

The history of the
caribbean is the
history of the
exploitation of labour



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In the above statement “ the history of the Caribbean is the history of the exploitation of labour,” it simply states that the Caribbean’s history is basically the history of its exploitation of labour. The definitions of keywords exploitation and labour must be considered. Exploitation can be defined as the practice of taking selfish or unfair advantage of a person or situation, usually for personal gain, while labour is defined as work done using the effort and strength of the body.

With the definitions obtained, it can now be stated that the history of the Caribbean is the history of the various situations in which labours were taken unfair advantage of, for personal gain by their employers. Firstly, the exploitation of labour of the Caribbean with reference to the Encomienda labours system. The Encomienda system was a trusteeship labour system employed by the Spanish Crown. The Spanish Crown utilized the Encomienda system during its conquests and colonization of the Americas as a way to compensate those who conquered native lands, thus a tool for expanding the Spanish Empire.

The Spanish Crown was granted control and responsibility of the peoples that they conquered, the native peoples, and were expected to convert them to Catholicism, in hope that they would subject to the Spanish rules. They even thought them their Spanish language, and, often least importantly, protected them from enemy tribes. In return for this protection, the natives were required to pay tribute to the Spanish Empire through labour and valuable goods.

It can clearly be seen that the natives were being treated unfairly in this system seen that they were forced to work hard in mines and on the <https://assignbuster.com/the-history-of-the-caribbean-is-the-history-of-the-exploitation-of-labour/>

plantations with little or nothing for their payment. This system created a recipe for corruption, abuse and disaster for the native peoples. For example, they were beaten brutally, they were kicked and whipped and the females were raped as little to no privacy was given to them. However, due to this, Spanish men were killed and forced to move due to the fact that the native peoples created warfare because of their ill treatment and also of the ways in which the native women were taken advantage of.

Another labour system that is referred to with the exploitation of labour in the Caribbean is slavery. The demand for slaves to cultivate sugarcane and other crops caused what came to be known as the triangle trade. This is when ships left Europe, stopped in Africa for trading then traveled to America where slaves were traded for sugar, rum, salt etc and then returned to Europe to begin trading again. Once they, the Africans, aboard the ships then they realized that they were being sent far away from home.

Because of this they jumped overboard into the sea, choosing to drown or to be eaten by sharks rather than to be taken away from their homeland. However, those who survived on the ship faced more abuses on the plantation where they were captured as slaves. Families were split up and the Africans were not allowed to learn to read or to write. African men, women and children were forced to work with the little that they had to eat or drink. Soon after the African slave population began to outnumber the Europeans and the native peoples because of the triangle trade.

The planters lived in a state of terror about the possibility of a rebellion and where cruel in their suppression of the slaves. This then went further than just whipping and the use of chains. Slaves were effectively imprisoned on <https://assignbuster.com/the-history-of-the-caribbean-is-the-history-of-the-exploitation-of-labour/>

their master's estates, forbidden to practice their religion, forbidden to speak their language and also forbidden to form groups without permission. Families were routinely and randomly split up. For example, at one point an entire island in the Eastern Caribbean was used as a farm for breeding slaves and then sold them to other Caribbean islands and to the Americans.

Slaves were named by their masters, that is, their names were changed from their native African names to European names or names that their masters saw fit for them. Despite this, however, the Africans were able to maintain their links with their cultures and also kept and retained most of their religion and customs. Some of their cultural forms that they retained were their religions, languages, food, medicine, music and art and their festivals. A review of slavery and the Encomienda labour systems as the history of exploitation of labour of the Caribbean.

Both labour systems had their similarities of being ill-treated, while their differences dealt with keeping their customs. The Encomienda was the labour system which the native peoples were ruled by the Spanish Empire. However, the Spanish were forced to move due to the fact that they were being killed by the native people. This was because the Spanish were ill-treating them. The other labour system that was discussed is slavery. This was when Africans were bought by the Europeans to work on the sugar-cane plantations.

They were separated from each other, had to live by the European rules and was forbidden to follow their customs. However, they managed to retain their customs and religion by forming small hid away groups. In conclusion, the history of the Caribbean is filled with struggle against colonialism and <https://assignbuster.com/the-history-of-the-caribbean-is-the-history-of-the-exploitation-of-labour/>

social injustice. From the discussion it shows that both labour systems, slavery and the Encomienda labour systems, plays a huge part in the history of the Caribbean as a history of exploitation of labour. The culture of the Caribbean is highly influenced by these two labour systems.

The native peoples were allowed to follow their customs while the Africans fought to follow their customs and religion. However, the experience of slavery has had a profound effect in shaping the modern Caribbean. It changed the population in terms of size, ethnicity, race and structure and also agricultural practices were changed. And it is through the African slaves, when they formed revolting groups they gained Emancipation. Hence, the history of the Caribbean is the history of exploitation of labour.