

continues to be much afflicted by poverty and a huge disparity in income between the poor and the wealthy; the rate of child labour is among the highest of the countries in the region.

Due to these enduring conditions, the Philippines is also a country that exports a very large number of migrant workers, mostly female. While Philippine migrant workers have created some of the strongest migrant worker organizations in the world, “[i]n general, however, women’s organizations from inside the country or outside have been able to bring little change to women in the Philippines”. This is no doubt partially due to the fact that there has been little effort by the state to mobilize women’s groups in policy implementation.

Bahramitash’s concluding chapter is a little unfocused, and therefore the weakest in this otherwise meticulously researched book. In it she briefly discusses matters such as Washington’s “attempt to seek control of oil resources in the Middle East”. Coming after the carefully detailed and rigorous analysis in the previous chapters, this final chapter appears a bit slapdash.

My very minor critique of the last chapter does not in any way diminish the quality of Bahramitash’s contribution to gender and globalization studies. *Liberation from Liberalization* provides a vital and rigorous analysis of the nature and effects of women’s participation in the formal and informal economy, and the results of the imposition of neoliberal policies on women in the developing world.

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Gelien Matthews. *Caribbean Slave Revolts and the British Abolitionist Movement*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006. 197pp.

Gelien Matthews examines the impact of slave revolts in the British West Indies on the abolition movement, focusing on the slave uprisings in the colonies of Barbados (1816), Demerara (1823) and Jamaica (1831-1832). She points out that the abolitionists were aware of the important role of slave revolts in strengthening the antislavery campaign.

The historiography on slavery could be separated into two schools of thought. The first argues that economic factors,

including the unprofitability of slavery, led to its demise. The second group of historians, to which Matthews belongs, is of the opinion that the abolition of slavery was due to the efforts of individuals and groups motivated by religious and humanitarian principles or/and political interests.

*Caribbean Slave Revolts and the British Abolitionist Movement* dissects a tumultuous period of slave protests in the pre-emancipation era. Some of the antislavery personalities and groups highlighted in the book are William Wilberforce, Thomas Buxton, Thomas Clarkson and the Anti-Slavery Society. The author commends Clarkson for providing "...the abolitionists with a practical demonstration of how best to combine antislavery rhetoric and tactic to achieve their objectives" (p.102).

Matthews argues, however, that there are some shortcomings in the positions taken by the humanitarians and abolitionists. For instance, in Chapter 2 "Agitating the Question", she argues, "What the abolitionists did not seem to understand was that in the last years of slavery, improved conditions did not make contented slaves" (p.40). In Chapter 4 "Loaded with Deadly Evidence" one of the revelations is the manner in which abolitionists used deaths of the enslaved, following the Demerara outbreak, "...to pressure Parliament and the public to rethink and take corrective action on the regime of slavery" (p.118). However, the abolitionists could have utilized many previous incidents as poignant illustrations in their anti-slavery campaigns.

Interestingly, the author elucidates that abolitionists felt the enslaved "would find motivation from outside the system if the impetus for change was not coming from within" (p.139). It seemed obvious that the sheer brutality of slavery would have been sufficient "impetus" for widespread and continuous resistance, be it covert or active. A minor oversight of Matthews is ignoring the role of African religious beliefs of the enslaved that would have certainly influenced the outbreak and course of these uprisings. The abolitionists also underestimated or ignored the influence of African religions such as voodun (voodoo) among the slave ringleaders and those who participated in the uprisings.

Matthews contends, "Slaves were attuned to and curious about discussions on the slavery question taking place in the colonies and across the Atlantic..." (p. 80). Furthermore, abolitionists were aware of the influence of the educated element among the enslaved domestics. Developments in nearby St. Domingue also

influenced the abolitionists' commentary on the rebellious conduct of the enslaved. This is emphasized in the sub-section "The St. Domingue Bogey" in Chapter 3, "The Other Side of Slave Revolts." Likewise, in Chapter 5, "Apocalyptic Warnings" there is mention of Clarkson, the militant abolitionist who was adamant that this former French West Indian colony could be used as a model. He felt British West Indian Blacks, "...like their Haitian counterparts, were peaceful and industrious once they had made the transition from bondage to freedom" (p.146).

The extent of how far religion was effectively wielded to undermine British West Indian slavery seems difficult to assess. This is due to the mixed signals emanating from the religious advocates of abolition, as pointed out in Chapter 3. Matthews uses the example of the Demerara revolt and focuses on Henry Brougham's claim that Christianity among the enslaved contributed to the relatively peaceful course of the revolt. In analyzing the role of the abolitionists, Matthews argues that they were "not being true to their over-all assessment of the relationship between Christianity and slavery" (p.83). Additionally, she also notes Buxton's perception of the Jamaican revolt as being partially due to the religious persecution of the enslaved by the planters. This is indeed accurate since many irresolute abolitionists sought to maintain an element of decorum juxtaposed to their sympathies for the violent revolts among the enslaved.

Matthews meticulously explores the multidimensional aspects of the abolition discourse and perceptions emanating from the British public, planters and West Indian colonists. In this regard, the author must be highly commended for incorporating a wealth of primary and secondary sources. Among these include journals and newspapers as the *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, *Edinburgh Review*, *Baptist Magazine*; also relevant tracts, sermons and Parliamentary speeches.

The author's lucid writing style coupled with cohesive themes and well-supported arguments will certainly appeal to scholars and students. *Caribbean Slave Revolts and the British Abolitionist Movement* is also an asset to the ongoing debate on the abolition of slavery. Indeed, the author has successfully shed new light on a critical phase of the turbulent antislavery movement.

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