**RESISTANCE AND REVOLTS**

**Forms and measures of Slave Control**

Slave control refers to the various methods used by the planters or slave owners in order to keep the slaves subjected and in an inferior position.

1. **Psychological**- constantly proclaiming in word and by deed that the Negro was inferior to the white man.
2. **Cultural**- prohibiting the use of African languages and practice of African religions and customs.
3. **Physical**- the establishment and maintenance of police and military forces intended to prevent or punish slave insurrection.
4. **Social**- the practice of rewarding those slaves who acted as informants or who in other ways assisted the masters against their fellow slaves.
5. **Economical**- preventing them from earning money which they could use to purchase their freedom.

Although many British West Indian planters were not enthusiastic about Christianizing their slaves and many of them made life difficult for the Non- Conformist Missionaries who sought to work among the slaves, some of these planters, particularly in smaller islands like Antigua, were willing to grant missionaries permission to enter their plantations. Some planters welcomed the work of the missionaries in making the slaves more loyal. The Christian principles that were taught by the missionaries might have helped to prevent slaves and gang uprisings.

Slaves could not own property without the master’s consent. Their provision grounds were kept small so as to keep them from earning a sizeable income or reaping food. There were laws that prevented slaves from rendering services in town. Slaves were only allowed one market day, initially Sunday. They were also forbidden to sell sugar, fire wood and from trading in a great variety of articles such as horses and cattle. Shopkeepers in town could not buy from slaves. All of these were economic methods of slave control used by the planters to keep the slaves dependent on them and less likely to free themselves from their terrible situation.

Slave laws were introduced into the colonies and were the main method used to control slaves.

**British Slave Laws**

* A slave could not own property.
* A slave could not grow or sell sugar, cotton or coffee but could sell things he made like baskets, pots, jewelry.
* He could not give evidence against a free man in court.
* He could not hire himself out without his owners’ permission.
* He was forbidden to get married.
* They were not to be taught to read or write.
* They were forbidden to become Christians.

The Spanish Slave Laws were called **Las Siete Partidas** while the French Slave Laws were called **Code Noir**.

**Difference between Spanish and British Slave Laws**

* The Spanish Laws were not framed to deal with the West Indian situation but were incorporated into the laws of the Spanish colonies. Slavery in Spain was a less severe institution than was plantation slavery in the New World and so the ‘’Siete Partidas’’ were less severe than the British Slave Laws.
* In British colonies, the laws were made by the assemblies of white settlers in each colony. The basis of the slave laws was fear. As the number of slaves increased, the fear of the whites grew and so the severity of the laws increased.
* Slaves, according to the Spanish Laws, were souls to be saved and therefore should be converted to the Roman Catholic faith. These was no concern about the souls of slaves in the English Laws prior to that of the 18c.

**Similarities between Code Noir and Siete Partidas**

* They were drawn up by the metropolis (Mother Country). They were laws of the Crown and they were applicable throughout all the overseas colonies of the Crown.
* They reflected the strong influence of the Roman Catholic Church on the government. Both provided for the conversion of the slaves to the Roman Catholic Faith.

**Similarities between Spanish and British Slave Laws**

* Penalties for slaves.
* Rights of owners.

***Slave Resistance***

Slave resistance was a constant feature of slave society. Enslaved persons in the Caribbean were persistent in their commitment to ‘’freedom and liberty’’. Such persistence manifested itself in a number of acts such as working slow, full scale rebellion, murder, and the destruction of property. These many acts could be seen as an ongoing struggle between the enslaved and their enslavers which thus came to shape the form of plantation society.

Slave resistance was defined by:

1. Powerlessness
2. Social degradation
3. Natal alienation- being alienated from your roots

**Causes of Slave Protests**

* A desire for freedom- slaves longed to be free in order to conduct their lives as they thought best.
* Harsh treatment- unreasonable demands and excessive punishment forced slaves to contest their conditions.
* Denial of customary rights- slaves were denied basic rights and many privileges were undermined including those relating to the supply of food, clothing, housing, and medical care.
* Shortage of food- in times of natural disasters such as droughts, slaves protested against inadequacy.
* Conspiracy-a number of slaves having the same tribal backgrounds were usually encouraged to rebel. eg. Asante.
* Geography- The mountainous terrain of the West Indies with the many hidden passes, forests and ravines were ideal slave hideouts, from which slaves could engage in guerilla warfare if attacked.
* Landlord Absenteeism- in times when plantations were run by overseers, managers, or Attorneys conditions were harsher.

**Forms/types of resistance**

1. **Active/overt/ Insurrectionary**- those acts which immediately had an effect on slavery. The more obvious the act, the more one could classify it as a means of active resistance.
2. **Passive/overt/ Non- Insurrectionary-** could be contrasted to the acts of active resistance.

**Acts of resistance included:**

* Running away
* Obeah
* Setting fire to cane fields
* Destruction of estate machinery
* Pretending ignorance
* Playing drums, singing
* Speaking their native language in private
* Setting up Maroon communities
* Lying
* Insubordination
* Revolution
* Revolts
* Petty stealing of estate property
* Slow work and (malingering) absence
* Maiming and killing of livestock
* Poisoning- the more subtle form of resistance

**Classification of forms of resistance**

**Active forms of resistance**

* Setting fires to cane fields
* Destruction of estate machinery
* Revolution
* Revolts (insurrectionary)
* Maiming and killing of livestock

**Passive forms of resistance**

* Running away
* Obeah
* Pretending ignorance
* Playing drums, singing
* Setting up Maroon communities
* Lying
* Insubordination
* Petty stealing of estate property
* Slow working and (malingering) absence
* Poisoning slave owners

**‘’Gender specific’’ forms of resistance**

Specific acts of resistance by enslaved women

* Delaying pregnancies
* Inducing abortions (probably most prevalent where the enslaved women had been a victim of sexual abuse by whites)
* Delaying weaning or breast-feeding babies
* Pretending to be ill during menstrual cycles
* Infanticide
* Cultural resistance- mothers passed on cultural traits to their children
* Concubinage
* Women made up songs making fun of their masters

***Maroonage***

**Definition**: Those slaves who ran away and established small settlements in the mountainous areas of Jamaica, British Guiana, Hispaniola, and Suriname. These individuals were called ‘’maroons’’. The word maroonage is derived from the Spanish word ‘’cimarron’’, which means fugitive or runaways. The two types of maroonage are **Grand Maroonage** and **Petit Maroonage**. Grand maroonage refers to large groups of people who ran away from plantations, and petit maroonage describes the individuals or small groups who ran away. Grand Maroonage led to the establishment of ‘’maroon communities’’ while petit maroonage was made up of people who sometimes returned to the estates.

**Factors which encouraged the development of Maroon Societies**

By the 1730’s, maroon settlements were established in Jamaica at Trelawney Town, Crawford Town, Accompany and Nanny Town because:

* Effective leadership by people like Cudjoe and Nanny.
* The topography of Jamaica (dense forests, caves, trees, rocks, mountains, etc.)
* They were expert trackers and skilled marksmen (learned from Africa).
* They planted provisions which helped them to survive and they relied on wild cattle and pigs for meat.
* Their members were replenished by other runaways.
* They had an excellent signaling system using cow horns (abengs) to send coded messages and were thus able to communicate between settlements.
* They raided plantations, then retreated back to their hideouts when food was scarce.

**Bush Negroes of Suriname**

Suriname was a Dutch colony. Bush Negroes stayed close enough to raid plantations but far enough not to be caught. They settled along rivers and were an innovative group.

**Effects on running away on planters and the efficiency of the plantation**

The act of running away by enslaved persons would have affected the planter and the efficiency of the plantation in a number of ways:

* Loss of labour for the plantations -resulted in planters having to spend money to replace those who would have escaped.
* Served as an encouragement to those already on the plantations.
* Theft – many of the enslaved would have ran away with some of the planter’s animals, crops and equipment.
* Attack on plantations - maroon societies represented a real danger to the estates.

**The Haitian Revolution {1791-1804}**

**Haitian Society before 1789**

The 1695 Treaty of Ryswick between France and Spain gave the French a legal right to the Western part of Hispaniola called Saint Domingue. The French, like every other government existing in those days, saw the colonies as existing exclusively for the profit of the Metropolis. Therefore, any goods which the colonists required, had to be bought exclusively from France and transported only by French ships. The society was made up of a number of classes. The ‘grand blancs’ (planters, civil & military officers) were the highest group. The second comprised merchants and professionals. Then, there were the ‘petit blancs’ (artisans, shop keepers and book keepers), followed by the mulattoes/free coloured and finally the salves.

* 55,000 Whites
* 25,000 Mulattoes
* 450,000 Blacks

**Social Groups**

**Divisions within Social Groups**

* Whites – These were divided by the fact that the ‘grand blancs’ had property and education and controlled the colonial assembly, while the ‘petit blancs’ were poorer and had very little education and no political power.
* Coloureds –These were mixed blood and the more fortunate ones were wealthy, and had a good education. However, there were those that were not fortunate enough, to have their freedom purchased for them.
* Blacks –The free blacks and the slaves were of same colour but had former freedom and sometimes property.

**Nature of Discontent**

St. Domingue was a divided society. Among the whites those who were born in colonies (creoles) resented those from the mother country who occupied all the important offices of government. The whites wanted greater autonomy (self-government). They were dissatisfied because of high taxation, the denial of equal political rights and wanted trade liberalization. After mulattoes who were educated in Paris returned home, their education and accomplishments filled the whites with hatred, envy and fear. This expressed in fierce legislation laws, designed to keep coloureds away without political power.

**Reasons for Conflict between Whites and Mulattoes**

* The mulattos (free coloureds) were numerous
* The whites resented mulattoes wealth
* Laws were passed by the whites to limit the opportunities of the mulattoes e.g mulattoes could not:
* Wear European dress
* Play mulatto games
* Marry whites
* Use of the title of monsieur or madame
* Sit in certain seats in church
* Assume the names of their white fathers
* They were responsible for the upkeep of the roads

**The French Revolution (1789- 1799) and its impact on the Haitian Revolution**

A revolution in France broke out because:

* Persons wanted liberty and freedom of expression
* Persons wanted equality before the law
* Persons wanted equal taxation regardless of wealth or nobility

The revolutionary slogan was ***Liberté, Égalité et Fraternité***. In English this means Freedom, Equality and Fraternity (brotherhood).

The white plantocracy in Haiti believed that they could capitalize on upheavals in France to press for independence or at least autonomy. They hoped to press for the right to pass their own laws, equality with French whites and an end to trading restrictions imposed by the metropolis.

The free coloureds wanted social and political equality with the whites and discrimination against them to come to an end.

The blacks/ slaves just wanted freedom from their shackled existence.

Encouraged by the ‘’**Amis des Noirs**’’ (**Friends of blacks**) in 1790 following the outbreak in France, the mulattoes petitioned to the National Assembly (French Government). They demanded full citizenship be given to children born of free parents and also that the right to vote should be given to all free persons over 25 years. The whites objected and Vincent Ogé (a young free coloured living in Paris) landed in St. Domingue in 1790 and started a revolt.

Ogé was defeated because only a few free coloureds were prepared to actually fight, the whites were better armed and supported. When Ogé realized he was outnumbered he fled the border into Santo Domingo where he was captured, returned and executed.

News of the execution reached France and the National Assembly agreed to pass a law allowing persons of colour born to free parents the right to vote for members of the colonial assembly. The planters refused to put this law in force and put together instead their own militia and armed their slaves. They soon began to fight.

The conflict which erupted gave the blacks a great opportunity to fight for their freedom. Property was left unattended and the whites were not united. The turmoil in France had also distracted the attention of the whites and both the mulattoes and blacks embraced the slogan of the French Revolution.

The revolt started under the leadership of Boukman (a High Priest of the Voodoo cult). The plan was to exterminate the whites and take the colony. Within days, half of the Northern Plain had been destroyed and whites murdered.

**A month later Toussaint Brenda (L’Overture) joined the fight**

In 1792 France declared war on Spain and Toussaint aided with the Spanish forces in an attempt to drive the French from the island. He trained 4000 blacks. In the same year, the National Assembly in France had passed another law, giving the vote to free coloureds and free blacks. They sent out an army of 6000 under the leadership of Léger Sonthonax to enforce the law. In 1793, Sonthonax granted emancipation to the slaves. This caused the whites and mulattoes to unite against the French Army and Sonthonax. The royalist planters invited Britain to invade. Toussaint was afraid that this might have meant the reinstatement of slavery, so he deserted the Spanish Army, killed the Spanish Officers who opposed him and joined Sonthonax. Toussaint now became the real leader of the French Forces. When the Spanish and French Governments made peace in 1795, Toussaint directed his energies against the English and planters. By 1798, the English invaders were worn down, disease stricken and gave up. Toussaint then turned against the coloureds who were threatening to take control of the South and West of the colony. About 10 000 men, women and children were murdered. The coloured commanders: André Rigaud fled to France.

In 1779, the French Government formally appointed Toussaint as governor. Napoleon Bonaparté, the ruler of France who opposed this sent his brother- in- law, Vincent Leclerc to remove Toussaint who had made it clear that he would resist slavery to the last drop of his blood. Napoleon’s plan however had included just that.

**How Leclerc got rid of Toussaint**

General Leclerc came with the plan to exploit the rivalries among the leaders and the tension between blacks and mulattoes. He was able to win several generals who came to join him along with their followers. Two such generals were **Henri Christophe** and **Jean- Jacques Dessalines**. In May 1802, Toussaint sent two of his aides- de- camp and a secretary to Leclerc to negotiate. After several hours of discussions, Toussaint agreed to submit under two conditions:

* Liberty for all in St. Domingue.
* Toussaint was allowed to keep his staff and retire where he wished in the territory.

Toussaint gave up the fight. Dessalines who had formerly worshiped Toussaint, sought to get rid of him. He told Leclerc that peace could never be achieved unless Toussaint was sent from the colony. The following month Leclerc sent Toussaint to a meeting in Cape Français. Although warned by friends that Leclerc intended to arrest him, while Dessalines and the others had control of their troops, he was wrong. After he arrived for the meeting Toussaint conversed with one of his generals who then asked to be excused. As soon as he left, some men arrived with rifles, entered the house, bound Toussaint like a common criminal and put him aboard a warship to France where he died in 1803.

**Haitian Independence**

On January, 1804, Dessalines declared the colony independent of France. He gave it, its native name (Haiti) and took the white out of the flag to symbolize the colony being purged of its white suppressors.

**Reasons why Toussaint was considered the leader of the revolt in St. Domingue:**

Although Toussaint was not involved until one month after its outbreak he is considered the leader because:

* His name has been associated the most with the revolution.
* It was he who impressed the slaves with his military ability to command the rebel troops.
* He ensured his army was well supplied with arms. (30 000 guns from the U.S).
* He appointed assistants who had specific duties. (Christophe & Dessalines).
* He made and broke alliances when necessary.
* He drove the British troops from the light bank of the Antibonite River.
* It was he who led the slaves of Haiti to freedom and in to the intermediate post Emancipation period.

**Reasons why slaves succeeded in overthrowing succeeded in overthrowing slavery in St. Domingue:**

* The effective leadership of Toussaint.
* The unity of slaves under Toussaint’s leadership (especially through religion).
* The slaves’ determination to end slavery and thereby free themselves.
* The timing of the revolt.
* The defeat of the French allies and British troops.
* The slaves’ superior knowledge of the terrain.
* Diseases (yellow fever) savaged foreign troops.
* The slaves devastated the land which made it difficult for the troops to survive without impacts.

**Effects of the Haitian Revolution on Haiti:**

**Positive:**

* The slaves defeated all forces with whom they fought.
* The slaves won their freedom.
* It showed that blacks could unite from a common cause.
* The revolt led to an emergence of great black leaders.

**Negative:**

* Political instability as a result of early independence & rivalries between mulattoes and blacks evolved.
* Tremendous loss of lives due to fighting, murders and disease.
* Many people fled to other countries reducing the population even further.
* Economic difficulties since the revolt was fought on Haitian soil (crops destroyed/fields. burnt) A lot of plantations were split into small land holdings and used for subsistent living.
* The major countries of the world such as: U.S.A, Britain, Spain, and France placed an embargo on Haiti and refused to trade with her.

**Effects of the Haitian Revolution on the other Caribbean countries**

**Social:**

* Greater fear by the whites of the thought of a slave uprising similar to the Haitian Revolution.
* Emigration led to an increased French Creole population in Jamaica, Cuba, Trinidad, and Puerto Rico.
* The French Creole Emigrants helped to influence the culture of these islands especially by way of language and religion.

**Economical:**

* St. Domingue sugar industries collapsed boosting sugar production elsewhere.
* Cuba became the world’s leading sugar produce as French planters and technicians introduced new forms of technology.
* World market prices increased and some commodities like sugar cotton and coffee.

**Political:**

* Slave control was tightened in the other Caribbean colonies. The plantocracy became more repressive.
* Haiti inspired slave revolts elsewhere like Jamaica, Martinique and Guadeloupe.
* French Emigrants spread stories about the harshness of slavery in Haiti which strengthened the argument for abolition.

***Slave Revolts***

**The 1763 Revolt in Berbice**

The Berbice Revolt occurred in British Guiana and began on 23rd February, 1763 and lasted into 1764.

**Causes of the revolt:**

* The slaves wished for permanent freedom from the Dutch and felt that a revolt was the only way to achieve this.
* The slaves wanted revenge on the managers and overseers because of the ill treatment they received at their hands.
* Some slaves received little or no provisions because the planters did not grow enough on the estates and the Berbice Association cut down on food imports.
* The slaves knew that the whites were weak as a group (both in size and physically).
* The slaves were inspired to start a revolt by a Maroon revolt in Suriname in 1762.

**Course of the revolt**

The revolt began on 23rd February, 1763 at Plantation Magdelenenberg owned by a widow, Madame Vernesobre, on the Caje River. The slaves killed the manager and carpenter, burned down the owner’s house, and moved onto neighbouring plantations along the Berbice River. Coffy, a house slave, became the leader and set up headquarters at Plantations Hollandia and Zeelandia. This forced the whites to retreat to Fort Nassauand Peerboom.

On March 8th, Governor Van Hoogenheim received a shipload of 10 soldiers from a British ship from Suriname and was able to attack for the first time. Van Hoogenheim led the main party of the Berbice River to Plantation Dageraad, but his three attacks were unsuccessful. In April, Coffy and the Governor sought to divide Berbice but in that time the Governor received reinforcements from Gravesande, the Governor of Essequibo.

On May 13th, Coffy attacked Dageraad unsuccessfully. Eight whites and 58 slaves were killed. Coffy’s deputy Akara deserted him. Divisions plagued the black forces (slaves). Ultimately, Coffy committed suicide.

**Results/consequences of the revolt:**

* In the months of March and April of 1764, 40 slaves were hanged, 24 broken at the wheel and 24 were burned.
* February 23rd was changed to Guyanese National Day.
* In 1970 when Berbice became a Republic, Coffy was chosen as a National Hero.
* The revolt marked the first serious attempt by a large group of enslaved people to win their freedom in Guyana.

**Reasons for failure of the revolt:**

* Coffy’s hesitation on attacking Fort Nassau.
* The leaders of the revolt were divided in their struggle for power which deterred their aim.
* The Dutch soldiers were far superior in weaponry and skill compared to the rebels (slaves).
* Betrayal among leaders also led to the failure of this revolt.

**The 1816 Revolt in Barbados (Bussa’s Rebellion)**

Prior to 1816, Barbados had not had a major revolt for over 100 years, and the enslavers boasted of having succeeded in creating a stable slave society. That notion of stability and contentedness was shattered on Sunday April 14th, 1816, when enslaved blacks launched an island wide assault on the enslavers. This revolt was carefully planned and organized by the senior enslaved men and women who worked on several estates. The leader of the revolt was Bussa. Bussa was born a free man in Africa in the 18c. and captured and brought to Barbados as a slave. He had a job as a Head Ranger at Bayley’s Plantation. He was also brave, strong and determined to enforce change.

**Causes of the revolt:**

* Harsh treatment inflicted by white society created a desire for permanent freedom and revenge.
* The efforts of the Non- Conformists missionaries and Abolitionists in England gave the enslaved population the moral justification for the revolt.
* An able leader called Bussa emerged among the slaves.
* The news of the success of the Haitian Revolution reached the other Caribbean countries and so the slaves in Barbados believed that they too could obtain freedom by an uprising. Slaves such as Nanny Grigg (senior domestic slave), who aided in the revolt, frequently spoke of the Haitian struggle for freedom.
* Maroonage on the island of Barbados was difficult because of the flat terrain and lack of dense forest. So for the enslaved blacks the best option to obtain freedom and establish themselves as a dominant force was to attack the enslavers.
* The enslaved made a decision to revolt because they were conscious of international efforts aimed against enslavement. Washington Franklin, a free man, often read newspaper reports of anti-slavery reports to the slaves.
* Slaves in Barbados enjoyed some measure of freedom and this measure of freedom helped them to organize the revolt.
* The slave trade had been abolished in 1807. In 1815, the British Parliament came up with an Imperial Registry Bill to register all slaves so as to monitor the treatment of the slaves and to stop excessive cruelty. The planters were infuriated over the passing of this bill and saw it as an interference in their domestic affairs. The slaves misinterpreted this as being anger about a plan for their emancipation. The slaves then decided to take their own freedom.

**Courses of the revolt**

Bussa and his collaborators decided to start the revolt on 14th April, Easter Sunday. It commenced in the eastern parishes of St. Phillip and Christ Church spreading into the parish of St. Thomas, St. George, St. John and parts of St. Michael, putting a temporary halt to the sugar harvest as enslaved persons, the militia and the imperial troops clashed in a war for freedom and independence. Bussa commanded about 400 men and women against the troops. Bussa was killed in battle and his troops continued to fight until they were defeated by superior firepower. By the time the soldiers had crushed the revolt, 25% of the island’s sugarcane had gone up in smoke. One white civilian and one black soldier was killed during the revolt. 50 enslaved blacks were killed while fighting and 144 were executed in September under Marshall Law. 70 were sentenced to death and 123 were sent away to other islands. Other key persons in this revolt besides Bussa were Washington Franklin, John and Nanny Grigg, Johnny, King Wiltshire, Jackey and Dick Bailey. The two major plantation that were involved in the revolt were Bailey’s Plantation and Simmons Plantation. John and Nanny Grigg and Jackey were from Simmons Plantation, while King Wiltshire, Dick Bailey, Johnny and Bussa were from Bailey’s Plantation. The revolt finally ended on April 16th.

**Results/ consequences of the revolt:**

* The whites now lived in constant fear of another slave uprising.
* Bussa was killed in the revolt.
* 144 persons were executed including Washington Franklin and 123 were sent to other islands.
* 25% of the sugarcane crop in Barbados was destroyed. This slowed down the sugar production process.
* Plantation machinery was damaged and destroyed along with planters’ homes or great houses. This caused the planters great expense. Property damage was estimated at €175 000.
* Bussa (leader of the revolt) became a Barbadian National Hero in 1998.
* In 1985, 169 years after his rebellion, the Emancipation Statue, created by Karl Broodhagen, was unveiled in Haggatt Hall, St. Michael.

**Reasons for the failure of the revolt:**

* The whites had superior weapons compared to the slaves.
* The number of slaves who participated in the revolt was relatively small. A large force would have been needed in order to overpower the whites.
* Limited ammunitions for the slaves to use.

**The 1823 Revolt in Demerara**

The Demerara Revolt was a slave uprising involving more than 10 000 slaves that took place in the Crown colony of Demerara- Essequibo (now part of Guyana). The rebellion took place on August 18th 1823 and lasted for two days and was held by slaves of the highest status. Around 9000 slaves were involved in this revolt.

**Causes of the revolt:**

* In 1823, Amelioration proposals (improvement in slave conditions) were sent from the British Colonial Secretary to the Governor of Demerara so that the amelioration proposals could be adopted. The Court of Policy in Demerara examined the proposals on July 21st, 1823, and postponed making a decision. The slaves believed that their masters were concealing news of the slaves’ emancipation decided to seek their own freedom by revolting.
* The slaves also wanted freedom from their enslavement.
* They also wanted revenge on the whites because of the harsh treatment they were subjected to and poor living conditions they were forced to live under.

**Course of the revolt**

 On the morning of Sunday 17 August 1823, slaves at Mahaica met together at Plantation Success and three of them, Jack Gladstone, a cooper on that plantation, Joseph Packwood and Manuel, assumed some kind of leadership of the group. All of them began to plan an uprising, but Gladstone's father, Quamina, who arrived at the meeting later, objected to any bloody revolt and suggested that the slaves should go on strike. When someone asked if they should get guns to protect themselves, Quamina said he would have to seek the advice of the Rev. Smith on this matter.

Quamina departed for Bethel Chapel at Le Ressouvenir and after the Sunday service, he and two other slaves, Manuel and Seaton, went to Smith's home. There they told the priest that the managers of the plantation should go to Georgetown to "fetch up the new law." Smith rebuked them and advised them against speaking to any of the managers about this, saying if they did so they would provoke the Governor. He begged them to wait until the Governor and their masters inform them about the new regulations. When Quamina told Smith of the uprising being planned, the priest asked them to request the other slaves, particularly the Christians, not to rebel. Quamina promised to obey Smith and he sent his two companions to urge other slaves not to rebel. He also told Smith he would send a message in the evening to the Mahaica slaves not to rise up against their masters.

But despite Quamina's efforts, the slaves were determined to rebel from the following evening. Their plan was to seize all guns on the plantations, lock up the Whites during the night and then send them to the Governor on the following morning to bring the "new law." All Quamina could do was to implore them not to be violent in the process.

But on the morning of Monday 18 August, the plan was leaked by Joseph Packwood, a house slave, who revealed it to his master, John Simpson, of Le Reduit plantation, located about five miles east of Georgetown. Simpson immediately gave this information to Governor Murray who with a group of soldiers rode up to the area of Le Ressouvenir and La Bonne Intention where he met a large group of armed Africans on the road. He asked them what they wanted and they replied, "Our right." He then ordered them to surrender their weapons, but after they refused he warned that their disobedience would cause them to lose whatever new benefits the new regulations aimed to provide. Further, Murray asked them to go home and to meet with him at Plantation Felicity the next morning, but the slaves bluntly refused this invitation.

It was very late that afternoon when Rev. John Smith first heard of the uprising. In a note to his informant, Jackey Reed, a slave who attended his church, he stated that hasty, violent measures were contrary to Christianity and begged Reed not to participate in the revolt.

Shortly after, while Smith and his wife were walking on the plantation, they saw a large group of noisy African slaves outside the home of Hamilton, the manager of Le Ressouvenir. Smith begged them not to harm Hamilton but they told him to go home.

That night the slaves seized and locked up the White managers and overseers on thirty-seven plantations between Georgetown and Mahaica in East Demerara. They searched their houses for weapons and ammunition, but there was very little violence since the slaves apparently heeded Quamina's request. However, some slaves took revenge on their masters or overseers by putting them in stocks; this action resulted in some violence a few White men were killed. The White population naturally were very terrified and feared they would be killed. But the slaves who were mainly Christians did not want to lose their religious character so they proclaimed that their action was a strike and not a rebellion. At the same time, not all slaves joined the rebels and they remained loyal to their masters.

The next day an Anglican priest, Wiltshire Austin, suggested to Governor Murray that he and Smith should be allowed to meet with the slaves to urge them to return to work. But the Governor refused to accept this suggestion and immediately declared martial law.

The 21st Fusileers and the 1st West Indian Regiment under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Leahy, aided by a volunteer battalion, were dispatched to combat the rebels who were armed mainly with cutlasses and bayonets on poles and a small number of stands of rifles captured from plantations. At first, the movement of the troops was hampered since many of the wooden bridges across the various plantation canals were destroyed by the rebels.

The suppression of the rebellion saw much violence. On Tuesday, 19 August, there were major confrontations at Dochfour estate where ten to fifteen of the 800 rebels were killed; and at Good Hope where six rebels were shot dead. On the morning of 20 August, six were killed at Bee Hive plantation and forty at Elizabeth Hall.

There was also a major battle on the same day Bachelor's Adventure where more roughly 2,000 slaves confronted the military. Lieutenant-Colonel John Thomas Leahy who had about 300 men under his command asked them what they wanted. They responded that they wanted to work for only two or three days a week. Leahy told them if they lay down their arms and returned home he would tell the Governor what they wanted. But perceiving that they were not interested in surrendering their arms he, accompanied by one of his officers, Captain John Croal, went up to them and again enquired what they wanted. They shouted that they wanted their freedom which the King had granted to them. Leahy then read the proclamation of martial law to them. When he completed the reading, Jack Gladstone, one of the slave leaders, showed him a copy of a letter signed by many plantation owners that they were not abused by the rebels.

One of the other leaders then suggested that they should hold Leahy and Croal as hostages, but Gladstone objected strongly and prevented such an occurrence. Many other rebels suggested that all the slaves should march to Georgetown to present their demands to the Governor, but Leahy discouraged this saying that if they did so they would all be hanged, and suggested that they should communicate to the Governor through him. He then gave them half an hour to decide to surrender their arms, failing which he would order his men to shoot. However, the rebels continued to show defiance and Leahy ordered his troops to open fire. Many of the slaves fled in confusion while some others quickly surrendered their weapons to the troops. In this savage crushing military action more than 250 were killed. A report prepared by Governor Murray two days later praised Leahy and his troops and noted that only one soldier was slightly injured while noting that "100 to 150" slaves were shot dead.

The uprising collapsed very quickly since the slaves, despite being armed, were poorly organised. After their defeat at Bachelor's Adventure, the Governor proclaimed a full and free pardon to all slaves who surrendered within 48 hours, provided that they were not ringleaders of the rebellion. He also offered a reward of 1,000 guineas for the capture of Quamina whom he regarded as the main leader of the rebellion.

In the military sweeping-up exercises that followed, there were impromptu court-martials of captured slaves and those regarded as ringleaders were immediately after executed by firing-squad or by hanging. Many of the corpses were also decapitated and the heads were nailed on posts along the public road. Among those hanged was Telemachus of Bachelor's Adventure who was regarded as a "ringleader" of the uprising at that location.

Some of the rebels who escaped were also hunted down and shot by Amerindian slave-catchers. Quamina himself was shot dead by these Amerindian slave-catchers in the back lands of Chateau Margot on 16 September and his body was later publicly hanged by the side of the public road at Success. Jack Gladstone was later arrested and also sentenced to be hanged; however, his sentence was commuted but he was sold and deported to St. Lucia in the British West Indies.

Out of an estimated 74,000 slaves in the united colony of Essequibo- Demerara about 13,000 took part in the uprising. And of the 350 plantations estates in the colony, only thirty-seven were involved. No doubt, many who did not take part sympathized with the rebels and shared their suspicion that the planters would spare no efforts to prevent them from obtaining their freedom.

On 25 August, Governor Murray set up a "court-martial" headed by Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Arthur Goodman, for the trials of the arrested rebel slaves who were considered to be "ringleaders." The trials which continued into early 1824 were conducted at different plantations and the prisoners were executed by shooting or hanging and their heads were cut off and nailed to posts. Over 200 Africans were beheaded and their heads placed on stakes at the Parade Ground in Georgetown and from Plaisance to Mahaica in East Demerara. Of those condemned to death, fourteen had their sentences commuted but, like Jack Gladstone, they were sold to other slave owners in the British West Indies.

In addition, there were other sentences, including solitary confinement and flogging of up to 1,000 lashes each. Some were also condemned to be chained for the rest of their servitude.

Meanwhile, on the day of the Bachelor's Adventure battle, the situation took a strange turn when Rev. John Smith was arrested and charged for encouraging the slaves to rebel. While awaiting trial, he was imprisoned in Colony House. His arrest, undoubtedly encouraged by many of the planters, was seen as an act of revenge against the priest for preaching to the slaves.

Despite being a civilian and charged for the crime allegedly committed before martial law was proclaimed, he faced a trial by a military court-martial presided by Lieutenant Colonel Goodman from 13 October to 24 November 1823. He was tried for four offences: promoting discontent and dissatisfaction in the minds of the slaves towards their masters, overseers and managers, and inciting rebellion; advising, consulting and corresponding with Quamina, and aiding and abetting him in the revolt; failure to make known the planned rebellion to the proper authorities; and not making efforts to suppress, detain and restrain Quamina once the rebellion was under way.

Smith denied the charges but, nevertheless, he remained imprisoned for seven weeks in Colony House before his trial took place. He was found guilty and sentenced to be hanged and was transferred from Colony House to the local prison. He appealed to the British government which subsequently ordered a commutation of the death sentence and restored his freedom. However, while awaiting information of the results of his appeal to arrive by ship from England, he died from pneumonia in the prison on 6 February 1824. To avoid the risk of stirring sentiment against the slave owners, the colonial authorities buried his body before daybreak but deliberately did not mark his grave.

The information that he was acquitted actually arrived in Georgetown on 30 March, weeks after his funeral. (Significantly, the appeals court in repealing his sentence also banned him from residing in Guyana and any other British Caribbean territory and ordered him to post a bond of 2,000 pounds.) News of his death was later published in British newspapers; it caused great outrage throughout Great Britain and 200 petitions denouncing the actions of the colonial authorities were sent to the British Parliament.

**Results/consequences of the revolt:**

* The numerous petitions, including some by parliamentarians, and newspaper comments condemning the military trial and the death sentence on Rev. Smith finally resulted in a formal motion being raised in the British House of Commons. It called for the members to "declare that they contemplate with serious alarm and deep sorrow the violation of law and justice" in the trial of Rev. Smith and urged King George to adopt measures to enable the just and humane administration of law in Demerara to "protect the voluntary instructors of the Negroes, as well as the Negroes themselves and the rest of His Majesty's subjects from oppression."
* The motion was presented by a Member of Parliament from the Opposition and it was debated on 1 June and 11 June 1824.
* Speeches opposing the motion and supporting the trial by court martial were made by parliamentarians on the government side as well as ministers of the government, including the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, George Canning. Speaking in support of the motion were leading members of the Opposition, including the famous leader of the anti-slavery movement, William Wilberforce, but despite their strong arguments, the government majority voted against it.
* The forceful speeches on both sides examined the trial of Rev. Smith through the perspective of various laws - British common law, Dutch law, British military law, Dutch military law and Demerara colonial law.
* The debate also threw light on the political feelings of British lawmakers of the early nineteenth century regarding their opinions on slavery and British amelioration policies in Guyana and the British Caribbean possessions. In addition, it exposed some of their views on the East Coast Demerara slave uprising of August 1823 which was a major blow to colonial rule and most likely helped to hasten the end of African slavery in the British colonial territories.
* In Guyana, the slaves regarded Rev. Smith's death as a sacrifice which was made on their behalf, and soon after, they began referring to him as the "Demerara Martyr."

**Reasons for the failure of the revolt:**

* There was a lack of unity among the rebels. Some slaves wanted to use passive forms of resistance while others wanted to use insurrectionary forms of resistance.
* The whites had superior weapons compared to the slaves.
* The slaves had limited ammunitions while the whites had plenty of ammunitions which they readily used.

**The 1831-2 Revolt in Jamaica/ Sam Sharpe/ Christmas Rebellion/Baptist War**

This revolt was led by Samuel Sharpe, a slave Baptist deacon. Samuel Sharpe is blamed for the violence that occurred but however, he never instructed the slaves to act violently against the whites. Instead he suggested a peaceful approach such as the refusal to work unless wages were paid. This revolt is the last slave revolt to take place in the British West Indies and the largest with over 20 000 slaves involved. This revolt saw the end of slavery soon afterwards in the British West Indies. This revolt along with the 1816 revolt in Barbados and the 1823 revolt in Demerara are collectively known as the ‘’Emancipation Wars’’.

**Causes:**

* Samuel Sharpe was a literate man who would have had access to newspaper reports about English politics and about the anti-slavery arguments in England. In 1831 it was clear that the British Parliament would emancipate the slaves soon and that the planters would try to find ways of keeping their unpaid labour. Sam Sharpe and the other slaves believed that the planters were withholding their freedom so they sought out to obtain it.
* The slaves desired freedom from their harsh enslavement.
* The activities of the Non-Conformist Missionaries in Jamaica implanted in the minds of the slaves that slavery was wrong and that they were supposed to be free men so they wanted to be freed so they started a revolt.

**Course of the revolt**

The plan for the revolt began on December 25th, 1831. Sam Sharpe had suggested that the slaves refused to work unless they were paid wages. The actual violence of the Jamaican Revolt that began on Tuesday, 27 December 1831. It was the last night of the three-day Christmas festival. The signal for the strike to begin started with the firing of the sugar trash on the evening of the 27 on the Kensington Estate.  
By midnight, sixteen other estates were burning. It moved from the original aim of a strike quickly into a rebellion. With little or no arms, the slaves knew that the only way to struck their oppression was by firing the estates. The planters who were in the interior began to desert their estates. The roads were then in the hands of the rebels. For eight days, there was hardly a single colonist to be seen in those areas. As well as in Montego Bay and Savanalamar. Fifty thousand slaves fled to coastal towns and began to ramble about, plundering and burning at will.  
By the first week of January 1832 the revolt was completely squashed by the martial law that was called in.  
The hunt was then put in place to gather the slaves that had escaped to be placed before the court and have their fate handed down to them.

**Results/Consequences of the revolt:**

* One hundred and sixty estates of various kinds were destroyed by fire.
* The slaves were defeated (400 slaves died) and another 100 were executed following Martial Law.
* About a dozen white were murdered.
* The Non-Conformist Missionaries were blamed for the revolt and were made to suffer their alleged guilt.
* William Knibb and Thomas Burchell who were Missionaries who were threatened with trial for encouraging the rebellion returned to England after their acquittal and gave first- hand accounts of what occurred in Jamaica. They told the people what would occur if slavery was to occur.
* Samuel Sharpe was tried in April 1832, found guilty of rebellion and insurrection, and hanged on 23rd May, 1832.
* The whites now lived in constant fear of a greater slave insurrection. It reminded many of rebellion in St. Domingue.
* Despite its failure, the Jamaican uprising played a significant role in the advent of abolition in the British Caribbean. A week after Sharpe's execution, Parliament appointed a committee to consider measures for abolition. Dozens of witnesses were called to testify in London, and after months of debate, the Act for the Abolition of Slavery was passed in 1833. Samuel Sharpe's war brought about an earlier emancipation for the enslaved, and built up their confidence that they were agents of their own liberation.
* Samuel Sharpe was made a Jamaican National Hero in 1975 and a statue in his honour has been erected in Montego Bay, Jamaica.
* Samuel Sharpe’s face also appears on the Jamaican $50 bill.

**Reasons for the failure of the revolt:**

* The slaves did not intend to kill the whites, only in self- defense. So the whites were able to capitalize on the slaves’ seemingly inability to violently attack them.
* The British Troops and Militia had superior weaponry and skill compared to the slaves so they were able to defeat them and bring the revolt under control as they brutally suppressed them.
* The revolt was relatively poorly planned and the slaves did not initially set out to harm the whites instead to damage property. This played a part in the failure of the revolt as the slaves’ refusal to do bodily harm ended up causing many of them their lives as the British troops were not so conscious about doing the slaves harm. The troops did all that was necessary to defeat the slaves.

**Reasons why many slave revolts failed**

The fact that many slave revolts did not achieve freedom was due to:

* The lack of unity among the insurgents.
* The military assistance to colonies by other colonies.
* The superior weapons of the whites.
* Limited ammunitions.
* Divisiveness among the blacks.

**The Impact of revolts**

While slave revolts may have assisted in giving planters a sense of racial and group solidarity they also invoked a great deal of fear for the following reasons.

* Death and injury.
* Overthrow of slavery.
* Destruction of the plantations.
* Removal of the planter government.
* Independence- European countries feared the loss of their colonies to the enslaved.
* Disruption of the social order and political systems.

Throughout slavery resistance and revolts were constant features of Caribbean society. Slaves did not flee because escape undermined their master’s property, even though flight had that impact. Slaves fled because they wanted freedom from their bondage, and flight- desperate as such action often was- offered some hope that freedom might be attained. By revolting enslaved persons tried to undermine the stratified system of slavery.