TRANSITION FROM SLAVERY TO FREEDOM

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The first time in western European history, developed many of imperial and colonial societies associated with African slavery a popular abolitionists movement which questioned the right and acceptance of the authority of slavery.

Despite the fact that individuals attacked slavery from its earliest development in the Americas, these were just isolated voices which never took on or changed the opinion.

However at the beginning of the 18th century, an increase of numbers of influential philosophers and religious leaders began to question the authority and morality of the establishment.

The Quakers had been deeply involved in slaving and slavery in America.

- In 1770’s the fundamental difference between their beliefs and their practices led the Quakers to begin attacking slavery in the middle of their members and in the societies in which they lived.
Abolitionism

- Nevertheless abolitionism was still a minority position
  - Now received fundamental intellectual and moral backing among a small group of influential theorists and clergymen
  - Instead of isolated voices of insignificant critics, there were a growing consensus among European elites
    - This consensus explains the attacks on slavery in the metropolitan territories of the major European states, many were possessors of slave colonies.
  - Now held that slavery was incompatible with English, Portugueses, or French rights
  - In 1770’s, Portugal, England, and, France all achieved decrees and supported the decisions which abolished slavery within their Continent and nearby Atlantic Islands
Abolitionism cont.

- Followed by a growing abolitionist consensus of radical republicans and millenarian and evangelical Protestants in northern colonies of North America.

- In 1770’s and 1780’s gradualist abolitionists schemes were developed which declared all newborn slaves to be free and, which required their apprenticeship to be under their parent’s masters well into early adulthood.

- The first regions in America to declare abolition were the northern states of North America: Vermont in 1777 → Pennsylvania and Massachusetts in 1780 → Rhode Island and Connecticut in 1784.
  - All of these areas had relatively small populations of slaves, and mostly found in domestic service.
The French movement of 1789 directly confronted the conflict of the enslavement of humans in an egalitarian society.

In 1788, an anti-slavery society known as the Amis des Noirs was founded in France with support from British Quakers.

- This upper-class organization had little impact until the French Revolution.
- Even though the growing debate over colonial representation and the civil rights of free mulattoes and blacks which permitted the Amis to extend the discussion of abolitionism to huge audience.

In February of 1794 the assembly emancipated and apprenticed only the 491,000 slaves of Guadalupe and Saint Domingue.

- Napoleon’s overthrow of the abolition decree to push back the black rebels and led to an immediate emancipation to all slaves remaining in Saint Domingue.

However the events of the French Revolution only somewhat affected abolitionist sentiments in other American Societies.

It would take more than a consensus of radicals and evangelicals to destroy the institution.

Thus began a campaign of mass mobilization within Europe against slavery.

- This campaign concentrated first on American slavery system, on the African slave trade.
Abolition of the Slave Trade

- In 1787, a Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade was formed in England
- As early as 1788, through legislation established a limit on a number of slaves carried by a tonnage ship
- The anti-slave trade campaign quickly spread to all nations of Europe and America
- In 1787 The U.S. Congress abolished the slave trade
  ○ Thus being the 1st nation to stop its slave trade
  ○ During 1810’s and 1820’s, all new major Latin American republics abolished the slave trade
- The English anti-slave-trade movement mounted a big effort to abolish the slave-trading of all nations
  ○ They pressured the British government to force all governments to end the trade
- France was the most important affected trader of African slaves before the period of the French Revolution
Abolition of the Slave Trade cont.

- In 1820, British navy began its policy of patrolling the African Coast, and the government extracted from many European powers the right to search their vessels on high seas
  - Most of the major European naval powers had granted Britain this essential right by the 1840s
    - Brazilians followed, and so did the United States
- From 1808 to 1850, the Spaniards and the Portuguese refused to conform these demands
- Forced all these nations to accept mixed judicial commissions to condemn vessels caught in the trade
- Spaniards, whose Cuban possession remained their most important colony
  - Refused all demands for abolition, or carried out absurd decrees which did not stop the trade
- In 1840s, minor trade to Puerto Rico was completely terminated
  - It would take the united U.S. and British blockade of the island to finally force the end of the slave trade to Cuba
Abolition in America

- Many abolitionists were convinced that by ending the slave trade would also end of American slavery.

- Along with end of the slave trade was the fall of the slave population slowing down. And quickly the American-born slave population began to receive positive growth rates in emancipation societies.

- Emancipation of the slaves was far more difficult and costly affair.

- Slave-owners fought the emancipationist and in every case abolition of slavery was only achieved through political and/or military intervention. Slave-owners demanded cash compensation for their slaves and the right to freely use emancipated slaves as “apprentices.”

- Masters even fought or delayed every move toward abolition.
"Scene on a West Indian Plantation--Slaves Receiving the News of Their Emancipation."
1834
British Government

- After numerous petitions to the parliaments and great debates, the British government abolished slavery in 1834
  - However planters fought hard enough that the metropolitan government accepted their demands before freeing 668,000 slaves
    - Included both a generous cash settlement, plus a six-year apprenticeship for all slaves in the beginning of 1834
  - Only the bitter apprenticeship strikes and disturbance by the ex-slaves themselves that put an end to the system of slave labor
Dismantling of Slavery

- The move toward confrontational politics on part of the abolitionist in the post-1885 period, is the reason as to why they saw the dismantling of slavery.
- Almost all the major paulista cities were declaring slavery abolished and their territory a free zone.
  - This resulted the fugitive slaves to have a little difficulty in finding save havens.
  - Conflicts between police and armed slaves often became common.
- When the members of the imperial family were converted to a radical abolitionist position, there was little hope for the slave-owners.
- In May of 1888, the government finally decreed immediate and totally uncompensated emancipation for all the slaves.
  - Meaning, that the government accepted immediate and contribution to freeing all the slaves.
  - Thus was the largest remaining slave regime in America destroyed, and with its destruction African slavery was finally brought to an end in all the Americas.
  - Although, the legal ending of slavery did not end the influence on American Life.
Towards the third decade of the 20th century, ex-slaves and ex-master fought to control the resources that had been created under slavery.

- The outcome of this struggle varied from region to region, but the process of transition was almost as long and bloody as abolition and emancipation had been.
- The impact of this struggle in the Americas brought about one of the most fundamental changes in the world economy in the 19th century.

Abolition profoundly transformed labor relations.

- Slave emancipation became the major impulse for the migration of Asian laborers to the Americas.
- It was one of the key factors promoting the transatlantic migration of southern Europeans to Brazil.
Brazil

- From being a supervised labor force organized in groups and employing women in all aspects of basic agricultural production, plantation labor shifted to family units of production
  - Control over actual working conditions was given over to the individual workers themselves
  - The transition also meant an increasing sexual division of labor, as women shifted out of plantation field work
  - It also affected the rhythm of agricultural production, for the marked seasonal occupation of labor during harvesting and planting became a more pronounced aspect of plantation agriculture in the New World

- Free womb law - 1825 (Brazil)
  - 1842 - Compensation not paid to masters

- Chile and Mexico stand out as they almost immediately turned toward abolition as their first acts

- This transition from slave to free labor also opened a new chapter in the struggle between ex-masters and ex-slaves for control of land and labor
  - In every former society, these two groups fought bitterly either to maintain or destroy the traditional plantation system
  - The freed the slaves of the rural areas wanted to own their own lands, and they wanted freedom from any type of coerced labor

- This political, economic, and social conflict was in the end, much influenced by the economic viability of the plantation regimes which survived.

- Sometimes the limitations on alternative lands or occupations for the slaves saved the marginal producers from going out of production
  - In some cases, even the best of local conditions could not prevent world economic conditions from throwing victory to the ex-slaves
  - Thus free black wage-laborers, Chinese indentured workers, and slaves were all laboring on the large estates at the time of transition
  - So, it was a relatively simple process to shift into free labor
Without the need for maintaining the slave labor force on a yearly basis, these post-emancipation sugar plantations became even more pronounced seasonal operations with a clearly defined “dead season” in which no work was performed.

- Abolition also encouraged the total reorganization of sugar production itself in the most advanced regions.
- In the Northeast of Brazil, a similar process of adjustment occurred.
- Series of severe droughts in the Northeast, which began in the 1880s.
- Subsequent crises in subsistence forced many ex-slave peasants into part-time wage-labor on their old estates.

In the coffee fields of Sao Paulo, the transition was somewhat different.

- Coffee, like cotton, was an American crop for which world prices remained high throughout the transition period, providing the capital to aid the planters in their shift to free labor.
- This was crucial, since coffee planters found their labor crisis even more acute than those in sugar because of the wholesale abandonment of the coffee fazendas by the ex-slaves.
- With the city of Sao Paulo and other large urban centers expanding in the heart of the coffee zones.
The coffee planters had resisted the transition to the end, but in the 1870s and early 1880s they finally began to experiment with the use of European-immigrant indentured laborers. Most of these early paulista experiments were failures since the Europeans refused to accept the extremely restrictive labor contracts that Asians were forced to work under in other American regimes. European governments put pressure on the planters to produce both a freer labor system and one with much higher returns for the workers. Even then, the immigrants found that the repayment of the original passage money put too much of a limit on their earnings, so they refused to migrate to Brazil. The end result was that the planters were required to absorb all transportation costs, just as they had to accept families rather than single male workers as the base for their labor force.
Labor Shifts

- Labor of Italian families on Brazilian coffee estates led to a technical reorganization of the whole coffee-production process.
- This shift in labor and production arrangements was occurring as the coffee frontier was moving south and east into Parana from Sao Paulo.
  - This new frontier would be distinguished by small-farm production and the end of the old plantation organization.
- In the Guyana territories of the Netherlands and Great Britain the transition had much in common with the Brazilian experience.
  - Ex-slaves largely escaped the sugar plantations and were progressively replaced by immigrant indentured laborers.
  - Mainland colonies as well as in the French islands and the newer British sugar regions like Trinidad, there was experimentation with all types of immigrants.
  - The French and British from the 1830s to the 1860s actually tried to bring in free African workers, but this was to reminiscent of the slave trade and was eventually stopped by the respective metropolitan governments.
  - These areas, along with Surinam, brought in some 544,000 East Indians from the late 1830s until the 1910s to work in the sugar fields abandoned by the slaves.
- Movement toward emancipation went at a slower pace in American slave societies
- Protestant groups that were effective in English Abolition Movements were also important in United States
- Attempts to overthrow plantation slave regime of southern states didn’t happen until later 19th century
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Spanish American Republics</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Most of Spanish American Republics initiated gradual emancipation at the time of their independence by passing ‘free womb laws’</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>○ Liberated children of all free slaves</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Libertos and Manumisos</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>○ Required long term apprenticeship periods under old masters</td>
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<td><strong>No slave born prior to 1820’s decrees was freed</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Meant Slavery would continue with declining numbers into the 1840’s and 1850’s in most of these states</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Three republics of Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador, together had a slave population of 125,000 - 130,000 at time of independence in 1820’s</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Obtained independence under leadership of Simon Bolivar as a unified confederation called Gran Colombia.</strong></td>
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<td>○ (1821) State freed all slaves born after July 1821</td>
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• **juntas de manumision**
  ○ *Set up as collection of special taxes used to purchase freedom of those before that date*
• Abolitionist movement slowed
  ○ Slaveholders able to manipulate laws to own advantage in next two decades
• Ages in apprenticeship contracts changed from 18 years to 21, in one case 26 years
  ○ Guaranteed libertos would serve as slaves into 1840’s
• Some states returned to slave trading activities
  ○ Colombia
    ■ 800 slaves sold to Peru (1840’s)
• Total emancipation grew once more
  ○ Pressured each state to carry through immediate abolition for remaining slaves
  ○ Promised financial compensation for their masters
• Slave Population
  ○ 1/3 or less than at time of independence in most cases
Three Independent Republics

- Colombia
  - 54,000 slaves at end of colonial period now only over 16,000 (1851)
- Venezuela
  - 64,000 slaves (1810) now only 33,000 including manumisos (1854)
- Ecuador
  - 8,000 slaves at independence now only 2,000 by abolition (1852)
Liberating army of San Martin decreed gradual emancipation with free birth act (July 1821)

Apprenticeship laws kept libertos working for masters of their parents for the next two decades

Slavery declined slowly
  - Major slave rebellion of sugar workers who temporarily captured city of Trujillo (1848)

Slavery definitely abolished in late 1854
  - 89,000 slaves (1821) now only 25,000
  - Masters received compensation

Other south american republics followed similar path
  - Bolivia (1831)
    - Declared all slaves born since independence in 1825 to be free
    - Did not finally abolish slavery until 1851
The Peruvian “Experience”

- Uruguay
  - Free womb law of 1825
  - Still imported slaves from Brazil (1830’s)
  - (1842) no compensation paid to masters when slavery was definitely abolished
Chile and Mexico

- Unique in their almost immediate turn towards total abolition as their first acts
  - Chile (1823)
    - Freed 4000 slaves and became first Spanish American republic to do so
  - Argentina
    - First to begin emancipation
      - Free birth law (1813)
      - Total Abolition did not come until Constitution of 1853
  - Mexico
    - Still retained 3000 slaves before independence, freed them all by early 1830s

- Few Slaves in central America freed with compensation (1824)
- All continental republican governments eliminated slavery after 30 years
  - Majority through apprenticeship and partial compensation arrangements
Brazil, the Spanish Islands, and the United States

- Only major slave powers in second half of 19th century
  - Abolition was a long and slow process
- United States
  - Close ties between English and North American anti-slavery movements meant a long and intense process that reached its peak with a massive popular attack on slavery (1840’s - 1850’s)
  - Isolation of movement in Northern States guaranteed overthrow could only occur through civil war
  - US Civil War (1860’s) Finally Convinced Cuban and Brazilian intellectuals that slavery was set up for failure in the future
- Abolition movements began to develop within Brazil and Cuba finally
Cuba and Puerto Rico

- Problem within Complex Imperial Colonial Relationship
  - Involved struggle over control of relatively indifferent and changing central government
- Initially, abolitionism was associated with liberal movement in Spain
  - Only a minor part of reformist position
  - Most influential and important abolitionist leaders in Spain were Cuban or Puerto Rican Creoles
  - Cortes (1811 - 13) Colonial Delegates demanded gradualist emancipation in all the American Possessions
- Movement failed
  - Most of effective action against slave trade came from external British pressure
- (1815 - 1817) Strict but ineffective treaties against trade signed by the two countries
  - One condition was to set up mixed condemnation commissions in Havana to seize slave ships
British Consuls in Havana then became major advocates for abolition

- Extremely active in local politics (1820’s - 1830’s)
Spain

- **Cortes (1822 - 1823)**
  - Cuban radicals raised issue of slavery
- **Liberal government did not appear again until late 1860's**
- **End of Slave trade in Cuba**
  - Aided by treaties signed with British
    - Ended minor trade to Puerto Rico (1840’s)
  - Concluded through intervention of Union Navy in period of United States Civil War
- **US Civil War stimulated creation of first Spanish Abolitionist Society**
  - Established by a Puerto Rican in Madrid (1864)
- **Creation of first Spanish republic (1868) finally led Madrid to accept gradualist emancipation which it decreed September that year**
- **Weakness of government and start of independence rebellion in Cuba prevented enactment**
Spain

- Madrid government and all major parties now believed in the downfall of Slavery
  - Even conservatives supported the government decision (July 1870) to abolish slavery
- **Moret Law**
  - Freeing of all slaves born after its enactment and apprenticeship of the patrocinados to 22 years of age
    - Half wages to be paid when they reached 18
  - Everyone 65 years old and above were freed
Moret Decree within Cuba

- First Cuban rebellion (1868) guaranteed that Moret Decree would only be applied to the government side of the lines
  - Emancipation effectively carried out in a series of decrees in Puerto Rico (1872 - 1873)
- Government action brought down the number of slaves within Cuba
  - (1869) 363,000 slaves were now only 228,000 (1878)
    - Half of loss responsible by Moret Reforms
  - Moret Law finally applied to Cuba (1880) ahead of defeating the rebels after a delay
    - (1883) 100,000 slaves left
- Opposition to apprenticeship was strong among ex slaves
  - Many older slaves demanded immediate abolition
- October (1886) – Disturbance led Madrid government to terminate the apprenticeship system altogether and free the last remaining slaves
Abolitionist Movement in Brazil

- Struggle between classes and religions within one nation instead of between a metropolis and colonies
- Attack on slavery developed much later than elsewhere in Latin America because of how embedded it was within Brazilian Society
- (1850) Elite group of liberal urban intellectuals fought for the abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade
- Signing of a treaty with the British outlawing trade in 1831 had little effect
  - Pressure continued to build until final abolition was forced on Empire (1850) due to internal popular pressure influenced by British actions
- Ten year period of tranquility in which slavery was unchallenged
  - US Civil War and mounting international campaigns against Brazil reopened the debate of slavery (1860’s)
- Led Government elite to move toward a gradualist abolitionary approach
### Brazil Law of Free Birth

- **September 1871**
- Emancipated Slaves (ingenuos) had to serve apprenticeship until 21 years of age before effective freedom was granted
- State supported emancipation fund was established to purchase freedom for those born before 1872
- Government leaders believed they resolved the issue
  - Serious abolition agitation disappeared temporarily
    - (1880) Planter class enjoyed relative peace and control over their slave force
• Popular movement of abolitionism finally began a decade later
• Quickly challenged the foundations of slavery within Brazil
• Although leadership typically came from Elite Families, Brazilian Abolitionism was unusual in having a significant minority of mulatto and black leaders
  ○ Engineer Andre Reboucas
  ○ Pharmacist Jose de Patrocinio
  ○ Politician Luiz Gama
  ○ Fugitive Slave Leader Quintano Lacerda and his 10,000 fugitive slave community in the port city of Santos
• Included large numbers of free black workers on the docks and in the railroads
  ○ Refused to transport slaves and who assisted runaways
Further Abolition activity

- Early 1880’s – Internal Slave trade finally abolished
  - Taxes established on local sales of slaves
- decrees did not stem rising tide of abolitionist activity
- (1884) Abolitionists succeeded in proclaiming the northeastern state of Ceara as a free state
- Active underground railroad immediately developed with free people helping individual slaves escape their owners and reach Ceara
  - Slave owners fought growing disobedience
    - Another set of decrees (Passed September 1885) obtained a harsh fugitive slave law
      - Severely punished anyone assisting a runaway slave
      - Had the effect of provoking the abolitionist movement into taking a stand of civil disobedience
Growing Slavery Abolition

- 1885 onward – Pressure increased
- Each year, more and more cities declared slavery to be abolished within their limits
  - State of Amazonas joined ranks of free Ceara
  - Most importantly, Sao Paulo itself became a center of mass mobilization
- November 1886 – Strikes by free workers, many colored, finally forced the city of Santos to declare itself free
  - End of the year, 10,000 fugitives were living in the town
- Though slave owners proclaimed their emancipationist sentiments and claimed that the (1871 - 1885) decrees were ending slavery, the radical abolitionists challenged these assertions
- Emancipation Fund
  - (1871 - 1888) freed only 32,000 slaves
  - Three times that number of slaves purchased their own freedom or were granted manumission
Abolitionist Leaders held that all the gradual decrees were having little effect on the institution

- (1885) 1.1 million slaves still existed