

When comparing the changes spurred from the first encounters of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries and the subsequent expansion of the sugar trade or the Atlantic Revolutions, the evidence guides us to determine that the lesser had a far greater impact, which affected a significant change in world history. This was carried out through an excessive lust for wealth and desire for control as masters of the world they had inhabited for so long in poverty.

The old world had seemed to be partially at peace; when war was made, it was not sought through greed, at least not the greed of an entire nation. China had played a massive role in securing trade so that all that were kind could participate and that “bandit soldiers who looted and plundered recklessly we exterminated. Because the sea routes became pure and peaceful, the foreign peoples could rely upon them and pursue their occupations safely. All of this was done to the aid of the goddess...”<sup>1</sup> Europeans were often labeled the aggressive barbarians and bandits with the “Portuguese behaviour originated as a development of the Crusader mentality...”<sup>2</sup> and their religion enablement for a search for gold and plunder from all nations. These documents paint a picture of a power struggle of some countries at peace with themselves, their wealth, and their religion, leaving some, namely the European nations, struggling with their identity and ruled by a religion of greed.

After the initial conquests and rise to power, Europeans began to spit up the world as they saw fit, with Portugal and Spain dividing the world and splitting their reign equally as if the lands they claimed to own were vacant and for the taking. Through the conquests, they had

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<sup>1</sup> Zheng He's Inscriptions in Stone (1431)

<sup>2</sup> Chang Hsieh's Advice to Traders (1618)

claimed much of the New World, determined to tap itself through the utilization of its resources, both natural and held by the local population.

With the Europeans having now accumulated a mass of wealth and going through a period of economic, cultural, and spiritual enlightenment, we begin to see a form of capitalism and the subjugation of individuals based on race, specifically Africans. The new world would have to be sustained in the slave trade. One of the most significant economic factors that drove the slave trade was the sale of sugar cane with the employment of “a prodigious number of ships, of sailors, of merchants, of tradesmen, manufacturers, mechanics, and laborers, are continually employed, and reap a profit thereby...”<sup>3</sup> ultimately benefitting the motherland. As this new greed further enabled the slave trade, the rise in atrocities and othering began to rise. Africans were stripped of their humanity and subject to the use of cruel instruments from the whip to an “iron muzzle, thumb screws, &c” and often “applied at the slightest faults.”<sup>4</sup> Even with this intense othering and oppression of the African population, we still bear witness to evidence that there were still some Europeans that did not agree with the peculiar institution of slavery as sugar not produced by slaves was an advertisement approach taken by the East India Sugar Basins.

Not only was there a slight rift in the European population and their belief in the use of slaves for labor, but the new gathering of excessive wealth stemmed from the early encounters in global populations had led to mass corruption in the European world, which the French were the first to address. The citizens of France grew tired of being overtaxed while royalty, aristocracy,

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<sup>3</sup> A Letter to Parliament (1745)

<sup>4</sup> Olaudah Equiano, *The Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1814)

and the clergy all enjoyed relief from such burdens. The Third Estate (the commoners) took up arms against the crown and nobility and decapitated Louis XVI.<sup>5</sup>

The French Revolution was a spark of a movement upon which Europeans revolted against the nobility and royalty, and eventually, slaves caught on and revolted against their masters. This, tied to the desire of many Europeans to abolish slavery, ended with the abolition of slavery and the introduction of constitutional doctrines across nearly all European colonies. Within these constitutions, each almost uniform in all their requirements, was a call for liberty and justice for all, with “all citizens being equal in the eyes of the law”<sup>6</sup> and “Liberty for every man to speak, write, and publish his opinions without having his writings subject to any censorship or inspection before publication, and to worship as he pleases.”<sup>7</sup> Even with this awakening era of revolution and reform, there are still indicators that the masters and aristocracy were still very much in control of governing every man as to be a Senator-elect, you still have to hold an excessive amount of wealth and property, “and he shall possess therein a clear property worth six thousand dollars...”<sup>8</sup> Not only was there still codified division between classes of wealth, when inspecting the constitution of Saint-Domingue, there is more control exerted against the African population, illustrating the further division from class to race. Not only were Africans told what they had to worship, “the catholic, apostolic, Roman faith,”<sup>9</sup> but the governor was told to “censor by the authority of his commissaries, all writings designed for printing on the island he shall cause to be suppressed all those coming from abroad that would tend to corrupt

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<sup>5</sup> Wiesner, Wheeler, Doeringer, Curtis, *Discovering the Global Past; A look at the Evidence*, Fourth Edition, Vol. II: Since 1400 (Boston, 2012) P. 172

<sup>6</sup> Declaration of Rights of Man and of the Citizen, Approved by the National Assembly of France (1789)

<sup>7</sup> Excerpts from the French Constitution (1791)

<sup>8</sup> Federal Constitution for the States of Venezuela (1811)

<sup>9</sup> Saint-Domingue Constitution of 1801 (1801)

mores or trouble the new colony; he shall punish the authors or colporteurs, according to the severity of the situation.”<sup>10</sup>

With the earlier encounters of the 15th and 16th centuries, there may have been a single revolution in the terms we know today. The level of greed may have never gotten to where it is today had Europeans succumbed to their demise through starvation and plague, but they survived and, through global interaction, took what they thought was theirs through their divine appointment. Regardless of revolutionary intervention, the outcome was still governance via a desire for wealth through greed, exploitation, and further subjugation.

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<sup>10</sup> Saint-Domingue Constitution of 1801 (1801)