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*slavery and colonialism*

# APOLOGY OF SUBSTANCE

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# APOLOGY OF SUBSTANCE

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## for the new millennium



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'Incomplete and imperfect as the process may be, it shall leave us less burderned by the past and unshackled to pursue a glorious future'

**Nelson Mandela**

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**T**he National Assembly Against Racism believes that the celebrations for the coming millennium are not just an opportunity for the country to welcome a new era, it is also an appropriate point in time for the British Government to offer an apology of substance to black people for its role in slavery and colonialism across the globe. Britain enslaved and colonised millions of people in scores of nations and communities for centuries. The destruction of people's way of life and the systematic exploitation and often brutal subjugation inherent in this process was predicated entirely on racism and the myth of white supremacy.

The myth of innate white superiority was encouraged and endorsed at every level in British society and used to justify the many excesses of British imperialism.

The most abiding colonial legacy is the deep rooted racism that is embedded in contemporary British popular culture and pervades every aspect of modern Britain. It is this legacy that provides the basis for the institutionalised racism in Britain today.

It is time for Britain to exorcise the ghosts of the past and come to terms with its history as it steps into the new millennium.

# THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

## calls on the government to:

- 1** Make an **apology** for the inhumanity and injustice suffered by black people over five continents through **enslavement and colonisation**.
- 2** Formally **apologise to black people in Britain** today who have to live day-to-day with the worst legacy of colonialism: racism.
- 3** **Acknowledge** the voluntary and enforced **contributions that black people have made to Britain** and its economy, and agree in principle to the emerging demands for reparations.
- 4** **Cancel the debts** of countries which have suffered as a result of colonialism and slavery.
- 5** **End the practices of neo-colonialism** and advance the cause of establishing an equitable world order.
- 6** **Integrate Black history within the British education curriculum** ensuring a true depiction of the past and the present.



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'I think it would be a good idea'

**MK Ghandi**

— *on being asked for his view on Western civilisation*

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# The legacy of slavery and colonialism

● **£150 million profit made by the British from West Indian plantations alone**

Michael Craton, *Sinews of Empire: A Short History of British Slavery* (1974)

● **It is estimated that during the last thirty years of British colonial administration British trading and shipping interests took out of Ghana a total of £300 million**

Kwame Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite* (1963)

● **Bengal famine of 1770 killed 10 million people.**

Stanley Wolpert, *A New History of India* (1982)

● **Britain's loot alone from India was worth up to £1000 million**

William Digby,

*Prosperous British India: A Revelation from the Official Records* (1901)

● **Half of India's annual net revenues of £44 million flowed out of India**

Romesh Dutt, *The Economic History of India under early British Rule* (1906)

● **28,825,000 Indians starved to death in 24 famines between 1854 and 1901**

ibid.

! **The Bengal famine of 1943 claimed 1,500,000 victims**

Famine Inquiry Commission, report on Bengal, Delhi (1945)

● **As late as 1834 Britain had 540,559 African slaves in the Caribbean**

● **Prior to the European's arrival in 1772 there were 4000 black Tasmanians in Tasmania. This was reduced to 203 survivors within 59 years. By 1846 there were forty. By 1878 Tasmania's black population had been wiped out.**

MM Bennett, *The Australian Aboriginal as a Human Being* (1930)

● **The European settlement in Australia in 1788 saw a Black population of 300,000 reduced to 77,501 by 1921. By 1932 the population was down to 59,719**

Thomas Dunabin, *The Making of Australasia*

**I/we endorse the statement over page and support the campaign on this basis.**

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