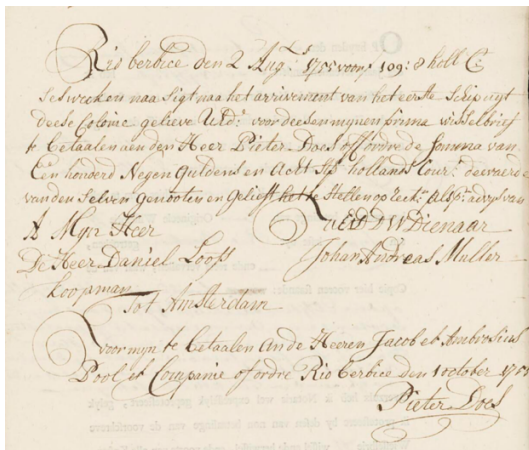




Business correspondence of 1755 between the Dutch slave economy and the Company Jacob Ambrosius Pool

ZURICH, BERNE, SOLOTHURN, SLAVERY (1719–1839)

Historical Report by Hans Fässler, MA (St.Gallen) of 18th March, 2026

Translated from the German original, which is relevant for the Swiss authorities,
by the author and with a big help from DeepL

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Abstract

In autumn 2024, Shelley Moorhead, a politician and activist in the US Virgin Islands, commissioned me to conduct a study on Switzerland's involvement in the slave trade, slavery and colonialism. It has already been well researched that on the one hand it was private actors (e.g. merchants, mercenary officers, merchant bankers, emigrants, employees of colonial companies), family businesses and banks that participated in the colonial system and, in particular, slavery. For example, the history of UBS, through its takeover of Credit Suisse, not only includes the slave-related activities of the family of Credit Institution founder Alfred Escher, but also the following slave-related financial institutions among its predecessor banks: Bank Leu, Deutsch-Schweizerische Kreditbank, St.Gallische Hypothekarkasse, Bank in Schaffhausen and the Bernese bank Marcuard & Cie. On the other hand, there are also state actors in Switzerland and the Swiss Confederation who were involved in slavery and the slave trade., Because this is an under-researched chapter in Swiss colonial history, the following historical report focuses on this aspect.

In the 18th century, the city states of Zurich, Bern and Solothurn invested public funds in slavery-related businesses (a slave plantation on St. Croix as collateral, shares in the British South Sea Company, shares in the French Compagnie des Indes) or granted slavery-related loans (to the Danish crown for the acquisition of the Danish Virgin Islands, to the Swedish crown at the time of the establishment of the island of Saint-Barthelemy as a colonial stronghold in the West Indies, to a slave plantation company with Swiss roots in the Dutch colony of Berbice, and to the bank Hottinguer & Cie, which was involved in the slave trade). The key dates are 1719 (first investments by Bern and Solothurn, founding of the Karrer Marine Infantry Regiment) and 1839 (Danish securities last mentioned in the Bank Leu files). In some cases, these financial commitments generated substantial profits. In addition, contrary to the military alliances with France, which prohibited the use of Swiss mercenary troops on and beyond the seas, the three city states mentioned tolerated the deployment of the Karrer/Hallwyl Marine Infantry Regiment to French North America and the Caribbean, thereby contributing to the maintenance of slavery and wars of extermination against indigenous peoples.

Table of Contents

(0) Introduction	3
(1) Atlantic Slavery	4
(2) Realities of Caribbean Slavery	6
(2.1) Virgin Islands	6
(2.2) Saint Barthélemy	8
(2.3) Berbice	9
(3) Zurich	11
(3.1) South Sea Company	11
(3.2) Danish Slavery Economy	11
(3.3) Swedish Slavery Economy	15
(3.4) Jacob Ambrosius Pool & Compagnie	15
(3.5) Hottinguer & Cie.	17
(3.6) Other Business Partners of Leu & Comp.	17
(3.7) Marine Infantry Regiment Karrer/Hallwyl	17
(4) Berne	18
(4.1) South Sea Company	18
(4.2) Marine Infantry Regiment Karrer/Hallwyl	19
(4.3) Danish Slavery Economy	19
(5) Solothurn	20
(5.1) French Mississippi Company.	20
(5.2) Marine Infantry Regiment Karrer/Hallwyl	21
(6) Contemporary Swiss Knowledge of Slavery	24
(6.1) Zurich, Berne and Solothurn	24
(6.2) Appenzell Ausserrhoden	32
(6.3) The Rest of the Confederacy	34
(7) African, Contemporary and Retrospective Criticism of Slavery	38
(7.1) The Victimised Societies	38
(7.2) The Perpetrator Societies	40
Appendix: Chronology	47
Archival Sources	48
Bibliography	49

Note on the use of terms with racist connotations: The author takes the view that in a historical report, and if the passages are marked as quotations, their sparing use in writing can be justified. Furthermore, the respective racist content varies depending on context and language.

(0) Introduction

First, an overview is presented of the emergence of slavery in the Atlantic region, including its various manifestations: indigenous slavery, the slave trade, the triangular trade and plantation slavery between the 15th and 19th centuries (1). This is followed by a look at the colonial areas relevant to this study: the Danish Virgin Islands, the Swedish island of Saint Barthélemy, and the Dutch colony of Berbice on the South American mainland (2).

The main section (3, 4, 5) of this report then deals with the city states of the Swiss Confederation Zurich, Berne and Solothurn, which invested in colonial companies from 1719 onwards and co-financed Danish and Swedish colonial policy, which granted loans to companies with Swiss roots that owned slave plantations or invested in slave ships, and which tolerated the colonial deployment of a Swiss mercenary regiment to the Americas. Particular colonial investments and engagements are explained in detail once and are then only briefly referred to in the respective chapters on the other city states.

The following chapter (6) is devoted to the question of what the political and commercial elites of the Swiss Confederation knew about the slavery relevance of their commitments and about the realities of colonial exploitation. The answer is based on contemporary publications on the one hand and on the biographies and networks of the Swiss players of the time on the other.

The final chapter (7) traces evidence that slavery and the slave trade have always been subject to marked and differentiated criticism from both victims and perpetrators.

A selective chronology at the end facilitates orientation among the numerous historical events dealt with in the present paper. Its methodological approach was to draw on existing, sometimes already older works (e.g. Brengard, Büchi, Landmann, Linder, Lüthy, Peyer), on archival research in less well-researched chapters (*Jacob Ambrosius Pool & Co.*), and on internationally accessible recent studies in regional issues (Danish, Swedish and Dutch Caribbean).

(1) Atlantic Slavery

Any historical account of the Atlantic region ultimately also deals with the relationship between imperialism, colonialism, capitalism and slavery.¹ Portugal's imperial expansion began in the first half of the 15th century and was motivated by religious (ideal of the Crusades) and economic (gold and spices) factors. For two centuries, the Iberians (Portugal and Spain) dominated European expansion into the Atlantic region and the Americas, which is also reflected in the fact that the vast majority of the 12 million men and women shipped from Africa and the 10 million who arrived in the Americas were taken to Spanish and Portuguese (Brazil) colonies. From the beginning of the 17th century, England, France and the Netherlands joined the race for colonies and profits, with Denmark and Sweden joining as latecomers in the 18th century. Overall, however, the entire European continent was integrated into the transatlantic economic system based on slavery, including Austria, Germany and Switzerland. The main driver of the slave trade and the development of plantation slavery was initially sugar, followed by cotton from the second half of the 18th century onwards and then particularly in the first half of the 19th century. Textiles (*indiennes* and linen fabrics), metals, weapons, alcohol, tobacco, etc. were brought from Europe to Africa as barter goods in the slave trade, while the colonies supplied for Europe steadily increasing quantities of sugar and tobacco, as well as coffee, cocoa, indigo, brazilwood and other dyes.

In the colonies of the Americas, European expansion led first and foremost to the violent seizure of land and, as a result of imported diseases, forced labour and the destruction of livelihoods, to the extermination or strategic acceptance of the disappearance of millions of indigenous people. Even after the switch from indigenous humans to slaves brought from Africa, the displacement of Native Americans continued in connection with the plantation economy and the increase in European settlers. From a capitalist perspective, the plantations of the so-called New World, especially the sugar plantations, represented economic progress in terms of organisation (the «first factory» with division of labour according to organisational processes), but at the same time they were also the starting point for ecologically devastating developments (extractivism, monoculture, deforestation). With the Dutch Cape Colony, Europe also secured the connection between the Atlantic slave system and that of the Indian Ocean (especially the Dutch East Indies).

From the beginnings of the boom in the slave economy in the 17th century to the present day, the connection between capitalist development, industrialisation, racism, colonialism, and slavery has been researched and discussed in ever-changing historical schools of thought. For Trinidadian historian Eric Eustace Williams (1911–1981), it seemed clear in 1944 that profits from slavery and the slave trade had financed the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain.² His (Williams) thesis has since

¹ For the present overview the following works have been taken into consideration: Steven Mintz. «Historical Context: Facts about the Slave Trade and Slavery». The Gilder Lehrmann Institute of American History. O.J. Online: <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/teacher-resources/historical-context-facts-about-slave-trade-and-slavery>. / Jürgen Osterhammel und Jan. C. Jansen. *Kolonialismus. Geschichte, Formen, Folgen*. München 1995. / Rosa Amelia Plumelle-Urbe. *Weisse Barbarei. Vom Kolonialrassismus zur Rassenpolitik der Nazis*. Zürich 2004. / Howard W. French. *Born in Blackness. Africa, Africans, and the Making of the Modern World, 1471 to the Second World War*. New York 2021. / Cécile Vidal. «Sklavereiimperien. Imperialismus, Kolonialismus und Sklaverei in der atlantischen Welt, 15.–18. Jahrhundert». In: Paulin Ismard (Hrsg.). *Welten der Sklaverei. Eine vergleichende Geschichte*. Berlin 2023. 921–936. / Sven Beckert. *King Cotton. Eine Globalgeschichte des Kapitalismus*. München 2019.

² Eric Williams. *Capitalism and Slavery*. London 2021.

been repeatedly discussed, criticised and further developed.¹ More recently, the «New Economic History» school has emphasised that, contrary to older assumptions, slavery was an efficient system that, after the abolition of the slave trade in the 19th century, generated huge profits under industrial conditions (railways, steam engines, business practices), especially in the southern states of the US, Cuba and Brazil, and would have continued even without the US Civil War.²

Currently, there is a great deal of debate on «war capitalism», referring to Sven Beckert's thesis that the much-analysed industrial capitalism of powerful nation states developed from a system that violently subjugated societies and territories and exploited millions of people in forced labour.³ Whichever analysis of the development of modernity one chooses, or whichever combination of different historical models one subscribes to, it is undisputed that the emergence of the so-called West and of European-American industrial capitalism would not have been possible without slavery and the colonial racism that accompanied it. Or, to quote Karl Marx and his somewhat narrow view of 1847 focusing on a single colonial commodity: «Let us be clear, we are only talking here about direct slavery, the slavery of blacks in Suriname, Brazil and the southern states of North America. Direct slavery is the linchpin of bourgeois industry, just like machinery, etc. Without slavery, no cotton; without cotton, no modern industry».⁴

The societies of the Caribbean in particular (including the Danish Antilles/US Virgin Islands, Swedish Saint Barthélemy/Collectivité de Saint-Barthélemy, Berbice/British Guiana/Guyana, which are all relevant to this report) have thus been victimised four times over:

- displacement and extermination of the indigenous communities (the Kalinago and the Arawak),
- violations of the physical and psychological integrity suffered by the enslaved men, women and children abducted from Africa,
- policies of the major powers in the age of colonialism and imperialism (USA, France, Great Britain, Spain, Germany),
- climate change, the Caribbean now being one of the most vulnerable regions in the world in this respect. Rising sea levels, more intense hurricane seasons, longer dry seasons and shorter rainy seasons threaten the well-being and development of states and the well-being of people who have themselves contributed very little to global CO₂ emissions.⁵

¹ Jennifer Agel. «Marxian Social History vs New Economic History: The “Williams Thesis” and the Debate on Slavery’s Relationship with the British Industrial Revolution». *The Graduate Review*. 8, 2023. 6-22. Online: https://vc.bridgew.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1263&context=grad_rev.

² Alfred H. Conrad und John R. Meyer. *The Economics of Slavery in the Antebellum South*. Journal of Political Economy. Volume 66, 2nd April, 1958.

³ Beckert. *Cotton*.

⁴ Karl Marx. *Das Elend der Philosophie. Antwort auf Proudhons ‘Die Philosophie des Elends’*. Stuttgart 1885. 103. Online: https://archive.org/details/ldpd_14861084_000/page/102/mode/2up.

⁵ Leon Sealy-Huggins. «‘1.5°C to stay alive’: climate change, imperialism and justice for the Caribbean». 2017. *Third World Quarterly*. 38(11), 2017. 2444–2463. Online: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01436597.2017.1368013#abstract>.

(2) Realities of Caribbean Slavery

(2.1) Virgin Islands

The three Danish Virgin Islands or *Dansk Vestindien* were St. Thomas (taken over by the Danish *Det Vestindisk-Guineisk kompagni* in 1672), St. John (claimed by Denmark in 1718) and St. Croix (purchased by Denmark from France in 1733).¹ In 1754, the Danish state, i.e. King Frederick V, took direct control and made the three islands a crown colony. In 1867, Denmark offered to sell the islands to the United States, but the deal fell through because the US Senate never voted on it. During the First World War, the United States feared German influence and became active again. In 1916, Denmark agreed to the sale to the US in a referendum, and since 1917, the United States Virgin Islands have been an *unincorporated territory* of the United States.

After the rapid failure of indentured service, slavery became the dominant economic and social system in the Danish West Indies – from the end of the 17th century until emancipation through a slave revolt in 1848. Export-oriented plantation agriculture developed very quickly on the two main islands, similar to that of many Caribbean islands. Cotton, which was initially cultivated, was quickly replaced by sugar cane. From the 1730s onwards, St. Croix in particular became one of the most productive islands in the Caribbean, with around 250 sugar plantations. At the height of the slave economy in the late 18th century, 90% of the population of the three islands consisted of enslaved humans. Later, this proportion decreased slightly. Sugar production, i.e. the pressing of the harvested sugar cane, was carried out by human and animal labour and, especially on St. Croix, by around 150 windmills.²

Even though the myth was perpetuated in the Netherlands that slavery in the Danish Virgin Islands had been milder than in other colonies, female slaves in particular were subjected to sexual violence, whereas the enslaved in general suffered under a draconian punishment system involving branding, mutilation, amputation and flogging. They fought back with sabotage, counter-violence, disobedience and escape (*marronage*).³ In 1733, the enslaved population on St. John, the smallest of the three Danish Antilles islands with around 100 plantations, revolted. The trigger was the *Slave Code* enacted by Governor General Philip Gardelin, who instituted a harsh penal regime involving flogging, amputation of limbs, public torture and executions.⁴ For several months, the rebels managed to control most of the island. It was only when French troops with several hundred soldiers came to the aid of the Danes from Martinique that the uprising was successfully suppressed. Swiss soldiers were also involved in this trans-imperial counterinsurgency mission: members of the second

¹ Unless otherwise stated, this overview is based on: Karen Fog Olwig. «Danish Perceptions and West Indian Realities: Slavery in the Danish West Indies». *The Bridge*: Vol. 11: No. 2, 1988. Article 5. / Arnold R. Highfield und George Tyson (ed.). *Negotiating Enslavement: Perspectives on Slavery in the Danish West Indies*. St. Croix 2009. / Essays by Stefania Galli, Klas Rönnbäck and Dimitrios Theodoridis (see bibliography).

² o.A. «Sugar Cultivation and Manufacturing». Webseite <Windmills of St. Croix>. 2023. Online: <https://www.stcroixwindmills.org/sugar-cultivation-and-manufacturing>.

³ Stefania Galli, Klas Rönnbäck und Dimitrios Theodoridis. «Slavery, Resistance and Repression. A Quantitative Empirical Investigation». *Göteborg Papers in Economic History*. No. 38. Göteborg 2024. 8.

⁴ Gardelin Slave Code. 1733. Rigsarkivet. 390. Generaltoldkammeret, Vestindiske og guineiske sager, Visdomsbog, 1733-1783, p. 359-363. Online: http://www.eurescl.eu/images/files_wp3/danishregulations/17330905.pdf.

company of the Karrer/Hallwyl regiment stationed in Martinique.¹

In July 2022, *De Nederlandsche Bank* (DNB) apologised to the descendants of enslaved people in the former Dutch colonial territories of Suriname, Bonaire, St. Eustatius, Saba, Aruba, Curaçao and Saint-Martin/Sint Maarten for its role in the Atlantic slave trade and slavery, particularly because numerous founding members and later board members had directly or indirectly profited from slavery, defended slavery and received compensation from the Dutch state after abolition.²

Companies with a Swiss background were also involved: *Gebroeders Planta* (roots in the Swiss canton of the Grisons or Graubünden)³ and *Faesch & Co* (roots in Basel).⁴ Although two DNB directors (Jan Hodshon and Jacobus Hermanus) and a major DNB investor (Johanna Borski) were closely linked to slavery profits from the US Virgin Islands,⁵ these former Danish colonial territories received nothing from the Dutch central bank's €5 million compensation fund in 2022.⁶ In response to demands from the African-Caribbean Reparations and Resettlement Alliance (ACRRA), that Denmark should enter into dialogue with the inhabitants of the Virgin Islands about reparations for colonial slavery and the modalities of the acquisition of the islands by the US, Danish officials stated on 21 October 2025 that the issues raised were to be understood as historical rather than legal. They rejected any legal responsibility and denied that Denmark had violated the treaty on the basis of which the territory was transferred to the United States in 1917.⁷

Several months before the aforementioned DNB, another private Dutch bank had already apologised for its predecessor institutions' involvement in slavery in the 18th and 19th centuries: ABN AMRO. Furthermore, ABN AMRO, which was formed from the merger of *Algemene Bank Nederland* and *Amsterdam-Rotterdam Bank*, announced material compensation measures in the areas of diversity and inclusion.⁸ The historical report commissioned by the bank (*The slavery history of historical predecessors of ABN AMRO*) documents how closely intertwined Dutch and Danish slavery interests

¹ Jeppe Mulich. *In a Sea of Empires. Networks and Crossings in the Revolutionary Caribbean*. Cambridge 2020. 63. Online: https://www.google.ch/books/edition/In_a_Sea_of_Empires/yhzhDwAAQBAJ?hl=de&gbpv=1&dq=swiss+martinique+1733+st.john&pg=PA63&printsec=frontcover.

² «Press release. DNB apologises for its historical links to slavery». Website DNB, 1st July 2022. <https://www.dnb.nl/en/general-news/press-release-2022/dnb-apologises-for-its-historical-links-to-slavery/>.

³ Peter von Planta aus Fürstenu. *Chronik der Familie von Planta nebst verschiedenen Mittheilungen aus der Vergangenheit Rhätens*. Zürich 1893. 62f. Online: https://www.google.ch/books/edition/Chronik_der_familie_von_Planta_nebst_ver/8YIAAAAYAAJ?hl=de&gbpv=1&dq=gebroeders+planta+amsterdam&pg=RA1-PA63&printsec=frontcover.

⁴ Karwan Fatah-Black, Lauren Lauret und Joris van den Tol. *Serving the Chain? De Nederlandsche Bank and the Last Decades of Slavery, 1814-1863*. Leiden 2022. 23f. Online: <https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/86016>.

⁵ Fatah-Black. *Chain*. 61f., 82, 130, 134.

⁶ «ACRRA Calls For Reparations from De Nederlandsche Bank for Slavery Ties in U.S. Virgin Islands». *The Virgin Island Consortium*, 10 February 2024. Online: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=http://viconsortium.com/news/download-as-pdf/10944&ved=2ahUKEwj73lw7-SAXy9AIHHd_dDG4QFnoECBoQAQ&usg=AOvVaw1W0jHwLc8bGWsig21zfPHJ.

⁷ Source Staff. «Denmark Rejects Legal Responsibility Tied to Former Rule of Virgin Islands». *The St. Thomas Source*. 22nd December 2025. Online: <https://stthomassource.com/content/2025/12/22/denmark-rejects-legal-responsibility-tied-to-former-rule-of-virgin-islands>.

⁸ «ABN AMRO apologizes for historic involvement in slavery». Press release, ABN AMRO Website. 13th April 2022. Online: <https://www.abnamro.com/en/news/abn-amro-apologizes-for-historic-involvement-in-slavery>.

⁹ Gerhard de Kok and Pepijn Brandon. *The slavery history of historical predecessors of ABN AMRO. An investigation into Hope & Co. and R. Mees & Zoonen*. Amsterdam 2020. 36–70. Online: https://assets.ctfassets.net/1u811bvgvthc/7sf5jwvvpQRHnJ4MD2BtyGO/5cfd4c9690c63de1ae8165e278482a04/IISH_The_slavery_history_of_historical_predecessors_of_ABN_AMRO_ENG.pdf.

were in St. Croix during that period of the 18th century which is relevant to this report.¹ At that time, the use of plantations on St. Croix as collateral for loans and other financial transactions (see the business of *Bank Leu*, *Brown Brothers* and Jürgen Hartung under 3.2) appears to have been common practice.²

The US Virgin Islands also include the islands of Little St. James and Great St. James off the eastern tip of the island of St. Thomas. From 2016 to 2019, they belonged to convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, who turned Little St. James, complete with a helicopter landing pad and fibre optic connections, into a hub for his global network of capital, power and abuse. According to official sources, Epstein had the remains of slave quarters on a sugar plantation on Great St. James removed.³ Today, the two islands belong to investment billionaire Stephen Deckoff.

(2.2) Saint Barthélemy

For almost a hundred years (1784–1878), the island of Saint Barthélemy was a Swedish Caribbean colony.⁴ The small size and the topography of the island made it unsuitable for a plantation economy, yet when Sweden took over, about one third of the approximately 700 inhabitants were enslaved. The Swedish *West India Company* (*Svenska Västindiska Kompaniet*) set about turning the island and its capital Gustavia into a free trading and transshipment centre for goods and slaves. In 1787, when *Bank Leu & Comp.* increased its bond of 1786, Sweden enacted a slavery law based on the French *Code Noir* model. It divided the population into whites, slaves and free people of colour. Enslaved people worked on Saint Barthélemy on construction sites, in households, as craftsmen and at the port. At its peak, the enslaved population numbered around 4,000. In 1790, the import of enslaved people (from Africa and other Caribbean islands) became duty-free, but customs duties were levied on exports.

As in the Virgin Islands and other colonies, the penal system on Saint Barthélemy was brutal and rigorous, with corporal punishment being the norm. One form of punishment was the *Negro Whip*, in which the victim was tied face down to four stakes and whipped. If the victim was a pregnant woman, a hole was dug in the ground to «protect» the unborn child. As in all colonies in the Americas, it was common practice on Saint Barthélemy for white men to commit sexual violence or have relationships with female slaves, as evidenced by the large number of *children of colour*. If

¹ Gerhard de Kok and Pepijn Brandon. *The slavery history of historical predecessors of ABN AMRO. An investigation into Hope & Co. and R. Mees & Zoonen*. Amsterdam 2020. 36–70. Online: https://assets.ctfassets.net/1u811bvgvthc/7sf5jwvvpQRHnJ4MD2BtyGO/5cfd4c9690c63de1ae8165e278482a04/IISH_The_slavery_history_of_historical_predecessors_of_ABN_AMRO_ENG.pdf.

² Kok. *ABN AMRO*. 11, 24, 35–43.

³ Associated Press. «Jeffrey Epstein's estate reaches a \$105M settlement with the U.S. Virgin Islands». *National Public Radio*, 1st December 2022. Online: <https://www.npr.org/2022/12/01/1140096222/jeffrey-epsteins-estate-reaches-a-105m-settlement-with-the-u-s-virgin-islands>.

⁴ Overview of Saint Barthélemy mainly based on: Niklas Selber und Amin Parsa. «Slavery in Swedish Law – Past and Present. Productive Judicial Framing, Silencing and Exceptionalism». *Critical Legal Perspectives on Contemporary Slavery. On the Presence of the Past*. Ed. by Adelle Blackett, Laura Dehaibi, M. Adedayo Odusanya und Edward van Daalen. Leiden 2025. 402–430. / Amat Levin. «Sweden's Forgotten Role in the Slave Trade. Cabo Corso, St. Barthélemy and colonial amnesia». *Black History Unveiled*. 11. Oktober 2025. Online: <https://www.blackhistoryunveiled.com/p/swedens-forgotten-role-in-the-slave>. / Ernst Ekman. «Sweden, the Slave Trade and Slavery, 1784-1847». *Outre-Mers. Revue d'histoire*, 1975. 221-231. Online: https://www.persee.fr/doc/outre_0300-9513_1975_num_62_226_1827.

children were freed at their father's request, they could be enslaved again if they were found guilty of hiding fugitives.

The Swedish slave trade forts on the so-called Swedish Gold Coast in Africa were lost to Denmark between 1657 and 1659. Nevertheless, in the 18th century Sweden profited significantly from a commodity used in the slave trade: The country became the most important exporter of metal bars manufactured in Europe, which were standardised in terms of size, weight and marking and were used as barter goods in the triangular trade in exchange for enslaved people. Despite its diverse slave trade connections (African forts, Swedish West Indies, metal bars), Sweden for a long time (similar to Holland and Denmark) cultivated the myth of smallness (compared to the great colonial powers) and of *White Innocence*.¹

In 1813, Sweden banned the slave trade in treaties with Great Britain but did not abolish slavery on Saint Barthélemy until 1847. According to the Brattle Report (*Quantification of Reparations for Transatlantic Chattel Slavery*), slave owners were compensated by the Swedish state with 250,000 FRF (French francs, the local currency), a sum that would be worth over three million dollars today. Reparations for Swedish slavery would amount to between 8 and 12 trillion US dollars today, depending on the assumed interest rates.² In addition, the report also uses data such as life expectancy, incidence of cardiovascular disease and diabetes to document the impact of transatlantic chattel slavery on post-slavery societies, particularly in the Caribbean.³

(2.3) Berbice

The Dutch colony of Berbice on the Caribbean coast of South America (*Wild Coast*) was founded in 1627 under the patronage of the Dutch province of Zeeland. In 1720, administration was taken over by the *Sociëteit van Berbice*. It was modelled on the *Sociëteit van Suriname* and opened the region to free trade and private settlers in 1733. This marked the beginning of a plantation economy.⁴ Before the outbreak of the great slave revolt of 1763, the Dutch colony of Berbice presented itself as follows: Along the Rio Berbice and its tributaries, the Canje and Wieronje, and along the Caribbean coast east and west of the Berbice estuary, there were sugar, coffee, cocoa and cotton plantations, some of which were owned by the *Sociëteit* and 135 were privately owned. These 135 plantations belonged to 96 different owners or combinations of owners, among whom, along with the plantation managers and directors, there were a striking number of Swiss nationals.⁵ In total, there were 350 European men and a few European women, compared to around 4,500 enslaved men, women and children. The centres of colonial administration and military bases were Fort Andries, New

¹ Gloria Wekker. *White Innocence. Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race*. Durham 2016.

² Coleman Bazon, Alberto Vargas, Rohan Janakiraman, Mary M. Olson. «Quantification of Reparations for Transatlantic Chattel Slavery». The Brattle Group 2023. 44f., 72. Online: <https://www.brattle.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Quantification-of-Reparations-for-Transatlantic-Chattel-Slavery.pdf>.

³ Bazon. «Quantification». 65.

⁴ Unless otherwise stated, this short overview is based on: Marjoleine Kars. *Blood on the River: A Chronicle of Mutiny and Freedom on the Wild Coast*. New York 2005.

⁵ Hans Fässler, *Caricom Compilation Archive (CCA)*. St.Gallen 2019. 1 Caricom Member States. Online: <https://louverture.ch/caricom-member-states>.

Amsterdam (near the mouth of the Berbice River) and Fort Nassau (the capital, approx. 90 km upstream from the mouth of the River Berbice).¹

The enslaved people cleared the jungle, prepared the fields for sowing, tended the crops, brought in the harvest, took over the processing of sugar cane, cotton bales, coffee and cocoa beans, transported goods, rowed river boats, worked as coopers, carpenters, cooks, servants, and planted food to ensure their own survival. As in all colonies, they were poorly fed and subjected to strict work discipline: ten hours a day, six days a week. At any given time, about one-sixth of adult slaves were unable to work because they were sick, injured or permanently disabled. Slaves who were recaptured after escaping (*bushinengé*) were brutally punished. An expert on the history of the Berbice colony concludes:

*«They were subjected to incessant torture by plantation owners and bombas (privileged slaves). Disease, hunger, sexual violence, relentless punishment and staged executions were commonplace. Low birth rates and high mortality rates fuelled the colonial masters' insatiable appetite for new slaves».*²

The uprising of 1763 shook the Dutch colonial empire in South America (Essequibo, Demerrara, Berbice, Suriname) to its foundations. The rebels soon controlled parts of the entire south of Berbice, and the Dutch colonial rulers sent desperate letters requesting troops from Holland. There were fears that the uprising would spread to neighbouring Suriname. Jacob Ambrosius Pool in Amsterdam received news of the uprising via the island of Sint Eustatius, which was administered by the Dutch West India Company, and together with the other directors of the *Societät van Berbice* in Amsterdam, he requested ammunition and 600 soldiers to quell the uprising.³

In April 1764, more than a year after its outbreak, the great slave revolt in Berbice was crushed, partly with Swiss assistance. Louis-Henri Fourgeoud (1717–1779) from Lausanne (then the Bernese Vaud territory), a major in Dutch service, was part of the 500-strong force that arrived in Berbice from the Dutch States-General in January 1764. Unlike the other troops, he remained in the country after the end of the uprising until 1765, commanding a company of volunteers whose task was to prevent further uprisings.⁴

Although the Dutch occupying forces took brutal revenge on the rebels – 24 were burned alive – and although the consequences of the conflict were considerable (1,800 rebels killed in battle, numerous plantations destroyed), the colony recovered fairly quickly and subsequently experienced steady growth. The loans granted by *Leu & Comp.* to *Jacob Ambrosius Pool & Comp.* in 1768 and 1772 can

¹ F. van Bouchenoeder, C. van Baarsel, C. van Covens et Mortier. *General map of plantations around the Berbice River exc.* Amsterdam 1802. Online: <https://www.atlasofmutualheritage.nl/page/1899/general-map-of-plantations-around-the-berbice-river>.

² Martha Anne Toll. «In 'Blood On The River,' The Berbice Rebellion Foreshadows Later Insurgencies». Book Review. *National Public Radio (npr)*. 12th August 2020. Online: <https://www.npr.org/2020/08/12/901229439/in-blood-on-the-river-the-berbice-rebellion-foreshadows-later-insurgencies>.

³ *Resolutien van de Ed. Gr. Mog. Heeren Staaten van Holland en Westfriesland van den Jaare 1773*. Tersse deel. 353. Online: https://www.google.ch/books/edition/Resolutien_van_de_Heeren_Staten_van_Holl/LxwZBY77858C?hl=de&gbpv=1&dq=ja+cob+ambrosius+pool+st.+eustacius+1763%C2%A0&pg=PA353&printsec=frontcover.

⁴ Philipp Krauer. Entry «*Louis-Henri Fourgeoud*». Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz (HLS) 2024. Online: <https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/061697/2024-10-15>.

certainly be seen in this context. In 1814, Berbice was ceded to Great Britain, which abolished the slave trade in 1807 and slavery in 1838/1840 and compensated the slave owners. The British colonies of Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice became independent in 1966 as the *Co-operative Republic of Guyana*. To this day, the country celebrates 23 February, the day the rebellion broke out in 1763, as a national holiday.

(3) Zurich

(3.1) South Sea Company

At the beginning of the 18th century, the coffers of Zurich's *Seckelamt*, the administrative unit responsible for managing the city's assets, had been generating surpluses for years. Furthermore, there were no major expenses on the horizon. The Zurich Council was now looking for an investment that appeared secure and would yield interest. They found one in the British *South Sea Company*, founded in 1711. In 1727, following the example of the city state of Bern, the Zurich *Seckelamt* purchased 120 shares worth 100,000 Zurich guilders. In doing so, «the city itself invested money in the slave trade».¹ In 1730, the city of Zurich lost 45 of these 120 shares due to the bankruptcy of the Zurich-based bank *Genevès & Holzhalb* in London. The remaining 75 shares performed well and remained in the city's possession until 1836. Historian Hans Conrad Peyer described this as a «great success» for the city. According to calculations by Brengard et al., based on the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, around 36,000 enslaved Africans were deported with Zurich's financial involvement.²

(3.2) Danish Slavery Economy

On 27th November 1754, the city-state of Zurich made a decision that led to the founding of the bank *Leu et Compagnie* on 15th April 1755. The task of the state bank, headed by Hans Conrad Heidegger (1710–1778) and treasurer Johann Jacob Leu (1689–1768), was to invest substantial amounts of state and private wealth abroad.³

The Danish investments (general bonds issued by King Frederick V of Denmark, *Danish-Asian Company*) came about thanks to Reinhard (later: Baron) Iselin (1714–1781), who enjoyed great trust in Zurich. The Basel merchant moved to Copenhagen in 1740 and quickly rose to the top of the *Fabritius & Wever* trading and shipping company. Around 1750, he founded the banking and trading house *R. Iselin & Cie*. In 1751, he was a shareholder in the sugar refinery of the *Royal Chartered*

¹ Marcel Brengard, Frank Schubert, und Lukas Zürcher. *Die Beteiligung der Stadt Zürich sowie der Zürcherinnen und Zürcher an Sklaverei und Sklavenhandel vom 17. bis ins 19. Jahrhundert. Bericht zu Handen des Präsidialdepartements der Stadt Zürich*. Zürich 2020. 17f. Online:

https://www.hist.uzh.ch/dam/jcr:7fd2e80c-fd5c-4954-b702-65f3ea94a419/BrengardSchubertZürcher_Bericht_Sklaverei_Sep2020.pdf

² Brengard et al. *Beteiligung*. 18.

³ Julius Landmann. *Leu & Co. 1755–1905: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des öffentlichen Kreditwesens*. Zürich 1905. 58–68.

Danish West India and Guinea Company and was active in the sugar trade.¹ In 1760, he was appointed director of the Danish-Asian Company.

In 1757, *Leu & Comp.* purchased shares in the *Bank in Copenhagen* for 9,140 Reichsthaler, not only on the recommendation of Iselin, but also of *Peter Hiss & Sohn*.² Peter or Pierre François His (1692–1760) was related by marriage to the Basel merchant family Ochs and ran what was perhaps the largest department store in Hamburg. He was involved in banking and the colonial goods trade and in 1753 declared sugar imports worth 1.8 million marks. In Hamburg, he represented the Danish king. His successor and son-in-law Albrecht Ochs (1716–1780) was originally a colonial goods trader in the French slave trading port of Nantes. In Hamburg, he did business with shipowners, plantation owners, slave traders, and Baron Schimmelmann.³ The *Bank in Copenhagen* was dependent on the Danish state, and Baron Schimmelmann (see 4.3 for more on Schimmelmann) was its advisor. Schimmelmann also advised the Danish king, and in 1773 the bank was nationalized. *Leu & Comp.* regularly subscribed to Danish bonds until 1798.⁴ As evidenced by the «advertising letter» from the Geneva notary Jean Louis in 1760, it was well known in Zurich that Denmark needed money to expand its small colonial empire *Dansk Vestindien*: «...nous avons acquis de nos propres deniers, et reuni au Domaine de notre Couronne, les Isles et les Colonies de l'Amerique...».⁵

In 1672, Danish settlers established the first permanent settlement on St. Thomas, one year after the founding of the *Westindian Company*, which was renamed the *West India and Guinea Company* in 1680. St. Croix was sold by France to Denmark in 1733, and Saint John became part of Danish West India in 1762 after a power struggle with Great Britain. But the Danish crown needed money time and again to consolidate its position in the Caribbean and expand its infrastructure. The 1750s and 1760s seem to have been particularly important in this regard, as in 1757, 1762, and 1765, the Danish king himself invested in three voyages of the slave ship *Kronprinsens Ønske*, thereby contributing to the shipment of 768 enslaved men, women, and children.⁶ In contrast, the Danish slave trade on the Gold Coast had been rather sluggish a decade earlier, as suggested by a letter from the governor of Fort Christiansborg (also known as Osu Castle) to the *West Indian-Guinean Company* in Copenhagen.⁷

Danish securities were listed in the books of *Leu & Comp.* until 1798, including Danish bonds in Genoa issued by the Brentano cousins since 1783. The slave trade from Africa was not abolished on the Danish Virgin Islands until 1803, and the 11 years between the decision *Forordning om Neger-Handelen* in 1792 and its implementation were apparently used to bring as many slaves as possible from Africa.⁸ Brengard et al. rightly summarise Zurich's financial transactions with the Danish crown as follows:

¹ Waldemar Westergaard. *The Danish West Indies Under Company Rule (1671–1754)*. New York 1917. 63, 84.

² Landmann. *Kreditwesen*. 111–115.

³ Klaus Weber. *Deutsche Kaufleute im Atlantikhandel 1680-1830*. Unternehmen und Familien in Hamburg, Cádiz und Bordeaux. München 2004. Online: 246–253.

⁴ Landmann. *Kreditwesen*. 117.

⁵ StAZH W II 21 10: Zinskommission Leu, Protokoll Band 1, S. 88-90.

⁶ Brengard et al. *Beteiligung*. 20f.

⁷ Ole Justesen (ed.). *Danish Sources for the History of Ghana 1657–1754*. Copenhagen 2005. 697.

⁸ Cornelius von Tiedemann. «Die Sklaverei gehört zur Geschichte der deutsch-dänischen Zusammenarbeit». *Der Nordschleswiger*. 23. August 2023. Online: <https://www.nordschleswiger.dk/de/nordschleswig-daenemark-meinung-leitartikel/sklaverei-gehoert-zur-geschichte-deutsch-daenischen>.

«Accordingly, from 1757 onwards, the city of Zurich and its citizens participated in the Danish slave trade, the financing of a slave trading centre, and the consolidation of the colonial plantation and slave economy through Leu & Co.».¹

Another slavery-related business deal was concluded by *Leu & Comp.* with the Danish Scottish brothers John and David Brown.² Operating as *John & David Brown*, they had been active in trade with the Caribbean since 1759 and owned numerous ships. John's father-in-law, Peter Appleby, had been the owner of a sugar refinery in Copenhagen since 1769. John was a member of the board of directors of the *Danish Asian Company* from 1771 to 1775 and from 1779 to 1785, as well as a of the *Royal Danish Baltic and Guinea Trading Company*, which was involved in the slave trade from 1786 to 1787. John's son Peter Brown (1760–1803) became a merchant and settled in St. Croix in 1781 and St. Thomas in 1782 in the Danish Antilles, where he founded the company *Brown & Stevenson*. In 1783, a legal dispute arose over a loan in which enslaved people were used as collateral. Another son of John Brown was David Alexander Brown (1769–1808). When he died on St. Thomas, he owned a slave named Julien, who was auctioned off after his death and fetched \$500.³ David Brown served as governor of Danish India in Tranquebar from 1774 to 1779. The *Danish-Asian Company* operated a local slave trade from its base in Tranquebar and also «supplied» slaves to the Cape Colony.⁴

In 1768, John and David Brown requested a loan of 20,000 talers from *Leu & Comp.* As collateral, they offered to pledge a bond mortgaged to a plantation on St. Croix. The plantation belonged to Jürgen Hartung, and Reinhard Iselin also participated in the transaction, which ran from 1771 to 1774, in return for a commission. In 1770, Iselin attempted to arrange a similar transaction involving a plantation owned by one Theobald Bourche on St. Croix, but this failed.⁵

In their Zurich study, Brengard et al. write that «proof of involvement in the slave trade» has yet to be provided regarding the Brown brothers.⁶ However, it is certain that in 1750, John Brown owned plantation No. 39 in *Vest Ende Qvarteeret* on St. Croix, which was 1,500 feet wide, 4,000 feet long, and valued at 500 rigsdaler. Brown had taken over these plantations from the aforementioned customs officer Jürgen Hartung (Jørgen Hardung), who had registered plantation No. 5 in *Oost Ende Qvarteer Littr A.*, plantation No. 15 in *Oost-Ende Qvarteeret Littr B.*, in 1747 plantation No. 24 in Printzens Qvarteer and in 1750, plantations No. 8 and No. 28 in *Vest Ende Qvarteeret*. In 1754, Jørgen Hardung owned half of plantation No. 8, and in 1780, it belonged to the «Erben Schimmelmänn» (the Schimmelmänn heirs).⁷ In 1767 and 1770, Jørgen Hardung was named as the owner of plantation 38

¹ Brengard et al. *Beteiligung*. 23.

² Graeme Kerridge. «The Browns of Denmark». o.O. 2022. Online: https://patersonhistory.org.au/resources/Browns_of_Denmark.pdf.

³ Theodor Hauch-Fausbøll. *Af slægten Browns Historie*. København 1918. 182, 194.

⁴ Preben Kaarsholm. «From abolition of the slave trade to protection of immigrants: Danish colonialism, German missionaries, and the development of ideas of humanitarian governance from the early eighteenth to the nineteenth century». *Atlantic Studies*. 17(3), 2020. 348-374.

https://rucforsk.ruc.dk/ws/portalfiles/portal/68228866/Pre_Print_RJAS_2018_0037_Kaarsholm_revised_2019.12.02.pdf.

⁵ Landmann. *Kreditwesen*. 132.

⁶ Brengard et al. *Beteiligung*. 21.

⁷ o.A. Estate Wheel of Fortune – Animal Mills. Website <Windmills of St. Croix>. Online: <https://www.stcroixwindmills.org/we/wheel-of-fortune-animal-mill>.

in *Vest Ende Qvarteeret*. In 1778, the heirs of Jørgen Hardung appear as owners, and in 1790 only «Hardung».¹ Theobald Bourche, also mentioned above, owned plantation no. 32² and plantation no. 33 in *Printzens Qvarteer*, measuring 3000 feet long, 2000 feet wide and valued at 150 rigsdaler. He sold the latter (Jørgen Hardung «Wheel of Fortune») in 1753 to the widow of James Carmuech, who was married to John Brown.³

Denmark decided to ban the slave trade in 1792, making it the first European colonial power to do so. This decision came into force in 1803. However, slavery continued to exist in the Danish Antilles (Virgin Islands) until 1848. In 1847, the Danish government decided to abolish slavery with a 12-year transition period and to declare newborns of enslaved women free. Since many enslaved people feared they would not live to see the end of the transition period, a rebellion broke out in 1848. Hundreds of slaves gathered on St. Croix and threatened to burn down Frederiksted and the rest of the island. The Danish governor general Peter von Scholten (1784–1854) saw no other option than to proclaim the immediate end of slavery.⁴

According to the Brattle Report, five years after the abolition of slavery slave owners in the Danish Antilles received compensation worth £200,000, which is equivalent to US\$ 854,920,312 in today's money. Reparations for Danish slavery by the Danish state, in which there has been continuity of financial institutions from the *Kurantbanken* (1736–1813) via the *Rigsbanken* (1813–1818) to *Danmarks Nationalbank* (from 1818), would amount to between \$486 and \$681 trillion today.⁵ The report also uses data such as life expectancy, incidence of cardiovascular disease, and diabetes to document the impact of slavery on post-slavery societies.⁶



Plantation landscape in the west of St. Croix (excerpt from the map by Jens Michelsen Beck, 1754)

¹ o.A. Estate Wheel of Fortune – Animal Mills. Website <Windmills of St. Croix>. Online: <https://www.stcroixwindmills.org/we/wheel-of-fortune-animal-mill>.

² I.M. Beck, und O.H. de Lode. «Tilforladelig kort over eylandet St. Croix udi America saaledes som det ved en acurat udmaaling er besunden med qvarterernes navne og enhver plantagies nummer efter hvilke de udi matriculen findes indførte og til enhver köber cederet beliggende paa 17 grader 38 minutter norder brede». Haffnia 1754. Online: <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g5012s.ct008969/?r=0.268,-0.097,1.382,0.726,0>.

³ Vestindisk-Guineisk Kompagni, Direktionen Om Vestindien. Diverse dokumenter indsamlet af Etatsråd Martfeldt. Arkivkassen mærket, Rigsarkivet 365, Generaltoldkammeret. Ældre del Vestindisk-guineisk renteskriverkontor 1690 – 1767. Om Vestindien pakke 411. 51, 56, 57, 61, 66 Online: <https://dwis.dk/images/Dokumenter/Artikler/Etatsraad%20Martfeldts%20dokumenter.pdf>.

⁴ K. E. Bugge. «Grundtvig and the abolition of slavery». *Grundtvig-Studier*, 56(1). København 2005. 160–191.

⁵ Bazelon. «Quantification». 44f., 72.

⁶ Bazelon. «Quantification». 65.

(3.3) Swedish Slavery Economy

In the 17th century, Sweden and Denmark were rivals in establishing slave trading bases in Africa. In the Caribbean, Sweden owned Saint Barthélemy as a colonial base from 1784 to 1878, after France ceded the island, along with 408 enslaved people and 542 French inhabitants, in exchange for trading rights.¹ In 1786, the Swedish *West India Company* (*Svenska Västindiska Kompaniet*) was founded in Stockholm. King Gustav III of Sweden owned 10% of the shares, making him the largest single shareholder. The island's most important port was called Gustavia, and one of the forts securing the port was called Fort Gustav.² Article 14 of the royal charter stated: «The company is also granted the right to engage in the slave trade on the coasts of Angola and Africa».³

In 1777, *Leu & Comp.* invested 90,000 *lire di banco* in Swedish securities via the Brentano cousins (Genoa). This Swedish bond was increased to 180,000 *lire di banco* in 1778. Repayments were made between 1786 and 1790, but the value still stood at 73,800 *lire di banco* in 1798. These funds either flowed directly into the Swedish colonial and slavery economy in the Caribbean or allowed funds to be released from the Swedish national budget for this purpose.⁴ *Leu & Comp.* also made substantial profits from this investment.

(3.4) Jacob Ambrosius Pool & Compagnie

The Pool family originally came from Samedan and Bever in the Swiss canton of the Grisons (or Graubünden). Giachem Pool von Bever (1647-1724) co-founded the confectionery company *Lorenz Planta & Co.* in Amsterdam in 1692. At the beginning of the 18th century, Giachem Pool's descendants switched to import and export businesses and expanded their commercial sphere to the West Indies around 1710. From 1740 onwards, they were active in the plantation business in the Dutch colony of Berbice (now Guyana) for almost a century.⁵ Members of the Pool family and various companies with representatives of this Swiss-Engadine-Dutch family owned more than 20 plantations along the Rio Berbice at various times, including the enslaved women, children and men who worked on them.⁶ After the abolition of slavery in 1838 by Great Britain, which took over the colony from the Netherlands in 1814, individual members of the Pool family were compensated for the loss of their slave property.⁷

¹ Hugh Thomas. *The Slave Trade. The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade 1440–1870*. New York 1997. Online: https://www.google.ch/books/edition/The_Slave_Trade/ISyDCgAAQBAJ?hl=de&gbpv=1&dq=swedish+slave+trade+saint-barthelemy&pg=PT436&printsec=frontcover.

² Amat Levin. «Sweden's Forgotten Role in the Slave Trade. Cabo Corso, St. Barthélemy and colonial amnesia». *Black History Unveiled*. Stockholm 2025. Online: <https://www.blackhistoryunveiled.com/p/swedens-forgotten-role-in-the-slave>.

³ Jan Lönn und Carlos Vidales. Übersetzung des königlichen Privilegs von Upsala 1786. Online: <https://web.archive.org/web/20090602223821/http://www.c-l-a-s-h.info/la-legislation-sur-la-traite-negriere-a-st-barthelemy.html#4>.

⁴ Landmann. *Kreditwesen*. 116–118.

⁵ Dolf Kaiser. *Fast ein Volk von Zuckerbäckern? Bündner Konditoren, Cafetiers und Hoteliers in europäischen Landen bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg. Ein wirtschaftsgeschichtlicher Beitrag*. Zürich 1985. 55f. Online: https://www.kulturarchiv.ch/fileadmin/pdf/Fast_ein_Volk_von_Zuckerbaeckern.pdf.

⁶ Hans Fässler, *Caricom Compilation Archive (CCA)*. St.Gallen 2019. 1 Caricom Member States. Online: <https://louverture.ch/caricom-member-states>.

⁷ Fässler. *CCA*. 1 Caricom Member States.

The company *Jacob Ambrosius Pool & Compagnie* in Amsterdam received loans from *Leu & Co.* in 1768 and 1772, presumably on the recommendation of Swiss-Danish shipping entrepreneur, merchant and banker Reinhard Iselin (1714–1781). In 1768, the sum involved was 10,250 guilders (*argent court d'Hollande à vue*), and in 1772 another 1,105 guilders.¹ In 1775, *Leu & Co.* expressed great interest in participating in a loan of 1 million guilders from *Jacob Ambrosius Pool & Compagnie*.²

The sources sometimes refer to *Jacob Ambrosius Pool & Compagnie*, *Poole & Co.*, *Jacob Ambrosius Pool* or a company called *Jacob und Ambrosius Pool & Companie*, and it is not clear whether these are all one and the same company. The *Amsterdam Notarial Archives* (Open Archives) contain around 700 documents relating to the business correspondence of Jacob Ambrosius Pool and the company *Jacob Ambrosius & Comp.* for the period 1752–1804 (bills of exchange, executor's certificates, permits, receipts, guarantees, purchase agreements for slave plantations, mortgages, estate inventories, bonds, assignments, ship declarations, registrations, etc.).³ In 1742, a source records that *Jacob and Ambrosius Pool* were the owners of a plantation called «Grison Taal» in Berbice and had appointed an administrator for this plantation.⁴ In 1759, a list of contributors name *Jacob Ambrosius Pool & Comp.* as the owners of the plantations «Geertruyd», «Mon Repos», «Roosenburg» and «Essendam»,⁵ and in 1762 as the owners of the plantations «Morgenstond», «Slingeland» and «Solitude». In 1763, Jacob Ambrosius Pool appears as one of the directors of the *Sociëteit van Berbice* (see above). In 1765, a ship carrying female and male slaves is transferred to *Jacob Ambrosius Pool and Comp.*⁷ In 1767, Jan Vinzenz Pool, partner of *Jacob Ambrosius Pool and Co.*, and Abraham Wijs in Amsterdam agreed that the latter would transfer all slaves on his plantation «Die Stadt Danzig» to the representative of *Jacob Ambrosius Pool and Co.*⁸ In 1769, Jacob Ambrosius Pool is mentioned at a meeting of 39 Amsterdam owners and shareholders of plantations in Berbice as the owner of six plantations.⁹ The Cederkreutz map (1771) shows the plantations «Roosenburg» and «Mon Repos» as being owned by Jan Vincent Pool.¹⁰ The *Jacob Ambrosius Pool* company was a co-owner.¹¹ In the great slave uprising of 1763, the «Mon Repos» plantation was one of the first to be

¹ StAZH W II 21 1: Zinskommission Leu, Hauptbuch. Band 1. 73 / Copierbuch. 140.

² StAZH W II 21 1: Zinskommission Leu, Copierbuch. 339.

³ Open Archives. Notariële Archive. Online:

https://www.openarchieven.nl/search.php?top&archive=&name=jacob+Ambrosius+Pool&number_show=10&sourcetype=&eventplace=&online=&relationtype=&sort=1&from=&until=&country=&eventtype=&start=0.

⁴ Contract mit registrierten Personen Louis Herrenschwand, Jacob Pool und Ambrosius Pool. Stadtarchiv Amsterdam, Notariële Archive, Teil: 9161, Zeitraum: 1742, Archiv 5075, Inventarnummer 9161, 7. März 1742, Archivnummer 214593. Online: <https://www.openarchieven.nl/saa:9d6d21e2-5636-666d-e053-b784100a1840/de>.

⁵ National Archives / Archiv South Holland, Archivnummer 1.05.05, Inventaris van het archief van de Sociëteit van Berbice, (1681) 1720-1795 (1800), Inventar nummer 127. Online:

<https://www.openarchieven.nl/transcripties/zoek.php?q=jacob+ambrosius+pool&start=50>

⁶ Open Archives. Archiv South Holland, Archivnummer 1.05.05, Inventaris van het archief van de Sociëteit van Berbice, Inventar nummer 132, 1762 augustus – 1762 juli. Online:

<https://www.openarchieven.nl/transcripties/zoek.php?q=morgenstond+plantagie>.

⁷ Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Not. Arch. 12880/akte 86. Transkript online:

<https://www.openarchieven.nl/transcripties/zoek.php?q=jacob+ambrosius+pool>.

⁸ Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Not. Arch. 12871/akte 753. Transkript online:

<https://www.openarchieven.nl/transcripties/zoek.php?q=jacob+ambrosius+pool+dantzig>.

⁹ J.P. van de Voort. *De Westindische plantages van 1720 tot 1795. financiën en handel*. Endhoven 1973. 202, 311. Online: https://repository.ubn.ru.nl/bitstream/handle/2066/148454/mmubn000001_004876083.pdf.

¹⁰ Christiaan T. Frederi Cederkreutz und Johannes van Keulen II. Nieuwe en zeer accurate generaale kaart van de twee Rivieren Berbice en Canje, met alle desselfs Plantagien en gronden enz. 1771. Online:

<https://www.atlasofmutualheritage.nl/page/1896/map-of-the-berbice-and-canje-rivers>.

¹¹ James Williams, *Dutch Plantations on the Banks of the Berbice and Canje Rivers in the country known since 1831 as the Colony of British Guyana*. Georgetown 1940. 132–134.

attacked by the rebels.¹ It is likely that the loans of 1768 and 1772 were used, among other things, to rebuild the Pool family's plantation empire after the uprising had been suppressed in 1764.

(3.5) Hottinguer & Cie.

The *Leu & Co.* interest commission regularly granted loans to *Hottinguer & Cie*, a Parisian bank with Swiss roots. The bank was managed by Hans Konrad Hottinger (1764–1841) from Zurich. In 1791, there were several investments by the Zurich government. Brengard et al. describe the significance of these financial transactions as follows: «The *Leu & Co.* interest commission thus also financed with its loans Hottinger's investments in the slave trade».² In 1792, *Hottinguer & Cie.* participated in the triangular trade expeditions of the vessels «Conquérant» and the «Roy d'Angole». Both slave ships departed from Le Havre, and the former deported 283 men, 91 women, 30 boys and 23 girls from West-Central Africa and Malembo in Angola to Havana.³ In the early 18th century, Malembo was one of the most important slave export ports, especially for English, Dutch, and French traders. The «Roy d'Angole» also shipped 386 people of unknown sex and age from West-Central Africa to Martinique. A total of 102 people died on these two voyages during the infamous *Middle Passage*, the excruciating crossing of the Atlantic. The city-state of Zurich and the Leu interest commission thus not only helped finance the slave trade but were also partly responsible for accepting the numerous deaths that were foreseeable at that time already. The average death rate on voyages to Spanish America was 18.75%, and 15.67% on voyages to the French Caribbean.⁴

(3.6.) Other Business Partners of Leu & Comp.

Other Business Partners of Leu & Comp. with relations to slavery see under 6.

(3.7) Marine Infantry Regiment Karrer/Hallwyl

Like the other cantons of the old Swiss Confederacy, Zurich tolerated the deployment of the Karrer/Hallwyl Marine Infantry Regiment to French North America and the Caribbean, contrary to the regulations and practices of the 18th-century confederate mercenary alliances, thereby contributing to the perpetuation of slavery. For more details, see 5.2.

¹ Odee Ishmael. *The Guyana Story. From Earliest Times to Independence*. 2005. Chapter 30: The Beginning of the Berbice Slave Rebellion. Online: <http://www.guyananeews.org/features/guyanastory/chapter30.html>.

² Brengard et al. *Beteiligung*. 22–24.

³ The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database. Rice University 2019. Online: <https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/trans-atlantic#voyages>.

⁴ D. Clark. «Death rate of captured slaves during the Middle Passage 1501-1866 by destination». Hamburg 2025. Online: https://www.statista.com/statistics/1070565/middle-passage-death-rate-by-destination-1501-1866/?srsltid=AfmBOoo9ztCN0DFtd_eCICSM0wlh96RSxvsnhQZYsmjyN0pLWJ-tr7Fc.

(4) Berne

(4.1) South Sea Company

Unlike Zurich and its *Leu & Comp.*, Berne did not establish a state bank. In 1702, the Grand Council of Two Hundred decided to leave such business to a private institution. In the same year, *Malacrida & Comp.* was founded. This bank quickly established contacts abroad (in Holland and England, but not in what they saw as unstable France), and the high reputation of its founders further increased confidence in the new company. In 1710, Berne began investing in Dutch and English government securities via *Malacrida & Comp.* The city wanted to steer clear of speculative transactions.¹

That changed in 1719 when, on the advice of *Müller & Comp.*, with whom *Malacrida & Comp.* collaborated in London, the Grand Council decided not to repatriate the funds that had become available there, but rather «de placer nos argents sur fond de la compagnie du sud». By the end of 1719, £150,000 of the Bernese treasury had been invested in the South Sea Company.² Who was this company, in which the canton of Bern was one of the largest single shareholders?

The *South Sea Company* had been founded in 1711 to solve Britain's financial problems caused by war. In 1713, Queen Anne of England and King Philip V of Spain agreed in the Treaty of Utrecht that Britain (as successor to France) should receive the so-called *Asiento de negros*, namely the right to ship slaves to the Spanish colonial empire. Until 1733, 4,800 enslaved people were to be «delivered» each year to the Spanish colonial ports of Cartagena, Buenos Aires, Veracruz, Havana, Caracas, Portobelo, Santiago de Cuba, and beyond. There were «slave depots» in Jamaica and Barbados. The prospect of profits from the slave trade and the gold and silver deposits in the «New World» repeatedly mentioned in advertising brochures sparked great interest in *South Sea Company* shares and ultimately led to a speculative bubble that burst at the end of 1720.³

It has often been recounted that not only the Bernese banks *Müller & Comp.* and *Malacrida & Comp.*, but also the old city state of Berne itself was caught up in this financial maelstrom, which caused despair throughout Europe and destroyed fortunes. It took years to resolve the situation, which only came to an end with the completion of the restructuring.⁴ And contrary to the impression of a financial disaster that might be associated with the bursting of the bubble in 1720 and the collapse of the two Bernese banking houses, the state of Berne ultimately emerged from the crisis with a profit of £168,952.⁵ In addition, the old and new «South Sea annuities» acquired with the sale of the shares (the latter of which remained at £129,078 until 1798) were closely linked to profits from the slave trade until the 1740s.⁶

¹ Landmann. «Kapitalanlagen». 24–29.

² Niklaus Linder. *Die Berner Bankenkrise von 1720 und das Recht. Eine Studie zur Rechts-, Banken- und Finanzgeschichte der Alten Schweiz*. Zürich 2004. 41–44.

³ o.A. «Exhibition. The South Sea Bubble, 1720. Narratives of the First International Crash». Curiosity Collections, Harvard Library. Online: <https://curiosity.lib.harvard.edu/south-sea-bubble/feature/exhibition>.

⁴ Linder. *Bankenkrise*. 116–125.

⁵ Landmann. «Kapitalanlagen». 101 (Beilage 9).

⁶ Ella Baron. «Slavery and South Sea Annuities». Letters to the Editor. *Times Literary Supplement*. 23. Mai 2025. Online: <https://www.the-tls.com/regular-features/letters-to-the-editor/slavery-and-south-sea-annuities>.

The number of slaves deported with Bernese financial involvement is likely to be similar to that in the case of Zurich. Historian Helen J. Paul comes to a conclusion similar to the one of the three Zurich historians: «Over its entire trading lifetime, the *South Sea Company* forced nearly 42,000 people to leave the African coast. It disembarked almost 35,000 people, meaning that just over 7,000 people died on the crossing».¹ That Berne was aware that the *South Sea Company* was involved in the slave trade is made evident by point 6 of a memorandum written in the late 1720s:

«...that the business conducted by the Company, both the slave trade in America and the whaling undertaken in the north, causes a great deal of fuss among the uninformed, but undoubtedly brings the Company more harm than good».²

(4.2) Marine Infantry Regiment Karrer/Hallwyl

Like the other cantons of the old Swiss Confederacy, Zurich tolerated the deployment of the Karrer/Hallwyl Marine Infantry Regiment to French North America and the Caribbean, contrary to the regulations and practices of the 18th-century confederate mercenary alliances, thereby contributing to the perpetuation of slavery. For more details, see 5.2.

(4.3) Danisch Slavery Economy

In 1757, Berne placed its first order to purchase five per cent bonds from the Danish government. Frankfurt banker Jean Jacquer Perretz acquired 100 bonds for Berne at a price of 157,238 *Reichstalers*. These bonds were extended three times (1769, 1776, 1786), and the interest rate was reduced in 1776.³

In 1768, on the advice of brothers Johann Philipp Bethmann and Simon Moritz Bethmann in Frankfurt, Berne contributed 140,000 *bankotalers* to a subscription by the Danish government in Hamburg. The Bethmann brothers' banking house was closely linked to financial and commodity flows in the Atlantic region. Their brother Johann Jakob Bethmann had a Swiss passport and had been established in Bordeaux since 1740 as a shipowner with connections to the French Antilles. In 1788, he and a consortium took over the rescue of the slave trading and plantation company *Romberg, Bapst & Cie* in Bordeaux, which had fallen into financial difficulties.⁴ Bethmann had predicted to Berne a rise in the *bankotaler* exchange rate, which then occurred and led to substantial profits for Berne. In 1777, the 140,000 *bankotalers* were converted into new four per cent bonds.⁵

In 1780, Bern acquired 250 bonds worth 100,000 Bernese crowns from a loan issued by the Bernese bank *Marcuard, Beuther & Comp.* In 1787, the term was extended. In addition, the Grand Council offered Denmark a loan of 300,000 Bernese crowns, for which 15 bonds worth 50,000 *livres* each

¹ Helen J. Paul, *The South Sea Bubble: An Economic History of Its Origins and Consequences*. Routledge 2011. 92.

² Landmann. «Kapitalanlagen». 65f.

³ Landmann. «Kapitalanlagen». 42.

⁴ Margrit Schulte und Klaus Weber. «From Westphalia to the Caribbean: Networks of German Textile Merchants in the Eighteenth Century». In: *Cosmopolitan Networks in Commerce and Society 1660-1914*. London 2011. 88–92. Online: https://perspectivia.net/servlets/MCRFileNodeServlet/ploneimport_derivate_00000177/schulte_westphalia.pdf.

⁵ Landmann. «Kapitalanlagen». 66.

were issued in Copenhagen.¹

Because the fourth deal offered by Denmark in 1782 was somewhat unclear, Bern inquired with Heinrich Carl Baron von Schimmelmann (1724–1787) in Hamburg. Since 1763, Schimmelmann had owned four plantations on the Danish Virgin Islands, including «La Grande Princesse» near Christiansted and «La Grange» in Frederiksted on St. Croix, as well as a sugar refinery in the Christianshavn district of Copenhagen. Over the next 20 years, he increased the number of plantation slaves from 400 to 1000. He also participated in the transatlantic slave trade and became probably the richest man in Europe.² Berne was ultimately persuaded by the man who said of himself, «The slave trade is very close to my heart»³ and purchased a bond worth 100,000 *livres de France* at 4½% interest via *Marcuard, Beuther & Comp.* and the Danish *Royal Chartered Trading and Canal Company*, which was guaranteed by the king.⁴

In 1798 the portfolio of Danish bonds amounted to 599,691 *Reichstaler*.⁵ This meant that Berne (like Zurich) had invested large sums in the Danish slave trade and profited from it at least between 1757 and 1798. For more on the relevance of Danish bonds to slavery, see 3.2.

(5) Solothurn

(5.1) The French Mississippi Company

At the beginning of the 18th century, after the death of Louis XIV, France was suffering from a crippling national debt and was facing bankruptcy. Thanks to his powers of persuasion and his knowledge of economics, the Scottish gambler (and convicted murderer) John Law (1671–1729) rose from being an advisor to the regent, Duke Philip II of Orléans, to becoming the creator of a central bank that issued paper money. He eventually held the highest office behind the king: *contrôleur général des finances*. Through mergers of older colonial privileged trading companies (*Compagnie des Indes Occidentales Françaises*, *Compagnie d'Occident*, *Compagnie des Indes orientales*, *Compagnie de Chine*) and the purchase of the slave trading company *Compagnie du Sénégal*, founded by Louis XIV in 1673, Law created the *Compagnie des Indes perpétuelle*, also known as the Mississippi Company, between 1717 and 1719.⁶

This company was ultimately a speculative vehicle, comparable to the *South Sea Company*, which was active at the same time, and – like the latter – relied on the expectation of profits from gold and silver imports. The plan was to settle 6,000 French people and 3,000 slaves on the Mississippi. When no gold was found, the *Mississippi Company* «imported» enslaved men and women from Angola, the Gold Coast and the French Antilles. On 6 June 1719, two ships belonging to the *Mississippi Company*

¹ Landmann. «Kapitalanlagen». 66f.

² Christian Degn. *Die Schimmelmanns im atlantischen Dreieckshandel. Gewinn und Gewissen*. Neumünster 1974.

³ Degn. *Schimmelmanns*. 161.

⁴ Landmann. «Kapitalanlagen». 67f.

⁵ Landmann. «Kapitalanlagen». 113 (Beilage 23).

⁶ Christian Chavagneux. *Une brève histoire des crises financières. Des tulipes au subprimes*. Paris 2011. Chapter 2.

«unloaded their cargo» of 500 Africans in Pensacola, 350 kilometres east of New Orleans. These were the first slaves ever to arrive in Louisiana.¹

As Law repeatedly issued new shares and the Banque Royal issued more and more paper money, the share prices of the *Mississippi Company* rose and a veritable speculative fever broke out in France and beyond, spreading to Switzerland from Appenzell to Thurgau and Geneva.² The Catholic canton of Solothurn was also affected, where people were looking for investment opportunities for state funds and, as inhabitants of the «ambassador city» (in contrast to Protestant Bern), were naturally oriented towards France. Karl Jakob Besenval (1677–1738) of Solothurn, a major in the Swiss Guards Regiment in Paris, recommended to his superiors that profits from other Solothurn investments be invested in shares of the *Mississippi Company*.³

The (von) Besenvals were one of the most influential patrician families in Solothurn. They were engaged in French military service and exerted considerable influence on the city through French pension payments. Karl Jakob's father had been the builder of Waldegg Castle and the Palais Besenval on the Aare River, and he had already purchased Mississippi shares worth 240,000 livres for his brothers Johann Viktor II and Peter Joseph. Karl Jakob von Besenval now informed the Solothurn authorities that it «could be beneficial and useful» to invest the profits from other state financial transactions in Paris in shares of the *Mississippi Company*. The council was persuaded and on 13 December 1719 commissioned Major Besenval and Captain von Roll to purchase shares worth 42,000 livres.⁴ When the speculative bubble burst, almost all this money was lost, with only 6,573 livres remaining.

(5.2) Marine Infantry Regiment Karrer/Hallwyl

The regiment's founder and first owner was Franz Adam Karrer (1672–1741), who was born in Röschenz, in the Swiss canton of Basel-Landschaft, settled in the canton of Solothurn in 1711 and became a citizen of Solothurn in 1729. He began his military career at the age of 14 in the French service and gradually rose through the ranks to become an officer. In 1719, he succeeded in establishing his own regiment through a private mercenary contract with the French Minister of the Navy, Joseph Fleuriau d'Armenonville (1661–1728), recruiting in Alsace and throughout the Swiss Confederacy. In 1736, he handed over the regiment to his son Ludwig Ignaz Karrer. In 1752, it was taken over by Franz Josef von Hallwyl (1719–1785) of Solothurn, an officer in French service, and disbanded in 1763.⁵

When it was founded in 1719, the regiment comprised 250 men in three companies. They were initially intended for service in French North America. In 1720, the regiment was transferred to the

¹ Hans Fässler. *Reise in Schwarz-Weiss. Schweizer Ortstermine in Sachen Sklaverei*. Zürich 2005. 44, 83–89.

² Herbert Lüthy. «Les Mississipiens de Steckborn et la fortune des barons d'Holbach». *Schweizer Beiträge zur Allgemeinen Geschichte* 13, 1955. 143–163.

³ Hermann Büchi. «Solothurnische Finanzzustände im ausgehenden Ancien Régime (ca. 1750–1798)». *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde*, Bd. 15, Basel 1916. 56–116. Online: <https://www.e-periodica.ch/digbib/view?pid=bzg-002%3A1916%3A15%3A%3A61>.

⁴ Andreas Affolter. *Verhandeln mit Republiken. Die französisch-eidgenössischen Beziehungen im frühen 18. Jahrhundert*. 2017 Köln. 219–225.

⁵ Adrian Baschung. «Schweizer Söldner in Nordamerika». Blog Schweizerisches Nationalmuseum. Online: <https://blog.nationalmuseum.ch/2022/08/schweizer-soeldner-in-nordamerika>.

Breton port city of Lorient, where the company founded by John Law in 1719 had its headquarters. The regiment was now placed in their pay, and Lorient was developed into one of the most important slave trading ports. Over 150 triangular trade expeditions set out from here. In 1731, part of the regiment was moved to Port-Louis, then to La Rochelle.¹



Drawing on the Karrer Regiment in the Swiss National Library
(created between 1890 and 1931)

In the Americas, units of the regiment were stationed at various locations: Martinique and Saint-Domingue (Cap-Français, Saint Louis, Port-au-Prince, Gonâve Island), Louisiana (New Orleans and Mobile), Fort Louisbourg (Ile Royal, now Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, Canada) and Cayenne (French Guiana).² The tasks of the various companies included maintaining a military presence, keeping peace and order, repelling attacks by the English and maintaining the fortifications. For our purposes, however, the fight against indigenous peoples and the suppression of slave revolts are of decisive importance.

The Karrer Regiment was deployed against American indigenous peoples from 1731 onwards in the so-called Natchez War. This native nation had resisted land seizures and displacement by the French colonial policy of the *Compagnie des Indes*, which led to a French war of extermination with mortars, bombs and grenades against the *Natchez* and their allies, the *Chickasaw*.³ Before 1731, Captain Charles-Frédéric de Merveilleux (1686–1749, also known as Wunderlich), a Swiss officer from the

¹ Hans Fässler. «Décoloniser Soleure. Aus der Solothurner Verenaschlucht nach Saint-Domingue». *Bulletin 2021 des Vereins Schweizerischer Geschichtslehrerinnen und -Lehrer VSGS*. https://louverture.ch/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/bulletin_2021_faessler.pdf.

² «Capitulation (du 1 septembre 1752) du régiment suisse entretenu au service de la marine et des colonies». Gabriel Coste. *Les anciennes troupes de la marine (1622–1792)*. Paris 1893. 283. Online: https://www.google.ch/books/edition/Les_anciennes_troupes_de_la_marine_1622/4YuodOCMNkoC?hl=de&gbpv=1&dq=Ordonnance+du+Roi,+por+entretenir+le+Régiment+Suisse+de+Hallwyl+au+Service+de+la+Marine+et+des+Colonies.&pg=PA283&printsec=frontcover.

³ Spencer C. Tucker. *The Encyclopedia of North American Indian Wars 1607–1890. A Political, Social, and Military History*. Oxford 2011. 535ff. Online: https://www.google.ch/books/edition/The_Encyclopedia_of_North_American_India/wRjOEAAAQBAJ?hl=de&gbpv=1&dq=natchez+chickasaw+war+genocide&pg=PA536&printsec=frontcover.

Karrer Regiment who had recruited soldiers in the Bernese Seeland and the Vaud region, had already been fighting for the French against the indigenous peoples and for settler colonialism.¹

The French sold hundreds of *Natchez* prisoners from the first phase of the war to French plantations in Saint-Domingue. During the major attack on the *Chickasaw* (Battle of Ackia, 26 May 1736), in which regimental commander Franz Adam Karrer took part with around 150 men, along with them 140 African slaves were forced to serve on the French side. These conflicts, which lasted until 1763 and also involved the *Choctaw* (who were allied with the French), were part of the struggle for control of the Mississippi, through which the French wanted to connect their colony of Louisiana with the northern part of *La nouvelle France*.²

Two missions by the regiment are known to have been carried out to combat slave uprisings: against the slave revolt on the Danish island of St. John (see 2.1) and in 1758 on Saint-Domingue, where the Swiss regiment helped to quell the revolt led by François Mackandal. When Mackandal was burned at the stake on the *Place d'Armes* in Cap Français, a detachment of the Karrer/Hallwyl regiment brought the rioting slaves under control by clearing the execution site.³ Some officers of the regiment also became plantation owners in Saint-Domingue, such as Jean-Conrad Baron de Spechbach (1727–1763), who came from Basel.⁴ Charles-Daniel de Meuron (1738–1806) from Neuchâtel also served in the Karrer/Hallwyl regiment and established his own free regiment for the Dutch East India Company in 1781.

The motto of the Karrer/Hallwyl regiment was: *Fidelitate & honore Terra & Mari* («With loyalty and honour on land and sea»). It was written on the regiment's flag. But in fact, the deployment of Swiss mercenary troops overseas was an anomaly. It was incompatible with official mercenary alliances and practice: «En principe les Suisses au service de la France ne doivent pas être employés au-delà du Rhin ni dans les colonies.»⁵ As early as 1521, just one generation after Columbus, a mercenary service contract with the French crown explicitly prohibited deployment at sea: «Point 5: The recruited troops may only be deployed on land and in the event of an enemy attack.»⁶ The mercenary contracts concluded between the 16th and 18th centuries between European powers such as Spain, France, and the Netherlands on the one hand and the Swiss Confederacy or individual cantons on the other always contained similar wording (no service on galleys, no service on or beyond the sea). The deployment of the first battalion of the *3rd Helvetic Half-Brigade* to suppress the slave uprising in Saint Domingue also violated the offensive and defensive alliance between the French and Helvetic (Swiss) governments of 1798. Article II stipulated that it was out of the question

¹ Ernst Lerch. «Die Bernische Auswanderung nach Amerika im 18. Jahrhundert». *Blätter für bernische Geschichte, Kunst und Altertumskunde*. Bern 1909. 297. Online: https://www.google.ch/books/edition/Blätter_für_bernische_Geschichte_Kunst/000LAAAAIAAJ?hl=de&gbpv=1&dq=de+Merveilleux+wunderlich+louisiana&pg=PA297&printsec=frontcover. / Gordon M. Sayre. *The Memoir of Lieutenant 1715–1747. A Sojourner in the French Atlantic*. Chapel Hill. 2012. 433. Online: https://www.google.ch/books/edition/The_Memoir_of_Lieutenant_Dumont_1715_174/Kb7qCQAAQBAJ?hl=de&gbpv=1&dq=natchez+karrer&pg=PA433&printsec=frontcover.

² Alan Gallay. *Colonial Wars of North America, 1512-1763. An Encyclopedia*. Abingdon 1996.

³ Paul Farmer. *Sida en Haïti. La victime accusée*. Paris 1996. 200.

⁴ Oliver Gliech. *Colons de Saint-Domingue, Anciens Propriétaires (1789)* – S. Website Domingino-Verlag. Online: https://www.domingino.de/stdomin/colons_s.htm.

⁵ André Corvisier. *La guerre. Essais historiques*. Paris 1998. 268.

⁶ Staatsarchiv Luzern. «Die französische Soldallianz 1521». Online: <https://staatsarchiv.lu.ch/schaufenster/quellen/Soldallianz>.

to «send Swiss troops across the sea».¹

For tactical or financial reasons, free regiments such as that of Karrer/Hallwyl were tolerated by the Swiss Confederacy or the Federal Diet («Tagsatzung»). They were a ploy to circumvent the legal and financial provisions of the mercenary alliances. It was possible to recruit soldiers without interference and to undercut the prices set in the alliances. A «pioneer» of this practice was the Grisons mercenary officer and mercenary diplomat Johann Peter Stuppa, or Jean Pierre Stouppe (1621–1701), who in 1671 bypassed both the French ambassador in Solothurn and the Federal Diet («Tagsatzung») and himself recruited troops in Switzerland at a much lower rate (5 to 6 écus per soldier per month instead of the previous 7 écus).² By tolerating the Karrer/Hallwyl («Free») Regiment, the Swiss cantons (including Zurich, Berne and Solothurn) condoned the use of Swiss troops against rebellious indigenous peoples and enslaved rebels.

(6) Contemporary Swiss Knowledge of Slavery

In our context, that of responsibility for participation in slavery, the question has repeatedly been raised as to what was known at a given time about Europe's colonial expansion into Africa and the Americas and about slavery and the slave trade, which were part and parcel of it. In his study of the Fuggers and the Welsers, German historian Mark Häberlin writes that as early as the 16th century, there was something like a global consciousness in cities such as Amsterdam, Venice, Nuremberg, and Augsburg:

*«America, Asia and, to a lesser extent, Africa became part of the educational and intellectual horizon of the educated and wealthy inhabitants of these cities; descriptions of these regions of the world and news about political, military and commercial ventures overseas found an interested audience».*³

This knowledge of the world grew and intensified in the 17th century, reaching critical mass in the 18th century and also reaching Switzerland. The following is a selection of sources and publications that prove for Zurich, Berne and Solothurn, for Appenzell Ausserrhoden and the rest of the Swiss Confederacy that even before and during the period relevant here (1719–1839),⁴ there certainly was a knowledge of the realities of colonialism, slavery and the slave trade among educated circles and families, merchants, bankers, and political actors. Appenzell Ausserrhoden is listed separately here because there are a surprising number of sources from that canton in the east of Switzerland and because it is highly probable that knowledge of slavery among the ruling classes and patricians of the urban centres of Zurich, Bern and Solothurn was at least as widespread as in rural Ausserrhoden.

¹ Fernando Bernoulli. *Die helvetischen Halbbrigaden im Dienste Frankreichs 1798–1805*. Frauenfeld 1934.

² Katrin Keller: «Ein Schweizer Gardehauptmann als französischer Unterhändler. Johann Peter Stuppas Werbeverhandlungen in der Eidgenossenschaft 1671». *Itinera* 45/2018, Beilage zur *Schweizerische Zeitung für Zeitgeschichte*, Herausgeber: Philippe Rogger und Nadir Weber. Basel 2018.

³ Mark Häberlin. *Aufbruch ins globale Zeitalter. Die Handelswelt der Fugger und Welser*. Darmstadt 2016. 21.

⁴ Time span between 1719 (acquisition of South Sea Company shares by Berne and of Mississippi shares by Solothurn, founding of the Regiment Karrer/Hallwyl) and 1836 (sale of the last *South Sea Company* annuities by Zurich).

(6.1) Zurich, Berne and Solothurn

=> In 1664, Zurich pastors Hans Jacob Zeller and Heinrich Huser published their *New Description of the Island of Jamaica, located in America*, in which they gave a realistic account of the reality of slavery:

*«...except for those who are brought there as slaves and sold in the open market; On how the East India Company in London engages in such commerce with Negroes or Moors who are frequently taken there; an adult male is commonly sold for 13 pounds sterling, which is 204 florins in our currency there. The present English inhabitants of this country make use of these Moors in their households and also have them work their sugar and cotton fields».*¹

=> In 1678, Zurich physician Felix Christian Spoerri (1615–1680) published his *American Travelogue to the Caribbean Islands and New England*, in which he recounted a journey undertaken in 1661 and 1662 to – among other colonies – Barbados:

«Furthermore there are also many Negroes and Indians here, who have been bought as slaves by the English and serve as serfs, forced to work the land: (These are all bartered from Angola, Guinea and other places, where they have been made prisoners of war by their own countrymen and traded by Christians at low prices for all kinds of glass corals, copper, iron, cloth, mirrors and other things; and there they are sold again at a reasonable price, depending on whether they are young or old and their build or size)... [...] ... to do their work, which is to plant sugar, tobacco, cotton, indigo or «endich», and whatever else the land yields... [...] There are plantations or farms where one master has 100 or more of these slaves».

The same text has the following to say about enslaved mothers:

*«When first they arrive in that country and are forced to work, they often die of hunger, believing that when they die, they will go to another country where they will lack nothing in terms of wealth, honour and cordiality, but will instead have everything in abundance».*²

=> In 1702, Franz Ludwig Michel (1675–1717) from Berne had his brother publish his travel experiences in North America: *Meines Bruders Frantz Ludwig Michels Kurze Americanische Reißbeschreibung* («My brother Frantz Ludwig Michel's brief account of his travels in America»). Therein, he provides an unvarnished picture of the realities of slavery in British North America upon his arrival in Virginia:

«There are many people who have plantations to rent. For two to five pounds, you can get good accommodation and as much land as you can work. Most of the wealth consists of slaves or Negroes, because if you have many workers, you can produce a lot of food and tobacco. These Negroes are brought here in large numbers every year from Guinea and Jamaica (which

¹ Hans Jacob Zeller und Heinrich Huser. «Die Insul Jamaica». *Vier loblicher Statt Zürich verbürgerter, Reissbeschreibungen*. Zürich 1677. 182. Online: <https://www.e-rara.ch/zuz/content/zoom/3749907>.

² Felix Christian Spoerri. «Americanische Reiss-Beschreibung nach den Caribes Insslen, und Neu-Engelland». Zürich 1678. 16–18. Online: <https://www.e-rara.ch/zuz/content/zoom/3749939>.

belongs to England) on English ships. You can choose them at will, young and old, men and women. Upon arrival, they are completely naked and wear only corals of various colours around their necks and arms. They usually cost between 18 and 30 pounds. They are slaves for life and good workers once they have adjusted to their environment. Many die during the journey or at the beginning of their stay here because they are poorly fed and treated very harshly. As a rule, both sexes are purchased and later they reproduce. The children must live in slavery like their parents. Even if they want to become Christians, they are rarely allowed to do so, as English law stipulates that they must be freed after seven years of service in accordance with Mosaic law. When a slave is purchased by the captain of a ship, he is not paid immediately, but the purchased slave usually plants tobacco so that the captain can be paid. Recently, before my departure, I spent a night on a ship that had arrived a few days earlier with 230 slaves from Guinea. There they are bought for little money, as are gold and ivory, but one hundred of them died on the voyage to Virginia».¹

=> Christoph von Graffenried (1661–1743), citizen of Berne and London, founded the colony of New Berne in North Carolina at the end of 1710 with the support of the English crown. He himself owned two enslaved men and went to war against the indigenous Tuscarora. In 1713, he returned to Bern penniless.² He and the aforementioned Franz Ludwig Michel were, in a sense, the vanguard of the «Carolina rabies» or «Carolina fever», the wave of emigration to North America that reached its peak between 1734 and 1750 with hundreds of emigrants from all over Switzerland.³ The Swiss quickly integrated into the colonial system, which displaced indigenous peoples, made their land available for European settlement and exploited the labour of enslaved people. Many of the emigrants became slave owners themselves in the first, but certainly in the second generation.⁴ Through promotional literature and contacts between family members in Switzerland and British North America, knowledge about the realities of slavery reached broad sections of the population of the Swiss Confederation.⁵

=> For Zurich, there is an emigration survey for the years 1734–1744, which records 2,300 emigrants. Albert Bernhardt Faust, an expert on Swiss emigration to British North America, estimates that a further 200 illegal emigrations must be added to this figure. He estimates the number of emigrants from Berne, which was larger and more populous at the time, at 3,000, and from Basel at 1,500. According to Faust, cantons whose archives also provide sufficient information on emigration to North America include Schaffhausen, Graubünden and Solothurn, which regions he includes in his overall statistics with 2,500 people each.⁶

¹ *Meines Bruders Frantz Ludwig Michels Kurze Americanische Reißbeschreibung*. Bern 1702. Bürgerbibliothek Bern, Mss.h.h.X.152. The passage quoted, which William J. Hinke had translated into English based on a transcript, was translated back into German for this study by the author. Online: <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/primary-documents/arriving-in-virginia-an-excerpt-from-short-report-of-the-american-journey-which-was-made-from-the-2nd-of-october-of-last-year-to-the-first-of-december-of-this-current-year-1702-by-frantz-ludwig-mi>.

² Faust. *Guide*. 179.

³ Fässler. *Reise*. 117–127.

⁴ Fässler. *CCA*. 3 Beyond the Caribbean.

⁵ See quotes from Appenzeller-Kalender (6.2).

⁶ Albert Bernhardt Faust und Gaius Marcus Brumbaugh. *Lists Of Swiss Emigrants In The Eighteenth Century To The American Colonies*. Washington 1920–1925. 12, 24. Online: https://archive.org/stream/listswissemigrant01fausrich/listswissemigrant01fausrich_djvu.txt.

=> In 1720, Johannes von Hallwyl (1672–1741), a nobleman from the state of Berne, entered the service of Franz Adam Karrer's regiment, which had been newly founded in 1719 and to whose owner he was distantly related. The von Hallwyl family had their ancestral seat in the castle of the same name in the municipality of Seengen, northwest of Lake Hallwil (today the Swiss canton of Aargau). Johannes von Hallwyl had entered Dutch service in 1708 with a Zurich regiment (Lochmann), before transferring to a Bernese regiment (von May) in 1709. In 1720, he was in La Rochelle and shortly afterwards in Martinique with 200 soldiers from the Karrer regiment. From 1724, he was commander of the Swiss company in Petit-Goâve on Saint-Domingue (now Haiti) with the rank of lieutenant captain. From then on, he became active in the colonial goods trade (sugar, tobacco, indigo, cotton, cinchona bark and silver piastres) and thus became wealthy. He also owned at least a few slaves for his household. In 1737, he returned to Switzerland but continued to run his colonial businesses. In 1752, the Karrer regiment passed into the hands of his cousin Franz Joseph von Hallwyl from Solothurn.¹

=> In Zurich, the founders of Bank Leu had impressive educational backgrounds and European travel experience. Johann Jacob Leu (1689–1768) was an encyclopaedist who had travelled to Germany (Marburg), the Netherlands and France (Paris, Versailles with an audience with Louis XIV) and spoke Spanish and Dutch.² Hans Conrad Heidegger (1710–1778) studied new languages in Lausanne, visited Berlin and was active as a diplomat in 1777 when the alliance between France and the Swiss Confederation was concluded.³ The general ledger records of the Leu interest commission also provide evidence of the global networks of business partners in which the Zurich state bank operated. The following players were active throughout Europe and in some cases closely linked to the slave trade, plantation ownership or transatlantic flows of commodities.

In addition to the aforementioned and slavery-related *John & David Brown*, Reinhard Iselin, Baron Schimmelmann, *Hottinguer & Cie* and *Jacob Ambrosius Pool & Compagnie*, which were involved in slavery, *Leu & Comp.* also did business with Henry Scherrer (merchant in Lyon, bill of exchange transactions and canvas trade), *Thelluson Necker et Compagnie* (banking house in Paris, financing of the slave trade),⁴ Isak Vernet (merchant and banker in Marseilles and Paris, financing of the slave trade and plantation economy), *Girardot & Haller* (banking house in Geneva and Paris, investments in the slave trade, speculation in colonial goods), Lavit, *Passavant, de Candolle & Comp.* (Geneva banking house, global shipping business, investments in the slave trade), *Peter Merian & Comp.* (Basel *indiennes* printing company with connections to Lörrach)⁵, *Jean Henry Cazenove Neveu & Compagnie* (London securities trading firm with links to Danish colonial policy, slave trade and plantation system), *Charles Théophil Cazenove & Barband* (London and Amsterdam, business with plantations in Suriname).⁶

¹ Museum Aargau (Hrsg.). *Zwischen der Karibik und dem Aargau. Johannes von Hallwyl (1688–1753) in den französischen Kolonien*. Zürich 2025.

² Alex Capus. *Patriarchen. Über Bally, Lindt, Nestlé und andere Pioniere*. München 2018. 99–108.

³ Landmann. *Kreditorganisation*. 38–57.

⁴ Herbert Lüthy. *La banque protestante en France de la révocation de l'Edit de Nantes à la Révolution*. Tome II. *De la Banque aux Finances (1730-1794)*. Paris 1951. Chapitre III «De Thelluson à Necker».

⁵ Arthur Bolliger. *Ein Beitrag zur Entwicklung des europäischen Textildrucks: Eine historisch-systematische Untersuchung*. Wien 1950. 184ff.

⁶ StAZH W II 21 1: Zinskommission Leu, Hauptbuch Band 1 und 2.

=> Emigration to British North America has already been mentioned. Through mercenary services, Berne had also been closely linked to the colonial powers of France and Holland since the 17th century. Patrician families such as Stürler, Diesbach, Erlach, Morlot, Wattenwyl, Mülinen, Tschärner, Muralt, Graffenried, and Steiger undoubtedly acquired not only financial capital but also social and cultural capital (trade networks, connections, knowledge of the world, foreign languages, education) in this context. Historian Michael Feller puts it this way:

*«The patrician families not only played an important role in the market for military services, they also guided the fortunes of Bern. There were therefore links between the private sector and the city-state. Bern benefited from the mercenary contractors' good contacts in the French centre of power. Information was quickly relayed to Bern through private correspondence, and this information advantage brought benefits not only in military terms, but also in foreign trade».*¹

At the time of the South Sea Company, the Bernese authorities had close ties to the colonial business world through the banks *Malacrida & Comp.* and *Müller & Comp.*, not only via London, but also via Jérôme Hunziger from Aarau and Amsterdam.² Niklaus Malacrida (1658–1742) was a member of the Bernese merchants' guild, and the other shareholders in the bank also had colonial connections: Gabriel Frisching (1666–1741) had been a captain in Dutch service, David Gruner (1686–1764) was the son-in-law of Niklaus Malacrida, a linen merchant and banker, Friedrich von Wattenwyl (1665–1741) was Lord of Montmirail (today: Thielle in the canton of Neuchâtel), which had close ties to the Moravian Church, which had been doing missionary work in Suriname since 1735 and which itself owned slaves.³ Other Bernese banks with international expertise included *Haller & Co.* and the private bank *Ludwig Zeerleder & Co.* The bank *Girardot & Haller*, co-founded by Rudolf Emanuel von Haller (1747–1833) of Berne, son of the polymath and poet Albrecht von Haller, has already been mentioned.⁴

The collapse of the *Malacrida & Co.* bank in the South Sea Bubble of 1721 affected the entire Bernese elite: The 34 most politically powerful families accounted for 184 creditors, 57% of whom were women. Among the ten most powerful Bernese patrician families were several that already had a history of colonialism (in East and West India), merchant activities, diplomatic and mercenary careers for European colonial powers: von Graffenried, May, von Wattenwyl, von Erlach, Steiger, Stürler, Tschärner and von Diesbach.⁵ But it was not only the state of Berne and the prominent representatives of the patrician families who were caught up in the maelstrom; such broad sections of the population were involved that awareness of colonial and slavery-related interdependencies is likely to have increased. Julius Landmann writes:

¹ Michael Feller. «So kam Bern zu Reichtum. Berner Söldner waren auf dem Gewaltmarkt gefragt – nur Jeder Dritte kehrte zurück». *Der Bund*. 8. August 2025. Online: <https://www.derbund.ch/bern-wie-das-soednerwesen-zum-berner-reichtum-beitrag-171817566155>.

² Linder. *Bankenkrise*. 28–31, 40.

³ Rudolf Dellsperger. «Thielle-Wavre (NE): Das alte Haus von Montmirail». Website Institut für historische Theologie. Bern 2023. Online: <https://www.theos.unibe.ch/montmirail>. / Evangelischer Pressedienst. «Herrnhuter bitten wegen Sklaverei in Surinam um Vergebung». Website <Evangelisch.de – mehr als du glaubst>. 30. Juni 2023. Online: <https://www.evangelisch.de/inhalte/85781/30-06-2013>.

⁴ Fässler. *Reise*. 172ff.

⁵ Linder. *Bankenkrise*. 73–75.

«The guilds and societies had invested their cash reserves in the Malacrida Bank; middle-class maidens and patrician ladies had invested their dowries; orphans had invested their fortunes; women had invested their «women's property»; there was no class, no well-known name that was not represented in this list of creditors: the bailiff, the administrative council, the treasurer, the preacher, the hospital directors, Mrs. Bailiff von Mühlenen, Mrs. Councillor Engelen, His Grace the municipal administrator Frisching, the reformed church consistory of Lissa in Poland, Professor Gerber, the late watchmaker's daughters, Junker Captain Rud. von Bonstädten, the child of Sam Schneider the baker, and others».¹

=> Bernese polymath and poet Albrecht von Haller (1708–1777), father of the banker and merchant Emanuel Rudolf Haller, wrote a total of over 9,000 reviews of European publications for the influential German literary journal *Göttingische Gelehrten Anzeigen* (GGA) from 1745 onwards. Among them are numerous travelogues from the period 1745–1776, which prove that there must have been a broad knowledge of the colonies and the institution of slavery associated with them in scholarly and educated circles in Europe and certainly also in Switzerland. The following works reviewed by Haller are only a selection.² They contain information on European slave forts in Africa, figures on the enslaved population in a particular colony, figures on the number of enslaved people deported to the colonies each year, and information on the colonial commodities sugar, cotton, coffee, cocoa and tobacco. The travelogues refer to East Indian territories (Mauritius, New Holland, New Guinea), the colonised territories of the Americas (Martinique, Guadeloupe, Saint-Domingue, Jamaica, Barbados, Barbuda, Carolina, Suriname, Berbice, Essequibo, Cayenne, Antigua) and African regions (Gambia, Gold Coast, Gorée and the Cape Colony):

- Samuel Urlsperger. *Der ausführlichen Nachrichten von der Königlich-Gross-Britannischen Colonie Saltzburgischer Emigranten in America*. 1740–1752.
- Charles de Brosses. *Histoire des navigations aux terres Australes*. 1756.
- Patrick Brown. *Civil and natural history of Jamaica*. 1756.
- Ludvig Ferdinand Rømer und Christian Gottlob Mengel. *Die Handlung verschiedener Völker auf der Küste von Guinea und in Westindien*. 1758.
- Antoine Simon le Page du Pratz. *Histoire de la Louisiane*. 1758.
- Jean-Baptiste Thibault de Chanvalon. *Voyage à la Martinique, contenant diverses observations sur la physique, l'histoire naturelle, l'agriculture, les moeurs et les usages de cette isle, faites en 1751 et dans les années suivantes*. 1763.
- Nicolas Louis de Lacaille. *Journal historique du voyage fait au Cap de Bonne-Espérance*. 1763.
- Jacques-Nicolas Bellin. *Description géographique de la Guyane*. 1763.
- Philippe Fermin. *Histoire naturelle de la Hollande équinoxiale*. 1765.
- William Burke und Marc-Antoine Eidous. *Histoire des colonies européennes dans l'Amérique*. 1767.
- Jean-Baptiste Demanet. *Nouvelle histoire de l'Afrique française*. 1767.
- Ludvig Ferdinand Rømer und Erik Pontoppidan. *Nachrichten von der Küste Guinea*. 1769.
- M de Beauvais-Raseau. *L'Art de l'indigotier*. 1770.
- Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. *Voyage à l'Isle de France, à l'Isle de Bourbon, au Cap de Bonne-Espérance, etc.* 1773.
- Guillaume-Thomas-François Raynal. *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissemens et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes*. 1770–1774.
- P. Nicolson. *Essai sur l'histoire naturelle de St. Domingue*. 1776.
- Jean-Barthélemy Dazille. *Observations sur les maladies des nègres, leurs causes, leurs traitemens et les moyens de les prévenir*. 1776.

¹ Landmann. *Kapitalanlagen*. 33.

² Digital edition of the reviews by Albrecht von Hallers. République des Lettres (hallerNet) 2018ff. Recherche mit Suchbegriffen «Slaven», «Mohren» und «Neger». Online: <https://republique-des-lettres.ch/data/reviews?query=&scope=mt&filters=>.

Selected quotations from three of the above-mentioned works (Urlspurger, 1740–1752, on Virginia; de Broses, 1756, on Jamaica; Dazille, 1776, on Cayenne) illustrate the relevance of slavery to the information conveyed:

*«A Negro costs only twelve thalers a year to maintain. A plantation with ten Negroes costs 406 pounds in the first year».*¹

*«...but the men become too accustomed to Moorish women. There are 12,000 Moorish slaves on the island, and 9,000 are brought from Africa every year. They are given some linen fabric...».*²

*«In favour of the slave trade: without it, a colony could become belligerent, but not rich. He proves this with Canada and St. Domingue».*³

=> In Solothurn, proximity to France (Solothurn or Soleure as seat of the French embassy to the Swiss Confederacy from 1530 to 1792) is likely to have played a major role in shaping the worldview of the Swiss elite. The Karrer/Hallwyl regiment has already been mentioned. In addition to the von Besenval family, which has also already been mentioned, the von Roll family from Solothurn also had close ties to France. They belonged to the inner circle of the Solothurn patriciate and took over the leadership of the ambassadorial city after the fall of the von Besenval family. Noteworthy figures include Ludwig von Roll (1605–1652), a mercenary commander with military, economic and courtly expertise;⁴ Georg Franz Josef Ignaz von Roll (1707–1758), a brigadier in French service; and Franz Joseph von Roll (1743–1815), a field marshal in French service. From 1794, Ludwig Robert von Roll (1750–1813) was the owner of a regiment in English service, which was deployed to Egypt among other places.⁵

The third patrician family from Solothurn worth mentioning is the von Sury family, who served in various foreign armies: Urs Franz Josef von Sury (1673–1719) as a brigadier for France, Eugen Georg Alexander von Sury (1720–1782) as a lieutenant general for Sardinia, Heinrich von Sury (1606–1654) as a colonel for France, Johann Josef Sury von Steinbrugg (1633–1672) also as a colonel for France, and Johann Anton Josef von Sury (1695–1745) as a brigadier for Spain.⁶ Finally, the fourth mercenary family from Solothurn was the Greder family, who served in the French army for four generations: colonel Wolfgang II Greder (1632–1691), lieutenant general Lorenz Greder (1658–1716) and brigadiers Ludwig Greder (1659–1703) and Balthasar Greder (1667–1714).⁷

=> In 1757, a letter from Paris to Zurich banker Johann Jakob Wirth about the nature of French public funds contained a passage that made it clear how investing in the French state was tied to French colonial policy:

¹ Review by Albrecht von Haller of: Samuel Urlspurger. *Der ausführlichen Nachrichten von der Königlich-Gross-Britannischen Colonie Saltzburgischer Emigranten in America*. Halle 1740–1752. GGA 1753 (1), St. 5. 36.

² Review by Albrecht von Haller of: Patrick Brown. *Civil and natural history of Jamaica*. London 1756. GGA 1758 (1), St. 47. 455.

³ Review by Albrecht von Haller of: Jean-Barthélemy Dazille. *Observations sur les maladies des nègres, leurs causes, leurs traitemens et les moyens de les prévenir*. Paris 1776. GGA 1778 (Z), St. 47. 742.

⁴ Vincent Oberer. *Ludwig von Roll. Ein Solothurner Soldienstunternehmer im Dreissigjährigen Krieg*. Basel 2025.

⁵ Erich Meyer. Eintrag «von Roll (Familie, SO)» im Historischen Lexikon der Schweiz (HLS). 2012. Online: <https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/022856/2012-01-05>.

⁶ Erich Meyer. Eintrag «Sury» im Historischen Lexikon der Schweiz (HLS). 2014. Online: <https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/022863/2014-08-04>.

⁷ Margrit Fritsch. *Wer waren die porträtierten Personen im Blumenstein? Solothurn o.J., ohne Paginierung*.

*«Our company also has securities in the public domain on which it pays interest; it has shares whose price is not fixed; at today's price, they yield 4¼ per cent, they yield less than other public securities because there is hope that the dividend will be increased, and wherever there is hope, this nation adopts the most favourable side. In the present circumstances, it is doubtful in my opinion whether this hope is worth anything, as there is unrest in the Indies and war between the Moguls and us...».*¹

The French *Compagnie des Indes* was active in both Africa and the West Indies (1719–1770: equipping 179 slave trade voyages, mainly from the port of Lorient).² The aforementioned «trouble in the Indies» that damaged business refer to imperial competition with Great Britain in Southeast India, which reached its peak with the Seven Years' War (1756–1763), and to conflicts with the declining Indian Mughal Empire.

=> In the context of the purchase of general bonds issued by King Frederik V of Denmark by around 20 Zurich families and organisations, Geneva notary Jean Louis explained in 1760 the Danish crown's need for money with the expansion and securing of Danish colonial possessions in the Americas:

*«It is in this view that we have spared no expense to procure and ensure free navigation for our subjects everywhere, that we have acquired with our own money and added to the domain of our Crown the islands and colonies of America, and that in order to preserve peace in our states, this precious blessing from Heaven, we have not regretted applying part of our Crown's revenues to increasing our armies both by sea and by land».*³

=> In 1781, the predecessor newspaper of the (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*) reported with statistical precision on the slave trade, slavery, and its deadly consequences. It concluded with the quote: «How much must half of humanity suffer so that the other half can live in luxury!»⁴

=> When in 1786, the Zurich authorities wanted to punish the rebellious court clerk Johann Conrad Winz (1757–1828) from Stein am Rhein, they decided to banish him to Berbice via St. Gallen's West Indian connections (members of the Zollikofer and Züblin families). There Winz worked his way up to become director of two plantations and communicated regularly with the Zurich authorities, providing detailed information about his activities and plans in the plantation business. Zurich had already sent a misfit scion of a distinguished family to Suriname in 1684 to serve in the Dutch military, and in 1752, Zurich, as chairing canton in the Federal Diet, had presented a plan to deport vagrants and beggars from the Swiss Confederation to the French Antilles. The project ultimately failed due to resistance from the French court.⁵

¹ Landmann. *Kreditwesen*. 328 (Beilage Nr. 3).

² Service historique de la Défense. «Dossier documentaire. La compagnie des Indes et la traite des noirs au XVIIIe siècle (1719–1770)». Online: https://www.servicehistorique.sga.defense.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/2020-12/la_compagnie_des_Indes.pdf.

³ StAZH W II 21 10: Zinskommission Leu, Protokoll Band 1, S. 88-90.

⁴ Johann Kaspar Riesbeck (1754–1786), German lawyer, author, actor, and illuminator. *Zürcher Zeitung*, 25th August 1781.

⁵ Robert Pfaff. «Johann Conrad Winz». *Schaffhauser Beiträge zur Geschichte*. Band 58, 1981. 379–386. Online: <https://www.e-periodica.ch/digbib/view?pid=sbg-003%3A1981%3A58%3A%3A392>.

=> In 1804 Swiss zoologist Heinrich Rudolf Schinz (1777–1861) became a teacher at the medical institute of the newly founded University of Zurich, and from 1833 he was associate professor of natural history. In 1827, he had written about the slave trade:

«The desire to classify Negroes as animals may well be in the interests of those who wish to promote and defend the slave trade, which is a disgrace to civilized humanity, since according to the morality of these people, it would not be a sin to treat an animal as Negroes are so often treated. But even tormenting animals is shameful for humans; how much more shameful, then, is it to degrade a fellow human being to the status of an animal because he is black. The Negro is a human being like the European; he is our brother, and we have not the slightest right to mistreat him. His mind is just as capable of education and perfection as ours...»¹

(6.2) Appenzell Ausserrhoden

=> Due to its unbroken tradition the Zellweger Library in Trogen (canton of Appenzell Ausserrhoden in eastern Switzerland) is nowadays considered an elucidating object of study for the so-called canon research (and theory). This research uses library collections to examine what was known at a particular point in time in a particular social class. In the historical book collection of the Cantonal Library of Appenzell Ausserrhoden in Trogen (the former private library of the Zellweger family) works such as the following provide detailed information on the location of European slave forts on the African west coast, the location of plantations in the Americas, and prices on slave markets:

- Albrecht Herport. *Eine kurtze Ost-Indianische Reiss-Beschreibung*. Bern 1669.
- Guillaume Bosman. *Voyage de Guinée, contenant une description nouvelle & très exacte de cette côte où l'on trouve & où l'on trafique l'or, les dents d'Elephant, & les Esclaves*. Utrecht 1705.
- Johann Hübner. *Kurtze Fragen aus der alten und neuen Geographie biss auf gegenwärtige Zeit continuiret*. Leipzig 1710.
- Anonym. *Voyage Aux Côtes de Guinée & en Amérique par Mr. N****. Amsterdam 1719.
- Joseph Delaporte. *Reisen eines Franzosen, oder Beschreibung der vornehmsten Reiche der Welt, nach ihrer ehemaligen oder itzigen Beschaffenheit*. Leipzig 1773, v.a. Bde. 9–16.
- D. Philipp Fermin. *Reise durch Surinam*. Potsdam 1782
- John Palaret. *Bowles's Universal Atlas*. London ca. 1792.²

=> The «Appenzeller Kalender» was an almanac published annually from 1722 onwards and was read far beyond the Appenzell region, partly because of its reports, news items, calendar and astronomical details and anecdotes. Information on slavery and the colonial world can be found in the years 1726, 1752, 1754, 1755, 1771, 1772, 1773, 1777, 1779, 1781, 1782, 1783, 1785, 1788, 1789, 1795, 1801, 1805, 1808, 1809, 1822, and 1824. Johannes Tobler (1696–1765), founder of the «Appenzeller Kalender» and former «Landammann» (chief magistrate) of Appenzell Ausserrhoden, emigrated to South Carolina in 1736, together with around 200 other Swiss citizens, and founded a colony on the Savannah River. He himself owned slaves and reported that other Swiss citizens did so, too. In the Appenzell almanac of 1754, he wrote:

«One can notice several small towns and villages in the region that have been founded recently, which have very wealthy planters and residents, some of whom own 100, 200, and

¹ Heinrich Rudolf Schinz. *Naturgeschichte und Abbildungen der Säugethiere*. Zürich 1827. 42.

² Fässler. *Reise*. 330.

*more black slaves. [...] In South Carolina and the surrounding area, there is still a great deal of good land available, but only few inhabitants. [...] At present, 100 acres of land and a Negro slave cost only ten and a half «batzen» of your money: in times of war, the price may rise by a third».*¹

In the 1771 edition of the «Appenzeller Kalender», Conrad Schläpfer, «magistrate of Trogen», wrote about the history of Berbice. He already knew that plantations had been established there, «some of which are inhabited nowadays in this country by Dutch colonists, Germans, and Swiss». He wrote about cotton cultivation in Berbice:

*«For all that planting, you usually need Negroes or slaves. They are wild black people who have been raised in Africa, the land of the blacks, and are therefore bought at a high price. A man costs between 150 and 500 guilders. They are better at work than the old inhabitants of this country...».*²

=> In 1785, the «Appenzeller Hinkende Bott» («The Limping Messenger») published a lengthy historical description of Kingston, a city in America, in the form of letters. In his letter from 1778, the author painted a harrowing picture of a slave market organized after the arrival of a French slave ship carrying 550 enslaved humans from the coast of Guinea:

*«There stood a crowd of black people, old and young, men and women; all stark naked, as God had created them; all had a card hanging around their necks with numbers written on it. Dear God! I thought, here they sell people like we sell cattle, geese, and pigs. Many buyers walked around, inspecting and feeling the blacks to see if they had any defects. A young, strong man in his prime was valued at 600 Reichsthaler, while others were priced at 450, 300, or 200 Reichsthaler. Old women and old men were no longer valued as much as small children. [...] By 9 o'clock, everything had been sold, and everyone was preparing to take away the goods they had purchased. The black girl kissed her black brother once more and wept; the old Negroes embraced each other and cried farewell!»*³

=> In 1765, the «Appenzeller Kalender» published an introduction to the slave revolt in Berbice under the title «American History», which begins as follows:

*«In this part of the world, the spirit of rebellion has begun to rage: The blacks have stirred up a general uprising on the Dutch-owned island (sic!) of Berbice, and it is appalling to see the cruelty with which they are killing Christians».*⁴

¹ Johannes Tobler. «Beschreibung von Carolina». *Alter und verbesserter Schreib-Kalender auf das G.G. Gnadenreiche Christjahr MDCCLIV*. St.Gallen 1754. Ohne Paginierung.

² Conrad Schläpfer. *Alter und Neuer Appenzeller Staats-Kriegs u. Friedens Calender, oder der Hinkende Bott*. Trogen 1771. Ohne Paginierung. Online: <https://www.e-periodica.ch/digbib/view?pid=apk-001%3A1771%3A50%3A%3A25>.

³ o.A. «Historische Beschreibung von Kingston, eine Stadt in Amerika – in Briefen». *Alter und neuer grosser Staats-, Kriegs- und Friedens Appenzellerkalender*. Trogen 1785. Ohne Paginierung. Online: https://www.google.ch/books/edition/Alter_und_neuer_grosser_Staats_Kriegs_un/qv18yvpo_Z0C?hl=de&gbpv=1&dq=Historische+Beschreibung+von+Kingston,+eine+Stadt+in+Amerika+---+in+Briefen&pg=PT25&printsec=frontcover.

⁴ *Appenzeller Staat-, Kriegs- und Friedenskalender. Auf das Jahr nach der Gnadenreichen Geburt unseres Herren und Heilands JESU Christi MDCCLXV*. St.Gallen 1765. Ohne Paginierung. Online: <https://www.e-periodica.ch/digbib/view?pid=apk-001%3A1765%3A44%3A%3A5>.

The author appears to be well informed about the uprising and the countermeasures taken, and then prints a lengthy letter dated May 12, 1763, from Curaçao, which also appeared in Dutch, French, and German in various European publications. The author of the letter was Jan Abraham Charbon (1729–1798), who came from a Swiss family in Treytorrens (Bernese Vaud region).¹ Charbon was a merchant in Amsterdam, and he and his descendants, or rather the *Charbon & Zoon* company, owned or managed dozens of plantations in Berbice and Suriname until the abolition of slavery in 1863.² In 1863, 138 slaves were recorded as being owned by the Charbons (Jan Adam, Pieter Anthony, and *Charbon en Zoon*).³ Jan Abraham Charbon probably arrived in Berbice in 1761. In the letter, he gives a detailed account of the attacks by the rebellious slaves, the negotiations with them, his injury by gunshot and his capture by the rebels. He also mentions the Swiss Mittelholzer (from the canton of Appenzell Innerrhoden), who belonged to a family of plantation owners or managers in Berbice and was also involved in the uprising.

(6.3) The Rest of the Confederacy

=> In 1528, St. Gallen merchant Hieronymus Sailer (1495–1559) and Ulrich Ehinger from Konstanz, on behalf of the Welser trading house in Augsburg, signed the second *Asiento de negros* ever granted by the Spanish Crown. This involved the deportation of 4,000 enslaved men and women from Africa to the Spanish colony of Venezuela. The contract already included a quota of one-third women, and Sailer was well informed about purchase prices, sales areas, license fees, and payment and transport arrangements for the enslaved.⁴

=> In 1680, Jean Noblet of Geneva wrote a long letter from Amsterdam to his cousin F. Duhamel, explaining his plan to colonize three American islands with settlers from Geneva. The Republic of Geneva was to assume sovereignty over these islands. According to Noblet, black slaves could be brought there more cheaply than to the Caribbean islands.⁵ At the same time, he submitted a request to the mayor and council of Geneva to assume sovereignty over these islands on their behalf.⁶

=> The Högger merchant family from St. Gallen had close ties to the courts of colonial powers.⁷ Sebastian Högger (1686–1737) passed his captain's exam in Brest and served in the Swedish navy from 1710 onwards. He travelled to Martinique and America for King Charles XII in 1716, followed by voyages to the African coast in 1718, and in 1723 he was commander of a squadron with the rank of general.⁸ Daniel Högger (1722–1793) died as Minister of the States General of the Netherlands in

¹ Fässler. CCA. 1 Caricom Member States.

² Persönliche Daten Jan Adam 'Jean Adam' Charbon [1729.] Website Genealogie online. Online: <https://www.genealogieonline.nl/de/deelgenealogie-flu/l2934.php>

³ Nationaal Archief. Suriname en Nederlandse Antillen: Vrijverklaarde slaven (Emancipatie 1863), Voornaam: Jan Adam. Online: <https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/index/nt00341/b2a6ebf3-2f81-447c-ac11-448d4ce4e383>.

⁴ Rezia Krauer, Nicole Stadelmann, Hanna A. Beck und Kirsten Mahlke. *Konquistadoren und Sklavenhändler von Bodensee. Kolonialgeschichte im 16. Jahrhundert*. Schwellbrunn 2024. 24–29.

⁵ Faust, Albert. *Guide to the Materials for American History in Swiss and Austrian Archives*. Washington 1916. Online:

https://dn790002.ca.archive.org/0/items/guidetomaterials00faus/guidetomaterials00faus_bw.pdf.

⁶ A.-C. «Le Genevois Jean Noblet, 1680». *Le Globe. Revue genevoise de géographie*. Année 1872, 11. 89-94. Online: https://www.persee.fr/doc/globe_0398-3412_1872_num_11_1_4353.

⁷ Affolter. *Verhandeln*. 406.

⁸ Wolfgang Göldi. Eintrag «Sebastian Högger» im Historischen Lexikon der Schweiz (HLS). 2011. Online: <https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/023922/2011-07-14>.

Hamburg, while Johann Wilhelm Högger (1755–1838) was Minister at the Portuguese court from 1783 to 1790.

=> In 1759, Voltaire published in Geneva his book «Candide ou l'optimisme», and it immediately spread throughout Europe. By 1761, it had already been translated and published in German. In chapter 19, the *nègre de Suriname* is introduced, who recounts his fate in the Dutch colony. He has lost his arm in a work accident in the sugar mill, and as punishment for attempting to escape, one of his legs was amputated. He says, «Dogs, monkeys, and parrots are a thousand times less unhappy than we are».¹

=> Regardless of whether news about slave revolts has negative/positive connotations (cruelty of the rebelling slaves, relief at their suppression) or positive/negative connotations (hope for the abolition of slavery, freedom for the oppressed, regret at their suppression), it nevertheless contributes to spreading knowledge about the realities of slavery. The large and initially successful slave revolt in Berbice in 1763/1764 has already been discussed above in section 2.3. Here we will focus on how it was received in Switzerland, despite a distance of 8,000 kilometres and slow communication by sailing ships and messengers. In 1765, an episode entitled «Die verlorne Schildwacht» (The Lost Sentinel) appeared in the «Historischer Kalender, oder, Der hinkende Bot» («Historical Calendar, or The Limping Messenger»), which began as follows:

«During the riots stirred up by blacks in Berbice in America, troops had to be sent from Holland to quell them. Now, among these auxiliary forces there was a German youngster who had enlisted for this war in Amsterdam out of curiosity. He was now posted here in America to guard against the savages....»²

The story then continues with him being captured by the rebels and him getting the impression that they are going to burn him, whereupon he is rescued by a company of Europeans.

=> News of the Berbice rebellion also reached St. Gallen (eastern Switzerland). Ambrosius Züblin (1725–1763), brother of plantation founder and owner Paulus Züblin (1709–1760) from St. Gallen and director of three plantations, was killed at the very beginning of the rebellion. On 8th October 1763, the Municipal Council of the City of St. Gallen decided to ring the bells of St. Laurenzen church to commemorate the death of Ambrosius Züblin in Berbice.³

=> In 1776, plantation owner and slaveholder David Philippe Treytorrens (1721–1788) returned from the French colony of Saint-Domingue to his hometown Yverdon, where the Villa d'Entremont was built for him. He was accompanied by his two (enslaved) children, François Mida and Pauline Buisson.⁴

=> From 1782 to 1784, Neuchâtel publisher and politician Frédéric Samuel Ostervald (1713–1795) had Abbé Guillaume-Thomas Raynal's major work «L'Histoire des deux Indes» printed through his

¹ Voltaire. *Candide ou l'optimisme*. Genève 1759. 179.

² *Historischer Kalender, oder, Der hinkende Bot. Auf das Jahr Christi 1765*. Bern 1765. Ohne Paginierung. Online: <https://www.e-periodica.ch/digbib/view?pid=hib-001%3A1765%3A0%3A%3A4>.

³ Stadtarchiv St. Gallen, Realregister der Ratsprotokolle, Bd. V, S. 2.

⁴ Caroline Arni. *Lauter Frauen. Zwölf historische Porträts*. Basel 2021. 63–78.

Société typographique de Neuchâtel (STN). In this book, Raynal condemned the slave trade and slavery and predicted a major uprising by enslaved people.¹ The STN smuggled books criticizing slavery that were printed in Neuchâtel into France (where they were banned).²

=> From 1786 to 1817, numerous Swiss citizens were active in the *Société des Amis des Noirs* and the *Groupe de Coppet*, which campaigned from its base in Coppet Castle in today's Vaud area (French-speaking part of Switzerland) and which advocated the abolition of the slave trade and slavery: Germaine de Staël, Auguste de Staël, Benjamin Constant, Victor de Broglie, and Jean de Sismondi.³ Among the founders of the French abolitionist *Société des Amis des Noirs* were also several Swiss citizens, including the merchant and cotton trader Jacques Bidermann (1751–1817) from Winterthur.⁴

=> In 1789, Benjamin-Sigismond Frossard (1754–1830), a pastor from the Bernese Vaud territory and Doctor of Law at Oxford University, explained in detail the realities of slavery (origins of the enslaved, enslavement, transport across the Atlantic, slave markets in the West Indies) in the first volume of «La Cause des esclaves nègres». The second volume deals with moral and legal aspects. Frossard writes:

*«Surely there is not one of my readers who could follow the slave ships from Guinea to America without shedding tears of emotion at the great suffering sacrificed to the greed of the colonists and the sensuality of Europe. There is no one who would not have said that this trade, based on greed and nourished by barbarism, violates all laws of justice, religion, and sound politics».*⁵

=> In 1814, Geneva economist and historian Jean-Charles-Léonard Simonde de Sismondi (1773–1842) criticized the French position on slavery at the Congress of Vienna in «De l'intérêt de la France à l'égard de la traite des nègres», because France, contrary to the other major European nations, wanted to enforce the right to extend the slave trade for another five years:

*«The right that the French are demanding today is therefore the right to corrupt the customs of the Negroes once again, to fight with all their might against the benevolent influence of philanthropic societies that are intended to civilize them, to violate their own laws, the laws of Christianity, and the laws of nature, by treating their fellow men and brothers in a manner that God has not even permitted animals to be treated, and finally, to guarantee this terrible tyranny, to inflict such terrible torments that our imagination cannot bear to conceive of them».*⁶

¹ Robert Darnton. *A Literary Tour de France*. Oxford 2018. 113.

² Michel Schlup. Eintrag «Société typographique de Neuchâtel» im Historischen Lexikon der Schweiz (HLS). Online: <https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/024569/2011-08-04>.

³ John Claiborne Isbell. «Voices Lost? Staël and Slavery, 1786–1830» In: *Staël, Romanticism and Revolution The Life and Times of the First Europeans*. Cambridge 2023. 200 – 211. Online: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/stael-romanticism-and-revolution/voices-lost/6E73F9966959868272B74A540659DE30>.

⁴ Thomas David. «L'internationale abolitionniste : les Suisses et l'abolitionnisme français, 1760-1840». In: Olivier Grenouilleau (édit). *Abolir l'esclavage. Un réformisme à l'épreuve* (France, Portugal, Suisse, XVIIIe-XIXe siècles). Rennes 2008. 115–131. Online: <https://books.openedition.org/pur/5722>.

⁵ Benjamin-Sigismond Frossard. *La cause des esclaves nègres et des habitants de la Guinée, portée au tribunal de la justice, de la religion, de la politique*. Tome deux. Lyon 1789. 1f. Online: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k9801379g/f15.item>.

⁶ Jean-Charles-Léonard Simonde de Sismondi. *De l'intérêt de la France à l'égard de la traite des nègres*. Paris 1814. 7. Online: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k109908g/f6.item.r=zoom>.

=> From 1816 to 1819, Johann Ulrich Buechler (born around 1762), a merchant from St. Gallen, travelled through North America and the West Indies and gave precise descriptions of slavery reality in his book «Land- und Seereisen eines St. Gallischen Kantonsbürgers» (Land and Sea Journeys of a Citizen of the Canton of St. Gallen). His reactions to slavery were unambiguous:

«Once, unexpectedly, I saw two or three Negro slaves tied together with ropes, all naked except for their private parts, led into the countryside by a mulatto, which happens every day in smaller or larger numbers. With a stick in his hand, he drove them like cattle to a plantation; they were all young men aged 17, 18 or 20, handsome, well-built people; at first this seemed strange to me, I thought they were criminals. I asked what this meant and was told that this was how slaves were taken to the colonies, that they had been recently purchased and that this was customary practice. I thought to myself how it could be possible to treat human beings in this way, to exploit them so unfairly, as if they were cows or pigs».¹

=> German-Swiss writer, educator and politician Heinrich Zschokke (1771–1848) was friends with a plantation owner in Cuba. He took the owner's son Tom into his home and accompanied him from the village of Unterseen (Canton of Berne) to Le Havre.² Zschokke was one of the first European (and Swiss) intellectuals to understand the significance of the Haitian Revolution (1791–1804) in the context of slavery and racism. In his satirical story «Der König von Akkim» («The King of Akkim» (1818), he wrote:

«To tell the truth, however, we must also admit that we Europeans did not use to consider black people to be real human beings, but rather a kind of animal that stood between the monkey and the human species. Our great scholars proved to us in black and white in their immortal works, decorated with copperplate engravings, that black people, simply because of their bone structure, had far less intelligence than we other honest people. But since Negroes and Negro girls have written quite decent poems, completed the finest calculations, preached sermons, become commanders of European troops in European service, and even established republics and kingdoms on the island of Haiti, where they have schools, factories, shipyards, cannon foundries and even constitutions and laws that many a clever man would like to see in some European countries, yes, since then, the opinion of the intellect of Negroes has changed somewhat, and the great scholars with their immortal works have since appeared somewhat uncomprehending».³

=> In 1827, Johann Jakob Bernet (1800–1851) and Peter Scheitlin (1779–1848), both Protestant ministers from St. Gallen (eastern Switzerland), jointly published the first volume of *Geschichtliche Unterhaltungen. Die Menschheit auf ihrem Schicksal- und Bildungsgange während der ersten vier*

¹ Johann Ulrich Buechler. *Land- und Seereisen eines St. Gallischen Kantonsbürgers nach Nordamerika und Westindien, über Amsterdam nach Baltimore, Pitzburg, Gallipoli, Sensanetta, Neu-Vevay, die Gegend Wabasch am Ohio, Natschet, Battonrouge, und Neu-Orleans am Mississippi u. wieder zurück nach Amsterdam in den Jahren 1816, 1817 und 1818*. St. Gallen, 1819. 168f. Online: <https://www.e-rara.ch/zuz/content/zoom/13095828>.

² Yvonne Leimgruber. *In pädagogischer Mission. Die Pädagogin Rosette Niederer-Kasthofer (1779–1857) und ihr Wirken für ein frauengerechtes Leben in Familie und Gesellschaft*. Bad Heilbrunn 2006. 171, FN 69.

³ Heinrich Zschokke. «Der König von Akkim». In: *Erheiterungen*, 2. Bd., Aarau 1818. 525–548. Online: <https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/zschokke/akim/akim.html>.

Jahrtausende («Historical Conversations. Mankind on its path of destiny and education during the first four millennia»). It states:

«But as time went on, cruelty transformed slave capture and the slave trade into a bloody caricature, and greed finally stamped it with the mark of infamy».¹

Bernet was the solely responsible author of the second volume of «Geschichtliche Unterhaltungen» («Historical Conversations»). Therein, he once again expresses his explicit views on slavery:

«Man has always felt himself to be a ruler. After all, he may honour countries and islands with his names; only he should not seek to destroy the integrity of his fellow humans. The name of the master, branded onto the forehead of the poor slave on the plantation, is a mark of shame for the humanity of the former».²

=> In 1832, Johannes Kirchhofer (1800–1869), professor of theology, dean, and antistes from Schaffhausen, expressed racist and pro-slavery views in his treatise *Das Missionswerk betrachtet nach seiner Wichtigkeit und Nothwendigkeit* (Missionary Work Considered in Terms of Its Importance and Necessity). He claimed that in 1768, there were already «4,560 Christian Negroes» on the Danish islands of St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. John, who – after their conversion – endured «their often harsh fate with courage and serenity thanks to the great comfort instilled by the sublime teachings of Christ.»³

(7) African, Contemporary and Retrospective Criticism of Slavery

(7.1) The Victimised Societies

The so-called *Manden Charter* is a source from the African context of the 13th century and is considered the oldest declaration of fundamental human rights ever. It was added to UNESCO's «Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity» in 2009. The French translation of the text contains the following passages relevant to slavery:

«Every (human) life is a life. / It is true that one life comes into existence before another, but one life is not 'older' or more respectable than another. / Just as one life is not superior to another».

«Every life is a life / Any wrong done to a life requires reparation».

¹ Johann Jakob Bernet und Peter Scheitlin. *Geschichtliche Unterhaltungen. Die Menschheit auf ihrem Schicksals- und Bildungsgange während der ersten vier Jahrtausende*. Erster Band. St.Gallen 1827. 130. Online: https://www.google.ch/books/edition/Geschichtliche_Unterhaltungen/5LlFAy47X94C?hl=de&gbpv=1&dq=scheitlin+bluttriebendes+zerrbild&pg=PA130&printsec=frontcover.

² Johann Jakob Bernet. *Geschichtliche Unterhaltungen. Die Menschheit auf ihrem Schicksals- und Bildungsgange während der ersten vier Jahrtausende*. Zweiter Band. St.Gallen 1827. 223. Online: https://www.google.ch/books/edition/Die_Menschheit_auf_ihrem_Schicksals_und_B/eZiNN36c2LYC?hl=de&gbpv=1&dq=Johann+Jakob+Bernet.+Geschichtliche+Unterhaltungen&pg=PP1&printsec=frontcover.

³ Johannes Kirchhofer, *Das Missionswerk betrachtet nach seiner Wichtigkeit und Nothwendigkeit, nach der Verpflichtung, daran Theil zu nehmen und nach der Art und Weise dieser Theilnahme*. Schaffhausen 1832. Online: https://www.google.ch/books/edition/Das_Missionswerk_betrachtet_nach_seiner/P3sCdQ2vSZwC?hl=de&gbpv=1&dq=kirchhofer+christliche+neger&pg=PA36&printsec=frontcover.

«Slavery is not a good thing either / There is no worse calamity than these things / In this world».

«War will never again destroy a village in Manden / To take slaves there».

«The essence of slavery is extinguished today / 'From one wall to the other' of Manden».¹

The enslaved humans of the Atlantic basin themselves never debated as to whether enslavement were «normal» – for them, it was always clear that what was being done to them (deprivation of liberty, sexual and other violence, malnutrition, torture, corporal punishment, psychological cruelty, forced labour, murder) was wrong and a fundamental violation of their human integrity and dignity. Throughout history, people in Africa, during the Middle Passage and in the Americas have therefore resisted their enslavement and their existence as slaves. They hid from their captors, physically resisted their enslavers, sought death in the sea during the Atlantic crossing, escaped the horrors of the plantation by *Marronage* (escaping into the jungle), feigned «laziness» and «incompetence», mocked the planters, stole objects or agricultural products, set fires, attacked their tormentors, plotted to poison their masters, allied themselves with indigenous peoples, destroyed tools and work animals, and killed their children to spare them a life of slavery.² And they planned and carried out hundreds of large and small uprisings, such as in 1595 on São Tomé and Príncipe, 1676 in Virginia, 1678 in Suriname, 1687 in Berbice, 1712 in New York, 1733 on St. John, 1758 in Saint-Domingue, 1760 in Jamaica, 1763 in Berbice, 1791 in Saint-Domingue, 1811 in Louisiana and on La Réunion, 1822 in South Carolina, and 1831 in Virginia.

Of course, since the 17th century, colonised people and people of African descent have taken theoretical (moral, ethical, philosophical, legal) positions in publications, too.³ Some examples:

=> Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala (dates of birth and death unknown), an approximately 80-year-old indigenous man from the southern central Andes, who in 1615 published his «First New Chronicle and Good Government», in which he radically criticised the Spanish colonial regime and the slavery it practised.⁴

=> Jean Louis Vastey or Baron de Vastey (1781–1820), son of a French plantation owner and a free *femme de couleur*, who in 1817, in 'Political Reflections on Some French Writings and Newspapers about Haiti', defended Haiti's sovereignty with arguments based on international law, appealing to public opinion and divine law, and opposed the racialised world order that was emerging after the Congress of Vienna.⁵

=> Cyrill Bisette (1795–1858), an *homme de couleur* from Martinique, who was arrested, enslaved and branded because of his activities and writings (including *De la situation des gens de couleur libres*

¹ Youssouf Tata Cissé. *La Charte de Manden, T1. Du Serment des chasseurs à l'abolition de l'esclavage (1212–1222)*. Lisbonne 2015. 148–154.

² Iris Därmann. *Undienlichkeit. Gewaltgeschichte und politische Philosophie*. Berlin 2020. 25f.

³ Lucile Dreidemy, Johannes Knierzinger, David Mayer, Clemens Pfeffer (Hg.). *Stimmen des Antikolonialismus. Eine globalhistorische Spurensammlung 1615-1915*. Wien 2025.

⁴ Imanyra Caceres, Ruth Sonderegger. «Kommentar: Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala's *Erste neue Chronik und gute Regierung*. Eine einführende Annäherung». Dreidemy. *Stimmen*. 70–84.

⁵ Andrew Young. «Kommentar: Eine neue Ordnung der Dinge. Baron de Vastey über Souveränität und Anerkennung». Dreidemy. *Stimmen*. 153–164.

aux Antilles françaises, 1823), but continued to fight and also demanded reparations for the enslaved.¹

If relatively little space is devoted to these and similar voices here, it is not because they are unimportant in terms of the history of ideas, but because the likelihood that the elites in Zurich, Bern and Solothurn could have come into contact with them is very low.

Finally, it should be noted that as early as the 18th century, some enslaved people fought for their dignity and rights by taking legal action to demand their freedom or compensation and reparations for the suffering inflicted upon them and for the exploitation of their bodies through unpaid forced labour. In two cases, they were even successful: In 1781, a jury in a Massachusetts court ruled in favour of Brom and Bett (later Elizabeth Freeman, c. 1742–1829), who argued that they could not be anyone's property. The court, however, ruled that despite having been purchased by their slave owner, the two had never been his property but had always been free persons, and therefore awarded them only 30 shillings in damages for their labour and 5 pounds, 14 shillings and 4 pence for court costs.² And in 1783, Belinda (later Belinda Sutton or Belinda Royall), a slave born in Africa around 1713, submitted a petition to the Massachusetts legislature in which she recounted her life story and demanded a pension for herself and her daughter from the estate of her enslaver, Isaac Royall Jr. The Massachusetts Parliament agreed to pay Belinda an annual pension of £15 and 12 shillings.³

(7.2) The Perpetrator Societies

When examining the positionality of the perpetrator societies, it becomes clear that the debate over whether the enslavement of human beings and the trade in them is a sin, an injustice or even a crime is as old as slavery in the Atlantic region itself. The following compilation shows that between the actual beginning of the transatlantic slave trade in 1444 and the end of Zurich's investments in the slave economy in 1839, numerous European and American personalities took a clear stand against the injustice of slavery and the slave trade, and that one state even abolished slavery:

In **1444**, the first transport of enslaved people took place from the coast of present-day Mauritania across the Atlantic to Lagos (Algarve) in Portugal. The scenes at the slave market (*mercado dos escravos*) were described with great human compassion by a Portuguese contemporary, Gomes Eanes de Azurara (c. 1410–1474):

«But what heart, however hard it might be, would not be moved to pity when it saw this group? Some had their heads bowed and their faces covered with tears, looking at each other; others groaned in pain, looked up to the sky, fixed their eyes on it and cried out loudly, as if asking the father of nature for help; still others beat their faces with their palms and threw themselves prostrate on the ground; others lamented in songs, as was the custom in their

¹ Louis-Georges Tin. *De l'esclavage aux réparations. Les textes clés d'hier et d'aujourd'hui*. Paris 2013. 24f., 59–61.

² Suzanne Geissler Bowles. «Tapping Reeve and Mumbet: Abolishing Slavery in Massachusetts». Website <Princeton & Slavery Project>. Princeton o.J. Online: <https://slavery.princeton.edu/stories/tapping-reeve#8405>.

³ Roy E. Finkenbine. «Belinda's Petition. Reparations for Slavery in Revolutionary Massachusetts». *The William and Mary Quarterly*. Third Series, Vol. 64, No. 1, January 2007. 95–104.

country [...]. But to add to the suffering, those who had carried the spoils came and began to separate them from each other in order to distribute their shares equally; in doing so, they inevitably separated children from their fathers, wives from their husbands, and brothers from each other. Neither friends nor relatives were spared; everyone fell where fate carried them!»¹

In **1527**, Dominican monk Bartolomé de las Casas (1484–1566) began his monumental work «Historia de las Indias on Hispaniola», which he continued to work on after his return to Spain in 1547 and completed in 1559. Las Casas, who in his early works had advocated the ‘importation’ of African slaves in order to spare the indigenous population, recanted this position in «Historia de las Indias» and thus became (although the exact date of the writing of this text is unknown) probably the first white European ever to describe slavery and the trade in African slaves as a sin and a crime. He wrote about himself in the third person:

«He was unaware of the injustice with which the Portuguese captured them and made them slaves. Once he realised this, he would never have given the advice for anything in the world, because it was always wrong to capture them and tyrannical to make them slaves; the Negroes have the same rights as the Indians».

In Volume 3, de las Casas expressed it once again as follows:

«I soon regretted it and condemned myself for my ignorance. I realised that black slavery was just as unjust as Indian slavery (...) and I was not sure whether my ignorance and good faith would protect me in the eyes of God».²

In **1555**, Portuguese publisher Fernão de Oliveira (1507–1581), a Dominican friar, denounced slave traders, saying they «bought and sold peaceful people as one buys and sells animals».³

In **1573**, Spanish Dominican friar Bartolomé Frías de Albornoz (1519–1573), the first professor of civil law at the University of Mexico, wrote in «Arte de los Contratos», «Certain sales that are not prohibited by law are ... dangerous to the conscience ... such as contracts relating to the sale of Negroes». De Albornoz questioned the so-called «legitimate» reasons for enslavement, arguing that «not even Jesus Christ» could justify the enslavement of a human being, since all human beings were to be considered free and natural law favoured the weak, which ruled out any justification for the enslavement of women and children or those who were sold because of hunger. He advised merchants to stop investing in such a «bloodthirsty» trade.⁴

In **1576**, French political theorist Jean Bodin (1529–1596) categorically rejected slavery in his work

¹ Gomes Eannes de Azurara. *The Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*. Vol. 1, London 1896. Ausschnitte online: <https://sites.miamioh.edu/empire/files/2022/06/1444-Zurara-Chronicle-of-the-Discovery-and-Conquest-of-Guinea.pdf>.

² Mark DeStephano. «The Proto-postcolonial Colonizer: Bartolomé de las Casas and the Turn from Slaver to Saver». In: Mélanie Joseph-Vilain et Judith Misrahi-Barak (editors). *Another Life. Une autre vie*. Montpellier 2022. 173-194.

³ Maria do Rosário Pimentel Fernando Oliveira. «A voz portuguesa pioneira na contestação à escravatura». *Politeia - História e Sociedade, Vitória da Conquista*, v. 15, n. 1, Bahia 2015. 269–290. Online: <https://periodicos2.uesb.br/politeia/article/view/3703/3053>.

⁴ Alvaro Perpere Viñuales. «Bartolomé de Albornoz y la esclavitud. ¿Una crítica desde la filosofía de la economía?». *Humanidades. revista de la Universidad de Montevideo*, no. 8. Montevideo 2020. Online: http://www.scielo.edu.uy/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S2301-16292020000200119.

«Six livres de la République». He asked himself the question, «Is slavery natural and useful, or is it contrary to nature?» Bodin opposed Aristotle, who considered slavery to be natural because some people were born to rule and command, while the role of others was to serve and obey. For Bodin, on the other hand, it was clear that slavery was unnatural and contrary to human dignity because of the countless indescribable humiliations that slaves had to endure.¹

In **1656**, the English cooper Thomas Venner (1600–1661), leader of the *Fifth Monarchy Men*, condemned the trade «in slaves and in the souls of men» in his treatise «A Banner of Truth Displayed».²

In **1679**, Dutch pastor Jacobus Hondius (1629–1691) listed slavery as sin number 810 in his book «Swart register van duysent sonden» («Black Register of a Thousand Sins»). He wrote, «Church members who buy and sell slaves and trade in such wretched human beings are committing a sin. For these are not mere animals, but human beings of the same nature as themselves. Even though such slave trading is not only practised by Jews, Turks and pagans, but also by so-called Christians, even by Dutchmen. Reformed members should not stain themselves with such merciless trade. Rather, they should act in complete fear of the Lord, so that the money they earn becomes a blessing rather than a curse».³

In **1681**, Capuchin monk Epifanio de Moirans (1644–1689) from the French Jura, together with his Spanish brother in faith Francisco José de Jaca (1645–1690), preached against the slave trade and slavery and refused to grant absolution to slave owners during confession because the slave trade and ownership of slaves was a sin. Their demands were: release of slaves and compensation for the enslaved for the value of their labour.⁴

All of the aforementioned statements against slavery were made before the triple «key year» of 1719, which is relevant to our Swiss federal context (purchase of shares in the *South Sea Company* by Bern, purchase of *Mississippi* shares by Solothurn, founding of the Karrer Marine Infantry Regiment).

In **1724**, Scottish philosopher Gershom Carmichael (1672–1729) argued in «Supplements and Observations upon Samuel Pufendorf's On the Duty of Man and Citizen according to the Law of Nature» that no human being could enslave another because «...Human beings are not among the objects over which God has granted dominion to the human race».⁵

In **1737**, British Quaker Benjamin Lay (1662–1759) described slavery in his pamphlet «All Slave-Keepers That Keep the Innocent in Bondage: Apostates», published in Philadelphia, as «a practice so repugnant and offensive to religion that it cannot be put into words». He refused to eat food or wear clothes that had been produced by slave labour. Lay was short in stature (1.30 m) and had several

¹ Tommi Lindfors. «Jean Bodin (c. 1529–1596)». Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Online: <https://iep.utm.edu/jean-bodin>.

² Thomas Venner. *The Banner of truth displayed: or, A testimony for Christ, and against Anti-Christ*. London 1656. Online: <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A78112.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>.

³ Jacobus Hondius. *Swart register van duysent sonden*. Amsterdam 1679. 363f. Online: https://books.google.ch/books?id=PgpiAAAACAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=de&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.

⁴ Louis Sala-Molins. *Esclavage réparation: Les lumières des Capucins et les lueurs des Pharisiens*. Fécamp 2014.

⁵ Julia Jorati. *Slavery and Race. Philosophical Debates in the Eighteenth Century*. Oxford 2023. Siehe besonders Kapitel 2.1 Gershom Carmichael, S. 100–107. Online: [https://www.google.ch/books/edition/Slavery_and_Race/S8LbEAAAQBAJ?hl=de&gbpv=1&dq=Gershom+Carmichael+\(1672-1729\)+against+slavery&pg=PA100&printsec=frontcover](https://www.google.ch/books/edition/Slavery_and_Race/S8LbEAAAQBAJ?hl=de&gbpv=1&dq=Gershom+Carmichael+(1672-1729)+against+slavery&pg=PA100&printsec=frontcover).

physical disabilities. In addition to his anti-slavery activism, he was an advocate for women's rights, vegetarianism and non-violent resistance, as well as an opponent of the death penalty. He had become acquainted with slavery during a stay on the sugar island of Barbados from 1718 to 1720.¹



Drawing of abolitionist Benjamin Lay
(1682–1759) in a 1815 publication

In **1754**, teacher and Quaker Anthony Benezet (1713–1784) published in Philadelphia «An Epistle of caution and advice, concerning the buying and keeping of slaves». In this text, he asked, «How can we, who are charged with spreading the good news of universal love and peace among men, be so inconsistent with ourselves as to acquire those who are prisoners of war, thereby encouraging this unchristian practice? And this is even more so in view of the fact that many of these unfortunate creatures have been stolen away, parents from children and children from parents, and others who lived in good circumstances in their countries of origin have been inhumanely torn from what they considered to be a happy situation and forced to toil in a state of slavery, too often in extremely cruel ways». Benezet justified his opposition to slavery with the biblical quotation «Whoever kidnaps a person, whether he has sold him or is still in his power, shall be punished with death». (Exodus 21:16)²

In **1755**, the work «A System of Moral Philosophy» by Scottish Enlightenment philosopher Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746) was published posthumously. He had written it between 1735 and 1746. In Chapter V, he declared that all human beings have the right to life and natural liberty. Hutcheson then went on to state even more clearly, «No natural or acquired human disposition can give a perfect right to exercise power over others without their consent. This is contrary to the teaching of Aristotle and some of the other ancients that some people are slaves by nature».³

In **1769**, self-taught lawyer Granville Sharp (1735–1813) published the first public attack on slavery in England: «A Representation of the Injustice and Dangerous Tendency of Tolerating Slavery». In this work, he argued that slavery was «against the laws of nature», which guaranteed equality for all people, contrary to all artificial laws imposed on them by society.⁴

¹ Nate Kogan. «Aberrations in the Body and in the Body Politic: The Eighteenth-Century Life of Benjamin Lay, Disabled Abolitionist». *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 36(3), 2016. Online: <https://dsq-sds.org/article/id/384>.

² Marie-Jeanne Rossignol and Bertrand Van Ruymbeke (editors). *The Atlantic World of Anthony Benezet (1713-1784). From French Reformation to North American Quaker Antislavery Activism*. Leiden 2016.

³ Francis Hutcheson. *A system of moral philosophy, in three books*. London 1755. Online: <https://archive.org/details/systemmoralphilo01hutc>.

⁴ Granville Sharp. *A representation of the injustice and dangerous tendency of tolerating slavery*. London 1769. <https://archive.org/details/representationof00shar/page/2/mode/2up>.

In 1773, physician, chemist, writer, teacher and humanist Benjamin Rush (1746–1813) spoke out in favour of abolishing slavery in «An Address to the Inhabitants of the British Settlements, on the Slavery of the Negroes in America». For him, «slavery was not simply unjust, it was a violation of natural law and a disgrace before God». Rush also believed that the «national crime» of slavery should be punished at the national level.¹

In 1774, the North American colonies of Rhode Island and Connecticut banned the importation of slaves from overseas, stating the following reasons, «Considering that the inhabitants of America are generally committed to preserving their own rights and freedoms, among which personal freedom is regarded as the highest good, those who wish to enjoy all the benefits of freedom themselves should be prepared to extend personal freedom to others as well...»²

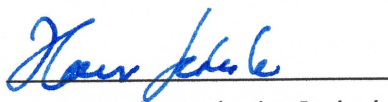
In 1777, Vermont became the first statal entity to abolish slavery. The first article of the 1777 Constitution stated, «No man born in this country or brought here from overseas shall be legally obliged to serve another person as a servant, slave or apprentice after reaching the age of 21, nor shall any woman be so obliged after reaching the age of 18, unless they have voluntarily committed themselves to such service». In addition, black men in the colony were given the right to vote.³

On 5 February 1794, Jacques-Alexis Thuriot de la Rozière (1753–1829), representative of the Montagnards (and member of the Jacobins and the Cordeliers), spoke of slavery as a crime against humanity (*un crime de lèse-humanité*) during the debate on slavery in the revolutionary French Convention in Paris. The Convention agreed with this characterisation. The term *lèse-humanité* had already been used several times in other contexts of injustice during the French Enlightenment and can be traced back to a combination or continuation of the terms *crime de lèse-majesté* and *crime de lèse-nation*.⁴

At the Congress of Vienna in 1815, eight European powers not only condemned the slave trade and called on Europe and the «civilised nations» to abolish it, but also emphasised that the slave trade had «always been regarded by enlightened and just people as contrary to the principles of humanity and universal morality».⁵

St.Gallen, 18th March 2026

Hans Fässler



¹ University of Pennsylvania. «Benjamin Rush Portal. On Abolition and Race». Online: https://guides.library.upenn.edu/benjamin-rush/Rush_on_Abolition_and_Race.

² Christian McBurney. «Rhode Island Acts to Prevent an Enslaved Family from Being Transported to the South». *Journal of the American Revolution*. o.O. 2022. Online: <https://allthingsliberty.com/2022/05/rhode-island-acts-to-prevent-an-enslaved-family-from-being-transported-to-the-south>.

³ Harvey Amani Whitfield. *The Problem of Slavery in Early Vermont, 1777-1810*. Vermont 2020.

⁴ Anne Rolland-Boulestreau et Pierre Serna. «"Lèse-humanité" et "populicide", des crimes dans la Révolution française». Radio France. Paris 2025. Online: <https://www.radiofrance.fr/franceculture/podcasts/le-cours-de-l-histoire/lese-humanite-et-populicide-des-crimes-dans-la-revolution-francaise-7782454>.

⁵ Beilage 15 der Wiener Schlussakte: Declaration des 8 Cours, relative à l'Abolition Universelle de la Traite des Nègres, vom 8.2.1815, British and Foreign State Papers, Vol. 3 (1815-1816), 1838, S. 972.

Appendix: Chronology

- 1444 Start of the transatlantic slave trade
- 1521 Ban on the use of mercenaries at sea and above sea level in the military alliance between King Francis I of France and the Swiss Confederation
- 1719 Purchase of 1,300 shares in the South Sea Company by Berne
- 1719 Decision by the Council of Solothurn: purchase of Mississippi shares worth 42,000 livres
- 1719 Founding of the Karrer Marine Infantry Regiment (later Hallwyl)
- 1727 Acquisition of 120 *South Sea Company* shares by the Zurich Seckelamt
- 1733 Participation of the Karrer Regiment in the suppression of the slave revolt in St. Thomas
- 1755 Founding of the *Leu Interest Commission*
- 1757 First loan by the *Leu Interest Commission* to Denmark
- 1760 Purchase of bonds from the Danish king worth 20,000 *écus* by *Leu & Co.*
- 1763 Start of the great slave uprising in Berbice
- 1763 Dissolution of the Karrer/Hallwyl regiment
- 1768 First loan by Bank Leu Comp. to *Jacob Ambrosius Pool & Compagnie* in Amsterdam
- 1791 Outbreak of the Haitian Revolution
- 1794 Declaration by the French Convention: slavery as a crime against humanity
- 1798 Liquidation of *Leu & Comp.* as a public bank
- 1801 Declaration of the Haitian Constitution, «There can be no slaves on this territory; servitude is abolished forever. All men are born, live and die free and French».
- 1807 Ban of the slave trade by Great Britain
- 1815 Congress of Vienna
- 1807 Ban of the slave trade by Great Britain
- 1833 Abolition of slavery by Great Britain (with apprenticeship until 1838/1840)
- 1836 Sale of the last *South Sea Company* annuities by Zurich
- 1839 Danish securities last mentioned in the Bank Leu files
- 1864 Justification of slavery by the Swiss Federal Council as the last Western government¹
- 1888 Abolition of slavery by Brazil
- 2001 Loi Taubira: French National Assembly declares slavery a crime against humanity
- 2001 UN Conference in Durban with Switzerland signing the final declaration
- 2010 Transfer of the Bank Leu files to the Zurich State Archives
- 2019 Justification by the Swiss Federal Council of the position taken by the Federal Council in 1864²

¹ «Bericht des Bundesrates an den h. Nationalrat, betreffend Strafbestimmungen gegen Schweizer in Brasilien, welche Sklaven halten. (Vom 2. Dezember 1864.)». Bundesblatt 1864. Band 3, Heft 53. 230–239. Online: https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/fga/1864/3_230_/de.

² Interpellationen Friedl SP-SG (2018, «Sklaverei-Vergangenheit der Schweiz und ihren Banken». Online: <https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaefte?AffairId=20183072>), Ryser Grüne-SG (2021, «Bundesrätliche Rechtfertigung der Sklaverei (1864 und 2018)». Online: <https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaefte?AffairId=20213905>) und Marti SP-BL (2022, «Rechtfertigung eines Verbrechens gegen die Menschheit durch den Bundesrat». Online: https://louverture.ch/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/rechtfertigung_marti.pdf).

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Open Archives, Notarielle Archive

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Vestindisk-Guineisk Kompagni, Direktionen Om Vestindien. Diverse dokumenter indsamlet af

Etatsråd Martfeldt. Arkivkassen mærket, Rigsarkivet 365, Generaltoldkammeret. Ældre del

Vestindisk-guineisk renteskriverkontor 1690 – 1767. Om Vestindien pakke 411.

Website Genealogie

Commentary on the status of the Bank Leu files: The ledgers, copy books and minutes of Bank Leu & Comp., crucial archival materials for this study, were long closed to historical research because Credit Suisse, which had taken over the private Bank Leu in 1990, took the position that these were private files and therefore bank customer confidentiality had to be protected. It was not until 2010 that Zurich's mayor, Corine Mauch, reached an agreement with Clariden Leu CEO Hans Nützi, and the state files were handed over to the State Archives of Zurich. However, the terms of use are still unsatisfactory. In the user agreement of 9 June 2011, which could only be disclosed under pressure from the principle of transparency and which also contains redacted sections, the Zurich State Archives committed themselves not to make copies of the originals. To this day, no complete digital copies may be made from the CD-ROM that can be consulted in the State Archives, and copies of individual pages must be requested separately. Furthermore, the Bank Leu archives are not available online, even though they are of inestimable value for international and transnational historical research. It therefore appears that UBS is unwilling to move away from the obstructive archiving policy of its predecessor Credit Suisse.

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