to this being China. Important similarities included the armies of Germany and Japan "were the main consumers in both systems of war economy" and "in both cases, war financing was covered with occupation costs which were imposed to the occupied countries." (p. 325) Overall, this is a fascinating and valuable monograph that illustrates the complexities of this topic and suggests the need for further comparative studies.

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Swingen, Abigail L. *Competing Visions of Empire: Labor, Slavery, and the Origins of the British Atlantic Empire*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015. 271 Pp.

Investigating the origins of the British Empire in the Atlantic, Abigail L. Swingen shows how a variety of imperial ideologies and policies jostled for predominance throughout the 17th century. She is primarily concerned with the ways in which Britain created and maintained its empire in the Caribbean, specifically Barbados and Jamaica. Swingen argues that constant negotiation, resistance, and sometimes violent conflict between the colonies and the metropole continuously reshaped and redefined the imperial vision of the British government. Yet labor, and more precisely unfree labor, took center stage in the political and economic drama that fashioned the British Atlantic Empire.

Consisting of seven chapters, Swingen's work starts with the founding of English colonies in the Caribbean, specifically Barbados and Jamaica. From the genesis of English imperialism, the colonies confronted an almost continual dearth of labor, especially cheap labor. In her first

chapter, Swingen explains how the struggle to meet this need in the form of indentured and convict labor eventually led the colonies to rely on African slaves instead. In light of the expense and risk of using indentured servants and convict labor, African slaves became a relatively attractive option. In the next three chapters, she then charts the development of an imperial agenda from the Parliamentarian regime to the restored monarchy seeking to impose a more centralized control over the empire. Key to this centralization in the Atlantic was the African Company and its monopoly. Throughout the period, constant negotiation, resistance, and sometimes conflict defined the relationship between imperial officials and colonies. In her final chapters, Swingen shows how war with France, beginning in the 1690s and continuing through the following century, further redefined the colonies. Essentially left to their own defenses, their white population decreased, resulting in an increasing reliance on African slaves. English officials recognized the increasing necessity for African slaves and, despite the inherent obstacles to trade during this war-torn period, purposely sought to become a dominant force in the Atlantic slave trade. Their efforts culminated in the *Asiento*, an agreement granting English slave traders exclusive rights to sell slaves to Spanish colonies in the Americas. Serving as an excellent bookend, the *Asiento* shows how essential unfree labor was to the ultimate success of English imperial aspirations.

In this book, Swingen engages the debate about the mercantilist nature of the British Empire. Recently, historians have begun to question the traditional narrative of a mercantilist government in which the main goal in building an empire was to create wealth for the homeland. Swingen critiques this historiography by suggesting that even colonial governors were not as interested in supporting mercantilism as previous historians would argue. Rather, colonial officials often inhibited the imperial policies of the British government and continuously advocated for policies of free trade, especially in regard to labor. Colonial governors, no matter how they were appointed, more often than not supported their constituents (planters and merchants) in opposition to imperial policy.

Underlying the colonial discontent that Swingen discusses lay the fear and mistrust of monopoly granted to charter companies like the African

Company. Planters and merchants consistently questioned the legitimacy and efficacy of companies that were guaranteed sole legal rights to sell slaves to English colonies. In much the same way that James Fichter shows in his book *'So Great a Proffit'*, colonial discontent with monopoly was at the very heart of the American Revolution. Fichter shows how the British government's efforts to enforce the monopoly of the British East India Company over Indian tea created the conditions for revolt. Taken together, Fichter and Swingen show how colonial resentment was not a short-term phenomenon. Rather, colonial subjects were inherently distrustful of imperial and mercantilist policies that favored certain companies over free access to the open market.

A limitation in Swingen's work is her focus primarily on domestic and demographic reasons for the failure of indentured servitude, which minimizes other factors in the rise of African slavery. In her view, changing demographic patterns in England and the realization that a large domestic population could be economically useful in industry made indentured and convict laborers less viable. Though these reasons are certainly part of the story, one cannot discount the power of basic capitalistic motivations. African slaves were on the whole more profitable than trading in other forms of coerced labor, considerations which she mentions only in passing. If an entire company is created and devoted to trading in mainly African slaves, the drive for profit must be primary. Nevertheless, Swingen provides a succinct view of the constant struggle between colony and metropolis and how that struggle helped to create an empire dependent on unfree labor, and this book deserves its proper place in the historiography of Atlantic empires.

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