

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE SLAVE TRADE AND ITS ABOLITION

23 AUGUST 2020

23 August has been designated by UNESCO as the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition.



From 1562 when slavery began with the first English slaving expedition setting off by Sir John Hawkins to 1865 when the transatlantic slave trade was abolished, between 10 and 28 million African men, women and children were enslaved, persecuted and their human rights denied. By the end of slavery millions had lost their lives.

The transatlantic trafficking of enslaved African labour resulted in brutal economic exploitation and inhumanity towards humankind.

This abominable and shameful period of time was unprecedented and unique in the way that these terrible acts and crimes against humanity took place on an industrial scale and was enforced by European Law, which involved and was supported by many major establishments and institutions.



We pay tribute to all those who campaigned – black and white – to abolish the trafficking of enslaved African labour, particularly the enslaved African men and women themselves, former African slaves such as Olaudah Equiano and Ignatius Sancho, white working class groups, parliamentarians such as William Wilberforce and many others.



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The legacy of the Slave Trade continues to manifest itself in different forms, through colonialism, apartheid, racism, poverty, economic and social deprivation, unfair trade agreements and huge debts owed by developing countries to the rich developed nations. The recent disgraceful treatment of the Windrush generation is a prime example of this shameful legacy.

Nations affected by the legacy of slavery such as Africa and the Caribbean should be compensated through aid, cancellation of debt and other measures. We also urge the Government to change trade agreements to benefit poorer nations and working people within these nations.

The slave trade is a part of our history that must be condemned and never forgotten.

Unite recognises the legacy and contributions of people of African descent. We fully support the call for a National Day of Remembrance. We encourage initiatives from the regions to commemorate the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.



Unite calls on the government to support the organisation of an annual remembrance day and commit resources for education and raising awareness to mark this high profile event.

We recoil at the leftovers of slavery still evident in our society today. From racist bile shouted by the far right parties to the continual discrimination faced by black and Asian workers and worst still, the shocking normalisation of racist language and attacks which continue to blight our society.

The legacy of domination still continues and raises its ugly head continually through violence, policies or comments made by those around us including senior politicians who should know better.

We would continue to raise awareness about this history to ensure rights and dignity of black people as well as our collective challenge against all forms of racism and discrimination. Unite's Unity over Division campaign is one of the many avenues we use to progress this.

Unite calls on the government to once and for all, stamp out the emergence and unrelenting occurrence of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance, whether in their more subtle and contemporary forms and manifestations, or by other ideologies and practices based on racial or ethnic discrimination or superiority. We call for the elimination of all forms of racial prejudice including hate crime in the world of work and all aspects of our lives.

*The death of George Floyd in USA and the disproportionate Impact of Covid 19 this year have exposed the reality of BAEM people's daily lives. We must all unite, Black and White, in solidarity to challenge the injustices BAEM people face relentlessly. We must all Stand up and be counted. Racism Hurts and **Black Lives Matter**.*