockingham - of Wentworth Woodhouse - 'got one', we did not discover. Many portraits from country houses show black boys waiting on their mistresses. The dreadful conditions of employment, in which young black servants were exploited and, at best, treated as pets, resulted in many running away to live among the black community in London. Newspapers often carried advertisements offering big rewards for their return.

Through this work, Equiano, along with other black political campaigners, became involved with both the white middle class Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade and the radical London Corresponding Society, set up to spread the ideas of the French Revolution. As both of these societies had their sister organisations in Sheffield, it is likely that Equiano met men and women from both the Abolition Society and the SSCI during his visit in August 1790. Other than the information in

documents 26, 27 and 28, we know very little about his visit.

Document 26 is an advertisement for his autobiography published in the *Sheffield Register* in the week preceding his visit.

Document 27, also from the *Register*, tells us that Equiano had addressed a meeting in Sheffield. In this article Gales attacks racist arguments being used to justify the slave trade. Although we do not know where Equiano spoke or where he stayed, **document 28** (a letter to the Reverend Thomas Bryant, a radical methodist minister in Sheffield who was involved in the SSCI, from Thomas Hardy, the secretary of the London Corresponding Society) suggests that he spent time with members of the SSCI and other radicals. This letter is also important in

pointing to the connections between class politics and anti-slavery in this period.

From the mid-1790's the government began to 'clamp down' on radical activities. Some radicals, such as Joseph Gales, fled the country, while many others were imprisoned, including James Montgomery who took over the *Register* after Gales' departure. Most radical organisations went underground. The anti-slavery movement in Britain - though not in the Caribbean - was much less active between the ending of the trade in 1807 and the mid-1820's. Then, with the upsurge of political activity which was to continue into the mid-century, the campaign against slavery was revived. Sheffield again became a centre of activity - for both middle class anti-slavery societies and for the wider working class movements of Owenism and Chartism.

Activity 9: Why was slavery abolished?

Time: allow a double lesson for this activity.

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Purpose: | To (a) examine the many factors - political, economic and humanitarian, in both the Caribbean and Britain - which were significant in bringing about Abolition, and (b) explore the importance of selection of evidence in history. |
| Preparation | Photocopy A3 pages 62-63 and 64-65 and the relevant question pages (see below for quantities). |
| Procedure | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Class divided into two halves and students work in pairs or small groups. 2. Students are given an A3 sheet and question page to work through. 3. Feed back into main group - discussion on why slavery was abolished, emphasising differing perspectives and asking why the 'Wilberforce' perspective has had such a prominence in British writings on anti-slavery while the radical movements in both Britain and the Caribbean have been largely ignored. |

Why was Slavery abolished? -1

Source A

"No-one knows how many Africans were taken to America as slaves, but at least two million went to the British colonies alone. In 1700 they were sold for £15 each, on average, and by the 1740's they fetched £40. There was a lot of money to be made. Merchants in Liverpool and Bristol loaded their ships with cotton cloth and iron goods. They exchanged these for slaves in Africa, and sold the slaves either in the West Indies or in the southern colonies on the mainland. With the money they bought sugar and tobacco. The ships went out, then, with common, cheap goods and came home with valuable luxuries. Men in the slave trade became rich, as did the planters.

"After a time, though, more and more people saw how wicked the slave trade was. Men like Thomas Folwell Buxton and William Wilberforce spent years trying to persuade Parliament to make it illegal. Parliament finally did so in 1807."

(P and M Speed, Britain Becomes a Great Power, 1979.)

Source B

"By the end of the eighteenth century there was growing concern about this human trade... In 1807, largely through the efforts of the MP William Wilberforce, an Act was passed which abolished the trade in slaves."

(Robert Unwin, History for You: Britain since 1700, 1986)

Source C

"The Evangelicals, who unlike the Methodists, remained part of the Church of England, also believed in leading strict and virtuous lives... They adopted the custom of family prayers and saying grace before meals, and they insisted on the strict observance of the Sabbath...

"But the Evangelicals did more than live virtuous lives - they led useful ones too. Wilberforce and his friends campaigned against the slave trade which was finally outlawed in 1807, and in 1833, largely as a result of their efforts, all slaves in the British Empire were freed."

(R.N. Rundle, Britain's Economic and Social Development 1700 to the Present Day, Hodder and Stoughton Ltd/New English Library Ltd 1973, ISBN 0 340 116145.)

Sources D and E



Anti-slavery medals

(Wilberforce House Museum, Hull City Museums and Art Galleries)

Source F

"... The abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1833... was the culmination of a very successful campaign by the anti-slavery society and its veteran evangelical leader, William Wilberforce... The slave trade had been abolished in 1807.... but in 1833 the status of slavery was ended at a cost of £20 million in compensation to the slave owners. A scheme of apprenticeship was adopted to help former slaves, but it was not well run and there was much disorder and distress in some Caribbean islands. Nevertheless, the measure was a selfless, expensive and humanitarian measure."

(R. B. Jones, A Political, Social and Economic History of Britain, 1760-1914: The Challenge of Greatness, Hodder and Stoughton Ltd/New English Library Ltd 1987, ISBN 0 340 27896.)

Why was Slavery Abolished? - 2

Source A

Source A is a story which has been passed down over many generations in Jamaica. It is about a woman called Nanny, who was brought to Jamaica as a slave in the early 1700's. Soon after she arrived, Nanny ran away and went to live in a Rebel town. Rebel towns were towns of runaway slaves which were being set up all over the island. These runaway slaves were called Maroons. The Maroons wanted to end slavery and drive the British out of Jamaica.

"By 1720, Nanny had taken control of the Blue Mountain Rebel Town. It was renamed Nanny Town. There Nanny, Quoa and their people cleared over 600 acres of forest for cultivation. Their community was organised like the Ashanti society. From these hills the Maroons would send traders to the city. They would exchange food for arms and cloth. Nanny's Maroons would also raid plantations. Then they would burn the estates and carry off arms, food and slaves whom they set free.

"From 1728 to 1734, Nanny Town was defended against British attack. The Maroons were better than the British at fighting in the rainy mountains.... Nanny had spies all around. Some were even on the slave plantations. In this way she got news of when the British would attack. Her warriors moved swiftly and quietly.

"The British finally captured Nanny Town by using many guns and cannons..... In 1739, Cudjoe (another Maroon leader) signed a peace treaty with the British. This treaty gave the Maroons lands and rights as free men. But in return they promised the British to do three things. They promised not to war against the British. They were to help capture runaway slaves. Lastly, they were to help the Government put down revolts.

"Nanny refused a similar offer. Instead she agreed to enter into a truce with the British. Nanny did this half-heartedly. She agreed to it mainly because she saw that her people were tired of war. They wanted peace.

"Nanny and people like her helped to speed up the end of slavery. The slave rebellions that followed were inspired by Nanny and other freedom fighters. This fear of revolution was a major factor influencing the British to abolish slavery."

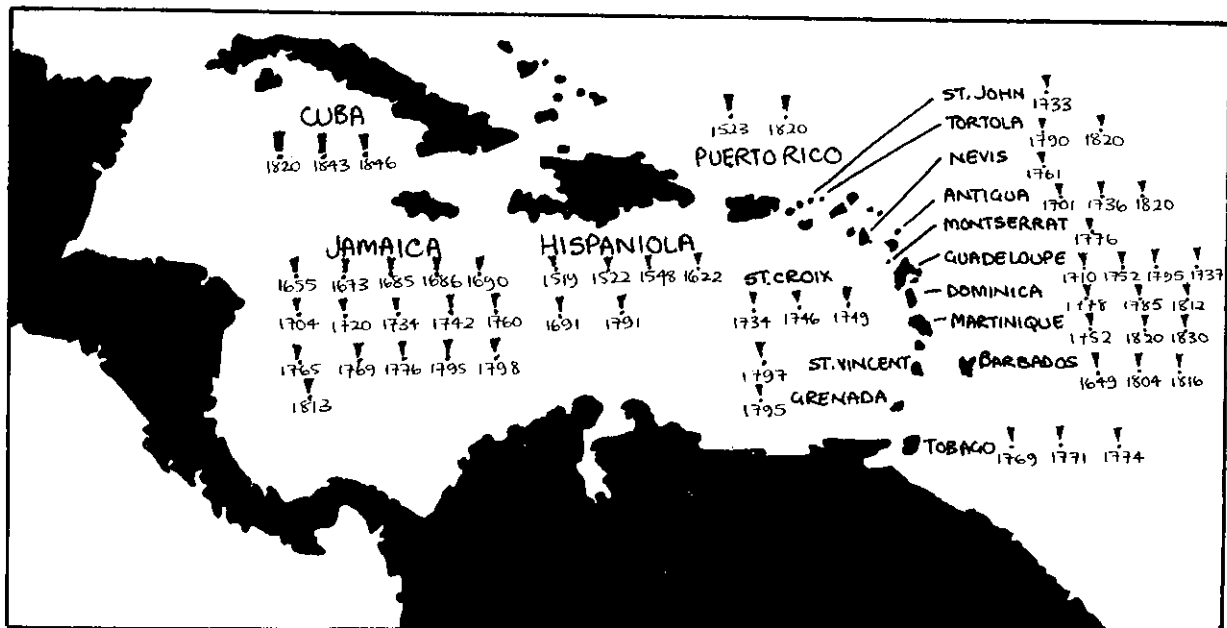
(Nanny of the Maroons, Jaml Heritage Readers, 1990).

Source B



Nanny

Source C



Some Slave Rebellions in the Caribbean

Source D

"Many Europeans ... felt it would be less expensive to pay wages to free labourers than to keep them as slaves, because then planters would not have to feed and house their workforce. They also believed that labourers would work harder for wages than slaves, particularly if they were paid according to the amount they produced. This made good sense to many of the plantation owners, especially since new slaves were becoming increasingly expensive and difficult to obtain. And abolition, they thought, would also reduce the risk of slave rebellions against them (slave revolts were a very common event in the Caribbean...)"

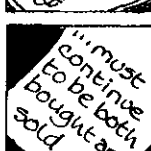
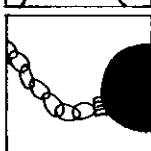
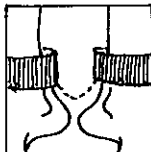
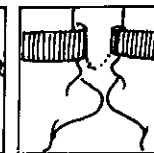
(James Ferguson, *Far From Paradise*, 1990.)

Source E

"...as the Industrial Revolution gained momentum, the West Indies alone could not satisfy British trade... There were now larger sugar producing regions being opened up in India and the East Indies, which produced cheaper sugar without slave labour. Mauritius, Cuba and Brazil were more businesslike and could also offer cheaper sugar. The British West Indies could not hope to compete with them on the open market. Another great threat was beet sugar, farmed and manufactured in Europe..."

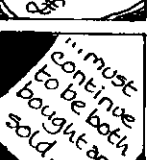
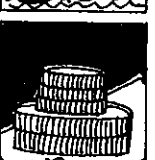
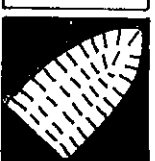
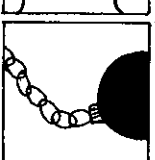
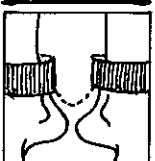
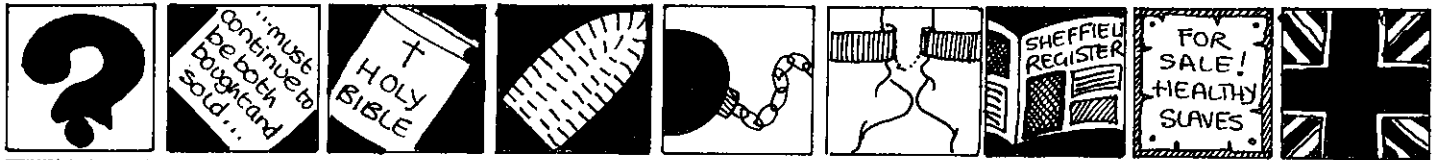
"All these factors mounted up against the West Indian planter. His product, sugar, was now not as important as before and therefore the people who produced the product, the slaves, were not as essential to British business as they had been during the eighteenth century."

(Lennox Honeychurch, *The Caribbean People Book Three*.)



Why was Slavery Abolished? - 1: Questions

1. (a) How many slaves does Source A say were taken to the British colonies in America and the Caribbean?
 (b) What does Source A suggest was the reason for slavery?
 (c) Why was the slave trade made illegal in 1807?
2. What reason does Source B give for the abolition of the slave trade in 1807?
3. Source C talks about 'Evangelicals'. Why do you think Evangelicals often became involved in the campaign against slavery?
4. Look at Sources D and E.
 (a) How do you know that the man in Source D is a slave?
 (b) Find and write down the words that each of the slaves (in Sources D and E) is saying.
 (c) Why do you think they are asking these questions?
 (d) What do you think the white woman in Source E is doing?
5. Source F says that the abolition of slavery in 1833 was 'a selfless, expensive and humanitarian measure.' What evidence does the writer give to back this up?
6. Looking back over your answers to questions 1 to 6, can you answer the question 'who abolished slavery and why did they abolish it?'



Why was Slavery Abolished? - 2: Questions

1. Read Source A and answer the following questions:

- Who was Nanny?
- Who were the Maroons?
- Why do you think Nanny refused the offer that the British made in 1739?
- Why do you think Nanny was an inspiration to later generations of slaves who lived in the Caribbean?
- Why does Source A say Nanny was an important factor in influencing the British to abolish slavery?

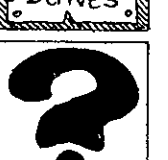
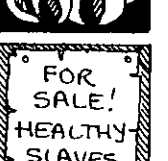
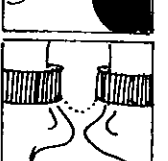
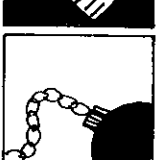
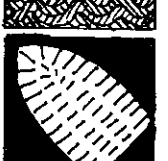
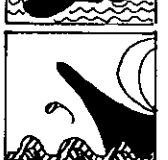
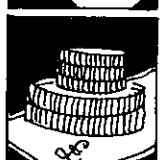
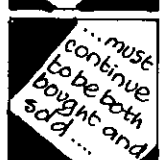
2. From looking at Source B, is this how you imagine Nanny would look?

3. What image of the Caribbean do you get from Source C?

4. In Source D, what does the writer say were the main reasons for the British decision to abolish slavery?

5. What evidence does Source E give that suggests that slavery was becoming unprofitable for the British?

6. Looking back over your answers, think about the people and other factors that were most important in influencing the ending of slavery. Now answer the question 'why was slavery abolished?'.



Activity 10: Anti-Slavery Role Play

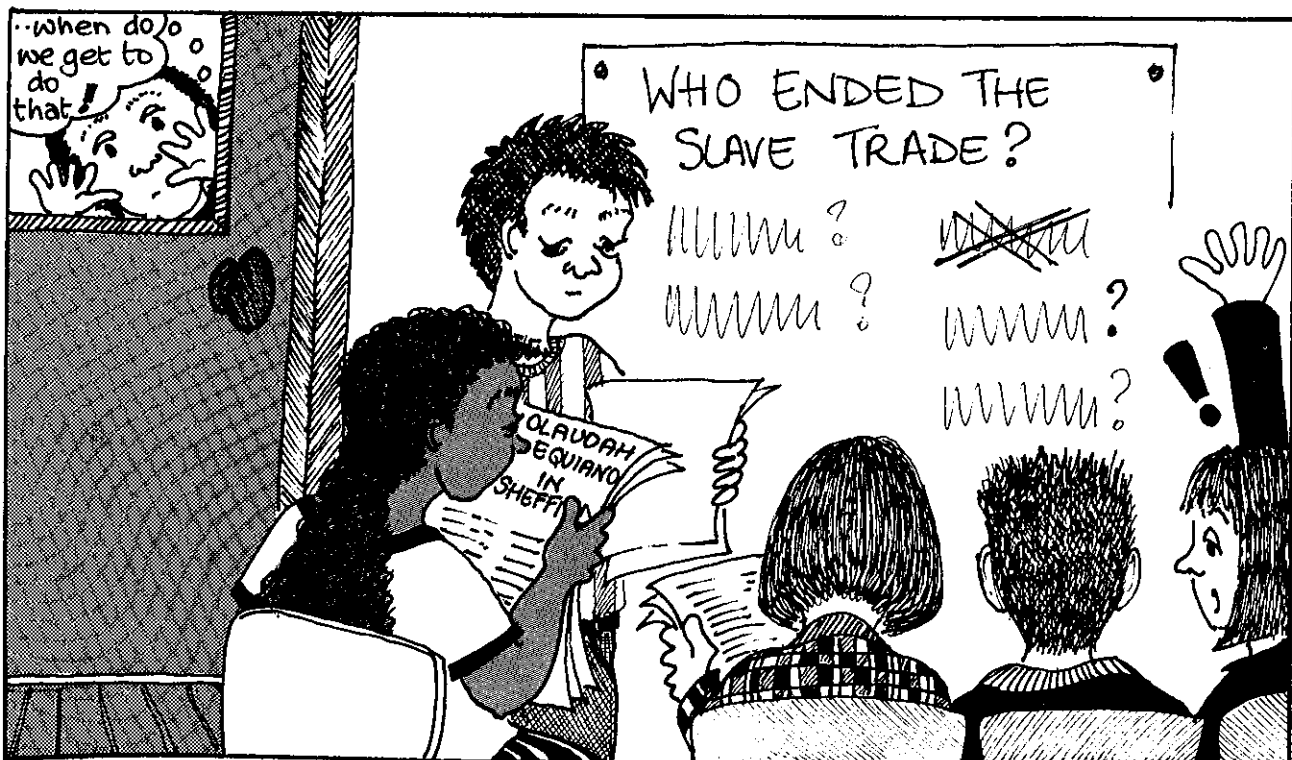
Time: allow at least one hour for this activity.

- Purpose:** To enable students to explore arguments for and against slavery in the late eighteenth century. This activity involves the teacher playing the role of Benjamin Spencer's company representative; we feel that it is important that students are not put in the position of having to argue in favour of slavery themselves.
- Preparation:** Make equal numbers of copies of role sheets A and B to allow each pair to have one sheet of either A or B. Make single copies of role sheets C and D. Make equal copies of **documents 21, 22, 23, 24, 27 and 28** to allow each student to have copies of **documents 21, 22**, (with A); **documents 23, 24, 27, 28** (with B); a single copy of **26** (with C) and of **20** (with D). Role sheet (C) also requires the extract from Equiano's autobiography, included on pages 39 to 41. Another student (or member of staff, if available) could chair the meeting.
- Procedure:**
1. Brainstorm on 'who ended the slave trade?'. Write up ideas on a large sheet of paper.
 2. Divide students into two groups of approximately equal number (A & B). Choose one student to form a third 'group' (C), to play the role of Olaudah Equiano. S/he will need to read out part of a document and put forward arguments in front of all the other students.
 3. Hand out sets of role sheets to groups (A) & (B). The first group need Role sheet (A) and **documents 21 & 22**; the second group need Role sheet (B) and **documents 23, 24, 27, & 28**. The student playing Olaudah Equiano should be given role sheet (C), a copy of **document 26** and pages 39 to 41 (from Equiano's autobiography). The teacher will be in the role of Benjamin Spencer's company representative, and needs Role sheet (D) and a copy of **document 20**.
 4. Ask the students to use the role sheets as a basic outline and, with the help of the documents, to spend about fifteen minutes trying to 'get into the skin' of the characters they are playing. Some assistance will be needed by the groups to fully benefit from the documents; otherwise the role sheets provide sufficient information to enable participation.
 5. The teacher going into role should warn students about what s/he he will be doing and could add something like:

'You had better have your arguments sorted because mine will take some beating!' The teacher or student chairing the meeting should preferably have read the different role sheets and needs to bring the group together to introduce them to each other. She could start the meeting by hearing the contribution from the teacher as Spencer's representative - as this could help stimulate the other groups into contributing more passionately. Further contributions could be taken from each group in turn or on a hands up basis, as long as everyone in each group is encouraged to have a go.

6. The meeting should be ended to allow enough time for all the participants to 'de-role'. One useful way of doing this is for each participant (including the teachers) to turn to the next person and say (I'm not X (character) because ... (list three reasons why not)'. Time should be allowed for students to feed back how they felt in their roles and for the teacher who played the character in favour of slavery to comment on which arguments or groups they felt most swayed by when in role.

NB. Although these are all real historical characters, most of whom (not including Spencer) would have known or at least met each other, this is an imaginary meeting and some licence is used, especially with dates. Thus, although the 1790's setting is quite accurate, the SSCI was actually formed in 1791 after Equiano's real visit to Sheffield in 1790; Hannah Kilham would have only have been in her mid-teens in the early 1790's (and while she had already joined the Methodists she was not yet involved in the Anti-slavery campaign). We do believe, however, that it is sufficiently accurate for these slight discrepancies not to be of great significance.



ROLE SHEET A

Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade

Dear Friends of the anti-slavery movement,

As you well know, Olaudah Equiano will be speaking at our next meeting and we are expecting many people to come along to hear him. Your support is very important. We are also expecting a visit from someone who wants to persuade people that the slave trade is a good thing. Please be ready to stand up and speak, as we need to remind this person and everyone else who comes that:

- African slaves are human beings, and have souls just like us. It is morally wrong for Christian people, as civilised human beings, to trade in, or keep, other people as slaves. Supporters of slavery should be reminded of the passage in the Bible which says 'do unto others as you would have them do unto you.'
- African slaves have been taken by force from their homes and their country of birth. They have been split up from their friends, families and everything that makes life dear to them. They are ruled by masters who can choose to be cruel and brutal if they want to be. I enclose a letter to the local paper that makes these points well (document 21).
- Slavery is not necessary for the wealth of this country. It is inefficient and wasteful. Many slaves die young and it is becoming more expensive to replace them. Also they feel it is not worth working hard because they don't get any wages for their work. And there is always the threat of rebellion.
- Also, we do not need the luxury items that are produced on plantations. Many of these items can be got elsewhere. We can follow the example of some women in Sheffield who are supporting a boycott of clothes and food, such as sugar and rum, which are produced by slaves. If we stop buying these goods, the slave owners will not need to keep slaves to produce these items. The slave trade will then collapse, and not before time! For information about this, an extract from a leaflet printed by Joseph Gales, editor of the *Sheffield Register*, is enclosed (document 22). More copies can be ordered from the newspaper office in town. (The price is on the cover - discount rates for large orders).

Very best wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,

Hannah Kilham

ROLE SHEET B

Sheffield Society for Constitutional Information

Dear Friends of Liberty,

We hope that you can join us at an important anti-slave trade meeting at the Methodist meeting house this week. There will be a speech by the famous African, Olaudah Equiano. It is also said that someone will be there who wants the wretched slave trade to continue.

As you know it is very important that we show everyone at the meeting that the working class people of England want to see the ending of the slave trade. We must argue that:

- All people are born equal and free. It is therefore wrong for some men to own and oppress others, as slaves. We agree with the article recently published in the *Sheffield Register* which says that Africans are equal to white people (document 27).
- Slavery is not just wrong, it is against the laws of good government. All men, not just the rich, should have a say in the running of their countries; government should be representative of the people. We are enclosing a copy of the petition we sent to the King which argues this point (document 23).
- Our struggle as poor, oppressed working men and women is one and the same struggle as that of the slaves. We want liberty and rights for all people in Britain, Africa and the Americas. A letter received recently by one of our members, the Reverend Mr Thomas Bryant, makes this point well; please find a copy enclosed - (document 28).

We have sent so many petitions to parliament, but our voices have not been heard. It is important that as many of our members and supporters as possible speak at this meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Nell and Joseph Mather

P.S. Many people have been asking for the words of the Song that Joe sang at the tavern after our last meeting. We have enclosed a copy (document 24).

ROLE SHEET C

Reverend Mr Thomas Bryant

Sheffield

Dear Olaudah Equiano,

I heard that your speech went down very well in Birmingham. I am just writing to let you have a copy of the advertisement for your book, as it has recently been printed in the *Sheffield Register*; please find it enclosed (document 26).

May I send you my very best wishes for the Sheffield meeting. Things seem to be well organised and we have plenty of support, but we hear that someone from Benjamin Spencer's Company will be there speaking in favour of the slave trade.

I think the best approach may be to read parts of the extract from your book about the Middle Passage; (please find enclosed a spare copy of this extract for use at the Sheffield meeting).

Yours sincerely,

T. Bryant

ROLE SHEET D

Benjamin Spencer & Co. Ltd.

To: The Company Representative in Sheffield,

My interests are under threat from these cursed abolitionists. Many members of the public will be at their next meeting to which the ex-slave Olaudah Equiano has been invited.

I want you to make sure you are at this meeting ready and prepared to put down the abolitionists' arguments. I will not have their poisonous ideas spread around the people of Sheffield.

Remind the people at the meeting that the wealth of our great nation depends on the trade. They would not have nearly as many possessions and as high a standard of living if it were not for merchants such as myself generating wealth for the people of England.

You must tell them also that talk of men being born 'free and equal' is nonsense. Slaves are a different species from Britons, and they adjust to drudgery and menial work quite happily. Moreover, conditions on plantations are not as bad as we are told. Challenge them: on what evidence do they base their arguments that slaves suffer? I enclose a recent letter to a Sheffield newspaper that illustrates this point well (document 20).

Tell the people to keep faith in the financial experts, the merchants like myself. We know what is good for the country. Most of us are good church-going Christians. Tell them not to listen to Equiano, he must just have an enormous chip on his shoulder.

The trade must continue for the good of us all.

Yours sincerely,

B. Spencer

Recommended Resources

- S. Collicott, *Connections: Haringey Local-National-World Links* (1986)
- L. Curtis, *Nothing But the Same Old Story, The Roots of Anti-Irish Racism* (Information on Ireland, 1984)
- P. Edwards (ed), *The Life of Olaudah Equiano* (Longman, 1988)
- J. Ferguson, *Far From Paradise* (Latin America Bureau, 1990)
- N. File and C. Power, *Black Settlers in Britain 1555-1958* (Heinemann, 1981)
- S. Fisher and D. Hicks, *World Studies 8-13, A Teacher's Handbook* (Oliver & Boyd, 1985)
- L. Honeychurch, *The Caribbean People, Books One - Three* (T. Nelson & Sons, 1980-1981)
- T. Hosking, *Black People in Britain 1650-1850* (Macmillan, 1984)
- Institute of Race Relations, *Roots of Racism* (1982), *Patterns of Racism* (1982), and *How Racism Came to Britain* (1985)
- Manchester DEP, *Teaching Development Issues: Colonialism* (1985)
- Sandwell Department of Education, *Britain and India: An Uncommon Journey, Unit Three, Racism in British Society* (1990)
- J.S. Stewart, *The Unequal Third*

References - Units one and two

- Hilary McD Beckles, *European Settlements and Rivalry 1492-1792* (1983)
- M. Berg, *The Age of Manufactures 1700-1820* (1985)
- R. Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery* (1938)
- B. Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society* (1990)
- J. Bush, *Moving On: Northamptonshire and the Wider World* (1989)
- A. Briggs, *A Social History of England* (1984)
- S. Collicott, *Connections: Haringey Local-National-World Links* (1986)
- L. Davidoff and C. Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (1987)
- B. Davidson, *Africa in History* (1974)
- P. Edwards (ed), *The Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1988)
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- **Colonialism, Slavery and the Industrial Revolution c1700 – 1860: The Empire in South Yorkshire** is a teaching pack designed for use in the History National Curriculum at Key Stage 3.

It contains:

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- The Pack has been developed in close collaboration with history teachers in the context of the debates about the narrow definition of 'British History' in the National Curriculum.
 - Using South Yorkshire as a case study, the pack draws together documentary evidence which illustrates the central role of the process of colonialism in the economic, political and cultural development of Britain.
 - Documents include: papers of a merchant involved in the slave trade, news reports, letters and songs about anti-slavery activity in Sheffield, the records of a wealthy family which had estates in Ireland, letters from a Sheffield missionary who spent some years in India – *and many more*.
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