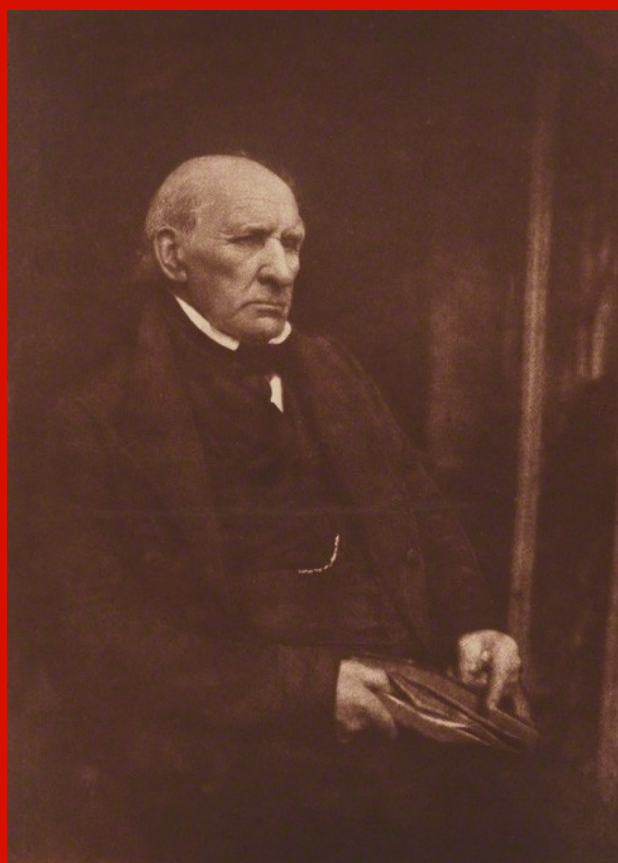


No Gladstone in the Park

The Gladstone Family and the Business
of Slavery
by
Steve Cushion



Caribbean Labour Solidarity

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There is a public park in the North London borough of Brent named after Sir William Gladstone, the former Liberal Prime Minister, who had spent many years using Dollis Hill House as his weekend retreat. Gladstone Park is on a hill with views across London. It has meadows, tree-lined avenues, a walled garden, a duck pond, sports pitches, tennis courts, an outdoor gym and children's playgrounds.

Why should such a fine public amenity be named after a family that made their fortune in the business of slavery.

In the 400 years of the 'Atlantic slave trade', somewhere in the region of 12 to 15 million Africans were enslaved and transported by force to the Americas and the Caribbean. Between one and two million died in the crossing and millions more people in Africa also died because of raids, wars and on the way to the coast for 'sale' to European traffickers. Once in the Americas, these enslaved labourers were forced to work in labour camps where the conditions were so harsh that most only lived for about seven years before the accumulation of fatigue, whipping and hunger sent them to an early grave. The attrition rate in a Caribbean plantation was worse than the Battle of the Somme. The UN World Conference Against Racism 2001 recognised this as a crime against humanity.

Many people in the local community in Brent are calling for the name of this park to be changed.

The park is also the site of a Memorial sculpture group 'To the Memory of Prisoners of War and Victims of Concentration Camps 1914–1945' by Fred Kormis. It seems totally inappropriate that such a fine memorial should be situated in a park named after a family who profited from plantation slavery. *Plantation* is just a polite term for a forced labour camp.

But there is another side to the story, for the historic Demerara Rebellion started on an estate owned by the Gladstones. No oppression without resistance.

No Gladstone in the Park

The Gladstone Family and the Business of Slavery

by Steve Cushion

Sir John Gladstone of Fasque (1764 - 1851)

John Gladstone was born in Leith, Scotland, the son of Thomas Gladstones, a grain merchant. He served his apprenticeship in a rope and sailcloth company, on completion of which he entered his father's business. He travelled widely on business and eventually settled in Liverpool where he made a small fortune as a partner in the trading company Corrie, Gladstone & Bradshaw, which he managed to take over and rename John Gladstone & Company in 1801. In 1814, he began trading with the East Indies when the monopoly of the East India Company was broken.

His interest in the West Indies had begun early in his career and by 1803 he was importing sugar and cotton from the Caribbean, and especially Demerara [later British Guiana]. He lent large sums of money to plantation owners and, when some of them were unable to repay their debts, he foreclosed on their mortgages. He acquired a half interest in *Le Success* plantations in Demerara in 1812, acquiring full ownership in 1816. He changed from coffee to sugar production and doubled the number of enslaved labourers to around 300. By 1820, by similar foreclosures, he owned a total of seven such plantations. He never visited the Caribbean, leaving the management of his interests in Demerara to his attorney Frederick Cort.¹

The abolition campaign in Britain, after a relative lull in activity following the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, was relaunched in 1823, when the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery Throughout the British Dominions was founded and Thomas Fowell Buxton moved a resolution in the House of Commons condemning enslavement as "repugnant to the principles of the British constitution and of the Christian religion", and called for its gradual abolition. Despite the efforts of George Canning, Foreign Secretary and later Prime Minister, he also urged the government to send dispatches to the colonies to improve the treatment of slaves.²

John Gladstone was a Member of Parliament from 1818 until 1827 and Chairman of the Liverpool West India Association as well as being a close friend and colleague of George Canning. Together, realising that there was a need to undermine the activities of the abolitionist faction in the House of Commons and proposed a series of reforms collectively known as "Amelioration".³ In 1823, therefore, resolutions were sent to the colonial assemblies urging them to pass legislation "ameliorating"

1 Richard Sheridan, "The Condition of Slaves on the Sugar Plantations of Sir John Gladstone in the Colony of Demerara 1812 to 1849". *New West Indian Guide*. 76 (2002) pp.243-4

2 Sheridan, *The Condition of Slaves on the Sugar Plantations of Sir John Gladstone*, p.247

3 Trevor Burnard and Kit Candlin. "Sir John Gladstone and the Debate over the Amelioration of Slavery in the British West Indies in the 1820s." *Journal of British Studies* 57, no. 4 (2018) pp. 760-82

the conditions under which enslaved labourers worked. Lord Bathurst, the Colonial Secretary drafted a series of measures for the 'improvement' of the enslaved. There should be better provision for the religious instruction of the slaves, while Sunday markets should be abolished so that the enslaved could attend church. The punishment of enslaved men was to be regulated, the whip should not be used casually in the field and the flogging of enslaved women was forbidden. Families, should not be separated. There was to be legal recognition of the right of the enslaved to hold property and the admission of their evidence against white colonists in court as well as encouraging the manumission of those who could afford to buy their own freedom.⁴

This attempt to head off demands for the eventual abolition of slavery was widely misunderstood by the plantocracy in the Caribbean who saw it as unjustified interference in their "right to private property", that is, their profits. In Demerara, the colonial authorities discussed the resolutions but made no public declaration as to their intention to implement them. Nevertheless, word of the existence of these instructions from London quickly reached the ears of the enslaved. Believing that the British Parliament had legislated their freedom, they planned militant activity to secure what they saw as their rights that were being withheld by the plantation oligarchy.

Enslaved workers on *Le Success* plantation, owned by Sir John Gladstone, led by Jack and his father Quamina, organised an uprising, which quickly spread to neighbouring estates as, in the manner of flying pickets, large groups went from one plantation to another calling the enslaved workers to join them. The Demerara rebels made no move to kill or injure the plantation management, merely locking the overseers, managers, and bookkeepers in the slave stocks, commandeering any weapons they found. There was some looting, ransacking of buildings and cane fields were set on fire. Where owners, managers or overseers resisted and firefights developed, a few of them were wounded or killed, but the leaders of the uprising did their best to prevent unnecessary loss of life amongst the enslavers. There were surprisingly few casualties amongst plantation management, although many of the most hated of them were abused, humiliated and slapped while in the stocks, particularly by the enslaved women.⁵

The rebels, numbering about 9000, attempted to negotiate with the governor of the island and the commander of the troops about their rights to wages, days without labour, and freedom. In many ways, the actions by the enslaved workers represented

4 Michael Taylor, *The Interest: How the British Establishment Resisted the Abolition of Slavery* (London : The Bodley Head, 2020) p.61

5 Emilia Viotti da Costa, *Crowns of Glory, Tears of Blood: The Demerara Slave Rebellion of 1823* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) pp.207-250

a form of "collective bargaining by riot", not dissimilar from the "Captain Swing" and "Luddite" disturbances then occurring in England.⁶ Considering the circumstances, little damage was done to property. Despite the relatively peaceful nature of the action, the colonial authorities brutally suppressed the revolt. Killing hundreds of slaves both in combat and by execution following drumhead courts-martial. There were a series of show trials followed by public executions, performed as a grisly pageant designed to terrify the enslaved workers and reassure the enslavers who had been badly frightened.

The nature of this uprising has been much debated in the historiography, with some seeing it as an attempt at the revolutionary overthrow of the whole institution of enslavement, while others see it as an armed, but reformist, demonstration intending to secure rights that they believed were legally theirs.⁷ Both these positions oversimplify the dynamic of the class struggle, revolutionaries frequently lead strikes and demonstrations with reformist aims when they see no possibility of immediate revolution, while reformist workers, in the heat of the struggle frequently shift to revolutionary positions.

Mary Turner argues that enslaved workers would often engage in forms of protest, not dissimilar from the forms of industrial action by employed workers, in order to obtain increased provisions, lighter workloads, the removal of hated overseers, greater access to provision grounds and other reforms to their working conditions. For instance, they would all gather at the boundary of the estate and refuse to work, but not leave the premises so that they could not be accused of trying to escape.⁸ Such day to day individual and collective resistance helped build the solidarity necessary for the uprising. The cause of the uprising cannot be traced to any single cause, at bottom it was the very institution of slavery and the years of frustration that finally spilled over into revolt.

The terrified slave owners painted a picture of the rebels as violent, bloodthirsty brutes.⁹ Meanwhile, the *Edinburgh Review*, an anti-slavery journal wrote:

In Demerara, a slight commotion was occasioned among the Negroes . . . and far more resembling a combination of European workmen to strike for wages, for time or other indulgence than a rebellion of African slaves.¹⁰

6 Gelien Matthews, *Caribbean Slave Revolts and the British Abolitionist Movement* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012) p.21

Carl Griffin, *Protest, Politics and Work in Rural England, 1700-1850* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)

7 see Janet Mills, "*Quamina, do you hear this?*" *Revisiting the Demerara Slave Rebellion, 1823* (MA thesis, Dalhousie University Halifax, Nova Scotia, 2018) for a full discussion of the historiography.

8 Mary Turner, *From Chattel Slaves to Wage Slaves: The Dynamics of Labour Bargaining in the Americas* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1995)

9 Joshua Bryant, *Accounts of the Insurrection of the Negro Slaves in the Colony of Demerara* (Demerara: Guiana Chronicle Office, Georgetown 1824)

10 *Edinburgh Review* 41, no. 81 (October 1824)

Reversing the allegations that the abolitionists in London had inspired the revolt, Gelien Matthews places the initiative with the enslaved themselves saying "The slaves seemed to make a point of identifying their overt resistance with the debates taking place in Britain on their behalf by timing their risings to follow each wave of abolitionist activity". The racist contempt of the plantation owners meant that they could not believe that the rebels were responsible for such a sophisticated strategy. The editor of the *Demerara Gazette* concluded on August 28, 1823, that "the plans and arrangements of the rebels were most extensive and well made - too well made indeed to admit of a doubt but a superior order of people had laid the original foundation".¹¹ They found a convenient scapegoat in the Reverend John Smith, the preacher at the church where Jack and Quamina worshipped. He was sentenced to death but died from his conditions of imprisonment before they could execute him. Typically, John Smith's judicial murder caused more outrage in elite abolitionist circles London than all the hundreds of dead Africans. However, Sir John Gladstone advanced the opinion that: "I was not sorry to hear of Smith's death as his release would have been followed by much cavil and discussion here".

Nevertheless, some workers in Britain adopted an position of solidarity with the enslaved. As an anti-slavery track of the period argued.

the miners of Cornwall, ... the ironworkers of Wales,... the keelmen of the Tyne, ... the weavers of Lancashire, ... the unhappy affair at Manchester, ... large bodies of Spitalfields crowded last year to Westminster filling Palace-Yard and all the avenues and passages of the House of Parliament with their numbers, beseeching and imploring the members of the Legislatures to protect them from the unjust purposes of their masters ... Or take a stronger case, that of the agricultural labourers, who in open day have been proceeding in bodies to the destruction of threshing machines, and to other acts of destruction of lawless violence; or that of the Luddites or, that of the Blanketeers. And let us ask whether it would have been endured that even these individuals should have been dealt with as the poor, ignorant, oppressed, cart-whipped slaves of Demerara have been dealt with?¹²

Thus, the similarity between the rebels in Demerara and the rebels in England was obvious to radicals in Britain.

Quamina was "shot while trying to escape", while Jack was sentenced to death, but after an appeal for clemency by Sir John Gladstone, was exiled to St Lucia where he was sentenced to hard labour. Seventy-three people who were tried by court marshal, 70 of whom were found guilty, including 21 who were executed, including 10 who

11 Matthews, *Caribbean Slave Revolts and the British Abolitionist Movement*, pp.9, 45

12 "Negro Slavery. No. VII. Insurrections of Slaves in the West Indies, Particularly in Demerara" pp. 60–61 cited in Matthews, *Caribbean Slave Revolts and the British Abolitionist Movement*, p.78

were decapitated after being hanged and had their heads put on poles, while the remainder were brutally flogged. Hundreds of others were murdered by soldiers during and in the immediate aftermath of the uprising.

David Lammy MP, the Shadow Foreign Secretary has written to the British government asking it to pardon 70 abolitionists convicted for their role in the historic 1823 Demerara rebellion. He said exercising the royal prerogative of mercy to grant pardons to those involved in the uprising would be "a significant step in Britain's acknowledgment of its role in the history of slavery".

Thomas Harding, the author of *White Debt* said:

The men and women who took part in the Demerara uprising of 1823 were attempting to abolish British slavery. It was a British court martial which found the 70 people guilty, a court established by a British governor in a British colony (later known as 'British Guiana'), on behalf of the British king, under British military code.

Now is the time for the British government to take full responsibility for its legacy of slavery, to pardon the 'Demerara 70' and recognise them for what they were: heroes, for all of us.¹³

Anya Jabour says of the whole attempt at "amelioration":

a new and hostile disease environment, coupled with extreme work loads and inadequate diet, put enslaved Africans and their descendants in the New World in a precarious position. The situation was compounded by miserliness and racism, which induced slaveowners, doctors, and even slaves' advocates to overlook evidence of slave malnutrition and illness. Slaves were punished for complaining of poor health, exhibiting signs of illness and malnutrition, and for attempting to augment the scanty official care given them. As a result, proposed measures for improving slave health and achieving natural increase were ineffective. Racism and profit-seeking were key elements in the demographic debacle of Caribbean slavery.¹⁴

Sir John Gladstone relied on his attorney, Frederick Cort, for information about conditions on his property in Demerara and Cort had every interest in painting a rosy picture, just as Gladstone wanted to believe that all was well. Gladstone shared this positive image with parliamentary colleagues such as George Canning and used these reports to counteract the propaganda of the anti-slavery faction. So he was completely confounded when he discovered that the revolt had started on his own property at *Le*

13 Thomas Harding, *White Debt: The Demerara Uprising and Britain's Legacy of Slavery* (London : Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2022)

David Lammy requests pardon for 1823 slave rebellion convicts, Guardian, 13 February 2022

14 Anya Jabour, "Slave Health and Health Care in the British Caribbean: Profits, Racism and the Failure of Amelioration in Trinidad and British Guiana, 1824-1834". *The Journal of Caribbean History* 28 (1994) p.17

Success. However, it did not take him long to argue that "negroes, when not enslaved, were idle, insolent, slothful and averse to outdoor work".¹⁵ Of course, Gladstone had every reason to want to believe that *Le Success* was being properly run, he had purchased it for £80,000 [£106,700,000] and made him a profit of £10,000 [£13,340,000] a year, 12.5%.¹⁶ The revolt of 1823 did nothing to dissuade Gladstone from increasing his investment in the West Indies and, by a mixture of foreclosing ruthlessly on debts and buying the property of the recently deceased from inheritors who were not entirely *au fait* with the value of their inheritance, he became one of the most important owners of land and slave in the region.

Nevertheless, he was not so naive as to believe every word that Frederick Court sent him, useful as it had been in his attempts to undermine the abolitionist movement. So he sent his son Robertson to investigate in 1828. Robertson found that Cort was idle, corrupt, greedy and brutal, but worst of all in the eyes of the Gladstone family, an incompetent manager. He was summarily dismissed. Of course, this revelation that Cort's reports were self-seeking and untrue did nothing to persuade Robertson or his Father that the institution of enslavement was wrong. Robertson wrote:

"Every comfort is theirs. Slavery is to them a name without a meaning - preaching did and has inflamed their minds; but fortunately for their own welfare those doctrines which were held out to them pretending to be grounded upon the faith of the Christian religion have vanished like the shadow they were composed of. Now they are once more contented and happy, and will remain so, if allowed to live undisturbed by the meddling and ill disposed. They know little of the character of the Negro and West Indies who suppose the people to be a wretched race: no, it is the contrary - they are what others are not, happy!".¹⁷

None so blind as those who will not see!

John Gladstone, who was the biggest single claimant of compensation when slavery was abolished in 1838, was associated with eleven different compensation claims. He owned 2,508 enslaved workers in British Guiana and Jamaica and received a compensation payment of £106,769 [£132,200,000].

More than enough to salve a conscience.

15 Correspondence with James Cropper, 1824

16 S G. Checkland, *The Gladstones: A Family Biography, 1764-1851* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) p.196

17 Checkland, *The Gladstones*, p.200

As late as 1830, he was still defending slavery while advocating gradual amelioration, leading to emancipation when it was "safe and not unjust to the planters".¹⁸

William Gladstone

Sir John Gladstone had other sons, one of whom was a Tory MP and another was to become the leading Liberal politician, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Prime Minister, William Gladstone. For more than 30 years, William Gladstone was dependent on his father for his income and political expenses. His father gave him a large annual allowance and paid half of his expenses when he stood for election at Newark. In addition received at least £120,000 from his father around the time of his death in 1851.¹⁹ This money came from the unpaid labour of enslaved Africans in Guyana

During the Newark campaign, William Gladstone spoke of the need for "measures for the moral advancement and further legal protection of our fellow subjects in slavery", while stressing the need for Christian education and the inculcation of "honest and industrious habits" and concluding by saying "let emancipation go hand in hand with fitness to enjoy freedom". Furthermore he claimed that there was nothing in scripture that stated slavery was "absolutely and necessarily sinful".²⁰ The same slowly, slowly attitude that his father had pioneered in Parliament, attempting to delay emancipation as long as possible by saying that the enslaved were not able to profit from freedom yet. The expression "honest and industrious habits" can be interpreted as meaning that the workers in the West Indies should be ready to be exploited by their previous owners without complaint or resistance. A theme he pursued further in his speech to Parliament opposing emancipation in 1833: "I would not free the slave without assurance of his disposition to industry".

He managed to get himself onto the Parliamentary committee discussing the detail of the bill and was thus able to be part of the move to compensate the owners with £20 million pounds for their loss of property rights in the enslaved workers. In 1835 he was closely involved in pushing his father's compensation claim. Sir John Gladstone would receive one of the highest compensation payments, although William Gladstone opposed the publication of a parliamentary account of how much individuals had received in payment.

18 John Gladstone, *Facts relating to slavery in the West Indies and America, contained in a letter to Sir Robert Peel Bt.* (London, 1830)

19 Checkland, Gladstones, *A Family Biography* (Cambridge, 1971) p. 416

20 Gladstone's address to the Newark electors, 8 Oct. 1832, quoted in Roland Quinault, "Gladstone and Slavery." *The Historical Journal* 52, no. 2 (2009) p.367

Postscript

Historian Louise Raw wrote recently:

As there's talk of removing a statue I've written a lot about, of William Gladstone on Bow Road in east London, we should also consider honouring the women forced to pay for it in 1882. The unveiling took place in 1882 at the behest of their hugely wealthy bosses Bryant and May, who'd forced the match-women to pay for the statue from already starvation wages. The firm made workers attend the ceremony – but watched in horror as the women turned it into a protest, attacking the statue with rocks, jabbing their fingers with hatpins to stain it red, and shouting "our blood paid for this!".

A local tradition has grown up for the statue's outstretched hand to be painted red to signify the stain of blood.

Ethical Name Change Open Letter

Please consider signing and sharing this

[Open Letter for “No Gladstone in the Park”](#)

William Gladstone’s maiden speech to Parliament was in defence of Slavery. He believed enslaved workers should undergo some form of “civilisation” process before emancipation and when abolition was finally agreed, he negotiated the equivalent of £14m “compensation” for his father. 124 years after his death his name needs to be removed.

We, the undersigned Concerned Citizens and Community Activists demand an unreserved apology from Councillor Milli Patel, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Reform at Brent Council.

On 31st January 2023, at a meeting of the Steering Group for Brent’s Community Action Plan (BCAP), Cllr Patel dismissed the No Gladstone in the Park campaign calling for the removal of iconography celebrating African Enslavement using the description “Contested History”. It is a response that at best, highlights a need for Cultural Sensitivity Training and at worst, can be seen as an attempt to further institutionalise Afrophobia. Following that meeting, it has come to our attention that Community Activists from No Gladstone in the Park have been unilaterally removed from the mailing list thereby excluding them from meetings.

It is extremely disappointing that Brent Council has opted to reject the No Gladstone in Park call for Reparative Justice when institutions like the Royal Family, the Church of England and the Guardian Newspaper have stepped up to address the issue. It is also patently undemocratic to exclude Community Voices, especially those of African Heritage from the Brent Community Action Plan Steering Group. We strongly suggest that the decision to exclude Ethical Name Change and the 2 Brent based campaigns No Gladstone in the Park and Leopold Must Go is reconsidered as a matter of urgency.

The Gladstone Family was one of the largest enslavers with plantations in Jamaica and Demerara (now modern day Guyana). In 1823, when the greatest rebellion of enslaved People in Demerara’s history took place on a Gladstone plantation, the insurrection was put down with great brutality: many Africans were mutilated and others executed for having the temerity to rebel against their enslavement. The Gladstone Family received the largest compensation payment from the British government, over £100,000 for the more than 2,000 enslaved people they had to free when enslavement was finally abolished. This was £14 million in today’s money. The historical records show that Gladstone was involved in calculating the compensation to be paid to his father. It is also a matter of historical record that the £20 million pounds paid to the Enslavers in 1833 was so large that the Government had to take a loan which it only finished paying in 2015. It is a

matter of historical record that the victims of this heinous Crime against Humanity received nothing. The “Contested History” narrative does not bear scrutiny:

- Is it contested history that Africans were shipped from the African Continent to the so-called New World during the Transatlantic Trafficking of Africans and that it was a heinous practice masquerading as trade?
- Is it contested history that the Trafficking was brutal and the “Middle Passage” resulted in loss of life and psychological trauma for the survivors?
- Is it contested history that Africans were sometimes thrown overboard so the Traffickers could attempt to claim compensation from insurance as happened in the case of the Zong which ended up in the UK Courts?
- Is it contested history that the Enslavement that followed the Trafficking involved brutal treatment including rape?
- Is it contested history that Article one, section two of the Constitution of the United States declared that any person who was not free would be counted as three-fifths of a free individual for the purposes of determining congressional representation?
- Is it contested history that Africans were stripped of their identity, language culture and families?
- Is it contested history that King Leopold of Belgium treated the Congo as his personal property and brutalised the people, chopping off hands of young children if production quotas were not met and, in many cases, forcing the father of the child or children to pose holding their children’s hands whilst the mutilated children stood next to them, thus demonstrating the powerlessness of their parents to protect them?
- Is it contested history that in 1908, Belgium Parliament took control of the Congo when International Outrage at the atrocities reached a zenith?
- Is it contested history that King Leopold is in the top 10 of mass murderers because 10 – 15 million Congolese died as a result of his brutality?
- Is it contested history that Africa is still reeling from the Colonial Adventure which extracted wealth from the Continent and many of the fine buildings in the cities of Europe were financed through the trafficking of Africans?

Ethical Name Change is resolute about delivering antiracist change in spite of the hostile political climate where some seek political capital from demonising vulnerable migrants and trivialising racist paraphernalia such as gollywogs or Afriphobic names.

We look forward to hearing from you soon about the steps Brent Council will take to correct a grievous wrong.

Sign the Open Letter - <https://shorturl.at/dxV28>

Overturn the convictions of all those who were convicted for their role in the historic 1823 Demerara rebellion

Britain's shadow Foreign Secretary, David Lammy, in February 2022 wrote to the British government requesting the pardon of 70 abolitionists convicted for their role in the 1823 Demerara rebellion. Lammy called the revolt, involving more 11,000 enslaved Africans, a "seminal moment" in the history of the human slave trade. It failed but contributed to the abolition of slavery ten years later.

In a letter to Dominic Raab, the Justice Secretary, Lammy highlighted the plight of Jack Gladstone, a slave who was the main organiser of the two-day uprising, and John Smith, a British Protestant minister. His letter named 73 people who were tried — 70 of whom were found guilty, including 21 who were hanged. Ten of those slaves were then decapitated and their heads were put on poles.

Lammy wrote: "In recent years, this country has entered into a discussion about its colonial history and the path to repair. The full pardoning of both John Smith and Jack Gladstone would be a significant step in Britain's acknowledgment of its role in the history of slavery. Both . . . were pioneers of the abolition movement, and they must be remembered and celebrated as such.

"It is for this reason that I am requesting a pardon through the exercise of the royal prerogative of mercy."

Demerara, part of modern-day Guyana, was one of Britain's most lucrative colonies, being rich in sugar plantations. It was known for treating slaves harshly.

Jack Gladstone was enslaved by Sir John Gladstone, father of William Gladstone, the future prime minister.

However, in a reply sent to Lammy on Wednesday February 9, 2022, Raab said that following Guyana gaining Independence in 1966 and becoming a Republic in 1970, it would be for its president to grant such pardons.

Thomas Harding, the author of *White Debt*, called Raab's response "shocking". He told The Guardian: "Britain was responsible for this gross miscarriage of justice, not Guyana, and the British government should be the one to pardon those found guilty."

Trade Union Congress, London, East and South East region Reparations for Afrikan Enslavement Steering Group

In the 400 years of the 'Atlantic slave trade', somewhere in the region of 12 to 15 million Africans were enslaved and transported by force to the Americas and the Caribbean. Between one and two million died in the crossing and millions more people in Africa also died because of raids, wars and on the way to the coast for 'sale' to European traffickers. Once in the Americas, these enslaved labourers were forced to work in labour camps where the conditions were so harsh that most only lived for about seven years before the accumulation of fatigue, whipping and hunger sent them to an early grave. The attrition rate in a Caribbean plantation was worse than the Battle of the Somme. The UN World Conference Against Racism 2001 recognised this as a crime against humanity.

Trafficking for the African continent represented depopulation of its societies, the destruction of political and social structures, the stifling of economic development and prepared the way for eventual colonial occupation by the European powers.

Profits from British trafficking and the unpaid labour of enslaved workers contributed significantly to the accumulation of capital in England, which financed the Industrial Revolution and, conversely, contributed to the underdevelopment of member states of the Caribbean Community, both through the profits made from sugar and other tropical products as well as the supply of cheap raw materials such as cotton to European and North American manufacturers. These profits went, directly or indirectly, to the manufacturers and other suppliers of the trafficking, to the shipping industry, into the construction of infrastructure such as canals and railways, but above all to the financial services industry. Many of today's banks and insurance companies can be traced back directly to concerns that had their first growth through their financing of trafficking and enslavement. It would therefore seem reasonable that these modern corporations should refund the unpaid wages from which their predecessors profited so handsomely.

The international trade union and Labour movement has a duty to be in the forefront of the Reparations movement because this struggle is about redress for the unpaid labour, including the special oppression of women, who were forced to have children to provide a continued source of enslaved labour. Furthermore, this struggle is also about stopping and repairing the effect of the ongoing super exploitation of Afrikan people worldwide by institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank.

Racism, which the supporters of the trafficking used as a justification for enslavement, has infected British society. The racism of the police, the unemployment figures for young Black people, the endless discrimination and petty humiliations of everyday life, the Windrush scandal: all these factors and more have

their origins in the invention of racism to explain the wealth and power that the British ruling class gained from enslavement.

As well as the return of unpaid wages, we seek Reparations for the former enslaved Afrikans and their descendants for the denial of their culture and history; human rights abuses, including but not limited to murder, rape, flogging, branding, denial of freedom of movement, freedom to worship, freedom to own land, and the right to education; and for the severe generational psychological damage to enslaved people and their descendants, long after 1838, caused by their status as enslaved people and perpetuated by associated systemic racism and racial discrimination.

The call for Reparations for enslavement appeals in a broader sense to the "correcting of a wrong". In the case of the trafficking and enslavement with its persistent legacies, this means implementing measures of compensation at different levels. It embraces a multitude of symbolic and material dimensions, including the call for apology and recognition, but also for collective investments that would address the structural inequalities and racial discrimination Afrikan people still suffer in terms of accessing education, health systems, income, housing and labour markets, to name just a few. Besides financial transfers, claims for Reparations demand support for historical and commemorative activities, the erection of memorials, returning artifacts, days of remembrance and museums that would contribute to decolonising the history of enslavement and its legacies.

A better world is possible.

The LESE TUC Reparations for Afrikan Enslavement Steering Group sets as its aims to:

- Campaign in the trade union movement for Reparations for enslavement.
- Support and publicise the work of the CARICOM Reparations Commission.
- Support those governments, such as Belize, that have lodged claims for Reparations and encourage other governments to follow their example.
- Liaise with other bodies such as the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Afrikan Reparations and local Reparations groups such as Global Afrikan Congressuk (GACuk).
- Work for the decolonisation of education at all levels.
- Support local campaigns for the removal of statues and similar memorials to traffickers and enslavers.
- Produce printed and digital material to support the above.
- Provide speakers for trade union meetings.
- Support the campaign to overturn the convictions of all those who were convicted for their role in the historic 1823 Demerara rebellion by enslaved workers. This should be extended to all enslaved persons executed or punished for acts of resistance.

No Gladstone in the Park

The Gladstone Family and the Business of Slavery

by
Steve Cushion

There is a public park in the North London borough of Brent named after Sir William Gladstone, the former Liberal Prime Minister, who had spent many years using Dollis Hill House as his weekend retreat. Gladstone Park is on a hill with views across London. It has meadows, tree-lined avenues, a walled garden, a duck pond, sports pitches, tennis courts, an outdoor gym and children's playgrounds.

Why should such a fine public amenity be named after a family that made their fortune in the business of slavery.

In the 400 years of the 'Atlantic slave trade', somewhere in the region of 12 to 15 million Africans were enslaved and transported by force to the Americas and the Caribbean. Between one and two million died in the crossing and millions more people in Africa also died because of raids, wars and on the way to the coast for 'sale' to European traffickers. Once in the Americas, these enslaved labourers were forced to work in labour camps where the conditions were so harsh that most only lived for about seven years before the accumulation of fatigue, whipping and hunger sent them to an early grave. The attrition rate in a Caribbean plantation was worse than the Battle of the Somme. The UN World Conference Against Racism 2001 recognised this as a crime against humanity.

Many people in the local community in Brent are calling for the name of this park to be changed.

But there is another side to the story, for the historic Demerara Rebellion started on an estate owned by the Gladstones. No oppression without resistance.

