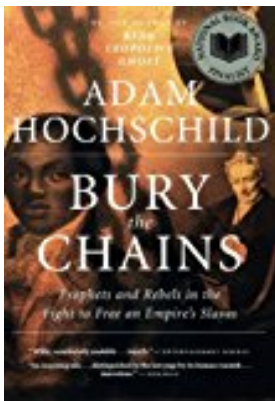


# [PDF] Bury The Chains: Prophets And Rebels In The Fight To Free An Empire's Slaves

Adam Hochschild - pdf download free book

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#### Books Details:

Title: Bury the Chains: Prophets and  
Author: Adam Hochschild  
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#### Description:

**From Publishers Weekly** "Men from England bought and sold me,/ Paid my price in paltry gold;/ But, though theirs they have enroll'd me,/ Minds are never to be sold." So went "The Negro's Complaint" by noted 18th-century poet William Cowper—written, says Hochschild, as an op-ed piece would be today, to spread the message of England's fledgling movement to abolish the slave trade. Hochschild, whose last book, *King Leopold's Ghost*, was a stunning account of the ravages

perpetrated by Belgium on the Congo, turns to a more edifying but no less amazing tale: the rich, complex history of a movement that began with just 12 angry men meeting in a printer's shop in London in 1787 and, within a century, had led to the virtual disappearance of slavery. The men who met in James Phillips's print shop included Quakers, Evangelical Anglicans and a young Cambridge graduate who had had an epiphany about the evils of slavery while on the road to London. The last, Thomas Clarkson, became an indefatigable organizer, carrying out the first modern-style investigation into human rights abuses. Granville Sharp was an eccentric but socially respected man of progressive ideas who dreamed of founding a colony of free blacks in Africa. Within a short time these men and their colleagues had created a mass movement that included the first boycott, in which hundreds of thousands of Britons, chiefly women, refused to buy slave-made sugar from the Caribbean; petitions from all over the country flooded into Parliament; and a mass-produced drawing of a slaver's lower deck, showing where the slaves were densely crowded for the middle passage, became the first iconic image of human oppression. Hochschild tells of this campaign with verve, style and humor, but without preaching or moralizing, letting the horrific facts of slavery in the Caribbean (far more brutal than in the American South) speak for themselves. And he refuses to make saints out of the activists; while highlighting bravery in the face of death threats and physical violence by promoters of slavery, the author equally points out their foibles and failings, and the often ironic unintended consequences of their actions. Along the way, Hochschild illuminates how Britain's economy was dependent upon the slave trade, why England's civil society was particularly hospitable to a movement to abolish that trade, and the impact on the movement of the French Revolution and the particularly bloody slave uprising in French St. Domingue (today's Haiti). It's a brilliantly told tale, at once horrifying and pleasurable to read. 16 pages of b&w photos not seen by *PW*.

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**From** Hochschild's history of British abolitionism notes that ending slavery would have seemed as unlikely in eighteenth-century England as banning automobiles does today. Despite the "latent feeling" among intellectuals that slavery was barbarous, Caribbean sugar plantations were seen as a necessary part of the economy. Prefiguring many social movements to come, the anti-slavery crusade was driven by the partnership between a committed activist, Thomas Clarkson, and a connected politician, William Wilberforce. It was Clarkson and his Quaker associates who pioneered the use of petitions, eyewitness accounts, and even an early, innocent form of direct-mail solicitation. Hochschild argues that the violent techniques of naval press gangs primed England's populace to consider the plight of the slaves. His capacious narrative is both disturbing and fascinating, and not without its ironies: when Parliament finally did abolish slavery, in 1833, plantation owners were generously compensated for their loss of "property."

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