

Introduction to Latin American History

Primary Source Essay Assignment

Due: Friday, Nov.3rd

In 2-3 pages, analyze the following primary sources. Think critically about what information they reveal. In your responses, you should address the following questions, but do not explicitly answer by simply rephrasing the questions:

1. What do you understand about the time period (context) of the sources? Why was there increasing racial tensions in the French colony, St. Domingue?
2. What does the Code Noir of 1685 and Julien Raimond's document tell us about how descendants of Africans (slaves and free coloreds) were treated in colonial St. Domingue?
3. Why did the Free Citizens of Color and Vincent Ogé react as they did within this context?

Students' answers will be evaluated based upon the quality of their argument and use of evidence, how thoroughly they demonstrate an understanding of the time period, contextualize the provided sources within that time period, and the level of detailed information and evidence provided to support arguments and conclusions. These are open-source exercises and students *should* use their course texts to fully answer the questions (and, once again, cite the evidence they use utilizing their respective discipline's manual of style).

Related Titles in
THE BEDFORD SERIES IN HISTORY AND CULTURE
Advisory Editors: Lynn Hunt, *University of California, Los Angeles*
 David W. Blight, *Yale University*
 Bonnie G. Smith, *Rutgers University*
 Natalie Zemon Davis, *Princeton University*
 Ernest R. May, *Harvard University*

Christopher Columbus and the Enterprise of the Indies: A Brief History with Documents

Geoffrey Symcox, *University of California, Los Angeles*, and Blair Sullivan, *University of California, Los Angeles*

Victors and Vanquished: Spanish and Nahuatl Views of the Conquest of Mexico

Edited with an Introduction by Stuart B. Schwartz, *Yale University*

THE INTERESTING NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF OLAUDAH EQUIANO, WRITTEN BY HIMSELF, *Second Edition*

Edited with an Introduction by Robert J. Allison, *Suffolk University*

The French Revolution and Human Rights: A Brief Documentary History

Edited, Translated, and with an Introduction by Lynn Hunt, *University of California, Los Angeles*

William Lloyd Garrison and the Fight against Slavery: Selections from THE LIBERATOR

Edited with an Introduction by William E. Cain, *Wellesley College*

THE CONFESSIONS OF NAT TURNER and *Related Documents*

Edited with an Introduction by Kenneth S. Greenberg, *Suffolk University*

Defending Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Old South: A Brief History with Documents

Paul Finkelman, *University of Tulsa College of Law*

NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS, AN AMERICAN SLAVE, WRITTEN BY HIMSELF with *Related Documents, Second Edition*

Edited with an Introduction by David W. Blight, *Yale University*

Dred Scott v. Sandford: A Brief History with Documents

Paul Finkelman, *University of Tulsa College of Law*

Abraham Lincoln, Slavery, and the Civil War: Selected Writings and Speeches

Edited by Michael P. Johnson, *Johns Hopkins University*

THE BEDFORD SERIES IN HISTORY AND CULTURE

Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804 **A Brief History with Documents**

Laurent Dubois

Duke University

and

John D. Garrigus

University of Texas at Arlington

BEDFORD / ST. MARTIN'S

Boston ♦ New York

For Bedford/St. Martin's

Executive Editor for History: Mary V. Dougherty
Director of Development for History: Jane Knetzger
Developmental Editor: Shannon Hunt
Senior Production Supervisor: Joe Ford
Production Associate: Matthew Hayes
Senior Marketing Manager: Jenna Bookin Barry
Project Management: Books By Design, Inc.
Text Design: Claire Seng-Niemoeller
Cover Design: Billy Boardman
Cover Art: Hand-colored engraving of *Toussaint Louverture fighting the French in Saint-Domingue*, ca. 1800. © Bettmann/Corbis.
Composition: Stratford Publishing Services, Inc.
Printing and Binding: Haddon Craftsmen, an RR Donnelley & Sons Company
President: Joan E. Feinberg
Editorial Director: Denise B. Wydra
Director of Marketing: Karen Melton Soeltz
Director of Editing, Design, and Production: Marcia Cohen
Manager, Publishing Services: Emily Berleth

Library of Congress Control Number: 2005931087

Copyright © 2006 by Bedford/St. Martin's

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, except as may be expressly permitted by the applicable copyright statutes or in writing by the Publisher.

Manufactured in the United States of America.

6 5
p o

For information, write: Bedford/St. Martin's, 75 Arlington Street, Boston, MA 02116
(617-399-4000)

ISBN-10: 0-312-41501-X (paperback)
1-4039-7157-9 (hardcover)
ISBN-13: 978-0-312-41501-3

Foreword

The Bedford Series in History and Culture is designed so that readers can study the past as historians do.

The historian's first task is finding the evidence. Documents, letters, memoirs, interviews, pictures, movies, novels, or poems can provide facts and clues. Then the historian questions and compares the sources. There is more to do than in a courtroom, for hearsay evidence is welcome, and the historian is usually looking for answers beyond act and motive. Different views of an event may be as important as a single verdict. How a story is told may yield as much information as what it says.

Along the way the historian seeks help from other historians and perhaps from specialists in other disciplines. Finally, it is time to write, to decide on an interpretation and how to arrange the evidence for readers.

Each book in this series contains an important historical document or group of documents, each document a witness from the past and open to interpretation in different ways. The documents are combined with some element of historical narrative—an introduction or a biographical essay, for example—that provides students with an analysis of the primary source material and important background information about the world in which it was produced.

Each book in the series focuses on a specific topic within a specific historical period. Each provides a basis for lively thought and discussion about several aspects of the topic and the historian's role. Each is short enough (and inexpensive enough) to be a reasonable one-week assignment in a college course. Whether as classroom or personal reading, each book in the series provides firsthand experience of the challenge—and fun—of discovering, recreating, and interpreting the past.

Lynn Hunt
David W. Blight
Bonnie G. Smith
Natalie Zemon Davis
Ernest R. May

1

The French Caribbean in the Eighteenth Century

1

The Code Noir

1685

Since at least the 1630s, French Caribbean colonists had held enslaved Africans. However, it was only after sugar planting became the islands' main crop in the middle of the century that enslaved people came to outnumber colonists. In 1685, the French monarchy issued a comprehensive slave code to replace the piecemeal local laws written by colonial administrators and judges. Drafted by European legal scholars who knew far more about ancient Roman jurisprudence than about New World plantations, The Code Noir contained many provisions that colonists ignored or deliberately violated. Nevertheless, although it was reissued and supplemented by local legislation throughout the eighteenth century, The Code Noir remained the foundation for the legal framework of French Caribbean slavery through the early years of the Haitian Revolution.

Le Code Noir ou recueil des reglements rendus jusqu'à présent (Paris: Prault, 1767).

Edict of the King

Concerning the enforcement of order in the French American islands from the month of March 1685

Louis, by the grace of God, King of France and Navarre: to all present and to come, Greetings. Since we owe equally our attention to all the peoples that Divine Providence has put under our obedience, we have had examined in our presence the memoranda that have been sent to us by our officers in our American islands, who have informed us that they need our authority and our justice to maintain the discipline of the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church¹ there and to regulate the status and condition of the slaves in our said islands. And we desire to provide for this and to have them know that although they live in regions infinitely removed from our normal residence, we are always present to them, not only by the range of our power but also by the promptness of our attempts to assist them in their needs. For these reasons, by the advice of our Council and by our certain knowledge, full power, and royal authority, we say, rule, and order, wish and are pleased by that which follows.

I. . . . we charge all our officers to evict from our islands all the Jews who have established their residence there, who we order, as to the declared enemies of the Christian religion, to leave within three months of the publication date of these present [edicts], or face confiscation of body and property.

II. All the slaves in our Islands will be baptized and instructed in the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman religion. . . .

III. We forbid any public exercise of any religion other than the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman; we wish that the offenders be punished as rebels and disobedient to our orders. . . . We prohibit all such [religious] assemblies, which we declare illicit and seditious, subject to the same penalty that will be levied even against masters who allow or tolerate them among their slaves.

VI. We charge all our subjects, whatever their status and condition, to observe Sundays and holidays that are kept by our subjects of the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman religion. We forbid them to work or to make their slaves work on these days from the hour of midnight until the next midnight, either in agriculture, the manufacture of sugar, or

¹This was the official name commonly used to describe the Roman Catholic Church at the time. It was meant to emphasize the connection to the early Apostles of Christ.

all other works, on pain of fine and discretionary punishment of the masters and confiscation of the sugar and of the said slaves. . . .

VII. We also forbid the holding of *négre*² markets and all other markets on such days under similar penalties. . . .

IX. Free men who will have one or several children from concubinage with their slaves, as well as the masters who permitted this, will each be condemned to a fine of two thousand pounds of sugar. And if they are the masters of the slave by whom they have had such children, we wish that beyond the fine they be deprived of the slave and the children, and that she and they be confiscated for the profit of the [royal] hospital, without ever being manumitted. Nevertheless, we do not intend for this article to be enforced if the man . . . would marry this slave in the church, which will free her and make the children free and legitimate. . . .

X. The marriage ceremonies prescribed by the Ordinance of Blois³ . . . will be observed both for free persons and for slaves; nevertheless, for the slave the consent of the father and the mother is not necessary, only that of the master.

XI. We forbid priests to officiate at the marriages of slaves unless they can show the consent of their masters. We also forbid masters to make their slaves marry against their will.

XII. The children born of marriages between slaves will be slaves and will belong to the master of the female slaves, and not to those of their husbands, if the husband and the wife have different masters.

XIII. We wish that if a slave husband has married a free woman, the children, both male and girls, will follow the condition of their mother and be free like her, in spite of the servitude of their father; and that if the father is free and the mother enslaved, the children will be slaves for the same reason.

XIV. Masters will be required to have their baptized slaves buried in holy ground in cemeteries designated for this purpose; and those [slaves] who die without having received baptism will be buried at night in some field near the place where they died.

²Throughout the documents, we have sometimes left racial terms, particularly *négre*, untranslated because no English term precisely captures its connotations. It could be translated as either *negro* or *black*, but in writings and legislation, especially during the French Revolution, the decision to use the term *négre* rather than the more respectful *noir* (black) carried important implications.

³This ordinance governed the practice of marriage throughout the French kingdom.

XV. We forbid slaves to carry any weapon, or large sticks, on pain of whipping and confiscation of the weapon, with the sole exception of those who are sent hunting by their master and who carry their note or known mark.⁴

XVI. In the same way we forbid slaves belonging to different masters to gather in the day or night, whether for a wedding or otherwise, whether on their master's property or elsewhere, and still less in the main roads or faraway places, on pain of corporal punishment, which will not be less than the whip and [branding with] the fleur-de-lis;⁵ frequent violations and other aggravating circumstances can be punished with death, which we leave to the decision of judges. We charge all our subjects, even those who are not officers, to approach the offenders, to arrest them and take them to prison, even if there is not yet any warrant against them.

XVII. Masters who are convicted of having permitted or tolerated such assemblies of slaves other than those belonging to them will be condemned in their own and private name to pay for all the damages done to their neighbors by these said assemblies and a fine . . . for the first time and double for repeat offenses.

XVIII. We forbid slaves to sell sugar cane for whatever reason or occasion, even with the permission of their master, on pain of whipping for the slaves and . . . [a fine] . . . for their masters who permitted it, and a similar fine against the buyer.

XIX. We also forbid them to sell any kind of foodstuffs in the market or by carrying them to private houses, including fruits, vegetables, firewood, animal fodder, or handicrafts, without the express permission of their masters by a note or by known marks on pain of confiscation of the goods thus sold. . . .

XXII. Each week masters will have to provide their slaves ten years and older, for their nourishment, two-and-a-half Parisian quarts of cassava⁶ flour or three cassavas weighing at least two and a half pounds each or equivalent items, with two pounds of salted beef or three pounds of fish or other things in proportion, and to children, after they are weaned to the age of ten years, half of the above supplies.

XXIII. We forbid masters to give the slaves rum or taffia⁷ in place of the subsistence mentioned in the previous article.

⁴Known mark refers to the mark (often an x) made by masters who could not write or sign their names.

⁵The fleur-de-lis was the symbol of the king.

⁶Cassava, also known as manioc or yucca, is a starchy root vegetable often used in the Caribbean to make flour.

⁷Like rum, taffia was an alcohol produced from molasses, but it was of lower quality.

XXIV. We similarly forbid them to relieve themselves of providing food and subsistence to their slaves by permitting them to work a certain day of the week for their own ends.

XXV. Each year masters will have to furnish each slave with two outfits of canvas or four yards of canvas, at the master's discretion.

XXVI. Slaves who are not fed, clothed, and supported by their master as we command in these articles will notify the royal attorney and give him their statements. Based on this, even if the information comes from elsewhere, the master will be prosecuted at no cost to the plaintiff, which we desire because of masters' crimes and barbarous and inhumane treatment of their slaves. . . .

XXX. Slaves may not be given offices or commissions with any public function, nor be named agents by anyone other than their masters to act or estimate losses or testify, either in civil or criminal matters. And in cases where they will be heard as witnesses, their depositions will only serve as memoranda to aid the judges in the investigation, without being the source of any presumption, conjecture, or proof.

XXXI. Slaves cannot be party to either judgments or civil proceedings, nor can they be plaintiffs or defendants in civil or criminal proceedings. . . .

XXXIII. The slave who will have struck his master or the wife of his master, his mistress, or their children and drawn blood, or in the face, will be punished with death. . . .

LV. Masters twenty years old will be able to manumit their slaves by [legal] deed or by cause of death, without being required to provide the reason for this manumission. Provided that they are minors twenty-five years of age, they will not need the permission of parents.

LVI. Any slave whose master leaves him all his property or who names him executor of his testament or tutor of his children will be regarded as manumitted.

LVII. We declare that manumissions enacted in our islands will be considered as birth in our islands and manumitted slaves will not need our letters of naturalization in order to enjoy the advantages of our natural subjects in our kingdom, lands, and countries under our obedience, although they be born in foreign lands.

LVIII. We command manumitted slaves to retain a particular respect for their former masters, their widows, and their children; and any insult that they make against them will be punished more severely than if it had been done to another person. However, we declare them free and absolved of any other burdens, services, and rights that their former masters would like to claim, as much on their persons as on their possessions and estates as patrons.

LIX. We grant to manumitted slaves the same rights, privileges, and liberties enjoyed by persons born free; desiring that they merit this acquired liberty and that it produce in them, both for their persons and for their property, the same effects that the good fortune of natural liberty causes in our other subjects.

2

Prophesies of Slave Revolution

1771 and 1780

In his L'An deux mille quatre cent quarante (The Year 2440), first published in 1771, Louis-Sébastien Mercier critiqued the society he lived in by imagining waking up from a very long nap to find the world perfected and the tyranny and oppression of the past erased. As he wanders in this new world, he comes upon a monument representing a remarkable man who had brought liberty to slaves and redemption to Europeans.

[T]o the right I saw on a magnificent pedestal a *nègre*, his head bare, his arm outstretched, with pride in his eyes and a noble and imposing demeanor. Around him was the debris of twenty scepters.⁸ At his feet were the words "To the Avenger of the New World!"

I shouted with surprise and joy. Yes, I was told with an energy equal to my exclamations, nature had finally created this surprising and immortal man who had delivered a world from the most atrocious, longest, and most insulting tyranny of all. His genius, his audacity, his virtuous vengeance were rewarded; he broke the chains of his compatriots. So many slaves oppressed by the most odious slavery seemed to be awaiting only his signal to become as many heroes. The torrent that breaks dikes and lightning that strikes have a less immediate and violent effect. In the same instant they spilled the blood of their tyrants. French, Spanish, English, Dutch, Portuguese all fell prey to

⁸A scepter is a symbol of royalty.

Source: Louis-Sébastien Mercier, *From L'An deux mille quatre cent quarante: Rêve s'il en fut jamais* (Paris: Le petit jeune et Gerard, An X [1802]), 180-84.

iron, poison, and flame. The soil of America avidly drank the blood that it has been awaiting for so long, and the bones of their ancestors, murdered by cowards, seemed to stand up and shake with joy. . . . This heroic avenger freed a world of which he is the god, while the other [the Old World] has rendered him homage and granted him crowns. He came like a storm spreading across a city of criminals that is about to be destroyed by lightning. He was the exterminating angel to which God and Justice had handed its double-edged sword: He demonstrated that sooner or later cruelty will be punished and that Providence stores away souls that she unleashes on the earth to reestablish the balance that the iniquity of ferocious ambition has destroyed.*

This passage from a history of European colonialism, the publication of which was overseen by Abbé Raynal, followed a common eighteenth-century practice by directly incorporating some of Mercier's language. But the author of the passage, Denis Diderot, also included details not in Mercier, notably referring to events in Jamaica and Suriname, where colonial governments had made treaties with maroon communities, assuring them of their freedom. In this version, which followed a description of the slave trade, Diderot appealed to the sense of justice of European monarchs, urging them to end their own participation in the slave trade and declare war against any leaders who continued participating in the traffic. Then, however, he suggested that a violent revolution among the slaves themselves might ultimately be required to overturn slavery.

Refuse the seal of your authority to this infamous and criminal traffic of men who are turned into herds of cattle, and this commerce will disappear. Unite, for once, in pursuit of good, those forces that are so often gathered together for its destruction. If one among you dares to base hope for his richness and grandeur on the generosity of all others, he becomes an enemy of the human race that must be destroyed. Carry fire and iron against him. Your armies will be filled with the

*This hero, no doubt, will spare the generous Quakers who have just granted liberty to their *nègres* in a touching and memorable moment that made me spill tears of joy and makes me hate those Christians who do not imitate them.

Gaillaume Thomas François Raynal, *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les Deux Indes* (Genève: Pellet, 1780), vol. 3, book II, chap. 24.

hilated . . . there will be torrents of blood flowing as powerful as the gutters that flow along our streets.

Sirs,

We have the honor of being
Signed by us, Nègres

Copy of a Letter from the Slaves of Martinique, August 29, 1789

Great General:

The entire Nation of the Black Slaves very humbly begs your august person to accept its respectful homage and to cast a humanitarian eye on the reflections it takes the liberty of presenting to you.

We are not unaware, Great General, of all the negative things that have been presented to you about us; we are painted in such a foul way that even the most solidly virtuous person would have reason to turn against us; but God, who sooner or later always stops the proud plans of men, this God who is so just knows what is deep inside us; he knows that we have never had any project but to patiently accept the oppression of our persecutors. This eternal God, who could no longer suffer so much persecution, must have given Louis XVI, the greatest of monarchs, the charge of delivering all the miserable Christians oppressed by their unjust fellow men. . . .

We have just learned with extreme desperation that the mulattos, far from taking care of their enslaved mothers, brothers, and sisters, have dared claim that we do not deserve to enjoy, as they do, the benefits that come from peace and liberty and are incapable of continuing the hard work that supports the merchants of the white nation and cannot provide any service to the state. This is a great absurdity, and this vile action must demonstrate to you the baseness of spirit of this proud nation and make you see the hate, the jealousy, and all the horror of the disdain this nation has for us. . . . It is not jealousy that forces us to complain about the mulattos, but the harshness they have shown in creating a plan for liberty for only themselves, when we are all of the same family. We do not know, Great General, if you have received the request of the mulattos, but you will receive it soon, and we are happy if we have the good fortune to have reached you before it. . . .

We end our reflections by declaring to you that the entire Nation of

Source: Archives Nationales, C^{8a} 89, p. 69.

Black Slaves united together has a single wish, a single desire for independence, and all the slaves with a unanimous voice send out only one cry, one clamor to reclaim the liberty they have gained through centuries of suffering and ignominious servitude.

This is no longer a Nation that is blinded by ignorance and that trembles at the threat of the lightest punishments; its suffering has enlightened it and has determined it to spill to its last drop of blood rather than support the yoke of slavery, a horrible yoke attacked by the laws, by humanity, and by all of nature, by the Divinity and by our good King Louis XVI. We hope it will be condemned by the illustrious [Governor] Vioménil. Your response, Great General, will decide our destiny and that of the colony. Please send it to the parish priests who will inform us about it at the announcements at the end of mass. We await it with the greatest impatience, but without leaving behind the respect that is due to your dignity, and the Nation asks you to believe it to be, [Great] Grand General, your most humble and obedient servant.

Signed,

The Entire Nation

Saint-Pierre, August 29, 1789

5

THE FREE CITIZENS OF COLOR

Address to the National Assembly

October 22, 1789

Summer 1789 had been a tumultuous time in Paris. Within three months, the Estates General had become the National Assembly and had voted the Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen as the preamble to a new French constitution. Inspired by these events, more than a dozen of the hundreds of people of color living in the capital city began to hold meetings in late August. Gathering in the offices of Etienne-Louis-Hector Delolme, a white lawyer who became their spokesman, they drew up a formal

From "Discours de M. Joly au nom d'une députation des hommes de couleur," 22 October 1789, in *Archives parlementaires*, première série (Paris: P. Dupont, 1877), IX: 476-78.

collection of grievances, as most of France had done earlier in the preceding year. They then approached a group of wealthy absentee planters who were meeting in Paris to discuss how the emerging revolution might affect the colonies. When the planters rejected their proposed reforms in early September, the Parisian free coloreds appealed to the National Assembly.

Address to the National Assembly, To Our Lords, the Representatives of the Nation.

Our lords, the free citizens and landowners of color of the French islands and colonies are honored to inform you that there still exists in one of the lands of this empire a species of men scorned and degraded, a class of citizens doomed to rejection, to all the humiliations of slavery: in a word, Frenchmen who groan under the yoke of oppression.

Such is the fate of the unfortunate American colonists known in the islands under the name of mulattos, quadroons,² etc.

Born citizens and free, they live as foreigners in their own fatherland. Excluded from all positions, from honors and professions, they are even forbidden to practice some of the mechanical trades. Set apart in the most degrading fashion, they find themselves enslaved even in their liberty.

The Estates General has been summoned.

All France has hastened to support the king's benevolent plans; citizens of all classes have been called to the great work of public regeneration; all have contributed to writing complaints and nominating deputies to defending their rights and set forth their interests.

The call of liberty has echoed in the other hemisphere.

It should certainly have erased even the memory of these outrageous distinctions between citizens of the same land; instead, it has brought forth even more appalling ones.

For an ambitious aristocracy, liberty means only the right to rule other men, without sharing power.

The white colonists have acted according to this principle, which even today consistently guides their behavior.

They have taken upon themselves the right to elect colonial representatives.

² Individuals of one-quarter African ancestry.

Excluded from these meetings, the citizens of color have been deprived of the ability to look after their own interests, to discuss things that affect them too, and to carry their wishes, complaints, and demands to the National Assembly.

In this strange system, the citizens of color find themselves represented by the white colonists' deputies, although they have still never been included in their partial assemblies and they have not entrusted any power to these deputies. Their opposing interests, which sadly are only too obvious, make such representation absurd and contradictory.

You, our lords, must weigh these considerations; you must return to these oppressed citizens the rights that have been unjustly stripped from them; you must gloriously complete your work, by ensuring the liberty of French citizens in both hemispheres.

The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen has awakened the colonists of color to their past condition; they have shown themselves worthy of the dignity that you have assigned to them; they have learned their rights and they have used them. . . .

The citizens of color are clearly as qualified as the whites to demand this representation.

Like them they are all citizens, free and French; the edict of March 1685 accords them all such rights and guarantees them all such privileges. It states "that the freedmen (and all the more so their descendants) have earned their liberty; let this liberty produce in them, as much in their persons as for their property, the same effects as the fortune of liberty that is natural to all Frenchmen."³ Like them they are property owners and farmers; like them they contribute to the relief of the state by paying the levies and bearing all expenses that they and the whites share. Like them they have already shed their blood and are prepared to spill it again for the defense of the fatherland. Like them, finally, though with less encouragement and means, they have proven their patriotism again and again. . . .

They beseech you, our lords, not to forget them, and to act strictly on principle.

They ask for no favors.

They claim the rights of man and of citizen, those inalienable rights based on nature and the social contract, those rights that you have so solemnly recognized and so faithfully established when you established as the foundation of the constitution "that all men are born and remain free and equal in rights."

³ From Article 59 of *The Code Noir*. Note that this is a paraphrase, not an exact quote.

"That the law is the expression of the general will; that all citizens have the right to participate personally, or through their representatives, in its formation;

"That each citizen has the right to certify the necessity of public contribution, and to freely consent to it, either personally or through his representatives."

Is it your intent to reject these fundamental principles, setting the interests of the whites against those of the colonies? Do we want to muffle nature's voice with the calculations of sordid profit?

Can we not recognize the language of ambition and greed, whose speakers do not value the prosperity of the state unless they profit personally?

But this is not the place to conduct such serious discussions about basics of the rights of the citizens of color.

After you have agreed to their preliminary claims: when they have descended into the arena to fight their adversaries, they will easily show that the legitimate interests of the whites themselves, like those of the colonies, lie in guaranteeing the status and the liberty of the citizens of color. For a state's good fortune consists in the peace and harmony of its constituent members, and there can be no true peace or strong union between a strong group that oppresses and a weak one that yields; between a commanding master and an obedient slave.

6

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Decree of March 8 and Instructions of March 28

1790

On March 8, 1790, the French National Assembly passed a brief decree describing how elections should be organized in the colonies. Despite the arguments of the free men of color and their Parisian supporters that they were qualified to be citizens, neither the March 8 decree nor the Assembly's "Instructions," passed twenty days later, specifically mentioned

R. P. Adolphe Cabon, Histoire d'Haïti. Cours professé au Petit Séminaire, Collège Saint Martial, vol. 3 (Port-au-Prince: Édition de la Petite Revue, 1980-1997).

whether free people of color would be allowed to vote. These documents were based on the recommendations of the assembly's Colonial Committee, which free colored advocates described as controlled by planter interests.

Decree of the National Assembly, Monday March 8, 1790

First Article—Each colony has the right to express its wishes regarding the constitution, laws, and administration appropriate to its prosperity and the good fortunes of its inhabitants, as long as it conforms to the general principles that connect the colonies to the metropole⁴ and guarantee the protection of their respective interests.

Article II—In colonies that have Colonial Assemblies, freely elected and acknowledged by the citizens, these assemblies will be allowed to express the wishes of the colony. Those colonies without such assemblies will immediately create them in order to perform these same functions....

Article IV—The plans prepared by these Colonial Assemblies will be submitted to the National Assembly, which will examine them, issue a decree, and present them for royal acceptance and approval.

Article V—The National Assembly's decrees on the organization of municipal governments and administrative assemblies will be sent to these Colonial Assemblies, which will be authorized to execute those parts of the said decrees that can be adapted to local customs, pending the final decision of the National Assembly and the king on any modifications, and with the governor's provisional approval of measures voted by the administrative bodies.

Instructions Addressed by the National Assembly to the Colony of Saint-Domingue

On March 28, 1790

First Article—As soon as the Saint-Domingue's governor receives the king's dispatch containing these Instructions and the National Assembly's March 8 colonial decree, he will immediately communicate them to the Colonial Assembly if one is already formed, notify the provincial assemblies, and inform the residents of the colony legally

⁴The term *metropole* was used to refer to the part of the French nation located on the European continent, in contrast to its overseas colonies.

important than pride and avarice! Put another way, these men will be the victims of oppression until their tyrants agree to lighten their fate.

The representatives of the French people voted this strange decree almost unanimously, at the very moment in which they were congratulating themselves for having struck down tyranny and reconquered liberty. Moreover, as if they were afraid of gaining some insight on an issue of such great importance, they had already voted to prohibit any discussion of this one. . . .

The political world is certainly going to look different. The volcano of liberty that has been lit in France will soon bring about a general explosion and change the fate of the human species in the two hemispheres. The interests of the colony and of the metropole, their internal and external security, require that all forces work together, like the bundle of sticks that, according to the story, a dying father offered his family as an emblem. But our islands harbor the seeds of their own destruction, which are sending out roots. It is always a despicable policy to degrade one group of people instead of involving them in maintaining order. Did not the oppression of soldiers cause regimental uprisings [in France] that almost dissolved the army? It would be a great mistake to imagine that the colonies could remain in this unnatural repressed state very long; to believe this, one would have to know very little about human affairs. And the following considerations reinforce this opinion.

Everywhere the people of mixed race see this cockade, which, according to the prediction, will be known around the world; they see the revolutionary flag paraded with honor. How can one believe that the cries of liberty ringing endlessly in their ears will not awaken in their hearts a longing for their rights? Add to this a consideration of their strength, whose steady growth is extraordinary. I will cite just one fact. In 1779, there were 7,055 people of color in Saint-Domingue; in 1787, 19,632 were counted. Therefore, in the period of eight years, the population more than doubled; while France's population barely grew by one-ninth over a period of seventy-two years.

How can you limit that population when the unrestrained lechery of so many whites guarantees its future growth? The mulattos' industriousness and its results will follow the same pattern. Will you disarm all the free colored militias and patrols in fear of an uprising? They would have to be replaced and restrained by multiple expeditions of French soldiers, who would have to carry out all duties in a burning climate that devours effeminate Europeans and overworked *nègres*.

Who can say whether this degraded caste, pushed to despair, will not use its strength to rescue justice, if the mulattos will not ally with the *nègres* against those whites who might have easily claimed them,

thanks to filial love or the habit of respect? The easiest path for them would be to emigrate to the neighboring Spanish territory, where a diversity of skin colors has not produced legal distinctions. Already several have taken this step, and I can assure you, for I have proof, that if the injustices of the whites do not end soon, many people of mixed race plan to abandon a country where the sun shines only on their sorrows, and take their productivity and wealth elsewhere.

Moreover, do you not fear a coalition between the people of mixed race, those whites who aim at independence, and others who would greedily seize an opportunity to free themselves from paying the enormous sums they owe to France? Might not bitterness, ambition, and disloyalty stir up trouble and cause secession, with incalculable consequences? . . .

Oh, that I were a false prophet! But if events prove my fears correct, at least I will not have to reproach myself for saying nothing about these important matters. Is it not obvious that, if pride could be set aside, there would be more citizens and they would have less to fear from the slaves? If people of mixed race and whites could be brought together by their common interests and advantages, the size of their combined forces would more efficiently ensure the colonies' tranquility. There can be no doubt that sooner or later the repressed energy of the mulattos will rise up with an unstoppable violence. The oppressed can be forced into inactivity now only because they are temporarily weak. Such dangerous apathy! Evil's frightening silence is usually broken only by a tumultuous dash for liberty.

8

Letters from the Uprising of Vincent Ogé

October 1790

The light-skinned son of a French merchant in the main colonial city of Cap François, Vincent Ogé was one of the wealthiest men of color in Saint-Domingue, dealing in sugar, coffee, and real estate with French and colonial merchants alike. He had come to Paris on business in the late 1780s and had offered his own version of racial reform to absentee planters before joining the Paris free colored group and soon becoming one of its leaders. After the National Assembly voted to send its ambiguous March 28 Instruction

Archives Nationales, Section Outre-Mer, DXXV 65, dossier 658, piece 11.

to Saint-Domingue, Ogé left France secretly, traveling first to England and then Charleston, South Carolina, before returning to Saint-Domingue in October 1790. On arrival, he sent a letter to Saint-Domingue's governor, the Count de Peinier, in an attempt to get the royal government to apply the reforms he believed had been legislated in Paris. He intimated that, if the governor did not take action, he might soon be facing an insurrection.

Ogé to the Count de Peinier

October 21, 1790

Monsieur Count,

We had the honor of writing you collectively from Paris last April 18, under the seal of M. Bisonar, treasurer, to provide you with an excerpt of the National Assembly's decree of March 28 concerning the colonies, and copies of all our demands.

I was indeed surprised, *Monsieur*, to see when I arrived that you had not published the decree and that you undoubtedly intended to ignore it as your predecessors did the Edict of 1685.

No, no, *Monsieur* Count, we will not remain under the yoke as we have for two centuries. The iron rod that has beaten us down is broken. We call for the enacting of this decree; be prudent, therefore, and avoid a crisis that you would not be able to subdue.

I have sworn to see the execution of the decree that I worked to obtain, to rebut force with force, and, finally, to put an end to a prejudice that is as unjust as it is barbaric.

I am, with respect, etc.,

Signed Ogé the Younger

Peinier rebuffed Ogé, who began gathering armed supporters in order to put additional pressure on the government. He also appealed to leaders of color in other parts of the colony to join him, but they were more cautious, as this letter shows.

The Free-Colored Leaders of the West to Ogé

Port-au-Prince

October 29, 1790

Monsieur,

You must be aware of all our gratitude for the services you ren-

Archives Nationales, F³ 196, f^o 114.

dered in France to the entire free colored class; at this time, we are unable to communicate our sentiments to you. We will have to be satisfied with telling you that, while admiring your patriotic zeal, we cannot join the steps you want to take with the governor. We believe that the present circumstances are not favorable to such a request. We also observed that the letters that Monsieur your brother brought us are written in imprudent terms and may have a bad effect, especially at a time when many persons appear to be disposed in our favor. We believe that you should come to Mirebalais with all the documents that show the National Assembly's recognition of our rights. Some of us will also travel to Mirebalais to discuss with you what measures we should take to get what we legitimately request. We hope you will not attribute our refusal to join the steps you are planning to a lack of enthusiasm or energy on our part. On the contrary, please understand that, rather than give up the pursuit of our rights, we are more committed than ever to uphold them with the last drop of our blood. But we believe that waiting several days will allow us a better means of success. We hope that you will not misunderstand the observations that we make here, and that you will indeed be persuaded of the sincerity of the sentiments with which we have the honor, etc.

Signed P. Pinchinat, Beauvais, La Bastille, Borno Jeune, La Bastille fils, Drouillard fils.

Ogé wrote the following letter to the Provincial Assembly of the North when he was under attack by the white colonial militia, which aimed to capture him and disperse his band of supporters. Although his troops initially defeated the white militia, they were soon routed, and Ogé fled to the Spanish colony of Santo Domingo. Extradited back to the French colony a few weeks later, he was publicly tortured and executed.

Ogé to the Provincial Assembly of the North

Hear ye, hear ye, the worthiness of a man whose intentions are pure. When I asked the National Assembly for a decree that I received on behalf of the American colonists formerly known under the insulting epithet "mixed-blood," my claims included nothing about the fate of the *négres* who live in slavery. You and all our adversaries have distorted my efforts so that respectable landowners will have no regard for me. No, no, Monsieur, we have only made claims on behalf of the class of free men who have been oppressed for two centuries. We

Archives Nationales, DXXV 65, dossier 658, pièce 9.

want the execution of the March 28 decree; we continue to work for its adoption, and we will never stop repeating to our friends that our adversaries are unjust and that they cannot conceive of reconciling their interests with our own.

I have the honor to be, etc. your very humble and very obedient servant.

Signed, Ogé the Younger

9

JULIEN RAIMOND

*Observations on the Origin and Progression
of the White Colonists' Prejudice
against Men of Color*

1791

Born in 1744 in Saint-Domingue's southern peninsula to a French immigrant and a free woman of color, Julien Raimond was a successful indigo planter who owned more than a hundred slaves by the 1780s. In 1785, he moved to France, where his speeches and pamphlets helped convince the National Assembly to dismantle colonial racism. He stepped up his efforts during the early years of the French Revolution and in 1791 penned this essay in support of granting political rights to free coloreds. At the core of his argument was a history and description of the free people of color of Saint-Domingue that differed sharply from the way they were often portrayed by other writers, such as Moreau de Saint-Méry (Document 3), by emphasizing their sexual virtue and loyalty to France.

For a long time, we have been debating a great question regarding our colonies: whether the free people of color will be given the status of active citizen [i.e., given full political rights] in the colonies.

Julien Raimond, Observations sur l'origine et les progrès [sic] du préjugé des colons blancs contre les hommes de couleur; sur les inconvénients de le perpétuer; la nécessité, la facilité de le détruire, par M. Raimond, homme de couleur de Saint-Domingue (Paris, 1791).

The white planters, who are the aristocrats, the nobles of the colonies, want to take these priceless rights from the free mulattos they detest and want to disgrace. To do this, they have deliberately confused the free colored cause with that of the slaves. This carefully planned misunderstanding has so scrambled ideas about the true status of the free people of color that up to now a large part of the National Assembly still has no clear understanding of this free and property-owning class of color.

It is therefore essential to clarify things and state here: (1) how the free population of color started; (2) how it survived over time, and, finally, what it is today.

A mulatto is the offspring of a white man with a black woman. The terms *people of color* or *people of mixed race* refer to the product of two mulattos or of mulattos with whites, and to their different offspring.

When the colonies were founded and at the moment when Africans began to be brought in to cultivate them, there were no or almost no European women present. Only single men burning with a desire to succeed dared cross the seas and expose themselves to a climate that was all the more dangerous because they had none of the measures that exist today.

Transported to this foreign and still uncultivated land, weakened by the hot climate, often sick and without the assistance that wives of their own color might have provided, these Europeans became attached to African women, who cared for them all the more attentively because they hoped liberty would be their reward.

These first whites lived with these women as in the state of marriage; they had children with them. Some, touched by their affection and care and swept away by paternal love, married their slaves. This not only freed them from slavery; it also legitimized the fruit of their love or habits.

When they died, they usually left these children the property they had acquired. Other men, less sensitive than this, perhaps more proud, perhaps already committed [to another woman] by indissoluble bonds, simply manumitted the children and the woman who brought them into the world and gave these children lands and some slaves.

Such, in the colony's first age, was the free population of color. Then they married among themselves, and the daughters married whites who came from France.

When the colony was a little more developed and the government began to pay more attention to it, a number of white women were sent there to increase the white population. The whites preferred girls of

color over these women, and those who did not share this preference chose women among their slaves to care for them and their households. Though they called them housekeepers, they made them into wives. As soon as these women had children with their masters, they became free, as did their children, who were always raised like free children. There was still so much uncultivated land available then that they could give some to each of their children.

Such was the status of the free people of color in the colony's second age.

Until this point, there was no prejudice against this class of free men. There was no dishonor in knowing them, spending time with them, living with them, forming relationships with their daughters; and men of color were commissioned as officers in the militia.

Prejudice started around the middle of the colony's third age, and here is its origin. Just before the 1744 war [War of Austrian Succession], the colonies were so profitable that France paid more attention to them than ever before. Many Europeans crossed the sea, including large numbers of poor women who came to seek their fortunes. Mothers brought their daughters to marry them to rich colonists. They were frequently disappointed. Since these immigrant women brought no resources, many of the young men who came to the colony to get rich preferred to marry girls of color, whose dowries included land and slaves they could use profitably. Such preferences began to inspire jealousy in white women. *Inde irae.*⁵

Jealousy changed into hate in the colony's third age. By that time, there were many young folk from good families. Many younger sons of nobility came to the colony to marry girls of color whose parents had become rich,* establishing themselves comfortably this way and even increasing their fortunes.

This was the situation at the end of the colony's third age, in 1749. . . .

The peace of 1749 attracted to the islands a great many white families who quickly adopted the resentments and prejudice that the earlier whites began to manifest against the people of color, whose growing fortunes only increased these feelings.

The peace of 1763 strengthened these sentiments. All those young people of color who had received a good education [in France], includ-

⁵Latin for "Hence this resentment."

*In 1763, more than three hundred whites, including several gentlemen, had married girls of color. See the *Considerations of Saint-Domingue* by H.D.

ing several who had held honored positions at court or served as officers in different regiments, returned to the colony at that time.

Their talent, character, sophistication, and knowledge only drew attention to the vices and ignorance of the islands' whites, who therefore scorned them. Just as tyrants cannot forgive virtue, the dim-witted resent intelligence. In addition to the humiliations whites heaped upon these young people of color, they tried to create harsh laws that would reinforce these insults and stifle all the talents and industry of this class. . . .

It was during the reestablishment of the militia [in 1769] that white jealousy against the people of color was wielded with a furor that had never been seen before. It was not enough to strip men of color of their officers' commissions despite their outstanding service. This injustice was followed by a host of laws that outdid each other in tyranny and absurdity. One forbade people of color to use a carriage; another forbade them to dress like whites or wear the same fabrics or jewels; this was in fact the most ill-advised law, since it attacked a branch of French industry, but jealousy knows no bounds and cuts its own throat. The colonial ministry refused to acknowledge the noble status of whites who had married women of color. It sent letters forbidding people of color from coming to France or sending their children for education. Others stripped all honors from whites marrying women of color, or required notaries and priests to insert the word "free" on all official documents drafted for people of color to remind them, so it was said, of their origins [in slavery], no matter how distant it was. Other orders required them to drop the European name they had and adopt one in an African language. Finally, this frenzy was pushed so far that Hiliard d'Auberteuil⁷ dared recommend that whites take justice into their own hands with people of color without ever informing the judicial system. . . .

The basic idea of everything that you have just read is that the majority of the free colored class was born free, of free parents, and in legitimate marriage, and that those who are illegitimate were born of free mothers. Out of this entire class there are not two hundred who were truly enslaved and manumitted.

As for the free blacks who are also included in the free colored class, there are no more than fifteen hundred in all, and more than two-thirds of them were born free and the others manumitted. These

⁷An eighteenth-century author who penned a famous book about Saint-Domingue.

facts and calculations can be easily verified using militia rolls and parish registers.⁸

⁸Although much of Raimond's account rings true, the claims in these last two paragraphs are misleading. Depending on the region of the colony, approximately one-third to one-half of all free people of color in Saint-Domingue were ex-slaves. Similarly, the colony was home to thousands of free blacks, most of whom would have been ex-slaves.

10

The Debate of May 15, 1791

This cartoon was published the day that the National Assembly voted to give citizenship to a small group of legitimately born free men of color. The image reveals that the cartoonist saw the controversy as exotic, yet connected to the deepest values of the French Revolution. The cartoon depicts the various forces pressuring Antoine Barnave (2), chair of the Colonial Committee, who is being offered bribes by a colonist (1) and ideas by a conservative writer (3). As the tiny figures of the rest of the Committee (#24) climb Barnave's legs, the decrepit and deaf Gerard (8) exclaims, "I agree with Mr. Barnave. What did he say?" His companion, Médéric-Louis-Élie Moreau de Saint-Méry (Document 3), replies, "Ask my mulatto mistress [she lives at] Clergy Street, No. 22." In the center of the image, Barnave turns his back on the child labeled "the Little Mulatto" (11), who cries out to "Gouy d'Arcy" (Louis-Marthe Gouy d'Arcy), the leader of the conservative planters, "Father, father, for God's sake, speak on our behalf." The white man answers, "Alas, my son, I would do it, if it would only earn me 42 percent."

Behind the child is Julien Raimond (16; see Document 9), described as a "citizen of color," holding part of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen. He says, "By wrenching this immortal declaration from my hands, cruel sir, do you believe you are tearing it from all the hearts in which it is written?" A colonist of color (15) asks, "Are we not free, property owners, and taxpayers; why in God's name are we treated like slaves?"

Hovering over these men are the allegorical figures (12) of Humanity, Justice, and Reason, identified respectively as Maximilien Robespierre, a prominent member of the National Assembly, "Pethion" (Jérôme Pétion de Villeneuve), President of the Friends of the Blacks, and the Abbé Henri Grégoire (see Document 7). The artist describes them as having "come to the rescue of the men of color that Barnave holds in chains and wants to deliver to the white colonists."

