
Abstract

After their emancipation, the formerly enslaved people in the Dutch colonies were still subjected to a colonial world of unequal labor relations and economic opportunities. Indentured labor, convict labor, the Cultivation System, and exclusion through racism impeded their socioeconomic freedom. The colonial state was searching for new ways to control this evolving society that was shedding the social boundaries of slavery. Repressive policing and the police force's organizational structure not only illustrate the struggle to reconsolidate colonial power, but also reveal the weaknesses of the colonial state in this transitional period. Holding on to the colonial relations of the past eventually proved impossible; society was inexorably changing.

Keywords: abolition; free labor; colonial police; Suriname; Dutch East Indies; Dutch Caribbean