
Abstract

This chapter explores the role of the States General of the United Provinces of the Netherlands in shaping the development of slavery within the Dutch colonial empire, spanning from the Act of Abjuration in 1581 to the abolition of the States General in 1796. The States General provided political, military, financial, and legal support for both private and corporate Dutch engagement in the slave trade and colonial slavery. The decisions made by the States General contributed to the justification, normalization, and intensification of the slave trade and the exploitation of enslaved individuals across the Dutch empire in Asia, Africa, and the Americas, while also influencing the gradual acceptance of slavery within the Dutch Republic.

Keywords: States General; slavery;
Dutch East India Company; Dutch West India Company