

Racism Has a Forgotten History.
Posted On:December 31, 1969

We Americans in our self-centeredness think we invented racism and slavery, but we did not. We were one of the few societies in the world to outlaw it when it was a major part of our economy. Others were England, which outlawed the slave trade in 1772 and Russia in 1861 in freeing their serfs. France abolished Caribbean slavery in the French Revolution in 1794 and Napoleon shamefully reinstated it in 1802.

Slavery has been a human institution from the beginning of civilization, from the time that one group could compel another to do work that they did not want to do for themselves. Small hunter-gatherer families did not have enough food to support slaves. But once agriculture provided surplus, slavery became feasible. With settled communities, such tasks as irrigation trench digging, mining, and other large projects required labor beyond the voluntary labor of the citizens.

Mining (when metallurgy was invented) was particularly terrible and required forced labor. Seafaring soon required forced labor as well, which slavery, usually punishment, met the need. Roman galleys were infamous for this use, as well as using slaves for their favorite entertainment, the lethal Roman gladiatorial games.

Warfare from the ancient world until quite recently provided a steady stream of slave labor. Female slave labor was provided largely in marriage and in warfare as well. This was the way of the world and nobody thought it could be otherwise.

Africa and skin color entered the story early. The Egyptians plundered the Sudan (their near South) for black-skinned slaves who provided them with slaves of both genders. With the advent of Islam, the Arabs swept North Africa and Islam forged some rules. Islam was supposed to be color-blind but in reality, it was not. Because it was forbidden to castrate a fellow Muslim, one could castrate captive Black slaves before converting them to Islam, and so they did.

Africa was rife with slavery. Tribes enslaved other slaves and sold them readily to Arabs, and later to the Portuguese. The idea that Africans were just exploited by the west is nonsense. There was more than enough greed to go around. We just need to observe the utter evil of the civil wars in the Congo and elsewhere to see how little leaders care for their own people, especially their women and children.

The slave trade in Africa was endemic well before anybody in Europe ever thought of it. Islam's role in slavery has been overlooked for too long. When the ancient world, particularly Rome, which had been built on a slave culture, had already given up that institution under the urging of Christianity by the fourth century, Islam in the 7th century brought it back.

Islam had an endless appetite for slaves, needed for domestic labor, marble and salt mining, and most of all, harems. The Muslim slave markets were an enormous business, fed by Arab piracy in the Mediterranean, depopulating much of southern Europe during the Dark and Middle Ages. Sicilian nobility when short of money sold their own peasants. Vikings, before the first Crusade, partnered with Muslims to kidnap women from Ireland to Russia for Arab harems. Arab coins are still being found in Viking graves in Scandinavia.

The Bubonic Plague put an end to the White slave sources but reopened African slavery. Africa was the only place not hit by the Black Death. Black slavery moved from the declining Muslim world to the New World with its need for plantation labor and Western Slavery was born.

It is little recognized that Brazilian slavery dwarfed in numbers, and probably in cruelty, North American slavery, and did not come to an end until 1888.

Too many new Black converts to Islam do not realize Islam's bad history with slavery, ongoing today! Sudan persecutes not only non-Muslim Blacks, but even Black Muslims. Whole families in Chad have been kept in slavery not knowing that it is illegal. In Saudi Arabia, slavery was officially abolished in 1962. But what is the status of their women? And ISIS is back in the Muslim slave business, complete with slave markets.

684 words

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