



Have the various bush negroe ethnicities been able to maintain their autonomy over hundreds of years, against all oppressive forces, through their refusal to allow themselves to be subjected by any broad centralizing forces? I think so again.

Jamaica

Across the Caribbean from Suriname – in Jamaica – from as early as the 1650s there developed similar decentralized Maroon communities, only there they were fighting against the local enslavers of the British Empire. After generations of unsuccessful campaigns by the British against the Maroon guerrillas, they too hit upon the necessity of trying to divide the fighting Maroons from their main source of new recruits: the enslaved African workers. So the British offered the Maroons ‘treaties’ similar to those in Suriname.

To force the British to adopt such methods, the Maroons fought tenaciously, skillfully and bravely for over 100 years! And even though there (also) we witness a number of decentralized groups, they roughly became to be recognized as the Windward and Leeward Maroons: the former located in the eastern (windward) end of Jamaica, and the latter on the westward (leeward) side. And history records the most noted Maroon of the Windwards as an African womyn named Granny Nanny – who even had a town named after her in the Maroon’s liberated territory. Indeed, Nanny Town became the center of the resistance to British plantation imperialism in Jamaica, the headquarters from which the Maroon bands almost succeeded in driving all of the imperialists from the island altogether – even though British soldiers captured and burned Nanny Town on a number of occasions.

The dominant personality amongst the Leewards was an African man named Kodjo. History records Kodjo as leading a tightly controlled and centralized operation. When the Windwards had to make a trek across the island during one fierce suppression effort, seeking the Leewards help, even Kodjo could not force them to abandon their autonomy.

Telling, it was Granny Nanny who led a segment of decentralized Windwards to resist signing the treaties the longest. She went as far as to have the British envoys killed on more than one occasion, and only submitted after Kodjo and all of the male Maroon heads had capitulated.

After that, these Maroons were used to help the British hunt and capture new runaways, as well as suppress revolts amongst the still enslaved African workers; although they fiercely clung to the freedom and autonomy they and their ancestors had fought for!

