

THE SLAVE TRADE AND SLAVERY
IN LATIN AMERICA AND
THE CARIBBEAN

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- TESTING THE CHAINS: RESISTANCE TO SLAVERY IN THE BRITISH WEST INDIES.* By MICHAEL CRATON. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1983. Pp. 389. \$29.50.)
- SLAVES AND THE MISSIONARIES: THE DISINTEGRATION OF JAMAICAN SLAVE SOCIETY, 1784-1834.* By MARY TURNER. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982. Pp. 223. \$25.95.)
- SLAVERS IN PARADISE: THE PERUVIAN SLAVE TRADE IN POLYNESIA, 1862-1864.* By H. E. MAUDE. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1981. Pp. 244. \$23.50.)
- CHILDREN OF GOD'S FIRE: A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF BLACK SLAVERY IN BRAZIL.* By ROBERT EDGAR CONRAD. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983. Pp. 515. Cloth \$50.00, paper \$17.50.)
- THE ABOLITION OF THE ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE: ORIGINS AND EFFECTS IN EUROPE, AFRICA, AND THE AMERICAS.* Edited by DAVID ELTIS and JAMES WALVIN. (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1981. Pp. 314. \$22.50.)
- FREEDOM AND PREJUDICE: THE LEGACY OF SLAVERY IN THE UNITED STATES AND BRAZIL.* By ROBERT BRENT TOPLIN. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981. Pp. 134. \$23.95.)
- LA ABOLICION DE LA ESCLAVITUD EN POPAYAN, 1832-1852.* By JORGE CASTELLANOS. (Cali, Colombia: Universidad del Valle, 1980. Pp. 132.)
- HISTORIA ECONOMICA Y SOCIAL DE COLOMBIA, TOMO II: POPAYAN, UNA SOCIEDAD ESCLAVISTA, 1680-1800.* By GERMAN COLMENARES. (Bogotá: La Correta Inéditos, 1979. Pp. 310.)

In a perceptive essay assessing the impact on Europe of the colonization of the New World, Professor J. H. Elliott wrote: "It is no accident that some of the most important historical work of our own age—preoccupied as it is with the problem of European and non-European, of black and white—should have been devoted to the study of the social, demographic and psychological consequences for non-European societies of Europe's overseas expansion."¹

The outpouring of books on slavery and the slave trade continues, and from each harvest, the discriminating reader can distill new insights on the complex interrelationship between blacks and whites in the colonial societies of the New World. The books reviewed here cover aspects of both the slave trade and slavery in the British West Indies, Colombia, Brazil, and the west coast of South America, and they range in time from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. Social and demographic topics predominate.

Two studies help to bring the slave system in the British West Indies back into focus. Michael Craton's *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* is an excellent analysis of the shifting pattern of slave resistance in the plantation colonies of the British West Indies. Other historians have recognized the importance of slave insurrections in the British Caribbean, but Craton's study is a significant advance in two directions. It surveys all the major uprisings and attempts to place them within an overall structure. His accounts of individual insurrections are models of concise historical narrative, but he is not content to write a series of narrative accounts. His purpose is to demonstrate a continuum of active slave resistance that was "structurally endemic" in slave societies. In his own words, his study contributes "to the devaluation of outside influences upon slave attitudes and behaviour" (p. 18).

Craton detects two phases of slave revolt, the earliest being "essentially African in character": "The rebels were mostly Africans led by Africans, the uprisings plotted, planned, and prepared in African style, with aims and fighting methods that owed at least as much to Africa as to the special conditions of Caribbean colonies and Amerindian precedents" (p. 99). The later phase, comprising the period 1775–1832, witnessed a transition to a "creole" or "Afro-Caribbean" resistance in which, Craton argues, slave ideology and aims were more coordinated. Throughout the long history of slave resistance in the British West Indies, as in other slave societies, the fundamental goal was freedom, "a determination to make, take, or recreate a life of their own" (p. 243).

Craton's analysis of the earlier, or "African," phase of slave resistance can be compared with his own previous attempts to find a framework, or typology, for British Caribbean slave revolts and also with the sociohistorical hypothesis constructed by Orlando Patterson to explain the endemic uprisings in Jamaica during the first century of British colonial rule.² Craton shies away from rigidity in constructing a hypothesis to explain the persistent rebellions, especially in Jamaica and Barbados during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He succeeds in pointing up the importance both of African elements and of the phenomenon of marronage, especially in Jamaica, as key parts of Caribbean slave resistance up to the latter eighteenth century.

Craton is more controversial in his explanation of slave revolts from 1775 to 1832 because he seeks to direct attention toward the slaves themselves and especially toward slave leadership, discounting extrinsic forces, particularly the impact of the Age of Revolution. Here he consciously moves away from David Brion Davis's thesis that the Age of Revolution was "a major turning point in the history of New World slavery."³ Craton believes that "the slave revolts of 1816–1832 came too late to be ascribed solely to the external and worldwide forces of the Age of Revolution" (p. 333).

To some extent, Craton's argument revolves around a definition of the Age of Revolution and how it affected the British Caribbean. His circumscribed definition of the Age of Revolution in chronological terms as lasting from 1775 to 1815 conveniently excludes the three most significant nineteenth-century slave revolts in the British West Indies and thus serves his own argument. He finds few direct causal links between American and French revolutionary currents and British slave rebellions, but he does not examine closely the ferments of British life in the same period as forces for change affecting Britain's colonies as well as the metropolis. The last rebellion Craton analyzes is the Jamaican Baptist War of 1831–32, which precedes both the Reform Bill and slave emancipation. His account of events in Jamaica is comprehensive, but he does not try to incorporate the Jamaican rebellion within a metropolitan context to uncover the background to the war or to weigh its impact upon the abolition movement. He does argue that the rapid Christianization of British West Indian slaves after 1783 raised their political consciousness, increasing the likelihood of slave resistance. Should this trend be viewed as one of the revolutionary currents of the era?

In the last section of *Testing the Chains*, Craton concentrates on the rebellions in Barbados (1816), Demerara (1823), and Jamaica (1831–32). The historical importance for the British Caribbean of these events justifies the emphasis he places on them, but in his desire to tilt the historical balance away from interpretations focusing solely on metropolitan developments, he may have gone too far in the other direction. If indeed, as Craton states, "the slaves were the primary actors in the process [of abolition]," the evidence he produces is far from conclusive. Abolition of slavery in the 1830s occurred in Britain, and Craton could strengthen his thesis if he were able to demonstrate in detail the effect of the Baptist War upon British public opinion and the British government.

Craton's thesis raises other questions. By concentrating on slave rebellions in the preemancipation period, he leaves the reader wondering to what extent slave resistance took other forms during slavery's last

days. He offers a brief explanation of the absence of slave revolts in colonies like Trinidad, but if Craton's theory of slave rebellion is to stand up, it also must account for periods of quiescence. In the epilogue, he traces briefly the postslavery uprisings in the British Caribbean to extend the continuum and to demonstrate how abolition changed very little in the lives of the black people of the British islands. Craton acknowledges that circumstances "gradually changed," but whether they were, as he argues, "subject chiefly to an intrinsic, not extrinsic logic" remains open for further debate (p. 331).

Mary Turner's *Slaves and Missionaries: The Disintegration of Jamaican Slave Society* is a useful complement to the latter part of Craton's study. She incorporates a revised version of an earlier article on the Baptist War and precedes it with a very detailed examination of the growth of the missionary movement in Jamaica.⁴ In contrast to Craton, she finds that the incidence of slave rebellions in Jamaica diminished with the end of the slave trade in 1808. The most common form of slave resistance was still flight. She views the Baptist War not as part of a continuum but something that requires an explanation as a unique historical phenomenon. The explanation is primarily the long-term effects of the missionary movement in the island.

The missionaries, particularly the Baptists and Wesleyan Methodists, brought the religious revival sweeping Britain to Jamaica, where in the midst of a plantation slave society, they ministered directly to the slaves. Christianity gradually became a theology of liberation, as it "elaborated the social bases for conflict, sharpened tensions and stimulated new forms of resistance to slavery" (p. 80). By 1834 membership in a mission church was a "a reward of merit" for the slave. Slowly, this meritocracy challenged slave status because "it underlined the arbitrary nature of the divisions between slaves and masters" (p. 85). Prior to 1823, the missionaries themselves were careful not to challenge the institution of slavery directly, even though they were seen as antislavery agitators by the plantocracy. The ambiguous position the missionaries held became even more tenuous after 1823, when the Baptist and Wesleyan parent societies came out openly in favor of abolition. From 1825 the mission churches were staffed increasingly by younger, more militant clerics who were caught up in the fervor of the growing abolitionist movement.

Mary Turner's account successfully weaves the background of the British missionary societies, the abolitionist campaign, and the actions of the British government into the foreground of Jamaican events. She shows how the missionary work helped to create slave leaders like Sam Sharpe, "an eloquent and passionate teacher" who made himself literate and became a "daddy" among the native Baptists. The 1831

rebellion was organized by Sharpe and his colleagues, who used the network of mission meetings and native Baptist contacts to create a revolutionary political organization to overthrow the slave system.

The failure of the rebellion left the unfortunate slaves vulnerable to the full wrath of white vengeance, but it forced the missionaries to become outright campaigners for slave abolition. Their public campaigning in Britain helped to convince both public opinion and the British government of the need for immediate abolition. Turner's thesis that the missionaries contributed to the disintegration of the slave system within the British Empire by helping to undermine it internally, especially in Jamaica, while pressing for its destruction externally is well argued and well supported. Her argument reinforces the importance of the Baptist War as a key element in the destruction of British slavery, and her approach underlines the need to keep colonial and metropolitan developments in a proper historical balance.

The impact of religion on the abolition of British slavery surfaces again in Roger Anstey's contribution to the collection of papers edited by David Eltis and James Walvin and published as *The Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Origins and Effects in Europe, Africa, and the Americas*. These papers were originally presented at a symposium held at Aarhus University in Denmark in 1978. Anstey died before his paper was published, and the book appropriately is dedicated to him. In "Religion and British Emancipation," Anstey underscored the importance of the connection between dissent and antislavery in British emancipation. He argued that "popular pressure, largely coming from the religious public, was, then, crucial in 1832–33" (p. 53). He also suggested that economic forces should not be discounted as an element in the British campaign. The West Indian planters in 1833 knew, as the government did, that West Indian slavery was no longer important for Britain's commercial interest, and they consequently were prepared to haggle over compensation rather than conduct a last-ditch defense of slavery.

Two other papers in the same section, "Abolition and the European Metropolis," also highlight the British emancipation struggle. In both the emphasis is exclusively on the British metropolis. What is lacking is the inclusion of the colonial developments that Craton and Turner detail. Howard Temperley, echoing some of Anstey's argument, portrays the British antislavery cause "as a secularized or semi-secularized form of Christian evangelism" imposed by "dominant metropolitan cultures" on societies occupying economic peripheries (p. 32). James Walvin concentrates on the domestic political campaign mounted by British abolitionists, part of what he sees as "the complex political chemistry" that must be unravelled if abolition is to be fully explained (p. 63).

The remaining three sections of the book contain papers on the impact of the abolition of slave trade on Africa, the nature of the illegal slave trade, and demographic and cultural responses to the slave trade in the Americas. All the contributions on Africa concentrate on economic topics. Philip Curtin concludes that the abolition of the slave trade had only a small effect on the Senegambian economy. Henry A. Gemery and Jan S. Hogendorn show how abolition drastically cut money imports to West Africa and argue that beyond its human benefit, "abolition conferred on West Africa a real economic benefit" (p. 111). Ralph Austen examines the connection between the abolition of the slave trade in the Indian Ocean and European political and economic hegemony in the region, concluding that antislavery movements did not modernize the East African economic structure on a Western model.

The three papers on the nineteenth-century illegal slave trade again demonstrate a largely metropolitan focus. There is no specific treatment of the two key areas in the Americas, Brazil and Cuba. David Eltis provides an invaluable analysis of the impact of suppression policies on the nature of the slave trade itself. This analysis suggests that it took some time for changes to be felt, with significant alterations beginning in the late 1830s. Pieter Emmer uncovers a tiny corner of the Atlantic slave trade, demonstrating how the Dutch continued to import slaves illegally into Surinam after the prohibition of the Dutch slave trade. Serge Daget challenges the alleged ineffectiveness of French suppression policies with a useful discussion of the role of the French Navy off West Africa after the end of the Napoleonic Wars.

Two papers by Hans Christian Johansen and Svend E. Green-Pedersen explore the demographic considerations behind the abolition of the Danish slave trade. Richard Sheridan then extends the demographic theme of the latter part of the book to probe the connection between the demographic and epidemiological character of the slave trade to Jamaica and the characteristics of plantation slavery itself. Franklin Knight's concluding paper ties the overall demography of the Atlantic slave trade to the emergence of Afro-American culture in the Americas. As he says, "The transatlantic slave trade was a movement of peoples; it was only coincidentally a transfer of culture." Yet it influenced Afro-American culture through the volume and rate of slave introduction, the sex and age distribution, and the nature of social and economic conditions in the American societies.

All the papers in *The Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade* confirm what Stanley Engerman says in his introductory essay: there are no easy answers to the increasingly complex historical questions associated with the slave trade and its abolition. As the range of issues grows,

overall synthesis becomes more necessary and more difficult. These papers reveal the complexity of the problems and broaden the agenda. None attempts an overall synthesis of the results of a steady growth in historical scholarship on the slave trade, nor (with one or two exceptions) do the authors try to chart the direction for future research.

H. E. Maude's *Slavers in Paradise: The Peruvian Slave Trade in Polynesia, 1862–1864* takes readers from the macrocosm of the Atlantic slave trade to the microcosm of the Pacific slave trade in the 1860s. Labor shortages in Peru following the abolition of slavery stimulated a "coolie" trade with China and an offshoot, "blackbirding" in the Pacific. Maude has written a detailed monograph on the seven-month search for Pacific island slaves in 1862–63, concentrating on the narrative of the voyages of each of the ships involved. Over three thousand Pacific Islanders were brought to Peru in this brief time, but only 157 returned alive to Polynesia. Fortunately, the active intervention of the French Ambassador in Lima, combined with sustained opposition from the Peruvian paper *El Comercio*, persuaded the Peruvian government to halt the traffic before the tragedy worsened. Even so, given the small population of the Polynesian islands at the time, Maude brands this brief Peruvian slave trade "genocide of an order never seen before or since" in the history of Polynesia (p. 182). Maude's chief interest is the impact of this slave trading on Polynesia, and he makes no attempt to compare "blackbirding" with the equally infamous trade in Chinese indentured laborers. His study reiterates, however, that the search for servile labor to work in American countries did not end with the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade. The Pacific also witnessed an illegal trade in human beings.

As the works by Craton and Turner illustrate, historians of slavery recently have been attempting to reconstruct the institution from the slaves' viewpoint. Robert Edgar Conrad's *Children of God's Fire: A Documentary History of Black Slavery in Brazil* provides abundant material for historians and students of African slavery in Brazil to understand what the slaves actually experienced. It is an invaluable contribution both to the scholarly examination of Brazilian slavery and to the evolving debate on comparative slave systems in the Americas.

Conrad has gathered a collection of documents covering the slave trade to Brazil and Brazilian slavery in all its manifestations from the colonial period on through to emancipation in the late nineteenth century. Each section and each document is prefaced by a lucid introduction that sets the context and presents the reader with key facts. A thorough search by the author turned up only two documents written by slaves while they still were slaves. Seven documents in all are direct accounts by slaves or former slaves and four others are by descendants of slaves. The contrast with the relatively large amount of original

"slave testimony" from the United States is marked.⁵ Conrad attributes this paucity to the very low literacy rate among Brazilian slaves.

Conrad's collection is a documentary portrait of a society whose most enduring institution, apart from the church, was slavery. Far from the relatively humane or milder slavery in Brazil pictured by earlier authors such as Frank Tannenbaum or Gilberto Freyre, Conrad's documents reveal a much more brutal system that "comprises one of the harsher chapters in human history, comparable in ferocity to some of the cruel events in our own historical period" (p. xxvi). His particularly valuable sections on slave resistance and slave punishment bring out this aspect vividly. The treatment endured by Brazil's slaves, especially on rural plantations, provoked almost continual resistance. While organized rebellions were more dramatic, if less frequent, flight or other individual acts were more common. The characterization of Brazilian slavery as "a state of domestic war" is much closer to the mark in describing the institution (p. 359). Conrad suggests, and the documents bear him out, that many similarities exist between the plantation slave system of Brazil and those of the Caribbean.

Eighty percent of the documents selected for inclusion in *Children of God's Fire* originated in the nineteenth century. Conrad's claim of a reasonable balance between the colonial period and that of the empire is generally valid, except perhaps in the sections dealing with urban slave life and slavery at the mines during the colonial period. A. J. R. Russell-Wood has drawn attention to the differences of Brazilian colonial slavery in the gold mining areas and has raised the intriguing question of the extent to which different economies altered slave life.⁶ Two documents in Conrad's book, one discussing slaves' gambling and another banning slaves' possession of weapons, refer to eighteenth-century mining camps. In a later section on slave resistance, the author includes another document on a 1719 slave conspiracy in Minas Gerais. These fragmentary references hint at the contrasts raised by Russell-Wood but do not permit any detailed comparison. Conrad himself is well aware that slave conditions in the nineteenth century did not necessarily apply in the earlier colonial period. Slavery did evolve over time. Nevertheless, the reader of the section "Slave Life in Cities and at the Mines" might assume that it did not evolve because the documents included refer only to the nineteenth century.

Conrad selected specific documents on the problems of female slaves and on the deeply ambiguous position of the Roman Catholic church on slavery. He concludes that the church was "a bulwark of slavery" (p. 152). He also demonstrates with documentary evidence how pervasive racial discrimination has been in Brazil since the Portuguese arrived. One nineteenth-century document offers a striking contrast between Brazilian racial discrimination and the racism encoun-

tered by a Brazilian mulatto in New York, although Conrad cautions that both forms were equally “destructive to the personalities and lives of those concerned” (p. 202).

A number of sections contain specific refutations of Freyre’s and Tannenbaum’s outdated theories of Brazilian slavery, but the documents themselves suggest that the time has come to get away from an agenda circumscribed by reaction to Tannenbaum and Freyre and move toward a more realistic assessment of the complexity of Brazilian slavery. This move may be heralded by A. J. R. Russell-Wood’s penetrating study of what he terms the “chiaroscuro” in colonial Brazil.⁷

The study of comparative slave systems in the Americas has focused on comparisons between Brazil and the United States. Robert Brent Toplin’s book of essays entitled *Freedom and Prejudice: The Legacy of Slavery in the United States and Brazil* carries on the tradition. He seeks to broaden the comparisons made by historian Carl Degler and sociologist Harmarnus Hoetink in an effort to penetrate to the roots of racial attitudes in the two countries. Toplin believes that the history of slavery in Brazil and the United States, especially the respective abolition experiences, determined the legacy of race relations that followed. Tensions over abolition “pushed loosely articulated racial concepts into the open and gave them the force of formal ideology” (p. xxii). Even after the institution of slavery had long disappeared, the twin legacies of color prejudice and economic inequality remain. Many of the essays Toplin reproduces in *Freedom and Prejudice* first appeared in the early 1970s. The book usefully gathers them together, permitting comparisons with Degler and Thomas Skidmore, who published a seminal article in 1971 pointing out the differences between the history of race relations in Brazil and the United States.⁸

Germán Colmenares and Jorge Castellanos, in their respective studies of slavery in Popayán in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, together provide a picture of a slave society in periods of expansion and decline. Colmenares discovered that Popayán offers rich documentary material for the historian to exploit, and he has done so with rewarding results in *Popayán, una sociedad esclavista, 1680–1800*, which is the second volume of his *Historia económica y social de Colombia*. Castellanos’s *La abolición de la esclavitud en Popayán, 1832–1852* is a helpful introductory essay, but it is not based on the wealth of primary sources used by Colmenares nor does it reveal the nature of nineteenth-century Popayán society with insights equal to those that Colmenares sheds on the eighteenth century.

Germán Colmenares’s second volume in his synthesis of the social and economic history of New Granada is a profound work, one that will stand with Manuel Moreno Fraginals’s volume study on Cuba, *El ingenio*, as major contributions to the knowledge of slavery in Latin

America.⁹ When Magnus Mörner reviewed recent research on slavery and its abolition in Latin America in 1978, he concluded that research results on the Latin American side had been “less striking” than those in North America or in Europe.¹⁰ With the publication of these studies on Cuba and New Granada, the balance is being redressed.

Colmenares has closely reviewed recent historical work and the methods used by North American and European historians. He acknowledges that serious historical work on the social and economic aspects of slavery in New Granada has only occurred within the last fifteen years, but his synthesis is carefully designed to explore the connections between slavery and the economic, social, and political structure of the colony. He divided *Popayán* into sections on the slaves, the mines, the land and society, and politics, and explores each theme separately, yet he is careful always to weave the complex web of historical interconnections. Slavery within the colonial society of New Granada remains the unifying theme.

Colmenares pictures eighteenth-century Popayán as a slave society midway between the slave system of the U.S. South, where domestic reproduction steadily increased slave numbers, and the plantation slave societies of the Antilles and Brazil, where high slave mortality rates necessitated continual replenishment through the Atlantic slave trade. He concludes that the conditions of slave existence in Popayán were not as harsh as those prevailing in the plantation societies of the Antilles and Brazil. He finds that until the last three decades of the eighteenth century, the birthrate among Popayán slaves exceeded the death rate.

As a slave society, New Granada absorbed slightly over 20 percent of all slave imports to Spanish America; and of those imported through Cartagena, especially under the English *asiento* in the early eighteenth century, nearly a quarter were destined for Popayán and the mining centers of the Pacific.¹¹ Colmenares gathered data on ninety-four hundred slave transactions in the Popayán slave market from 1680 to 1800 and analyzed these to extract valuable information on where the slaves came from, who bought them, and how they were allocated to the various sectors of the colonial Popayán economy. He discovered that the nature of slave sales changed in the second half of the eighteenth century. After 1780 very few slaves brought directly from Africa were sold in Popayán, but the slave market remained active due to the sales of creole slaves. Coincident with this change was an increase in the number of female slaves sold and a drop in sales of large slave gangs. Colmenares also found a gradual, but steady, diminution in slave prices during the eighteenth century, which he explains as a response to local economic circumstances.

Colmenares's extensive analysis of both the colonial economy

and the colonial slave society of Popayán has led him to challenge the methods used in recent studies of slave profitability.¹² Using the same data as William F. Sharp on one mine, Colmenares arrived at substantially different results (pp. 154–65). Colmenares's challenge, however, goes well beyond individual instances. He views eighteenth-century Popayán as a feudal and precapitalist slave society with features typical of the *ancien régime*. Mining, labor, and land were all monopolies derived from social and political privilege. Models and methods used to calculate profitability in a capitalist economy, he argues, are inappropriate in a precapitalist society where people invested in land or slaves not just for profit but also for stability and prestige. Colmenares's real challenge is to discover suitable historical tools to understand the reality of this precapitalist slave society.

He goes on to emphasize that historians cannot separate precapitalist economic structures from the social and ideological structures that sustained them. He performed the same careful dissection of six hundred land sales in Popayán from 1680 to 1800 as he did with the sales of slaves. His conclusion is that land sales are intimately tied to the fate of the mining economy, which in turn rested on slave labor. Prior to 1750, slave labor was directed toward the expansion of the mining economy. In this period, large latifundios remained generally unproductive because of the absence of labor. This situation changed in the latter part of the century, as wealthy mine owners bought land and began to construct haciendas for prestige and security.

The society Colmenares brings to life was socially immobile and aristocratic. Its structure peers through the fortunes made in mining and slave trading, but Colmenares acknowledges the difficulties of understanding it from the slaves' viewpoint. His investigations reveal little about the daily life of the slaves or common people, even if he succeeds in uncovering information on slave diet, disease, and manumission rates. His great success is his synthesis of the different sectors of this feudal and precapitalist slave society planted in Popayán by Spanish colonists.

Jorge Castellanos agrees in *La abolición de la esclavitud en Popayán* that even in its era of decline, Popayán society still rested on slavery. He finds nineteenth-century Popayán a polarized world divided between an entrenched aristocracy and their slaves. As late as the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century, Castellanos finds, slavery still permeated Colombian socioeconomic structures. The Law of Cúcuta had proclaimed free birth and gradual abolition throughout Gran Colombia in 1821, but just as slavery in Venezuela lingered until 1854, so abolition was delayed in Colombia until 1852. After two introductory chapters, Castellanos's study focuses on the twenty years prior to abolition. He used documentary evidence from Popayán, but if the rich eigh-

teenth-century documentary sources mined by Colmenares also exist for the nineteenth century, they remain to be fully exploited. Castellanos alludes to the questions surrounding the abolition of slavery in Popayán, but his work is disappointing in its lack of detail on any aspect of the topic.

Castellanos indicates that the average annual rate of manumission was lower between 1835 and 1840, when fewer than five slaves per year were freed in Popayán, than it had been in the eighteenth century. Colmenares calculated an average of six slaves manumitted per year in the eighteenth century (p. 98). The manumission rate in Popayán was also lower than in neighboring Venezuela.¹³ Gradual manumission clearly failed, blocked by the last-ditch resistance of the Popayán slave-owners. What then forced the final abolition of slavery?

Castellanos argues that the cause was not an automatic evolution of new economic forces or a movement initiated from the upper hierarchy of society but a development owing much to the efforts of slaves themselves. Yet apart from an account of a slave uprising in 1843, he does not develop or document this thesis. Later in *La abolición*, Castellanos offers another explanation. The continuous decline of economic power of the slaveholding south in the first half of the nineteenth century was offset by a parallel increase in vigor of the commercial and artisan sectors of the Colombian economy. The 1848 revolutions in Europe inspired a group of young intellectuals, the so-called Generation of '48, and a political crisis ensued. After coming to power, the intellectuals successfully attacked slavery as the most prominent and enduring legacy of the colonialism they wished to eradicate. When the abolition law finally took effect at the beginning of 1852, only 16,500 slaves remained. The slave population of Popayán had diminished by 41 percent in the eight years from 1835 to 1843, so that even before the final struggle, the institution had been disintegrating due to slave flight and what Castellanos describes as "demographic erosion" (p. 85).

Obvious parallels exist between Colombia and Venezuela, and further comparisons can be made with Brazil and Cuba. Colombia adopted a *patronato* system in 1842. Rebecca Scott's recent studies analyzing the abolition of slavery within Cuba and the operation of the *patronato* system there offer insights that might be used in Colombia as well.¹⁴ Whether slave labor and technology were incompatible in Colombia, as Manuel Moreno Fragnals argues they were in Cuba, has not been explored.¹⁵ Castellanos does not believe that slavery in Colombia died naturally because it had ceased to be profitable, but he agrees that the economic history of nineteenth-century Popayán remains to be written. The abolitionist campaign launched by the Generation of '48 had links to developments in France's colonies and broader ties with abolitionist currents in other parts of the Americas. These and other themes

still await historians of Colombian abolition who, like Germán Colmenares, must be fully cognizant of contemporary historical work and equally familiar with the documentary resources of Colombia.

Of the eight books reviewed in this essay, three particularly stand out as representative of new approaches. Michael Craton's *Testing the Chains* highlights the importance of slave resistance in the Caribbean and tries to incorporate various forms of slave resistance into one continuum extending from the earliest colonies to the postemancipation era. Robert Conrad's documentary collection, *Children of God's Fire*, makes the primary evidence of the real character of Brazilian slavery available to a much wider audience. Germán Colmenares draws on the tools of social and economic history to construct a synthesis of a colonial slave society in *Popayán*. Both Craton and Conrad succeed in drawing back the veils of slave life as the slaves themselves experienced it, while Colmenares sinks an even deeper historical shaft, laying bare the skeletal structure of colonial Popayán. The diversity of historical methods employed in these books as well as the differences and the similarities of slave existence in widely separated regions of the Americas revealed by the authors all point to the complexity confronting historians of slavery in the New World and to the rich rewards beckoning intrepid pioneers who are prepared to push back the existing boundaries.

NOTES

1. J. H. Elliott, *The Old World and the New, 1492–1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 4.
2. M. Craton, "The Passion to Exist: Slave Rebellions in the British West Indies, 1650–1832," *Journal of Caribbean History* 13 (Summer 1980):1–20; and *Sinews of Empire: A Short History of British Slavery* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor, 1974), 226–37. See also H. Orlando Patterson, "Slavery and Slave Revolts: A Socio-Historical Analysis of the First Maroon War, Jamaica, 1655–1740," *Social and Economic Studies* 19 (1970):289–335; and *The Sociology of Slavery* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1967), 260–83.
3. D. B. Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770–1823* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), 71.
4. Mary Reckford, "The Jamaica Slave Rebellion of 1831," *Past and Present* 40 (July 1968):108–25.
5. See, for example, John W. Blassingame, *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977).
6. A. J. R. Russell-Wood, *The Black Man in Slavery and Freedom in Colonial Brazil* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 104–27.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Thomas Skidmore, "Toward a Comparative Analysis of Race Relations since Abolition in Brazil and the United States," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 4, no. 1 (1971):1–28.
9. Manuel Moreno Fraginals, *El ingenio: complejo económico social cubano del azúcar* (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1978). See also Franklin Knight, "The Caribbean Sugar Industry and Slavery," *LARR* 18, no. 2 (1983):219–29 for a review of *El ingenio*.
10. Magnus Mörner, "Recent Research on Negro Slavery and Abolition in Latin America," *LARR* 13, no. 2 (1978):266.

11. For a fuller description of the British slave trade during this period, see Colin A. Palmer, *Human Cargoes: The British Slave Trade to Spanish America, 1700–1739* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1981).
12. See especially Robert W. Fogel and Stanley Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Slavery*, 2 vols. (New York: Little, Brown, 1974); and William F. Sharp, "The Profitability of Slavery in the Colombian Chocó, 1680–1810," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 55, no. 3 (Aug. 1975):468–95.
13. John V. Lombardi, *The Decline and Abolition of Negro Slavery in Venezuela, 1820–1854* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1971), 68.
14. See Rebecca J. Scott, "Explaining Abolition: Contradiction, Adaptation, and Challenge in Cuban Slave Society, 1860–1886," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26, no. 1 (Jan. 1984):83–111; and her article "Gradual Abolition and the Dynamics of Slave Emancipation in Cuba, 1868–86," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 63, no. 3 (1983):449–77. See also her forthcoming book, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).
15. Manuel Moreno Fraginals, *El ingenio*.