

# Christopher Codrington and the Business of Slavery

*A response to **Renewal and Reconciliation:  
The Codrington Reparations Project***



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Caribbean Labour Solidarity

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by

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Cover image: Plaque erected by the entrance to the All Souls College Library, Oxford to the enslaved people who worked on the Codrington Plantations. This plaque is located next to the entrance to All Souls Library, formally the "Codrington Library", which was funded by slave owner Christopher Codrington [Wikimedia]

# Renewal and Reconciliation

## The Codrington Reparations Project

Christopher Codrington, who died in 1710, bequeathed a profitable sugar estate in Barbados and over three hundred enslaved labourers to the Church of England's missionary wing. This legacy became the basis for the foundation of Codrington College, a theological college in Barbados associated with the University of the West Indies.

The *Renewal and Reconciliation: The Codrington Reparations Project* was announced in 2023 in partnership with *The Codrington Trust* (CT) and the *United Society Partners in the Gospel* (USPG).<sup>1</sup> We are told that the project aims to take reparative action in response to USPG's shameful links to slavery on the Codrington Estate, Barbados. The USPG has committed to a programme of work in partnership with Codrington Trust, in Barbados, in response to proposals that the Trust has advanced. USPG has pledged 18M Barbadian Dollars (BDS) (£7M GBP) - to be spent in Barbados over the next 10-15 years to support this work.

Are they doing enough to apologise and make restitution? How have they dealt with the record of enslavers? Is the money they are offering adequate? How does all this fit into the modern campaign for Reparations?

## Christopher Codrington (1668–1710)

The Church of England, which was the official church of the British Empire and therefore an arm of the state,<sup>2</sup> only really had to consider its position on enslavement when the plantation system started in the British West Indies in the middle of the 17th century. The Church struggled with its conscience, but quickly triumphed over any doubts about the legitimacy of the business of slavery. They were greatly assisted in this by Christopher Codrington (1668–1710), who bequeathed a profitable sugar estate and three hundred enslaved labourers to the Church's missionary wing. Thus their complicity was cheaply purchased.

The Codrington Family had been involved in the business of slavery in the West Indies for nearly as long as the notorious Drax family<sup>3</sup>, starting with Christopher Codrington (d.1656), the founder of the dynasty, who arrived in Barbados in 1627. He married Frances Drax, James Drax's sister and, despite their political differences, Christopher Codrington being a Royalist, they formed an alliance that enabled them

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1 <https://www.uspg.org.uk/stories/news/the-codrington-trust-and-uspg-announce-steering-committee-for-codrington-project.php>

2 Technically speaking, the Church of Scotland, which is Presbyterian rather than Anglican, is the official church in Scotland, but in practice, it was the C of E that represented state religion in the British West Indies.

3 See CLS pamphlet *The Drax Family Dynasty and the Business of Slavery, Why Reparations For African Enslavement is a Trade Union Issue* by Steve Cushion - <https://cls-uk.org.uk/?p=1833>

to deploy a powerful political influence in Barbados. Indeed, their different political affiliations enabled them to watch each other's backs in uncertain political times. This is perhaps best illustrated when Christopher Codrington heard of a scheme by the Royalist Governor of Barbados to force an oath of allegiance to the King. He betrayed the plot to his brother in law, later pretending to have been drunk at the time. This enabled Drax to organise sufficient opposition to put a stop to the intended measure.<sup>4</sup>

In a similar manner to his brother in law, Christopher Codrington managed to acquire a substantial estate, which he bequeathed to his son on his death in 1656. This son, also confusingly called Christopher Codrington (1640-1698), increased his landholding, so that he owned 618 acres in Barbados by 1680 and, together with his brother John, 380 acres in Antigua, both worked by a labour force of several hundred enslaved Africans. He also had cattle rearing interests in Barbuda. He was politically active, becoming a member of the council of Barbados in 1666, and was acting governor of the island between 1669 and 1672.<sup>5</sup>

He took over Consetts, his neighbour's plantation, in 1669. It was locally believed that he had murdered the previous owner as well as fellow conspirator, Henry Willoughby, son of the Governor. Be that as it may, the location of Consetts, on the east coast of Barbados, 14 miles distant from Bridgetown across difficult country, allowed Codrington to land enslaved Africans, imported directly from Africa, in defiance of the Royal African Company's monopoly. In 1683, his reputation in tatters in Barbados, he moved to Antigua where he quickly became the owner of one of the largest estates on the island, 1000 acres and 800 enslaved labourers, as well as being appointed Deputy Governor of the Leeward Islands.<sup>6</sup> In 1689, when word arrived of the replacement of King James II by William III, the previous Governor, a Royalist named Sir Nathaniel Johnson, rapidly departed for South Carolina with 100 enslaved Africans, leaving Christopher Codrington in charge. Codrington managed to mount an efficient military defence against a combination of the French Navy, Indigenous Kalinago islanders and rebellious Irish Catholics. While he spent considerable sums of his own money equipping the British forces in this complicated war, he treated this as an investment and used his position as Governor to further enrich himself greatly. By the time he died in 1698, he was facing impeachment, charged with corruption.<sup>7</sup> None of which prevented his son, yet another Christopher Codrington (1668–1710), being appointed as his replacement as Governor of the Leeward Islands.

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4 Parker, *The Sugar Barons*, pp.92-3

5 Andrew O'Shaughnessy, "Codrington, Christopher (1639/40–1698), planter and colonial official." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004)

6 Darra Goldstein, *The Oxford Companion to Sugar and Sweets*, (Oxford University Press, 2015) p. 674; Parker, *The Sugar Barons*, p.218

7 Richard Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713* (Omohundro Institute and University of North Carolina Press, 2012) pp.134-6.

This third Christopher Codrington was sent to England for his education in 1680, where he attended a private school in Enfield and then All Souls College, University of Oxford, where he stayed until 1698, only breaking his studies to fight in King William's War in the West Indies and subsequently in Flanders, where his abilities drew him to the attention of the King.<sup>8</sup> He served as Governor of the Leeward Islands from 1700 to 1704, organising the defence of the colonies in yet another war with the French, further enriching himself in the process. However, his attempts to reform the treatment of the enslaved workers irritated the majority of planters of Antigua, not that his attempts met with any success as the "Act for the better Government of Slaves and free Negroes" passed during his governorship was almost indistinguishable from the 1661 Act in Barbados. The Antiguan slaveowners lobbied the imperial government in London not to renew his term of office and he was replaced by a favourite of Queen Anne by the name of Daniel Parke who, however, fared even worse and was murdered by a mob of 300 slaveowners and their overseers.<sup>9</sup>

If it were not for his will, Christopher Codrington might have entered history as just one more plantation owner and colonial administrator, albeit slightly more cultured and perhaps less brutal than most of his fellows.

### **Codrington College**

Codrington, while leaving the majority of his wealth, lands and enslaved labourers to his cousin William Codrington, also left £10,000 [£31,050,000 in today's money] and his 12,000 volume book collection to All Souls College, as well as leaving his estates in Barbados, with 315 enslaved workers included, to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, founded by William III in 1701 as the official overseas missionary arm of the Church of England. This bequest was worth £30,000 [£93,140,000] and produced an income of £2,000 [£6,209,000] a year.<sup>10</sup> It has been argued that he intended this bequest to benefit the enslaved labourers and their children, but his will only speaks of Professors and Scholars "who shall be obliged to study and practice physics and surgery as well as divinity, that by the apparent usefulness of the former to all mankind, they may both endear themselves to the people, and have better opportunities of doing good to men's souls, whilst they are taking care of their bodies. Particulars of the Constitution I leave to the Society Compos'd of good and wise men".<sup>11</sup> The main purpose of the bequest seems to have

8 George Simmons, "Towards a Biography of Christopher Codrington the Younger." *Caribbean Studies* 12, no. 1 (1972) pp.32–50

King William's War was the North American theatre of the Nine Years' War (1688–1697), also known as the War of the Grand Alliance or the War of the League of Augsburg.

9 Parker, *The Sugar Barons*, pp. 256-67

10 Simmons, *Towards a Biography of Christopher Codrington*, p.45

11 George Simmons, "West Indian Higher Education - The Story Of Codrington College" *Caribbean Quarterly* 18, no. 3 (1972) p.45

been religious missionary work. Medicine is seen as an aid to conversion to Christianity and, in any case, given that the enslaved labourers were categorised as property, healing their ills would be in effect repairing the property of the enslavers. Not that the expressed intentions in his will were implemented in any manner at all until 1830.

The heir to the bulk of Christopher Codrington's estate, Colonel William Codrington, contested the will, claiming that a number of recently purchased slaves should form part of his inheritance. Finally, agreement was reached in 1742 between William Codrington and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, by means of a one off payment of £5,000 [£13,160,000].<sup>12</sup>

Then, rather than the theological college that Christopher Codrington appeared to have in mind, a grammar school was set up in 1745 for the sons of the local slaveholding gentry to prepare them for entrance to English universities. It did not teach any theology until 1830 and even then, only after a prolonged legal dispute with the Chief Justice of Barbados.<sup>13</sup>

Despite the delay in obtaining control of the Codrington bequest, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel had already adopted a position that accepted the legitimacy of chattel slavery. During his 1711 annual sermon to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, William Fleetwood, Bishop of St. Asaph of the Church in Wales, urged slave owners to aid in Christianising their slaves. Quoting from St Paul's mission to the Gentiles, Fleetwood stressed the Christian's duty to preach the gospel, stating that this duty included colonial slaves. He spoke of some misconceptions that slave owners had about baptism and manumission and the selling of baptized slaves. He assured them that baptism did not free the slave however, he urged that Christianity demanded mercy and compassion towards all. "To deal harshly with the slaves was to disobey Christ". Furthermore, "if they could be sold before they were baptized, the Laws of Christ would not deprive the owners of that property after baptism".<sup>14</sup> Above all he reasserted the slave owners' right to decide the fate of the oppressed without their consent. He believed that the ownership of 300 slaves by the Society enabled it to "Preach by Example" and show their fellow slave holders that a profitable slave plantation was compatible with Christianity.<sup>15</sup>

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12 George Simmons, "The Legitimacy Of Codrington College", *New World Journal*,

<https://newworldjournal.org/volumes/barbados-independence-issue/the-legitimacy-of-codrington-college/>

13 The Revd Carlton Turner, *Christopher Codrington's Will: A Personal Reflection on Anglican Theological Education in the Caribbean*, <https://www.uspg.org.uk>

14 Noel Titus, "Concurrence without Compliance: SPG and the Barbadian Plantations 1710–1834." In Daniel O'Connor et al., eds., *Three Centuries of Mission: The United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel 1701–2000* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010) p. 250

15 Travis Glasson, *Mastering Christianity: Missionary Anglicanism and Slavery in the Atlantic World* (Oxford University Press, 2012) pp.143-4



However, making profits and making converts proved incompatible. With the Bible in one hand and the whip in the other, "by 1726, sixteen years after the death of Christopher Codrington, not one of the Society's slaves had been baptized".<sup>16</sup> The practice of branding the word SOCIETY on the chests of all enslaved labourers coming into the possession of the Society cannot have endeared these missionaries for the Lord Jesus to the potential convert nor be seen as a sign of God's mercy.

James Heywood Markland was Treasurer of the Society at the time that slavery was abolished. In this capacity he was awarded compensation of £8,558 [£10,600,000] for the 410 slaves that the Society still owned on the Codrington estate.

### **Christian Slavery**

When William Blathwayt<sup>17</sup>, on behalf of the Lords of Trade and Plantations in London, wrote to the merchants of Barbados to inquire as to "the unhappy state of the negroes and other slaves in Barbadoes by their not being admitted to the Christian religion," the "gentlemen of Barbados" replied that "the conversion of their slaves to Christianity would not only destroy their property but endanger the island, inasmuch as converted negroes grow more perverse and intractable than others".<sup>18</sup> The original terminology of enslavement had referred to Europeans as "Christians" and the enslaved labourers as "Negroes" or "Heathens".

Ever since 1452, when Pope Nicholas V issued the Brief *Dum Diversas*, granting King Alfonso V of Portugal "full and free permission to invade, search out, capture and subjugate the Saracens and pagans and any other unbelievers and enemies of Christ wherever they may be . . . and to reduce their persons into perpetual slavery", European enslavers, Protestant and Catholic had relied on the "infidel" status of Africans to justify their enslavement.<sup>19</sup> Logically therefore, they were afraid that baptism would give their enslaved labour a claim to emancipation. Christian missionaries and their supporters argued that race, rather than religion, was the defining feature of enslavement. Protestant evangelicals in British North America and the Caribbean went to great lengths to reassure slave owners that baptism would not result in their enslaved labourers having any right to emancipation and would, rather, make them more docile and productive workers.

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16 Janice McLean-Farrell and Michael Anderson Clarke. "Missions in Contested Places/Spaces: The SPG, Slavery, and Codrington College, Barbados", *Mission Studies* 38, 3 (2021) pp. 330-4

17 Blathwayt was appointed Lord of Trade in 1696 and held the post until 1707.

18 Katharine Gerbner, *Christian Slavery: Conversion and Race in the Protestant Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018) p.2

19 Geoffrey Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) p.157

When William Edmundson, a Quaker minister, visited Barbados in 1675, he was criticised for "making the Negroes Christians, and [making] them rebel and cut our Throats," Edmundson replied that "it was a good Work to bring them to the Knowledge of God and Christ Jesus, and to believe in him that died for them, and for all Men, and that would keep them from rebelling or cutting any Man's Throat".<sup>20</sup>

In order to demonstrate their commitment to the whole business of slavery, ministers of the Church of England became the front line of the enforcement of the system. In 1661, when the Assembly of Barbados passed 'An Act for the good governing of Servants, and ordaining the Rights between Masters and Servants' and 'An Act for the better ordering and governing of Negroes', ministers were instructed to read these Acts to their parishioners twice a year so that "no Person may pretend any Ignorance in this Act or Statute, or any Branch, or Clause thereof".<sup>21</sup>

The parish church also served as a place of public punishment. In the 1640s, the Barbados Assembly instructed the churchwardens of every Parish to "provide a strong pair of Stocks to be placed . . . near the Church or Chapel." Every Sunday, the constables, churchwardens, and sidesmen were to "walk and search Taverns, Ale-houses, Victualling-houses, or other Houses, where they do suspect ... debauched Company to frequent." If they found anyone "drinking, swearing, gaming, or otherwise misdemeaning themselves," they brought them to the stocks "to be . . . imprisoned [for] the Space of Four Hours." In 1668, the assembly passed another law "preventing the selling of Brandy and Rum, in Tipling-houses near the Broad-paths and High-ways." The Act targeted "Servants and Negroes" and complained that "on Sabbath-days, many lewd, loose, and idle persons, do usually resort to such Tipling-houses, who, by their drunkenness, swearing, and other miscarriages, do in a very high nature blaspheme the name of God, profane the Sabbath, and bring a great scandal upon true Christian Religion".<sup>22</sup>

It has been written that the plantation owners were "scarcely noted for their religious zeal" and that they "sank into a hopeless moral torpor, eating, drinking, and fornicating themselves into an early grave".<sup>23</sup> While this is a classic case of ruling class "don't do as I do, do as I say", it does not mean that they did not recognise the importance of formal religious observance. They saw themselves as Protestant and used their religious identity to justify their social control. Church based marriage,

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20 William Edmundson, *A Journal of the Life, Travels, Sufferings, and Labour of Love in the Work of the Ministry* (London, 1829) p.78

21 Thomas Drake, *Quakers and Slavery in America* (Yale University Press, 1950) pp. 4–6; Edward B. Rugemer. "The Development of Mastery and Race in the Comprehensive Slave Codes of the Greater Caribbean during the Seventeenth Century." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (2013)

22 Richard Hall, *Acts, Passed in the Island of Barbados. From 1643, to 1762* (London: Printed for Richard Hall, 1764) pp. 4–5, 63–64.

23 William Edmundson, *A Journal of the Life, Travels, Sufferings, and Labour of Love in the Work of the Ministry* (London, 1829) p. 78

baptism, and funerals became integrated into a broader culture of hierarchy that helped to maintain their dominance.

Perhaps the best statement of the slaveholders' religion is contained in the hymn *All Things Bright and Beautiful*:

The rich man in his castle,  
The poor man at his gate,  
God made them, high, and lowly,  
And order'd their estate.

*The Book of Common Prayer, Hymn 573*

The Christian missionaries, Quaker as well as Anglican were in the forefront of the racialisation of enslavement in order that they might justify their proselytising the enslaved without threatening the source of labour power. The plantation oligarchy eventually sought the best of both worlds. As the language of racialism replaced religious terms in the British West Indies, the plantocracy was able to use the new forms of racial prejudice in conjunction with the older religious divisions to reinforce their rule. The Irish might be made to feel that they were better than the Africans, but they were still Catholics and therefore lower on the social ladder than the English Protestants. The change in terminology is illustrated by a 1644 law in Antigua entitled "Against Carnall Coppulation between Christian and Heathen," while by 1675, a Nevis law is entitled "White Men Not to Keep Company with Negroes".<sup>24</sup>

Quakers may have been in the forefront of the campaign against slavery in the 18th century, but in the 17th century, they were as keen as the Anglicans to reconcile religion and enslavement. They argued that Christian influence would help maintain social order and that Christian slaves were more docile than others while being more productive.

George Gray, a leading Barbadian Quaker, argued that blacks were "Heathen by Nature," and urged slave owners to "bring Nigroes unto Christianity or a Christian Life that they may be free men Indeed & in Truth". "Masters" should encourage their slaves to keep "family Meetings" and to discourage them from "rudeness, dancing, drinking & having Merry Meetings that are bad examples to all people." He accused the enslaved of "provokeing one another to doe Wickedly" and he urged Quaker slave owners to keep their slaves busy during the week so they did not have "Liberty to flock & go abroad in Company," which allowed for the opportunity to "do Mischeif & plott & Contrive".<sup>25</sup>

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24 Jenny Shaw, *Everyday Life in the Early English Caribbean: Irish, Africans, and the Construction of Difference* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2013) p.17

25 William Frost, "George Fox's Ambiguous Anti-Slavery Legacy," in Michael Mullett (ed.) *New Light on George Fox, 1624–1691* (York: Ebor Press, 1994) pp.82-4

Eventually, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel inserted into the baptism ritual for enslaved converts: "You declare in the presence of God and before this Congregation that you do not ask for the holy baptism out of any design to free yourself from the duty and Obedience you owe to your Master while you live but merely for the good of your Soul and to partake of the Graces and Blessings promised to the Members of the Church of Jesus Christ".<sup>26</sup>

However, there was a more practical reason why the plantation oligarchs opposed their enslaved workers converting to Christianity. Conversion to Protestant Christianity entailed teaching the would-be convert literacy in the English language. The enslavers feared that this would enable the enslaved to advocate legally for their rights and even to organise resistance more easily, while the missionaries began to notice that the newly literate slaves were starting to place their own interpretations on the Bible.<sup>27</sup>

In 1730 the Rev. Robert Robertson, a Nevis clergyman, who was not associated with the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, published *A Letter To the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of London from An Inhabitant of his Majesty's Leeward-Caribee Islands*, insisting that "there is not a Sugar or Guinea-Trader of any Note in London, Bristol, or Liverpole, but could have told your Lordship that it is impossible Baptism, or any the like Privilege, should destroy the Property the Masters have in their Negro-Slaves, or the Right of selling them again at Pleasure." Rather, he argued, the problem with education and literacy was that they provided slaves with skills that they could use to gain access to the legal system to the inconvenience of their masters. More importantly, literacy gave some house slaves access to reading planters' newspapers. In 1815, Nanny Grigg, who worked as a domestic servant in the Great House of Simmons plantation, read in the newspapers of discussions in the Barbados House of Assembly concerning the Slave Registry Bill in the British House of Commons and more generally of the activities of the abolitionist movement in Britain. The frenzied denunciations of these by the plantation owners' representatives in Barbados convinced her that freedom was coming, but that the island's authorities were going to deny the enslaved their freedom. This interpretation of the news was widely believed by her fellow enslaved labourers on the estate and was an important factor in provoking the 1816 rebellion known as Bussa's War.<sup>28</sup>

The missionary work of Christians amongst the enslaved is often portrayed in a positive light by those modern-day apologists who seek to diminish the stain of slave owning on plantation owners such as Codrington.<sup>29</sup> However, Christian missionary work and the education of the enslaved were in no way altruistic. Rather it was

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26 Gerbner, *Christian Slavery*, p.125

27 Gerbner, *Christian Slavery*, p.134

28 Lilian McNaught, *The 1816 Barbados Slave Revolt* (University of Exeter, MA thesis, 2017) p.63;

intended to make them obedient and hard working slaves who would accept their position in colonial society and would have them believe that there was divine authority behind their enslavement. Christianity, as preached by the Church of England and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel demonised and outlawed African traditional cultural and spiritual practices, devaluing and demeaning their African ancestry.<sup>30</sup>

Whatever opinions, for or against, that individual planters held in respect of Christian missionary work amongst their enslaved labourers, they were united in their hatred of religious practices that had their roots back in Africa. They particularly hated and feared drumming. Africans and their descendants changed and adapted their belief systems to local circumstances and influences; *Santería* in Cuba, *Obeah* in Jamaica, *Vodun* in Saint-Domingue and many others. Islam also persisted, particularly amongst the enslaved in Brazil. And the slave owners had good reason to be afraid as these cultural practices from the old country enabled the enslaved to maintain self-respect and provided a channel for organised resistance.

### **The Church of England**

In 1838, ninety-six Church of England clergymen received compensation for enslaved labourers who they claimed to own.

"I have long wondered & lamented," wrote the Archbishop of Canterbury to a fellow bishop in 1760, "that the Negroes in our plantations decrease, & new Supplies become necessary continually. Surely this proceeds from some Defect, both of Humanity, & even of good policy. *But we must take things as they are at present*".<sup>31</sup>

And the Church of England took things as they were until 2006 when the General Synod passed the following resolution:

That this Synod:

(a) recognising that the commemoration of the bicentenary of the Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade in 1807, to be celebrated in 2007, will provide unprecedented opportunities to acknowledge the Church's complicity in the slave trade and tell anew the Christian story of creation and redemption:

(b) acknowledging (i) the progress made to release men, women, and children from the dehumanising and shameful consequences of slavery; (ii) that the process of emancipation of all people from all expressions of enslavement is scandalously unfinished work; and (iii) the substantial work currently being undertaken in this campaign by the Church and other agencies;

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29 Robert Jackson, "Codrington at All Souls: "Retain + Explain" = Vandalise and Vilify", *History Reclaimed* 11 July 2022, <https://historyreclaimed.co.uk/codrington-at-all-souls-retain-explain-vandalise-and-vilify/>

30 McLean-Farrell and Clarke, *Missions in Contested Places/Spaces* pp. 330 & 344

31 Harry Bennett, "The Problem of Slave Labor Supply at the Codrington Plantations." *The Journal of Negro History* 37, no. 2 (1952) p.135. My italics.

(c) in the light of our involvement in the slave trade and of the Christian demands of repentance and sorrow resolve to (i) support vigorously every effort by the Church and other agencies to protest against human trafficking and all other manifestations of slavery across the world; (ii) affiliate to the Stop the Traffik Coalition; (iii) call on HM Government and the European Institutions to give the highest priority to enabling legislation to bring to an end the causes and outcomes of slavery; (iv) urge the Archbishops' Council to encourage and resource the Church to address with greater seriousness the legacy of the slave trade and to tell the story of release and redemption to our own and successive generations by prayer, study, reflection, and action; and (v) recognising the damage done to those who are the heirs of those who were enslaved, offer an apology to them.<sup>32</sup>

Furthermore, the United Society Partners in the Gospel, the successor to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, "supports the CARICOM Reparations Commission agenda" and "is engaging in a process of understanding its own culpability as a colonial actor better through an intentional exploration of its archives".<sup>33</sup>

So far, so good.

However, when the Master of Jesus College, University of Cambridge tried to obtain the removal of the statue of Tobias Rustat from the college chapel because of his links to the slave trade, the request was turned down by a Church court, which found that widespread opposition to the memorial was based on what they called "a false narrative" about the scale of the financial rewards Rustat gained from slavery, and ordered that the memorial should remain in the chapel. The judgement was made by the deputy chancellor of the diocese of Ely, David Hodge QC, who said the removal of the Rustat memorial would cause "considerable or notable harm to the significance of the chapel as a building of special architectural or historic interest". He went on to say that Rustat only made a limited part of his wealth from slavery. His initial investment in the Royal African Company was £400, but a bonus in 1691, brought their shareholding up to £1,600, nearly 5 million today. Add this to the "modest" 7% per annum dividends and that he was a director of the Royal African Company for which he was well paid. One wonders how much it would have to be for the ecclesiastical court to see it as substantial. The true position, Hodge said, was that Rustat's investments in the Royal Adventurers brought him no financial returns at all, and he realised his investments in the Royal African Company only in May 1691, 20 years after he had made his gifts to the college.<sup>34</sup>

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32 <https://www.churchofengland.org/news-and-media/news-and-statements/church-and-legacy-slavery>

33 <https://www.uspg.org.uk/about/history/>

34 "Church court rejects Cambridge college bid to move slave trader memorial", *The Guardian* (23 March, 2022).

Is a crime less of a crime because the criminal did not make the expected gains? But, in any case, this is an ingenuous way of avoiding the main argument. The real problem with this memorial, as well all the other memorials and statues of those who profited, or attempted to profit, from the business of slavery, is that they glorify and honour men who were guilty of a crime against humanity.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, has condemned the decision to keep the memorial of slave trade investor Tobias Rustat in Jesus College's chapel. He said that "Memorials to slave-traders do not belong in places of worship... Why is it so much agony to remove a memorial to slavery?".

Sonita Alleyne, Master of Jesus College, has said of the verdict: "Last spring, the Church committed to taking action. This judgement demonstrates the inadequacies of the Church process for addressing issues of racial injustice and contested memorialisation. It is not fit for purpose".<sup>35</sup>

Tobias Rustat was a close confidant and supporter of Charles II and James II, which position enabled him to gain considerable bribe money for gaining access to the King, particularly arranging the granting of Knighthoods, which could be obtained for £1095 [£4,379,000], plus a bribe to the person introducing the applicant. Rustat also lent money and used his access to royal authority to ensure prompt repayment. This was the origin of a considerable amount of the money he went on to invest in the slave trade. Let us not forget that his royal patrons, who he served so loyally, were the principal shareholders in the Royal African Company. After the so-called Glorious Revolution that deposed James II, he quickly swore allegiance to the new King William and Queen Mary in 1689 to secure his pension.<sup>36</sup> Loyalty only goes so far when money is involved.

Rustat gave over £10,000 to Leicestershire churches, St Paul's Cathedral, Chelsea Hospital, St John's Hospital, Bath, St John's College, Oxford, Cambridge University Library, and Jesus College, Cambridge. He commissioned three royal statues from Grinling Gibbons, all in Roman costume, commemorating Charles II, at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, Charles II on a horse, in Windsor Castle and James II, now in Trafalgar Square. Moreover, he paid for the memorial to himself during his life and stored it in his house for eight years until it could be erected in Jesus College on his death.<sup>37</sup>

Clearly a man much concerned about his reputation amongst future generations, so his donations to Church and University can be seen as just so much whitewash.

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35 "Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby on Rustat plaque controversy: 'Memorials to slave-traders do not belong in places of worship'", *Cambridge Independent* (13 April 2022)

36 Lewin, Philip. "Rustat, Tobias (bap. 1608, d. 1694), courtier and benefactor." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

37 Ibid.

## The Codrington Legacy

Whether Christopher Codrington actually cared for the spiritual welfare of the enslaved or not, we cannot know. If, however, the purpose of his legacy to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was to secure his good name for future generations, then he was remarkably successful. Until Katharine Gerbner wrote *Christian Slavery: Conversion and Race in the Protestant Atlantic World* in 2018 or Janice McLean-Farrell and Michael Anderson Clarke wrote *Missions in Contested Places/Spaces: The SPG, Slavery, and Codrington College, Barbados* in 2021, it is hard to find any writer with a bad word to say about him.<sup>38</sup> His chief hagiographer, George Simmons wrote three eulogies in the early 1970s, typical of which: "Codrington College in Barbados, British West Indies, stands as a monument to its founder Christopher Codrington the Younger. Munificent indeed as the bequest was, it was ennobled by the life and character of its giver".<sup>39</sup> The official history of Codrington College, written in 1988, but still prominently on the college's website, says that "his concern for the slaves made him many enemies among the planter class". The fact that the Codrington Estate "thrived on slave labour for two centuries" is buried towards the end of the pamphlet.<sup>40</sup> As late as 2022, Robert Jackson, a former MP for Wantage and a Quondam Fellow of All Souls, University of Oxford, argues that Codrington sought to do the best that he could within the limits of his capabilities and even goes as far as to say that Codrington may be understood to have been in the vanguard of abolitionism.<sup>41</sup> Jackson goes on to say: "what practical courses were open to a person in 1698 reluctantly inheriting property in a large number of slaves. In the circumstances of the time in the colonies, although the manumission of individuals was possible, the freeing of a large body of slaves would almost certainly have led to their reinslavement by other planters".<sup>42</sup> The accused in a court case who said "If I had not robbed him, someone else would have" is hardly likely to convince the jury of his innocence. The ability of rich businessmen to sanitise their past by means of a substantial donation to a good cause is clearly still very important to the ruling class and its ideologues.

Meanwhile the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography entry states: "Codrington's will and the sentiments expressed in a sermon preached at his funeral by William Gordon revealed a deep and practical piety, tied to a desire to improve the moral and physical health of both the white and black inhabitants of the Caribbean

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38 Gerbner, *Christian Slavery*;

McLean-Farrell and Anderson Clarke, *Missions in Contested Places/Spaces*

39 George Simmons, "West Indian Higher Education - The Story Of Codrington College." *Caribbean Quarterly* 18, no. 3 (1972): p.51

40 <https://codringtoncollege.edu.bb/history/>

41 Serenhedd James, "What is truth? The ethics of memorials", *The Critic* (15 April, 2022)

42 Robert Jackson, "Codrington at All Souls – the Awakening of the Anglican Conscience concerning Slavery" *History Reclaimed* (2021)



colonies".<sup>43</sup> Given that his wealth at death is estimated at £100,000 [£310,500,000], his endowment of Codrington College would seem to have been money well spent, even if his greedy cousin clearly begrudged the donation and wanted it all.

His other bequest was to All Souls College, University of Oxford. In November 2020, the Governing Body of All Souls College announced that they will no longer call their college library the Codrington Library, acknowledging that plantations worked by enslaved people were the source of revenue for Codrington's donation. A new name for the library has not been specified. However, the governing body did not remove the statue of Codrington which stands in the centre of the library.

Common Ground Oxford, a student-led movement founded to examine Oxford University's colonial past, published the following statement, calling for further action:

We welcome All Souls College's recent statement on Codrington's legacy at the College, and we are writing today with hopes for further discussion and change...

However, the decision to retain Henry Cheere's statue of slave-owner Christopher Codrington in All Souls' Library came as a great disappointment to us. This decision exhibits All Souls' inability to stand in solidarity with Black and POC communities, who have campaigned to make Oxford reckon with its past for decades. The choice to preserve the statue cannot be reconciled with the College's stated commitments to 'investigate further forms of memorialisation and contextualisation' with regards to Codrington's legacy...

Codrington's legacy is his wealth, accumulated from systematic sexual exploitation, trafficking and mass murder... This has caused generational trauma not just for their descendants, but for all people of African & Caribbean descent to this day...

Physically, this statue cannot be made neutral: it is positioned such that onlookers stand at his stone feet, its pose is one of heroism and prestige. No plaque could sanitise the harm of continuing to elevate this slave-owner. No plaque could do justice to the thousands of enslaved people whose forced labour generated the wealth on which All Souls Library stands.<sup>44</sup>

However, All Souls College has found an ingenious way round the problem that the statue is a protected Grade I listed monument in a Grade I listed building. The statue remains, but a projector has been installed to project imagery of cracks, damage, and graffiti onto the marble statue of Codrington in the library: this is intended to be permanent and is switched on at all times when the library is in use.

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<sup>43</sup> Mandelbrote, Scott. "Codrington, Christopher (1668–1710), colonial governor, plantation and slave owner and benefactor" *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

<sup>44</sup> "All Souls College change Codrington Library name, but keep statue of slaveholder", *Cherwell*, 20th November 2020

This would seem to have irritated Codrington's defenders even more than removing the statue, with Robert Jackson saying that "What all Souls is offering is a case not so much of "Retain and Explain" as of "Vandalise and Vilify".<sup>45</sup>

## **Dodington Park**

While some of Christopher Codrington's estate was bequeathed to the Church and the University, the majority was inherited by his cousin William, which added to his already considerable holding. William Codrington (c.1680-1748) not only profited from the labour of enslaved Africans on his plantations in Antigua, Barbados, St. Kitts and Barbuda, he was also actively involved in the slave trade itself. In his early days as a slave plantation owner, he had relied on the *Royal African Company* to supply his enslaved labourers but, once the Company had lost its monopoly, he started trading on his own account.

His ownership of three ships, the *Codrington*, the *Pearl*, and *Betty's Hope*, enabled him a level of independence denied to his competitors. He could choose what he described as the "choicest" African captives for himself, but could also redirect ships to the most profitable slave markets either in the Caribbean or continental North America. Modern businesses refer to this as "vertical integration". The Codrington family sent at least nine distinct slave trading expeditions between 1713 and 1735, transporting more than 1,900 captives, some of whom were sold in the expanding rice plantations of South Carolina.<sup>46</sup>

Before he left England to take up his appointment in the West Indies, Sir Christopher Codrington (1668–1710) had purchased the family estate at Dodington, Gloucestershire, from his cousin Samuel in 1700. This then passed to William Codrington with the rest of his inheritance.<sup>47</sup> We know from his letters that William was living there permanently by 1715, running his slaving and sugar production business as an absentee owner. In the early part of the 18th century, he extended his landholding by enclosing neighbouring common land in the parish of Old Sodbury. To this was added the manor of Marshfield, bought in 1730, manor of Codrington in 1807 and West Kington in 1808.<sup>48</sup> He was made a baronet in 1721. The London Gazette does not give any reason why he was so honoured, so it is safe to assume that he purchased the knighthood, a common practice then, costing in the region of £1000 [£2,776,000].

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45 Robert Jackson, "Codrington at All Souls: "Retain + Explain" = Vandalise and Vilify", *History Reclaimed* 11 July 2022, <https://historyreclaimed.co.uk/codrington-at-all-souls-retain-explain-vandalise-and-vilify/>

46 James Dator, "'Choicest of the Cargoe': Antigua, the Codringtons, and the Slave Trade, ca. 1672–1808" In Georgia Fox *An Archaeology and History of a Caribbean Sugar Plantation on Antigua*, (University Press of Florida, 2020) pp. 145-6 & 154

47 Mandelbrote, *Codrington, Christopher (1668–1710)*

48 *Codrington family of Dodington, 1462-1947* - <https://catalogue.gloucestershire.gov.uk/records/D1610>;  
*VCH Gloucestershire 14, Old Sodbury* - <https://www.history.ac.uk/>

Dodington Park passed to his son, also Sir William Codrington (1719-92), who later disinherited his own son and bequeathed the majority of his estate to his nephew, Christopher Bethell Codrington (1764 - 1843), MP for Tewkesbury from 1797 to 1812, during which time he was one of only 16 MPs to vote against the abolition of the slave trade in 1807. Codrington's purchase of the Hill estates at Wapley for £45,000 [£51,320,000] in 1817 made his Gloucestershire property "extend upwards of 15 miles in one continued line". In 1821 he bought the Sherrett plantation in Antigua.<sup>49</sup> He received over £30,000 [£37,150,000] in 1838 as compensation for the emancipation of his enslaved labourers.

The Dodington estate comprises some 600 acres of landscaped park with woods, lakes, lodges, a dower house, an orangery, a church, and a walled kitchen garden. Formal gardens adjoin the main house. The grounds were laid out around 1764 by Capability Brown and were modified in 1793 by William Emes and John Webb. The main house was built under the direction of James Wyatt between 1798 and 1816.<sup>50</sup> The total cost of the work was £68,478 [£79,290,000]. The annual rental income that Bethell Codrington drew from the Dodington Estate averaged £8,203 [£9,498,000].<sup>51</sup>

There is a statue of another Codrington, Admiral Sir Edward Codrington, in St Paul's Cathedral. He carried on the family's tradition of violent colonialism and slave owning. He commanded the fleet that destroyed the Turkish and Egyptian fleets at the Battle of Navarino and under the terms of the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833, Codrington was awarded government compensation of £2588 6s 6d for the 190 enslaved workers he had owned on Antigua. There is no mention of his role as an enslaver in the Cathedral, but in June 2020, a plaque in Brighton commemorating Codrington was removed following protests over the commemoration of a slave owner. There is a picture in the local paper of the building owner personally demolishing the plaque with a club hammer.

Admiral Sir Edward Codrington (1770-1851) was the grandson of Sir William Codrington (c.1680-1748). He was Member of Parliament for Devonport from 1832, to 1839 and he carried on the family's tradition of violent colonialism and slave owning. He commanded the fleet that destroyed the Turkish and Egyptian fleets at the Battle of Navarino. and he was joint owner of the Rooms plantation on Antigua, which he had inherited, and received compensation of £2588 6s 6d [£3,206,000] for 190 Enslaved labourers.

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49 M. J. Williams and David Fisher, "Bethell Codrington, Christopher (1764-1843), of Dodington, nr. Chipping Sodbury, Glos". *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1790-1820*. (Boydell and Brewer, 1986)

50 Anne Warren, "The Building of Dodington Park." *Architectural History* 34 (1991) pp.171-95

51 Richard Wilson and Alan Mackley, *Creating Paradise : the Building of the English Country House, 1660-1880*, (London: Hambledon and London, 2000) pp.326-7

There is a memorial to him in the Crypt of St Paul's Cathedral, London and another in All Saints Church, Dodington, Somerset. There is no mention of his role as an enslaver in the Cathedral, but in June 2020, a blue plaque in Brighton commemorating Codrington was removed following protests over the commemoration of a slave owner. There was a picture in the local paper of the building owner personally demolishing the plaque with a club hammer.

Yet Codrington College in Barbados is still named after this family of enslavers

Today, the Dodington Estate is owned by a modern businessman, the vacuum cleaner merchant Sir James Dyson, the second richest person in the UK with an estimated £23 billion. He purchased the property for £20 million in 2003.

## **Reparations**

The *United Society Partners in the Gospel*, as the *Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts* is now known, announced last year

USPG is committed to telling the whole truth about the past; apologising for and repenting of this history and expressing deep remorse for the Society's actions, for the historic damage and also the intergenerational legacies. USPG commits to working in close partnership with the Codrington Trust, as the Governing Body of the Codrington estate and College. The Codrington Trust advanced proposals for a programme of reparatory activities and an investment of 18M BDS (£7M sterling) over a period of 10 -15 years.

First let us do the maths 300 enslaved labourers held from 1712 to 1838 (126 years). The average wage for an English agricultural labourer at the time was £20 a year. This give an unpaid wages bill of £750,000, worth £1,700, 000,000 in today's money.

So £7 million is chickenfeed. But, worse, the Codrington Trust has decided how much they will give. This is philanthropy at its worst. Such charity allows the perpetrator to determine the amount and the manner in which the profits of their crimes are distributed. The Church decides on worthy recipients, not the descendants of the enslaved.

Over the course of the Project, they say will engage in a range of research and programming activities.

The nearest there is to any economic Reparations is assisting tenants living on the estate in acquiring freehold lots in accordance with the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. This is a law which allows for the purchase of land currently rented "at a purchase price governed by considerations of public policy and the requirements of the Constitution". Not very generous as tenants have that right already.

On 5 September 2024, the Codrington Trust and USPG announced their eleven-member Steering Committee to govern and oversee Renewal and Reconciliation: The Codrington Project. The Steering Committee will provide guidance for the operation of the project, receiving and reviewing from the Executive Committee and making recommendations to the two trustee boards. They also say they "are working in partnership in continuous collaboration and will listen with descendants of the enslaved to decide on appropriate action for this project to ensure that those who will be directly impacted are consulted".

"Guidance", "recommendations", "consultation" but in the end, the Codrington Trust and USPG will decide, This does not give any control of the fund to the descendants of the enslaved, thus the money remains firmly in the hands of the Codrington Trust - the Church still thinks it knows best what is good for you.

The Barbados government's national task force on reparations have criticised the United Society Partners in the Gospel (USPG) for not negotiating the terms nor the amount of the payments with them.

David Comissiong, deputy chair of the national task force on reparations, is quoted as saying that organisations such as USPG should understand "that reparations are not about them unilaterally determining what compensation they are prepared to make".

Codrington College in Barbados is still named after this family of enslavers and the website contains the words:

*The Codrington Trust, along with its host country Barbados, both can truly say,  
"The Lord has been the people's guide for past three hundred years"  
We invite you to come, join with us and write your name on this page of history.  
May the house of Codrington forever flourish!*

If the *Codrington Trust* and the *United Society Partners in the Gospel* are serious in facing up to their history of profiting from enslavement, the very least they could do would be to remove the name of Codrington from the institution and update their website to denounce rather than praise Christopher Codrington himself.

Why would they wish to be named after a man guilty of a crime against humanity?

John Wesley condemned "*men buyers*" equally with "*men stealers*". He warned the planters:

*The blood of thy brother crieth against thee from the earth. . . . Instantly, at any price, were it half thy goods, deliver thyself from blood guiltiness.*

## **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) and Caribbean Labour Solidarity (CLS).
- 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.

## **What is Caribbean Labour Solidarity?**

### **How does it function?**

### **What are the aims and objectives?**

CLS was founded in 1974 by a group of activists from the Caribbean Community and the wider labour movement in response to an appeal from independent trades unionists in Jamaica, for support in their struggle against anti-union legislation. After this campaign, it was decided that there was a need for a permanent anti-imperialist organisation which would promote the support of the mounting democratic national movement which was by then sweeping the Caribbean.

Our roots are in the Caribbean and the wider working class community. We have links with progressive organisations throughout the Caribbean region with whom we exchange information and offer mutual support and solidarity.

We have, we believe, a very important educational role in disseminating information in this area that is not usually available through the normal sources. We do this through our monthly public meetings, our bulletin Cutlass, our website and through press releases, leaflets and periodical articles and at conferences and demonstrations.

We associate ourselves fully with all the progressive and working peoples' movements in the Caribbean, and rejoice in the victories won by the Cuban and Venezuelan revolutions.

CLS also sets itself the aim of mobilising opinion in defence of the pan-African bonds that exist between all black peoples in Africa, Europe and the Americas in their struggles against racism and imperialism. Recognising Britain's bitter racist legacy, Caribbean Labour Solidarity joins the fight for reparations for slavery and seeks united action with all Caribbean and working class solidarity organisations which share our commitment to anti-imperialist and anti-racist struggle.

**CLS is financed through subscriptions, contributions, donations and fundraising, with speakers giving their time free of charge. This enables us to retain our Independence and influence.**

### **Membership of CLS**

**Organisations - £25**

**Annual full membership fee of £15.00 with a concessionary fee of £10.00**

Please contact us via [info@cls-uk.org.uk](mailto:info@cls-uk.org.uk)



Some of the areas of discussion and campaign involvement of CLS over the years

- The Grenada 17
- Opposition to capital punishment in the Caribbean
- General Elections in Guyana and Jamaica
- The political situation in Guyana
- 50th anniversary of The Windrush
- The Grenadian Revolution
- The Stephen Lawrence case
- Racist immigration laws and deportations
- Solidarity with Haiti
- Racism in the Dominican Republic
- Free Trade of the America Area (FTAA)
- Affordable Drugs and the Multinational Pharmaceutical companies
- Deaths in Police custody
- Climate change and the defence of the environment
- International Women's Day
- Reparations for Slavery

These have been just a few of the important topics that have been highlighted during our monthly discussions. We hope you will be able to participate in our forthcoming meetings and support our campaigning.

We are not tied to any political party. We work to unite all those who support equality, democracy, justice and social progress in the Caribbean.

We will support all who recognise that the struggle against racism, fascism, imperialism and neo-colonialism in the Caribbean requires the building of strong international links between the working people of the region and their sisters and brothers globally.





# **Christopher Codrington and the Business of Slavery**

***A response to *Renewal and Reconciliation:  
The Codrington Reparations Project****

**by  
Steve Cushion**

**Christopher Codrington, who died in 1710, bequeathed a profitable sugar estate in Barbados and over three hundred enslaved labourers to the Church of England's missionary wing. This legacy became the basis for the foundation of Codrington College, a theological college in Barbados associated with the University of the West Indies.**

***Renewal and Reconciliation: The Codrington Reparations Project* was announced in 2023 in partnership with The Codrington Trust (CT) and the United Society Partners in the Gospel (USPG). We are told that the project aims to take reparative action in response to USPG's shameful links to slavery on the Codrington Estate, Barbados. The USPG has committed to a programme of work in partnership with Codrington Trust, in Barbados, in response to proposals that the Trust has advanced. USPG has pledged 18M Barbadian Dollars (BDS) (£7M GBP) - to be spent in Barbados over the next 10-15 years to support this work.**

**Are they doing enough to apologise and make restitution? How have they dealt with the record of enslavers? Is the money they are offering adequate? How does all this fit into the modern campaign for Reparations?**

