

SLAVERY AND ITS LEGACIES

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- LA REBELION DE ESCLAVOS DE HAITI.* By Torcuato S. Di Tella. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones del IDES, 1984. Pp. 118.)
- THE CARIBBEAN SLAVE: A BIOLOGICAL HISTORY.* By Kenneth F. Kiple. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984. Pp. 274. \$32.50.)
- SUGAR IS MADE WITH BLOOD: THE CONSPIRACY OF LA ESCALERA AND THE CONFLICT BETWEEN EMPIRES OVER SLAVERY IN CUBA.* By Robert L. Paquette. (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1988. Pp. 346. \$29.95.)
- SUGAR AND MODERN SLAVERY: A TALE OF TWO COUNTRIES.* By Roger Plant. (London: Zed Books, 1987. Pp. 177. \$37.50 cloth, \$11.50 paper.)
- STAND THE STORM: A HISTORY OF THE ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE.* By Edward Reynolds. (London and New York: Allison and Busby, 1985. Pp. 182. \$14.95 cloth, \$6.95 paper.)
- NARRATIVE OF A FIVE-YEAR EXPEDITION AGAINST THE REVOLTED NEGROES OF SURINAM.* By John Gabriel Stedman. Edited and with an introduction and notes by Richard Price and Sally Price. (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988. Pp. 708. \$95.00.)
- BRITISH CAPITALISM AND CARIBBEAN SLAVERY: THE LEGACY OF ERIC WILLIAMS.* Edited by Barbara L. Solow and Stanley L. Engerman. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987. Pp. 345. \$29.95.)

Although Africans and their descendants have been at the center of the Atlantic world's modern history, only since World War II have studies on slavery and the slave trade played a prominent role in the historiography of the former slaveholding and slave-trading nations and colonies. This trend has coincided with the global process of political decolonization and the parallel academic concern with exploring the causes and consequences of the social and economic disequilibrium so evident in the postwar world.

While the East-West schism and the emergence of the cold war stimulated an entire genre of research and writing that was often designed to justify one protagonist or the other, a number of scholars have increasingly come to view the world from a different dualistic vantage point. The wealth of nations had obviously not been equitably distrib-

uted. On one side of the ledger were the developed countries, conspicuously those of the North Atlantic world responsible for organizing and orchestrating the slave trade and African slavery. On the other side were the overexploited and thus underdeveloped nations, whose political domination by Europe was ending. In many cases, particularly in Africa and Latin America, poverty and exploitation were closely linked to the social and economic systems created by slavery and left entrenched in various forms long after emancipation. Reflecting the historical profession's long-standing search for origins, scholars around the world have been drawn to a past shaped in so many ways by slavery, the slave trade, and the many contemporary legacies of this sad episode in the human experience.

Among the most influential pioneering studies published as the war was ending was Eric Williams's seminal work *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944), which outlined the principal themes that have dominated scholarly writing on slavery and abolition, and indeed Caribbean history in one form or another ever since. On the fortieth anniversary of this work's publication, an international conference was convened at the Rockefeller Study and Conference Center in Bellagio, Italy, to consider the debates and controversies spawned by the Williams tome. Stanley Engerman and Barbara Solow assembled the papers presented in Bellagio, grouping them into the topical areas that have been most intensely debated in the historiography on slavery. The editors' concise introduction to *British Capitalism and Caribbean Slavery: The Legacy of Eric Williams* summarizes the main arguments of each essay as well as the unpublished critical remarks made on them by scholars invited to participate in the conference as commentators.

Williams has been harshly criticized for his almost dogmatic economic determinism, especially his insistence that the development of the virulent racism central to Western culture followed, rather than preceded, the growth of the African slave trade. In Williams's view, slavery was strictly an economic response by various colonial powers in the Americas to labor shortages and available African supplies. Theories of racial inferiority emerged subsequently to rationalize philosophically the growth of an institution that was inherently an economic reaction to New World labor conditions and European demands for tropical staples.

William Green convincingly attacks these ideas in the first essay in the Solow and Engerman collection by examining the growth of slavery and racism in Barbados and Virginia, the colonies that served as the models for *Capitalism and Slavery*. Williams's arguments are placed within the broader political context of the 1940s: the quest for political independence in the British Caribbean and the desire to undermine the ideological foundations of imperial legitimacy, which revolved partially around a twentieth-century version of the "white man's burden."

Green's conclusions challenge nearly every aspect of the Williams

thesis on the origins of racism and its link to slavery. Green demonstrates that racist convictions on the part of colonists, African slavery, and legal codes developed to regulate the institution were all well-established in both colonies long before European market demands stimulated the rapid growth of export economies and the mushrooming of slave populations.

One of the main purposes of *Capitalism and Slavery* was to place African slavery and the slave trade at the virtual center of modern European economic history. According to Williams, the English industrial revolution was closely connected to the dramatic rise in world trade and the process of capital accumulation made possible by the West Indian slave and sugar economies. This conclusion is generally sustained by essays by Barbara Solow, Joseph Inikori, and David Richardson. Solow surveys the entire history of sugar and slavery from the early period of Italian colonization in the Mediterranean to the Caribbean and Brazilian projects of the various European powers. She underlines the veracity of Williams's contentions by stressing the salutary impact of the slave-sugar complex on investment opportunities, trading patterns, and the process of capital accumulation.

Inikori supports the Williams thesis on European industrial development more specifically by focusing on the impact of foreign commerce on the English economy. He frames patterns of external trade as the critical variables determining growth patterns over the long haul. During the seventeenth century, the re-export trade stimulated mercantile, not industrial, investment, but limitations existed on the process of economic expansion that could have taken place on these foundations. For Inikori, the opening of the Atlantic economies was the key to industrial growth, and these economies revolved around the slave trade and slave labor to produce a variety of tropical or semitropical staples.

Richardson considers the impact of the West Indian slave and sugar complex on the British economy in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. He emphasizes the growth of the English domestic market for sugar, which was linked to rising per capita income as well as to the growing per capita consumption of sugar. In this way, Richardson takes issue with Williams's notion that external variables were primarily responsible for stimulating British industrial development. The growing English affection for sugar was shaped by internal economic, social, and cultural factors having little connection to West Indian slavery or the slave trade. Richardson does not deny the critical importance of the trans-Atlantic slave-sugar complex in promoting English industries and indeed emphasizes the fact that the West Indian colonies consumed approximately half of all British domestically produced exports in the period considered. He seeks, however, to revise the Williams thesis by presenting a more balanced account of internal and external factors responsible for industrial expansion.

Perhaps no aspect of *Capitalism and Slavery* has been more vociferously debated than Williams's contention that abolitionism, the banning of the slave trade, and final emancipation were linked almost exclusively to the collapsing economic viability of slavery and the rise of industrial capitalism in Great Britain. The most influential and articulate challenger of these notions has been Seymour Drescher, whose *Econocide: British Slavery in the Era of Abolition* (1977) argued that the British West Indian colonies continued to expand economically until the eve of final abolition in the early 1830s. For Drescher, British abolitionism held little economic rationality and therefore Williams's postulations on the supposed economic contradictions between the metropolitan growth of capitalist relations of production and colonial slavery should be dismissed.

Selwyn Carrington replies to Drescher's assertions and defends Williams's ideas on the economic causes of abolitionism and emancipation by assessing the impact of the American Revolution on the economies of the British West Indian colonies. Carrington sustains Williams's conclusion that U.S. independence seriously disrupted an interdependent economic system revolving around the triangular trans-Atlantic trade. In Carrington's view, this disruption undermined the British sugar colonies in the period between 1775 and 1791. If so, Drescher is wrong on the chronology of decline, an important variable in the Williams formula. Abolitionism coincided with the unraveling of the colonial slave-sugar economies, which occurred much earlier than Drescher maintains. It should be noted, however, that Solow and Engerman's introduction challenges Carrington's concept of timing and places the onset of decline after the War of 1812.

Richard Dunn examines the evolution of a slave labor force on a specific sugar plantation in southwestern Jamaica, the Mesopotamia estate, for which continuous primary-source time-series information is available between 1751 and 1831. Demographic and occupational data are presented that specialists on Caribbean slavery will find to be of exceptional quality. One interesting finding was that slaves on Mesopotamia worked at their jobs for an average of more than nineteen years, a key piece of information needed to calculate the economic profitability of sugar production based on slave labor. Dunn examined account books indicating that for Mesopotamia, at least, slavery was extremely profitable between 1782 and 1816 and began to decline only thereafter. Thus for this micro example, which may be indicative of general patterns, Williams and Carrington are wrong about the chronology of economic decline and Drescher's arguments are sustained.

Drescher's essay in the Solow and Engerman volume considers the dynamics of the abolitionist mass-petition movement in the Manchester region of England. His broader purpose is to dispute both the economic and the ideological motivations of British abolitionism. For Drescher,

abolitionism resulted from neither economic decline nor the rise of capitalist ideology but was instead part of a national-level social movement closely tied to the developing industrial revolution. This movement was spearheaded by a cross section of the Manchester social order that included skilled labor, artisans, and capitalist entrepreneurs.

David Brion Davis's essay is less a discussion of Williams's work than a defense of the ideological explanations of abolitionism that Drescher takes to task. For Davis, the broader significance of abolitionism, regardless of contradictory motives and functions, was the advancement of the ideological hegemony of capitalist values, which were accepted by a broad cross section of Western societies.

Howard Temperley's rambling piece covers some aspects of the reaction to Williams's notions on abolition discussed in the previous essays without adding anything new to the debates. Finally, Michael Craton discusses the linkage between slave rebellions and resistance and the English abolitionist movement, a topic only briefly touched upon by Williams. *British Capitalism and Caribbean Slavery* ends with three comparative and historiographical essays by Gavin Wright, Hilary Beckles, and Richard Sheridan.

Much space has been devoted to summarizing the essays presented in *British Capitalism and Caribbean Slavery* because they encapsulate the work of some of the main scholars who have examined the impact of British West Indian slavery and abolition in well-known monographs. The title of the volume is somewhat misleading, however, because although the Caribbean is conceived of in a particular way from the vantage point of London or Kingston, the term itself as well as the topics of slavery and abolition have different meanings in Havana or San Juan. Emancipation in the British colonies preceded slavery's most important epoch in Cuba, where the importation of slaves peaked in the late 1850s.

Kenneth Kiple's *The Caribbean Slave: A Biological History* examines the Caribbean from a broader spatial perspective. This monograph is the second of three studies by Kiple treating the fascinating subject of African-American biological history, and it is almost indispensable as a point of departure for understanding the most elementary aspects of slavery and the slave trade to the New World. Kiple's study also revises revisionist interpretations of slavery by suggesting that West Africans were indeed more suited for Caribbean labor, not due to racial characteristics but because of the history of disease and immunology in Europe, West Africa, and the Caribbean.

Of the three major sections, the first concentrates on the long-term biological impact of West Africa's resource-poor environment and the effects of almost chronic malnutrition on those destined to become slaves in the Americas. Kiple treads on controversial and delicate ground with much skill, for what emerges is a portrait of a people assaulted over the

millennia by such a wide array of diseases and nutritional deficiencies that they collectively developed biological characteristics altogether different from Europeans. These traits made Africans more resistant to the difficulties of survival in the tropics, and the disease history of West Africans, far from being a myth, produced a biological ability to withstand labor more effectively in the Caribbean than Europeans could. West Africans were thus better equipped to survive the rigors of plantation labor because of long-term immunological responses to European diseases, which destroyed Caribbean indigenous cultures. West Africans were also more resistant to the infirmities that ravaged whites in Africa and the New World, principally malaria and yellow fever.

Slaves reaching the Caribbean represented an immunological elite, for they were the offspring of generations of forebears who had weathered a daunting array of nutritional deficiencies and endemic West African diseases. These illnesses are considered in technical, but very readable, prose. Kiple also covers related topics: how the biological makeup of Africans responded to diets that were poor in vitamins, minerals, and protein; why slaves in the West Indies could ward off certain diseases but not others; and the reasons for the widespread appearance of other specific contemporary diseases among those of African descent. For example, the development of sickle-shaped blood cells in West Africa, an immunological response to malaria, explains African ability to withstand malaria as well as the subsequent pervasive evolution of sickle-cell anemia within African-American populations. Another interesting example concerns the long-term impact of the salt-poor West African environment, which led to the development of biological mechanisms for retaining salt in the body. This outcome explains the comparatively high rates of hypertension among African-Americans today, given the direct link between this condition and sodium retention.

The connected themes of nutrition, disease, and demographic trends among West Indian slave populations are examined in the second part of *The Caribbean Slave*. Kiple argues that the fundamental nutritional and disease environment of West Africa was virtually duplicated in the Caribbean. The main theme running through this section is that nutritionally poor diets can be held accountable for disease susceptibility among blacks and for the failure of slaves to reproduce at normal rates in any of the major slaveholding colonies in the Caribbean.

According to Kiple, even during the voyage across the Atlantic (the middle passage), the critical variable determining survival was the nutritional background of slaves before they were herded onto slaving vessels. Dysentery, seasickness, and parasites—not infectious diseases—were the major killers during the trans-Atlantic crossing, and slaves with long-term diets that were nutritionally deficient readily succumbed to conditions that could have been adequately prevented by dietary improvements.

Using the evidence available, Kiple presents a detailed model of probable slave diets that takes into account provision-ground production as well as basic rations on plantations. As was the case in Africa, the Caribbean slave diet was high in carbohydrates but deficient in proteins and a number of essential vitamins and minerals, which led to a wide variety of diseases considered in the study. Kiple indicates that the failure of Caribbean slave populations to reproduce was not due to lower fertility rates than those of slaves in North America, where the slave populations' natural increase was dramatic. Fertility rates were nearly identical in both regions, but infant and child mortality in the Caribbean claimed nearly half of all live births before the age of five due to tetanus, infantile beriberi, and protein energy malnutrition.

The final section of *The Caribbean Slave* explores the horrendous toll taken by yellow fever and malaria on Caribbean white populations. A fact generally less emphasized in the historiography of the West Indies is that before the last half of the nineteenth century, the net natural decrease of white populations was greater than for blacks, almost entirely because of these two diseases. The political implications were far-reaching, evidenced by such little-known episodes of disease history as the loss of more than forty thousand casualties largely due to yellow fever among the French expeditionary force sent by Napoleon to recapture St. Domingue in 1802. Similarly, between 1793 and 1796, the British West Indian armies lost some eighty thousand men to tropical diseases.

Kiple's epilogue explores the impact of the elimination of yellow fever and malaria in the twentieth-century Caribbean. The victory over these diseases ironically opened up the region to more intensified white exploitation by making the environment more hospitable.

Although much of *The Caribbean Slave* is based on suppositions about West Indian slave diets that can never be substantiated for want of documentary source materials, Kiple's arguments are convincing and illuminating nonetheless. This book should be read by every scholar seeking to understand the fundamental dynamics of postconquest Caribbean history, regardless of topical interest.

The themes of slave rebellion and resistance are analyzed from different approaches in Robert Paquette's monograph on "La Escalera" in Cuba, John Gabriel Stedman's long and fascinating diary documenting the campaign against Surinam maroons in the late eighteenth century, and Torcuato Di Tella's brief synthesis of the Haitian slave rebellion.

In early 1844, Cuba's colonial government unleashed the full brunt of state power on the slave and free colored populations of the island's principal sugar-producing districts in the province of Matanzas. Certain that a slave conspiracy with separatist implications had been detected, a military commission was empowered to scour the province in search of evidence and conspirators. In the wave of terror that ensued, thousands

of Matanzas free blacks, mulattos, and slaves were interrogated, tortured, murdered, imprisoned, or exiled. The free colored population's intellectual elite was decimated by this repression, which took the life of Cuba's most distinguished nineteenth-century poet, the legendary Plácido. White foreigners, mostly U.S. and British machinists, were also systematically rounded up and jailed on suspicion of complicity in the conspiracy known as La Escalera.

Historians in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have debated the existence of an actual conspiracy, and some have interpreted the repression as a preemptive strike at both separatism and the continuous plotting by slaves themselves. Paquette's *Sugar Is Made with Blood* should end most of the debate. He convincingly demonstrates that a conspiracy was in the making, and one of dimensions that help explain the colonial elite's recurring nightmare of "otro Santo Domingo" (another slave revolt like that in Haiti) breaking out in Cuba.

This thorough and well-written work is based on extensive archival research, largely in the United States and Great Britain, and a complete perusal of every bit of secondary literature written on La Escalera from contemporary accounts to the most recent publications. It is divided into three major parts.

The first of three sections places the events of 1844 within the context of Cuba's nineteenth-century patterns of social and political development. Chapters summarize important aspects of class and caste structures, sugar and slavery, the white population's contradictory attitudes toward slave labor and the prospects of abolition, and the position of free blacks and mulattos in Cuban slave society. Specialists will recognize little that is new here because this section is based on well-known secondary sources. This material nevertheless provides a useful introduction to nineteenth-century Cuba for those unfamiliar with Cuban historiography.

A second section locates La Escalera within its international context, mainly the well-known and extensively researched British campaign to curb the African slave trade. The Cuban activities of British antislavery crusader David Turnbull and his secretary and chief spy, Francis Ross Cocking, are detailed as never before. The rise in Cuba of the annexationist movement (to the United States), which paralleled an intensification of the ever-present fear of Africanization that began in Cuba with the large-scale importation of slaves in the 1760s, is considered thoroughly.

The first two parts of *Sugar Is Made with Blood* thus situate La Escalera in the social and political context of colonial Cuba in the early 1840s. Part Three recounts in painstaking detail the repression and its aftermath by examining the major figures who left testimonies or were alluded to in the written record, published and documentary. No other accounts of this episode are as complete, and in all likelihood, this version will remain the authoritative account for some time.

Although the product of admirably thorough research, *Sugar Is Made with Blood* has several flaws, some of which are not the fault of Paquette, who was unfortunately denied access to Cuban archival collections. The first two parts (which constitute 205 of 266 total pages) do not deal with the conspiracy or the repression but instead provide background by summarizing material that has been extensively reported. To be fair, new insights from heretofore unexamined documentary sources are offered, but few of them could be used to reinterpret this period in Cuban history.

Second, Paquette fails to link La Escalera to the specific process of economic development experienced precisely in the districts where the repression was the most severe. Three multimillion-dollar (or British pound sterling) railway lines were being built and were opening virgin frontier areas to sugar cultivation, which meant investments of unparalleled dimensions for Cuba's colonial elite. La Escalera must be analyzed within this context, for the powerful merchant-planter families investing in economic growth were not about to allow huge capital commitments to be threatened by real or even imagined insurrectionary conspiracies, especially after the slave risings of the early 1840s, which Paquette discusses.

Third, the long-term impact of the repression is not sufficiently analyzed. From the colonial point of view, La Escalera was a brilliant state coup that decisively ended any effective slave resistance in the major zones of Cuban sugar production until the eve of final abolition. Almost every Matanzas *palenque* (maroon community) was destroyed, and notices of spontaneous or organized slave risings disappear from the historical record after 1844.

Although these deficiencies should be kept in mind, Paquette has succeeded in providing scholars with the most complete narrative account of the circumstances surrounding La Escalera. His book should certainly put to rest any notions that this situation was anything but a real insurrectionary conspiracy, one that threatened not only slavery but Spanish colonial control over Cuba.

John Stedman arrived in Surinam in early 1773 as one of eight hundred professional soldiers recruited by the Dutch to attempt to destroy maroon communities that had been engaged in almost constant warfare with European settlers since the colony was founded by the English in 1651. After the colony was ceded to the Netherlands in 1667, the Dutch built a lucrative sugar-plantation economy based on African slave labor, as they had done several decades earlier in northeast Brazil during the occupation of Pernambuco. By the time Stedman arrived, some fifty thousand slaves, most of them African-born, were supporting more than three thousand white settlers, who were living in ostentatious luxury. Surinam's sugar industry, according to the introduction by Richard and

Sally Price, produced significantly more revenue per capita than any other Caribbean plantation economy in the mid-eighteenth century.

Stedman spent a little over four years in Surinam, contrary to the title of his memoirs, and during this time he kept a meticulous diary of his extensive experiences there. On retiring to Devonshire, he wrote the long account reproduced by the Prices in *Narrative of a Five-Year Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam*. Stedman's narrative is already fairly well known to scholars of slavery in the Americas as it has been published in a number of languages in many editions since the first appeared in 1796. What, then, is the purpose of yet another version?

In the late 1970s, Stedman's personal copy of the original 1790 manuscript was discovered in the James Ford Bell Library at the University of Minnesota. On comparing the manuscript with different published versions, Sally and Richard Price found that all of the published versions had been distorted to varying degrees, including the initial 1796 publication. This new Johns Hopkins edition presents the original without alterations, accompanied by a lengthy explanatory introduction and a series of notes (totaling 149 pages).

The introduction places the narrative within the context of colonial Surinam's history of slave resistance and constant warfare between maroons and settlers. The major themes developed by Stedman are all clearly discussed, providing excellent preparation for reading the text. The introduction's prose, however, is often terribly dense, especially when detailing differences between versions of the narrative or dissecting the histories of the development of the various plates in overwhelming and often boring detail.

Reading Stedman's narrative requires much patience. Its more than six hundred pages offer a rambling but ultimately valuable chronicle of life in late-eighteenth-century Surinam in much the same way that Charles Darwin's various published versions of the *Beagle's* voyage provide glimpses of Brazil, the Argentine pampas, and other notable places during the early nineteenth century.

The most striking sections of Stedman's narrative consider many aspects of slave life and the extant social relations between masters and slaves in this Caribbean plantation society. In retrospect, Stedman regretted his participation in the extended campaign against the maroons, whom he came to view as rebels fighting for a just cause. An overwhelming sense of sadness permeates his manuscript as he recounts over and over again the multitude of mindless instances of cruelty and abuse perpetrated upon Surinam's slaves, many of which he witnessed at first hand. A severe indictment against plantation slavery gradually develops, motivated not only by the empirical observation of man's inhumanity in the age of the Enlightenment but also by an emotional response not inconsistent with the epoch. Stedman fell in love with a slave woman,

but he was never able to free her or bring her back to Europe to make her his honorable wife, as was his stated ambition. His frustrating and at times desperate relationship with Joanna is chronicled throughout the text.

Stedman's descriptive prose on late-eighteenth-century Surinam is invaluable. Flora and fauna were recorded in words as well as in many drawings later converted into the plates that are reproduced in this edition. The military campaigns against the maroons and frequent aimless wanderings through the bush provide the mundane details of a colonial soldier's existence in the late eighteenth century, stripped of glorified or romantic imagery. Stedman's descriptions, however, bring plantations to life, and convert Paramaribo into a living town. Surviving indigenous peoples are paraded before the reader, and the shockingly absurd medical practices of the era become one of the many themes running through Stedman's account.

Reproducing this manuscript was a daunting editorial task because of its length alone. Doubts immediately arise about whether so much energy could have been more productively devoted to other academic endeavors, particularly because the basic flavor of Stedman's chronicle comes through in the many previous editions of this work. But then again, it is valuable to have an accurate transcription of this masterful glimpse of life in the Caribbean during the late eighteenth century, and future scholars will no doubt be grateful for the Price edition.

An important precursor of the independence movement that swept through Spanish-speaking Latin America after 1810 was the Haitian Revolution, along with the revolt of the Colombian *comuneros* and the Tupac Amaru uprising in Peru during the early 1780s. Although the Haitian rebellion developed into a full-scale slave uprising, it was fomented by the nonslave classes and castes of colonial Saint-Domingue, who ultimately lost control of the process they initiated.

La rebelión de esclavos de Haití, a short synthesis by distinguished Argentine sociologist Torcuato Di Tella, is actually misnamed. Rather than treating the slave rebellion component of the Haitian revolutionary process, the book provides a complete and well-written background to the slave revolt that is based entirely on secondary sources. The account concentrates on the social and political conflicts and tensions within a multiracial slave society that were set in motion by the French Revolution and how these ripples evolved and changed as revolutionary France grappled with its colonial question.

Di Tella attempts to provide a theoretical framework for his study by placing the Haitian revolutionary process within the context of a "populismo americano" whose principal characteristic was the political leadership of white rural sectors marginalized from the dominant colonial elite. This outlook is contrasted with the populism of the Old Regime in

which elites manipulated masses with the usual demagoguery and misleading myths and symbols.

Although Di Tella compares this brand of populism with the federalist caudillos of Mexico and South America and even with anti-Federalists in the United States, his real inspiration is closer to home. Peronism has pervaded all aspects of Argentine society, and at times the nation's intellectual elite tends to stretch its analytical importance beyond the historical context that gave rise to Peronista populism in the mid-twentieth century.

Di Tella, fortunately, does not dwell on this effort at a theoretical construct in explaining the failure of colonial elite groups to control the move toward Haitian independence. His brief book skillfully delineates the class, caste, racial, and regional structures of prerevolutionary Haitian society and how each colonial sector reacted to the ongoing political changes wrought by the French Revolution. Excellent sections describe the social positions, economic interests, political attitudes, and shifting political configurations among absentee and resident planters and merchants, *petit blancs*, the mulatto population, and the colony's slaves. Central to the discussion are changing conflicts, contradictions, and political alliances between clearly defined groups, and although the slave uprising itself receives little attention, the impending explosion underlies each chapter.

As an introduction to the Haitian revolutionary process for Spanish-speaking students, *La rebelión de esclavos de Haiti* makes a good point of departure. Few works in English are as concise, clear, and informative for those with little knowledge of the revolution that inspired slaves throughout the Caribbean during the nineteenth century.

Edward Reynolds's slim *Stand the Storm: A History of the Atlantic Slave Trade* was written to synthesize existing literature on a theme that has been central to the historiography of the Atlantic world for well over three decades. Most of the major themes that have concerned scholars studying various aspects of slavery and the slave trade are mentioned only in passing. Given the vast chronology and spatial breadth of the topic and its critical importance to modern world history, one wonders why Reynolds would even dare attempt to summarize such complexities in so little space. The result is that every topical area is listed but hardly discussed. Short segments focus on numerous subjects: slavery within Africa before the advent of Portuguese-led slaving in the mid-fifteenth century; aspects of the trade on the African coast; the middle passage; market conditions and their variations through time; abolition; and the impact of the slave trade within African societies and on the Atlantic nations that became centers of slaving or slavery.

Stand the Storm was not written to add anything new to the maturing scholarship in the field of slave studies, and it most emphatically does not. It might possibly serve as a text for undergraduates with no prior

notions of slavery or the trade in slaves that shaped so much of the world's economy from the mid-fifteenth through the late nineteenth centuries, although I would recommend half a dozen works before it.

The final work under review here, Roger Plant's *Sugar and Modern Slavery: A Tale of Two Countries*, deals with the legacies of slavery in contemporary Hispaniola. Emerging from the ashes of the only successful slave revolt in the Western Hemisphere, the people of Haiti have endured seemingly endless cycles of poverty and oppression at the hands of merciless dictators in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although the nightmare of "otro Santo Domingo" haunted planters and colonial elites throughout the Caribbean long after the Republic of Haiti was established in 1804, the destruction of its once-thriving sugar and coffee economy removed Haiti from any significant geopolitical importance for the advanced industrial nations of the North Atlantic world. Crusading British abolitionists in the nineteenth century, who so effectively helped curb the Cuban and Puerto Rican slave trades by the 1860s, rarely took notice of the oppressive conditions of former slaves and their descendants in independent Haiti, despite British occupation during the slave rebellion.

Nor has the United States demonstrated any concern for the desperate plight of one of the poorest countries of the world since imperial domination over the Caribbean shifted at the turn of the twentieth century, other than the U.S. quest for stability through officially supporting a series of hopelessly corrupt military dictators. Now and again, Haiti has received notice, most graphically when U.S. armed forces occupied the nation between 1915 and 1934. During the 1980s, when the Reagan administration's political and economic initiatives resulted in a dramatic rise in Caribbean poverty, the overthrow of Jean Claude Duvalier and the appearance of Haitian "boat people" on the shores of Florida also captured Washington's attention momentarily. But by and large, Haiti is ignored, and any knowledge of the country in U.S. government or even academic circles is marginal at best.

Plant's well-written *Sugar and Modern Slavery* is an instructive introduction to contemporary Haiti and the historical background that forced migration or aspiration to it on a significant portion of the Haitian population throughout the twentieth century. The fieldwork for this book, which was commissioned by the Anti-Slavery Society, consisted of two visits by Plant to Haiti and the Dominican Republic in 1982 and 1986. The purpose of these trips was to investigate the conditions of Haitian migrant workers laboring in the Dominican Republic's sugar industry.

Since the late nineteenth century, Haitian migrant labor has played a critical role in developing sugar production in neighboring Santo Domingo. Land availability and the reluctance of a fiercely independent Dominican peasantry to submit to the regimented and oppressive conditions prevailing in the growing sugar sector meant that successful sugar

production rested on importing labor. This situation was strikingly analogous to the one that spawned the beginnings of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the sixteenth century. Throughout the twentieth century, Haitian migrant workers in the Dominican Republic have been subjected to absolute domination that has scarcely differed from the slave system prevailing in other Caribbean "sugar isles" since the early colonial period.

Plant meticulously documents these conditions, indicating that Haitian migrants were virtually enslaved within Dominican sugar estates, most of which were owned by foreign capital in the early twentieth century and again after the assassination of Trujillo in 1961. The informal enslavement of Haitian migrants became a reality in the Dominican Republic, and an organized and formal modern "slave trade" existed that was sanctioned by governmental authorities in both nations. Haitian cane cutters were recruited throughout the twentieth century with the usual compliance of authorities on both sides of the border through bribes, kickbacks, or threats of violence. But the trade in modern Haitian slaves was so lucrative that a formal contract was signed in 1952 between governments authorizing the actual purchase of Haitian workers by the Trujillo regime. Trujillo himself became the principal owner of almost all the nation's sugar *ingenios* by the early 1950s.

The 1952 "Acuerdo" offered formal labor contracts to Haitian migrants, but they were ineffectual in curbing the day-to-day realities of slavery and can be compared with the contracts offered to Chinese laborers who came to Cuba from 1847 to 1873. This officially sanctioned slave trade, periodically renegotiated via new agreements between the two governments, lasted until 1986 and has been virtually ignored by the entire world. The irony of this dreadful situation is that the Haitians who had the misfortune of falling into modern slavery are the descendants of slaves who successfully rebelled to obtain their freedom nearly two centuries ago.

The most striking sections of *Sugar and Modern Slavery* are the accounts of the slavelike conditions of Haitians within the Dominican Republic, which are based on Plant's first-hand observations. But the work's careful consideration of the political, economic, and social history of sugar production in each country is sweeping yet sensitive to shifts in productive methods, ownership structures, and relations to world-market conditions for sugar. Plant also discusses internal political shifts within the Dominican Republic and their relation to the Haitian migrant question, along with the attitudes of organized labor and other sectors of twentieth-century Dominican society. The large Haitian population in Santo Domingo is analyzed by its different components rather than according to broad generalizations. *Sugar and Modern Slavery* is coherently written, well organized, and provides an excellent introduction to the horrid problems of contemporary Haiti for the unacquainted as well as a

succinct summary for those with some familiarity with the themes of this book.

Recently, a colleague I had not spoken with for some time asked what I had been up to of late. I replied that I was working on economic aspects of slavery and abolition in the Hispanic Caribbean. Her reaction startled me, for she declared that it was her understanding that slavery was out of vogue among historians.

This hardly seems the case. Some of the most fundamental analytical aspects of how slavery and abolition affected the Atlantic economies have only been touched on by the most recent research. The cultural, political, and social experiences of slave populations remain mysterious for most slaveholding countries. Moreover, the multifaceted experiences of former slaves after emancipation are almost completely enigmatic. Many of the questions posed in 1944 by Eric Williams in *Capitalism and Slavery* are still very much an organic part of contemporary debates on slavery and the slave trade. In sum, the books reviewed here focus on themes that merit careful consideration and rigorous future research.