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Legalized Slavery

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The Code was one of the most influential decrees in Europe that influenced humanity in slavery, freedom, and race across Europe (Bush, 2013). Originally, the purpose of the Code was to end illegal slavery and provide a legal framework. However, its initial version was not accepted.

In France, the Code Noir was an idea of King Louis XIV. It illustrated and elaborated the conditions of slavery during the ancient colonial period. In addition, this law emphasized the expulsion of all Jews from France and the compulsory baptism of all slaves by the Catholic Church. The Code Noir also had a decree that put emphasis on the restriction of all black activities and declared the Roman Catholic religion as the only valid one. Furthermore, the Code Noir allowed the plantation owners to have complete power and control over their slaves. As a result, slave owners legalized the brutal treatment, punishment, and torture of slaves and used such treatment as a means of controlling slaves.

On the other hand, the assembly passed the Virginia Slave Act in 1705 and automatically condemned all black servants to slavery life and brutal treatment (Bush, 2013). Black servants included all men and women along with their children. Before the passing of the law, all servants were indentured, and teenagers would work until they were freed upon reaching the age of twenty-four. According to Finkelman (2002), thanks to the Virginia Slave Act, white Christians got the right to mistreat, torture, beat, and kill black slaves without having to face any consequences. This law also ensured that being born black automatically made a person inferior to whites, that is, the law virtually turned blacks into slaves.

Enforced by authorities and slave masters, the law was used to define the two slave trade Codes. After the legalization of the slave trade Codes, slave masters acquired superior power and

control over all their slaves, so they brutally disciplined slaves whenever they committed even the slightest offense.

With regard to the assumption about the essence of the slave population, it was assumed that slaves in the French colonies represented the majority of the total population. As a result, the colonies had constant supply of black slaves for work on their plantations.

In terms of the similarities between the two slave trade Codes, authorities and slave masters ignored slave deaths associated with brutal treatment, torture, or inhuman treatment. Secondly, in both Codes, according to the law, white masters represented a superior social group, whereas slaves made an inferior group. Thirdly, Christianity served as the only valid and relevant religion in both Codes.

The first difference between the two Codes was that the Code Noir's primary goal was to put an end to the rampant slave trade practice, whereas the Virginia Slave Act legalized illegal slavery of blacks. Another difference between the two Codes was that after the rejection of the Code Noir's first purpose, both blacks and Jews suffered from oppression. In contrast, in the Virginia Code, only blacks were oppressed and denied any rights because of their skin color.

In conclusion, the two Codes show that the slave trade role was to legalize the use of a cheap source of labor in the form of black slaves from Africa. Those slaves were used to till the large plantations of crops in the French colonies. In addition, the two Codes ensured that black slaves performed various chores for their white masters for little pay or even free. Furthermore, the two Codes created segregation in society whereby whites were considered more superior than blacks and Jews (Stephen, 2010).

## References

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