9

Masterless People

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Maroons, Pirates, and Commoners

In the 16th century, the wealth of the Caribbean region and of the New World more broadly was generated largely by indigenous and African workers, and the riches they produced were transported by sea with the labor of sailors drawn from Spain's developing port cities. These intercontinental movements of people and commodities changed over time as the Dutch, French, English, and Danish played an increasingly active role. The combined labor of sailors and slaves made possible not only the luxury consumption of Europe's ruling classes but also the economic development, territorial wars, and voyages of conquest that continually reestablished their dominance of their own and other societies. At the same time the world was becoming smaller, as greater numbers of people from ever more distant regions were brought together in ways previously unimaginable. But while this was initially a world envisioned by the masters of the Caribbean and Atlantic economies, it also became a world for those who would have no masters at all.

Maroon Societies

The history of rebel slaves in the Caribbean was as old as slavery itself. In 1502, Governor Nicolás de Ovando arrived in Hispaniola to establish a permanent Spanish settlement. His fleet of 30 ships carried a cross-section of Spanish society, including African slaves. Among them was an unnamed man who wasted no time in escaping from his Spanish masters after arriving in the New World. He joined the indigenous communities that survived in the island's mountainous interior and became the first African maroon in the Americas (Price 1996, 1).

The English term "maroons" came from the Spanish *cimarrones*, which designated communities of "Indian" slaves who abandoned their work and formed mountain strongholds with the other survivors of genocide and slavery. As African women and men restocked the understaffed mines and estates of Spanish colonial masters, those who followed in the footsteps of their Taino forebears came to be known by the same name. Within a few decades, the word came to mean African slaves who fled their masters.

Resistance to slavery began in Africa and slowed the spread of African slavery in the Americas. Even as European slavers expanded the trade in the late 17th and 18th centuries to meet the surging needs of Caribbean sugar production, they met with resistance up and down the West African coast. Skilled mariners like the Kru kept Europeans off their shores and even assisted in the shipboard revolts of those already captured and taken to sea (Rediker 2004). The peoples of coastal Upper Guinea adopted a range of strategies to resist enslavement that prefigured the settlement strategies and defensive fortifications used by maroons in the Americas (Diouf 2003, 155–60; Price 1996, 220). As the Atlantic slave trade reached deeper into Africa, it drew more people with a wider range of ideas and experiences into this struggle. The resistance of groups that never left African soil sprang from the same well of ideas and reflected a common intellectual tradition (Diouf 2003, 62–78, 142–44; Searing 2002). Maroons and rebel slaves throughout the Caribbean invoked these and other traditions in their struggle for freedom (Campbell 1988, 4). African knowledge of the Caribbean itself also developed very early, with a 17th-century slave ship sailor reporting that Africans had "a more dreadful apprehension of Barbadoes than we can have of hell" (Heuman 1986, 17–18).

As important as African traditions were, however, it was the experience of slavery itself that drove thousands of enslaved women and men to attempt the flight to freedom. Regardless of their roots, these great masses of people were brought face to face with the production-oriented logic of plantation society, which placed them within ever more industrial and densely populated settings. To remain within the confines of such a society was to accept a world in which the act of whipping alone had "a thousand refinements" (James 1963, 12–13; Price 1996, 88). Hands

were shackled to feet and feet to blocks of wood, to prevent escape. Tin masks were secured over the faces of field slaves to prevent them from eating the sugarcane that they lived and died to produce. All manner of tortures were employed to enforce discipline and punish insubordination, and no parts of the body were off limits to mutilation.

For most of the enslaved, the path to freedom was shaped by their skills, their local geography, their degree of independence, and, most important, their relationships with their fellow slaves. Whether brought from Africa or acquired in the New World, skills such as experience in coastal navigation could provide the means for achieving freedom. For example, the Danish islands of St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. Jan had virtually no viable interior retreats in which rebel slaves could establish defensible communities, and the deforestation that came with the rapid expansion of sugar plantations removed what little tree cover might have provided shelter to runaways. With few other options, the enslaved women and men of the Danish islands used skills acquired on turtle fishing expeditions to navigate their way to a better life in adjacent islands. These "maritime maroons" depended on connections with urban slaves and free blacks in port cities like Charlotte Amalie to help ensure relatively easy access to idle seacraft (Hall 1985). Solidarity, manifested in networks of communication and reciprocity, was thus the foundation of all marronage. In a world of masters and slaves, those who sought to live on different terms would come to depend on such connections.

While many maroon communities would also develop connections to colonial society, others were relatively independent and autonomous and offered new opportunities to escaped slaves. When one escaped slave arrived at a forest hideout in French Guiana in 1747, he found a vibrant economy based on subsistence agriculture (Price 1996, 312–19). Newly arrived runaways were given garden plots that they cleared and planted, and they were provided for by the community until their crops were ready to eat. They planted manioc, millet, rice, sweet potatoes, yams, sugarcane, and bananas as well as cotton, from which they made their clothes.

More well-established maroon communities might acquire goods by hijacking trade caravans or even by trading with nearby towns. In fact, such connections with the colonial economy were increasingly the norm over time. For special ceremonial occasions, some maroons dressed in fine Spanish silks. Members of a maroon community in French Guiana stored their more utilitarian attire and other small goods in *pagarats*, double-plaited woven baskets first made by indigenous Caribs, which could be waterproofed with leaves and stacked, hung, or nested. In addition to the various foods produced on the garden plots, the maroons fished and hunted wild pig, deer, and jaguar. Similar practices prevailed in the early years of maroons and buccaneers on Jamaica, where the abundant livestock was described by an abbot in 1611 as "common to all" (Carey 1997, 68).

In spite of the communal agriculture and traditions of mutual aid, masterlessness was far from absolute within maroon societies, as is suggested by the place of women in their social order. Almost all maroon communities were disproportionately male, and the polygamous arrangements imposed by military strongmen exacerbated the skewed gender ratio (Price 1996, 19). A half-dozen women from the settlement in French Guiana eventually asked to be returned to their masters, arguing that they were kept in place "by force and threat of violence" (Price 1996, 318). Things seem to have been more equitable among the cimarrons of 16th-century Panama. Though they routinely kidnapped slave women from Spanish settlements to balance their numbers, historical records suggest that life for women remained far better in maroon communities than within slave society (Pike 2007, 251–54).

Although the incomplete and fragmentary historical records documenting maroon societies are inevitably more dense for the authoritarian and militaristic settlements most familiar to Europeans, the world the maroons made stands out as remarkably egalitarian for its day. Evidence of democratic elections survives for maroon officials in Jamaica, Cuba, and Panama (Price 1996, 41, 51, 260). Two separate slave plots in the 1690s threatened to overthrow the governments of Cartagena and Barbados and to elect an African king (Thornton 1998, 301–2). Security concerns and isolation did leave relatively hierarchical structures in place in many maroon societies, but even this changed over time (Price 1996, 19–22). One influence in that democratization may have been the other masterless peoples of the Caribbean, people who escaped similar conditions and formed their own alternative societies outside the bounds of colonial control.

Pirate Societies

The deep-sea sailing ships that crisscrossed the Atlantic from the time of Columbus until the Industrial Revolution have rightly been called "the most complex machine[s] of the epoch" (Perez-Mallaína 1998, 63). They held together the international economy centered on the Caribbean. The silver mines and sugar plantations that formed the basis of European empires, not to mention the large and ever-expanding number of African slaves who labored in them, were made possible by these vessels and by the maritime workers who made them move. Like the mines and plantations of the terrestrial world, each ship was a factory, an enclosure in which a small number of officers could successfully discipline and exploit the labor of large crews.

Like slaves, sailors recoiled against their working conditions. Justice was often applied arbitrarily: when in 1572 General Cristóbal de Eraso put some of his crew in stocks for using the Lord's name in vain, they protested that it was insult upon injury, "especially on a ship that is already jail enough by itself" (Perez-Mallaína 1998, 129). There was also the matter of wages. Sixteenth-century Spanish sailors made only slightly more than day laborers in urban Spain, while working under much more dangerous conditions. English sailors fared little better. Their wages were generally low, delinquency and fraud in payment were common, and slumps in trade could leave thousands unemployed and cut salaries in half in a matter of just a few years (Rediker 2004, 43, 23).

One alternative was the pirate ship. To understand what it meant to be a pirate, it helps to remember what it meant to be a maroon. In a world of masters and slaves, the maroon was neither. Masters and slaves were interlocked parts of the same system. Maroons could not have existed without that system—indeed, marronage arose out of and in direct response to it—but what defined a maroon community was its potential to transcend the dialectic between master and slave. In practice these societies took various forms, with varying degrees of engagement with the plantation system and varying degrees of masterlessness in their internal structure, but at the most fundamental level a maroon society existed in opposition to the world of masters and slaves. Pirates emerged from a similarly stratified society, each ship a wooden world contingent upon the domination of the captain over his crew. Although the world of captains and crews was destined to continue, pirates began to challenge the foundation of that system in the 17th-century Caribbean.

The first genuine pirates of the Caribbean were the buccaneers, and the first buccaneers were in fact maroons. The 1620 journal of a French sailor records an encounter on the coast of Hispaniola with two men, a "*marron*" and a "*nègre*," huddled around a campfire with a wooden grill that the two called by its indigenous name, *boucan*. The two men described how they and others subsisted by poaching Spanish livestock and living in common in the unoccupied northwestern section of the island. Their lifestyle appealed to men who were trapped for so much of their lives on ships and subjected to the whims of high seas and violent captains. When the French ship set sail a few days later, six of its crew had gone missing, swelling the ranks of these men of the boucan, the buccaneers (Moreau 2006, 58–59).

Conflicts within and between imperial powers presented new threats and new opportunities for the buccaneers. Many took to the sea as privateers—pirates in the service of whatever state would temporarily license their activities. At the same time, the Caribbean was increasingly becoming a nexus for the outcasts of societies on both sides of the Atlantic. Peasant uprisings and urban rebellions across Europe brought migrants to the Caribbean from regions known for widespread banditry and vagabondage. When the English Revolution ended in 1660, many of the rebels—who had sought protection for their common lands, overthrow of the monarchy, and an end to African slavery—fled across the sea and took to buccaneering (Linebaugh and Rediker 2000, 104–42; Hill 1986). Meanwhile, French rebels

had intermixed with the outcasts of other nations in Caribbean pirate havens such as Port Royal, Jamaica, whose governor protested that the island "subsisted in disorder" and that there was no one "who does not believe himself to be beyond the officers of the King" (Pennell 2001, 169–94).

Piracy was an especially attractive opportunity for the unfree, black and white alike. Creoles and experienced seafarers made particularly adept pirates. Conservative estimates suggest that black and mulatto sailors comprised at least one-quarter of all pirates in the 17th and 18th centuries. Men of color were frequently elected to lead pirate crews and some, like Francisco Fernando of Jamaica, were successful enough to retire as rich men (Pennell 2001, 199–201). Pirate ships were tightly knit communities, and solidarity among the ranks extended across racial lines. When pirate John Cornelius was discovered planning to abandon the black sailors on his ship, a majority of the crew mutinied and elected a new captain (Defoe 1724, 604–5).

A significant number of buccaneers were Irish, usually escaped indentured servants who had been deported to the West Indies—"Barbadoesed"—after the Cromwellian conquest of 1649–53. The plantation experience frequently brought them into common cause with fellow slaves, with whom they led multiple rebellions in the 17th century (Hill 1986). When called upon to help fight the maroons of Jamaica, Irish militiamen joined regiments of free blacks in mass desertions (Campbell 1988, 85–86).

Though women were much less common among pirates than among maroons, they enjoyed greater freedom on the seas. At a 1721 trial in Jamaica, two pirates headed for the gallows—Anne Bonny and Mary Read—were discovered to be pregnant. They had been captured in the midst of a spirited defense of their ship in which only one male crew member assisted them, and they were held in high regard by their fellow crew members: "No Person amongst them was more resolute, or ready to board or undertake any Thing that was hazardous" (Defoe 1724, 156).

Pirates faced an even more difficult flight to freedom than maroons—they first had to get hold of a ship. For most of the 17th century, they could simply join state-sanctioned privateering expeditions. By the early 18th century, however, peace between European powers and distaste for the unpredictable and independent character of the buccaneers meant that outright piracy was the only option. Read first decided to "go on the account" after pirates boarded a Dutch vessel she had been sailing in the Caribbean. Though she briefly retired from the sea and "liv'd quietly on Shore," she returned to piracy after signing onto an English privateering vessel, where she promptly helped lead a mutiny (Defoe 1724, 155–56). Her story represents the experience of most pirates, almost all of whom joined in one of these two ways.

In the 18th century about one in every five pirates was a mutineer, and roughly half of all mutinies ended in the decision to turn pirate. Such mutinies were particularly common on slave ships, which represented the convergence of slavery, colonialism, and maritime labor—the defining institutions of the Atlantic world. In less dramatic fashion, most new recruits were those who, once given the choice, elected to pursue a life of liberty beneath a black flag in place of the poverty and brutality of traditional seafaring in the service of capital and state. These could include not only the crews but also slaves who, though they were sometimes captured as prizes and at other times put to work in subordinate positions, were often released and sometimes joined their liberators as equals. Even when they did not join the crew, slaves were often freed, armed, and left to do justice on their former masters (Rediker 2004, 46–47, 138; Pennell 2001, 183–84, 199–202).

Figure 9.1 Pirates Ann Bonny and Mary Read. Engraving by B. Cole (1724).

Although the most widely recognized image of piracy is that of a ship flying the infamous black flag, many did not sail under the "Jolly Roger." It came into widespread use only in periods of peace between the European powers, particularly after the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht left thousands of sailors out of work with few other options but to turn pirate on their own behalf (Rediker 2004, 53, 24, 164). Still, the politics of the pirate ship were always concerned more with democracy and equality than with nationalism, and the use of flags or state sanction for their activities could mask the underlying commonalities that united pirates.

Much more important than the colors under which pirates sailed was the way in which they organized their lives. Based on the practices of the early buccaneers, pirates in the 17th and early 18th centuries "'distributed justice,' elected their offi-

cers, divided their loot equally, . . . limited the authority of the captain, resisted many of the practices of the capitalist merchant shipping industry, and maintained a multicultural, multiracial, and multinational social order" (Rediker 2004, 16–17, 65). Whether at sea or in port, a pirate could expect to spend most of his days "being daily regal'd with Musick, Drinking, and the Gaiety and Diversions of his Companions" (Defoe 1724 [1999], 244). These rejections of cultural conservatism, political oppression, and economic exploitation resemble the aspirations of maroon societies, and for good reason.

Connections

In 1722 the French Dominican priest Jean-Baptiste Labat wrote that the people of the Caribbean were "all together, in the same boat, sailing on the same uncertain sea." He had lived in the Caribbean for more than a decade at the turn of the century, even sailed among the buccaneers, and he knew well the region and its people. His statement holds most true for the masterless people of the Caribbean—the maroons, pirates, and other commoners who pursued alternative ways of life in an age when capitalism, colonialism, and slavery were prevalent. Beyond sharing common interests and some common values, many masterless communities were actually connected by their opposition to the encroaching imperial powers. Yet conflicts often existed within and between these communities, and the growth of the plantation complex and the expansion of imperial control further complicated this situation. The connections among masterless communities, as well as their diverse relationships to the colonial economy, shaped the course of Caribbean history well into the 18th century.

Among the most important groups in the masterless Caribbean were indigenous commoners—communities of people generally organized on principles of mutual aid, rather than private accumulation, that existed both before and after the conquest period. Though the Cuna of Panama and Colombia had been a relatively hierarchical society before the conquest, they responded to the Spanish invasion by leveling their social order, abandoning metalworking, and organizing their society on principles of subsistence and reciprocity. They welcomed runaway slaves from the Spanish territories and made common cause with the buccaneers, with whom they traded food and supplies for firearms to wage war on the Spanish empire (Wolf 1982, 155–56).

Connections among masterless people had existed since the beginning of colonization; indeed, the solidarity of indigenous commoners with sailors and slaves is implied in the very terms *boucanier* and *cimarrón*. These connections also extended to Spanish commoners who resisted royal officials. Ovando's 1502 mission to Hispaniola carried troops to suppress a rebellion in which Spanish and indigenous laborers had united to halt production in the mines. After coaxing the indigenous leaders into a building with offerings of peace, the Spanish officials burned them alive, hanged their wives, and put 50 Spanish strikers to the sword. And when the Spanish first attempted to put down the *cimarrones* of Panama in 1556, they could find no Spaniards willing to enlist in the effort.

The solidarity among maroons, pirates, and commoners shaped their lives in numerous ways. Conscious of their common lot, pirates routinely referred to their trade as "a marooning life" and gave their ships names like the *Maroon* and the *Murrone Galley*, or referred to them as "maroon periaguas [piraguas, or canoes]" (Rediker 2004, 56, 192n8; Pennell 2001, 202). Even today, a visible artifact of this solidarity survives in the Jamaican practice of jerking meat over a boucan, originally an indigenous tradition that was preserved and passed on to the Jamaican maroons through their exchanges with buccaneers (Carey 1997, 66–76).

Decline

Just as maroon and pirate societies did not exist in isolation from one another, neither did they exist in isolation from the colonial projects of the various empires. By their very nature, both maroons and pirates had arisen out of the colonial economies. The enslavement of Africans gave rise to maroon communities, and the intolerable conditions of seafaring labor generated mutinous crews and pirates. The expansion and intensification of production with slave labor drove more and more slaves to flee their masters, while increases in commerce made piracy more tempting than ever. By the end of the period, these contradictions were forced to a resolution: the economic development of the Caribbean in the 17th century, made possible in part by the actions of maroons and pirates, eventually required the eradication of those same communities.

Buccaneers, active in the small island of Tortuga since at least 1630, played a key role in handing the island decisively to the French in 1640. The island quickly became a hub of pirate activity, both sanctioned and unsanctioned. Further outposts were established on Hispaniola at Port Margot, Port de Paix, and Petit-Goâve, from which the buccaneers expanded their depredations against the Spanish and extended the zone of French control in the western half of the island (Haring 1910, 58–66; Camus 1997). Jamaica itself was conquered only with the combined assistance of maroons and buccaneers. The maroons of Jamaica, who first fled the plantations in large numbers after the English invasion of 1655, were the decisive force in ultimately driving the Spanish from the island. Too racist to acknowledge the contribution of the maroons, the 18th-century historian Edward Long nevertheless conceded in his 1774 account that "it is to the buccaneers that we owe the possession of Jamaica" (Campbell 1988, 14–34). Throughout the mid-17th century, the

establishment of non-Spanish colonies in the Caribbean depended in large part on the labor of buccaneers.

Maroons and pirates continued to play important, albeit different, roles in the development of colonies once they were established. To develop large plantations effectively, however, the English had to address the issue of marronage. Though some hostilities continued after the earliest Jamaican maroon treaties of 1663 and 1670, a pair of treaties in March and June 1739 ensured the position of the planters. These treaties were driven almost exclusively by concern for economic development; they regulated the crops and livestock maroons could raise, the areas they could settle, the distances they could travel, and the terms on which they could trade with other colonists (Campbell 1988, 127–63). In their new and more integrated role in the plantation economy, Jamaican maroon communities became a major source of food on the island and even produced some finished goods, such as processed tobacco, that were outside the concern of the large planters (Campbell 1988, 133, 192). Equally significant was the requirement that the maroons turn over runaway slaves who had recently joined them and help suppress rebellions and catch fugitives in the future. By employing maroons in enforcing the boundaries of the plantation, Jamaican planters eliminated the logical base of future maroon support while establishing more complete control over their own work force. The connection between containing maroons and developing sugar plantations was most blatant in islands like Martinique and Guadeloupe, where the bounty for returning runaway slaves was paid in sugar (Price 1996, 113).

The relationship of buccaneers to the colonial economy was even closer than that of the most complicit maroons. Where maroon communities by their very nature existed at a certain distance from colonial society, pirates operated precisely along the most active trade routes and required friendly ports in which to unload their prizes. In the case of Jamaica, piracy was the initial economic base of the colony, and the revenues it generated provided start-up capital that contributed to the development of large-scale capitalist agriculture based on slave labor (Zahedieh 1986). The economic development of western Hispaniola, controlled by the French, was also founded on piracy based out of ports like Petit-Goave and nearby Tortuga (Camus 1997, 75). After Spain formally ceded the territory to France in 1697, the colony of Saint-Domingue went on to become the world center of sugar production in the 18th century. In addition to enriching the local merchants in sympathetic ports, some pirates themselves became quite wealthy. The Frenchman Montauban was one of a number of pirates in the 1690s who enriched themselves first by raiding Spanish commerce and then by investing the profits in sugar plantations (Moreau 2006, 138–40). Alexander Exquemelin, the most famous chronicler of the buccaneers, records that provisions for wounded pirates were made in terms of either money or slaves (Exquemelin 1684, 83–84).

All of this has led some recent scholars to suggest that pirates were in fact prototypical capitalists driven by the values of the market economy and the logic of the invisible hand (Moreau 2006, 127–48; Leeson 2007). Of course not all pirates opposed slavery; not all maroons did either. Pirates operated in a world that was increasingly organized along capitalist lines, but they organized the pirate ship in a very different fashion. They depended for their survival on a network of communal economies, and the pirate ship itself was one of them. When their democratic and egalitarian values were violated, as when Welsh pirate Henry Morgan refused to promise an equal share to all members of a 1665 expedition out of Jamaica, the overwhelming majority of the crew mutinied or deserted (Haring 1910, 129). Also, many pirates had experienced slavery or indenture directly (Rediker 2004, 63–64). If there is some debate among historians about the place of pirates in plantation society, there was no such debate among contemporary planters—in their view, both pirates and maroons were fundamentally incompatible with the imperatives of capitalist plantation slavery.

Maroons and pirates were united, if not by opposition to colonial society, then by opposition from it. Where piracy had once been encouraged, it was now suppressed. Where maroon societies had once been tolerated, they were now subdued or contained. Some, like the pirate-investor Montauban, were able to cash in and rejoin society. Others switched sides, like former maroons who became slave-catchers, or erstwhile buccaneers who enlisted as pirate hunters. Still others faded into the forests and hills of uninhabited areas, returning to hunting and gathering for subsistence, smuggling dyewoods off the coast of Brazil, or panning for salt in the plains of Saint-Domingue and Venezuela. Most often, however, their lives ended violently. At least one-tenth of pirates were executed, and when accounting for other casualties, the number rises to at least one-quarter and perhaps one-half (Rediker 2004, 163). Piracy was largely driven from the Caribbean by 1726, and of the maroon communities that survived the 18th century, only in Jamaica and Suriname do they still recognizably persist. The successful development and expansion of plantation slavery thus depended not only on technological and agricultural advancements, but also on the initial complicity and ultimate suppression of these masterless people who tried to make history on their own terms.

Legacy

In the age of masterlessness, the Caribbean was a place where women and men from all corners of the Atlantic brought together a wide range of ideas and experiences to challenge their masters and prove that another world was possible. The eventual suppression of their efforts in the Caribbean meant the relocation, not the disappearance, of their struggles. The following years witnessed a worldwide

dissemination of those values back to Europe and to Africa. The Trelawny Town maroons of Jamaica were deported to Nova Scotia and then Sierra Leone after a year-long rebellion that ended in 1796 (Campbell 1988, 11, 209–49). The former Martinican slave Abraham Samuel went pirating in the Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea, and Persian Gulf before arriving in Madagascar, where he was declared heir to the throne of an African kingdom (Ritchie 1986, 84–85). Samuel was just one of many pirates who shifted their bases of operation to the coasts of Africa, mixing in with the local population and attacking the slave trade or raiding the commerce between Europe and Asia. One gang of pirates settled among the Kru of West Africa, a maritime people who had successfully fought the slave trade on both sides of the Atlantic. As the popular press spread word of their exploits, Caribbean pirates became a presence in literature and the arts. The famous painting of the French Revolution, Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People*, appears to be based closely on an image that appears on the cover of a volume of stories about Anne Bonny and Mary Read (Rediker 2004, 55–56, 121–26).

Ideas of liberty flowed both ways across the Atlantic, and over time it became increasingly difficult to tell which intellectual currents flowed from which shores. The Jamaican-born Robert Wedderburn, the mulatto son of a slave, traced the English conquest of that island to the defeat of the radicals in the English Revolution. Wedderburn himself moved to England in 1778 but always took inspiration from the maroon freedom struggle. In his correspondence with his half-sister, the maroon Elizabeth Campbell, Wedderburn invoked the oral history of the maroons in letters that convinced her to free her own slaves and redistribute her property. In her replies from Jamaica, Campbell relayed stories of how the freed slaves of the island "are singing all day at work about Thomas Spence," the English radical democrat and advocate of communal land ownership. The sailor William "Black" Davidson, a fellow Jamaican mulatto expatriate in Britain and also an adherent of Spence, protected a pirate flag bearing the inscription "Let us die like Men and not be sold like Slaves" at an 1819 labor demonstration in London (Linebaugh and Rediker 2000, 287–326). Such stories were commonplace in an era when radical ideas, first brought together in the Caribbean, were recirculating around the world.

This legacy was felt in the Caribbean itself. In key moments, rebel slaves went beyond merely escaping colonial society to transforming it. The anticolonial movements that swept Spanish America in the 19th century began in Venezuela in 1810, where maroons were among the first to join in the struggle (Price 1996, 73). In *The General in His Labyrinth*, contemporary novelist Gabriel García Marquez envisions Simón Bolívar himself marching across the countryside carrying a pirate flag, "the skull and crossbones superimposed on a motto in letters of blood: 'Liberty or Death.'" Without a doubt, however, the greatest standard bearer of the masterless legacy was French Saint-Domingue, where in 1791 the slaves rose up against their

masters and put the torch to their plantations. They continued their struggle for more than a decade, overthrowing both slavery and colonialism, and established the independent republic of Haiti on New Year's Day 1804. Seeking to convey the fears of planters across the region, the Spanish consul in Philadelphia immediately likened the rebels to "some second buccaneers . . . that will try to light the revolutionary fire in our islands if all of their movements are not surveyed." Though the fears of pan-Caribbean revolution were not realized, Haiti survives as a testament to the women and men who struggled in their own way for freedom in the centuries before and since. The boucan, the central flame around which the earliest maroons, pirates, and indigenous commoners had gathered, was a metaphor for masterlessness not soon forgotten.

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PART 3

Colonial Designs in Flux