

coercion and freedom. The editors probably should have addressed this issue in a more systematic way, as a number of recent studies have questioned the usefulness of categories such as 'freedom' and 'unfreedom' as analytical tools in order to understand the global history of labour and migration.

Resisting bondage in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia

Edited by Edward A. Alpers, Gwyn Campbell, and Michael Salman. London and New York: Routledge, 2007. Pp 116. Hardback £95, ISBN: 978-0-415-77151-1.

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This is the companion volume to *Slavery and resistance in Africa and Asia* (2005) and the latest of three volumes in the Routledge Studies in Slave and Post-slave Societies and Cultures series. The first and second volumes, *The structure of slavery in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (2004) and *Abolition and its aftermath in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia* (2005), were both edited by Gwyn Campbell. Together, these four volumes, published under the collaborative leadership of Gwyn Campbell, largely through his 'Avignon-style' conferences of pre-circulated and workshoped papers, have transformed the scholarship on slavery and bondage in the Indian Ocean world (IOW). By bringing together scholars with specific area expertise, they have contributed to our understanding of the meanings of bondage in a comparative context in this vast geographical realm stretching from the southern tip of Africa to the eastern regions of Asia. It is tempting to write a review essay on the four volumes together, particularly because several authors contribute to more than one volume and there are consistent themes, including that of resistance, which appear in all of them. However, this review will focus on *Resisting bondage* as the latest work in the growing field of Indian Ocean slave studies.

Campbell, Alpers, and Salman begin their 'Introduction' by stating what has by now become obvious in Indian Ocean studies: 'Bondage in the IOW assumed a multiplicity of often overlapping forms that varied according to region and inevitably changed over time' (p. 1). Indigenous societies in the

IOW were generally characterized by hierarchical social structures with vertical social obligations determined by status that included various forms of bondage and slavery. The IOW included societies in which people practised one or more of the world religions – Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as well as people who retained animist beliefs, even in the face of concerted efforts at conversion. Islam had the greatest impact on slave-owners' attitudes and behaviours towards their slaves. Slaves within these societies were themselves not a homogenous group, with ethnicity, gender, and age affecting their individual forms of bondage and potentials for resistance and accommodation. Using the concept of 'open' and 'closed' systems of slavery, the editors argue that indigenous open slave systems in Africa and Southeast Asia provided greater avenues for social mobility than the more rigid social hierarchies of East Asian societies and European-run plantation colonies.

The various forms of bondage produced correspondingly complex forms of resistance, including revolt, varieties of communal defiance, religious conversion, petitions to the state, passive resistance and strikes, attacks against oppressors, and the ubiquitous use of escape either by individuals or by groups. The editors also use the category of 'negative forms of resistance' to refer to the use of anti-childbearing practices by women, self-mutilation, and the abandonment of crafts by skilled workers. Forms of accommodation can also be analysed as strategies used by slaves to alleviate their servile status.

Nigel Worden summarizes the scholarship on slavery and resistance at the Cape of Good Hope, arguing that the multiethnic background of slaves from around the IOW from the beginning of the Dutch colony until the end of the eighteenth century, when it was conquered by the British, was one of the main factors inhibiting large-scale slave revolts either in Cape Town, where slaves were in the majority, or in rural areas where slaves and bonded indigenous labourers toiled in small numbers on relatively isolated farms. Escape either overland or by sea remained the main form of resistance. *Droster* (escapee) individuals and groups lived in the mountainous terrain near settlements, or beyond the borders of the colony (including in neighbouring African societies), but the common occurrence of voluntary return by half-starving escapees (soldiers and slaves) revealed the difficulties of survival in this region. By the nineteenth century, a growing locally born slave population combined with a servile, indigenous, landless Khoi people to form the

core of three unique and unrelated uprisings that Worden characterizes as ‘revolts of the unfree’, which took place from the end of the slave trade through the era of emancipation.

Three chapters examine forced labour and resistance in the islands of the south-west Indian Ocean. Campbell focuses on the nineteenth-century Merina empire in Madagascar, pointing out that most of the non-elite population were either slaves or subject to *corvée* labour. Resistance was determined by ethnic origin and type of work. African slaves from the continent tended not to revolt but to look for opportunities to better their lot, including the use of collective action. Malagasy slaves differed in their response according to their place of origin. Merina slaves rarely rebelled but non-Merina slaves fled. *Fanompoana* (*corvée* or conscript) labour demanded of free Malagasy was considered more onerous than slavery, so widespread desertion and non-cooperation undermined the Merina state and facilitated its conquest by the French. The expansion of the Merina empire resulted in Sakalava from Madagascar fleeing to Mayotta in the Comoro Islands during the mid nineteenth century, ultimately leading the islanders to seek French colonial status. The French attempted to develop a plantation economy increasingly dependent on forced labour, resulting in an insurrection during 1856 that was put down by the French partly through exiling leaders to Reunion and re-imposing harsh labour legislation. Eric Jennings’ chapter on Madagascar under the Vichy government during the Second World War argues that the regime acquiesced to colonists’ demands for unpaid labour enforced by repressive punishments. Many Malagasy responded by absconding but there was also the emergence of political protests. This resulted in repeated attempts by the colonial state, even after the defeat of Vichy, to reinforce forced labour on the island.

Roger Knight’s chapter on ‘sugar and servility’ in mid-nineteenth-century Java calls for a global perspective on sugar production and the use of various forms of forced labour. The Dutch colonial *Cultuurstelsel* (forced cultivation system) required peasants to perform *corvée* labour to cultivate export staples. However, the form of this forced labour varied considerably, as did forms of coercion. Passive resistance by peasants and villagers forced to cultivate sugar did not commonly lead to violence because continued access to land tended to assure at least partial acquiescence. As Shigeru Sato argues, desertion and dereliction remained the main forms of resistance by Javanese to *romusha* (conscript labour) imposed by the Japanese after their occupation of

Indonesia during the Second World War. An interesting comparison to these chapters on Java can be made with Francesca Declich’s essay on the Italian colonization of the Lower Juba River region of southern Somalia and the British occupation of the area during the Second World War. Italian colonists demanded access to the labour of local Zigula peasants, who resisted the imposition of forced labour regimes on colonial farms and *corvée* labour for public works. The Italian regime also implemented a system of forced marriage, which Declich argues amounted to girl sexual slavery, to stabilize a male workforce on colonial farms. The British encouraged the continuation of these forms of forced labour, which were enforced by armed *askari* (African colonial police). Forms of resistance varied, including escape and non-cooperation, as well as organized protest.

The final chapter of the volume is a co-authored comparison of unfree labour in three colonial contexts from 1920–1950: Indians working in the tea gardens of Assam under the British, Vietnamese on the rubber plantations of Indo-China under the French, and Aborigines on the cattle stations of northern Australia. The case studies are presented sequentially, with comparative themes being drawn out in the conclusion. The authors – Robert Castle, James Hagan, and Andrew Wells – are long-term collaborators and this chapter is one of the fruits of their collective interest in labour history. James Hagan died in May 2010 and the tributes written by his co-authors point to the importance that Hagan placed on asking ‘big questions’.¹ In this chapter, despite the vastly different evolution of these case studies of large-scale capitalist export commodity production, the commonalities of resistance can be found in the shift from individual to collective action. Desertion, self-mutilation, and violence gave way to collective protest encouraged by growing nationalist and anti-racist sentiments but fuelled by beliefs in a mythical-moral past. In all three contexts, the states supported repression of resistance but their actions were not entirely driven by employers; instead, state policies were mitigated by both national development and welfare concerns and international pressure against forced labour.

I have devoted considerable space in this review to detailing each chapter in order to point out that

1 Rob Castle, ‘Jim Hagan: a memoir’ and Andrew Wells, ‘Researching and writing history with Jim Hagan’, *Labour History*, 98, May 2010.

they can be analysed productively in various combinations. One of the big questions is that regarding the resilience of forced labour regimes into the twentieth century, well after formal abolition of slavery. The role of the state in modifying and enforcing forced labour regimes is crucial. Six case studies in four chapters deal with the early twentieth century and the Second World War, arguing that forms of bondage were retained and modified in each case, prompting the continuation of older forms of resistance alongside emerging collective protests. Chapters from the other volumes mentioned at the beginning of this review would extend the comparative case studies of this crucial period. This volume can be productively read alone and provides an essential contribution to IOW slavery studies, comparative slavery, and world history. Together, however, the series constitutes a foundation of collective and collaborative scholarship that has provided a new foundation for analysing bondage in the Indian Ocean that not only present numerous case studies across the entire region but also suggest avenues for further research.

World history, the big eras: a compact history of humankind for teachers and students

By Edmund Burke III, David Christian, and Ross E. Dunn. Los Angeles, CA: National Center for History in the Schools, UCLA, 2009. Pp. i + 91. Paperback US\$15.00, ISBN: 978-0-963218-7-9.

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As all teachers of world history survey courses know, it is a difficult subject to teach well. Not only must they continually expand their knowledge of different places and times in the past, but they must also present hundreds or even thousands of years of the world's history in one or two quarters, semesters, or terms in a meaningful way. These challenges, moreover, are only magnified by the fact that many teachers recruited to give the course, at both university and secondary levels, lack formal training in world historical methods and scholarship.

In part to mitigate these challenges, a team of scholars and teachers directed by Ross Dunn at San

Diego State University created the 'World history for us all' programme – a free, web-based, model curriculum for world history survey courses that includes overview essays, lesson plans, and images based on up-to-date scholarship in the field of world history (<http://worldhistoryforusall.sdsu.edu>). *World history: the big eras* is taken directly from this project, as the volume brings together in print the overview essays that introduce the nine 'big eras' into which the team have divided the global past. While the overview essays are just the starting point for each 'big era' in the web version of 'World history for us all', in *World history* they are meant to stand alone as a very brief 'interpretive narrative of the human past from the origins of the universe to today' (p. 1).

This book is not intended to provide exhaustive detail or nuanced interpretations of the world's past. Rather, it is meant to provide a framework around which the myriad details of world history can begin to fall into place. In so doing, it allows a look at the 'forest' of world history without getting bogged down in the many 'trees' that seem to so confound teachers and students of the course alike. By stripping the world's past down into nine chronological eras in only ninety-one pages, *World history* encourages readers to conceptualize human history in its totality in one reading, rather than to build it piecemeal from thousands of historical details absorbed over long periods of time.

The book itself consists of an introduction, nine chapters that correspond with the nine 'big eras' identified in the 'World history for us all' curriculum, and an epilogue. All of the chapters, including the introduction and epilogue, are followed by study questions that promote engagement and interpretation rather than simple regurgitation. Another feature common to the nine chapters on the 'big eras' is that all content is divided into three broad subsections: humans and the environment, humans and other humans, humans and ideas. This feature allows students to make comparisons and to comprehend massive changes across vast swaths of time.

The introduction offers a self-conscious account of the authors' convictions about the purposes of world history, the varying scales on which it should be studied, and the ways in which our own historical moment has allowed us to 'think the world' as never before (p. 4). In addition, it introduces the geographical terms used throughout the book, since some – like Afroeurasia and Indo-Mediterranea – may be unfamiliar to readers.