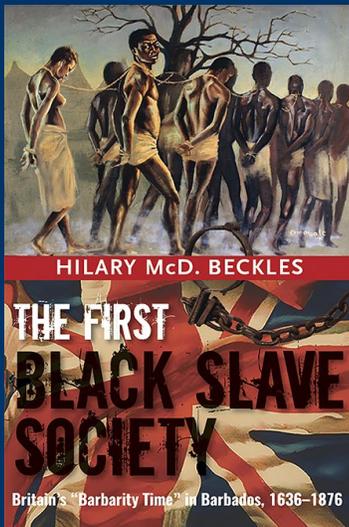


The First Black Slave Society

Britain's "Barbarity Time" in Barbados, 1636-1876

By:

Hilary McD. Beckles



The University of the West
Indies Press

7A GIBRALTAR HALL ROAD
UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
MONA CAMPUS
KINGSTON 7, JAMAICA

For Orders in:

USA & Carib. (800)848-6224

Canada (800)847-9736

Europe +44 (0)1767604972

Jamaica (876)922-7312

Visit www.uwipress.com

"Barbados, the beautiful Caribbean island known for its social amiability and political civility, was the site of the first 'black slave society' – the most systemically violent, brutal and racially inhumane society of modernity. . . . The society has a distinct social character and cultural identity that are rooted in its slavery past. Public perceptions of the nation remain linked to the legacies of slavery. Once described by an economist as closest in the Caribbean to a model of the 'pure plantation', first to be reformatted as a black slave society, Barbados remains the last to loosen the political stranglehold of plantocracy."
—From the preface

In this remarkable exploration of the brutal course of Barbados's history, Hilary McD. Beckles details the systematic barbarism of the British colonial project. Trade in enslaved Africans was not new in the Americas in the seventeenth century – the Portuguese and Spanish had commercialized chattel slavery in Brazil and Cuba in the 1500s – but in Barbados, the practice of slavery reached its apotheosis.

Barbados was the birthplace of British slave society and the most ruthlessly colonized. The geography of Barbados was ideally suited to sugar plantations and there were enormous fortunes to be made for British royalty and ruling elites from sugar produced by an enslaved, "disposable" workforce, fortunes that secured Britain's place as an imperial superpower. The inhumane legacy of plantation society has shaped modern Barbados and this history must be fully understood by the inheritors on both sides of the power dynamic before real change and reparatory justice can take place.

A prequel to Beckles's equally compelling *Britain's Black Debt*, *The First Black Slave Society: Britain's "Barbarity Time" in Barbados, 1636–1876* is essential reading for anyone interested in Atlantic history, slavery and the plantation system, and modern race relations.

HILARY McD. BECKLES is Professor of Economic and Social History and Vice-Chancellor, University of the West Indies. His many publications include *Britain's Black Debt: Reparations for Caribbean Slavery and Native Genocide*; *A Nation Imagined: The First West Indies Test Tour, 1928*; and *Freedoms Won: Emancipation, Identity and Nationhood in the Caribbean*.

CARIBBEAN HISTORY

ISBN 978-976-640-585-4

US\$35 (s) Paper



The University of the West Indies Press