

How did the Indigenous Peoples React to Spanish Colonization and Enslavement?

1. Maroonage

Some of the natives fled to the safety of the mountains, dens and caves. In forested and hilly areas such as Jamaica, St. Vincent, Dominica and St. Lucia this was virtually easy. The newcomers were not familiar with the terrain. They dare not risk their lives nor waste time and money to seek for these runaways who might never be found.

2. Migration

This was more common in the Lesser Antilles where the islands are a little nearer to each other. The Kalinagos in particular used their intimate knowledge of the area and their skill and experience to travel to neighboring territories to seek refuge. A number of them left **St. Vincent** and went to **Belize** where they formed several villages. (**Garifunas.**)

3. Attacks

The aggressive Kalinagos did not give up without a fight. They staged various surprise attacks against the intruders so much so that the Spaniards were unable to effectively colonize the Lesser Antilles. Later on when the English tried they met the same reception. The English and the French were forced to share the island of St. Christopher (St. Kitts) as a defense strategy against the Kalinagos. Even the usually peaceful Tainos became aggressive. In 1511 when the conquest of Cuba began chief **Hatuey** resisted the process.

4. Amerindian co-operation

The natives realized that their only chance against the Europeans was to co-operate with each other. On one such occasion they planned and executed the drowning of a Spanish nobleman, Salzedo, who they had been ordered to carry across a river on their shoulders.

5. Suicide

The natives drank poisonous cassava juice. Others threw themselves headlong over cliffs to their death rather than subject themselves to the cruelty of Spanish slavery. It is reported that mothers also committed infanticide.

6. Destruction of Property

The natives learnt quickly from the Europeans. They too destroyed the property of their new masters. They poisoned the water supply and uprooted crops that were not yet matured. They also burnt the barns where the Europeans stored their food.

7. They refused to work

They were punished for this but if they succeeded in keeping the master hungry for a day or so they felt justified.