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The Impact of the Haitian Revolution on the Emancipation of Slavery in Jamaica

By

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One of the ironies of Eric William's ground breaking work, **Capitalism and Slavery**, is that racism as a feature of slave society in the British West Indies has been relegated in favor of economic determinism. Although some scholars argue that racism is most difficult to measure, plantation correspondence is replete with racial assumptions. One would be very surprised at the extent of racial comments by the Jamaican planters resulting from the Haitian revolution.

Many of the Jamaican planters, while concerned with issues of security, were more concerned with the implications of a Jamaican society managed by former enslaved Africans. They could not imagine "uncivilized" Africans creating an orderly, stable and successful society. This paper argues that the unwarranted paranoia among many of the Jamaican planters to the Haitian revolution indirectly contributed to further socio-economic and political decay in early 19th century Jamaican slave society. The planters' hysteria and repression towards their enslaved Africans were racially motivated¹ and resulted in

¹ CO/137/162; Jamaica's judicial system in the early 1900s came under intense scrutiny by the British authorities since there was an increase in the miscarriages of justice by most planters. The planter class initiated various measures to suppress enslaved Africans. They also harassed and deported French immigrants and their slaves. Such paranoia was as a result of the Haitian revolution. As a

their vigorous resistance and sabotage of amelioration being recommended by the metropolitan authorities. The Jamaican planters were fearful of its implications. Given the economic context, such planter resistance to amelioration was counter-productive to efficient plantation management. Secondly, this paper refutes Eric William's argument that racism was a result of the economic forces existent in British West Indian slave society. I will show that both racism and economics operated simultaneously from the very beginning of British West Indian slave society. Thus, racial and economic motives were not in opposition to each other but were mutual partners.²

The Development of Racial Theory

The larger European context from which the British emerged has to be the starting point for any serious study of racism in the Americas.³ Were the British racist in their categorization of Africans even before they arrived in the New World, as hinted by William Green?⁴ Was racism a by-product of slavery, as Williams claimed? In examining the development of racial thought, the definition of what is meant by 'race' has to be first studied followed by its meaning in both Catholic and Protestant thought. When that is examined the practice of European racism can be described as a progressive development. European racism

further demonstration of the planters' concern for tighter security they pressured the Jamaican government to transport a voluminous amount of enslaved Africans from the island of Jamaica. It became so striking that the British authorities had to further rebuke the Jamaican authorities.

² See Eugene Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), p. 221. He argues that slavery as an economic institution cannot be successfully studied outside of its political and social contexts.

³ James Sweet, "The Iberian Roots of Racist Thought" in *William and Mary Quarterly* LIV (1997): 143-166.

⁴ William Green, "Race and Slavery: Considerations on the Williams Thesis" in *British Capitalism and Caribbean Slave* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 48.

towards Africans started before their arrival in the Caribbean and developed into the scientific racism of the late 19th century.⁵

Franklin Knight argues that attitudes towards race and towards slavery are not necessarily the same. The European concept of race started as a form of identification among the extended family, friends and members of one's village. It then moved onwards to the larger society. Thus, Englishmen in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries thought of themselves as a race distinct from the Spanish the Portuguese and other Europeans. Nevertheless, as the Englishmen pushed farther and farther into the wider world and as they began to realize the diversity of the colors and conditions of man and society, they changed their notions of race. Race took on characteristics of color since all Europeans had similar features to be classified as white; Asians had similar features to be described as yellow, and Africans south of the Sahara had similar features to be described as black. The color element in race replaced the previous distinctions of 'Christians' and 'Infidels'.⁶

Once color and culture became associated with race then the next logical step was the stereotyping of cultures which eventually led to racial discrimination. By the 16th century European ethnocentrism had a tendency to place all non-Europeans in a color continuum. Those more closely approximating white in appearance were regarded as more pleasing, while those less approximating white were less pleasing.⁷ Even persons such as Las Casas who fought for the defense of the Indians were not immune from racial stereotyping. Las Casas's *Historia*, which denounces the Portuguese slave raids in Africa, also contains the description of the various gradations of captives. Las Casas writes:

Those who were reasonably white, handsome, and elegant, others less white who seemed to be pardos (gray or dusky), and others as black as

⁵ See Franklin Knight, *The African Dimension in Latin American Societies* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1974). He mentions the impact of Social Darwinism as a significant factor in cementing scientific racism.

⁶ Ibid, p. 52.

⁷ Gordon Lewis, "Pro-Slavery Ideology" in *Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World*. Verene Shepherd and Hillary Beckles, eds., (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2000), p. 545.

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Ethiopians, so malformed in their face and bodies that they appeared to those who looked at them to be the image of another and lower hemisphere.⁸

Numerous studies further show that European societies by the sixteenth century had developed racial assumptions about Africans being barbarians and being aesthetically unpleasant (ugly), in their literature.⁹ In addition, influential thinkers and priests such as Spanish Juan Gines de Sepulveda, developed Thomas Aquinas's 'natural theology', to argue that some men were naturally superior to others in terms of reasoning ability and leadership. Thus some races such as Africans were destined to be ruled over by Europeans since they were far superior.¹⁰

Portugal also presents a further example since they were the first European country to have a significant amount of West African immigrants by the end of the fifteenth century.¹¹ One of the early Portuguese stereotypes of Africa south of the Sahara was that it was occupied by monsters.¹² Furthermore, the Portuguese regarded non-Portuguese living in their country as inferior since they were confined to physical labor, which they viewed as demeaning. In addition, the Portuguese believed that the culture and the morality of non-Portuguese were so inferior that regular contact with them would result in those cultures becoming more civilized.¹³

The belief that West Africans were ordained as slaves was not the general view in fifteenth century Portugal, although evidence does exist that the link was already made by medieval writers. The royal Chronicler,

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ A. J. R. Russell-Wood, in *Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World*, Verene Shepherd and Hilary Beckles, eds., (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2000), p. 27.

¹⁰ Franklin Knight, *The African Dimension in Latin American Societies* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1974), pp. 53-54.

¹¹ A. J. R. Russell-Wood, in *Caribbean Slavery in the Atlantic World*, Verene Shepherd and Hilary Beckles, eds., (Kingston: Ian Randle, 2000), p. 21. He states that these West Africans slaves gradually supplanted Moorish slaves.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid, pp. 22-24.

Gomes Eanes de Zuara, for example, argued that West Africans were the inheritors of the curse of Ham and thus were generally condemned as slaves. In addition, the sinful nature of many West Africans made them sub-humans and generally inferior.¹⁴ Regarding the physical appearances of blacks, Zuara writes, "For amongst them there were some white enough, fair to look upon and well proportioned; others were less white than mulattoes; others again were as black as Ethiops and so ugly, both in features and in body as almost to appear... the images of a lower hemisphere".¹⁵

Although Zuara's depiction of blacks in fifteenth century Portugal represented the exception rather than the norm, sixteenth century literary works were much more judgmental of West Africans. They were presented as devilish, their speech pattern was ridiculed, and one particular writer Vincente, included a black character who wished he was white as a hen's egg, with a well shaped nose and a thinner lip.¹⁶ A.J.R. Russell-Wood concludes that the doctrine surrounding the 'purity of blood' was one of the most dangerous doctrines that the Portuguese passed on to the Americas. Holders of public offices in both church and state had to ensure that their blood was not tainted with that of a Jew, Moor, Morisco, Mulatto, or of any other infected nations.¹⁷ This obsession among Europeans with purity of blood was also present in the British territories in the West Indies and in the American north from the time of their arrival. Mulattoes for example, were generally lumped with Africans in the slave

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 25. He made this point in his *Cronica dos feitos de Guine*. He did not attribute all blacks to such a position, as some black leaders were seen as outstanding warrior leaders.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 27.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 29. Winthrop Jordan "American Chiaroscuro: The Status and Definition of Mulattoes in the British Colonies" in *Slavery in the New World*, Laura Foner and Eugene D. Genovese, eds., (Englewood Cliffs: New Jersey, 1969). He argues that Portuguese and Spain developed a rigid social hierarchy depending on the degrees of intermixture of Negro and European blood. Other publications with similar themes in Latin American history are Richard Fletcher, *Moorish Spain* (University of California Press, 1992); Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters in the New World*, (Yale University Press, 1993).

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codes and in statutes governing the conduct of free Africans.¹⁸ On the North American continent, the English settlers had one word to describe mulattoes, while in the British West Indies, four different words were used: mulatto, sambo, quadroon and mestize.¹⁹ These four characterizations described not only the different levels of blood mixing but also signified the distance each category was from the ideal of whiteness.

In Jamaica, the slave code of 1733 provided legitimacy to mulattoes who were distanced from their African ancestry by at least three generations. Such mulattoes were to become English men free from the taint of African blood. As such, they could attain the right to vote or poll in elections if they were brought up in the Christian Religion. However, around the same time period in Barbados, the slave codes barred such persons whose original blood was African from voting or testifying against whites.²⁰

By the end of the 18th century in the British West Indies, racial stereotyping of Africans as sub-humans by the purity of their blood was the norm. This level of racial stratification where Africans were the least important in the social matrix was even common amongst the more ‘progressive’ planters, such as Bryan Edwards. Edwards was much more tolerable of Africans gaining more privileges. Interestingly, the Jamaican slave society had become so rigid in terms of racial classification that even fellow white men, especially from non-British territories, could not escape the inferior/superior category. For example, Governor Nugent was asked his opinion in a colonial office correspondent whether “an inferior class of white persons could be settled into the population of Trinidad”.²¹

The classification of fellow whites from non-British territories in the superior/inferior category demonstrates that racial theory in Jamaica was not only based on physiognomy but was also cultural. As a result each cultural group, despite their physical features, had to be aware of their social standing and had to comply in order that those of pure Anglo-Saxon culture and pure blood would retain their superior status. Already, the

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 190.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 196.

²⁰ Ibid, pp. 200-201.

²¹ Colonial Office to Governor Nugent, CO/137108, vol. 2, April 2nd 1802, p. 42.

high extent of miscegenation in Jamaican slave society was threatening the very fabric of the social matrix.²² Governor Nugent acknowledged this by stating that they had to facilitate the importation of European white women, since they were too many mulatto women in the island. Jamaica in the early 19th century ran the danger of cross-breeding an inferior class of persons.²³

The nexus between race and economics was most obvious as a result of the Haitian revolution. White individuals from all the various cultures resident in Jamaica realized that they had to unite around a kind of 'racial contract' to protect their economic interests.²⁴ Such an indirect 'racial contract' on behalf of the white residents of Jamaica was necessary to sanction the continued slavery of Africans who were at the lowest level of the social ladder.²⁵ By the end of the 18th century, this 'racial contract' was entrenched in Jamaica, despite the attempts by the colonial office to introduce amelioration and to offer Africans further privileges.

It is at this juncture that the Haitian revolution played a critical role in the discourse on slavery between Jamaica and the metropolis. Although the Jamaican planters stressed the need for extra security to thwart any intended rebellion, the planters feared the destruction of the racial contract

²² Governor Nugent to the Colonial Office, CO/137/108, vol.3, Dec 1st 1802, pp. 6-9. On a tour of the island he concluded that there were too many mulattoes in the island.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ See Charles W. Mills. *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press). This theory is based on the social contract tradition that has been central to Western political theory. He argues that this racial contract is a formal or informal agreement and was not reflective of everyone in society but between the people who really count - who were usually white. Thus, it becomes a racial contract. He further argues that the philosophy under-girding such a contract is one that assumes that their subjects are usually second-class residents of a state and thus has no inherent right to engage in dialogue regarding the nature of nation building. As a result, those who nature has placed to rule them (white population) have the moral obligation to prescribe their role (slaves) in society.

²⁵ Ibid.

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by the Africans. In addition, they also feared the loss of their economic interests.²⁶

This racial contract was not only limited to the British West Indies but was also a feature of slave life in the Danish West Indies. In their slave laws the Danes ensured that enslaved Africans were tied to the plantation and were restricted from conducting businesses in the towns to symbolize their divinely ordained status as manual laborers.²⁷ Most important, the laws of 1758 demanded that Europeans, despite their social class, had to dress properly and decently to differentiate them from enslaved Africans. Europeans who could not afford the proper outfits at significant events were even given free outfits. The extent to which the authorities in the Danish West Indies sought to unify fellow Europeans in a racial contract against Africans is further described:

...people of means engage in the services of these poor folk [poor Euro-Caribbean] and employ them on their plantations, either employing them to keep watch on things or simply providing them with something to do. In this way they make it possible for them to earn their livelihood without having to beg, since beggars are not tolerated there. It is considered the greatest shame if a white person has to beg.²⁸

In addition, the type of punishment given to whites had to be different from what was given to Africans. For example, one Richard Brown maltreated two of his enslaved Africans to the point that they died. Brown, who was constantly in trouble with the law, was given a mild sentence of one year with mild labor from the colonial court. The Governor General of the Danish West Indian colony sent the case to the Danish Supreme Court in Denmark, since he was insistent that no white person should be severely punished in the colony since it would jeopardize

²⁶ See David Geggus. *Haitian Revolutionary Studies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), p. 24.

²⁷ Gunvor Simonsen. "Skin Color as a Tool of Regulation and Power in the Danish West Indies in the Eighteen Century" in *Journal of Caribbean History*. Vol. 37, no. 2, (2003), p. 262.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 261.

the moral and social standing which whites had over blacks. Incidentally, the Danish Supreme Court sentenced Brown to two years hard labor.²⁹

As a result of this informal racial contract it is easier to understand why the white planters of Jamaica felt that their racial contract would be shattered if they did not put a stop to the amount of Haitian refugees fleeing to Jamaica from the revolution. The Jamaican planters felt that the high ratio of Haitian immigrants in Jamaica would challenge their acknowledged social and political position. Such thinking among the white planter class in Jamaica meant that they had to curtail the flow of the Haitian refugees fleeing to the island and resist metropolitan plans for greater amelioration among their enslaved Africans. Such planter resistance, however, in early nineteenth century Jamaica had serious implications for effective plantation management.

The Haitian Revolution and Plantation Management

In light of the economic decline in the sugar industry in early 19th century Jamaica,³⁰ plantation management necessitated ameliorative measures aimed at maximizing African labor and encouraging African entrepreneurship. In 1803, the Jamaican Assembly debated a bill proposed by some new planters, which sought to revolutionize African labor. The bill stated that the estates should be entirely run by 'Negroes'. Thus, plantations that had a ratio of one hundred enslaved Africans without any white individual would be exempt from deficiency. The former clause stated that for every one hundred and fifty Negroes, there had to be at least two white persons. The bill was eventually defeated by an angry Jamaican Assembly. One attorney from Westmoreland was quite infuriated that the proposed bill had the backing of the Lieutenant Governor. He was totally against the initiative and was now against the Governor, since the initiative, if passed, would ruin many plantations.³¹

²⁹ Ibid, p. 271.

³⁰ One of the recent publications highlighting early decline in the British West Indies is Selwyn Carrington's, *The Sugar Industry and the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1775-1810* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002). Carrington's work extends the ongoing debate of an early or a later decline in the British West Indies sugar industry.

³¹ Rodgers to Barham. MS.Clar.Dep.b. 33-38. December 15th 1803.

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The proposal of a radical Deficiency Bill signaled a series of ‘progressive’ attempts in the late 18th century by planters such as Bryan Edwards. Edwards accepted the reality that if Jamaica was to survive economically in the new world of free trade, they had to practice planter amelioration. Thus, as early as the 1790s, Edwards advocated task work along with the granting of financial incentives to enslaved Africans who did extra work in their free time.³² In addition, the Jamaican Slave Laws which was passed in the late 1800s were also ‘progressive’, in the context of the earlier laws.

It must be stated, however, that the Jamaican planters only passed these laws to please the authorities in London and to hinder their efforts at abolishing the slave trade.³³ Edward’s openness to amelioration was based on the economic reality that the planters faced and not because he was in favor of miscegenation or the building of a cohesive multi-racial society. As ‘progressive’ as Edwards was, he too had a paternalistic attitude toward Africans, since he viewed them as childlike and impressionable. He believed that “creolized” Africans were more civilized and would not rebel against their masters, unless inspired by outside revolutionaries like the ‘Negroes’ in Haiti, whose savagery was clear for all to see.³⁴

In contrast to Edwards, Simon Taylor the renowned sugar tycoon, argued vehemently against London’s prescribed amelioration. Taylor wanted a strong military in Jamaica. He was convinced that if enslaved Africans were not repressed and controlled, they would surely replicate the Haitian revolution. He constantly argued that Jamaica was fast becoming a Negro colony and as such it could no longer attract the caliber of white families who were the backbone of a stable society. Taylor writes, “From all appearances the colony is fast becoming a Negro colony... where no whites can live. I am so convinced of it that I am determined to quit as

³² Bryan Edwards. *The History, Civil and Commercial of the British Colonies in the West Indies, 1793-1891*, vol. 2 (Stockdale: London, 1794), pp. 180-181.

³³ See Heather Cateau, “Management and the Sugar Industry in the British West Indies, 1750-1810”, (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of the West Indies, 1994).

³⁴ Olwyn Blouet, “Bryan Edwards and the Haitian Revolution” in *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World*, David Geggus, ed., (University of South Carolina: Columbia, 2001), pp. 44-53.

soon as I possible can, and must retire to America with everything I have, and let matters take their course".³⁵

Taylor was convinced that amelioration would result in Jamaica becoming another Haiti that he advised his nephew to take his mother and sisters to America, especially New York. If they wanted to live in New York, he would purchase a home there so that they could have a descent way of life. He concluded that the reason the white inhabitants of St. Dominique had to run to America was not just for their safety, but because they would starve to death, from the African 'savages', with whom they would have had to live.³⁶

Taylor further lamented how a once prosperous colony, like Jamaica-- a haven for young white males looking for wealth-- could have become so doomed. He stressed that if Jamaica continued to follow London's concept of amelioration, very soon the Africans would take over Jamaica and he had no doubt that every white person would be butchered, as in St Dominique.³⁷

It was conservative planters like Taylor who wielded enormous influence in the Jamaican Assembly, as acknowledged by Governor Nugent in 1802.³⁸ These planters insisted that the enslaved Africans' nature dictated that they had to be forcibly controlled. One bookkeeper from the New Yarmouth plantation in the parish of Vere informed the Governor that planters all over the island were extremely irritated with him, since he was fighting for the rights of Africans. He was playing a dangerous game as the revolutionary breeze which was blowing all across the Americas would soon result in massive bloodshed in Jamaica.³⁹ Having worked with the 'Negroes' for such a long time, he could teach him about the Africans' nature. He writes:

They are a race of beings that cannot bear prosperity... any interference of his majesty's government, they always construe for emancipation as they have no other ideas of other intentions.... It

³⁵ Simon Taylor to Simon Richard Taylor, 120/1/H (May 15th 1800).

³⁶ Ibid August 30th 1806, No. 27

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Governor Nugent to London, CO/137/108, June 28th 1802.

³⁹ G. Gilbert to Governor. CO/137/155, October 21st 1823, p. 62.

will be a lapse of ages before the Negro can even participate of the blessings of freedom, the very name of the African, must cease to exist in their memories before their customs are obliterated.⁴⁰

Security

Throughout the early 19th century the Jamaican planters relied on the institutions of the state, the judiciary and the military, to repress the enslaved Africans. Such repression came in the following forms: an Alien Act, Martial Laws, a Proposed Police Bill, Illegal detention of Africans, an unusual amount of Africans transported from the island and a litany of judicial cases, which incurred the wrath of the Colonial Authorities.

The Assembly passed an Alien Act in the 1790s, which was aimed at deporting dangerous, idle and uncertified Haitian immigrants and their Africans.⁴¹ French immigrants who did not possess a certified ticket signed by at least two magistrates in their neighborhood, attesting to their legal employment, were to be arrested and deported.

In 1799, Governor Nugent of Jamaica was pressured by the Assembly to reinforce the Alien Act, since there were too many ‘idle’ Haitian immigrants residing in Kingston.⁴² In 1800, Governor Nugent assured the Jamaican Assembly that the 399 French men residing in Kingston were certified and posed no threat to the island. As such, they were not in violation of the “Foreigners of Dangerous Descriptions” Act. Nugent further stated that the French men who had settled in the mountains and in the interior of the island working as planters and overseers were also certified. In addition, all the male French slaves in the island below twelve years of age were also accounted for.⁴³

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Aliens Deported from Jamaica since Jan 1st 1823. There are 24 such persons who have been deported as a result of the Alien Act. This includes Louis Lescene, who is described as Sambo and John Esscoffery who is described as brown. Among the 24 persons, 3 are described as white, 3 as unknown, 6 as brown and the remainder as black.

⁴² Letter Book of the Jamaican Assembly, 1B/5/13, Nov 19th 1799, pp. 196-197.

⁴³ Governor Nugent to the Jamaican Assembly, 1B/5/1/45, Feb 6th 1800, p. 507.

The Alien Act was not only a temporary measure to deport uncertified Haitians; it became a regular feature of Jamaican life throughout the early 19th century. During the years 1823 to 1825, the Registration Reports list twenty-four additional persons as deported under the Alien Act. Two of the more noted French persons of color charged under the Alien Act were Louis Lescene and John Escoffrey. The Jamaican government was severely rebuked by the Colonial Office in 1828 for the way in which they mishandled the case.⁴⁴ The Governor at that time convicted the men using a 'secret committee' which was not properly constituted. Both men were eventually exonerated in London and sent back to Jamaica.

In 1802, the Jamaican Assembly proposed a Police Bill, which was aimed at having lower class Europeans patrolling the streets of Kingston. The proposed bill was withdrawn a few months later after much discussion, since the Assembly felt it would be placing too much power in the hands of a turbulent lower class.⁴⁵ Extra security measures were nevertheless the order of the day, as 30 out of 100 new Haitian immigrants were further detained and transported off the island in 1802.

During the years 1801-03, the Jamaican government also detained French persons of color indefinitely on prison ships. The Jamaican Assembly even declared the country under Martial Law and gave the Governor sweeping powers to act decisively.⁴⁶ As a result, the Jamaican government hung two additional suspected French conspirators⁴⁷ and the Assembly provided a sum of £20,000 to transport off the island every French immigrant and his slave who were not naturalized nor had property.⁴⁸

The planters' paranoia for tightened security in Jamaica was legitimate, since on one occasion they were informed by Toussaint Overture that his

⁴⁴ CO/137/168, Feb 18th 1828. Alien Law & Answers from Haskisson to Hibbert. First, regarding Lescesne and Escoffery, Hibbert is told that the majesty ministers believe that the Assembly was wrong to charge them as aliens as Haiti was a British nation when they were born, thus, they were not aliens (p 45-46). See also appendixes for other mis-handled cases.

⁴⁵ Governor Nugent to the Colonial Office, CO/137/1802, June 1st 1802.

⁴⁶ Lt. Governor to Lord Hobart, CO/137/10, March 4th 1803.

⁴⁷ Ibid, August 23rd 1803.

⁴⁸ Ibid, December 19th 1803.

fellow Haitians were planning a military expedition to overthrow the British government in Jamaica.⁴⁹ It is still debatable whether Toussaint really knew of such a plot or this was one of his schemes to improve international relations with the British government.⁵⁰ However, the point that must be made is that the planters' response in initiating extreme security measures to stifle any form of resistance from the Haitians continued long after the revolution no longer posed a threat. The planters continued to display a heavy-handed approach in using the institutions of the state to punish the Africans throughout the early 19th century, even for minor offences. This eventually led to increased resistance by the enslaved Africans and by the metropolitan authorities in London, who were disappointed at the slow pace of amelioration in Jamaica.

The seeming savagery of blacks butchering whites in Haiti was a constant reminder to the planters and it colored the daily interaction between planters and their enslaved Africans. In 1823, the Lieutenant Governor of Jamaica was told that the House of Commons in London demanded an explanation of the 1,392 Africans transported off the island from 1808-22.⁵¹ The Lieutenant Governor admitted that they were transported for disciplinary reasons and that during his brief tenure, he had to change the legal system where he personally began to review capital convictions. This had become necessary since the Jamaican magistrates were punishing enslaved Africans with capital convictions for even minor offences.⁵² To make matters worse, Jamaica's judicial system had remained ineffective since the Jamaican planters were above their own laws (See Appendixes).

The planters' harshness contributed to the increase in slave rebellions. The rebellions between the years 1800-34, increased both numerically and with intensity, as is seen below.

⁴⁹ David Geggus. *Haitian Revolutionary Studies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), p. 24.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Colonial Office to Governor, CO/137/ 155, June 28th 1823.

⁵² Governor to the Colonial Office, CO/137/155, June 28th 1823.

Early 19th Century Rebellions in Jamaica

Year	Parish	Type	Outcome
	St		
1806	George	Small	2 slaves executed
1807	Portland	Small	?
	Port		
1808	Royal	Small	?
1809	Kingston	Medium	2 slaves hung
	St		
1815	Elizabeth	Medium	2 slaves convicted
	St		
1819	Catherine	Large	Maroon village destroyed
	5		
1823	Parishes	Very Large	25 slaves hung
	9		
1831	Parishes	Extremely Large	Thousands of slaves were involved

In concluding, the Haitian revolution was the most significant event in the late 18th and early 19th century. It drove the Jamaican planters to adopt the harshest of measures to discipline and to control their enslaved Africans. Such measures, although appearing justified at times, were more a result of their racial image of Africans as savages and less to do with issues of security. As the planters' harshness increased, so were the rate and the intensity of slave rebellions.

The memory of the Haitian revolution provided the context for the planters' continued resistance to London's attempts at amelioration. The 'African savages' had to be put in their place, since the created order did not allow for an egalitarian multi-ethnic and multi-racial society. The issue of race and its significance to Caribbean historiography is therefore a significant factor in the study of plantation management. Unfortunately, early 19th century Jamaica necessitated planter amelioration to maximize African labor. Given the economic context of the early 19th century, the planters' harsh measures motivated by racial fears were counter-

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productive to efficient human resource management and could only lead to one eventual end -- the abolishing of slavery in 1834.

Theological Implications

In British West Indian history August 1st is a most significant day. One hundred and seventy years ago, on August 1st 1834, enslaved Africans over the age of six had their legal status changed from slaves to that of apprentices. Exactly four years after (August 1st 1838) all apprentices of African origin throughout the British West Indies were granted full emancipation. At last Africans who had toiled under the British tyranny of slavery in the Caribbean for over two hundred years were now free. These freed Africans in Jamaica celebrated their freedom by going to special church services in droves and in celebratory dinners followed by dances and balls.

As we celebrate our ancestors' emancipation one hundred and sixty six years after, can we in all honesty and fairness conclude that our ancestors' dream of a multi-racial and multi-ethnic society is fulfilled? Can we safely say that our nation is color-blind and classless and that political, social and economic emancipation is practiced? Is the popular saying true of Jamaica - that the more things change the more they seem to remain the same? Can we boast of an excellent judicial system? Is our legal system been revised and re-structured to the extent that every single African descendant resident in Jamaica guaranteed equal rights and justice? We owe it to our African descendants who worshipped on August 1st 1838 not to have other occurrences similar to that of Janice Allen of Crawle and of the senseless reprisal killings of our own African brothers and sisters.

We owe a debt to our African ancestors to ensure that the institutions of the state no longer discriminate against fellow Jamaicans based on their color, class and wealth. Our African brothers and sisters suffered too much socially and at the hand of the state for us to continue punishing the poor at the expense of the rich. On the other hand, we must commend our government for its bold stance in helping Haitian refugees and in providing a temporary safe haven for exiled President Bertrand Aristide. But we must challenge them to even go further and continue to build an international coalition to censor and to apply punitive measures at the United Nations and other such international institutions. The powerful countries which continue to de-stabilize and impoverish Haiti, primarily

because they dared to free themselves from the tyranny of slavery in 1804 ought to be chastised. The recognition of Haiti's sovereignty is significant as the independence of the entire Caribbean is at stake. Finally, the church has to continue the mammoth task of remaining an agent of change in empowering and transforming our socio-economic and political contexts; in remaining a facilitator, a referee, an advocate—a critic of the powerful and the mighty, while remaining a friend of the poor and the powerless.

APPENDIXES

Appendix. A. Injustices in the Jamaican Legal System, 1817-22

On August 24th 1821, an attorney in Clarendon castigated the magistrates in his parish for numerous irregularities in severely punishing a head watchman. The Attorney General agreed that a proper jury was not constituted and warned the magistrates that they would be removed if other un-constitutional occurrences took place.

On March 20th 1817, one planter Edward Bolt, was convicted of murder. It was however recommended by the jury and the Chief Justice of Jamaica that he should be tried for manslaughter and not murder, since he was provoked. The governor sought the advice of the Colonial Office.

On March 8th 1822, one planter, Charles Newman of Manchester, killed his slave by punishing him with a large stick while he was in stocks. He too disappeared from the island and charges of neglect were brought against the coroner and the two magistrates in the Grand Court. All three persons were released since there was not sufficient evidence to have them convicted. The alleged persons had removed the evidence.

On August 5th 1822, one planter, Thomas Simpson, was convicted in the Cornwall Assize court for raping an infant under ten years old. The case was sent to the crown to be decided, as it was argued that Simpson was at times mentally deranged and, furthermore, he was

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tried by an English law, which was not applicable in the Jamaican context.

Appendix. B. Injustices in the Jamaican Legal System, 1826-32

On August 9th 1826, one white person, Adam S. Mckay, was convicted of murder under the 1826 law. The case was sent to the crown and the judges asked that his sentence should be disallowed, as slave evidence was used to have him convicted under the 1826 Jamaican laws.

On April 22nd 1828, one fellow white planter, Henry Benjamin, accused the incoming Custos or Chief Justice of Trelewany, William Miller, for being a tyrant. He bullied his jurors until he was told the verdict that he wanted. The Attorney General in his investigation agreed and stated that in his trials no proper notes were taken. Whenever such notes were taken, they were written in pencil, and then later transcribed.

On Dec 2nd 1830, the Custos of St Andrew was accused by a fellow white person, W. Taylor, that they did not offer a Council of Protection to his slave, and it resulted in her being severely beaten by the jailor. Lord Goderich ordered that the enslaved woman be released and he further reprimanded the magistrates for being very insensitive.

On May 15th 1832, Lord Goderich again censured the magistrates and Custos of St Mary for their mis-handling of a murder investigation.