

# The Role of Interest Groups

## Introduction:

By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century Britain began a gradual process to end slavery throughout her empire. A number of persons agreed with this move. For various reasons and from different perspectives they thought that it was time for the system to end.

- **Missionaries** who disagreed on religious grounds. They argued that the Bible did NOT condone slavery but rather condemned it. The Bible actually teaches that all men are equal before God. The horrid and inhumane treatment of the enslaved was not in keeping with the commandment to love your neighbor as yourself. Furthermore in forbidding the enslaved to get married slavery was condoning sin.

The Missionaries were further enraged by the fact that many of the British and French planters in particular opposed the religious instructions of the slaves and went so far as to engage in acts of violence against God's messengers who tried to do so. It was not right for the enslaved to work on the Lord's Day. They should be allowed to use that day for worship.



*Missionaries*

- **Humanitarians** who disagreed on moral grounds. They argued that the slaves were not property but a part of the human family to which all of us belong as equals. Philosophers such as Rousseau argued that all men are born free and that freedom was and should remain the natural state of every man. They were totally against the sexual abuse of women. These violations of human rights caused them to join the campaign against slavery.
- **Economists and Industrialists.** They believed that manual labor was outdated and inefficient and should be replaced by machinery. They argued that using machinery would be cheaper and far more efficient.
- Investors who had invested large sums of money into the sugar estates of the Caribbean by advancing loans to planters. They had not received all of the money owed to them and some estates were bankrupt!
- The system of slavery encouraged all sorts of vices and evil ways in the enslaved such as stealing, lying and cursing.