

the United States and Britain) upon the armed forces and upon patronage to maintain itself in office.

The book lacks theoretical focus and makes little attempt at analysis. In some instances, information is presented and assertions made without documentation. Relatedly, there is some tendency to resort to local political gossip in accounts of political events and of the behavior and motivations of the participants. Finally, the narrative tends to be disjointed at times. All these problems may well be inevitable given the nature of the book as an account of the political history of Guyana after World War II. They do not detract from the worth of the book as a case history of the politics of a country where deliberate and blatant intervention has produced severe consequences for economic and political development.

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Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807–1834. By B. W. HIGMAN. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984. Maps. Tables. Figures. Statistical Supplement. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xxxiii, 781. Cloth. \$65.00.

In 1976, Barry Higman produced a prize-winning book on the slave population and economy of Jamaica between the ending of the slave trade and the freeing of the slaves, based largely on the Jamaican slave registration returns. Now, after eight years' toil he has achieved much the same for the whole British Caribbean—more than twice as many slaves, in twenty different colonies.

The chief contribution of the earlier book was to demonstrate, and to a large extent explain, the great range of slave experience and demographic performance within the single island, using rigorous quantification, elegant graphics, and a sensitive interplay between statistical and nonnumerical source materials. This time, the range was much greater, while the registration returns turned out to be far from consistent in form, and the corroborative sources far less copious and helpful than those from Britain's chief Caribbean colony.

After a brief chapter explaining his purpose and pointing out the salient problems and pitfalls, Higman combines a comprehensive description of the slave registration materials with an explanation of his analytical and comparative method. Like the book as a whole, this section is pitched at exactly the right level between intelligent layman and expert. With daunting modesty, however, Higman almost apologizes that his analysis is "principally aggregative," that his data were only selectively computerized, and that some of his 75 figures and 242 tables are not fully discussed in the text and remain as semiprocessed raw materials for other scholars. This, surely, undersells what is the most detailed, comprehensive, and sophisticated statistical survey of British West Indian slavery ever published—based upon a distinction at the "macro" level among first-, second-, and third-

phase sugar colonies (acquired before 1700, in 1763, and in 1815, respectively) and “marginal” colonies (British Honduras, The Caymans, Bahamas, Anguilla, Barbuda), which will doubtless become standard, and illuminated by judiciously selected “micro” studies of individual plantations and towns.

The core of the book is the six long chapters—over 300 pages—analyzing the growth, distribution, and structure of slave populations; the distinction between rural and urban regimes; and questions of health, fertility, and natural increase. Higman illustrates how the overall decline in the slave population between 1807 and 1834 disguised great variations between different colonies, regimes, and types of slave, and goes far to explain what it was about sugar plantations that could be demographically disastrous, while nonplantation colonies were almost the reverse. His analysis of general factors such as the differences between Africans and creoles, males and females, Black and “coloured,” town and country slaves, and of the influence of age, status, work required, climate, food, housing, clothing, and disease is magisterial. Certain passages, however, stand out with even more conclusive force. These include the discussions of family life, of task work, provision grounds, and marketing networks, of matters only dimly understood at the time, such as slave customs and behavior (including the mysterious “dirt-eating”), the etiology of diseases, the effects of medical treatment, and the dubious value of white slave doctoring. Almost as a bonus, the book includes a summary treatment of intercolonial slave transfers and their effects, an analysis of the precise origins in Africa of British West Indian slaves, and of the differential heights by ages (and thus maturation) of African and creole slaves.

The most scrupulous of scholars, Higman will take his data as far as it will go, but never farther. This can be both impressive and mildly disappointing. For example, one looks in vain in the chapter on fertility, mortality, and natural increase for the final resolution of the conundrum of whether the decline in slave numbers after the slave trade ended was chiefly the result of increased mortality (as the abolitionists presumed) or of decreasing fertility (as the planters believed). Higman convincingly shows that the issue has been clouded by serious understating in the records of infant mortality (and thus slave fertility as well), and points out that the equations varied confusingly from place to place and time to time. Thus the best he can aim for is “a more precise ordering of the variables” involved.

More unequivocally disappointing is the almost casual conclusion of the textual half of the book. A tenth chapter on “Refuge and Resistance” does what it can with the data in the registration returns on manumission and marronage, patchily augmented from other sources, but the discussion of overt resistance and the rebellions of 1816, 1823, and 1831 is meager. Similarly, the final five-page chapter grandly entitled “Slavery and Population History” does not adequately summarize the book, but, rather, tantalizes us by suggesting areas in which the author might have speculated beyond his data and contextual frame. These include a recognition of the degree to which the material deployed plays up the “causal pri-

macy of material conditions” at the expense of ideology, and of the ways in which the book makes virtually no estimate of the psychological effects of material conditions, no temporal linkages with what are referred to as the relatively horrific conditions during the earlier “gold” and “silver” ages of sugar, and no spatial linkages with slavery outside the British Caribbean, with conditions in Africa, or in industrial Britain.

This, though, is not to detract from what is the nearest one could hope for to a definitive work on its self-defined topic. The publishers as well as the author are to be congratulated. It is rare today to see such a spacious and well-edited tome—more than 800 pages, more tables, figures, maps, and notes than text, an excellent up-to-date bibliography and index—sold, moreover, at a price that is still in the troposphere.

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RELATED TOPICS

Handbook of North American Indians. Vol. 10: *Southwest*. WILLIAM C. STURTEVANT, General Editor. ALFONSO ORTIZ, Volume Editor. Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1983. Maps. Illustrations. Tables. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xvi, 868. Cloth. \$25.00.

For the past two decades a major scholarly effort has been under way to review the current knowledge of native peoples in North America. The results are being published in the monumental *Handbook of North American Indians*, a multi-volume encyclopedic inventory of ten major geographic-cultural areas, complemented by several topical volumes. The first tomes were published in 1978; the present publication is the fifth part to appear and the second on the Southwest, the only area to be treated in two volumes. Volume 10 covers the whole of the greater Southwest, including northern Mexico and the northern fringe of Mesoamerica, but excluding the Pueblo peoples of New Mexico and Arizona (dealt with in volume 9).

Preceding the preface is a map that illustrates the area and tribal groups covered. This is followed by a brief presentation on the technical alphabet, non-technical equivalents, and related English pronunciations. Treatment of tribal groups begins with the Yuman-speaking peoples in the northwest and proceeds counterclockwise in an expanding spiral through southern Arizona, northwest Mexico, north central and northeast Mexico, southern Texas, and New Mexico and eastern Arizona. Each tribal summary is ten to twenty pages in length and