

CARIBBEAN HISTORY- CORE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**EMANCIPATION AND APPRENTICESHIP**

## CSEC Caribbean History: A Glossary of Core terms, people and events of the Caribbean Past

The CSEC Caribbean History syllabus consists of a Core of *ten topics* and *nine* Themes that cover the extent of Caribbean history from the arrival and settlement of the region by the indigenous people, to the formation and establishment of Independent Caribbean nation-states that arose from centuries of European colonisation and oppressive systems of labour.

The Core topics include the following:

- ❖ The Indigenous Peoples of the Americas
- ❖ The Europeans
- ❖ The Economic Revolution and the coming of enslaved Africans
- ❖ Slave Resistance
- ❖ Emancipation and Apprenticeship
- ❖ The coming of the Chinese, Europeans (Madeirans, Germans, French), Indians and Africans
- ❖ The Establishment of the Peasantry, 1838 to 1900
- ❖ The United States' influence in the Caribbean
- ❖ Popular Protests in the 1930s
- ❖ Movements towards Independence *and Regional Integration* up to 1985.

The Themes are arranged in Sections from **A to C** and include the following:

- ❖ Section A
  - The Indigenous People and the Coming of the Europeans
  - Caribbean Economy and Slavery
  - Resistance and Revolt
- ❖ Section B
  - Metropolitan Movements Towards Emancipation
  - Adjustments to Emancipation, 1838-1876
  - Caribbean Economy, 1875-1985
- ❖ Section C
  - United States in the Caribbean, 1776-1985
  - Caribbean Political
  - Caribbean Society 1900-1985

## EMANCIPATION AND APPRENTICESHIP

- *Reasons for the abolition of the Trans-Atlantic trade in Africans.*
- The Amelioration proposals.
- Social, economic and political factors which led to the abolition of slavery in the *Caribbean*.
- The *main provisions of the Emancipation Act* and the problems of the Apprenticeship system.

### KEY TERMS

- **Abolition** – the term abolish means “to get rid of.” In this context, the Abolition movement refers to the popular campaign against the Slave Trade until 1807. The abolition of slavery itself, sometimes referred to as 'Emancipation', was an aim of the Anti-Slavery Society from 1823. There were divisions between advocates of gradual and immediate abolition of slavery.
- **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 (MPs) 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.
- **Amelioration** – in the history of the former British territories in the Caribbean, the term Amelioration (literally, "making better") refers to the efforts of the Imperial government to improve the situation of the enslaved people in its colonies during the decade between 1823 and the abolition of slavery by Parliament in 1834. The relative failure of this London-driven program of reform pushed both the British anti-slavery movement and the British government and Parliament to abandon "gradualism" and opt for outright abolition of slavery by 1834.
- **Anti-abolitionist** – abolitionists were the people involved in the Abolition movement, who campaigned to end the slave trade. Anti-abolitionists were those who campaigned against them to keep the slave trade going. Anti-abolitionists therefore included members of the West India Interest.

## **KEY TERMS**

- **Anti-slavery** – this term might be used to describe a person, an action, or an idea that is against slavery.
- **Apprentice** – a person who learns a trade by working in it for an agreed period at low wages. Traditionally apprenticeship was the term used where someone was bound to a master craftsman to learn a trade. In the Caribbean it was used to describe the intermediate status between slavery and freedom imposed by the 1833 British Emancipation Act. Under the Act, upon emancipation on 1 August 1834, former slaves were formally bound to their former master for a set number of years. Antigua and the Bahamas passed local laws to abolish the apprenticeship clause, and so their slaves were all freed on 1 August 1834. Owing to its unpopularity, apprenticeship was ended on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1838. The term is often used interchangeably with indentured servitude since an apprentice traditionally signed an indenture (legal contract).
- **Apprenticeship** – this word is used in general terms to describe the position of an apprentice working under a legal agreement for a low wage as an initiatory training in a trade. The apprenticeship system was applied to previously enslaved people, between 1834 and 1838, who were forced to work as ‘apprentices’ for their old ‘masters’. This system was not implemented in all Caribbean islands. The apprenticeship system was intended to end in 1838 for non-*praedials* (non-agricultural workers) and 1840 for *praedials* (agricultural workers), but the system ended for all apprentices on 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1838.
- **British Empire** – countries throughout the world conquered or settled by England/Great Britain during the period from the 16th to the 20th centuries. Most had achieved independence by the end of the 20th century, and many are now members of the Commonwealth.
- **Campaign** – a course of action or publicity designed to arouse public interest and influence opinion.
- **Committee** – a group of individuals united behind a cause or common interest.
- **Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade** – the first organisation set up by 12 men who campaigned for the abolition of the slave trade. The group was founded on 22nd May 1787 and its first members included Granville Sharp, Joseph Woods, Samuel Hoarse Jr, William Dillwyn, George Harrison, James Phillips, Richard Phillips, Thomas Clarkson, Philip Sansom, John Lloyd, Joseph Hopper and John Barton. They met at a printing shop at 2 George Yard in London. Most of the members were Quakers.

## **KEY TERMS**

- **Chattel Slavery** – system of slavery whereby an individual and their offspring are recognised by the law as being the property of another person for life. This system was established by Europeans and formed the basis of transatlantic slavery.
- **The Clapham Sect, or 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 were so called, 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 who were all famous names in the abolition movement. However, the Saints were mainly concerned with the abolition of the slave trade.
- **Emancipation** – to set free from control; the term given to the abolition of slavery wherein the freedom of enslaved people was enacted.
- **Emancipation Achieved** – in August 1833, the Slave Emancipation Act was passed, giving all slaves in the British Empire their freedom, albeit after a set period of years. Plantation owners received compensation for the 'loss of their slaves' in the form of a government grant set at £20,000,000.
- **Enslaved Africans** – people of African heritage who were enslaved under the chattel system operating in the Americas during the period of slavery.
- **Emancipation Revolts** – these were violent actions or uprisings initiated by enslaved persons against the established authorities (the plantocracy) in the European slave colonies. Typically, the direct or indirect goal of the enslaved was to achieve emancipation (freedom) from enslavement. Some examples of emancipation revolts were the Berbice Revolt (1763), Barbados Revolt (1816), the Demerara Revolt (1823) and the Jamaican Revolt (1831). The only successful emancipation revolt was the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) whereby the enslaved of Haiti (St. Domingue) achieved their freedom through armed revolt.
- **Industrial Revolution** – a term usually associated with the accelerated (very quick) pace of economic change due to technical and mechanical innovations which resulted in the emergence of mass markets and manufactured goods. The Industrial Revolution began in Britain in the last quarter of the 18th century with the mechanization of the cotton and wool industries. With the harnessing of steam power, factories became centred in towns leading to urbanisation and population growth. The mechanisation of iron and steel came later from 1830.

## **KEY TERMS**

- **Industrialists** – persons who owned and developed industry. They were concerned with economic activities which involved the processing of raw materials and manufacture (production) of goods in factories. In the early nineteenth century, 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 goods 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, if the enslaved were emancipated- a purely self-interested motive
- **Pamphlet** – a leaflet or short, bound booklet. As they were cheaper to produce and bind than a book, pamphlets were often used by campaigners or those with a political, social or religious idea. They were ideal for communicating with a wide range of people.
- **Petition** – a formal written request or application, especially one signed by many people, to a particular individual or group, for example, a government.
- **Pro-slavery** – individuals who supported the slave trade and wished for it to continue might be called 'pro-slavery'. Often, these individuals would have an economic interest in slavery.
- **Quakers** – members of a Christian religious sect known as the Society of Friends, founded in the 17th century. Quakers were non-conformist - they did not follow the rituals or liturgy of the Church of England. While free to practice their beliefs, Quakers were often marginalised in 18th century society. They supported the abolition of slavery long before it became a popular mainstream cause. Most of the members of the 1787 Committee were Quakers and the national network of Quakers helped spread the campaign all over the country.
- **Radicalism** – in a late 18th century context, radicals were seen as people who held non-conventional opinions, usually advocating drastic reform of the political, social or religious status quo. Supporters of the French Revolution were often called radicals. In the 1790s, radical societies sprang up in many British towns, inspired by ideas of revolution. Supporters of democracy were also radical, as were supporters of rights for women. Even though Wilberforce denied it, abolitionists were very much part of this climate of radicalism.
- **Resistance** – to resist something is to oppose it.
- **Revolt** – an uprising or rebellion against the established ruler or law.

## **KEY TERMS**

- **Rights of Man** – a book by Thomas Paine arguing for popular democracy. In 1791, his ideas were considered dangerously subversive and even treasonable.
- **Slavery Abolition Act, (1833), in British history** – Act of Parliament that abolished slavery in most British colonies, freeing more than 800,000 enslaved Africans in the Caribbean and South Africa as well as a small number in Canada. It received Royal Assent on August 28, 1833, and took effect on August 1, 1834.
- **Slavery Abolition in French history** – slavery was first abolished by the French Republic in 1794, but Napoleon revoked that decree in 1802. In 1815, the Republic abolished the slave trade, but the decree did not come into effect until 1826. France re-abolished slavery in her colonies in 1848 with a general and unconditional emancipation. The abolition of slavery was decreed on April 27, 1848 in the French colonies (Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guiana, The Reunion Island).
- **Slavery Abolition in Spanish history** – the Spanish colonies in the Caribbean were among the last to abolish slavery. While the British colonies abolished slavery completely by 1834, Spain abolished slavery in Puerto Rico in 1873 and in Cuba in 1886. On the mainland of Central and South America, Spain ended African slavery in the eighteenth century
- **Special magistrates** (also called Stipendiary Magistrates) – these persons 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.
- **West Indies** – the term refers to the parts of America first discovered by European explorers, so called because they were initially believed to be part of Asia. They consist of the islands of the Caribbean Sea, also known as the Antilles.
- **West Indies Planters Lobby** – a group of property owners brought together to defend their financial interest in the West Indies slave trade. They included plantation owners, merchants, ship owners and bankers. Many of the wealthiest men in the UK had some economic interest in the slave trade.

## **KEY TERMS**

- **The West India Interest** – the group 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 put 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.

### **Contributors:**

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