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Blackburn Chapter 6

VI

Revolutionary Emancipationism and the Birth of Haiti

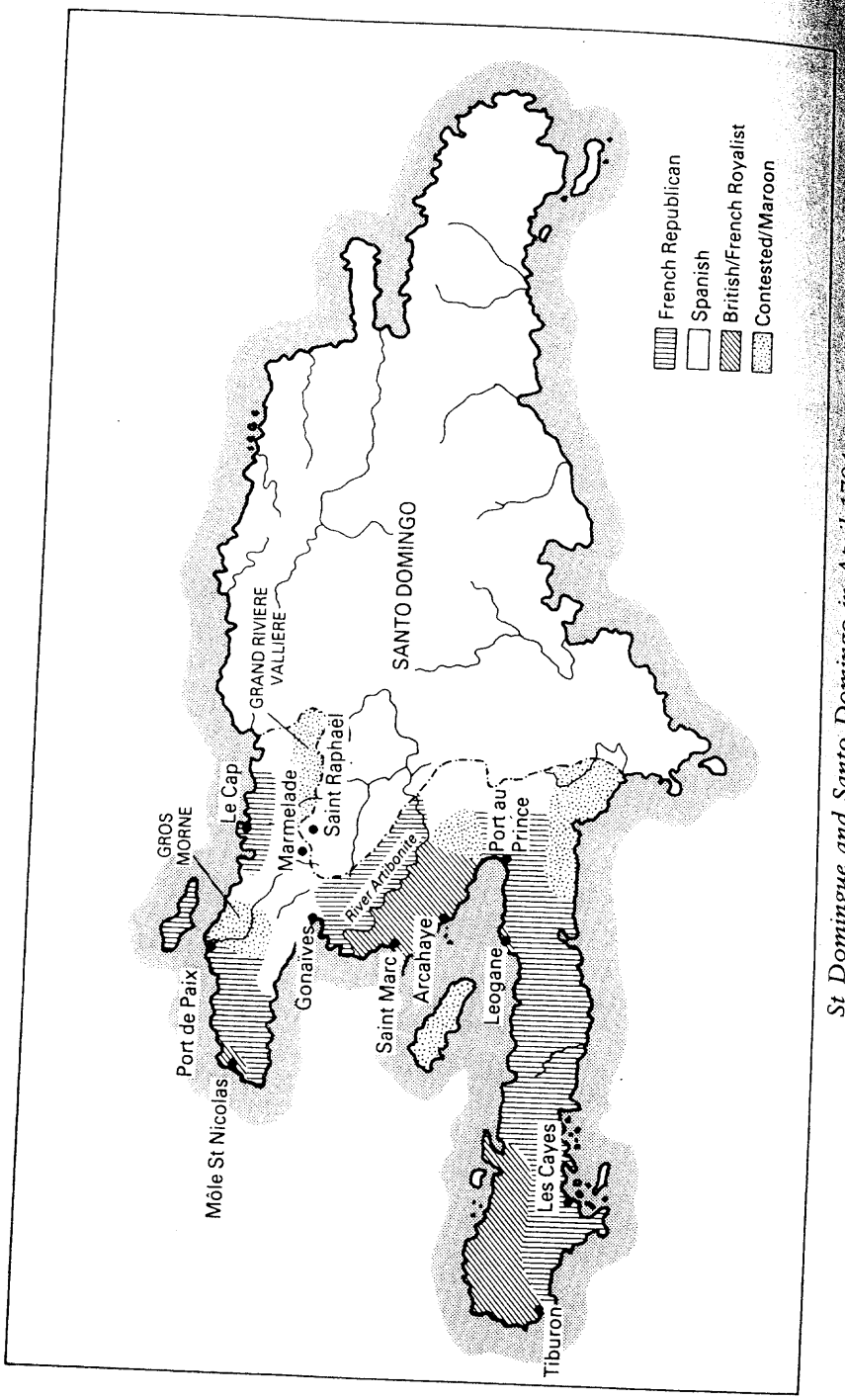
Que veut cette hordes d'esclaves
De traitres, de Rois conjurés?
Pour qui ces ignobles entravés,
Ces fers des longtemps preparés
Francais! pour nous, ah! quel outrage!
Quels transports il doit exciter?
C'est nous qu'on ose mediter
De rendre a l'antique esclavage
Aux Armes citoyens! formez vos bataillons; marchons, marchons,
Qu'un sang impur, abreuve nos sillons.

La Marseillaise (1792)

Dessalines sorti lan Nord,
Vini compté ça li porte,
Ça li porte.
Li porte fusils, li porte boulets
Ouanga nouveau!

(Dessalines is coming to the North
Come see what he is bringing.
He is bringing muskets, he is bringing bullets,
These are the new talismans.)

Haitian song (1803–4?)



St Domingue and Santo Domingo in April 1794

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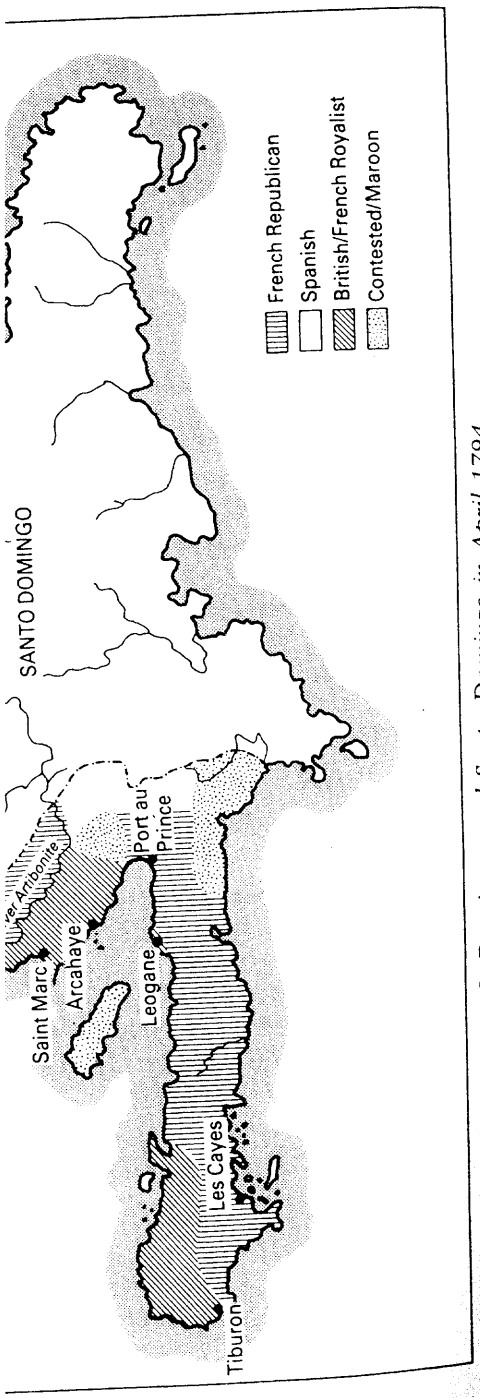
In May 1793 a new Governor, General with a squadron that had evaded the Br from the Northern capital at the time and property in the colony, was turned against colonists who opposed his financial levies a *couleur*. Galbaud publicly insisted that he Commissioners and that they had been e assembled a large consignment of pla proposed to sell to North American m military supplies. Sonthonax and Polverel a proclamation dismissing him from his p for France, charged with conspiring ag Laveaux, commanding the Republican for the Commissioners, but Galbaud refused



St Domingue and Santo Domingo in April 1794

During the years 1793 and 1794 the French Antilles passed through the furnace of war and revolution to emerge with a radically new social order. British blockade soon made normal commerce and communication between France and its Caribbean possessions difficult and dangerous, but this did not prevent the sealing of a precarious but vital alliance between black liberation in the New World and the Jacobin Republic in the Old.

The position of the Republicans in St Domingue by the middle of 1793 was perilous. Only about 3,500 of the troops sent from the metropolis were still alive, and of these many were sick and others ready to desert. The Republican Commissioners exercised a precarious hold on the major centres thanks to this force and its major ally, the newly named units of coloured troops, the *Légion d'Egalité*, composed of 'Citizens of April 4th', that is free blacks and mulattos, often veterans of the *Légion de Saint Domingue*. But the Spanish, with their black commanders, were poised to advance across the border while pockets of royalist strength were to be found in many areas. The Republican authorities were further hampered by a dearth of resources. Metropolitan *assignats* had little currency in the Antilles, with the traditional colonial preference for gold and silver. The Commissioners decreed a property levy on urban and rural estates. This measure, often implemented by newly appointed coloured officials, provoked bitter hostility from white proprietors still within the Republican zone. The offensives undertaken against the black rebels proved indecisive, with the latter abandoning territory but regrouping in more remote areas. The Commissioners had successfully disposed of Desparbès but nearly six months later, with depleted forces and communications to France broken, they were to face another internal crisis.[1]

In May 1793 a new Governor, General Galbaud, arrived at Le Cap with a squadron that had evaded the British. Sonthonax was absent from the Northern capital at the time and Galbaud, who had inherited property in the colony, was turned against the Commissioner by white colonists who opposed his financial levies and promotion of the *gens de couleur*. Galbaud publicly insisted that he was not subordinate to the Commissioners and that they had been exceeding their authority. He assembled a large consignment of plantation produce which he proposed to sell to North American merchants in order to obtain military supplies. Sonthonax and Polverel rushed to Le Cap and issued a proclamation dismissing him from his post and ordering him to leave for France, charged with conspiring against the Republic. General Layeaux, commanding the Republican forces at Port de Paix, supported the Commissioners, but Galbaud refused to comply with the deporta-

tion order issued against him. In his defiance of the Commissioners he received support from most of the French naval squadron in the harbour at Le Cap together with most of the city's white militia forces. Le Cap at this time contained large numbers of dissident whites, royalists and autonomists, some having sought refuge there from areas of mulatto power in the West, others awaiting passage to the United States, and some sentenced to deportation to France. After clashes with Galbaud's supporters the Commissioners retired from Le Cap, with units of the *Légion d'Egalité*. The Republican enclaves in the South were too embattled to lend any assistance. However, in the hills around Le Cap there were rebel bands, led by such men as Macaya and Pierrot, who had stayed in the vicinity of the plantations while resisting the authority of the planters or managers. The Commissioners decided to appeal to these black partisans to help them regain control of Le Cap. Those who responded to their appeal would receive arms and liberty: 'We declare that the will of the French Republic, and that of its delegates, is to give liberty to all Negro warriors who will fight for the Republic under the orders of the Civil Commissioner.'[2] Several thousand black fighters responded to this appeal and descended on Le Cap on June 22nd and 23rd where they threw back the white rebels; Galbaud was persuaded to set sail, taking with him to Baltimore many thousands of white colonists. Much of Le Cap was destroyed during the fighting; in its aftermath the columns of Macaya and Pierrot returned to the countryside, leaving behind them the smouldering ruins of the once splendid provincial capital.

The Republican forces repossessed Le Cap, but their position throughout the North was critically weakened by the division that had erupted in their ranks. The black rebels had been ready to attack their former owners or managers in Le Cap, as an insurance against their return, as a way of acquiring muskets and perhaps with the prospect of plunder too; but afterwards, unwilling to accept Republican orders, they dispersed, taking their muskets with them. In July the Spanish forces advanced across a broad front in the North, with their black-commanded columns reaching deep into French territory. Spanish advances cut off the Republican garrisons in Le Cap and Port de Paix. Rumours of an imminent British invasion and of collusion by autonomist municipalities abounded. Polverel returned to Port au Prince, now Port Républicain, but in the South and West the writ of the Republic depended solely on the forces of the mulatto General Rigaud. In the North Laveaux and Sonthonax were bottled up in their coastal enclaves, seeking to enlist such black soldiers as they could. They urged the black generals fighting with Spain to join them, but to no avail.

With the Republican forces divided, Sonthonax was the supreme

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authority in the North. He sent a letter in early August to the National Convention urging that the time had come to proclaim the great principle of emancipation. The municipality of Le Cap submitted a petition to the Commissioner on August 25th 'in the name of the *cultivateurs* of Saint Domingue', saying that slavery must be ended. On August 29th 1793 Sonthonax took the fateful step of issuing a decree freeing all slaves in his jurisdiction. The decree was published in *Kréyole* to ensure that it could reach the mass of blacks.[3] In the North the slave order was already greatly weakened but in the North-west, South and West there were certainly still hundreds of thousands of slaves, perhaps as many as a quarter of a million. The Spanish occupying forces had strict instructions to uphold the slave regime. When the British occupied large tracts of the Centre and South in succeeding months, they found that planter militias had ensured the survival of the slave regime and of plantation production. The Spanish commanders used columns of black troops but they guaranteed slave property. Sonthonax's decree, following up the more limited appeal of June, was based on a judgement of the scope for building a Republican army from the mass of black slaves. Sporadic slave rebellions were reported from various parts in the summer of 1793 and this will have encouraged Sonthonax. But he also took the risk that mulatto proprietors would be alienated by his action, as indeed many were. Polverel, stationed in the South, had extended a promise of freedom to those fighting with four named maroon commanders – Armand, Martial, Formon and Bénnech – in late July. While the rebel chiefs were offered Republican commissions, and their followers obtained muskets and powder, they were expected to help maintain plantation discipline; Rigaud attacked Formon for his failure to comply with this order. Though planters or managers remained in control in many areas they faced widespread pressure for a five-day week, or for more far-reaching improvements in their labourers' working or living conditions. Polverel at first sought to limit emancipation offers to potential soldiers and slaves who were the property of émigrés. Despite reservations about Sonthonax's decree of August 29th, which he thought did not make adequate provision for an alternative labour regime, he decided to endorse it on September 21st. His willingness to defer to the mulatto proprietors was probably lessened by the knowledge that many of them were now colluding with the Republic's enemies. The decree of general emancipation allowed the Republican authorities to enlist some black soldiers and to present themselves as the champions of a new plantation regime which yielded to many of the most common demands of the slave crews. The previous policy of offering freedom only to individual blacks had forced potential recruits to abandon family and comrades which many had not

been prepared to do. And so long as slavery remained legal newly freed blacks would still feel insecure. Under the pressure of the Spanish invasion Sonthonax had seen that it was essential to go further and make a collective appeal to the enslaved blacks. Sonthonax's decree, following up the more limited measure of June, extended the scope for recruiting blacks, allowed the Republicans to appeal to the good will of the black masses and conferred a moral advantage on the Republican cause.[4]

The Republican Commissioners and commanders urged the black generals fighting with Spain to rally to the Republic now that it offered general emancipation and civic equality. Toussaint Bréda, now commander at Marmelade in the West, replied to the effect that Republicans, having betrayed their King, were in no position to offer liberty to his subjects. While Toussaint rejected French appeals he now began to differentiate himself from the other Spanish commanders by finding ways to identify with black resistance to enslavement. Some time in the early months of 1793 Toussaint abandoned the name of Bréda, the plantation where he was born, and adopted that of 'Louverture', or more rarely 'L'Ouverture', he who makes an opening. Following the Spanish invasion in July Toussaint's forces had swelled in size and they had occupied much of the strategically important Artibonite, commanding the passage from the North to the West. Operating at this distance from his commanders Toussaint enjoyed considerable autonomy. Significantly enough, he was to issue an appeal to the oppressed population of the colony, given the same date as the decree issued by Sonthonax:

> Brothers and Friends. I am Toussaint L'Ouverture, my name is perhaps known to you. I have undertaken vengeance. I want liberty and equality to reign in San Domingo. I work to bring them into existence. Unite yourselves to us, brothers, and fight with us for the same cause etc. Your very humble and obedient servant. TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE, General of the Armies of the King, for the Public Good.[5]

Toussaint Louverture had reason to treat with reserve the approaches made by the French Republicans: it was far from clear whether the decrees of the Civil Commissioners would ever be endorsed by their home government. However, Toussaint did admit into his camp deserters and stragglers from the French military, using them to train his soldiers and to provide staff work; French *curés* were employed as secretaries. From the outset Toussaint's forces were distinguished by their discipline and mobility. Toussaint himself was an ex-slave of fifty who had worked successively as coachman and veterinarian. He had

learned to read and write, acquired an estate entrusted with considerable responsibilities by th plantation, who had manumitted him in the reputed to have read Raynal's *History*, with its of slavery, in the library at Bréda. He enjoy Bayou de Libertas, the plantation manager, a safety in the aftermath of August 1791. Toussai Moyse, a former slave at Bréda; and Dessali menial slave of a freedman. It was characteris that many *nouveaux libres* held posts of comm Toussaint could better understand the aspiratio than did the mulatto commanders; as an experience of administration and affairs than t At the time of the Revolution he was already qu was worked by a dozen or more hired slaves. Jo risked more than others and perhaps for tha from it. He had acted as Biassou's secretary acquiring an independent command and in th participated in the dubious negotiations with the closing months of 1791. Not until he wa and mountainous region of the Artibonite di vision.

Toussaint Louverture and Sonthonax both were the key to the future of the colony and t to whoever was accepted by them as the beare But both men were exceeding the authority g flouting their instructions. Sonthonax could conferred on him allowed him to set aside received from the Navy Ministry but he precarious case to argue. In September he St Domingue's quota of delegates in the Natio sure that those elected were firm supporte policy. Because of the blockade the delegate their way to Paris. For his part Toussaint hop that they could only win control of St Domir to match the Republican Commissioners' While the Marquis de Hermonas was prepa consider such a proposal from one of his Spanish political authorities soon made clear circumstances countenance any attacks authorities were hoping that, whatever Domingue and Santo Domingo would be r Crown as a flourishing slave colony.

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learned to read and write, acquired an estate by marriage, and been entrusted with considerable responsibilities by the manager of the Bréda plantation, who had manumitted him in the first place. Toussaint is reputed to have read Raynal's *History*, with its vigorous denunciation of slavery, in the library at Bréda. He enjoyed good relations with Bayou de Libertas, the plantation manager, and ensured his family's safety in the aftermath of August 1791. Toussaint's lieutenants included Moyse, a former slave at Bréda; and Dessalines, who had been the menial slave of a freedman. It was characteristic of Toussaint's force that many *nouveaux libres* held posts of command. As a former slave Toussaint could better understand the aspirations of the mass of blacks than did the mulatto commanders; as an *affranchi* he had more experience of administration and affairs than the other black generals. At the time of the Revolution he was already quite well off and his estate was worked by a dozen or more hired slaves. Joining the insurrection he risked more than others and perhaps for that reason expected more from it. He had acted as Biassou's secretary and aide-de-camp before acquiring an independent command and in the former capacities had participated in the dubious negotiations with the French authorities in the closing months of 1791. Not until he was installed in the remote and mountainous region of the Artibonite did he reveal any broader vision.

Toussaint Louverture and Sonthonax both understood that the slaves were the key to the future of the colony and that victory would belong to whoever was accepted by them as the bearer of their will to freedom. But both men were exceeding the authority given to them and directly flouting their instructions. Sonthonax could plead that the powers conferred on him allowed him to set aside the instructions he had received from the Navy Ministry but he realised that this was a precarious case to argue. In September he organised elections to fill St Domingue's quota of delegates in the National Convention and made sure that those elected were firm supporters of his emancipationist policy. Because of the blockade the delegates left for Philadelphia on their way to Paris. For his part Toussaint hoped to persuade the Spanish that they could only win control of St Domingue if they were prepared to match the Republican Commissioners' decree of general liberty. While the Marquis de Hermonas was prepared, as a military man, to consider such a proposal from one of his ablest black generals, the Spanish political authorities soon made clear that they would under no circumstances countenance any attacks on slavery. The Spanish authorities were hoping that, whatever happened in Europe, St Domingue and Santo Domingo would be reunited under the Spanish Crown as a flourishing slave colony.

In the last days of September a small British expedition – only 801 troops in the first instance – occupied Jérémie in the extreme South-west and Môle St Nicolas in the extreme North-west. St Marc and other Western ports were occupied by the end of the year, usually at the invitation of the municipality: the mulatto mayors of Arcahaie (Lapointe) and Léogane (Labissonnière) welcomed the British. In a pragmatic way the British were prepared to work with powerful mulatto proprietors though other free people of colour were promised no security in their rights and slavery was, of course, maintained. The main mulatto commanders in the South and West – Rigaud, Pinchinat and Beauvais – remained faithful to the Republic. Nevertheless the Republicans seemed caught in a pincer, with the Spanish free to move in across the Eastern border while the British could use naval power to land wherever they wished on the Western seaboard. With this cover French royalists acted with increasing boldness, visiting summary justice on any Republican they captured and making clear to all their determination to uphold the slave regime. Substantial British and royalist reinforcements were expected in the early months of 1794. While the main British expedition sailed to the Windward Islands the British occupying force in St Domingue grew to 3,600 men by April 1794; bridgeheads at half a dozen places enjoyed the protection of the Royal Navy. Republican St Domingue, by contrast, was almost completely cut off from its metropolis.[6]

The main British expedition, 7,000 men aboard eight ships of the line and a dozen lesser vessels, reached the Windwards in December 1793. The British first captured Trinidad and Ste Lucie while blockading Martinique and Guadeloupe. Martinique was captured in February, followed by Guadeloupe's small insular dependencies and, finally, Guadeloupe itself was taken on March 20th. Rochambeau and Lacrosse put up some resistance but, in the face of superior forces, surrendered the colony to the British. In the last weeks before the final British assault the Republicans of Guadeloupe decided to recruit a special black *chasseur* regiment from the colony's slaves; 300 out of a projected 500 were enrolled prior to the final invasion. Apparently both sides were prepared to leave the main body of 170,000 slaves in the Iles du Vent as spectators of the conflict. The British occupation was accompanied by the return of many planters who found their estates in reasonable working order. Once the British had secured the Windwards they could spare more forces for St Domingue, where they planned to capture Port au Prince.[7]

A crucial turning-point in the fortunes of Republican St Domingue came about between the end of April and the end of May 1794. On April 29th the British commander at St Marc learned that Toussaint,

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Spain and its royalist allies. On April 4th th
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Toussaint refused to do so. Military clash
of Toussaint and Sonthonax had helped t
of slave resistance. The early months o
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commander at St Marc learned that Toussaint,

the commander at Gonaives forty miles up the coast, had broken with Spain and its royalist allies. On April 4th the planters at Gonaives had sent a petition to Toussaint's Spanish superior requesting his removal. They complained that Toussaint did not obey Biassou's orders and that the military posts that his forces controlled had become places of refuge for every type of black miscreant and runaway, including slaves who had stolen from, or even murdered, their masters. In the wake of the conflict Toussaint had clearly decided that his position as a Spanish officer was now untenable. Turning on Spain and its local allies he ordered his forces, which now numbered 4,000 seasoned fighters, to refuse further collaboration with the Spanish authorities and prepare to attack neighbouring Spanish strongpoints. Toussaint's forces apparently had no difficulty in accepting his volte-face. For some time it was unclear whether Toussaint intended to join the Republicans or to remain independent, as a number of black commanders had done in other parts of the colony. On May 24th 1794 Laveaux sent a message to Polverel reporting: 'Toussaint Louverture, one of the three chiefs of the African royalists, in coalition with the Spanish Government, has at last discovered his true interests and that of his brothers; he has realised that kings can never be the friends of liberty; he fights today for the Republic at the head of an armed force.'[8] Laveaux had yet to meet Toussaint and realise the full extent of the improvement in his situation.

In the conflict between the French Republicans and the invading forces the issue of slavery had surfaced irresistibly. Jean François and Biassou had shown themselves willing to maintain the slave regime, but Toussaint refused to do so. Military clashes and the competing appeals of Toussaint and Sonthonax had helped to set the scene for a new wave of slave resistance. The early months of 1794 had witnessed a fire-cracker chain of slave revolts in the North, spreading southwards to the West. Toussaint had orders to stamp out such insurrections but instead gave shelter to the rebels. It was this that had provoked the planter protests.[9]

Prior to May 1794 the Republic did have some capable black officers – they included Colonel Pierre Michel and Captain Henry Christophe, the latter now seconded to Toussaint's staff – but not the mainstream of those forces thrown up by the revolt. If Toussaint had not committed his by now well-trained and increasingly effective forces to the Republic the surge of slave resistance would not by itself have prevented the British and Spanish from completing their occupation of the colony. Toussaint's switch was soon followed by a lightning campaign in the course of which he recaptured most of the Northern plain from the Spanish occupiers. Between Toussaint's abandonment of the Spanish and his definitive adhesion to the Republicans had been a brief hiatus

during which neither side knew for sure what he was doing. The timing of Toussaint's unequivocal declaration for the Republic may have been influenced by news received from Europe: on February 4th the French Convention decreed emancipation in all the French colonies. Whether or not Toussaint knew of this decree when he abandoned Spain it certainly cemented the basis for a fateful alliance and a new Republican order in St Domingue.[10]

The condition of the metropolis in 1793–4 was scarcely less troubled than that of the French colonies. The Brissotins had proved far more decisive in foreign and colonial policy than they were in the handling of the situation created by the disintegration of the *ancien régime* and the continuance of popular unrest. 1792 had witnessed a new *jacquerie* in the countryside. The disruption of colonial trade fuelled the far more serious revolt in the *Vendée*. The Brissotins had launched France on the path of war in the hope of nipping armed counter-revolution in the bud, restoring initiative to the executive and laying the basis for a new European order. But they proved unable to contain the forces unleashed by the war or to construct an authoritative political centre. Generals whom they had chosen defected, while military disaster provoked unprecedented popular mobilisations; the *grande levée* of 1793 put half a million men under arms. Eventually the more radical Jacobins of the Mountain gained ascendancy in the sections, amongst the soldiers, and in the Convention. The Committee of Public Safety was set up in April 1793. The Jacobins obtained the exclusion of the leading Girondins from the Convention in June 1793 and further consolidated their grip following the Federalist revolt which ensued. Under pressure from the popular movement and the needs of war the Jacobins began to construct a revolutionary administration and to elaborate a new Declaration of Rights which dispensed with the absolute guarantee to private property contained in the Declaration of 1789. The radical Jacobins were prepared to qualify the rights of the propertied, to curtail market forces and to sanction new social rights; but not to tolerate combinations of workers or to countenance the egalitarian doctrines that now emerged amongst the more extreme *sans-culottes* . It was at this time that the remaining non-capitalist forms of property were swept away. On July 17th, around the time Sonthonax was preparing to decree the extinction of slave property, the Convention finally abolished, without indemnification, all remaining feudal rights. In August the Abbé Grégoire, as President of the Convention, secured the abolition of the slave trade bounty. In October 1793 the revolutionary calendar was adopted, symbolising the aspiration to make the world anew.

The turbulence of revolution brought to current of rude popular egalitarianism an commerce. This underground tradition, refle of the outlook of peasants, labourers and a better by communistic *curés* and 'contum mainstream of enlightenment thought, with exclamations. The *Testament* of Jean Mesli the Abbé Mably, with their attacks on large prosperity of the trading centres and t articulated popular prejudices that undermi colonial slave system, namely respect for rights. In 1793 Pierre Dolivier and other *cu* in the name of *la justice primitive*, themes Conspiracy of the Equals. Chaumette, the Paris Commune, declared that it was neces they starved the people. Where the social r concerned Babeuf was to be closer to givir revolutionary undercurrent than were Cordeliers. But Jacobin legislators still had case of colonial slavery they could do so

The Jacobins were prepared to con movement than had the Brissotins, but wer from solving the crisis of the economy. Th Convention came at a point when the overcome internal divisions and conce revolution's fight for survival. It came at and exaltation in the unfolding of the re the high-water mark of its social aspiratic subordinate propertied interests to a high

The troubles in the colonies continu integration of the metropolitan social o defending mulatto rights had helped m autonomism and royalism but not to r proper working order. From June 17 plantation produce which French mer Caribbean had to break the British block even harder to find – though by this foodstuffs rather than sugar which sp influence of the maritime bourgeoisie wa Federalist revolt in the summer and by commercial infrastructure linked to the furore about the 'Foreign Plot' which pe November 1793 was fed by reports

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The turbulence of revolution brought to the surface a subterranean current of rude popular egalitarianism and hostility to wealth and commerce. This underground tradition, reflecting the communal aspect of the outlook of peasants, labourers and artisans had been expressed better by communistic *curés* and 'contumacious Abbés' than by the mainstream of enlightenment thought, with its anti-slavery essays and exclamations. The *Testament* of Jean Meslier and the *Observations* of the Abbé Mably, with their attacks on large-scale property, on the false prosperity of the trading centres and the arrogance of the rich, articulated popular prejudices that undermined a crucial support of the colonial slave system, namely respect for the slaveholders' property rights. In 1793 Pierre Dolivier and other *curés rouges* attacked property in the name of *la justice primitive*, themes that were later to inspire the Conspiracy of the Equals. Chaumette, the Hébertiste prosecutor of the Paris Commune, declared that it was necessary to crush the rich before they starved the people. Where the social regime of the metropolis was concerned Babeuf was to be closer to giving political expression to this revolutionary undercurrent than were the Jacobins or even the Cordeliers. But Jacobin legislators still had to take account of it; in the case of colonial slavery they could do so with few inhibitions.[11]

The Jacobins were prepared to concede more to the popular movement than had the Brissotins, but were still far from satisfying it or from solving the crisis of the economy. The abolition of slavery by the Convention came at a point when the Jacobin Republic needed to overcome internal divisions and concentrate all energies on the revolution's fight for survival. It came at a peculiar moment of destiny and exaltation in the unfolding of the revolutionary drama, signalling the high-water mark of its social aspirations and of its preparedness to subordinate propertied interests to a higher end.

The troubles in the colonies continued to contribute to the disintegration of the metropolitan social order. The Brissotin policy of defending mulatto rights had helped momentarily to contain planter autonomism and royalism but not to restore the colonial system to proper working order. From June 1793 those scant supplies of plantation produce which French merchants could acquire in the Caribbean had to break the British blockade. Sugar and coffee became even harder to find – though by this time it was shortage of basic foodstuffs rather than sugar which sparked off riots. The political influence of the maritime bourgeoisie was destroyed by the fiasco of the Federalist revolt in the summer and by the collapse of the traditional commercial infrastructure linked to the colonies and foreign trade. The furore about the 'Foreign Plot' which permeated factional conflict from November 1793 was fed by reports of defections in the colonies;

slaveholding planters had placed themselves outside the national fold.[12]

In Paris there were few interests directly linked to colonial commerce, but a dubious attempt to refloat the Compagnie des Indes, exposed in January 1794, tainted those who had dabbled in colonial speculations and weakened the position of Danton's friends, the *indulgents*. By this time the *sans-culottes* were inclined to suspect all merchants of vicious and unpatriotic activities. Writing of February 1794 – Pluviôse An II – the very time when the Convention addressed itself to the question of colonial slavery, Soboul notes: 'Hostility towards merchants, a hostility so characteristic of the popular mentality, remained as strong as ever, despite the enforcement of various types of control over the economic life of the nation.'[13] The international situation, with the British playing a leading role in the counter-revolutionary coalition, remained menacing: but early victories and the success of the *grande levée* induced a definite revolutionary self-confidence.

The national Convention came to decide on colonial slavery just before the purge of the Hébertistes and Dantonistes but long after the flight, imprisonment or execution of most leading members of the *Amis des Noirs*. The *Amis* had never matched the public campaigns of the British Abolition Society; by the end of 1793 it was effectively defunct. Yet the *Amis* had helped to radicalise the revolution through their battle for mulatto rights; Sonthonax, one of their supporters, was instrumental in bringing the slavery question before the Convention. The three emancipationist delegates sent to the Convention at Sonthonax's initiative arrived in Paris in late January 1794. These new deputies – a black freedman, a mulatto and a white colon – were arrested on arrival at the instigation of colonial Jacobins critical of Sonthonax but they were soon released and presented themselves at the Convention. The black deputy, Jean-Baptiste Belley-Mars, formerly the military commander of Le Cap, was loudly applauded. Dufay, the white deputy, delivered a passionate speech on February 4th (Pluviôse 16, An II) defending the general liberty that had been decreed in St Domingue and urging that, as an act of both justice and military necessity, it be extended to the other French colonies. He pointed to the opportunities for a revolutionary counter-offensive in the Caribbean. It was common knowledge that a large British fleet had been dispatched to the West Indies. Dufay's declarations were met with rapturous applause. Levasseur of Sarthe proposed that the Convention move immediately to abolish slavery in the colonies: 'Citizen President, do not suffer the Convention to demean itself by a discussion.' The motion was thereupon carried by acclamation and embodied in a decree proposed by Lacroix of the Eure et Loire which ran as follows: 'The National Convention declares slavery abolished in all the colonies. In consequence it declares that all men, without c

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The decree came before the Convention for ratification without any report or recommendation from the Committee of Public Safety; on this occasion Danton spoke. In all probability the delegates from St Domingue had evoked a quite spontaneous and unexpected reaction. Danton declared:

> Representatives of the French people, until now we have decreed liberty as egotists for ourselves. But today we proclaim universal liberty . . . . Today the Englishman is dead! [Loud applause] Pitt and his plots are done for! France, until now cheated of her glory, repossesses it before the eyes of an astonished Europe and assumes the preponderance which must be assured her by her principles, her energy, her land and her population! Activity, energy, generosity, but generosity guided by the flame of reason, and regulated by the compass of principles, and thus assured forever of the recognition of posterity.[15]

Danton's overblown rhetoric of national messianism scarcely did justice to the Convention's decree which did indeed deserve, but has rarely received, the 'recognition of posterity'. It is usually relegated to little more than a footnote whether in histories of the French Revolution or in histories of New World slavery. The Convention was, it is true, confirming and generalising a decree which had already been issued locally by its Commissioner. The Convention's confirmation gave greater legal force and substance to the policy Sonthonax had already adopted and required that it should be spread to the other French colonies. In St Domingue it helped to convince a crucial section of the insurgent black forces that the Republic was their ally. At the time the Convention decreed the abolition of slavery a British expeditionary force was just completing its occupation of the French Windward islands, though of this the Convention was, as yet, unaware. In principle the decree of Pluviôse had struck down, without any compensation, the most important form of colonial property. The decree also had major foreign policy implications. If the execution of Louis XVI had outraged the monarchies of Europe, the decree of Pluviôse ranged the new Republic not only against all the European colonial powers but also against its one remaining potential ally, the United States. Awareness of this fact had induced a certain caution in the Committee of Public Safety, which was only overcome by the direct intercession of the St Domingue deputies and the general spirit of revolutionary audacity which had gripped the Convention.

The Commune of Paris celebrated the decree of Pluviôse in a special event held in the Temple of Reason, as Notre Dame was now called, with the participation of many coloured citizens.[16] Chaumette delivered a eulogy of the Convention's decree; together with other Hébertistes and sponsors of the Cult of Reason he had adopted the cause of emancipation with special fervour. Whatever reservations may have been entertained by the Committee of Public Safety concerning the decision of the Convention, these did not stop it immediately assembling an expedition to the New World, with instructions to undertake a revolutionary war for the liberation of the slaves. With the decree of Pluviôse anti-slavery had ceased to be an occasion for philanthropic gestures and sentimental declamation; united with the insurgent slaves of the Caribbean it became an active protagonist in the momentous conflicts of Europe and the New World. For a brief but vital period the programme of radical abolitionism was fuelled by slave rebellion and sponsored by a major power.

The expedition sent to the Caribbean successfully evaded the British blockade and arrived in the vicinity of the Windward Islands in April, a little over two months from the date of the decree. The expedition comprised 1,200 men aboard two frigates, five transports and one brigantine. It was under the command of two Commissioners appointed by the Convention: Victor Hugues and Pierre Chrétien, both supporters of the Mountain. They discovered on arrival that the French islands were entirely in the hands of the British, who had occupied them with the active complicity of royalists. Hugues effected a landing on Guadeloupe and by April 23rd had liberated a part of the island and defeated a 700-strong detachment of royalists. From this beach-head the Commissioner unleashed a revolutionary war upon the slave-owners and their British backers, freeing the slaves and forming them into units of the *Légion d'Egalité* and the newly created *Bataillon des Antilles*. Between April and December the Republicans ejected the British occupying force of between 3,000 and 4,000 troops, capturing 2,000 rifles and 38 guns. The Republican Commissioners brought with them a guillotine and a printing press, both of which machines were set busily to work. Victor Hugues, formerly the prosecutor at Rochefort during the Terror and with prior experience in the Antilles, soon established himself as the effective chief of the Republican forces. Captured royalists were summarily executed. Copies of the decree of Pluviôse, of the Rights of Man and of other revolutionary documents and addresses were translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch and English and clandestinely introduced to all parts of the Caribbean. The main British forces on Martinique were too large and well entrenched to be tackled

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Over the next two years Hugues organised a highly successful flotilla of corsairs which proceeded to prey upon British, Spanish and North American shipping. These corsairs – their ships had such names as *L'Incorruptible*, *La Tyrannicide*, *L'Ami du Peuple*, *Le Terroriste* and *La Bande Joyeuse* – continued to flaunt a species of buccaneering Jacobinism long after the overthrow of Robespierre in Paris. The Dutch colonies of St Eustatius and St Martin, which had been in British hands, were recaptured by the French Republicans on behalf of the newly declared Batavian Republic. Slave conspiracies and maroon rebellion erupted in several colonies, directly or indirectly inspired by the events in the French islands: Venezuela, Brazil, Jamaica and Cuba were all affected, as will be recounted in subsequent chapters.

The most sustained and impressive struggles erupted in two islands, Grenada and St Vincent, which Britain had acquired from France in the 1760s. Republican propaganda helped to create an extraordinary alliance in these colonies between a handful of *Kréyole*-speaking mulatto proprietors and the mass of slaves, most of whom also spoke the French colonial patois. On St Vincent the Republican forces were further strengthened by the adhesion of the 'black Caribs' who had resisted the British in the 1770s. The revolt in Grenada was led by Julien Fédon, a mulatto proprietor who freed his own slaves prior to raising the French Republican standard, inscribed with the words *Liberté, Egalité ou la Mort*, on March 1st 1795. Five hundred Republican reinforcements were landed on St Vincent in September 1795; with this help from Guadeloupe Fédon succeeded in confining the British garrison to a tiny enclave around the town of St George's by February 1796 after a series of hard-fought battles and skirmishes. Over this same period the British were also driven from most of St Vincent by a combined force of revolutionary Republicans and black Caribs, the latter led by their chief Joseph Chatoyer. The Republican regimes not only freed the slaves but armed them, thereby creating a formidable barrier to the predictable British attempt at reconquest.[18]

On Guadeloupe the French Republican forces were racially mixed with some liberated blacks, such as the celebrated Captain Vulcain, rising to posts of command. However, the experienced stratum of mulatto *anciens libres* predominated in the key commands. Most of the 90,000 or so former slaves on Guadeloupe itself remained on the plantations, where they were kept at work by regulations against vagabonds and rules which restricted access to the provision grounds to those working on the plantations. In principle the plantation labourers could not be beaten and were to receive a share of the proceeds after

sale of the harvest – however, they may often have been cheated by the merchants, officials and former *commandeurs* to whom plantation administration was entrusted. Night-work in the sugar mills was suspended and the rigours of the new system were somewhat softened by Republican reliance on armed blacks. In a report to the Directory Victor Hugues blandly reported: 'These new citizens calmly enjoy their new status: although not paid they work, in truth a little slowly, but they work.' The Commissioner was also happy to note: 'At St Vincent we have renewed the ancient friendship which bound us to the Caribs; their chief is strongly attached to us.'[19] The more embattled Republican forces in Grenada and St Vincent had little possibility of maintaining plantation output but they did encourage an expansion of subsistence cultivation.

In St Domingue the Republicans' main gains in 1794–5 were at the expense of the Spanish. The British Navy, enjoying naval supremacy despite the corsairs, could bombard coastal strongpoints and concentrate forces at whichever point they chose. In St Domingue, with its long and heavily indented coastline, this was a considerable advantage. In June 1794 the British captured Port au Prince, capital of the South, together with some of its hinterland and a coastal strip, but thereafter their advance ground to a halt. The Republicans in St Domingue, strengthened by the adhesion of Toussaint and armed with the decree of Pluviôse, stoutly resisted the combined forces of the British, the royalists and the Spanish. The mulatto commanders Beauvais and Rigaud remained faithful to the Republic and checked British advances in the South and West. Rigaud's force numbered 5,000 infantry and 1,500 cavalry. Toussaint consolidated his hold on the Artibonite and much of the North: his forces grew from 4,000 to 10,000 infantry, with two cavalry regiments. Toussaint also managed to win to the Republican cause a few thousand maroons, led by Dieudonné. Laveaux in the North also won over new forces, the independent black rebels of the Gros Morne. From about this time Pierrot, who had helped to defeat Galbaud in 1793, aligned his forces with the Republic. The mulatto General Villatte, based on Le Cap, faced the Spanish in the North-east.[20]

Sonthonax, who had done so much to restore Republican fortunes, was recalled in June 1794 to answer criticisms that had been made of his conduct and administration. Had the Jacobins survived he might have become a victim of murderous factionalism since he could be accused of being the tool of Brissot, Danton or the Hébertistes. Jeanbon Saint–André, a member of the Committee of Public Safety linked to the colonial patriot milieu, had supported the charges against Sonthonax

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r, they may often have been cheated by the rmer *commandeurs* to whom plantation ed. Night-work in the sugar mills was f the new system were somewhat softened rmed blacks. In a report to the Directory ted: 'These new citizens calmly enjoy their id they work, in truth a little slowly, but ner was also happy to note: 'At St Vincent t friendship which bound us to the Caribs; ed to us.'[19] The more embattled Republican Vincent had little possibility of maintaining did encourage an expansion of subsistence

licans' main gains in 1794–5 were at the e British Navy, enjoying naval supremacy bombard coastal strongpoints and concen- oint they chose. In St Domingue, with its oastline, this was a considerable advantage. ptured Port au Prince, capital of the South, interland and a coastal strip, but thereafter a halt. The Republicans in St Domingue, n of Toussaint and armed with the decree of combined forces of the British, the royalists ulatto commanders Beauvais and Rigaud public and checked British advances in the force numbered 5,000 infantry and 1,500 ated his hold on the Artibonite and much of from 4,000 to 10,000 infantry, with two nt also managed to win to the Republican roons, led by Dieudonné. Laveaux in the forces, the independent black rebels of the this time Pierrot, who had helped to defeat his forces with the Republic. The mulatto e Cap, faced the Spanish in the North-east.[20] ne so much to restore Republican fortunes, to answer criticisms that had been made of ation. Had the Jacobins survived he might murderous factionalism since he could be f Brissot, Danton or the Hébertistes. Jeanbon the Committee of Public Safety linked to the d supported the charges against Sonthonax

while Fouché was to defend the Commissioner. With the advent of the Directory Sonthonax's Brissotin past no longer counted against him and in the course of a lengthy inquiry he vindicated all his work in St Domingue; the last act of the revolutionary Convention of 1792–5 was to exonerate its Commissioner in St Domingue on all charges and to congratulate him on the success of his mission. Sonthonax's presence in Paris gave revolutionary St Domingue a well-informed and influential advocate; before long the new Colonial Minister, Admiral Truguet, was to nominate him to head another commission to the colony.[21]

In the summer of 1794 a Spanish invasion of France was driven back across the Pyrenees. Hoping to forestall attack by the Republic's formidable armies, Spain concluded peace with France in July 1795 and, by the terms of the Treaty of Basle, ceded Spanish Santo Domingo to France, though no effective French administration could be established there for some time. Biassou and Jean François still commanded several thousand troops when news of the treaty arrived; they withdrew to Santo Domingo, and were then evacuated to Cuba, leaving most of their followers behind. The Directory's diplomacy and victories in Europe thus reduced pressure on its still beleagured forces in St Domingue.

Republican resistance in St Domingue and the success of the revolutionary counter-offensive in the Windwards, against heavy odds, must have made a good impression in Paris. Admiral Truguet, the Directory's Minister of Marine during much of this time, was a professional of firm Republican convictions; he had been in Le Cap as a naval captain in June 1793 and had supported Sonthonax. The French Republicans in the Caribbean were spreading havoc amongst the enemy and forcing it to assemble a large new West Indian expedition. So far as the Directory itself was concerned the activities of the Antillean revolutionaries had the further advantage that they were not financially burdensome. The activities of the corsairs enabled Hugues to send back to France a stream of prize goods, captured treasure and plantation products. Hugues amassed a considerable fortune for himself and would not have been above maintaining his popularity in the metropolis by discreet pay-offs in the right quarters.

But over and above either strategic or financial calculations the Directory's commitment to revolutionary anti-slavery was highly congruent with its claims to Republican legitimacy. Jean François Reubel, one of the strongmen of the Directory, had been a leading supporter of the *Amis des Noirs* and the author of the decree of May 1791 on mulatto rights. Condorcet was declared the philosophical

patron of the Directory and his works published in an official edition; these included both the essay on slavery, whose practical prescriptions found some echo in the new plantation regime, and his classic *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind*, written in prison in 1793 and alloting an important role to slave emancipation and the redemption of Africa in humanity's forward march. Historians have been prone to dwell on the seamy and chaotic side of the rule of the Directory. But, though not entirely free of such failings, its colonial policy drew strength from revolutionary virtue and coherence. In this area at least Thermidor stabilised rather than repressed the Jacobin impulse, and infused it with an internationalism which the Jacobins had lacked at the time of the paranoia about foreign plots.

If the Directory can be given credit for sustaining Republican emancipationism it is probable that without the radical Jacobin interlude such a sweeping measure of expropriation as the decree of Pluviôse would never have been enacted. It was at this point that the elemental upheaval of colony and metropolis coincided. The members of the Convention who were so overcome by Dufay's address had allowed political calculation to be subordinated to that spontaneous anti-slavery reflex found in such characteristic expressions of the popular mentality as the *Marseillaise*, with its denunciation of 'l'esclavage antique', and the common slogans 'Live Freely or Die', 'Rather Death than Slavery'.[22] The victory of 1792 for the rights of free blacks and mulattos had undermined the racialist justification for slavery, leaving only the mystique of private property. With the ousting of the Girondin bourgeoisie this remaining barrier to slave emancipation was flimsy enough to be swept away by the appearance of the delegation from St Domingue. The invention of black slavery in the Americas in a previous epoch has been called an 'unthinking decision' and the description might also be applied to the approval of the emancipation decree. Though sponsored by the apostles of Reason this decree had been an existential affirmation of the revolutionary project. Perhaps only those whose conception of human nature had been transformed by the revolutionary experience could see a general emancipation decree as a rational element of political strategy; at all events previous purely instrumental attempts to recruit slaves had never been thought to require a call for general emancipation.

The new revolutionary order in the Antilles faced a major British onslaught in 1796. The British policy of colonial aggression had backfired and the slave order of the whole region faced a desperately serious threat. The loss of Guadeloupe, St Vincent, Ste Lucie and most of Grenada, accompanied by the general instigation of servile revolt,

Jean-Baptiste Belley: deputy in

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Jean-Baptiste Belley: deputy in the Assembly, 1797

sounded the alarm; an alarm compounded by the activities of revolutionary agents, rumours of slave or maroon conspiracies, throughout the Caribbean. Dundas declaimed against 'the extraordinary and unprecedented system now adopted by the Enemy for overturning all regular Government and subordination'.[23] With the help of his colleague Lord Hawkesbury, a West Indian proprietor, Dundas persuaded the British Cabinet to dispatch a veritable armada to the West Indian theatre: nearly 100 ships and 30,000 men were assembled for this purpose, equal in troop numbers alone to the Flanders expedition and one of the largest ever to have crossed the Atlantic. The objective was to regain the islands seized by the French and to complete the occupation of St Domingue. The priority was to recapture the British islands which had been largely lost – St Vincent and Grenada – and to retake Ste Lucie. A massive asssault on Ste Lucie in April of 1796 established a British presence on this island, but resistance did not collapse despite the overwhelming superiority of the invaders: 'the blacks', a British officer observed, are 'to a man our enemies'. The British commander, Brigadier General Moore, subsequently to become famous in the Peninsular War, noted that 'men after having been told they were free, and after carrying arms, did not easily return to slavery'.[24] While Moore placed much blame on 'white people attached to the Republic' for envenoming the situation, he also conceded that the

Republicans were 'joined by numbers of blacks from the plantations; all of that colour are attached to them'. He concluded regretfully: 'It was my wish to have governed the colony with mildness, but I have been forced to adopt the most violent measures from the perverseness and bad composition of those I have to deal with.'[25] The British press dubbed the conflict in the Lesser Antilles the 'Brigands' War' and reported Republican atrocities against non-combatants in lurid detail. In Grenada and St Vincent the British also encountered vigorous and widespread resistance. A force of 5,000 men landed at Grenada in March 1796 and forced Fédon into a guerrilla resistance in the woods and hills south of the Grand Etang. Fédon himself was probably killed in July but irregular warfare continued. There were further reports of atrocities committed by former slaves and their Republican instigators; in one case the slaves were said to have crushed a planter to death by feeding him through the rollers of his own mill. Aware that the Republican forces on the different islands were concerting their efforts the British descended on St Vincent with 4,000 men in June 1796. The veteran black Carib leader Chatoyer was killed in a clash in March 1795 but the black Caribs now fought with their French allies under a new chief Duvallé. While some slaves joined the Carib/Republican force, others remained on the estates and even helped the British.

Faced with heavy losses, many of them caused by illness, and needing large forces to patrol territory recaptured from the brigands, the British commanders called for reinforcements. Despite planter misgivings it was decided to raise black ranger batallions formed from specially purchased slaves who were promised pay and freedom. These West India regiments were to total 7,000 men, some based in Jamaica, others in the smaller islands. The black ranger forces were sent in small units to root out guerrillas in the hills. Anxious to end a draining conflict the British conceded terms to most of the 'brigand' forces, treating some as French soldiers surrendering with the honours of war and persuading others to break with their French allies. Thus on Ste Lucie those members of the *Armée française dans les bois* who were not native to Ste Lucie would be repatriated to French territory under a flag of truce; free natives of the island would be allowed to remain without any sanction; former slaves would be integrated into a free black batallion and sent to serve in Sierra Leone. By the close of 1797 the British forces had regained control of Ste Lucie by means of these concessions. Similar terms were offered to the 'brigands' on the other islands. Under duress the black Caribs of St Vincent eventually agreed to accept resettlement on the island of Rattan on the coast of Honduras. While the plantation regime survived on St Vincent the slaveholders of Grenada largely forsook sugar cultivation and devoted their lands and slaves to the less

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At least 40,000 British soldiers and sailors were lost in the campaigns in the Lesser Antilles in the years 1796–1800, some killed in action, many dying of disease and others discharged as unfit for service. Guadeloupe and its smaller dependencies were not regained. Events in St Domingue have tended to eclipse the memory of the war in the Lesser Antilles: yet the latter undoubtedly made a large contribution to British decisions concerning St Domingue, helping to draw off large British forces that could otherwise have been used there.[26]

The French Republic could not match the British expedition sent to the Caribbean, but nevertheless it sent sizeable forces. In the course of 1796 some 6,000 troops were sent to the Lesser Antilles and 3,000 to St Domingue. In St Domingue the emancipation policy meant that Republican forces required supplies rather than manpower; they were sent 30,000 muskets and 400,000 lb of powder in 1796.[27]

Following the departure of Sonthonax, Laveaux had continued the Commissioner's policy of promoting the growth of a black military power, seeing the former slaves as the foundation of Republican strength. A layer of mulattos who had previously supplied most of the commanding officers of the *Légion d'Egalité*, and many senior posts in the municipalities, resented the promotion of black commanders. In March 1796 Villatte and the municipality of Le Cap arrested Laveaux. However, this coup was foiled by the loyalty of some commanders – notably the black Pierre Michel and the mulatto B. Léveillé – and by Toussaint Louverture's dispatch of forces to quell the mulatto-led rebellion. This incident hastened and formalised the very growth of a black revolutionary power that it had been designed to thwart. Laveaux, as the ranking delegate of the Republic, appointed Toussaint to the post of Governor of the colony and promoted several black officers to the rank of general. At the ceremony of installation of the new Governor in April Laveaux hailed Toussaint as a saviour of the Republic and the redeemer of the slaves predicted by Raynal.

The new dispensation within the Republican zone was confirmed in May with the arrival of a new Civil Commission, headed once again by Sonthonax. The other members of the Commission were Raimond, who had championed mulatto rights in the National Assembly, and Roume, who in an earlier spell as Commissioner had helped to devise the Southern 'concordat' between whites and mulattos in 1791–2. On his arrival in Le Cap Sonthonax received the acclamation of the black population and was hailed by Toussaint as the 'fondateur de la liberté'. While the new Commission enjoyed similar powers to its predecessors local forces now greatly predominated over those sent from the metropolis.

The British presence in Port au Prince and the Centre still divided Republican St Domingue into two, precariously joined by a disputed neck of land. In the Southern area, under Rigaud's command, the mulattos conserved an influential position. In the North the blacks and *nouveaux libres* were the main power. The French reinforcements who arrived with the Commissioners at Le Cap were commanded by Rochambeau who became alarmed at the overturn that had taken place in the colony's structure of power and property. Sonthonax soon ordered him back to France where he later alleged that 'the war in St Domingue is that of the propertyless against the legitimate proprietors'.[28] Though denied by the Commissioners this charge had some substance.

Formally the Commission wished to rehabilitate the plantation economy with the help of patriotic planters and dutiful freedmen; in practice, at least in the North, it relied on armed former slaves to check the treason and contraband of unpatriotic estate owners and managers. Many 'legitimate proprietors' had left for the areas of British occupation, if not for Kingston, Philadelphia or London. Rochambeau probably spoke most directly for colonial proprietors in the metropolis, and for those mercantile interests with a lien on colonial properties, who believed that the time had come when they could publicly demand a return to order. However, within the Republican areas there were still some resident planters, above all mulattos, and a layer of administrators seeking to repossess estates. But in Sonthonax's view many of these were not true friends of the Republic; not only did they happily trade with the enemy but they also hankered for a return of slavery. As he explained in a letter to Truguet: 'The Revolution here has had the same phases as in France and Europe. The bourgeois fought the nobles in order to oppress the people; the men of colour wanted the humiliation and even the expulsion of the whites, but they abhored liberty.'[29]

The British presence shored up slavery in the occupied zone, so that the future of emancipation in St Domingue still seemed open. Many remaining proprietors and managers, including some *gens de couleur*, took shelter behind the British lines where plantations continued to function. Some 60,000 slaves still laboured in the plantations in the British zone. The British had received 4,000 reinforcements in 1795 and more than 10,000 in 1796. As auxiliaries there were large units of 'royalists': these comprised royalist officers, leading an assortment of whites fighting for pay and plunder, mulattos and former members of the *maréchaussé* similarly motivated, and blacks offered their freedom. The money, uniforms, food and supplies which the British could offer were a magnet for recruits in an increasingly war-devastated land. With their sea-power, artillery and reinforcements the British and their

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royalist allies were in a strong position. Disease was to take its toll in the British ranks but, even before it did so, the British regime's hope of extending the area of occupation was rendered vain by its defence of slavery. No doubt only a minority of blacks in the Republican zone really enjoyed full civic rights but the ending of slavery there did formalise and guarantee the end of planter control over the life of the direct producers.

Official Republican efforts to rehabilitate plantation production, using regulations similar to those in force in Guadeloupe, met with indifferent results. According to the original decree of emancipation issued by Sonthonax, those former slaves not enrolled in the army were required to remain on their plantation for a period of at least a year; the value of the harvest was to be divided between the owners and the cultivators in the proportion of one to two or three. The estates of *émigrés* and royalists were seized and leased out to administrators under a system of *fermage* devised by the Civil Commission. Field hands were urged to remain ready for labour and their attempts to claim larger plots of land were denied. But in many areas there was, in effect, a stand-off between the Republican regime and the former slaves, with the latter beginning to construct an autonomous existence for themselves and working only fitfully on the plantations. On the estates let under the system of *fermage* the harvest was to be divided up between the cultivators, the administrators and the state. A regulation of 1796 created a rural gendarmerie whose task was to enforce labour discipline and to suppress vagabondage. Those without labour contracts binding them to work on an estate would, in theory, be denied access to provision grounds. Finding administrators for the estates was very difficult, since there were few with the necessary technical competence, and most of those who did possess such competence were former overseers or *commandeurs* who would be distrusted by the mass of labourers. The year 1796 witnessed repeated conflicts over the attempts to impose the new labour regulations. Two years earlier Sonthonax had encouraged the former slaves of the North to defy the authority of their owners and managers arms in hand. It was now impossible simply to dragoon the field hands back to the plantations. In one Southern version of the labour regulations the labourers were told that they must work a six-day week if they wished to claim their full share of the sale of the crop. But many preferred a half share for five days' work, or even no share for four days' work; in the latter case their access to a plot of land would be their sole 'payment' for four days' labour.

Government officials or army officers would take on responsibility for an estate, but even they had difficulty in containing the resistance of the producers. Sugar output dropped sharply, with destruction of

plantation equipment, and of irrigation works, explaining part of the fall. Coffee output suffered less of a decline. This crop could be grown on a small scale, with the Republican authorities or their appointees claiming a share of the harvest. In a number of areas women cultivators refused to take part in the sugar or coffee harvest unless they were promised the same pay-out as male cultivators; the original decrees of emancipation had offered them only two-thirds of a male workers' share.[30]

Between 1796 and 1798 the military capacity of the Republican forces was considerably enhanced. While there were still many black irregulars of indeterminate allegiance the regiments commanded by Toussaint were no longer a guerrilla force but highly disciplined contingents capable of strategic deployment to any part of the colony. British officers paid tribute to the military capacity and tactics of Toussaint's *demi-brigades*.[31] The social order of Republican St Domingue reflected the half-peasant, half-proletarian character of the former slaves, without whose support, however grudging, it could not have survived. Sidney Mintz has written of the 'proto-peasant' aspirations of slaves in the Caribbean and there can be little doubt that many of St Domingue's former slaves saw emancipation principally in terms of their opportunity to cultivate a plot of land, and raise a family, unmolested by their former overseers.[32] On the other hand, the regime of plantation slavery had developed a disciplined and deracinated labour force; some former slaves had been themselves organisers, and indeed task-masters; many had not yet developed strong local attachments. Localistic, 'proto-peasant' resistance largely thwarted attempts to recreate a plantation regime. But paradoxically those who had been formed by the plantations played a major part in sustaining the new Republican political order. Ultimately it was the discipline and coherence of the army, echoing that of the plantations, which defeated the partisans of re-enslavement.[33] Black resistance to the British and to slavery drew on a variety of sources. The majority of adult blacks had been born in Africa; a synthesis of African religious and political ideas encouraged them to shake off enslavement. Some of those who led maroon bands and practised voodoo were prepared, like Hyacinth, to collaborate with the British. But however egotistical particular chiefs might be they discovered that alignment with the defenders of slavery was liable to alienate the mass of blacks. Behind the British lines the fate of particular plantations greatly depended upon the attitude of the slave elite; if they decided to leave so would the rest of the crew. As the conflict dragged on security could not be guaranteed on 'loyal' plantations. Having intervened to defend slavery the British occupation actually provoked a more systematic and deeply rooted resistance to it. The

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Republicans prospered to the extent that they allied themselves with, and lent coherence to, this elemental social force.

The last stages of the war against the British witnessed an assertion of Toussaint's independent power and a certain *rapprochement* between the black general and his mulatto counterpart in the South, Rigaud. In the South and West liberated slaves also supplied the rank and file of the Republican forces, but in this zone most officers were mulattos or *ancien libres*. The Republican generals succeeded in confining the British to increasingly beleagured enclaves. A pressing problem for both commanders was that of obtaining resources with which to supply their troops. In this situation both Toussaint and Rigaud rediscovered the advantages of that commercial autonomy at which the planters of the Antilles had so often aimed. Their control of the countryside gave them access to at least some coffee, sugar and cotton. North American merchants were prepared to pay for these with military supplies or good coin; the remaining mercantile agents of the metropolis, impeded by the British blockade, had little to offer. Sonthonax and Laveaux inclined to a different solution to the problem of supplies and revenue; like Hugues in Guadeloupe they began to organise a revolutionary *guerre de corse*; there was now a 'Quasi-War' between France and the United States, as President Adams had aligned his country with Britain. But neither Commissioner nor general were any longer in a position to determine policy.

In March 1797 elections were held for a new French Assembly; probably at Toussaint's instigation both Laveaux and Sonthonax were chosen as deputies for St Domingue. Laveaux accepted this new assignment with good grace; he transferred overall command to Toussaint and on his return to Paris continued to defend the new order in St Domingue. Sonthonax refused to leave. Tension mounted between the Civil Commissioner and the black Commander in Chief until in September Toussaint obliged Sonthonax to comply with a recall order from Paris. Toussaint claimed that Sonthonax was plotting to make St Domingue independent and to slaughter the whites. In reality it was Toussaint who was taking a step towards independence while covering his tracks with these distortions.

The departure of Laveaux and Sonthonax came at a time when Toussaint and Rigaud were poised to roll back British control of the occupied territories. But given the strength of British sea-power and the fortification of the occupied enclaves this promised to be a difficult operation. Via intermediaries the British commander intimated that he would be willing to negotiate a withdrawal with Toussaint and Rigaud. The British were beginning to realise that there was no way they could win in St Domingue; the occupation was costly and ineffective. The

London government sent a new commander with secret instructions to explore terms for a partial or wholesale withdrawal; it was hoped to persuade the coloured commanders to withdraw support from the policy of revolutionary offensive outside St Domingue. Toussaint and Rigaud were to be offered an orderly evacuation that would enable them to take possession of the plantations, port facilities and military installations in the British occupied zone. In return for this the British insisted that the activities of the Republican corsairs and revolutionary agents should cease, that traders should be free to visit St Domingue's ports and that those French planters who wished to remain should be permitted to do so. Toussaint was prepared to accept, and honour, these terms; Rigaud agreed with some hesitation. Neither Laveaux nor Sonthonax would have been offered, or been prepared to consider, such a deal with the British.[34]

A menacing turn of events in France complicated the clash between Toussaint and Sonthonax. The elections of March 1797 brought many covert royalists, and former members of the colonial establishment, back into the mainstream of French political life. Barbé Marbois, the former Intendant of St Domingue, became the president of the Five Hundred. In the opening sessions of this body calls were made for the restoration of order in the colonies and for a disavowal of the extremism of Sonthonax. Rochambeau's reflections on the subject of colonial anarchy were extensively quoted by Viennot Vaublanc, who emerged as chief spokesman for the planter interest. There also seemed a prospect of peace between the contending powers in Europe. The French royalist promoters of the British occupation of St Domingue, Malouet and de Charmilly, believed that a royalist restoration and an end to the war were now in prospect. Sonthonax and Toussaint were both greatly alarmed by reports and rumours of developments in Europe. Sonthonax was thoroughly committed to both the Republic and to the new revolutionary order in the colonies. Toussaint was more narrowly concerned to defend the new order in St Domingue. If Sonthonax did plan independence for St Domingue, as alleged, this would have been in the event of a royalist restoration in France; and his alleged plan to slaughter the whites probably referred to retribution for those planters who had collaborated with the British. Toussaint was less committed to any particular regime in the metropolis, saw some potential advantages in the return of planters and managers, and wished to keep open the possibility of negotiating with the British. Consequently Toussaint broke with Sonthonax and, in James's phrase, 'threw him to the wolves'.[35] (Once more the Jacobin Commissioner's luck held; by the time he arrived back in France the intrigues of royalists and colonial proprietors had been foiled by the coup of Fructidor.)

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Toussaint was prepared to disembarrass himself of Sonthonax, whom he compared to other extremists like Robespierre and Marat, but he simultaneously dispatched to Paris an eloquent and vigorous riposte to Vaublanc and Rochambeau. He warned that the former slaves would know how to fight 'should General Rochambeau . . . reappear at the head of an army in order to return the blacks to slavery'.[36]

The British position began to collapse in the early months of 1798. Some 20,000 British troopers had died or deserted or been discharged as unfit for service by this date; total British losses in the Caribbean theatre were soon to reach 60,000. Disease had taken a heavy toll and military operations in St Domingue had yielded very meagre results. At no point had the occupiers succeeded in mounting major offensives against the Republicans, nor had they extended the occupation beyond the boundaries that it had reached in its first months, thanks to the French planter militias. The casualties of the British forces fighting in the Lesser Antilles were about twice as great as those in St Domingue; if the British had not suffered this distraction and depletion they might even have succeeded in stifling the revolt in the larger colony. The poor results and heavy casualties of Britain's West Indian operations encouraged anti-war sentiment and gave openings to the Foxite opposition in Parliament.[37] Following the departure of Sonthonax, Toussaint and Rigaud kept up the pressure on the British forces. For a time the British hoped to retain control of the naval base at Môle St Nicolas, or of some other enclave. Not until July–August 1798 was an agreement struck with Toussaint and Rigaud for a complete British withdrawal. It was agreed that St Domingue would no longer be used as a base for attacks on British shipping or on the British slave colonies. Those French planters who wished to do so could remain. The British had themselves recruited black auxiliary forces for the defence of the occupied zone; some of these forces were now integrated into Toussaint's army.

Toussaint and Rigaud undertook these negotiations without proper sanction from the Directory and several of the more delicate accords were kept as secret clauses when the Treaty was signed. The British entertained Toussaint lavishly at the Môle St Nicolas prior to their departure and invited him to establish an independent kingdom – though gratified by these attentions he declined the invitation. Reports in the British press hinted at the agreements reached – indeed they mischievously encouraged the view that Toussaint was about to desert France. The metropolitan authorities were by now thoroughly suspicious of their Governor in St Domingue. Raimond and Roume remained as titular Commissioners but had no power other than as advisers. In April 1798 another Commissioner, Hédouville, was sent by

Paris but he arrived unaccompanied by troops. The new Commissioner had little alternative but to approve an expurgated version of the Treaty with the British. Hédouville suspected Toussaint of having compromised the Republic by a series of concessions – to the British, to former *émigrés*, whom he had allowed to return, and to the mass of blacks in the North, who were fitful in their attention to the cash crops. The Commissioner announced that labourers would henceforth be obliged to sign labour contracts for three years instead of one year. This provoked revolt in the North and persuaded Hédouville that he should retire to France. Before going he promised Rigaud full support if he should challenge Toussaint's power. This parting shot played upon already existing antagonisms and rivalry between the two generals, and more generally between blacks and *mulâtres*. After a period of tension open civil war broke out in March 1799. It took the black general a little over a year to establish full control and to eject Rigaud and other leading mulattos from the island. While the latter sought refuge in France, Toussaint's advance on the South was facilitated by United States naval cover; the Adams administration followed the British government in regarding Toussaint as less menacing to Caribbean commerce and order than those who were more faithful to the French Republic. However, Toussaint tried to give his regime some shreds of Republican legitimacy by attributing the title of Commissioner successively to Raimond and Roume. In December 1800 his forces invaded the still Spanish-administered half of the island, and decreed the emancipation of the colony's 15,000 slaves. This action had no metropolitan sanction and was undertaken in order to prevent Santo Domingo being used as a staging post for a French expedition. Toussaint had attentively followed Napoleon Bonaparte's rise to power and saw some parallel between himself and the First Consul. He still sent occasional letters to Paris justifying his conduct; one of them, destined to remain unanswered, began, 'From the First of the Blacks to the First of the Whites'.[38]

Toussaint was ruler of St Domingue until the arrival of a large French expeditionary force in February 1802. He supervised a certain recovery of the economy and the introduction of a new constitution. According to figures assembled by the treasury of St Domingue exports in 1800 ran at only one-fifth of the volume achieved in 1789; because of higher prices, and higher charges, customs revenue was almost the same. The export volume figure may have been understated to conceal the extent of trade with the United States or Britain. Nevertheless there is no doubt that revolution and war had produced a major slump in plantation output.

Table 2 Exports of St Domingue, 1789

lb '000	*1789*
White sugar	47,516
Raw sugar	93,573
Coffee	76,835
Cotton	7,004
Indigo	759

Source: Pluchon, *Toussaint Louverture*, p. 275.

The irrigation systems for which St Doming badly damaged and much equipment destroye French part had dropped to under 400,000, previous level. Population decline resulted fr imports and the historically low proportion population as well as the devastation of war more interested in subsistence cultivation th This held out hope of demographic recc undermined the plantation economy. In the *esclave, moin pas travaye*' (I'm not a slave I work referred to was essentially that perform thirds of the surviving plantations were helc confiscated the estates of *émigrés* and count Toussaint allowed those willing to do so to re The *domaines nationaux* were leased out to army officers. The Commissioners Raimon acquired, or leased, a string of estates; Gen thirty-three sugar estates, while General Chri worth more than $250,000 in 1799.[39] Under leaseholders of *domaines nationaux* were exp of the value of the harvest to the labourers a all produce to the state. A state budget for 3 up for 1801. It was common for the fiscal au produce rather than cash; British or North then exchange arms, ammunition, textiles ar sugar. According to the official financial bala produce of *domaines nationaux* raised customs.[40]

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Table 2 Exports of St Domingue, 1789 and 1800–1801

lb '000	*1789*	*1800–1801*
White sugar	47,516	17
Raw sugar	93,573	18,519
Coffee	76,835	43,220
Cotton	7,004	2,480
Indigo	759	1

Source: Pluchon, *Toussaint Louverture*, p. 275.

The irrigation systems for which St Domingue was famous had been badly damaged and much equipment destroyed. The population of the French part had dropped to under 400,000, roughly two-thirds of its previous level. Population decline resulted from the cessation of slave imports and the historically low proportion of children in the slave population as well as the devastation of war. The new peasantry was more interested in subsistence cultivation than producing cash crops. This held out hope of demographic recovery in the future but undermined the plantation economy. In the peasant saying '*Moin pas esclave, moin pas travaye*' (I'm not a slave I don't have to work), the work referred to was essentially that performed for others. About two-thirds of the surviving plantations were held by the state, which had confiscated the estates of *émigrés* and counter-revolutionaries; though Toussaint allowed those willing to do so to return to reclaim their land. The *domaines nationaux* were leased out to private individuals or to army officers. The Commissioners Raimond and Roume had each acquired, or leased, a string of estates; General Dessalines controlled thirty-three sugar estates, while General Christophe was reported to be worth more than $250,000 in 1799.[39] Under the system of *fermage* the leaseholders of *domaines nationaux* were expected to pay out a quarter of the value of the harvest to the labourers and to hand over a half of all produce to the state. A state budget for 33 million *livres* was drawn up for 1801. It was common for the fiscal authorities to make a levy of produce rather than cash; British or North American traders would then exchange arms, ammunition, textiles and equipment for coffee or sugar. According to the official financial balance the sale or exchange of produce of *domaines nationaux* raised more revenue than the customs.[40]

Army officers or officials operated estates because they were more likely to have access to disciplined labour. The direct producers were

only permitted to work their garden plots so long as they contributed labour to the estates. A decree of October 1800 placed all those in agriculture – labourers, overseers, managers and proprietors – under military discipline. Every adult had to be able to give proof of 'useful employment', while managers and proprietors had to submit accounts to the military commander of their district. A special rural guard, based on units fifty-five men strong, was organised to enforce this decree.

Juridically the new labour regime resembled a species of serfdom in that labourers were supposed to be bound to their estates, and obliged to labour, in return for which they had access to means of subsistence, an autonomous family life and a notional share in plantation proceeds. In practice the direct producers must sometimes have been in a position to check or challenge the full severity of the labour decrees. Bands of maroons still existed in many parts of St Domingue owing no defined allegiance to the state and linked instead to particular localities. The maroons still tended to comprise mainly younger men. Women made a large economic contribution in the settled areas, working in the fields and organising local markets. To conserve its labour force an estate had to offer some incentives and rights to the producer beyond the formal ban on whipping. Labourers on the estates often had to be armed while the army itself was recruited in large measure from the ranks of the peasantry. The real relations of force in the countryside, where many former slaves had been armed, virtually precluded the full reinstitution of slavery. On the other hand, the soldiery often assessed and collected tribute in a rough and ready manner, without regard to the producers' formal rights.

Toussaint's style of rule echoed that of an autocratic and independent-minded colonial Governor – with the difference that he had no Intendant or metropolitan minister to dispute his authority. The old Governor's Palace at Port au Prince, now Port Républicain, served as his offical residence and headquarters, from which he set out on repeated tours of inspection. Toussaint's personal staff included four or five secretaries (usually whites) who took down a stream of orders, decrees, letters and proclamations. His entourage included several long-standing white and mulatto advisers or administrators. Among these were five 'constitutional' priests, radical *curés* who appear to have identified with slave revolt from the outset. Other important members of Toussaint staff included the mulattos Raimond and Pascal; Nathan, the *juif interprète*; Bunel, a former colonial administrator; and Vincent, a French colonel of engineers. Many of these men, despite French nationality, loyally served Toussaint in his negotiations with the British or Americans. Most of the officers in the army were blacks and former slaves; men like Dessalines, Christophe and Moyse. Among the few

Toussaint Louv

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Toussaint Louverture

white or mulatto officers were Agé, the white chief of staff, and Clairveaux, the mulatto commander in the East. In the course of the war with Rigaud the number of mulatto officers dropped considerably. Suzanne Simon, Toussaint's wife, and Claire Heureuse, the wife of Dessalines, also played some part in public affairs, appealing for clemency in the bloody caste feuds which rent St Domingue.

Grand receptions were held at the Governor's Palace, attended by officers of the new order, foreign traders and planters who had returned to their estates. Toussaint would dress simply but was usually accompanied by a splendid honour guard. Toussaint imposed himself on his collaborators by his force of personality and by his control of the army. He spoke a vigorous but ungrammatical French, and had read widely. In the Governor's Palace and other public buildings were to be found busts and portraits of Raynal, who, rather than Rousseau or Condorcet, was adopted as the prophet of the new order. Just as Raynal's work reflected the aspirations of enlightened planters as well as championing slave emancipation, so there was a double quality to Toussaint's new regime. It rested on the forces unleashed by slave revolt and slave emancipation; at the same time it reflected or recreated the ideals of the autonomist planters and enlightened administrators. Toussaint was a former slave; he was also a former slaveholder.[41]

In July 1801 a new constitution was drawn up by a Central

Assembly whose ten members had been nominated by Toussaint. It proclaimed him Governor for life. The Assembly comprised three whites, three mulattos and four inhabitants of the former Spanish colony. The text of the Constitution had been drafted, in consultation with Toussaint, by Raimond, the Assembly's Secretary, and Bertrand Borghella, its President. Borghella was a large planter and a former member of the notoriously autonomist *Conseil Supérieur* of Port au Prince. The constitution declared St Domingue to be a self-governing colony of France enjoying freedom of commerce. Toussaint had the right to nominate his successor from amongst the army generals. Freedom and French nationality were the prerogative of every inhabitant. Catholicism was to be the official religion. Toussaint himself always displayed a great respect for the religion in which he had been brought up; *Te Deums* would be offered for his victories and the general would himself enter the pulpit to deliver admonitions to the congregation. The Constitution only allowed for a notional link between metropolis and colony; no resident agent of the metropolis was envisaged, simply correspondence between the Governor and the French head of state. However, the Louverturian Constitution did stop short of declaring outright independence and, as a placatory gesture, a copy was sent to the First Consul for his endorsement.[42]

The new order over which Toussaint presided made massive and prudent provision for defence. The prospective enemy was no longer Britain but the metropolis itself. While war continued between Britain and France the metropolis was in no position to send an expedition to the Antilles. But by 1799 it was clear that peace would soon be made. The replacement of President Adams by Jefferson in the election of 1799 was a further ominous development for St Domingue, since it was likely to result in the ending of the so-called 'Quasi-War' between France and the United States. Adams had favoured trade with St Domingue and his Agent there had played an important part in the negotiations with the British. Jefferson was not only pro-French but a Virginian slave-owner and, as such, likely to be particularly hostile to an adjacent black power in the Americas. Toussaint had been willing to end anti-slavery activity directed at other American territories, which had pleased Adams; it was thought that to his successor the very existence of an emancipationist black state would be anathema. Calculating that this would be welcome news the First Consul conveyed a message to the new President that insubordination in St Domingue would not be tolerated. From a mixture of motives to be explored in the next chapter Jefferson did nothing to discourage the French.

The militarisation of the Louverturian order in St Domingue is stressed by Pierre Pluchon, who argues that it was both tyrannical and

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Bonaparte was intent on creating a
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ers had been nominated by Toussaint. It for life. The Assembly comprised three d four inhabitants of the former Spanish nstitution had been drafted, in consultation id, the Assembly's Secretary, and Bertrand orghella was a large planter and a former autonomist *Conseil Supérieur* of Port au eclared St Domingue to be a self-governing freedom of commerce. Toussaint had the ccessor from amongst the army generals. tionality were the prerogative of every s to be the official religion. Toussaint himself espect for the religion in which he had been would be offered for his victories and the er the pulpit to deliver admonitions to the itution only allowed for a notional link lony; no resident agent of the metropolis was ndence between the Governor and the French e Louverturian Constitution did stop short of dence and, as a placatory gesture, a copy was or his endorsement.[42]

which Toussaint presided made massive and ence. The prospective enemy was no longer s itself. While war continued between Britain s was in no position to send an expedition to it was clear that peace would soon be made. ident Adams by Jefferson in the election of ous development for St Domingue, since it was nding of the so-called 'Quasi-War' between States. Adams had favoured trade with ent there had played an important part in the tish. Jefferson was not only pro-French but a id, as such, likely to be particularly hostile to in the Americas. Toussaint had been willing to directed at other American territories, which was thought that to his successor the very ipationist black state would be anathema. uld be welcome news the First Consul conveyed President that insubordination in St Domingue From a mixture of motives to be explored in the lid nothing to discourage the French.

f the Louverturian order in St Domingue is on, who argues that it was both tyrannical and

burdensome. Toussaint's army was maintained at a regular strength of 20,000, with a similar number organised in the militia and *gendarmerie*. Certainly armed forces totalling more than a tenth of the total population constituted a heavy charge upon available resources. The legacy of disorder bequeathed by a decade of civil war, revolution and foreign intervention severely tested the new power and impelled it along the path of centralisation and militarisation. Toussaint often found it easier to incorporate free-lance military groups or defeated enemies than to seek to disband them, leading to a further growth of the military establishment. The manifest danger of new interventions helped to justify such a policy.[43]

The French expedition feared by Toussaint duly appeared at the beginning of February 1802. It initially comprised some 16,000 men commanded by Leclerc, a noted Republican general and brother-in-law to Bonaparte. Leclerc carried with him an appointment as Governor General and a proclamation to the effect that France would always respect the liberty of its new citizens. The size of the expeditionary force and its simultaneous descent upon the island's principal ports made it clear that Bonaparte's intention was to break the power of Toussaint's army and to reintegrate the colony. Leclerc's second in command was Rochambeau; he was also accompanied by the mulatto commanders Rigaud and Pétion.

Bonaparte was intent on creating a new French empire in the Americas. The preliminary accord for a peace treaty with Britain had been reached in September 1801. Under its terms Martinique and other colonies occupied by Britain were to be returned to France or its allies – only Trinidad was retained by Britain, though the First Consul regretted even this. At about the same time France acquired Louisiana from Spain by a secret clause of the Treaty of San Ildefonso. The reconquest of St Domingue was to be the centre-point of this strategy. With some success Bonaparte sought to persuade the British and American governments that the 'annihilation of black government' in St Domingue was in their interest; he urged the 'necessity of stifling in every part of the world every kind of disquiet and trouble'. In France itself there was an influential lobby of colonial proprietors or merchants who wished to recoup their old prosperity. The First Consul's wife, Josephine Beauharnais, owned property in St Domingue and Martinique. Barbé Marbois was now a member of the Council of State, as was Moreau de Saint Méry, the former representative of Martinique and member of the Club Massiac. Talleyrand seems to have felt that the Caribbean venture was a convenient outlet for the First Consul's ambitions. Later Napoleon was to blame 'the Council of State and his ministers' for having promoted the expedition to St Domingue; they

were, he thought, 'hurried along by the clamours of the colonists, who formed a considerable party at Paris, and were, besides . . . nearly all royalists, or in the pay of the English faction'.[44] Napoleon's attempt to disclaim responsibility should not be accepted at face value; nevertheless the colonial lobby and merchants anxious to supply a large continental market with tropical produce generally favoured the expedition, as did those who wished for good relations with Britain and the United States. The destruction of 'black government' in St Domingue would have earned Napoleon the gratitude of slaveholders throughout the New World.

Toussaint had consolidated the revolution in St Domingue by playing off the major Atlantic powers against one another. Now this was no longer possible. At the time of the arrival of the Leclerc expedition Toussaint was also vulnerable domestically. Some four months prior to Leclerc's arrival Toussaint had carried out a wholesale purge of the army, involving the execution of Moyse, commander of the North. The precise reasons for this purge are difficult to establish but it was linked to unrest among the cultivators caused by the implementation of the labour decrees. Moyse had failed to suppress this unrest, or even positively supported it, while his followers had charged that Toussaint intended to reduce the field labourers to being little more than slaves or serfs of their former owners or, perhaps even worse, of jumped-up *petits blancs* or army officers. According to a report made by the US Consul at Le Cap, Moyse had revealed a readiness to overthrow Toussaint and to establish better relations with France. The summary execution of Moyse, and some 2,000 real or supposed supporters, was followed by the adoption of a draconian decree on internal security. All citizens were required to possess an official identity card and an elaborate series of controls was established over the movements of labourers and soldiers. Idleness was to be punished with forced labour, sedition with death and suspect foreigners were to be deported. This decree did not simply tighten up the plantation regime; it desperately sought to stave off political disintegration.[45]

Leclerc's landing on the island was carried through with surprising success in its first stages. In many places Leclerc's authority was accepted by army commanders, including Paul Louverture and Clairveaux, who seemed to lack clear instructions from their commander-in-chief. Toussaint had first demoralised his supporters by a purge and then left his generals unprepared for an invasion which everyone knew was coming. Perhaps Toussaint expected Bonaparte to offer him a deal. There was also the difficulty, ignored by some, that loyalty to the Republic was still a powerful force, among people of colour no less than with most whites. The only effective resistance to Leclerc came

from the forces commanded by Toussaint and Dessalines in the West. Toussaint now a revolutionary. He urged the destructio French and warned that they had come to directly to the cultivators of the North, a guerrilla strategy. Toussaint's principal lie fighting a more conventional campaign reverses. In the last days of April Christo come to terms with Leclerc on condition ranks and commands. Leclerc accepte Toussaint also indicated a readiness to Governor General, on condition that he his personal guard and that his troops Republican forces. Once again Leclerc w distrusted Toussaint's intentions. Despite warfare continued, led by the chiefs of m army units who had no faith in the Fren of striking a deal with him. Leclerc's aim many of the black troops as possible an the army with a rank above that of resistance made it impossible for him to with good reason he suspected Toussain plotting insurrection. On June 6th transported to France.

On July Ist Napoleon wrote to Lecle black generals and deport them to September: 'without this we will have d and beautiful colony will be poised on a confidence in capitalists, colonists or c that he was now far too weak to take colony could only be held with the generals. Though Leclerc had received s had suffered heavy casualties: the seige à Pierrot, held by Dessalines's troops, h than 1,500 French troops. With the o began to take its toll. Meanwhile the Leclerc complained that the arrest of since there were 2,000 black chiefs w arrest. Leclerc himself succumbed to th November 2nd. In his last letters to Na position was being fatally undermine returned with him, many intent on re longed for the day when the full rigour

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from the forces commanded by Toussaint and Christophe in the North and Dessalines in the West. Toussaint now rediscovered his vocation as a revolutionary. He urged the destruction of all that could help the French and warned that they had come to restore slavery. He appealed directly to the cultivators of the North, arming them and advocating a guerrilla strategy. Toussaint's principal lieutenants, however, insisted on fighting a more conventional campaign and suffered a number of reverses. In the last days of April Christophe and Dessalines offered to come to terms with Leclerc on condition that they would retain their ranks and commands. Leclerc accepted this offer. In early May Toussaint also indicated a readiness to make peace with the new Governor General, on condition that he could retire to his estates with his personal guard and that his troops would be integrated with the Republican forces. Once again Leclerc was happy to agree, though he distrusted Toussaint's intentions. Despite these capitulations irregular warfare continued, led by the chiefs of maroon bands and of militia or army units who had no faith in the French commander or no prospect of striking a deal with him. Leclerc's aim was to disarm and disband as many of the black troops as possible and to leave no black officers in the army with a rank above that of captain. The continuation of resistance made it impossible for him to implement this plan. Probably with good reason he suspected Toussaint and other black generals of plotting insurrection. On June 6th Toussaint was arrested and transported to France.

On July Ist Napoleon wrote to Leclerc urging him to arrest all the black generals and deport them to France before the end of September: 'without this we will have done nothing, and an immense and beautiful colony will be poised on a volcano and fail to inspire any confidence in capitalists, colonists or commerce.'[46] Leclerc explained that he was now far too weak to take any such measure and that the colony could only be held with the assistance of the loyal black generals. Though Leclerc had received some reinforcements, his troops had suffered heavy casualties: the seige and capture of the fort at Crête à Pierrot, held by Dessalines's troops, had alone cost the lives of more than 1,500 French troops. With the onset of summer, yellow fever began to take its toll. Meanwhile the black resistance continued and Leclerc complained that the arrest of Toussaint counted for nothing, since there were 2,000 black chiefs whom it would be necessary to arrest. Leclerc himself succumbed to the fever in October and died on November 2nd. In his last letters to Napoleon he complained that his position was being fatally undermined. The white *colons* who had returned with him, many intent on reclaiming their former property, longed for the day when the full rigour of the old regime could again be

enforced, including both slavery and the caste system. The provocative behaviour of these white *colons*, and of the National Guards recruited from them, caused endless trouble with the mulatto and black troops. The French troops, drawn mainly from the Army of the Rhine, often displayed little sympathy for the colonial whites and sided with the coloured commanders. The memoirs of one Republican general recall the troubled silence that descended upon his troops when they heard the defenders of Crête à Pierrot singing French patriotic and revolutionary songs: 'In spite of the indignation that the black atrocities excited, these airs generally produced a painful feeling. Our soldiers looked at each other questioningly; they seemed to say: "Are our barbaric enemies in the right? Are we really the only soldiers of the Republic? Have we became servile political instruments?"'[47]

Leclerc repeatedly insisted that the French Republic would have scrupulous regard for the freedom of the former slaves in St Domingue, and to begin with he had been believed. In the summer of 1802 the arrest of Toussaint, and the arrival of news from France and the Windward Islands, began to destroy Leclerc's credibility on this key issue. The reincorporation of Martinique, where the slave plantations were intact, obliged the Consular regime to clarify the status of slavery in the French colonies. The result was the decree of Floréal An X (May 19th 1802), presented to the Tribunat with the preamble that it was necessary 'to ensure the good security of our neighbours'. The decree restored the legality of slavery and the slave trade in the French colonies; though no specific reference was made to St Domingue or Guadeloupe, it was explained that the competent colonial authorities would make provision for those who had been freed by revolutionary laws. The decree of Floréal was approved by 54 votes to 27 in the Tribunate and 211 votes to 63 in the Senate. The Legion of Honour was established on the same day by the Tribunate; in the previous week branding for criminals had been restored. Floréal effectively brought the first French Republic to an end: the plan for a plebiscite making Napoleon Consul for life was also devised at this time.[48]

The French attempt to reimpose slavery was first made in Guadeloupe. Victor Hugues had been replaced as Governor in February 1798 and forced to leave the colony in 1799. The regime he had established was preserved in its essentials by his immediate successors, who included Laveaux; the latter was arrested in March 1800. There were said to be over 1,000 estates farmed out to black cultivators; after the dismissal of Hugues an attempt was made to introduce a somewhat less regimented system of share-cropping (*colonat partiare*). The mass of black labourers of Guadeloupe did not acquire the robust independence of the ex-slaves of St Domingue; this was both because

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emancipation 'from above' had predominated and because the relatively small size of the island gave less scope to peasant cultivation and *maronnage*, two vital supports of black freedom in the larger colony. The Republican military establishment in Guadeloupe incorporated *gens de couleur* in the most senior positions, the mulatto General Magloire Pélage and the black general Louis Delgrès being notable amongst them. In 1801 Bonaparte sent Lacrosse, who had saved the Iles du Vent for the Republic in 1792, to prepare Guadeloupe for the Consulate's special colonial regime. Magloire Pélage quickly divined this threat and arrested Lacrosse on October 24th. Bonaparte thereupon dispatched a large force to the colony commanded by General Richepanse. Magloire Pélage came to terms with Richepanse in May, but Louis Delgrès opted for armed resistance. After a heroic last stand in the crater of the volcano Matouba Delgrès was killed and most of his followers overwhelmed. As soon as Richepanse received the decree of Floréal he decided to reintroduce slavery. No attempt was made to re-enslave black soldiers or *anciens libres* proprietors but labourers on the estates were generally returned to their former condition.[49]

To Leclerc's consternation news of the restoration of slavery in Guadeloupe reached St Domingue in July, demolishing the idea that the decree of Floréal was only applicable to Martinique and other territories where slavery had never been abolished. Leclerc complained to Paris that fear of the restoration of slavery was having a disastrous effect, stimulating the black revolt and undermining the loyalty of his black and mulatto commanders. Dessalines and Christophe had pitilessly repressed the rebels in the areas entrusted to them by the French Captain General. In August and September they began to hedge their bets, covertly assisting some rebel groups while vigorously eliminating potential rivals. In an effort to retain the loyalty of his black generals Leclerc sent Rigaud back to France. But the racism of the white colonial establishment had recreated the alliance between black and mulatto which had disappeared in the civil war of 1799. The black commanders, slighted by the French, were also profoundly aware of the depth of popular resistance to slavery and the caste regime. A decade of struggles had fused the pragmatic and the ideological dimensions of anti-slavery in the popular mentality. Intelligence of the restoration of slavery thus triggered the defence of quite specific rights and possessions; as for the *anciens libres* they sensed that their own civic status would be similarly degraded if black slavery was restored.

On October 13th–14th 1802 the most outstanding black and mulatto generals – Dessalines, Christophe, Clerveau and Pétion – simultaneously turned on the French, with regiments comprising some 6,000 disciplined and well-armed troops. Leclerc only just escaped

capture and the loss of Le Cap, where he lay on his death-bed. In November Rochambeau took over command of the French forces while a conference of the rebel generals appointed Dessalines as their commander-in-chief. Rochambeau now faced not only popular revolt but experienced and capable military formations. While the rebel bands had made the colony impossible to conquer their new alignment with the black demi-brigades meant that the French could be defeated. Relations between France and Britain were deteriorating rapidly as Napoleon threatened British positions in India and the Near East while the British refused to give up their bases in the Mediterranean, as had been agreed at Amiens. France's acquisition of Louisiana had aroused North American suspicions. The black rebels in St Domingue found it somewhat easier to acquire supplies from British or North American traders. In May 1803 war broke out again between Britain and France; good relations between France and the United States were rescued when Napoleon made over Louisiana to the American Republic. However, Napoleon had no intention of abandoning St Domingue and succeeded in sending 15,000 reinforcements to Rochambeau prior to the imposition of a British blockade on the island. The desperate French attempt to recover St Domingue involved the wholesale massacre of non-combatants and reached an exterminist pitch that foreshadowed the colonial wars of a later epoch. The wars that ravaged St Domingue had often been marked by the most atrocious blood-letting. The various conflicts that ranged royalists against Republicans, masters against slaves, whites against coloured, mulattos against blacks, invaders against invaded had rarely admitted the observance of any 'rules of war'. Toussaint, animated by a more constructive ideal, had been one of the few generals to give quarter to his enemies, though he did permit occasional atrocities against mulatto opponents. In one of his last letters to Napoleon Leclerc warned: 'Here is my opinion. You will have to exterminate all the blacks in the mountains, women as well as men, except for children under twelve. Wipe out half the population of the lowlands and do not leave in the colony a single black who has worn an epaulette.'[50] If Rochambeau, despite reinforcements, found execution of this baleful testament beyond him, it was not for want of trying.

The need at all costs to prevent escape by Toussaint, 'the man who has fanaticised this island', was another refrain of Leclerc's last letters. On April 17th 1803 Toussaint Louverture died in the icy dungeons of the Fortress of Joux in the Jura Mountains, after months of brutal and humiliating treatment. At a conference of the rebel generals held at about this time, it was decided no longer to fight under the tricolour. According to legend Dessalines held up the flag of the Republic and tore from it the white band; henceforth the rebels fought under a red and

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The French defeat in St Domingue
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blue standard on which the initials R.F. had been replaced by the motto 'Liberty or Death'. The French expedition and its avid retinue of white colonists managed to hold out a few months longer and even retained the collaboration of some black and mulatto soldiers. But the threat they represented of a full dress restoration of the colonial *ancien régime* reforged the alliance between the coloured army and the black cultivators, between *nouveaux libres* and *anciens libres*, between the blacks and the mulattos. The twin project of restoring slavery and destroying 'black government' foundered. On November 29th the British agreed to evacuate Rochambeau and his forces as prisoners of war; some 4,000 troops and as many civilians embarked at Le Cap for Jamaica. A French presence remained in the former Spanish half of the island but St Domingue was now entirely in rebel hands. Not until January 1st 1804, at the conclusion of another conference of rebel commanders, was the Republic of Haiti proclaimed. The name chosen for the new Republic was Amerindian rather than African or European. Dessalines was named as 'Governor General', a title chosen, perhaps, for its Louverturian echoes.

The French defeat in St Domingue made a powerful impact on contemporary opinion – especially in Britain as it again faced the prospect of a French invasion. Napoleon had sent some 35,000 French troops to St Domingue; about 20,000 had died of various sicknesses while 8,000 perished on the field of battle. Among those lost were Leclerc and eighteen other white generals. The losses amongst white and coloured auxiliaries at least doubled total losses on the French side, though sickness was not nearly so important a cause of death for the local forces.[51] The impact of the French defeat was all the greater since Napoleon had been free of other military distractions in the first eighteen months of the attempted reconquest. The costly lesson which had been learned by first the British and then the French was noted by all colonial and slaveholding powers. The British had sought to secure and extend their slaveholdings in the West Indies; instead they had lost some 60,000 men, expended sorely needed resources and consolidated the power of the emancipated slaves they had set out to crush. Napoleon's war against black government, and ignominious attempt to re-establish slavery, had provoked an unprecedented liberation struggle and had given birth to the new state of Haiti.

The defeat of the French made it easier for the British to register the significance of their own débâcle in St Domingue. The example and martyrdom of Toussaint was to become a source of inspiration to radical abolitionists, first in Britain, subsequently in France and the United States. The British press, which would have been happy to celebrate his execution in 1796, gave harrowing accounts of his

imprisonment and death. On February 3rd 1803 the *Morning Post* published Wordsworth's sonnet to Toussaint which ended:

> Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
> Live and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
> Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, skies;
> There's not a breath of the common wind
> That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
> Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
> And Love, and man's unconquerable mind.

If Wordsworth's tribute is taken to refer to the resistance of anonymous black masses, who fought on even when deserted by their leaders, then his invocation of their elemental and essential strength was very apt. Around the same time James Stephen, who was brother-in-law to Wilberforce, published a pamphlet entitled *The Opportunity or Reasons for an Immediate Alliance with St Domingo*, in which he urged the advantages of helping the rebels. Stephen was to be a leading light in the second wave of British abolitionism, which dates from this time: abolition of the slave trade regained a House of Commons majority in May 1804, leading, in circumstances to be considered in chapter 8, to the Act of 1807. But long before this the London government had rediscovered the advantages of discreet accommodation to the Revolution in St Domingue/Haiti.[52]

During the early stages of the war between France and Britain there were no engagements in Europe and a large French fleet was dispatched to Martinique. The British proved most unwilling to allow the West Indies to become a zone of hostilities, and long postponed any attacks on the remaining French islands. The West India regiment, formed from specially purchased Africans, played an important part in the defence of the British Caribbean. Neither the anti-French forces in St Domingue nor the new Republic of Haiti were accorded official recognition but both received some military supplies and some naval cover from the British. Without any necessity for a formal treaty of alliance Dessalines's *demi-brigades* were a formidable barrier to any new attempt to reconstruct the French Antilles.[53]

In the short run the defeat in St Domingue had little impact in France itself, where Napoleon had broken his opponents and was soon planning larger adventures. The *Amis des Noirs* had briefly flickered into existence in 1797–8 only to expire again. The elevation of Abbé Grégoire to the Senate in 1801 had been one of the last acts of independence by the legislature; he was to vote both against the decree of Floréal and against the establishment of the Empire, but to equally

little effect. Laveaux and Sonthonax had
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n thyself, never to rise again,
e comfort. Thou hast left behind
will work for thee; air, earth, skies;
a breath of the common wind
rget thee; thou hast great allies;
are exultations, agonies,
ınd man's unconquerable mind.

ɔute is taken to refer to the resistance of :s, who fought on even when deserted by their ion of their elemental and essential strength was ame time James Stephen, who was brother-in-lished a pamphlet entitled *The Opportunity or liate Alliance with St Domingo*, in which he helping the rebels. Stephen was to be a leading e of British abolitionism, which dates from this slave trade regained a House of Commons , leading, in circumstances to be considered in t of 1807. But long before this the London overed the advantages of discreet accommoda- in St Domingue/Haiti.[52]

ges of the war between France and Britain there n Europe and a large French fleet was dispatched itish proved most unwilling to allow the West ıe of hostilities, and long postponed any attacks :h islands. The West India regiment, formed from ricans, played an important part in the defence of

Neither the anti-French forces in St Domingue of Haiti were accorded official recognition but ıilitary supplies and some naval cover from the y necessity for a formal treaty of alliance ɜades were a formidable barrier to any new t the French Antilles.[53]

defeat in St Domingue had little impact in France on had broken his opponents and was soon ıtures. The *Amis des Noirs* had briefly flickered 7–8 only to expire again. The elevation of Abbé ate in 1801 had been one of the last acts of legislature; he was to vote both against the decree t the establishment of the Empire, but to equally

little effect. Laveaux and Sonthonax had moved into opposition to Bonaparte as First Consul, but both were suspect as Jacobins; Laveaux had been arrested for a time in December 1801 following the explosion of the 'infernal machine'. Colonel Vincent had been arrested after bringing Toussaint's Constitution to the First Consul; he warned of the dangers of invading St Domingue and was later exiled to Elba, where he was on hand to greet the Emperor in 1814. Victor Hugues secured appointment as Governor of French Guiana where he implemented the decree restoring slavery. Many of the French who remained in Haiti were slaughtered in a massacre on the aftermath of the declaration of independence. The only prominent French Republican to find refuge in Haiti was the Jacobin Terrorist Billaud–Varenne, Hugues's sponsor in 1794, who ended his days there in 1815–18. Malouet, the veteran *monarchien* who had helped to organise the British occupation of the French Antilles, became Louis XVIII's first Colonial Minister. Du Buc also became an ornament of the Restoration.

The Republic of Haiti set up in 1804 preserved a vital element of continuity with the St Domingue of Toussaint Louverture. Both outlawed slavery by express constitutional provision, both were led by an insecure new ruling class that united economic and military functions, and both expressed an aspiration to effective independence.

The death of slavery had been confirmed by the defeat of the French, as had the new status of the mass of Haitians who had made that defeat possible. All successor regimes sought to find ways of obliging the country dwellers to work. Many have been tempted to equate the stringent rural codes enacted by Toussaint, Dessalines and Henry Christophe with the slave condition under the old regime. Yet when offered the choice of a return to full chattel slavery, the labourers had always preferred to ally with their new masters against their old. Under the new labour regime the overseer's whip was banned; though other forms of coercion may have taken its place, this ban does seem to have been generally observed and generally welcomed. The fact that the new masters were black or brown while most of the old had been white does not adequately explain the seeming preferences of the mass of *nouveaux libres*. In the *ancien régime* the condition of the slave of a free black had never been regarded as enviable.

The new condition of the mass of labourers was freer than that of the slave in certain decisive respects. In the first place the writ of governments and landowners was from the outset very much less effective and complete, scarcely reaching to the mountain districts and often ignored even in the plains. The scale of the peasant rebellions and 'peasant republics' in nineteenth-century Haiti was to be qualitatively

greater than that of their eighteenth-century precursors, the maroons. Thus from 1807 to 1819 large areas of the South-west constituted an autonomous farmers' Republic led by the African former slave and maroon, Jean–Baptiste Duperrier, commonly known as Goman. Even within the regions of more settled administration the new authorities found it prudent to limit exploitation of the direct producers: too much pressure on them would undermine the basis of political power. Ultimately the army and police were recruited from the mass of peasants and labourers, whose disaffection would encourage military revolts, conspiracies and coups. Free-lance groups of armed peasants and labourers, known as *picquets* or *cacos*, were to play an important part in Haitian history.[54]

Militarism itself was certainly to be the bane of Haitian society, with armed forces totalling as many as 40,000 absorbing much of the social surplus and discouraging the diversification of commodity production. The Haitian peasants preferred subsistence cultivation to meet their own needs rather than cash crop cultivation, since the proceeds of the latter could be more readily appropriated by grasping landlords or military administrators. In the days of slavery the producers had been super-exploited to produce a vast export surplus; under the burdens of militarism and landlordism the Haitain peasant produced a far more modest surplus, but enjoyed a more autonomous existence. While the export trade languished, local markets, in which women played a major role, were quite vigorous.[55]

A significant index of the new condition of the mass of the population was to be a strong recovery in population levels during the first decades of independence. According to one contemporary estimate the population grew from 375,000 in 1800 to 935,000 in 1822.[56] While the precise figures may be questioned there was undoubtedly a sizeable increase in population over these decades. Haitian governments claimed to promote family life. While there was much diversity in family form, with polygamy being quite common, this offered qualitatively greater opportunities for child-rearing than the old slave order.

Despite the ambivalent role they had played in the struggle against France Toussaint's generals became the leaders of the new state, in uneasy collaboration with the mulatto leaders of the South and West. Dessalines declared himself Emperor in 1804, but this emulation of Napoleon was accompanied by a strongly anti-French orientation. The French, but not the British, were attacked for fostering slavery in the Caribbean. The massacre of remaining Frenchmen was followed in 1805 by an unsuccessful invasion of the still French-controlled Eastern half of the island. The British authorities did not officially condone

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Dessalines's bloodthirsty vendetta against the French, but it may have aimed to impress them as well as to exact vengeance. Many mulattos and *anciens libres* were not as hostile as Dessalines towards the French and were more suspicious of the British. Dessalines took over French estates as *domaines nationaux* and announced a plan to distribute small plots of land to veterans. Mulatto proprietors were alarmed at plans to confiscate estates which they claimed had been bequeathed to them by white kinsmen. Despite decrees imposing labour duties on the cultivators, the economy of the new state, weakened by war, official neglect and the slaughter of administrators, yielded few cash crops. A profligate and disorganised imperial Court absorbed what tax revenues were available, leaving the army unpaid. Following a Southern rebellion in 1806 the Emperor was assassinated.

After Dessalines's death Haiti was divided roughly in two, with Henry Christophe ruling the North and Alexandre Pétion the South. Christophe, who had been born in Grenada, pursued a pro-British policy. Alignment with Britain was undertaken as an insurance against the return of the French and in the hope of economic concessions. In 1808–9 Christophe backed a successful Spanish revolt against the French who still occupied the Eastern half of the island. While the North relied mainly on British traders, the South had its own merchants and hoped for good relations with the United States. In 1811 Christophe had himself crowned as King Henry I of Haiti, with court etiquette and regalia based on that of St James; apart from gratifying his own vanity the option for a kingdom was intended to demonstrate soundness to the British. Pétion in the South remained ostentatiously faithful to Republican forms, but he too was obliged to accommodate to Britain. Both states, in deference to British pressure, lowered duties on imports from Britain.

Under the terms of the Treaty of Paris in 1814 France was permitted to recover its New World colonies. Martinique and Guadeloupe were to be handed back with their plantations in quite a flourishing condition after years of British occupation. Since neither government in Haiti had been recognised by any power, there was an implication that France could reclaim 'St Domingue'. The negotiators were persuaded by Talleyrand that colonial concessions to France would make the restored monarchy more palatable to French opinion while tying up French energies at a safe distance from Europe. Plans laid for suborning and threatening the new leaders of Haiti, as a prelude to some new expedition, came to nothing. French overtures were indignantly rejected; King Henry arrested the envoy sent to him, published the secret instructions he carried and offered a joint resistance pact to Pétion. Though the French government retained a formal claim to

St Domingue, in 1815 it was recognised that recovering it *manu militari* would meet implacable and united opposition from the Haitian leaders and expose France to hostile opinion.

Neither Haitian state was recognised by any foreign government. Lacking any diplomatic recognition both the kingdom and the Republic were to cultivate relations with the leaders of anti-slavery in Europe. The French threat of 1814–15 had been thwarted in part because of an upsurge of abolitionist sentiment in Europe; in France itself the 'Hundred Days' had seen a decree against the slave trade while in Britain, as will be seen in chapter 8, this episode occasioned massive abolitionist protest. Subsequently King Henry engaged in a lengthy correspondence with Wilberforce and Clarkson, requesting their advice and help on diplomatic, economic and educational policy. President Pétion, and his successor Boyer, turned to the Abbé Grégoire for counsel and support.[57]

Both kingdom and Republic publicly renounced interference with the slave order elsewhere in the Americas. Nevertheless both found ways of lending some practical assistance to the struggle against colonial slavery. Christophe followed Dessalines in welcoming freedmen from North America, especially when they had skills that could assist the reconstruction of the country. Christophe's navy, built up as a weapon against the Southern Republic, was also used against slave-traders breaking the various bi-lateral treaties devised in the aftermath of the Congress of Vienna. Pétion in the South was to encourage Bolivar to adopt an emancipationist policy (about which more in chapter 9).

In the North King Henry maintained some enclaves of plantation production, using the *fermage* system and imposing stern labour regulations. The daily routine of the labourers on the large estates was, in principle, minutely regulated: after rising at 3 a.m. there were prayers and breakfast, followed by a morning stint in the fields from 4.30 to 8 a.m., a second stint from 9 a.m. to midday, a lunch-break until 2 p.m., followed by an afternoon shift until sundown, around 6 p.m., when they returned to their *cailles*. On Saturday's they would cultivate their garden plots; Sundays were a day of rest and, supposedly, worship. (Like Toussaint before him Christophe was a devout Christian and disapproved of voodoo.) The good discipline of Christophe's army and the high price of plantation produce allowed this policy to achieve some success and helped to finance the construction of a remarkable series of fortifications and palaces. Christophe's commanders were issued with telescopes; supposedly to be used both to spot invading fleets and to ensure that work proceeded in the fields. The economic successes of the royal state probably owed as much to state coordination of the economy as to intensive exploitation on the plantations. A number of

schools were founded and some attenti improvement. The foreign exchange earne was also used to buy male slaves of militar a strength of 4,000 the royal *Dahomets* h regime and the rule of King Henry. Henr by an internal revolt in 1820. Henry was weakened by Republican propaganda and and coffee; but the severity of the plantati have contributed to his isolation.[58]

The Republic of the South and W disciplined than the Northern kingdom. A and Jérome Borghella, the mulatto son of collaborated with Toussaint, set up bre president, showed great skill at contair without resort to armed force. In the Sout independent proprietory class, many of Pétion sought to strengthen the repub confiscated estates, and other public lan officials. In this way a medium and created. Retired soldiers received 5 *carrea* or 17 acres), colonels 25 *carreaux*. Du (1807–18) over 150,000 hectares of land than 10,000 persons. However, large est by tenant farmers. Following the overth was invaded by the South, now under the the royal treasury was found to conta £500,000. Sugar output collapsed, b important at around 20,000 tons annu major producer. The plantation system i overthrow of King Henry, so that th Republic as a whole was now based minifundia and tenant-worked latifundi

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schools were founded and some attention was paid to agricultural improvement. The foreign exchange earned by sales of sugar and coffee was also used to buy male slaves of military age from Dahomey; kept at a strength of 4,000 the royal *Dahomets* helped to maintain the labour regime and the rule of King Henry. Henry was eventually overthrown by an internal revolt in 1820. Henry was in bad health and his regime weakened by Republican propaganda and a decline in the price of sugar and coffee; but the severity of the plantation regime he established must have contributed to his isolation.[58]

The Republic of the South and West was less integrated and disciplined than the Northern kingdom. At different times both Rigaud and Jérome Borghella, the mulatto son of the French merchant who had collaborated with Toussaint, set up break-away statelets. Pétion, as president, showed great skill at containing such challenges, usually without resort to armed force. In the South and West there was a larger independent proprietory class, many of them *anciens libres*. In 1809 Pétion sought to strengthen the republican regime by dividing up confiscated estates, and other public lands, among soldiers and public officials. In this way a medium and small-holding peasantry was created. Retired soldiers received 5 *carreaux* of land (about 6.5 hectares or 17 acres), colonels 25 *carreaux*. During the presidency of Pétion (1807–18) over 150,000 hectares of land were granted or sold to more than 10,000 persons. However, large estates survived and were worked by tenant farmers. Following the overthrow of King Henry the North was invaded by the South, now under the leadership of President Boyer; the royal treasury was found to contain 13 million *livres*, roughly £500,000. Sugar output collapsed, but coffee exports remained important at around 20,000 tons annually; enough to make Haiti a major producer. The plantation system in the North did not survive the overthrow of King Henry, so that the agricultural system of the Republic as a whole was now based on a combination of peasant minifundia and tenant-worked latifundia.[59]

The precarious survival of Haitian independence was a thorn in the flesh of the slave order throughout the western hemisphere. The overturn in St Domingue and the consolidation of black power in Haiti had a terrible message for the slave order throughout the Americas. Black rebels in Cuba in 1812 , in the United States in 1820, in Jamaica and Brazil in the 1820s, found inspiration in Haiti. British, French and North American abolitionists all wrote books about Toussaint Louverture and the drama of the Haitian revolution. The example of St Domingue lived on in the fears of planters and colonial authorities. As we will see British emancipation, the options of the Cuban and Brazilian planters, the waning of the slave systems on the smaller

Caribbean islands and the growth of more secure systems on the mainland and in Cuba, were all to reflect the impact of the first liberation in St Domingue.

The chain of colonial slavery in the Americas had broken at what had been, in 1789, its strongest link. The Revolution had succeeded in St Domingue/Haiti for a combination of reasons: the massive numerical preponderance of slaves, some of them 'raw Africans' unused to American slavery, others creoles with new capacities formed by the plantation regime itself; the emergence of a slave elite, with some freedom of movement; the presence of a large free coloured community, with property and military experience; the disintegration of the mechanisms of slave control, as the metropolitan Revolution spilled back into the colonies, and as different factions of the free population fought with one another and armed slaves to further their own ends; the willingness of the metropolis to defend colonialism by jettisoning caste discrimination; the remarkable explosion of slave revolt in August 1791; the size and situation of the colony, facilitating the survival and spread of slave resistance and rebellion; the tenacity of the mass of blacks in pushing back planter power and defending their newly won freedom; the decision of the Jacobin Commissioners to ally with the slave resistance and build an emancipationist power; the diplomatic and military help of the Directory in resistance to royalist planters and the British occupation; the interplay of imperial and commercial rivalries opening up space for an emancipationist black state; two expeditions, mounted by the leading powers of the age, radicalising the Revolution they had been designed to crush.

In 1794 the message of revolutionary slave emancipation in St Domingue had been carried to France and from France it had been carried back across the Atlantic to the Lesser Antilles. The Iles du Vent lacked some of the crucial circumstances that favoured revolution in St Domingue. In these islands even quite intense factional struggles between Patriots and royalists had not involved the slaves. The free people of colour were less numerous. Planter hegemony had proved resilient, helped by the more manageable size of the islands, the skilful tactics of Du Buc, the intervention of the British and the deficient revolutionary initiative of the French representatives there. Prior to the arrival of Hugues in April 1794 neither intense Republican celebration of liberty and equality, nor the threat of British occupation, had produced any major challenge to slavery. The Jacobin expedition overthrew slavery and repulsed the British in Guadeloupe and stimulated Republican emancipationism in many parts of the Lesser Antilles and wider Caribbean. But both the manner of liberation in

Guadeloupe and the size of the colony made vulnerable than in St Domingue. Just as strugg distracted the British in the mid-1790s, to St Domingue revolution, so in 1802 the resista alert coloured officers in the larger colony intentions.

Sometimes historians have written as if the regime by itself propelled the slaves to freedon that the revolutionary agents in the Caribbea decree emancipation. The conduct of Rochami Lesser Antilles in February 1794 showed othe slavery required conscious and dedicated favourable conditions. Without the emergenc 1793–4, and their alliance with revolutiona emancipation would not have been consolida aspiration of the black masses for autonomy a generalising politics and programme, or what tuously to refer to as 'ideology'. The revolu and egalitarianism of the 1790s was adopted f an enduring ideology. One of Napoleon's grav he set out to reconquer St Domingue and re-e underestimate the extent to which liberty and religion of the formerly enslaved, and even m Part of the grandeur of the great French Rev sponsor slave emancipation in the Americas; of the great Revolution in St Domingue/Ha defended the gains of the French Revolution ag

But to say this is not to argue for som discourse, revolutionary or otherwise, with liberation unfolded. The message of black aut in a variety of idioms – French, or *Kréyole* or and with a variety of political or religio Republican, Catholic, voodoo – so long a broken. At a number of crucial junctures the the black fighters was constituted not by wh their physical impact on the structures of op enabling the mass of slaves to discover an identity *vis-à-vis* their oppressors and exploi essential message of black autonomy was sust partisans, of diverse allegiance and formatio to the old order, whether justified in te monarchy, patriotism or personal advantage leaders had collaborated with Leclerc yet he

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Guadeloupe and the size of the colony made this achievement more vulnerable than in St Domingue. Just as struggles in the Lesser Antilles distracted the British in the mid-1790s, to the advantage of the St Domingue revolution, so in 1802 the resistance of Delgrès helped to alert coloured officers in the larger colony as to Napoleon's real intentions.

Sometimes historians have written as if the collapse of the colonial regime by itself propelled the slaves to freedom, or they have suggested that the revolutionary agents in the Caribbean had no choice but to decree emancipation. The conduct of Rochambeau and Lacrosse in the Lesser Antilles in February 1794 showed otherwise. The overthrow of slavery required conscious and dedicated protagonists as well as favourable conditions. Without the emergence of 'Black Jacobins' in 1793–4, and their alliance with revolutionary France, a generalised emancipation would not have been consolidated in St Domingue. The aspiration of the black masses for autonomy and living space required a generalising politics and programme, or what Napoleon was contemptuously to refer to as 'ideology'. The revolutionary emancipationism and egalitarianism of the 1790s was adopted for that reason and proved an enduring ideology. One of Napoleon's gravest miscalculations, when he set out to reconquer St Domingue and re-enslave the blacks, was to underestimate the extent to which liberty and equality had become the religion of the formerly enslaved, and even most of the *anciens libres*. Part of the grandeur of the great French Revolution is that it came to sponsor slave emancipation in the Americas; and part of the grandeur of the great Revolution in St Domingue/Haiti is that it successfully defended the gains of the French Revolution against France itself.[60]

But to say this is not to argue for some self-sufficient realm of discourse, revolutionary or otherwise, within which the drama of liberation unfolded. The message of black autonomy might be conveyed in a variety of idioms – French, or *Kréyole* or some African language – and with a variety of political or religious inflexions – royalist, Republican, Catholic, voodoo – so long as slaveholder power was broken. At a number of crucial junctures the meaning of the action of the black fighters was constituted not by what they had to say but by their physical impact on the structures of oppression and exploitation, enabling the mass of slaves to discover and assert a new collective identity *vis-à-vis* their oppressors and exploiters. From the outset the essential message of black autonomy was sustained by a myriad of local partisans, of diverse allegiance and formation, who resisted any return to the old order, whether justified in terms of republicanism or monarchy, patriotism or personal advantage. In 1802 all the famous leaders had collaborated with Leclerc yet he had still been opposed. It

might be thought that Haitian resistance to Napoleon was sustained by nationalism, just as Spanish or Russian nationalism helped to inspire resistance to French occupation. Yet the very name of Haiti was not thought of until the French were already defeated – and no sooner had the new state been founded than it splintered. So it does seem reasonable to postulate some prior, more basic identity emerging from, and defined by, resistance to the slave condition and articulated by a multitude of local associations and popular memories. After all the Haitian Revolution had involved more profound upheavals and mobilisations than even the French Revolution itself. Black emancipationism was a product of the whole extraordinary experience of the decade and a half following the revolt of 1791. In the case of St Domingue the break with slavery furnished the indispensable basis for the break with colonialism. Black emancipationism was something deeper and more constant than a febrile tropical patriotism. It thus long pre-dated the declaration of independence and ensured that independence had an emancipationist content. Haiti was not the first independent American state but it was the first to guarantee civic liberty to all inhabitants.

Notes

1. For the situation of the Republicans in mid-1793 see Geggus, *Slavery, War and Revolution*, pp. 64, 100–101.

2. Stein, *Léger Félicité Sonthonax*, pp. 75, 95. Sonthonax's original instructions, while giving him extensive powers, expressly stated: 'It is unnecessary to remind you that the equality of rights extended to the men of colour and the blacks must not suffer any extention.' Monge, Minister for the Colonies, August 25th 1792, quoted in Saintoyant, *La Colonisation Française pendant la Révolution*, II, p. 118. Stein's account makes it clear that Sonthonax was writing to Paris urging general emancipation from February 1793. From this date he granted many piecemeal manumissions; from May he ordered the protective clauses of the regulations of 1784 to be read out every Sunday in the churches. Following the June decree he extended freedom to the womenfolk of the black warriors, so long as they were prepared to go through a Republican marriage ceremony. The Navy Minister and the Convention widened the powers available to the Commission in March 1793 and were probably aware of the use that might be made of them.

3. Stein, *Léger Félicité Sonthonax*, pp. 76–106; Thomas Ott, *The Haitian Revolution, 1789–1803*, Knoxville 1973, p. 71.

4. Pluchon, *Toussaint Louverture*, pp. 17–19. While the course of events in the North was to prove decisive, both Toussaint and Sonthonax were aware of smouldering rebellions elsewhere and of forms of resistance short of outright rebellion: see Carolyn Fick, 'Black Peasants and Soldiers in the Saint Domingue Revolution: Initial Reactions to Freedom in the South Province (1793–4)', in Frederick Krantz, ed., *History from Below*, Montréal 1985, pp. 243–60.

5. Quoted in James, *The Black Jacobins*, p. 125. Toussaint was responding to Sonthonax's action in freeing slaves since he had issued a proclamation to the slaves dated August 25th which declared: 'Having been the first to champion your cause, it is my duty to continue to labour for it. I cannot permit another to rob me of the initiative. Since I have begun I will know how to conclude. Join me and you will enjoy the rights of

freedmen sooner than any other way.' Quoted in *T*
Tyson, Jr., Englewood Cliffs, NJ 1973, p. 27. As a
most offer freedom to those who enlisted with him, t
this authority to its limit.

6. Geggus, *Slavery, War and Revolution*, pp. 10.
7. Pérotin–Dumon, *Etre Patriote sous les Tropiq*
8. Polverel's summary quoted in Pluchon, *Touss*
9. Geggus, *Slavery, War and Revolution*, pp. 11
10. David Geggus , 'From His Most Catholic Maje
Volte Face of Toussaint Louverture and the Ending of
Française d'Histoire d'Outre Mer, 241, 1978, pp. 481
had early news of the National Convention's decree
fact that he was in the vicinity of the port of Gonaiv

11. For social pressures on the Jacobins see D.M.
Revolution and Counter-Revolution, London 1985,
tionary Europe, 1783–1815, London 1970, pp. 139–
pp. 313–34. Rousseau's writings came closest to arti
popular egalitarianism. The writings of the Abbé Bo
direction: for example his *Doutes Proposés aux Philo*
Observations on the Government and Laws of the
celebration of equality and natural liberty in *Le Testa*
early eighteenth century but not fully published u
circulated in manuscript; the point is not so much
that he reflected in heightened form a radical tradit
clergy and other 'organic intellectuals' of the peas
revolutionary period the proto-socialist current be
Sylvain Maréchal's *Manifeste des Égaux*; this secular
assisted the generalisation of egalitarian principles t
were not necessarily members of the Christian religi

12. Forrest, *Society and Politics in Revolutionar*

13. Soboul, *The French Revolution*, pp. 369–
critical moment through which the Revolution an
Histoire Socialiste de la Révolution Française, I, p
voies nouvelles pour l'histoire politique de la Revol
de la Révolution Française, vol. 47, no. 219, Janu
Class Ideology and the Rights of the Nobles during
Like all fundamental political crises that of the
condensed a wide range of social issues and conflicts
a real issue at stake and an unparallelled source
Higonnet stresses anti-nobilism, a contrasting emph
Revolution is found in Immanuel Wallerstein's fortl
the emergence of a world system. In fact French a
confluence of anti-nobilism, anti-absolutism and an
Wallerstein neglect anti-absolutism, with its aspira
concept of sovereignty, since they deny that the *anc*
apparatus.

14. Augustin Cochin, *L'Abolition de l'Esclava*
Stein, *Léger Félicité Sonthonax*, pp. 110–11; see als
in *La Révolution Française et l'Abolition de l'Escla*
the reflexes of a moderate nineteenth-century ab
dared nothing, the Legislative could do nothing, the

15. *Le Moniteur Universel*, 17, 18 Pluviôse, A
Danton's role in promoting emancipation was to
irresponsibility and treachery. The factional purpo
the emancipation was, nevertheless, pursued.

16. P.G. Chaumette, 'Discours sur l'abolition d
et l'Abolition de l'Esclavage, XII. For a strategic

ian resistance to Napoleon was sustained by
sh or Russian nationalism helped to inspire
nation. Yet the very name of Haiti was not
n were already defeated – and no sooner had
nded than it splintered. So it does seem
me prior, more basic identity emerging from,
to the slave condition and articulated by a
ations and popular memories. After all the
involved more profound upheavals and
ne French Revolution itself. Black emancipa-
f the whole extraordinary experience of the
wing the revolt of 1791. In the case of
ith slavery furnished the indispensable basis
alism. Black emancipationism was something
than a febrile tropical patriotism. It thus long
of independence and ensured that indepen-
ationist content. Haiti was not the first
te but it was the first to guarantee civic liberty

Republicans in mid-1793 see Geggus, *Slavery, War and*

nthonax, pp. 75, 95. Sonthonax's original instructions,
rs, expressly stated: 'It is unnecessary to remind you that
o the men of colour and the blacks must not suffer any
the Colonies, August 25th 1792, quoted in Saintoyant,
nt la Révolution, II, p. 118. Stein's account makes it clear
Paris urging general emancipation from February 1793.
ny piecemeal manumissions; from May he ordered the
ons of 1784 to be read out every Sunday in the churches.
tended freedom to the womenfolk of the black warriors,
go through a Republican marriage ceremony. The Navy
dened the powers available to the Commission in March
of the use that might be made of them.
Sonthonax, pp. 76–106; Thomas Ott, *The Haitian*
ille 1973, p. 71.
verture, pp. 17–19. While the course of events in the
oth Toussaint and Sonthonax were aware of smouldering
ms of resistance short of outright rebellion: see Carolyn
rs in the Saint Domingue Revolution: Initial Reactions to
(1793–4)', in Frederick Krantz, ed., *History from Below*,

Black Jacobins, p. 125. Toussaint was responding to
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aving been the first to champion your cause, it is my duty
annot permit another to rob me of the initiative. Since I
to conclude. Join me and you will enjoy the rights of

freedmen sooner than any other way.' Quoted in *Toussaint L'Ouverture*, ed. George Tyson, Jr., Englewood Cliffs, NJ 1973, p. 27. As a Spanish officer Toussaint could at most offer freedom to those who enlisted with him, though evidently he sought to press this authority to its limit.

6. Geggus, *Slavery, War and Revolution*, pp. 105–14.
7. Pérotin–Dumon, *Etre Patriote sous les Tropiques*, pp. 216–20.
8. Polverel's summary quoted in Pluchon, *Toussaint Louverture*, p. 44.
9. Geggus, *Slavery, War and Revolution*, pp. 116, 304.
10. David Geggus , 'From His Most Catholic Majesty to the Godless Republique: The Volte Face of Toussaint Louverture and the Ending of Slavery in Saint Domingue', *Revue Française d'Histoire d'Outre Mer*, 241, 1978, pp. 481–99. The possibility that Toussaint had early news of the National Convention's decree on emancipation is increased by the fact that he was in the vicinity of the port of Gonaives in April and May.
11. For social pressures on the Jacobins see D.M.G. Sutherland, *France 1789–1815: Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, London 1985, pp. 129–44; George Rudé, *Revolutionary Europe, 1783–1815*, London 1970, pp. 139–54; Soboul, *The French Revolution*, pp. 313–34. Rousseau's writings came closest to articulating the radical undercurrent of popular egalitarianism. The writings of the Abbé Bonnot de Mably also tended in this direction: for example his *Doutes Proposés aux Philosophes Economistes* of 1768 and his *Observations on the Government and Laws of the United States* (London 1790). The celebration of equality and natural liberty in *Le Testament* of Jean Meslier, written in the early eighteenth century but not fully published until the nineteenth, is said to have circulated in manuscript; the point is not so much that Meslier exercised 'influence' as that he reflected in heightened form a radical tradition to be found amongst the lower clergy and other 'organic intellectuals' of the peasantry and small producers. By the revolutionary period the proto-socialist current begins to assume secular forms as in Sylvain Maréchal's *Manifeste des Égaux*; this secularisation of popular politics may have assisted the generalisation of egalitarian principles to those, such as African slaves, who were not necessarily members of the Christian religious community.
12. Forrest, *Society and Politics in Revolutionary Bordeaux*, pp. 28–9, 42, 57.
13. Soboul, *The French Revolution*, pp. 369–70. For rival interpretations of the critical moment through which the Revolution and Republic was passing see Jaurès, *Histoire Socialiste de la Révolution Française*, I, p. 247; Claude Mazauric, 'Quelques voies nouvelles pour l'histoire politique de la Revolution française', *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française*, vol. 47, no. 219, January–March 1975, p. 157; Higonnet, *Class Ideology and the Rights of the Nobles during the French Revolution*, pp. 170–218. Like all fundamental political crises that of the Jacobin Republic concentrated and condensed a wide range of social issues and conflicts; colonial slavery was simultaneously a real issue at stake and an unparallelled source of symbolic representations. While Higonnet stresses anti-nobilism, a contrasting emphasis on anti-capitalist elements in the Revolution is found in Immanuel Wallerstein's forthcoming third volume in his study of the emergence of a world system. In fact French anti-slavery was made possible by the *confluence* of anti-nobilism, anti-absolutism and anti-capitalism. However, Higonnet and Wallerstein neglect anti-absolutism, with its aspiration to a new and more far-reaching concept of sovereignty, since they deny that the *ancien régime* was at root a feudal power apparatus.
14. Augustin Cochin, *L'Abolition de l'Esclavage*, Paris 1861, 2 vols, I, pp. 13–15; Stein, *Légér Félicité Sonthonax*, pp. 110–11; see also *Decret de la Convention Nationale*, in *La Révolution Française et l'Abolition de l'Esclavage*, Paris 1968, XVII. Cochin, with the reflexes of a moderate nineteenth-century abolitionist, comments: 'The Assembly dared nothing, the Legislative could do nothing, the Convention risked everything' (p. 7).
15. *Le Moniteur Universel*, 17, 18 Pluviôse, An II, nos. 137, 138, February 1794. Danton's role in promoting emancipation was to bring down on him the charges of irresponsibility and treachery. The factional purpose of such charges was revealed when the emancipation was, nevertheless, pursued.
16. P.G. Chaumette, 'Discours sur l'abolition de l'esclavage', *La Révolution Française et l'Abolition de l'Esclavage*, XII. For a strategic and principled defence of the Pluviôse

decree see also the article from the *Creole Patriote* published in Paris on Pluviôse 28 and reprinted in Yves Benot, *La Révolution et la fin des colonies*, Paris 1987, pp. 249–52. Yves Benot points out that Sonthonax, Chaumette and Sylvain Maréchal all wrote for *Les Révolutions de Paris* in 1791–2 (pp. 125–7).

17. Oruno Lara, *La Guadeloupe dans l'Histoire*, pp. 94–107. This work by an early twentieth-century historian from Guadeloupe gives a rather positive assessment of the emancipationist regime in the colony; a longer and more hostile account will be found in the biography by a French naval historian: Ste Croix de la Roncière, *Victor Hughes, le Conventionnel*, Paris 1932, p. 111–70. (The title here gives a variant spelling of Hugues's name.) The prior Republican education of Guadeloupe did something to prepare the way for Hugues's revolutionary war, despite its pro-slavery commitment, Pérotin–Dumon, *Êtres Patriotes sous les Tropiques*, pp. 231–46. The exploits of Victor Hugues are the subject of Alejo Carpentier's novel, *El Siglo de las Luces*; however, the latter relied on Roncière and should not be taken as historically accurate on all points: see the contribution by Françoise Treil–Labarre in J. Baldran *et al.*, *Quinze Études au Tour de 'El Siglo de las Luces' de Alejo Carpentier*, Paris 1983. The impact of Hugues's expedition on the British is recounted in Michael Duffy, *Soldiers, Sugar and Seapower*, Oxford 1987, pp. 115–36.

18. For the revolts in Grenada and St Vincent see Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains*, pp. 180–94; and Duffy, *Soldiers, Sugar and Seapower*, pp. 137–56.

19. *Rapport fait, au nom de comité de salut public, sur la Guadeloupe et autres Iles de Vent*, Defermond, Paris An III, p. 5. Given the considerable military significance and social interest of Republican emancipation in Guadeloupe it is surprising that it has not attracted more attention. See, for example, the surprising mistake in Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans*, p. 118, who appears to believe that emancipation never reached Guadeloupe. The abolition of night-work in the mills, a major gain for the labourers, is confirmed by the otherwise hostile account of M.A. Lacour for whom the Republican regime embodied 'neither slavery nor freedom but disorder' in which 'insolent' blacks abused official tolerance; Lacour, *Histoire de la Guadeloupe*, Basse Terre 1858, pp. 384–9.

20. James, *The Black Jacobins*, pp. 163–73; Pluchon, *Toussaint Louverture*, pp. 56–64; Geggus, *Slavery, War and Revolution*, p. 185.

21. Stein, *Léger Félicité Sonthonax*, pp. 107–20.

22. Marc Bouloiseau, *La République Jacobine, 10 Août 1792–9 Thermidor An II*, Paris 1972, p. 78.

23. Quoted in Geggus, *Slavery, War and Revolution*, p. 191.

24. The British officer is quoted by R.G. Buckley, *Slaves in Red Coats: the British West India Regiments, 1795–1815*, New Haven and London 1979, p. 90.

25. General Moore is quoted by Craton, *Testing the Chains*, p. 198.

26. Buckley, *Slaves in Red Coats*, pp. 25–8, 82–105; Craton, *Testing the Chains*, pp. 211–23.

27. Oruno Lara, *La Guadeloupe dans l'Histoire*, p. 100; Geggus, *Slavery, War and Revolution*, p. 196.

28. Pluchon, *Toussaint Louverture*, p. 75.

29. Stein, *Léger Félicité Sonthonax*, p. 135.

30. For the new social order in the colony and the policies of the Commissioners see Stein, *Léger Félicité Sonthonax*, pp. 123–55; Carolyn Fick, 'Black Peasants and Soldiers in Saint Domingue', in Krantz, *History from Below*, pp. 243–61; James, *The Black Jacobins*, pp. 155–6, 174–6, 218–20; Pluchon, *Toussaint Louverture*, pp. 72–5; Ott, *The Haitian Revolution*, pp. 129–31; Fouchard, *The Haitian Maroons*, pp. 358–9.

31. Roger Norman Buckley, ed., *The Haitian Journal of Lieutenant Howard*, Knoxville 1985, p. xvii–xviii.

32. Sidney Mintz, *Caribbean Transformations*, Chicago 1974, pp. 146–56.

33. See James's observations on this topic, *The Black Jacobins*, pp. 85–6.

34. See the remarks of the British Agent in Tyson, *Toussaint L'Ouverture*, p. 91; Geggus, *Slavery, War and Revolution*, p. 287.

35. James, *The Black Jacobins*, p. 193.

36. Toussaint's letter is given in Tyson, *Tousse* was here replying to Rochambeau's statement, wh necessary to fight to make them (that is the blacks his French critics, and warning to the Directory lacking from his laboured attempt to justify his att pp. 46–9. For an account sympathetic to Sonthon pp. 156–73.

37. Geggus, *Slavery, War and Revolution*, pp. of Pitt's Caribbean Campaigns, 1793–1798', *Histo* 699–706. The figure given above includes as casu discharged as unfit for service; it includes sailors a British casualties so defined totalled 55,670, to wh losses among foreign auxiliary forces, probably F enormous sum of £16–20 million (p. 705). Fo calculates much higher British casualties – 87,00 the Caribbean, Duffy, *Soldiers, Sugar and Seapo*

38. Robert Debs Heinl Jr. and Nancy Gordon *the Haitian People*, Boston 1978, p. 96.

39. Heinl and Heinl, *Written in Blood*, p. 95

40. Ott, *The Haitian Revolution*, pp. 127–38; Mats Lundhall, 'Toussaint L'Ouverture and th *Slavery and Abolition*, vol. 6, no. 4, 1985, pp. 1

41. Pluchon, *Toussaint Louverture*, pp. 18–9

42. Heinl and Heinl, *Written in Blood*, pp. 9

43. Pluchon, *Toussaint Louverture*, pp. 292–

44. Tyson, ed., *Toussaint L'Ouverture*, p. 8 *States of America during the First Administration* pp. 391–2.

45. The text of the decree is printed in Tyson also the discussion in James, *The Black Jacobins* that around this time *livrets* were being introduc a check to vagabonds.

46. Quoted in Pluchon, *Toussaint Louvertur* from Bonaparte were to proceed in three stag exacting: negotiate with Toussaint, offer him ar become more exacting. . . . In the first phase con the last phase send them all to France . . . ship c conduct, patriotism or past services. . . . No matt disarm all *noirs*. . .' (quoted in Heinl and Heinl,

47. Pamphile de Lacroix, *Memoires*, vol. *Revolution*, p. 257.

48. Cochin, *L'Abolition de l'Esclavage*, pp. *Republic, 1792–1804*, London 1974, p. 280.

49. Oruno Lara, *La Guadeloupe dans l'Hist*

50. Quoted in Heinl and Heinl, *Written in*

51. A further 8,000 French sailors also lost t Pamphile Lacroix estimated that there had been forces, black and white, military and civilian (Both the British and the French lost more so Waterloo.

52. David Geggus, 'British Opinion and the *and British Society*, especially pp. 140–49.

53 Heinl and Heinl, *Written in Blood*, p. 1

54. David Nicholls, 'Rural protest and F *Context: Ethnicity, Economy and Revolt*, pp. 170–74.

55. For the formation of a Haitian peasan

he *Creole Patriote* published in Paris on Pluviôse 28 and
volution et la fin des colonies, Paris 1987, pp. 249–52.
ıonax, Chaumette and Sylvain Maréchal all wrote for *Les*
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ıentier, Paris 1983. The impact of Hugues's expedition on
ıael Duffy, *Soldiers, Sugar and Seapower*, Oxford 1987,

la and St Vincent see Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains*,
s, *Sugar and Seapower*, pp. 137–56.
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thonax, pp. 107–20.
épublique Jacobine, 10 Août 1792–9 Thermidor An II,

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15, New Haven and London 1979, p. 90.
d by Craton, *Testing the Chains*, p. 198.
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erture, p. 75.
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ory from Below, pp. 243–61; James, *The Black Jacobins*,
hon, *Toussaint Louverture*, pp. 72–5; Ott, *The Haitian*
rd, *The Haitian Maroons*, pp. 358–9.
, ed., *The Haitian Journal of Lieutenant Howard*,

Transformations, Chicago 1974, pp. 146–56.
on this topic, *The Black Jacobins*, pp. 85–6.
British Agent in Tyson, *Toussaint L'Ouverture*, p. 91;
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ns, p. 193.

36. Toussaint's letter is given in Tyson, *Toussaint L'Ouverture*, pp. 36–43. Toussaint was here replying to Rochambeau's statement, which he quoted, that 'one day it will be necessary to fight to make them (that is the blacks) return to work'. Toussaint's replies to his French critics, and warning to the Directory, has a vigour and directness entirely lacking from his laboured attempt to justify his attacks on Sonthonax, given by Tyson on pp. 46–9. For an account sympathetic to Sonthonax see Stein, *Léger Félicité Sonthonax*, pp. 156–73.

37. Geggus, *Slavery, War and Revolution*, pp. 212–13, 383; David Geggus, 'The Cost of Pitt's Caribbean Campaigns, 1793–1798', *Historical Journal*, vol. 26, no. 3, 1983, pp. 699–706. The figure given above includes as casualties those who died, deserted or were discharged as unfit for service; it includes sailors as well as soldiers. Geggus calculates that British casualties so defined totalled 55,670, to which must be added a further 3,500 or so losses among foreign auxiliary forces, probably French royalists. The campaigns cost the enormous sum of £16–20 million (p. 705). For the longer period 1793–1801 Duffy calculates much higher British casualties – 87,000–97,000, with at least 64,000 dead in the Caribbean, Duffy, *Soldiers, Sugar and Seapower*, pp. 333–4.

38. Robert Debs Heinl Jr. and Nancy Gordon Heinl, *Written in Blood: The Story of the Haitian People*, Boston 1978, p. 96.

39. Heinl and Heinl, *Written in Blood*, p. 95.

40. Ott, *The Haitian Revolution*, pp. 127–38; Pluchon, *Toussaint Louverture*, p. 279; Mats Lundhall, 'Toussaint L'Ouverture and the War Economy of Saint Domingue', *Slavery and Abolition*, vol. 6, no. 4, 1985, pp. 122–38.

41. Pluchon, *Toussaint Louverture*, pp. 18–9, 220–50.

42. Heinl and Heinl, *Written in Blood*, pp. 96–7.

43. Pluchon, *Toussaint Louverture*, pp. 292–9.

44. Tyson, ed., *Toussaint L'Ouverture*, p. 88; Henry Adams, *History of the United States of America during the First Administration of Thomas Jefferson*, New York 1962, pp. 391–2.

45. The text of the decree is printed in Tyson, *Toussaint L'Ouverture*, pp. 59–64; see also the discussion in James, *The Black Jacobins*, p. 279 *et seq.* It is interesting to note that around this time *livrets* were being introduced in France too as a security device and a check to vagabonds.

46. Quoted in Pluchon, *Toussaint Louverture*, p. 346. Leclerc's original instructions from Bonaparte were to proceed in three stages: 'In the first phase you will not be exacting: negotiate with Toussaint, offer him anything he asks. . . . This done you will become more exacting. . . . In the first phase confirm them in their rank and position. In the last phase send them all to France . . . ship out all black generals, regardless of their conduct, patriotism or past services. . . . No matter what happens, during the third phase disarm all *noirs*. . .' (quoted in Heinl and Heinl, *Written in Blood*, pp. 100–101).

47. Pamphile de Lacroix, *Memoires*, vol. II, p. 164; quoted in Ott, *The Haitian Revolution*, p. 257.

48. Cochin, *L'Abolition de l'Esclavage*, pp. 22–3; M.J. Sydenham, *The First French Republic, 1792–1804*, London 1974, p. 280.

49. Oruno Lara, *La Guadeloupe dans l'Histoire*, pp. 109–30.

50. Quoted in Heinl and Heinl, *Written in Blood*, p. 113.

51. A further 8,000 French sailors also lost their life from the fighting or from disease. Pamphile Lacroix estimated that there had been 62,481 fatalities among the pro-French forces, black and white, military and civilian (Pluchon, *Toussaint Louverture*, p. 385). Both the British and the French lost more soldiers in St Domingue than they did at Waterloo.

52. David Geggus, 'British Opinion and the Emergence of Haiti', in Walvin, *Slavery and British Society*, especially pp. 140–49.

53 Heinl and Heinl, *Written in Blood*, p. 123–37.

54. David Nicholls, 'Rural protest and Peasant Revolt', in *Haiti in Caribbean Context: Ethnicity, Economy and Revolt*, London 1985, pp. 167–84, especially pp. 170–74.

55. For the formation of a Haitian peasantry in the early independence period see

Paul Moral, *Le Paysan Haitien*, Paris 1961, pp. 34–45.

56. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, London 1828, p. 331. A recent writer estimates that the population of Haiti grew from circa 400,000 in 1804 to circa 600,000 in 1824. See Mats Lundhal, *Peasants and Poverty: A Study of Haiti*, London 1979, p. 190.

57. Ruth Necheles, *The Abbé Grégoire, 1787–1831*, Westport, Conn. 1971, pp. 253–89.

58. Hubert Cole, *Christophe, King of Haiti*, London 1967.

59. Nicholls, 'Economic Dependence and Political Autonomy, 1804–1915', in *Haiti in Caribbean Context*, pp. 83–120, especially p. 93. For a socio-political sketch of both monarchy and Republic see also David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour and National Independence in Haiti*, Cambridge 1979, pp. 35–60. More material on the kingdom will be found in Cole, *Christophe, King of Haiti*, and on the Republic in Hennock Trouillot, 'La République de Pétion et le Peuple Haïtien', *Revue de la Societé Haïtienne d'Histoire*, vol. 31, no. 107, January–April 1960, pp. 96–115.

60. These points are underlined by the survival of slavery in the French Indian Ocean island of Réunion and also in the Dutch colonies. The government in Paris had very little contact with its representatives in Réunion, who deferred to the local slaveholders. On the other hand there was no slave uprising in Réunion sufficient to force emancipation onto the agenda, as happened in Saint Domingue. In the Dutch colony of Curaçao there was a slave revolt in 1795, inspired by the events in the French Caribbean, but the colonial authorities succeeded in crushing it. Note that the Dutch Patriots did not control the Netherlands in February 1794 at the time of the French emancipation decree. Even once the Patriot Batavian Republic was consolidated in Europe it had little purchase on events in the colonies. See Claude Wanquet, 'Révolution française et identité réunionnaise', and Francois J. L. Souty, 'La Révolution française, la République batave et le premier repli colonial néerlandais (1784–1814)', in Jean Tarrale, ed., *La Révolution française et les colonies*, Paris 1989. Another informative study brings out the importance of the historic convergence of black insurgency and French Jacobinism in 1794. See Florence Gauthier, *Triomphe et mort du droit naturel en Révolution*, Paris 1992.

VII

Abolition and The United

What in short is the whole system of
One hemisphere of the earth, separate
seas on both sides, having a different s
from different climates, different soi
different modes of existence and its ow
is made subservient to all the petty int
laws, their regulations, their

Thomas Jefferson