Abolitionist politics and national identities in nineteenth-century Europe

This essay examines the emergence of a culture of opposition to slave trading and slavery in European politics between the late eighteenth and late nineteenth centuries. It looks at the issues and attitudes surrounding the politics of abolition on a national and international level, particularly in relation to the problem of national identity. How did abolition movements develop and gain popular support in different European countries? Were they able to extend this influence into other countries? How did the development of a politics of anti-slavery affect national identities and changing international relationships during this period? The essay looks at the connections between national identities, public support for abolition and new forms of political campaigning developed by anti-slavery organisations in Europe.

Over the course of the nineteenth century, anti-slavery principles and the idea of European 'civilisation' became intertwined. As Europe moved to abolish slavery, abolition was increasingly seen as a measure of civilisation and progress. Areas of the world where slavery and slave trading still existed were deemed 'uncivilised' and a European consensus in favour of abolition began to emerge. By the end of the century, the politics of abolition had become a fundamental justification for European military and imperial intervention in Africa.

The first part of the essay will focus on the issue of the slave trade. It will examine the foundation of early abolitionist movements in Britain and France, followed by Britain's abolition of the slave trade in 1807, and attempts to impose abolition on a global scale through a series of treaties and campaigns against slave trading. The French *Société de la Morale Chrétienne* will be examined as an example of a later European movement against the slave trade. The second part of the essay will look at the role of campaigns against slavery in European political culture, focusing on anti-slavery movements founded in Britain, France and Spain between the 1820s and 1860s. Finally, the emergence of late nineteenth-century abolitionist movements in Europe will be considered. These different forms of social and political engagement against slave trading and slavery will be considered in national and international contexts, in order to understand how the issues and political attitudes surrounding abolition varied within Europe, and how they interacted with broader questions of religion, race and identity.

Early European Abolitionism: the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade in Britain and the Amis des Noirs in France

The complex relationships between the countries of Europe helped to define the circumstances in which an organised political culture of abolition emerged. In the eighteenth century, opponents to the slave trade and slavery were scattered across the continent, including figures of the French Enlightenment such as Montesquieu, Diderot and Condorcet and campaigners for emancipation like Granville Sharp in Britain.[1] The first dedicated abolitionist organisation in Europe was created in 1787 in London: the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. This was followed by the creation of

the French *Société des Amis des Noirs* [Society of Friends of the Blacks] in February 1788, at the request of the British society. In the founding speech of the *Amis des Noirs*, Jacques-Pierre Brissot de Warville suggested that an abolitionist society was needed in Paris, in order to "compete with that of London".[2]

Despite this appeal to national pride, cooperation was quickly established between the two early European abolitionist movements. Publications were translated, visits were exchanged and the two societies even shared an official seal, the Wedgewood image of a kneeling slave with the caption "Am I not a man and a brother?" in Britain, and "Ne suis-je pas ton frère?" [Am I not your brother?] in France. Dispatches of Mirabeau's journal, *Analyse des papiers anglais* were used by the two societies to communicate, exchange pamphlets and evade the French censors.[3] The British abolitionist Thomas Clarkson stayed in Paris and attended meetings of the *Amis des Noirs* between 1789 and 1790. However, despite these connections and a shared commitment to ending the slave trade, a number of problems emerged that made continued cooperation difficult.

Firstly, the two societies had very different public profiles and levels of support. A French pamphlet published in support of the newly formed *Amis des Noirs* compared the potential audiences that the societies could hope to reach. While abolitionist ideas were "more widespread and better received in England than in any other part of Europe", giving "hope that the cry of humanity will be heard more keenly there", the early growth of abolitionism in France seemed to have less widespread popular appeal: "The same pressure is making itself felt in France, but with far from the same universality".[4] The *Amis des Noirs* were aware of their limited popular support in France, but saw this as the result of passing political trends rather than something that they could control. In a 1789 committee report outlining potential courses of action for the society, abolitionist Le Roi de Petitval suggested that while the "fashion" for abolitionism was stronger in Britain, it might at some point reach France. The report did not suggest that actively promoting popular anti-slavery sentiment might be beneficial.[5]

Campaign goals and tactics were very different in Britain. The Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade had carefully defined goals and drew up lists of instructions for campaigners detailing precisely when and how to canvas for support and petition Parliament. Local committees were formed around the country and public petitioning played an important role in the development of the politics of abolition in Britain.[6] In France, however, the *Société des Amis des Noirs* focused their attention on the revolutionary debates taking place in the National Assembly in Paris. Their campaigns were broader and more radical, calling for constitutional rights for free black citizens in the colonies as well as an end to both the slave trade and slavery, described as "infernal cannibalism" by French revolutionary Abbé Fauchet.[7] These different approaches and aims distanced the two societies from one another.

Abolitionist connections between Britain and France were damaged by the impact of the French Revolution and the wars that followed it. British campaigners found that close relations with radical France quickly became a liability at home. During his tour of Scotland on behalf of the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade in 1792, for example, William Dickson noted in his diary after meeting two potential supporters: "Neither of them have any connection with the French Revolutionary Club here, and I charged them to beware of any allusions to it, or even to liberty".[8] Relationships between

the abolitionists of Europe were also affected by the deaths of many original members of the *Amis des Noirs* during the French revolution. Most importantly, the radical self-emancipation of the slaves in the French colony of Saint Domingue between 1791 and 1793 and the official abolition of colonial slavery by the French Convention went far further than British campaigners had ever envisaged. With few exceptions, the advances made in Saint Domingue and France in ending slavery and the slave trade were met with disapproval in Britain.[9] In a letter to Thomas Clarkson in 1798, the Marquis de Lafayette criticised the abolition of slavery as "hurried" and "verging on anarchy" and, with the major exception of Saint Domingue, where the former slaves declared the independent state of Haiti in 1804, slavery was restored by Napoleon throughout the remaining French empire in 1802.[10]

British campaigns against the 'foreign slave trade'

Once Britain regained the lead in the politics of abolition by ending the slave trade in 1807 the complex relationship between the two countries created a polarising effect, intensifying public support for abolition in Britain but creating public hostility in France. The case against the French slave trade became tainted by its association with Britain: "after all, it was England – perfidious Albion – that was so obsessed with abolishing the slave trade".[11] In Britain, hostility towards France contributed to the largest ever petitioning campaign against the slave trade. The peace treaty signed in Paris in 1814 met with public outrage due to the clause which allowed a five year continuation of the French slave trade. A tenth of the entire population added their names to over 1300 petitions on the subject - many more than had been signed in favour of abolition of Britain's own slave trade.[12]

The campaign against the slave trading clause of the 1814 Treaty of Paris developed into a national crusade in Britain against the 'foreign slave trade' in the first half of the nineteenth century. After 1807, instead of starting to campaign against slavery in their own colonies, British abolitionists turned their attention to the rest of Europe, and quickly made plans to "diffuse authentic information, and excite just sentiments" abroad.[13] They hoped that if the full horror of the slave trade was publicised across Europe then public opinion would be roused, as it had been in Britain. This evangelical fervour, combined with a self-satisfied pride at having abolished the slave trade certainly had an impact on how nineteenth-century Britons viewed themselves, as well as influencing their perceptions of countries such as France, Spain and Portugal that continued to trade in slaves. However, the abolitionist hope that more targeted and accurate information about the slave trade reaching Europe would result in a growth in public support for abolition was misplaced. There were serious public doubts over the impartiality of this information, and British-sponsored propaganda campaigns were greeted with suspicion in continental Europe.

British abolitionists and their supporters on the continent encouraged overt intervention in Europe via publications, public addresses, private meetings and letters to foreign monarchs and political figures such as the French foreign minister Talleyrand and Alexander I, Emperor of Russia.[14] The Society of Friends and the African Institution, founded in 1807 with the aim of 'civilising' Africa and ending the foreign slave trade, led this drive to promote the cause of abolitionism abroad. These

international campaign materials highlighted shared values and religious kinship between the nations of Europe. They tried to encourage a collective sense of responsibility in Europe for the abolition of the slave trade, and suggested that: "It matters not whether [the trade] be carried on by the French, the Dutch, the Portuguese, the Germans, or other persons: the result will be the same. Human nature is alike in all the countries of the universe".[15] Like the 'Declaration Relative to the Slave Trade' signed at the Congress of Vienna in February 1815, these campaigns tried to promote cooperation between European countries in order to end the slave trade.

British influence was clear in much of the material published abroad in the 1810s and 20s. New pamphlets copied their examples directly from existing campaign materials, translating and re-publishing without adapting the material to suit new European audiences. For example, the Spanish abolitionist Blanco White's *Bosquexo del comercio en esclavos: y reflexiones sobre este tráfico considerado moral, política, y cristianamente* [Sketch of the slave trade: and reflections on this traffic considered from a moral, political and Christian perspective] was published in London and only took into account the British campaign against the slave trade, considered to be broadly "applicable to what other nations are doing".[16] In 1821, the African Institution in London had their entire 180 page report on the foreign slave trade directly translated into French, and published "by order of the African Institution".[17] A more subtle approach was needed, and British-sponsored propaganda against the slave trade was later published and circulated anonymously abroad, as campaigners realised that an obvious connection to Britain could have a negative impact on their cause.

Other tactics employed by British campaigners included seeking out overseas abolitionist correspondents and witnesses to the slave trade. In addition to Blanco White, a number of French supporters such as Simonde de Sismondi and Madame de Staël corresponded with British abolitionists and had writings and translations published in London. A former employee of the French colonial government in Senegal, Joseph Elzéar Morenas, was supported by British abolitionists when he brought two petitions against the French government in 1820 and 1821 calling for the suppression of the illegal slave trade from Africa.[18] Nineteenth-century British abolitionists also attempted to encourage opposition to the slave trade in continental Europe via speaking tours by Quaker abolitionists like George Alexander, Josiah Forster and Anne Knight. They were able to draw on religious networks in Europe, and secure financial and practical support in setting up abolitionist societies abroad.

Société de la Morale Chrétienne

A new British-style campaigning group against the slave trade emerged in France in 1822, as part of the *Société de la Morale Chrétienne* [Society of Christian Morality]. With members including the Reverend Mark Wilks, who introduced fundraising via the sale of workbags and prints into the French abolitionist movement, the society established close ties with Britain from the outset.[19] The society maintained that France should ignore nationalist fears of collaboration with the so-called "natural enemy" across the Channel, and work with Britain to ensure full compliance with the treaties signed against the slave trade.[20] A number of initiatives such as essay and poetry contests

were organised to increase public awareness of the continued French slave trade. Yet the timid campaigns of the *Société de la Morale Chrétienne* made little impact on French public opinion, and their activities did not develop into a large-scale movement against the slave trade.

In Britain, national mass petitioning campaigns calling for the abolition of the slave trade had drawn support from across the country and across class, race and gender divisions since 1788. It eventually became, as Linda Colley has pointed out, a comparatively "uncontroversial" cause and an "emblem of national virtue", which united public opinion, promoted national unity and allowed Britain to take the moral high ground within Europe, appearing as a champion of liberty.[21] However, in France and elsewhere in Europe, opposing the slave trade was more problematic. Public and political support was fragmented, and Britain's efforts to export its own model of abolitionism after 1814 caused resentment. Attempts at organised abolitionism in Europe remained sporadic and confined to a small international elite, many with religious or intellectual connections to Britain. Unlike in Britain, public opinion in most European countries did not become fully invested in the idea of ending the slave trade on a national level, and the issue thus had a minimal effect upon national identity at this point. As the historian of abolition Seymour Drescher puts it: "Comparatively speaking, abolitionism was more like a ripple than a wave in most of Western Europe in the century before 1850".[22]

"An abolitionist atmosphere": comparing European political cultures of anti-slavery

The power behind British anti-slavery political culture in the nineteenth century was confidently attributed to national public opinion: "the influence of a nation's thunder", as it was described at a meeting in London.[23] However, this perception of a mass public anti-slavery sentiment was unusual for Europe at the time. Individual figures in countries such as France and Spain had spoken out strongly against slavery, but widespread public pressure to emancipate the colonies was not seen anywhere else in Europe on the same scale. Yet half a century later, colonial slavery had been abolished across Europe, and slaveholding was widely perceived to be 'uncivilised' and unworthy of Europeans. Clearly some form of "abolitionist atmosphere", to cite a Spanish anti-slavery pamphlet, had influenced Europe over the course of the nineteenth century, but identifying how this shift took place is difficult.[24] Often a national consensus could only be reached reluctantly, or in retrospect, once colonial slavery had already been abolished.

This section gives a comparative overview of national campaigns for the abolition of European colonial slavery, from the 1820s to the 1870s. It examines how anti-slavery campaigns attempted to appeal to a patriotic concept of freedom as an integral part of national identity, in order to promote the abolition of colonial slavery.

Britain

By the 1820s, national identity was invested in the idea of Britain as a land where freedom flourished, where the air was "too pure for a slave to breathe in".[25] Slavery was increasingly

criticised on religious grounds, and was allowed to exist only on the boundaries of the nation: in the former American colonies, in the West Indies and in countries generally perceived as less 'civilised'.[26] Campaigners repeatedly portrayed the remaining colonial centres of plantation slavery as an affront to Christianity and a national disgrace. These convictions were gradually incorporated into British political culture, with widespread public support for the abolition not just of the slave trade, but of colonial slavery itself. To this end, the Anti-Slavery Society (also known as the Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery) was founded in 1823, and quickly established branches all over the country.

Calling for the immediate abolition of slavery, the campaigner Elizabeth Heyrick argued that this was the only way Britain would be able to maintain the moral high ground in Europe: "Then, and not till then, we shall speak to the surrounding nations with the all-commanding eloquence of sincerity and truth".[27] Despite opposition from the West India lobby in Britain, a strong public consensus against slavery was established. By 1831, Stephen Lushington was promoting a British political culture that he argued "compelled" silence from all those who were pro-slavery.[28] The same year, a radical branch of the Anti-Slavery Society, the Agency was created to push for immediate change. The British government received petitions totalling over a million signatures calling for an immediate end to colonial slavery in 1833, and a law abolishing colonial slavery was passed in August of the same year. Another public campaign put an early end to the apprenticeship system that had perpetuated conditions of enslavement in the British colonies between 1834 and 1838.

As Heyrick had suggested, campaigns to end slavery abroad began almost immediately after abolition in the British colonies. British campaigners first started to lobby and promote abolition in Europe: Zachary Macaulay published in French a series of five anonymous pamphlets on colonial slavery and abolition in the mid-1830s with the Paris-based publisher Hachette, and George Alexander toured Denmark and the northern German states in 1839. The British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS) was founded in 1839 and international anti-slavery conventions were held in London in 1840 and 1843, with delegates from all over the world. These conferences were designed to impress foreign visitors to Britain with the success of the abolition 'experiment', as this extract from the second conference proceedings boastfully suggests:

> "European Nations, desirous of emulating Great Britain in power and wealth, are sensible that her philanthropy places her so immeasurably above them in the scale of humanity, that they cannot approximate to her greatness until they have imitated her example and released the bondsman from his chains".[29]

The BFASS followed similar international tactics to those used by British campaigns against the foreign slave trade in the 1810s and 20s. Foreign correspondents were sought out, anti-slavery tours organised and campaign materials sent out to contacts abroad. This was also the first anti-slavery society to address the issue of slavery in India and in Africa, as reports on both were presented at the 1840 convention. Seymour Drescher has described the 1830s and early 1840s as the "zenith" of British anti-slavery activity, with a marked decline in influence of the society after this point.[30]

France

In France, the conservative political culture of the Restoration made public campaigning very difficult in the first half of the nineteenth century. The nation's radical anti-slavery tradition was almost completely suppressed. The few remaining abolitionists of the revolutionary period, such as Abbé Grégoire and Civique de Gastine, who in an 1820 petition called slavery "repulsive to the French character" and "an outrage against nature",[31] were seen as dangerous radicals and ostracised from French politics. Only in 1834 did a national movement against slavery, the *Société pour l'abolition de l'esclavage*, emerge in France and it took another fourteen years and another radical change of government in 1848 for a law of abolition to be passed.

As the prospectus of the newly-established French society noted, there had been a strong sense of resistance and "wounded national pride" to France's hesitation in re-launching abolitionism, especially after Britain had passed the emancipation bill.[32] As in the 1780s and 90s, the French movement remained a small elite group, centred on leading figures in parliament who rejected the popularist notion of mass campaigning or petitions. The French abolitionist politician, Agénor de Gasparin, noted in 1838 that the politics of anti-slavery had the ability to unite politicians from different parties.[33] However, this cooperation was not really extended into the social or religious sphere, unlike in Britain where the role of non-conformist religious groups such as the Quakers in abolishing slave trading and slavery has been noted.

Anti-slavery opinions were not widely publicised in the press, through public meetings and pamphlets, as they had been in Britain. Abolitionism never became part of popular culture on a national scale, despite some efforts to launch poetry and essay writing competitions.[34] There were a few exceptions, such as a workers' petition for immediate abolition in 1844, coordinated by the leading French abolitionist Victor Schoelcher, and a Protestant ladies' petition in 1847, but the scale was too small to have a real national impact.[35] Anti-slavery political culture in France was largely restricted to the sphere of parliamentary debate and legislation: this is where political alliances were made, debates were held and where slavery was abolished.

Yet the pragmatic and political character of organised abolitionism in France did not mean that the issue held no interest for the French public. The campaigner Guillaume de Félice commented bitterly in 1846 that "everyone nowadays is an abolitionist, or claims to be".[36] Although Félice made a clear distinction between those who were campaigning actively for immediate abolition and those who were merely "whitewashing", making small concessions and trying to delay the full abolition of slavery as long as they could, it is interesting to note how much more publically acceptable abolitionism had become in France by the 1840s. By this point, a strong sense of inevitability had emerged. Most contemporary observers realised that once slavery had ended in the British colonies, France would not be able to maintain it for much longer. An example of the kind of slow-burning, reluctant European abolitionism criticised by Félice can be seen in an essay by the Comte de Montureux, on the 'Means to be employed in abolishing slavery in the French colonies'. This essay is based on the assumption that all colonial slavery would eventually be abolished, "since England wishes it, and since this will is seconded in all civilised countries by ardent and active supporters".[37] Abolition was increasingly seen as a necessary stage, both within national political culture and in an

international context. This sense of inevitability was shared in Denmark and Sweden, where colonial slavery was abolished in 1847-48.

The 'atmosphere' of inevitability around abolition in nineteenth-century Europe grew out of a combination of internal and external pressures to end slavery. In order to shame countries which still authorised slavery in their colonial territories, unfavourable comparisons were drawn with other nations. In one French abolitionist tract, published in the late 1840s, France was criticised for being "behind" in the process of abolishing slavery, having been "overtaken by England, Sweden, Denmark and the Bey of Tunisia". The unfavourable comparison with an African leader who had abolished slavery was intended to be the most unpalatable and shaming aspect of this critique. The pamphlet viewed this 'backwardness' as a kind of anomaly, for on the scale of 'civilisation', France was described as far ahead in many other ways, due to a reputation for "fairness and generosity", being "devoted to noble causes" and to the "great ideas of modern civilisation".[38] Therefore according to this pamphlet, once the problem of slavery had been resolved, France would regain an otherwise deserved place at the head of the 'civilised' nations. In this case, abolitionism can be seen as almost a strategic way of improving the reputation of a given state, as 'civilisation' was linked to ideals of progress, enlightenment and national pride and identity.

Spain

The idea that abolition was a matter of national pride can also be noted in the rise of a political culture of anti-slavery in Spain in the second half of the nineteenth century. The pressure of international opinion was evoked by Spanish abolitionists, who suggested that ending slavery in Puerto Rico and Cuba would help to reaffirm Spain's standing as an imperial power on the world stage: "the civilised world is watching us to see if the Spanish people are worthy of entering the concert of nations marching at the forefront of progress".[39] External pressure was still a major factor in producing change, and Britain's role in driving international abolitionism forward continued to be felt in Spain, even as late as the 1870s. The Puerto Rican abolitionist Ramón Bétances from exile in Paris described the British press as "a European power in itself", in terms of the influence it was able to wield in forcing the issue of Spanish colonial slavery into the news, and into public consciousness.[40]

Flattery, promises, blame and threats were all employed by anti-slavery campaigners to convince Europe to renounce colonial slavery. The threat of religious damnation appeared in abolitionist campaign tracts, which stressed the importance of abolition as a religious and philanthropic duty. A vision of hurricanes, shipwrecks, wars and disease striking the Atlantic world as divine vengeance for the slave trade was threatened in the early nineteenth-century Unitarian tract, *The Tongue*.[41] A French abolitionist pamphlet described slavery as a pestilential atmosphere that "crosses seas, infects our ports, spreads its poison through the heart of European civilisation".[42] Even decades after it had been abolished, the poison of slavery was affecting the whole of Europe according to a French Protestant tract published in 1863, which suggested that unemployment, food shortages and misery were caused by divine retribution for centuries of slavery and "violation of divine law", the consequences of which were still being felt in Europe.[43]

This essay focuses on political cultures of anti-slavery in Europe, yet of course anti-slavery politics were also at their height in the Caribbean, in North and South America and in the Indian Ocean in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As Schmidt-Nowara has commented, "one cannot separate colony from metropolis in understanding the origins and interests of abolitionist movements".[44] Both the enslaved and free inhabitants of the colonies contributed to a ferment of action against slavery, including slave revolts and landmark legal cases. Over the course of the nineteenth century, a consensus opposing slavery and slave trading gradually emerged through a series of political changes and sustained pressure from abolitionists, causing a "truly remarkable volte-face in European and indeed global attitudes".[45] Countries around the world that had abolished slave trading and slavery were seen as innovators, while other nations that continued to permit slavery were increasingly condemned and viewed as 'uncivilised'.

European 'civilisation' and late nineteenth-century abolitionism

The relationship between European 'civilisation' and anti-slavery was built in the nineteenth century on an image of exceptionalism shared by the nations of Europe. Over the course of the century, slavery was gradually abolished in legislation throughout Europe. These countries, along with their abolition movements, then joined the chorus of blame directed at other, 'uncivilised' countries where slavery was still permitted. Eventually, this international movement towards anti-slavery reached a critical mass, and Europe began to perceive itself as an exceptional, 'civilised' continent, free of slavery and slave trading. By the end of the century, abolitionist societies were established across the continent, including in Germany, Belgium and Switzerland. These were European countries that had no American colonies and little or no previous involvement in debates over slavery and abolition.

European anti-slavery societies were looking outwards by this point, particularly to East and Central Africa. Here, the devastation wrought by slave trading routes to the coast and across the Sahara had been the focus of European travel reports since the 1860s. The perception of the uncivilised, slave trading 'Other' shifted in the late nineteenth century to the 'Arab' traders on the coast of East Africa. By focusing on an external enemy, instead of blaming one another for continuing to trade in slaves or permitting colonial slavery, the nations of Europe were united for the first time on the issue of abolition. Of course, there were disagreements about methods and areas of influence, as well as religious divisions between Protestant and Catholic organisations, but overall European campaigners were in agreement that a solution to the problem of slave trading in Africa had to be found.

European intervention in the politics of anti-slavery became a means of justifying imperialism and an aggressive colonial expansion policy in Africa. Ending the trade in enslaved Africans from the interior and establishing colonial occupation were seen as complementary methods of 'civilisation'. The anti-slavery journal of the Swiss abolitionist society, founded in 1889, was entitled *L'Afrique explorée et civilisée* [Africa explored and civilised]. The Brussels anti-slavery society's manifesto asked supporters to send donations to support the "liberating" and "civilising" Belgian expedition to the

Congo.[46] Clearly the politics of anti-slavery were appropriated to a large extent by Europe's imperialist 'scramble for Africa'.

One of the leading abolitionist campaigners of the period was Cardinal Lavigerie, head of the 'White Fathers', the French Catholic mission in North Africa. Lavigerie was the author of campaign materials in numerous languages circulating in late nineteenth-century Europe on the subject of the new "European Crusade against the African Slave Trade".[47] He also toured Europe in 1888 giving public lectures. He believed in military intervention on the ground against the slave trade, and the long-term establishment of Christian missions as a way of keeping slave traders out of central Africa. Another self-proclaimed leader of the European abolition revival and colonisation movement was King Leopold II of Belgium who himself employed slave labour in his brutal colonial occupation of the Congo.[48] Leopold hosted a conference of African explorers in 1876 and a major anti-slavery congress in Brussels in 1889-90, which according to Drescher served to fully establish the connection between anti-slavery and the concept of 'civilisation': "the Brussels Convention of 1890 minted antislavery as the gold standard of Western civilization".[49]

'Civilisation' became in fact a way of measuring participation in the campaign to end slavery. It indicated a sense of belonging to a shared project that was designed to unite nineteenth-century Europe and its allies. Political and religious groups had already begun to unite around the issue of abolition within the national sphere, with corresponding implications for the development of national identity. However, attempts to create a lasting, shared European consensus of anti-slavery had always been unsuccessful, often because major participants such as Britain, France and Spain had been at war. The late nineteenth-century attempt to end slavery and slave trading in Africa can be seen as an alternative means of pursuing political unity and stability in Europe. It had become progressively easier to convince European countries to unite around a common cause and against a designated 'uncivilised other'. However, as the example of King Leopold in the Congo shows, anti-slavery campaigns in Africa also led to new forms of enslavement and colonial exploitation, which would continue into the twentieth century.

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Notes

[1] A representation of early abolitionists in Europe and the Americas can be seen in Clarkson's map of the abolition movement, conceived as a number of tributaries flowing into a single river of opposition to the slave trade. Thomas Clarkson, *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade by the British Parliament*, 2 vols (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1808).

[2] Brissot de Warville, Jacques-Pierre, *Discours sur la nécessité d'établir à Paris une société pour concourir avec celle de Londres, à l'abolition de la traite et de l'esclavage des nègres : prononcé le 19 février 1788, dans une société de quelques amis, rassemblés à Paris à la prière du comité de Londres* (France, 1788).

[3] Marcel Dorigny, 'Mirabeau and the *Société des Amis des Noirs*: Which Way to Abolish Slavery', *The Abolitions of Slavery: from Léger Félicité Sonthonax to Victor Schoelcher, 1793, 1794, 1848*, ed. Marcel Dorigny (New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books and UNESCO, 2003), 121-32.

[4] *Tableau précis de la malheureuse condition des négres dans les colonies d'Amérique: suivi de considérations adressées aux Gouvernemens de l'Amérique libre sur l'inconséquence de leur conduite en tolérant l'esclavage* (Paris & London: Regnault, 1788), v.

[5] Le Roi de Petitval, 'Réflexions sur les Travaux auxquels peut et doit se livrer la Société des Amis des Noirs' (1789). Archives Départementales de la Gironde, Bordeaux.

[6] See J. R. Oldfield, *Popular politics and British anti-slavery: the mobilisation of public opinion against the slave trade, 1787-1807* (London, Portland: Frank Cass, 1998), chapters 2 and 4.

[7] Abbé Claude Fauchet, 'A Messieurs les Auteurs des Révolutions de Paris', in *Révolutions de Paris, Dédiées à la Nation*, 29 (January 1790), 41.

[8] William Dickson*, Diary of a visit to Scotland 5 January-19 March 1792 on behalf of the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade* (unpublished manuscript, 1792). Society of Friends House Library, London.

[9] One of the few radical British abolitionist pamphlets to defend France's abolition of slavery in 1794 was: *A Defence of the Decree of the National Convention of France, for emancipating the slaves in the West Indies* (London: M. Gurney, D. J. Eton, 1794).

[10] Marquis de Lafayette, letter to Thomas Clarkson, 27 January 1798 (Cropper family papers, Merseyside Maritime Museum, Liverpool). On Napoleon's re-establishment of colonial slavery, see Jean-Marcel Champion, '30 Floréal Year X: The Restoration of Slavery by Bonaparte', in *The Abolitions of Slavery: From Léger Félicité Sonthonax to Victor Schoelcher, 1793, 1794, 1848*, ed. Marcel Dorigny (New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books and UNESCO, 2003), 229-36.

[11] Christopher L. Miller, *The French Atlantic Triangle: Literature and Culture of the Slave Trade* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2008), x.

[12] See David Kielstra, *The Politics of Slave Trade Suppression in Britain and France 1814-1848* (New York: St. Martins, 2000), 22-55.

[13] 'Abolition of the Slave Trade', *The Morning Chronicle* (June 18, 1814).

[14] See for example William Wilberforce, *A Letter to His Excellency the Prince of Talleyrand Perigord, on the subject of the slave trade* (London: J. Hatchard. Cadell & Davis, 1814), Madame de Staël, *Appel aux souverains réunis à Paris pour en obtenir l'abolition de la traite des nègres* (London: Ellerton & Henderson, 1814), Thomas Clarkson, 'Interview with the Emperor of Russia at Paris on Saturday 23 September 1815' (manuscript, Wisbech & Fenland museum).

[15] Thomas Clarkson, *The Cries of Africa, to the Inhabitants of Europe, or, a Survey of that Bloody Commerce called the Slave Trade* (London: Harvey & Darton, W. Phillips, 1822), iv.

[16] José Maria Blanco y Crespo ("Blanco White"), *Bosquexo del comercio en esclavos : y reflexiones sobre este tráfico considerado moral, política, y cristianamente* (London: Ellerton & Henderson, 1814), 2.

[17] *De l'état actuel de la traite des noirs, extrait des renseignemens déposés récemment à ce sujet sur le bureau de la Chambre des Communes d'Angleterre ; composant le rapport présenté, le 8 mai, 1821, aux Directeurs de l'Institution Africaine par le comité spécial nommé à cet effet. Imprimé par ordre de l'Institution Africaine comme Supplément à son Rapport Annuel pour 1821* (London: G. Schulze, 1821).

[18] See Joseph Elzéar Morenas, *Pétition contre la traite des noirs, qui se fait au Sénégal, présentée à la Chambre des Députés, le 14 juin 1820* (Paris: Chez Corréard, 1820) and *Séconde pétition contre la traite des noirs, présentée à la Chambre des Députés, le 19 mars 1821, et à celle des Pairs, le 26* (Paris: Jeunehomme-Crémière, 1821).

[19] 'Société de la Morale Chrétienne - séance générale annuelle 13 avril 1826', *Revue Protestante*, tome III (May 1826), 222.

[20] Baron Auguste de Staël, 'Comité pour l'abolition de la traite des noirs. Société formée à Liverpool pour l'adoucissement et l'abolition graduelle de l'esclavage' in *Journal de la Société de la Morale Chrétienne*, vol. 2, no.7 (1823), 41-60.

[21] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1992), 'Slavery, freedom and consensus' (350-60).

[22] Seymour Drescher, *Capitalism and antislavery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 198-99.

[23] Speech by the Reverend J. Burnett at Exeter Hall, London, on the issue of the apprenticeship system, 'Anti-Slavery Meeting' (1837), 38. http://www.recoveredhistories.org/pamphlet1.php?catid=475

[24] *La Abolicion de la Esclavitud en Puerto-Rico. Reunion celebrada en el Teatro Nacional de la Ópera, por la Sociedad Abolicionista Española, el dia 23 de Enero de 1873* (Madrid: Sociedad Abolicionista Española, 1873), 13.

[25] Cit. David Brion Davis, *The problem of slavery in the age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), 487.

[26] A process of "converting [...] already existing qualms into positive action" on the issue of slave trading and slavery began to develop in Britain following the loss of the North American colonies, according to Linda Colley (*Britons*, 352). See also Christopher Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

[27] Elizabeth Heyrick, *Immediate not gradual abolition; or, an inquiry into the shortest, safest, and most effectual means of getting rid of West Indian slavery* (London: J. Hatchard & Son, etc., 1824), 3.

[28] Stephen Lushington, *Speech of Dr. Lushington, Delivered at a General Meeting of the Society for the Abolition of* Slavery (London: S. Bagster, 1831), 2. Lushington was downplaying the strength of pro-slavery voices for political effect: they remained a vociferous part of the debate until (and even beyond) the abolition of colonial slavery in 1833.

[29] John Flude Johnson, Preface to the *Proceedings of the General Anti-Slavery Convention, called by the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, and held in London, from Tuesday June 13th, to Tuesday June 20th, 1843* (London: John Snow, 1843), iv.

[30] Seymour Drescher, *Abolition: A History of Slavery and Antislavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 267.

[31] Civique de Gastine, *Pétition à MM. les Députés des Départemens, relative à l'abolition de l'esclavage dans les colonies françaises* (Paris: Chez tous les Marchands de Nouveautés, 1820), 5.

[32] *Prospectus de la Société pour l'abolition de l'esclavage* (Paris: A. Henry, 1834), 4.

[33] Agénor de Gasparin, *Esclavage et traite* (Paris: Joubert, 1838), xv.

[34] See for example a poetry competition held in the city of Amiens in northern France, in 1819 and 1820 on the subject of the abolition of the slave trade: 'L'abolition de la traite des nègres' (1819-20), Archives départementales de la Somme.

[35] Victor Schoelcher, *De la pétition des ouvriers pour l'abolition immédiate de l'esclavage* (Paris: Pagnerre, 1844), and 'Petition des Dames de Paris en faveur de l'abolition de l'esclavage', *L'Abolitioniste français,* 1847, 35-41.

[36] Guillaume de Félice, *Émancipation immédiate et complète des esclaves. Appel aux abolitionistes,* (Paris: Delay, 1846), 5.

[37] Comte Adolphe Bourcier de Montureux, *Essai sur les moyens à employer pour abolir l'esclavage dans les Colonies françaises* (Vic: Imp. de Veuve Gabriel, 1844), 1.

[38] *Martyrologe Colonial. Tableau de l'esclavage aux colonies françaises* (Paris: A. Sirou & Desquers), 23.

[39] Rafael de Labra, *Discurso sobre la abolición de la esclavitud en Inglaterra pronunciado por D. Rafael Marta de Labra, en el Ateneo Mercantil, el día 19 de Diciembre de 1879* (Madrid: Alfonso Rodero, 1880), 4.

[40] Ramón Emeterio Bétances, *La abolición de la esclavitud en Puerto-Rico y el Gobierno radical y monárquico de España* (Paris: Rougé Frères, Dunon & Fresne, 1872).

[41] *The Tongue; or, Essays on the uses and abuses of speech, interspersed with fictitious characters: Including a Description of the Sufferings of the Negroes in Africa, and the West-Indies. To which is added, an appendix on Freedom of Speech* (Wisbech: J. White, [?]).

[42] J.-B. Rouvellat de Cussac, *Situation des esclaves dans les colonies françaises, urgence de l'émancipation* (Paris: Pagnerre, 1845), 10.

[43] Louis Leblois, *Les suites de l'esclavage des nègres (Extrait du Disciple de Jésus-Christ)* (Paris: J. Cherbuliez, 1863), 5.

[44] Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, *Empire & anti-slavery: Spain, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, 1833-1874* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999), 3.

[45] Joel Quirk and David Richardson, 'Anti-slavery, European Identity and International Society: A Macro-historical Perspective', *Journal of Modern European History*, 7:1 (2009), 91.

[46] 'Manifeste de la Société antiesclavagiste de Bruxelles', *Bulletin de la Société antiesclavagiste de France*, I (October 1888), 74-78.

[47] Cardinal Lavigerie, *Crusade against the Slave-Trade. Oration by Cardinal Lavigerie at a meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society held in Prince's Hall, London, Tuesday July 31st, 1888* (London: British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1888), 3.

[48] See Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (London: Pan, 2006).

[49] Drescher, *Abolition: A History of Slavery and Antislavery*, 385.