A LONGING FOR SAINT-DOMINGUE/A LONGING FOR HAITI: HAITI AND THE RISE AND FALL OF FRENCH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

In 1804, the French Caribbean colony of Saint-Domingue—erstwhile the most lucrative plantation colony in the world—declared its independence as Haiti. The new country, with its population overwhelmingly made up of formerly enslaved people, went on to become the first Black Republic in the modern world. This was a major turning point in world history. It was so unprecedented that its effects are still not fully appreciated over two hundred years later. To expand our understanding of the global significance of the event, this dissertation examines the interplay between the legacy of the Haitian Revolution and later French colonialism in Africa.

Despite its pathbreaking defiance of the colonial system, Haiti played something of an ambivalent role in the rise and fall of the second French colonial empire. Beginning in 1830, nostalgia for their most lucrative colony pushed France to pursue new colonies in Africa partly to compensate for the loss of Saint-Domingue. At the same time, however, the spectre of the violent revolution that produced Haiti constrained and guided French efforts in Africa in a variety of ways.

But it was not just the idea of Haiti that affected French colonialism in Africa. Haitian people also brought their perspective to bear on this second era of French overseas ambitions. Over the course of the nineteenth century, as a Haitian community emerged in Paris, these migrants found themselves uniquely placed to comment on French activities in Africa. While they rejected any notion of inherent racial inequality, some truly believed in French cultural superiority and actually spoke in favour of French attempts to bring "civilization" to Africa. A few even travelled to the continent as agents of French imperialism.

Into the twentieth century, however, most Haitians came to oppose European imperialism in all its forms. As members of militant groups in Paris, as delegates at international gatherings,

and even as teachers, specialists and civil servants in the emerging African countries, numerous Haitians played significant roles in the destabilization of the French empire and in the nation- and state-building projects that followed. In so doing, they carried Haiti's revolutionary, anti-racist and anti-colonialist heritage into the twentieth century and—for the second time in history—helped precipitate the end of the French colonial empire.

This work is dedicated to my grandfather,
Dr. Gordon James King (1932-2021)

Professor of Animal Science
at the University of Guelph (1968-1990)

agricultural productivity and research consultant
for UNESCO, the FAO, the UNDP, the IAEA, CIDA,
as well as various universities and government ministries
in India, Jamaica, Zambia, Kenya, Austria, Czechoslovakia,
Venezuela, Malaysia, Brazil, Sweden, Philippines, Tanzania,
China, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Mexico, Uganda, Ethiopia, Syria,
Chile and Thailand (1974-1996)

And to Dr. Joubert Satyre (1958–2023)

Professor of Francophone Literature
at the University of Guelph (2003-2023)

scholar, poet, musician, novelist, gardener

yon moun de byen e kite zanmi tout moun
li rete grave nan memwa nou

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:
OR, LEARNING TO LEARN

I wasn't a great student.

My old report cards depict "a quiet child" who, nevertheless, could be "quite chatty instead of starting the work he is to do." I was "quite a slow printer" who somehow also "tends to work rather quickly" at the expense of quality. In general, my work was incomplete or poorly done. Terms like "disorganized," "satisfactory" and "unfocused" followed me from kindergarten through high school in the official documents, much to my parents' frustration.

My teachers tried. Some tried harder than others. One (grade 4) tried stuffing me in the corner until my mom complained. Another (grade 10) told me to give up on learning French—*désolé Madame*! A lot of them could see that I was bright. They described me as creative and insightful, but never studious. The trouble was I was boundlessly interested in things that weren't school. School, as I saw it, was taking up time I could have spent learning about the things I really wanted to learn about. My teachers could never figure out how to meet me at this natural curiosity. At least one teacher got part way there. In grade 5, Mademoiselle Benson (who changed my name from Matthew to Matt) made me think I could be a writer. But the next year I was back to: "needs to make better use of time."

A kid growing up in Ontario in the 1980s and 1990s first learns about history—about the breadth and variety of human experience through time and space—from pop culture. Seventy-eight days before I was born, *Back to the Future* arrived in cinemas, and stories about time travel were staples of my media diet. Period films, too. I'm talking Indiana Jones and *Who Framed Roger*

Rabbit. These movies played a fundamental role in the early development of my historical consciousness. This dissertation probably wouldn't exist if not for a bunch of (mainly Jewish) guys in Los Angeles like Stephen Spielberg, Bob Gale and Robert Zemeckis, Chris Matheson and Ed Solomon, Harold Ramis and Danny Rubin. Other notable early authorities on the far-flung corners of humanity were Looney Tunes, Monty Python, They Might Be Giants, the NES, "Weird Al" Yankovic, Douglas Adams and an assortment of long-forgotten relics acquired at Jumbo Video, HMV and the local library.

Slowly, alongside pop culture, came so-called "high" culture. For me, that meant the culture of my grandparents. They took me and my siblings to see plays in Stratford. They brought us to museums and to the Iroquoian village at Crawford Lake. They encouraged me to listen to classical music and read "literature." They even signed me up for golf lessons, but I was hopeless. My gramma Norma was the ringleader. I hold her personally responsible for the height of my brow.

My dad's parents, Mary and Owen Robertshaw, emigrated to Ontario from Manchester, UK, a decade before I was born. For me, they were a living link to history. When I got old and bold enough, I plied them with questions about living through the war. They told me all about sleeping in bomb shelters while the Luftwaffe tried to level the industrial town where they lived.

My late grampa Gord (to whom this dissertation is dedicated) gave me my only connection to academia. He spent decades as a fixture of the Ontario Agricultural College at the University Guelph and made sure we all went to the annual open house weekend each March to see the cow with the window in its side and the various other wonders of this secret universe.

When, at the "mature" age of twenty-six, I had the opportunity to start university, it had to be Guelph. In History, though; no see-through cows for me, thanks.

Crucially, the month before I started my undergrad, I found myself in Haiti. I was working as a videographer and attending a church that had a denominational connection to Haiti. In 2011, while Port-au-Prince was still rebuilding from the earthquake, I started asking around about ways I could get involved. “Sister” Joan Sider let me tag along as a photographer and French translator with a delegation sent to attend a conference in Delmas 33. I met many Haitian friends and travelled around the capital and up to Gonaïves in the northwest. I asked endless questions, and our hosts—Oliam Richard, Elsa Hilaire, Michel Fortunat and Ludlène Baptistin—graciously indulged my curiosity and taught me the basics of their language (apparently quite different from French). I was hooked.

I returned to Haiti three times over the subsequent years. A friend, Mark Wallace, who works for an NGO, brought me along as a videographer and gave me some time to poke around in the national library, bookstores and a couple of museums. My time in Haiti and the friends I made there were essential to the processes that led to this dissertation. They helped me find Haitian books and also taught me things about their country that couldn’t come from books. In one of my fondest memories, I helped Elsa’s nine-year-old daughter Jhessicka prepare for a test on Haitian history. We quizzed each other. She won.

Days after returning from my first trip to Haiti, I started at Guelph, and, for the first time, I started to succeed in school. I’d like to suggest that my teachers learned how to teach me, but, in classes of 300, the onus was clearly on me to learn how to learn. Fortunately, by this point, I had come around to seeing school as a gateway to knowledge, rather than an obstacle. My natural curiosity found a home, and I started to thrive.

Not to say I didn’t have some great teachers. Karen Racine, who ended up my Master’s advisor, stands out the most. She was my compass and my constant encourager. Victor

Fernandez, who was a grad student on loan from the French Riviera, was the first French teacher who made me feel like I could *réussir*. I had the unmatched privilege of having Dawn Cornelio—in person, no less!—before she flew away to Scotland to be with her one true love. William Cormack, Peter Goddard, Christine Ekholst and Alan MacDougall also deserve honourable mention.

As I progressed at Guelph, I looked for opportunities to learn about Haiti. Drs. Racine and Cornelio both signed off on independent study courses about the country, since there were none offered. Soon, my passion for Haiti led me to Joubert Satyre (to whom this dissertation is also dedicated), a literature professor from Haiti who happened to be at Guelph. Joubert was a mentor and a friend, patiently correcting many of my ideas about his country, directing my reading of Haitian literature, all the while struggling with health issues. He ended up on my committee for my Master's thesis. Sadly, when I returned to Guelph to teach in 2023, I learned that Joubert had passed away, far too young, from pancreatic cancer. He will be missed by many.

During my Master's, I had the opportunity to travel to Boston for an intense, three-week Haitian Creole class. My instructors—Marc Prou, Patrick Sylvain, Lesly René—gave me the gift of speech. If not for them, I wouldn't have been able to talk to Haitians in their language or access the growing body of writing in Creole. I would, in a sense, be *sak vid pa kanpe*—the empty bag that can't stand up. I'm forever grateful for this gift.

I arrived at York in September 2017 with the notion of becoming a doctor.

It was a slog.

My second son arrived that November.

We went on strike (in fact, the longest post-secondary strike in Canadian history).

We had family health struggles and a global health catastrophe (I was supposed to be at the Schomburg Center in Harlem in late March 2020—I wonder if they're still waiting for me to show up?).

Haiti, meanwhile, slid into a sustained period of instability.

Through it all, my classmates at York made the process twice as pleasant and half as demoralizing. Karen Dancey, the administrator's administrator, kept me and everyone else in the department from getting lost at sea, bureaucratically speaking. And my distinguished professors made sure I kept sailing forward, doling out guidance and insights with apparently no end. Paul Lovejoy was first and foremost, but no less helpful and supportive were Marty Klein, Deb Neill, David Trotman and Margaret Schotte. Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall (whom I consider an informal advisor from afar) provided critical perspectives by way of Twitter—sinking ship though it was.

Finally, the exceptional work of lots of people I've never met has been fundamental to this project. There are too many to mention; their names appear in the footnotes and bibliography. But I would like to note a few: Marlene Daut, Laurent Dubois, Regine O. Jackson, Chris Bongie, Chelsea Stieber, Brandon R. Byrd, as well as the late Léon-François Hoffmann and Tyler Stovall. And, above all, Michel-Rolph Trouillot.

As any historian will tell you, no narrative exists in a vacuum. Multiple, intertwining stories always exist side-by-side. I've sketched out my life story as a clumsy pursuit of knowledge, but a second, no less important plotline was going on all the while in the background. Or, more precisely, the foreground. Family is, in some sense, what this has all been about. Without my parents and grandparents, my siblings, my in-laws, my two sons, and most of all, my wife Kiersten, I might have gone in another direction at any point along this trajectory and you would

be reading someone else's dissertation. They kept me grounded and made my life exponentially more chaotic in the best ways. And while, at times, some of them may have slowed down the process (like when I was home with two rowdy boys during a pandemic) they saw it through to the end.

Although I've already dedicated this work to grampa Gord and to Joubert, it really belonged to Kiersten from the start. The whole time I was sitting at home reading and writing, she was across town at an elementary school teaching kids how to read and write. And you can bet she was meeting them at their natural curiosity.

30 September 2024

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Introduction

Like many residents of colonial Saint-Domingue, Louis Lefebvre de Laraque could trace his family line back to Europe and to Africa.[1] His paternal grandfather, Claude Lefebvre, had been born in Paris around 1612 and had gone to work as an administrator on the French Caribbean island of Saint-Croix. Here, Claude and his wife Charlotte Legrand welcomed two daughters, Marie-Rose and Barbe, and a son named Jacques. In 1695, amid imperial conflicts, the family evacuated the tiny colony with the rest of its French population and settled in the central Artibonite valley of Saint-Domingue just as this larger colony was on the cusp of becoming the jewel of the French colonial empire. In January of 1721, young Jacques married a local woman, Marguerite Bellanger, who appears to have been part of the colony's small mixed-race population. The couple produced a child that same October, and, presumably due to a complication with childbirth, Marguerite died shortly thereafter.

The child was Louis Lefebvre de Laraque. From his father, Louis had a genealogical link to France. Through his mother, to Africa. With the colony's strict racial hierarchy, Louis spent his life attempting to "pass for white."[2] Despite this, he too married a mixed-race woman, Marie Magdaleine Batard, who was apparently the daughter of a Frenchman and Black woman. Louis and Marie Magdaleine produced at least five children who, like their father, had blood links to Africa and to Europe. Like many mixed-race families in Saint-Domingue, the Laraques enjoyed

[1] Much of this section is based on genealogical data compiled by the Association de Généaologie de Haïti.
[2] Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, vol. 1 (Port-au-Prince: Courtois, 1847), 340n1.

relative prosperity and may have owned land and even slaves. Louis apparently received a legal education in France, possibly in Bordeaux, as one of his children was born in the nearby village of Saint-Christophe-des-Bardes. Louis then returned to Saint-Domingue and became a "procureur du roi," a crown prosecutor, in the town of Saint Marc on the colony's west coast.

When the Haitian Revolution erupted in 1791, many mixed-race families joined in the rebellion. The seventy-year-old Louis seems to have allied with Toussaint Louverture. As events transpired, however, a rift developed between Louverture and the mixed-race community and its leader, André Rigaud, culminating with the so-called War of the Knives around 1800. Rigaud fled into exile and many of his supporters were killed. Louis Lefebvre de Laraque and his son Colonel Joseph Marc de Laraque seem to have been victims of this confrontation.[3] Both were killed in 1802. Despite this bloody war within a war, the colony's Black and mixed-race communities found common ground after Toussaint Louverture was arrested and it became clear that Napoleon intended to restore slavery and reaffirm French control in the colony. Under the Black leader Jean-Jacques Dessalines, Haiti declared its independence on 1 January 1804. In so doing, it precipitated the collapse of the first French colonial empire and became an experimental state—a post-slavery society that espoused racial equality and rejected European colonialism.

While virtually the entire white population had left by the time of the declaration of independence, the mixed-race minority, having rallied to the rebel cause under the leadership of Rigaud's successor Alexandre Pétion, was allowed to remain. The Laraques thus became Haitian citizens. Shortly after independence, the country divided into the northern State (later Kingdom) of Haiti under the Black general Henri Christophe and the southern Republic of Haiti under the mixed-race Pétion. The Laraques relocated from Saint-Marc to the southern town of Jérémie,

[3] Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haiti*, vol. 2 (Port-au-Prince: Courtois, 1847), 43.

evidently favouring the more liberal, westernized vision of their young country's future. Like many mixed-race families who had been relatively prosperous at the time of the revolution, the Laraques were able to maintain a level of social prestige in the new country. They were community leaders in Jérémie and sometimes engaged in national developments as the country attempted to build itself into a beacon of liberty for Black people around the world. Louis and Marie Magdaleine's son Philippe Laraque became Haitian senator in 1830—the same year that France took the first steps toward building its second colonial empire with the invasion of Algeria.[4] Philippe's son, Jean-Baptiste Philizaire Laraque seems to have been a military leader in the internal conflicts surrounding the overthrow of Alexandre Pétion's successor, Jean-Pierre Boyer, in 1843. Philizaire's son, Jean-Pierre Florimond Laraque, married into the prominent Lorquet family of Port-au-Prince.

In 1850, Florimond and his wife Elmire Lorquet welcomed a son named Jean Wolsaint Sylla Laraque. With the help of family resources and connections, Sylla was able to build a fortune exporting coffee by the time he was thirty. He supported the Haitian Liberal party of the day, which had been established to protect the interests of traditional elites and merchants like himself. As a result of these affiliations, Sylla fell afoul of the Nationalist Party—the Liberal party's economic nationalist rivals—who came to power in 1879. The Nationalist government under President Lysuis Salomon attempted to despoil Sylla of part of his vast fortune, and Sylla went into exile in France in 1885. Sylla's wealth enabled him to establish himself among the upper crust of French society. He purchased land in Brittany and helped build the seaside resort town of Saint-Lunaire.[5] He bought the stately château at Monchy-Humières in Oise (north of

[4] Government of Haiti, *Sénat: Règlement intérieur* (Port-au-Prince: Imprimerie de l'État, 1937), 22.
[5] Marc Bonnel "Le développement balnéaire de la Côte d'Émeraude dans la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle," in Association Bretonne and Union Régionaliste Bretonne, *Congrès: Histoire – Arts et Lettres – Économie – Langues bretonnes* vol. 127 (2018): 116–119.

Paris) which had been the home of aristocrats in the ancien régime. And, in perhaps the ultimate rejection of his Haitian heritage, he took advantage of French colonial expansion in North Africa to purchase vineyards in Tunisia.[6]

But Sylla Laraque was not able to eradicate Haiti's anti-colonial spirit from his household. In 1902, he and a Martinican woman named Louise-Josephine-Camille Saint-Jacques had an illegitimate son named Camille who took his mother's surname.[7] The young Camille Saint-Jacques seems to have grown up in the affluent Paris neighbourhood of Neuilly-sur-Seine, and he may also have spent time in Tunisia as a youth.[8] Like any rich kid in any era, Saint-Jacques was drawn into the city, studying engineering in Paris. Right around the time his father died in 1924, Camille began to get involved in radical politics. He joined the French Communist Party and various groups dedicated to Black liberation. For several years in the 1920s and 1930s, he collaborated with militants from the French colonies—Lamine Senghor of Senegal, Louis Hunkanrin of Dahomey, Max Bloncourt of Guadeloupe, Abdelkader Hadj Ali of Algeria, Samuel Stéphany of Madagascar, Nguyen Ai Quoc (later known as Ho Chi Minh) of French Indochina—to challenge European imperialism and provoke revolution in the colonies. By the mid-1930s he had settled into a career as an engineer, but not before contributing significantly to this growing anti-colonial movement in France. He drew from his Haitian background, from the country's legacy of anti-racism and anti-colonialism, and he helped accelerate processes that would ultimately bring an end to the second French colonial empire, just as his ancestors had helped bring an end to the first.

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[6] "Echo de l'Affaire Humbert," *Le Matin: dernières télégrammes de la nuit*, 6 July 1904, 5.
[7] "Nécrologie," *La Vérité*, 19 October 1902, 3; *Recueil périodique et critique de jurisprudence, de législation et de doctrine en matière civile, commerciale, criminelle, administrative et de droit publique* (Paris: Jurisprudence général Dalloz, 1939), 88.
[8] Michael Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 179.

The Laraque family tree highlights the themes of the present study. The central question here is: What was the relationship between Haiti and later French colonialism in Africa? Like their country, the family had roots in Europe and Africa. This dual heritage influenced their shifting loyalties and interests. Louis Lefebvre de Laraque served France as a crown prosecutor before he and his son Joseph Marc allied with the colony's African population against France. Their descendants worked to build Haiti into an example of a post-slavery society but also gravitated toward a French-style republican vision of Haiti. One of them, Sylla Laraque, ultimately abandoned the country altogether, adopting France as his home. He even went as far as to support the new French colonial system in Africa, only to have his son turn passionately against that very system, returning to the earlier anti-colonialism of his Haitian forbears. This ambivalence toward France and its empire, this dual tendency to support and oppose French activities in Africa, is the key to everything that follows.

Before it became the independent Republic of Haiti, the colony of Saint-Domingue had been France's prized overseas possession—the most lucrative colony in the world by some estimates. As much as 15 percent of France's economic growth was based on imperial products between 1716 and 1787, with Saint-Domingue contributing the lion's share.[9] Indebted after the American War of Independence, France relied more and more on income from its darling colony in the days leading up to the revolution.[10] After the massive slave uprising culminated with the loss of Saint-Domingue in 1804, it sent shockwaves through France's economy and, by extension, its society and culture. The French overseas empire went into decline following the loss of Saint-

[9] Guillaume Daudin, *Commerce et prospérité: La France au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2005), 77–78.
[10] Trevor Burnard and John Garrigus, *The Plantation Machine* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2016), 22.

Domingue in 1804. Beginning in 1830, however, the French began to pursue new possessions in Africa and elsewhere. Nostalgia for its most valuable colony and the memory of the events surrounding its loss shaped the way French colonizers, administrators and the French public thought about these renewed colonial ventures. The longing for a new Saint-Domingue was an important undercurrent for the invasion of Algeria in 1830 and of intensified expansion into Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1880s. The idea of Haiti in the French collective imagination—an agricultural paradise whose potential was wasted after people of African descent had taken control—helped Europeans justify the notion that they had a right and a responsibility to bring development, prosperity and "civilization" to Africa.

But if the French remembered the immeasurable wealth generated in Saint-Domingue as a best-case colonial scenario, they were also forced to consider Haiti as a worst-case scenario. French colonial administrators reflected on their predecessors' actions that had provoked the Saint-Domingue slave uprising and the ultimate loss of their cherished colony. Prolonged interactions with Africans in the Caribbean and during the racialized war of 1791–1803 affected the way the French viewed Africans generally, and these lessons shaped their interactions with diverse African societies. The experience impacted the way French legislators and colonial administrators in Africa approached everything from slavery and labour to questions of political rights and policies around and racial mixing to education services and military health. It is overly simplistic to suggest that the memory of the Haitian Revolution was the basis of the French approaches to these issues in Africa. It is, however, worth examining the ways in which the French drew from their national narratives of the Saint-Domingue rebellion in their discussions over how best to proceed on the continent.

Haiti, then, cast a long shadow over French activities in Africa. But the impacts of the Haitian Revolution on the later French colonial empire can be examined from a second perspective. Haitians have always had an ambiguous relationship with their former metropole. Haitian elites espoused a deep connection to French culture and routinely sent their children to France for an education. Yet since their country had won its independence from France by way of armed conflict, many Haitians were sceptical of the notion of inherent French superiority and their natural right to colonize. Furthermore, Haitian intellectuals were conscious of the symbolic importance of their nation, and they hoped to depict Haiti as a model for African self-government. Over the course of the nineteenth century, a sizeable Haitian community took root in Paris. Their national history and its relation to France meant that this groups of students, diplomats and political exiles were in an ideal position to add their unique perspective to the discourses around colonialism that were beginning to germinate toward the end of the nineteenth century and proliferate in the twentieth. Haitians published newspapers, helped organize Pan-African congresses, and engaged in the intellectual debates taking place in the salons of Paris. Some, like Benito Sylvain and Louis-Joseph Janvier, were apologists for benevolent colonialism. Others, such as Jean Price-Mars, Léo Sajous and the aforementioned Camille Saint-Jacques, were more thoroughly critical.

Haitian diplomats also worked to make a place for themselves in the emergent internationalist scene. Haitians at the League of Nations and United Nations regularly positioned themselves against the status quo of European colonialism. Initially marginalized on the global stage, Haitian representatives were gradually accorded a degree of honour as the historical processes for which their country was an emblem—anti-slavery, racial equality and decolonization—came into the mainstream. As such, Haitians like Auguste Nemours, Frédéric

Doret and Dantès Bellegarde at the League of Nations, and Emile Saint-Lôt and Max H. Dorsinville at the United Nations were able to lodge effective critiques against lingering European empires. Ultimately, they played key roles on behalf of their country in the diplomacy surrounding the decolonization of Africa.

For many Haitians, their concerted interest in African affairs led them to visit or even take up residence on the continent. Ever since Benito Sylvain travelled to Ethiopia in 1897, Haitians have been visiting Africa for a number of reasons. Some worked as missionaries—religious or cultural—or as auxiliaries of secular organizations like the United Nations. Others undertook academic research on the continent. Still others, scorning oppressive regimes at home and Western racism in all its forms, sought refuge in Africa. These reverse migrations and South-South connections can tell us much about the processes that shaped the underdeveloped world and emergent nationalisms in the twentieth century. By looking at the lives and experiences of Haitians in Africa we can glimpse the variety of ways the idea of Haiti, the first Black Republic, weaved itself into the push for independence and nation-building efforts across the continent.

In sum, this project is conceived as an attempt to trace the impacts of Haiti, Haitians and the Haitian Revolution on the later French colonial empire, particularly in Africa. On the one hand, the popular memory of the success and ultimate loss of Saint-Domingue certainly shaped the way the French went about establishing their rule in their African territories. On the other hand, the very fact of Haiti—a former French colony populated by people of African descent who had won their independence through armed conflict—was a thorn in the side of the later French colonial empire. The idea of Haiti undermined French claims to colonialism by right, and the presence of Haitians in Paris, in Africa and at international organizations challenged the ideologies on which European colonialism depended.

Part 1 examines the idea of Haiti as it existed and developed in France throughout the nineteenth century. It looks at depictions of Haiti in French popular and intellectual culture in the aftermath of the revolution in order to discern the role that the loss and memory of Saint-Domingue played in French colonial activities in Africa. In chapter 1, I look at nineteenth-century French accounts of the Haitian Revolution. Although it is widely believed that the contemporary French writers and subsequent historians silenced the Haitian Revolution, numerous accounts of the event actually appeared in French publications during the century that followed. The event was not well known in France, but it was also not unknown. A version of the revolution was reiterated time and again in French publications—from novels to newspapers to scholarly works. As a complex event, the Haitian Revolution eludes simple narrativization even to this day, and so these early French accounts tended to be schematic at best, consisting of a limited number of predictable tropes, which we will examine in turn.

Chapters 2 and 3 then examine the image of independent Haiti as it existed in French cultural consciousness during the nineteenth century. I look at representations of Haiti in travel writing, political cartoons, literature, and scholarly publications. Haiti appears frequently in these works and clearly served a dual purpose. Authors popularized a distinct image of Haiti's picturesque landscapes and fecund fields—the subject of chapter 2. At the same time, as we will see in chapter 3, writings depicted the Haitian people as indolent, its leaders as unscrupulous, and its civilization as barbaric. These two themes—fertile fields and feeble minds—worked in tandem to portray the country's wasted potential and thus helped bolster French support for the takeover of parts of Africa. Part 1 concludes with an investigation the French author Edgar La Selve's speaking tour as he circulated France describing Haiti to a country that knew little about

it. This tour, and reactions to it, reveal the extent to which the schematic version of Haiti had proliferated in the country, and also underscore how many in France were growing more interested in renewed colonial expansion by the last decades of the nineteenth century.

After detailing the way Haiti and its revolution existed in the French national imagination in part 1, I turn to the effect of these ideas on later French colonialism in Africa in part 2. First, chapter 4 looks at the nostalgia for Saint-Domingue that remained in the background of the 1830 French invasion of Algiers. Memoirs of the men involved show how the memory of the prosperity of Saint-Domingue was still very much alive when the French reignited their imperial ambitions nearly thirty years after the loss of their model colony. I then look at the subsequent conquests of African territories and assess the way that the French used the idea of Haiti to motivate and justify their actions. I look at legislative debates, popular press articles and the writings of the colonial theorist Paul Léroy-Beaulieu and the positivist Pierre Laffitte who referred to Haiti in their justifications for the new imperialism. In chapter 5, I turn from the motivating influence of Saint-Domingue to the constraining influence of Haiti. I look at several ways that the memory of the tragedy of the Haitian Revolution, as they saw it, served to constrain and direct French legislators and administrators as they dealt with Africa.

Beginning in part 3, I shift my focus from the French to the Haitian perspective. It was not just the idea of Haiti that had an impact on French activities in Africa, it was also Haitian people themselves. Part 3 looks at the growing Haitian community in Paris in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and examines the way these people engaged with the discourses around colonialism in multiple contexts. As noted, Haitian attitudes toward France were ambivalent. Haitian elites were typically educated in France and imbued with an appreciation for French culture. Yet they were also conscious of their country's role as a symbol of Black capacity and as

a test-case in African self-government. Chapter 6 looks the Haitian publishing scene in Paris up to the 1890s. Writers like Louis-Joseph Janvier and Benito Sylvain wrote copiously against European racism, while at the same time musing on the possible benefits of colonization in Africa. Chapter 7 then looks at the person-to-person interactions between Haitians and French people in scholarly societies, and between Haitians and people from Africa and the wider colonial world in literary salons and political organizations. In these contexts, they challenged European racism and collaborated with people from all over the world, attended and helped to organize Pan-African congresses and public lectures, and contributed to the critiques of colonialism advanced by the communist party, the Négritude movement and other anti-colonial spheres.

Part 4 begins in Paris and moves to the various centres of the growing internationalism of the twentieth century—namely Geneva and New York City. Chapter 8 looks at Haitian involvement at the League of Nations and parallel developments in the series of Pan-African Congresses. In the latter context, Haitian delegates built connections to Black communities around the world and enjoyed a degree of prestige as representatives of one of only three independent Black nations. These growing connections helped embolden Haitian representatives at the League of Nations to push the European colonies toward a greater respect for the dignity and capacity of colonial people. But it was not until after the League collapsed during the Second World War and was rebuilt as the United Nations that Haitians were really able to work toward the decolonization in Africa, as we will see in chapter 9.

Part 5 flips the perspective once again. Rather than looking at Haitians talking about Africa from the remote centres of international governance, it focuses on Haitians on the ground in Africa. Chapter 10 looks at the experiences of several Haitians who travelled to Africa for

various reasons in the first half of the twentieth century. For the most part, these figures were agents rather than opponents of colonialism. As the century progressed, however, Haitians were able to play important roles in the emerging states across the Atlantic. Coincidentally, just as France's African colonies were throwing off French imperialism, thousands of Haitians were looking for new homes abroad, pushed out of their country by the oppressive Duvalier regime. While most of these exiles ended up in France, Canada or the United States, several chose to settle in Senegal where they could speak French among a Black population, bringing insights from the original Black Republic to a new one in Africa. Chapter 11 focuses in on this Haitian community in Dakar.

Throughout these encounters, it becomes clear that the Haitian Revolution had important impacts in the French colonies in Africa and in the states that succeeded them. The memory of the revolution served both to fuel French colonialism on the continent, but also to limit it. Similarly, the citizens of the country that the revolution produced sometimes supported French colonial efforts in Africa, but never without reservations. They could not abide the underlying racism that the French used to justify colonialism, and eventually most Haitians largely turned against the whole colonial project and did what they could to undermine it. All things considered, Haiti played an ambivalent role in French colonial Africa, both as a constructive and a destructive force in the French colonial system. Ultimately, the weight of the legacy of Haiti tipped against France's later colonial project, and helped hasten the demise of French Africa.

Historiography

Haiti and its revolution have received much academic interest in recent years. Formerly a neglected topic, it has blossomed since the 1990s when the Haitian scholar Michel-Rolph Trouillot published his groundbreaking historiographical study *Silencing the Past* in 1995. The revolution is considered a crucial turning point in the history of the Caribbean, and scholars like C. L. R. James and Eric Williams have long depicted it as such. While contributors to David Geggus's *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World* (2001), Martin Munro and Elizabeth Walcott-Hackshaw's *Reinterpreting the Haitian Revolution and its Cultural Aftershocks* (2006), and Doris Garraway's *Tree of Liberty: Cultural Legacies of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World* (2008) sought to illuminate the revolution's multifarious impacts on developments in the Atlantic World, other historians have written book-length studies of the diverse results of the revolution. For example, Ashli White's *Encountering Revolution* (2010), Ada Ferrer's *Freedom's Mirror* (2014), and Matthew J. Smith's *Liberty, Fraternity and Exile* (2014) trace the impacts of the revolution on the societies and slave systems of the United States, Cuba and Jamaica, respectively.

Some scholars have gone as far as to make a case for the pervasive role of Haiti in the evolution of modern thought. Marlene Daut, in her massive study *Tropics of Haiti: Race and the Literary History of the Atlantic World* (2015), tracks literary depictions of the Haitian Revolution and reveals how such representations contributed to modern conceptions of race and revolution. Susan Buck-Morss's work *Hegel, Haiti and Universal History* (2009) examines the influence of

the Saint-Domingue slave uprising on the philosophical development of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and, by extension, on the whole of Western philosophy. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, for his part, argued persuasively that the intentional silencing of the Haitian Revolution by contemporaries and later historians was a function of vast power structures in Western ideological discourses, while the recent recovery of the revolution accompanied a broad shift in historiographical theory and political thought.

Despite these achievements, significant gaps remain. Strangely, for instance, there has been relatively little written on the impacts of the Haitian Revolution on the subsequent history of France. There are many reasons to believe that the loss of Haiti shaped France's subsequent colonial endeavours, but this topic has received scant academic attention. Partly, this can be attributed to French academia's generalized reluctance to engage with their country's colonial history. Alice Bennington recently noted that "there remains a stark contrast between the anglophone academy, in which post-colonial studies have become a feature of the academic landscape, and the French, in which they continue to excite considerable debate and opposition."[1] Bennington, Trouillot and others have identified the dominant Republican narrative of French history—in which themes of slavery, racism and colonialism play little part—as a primary cause of this institutional resistance.[2]

Although scholars in Britain, North America and the Caribbean have demonstrated a greater interest in the revolution and its impacts, they too have paid surprisingly little attention to the impact of the Haitian Revolution on the subsequent history of France. This oversight may be partly attributed to longstanding attempts to disentangle Haiti's history and culture from that of

[1] Alice Bennington, "(Re)Writing Empire? The Reception of Post-Colonial Studies in France," *The Historical Journal* 59 no, 4 (2016): 1158.
[2] Ibid., 1168–1175; Michel Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 98–102.

its former metropole. This endeavour derives from the classic debate over the nature of Haitian society. While Haitian elites like Dantès Bellegarde (1877-1966) considered their homeland to be a 'cultural province of France,' intellectuals like Jean Price-Mars (1876-1969) called for a greater understanding of Haiti on its own terms, stressing indigenous and African cultural elements. Indigenist and Noiriste discourses grew to dominate within the country by the mid-twentieth century, and this trend has had major implications for the historiography of Haiti. Histories of Haiti by non-Haitians received criticism for failing to understand the revolution and the country it produced on their own terms. One of the first English-language treatments of the revolution in the second half of the twentieth century, Thomas O. Ott's *The Haitian Revolution, 1791–1804* (1973) reiterated the idea the slave revolt was an extension of the French Revolution. Even C. L. R. James's pathbreaking *The Black Jacobins* (1938) was said to rely too heavily on Western frames of reference (Jacobinism, Marxism-Leninism). Conversely, more recent histories like Carolyn Fick's *The Making of Haiti* (1990) and Laurent Dubois's *Avengers of the New World* (2005) stressed Black agency, portraying the Haitian Revolution as the result of internal dynamics and African antecedents.

In short, the divorce of the historiographies of Haiti and France was mutual. But the divergence has resulted in significant analytical blind spots. The two countries were not nearly as disconnected as their written histories seem to suggest. The French re-established formal economic interests in Haiti after the Franco-Haitian accord of 1825 and French Catholic clergymen became a fixture in Haitian churches and schools after the concordat with the Vatican of 1860. A sizeable Haitian community has existed in Paris since the nineteenth century, and Haitian elites have always had an interest in—and often played a part in—activities and debates taking place in France. The history of each country is incomplete without reference to the other.

In attempting to bridge this gap, we are led to what seems an obvious line of inquiry—the role of Haiti, Haitians and the Haitian Revolution in the formation and disintegration of the later French colonial empire in Africa.

In order to understand the role that the idea of Haiti played on later French colonialism, we need to examine the meaning of Haiti in nineteenth century France. In recent years, several scholars have argued that the silencing of the Haitian Revolution was never as effective as Michel-Rolph Trouillot suggested in 1995. In 2006, Sibylle Fischer challenged mulutiple aspects of the theories advanced in Trouillot's work. She points out that the spread of news in the Atlantic World was constant and uncontrollable, and references to events in Saint-Domingue and Haiti abound in the contemporary press.[3] As another scholar eloquently put it, "if this was silence, it was a thunderous one indeed."[4] Furthermore, while Trouillot saw the revolution as "unthinkable" because a successful slave revolt could not be understood within the parameters of Western thought, Fischer contends that such a monolithic intellectual framework is a fiction. She refers to the writings of some of the more radical authors of the French Republic to reveal that "racial equality was, in fact, thinkable."[5] Finally, she notes perceptively that the very concepts of "silencing" and "unthinkable" present a contradiction; how can a person know to actively silence an event when they are unable to understand its causes and imagine its consequences? Fischer thus provides important correctives to many of Trouillot's key ideas. This dissertation continues

[3] Sibylle Fischer, "Unthinkable History? The Haitian Revolution, Historiography, and Modernity on the Periphery," in *A Companion to African-American Studies*, Lewis R. Gordon and Jane Anna Gordon, ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 364-365.
[4] Ada Ferrer, "Talk About Haiti: The Archive and the Atlantic's Haitian Revolution," in *Haitian History: New Perspectives*, Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, ed. (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2013), 140.
[5] Ibid., 365.

the work of exploring the extent to which Trouillot's groundbreaking "silencing" thesis remains relevant in the light of new research.

In his influential works *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said advanced the notion of "structures of attitude and reference."[6] As he explains, these widely accepted representations of a people group exist within the writings of another people group and set the parameters for the way the latter society understands and interacts with the former. Significantly, Said insists that a work does not have to be explicitly "imperialist" to contribute to these systems of thought that influence global relations. He stresses the idea that works of fiction and ostensibly objective scholarship are never fully divorced from their political context, saying, "politics in the form of imperialism bears upon the production of literature, scholarship, social theory, and history writing," and, in turn, such productions contribute discursively to systems of power and domination.[7] By looking at a wide variety of French writings, then, we can get a sense of how the French understood Haiti and Haitians in the wake of independence.

This not the first Saidian analysis of literary representations of Haiti. In her comprehensive tome *Tropics of Haiti*, which one reviewer lauded as "an Atlantic counterpart to Edward Said's *Orientalism*," Marlene Daut presents a groundbreaking study of the idea of Haiti in the Atlantic World.[8] She looks at innumerable fictional accounts of the Haitian Revolution and demonstrates that nineteenth-century authors, regardless of their stance on colonialism and slavery, relied on ready-made categories in their descriptions of the Haitian Revolution and its participants. As a result, these works were "incessantly narrated in a particularly 'racialized' way that had the ultimate effect of subordinating the position of the Haitian Revolution to the French

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[6] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 52.
[7] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 14.
[8] Erin Zavitz, "Representing the Unthinkable: The Haitian Revolution in Print," *sx salon* 25 (June 2017). http://smallaxe.net/sxsalon/reviews/representing-unthinkable-haitian-revolution-print.

and American revolutions."[9] Her focus on fictional portrayals of the revolution and her conclusions regarding nineteenth-century racism and its legacies are a critical foundation for the present study.

Part 1 of this dissertation expands on Daut's study in three distinct ways. First, Daut's interest laid chiefly in portrayals of the Haitian Revolution, whereas I expand the focus to consider how independent Haiti was portrayed and understood in nineteenth-century France. What were the consequences of the revolution as the French understood them? Second, Daut's work is conceived as an analysis of racism and thus focuses on the way humans are portrayed in Haitian Revolutionary fictions. This dissertation, however, takes colonialism as its primary focus, and since colonialism cannot be understood without considering racism *and* economics, my analysis of the idea of Haiti incorporates depictions of Haitians themselves and of their physical country and its resources. Finally, Daut makes important points about the way literary tropes had real-world implications. She notes that these Haitian Revolutionary fictions "helped to create and sustain a long-standing cultural vocabulary about revolutions" which "became infinitely useful to individual nation-states as they constructed national narratives based around policies of inclusion and exclusion and to the slave-holding Atlantic World as it grasped to hold onto its many lucrative plantation economies."[10] In the end, however, Daut (a practicing historian but a literary scholar by training) remains mostly in the realm of texts; the real-world implications are implied but not examined. In part 2, I examine how the "long-standing cultural vocabulary" about Haiti was transformed into action when the French set about establishing their second colonial empire in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

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[9] Marlene Daut, *Tropics of Haiti* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), 3.
[10] Ibid., 35.

This dissertation is also part of an ongoing attempt to link the first era of European imperialism to the second. This history is often conceived in two distinct halves. The first—associated with people like Christopher Columbus, Hernán Cortés and Samuel de Champlain—stretched from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries and was largely focused on Spanish, Portuguese, British, and French activities in the "New World" and the "East Indies." The second phase of European imperialism—the remit of men like Leopold II, Sovorgnan de Brazza and Lord Lugard—began with the Scramble for Africa and the Berlin Conference and mainly concerned British, French, German, Belgian, Portuguese and Italian activities in Africa and Asia. The Scramble is so central to the dominant view of European colonialism in Africa that many histories of the topic begin in the 1870s or 1880s, largely neglecting European incursions on the continent stretching back to Antiquity.[11]

Africanists have led the charge in challenging the primacy of the Scramble as the central fact of Africa's history by tracing continuities on the continent and countering the Eurocentric view that the "Dark Continent" was without a history prior to European invasion. Furthermore, a growing body of work on European colonialism is connecting the "Age of Exploration" to the "New Imperialism" to reveal that the two halves are not as discrete as has been supposed. The British historian A. G. Hopkins, for example, has described how one of the events that arguably triggered the Scramble for Africa, the British occupation of Egypt, was part of a continuous process of European expansion and not a rupture with the past.[12] The occupation was partly intended to shore up security around the Suez Canal, thereby protecting routes to older colonial

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[11] For example, Raymond Betts, *Tricouleur: The French Overseas Empire* (London & New York: Gordon & Cremonesi, 1978); Alice Conklin, Sarah Fishman and Robert Zaretsky, *France and its Empire Since 1870* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); Rudolf von Albertini and Albert Wirz, *European Colonial Rule, 1880-1940: The Impact of the West on India, Southeast Asia, and Africa*, John G. Williamson, trans. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982).

[12] A. G. Hopkins, "The Victorians in Africa: A Reconsideration of the Occupation of Egypt, 1882," *The Jounal of African History* 27, no. 2 (1986): 360–90.

establishments in the East. The other colonial empires in Africa also have histories that begin long before 1880. Portugal's claims on Africa had been gradually expanding since the fifteenth century, and while German, Italian and Belgian claims on the continent were new in the 1880s, they can be understood as the extensions of these countries' intensifying nationalism and their unifications and expansions within Europe earlier in the century. More to the point, German and Italian imperial traditions reverberate back through the centuries: Frederick the Great, the Brandenburg African Company, the Tuscan expedition to Brazil, Klein-Venedig, Vespucci, Caboto, Colombo, Charlemagne, the Roman Empire.

France presents a particular case. The standard bisection of European colonial history is particularly evident in histories of French colonialism, as there is a conspicuous gap between the virtual collapse of the first colonial empire by 1815 and the intensification of the "New Imperialism" starting in the 1870s. France is the only European country that had two massive yet almost totally separate global empires.[13] Still, the separation between the first and second French colonial empires is not absolute. France maintained a small set of colonies throughout its phase of imperial limbo in the nineteenth century. The period between 1815 and 1870 saw continued the administration of the Four Communes in Senegal; of La Réunion in the Indian Ocean; of Guadeloupe, Martinique and Guiana in the Caribbean; and of tiny Saint-Pierre and Miquelon off the coast of Newfoundland. The period also saw new colonial efforts in Algeria in the 1830s and (though unsuccessfully) in Mexico in the 1860s. And the two phases of French colonialism are linked in other ways; the late Kate Marsh has argued that nostalgia for the first colonial empire was a driving force for the second, a theme that the present study takes up in chapter 4.[14] Marsh

[13] Setting aside Italy and Germany's cases, since the Roman Empire and First Reich were categorically different from the later Italian and German empires.
[14] Kate Marsh, *Narratives of the French Empire: Fiction, Nostalgia, and Imperial Rivalries* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013).

has shown how the eighteenth-century loss of French India fuelled desires to pursue new colonies in Africa in the nineteenth century. I make the argument that nostalgia for Saint-Domingue—a more valuable colony, and one that had been lost more recently and (arguably) more dramatically—played a prominent role in motivating the renewed imperial push as early as 1830. By tracing the memory of Saint-Domingue/Haiti through these developments and into the fabric of the second colonial empire, I hope to add a new dimension to the larger story of French and European colonialism.

Part 3 brings us to Paris, a city that has received boundless attention by historians. The city's Black population, one of the largest and longest established in Europe, has been the subject of numerous studies.[15] In French public discourses, there is a reluctance to talk about racial categories in French society. This reluctance stems from an attachment to universalizing principles dating back to the revolution and Enlightenment, upheld sporadically and articulated in such statements as "there are no slaves in France" and more recently "there are no hyphenated Frenchmen." Further, the neglect of race and racism in France is tied to a national tendency to minimize the history of French colonization. While portions of the French population mutely overlook the multi-racial composition of their nation, others, such as the political movement surrounding Jean-Marie Le Pen's Front National, target non-white sections of French society directly. Far right rhetoric paints non-white French people as immigrants or *issus de l'immigration*—conveniently overlooking the large white immigrant population—thereby

[15] See for example Jennifer Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis: The Urban Grounds of Anti-Imperialism and Feminism in Inter-War Paris* (Lincoln, NB & London: University of Nebraska Press, 2010); Tyler Stovall, *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light* (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1996); Gary Wilder, *The French Imperial Nation State: Négritude and Colonial Humanism Between the Two World Wars* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Tricia Danielle Keaton, T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting and Tyler Stovall, ed. *Black France/France Noire: The History and Politics of Blackness* (Durham, NC & London: Duke University Press, 2012).

questioning the legitimacy of the citizenship of non-white French people.[16] Such partisans promote the idea that immigration to France is a new and threatening phenomenon. But even the most cursory glance at French history reveals that non-white immigration to France is anything but new. Research by immigration historian Gérard Noiriel and others have shown that French history and the French nation have long been defined and enriched by so-called "non-native" elements, and indeed that "France has been the European country most marked by immigration" and "the country whose immigrant population has become most thoroughly integrated into the life of the nation."[17] This history is by far most evident in Paris and the Île-de-France region, but no less important in the provinces and their urban centres.

Who made up this sizeable and vibrant Black community in what Jennifer Boittin refers to as the "Colonial Metropolis" of Paris? Historical analyses of Paris's Black population tend to focus on three categories: Africans, Antilleans and Black Americans. To these, one should add a fourth category that tends to be overlooked: Haitians. Not technically French Antilleans since independence in 1804, Haitians were ineligible for the benefits of French citizenship that their Antillean and African associates pursued. Unlike Black Americans, they spoke French and were intimately familiar with French culture, and so better placed to offer nuanced critiques of French racism and colonialism. Unlike residents of France's African colonies, their country had long rejected French colonialism. Inevitably, then, their goals and their perspective on the French empire in Africa were distinct from that of their peers from Point-à-Pitre, Dakar and Harlem. As we will see in part 3, Haitians in Paris played a distinct role in the development of international

[16] Keaton et al. *Black France*, xiii.
[17] James A. Winders, *Paris Africain: Rhythms of the African Diaspora* (Houndsmill, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 5.

Black discourses, helping to mobilize the Black community, founding important associations and newspapers, and publishing influential treatises.

Black people ended up in Paris for a variety of reasons, but education, work and an escape from flagrant racism elsewhere were among the most common. One can by no means say that Paris was devoid of anti-Black racism. In his work, *Paris Noir*, Tyler Stovall refers to the "myth of colour-blind France," which contains a double meaning: it was a fiction, but it was an alluring and effecting fiction. The myth drew countless Black people to Paris and, to a degree, became self-fulfilling.[18] Interactions between Black people from vastly different backgrounds contributed to the emergence of what Gary Wilder has referred to as a "black public sphere."[19] In the early years, however, the Black community was fragmented along lines of class and nationality. Historians have drawn particular attention to the division between Africans, many of whom had come to France as soldiers or sailors, and Antilleans, of whom a large portion were middle-class students or civil servants. Antilleans tended to consider their African fellows as somehow inferior and uncivilized. The Africans, for their part, viewed Antilleans as elitist, and, since they were often posted as administrators in Africa, complicit in the abuses of the colonial system.[20] Haitians, standing outside of these divisions, helped facilitate the process of building solidarity, a contribution that is largely overlooked. Gradually, divisions began to lessen, and a productive climate of intellectual discourse flourished.

In recent years, certain individual Haitians in Paris have received academic attention. Louis-Joseph Janvier, for example, was recently the subject of an edited volume, framed around

[18] Stovall, *Paris Noir*, xiii.
[19] Wilder, *French Imperial Nation-State*, 157.
[20] Boittin, *Colonial Metropolis*, 90.

a new translation of one of his works and including articles by several scholars.[21] The Haitian anthropologist Anténor Firmin, likewise, has received a degree of scholarly attention, as has his compatriot, the newspaper publisher and early Pan-Africanist organizer Benito Sylvain.[22] But there are numerous other figures who made major contributions, but who remain largely unknown. Part 3 highlights lesser known figures like Camille Saint-Jacques, Ludovic Lacombe and Léon Sajous who lived in Paris for many years and made important contributions to the growing transnational Black community in the city and to the anti-colonial discourses that were being articulated in the interwar period.

In addition to being a hub for a growing Black transnational consciousness, Paris also served as a gateway for Haitians to play a part in the twentieth century's emergent internationalist organizations. After the First World War, participants at the Paris Peace Conference attempted to reshape the world along more peaceful and sustainable lines. A key part of this scheme was the establishment of the League of Nations as a forum for open diplomacy. Generally, Haiti's Minister Plenipotentiary in Paris doubled as its delegate to the League of Nations. Here, as representatives of one of the only Black self-governing nations, they tried to position themselves as spokesmen for the colonized world and for Black people everywhere. But these contributions, too, have been largely absent from histories about the growing internationalist movement.

Chantalle F. Verna, in a rare article on the topic, stressed that while "Haitians were one of the few Black populations able to assert their sovereignty and presence as delegates at international gatherings," they have largely been omitted from writings on international

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[21] Louis-Joseph Janvier, *Haïti aux Haïtiens*, ed. Brandon R. Byrd and Chelsea Stieber, Nadève Ménard, trans. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2023).
[22] Robert Bernasconi, "A Haitian in Paris: Anténor Firmin as a philosopher against racism," *Patterns of Prejudice* 42, nos. 4–5 (2008): 365–383; Tony Martin, *The Pan-African Connection* (Dover, MA: Majority Press, 1984).

relations.[23] As a result, she says, international relations scholars "have reinforced the hierarchies of supremacy that African American, Caribbean, and African leaders working in the international sphere historically labored to dismantle."[24] In chapter 8, I add to this discussion by tracing how Haitian delegates overcame their initial marginalization at the Paris Peace Talks and League of Nations to make meaningful contributions to global discussions around race and colonialism, while drawing inspiration from the parallel Pan-African Congress movement and sometimes serving as a link between the two. These precedents ultimately allowed them to play key roles in the decolonization of Africa under the auspices of the United Nations.

If the Haitian community in Paris and Haitian delegates at international organizations have received scant academic attention, Haitian enclaves in places like Dakar have received still less. This is relatively new territory for historical research. The reverse migration of people of African descent "back to Africa" is a neglected dimension of the history of migrations. There have certainly been scholarly studies on the resettlement of enslaved people from North America to Liberia and of Black Americans travelling as experts and activists to places like Ghana, but it is nonetheless something of an embryonic field.[25] Within this small corpus, some scholars have noted a "consistent Afro-Saxon bias" that has characterized academic work.[26] In the tradition of Paul Gilroy's *Black Atlantic* (1993), many historians have looked at migrations from the United

[23] Chantalle F. Verna, "Haiti, the United Nations, and Decolonization in the Congo," in *The United Nations and Decolonization* ed. Nicole Eggers, Jessica Lynne Pearson and Aurora Almada e Santos (London: Routledge, 2020), 129.
[24] Ibid., 131
[25] For example, Kevin K. Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Stephen J. L. Taylor, *Exiles, Entrepreneurs, and Educators* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2019); Sebastian N. Page, *Black Resettlement and the American Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2021).
[26] Michael O. West and William G. Martin, "Introduction," in *From Toussaint to Tupac,* ed. Michael O. West, William G. Martin and Fanon Che Wilkins (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 7.

States and the British West Indies to various locations in Europe and Africa, while events in the francophone Black Atlantic have largely been left to literary scholars. As a symptom of this neglect, very little has been written about the thousands of Haitians who travelled to Africa over the course of the twentieth century, and this despite a growing academic interest in Haiti and its diaspora in recent years.

One of the few books that deals broadly with the topic, *Geographies of the Haitian Diaspora* (2010), pays virtually no attention to Haitians in Africa.[27] To date, most of the available information on Haitians in Africa comes from memoirs.[28] One of the few scholarly studies, an article by Regine O. Jackson, looks at Haitian medical workers who travelled to Congo-Kinshasa in the 1960s with the United Nations. In this article, Jackson reflects on the neglect of the topic and articulates several important guidelines for thinking about Haitians in Africa. She says that "new interpretive frames are needed to see migration to postcolonial Africa as part of a long tradition of Haitian internationalism."[29] She remarks that "Haitians saw postcolonial Africa as a space of possibility," but that "certain interpretations of Haitian immigration to the Congo seem to challenge the very logic of powerful discursive frames." She explains that well-worn categories like *exile* and *brain drain* "neglect important dimensions of migrant subjectivities," while the term *expatriate* connotes "not only whiteness but also lavish lifestyles, hedonistic pleasures, and social irresponsibility." She concludes that "this 'failure of categories'… narrows our ability to imagine how Haitians contributed to the project of mid-

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[27] Regine O. Jackson, ed., *Geographies of the Haitian Diaspora* (New York: Routledge, 2010).
[28] Verna, "Haiti, the United Nations," 139n6. See, for example, Jean Jonassiant, *Le Pouvoir des mots, les maux du pouvoir* (Paris & Montreal: Arcantère & Presses de l'Université de Montreal, 1986); Victoria Lodewick, "Institution, *errance* and ethnography: The African Novels of three Francophone Caribbean Writers," PhD diss., (Duke University, 2000); Roger Dorsinville, *A Critical Edition of Haitian Writer Roger Dorsinville's Memoirs of Africa* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2002); Max H. Dorsinville, *Mémoires de la décolonisation* (Montreal: Mémoires d'encrier, 2006); and Camille Kuyu, *Les Haïtiens au Congo* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006).
[29] Regine O. Jackson, "The Failure of Categories: Haitian in the United Nations Organization in the Congo, 1960-64," *Journal of Haitian Studies* 20 no. 1 (2014): 36.

twentieth-century Black internationalism as well as our modes of theorizing the Haitian diaspora."[30] Part 5, then, contributes to an attempt to break from preconceptions of twentieth century migrations and to take the scope of global and transnational histories in new, unexamined directions.

Despite the broad silences, one Haitian who spent significant time in Africa has come into view in recent years. Several feminist scholars have drawn attention to Suzanne Comhaire-Sylvain and her work in Africa. In the tradition of Annette K. Joseph-Gabriel's groundbreaking study *Reimagining Liberation*, which traced the contributions of seven Black women to a more inclusive vision of French citizenship, scholars like Fatoumata Seck and Grace Sanders Johnson have begun to examine how Comhaire-Sylvain's transnational activities engaged with the tensions inherent in the colonial and post-colonial world. They have stressed the way she advanced the field of anthropology and energized broader discourses about the meaning of gender, class and race in Haiti and in colonial and post-colonial Africa.[31] Chapter 10 aims to build on this scholarship by situating Comhaire-Sylvain among lineage of Haitians who went to Africa for a variety of reasons during the colonial period. While these earlier travellers showed a bias in favour of French culture and a conditional acceptance of European colonialism, Comhaire-Sylvain's work challenged these attitudes. She can thus be considered a transitional figure in Haiti's relationship with Africa, connecting these earlier figure to those examined in

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[30] Ibid.

[31] Grace L. Sanders Johnson, "Suzanne and Suzanne: An Experiment in Reimagining Liberation," *Small Axe* 27 no. 1 (March 2023): 131–142; Grace L. Sanders Johnson, "Picturing herself in Africa: Haiti, Diaspora, and the Visual Folkloric," *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism* 22 no. 2 (2022): 348–373; Grace L. Sanders Johnson, *White Gloves, Black Nation: Women, Citizenship and Political Wayfaring in Haiti* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2023); Fatoumata Seck, "Crossing the Atlantic: Bouqui and Malice, a Caribbean Counterpoetics," *Journal of Haitian Studies* 24 no. 1 (Spring 2018): 76–100; Fatoumata Seck, "From Haiti to Congo: Colonial Fault Lines in the Life of Suzanne Comhaire-Sylvain," unpublished manuscript.

chapter 11 who were keen to bring insights from the original Black Republic to the new ones taking shape on the other side of the Atlantic.

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If, as some historians have suggested, Camille Saint-Jacques spent part of his youth in Tunisia, one can imagine the contradictions he must have encountered there.[32] Picture him, ten years old in 1912, hanging around on his father's vineyard. He attends a French school in the nearby town of Zaghouan and is taught to love his *patrie*. Meanwhile, from his older half brothers and sisters he hears stories about Haiti. He learns how his ancestors fought against French colonialism and exploitation. Yet, living a comfortable life, he initially makes no connection between Tunisia and Saint-Domingue. They do not, for instance, use slave labour. On the vineyard, most of the workers are Italian settlers, as Muslim Tunisians generally eschewed work in the production of alcohol. These Italians are resentful of French control over a region their country has been attempting to claim, but they are friendly with young Camille. They explain to him that the ancient Roman ruins that dot the landscape in the vicinity are the remains of the great empire that their ancestors had established some two millennia earlier. They take him to see the Roman aqueduct in Zaghouan that once supplied water for the legendary city of Carthage to the north. By rights, they say, this vineyard should be theirs. By rights. He begins to wonder about the basis of these rights.

[32] The historical context surrounding this hypothetical section is mainly drawn from Amal N. Ghazal, "Tensions of Nationalism: The Mbazi Student Missions in Tunis and the Politics of Anti-Colonialism," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 47, iss. 1 (February 2015): 47–63, and Kenneth Perkins, *A History of Modern Tunisia*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

As he wanders about the vineyard and into town, he meets Tunisians whose families had been despoiled of their traditional lands and forced into wage labour. For their part, they must have been curious about this French-speaking kid with black skin, not quite knowing how to place him. Camille, perhaps, tries to speak to them. Yet, despite his dark skin, he is clearly part of the new French landholding class that had come to dominate since the protectorate was established thirty years earlier. They give him the cold shoulder.

Over time, perhaps, he befriends a Tunisian boy his age. From this friendship, he learns about the deep frustrations of the local population. He learns of the growing movement against the French protectorate, the Young Tunisians, who are demanding self-determination. He learns of the protest that took place the a few months earlier over French confiscation of lands that included a Muslim cemetery. He learns of the Tunisian boy who was killed just weeks earlier, run over by a tram, of the resulting Tunisian boycott of the tram system as an act of political defiance, and of the subsequent French crackdown on opposition to the French administration.

Slowly, Camille begins to associate this frustration with the situation his ancestors faced on the other side of the ocean over one century earlier. He feels the contradictions living inside of him. His French ancestors stole his African ancestors from their land, just as his contemporary compatriots have stolen land from people in Africa. Then, as now, this frustration cannot last forever. Eventually change must come.

Within twelve years, he is in Paris, in the very heart of the French colonial empire, fighting against it. In so doing, he carries on the legacy of his great great great grandfather Louis Lefebvre de Laraque, who, over a century earlier, fought for the end of slavery, for racial equality, and for the independence of Haiti, the first Black Republic. Yet Louis, ironically, died at the hands of his erstwhile allies in the rebellion, anticipating the tensions and ambiguities in

the French colonial system that carried on to Camille Saint-Jacques's day. In the pages that follow, we will see how these tensions and ambiguities played themselves out as the French remembered Saint-Domingue and tried to forget Haiti, as they went about constructing a new colonial empire in Africa, as Haitian people got involved in these processes, and as the empire, in the end, collapsed once again.

PART 1

A Longing for Saint-Domingue I: Imagining Haiti in Nineteenth-Century France

"*La richesse ou la pauvreté de Saint-Domingue dépendait-elle de la fertilité de son sol ou de la nature de son gouvernement?*"

Roger de Beauvoir, 1840

Introduction
Jarnac, 11 December 1881

The town of Jarnac, in the Charente department of southwestern France, is about sixty kilometres inland from the Atlantic coast. Compared to the port city of La Rochelle—some eighty kilometers to its northwest—Jarnac benefits little from the ocean's moderating effect on its climate, or from the flow of people and ideas common to maritime towns. It is a calm and consistent place. Since the 1860s, the town's population has remained below 5,000 (with the exception of a single census in 1975 which showed 5,045).[1] Historically, a large number of these residents have worked in the wine vinegar trade—less glamorous and less profitable than the celebrated brandy trade in nearby Cognac, a source of some friction between the two towns. Nevertheless, the town has its claims to fame; most notably, French president François Mitterrand was born there in 1916. Biographies of Mitterrand describe the town at the turn of the century as "small but vibrant" and "an inland agricultural town, not much directly influenced by an ocean that was much farther away then than today."[2] Jarnac is a prime example of the type of provincial French community that had little interest in tropical, far-off locations—whether they be French colonies or not. As long as the coffee and sugar kept coming, activities in exotic locales were a matter of limited concern to the people of Jarnac.

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[1] "Notice Communal: Jarnac," *Des villages de Cassini aux communes d'aujourd'hui*, L'École des Hauts Études en Sciences Sociales, accessed 21 September 2024, http://cassini.ehess.fr/fr/html/fiche.php?select_resultat=17764.
[2] Ronald Tiersky, *François Mitterrand: A Very French President* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 39.

This general indifference toward the tropics, however, evaporated for a single evening in 1881 in the middle of a cold December.[3] The regional press had announced an upcoming event saying, "in this time of fog and cold, one would do well to embark on this pleasure trip."[4] The pleasure trip in question would be confined to the Jarnac theatre. There, around 7:30 on the evening of the 11th, a small crowd shuffles in out of the cold. They pay the cost of admission: fifty centimes (with a 25 percent discount for students). They take their seats, unsure what to expect. An odd, glowing contraption on the stage—a Molteni oxhydric projector that has been temporarily installed for the evening's event—is silently burning hydrogen and giving the room an unusual ambience. The fact that the event, billed as "Voyage aux pays des Nègres," was to be presented by a professor from rivaling Cognac has dampened enthusiasms. Nevertheless, here they are. Not exactly excited, but curious.

At eight o'clock the lights go down. The din falls to scattered whispers. A lone man takes the stage. This is Edgar La Selve: chair of history and geography at the College of Cognac, author, world traveller. He is dressed in academic attire—slightly shabbier than the theatregoing crowd. A thick beard and a mop of brown hair make him look older than he is (today is, in fact, his thirty-second birthday). La Selve manipulates the Molteni projector, and with a blaze of light an unfamiliar map appears on the wall behind the stage. The room is now completely quiet. He extends his arm, gesturing at the makeshift screen.

'*Mesdames et messieurs*,' he says, 'this is the island of Hispaniola.'

He speaks quietly, but the crowd hangs on to every word. He explains that the region to the east is 'the country of the *mulâtres*, Dominicanie,' while the western portion is 'the country

[3] This slightly dramatized version is derived from the newspaper accounts noted. Paraphrased dialogue is indicated by single quotes.
[4] "Voyage au Pays des Nègres," *La Charente*, 4 December 1881, 3.

of the *nègres*, *Haïti*, which you may know better as Saint-Domingue, our former colony.' He explains that he spent some considerable time in this Black Republic.

For the next two hours he leads them on an excursion. He speaks with such familiarity, and with the support of a seemingly endless series of projected illustrations of people, towns and landscapes, that the spectators genuinely feel like they have escaped the cold Jarnac December and travelled two thousand leagues to a tropical island paradise. Descriptions of the country's natural beauty, abundant vegetation and a summer without end cause a few souls in this grey agricultural town to experience wanderlust for the first time in their lives. He thrills them with harrowing tales of child sacrifice deep in the jungle. They laugh at the misadventures of the oafish Courouille, La Selve's guide in his trek through the countryside. Accounts of tragic events from the country's history, such as the suicide of King Henry, lead a few young women to shed tears.

In short, they are captivated. This is something truly novel.

Around 10 p.m. the speaker concludes his presentation. He extinguishes the projector, and the house lights are reignited. For many, it was too short. Most of the audience members make their way outside, taken off guard by a temperature that is approaching freezing. A few stay behind to thank the professor for an enlightening conference. Their world is a bit larger than it was two hours earlier.

Days later, a review appears in the regional press. Its author praises the way the La Selve enlightened his audience. He characterizes many of his compatriots as "idlers, stuck in the darkness of ignorance, who observe nothing, compare nothing, and imagine nothing, and accept that the world does not extend past the contours of the hammock that saw their birth." Into this darkness of ignorance stepped Monsieur La Selve, who, "responding to a sense of duty,"

embarked on a daring adventure to study "the mores and customs of a little-known country," and returned to France wanting nothing more than to "contribute to expanding our sphere of knowledge." The review concluded that, "After an agreeable evening, we confess frankly that we simply admire Mr. La Selve who has succeeded in arming himself, in this conference, for the noble fight of science and civilization."[5]

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Over the next two years, La Selve went on to give this same presentation more than three hundred times, from Lille in French Flanders to Pau in the Pyrenees, even crossing the Strait of Gibraltar for a string of dates in Algeria. As the above vignette suggests, La Selve's tour reveals two things about the idea of Haiti in France in the nineteenth century. First, hardly anyone knew anything about Haiti. As Michel-Rolph Trouillot has shown in his celebrated study *Silencing the Past*, the Haitian Revolution and the republic it produced were largely written out of French histories. "Most historians" Trouillot said, "ignored or simply skipped over whatever record there was," adding that, "a few took the time for short and often derogatory passages on the Haitian revolutionaries before moving on, as it were, to more important subjects."[6]

Trouillot's few historians and their "derogatory passages," however, lead us to the second point: the silencing was incomplete. While La Selve's audiences knew little about Haiti, they knew something. Wherever La Selve went, he spoke of a country that was *peu connu* but not *inconnu*. Their preconceptions were few; nevertheless, they had preconceptions. It was generally known, for example, that Haiti was formerly the French colony of Saint-Domingue, and there

[5] Victor Tremolo né Staccato, "Théatre de Barbezieux," *Le Narrateur Impartial*, 24 December 1881, 2.
[6] Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 101.

was a sense of national nostalgia for this, the greatest French colony. Mixed in with the memory of Saint-Domingue's former glory was the idea that the island was blessed with an almost supernatural agricultural capacity. Yet, this was an agricultural capacity that, from the French perspective, was being squandered since the island's Black population had ruined the colony and stolen it from France back in Napoleon's day. By the time La Selve embarked on his speaking tour in the 1880s, a simplified understanding of Haiti, Haitians and the Haitian Revolution had seeped into the realm of common knowledge in France. Part 1 examines this simplified version and how it was articulated and maintained in France in the century after Haiti won its independence.

Representations of Haiti figured into diverse works ranging from the literature of celebrated French writers like Victor Hugo and Alphonse de Lamartine, to more lurid works like Amédée de Noé's caricatures and the farce plays of Varin and Labiche, to the travel writings of Paul Dhormoys and the pseudoscientific racial theories of Arthur de Gobineau. The idea of Haiti in nineteenth-century France was not monolithic; the works of abolitionists like Victor Schœlcher and Sophie Doin offered a more sympathetic view of Haiti than was typical of their contemporaries. Furthermore, as Eugen Weber demonstrated out in his *Peasants into Frenchmen*, it is difficult to speak of a "French nation" or "French attitudes" in this period; for much of the century most people were still illiterate and tended to associate more with their local region than with an idea of France.[7] Nevertheless, in this same period education expanded apace, the middle class grew in size and significance, and understandings of French nationhood took root throughout the Hexagon. The memory of Saint-Domingue and the image of Haiti played a

[7] Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976).

role in these processes, underscoring what it meant to be French and deepening visions of France's history and its future.

As we will see, a consistent image of Haiti sustained itself in French writings throughout the nineteenth century. The next three chapters look at three aspects of this broadly accepted version of Haiti in nineteenth-century France. First, a particular narrative of the Haitian Revolution took shape. Second, French accounts depicted the Haitian earth as almost supernaturally fertile—a true agricultural paradise. Finally, the Haitian people were presented according to a limited set of largely negative tropes. It is striking, in fact, how durable this image proved to be over the course of the century, particularly since France experienced a series of revolutions, transformations and crises. By way of a conclusion, we will turn to an analysis of Edgar La Selve's speaking tour in the 1880s as a way of assessing the idea of Haiti as it continued to exist diffusely in France several generations after the colony had won its independence. This will lead us into a study of the mobilization of the idea of Haiti during the push for renewed French imperialism in the late nineteenth century—the topic of part 2.

- 1 -
French Versions of the Haitian Revolution

The process of forgetting or misremembering the Haitian Revolution has received much academic interest since Michel-Rolph Trouillot presented his influential analysis in 1995. Trouillot's formulas of erasure and banalization have come to be standard descriptions of the way authors in the West minimized the importance of the Haitian Revolution, relegating it to a footnote in histories of the Atlantic World and the Age of Revolutions. In Trouillot's words, historians habitually employed "formulas that tend to erase directly the fact of a revolution," or else they "empty a number of events of their revolutionary content so that the entire sting of facts, gnawed from all sides, becomes trivialized."[1] In the specific case of French historiography, Trouillot points to "a more general silencing of French colonialism" as the reason for the silences regarding Haiti in the country's historiography and public discourses.[2]

Nevertheless, although there was a tendency to forget Saint-Domingue, there was a countertendency to remember it based on a particular interpretation of how the events transpired. First, it should be noted that French and Haitian authors published numerous lengthy accounts of the Haitian Revolution in France throughout the century. Added to these were the accounts of foreign authors—notably the British planter and proponent of slavery Bryan Edwards—which were sometimes translated and disseminated in France. No fewer than eleven monographs about

[1] Trouillot, *Silencing*, 96.
[2] Ibid., 100.

the Haitian Revolution were published in France between 1802 and 1897.[3] While Victor Hugo, an eminently literate French teenager, was keen on reading his de Lacroix and his translations of Edwards, the vast majority of French people in the nineteenth century surely were not in the habit of reading multi-volume works on the topic. But this does not mean they were totally ignorant about Haiti. In addition to specialist accounts there were numerous novels, poems and short stories that dealt with the revolution. Furthermore, French newspapers from the nineteenth century often make passing references to "the island of Haiti, formerly Saint-Domingue" and sometimes include brief summaries of the revolution. From these brief but frequent references with their explanatory notes, we can assume that the Haitian Revolution was known, if only vaguely so, as French readers constantly had to be reminded of the details.

Part of the issue here is that the Haitian Revolution is a complicated affair, as any student of Caribbean history knows well. The events do not lend themselves to a tidy narrative. There are a multitude of interests at play. The colony's four main groups—enslaved people, Free People of Colour, *petit blancs* and *grand blancs*—are loyal to the French King and the French Republic at different times, sometimes throwing in their lot with the Spanish or the British invaders. There are wars within wars, broken alliances and rebels of all colours fighting among themselves. Slavery is abolished by degrees, semi-re-established under a different name, and then reimposed

[3] Bryan Edwards, *Histoire de l'île de Saint-Domingue* (Paris: G. Dufour, 1802); Félix Carteaux, *Soirées bermudiennes, ou Entretien sur les événemens qui ont opéré la ruine de la partie française de l'isle de Saint-Domingue* (Bordeaux: Pellier-Lawalle, 1802); Nicolas Pierre Gilbert, *Histoire médicale de l'armée francaise a Saint-Domingue, en l'an dix: ou mémoire sur la fiévre jaune, avec un apercu de topographie médicale de cette colonie* (Paris: Gabon, 1803); Bryan Edwards, *Histoire de Saint-Domingue, depuis 1789 jusqu'en 1794*, trans. Edouard Bryand (Paris: Pierre Blanchard, 1812); Antoine Dalmas, *Histoire de la Révolution de Saint-Domingue* (Paris: Mame Frères, 1814); Antoine Métral, *Histoire de l'insurrection des esclaves dans le nord de Saint-Domingue* (Paris: F. Scherff, 1818); L. J. Clausson, *Précis historique de la revolution de Saint-Domingue* (Paris: Pillet Ainé, 1819); Pamphile de Lacroix, *Mémoires pour server à l'histoire de la Révolution de Saint-Domingue*, 2 vols. (Paris: Pillet Ainé, 1819); Antoine Métral, *Histoire de l'expedition des Français à Saint-Domingue* (Paris: Fanjat Ainé, 1825); Beaubrun Ardouin, *Études sur l'histoire d'Haïti*, vols. 1–5 (Paris: Dezorby & E. Mageleine, 1854–1855); Henri Castonnet Des Fosses, *La Perte d'une Colonie: La Révolution de Saint-Domingue* (Paris: Faivre, 1897). Incidentally, while Trouillot (99) notes that American observers tended to refer to the event as a "revolt" or a "rebellion," these titles reveal that French historians had no such compunction.

and destroyed simultaneously. Toussaint Louverture fights for Spain against France and for France against Spain. The Governor-General appointed by Paris goes to war against the Civil Commissioners appointed by Paris. Before winning its independence, French Saint-Domingue annexes Spanish Santo Domingo, so in the end the Spanish side is French, and the French side is independent. The aftermath, too, is complicated. The early leaders call themselves emperors, kings and presidents. The country splits into two (and briefly three) states, recombines and then once again absorbs Santo Domingo (which, in the interim, had reverted to Spanish rule and then declared its independence) before losing it again. Haiti's revolution and early history are a veritable Gordian Knot, and the average French person of the nineteenth century was no Alexander the Great able to cut through it. As a result, they tended to know a schematic version of the event at best.

Educated French people, presumably, could echo the writer and diplomat Paul Dhormoys's admission of an imprecise knowledge of the country in his 1859 publication *Visite chez Soulouque*. In his recollections of his travels to Haiti, he admits that his preexisting knowledge of the island was "rather muddled." He goes on to explain that he "knew vaguely that the island of Saint-Domingue had once been divided into two parts, the Western part belonging to France and the Eastern part subject to Spain," but that he "had thought that the revolt of the *noirs* in 1791 had united these two sections into one body," believing that the island was still, in his day, united under Faustin Soulouque, who "stretched his scepter over the entire island of Haiti."[4] He had an approximate knowledge of the events in question, but he was not up to date on the basic facts of the two countries' political histories. This imprecise knowledge about Haiti, we can assume, was typical of many educated French people in the nineteenth century.

[4] Paul Dhormoys, *Une visite chez Soulouque: souvenirs d'un voyage chez l'île d'Haïti* (Paris: Librairie Nouvelle, 1859), 7.

By looking at references to the Haitian Revolution in French periodicals and other publications, we can get a sense of the schematic version as it was known in the country. Of course, there was no monolithic French nation with a standard understanding of the event. But common threads nevertheless wove their way into the mainstream of educated French discourses about their country's colonial history. The typical version contains four main elements. First, it was generally known that the situation in Saint-Domingue had become untenable because of the limitless exploitation of enslaved Africans. Second, the chaos of the French Revolution unsettled the delicate balance in Saint-Domingue, in part by the dangerous flow of ideas and in part by reckless legislation—most notably, the Decree of 15 May 1791, which gave full political rights to the colony's Free People of Colour, prompting the swift unravelling of Saint-Domingue society. Third, the colony's mixed-race residents were named as the masterminds behind the revolution. Finally, the role of yellow fever in the final defeat of the Leclerc expedition was repeated as a canonical aspect of the event.

The *révolte des nègres* was the first fact of the Haitian Revolution. If you knew anything about the event, you knew it involved the colony's Black and enslaved people rising up in rebellion. This was fundamental to French understandings of the event. Initially, most French people who were familiar with the events in Saint-Domingue learned about them through fiction. Marlene Daut has identified thirty-seven novels, novellas, plays and poems published in France between 1804 and 1830 that deal with the Haitian Revolution. Of these, almost three quarters were published between 1822 and 1829, corresponding neatly with the Franco-Haitian Accord of 1825 which formalized France's recognition of Haitian independence.[5] Evidently, French interest in

[5] See Daut's online database, Fictions of the Haitian Revolution (https://www. haitianrevolutionaryfictions.com) for a growing list of fictional works dealing with the Haitian Revolution from 1787 to 1899.

Haiti peaked in the 1820s. In this period the flurry of fictional writings and pamphlets by former planters helped set the tone for French ideas about Haiti that remained intact long after its independence was formally recognized.

The *révolte des nègre* was cemented as a key part of the known version of events. Grotesque depictions of Black people killing white planters and their families were a standard motif in French novels and novellas that dramatized the Haitian Revolution in the early years of the nineteenth century. As the century progressed, however, ideas about race and slavery developed along particular trajectories in France as elsewhere. Slavery was abolished throughout the French colonial empire by 1848 (though it remained in effect in the African interior as French expanded inward in subsequent decades).[6] Theories of scientific racism grew in popularity, as did arguments for racial equality. On all sides of these debates there was a growing appreciation that the plantation complex and the total domination of 90 percent of the population by the remaining 10 percent in Saint-Domingue had become untenable by 1791. The centrality of the *révolte des nègres* and its violence remained a key aspect of the memory of the event, but later portrayals tended to explain the uprising as the almost inevitable result of demographic distortions caused by the unchecked proliferation of slavery and the plantation system.

Inevitable or not, the *révolte des nègres* remained central to retellings throughout the nineteenth century. In 1858, when the *Revue contemporaine* ran a feature on commerce during the French Revolution, a significant portion was dedicated to the loss of Haiti. The author, Baron Ernouf, notes the immense value of the colony in its heyday, saying "it was thanks to our colonies, and Saint-Domingue most of all, that between the financial crisis of 1720 and the

[6] Martin Klein, *Slavery and Colonial Rule in French West Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 28–36.

revolution the money stock doubled in France."[7] He then goes on to expose the shameful basis on which this vast wealth was founded, and the virtual inevitability of its collapse:

> God forbid we should say that there was nothing culpable in the very principle of these immense riches; that there was nothing in desperate need of modification, in the social state of our colonies. We will not glorify slavery; we do not even mean to excuse it; we voluntarily recognize that such profits, as great as they can be, do not justify the methods used to obtain them. Since a notable part of the products of colonial labour benefited France, it was incontestably for the French government, whatever it may be, an imperious duty to learn about and amend any aspect of this labour that could be presented as immoral.[8]

Later still, the colony's internal tensions were summarized neatly in *La grande encyclopédie* which was published in thirty-one volumes in the last decades of the nineteenth century. In the article on Haiti, the author explains that "the planters, drunk on their wealth, thought of nothing but extending the reach of their domains and the number of their slaves… The *nègres* who bore the cost of this fortune, unique in the history of the Antilles, were subject to the harshest oppression."[9] Ultimately, he concludes, "the injustice and the blindness of the planters would spell their ruin."[10]

With such internal tensions and abuse, only a firm grip could have maintained order. As Baron Ernouf explained, "any hasty change could only provoke the most frightful disasters." Stability, he said, could only be accomplished by "a government that is wise, strong and, above all, obeyed."[11] On this score, the French government failed utterly. It was universally acknowledged that the French government had, in the end, precipitated the loss of Saint-Domingue by its hasty

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[7] Alfred-Auguste Ernouf, "Le commerce et l'industrie pendant la Révolution française," *Revue contemporaine*, ser. 2, vol. 1 (Paris: Bureau de la Revue contemporaine, 1858), 863–864.
[8] Ibid., 864.
[9] Marcellin Berthelot, et al. eds. *La grande encyclopédie: inventaire raisonné des sciences, des lettres et des arts*, vol. 19 (Paris: H. Lamirault, 1885–1902), 735.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ernouf, "Le commerce," 865.

and haphazard approach to colonial administration during the French Revolution. In particular, in the aftermath of the slave insurrection, one act on the part of the revolutionary government was singled out as the match that lit the fuse. This was the decree of 15 May 1791 which gave full political rights to the colony's Free People of Colour who were born to two free parents.

In the early years of the French Revolution, Saint-Domingue's various free factions vied for improved situations; the *petits blancs* and Free People of Colour hoped to improve their social standing, while the *grands blancs* planters rebuffed attacks on the status quo, even calling on the British to annex the colony in the hopes of maintaining slavery and the socio-racial hierarchy. The conflict came to a head with the attempted uprising of the mixed-race leaders Vincent Ogé and Jean-Baptiste Chavannes, who were executed in February 1791. News of this rebellion spread to Paris, where the National Constituent Assembly, hoping to pacify the situation, issued the Decree of 15 May. Although the direct beneficiaries of the Decree amounted only to some 400 people in Saint-Domingue, the colony's white population bristled at this audacious attack on the racial hierarchy.[12] Moreover, the Decree coincided with a clash in the French Assembly between Moreau de Saint-Méry, who called for constitutional protections for slavery, and Maximilien Robespierre, who replied "perish your colonies, if you are keeping them at that price."[13] The free factions began to mobilize for war. The consequent instability provided the opportunity for the unprecedented slave insurrection in August 1791.

As early as 1797, Bryan Edwards, noted that the revolution would likely have occurred anyway, saying "there is indeed too much reason to believe, that these miseries would have occurred in St.-Domingo, in a great degree, even if the proceedings of the National Assembly…

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[12] William B. Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 115.
[13] Maximilien Robespierre, "On the Condition of Free Men of Color," in *Virtue and Terror*, Slavoj Zizek, ed. (New York: Verso, 2017), 21.

had been more temperate, and if the decree of the 15th of May had never passed into law."[14] Still, he admitted the pivotal impact of the Decree, concluding that "it may be affirmed, with truth and certainty, that this fatal measure gave life and activity to the poison. It was the brand by which the flames were lighted, and the combustibles that were prepared set into action."[15]

For the rest of the century, French accounts of the loss of Saint-Domingue dwelt on this detail. There was agreement on this fact across the political spectrum. Conservative critics of the French Revolution used it as a convenient argument to prove the irresponsibility and inherent disorder of the republican cause. For example, in perhaps the best known fictional account of the Haitian Revolution in nineteenth century France, Victor Hugo's 1826 novella *Bug-Jargal* (which will be examined in greater detail in chapters 2 and 3), the young Victor Hugo refers to the "disastrous decree of the 15th of May 1791."[16] In 1845, a Catholic publisher of educational materials produced a book about Saint-Domingue of which the last two chapters focus on the revolution and early independence. The author notes that shortly after Ogé was executed, "the constituent assembly's decree of 15 May 1791 was issued, which declared that men of colour born of a free father and mother, were admissible in the constitutional assemblies. The effect of thunder is not as swift as that made by this decree on their minds, a sort of delirium seized all heads."[17]

Baron Ernouf (a Bonapartist by political orientation), while he does not refer to the Decree of 15 May specifically, points to the general chaos emanating from the revolutionary government in Paris as the cause of the eruption. Whereas, he had said, only a "wise, strong and

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[14] Bryan Edwards, quoted in Bongie, "Appendix E" in Victor Hugo, *Bug Jargal*, trans. Bongie Chris Bongie (Toronto: Broadview Editions, 2004), 293.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Hugo, *Bug-Jargal*, 70.
[17] Jules Lacroix de Marlès, *Histoire descriptive et pittoresque de Saint-Domingue (Haïti)* (Tours: Mame, 1845), 210.

overall obeyed" government could reconcile the deep tensions in Saint-Domingue, the "new dictators of France, dominated by the revolutionary spirit, had neither the power nor the will to apply such moderation."[18] Ultimately, he says, "the insurrectional authority that was reigning in France only manifest itself in the colonies via equivocal decisions, which, far from preventing the conflagration, hastened the explosion."[19] While, later, the liberal/positivist leaning *Grande encyclopédie* summarized the Decree's effect thus: "The Constituent Assembly ended up giving to the *mulâtres*, born of a free father and mother, eligibility for colonial assemblies. Exasperated, the planters entered hostilities with the mother country," and consequently "an uprising broke out, inaugurating the race war."[20]

From all sides, then, there was a general agreement that the revolutionary government in Paris bore at least some responsibility for the loss of Saint-Domingue. Conservatives, like the young Hugo and the Catholic pedagogue Jules Lacroix de Marlès believed that the Decree had been disastrous, sending shockwaves through the fragile society in Saint-Domingue. Liberal republicans like the authors of the *Grande encyclopédie* pointed to the Decree as the cause of a race war, and the Bonapartist Baron Ernouf depicted the National Assembly's hasty legislation—as exemplified by the Decree—as the antithesis of the law and order necessary for effective governance, particularly in a setting as precarious as colonial Saint-Domingue.

In the opinion of many white European observers in the nineteenth century, Saint-Domingue's Free People of Colour were the masterminds behind the slave rebellion and the most culpable villains of the War of Independence. As Marlene Daut notes, "pseudoscientific ideas about 'race'

[18] Ernouf, "Le commerce," 864.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Berthelot, ed. *Encyclopédie*, 735.

affected eighteenth- and nineteenth-century understandings of the Haitian Revolution as the events unfolded in the decades after Haitian independence, and ultimately contributed to a widely disseminated narrative of 'mulatto/a vengeance.'"[21] Trouillot, too, talks about the notion that Saint-Domingue's mixed-race population incited the enslaved people to rebel. He points out that contemporary observers and later historians, unconvinced that Black people had the capacity to orchestrate a large and ultimately successful revolution, resorted to "conspiracy theories," and insisted that "the uprising must have been 'prompted,' 'provoked,' or 'suggested' by some higher being than the slaves themselves: royalists, mulattoes, or other external agents."[22] The historiography, by making use of such formulas of erasure, robbed Black Haitians of their agency from the very beginning.

Reinforced in works of fiction, the notion of mixed-race masterminds became a common thread in French retellings of the loss of Saint-Domingue. They tended to draw a direct line from the Decree of 15 May 1791, through the Free People of Colour to the pivotal slave rebellion of that August. They pointed out that when the whites and Free People of Colour took up arms against one another in 1791, both sides mobilized slaves for the confrontation. The more cynical accounts went as far as to say that the Free People of Colour instructed the enslaved people in the northern part of the colony to strike for freedom in August 1791. De Marlès, for example, explained that "a vast conspiracy was hatching in the shadows. The *mulâtres* called out to the *noirs*, who responded. They did not even wait for the signal that the *mulâtres* were supposed to give them to act."[23] In other words, the *mulâtres* armed the enslaved people but then lost control of the situation.

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[21] Daut, *Tropics*, 109.
[22] Trouillot, *Silencing*, 103.
[23] Marlès, *Histoire descriptive*, 211.

With the increasing power of mixed-race rulers like Alexandre Pétion and Jean-Pierre Boyer in the years following independence, it was quite typical for French authors to present Haiti's "coloured" faction as usurpers of the valuable colony, and to depict them as ungrateful sons corrupted by their Africanness. In the years leading up to the Franco-Haitian Accord, one former planter opposed recognition, arguing that "Saint-Domingue was worth more than several of our provinces; what would we say of a French minister who would give three of our provinces to the King of Morocco? He would be no less guilty than the one who proposes that we recognize Boyer."[24] Another framed a proposed reconquest as in the interest of the Black masses, saying the "aristocracy of the *mulâtres*" had "renounced all morals, all religion" and asked "would you want to deprive the Black of all spiritual assistance, leaving them without consolation under the yoke of the brigands who govern them? Certainly not… we must take back Saint-Domingue."[25] The early ascendancy of the mixed-race faction was thus a convenient way for French commentators to make Haiti intelligible. As the children of "pure" Frenchmen, they had been able to envision and achieve independence. But as the offspring of African mothers, they were illegitimate heirs, and this served to explain their treachery.

Finally, there was the military defeat. It was difficult for French observers to understand how one of Europe's greatest armies was defeated by people who had, until recently, been abject field labourers. In order to explain the defeat, Western authors adopted another one of Trouillot's formulas of banalization, largely pinning the defeat on tropical illnesses, especially yellow fever. In the words of another recent scholar, "true, these authors concede, the European armies were

[24] Un Colon de Saint-Domingue, *Lettre à M. le Général Foy* (Paris: Les Marchands de Nouvautés, 1822), 12–13.
[25] Anonymous, *Cri des colons propriétaires à Saint-Domingue, expropriés et réfugiés en France, ou Appel à la nation* (Paris: Goujon, 1822), 17, 27.

defeated—not by a superior Black army, however, but by an unhappy coincidence of bad weather, mean bugs, and competing European powers."[26] This once again serves to undermine the efforts of the Haitian people who organized themselves into effective military units, developed tactics suited to their locale, and fought tirelessly for years in order to secure their personal freedom and national independence.

For French commentators, *fièvre jaune* was the final word in French military defeat in Saint-Domingue. An entire book on the topic had appeared as early as 1803.[27] The explanation was repeated ad nauseum throughout the century. In 1884, the French poet and proponent of a renewed colonialism Charles Alfred Canivet wrote a severely truncated summary of the final push for Haitian independence: "The [Leclerc] expedition was vigorously carried out and succeeded, having taken care of the people, they then had to contend with the climate. The French contingent was decimated by sickness, and the general himself succumbed at the end of the year 1802. Since then, Saint-Domingue has remained independent."[28] The *Grande encyclopédie* credits yellow fever with the defeat of the British in 1797 and of the Leclerc expedition by 1803.[29] Even passing references to Haiti sometimes prompted reminders; a tongue-in-cheek article about beans in a 1897 issue of *Le Petit Parisien* digressed into a brief anecdote about Haiti, characterizing the early days of independence as "the first years of our century, after the battles which Haiti maintained for its independence against the unfortunate army of Leclerc whom yellow fever exterminated almost entirely in 1803."[30] If this passage can be taken as a shorthand for a French understanding of Haiti's genesis, it is clear that the role of yellow fever

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[26] Thomas Reinhardt, "200 Years of Forgetting: Hushing Up the Haitian Revolution," *Journal of Black Studies* 35, no. 4 (March 2005): 252.
[27] Nicolas Pierre Gilbert, *Histoire médicale de l'armée francaise a Saint-Domingue, en l'an dix: ou mémoire sur la fiévre jaune, avec un apercu de topographie médicale de cette colonie* (Paris: Gabon, 1803).
[28] Charles Alfred Canivet, *Les colonies perdues* (Paris: Jouvet, 1884), 260.
[29] Berthelot, ed. *Encyclopédie*, 735, 736.
[30] Pontarmé, "Un roi de la fèves," *Le Petit Parisien*, 6 January 1897, 2.

was firmly established as a key component of the narrative of the loss of Saint-Domingue in the French national imagination.

To summarize, while many in France opted to forget or actively silence the Haitian Revolution, others continued to be curious about this seemingly inexplicable event in the history of both countries. The story was told and retold in monographs, literature and periodicals. Even the most truncated versions tended to feature four key elements. They depicted the incredible wealth generated in the colony as untenable, based, as it was, on the exploitation of an enslaved majority. The demographic distortions of the colonial period also produced a class of mixed-race residents of the colony, whose rights were circumscribed under the strict racial hierarchy. When the French revolutionary government upset this delicate balance through careless meddling, the mixed-race minority betrayed their European kin and orchestrated a fierce slave insurrection. Finally, when the French arrived to pacify the island, they were rebuffed, not by Black genius but by the seemingly arbitrary effects of yellow fever. With occasional variations, this was the version of the loss of Saint-Domingue that survived in the French national consciousness and public discourse throughout the nineteenth century and beyond. As we will see in the next chapters, this schematic version of the Haitian Revolution bolstered French ideas about Haiti and its people long into the independence period.

- 2 -
Haiti as an Agricultural Paradise

Unsurprisingly, the idea of Haiti as an agricultural paradise predates Haitian independence; it was, after all, one of the keys to the colony's success. Observers penned descriptions of the island's beauty and fertility long before the French had even set foot on the island. These were among the first impressions Europeans had about Hispaniola. Within days of landing on its shore in December of 1492, Christopher Columbus commented on the excellent agricultural prospects of the island's vast northern plain, saying:

> the best land of Castille could not be compared with it… the difference being as great as between night and day… All these lands were cultivated… a very large river passed through the centre of the valley and could irrigate all the fields. All the trees were full of fruit, and the plants tall and covered with flowers… The climate was like April in Castille; the nightingale and other birds sang as they do in Spain during that month, and it was the most pleasant place in the world.[1]

Despite this glowing assessment, the Western half of Hispaniola remained largely uncolonized through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. With the eradication of the indigenous population and Spain's shift of focus to the mainland, the territory served mainly as a refuge for buccaneers based on Tortuga. The French government did not formalize its claim on the colony until 1697.

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[1] Christopher Columbus, *The Journal of Christopher Columbus (During his First Voyage, 1492-93)*, trans. Clements R. Markham (London: Charles J. Clark, 1893), 109.

Once formalized, Saint-Domingue quickly became the jewel of the French colonial empire. One historian has called eighteenth-century Saint-Domingue "perhaps the most profitable bit of land in the world," while another has described it as "the apogee of the European colonizing process begun three centuries earlier."[2] Success was based on several factors—transatlantic wind currents, investment from the metropole, enslaved labour on a massive scale, transformations associated with the sugar revolution—but one of the keys to Saint-Domingue's prosperity was its inherent agricultural capacity. The place had a reputation for an almost supernatural ability to produce vegetation. Père Jean-Baptiste Labat, an early observer and promoter of plantation agriculture in the French Caribbean, noted in his widely read tome *Nouveau voyage aux îles de l'Amérique* (1722): "there is no known country in the world more abundant than this Island, the soil is of an admirable fecundity, rich, deep and in a position to never stop producing anything that one could desire."[3] What one desired was sugar. Saint-Domingue quickly became the unrivalled world leader in sugar production. By 1740, the plantations of Saint-Domingue were producing an estimated 16 percent more sugar than the whole of the British West Indies, in addition to other significant crops like coffee and indigo.[4]

Saint-Domingue's fertility featured in the popular commercial encyclopedia *Histoire des deux Indes*. The multi-volume work was first published in 1770 under the direction of Abbé Raynal with contributors including Denis Diderot and Baron d'Holbach. Numerous editions followed in quick succession, and it was widely disseminated and read in France and beyond in this era of growing demand for knowledge. One contributor referred to Saint-Domingue as "the

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[2] Laurent Dubois, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History* (New York: Picador, 2012), 4; David P. Geggus, "Saint-Domingue on the Eve of the Haitian Revolution," in *Haitian History: New Perspectives*, Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, ed. (New York & London: Routledge, 2013), 72.
[3] Père Jean Baptiste Labat, *Nouveau voyage aux îles françaises de l'Amérique* vol. 7 (Paris: C. J. B. Delespine, 1742), 59.
[4] Trevor Burnard and John Garrigus, *The Plantation Machine* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2016), 35-36.

country in the Americas that produces the most sugar and of the best quality," and described its northern plain as "a terrain whose fertility surpasses the desires of the imagination."[5] Its fertility was apparently too much for mere prose; the author shifted to a poetic register as he described the landscape:

> one savours at one's leisure the delights of a springtime without winter, without summer. The year only has two equally lovely seasons. The earth, always loaded with fruit, always covered with flowers, continually combines the charms and the richness that poetry dispenses in its descriptions. Wherever one looks, one is enchanted by the variety of objects coloured by a pure light. The sky is temperate by day; the constantly fresh nights anticipate a pleasant sun. The inhabitants of the plain where this heavenly orb casts its liveliest rays go up into these mountains to breathe the fresh air, to drink the salubrious waters. Happy is the mortal who taught the French to establish themselves in such a delicious residence.[6]

The encyclopedist was not the last to wax poetic in his attempt to describe the beauty and fecundity of Haiti; such exuberance was characteristic of French descriptions of the island's tropical allure and legendary agricultural capacity long into the nineteenth century.

Given French adulation for Saint-Domingue's productivity, when stability crumbled during the Haitian Revolution, the educated French public understood what was at stake. Written reactions to the events of 1791 to 1804 and the ultimate loss of the colony reinforced the idea of Haiti's inexhaustible fecundity. For decades following independence, former planters plied their governments with pamphlets demanding reconquest or, at minimum, compensation for the loss of their property and prospects in the colony. Especially in the early years following independence when many harboured hopes that the colony could be recaptured, the pamphleteers stressed the island's natural bounty, hoping to inspire another large-scale military expedition that would restore order. One despoiled planter wrote in 1804 that "the French empire's most

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[5] Abbé Raynal, *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce européens dans les deux Indes*, 3rd ed., vol. 3 (Geneva: Pellet, 1780), 441; Raynal, *Histoire des deux Indes*, 3rd ed., vol. 2 (Geneva: Libraires Associés, 1775), 608.
[6] Raynal, *Deux Indes*, 608.

beautiful and richest possession is momentarily lost."[7] In 1805, a former Saint-Domingue trader prophesied that "we will soon see this beautiful country in a state of prosperity that will fulfill the most fantastic dreams of the imagination."[8] Others, more prosaically, depicted the island's bounty through figures. One pamphlet claimed that "alone, this colony produced *three hundred million* [pounds] *of sugar*, and *one hundred and twenty million of coffee* annually, not to mention other foodstuffs," adding that "France, when it finally recovers Saint-Domingue, will soon re-establish and reopen the dried wells of its former splendour."[9] It was writers likes these, with an explicit interest in Haiti's agricultural potential, who laid the materialist foundation for enduring French ideas about the former colony.

For decades, some stubbornly waited for reconquest. One writer insisted in 1817 that "without Saint-Domingue, no prosperity for France," while another, as late as 1824, claimed that "calm will return to Saint-Domingue, and then the *nègres* will joyfully return to their natural, happy and necessary servitude."[10] By the 1820s, however, the likelihood of reconquest was growing more and more faint. In the words of one historian, most of the former colonists "developed more limited goals reflecting a more realistic appraisal of Saint-Domingue's value."[11] They came to accept that, given the time elapsed and the independent spirit of the Haitian people, reconquest was a lost cause. An 1821 pamphlet summarized the general feeling: "Retaking Saint-Domingue by force is *impossible*: the entire population of the country would successfully come together, because they would be fighting for their liberty, which has become

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[7] Chotard, *Origine des malheurs de Saint-Domingue, développement du système colonial, et moyen de restauration* (Bordeaux: Dubois & Courdet, 1804), 41.
[8] J. Abeille, *Essai sur nos colonies et sur le rétablissement de Saint-Domingue* (Paris: Chomel, 1805), 46.
[9] Comte de Léomont, *La France demande Saint-Domingue* (Paris: Le Normant, 1817), 4. Italics in original.
[10] Léomont, *La France demande*, 3; Le Cher de St.-M... *To Lord Stanlay*, (Paris: Marchand du Breuil, 1824), 2.
[11] Robert Stein, "From Saint-Domingue to Haiti, 1804-1825," *Journal of Caribbean History* 19 no. 2 (November 1984): 190.

for the Haitians object of *belligerent fanaticism*."[12] The author added perceptively that "Saint-Domingue's independence is a *de facto independence*; the march of time will give it legal sanction. France therefore will not be making a great sacrifice by accepting what she has no means to oppose."[13]

With a view toward reparations rather than reconquest, some suggested that the island's value had been utterly destroyed over the course of the war. One 1819 pamphlet lamented that "Saint-Domingue, which once produced for France at least *140 million* [pounds] *of colonial foodstuffs*, can no longer produce one quarter of that amount."[14] The same author called Saint-Domingue "the most productive island of the West Indies," and said that "in 1789 Saint-Domingue produced *the best and the most sugar* in the Americas," but that it now ranked among the worst.[15] An 1826 précis on the indemnity negotiations declared that "all is destroyed. The plains, once so fertile, are for the most part covered in trees, like at the time of conquest… and, apart from the *mornes*, which produce rich harvests, the rest of the colony is uncultivated."[16] Significantly, the latter account portrays the island as overwhelmed by its own fertility. Ironically, it was the island's ability to bear fruit that had destroyed its agricultural capacity. This became a theme in French writings about Haiti. As the French saw it, in the absence of their expertise the fertility of the Haitian earth had been allowed to consume itself. The island had lost all value.

Other commentators believed the island's potential remained, but that the French should follow Britain's example in South America and move toward informal imperialism in the form of

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[12] Henri de Viel-Castel, *Mémoire sur Saint-Domingue* (Bordeaux: Courdert, 1821), 7. Italics in original.
[13] *Ibid.*, 11.
[14] M. L. P., *Lettre de M. L. P. addressée aux Chambres* (Paris: P. Didot l'ainé, 1819), 6. Italics in original.
[15] Ibid., 6, 5.
[16] Jean-Baptiste Guislain Wallez, *Précis historique des négotiations entre la France et Saint-Domingue* (Paris: Ponthieu, Peytieux Treuttel & Wurtz, 1826), 72.

trade dominance in order to maintain control of Haitian agriculture. In 1825, therefore, France formally recognized Haitian independence and normalized diplomatic relations. As is well known, this recognition came with strings attached; the French only agreed to acknowledge Haiti's independence in exchange for an indemnity of 150 million francs. The amount, which permanently crippled Haiti's economy, was based on an estimation of what French planters had lost including property in the form of enslaved labourers and plots of agricultural land.

Although the pamphlets of former colonist were one of the most abundant sources of descriptions of Haiti in the early nineteenth century, as we have seen, ideas about Haitian were further disseminated through French society by way of other types of writing—notably fiction. Characteristically, these works go to great lengths to depict a lost paradise. In one of the first novels set in revolutionary Saint-Domingue, Jean-Baptiste Picquenard's *Adonis, ou le bon nègre* (1798), the author sets the scene thus: "this plain, once so rich and flourishing, so beautiful with its habitations, its sugar mills, artistic masterpieces, its long avenues, its sugarcane, its stores and mansions, was now only lit by the flame that devoured these magnificent properties, the precious fruits of long and arduous labour."[17] In his follow-up novel, *Zoflora, ou la bonne négresse* (1799), Picquenard presents pre-revolutionary Saint-Domingue in nothing less than mythic terms. The narrator refers to the colony as a new El Dorado.[18] He describes the protagonist's arrival on the island thus: "The aspect of the coasts of Saint-Domingue, covered in permanently green trees, the beauty of a pure azure sky, the view of a resplendent sun containing all the colours of the prism, ravished his imagination and plunged him into a sort of ecstasy. The old *Ohaïti* [*sic*] was for him the island of felicity; or rather he felt he was entering the ancient

[17] Jean-Baptiste Picquenard, *Adonis, ou le bon nègre* (Paris: Didot Jeune, 1798), 19.
[18] Jean-Baptiste Picquenard, *Zoflora, ou la bonne négresse* (Paris: Didot Jeune, 1799), vii.

Eden."[19] Picquenard's novels were a significant source of inspiration for subsequent fictional portrayals of the fate of Saint-Domingue including the best-known fictional account of the Haitian Revolution published in France in the nineteenth century: Victor Hugo's *Bug-Jargal*.[20]

According to literary scholar Chris Bongie, *Bug-Jargal* was "among the more substantial nineteenth-century European novels to have dealt with issues of race in general, and certainly the most substantial to have dealt with the Haitian Revolution in particular."[21] Hugo first published "Bug-Jargal" as a serial short story in a literary journal in 1820 when he was just eighteen years old, and when France had not yet recognized Haitian independence. It is well known that Hugo's political orientation was conservative in his youth. As a young man under the Bourbon Restoration, he was wary of disorder and critical of the French and Haitian Revolutions and their aims and methods. Moreover, Hugo is believed to have had family connections to the lost colony, and it is possible that he stood to gain from reparations.[22] His portrayal of the revolution in Saint-Domingue is marked by the political orientation of his youth and by his particular interest in the subject.

Like his contemporaries, Hugo's depiction of the Haitian Revolution is the story of a paradise lost. He too describes the colony's natural abundance in superlative terms. In one of the most memorable scenes in the novel, as the narrator/protagonist Leopold d'Auverney is being led toward his death, he is struck by the beauty of the land. In the 1820 short story, Hugo renders d'Auverney musings thus:

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[19] *Ibid.*, 48.
[20] Chris Bongie, "Appendix F: Literary Sources" in Victor Hugo, *Bug Jargal*, trans. Chris Bongie (Toronto: Broadview Editions, 2004), 325–326.
[21] Chris Bongie, "Introduction" in Hugo, *Bug Jargal*, trans. Bongie, 29.
[22] A. James Arnold, "Recuperating the Haitian Revolution in Literature: From Victor Hugo to Derek Walcott," in *Tree of Liberty: Cultural Legacies of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World*, Doris L. Garraway, ed. (Charlottesville & London: University of Virginia Press, 2008), 179; Bongie, "Introduction," 32.

> We descended into a small valley, the appearance of which would have enchanted me at any other time: a torrent ran through it from one end to the other, imparting a fertile moistness to the soil. It was dominated by sycamore maples of an extraordinary height. You could see the blue-azure haloes found on that species of wild honeysuckle the negroes call *caoli* mixed in with the pale yellow flowers of the Candian osier. Green expanses of liana vines hid from sight the brownish slopes of the neighbouring crags… Here in this awe-inspiring place, the blacks came to a halt, and I saw that the time had come for me to die.[23]

Hugo thus captures the colony's natural beauty coupled with a sense of nostalgia and loss. For French readers in 1820 this must have resonated with their memory of the tragic end of their most valuable imperial possession.

Six years later, taking advantage of the brief surge of interest in Haiti that coincided with the Franco-Haitian Accord, Hugo reworked the short story into a novel. In this version, he maintained the death march scene, adding a few significant changes. The addition of one phrase generalizes the setting as one of many similarly picturesque locations on the island; the aforementioned torrent now "streamed into one of those blue lakes that are so plentiful in the interior of the Saint Domingue mornes."[24] In this version, the narrator is overcome with emotion in the reminiscence, exclaiming, "how beautiful this valley seemed to me!"[25] In addition to the sycamore maples, he describes "dense clumps of *mauritias*—a variety of palm that prevents any other vegetation from growing under its cover," another example of the island's fertility undermining itself.[26] He adds "date trees; magnolias with their broad calyces; large catalpas showing off their glossy, jagged leaves against the golden blossoms of the laburnum trees."[27] Ultimately, like other authors attempting to convey the almost supernatural beauty of the colony, he resorts to mythic metaphor, saying, "from every corner of this virgin soil there arose a

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[23] Victor Hugo, "Appendix A: Bug-Jargal" in *Bug Jargal*, trans. Bongie, 241–242.
[24] Hugo, *Bug Jargal*, trans. Bongie, 180.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.

primitive perfume like the one that the first man must have breathed as he smelled the first roses of Eden."[28]

Initial responses to *Bug-Jargal* were mixed. Among other complaints, reviewers took issue with the author's exaggerated depiction of the sublime setting. One 1826 review referred to the "strenuous effort on his part at conveying to us some sense of a world that he has never observed, and which forces him to resort to botanical nomenclature in order to give us some image of the world."[29] Another accused Hugo of simply emulating the Edenic depictions of the Americas popularized by Chateaubriand in his novellas *Atala* (1801) and *René* (1802), saying "if he wants to represent a location in the New World, he copies the descriptive style of Monsieur Chateaubriand, sketching brilliant but unimaginable pictures and inventing impossible landscapes."[30] Unfavourable reviews notwithstanding, literate French people read the book when it was published, and they continued to read it throughout the century. As Hugo's celebrity grew, subsequent editions of *Bug-Jargal* appeared in 1829, 1834, and 1876, and it was adapted for the stage in 1880. In a review of the stage adaptation, sixty years after the title first appeared in print, one reviewer began thus: "Have you read *Bug-Jargal*? It's likely."[31] It was a well-known story by a celebrated author, and its impact on French views of their former colony must have been considerable. As a result, mythic depictions of Saint-Domingue's supernatural bounty seeped deeper into French popular memory of the lost colony and into the ongoing structures of attitude and reference regarding Haiti.

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[28] Ibid.
[29] B. d'E, quoted in Chris Bongie, "Appendix D: Contemporary Reviews" in Hugo, *Bug Jargal*, trans. Bongie, 281.
[30] Anonymous, quoted in Chris Bongie, "Appendix D" in Hugo, *Bug Jargal*, trans. Bongie, 278.
[31] Cornélius, "Chronique Théatrale," *Le Presse Illustré*, 21 November 1880, 2.

As time wore on, and as Haitian independence grew more and more stable, French visitors to the island were continually struck by the undiminished beauty and fertility of their former colony. F. Eldin, a missionary who had spent over a decade in Haiti in the 1860s and 1870s, published an account of his travels in 1878. He recounts his impressions on travelling through the Artibonite valley in the country's central region:

> the gigantic trees, the dense forests, the thick vines profusely sprouting branches, flowers and fruit everywhere attested to the excellence of the earth. Lush greenery stretched out in every direction; a warm, easy breeze, after becoming saturated, in this abyss of foliage, with the perfume of flower and fruit, greeted us with its fragrant emanations... The trees sighed under the spell of the day's wind, the river murmured, and the tropical heat fertilized and nourished the prodigious vegetation.[32]

Later, when visiting the southern town of Léogane, he is once again struck by the beauty of the landscape:

> The plain that surrounds Léogane and which bears its name is admirable in terms of its vegetation and its fertility. Traversed by a great river, watered by a large number of springs which spout from the mornes that surround it, it could, if needed, be entirely irrigated.[33]

His reminiscences then turn to a reflection on the contemporary waste of the country's prodigious resources, lamenting what might have been. He says,

> The French had benefitted from all of these resources, and one still sees remains of sugar refineries and distilleries they had established. Immense cauldrons, pipes and bells are scattered here and there; the canals they had carved strew their useless waters and produce malevolent marshes.[34]

And, once again, we see the island, in the absence of systematic agricultural oversight, consumed by its own fertility:

> The cane fields of old are invaded by logwood forests or wild plants; the Blacks only cultivate a few parcels of these rich and fecund properties, where they haphazardly scatter

[32] F. Eldin, *Haïti: Treize ans de séjour aux Antilles* (Toulouse: Société des livres religieux, 1878), 138.
[33] Ibid., 203.
[34] Ibid.

> seeds, planting lettuce, radish, bananas, potatoes, sugarcane, manioc, etc. They hardly need to exert themselves in order to live.[35]

Eldin's book thus reiterated and reinforced the idea of Haiti as a lost agricultural paradise that was still current in France nearly eighty years after the colony declared its independence.

It is evident, then, that by the last decades of the nineteenth century, informed French society still clung to the notion of an island that was supernaturally endowed with the capacity to bear fruit. This narrative began with Columbus and echoed through the colonial period and continued to shape French understandings of the country long after Haiti had declared its independence. Its soil was rich, its lakes and rivers apparently tailor-made to serve as vast irrigation systems, its vegetation seemed to explode out of the earth. Saint-Domingue was cast in mythic terms from the beginning. But this was not the only thing people in France knew about Haiti. They also knew it was relatively poor, which confronted them with a paradox. If the island was simply bursting with agricultural capacity, surely the merest effort would turn it into one of the richest countries in the world. Of course, the reasons for Haiti's decline into poverty were numerous and complex and included variables like soil degradation, trade embargoes, the impracticality of large-scale sugar cultivation in the absence of slavery, exploitation at the hands of foreigners through unfavourable trade arrangements and through the crippling debt accrued under the terms of the Franco-Haitian Accord of 1825. But for the French in the nineteenth century, as suggested in Eldin's final quote above, the explanation fell on the Haitians themselves.

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[35] Ibid., 203–204.

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Imagining Haitians in Nineteenth-Century France

Throughout the nineteenth century, Western notions of race changed rapidly as scientists and philosophers strove to bring meaning to an increasingly interconnected planet. Ideas about race in nineteenth-century France have received much academic attention.[1] These studies, however, tend to begin in the second half of the nineteenth century as scientific racism and the second French colonial empire started to take shape. They therefore pertain mainly to French experiences in Africa and Southeast Asia, or to immigrant life in continental France (chiefly Paris), and thus pay little attention to Haiti. Although Marlene Daut went a long way to filling this gap with her *Tropics of Haiti*, analyses of the role that Haiti played in French racial thinking have been quite limited. In this section, it is not my intention to provide an exhaustive analysis of French racial thinking in general. Instead, I will highlight key examples from France's nineteenth-century literary and academic corpus and popular press in order to demonstrate how the Haitian people figured into French popular imagination in the century following Haitian independence.

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[1] See, for example, Pascal Blanchard et al., eds., *Colonial Culture in France since the Revolution* (Bloomington; Indianapolis: University of Indiana Press, 2014); Alice Conklin, *In the Museum of Man: Race, Anthropology, and Empire in France, 1850-1950* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2013); Dana S. Hale, *Races on Display: French Representations of Colonized Peoples, 1886-1940* (Bloomington; Indianapolis: University of Indiana Press, 2008); Pratima Prasad, *Colonialism, Race, and the Romantic Imagination* (New York; London: Routledge, 2009): Tyler Stovall, *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light* (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1996).

Specifically, I will look at five tropes that were characteristic of French portrayals of the Haitian people in the nineteenth century. The "savage hordes" trope emerged in the colonial and revolutionary periods and portrayed Haiti's masses as sub-human and depraved. The "noble savage" trope singled out individual Haitians—fictional or actual—as virtuous in order to contrast and reinforce the more typical brutality of the rest of the population. The "mulatto volatility" trope described mixed-race Haitians as an unstable combination of the best and worst human attributes. The "indolence" trope characterized the post-independence Haitian population as overwhelmingly lazy and pegged the country's failure to revive the plantation system on this fault in the Haitian temperament. And finally, Haitians in the independence period were lampooned via the "European pretentions" trope, which ridiculed Haitian leaders, whether republican or monarchical, of playacting European culture despite their inherent inferiority. Each of these patterns was disseminated through specialist and popular publications and served to crystalize a narrowly defined structure of attitude and reference toward Haiti within the French national imagination just as a French national identity was taking shape.

When depicting the Haitian people as a group, particularly in the Revolutionary era, the standard description was of a mass of brutes, scarcely human at all. Early fictional works dealing with the Haitian Revolution tended to emphasize the brutality of the slave insurrection and the victimization of honest planters (and their wives and daughters in particular). One of the earliest dramatized accounts of the Revolution, Mademoiselle de Palaiseau's popular novella *Histoire de mesdemoiselles de Saint-Janvier, les deux seules blanches sauvées du massacre de Saint-Domingue* (1812), is archetypical of the genre. In an introduction to the third edition (the first run sold out in fifteen days, the second within three months), the publisher quotes a contemporary

racial theorist to account for the unfathomable scenes of horror within the book's pages: "By their nature and their existence… *nègres*, like other savages, belong to the family of ferocious animals."[2] The events at Saint-Domingue, he continues, are the ultimate embodiment of this "horrible conformity of inclinations and of customs."[3] Works along this line were reproduced frequently throughout the century: Alexandre de Saillet's *Lucile de Saint-Albe* (1848), V. Denancé's *La Famille de Martel le planteur* (1865), Julie Gouraud's *Les Deux enfants de Saint-Domingue* (1874) and Madame A. Fresneau's *Thérèse à Saint-Domingue* (1888), to name a few.

Inevitably, the "rebellion of African savages" narrative was not limited to fictional works. In one of the earliest histories of the Haitian Revolution, Antoine Métral's 1818 tome *L'Histoire de l'insurrection des esclaves dans le nord de Saint-Domingue*, the author offered an explanation for the brutal insurrection. Initially, he refers to the important role of "the love of liberty that is found in all men."[4] This apparent position on a shared human nature, however, is immediately spoilt when he goes on to say that "even the beasts" display a boundless desire for liberty.[5] Métral sketches out a collection of supposed essential African temperaments, which were nonetheless forged into a generalized barbarity under the yoke of slavery. He presents the differences between the Blacks of Saint-Domingue originating, as they did, in various regions of Africa. To some he is relatively sympathetic, noting their beauty and industriousness; others are naturally indolent, reserved or given to flight; still others have "a character of ferocity which leads them to eat human flesh."[6] Whatever their essential differences, Métral explains that "slavery altered their primitive character… and as these *nègres* passed from their savage nature

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[2] Anonymous, introduction to *Histoire de mesdemoiselles de Saint-Janvier, les deux seules blanches sauvées du massacre de Saint-Domingue*, by Madame de Palaiseau, 3rd ed. (Paris: J. J. Blaise, 1812), 15-16.
[3] Ibid., 16.
[4] Métral, *L'Histoire de l'insurrection*, 9.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid., 45.

to their corrupted nature, their virtues changed to vice and their vices to crimes."[7] For Métral, then, the brutality of the insurrection was still due to the insurgents' "primitive" African nature, but this nature was further degraded by their experiences under the institution of slavery.

Despite essentializing views of a supposed African temperament, it was not uncommon for fictional works to include a virtuous Black character, often rescuing a white figure from certain death at the hands of rampaging Black hordes. Far from being a concession to racial equality, this noble savage figure is notable for being an anomaly, ultimately serving to emphasize his more typically brutal fellows by contrast. In Palaiseau's novel, for example, when a Black general named Diakué is tasked with massacring Madame Saint-Janvier and her two young daughters, the white woman pleads for the general to at least spare her children. At this point another soldier "chops off her head, which, detaching from her body, falls into the arms of her unhappy daughters, and douses them with the blood of their unfortunate mother."[8] Diakué proceeds to distinguish himself from his blood-thirsty subordinates by honouring Madame Saint-Janvier's request. In order to do so, however, he must execute an elaborate ruse:

> Diakué, pretending to want to reserve for himself the honour of massacring the two last whites that remained at Cap, said to the *Noirs*: 'Soldiers, you have had the satisfaction of killing a larger number of these whites, it is fitting that your general also plays his part.' That instant, he dragged the two children back to his house in a seemingly ferocious manner, yelling that it would be his pleasure to kill them, and that they would never recover.[9]

Thus, Diakué manages to save the girls by enacting a performance of the supposedly barbaric inclinations of his race and appealing to the bloodthirstiness of his comrades. It is difficult to imagine a more cynical instance of the noble savage trope.

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[7] Ibid., 46.
[8] Palaiseau, *Mesdemoiselles*, 57-58.
[9] Ibid., 58-59.

The twin tropes of "savage hordes" and "noble savage" certainly figure into Hugo's widely read version of the Haitian Revolution and thus disseminated more broadly through French society. The titular character is a classic example of the noble savage archetype, serving to contrast with and amplify the barbarity of the other Black characters. Amid the bloody insurrection, Bug-Jargal's comportment "was in singular contrast with the ferocity of the others."[10] Whereas the other Black figures "devised any number of ways to kill the prisoners who fell into their hands, Bug-Jargal made every effort to furnish them with the means to get off the island."[11] Bug-Jargal is shown to be selfless and heroic; he falls in love with a white woman, Marie, and then saves her life by helping her escape with her white fiancé, the protagonist, D'Auverney. Again, toward the end of the story, Bug-Jargal saves Marie and D'Auverney from his fellow ex-slaves and he loses his own life in the process.

The reactions of Hugo's contemporary reviewers give an indication of the racial attitudes that existed in France at the time. As noted, *Bug-Jargal* met a tepid reception when it was first published as a novel in 1826, and one of the problems with the work, according to reviewers, had to do with the contrast between Bug-Jargal and the other Black characters. For slightly different reasons, critics of different political stripes were uncomfortable with Hugo's portrayal of the titular character as a virtuous Black man. One wrote in the left-leaning *Revue encyclopédique* that "the assumption on which the novel is based is one that is scarcely to be found in nature: a black man head over heels in love with a white woman, and who manages to be both gallantly respectful and ardently passionate."[12] He adds that there was "something jarring about Bug-

[10] Hugo, *Bug-Jargal*, 103.
[11] Ibid.
[12] C. A. Chauvet quoted in Chris Bongie, "Appendix D" in Hugo, *Bug Jargal*, trans. Bongie, 285.

Jargal's chivalrous magnanimity in a book where his race is represented as being so worthy of contempt."[13] The noble savage figure, in his opinion, was unbelievable.

Another reviewer wrote in the staunchly conservative *Le Drapeau blanc* that he was willing to forgive Hugo for including the improbable Bug-Jargal because of the literary merits of the character and his role in the story. He explains that "the main character, Bug-Jargal, is perhaps fantastical in certain respects, but he does move and interest the reader. The contrast between this negro and those monsters of cruelty and debauchery who go by the names of Biassou and Rigaud sets the imagination at rest and reconciles it with human nature."[14] In other words, he believes Bug-Jargal is important to the story as he serves to underscore the more typical brutality of the other Black characters. He goes on to explain the impossibility of such a character existing in the real world, saying, "one can scarcely accustom oneself to a Congo negro who is represented as a model of greatness, heroism, sensibility, and who is draped in a character that is, as it were, positively chivalrous. Representing him in this way is to grant the African race a capacity for advanced civilization that it in no way possesses."[15] In the end, he concedes that Hugo's creative liberties were justified for the sake of the work: "we do not blame Monsieur Victor Hugo for having painted his hero in the most glittering colours, thereby placing him beyond the jurisdiction of too commonplace and trivial a truth."[16] In short, for the reviewer in *Le Drapeau blanc*, the noble savage trope was, indeed, a mere trope—an effective literary invention, but one with no corresponding reality.

A third commentator, writing for the liberal *Globe*, took the opposite view. He believed a person like Bug-Jargal could well exist in reality, but, from a strictly literary perspective, the

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[13] Ibid.
[14] B. d'E, quoted in Bongie, "Appendix D" in Hugo, *Bug Jargal*, trans. Bongie, 281–282.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.

charter was unsatisfactory. Specifically, he thought Hugo should have made Bug-Jargal's "African nature" more evident. In his words, he was "not of the opinion that there is any fine quality which is inaccessible to the African race," and he allowed that Hugo had "every right to make a hero out of his negro."[17] Yet he believed that Hugo had missed an opportunity to construct a more dynamic character by emphasizing Bug-Jargal's triumph over his "savage" nature. He explains:

> What I would have liked is a hero characterized by the contrast between an uncultivated and a generous attitude, between a ferocious and a merciful disposition, between ignorance and genius. I would like to see how a good, energetic nature overcame in him the flaws arising from his servile upbringing and the habits acquired as a result of this. Alongside his virtues and his noble instincts—the blatant signs of his distinction among men—I would have liked to have witnessed him struggling with the unbridled needs and brutal passions that reveal a man who is still a slave and half wild, and which would stand as the proof of his origin and the mark of his chains. A great negro man must be, as has been said of a Shakespearean tragedy, a mixture of the sublime and the uncouth.[18]

From the perspective of the *Globe*'s critic, then, the underlying reality was irrelevant. As he saw it, Hugo's chief loyalty should be to his literary craft, even if it meant depicting a Black character according to a narrow set of essentializing and potentially harmful tropes.

If these three reviewers are representative, we can draw two conclusions about French attitudes about Haitians and about people from Africa generally. First, there was an underlying belief in an essential African temperament. Secondly, while some believed this temperament was unsurmountable, others thought African people could be "redeemed" by an adherence to French cultural norms. Nevertheless, even the rare "civilized" African would be expected to slip back into the "uncouth" aspects of his nature at any moment. Thus, in all but the most singular cases, "unbridled needs and brutal passions,"—an imagined, essential Africanness—was the predominant fact shaping of the personalities of the people of Haiti collectively and individually.

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[17] Anonymous, quoted in Bongie, "Appendix D" in Hugo, *Bug Jargal*, trans. Bongie, 277.
[18] Ibid.

It was not only Saint-Domingue's Black population that was maligned in nineteenth-century French writing; descriptions of the country's mixed-race minority often figured into French accounts of the country and tended to follow a regular pattern. In this period, the great age of classification, French intellectuals and colonial administrators (like their counterparts in other European empires) attempted to systematize a taxonomy for various racial combinations. An excerpt from Moreau de Saint-Méry's influential *Description topographique, physique, civile, politique et historique de la partie française de l'isle de Saint-Domingue* (1789) shows the obsessiveness with which some writers dedicated themselves to this issue: "while the *Quarteron* has ¾ of the White and ¼ of the *Nègre*, the *Griffe* has ¾ of the *Nègre* and ¼ of the White; and while the *Métis* has ⅞ of the White and ⅛ of the Black, the *Sacatra* has ⅞ of the Black and ⅛ of the White."[19] For philosophical and socio-political reasons, many intellectuals in this era were apparently obsessed with this type of blood taxonomy.

Like many of his contemporaries, Moreau de Saint-Méry believed that these gradations determined constitution and character to a large degree. He states, for example, that mixed-race people were "of a pleasant form, and quite intelligent, but they go as far as the *nègres*, in terms of indolence and the love of rest," and that "the *Mulâtre* loves pleasure; it is his only master, but this master is despotic."[20] He grants that there are, nevertheless, hardworking mixed-race people, but that "the facility with which we count them supports the general observation."[21] Likewise, he says of mixed-race women, "the entire being of *Mulâtresses* is given over to delight," and that

[19] Médéric Louis Élie Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description topographique, physique, civile, politique et historique de la partie française de l'île de Saint-Domingue*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: n. pub., 1789), 89.
[20] Ibid., 90.
[21] Ibid.

"the poison of love is more active among *Mulâtresse* than among other women."[22] Again, he allows for exceptions, saying his reader should not "conclude, from what I am saying about the habits of *Mulâtresse*, that there are none who know virtue… But these exceptions are, unfortunately, quite rare."[23] In the end, he concludes that "the People of colour are, in general, good and susceptible of elevation in their soul… They are quite hospitable, and if they can vanquish their indolence, the Colonies would possess in them precious beings."[24] Despite allowances for exceptions to the rule, Moreau de Saint-Méry's depiction of Saint-Domingue's mixed-race population is of a largely homogenous group whose disposition can be generalized.

One of the recurrent ways mixed-race Haitians were characterized was by their supposed volatility; they were frequently conceived as an irreconcilable blend of humanity's best and worst attributes. On the one hand they were praised for their beauty and intelligence, while in the same breath being accused of craftiness, vice, and a propensity toward violence. Marlene Daut explains that "formal debates about 'racial mixing' acted in the popular consciousness to produce people of colour as at once fascinating objects of study, desirable sexual partners, and dangerously degraded and volatile specimens of the New World to be feared, enslaved, or destroyed."[25] Ideas about the risks inherent in racial mixing were already in existence in the colonial period. Père Labat, for instance, provided an early description of the paradoxes of miscegenation in his 1722 publication, saying, "the *Mulâtres* are normally well made, of a good height, vigorous, skillful, industrious and unimaginably hardy; they are highly vivacious, and yet

[22] Ibid., 92, 94.
[23] Ibid., 94.
[24] Ibid., 98.
[25] Daut, *Tropics*, 7.

they are indulgent to their pleasures, they are fickle, secretive, mean and capable of the greatest crimes."[26]

Unsurprisingly, the "mulatto volatility" trope grew more prevalent during and after the revolution. As we saw in chapter 1, the inherent volatility ascribed to mixed-race people was invoked as a primary cause of revolution itself. The imagined negative/African inclinations of mixed-race Haitians were thought to have won out over their more positive/European attributes. In their pamphlets, the ex-planters often framed the "*mulâtre* aristocracy" as the masterminds behind the uprising and as the main beneficiaries of the French exodus. One wrote in 1805 that the mixed-race Haitians "owed their lives and properties to the whites, and were at the same time despoilers and parricides," adding, "in all of their conduct, the *mulâtres* considered in general, have demonstrated to their supposed friends in the metropole their evil inclinations, their incapacity and their deceitfulness, and have lost the pity of the men of good faith who had accused whites of injustice and harshness toward them."[27] "It is a proverb in all of the Antilles," another former planter wrote in 1822, "that the *mulâtres* have all of the defects, all of the vices of the two colours, without having any of their virtues."[28]

An extreme example of the "mulatto volatility" trope appears in Hugo's *Bug-Jargal*. The character Habibrah is described as a hideous mixed-race dwarf, "one of those creatures whose physical configuration is so strange that they would seem like monsters, if it weren't that they made one laugh."[29] While Bug-Jargal himself is the rare example of Black nobility, Habibrah, the *griffe* (three quarters Black), is an archetype of miscegenation in its most volatile form. Before the insurrection begins, Habibrah is depicted living a life of comfort, acting as a jester in

[26] Labat, *Nouveau voyage* vol. 6, 120–121; Daut, *Tropics*, 74.
[27] Abeille, "Essai," 6–7.
[28] Anonymous, *Cri des colons*, 7.
[29] Hugo, *Bug-Jargal*, 68.

the household of the protagonist's uncle. His only tasks are to fan flies away from his master and keep him entertained. He dresses in "ridiculous outfits—gaudily strewn with ribbons and sprinkled with little bells."[30] Despite his proximity to the plantation owner, Habibrah never advocates on behalf of the field slaves. In fact, the narrator adds, "he was overheard one day, when he believed himself to be alone with my uncle, encouraging him to show even more severity toward his unfortunate fellow slaves."[31] And yet, when the revolution begins, Habibrah murders his master without compunction and reveals himself to a bloodthirsty villain and one of the chief architects of the insurrection.

An early reviewer described Habibrah as the personification of "the hateful, deformed, cruel aspect of human nature, a swelling evil," while another called him "a monster of sorts, and a jester, who cold-bloodedly cuts the throat of a master whom he has spent twenty years entertaining and who with unbending cruelty hunts down the whites whose abject servant he has been."[32] In addition to being hideous and violent, Habibrah is also supremely eloquent, able to describe his abject humiliation clearly and persuasively. Thus, for the latter critic, Habibrah comes across as contrived. As he notes, "the laboured nature of this character makes itself felt. He is not a living man but, rather, the product of a convention, the means to an end."[33] Conversely, the reviewer is more convinced when another mixed-race character, driven by fear for his own survival, is forced to murder a white prisoner in cold blood. He says, "the struggle of pity and love of life that goes on inside this wretched mulatto—the mixture of cowardice, remorse, shame, and egotism when he throws himself upon his victim… strikes one as both

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[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve, quoted in Bongie, "Appendix D" in Hugo, *Bug Jargal*, trans. Bongie, 290; Anonymous, quoted in Bongie, "Appendix D" in Hugo, *Bug Jargal*, trans. Bongie, 278.
[33] Anonymous, quoted in Bongie, "Appendix D" in Hugo, *Bug Jargal*, trans. Bongie, 278.

terrible and true."[34] Clearly, Hugo's readers had preconceived notions regarding mixed-race characters, and they judged Hugo's literary craft in light of these prejudices.

Again, Hugo was articulating attitudes that existed at the time, but, thanks to his growing celebrity, he also served to entrench them further into his country's national consciousness. Sixty years later, the eminent Haitian anthropologist Anténor Firmin reflected on Hugo's dialectical engagement with ideas about race, specifically noting the mixed-race villain in *Bug-Jargal*. He describes the disdain that mixed-race people have long endured:

> If the Black has always been disfavoured by the white race, if they have long considered the *mulâtre* a monstrous being, the *griffe*, is he not, in the end, the sacrificial lamb of all of his childish racial theories and prejudices and which, for want of illumination and contradiction, ended up mixed into the current of science?[35]

He then goes on to implicate Hugo's *Bug-Jargal* as both a symptom and a source of this prejudice:

> The poet, despite his genius, even in virtue of his genius, is always the faithful reflection of the thinking of his century… In *Bug-Jargal*, Victor Hugo wanted to make obvious the character of all the varieties of humans represented by his heroes. He shows the white as generous, the Black poetically noble; but he makes the *griffe* the most hideous being. Habibrah, whom he presents as a *griffe*, is physically ugly and deformed; morally, he is grouchy, cowardly, envious and hateful.[36]

Finally, Firmin notes that *Bug-Jargal* is a work of juvenilia, which must partly account for the lack of nuance in his depiction of characters of colour. Still, he concludes, this can be considered a further indication that such "ambient ideas" were widely current in Hugo's society.[37]

It goes without saying that Firmin, who actually knew Black and mixed-race people from all walks of life, considered these racial theories to be utter nonsense. In his words, neither

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[34] Ibid.
[35] Anténor Firmin, *De l'égalité des races humaines: anthropologie positive* (Paris: F. Pichon, 1885), 303.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.

griffes nor *mulâtres* "deserved the reputation for cowardice and envious ignorance that Caucasian prejudice has ascribed to them."[38] "In Haiti," he continues,

> where the experience of *métissage* occurs at all degrees, spontaneously and naturally, we find no fewer intelligent and remarkably organized men, among the *griffes*, than among any other varieties of the human species. Among the… different combinations that are produced from the *mulâtre* and the Black, one can encounter personalities of the highest intellectual and moral distinction.[39]

But in nineteenth-century France, where hardly anyone encountered people of colour day-to-day, imagined personality traits of mixed-race Haitians percolated through the national imagination. Conveniently, they helped explain away the uncomfortable history of the loss of Saint-Domingue, as we have seen.

As the Haitian Revolution receded into memory, and the country's independence was finally secured via the Franco-Haitian Accord, another picture of the Haitian masses grew to rival the "savage hordes" trope. The masses were still described as uncivilized and violent, but increasingly they were also characterized as indolent. Again, this was an old standard. The French naturalist Justin Girod-Chantrans, who spent time in Saint-Domingue, had mused on the character of enslaved and Free People of Colour in the colony in a book he published in 1785. In it, he notes that in Europe, poor people had no choice but to work the land in order to eke out a living, saying, "in Europe, where the earth is only cultivated with great effort, where taxes are considerable, winter rigorous and families numerous, the man of the people is constrained to work continually for fear of extreme poverty."[40] In Saint-Domingue, on the other hand the

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[38] Ibid., 314.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Justin Girod-Chantrans, *Voyage d'un Suisse dans différents colonies d'Amérique pendant la dernière guerre; avec un table d'observations météorologiques faites à Saint-Domingue* (Neuchâtel: Société Typographique, 1785), 205.

enslaved masses had no reason to develop an inclination to work. He says, "the slaves of Saint-Domingue, whose masters give them material for clothing, and to whom the earth gives sustenance free of taxes and free of proprietors, oppressed by the heat of the climate, and furthermore by the daily tasks on the habitation from which they derive no profit, naturally dislike work and prefer rest to movement."[41] This idea that Haiti's natural bounty engendered a reluctance to work became deeply entrenched in France.

But, according to Girod-Chantrans, it was not only the enslaved population who was reluctant to work. He notes that the "free *nègres*, who do not have the same reasons for indolence, incline nonetheless toward idleness in a striking manner."[42] He explains that the working class in the colony exists in a state of opprobrium, which gives labour a demeaning association. As a result, he concludes, "the freedmen who are able to live without exerting effort, hope only to enjoy rest, and they carry idleness to an extreme as soon as they have the means to do so."[43] Girod-Chantrans was emphatic that the general disinclination toward work was not "a defect in the foresight and in the mind" of Saint-Domingue's non-white population, but "derived naturally from their specific moral and physical circumstances."[44] It was circumstantial, and not based in essential racial characteristics.

Whatever its cause, as time went on the indolence of the masses of independent Haiti came to be regarded as an established fact. With the country's economic decline through the nineteenth century, the people's unwillingness to work was constantly cited as one of the primary causes of the collapse of the plantation system and of Haiti's consequent poverty. In actuality, the end of plantation agriculture was bred from the formerly enslaved masses' rejection

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[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid., 205–206.
[43] Ibid., 206.
[44] Ibid., 206–207.

of the routines of their dehumanizing past. Faced with the option to return to the field, albeit for a daily wage, Haitians overwhelmingly chose instead to become smallholders engaged in subsistence agriculture and small-scale production for market. In the words of one Haitian historian in the nineteenth century, "to choose dignified precariousness, instead of—and in the face of—a false comfort within humiliation and shame, was the expression of knowledge gained from experiencing irrational exploitation conjoined with harassment."[45] This preference to tend one's own plot rather than be subject to the degrading and backbreaking conditions of labour in cane fields seemed to foreign observers as proof of widespread Haitian indolence.

Conflicting views of Haiti's agricultural labour system also provoked accusations of indolence in Haiti itself, thereby reinforcing the belief in France. Early Haitian leaders envisioned the resurgence of largescale agriculture in Haiti and were thus forced to contend with the contrary desires of Haiti's masses. When slavery was first abolished in 1793, Léger-Félicité Sonthonax's proclamation instructed former slaves to "not believe, however, that the liberty that you will enjoy consist of a state of laziness and idleness," adding that "in France, everyone is free, but everyone works."[46] Toussaint Louverture, Jean-Jacques Dessalines and Henri Christophe all attempted to revive the plantation system, balancing combinations of wage labour and coercion to keep the Haitian people on the plantations.

When Henri Christophe was president and then king of the northern half of Haiti between 1807 and 1820, his vision for Haitian recovery was delineated in the massive "Code Henry," which called for a return to plantation agriculture, though on a more humane basis. Workers

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[45] Jean Casimir, *The Haitians: A Decolonial History*, translated by Laurent Dubois (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 129. See also: Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World* (Cambridge, MA & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 106; Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Haiti: State Against Nation* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1990), 43–44, 74–75.
[46] Léger Félicité Sonthonax, "Proclamation," 29 August 1793.

would be paid for their labour, but they would be forced to remain on the plantations and could be punished for leaving or for shirking their responsibilities. The Code stated that "the law punishes idlers and vagabonds," and that "begging is severely prohibited; all idlers, beggars, women of bad lives and morals, drifters in the towns, villages or highways will be arrested by the police to be returned to their habitations."[47] Unfortunately, these portions of the Code Henry—based, as they were, on particular vision of how free Haitians should be spending their time—propagated the idea that Haitians were disinclined to work.[48]

For the ex-planter pamphleteers, inherent "African" indolence was at the heart of their argument that Saint-Domingue's prosperity could only be rebuilt if European control was re-established. The Count of Léaumont, who had been born in the colony, was one of the more prolific pamphleteers demanding reconquest or reparations. He wrote in 1825 that, "the former prosperity of the colony will be reborn by the return of European activity and industry, which the indolent African needs in order to use the action of his strong arms, and to offer to his imitative character a good and useful example to follow."[49] In another pamphlet, Léaumont said, "the *nègre*, accustomed to seeing lands made productive only by slaves, has remained convinced that to force him to work is to rob him of his liberty, because unfortunately his indolent and lazy character leads him to believe that liberty ends where work begins."[50] Once the indemnity had been secured, another former planter predicted a dire future for the country, saying, "the *nègres*, left to themselves, are falling back into their native indolence: the great business of their lives is

[47] Code Henry, "Loi Concernant la Culture," Chapter 2, Art. 17, 19.
[48] Dubois, *Aftershocks*, 65–68; Casimir, *Haitians*, 168.
[49] Jean Suzanne de Léaumont, *Note sur l'indemnité accordée aux anciens habitans de Saint-Domingue* (1825), 3.
[50] Jean Suzanne de Léaumont, *Lettre de M. le Cte de Léaumont à son excellence monseigneur le Comte de Villèle, président du Conseil des Ministres* (1825), 3.

to sleep during the day and dance the *bamboula* during at night; and when they feel hunger, a few bananas that can be obtained without effort are sufficient."[51]

As the century progressed, and as Haitian indolence came to be more and more accepted as a fact, some writers felt the need to oppose such received wisdom. In his 1843 tome *Colonies étrangères et Haïti*, the French abolitionist Victor Schœlcher—who, unlike the vast majority of his compatriots, had actually been to Haiti—wrote that, "in my eyes, it has become an out-dated prejudice to talk about the instinctive laziness of the *nègres*, and to claim that they rest as soon as they have anything to eat." As an example of Black industriousness, he recalls meeting, "in our nocturnal wanderings, *nègres* travelling to the market at nighttime in order not to lose the day, and travelling six or seven leagues to find the best outlet for their products."[52] As Marlene Daut has demonstrated, Schœlcher was by no means exempt from the racial biases of his day.[53] Elsewhere in the same work, in fact, he suggests that Haitians exhibit "the laziness common to all men and above all to former slaves."[54] But he nevertheless insisted this was a result of the post-slavery culture, and, in any case, an essentially human attribute.

Haitians, too, opposed the allegation. The Haitian historian Beaubrun Ardouin, in a volume of his massive history of Haiti published in Paris in 1853, explained the misconception at the heart of the idea of Haitian laziness:

> The natural wish of all men who work with their hands is to acquire a property, a plot of this land that he fertilizes with his sweat: he wants *isolated work* that will not permit great exploitation as under the former colonial regime; this situation has prompted monstrous accusations against the Blacks, who are imputed an instinctive laziness, since the Antilles have long and habitually been considered fields that must always produce immense riches.[55]

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[51] Anonymous, *Sur l'indépendance de Saint-Domingue, et sur l'indemnité due aux anciens habitants de cette colonie* (1826), 31.
[52] Victor Schœlcher, *Colonies étrangères et Haïti*, vol. 1 (Paris: Pagnerre, 1843), 105.
[53] Daut, *Tropics*, 524–533.
[54] Schœlcher, *Colonies*, vol. 2, 148.
[55] Beaubrun Ardouin, *Études sur l'histoir d'Haïti*, vol. 4 (Paris: Dezorby & E. Magdeleine, 1853), 403–404. Italics in original.

Elsewhere, Ardouin is emphatic that to misconstrue the preference for "isolated work" on small-scale plots as laziness is "to support the slander spread by the colonial faction against people of the Black race," adding that, "it is almost the same as justifying the monstrous regime against which they revolted."[56] But Schœlcher and Ardouin were in a minority in France. Half a century after Haiti had abolished slavery and embarked on new modes of labour and property ownership, both writers were compelled to respond to the more typical view that Haiti's masses were characteristically indolent.

French writers continued to repeat the indolence trope into the second half of the nineteenth century, bolstered by the era's flourishing racial theories. The leading French proponent of these theories was Arthur de Gobineau, who has been referred to as "a seminal figure in the history of European racism."[57] In his famous tome *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, published in the same city and in the same year as Ardouin's *Histoire d'Haïti*, Gobineau attempted to systematically dismantle any notion of equality between the races. His family history is murky, but it seems likely that his background informed his racial theories. His maternal grandmother was a "Créole from Saint-Domingue," who emigrated to Bordeaux sometime in the late eighteenth century and had a daughter named Anne-Louise-Madeleine de Gercy.[58] De Gercy married Louis de Gobineau in 1810 and "brought him… nothing but the memories of a great fortune that had totally evaporated."[59] Accounts are scant, but it seems likely that Madame de Gobineau's poverty was the result of the loss of property in Saint-Domingue. Gobineau despised

[56] Ardouin, *Histoire*, vol. 2, (), 322.
[57] Michael D. Biddiss, *The Father of Racist Ideology: The Social and Political Thought of Count Gobineau* (New York: Weybright and Talley, 1970), 3.
[58] Bertier de Sauvigny, "Un témoin désabusé du XIXe siècle," *La Croix*, 2 January 1956, 4.
[59] Ibid.

his mother, who eloped with his tutor when Gobineau was still a child. One biographer has conjectured that anxiety over the possibility that his maternal line "had been tainted in the deeper past with some element of Negroid miscegenation" may have been an "important element in the evolution of the convictions behind the *Essai*."[60]

For Arthur de Gobineau, the ideas of Haiti, racial hierarchy and France's lost colonial glory were intertwined and personal. Never having set foot in the country (his nearest connection was though his wife, Clémence Gabrielle Monnerot, who was born in was Martinique), he described the Haitians of his imagination, informed by his family history and his white supremacist delusions. Manichean in his views of miscegenation—believing any virtue observed among Blacks was the result of white influence, while "African" blood invariable had a degenerating effect—Gobineau noted the "superior intelligence" of the mixed-race Haitians relative to their Black compatriots, saying "European blood modified the African nature, and these men, had they been melted into a white mass and with good models always before their eyes, could otherwise become useful citizens."[61] Black Haitians, conversely, were "unfortunately more numerous," and "although their grandparents, at the very nearest, knew the African soil, are still entirely subject to its influence."[62] This influence, according to Gobineau, could be summarized thus: "their supreme joy: laziness; their supreme reason: murder."[63] Contrary to many writers who had gone before, Gobineau framed the supposed Haitian indolence not as the effect of island's tropical climate or of the legacy of slavery, but of inherent "African" defects. In so doing, he reinforced the negative image of the Haitian people in the French popular imagination.

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[60] Biddiss, *Father*, 45.
[61] Arthur Gobineau, *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, vol. 1 (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1853), 80.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid., 80–81.

One final trope that grew in popularity as the nineteenth century progressed was an often-comedic depiction of Haitians' pretentions toward European culture. Free People of Colour in colonial Saint-Domingue, as noted, were often characterized as vain. This perceived vanity was, no doubt, partly based around the suffocating nature of Sanit-Domingue society for its non-white population. Their rights were circumscribed and were becoming more so throughout the eighteenth century.[64] In order to reinforce social distinctions based on race, laws prevented Free People of Colour from working in particular professions, prohibited certain modes of dress, and even restricted the names they were allowed to give their children.[65] When non-white individuals wore the wrong clothes—let alone demanded rights and professional opportunities—French observers interpreted it as an unacceptable ambition to rise above their station. As twentieth-century postcolonial theorists like Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi and Homi K. Bhabha have explored in detail, Europeans wrote the criteria for civilization and then criticized non-Europeans for even attempting to reach those standards.

From the French perspective, the revolution itself became a metaphor for the haughty ambitions of the Haitian people. The ex-planters made this clear in their pamphlets. They explained how the colony's non-white residents were usurpers. One, for example, declared that "Saint-Domingue's *mulâtres* stole the land and the people, and it is inconceivable that the French could come to terms with such immoral beings," adding that "never will a French monarch believe he has the right to despoil his faithful subjects, and to give to Africans a land cleared by Frenchmen."[66] As Haitian leaders established themselves as constitutional rulers (whether kings

[64] See John Garrigus, *Before Haiti: Race and Citizenship in French Saint-Domingue* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006).
[65] Dubois, *Avengers*, 62.
[66] M. D. A. L. F., *La Vérité sur Saint-Domingue et les Mulâtres* (Paris: Marchand du Breuil, 1824), 4, 5.

or presidents), when they adopted liberal constitutions, when they wrote poetry and academic treatises, French observers were quick to point out how ridiculous they were for imitating European forms. For many, the fact that they were Black or mixed-race meant they were only playacting at civilization. Instead of appreciating Haiti's early political and literary experiments as the work of a country attempting to find its footing in an antagonistic world, French observers found it easier to lampoon their efforts.

Two influential depictions of the Black Republic and its pretentions toward European civilization appeared in print in Paris in the 1850s. Both circulated widely. The first was a comic album published under the auspices of the humour magazine *Charivari* in April 1850. It was a series of sixty caricatures by the cartoonist Charles Amédée de Noé (better known as Cham) lampooning Haiti's then current head of state, Faustin Soulouque. The cartoons openly mocked the Haitian emperor and his court for their imperial style. The second, published three years later, was in Gobineau's aforementioned *Essai*. Along with his depictions of Haitian indolence, Gobineau expounded on the incapacity of the Haitian people to govern themselves according to Western standards. Despite the two works' different genres and audiences, they share a common representation of Haiti and its people, juxtaposing their authors' beliefs about Western civilization and African barbarity. The authors, in fact, had much in common. They were near exact contemporaries—Gobineau lived 1816-1882, Noé, 1818-1879—and each was the scion an obscure aristocratic family. Neither had ever set foot in Haiti, but, coincidentally, both had a direct family connection to the former colony.

As noted above, Gobineau's maternal grandmother had been born in the Saint-Domingue. As for Cham, his connection was through his paternal grandfather. Louis-Pantaléon de Noé was part owner of the Bréda plantation near Cap Français in northern Saint-Domingue—one of the

wealthiest plantations in the colony and, most famously, the birthplace of Toussaint Louverture. In 1789, Pantaléon de Noé was sent as a representative to the Estates-General where he and the other delegates from Saint-Domingue were snubbed.[67] By 1799, thanks to revolutions on both sides of the Atlantic, he was penniless and in exile in England. He wrote to Louverture for financial assistance before re-establishing himself in France around 1802. The events in Saint-Domingue cost him a fortune, and he ended up living on a military pension under Napoleon. He died in 1816. His children, (including Cham's father) received compensation of over 66,000 francs from the indemnity of 1825 when Cham was ten years old.[68] Cham grew up in comfort but surely learned about his family's former grandeur. Like Gobineau, Cham may well have harboured a family grudge against the former colony, which he unleashed in his sardonic caricatures of Soulouque in 1850.

A few examples will suffice to demonstrate the tone of Cham's comic album.[69] In one frame, Solouque hands a medal to a naked Black soldier, saying, "I order you to pin this decoration to your buttonhole."[70] In another, Empress Ourika is being attacked by monkeys dressed in frilled collars and feathered caps; the caption explains that the empress is obliged to suffer the mischief of her squires.[71] In yet another, Soulouque, "wanting to divorce," sends an ambassador to Austria to ask for the hand of one of the emperor's daughters. The ambassador, a Black man in a powdered wig, is received "with the honours due to his rank"; the illustration shows him being kicked in the backside out the door.[72] A final example shows a white dignitary

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[67] Dubois, *Avengers*, 74.
[68] Jean-Louis Donnadieu, *Un grand seigneur et ses escalves* (Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Midi, 2009), 237.
[69] These cartoons appear in Appendix 3.
[70] Cham [Amédée de Noé], *Solouque et sa cour* (Paris: Charivari, 1850), 2. Appendix 3, figure 1.
[71] Cham, *Soulouque*, 3. Incidentally, the Empresses's name was not Ourika, but Adélina Lévêque. Cham chose instead to give her the name of the titular, mixed-race heroine of Claire de Duras's 1824 novel, presumably because it sounded more exotic than Adélina. Appendix 3, figure 2.
[72] Cham, *Soulouque*, 8. Appendix 3, figure 3.

speaking to a Black woman dressed in shabby clothes and holding a broom. The man asks the woman, apparently the maid, if he can speak with the emperor. On being told that Soulouque is busy, he asks if he can have an audience with the empress. "*C'est moi*, *Monsieur*," is her reply.[73]

Some authors have pointed out that such satirical portrayals of Soulouque by Cham and others often served as a thinly veiled criticism of Napoleon III under the press censorship of the Second French Empire (1852–1870).[74] Regardless, Cham's cartoons popularized a durable image of Haiti and Haitians that had traction in nineteenth-century France. Nearly a decade later, the writer Paul Dhormoys, in his reminiscences of his visit to Haiti, remarked that "since Cham's pencil popularized the name of Soulouque in our country and placed this delicate monarch into a grotesque pantheon… it has been difficult to speak about this ebony emperor, *his country and his subjects* without laughing."[75] Beyond the emperor himself, the comic album made the country and its people into objects of ridicule. For decades, Soulouque's name could be invoked as a shorthand to malign the country. Twenty-years after the comic album (and thirteen years after Soulouque had been deposed), a Haitian named Dorsinville was arrested for fraud in Paris. A Parisian newspaper used the event reiterate the old larks about Soulouque. "Dorsinville," the author wrote,

> is the natural and unacknowledged son of one Auguste Nau, who, under the benevolent reign of Soulouque, was named a baron… In truth, this title does not signify much of anything… Soulouque, who was not satisfied just to look like a monkey physically, but also wanted to ape another sovereign [i.e. Napoleon III], this one European, from a background as common as his own, and who did not refrain from granting noble titles.[76]

[73] Ibid., 13. Appendix 3, figure 4.
[74] For example, Dubois, *Aftershocks*, 146.
[75] Dhormoys, *Visite chez Soulouque*, 3. Emphasis added.
[76] Quid Juris, "Tribunaux," *L'Office Industriel*, 1 April 1872, 1–2.

Long into the second half of the nineteenth century, Cham's Soulouque comics became a vital part of French imaginings about Haiti, fuelling tongue-in-cheek references and, by extension, a flippant attitude toward the country and its people.

In Gobineau's work, though supposedly a dispassionate academic treatise, the author makes no attempt to hide his opinion that the cultural pretensions of Haitians are an absurdity. In a section titled "Ethnic Inequalities Are Not the Result of Institutions," he chooses Haiti as a prime example of the discord between European political institutions and the "African" temperament. He begins:

> Here is a society whose institutions are not only parallel to our own, but furthermore derive the latest maxims of our political sagacity. All that the most refined European liberalism has proclaimed in the last sixty years, all that the thinkers and greatest friends of independence and the dignity of man have been able to write, all the declarations of rights and principles have echoed on the banks of the Artibonite. Nothing African remains in their written laws; memories of the Hamitic land have officially disappeared from their minds; official language never reveals a trace of it; the institutions, I repeat are completely European.[77]

"Now," he goes on, "let's see how they conform to behaviours. What a Contrast! Behaviours? We see they are as depraved, as brutal, as ferocious as in Dahomey or the country of the Fetallahs."[78] From here, he launches into a tirade about this perceived absurdity, dwelling on the thin veneer of European civilization which fails to hide the essential barbarity of the Haitian people:

> Do you interrogate him, seeking to penetrate his mind to appreciate the nature of the ideas that occupy him? You find the most uncultivated intelligence united with the most savage… If this man opens his mouth, he will tell you all of the common platitudes that our newspapers have bored us with for the past half century. This barbarian knows them by heart… He speaks like Baron Holbach, reasons like Monsieur de Grimm, and, deep down, he has not a care in the world but to chew tobacco, drink alcohol, disembowel his enemies, and appease witches. The rest of the time he sleeps.[79]

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[77] Gobineau, *Essai*, 78–79.
[78] Ibid., 79. Fellatah is a disused term for the Fula people of west and central Africa.
[79] Ibid., 79–80.

Although Gobineau's thousand-page treatise was surely less widely read than Cham's comic album, the two together must have reinforced the "comic pretentions" trope both among elites and everyday people in France.

The cases of Cham and Gobineau hint at ongoing connections between the two nations long after Haitian independence, and they reveal the consistency and the currency of the idea of Haiti in mid-nineteenth-century France. The splendour of Saint-Domingue was still in living memory and was bound up in many family histories. Despite the 1825 indemnity, many French families nursed wounds over the loss of their plantations and slaves. The writers among them, like Cham, Gobineau, Hugo, and the early ex-planter pamphleteers helped craft a durable image of Haiti that permeated French society and underpinned French ideas about the world and their place in it. By the late nineteenth century, French descriptions and imaginings of Haitian people were firmly associated with a small set of ready-made categories which were endlessly reproduced: savagery (noble or otherwise), mulatto volatility, indolence and ludicrous pretentions to European civilization. By the time France was ready to launch its second colonial empire, these ready-made categories of Haitians (and, by extension, Africans) were on hand to inform the process.

Conclusion:
Edgar La Selve's *Pays des Nègres* Tour

By the last decades of the nineteenth century, a relatively stable idea of Haiti had planted itself in the French collective imagination. In the minds of French people, the words Saint-Domingue and Haiti continued evoke ideas of fertile land, an incompetent population and wasted potential. At the same time, as France's foreign interests shifted away from the Americas and toward the Old World, French people thought less and less about the old colony. This indifference only increased the freedom of writers to shape popular memories and images of Haiti. In the 1880s, one writer more than any other worked to disseminate his version of Haiti, going to great lengths to remind the French about the former colony and its lost potential. Edgar La Selve was rare among his compatriots for having spent time in Haiti. He published numerous books about the "pays des nègres" and, travelled extensively through France and Algeria, giving presentations about the country, making use of the latest multi-media novelties. Ultimately, he was embroiled in a scandal which put him at odds with members of Paris's Haitian community, and apparently precipitated his untimely death. By taking a look at the life and work of Edgar La Selve, we can get a sense of the tone of French writing about Haiti in the last years of the nineteenth century. Perhaps even more informatively, La Selve's tour left a trail of advertisements and reviews in local newspapers, which give us valuable insights into attitudes toward Haiti that existed more broadly in French society in the last decades of the century.

Edgar La Selve's early life is somewhat obscure. He was apparently born in Lalinde in the south of France in 1849 and began a teaching career at the age of nineteen at a college in

Bergerac. By about 1870 he was "taken with a passion for travel," and made the unlikely decision to relocate to Haiti.[1] He travelled throughout the country and learned about its people, its history and its geography, and also took a stint teaching rhetoric at the Lycée de Port-au-Prince.[2] On leaving the country, he travelled throughout the Caribbean before proceeding to the United States and finally to London, where he worked as a correspondent for a French periodical. Finally, around 1880 he returned to France. He took teaching posts at a college as he began working to establish himself as a man of letters and public intellectual.

La Selve returned to a France that was different from the one he had left a decade earlier. In the 1880s, France was experiencing something of a renaissance of curiosity about the wider world. For much of the nineteenth century, the French population had been largely inward-looking, caring little for the world beyond their shores.[3] By the last decades of the century, this began to change. After the embarrassing defeat in the war against Prussia, and with both its economy and its population apparently stagnating, France seemed to have developed a "collective inferiority complex."[4] A renewed emphasis on military and trade activities abroad posed a possible solution. The 1880s saw the Scramble for Africa, which coincided with a slew of fiction and non-fiction publications on exotic topics and growing memberships in organization like the Geographical Society and the Catholic Oeuvre de la propagation de la foi, which promoted interest in French overseas activities.[5] In 1889, Paris hosted the well-attended Universal Exposition, at which "for the first time at a world's fair, the construction of villages,

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[1] "Conférence de E. La Selve," *La Dépêche*, 26 March 1885, 3.
[2] Edgar La Selve, *Le Pays des nègres, voyage à Haïti* (Paris: Hachette, 1881), 214.
[3] Betts, *Tricouleur*, 18.
[4] Ibid., 40.
[5] Tony Chafer and Amanda Sackur, "Introduction," in *Promoting the Colonial Idea: Propaganda and Visions of Empire in France* edited by Tony Chafer and Amanda Sackur (Houndsmill, UK & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 5; J. P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 38.

including indigenous people going about their 'normal' daily activities, constituted a central component."[6] Clearly, the *outre-mer* was in vogue.

In this context, Edgar La Selve found himself with marketable first-hand knowledge about Haiti and the Caribbean. He was able to leverage his distinct experience to meet a growing demand for information about the wider world. In 1881 he published his book *Le Pays des Nègres* through one of the continent's top publishing houses, Librairie Hachette, thus making his first significant contribution to the national imagination about Haiti. Like those of his predecessors and contemporaries, La Selve's book largely replicated the currents in French thinking about Saint-Domingue and Haiti as examined above. He emphasized the country's fertility, evoking mountains that resembled "a succession of colossal breasts."[7] He rivalled earlier poetic depictions of the island's fabled abundance, saying:

> among these plains, these valleys, these veritable gardens of Hesperides, one finds an exuberant confusion of orange trees, mango trees covered in their golden fruit; banana trees, weighed down with their heavy and delicious bunches; fig trees with twisted branches; slender palm trees, more sonorous than Ionian pines; sugar cane, coffee, cotton, etc. etc. Here, nature dispenses her gifts like a doting mother.[8]

Of the Haitian people, La Selve wrote of his direct experience, and so depicts a diversity of individuals. Yet he still makes use of the old tropes. For example, when explaining the country's declining agriculture, he says, "the inhabitant, happy to live in an air that makes bodies soft and effeminate, feeds himself on the fruits that the trees bear, and refuses to work. He spends half his life in his house, splayed out on a mat, without a worry for tomorrow, and the other half dancing in the shade of the mango trees. O happy man!"[9]

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[6] Lynn E. Palermo, "Identity Under Construction: Representing the Colonies at the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1889," in *The Color of Liberty: Histories of Race in France* edited by Sue Peabody and Tyler Stovall (Chapel Hill: Duke University Press, 2003), 291.
[7] Edgar La Selve, *Le Pays des nègres, voyage à Haïti* (Paris: Hachette, 1881), 4.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid., 234.

La Selve also includes a brief history of the revolution in his introduction, which mainly follows the model set out in countless French sketches of the event. He explains the vast wealth generated by the colony and the consequent demographic distortions. He describes these internal tensions thus: "exports increased annually to 193,000,000 livres-tournois," while at the same time "the number of slaves was 500,000 compared to 40,000 colonists, who weighed down the multitude of the oppressed with the harshest servitude," and also notes that "the freed people could not exercise any political rights."[10] He notes the extension of rights to the Free People of Colour during the French Revolution, which provided the fuse for the explosion. He paints fearsome images of the Black insurgents and their brutal crimes against the white planters—hyperbolically describing cannibalism and infanticide. He implicates certain mixed-race leaders as masterminds, noting "Romaine Rivière, that *mulâtre* charlatan of Trou-Coffi who called himself godson of the Holy Virgin… and exercised, thanks to their superstitions, some unknown power of fascination over those unfortunates who only revolted as not to disobey," and even referring to Hugo's fictional Habibrah as one of the culprits.[11] Interestingly, in his introductory overview of the revolution, La Selve omits the role of tropical diseases, though elsewhere he refers to "the army of the metropole decimated by yellow fever," and notes that the "soldiers, exposed to sun by day and standing guard by night, often in the rain, were quickly carried off by yellow fever."[12] In other words, La Selve gave his French readers what they expected, a familiar and captivating version of Haiti and its revolution.

In 1881 then, La Selve reinforced French preconceptions about Haiti. But unlike most writers about Haiti, his version of the country was not limited to print. Before the book had

[10] Ibid., 8.
[11] Ibid., 10.
[12] Ibid., 20, 147.

reached the shelves, La Selve started presenting the information in a different and novel manner. In the winter of 1880-1881, La Selve staged a series of presentations at the Salle de Conférences on the Boulevard des Capucines in Paris. In the presence of Parisian elites, La Selve developed a two-to-three-hour spectacle in which he transported his audience to Haiti. His colourful anecdotes were supported by a series of sixty-six projections produced using the latest in multi-media technology: a Molteni oxyhydric projector which turned paintings and illustrations of Haiti's landscapes, buildings and people into life-sized panoramic effects. The combined novelty of the technology and the descriptions of Haiti made an impact on the Parisian public and reverberated into the provinces. La Selve then capitalized on the success of these presentations and of his book, which came to print in summer 1881, and embarked on a tour. He crisscrossed France as far north as Lille in French Flanders and south to Montauban in the Pyrenees before crossing the Mediterranean to continue his tour into Algeria. Altogether he gave approximately 320 of these presentations over the course of two-and-a-half years.

It seems incontrovertible that La Selve made a significant contribution to French ideas about Haiti in this period. He spoke directly to tens of thousands of people about a topic they previously knew little about. For our purposes, we can gain a deeper understanding of both the existing ideas about Haiti and La Selve's impact by analyzing the series of announcements and reviews that followed alongside his speaking tour. I have found nearly seventy of these articles scattered through French and Algerian periodicals from the period. They paint an intriguing picture of the extent to which Haiti remained in the French national imagination nearly eight decades after it had declared its independence.

One comment that comes up often is the idea that Haiti is virtually unknown in France. One reviewer in La Rochefoucauld described the Caribbean islands as "unknown to almost the

entirety of the people of Europe."[13] In Barbezieux, the announcement for La Selve's presentation called Haiti "an unfrequented island," and the review following the talk called it "a little-known country."[14] In Épinal, the promotion called it "an almost unknown region," and the reviewer called it "an unknown or poorly known country, like those of Livingstone and Stanley," making a conceptual link between Haiti and Africa.[15] A reviewer in Limoges referred to "these mysterious countries of the West Indies, so unknown even to renowned travellers," and an announcement before his presentation in Tlemcen, Algeria called Haiti an "unknown island."[16] Mystery seems to be one of the main notions associated with Haiti by the 1880s. Educated newspaper contributors throughout the provinces were in agreement on this point, so it seems likely that this was generally true of France in the period; those who knew anything about Haiti knew little.

The mystery of Haiti was partly explained by another common theme in numerous announcements and reviews: the rigours of international travel. Several of the articles describe the cost and dangers associated with long-distance travel in similar terms. An announcement for the presentation in Saintes exclaimed: "Happy mortals! Without paying the fabulous cost of a berth on a transatlantic liner, without suffering from seasickness, they will make the passage; they will visit and island as big as Ireland in detail, and what's more sitting comfortably in a theatre box among their family and friends."[17] In Vosges, the promoter said, "so that we can make this journey without leaving our homes, without getting seasick, without being devoured

[13] "La Rochefoucauld," *La Charente*, 30 June 1881, 3.
[14] "Voyage au Pays des Nègres," *L'Opinion des Charentes*, 10 December 1881, 3; Victor Tremolo né Staccato, "Théatre de Barbezieux," *Le Narrateur Impartial*, 24 December 1881, 2.
[15] "Voyage au Pays des Nègres," *Le Mémorial des Vosges*, 2 June 1882, 3; "Conférence," *Le Mémorial des Vosges*, 16 June 1882, 3.
[16] "Salle de la Société Philharmonique," *La Gazette du Centre*, 12 December 1882, 3; "Voyage au Pays des Nègres," *Le Courrier de Tlemcen*, 20 July 1883, 3.
[17] "Voyage au Pays des Nègres," *La Charente*, 4 December 1881, 3.

by mosquitoes, bit by snakes, brutalized by the natives, without being exposed to yellow fever or all kinds of other diseases, Mr. Edgar La Selve… lived through many years lost in the seas the savannahs and the hills of the West Indies. Everyone can tell how courageous and devoted he is by the execution of such a dangerous exploration."[18] And in Mostaganem, Algeria, which was in the middle of a heat wave, the reviewer marvelled that "without much difficulty, without getting seasick and without all the inconveniences of travelling overseas, except the tropical heat that we are now experiencing and which completed the illusion, we made the most interesting excursion to the island of Saint-Domingue."[19]

With visions of mosquitoes and tropical diseases in mind, reviewers dwelt very little on the natural beauty and fertility of the Haitian earth. Whether this is an indication of the content of the presentations, or the interests of the reviewers is not clear. As noted above, La Selve described the Haitian bounty in hyperbolic terms in his books, and book reviewers certainly picked up on the old theme. A review of his book from July 1881 borrowed a phrase from the book to describe Haiti as "that wealthy island to whom nature has given gifts as a mother who gives freely."[20] Another, likewise, gleaned from La Selve that "no country in the world can boast of a more fertile soil, a more advantageous situation."[21] Concerning La Selve's presentations, however, the spectacle of the oxyhydric projections seems to have been more captivating than La Selve's descriptions of the island's bounty.

There is evidence, however, that La Selve propagated the old tropes of Haitian people as incompetent and uncivilized. There are only a small number of references to the Haitian people in reviews of his presentations, but they tend to support this narrative. Twice—in December

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[18] "Voyage au Pays des Nègres," *Le Mémorial des Vosges*, 2 June 1882, 3.
[19] "La Conférence de M. La Selve," *Le Courrier de Mostaganem*, 16 August 1883, 2.
[20] "Les Livres," *Le Gaulois*, 10 July 1881, 3.
[21] "Edgar La Selve: *Le Pays des Nègres*," *La Nouvelle Revue*, 1 September 1881, 447.

1881 and March 1882—reviewers mentioned a supposedly humorous anecdote that La Selve recounted. The anecdote in question is apparently entirely fabricated, as the details change significantly between the tellings. In both versions the punchline is premised around a French pun; a music teacher, who is instructing a Haitian student, states that, "une *blanche* valait deux noires."[22] This refers to music notation: a half note (a *blanche* in French) lasts twice the duration of a quarter note (a *noire*), as most middle-class French people would have known. In the anecdote, however, the parent of the music student—in one version it is a Black elite woman named Mme. Domingue, and in the other it is Dessalines himself—takes the statement as a racist quip and flies into a rage. In the Dessalines version, the Emperor then orders that "from now on it will be said that a *noire* is worth two *blanches*."[23] Clearly, this anecdote was not intended to be taken seriously, but to break the ice with a joke at Haiti's expense. In fact, the same joke had been used three decades earlier by none other than Amédée de Noé in one of his satirical cartoons about the court of Faustin Soulouque. Cham depicts the fictional Empress Ourika, fist in the air, chasing a man away from a piano. The caption reads "Empress Ourika becomes furious with her piano teacher who dared to maintain that a *blanche* was worth two *noires*."[24] La Selve, it seems, pulled the anecdote out of the stock of racist jokes in hopes of warming up the crowd.

The music teacher joke exemplifies the notion, still current in the last decades of the nineteenth century, that Haiti was a land of contradictions—a savage country with a superficial veneer of civilization. The country's history since 1804 was typically summarized as a series of bloody wars. A reviewer of La Selve's book said that the book "gives us an account of the wars that, for a century, have bathed this corner of the earth in blood."[25] The reviewer of the

[22] Tremolo né Staccato, "Barbezieux," 3. Italics in original.
[23] "Conférence de M. De La Selve sur le Pays des Nègres," *Le Petit Nord*, 28 March 1882, 3.
[24] Cham, *Soulouque*, 6. Appendix 3, figure 5.
[25] "Edgar La Selve," *La Nouvelle Revue*, 1 September 1881, 447.

presentation in Lille noted that La Selve gave an overview of the country's history: "we see in series all of the important characters who played a role in all of the terrible historical phases in the country."[26] La Selve also captivated his listeners with depictions of the exotic and so-called primitive practices of the Haitian masses. The reviewer in Oloron wrote that La Selve described "the original and sometimes primitive customs of the Haitians," while the one in Algiers alluded to "child sacrifice deep in the heart of the forests."[27] This exoticism was, no doubt, the reason many listeners would have gone to see La Selve's talk in the first place.

La Selve seems to have been aware of this, and he played to the interests of his audience. Soon after the speaking tour, he wrote another book about Haiti, this time an "exotic novel" entitled *Le Général Cocoyo: moeurs haïtiens*. A reviewer noted the "success obtained by *Pays des nègres* as a book and as conference," and describes the follow up novel as "a life study of Haitian customs."[28] In the preface—which is dedicated to Victor Schœlcher—La Selve promotes his dual purpose, both literary and educational. He plays up the exotic angle, describing the paradox of Haiti in no uncertain terms by citing an earlier description of the country:

> I have to speak of a country where there are newspapers and witches, multi-party politics and fetishes, where snake worshippers have proclaimed for 83 years, in the presence of the Supreme Being, democratic constitutions and the divine right of kings… The Black world that I am going to uncover offers, indeed, in a single incident and even in a single individual, such a confusion of contrasts: civilization and the Congo, the touching and the atrocious, the grotesque and human blood interacting with such unexpected brutality, that by merely telling the truth I risk authorizing the most opposing prejudices.[29]

He goes on, defending the truthfulness of his depiction and alluding to the cause of this situation:

> Here I present a demi-savage, the worst of the species, personification of a society that persists living, in the nineteenth century, outside of Progress, cut off behind a moral Wall of China—the famous Article VII… I'm studying a society apart, 'the bloody scrap of

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[26] "Conférence," *Le Petit Nord*, 28 March 1882, 3.
[27] H. T. "Voyage au Pays des Nègres," *Le Glaneur d'Oloron et des Basses-Pyrénées*, 14 July 1883, 3; "Les Conférences de M. La Selve," *Le Radical Algérien*, 22 August 1883, 3.
[28] "Bibliographie: Le Général Cocoyo," *La Républicain de Constantine*, 12 July 1888, 2.
[29] Edgar La Selve, *Général Cocoyo: Moeurs Haïtiens* (Paris: Dentu, 1888), 5–6.

> African barbarity.' Would I really have to resort to my imagination? … I only have to reproduce with the mechanical exactitude of a camera the characters, the local incidents… The care that I take in presenting each date, the name of each actor and each locality, prove, with other clues, that truth reigns tyrannically in my account.[30]

He is no longer the blithe, thirty-year-old world traveller who returned to France in 1880 with stories about the wider world. He is now setting himself up as a public intellectual, an authority, the possessor of the definitive version of Haiti.

In the preceding quote, La Selve also alludes to the "famous Article VII." This, it seems, was a constant feature of his presentations. Numerous reviewers refer to it and, from the French perspective, there was a general understanding that this legal stipulation was at the root of Haiti's inability to flourish in spite of its vast resources. In a review of La Selve's first book, a reviewer in Angoulême noted that Haiti was "virtually unknown, since it is shut off from European immigration, and therefore from civilization—witness article 7 of the Constitution."[31] Nearly a year later, on the opposite side of the country in Vosges, virtually the same phrase appears in an announcement for La Selve's upcoming presentation.[32] In a review of one of his presentations in Algeria, the author directly links this legislation to the country's precipitous decline from booming colony to impoverished republic, saying that La Selve described, "a wonderful country that was once a thriving French colony, but which is closed to us today, due to laws prohibiting emigrants of the white race from entering Haiti."[33]

The Article in question is the portion of the Haitian Constitution that prevents foreigners from owning property in Haiti, which dates back to the first Haitian Constitution, promulgated by Jean-Jacques Dessalines in 1805. In the original constitution, the corresponding portion was

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[30] La Selve, *Général Cocoyo*, 6–7.
[31] "Bibliographie," *La Charente*, 31 July 1881, 3.
[32] "Voyage," *La Mémorial des Vosges*, 2 June 1882, 3.
[33] "Conférence," *Courrier de Mostaganem*, 16 August 1883, 2.

Article XII, which reads: "No whiteman of whatever nation he may be, shall put his foot on this territory with the title of master or proprietor, neither shall he in future acquire any property therein," and which is nonetheless mitigated by Article XIII, which says: "The preceding article cannot in the smallest degree affect white women who have been naturalized Haytians by Government, nor does it extend to children already born, or that may be born of the said women."[34] In the immediate aftermath of the revolution, this stipulation was intended to protect the nation from re-enslavement—literal or figurative—by interested foreigners.[35]

Subsequent Haitian constitutions maintained some variation of the prohibition on foreign ownership. When La Selve arrived in Haiti around 1870, the Constitution of 1867 was in effect, which stipulated that "No one, if they are not Haitian, can be the proprietor of real estate in Haiti, for any purpose, neither can they acquire property," and included very little provision for naturalization.[36] In 1874, however, a new constitution was adopted, and the "famous Article VII" seems to refer to this document. The new constitution clarified the prohibition on foreign ownership. It states:

> No one, if they are not Haitian, can own property in Haiti. Nevertheless, on the proposal of the President of Haiti, the Legislative body can grant titles of naturalization to any foreigner of good moral standards, who, after seven years' residence in the country, has introduced a useful art or trade, instructed students, or rendered real and effective services to the Republic of Haiti.[37]

Technically speaking, this did not amount to a "law prohibiting emigrants of the white race from entering Haiti," as the reviewers—and presumably the general public—imagined. But "famous Article VII" was a convenient explanation for Haiti's decline after the French had been ousted. It served as a shorthand for what the French saw as the Haitians' self-destructive rejection of

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[34] Haitian Constitution of 1805, art. 12 and 13. English Translation from *New York Evening Post*, 15 July 1805.
[35] Dubois, *Aftershocks*, 43.
[36] Haitian Constitution of 1867, art. 5.
[37] Haitian Constitution of 1874, art. 7.

"civilization" in the form of French business ventures. Indeed, even after Haiti adopted new constitutions in 1879 and again in 1888, and the foreign-ownership ban was relocated to Article VI and then Article III, French observers continued to lament the folly of "Article VII."

One final aspect of the previews and reviews of La Selve's speaking tour is worth noting. It was often repeated that the presenter knew, "following Horace's precept, how to mix the useful with the agreeable."[38] In other words, there seems to have been widespread agreement that knowledge about Haiti was somehow useful. La Selve was frequently described as acting out of a sense of duty in his efforts to popularize knowledge about Haiti. The reviewer of the presentation in Barbezieux of December 1881 was most emphatic on this point:

> This geographical conference, offered at Barbezieux, was for Mr. La Selve an act of bravery… our town has many people who want to learn, Mr. La Selve was responding to a sense of duty; indeed, an educated man who comes to study humans—the mores and customs of a little-known country—must contribute to expanding our sphere of knowledge… Some men, insatiable for knowledge, and full of courage and sagacity (Livingstone for example) travel the overlooked regions of the world… They are the honour of the human race, the giants of the intellectual world; they are a contrast with idlers, stuck in the darkness of ignorance, who observe nothing, compare nothing, and imagine nothing, and accept that the world does not extend past the contours of the hammock that saw their birth… they seem to have nothing human about them besides their speech organ; between these two extremes rise or descend the scale of diverse insights, and it is in order to expand the cohort of individuals who are approaching intellectual culture that presenters and labourers must work.[39]

The reviewer concludes by noting the general interest and appreciation that the audience held for La Selve: "After an agreeable evening, we confess frankly that we simply admire Mr. La Selve who knows how to arm himself in a conference for the noble fight of science and civilization."[40] In Royan, the announcement before La Selve's presentation boasted, "the appetite that the public

[38] "Voyage au Pays de Nègres," *Abeille de Fontainebleau*, 22 September 1882, 2.
[39] Tremolo né Staccato, "Barbezieux," 2.
[40] Ibid., 3.

has shown for some time for everything to do with science and instruction makes us argue that the young presenter will have a brilliant success."[41] Likewise, after one of his presentations in Algeria, the review remarked that "the enlightened public of Mostaganem being entirely satisfied by this soirée that was as instructive as it was entertaining, and considering Mr. La Selve's efforts to propagate useful knowledge, gave him, at the end of the evening, a unanimous vote of approval."[42]

But what exactly did they mean by "useful knowledge"? Were they thinking simply of knowledge for its own sake? Or did they believe that information about Haiti was somehow practical, despite evident disinterest in travelling to the island? La Selve's subsequent activities suggest that he had a more practical purpose in mind. In the next section, we will turn to an analysis of how the idea of Haiti was put to work in the accelerating the French colonial enterprise in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By painting a portrait of Haiti as an ideal but wasted colonial opportunity, La Selve contributed directly to a growing justification for the expansion of French colonialism in Africa.

[41] "Chronique de Royan et des Environs," *La Gazette des Bains de Mer de Royan-sur-l'Océan*, 24 June 1883, 7.
[42] "Conférence," *Courrier de Mostaganem*, 16 August 1883, 2.

Part 2

A Longing for Saint-Domingue II: Mobilizing the Idea of Haiti in French Africa

"*Spectre de Saint-Domingue, sors de tes rouges linceuls, lève toi et vient attester nos dernières paroles, pour épouvanter 'ce peuple au col dur,' qui refuse d'écouter notre appel pacifique."*

Victor Schœlcher, 1842

"*Sans faire fi des sentiments de l'élite des noirs et des mulâtres de nos vielles colonies, sans nous montrer ingrats pour ceux qui ont donné en certaines circonstances historiques de beaux exemples de fidélité à notre cause, nous dirons que la sagesse nous oblige à ne pas oublier non plus les leçons de Saint-Domingue.*"

Jules Harmand, 1910

Introduction
Algiers, 2 September 1830

Marshal Bertrand Clauzel could boast of the more or less unique distinction of being present at both the end of the first French colonial empire and the start of the second.[1] Born in southern France in December 1773, he was only fifteen years old at the outbreak of the French Revolution. He enlisted in the military and quickly rose through the ranks. He fought in Spain and in the German and Italian states before volunteering to join the Leclerc expedition to Saint-Domingue, which had been sent to restore order in the colony that had, until recently, been France's most valuable. In Saint-Domingue, though not yet thirty, Clauzel was given command of a division, and focused his energies on mitigating the effects of tropical diseases on his troops. He set up hospitals for the sick and for convalescents, and he insisted on taking positions in the mornes rather than in the more agreeable port towns where diseases spread easily. Despite these measures, Clauzel contracted yellow fever himself, but unlike many of his compatriots, he recovered. When General Leclerc succumbed to the disease in November 1802, Clauzel took command of the invasion forces until his replacement, Donatien de Rochambeau, could arrive.

On his arrival, Marshal Rochambeau initiated the final, brutal phase of the Haitian Revolutionary War, infamously making use of attack dogs, proto-gas chambers and summary

[1] Sometimes spelled "Clausel." The information from this biographical sketch is drawn from: "Le Maréchal Clauzel," *Journal de Toulouse*, 23 April 1842, 1–3; Beaubrun Ardouin, *Etudes sur l'histoire d'Haïti*, vol. 5 (Paris: Dezorby & Magdeleine, 1854); Rafe Blaufarb, *Bonapartists in the Borderlands: French Exiles and Refugees on the Gulf Coast, 1815-1835* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005); Comtesse Clauzel, *Souvenirs de la vie du Maréchal Clauzel raconté par leur grand'mère à ses petits-enfants* (Paris: A. Lahure, 1888); Francis Pulszky, *The Tricolor on the Atlas* (London, Edinburgh & New York: T. Nelson and Sons, 1854); Jennifer Sessions, *By Sword and Plow: France and the Conquest of Algeria* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017).

executions. His genocidal tactics only steeled the resolve of the insurgents, pushing the island's Black and mixed-race inhabitants to unite against the French forces. Meanwhile, Clauzel remained in command of the northern plain and tried to maintain a more conciliatory approach. He sought to understand the colony's non-white inhabitants and sowed discord between them by offering concessions to the masses. He maintained Toussaint Louverture's *cultivateur* system, through which formerly enslaved labourers were forced to remain on the plantations but were granted a portion of the produce that they could sell at regional markets. Clauzel and Rochambeau's diverging strategies for winning the war and saving the colony soon came to a head; Clauzel, according to some accounts, was plotting to oust Rochambeau and take control.[2] The latter, however, managed to unveil the plot and quickly had Clauzel transported back to Europe. For all his efforts, Rochambeau was soon forced to concede defeat, and Saint-Domingue became Haiti.

Clauzel, for his part, carried on making a name for himself in Europe. He distinguished himself in combat against the Duke of Wellington in the Peninsular War, once again taking command of the French forces at the Battle of Salamanca after his superiors had been incapacitated. Despite the French defeat, his efforts prompted Wellington to praise him as a formidable adversary. His Haitian rivals, among them Alexandre Pétion and Henri Christophe, likewise later recalled him as an able commander and a decent man. Napoleon himself went on to rank Clauzel among the best generals in Europe. A staunch Bonapartist, Clauzel backed Napoleon during the Hundred Days, and was condemned to death after the Battle of Waterloo. Along with a number of other Bonapartists, he went into exile in the United States, helping establish a wine and olive plantation in the nascent Alabama Territory. The colony failed to

[2] Ardouin, *Etudes*, 422.

thrive and Clauzel spent time in Mobile working as a merchant. He remained in Alabama for three years, returning to France in 1820 when the Bourbon administration offered him a pardon. Back in France, he gradually re-established himself as a military man, and he also dabbled in politics, elected to the French Chamber of Deputies in the late 1820s.

In 1830, when Charles X launched the invasion of Algeria, he put the Legitimist general the Count of Bourmont at its head. But after Charles fell from power that same year, Bourmont refused to swear allegiance to the new king, Louis-Philippe. Within months, Louis-Philippe remembered Clauzel and his impressive military credentials, and, in the words of one historian, Clauzel "was virtually catapulted to the summit of the French military profession."[3] He arrived in Algeria on 2 September 1830. As in Saint-Domingue and Salamanca, Clauzel stepped in to replace the leadership of a delicate campaign. The sense of purpose and the narrative symmetry must have been evident to Clauzel. At thirty, he had attempted to take control of the French forces in their effort to maintain their prized colony in the Caribbean, but he had been forced out; within months the colony was lost, and with it went French hopes for a colonial empire. Now, nearing sixty, he found himself at the head of a new colonial endeavour, which had started mere months earlier, and which promised to replace Saint-Domingue as a source of wealth and prestige for France. This was his chance to redeem himself.

His memories of fighting non-European adversaries over a harsh terrain in Saint-Domingue surely informed his tactics in Algeria. As in Saint-Domingue, Clauzel attempted to divide the local population, recruiting local troops particularly from among Kabyle people. In Saint-Domingue, he had had to keep the threat of yellow fever in mind as he designed his military strategies; in Algeria, cholera played a similar role. Likewise, his experiences with

[3] Blaufarb, *Bonapartists*, 160.

colonial agriculture schemes in both Saint-Domingue and Alabama surely shaped his vision of Algeria's value to France. One of Clauzel's first projects was to establish an experimental farm to adapt certain tropical agricultural products to the Algerian context.[4]

Despite the lessons learned from his earlier apprenticeship in colonialism, Clauzel's efforts in Algeria are generally considered to have been a failure. The model farm quickly collapsed, and Clauzel's most ambitious military expedition—an attempt to take the town of Constantine—was a disaster. Yet, in the view of France's century-long experience in Africa that was to follow, it nevertheless seems that Clauzel played an important role in the history of French colonialism. He promoted Algeria as a settler colony and set up lasting institutions like the French courts of justice and the Zouaves. Although his experimental farm failed, it fuelled an ongoing attempt to make African colonies into producers of goods for the French economy. Finally, although the Constantine expedition was a military failure, it nevertheless captured the French imagination and contributed to a growing interest in colonizing Africa. The retreat from Constantine was compared to Napoleon's retreat from Moscow in French writing and visual culture.[5] The perceived connections between Algeria and France's former colonial glory were all the more intense given that the man who was doing so much to draw attention to the new colony was the very man who had attempted to save the old and greatest of all colonies—Saint-Domingue.

Bertrand Clauzel's life is a microcosm for the theme of part 2. Like Clauzel, the French nation had a formative experience in Saint-Domingue. The nation experienced the tangible and intangible benefits of a successful colony—the wealth produced, and the glory enjoyed. Along

[4] Sessions, *By Sword*, 178.
[5] Ibid., 144–145.

with Clauzel, the French nation witnessed the last-ditch efforts to cling to the colony and considered its loss a tragedy. Like Clauzel, France then experienced a period of uncertainty in the matter of imperial ambition. Then, finally, both Clauzel and the nation in general sought renewed glory in a new era of colonialism and pondered the value of new acquisitions in Africa. He and his country could not help but think back to the glory of Saint-Domingue for inspiration. At the same time, the memory of Haiti remained as a spectre that haunted these new endeavours.

In the previous chapters, I demonstrated the multi-faceted idea of Haiti that lingered in the minds of French people for the century following their country's loss of its most valuable colony. The seeming paradox of supernatural agricultural potential giving way to a collapsing economy was reconciled by descriptions of an incompetent and indolent population who were unfit to cultivate and profit from the island's bounty. Memories of the Haitian Revolution were whittled down to a series of key events: demographic tensions, the recklessness of the revolutionary government in Paris, the treachery of the mixed-race minority, and the arbitrary impacts of yellow fever. This version of Haiti served to stoke appetites for colonial acquisitions in France while at the same time providing a series of principles to guide those processes. The memory of the glittering success of Saint-Domingue and the bloodshed of the Haitian Revolution lingered in the background when French forces claimed new portions of the African continent.

In the next chapter, I begin by tracing the expansion of the French presence in Africa, paying attention to the echoes of Saint-Domingue that accompanied these events. At various steps along the path to the construction of French Africa, Haiti was invoked for various reasons. Quite often these invocations consisted of a nostalgic longing for the glory days of Saint-Domingue's unmatched wealth. Particularly in the initial conquests of Algeria, when the Haitian Revolution was still in living memory, there was talk of establishing a new colony to replace

Saint-Domingue. But even decades later, in the context of an intensifying and self-conscious colonialism of the 1880s and 1890s, the memory of Saint-Domingue continued to resonate.

In chapter 5, I look at five aspects of the French colonial system in Africa in order to understand how the memory of Haiti informed French activities on the continent. First, the memory of the key role that tropical diseases like yellow fever had played in the loss of Saint-Domingue fuelled research into military medicine in Africa. Second, French policies and practices regarding slavery, abolition and labour in Africa undoubtedly drew from memories of the collapse of Saint-Domingue, understood in part as the natural consequence of a slavery-based economy left unchecked. Third, French attitudes toward Haiti's mixed-race community and rumours of the role Free People of Colour played as the masterminds of the Haitian Revolution informed attitudes toward miscegenation, an inevitable result of French settlement in Africa. Fourth, French education programs, the cornerstone of the *mission civilisatrice*, were shaped with the spectre of the Haitian Revolution in mind. And finally, the reckless extension of political rights to non-white subjects in Saint-Domingue, which had apparently been the spark that triggered the explosion in the colony, served as a reminder to deal cautiously with colonial subjects, particularly when it came to the question of enfranchisement.

- 4 -
Nostalgia for Saint-Domingue Spurs Colonialism in Africa

Throughout the nineteenth century, once they had started to recover from defeats in the Napoleonic Wars and come to terms with the collapse of their first colonial empire, the French slowly set about establishing their second colonial empire in Africa and Southeast Asia. The losses of Canada and India still rankled and fuelled rivalries with the British; but it was the memory of Saint-Domingue that served as a particularly strong point of reference for French activities in Africa. This was, after all, the French nation's most concentrated and intense experience with people from Africa. A look at writings connected to the different moments of French expansion in Africa reveal that Saint-Domingue often seemed to be lurking in the background. Soldiers, scholars, journalists and administrators nostalgically recalled the old colony's former glory and hoped new tropical possessions might match or even surpass it. In these contexts, Saint-Domingue served as a shorthand for colonial success.

Before Haiti's independence was even secured, several colonization schemes had been proposed to make up for the loss of Saint-Domingue. In 1797, Talleyrand presented a speech and an essay to the Institute de France, proclaiming that "every consideration urges us to occupy ourselves with new colonies," and emphasizing "the necessity of preparing for the replacing of our present colonies, in order that we may not be found behind-hand with events."[1] As possible

[1] Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, *Memoir Concerning the Commercial Relations of United States with England to Which is Added and Essay Upon the Advantages to be Derived in the Existing Circumstances* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1806), 85–86.

substitutions, he suggested locations in West and North Africa.[2] Napoleon, in his later commentaries, retrospectively mused on the possibilities that Egypt under a French administration had presented circa 1800, saying, "colonial commodities, namely sugar, cotton, rice, indigo, would cover all of upper Egypt, and would replace the products of Saint-Domingue."[3] But affairs in Europe had distracted Napoleon from new colonial endeavours and the French had abandoned Egypt by 1801. By the end of Napoleon's reign, the once great French colonial empire had been whittled down to a few scattered islands, the South American penal colony of Guiana, and the entrepôts of Saint-Louis and Gorée on the coast of West Africa.

Questions remained as to how to derive a profit from these vestigial colonies, particularly as the French transatlantic slave trade was officially abolished in 1818. Between 1816 and 1820, Julien Schmaltz, a colonial administrator in Senegal, "tried to stimulate agriculture and transform Saint-Louis's hinterland into a plantation colony to replace Haiti as a source of tropical products."[4] One of Schmaltz's successors, the abolitionist Jacques-François Roger, also urged a reorientation of French colonialism away from the Antilles and toward Africa.[5] In 1822 he set up a model plantation in Senegal to grow sugar, coffee, cotton and indigo—in other words, Saint-Dominguan crops—based on indentured labour. By 1829, Roger's scheme was abandoned amid inadequate labour and disappointing yields, and the French presence in the region remained restricted to the entrepôts.

King Charles X (r. 1824–1830), who had ordered the formal recognition of Haitian independence in 1825, launched an invasion of Algeria five years later in a last-ditch effort to shore up his flagging legitimacy. The former glory and the loss of Saint-Domingue were very

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[2] Talleyrand, *Memoir*, 81–82.
[3] Napoleon Bonaparte, *Commentaires de Napoléon* (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1867), 284.
[4] Robert Aldrich, *Greater France* (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), 21.
[5] Christopher L. Miller, "Forget Haiti: Baron Roger and the New Africa," *Yale French Studies* 107 (2005): 47–48.

much still in living memory at the time of this nascent expansion into North Africa; indeed, there were living links between the two campaigns. As noted in the biographical sketch at the start of this part, Marshal Bertrand Clauzel had been a division commander on the Leclerc Expedition to Saint-Domingue in 1802–1804 and was one of the lucky few who managed to recover from yellow fever and survive the campaign.[6] By the 1830s, he was a general and was placed at the head of the invasion of Algeria. He was subsequently made a Marshal of France for his service and was appointed governor of the North African colony from 1835 to 1837.[7] Similarly, the man who oversaw the organization of the French fleet for the invasion of Algeria, Inspector General of Naval Engineering Jean Marguerite Tupinier, had had one of his first assignments as a field engineer for the Leclerc expedition.[8] It is likely that other senior members of the Algerian campaign had also taken part in the Saint-Domingue expedition, and many participants undoubtedly had relatives who had done so.

But even those who had no direct link to the old colony still imagined a connection between the loss of Saint-Domingue and the Conquest of Algiers. Memoirs of the latter expedition reveal a perceived association between the two events. Staff officer Théodore de Quatrebarbes, who was born just months before Haiti declared its independence, nevertheless saw the loss of Saint-Domingue as a precursor to the invasion of Algeria. In his recollections of the invasion, published one year into the conquest, he pondered the value of the new colony: "Will France possess, at one hundred and fifty leagues from the limits of its territory, a colony that can console it for the loss of Saint-Domingue?"[9] That same year, Commander Armand

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[6] "Le Maréchal Clauzel," *Journal de Toulouse*, 23 April 1842, 2.
[7] Comtesse Clauzel, *Souvenirs*, 59.
[8] A. de Morsang, "Notice sur M. le baron Tupinier," *Archives des Hommes du jour* (Paris: Madame de Lacombe, n.d.), 4–5, 7.
[9] Théodore de Quatrebarbes, *Souvenirs de la campagne d'Afrique* (Paris: Dentu, 1831), 303. Emphasis added.

Jehannot de Bartillat explained that "it is the soil and the location that are the true value of this country. It is four and a half days away from Marseilles… it can make one forget the prosperity of Saint-Domingue."[10] Six years later Bartillat remained adamant that "Algiers, on our doorstep, would replace Saint-Domingue on an even greater scale of prosperity."[11] Evidently, those involved in the episode that inaugurated France's second colonial era traced a continuity from the loss of Saint-Domingue to the new conquests in Africa.

Even when it was not mentioned by name, Saint-Domingue was often evident in the subtext. When an anonymous author wrote in the *Revue de deux mondes* in 1830, immediately following the conquest of Algiers, an article describing the climate of the town and promoting colonization, he said, "protected by the Atlas from the winds of the Midi, it enjoys the mildest temperature and the healthiest conditions; diseases are very rare there, and Europeans who live there are never exposed to those murderous epidemics that mow them down in the Antilles with such frightening rapidity."[12] The author goes on to laud the region's "stunning fertility," praising local products including wool, oils, silk and wax, and suggesting the staples of the Caribbean colonies could easily be introduced: "a large part of its territory would easily be prepared for the cultivation of sugar, cotton and indigo."[13] After a quarter-century, the Saint-Domingue model of colonial wealth production still held pride of place.

The experience of colonizing Algeria set the tone for subsequent French incursions in Africa. The so-called quadrumvirate of French colonial generals—Thomas Bugeaud, Louis Faidherbe,

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[10] Armand Jehannot de Bartillat, *Coup d'œil sur la campagne d'Afrique en 1830* (Paris: Delaunay & Dentu, 1831), 22.
[11] Armand Jehannot de Bartillat, *Aperçu sur la colonisation d'Alger* (Paris: L. Normant, 1837), 5. Emphasis added.
[12] Anonymous, "Du territoire de la ville d'Alger. Résultat probable d'une expedition contre cette ville," *Revue des deux mondes*, vol. 1 (1830): 148.
[13] Ibid., 151.

Joseph Gallieni and Hubert Lyautey—represent a continuity from Algeria through Senegal, and then (via Indochina) to Madagascar and Morocco. They spearheaded and set the model for the military conquest and organization of French Africa. Thus, the echoes of Haiti were there from the beginning. The loss of Saint-Domingue was at least part of the impetus for invading Algeria, and the way French power was articulated in North Africa (and thereafter duplicated with variations elsewhere on the continent) was in some ways shaped by Betrand Clauzel's experiences in Saint-Domingue. Yet, as many historians have described, colonial conquests after Algeria were more the work of men of action than men of theory. In their writings, Bugeaud, Faidherbe, Gallieni and Lyautey evince little interest in earlier colonial antecedents, and so the memory of Saint-Domingue does not seem to have played much of an explicit role in this gradual series of incursions.

At home, likewise, there was a dearth of interest in colonial activities in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Public discourse on new colonial acquisitions tended to be muted. The governments of the Second Empire and early Third Republic seldom concerned themselves with military activities in Africa. On the left, many saw the colonies as a waste of money in the face of social issues in France, while critics on the right prioritized strength within Europe and (by the 1870s) the reconquest of Alsace and Lorraine.[14] French capitalists tended to gravitate toward the Americas, Europe, or even to British colonial possessions rather than those of their own country.[15] Amid this general disinterest in French colonial endeavours, the memory of Saint-Domingue served literary and intellectual but not practical purposes in France in the decades between 1830 and 1880.

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[14] Daughton, *Empire Divided*, 10.
[15] Betts, *Tricouleur*, 28.

The last decades of the nineteenth century, however, saw an intensification of French (and generally European) colonialism which became more strategic and reflective. Defeat in the Franco-Prussian War in 1870–71 prompted the growth of new interests in overseas glory. French nationalism began to channel into renewed enthusiasms for empire. Journalists, scholars, legislators and lobbyist increasingly weighed in on activities in Africa. Once again, proponents of empire found a useful tool in the deep reserves of ideas about Haiti which had become part of the national memory. Nostalgia for their most lucrative colony spurred excitement, and descriptions of Haiti's decline became a convenient justification for French control of Africa. Haiti enjoyed a tropical climate and fertile soil, but, in the absence of French leadership, largescale agriculture had collapsed, and the former wealth had apparently given way to worsening poverty. The change was attributed to the ineptness of Haiti's leaders and the indolence of its population, both characteristics that, according to received wisdom, were inherent defects in the personalities of people from Africa.

This image of Haiti and the assumptions that were bundled up with it served as a powerful tool for the justification of French encroachment into Africa. As the history of Haiti seemed to prove, only an advanced civilization could oversee the profitable use of a country's resources. Since the lesser society is unable to recognize its own interests, it was up to a superior people to forcibly assume control of the inferior people and their resources. The resulting wealth would greatly enrich the local population as well as their European custodians. Colonization was, therefore, more than justified—it was an obligation. In the words of one of the leading proponent of empire, Jules Ferry, it was a matter of "the right of superior races vis-à-vis inferior races."[16]

[16] Jules Ferry, *Discours et opinions de Jules Ferry*, vol. 5, Paul Robiquet, ed. (Paris: Armand Colin, 1897), 156.

While in the specific case of Haiti, constitutional stipulations, historical developments and Haitian national pride precluded direct French exploitation, Africa was another story.

Justifications for empire received support from new philosophical currents in France. Chief among these was Auguste Comte's positivism. Although Comte himself had died in 1857, his philosophy continued to grow in popularity in France (and elsewhere—notably Brazil and Mexico), peaking around the turn of the century. Positivists exalted science as the solution to the world's problems, including social problems. If authorities were empowered to employ reason and science without regard for the wishes of the governed, they could force a better world into existence. Positivists viewed European civilizations as advanced and rational, while they considered non-Western societies retrograde. In effect, positivism sometimes blended with scientific racism, adhering to a racial hierarchy that placed Europeans at the top and Africans at the bottom, but nevertheless professed the moral duty of "superior" toward "inferior" peoples.

Positivists promoted renewed imperialism as the natural extension of reason over backwardness, and they were also keen to draw examples from the history of Haiti for "scientific" evidence to support their claims of natural inequality. In 1882, one positivist made the connection between the old and new colonies explicit. That year, Comte's disciple and literary executory, the philosopher Pierre Laffitte, gave a lecture on Toussaint Louverture in Paris as part of a series on "the great types of humanity." The lecture was transcribed and published as an 87-page booklet. In it, Laffitte offered an account of the Haitian Revolution—and its most celebrated hero—framed around the notion that "the *nègre* race, in terms of intelligence and action, is inferior to her two sisters [i.e. the so-called white and yellow races]; but one has only to read the writings of explorers to become no less sure that it surpasses them in

affective capacity."[17] In other words, Laffitte understood the Haitian Revolution as an explosion of pent up emotion on the part of an inferior people group. Likewise, as many authors before him, Laffitte pegged the subsequent economic decline in Haiti on the temperament of the Haitians themselves; he characterizes Haitians as "big children" who, having broken the bonds of slavery, settled into "a life of delicious nonchalance under the shade of banana trees."[18]

Laffitte's depiction of Louverture himself was drawn largely from a recent biography by Thomas Prosper Gragnon-Lacoste. As historian David Aliano noted, Laffitte's use of this generally sympathetic portrait of Louverture, "creates a tension in his work."[19] Whereas Gragnon-Lacoste's biography juxtaposed Louverture's genius with what he described as the more typical barbarity of his compatriots, Laffitte's intention was to contrast Africans with Europeans. According to Aliano, "the very fact that Toussaint was such a great and capable man undermines Laffitte's assertion of racial distinctions."[20] But, ultimately, Laffitte was not really talking about Toussaint Louverture; he was talking about Haiti in order to talk about something else. Namely, he was making a positivist case for European colonialism in Africa. His Parisian audience in 1882 would not have missed this connection; newspapers over the past five years rang with headlines about the progress of the Tricolour in Africa: Algeria had been pacified, Brazza was busy staking out claims in the Congo River region, the takeover of Tunisia was underway, new territories adjacent to the Senegal colony had been annexed.

Laffitte nevertheless makes his larger purpose explicit. After arguing that Haiti was doomed to fail, he shifts his focus to Africa. He perceptively warns that the continent is currently

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[17] Pierre Laffitte, *Toussaint Louverture: Leçon de M. Pierre Laffitte, redigée par Dr. P. Dubuisson* (Paris: Bureau de la Revue Occidentale, 1882), 13.
[18] Ibid., 57, 50.
[19] David Aliano, "Revisiting Saint-Domingue: Toussaint Louverture and the Haitian Revolution in the French Colonial Debates of the Late Nineteenth Century (1870-1900)," *French Colonial History,* 9 (2008): 22.
[20] Ibid.

facing a threat from voracious European expansionism, saying, "Africa is in the process of opening up to speculators. Certain intrepid travellers had barely begun to inform us about the interior riches in this great peninsula [i.e., continent] and governments had already started rolling ideas in their heads of extravagant projects for exploiting the Black countries." He hearkens back to the historic role of tropical diseases—so central to French understandings of the failure to hold on to Saint-Domingue—saying that the only thing that has so far saved African societies from complete conquest, "not to say extermination," is "its climate, so fatal to the European."[21]

Despite his distrust of European governments and adventurers to deal peacefully with the people of Africa, Laffitte nevertheless believes European domination of the continent is inevitable and possibly beneficial. He says, "we are certainly not enemies of the relationship between European and African peoples; we call for them with all our heart, since they seem to us first inevitable and second necessary."[22] Still, this does not give Europeans the right to take unfair advantage of the situation. In Laffitte's view, positivism is the only thing that can temper the more nefarious aspects of European colonization. Unlike "materialism, its competitor," Laffitte insists the moral dimension of their philosophy means positivists must ensure that French activities in Africa work for the good of all parties.[23] "Woe to the Black race," he warns, "woe to all the weak or backward races if Positivism does not arrive in time to protect them!".[24] And so, in a seminar ostensibly about Toussaint Louverture, Pierre Laffitte made a moral case for increased colonization in Africa.

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[21] Laffitte, *Toussaint*, 83–84.
[22] Ibid, 84.
[23] Ibid., 82.
[24] Ibid., 83.

At the centre of French intellectual and political discourses about colonialism in Africa was a book that has variously been described as "the bible of French colonialism" and "the seminal study of French colonial economic theory" which formed "the basis for modern French imperialist ideology."[25] This was Paul Leroy-Beaulieu's *De la colonisation chez les peuples modernes*. First published in 1874 and subsequently appearing in six editions, the book articulated a novel economic argument for colonialism which French politicians and industrial capitalists adopted enthusiastically. Leroy-Beaulieu argued that industrial nations needed colonies not only as a source of raw materials, but also to absorb excess labour, capital and manufactured goods. This, he argued, would lead to general prosperity as the standard of living increased at home and in the colonies. By the time the book's second edition appeared in 1882, *De la colonisation* was being cited authoritatively, and the economic argument for colonization had become the standard line.

Leroy-Beaulieu refers to Saint-Domingue numerous times throughout the text, demonstrating that the memory of the colony was still very much alive and serviceable seventy years after its loss. More than once, he alludes to the colony's unmatched wealth at its peak, putting particular emphasis on the French colony's superiority over its British and Spanish competitors. He says, "Saint-Domingue became the greatest sugar producer in the world," and "Saint-Domingue, if we had been able to hold onto it, would have left Jamaica far behind, and would have come close to Cuba, which it had surpassed before the revolution," and again "Saint-Domingue held first rank among the plantation colonies," and finally, "the rise of Saint-Domingue, which dethroned Jamaica and Barbados, confounded the European powers and

[25] Daughton, *Empire Divided*, 10; Betts, *Tricouleur*, 45.

seemed to assure France's colonial superiority."[26] Leroy-Beaulieu thus emphasizes the successes in France's history as a colonial power in order to direct nationalism toward an interest in future colonialism.

Not only does Leroy-Beaulieu employ nostalgia for the success of Saint-Domingue to spur ambitions for new conquests, he also outlines both the conditions that had enabled the colony's unmatched wealth and the errors that had led to its demise as a French colony—critical lessons for a new imperial era. According to Leroy-Beaulieu, the natural fertility of the island was only part of the story. He notes that French economic planning under Louis XV and XVI had been distinctly beneficial to the growth of the plantation economies. He says, "the prosperity depended on the outlets that we opened for these products, the facilities that we offered for their fabrication, and the lightness of the taxes to which we submitted them."[27] The decreasing taxes—"originally heavy, ended up being relatively light compared to those that existed in the sugar islands of the other nations"—helped give Saint-Domingue an edge over its competitors.[28]

In the eighteenth century, of course, slavery had played a key role in the colony's success; Leroy-Beaulieu notes that the prosperity of Saint-Domingue, "justified in the eyes of the statesmen, the protection which the slave trade enjoyed."[29] But in addition to the fruits of their labour, the overwhelmingly enslaved population of Saint-Domingue had other outcomes that facilitated wealth creation. He explains that,

> an island like Saint-Domingue, which counted just one white per twenty *nègres*, and which, by reducing the needs of the greatest number, gave a great value to the export products, became infinitely more thriving than an island like Puerto Rico, where the white population was very numerous, where small-scale property was common, used by

[26] Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, *De la colonisation chez les peuples modernes*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Guillaumin, 1882), 173, 252, 256, 428.
[27] Ibid., 171.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid., 225.

> subsistence agriculture and exported relatively little, because it used all its strength to meet the needs of its inhabitants.[30]

In other words, the relatively insignificant number of white settlers in Saint-Domingue allowed most of the arable land in the colony to be devoted to export crops. Thanks to this dual benefit of an overwhelmingly enslaved population—land and labour—coupled with guaranteed markets for colonial products and light taxation, Saint-Domingue was able to become a model of colonial success. And the benefits to France kept multiplying, as "its commerce employed 1000 ships and 15,000 sailors."[31]

Despite the remarkable success of Saint-Domingue in the eighteenth century, Leroy-Beaulieu was also keen to point out the faults within the system that ultimately led to its demise. He notes that "nothing was more fragile than the outward and stately prosperity that our colonies enjoyed. It only took a few years for the richest and most beautiful of all, the queen of the Antilles, Saint-Domingue, to disappear."[32] The demographic shift that led to an overwhelmingly enslaved population, so beneficial to export agriculture, also led to some troubling conditions. In his words, "absenteeism with all of its dire consequences became fashionable; the cultivation of products for export was pushed to the extreme; the islands were nothing but great factories, exploited without mercy and in view of the greatest profit for the present without thinking about the future."[33] Elsewhere, he considers the effects that such an unchecked financial drive had on the enslaved people themselves:

> No one considered the well-being or unease of the thousands of workers whom one grew accustomed to seeing as machines. If these machines were poorly fed or short-lived, if they had to be replaced every ten or fifteen years, nobody cared. All savings on their upkeep were counted among the profits.[34]

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[30] Ibid., 197.
[31] Ibid., 173.
[32] Ibid., 197.
[33] Ibid., 171.
[34] Ibid., 197.

Short-term thinking and the unrestricted pursuit of profit had produced an itinerant local administrative class and a mass of dissatisfied labourers with no loyalty to the system. The result, as Leroy-Beaulieu's readers knew, was disastrous.

Short-sightedness had other dire consequences for Saint-Domingue. He notes that the ancien régime administration made the mistake of "neglecting the maritime force which was the only thing that could have maintained" Saint-Domingue.[35] The revolutionary government, for its part, dealt clumsily with the question of enfranchisement in the 1790s. Like many authors before him, Leroy-Beaulieu pinpoints the National Constituent Assembly's extension of rights to mixed-race colonial subjects as the moment that initiated the collapse of the colony. As he explains,

> The only question that the Constituent dared approach, and it was impossible to avoid it, was to know whether free people of colour would have the same rights in the colonies as whites. Solved with timidity, applied with irresolution and resistance in our establishments, the question was the origin of the bloody wars that led to our loss of Saint-Domingue.[36]

Again, reproducing earlier French interpretations of the Haitian Revolution that marginalized the agency of the Black insurgents, he adds that "it was not the *nègres*, it was the free *mulâtres*, rebuffed of political rights, who set fire to this productive colony and ripped it out of our hands."[37]

Leroy-Beaulieu goes on to explain that the delicate question of enfranchisement had come into focus once again in the time since Haiti won its independence. In the remaining French Caribbean islands, he says, efforts to extend the franchise had undermined governance. "Universal suffrage," he notes, "the putting up for election of all of the principal posts, the

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[35] Ibid., 174.
[36] Ibid., 225.
[37] Ibid.

absence of all conditions of census and property suffrage, have, in the French Antilles, made all power fall into the hands of the *nègres*, five or six times more numerous than the whites."[38] He goes on to give a stern warning to deal cautiously with the issue, still referring to the existing French Caribbean possessions, but clearly issuing a more general warning of caution for French colonialism elsewhere: "Be warned, from this process it is possible that this history of Saint-Domingue could begin again, that the whites could be eliminated from the islands that they colonized and that the *noirs*, left alone, could make Martinique and Guadeloupe fall into barbarism."[39] To this, he adds that "these dangers are unknown on the English islands, because universal suffrage does not reign there. Census suffrage tempers it and leaves to the whites the direction of the localities."[40]

Thus, Leroy-Beaulieu drew two parallel lesson from Haiti. On the one hand, Saint-Domingue was a shining example of what could be accomplished if government policies, business interests and local conditions were coordinated in the pursuit of profit. Yet, at the same time, he articulated Haiti as a cautionary tale, highlighting the unchecked economic system, demographic distortions and legislative blunders that brought about its demise. In so doing, he effectively bolstered his overall argument that colonialism was a lifeline for France, while at the same time illuminating certain errors that must be avoided in order for new colonial conquests to be worth the effort.

While Leroy-Beaulieu's work convinced industrial capitalists about the value of empire, and helped keep colonial expansion on the political agenda, it did little to inspire the masses. It was

[38] Ibid., 253.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.

left to other groups to promote the colonial idea more broadly throughout French society. Geographical societies, religious organizations and committees in charge of a series of expositions strove to redirect French nationalism toward the colonies. The diffusion of pro-imperial propaganda between 1880 and 1914 has been examined in several academic works. As Tony Chafer and Amanda Sackur point out in the introduction to their 2002 volume *Promoting the Colonial Idea*, France had a relatively well-organized imperial lobby in this period which was moderately successful in building up enthusiasm around empire as a component of the country's identity. In general, French people remained ignorant of activities in the colonies, but the diffusion of propaganda targeted at the masses, "fostered a particular sense of French identity based on '*grandeur*' and racism."[41] The authors take the failure of anti-imperial propaganda as evidence of the strength of the pro-imperial lobby, most strikingly revealed by the meagre attendance to the anti-colonial exhibition in Paris in 1931 in contrast to extremely popular colonial exposition of the same year.

In order to get a sense of the role that the memory of Haiti played in the upsurge in interest in colonialism throughout French society in the 1880s, we can return to Edgar La Selve and his activities in this period. After some 300 dates in continental France, La Selve crossed the Strait of Gibraltar to offer additional presentations of "Pays des Nègres" to French communities in Algeria. After appearances in Tlemcen, Sidi-bel-Abbès and Mostaganem, La Selve arrived in Algiers for his 320th presentation on Haiti. Ever the entrepreneur, La Selve took advantage of this time in North Africa in the summer of 1883, collecting content for a new series of lectures. By December 1884 he had launched a new tour, giving talks about North Africa in various French

[41] Tony Chafer and Amanda Sackur, "Introduction," in *Promoting the Colonial Idea: Propaganda and Visions of Empire in France*, ed. Tony Chafer and Amanda Sackur (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 9.

municipalities—now with "125 panoramic effects."[42] Once again, reviewers praised his heroic efforts to spread useful knowledge. An advertisement in Melun explained that "the indefatigable popularizer devoted his youth to crossing the old and new continent," and now "uses his ripe age to publish on what he has seen, tomes that are inexhaustible sources of information."[43] It goes on, noting that by offering immersive multi-media presentations, he "consoles those who cannot satisfy their wanderlust by giving them the sensation of reality."[44]

While commentators had praised La Selve somewhat dubiously for spreading "practical knowledge" on his first tour, the tangible applications of knowledge about North Africa were more evident. While his presentations on Haiti had stirred up interest in tropical locations, while simultaneously frustrating any ideas about exploiting those locations by describing the "famous Article VII," this time there was no such barrier to French designs on deriving profit from the lands in question. His talks about Algeria were explicitly couched in the possibility of further colonization in Africa. A notice before the presentation in Épinal in December 1884 describes the talk as "a conference on North Africa for the benefit of Algerian colonization."[45] These seminars, coinciding exactly with the Berlin Conference, may well have helped build up public support for French designs on Africa.

Interestingly, after a series of dates in France, La Selve once again crossed into Algeria, where he gave numerous additional presentations on North Africa. Despite the strangeness of a man from the Midi giving lectures on North Africa in North Africa, the response to these talks was particularly enthusiastic. His Franco-Algerian audiences clearly considered La Selve's efforts to be an important contribution to the expansion of French activities in Africa, and his

[42] "L'Afrique du Nord," *L'Avenir de Seine-et-Marne*, 9 January 1885, 3.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.
[45] "Conférence," *Le Mémorial des Vosges*, 24 December 1884, 2.

earlier experiences in Haiti bolstered his reputation as an authority on tropical countries and non-European cultures. An announcement for his series of three dates in Algiers mused on the explosion of interest in Africa generally:

> People are more interested in Africa than they have ever been before. Explorations have never before pushed so far into this part of the old world. Never have so many pioneers at once traversed this vast, mysterious continent, three times bigger than Europe and fifty times bigger than France. Currently, there is a traveller stationed in every corner of Africa, from the Maghreb of the Arabs to the Soudan of the *Nègres*.[46]

The author then goes on to consider how La Selve is both a product and a cause of this growing interest: "Africa has become, for intelligences as much as for imaginations, a sort of general preoccupation, which Mr. Edgar La Selve obeys and helps to satisfy… Onward! Onward! Let's go! We must embark!"[47] Clearly, La Selve was responding to and fuelling a growing drive to expand the French presence on the continent.

Before arriving in Algiers, papers elsewhere in the colony started clamouring for La Selve to visit. The *Courrier de Mostaganem* said, "we hope that the gracious traveller-patriot will come to our town and allow us to appreciate the intelligent method he employs to popularize in the metropole the things he learned in his travels in Algeria," and went on to praise La Selve, who "was able to appreciate the richness of our beautiful colony, as a friend convinced of its rich future."[48] The *Courrier* did not wait for La Selve to arrive to express its appreciation; for a subsequent issue, they collected comments from high dignitaries in the colony, including the Governor-General, senators and deputies. The Prefect of Algiers, for example, said, "I can only congratulate you for your determination. Our colony will have a rich future, and your [presentations] can only benefit it," while a Mr. Jacques, senator from Oran, stated, "I thank you

[46] "Le Tour de l'Afrique du Nord," *Le Radical algérien*, 17 February 1885, 3.
[47] Ibid.
[48] "On nous informe que…," *Le Courrier Mostaganem*, 12 February 1885, 3.

for your efforts to popularize Algeria. It will help us, I'm sure, to eliminate certain prejudices against this beautiful country."[49] La Selve honoured their request, giving a presentation in Mostaganem on 28 February.

La Selve continued to give talks on both Haiti and North Africa over the next three years. As France reinforced and extended its control over different parts of Africa, the connection between La Selve's work and the French colonial project became increasingly apparent. In July 1885, he gave his North Africa talk in Villefranche in east-central France. An announcement painted La Selve's work in epic terms: "The Romans, at the time of Scipio, asked: *Quid novi fert Africa*?... Well! We are Romans from the point of view of Africa. Africa is the promised land given by Providence to France. That is why we are heading to Africa with Mr. La Selve."[50] According to available French newspaper records, La Selve's final presentations took place in late 1888, concluding with a talk about Haiti in Bar-sur-Aube in north-eastern France on 7 December. Altogether, over the course of eight years, he gave over 400 talks about Haiti and North Africa throughout France and Algeria. In so doing, he propagated a particular image of Haiti, while at the same time stimulating interest in the wider world and France's role in it.

As the general population's appetite for colonialism grew, it fell to their representatives in the Chambers to develop policies that would turn the patchwork of acquisitions in Africa and elsewhere into a cohesive empire that was worth the cost of administration. In the legislature, Saint-Domingue had certainly never been forgotten; as late as the 1890s, the Chamber of Deputies was still receiving and debating petitions from families who had lost property during the Haitian Revolution. In the records of their discussions, unlike in the popular press, deputies

[49] "Voyages d'Études aux pays lointains," *Le Courrier Mostaganem*, 19 February 1885, 3
[50] "Le Pays des Arabes," *Journal de Villefranche*, 18 July 1885, 2. Latin translation: What news does Africa bring?

seldom bothered to give a recapitulation of the revolution itself. One commission's report in 1893 alludes to "the famous revolution that had occurred on the island of Saint-Domingue."[51] The events in Haiti seem to have been common knowledge among political elites into the 1890s and beyond.

Nevertheless, legislators did not always grasp the continuities from France's first to its second colonial empire. In an 1899 discussion of the budget for the Ministry of Colonies, Eugène Etienne, the representative from Oran (Algeria), had this to say about this shallow view of French colonial history:

> To say that France's colonial domain was constituted in the last twenty years without an overall vision, without a method, is, it seems to me, to misunderstand the reality of the facts. Those who have directed colonial policies over the last twenty years had only to look behind them and imitate their predecessors. One thinks generally that the French Republic invented colonial policy in our country. One seems to believe that it did not exist before that, that it ended in the middle of the eighteenth century, when, after the great disasters of 1767 we lost nearly our entire colonial empire. This is inaccurate. Even after the great disasters of 1767 we still had colonial policies. We maintained some vestiges of our colonial empire and attempted to expand them. Even the Empire, which engaged in war throughout Europe for fifteen years, was interested in colonial policy. It sent expeditions to Saint-Domingue to try to conserve that possession. It went to Egypt not only to make war with England, but to establish French influence. That was, I imagine, a colonial policy.[52]

Etienne's comments suggest that, while this history of Saint-Domingue was generally known in political circles, the Parisian elites who attempted to direct developments in the colonies did not have France's long colonial history or the paramount example of Saint-Domingue/Haiti at top of mind. They were, instead, responding to events as they came.

Still, Haiti continued to serve as a point of reference, and was, from time to time, invoked in legislative debates concerning Africa. Such was the case in 1894, in the context of an intense debate in the Chamber of Deputies over the fate of Madagascar. Since the early 1880s France

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[51] France, Chamber of Deputies, *Feuilleton*, no. 513, (1 June 1893), 5.
[52] Ibid.

had maintained a protectorate over the northern portion of the island. Resistance efforts among various groups on the island led to a state of near anarchy by the early 1890s, and in 1894 the French government met to discuss their options for the island. They considered whether it would be best to abandon the island, maintain the protectorate system or annex the island as a full colony. The champion of the latter position was the Foreign Minister Gabriel Hanotaux who made an impassioned plea for annexation in the session of 23 November 1894. Although it would be a costly war in both funds and in the lives of French soldiers, Hanotaux insisted the cost would be justified, not only in economic terms, but in moral terms. He claimed that they had the duty to avenge the lives of French citizens who had already perished in the ongoing disorder on the island. They must, he said, "avenge the blood of our nationals" that had been spilled in Madagascar. At this point, a "member on the extreme left" unexpectedly cried out "And what about Saint-Domingue?" To which Hanotaux replied, "I will reply to you on that point when you like and to your satisfaction; but you must recognize that Saint-Domingue must not make one forget about Madagascar." This statement was greeted with a general cry of "Très bien! Très bien!".[53]

This interchange shows that, ninety years later, the disastrous Saint-Domingue campaign still served as a reminder of what could go wrong when a French expeditionary force was sent to do battle on a faraway island with an antagonistic local population. Hanotaux immediately got the reference, and, we can imagine, so did his fellow legislators. Yet, he believed that the Saint-Domingue fiasco should not be held up as a deterrent for contemporary colonization schemes. If anything, Hanotaux would likely cite the failure at Saint-Domingue as another reason why France had a moral duty to avenge the blood of Frenchmen and, in so doing, reaffirm their

[53] France, Chamber of Deputies, in Gabriel Hanotaux, *L'Affaire de Maragascar* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1896), 161.

national superiority and re-establish their former glory. As it turned out, the "member on the extreme left" had a valid point; in the early months of the subsequent expedition, 40 percent of the soldiers died from disease, and the conquest of Madagascar, which took another four years, was soon recognized as among the deadliest to date of all of the French colonial ventures in Africa—at least for French soldiers.[54]

By 1910, when the French colonial empire was approaching its nadir, the shadow of Haiti still lingered. That year, the colonial administrator Jules Harmand published his influential book *Domination et colonisation* in which he reiterated a justification for colonialism based on the apparent mismatch between the inferiority of non-Western peoples and the abundant resources available in their lands. Again, more than a century after the loss of Saint-Domingue, Harmand pointed to Haiti as proof that African people were incapable of productively exploiting their own resources, saying: "we know what happened to the 'Pearl of the Antilles,' Haiti, in the hands of Africans."[55] He couched his overall argument in Nietzschean terms. Although colonization—the violent seizure of lands and resources—might be immoral in one sense, it was nonetheless inevitable; a great nation must conquer or perish.

Harmand was fully aware of the fact that the entire system rested on military force, not only during the period of conquest, but, since local populations would never accept foreign domination, permanently. Elsewhere in the work, he chillingly alludes to the example of Haiti to highlight this inevitable state of permanent inequality and domination, issuing a stark warning to his compatriots. He remarks that although one could point to successful examples of the *mission civilisatrice*, and although certain Africans had distinguished themselves as "good examples of

[54] Aldrich, *Greater France*, 62.
[55] Jules Harmand, *Domination et colonisation* (Paris: Flammarion, 1910), 66.

fidelity to our case," he nonetheless warned that "wisdom obliges that we do not forget the lessons of Saint-Domingue."[56] Built, as it was, on violence, there was always the possibility that the colonial system in Africa could come crashing down at any moment. The French were keenly aware that the pursuit of a new Saint-Domingue could lead to a new Haiti. Thus, as we will see in the next chapter, the architects of empire drew specific lessons from Haiti in order to prevent a repeat of the Haitian Revolution.

[56] *Ibid.*, 345.

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The Spectre of Haiti in the Administration of French Africa

If the French used Saint-Domingue as a shorthand for colonial success, Haiti stood for failure. Saint-Domingue was a best-case scenario; Haiti was a warning call that was intimately connected to it, a tragic sequel to a colonial fairy tale. While France had lost their possessions in Canada and India to the British on the battlefield, Saint-Domingue had collapsed under the weight of its own internal contradictions. Aware of this history, French legislators, theorists and colonial administrators worked tirelessly to avoid making the same mistakes a second time. The former colony served as an important point of reference to French activities in Africa. As a Black Republic, it represented everything that the French feared in Africa. They drew specific lessons from their understanding of what had gone wrong in Saint-Domingue and attempted to implement them as they went about designing the new colonial system.

Perhaps the most well-known "fact" about the French loss of Saint-Domingue, was the role of tropical diseases. Of the 59,000 soldiers sent to Saint-Domingue, more than 80 percent had perished, and French accounts attributed these casualties overwhelmingly to yellow fever.[1] As we saw in chapter 1, French commentators used this fact—rather than the more troublesome notion of Black genius—to make their country's ultimate loss of Saint-Domingue understandable. This lesson was, of course, extremely relevant to French endeavours in Africa.

[1] Philip D. Curtin, *Disease and Empire: The Health of European Troops in the Conquest of Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 10.

Prior to the nineteenth century, Africa had largely avoided European colonization in large part because of the vulnerability of Europeans to diseases on the continent. Historically, Europeans travelling to Africa had about a 50 percent chance of dying within the first year, primarily from malaria, gastrointestinal infections and yellow fever. Although the diseases themselves were not well understood, by the 1820s it started to become widely known that West Africa was about twice as deadly as the Caribbean to Europeans.[2]

By the mid-nineteenth century, however, medical advances began building up the capacity of European armies to make headway in Africa. As Philip Curtin has argued, these advances did not necessarily precede the intensification of military activity in Africa; the initial charge into the Niger Valley by the British and French in the 1830s enjoyed no such luxuries. Nevertheless, the discovery of quinine's prophylactic properties and successful campaigns against counterproductive medical treatments such as bloodletting combined to gradually decrease the death tolls among European armies in Africa. During the middle decades of the nineteenth century, military deaths from malaria dropped by some 60 percent in Algeria, and by an even greater margin in Senegal.[3] Recurrent yellow fever epidemics, however, continued to plague the French in West Africa; at least seven such epidemics hit the French communes in Senegal between 1830 and 1881, the last having a mortality rate of 81 percent among Europeans.[4] Clearly, additional medical breakthroughs were needed.

The French experience in Saint-Domingue figured directly into this process. The chief medical officer on the Saint-Domingue expedition was a twenty-seven-year-old doctor by the name of François-Victor Bally. In Saint-Domingue, Bally spent his days caring for sick soldiers

[2] Ibid., 1, 5, 12.
[3] Ibid., 18–26.
[4] Ibid., 79.

and his evenings studying the disease. Captured by the British, he went on to study yellow fever in Jamaica and the United States. On returning to Europe, the disease continued to demand his attention; in 1805 he was sent to study the origin of an outbreak of yellow fever in Cadix, and in 1820, once again, he was called in to service for an outbreak in Oise. In 1821 he was appointed to a four-person committee tasked with researching and combatting the spread of the disease along the Mediterranean. Between 1810 and 1833, he authored or co-authored several works on yellow fever, as well as several on other tropical diseases and an 1833 article on the use of quinine against "intermittent fevers."[5]

Although Bally turned out to be mistaken about certain important aspects of yellow fever—for example, he believed it to be directly contagious and he did not rule out the role of miasmas—his experiences in Saint-Domingue and subsequent publications nevertheless advanced medical knowledge about the disease, and about tropical diseases in general. Yellow fever continued to harry the French throughout the nineteenth century; it proved to be a major impediment to both French invasions of Mexico (1838–1839 and 1861–1867) and contributed to the failure of the French Panama canal project (1881–1889). These debacles enriched French medical knowledge, but Bally continued to hold an esteemed position in the scholarship. As French armies encroached on Africa, their medical advisors drew on his writings as they undertook their own research. When L.-J.-B. Bérenger-Féraud, who served as chief of the medical service of Senegal in the 1870s and was a part of the Tunisia expedition in the 1880s,

[5] Joseph Minjollat, *Notice sur le Docteur François-Victor Bally, médecin en chef de l'expédition de Saint-Domingue* (Vienna: Savigné, 1867). Books of note include François-Victor Bally, André François and Étienne Pariset, *Histoire médicale de la fièvre jaune, observée en Espagne et particulièrement en Catalogne, dans l'année 1821* (Paris: L'Imprimerie Royale, 1823) and François-Victor Bally, "Considérations pratiques sur les fièvres intermittentes et sur l'emploi du sulfate de quinine" (1833).

published a 1000-page clinical and theoretical treatise on yellow fever in 1891, he cited Bally and referred to Saint-Domingue dozens of times in the work.[6]

Not only did the memory of Saint-Domingue factor directly into the development of French medical knowledge regarding yellow fever and other diseases, it also served as a convenient anecdote for promoters of military medicine. As we saw earlier, the Saint-Domingue fiasco came up in the French Chamber of Deputies in discussion on whether or not to send in the French army to annex Madagascar in the 1890s, where the prospect of disease was a serious threat to the military operation. Again, in 1900, when France was on the cusp of establishing a reformed Colonial Army under the War Department rather than the Ministry of the Navy, a socialist deputy by the name of Edouard Lockroy considered the plan ill-advised. In a legislative debate on the subject, he launched into a scathing critique of France's military record. He named recent missteps like the Fashoda crisis, and the "long row of cadavers" in Madagascar, and then turned to Haiti, saying,

> I will take an example from history, and I will cite for you the expedition of Saint-Domingue, which Bonaparte confided to one of his dearest lieutenants, to General Leclerc, on whom he placed such great hopes! What happened to this army, composed of all the heroes of the Army of the Rhine…? It went to get bogged down in the island of Saint-Domingue, decimated by sickness, massacred by the *nègres* of Toussaint Louverture![7]

Of course, it was not necessary to harken back to the Leclerc Expedition to realize the importance of keeping armies healthy. It was general knowledge that travelling to Africa was a risky prospect, and one did not need a history lesson to understand that you could not conquer a territory with dead soldiers. Still, the confluence of mosquito-borne illness, military defeat and colony loss was not an easy example to forget.

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[6] Louis-Jean-Baptiste Bérenger-Féraud, *Traité théorique & Clinique de la fièvre jaune* (Paris: Octave Doin, 1891).
[7] France, Chamber of Deputies, "Séance du lundi 2 Avril," *Journal officiel de la république*, (3 April 1900), 1081–1082.

Once colonial territories had been secured, one of the more pressing and delicate questions—and one to which the precedents in Saint-Domingue were clearly relevant—was the matter of labour. For each of the European empires, the constant and elusive aim of colonization was to turn far-flung domains into profitable economic ventures. In France, this was discussed under the concept of *mise en valeur*. This notion was most famously articulated in Albert Sarraut's 1923 book *Mise en valeur des colonies françaises*, but the principle had formed a key component of the logic of empire much earlier. In order to make the colonies pay for themselves and enrich the metropole, it was necessary to develop a "native policy" that would establish a viable workforce for export products. In an earlier era, this issue would have been solved by the use of enslaved labour, but by the late nineteenth century, this was no longer a valid option.

In part, slavery was discredited because it was out of synch with one of the other goals of empire in this later period; the French hoped to create new markets for goods manufactured in France. This necessitated a shift to wage labour and the gradual cultivation of working classes in the colonies. More importantly, however, public opinion in the West had veered firmly away from its traditional acceptance of slavery over the course of the nineteenth century. The Haitian Revolution itself had played an important role in this widespread transformation of attitudes. Abolitionists throughout the West had pointed to Haiti, if not as proof that people of African descent were fully human and capable of acting toward their own interests, then at least as a warning of what could happen elsewhere if slavery was not abolished. This, as David Geggus has shown, contributed to the British push to abolish the slave trade in 1807.[8] In France, calls to

[8] David Geggus, "Haiti and the Abolitionists: Opinion, Propaganda and International Politics in Britain and France, 1804–1836," in *Abolition and its Aftermath: The Historical Context, 1790–1836*, David Richardson, ed. London: Frank Cass, 1985), 113–120.

reconquer Haiti and re-establish slavery there after the Bourbon restoration provoked a modest uptick in abolitionism in France between 1815 and 1825. The Haiti question helped put the international abolition of the transatlantic slave trade on the table at the Vienna Congress, and the French slave trade was finally abolished in 1818.

The small and generally elite-centred abolitionist movement in France sometimes referred to Haiti as it articulated arguments for the suppression of the ongoing illicit slave trade and the abolition of slavery. The most important anti-slavery association in mid-nineteenth-century France, the Société de la morale chrétienne, attempted to combat the mainstream narrative that an excessively bloody slave uprising in Saint-Domingue had reduced the island to a state of savagery; in 1823, for example, one of their members gave a speech in which he declared that "the current government of Saint-Domingue is perfectly organized; and very few countries in Europe can boast of a revolution less bloody that that which united the two parts of the island."[9] Still, if anything, the fear of "another Saint-Domingue" actually delayed French abolition, as proponents of slavery were as likely to leverage Haiti for their purposes.[10] Over time, the memory of the bloody debacle in Haiti largely dampened popular enthusiasms for abolition in France.

Nevertheless, France officially abolished colonial slavery in 1848. Historian Lawrence C. Jennings found "little evidence" that the Haitian Revolution "directly influenced French government policy in the latter part of the 1830s of the 1840s prior to 1848," and that "it was not the precedent of Saint-Domingue but the situation in the neighboring British colonies that led

[9] Charles Coquerel, "Note sur l'abolition de l'esclavage, lue à la séance du Conseil, du lundi 10 février 1823," *Journal de la Société de la morale chrétienne*, vol. 9 (1823), 154.
[10] Lawrence C. Jennings, *French Anti-Slavery: The Movement for the Abolition of Slavery in France, 1802–1848* (Cambridge, UK & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 120–121.

French officials to fear troubles in French slave establishments."[11] This, however, seems to underestimate the degree to which the memory of the dramatic loss of Saint-Domingue shaped the political, intellectual and historical framework in which slavery could be discussed in nineteenth-century France. After all, the man who penned the 1848 Decree that officially abolished slavery, Victor Schœlcher, had become the first French abolitionist to travel to Haiti just seven years earlier, and had included this warning in his 1842 book calling for immediate emancipation: "Spectre of Saint-Domingue, come out from your red shrouds, arise and come bear witness to our preceding words, to terrify this 'hard-necked people,' who refuse to listen to our peaceful appeal."[12]

Although the 1848 decree proclaimed that "slavery will be entirely abolished in all the French colonies and possessions," in reality, abolition was far from complete.[13] In particular, it had virtually no immediate impact in France's growing number of newly claimed territories in Africa. The continuing practice of slavery on the continent was, in fact, one of the realities that France and other European nations used to justify their expanding claims. It was ostensibly one of the top priorities of the countries that gathered at the Berlin Conference in 1884–1885 to define their spheres of influence on the continent. As the general public in France came to see slavery as inherently evil, at odds with both republican universalism and Christian morality, their government wooed popular support for empire-building by insisting on the altruistic goal of ending slavery on the continent. As such, those tasked with administering France's African colonies were in no position to start setting up New World slave societies in the Old. As early as

[11] Jennings, *French Anti-Slavery*, 121–122.
[12] Victor Shœlcher, *Des colonies françaises: abolition immédiate et necessaire* (Paris: Pagnerre, 1842), 381; Geggus, "Haiti and the Abolitionists", 123.
[13] Victor Schœlcher, "Décret du Gouvernement provisoire abolissant l'esclavage dans les Colonies du 27 avril 1848," art. 1.

1833, one French author wrote of Algeria that, "the new direction of ideas that we sometimes qualify as the progress of enlightenment absolutely forbids one to think of turning this magnificent country into a slave colony in the manner of Saint-Domingue."[14] By the last decades of the century, if Europeans wanted to coerce labour in Africa they would have to so by subtler means and describe it using other terms.

Educated people in France understood that the uprising of enslaved people that had initiated the loss of Saint-Domingue had not happened suddenly without warning. Slave revolts had happened before and since in slave societies throughout the Americas. In their schematic retelling of the Haitian Revolution, it was understood that the runaway success of the colony had produced demographic distortions that had made the situation untenable. Recall, as the authors of the *Grande encyclopédie* had put it, "the planters, drunk on their wealth, thought of nothing but extending the reach of their domains and the number of their slaves… The *nègres* who bore the cost of this fortune, unique in the history of the Antilles, were subject to the harshest oppression."[15] With the benefit of hindsight, legislators knew that allowing companies in Africa unfettered control of local populations as a source of labour would inevitably lead to abuses in the short term and eventual turmoil. So, while they were opposed to the ongoing existence of indigenous slavery in Africa, they also officially prohibited French companies from making use of enslaved labour in their operations on the continent. As France consolidated it hold its African domains, the French government frequently issued directives against both types of slavery.

While legislators in the remote halls of parliament in Paris, imbued with lessons drawn from the Haitian Revolution, continually insisted on the humane treatment of colonial subjects,

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[14] Benjamin Gradis, *Coup-d'œil sur les colonies, et en particulier sur celle d'Alger* (Paris: Delauney & Wilbert, 1833), 20.
[15] Berthelot, *La grande encyclopédie*, 735.

at the same time French entrepreneurs in Africa were drawing their own conclusions from Haiti's history. As with the old planters in Saint-Domingue, the most pressing question was how to make a profit. As in Saint-Domingue, the key was African labour. Understandably, African rural people were reluctant to suddenly give up subsistence agriculture and start being motivated by paycheques and regulated by company timetables. But French businessmen had been raised on the narrative of the rise and fall of Saint-Domingue which blamed independent Haiti's economic decline on inherent African laziness. Here too, they interpreted African people's reluctance to accept employment in export industries as indolence, and believed coercion was the only viable method to supply labour for their ventures. As a result, the entrepreneurs and merchants who hoped to establish profitable ventures on the continent were frequently at odds with the government. Colonial administrators, for their part, often found themselves caught in between, hoping to placate French businessmen on the ground while at the same time appearing to follow directives coming from Paris.[16]

Limitations with communication and transportation meant that effective control from Paris was often tenuous at best. The improvised strategies of those stationed in the colonies tended to prove more decisive than the humanitarian principles emanating from the metropole and supposedly guiding the colonial project. The abolition of indigenous slavery was pursued half-heartedly. Some administrators proclaimed the principle in theory; William Ponty, for example, in a circular of 1900 said, "let us not forget that it is in the name of Liberty and to combat such barbaric customs that European powers have come to the territory of Africa."[17] But, in practice, administrators more often struck a precarious balance between the European anti-

[16] See Suzanne Miers and Martin Klein, "Introduction," in *Slavery and Colonial Rule in Africa*, Suzanne Miers and Martin Klein, eds. (Abingdon, UK: Frank Cass, 1999), 1–14.
[17] William Ponty, quoted in Martin A. Klein, *Slavery and Colonial Rule in French West Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 127.

slavery agenda and socio-economic priorities in Africa. Finding the practice more or less ubiquitous on the continent, colonial administrators believed that to abolish slavery outright would be catastrophic. This argument was bolstered by the memory of the Haitian Revolution, during which modest reforms in the racial hierarchy had precipitated just such a bloody collapse. Hasty abolition would disrupt the status quo and undermine the order on which their economic projects depended. Instead, administrators took a pragmatic stance toward slavery, tackling its most egregious and disruptive aspects—slave trading and raiding—directly, targeting the institution itself only when it served more immediate ends (such as to curb the power of an African rival), and, more often, finding ways to accommodate the practice, even using it to fill their needs for agricultural labour, public works and military service.[18] For instance, the so-called *villages de liberté* in French West Africa were ostensibly set up as places to resettle escaped or liberated slaves, but in actuality were used by the French to keep labourers from deserting an important agricultural region.[19]

Even more nefariously, when they were not dragging their heels on the abolition of slavery where it already existed, French colonists were not averse to the pragmatic use of slavery for their own purposes in Africa. Through much of the nineteenth century, it was common practice for the French military to purchase soldiers, who would gain their freedom after serving for ten to fourteen years.[20] Long into the twentieth century, administrators were complicit in schemes to produce new coerced workforces under pressure from business interests. In Equatorial Africa, in particular, but also elsewhere, French administrators used brutal tactics, sometimes eerily reminiscent of descriptions of colonial Saint-Domingue, in order to supply

[18] Miers and Klein, "Introduction," 5.
[19] Andrew F. Clarke, "Freedom Villages in the Upper Senegal Valley, 1887–1910: A Reassessment," *Slavery and Abolition* 16, no. 3 (December 1995): 311–330.
[20] Curtin, *Disease*, 18.

labourers. Two colonial administrators in the French Congo, Fernand Gaud and Georges Toqué, infamously resorted to committing atrocities including summary execution in order to intimidate the local population into labour and porterage for the French concession-companies operating in the region.[21] Both men were tried and convicted in France, and the Gaud-Toqué Affair caused something of a scandal, but inhumane tactics continued.

In both Madagascar and Equatorial Africa, the administrations developed systems for "recruiting" local labourers for railroad construction. Though in some cases these were paid a wage, working conditions were atrocious. In Madagascar, workers were kept at service camps and employed against their will for contracts of two to three years. In Equatorial Africa "recruitment" for the Congo-Ocean railroad construction project displaced and divided families and the gruelling work claimed countless lives.[22] Elsewhere, the *corvée* law was used. This legal mechanism for compulsory labour was already familiar in both France and in several colonial contexts, and it empowered colonial administrators to procure unpaid labourers for public work projects without having to resort to slavery—at least not in a legal sense. This legal fiction proved too unsettling, however, and soon the corvée was abolished and replaced with a head tax, which forced colonial subjects to find wage labour in order to make tax payments. Still, coercion remained in effect long into the colonial period.

These tensions between principle and practice with regard to slavery and colonial labour were a defining and enduring characteristic of French colonialism in Africa. Earlier French experiences with Haiti informed the attitudes on both sides of this tension, contributing to currents that both challenged and reinforced exploitative labour practices. Haiti's role in the

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[21] Betts, *Tricouleur*, 81.
[22] Alice Conklin, Sarah Fishman and Robert Zaretsky, *France and its Empire Since 1870* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 98; Betts, *Tricouleur*, 83.

development of the anti-slavery mainstream in Europe moved legislators to issue humanitarian directives to their compatriots in Africa. At the same time, the idea of Haiti contributed to French beliefs in a presumed African reluctance to work, which led entrepreneurs and administrators in the colonies toward an aggressive mobilization of labour. This tension did much to stir up resentment in France's African colonies as well as occasional outrage in France itself. Despite French efforts to maintain the colonies, these countervailing trends contributed to the eventual unravelling of French control in Africa. In some places—namely Cameroon, Madagascar, and, most significantly, Algeria (not to mention Indochina)—local resentment over French racism and a harsh labour regime boiled over into armed conflict in a dramatic reprise of the loss of Saint-Domingue. In other cases, in the face of blatant contradictions between principle and practice, France gradually lost the will to continue governing through force.

Another aspect of the traditional French account of the Haitian Revolution that continued to resonate into the second colonial empire was the anxieties surrounding the Free People of Colour. As we have seen, nineteenth-century logic supposed that enslaved Africans were incapable of planning and executing such a massive and ultimately victorious uprising. Consequently, many accounts of the event painted the colony's mixed-race minority as the true masterminds behind the insurrection. This helped make the disaster comprehensible in France and throughout the western world. Furthermore, nineteenth-century racial theories held that mixed-race people tended to have predictable characteristics that, in this case, pushed them toward insurrection. In fictional works and in pseudoscientific treatises, racial mixing was presented as a deviation that produced individuals characterized by volatility. French writers described Haiti's mixed-race people as traitors, as the ungrateful sons of French planters who

had despoiled their fathers of the colony and proceeded to drive it into the ground. This narrative was reinforced during the period of "mulatto ascendancy" in the first decades of Haitian independence which culminated with the twenty-five-year presidency of Jean-Pierre Boyer. It remained a key aspect of French retellings of the Haitian Revolution to the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth.

French anxieties about racial mixing remained relevant long into the era of the second colonial empire. Despite these fears, there was relatively little effort to discourage Frenchmen stationed in Africa from forming "temporary unions" with local women. As several historians have noted, given the scarcity of European women in the colonies, there was a tacit understanding that soldiers and administrators would pursue sexual relations with African women.[23] Unlike their British, German and Dutch counterparts, who attempted to curb sexual relations between European colonists and "native" women, French legislators, administrators and military commanders tended to turn a blind eye.[24] Over time, however, the children produced from these unions began to pose thorny sociological and legal issues for the French colonial system.

Though figures vary widely, the size of so-called métis populations throughout Africa seems to have been quite small. A 1938 census of French West Africa counted 3,437 mixed-race residents in a population of over 14 million (less than 0.003 percent).[25] In Madagascar and

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[23] In addition to the works cited in this section, see also George E. Brooks, *Eurafricans in West Africa: Commerce, Social Status, Gender, and Religious Observance from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2003); Hilary Jones, *The Métis of Senegal: Urban Life and Politics in French West Africa* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2013).

[24] Emmanuelle Saada, *Empire's Children: Race, Filiation, and Citizenship in the French Colonies*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 63; Owen White, *Children of the French Empire: Miscegenation and Colonial Society in French West Africa 1895–1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 33–37.

[25] "A. O. F. Peuplement Naissances des Villes," *Le Monde Coloniale Illustré* 15, no. 175 (January 1938), XXIX. See Emmanuelle Saada's note on the complications with census data for métis people in Saada, *Empire's Children*, 38–41.

Equatorial Africa there were fewer still.[26] Whatever the precise numbers, it was far from a substantial minority. Yet, the mere existence of an identifiable number of métis children in the colonies led theorists, legislators and administrators to imagine numerous potential risks to the colonial order. On the one hand, if mixed-race children, even those abandoned by their French fathers, were automatically conferred citizenship, it might lead to the undesirable growth of an enfranchised population that was culturally African and felt no loyalty to France. Alternatively, refusing citizenship to mixed-race individuals could well lead to the emergence of a self-conscious and resentful métis community in the colonies who might play a leading role in challenging French hegemony (as had apparently been the case with Saint-Domingue's Free People of Colour). Fundamentally, the existence of a mixed-race subset of the population upset the notion of "proper difference" between Europeans and Africans, a convenient binary which served as the basis of the former's domination of the latter.[27]

There is no doubt that the haunting memory of Saint-Domingue fuelled these anxieties. One influential figure who was keenly aware of the parallels was Arthur Girault, an eminent French colonial jurist. Girault had an enormous influence on the articulation of French colonial legal theory; in 1894 he published a work that has been described as the first modern colonial legal treatise, and in 1900 he penned one of the first texts establishing a legal framework for dealing with mixed-race colonial inhabitants.[28] An able historian, Girault's works brim with allusions to earlier colonial situations. In his influential 1894 treatise, for example, he lamented the irrational animosity between Saint-Domingue's white planters and Free People of Colour,

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[26] Saada, *Empire's Children*, 40. Saada also examines the apparently unique case of Algeria, where the mixed-race population was particularly invisible in contemporary records and in subsequent histories; Saada, *Empire's Children*, 25–30.
[27] Saada, *Empire's Children*, 60–62.
[28] Emmanuelle Saada, "Penser le fait colonial à travers le droit en 1900," *Mil Neuf Cent. Revue d'histoire intellectuelle* 1, no. 27 (2009): 109; Saada, *Empire's Children*, 117.

saying, "between the whites and the *mulâtres*, the was no rivalry of economic interest," but that "a long antipathy and the colour prejudice separated them." Then, imagining an alternate history, he adds, "in reconciling, they would have simultaneously safeguarded their interests and maintained peace in the Antilles."[29]

Later, in a 1911 speech before the International Colonial Institute, Girault explicitly linked the métis people in the newly acquired European colonies to Saint-Domingue's Free People of Colour. He first described the danger of allowing a rootless community of mixed-race people to emerge in the colonies, saying, "Treat *métis* as a class apart and ask yourselves what feelings will germinate in the minds of these men. Rejected by all sides, they will become *déclassés*, and, I would add, the most dangerous *déclassés* from the point of view of maintaining European domination."[30] He then drove home his point with a chilling reference to his own country's earlier colonial past:

> We in France must not forget that failure to understand this has in the past had disastrous consequences for us. The basic reason for France's loss in the eighteenth century of Saint-Domingue, which was her nest colony, was the division of whites and mulattoes. The former did not know how to accept the assistance which the latter loyally offered them. If they had accepted it, the island of Saint- Domingue would without doubt have remained a French colony.[31]

He thus urged the other colonial powers to avoid the mistake of allowing a mixed-race class to emerge, as the French had in Saint-Domingue with dire consequences. The speech was reprinted in the Institute's publication and the excerpt referring back to the Haitian Revolution was frequently quoted by those making the same argument.[32] As a result, the memory of Haiti seeped

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[29] Arthur Girault, *Principes de la colonisation et de legislation coloniale* 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Paris: L. Larose, 1904), 199.
[30] Arthur Gibault, quoted in White, *Children*, 78.
[31] Ibid.
[32] White, *Children*, 78.

into the institutional framework of the French colonies and of the European colonies more broadly.

Even when the connection was not explicit, it is easy to discern shadows of Haiti in the background of French anxieties regarding the métis. In a 1913 article entitled "Notre devoir envers les enfants métis," the former governor of Madagascar (and future Governor-General of French Equatorial Africa) painted an image of what would happen if the métis were allowed to grow into a distinct class. He borrowed Girault's terminology, saying, "Within a few years… we would have everywhere a class of *déclassés*," and then elaborated:

> Half educated, half brought up in the European style, the métis would be neither indigenous nor European. Thinking of themselves, by virtue of their semi-instruction, of their semi-education, as above the *indigènes*, they will want to dominate them. The *indigènes*, aware of [the métis's] real value, suffering their pretentions, will hate them and a part of this hatred will redound to the French, held responsible for their maliciousness, for the violence committed by the métis. Toward the European, the métis, conscious of their lack of equality, will feel nothing but jealousy, humiliation and will quickly become exasperated. The métis class, interposed between the *indigènes* and the colonists, will be an element of disunion, isolating them from one another, striving to provoke opposition between them.[33]

While this bleak prediction undoubtedly draws inspiration from developments in the *vielles colonies* like Guadeloupe and Martinique, its urgency is surely stoked by the extreme example of Saint-Domingue, where, as educated French people knew, the Free People of Colour played a similar destabilizing role in the dramatic events there.

As the twentieth century progressed, the French administration toyed with methods for dealing with the mixed-race population in Africa. In 1912, the Minster of Colonies Albert Lebrun issued a circular to the Governors and Governors-General in the French colonies, criticizing French fathers for abandoning mixed-race children without a second thought. He insisted that they "at least guarantee their education and put them in a position to provide for

[33] Victor Augagneur, "Notre devoir envers les enfants métis," *Les Annales Coloniales*, 11 January 1913, 1.

themselves," although they had no legal obligation to do so. Lebrun reiterated the possible risks involved, saying, "the abandonment of illegitimate children represents one of the possible causes of discord among the various elements of this population, besides the fact that it is likely to throw the greatest moral discredit on the principles by which our civilization declares itself to be inspired."[34] The circular, however, had little effect.

Over time, the typical approach to the "métis problem" came to be the establishment of orphanages and schools that would oversee the development and education of métis children and thereby shape their outlook and their place in colonial society. Initially, this process took place under the aegis of religious orders, but with the ambitious secularization program around the turn of the century, state-run orphanages for métis children became more common.[35] The *orphelinats de métis* were conceived as a collective intervention that would compensate for the indiscretions of individual Frenchmen in the colonies, and, in the words of one historian, allow administrators to "congratulate themselves on what they saw as the munificence of their policy towards abandoned métis children."[36] Despite this self-congratulatory posture, administrators sometimes pressured African mothers to hand their mixed-race children over to the orphanages.[37]

Although applied somewhat haphazardly, the overarching French strategy for solving the "métis problem" is evident in the characteristics of the state-funded orphanages and schools for métis children. These institutions were largely designed to produce teachers and auxiliary medical workers for the understaffed French colonial establishment. In effect, the French colonial administrations worked to set métis children up for a settled existence and to foster a love and respect for France within them. At the same time, they wanted to stave off the

[34] Albert Lebrun, cited in White*, Children*, 35.
[35] White, *Children*, 50.
[36] Ibid., 53.
[37] Ibid., 56.

formation of self-conscious mixed-race communities in the colonies and to avoid "overeducating" the métis so they would not become dissatisfied with their position in colonial society. In short, through an aggressive and paternalist program, the French state worked to intervene in a demographic process that they saw as a potential threat to the colonial system, as past experiences in Saint-Domingue clearly demonstrated.

In the end, their fears proved unwarranted. In no French African colony did the mixed-race population come anywhere near the 5 percent (about half the free population) that it had been in Saint-Domingue at the time of the Haitian Revolution.[38] The 1938 census of French West Africa found that métis people (having a one parent from Africa and one from France or another European country) made up less than 1 percent of the population of each colony. Even in Dakar, the colonial capital where the proportion of Europeans was significantly higher (7.6 percent), the métis population was pegged at about one half of one percent. At the other extreme, Niger counted just 157 métis in a population of over 1.7 million.[39] In any case, while the predictions of an intermediate class that would lead the charge for independence turned out to be correct, it was not a class of métis. As it turned out, it was the so-called *evolués*—Africans educated in French schools—who proved the most adept at destabilizing French hegemony in Africa.

By the twentieth century, education had become one of the pillars of French colonialism in Africa. Much vaunted by proponents of empire, French schools in Africa were the cornerstone of

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[38] For a comprehensive breakdown of the population in Saint-Domingue in 1789–1790, see James E. McLellan III, *Colonialism & Science: Saint-Domingue in the Old Regime* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 49.

[39] "A. O. F. Peuplement Naissances des Villes," *Le Monde Coloniale Illustré* 15, no. 175 (January 1938), XXIX. The figures presented in this chart, besides containing some mathematical errors, seem to underestimate the long-established métis population of Saint-Louis and the other communes. As Hilary Jones has pointed out, population estimates in the early twentieth century sometimes distorted the mixed-race population of the four communes, since, as French citizens, they were often simply counted among the French. Jones, *Métis,* 219n40

the *mission civilisatrice* that the French used to reconcile colonial domination with notions of liberty and equality. Schools spread the French language, popularized French values, and created new opportunities for social advancement. Perhaps more importantly for the French, they helped produce the workers necessary for the colonial system to function—clerks and translators in addition to the teachers and auxiliary medical workers noted earlier.

As with orphanages, education began largely as a missionary endeavour. With the anticlerical turn around 1900, the state began to take on a more prominent role in educating the masses, at least where resources allowed. In 1903, the Governor-General of French West Africa, Ernest Roume, instituted a three-tiered system that remained in place to the end of the colonial period, and was adopted in French Equatorial Africa in 1925. In theory, if not always in practice, each village had an *école de village* where rural children learned reading and writing, basic math, and skills to prepare them for agricultural work. The ablest pupils were then channeled into the *écoles régionales* in the capital of their administrative districts. Here, they advanced in the subjects offered in the village schools, and added some regional history, geography and science. Finally, a tiny fraction of the student population would then progress to the *écoles urbaines* for higher level study. An even smaller number might then move on to the higher-level schools, the *école primaire supérieure et commerciale,* the *école supérieur professionelle*, which trained skilled labourers, or the *école normal*, which trained indigenous teachers, interpreters, qadis (Islamic judges) and chiefs.[40]

It would be a stretch to argue that French education programs in Africa were directly shaped by the historical experience of Saint-Domingue. Indeed, it must be said that French

[40] Georges Hardy, "L'Enseignement aux Indigènes—Possession Françaises d'Afrique," in Institut Colonial Internationale, *XXIe Session, Paris, 5-6-7-8 Mai 1931, Rapports Préliminaires*, *L'Enseignement aux Indigènes, Native Education* (Brussels: Établissements Généraux d'Imprimerie, 1931), 272–273.

education projects in Africa fell drastically short of expressed ambitions. With the exception of Madagascar, where popular education was relatively widespread before French annexation, only a tiny fraction of the population of any French colony in Africa was ever enrolled in a French school during the colonial period.[41] Still, France's longue durée colonial history, of which the loss of Saint-Domingue was a key moment, was not irrelevant to the education project. It is evident that the rhetoric that surrounded education was grounded in underlying anxieties about both the humanitarian value and the future stability of the colonial system. These anxieties were undoubtedly reinforced by the memory of dramatic events in Saint-Domingue. Education was, one might say, considered a magic bullet that would mitigate the risks that the history of Haiti made to seem more acute. Done right, it would help foster goodwill internationally and locally, cultivate a love of French culture and an acceptance of the system, and allow administrators to check the pulse of possible centres of dissent.

Additionally, by monopolizing the education system, French administrators hoped to insulate their African subjects from the various dangerous intellectual currents that came to proliferate during the twentieth century, namely nationalism, Pan-Africanism and communism. Anxiety over the spread of destructive ideas had a precedent in Haiti; radical ideas emanating from revolutionary France had helped to stoke the flames of revolution in Saint-Domingue, particularly among the cosmopolitan Free People of Colour. François Coty, a French business magnate, lobbyist and newspaper publisher, expressed these anxieties over the battle for the minds and hearts of the people of Africa in a book-length treatise entitled *Sauvons nos colonies* (1931). A staunch anti-communist who had lost a fortune in Russia in the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution, Coty describes Pan-Africanism as a communist plot that was seeking to

[41] Betts, *Tricouleur*, 86.

break the bonds of order and loyalty that maintained European control in Africa.[42] Several times, he alludes to the memory of Haiti as both a warning to the French and a potential source of motivation to dissidents in Africa. He notes that, in Pan-Africanist circles, "a permanent enthusiasm… reigns in these environments and encourages the memory of the insurrection of Saint-Domingue, ultimately victorious even over the troops of Napoleon."[43] After describing recent unrest in Africa, he concludes that "from such events, assassinations and riots, it is sufficiently clear what the promoters of the *pan-nègre* movement mean by evolution 'in the direction of the race.' It is a new insurrection of Saint-Domingue, but generalized and extended across all of Africa, that they are trying to accomplish."[44]

Coty identifies Haitians in Paris who were playing a leading role in these movements. He quotes a recent Pan-Africanist declaration published by the Institut Nègre de Paris, and explains that "the signatories, many of whom are Haitian, were thinking of the bloody Toussaint Louverture, who has remained for them the historic model of a Black hero."[45] He accuses one particular Haitian in Paris, Dr. Léon Sajous (whom we will meet in chapter 7), of sowing discord, and goes on to describe Haiti's unique quality as a potential hub for opposition to French imperialism in Africa, saying "Haiti, where the French language is still spoken, albeit in a corrupted form, was perfectly suited as a base of recruitment for action in the French colonies."[46] French efforts to stifle intellectual ferment among colonial subjects were ultimately ineffectual, and, as we will see in the next chapters, Haitians did indeed play a role in stoking the flames of anti-imperialism in Paris's Black communities.

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[42] Roulhac B. Toledano and Elizabeth B. Coty, *François Coty: Fragrance, Power, Money* (Gretna, LA: Pelican, 2009), 160.
[43] François Coty, *Sauvons nos colonies: le peril rouge en pays noir* (Paris: Grasset, 1931), 143.
[44] Ibid., 183.
[45] Ibid., 175.
[46] Ibid., 203.

There was one final aspect of French colonialism in Africa that was haunted by the spectre of Haiti. The memory of the Haitian Revolution reminded many in France that the unfettered expansion of slavery and the volatility of the Free People of Colour had led to a powder keg in Saint-Domingue. But a powder keg does not combust spontaneously. Critically, French retellings of the Haitian Revolution also recalled the Decree of 15 May 1791 as the spark that lit the fuse. By hastily extending political rights to the mixed-race inhabitants of Saint-Domingue, the National Constituent Assembly had effectively undermined the order on which stability in the colony depended. This sudden extension of political rights had prompted conflict between the colony's free inhabitants, which in turn created an opening for the enslaved people to strike for freedom. Histories of the event agreed emphatically on this point. This known history helps to explain why French legislators in the late nineteenth century were exceedingly cautious when it came to questions of political enfranchisement in their African colonies.

As previously mentioned, Paul Leroy-Beaulieu reminded readers of his *De la colonisation chez les peuples modernes* about the impacts of the French government's clumsy approach to enfranchisement in Saint-Domingue, saying, "solved with timidity, applied with irresolution and resistance in our establishments, the question was the origin of the bloody wars that led to our loss of Saint-Domingue."[47] A century later, French legislators knew that they had to deal with the colonies with a steady hand as not to make the same mistake again. This was complicated by the fact that the new colonial empire took shape under the auspices of the Third Republic which was, in the words of one historian, "one of the most confusing and paradoxical of political regimes that France ever had."[48] Inherently shaky, it featured a weak presidency and

[47] Leroy-Beaulieu, *De la colonisation*, 225.
[48] Theodore Zeldin, *A History of French Passions*, vol 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 570.

a democratically elected and perennially fragmented legislature. The constant need to build coalitions, the frequent government turnovers, and the recurrent crises meant that maintaining a steady hand in the colonies was anything but straightforward.

Given the experience in Saint-Domingue, it is not surprising that French legislators were reluctant to challenge the status quo in the realm of enfranchisement. For the duration of the second colonial empire, France postponed extending political rights to colonial subjects in Africa. For nearly the entire duration of France's colonial venture in Africa, the vast majority of people in the French colonies had no say in the way they were governed. While settlers and French citizens residing temporarily in the colonies enjoyed political representation, the protections of the French law code, and exemptions from certain taxes and labour obligations, colonial subjects were denied all of these. Instead, they were subject to the arbitrary *code de l'indigénat*, under which they could be harshly punished for a wide array of offenses. The indigénat came into effect in Algeria as a temporary measure in 1838 and in Senegal in 1887, but it was frequently renewed and extended and became common throughout the colonial empire, serving as a convenient mechanism through which administrators could enforce French objectives.[49] Under the indigénat, even low-level administrators could dole out severe penalties for "crimes" including criticizing the French regime, lodging vagabonds, having an unregistered weapon, starting an unofficial school and not conforming to French standards of dress or hygiene.[50] In the words of one historian, "for colonised peoples no greater proof of the inequity of foreign control existed than the *indigénat*."[51]

[49] Aldrich, *Greater France*, 213.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.

It was possible for a colonial subject to acquire French citizenship, but it was a difficult process. The easiest way to become a French citizen was to be the resident of one of the four communes—the old entrepôt towns in Senegal—whose residents were granted citizenship in 1915. Otherwise, one could gain citizenship by marriage, or by being the (acknowledged) child of a French father. Outside of those circumstances, the process was more labyrinthine. A person could apply for citizenship if they were over twenty-one and had served for three years in the military or French civil service. However, in many contexts the bureaucracy put up other obstacles. In some colonies, one had additionally to demonstrate a good grasp of the French language, an upright character, past service to the empire and a capacity to support oneself materially.[52] Furthermore, citizenship entailed that one had to forfeit prerogatives endowed by customary law, such as having multiple wives under Islamic law, or ceremonial or inheritance privileges. Moreover, citizenship did not automatically grant a person the right to vote or exemptions from taxes or military service—yet another deterrent for those seeking citizenship. Thus, French legislators and administrators effectively curbed the process of enfranchisement in the African colonies.

This reluctance to extend citizenship and expand the franchise was at least partly derived from the lessons that the French nation had learned from the experience of Saint-Domingue. As noted earlier, in his treatise on the new imperialism, Paul Leroy-Beaulieu had reiterated the significance of the Decree of 15 May 1791 to the collapse of Saint-Domingue. He had surveyed the problems associated with enfranchisement in the *vielles colonies* of Martinique and Guadeloupe, and praised the English Caribbean alternative where there was no pretence of universal suffrage. Finally, he had given a stern warning that "this history of Saint-Domingue

[52] Ibid., 212.

could begin again," if the architects of the colonial system did not take care to maintain French control of the apparatus of governance in the colonies by opposing the expansion of the franchise.[53]

Haiti continued to serve as a point of reference for the question of enfranchisement and self-determination into the twentieth century. In 1903, Charles Albert Aubry, a deputy from French Algeria, gave an extended speech to the Chamber of Deputies opposing the extension of political rights to indigenous Algerians. To conclude, he referred to the example of Saint-Domingue, saying, "We must avoid childish sentimentality, bearing in mind that France lost its most beautiful of its colonies in the Antilles, Saint-Domingue, for having wanted to give primitives rights that they could not yet understand, rights that were the cause of abominable civil wars, after which they descended into the most brutal barbarity."[54]

Again, in the aftermath of the First World War, an Algerian petition called for the granting of political rights to indigenous Algerians. A legislative debate on the subject prompted an uncharacteristically nuanced (albeit heated) interchange about the Haitian Revolution. After describing the merits of Wilsonian self-determination, the socialist lawyer André Berthon highlighted its precedents from the French Revolution, when "the Convention decreed that all men, without distinction of colour, living in the colonies, are French citizens and will one day enjoy all the rights ensured by the Constitution." The conservative general Louis de Maud'huy, interrupting him repeatedly, finally exclaimed: "That cost us Saint-Domingue!" But Berthelot contradicted him, saying that, in the short term, the experiment in racial equality was successful, and Toussaint Louverture was, for a time, "a faithful servant of France." Maud'huy, evidently scandalized, accused Berthelot, saying, "you call the man who fought against the French of the

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[53] Ibid.
[54] France, Chamber of Deputies, "Séance du vendredi 3 avril," *Journal officiel de la république*, 4 April 1903, 1575.

Republic a faithful servant of France?" to which Berthelot replied, "Toussaint-Louverture was decorated as a French general after he fought against the English in the name of France. This is indisputable." Finally, Berthelot chastised the opponents of the petition for failing to live up to the legacy of the revolution: "That which the revolution accomplished, will you now, a century later, not dare to do the same, you self-proclaimed—falsely by the way—continuators of the French Revolution!"[55] This rare instance of a multi-dimensional account of the Haitian Revolution, however, failed to convince. Maud'huy's version of the Haitian Revolution was, it seems, the more widely accepted account, and the Algerian rights petition was rejected.

The question of political rights and citizenship shifted rapidly in the wake of the Second World War. Although the Brazzaville conference of 1944 signalled that the French intended to maintain a hard line against self-determination in the colonies (no indigenous representatives of the African colonies were invited), the war had nevertheless destabilized the system. When a constituent assembly convened in Paris in 1946 to draft a constitution for the new Fourth French Republic, the group included numerous representatives of colonial interests—among them future presidents Léopold Sédar Senghor of Senegal, Ferhat Abbas of Algeria, Félix Houphouët-Boigny of Côte d'Ivoire, as well as Senegal's Amadou Lamine-Guèye, Sourou-Migan Apithy of Dahomey, Alexandre Douala Manga Bell from Cameroon, and Jean-Félix Tchicaya of French Congo—who effectively pushed a new, progressive colonial agenda. Within a few months the assembly had issued decrees that ended the indigénat, abolished forced labour, applied the French law code throughout the colonies, and, with the celebrated Lamine-Guèye law, made all French subjects into citizens. However, in the post-war colonial empire, now rebranded the French Union, political rights for Africans were still proscribed by representational imbalances

[55] France, Chamber of Deputies, "Séance du jeudi 30 décembre," *Journal officiel de la république*, (31 December 1920), 4184.

that gave non-white colonial citizens a fraction of the political influence of their white European "compatriots."

Finally, on 23 June 1956, under pressure from independence movements in the colonies, the French legislature passed the Loi-cadre Defferre which transferred new powers to local administrations and proclaimed universal suffrage in the colonies. This gave the majority of people in France's African colonies a meaningful role in their own governance for the first time. As one historian has noted, "France here went further than any other country in decolonizing its African possessions without granting independence."[56] However, in the face of an intensifying conflict in Algeria, the new system did not last long. By October 1958, France had adopted a new constitution, and proposed another new colonial arrangement—now called the French Community—in which the political rights of the residents of France's African colonies would once again be truncated. In effect, the French had failed to heed the lesson of Saint-Domingue. As in the 1790s, a shaky French government waffled over the rights of its non-white colonial citizens, expanding and then curtailing political rights and generating resentment in the process. As in Saint-Domingue, this agitation proved too much for France's tenuous legitimacy in its African colonies. Guinea voted to reject the new constitution of the Fifth Republic and became independent that same year. Although the other French colonies initially accepted the new constitution, one-by-one they soon followed suit; within a period of just four years, virtually all of French Africa had proclaimed its independence.[57]

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[56] Conklin, et al. *France and its Empire*, 293.

[57] The only exception being French Somaliland, which won greater autonomy in 1967 and was renamed the French Territory of the Afars and Issas, and finally proclaimed its independence in 1977 as the Republic of Djibouti.

Conclusion:
Decolonization *à la mode d'Haïti*

Despite all the strategies that the French put in place to secure their colonies, the "winds of change" proved irreversible. By 1962, just as in 1804, the French colonial empire had been reduced to a vestigial scattering of islands and outposts. The parallels between the Haitian Revolution and the end of French colonial Africa do not end there; besides the involvement of yet another General Leclerc,[1] the end of the second French colonial empire shares notable similarities with the end of the first both in terms of the process of decolonization and in the characteristics of the republics that subsequently came into existence. The most obvious similarity is that the independence movements in Haiti and in several French African colonies intensified to armed struggles. In the case of Madagascar, Cameroon and, in particular, Algeria, where escalating violence played a major role in the movement to independence, similarities to the Haitian Revolution must have been self-evident.

Elsewhere, the transition to independence was less dramatic. Still, the history of Haiti was also relevant to these processes. Specifically, the Franco-Haitian Accord of 1825, which secured French recognition of Haitian independence, could be seen as a precursor to the independence negotiations in countries like Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Chad, Gabon, Niger and the Republic of the Congo, where the process was calm and diplomatic, but the resulting

[1] Philippe Leclerc de Hautecloque, known as General Leclerc (1902–1947), helped secure French Equatorial Africa for the Free French during World War Two. After the war he led a French expeditionary force to Indochina before relocating to Algeria as inspector-general of the French forces in North Africa. In 1947, he died in a mysterious plane crash near Béchar at the age of forty-five.

independence was designed to keep those nations' economies geared toward France. Just like the despoiled Dominguan planters in 1825, de Gaulle in 1960 realized that the colonies might actually be more valuable as republics. France established a monetary zone comprising most of the former colonies in Africa; to this day twelve former French colonies in Africa continue to use a currency (now pegged to the Euro), that keeps them tied to France's economy.[2] In the 1825 ordinance, French merchants were granted preferential treatment to trade in Haiti in the form of half-price duties in Haitian ports. Likewise, in 1960 French corporations were given preferential access to mineral deposits in their country's former colonies in Africa. In exchange, France has lent financial aid and military support to several African republics, which has served the additional purpose of propping up sympathetic leaders.[3]

Culturally, too, France remained the main touchstone in Haiti and in much of Africa. Haiti maintained French as its official language. The children of well-to-do Haitian families were routinely sent to Paris for their education. Haiti's national literature developed in French, and the national culture is indelibly tied to the language and the nation that produced it. The same is true in many of France's former African colonies. Of the twenty-one existing African countries that were once part of the French colonial empire, two-thirds have maintained French as an official language.[4] Many of the other also use French in numerous official and unofficial contexts. Even in Algeria, where French colonialism was most violently rejected, the widespread use of French continues despite the state's efforts to eradicate the language.[5] Many of the nationalist literary

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[2] The West African CFA franc: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo; the Central African CFA franc: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of the Congo and Gabon. Additionally, Comoros uses the Comorian franc, which is also tied to the Euro.

[3] Conklin, et al. *France and its Empire*, 294; See also François-Xavier Verschave, *La Françafrique: le plus long scandale de la République* (Paris: Stock, 1999).

[4] Benin, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Gabon, Guinea, Madagascar, Niger, Republic of the Congo, Senegal and Togo.

[5] Mohamed Benrabah, "An Algerian Paradox: Arabisation and the French Language," in *Shifting Frontiers of France and Francophonie*, Yves Rocheron & Christopher Rolfe, eds. (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2004), 54.

figures of the former French colonies—from Senegal's Léopold Sédar Senghor and Ousmane Sembène to the Congolese Henri Lopes and Cameroonian Calixte Beyala—write their novels and poetry in French. Of course, much of this literature is anti-colonialist in its content, and formal vernacular literatures are becoming more and more common in Haiti as well as in Africa. But the fact remains that France has maintained significant culture cachet in many of its former colonies.

In short, Haitians had pertinent insights on French colonization and decolonization. In fact, by the time France's African colonies began to declare their independence, Haiti had renewed its staunch anti-colonial stance under its populist and *noiriste* president François Duvalier. Unfortunately, Duvalier's nationalism verged on paranoia, and he deemed thousands of his compatriots as dissidents, sending them into exile. As we will see in chapter 10, many of these expatriates ended up in Africa, where they contributed directly to the independence and state-building processes. First, however, we will shift our focus to the epicentre of the French colonial empire—to Paris, where during the entire history of the second colonial empire, Haitians were living, working and bringing their unique perspective to debates about French colonialism.

Part 3

A Longing for Haiti I:
From Port-au-Prince to Paris:
Haitians in the City of Light

"Une fois qu'ils sont à l'Étranger, les Haïtiens ne rêvent, ne parlent, ne s'occupent que d'Haïti—qui leur apparaît sous les couleurs les plus séduisantes! Ils voient Paris à travers Haïti, et Haïti à travers Paris."

Fernand Hibbert, 1905

"Pas un père, pas une mère, qui ne rêvât, en notre île, d'envoyer ses fils à Paris, au centre de la Lumière—on appuyer fortement là-dessus—pour se façonner le cerveau et revenir, selon leur aptitude, des lettrés et de gentils hommes accomplis. Ou si c'étaient des filles, pour acquérir la souveraine élégance et les charmes irrésistible qui assure la triomphe de la Femme."

Frédéric Marcelin, 1913

Introduction
Paris, July 1898

July 1898 was a hectic month for Benito Sylvain.

It was a balmy summer in Paris, though not nearly as hot as in the town of Sylvain's birth, Port-de-Paix, across the channel from Tortuga in northern Haiti. The thirty-year-old naval officer, lawyer and journalist had been living in the French capital for about a decade and had earned a reputation as spokesman for the city's growing Black population. For many years he had overseen the publication of a weekly newspaper dedicated to the interests of Haiti and the Black race. He had served as president of the Ethnographical Society's Oriental and African Committee and had helped establish a Black Youth Organization and a Foreign Students association. He had given public lectures condemning slavery in Africa, social Darwinism and the abuses of European colonialism. He had even travelled to Africa to meet the Emperor of Ethiopia as a representative of the French Alliance.

That month, Sylvain had a full calendar.

On the morning of 5 July, Sylvain was among a small crowd on a Paris railway platform. They were there to welcome a delegation from Ethiopia. The express train from Marseille pulled into the station at nine o'clock, and the diplomatic corps descended onto the platform. Sylvain welcomed them to his adopted city, as they had welcomed him to Addis Ababa on his visit a year earlier. Once the requisite words of greeting were exchanged and the group had their picture taken, the delegation piled into eight carriages along with the welcoming committee and headed toward their lodgings at the Grand-Hôtel. Sylvain shared a carriage with Colonel Nadô, aide-de-

camp to the Abyssinian emperor. On the way to the hotel, they passed by the Place de la Bastille, and Sylvain may have pointed out the square where the famous fort had stood and noted its significance in the events that shook France a century earlier. He might even have mentioned the simultaneous revolution in his own country. Perhaps the events leading to Haitian independence resonated with a man from Ethiopia, the last independent region of Africa.[1]

A week later, on 12 July, Benito Sylvain was in another crowd. This time he was near the head of a large procession making its way along the Boulevard Ménilmontant in East Paris as the group wend its way into the Père Lachaise Cemetery and, shortly after nine o'clock, reached their destination: the grave of the celebrated French historian Jules Michelet. The occasion was to mark the one-hundredth anniversary of Michelet's birth. The attendees included Michelet's widow, Athénaïs Michelet, the mayors of the 3rd and 5th arrondissements, senators, professors, and representatives of numerous student associations. Sylvain, for his part, was there on behalf of the Black Youth Organization. In this capacity, he placed a wreath on the tomb and delivered a speech praising the great historian for his outspoken stance on racial equality. In the spirit of Michelet, Sylvain used the platform to criticize French abuses in the colonies, saying "No more useless bloodshed, no more appropriations and despoliations. The earth is big enough to feed all of its children and the plagues of nature are sufficient—alas!—to reduce the number of unhappy mortals." Several others gave remarks, but reporters called Sylvain's speech the most moving. They also noted his symbolic right, as a Haitian, to speak at the ceremony; Michelet's own father-in-law had been nothing less than a secretary of Toussaint Louverture and a tutor for his children.[2]

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[1] "L'ambassade abyssine à Paris," *Le Petit Journal*, 6 July 1898, 1.
[2] Marianne Vilain, "La Fête du Père-Lachaise," *La Fronde*, 13 July 1898, 2; "Le Centenaire de Michelet," *Le XIXe Siècle*, 14 July 1898, 1–2.

Four days later, at ten o'clock on the morning of 16 July, Sylvain was back in the spotlight. Once again at the head of a delegation from the Black Youth Organization, he had a public audience with the Ethiopian diplomats at their hotel. Again, he gave a short speech which was reproduced in numerous newspapers. He articulated his view of the merits of European civilization and his hopes for the future of Africa, and he declared that the Black Youth Organization was committed to the cause of Black dignity and self-determination. "These young people," he said of his African and Antillean colleagues of the Black Youth, "who have come to France for their education in order to acquire the best aspects of European culture, are thrilled and proud of the glory that the Négus [the emperor of Ethiopia] has won by his noble and magnanimous conduct. They, like myself, hope that he will become the great protector of all the people of Africa who have not yet found the path toward civilization." Sylvain thus demonstrated his proto-Pan-Africanist leanings and would in fact go on to help organize the first Pan-African convention two years later. "And," he concluded, "if ever—God forbid!—Ethiopia's independence is once again threatened," alluding to the failed Italian invasion two years prior, "the Black youth of the countries of the Americas, will heed my call to come its aid." The head of the Ethiopian delegation, Prince Woldié, responded that he would relay the message to Emperor Menelik.[3]

Before the month was through, on the afternoon of 23 July, Sylvain was in the public eye a fourth and final time. This time he was involved in a duel. Weeks earlier, the French gossip columnist Gustave de Villette had published an offensive article about Sylvain's friend George Flambert, another Haitian. The author, who was a habitual duelist, had mockingly described Flambert lying about a family fortune in order to win the affections of the Belgian beauty Léo

[3] Jean Hess, "Les Ambassadeurs abyssins," *Le Figaro*, 17 July 1898, 2.

Link. Flambert had taken the bait and challenged de Villette to a duel with pistols. The two met at the Parc des Princes Velodrome at 3 p.m. on the 23rd, and Sylvain agreed to serve as Flambert's second. The combatants exchanged shots. No one was harmed, but the two Haitians successfully defended Flambert's honour and the honour of their country.[4] Incidentally, this was not the first time Sylvain had been in a duel in Paris. Three years earlier he had criticized some Haitian students for "sacrificing their studies a bit too much to pleasure."[5] They responded by printing a derogatory article about him, which, in turn, prompted Sylvain—a skilled fencer—to challenge them to a duel with épées.[6] One, the law student Auguste Durand, accepted, and the two met on the Plateau de Gravelle in the Bois de Vicennes at 3 p.m. on 3 September. Both were accompanied by several friends, and, according to one report, this conspicuous number of "hommes de couleur" drew a crowd and soon the police intervened, arresting both Sylvain and Durand and confiscating their épées.[7]

Over the course of seventeen days in July 1898, Benito Sylvain held four well-publicized appointments that, taken together, highlight the major themes of his life and work. His association with the Ethiopian diplomats showed his interest in events in Africa, and particularly in independent Africa. Sylvain positioned himself, a Francophile Haitian, as a key intermediary in French dealings with the continent, insisting on the transcontinental connection between all Black people. At Michelet's memorial, he professed an attachment to French history and French culture, yet he also criticized Europeans in the colonies who were not living up to high calling of the *mission civilisatrice*. As the organizer of the Black Youth Organization, he demonstrated his

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[4] Gustave de Villette, "Échos & Nouvelles – Potins," *Gil Blas*, 5 July 1898, 1; "Échos & Nouvelles – Chronique du Duel," *Gil Blas*, 23 July 1898, 1; "Affaire Georges Flambert et G. de Villette," *La Justice*, 24 July 1898, 2.
[5] Benito Sylvain, "Insolence et Lâcheté," *La Fraternité*, 28 September 1895, 3.
[6] Robert Milton, "L'Assaut du *Figaro*," *Le Figaro*, 26 February 1898, 3. This article lists Sylvain as participating in an elite fencing demonstration.
[7] "Nouvelles Diverses," *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, 4 September 1895 (Morning Edition), 3.

interest in strengthening the bonds between people from Africa and from the African diaspora in order to work toward a common cause. Finally, as second in the Flambert/de Villette duel, he involved himself in an affair of honour and showed he was willing to challenge French racism directly even at personal risk.

Despite the racism he no doubt encountered daily as a Black Parisian—as demonstrated by his arrest in 1895—Sylvain believed in an idealized anti-racist France associated with people like Victor Schœlcher and Jules Michelet. He was a devoted supporter of Western Civilization and believed it had much to offer Africa. As such, he did not object to European colonialism outright. He was, however, fiercely opposed to European exploitation in the colonies, and believed in the future possibility of a sovereign, united Africa. These seemingly paradoxical views are accentuated by the fact that he was Haitian. A descendant of enslaved Africans and a citizen of the only republic that had violently won its independence from France, Sylvain's support for French colonialism in Africa was conditional, dependent on mutual respect and mutual benefit.

If the events of July 1898 highlight the paradoxes of Benito Sylvain, they also encapsulate the themes of this chapter. The central question here is: how did Haitians in Paris engage in the growing discourses around French colonialism in Africa? In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Paris was both the epicentre of a vast colonial empire and a cultural and intellectual hotspot. It had a large Black community—perhaps more than any other European city—and Haitians were a significant group within that community. With their unique history and unique perspectives on France and colonialism, these Haitians played a distinct role in the growing critiques of French colonialism emanating from Paris. In chapter 6, we will see how Sylvain and his compatriots contributed to what I call a Black Republic of Letters based in Paris

that gradually became a key centre of opposition to French colonialism. In chapter 7, we will look at person-to-person interactions in the formal intellectual societies and activist organizations and in the informal salons in Paris where Haitians debated with Europeans and collaborated with Black people from Africa and the Americas. These experiences had a powerful influence on all involved, and tied Paris's Black community together more closely, facilitating cooperation and the articulation of new ideas about race and colonialism. Throughout, we will see how Haitians like Benito Sylvain and many others came to Paris and found themselves uniquely placed to critique French colonialism in Africa.

Because of the important role the country played in the transatlantic slave trade and in the colonialization of Africa and the Caribbean, the history of Black people in France goes back centuries. In her book *There Are No Slaves in France*, Sue Peabody examines the earliest instances of these cultural interactions, and interrogates the stubborn notion that slavery never existed in France. Peabody reveals how legal definitions of race and slavery were in flux in the eighteenth century. While enslaved people were often able to leverage the idea of French exceptionality to sue for freedom on their arrival in France, legal definitions of race gradually developed to limit the rights of non-white individuals.[8] The country's complex system of legal inequality did not just affect racialized individuals but was the defining characteristic of life in the ancien régime. Relative privilege was, in fact, one of the primary factors leading to the French Revolution. As the revolutionaries sought to dismantle the system of privilege, they begrudgingly extended the republican ideal of equality to non-white individuals, culminating with the abolition of slavery in 1794 (albeit temporarily). Finally, with the ultimate abolition of

[8] Sue Peabody, *"There Are No Slaves in France": Political Culture of Race and Slavery in the Ancien Regime* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 3.

slavery in 1848, Black people began to demand (and in some cases win) French citizenship. The Black population of France remained infinitesimal compared to the white population, yet the legal groundwork was laid for a nominal acceptance of people of all colours to find a place for themselves in French society.

As the French colonial empire expanded dramatically from the 1870s, new opportunities presented themselves for people from Africa and the Caribbean to relocate to the metropole in search of education or work. More nefariously, others were put on display as part of human zoos and recurrent colonial expositions. By the 1890s, one census found 150 "Africans" living in Paris.[9] The city's Black communities received a major influx during and after the First World War. Thousands of Africans enlisted or were conscripted to serve in Europe, and many of these ended up in Paris after the war. Additionally, thousands of Black American soldiers, unwilling to return to the Jim Crow United States after Armistice, flocked to the French capital where they found a relatively hospitable environment. In the wake of the war, French disillusionment with Western civilization spurred a fascination with, among other things, Africa. This French openness, or curiosity, is remembered as the *vogue noir*. Blackness became fashionable. One can by no means say that Paris was devoid of anti-Black racism, even during the *vogue noir*. But many Black people discovered a relatively hospitable environment in Paris, and could echo the words of the Black Martinican novelist René Maran, who said in 1924, "it is only in Paris that blacks of all countries can work joyously, amidst a slightly mocking but friendly curiosity, toward their intellectual freedom, which is the only kind they truly seek."[10]

[9] "Les Etrangers à Paris," *La Fraternité*, first week of July 1892, 3.
[10] René Maran, quoted in Alice Conklin, "Who Speaks for Africa? The René Maran–Blaise Diagne Trial in 1920s Paris," in *The Colour of Liberty: Histories of Race in France*, Sue Peabody and Tyler Stovall, eds. (Durham, NC & London: Duke University Press, 2003), 315.

In the first decades of the twentieth century, Paris's Black community was fragmented along lines of class and nationality. Historians have drawn particular attention to the division between Africans, many of whom had come to France as soldiers or sailors, and Antilleans, of whom a large portion were middle-class students or civil servants. Blacks Antilleans tended to consider Africans as inferior and uncivilized. Africans, for their part, viewed Antilleans as elitist and, since they were sometimes posted as administrators in Africa, complicit in the abuses of the colonial system.[11] In the interwar period, however, thanks to the growing number of publications, formal associations and frequent informal gatherings, these divisions lessened, and a productive climate of intellectual discourse came to flourish in Paris's Black cosmopolitan community. Some of the twentieth century's most influential currents of thought regarding race and colonialism developed in the Parisian cafés, jazz venues and student dormitories in the interwar period. Among the most well-known of these intellectual trends was Négritude, a literary and philosophical movement premised on a rediscovery of the common heritage of all Black people and the revalorization of the African past.

The influx of Black American writers, artists and jazz musicians in the 1920s forged a connection to developments in the United States associated with the Harlem Renaissance and Black activism more broadly. Writers like Langston Hughes, W. E. B. Dubois, Countee Cullen and Claude McKay rubbed shoulders with Black intellectuals from elsewhere—like the Haitian ethnographer Jean Price-Mars and the Nardal sisters from Martinique—and helped articulate critiques of white superiority and colonialism. The goals of Black activists varied from the extension of French citizenship rights to an end to the abuses in the colonies to a wholesale dismantling of empire. The former demand culminated with the incorporation of Guiana,

[11] Boittin, *Colonial*, 90.

Réunion, Guadeloupe and Martinique as Overseas Departments with equal representation in the French legislature in 1946. The call for decolonization, at first a minority position, became a leading concern after World War II and helped tip the scales in favour of decolonization in French Africa in the 1950s and 1960s. While most historical analyses of Paris's Black community focus on Black Americans, Antilleans and Africans, Haitians also played a central role in this community and its activities.

Haitians have a long history of sending their children to be educated in France. The practice dates back to the colonial period. Saint-Domingue was an archetypal colony of exploitation; its social structure revolved around the plantation system. French families settled there temporarily with the intention of returning to France with the wealth they acquired. In the meantime, their children could be educated at home or in schools run by Catholic orders, but there was no impetus to establish institutions of higher learning. White colonists customarily sent their children to France for their education, as did the colony's upwardly mobile Free People of Colour. Alexandre Pétion and Jean-Pierre Boyer had both attended the École militaire in Paris before the Haitian Revolution, and Toussaint Louverture sent his sons, Placide and Isaac, to France in 1796 for the formal education he never had the opportunity to receive.[12]

Despite the rupture with the metropole in 1804, this custom continued after Haiti won its independence. The education system, meagre to begin with, was in shambles after the revolution. Besides social dislocations and physical destruction, the revolution also prompted a break with the Catholic Church. Independent Haiti got its start with very few teachers or schools. Elite

[12] Linsey Sainte-Claire, "Régénération et élitisme scolaire sous Alexandre Pétion et Jean-Pierre Boyer," *L'Esprit Créateur* 56, no 1 (Spring 2016): 124; Philippe Girard, *Toussaint Louverture: A Revolutionary Life* (New York: Basic Books, 2016), 160.

Haitian families, rather than investing in local institutions, opted to send their children abroad to be educated. Some went to the United Kingdom. Many went to parochial schools in provincial France. But, particularly for higher education, Paris was the place to go. As such, in the nineteenth century a small community of Haitians took root in the City of Light. As in any university town, it was a fluid community with people coming and going year by year. But it endured, having important impacts on both Haiti and Paris.

The desire of Haitian parents to send their children to France for an education appears frequently in Haitian letters. Frédéric Marcelin, the influential novelist and civil servant who spent much time in Paris, wrote in 1913 that there was "not a father, not a mother who did not dream, on our island, of sending their sons to Paris, to the centre of the Enlightenment… to shape their minds, and return, according to their aptitude, well-educated and accomplished gentlemen. Or, for his daughters, to acquire the sovereign elegance and irresistible charms that assure the triumph of Woman."[13] Sometimes, however, the city had less edifying effects on young Haitians who travelled there. Haitian literature is full of such examples, which must point to a corresponding reality or at least a corresponding anxiety. In Marcelin's short story "Tristylya" (1909), he says that one character "spent five years in Paris" where he was "supposed to study law or medicine," but "he did neither." Instead, "he assiduously frequented the cafés of the Left Bank," where "each night, among friends, with a cigarette between his lips and a beer glass in front of him, he solved the most difficult questions of social science."[14] Similarly, in Justin Lhérisson's celebrated novella *La Famille des Pitite Caille* (1905), the protagonist sends his son to Paris, where, in fifteen years, he learns nothing more than a bit of photography and Parisian

[13] Frédéric Marcelin, *Au gré du souvenir* (Paris: Augustin Challamel, 1913), 36–37.
[14] Frédéric Marcelin, *La Confession de Bazoutte* (Paris: Société d'Éditions Littéraires et Artistiques, 1909), 16.

slang.[15] In the real world, when the eminent Haitian ethnographer Jean Price-Mars first travelled to Paris in 1899 at the age of twenty-three, he "felt apprehensive and bewilderment to find himself in that fantastic city, alone to resist all kinds of temptations: of easy and impure love, of feverish and factitious activity in which one is thrown either toward pleasure or work."[16]

Haitians also went to Paris for other reasons. Long before François Duvalier came to power, exile was a part of Haiti's political culture. For a variety of internal and external reasons, Haiti's presidency has often been a precarious job. From the middle of the nineteenth century, as coups d'état and regional insurrections became more frequent, presidents resorted to force of arms to hold on to power and grew increasingly intolerant of opposition. They targeted former presidents, who customarily left the country after leaving office. Of the twenty-eight men who held the top job between 1804 and 1915, only five retired peacefully in Haiti after leaving the post. Eleven died in office or in violent transitions of power, while twelve, the largest portion, went into exile. The first to opt for exile was Jean-Pierre Boyer, who fled for Jamaica after he was ousted 1843, and then settled in Paris where he lived the rest of his life. Subsequent deposed presidents also headed for safe havens abroad. The trend of former presidents going into exile continued through the twentieth and into twenty-first century, with Jean-Claude Duvalier absconding to Paris in 1986 and Jean-Bertrand Aristide to the United States the first time he was ousted in 1991 and to South Africa the second in 2004.

But it was not just former presidents who sought refuge abroad. Presidential hopefuls, participants in unsuccessful rebellions, supporters and cabinet members of deposed presidents, and intellectuals who fell afoul of the regime also left the country, often temporarily but

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[15] Justin Lhérisson, *La Famille des Pitite Caille* (Port-au-Prince: Héreaux, 1905; Port-au-Prince: Editions Fardin, 1999) 84–85. Citations are from the Editions Fardin version.
[16] Jean Price-Mars, quoted in Jacques C. Antoine, *Jean Price-Mars and Haiti* (Washington, DC: Three Continents Press, 1981), 30.

sometimes permanently. Paris was a choice destination to spend one's exile. The writer Demesvar Delorme, for example, served as Minister of Education in 1867–1868, but left for Paris after President Sylvain Salnave suspended the Constitution and crippled the legislature in 1868. Frédéric Marcelin, likewise, served as Minister of Finance under President Nord Alexis until the latter was deposed in 1908. Marcelin relocated to Paris where he spent the rest of his life. Sometimes, Haitian bureaucrats and intellectuals were appointed to diplomatic posts as a form of quasi-exile. This tactic also has a long history in Haiti. Presidents have commonly appointed popular dissenters to diplomatic posts in order to keep them at arm's length without persecuting them directly and risking popular protest. Numerous famous Haitians had a stint in this type of diplomatic quasi-exile: Demesvar Delorme, Anténor Firmin, Massillon Coicou, Jean Brierre, Jacques Roumain, Roger Dorsinville, Émile Saint-Lôt, and many more.

Besides students, exiles and diplomats, Haitians also left home for more prosaic reasons—simply seeking employment or other opportunities abroad. Again, Paris was an ideal destination. Of course, records of these ordinary people are limited. Yet sometimes folks who just happened to be in Paris ended up getting involved with newsworthy events and thus showing up in the historical record. Thus, we hear of Léo Sajous, who was working as a doctor in Paris when he became involved with various Black internationalist groups in the 1920s and 1930s. Joseph Laroche had married a French woman while in engineering school in Paris and remained in France after graduating in 1908. After a stint working on the Paris metro, Laroche decided to take his wife and two young daughters back to Haiti. Unfortunately, the Laroche family boarded the *Titanic* for their Atlantic crossing. Joseph and his children were the only Black passengers on board the famous vessel. Joseph perished when the ship sank, but his family survived, ultimately returning to settle in Paris. And then there is Constantin Henriquez, who was studying medicine

in Paris in 1900 when he had the opportunity to compete for France in rugby at the 1900 Olympics in Paris. The team won, and Henriquez thus became the world's first Black Olympic gold medalist before returning to Haiti where he is credited with introducing the country to soccer.

As these examples suggest, Paris's Haitian community was generally made up of middle-class individuals and families, as these were the types of people who had the opportunity to travel or to send their children abroad for an education. They were not necessarily affluent; many of the students relied on government scholarships. Elites who fled Haiti often lost fortunes in the process, and many had to rely on the kindness of their compatriots in Paris in order to get by. But, if many of these expatriates were not wealthy, they were also not representative of Haiti's poor majority. Lawyers, doctors, engineers and other professionals were typical among the Parisian Haitian community. As we will see in chapter 6, this is reflected in the types or writing that Haitians published while they were in Paris. About a quarter of the titles that Haitians published in Paris between 1804 and 1940 were medical or legal works, including forty-six doctoral theses in these subjects.[17]

Despite the many opportunities for Haitians in Paris, the French capital was not always an idyllic setting. Their struggles were immortalized in fiction. Fernand Hibbert—who had lived in Paris for several years in the late 1880s and early 1890s—published his first novel *Séna* in Haiti in 1903 and mused on the relative freedoms for a Black person in Paris and in Haiti. As the protagonist, Rorrotte, explains:

> When I find myself the target of such persecutions in a country which claims to be at the head of civilization, I can't help but loving my dear Haiti even more, at least one is free there! … Because the French have the right to criticize their President, they imagine that they are free! It is an error, a great error! A country where one cannot take a single step without confronting a police officer… If you want to see free men, you must go to Haiti!

[17] See the overview of Haitian works published in Paris below on page 173–174.

> We perhaps do not write whatever we please there, but we do and say whatever we please.[18]

Rorrotte is a satirical character, and the monologue is comedically placed as a complaint about being expected to pay tips—the "persecutions" in question. But when his compatriots fall victim to racial profiling a few chapters later, Hibbert's larger point becomes clear.

Nevertheless, they continued to come. Numerically, the Haitian community in Paris was small but stable. It remained in the hundreds for over a century. In the 1890s Benito Sylvain undertook periodic, informal censuses of Haitian students in Paris. In the first of these, published in his newspaper in April 1893, and which he admitted was "far from complete," he found eighty-four Haitian students living in Paris.[19] Two years later his figure had increased to 174.[20] For much of the twentieth century, the community remained relatively small. It seems to have waned during the tumultuous war years, and then it began to grow slowly after 1945. By 1974, the French sociologist Roger Bastide determined that there were still only about 400 Haitians in France (the vast majority in the Paris vicinity).[21] Around that time, however, with the mass exodus prompted by the Duvaliers, the figure began to grow rapidly reaching 2,698 in Paris and 22,000 in the greater Île-de-France region by 1999.[22] But, in the period under investigation here, the 1890s to 1930s, the Haitian population in Paris was squarely in the hundreds—small but established and clearly not insignificant.

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[18] Fernand Hibbert, *Séna* (Port-au-Prince: L'Abeille, 1903; Port-au-Prince: Henri Deschamps, 1988), 197–198. Citations are from Henri Deschamps edition.
[19] "Les Étudiants Haïtiens à Paris," *La Fraternité*, 6 April 1893, 3.
[20] "Les Étudiants Haïtiens à Paris," *La Fraternité*, 28 September 1895, 4.
[21] Roger Bastide, Françoise Marin and François Raveau, *Les Haïtiens en France* (Paris-la-Haye: Mouton & Co., 1974), 229.
[22] Institut Nationale de la Statistique et des Études Économiques, 1999 Recensement de la Population; Margarita Moody, "Mediating Institution and the Adaptation of Haitian Immigrants in Paris, in *Geographies of the Haitian Diaspora*, ed. Regine O. Jackson (New York: Routledge, 2011), 127.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, then, Haitians comprised a distinct community among Paris's increasingly visible Black minority. They interacted with other Black communities in the city, but also had distinct interests and attitudes. Like their Black American neighbours, they were immigrants and not colonial migrants, so additional effort was required if they were to be accepted in French society. Like French subjects from colonial Africa, they were sometimes seen as exotic curiosities and had to contend with comments about the barbarity of their compatriots. They had, perhaps, most in common with their French Antillean peers. Haiti shared aspects of a common history with the French Caribbean territories. Like Martinicans, Guadeloupeans and Guianans, elite Haitians spoke French and were imbued with French as well as African and Caribbean culture. However, they had no access to the ostensible privileges that came along with being French subjects and could not aspire to full citizenship on the basis of their origin. Furthermore, they experienced the stigma of being citizens of a rebel colony, and their presence in Paris served as an uncomfortable reminder of the fragility of empire.

In short, Haitians in Paris were motivated and uniquely positioned to challenge the logic of French colonialism. Yet, they did not always do so. As we will see, Haitians did not universally condemn colonialism outright. Many of them believed in the benefits that French "civilization" could bring to Africa. Still, their impacts on the discourses of colonialism in this period cannot be denied. In the next two chapters, we will consider two avenues where Haitians leveraged their unique historical perspectives to offer powerful critiques against French colonialism in Africa. First, in chapter 6 we will look at their contributions to print culture in Paris, beginning with the pathbreaking works of Juste Chanlatte and Jean-Baptiste Symphor Linstant Pradines and culminating with Benito Sylvain's newspaper *La Fraternité*, founded in 1890. These and other Haitians helped establish a "Black Republic of Letters" centred in Paris

which served as a counterweight to French proponents of empire and to the more typical French obliviousness to colonial activities. Then, in chapter 7, we will look at the interactions between Haitians and other Parisians in the context of formal scholarly and political associations, as well as in informal gatherings—in the famous Parisian salons—where ideas and relationship blossomed and links with Blacks from elsewhere in the world were forged. We will see how a number of Haitian individuals in these contexts formed friendships and collaborations that ultimately played key roles in anti-colonial movements.

- 6 -
The Black Republic of Letters

In 1919, the Haitian diplomat Frédéric Doret quipped that "literature and coffee were the only things we found to cultivate in a century of autonomy."[1] Haitian letters can indeed boast of a long and vibrant tradition. In 1956, the American literary critic Edmund Wilson noted that since independence Haiti had printed more books per capita than any country in the Americas besides the United States—and this despite particularly low levels of literacy.[2] All the same, many important Haitian works were initially published in Paris. One of the first great works of Haitian history written by a Haitian, Beaubrun Ardouin's *Études sur l'histoire d'Haïti*, appeared in volumes in Paris between 1853 and 1860. The first Haitian novel, Émeric Bergeaud's *Stella*, was first published in Paris in 1859. Anténor Firmin's influential *De l'égalité des races humaines* was first printed in Paris in 1885. The book that brought Haitian Creole/Kreyòl into the mainstream of Haitian literature, Georges Sylvain's *Cric? Crac!*, was published in Paris by the press Ateliers haïtiens in 1901.[3] The situation continued long into the twentieth century. Paris saw the publication of such momentous Haitian works as Jean Price-Mars's *Ainsi Parla l'Oncle* (1928)[4], Jacques Stephen Alexis's *Compère Général Soleil* (1955) and Marie Vieux Chauvet's *Amour, Colère, Folie* (1968). Despite robust publishing traditions in Port-au-Prince and several

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[1] Quoted in Léon-François Hoffmann, *Littérature d'Haïti* (n.p.: EDICEF/AUPELP, 1995), 48.
[2] Edmund Wilson, *Red, Black, Blond, and Olive—Studies in Four Civilizations: Zuni, Haiti, Soviet Russia, Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 110.
[3] See Matthew Robertshaw, "Louverture, 1901–1915: Sylvain, the École Nationale, and the Opening of a Haitian Creole Debate," *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 44, no. 1 (2018): 7–10.
[4] Technically in Compiègne, about 70km north of Paris.

other Haitian towns, any history of Haitian publishing would be woefully incomplete without also considering works printed in Paris.

Paris's importance as a hub for Haitian printing owes much to its dynamic publishing industry. French publishing grew dramatically over the course of the nineteenth century. This growth had to do with technological advances and industrialization, a growing reading public (the literacy rate jumped from 38 to 69 percent between 1820 and 1870), financial developments, and, critically, changing censorship laws.[5] Both Haiti and France witnessed political crises and authoritarian governments during the nineteenth century. In both countries, the authorities curtailed freedoms and harsh censorship laws periodically came into effect. France, however, enjoyed longer periods of relative stability in which civil liberties—including freedom of the press and freedom of speech—made gains. After the collapse of the Second Empire in 1870, the Third Republic started to pass legislation to protect such freedoms, culminating with the benchmark Law of 21 July 1881 "on the freedom of the press," which abrogated much earlier prohibitive legislation and proclaimed that "printing and bookselling are free."[6] Some limitations remained, but this law laid the legal groundwork for a booming publishing industry in Paris in the *belle époque*.[7]

The open print climate encouraged Haitian expatriates to make the most of their time in Paris by publishing books, articles, essays, poetry collections, pamphlets, doctoral theses and sometimes launching their own periodicals. The Free Press Law seems to have been a significant turning point, as Haitian publishing in Paris increased dramatically after 1881. From 1804 to

[5] Max Roser and Esteban Ortiz-Ospina, "Literacy" Our World In Data, 2018, https://ourworldindata.org/literacy.
[6] Government of France, "Loi du 21 Juillet 1881 sur la liberté de la presse," art. I.
[7] See Pierre Casselle, "Le régime législatif," in *Histoire de l'édition française, Tome 3: Le temps des éditeurs*, Roger Chartier and Henri-Jean Martin, eds. (n.p.: Fayard, 1990), 42–48.

1881, Haitians published eighty-nine titles in Paris, an average of about one per year.[8] In the ten years following the Free Press Law, Haitians published seventy-nine titles in Paris—about eight per year. There were eighteen titles published in 1891 alone. The peak decades for Haitian publishing in Paris were the 1880s with sixty-three titles and the 1890s with a full one hundred. Exactly one quarter of the works published by Haitians in Paris between 1804 and 1939 were published in the 1890s. After the turn of the century, things began to slow down. Between 1900 and 1909, only fifty-two titles appeared (including the first work by a Haitian woman), in the 1910s, only thirty-three.[9] The latter figure was impacted by the First World War and the general contraction of French publishing in this decade. Haitians only published seven works in Paris during the war years. The 1920s saw a rebound; Haitians published forty-three works in Paris in that optimistic decade. In the 1930s the numbers dipped down again to just twenty-nine. In sum, the peak of Haitian publishing in Paris was clearly between 1881 and 1914, from the Free Press Law to the start of the First World War. This, for our purposes, is crucial as it corresponds exactly with the high point of French colonial interest in Africa.

After the press freedom law came into effect in 1881, a sustained and dynamic Haitian publishing scene began to take on a more definite shape in Paris. But the roots of the Black Republic of Letters go back earlier. These antecedents reveal currents and tensions that existed in Haiti—and, by extension, in Paris's Haitian community—which found their way into the print

[8] The statistics in this section are derived from Ulrick Duvivier, *Biographie général et méthodique de Haïti*, 2 vols. (Port-au-Prince: Imprimerie de l'État, 1941) and Max Bissainthe, *Dictionnaire de bibliographie haïtienne* (Washington: Scarecrow Press, 1951). Titles of the 400 works that Haitians published in Paris between 1804 and 1939 are included in Appendix 2, and the data are visualized in Appendix 3, charts 1 and 2.

[9] In the overwhelmingly masculine world of the Black Republic of Letters, I can find only three publications in Paris of works by Haitian women: V. Toussaint-Noël's *Le féminisme en canevas* (Guex, 1908); Virgile Valcin's *Cruelle destinée* (Jouve, 1929), considered the first novel by a Haitian woman; and Suzanne Comhaire-Sylvain doctoral thesis, *Contes haïtiens* (Université de Paris, 1933), which is one of many works by this distinguished anthropologist who we will learn much more about in chapter 10.

culture. At its heart, the Black Republic of Letters contained a strong current of anti-racist, anti-colonialist thought. This, of course, relates back to the origins of Haiti; the Declaration of Independence, which proclaimed that "all hopes of ever enslaving us are at an End, and we must live Independent or die," can be considered a foundational text in Haitian letters.[10] In the early years of independence, Haitian authors began to refine this principle into a sophisticated philosophy. As Marlene Daut has shown, early Haitian writers like Juste Chanlatte and Pompée de Vastey articulated the beginnings of a philosophical discourse that she calls "Black Atlantic Humanism." This ideology insisted on human equality and challenged the logic of colonialism, slavery and racism in the North Atlantic decades before similar critiques came to be associated with Black luminaries in the United States and elsewhere.[11] This national opposition to white supremacy went on to inform Haitian thinkers throughout the nineteenth century and beyond.

The anti-racist stance is evident in one of the very first Haitian works to find its way into print in Paris. Juste Chanlatte's *Le Cri de la nature* was a revisionist retelling of the events of the Haitian Revolution. It first appeared in Haiti in 1810, but, according to the Haitian archivist Max Bissainthe, it was republished in Paris in 1819.[12] Conceived as an enthusiastic reply to Abbé Grégoire's 1808 work *De la littérature des nègres*, Chanlatte consciously engaged with the small abolitionist movement in France and, more broadly, contributed to a transatlantic discourse that was beginning to critique the Eurocentric status quo. As Chris Bongie has pointed out, the work grappled with "the absurdities of racial science and the ambiguities of Enlightenment thought" and provided "a veritable blueprint" for "early Haitian literature in general."[13] Coming from a

[10] Haitian Declaration of Independence, anonymous English translation.
[11] Marlene Daut, *Baron de Vastey and the Origins of Black Atlantic Humanism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), xxi.
[12] Bissainthe, *Dictionnaire*, 60.
[13] Chris Bongie, "The Cry of History: Juste Chanlatte and the Unsettling (Presence) of Race in Early Haitian Literature," *MLN* 130 (2015): 811.

mixed-race Haitian and a representative of Henri Christophe's Black kingdom, the work was a powerful indictment of the idea of racial inequality. Its effect, however, was somewhat dampened after it was revised and republished (not to say plagiarized) by the French pedagogue Auguste Jean Baptiste Bouvet de Cressé as *Histoire de la catastrophe de Saint-Domingue* in Paris 1824, with some of its more radical edges softened.[14] Still, it helped set a bar for a growing Haitian public sphere emanating from the Caribbean and slowly taking root in Paris.

Another standout work in this tradition is Jean-Baptiste Symphor Linstant Pradines's *Essais sur les moyens d'extirper les préjugés des blancs contre la couleur des Africains et des sang mêlés*.[15] Linstant Pradines was born in Jérémie on Haiti's southern peninsula in 1812. By the late 1830s he was in Paris completing a law degree. While there, he connected with the modest French abolitionist circles. He attended the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840—perhaps the first Haitian to serve as the country's delegate to a major international gathering. Around the same time, he produced his *Essai*, which earned him an award from the French Abolition Society. The following year he published the work as a 170-page book. In it, he outlined the problem of racial prejudice and argued critically that these attitudes were not immutable—they were, in fact, historically determined and relatively new. He claimed that eighteenth-century colonial policies and legal slavery in Saint-Domingue and elsewhere had served to construct and entrench a system of racial hierarchy that helped justify the colonial system to the disadvantage of Black and mixed-race people everywhere. He explained that these biases had eroded the standing of non-white people in Europe and enabled the transatlantic slave trade, which, in turn, had derailed progress in Africa. Since the basis of this destructive global

[14] Bongie, "Cry of History," 829–833.
[15] Jean-Baptiste Symphor Linstant Pradines, *Essais sur les moyens d'extirper les préjugés des blancs contre la couleur des Africains et des sang mêlés* (Paris: Pagnerre, 1841), 71. The author's name varies from work to work; he was ennobled as Baron de Pradines under Faustin Solouque.

order was in legislation, Linstant Pradines believed strategic modifications to legal systems could undo the damage, and he gave numerous suggestions that might bring about these changes.

Anti-racism remained a fundamental component of the Black Republic of Letters as it hit its stride later in the century. At the same time, there was another attitude that sometimes overlapped with and sometimes came into tension with this anti-racist current. For many elite Haitians, the belief in inherent human equality coexisted with a belief in the superiority of Western culture. There was a tendency for educated Haitians to genuinely admire European (especially French) culture, and to adhere to French criteria for evaluating "civilization." In Haiti, elites employed markers of Frenchness in their style of dress and manners to set themselves apart from the masses.[16] Although the entire population spoke Kreyòl as their mother tongue, privileged Haitians learned French and effectively used it to bar their monolingual compatriots from formal settings.[17] On relocating to France, it was inevitable that Haitians would redouble this commitment to French norms in order to be accepted in the host society. The very first known Haitian work published in Paris was an 1813 doctoral thesis in literature in which the author, Louis Séguy-Villavaleix, delves into the topic of oration in Ancient Greece and Rome and demonstrates his vast knowledge of the Western humanist tradition.[18] This Francophile orientation is evident in most nineteenth-century Haitian poetry, which followed French models closely and was evaluated—by French and Haitian critics alike—for its technical and expressive use of the French language.

These anti-racist and Francophile currents were seldom mutually exclusive. The most passionate defenders of racial equality were often also enamoured with French culture and saw it

[16] See Trouillot, *State Against Nation*, 116.
[17] Robertshaw, "L'Ouverture," 3–6.
[18] Louis Séguy-Villavaleix, *Sur les harangues des historiens* (Paris: Fain, 1813).

as one of the few positive things that France had left in Haiti from the colonial period. Likewise, the most Francophile Haitians, though they certainly looked down on their country's peasantry and characterized them as uncivilized, could never accept French racial theories of natural inferiority without qualification. The first Haitian novel, Emeric Bergeaud's *Stella*, exemplifies the intersection of these two tendencies. Born in 1818 in the southern city of Les Cayes, Bergeaud was a member of Haiti's light-skinned elite.[19] After Faustin Soulouque came to power in 1847 (proclaiming himself emperor in 1849), he launched a campaign of persecution against traditional elites. Bergeaud went into exile on the Caribbean island of Saint Thomas. He used this time in exile to pen his only novel. On a visit to Paris in 1857, he gave the manuscript to his relative Beaubrun Ardouin before returning to Saint Thomas where he died in 1858 at the age of forty. The next year, Ardouin arranged for *Stella*'s publication by the prominent French printing house Dentu.

Stella is a fictionalized retelling of the Haitian Revolution couched in the Romulus and Remus myth of the founding of Rome. Bergeaud drew on the French and Western literary traditions, employing symbols and references that his French (and Francophile Haitian) readers would have recognized. The novel reads like a historical romance in the style of Victor Hugo and Walter Scott, and was written in a deliberately pristine French, only rarely making use of words or phrases in Kreyòl or Haitian-inflected French. As Léon-François Hoffmann noted, a more liberal use of non-standard French or Kreyòl "might shock Frenchmen, who, as everyone knows, are fanatical about so-called linguistic purity," adding that "it might also offend the Haitian readers of the time, who, even more than their counterparts of the Métropole, swore by Vauglas'

[19] Biographical notes are from Lesley S. Curtis and Christen Murcher, "Editors' Introduction," in Emeric Bergeaud, *Stella*, Lesley S. Curtis and Christen Murcher, eds., Nadève Ménard, trans. (New York: New York University Press, 2015), ix–xxxviii and Léon-François Hoffmann, "The First Haitian Novel: Émeric Bergeaud's *Stella*," in Hoffmann *Essays on Haitian Literature* (Washington DC: Three Continents Press, 1984), 109–122.

grammar and the Dictionary of the Académie française."[20] Furthermore, as Hoffmann and other more recent critics have pointed out, Bergeaud was extremely lenient toward France in the text.[21] The author refers to French errors (as opposed to crimes) in Saint-Domingue, and blames the war on the independent greed of French planters—personified in the character known only as The Colonist—who had rejected the ideals of the emerging French Republic. This despite the fact that a large portion of the French population was also benefitting from the products of enslaved labour in Saint-Domingue by the time of the revolution.[22] "Why the moderation?" Hoffmann asks, rhetorically, concluding that Bergeaud was "anxious not to displease either his French readers, or his Haitian ones who were hypnotized by—and identified with—an idealized France."[23]

Bergeaud was subject to (or at least in tune with) the Francophile leanings of his class. Yet, *Stella* is no mere ode to France. While he used techniques that would resonate with his readers, he also strove to challenge their prejudices. As he says in his introductory note, he "wanted to capture, through the attraction of the novel, the minds of those who do not subject themselves to the in-depth study of our annals."[24] Since the book was not published in Haiti, we can assume that it was mainly Haitians in Paris who read it. In the polarizing days of the Soulouque regime some Westernized Haitian exiles were beginning to turn their backs on Haiti.[25] Bergeaud was anxious to remind them about the best aspects of their national narrative and show them that the country's two racial groups—the Black and mixed-race people personified in *Stella* by the half-brothers Romulus and Remus—were kin. They were equals and

[20] Hoffmann, "First Haitian Novel," 121.
[21] Ibid., 119–120; Curtis and Murchen, "Introduction," xxi.
[22] Curtis and Murchen, "Introduction," xxii.
[23] Hoffmann, "First Haitian Novel," 120.
[24] Emeric Bergeaud, "Note," in *Stella*, Lesley S. Curtis and Christen Murcher, eds., Nadève Ménard, trans. (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 1.
[25] Hoffmann, "First Haitian Novel," 118.

could coexist and even thrive in cooperation. At the same time, Bergeaud was also writing for a French audience. As we have seen, French ideas about Haiti were constrained by a number of tropes and stereotypes. Bergeaud hoped to educate his French readers by presenting the Haitian Revolution as the fulfilment of the principles of liberty and equality. Drawing from the historical work of contemporary Haitian historians like Ardouin and Thomas Madiou, he recast the event not as a chaotic colonial rebellion but as a valiant slave revolt and national independence movement.[26]

In the end, Bergeaud made little impact on French views of Haiti, but he and others like him did play a significant role in boosting Haitian patriotism, helping to institutionalize the heroic version of the Haitian Revolution in Haiti and its diaspora.[27] Poets praised the nation and its founders in hyperbolic terms. Haitians in Paris, as they increased in numbers and in boldness, grew determined to rebuff detractors of their country. With increasing regularity, a variety of writers took to the press to denounce negative depictions of Haiti that appeared in print. As Haitians grew more and more sensitive to criticism against Haiti, they also grew less willing to criticize their own country, endeavouring to present the best face of a nation that was, in fact, divided and suffering. By the start of the twentieth century, when a new generation of writers began producing realist novels that depicted Haiti in all its complexity—the good, the bad and the ugly—Haitian critics were scandalized.[28] In the meantime, during the heyday of the Black Republic of Letters in the 1880s and 1890s, Haitians stood at attention to defend their country, and, increasingly, to offer passionate critiques French racism and colonialism.

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[26] Curtis and Murchen, "Introduction," xxvi.
[27] Ibid., xxv; Hoffmann, "First Haitian Novel," 119.
[28] See Frédéric Marcelin *Autour de deux romans* (Paris: Kugelmann, 1903).

The tension between anti-racist and Francophile orientations relates to the primary political division that emerged in Haiti in the second half of the nineteenth century. After Soulouque was deposed in 1859, party politics began to take shape in the country. The political landscape divided into two camps, sharing similarities with political divides throughout Latin America at the time. The Liberal Party was generally more Westernized in its outlook. It was associated with elite commercial interests and called for economic development based on open trade and international financing—even questioning the value of the sacrosanct foreign ownership ban in the constitution. The National Party, conversely, promoted economic nationalism and drew support from the peasantry and urban poor. Since Haiti's masses tended to have darker skin, the National Party was more racialist in its rhetoric, calling for Black (as opposed to the traditional mixed-race) leadership and for, as their slogan proclaimied, "the greatest good for the greatest number." This division was not a straightforward racial divide as earlier historians have supposed, but a political divide that partly overlapped with existing social divisions, which, in turn, partly overlapped with the racial demographics in the country that had their roots the colonial period.[29] As Liberals and Nationalists fought for control of the government in the 1870s and 1880s, supporters of both sides fled into exile. As a result, treatises for both parties appeared in print in Paris, notably Demesvar Delorme's Liberal polemic *Les théoriciens au pouvoir* (1870) and Louis-Joseph Janvier's Nationalist tome *Haiti aux Haïtiens* (1884). These political divisions culminated with a civil war in Haiti in 1883, prompting commentary from Haitians in Paris.

But if the Haitian community in Paris was split along Liberal/Nationalist lines, it was also united in two clear ways. First, the shared immigrant experience, the mere fact of being Haitian in Paris drew them together. In *Séna*, Hibbert evoked this phenomenon by having the entire

[29] For an overview of the intersections between race, colour and politics in Haiti, see Trouillot, *State Against Nation*, 110–113; Matthew J. Smith, *Red & Black in Haiti* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 4–6.

Haitian community attend a funeral for one of its members, regardless of whether or not they had known the deceased. He says, "in this great Paris, Haiti thus brings together all those connected to her, all those who had lived, loved and suffered on her sad, lamentable and benevolent soil."[30] This fictional event reflects an underlying reality, as numerous obituaries in Paris's Haitian-run newspapers attest; when, for example, a seventeen-year-old girl named Lucie-Elisabeth Etienne died of bronchitis in 1891, *La Fraternité* tells us that Paris's "Haitian colony arrived in great numbers showing the most painful emotion at this sad ceremony."[31] Clearly, by the last decades of the century a true community with a sense of shared identity had emerged in Paris.

The Paris Haitian community was also united by a commitment to the defence of Haiti and, in particular, of Haitian independence. Again, in *Séna*, Fernand Hibbert comments on the unwavering interest that Haitians in Paris held for their homeland, saying "once they are abroad, Haitians dream, speak, and think about nothing but Haiti," adding that "they see Paris through Haiti, and Haiti through Paris."[32] This is evinced by the fact that, as the Black Republic of Letters was finding its feet in the 1870s and 1880s, Haiti was the focus of the vast majority of the works it produced. Since fears of French reconquest had diminished after the Franco-Haitian Accord of 1825, when Haitian writers defended national sovereignty, they were mainly thinking about the threat of U.S. expansion. In the era of the Monroe Doctrine, Washington viewed the Americas as its sphere of influence and the Caribbean basin as the natural next step for territorial expansion. The United States had already attempted to annex both the Dominican Republic and Cuba in the mid-nineteenth century, and by the 1890s they caused a scandal by angling to set up a naval base in northern Haiti at Môle Saint-Nicholas. This was the most pressing, but not the

[30] Hibbert, *Séna*, 278.
[31] "Nécrologie," *La Fraternité*, 31 March 1891, 3.
[32] Hibbert, *Séna*, 277.

only threat to Haitian sovereignty The other great powers—France, but also Britain and Germany—also had financial interests in Haiti and sometimes threatened to intervene in Haitian affairs. France, in particular, could hem in Haitian sovereignty by way of the outstanding indemnity debt. Haitians in Paris wrote copiously to criticize the great powers and warn their compatriots of these threats to Haiti's self-determination.

In their efforts to defend Haiti's right to control its own affairs, the Black Republic of Letters employed arguments based on both universal human equality and the civilizing effects of French culture. Blacks were not inferior and Haitians, in particular, had the benefit of French cultural and institutional norms to bolster their claims to autonomy. Both of these lines of argument came to have new relevance in the 1880s and 1890s, when French colonial ambitions in Africa intensified. After Linstant Pradine's *Essai*, a few other Haitians produced modest works in Paris that dealt explicitly with racial prejudice, notably an anonymously authored 24-page pamphlet entitled *Aux homme impartiaux sur les attaques dont l'empire d'Haïti et les haïtiens ont été l'objet* (1850), Pierre Faubert's three-act play *Ogé ou la préjugé de couleur* (1856), and Surville Toussaint's 16-page pamphlet *De la race noire* (1872). In 1882, however, just months after the free press law opened the floodgates on publishing generally, a work appeared that, in turn, opened the floodgates for Paris's Haitians to engage more aggressively with their detractors and level bolder and more frequent critiques against French racism. *Les Détracteurs de la race noire et de la république d'Haïti* was the project of five young Haitians living in Paris. It was conceived as a response to the growing interest in and disparaging accounts of Haiti over the preceding year.

In the summer of 1881, as we have seen, Edgar La Selve had published his *Pays des Nègres* and stirred up additional interest in Haiti by way of his speaking tour which kicked off

that same year. In January 1882, the French literary critic Léo Quesnel published an article in *La Revue politique et littéraire*, which was ostensibly a review of La Selve's book, but was in fact a damning portrait of Haiti and of Black people in general. The book, Quesnel says, confirmed his suspicions about Haiti and the Black race. He begins: "If the theory of the inequality of the races needed confirmation, it would be found in the inanity of the efforts, over the last century, of the *nègres* of Haiti to constitute a society."[33] He goes on to voice classic French attitudes toward the Haitian people: that they had destroyed a paradise on earth, that they were inherently violent and lazy—"Blacks (both in Africa and in the Indies) are outrageously indolent"—that they were little more than overgrown children.[34] He characterizes educated Haitians as unwilling to do serious work, saying they prefer to study literature which only serves to give them pretentions. He concludes by proclaiming that Haiti's only hope is to abandon its protectionism and its bias against white foreigners, saying, "Nothing can be done with a society entirely composed of Black men… When there is no racial mixing there will be no progress," and finally, "the Haitians (the only *nègres* in the world who did not maintain an affectionate memory of French domination) will learn whether they did well not to seek, from the beginning of their independence, a point of reference and a source of strength from their friends, their former masters!".[35] Unsurprisingly, these words caused a stir in Paris's Haitian community.

Quesnel's article appeared in print on 21 January. Over the next two weeks, at least five young Haitians in Paris—Louis-Joseph Janvier, Clément Denis, Justin Dévost, Arthur Bowler and Jules Auguste—penned responses to Quesnel, pointing out errors in his article and defending Haiti against his caustic diatribe.[36] By 1 February, four of them had had their rebuttals printed in

[33] Léo Quesnel, "Anciennes colonies françaises: Haïti," *La Revue politique et littéraire*, 21 January 1881, 84.
[34] Ibid., 85.
[35] Ibid., 87.
[36] Dévost is sometimes rendered Dévot.

various Paris newspapers. On 4 February, Quesnel responded with a brief, dismissive article. "We like this noble anger," he said, "still we believe it is hardly justified."[37] He went on to restate his point in blunt terms, saying "that the African race, left to itself, will fall into a vicious circle and that it will only pick itself up through contact and fusion with the white race: fusion of ideas, fusion of heart and fusion of blood," and suggested that his Haitian critics themselves probably have "some drops of European blood."[38] This blithe response must have steeled the Haitians' resolve. The five men decided to give a definite, lasting shape to their rebuttals. They formed a committee, compiled their original articles and open letters, wrote new material and began to prepare a published volume. They solicited and received introductory remarks from Victor Schœlcher, now a senator, as well as the Puerto Rican abolitionist and diplomat Ramón Betances. The up-and-coming publishing house Marpon & Flammarion agreed to print the work, and, by April, *Les Détracteurs de la race noire et de république d'Haïti* was on the shelves of Parisian bookstores.

The authors of *Détracteurs* made a groundbreaking contribution to dialogues about race in Paris and to the role that Haiti could play in those dialogues. They passionately defended their country using moral, philosophical and (as two of them were medical doctors) physiological arguments. At the same time, they also demonstrated a cultural bias in favour of France. In attempting to defend their country, they minimized the fact that African cultural practices were widespread in Haiti. Denis, for example, states that Vodou had been stamped out in Haiti, saying "those African superstitions" had vanished and been "replaced by those of Catholicism."[39]

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[37] Léo Quesnel, "Haïtiens à Paris," *La Revue politique et littéraire*, 4 February 1881, 157.
[38] Ibid., 158.
[39] Clément Denis, "Article de M. C. Denis," in Jules Auguste, Arthur Bowler, Clément Denis, Justin Dévost and Louis-Joseph Janvier, *Les Détracteurs de la race noir et de la république d'Haïti*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Marpon & Flammarion, 1882), 14.

Although Kreyòl was spoken universally in Haiti, and only a tiny fraction of the population also spoke French, Janvier claimed erroneously that "the French language is the common language, the only in use, and all the peasants understand it."[40] The book's title claims that it was in defence of the Black race and of Haiti, but it does not pay much attention to Africa. Haitians in Paris in the early 1880s still had very little direct knowledge of Africa, and they had not yet begun to weigh in actively on impending French conquests on the continent. Only once in *Détracteurs* does one of its authors approach the topic. In his second contribution, Janvier states "the interior of Africa is opening up and we hope that it continues opening up, but to Livingstones, to philanthropists and not to the exploiters of man."[41] Thus, he expressed what was becoming a typical line of thought for Haitian commentators, not opposing colonialism outright, but calling for Europeans to play a benevolent, "civilizing" role in Africa.

Whatever its shortcomings, *Détracteurs* was a hit. It sold out in a month and was given a second run that same year. It was reviewed in the French and Haitian press and prompted much discussion in Paris. Its success contributed to the explosion of a more dynamic and confident Haitian publishing scene in Paris in the 1880s. The authors (apart from Clément Denis who died shortly thereafter) went on to new ambitious projects for the defence of Haiti.[42] Janvier and Bowler published book-length rebuttals of Haiti's critics.[43] In 1884, Janvier published a work devoted to the question of the equality of the races, which set the stage for Anténor Firmin's more famous work on the same topic, which appeared the next year.[44] The firm that published

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[40] Louis-Joseph Janvier, "Lettre de M. le Dr. Janvier," in Auguste et al. *Détracteurs*, 27.
[41] Louis-Joseph Janvier, "Étude de M. le Dr. Janvier" in Auguste et al. *Détracteurs*, 52.
[42] Anténor Firmin, *De l'Égalité des races humaines* (Paris: Pichon, 1885), 466.
[43] Louis-Joseph Janvier, *La République d'Haiti et ses visiteurs (1840-1882); réponse à Victor Cochinat, de la "Petite Presse" et à quelques autres écrivains* (Paris: Marpon & Flammarion, 1883); Arthur Bowler, *Une Conférence sur Haiti (en réponse aux détracteurs de ma race, notamment a Sir Spencer St-John, Ministre Plénipotentiaire de S.M.B. au Mexique)* (Paris: Dentu, 1888).
[44] Louis-Joseph Janvier, *L'égalité des races* (Paris: Rougier, 1884).

Détracteurs, Marpon & Flammarion, noticed the value of titles about Haiti (or, more likely, the lucrative market for such explosive public debates) and went on to publish eight additional works by Haitians in the next seven years. Other Parisian publishers followed suit (notably Kugelmann, Jouve, Pichon and Girard & Brière). By 1900, a Haitian press, Ateliers haïtiens, had been founded in Paris, publishing literature by the eminent writers Georges Sylvain and Massillon Coicou and others. But it was perhaps in the periodical press that Haitians really made their mark.

With the boom in Haitian publishing in Paris in the 1880s, it became evident that a Haitian-run newspaper might be sustainable, and it might be a valuable platform for the types of conversations that were important to Haitian expatriates. Between 1890 and 1906, at least six such newspapers appeared in Paris.[45] Five of these, like the vast majority of new papers in the period, were ephemeral, folding after a few issues. One, however, was a success. This was Benito Sylvain's *La Fraternité*. Its first issue appeared in August 1890, its slogan proclaiming it an "organ of the interests of Haiti and the Black race." With the help of a subsidy from the Haitian government, it went on to run for six years, producing about 200 issues with over 3000 articles by some 300 contributors. It included contributions by French notables like Victor Schœlcher, Jules Simon, Francisque Sarcey and Jean Hess, the Guadeloupean parliamentarians Alexandre Isaac and Gaston Gerville-Réache, and the feminists Marie Maugeret and Aline Vallette. A vast number of its contributors were Haitian, including several we have already

[45] Bissainthe, *Dictionnaire*, 789, 792, 797, 807, 837, 841. The six newspapers were: Benito Sylvain's *La Fraternité* (approximately 200 issues, 1890–1896), Arthur Bowler's *Haïti en Europe* (at least thirteen issues, 1891–1892), Furcy Chatelain's *La République d'Haïti* (perhaps only one issue, 1897), Georges Sejourne's *Le Libéral* (probably four issues, 1899–1900), Dathan de St.-Cyr's *La Revue haïtienne et africaine* (at least fifteen issues, circa 1905–1907), Benito Sylvain's *L'Étoile africaine* (perhaps two issues, July 1906 and January 1908). I have also seen evidence of a seventh Haitian newspaper in Paris, *La Riposte*, that was active around 1895.

encountered (Demesvar Delorme, Anténor Firmin, Justin Dévost, Pierre Faubert) as well as many whom we will meet later as they subsequently went on to play important roles in Haiti and in Haiti's activities in Paris and on the global stage (from future delegates at the League of Nations Tertulien Guilbaud and Frédéric Doret to future presidents Louis Borno and Sténio Vincent). As a venue for discussion and debate, as a point of contact with Africa and its Diaspora, and as a hub for the Haitian community in Paris, *La Fraternité* played a central role in the Black Republic of Letters in its peak decade.

The first issue shows the types of content that *La Fraternité* had to offer over its six-year run. It contained two items attributed to Benito's brother Georges Sylvain—an excerpt from a speech he had given several months earlier about relations between France and Haiti as well as an article about a conflict between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. It featured a poem pulled from the writings of Louis Borno, and an article by the civil engineer Frédéric Doret detailing some recent inventions—the phonograph, submarines and a "gas pistol." The rest of the content, apparently all by Benito, included articles about France's declining birth rate and about an African prince and his mistreatment while in Europe, as well as several short news briefs: an overview of French trade, an Anglo-French treaty regarding Africa and a resulting commission of French delegates sent to the continent, education reform in France, and remarks on a proposed statue of Admiral Amédée Courbet who had won military victories for the French in Indochina. Finally, there was the ordinary newspaper fare—obituaries for two Parisian Haitians, train schedules and lists of ships leaving for Haiti, titles of upcoming theatrical performances, advertisements and classifieds, and information about subscriptions.

The largest portion of the first issue, however, was devoted to an editorial in which Benito Sylvain explained the necessity of a Haitian newspaper in Paris. He observed that most

expatriate communities in Paris already had their own papers, and that Haiti, "which borrowed from France its language, its customs and its laws, and which maintains a relatively numerous colony in Paris," was nearly the only group that did not.[46] He detailed his vision for what a Haitian newspaper in Paris could mean for Black people around the world. The "*question noire*," he said, had been in the news for the past year and was intensifying in the light of French aggression in West Africa.[47] He worried that French colonial policy was threatening to turn away from "peacefully civilizing the mysterious continent," and he noted that this shift in approach to Africa was coinciding with growing animosity toward Black people in Europe and abuses in the old French colonies in the Caribbean. It was all connected. Therefore, he said, *La Fraternité* was an opportunity to challenge attitudes toward Haiti, and, in so doing, to "take up the cause of the entire Black race," so that "Haiti, the first independent Black state, will be in a position to support the work to improve the lot of our unhappy fellows in Africa."[48] For Sylvain, defining Haiti and defending the future of Africa were two halves of the same coin.

As it turned out, Sylvain's timing was propitious. Just months after he launched the paper, it ended up being a crucial platform for a public war of words over the meaning of Haiti—a war waged against none other than Edgar La Selve. As we have seen, La Selve toured France and Algeria extensively between 1880 and 1888, giving enthralling multimedia presentations, propagating a particular version of Haiti, and generally stirring up enthusiasm for colonial expansion in Africa. By the end of the decade, now entering his forties, La Selve settled into a more sedentary existence. He got married and had a child, and he briefly held a teaching post in Castres. He continued to eke out a living based on his knowledge about the wider world.

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[46] Benito Sylvain, "Nécessité d'un journal haïtien à Paris," *La Fraternité*, 27 August 1890, 1.
[47] Ibid. Italics in original.
[48] Ibid.

However, in the last years of his life, La Selve's legitimacy as an expert on Haiti faced a crisis. In 1888 he had published his exotic novel, *Le Général Cocoyo*, in which, as we have seen, he gave the public what it wanted in the form of exotic curiosities and violence—the "bloody scrap of African barbarity"—while at the same time insisting that everything in the novel was deeply rooted in the reality he had seen firsthand in the country. But La Selve was making these pronouncements in a Paris that had a growing Haitian community that was increasingly vocal and sensitive to criticism. It was inevitable that La Selve's version of Haiti would soon be contested.

In addition to teaching and writing, La Selve began to construct an enterprise that would allow him and his family to retire peacefully to his posh villa in the Paris suburb of Courbevoie. The enterprise took the form of an organization bearing the grand title of the Association Universelle, better known as the Académie des Palmiers. He described it as a "humanitarian, scientific, artistic and literary society" focused on "expanding French literature and encouraging educational travels, the cult of courtesy, and the abolition of slavery, the guillotine and war."[49] To support these lofty endeavours, La Selve devised a scheme that ultimately proved to be his undoing. The Académie's modus operandi was to conscript new members from among the elites of French society, foreign heads of state, and, in particular, notables from Africa and the Caribbean. Without their knowledge, they would be added to the Académie's membership list and asked to contribute a subscription fee. In return they would be given a title, decorated with a quadricolour rosette, and could have their image and a laudatory biography printed in the Académie's periodical, the *Revue exotique*, for which La Selve served as editor.

[49] Benito Sylvain, "L'Académie des Palmiers," *La Fraternité*, 10 February 1891, 2.

In 1890, several members of Paris's Haitian community received notice that they had been made members of the Académie des Palmiers. One of these was the Benito Sylvain. He received word that the Académie had granted him a medal of honour, but he did not reply. At this point, Sylvain was only vaguely aware of La Selve, who, as he wrote simply in September 1890, was "well known in Haiti."[50] A few months later, Sylvain read that *La Fraternité* was listed among the newspapers affiliated with the *Revue exotique*. By this point, however, Sylvain had learned "some unfavourable things" about La Selve, and he wrote a brief article stressing that *La Fraternité* was in no way connected to him.[51] This initial exchange quickly erupted into fourteen months of mudslinging between Sylvain and La Selve. The conflict tarnished the latter's reputation and may well have contributed to his untimely death. For our purposes, this mutual smear campaign can be read as a battle to define Haiti. La Selve had established himself as an authority on the country, popularizing ideas about Haiti that had existed in France for nearly a century. Sylvain, for his part, came to see La Selve as an enemy of Haiti who was propagating a caricature of the country and exploiting his connection to it to enrich himself.

After Sylvain's initial disavowal, the tone of the conflict shifts markedly. La Selve responded with a letter full of insults against *La Fraternité*, threatening Sylvain with legal action. By this point, Sylvain had decided what type of man La Selve was, and the value of his opinions. In his next issue, he declared that La Selve was an "exploiter of Haiti," and a "total hater of the Black race."[52] He said, "we are proud of the insults Mr. La Selve has hurled at us; the outrage of certain men is a certificate of dignity that bolsters us."[53] In the following issue, Sylvain continued his counterattack by reprinting a series of documents intended to unveil La Selve as a

[50] Benito Sylvain, "Nouvelles & Bruits," *La Fraternité*, 16 September 1890, 2.
[51] Benito Sylvain, "Une Protestation," *La Fraternité*, 27 January 1891, 1.
[52] Benito Sylvain, "Les Ménaces de M. La Selve," *La Fraternité*, 3 February 1891, 2–3.
[53] Ibid., 2.

con artist and an enemy of Haiti and the Black race. These included a letter from the French senator from Guadeloupe, Alexandre Isaac, who had been enlisted as a member of the Académie, but who now declared that "if Mr. La Selve, whom I have never had the honour to meet, was, sometime in the past, one of the detractors of our race, I want it to be well understood that there is nothing in common with him and me."[54] Sylvain reproduced excerpts from French and Haitian newspapers that mocked the Académie's practice of awarding of titles and laudatory biographies as a money-making scheme, and questioned the legality of granting decorations, claiming it infringed on the prerogatives of the State. Finally, Sylvain penned a brief commentary on *Général Cocoyo* as an indictment of the man and his attitudes toward Haiti. He reproduced the lines from the novel's introduction that called Haiti "the bloody scrap of African barbarity," and referred to a time when La Selve had described Parisian Haitians as "flashy foreigners ["rastaquouères"] with hair of wool and skin the colour of shoe polish." [55] Sylvain concluded the piece with a plea to his compatriots not to be deceived. Clearly, he was now set on unmasking La Selve, damaging his reputation and thereby delegitimizing his authority to speak about Haiti.

After Sylvain methodically dismantled his standing as a trusted authority on Haiti, La Selve resorted to ad hominem attacks on Sylvain, couched in racists imagery. The next edition of *Revue exotique*, included a brief reply to Sylvain. It described Sylvain as an "orang-outan who is playing at journalism," and called *La Fraternité* "a banana leaf."[56] It characterized Sylvain as "kicking like a crazed ass against *Revue exotique* and the Académie des Palmiers," concluding that "his blustering backside is lost in the air," and that such a person "inspires disgust and only collects hatred."[57] This type of mudslinging was not uncommon in the late nineteenth-century

[54] Alexandre Isaac, quoted in Benito Sylvain, "L'Académie de Palmiers," *La Fraternité*, 10 February 1891, 2.
[55] Ibid., 2–3.
[56] "Échos et Informations," *Revue exotique*, 15 February 1891, 61.
[57] Ibid.

press, but it surely must have lost La Selve the higher ground, and further eroded his standing as a spokesperson for Haiti. Intended as a cool rebuff to salvage his reputation, it must have had the opposite result.

Sylvain then opted for a direct approach. Since the article had no byline, Sylvain sent two Haitian friends with a private letter inquiring whether La Selve was responsible for the "orang-outan" comment. La Selve's only response was to return the letter, "covered in…"—the ellipses implying it was soiled in human excrement. Sylvain's messengers reported, saying,

> perhaps he just wanted to demonstrate the great emotion he felt while reading our note. In any case, we would spit and spit again in the face of the lowlife who calls himself La Selve, the repugnant and pitiful, who imagined living shamefully off of our compatriots—thanks to his bewildering *Société des Palmiers* and its fanciful awards—after having badmouthed our country in books that, furthermore, are unread, because they are written by a cobbler…[58]

They congratulated Sylvain for "putting an end, at least we hope, to this wretch's disgusting commerce."[59] Sylvain related this development in the following issue of *La Fraternité*, saying, "may that term 'Orang-utan,' which Mr. La Selve used as an insult, inspire healthy reflections within all those of our race who were in some way affiliated with this grotesque *Académie des Palmiers*!"[60] Withing two months, Sylvain was thrilled to receive word from Port-au-Prince that many of his compatriots had pulled out of the Académie.[61]

Several months later, in January 1892, Sylvain announced that resignations were raining down on the Académie after Demesvar Delorme, the respected Haitian minister to Berlin, refused to join and received public abuse from La Selve.[62] In February, Sylvain reported a

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[58] Léon Audain, quoted in Benito Sylvain "Un Sale Monsieur," *La Fraternité*, 24 February 1891, 1. Italics in original.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Sylvain, "Un Sale Monsieur," *La Fraternité*, 24 February 1891, 1. Italics in original.
[61] Benito Sylvain, "Joie Patriotique," *La Fraternité*, 27 April 1891, 1.
[62] Benito Sylvain, "L'Académie des Palmiers: Les démissions pleuvent," *La Fraternité*, third week of January 1892, 1.

general desertion, noting several high-profile resignations, and proclaiming that, "the Académie des Palmiers is dying! The Académie des Palmiers is dead!".[63] In March, Sylvain predicted the Académie's impending bankruptcy; "this great sham of an enterprise," he said, "is thus approaching death."[64] La Selve, in turn, publicly criticized the Haitian government for subsidizing *La Fraternité*, which, he said, "renders no service to the country, nor to the Black race," adding, furthermore, that no one was interested in Sylvain's poppycock.[65] He added derogatorily that Sylvain must be receiving help from a white man in polishing up his prose. Finally, in a desperate effort to save his role as a spokesperson for Haiti, he suggested that the government should pull its funding from *La Fraternité*, and instead support his own paper.

Sylvain replied to these harsh words in his final attack against La Selve. In the issue of *La Fraternité* of the first week of April 1892, he wrote an article subtitled (chillingly, in the light of subsequent events) "Despair of a Blackmailer, Vengeance of a dying man, Edgar's last cry."[66] He declared that La Selve's claims about *La Fraternité* were entirely unfounded; *La Fraternité* enjoyed a strong readership and the idea that the Haitian government should support the *Revue exotique* was preposterous, particularly since it "flatters our government clumsily and publishes portraits of the heroes of our independence that are total fantasy—when they are not frightful caricatures." Sylvain concluded by predicting that this would be the last word from La Selve, who would soon be forced to shut down his agency and return to the region of his birth to take up his original career—"digging for truffles." "May this sad ending," he added, "serve as a lesson for the present and future detractors of Haiti and of the Black race!".

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[63] Benito Sylvain, "L'Académie des Cocotiers: Lâchage général," *La Fraternité*, first week of February 1892, 1–2.
[64] Benito Sylvain, "L'Académie des Cocotiers: La Débâcle finale," *La Fraternité*, first week of March 1892, 2.
[65] Benito Sylvain, "L'Académie des Cocotiers: Désespoir d'un maître chanteur, Vengeance d'un moribund, Le dernier cri d'Edgar," *La Fraternité*, first week of April 1892, 2.
[66] Ibid.

As it turned out, Sylvain's predictions, were not far off. It was, indeed, La Selve's final cry. Weeks later, on 26 April 1892, Edgar La Selve took his own life at the age of forty-three by shooting himself in the head in the headquarters of Société des Gens de Lettres in Paris. A note in his pocket explained the circumstance that had led to his suicide. He wrote: "I sense that my intellectual faculties are decreasing more and more, and I no longer have the strength to face the future."[67] But it is hard to imagine that Sylvain's tireless campaign against him and the corresponding collapse of the Académie des Palmiers did not play a role in La Selve's decline. Sylvain, for his part, commented that "Edgar La Selve—as is known to our readers—was one of the cruelest detractors of Haiti and of the Black race. But all resentment must fall before the dead, and it is with a heart full of immense pity that we wish for peace for his poor soul!".[68] Clearly, this was a tragic finale to the war or words between Sylvain and La Selve. At the same time, it palpably and publicly demonstrated how far Sylvain was willing to go to oppose the detractors of Haiti and the Black race. On a more pragmatic level, this salacious series of events undoubtedly also helped *La Fraternité* sell more copies and boost the overall financial viability and cultural prominence of his paper and of the Black Republic of Letters in general.

As the campaign against La Selve demonstrates only too well, *La Fraternité* was an effective platform for coordinating the defence of Haiti and of the Black race. But as publication continued, it became evident that Paris's Haitians did not have a particularly strong understanding of Africa. Although the paper was curated from a Haitian perspective and included countless articles written by Haitians, the first-hand accounts of Africa were typically provided by French authors—missionaries, explorers, military men—for the simple fact that, as

[67] "Suicide d'un écrivain," *L'Indépendant des Basses-Pyrénéees*, 3 May 1892, 2.
[68] Benito Sylvain, "Dernière heure: La mort d'Edgar La Selve," *La Fraternité*, fourth week of April 1892, 3.

we will see in chapter 10, no Haitians had yet travelled to the continent. With most of what they knew about Africa filtered through a French perspective, and since they were themselves personally attached to French culture, it is not too surprising that Haitians in Paris were generally in favour of the *mission civilisatrice* as it was being articulated in the 1890s.

This was displayed in the twenty-eighth issue of *La Fraternité*, in which Sylvain reports on visiting the Jardin Zoologique d'Acclimatation to see a group of Dahomeyans who were on display. The exhibit prompted Sylvain to report that,

> Personally, I was struck by the intelligence that these savages seemed to display, which revealed that more than one of them (particularly the chief—a strapping man of an athletic build and a proud face, and an impeccable torso and biceps) seemed to enjoy the growing number of spectators. And, on leaving the Jardin d'Acclimatation, my impressions were summarized in this thought that I murmured under my breath: 'it would be so easy to civilize these people!'.[69]

Somewhat paradoxically from our perspective, this general attitude meant that *La Fraternité*, a paper ostensibly dedicated to African interests, run by citizens of a country that had rejected French colonialism, frequently served as a platform for advocates of French expansion in Africa. This must have been a boon to the colonial lobby in France.

But it would be far from accurate to characterize *La Fraternité* as a colonialist mouthpiece. Over the course of its six-year run, the paper gave Haitians in Paris the opportunity both to expand their knowledge of the continent and to discuss the relative merits and dangers of French activities in Africa. Sylvain's own ideas changed over the duration of *La Fraternité*'s run; in one of its final issues, that of 2 July 1896, for example, he referred to the human zoos as "those exhibitions of indigenous Africans that odious Barnums organize periodically at the Champs-de-Mars for the pleasure of good Parisians."[70] He qualified these displays as "immoral,"

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[69] Benito Sylvain, "Les Dahoméens à Paris," *La Fraternité*, 3 March 1891, 1.
[70] Benito Sylvain, "Travailleurs noirs et travailleurs blancs," *La Fraternité*, 3 July 1896,1.

and lamented that they served to strengthen "the racial pride" that was "necessary for colonial conquests."[71] While in 1891, he had visited the Jardin d'Acclimatation out of sheer curiosity and described the Dahomeyans in exotic terms, five years later he was more able to conceptualize people from Africa as fully human individuals from a society with its own distinct culture. Clearly, Sylvain's own attitudes toward Africans and toward the underlying dynamics of colonialism had shifted during the paper's run. They would continue to do so when he was able to visit Africa personally the following year, as we will see in chapter 10.

This shift is evident in *La Fraternité* more generally, and it is presumably a reflection of a broader shift in Paris's Haitian community as they began to encounter more and more Africans in their daily lives and learned more about the sinister side of colonialism. In earlier issues, while condemning the abuses perpetrated (most often) by other European powers, *La Fraternité* tended to praise French expansion. Over time, however, Sylvain and his collaborators grew more willing to publicize and criticize French abuses in Africa. In June 1894, for example, they printed an article by the French doctor and explorer Jean Hess in which the author scathingly summarized the problem. Hess began "science has found in Africa inferior peoples, in Europe, superior peoples," adding that "this science is European" and "if it were African, it would probably formulate a different conclusion."[72] He went on to explain that in the name of this science, "the man of Europe… discovered that duty commanded him to 'enlighten' the African man," but, in the process, he learned that his "Black brother possessed in his country diverse treasures." Europeans, Hess said, realized they needed Black labour to exploit such treasures, and that "payment in blows from the kurbash enriched faster than payment in money." He then listed numerous instances of inhumane treatment of Africans by French colonists. He concluded,

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[71] Ibid.
[72] Jean Hess, "De la conduit des blancs vis-à-vis des nègres en Afriques," *La Fraternité*, 6 June 1894, 1.

saying, “I consider it not only my right, but also my duty to bring attention to abuses in Africa, especially if the perpetrators are from my own country.” This must have shaken Sylvain and Paris’s Haitian community profoundly, particularly given the parallels between such atrocities and those that had prompted the Haitian Revolution.

Paris’s Haitian community was, of course, not monolithic in its opinions. In fact, according to Sylvain, when *La Fraternité* finally folded in 1896, its demise was precipitated by “a coalition of Haitian politicians and students who envied our independent opinions,” and successfully petitioned the Haitian government to discontinue the subsidy that had helped the paper stay afloat.[73] But in spite of such conflicts among Haitian expatriates, partly thanks to the groundwork laid by *La Fraternité* and the authors of *Détracteurs de la race noire*, the 1890s clearly witnessed a progression toward a better informed and more global-minded Haitian community in Paris. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, and as French expansion reached its pinnacle in Africa and turned from conquering to governing, a large, literate, and increasingly activist community of Haitians remained at the epicentre of the colonial empire, ready to pen criticisms and participate in other forms of dissent against the colonial status quo. Gradually, as more and more Africans made their way to Paris, and the city’s other Black communities expanded apace, Paris became a centre of Black internationalist activities in which Haitians were keen to play a role. As we will see in the next chapter, these face-to-face interactions came to play a key part in the growing articulation of anti-colonialism and Black consciousness that would eventually contribute to the collapse of French colonialism in Africa.

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[73] Benito Sylvain, “The Pan-African Association,” in Tony Martin, *The Pan-African Connection* (Dover, MA: Majority Press, 1984), 216n1. Martin’s translation with one minor correction. Martin rendered “une coalition des politicians et des étudiants haïtiens” as “a coalition of politicians and Haitian students,” but “a coalition of Haitian politicians and students” seems more correct.

- 7 -
Salon Noir:
Haitians in Person in Paris

Perhaps even more than in their publishing endeavours, Haitians' physical presence in Paris served as a reminder of their country and its landmark rejection of French colonialism. If so inclined, white Parisians could avoid picking up copies of *La Fraternité* or titles by Haitian authors that appeared in bookshops. But when Haitian people themselves began showing up in greater numbers and in traditionally white spaces, they were harder to ignore. Here they were: citizens of the lost colony, the people whose ancestors had rejected France. As they went about their lives in the French capital, their mere existence was an uncomfortable reminder that the edifice could come crashing down. At the same time, the Haitians who ended up in Paris in the nineteenth century were overwhelmingly elites who tended to share the affinity for French culture typical of their class. Thus, while their presence may have struck some observers as an eerie warning of the possibility of colony collapse, they might just as well be seen as evidence of the capacity of French culture to elevate people who would otherwise—they imagined—be doomed to barbarity. The Haitians themselves, while certainly interested in promoting the polarizing notion of the equality of the races, were often convinced of the "civilizing" value of French culture. Paradoxically, then, Haitians in Paris could evoke contradictory reactions from the French people with whom they interacted.

As the nineteenth century was drawing to a close, elite Haitians could be found more and more in the most hallowed venues of French culture—learned societies and Parisian salons.

Since the Age of Enlightenment, these spaces had been the heartbeat of French intellectual life. While they were overwhelmingly white spaces, they were often not exclusively so. Paris had a reputation for its relative openness toward people of colour. As noted, it was no colour-blind utopia, but the presence of people of colour in scholarly meetings and literary salons was not unheard of in the nineteenth century and even earlier. Certainly, people of African descent found a place for themselves among scholars and politicians in abolitionist circles. But Black people sometimes managed to break into the cultural mainstream in France. Celebrated individuals like the Chevalier de Saint-Georges and Alexandre Dumas reach the pinnacle of the Parisian cultural scene. True, they encountered discrimination and were sometimes treated as curiosities. But they nevertheless made room for themselves and blazed a trail for others to follow.

By the 1880s, as mixed-race and then Black people from the old French colonies were beginning to win elections to the French parliament, Haitians were making inroads in the scholarly societies and informal salons that governed the intellectual and cultural realms. In this chapter we will explore the lives and activities of numerous Haitians who came face to face with French people as well as people from the French colonies and beyond between 1880 and 1939. In diverse contexts, they presented themselves as heirs to the country's anti-racist and anti-colonialist history and tried to live up to Haiti's symbolic legacy as they understood it. First, we will see how certain Haitians worked to shift conversations around race at the highest levels of French intellectual culture. Louis-Joseph Janvier, Anténor Firmin and Benito Sylvain all joined scholarly societies and, with varying degrees of success, fought against the racist currents deep within them. At the same time, all three were devoted to French culture and tended to accept the idea that Africa was in desperate need of European tutelage and civilization.

In the first decades of the twentieth century, Haitians in Paris were able to learn more about Africa and adopt a more sympathetic view of African cultures, and a correspondingly antagonistic stance toward European colonialism. The Haitian Jean-Price Mars played a fundamental role in this shift, as did growing connections between Haitians and people from Africa living in Paris. In the 1890s, Benito Sylvain had worked to forge links between Paris's Haitians and its various other Black communities, but this objective did not come to fruition until the interwar period, partly thanks to the efforts of the Haitian doctor Léo Sajous. Along with the militant Haitians Camille Saint-Jacques and Ludovic Lacombe, Sajous built up a number of radical associations which worked to destabilize French control of Africa and build solidarity between people of African descent on three continents. All of these efforts fuelled the growing anti-imperialist movement in interwar Paris. In the end, these and many other Haitians managed to play a part in the collapse of the second French colonial empire, just as their ancestors had played a part in the collapse of the first.

The Anthropological Society of Paris was a preeminent learned society. Founded in 1859, it was a bastion of racial thought in one of Europe's intellectual centres. Anthropology, in the nineteenth century, was largely concerned with taxonomizing the differences between the human races, and the Anthropological Society had a strong connection to the popular scientific racism of the era. Paul Broca, who had founded the institution in 1859, was a leading proponent of polygenism, the theory that different human races had different origins and could therefore be considered distinct species. Broca had made a career out of measuring human skulls in the hopes of finding empirical proof for the inherent physical and intellectual differences between human races. After Broca died in 1880, polygenism remained in vogue among the members of the

Anthropological Society.[1] Borrowing a phrase from the American anthropologist Lee D. Baker, the literary scholar Bastien Craipain has described the "nearly all-white" Anthropological Society as a "reliable narrator in the story of white supremacy."[2]

Despite the racism at its core, the Anthropological Society added no fewer than three Haitians to its numbers in 1880s. This was the result of two opposing processes. On the one hand, like many of their compatriots, the three men in question worked to be accepted in the highest levels of French intellectual culture and, if possible, to challenge the fundamental prejudices at its heart. On the other, as Craipain explains, the Anthropological Society at the time had an intense interest in Haiti as a "sort of large-scale laboratory" in which anthropologists and physicians could study Black and mixed-race bodies outside of the influence of slavery and colonialism in order to test the "rules" of racial science.[3] Hence, on 7 December 1882, after the French anthropologist Léonce Manouvrier brought the recently published *Détracteurs de la race noire et de la République d'Haïti* to the attention of his peers and noted that one of its authors, the medical doctor Louis-Joseph Janvier, had expressed an interest in joining their ranks, he received a favourable response. Two weeks later, at the Society's meeting of 21 December 1882, Janvier was elected as a full member.[4]

Membership in the Anthropological Society helped grant Janvier access to elite social circles in Paris. He was a regular at the salons of the poet Leconte de Lisle and was friends with several other luminaries of French literature and academia, including François Coppée, Maurice Barrès, José-Maria de Heredia, Judith Gautier, Stéphane Mallarmé and Elisée Reclus, some of

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[1] Robert Bernasconi, "A Haitian in Paris: Anténor Firmin as a philosopher against racism," *Patterns of Prejudice* 42, nos. 4–5 (2008): 366.
[2] Bastien Craipan, "There is No Odd in Ordinary: Louis-Joseph Janvier, Haiti, and the Tropics of Racial Science," in Louis-Joseph Janvier, *Haïti aux Haïtiens*, Brandon R. Byrd and Chelsea Stieber, eds. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2023), 153.
[3] Craipain, "No Odd in Ordinary," 144.
[4] Ibid., 152.

whom saw Janvier as proof that there was no limit to the civilizing power of French culture.[5] At the same time, while he was rubbing shoulders with the cream of French society, he was actively working to shake the foundation of the field of anthropology. A month after joining the Society, Janvier gave a presentation on his latest project, a new book entitled *La République d'Haïti et ses visiteurs*. In his short address to the Society, Janvier described the book as a "work of comparative sociology that can be fruitfully consulted by all of those that wish to seriously and impartially study Antillean society in contact with Western society," as well as "the psychological transformation that a Black person's brain can undergo, just as those belonging to individuals from the other human families."[6] As Craipain notes, Janvier was "calling for the consideration and recognition of cultural formations and exchanges as necessary objects of anthropological investigation."[7] In other words, he imagined a turn away from physical anthropology, from the classification of human "types," and hoped to centre culture as the chief subject of anthropological study—a transformation that did eventually take place in the field.

Seven months after Janvier's election, another Haitian medical doctor, Jean-Baptiste Dehoux, joined the Society, and one year after that, on Janvier's recommendation, Anténor Firmin was added to their number.[8] Despite Janvier's interventions, Firmin seems to have found the intellectual climate somewhat impenetrable when he first joined the Society. In an article about Firmin at the Society, the British historian of the philosophy of race Robert Bernasconi notes that "the late nineteenth century saw an intensification of racism, motivated by the demands of imperialism and justified by social Darwinism," and that this helps explain why

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[5] Yves Chelma, "Louis-Joseph Janvier, National Writer," Nadève Ménard, trans., in Janvier, *Haïti aux Haïtiens*, Byrd and Stieber, eds., 85.
[6] Louis-Joseph Janiver, "Séance du 18 janvier 1883," in *Bulletins de la Société d'anthropologie de Paris*, vol. 6, ser. 3 (Paris: G. Masson, 1883), 64.
[7] Craipain, "No Odd in Ordinary," 156.
[8] Bernasconi, "Haitian in Paris," 365n, 365; Byrd and Stieber, "Introduction," in Janvier, *Haïti aux Haïtiens*, Byrd and Stieber, eds., 15.

Firmin "never made an intervention of any kind until much later."[9] He did, however, respond in writing. One year after joining its ranks, Firmin's experiences at the Society fuelled him to produce his now famous work, *De l'égalité des race humaines*. The book explicitly opposed several members of the Society, including Broca himself, for their racist dogmatism.[10] It was, however, virtually ignored by the Anthropological Society.[11]

Firmin returned to Haiti in 1888, but was back in Paris in 1891, at which point he was more willing to challenge the ideas of the Anthropological Society directly. It was an uphill battle. On 7 April 1892, the archaeologist Félix Regnault gave a talk on the role of mountains in the distribution of the human races. The presentation prompted Firmin to declared that "one often speaks of inferior populations and superior populations, when it is really a question of populations that have evolved and ones that have remained in a primitive period." He said that certain people groups that are considered inferior "are only thus because their environment did not allow them to develop," while others, "having everything necessary to improve themselves," have been able to do so. He went on to condemn the "flippancy with which we decide the irrevocable inferiority of certain races without taking their exterior conditions into account." Using Haiti as an example, he insisted that when those external conditions change, "the Black race is in no way incapable of lifting itself up to a superior degree of intellectual development no less than other already civilized races." [12] His colleagues made no comment on this radical pronouncement.

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[9] Bernasconi, "Haitian in Paris," 369.
[10] Firmin, *De l'égalité*, 56.
[11] Ibid., 366.
[12] "Séance du 7 avril 1892," in *Bulletins de la Société d'anthropologie de Paris*, vol. 3, ser. 4 (Paris: G. Masson, 1892), 235–236.

Again, two weeks later on 21 April 1892, the physical anthropologist Joseph Lajard gave a lecture comparing the ancient and modern skulls of the inhabitants of the Azores and Canary Islands. In the discussion that followed, the racial dogmatists in the room cast doubt on the role that physical environment plays on human development. Firmin interjected that not only did physical environment play a role in the development of people groups, so too did social situation. Again, his colleagues glossed over his comment and continued discussing relative skull sizes. But Firmin, once again, attempted to shift the conversation away from biology to environment. He said, if "the *nègres* of Africa" are intellectually inferior, it is because of their conditions, which make it "difficult to demonstrate the great qualities they possess." This time, Firmin's statement prompted a response, but it was surely not the one he was hoping for. The president of the Society, Arthur Bordier, asked Firmin if any of his ancestors were white. Apparently taken off guard, Firmin replied that, while he was not certain, there might have been "a bit of white blood," but that he did not believe that this was the basis of his intelligence. Bordier responded that it was nevertheless possible that "this white blood had modified the skull of Mr. Firmin and could be the cause of the development of his intelligence." Léonce Manouvrier, the man who had originally opened the door for Janvier and his compatriots to join the Society, then suggested that it might be informative for Firmin to have his head measured, adding that he should ask other Haitians in Paris to do likewise. Firmin apparently made no reply to these presumably hurtful suggestions.[13] As Bernasconi has noted, these interactions reveal how, "in an instant Firmin's colleagues could switch from considering him a participant in their debates to treating him as an object of anthropological study."[14]

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[13] "Séance du 21 avril 1892," in *Bulletins de la Société d'anthropologie de Paris*, vol. 3, ser. 4 (Paris: G. Masson, 1892), 329–330.
[14] Bernasconi, "Haitian in Paris," 383.

Another Haitian who was also at the forefront of these interactions, and who seems to have had a more positive experience in Parisian intellectual spheres, was Benito Sylvain. While he was busy putting out weekly issues of *La Fraternité*, he started to get involved with the Ethnographical Society. This organization had been founded by the French ethnologist and linguist Léon de Rosny in 1859—the same year as the Anthropological Society. Although certainly not immune from the prejudices of its day, the Ethnographical Society was less concerned with definite racial hierarchies and more interested in attempting to understand non-European cultures on their own terms, looking at languages and customs more than physical bodies. From the beginning, its participants were relatively diverse. On its first membership role, printed in 1860, in additional to many French names were German, British, American and Eastern European scholars, as well as several Persian and Arabic members.[15] With its emphasis on culture rather than on physical and intellectual differences between human races, the Ethnographical Society was sometimes compelled to weigh in on popular notions of racial inequality. Partly in protest to these attitudes, in early 1894 the Society decided to appoint a Haitian to an important post in its organization.

Thus, on 21 May 1894, in the town hall of Paris's seventh arrondissement, Benito Sylvain was installed as the director of the Ethnographical Society's Oriental and African Committee. Léon de Rosny explicitly stated that the appointment was "to protest against the supposed scientific theory of the inferiority of certain human races," and went on to praise Sylvain for his "remarkable scientific and literary" accomplishments.[16] Sylvain then gave a speech, "many times interrupted by warm applause," in which he called for increased European immigration to Africa, as long as these immigrants do not "give themselves over to acts of

[15] Léon de Rosny, *Annuaire de la Sociéte d'ethnographie* (Paris: Challamel ainé, 1860), 16–28.
[16] D. Marceron, "Société d'ethnographie," *Journal official de la République française*, 30 May 1894, 2469.

cruelty toward their hosts."[17] Sylvain remained involved with the Society for at least five years. It gave him an indispensable and relatively objective source of information about Africa, and it became a platform for him to give accounts of his later travels to Ethiopia and for commenting on European colonialism.

In December 1894 he gave a lecture on racial mixing, denouncing the theory of polygenism, and proclaiming that there was no correlation between "métissage" and intellect.[18] In June 1895, he presided over a seminar in which a French explorer, gave a detailed account of his travels in the Congo region, describing the lives and customs of the local people.[19] In June 1896, he gave a public lecture in which he lamented the "wars and tragic events that were delaying Africa's evolution toward civilization."[20] In one of the last records of his activities in the Society, on 5 July 1899, Sylvain attended a seminar on the rights and responsibilities of colonial powers. The presenter, Monsieur Delaurier, declared that the whole earth belonged to all peoples, but that "in the places where natural riches are unexploited… the natives must not prevent their exploitation by more civilized and more capable peoples."[21] He added that the use of brutal force was unproductive, noting how Spain had recently lost its last remaining colonies. Sylvain then chimed in. He did not contradict Delaurier, sharing many of his ideas, but he clarified that the people of Africa should not be imagined simply as sources of tax revenue and corvée labour, but must be considered an indispensable factor in colonial prosperity. Sylvain concluded his remarks by praising France for having "started on this path of equity and political sagacity" with regard to colonial policy.

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[17] Ibid.
[18] D. Marceron, "Société d'ethnographie," *Journal officiel de la République française*, 21 December 1894, 6293.
[19] D. Marceron, "Société d'ethnographie," *Journal officiel de la République française*, 23 June 1895, 3476–3477.
[20] "Informations: Conférence," *Le Figaro*, 22 June 1896, 4.
[21] André Perez, "Société d'ethnographie," *Journal officiel de la République française*, 19 July 1899, 4875.

In addition to his qualified defense of colonialism in the Ethnographical Society, Sylvain was also involved in building connections between Paris's expatriate communities. In 1896, right around the time when *La Fraternité* was winding down its operations, Sylvain was looking for other ways to contribute to life in Paris and set his sights on the city's large and growing foreign student population. Initially, Sylvain's efforts were not exclusively geared toward Black Parisians. Along with a Russian friend named Victor Zelmans, he worked to establish a Foreign Students Association intended to "ease the transition of students arriving in Paris."[22] He was not thinking of Haitian or Black students in particular. In an interview about the Association, he said "imagine someone arriving from South America, Russia or the Orient to take courses… On descending from the train, he finds himself lost in the capital, alone, abandoned to himself, knowing very little French or where to find his compatriots."[23] Furthermore, he stressed that the Association was not exclusively for foreign students but was "open to any of our French comrades who would like to participate in this work of union and fraternity."[24] It was not long, however, before Sylvain began to focus his community-building work on Paris's Black residents.

By early 1898, Sylvain helped establish a Black Youth Organization, which consisted of Black Parisians (mainly students) from Haiti, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Liberia, Senegal, the Dominican Republic, Guiana and the United States.[25] Sylvain presided over the group's inaugural event: a banquet held on 7 February 1898 at the Hôtel des Sociétés Savantes. This event was conspicuous for its novelty; at least eleven Parisian newspapers reported on it.[26] One

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[22] Benito Sylvain quote in "Au quartier latin: Les étudiants étrangers à Paris," *La Presse*, 16 August 1896, 1.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Benito Sylvain, "Au quartier latin: Projet d'association des étudiants étrangers," *La Presse*, 19 August 1896, 1.
[25] "Les réunions d'hier: La jeunesse noire," *Le Rappel*, 8 February 1898, 3.
[26] Sinbad, "L'âme nègre," *Le Figaro*, 7 February 1898, 1; "A l'Hôtel des sociétés savantes: Un déjeuner," *La Presse*, 7 February 1898, 1; "Banquet de la Jeunesse nègre," *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, 7 February 1898, 4; "Les étudiants nègres," *Le Petit Parisien*, 7 February 1898, 1; "Banquet de la Jeunesse noire," *La Croix*, 8 February 1898, 3; "Chronique d'aujourd'hui," *Le Pays*, 8 February 1898, 3; "Les réunions d'hier: La jeunesse noire," *Le Rappel*, 8 February 1898, 3; "Les réunions d'hier: La jeunesse noire," *Le Temps*, 8 February 1898, 2–3;

noted that the "*colonie nègre*" in Paris had received little attention until recently, adding that although the participants were from different countries, they were united by the "contempt that is sometimes felt for the Black race by representatives of the race that has given itself the title of superior."[27] Estimates of the number of people in attendance varied from forty to sixty, and included Jean Hess—recently returned from West Africa—as a guest of honour. Sylvain gave a toast in honour of Hess, praising him for exposing abuses in the colonies and for encouraging Europeans to work in association with Africans for their mutual benefit. Sylvain's stirring conclusion was reprinted in the French press:

> You have been, my dear Hess, in the first rank of those whites who have demanded a bit of humanity for the Blacks. You have understood well that our soul was accessible to the highest sentiments of elevation and humanity. By using, gentlemen, your progress in science and in helping us to apply it, you will find in us powerful auxiliaries in your colonization.[28]

As the event concluded, the group vowed to hold subsequent banquets every semester for "representatives of the Black race living in Paris."[29] It is unclear if they followed through on this plan. Nevertheless, this event and the subsequent activities of the Black Youth Organization were undoubtedly a stepping stone that contributed to the development of an increasingly collaborative Black community in Paris, which eventually came to be an important centre of opposition to the colonial system. Again, Benito Sylvain was at the forefront of this transformation.

Despite Sylvain's efforts, a cohesive Black cosmopolitan community did not flourish in Paris until the interwar period. Much later, Léon Gontran-Damas, co-founder of the Négritude

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"Les réunions d'hier: La jeunesse noire," *Le XIXe siècle*, 8 February 1898, 3; "Echos," *La Justice*, 9 February 1898, 1; "Echos," *L'Etudiant*, 12 and 17 February 1898, 2.

[27] "Les réunions," *Le Rappel*, 8 February, 1898, 3.

[28] "Chronique d'aujourd'hui," *Le Pays*, 8 February 1898, 3.

[29] "A l'Hôtel des sociétés savantes: Un déjeuner," *La Presse*, 7 February 1898, 1.

movement, recalled that before the First World War "there was a distinct cleavage between the Antilleans, who were French citizens, and the Africans or the Indochinese, who belonged to the so-called new colonies."[30] Tyler Stovall notes that before the 1930s "blacks from different parts of the French Empire often held aloof from each other," and that by the interwar period there was a growing effort in Paris "to bring people from different cultures and parts of the world into a unified and coherent black community."[31] While this is generally true, it overlooks the community-building work of Sylvain and others in the 1890s and into the early twentieth century. Furthermore, while Stovall notes the Haitian doctor Léo Sajous's collaborations with the Nardal sisters, he largely overlooks the role that he and other Haitians played in the development of Paris's Black community. For the remainder of this chapter, I will consider the contributions of four Haitians whose time in Paris helped bring shape and meaning to the city's Black cosmopolitan community. As a result, Haitians ultimately contributed to an important centre of anti-colonialism which helped hasten the undoing of the French colonial empire.

The seminal figure in this entire process was the celebrated doctor and ethnographer Jean Price-Mars. No individual better encapsulates the transition from the nineteenth-century Haitian elites in Paris like Benito Sylvain and Louis-Joseph Janvier—who championed racial equality but nevertheless believed that French "civilization" was the key to Africa's progress—to the twentieth-century figures we will encounter below, who were far more critical of French colonialism and came to see African cultures as sophisticated and worthy of respect and preservation. Furthermore, perhaps no other Haitian had a more profound impact on one of the

[30] Léon-Gontran Damas, "Interview de Léon-Gontran Damas," interview by Marc-Vincent Howlett, *Présence Africaine* no. 187/188 (2013): 28.
[31] Stovall, *Paris Noir*, 106.

key philosophical currents that swayed African intellectuals in Paris—most notably future Senegalese president Léopold Sédar Senghor—away from the same type of blind acceptance of France and its culture. It is difficult to overstate the importance of Jean Price-Mars to the story that I am telling, the story of Haiti's impact on the later French colonial empire. Yet, for all his influence on Paris's Black community, of the four individuals I am focusing on here Price-Mars spent the least time in Paris, apparently hardly more than three scattered years.

Price-Mars was born in October 1876 in the northern Haitian commune of Grand-Rivière-du-Nord, a picturesque region with a fabled history. Over a century earlier it had seen the birth of the architect of Haitian independence, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, and in 1790 it had witnessed one of the key precursors to the Haitian Revolution—the failed Ogé-Chavannes revolt. Aware of this history, Price-Mars was fiercely patriotic from a young age.[32] This patriotism and commitment to Haitian sovereignty intensified in his teen years when rumours of U.S. annexations in Môle Saint-Nicolas flooded the news.[33] His childhood in a rural community, far removed from the political ferment of Port-au-Prince, also gave him insight into the country's pervasive peasant culture, including its Vodou religion and Kreyòl language, in a time when Haitian elites were attempting to paint Haiti as a "cultural province of France." In 1899, when the twenty-three-year-old Price-Mars arrived in Paris to attend medical school, he already had a resumé of engaged social commentary on behalf of Haiti's impoverished and maligned masses.[34]

Arriving in the Latin Quarter and settling into a dynamic community of Haitian and other international students, one wonders if Price-Mars's transition benefitted from Benito Sylvain's Black Youth Organization, which had been founded one year earlier. This first stay in Paris was

[32] Antoine, *Price-Mars*, 12.
[33] Ibid., 26.
[34] Ibid., 27–28.

brief—political developments in Port-au-Prince forced him to leave just one year later. But this stint in the French capital was formative for the young Price-Mars. Like countless other Haitians, Price-Mars arrived in Paris full of admiration for France and its culture.[35] While in town, however, one experience began to cast doubt on this unquestioning loyalty to French civilization. As his biographer tells us, his attention began to shift from medicine to the social sciences, and, "taking time out of Medical School, he went to study at the Museum of Natural History, the Trocadero Museum, the School of Anthropology" and "also attended lectures on the social sciences at the Sorbonne and Collège de France."[36] This intellectual wandering led him to read Gustave Le Bon's recent book *Les Lois Psychologiques de l'Évolution des Peuples*. Here, Price-Mars encountered a Frenchman expressing the theory of racial inequality in its cruellest terms, even using Haiti as an example, as in this passage:

> There is no example in ancient or modern history of a negro people having reached a certain level of civilisation; and on every occasion when a superior civilisation, by one of those accidents which in ancient times in Ethiopia, and in modern times in Haiti, has fallen into the hands of the negro race, this civilisation has speedily reverted to wretchedly inferior forms.[37]

Faced with such bald-faced racism at the very heart of French intellectual culture, Price-Mars apparently experienced something of an intellectual awakening. He later recalled that at that moment, he "rebelled against the unfairness and the insolence of such a judgement," and "vowed to join the glorious battle for the triumph of scientific truth."[38]

Price-Mars's time in Paris was possible because of a government scholarship which included a job at the Haitian Legation in the city. A diplomatic shuffle in 1900 forced him to relocate to Berlin. He was recalled to Haiti in 1902, but he broke up the return voyage by

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[35] Ibid., 30, 35.
[36] Ibid., 35.
[37] Gustave Le Bon, *The Psychology of Peoples* (New York: Macmillan, 1898), 104–105.
[38] Jean Price-Mars, quoted in Antoine, *Price-Mars*, 38.

spending an additional year in Paris from 1902 to 1903 during which he studied sociology and anthropology at the Sorbonne, the School of Political Science and the Collège de France.[39] After returning to Haiti, he was sent on a diplomatic mission to the United States, which gave him the opportunity to visit the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, observe the technological wonders (and human zoos) at the Saint Louis Exposition, and witness the generalized racism in the country. This further steeled his resolve to fight against Western racism and threats to Haitian autonomy. Now entering his thirties, he was already beginning to surpass Firmin, Sylvain and Janvier in his calls to reject racial hierarchies. Furthermore, he had begun toying with the notion that Haiti's peasant culture (and its African vestiges) may not be an obstacle to progress, but that perhaps it was the Haitian elites' obsession with French "civilization" and disparagement of their poorer compatriots that were the true impediments to authentic national development.[40]

Price-Mars returned to Paris, this time as Haitian Minister to France, in 1915. Haiti was in the midst of a political crisis, and soon after Price-Mars left the country, the U.S. marines arrived in Port-au-Prince and the nineteen-year occupation began. While some Haitian elites initially hoped this would be an opportunity for the country to get on the path of progress, Price-Mars was horrified by the affront to Haitian sovereignty. Again, Price-Mars was in Paris only briefly, but while he was there, he arranged a meeting with Gustave Le Bon. He directly confronted the man on his racist words against Haiti and the Black race. Le Bon was impressed by Price-Mars and admitted that some of his conclusions may have been overstated. Le Bon then challenged Price-Mars to write his own book about Haiti.[41] Price-Mars returned to Haiti in 1916 and threw himself into a scholarly analysis of the social problems that had provoked the

[39] Antoine, *Price-Mars*, 41.
[40] Ibid., 61–64.
[41] Ibid., 94.

occupation, writing and giving public lectures on the topic. He came to be convinced that Haiti's peasant culture was the true Haitian culture, and the necessary basis of an authentic future development, and that the elites' hypocrisy, their disavowal of Haiti's African cultural roots and their sycophantic attachment to French culture, were the true cause of Haiti's failure to thrive. In 1919 he compiled these thoughts in a book entitled *La Vocation de l'élite*.

Convinced of the value of Haiti's peasant culture, he embarked on a series of investigations of the peasant life and folklore. As well as he was able from secondary source reading, Price-Mars also worked to link Haitian customs to the cultural practices of various African groups. In particular, he led the charge in rehabilitating the image of the Vodou religion, which foreigners and elite Haitians continued to denigrate as a cannibalistic cult, but which was in fact an important cultural institution with historic links to religions still in practice in Africa. These activities put him at odds with members of the Haitian elite, many of whom were expressing a renewed commitment to French culture as a way of undermining the logic of a U.S. civilizing mission in Haiti.[42] This research eventually culminated with the publication of his most famous work, *Ainsi parla l'oncle*, published in France in 1928, in which he coined the enduring phrase "collective bovarysme" to refer to the Haitian elites' pathological delusion that they were French.

While the book was criticized in the Haitian press, it excited the younger generation.[43] Price-Mars's work helped inspire a new literary and intellectual movement in Haiti that came to be known as Indigenism. A generation of poets and scholars began to actively pursue and promote Haiti's peasant culture. Benito Sylvain's nephew Normil Sylvain founded *La Revue*

[42] See Matthew Robertshaw, "Occupying Creole: The Crisis of Language under the U.S. Occupation of Haiti," *The Journal of Haitian Studies* 24, no. 1 (2018): 11–12.
[43] Antoine, *Price-Mars*, 142–144.

indigène as a mouthpiece for the movement. But its reverberations went even further than that. Famously, within a few years, *Ainsi parla l'oncle* had made the rounds of Paris's Black community where it had a major impact on the intellectual development of young Black students including Aimé Césaire from Martinique, Léon-Gontran Damas of Guiana and the Senegalese Léopold Sédar Senghor. As Senghor later recalled,

> as a student at the Sorbonne I had begun to ponder the problem of a cultural renaissance in Black Africa… I drank *Ainsi parla l'oncle* at a breath as one drinks water from a cistern, in the evening, returning from a long trip in the desert. I was gratified to the full. The Uncle was supporting the reason for my search, approving what I had felt. For, as he showed me the wealth of Négritude he had discovered in Haitian soil, he taught me how to discover the same value, but virgin and stronger, on and in African soil.[44]

Along with Damas and Césaire, Senghor went on to articulate a philosophy they called *Négritude*, which adapted Price-Mars's understanding of the problems in Haiti to a global (or at least a French colonial) scale. Césaire, later famously described Haiti as "the place where Négritude stood up for the first time."[45] Their efforts, beginning in the 1930s, helped unite Black Parisians in a stance against French colonialism.

In the meantime, another current had begun to stir up anti-colonial sentiment among Paris's local and foreign communities. Marxist politics were not new to France. Price-Mars, during his first stint in Paris in 1900, had been fired up by the socialist Jean Jaurès's speeches defending the French working class against the exploitation of the capitalist bourgeoisie.[46] Jaurès and the far left had made limited gains in the first decades of the twentieth century, but after the Russian Revolution in 1917, communism was gaining traction through international connections emanating from Moscow. By 1920, there was a communist party in France, a radical movement

[44] Léopold Sédar Senghor, quoted in Antoine, *Price-Mars*, 144.
[45] Aimé Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1971), 67.
[46] Antoine, *Price-Mars*, 32–33.

that broke from the reformist left that Jaurès had worked to establish earlier in the century.[47] This new faction was far more antagonistic to the French colonial system. As noted, French communists staged a counter-exhibition to coincide with the 1931 Paris Colonial Exposition in order to expose abuses in the colonies. French communists in Paris also sought partnerships with foreigners and colonial subjects studying in the city's universities. Among these young militants were several Haitians, most notably Camille Saint-Jacques.

Camille Saint-Jacques, whom we encountered in the introduction, had grown up in comfort. As we have seen, his father was the wealthy Haitian businessman Sylla Laraque who had immigrated to France in 1885, purchased land in Brittany, the stately château at Monchy-Humières in Oise, as well as a vineyard in Tunisia (possibly becoming the second Haitian to travel to Africa).[48] In 1902, Laraque and a Martinican woman named Louise-Josephine-Camille Saint-Jacques produced an illegitimate son named Camille.[49] The young Saint-Jacques grew up in France and may also have spent some time in Tunisia.[50] He studied engineering in Paris and started getting involved in radical politics, joining the French Communist Party.

In 1920, the Second World Congress of the Communist International called for the active support of nationalist and socialist movements in the colonies, one speaker proclaiming that "the Communist International must be a beacon to light the way to the rebellious peoples in Asia and

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[47] Conklin, Fishman and Zaretsky, *France and its Empire*, 158.
[48] See chapter 10 for an overview of early Haitian visitors to Africa. Marc Bonnel "Le développement balnéaire de la Côte d'Émeraude dans la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle," in Association Bretonne and Union Régionaliste Bretonne, *Congrès: Histoire – Arts et Lettres – Économie – Langues bretonnes* vol. 127 (2018): 116–119; "Echo de l'Affaire Humbert," *Le Matin: dernières télégrammes de la nuit*, 6 July 1904, 5.
[49] "Nécrologie," *La Vérité*, 19 October 1902, 3; *Recueil périodique et critique de jurisprudence, de législation et de doctrine en matière civile, commerciale, criminelle, administrative et de droit publique* (Paris: Jurisprudence général Dalloz, 1939), 88.
[50] Michael Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 179.

Africa."[51] To this end the French Communist Party founded a Colonial Commission with various sub-commissions dealing with different colonial regions. It also helped established an organization known as the Intercolonial Union in order to coordinate the activities of "native" activists. The Union numbered some 200 members at its founding, and went on to include Lamine Senghor of Senegal, Louis Hunkanrin of Dahomey, Max Bloncourt of Guadeloupe, Abdelkader Hadj Ali of Algeria, Samuel Stéphany of Madagascar, and Nguyen Ai Quoc (later known as Ho Chi Minh) of Vietnam.[52] Camille Saint-Jacques, born in France but with a Haitian heritage, was uniquely placed to serve as a link between this international coterie and their French collaborators. He was appointed head of Propaganda for the Union and was also involved at the Colonial Commission.[53] Despite being a French citizen by birth, Saint-Jacques pushed for the members from the colonies to have a greater say in the Colonial Commission's administration, arguing that representatives of the various nationalist movements had a better understanding of their distinct colonial contexts.[54]

Yet Saint-Jacques was not interested in independence at all costs. An awareness of Haiti's history—with its civil wars, foreign interventions and kleptocratic political culture—had perhaps convinced him that independence did not automatically solve a country's problems. Thus, he insisted that support for independence movements must be strategic in order to promote social revolution alongside political revolution. This was evident in the case of the Rif War. In 1921 the Berber leader Abd el-Krim proclaimed the independence of the Rif Republic in northern Morocco and launched a guerrilla campaign against the Spanish protectorate. France

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[51] "Minutes of the Second Congress of the Communist International, Fourth Session July 25," *Marxists Internet Archive*, https://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/2nd-congress/ch04.htm, Accessed 16 August 2024.
[52] Brent Hayes Edwards, "The Shadow of Shadows," *positions* 11, no.1 (2013), 18.
[53] Philippe Dewitte, *Les Mouvements nègres en France* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1985), 107.
[54] Goebel, *Anti-Imperial*, 195–196.

came to the aid of the Spanish forces, while French communists considered lending support to Abd el-Krim. Saint-Jacques opposed this suggestion. In 1926, he published an article on the "Rifian problem" in the French Communist newspaper *Cahiers du bolchévisme*.[55] He characterized Abd el-Krim as a "feudal leader" who had "betrayed his people" and "fought for his own personal fortune." Despite this, Saint-Jacques said, French communists "celebrated the person of Abd el-Krim as an apostle." He accused French communist leaders of separating "the national emancipation movement from the social emancipation movement," and, in turn, of undermining the progress that worker and peasant movements had made in the nearby French colonies of Tunisia and Algeria. In the end, he urged the French Communist Party to develop a more sophisticated colonial policy.

Although he was a committed communist and tended to think in terms of class rather than race, Saint-Jacques soon gravitated toward groups dedicated to Black and African interests. Despite Saint-Jacques's efforts to save it, diverging interests in the Intercolonial Union began to pull it apart.[56] He then got involved with Lamine Senghor's Comité de Défense de la Race Nègre, a militant anti-imperial organization separate from the Communist Party that was focused on liberation in Africa and its diaspora. The two men travelled to Brussels in February of 1927 to attend the League Against Imperialism Conference where they served on the Committee on the Negro Question.[57] Here, as the scholar Anne Garland Mahler recently demonstrated, they contributed to an accelerating Black international activism.[58] In 1927, the same year that Lamine Senghor died (ironically from the lingering medical effects from serving in the French army in

[55] Camille Saint-Jacques, "Sur le problème rifain," *Cahiers du bolchévisme*, 30 June 1926, 1421–1423.
[56] Dewitte, *Mouvements*, 113.
[57] Anne Garland Mahler, "Against Latin American Regionalisms: The 1927 Brussels Congress and the Anti-Imperialist League of the Americas," *Latin American Research Review* 59 (2024): 355.
[58] Mahler, "Against Latin American Regionalisms," 358–359.

the First World War), the Comité fragmented. The more radical faction became the Ligue de Défense de la Race Nègre, while the moderates formed the Comité de Défense de la Race Noire.[59] Like most of his Antillean peers, Saint-Jacques seems to have landed among the more moderate faction.[60] Perhaps exasperated by ongoing police surveillance, Saint-Jacques seems to have drifted away from his earlier radicalism by the mid-1930s to follow up on his education and pursue a career as an engineer, even patenting a metallurgical oven in 1936.[61] But there is no doubt that he was a key figure in the interplay between international Marxism and Black consciousness in interwar Paris, as well as an important link between Haiti and these processes.

Although most of the Caribbean members of the original Comité ended up with Saint-Jacques in the more moderate Comité de Défense de la Race Noire, at least two Haitians were counted among the more militant Ligue de Défense de la Race Nègre. These were Ludovic Lacombe and Léo Sajous. Although they both participated in the activities of the new radical Ligue (and its successor organization the Union des Travailleurs Nègres) they had different underlying motivations. While Lacombe pressed for independence at all costs, Sajous was more interested in building up cooperation among Black Parisians and between Africa and its Diaspora more generally. Taken together, Lacombe and Sajous illuminate the trials and trajectories of Black internationalist and anti-imperialist currents as they began to coalesce in Paris in the 1930s.

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[59] The subtle shift from "Nègre" to "Noir" in the group's name has been analyzed in Jennifer Anne Boittin, "Black in France: The Language and Politics of Race in the Late Third Republic," *French Politics, Culture & Society* 27, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 23–46.

[60] Along with the moderate Black Antilleans René Maran and Max Bloncourt, Saint-Jacque had helped launch the short-lived journal *Le Courrier des noirs* in December of 1927. Toc, "Le 'Courrier des Noirs'," *L'Ere Nouvelle*, 28 December 1927, 3.

[61] "Une Invention intéressante dans l'industrie mettalurgique," *Le Phare de la Loire, de Bretagne et de Vendée*, 2 January 1936, 3; Felix Jean-Louis III, "Between Harlem and Paris: Haitian Internationalism in the Interwar Period," PhD diss., (Florida International University, 2020), 179–180.

Much of Ludovice Lacombe's early life is obscure, but he seems to have been born in Port-au-Prince around 1904.[62] It is unclear why he emigrated to Paris by the late 1920s, but his outspoken criticism of the U.S. occupation may have been a factor. In Paris, he began working as a journalist and associating with communist and Pan-Africanist organizations. His own anti-imperialism was fuelled by his commitment to Haiti's historic independence. Although he had Marxist credentials, he called himself a nationalist first and foremost. As such, he supported the conservative and authoritarian Haitian president Sténio Vincent who led the push for U.S. withdrawal from Haiti between 1930 and 1934.[63] The principles underlying his Haitian nationalism led him to promote Black liberation elsewhere in the world. Unlike Saint-Jacques, for Lacombe independence was everything. He contributed to a growing number of Black Parisian periodicals—especially the Ligue's organ *Le Race Nègre* and later the Guadeloupean Jules Alcandre's paper *Europe-Colonies*—consistently speaking about Haiti as a way of speaking about colonialism and Black self-determination more generally.

Lacombe played a radicalizing role in the Ligue, pressuring his colleagues to target colonialism, not capitalism, as the root of all evil. In 1929, for example, shortly after the Comité's schism, he demanded that all of the members of the new Ligue who were not anti-imperialist should resign. The group's militant leader, the French Soudanese teacher Tiemoko Garan Kouyaté, had to reel in Lacombe's enthusiasm, clarifying that the Ligue welcomed members with diverse views.[64] Later, anxious to keep the emphasis on decolonization, Lacombe criticized the Ligue for being too explicitly communist, saying this was deterring potential

[62] Emile Saint-Lôt, born in Port-au-Prince in 1904, later referred to him as a childhood friend. Emile Saint-Lôt, "Une lettre d'Emile Saint-Lôt à Lorimer Denis," *Le Nouvelliste*, 16 May 1952, 1,4.
[63] Ludovic Morin-Lacombe, "Le gouvernement haïtien et la désoccupation immédiate américaine," *Europe-Colonies*, 25 December 1934, 3; Dewitte, *Mouvements*, 341-342; Goebel, *Anti-Imperial*, 270–271.
[64] Jean-Louis, "Between Harlem and Paris," 231.

members who might otherwise join the fight against colonialism.[65] This belligerence—coupled with growing and legitimate fears of police surveillance—helped provoke yet another split within the Ligue in 1931, with Kouyaté and Lacombe on one side and Léo Sajous falling among the more moderate Emile Faure and André Beton from the old colonies of Senegal and Guadeloupe respectively. While Lacombe exacerbated the rupture, Sajous hoped to mend it, even offering to be an intermediary between the two sides.[66]

This effort to repair the damage in the Ligue reflects Léo Sajous's passion for Black cooperation. Sajous is widely recognized as a key contributor to growth of a Pan-African consciousness in interwar Paris because of his collaboration with the Martinican Paulette Nardal on the groundbreaking journal *Revue du monde noir*. Numerous works dealing with Pan-Africanism in Paris in the 1930s note Sajous in this context. His life and other activities, however, are less well known.[67] Born in 1892 in Gonaïves in Northern Haiti, he was a generation older than Saint-Jacques and Lacombe, which might help account for his relative moderation. He came to Paris in 1915 for medical studies and later married a French woman.[68] In 1921, still a

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[65] Boittin, "Black in France," 27. In this meeting, Lacombe famously stated that he was a "nationalist, but anti-communist *nègre* who wanted no master, white or red." While some authors have used this quote to cast doubt on Lacombe's Marxism, Felix Jean-Louis III points out that Lacombe's use of the term "anti-communist" is not convincing, as he remained active among communist circles for many years after making the statement. Jean-Louis also suggests that the paranoia associated with ongoing police surveillance likely led Lacombe to cloak his communism. Jean-Louis, "Between Harlem and Paris," 252–253.

[66] Jean-Louis, "Between Harlem and Paris," 248.

[67] Sajous is often referred to as a dentist, and one scholar describes him giving "free dental check-ups to African and Antillean laborers in the city at his clinic." Brent Hayes Edwards, "Abcedarium," *Callalloo* 24, no. 2 (Spring 2001): 606. He is also referred to as a dentist in Dewitte, *Mouvements*, 196, 302, 321; Stovall, *Paris Noir*, 107; Goebel, *Anti-Imperial*, 81, 276. This notion seems to be drawn from police reports from the 1930s when Black activists were under ongoing surveillance. In the contemporary French and Haitian press, however, he was consistently referred to as a medical doctor. Of course, he may have been a doctor who dabbled in dentistry, but there are several reasons why it seems unlikely that he was exclusively a dentist. He seems to have studied at Paris's Faculté de Médicine, not the École dentaire. After practicing for several years in Paris in the 1920s and 1930s, he went on to oversee the National Health Service in Liberia. And by 1947 he was advertising himself as a doctor of skin and blood diseases, gynecology and general medicine in Port-au-Prince. Léo Sajous, advertisement, *Le Nouvelliste*, 18 July 1947, 3. "L'Association pour le développement des relations médicales," *Conjonction*, January 1946, 59.

[68] Jean-Louis, "Between Harlem and Paris," 232.

medical student, he attended the Second Pan-African Congress in Paris.[69] Like Saint-Jacques and Lacombe, he was intimately involved with the string of Black organizations that succeeded one another in Paris in the 1920s and early 1930s. Around 1925 he was involved with the original Ligue Universelle de Défense de la Race Noire until its leader, the Dahomeyan Kojo Touvalou Houénou was arrested.[70] He was with Lamine Senghor at the successor organization, the Comité de Défense de la Race Nègre, until Senghor's death.[71] As we have seen, he was then part of Kouyaté's more militant Ligue de Défense de la Race Nègre. In the latter organization, Sajous held a leadership role, facilitating meetings and even serving as president of the Paris chapter.[72] In this context, like Ludovic Lacombe, he drew connections between the U.S. occupation of Haiti and European colonialism in Africa, for example in a speech he gave on the topic at a Ligue meeting in December 1929.[73] But the fractious atmosphere at the militant Ligue seems to have pushed him to look for additional endeavours.

As a practicing doctor, Sajous's disposition was to heal rather than to destroy. Although he was clearly an anti-imperialist and had connections to communists, he was more interested in improving people's lives directly than in overthrowing the system. His sincere interest in the lot of all people of African descent led him to provide free or discounted medical services to Black labourers in Paris.[74] This arrangement kindled a desire to systematize broader supports for Black Parisians. As Benito Sylvain had in the 1890s, Sajous worked to establish a new organization specifically to assist Black students in the city. He envisioned the Institut Nègre de Paris as a mutual aid society that would expand education for Black people and connect newcomers with

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[69] Ibid., 148–149.
[70] J. Ayo Langley, "Pan-Africanism in Paris, 1924–36," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 7, no. 1 (April 1969), 80.
[71] Langley, "Pan-Africanism," 84; Jean-Louis, "Between Harlem and Paris," 200.
[72] Jean-Louis, "Between Harlem and Paris," 222, 230, 232, 235.
[73] Ibid., 258.
[74] Damas, "Interview," 27; Jean-Louis, "Between Harlem and Paris," 232.

social services. It was intentionally framed as apolitical, accepting requests from people of African descent from anywhere in the world regardless of their political orientation. Sajous formed a committee and put out an international call for donations.[75] According to legal requirements, he registered the Institut with the local police prefect. But by this point Sajous had been affiliated with known communists for several years and was personally under police surveillance. His application was denied, and the Institut Nègre was stillborn.[76]

Frustrated by this setback, Sajous soon resigned from the Ligue and took comfort in the company of a flourishing literary salon organized by the Nardal sisters of Martinique. Paulette Nardal, who was an active journalist in Paris, opened her Left Bank apartment for the Sunday evening gatherings starting in 1929. In addition to Sajous and the Nardals, the popular salon welcomed such notables as Léopold Sédar Senghor, Léon-Gontran Damas, Aimé Césaire, René Maran, Felix Éboué, Etienne Léro, René Ménil, and Jean Price-Mars, as well as Black American luminaries including Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, Claude McKay and Alain Locke.[77] Discussions touched on politics, poetry, music, and Black culture in all its forms. The meetings also led to a publication that is recognized as a touchstone in the history of a global Black consciousness. Paulette Nardal is rightly credited with being the force behind *Revue du Monde Noir*, but Léo Sajous also played a central role in its conception and execution.[78] He encouraged Nardal to launch the paper and contributed articles and administrative support. The bilingual monthly review produced only six issues between 1931 and 1932, but it and the salon that had

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[75] Comité Universelle de l'Institute Nègre de Paris, "Appel international," in François Coty, *Sauvons nos colonies* (Paris: Grasset, 1931): 166–168.
[76] Dewitte, *Mouvements*, 196; Jean-Louis, "Between Harlem and Paris," 236–240; Langley, "Pan-Africanism," 88; Hayes Edwards, "Abcedarium," 607.
[77] Robert P. Smith, "Rereading 'Banjo': Claude McKay and the French Connection," *CLA Journal* 30, no. 1 (September 1986): 49.
[78] See Annette K. Joseph-Gabriel, "Paulette Nardal: Martinican Women as Political Protagonists in the Overseas Department," in *Reimagining Liberation: How Black Women Transformed Citizenship in the French Empire* (Urbana; Chicago: Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2020), 57–81.

birthed it played an important role in building links between Paris's Black communities, including Americas, Antilleans, Africans and Haitians.

Despite quitting the Ligue in an attempt to distance himself from allegations of communism, Sajous remained involved in similar groups where he continued to work toward Black solidarity, including the Union des Travailleurs Nègres (which he helped establish) and the Comité d'Études Nègres.[79] But he began to sense that if he wanted to make a real positive impact for Black people, the best place to do it was in Africa itself. By 1934—the same year that the U.S. occupation of Haiti ended, and the country proclaimed its "second independence"—Sajous left Paris for Liberia. He remained there for over a decade, attempting to bring positive change and protect the sovereignty of one of the few independent Black states.[80] After two decades in Paris, he was remembered as a leading figure of the bourgeoning Black cosmopolitan scene at the heart of the French colonial empire. His contributions undoubtedly advanced the cause of Black solidarity and a growing dissatisfaction with the European colonial system. In the end, along with Saint-Jacques, Lacombe, Price-Mars and many others, Sajous embodied Haiti's ongoing commitment to Black liberation around the world.

[79] Jean-Louis, "Between Harlem and Paris," 233–234, 264.
[80] See chapter 10.

Conclusion:
Paris, December 1933

There is one final Haitian in Paris whose interactions with the city's Black community are worth noting. We will learn more about Auguste Nemours and his work at the League of Nations in the next section, but I would be remiss to overlook an encounter between Nemours and another Black intellectual that took place in Paris in late 1933 and reverberated beyond France and its colonies. Nemours had been in the city since 1926, serving as Haiti's Minister Plenipotentiary to Paris and delegate to the League of Nations, and spending his leisure time working on a military history of the Haitian Revolution. His *Histoire militaire de la guerre d'indépendance de Saint-Domingue* had been published in Paris in two volumes in 1925 and 1928. In late 1933, a young Black Trinidadian came to Paris to do archival research for his own history of the Haitian Revolution. On learning of Nemours's work and the fact that he happened to be in Paris, the thirty-two-year-old Trinidadian sought out the fifty-year-old Haitian, and Nemours took the younger man under his wing. The two met multiple times to discuss the revolution, Nemours reenacting its military campaigns "using books and coffee cups on a large table."[1] Armed with these insights, over the next five years the young scholar—whose name was C. L. R. James—produced his celebrated history of the Haitian Revolution, *The Black Jacobins*.

[1] C. L. R. James quoted in Christian Høgsbjerg, "Globalizing the Haitian Revolution in Black Paris: C. L. R. James, Metropolitan Anti-Imperialism in Interwar France and the Writing of *The Black Jacobins*," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 40, no. 3 (2020): 498.

James's book was an instant classic in the English-speaking world. It revolutionized the historiography of Haiti and the Caribbean, attributing Black people with unprecedented agency and challenging the narrative that global abolition was the result of British philanthropy. It popularized Haiti's anti-colonial example in Britain and its colonies in the decades leading up to decolonization in Africa and the Caribbean. Its early readers included future African leaders like Kwame Nkrumah and Jomo Kenyatta, as well as antiapartheid dissidents in South Africa.[2] When the surrealist Pierre Naville published a French translation in Paris in 1949, it met more limited success—perhaps because this account of war-torn France facing a revolution in a Black colony hit too close to home. Still, it had a significant impact on certain French readers, notably the Black Martinican Frantz Fanon who fought for Algeria's independence and whose own writings became seminal texts in the global push for decolonization.[3] Thus, although Auguste Nemours was himself a committed Francophile (as we will see in the next chapter), through his influence on C. L. R. James he had an important if indirect impact on the ultimate disintegration of the French colonial empire.

The story of Haiti had drawn James to Paris. The colony that had become the first Black Republic represented a crack in the foundation of the French colonial system. As more and more Haitians made their way to Paris, that crack became increasingly evident. Their very presence in the city revealed the weaknesses and historic failures of French colonialism. Gradually, Haitians grew bolder in their efforts to exploit these weaknesses. Louis-Joseph Janvier and Anténor Firmin targeted the scientific fallacies that justified European domination, while personally holding on to a belief in the civilizing value of French culture. Benito Sylvain, likewise, engaged

[2] Charles Forsdick and Christian Høgsbjerg, "Introduction: Rethinking the Black Jacobins," in *The Black Jacobins Reader*, Charles Forsdick and Christian Høgsbjerg, eds. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 16, 20, 23.
[3] Ibid., 22.

with a scholarly society, but he also spearheaded early attempts to build bridges between Paris's Black communities. A possible beneficiary of Sylvain's student organizing was the young Jean-Price Mars, whose later philosophical work prompted a major shift in elite Haitian attitudes toward French and African cultures and also impacted a generation of thinkers in both Paris and Africa. As Paris's Black community grew increasingly unified against colonialism in the interwar period, Haitians like Camille Saint-Jacques, Ludovic Lacombe were right in the middle of it, drawing on their national story in their attempts to radicalize the movement. Their compatriot Léo Sajous, meanwhile, played an important role in seeking the Black transnational solidarity necessary to build up the pressure that would ultimately spell the end of the empire.

But Paris also helped provide an opening for Haitians to contribute to these processes in another way. As the twentieth century's world wars generated unprecedented attempts to build forums for international collaboration in the face of global problems, Paris took on new significance as a centre for some of these development. As we will see in part 4, while their compatriots were participating in intellectual societies, literary salons and radical political organization in Paris, Auguste Nemours and several other Haitians managed to leverage their country's rare distinction as an independent Black state as an access pass to these new institutions. Here, in these emerging international organizations, they were able to speak on behalf of the world's oppressed Black people. At the League of Nations and, in particular, at the United Nations, Haitian delegates eventually played a direct role in the historic dismantling of the French colonial empire.

Part 4

A Longing for Haiti II: Haitians on the Global Stage

"Nous rappelant ces trônes que nous pensions solidement établis et dont les débris jonchent aujourd'hui le sol de toute l'Europe, craignons—si notre pusillanimité nous empêche de jouer le rôle que notre conscience nous fait un devoir sacré de remplir—grands ou petits, puissants ou faibles, proches ou lointains, blanc ou gens de couleur, craignons, un jour d'être l'Éthiopie de quelqu'un."

Auguste Nemours, 1935

"The famous Bevin-Sforza plot… aimed at dividing our country and leaving it under colonial domination. And if that attempt failed here in the United Nations it was by only one vote; there was no two thirds majority. That vote was cast by a country very dear to us, a country linked to Africa by blood ties. It was Haiti's vote which saved Libya's destiny."

Mansour Rashid El-Kikhia, 1970

Introduction
La Cluse-et-Mijoux, 26 August 1927

If, on Friday 26 August 1927 at ten o'clock the morning, you had escaped the pouring rain by slipping into the Church of Saint-Pierre in the tiny village of La Cluse-et-Mijoux in eastern France, you could have attended a singular funeral.[1] There was no body, no casket at all on the catafalque that was draped in red and blue, and no one present had known the dearly departed personally. In fact, the person in question had died over 120 years earlier. If the death had taken place a long time ago, it had happened a short distance away—just 500 metres to the west in the famous Fort de Joux, which still cast its long shadow over the tiny village and its church. Though the people in attendance did not know the deceased personally, many of them felt a connection to him. They had grown up in a village where the Fort dominated the skyline, and they had heard the stories of its famous prisoner. One man in the room felt a connection for a completely different reason. The deceased was a symbol of his homeland, of Haiti, despite the fact that he had never technically been there; when he left it had still been called Saint-Domingue. The funeral was, in fact, in honour of none other than Toussaint Louverture.

[1] This slightly dramatized account is based on the images included in Alfred Nemours, *Histoire de la captivité et de la mort de Toussaint-Louverture* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1929) as well as the following newspaper articles: "Au Pied du Fort de Joux," *Journal de Pontarlier*, 27 August 1927, 2; "Toussaint Louverture," *Le Pontissalien*, 3 September 1927, 1-2; "Au Pied du Fort de Joux: Une belle cérémonie," *Journal de Pontarlier*, 3 September 1927, 2; "À la Mémoire de Toussaint-Louverture," *Le Courrier de la Montagne*, 3 September 1927, 1. Biographies of Ordinaire and Girod are from Jean Jolly, ed. *Dictionnaire des parliamentaires français, 1889–1940*, vol. 7 and 8 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1973) excerpted on the Assemblée Nationale website. Paraphrased quotes are indicated with single quotation marks.

The event had been organized by Haiti's minister plenipotentiary to France, Alfred Auguste Nemours. He and his French wife, Charlotte, sat in the front pew as the local curate, Abbé Dubail, said the mass. In addition to a group of villagers from the larger commune of Pontarlier, just north of La Cluse-et-Mijoux, many local notables were in attendance. The department's representatives to the French parliament, Deputy Girod and Senator Ordinaire, were present, as was the sub-prefect, Monsieur Denizet. Colonel Rivoire and Commandant Sauvin were there as representatives of the Ministers of War and Foreign Affairs. The mayor, Monsieur Jeannerod was in attendance along with his municipal council. Also present were representatives of public service departments—the inspector of forests and the inspector of customs—and delegates from the local chapters of various organizations: Veterans of the Franco-Prussian War and the Great War, the Disabled Veterans Association, the Souvenir Français, and the Dames de France. In short, there was hardly an empty seat in the sanctuary.

The solemn ceremony concluded. The organist played a funeral hymn as the congregation shuffled out into the rain. Some dispersed, but most crossed the dappled cemetery and entered the Town Hall for a reception organized by the Haitian diplomat. Once they had taken their seats, Nemours stood and thanked the participants for showing their support. He gave a brief speech outlining his country's affinity for France.

'Our two republics,' he said, 'are sisters. Uniquely in the whole of the New World, Haitians have preserved the French language and traditions. Many Haitians are honoured to think of France as their second homeland. We have French names; we speak French; Messieurs, we are French!'

Those in attendance cheered enthusiastically at these pronouncements.

Nemours proposed a toast to the prosperity and the grandeur of France.

Next, Maurice Ordinaire stood to say a few words. The sixty-five-year-old senator had worked in the Ministry of Colonies in various capacities and had a particular interest in North Africa. He had penned newspaper articles and government reports on the *mission civilisatrice* and had once written that "France struck the first blow against the inhumane practice of slavery and even sacrificed, in the name of a principle, the richest of her overseas possessions."[2] Now, seeing a Black man from that same former colony express his admiration for France, Ordinaire was profoundly moved, and he said so.

Still, he was a politician and had to consider the optics. He was aware of the complexity of the relationship between the two countries, a complexity that Toussaint Louverture's death symbolized dramatically.

'I admit,' he said, stroking his thick white moustache, 'I do not know all the details of Louverture's life and death. But I remember hearing that his lamentable end was due to a grave error on the part of our government. After having served France, Toussaint Louverture turned against us as a result of this error. Thus, Saint-Domingue was lost. Nevertheless, the former colony conserves the use of our language and a fidelity to the French cause.'

He then turned to address Nemours directly:

'Tell them, Monsieur Minister, tell them in Haiti how many people attended this ceremony, which was both a glorification and a reparation. The people here are the great grandchildren of those who saw that unhappy general walking sadly along the icy ramparts of Fort-de-Joux. Tell them that the survivors of the wars of 1870 and 1914 gathered to celebrate the memory of a brave soldier who, it is true, crossed swords with France, but whose bravery raises him to the ranks of our heroes. Tell them, finally, Monsieur Minister, that we are grateful to your

[2] Maurice Ordinaire, "Croisade & Conquete," *La République française*, 18 December 1888, 1.

compatriots for the attachment that they feel for their former mother country, and we offer our best wishes for Haiti's happiness and liberty.'

He raised a glass, saying, 'to Monsieur Nemours and to every country that is devoted to our great homeland.'

The senator took his seat. His colleague from the Lower House rose to follow. Adolphe Girod was ten years younger than Ordinaire. He had a smaller moustache—his was black and upturned—but a larger build than the lean Ordinaire. While Ordinaire was a career bureaucrat and hobby journalist, Girod was both a newspaper editor and a former soldier who had been an air commander in the Great War. Now, as a member of the National Assembly in Paris, he worked to improve the military, and, like many on the political left, was generally more interested in issues in continental France than in the colonial empire. He nevertheless would later go on to serve as General Paymaster of Martinique.

Here, however, his focus was on France.

In his speech, he explained why he felt it necessary to attend this momentous ceremony.

'We are, Monsieur Minister, profoundly patriotic. We never miss an opportunity to piously keep the eternal flame that rises from the tomb of our dead, of those whose sacrifice saved the homeland in times of loss and suffering. You, Monsieur Nemours, celebrate yours today: it is fitting that you do not do so alone and that a common tribute is raised to those who are no more.

'When you were named Minister to France, one of your first acts was to visit the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. You placed a bouquet of flowers on the monument on behalf of your country. It was our duty to thank you for that gesture. So, Monsieur Minister, here we are!'

Like Ordinaire, Girod made sure to weigh in on the complicated legacy of Toussaint Louverture and his relationship with France. After musing on the uncertainties and nuances inherent in the historical record, he arrived at his point:

'If Toussaint Louverture died here in our presence, it was perhaps because of the despair that his love for France was not faithfully understood. No matter. The essential for us is that he loved our country and he tried to serve it. That is why, Monsieur Minister, we have gathered with you in this reminiscence.'

To conclude, Girod turned his attention back to Nemours himself.

'There is one final reason why it is appropriate that we celebrate with you today. You represent Haiti, but you are clearly one of our own. I can think of nothing more moving than the article you wrote on the survival of French in Haiti. You are clearly one of those men about whom it can be said: All men have two countries, their own and France.'

Finally, he proposed a toast to Madame Nemours, who was, after all, 'a beautiful French flower,' that Nemours had 'picked from among the perfumed gardens of our land.'

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Alfred Auguste Nemours wore many hats. Like Louverture, he was a general; he had trained at the École Militaire de Saint-Cyr in Paris, the same institution where Hubert Lyautey (earlier) and Charles de Gaulle (later) received their educations. In the course of his life, Nemours was also a diplomat, a historian, a senator, and, perhaps most famously, a representative to the League of Nations. He lived in Paris for many years, and he had a complicated relationship with Haiti's former colonizer. He was intimately aware of the inhumanity that the French had doled out on

his ancestors in the colonial and revolutionary periods. But, like many of his compatriots, he felt a cultural attachment to France, as is clear from the above vignette. He spoke French, read French literature, and was interested in France's domestic and international activities. During the First World War, he had even made an impassioned plea for Haiti to support France and its Allies. Many times, he expressed an admiration for the country, which he considered the only Western country where racial equality was in evidence.

Still, by virtue of his nationality, Nemours was incapable of accepting the myths of French civilization without qualification. He was among the first historians to begin the necessary revision of the received accounts of the Haitian Revolution, publishing a groundbreaking history of the event in France in 1925. He was gregarious and opinionated, and frequented the salons for which Paris had been famous since the Enlightenment. Here, he encountered Black intellectuals from around the world and deepened their understanding of his country's significant role in the history of Black liberation. Famously, as we saw at the end of the last section, he met the Trinidadian Marxist C. L. R. James in the 1930s, fuelling the latter's desire and capacity to write his own groundbreaking account of the Haitian Revolution. Finally, Nemours was appointed as Haiti's representative to the League of Nations, where, in that age of appeasement, he was a rare voice opposing Italy's invasion of Ethiopia, and, by extension the underlying logic of colonialism. Despite his attachment to France, he was a critic of aggressive European colonialism whether it concerned Bonaparte's France or Mussolini's Italy.

Nemours's life highlights the complex assortment of ideas that he and his compatriots brought to the table at the League of Nations and its successor, the United Nations. As we will see, their active participation at these international institutions gave Haiti a voice in the highest levels of diplomatic discourses and pushed the boundaries of what was possible for Black people

and small states on the global Stage. At the same time, the attachment that elite Haitians felt for France in particular and Western notions of civilization in general meant that, initially, their activism could only go so far. Like Nemours, they tended to hold both a belief in racial equality alongside a belief in a cultural hierarchy, conceiving the peoples of Africa as backward while at the same time working to put an end to colonial abuses and advocating for forms of Black self-determination. While they worked to make a place for themselves at the table, they levelled a rare challenge against the norms of European imperialism in the first half of the twentieth century and participated directly in processes of decolonization in the second.

The people of Haiti have always been conscious of their country's distinct history and its symbolic role at the head of global currents toward decolonization, racial equality and the abolition of slavery. From the beginning, the Haitian government was quick to acknowledge the independence of new countries. Alexandre Pétion famously hosted Simón Bolívar as he was on the cusp of leading Spain's South American colonies to independence, and Jean-Pierre Boyer made Haiti the first country to recognize Greek independence in 1821.[3] Haitians weighed in on the abolition of slavery in other parts of the Americas and offered land in their country for resettlement schemes.[4] But this diplomacy was almost always bilateral. Haiti was rarely included in the intergovernmental conferences that were becoming more and more common in the nineteenth century. Of course, there were no Haitian representatives at the Congress of Vienna (1815) when the country was still unrecognized. Things, however, did not change when France

[3] Alexandre Pétion and Simón Bolívar, "An Exchange of Letters," in *The Haiti Reader*, edited by Laurent Dubois, Kaiama L. Glover, Nadève Ménard, Millery Pollyné and Chantalle F. Verna (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2020), 33–35. E. G. Sideris and A. A. Konsta, "A Letter from Jean-Pierre Boyer to Greek Revolutionaries," *Journal of Haitian Studies* 11, no. 1 (2005): 167–171.
[4] Mark J. Fleszar, "'My Laborers in Haiti are not Slaves,': Proslavery Fictions and a Black Colonization Experiment on the Northern Coast, 1835–1846," *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 2, no. 4 (December 2012): 478–510.

and then other countries began acknowledging Haitian independence after 1825. There was no Haitian representative at the Congress of Panama (1826), the Paris Monetary Conferences (1867, 1878 and 1881), the Berlin Conference (1884–85) or the First Hague Conference (1889). Neither was it a founding member of the early international organizations; the International Telegraph Union—famous as the oldest active global international organization—was founded in 1865, but Haiti did not join until 1927.

There were at least three noteworthy exceptions to this trend. First, as noted in chapter 6, the Haitian jurist Jean-Baptiste Symphor Linstant de Pradine attended the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1840 and is depicted in Benjamin Robert Haydon's famous painting of the event. Second, Louis-Joseph Janvier attended the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works in 1886, contributing much to the discussions and making Haiti one of the original nine signatories to the resulting treaty dealing with international copyright law.[5] And third, the Haitian diplomat Hannibal Price was present at the First International Conference of American States in 1889–1890.

But it was not until the start of the twentieth century that Haiti began to take a more active role international gatherings and organizations. Since it was one of just three independent Black self-governed nations during the first half of the twentieth century (albeit under a U.S. occupation from 1915 to 1934), the country was able to play a pioneering role in the emerging landscape of modern internationalism. In the early years of the century, the country mainly played an important role in special interest groups and gatherings such as the Pan-African congresses. At the more general international gatherings, like the Paris Peace Conference, Haiti was largely marginalized. Over the course of the century, however, Haitian diplomats began to

[5] Brandon Byrd and Chelsea Stieber, "Introduction," in Louis-Joseph Janvier, *Haiti for the Haitians*, edited by Brandon Byrd and Chelsea Stieber (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2023), 22n53.

take on a larger role as the currents favouring universal human rights and decolonization began to attribute greater value to Haiti's distinct history. In chapter 9, we will consider the contributions of individual Haitians to three famous intergovernmental contexts in the first half of the twentieth century: the Pan-African congresses, the Paris Peace Talks and the League of Nations. We will continue this story chapter 10, when we consider the role that Haitians played in the decolonization of Africa under the auspices of the United Nations.

- 8 –
Making Room at the Table

In 1900, Haiti started to play a more active role on the international scene. Once again, it was Benito Sylvain who led the way. In the early 1890s Sylvain had already started showing up at international conferences including the Anti-Slavery conferences in Brussels and Paris.[1] By 1895, he had begun to think of the possibility of organizing a large international gathering that would put the stubborn idea of racial inequality to rest. His idea was to bring the brightest European scholars and philanthropists together with "the most authoritative spokesmen of the slandered race," during the 1900 Paris Exposition.[2] Here, he explained in a letter to Anténor Firmin, "all the arguments, old and new, which our detractors invoke for the support of their odious ethnological hierarchization… will be subjected to the close scrutiny of scientific discussion for the complete edification of the whole world."[3] Firmin, Haiti's most celebrated critic of the notion of racial inequality, called Sylvain's idea "an absolutely new and very beautiful one," adding that "thus the twentieth century would open by shedding some light on a problem whose solution ought to influence powerfully the course of politics and philosophy."[4] In the intervening years, however, personal and professional complications prevented Sylvain from pursuing the idea.

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[1] Benito Sylvain, "Déliberations du Congrès antiesclavagiste: Première Séance, Lundi 22 septembre," *La Fraternité*, 24 September 1890, 2. Benito Sylvain, "The Pan-African Association," in Tony Martin, *The Pan-African Connection* (Dover, MA: Majority Press, 1984), 206.
[2] Sylvain, *Pan-African*, 204.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Anténor Firmin, quoted in Martin, *Pan-African*, 204.

In 1898, a chance encounter breathed new life into the project. On his return from his first voyage to Ethiopia, Sylvain met Booker T. Washington who connected him to Henry Sylvester Williams, a Trinidadian law student in London. Williams was independently working toward a similar goal; he intended to set up a conference of Black thinkers focusing on the conditions of Black people in the British Empire. Sylvain convinced him to expand the focus to include all Black people living under European and American domination.[5] Sylvain modified his plans as well. As he later explained "instead of a meeting of Caucasian scholars, among whom some of the most eminent members of the Black race would be seated, we were now going to have a meeting of delegates of African origin, among whom there would be European scholars, philanthropists and politicians."[6] Sylvain enthusiastically began to promote the event in Paris.

The Pan-African Conference took place in London's Westminster Town Hall from 23 to 25 July 1900. Benito Sylvain attended as a representative of both Haiti and Ethiopia (the latter owing to his recent voyages to the court of Emperor Menelik). Also in attendance were a large contingent from the United States including W. E. B. Du Bois, several African and Caribbean delegates, and representatives from Ireland, Scotland and Canada, who were "all of African origin." Some "English and American philanthropists and publicists," were also present.[7] Despite Sylvain's efforts to expand the focus, it was overwhelmingly an Anglo-American affair. Still, as one of the three independent Black nations, Haiti was given symbolic pride of place among the deliberations along with Ethiopia and Liberia.

Sylvain reports the event's outcomes as the following: First, a Pan-African Association was formed, "to centralize and control the activities of all organizations" dedicated to "the

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[5] Marika Sherwood, *Origins of Pan-Africanism: Henry Sylvester Williams, Africa, and the African Diaspora* (New York & London: Routledge, 2011), 70.
[6] Sylvain, *Pan-African*, 205
[7] Ibid.

protection and education of peoples of African origin." Second, the participants agreed that a Pan-African Congress should be organized every two years. Third, they decided that the Pan-African Congress of 1902 was to be held in the United States, and that of 1904, in Haiti "in order to add lustre to the celebration of Haiti's on hundredth anniversary as an independent nation." Fourth, a manifesto was to be drawn up, appealing to the "political wisdom and humanity of Christian nations." It was to be delivered to Queen Victoria, to protest "the cruel treatment inflicted upon the indigenous people of the South African colonies." And finally, they declared that the heads of state of the three independent Black nations, Emperor Menelik of Ethiopia and the presidents of Haiti and Liberia should be named Grand Protectors of the Pan-African Association, "in order to direct their attention to the urgent necessity of consolidating and harmonizing their diplomatic efforts, with a view of reacting against the policy of extermination and degradation which prevails in Europe in regard to Black and coloured people."[8] This final proposition, although it did not have any immediate impacts, anticipated the role that Haiti would learn play as a Black nation on the internationalist scene.

The 1900 Pan-African Conference was, by today's standards, quite conservative; the overall tone was paternalistic, emphasizing the benefits of European civilization for colonial peoples. Nevertheless, the event was an important step in the building of international Black cooperation, and a passionate challenge to the abuses perpetrated against Black people in Africa and in the Americas. Although the conference organizers hoped to continue meeting every two years, it was nineteen years before an official Pan-African congress took place. In the meantime, Haitian delegates began to show up more and more frequently at international gatherings. There was a Haitian delegation at the Second Hague Conference in 1907, and Haiti's former president

[8] Sylvain, *Pan-African*, 206–207.

François D. Légitime was present at the First Universal Races Conference in London in 1911.[9] But, as with so many other developments, the real turning point came with the First World War, or, more precisely in the peace deliberations that followed.

In some ways, the Paris Peace Conference of 1919–1920 was the event that set the stage for rest of the twentieth century. The participants latched on to the opportunity to make something new out of the rubble left by the First World War. They drew new borders in Europe and attempted to curb the future strength of the Central Powers. While popularizing the idea of national self-determination, they simultaneously frustrated nationalist expectations around the world by reaffirming the role of Europe in the existing colonies in Africa and elsewhere. Germany's colonies in Africa and the Pacific were transferred to the oversight of Allied nations as Mandate Territories. With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Middle East, too, was parcelled up between European powers. Finally, the first significant global intergovernmental organization, the League of Nations, came into existence as an important but ultimately ineffectual forum for international peace-keeping diplomacy. In short, the Paris peace talks overhauled the international system, and set the stage for two decades of delicate peace that left many unhappy.

This was an event of truly global interest, but there was only so much room at the table. It was the Allied Powers who set the terms of the Treaty of Versailles and the other products of the peace talks, but that did not mean all of the allies were equally welcome to contribute. As many as thirty-two nations were invited to send delegations. Haiti had declared war on Germany on 12 July 1918 after German submarines torpedoed a French steamer with eight Haitians on board.[10]

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[9] William I. Hull, *The Two Hague Conferences* (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1908), 276; Robert John Holton, "Cosmopolitanism or cosmopolitanisms? The Universal Races Congress of 1911," *Global Networks* 2, no. 2 (2002): 158.

[10] "Haiti Declares War Against Germany," *New York Times*, 16 July 1918, 5.

Never having engaged in combat, the Peace Conference organizers defined Haiti as a "small theoretical belligerent power" along with Liberia, Cuba and the Central American republics, and it received an invitation to send a single plenipotentiary.[11] But ultimate decision-making power fell to the "Big Three" (sometimes "Big Four")—U.S. president Woodrow Wilson, British and French prime ministers David Lloyd George and Georges Clemenceau, and (initially) Italy's prime minister Vittorio Orlando. Most major decisions took place in smaller gatherings of this Council of Four. The plenary session met only fourteen times between January and November of 1919, while the smaller group met this many times in January alone and continued to meet regularly for the rest of the year.[12]

Among Woodrow Wilson's guiding principles for deliberations, his Fourteen Points, he called for "a free, open-minded, an absolutely impartial adjustment of *all colonial claims*, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty, the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined."[13] In spite of this, no colonial representatives were consulted, and the European powers resorted to secret deals to confirm and update the colonial landscape. Wilson, for his part, did not go very far to challenge the imperial status quo. He opposed the outright annexation of the former German colonies, suggesting instead that the new League of Nations administer them directly.[14] The other victors, however, had their eyes on the German colonies; in the end, a compromise resulted in the former colonies being converted to

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[11] U.S. Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1919, Volume I, The Paris Peace Conference, 1919*, (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 2018). Doc. 346, David Hunter Miller and James Brown Scott, "The Technical Advisers to the Commission to Negotiate Peace (Miller, Scott) to the Secretary of State."
[12] Margaret MacMillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2003), 53; U.S. Department of State, *Papers Relating*, vol. III.
[13] Woodrow Wilson, "President Wilson's Message to Congress," January 8, 1918, Records of the United States Senate, Record Group 46, Records of the United States Senate, National Archives. Italics added.
[14] MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, 98–106.

League of Nations Mandates under the administration of various Allied nations, mainly Britain and France, but also Belgium, Portugal, the British dominions of South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, as well as Japan. In theory the League would temper the Mandatory Powers' rule, but in practice they simply submitted annual reports and dealt with the Mandates as de facto colonies. France, for its, part, acquired most of Togo and Cameroon (as well as Syria and Lebanon), and its colonial empire thus reached its largest extent.

Wilson's soft approach to the European empires gave him leverage to pursue his main objective: the League of Nations. He envisioned the organization as a forum in which open diplomacy and, when necessary, coordinated pressure would prevent future wars. The League's founding Covenant stipulated that its members must "respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all Members of the League."[15] But this put Wilson in something of an awkward position, considering his own country's recurrent interventions in Latin American countries—the U.S. foreign policy stance known as the Monroe Doctrine. In particular, he knew that the U.S. Congress would never ratify a treaty that committed the United States to an intergovernmental organization that forbid foreign intervention, as this would jeopardize their growing command of the Western Hemisphere. Aware of this, Wilson worked to convince the other representatives that the Monroe Doctrine existed to keep peace in Latin America, and was, in this regard, a model for the League of Nations. Despite objections and comments from the delegates from France, Panama and Honduras, in the end Wilson successfully added a clause to the Covenant specifically allowing the Monroe Doctrine to remain in effect.[16]

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[15] League of Nations, "The Covenant of the League of Nations," Art. X.
[16] MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, 95–97; League of Nations, "Covenant," Art. XXI.

Haiti, of course, had a vested interest in the idea of self-determination—because of its past, but also because of its present. In 1919, Haiti was four years into its occupation by the United States, so the question surrounding the Monroe Doctrine had immediate relevance in the country. Haiti's president Sudré Dartiguenave tapped the current Haitian Minister to France, Tertulien Guilbaud, to attend the Conference as the country's delegate.[17] Guilbaud was a seventy-year-old poet and career diplomat whose poetry Anténor Firmin had once praised as an example of Black excellence.[18] He was also a popular figure in Haiti for having rejected the presidency when it had been offered to him under the occupation.[19]

Although President Dartiguenave owed his position to the occupiers, he wanted to take advantage of the Paris Conference to inform President Wilson and Secretary of State Robert Lansing about the abuses that their Marines were perpetrating in Haiti. The Haitian government instructed Guilbaud to leverage Wilson's widely publicized support for national self-determination and press for the "abolition in Haiti of the regime of martial law and provost courts instituted since the American occupation."[20] Guilbaud was told to speak to Wilson privately, not in the sessions of the Peace Conference, believing this would ensure the best results. After being rebuffed from a direct audience with either Wilson or Lansing, however, Guilbaud contacted them via a memorandum and informed them of the widespread abuse and discontent in Haiti.[21] Briefly, it seemed like it might work. Within weeks, the American mission in Paris dispatched a message to the State Department in Washington calling for the withdrawal of the Marines. The occupation leadership in Port-au-Prince, however, responded that the

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[17] Guilbaud's first name sometimes appears as 'Tertullien.'
[18] Firmin, *De l'égalité*, 450–453.
[19] Dantès Bellegarde, *Histoire du peuple haïtien, 1492–1952* (Port-au-Prince: n. pub., 1953), 254.
[20] Constantin Benoit, quoted in Dantès Bellegarde, *La République d'Haïti et les Etats-Unis devant la justice internationale* (Paris: Librairie de Paris-Livre, 1924), 13; Hans Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti, 1915–1934* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 115.
[21] Bellegarde, *Histoire*, 276.

ongoing guerilla resistance in the country necessitated the continued military presence. Within eight days of their original cable, Secretary of State Lansing admitted that "it would appear impossible to make any change in status quo in Haiti at present."[22] The Marines stayed in the country for another fifteen years. Tertulien Guilbaud, meanwhile, resumed his role as a side-lined delegate at the Paris Conference.

There was one other time at the Peace Conference when Guilbaud tried unsuccessfully to weigh in on an issue that was particularly important to his country: racial equality. As discussions on the establishment of the League of Nations progressed, the Japanese delegation made it known that they hoped to add a statement on racial equality to the preamble of the League Covenant. Although their country was a rising power on the world stage, Japanese nationals frequently experienced humiliation and discrimination in their interactions with the West. They saw the creation of the League as an opportunity for redress. In private meetings, they made this intention clear. The proposal met stiff opposition from the United States (where Wilson feared it would alienate Members of Congress and prevent ratification), and from the British dominions, particularly Australia.[23] The racial equality clause had support from delegates from China, Italy, Greece, Czechoslovakia and France, and the Commission on the League of Nations even voted in favour of the statement. President Wilson, however, pronounced that since there were strong objection to the clause, it could not be approved.[24]

Tertulien Guilbaud did not have much of an opportunity to express his opinion on the racial equality clause one way or the other. At a meeting on 27 January, the delegates voted for five countries to join the Commission on the League of Nations in addition to the United States,

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[22] Lansing, quoted in Schmidt, *Occupation*, 116.
[23] MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, 319.
[24] Ibid., 320.

the British Empire, France, Italy and Japan. Guilbaud stood for Haiti to be elected, but he did not receive enough votes.[25] In fact, of the eleven nominated countries, five were elected (Belgium, Brazil, China, Portugal and Serbia) and the Commission later requested that four of the others be added to the group (Czechoslovakia, Greece, Poland and Rumania).[26] Only Haiti and Ecuador were excluded. In correspondence to the Haitian Foreign Minister in February and April, Tertulien Guilbaud explained that he attempted to show support for the racial equality clause in plenary sessions, but that, under pressure from the United States, he was forced to reject the proposal.[27] In the end, the League of Nations Covenant made no mention of racial equality. According to the historian Margaret MacMillan, this had serious repercussions in the long term; in her words, Japan's failure to secure the racial equality clause "was an important factor in the interwar years in turning Japan away from cooperation with the West toward more aggressively nationalistic policies."[28] Additionally, when the Western powers tried to compensate Japan by affirming their claim to China's Shantung province, the ruling directly provoked the May Fourth Movement in China and eroded that country's relations with the West as well.[29]

In short, Tertulien Guilbaud's attempts to affect the course of the Paris Peace Conference were completely unsuccessful. He tried and failed to secure a better deal for Haiti. He tried and failed to weigh in on the racial equality clause—something dear to him and his compatriots. Nevertheless, he was there. Haiti was one of only a handful of countries represented at the Conference. Guilbaud signed the Treaty of Versailles and the Covenant of the League of

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[25] U.S. Department of State, *Papers Relating*, vol. III "Document 17. Minutes of the Meeting Held by the Representatives of Powers With Special Interests."
[26] Ibid., "Annex I. Report of the Commission of the League of Nations."
[27] Brenda Gayle Plummer, "Garveyism in Haiti During the U.S. Occupation," *Journal of Haitian Studies* 21, no. 2 (Fall 2015): 69.
[28] MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, 321.
[29] Ibid., 338–339.

Nations, ensuring that Haiti would continue to play a role in international diplomacy going forward.

There was, in fact, another Haitian who arrived in Paris in 1919 hoping to address the Peace Conference on behalf of his country and of Black people in general. Although they were both from Port-de-Paix, Eliézer Cadet was a very different person than Tertulien Guilbaud. He was young, just twenty-three years old, and had no experience in international diplomacy. He had travelled from Haiti to the United States during the war to pursue an education in mechanics. He worked for a time in a munitions factory in West Virginia and spent weekends in Brooklyn where he encountered the growing movement centred around Marcus Garvey. Garvey's newspaper *Negro World* published an article that Chenet had written criticizing the U.S. occupation of Haiti. By December 1918, Cadet was attending meetings of Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association.[30]

The UNIA hoped to send a spokesperson to Paris in 1919. The First Pan-African Congress had been organized in Paris from 19 to 21 February in order to coincide with the peace talks, and Garvey hoped to have an impact on the proceedings of both events. He was critical of the organizers of the Pan-African Congress, in particular W. E. B. Du Bois, who he believed was too soft on colonialism. While pushing for improved conditions in Africa, the Congress did not object to European domination or the emerging League of Nations' Mandate system. Garvey wanted them to go further. The UNIA's slogan was "Africa for the Africans," by which they meant that Africa should promptly be given its independence, but that Blacks from the Americas and from among the Westernized African elites should take charge of the continent and its

[30] Robert A. Hill, ed., *The Marcus Garvey and UNIA Papers, Volume XI, The Caribbean Diaspora, 1910–1920* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 120n1.

development. He believed that German colonies, in particular, should immediately be transferred to Black control.

In weeks leading up to the Paris conferences, the UNIA elected two delegates and chose Eliézer Cadet as their interpreter and secretary. In a letter to a friend back home in Haiti, Cadet expressed his naïve dream that he would soon be sent to Africa "to the administration of the German colonies which are to be returned to the blacks."[31] The U.S. State Department, however, soon put a ban on issuing visas for Black Americans hoping to attend the Pan-African Congress, apparently on the advice of the French government, which did "not consider it a favourable time to hold such a congress."[32] Fortunately, Eliézer Cadet was able to travel to France on his Haitian passport, so Garvey sent the young man as "High Commissioner" of the UNIA.

Despite the hopes of its organizers, the impact of the Pan-African Congress on the Peace Conference was negligible. They passed resolutions calling for medical care and education for Africans, for the abolition of slavery and forced labour, and generally for the League of Nations to guarantee the rights and proper treatment of Black people around the world.[33] W. E. B. Dubois delivered these resolutions to the American delegate Edward House, who received the Black statesman with courtesy, but did nothing to implement the resolutions.[34] Cadet arrived in Paris as the Pan-African Congress was wrapping up, so he was likely unable to influence these outcomes one way or the other. He did manage to speak to Liberia's president-elect Charles D. B. King, who attended both the Pan-African Congress and Peace Conference as his country's delegate. Here, too, Cadet made little impact. According to an American report, Cadet gave King copies of

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[31] "U.S. Postal Censorship Report," in Hill, *Marcus Garvey Papers*, 119.
[32] "Ban on Negro Congress," *The New York Times*, 2 February 1919, 4.
[33] Pan-African Conference. "Resolutions votées par le Congrès Pan-Africain, ca. February 21, 1919." *W. E. B. Du Bois Papers* (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.
[34] MacMillan, *Paris 1919*, 105.

Garvey's newspaper and "endeavored to arouse him in some sort of movement."[35] King replied that "if the American Negroes were so thoroughly dissatisfied with social and political conditions, why did they not go to Liberia."[36]

Cadet remained in Paris for some time after the Pan-African Congress, supporting himself by working as a mechanic and hoping to impact the ongoing peace talks.[37] He certainly never addressed the Peace Conference directly, though it is unclear if he ever spoke to any of the representatives (besides Liberia's president) in smaller gatherings. The Jamaican historian Robert A. Hill, editor of the *Marcus Garvey and UNIA Papers* collection, notes that on 9 March 1919 Cadet delivered "the UNIA's "Peace Aims" to the president and secretary of the Paris Peace Conference [i.e. Georges Clemenceau and his secretary Paul Dutasta], with the request they be published."[38] Du Bois's biographer David Levering Lewis, on the other hand, claims that Garvey's "emissaries were summarily rejected, their letters and petitions ignored," adding that Cadet was on a "fool's errand" and that he did not possess "even the fiction of importance extended to Du Bois by Clemenceau, Diagne, Colonel House, George Beer, Walter Lippmann, and the international press."[39] Whether or not he spoke directly with Clemenceau, he almost certainly had no impact on the peace negotiations or on the changes to the European empires in Africa.

On the other hand, Cadet's voyage to Paris was not entirely fruitless. If nothing else, it served to inspire his compatriots with the idea that they could take part in international deliberations and once again participate in making history. According to an article in the 9 March

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[35] H. F. Worley and C. G. Contee, "The Worley Report on the Pan-African Congress of 1919," *Journal of Negro History* 55, no. 2 (April 1970): 141.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Hill, *Marcus Garvey Papers*, 120n1.
[38] Ibid., *cxxxiii*.
[39] David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: A Biography* (New York: Holt, 2009), 420–421.

issue of the Haitian newspaper *L'Essor*, Cadet was well received by the French press, and "delivered an address to French and English people" in which he presented Garvey's bold demands in favour of African self-determination.[40] Among these demands, he ordered that "the right of self-determination will be applied to Africans and to every European colony where the African race predominates," and insisted on "the return to the natives of Germany's African colonies, which will be administered by Negroes educated in Eastern and Western countries."[41] The article praised Cadet, exclaiming that "it is to the glory of Haiti that one of its sons has been chosen to bring the Race's condolences to the highest council of peace."[42] Again, on 16 May, the same newspaper printed an editorial reaffirming its support for Cadet and responding to some criticism that had been circulating against him. The author referred to him hyperbolically as "the high commissioner of the blacks at the peace conference," and said that his name is "on everyone's lips." He went on, "Mr. Cadet is considered by some too *young* for this delicate mission." The author contested this idea. Instead, he blamed such derision by his fellow Haitians on "our habitual levity" and "proverbial egotism," adding "everyone would like to be in Mr. Cadet's place."[43]

Finally, the editor reproduced an article from *Negro World* that amplified the praise and surely boosted Cadet's reputation in Haiti. It gave the impression that he had had the opportunity to speak in front of the gathered nations, saying "upon his arrival in Paris, he presented the aims of the race to the conference. He was well received." After outlining the UNIA's opposition to Du Bois, the article concluded with some final words of esteem for Cadet and his mission:

> It is thus that a Haitian represents in France the highest interest of the entire Negro race and of the American fraction in particular. Mr. Cadet did not have to flee from this

[40] "Article in *L'Essor Quotidien*," in Hill, *Marcus Garvey Papers*, 191.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] "Editorial in *L'Essor Quotidien*," in Hill, *Marcus Garvey Papers*, 207–208. Italics in original.

> excessive honour; he has left; he is working. The ideas he advances in the Parisian milieu will not be lost; nothing is lost. So let us, over here, be decent; it is not for us, at this time, to denigrate the Cadet mission. The mission is noble; let us hope that it is redemptory.[44]

Thus, Cadet blazed a trail that later Haitians would follow. While neither he nor Tertulien Guilbaud affected the course of the peace talks, their impacts back home differed. Guilbaud caused relatively little fanfare, while Cadet captured the imagination of his compatriots. He must have made many in Haiti think about what role their country could play in the field of internationalism that was emerging after World War One. He was remembered for it. Half a century later, one could read in a Haitian newspaper, a letter addressed to Cadet that read (inaccurately but rousingly): "you were a delegate at the international Paris Peace Congress as High Commissioner for the Black Movement for Emancipation."[45]

By showing up Paris—uninvited, scrappy and idealistic—Eliézer Cadet stimulated conversations about Haiti's role in international diplomacy among his compatriots. More practically, by signing the Treaty of Versailles, Tertulien Guilbaud symbolically committed Haiti to membership in the League of Nations. This was confirmed in July 1920 when the Haitian legislature did what the U.S. Congress failed to do, ratifying the Treaty and thereby formally joining the League. Interestingly, this shows that the Haitian government was not entirely subordinated to the will of the United States during the occupation. To an extent, the country was able to plot its own course in the field of international diplomacy. The same could be said of Cuba, Nicaragua and Panama, which were all very much dominated by the United States in this period, but which all opted to join the League at its inception. Like Guilbaud at the Paris Peace Conference, the representatives of these young republics surely hoped to use their new platforms at the League to critique

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[44] Ibid., 208.
[45] Gerson Alexis, "Billet à Eliézer Cadet," *Le Nouvelliste*, 12 July 1979, 2.

colonialism, whether in the form European imperialism in the Old World or the Monroe Doctrine in the New.

Haiti's delegation to First Assembly of the League of Nations consisted of Tertulien Guilbaud, Auguste Bonamy, who was the head of Haiti's Supreme Court, and a civil engineer named Frédéric Doret. From the start, Haiti's representatives worked to make a place for themselves at the League. Almost immediately, they began to position themselves against the status quo of European colonialism, if only moderately so. Like many small powers, Haiti's role was more rhetorical than practical. Haiti's delegates were rarely able to make an impact on the course of events, and the country was in no position to contribute financially or militarily to the League's international activities. One of the first matters of business, for example, was on the question of the Soviet conquest of Armenia in 1920. In a December telegram, the Haitian government indicated that it could not support an intervention in Armenia materially, but it hoped "with all its heart that one or more Members of the League should undertake this humanitarian task."[46]

Frédéric Doret, in particular, took a vocal stance in 1920 but had little impact. The fifty-four-year-old engineer was buoyant with the idealism that Woodrow Wilson had inspired at the Peace Conference. As far as he was able—which was not very far—he pushed the League to exert real influence on global developments toward peace and human dignity. Appointed to the Sixth Commission on the Reduction of Arms, Economic Weapons and Mandates, Doret submitted a proposal that might have changed the course of history. It called for the establishment of

> a special and permanent organization tasked with studying and implementing methods of bringing about what we might call the disarmament of minds, by a constant propaganda

[46] Barau, "Telegram from the Haitian Government," 3 December 1920, in *League of Nations Official Journal*, (November–December 1920), 95. United Nations Archive at Geneva, reference code: OJ-8-1920_BI.

> in all countries of the League, and particularly in the schools of those countries, in view of popularizing the peaceful principles advocated by the League, and decreasing subjects of dissent between men and between peoples.[47]

When the Commission met to discuss the proposal on 11 December 1920, Doret had some support. But the delegate from Great Britain, H. A. L. Fisher, argued that the League did not have the resources for such an undertaking. The delegate representing South Africa, the English aristocrat Lord Robert Cecil, concurred. He stressed the impracticability of the plan, explaining that "most of the histories and a great part of the poetry of the world would have to be rewritten, or at any rate, explained away before much could be done in that direction."[48] Both Cecil and Fisher argued that it should be left to independent organization in each nation to promote peace and disarmament; Fisher "hoped that M. Doret would not insist."[49] Doret withdrew his proposal, and the League continued to abandon its initial idealism, slowly turning into the weak and ineffectual organization that ultimately failed to prevent another World War.

Amid discussions on disarmament, the Sixth Commission did not spend much time talking about the Mandates. When the plenary session met one week later on 18 December, Doret took the opportunity to present a proposal regarding the Mandates. He was specifically speaking about the former German colonies, now administered by Allied powers on behalf of the League of Nations, but his comments were undoubtedly interpreted as a larger commentary on European colonialism:

> There are, I know, many good Colonial Administrators who pay the utmost attention to the welfare of the natives; but there are also some frankly bad ones, and although they belong to countries possessed by wide and generous ideas, yet they exploit the territory of which they are put in charge as though it were a feudal domain and they maintain the worst ideas of the Middle Ages in that territory, ideas which are a shame to civilisation…

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[47] "Procès-verbal de la troisième séance de la commission No 6," 1. United Nations Archive at Geneva, reference code: R1364-26-85438543.
[48] "Assembly Commission No. 6, Seventh Meeting, 11th December 1920," 4. United Nations Archive at Geneva, reference code: R1364-26-85438543.
[49] Ibid.

> They do this because they know that they are far from central control. Now I ask the League of nations to exercise this central control.[50]

He then proposed an amendment to an article of the League Covenant. The Covenant decreed that each Mandatory power should send an annual report to the League detailing developments in the Mandate Territory. Doret proposed that, in addition, it should stipulate that each Mandatory Power should send an annual control mission, ideally made up of Members of Parliament, to the Mandate Territories, where they should "hold an enquiry among the natives upon the administration of the Mandatory Power and its Report shall be communicated to the Council of the League of Nations." This, he said, would help convince "the natives of these territories that, thanks to our decision, they have at Geneva, the capital of Christian charity, guardian angels who are watching over them."[51]

Again, support was mixed. Again, for the second time in a week, the British delegates derailed Doret's plan. And again, Lord Robert Cecil, was the most vocal opponent. He distorted Doret's proposal, saying:

> There was the speech of the Delegate from Haiti in which he recommended that we should make it part of the Report that Parliamentary Committees should be encouraged to visit Mandated Territories. I am afraid that I could not give the slightest countenance to any such suggestion… If the League of Nations attempts to become a kind of super-State administering Mandated territories it will certainly make a great mess of the operation and do harm and not good to the people that it is trying to serve.[52]

Léon Bourgeois, the French representative, assured Doret that the Mandatory powers could be trusted to act responsibly, saying, "I am sure that it is the desire of all of us that those peoples who do not yet possess full capacity for self-government should, by careful administration, be

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[50] "First Assembly of the League of Nations, Geneva 1920, Provisional Verbatim Record, 30th Plenary Meeting (Salle de Reformation), Saturday 18th Dec. 1920 at 10 a.m.," 5. United Nations Archive at Geneva, reference code: A-PLENARY-PROV-1920_BI.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid., 10.

raised to a state of civilisation in which they are capable of exercising their powers for themselves."[53]

As the session was coming to a close, Cecil addressed Doret directly, saying, "may I venture to ask my honourable colleague from Haiti not to press the Amendment? I am sure he will see it is impossible for us to accept it, and none of the Mandatory Powers could accept it, therefore I ask him to withdraw it."[54] Doret, apparently dejected, consented, saying:

> Gentlemen, I think there has been some misapprehension as to my intentions. It was not my intention to exalt the League of Nations to a sort of super-State, but that the powers should be left entirely in charge of the States of which they were the Mandatories. I only thought that their reports should be forwarded. It is only after the assurances given by Mr. Bourgeois as to the interests which France would take in the territories which she administered that I withdraw the amendment.[55]

Thus, Haiti made its true debut on the largest stage of international diplomacy by trying, and failing, to build accountability into the system of European colonialism. Doret had not targeted the colonial empires directly, but he had submitted a critique of the abuses of colonialism into the record, reinforcing the role that Haiti was taking for itself in on the global stage.

Throughout the optimistic 1920s, the League of Nations worked to build itself into an influential and legitimate institution. In 1921, Dartiguenave's government in Haiti appointed a new Minister to Paris, who, *ex officio*, became Haiti's representative at the Second Assembly of the League of Nations. Dantès Bellegarde turned out to be the major Haitian figure on the international stage during the 1920s. He was perhaps the Haitian who had the biggest impact on the League and on the fledgeling field of international cooperation in this period. Bellegarde was a lawyer and a liberal political figure in Haiti. At forty-four years old, he had previously served as Director of

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[53] Ibid.,11.
[54] Ibid., 12.
[55] Ibid.

Public Instruction, head of Haiti's National Bank, secretary to President Oreste during his short presidency of 1913 to 1914, and he was a member of Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague. He was a critic of the U.S. occupation of Haiti, and President Dartiguenave must have hoped that, once again, this new international forum could be used to critique the situation in Haiti. Bellegarde, however, had a larger view of the role could play in Geneva on behalf of his own country and on behalf of Africa.

Bellegarde's interest in Africa was fuelled by his association with the Pan-African movement. In the same period that the League of Nations was finding its footing, the Pan-African movement was also gaining steam in the wake of its first Congress in 1919. The Second Pan-African Congress took place in three European cities—London, Brussels and Paris—in the late summer of 1921. Once again, the scheduling was strategic; the dates chosen were in the week leading up to the League of Nations' Second Assembly. Bellegarde attended the Paris dates. Here, he presented a speech and spent time rubbing shoulders with the likes of W. E. B Du Bois, Rayford Logan, Blaise Diagne, Candace Gratien and many others.[56] The Congress produced a Manifesto to be delivered to the League of Nations in their upcoming session. Like in 1919, it was quite modest in its aims. It demanded three specific things: 1. that the League of Nations and International Bureau of Labour would set up a section to "deal particularly and in detail with the conditions and needs of native Negro labor especially in Africa," 2; that a Black person, "properly fitted in character and training," be appointed to the Permanent Mandates Commission; and 3. for "civilized people of Negro descent" to be treated as equals in all contexts.[57]

[56] Jessie Fauset, "Impressions of the Second Pan-African Congress," *Crisis*, November 1921, 15–16.
[57] Pan-African Congress, "Manifesto to the League of Nations," *Crisis*, November 1921, 18.

When the Congress concluded, Bellegarde made his way to Geneva to take part in the Second Assembly of the League of Nations, which ran from 5 September to 5 October 1921. Du Bois and the other American officials of the Pan-African Congress also made the trip, hoping to present the Manifesto to the League. Du Bois's name and reputation opened doors, and he managed to have meetings with numerous delegates and officials at the League. Du Bois presented the Manifesto to these notables and received some encouragement that the appointment of a Black member to the Permanent Mandates Commission seemed like a worthwhile idea.[58] As an American, Du Bois could not participate in the Assembly directly, so he tasked Dantès Bellegarde with addressing the League on behalf of the Pan-African Congress.

On 23 September, in the Assembly's discussion on Mandates, Bellegarde presented the suggestion that a Black man should be appointed to the Permanent Mandates Commission. Speaking with great tact and diplomacy, he did not miss the opportunity to issue a challenge for the colonial powers, saying, "colonies used to be regarded, let us say, in the past, as a source of revenue, to be exploited chiefly for the profit of the mother-county," but that "it is now understood that… it is the duty and honour of the more advanced peoples to bring these populations, which are still stumbling in the darkness of ignorance and moral misery, to the light of intelligent and conscious thought."[59] He went on to cautiously broach his main point, saying,

> A congress of the coloured races met lately in London, in Paris and in Brussels; it passed a recommendation, and it is this recommendation that I wish to submit to you; the purport of this recommendation is that the Commission entrusted with the study of the reports of the various Mandatory Powers *should number among its members one of their race* who, by education, merit and experience, possesses the requisite qualifications to sit on the said Commission.[60]

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[58] Fauset, "Impressions," 16–17.
[59] "Seventh Plenary Meeting, Friday, September 23rd, 1921, at 10 a.m." 355. United Nations Archive at Geneva, reference code: A-PLENARY-MINUTES-1921_BI.
[60] Ibid., 356. Italics added.

He went on to clarify his meaning, “lest you misunderstand me,” explaining that the Mandates Commission considered the results of the administrations by the Mandatory Powers from the perspective of the administrations, but, he asked, “should it not also consider the question from the point of view of the natives who are governed?” Apparently, Bellegarde believed that by virtue of his skin colour, this hypothetical Commission member would be perfectly able to understand the perspectives of the diverse populations of the Mandate Territories.

There is good reason to believe that Bellegarde had himself in mind for this role. It is clear that Bellegarde was sincerely interested in improving the lives of millions of people in Africa and beyond. He must have sensed the high calling that this opportunity might present. The Permanent Mandates Commission ostensibly oversaw the administration of the former German colonies in Africa and in the Pacific. Although in practice, it was the Mandatory Powers that dealt with day-to-day administration in the Mandates, Bellegarde and the Pan-African Congress clearly believed that the Commission had the potential to exert influence and improve conditions for the people of Cameroon, Togo, South-West Africa and elsewhere. In its current composition, however, the Commission was made up of Europeans (apart from its single Japanese representative), many of whom were former colonial administrators, and thus very unlikely to begin drastically revising the colonial system. By suggesting a Black man be appointed to the Commission, Bellegarde must have understood the role that he himself—the citizen of a Black Republic that had rejected French colonialism—might one day be able to play in correcting the abuses of colonialism in Africa.

When the Second Assembly concluded on 5 October, very little work had been done with regard to the Mandates. Decisions were deferred to the next year’s Assembly. In the meantime, political changes in Haiti were beginning to make Bellegarde’s role at the League more

precarious. In spring of 1922, the U.S. administration in occupied Haiti replaced President Dartiguenave, who had frequently shown himself to be obstructive, with the more cooperative Louis Borno. As a result of this change, Dantès Bellegarde, ever a critic of the occupation, found himself firmly in the opposition camp in Haiti's political landscape. Bellegarde might have sensed that his days as Haiti's representative at the League of Nations were numbered. Perhaps that helps to explain why he played a much more active role in the League's Third Assembly in 1922. All the same, Bellegarde returned to Geneva in September 1922 ready to carry on his campaign with regard to the Mandates.

His efforts received an unexpected boost from a tragedy that occurred in one of the Mandate territories that year. Five months earlier in the Mandate of South-West Africa, the administering authorities in South Africa had brutally crushed a rebellion of the Bondelzwart—a small pastoral community of the Nama people in the southern region of the territory. The Bondelzwart had initially welcomed South African administration, believing it would be an improvement from the oppressive German regime.[61] Their conditions, however, continued to deteriorate under South African control. In 1921, an exorbitant new tax on the dogs the Bondelzwart people used for herding and hunting threatened to force many into destitution. They refuse to pay. Many were arrested. In April 1922 a community leader returned from Cape Colony with some rifles. Soon news of an imminent rebellion reached the authorities, and they responded with a brutal crackdown, including aerial bombardment. Men, women and children died in the punitive expedition.

News of the incident reached the international press, and a South African delegate had submitted a report to the League. But it was not until Dantès Bellegarde brought up the issue in

[61] Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 114.

the plenary session that the League was moved to act. In a speech on 8 September, Bellegarde referred to the report on the incident, saying, "I do not think that your attention has been sufficiently drawn to the gravity of the facts."[62] He briefly outlined what was known about the event, emphasizing the inhumanity that the authorities had displayed. For Bellegarde, it was unacceptable that such a thing had occurred in a Mandate Territory. He concluded his speech, saying,

> These facts are too important to be passed over by the Assembly, and I am sure that the High Commissioner will agree with us to ask the League, through its Permanent Mandates Commission, to obtain all possible information regarding these events. That women and children should have been massacred in the name of the League of Nations and under its protection is an abominable outrage which we cannot suffer.[63]

His speech was received with "loud and prolonged applause." At the end of the meeting, he submitted a draft resolution calling for an immediate inquiry into the situation, for the distribution of relief for the victims, and for the "restoration of the economic life in the Bondelzwart district."[64]

The Assembly forwarded the resolution to the Sixth Committee on Political Questions for discussion, which in turn set up a sub-committee to revise the resolution. Bellegarde happened to be on the Sixth Committee, and he was placed on the sub-committee, so he spent the next weeks debating with this smaller group over his own resolution. In this context, he revived Frédéric Doret's effort to make the League of Nations exert a degree of meaningful control over the Mandates, though from another angle; rather than Parliamentary enquiries, Bellegarde focused on the right of petition. The sub-committee—which was almost entirely composed of representatives of the Mandatory Powers and included conventional colonial administrators like

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[62] "Verbatim Record of the Third Assembly of the League of Nations, 7th Plenary Meeting, Friday September 8th, 1922, at 10 a.m." 13. United Nations Archive at Geneva, reference code: R1375.26.23218.23218.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid., 18.

the Gabriel Hanotaux and Lord Robert Cecil—ultimately decided that the peoples of the Mandated Territories should direct all complaints to the Mandatory Powers. Bellegarde dissented from this opinion, saying they should have the opportunity to petition the League of Nations directly. But he was outvoted, and the sub-committee's report expressed the hope that petitions should go through the governments of the Mandatory Powers.

Unsatisfied with this conclusion, Bellegarde opted to express his views when the plenary session convened to discuss the matter again on 20 September. Again, like Doret, Bellegarde took the opportunity to make a larger point about colonialism, saying that the Mandates should be governed "in the best possible manner," so that it "may serve as an example to all Colonial powers."[65] He said that allowing them to "lay their complaints before the League of Nations" was "the most effective guarantee which we can supply to the populations under mandate." He said he knew that the Mandatory Powers were "actuated by the most generous motives toward the populations they administer," but that intentions were not a sufficient guarantee of good governance. As he explained, again with evident relevance to all colonial powers:

> Governments may have the best intentions, but when it comes to applying the rules they lay down it is another matter. Like the husband in the play, the government is always the last to know what is happening, and when the population has complaints to make you ask them to communicate their complaints through the intermediary of the mandatory Power; in other words, you ask them to communicate their grievances to the very persons of whom they complain.

He declared emphatically that "we ought to guarantee full liberty and full independence to those who may have cause for complaint and who are under the protection of the League of Nations," adding that, "no injustice must be committed in any place where the League of Nations is responsible." Again, his speech was met with applause in the chamber.

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[65] "Verbatim Record of the Third Assembly of the League of Nations, 12th Plenary Meeting, Wednesday September 20th, 1922, at 10.30 a.m." 7. United Nations Archive at Geneva, reference code: R1375.26.23218.23218.

Nevertheless, the right of petition remained unchanged for the time being. Still, Bellegarde's campaign made an impact in two ways. First, it forced the Permanent Mandates Commission to define itself. It had hitherto been a relatively meaningless body as the administration of the Mandates was left entirely to the Mandatory Powers. The inquiry into the Bondelzwarts incident—which Bellegarde had proposed—was the Permanent Mandates Commission's first real test. As the historian Susan Pedersen has pointed out, the incident "did more to crystallize the Commission's ideals, define its practice, enhance its reputation, and make League oversight a reality, than any other conflict."[66] Thus, Bellegarde can be considered to have succeeded, if only modestly and indirectly, in improving the conditions of the people in the Mandates.

In addition, the mere fact of a Haitian speaking persuasively and eloquently in the pursuit of such a monumental goal made an impact on the institution of the League of Nations. The fact that a seemingly insignificant country could now have a voice in global affairs was not lost on the participants. Bellegarde began one of his first speeches by commenting on the novelty; he said, "I felt that the modest position of the Republic of Haiti in this Assembly did not give me the right to take part in a discussion which touches on some of the most serious problems that require the world's attention," but that,

> I overcame my scruples by the thought that, owing to its remoteness and because it has not been involved in any of the conflicts by which the League has been preoccupied, my country possesses, by the mere fact of its distant position, the detachment necessary to form a disinterested judgement of the activities of the League of Nations, and therefore to express to this Assembly an absolutely impartial opinion.[67]

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[66] Pedersen, *Guardians*, 113.

[67] "Verbatim Record of the Third Assembly of the League of Nations, 7th Plenary Meeting, Friday September 8th, 1922, at 10 a.m." 10. United Nations Archive at Geneva, reference code: R1375.26.23218.23218.

Although Lord Robert Cecil disagreed with Bellegarde's suggestion of direct petition, he thanked him for his comments, saying, "this debate has shown that the mandatory system is a reality… and that it is a real step forward in the progress of humanity in affairs of this kind."[68] The British public intellectual Gilbert Murray, who was representing South Africa, marvelled at the profound change that Bellegarde had embodied. He said,

> Is it not something without parallel in the history of the world hitherto that yesterday the Delegate from Haiti, with no sort of diplomatic or military power behind him, could stand up here, with perfect courtesy and perfect ease, to complain of certain actions which the great British Empire had taken towards people of his race? That that could be done in the face of the world with no resentment felt and no attempt on the part of the great Power criticised to evade the criticism or to complain of the language used, is remarkable. That it has been done, ladies and gentlemen, surely shows that we have reached a new stage in the development of international relations.[69]

Thus, by simply being present and voicing his principles, Bellegarde had an impact on the culture of the League of Nations. In turn he helped make the vision of a truly cooperative and inclusive forum a reality.

After participating in the Third Assembly and leading his country to new heights of influence on the international stage, Bellegarde was recalled to Haiti. His replacement as Minister to Paris and delegate to the League of Nations was the less confrontational jurist Auguste Bonamy. But Bellegarde's work at the League was not finished. The Permanent Mandates Commission was still composed almost entirely of Europeans, and Bellegarde—ever the advocate of direct petition—began corresponding with League of Nations officials and inquiring whether he might personally be added to the Commission as an independent representative of the Black race. By

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[68] "Verbatim Record of the Third Assembly of the League of Nations, 12th Plenary Meeting, Wednesday September 20th, 1922, at 10.30 a.m." 14. United Nations Archive at Geneva, reference code: R1375.26.23218.23218.
[69] "Verbatim Record of the Third Assembly of the League of Nations, 13th Plenary Meeting, Wednesday Sunday 21st, 1922, at 10 a.m." 9–10. United Nations Archive at Geneva, reference code: R1375.26.23218.23218.

May 1924, a Latin American group had begun to take shape at the League, and one of its organizers, the Uruguayan Julián Nogueira, started pitching around on behalf of Bellegarde.

On 12 May 1924, Nogueira met with William Rappard, director of the Mandates section of the League Secretariat and member of the Permanent Mandates Commission, to discuss the request. Nogueira acknowledged that the appointment was unlikely, but suggested instead that Bellegarde might be added to a new temporary commission that had recently been set up to investigate slavery. The Temporary Slavery Commission, consisted of experts with special experience regarding slavery, and, again, each was a European. Given the way Bellegarde had distinguished himself in the 1922 Assembly, Rappard was intrigued by the idea of adding him to the mix. He decided to take the matter straight to the top. He wrote a note to the League of Nations' Secretary-General, Sir Eric Drummond, saying, "this suggestion strikes me as interesting, and I am sorry that it did not occur to me before. It would, I believe, be sound League policy to appoint M. Bellegarde, thus giving satisfaction both to the black race and to Latin-America, besides securing the co-operation of one who might be a very valuable member."[70] The League of Nations Council, when it had set up the Slavery Commission, hoped to keep it small in order to expedite its important work, but Rappard thought the idea was nonetheless worth pursuing. In a handwritten note on the bottom of the message, Drummond said, "there are clearly great advantages in seeing M. Bellegarde as a member of the Committee," and said he would make the suggestion in the Council's next meeting.[71] The Council met on 12 June and agreed to appoint Bellegarde as the eighth member of the Temporary Slavery

[70] William Rappard, Note to Eric Drummond, 12 May 1924. United Nations Archive at Geneva, reference code: R71.1.36398.34440.
[71] Eric Drummond, Handwritten note, 13 May 1924. United Nations Archive at Geneva, reference code: R71.1.36398.34440.

Commission. He thus became the first Black expert assigned to a League of Nations commission.[72]

Bellegarde returned to Geneva in the summer of 1924 and, on 9 July, the Temporary Slavery Commission began meeting to devise an agenda for their work. They submitted a plan to study "slavery in all its forms." Each member was tasked with contacting their respective governments to request any relevant legislation with regard to slavery before they convened again one year later. This put Bellegarde in an awkward position. First of all, Louis Borno's client-government considered Bellegarde something of a *persona non grata* for his outspoken opposition to the continued U.S. occupation. Second, because the abolition of slavery was a fundamental part of Haiti's history and national identity, the implication that Haiti would have specific legislation regarding slavery had the potential to cause a scandal—which, in fact, it did.

The Temporary Slavery Commission was scheduled to meet again in July 1925. In the meantime, Bellegarde sent two tactful letters to his foreign minister, Léon Déjean, asking for any relevant legislation. Since the Commission was interested in "slavery in all its forms," he noted the corvée system, which the occupiers had recently revived in Haiti to procure free labour for road construction. As in Africa, the corvée brought abuse and caused an outrage in a country that was fundamentally opposed to anything resembling slavery. Bellegarde also referred to the slave-like conditions of migrant Haitian sugar cutters in Cuba, as well as a recent report of a traffic in Haitian women who were allegedly being sent to Cuban brothels. Clearly, Bellegarde was committed to an exhaustive definition of slavery. His letters received no reply, but days later the government's newspaper published an article accusing Bellegarde of abusing his role on the

[72] José Antonio Sánchez Román, "Abolitionism and Self-Government: Dantès Bellegarde's Participation in the Temporary Commission on Slavery of the League of Nations," *The International History Review* 45, no. 6, (2023): 866.

Temporary Slavery Commission to carry out a smear campaign against the Haitian and Cuban governments. Forced to respond, Bellegarde published an article defending his honour and detailing his sources. Soon, the Haitian government sent a telegram to the League, asking them to terminate Bellegarde's role on the Commission.

In the weeks leading up to the second session of the Temporary Slavery Commission, secret meetings took place, and much ink was spilled over the matter of Bellegarde's participation. Not wanting to alienate one of the League's founding members, Secretary-General Eric Drummond assured Haiti's delegate that they were looking into the matter. Drummond drafted several versions of a letter to Bellegarde himself to inform him of his government's request. Nevertheless, Bellegarde arrived once again in Geneva and attended the Temporary Slavery Commission's second session as planned. Bellegarde was not informed that he was to be sacked until the commission had all but concluded its work. On hearing the news, he wrote a long, handwritten letter to Drummond to explain his side of the story. He commented on the high honour he and his country had won by his being appointed to the commission. "There is not a Haitian worthy of the name," he said, "who did not feel pride because of it, considering that this honour was granted above all to Haiti."[73] By this time, in any case, the point was moot. Two days later the Temporary Slavery Commission finalized its report and submitted it to the Council, completing the task that had been assigned to it.

Bellegarde thus contributed his own and his country's perspective—though without official sanction—to discussions and policies regarding slavery in the highest international context of the time. As the historian José Antonio Sánchez Román has described, despite the Western biases that he largely shared with the other members of the commission—most of whom

[73] Dantès Bellegarde, Letter to Eric Drummond, 23 July May 1925. United Nations Archive at Geneva, reference code: R71.1.36398.34440.

were former colonial administrators, including the French Maurice Delafosse and the British General Lugard—Bellegarde was the most radical member of the Commission.[74] While most of them wanted a narrow definition of slavery as the ownership and traffic in human beings, Bellegarde pushed for a broader definition that encapsulated all forms of coerced labour.[75] But as representatives of the European colonies, the other members knew this would call their countries' approaches to colonial labour into question. They tapped into longstanding attitudes regarding a supposed "African" temperament, believing that African people were naturally lazy, necessitating a degree of coercion. Bellegarde disagreed. His experience in Haiti showed him that most people naturally want to benefit from their own labour and to deprive them of this option was akin to enslaving them. As Sánchez Román explains, "Bellegarde was making a radical claim for racial equality and showing his belief in the capacity of the natives for self-government."[76]

The report that the commission submitted to the League of Nations Council was more moderate than Bellegarde had hoped. Nevertheless, it was a start. The report became the groundwork for the 1926 International Slavery Convention, which has served as a benchmark for international norms with regard to slavery and slave trades ever since. The debates also prompted the International Labour Organization to begin taking an interest in colonial labour culminating with its Forced Labour Convention in 1930.[77] Finally, despite the tepidity of the report—and of the League of Nations' humanitarianism in general, which many have accused of serving to reinforce the European empires—Bellegarde's participation in the Temporary Slavery Commission demonstrates that the League did allow a platform for small nations and for radical

[74] Sánchez Román, "Abolitionism," 872.
[75] Ibid., 873.
[76] Ibid., 877.
[77] Ibid., 878.

ideas. Thus, Haiti was able to eke out a place for itself at the table of internationalist discourse, to bolster its reputation as a defender of the rights of Africans, and—if only slightly—to make an impact on the lives of people living under European domination.

From 1925, with the support of the Borno administration, the U.S. consolidated its control in Haiti. In this period, the county's role on the international stage grew somewhat more stagnant, its delegates at the League considerably less dynamic after Bellegarde's dismissal. A Fourth Pan-African Congress was slated to be held in Port-au-Prince in 1925, but it was cancelled, officially due to transportation logistics, but presumably the occupiers also feared it would agitate dissent in the country. When the next Congress took place in New York City in 1927, Bellegarde attended and used the opportunity to once again denounce the occupation. In general, the occupation itself became the primary concern of Haitian elites, and they worked to mobilize the nation against U.S. control. Finally, amid mounting opposition and massive general strike, Borno resigned in May 1930. The interim president recalled Bellegarde from exile and sent him back to Geneva. By November, the occupiers had allowed an election, and the nationalist Sténio Vincent became president and promised to win Haiti its "second independence."

In 1930, on his return to Geneva, Bellegarde gave his most famous speech at the League, a speech that Mercer Cook later referred to as his masterpiece.[78] This was his long-awaited denunciation, before the League of Nations, of the U.S. occupation of Haiti (which carried on for another four years after Borno left power). "So long as the military occupation lasts," he proclaimed, "an occupation unjustifiable in law, based as it is on a treaty imposed by force on the people of Haiti, so long will fear and mistrust hold sway among the American nations."

[78] Mercer Cook, "Dantès Bellegarde," *Phylon* 1, no. 2 (1940): 132.

Newspapers around the world reported on the sensational speech.[79] Presumably, this display was no benefit to the League's ongoing aspiration to court the membership of the United States, but knowing he now had the backing of Port-au-Prince, Bellegarde could not resist the opportunity to articulate his principles on the global stage.

By the early 1930s, the League had reached its peak of international importance, but it was also beginning to show cracks. Japan, a founding member, was now emerging as an aggressive nationalist power and distancing itself from the internationalist cause. It withdrew from the League in March 1933. Likewise, Germany had been allowed to join the League in 1926 but withdrew in October 1933 after Adolf Hitler came to power. The United States, for its part, remained aloof. The legitimacy of the institution was quickly eroding over the course of the 1930s. Haiti's delegates contributed to last-ditch efforts to save the League of Nations. If the League were to maintain its legitimacy, they knew, it would have to live up to its commitment to protect the sovereignty of its members. The Haitian delegates were thus able to combine their claimed role as spokesman for the cause of Black self-determination with their efforts to buoy up the sinking ship of the League of Nations.

This is the context of Haiti's most famous moment at the League. One last time, a Haitian was able to present a speech that was at once a sweeping denunciation of aggressive colonialism, a defence of Black self-determination, and a plea for the League to live up to its own principles. In 1935 Auguste Nemours made his way to Geneva as Haiti's representative to the League's Sixteenth Assembly. That same year, there had been rumours of border skirmishes between Ethiopia and Italian Eritrea and growing indications that Mussolini was preparing to send in a military force. Since both countries were members, Ethiopia had begun to petition the League for

[79] Cook, "Bellegarde," 132.

intervention.[80] Conciliation proved ineffective, and the situation grew more tense over the course of 1935.

In a speech on 15 September, Nemours provided his first comments in defence of Ethiopia. In so doing, he attacked the very basis of European colonialism. "Haiti cannot refrain from taking its part," he said, "as a small nation and as a nation of colour… it stands for two principles—liberty and racial equality." He praised the commitment toward equality that the League had always held toward its members, saying "no discrimination has ever been made among the Members of our League, on the ground either of the extent of their territory, their power, the size of their population or their origin." Thus, he continued, "there can be no question of applying two moral standards—a higher one for certain continents and peoples and a less human one for other continents and other peoples regarded as secondary." Then, in a statement that must have put all of the representatives of European empires on edge, he added, "the imperfect utilisation of soil and subsoil cannot be regarded as sufficient motives for conquest. A backward population can be assisted by other means than guns and tanks." Then, he laid his challenge before the Assembly: "A nation has come to you demanding justice—a nation whose history goes back for thousands of years. Are you going to refuse to request it?" Finally, he concluded by expressing what many at the time (and many historians since) thought—that Ethiopia constituted a test case for the League of Nations: "The black and coloured people are watching; the small nations are listening; and all calmly await your verdict."[81]

The Sixteenth Assembly was expected to close on 28 September, but amid growing political tensions in East Africa and elsewhere, the delegates chose instead to adjourn for ten

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[80] "Abyssinia and Italy. Request For League Intervention," *The Times*, 4 January 1935, 11.
[81] "Verbatim Record of the Sixteenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the League of Nations, Ninth Plenary Meeting, Monday, September 16th, 1935, at 10.30 a.m." 4–5. United Nations Archive at Geneva, reference code: A-PLENARY-VERBATIM-1935_EN.

days and reconvene on 9 October. During this break, on 3 October 1935, Italy invaded Ethiopia. On 10 October, the day after the Assembly reconvened, Nemours took the floor in the plenary session and made his second speech about the situation in Ethiopia. He made similar points that he had made in his first speech, before concluding with a prophetic statement, perhaps the most famous words that a Haitian ever uttered at the League of Nations:

> Let us remember those thrones which we believed to be firmly established, but of which the fragments are now strewn all over the soil of Europe; woe betide us if our pusillanimity prevents us from playing the part that is our sacred duty, at the dictate of our conscience, to fulfil; great or small, strong or weak, near or far, white or coloured, let us never forget that one day we may become somebody's Ethiopia.[82]

Amid widespread denunciations of Italy, the League applied sanctions, but it was not enough. Britain and France were more concerned with growing German aggression in central Europe.[83] Haiti, for its part, was unable to maintain its sanctions as Italy was the purchaser of some 30 percent of its exports.[84] Within sixteen months Italy had occupied Ethiopia and soon thereafter it withdrew from the League, following the example of Germany and Japan which had also begun to invade adjacent territories. The failure to effectively intervene in Ethiopia was, for many contemporaries, the final proof that the League was a meaningless, ineffectual organization and another war was inevitable.[85]

The final remains of the League's credibility were swept away in 1939 when it failed to prevent the Second World War. It officially dissolved in 1946. Haiti, for its part, had withdrawn by 1942. But it had been there. For twenty-three years Haitians had dutifully attended

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[82] "Verbatim Record of the Sixteenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the League of Nations, Fifteenth Plenary Meeting, Thursday, October 10th, 1935, at 10.30 a.m." 14. United Nations Archive at Geneva, reference code: A-PLENARY-VERBATIM-1935_EN.
[83] Peter J. Beck, "The League of Nations and the Great Powers, 1936–1940," *World Affairs* 157, no. 4, (Spring 1995): 175.
[84] Robert Knox, "Haiti at the League of Nations: Racialisation, Accumulation and Representation," *Melbourne Journal of International Law* 21, iss. 2 (December 2020): 266.
[85] G. W. Baer, *Test Case: Italy, Ethiopia and the League of Nations* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1976).

Assemblies, sat on committees, and attempted to speak on behalf of Black people, colonized people, and small states. In the process they brought their country's unique experiences into global discourses and pushed the boundaries of what was possible on the world stage. As French educated Haitians, they tended to subscribe to Western criteria for evaluating civilization. But they also provided an important link between the League and the maturing anti-racist critiques coming out of the Pan-Africanist movement.

Despite the dramatic changes going on in Haiti in the period, their message remained remarkably consistent. A continuous line can be traced from Benito Sylvain's attempt to organize an ethnographical conference that would put the racial equality debate in to rest, to Tertulien Guilbaud's failed attempt to support the racial equality clause at the Paris Peace Conference, to Dantès Bellegarde's forceful arguments against racial inequality in the context of the Temporary Slavery Commission. Eliézer Cadet called for "Africa for the Africans," and Bellegarde called for a Black man to be appointed to the Permanent Mandates Commission. Frédéric Doret and Bellegarde both worked to give the League more meaningful control over the Mandates system. All demanded Haitian sovereignty, and, after the U.S. occupation ended, Nemours carried on the fight for Black self-determination by opposing the Italian invasion of Ethiopia.

When the Second World War finally came to an end, and the world started trying to create a new forum for international deliberations, the previous experiment—including Haiti's contributions to it—was an essential point of reference. And, once again, Haitians were there from the start, eager to participate in fashioning a more just world.

- 9 -
Haiti at the United Nations

Haitians played a significant role at the United Nations since its inception. As an independent nation in 1945, Haiti was one of only a few Black self-governing nations to engage with the early policymaking of the international body. A Haitian delegation was present at the San Francisco Conference where the United Nations came into existence, and its chairperson, Minister of Foreign Affairs Gerard E. Lescot, signed the United Nations Charter on 26 June 1945.[1] According to Haitian historian Chantalle F. Verna, "Haiti was one of the few 'delegations presumed to be sympathetic' to the anticolonial and citizenship rights of Africans and African-descended people who did not have official access to the founding conference of the UN, as the terms of the newly emerging organization were being finalized."[2] She notes that "while populations without official delegations engaged with the conference in a myriad of ways, states with formal representation had the advantage of attending sessions and voting."[3] Thus, along with Liberia and Ethiopia, Haiti was poised to play a significant role in the UN's mid-century activities, most notably in its approach to the decolonization of Africa.

Numerous Haitians took an interest in developments in Africa in the 1950s and 1960s and played an important role in the decolonization of Africa under the auspices of the UN. As a founding member of the organization, and with a highly educated, French-speaking middle class

[1] Verna, "Haiti, the United Nations," 132.
[2] Ibid., 131.
[3] Ibid.

and the added advantage of Black skin, there was a strong demand for Haitians in important posts in the United Nations activities in francophone Africa. Régine O. Jackson estimates that as many as 7,500 Haitians travelled to Africa as administrators, expert consultants, teachers and medical workers with various UN agencies.[4] Athémas Bellerive led a WHO medical team that included numerous Haitian doctors in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Maurice Dartigue held many posts for the UN and UNESCO including senior education specialist for the UN's Trusteeship department and Chief of UNESCO's African division. Herbert Peck was an FAO and UNESCO Agronomist who taught agriculture at the University of Kinshasa for twenty-four years. But two individuals stand out for their engagement with the decolonization of Africa "from above."

The first is Emile Saint-Lôt. Born in Port-au-Prince in 1904, Saint-Lôt had trained as a lawyer and taught courses in literature and sociology in Port-au-Prince. He had risen to the Senate and had been a cabinet minister in the relatively progressive government of Dumarsais Estimé in the aftermath of the Haitian Revolution of 1946.[5] He was a member of the body that drafted the Haitian constitution of 1946. As Minister of Labour and National Education, he had spearheaded efforts at the separation of church and state in Haiti.[6] He was part of the *noiriste* faction—a populist movement that promoted the Black petit bourgeoisie in opposition to the country's traditional light-skinned elites. According to historian Matthew J. Smith, Saint-Lôt had a falling out with President Estimé and, like many Haitians who found themselves at odds with

[4] Jackson, "Failure of Categories," 35.
[5] Ludovic Morin Lacombe, "Son nouveau ministre résidant à Paris, M. Emile St-Lôt," *Europe-Colonies*, 1 May 1949, 3.
[6] Ibid.

the person in power, ended up in a diplomatic post in part so that the president could keep him at a distance.[7]

Thus, Emile Saint-Lôt was appointed Haiti's first ambassador to the United Nations. In 1947 he travelled to New York City to take part in the UN's earliest activities. From the start, he positioned himself as a champion of Black people around the world. Once, when South Africa's prime minister Jan Smuts invited him to dinner, he is supposed to have declined the invitation, saying "my dignity as a *nègre* and as a delegate of a Black State prevents me from being your guest, as you are the head of an African State that refuses men and women of my race (although they are the overwhelming majority of the population of South Africa) the most elementary rights of human dignity."[8]

One of Saint-Lôt's first duties was to participate in the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Between May 1947 and May 1948 in Lake Success New York, a nine-person sub-committee chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt drafted the Declaration. In August 1948, they submitted it to the United Nations Third Committee, the committee on social, humanitarian and cultural issues for discussion and revisions—of which Emile Saint-Lôt was a member. Because the UN did not yet have a permanent headquarters, the 1948 sessions took place in Paris. There, in the Palais de Chaillot, between 30 September and 7 December, representatives of the fifty-one member states convened for some eighty meetings to discuss and debate over the document.

Saint-Lôt's colleagues on the Third Committee understood Haiti's significance in the global development of human rights, and he was accorded a degree of esteem in the chamber. He was appointed rapporteur and occasionally served as chairperson. He was an active participant in

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[7] Smith, *Red & Black in Haiti*, 144.
[8] Lacombe, "Son nouveau ministre," 3.

the debates, and he conscientiously took up the cause of colonial peoples. Representatives of the other two Black self-governing member states were only present at occasional meetings (presumably for logistical reasons). An Ethiopian representative was present at fifteen of the meetings, while one from Liberia was only present at four. Haiti, conversely, was present at forty-five of the meetings. As such, at most of these meetings Saint-Lôt was the only Black man in the room. The Ethiopian and Liberian representatives cast votes—they tended to vote as a bloc with Haiti—but they did not contribute to the debates (one suspects language barriers were a factor). Saint-Lôt, on the other hand, was a major contributor to the discussions.[9]

His first contribution to the debates on the Declaration of Human Rights was an insistence on a mechanism for implementation, as opposed to a mere idealistic basis for the document. In his opening statement, he said that "Haiti wished to lend its support to all those who fought for freedom equality and justice, and would do its utmost to make the Declaration not an abstract document but an instrument of practical value to the oppressed everywhere."[10] He reminded the committee of the "millions of individuals who, for so long, had been looking to the United Nations to carry out the promises made in the Charter, and who were expecting more than empty words."[11] Echoing the calls for practical action that Frédéric Doret had voiced in the first sessions of the League of Nations, Saint-Lôt urged the committee to draft an international

[9] According to the available records, the representative from Liberia was present for thirteen votes. For three of them, the Haitian representative was absent. For the remaining ten, Liberia voted (or abstained) along with Haiti seven times. Three times Liberia abstained while Haiti voted. The two representatives were therefore never on opposite sides of a vote. The Ethiopian representative was present at forty-seven votes, of which the Haitian representative was present for thirty-four. Both abstained or were on the same side of the vote twenty-one times. Twelve times one voted while the other abstained. Only once were the Haitian and Ethiopian representatives on opposite sides of a vote. The vote in question was over the phrase "Freedom of speech and the Press shall not be used for purposes of propagating fascism." The Ethiopian representative was in favour of the phrase while Saint-Lôt opposed it because it "would have permitted the United Nations to set up a form of discrimination so vaguely defined that might be feared that it would open the way to… other forms of discrimination." The phrase was rejected 23 votes to 10 with 13 abstentions.

[10] UN Third Committee, UN GAOR, 3rd Sess., 90th mtg., U.N. Document A/C.3/SR.90 (1 October 1948), 44.

[11] UN Third Committee, UN GAOR, 3rd Sess., 94th mtg., U.N. Document A/C.3/SR.94 (5 October 1948), 78.

covenant that would bind nations to implement human rights guarantees, lest "states and people would come to the conclusion that the United Nations was merely formulating principles which were meaningless, as no provisions had been made for their implementation."[12] Saint-Lôt's call for an international covenant was unsuccessful, but his early insistence on the practical value of the document for the millions of people living under the yoke of colonialism surely helped set the tone of subsequent discussions.

Beyond a general call for practical implementation, Saint-Lôt argued for the inclusion of a statement confirming that the Declaration applied fully to the people of "Non-Self-Governing Territories." He lent strong support to a Yugoslavian amendment that stated, "the rights proclaimed in this Declaration also apply to any person belonging to the population of a Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territory."[13] To objections that the "universal" character of the Declaration would make such a clause redundant, Saint-Lôt responded that "a colonial application clause appeared in all international conventions signed by Members of the United Nations under the pretext that signatories could not impose their will upon their colonies. That had, however, never prevented such Powers from imposing their will when they had so desired."[14] He took on the role of spokesman for colonized people, saying that most of those present "had little idea of the feeling of exasperation and despair generated in peoples living under a colonial regime," and that "the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories… should be assured that they had the goodwill of the United Nations directed toward them."[15] In response to the French representative's insistence that the Declaration applied equally to all people

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[12] Ibid., 80.
[13] UN Third Committee, UN GAOR, 3rd Sess., Draft International Declaration of Human Rights: Amendments to the Draft Declaration (E/800)/Yugoslavia, A/C.3/233 (7 October 1946).
[14] UN Third Committee, UN GAOR, 3rd Sess., 163rd mtg., U.N. Document A/C.3/SR.163 (29 November 1948), 740.
[15] Ibid.

without drawing specific attention to colonial people, Saint-Lôt said that it was "surprising that countries which had had no experience of colonial conditions should attempt to lay down the law to those which had."[16] He added that Haiti, "as representing a number of similar States, had received many petitions asking that such an article should be included into the declaration," and he took another liberty in criticizing the colonial powers, saying, "it was strange to find the cry of freedom taken up in the Committee by countries which had not had a good record in their dealings with Non-Self-Governing Territories."[17] Ultimately, the Yugoslavian proposal passed by a narrow margin: sixteen votes to fourteen with seven abstentions, thus accomplishing Haiti's first diplomatic victory at the new institution.

In some instances, Saint-Lôt was less successful in his attempts to challenge dominant Western norms in the chamber. For example, he argued against the strict Western notion of individualism present in the text, saying "the doctrine of individualism carried to excess had brought about the reaction of totalitarianism, and an attempt should be made to avoid either extreme."[18] On this point, he drafted an amendment which changed the article: "Everyone has the right to own property alone or in association with others," adding the phrase, "this right shall be exercised in conformity with the public interest."[19] This proposal was rejected by a vote of eighteen to eleven with twelve abstentions.

He also opposed a phrase in the Declaration which stipulated that elections should take place "by secret ballot," saying that "illiterate people would thus be excluded from voting and the suffrage would no longer be universal."[20] He went on to allude to the Haitian Revolution,

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[16] Ibid., 742.
[17] Ibid., 742–743.
[18] UN Third Committee, UN GAOR, 3rd Sess., 105th mtg., U.N. Document A/C.3/SR.105 (18 October 1948), 172.
[19] UN Third Committee, UN GAOR, 3rd Sess., 127th mtg., U.N. Document A/C.3/SR.127 (8 November 1948), 383.
[20] UN Third Committee, UN GAOR, 3rd Sess., 132nd mtg., U.N. Document A/C.3/SR.132 (11 November 1948), 450.

saying that "hundreds of thousands of inhabitants of his country who had been unable to read and write had still had the courage to fight for their independence."[21] He once again subtly criticized the colonial powers, saying that "illiteracy was usually the result of oppression of the masses by the minority in control and was no reason to deprive human beings of civil rights."[22] He pointed out that the Declaration "was not addressed solely to the Western hemisphere, but to the entire world," and noted that "illiteracy was still very common, 85 percent of the population of the world being illiterate."[23] He reminded the committee that "universal suffrage was one of the latest of man's conquests and had not yet been sufficiently consolidated, for electoral fraud was extremely difficult to prevent."[24] He therefore stressed the fact that insisting on the secret ballot would "place a further weapon in the hands of people desirous of 'rigging' elections," and that, in sum, "it would be better to mention universal suffrage, while emphasizing that it should be genuine and authentic, without referring to the secret ballot."[25] Ultimately, he called for a vote to remove "and held by secret ballot" from the article. Despite his eloquent appeal, his proposal was struck down in a vote of thirty-eight to two.

Finally, after months of debate in the Third Committee, the General Assembly came together in a plenary session on 9 December. As rapporteur, and as a representative of Haiti, Emile Saint-Lôt was given the historic task of presenting the Declaration to the General Assembly. "As a representative of Haiti," he said in his opening remarks, he thanked those present "for having appointed him to bring before the Assembly the text of a declaration of human rights which, for the first time, was to be universal in scope and for having thus

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[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid., 450–451.
[23] UN Third Committee, UN GAOR, 3rd Sess., 133rd mtg., U.N. Document A/C.3/SR.133 (12 November 1948), 466.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.

associated his country with that historic act."[26] Thus, in full awareness of his country's significance in the history of human rights, a Haitian played a significant role in crafting the document that has served as a point of reference for decolonization and self-determination over the subsequent decades.

After his stint as a contributor to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Saint-Lôt served as Haiti's representative on the General Assembly. In this role, he cast votes on the recognition of several new states. Most famously, he played a key role in the defeat of the Bevin-Sforza plan which would have broken Libya up into three Trusteeships administered by France, Britain and Italy. In the wake of the Second World War, there was much debate over what was to be done with Italy's three colonies in Africa. The United Nations First Committee discussed the issue at great length. Here, Saint-Lôt forcefully took up the cause of the masses against European interests, saying,

> If the question of the disposal of the former Italian colonies had been in the hands of the four great Powers, then the question would have been settled by force. But that was not the case, and the General Assembly would be guided by the basic principles of the United Nations. Under the Charter, a new institution, trusteeship, had replaced the mandate system. In civil law the interests of the ward were paramount. What then would serve the interests of the people of the former colonies?[27]

Once again taking up priorities that his compatriots had established at the League of Nations, he insisted that the General Assembly set up a commission to hear representatives of the populations of the three territories, and that the commission not involve any member state with interest in the region (i.e., Italy). An impartial consultation with the affected populations, he said, would set a critical precedent: "How could the interests of the inhabitants—the overriding consideration in trusteeship affairs—be known if their representatives were refused a hearing?

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[26] UN First Committee, UN GAOR, 3rd Sess., 241st mtg., U.N. Document A/C.1/SR.237-27 (11 April 1949), 37.
[27] Ibid.

The decision adopted would set a precedent in the matter of international trusteeship—still a relatively new field."[28] Saint-Lôt thus helped direct the policies and procedures of the early United Nations for the second time and contributed to the changing discussions regarding Europe's colonies in Africa.

In the end, Saint-Lôt cast the decisive vote to reject the Bevin-Sforza Plan. The General Assembly voted on the proposal on 18 May 1949, and it failed to pass by a razor-thin margin. The result was thirty-three votes in favour and seventeen against, just one vote short of the required two two-thirds majority. The plan was rejected, Libya remained unified and soon achieved independence.[29] Libya did not forget its debt to Haiti; in 1969, in a Fourth Committee session that marked the anniversary of Saint-Lôt's opposition to Bevin-Sforza plan, the representative from Libya proclaimed that he "wished to take the opportunity of expressing his country's gratitude to Haiti, whose representative at that time, Mr. Emile Saint-Lôt, had defeated the Bevin-Sforza conspiracy in the General Assembly."[30] And again in 1970, in the General Assembly, the Libyan representative recalled, "the famous Bevin-Sforza plot which was hatched outside the United Nations, aimed at dividing our country and leaving it under colonial domination. And if that attempt failed here in the United Nations it was by only one vote; there was no two thirds majority. That vote was cast by a country very dear to us, a country linked to Africa by blood ties. It was Haiti's vote which saved Libya's destiny."[31] The independence of Italy's colonies after the Second World War was a major step toward the decolonization of Africa more broadly, and Emile Saint-Lôt played an important role at this critical juncture. In the

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[28] Ibid.
[29] Thomas J. Hamilton, "U.N., 37–14, Rejects Bevin-Sforza Plan on Rome Colonies," *New York Times*, 18 May 1949, 1, 7.
[30] UN Fourth Committee, UN GAOR, 24th Sess., 1853rd mtg., U.N. Document A/C.4/SR.1853 (21 November 1969), 24.
[31] UN General Assembly, UN GAOR, 25th Sess., 1857th mtg., U.N. Document A/PV.1857 (1 October 1970), 24.

following decades, he continued to have an interest in events in Africa. In 1958 he attended the First International Congress of Black Artists and Writers in Paris and famously addressed the African delegates in no uncertain terms: "My African brothers, do not hypothesize your independence. It must not be given to you. Take it!"[32]

The other Haitian who played a key role in the United Nation's approach to the decolonization of Africa was Max H. Dorsinville. Dorsinville had been a mid-level bureaucrat under a series of presidents in post-occupation Haiti, working for the Ministry of Foreign Relations and as the under-secretary of the Cabinet.[33] This prolonged career was no mean feat in a country where public life is polarized, and opposition is rarely tolerated. He seems to have been something of a political chameleon, shrewdly avoiding extremes. In his autobiography, for example, he recalls a clash between Catholic and Marxist groups during the heady days of the Revolution of 1946, saying, "I was not for either side. I did not like or approve of the leftist outrage that stoked the least noble aspects of our anarchist nature. Neither was I prepared to lend a hand to our godly hypocrites. I was in favour of social justice and not humiliating charity or a vindictive dictator who calls himself a proletarian."[34] This tendency toward moderation no doubt served him well in his decades-long career at the United Nations, but his orientation toward the status quo also gives a foretaste of some of his shortcomings as an international policymaker.

Like Saint-Lôt, Dorsinville was at the UN in its earliest days; he first reported to New York City in 1947.[35] He started out on the Committee on Procedures and Organization where, in

[32] Gérard Bissainth, "Il était une fois un pays phare qui s'appelait Haïti," *Journal of Haitian Studies* vol. 13 no. 9 (2007): 152.
[33] Max H. Dorsinville, *Mémoires de la décolonisation* (Montreal: Mémoires d'encrier, 2006), 135.
[34] Ibid. 141.
[35] Ibid., 173.

his words, he "listened, observed," finding his footing among seasoned legislators and former representatives to the League of Nations.[36] He was soon appointed Haiti's representative to the General Assembly's Fourth Committee, the committee dealing with decolonization and Trusteeships, where he served as rapporteur. Here, he was directly involved in designing the Trusteeship system. This was an important step toward decolonization in the Trust Territories, which included Somaliland, French and British Cameroons, French and British Togoland, Ruanda-Urundi, Tanganyika, New Guinea, Western Samoa, Nauru and the Territory of the Pacific Islands. The successor to the League of Nations' Mandate system, UN Trust territories were placed under the trusteeship of a Western power who was tasked with promoting "political, economic, social, and educational advancement of the inhabitants" as well as "their progressive development towards self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned."[37] Dorsinville does not appear to have been a particularly active participant in Fourth Committee debates; he unsuccessfully opposed South Africa's choice to forego trusteeship arrangements in favour of a straightforward annexation of South-West Africa (Namibia), but otherwise mainly focused on his duties as rapporteur.

While the Fourth Committee dealt broadly with decolonization and the Trusteeship system, administering powers were directly answerable to a separate organ: the Trusteeship Council. In the 1950s, the Council was composed representatives from fourteen countries—the five permanent members of the Security Council (China, France, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and the United States), the additional countries administering Trust Territories (Australia, Belgium, Italy and New Zealand), and five nations elected on three-year terms to equalize the

[36] Ibid., 176–177.
[37] United Nations, "Charter of the United Nations," art 76.2.

number of administering and non-administering members. In 1954, Haiti was elected to the Trusteeship Council for a three-year term, which was renewed for another three years in 1957. Dorsinville was the country's representative. Given Haiti's history, Dorsinville's role in the oversight of French-administered Togo and Cameroon is most intriguing. In this context, the citizen of a former French colony that had won its independence from France found himself overseeing and working to put an end to French activities in Africa. Dorsinville must have sensed the irony.

Between 1954 and 1959, while Dorsinville was on the Council, the other rotating nations represented were Burma, El Salvador, Guatemala, India, Paraguay, Syria and the United Arab Republic. Hence, Dorsinville was typically the only Black man at the table in these meetings that determined the fate of millions of people in Africa. He chaired important committees, including the Committee on Rural Economic Development of the Trust Territories and the Committee on the Question of the Attainment of Self-Government or Independence. He led visiting missions to all seven of the Trust Territories in Africa. And he was unanimously elected as Vice-President of the Council in 1955 and President in 1959.

On the Trusteeship Council, Dorsinville had the opportunity to bring Haiti's unique perspective on colonialism to the international stage. His first session on the Council was on 28 January 1954. In his opening remarks, he connected Haiti's history to the struggle for self-determination in Africa, as recorded in the report of the session: "Pointing out that his own country had just celebrated the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of its independence, he added that although slavery had been abolished, after centuries of struggle, the development of the colonial territories was still being hampered by certain practices." He went on, saying, "the metropolitan country's interests were not identical to those of the colonial territories," but that he

was hopeful "that the Administering Authorities would bring the Territories entrusted to them to a stage of advancement that would enable them to become self-governing." Finally, he reiterated the role that Haiti would play "to ensure that the United Nations embraced all democratic peoples, and that it discharged the sacred mission to which all its members had committed themselves."[38]

From the start of his tenure on the Council, then, Dorsinville emphasized his country's role in the long history of decolonization. For him, there was a direct line from Toussaint Louverture to the Trusteeship Council. His contributions to the discussions show that he was in favour of consulting with and respecting the will of the masses in the Trust Territories and keen to find an expeditious path toward self-government. Yet his opening remarks also hint at a tension in Dorsinville's views. While he acknowledged a conflict between the interests of the colonizers and colonized, he also believed in the positive and necessary role that Western nations must play in Africa, bringing development to the Trust Territories and preparing them for independence. This mixed view of colonialism is virtually identical to that held by Dorsinville's earlier compatriots like Benito Sylvain and Auguste Nemours. Dorsinville's contributions to Trusteeship Council discussions were marked by his conflicted view that was fundamentally opposed to colonialism while at the same time seeing colonialism as an indispensable step in Africa's destiny.

In the Council's annual reviews of Trust Territory administrations, Dorsinville pushed the administering authorities to respect the interests of Africans and focus on the road to independence. In one of his earliest sessions, he gave a lengthy response to a report on the administration of French Cameroon. He made numerous recommendations including the

[38] UN Trusteeship Council, UN TCOR, 13th Sess., 484th mtg., U.N. Document T/SR.484 (28 January 1954), 1.

extension of elected bodies, the expansion of education, and economic protection for small-scale agricultural producers, and he concluded by noting that he "regretted that the annual report made no reference to… the acquisition of self-government or independence by the Territory."[39] As his first substantive contribution to the debates over Trusteeship administration, these comments set the tone for his work on the Council over the next six years.

Two years later he offered another lengthy response to a French report, going even further to push the French administration to honour the interests of their African charges. His comments have a hint of sarcasm, evidently stemming from exasperation with the colonial powers. The record of his remarks reads thus:

> Mr. Dorsinville (Haiti) said that the welcome recognition by the colonial Powers that stagnation was not the best policy was reflected in the sudden admission by experienced colonial administrators that the Africans had made great strides forward in the last forty years. His delegation had long been convinced of that, hence its insistence that that advance should be reflected in the progressive transfer of power to the indigenous people by agreed stages. It was therefore pleased to hear that the French government intended soon to consult the people of Togoland under French administration on their political future.[40]

Once again, Dorsinville positioned his delegation and his country as a vanguard of decolonization, suggesting that the colonial powers are only just realizing things about Africa that Haitians had known all along.

The French government was considering incorporating Togo into the neighbouring colony of Dahomey. This had been the fate of British Togo, which, despite Dorsinville's opposition, was in the process of being annexed to the Gold Coast (soon to win its independence as Ghana). Dorsinville opposed the plan for French Togo, saying that "his delegation wished …

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[39] UN Trusteeship Council, UN TCOR, 13th Sess., 494th mtg., U.N. Document T/SR.494 (11 February 1954), 89–90.
[40] UN Trusteeship Council, UN TCOR, 17th Sess., 669th mtg., U.N. Document T/SR.669 (28 February 1956), 128.

to reaffirm its view that the only true freedom from the colonial yoke was independence."[41] He referred to the UN Charter's directive regarding Trusteeships, which called for the "progressive development towards self-government or independence" according to "the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned," and insisted that this "could not be achieved by the absorption of a Trust Territory into an independent neighbouring territory or larger group."[42] He went on, saying,

> Progressive development toward self-government or independence meant the progressive awakening of a sense of solidarity culminating in the desire for nationhood. The French representative's reasoning represented the complete negation of that conception of self-government or independence. The French Representative had argued that at any moment the Administering Authority could decide that the Territory's progressive development should branch off towards some outcome rather than independence, such as integration in the French Union, even before the peoples concerned had any experience of complete political freedom or could pass an informed judgement on the *pros* and *cons* of the choice before them.[43]

In response to the administering authority's stated plan to "undertake a popular constitution within a few months," he said that "the people must be consulted on their future at some stage, but the consultation should take place only when public opinion was sufficiently formed."[44] He contended that "the Administering Authority should give the widest possible publicity to its intentions and allow everyone concerned the fullest opportunity to discuss them," concluding that "he doubted whether the period envisaged by the French Government would be sufficient to allow the people of the Trust Territory to become really familiar with the problems before them."[45]

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[41] Ibid.
[42] "Charter," art 76.2; UN Trusteeship Council, UN TCOR, 17th Sess., 669th mtg., U.N. Document T/SR.669 (28 February 1956), 128.
[43] UN Trusteeship Council, UN TCOR, 17th Sess., 669th mtg., U.N. Document T/SR.669 (28 February 1956). Italics in original.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.

Finally, he stressed the need to rectify one of the internal problems that colonialism had created: the disproportionate power of the Westernized elites. "There was a very real danger," he said, "that the African *élite* might turn their backs on their own people."[46] He called for an increased push to educate the masses, saying "the remedy was to open more and more schools so that the growing number of educated people would eventually destroy the myth of a privileged intelligentsia."[47] Despite his fear of a self-interested elite, he noted that the elites should play a role in challenging their own power: "the *élite* themselves should work steadily to bridge the gap separating them from their less fortunate brethren."[48] Thus, in one of his most comprehensive statements, Dorsinville leveled a sweeping critique of French activities in Africa. At the same time, however, his idealism with respect to disinterested power, as revealed in the latter statement, sometimes undermined his efforts to serve the interests of African people.

Despite his strong critique of the administering authorities, Dorsinville shared with Benito Sylvain a belief that European colonialism had the capacity, if not always the will, to foster development and prepare colonial peoples for sovereignty. This faith in European diligence and decency sometimes blinded him to the ongoing abuses on the part of administering authorities. This fault came into sharp focus in 1955. In May of that year, a violent anti-colonial uprising occurred in Douala, Yaounde and elsewhere in French-administered Cameroon, initiating a protracted struggle which has come to be known as the Hidden War, due to its overshadowing by the Algerian War of Independence. The administration blamed the uprising on the Union des populations du Cameroun (UPC), a radical anti-colonial political party with widespread support in the territory. The government used the event to justify a harsh suppression

[46] Ibid., 129. Italics in original.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid. Italics in original.

of the UPC, which was banned outright.[49] Within weeks, the Trusteeship Council arranged a visiting mission to the Trust Territory, and Dorsinville—the only Black, French-speaking member of the Council—was unanimously elected to lead the mission. The Visiting Mission was instructed "to receive petitions without prejudice" and to "investigate on the spot, after consultation with the local representative of the Administering Authority concerned, such of the petitions received as, in its opinion, warrant special investigation."[50] The mission was in French Cameroon from 18 October to 18 November, then travelled to British administered Cameroon for eighteen days before returning home.

In the months following this trip, Dorsinville received harsh criticism from Cameroonian people. In a slew of some 35,000 petitions to the Trusteeship Council, representatives of local groups explicitly criticized Dorsinville for his failure to hear their grievances. He was judged particularly harshly in view of his Haitianness. A letter from a representative of the UPC reads:

> It is astounding and shameful that Mr. Dorsinville, the Chairman of the mission, can back statements of the French Government and ignore the sufferings of *his Cameroonian brothers* by supporting the dissolution of the UPC through his refusal to hear anyone from that party… It is also regrettable that Mr. Dorsinville—in whose ability to carry out a serious investigation… the whole population of the Cameroons had full confidence because his skin is black like ours, because he is our brother and because he is the representative of a former French colony, the Republic of Haiti, which had to endure the trials of colonization—should be the man to betray our confidence, the confidences of his own Government and that he should have been unable to carry out properly the task entrusted to him.[51]

Another petition claimed that "Mr. Dorsinville was corrupted by the French: his mind was poisoned by the offer of money, so that the mission made no further inquiry," and that his report

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[49] Martin Antangana, *The End of French Rule in Cameroon* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2010), 26.
[50] UN Trusteeship Council, UN TCOR, Resolutions Adopted by the Trusteeship Council During its 16th Session, U.N. Document T/1199 (8 June–22 July 1955), 2.
[51] UN Trusteeship Council, UN TCOR, Petitions from the Akwa Central Committee of the "Union des populations du Cameroun" Concerning the Cameroons Under French Administration, U.N. Document T/PET.5/L.82 (19 January 1956), 2.

"made no mention of the bloodshed, the graves, the active members of the UPC who were languishing in various prisons, and he refused to accept the petitions submitted to him, while several of our compatriots were tortured in the presence of the Visiting Mission."[52] Again, these accusations were all the more pointed because of the expectation that a Haitian would have an interest in the conditions of Africans, especially Africans living under a French administration.

In subsequent Trusteeship Council sessions, Dorsinville worked to explain and justify the Visiting Mission's activities in the light of the deluge of petitions. It is clear that the Visiting Mission had a delicate role to play in French Cameroon, and Dorsinville maintained that they did their best to navigate an explosive situation. He said that

> if the Mission had granted hearing to the UPC and its affiliated parties it might have been accused of attempting to reconstitute those parties. True, it could have heard, individually, persons who might have shed light on the events of May 1955, but it did not know from whom reliable information could be obtained. Accordingly, the Mission had heard the version of the May events given by the Administering Authority and by certain petitioners who had appeared before it, and had attempted to form an unbiased opinion. It had been unable to do more.[53]

To his credit, while other representatives balked at the possibility of analyzing the content of the approximately 35,000 petitions, Dorsinville insisted that the Council devote additional resources to summarize the petitions, so that "the Council could apply the normal procedure to the mass of communications and study them in a relatively brief time."[54] Still, the sheer number of petitions shows that Dorsinville failed to win the confidence of a large portion of the population of one Trust Territory, to the detriment of his reputation. Three years later, Cameroonians still associated his name with the UN's shortcomings; in 1958, a group of Cameroonian students

[52] UN Trusteeship Council, UN TCOR, Petition from Mr. Frederick Dandou Concerning the Cameroons Under French Administration, U.N. Document T/PET.5/L.118 (29 August 1956), 1.
[53] UN Trusteeship Council, UN TCOR, 17th Sess., 663rd mtg., U.N. Document T/SR.663 (20 February 1956), 285.
[54] UN Trusteeship Council, UN TCOR, 17th Sess., 689th mtg., U.N. Document T/SR.689 (20 March 1956), 221.

wrote a petition that referred to "the Dorsenville [*sic*] report" as "one-sided, to the detriment both of France and of the Cameroons and to the disrepute of the United Nations."[55]

In other cases, however, Dorsinville was more successful at representing the interests of Trust Territory populations. In 1958 Dorsinville led another mission to Africa. This time he was the UN representative for the supervision of legislative elections in French Togoland. The election took place on 27 April 1958, bringing Sylvanus Olympio to power as Prime Minister. By all accounts, the presence of the UN inspired confidence in the voters and resulted in an elected body that truly reflected the will of the Togolese people. In his exhaustive report on the election, Dorsinville concluded that "there is not the slightest doubt in my mind that the general outcome of the elections faithfully reflects the wishes of the people of Togoland," and that the election "can be considered a historic event in Togoland's progress toward the objectives of the Trusteeship System."[56] Dorsinville was lauded for his work organizing the election, which was a major step in Togo's movement toward independence. In Olympio's address to the Fourth Committee, he said,

> all the honour and credit for this achievement are due to the United Nations, whose authority and prestige elicited the confidence and co-operation of the entire Togolese people, to Ambassador Dorsinville, whose good offices and distinguished services as United Nations Commissioner helped to overcome so many difficulties, to his able advisers and colleagues, and to the United Nations Observers whose impartiality, acumen and discretion enabled them to cope with the extensive and delicate operations inherent in this kind of activity.[57]

In a subsequent Fourth Committee session, the representative of recently-independent Ghana commented that "it was a source of pride to his country that it had been a representative of Haiti

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[55] UN Trusteeship Council, UN TCOR, Petition from the Ibadan Kamerun Students' Association Concerning the Cameroons Under British Administration, U.N. Document T/PET.4/L.9 (2 May 1958), 4.
[56] UN General Assembly, UN GAOR, Report of the United Nations Commissioner for the Supervisions of the Elections in Togoland under French Administration, U.N. Document A/3957 (23 October 1958), 70–71.
[57] UN Fourth Committee, UN GAOR, Statement made by Mr. Sylvanus Olympio, Prime Minister of the Republic of Togoland, Speaking as a Member of the French Delegation, at the 782nd Meeting of the Fourth Committee on 3 November 1958, U.N. Document A/C.4/384 (4 November 1958), 1–2.

who had presided over one of the most significant episodes in Africa's history."[58] Like Emile Saint-Lôt's defeat of the Bevin-Sforza plan for Libya, Dorsinville's oversight of the 1958 Togolese election was a red-letter event in the history of Haiti's contributions to the decolonization of Africa.

[58] UN Fourth Committee, UN GAOR, 13th Sess., 787th mtg., U.N. Document A/C.4/SR.787 (6 November 1958), 84.

Conclusion:
A Mixed Legacy

As the case of Dorsinville illustrates, the United Nations, and Haiti's role within in it, have a mixed legacy. Dorsinville is certainly a key figure in the part Haiti played in the decolonization of Africa. He is also, however, connected to the fraught history of supranational activities in the decolonizing and post-colonial world, activities that have often been criticized for their neglect of human rights and their collusion with colonial or neocolonial interests, prioritizing order and stability over national sovereignty. This tension within Haiti's contributions to the United Nations grew more complicated after François Duvalier came to power in October 1957. Although Duvalier espoused Black power rhetoric, he too prioritized order over the will of the people with grim results in Haiti. Since representatives to the United Nations serve at the will of their governments, one must consider Duvalier's influence when judging the activities of Haitian representatives post-1957. Then again, like Haitian presidents before him, Duvalier surely used diplomatic appointments to keep dissenters at arm's length. Thus, it is difficult to parse how directly François Duvalier (and his son and successor Jean-Claude) played a role at the UN.

In any case, by the time Duvalier came to power in 1957, African decolonization was all but assured, and Haitians could boast of the part they had played to achieve it. The bold efforts of Frédéric Doret, Dantès Bellegarde, Auguste Nemours and others in Geneva, as well as the contributions of Emile Saint-Lôt and Max H. Dosinville and others in New York City were surely a monumental link between Haiti's rejection of French colonialism and racism in 1804 and the end of the second French colonial empire circa 1960. But there was, additionally, another

group of Haitians who engaged with the decolonization of Africa under completely different circumstances. Unlike their compatriots at the UN, these men and women were in Africa in spite of the Duvalier regimes. Beginning in 1962, numerous Haitian writers, artists, intellectuals and activists settled in Dakar where they contributed directly to the decolonization and nation-building project "from below." In so doing, they built upon a small but growing tradition of Haitian travels to Africa.

Part 5

A Longing for Haiti III:
Haitians in Africa

"I am no foreigner here,
I am from Dahomey,
And so I came back home,
Looking for my songs—
The songs I left here
Three hundred years ago.
I am here to take them back
Back home with me to Haiti."

Félix Morisseau-Leroy, 1959

"I was coming to Africa with a feeling of superiority based on my country's one hundred and fifty years of independence (theirs, at the time, was barely two years old). … This "older brother" quickly found himself seated on a stool as a speechless observer. What I was observing was a people with its own life and culture, its own conception of self and of the world that excluded mine."

Roger Dorsinville, 1989

Introduction
Dakar, 16 April 1966

"The King is dead!" a dozen voices call out from the wings of the darkened theatre.[1]

The floodlights come on, revealing the wall of an unfinished stone building encased in scaffolding. A throng, in the traditional dress of Haitian peasants, carries a body onto the stage. The Queen, now dressed simply in a white dress and headwrap that accentuate her dark skin, walks into view. She is flanked by two men: a smartly dressed page boy and an aristocrat in a ruffled shirt and blue tailcoat. The trio sombrely make their way to centre stage. The man in the blue tailcoat begins to bark orders to the peasants as they arrange the body on the scaffolding. It has become a funeral pyre. His instructions given, the Queen steps forward. In a voice that wavers between noble pride and overwhelming sorrow, she begins her final oration:

> "Man, pusher of boundaries
> Man, forger of stars…
> great dedicated heart already grown cold in the distance
> rid yourself of your stony pride
> and think of a little old woman
> who, slinking along through dust and rain in
> the blighted day, to the very end of the voyage, will glean your name."

The last words are almost inaudible as she begins to choke up. The page boy gives a brief address, lamenting the king's untimely death. Then, the man in the blue tailcoat steps forward with the final word as the scene draws to a close.

"You brittle-hearted stars

[1] This dramatized account is derived from the final scene of Aimé Césaire's *La Tragédie du roi Christophe*, and the writings of Lucien Lemoine and Jacqueline Scott-Lemoine, cited below. Invented dialogue is indicated with single quotes.

you, born of the pyre of Ethiopian Memnon
You birds, disseminators of pollen
draw for him his imperishable coat of arms
on azure, a red phoenix crowned in gold."

The small orchestra swells to a fanfare, and the scarlet curtains are drawn shut.

The audience is on its feet, erupting into an ovation.

Behind the curtain, the Queen turns to catch the eye of the man in the blue tailcoat. They smile and rush toward one another. They embrace. Now, finally, they can catch their breath. Their long-awaited African debut is over. Although some of their fellow cast members were born in Africa—including the Senegalese Douta Seck in the lead role—this is the first time Jacqueline Scott-Lemoine and her husband Lucien have been on the continent.

'Did you see who was in the audience?' Jacqueline asks.

'Josephine Baker!' replies Lucien. 'And was that Duke Ellington?'

'I saw Emperor Selassie. And I hear Baldwin, Hughes and Alioune Diop are all planning to come later in the week.'

It is an auspicious occasion. This, the first of a string of performances, is part of a weeks-long festival, the first Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres, which the Senegalese government has organized in collaboration with UNESCO. Black luminaries in music, literature, dance, filmmaking, philosophy, visual art and theatre have convened in Dakar for a marathon of exhibitions, lectures, performances and pageantry.

Against a flow constant activity as the show is cleaned up and prepared for tomorrow's performance, Jacqueline and Lucien make their way backstage. They arrive in the green room where two men are speaking and laughing together. The men turn to greet the actors. Jacqueline and Lucien know one of them well. The other they recognize but have never met. The first, the

Martinican Aimé Césaire who wrote the play they have just performed, kisses them on both cheeks and turns to introduce them to his old friend.

'Jacqui, Lucien,' he says, 'allow me to introduce you to our host, President Léopold Sédar Senghor; Léo, meet Jacqueline and Lucien Lemoine of Haiti.'

'Welcome to Dakar,' Senghor beams, shaking their hands. 'Haitians are always welcome in our country. The first country where Négritude stood on its own two feet, *n'est-ce pas*, Aimé?'

'*Mais oui*, Léo,' Césaire agrees, smiling.

'It was a magnificent performance,' the president adds.

'*Merci*, *Monsieur President*,' Lucien stammers.

'Perhaps a bit on the nose given the situation in your country, *hein*?' the president adds with a wink.

'Ignore him,' Césaire laughs at his friend. 'Besides, perhaps it was not a Haitian king that I had in mind when I wrote it.'

Senghor brushes off the comment.

'I hope you will explore the rest of the festival and the country before you return to Haiti,' he says to the actors.

'We won't be returning any time soon,' Jacqueline says with a sigh. 'President Duvalier has made the country unliveable.'

'Where will you go?' Senghor asks.

'Back to Paris, I suppose,' says Lucien.

'*Non*,' Senghor says, resolute. 'There is much work to do in Africa, especially for citizens of the first Black Republic. There are many Haitians living in Dakar already. We will find jobs for you. *Restez*! You are home here.'

Jacqueline and Lucien look at each. They hesitate to respond, although they already know their answer.

They will remain in Dakar.

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The event that brought Jacqueline Scott-Lemoine and her husband to Senegal—the performance of Aimé Césaire's *La Tragédie du roi Christophe* at Dakar's Daniel Sorano National Theatre during the Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres—was a red-letter event in the History of Black internationalism. It highlights the historical connection between the Haitian Revolution and the decolonization of Africa over 150 years later. In a sense, the collapse of first French colonial empire came face-to-face with the collapse of the second. Here was a play about the Haitian Revolution and its aftermath, written by one of the fathers of Négritude, staged in the former capital of French West Africa on the invitation of one of the other fathers of Négritude, featuring a cast of Haitians and Africans, and performed in front of towering Black artists and intellectuals from across the planet.

The play invokes Haitian history to issue a warning to Africa. The plot revolves around Henri Christophe as the leader of a newly independent nation, built on the notion of Black dignity and equality for all, who nevertheless betrays the promise of liberty in the pursuit of national and personal grandeur. Christophe attempts to build an imposing citadel, a monument to Haiti's historical significance, and ends up essentially re-enslaving his subjects in order to carry out this grandiose scheme. Ultimately, Christophe meets a tragic end, taking his own life as his power is slipping away. The play is considered one of Césaire's finest literary achievements, and

many commentators have noted the authors apparent motivation in issuing a warning for nascent African states and their leaders.[2] Césaire understood the neocolonial potential of new African leaders and used his play to depict what could happen if the interests of the African masses were subordinated to state-building schemes or the personal aspirations of presidents. In particular, Césaire was leveling a criticism against for his old friend, President Senghor, whom he believed was becoming too pragmatic, abandoning his earlier idealism and adopting modernizing projects from above without consulting with the people.[3]

If the dramatic events of Haiti's history contained a warning, so too did its contemporary situation. For the past nine years, Haiti had been under the control of President François Duvalier. Two years earlier, Duvalier had declared himself President for Life, and his grip on Haitian society had grown more and more destructive. He targeted opponents to his regime and crippled independent institutions like the legislature, the Catholic Church and the military. Duvalier triggered a mass exodus, which included a considerable portion of the country's professionals and intelligentsia, and many more desperate peasants. Hundreds of thousands of Haitians left Duvalier's Haiti and settled in cities like Miami, New York, Montreal and Paris. Some also headed to Africa, where they hoped to find a more settled existence and to contribute to the development of newly independent nations in the Haitian people's ancestral homeland.

But Jacqueline, Lucien and their fellow exiles were not the first Haitians to arrive in Africa. By 1966, Haitians had been visiting the continent for a variety of reasons for at least seven decades. Part 5 follows the experiences of several individuals, from the first known

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[2] Nick Nesbitt, "History and Nation-Building in Aimé Césaire's 'La Tragédie du Roi Christophe,'" *Journal of Haitian Studies* Vol. 3/4, (1997-1998): 132.
[3] Christina S. McMahon, "Theatre and the Politics of Display: *The Tragedy of King Christophe* at Senegal's First World Festival of Negro Arts," in *Modernization as Spectacle in Africa*, ed. Peter Bloom, Stephan F. Miescher and Takyiwaa Manuh (Bloomington: Indiana University Press: 2014), 287–288.

Haitian to travel to Africa in the 1890s to visit the emperor of Ethiopia, to the community of Haitians who laid down roots in Dakar in the 1960s and contributed directly to the nation- and state-building projects there. As we have seen in previous chapters, Haiti had a long and complex influence on events in French Africa. On the one hand, the memory of Saint-Domingue fuelled and guided French activities on the African continent. On the other, Haitians in Paris challenged the basis French rule in Africa while their compatriots at the League of Nations and United Nations pushed for decolonization. In this final chapter of the story of Haitian influence on Africa, the two sides finally meet face to face. Here, we will follow the travels of numerous Haitians who made their way to different parts of Africa during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

I have divided my analysis of Haitian migrations to Africa into two chapters. First, I look at Haitians who travelled to Africa in the colonial period, and whom I refer to as the Pioneers. I use this term conscientiously: on the one hand, they certainly laid a trail that later Haitians followed. On the other, like the pioneers of the United States frontier, they were in many ways complicit with the colonialist system. They operated with the support of European interests, and their goals are sometimes difficult to parse from the aims of European colonialism. After that, in chapter 11, I narrow in on the Haitian community in Dakar and examine how they contributed to decolonization and nation-building on the ground. I refer to this group as the Expatriates. By tracing the trajectory and transformations from the Pioneers to the Expatriates, we can gain a deeper understanding of the long story of Haitian involvement in Africa.

- 10 -
The Pioneers:
From Benito to Suzanne

In the colonial period, Saint-Domingue was still importing large numbers of enslaved people from Africa right up to the time of the revolution. The twisted economics of the plantation complex meant that instead of treating enslaved labourers humanely, it was more cost-effective for planters to work them to death and then replace them. It is estimated that when the revolution began in 1791 between one half and two thirds of the colony's enslaved population were *nègres bossales*—they had been born and enslaved in Africa.[1] As a result, a significant portion of the first generation of citizens of independent Haiti had first-hand knowledge of Africa. This demographic composition had a profound impact on the development of the national culture. The Haitian scholar Jean Casimir has noted that "Haitians of African origin were in fact the first on the American continent to stop receiving deportees from their motherland," but that Haiti, nevertheless, "remains one of the lands in America most influenced by African traditions."[2] The legacy of diverse African people groups is evident in the Kreyòl language, the Vodou religion, and in Haiti's folklore and cultural practices.[3]

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[1] Jean Casimir, "La Révolution de 1804 et l'état," in *Genèse de l'état haïtien*, ed. Michel Hector and Laënnec Hubron (Paris: Éditions de la maison des sciences de l'homme, 2009), 77–92; Carolyn E. Fick, *The Making of Haiti* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press), 25. For an important study on the Haitian revolutionaries' African origins, see John K. Thornton, "'I am the Subject of the King of Kongo': African Political Ideology and the Haitian Revolution," *Journal of World History* 4, no. 2 (1993): 181–214.

[2] Jean Casimir, *The Haitians: A Decolonial History*, trans. Laurent Dubois (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 292.

[3] For a recent work detailing the African origins of Haitian Vodou, see Benjamin Hebbelthwaite, *A Transatlantic History of Haitian Vodou: Rasin Figuier, Rasin Bwa Kayiman, and the Rada and Gede Rites* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2021).

In spite of this cultural conservation, Haiti was almost completely isolated from Africa for much of its first century. In a 1989 study of Haitian culture, the eminent scholar of Haitian literature, Léon François Hoffmann wrote that as far as he could determine, only three Haitians had any first-hand experience of Africa between 1804 and 1935.[4] Today, more than three decades later, I have only been able to add five individuals (three somewhat dubiously) to their number. Before examining Hoffmann's three individuals, it is worth taking a moment to consider the five that he overlooked.

As noted, three are somewhat dubious, while two should certainly be added to Hoffmann's list. The Spiritan missionary Eugène Tisserant was born in Paris in 1814 to a French father and a Haitian mother. Though a French citizen, he worked in Haiti for a time and was briefly Head of the Catholic Church in Haiti, before being appointed Prefect Apostolic of Guinea. He embarked for Africa but died en route in a shipwreck off the coast of Morocco.[5] It is possible he visited the mission fields on the continent at some point before he perished. If so, Tisserant would be a contender for the title of first Haitians to travel to Africa. But admittedly it is a stretch since he might not have actually made it to Africa.

Likewise, Joseph Tomei might have been a Haitian in Africa. Tomei was born in Port-de-Paix around 1894.[6] By 1927, he was in the Senegal colony working as a land surveyor for the Service Topographique. [7] Around 1932, he arrived in Conakry, Guinée, in the same role, and

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[4] Léon-François Hoffmann, *Haiti: couleurs, croyances, créole* (Montreal: CIDIHCA, 1989), 37.
[5] Henry J. Koren, *To The Ends of the Earth: A General History of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1983), 143, 168, 190, 238–242.
[6] One reference says he was born in 'Port Prince' [*sic*]. More typically and more convincingly, however, his birthplace is listed as Port-de-Paix.
[7] General Government of French West Africa, *Colonie du Sénégal: Compte définitif des recettes et des dépenses, Exercices 1929* (Saint-Louis: Imprimerie du Gouvernement, 1931), 265; General Government of French West Africa, *Colonie du Sénégal: Compte définitif des recettes et des dépenses, Exercices 1928* (Saint-Louis: Imprimerie du Gouvernement, 1931), 254.

within two years he was promoted to chief surveyor of the topographical service.[8] In 1936 he was named an assessor for the Criminal Tribunal in Conakry.[9] He continued working in Guinée until at least 1945, enjoying occasional vacations in France with his wife and daughter.[10] Altogether, Tomei seems to have spent as much as eighteen years in Africa. Clearly, he would qualify as a Haitian in Africa. However, it seems possible that Tomei's father had been a French merchant stationed in Port-de-Paix, and it is unclear if his mother was French or Haitian. He may have been one of the first Haitians in Africa, or he may simply have been a Frenchman born abroad.

A third individual who might be considered a Haitian in Africa is Camille Saint-Jacques, whom we have already encountered. Born the illegitimate child of a Haitian father and a Martinican mother in Paris's affluent Neuilly-sur-Seine neighbourhood in 1902, Saint-Jacques was never a Haitian citizen. However, he was often described as a Haitian and, as we have seen, he clearly felt a connection to his country's anti-colonial past. Some sources say he spent his childhood in Tunisia, though I have yet to see compelling evidence to support this.[11] There is little doubt, however, that his father, the Haitian millionaire Sylla Laraque, should be considered one of the first Haitians in Africa. As noted, after leaving Haiti and establishing himself in France, he bought a vineyard in Tunisia in 1904. As a condition of the sale, he agreed to spend part of the year in Tunisia, and by 1909 he had helped establish an annual directory and a French library in Zaghouan.[12] Laraque can thus be considered the second known Haitian to have set foot in Africa.

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[8] "Actes du gouvernement local," *Journal officiel de la Guinée française*, 1 April 1934, 201.
[9] "Actes du gouvernement local," *Journal officiel de la Guinée française*, 15 December 1936, 793.
[10] "Avis et Communications," *Journal official de la Guinée française*, 1 March 1945, 88.
[11] Goebel, *Anti-Imperial*, 179.
[12] *Annuaire de caïdat de Zaghouan* (Tunis: Imprimerie Nouvelle A. Fouquet, 1909), 2, 58, 75.

Another Haitian who certainly travelled to Africa prior to 1935—if just barely—was Léo Sajous. As we saw in chapter 7, Sajous is well known for his work with Paulette Nardal on the publication of the influential Black internationalist paper *Le Revue du monde noir* in the early 1930s. After making this and other important contributions to the growing Pan-Africanist and anti-colonial movement in Paris, Sajous made his way to Liberia in 1934. Here, he was involved in a somewhat unexpected effort to forge an economic connection between Liberia and Poland. This project never materialized, and some critics viewed it as another form of European colonialism.[13] More significantly, Sajous also used his medical expertise to bolster public health services in Liberia, where he remained for over ten years.[14]

Altogether, then, at least two and possibly as many as five known Haitians (and surely some unknown ones) had direct knowledge of Africa between 1804 and 1935 in addition to the three that Hoffmann identified in 1989. As members of their country's elite, they likely shared the biases of their class, and all five of them were in some way complicit in the colonial system. One was a missionary, one a land surveyor for the colonial administration, two, a father and son, owned land in a French protectorate, and one, though he worked to strengthen an independent African state, also dabbled with European economic expansion, albeit with a European country he did not consider to be colonialist.

Let us turn now to the three Haitians whom Hoffmann identified as having direct experience of Africa between 1804 and 1935: Félix Darfour, Desaix Backer[15] and Benito

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[13] See Piotr Puchalski, "The Polish Mission to Liberia, 1934–1938: Constructing Poland's Colonial Identity," *The Historical Journal* 60, no. 4 (2017): 1071–1096; Milena Skulimowska, "Poland's Colonial Aspirations and the Question of a Mandate over Liberia, 1933–1939," *The Historical Journal* 65 (2022): 730–749.
[14] "L'Association pour le développement des relations médicales," *Conjonction*, January 1946, 59.
[15] There is some confusion over Desaix Backer's name. Hoffmann renders Desaix Backer's surname 'Baker,' but on his own book Backer's named is rendered 'Desaix Backer.' In the 1922 *Annales de la propagation de la foi* he is listed as 'Alype Desaix-Baker,' and in Roger Dorsinville's memoirs he calls him 'Alip Baker.' He also seems to have written under the pseudonym 'Aimard Le Sage.'

Sylvain. Darfour is believed to have been born in the mid-eighteenth century in the interior of northern Africa (his surname refers to the Darfur region in what is now South Sudan). He made his way to France for an education, and, by 1818, to Haiti, where he became a citizen. He founded a newspaper and famously denounced the treatment of Black Haitians by the country's light-skinned elites. As a result of his activism, he fell afoul of the government and was executed in 1822. Darfour's is undoubtedly an intriguing story in Haitian/French/African transnational history and has been examined elsewhere.[16] But since we are concerned here with Haitians travelling to Africa, and not the other way around, we need not dwell on him here.

Hoffmann's second and third cases are more relevant for the current study. Like Eugène Tisserant, Desaix Backer was a Catholic missionary of the Spiritan order. He worked in the Senegal colony in the 1930s, spending time in Dakar, Thiès, Saint-Louis, Gorée and the hinterland. He produced a book about his travels entitled *Dans les brousses africaines*, which was published in Haiti in 1935. Hoffmann notes that the book "gives no indication, besides the photo of its author, of his national or ethnic origin," and, in the book, "one can find the mixture of irony and condescension characteristic of accounts of travels in Africa."[17] The book is rife with this irony and condescension. A few examples will suffice.

On leaving France, Backer explains that he is travelling to Africa because "brutish souls lead the lives of beasts there," and he was "determined, in the memory of the Master, to convert them."[18] He ponders the supposed torpor of the African people: "what fatality condemned the Black race to this long stagnation, this tendency always to fall back under its own weight into the

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[16] Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti Made During a Residence in that Republic* (London: Colburn & Bentley, 1830), 27–28; David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour and National Independence in Haiti* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 42–43; Chelsea Stieber, *Haiti's Paper War: Post-Independence Writing, Civil War, and the Making of the Republic, 1804–1954* (New York: New York University Press, 2020), 133–134.
[17] Hoffmann, *Haiti*, 37.
[18] Desaix Backer, *Dans les brousses africaines* (Port-au-Prince: Chéraquit, 1935), 8.

abyss of its primitive state?"[19] One of his more bald-faced proclamations of Western superiority comes via his description of the formerly-enslaved Liberians:

> Certain individuals, in distancing themselves from their native land, undergo advantageous metamorphoses; others, by contrast, degenerate and fall into a deplorable state of inferiority. The Liberians, emancipated slaves of North America, are a sad example: in an enlightened and industrious milieu, this intelligent people easily assimilated themselves to the whites, and in many circumstances surpassed them. It is a fact: the American Black equals the white in the domain of technical and productive knowledge. But, lo and behold, when these uprooted Blacks are in a sense replanted in their soil, they lose all the aptitudes that we know they had gained. Emulation was good for them. And, it must be said, proximity to whites was as indispensable as water to the fish or air to the animated being.[20]

Finally, while describing the diversity of the people of Africa, Backer makes the following claim: "It must be said that all of the races on the continent have not all received the same intelligence. Whereas one encounters some highly gifted individuals, one also meets others who are more beast than man; their customs and their mores hardly differ from those of monkeys."[21] Despite his Haitian identity, Backer quite clearly adopted a European worldview which held particular assumptions about Western culture and about the African continent and its people. Evidently, he was a pioneer in the colonialist sense, contributing to rather than challenging European domination in Africa.

The third individual that Hoffmann notes is better known and his relationship with Africa is more complex. As we saw in part 3, Benito Sylvain had taken up residence in Paris by the 1890s and established himself as a newspaper publisher and as spokesman for the city's growing Black population. By the middle of the decade, Sylvain's growing Pan-Africanist sentiment drew him to Africa. In the 1890s Ethiopia stood out as one of the last uncolonized regions of the continent. In 1896 the Italians attempted to conquer the territory but were famously defeated at

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[19] Ibid., 17.
[20] Ibid. 16.
[21] Ibid., 18.

the Battle of Adwa. European powers then sought to establish informal ties with Ethiopia. In spring of 1897, Benito Sylvain travelled to the region under the auspices of the French Alliance. En route, he encountered Prince Henri of Orléans, then a famous explorer. In an account of their meeting, the prince commented, "He is a Haytian… charged with a mission from the Alliance française (a society founded, it is well known, for the promotion of the French language, and, consequently, French influence). … The Emperor may well be astonished to see our army represented by an alien mulatto."[22] In Addis Ababa, Sylvain met with Emperor Menelik II, who, according to Sylvain's account, welcomed him as the first representative of Black civilization in the Americas to travel to Ethiopia and gave him the honorary title of aide-de-camp.[23]

According to Sylvain's own testimony he was in Africa as an agent of French colonialism. Shortly after his return, he stated: "I believed I could be of service to the French cause in Ethiopia and I solicited a delegation for the great African empire, whose friendship Europeans are currently fighting for."[24] As a Black man with a profound attachment to French culture, he believed he was uniquely suited to spread French influence. He said:

> I think that it is precisely young foreigners like me who feel a profound attachment to France who should be entrusted with the delicate mission of drawing new sympathies to the glorious nation whose benevolent genius invigorates the human spirit, thereby expanding the sphere of its moral and political influence. Such auxiliaries are particularly precious in countries where racial differences constitute an important political factor and pose a serious obstacle to the infiltration of European ideas and customs.[25]

As we have seen, he believed colonialism could benefit both colonizer and colonized. He had been making this argument for years. In 1892, for example, he stated plainly in the pages of *La Fraternité*:

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[22] Prince Henri of Orléans, "Caravan Travel to Harrar," *The New York Herald (European Edition)*, 1 June 1897, 6.
[23] Benito Sylvain, "Prince Henri and M. Benito Sylvain," *The New York Herald (European Edition)*, 15 June 1897, 3.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.

> Go, take possession of those immense territories; but make sure to put an end to slavery there, that odious triumph of barbarity. Use the arms of the indigenous people to your heart's content, and profit from their labour; but also develop the obscured flame of their intelligence and transform their souls by way of morality and religion. The partition of Africa, according to these conditions, would be the most magnificent, the most praiseworthy, and the most productive accomplishment of modern civilization."[26]

Despite the racism he no doubt faced daily as a Black Parisian, he believed in the ideal of an anti-racist France. He was a devoted supporter of Western Civilization and believed it had much to offer Africa. As such, he did not object to European colonialism outright.

It would be inaccurate, however, to think of Sylvain as a simple agent of French colonialism. His views were affected by his attachment to Western civilization, on the one hand, and his Haitian identity on the other. He did not, for example, believe the European right to colonization was unconditional. In a letter regarding the Cuban war of independence, for example, he said, "For us Haitians, who enjoy full independence, the Cuban question is simple. It is formulated thus: 'Does a people group have the right to use force to dominate another people group who is demanding its liberty?' I defy any honest thinker to dare to answer 'yes' along with Spain."[27] He was fiercely opposed to European excesses in the colonies, and speculated on the eventual possibility of a sovereign, united Africa. He was committed to the maintenance of Ethiopian independence as a steppingstone to a gradual expansion of self-determination in Africa. As noted earlier, in a speech in 1898 he expressed his desire that the Ethiopian emperor would "become the great protector of all the African tribes who have not yet found the path to civilization."[28] And he stated publicly his support for Ethiopian independence, saying, "if ever—God forbid!—Ethiopia's independence is threatened, with a word, I will call the Black Youth to

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[26] Benito Sylvain, "Le Partage de l'Afrique," *La Fraternité*, second week of April 1892, 1.
[27] Benito Sylvain, "The Hayti Lesson," *The New York Herald (European Edition)*, 9 April 1898, 3.
[28] Benito Sylvain, quoted in "La mission abyssine," *La Liberté*, 16 July 1898, 3.

its aid. May God conserve and protect the Negus Menelik, for the good of the Black race!"[29] As we saw in chapter 7, his sincere interest in intra-African cooperation and the movement toward African sovereignty led him to contribute to the Pan-African movement; he helped organize the First Pan-African Conference in London in 1900.

In 1901 he completed a doctorate in law, defending a thesis entitled "De la sort des indigènes dans les colonies d'exploitation." In this work, Sylvain explores the past, present and future of colonialism. He looks at the past of places like Haiti and Cuba and notes that "nations that base their colonial systems on violence and oppression" are doomed to lose their colonies. He exposes and denounces the contemporary abuses on the part of European colonists. Finally, he looks at the future of colonialism. Here, he lays out a view of what he sees as the best-case scenario for colonialism in Africa. Essentially, he believes that European colonialism has the capacity to be a productive force, bringing resources to Europe and "civilization" to Africa. As such, Sylvain again reveals himself to be fundamentally in favour of the French presence in Africa.

Yet, again, it would be inaccurate to call Sylvain a blind apostle of European imperialism. In his rhetoric, there was little to differentiate him from his white European contemporaries—Black or white— who called for the "civilization" of Africa through benevolent imperialism. In the words of one scholar, "like many other Black activists of his type and time he probably would not qualify as particularly radical by today's standards."[30] However, his concerted efforts to oppose the abuses of colonialism and to build connections within Africa and between Africa and its diaspora certainly distinguished him as someone who truly sympathized with the African people. He returned to Ethiopia three times between 1897 and

[29] Ibid.
[30] Martin, *Pan-African*, 201.

1906. In so doing, he became the model of a roving Haitian in Africa. His ambivalence toward French colonialism is characteristic of elite Haitian attitudes toward Africa around the turn of the century. Like Sylvain, many Haitians understood the continent partly through the lens of French imperialism and partly through their own country's unique history with that imperialism. Like Sylvain, many Haitians held an attachment to French culture and were willing to forgive the colonists for their excesses as long as they brought "civilization" and material progress to the continent. But this Eurocentric view of Africa began to transform by the middle of the twentieth century. This transformation was fuelled by the work of another Haitian who, coincidentally, was Benito Sylvain's niece.

In 1898, one year after Benito Sylvain's first voyage to Africa, his brother, the venerated author Georges Sylvain, welcomed his first child into the world—a daughter named Suzanne. For all her famous relatives, Suzanne Sylvain (later Comhaire-Sylvain) is famous in her own right as the first Haitian woman anthropologist. She studied at the Sorbonne, worked with the likes of Bronisław Malinowski, Alfred Métraux and Lilias Homburger, and did post-graduate work at Columbia and Oxford. Throughout her decades-long career, she spent many years in Africa for fieldwork, beginning in the Belgian Congo in 1943 and ending with her untimely death in Nsukka, Nigeria in 1975. As such, she is one of a very small number of Haitians who truly knew both colonial and postcolonial Africa. Having lived through this transitional time, Comhaire-Sylvain was something of a transitional figure in the role Haitians played on the ground in Africa.

In his famous works, Edward Said reminds us that the production of knowledge is a function of colonialism.[31] Colonialist nations produce and claim a monopoly on knowledge about colonized peoples which reinforces domination. More recently, the French historian Emmanuelle Sibeud has described how the field of anthropology, in particular, often served as a tool for colonialism by demonstrating supposed inherent differences between the "civilized" colonist and the "backward" colonial subject.[32] While anthropologists supported colonialism with theories about racial inequality, anthropologists also relied on the colonial system to give them access artifacts and human bones for their research. It was a mutually reinforcing relationship. As a student of a discipline so intertwined with the colonial project, Comhaire-Sylvain no doubt had to grapple with her own proximity to the colonialist system. Colonialism gave her the occasion and the impetus to carry out her initial fieldwork in Africa in the 1940s; her husband, the Belgian anthropologist Jean Comhaire, held a government post in the Belgian Congo during the Second World War.[33] With her elite Western education, it is unsurprising that some modern Haitian scholars detect a bias in favour of a European standard in some of her early writings.[34]

However, as Emmanuelle Sibeud also explains, the field of anthropology was itself in flux in the first half of the twentieth century. As we have seen, the Haitian scholars Louis-Joesph Janvier and Anténor Firmin were pushing for these changes in the 1880s. Finally, after the First World War, many anthropologists grew more sceptical of the meaning of biological race and began to cast doubt on the idea of inherent differences between people groups that formed part of

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[31] Said, *Orientalism*.
[32] Emmanuel Sibeud, "A Useless Colonial Science?: Practicing Anthropology in the French Colonial Empire, circa 1880–1960," *Current Anthropology* 53 no. S5 (April 2012): S83–S94.
[33] "Personality of the Week," *Haiti Sun*, 13 July 1952, 3.
[34] Haitian linguist Michel Degraff points out that her famous study of Kreyòl evinces a subtle assumption of the inferiority of African mentalities. Michel Degraff, "Linguists' Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Creole Exceptionalism," *Language and Society* 34, no. 4 (2005): 556–557.

the justification of imperialism. Sibeud explains that by 1919, a gap had emerged "between anthropologists criticizing the notion of race and working along with social scientists and those obstinately locked in the past supremacy of their specialty grounded in race."[35] As the discipline developed, "linguistics or cultural ethnology provided a sounder basis to classify colonial people," and "physical anthropology thus appeared as a peripheral and eventually troublesome form of leisure."[36] When Comhaire-Sylvain began her studies at the Sorbonne in the early 1930s, she entered a field that was becoming more interested in language and culture than in the obsessive classification of physical bodies; accordingly, her doctoral thesis, published in two volumes in 1936 and 1937, deals with the language and folklore of Haiti.[37]

Developments in Haiti over the first half of the twentieth century must also have impacted Comhaire-Sylvain's view of imperialism and race, and by extension her view of her own work. Several members of the Sylvain family were outspoken critics of the U.S. occupation, in particular her father, Georges, and her brother Normil. Georges Sylvain founded an anti-occupation organization, the Union Patriotique, to coordinate against the occupiers. He faced harsh censorship and suffered financially from his opposition. He died in 1925 while the occupation was still firmly entrenched in Haiti.

Normil Sylvain's opposition to the occupation took a different form. He became a leading figure in the Indigenist movement, which opposed the "civilizing" agenda of the occupation by devoting new interest to and placing greater value on the aspects of Haitian culture that had their roots in Africa. Inspired by Jean Price-Mars and his work, Indigenists studied Haitian folklore, the Vodou religion, the Kreyòl language and Haitian cultural practices and worked to promote

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[35] Sibeud, "Useless," S90.
[36] Ibid., S93.
[37] Suzanne Sylvain, *Le Créole haïtien, morphologie et syntaxe* (Wetteren, Belgium: De Meester, 1936); Suzanne Sylvain, *Les Contes haïtiens* (Wetteren, Belgium: De Meester, 1937).

the African aspects of Haiti's national heritage. None of the Indigenist writers of the 1930s had actually visited Africa, and their writings centred around an exoticized and idealized version of the continent.[38] Still, as we saw in chapter 7, Indigenism had a major impact on Haitian views of Africa generally and even had reverberations in Africa itself as one of the major influences of Négritude. Like his father, Normil died before he could see the end of the occupation.

The loss of her father and brother in the midst of their struggle against the occupation must have affected young Suzanne's attitudes toward colonialism elsewhere in the world. Likewise, the changing appreciation of Africa among intellectuals in her country and among members of her own family seemingly impacted her own views of the continent and its people. She is affiliated with Indigenism in her own right. In her groundbreaking study of Kreyòl, she undertook a thorough investigation of the linguistic system and concluded by insisting on the fundamentally African character of the language, famously saying that "we are in the presence of French poured into the mould of African syntax, or, since languages are generally classed according to their syntactical lineage, of an Ewe language with a French vocabulary."[39] Her book, and this claim in particular, bolstered the Indigenist movement at home.[40]

Between 1937 and 1972, Comhaire-Sylvain crisscrossed the Atlantic carrying out extensive fieldwork in Haiti and in various parts of Africa. She studied languages, folklore and cultural practices in Haitian villages, in the Belgian Congo (1943–1945), independent Zaire (1965), Togo, Dahomey, Ethiopia and Nigeria. She published numerous scholarly articles and book-length studies, and also co-authored works with her husband and with the anthropologists

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[38] Hoffmann, *Haïti*, 37; Max Dorsinville, "Les écrivains haïtiens à Dakar," *La littérature haïtienne* 13, no. 2 (August 1980): 347–348.
[39] Comhaire-Sylvain, *Créole*, 178.
[40] See Matthew Robertshaw, "Haitian Creole Comes of Age: Philology, Orthography, Education and Literature in the 'Haitian Sixties,' 1934–1957," *Journal of Haitian Studies* 26, no 1 (2020): 4–36.

Alfred Métraux and Harold Courlander and the linguist Robert A. Hall. Somehow, she found the time to serve as inspector of schools under Dumarsais Estimé's government in the late 1940s, and as a UN administrator for Togo and the Cameroons between 1949 and 1958. She ultimately settled in Nsukka, Nigeria, where she continued to do research and work at the university there, and where she died unexpectedly in a car crash at the age of seventy-six.[41]

By reinforcing the perceived relationship between Haiti and Africa, Comhaire-Sylvain contributed mightily to the restoration of a spiritual bridge that crossed the Atlantic. Although Haiti's popular culture is essentially African, Haitian elites tended to be ignorant of its depth and its African antecedents. Still, they had always been vaguely aware of an abstract connection to Africa, and many of them grew increasingly curious about it with the advent of the Indigenist movement. By mid-century, Comhaire-Sylvain began to give substance to the abstract relationship with concrete examples. Decades before Richard Price and Sidney Mintz's pathbreaking study of the vestiges of African cultures in the Americas, Suzanne Comhaire-Sylvain—along with other scholars like the American anthropologist Melville Herskovits who was carrying out similar research in Haiti and in Africa around the same time—had already begun to identify numerous cultural practices that Haitians inherited from their African forebears, and that still had parallels in contemporary Africa.

Besides redefining Kreyòl as an "Ewe language with a French vocabulary," Comhaire-Sylvain delved into the folk storytelling traditions of Haiti and of several African societies, collecting and demonstrating countless folktales that existed in variations on both sides of the Atlantic. In her doctoral thesis, which she produced long before setting foot in Africa, she began

[41] Daniel J. Crowley, "Suzanne Comhaire Sylvain (1898–1975)," *Journal of American Folklore* 90, no. 360 (April–June 1978): 701–702.

to make these connections based on secondary source research.[42] In 1940, she published a collection of some of Haiti's best-loved folktales, the Bouki and Ti Malice stories, estimating that half of the tales she collected were "likely of African origin where they are found among diverse tribes."[43] She connects Bouki and Ti Malis to the Hare and Hyena tales of West African and Bantu-speaking peoples, as well as to the Br'er Rabbit stories of Black communities in the United States.[44] Later, after personally spending much time in Africa, she was able to make increasingly sophisticated comparisons. In 1943, during her first stint as a researcher in the Belgian Congo, she interviewed over 600 youths and asked them to recount their favourite traditional folktales.[45] She published the results in a 1973 tome entitled *Qui mange avec une femme: Contes zairois et haïtiens*. As the title suggests, she identified striking thematic similarities between tales told in Lingala or Kikongo and those told in Kreyòl, despite a separation of many generations and several thousand kilometres.

Similarly, in her fieldwork among rural people in Haiti, Africa was never far from her mind. In a 1951 study of Haitian folk music, she identifies numerous dance styles (*bâboulé*, *calenda, chica*, *djouba*,) and instruments (*asô*, *ogâ*, *maniba*/*marimba*) with African antecedents.[46] In a 1964 study of the Haitian market system co-authored with her husband, she calls markets "one of the most conspicuous legacies from Africa to West Indian cultures."[47] She goes on to point out several features of the Haitian market system that are evident in Africa, such

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[42] Suzanne Comhaire-Sylvain, "Les Contes haïtiens," PhD thesis, (Université de Paris, 1937), 132 *ff.*
[43] Suzanne Comhaire-Sylvain, *Le Roman de Bouqui* (1940; reis., Ottawa: Leméac, 1973), 7.
[44] Ibid., 8–9. For a recent analysis of the Bouki and Ti Malis stories and their African counterparts, Fatoumata Seck "Crossing the Atlantic: Bouqui and Malice, a Caribbean Counterpoetics," *Journal of Haitian Studies* 24, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 76–100.
[45] Suzanne Comhaire-Sylvain, *Qui mange avec une femme: Contes zairois et haïtiens* (Bandundu: Ceeba publications, 1973), ii.
[46] Suzanne Comhaire-Sylvain, "La Chanson haïtienne," *Présence africaine* no. 12 (1951): 65, 66, 75, 77.
[47] Suzanne Comhaire-Sylvain and Jean Comhaire, "A Statistical Note on the Kenscoff Market System, Haiti," *Social and Economic Studies* 13 no. 3 (September 1964): 397.

as a tendency to hold markets away from population centres, an apparent aversion to cattle farming, and the staggering of market days "so that enterprising traders (almost all women) may walk from one place to another in regular sequence."[48] In 1971, the couple produced a survey of information on Africa entitled *Le Nouveau Dossier Afrique* and again made passing references to the continent's gifts to Haiti, such as in the entry detailing the Fon people, in which they state that Fon captives "played a primordial role in the Haitian war of independence, with Toussaint Louverture and other leaders of the same origin, and contributed more than any other group to the elaboration of the Kreyòl language and the Vodou religion."[49]

Suzanne Comhaire-Sylvain thus represents a shift in the story of Haitians in Africa. While earlier individuals like Benito Sylvain and Desaix Backer blazed an important trail for her to follow, they largely understood Africa through the lens of a French cultural worldview. By Comhaire-Sylvain's time Haitians were starting to think about Africa on its own terms, and they were starting to better understand the complex historical and cultural connections they shared with the continent. Suzanne Comhaire-Sylvain's work is both a product and a cause of this transformation. Her exposure to the romanticized image of Africa espoused by the Indigenist movement, her family's anti-imperialism in the face of the U.S. occupation, the legacy of her famous uncle, and her personal travels to Africa were all indispensable to the part she played in the transformation of transatlantic connections between Haiti and the African continent.

As it happens, Benito and Suzanne were only the first of many Sylvains to make the trip to Africa. Three of Suzanne's siblings spent part of their lives on the continent. Her sister Yvonne

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[48] Ibid. 398, 399, 401.
[49] Suzanne Comhaire-Sylvain and Jean Comhaire, *Nouveau dossier Afrique* (Verviers, Belgium: Marabout University, 1971), 57.

was Haiti's first female doctor, an obstetrician-gynecologist a cancer researcher who worked tirelessly to tackle the medical problems facing impoverished people in Haiti and elsewhere. Her expertise brought her to the Congo-Léopoldville, Nigeria and Senegal as a reproductive health specialist with the World Health Organization.[50] Another sister, Madeleine, was a sociologist and a feminist who fought for women's rights in Haiti. She worked for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration and on the Commission on the Status of Women under the UN's Economic and Social Council. In the late 1960s she served as a community development advisor for the government of Togo.[51] Their brother Pierre was a horticulturist who worked as a coffee specialist for the Food and Agriculture Organization in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.[52] A first cousin, Edmond Sylvain, was a career diplomat who, in 1960, briefly served as the educational expert for the United Nations Operation in the Congo and as UNESCO's chief representative in the newly independent state before working for several years as a professor in Kinshasa.[53]

Finally, Edmond Sylvain's daughter Raymonde also made the trek. While studying History at the Sorbonne in 1950 she met a Senegalese student named Amadou Makhtar M'Bow. They got married in 1951 and settled in Dakar.[54] After Senegal won its independence, M'Bow served as Minister of Education and then Culture and Youth Affairs before working for UNESCO, ultimately serving as its director-general from 1974 to 1987. In an interview in the 1980s, Raymonde M'Bow was asked about her family's connection to Africa. "At the Sylvain home," the interviewer reported,

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[50] Louise Price, "Women in the News," *Pi Lambda Theta Journal* 26 no. 1 (October 1947): 53; Jasmine Narcisse, *Mémoire des Femmes* (Port-au-Prince: UNICEF-Haiti, 1997), 82–83.
[51] Narcisse, *Mémoire*, 51–52.
[52] Pierre G. Sylvain, "Ethiopian Coffee: It's Significance to World Coffee Problems," *Economic Botany* 12 no. 2 (1958): 111.
[53] Garry Fullerton, *UNESCO in the Congo* (Paris: UNESCO, 1964), 50.
[54] Thassinda Uba Thassinda, *Amadou Mahtar M'Bow: Un sahélien à l'UNESCO* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1989),120–121.

> Africa was not exactly *terra incognita*. They spoke about it regularly. Benito Sylvain had lived in Ethiopia. He even wrote a book demanding Ethiopia's independence. It is true that Benito Sylvain had a sort of veneration for Africa. In any case, Haitians, more than other Blacks from the Antilles, have always held a nostalgia for Africa, land of their ancestors. In the Haitian countryside, in particular, Africa continues to nourish the popular imagination. 'Everything that was happening in Africa,' insists Mrs. Raymonde M'Bow, 'interested my family. We talked all about it, and without really ever having the opportunity to encounter Africa or Africans, I was predisposed to accept them just as they are.'[55]

Apparently, Benito Sylvain set a strong example for his nieces and nephews to follow. Through their influence and publications, the Sylvains added nuance and sophistication to the idea of Africa in Haiti. In Africa, several members of the Sylvain family did their part to contribute to processes of change in newly independent states. In so doing, they blazed a trail that many of their compatriots would soon follow.

[55] Ibid. 121.

- 11 -
The Expatriates:
A Haitian Community in Dakar

The late 1950s and early 1960s are a particular interesting juncture in the joint histories of Haiti and Africa. In Haiti, François Duvalier came to power in 1957 and gradually eroded civil liberties and opposition to his regime, which provoked a mass exodus of Haiti's highly educated middle class. As opponents of Duvalier's anti-democratic regime, many of these exiles were politically left-leaning and defenders of human rights and freedoms. At the same time, on the other side of the Atlantic, the continent of Africa was in the throes of decolonization. Many progressive Haitians, finding themselves in limbo, thought it only natural to make their way to Africa and get involved in the historic transformations taking place there. In this final chapter, we will follow the divergent paths that four Haitians took to Dakar in the 1960s before examining how each of them contributed to early developments in the young Republic of Senegal.

The youngest, and the first to arrive, was the playwright, poet and journalist Gérard Chenet. Chenet was born in 1927 and attended schools in Port-au-Prince with some of the most famous writers of his generation, including Jacques Stephen Alexis and René Depestre with whom he founded the Marxist-oriented newspaper *La Ruche*. At the age of eighteen, in the midst of the excitement following the Second World War and the birth of the United Nations, Chenet and his peers helped organize the student strike that spread through Port-au-Prince, destabilized the Lescot regime and ultimately ushered in the relatively democratic era following the

Revolution of 1946.[1] Chenet found work in Estimé's government, helping to organize Port-au-Prince's Bicentennial Expo in 1949. He worked for another newspaper, the organ of the Popular Socialist Party, until military rule returned under Paul Magloire in 1950, and the newspaper was suppressed. Unable to find work, Chenet left the country. He went to Canada in 1955 to study architecture, but then relocated to East Germany, where he studied political science and African history at Karl Marx University, also travelling to Moscow to attend Khrushchev's World Festival of Youth and Students in 1957.[2]

That same year, François Duvalier came to power in Haiti. Chenet, as a well-known dissident, became *persona non grata* in his country. The next year, Guinea became the first sub-Saharan African colony to win its independence from France.[3] Its leader, Ahmed Sekou Touré, called on the progressives of the world to flock to the country. Chenet obliged in 1960. He lived in Guinea for two years, teaching history at a lycée in Conakry and studying African cultures under the auspices of the Institut français d'Afrique noire. By 1962, Sekou Touré had taken on a dictatorial style; in Chenet's words, he "had become a character akin to Duvalier."[4] At this time, Chenet wrote a play about the nineteenth century West African leader El Hadj Omar, whom Chenet presents as a proto-democratic figure in contrast to Sekou Touré's authoritarianism. Léopold Senghor, the president of newly independent Senegal, wrote to Chenet to tell him how much he appreciated the play. Senghor invited Chenet to stage the play in Dakar. So, in 1962, at the age of thirty-five, Chenet relocated to Senegal where he lived for the rest of his long life.[5]

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[1] Smith, *Red and Black*, 76–77.
[2] Gérard Chenet, "Gérard Chenet, 5 questions pour Île en île," interview by Giscard Bourchotte, 4 January 2012, video, 6:36–41:58, http://ile-en-ile.org/gerard-chenet-5-questions-pour-ile-en-ile; Joëlle Vitiello, "Gérard Chenet," Île en île, 16 May 2010, http://ile-en-ile.org/chenet.
[3] Morocco and Tunisia, which had won their independence from France two years earlier, were technically protectorates, not colonies.
[4] "Gérard Chenet," 28:15.
[5] "Gérard Chenet," 18:10–41:58; Vitiello, "Gérard Chenet."

Two years after Chenet arrived in Dakar, another Haitian poet and radical journalist joined him. This was Jean Fernand Brierre. Born in Jérémie in 1909, Brierre was a generation ahead of Chenet. As such, he came of age during the U.S. occupation, which profoundly impacted his outlook. In his words, "my childhood ended at the age of six… the day the American Occupation came to my native city. Thus, I began suffering very young."[6] His early adult life was a strange cavalcade of working for the Haitian government and opposing it, more than once resulting in his imprisonment. He was involved with the 1929 student strike that set in motion the gradual disintegration of the U.S. occupation. He was arrested and briefly held for his participation in the strike, bringing him nation-wide recognition. During the strike, U.S. Marines gunned down a group of protestors in Les Cayes. When Brierre held a vigil for the deceased in February 1930 he was arrested a second time.[7] Within months, he was appointed secretary of the Haitian Legation in Paris—another instance of the Haitian government keeping agitators at a distance via diplomatic posts.[8] In 1932, he had returned to Haiti and founded an anti-occupation newspaper, *La Bataille*. As a result of his criticism of the U.S. administration, he was once again imprisoned, this time for 20 months.[9]

After the occupation ended in 1934, Brierre enjoyed a more settled existence for a time. In the early 1940s, he was appointed inspector of schools in his hometown of Jérémie. In 1942, he travelled to New York City to attend Columbia University. Here, he befriended Langston Hughes and met anti-imperialists from India and Africa as well as progressives from France,

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[6] Herman F. Bostick, "Poetic Encounters: An Interview with Jean F. Brierre," *CLA Journal* 26, no. 3 (March 1983): 280.
[7] "L'incident d'hier," *Le Matin*, 13 February 1930, 1.
[8] "A la légation de Paris," *Le Matin,* 4 June 1930, 1.
[9] "Jean Brierre, le poète," *Le Nouvelliste*, 15 February 1955, 1, 6; Bostick, "Poetic Encounters," 277–287; Mercer Cook, "Jean F. Brierre, Poet and Hero," *Negro History Bulletin* 9, no. 6 (March 1946): 125–128, 141–142; Lucien Lemoine, "Jean F. Brierre," Île en île, 11 September 2005, http://ile-en-ile.org/brierre; "Jean Brierre, l'homme et l'oeuvre," *Le Nouvelliste*, 28 May 2010.

Belgium, Spain, Italy and China, displaced by war. His time in New York greatly expanded his worldview, and he was "fired with renewed zeal to help his country advance."[10] On his return to Haiti in 1943, he devoted himself to literature and journalism with the aim of inspiring the younger generation to demand the extensions of civil rights and democracy in Haiti. He was soon imprisoned again, this time for agitating during the Revolution of 1946, but his supporters quickly demanded his release. In the late 1940s and 1950s he served in numerous government posts, most notably as director of the National Office of Tourism. In this role he made a major contribution to his country, helping to usher in Haiti's golden age of tourism in the 1950s.[11] He later served as Haiti's ambassador to Argentina, and once intervened to spirit a group of Peronist rebels out of the country to safety.[12] After Duvalier came to power in 1957, Brierre found himself at odds with the authorities once again. He tried to make a life for himself outside of government service, practicing law and running a bookstore.[13] Nevertheless, he was jailed repeatedly. When he was released in 1961, he took refuge in the Brazilian embassy for eleven months and decided to leave the country.[14] In August 1962 he went to Jamaica and then finally headed to Senegal in 1964.[15] He remained in Dakar for more than twenty years.[16]

Two years after Brierre's arrival, another writer joined the growing Haitian community in Dakar. His name was Félix Morisseau-Leroy. Morisseau (as he was known) was a poet and playwright and was most famous for his pioneering work in Kreyòl-language literature.[17] Born in

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[10] Cook, "Jean F. Brierre," 127.
[11] "Une distinction bien méritée, Jean F. Brière, Commandeur de l'ordre 'honeur et mérite,'" *Le Nouvelliste*, 1 December 1951, 1; Smith, *Red and Black*, 107.
[12] "Jean Brierre Home From Argentina Episode," *Haiti Sun*, 29 July 1956, 16.
[13] "The Poets on Haiti's Map," *Haiti Sun*, 9 April 1961, 12.
[14] "Foe of Regime Leaves Haiti," *New York Times,* 12 August 1962, 4.
[15] "Brierre and Leger Leave for Kingston," *Haiti Sun*, 12 August 1962, 1.
[16] "Jean Brierre, le poète," 6; Cook, "Jean F. Brierre," 125–128, 142; Bostick, "Poetic Encounters," 277–287, Lemoine, "Jean F. Brierre"; "L'homme et l'oeuvre."
[17] See Robertshaw, "Haitian Creole Comes of Age," 23–27.

Grand-Gosier in 1912, his anti-authoritarian outlook was also shaped by his early years under the U.S. occupation. At the age of seventeen, he organized demonstrations against the occupation, for which he was, in his words, "invited to come to the police station three times in a month and a half."[18] He got his start as a teacher and journalist before travelling to Columbia University to study education. Like Brierre, Morisseau's time in New York City greatly impacted his understanding of global transformations and Haiti's place within them. On his return in 1942, he served as General Director of Urban Education, and later as Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Secretary to the Council of the University of Haiti and Director of the Ministry of Public Information.

In this period, he established himself as a champion of Kreyòl-language education, believing that the strict use of French in schools was a barrier for the mass of Kreyòl monolinguals in Haiti. In 1953, aware of the desperate need to bridge the linguistic divide in Haiti, Morisseau began to experiment with Kreyòl language literature. He wrote a collection of Kreyòl poems, which is considered the first significant use of the language as a vehicle for literary expression.[19] He also wrote an adaptation of Sophocles's *Antigone* in Kreyòl, which was staged in Port-au-Prince's Rex Theatre and in rural Haiti for an illiterate audience. The play was a major coup. It met rave reviews and had an impact on changing perceptions of the language as a fully sophisticated language and not simply a vulgar dialect of French. Morisseau thereby settled into his vocation; social transformation by way of vernacular literature became the theme of his life in Haiti and beyond.[20]

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[18] Judy Cantor, "The Voice of Haiti," *Miami Times*, 2 May 1996.
[19] Georges Castera, "La poésie de Felix Morisseau-Leroy," *Demanbre: Revue haïtienne de littérature de critique et de théorie sociale* 1 (2012), 106.
[20] Cantor, "Voice of Haiti"; Jeffery Knapp and Stephen Malagodi, *Felix Moriso-Lewa, a portrait of the poet* (Miami: WLRN Radio, 1987); Félix Morrisseau-Leroy, *Le destin des Caraïbes* (Port-au-Prince: Telhomme, 1941); "Antigone adaptation créole de Morisseau Leroy," *Nouvelliste*, 16 July 1953, 1; "Bonhomme's Soul Enters Into His Creole Acting," *Haiti Sun*, 27 September 1953, 8.

By the time Duvalier came to power, Morisseau had earned a reputation as a progressive. Just weeks after the election, Morisseau left the country, having won a UNESCO arts scholarship for a six-month lecture tour of Europe. Along the way, he convinced the organizers to arrange for him to visit Dahomey—his first visit to Africa. While he was away, friends told him he should not return, or he would be arrested. Nonetheless, Morisseau returned to Haiti in spring 1958. He was not arrested, but he received regular threats as the administration made it clear that he was not safe. In 1959, he found an excuse to leave the country when his UNESCO connections helped him arrange to bring his theatre troupe to Paris to perform his Kreyòl version of *Antigone*. He did not return to Haiti for twenty-seven years. In Paris, Morisseau met Léopold Sédar Senghor who was on the cusp of becoming Senegal's first president, and he was inspired to return to Africa. First, he took a job teaching French at a university in Nigeria. After a few months, he was invited to give a lecture on popular theatre in Accra, Ghana. Kwame Nkrumah's government then appointed him "National Organizer of Drama and Literature." When Nkrumah fell in a coup d'état in 1966, Morisseau finally made his way to Dakar. He lived in Senegal for fifteen years.[21]

A fourth Haitian who settled in Dakar in this period was Jacqueline Scott-Lemoine. Jacqueline Scott was born in 1923 and was raised by her uncle, a professional stage actor. She worked as a secretary and a TV and radio presenter in Haiti. In the late 1940s and early 1950s she followed after her uncle and began to make a living as a stage actor. Like Morisseau, she was part of a popular theatre troupe, the Société Nationale d'Art Dramtique, that performed Kreyòl language plays for working-class and rural Haitians. When Duvalier came to power, her troupe

[21] Cantor, "Voice of Haiti"; James Gibbs, *Nkyin-Kyin: Essays on the Ghanaian Theatre* (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 2009); Knapp and Malagodi, *Felix Moriso-Lewa*; Félix Morisseau-Leroy, "Return to Dahomey, My Ancestral Home," *Haiti Sun*, 1 February 1959, 1, 4, 16; Personal correspondence with Albert Morisseau-Leroy.

was persecuted. At least once, Duvalier's secret police, the *tonton makout*, had "weapons aimed at them throughout the performance."[22] The following day Duvalier called the troupe's administrator into the palace and had him beaten. Finding the country unliveable, in her words, Scott left in 1962.[23] She found went to Paris and took a job in radio, and she married the Haitian actor and poet Lucien Lemoine in 1964. She appeared in a stage adaptation of Jacques Roumain's *Gouverneurs de la rosée*, and she was soon scouted by the French theatre director Jean-Marie Serreau to appear in Aimé Césaire's play about Haiti, *La Tragédie du roi Christophe*. This was the role that brought her to Africa.[24]

As noted at the start of this section, the first Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres took place in Dakar in April 1966. Black luminaries from across the globe convened in the city for twenty-four days of lectures, film premieres, art exhibitions, and musical and theatrical performances as President Senghor sought to draw attention to the city and forge connections with the African diaspora. He asked his friend Aimé Césaire to stage a play for the event, and Césaire chose *La Tragédie du roi Christophe*. As noted, the performance is something of a red-letter event in the history of Black internationalism generally, and in the connection between Haiti and Africa in particular. The performance was also significant for Jacqueline Scott-Lemoine. In Dakar, she encountered the city's Haitian community and decided to stay. Along with Lucien, she lived in Dakar until her death 45 years later in 2011.

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[22] Jacqueline Scott-Lemoine, "Jacqueline Scott-Lemoine (1923, Port-au-Prince, Haïti – 2011, Dakar, Sénégal). Extrait d'un entretien avec Louis Carl Saint Jean," *Présence Africaine* no. 184 (2011), 250.
[23] "L'actrice Jacqueline Scott-Lemoine est décédée," RFI, 10 July 2011. https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20110710-actrice-senegalaise-jacqueline-scott-lemoine-est-morte.
[24] Giscard Bouchotte, "Jacqueline Scott-Lemoine," Île en île, 16 February 2009, http://ile-en-ile.org/scott; Jacqueline Scott-Lemoine, "Jacqueline Scott-Lemoine, 5 questions pour Île en île," interview by Giscard Bourchotte, 27 December 2010, video, 22:52, http://ile-en-ile.org/jacqueline-scott-lemoine-5-questions-pour-ile-en-ile.

By 1966, then, Gérard Chenet, Jean F. Brierre, Félix Morisseau-Leroy and Jacqueline Scott-Lemoine had all settled in as part of Dakar's Haitian enclave. They each made their way to Africa along a different trajectory, but each voyage can be described in similar terms: they all left Haiti, or chose not to return, because of François Duvalier, and they all ended up in Dakar because of its reputation as a hub for progressive, French-speaking members of the African diaspora. Thus, they represent a distinct migration pattern. Demographic data are sparse, but it seems likely that this Haiti-to-Senegal route was one of the larger movements of Haitians to Africa, perhaps second only to the contingent of Haitians who travelled to Africa (mainly Zaire) under the auspices of the United Nations. Régine O. Jackson pegs this latter group at as many as 7,500 Haitians, but many of these were only on the continent temporarily.[25] In 1982, the Haitian geographer Georges Anglade put the number of Haitians who had settled in Africa since 1962 at just 2,000, expanding the figure to 25,000 in 2005.[26] In the 1960s there were likely only a few thousand Haitians living in Africa for extended periods. A significant portion of these appear to have been in Dakar, and this group should be considered an important if underacknowledged branch of the Haitian diaspora.

One member of this community, the novelist and ethnographer Roger Dorsinville, recalled his time among the Dakar's Haitian community in his memoirs. He remembers the Haitian expatriates as a small, tight-knit group of mostly artists and intellectuals and their families. When he arrived in Dakar in 1972, he recalls, "Didie Brierre [Jean's wife] would invite me for a meal on Sundays; Kessler Clermont daily; the Lecontes and Lemoines kept their doors

[25] Jackson, "Failure of Categories," 35.
[26] Georges Anglade, *Espace et liberté en Haïti* (Montreal: ERCE, 1982); "Georges Anglade, Les Haïtiens dans le monde," Île en île, 21 April 2009, http://ile-en-ile.org/georges-anglade-les-haitiens-dans-le-monde.

opened. Gérard Chenet put his studio at my disposal for as long as I wished."[27] Although they considered themselves to be in exile, the community was characterized by mobility; Dorsinville notes that "among the Haitians of Dakar there was always guessing as to who was on his way east, west or south."[28] But for some Haitians, Dakar became, if not necessarily home, at least a safe harbour. Some (Brierre, Chenet, Dorsinville) were avowed socialists, sheltering from Cold War animosities. Others (Morisseau, Lemoine and Scott-Lemoine) were artists who wanted to live under a government that would allow them a degree of freedom of expression. Still others (Vera André Périclès and Lionel Derenoncourt) were international aid workers, hoping to make a meaningful contribution to a fledgling African republic.

Relations between Haitians and the local people were not always free of friction; while working at a publishing house, Roger Dorsinville was confronted by one of his colleagues who said, "'What the hell are you doing here taking the job of a Senegalese? We are fighting the whites; for us, people like you are worse than the whites.'"[29] The man later apologized for his outburst, but Dorsinville was deeply hurt. The Haitians filled a paradoxical role in Dakar; one the one hand, Dorsinville recalled, "the benefit of one hundred and fifty years of independence earned us a favourable bias as 'older brothers.'"[30] Yet, as Duvalier's power grew, "the news coming from Haiti was catastrophic," and Dakar elites began to despair of Haiti, saying "'What have you done to us? We no longer have a model.'"[31] Once again, Haiti emerges simultaneously as an inspiration and a cautionary tale.

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[27] Roger Dorsinville, *Critical Edition of Haitian Writer Roger Dorsinville's Memoirs of Africa* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2002), 55.
[28] Ibid., 59.
[29] Ibid., 45.
[30] Ibid., 83.
[31] Ibid., 83, 84.

All four of our Expatriates brought the lessons they had learned and the administrative and artistic skills they had acquired in Haiti with them to Senegal and drew from them to contribute to the new country in a variety of ways. Brierre had years of experience in tourism administration, a field that he pioneered in Haiti. In 1946, he had been named Cultural and Tourism Attaché at Haiti's Department of Foreign Relations.[32] The next year, the Haitian government created a Department of Tourism and named Brierre its Undersecretary.[33] In 1950, the government created a National Tourism Office, and appointed him director.[34] In these roles, he travelled to Paris, New York City, Mexico City, Puerto Rico, Washington, DC, and elsewhere to promote the country as a tourist destination and to entice visitors to the Port-au-Prince Bicentennial Exposition in 1949. He welcomed such figures as Katherine Dunham, Lavinia Williams, Fedora Aléman and Jean-Paul Sartre to the country. Between 1947 and 1949 tourism to Haiti expanded by nearly 40 percent.[35] In 1951, Brierre was awarded the Order of Honour and Merit for his work in the Department, because "his boundless activity, his brilliant qualities and his ardent desire to serve the collectivity and the country had given [the Department of Tourism] a remarkable launch."[36] By 1956, tourism in Haiti had experienced a more than tenfold increase before contracting dramatically after Duvalier came to power.[37]

Appropriately, then, when Brierre relocated to Senegal, Senghor gave him a job at the Ministry of Culture, and he was involved in planning the 1966 Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres—the event that brought Jacqueline Scott-Lemoine to Africa and put Dakar on the map.

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[32] "Jean Brierre, Attaché Culturel et Touristique," *Le Nouvelliste*, 5 October 1946, 6.
[33] *Livre bleu d'Haïti, 1946–1949* (Port-au-Prince: Imprimerie de l'état, 1950), 512; "Le nouveau cabinet," *Le Nouvelliste*, 26 November 1947, 1.
[34] "Jean Brierre Director of the National Office of Tourism," *Haiti Sun*, 1 October 1950, 3.
[35] *Livre bleu*, 518.
[36] "Une distinction bien méritée." The growth and rapid decline of Haitian tourism were immortalized in the Graham Greene novel *The Comedians* (1966) and the film of the same name (1967).
[37] "35000 familles vivant du Tourisme réclament la Paix," *Le Nouvelliste*, 8 December 1958 1, 4.

Brierre's main task for the festival combined his two fields of expertise, poetry and tourism. Senghor tapped him to write the text for a sound and light spectacle on Gorée Island.[38] The production, entitled the *Spectacle féerique de Gorée* (Gorée Enchanted Spectacle), was a central attraction at the festival. It involved pre-recorded music, coordinated lighting and 230 actors who, over the course of fifty minutes, delivered an epic history of the island and the continent in eight scenes. The *Spectacle* was staged nightly, sometimes twice, for a total of thirty-eight performances over the course of twenty-one days. One of the most popular attractions at the festival, it sold an estimated 23,000 tickets.[39] Ethnomusicology scholar Melissa D. Reiser described it as a folk opera, which "translated negritude, through the art of live performance, into an easily digested progress narrative designed for mass consumption."[40] President Senghor personally approved the text, and the event served as his mouthpiece for his new cultural policy. The *Spectacle* was "strategically positioned to present a revised postcolonial vision of the country's past, as well as its future, to the world at large."[41] Once again, we find a Haitian at the very heart of a decolonial moment in Africa, collaborating with a nationalist leader to articulate his vision of Africa's past and future and presenting it to both a local and a global audience.

In a concrete example of the "Brain Drain" often attributed to the Duvalier Era, Brierre took his expertise in tourism administration and his skills as a poet with him into exile to Haiti's detriment and to Senegal's benefit. The festival was partly conceived as a way of drawing the world's attention to Senegal, and, indeed, it corresponds with the beginning of a surge of tourism to the country. Researchers Estrella Sendra and Saliou Ndour concluded that "the beginnings of a

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[38] Jean Mazel, *Présence du monde noir* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1975), 251.
[39] Melissa D. Reiser, "Music, Negritude, and the 'African Renaissance': Performing Blackness at the World Festivals of Black Arts in Dakar, 1966 and 2010," PhD diss., (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2014), 119.
[40] Ibid., 118.
[41] Ibid., 119.

cultural tourism industry" was "one of the main legacies of the 1966 festival."[42] Within nine years, Senegal was seventh in Africa for total share of international tourism.[43] For many years, Brierre continued to serve in the Ministry of Culture in Senegal where he was director of the Arts and Literature department. He sometimes represented Senegal on the world stage, including at an African and Asian film festival in the Soviet Union in 1968.[44] He also worked in radio and published extensively in literature, criticism and essays.

But as much as he contributed to developments in Senegal, Africa also had a major impact on Brierre. In his early life he had been imbued by the Indigenism of Jean Price-Mars with its poetic attachment to a metaphorical Africa. "The return to Africa preached by Price-Mars," he remembered, "was a truly sentimental return to the past."[45] Roger Dorsinville describes this naïveté toward the African continent among educated Haitians in greater detail:

> Arriving in Africa, this Haitian knew nothing about the continent other than the fact that he was an historical produce of the slave trade stemming from Africa. The literature and iconography of colonialism propagated such hideous images and forms of the slave trade that the name "African" stood for essential savagery. I was exposed to no other images to counterbalance the brainwashing I have been a victim of; except for the works of Jean Price-Mars and the more or less inflated echoings of the *griots* group. One should not be ashamed—or rather, one should *be* ashamed—to say that a so-called educated man was so misinformed. Other than that, just a few travel accounts and a few narratives of the rare ones who had returned from over there were known to me. … The travel notes of Alip [Desaix] Baker triggered my childhood imagination by evocations of vast water spans and immense forests."[46]

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[42] Estrella Sendra and Saliou Ndour, "Fiftieth Anniversary of the First World Festival of Negro Arts: A Comparative Study of the Involvement of the Population in the World Festival of Negro Arts in 1966 and 2010," *Interventions* vol. 20 no. 7 (2018): 978.
[43] Aby Sene-Harper, "Tourism Development in Senegal: Historical Overview and New Directions for Community-Based Tourism," in *Routledge Handbook of Tourism in Africa*, ed. Marina Novelli, Emmanuel Akwasi Adu-Ampong and Manuel Alector Ribeiro (London: Routledge, 2020), 223–224.
[44] Françoise Blum and Constantin Katsakioris, "Léopold Sédar Senghor et l'Union soviétique: la confrontation, 1957–1966," *Cahier d'études africaines* vol 235 (2019): 845.
[45] Bostick, "Poetic Encounters," 283. Italics in original.
[46] Dorsinville, *Critical Edition*, 79.

For Brierre coming to Africa dismantled the constructed image and replaced it with the real thing. In his words,

> I think that before going to Africa I had a large number of gaps in my education. Surely I was acquainted with certain [African] poets; Senghor was one of them. But I had not yet lived the African life, *understood* the African traditions and *compared* them to our own. One does not have to compare them. For in reality, our true cultural conditions *are* African conditions. Our roots *are* African and that is why we say we are much nearer to Africa than to South America.[47]

It took crossing an ocean for Brierre to realize that, in a sense, Haiti is an African country. As a result, he achieved in poetry what Suzanne Comhaire-Sylvain achieved in anthropology. By travelling to Africa, he was able to evoke the continent and its relationship to Haiti with more nuance than his Indigenist predecessors. He thereby reinforced these transatlantic connections. His poems were read and reviewed in Haiti, and his fame as a poet continued to grow at home and in the Haitian diaspora. More than a decade after he left Haiti, newspaper articles still evoked him as "our Bard," and "that giant of contemporary Haitian poetry."[48] When he returned to the country in 1986 after Jean-Claude Duvalier fell from power, he was "greeted with euphoria" by young Haitians who had heard of him but never seen him.[49] He remained in Haiti until his death in 1992.

When Félix Morisseau-Leroy arrived in Senegal in 1966, President Senghor appointed him technical advisor for the Senegalese People's Theatre.[50] Morisseau was still keen on doing what he was best at, fostering social change through popular language theatre. But this was a more complicated prospect in Senegal than in Haiti. The linguistic situation in Senegal shared some

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[47] Bostick, "Poetic Encounters," 283. Italics in original.
[48] Wébert Lahens, "Au palais de justice de Port-au-Prince," *Le Nouvelliste*, 11 December 1978, 6; Christophe Charles, "Letter ouverte à M. Alix Damour," *Le Nouvelliste*, 20 and 21 October 1979, 4.
[49] "L'homme et l'oeuvre."
[50] Cantor, "Voice of Haiti."

similarities to Haiti. Like in Haiti, French was the official language and was used in formal and written contexts. Like in Haiti, most of the people were not fluent in French, and therefore French competence acted as a barrier to education and political participation.[51] Unlike in Haiti, however, there was no popular language shared by the entire nation. While all Haitians speak Kreyòl as their mother tongue, the majority language of Senegal, Wolof, was only the first language of about 44 percent of the population.[52] Nevertheless, Morisseau plunged into this multilingual context and worked to foster a vernacular theatre movement in Senegal.

While he was still National Theatre Director in Ghana, he wrote an article for *Présence Africaine* in which he articulated his vision of popular theatre. In it, he proclaims European theatre to be dead, describing it as either "men and women garbed in the most outmoded costumes possible, speaking in a language that the people understand less and less, and making the gestures of a vanished society, under ten to twenty kilowatts of lighting," or, conversely, "ladies and gentlemen dressed in the latest fashion, sitting stiffly, in the most perfect silence and obscurity."[53] African theatre, on the other hand, is alive. It is participatory and integrated with daily life. He gives an example:

> When Chief X, general secretary of the Office of Urbanism of Warri, announces the funeral of his aunt who has been dead for five years, thirty [theatre] companies come from diverse villages and towns of the Niger delta and succeed one another for eight days and nights under a shelter decorated for the occasion and offer the changing crowd a series of concerts, chants, dances, sketches, and mimed fables, the smallest portion of which would put Chatelet's operettas or the musicals of Broadway to shame.[54]

He then describes the role of popular theatre in modern African states. He calls for its application in the "systematic effort of cultural decolonization," saying that "one of the first roles of African

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[51] Gerda Mansour, "The Dynamics of Multilingualism: The Case of Senegal," *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 1, no. 4 (1980): 283, 286.
[52] Ibid., 277.
[53] Félix Morisseau-Leroy, "Le théâtre dans la révolution africaine," *Présence africaine*, no. 52 (1964): 61.
[54] Ibid., 63.

national theatre is in its contribution to civic education," and that "we must think of a theatre that speaks to the members of the party, the unions, the cooperatives, the youth organizations and the army."[55] He warns against commercialization of popular theatre and of its cooption by neocolonial powers, and he proclaims popular theatre is essential to any new African state where "the political framework has allowed the people to effectively assume the responsibilities of power."[56]

Morisseau brought with him more than a decade of experience in popular theatre from Haiti and Ghana and had fled authoritarianism in both countries. He was therefore highly motivated to use his unique skills to contribute to the development of a national consciousness in Senegal, empowering the masses to engage in public life and keep the authorities accountable. He adapted his Kreyòl plays into Wolof and staged them alongside works by local playwrights.[57] He earned great fame in Africa. Later he recalled one of the highest honours of his life when African peasants started naming their children Morisseau-Leroy.[58] He went on to work as director of radio and television broadcasting and continued writing poetry in Kreyòl which was published and disseminated through the Haitian diaspora.[59] He took a one-year residency at the University of the West Indies in Jamaica in 1978–1979, and then returned to Dakar. Altogether he spent fourteen years in Senegal. In 1981, with failing eyesight, he retired to Miami, another hub of the Haitian diaspora. He returned to Haiti after Duvalier left the country in 1986. He continued to live in Miami but returned to Haiti many times. He died in 1998.

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[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid., 65.
[57] Cantor, "Voice of Haiti"; Morisseau-Leroy, "The Awakening of Creole Consciousness," *UNESCO Courrier*, April 1983, 20.
[58] Félix Morisseau-Leroy, "Fiction and Poetry Readings: Felix Morisseau-Leroy (1994)," *Caribbean Writers Summer Institute*, University of Miami, 1994, video, 26:48, https://digitalcollections.library.miami.edu/digital/collection/asu0281/id/148/.
[59] Herbert Gold, "The Messiah Returned to Haiti, but It Didn't Help: Letter from Port-au-Prince, 1953–2008," *The Hudson Review* 63, no. 3 (Autumn 2009): 452.

Morisseau-Leroy always intended to return to his beloved homeland. He told Jacqueline Scott-Lemoine that "Haiti was in his flesh."[60] Scott-Lemoine, conversely, grieved the permanent loss of Haiti; for her, relocating to Senegal was akin to coming home. After playing her part in *La Tragédie du roi Christophe* in 1966, President Senghor told her and her husband, "Stay! You are home here."[61] In her words, they found "a fatherland, a flag, a family," and discovered why the "old patriarchs of the Haitian mountains always insisted on being placed in the tomb with a bit of semolina, a knotted cane, and a few coins that would allow their souls to take the voyage to the mythic 'Lan Guinen,' the greater Guinea, whence they had departed three centuries earlier."[62] While Jean Brierre and Félix Morisseau-Leroy returned to Haiti shortly after Jean-Claude Duvalier fell from power, Scott-Lemoine had long since decided to stay. She became a Senegalese citizen in 1976 and remained until her death 2011. What began as exile matured into a settled existence. Altogether, she lived in Dakar for forty-five years—slightly more than half of her long life.

Like Morisseau-Leroy, Scott-Lemoine was involved in the cultivation of local theatre in Senegal. She was made *pensionnaire* of the Daniel Sorano National Theatre, an institution established in 1965 for the approaching festival. She held the role for eighteen years, sometimes serving as stage director. In 1983 she appeared in a film by the Moroccan director Souheil Ben-Barka. Along with Lucien, she organized theatre workshops at Chiekh Anta Diop University. With her background in broadcasting, Scott-Lemoine also worked in radio and television. A 1968 interview in a Haitian newspaper declared that "radio in Dakar is Haitian. Its principal

[60] Personal correspondence with Albert Morisseau-Leroy.
[61] Jacqueline Scott-Lemoine, "Nous de la diaspora et Léopold Sédar Senghor," *Présence Africaine* no. 154 (1996): 80.
[62] Ibid., 81

announcers are Lucien Lemoine and Jacqueline Scott Lemoine."[63] She hosted a program called "La Voix des Poètes," presenting literary content on public television. She retired from acting in 2006, but she did not slow down. She edited a journal entitled *Entracte*, contributed articles to *Présence Africaine*, published a collection of short stories and a wrote a stage play. Together with Lucien, she became a pillar, not just of the Haitian community in Dakar, but of the city's arts community more broadly. According to a 2009 article in the Haitian diaspora weekly *Haïti en Marche*, "a whole generation—of Senegalese journalists, of personalities in the world of African theatre and letters—saw the couple teaching and growing old together. She is such a reference in Dakar that… a taxi driver will take you straight from the Léopold Sédar Senghor Airport to her house just by mentioning her name."[64] When she died in 2011, Senegalese obituaries hailed her as "leading lady in art and culture."[65]

Apart from *La Tragédie du roi Christophe*, Jacqueline Scott-Lemoine was involved with one other event of profound significance in the history of the relationship between Haiti and Africa. This was Léopold Senghor's 1976 visit to the Caribbean. In February of that year, Senghor made an official trip to Martinique, Guadeloupe and Haiti. He brought the company of the Daniel Sorano Theatre with him to perform *La Tragédie* once again, this time in Martinique, the birthplace of its writer, and Haiti, the country of its setting. Césaire welcomed the president and the troupe to Martinique amid great fanfare. Guadeloupe, too, offered an enthusiastic welcome. Then came Haiti. For some reason, perhaps related to the ongoing Duvalierist obstructionism under Baby Doc, the theatre troupe was not permitted to proceed to Haiti. Lucien

[63] Aubelin Jolicoeur, "Au fil des jours," *Le Nouvelliste*, 27 September 1968, 1.
[64] "Jacqueline Scott-Lemoine," *Haïti en Marche*, 11 March 2009, 12.
[65] Ibrahima Lissa Faye, "In Memoriam. Jacqueline Scott-Lemoine, une grande artiste a tiré sa révérence," Press Afrik, 11 July 2011. https://www.pressafrik.com/In-Memoriam-Jacqueline-Scott-Lemoine-une-grande-artiste-a-tire-sa-reverence_a62014.html#google_vignette.

Lemoine remained in Guadeloupe. But Jacqueline Scott-Lemoine decided to go on. She had not been back in fourteen years. She took her young son and made the crossing with Senghor.

Senghor was not the first African Head of State to visit Haiti; Port-au-Prince had previously hosted William Tubman and William Tolbert of Liberia in 1954 and 1968 respectively, Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria in 1965, and Ethiopia's Haile Selassie in 1966.[66] Nonetheless, according to Scott-Lemoine, Senghor's visit was "a major event for the entire island, for the intellectual as much as for the men in the street who honour Africa, from generation to generation, each in his own way, and who have started to wonder why the people of the great continent seem to have forgotten this remote diaspora."[67] This was a moment of intense affinity between Haiti and Africa. "More than the official displays," Scott-Lemoine recalled, President Senghor

> was touched by the humble fervour of the common man in the street who recognized him. At the Cap-Haïtien market, a peasant approached him, placed his hand on his shoulder and said "Papa!". He was sympathetic to the fact … that in his presence Haitians felt proud to be Black, happy to show him several scholarly establishments that bore his name, even a hairdressing school called 'Senghorette'; that the daughter of Jean Coradin, the author and ambassador, was given the name 'Sédare' in his honour.[68]

But for Scott-Lemoine, the most meaningful connections were personal: "He was happy that my old mother, whom I introduced to him, expressed her emotion at being so close to the author of *Chants d'ombre*; happy that my cousin the pianist, graduate of the National Conservatory of Music in Paris and of the Marguerite Long-Jacques Thibault School, had been able to thank him in person for inviting her to give recitals in Dakar."[69] Without a doubt, Senghor's visit to Haiti was an important moment in development of links of solidarity between Haiti and Africa.

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[66] "La Prochaine Visite du Président Senghor à Port-au-Prince," *Le Nouvelliste*, 15 January 1976, 1.
[67] Scott-Lemoine, "Nous de la diaspora," 83.
[68] Ibid., 82–83.
[69] Ibid., 83.

President Senghor also brought Gérard Chenet along with him on the 1976 trip, but Chenet's experience was less idyllic. On arriving in Port-au-Prince, Chenet was arrested. President Senghor was furious and intervened to have him released.[70] This event is indicative of two points of tension that had emerged by the late 1970s. First, it points at a divide between Senghor and the more militant anti-colonialists and pan-Africanists. Senghor was always a bit of a paradox. He spoke of African socialism while the same time courting foreign capital. He opposed French imperialism but became a member of the Académie française. His Négritude philosophy was premised on an appreciation of the African masses, yet he worked tirelessly to modernize Senegal through large-scale projects with limited consultation with those same masses, as Aimé Césaire has so presciently critiqued in *La Tragédie du roi Christophe*. His 1976 visit to Haiti was similarly paradoxical.

The Haitian community in Dakar and elsewhere opposed Senghor's visit to Haiti. As Roger Dorsinville recalls, they first heard about the upcoming trip from "compatriots in Paris, New York, or somewhere else on the African continent," and they were "asked to do our utmost so that Senghor did not bring comfort to Baby Doc Duvalier's regime, giving it a legitimacy that was denied everywhere."[71] Dorsinville believed that the trip had been orchestrated by the French, who were "looking for a cover that the prestige of the Senegalese chief would surely provide."[72] Senghor ignored the protestations of the Haitian expatriates because, according to Dorsinville, "the great President wasn't one to heed our advice when it came to the matter of French Foreign

[70] "Gérard Chenet," Île en île.
[71] Dorsinville, *Critical Edition*, 94.
[72] Ibid.

Aid."[73] Senghor's decision thus demonstrates a rift within the Black internationalist community over French neocolonial interests and Duvalier's authoritarianism.

The visit also prompted a rift in Dakar's Haitian community, with some Haitians opposing the trip and others participating in it. This tension seems to explain why Lucien Lemoine remained in Guadeloupe while Jacqueline proceeded to Haiti. Dorsinville was surprised that Chenet went on the trip at all; "Chenet," he recalled, "had never been, like Brierre for example, close to the President-poet," and he was certainly no friend of Jean-Claude Duvalier.[74] Dorsinville saw it as an act of betrayal. Chenet and Scott-Lemoine surely believed Senghor's visit would strengthen ties between Africa and its diaspora. Maybe they hoped the international attention and strengthened bonds would inspire change in their country. They undoubtedly also wanted an opportunity to see their families, trusting in the pageantry around Senghor to protect them from the regime. If so, their hopes were largely disappointed. Chenet was arrested, and he lost the respect of Haitians in Dakar. Furthermore, the trip actually soured the relationship between Duvalier and Senghor. Duvalier snubbed Senghor, refusing to meet privately with him. He feared Senghor's visit would embolden activists in Haiti, and he conducted raids on the homes of writers and artists the day after Senghor left the country, sending still more Haitians into exile.[75]

His 1976 arrest was, perhaps, the final straw for Chenet. He visited Haiti after Duvalier left in 1986, but, like Jacqueline Scott-Lemoine, he ultimately decided to remain in Senegal. According to Roger Dorsinville, Chenet was a non-conformist who did not want to live under any

[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.

government that would interfere with his life; he "wasn't cut out for any of the stifling Republics that just sprouted. Dakar, after all, was the best he could find."[76] He lived in Senegal for more than half a century. During that time, he contributed to the country's development in many ways. Like Brierre, he worked for the Ministry of Culture and helped organize the 1966 festival.[77] Like Morisseau-Leroy, he founded a theatrical troupe, La Troupe Gérard Chenet, which performed works by local authors as well as Chenet's own *El Hadj Omar* (the critique of Sekou Touré mentioned above) at the Daniel Sorano Theatre in the late 1960s.[78] Something of a recluse, he left Dakar around 1970 to settle in Toubab Dialaw, some fifty kilometres down the coast from Dakar. Here, he finally achieved his dream of becoming an architect. He built an artist retreat and hotel called Sobo Bade which grew to include a plastic arts workshop, an open-air theatre and a cultural and ecological centre, and which hosted an annual arts festival. Through Sobo Bade, Chenet contributed to tourism and the arts in Senegal for decades. He remained here until his death in 2022 at the age of ninety-five. He had lived in Senegal for sixty years.

Although he had not relocated to Haiti after Duvalier left in 1986, he did pay a visit to the country that year. While there, he was interviewed by the celebrated Haitian radio journalist Jean Dominique. Despite not always seeing eye-to-eye with Senghor, he described the lessons Haiti could learn from Senegal as it sought to forge a new political culture in the wake of the Duvalier dictatorships. Dominique referred to Senghor's concession of power at the end of his presidency as "exemplary for the rest of Africa because he was one of the only ones to have thus voluntarily passed the power to his successor," and asked if Chenet had gained wisdom from living in such a political milieu. Chenet explained how Senghor, unlike the Duvaliers and unlike many

[76] Ibid., 65–66.
[77] "Gérard Chenet," Île en île.
[78] Jessica B. Harris, "French-Speaking Theatre in Senegal," PhD diss., (New York University, 1983), 146–148.

contemporary African leaders, had the ability to tolerate dissent. “Even the minority,” he said, “has the right to speak.” In Senegal, he went on,

> those in power often adopt the ideas, the doctrines and the programs that have been elaborated by the opposition parties… They reach a consensus by way of their confrontation. Confrontation is necessary, certainly. I don’t deny it. But confrontation must be without aggression, without a negative connotation, without insults, without slander, with respect for one’s interlocutor. But it’s a confrontation that must lead to what we all really want to have, which is an equilibrium, a harmony, and the flowering of the society on the basis of this equilibrium.[79]

It was a lesson that Haiti desperately needed to learn in 1986 after twenty-nine years of authoritarian rule. The country grappled with this lesson over the subsequent decades. As of 2024, unfortunately, it has seen only intermittent success.

[79] Gérard Chenet, “Gérard Chenet, interview Jean L. Dominique,” interview by Jean Dominique, 1986, audio, 24:32, https://repository.duke.edu/dc/radiohaiti/RL10059-RR-0537_01.

Conclusion:
"A Sublime Reference"

Whereas Haitians had come to Dakar as "older brothers," as representatives of a 150-year-old Black Republic with the idea that they had much to offer, by 1986 they were talking about Senegal's political processes as a model for Haiti. Whatever the dynamics of the relationships between Haiti and various African states, Haiti's relationship with the continent in general, and with Senegal in particular, remains strong, thanks in no small measure to more than a century of migrations between Haiti and the African continent.

On 12 January 2010, when Haiti suffered its worst natural disaster in recent history, its deep connection with Africa once again took centre stage. African states pledged over 19 million dollars in aid.[1] But the response from Senegal was particularly noteworthy. Within days, a group of Senegalese leaders convened in Dakar and collectively prepared a statement. It is worth quoting at length:

> We, Personalities, Political Leaders, notable religious, civil and military leaders, representing the Government, the Parliament, the civil society organizations, and different economic, social and cultural and citizen elements of Senegal, gathered today, Saturday 16 January 2010 in Dakar in the Palace of the Republic, on the invitation of His Excellency Mr. Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic, for a broad consultation on the dramatic situation experienced by the Haitian people in the aftermath of the earthquake of Tuesday, January 12, 2010, recognized as the largest earthquake ever recorded in its history;
>
> After having listened with great emotion to the sympathetic appeal that Mr. Abdoulaye Wade made to all the sons of Africa and the Diaspora, firstly, to remind them of the duty of memory and solidarity toward the Haitian People, hit for the second time by a tragedy that has taken the lives of tens of thousands, left millions homeless by destroying homes,

[1] "Haiti earthquake aid pledged by country," *The Guardian*, dataset, accessed 12 June 2022.

> and partly destroyed public buildings, and, secondly, to ask them to take responsibility, with him, the proposition he made to the Haitian for a return to Africa, land of their origin, if they so wish, *to build their own state*;
>
> After having listened with great interest to the instructive historical reminder made by Professor Iba Der THIAM who highlighted *the major role played by the Haitians in the fight of the Black Peoples for their liberation, the preservation of their dignity and the refusal of colonial domination headed by Toussaint Louverture, symbol of the Resistance and the Revolt of the Blacks*, with Haiti's decisive contribution to the struggle for independence of Latin America and the United States;
>
> Being convinced that *Haiti constitutes a sublime reference for the Peoples of Africa* and the Diaspora because of its fierce struggle against the slave trade and colonial domination, its rejection of all justifications of civilizing missions thus giving the first breath to the Pan-Africanist Movement, all of which produced a sort of conspiracy against this rebel-people, who must never be allowed to serve as a model;
>
> Being convinced that Africa, land of origin of Haitians transplanted by force and against their will outside the continent, cannot remain insensitive to the tragic fate that strikes the Haitian people today;
>
> Being convinced of the historical and strategic significance of the Right of Return of Haitians to the African lands proposed by Mr. Abdoulaye Wade who translated so eloquently, once again, his profound and sincere engagement with the Black cause and his enduring pan-African convictions; such a proposal, besides the historical reasons that are the foundation of its pertinence, is all the more justified by the fact that Haiti resides in a zone that is particularly vulnerable to earthquakes, and its population is thus in permanent danger and its development efforts are constantly reduced to nothing;
>
> We do decide to approve and carry everywhere in Senegal, Africa, and throughout the world the fraternal message and the generous proposal of Mr. Abdolaye Wade for a *Right of Return for Haitians, and the creation, if they wish, of their own State on the land of Africa, land of their ancestors*.[2]

The proposal to carve out a new state for Haiti came to nothing, but it was, nonetheless, a striking indication of the bonds of affinity that had been forged between Haiti and Senegal over the course of the twentieth century. Later that year, the Senegalese government brought 163 Haitian university students to Dakar to resume their education, which had been cut short by the

[2] La Réunion de Concertation inclusive, "Resolutions sur la situation en Haïti," 16 January 2010. Italics added.

earthquake, free of charge. Hundreds met them at the airport and welcomed them with signs declaring "Senegal for Haiti, Africa for Haiti."[3]

The voyages of Benito Sylvain, Desaix Backer, Suzanne Comhaire-Sylvain, Gérard Chenet, Félix Morisseau-Leroy, Jean F. Brierre, Jacqueline Scott-Lemoine and countless others had profound impacts on Haiti and on Africa. Through their experiences and writings, the people of Haiti began to learn about Africa on its own terms, not through the lens of French colonialism. As a result, elite Haitians learned how deeply connected their own culture was to its African heritage. Across the Atlantic—from Accra to Addis Ababa, from Conakry to Kinshasa, from Dakar to Dar es Salaam, and from Monrovia to Mogadishu—the presence of Haitians reminded African people of the global scale of their continent's history. As their countries gained independence, they met representatives of a Black Republic that, despite its problems, had endured for over a century. Like so many others, they had the chance to ponder the paradox—the model to emulate and the cautionary tale—that was Haiti.

[3] Sheriff Bojang Jr., "Senegal takes in Haitian student refugees," *The Guardian*, 14 October 2010.

Conclusion:
Africans in Haiti/Haiti is Africa

Il était une fois un pays phare
qui s'appelait Haïti
et qui a fait rêver tout les Noirs du monde entier
et tout les damnés de la terre.
Il ne tient qu'à nous, femmes et hommes d'Haïti
qu'il le redevienne.

Gérard Bissainth, 2007

From Seoul to Port-au-Prince, 31 May 2002

On 31 May 2002, shortly before 8:30 in the evening, the French men's national football team steps onto the pitch at the Sangam Stadium in Seoul, South Korea. Four years earlier, they had won the World Cup on their home turf. The victory had been a moment of jubilation throughout the country, but also a moment of reflection. France had lately been riven by political currents that opposed immigration, and French people with different skin tones had long suffered abuse at the hands of their compatriots and of institutions in this supposedly colour-blind country. The 1998 team had featured several players with family histories stretching throughout the former French colonial empire: Zinedine Zidane had Algerian roots; Lilian Thuram, Thierry Henry, Bernard Lama and Bernard Diomède were all connected to the French Caribbean; Patrick Viera had been born in Dakar and Christian Karembeu on the French Pacific island of New Caledonia. The victory of this multi-racial squad had encouraged many to imagine a France that was more accepting of its diverse present and more acknowledging of its colonial past.[1]

Now, four years on, they are in East Asia to defend their title as world champions. Again, the team is conspicuously diverse. Many of these same men had played on the 1998 squad, with the notable addition of the twenty-year-old forward Djibril Cissé whose parents had immigrated to France from Côte d'Ivoire before he was born. Today, despite the fact that Zidane is out with

[1] See Laurent Dubois, *Soccer Empire: The World Cup and the Future of France* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 2010).

an injury, they are confident. They know they will need to bring their best against Denmark and Uruguay in their next two matches. But today they are facing a team that has never even participated in a World Cup.

Today, they face Senegal.

Anticipation is running high in the stadium and around the world for this, the opening match of the tournament. The teams line up on the pitch. The marching band strikes up with "La Marseillaise." A few French players mechanically sing along to its provocative lyric: "under our flags may victory hurry to your manly accents, so that your expiring enemies see your triumph and our glory." Then, Senegal's anthem begins. The lyrics of "Le lion rouge" were penned by Léopold Sédar Senghor himself, and the anthem had been adopted when the country declared its independence from France just forty-two years earlier. "Stand up, brothers, here is Africa assembled," they sing. This is an emotional moment. Nearly all of the Senegalese players live in France where they play for mid-level French clubs. They are used to standing through the French anthem, but hearing their own country's song in this contexts is a completely new experience. Most of the French players, for their part, play for top-tier clubs outside of France: Bayern Munich, Arsenal, Juventus, Real Madrid.

The players shake hands and take their positions. The referee blows the whistle. The match begins. Immediately, the French squad realizes that they have underestimated the debutants. Senegal makes two attempts in the first five minutes, while the French team is initially unable to break through the Senegalese defence. At nineteen minutes, French midfielder Emmanuel Petit takes a corner kick, but Senegal's keeper Tony Sylva bats it away. French centre-forward David Trezeguet has an attempt on goal at twenty-two minutes, but it bounces off the post. Senegal then manages to get on the offence, driving forward several times. Finally, at

the thirtieth minute, Senegal's centre-forward breaks through to play the ball up into the corner and then sweeps it across to his teammate Papa Bouba Diop. Emmanuel Petit intercepts and chips it up toward his keeper, but Fabien Barthez can't keep a grip on the ball. Bouba Diop jumps at the chance and tips the ball into the back of the net.

Senegal is ahead of the best team in the world.

Thirteen thousand kilometres away, in Port-au-Prince, where it is still early morning, two centuries of pent-up anti-colonialism erupt into deafening applause. Although most Haitians don't own televisions, there is no shortage of screens on which to watch the World Cup. The government (partly in hopes of distracting the people from ongoing political and economic crises) has installed large screen televisions throughout the capital in public parks and even in the Port-au-Prince General Hospital.[2] Most Haitian soccer fans are diehard supporters of Brazil, though a few French fans can be found. For this match, however, most are rallying behind Senegal as representatives of Africa and its diaspora. The fact that they are now ahead of the defending champions and of Senegal and Haiti's former colonizer intensifies the symbolism. But there is still a lot of game to play. For older viewers, the scene is eerily reminiscent of Haiti's own debut at the World Cup back in 1974, when they scored the first goal in their first match against Italy but then went on to lose 3–1. Port-au-Prince holds its collective breath.

They needn't have worried.

After a scrappy second half the game ends with no additional goals.

Senegal 1, France 0.

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[2] Raymond Joseph, "Holding Off on Radical Reform Until After the World Cup," *The New York Sun*, 14 June 2002; Ives Marie Chanel, "La Coupe du monde fait oublier la crise politique: Haïti foot et politique," *Haïti en Marche*, 26 June 2002, 1, 3, 5.

Cheers of celebration reverberate throughout Port-au-Prince. It is not quite ten o'clock on Saturday morning when the broadcast of the match comes to an end, but the people are ready to party. The game and the celebration that followed will go on to become one of those events that people remember for years to come. As one fan recalled over two decades later,

> Senegal vs. France was a match that Haiti will never forget… Despite all of the predictions that were favouring France, Senegal surprised the whole world when they beat France in 2002. Haiti celebrated that victory as if it was Brazil that had won. In football, Haiti doesn't care much for France. I was eighteen years old then, I watched the match with a group of friends. After the match we ran around in the streets celebrating. We hoped Senegal would go all the way to the final, but unfortunately, they went out in the quarterfinals. Still, we were very satisfied, because they beat France.[3]

France went on to be eliminated in the Group Stage, not winning a single match. The Senegalese team, conversely, faced Sweden in the Round of 16 and won, becoming the second African team to make it to the quarterfinals. In the end, they lost to Turkey in extra time.

But Senegal's run at the 2002 World Cup had been a brief moment of joy and unity for Africa and its diaspora, and particularly for the former French colonial empire. After their final defeat against Turkey, a Haitian newspaper reported that all of Africa felt the disappointment that Senegal had lost.[4] "The continent is dejected," it quoted a merchant in the capital of Côte d'Ivoire, "I had hoped that for once an African team would make it to the final to change the course of things."[5] Yet their showing was widely considered a victory for the continent. "The boys have brought honour to Africa," said the president of Mali, "they were worthy of the continent, and I give them my congratulations for all of the happiness they have given us."[6] Just as the 1998 French victory had been a moment of reflection for France with regard to its colonial past, the 2002 French defeat at the hands of Senegal was a crystallizing moment for the former

[3] Hans Michel Fortunat, September 2024, personal correspondence with the author.
[4] "L'Afrique attristé par la défaite sénégalaise," *Haïti en Marche*, 26 June 2002, 16, 20.
[5] Quoted in Ibid., 16.
[6] Amadou Toumani Touré, quoted in Ibid., 16.

colonies themselves, prompting many to imagine an Africa that finally escaped the legacies of colonialism that had weighed on it for so long and moved forward with more unity into the twenty-first century. And Haiti shared in these feelings of joy and unity, and in this moment of reflection.

Many Haitians celebrating Senegal's victory over France in 2002 would have been partly aware of the histories of the two countries represented on the field, and how their own history was intertwined with them. They knew, at the very least, about how Haiti had led the global movement against slavery, racial inequality and colonialism and had lodged one of the most important challenges to French claims to a vast global empire. The Haitian Revolution had foiled Napoleon's designs for a revived North American empire, but it had not completely extinguished French ambitions to collect and profit from far-flung domains. Over time, memories of the bounty of Saint-Domingue gave momentum to a renewed imperialist pulse that gradually intensified over the course of the nineteenth century. Meanwhile, harrowing depictions of the Haitian Revolution warned French colonists against the repercussion of a too flippant approach to conquest and administration. Thus, while the memory of Saint-Domingue fuelled French conquests in Africa, the contrapuntal memory of Haiti served to constrain those efforts in important ways.

Just as the memory of Haiti had ambivalent impacts on the evolution of the later French colonial empire in Africa, Haitian people themselves played sometimes contradictory roles in its rise and fall. As the Haitian community in Paris grew, many of its members expressed an appreciation for French culture and, often, a conditional approval of French activities in Africa. A few even travelled to Africa as agents of French imperialism. At the same time, Haitians

articulated defences of their country couched in powerful arguments against the notion of inherent racial inequality while demanding that European activities in Africa bring tangible benefits to colonized peoples. In the process, they helped build up a Black Republic of Letters that connected Paris to Port-au-Prince and to other centres of Black thought. These connections and publishing endeavours laid the foundation for a more unified anti-colonial movement after the First World War.

As the twentieth century progressed, Haitians grew more willing and able to speak out against colonialism. Connections they made through the Pan-African movement encouraged them to leverage their country's nearly unique status as a Black Republic to impact the course of the internationalist movement in the aftermath of the War. Granted a seat at the Paris Peace Conference, they became founding members of the League of Nations and took every opportunity to use it as a platform to denounce the U.S. occupation of their own country as well as pervasive European racism and continued abuse in Africa. When the world went to war again in 1939 it revealed the weaknesses of the new internationalism. But by 1945 the processes revived under the new United Nations, and once again Haitians were there from the start. Again, the country's delegates committed themselves to the growing anti-colonial push. Between 1958 and 1962, virtually the entire French colonial empire came to an end, and Haitian representatives at the UN played a part in the transformation.

Meanwhile, Haiti was undergoing a transformation of its own. Although in 1946—the same year that the United Nations had its first meeting—Haiti had experienced a democratic revolution, this had begun to turn around by 1960. François Duvalier launched a "political revolution," curbing the country's fledgeling democratic trajectory and setting up a totalitarian state. In response, thousands of Haitians left the country. Some of these, including many who

had taken part in the Revolution of 1946, were eager to continue working for Black self-determination beyond their borders, and so settled in towns in Africa where they brought skills and perspectives from the original Black Republic to employ them in the new ones that were beginning to take root in Africa.

Despite the ambivalent role that Haiti sometimes played in the history of French colonialism in Africa, the country was widely acknowledged as a flag-bearer of Black self-determination. On 19 September 1956, the year before Duvalier came to power, when Haiti was still enjoying the sunset of its Golden Age, and when most of Africa was still under European control, Black notables from around the world came together in Paris. The occasion was the First International Conference of Black Writers and Artists, held at the Descartes Amphitheatre at the Sorbonne. Organized under the aegis of the Pan-African literary review *Présence Africaine*, its participants included Jacques Stephen Alexis, Amadou Hampate Bâ, James Baldwin, Jean Price-Mars, Aimé Césaire, Alioune Diop, Sheik Anta Diop, Frantz Fanon, Albert Mangonès, René Piquion, Jacques Rabémananjara, Emile Saint-Lôt, Léopold Sédar Senghor and Richard Wright. For four days, they discussed art, literature, philosophy and the future of Africa and the Black world.

One participant, the Haitian poet and Catholic priest Gérard Bissainthe, later recalled the special status that his country enjoyed in the proceedings. "Haiti" he said, "was the Reference."[7] He noted that "when the Haitian delegation came into the Descartes Amphitheatre at the Sorbonne, that hotspot of Western thought, there was an extraordinary ovation that lasted several minutes." Jean-Price Mars—who had inspired many elites in Haiti and in Africa to reject European cultural hierarchies and pursue an authentic national identity based on African

[7] Gérard Bissainthe, "Il était une phare qui s'appelait Haïti," *Journal of Haitian Studies* 13, no. 2 (Fall 2007): 152.

traditions—was unanimously elected to chair the event. It was here that Emile Saint-Lôt—after contributing to the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and working toward the decolonization of Africa at the United Nations—made his proclamation, provoking another round of sustained applause: "My African Brothers, do not hypothesize your independence. It must not be given to you. Take it!"[8] As Bissainthe recalled, "I have never in my life seen such a spectacle."

On the fiftieth anniversary of the event, long after Africa had won its independence, and when Haiti had long fallen from its Golden Age and into a period of sustained crisis and instability, Bissainthe looked back on the era when Haiti had been the Reference. "Still today," he mused

> I encounter significant numbers of Africans who say that for them Haiti is still the Reference. For them, out of two hundred years of history, our last decades of stagnation are just a minor incident, sad to be sure. But they believe we are capable of getting back up and retaking our place as the flag-bearers of the Black world. Personally, I've never doubted it, especially because the secret of our salvation is so simple: we have in our human resources and in our other resources all of the ingredients; we are only missing the proper arrangement. And for some the only thing missing is faith. But the Haitian phoenix will emerge from the ashes.[9]

But Haiti has continued to struggle in the eighteen years since Bissainthe penned these words. It has yet to emerge like a phoenix from the ashes. Today, in fact, many parts of Africa have surpassed Haiti in terms of economic development, functioning institutions and social stability.

In recent years, Haiti has often looked to Africa for guidance and assistance. As noted, several African countries contributed to relief and restoration efforts in the wake of the 2010 earthquake. In January 2014, a Haitian delegation was invited to the Summit of the African Union in Addis Ababa as guests of honour. Haiti's prime minister Laurent Lamothe summarized

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[8] Quoted in ibid.
[9] Ibid, 153.

the historic relationship between Haiti and Africa in his speech at the opening ceremony, echoing ideas that Jean Price-Mars and Suzanne Comhaire-Sylvain had so forcefully pronounced nearly a century earlier:

> Although located in America, Haiti always loudly proclaimed his African belonging. We are African in our souls, in our hearts and in our manners. There is not a Haitian who does not feel at home in Africa, as there is not an African who is not found itself in Haiti… After two hundred and ten [years] of life of independent people in America, our belonging to Africa remains intact and indelible. Haiti is Africa in the Caribbean. If we exist today it is because our ancestors came from former regions that today constitute Benin, Senegal, Ghana, Congo, Liberia, and many other countries that have been able to break their chains, by drawing on the traditions, the resources necessary for their release.[10]

For Lamothe, this was an opportunity to reinforce connections to Africa which, he hoped, would help the Haitian Republic get back on its feet. He went as far as to suggest that the African Union should modify its constitution in order to allow Haiti to join as a full member.

Ironically, Lamothe has since been accused of corruption and deepening Haiti's economic and political crises. Likewise, another very recent interaction between Haiti and Africa has been rife with controversy. In June 2024, a Kenyan-led international police force arrived in Haiti to restore order in the face of the violence that had gripped the country for many years. While many foreign observers and some Haitians initially placed hope in the intervention, critics began to lament that this was yet another attempt to enforce the status quo on Haiti, propping up corrupt leaders who continuously ignore the will and the interests of the people in whose name they claimed to govern.

The people of Haiti have proven their competence and their creativity repeatedly throughout their history. They have a habit of being ahead of their time—a tradition going back to 1804. The leading role they played in the decolonization of Africa—in the making of the

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[10] Laurent Lamothe, "Haiti Joins the African Union: Speech of Prime Minister Lamothe," *Africology: The Journal of Pan-African Studies* 9, no. 4 (July 2016): 446.

modern world—is another proof of that. And yet they have consistently been treated as a problem to be dealt with by foreign powers. One day, perhaps, they will be allowed to take the lead once again. One day, perhaps, they will show us how to deal with hunger, with global poverty, with environmental degradation and with the other seemingly insoluble problems facing the world in the twenty-first century. One day, perhaps, they will once again become the Reference. As Gérard Bissainthe said:

> there was once a beacon country
> which called itself Haiti
> and which gave dreams to all the Black people of the world
> and to all of the wretched of the earth.
> It is up to us alone, women and men of Haiti,
> to make it so once again.[11]

[11] Bissainthe, "Il était une fois," 153.

Appendix 1:
Haitians in Africa

To contribute to a growing understanding this lesser-known dimension of the Haitian diaspora, I have compiled an index of Haitians who spent time in Africa. My hope is that this admittedly incomplete list will be used to fuel subsequent study in this topic.

Individuals who do not strictly fit the definition of Haitians in Africa, either because they were not (or may not have been) Haitian citizens or because it is not clear whether they actually went to Africa, are indicated with an asterisk (*).

Roger Ade: Supervised the "Centre de Production" printing centre in Limite near Kinshasa which produced educational material and was established by UNICEF, UNESCO and ONUC. Trained Congolese workers.

Georges Anglade: (1944-2010) Geographer. Educated in Strasbourg and Montreal. His research took him to the Bahamas, Venezuela, Nigeria and Djibouti.

Pierre Anglade: (1950-) Worked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Sent to Algeria, Benin, Niger, Mauritania and Mayotte (Comoros island that voted to stay part of France) where he worked in education.

Arcelin: An agronomist in Dakar.

Jean-Bertrand Aristide: (1953–) President of Haiti (1991, 1994–1996, 2000–2004). After he was ousted from the presidency for the second time in 2004, he spent his exile in South Africa.

Edner Backer: (1934–1977) Doctor in Makoua Republic of Congo (Congo-Brazzaville), and then in Brazzaville. Worked for the Congolese Ministry of Health under Marien Ngouabi's government. Second to Minister of Health.

Desaix Baker (or, Backer): Catholic missionary to French West Africa. *Dans les brousses africains* (1935). Earlier, under the pseudonym Aimard Le Sage: *L'Amant idéal* (1926) and *Les Amazones d'Haïti* (n.d.).

Athemas Bellerive: (1910–1985) Doctor. Trained in the United States under Public Health Service. University of Michigan Master of Public Health, 1948. Director General, Public Health Service of Haiti circa 1954. Published on malaria (1947) and hygiene (1954). Worked for UN. Directed WHO medical team in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Dilia "Didie" Brierre: Jean F. Brierre's wife. Lived with him in Senegal.

Jean F. Brierre: (1909-1992) Poet and diplomat. Spent time in Paris in the 1930s. Diplomat to Argentina. Political engagement put him in jail in Haiti, a total of nine years, some of them with Jacques Roumain. Left Haiti in 1962 for Jamaica and then, upon Léopold Senghor's invitation, spent a quarter century in Senegal. Important posts in the young republic. Program officer at the cultural section of National Broadcasting, director of Arts et Lettres, advisor to the Minister of Culture.

Monique Chauvet: (?–2000) With her husband Lucien Leconte in Dakar in the 1970s.

Gérard Chenet: (1927-2022) As a young journalist in Haiti, Chenet was arrested in 1946 for criticizing Lescot. His arrest helped trigger the Revolution of 1946. He left for Canada in 1955, hoping to become an architect. In 1957-1958 he studied political science in France. Toured Europe, attended the Youth Festival in the USSR, then won a scholarship to study African history in Eastern Europe where he wrote a doctoral thesis on Haitian-German relations. In 1958, when the French left Guinea after their famous "non" vote, Sekou Touré called on the world's progressives to come to the country. Chenet moved there and worked for IFAN. He stayed for four years, until Sekou Touré's dictatorial turn. Chenet permanently relocated to Senegal. Helped organize the World Festival of Negro Arts in Dakar in 1966. Worked for the ministry of Scientific Research in the History section. In 1976 he travelled to Haiti with Senghor. Was arrested by Duvalier but Senghor intervened to free him. Retired in Senegal.

Kesler Clermont: Lawyer and union organizer. Involved in the Revolution of 1946 in Haiti. Lived in Dakar. Later Ertha Trouillot's Foreign Minister.

Suzanne Comhaire-Sylvain: (1898-1975) The first Haitian female anthropologist. Earned her doctorate in 1936 at the Sorbonne under Marcel Mauss. Studied with Bronislaw Malinowski. Carried out anthropological work in Haiti in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. Served as inspector of schools for the Haitian government, and pursued studies in education methods in New York City (Columbia?). She published works on language and oral literature in Haiti. She then travelled to the Leopoldville, Belgian Congo, to study the lives of urban African women. 1960-1962 carried out research in Ethiopia. In 1965 she returned to Leopoldville (which by then was Kinshasa), to resume her study of urban African women. She also spent time researching in Ethiopia, Senegal, Togo and Nigeria. Died in a car accident in Nigeria on 20 June 1975.

Jean Coradin: Diplomat in various African countries including Liberia and Benin.

Louis-Philippe Dalembert: (1962-) Journalist and "vagabond." Spent a decade in Paris where he went to school and worked as a journalist. Travelled the Americas, the Caribbean, the Middle East, Europe and Africa.

Maurice Dartigue: (1903-1983) Studied rural education at Columbia, completing his Master's in 1931. Appointed Minister of Education, Agriculture and Labour in Haiti in 1941. In the role for four and a half years, instituted many reforms. Went into exile after the Revolution of 1946. For ten years he worked in the Trusteeship Department of the United Nations in New York, becoming Senior Specialist in Education. Transferred to UNESCO in Paris in 1956. Supervised Latin American Major Project. Held multiple posts, including: Chief of the Division of Primary Education, Chief of the Division of In-School Education, Chief of the UNESCO Mission in the

Congo, and Chief of the (newly created) Africa Division. After "retiring" at 60, he went on several short- and longer-term assignments in Africa. Helped organize a conference of ministers and directors of education in 15 to 25 May 1960 in Addis Ababa (the Conference of African States on the Development of Education in Africa or the Addis Ababa Conference).

Lionel Derenoncourt: An international aid work living in Dakar.

Félix Dorsinville: Roger Dorsinville's son. Lived and worked with his father in exile.

Max Dorsinville: (1943-) Son of Max H. Dorsinville. Left Haiti in 1954 when his father was named Haitian ambassador to the UN. Professor at McGill 1970 to 2006.

Max H. Dorsinville: (1910-2005) Joined the UN in 1947. First Haitian to lead a UN mission in colonial Africa from 1955. Helped the transition to independence of Togo, Cameroon, Somalia, Tanganyika, Rwanda-Burundi and Congo. Chief of Operations for the UN military Operations in Congo (ONUC) May 1963–April 1964. (Under)reported the Rwanda genocide. Roger Dorsinville's brother. Max Dorsinville's father.

Roger Dorsinville: (1911-1992) Politician and public servant. Secretary of Agriculture, Public Health and Labour in 1956. He worked as Ambassador to Senegal until 1965. Lived in Liberia (c. 1965-1972) and Senegal (c. 1972-1986). He carried out ethnological work in the Liberian hinterland and published two works on the topic: *Dans un monde de dieux* (1970) and *The Bassa Mask* (1973). Worked at a publishing house and ran a bookstore in Dakar. Max H. Dorsinville's brother.

Marcel Fombrun: (1915-1986) Delegate to UN in 1955. Secretary of the presidency and commerce 1956. In exile 1959-1984. 17 years in Congo and elsewhere in Africa. UNICEF representative in many African countries.

Odette Roy Fombrun: (1917-2022) Studied nursing in Boston in 1945. In exile 1959-1984. 17 years in Congo and elsewhere in Africa. Taught courses in Congo. Contributed to the 1987 Haitian Constitution.

Jean Fouchard: Diplomat. Visited Dakar.

Hérard Jadotte: Editor and publisher in Montreal. Visited Dakar.

Robert Laraque: (1912–1935) Son of Sylla Laraque. Died in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 1935.

Simone Laraque: (1912–1996) Daughter of Sylla Laraque. Born in Mograne, Tunisia in 1912.

Sylla Laraque: (1850–1924) After growing wealthy in coffee exporting in the mid-nineteenth century, he left Haiti in 1885 to avoid despoilation under Salomon. Relocated to France and purchased vineyards in Tunisia. Apparently spent time in Tunisia circa 1909–1912. Father of Camille Saint-Jacques.

Lucien Leconte: (?–2002) Dentist in Dakar in the 1970s. Husband of Monique Leconte.

Renée Lemaire: Félix Morisseau-Leroy's wife. Lived with him in Dakar.

Lucien Lemoine: (1923-2010) Poet and actor. First arrived in Senegal in 1966 for the First World Festival of Black Arts (FESMAN) in Dakar. Taught at a journalism school in Dakar. Hosted a radio show on literature.

Michel Philippe Leurebours: (1934-) Travelled to France in 1960 to study art and architecture. Only Black student in the Institut d'art et d'archéologie. Studied African art and taught in Congo.

Max Manigat: (1931-) Went to Congo in 1965. Taught in Congolese high schools and later at CUNY. Worked on a book *Un Haïtien au Congo*, but his computer was hacked, and he lost it.

Félix Morisseau-Léroy: (1912-1998) Creole language poet and playwright. Travelled to Paris to stage his Creole play, *Antigòn*, and to escape Duvalier, in 1959. In Nigeria 1960, Ghana ±1961-1966, Senegal 1966-1981. Developed his ideas around popular theatre in Haiti, then continued his work in Ghana and Senegal. Retired in Miami in 1981.

Jean-Marc Pasquet: Son of a Haitian father and French-Russian mother. Born in Switzerland, raised in Asia, Africa and Europe.

Giselle Peck: Secretary and aide to the mayors of Kinshasa. Wife of Herbert B. Peck. Mother of Raoul Peck.

Herbert B. Peck: UNESCO and FAO Agronomist and professor of agriculture in Kinshasa for twenty-four years. Also worked in "various African countries—helping them with their development." Father of Raoul Peck. Husband of Giselle Peck.

Raoul Peck: (1953-) Haitian filmmaker and Minister of Culture under René Préval. Produced documentaries about Patrice Lumumba and James Baldwin. Lived with his family in Kinshasa for twenty-four years beginning when he was eight years old. Son of Giselle and Herbert Peck.

Vera André Périclès: An international aid work living in Dakar.

Jean Price-Mars: (1876-1969) Haitian intellectual and the father of Haitian Indigenism. Moved to Paris in 1899 at the age of 23 on a scholarship to study medicine. Made secretary of the Haitian legation. Chargé d'affaires to Washington DC 1908-1911. National inspector of public education 1912-1915. Minister to France 1915-1916. Met and influenced the Négritude theorists. Founded the Institute of Ethnology in 1941. Elected president of the First Congress of Black Artists and Writers in Paris. Visited Senghor in Dakar in 1966.

Camille Saint-Jacques: (1902–1986) Son of Sylla Laraque, said to have spent time on his father's vineyard lands in Tunisia circa 1908–1912. Went on to get involved in anti-colonial activism in various groups in Paris in the 1920s and 1930s.

Léo Sajous: (1892–?) Doctor. Lived in Paris in the from c. 1915 to 1934. Tried to create a Negro Institute in 1929. Invovled with Paulette Nardal's famous salon. Encouraged Nardal to create *La Revue du Monde Noir* in 1931, which had an impact on the Négritude movement and Black

solidarity in Paris. Subsequently spent some ten years in Liberia where he attempted to negotiate economic links between Poland and Liberia, and worked as head of the national hygiene service.

Jacqueline Scott-Lemoine: (1923-2011) - Stage actor and writer. Worked at the Haitian embassy in Paris 1950-1953. Returned to Haiti in 1956 where she worked as a TV host. In 1963 she went back to Paris on a scholarship to intern at the Maison de la Radio. Was offered the role as the queen in Aimé Césaire's *La Tragédie du roi Christophe* and was a theatre woman thereafter. She married Lucien Lemoine in 1964 (with Aimé Césaire serving as a witness). She toured with *La Tragédie* across Europe, and ended up performing the play at the First World Festival of Black Arts (FESMAN) in Dakar in 1966 in front of an audience which included Léopold Senghor, Haile Selassie, the king of Morocco's nephew, Duke Ellington, Josephine Baker, Alioune Diop, Katherine Dunham, Langston Hughes and Aimé Césaire. She and Lucien took up residence in Dakar in 1966, became citizens in 1976, and contributed to the development of Senegalese theatre.

Maurice Sixto: (1919-1984) Descendant of Baron de Vastey. Studied law 1945-1948, while also working in radio and working as a translator and tour guide for the American embassy in Haiti. Press aganet at the Liberian embassy to Haiti (1948-1960). 1962 Unesco teacher in Congo. Taught French, English, Latin and Social Science in Kinshasa for 9 years. Glaucoma forces him to return to Haiti in 1969. Opposed Restavèk system. Promoted the use of Creole. Ran a radio programme. Retired to USA.

Benito Sylvain: (1868-1915) Journalist and early pan-African organizer. In 1874 he earned his baccalauréat ès lettres at Collège Stanislas in Paris. 1889, named secretary of the Haitian legation in London, but abandoned the post after one year to move to Paris and start *La Fraternité* a newspaper dedicated to Haitian and African interests, which ran for seven years. 1890, participated in anti-slavery conferences in Brussels, where he befriended Cardinal Lavigerie and gained an audience with Leopold II. 1891, *La Fraternité* received a grant from the Haitian government. 1894, named president of the Comité Oriental et Africain of the Paris Ethnological Society. 1897, first trip to Abyssinia. 10 April, first interview with Menelik II, by whom he was decorated and named aide de camp. 1898, studied maritime engineering at the École du Génie Maritime de France. Served as Menelik's representative to the Pan-African conference in 1900 (which he also helped to organize). 1901, doctorate, thesis (about the plight of the colonized) presented at the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques. 1902, as delegate general for the Pan-African Society, sent to mediate in the conflicts going on in Haiti. 1903, second trip to Abyssinia. Gives greetings from Nord Alexis to Menelik. Promoted to commandant on 24 April. 1904, third trip. Celebrates Haitian centennial in Addis Ababa. Travels to Alexandria and Cairo. Conference for the Khedivial Geographical Society. 1905, gives numerous presentations in Paris and goes to Rome to found the Society for the Social Advancement of Blacks. Audience with Pope Pius X, talks about the plight of Africans. 1906, fourth trip to Abyssinia. New series of conferences in Paris about Abyssinia. 1907 travels to Canada and founds "L'Étoile Africaine." Fights racism in Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec City. 1909-1914, public service in Haiti. Dies 3 January 1915.

Edmond Sylvain: Educational expert for UN Operation in the Congo and head of UNESCO in the Congo, August–November 1960, then professor in Congo for several years. Cousin of Suzanne Comhaire-Sylvain. Nephew of Benito Sylvain.

Madeleine Sylvain-Bouchereau: (1905-1970) Sociologist. Worked for the UN. 1966-1968, advisor on community development for the government of Togo. Sister of Suzanne Comhaire-Sylvain. Niece of Benito Sylvain.

Pierre Sylvain: (1910-1991) Botanist. Reported on coffee production in Ethiopia. Brother of Suzanne Comhaire-Sylvain. Nephew of Benito Sylvain.

Raymonde Sylvain M'bow: Daughter of Edmond Sylvain. She studied history at the Sorbonne, where she met the Senegalese student Amadou Makhtar M'bow, whom she married. M'bow went on to be Minister of Education and then Culture and Youth Affairs in Senegal (1966-1970). Then he worked for UNESCO, eventually becoming Director-General from 1974 to 1987.

Yvonne Sylvain: (1907-1989) Doctor (Haiti's first OBGYN) and cancer researcher. Brought her medical knowledge to "several African countries" including Senegal and Nigeria.

***Joseph Tomei:** Born in Port-de-Paix circa 1894, apparently the son of a French merchant stationed in the town. Mother may have been Haitian. Went on to serve in the French topographic service in colonial Senegal and Guinée from the 1920s to the 1940s.

Marie-Thérèse Torchon: Maurice Sixto's wife. Travelled to Congo from Canada. Met Sixto.

***Eugène Tisserant:** (1814–1845) Spiritan missionary. Born in France to a Haitian mother and a French father. Worked in Haiti and briefly served as Head of the Catholic Church in Haiti. Later appointed Prefect Apostolic of Guinée. Died in a shipwreck off the coast of Morocco on his way to Africa.

Appendix 2:
Titles published by Haïtians in Paris, 1804–1939

The following is an incomplete list of titles published by Haitians in Paris between 1804 and 1939. It is based on two works, *Bibliographie général et méthodique de Haïti* (1941) and Max Bissainthe's *Dictionnaire bibliographique haïtienne* (1951) and additional research. They are ordered chronologically to demonstrate developments over time.

1810s:

Séguy-Villevaleix, Louis. *Université impériale. Académie de Paris. Faculté des lettres. Thèse de belles-lettres. Littérature ancienne et moderne. Sur les harangues des historiens*. Paris: Fain, 1813.

Chanlatte, Juste. *Le cri de la nature*. Paris: Editions de la Revue encyclopédique, 1819. [first ed. was published in Haiti]

1820s:

Chanlatte, Juste. *Histoire de la catastrophe de Saint-Domingue, avec la corres- pondance des généraux Leclerc (beau-frére de Bonaparte), Henry Chris- tophe (depuis Roi d'Hayti), Hardy, Vilton, etc., certifiée conforme aux originaux déposés aux Archives, par le Lieutenant-Général Rouanez Jeune*. Paris: Peytieux, 1824.

Anonymous. *Code Civil d'Haïti*. Paris: n. pub., 1826.

Justin, Placide. *Histoire politique et statistique de l''Ile d'Hayti, Saint-Domingue; écrite sur des documents officiels et des notes communiquées par Sir James Barskett, Agent du Gouvernement Britannique dans les Antilles.* Paris: Brières, 1826.

1830s:

Anonymous. *Lettre d'un Haïtien à un Français sur le bruit d'une rupture prochaine entre Haïti et la France*. Paris: Blaise, 1832.

Fournier de Pescay, François. *Coup d'œil sur les relations commerciales de la France avec Haïti et sur la dette de cette République envers les anciens colons de St.-Domîngue.*Paris: Verone, 1832.

Merlet, Jean Baptiste*. Propositions et observations sur les accouchements et sur quelques maladies de l'urètre et de la vessie*. Paris: Didot le jeune, 1834.

Paul, G. *Affaire d'Haïti*. Paris: Renard & Delaunay, 1836.

Imbert, Marie-Antoine Victor. *Thèse pour la licence soutenue*. Paris: Vinchon, 1838.

1840s:

Linstant de Pradines, Jean-Baptiste Symphor. *Essais sur les moyens d'extirper les préjugés des blancs contre la couleur des Africains et des sang mêlés*. Paris: Pagnerre, 1840.

Linstant de Pradines, Jean-Baptiste Symphor. *Thése pour la licence en Droit*. Paris: Lecrampe, 1840.

Ardouin, Beaubrun. *Réponse du Sénateur ...a une lettre de M. Isambert.* Paris: Pinard, 1842.

Imbert, Marie-Antoine Victor. *Thèse pour la doctorat*. Paris: Vichon, 1842.

Anonymous. *La dette haïtienne et sa liquidation. Avantages d'un sursis*. Paris: Waille, 1844.

Chenet, Jean-Baptiste. *Etudes poétiques ou Chants du barde glané chez les Muses*. Paris: Dupont, 1846.

1850s:

Anonymous. *Aux hommes impartiaux, sur les attaques dont l'Empire d'Haïti et les Haïtiens ont été l'objet*. Paris: Charpentier, 1850.

St-Remy, Joseph. *Vie de Toussaint Louverture*. Paris: Moquet, 1850.

Boisrond-Tonnerre, Félix. *Mémoires pour servir a l'histoire d'Haïti ... précédés de différents actes politiques dûs à sa plume, et d'une étude historique et critique*. Paris: France libraires, 1851. [Disputed authorship]

Linstant de Pradines, Jean-Baptiste Symphor*. Recueil général des lois et actes du Gouvernement d'Haïti depuis la proclamation de son indépendance*. Paris: Durand, 1851.

Ardouin, Beaubrun. *Études sur l'Histoire d'Haïti*. Multiple volumes. Paris: Dezobry et E. Magdeleine, 1853–1860.

St-Remy, Joseph. *Pétion et Haïti; étude monographique et historique*. Paris: Chez l'auteur, 1854. [Five editions to 1857; last two editions via Durand]

Faubert, Pierre. *Ogé ou le préjugé de couleur*. Paris: Moquet, 1856.

Audain, Louis. *Discours à trois jeunes Haïtiens récemment couronnés au grand concours de la Sorbonne; prix d'honneur en rhétorique, premier prix de théme grec et un accessit en théme latin; discours lu le 12 août 1858, dans un banquet offert à ces trois jeunes lauréats.* Paris: Moquet, 1857.

Ethéart, Liauthaud. *Binettes de classiques, ou la poche d'un paletot; vaudeville en deux actes; faute d'un habit; monologue en un acte en vers*. Paris: Moquet, 1857.

Ethéart, Liauthaud. *Deux étudiants; farce-vaudeville en deux actes; le monde de chez nous; comédie en cing actes et en vers*. Paris: Moquet, 1857.

Anonymous. *Loi portant la mopdification à la loi du 13 juillet 1858, sur l'administration et la direction des Douanes*. Paris: Chamerot, 1859.

Audain, Louis, Prosper Elie and Edmond Paul. *Quelques lignes de reconnaissance a M. Victor Hugo pour son article "Un mot sur John Brown", par trois Haïtiens, interprétes des sentiments de leurs compatriotes.* Paris: Moquet, 1859.

Bergeaud, Emeric. *Stella*. Paris: Dentu, 1859.

1860s:

Anonymous. *Etat général du budget pour 1860; Département des Cultes*. Paris: Courtois, 1860.

Dupont Labastille, Jacques. *Thèse pour la licence soutenue*. Paris: Cosson, 1860.

Ethéart, Liauthaud. *La fille de l'Empereur; drame historique en trois actes; un duel sous Blanchelande; drame historique en quatre actes*. Paris: Moquet, 1860.

Saint-Armand, J. *Histoire des révolutions d'Haïti*. Paris: Dentu, 1860.

Anonymous. *Alphabet à l'usage de la Jeunesse haïtienne, suivi d'un Résumé de la géographie et de l'histoire de l'île d'Haïti jusqu'en 1861*. Paris: n. pub., 1861. [2nd ed. 1889]

Bruno, Joseph Demosthènes. *Thèse pour la licence*. Paris: Charles de Mourgues, 1861.

Dehoux, Jean-Baptiste. *Du mouvement organique et de la synthèse animale*. Paris: Delahaye, 1861.

Delorme, Demesvar. *L'Indépendance d'Haïti et la France*. Paris: Dentu, 1861. [Signed "Charolais"]

Paul. Edmond. *Questions politico-économiques. Deuxième partie. Formation de la richesse nationale.-Troisième partie. Le papier-monnaie et le projet d'un Banque d'Etat*. Paris: Bourdier, 1861. [3 parts; 2nd and 3rd in 1863]

Salomon, Louis Etienne Félicité Lysius. *Une défense*. Paris: Labrone & Mortens, 1861.

Delva, Alexandre. *Thèse pour la licence soutenue*. Paris: Thunot, 1862.

Paul, Edmond. *L'éducation industrielle du peuple ou la protection due aux industries naissantes*. Paris: Bourdier, 1862.

Anonymous. *Code Civil d'Haïti*. Paris: Lahure, 1864.

Bonnet, Guy-Joseph. *Souvenirs historiques de... Général de Division des Armées de la République d'Haïti, ancien aide de camp de Rigaud; documents officiels relatifs à toutes les phases de la révolution de St-Domingue, recueillis et mis en ordre par (son fils) Edmond Bonnet*. Paris: Durand, 1864. [Posthumous]

Faubert, (Général). *Poésies, suivies de Notes et de Fragments*. Paris: Maillet, 1864.

Dubois, Elie. *Deux années et demi de ministére*. Paris: Bourdier, 1866.

Dubois, Elie. *Précis historique de la révolution Haïtienne de 1843*. Paris: Bourdier, 1866.

Ethéart, Liauthaud. *Essais dramatiques*. Paris: Moquet, 1866.

Villavaleix, Charles Séguy. *Les Primavères*. Paris: Jouaust, 1866. [2nd ed. 1867]

Delva, Alexandre. *Considérations sur l'armée Haïtienne*. Paris: Maillet, 1867.

Delorme, Demesvar. *La Reconnaissance du général Salnave*. Paris: Chaix, 1868.

1870s:

Delorme, Demesvar. *Les théoriciens au pouvoir*. Paris: Plon, 1870.

Saint-Armand, J. *Code rural d'Haïti publié avec commentaires et formulaires*. Paris: Guyot, 1872. [2nd ed.]

Toussaint, Surville. *De la race noire*. Paris: Noblet, 1872.

Delorme, Demesvar. *Francesca*. Paris: Dentu, 1873.

Delorme, Demesvar. *Réflexions diverses sur Haïti.* Paris: Dentu, 1873.

Delva, Alexandre. *Considérations sur l'article 7 de la constitution d'Haïti*. Paris: Librairie générale, dépôt centrale des éditeurs, 1873.

Granville, Jonathas. *Henri Théodore. Biographie de Jonathas Granville, par son fils*. Paris: Brière, 1873.

Arteaud, Jean Chrysostome. *Réflextions sur la situation actuelle d'Haïti.* Paris: Lahure, 1874.

Delorme, Demesvar. *Les Paisibles*. Paris: Alcan-Lévy, 1874.

Pinkcombe, Edouard. *L'Article 7: Letter à M. Delorme*. Paris: Alcan-Lévy, 1874.

Pinkcombe, Edouard. *Le Tison*. Paris: Alcan-Lévy, 1874.

Auguste, Nemours. *De l'hygiène de la flanelle.* Paris: n. pub., 1876.

Grellier, Roche. *Essai sur les indications thérapeutiques dans les blessures de l'articulation scapulo-humèrale par coup de feu*. Paris: A. Parent, 1876.

Légitime, François Denis. *Ils ont osé.* Paris: Lahure, 1876.

Linstant de Pradines, Jean-Baptiste Symphor*. Nos fils ou de la néotocratie en Haïti; lettres au Gouvernement provisoire et au Rédacteur en Chef du "Constitutionnel" de Port-au-Prince*. Paris: Donnaud, 1876.

Price, Hannibal. *Etudes sur les finances et l'économie des nations*. Paris: Lahure, 1876.

Delorme, Demesvar. *Le damné*. Paris: Challamel, 1877.

Desert, Archimède. *Des dilations lymphatiques (lymphagiectasie, lymphangiome)*. Paris: A. Parent, 1877.

Henriquez, Alfred. *Mémoire: le siège de six mois*. Paris: Roquet, 1877.

Laforestrie, Charles. *Lettre a M. le Président de l'Assemblée Nationale d'Haïti*. Paris: Lahure, 1877.

Baron, Louis-Gédéon. *Etude clinique sur les troubles de la vue chez les hystériques et les hystéro-épileptiques*. Paris: A. Parent, 1878.

Lochard, Paul. *Les chants du soir.* Paris: Kugelmann, 1878.

Miot, Merovée. *Historique de l'article 5 de la caisse d'amortissement*. Paris: Veuve Ethiou Pérou, 1878.

Ménos, Solon. *Thèse pour licence*. Paris: Pichon, 1878.

Désert, Enoch. *La Banque Agricole et foncière*. Paris: Cotillon, 1879.

Désert, Enoch. *Les réformes financiéres de la République d'Haïti.* Paris: Pichon, 1879.

Gragnon-Lacoste, Thomas-Prosper. *Haïtiade*. Paris: n. pub., 1878.

Lamothe. Louis Joseph Tacite. *Du traitement de l'asthme par quelques agents, principalement de la médication altérante.* Paris: A. Parent, 1879.

Légitime, François Denis. *L'Armée Haïtienne; sa nécessité, son rôle*. Paris: Dufossé, 1879.

Mahotière, Honorius. *Etudes cliniques sur les contractions utérines.* Paris: A. Parent, 1879.

1880s:

Anonymous. *Projet de Statuts de la Banque Nationale d'Haïti*. Paris: Veuve Ethiou Pérou, 1880.

Bergeaud, Jacques. *Mémoire sur la fiévre pernicieuse en Haïti d'aprés les documents recueillis dans le sud de l'île.* Paris: Delahaye & Lecrosnier, 1880.

Désert, Enoch. *La Banque Nationale d'Haïti, contenant le commentaire critique et analytique du décret de l'Assemblée nationale, le réglement de la dette intérieure…* Paris: Derenne, 1880.

Jacob. *Correspondance d'Haïti.* Paris: n. pub., 1880.

Nau, Auguste Thédore Eugène*. Agronomie et Agriculture en Haïti; suivies de la deuxième édition de "L'Influence de l'Agriculture sur la civilisation des peuples".* Paris: Guyot, 1880. [Revised edition in 1886]

Fleury Battier, Alcibiade*. Sous les Bambous.* Paris: Kugelmann, 1881.

Janvier, Louis-Joseph. *Phtisie pulmonaire; causes, traitement préventif.* Paris: A. Parent, 1881.

Ménos, Solon. *De la separation des patrimoines.* Paris: Cotillon, 1881.

Pommayrac, Alcibiade. *Réflexions sur la crise agricole, commerciale et financiére d'Haïti.* Paris: Kugelmann, 1881.

Auguste, Jules, Arthur Bowler, Clément Denis and Justin Dévost, Louis-Joseph Janvier. *Les détracteurs de la race noire et de la République d'Haïti; réponses a M. Léo Quesnel….* Paris: Marpon & Flammarion, 1882.

Edouard, Emmanuel. *Rimes Haïtiennes.* Paris: Dentu, 1882.

Government of Haïti. *Documents diplomatiques; relations extérieures; affaire Maunder.* Paris: Chaix, 1882. [2 vols.]

Jeanty, Occide. *Petite grammaire musicale.* Paris: Librairie Evangelique, 1882.

Lespinasse, Beauvais. *Histoire des Affranchis de Saint-Domingue.* Paris: Kugelmann, 1882.

Ménos, Solon. *Haïti et sa première exposition; la statue de Victor Hugo; conférences faites à Port-au-Prince (Haïti).* Paris: Cotillon, 1882.

Ménos, Solon. *Les Mnémoniennes.* Paris: Cotillon, 1882.

Héraux, Edmond. *Les Préludes.* Paris: Grasset, 1883.

Janvier, Louis-Joseph. *La République d'Haïti et ses visiteurs (1840-1882); réponse à Victor Cochinat, de la "Petite Presse" et à quelques autres écrivains.* Paris: Marpon & Flammarion, 1883.

Légitime, François Denis. *Une année au Ministére de l'Agriculture et de l'Intérieur.* Paris: Challamel, 1883.

Sabourin, Dantès. *Des rapports qui unissent quelques maladies de l'enfant à celles de la mère et réciproquement.* Paris: Albert Drouin, 1883.

Banque Nationale d'Haïti. *Assemblée générale....* Paris: Veuve Ethiou Pérou, 1884. [Subsequently published annual reports to 1914, publishers differ]

Chancy, Emmanuel. *L'indépendance nationale d'Haïti; étude historique, contenant des appréciations nouvelles, suivie d'états inédits des sommes versées dés 1838 en exécution du traité financier du 12 février, et précédée d'une préface de M. Jérémie.* Paris: Marpon & Flammarion, 1884.

Guilloux, Alexis Jean-Marie. *Lettre pastorale et mandement ... pour le saint temps de caréme de l'an de grace 1884.* Paris: Oberthur, 1884.

Janvier, Louis-Joseph. *Les Antinationaux, actes et principes.* Paris: Rougier, 1884.

Janvier, Louis-Joseph. *L'égalité des races.* Paris: Rougier, 1884.

Janvier, Louis-Joseph. *Haïti aux haïtiens.* Paris: A. Parent, A. Davy, 1884.

Janvier, Louis-Joseph. *Le Vieux Piquet; scène de la vie haïtienne.* Paris: A. Parent, 1884.

Luzincourt Rose, Samuel. *Les Soupirs.* Paris: Grassart, 1884.

Anselin, Charles. *L'art d'être facile à la riposte, de faire le trait d'esprit, d'avoir le mot pour rire; suivi de notices utiles sur les sciences, les arts et les lettres.* Paris: n. pub., 1885.

Bergeaud, Jacques. *Variole et vaccine; notes pour servir de contribution a l'histoire d'une épidémie de variole qui a sévi aux Cayes, Haïti, du 9 avril 1822 au... mars 1883.* Paris: Delahaye & Lecrosnier, 1885. [2nd edition appeared in the same year]

Duchatellier, Achille. *Considérations sur la genèse et l'étiologie de l'hépatite suppurée.* Paris: Derenne, 1885.

Edouard, Emmanuel. *Le Panthéon Haïtien.* Paris: Auguste Ghio, 1885.

Edouard, Emmanuel. *La République d'Haïti à la Apothéose de Victor Hugo.* Paris: Derenne, 1885.

Firmin, Anténor. *De l'égalité des races.* Paris: Cotillon & Pichon, 1885.

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Appendix 3:
Charts and Figures



— Eh bien ! drôle, qu'est-ce que tu cherches ? je t'ordonne d'accrocher cette décoration à ta boutonnière.

Figure 1 - Cham cartoon, Wikisource



L'impératrice Ourika obligée de souffrir les espièglerie des pages attachés à sa personne.

Figure 2 - Cham cartoon, Wikisource



Soulouque désirant divorcer, fait partir pour Vienne un envoyé plénipotentiaire pour demander la main d'une des filles que ne peut manquer d'avoir un jour l'empereur d'Autriche. — Cet ambassadeur est reçu à la porte du palais avec les honneurs dus à son rang.

Figure 3 - Cham cartoon, Wikisource



LA COUR DE SOULOUQUE LE MATIN.

— L'empereur Soulouque est-il visible ?

— Non, monsieur, il est occupé, il nettoie ses bottes à l'écurie.

— L'impératrice daignerait-elle m'accorder une audience ?

— C'est moi, monsieur.

Figure 4 - Cham cartoon, Wikisource



L'impératrice Ourika devient furieuse contre son professeur de piano qui ose soutenir qu'une blanche valait deux noires.

Figure 5 - Cham cartoon, Wikisource

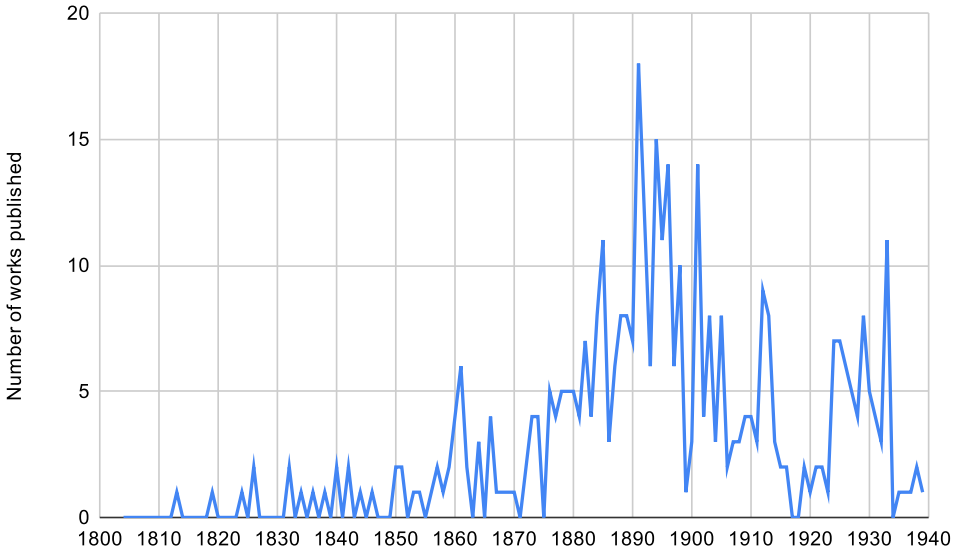


Chart 1 - Haitians in Paris, titles per year

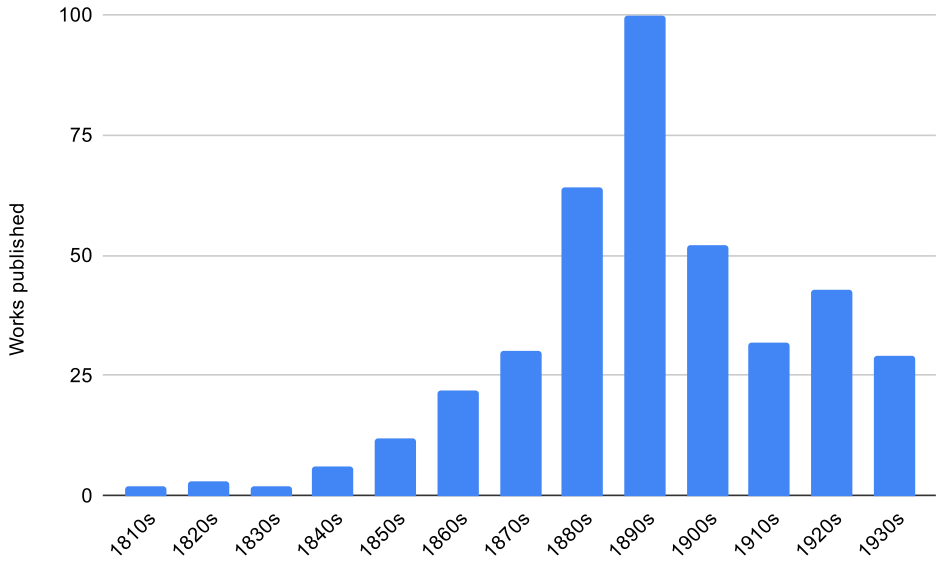


Chart 2 - Haitians in Paris, titles per decade

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