Metropolitan Movements Towards Emancipation

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Theme 4: Metropolitan Movements Towards Emancipation

1. The Emancipation Revolts
2. Slavery Challenged
3. The British Anti-Slavery Movement
4. Abolition of Slave Trade
5. Emancipation
6. Apprenticeship
The Emancipation Revolts

Enslaved domestics would hear talk in the enslavers’ homes about the news from Haiti, about the French Revolution, about the English people who were pressing for an end to the slave trade.

Those who went to the market brought back news and gossip to everyone. A small number could read; they were taught by non-conformist (did not conform to the beliefs of the Church of England) missionaries.

Enslaved people saw soldiers leaving to go and fight against the revolutionaries in Haiti. Enslaved people sensed that it was time for their emancipation.

Barbados: Bussa Rallies the enslaved, 1816

In 1815, the British government wrote to all assemblies in the Caribbean colonies asking them to pass a Registration Act. The names of the enslaved people in the colony were to be put on a register.

The aim was to end the importation of slaves. The Planter class and their supporters were outraged. In Barbados the assembly refused to pass a registration law. The news spread across the colony. At Bayley’s plantation in the parish of St. Phillip, Bussa (who was a head ranger—knew how to read) was leading a meeting of slaves to discuss issues.

On Easter Sunday 1816, Bayley’s plantation became a rallying point for a movement that spread from a plantation to another. Martial law was declared and troops and regulars marched to the parishes. Many enslaved did not resist. The Planters showed no such humanity, several Africans caught off their plantations were murdered.

Several months later, the assembly set up a select committee (mostly planters) to investigate the cause of the revolt. They placed the blame on Washington Franklin because he read reports of anti-slavery movements in England and led the enslaved to believe that the planters and the assembly were holding their freedom. They ignored the part played by Bussa (who was killed during the fight).
Demerara, 1823

The 1807 end to the slave trade left the plants with a short of labor. They feared losing more labour through runaways. They wanted quick profits and return home. They overworked their enslaved population.

In 1823, a second rumour about protection spread around the plantations. This time it was that the king had sent a free paper ending slavery but the governor would not issue it. A revolt quickly broke out and within days 13,000 enslaved joined. In negotiations, enslaved asked for lands and refused to go back to the plantations. Enslaved were mown down with musket fire. More than 100 Africans were killed. After that, the troops marched up and down the coast holding court-martials and then shooting rebel leaders.

Jamaica 1831 and Samuel Sharpe

1831 free colored were given the same rights as the Europeans. The enslaved Samuel Sharpe had already become a deacon at the Reverend Thomas Burchell’s Baptist Church in Montego Bay. He was a respected figure among fellow Africans. He read and was aware of English politics.

Christmas day and Boxing Day were holidays and sharp planned a strike the day after. Their followers argued that they would refuse to work if they were not paid wages. The plans were a well-kept secret.

The strike began quietly in St. James when the enslaved refused to work. The first violence started when the great house and sugar works at Kensington in St. James were burned.

THE BAPTIST WAR:

the militia sent out from Montego Bay were driven back and the revolt spread to Trelawney parish. Disturbances broke out in St. Elizabeth, Manchester, St. Thomas and Portland. The uprisings were quickly calmed but areas in the north-west remained in turmoil. An additional detachment was sent from Kingston, over 400 rebels were killed and Sharpe was executed with about 100 followers.

Effects of the emancipation revolts:

The enslaved were forcing the pace of the movement towards the end of enslavement in the sugar colonies and the rest of the British empire. The enslaved undoubtedly lost with tragic and cruel losses of life.

The revolts played a vital role in bringing emancipation forward. The planters and the assemblies they controlled made the great mistake of putting the blame on the campaign in England to end slavery and on a number of British Christian missionaries in the Caribbean.
Slavery Challenged

Attitudes towards slavery: pre 18th century
It was considered just to enslaved a man who had taken up arms against you, and a person who had committed an offense he had to pay for by loss of freedom, giving his labor in compensation.

Africans were acquired in three ways: in war, as punishment for crimes, and by purchase. Europeans entering the West African slave trade regarded the first method as just if it really was in war.

Some Catholics argued that slavery although wrong and contrary to the natural rights of man was a necessary evil. Some believed that it was better for an African to be a Christian slave than a free pagan. Other argued that the Africans lives were being saved by being brought to the West indies. The unpleasant racial attitude that Africans were a degraded race and so deserved their slavery was widespread in Britain and France, but not so common in Spain. Those who supported slavery cited the old Testaments, and the passage about the curse on Ham and his descendants and their blackness giving them inferiority and making them slaves forever. On the other hand, the ideas of Christian brotherhood made Christians condemn slavery. Planters took the ideas of obedience from the bible to their advantage as well.

Perspectives on Slavery 18 century
Some planters argued against slavery but when their way of life was threatened, the planters closed their ranks and defended slavery. In France anti-slavery movements were secular based on man’s reason. It culminated in the Declaration of the Rights of Man in August 1789. In Britain, anti-slavery movements were founded on the evangelical movement. The economic decline led some people to question slavery: If free crown sugar from the East could complete favorably, perhaps was wrong for economic as well as moral reasons. Many industrialists felt that if the slave economies changed to wage economies, the workers would have money to buy British goods.

Much controversy was aroused by the attitude that blacks were slaves because they were inferior to whites. The supporters of this view held that blacks were inferior because they had achieved little in thought. Thomas Jefferson in the USA promoted the back to Africa movement because he believed that blacks were inferior but had to talk against slavery. Others denied that blacks were inferior, and argued that they had not reached eminence in arts, sciences and ideas because they had not had the opportunity.

Slavery was economically unsound. The defenders of slavery and the slave trade argued that the economies of the West Indies would collapse without slaves. They should that the initial costs of buying the slaves were high, but thereafter, because there were no wages, the costs were low. Their opponents held that costs of slave labour were always high because mortality was high and replacement expensive. French thinkers: the strongest condemnation of slavery came from the philosopher Jean-Rousseau, who held that a man was born free and according to natural law could never be enslaved. In Britain: John Wesley (founder of the Methodist) 1774; said that no human law can deprive humans from liberty. West Indian planters argued for slavery: Edward Long and Bryan Edwards were historians who tried to convince the outside world that the blacks deserved to be slaves. They pictured blacks as dishonest, immoral, lazy, cowardly, lustful, cruel, superstitious, in fact possessing every vice imaginable.

Planters said that: if slavery was morally wrong, it was not just wrong at the end of the 18th century, but had always been wrong. Yet it had been approved by governments in the past, and through all changes of political parties. They pointed to the British’s right to property which it was the duty of the government to uphold. They attacked the British government for the transportation of criminals to Australia; for the conditions for sailors in the British navy; for prison conditions; even for the standard of living of workers in English industrial towns. At first the French revolution was enthusiastically received by abolitionist because it proclaimed liberty and equality, but when it turned to violence and bloodshed many changed their minds or at least withdrew their support temporarily from abolition.
Arguments for slavery:
Slavery was supported by scriptures
Blacks were unprepared for freedom.
Men were not born free and equal because blacks were from a degraded race.
In a capitalist society, blacks would be poor and this would lead to a revolution.
Slave-owners valued their slaves highly and wanted to look after them well.
The temperament of blacks enabled them to adjust to their life of drudgery and menial work and be happy in it.

Economic arguments
Sugar cotton and other tropical crops had to be grown on plantations which were worked with slave labor.
Slavery provided the basis for a superior culture. There had to be a class of slaves to perform the menial duties so that the white could confine itself to government and culture.
Slavery already existed in Africa, so Europeans were not introducing a new evil.
Slavery might be wrong but, it gave the opportunity for conversion to Christianity.
Slavery could be adapted to a plantation and a manufacturing economy.
Slavery could lead to diversification in agriculture.
Slavery did not necessarily lead to soil exhaustion

Preservation of white society:
If the slaves were freed, the whites would become a minority.
Successful planters could make huge profits to become leaders economically, politically, socially, and culturally.
Slavery was the means by which small planters could rise to emulate big planters.
Poor whites used their color to keep the little status they had.

Arguments Against slavery:
It was contrary to reason, justice, nature, the principles of law and government and the doctrine of natural religion.
It was morally wrong for Christians to be involved in slavery.
If people followed the principle of “do unto to others as you would want them to do unto you,” they would condemn slavery.
It was a denial of civilization.
Freedom is the true, natural state of man. Only with freedom can man achieve true greatness.
With freedom blacks would be poor but the horrors of slavery far outweighed the horrors of poverty.
It made the whites lazy and ignorant.
It provoked economic instability and stalled technological improvements.
Monoculture was dangerous to the economy.
It stopped the development of the manufacturing economy.
Slavery limited the size of markets and flow of goods and circulation of money.
Slavery led to the exodus of white yeomanry from the community.
The profits of plantation owners were not reinvested in the local economy but spent abroad.
The slave system was inefficient, wasteful and unproductive. There was always the issue of a high rate of mortality, careless damage, the maintenance of very young and old slaves an ever-rising replacement costs.
Slavery made slaves a reluctant labor forces.
Slavery brought fear and insecurity.
Life in a slave society was unpleasant and uncomfortable for whites.
Some whites had a guilty conscience.
A slave society was socially restrictive.
The British anti-slavery movement

Sugar's place in the first British empire:
Sugar was the single most profitable product from the British empire.
Sugar and the enslavement trade paid for the busy docks in Liverpool, Bristol and Glassglow and the fine merchants' houses in these towns. Profits were used to finance the new industries such as iron, steam power, etc.

Absentee planters: the men who owned several plantations in the Caribbean but left their estates in the hands of attorneys.
In the 18th century, members of parliament bought their seats by bribing the men who had the right to elect a minister of parliament.
Absentee planters made up the most important part of what the British called the West India interest.
They were the pressure group for laws/custom arrangements that helped their profits even if they did not benefit other Britons (such as the Sugar Duties Act- SDA). This (SDA) gave the Royal Navy power to block French Caribbean planters from buying cheap supplies of food, timber, metal goods from the British colonies in north America. The aim was to make French sugar more expensive than the British sugar.

The Quaker movement
Granville Sharp was considered to be the father of the anti-slavery movement.
Quakers was the name given by outsiders to a religious group called the Society of friends founded by George Fox in 1648. They acted as a pressure group for abolition.
Their strategy was to win over public opinion by carrying the arguments for abolition into every home in Britain through pamphlets, the press and the pulpit every Sunday.
In the second half of the 18th century, abolition became a religious crusade for the Quakers.
George Fox instructed them to welcome their enslaved workers to religious services, to treat them kindly and to free them after a number of years of faithful service.
The Quakers in Barbados had to be more cautious because they were few in numbers. Their meeting houses were often torn down by angry neighbors. Magistrates jailed and fiend them for their beliefs, which forbade them to take oaths or join the militia. Given the opposition the Quakers gave up their open position regarding slavery.

The Clapham Sect, of the Saints
The Church of England was the established church in Britain and her colonies.
In the 18th century, the members wanted less emphasis on salvation through the sacraments and more on salvation through good works, and morality.
The Clapham sect or the saints because they worshipped at the church of the Reverend John Venn in Clapham in south London between 1792 and 1813. Among them were William Wilberforce, Granville Sharp, Thomas Clarkson, James Ramsey, James Stephen, and Zachary Macaulay all famous names in abolition.
However, the saints were mainly concerned with the abolition of the slave trade.

Industrialists:
The new industrialists were producing textiles, pottery, iron, and steel goods more cheaply in greater quantities. They were interested in getting cheap raw materials, and they turned from British West Indian sugar to other sources which were cheaper. The flood of cheap manufactured good they produced needed wider markets and, although the slave populated-islands of the West Indies did not provide a good market, the industrialists thought that after abolition they would do so.
British industrialists and merchants could sell more goods and make more money, a purely self-interested motive.
The campaign for the abolition of the slave trade

Outside parliament: the general public in Britain was indifferent to slavery, and the first task of the abolitionist was to win them over to support for the abolition of the slave trade.

In 1765 a Barbadian slave, Joseph Strong, had been abandoned in England as being unfit to work. Granville Sharpe's brother, a doctor, helped Strong to recover, whereupon his master David Lisle, claimed back his property and sold him to a Jamaican who put him on board ship for Jamaica. Granville saved the slave and secured his release. Sharp wanted to establish that slavery was illegal in England and set these slaves free. His victory came with the case of James Somerset, a Jamaican ill-treated slave who had been abandoned. When his master claimed him back, Sharp took the master to court and the judge Lord Mansfield's judgement showed that slavery was illegal in England.

This led Sharp to start his scheme for resettling Africans in Africa and the colony of Sierra Leone was funded in 1787.

Later the abolitionists realized that emancipation was too big a step to expect and they settled for the abolition of the slave trade instead.

The Campaign in Parliament

The main task of the 'Society for Effecting the abolition of the slave trade (1787) was to bring the abolition of slavery: members of parliament who could introduce the abolition issue into debates in the House of Commons were crucial; the most famous of these was William Wilberforce.

Wilberforce entered the House of Commons as member for Hull in 1780 at the age of 21. Early in his career, he was converted to evangelical Christianity and joined the Claphan Sect. In 1787 he was approached by Thomas Clarkson to take up the cause of abolition, and he held Abolitionist society meetings at his home in London. Clarkson furnished Wilberforce with evidence against the slave trade and Wilberforce canvassed other members of parliament to support abolition.

The first motion against the slave trade came before the House of Commons in 1776, and was easily defeated.

In 1787 and 1788 a total of 100 petitions against the slave trade reached parliament and an impartial report by the trade committee of the Privy council 'on the present state of the African trade was published, which helped the cause by providing valuable evidence. Thomas provided more evidence in a pamphlet.

On 9th May 1788 William Pitt (who became the prime minister later) introduced a resolution against the slave trade in the House of Commons. Charles Fox and Edmond Burke also argued in favor of abolition.

While a resolution to consider the slave trade was considered a law was passed to limit the number of slaves carried according to the size of the ship. On May 12th 1789, Wilberforce condemned the slave trade in a masterly three-hour speech, but the resolution was defeated. On April 1791 he introduced a bill abolishing the slave trade and it was easily defeated.

In 1792 about 500 petitions poured into parliament and the abolitionists had partial success when the House of Commons passed a resolution, that the slave trade ought to be gradually abolished.

In 1792 the abolitionist campaign suffered two checks. The first was caused by the French revolution, followed by the revolutionary wars. Pitt and the government devoted all their energies to the war with France and forgot the issue with abolition. The disillusionment with reform and abolition lasted until the horrors of the French revolution had been forgotten.

The West India Interest (rich absentee planters)

The West India interest was a growing force in British politics (members of parliament).

Later in the century they could count on 50 votes and with influence over other members, they made up
The Abolition of the slave trade

When the abolitionists' parliamentary campaign began again after 1802, they were strengthened by three new members from the Clapham Sect; James Stephen, Zachary Macaulay, and Henry Broughan.

Pitt (the prime minister and abolitionist) was handicapped because some of the ministers in his government fought against slavery.

In 1804 Wilberforce introduced a bill for the abolition of the slave trade in House of Commons (equivalent to the senate in Belize), this time it was defeated in the House of lords (equivalent to the house of representatives in Belize).

A new Abolition Act was passed by the commons in 1806, and by the house of Lords in 1807, with substantial majorities in both houses.

The act received its Royal Assent on March 25th 1807.

Difficulties in enforcing abolition:
The act of 1807 declared all trading in African slaves from January 1st 1808 to be utterly abolished, prohibited and declared to be unlawful. If traders were caught, the punishments were not severe, only a fine of €100 for every slave.

In Sierra Leone the British West Africa Squadron was based at Freetown to patrol the Gulf of Guinea.

In the Caribbean, an international court known as the mixed commission was set up at Havana to decide the legality of the captures made by the British naval ships and to arrange for the disposal of freed slaves. Up to 1834 they were taken back to Sierra Leone but after Emancipation they were sent to Jamaica or Barbados.

In 1811, the British government passed another Act laying down stiffer penalties for captains caught slave trading. Transportation was the cost for the first offence and hanging for the second offence.

Another loophole allowed slave-owners moving from one colony to another take with them two domestic slaves, in this way slaves were moved, to Trinidad and Guiana, where they were sold for high prices. The government made moves to eradicate this practice.

The British empire but, as Britain was the major slave trader, it caused the Atlantic slaves trade to decline.

The British government could only use diplomacy and persuasion to make other countries give up trade. At the congress of Vienna in 1814-1815, all countries attending agreed to a British motion to stop the slave trade, but they did little to carry it out.

The British government then introduced the idea of reciprocal search treaties, whereby the British navy had the right to search foreign ships, and foreign naval ship had the same authority on British ships.

Some still did not practice the reciprocal searches; thus the slave trade continued until the abolition of slavery in the USA, Puerto Rico and Cuba.
Better Days for the free coloreds:
As the price of sugar fell, the colored’s with money had no wish to go into sugar even if they had been allowed to. They owned pimento and coffee estates, and estates growing other crops which required less capital and labor than sugar. Moreover, the restrictions in the amount of land they could hold, had made them turn their attention to other ways of making money such as inn-keeping, shop-keeping, and owning and hiring out skilled slaves.
After the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, restrictions on landowning were lifted and the Coloreds were able to put their money into land that the whites were giving up.
In 1830, all legal discrimination on the grounds of color was abolished in Jamaica; and in 1831 in Barbados, Dominica and Tobago.

The Emancipation of Slaves
Amelioration (improvement of the abolition act—leading up to emancipation):
After the slave trade had ended many of the Clapham Sect left the abolition movement because they did not support the move towards emancipation.
In the British West Indies there was a distinction between the new/crown colonies- Trinidad, St. Lucia, and Guiana. AND the Legislative islands, Barbados, Jamaica and the Leeward islands- which were almost self-governing.
The crown could pass slave amelioration for the crown colonies but only local legislatures could pass measures in the other islands.
The registration of slaves/registry bill, which was intended to stop excessive punishments and illegal slave sales, was passed in Trinidad in 1812 and in St. Lucia in 1814.
In 1815 Wilberforce introduced a bill for the compulsory registration of slaves in all colonies but it was me by protests from the colonial legislatures that the British government had no right to interfere with their slave laws.
In 1823 the Society for the Gradual Abolition of slavery was formed, aimed at making amelioration part of government policy.
Thomas Buxton took over as chief parliamentary spokesman for Abolition. In 1823 Buxton introduced his famous resolution in the house: “that the state of slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British Constitution and of the Christian religion and that it ought to be gradually abolished throughout the British colonies.

The West India interest:
Formed a committee of 15 to plan their campaign against the emancipation.
The West India interest put their own amelioration proposals before the Secretary of State, lord Bathurst, who accepted them. Buxton agreed to withdraw his resolution.
The foreign secretary out forward an amelioration bill based on the West India Committee’s proposals.
The suggestions for reform were largely ignored in Trinidad, St. Lucia and Demerara.

A circular letter was sent to the legislature islands urging them to adopt and effect positive measures for Amelioration, measures suggested:
No flogging of women
A day should be allowed to elapse between the offence and the flogging. Records of all floggings over 3 lashes should be recorded and presented to magistrates. Slave families should not be divided. Slaves should not be sold in payment of debts. Adequate religious instruction should be given to slaves. Slaves should be allowed to give evidence in court if a minister would vouch for the slave’s character. Saving banks for slaves should be set up to encourage thrift and enable purchases.

**The failure of amelioration**

The legislatures of Jamaica, Barbados, Dominica and St. Vincent ignored the suggested measures. The reaction of West Indian planters, together with the ill treatment of William Shrewsbury in Barbados and John Smith in Demerara, and the harassment of other missionaries elsewhere, angered the abolitionists in England and turned public opinion decisively against the planters.

It was finally recognized in England that the planters had no intention of ameliorating their slave laws. Amelioration was a failure in 1826 by 1830 it was abandoned for emancipation.

**Missionaries in the British West Indies**

The church of England was the church of the planters; it did very little to help slaves. Its most effective activity in helping slaves came from the society for the propagation of the gospel (1699) and in 1794 the “society for the conversion and religious instruction and education of the negro slaves in the West Indies,” was formed but by comparison with the non-conformist societies it did little to help the slaves.

In the Spanish islands the Roman Catholic Church was active in converting and instructing slaves. The planters had to allow Catholic slave schools and give the slave time to attend.

In the French Islands: the Code noir (slave code laws) provided for the conversion of slaves. The French government demanded the conversion of slaves but, by the time of emancipation in 1848, few slaves had been converted.

**Non-conformist missionaries**

Eventually the slaves found their religious guidance from the protestant nonconformist missions, most of which were established towards the end of the 18th century as the result of religious revivals in Europe. The united Brethren or Moravians founded in Germany, were the first to establish missions for slaves in the West Indies.

Their missions practiced self-sufficiency, so that a close Moravian community developed when they took over plantation lock, stock and barrel; Their missionaries were expected to labour and this presented problems in the West Indian society.

The Baptist mission was the most important for it was work amongst slaves in the British West Indies. It was founded in Jamaica by two blacks, George Lisle and Moses Baker, in 1784. They built at large, brick church in Kingston and sent out preachers on horseback to reach the slaves in the fields who could not attend the main church.

The Methodist began their work in Antigua in 1770 and spread through the eastern Caribbean where they were attacked by the planters.

**The persecution of missionaries**

Non-conformist preached other doctrines, like Christian brotherhood and equality before god, which the planters found unacceptable.

The missionaries often insisted that the slaves be taught to read and write, so that they could have private bible readings and prayers between Sunday services. The planters were against educating slaves and so were the authorities.

Missionaries were persecuted because some riots occurred during the time they were preaching. Other obstacles faced by the missionaries:

- Laws were used by missionaries to make things difficult for the missionaries.
- Right up to 1833, there were too few missionaries for the work they had to perform.
- Instruction of the slaves in English presented problems.
- African practices and cultures were considered immoral by missionaries.
- Africans had religious beliefs and rituals of their own.
- The Sunday market was a special obstacle missionaries had to overcome.
- In Jamaica a group called the colonial church union was created to fight missionaries.
The Emancipation of slaves

Immediate causes:
Amelioration had been rejected as being unworkable, and evidence of planter brutality came not only from the West Indies but also from the other colonies such as Mauritius, in the Indian Ocean. An intensive campaign for emancipations started in 1831.

Extra impetus was given by the following:
The publication of a pamphlet named Whiteley on his observation on the treatment of slaves.
The 1831-32 slave riots in Jamaica and its brutal suppression by the authorities.
The arrival of William Knibb and Thomas Burchell who reported that to maintain slavery would promote a racial war.
A crowded meeting at Exeter Hall in London which sent a deputation to the prime minister demanding emancipation.
In 1831 the government offered lower duties on sugar in return for amendments to slave laws by the colonial legislatures. Then they put forward the idea of compensation to the slave-owners for freeing their slaves. This proved to be the incentive that the planters needed to accept emancipation.

The Emancipation act, 1833
Thomas Buxton introduced the emancipation bill in 1833 (emancipation granted in 1834).
The act stated that: 'slavery shall be and is hereby utterly and forever abolished and declared unlawful throughout the British colonies and possessions abroad.
It came with an apprenticeship system of first 6 year that ended up being 4 years up to 1838.
The bill originally proposed a loan of €15,000,000 to slave owners from the British government, and an apprenticeship period of 12 years. This was amended and the final act was as follows:
Slave children under 6 years were to be freed immediately.
Slaves over 6 would have to save an apprenticeship of 6 years in the case of field slaves, and 4 years in the case of all others.
Apprentices should work for not more than 45 hours per week without pay, and any additional hours would be paid.
Apprentices should be provided with food and clothing by the master.
Compensation in the form of a free gift of €20,000,000 should be paid to slave-owners throughout the British empire on condition that local legislatures passed laws to bring emancipation.
The apprenticeship period could be shortened but no alternative would be allowed.

On August 1833 the Act received royal assent and emancipation was to come into effect on August 1st 1834.
The Jamaican planters had been worried when they first heard that compensation was to be in the form of a loan, but after this was changed to a free gift by the persuasive effort of the West India Committee and the amount increased, they, too, passed emancipation quickly.
The legislatures of Antigua and Bermuda decided to do without apprenticeship, so there the slaves had to come complete freedom on August 1st 1834.
Complete freedom for all was scheduled for 1st August 1840, but in the event it was brought forward to August 1st 1838. When it was decided to end apprenticeship two years earlier.
At midnight on 31st July 1838 complete freedom was received with great rejoicing, but with little or not excessive exuberance in the form of drunkenness or violence that whites feared. But many went to church in thanksgiving.
Compensation:
The British West Indies received 16,500,000 in compensation.
Compensation of each planter was worked out for each island from the ration of the quantity of exports to the number of slaves; that is a sort of assessment of the slaves’ productivity in each island.

The Apprenticeship system
Antigua was the only British West Indian island not to have apprenticeship. Within two months, ex slaves worked for wages.

Reasons:
Apprenticeship was used to soften the blow of emancipation by giving the planters a few more years of free labor, while conceding to the slaves their right to freedom. The earlier proposals of an apprenticeship period of 12 years show clearly that it was designed to appease planters and trick the slaves into thinking they were free. Ex-slaves need time to adjust to looking after themselves, handling money and supporting their families. However, it was soon apparent that apprenticeship was not designed to do this because food and clothes were still provided by the master, and the slaves’ opportunity for earning money was very limited.
It was also argued that the planters needed time to adjust to wage labour, and there was certainly more foundation for this argument.

Apprenticeship at work:
The planters would behave as if they still had slave labor. The ex-slaves would think that they were completely free and refused to work. Planters were unwilling to pay for labor beyond 45 hours free labor per week and tried to bring cases against ex-slaves so that they could be forced back. In the apprenticeship period the treadmill, was introduced as a form of punishment.

Special magistrates
Were appointed to oversee apprenticeship: they were usually appointed to ensure impartiality from England but some West Indians had to be appointed to make up numbers. Part of their job was to answer appeals from ex-slaves who complained of ill treatment, although sometimes it was the planters who complained that the ex-slaves did not work. Many magistrates died because they travelled long distances and found themselves friendless and in a hostile environment. Plantation discipline and punishment still continued, and the special magistrates had no jurisdiction in the plantations. Special magistrates were unpopular with the planters because they listened to the appeals of the ex-slaves and frequently upheld them. But they could also be unpopular with the slaves for agreeing that the planter’s punishment was justified. They worked on two year contracts and therefore, could be dismissed if the authorities were not satisfied.
The end of apprenticeship:

Was judged a failure and brought to an early end.
To the ex-slaves, apprenticeship seemed just a continuation of slavery and it was unpopular with the planters, even though it was designed to help them.
In 1838 the British Parliament amended the Abolition of Slavery Act by forbidding the flogging of females or punishment on the treadmill and by allowing colonial governor to supervise the treatment of apprentices in workshops.
The legal question of the status of artisan slaves finally decided the matter. Domestic slaves were to receive complete freedom in 1838. The artisan slaves, who maintained the machinery on the states and di other specialized jobs insisted that they should be classed as domestic slaves. However, without the labor of the artisan slaves, the plantations could not keep running and so, when it was decided that artisan slaves could not be cored to work after 1838, complete freedom had to be given to all slaves on the plantations, and apprenticeship came to an end.

Abolition and emancipation in the non-British Caribbean

French Islands:
Napoleon re-established slavery and when the Bourbon Kings were restored in 1815 it was retained.
The traffic (shipping of slaves) did not end until 1833 when the Anglo-French right of search agreement was extended and reinforced.
The French, too, decided to adopt a policy of amelioration before considering emancipation.
In the French, many of the proposals were similar to the British:
Tax on manumission abolished, making it easier for slaves to buy their freedom.
However, the efforts of the West India Interest were discarded as the white plantation owners in the Caribbean refused to accept the proposals.
The Governor of Guyana was reluctant to post the proposals as he thought it would start a riot.
It was influenced by Victor Schoelcher, a business man who had observed slavery at first-hand while he was travelling in the Caribbean. After visiting the French West Indies in 1840 he was convinced that immediate emancipation was necessary.
In France, La societe pour l'Abolition de L esclavage was formed in 1834; it was a rationalist movement. It achieved a minor victory in 1836 when it was decreed that any slave setting foot in France must be set free.
The French India interest defended slavery as economically essential, as well as being socially desirable on account of what was stated to be the savagery and idleness of the slaves.
On April 27th 1848 Schoeldcher drew up a bill proposing the abolition of slavery throughout the French Empire. This incorporated the idea of compensation, and some 126 million francs were paid to the owners of 258,000 slaves in the islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe and the colony of Cayenne next to Suriname on the South American mainland, and the island of Reunion in the Indian Ocean.
The Spanish Island:
With increased sugar production, slavery grew and, at first, the Cuban planters could not obtain enough slaves due to trade restrictions. In 1791, the Cuban slave trade was declared open and duties on slaves were reduced. Traders from any country could import slaves into Cuba were allowed to export any commodity without duty.
In 1820, the Spanish again formally agreed to stop the slave trade, but slaves continued to be imported into Cuba.
However, in 1865, the Spanish did finally abolish the slave trade effectively.
In Cuba itself, the Creole Spaniards were worried about the great numbers of slaves and wanted the slave trade, which was in the hands of the Spanish born traders, suppressed.
There was increasing pressure from Britain, then nearing the height of her imperial power, to free slaves. In Cuba, by 1840, the majority of slaves were legally entitled to their freedom if they could prove to the Anglo-Spanish Commission at Havana that they had been imported after 1820.
Many feared emancipation because they thought it would lead to black republics. Others feared that, without slavery, there would be a decline in the sugar industry, as in Jamaica. Some even considered an annexation to the USA.
The British were urging emancipation in the Spanish empire for humanitarian and economic reasons. Slave-produced sugar from the Spanish islands was underselling the sugar produced in the British islands. Britain also wanted emancipation to keep Cuba out of the hands of the USA.
In 1868 the monarchy in Spain was overthrown and the country became a republic, with a new government which included a number of anti-slavery sympathizers.
In 1870 the Spanish government passed a law that freed all slaves over 60 years old, together with all those born after 1868. Three years later all the slaves in Puerto Rico were set free; and 35 million pesetas were paid to former owners. This process was abandoned 6 years later, with all remaining slaved being set free in 1886.
Dutch Colonies
The Dutch retained slavery in Suriname and their island colonies of Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, St. Martin, St. Eustatius, and Saba until 1863. The abolition law ordered state supervision of the slaves emancipated on the mainland, in order to ensure that labor remained available for the Suriname sugar estates.

The Swedish and Danish Islands
The small number of slaves on the tiny island of St. Bartholomew, which had been a Swedish possession since 1785, were set free in 1846. The Danish governor Peter Von Scholten, had proposed that the slaves of St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. John be allowed to buy their freedom over a 6 year period, during which they would be given an ever-increasing amount of time each year to earn the money needed. This was rejected by both the planters and the Danish government. A second proposal, to give the slaves one full day of work every week and to let them earn money which could be used to buy their freedom, was made in 1840, but was rejected by the planters.

In 1847 a royal decree was issued. This provided for all children born to slaves after 28th July of that year to be set free, and for all other slaves to be emancipated after a 12 year apprenticeship period. On 2 July 1848 a general uprising took place, led by two slaves, one known as general Buddoe and the other named Martin king. Following a general refusal to work, Buddoe and King led a large number of slaves in a march on the town of Frederiksted, where a few houses were plundered and demolished. The following day the governor declared full emancipation.

The decree stated that as free men and women they would be allowed to retain their houses and provision grounds for only 3 months. In 1849 harsh labour contracts were imposed on all the ex-slaves who wanted to keep their houses and provision grounds. Four years later generous compensation was paid to the ex-slave owner.
Guiding Questions

1. Why was a slave’s ability to read and write important for emancipation revolts?
2. What were the causes and effects of Bussa’s rebellion in Barbados?
3. How did planters react to Bussa’s rebellion? Who was blamed for the rebellion?
4. What were the central causes of the revolt at Demerara?
5. What was the outcome of the revolt at Demerara?
6. Why was the Baptist rebellion an example of Baptist influence on slave movements for freedom?
7. Assess the effects of the 19th century revolts on the emancipation process.
8. How did Europeans defend/justify slavery before the 18th century?
9. Examine five attitudes towards slavery before the 18th century.
10. How did Europeans defend/justify slavery during the 18th century?
11. Examine five attitudes towards slavery during the 18th century.
12. Compare and contrast English and French understandings of the anti-slavery movement during the 18th century.
13. Examine three economic reasons to justify slavery during the 18th century.
14. Describe three religious reasons to justify slavery during the 18th century.
15. Who was an absentee planter?
16. What is referred to as the West Indian interest?
17. How did planters use their pressure on parliament to defend slavery?
18. How did planters defend slavery?
19. How did wars and the French revolution impact the movement towards abolition and emancipation?
20. Examine 6 arguments against slavery. 3 economic and 3 religious.
21. Examine 6 arguments for slavery. 3 economic and 3 racial.
22. Which pressure groups fought against slavery? What were their interests?
23. Which pressure groups fought for slavery? What were their interests?
24. Why did early abolitionists settle to fight only for abolition initially?
25. What was the Quaker movement?
26. What were the aims of the Quaker movement?
27. Why was the Quaker movement persecuted in the Caribbean?
28. Why was the Clapham Sect important in the abolition movement?
29. Why industrialists campaigned against slavery?
30. Summarize and examine the strategies employed to campaign against slavery outside of the parliament.
31. Examine the strategies employed in parliament.
32. Analyze the role of Granville Sharpe, and William Wilberforce, Mr. Pitt in the movement towards abolition.
33. Create a timeline of the different attempts, proposals, wins, and failures on the road towards obtaining slave abolition.
34. Breakdown the challenges in implementing abolition.
35. Assess the process of amelioration.
36. Describe the British and French amelioration policies.
37. Compare and contrast the implementation of slave policies in crown colonies and legislative policies.
38. Examine the West India interest group proposal for amelioration.
39. How did British abolition of the slave trade impact slavery in the rest of the Caribbean?
40. How did the British pressure other colonial powers to stop the slave trade?
41. What was the impact of the missionary groups on abolitionist and emancipation movements?
42. Why were missionaries persecuted in the Caribbean?
43. What challenges the missionaries faced when trying to convert Africans to their religious views?
44. Analyze the causes for slave emancipation.
45. Describe the emancipation act.
46. Examine the process for compensation.
47. Describe the conditions for the apprenticeship system.
48. Analyze the justifications for the apprenticeship system.
49. Who implemented the apprenticeship system? What was their role?
50. Why was the apprenticeship system ended?
51. Analyze the general impact of the Apprenticeship system on the Caribbean region.
52. What were the central ideological concepts that guided French abolitionist movements?
53. Why did the French end slavery?
54. What were the central ideological concepts that guided Spanish abolitionist movements?
55. Why did the Spanish end slavery?
56. Why Cubans wanted to be annexed to the USA?
57. How did the sugar industry shape the Spanish decision to abolish or not abolish slavery?
58. Compare and contrast Spanish, French, English, Dutch and Swedish movements towards emancipation.
59. Analyze the terms/act of the 1807 abolition act.
60. Analyze the terms/acts of the 1833 act of emancipation.