

THE BRITISH OCCUPATION OF SAINT DOMINGUE 1793-98

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by

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## DECLARATION

Chapters I and II are based on a dissertation submitted in 1972 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of M.A. of the University of London.



## ABSTRACT

This is a dual study of British intervention in the Saint Domingue Revolution. It treats the military occupation of 1793-98 both as an aspect of Britain's imperial and military policy, and, more particularly, as a window on a West Indian society in the process of disintegration. Political and military events provide the framework for a narrative, whose main theme is the shifting balance of power within Dominguan society between the black white and coloured communities. Certain areas receive special attention - the respective roles of a creole, autonomist mentality and of the Counter-Revolution in bringing about British intervention; *predatory* and defensive thinking in Government policy-making; disease and mortality among the British troops; the interaction of colonial social groups with one another and with the occupying forces; the economy of the occupied zone; black responses to the Revolution, and the progressive destruction of the plantation regime. A wide range of sources is employed, many of them previously unexploited.

## INTRODUCTION

On the eve of the French Revolution, Saint Domingue was one of the wealthiest colonies in the world and a keystone of the Atlantic economy. From the middle years of the 18th century, while its planters and fertile soil produced ever increasing quantities of sugar, coffee and other high-grade, valuable staples, its tropical patchwork of plantations and hamlets and handful of ports had been fusing into a self-consciously creole society through the processes of parish life and local inter-marriage.<sup>1</sup> After 130 years of French metropolitan rule, Saint Domingue had developed into a community of insular individuality, still bound economically to the mother country by the Exclusif and governed by an administrative system long under fire in the colony and the metropolis. Less than a decade before, British colonists in North America had shown that a colonial rebellion could be feasible, respectable and profitable.

If colonial self confidence was the reward of Saint Domingue's remarkable productivity, human misery was its cost. In these last years of the Ancien Regime, manacled negroes, shipped from Africa, were being imported at a rate of nearly 40,000 per annum to be broken into the rhythm of plantation slavery.<sup>2</sup> Their cause had already found champions across the sea in the urban, bureaucratic world which was emerging and was eventually to eradicate the institution of slavery everywhere. To Raynal, however, it seemed the slaves needed only a leader to gain their freedom. The whites of Saint Domingue numbered merely 7% of the population.<sup>3</sup> They slept, in Mirabeau's words, au pied du Vésuve.<sup>4</sup>

The prophets of doom were of course proved right. At the end of August, 1791, after three years of agitation and violence at all levels of colonial society, the slaves of the Plaine du Nord rose against their masters, followed shortly by the free coloureds of the West Province. Massacre and destruction engulfed great tracts of the colony. By late 1793, planters were fighting French soldiers alongside British troops they had called to their aid.

Events evolved this far, however, only through the complex interaction of indigenous and external forces. This classic struggle in the Caribbean was worked out against a background of the French Revolution. Sharing elements of common causation, the two revolutions



were complexly intertwined and also largely co-eval, finding their conclusions respectively in the success and failure of First Consul Bonaparte. To what extent, though, were the 'sparks' of the French Revolution required to detonate the colonial 'powder keg', as the metaphor usually runs? Conversely, just how combustible was Saint Domingue in the 1780's? The question is important, relating not only to the human cost of West Indian slave society at its most materially successful, but also, in a wider context, to the theory of an autonomous Atlantic Revolution transcending simple reaction to the great revolution in France. More specifically, it is crucial to understanding why there was a British occupation of Saint Domingue.

It is with this problem that the first three chapters are concerned. Dominguan society in the late 1780's is analysed and placed in its colonial context with comparative reference to other societies in the New World (Chapter I). The impact of the Revolution is then examined (Chapter II). In the main, stress is laid on the role of external factors, though it is hoped that the analysis provides a fairly complete picture of the forces determining local action. The slave revolution receives special attention. A singular and neglected paradox of the Haitian revolution is the fact that the world's sole successful slave revolt took place in a colony where slave resistance had been comparatively slight. Hence, any explanation of the slave revolution must also explain its lack of significant precedents. The gradualism of its development, and the balance between conflict and accommodation in plantation society, are major themes of this thesis.

In Chapter III, the difficult question of colonial separatism is given extended treatment. Much new documentary evidence is combined with a close consideration of developments on both sides of the Atlantic in elucidating the respective roles of l'autonomisme créole and the Counter-Revolution in bringing the British into Saint Domingue. New light is thrown on the actions of Malouet and other less well-known figures, and there emerges a far more complex picture than historians have hitherto presented. The British response to these events, in England and Jamaica, is dealt with in Chapter IV. Modern historians have inherited contemporaries' conflicting ideas as to the reasons behind British intervention, the extent to which it was justifiable and the value of sugar colonies in general. Its relation

to the Abolition question is controversial. By examining in detail the importance of the West Indies in Government thinking, and the part played by Saint Domingue within its West India policy, the issue of ministerial motives is considerably clarified and existing judgments are revised. The reaction of Jamaica, slave and free, to the Saint Domingue slave revolt is also explored.

The impact of British intervention, particularly on the shifting balance of power between black, white and brown, is the underlying concern of Chapter V. It emphasises that Saint Domingue had by no means disintegrated by early 1793 and suggests that, though foreign intervention had a deleterious effect on the situation, speedier and more determined action by the British might have produced radically different results. The narrative, which corrects various errors perpetuated in the secondary sources and provides fresh information on the activities of Toussaint Louverture, pays special attention to the crucial and misunderstood area of white - mulatto relations.

In Chapter VI, some new light is cast on the genesis of the institutions that governed occupied Saint Domingue, notably on French and British attitudes towards this novel situation in imperial history. For the first time, the functioning of these institutions is examined. The problems they had to deal with, both administrative and political, are further explored in Chapter VII, which also continues the military narrative into 1796 and so provides a composite picture of the governorship of Sir Adam Williamson, perhaps the key figure of the British occupation. A wide range of sources is employed in piecing together military and political developments and in relating them to the changes taking place in Dominguan society as a whole. These concerns also underlie Chapter VIII, which traces the story of the ill-starred Abercrombie expedition from its controversial conception in Whitehall to its destruction in the Caribbean. Chapter IX returns to examine reactions in Great Britain to the Saint Domingue venture. The fluctuations in British and émigré policy that led to the appointment of John Simcoe as Governor are investigated and the events of his governorship are then analysed with reference to the changing power structure in the colony.

Chapters X and XI deal with different aspects of life under the occupation. In the towns and in the countryside, the impact of Revolution is assessed as regards society, the environment and the economy. Relations between the colonists, the British and the émigrés;



the British soldier's response to life in the tropics; attitudes to race and slavery; the predicament of the free coloureds, and the black slave as soldier, bon nègre and 'brigand', and the growth of a peasantry are subjects of especial interest. It is hoped that, by observing the institution of slavery when attacked from without and within, in the process of disintegration, we can learn something of the forces of stress and stability in plantation society.

Chapter XII is a special study of the administration of absentee property in the British zone. Dealing with a major aspect of British policy and a permanent problem in West Indian society, it provides some interesting insights into colonial mores and the difficulties of government in the Caribbean. In Chapter XIII, some unexamined aspects of the history of yellow fever are brought to light and an attempt is made to explain the very great losses suffered by the British troops in Saint Domingue. They are examined both in detail and from a comparative viewpoint using a large quantity of statistical data. Existing estimates are considerably revised. Chapter XIV deals with the final campaign and the evacuation. By way of conclusion Chapter XV seeks to re-evaluate the impact of the Saint Domingue venture on British fortunes in the 1790's, and also to assess its role in the destruction of Saint Domingue and the creation of Haiti.

Although it attracted a good deal of contemporary attention, the British occupation of Saint Domingue has never been studied in its totality and only a small proportion of the archival material relating to it has hitherto been exploited. Certain aspects, such as government society and the economy under the occupation have never been previously investigated at all. Sir John Fortescue's History of the British Army first drew attention to the subject in 1906. Thirty years later C.L. Lokke broached a number of related issues in several short articles and more recently, research by D. Sanderson, C; Frostin and R.H. Griffiths has examined subsidiary aspects of the occupation - naval strategy, 'l'appel aux Anglais' in 1793 and the role of the French colonial community in London. C.L.R. James, H. Cole, and T. Ott have also dealt with the subject in the course of more general works. This study, based on archival material in five countries a critical analysis of the printed sources, and 2½ months' fieldwork in Haiti, questions to varying degrees the findings

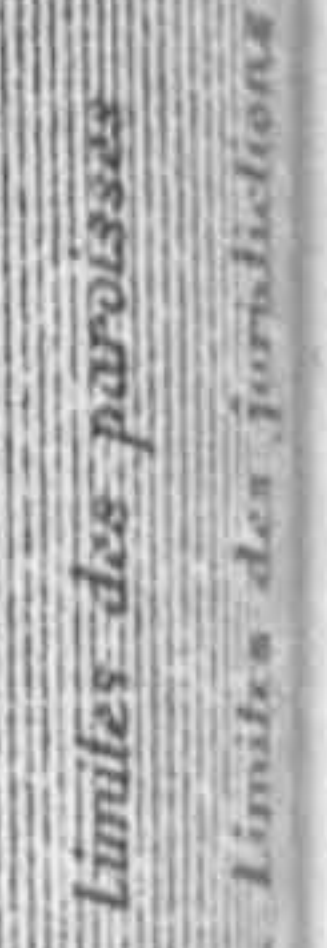
of all these scholars and presents the subject in a new detail and depth. By bringing together with a thorough examination of the secondary works and standard sources a lot of largely or entirely unknown material, British, Spanish and French, some fresh light is also cast en passant on other aspects of the Haitian revolution, such as the Spanish invasion, the slave revolt and the actions of Toussaint Louverture.

As Thomas Ott has remarked<sup>5</sup> the historiography of the Haitian revolution has been bedevilled by overt partisanship and superficiality. His own attempt, however, to redress the balance, albeit successful in many ways, exemplifies another main feature of writing on the Revolution - a low level of factual accuracy.<sup>6</sup> This is perhaps particularly evident in writings in English and dates back to Bryan Edwards's Historical Survey, the principal contemporary source on the British occupation. However, even the very best works in French display the same failings. Cabon's masterful Histoire d'Haiti is weakest when dealing with the period 1789-98, while Pauléus-Sannon's Histoire de Toussaint Louverture, the best of numerous biographies, is notably unreliable in the quotation of documents and dates. Though perhaps perpetuating many old errors and even creating new ones - the documents themselves can be extremely contradictory - it is nonetheless hoped that this investigation of a little-studied subject will contribute towards a more accurate history of the Haitian revolution in general and provide new insights into that unique and profound event.



du département des Cartes et Plans de la Bibliothèque

A horizontal scale bar with markings at intervals of 10, labeled from 0 to 80 km.





## CHAPTER I. SAINT DOMINGUE ON THE EVE OF THE REVOLUTION.

(i) White Saint Domingue. 'Nos Seigneurs de Saint Domingue, Messieurs de la Martinique, bourgeois de Guadeloupe':<sup>(1)</sup> if a little misleading as to the nature of French West Indian white society, this old colonial saying is nonetheless suggestive of the social pre-eminence enjoyed by the planters of la perle des Antilles. Investment in the colony had attracted some Court nobility. Military service, the career of plantation manager and the prospect of better things also brought many of their provincial cousins to seek aux Isles the fortune that eluded them in France.<sup>(2)</sup> However, money always counted more than birth in Saint Domingue. Its society in the main was dominated by a plutocracy of grands blancs, graced with the occasional title, usually of recent origin, the prize of a creole heiress or the creation of an inventive parvenu who had left the obscurity of his origins on the other side of the Atlantic.<sup>(3)</sup>

Yet, grands seigneurs is how they thought of themselves. Masters of the largest and most prosperous plantations in the Caribbean, surrounded sometimes from birth by crowds of obedient slaves, the Dominguan grand blanc developed an imperiousness that was reinforced by the knowledge of his economic importance to France.<sup>(4)</sup> By 1789 the coastal plains of this colony scarcely bigger than Belgium were producing 40% of the world's sugar while from the mountains of the interior came 60% of the world's coffee. Its total production was probably double that of the entire British West Indies. Several million Frenchmen depended directly on commerce with Saint Domingue, which accounted for about 40% of France's foreign trade. No other colony, Rotberg observes, contributed so much to its mother country.<sup>(5)</sup>

Because little of this wealth remained in the colony, Saint Domingue's cultural achievements remained meagre by European or mainland American standards. The capital, Port au Prince, according to one visitor, had the air of a 'Tartar camp'. Spread out over a vast terrain, most of its 900 buildings were low wooden structures, single-storied and roofed with shingles. Baron Wimpffen mocked the 'wretched opulence' of an elite whose fine, imported carriages were pulled by mules and whose black postillions, bedecked with braid, went barefoot.<sup>(6)</sup> However, one should not generalise too readily, for Saint Domingue was a large colony and few commentators were well-acquainted with all three of its provinces.<sup>(7)</sup> Though not an



impressive sight, Port au Prince was a busy seaport, administrative centre and garrison town; it possessed, along with innumerable bars, cafes and billard halls, two or three bookshops (rare in the West Indies), a botanic garden, a bath-house, a small waxworks and a shop that sold musical instruments.<sup>(8)</sup> Life in the frontier districts was rough.

But in the long-settled coastal region, where well laid out plantations chequered the plains and rose in orderly terraces into the mountains, society was more developed. At Jérémie a ball that brought in 200 people from the countryside was an historic occasion, long remembered, but at Port au Prince the playhouse seated 750, and at le Cap, 1500.<sup>(9)</sup>

Even so, Cap Français, with its Paris fashions and predominantly slave population, public baths and piles of rotting rubbish, casinos and livestock wandering the streets, at best, rivalled Charleston. The other towns were merely small collections of houses, mainly wooden, though at the end of the Ancien Regime the construction of public fountains and highways, quaysides and bridges, lent them a prosperous air.<sup>(10)</sup> Schools were nearly non-existent and creole women were notoriously ignorant. While stone plantation houses were becoming more common, as in Jamaica, the grand'case generally was a flimsy construction and always sparsely furnished.<sup>(11)</sup>

This was largely because few colonists regarded their stay there as permanent. All commentators noticed an atmosphere of hurry and obsession with return to France, that was also a persistent theme in colonists' correspondence.<sup>(12)</sup> The extent of absentee proprietorship is unknown and controversial, but in the plains it was probably as great as in the British islands, and was responsible for draining away profits better spent in the colony.<sup>(13)</sup> Insofar as it facilitated through trusteeship the induction of merchants and lawyers into the plantocracy, it was along with intermarriage an integrative influence. Though prejudice against its members still existed in 1789,<sup>(14)</sup> the urban, mercantile/professional elite were usually planters too.<sup>(15)</sup> Yet, absenteeism sapped the fibre of colonial society, increasing the damage done by difficult communications, a paucity of women and a materialistic outlook. 'Il se forme à Saint Domingue', wrote Moreau de Saint-Méry, 'très peu de ces liaisons agréables qu'on nomme la société'.<sup>(16)</sup> To a Swiss visitor, the colonists' passion for gambling symbolised a materialistic society, a lack of white women and an absence of conversation.<sup>(17)</sup>

Charles Frostin, working from government records, has recently



protested against the plantation-centric view of Dominguan society that emerges from Gabriel Debien's work, based largely on plantation documents.<sup>(18)</sup> He proposes that Saint Domingue was rather more than a collection of quasi-independent estates to be viewed in isolation, and points to a complex urban life in le Cap and Port au Prince, to the importance of white vagabondage in the countryside and to the growth of closely inter-connected clan groups in the coastal plains.<sup>(19)</sup> Though these aspects are hardly absent from Debien's voluminous work, this is a useful correction of emphasis. Nevertheless, against the gradual consolidation of family ties and diversity of activity around the ports, the spread of freemasonry and the foundation of a philosophical society, periodical concerts and balls and an increasingly active press, one must weigh the perpetual emigration of successful men, the decline of the traditional hospitality,<sup>(20)</sup> the prevalence of bachelorhood,<sup>(21)</sup> and the isolation and monotony of plantation life, in which a game of cards on Sunday was a major social event.<sup>(22)</sup>

If bonds between the grands blancs were fairly weak, relations between the classes of white society were weaker still. In the highlands, the coffee boom of the previous 30 years had created a new class of self-made middling planters, who lacked the capital and established position of a grand blanc but whose lower overheads enabled them to outbid the large sugar planters in the slave market.<sup>(23)</sup> A class struggle was the more fully joined in that the new men, living close to the soil of their parishes in constant supervision of their unstable crop, resented the lands granted to absentees but left uncultivated.<sup>(24)</sup> Regarding themselves as the colony's true inhabitants, the resident planters perhaps regarded the mother country with less attachment than did a prospective absentee. They thus reinforced a 'creole-ness' of attitude long present. In 1761 the Governor had complained that, 'Ces blancs ainsi répandus ne sont point retenus par le lien de la patrie et du sang...Ces hommes armés... habitent ça et là et (without military rule) vivroient dans une espèce d'indépendance funeste à la société et à l'Etat même'.<sup>(25)</sup> Many of the whites born in the colony denied they were French, insisting instead: 'Je suis créole'.<sup>(26)</sup>

The rise of the coffee planters also entailed the displacement from the highlands of woodcutters and hunters, squatters and small-holders, who often returned to swell the body of malcontents in the ports. In the Revolution such men were to be prominent among



petits blancs militants.<sup>(27)</sup> The petits blancs formed a broad social group that embraced both the industrious apprenti-colon and the dregs of waterfront life. Largely recruited among the classes dangereuses then troubling Europe,<sup>(28)</sup> they commanded high wages in the colony but could not escape the increasing competition for the necessities of life then endemic throughout the Western World. Social mobility was greater than in Europe but opportunities were getting more scarce.<sup>(29)</sup> The growth of the urban population had caused in 1780 a Mémoire sur la police du Cap to lament, 'Les vols...les mutineries, l'on dit presque les séditions, menacent de plus en plus cette ville de quelque accident funeste, et que le gouvernement ne pourra arrêter que par les moyens les plus violents.'<sup>(30)</sup> 'Il est peu de contrées', remarked one grand blanc, 'aussi immoralement peuplées que Saint Domingue'.<sup>(31)</sup>

The growing numbers of small whites arriving with every ship from France, seeking employment in artisan trades or as overseers, met with strong competition, not only from one another but from the large free coloured community.<sup>(32)</sup> This did not occur in the Iberian colonies where no white wanted to be a small white, nor in the British colonies where this sector had already been driven out or had risen in society and where the free coloured position was not so strong.<sup>(33)</sup> Furthermore, neither experienced the burst of immigration which had doubled the white population of Saint Domingue since the Peace of Paris. Lowly in status and economically insecure, the petits blancs were the most racist element in colonial society. Yet, their situation was ambiguous, for the overseer on the plantation, the artisan in his workshop, the pedlar and vagabond on the country roads, the cabaretier and the caboteur, spent their days and nights in close proximity to the slaves and the poorer mulattoes. Some even married a slave woman or a mulatress. In October 1789 two whites who had been displaced from the mountains were shot at Saint Marc for conspiring with mulattoes and slave foremen.<sup>(34)</sup> A year later some whites were to join the mulatto rebellion led by Ogé.<sup>(35)</sup> Under the Ancien Regime, deserting troops were known to collaborate with runaway slaves.<sup>(36)</sup> Such examples, if exceptional, show the limits of small white racism and the acuteness of class conflict in Saint Domingue.

Plantation managers<sup>(37)</sup> and attornies occupied an intermediate position in white society. The grands blancs, Carteaux tells us,<sup>(38)</sup> increasingly spurned them, so that they joined with the small whites in resenting the pretensions and titles their superiors tended to adopt



after 1763. Dubuisson's observation, therefore, that 'toutes les classes d'hommes blancs sont confondues à Saint Domingue',<sup>(39)</sup> must be seen as strictly relative to the social order of Ancien Regime Europe. The usual solidarity of West Indian whites was weakened in Saint Domingue by class tensions which resulted from the unusual diversification of its economy, the extent of small white immigration and the position of its free coloured population.

Nevertheless, in the mid 1780's, Debien observes, social problems were not the most prominent.<sup>(40)</sup> Although a remarkably fertile soil combined with an advanced use of irrigation produced a yield of two-thirds more per acre than in Jamaica;<sup>(41)</sup> although production boomed and prices rose;<sup>(42)</sup> although 'riche comme un creole' was a Parisian proverb; Saint Domingue's most serious problem to contemporaries was economic. 'Messieurs les Américains', were in the words of one Bordeaux merchant, 'des riches malaisés'.<sup>(43)</sup>

While it is difficult to see the profitability of West India planting in perspective,<sup>(44)</sup> it seems that Saint Domingue's wealth ' was gained only at the price of heavy indebtedness to France's maritime bourgeoisie. Credit, accompanied by aristocratic values, bred wastefulness, and applied to an extremely unstable type of agriculture, placed most planters in a debtor relationship that they resented. Though it is debatable exactly who exploited whom, the merchants naturally hoped to supply their clients dearly while securing their crops cheaply. The fact that three-fifths of Saint Domingue's exports to France were subsequently re-exported<sup>(45)</sup> represented a further colonial loss benefiting the metropolitan merchants. By far the gravest implications are contained in a study of a Bordeaux merchant firm trading to Saint Marc, which suggests that from late 1788 through 1790 colonial products fetched higher prices in the colony than in France, and moreover, that freight and merchandising swallowed up 25%-45% of the wholesale price.<sup>(46)</sup> Apparently, illicit trade with the Americans, who were now virtually excluded from the British islands, was a much more profitable outlet. Perhaps these circumstances were exceptional. The planter Dubuc Saint Olympe reckoned metropolitan prices as 15% above those in the colony, allowing for transport costs.<sup>(47)</sup> Anyway, the Jamaican planter had long received barely half of the wholesale price of his sugar.<sup>(48)</sup> It would seem that Saint Domingue's greatest complaint against the Exclusif concerned imports.<sup>(49)</sup>



Here the French government had improved matters but, like the British, shrewdly little. The free ports opened in 1784 produced a boom in trade with the United States, though import duties were heavy and were increased in 1787-88.<sup>(50)</sup> American flour continued to be excluded. Foreign slaveships were admitted under extremely restricted conditions, so that demand was not satisfied and the price of slaves continued to rise.<sup>(51)</sup> Moreover, this breach in the monopoly of French merchants caused a retaliatory increase in freight charges, and probably whetted the colonists' appetite for bigger markets.

The vicious circle of exploitation and mounting debt was of course not confined to the French Empire. The Exclusif, even without the attenuation brought by contraband trade,<sup>(52)</sup> probably bore less severely than the strait-jacket still confining the Iberian colonies.<sup>(53)</sup> Saint Domingue also enjoyed lighter and more enlightened duties than the British planters and a freer attitude to colonial refining.<sup>(54)</sup> It is well to remember that in the aftermath of American independence costs rose most steeply in the British West Indies which suffered all the more for being in incipient decline. Above all, the French colonists enjoyed a singularly privileged position as regards their debts, on which interest was often not charged by merchant creditors.<sup>(55)</sup>

However, Dominguan planters, uniquely in no need of preferential markets, knew that more and cheaper slaves, a wider range of imports, larger and better markets, cheaper freight and insurance, cheaper and fresher food, and perhaps longer credit, would be theirs but for the Exclusif. But for French rule, some 300/500 millions of debts<sup>(56)</sup> would not be theirs either. Though the grievance had always existed, economic subordination was ceasing to be accepted as a fact of colonial life. In the words of Stanislas Foache: 'On voudrait être de la nation où le sucre se vend le plus cher et qui a le moins à craindre en temps de guerre'.<sup>(57)</sup> If French commerce slackened, a colonial pamphlet predicted in 1785, 'les colonies s'éteindront... ou elles feront une empire à part, ou elles s'attacheront à une autre empire'.<sup>(58)</sup> Significantly, this warning came from the South Province, the one most hampered by the Exclusif and, according to Debien, 'animé d'un esprit plus jeune, plus hardi, plus américain'.<sup>(59)</sup> Such attitudes had been greatly stimulated by Saint Domingue's wartime experience, for France's inability in the face of British seapower to supply and protect the colonies she taxed, let alone market their produce, hit the planters very hard. In the Seven Years' War, they



had envied their counterparts in Guadeloupe, who by surrendering to the British, benefited instead of suffering from Britain's superiority at sea. (60)

Although the French colonies were the most lightly taxed of all, and of these, Saint Domingue politically the freest, her inhabitants had never borne imperial rule lightly. The hollowness of this freedom perhaps excited rather than satisfied colonial aspirations. Extraordinary taxation required some colonial consent, that of the militia chiefs and some magistrates, but was often continued beyond the agreed period. (61)

The right of the two Conseils Supérieurs to discuss and register laws was likewise ineffective and far-removed from the internal legislative competence of the British colonists' representative assemblies. In 1769 the magistrates of the Port au Prince Conseil were sent to the Bastille for encouraging rebellion, and thereafter the Government tried to ensure that only its supporters became magistrates. (62)

A critical attitude to government combined with political impotence also found institutional expression in the Chambers of Agriculture and Commerce, the former being permitted to draw up reports on retiring Governors and Intendants. These bodies together with the parish assemblies and planter participation in minor administrative offices fostered a sense of political competence that was rankled by heavy-handed rule from France.

Historians have seen Saint Domingue's Administration in radically different lights. Most depict a scene of military despotism and administrative corruption, (63) yet it should be noted that Bryan Edwards was impressed with its 'liberality and mildness' and that such instances of tyranny or corruption that he records were vehemently denied by so unlikely a figure as Venault de Charmilly. (64) However, the colonists' complaints about inexperience in office and discontinuity in policy seem well proven. In the 1780's the colony had 11 different Governors and 5 Intendants. (65)

The maxim that a colonial government was a no more arbitrary reflection of the mother country's perhaps flatters Saint Domingue unduly. Rivalry between the Governor and Intendant, although not as dead in France as once thought, was a major and crippling factor in colonial life. Moreover, the prevalence of military administration and jurisdiction made for a harshness in public procedure probably rarely encountered by wealthy proprietors in France. In addition to the standard West Indian grievances of bribery, vexatious militia service and requisitioning, one finds complaints against illegal



arrest, arbitrary imprisonment and the overriding of judicial decisions.<sup>(66)</sup> Favouritism in land concessions and the capricious revocation of grants were additional causes of rancour that were to be voiced in the colony's cahiers.<sup>(67)</sup>

This state of affairs had long been attacked by the colonists. In the 1720's and 60's many had taken up arms and demanded the financial and administrative autonomy possessed de jure by the pays d'état and de facto by the British colonies.<sup>(68)</sup> The crisis after the Seven Years' War saw the two Conseils assume the role of popular champions, like the parlements in France, defending anciens privilèges in the face of government reform. In the West and South a serious rebellion broke out. The South Province had always had close links with Jamaica - some British even settled there - and in 1769 certain habitants of the Cayes region apparently called on the Governor to send troops to liberate Saint Domingue from la domination française. The brutal suppression of this revolt left bitter memories, and we find the same families playing active parts in the early years of the Revolution.<sup>(69)</sup> Nonetheless, these flare-ups resulted from exceptional provocation. Debien doubts that they represented a permanent state of mind.<sup>(70)</sup> Later increases in the octroi created no problem. The Administration could always find friends.<sup>(71)</sup>

Furthermore, if, as Frostin claims, Saint Domingue was the Caribbean's most turbulent colony, the competition was close. Dominguans had tried to overthrow their Governor in 1769, but the colonists of Martinique had actually driven theirs out in 1717, and seven years before the Governor of the Leeward Isles had been murdered by rioting colonists.<sup>(72)</sup> While in the early 80's the two Conseils were being openly critical of government procedure, a series of revolts spread through Peru and New Granada, set off by increasing taxation. St. Kitts, with its 'Gallo-American' Assembly, had just surrendered to the French and was shortly to riot against its customs officers. For over ten years it refused to re-constitute its militia. Anti-militarism and non-combattancy were the rule in the Caribbean rather than the exception. In Demerara and Essequibo, a 'fierce struggle' over taxation lasted throughout the 1780's. In Grenada, intransigent settlers persistently thwarted government policy. Republican plots were discovered in Chile in 1780, at Goa in 1787 and at Minas Gerais in 1789. In the early 90's, planters throughout the Spanish Caribbean forced the withdrawal of a new slave code. Even Jamaica



may have possessed a pro-independence party.<sup>(73)</sup> Eighteenth century colonies in general can be characterised as 'though fundamentally loyal... habitually disobedient'.<sup>(74)</sup>

This makes Saint Domingue's refractoriness less unique, but the fact that British colonists already possessed the institutions that French planters envied, might suggest that Saint Domingue had the more reason to revolt. Possibly an important factor here was the Government's belated attempts, beginning in 1784, to intervene between the planter, his employees and his slaves. Decrees which demanded stricter standards of book-keeping and a more humane treatment of slaves enraged attornies and managers and were resented by planters as despotic interference. The Conseil of le Cap refused to register them. The acceptance of slave evidence against whites, some said, would undermine the very foundations of colonial society.<sup>(75)</sup> This unwelcome trend in imperial policy may well have been of immense significance in alienating colonial opinion. On the other hand, its apparent ineffectiveness<sup>(76)</sup> might have left the planters well satisfied with their ability to remain absolute monarchs on their own estates. Such flouting of the law was no novelty, and if it bred a potentially subversive disrespect, it also made imperial rule much more acceptable to the colonist than would appear in theory. This sort of safety-valve does much to explain the longevity of the first colonial empires.

In these years, however, attitudes were changing throughout the Western world, and for the first colonial empires the bell was tolling. Frostin has suggestively depicted the discontent in Saint Domingue as forming part of an occidental Pre-Revolution as outlined by Palmer and Godechot. The parallels are many both as regards cause and effect.<sup>(77)</sup> Yet, the central problem remains that of the Democratic Revolution in general - how significant were such events in their own time and place? That is, before the French Revolution sent shock waves across the world and forced future generations to read preceding history by its own volcanic light. This must remain a matter for interpretation but there is no doubt that in the 1780's both philosophe precept and American example were spreading belief in the justice and inevitability of colonial secession.

Turgot, Raynal and Mirabeau all predicted and apparently favoured the separation of Saint Domingue from France.<sup>(78)</sup> If the colonists themselves were not notably receptive to liberal ideas, the Enlightenment certainly served to reinforce existing notions of an



original and revocable contract made between the French Crown and their freebooting forefathers.<sup>(79)</sup> The Considérations of Hilliard d'Auberteuil, published in 1776, warned of une séparation prochaine if le joug militaire and exploitation by French merchants did not cease.<sup>(80)</sup> Though banned, it seems to have circulated widely in the colony. However, according to de Charmilly, it was the experience of free trade with neutrals during the years 1780-83 that created in certain influential colonists the desire for independence.<sup>(81)</sup> Commercial links with the United States, moreover, multiplied after 1783 and colonial pamphleteers and petitioners of the Revolutionary period were to enjoy reminding Versailles of Britain's past mistakes.<sup>(82)</sup>

Yet, for Saint Domingue, unlike the Spanish Empire, the American precedent was not entirely relevant. Island colonies, based on slavery and cash crops, were extremely vulnerable, both strategically and economically.<sup>(83)</sup> Saint Domingue, it is true, with its relatively large free population and low production costs was less vulnerable than most and some planters, undoubtedly, were able to envisage absolute independence for the colony. Nevertheless, they were probably few in number, and for most, the essential insecurity of a slave colony was a fundamental factor limiting any such desires.<sup>(84)</sup>

To seek British sovereignty, however, was a possible alternative. In the turbulent 1760's, it was apparently fashionable in Saint Domingue to denigrate French rule while extolling that of England.<sup>(85)</sup> Even after the loss of North America, England's international prestige remained extremely high.<sup>(86)</sup> The conditions granted to Guadeloupe in 1759, to Grenada in 1768 and to Quebec in 1774,<sup>(87)</sup> suggested such a change of domination could be profitable without entailing loss of cultural identity.<sup>(88)</sup> However, one wonders if the French planters' enthusiasm for 'English liberties', that Frostin emphasises,<sup>(89)</sup> was actually encouraged by Britain's treatment of her conquered colonies. In none of them had equal rights been extended to their French inhabitants.<sup>(90)</sup> Quebec had no assembly at all until 1791, and the one then established could scarcely be compared to Jamaica's or those Revolutionary France was then granting to her colonies. In Grenada, limited rights of representation had belatedly been accorded to the French colonists but these were nullified by the hostility of the English residents, which amounted to persecution. In 1790 it was decided to withdraw them.<sup>(91)</sup> Thus, however much French planters may or may not have admired English institutions, they were not likely to



obtain them through direct British rule.

It is significant that when English criminal law was introduced into Grenada most of the French inhabitants left the colony.<sup>(92)</sup> In all the Ceded Islands, it seems, British rule was borne with reluctance. In the American War, they welcomed (albeit discreetly) their French invaders, and emigration from them continued into the 1780's.<sup>(93)</sup> While few Quebecquois had felt the need to emigrate, one could hardly talk of Anglophilia amongst its stolidly pro-French population, even after 30 years of prosperous British rule. Few doubted that a French invasion of Canada would receive massive local support<sup>(94)</sup> and in Grenada, Dominica and St. Vincent many French colonists actually did rebel during the Revolutionary War.<sup>(95)</sup> The seigneurs of New France, to be sure, had closely identified themselves with their new rulers as conquered elites tend to do,<sup>(96)</sup> but this bore no relation to their previous attitudes; half of the notables in 1763 had felt obliged to emigrate.<sup>(97)</sup> Hence, if it was true that 'l'ésprit de famille et de patrie n'est pas généralement celui des colonies',<sup>(98)</sup> one should not underestimate the ties of sentiment that, even in this most cosmopolitan of ages, bound the French colonist to France.

The colombiers and clochers that adorned, quite absurdly, so many plantations in Saint Domingue,<sup>(99)</sup> the great imports of Bordeaux wines, and the obsession with return to France,<sup>(100)</sup> suggest there were limits to the 'American-ness' of these men. Admittedly, Saint Domingue was considerably less Catholic than Quebec, and to this extent was bound less closely to France, but it was also much less creole. Only a quarter of Saint Domingue's white population were native to the colony and most of these were women.<sup>(101)</sup> Although a new type of man was appearing, who spoke creole before he spoke French, and who perhaps resented interference from a mother country he had never seen, such men can have numbered at most 4/5,000, probably rather less. Moreover, insofar as they conformed to the easy-going, inefficient stereotype of the creole planter,<sup>(102)</sup> their response to the economic rationale of secession was probably not strong. The growth of a materialist outlook in Saint Domingue and of a ruthlessly businesslike approach to planting was associated with ambitious new arrivals from France.<sup>(103)</sup> It was surely they who most resented imperial regulations that trimmed their profit margins. Hence, to the extent that they were not mutually reinforcing, cultural alienation and economic frustration were less potent forces for separation than first appears.



In addition, the growing ranks of absentees, of young creoles being educated in France and of colonists marrying into the French nobility,<sup>(104)</sup> can hardly be credited with separatist designs; indeed, they gave the colony a more European outlook.<sup>(105)</sup> It is true, absenteeism aggravated the resident planters, and was accompanied by a contrary movement of small whites who were to a great extent foreign and, like the mobs of waterfront America in the 1760's, lost little love on the mother country. But where were Saint Domingue's 'Sons of Liberty', her town meetings, her non-importation agreements, her colonial assemblies and universities? Le Brasseur's words of 1781 are noteworthy: 'Il n'y a pas de patrie à Saint Domingue, point d'ésprit publique, par conséquent rien qui puisse élever l'âme et la porter aux grandes actions'.<sup>(106)</sup> Admittedly, this sounds a little reminiscent of mis-placed British optimism of twenty years before about the rifts between the 13 North American colonies, but it would be wrong to underrate the uniqueness of British America's tradition of self-government and the part it played in fostering a revolutionary mentality. In Spanish America, independence was very much an 'event after the fact',<sup>(107)</sup> and no matter how elaborately its origins are traced, it remains indissolubly linked with the Napoleonic invasion of Spain. Until the French Revolution, Saint Domingue lacked both the necessary crisis and with it the institutional bases for a revolt against France, and when revolt did come, it was riven by the factionalism of a highly fractured society. Saintoyant asserts that the colony would no longer be satisfied, after the American Revolution, with any concessions short of actual independence under French suzerainty.<sup>(108)</sup> But we may ask: how many colonists? and, more importantly: what were they prepared to do about it? Though there can have been few whites who would not have welcomed legislative autonomy and economic freedom, separatist talk was probably a matter of hot-headed extremists or academic discussion scarcely less so than in the British islands, and as such, would probably have remained talk without the blow to established authority and the threat to slavery and white supremacy brought by the French Revolution.

(ii) The Free Coloureds. Although the Code Noire of 1685 had granted the free coloureds equal rights with whites, it had never represented a colonial reality,<sup>(109)</sup> and during the 18th century a body of racist legislation was built up from both local and metropolitan



enactments that was perhaps unequalled in the West Indies. At a personal level, however, in the areas of manumission, miscegenation, marriage and plantation employment, the French seem to have displayed a paradoxical lack of prejudice that tended to distinguish them from the 'Anglo-Saxons' and from which the gens de couleur profited. The result was that Saint Domingue's free coloured community in the decade before the Revolution was remarkable both for its size and wealth and for the severity of the laws that governed it.

While all population estimates are hazardous, Debien thinks that by the late 1780's the free coloureds outnumbered the whites.<sup>(110)</sup> The size of the free coloured sector, at least three times as big as Jamaica's, naturally reflected the great number of slaves but essentially it resulted from a high degree of miscegenation and from a high frequency of manumission, partly also from marriage between free men and female slaves, which was a sort of manumission.<sup>(111)</sup> De Charmilly suggested as an important factor the amount of prostitution and concubinage, resulting from the high wages paid in Saint Domingue and its relatively large urban area.<sup>(112)</sup> However, in the opinion of Moreau de Saint Mery, women in this category bore few children, for reasons both physical and professional. The coloured population itself, he claimed, was not self-reproducing.<sup>(113)</sup>

As in all American slave societies outside the United States, the free coloureds helped supply the need for a middle stratum between the slaves and the white proprietary/professional class. In Saint Domingue, however, several factors, though none were exclusive to the colony, aided sections of this group to achieve an unusual prosperity and independence. Firstly, there were no restrictions on the number of slaves or the amount of property a free coloured could own or inherit.<sup>(114)</sup> In 1790, the mulattoes professed ownership of one-third of the colony's productive land and one-quarter of its slaves.<sup>(115)</sup> The growth of a coloured planter class was further facilitated by the expansion of secondary cultures in Saint Domingue especially of coffee and cotton which required little capital outlay. While free-coloured proprietors of varying wealth predominated in the mountains, mulattoes were often found on the coastal plains, serving as managers or overseers in the sugar estates. This is because the French were markedly less successful in enforcing their 'deficiency' laws than were the English and, as absenteeism increased, were more inclined to entrust their properties to their illegitimate offspring.<sup>(116)</sup> Lastly, as the



ratio of creole slaves to free coloureds was much smaller in Saint Domingue than elsewhere, it is probable that coloured craftsmen suffered correspondingly less competition from the 'jobbing' of slave artisans.

The free coloured sector thus covered a broad economic range as well as being divided by colour into eleven recognised types, from free black to mésallié white, excluding Indian admixtures. In the 'Anglo-Saxon' colonies, free coloured status was often derided by economically more secure slaves;<sup>(117)</sup> in the Iberian and other French colonies the mulatto rarely rose above the position of prosperous artisan, but in Saint Domingue he might be a wealthy planter or trader, who educated his children in France, lent money to white men and bid for the best property in the colony. Although Moreau de Saint-Méry noted that they generally enjoyed good relations with slaves who were not their own, they were usually considered the cruellest of masters - at least by the whites. Jean Casimir has claimed, on the other hand, that as the coloured planters invariably resided on their small-scale properties, they enjoyed a closer, more paternal, relationship with their slaves.<sup>(118)</sup> As members of the maréchaussée, however, the mulattoes were certainly hated by the blacks, being responsible for catching runaways.<sup>(119)</sup> For the most part, the free coloureds tended to despise the darker side of their origins and to strive towards 'whiteness' in manners and choice of partner. While such an attitude made for social cohesion, the white response increasingly condemned the mulattoes to remain, in sociological terms, marginal men, ever denied membership by their reference group - like the d'Antons and de Robespierres of Ancien Regime France.

The period 1730-80 brought a new severity to the legal restrictions that burdened those neither white nor slave. They were excluded from the priesthood, medicine and the law; forbidden to wear European dress and to play European games; compelled to sit separately in church and at the theatre; denied entry to France, and prevented from gathering 'entre eux, sous prétexte de noces, de festins ou de danses'.<sup>(120)</sup> In practice, things were sometimes better. Despite prohibitions, mulattoes still hunted freely and the future revolutionary, André Rigaud, was allowed to practise as a goldsmith. No mulatto ever had his hand cut off for striking a white,<sup>(121)</sup> though this was the prescribed penalty. But often, things



were worse. Taxation, maréchaussée and militia service fell heavily on the free coloureds.<sup>(122)</sup> Although, unlike in the British islands, they could testify against whites in court, justice was difficult to obtain against a white man unless the mulatto himself had white protectors.<sup>(123)</sup> Whether mixed marriages had by 1789 become rare and disdained, or had never been so common, it is hard to say,<sup>(124)</sup> but in 1778 they were banned in France.

The reasons behind this rising tide of racism are various. Prejudice and policy both played a part, most obviously in direct response to the increasing strength of the free coloureds. This aroused both the jealousy of the colonists and fear on the part of the Administration that, if discontented whites allied themselves with the mulattoes, secession would follow.<sup>(125)</sup> The policy of depressing the status of the free coloured also represented an attempt to erect a bulwark against the alarming growth in the number of slaves. By stressing la tâche ineffaçable de l'esclavage, the whites hoped to convince the slaves (and no doubt themselves) of an ontological, racial element in the free/slave division, the only one recognised by the Code Noire.<sup>(126)</sup> The free coloureds suffered, therefore, for the hypothetical sins of both whites and blacks. The French response here contrasts with British policy in Jamaica and Antigua, which had two of the highest black:white ratios in the British Caribbean, and where limited political concessions were used to ally free coloureds to the regime.<sup>(127)</sup>

Nonetheless, during the middle years of the century it was the white population that increased at the fastest rate, and in the towns it continued to do so until the Revolution. This meant both an influx of white women and an advance towards the possibility of an endogamous white society. These are the two factors suggested by W.D. Jordan as the main stimulants of racism in the New World.<sup>(128)</sup> Perhaps more importantly, this movement further possessed a class dimension producing the conflict between small whites and free coloureds already mentioned. It is doubtful, however, that Saint Domingue provides evidence for a fuller 'class' interpretation of racial tension. Genovese's distinction between 'bourgeois' and 'seigneurial' attitudes finds some support in what Debien writes about the tolerance of the older white families,<sup>(129)</sup> but it necessitates identifying the new coffee planters with a 'bourgeois' ethos when they just as easily qualify for the 'seigneurial' tag.

Whatever the reasons, a uniquely dangerous situation was being created. While liberalism gained ground in Europe, in Saint Domingue there had been mounting repression of a social group whose size and wealth and self-consciousness were growing rapidly, and which supplied, moreover, most of the colony's militia men and its entire rural police force. The white colonists were to regret this military education given to such naturally gifted soliders. Mulattoes had played a turbulent if subservient role in the struggles of the '60's.<sup>(130)</sup> In 1783, a coloured regiment returned from fighting alongside the American colonists. The consequent situation morale nouvelle<sup>(131)</sup> produced from the free coloureds a memoir attacking the caste system. During 1785-86, Julien Raimond contacted leading mulattoes throughout the South and West before going to plead their cause in France.

As there were administrators in both Port au Prince and Versailles who were alive to the colour problem, the memoir was sympathetically received. By the outbreak of the Revolution, it was still awaiting a reply. Perhaps Saintoyant was too harsh in suggesting that the government was still encouraging racial antagonism in the 1780's.<sup>(132)</sup> Certainly manners were beginning to change, as was the outlook of the law courts.<sup>(133)</sup> If the great majority of the planters solidly opposed any concessions to the free coloureds, the attitude of the merchants, lawyers and military suggested that better relations might have evolved, given time. Time, however, was not on Saint Domingue's side.

(iii) The Slaves. Despite the great influx of white immigrants, the growing body of free-coloureds and a century of creolization, Saint Domingue in the 1780's was becoming rapidly more African. While the whites and free-coloureds each numbered under 40,000, the slave population, swelling with imported blacks, totalled something like half a million.<sup>(134)</sup> Though undeniably stark, this fact may have tended to distort descriptions of Saint Domingue. Debbasch calls it three colonies in one,<sup>(135)</sup> and as regards the slaves it acted as such during the Revolution. The actual black:white ratio was lower than in Grenada and Antigua, and the slave population was probably more balanced between male and female, African and creole, than Moreau de Saint-Méry believed.<sup>(136)</sup> Besides, the implications of this last factor are not entirely clear.



Recently-arrived slaves, feeling their loss of freedom, strangers with no attachment to their new situation, were potentially a more volatile force but they were also disoriented, linguistically isolated and to some extent broken in spirit by their brutal transplantation. While the creole was naturally the most adjusted to slavery, being born into it, the imported bossale may also have been a bondsman in Africa. The Trade, moreover, was in some degree a process of selection, since the most rebellious captives cannot have lived to see the New World. Newly-imported blacks, it is true, provided most of the colony's runaways, yet most observers agreed that the most loyal slaves were Africans<sup>(137)</sup> and one can see that the creolized African who had painfully put down roots for the second time in his life might value stability highly.<sup>(138)</sup> Conversely, the growing creole elite of urban slaves and domestics were often referred to as dangerous, possessing more 'pretensions', as the whites saw it.<sup>(139)</sup> They were doubtless more receptive to the news soon to arrive from France, and when insurrection threatened in 1790, on one plantation at least, it was the creole slaves that the manager mistrusted.<sup>(140)</sup>

The never-satisfied demand for nègres de traite speaks grimly of the demography of slave life. Debien estimates an annual general mortality of 5%/6% minimum, excluding years of epidemic, and these were frequent.<sup>(141)</sup> Even so, the birth rate was the most significant factor. Slavery did not so much like Saturn devour its children, but was, rather, a barren mother. The shock of becoming a slave in an alien world was said to impair the fertility of African women, who were anyway much less healthy than creoles and, on the coffee plantations, were well outnumbered by men. Although the sugar plantations, owing to their greater degree of creolization, possessed not only more, but apparently more fertile, females this advantage was entirely cancelled out by their more demanding work and less healthy location.<sup>(142)</sup> Abortion and infanticide were apparently not uncommon. Some masters, though a decreasing number, probably approved of such practices, finding pregnancy and child-rearing uneconomic, while the majority clearly preferred to work their slaves into premature decrepitude rather than minimise depreciation in this sector of their capital investment. If there can be little doubt that a commercial, exploitative attitude was the norm in Saint Domingue, it may be disputed on the one hand how far it was qualified by a paternalistic element, and on the other, how far it was tinged with outright sadism.



Contemporary writers severely criticised the treatment accorded the slaves. Though often limited in experience and evincing a fashionable sentimentality, their evidence, at least as regards food, clothing, shelter and work-load, is not radically contradicted by that of surviving plantation accounts and correspondence. Wimpffen's observation that no article of the Code Noire was enforced<sup>(143)</sup> seems well attested. Only slightly more exaggerated was the baron de Saint Victor's assertion that, 'les trois quarts des maitres ne nourrissent pas leurs esclaves et leur dérobent presque tout le temps de repos que les lois leur attribuent'.<sup>(144)</sup> Even so, what the slaves lost in the way of rest and nourishment through having to work their own allotments, they gained, in contrast to their relatively well-fed American counterparts, in a sense of personal possession and independence, that was encouraged by intelligent masters. They were also far more likely to gain their freedom than the slaves of British planters and were perhaps better clothed, if worse fed, than blacks in Jamaica. Unlike slaves in Brazil, they were not locked up at night.<sup>(145)</sup> Reliable critics of the slave regime pointed less to any generalised hardship or mistreatment - they knew the conditions of the European peasantry - than to a deprivation of enjoyment and to the slave's defencelessness in face of the master's occasional caprice.<sup>(146)</sup>

Conditions clearly varied from plantation to plantation but were probably worst on those of absentees. Those colonists who dreamed of turning their estates into patriarchal congeries of Christian family groups seem often to have been absentees, distant from the harsh, sometimes terrible, reality of their managers' regimes.<sup>(147)</sup> Tales of gory punishments abound in the literature and two writers specifically state that the good master was regarded as an eccentric who could not interfere outside his own estate.<sup>(148)</sup> If this is hard to believe, perhaps Girod-Chantrons provides an answer: 'Après un certain temps dans le nouveau Monde, l'Européen devient un autre homme', or the down-to-earth Pere Labat: 'On s'y fait bientôt'.<sup>(149)</sup> Even for the planter himself, the claims of humanity and self-interest did not necessarily coincide, and the colonial mind knew irrational regions where fear and caprice proved stronger than a strict regard for book-keeping. The loyalty shown by many slaves to their masters, stressed by M. Richard,<sup>(150)</sup> is not in itself proof of good treatment. A bad master, noted Malenfant,



'est sûr de se faire aimer par la persuasion ou sont les Noirs que leurs maitres peuvent les battre et les tuer'.<sup>(151)</sup> This perhaps gives some idea how slave society hung together and provides a necessary antidote to the tendency to polarise opposites. Symbiosis, after all, was achieved.

Although compelled to observe a perpetual double standard in its work, the most reliable witness is probably the Administration.<sup>(152)</sup> In the interests of stability, it enjoined close white surveillance of blacks and supported a system of terror against the slave both legal and illegal. It also propagated ideas of the natural inferiority of non-whites, and helped maintain them in a state of secular and spiritual ignorance. The master had to be shown to be above contradiction. Yet, in the interest of both humanity and stability, it was additionally obliged to limit the masters' excesses. The flow of official reports of unpunished atrocities testify to its complete failure here - a failure crowned by the notorious Lejeune case of 1788, its supreme effort, 'cette occasion unique d'arrêter le cours de tant d'atrocités...Depuis cent ans', the Intendant and Governor declaimed, 'ces cruautés s'exercent impunément'.<sup>(153)</sup> However, although there were 'des quartiers entiers ou l'ancienne barbarie subsiste dans toute sa force', they added that 'un régime modéré' was now becoming more generalised.<sup>(154)</sup>

This opinion was widely held. Debien has observed the spasmodic development after 1770 of a more humane attitude towards the sick, the pregnant and the newly-arrived.<sup>(155)</sup> Humanitarian thinking and the rising cost of slaves also attenuated brutality in discipline, if only to avoid feeding abolitionist propaganda, and sometimes brought improvements in food and shelter. This trend, moreover, was given legislative expression in the decrees of 1784-5. However, they were highly unpopular and seem to have remained defunct.<sup>(156)</sup> Debien concludes that in 1789 there remained 'un monde à emouvoir'.<sup>(157)</sup>

In the 1780's some 60% of slave imports were absorbed by the coffee plantations. Here the regime was much milder than on the sucreries, though new estates had to be cut out of the scrub and their seclusion, some said, abetted cruelty.<sup>(158)</sup> Cold nights in the mountains also meant death to many new arrivals. Possibly less affected by the current of humanitarian thought in Europe<sup>(159)</sup> and more so (surprisingly) by the baneful influence of incipient soil exhaustion,<sup>(160)</sup> they nonetheless benefited from a healthier location



and from owners who were usually resident. At this time, Moreau noted, manumission had also become more frequent,<sup>(161)</sup> though not to the extent that made it an instrument of pacification under the Spanish. If pressure on the food supply was mounting rapidly, the American trade and the jardins nègres apparently accommodated it. Thus, there seems little justification for Gaston-Martin's picture of actually worsening conditions.<sup>(162)</sup>

Only in the comparative context may this have been true. In the British Caribbean in the previous 20 years economic decline and humanitarian pressure had made slave lives less easily expendable than in the boom world of Saint Domingue. In the United States and Brazil economic and other trends were probably working to the slaves' advantage, albeit temporarily, while in Cuba commercialization was only beginning.<sup>(163)</sup> Generally speaking, then, Humboldt's later observation that 'French slavery' was the worst, could conceivably be extended to cover Saint Domingue on the eve of the New World's sole successful slave revolt.

Paradoxically, until the Revolution, Saint Domingue's slaves appear to have been remarkably unrebelling.<sup>(164)</sup> Although most of the factors that Patterson suggests lay behind Jamaica's numerous revolts<sup>(165)</sup> were equally or even more prominent in Saint Domingue, there is scarcely a single rebellion recorded. Conspiracies were occasionally discovered, but they seem to have been getting rarer.<sup>(166)</sup> Also, while the colony's terrain favoured runaways, they were never so disruptive as in Jamaica and Surinam, and the most famous maroon band numbered in 1784 a mere 137.<sup>(167)</sup> Rather like the wolf's, the maroon's aggression has been somewhat exaggerated. Desertions, Debbasch and Debien believe, were rarely the product of a specific desire for liberty, nor pace M. Fouchard were they notably increasing.<sup>(168)</sup> It is true, in 1784 the Governor was forced to negotiate with the disruptive Dokos band, but, as in Jamaica, this made for stability not subversion.<sup>(169)</sup> Slave protest was often expressed with poison, but not so frequently as guilty white minds imagined. Apart from suicide, self-mutilation and the occasional strike, the slaves' resentment was generally sunk in an acceptance of the status quo, sometimes sullen, sometimes stoic, often alleviated through satire. The majority, it seems, succeeded in constructing out of plantation relationships and a plot of vegetables a bearable existence.

In any slave society, the psychological and physical barriers



against rebellion were immense. One may cite three main reasons. The master class monopolised the use of armed force; slave classes were peculiarly lacking in cohesion and, inevitably if to varying degrees, the slaves internalised the masters' view of them as inferior. (170) In the New World, the slave-owning class was further buttressed by being (for the most part) racially distinct from its slaves and by possessing a far more advanced material culture, which lent it both additional sanction and ability to repress. At the same time, the slaves were not a homogeneous group bound by kinship and custom, but a random agglomeration of individuals from diverse cultures, speaking different languages and at different stages of assimilation into colonial society.

As amongst free men, divisions of class, colour, ethnic origin and locality were strong, while family ties were weak. Creoles mocked the newly-arrived bossales and sometimes exploited them; creolized Africans denied their origins, and domestics and artisans had privileges and pretensions of their own which set them further apart from the nègres de jardin. The endurance of 'tribal' cultures among the Africans could likewise be divisive, old hostilities persisting. (171) Subversive religious sects were often denounced, a contemporary said, because 'ils n'adorent point le même dieu, ils se haïssent et s'épient réciproquement'. (172) Conspiracies were also frequently betrayed by creole women favoured by whites. They were said to spurn the African men; competition for women adding a particular edge to rivalries amongst the slaves. Of course, the slave experience itself forged new social bonds, between bâtiments who had undergone the Middle Passage together, (173) between baptised slaves sharing the same godparents, between adepts of syncretic religious cults, while gang labour in the fields imposed its own solidarity, symbolised in songs of call and response. Yet, equally, it was not unknown for a plantation workforce to identify with its master, so far as to indulge in rivalry with those of other estates and to ally with ateliers whose master was related to their own, (174) thus strengthening the system.

The system was also strengthened by its shortcomings, not to mention what human features it possessed. Precisely because the plantation did not resemble the concentration camp to which some have compared it, slaves were able to disappear periodically for weekends with a distant lover, to pilfer from the stores, to make life hell for an unpopular overseer and even to get him dismissed by



refusing to work. With time they might achieve modest prosperity, and occasionally gain their freedom. Hence, tension could be released.

Perhaps the growing preponderance of 'Congo' slaves, reputedly the most docile, was conducive to stability, though they were prone to marronage. Considering the mass of conflicting evidence to be assimilated, any generalisation about the 'slave personality' is vulnerable. The Haitian Revolution, as will be seen, is a classic case in point. Debbasch is on difficult ground when he asserts that the desire for freedom was not strong among the slaves.<sup>(175)</sup> One can point to persistent or successful runaways, or those few bold spirits mentioned by Moreau de Saint-Méry<sup>(176)</sup> who took on the whites at their own game and told them that negroes were the superior race. Undoubtedly dangerous was the vodun cult, whose potential Moreau vaguely felt, though unaware of the meaning of the ritual chant that he printed.<sup>(177)</sup> Even so, until 1791, nocturnal meetings served simply as a safety-valve; at worst, mere 'rituals of rebellion'.<sup>(178)</sup> Their organisation was doubtless overrated by Saintoyant and Vaissière.<sup>(179)</sup> Fostering a revolutionary mentality at the same time as defusing latent tensions, the vodun cult reflects the immanent contradictions at the heart of the slave system, which drove the slave to rebel but remorselessly held him in check. Yet, according to Rousseau, slavery destroyed the desire to be free.<sup>(180)</sup> Whites were generally agreed that the slaves accepted their condition as inevitable, if not legitimate.<sup>(181)</sup> In the words of Toussaint Louverture himself, 'Ils ont supporté leurs fers tant qu'ils ne connurent pas d'état plus heureux que celui de l'esclavage'.<sup>(182)</sup> Black Saint Domingue was indeed une mine à poudre but the powder was damp, and was to need a lot of revolutionary heat to dry it out.

The growth of anti-slavery opinion in France offered, in itself, an even less likely path to freedom than did direct action by the blacks. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the divorce between the theory and practice of slavery was clearly demonstrated. While philosophers attacked the theory, publicists exposed the facts and playwrights and poets dramatised them. The economics of slavery, too, were being questioned, and the Government took a discreet interest in means of replacing it.<sup>(183)</sup> Most planters, however, confident in their importance to the French economy, were not over-concerned for the time being. As Gaston-Martin observed, people had shed tears over



Inkle and Yarico for 100 years, yet continued to sip their well-sugared cups of coffee.<sup>(184)</sup> Nonetheless, early in 1788, planters were beginning to worry about the effects the abolitionist campaign would have on their workforces. Such concerns probably played only a small part in stimulating the colonists' first political moves at this time but once revolution was sweeping France, they undoubtedly strengthened desires for autonomy.<sup>(185)</sup>

Reform, as de Tocqueville observed, has the paradoxical effect of defusing discontent while simultaneously encouraging it, by demonstrating the possibility of change where none previously existed. When, in 1784-85, the Government tried to impose on the planters certain improvements in the treatment of their slaves, the result was a wave of murders, strikes and marronage on the part of the blacks.<sup>(186)</sup> A number of New World slave revolts were associated with a belief that reform by distant rulers was being blocked by the master class in the locality.<sup>(187)</sup> The Haitian Revolution was to be no exception.

(iv) Conclusion. In a sense there was no dominguois society. Its administrators treated their time there as a temporary exile. Its largest proprietors, if they lived there at all, were conducting a commercial smash and grab raid, and below them laboured lesser figures, likewise anxious to get rich and return to Europe, as soon as possible. While only a quarter of the whites were creoles, over one half of the colony's entire population had been born in Africa and arrived in the hold of a slave ship.

Social cohesion was not only sapped by materialism, a lack of roots and an atmosphere of impermanence, but also by an increasing degree of stratification. Creoles were ridiculed by Europeans, the coffee planter disdained the cotton grower, the sugar planter looked down on both, and all of them despised the wage earner.<sup>(188)</sup> New and vicious barriers had arisen between white and coloured, while free blacks and mésallié whites served to further diversify the scale of scorn and degradation. Even amongst the slaves, elites of creoles and domestics were growing. This high degree of segmentation was to express itself in the ruthlessly shifting alliances of the Revolution.

Certainly, the whites' internal differences were of a lesser order than the racial division. Yet, in a comparative context, Saint Domingue perhaps exhibited more class tension than other New



World colonies, while the caste line was not so clear cut as in the United States or (in a qualified sense) in the British West Indies. The result was that Saint Domingue had neither the neat lines of stratification, and therefore stability, of the British colonies, where the class and colour hierarchies were identical, nor the greater integration of the Iberian colonies. Its main distinguishing characteristics, therefore, apart from its huge number of slaves, were its prominent petit blanc and free coloured sectors, and their hostile conjunction.

On the other hand, it could be said that the underlying similarities of the New World slave societies outweighed their differences and that Saint Domingue's problems were simply those of others writ large. Possessing a large, diversified population, it merely contained the commonly repressed, thus potentially explosive, elements, (slaves, free coloureds, small whites), in greater numbers, and in most cases, greater proportion. In the older colonies, such as the British Leewards, <sup>(189)</sup> the struggle between the small whites and free coloureds had already resolved itself peacefully.

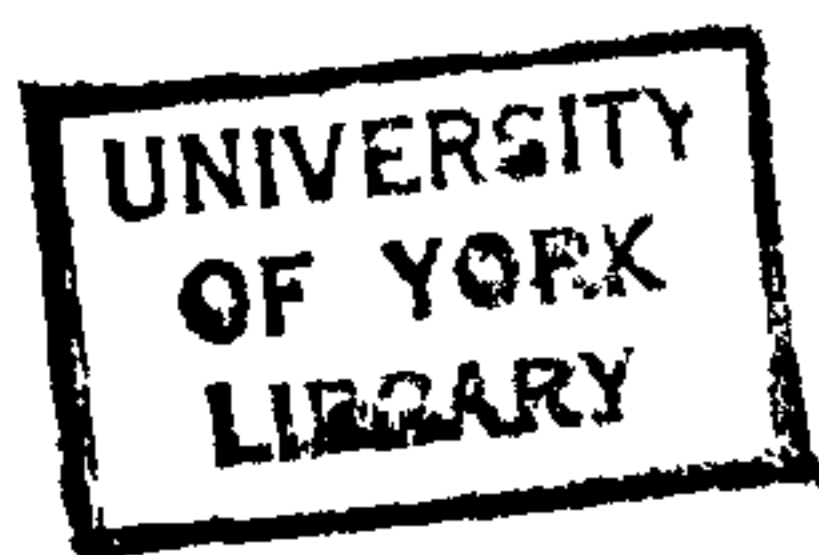
It is with some reason that in the mid-1780's social problems were not a major issue to most Dominguan planters. The colony might have had the world's fastest-growing slave population, but the colonists could feel secure in its equally unique record of tranquillity. The free coloureds' increase in numbers and wealth had clashed head on with mounting racism but they were still quiet. The ablest of them continued to leave Saint Domingue to pursue careers in France and there were at this time signs of improving race relations. Similarly, though the number of petits blancs was growing, they remained no more than a police problem, and the Intendant was strengthening the police.

As for the grands blancs, their long-standing political and economic grievances had served to shape a sense of separate identity and of interests divergent from those of the mother country that is the root of colonial nationalism. Yet, this is easily exaggerated. Vulnerability, national sentiment and inertia were less dramatic but powerful factors reinforcing the imperial tie. It must also be admitted that the frailty of Saint Domingue's social fabric was a hindrance to political action, for the individualism that weakened ties with the home country also sapped the common spirit created by common grievances. Furthermore, contemporary correspondence shows the colonists pre-occupied not with imminent cataclysm but with the



mundanities of day to day life, which for many, in the short term, was proving pleasantly profitable. (190)

The whites' attitude to independence, the free coloureds' desires for equality, the slaves' ideas about freedom, were all conditioned by their perception of what was possible or probable. For all three groups the 1780's was a period of rising expectations and broadening horizons, but few indeed can have felt independence, equality or emancipation lay sufficiently close to the realms of reality to warrant a strong degree of commitment. Potential violent conflict was clearly very close to the surface of life in Saint Domingue, but it was latent in all slave-based colonies of the time. Men, moreover, whether slave or free, rarely find life unbearable and are apt to prefer a familiar present to an unknown future. The example of the English and Spanish mainland colonies suggests that revolution was not caused by the colonial systems themselves, but by changes in them. (191)





## CHAPTER II. THE REVOLUTION.

In Saint Domingue, as in France, the Ancien Regime's last, ill-fated flourish of reforming activity encountered heavy opposition from the law courts and brought about a situation fairly termed 'pre-revolutionary'. The vigorous efficiency of Barbé-Marbois' Intendancy (1786-1789) made more enemies than friends. Alarming proposals were made to change the laws of debt, and the abolition of the Conseil du Cap, especially, like that of the Parlement of Paris, wounded powerful vested interests and outraged public pride at all levels of white society. Anger at the dismissal of these patriarchs de la famille coloniale<sup>(1)</sup> was exacerbated when representative assemblies were granted to Martinique and Guadeloupe but not to Saint Domingue.<sup>(2)</sup>

In June 1788, certain prominent colonists arrived in Paris to present the King with a list of grievances. Revolutionary events in France now started to impinge on the colonies. Inspired by the noblesse of Brittany and Dauphiné, absentee proprietors initiated a campaign for colonial representation in the States-General,<sup>(3)</sup> and thereby complicated the colonists' demands with a dispute about the means for achieving them.

Early in 1789, the Chambre d'Agriculture of le Cap and three secret committees organised illegally among the grands blancs the election of deputies, who were sent to France. Fears of a 'déspotisme ministériel qui ne respecte rien'<sup>(4)</sup> proved groundless, since the colonial authorities, left uninformed by Versailles and divided amongst themselves, declined into impotence. The elections apparently involved very few colonists;<sup>(5)</sup> perhaps because of difficult communications, or apathy, or loyalty, or rigging; or perhaps because of a desire to keep the affairs of a prosperous colony away from the revolutionary assembly of a bankrupt metropole, particularly in view of the growing threat of the Amis des Noirs. Absentee opinion had divided on the representation issue in September 1788.<sup>(6)</sup> Slowly finding themselves out of harmony with opinion in Paris, many colonists perceived the need for a defensive stance. Around July 1789, the Club Massiac took shape, devoted to opposing colonial representation in National Assembly.<sup>(7)</sup>

Both groups in France, however, were overtaken by events in Saint Domingue. Already agitated by the grain crisis in France, the colony reacted violently to the news of the Paris revolution.



Petits blancs celebrated the fall of the Bastille with pillaging and burning; patriotic societies were formed and a municipal revolution overturned military government in many parts of the colony. 'Multitudes of vagabonds...deluged the towns. Gangs of rioters appeared...as if from underground'.<sup>(8)</sup> In the North, certain grands blancs, using the mob of le Cap, took advantage of the Governor's recall to drive out the Intendant and elect a provincial assembly. The pattern would be repeated throughout the Revolution - 'quelques intrigants perdus de dettes', backed up by 'les hommes à bras...n'ayant rien à perdre et beaucoup à gagner'.<sup>(9)</sup> In little time, the Assembly of the North raised its own troops, entirely reformed the administration, condemned the colonial cahier and ordered all colonists under threat of expropriation to return and 'partager le péril commun'.<sup>(10)</sup> A General Assembly, meeting at Saint Marc, declared itself sovereign and boldly produced a set of Bases Constitutionnelles.<sup>(11)</sup> Denouncing this move towards independence, the Assembly of the North temporarily rallied to the Governor and, with the military, drove out these Patriotes in August 1790.

Against a rapidly changing background, colonial politics had developed a bewildering complexity. Extremely atomised, it was an affair of factions rather than parties. Nevertheless, certain social realities lay behind the groupings mentioned. Half of the colonial deputies in Paris were wealthy absentees, mostly nobles, connected with both liberal and reactionary elements in the aristocracy.<sup>(12)</sup> They initially demanded to sit with the Second Estate. The cahier of the North Province, that they took with them to Paris, was designed to strengthen grand blanc privileges, and requested transmissible nobility for the colonial magistrates.<sup>(13)</sup> The cahier of the West was remarkably democratic in tone, but possibly disingenuous.<sup>(14)</sup> Occasionally mentioning droits imprescriptibles or loi naturelle, these men generally based their arguments on the colonists', i.e. the grands blancs', great wealth and specialised local knowledge, thereby falling unsuspecting prey to Mirabeau and Condorcet.<sup>(15)</sup> Their social ideas were rigidly hierarchical.<sup>(16)</sup> They thus form an aristocratic reaction in R.R. Palmer's broad sense.<sup>(17)</sup> When the folly of imperial representation stood revealed, the Club Massiac absorbed most of the metropolitan members of this group, yet was distinguished by leaders of moderate fortune, often creoles, who had recently arrived from Saint Domingue.<sup>(18)</sup>



Although Rotberg and Ott confuse 'Patriote' with petit blanc,<sup>(19)</sup> most of the deputies at Saint Marc were middling planters, hostile to absenteeism and distant rule.<sup>(20)</sup> According to Garran-Coulon, they despised the 'petits blancs', increasingly more confident and unruly behind their red cockades.<sup>(21)</sup> They were certainly not averse to adopting fantasy titles of marquis or chevalier. The Assembly of the North was dominated by lawyers and big merchants, whose professional interests explain much of their opposition to the Patriots.<sup>(22)</sup> More truly allies of the Old Regime were army officers and administrators, who, with some rich planters and establishment lawyers, led the Pompons blancs. Vaissiere's pattern of bourgeoisie against military nobility is therefore fallacious.<sup>(23)</sup>

With the exception of the government party, it is not inaccurate to say that these groups sought basically the same ends:- to gain as much autonomy as possible; to liberalize colonial commerce; to maintain a rigid hierarchy of colour and to preserve the institution of slavery and the trade vital to its preservation. The differences arose over means and the degree of militancy adopted. While the colonial deputies were committed to working with the National Assembly, the Club Massiac preferred to operate in close contact with the ministry and the ports, and pursue a more cautious policy. The Assembly of the North was determined on direct action but was not so ready to flout the metropole as were the deputies at Saint Marc, even though after driving them out they, too, tended to ignore the Governor.<sup>(24)</sup>

Political demands were at first mild. The Lettre au Roi, dated 31 mai 1788,<sup>(25)</sup> had merely requested an advisory type of assembly such as Martinique had gained. However, by 1789, presumably encouraged by the approach of the States-General and the re-appearance of several Provincial Estates, the three colonial cahiers and various plans for colonial assemblies of both colons and coloniaux all call for complete internal legislative autonomy save for a royal veto.<sup>(26)</sup> Some of the latter plans even envisaged colonial control of commercial affairs - a position more extreme than that of the American Declaration of Rights of 1774, though couched in much milder language. The Bases Constitutionnelles of the Saint Marc Assembly allowed the metropole little say in matters of trade, and none at all where foodstuffs were concerned.<sup>(27)</sup> Even the Assembly of the North requested that no commercial law be passed without consulting the Colonial Assembly.<sup>(28)</sup> On the other hand, in the cahiers of the Chambre d'Agriculture and



the North Province economic demands had been neither extreme nor prominent.<sup>(29)</sup> The Club Massiac, moreover, valuing its alliance with the French mercantile community to advance its political claims and protect the social status quo, never even discussed such matters.<sup>(30)</sup> By 1791, even the extremists seem to have accepted France's claim to determine the commercial relations of her colonies.<sup>(31)</sup> Like the American revolutionaries, many French colonists may have given liberty of trade a fairly low priority. In the Revolution, the commercial question certainly became overshadowed by political and social issues.<sup>(32)</sup>

As regards an absolute independence that would enable metropolitan debts to be forgotten, it is hard to guess how much support there was for it. It was discussed by the deputies at Saint Marc<sup>(33)</sup> but the assembly was still prepared, ostensibly, to accept a royal veto, and by July, when it entered its extreme phase, it consisted of barely 100 increasingly unpopular men who were soon overthrown.<sup>(34)</sup> Equally, the militaristic backlash that brought about its downfall alienated many moderates,<sup>(35)</sup> and the 85 léopardins, (the deputies who had to flee to France), left behind many friends in the South and West. In March 1791, this Côté ouest party<sup>(36)</sup> made an important advance when troops mutinied in Port au Prince, enabling their sympathisers to establish a Municipality.<sup>(37)</sup> Many léopardins returned to take part in the Second Colonial Assembly in August 1791, and when the slave revolt broke out they were among the first to look to England for help.

It is disputed how far these events followed naturally from Saint Domingue's past history and how far they were reactions to events in France.<sup>(38)</sup> Clearly discontent was widespread and considerable in 1787, though until the calling of the States-General it had produced little more than a list of grievances drawn up by some leading colonists to be sent to the king. Without the prospect of sweeping reforms and the paralysis of authority bought by the Revolution, one may doubt if the colony would have gone much further in attempting to shape its own destiny. Saintoyant did not accept this, but even he thought that, had times been quieter, the National Assembly's policy of internal legislative autonomy subject to a metropolitan veto, maintenance of the Governor's status and only minor modifications in the Exclusif, would have been enough to establish satisfactory relations.<sup>(39)</sup> The great stumbling block,



it may be argued, was less a deep-seated desire for independence than the Revolution's threat to white supremacy, and therefore to slavery, in Saint Domingue.

In the colour question, few commentators have failed to find a root cause of the colony's collapse. Whether condemning the free coloureds for seeking equality with the whites, or blaming the whites for rejecting these demands, contemporaries often attributed the destruction of Saint Domingue not to the slaves who accomplished its destruction, nor to the political and social divisions that weakened white resistance, but to the bitter struggle between white and brown, which not only gave an example and an opportunity to the enslaved masses but also directly embroiled them.<sup>(40)</sup>

Though colour prejudice always had the upper hand, the current of colonial opinion favourable to the free coloureds was not entirely extinguished in the Revolution. In 1789, the Committee of the West referred to free coloureds as equals.<sup>(41)</sup> In the Club Massiac, some southerners favoured concessions, as did many metropolitan merchants.<sup>(42)</sup> In parts of the South, mulattoes voted in the first Revolutionary elections and even sat on committees with whites.<sup>(43)</sup> Nevertheless, while the Revolution aided the free coloured position by convincing some whites, through fear if not reason, that reform was necessary, its main effect was to harden colonial attitudes against even the slightest concessions in case worse followed. Connections with the Amis des Noirs not only encouraged the mulattoes to extend their demands, perhaps unwisely, but also enabled rumour and propaganda to link their cause damagingly with that of the slaves.

To the free coloureds themselves, the Rights of Man offered a return to the letter and spirit of the Code Noire. In the autumn of 1789, they assembled like the whites to make their wishes known but met with a wave of persecution.<sup>(44)</sup> Helping the Administration to overcome the Patriots in 1790 brought them no concessions. However - an important development - they acquired leaders from among the wealthy coloureds now returning from France, Pierre Pinchinat, J.B. Villatte, J.B. Lapointe, men who had been accustomed to equal treatment. Some mulattoes fortified their plantations to protect themselves, but an attempt by the Parisian lawyer, Vincent Ogé, to raise a rebellion in October 1790 failed utterly.<sup>(45)</sup> While having the free coloureds well in check, the whites were additionally fortunate in that the National Assembly maintained an embarrassed ambiguity on the colour



question until May 1791. Nonetheless, they suspected the metropole's intentions and the ambivalence on this issue of the March 1790 decrees may have helped to push the Patriots to extremes. Certainly, when the National Assembly was forced to break its silence and grant political rights to the few non-whites born of free parents, the effect was fatal. Colonists heaped scorn on a mother country that suggested that non-whites could be their equals.<sup>(46)</sup> Coinciding with the petit blanc revolution in Port au Prince,<sup>(47)</sup> this compromise decree, though not even sent out, simply drove whites and coloureds further apart. Because of emigration during the Revolution, the mulattoes must have now well outnumbered the whites in the colony.<sup>(48)</sup> Their resistance stiffened. Towards the end of July, the free coloureds of the West, their patience exhausted, began to gather in armed bands.

However, just when the free coloureds were poised to strike, and the Second Colonial Assembly was gathering at le Cap, a whirlwind of violence swept through the plantations of the northern plain. The slaves rebelled, and with cane-knives and fire-brands took a terrible vengeance on their masters. Airborne ash from the blazing canefields rained down on le Cap as on a second Pompeii. Mirabeau's 'Vesuvius' had erupted.<sup>(49)</sup>

As early as September 1789, the Intendant had written, 'Tout ce qui se fait et s'écrit particulièrement de l'affranchissement des nègres perce dans la colonie...ces negres s'accordent tous...que les blancs esclaves ont tué leurs maîtres, et qu'aujourd'hui libres, ils se gouvernent eux-mêmes et rentrent en possession des biens de la terre'.<sup>(50)</sup> Careless table talk in the grand'cases and conversation with sailors on the wharves kept the slaves informed of events in France.<sup>(51)</sup> Assuredly, they began to see themselves and their masters in a new light. At bottom, however, slave revolts were not determined by the ideas circulating in the slave quarters, but by their prospects of success, and that meant by the strength and unity of the master class. The experience of Jamaica at this time makes this clear.<sup>(52)</sup> For two years, the slaves of Saint Domingue had watched their masters, white and coloured, violently assail established authority. Twice as numerous as the slaves of Jamaica, they faced approximately the same number of troops in a colony nearly three times as large.<sup>(53)</sup> Considering the reckless complacency of most whites and the excessive suspicion of others, not to mention the outright provocation of some troops arriving from France,<sup>(54)</sup> perhaps the most surprising feature



of the slave revolt was its slowness in coming. Only a few small outbreaks occurred before August 1791. Equally surprising perhaps is the spasmodic and limited way it developed.<sup>(55)</sup> Despite what has been written about the 'revolution of half a million slaves',<sup>(56)</sup> Saint Domingue was never to experience anything like a general insurrection.

It seems quite possible that not only was the white demonstration of the efficacy of violence a vital factor in stimulating ferment among the slaves but also a measure of white or coloured leadership. According to Robert Michels, all major class movements in history have been instigated, aided and led by men from the classes against which those movements were directed.<sup>(57)</sup> In the West and South Provinces, it was with few exceptions at the command of their masters that the slaves first took to arms to fight in the civil war between whites and coloureds.<sup>(58)</sup> In the North, the major breakthroughs in the revolt seem to have come when mulattoes joined the slaves, helping them to take over the mountains adjoining the great plain and then break out to the eastward.<sup>(59)</sup> If the story is true, that the August rebellion was a counter-revolutionary manoeuvre that misfired,<sup>(60)</sup> then the autonomy of the slave insurrection is considerably diminished. Garran-Coulon blamed white prejudice for what he called the obsession for finding external causes of the slave revolt.<sup>(61)</sup> He may have been right, - certainly the reasoning, and honesty, of someone like Carteaux leaves much to be desired<sup>(62)</sup> - but so also may this unique event have been the product of extraordinary circumstances.

Whatever interests were bound up with the August rebellion, its immediate organisation was apparently the result of nocturnal gatherings associated with the vodun cult.<sup>(63)</sup> The proscription of the cult by the colonial authorities, and later by Sonthonax, Toussaint, Dessalines and Christophe,<sup>(64)</sup> gives some idea of its subversive potential. It seems to have provided through its meetings a network of inter-plantation contacts, some leadership through its priests, a unity of feeling and a sense of invulnerability through its precepts.<sup>(65)</sup> Even so, the localised nature of the August rebellion surely disproves fantastic theories of a religious organisation on a colony-wide scale, notwithstanding the rapidity with which news travelled among the slaves. The fact that so many slaves rebelled at the same time<sup>(66)</sup> can doubtless be explained by the size, and density of population of the northern plain; the hesitant, defensive tactics



of the whites;<sup>(67)</sup> their numerical weakness<sup>(68)</sup> and indiscriminate cruelty,<sup>(69)</sup> and the terrorism of the insurgents,<sup>(70)</sup> that all contributed to the snowball effect of the first few weeks.

It is interesting that Boukman, apparently the organiser of the revolt, was not only a houngan but also of British West Indian origins.<sup>(71)</sup> The same seems to have been true of the famous maroon leaders, Macandal and Plymouth.<sup>(72)</sup> Slaves rejected by British planters were more likely to be dissidents.<sup>(73)</sup> Most of the rebels were presumably Africans, since they formed the majority of the adult population, though creole males, even specialists and house slaves, appear to have been little less prone to revolt.<sup>(74)</sup> Indeed, they supplied the bulk of the leadership and were almost certainly responsible for the rebellion.<sup>(75)</sup> Boukman was a coachman, but it was usually the slave-drivers, it seems, who decided if an atelier rebelled.<sup>(76)</sup> When one reflects that the Plaine du Nord was probably the most creolized part of the colony, and that the most Africanised areas were the slowest to revolt,<sup>(77)</sup> there seems good reason to re-examine suppositions about the links between African slaves and armed rebellion.

The insurrection produced acts of great savagery from the slaves, as from the whites and coloureds, but also numerous instances of loyalty or kindness both individual and collective.<sup>(78)</sup> According to tradition, Toussaint Louverture maintained calm on his master's plantation for a month before conveying the manager's wife to safety and then joining the rebels. His apparent dilemma was not simply that of the 'privileged' slave. Of the 317 other slaves on the Breda estates, where marronage, moreover, had been endemic, only 21 left for the rebel camp, while the remainder attempted to preserve the plantations.<sup>(79)</sup> Slavery was a more durable institution than some would believe.

The conflict between loyalties to class and colour is also noteworthy. Some whites had taken part in Ogé's rebellion in 1790,<sup>(80)</sup> and several cases are recorded of petits blancs leading or involved with bands of slave rebels.<sup>(81)</sup> Conversely, free black and mulatto slaveowners also joined with revolted slaves, though most at first sought solidarity with the whites.<sup>(82)</sup> Some bands of maroons were indifferent to the rebellion; others (apparently) were active participants.<sup>(83)</sup> The completely segmented nature of Saint Domingue society is evident from the absence of any permanent alignments between groups. In the plain of Cul de Sac, in the



autumn of 1791, the whites were initially confronted by the free coloureds joined by some slaves. Whites and mulattoes then combined and returned the slaves to their plantations but within weeks white and coloured planters were using their slaves to fight the white Patriots of Port au Prince, who also armed local slaves. In March 1792, the slaves themselves rose apparently in support of the mulattoes, but the following January they massacred them, sparing the whites.<sup>(84)</sup> In la Grand'Anse, the whites were able to rely on their slaves to hold down the free coloureds, but on the south coast it was usually the mulattoes who led the slaves against the whites.<sup>(85)</sup>

All the hatred, the fear and the aspirations latent in colonial society were now given free rein. However, the initiative in colonial affairs still lay in Europe and external factors were perhaps the most important, if negative, influence on the course of events. Firstly, France became increasingly unable to spare sufficient troops either to hunt down the insurgents or to overawe unruly whites.<sup>(86)</sup> A few more regiments more promptly sent and the revolution might have been over.<sup>(87)</sup> Secondly, the indecision of the French legislators on the colour question created havoc in the colony, and it was this issue that for over a year determined whether the slave revolt would spread beyond the North Province.

Fear of such a development had, by late September 1791, brought the whites in all three provinces to accept either the May 15 decree or equality for all free coloureds.<sup>(88)</sup> This alliance, however, was broken when the National Assembly withdrew the May decree.<sup>(89)</sup> A savage race war thereupon spread through the colony and continued until the early summer of 1792, when it became known that the new Legislative Assembly in Paris<sup>(90)</sup> had decreed on 4<sup>th</sup> April full equality between white and coloured freemen - and was sending a Civil Commission with 6,000 troops to enforce it. White and mulatto property-owners consequently joined in an uneasy common front and the slaves generally returned to work, having negotiated improved conditions.<sup>(91)</sup> The revolt was now largely confined to parts of the North and the Platons region in the South, which was captured by whites and loyal blacks in January 1793.<sup>(92)</sup>

While very little is known about this period in Saint Domingue's history, there seems, as regards the South and West, little exaggeration in Mahe de Cormeré's claim that, 'il n'eut réellement dans le principe, d'esclaves insurgés...que ceux qui avoient été



armés par les deux partis'.<sup>(93)</sup> In general, especially in the West, the largest province, slave resistance usually took the form in 1792 of flouting plantation discipline or ceasing to work,<sup>(94)</sup> which became increasingly easier as whites moved into the towns or emigrated. Autonomous aggression was, at least until 1793, rare, short-lived and isolated. The March 1792 uprising in the plain of Cul de Sac was instigated by the mulattoes and by August work had been resumed.<sup>(95)</sup> The brief and simultaneous insurrection in the plain of Arcahaye was likewise a mulatto manoeuvre - their plantations were spared. It caused very little destruction, and barely interrupted production at all, it seems.<sup>(96)</sup> The same appears true of the disturbances in the north-west and the Saint Marc-Artibonite region, though in the latter area damage may have been more extensive.<sup>(97)</sup> The mountains were apparently the least affected of all areas.<sup>(98)</sup> Neither la Grand'Anse nor the rest of the West experienced an autonomous slave rebellion of any significance.<sup>(99)</sup> There were minor outbreaks, and the slaves, once raised, were not easily bought off. In parts of the South, they broke away from their masters to fight on their own account, but only in the Cayes-Torbeck region was damage considerable, and here work was resumed in January 1793.<sup>(100)</sup>

Most importantly, where slaves actually were in rebellion, their demands were surprisingly mild. Generally they called for the extra free day per week they apparently thought the king had granted them, for some improvements in the treatment of slaves, and for emancipation only for their leaders. Sometimes they demanded the return of absentee masters.<sup>(101)</sup> One cannot expect them, Garran-Coulon observed, to have loved liberty as an ideal.<sup>(102)</sup> The question of the rebels' intentions is a difficult one. In the North it would seem that early ambitions to exterminate the whites<sup>(103)</sup> became rapidly scaled down with the experience of defeat. Roume claimed they never demanded general emancipation until the 4<sup>th</sup> April decree became known, and that only at the instigation of the Abbe Delahaye.<sup>(104)</sup> Certainly the rebels were by mid-November anxious to surrender before troops arrived from France. The planters foolishly refused to hear of it, and the war continued.<sup>(105)</sup> Yet, in June 1792 the soldier/planter de Rouvray wrote that most of the rebels he was fighting in the North wished to return to work.<sup>(106)</sup> Separated from the race war, the slave insurrection assumed manageable proportions. Faced by fresh troops, it generally slackened throughout the year.



Historians disagree as to how sincere was white Saint Domingue's acceptance of la loi de 4 avril.<sup>(107)</sup> The Revolution had certainly convinced some whites of the justice of the mulattoes' demands, or of the prudence of according them.<sup>(108)</sup> At the same time the bitterness of the race war made rapprochement all the more difficult, especially in la Grand'Anse, where the whites would never forgive the atrocities committed by the coloured planters of the Cayemittes region. By 1792, many colonists were indeed urging co-operation with the free coloureds, but often from the saner vantage point of France, where nonetheless the colonial deputies left the Legislative Assembly in protest against the April decree and the Club Massiac pressed its members to return to Saint Domingue to resist its application.<sup>(109)</sup> Mahé de Cormeré supported the Concordat policy, but privately he derided the mulattoes' ambition ridicule, orgueilleuse et démesurée. He described the 4<sup>th</sup> April decree as 'acceptée, peut-être avec répugnance...désastreuse mais nécessaire'.<sup>(110)</sup> Even some of the leading advocates of racial equality seem to have been playing the free coloureds false.<sup>(111)</sup> The alliance that had grown up since 1790 between the Government party and the mulattoes had some basis in the military man's appreciation of the free coloured's martial qualities and the European's freedom from colonial prejudice, but was to a large extent simply political manoeuvring, determined by the petits blancs' combination of radicalism and racism, and the slave revolt's threat to property.

On the whole, acceptance of the decree depended on the mulattoes' numerical strength in the different parishes. In most of the South and West they were henceforth, if not already, dominant. In the North and the three provincial capitals, where gens de couleur were least numerous, prejudice remained active, while in la Grand'Anse, which had the lowest mulatto:white ratio of any rural parish outside the North,<sup>(112)</sup> the decree was completely ignored.

When Civil Commissioners Sonthonax and Polverel arrived in September 1792, therefore, the situation had stabilised considerably but remained tense. Any official sent to root out racial discrimination would inevitably have met some resistance, but it appears that Sonthonax and Polverel made their task more difficult by a singular harshness towards the white population. Even Garran-Coulon, fellow Brissotin and apologist, pointed to certain excesses on their part and reported that some mulattoes, now in positions of power,



persecuted their former persecutors.<sup>(113)</sup>

Purges, deportations, heavy taxation, interference with shipping, the dissolution of the Colonial Assembly and all municipalities, if not unjustified, did little to win the Commissioners support in a colony where opinion became increasingly polarized after it was known that the monarchy had been overthrown and a republic established.<sup>(114)</sup> In October the Commissioners struck to the Right, deporting numerous officers and officials, suspected of plotting. In December, after an anti-mulatto riot in le Cap, they similarly purged the local separatist (or simply anarchic) faction.<sup>(115)</sup> The year ended with the Commissioners secure in the North Province, poised to forcibly extend their rule to the rest of the colony. However, just as in Europe the triumphant Republican armies were being propelled by Girondin ambition into fighting a world war, so too the policy of the Commissioners in Saint Domingue was alienating all shades of white opinion, even causing them to combine.<sup>(116)</sup> This left as their only allies the increasingly self-assertive free coloureds and a fast dwindling number of French troops.

Such was the situation when on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1793 the French Republic declared war on Great Britain.



### CHAPTER III. AUTONOMISM, ROYALISM AND 'L'APPEL AUX ANGLAIS'.

(i) The Problem. It is impossible to know what proportion of colonists favoured English intervention in 1793. Their motives, moreover, in either actively soliciting or merely accepting a British occupation are almost as debatable, and not surprisingly so, since the calling in of the English was an act of self-preservation, secession and counter-revolution all at the same time. Primarily, however, was it a response to immediate and dangerous circumstances? Or was it, as Frostin holds, <sup>(1)</sup> the natural expression of a virulent creole autonomism that had been maturing for fifty years? Conversely, what truth is there in Garran-Coulon's diatribes against colonial royalism, the planters' need for a king, whether English or French? <sup>(2)</sup> And what were the implications of these views for Great Britain?

If mere self-preservation were the prime-mover, one presumes that those colonists favouring a British occupation saw it as an act of police-keeping, partly humane, partly self-interested. Either a necessary evil or a convenient opportunity to profit from British commerce, the redcoats' presence would probably be intended to be temporary, though the colonists could not be unaware that England might try to retain the colony after the war.

If the autonomist aspect were paramount, then it is likely that British troops were intended to free Saint Domingue from French rule and French debts, and to enable it to become either British or independent, although some might have simply hoped to use the foreign presence as leverage at future peace negotiations to gain from France the political and commercial concessions the colony had sought in 1789-90.

Alternatively, if attachment to certain aspects of the Ancien Regime was the mainspring of the approach to Britain and the acceptance of its soldiers, then it is likely that the invaders were regarded as allies, who would help defeat the Revolution and hand the colony back to a France returned, if not specifically to the Bourbons, then at least to its senses. On the other hand, if the Republic remained triumphant in Europe, probably the conservative or compromised colonist would prefer to stay under monarchical British rule, free from sociétés populaires and enfranchised mulattoes, though dynastic loyalty might persuade others to prefer the rule of the Princes in exile.

These three categories are neither exhaustive, well-defined, nor



mutually exclusive. Nor are their implications for Britain clear cut. In addition, while all evidence of separatism in the Revolutionary period is subject to the difficulties of interpretation already outlined, no evidence can be called conclusive regarding the existence of attitudes often imprecise and not strongly felt in a population of thousands, especially when they concern hypothetical situations. The problem is partly one of evidence and partly conceptual. It will be suggested that proof of actual secessionist desires in Saint Domingue is not quite as extensive as contemporaries and historians have implied. On the other hand, to find any evidence at all of overtures from a colony to a foreign power, particularly in peacetime, is perhaps sufficiently impressive in itself. To insist on extensive proof of such a phenomenon, some would say, is to confuse an idea with its expression.<sup>(3)</sup> However, since this can hardly be avoided by the historian, it appears preferable to assuming the existence of things that might not have existed. At the same time, one must also remember with what reluctance and disunity the North American colonies themselves had nonetheless achieved independence and nationhood. A subject so elusive perhaps deserves more space than is here available. Yet, as it concerns fundamental attitudes towards the occupation, some investigation is thought necessary.

The most detailed and comprehensive work on the subject is by Charles Frostin.<sup>(4)</sup> His thesis is that the Revolution did not create in the colony an upsurge of royalism as colonial disaffection might suggest, but that it accelerated the growth of 'un permanent sentiment autonomiste' and desire to ditch metropolitan debts, 'qui depuis la seconde moitié du 18<sup>me</sup> siècle entraînaient les créoles vers la Grande Bretagne'.<sup>(5)</sup> Although the upsurge of royalism is something of a straw man, this interpretation undoubtedly does much to explain Saint Domingue's reaction to the French Revolution, but it would also seem overstated, tending to confuse opposition to the Revolution with pre-existing alienation from France. Such a distinction is vital to make when considering attitudes to the British occupation and the question of eventual sovereignty it raised. Anger with a fickle mother-country by 1793 must have permanently alienated some hitherto contented colonists, as well as giving others the opportunity to realise latent aspirations, but it is surely equally likely that basically loyal colonists, who flew into a rage when Parisian assemblies shook the pillars of their social order would have happily returned under French rule once the 'excesses' of the Revolution had passed. Hence, Frostin's case for



'la permanence de l'esprit autonomiste et anglophile chez la plupart des colons' is considerably undermined by his own suggestion that 'le mobile essentiel de l'appel des colons aux Anglais' was, in fact, Revolutionary legislation on the colour question.<sup>(6)</sup>

(ii) The Evidence. It has already been argued that, while a desire for more political and economic freedom had long been present in Saint Domingue, actual secessionist aspirations were of little account at least until the summer of 1791.<sup>(7)</sup> In a slave colony, to demand self-government was one thing: to seek independence was another.

Prominent among the evidence for the existence of an esprit autonomiste under the Ancien Regime, is a letter by the Comte de la Barre, in which he reflects how little the colony would suffer if occupied by the English.<sup>(8)</sup> However, it is highly unlikely it demonstrates much more than the concern of an ageing nobleman, recently arrived in the turbulent colony, to reassure an anxious and distant wife of the security of himself and of their property.<sup>(9)</sup> Significantly, he noted that when Grenada was conquered its inhabitants had been able to sell their land and emigrate. Not surprisingly, in 1790 we find the Count opposing the extremists in Saint Domingue.<sup>(10)</sup>

Talk of secession was certainly in the air from the start of, even before, the Revolution. The pamphlets and public statements of the colonists testify to this both by their veiled threats and their protestations of loyalty.<sup>(11)</sup> Nevertheless, generous allowance has to be made both for the blackmail of colonial politicians and the slander of the Amis des Noirs. Few planters can have doubted that they needed the protection of European arms and that this had to be paid for with commercial concessions. If the National Assembly's refusal to modify the Exclusif hardly strengthened the imperial tie, it is nonetheless true that the colonial cahiers and the behaviour of the Club Massiac reveal a willingness to tread carefully in this area.<sup>(12)</sup> When the rump of the Saint Marc Assembly opened the colony's ports in July 1790, the moderate majority was shocked and the backlash was swift.<sup>(13)</sup>

Garran-Coulon asserted as something beyond doubt that from early April 1790 the Saint Marc Assembly had secret relations with the English of Jamaica.<sup>(14)</sup> Yet, he could mention in evidence only one letter of denunciation and another reporting the rumour of a proposed Caribbean Confederation directed from Jamaica and Havana. The rumour soon proved spurious and anyway aroused no enthusiasm in Saint Domingue.<sup>(15)</sup> No sign of any such relations exist in the official papers of the Governor,



Council, Committee of Correspondence or Agent of Jamaica,<sup>(16)</sup> while Bryan Edwards summarily dismissed such talk as slander. He in fact found inconceivable the idea that some of the léopardins should have sought independence.<sup>(17)</sup>

This is obviously going too far. According to Venault de Charmilly,<sup>(18)</sup> certain influential colonists had, since their experience during the American War of free trade with the United States, desired independence for Saint Domingue under the general protection of the European Powers. They were, however, un petit nombre d'Habitants... quelques caractères ardents.<sup>(19)</sup> Moreover, though he himself preached the virtues of British rule dès le commencement des troubles, it is evident his Anglophilia was not shared by many other separatists. Thus, the idea of a British takeover - merely another despotism, as one colonist put it<sup>(20)</sup> - had even fewer supporters than did hare-brained schemes for what he called une indépendance absurde.<sup>(21)</sup> Some were aware, it seems, that, even if the British conquered the colony in wartime, the European balance of power would probably prevent them from keeping it.<sup>(22)</sup> Yet, pace M. Frostin, one gets the impression that most whites simply did not want to become British.<sup>(23)</sup>

The merchant, Grasset, claimed that the deputies at Saint Marc discussed independence nem. con. with a view to casting adrift from their French creditors.<sup>(24)</sup> If true, this would tell us primarily how far the moderate deputies were intimidated by the extremists, since we know that over 50 of the 212 deputies actively rejected the autonomist spirit that evolved in the Assembly.<sup>(25)</sup> Probably it is not true. The correspondence of the attorney Joseph Sartre mentions that the proposal, shocking to colonial opinion, met with stiff resistance.<sup>(26)</sup>

Nevertheless, many planters must have found the attraction of instant solvency a seductive argument in favour of secession. As the Revolution, from the summer of 1791 onwards, seemed an increasingly bigger threat to the colony, it might have served as a powerful adjunct in eroding residual loyalty to the mother country. However, it is important to remember that in plantation society debts were often treated with aristocratic nonchalance, even when crops were contracted in advance to a creditor. Planters regarded credit more as a necessary investment by the mercantile bourgeoisie than as something to be repaid.<sup>(27)</sup> Moreover, the nature of French colonial law, the bias of the Conseils



Supérieurs, and the lassitude of the Administration when faced with proud and recalcitrant planters made debts exceptionally hard to collect.<sup>(28)</sup> Unlike in the British West Indies, the seizure of slaves was illegal; that of real estate almost impossible, and bodily constraint was permitted in only a few circumstances. Attempts to change the law at the end of the Ancien Regime had to be dropped. The Revolution, furthermore, left intact the planters' privileged position.<sup>(29)</sup> The result was that some creditors dared not pressure their pampered clients, who could view unperturbed the prospect of interminable litigation.<sup>(30)</sup> Indebtedness, therefore, while embittering transatlantic relations, was not such a strong motive for secession as first appears. The Second Colonial Assembly, one notes, made a point of guaranteeing the colony's obligations to French commerce.<sup>(31)</sup>

Colonial apologia are not lacking in lies and specious arguments,<sup>(32)</sup> being usually written to rehabilitate the colonists' reputation in Napoleonic or Restoration France. Nevertheless, one might accept Felix Carteaux's point that free-trading in the Revolution did not necessarily imply a desire for absolute independence, still less for English rule - the least justified, he claimed, of anti-colonial jibes.<sup>(33)</sup> Britain could supply cheaper slaves and manufactured goods, but would still restrict the vital American trade without offering a significantly better market. The Revolution, it should not be forgotten, had brought the colonists a large measure of the political liberties for which they had envied their British neighbours and to this extent strengthened the imperial bond. Even the colonist who in 1791 published at le Cap an edition of the U.S. constitution seems to have looked towards la France, notre patrie chérie with new hope and enthusiasm.<sup>(34)</sup> Perhaps Cormier, president of the Club Massiac, writing in January 1792, expressed the average colonist's wishes - internal self-government and a commercial policy agreed to by the colony, the king and the Legislative Assembly.<sup>(35)</sup> Despite their debts, their demands for self-government and their threats of bolder action, not all commentators took seriously the pretensions of what were probably a handful of extremists.<sup>(36)</sup> Debien's estimate, therefore, that prior to the summer of 1791 less than ten colonists wanted absolute independence, seems very likely.<sup>(37)</sup>

However, the threat of the May 15 decree to white supremacy produced a violent response in Saint Domingue. It was no longer a matter of blackmail, Debien thinks;<sup>(38)</sup> though one must note that much of the evidence for this intense backlash against France consists of alarmist



letters specifically written for publication in Europe.<sup>(39)</sup> Addresses to the National Assembly were likewise designed to frighten it into backing down.<sup>(40)</sup> Nonetheless, the anger and the sense of betrayal were only too real. Creoles in Paris, despairing of the colony's future, not only made extravagant scenes in public but also approached the English ambassador, who referred a 'certain gentleman' to Foreign Secretary Grenville.<sup>(41)</sup> The Club Massiac, though, appears mainly to have looked to the King and the émigré Princes to sponsor opposition to the National Assembly.<sup>(42)</sup> At Port au Prince, an assemblée générale fédérative discussed how to resist militarily any attempt to impose on the colony the loi de sang, d'anarchie et d'indignation.<sup>(43)</sup> The parish of Gros Morne declared its connection with France at an end, and some colonists expressed desires for a coalition with Jamaica, believing all slave societies to have a vested interest in thwarting such a decree.<sup>(44)</sup> Three Port au Prince whites even went to Kingston to inform the military commander that Saint Domingue was determined on resistance.<sup>(45)</sup> However, they were not acting in any official capacity and the Port au Prince assembly that probably sent them had no official standing either, as it admitted. No actual overtures were made. Genuine fear existed that concessions to the free-coloureds would pave the way towards the abolition of slavery, and even the moderates in the colonial assembly were determined to resist the decree if necessary. One member even proposed that the Union Jack be raised.<sup>(46)</sup> Even so, the early sessions of the assembly, despite such violent language, showed much conciliation towards France.<sup>(47)</sup>

Only when the holocaust started in the region of le Cap do we find the first firm evidence of separatist activity in Saint Domingue. Only when half of the northern plain had been ravaged, and an immense amount of property destroyed, when hundreds of whites and numberless blacks had been slaughtered in a matter of weeks, only then did the proximity of Jamaica, the power of Britain and the prospect of easy credit for future repairs combine to provoke a request for British intervention.

The figure most implicated is Paul Cadusch.<sup>(48)</sup> As president of the Assembly, he was responsible for refusing to ask France for help and apparently delaying an appeal to Martinique until his overtures to Jamaica produced a response.<sup>(49)</sup> He sent the same requests for troops, arms and supplies to Cuba, Santo Domingo and the United States, but Lebeugnet, the envoy sent to Governor Effingham, is alleged to have made secret proposals.<sup>(50)</sup> This, however, appears to be untrue.<sup>(51)</sup> Cadusch's colleagues, Raboteau and Bérault Saint Maurice,<sup>(52)</sup> are like-



wise accused of making clandestine overtures when sent to Jamaica to raise a loan.<sup>(53)</sup> Again, no evidence of this has been found. Until late September, Cadusch indeed stopped ships leaving for France, Martinique and elsewhere, but he had good strategic reasons for doing so, and the approval of Governor Blanchelande. The arrival of the British warships, and several victories over the rebels in the last two weeks of September, brought a degree of security that then permitted the departure of the merchantmen's crews.<sup>(54)</sup> Much has also been made of the black cockade that Cadusch and others in le Cap wore in ostentatious disrespect to la cocarde nationale. Garran-Coulon calls it an anglophile symbol, but Bryan Edwards, when he visited le Cap, thought it a sign of mourning. Moreover, the cockades most in evidence in this month of crisis were green or yellow - counter-revolutionary colours.<sup>(55)</sup> Nevertheless, when Captain Affleck, accompanied by Edwards, arrived in le Cap with supplies on September 22nd,<sup>(56)</sup> they were rapturously received, in fact with tears and outstretched arms, and numerous people assured them that a British takeover would be welcomed.<sup>(57)</sup> A week later, Cadusch sent a letter to Pitt, accompanied by a memoir, asking that England occupy Saint Domingue.<sup>(58)</sup> The two documents embody the essence of l'autonomisme créole. One is a request for self-government under British suzerainty and free trade with the United States. The other presents a justification of slavery and a theoretical defence of the white colonists' rights vis à vis both the mother country and the free coloureds. Crudely based on contract theory, it reveals a debased but coherent world picture.<sup>(59)</sup> The display of separatist feeling, then, is quite impressive. However, some points need to be noted. A distinction should be drawn, it seems, between the secret dealings of Cadusch and the public anger that was general in le Cap. The very fact that disaffection was so widespread and involved the 'principal Gentlemen of the colony, military and civil'<sup>(60)</sup> suggests that it was something rather exceptional, both broader and shallower than l'autonomisme créole. Le Cap, after all, was the city of the big merchants, until that summer one of the centres of colonial loyalism. In September 1791, suddenly finding itself besieged by thousands of vengeful slaves, it seethed with panic, rumour and bewilderment. Since the slave revolt was invariably blamed on agents of the Administration or the Amis des Noirs, alienation from France reached a peak. One can extrapolate very little of general validity from such a unique situation.



As for Cadusch's letter, it does not so much promise support for an English occupation, as suggest that the sight of 14 warships and 12,000 troops would overawe the colony into accepting one. Moreover, it was not an official appeal on behalf of the Assembly but a personal approach in the name of la volonté générale.<sup>(61)</sup> Lastly, Cadusch's behaviour at this time was to destroy his standing in the colony; by the end of the year he was in hiding, a persecuted man.<sup>(62)</sup>

This moment of crisis produced perhaps three other proposals to throw off French rule. Boyer and Marie, the envoys sent from Port au Prince, returned to Kingston on 10<sup>th</sup> September to seek aid. In confidence, Marie informed Major-General Williamson that 'nothing would make them happier than to be independent of France and under the protection of Great Britain'.<sup>(63)</sup> In response a warship was sent to Port au Prince to keep the slaves in obedience. Its arrival seems to have prompted Caradeux aîné, commandant of Port au Prince National Guard and prominent racist, to approach his alarmed mulatto opponents about uniting to establish an independent Saint Domingue.<sup>(64)</sup> We have, however, only their word for it.

Far more remarkable are the visionary proposals that Venault de Charmilly presented in London to 'un ministre qui gouverne avec tant d'éclat la nation la plus éclairée...de l'Europe'.<sup>(65)</sup> Now the French army and navy were disrupted, he claimed, England alone could avert the disaster then facing all the sugar colonies. It should either make Saint Domingue a British colony, or, to avoid alarming the European powers, simply garrison its forts while opening up its trade to all comers. Then, using it as a springboard, Pitt's England, at the height of its powers, was to liberate South America from 'cette indolente et ignorante nation', the Spaniards. Otherwise, the United States, soon to be Britain's biggest rival, would carry southwards 'le flambeau de liberté que les créoles de ces climats attendent'.

There is no real evidence for at least another year of secessionist activity in Saint Domingue. This could be attributed to the knowledge that the English had refused to intervene, and that the slave revolt had made independence impracticable; also to the de facto independence that parts of the colony enjoyed in this period. However, other stabilising factors were the 24<sup>th</sup> September law, which granted colonial control over the colour question, until cancelled by the loi du 4 avril; the dispatch of troops with the first and second Civil Commissioners, and the rising prices that colonial products fetched in France after



the revolt in the North. It is significant that the outright abolition of racial discrimination in April 1792, far from strengthening the extreme Côté Ouest party, already in decline, led to its eclipse in the Colonial Assembly, which rallied round the Governor.<sup>(66)</sup> The extremists lacked energy and direction, said Garran-Coulon,<sup>(67)</sup> and very likely supporters as well. Their attempt to adopt the title Assemblée Générale was rejected by 4/5 of the colony's parishes, while the Assembly itself, deserted by gens de bien, cannot have been really representative of colonial opinion.<sup>(68)</sup> On the other hand, British assistance in the crisis had earned the colonists' gratitude, and merchants and refugees were now busily forging new links between Jamaica and Saint Domingue - or, indeed, strengthening old ones.<sup>(69)</sup>

It was principally in Europe that secessionist activity was to be found in 1792, though it was not towards the British Government that it was directed. As in the previous year, leading members of the Club Massiac appealed to both Louis XVI and his exiled brothers to use the French Antilles as a focus for the Counter-Revolution, and a futile attempt was made in July to get Spain to render aid under the Pacte de Famille.<sup>(70)</sup> Various schemes were elaborated both to persuade the colonial governors to cease recognition of the National Assembly and to ship out to the Caribbean an army of émigrés in a foreign, probably Russian, fleet. Spain, it was hoped, would occupy and hold Saint Domingue in the Regent's name, or at least prevent the disembarkation of Sonthonax's squadron. The figures involved were chiefly absentee coloniaux. Aristocratic military men, or former royal officials like Malouet and Cormier, the Club's president, they were mostly connected with the colony by marriage, though some had been born there. Although they liaised with the deputies sent to France by the Colonial Assembly and agreed with them that the loi du 4 avril should be resisted, only one of the deputies eventually accepted their pro-Spanish plans. He was the léopardin Cougniac-Mion,<sup>(71)</sup> who in April joined the growing émigré community in London. An open letter was drawn up in his name denouncing the law on racial equality and calling on all colonists to return to Saint Domingue to resist the Civil Commissioners. London was a convenient rendezvous for agents passing between Paris, the Rhineland and Madrid. Contrary to Garran-Coulon's assumption,<sup>(72)</sup> the royalist cabals that took place there did not at this time imply Anglophile plotting. No approaches seem to have been made to British ministers.<sup>(73)</sup> In September, when the Prussian army was advancing on



Paris, Cougniac-Mion was sent out to the islands as a secret representative of the Princes. <sup>(74)</sup>

These clandestine links with Coblenz and the Tuileries raise the question of colonial royalism and the part it played in alienating Saint Domingue from Revolutionary France. Frostin argues that dynastic loyalty was a significant factor only as regards those few colonial officers, usually European-born, who once war broke out were to follow the Princes' policy of looking to Spain for assistance, while the majority of colonists, Anglophile, often creole, looked to England. <sup>(75)</sup> Several criticisms can be made of this distinction. Initially, let us note that lack of support for Spanish intervention cannot really be taken as a measure of indifference to the monarchy, given the hatred felt for the Spaniards in Saint Domingue and the greater benefits offered by a British occupation. Always the traditional enemy, the Spaniards had become especially odious to the colonists since the slave revolt began, by refusing to send aid and by apparently assisting or trading with the rebels. Their illiberal attitude towards commerce, agriculture and government, combined with a liberal attitude towards the free coloureds, and the treachery and violence they were to display after war was declared, made them feared as conquerors. <sup>(76)</sup>

Between the loose usage of royaliste, meaning anyone opposed to the Revolutionary orthodoxy of the moment, and Frostin's unnecessarily narrow category of supporters of la solution espagnole there surely existed a large body of colonists for whom the French Crown was an object of some sentiment, not a focal point in their lives, but part of their inherited conception of how things were and should be. Few British Americans had wanted a republic in 1776, even though George III had been regarded as a tyrant in a way Louis XVI never was. Moreover, among Frenchmen the monarchy was a rather more meaningful institution than it was for the English, and most colonists as far as we know came from the deeply royalist West of France.

This is not to suggest that the 'average colonist' would have made great sacrifices for the Bourbons or the monarchical system, but rather that both counted for at least something in his life and would influence his actions. Thus, the alignment of the Club Massiac's policy with that of the Crown after 1791 <sup>(77)</sup> was primarily a strategy to defend colonial interests but it doubtless also accorded with the political ideals of its members, who had always looked to the king's ministers rather than to the Assembly, who had closer relations with the émigrés than was once



realised, and some of whom were implicated in the Favras plot to free the king in January 1791.<sup>(78)</sup> In Saint Domingue, of course, local needs were all the more dominant and the king's presence less felt.<sup>(79)</sup> However, his overthrow on August 10<sup>th</sup> 1792 and execution six months later must surely have shocked many more colonists than just those gens du roi that Sonthonax felt obliged to deport in October.<sup>(80)</sup> Even in Port au Prince, one of the few places, according to Garran-Coulon, where republicanism was enthusiastically embraced, the Municipality were noticeably unhappy at the turn events were taking in Europe.<sup>(81)</sup>

When only a small proportion of Frenchmen could be called republicans and far fewer regicides,<sup>(82)</sup> many in Saint Domingue, although américains, must have regarded the abolition of the monarchy as dissolving what allegiance they owed to the French Government - or at least thought it a necessary legitimation of conspiracy with a foreign power. One says 'must have' as it is difficult to separate this from other colonial grievances against the Revolution, since any direct reaction specifically against le 10 août was stultified by the arrival of the Commissioners and National Guards shortly before it became known as a fait accompli,<sup>(83)</sup> and their ascendancy was strengthened by news of the Republican victories in Europe.<sup>(84)</sup> However, Quebec provides a useful point of reference. There the literate classes, who had initially enthused about the French Revolution, began to change their minds by 1791, and by 1793 they generally abhorred it.<sup>(85)</sup> If democratically-minded, often anti-clerical, American-born Frenchmen, untouched by the slavery and colour questions, were thus affected by the king's execution, so too, surely, would have been many colonists in Saint Domingue. It was not necessary to be ultra-royalist or to have ulterior motives to oppose a regicide government. As it was, the greffier of les Cayes continued to sign documents in the king's name until deported, against the town's will, in January 1793; the Jacmel National Guards were still carrying a royalist banner in May, while in the same month a colonist declared to the Governor that he recognised only the orders of the king.<sup>(86)</sup>

Just when this new wedge was driven between the colonists and the Revolutionary Government, war broke out with England and Spain. A European coalition massed its forces against the French Republic. Immediately, secession became both more feasible and more desirable. Towards the end of 1792, secessionist currents had been quickening in both autonomist and counter-revolutionary camps. In Jamaica, we are told, refugees from Sonthonax's rule, who had been revolutionaries in



1789-90, 'first conceived' the plan of recovering their property 'by subjecting the Colony itself to the Government of Great Britain'.<sup>(87)</sup>

In London, Malouet was deputed to negotiate on behalf of the Saint Domingue émigré community. Despite pressure from de Charmilly, 'he deplored saying anything on the subject...until he thought he saw a proper opportunity'.<sup>(88)</sup> Meanwhile, the Spaniards of Santo Domingo were approached by Hanus de Jumécourt, a leading planter of the Cul de Sac region, who proposed to declare the colony temporarily independent until the monarchy was restored.<sup>(89)</sup> On the advice of Louis XVI, the baron de Montalembert, a leading counter-revolutionary with property in Saint Domingue, set out in January to observe conditions there, sailing for Jamaica with a recommendation from the Home Secretary.<sup>(90)</sup> At the end of the month, Cougniac-Mion himself arrived in Jamaica and contacted royalist elements. He hoped to see counter-revolutionary forces, perhaps under the marquis de Bouillé, shipped out by an English or Anglo-Spanish fleet.<sup>(91)</sup>

On February 25<sup>th</sup>, some sixty planters in London, 'ne pouvant recourir à leur souverain légitime, pour les délivrer de la tyrannie qui les opprime', authorised Malouet to treat with the British Government, 'adoptant d'avance les moyens qu'il prendra'. A set of Propositions were drawn up and underwent various changes before being ratified by both parties in April.<sup>(92)</sup> The colonists agreed to transfer their allegiance to George III until the future of Saint Domingue should be decided at a general peace. In return, they would receive British protection; a ten year suspension of their debts to French commerce; access to the British market, and slightly freer trading rights with the United States than were allowed under the Ancien Regime.<sup>(93)</sup>

Frostin interprets the document as a mise sous sequestre in appearance but more of a une livraison in fact.<sup>(94)</sup> Certainly, eventual annexation by Britain is seen as a possibility, but this is not surprising on the part of émigrés who could expect only proscription and sequestration if the Republic remained undefeated. Ridding them of their dependence on, and, temporarily, of their debts to, French commerce, the Propositions also went far in satisfying the demands of the colonial extremists. But were these men extremists? Emigrés first and colonists second, they were surely trying above all to derive an income from their estates while in exile. War, it was widely and shrewdly believed, would bring an end to the slave regime, still much intact. This brooding presentiment, and the poverty of most émigrés, put them in a desperate position.<sup>(95)</sup>



Yet, Malouet, their spokesman, only agreed to approach the Government, informally, once the king had been put on trial, and war seemed inevitable.<sup>(96)</sup> He wished England to intervene at the request of the planters' English creditors, not the planters themselves. Were this impossible, however, he suggested independence or American protection for Saint Domingue - dramatic proposals, though not entirely out of keeping with the policy of the émigré Princes, which included free trade for the colonies and schemes to bring the United States into the war against France.<sup>(97)</sup> Malouet's attitudes, often a mixture of conservatism and radicalism,<sup>(98)</sup> are thus difficult to assess. Like Louis de Curt, a Guadeloupe creole and principal negotiator for the Windward Islands colonists, he had been closely connected with the Counter-Revolution. His first contact with the British Government early in December, (a time when de Curt was already seeking British intervention and British citizenship), was simply to urge Pitt's Ministry to save Louis XVI from execution.<sup>(99)</sup> Not until war was declared and the émigrés from the Windward Islands had concluded an agreement with the British Government, did he, too, make official overtures to the Ministry.

These original Propositions, however, as opposed to the later versions, were avowedly separatist and Anglophile in colouring (Appendix C (i) ). Unlike the Windward Isles Propositions, they did not stipulate return to France should the Bourbons be restored.<sup>(100)</sup> Strangely, they have been ignored by both Frostin and by R.H. Griffiths. Two points need to be made. Firstly, the original Propositions might well reflect the influence of de Charmilly and Bérault Saint Maurice more than of Malouet and the destitute aristocrats he represented. Secondly, at the time of the king's execution, with the émigré army breaking up, the royalist cause was temporarily at rock bottom. The Royalists could expect the British to capture the French West Indies but not necessarily to overthrow the Republic or restore the monarchy. In the circumstances, England, 'où l'on trouve un Roi respecté et des hommes vraiment libres', offered a respectable alternative for men whose focus of loyalty was not France but its king.<sup>(101)</sup> The Vicomte de Fontanges, Malouet took pains to be assured, was willing to do anything at this time to save Saint Domingue.<sup>(102)</sup> However, in March the situation changed. Dumouriez' retreat, the revolt in the Vendée<sup>(103)</sup> and Spain's entry into the war brought the Royalists fresh hope. Their ideological predilections could once again with some reason nuance their material



interests. This is surely what explains Malouet's increasingly distant relations with the British. By March 29<sup>th</sup>, he was explaining to Lord Grenville that while desiring to remain British the planters must act in accord with their duty to the French Monarchy.<sup>(104)</sup>

It is true Malouet initially opposed the Princes' Spanish plans, but as he explained, Spain's conduct had been si affreuse that not one colonist wanted to submit to her.<sup>(105)</sup> He even told the Government that the planters approached the British specifically to be protected against a Spanish invasion.<sup>(106)</sup> Furthermore, he insisted that if de Charmilly were to act as agent for the British in Saint Domingue, he should do so in subordination to the Princes' representatives, Coustard and Fontanges.<sup>(107)</sup> Indeed, Frostin eventually has to conclude that Malouet, unlike de Charmilly, really did regard the occupation as a mise sous sequestre.<sup>(108)</sup>

As for the other known signatories, we cannot be sure. Said to be 'largely responsible for the Propositions', was Cadusch's colleague, Bérault Saint Maurice.<sup>(109)</sup> As one of the colony's deputies in Paris, he had been informed by Malouet what was afoot and slipped across the Channel in February, narrowly escaping arrest. Like Malouet, he insisted that all Dominguan planters, in the colony or abroad, even some of the troops there, would welcome British intervention.<sup>(110)</sup> There were a few other léopardins among the signatories but most would appear men of an entirely different stamp. The great majority were sugar planters, probably absentees.<sup>(111)</sup> A large proportion, including many of the smaller planters, were officers in the colonial regiments or in elite corps like the Vivarais Regiment, Bourbon Infantry and the Carabiniers de Monsieur. Some were 'colonists' only by marriage or inheritance; a good many, one might guess, had never set foot in Saint Domingue. Comtes, vicomtes, chevaliers; the Prince de Broglie-Revel, the Comte de Noailles, the Marquis de Jaille: they do not look like extremists. They insisted that a colonial assembly should not meet until peacetime; extremists in the colony had demanded a new one immediately.<sup>(112)</sup> Above all, one must remember that in these months, without allies and opposed by almost all Europe, the French Republic seemed increasingly close to collapse. Better to capitulate than to suffer a conquest that looked inevitable. A short war followed by a Bourbon restoration would be the least likely to involve territorial losses.

In Saint Domingue, the so-called separatist and royalist factions were temporarily united against the Commissioners in all three provincial



capitals: a significant point.<sup>(113)</sup> As in Europe, many of their members, especially those forced to flee the colony, now sought or at least hoped for British intervention. The royalist faction, led by Coustard, Fontanges and de Jumécourt, sent two deputies to London who seem to have arrived shortly after the Propositions were drawn up.<sup>(114)</sup> Simultaneously, they sought Spanish protection but told the authorities in Santo Domingo that the British would be accepted only as second best.<sup>(115)</sup> In February, a refugee in Kingston, the son of a tête-chaude of 1769, wrote to de Charmilly telling him his father now realised he had been right - France would destroy Saint Domingue.<sup>(116)</sup> Opinions, therefore, were changing. News of Louis XVI's execution was received 'avec horreur généralement par tous les blancs'.<sup>(117)</sup> The French in Jamaica went into mourning. Indeed, the very hour the king was guillotined they had burnt the tricolour and national cockade as well as effigies of Marat, Paine and the Duc d'Orléans. Royalists like de Beaunay passionately desired revenge and looked to England just as did democratic extremists such as Raboteau and Borel.<sup>(118)</sup> An armed troop was raised among the expanding refugee community<sup>(119)</sup> which awaited the arrival of a British fleet.

From March onwards, reports reaching Jamaica told the same story - weariness of disorder; fear of the mulattoes and of Sonthonax, as he moved closer to the blacks; hatred of Spain, and a general willingness of 'all orders', or just 'people of property', to welcome the British as saviours.<sup>(120)</sup> In London, one Count Rici informed the Government he had 'concerted measures' with various corps commanders in the colony.<sup>(121)</sup> As to the relative strength of these two factions, it is instructive to note that Borel, stormy petrel of Saint Domingue politics, was swiftly ostracised when he fled to Jamaica where most refugees supported the Ancien Regime.<sup>(122)</sup>

Even so, by no means all opponents of the Commissioners aimed at secession. Sometimes they claimed to be trying to 'conserver à la métropole les restes de la colonie', and even accused Sonthonax of being influenced by royalistes and indépendens.<sup>(123)</sup> Perhaps a verbal smokescreen, this possibly suggests that much of what Garran-Coulon thought plotting for independence is better termed personality struggles between republicans.<sup>(124)</sup> Here one might tentatively include the conspiracies of Thomas Millet<sup>(125)</sup> and the fighting that destroyed le Cap on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1793, in which French troops and free coloureds defended Sonthonax against sailors led by Governor Galbaud. Usually depicted as



part of the colonial counter-revolution, it seems scarcely colonial or counter-revolutionary, considering that most of le Cap remained neutral and both sides considered themselves Republicans. (126)

De Charmilly arrived in Jamaica a month later. He was at first coolly received by the refugee community in Kingston but had little difficulty in having the Propositions accepted by them, or at least the 15 called to hear them read on 26<sup>th</sup> July. Thereafter, his rival, Cougniac-Mion, could find little support for co-operation with the Spaniards, who had invaded Saint Domingue after the burning of le Cap and called on the French planters to join them. (127) Frostin makes much of this; he treats the choice between the two powers not as one of opportunity but as one of profound ideological significance that demonstrates the planters' anglophilia, secessionism and lack of loyalty to the Bourbons. (128) This is questionable. Firstly, we find such prominent counter-revolutionaries as Montalembert and La Rochejacquelein, even Loppinot de Beauport, (129) who had been designated Governor of Saint Domingue by the Princes, equally ready to serve under Spain or England. (130) Secondly, despite the colonists' dislike of the Spaniards, support for la solution espagnole was more widespread than Frostin thought. (131) De Charmilly's instructions were to get the Propositions accepted by the majority of colonists, yet for over 48 hours he refused to reveal their contents. Evidently he was doubtful of their reception or feared being outbid by the Hispanophiles. Then, on 25<sup>th</sup> July an urgent plea for British aid arrived from the town of Jérémie. The situation suddenly changed. Here was an immediate chance to overturn the Civil Commissioners. The Propositions were revealed and all agreed the British should move into Jérémie. Only the parvenu Cougniac-Mion chose to be plus royaliste que les royalistes. (132) The choice between the two powers was to some extent between duty and interest, but Frostin is surely wrong to rigidly represent it as a choice for or against the French connection. While England left the eventual sovereignty of Saint Domingue an open question, Spain, despite her recognition (in Europe) of Louis XVII, was undoubtedly aiming to keep her conquests. (133) The honorable et Chrétienne et héroïque solution the Governor of Santo Domingo offered to the rebel chief Jean-François (134) actually meant Spain's reconquest of all Hispaniola. A Bourbon restoration was not mentioned; nor was it in any of the proclamations issued by the Spaniards in Santo Domingo. (135) Both Frostin and Malouet were mistaken in thinking Governor García announced recognition of Louis XVII. (136) His proclamations, in fact, call on the colonists



to become Spanish subjects.

Hence, one cannot treat royalism as being synonymous with support for Spanish intervention. Curiously, Cadusch actually claimed that the Spaniards were initially preferred to the English, irrespective of religious or dynastic considerations, because of their proximity, their large army and their influence over the rebels: '...dans le moment où le frayeur et la inquiétude ne laissent aucun accès aux projets fantastiques, je dirai même aux factions...partout où le colon voit un protecteur qui l'arrache au fer des assassins il voit un Dieu, quelque soit sa Religion, ses richesses et son commerce'. Especially, he added, since the fate of a colony was decided by treaties not self-determination. (137) Scarcely a sign of Hispanophilia, this might suggest that the colonists sought foreign intervention for reasons no more positive than fear, poverty and aversion to Republican rule.

In May, Commandant Desombages of Jérémie had told the Governor of Cuba that Saint Domingue would welcome the first armed power to appear. The planters would prefer the English, but had originally looked to Spain and would accept either or both together. Only their desperate plight made them amenable to foreign domination. The great majority of whites simply wanted security and the status quo of 1784 plus prudent concessions to the free coloureds. Only a small faction sought total independence. (138) The planters detested the local Spaniards and doubtless suspected the good faith of Madrid, but above all they wanted their properties preserved. Of course, they appreciated the benefits of British commerce, especially in wartime, when it was a matter of survival, and Revolution or not, they might have been reluctant to resist a British occupation. However, such neutralité provisoire is not proof of either long-standing Anglophilia or a desire for annexation.

Before examining the reception Saint Domingue gave to the British forces, it is necessary to appreciate the immediate context in which it took place. Between the Commissioners and the planters, le fait révolutionnaire et le fait colonial, (139) there could be no compromise. Their mutual hatred was profound. Hundreds of whites were imprisoned (140) or deported. Public office became almost a mulatto monopoly. Mail was intercepted; heavy fines and taxation were imposed, and the Commissioners were at least believed to be extremely corrupt. The outbreak of war practically ended what commercial activity still survived, which, as regards France, was anyway rendered worthless by the decline of the assignats and the law of maximum prices. Above all, the colonists had



feared throughout the Revolution that France would abolish slavery, and in 1793 Sonthonax was steadily forced into realising these fears. In May, he began forming Légions de l'Egalité from those slaves who had been armed by the whites or mulattoes. At the same time, he relaxed discipline on the plantations, allowed slaves to denounce their masters and had the 1784-86 protective laws read out every Sunday.<sup>(141)</sup> The slave trade had been abolished in February. To fight Galbaud in June, Sonthonax turned to the local rebel bands, which he had to declare free. As a consequence, Cap Français went up in flames. General Emancipation followed on 29<sup>th</sup> August. However, the slave revolt, far from abating, escalated dramatically.<sup>(142)</sup> By the autumn, the Commissioners were disarming planters and handing their weapons to their erstwhile slaves.<sup>(143)</sup>

For the colonist of average prejudices, it was the end of the world. In such circumstances, what West India colony would not have welcomed foreign intervention?<sup>(144)</sup> Looked at from another angle, when three-quarters of France was in revolt against the Paris-run Revolution, why should her colonies have behaved any differently? The British were invited into Toulon a few weeks before they landed in Saint Domingue, yet there is no need to look for anglophile autonomists there. It was surely no accident that Saint Domingue was occupied when France was at its lowest ebb. Indeed, it must be emphasised that once war with England became inevitable, it was widely believed that the Republic was doomed, particularly after Neerwinden and the Federalist revolt. More especially, the French Antilles were thought easy prey for English sea-power. The colonists, therefore, had great incentive to abandon a sinking ship and get on the winning side. Hence, Sonthonax's desperate measures. No one could foresee that the mass mobilisation called for in August 1793 by Carnot, and by Sonthonax, would keep France republican and Saint Domingue French.

The first part of Saint Domingue to capitulate to the English was the isolated, coffee-growing region of la Grand'Anse, at the tip of the southern peninsula, the sole area that had not submitted to the Commissioners. The white planters of its four parishes,<sup>(145)</sup> many of them Basques, had been self-governing for nearly two years, united under a Conseil de Sûreté. They were intensely proud of their success in keeping their slaves loyal and using them to keep down or drive out the local free coloureds.<sup>(146)</sup> However, they were now under pressure from the forces of the mulatto André Rigaud. Although they resoundingly



defeated him in mid-June, when he tried to breach their north-eastern defences at Camp Desrivaux, their unity was beginning to crack. Early in June, the habitants of the Cap Dame Marie district stopped contributing to regional funds and at the beginning of August they surrendered to the mulattoes. Rigaud's army of slaves and free coloureds then advanced to within 30 miles of Jérémie, the main town. Particularly alarmed by the destruction of le Cap, the whites had already sent an envoy to Jamaica authorised to treat on any terms. <sup>(147)</sup> He arrived on 25<sup>th</sup> July, two days after de Charmilly. Merceron and Bérault Saint Maurice were sent back as agents to get the Propositions accepted as a capitulation. This was soon done, possibly with some help from Cadusch. <sup>(148)</sup> Troops from Jamaica landed at Jérémie on 19<sup>th</sup> September amid public rejoicing, and an oath was administered to the population, binding it as long as George III should possess the colony.

The Mole Saint Nicholas, the great naval stronghold commanding the Windward Passage, capitulated three days later, again amid 21 gun salutes and cries of Vive<sup>^</sup> les Anglais! The agents of surrender this time were the commandant, Colonel Deneux, the ex-commandant, Baron de Valtière, and the naval administrator, Carles. In early July, they had decided to seek Spanish intervention but were taken by a privateer on their way to Montecristi. They offered instead, after a complicated journey, to introduce British forces into the 'Gibraltar of the Antilles'. Unsuccessfully, they tried to ensure that the British troops serve with them under the Bourbon flag. <sup>(149)</sup>

The Union Jack was next raised in the port of Saint Marc, but not until the 12<sup>th</sup> December. Like the Grand'Anse, the Artibonite parishes had united against the Commissioners under a Council (of Peace and Union), but unlike the Grand'Anse, they were dominated by free coloureds. <sup>(150)</sup> On 30<sup>th</sup> November, a meeting of the Saint Marc commune voted by une très grande majorité to send deputies to capitulate to the English, on condition that racial equality be maintained. They were to preserve until a general peace, when Saint Domingue might possibly become British, their customs and status of Frenchmen. <sup>(151)</sup> Curiously, another meeting the next day declared the inhabitants to be irrévocablement attaché à la France leur mère patrie and decided to raise the Bourbon flag and send deputies simultaneously to both the English and Spanish. <sup>(152)</sup> Verettes, Gonaives and Petite Rivière soon copied their example. <sup>(153)</sup> At the Mole, the deputies failed to get Major Grant to accept the white flag. Nonetheless, they signed the Capitulation excepting article 4.



However, it was the Spaniards who responded most quickly. Only Saint Marc was able to welcome the British envoys sent to take formal possession. This, moreover, they declined to do, when on 9<sup>th</sup> December the coloured mayor, Savary, organised a parish meeting, dominated by some 150 of the poorer mulattoes, which refused to accept British rule.<sup>(154)</sup> Its president and secretary thereupon informed the British that owing to 'the manifested desire to remain French subjects and to continue under the ancient standard of that nation' - and to the ambivalent status accorded the free-coloureds - the Capitulation had been rejected. 'No prejudice', they observed, 'exists under the Spaniards'.<sup>(155)</sup> The deadlock was broken only when Captain Affleck sailed into the harbour on the 11<sup>th</sup>. Seeing no sign of the Union Jack, he seized a ship laden with £20,000 worth of produce - for many colonists the last remnants of their fortune. Savary fled, and the next day the 'respectable inhabitants' raised the British flag.<sup>(156)</sup>

Within a week, the town of Léogane had followed suit. There the whites worked in co-operation with 500 of the 'better sort of Mulattoes'.<sup>(157)</sup> Léogane also contained some 150 refugees, apparently planters, from the south-west region,<sup>(158)</sup> who declared they would return and hoist the British flag, even without the support of troops. Saint Louis du Sud had already sent envoys to the English.<sup>(159)</sup> In fact, the whole south coast with the exception of les Cayes was expected to surrender if British forces appeared.

Among those who had capitulated at the Mole in September were the white planters of the adjacent parish of Jean-Rabel, which was commanded by the mulatto, Jean Delair.<sup>(160)</sup> On 20<sup>th</sup> December, three days before the Spaniards arrived there in force, he allowed British troops to take possession of the region.<sup>(161)</sup> Four days later the immensely wealthy quartier of Arcahaye capitulated. It was dominated by the griffe Jean-Baptiste Lapointe.<sup>(162)</sup> Only a month before, he had saved Sonthonax from a dangerous situation at Saint Marc. However, he later adhered to the Artibonite Coalition and on 19<sup>th</sup> December he approached the British commander in that town. On 24<sup>th</sup> December, he harangued a public meeting in his presence on the benefits of British as opposed to Spanish protection. The response was a unanimous, and probably well-rehearsed, 'Vive Sa Majesté Britannique!...Vive Louis XVII! Vive tous les rois de la Terre!' First to sign the Capitulation were 18 officers of the National Guard. Only two were white.<sup>(163)</sup> Just as refugees from the northern parishes had crowded into the Mole, colonists now



fled Port au Prince for the newly-occupied areas.<sup>(164)</sup> Tortuga and Mirebalais, two highly strategic positions, would also have capitulated, had there been enough troops to occupy them.<sup>(165)</sup>

(iii) Analysis. To say, as James does, that 'all propertied San Domingo rushed to welcome the British',<sup>(166)</sup> is therefore an exaggeration, though the colonists' caution is understandable in view of the feeble numbers of troops sent for their protection. In spite of this, the welcome they received was, on the whole, impressive, even sycophantic, and the English were confident that with more soldiers the whole of the South and West would capitulate.<sup>(167)</sup> At the same time, the colonists' surrender can be entirely explained in terms of their desperate situation. Destitute or unemployed, shut up in the towns or camps, facing a total shortage of everything,<sup>(168)</sup> while their plantations disintegrated and their ex-slaves plotted their destruction; blockaded by the British and cruelly robbed by their privateers if they tried to escape,<sup>(169)</sup> the colonists had little choice but to surrender.<sup>(170)</sup> France could do nothing and the English refused to send supplies before a capitulation was signed. Moreover, the hated Spaniards and their black Auxiliaries were advancing with threats of punishment<sup>(171)</sup> and it was probably they who precipitated the overtures from the south-west,<sup>(172)</sup> the Artibonite, Mirebalais and perhaps Arcahaye. According to Debien, Lapointe only surrendered Arcahaye to avoid arrest by Republican rivals.<sup>(173)</sup> The capitulation of Jean Rabel was almost accidental as Delair had already called in the Spaniards.<sup>(174)</sup> Under the English, however, both commanders might hope for the preferment they failed to find under the Republic, just as ruined planters hoped for pensions and penniless wage-earners hoped for free rations. In la Grand'Anse and Arcahaye substantial bribes had been paid.<sup>(175)</sup> 'Pitt's gold' was to flow freely in Saint Domingue.

Despite the multiple attractions of an English occupation, it was not welcomed by all. According to de Charmilly,<sup>(176)</sup> all the planters wanted to belong to the English but all non-propriétaires were their enemies and favoured Sonthonax. At Jérémie, Bérault Saint Maurice described une masse de Canaille attachée à la République. They were white and needed constant surveillance. The same situation prevailed at the Mole, he said.<sup>(177)</sup> There, Edwards claimed, the town was 'in the highest degree hostile' and that most able-bodied men left to join the Republican forces; de Charmilly did not deny it.<sup>(178)</sup> Moreover, at least 70 men of Dillon's Irish Regiment were deported for refusing



the oath of allegiance. (179) At Saint Marc, the pattern was reversed. (180) The garrison at first refused either to lay down their arms or serve anyone but the French king. But, while their officers remained adamantly Republican, most of the rank and file eventually accepted British pay. As already seen, the poorer mulattoes at Saint Marc, some planters, and perhaps a few whites, opted decisively for the Spaniards. So did the non-propriétaires of Petite-Rivière, probably also mulattoes. Though accounted 'of no consequence or Property', this 'small number of desperadoes' clearly carried considerable weight. After all, most of Saint Marc's population was coloured. But for Affleck's gunboat diplomacy, Grant thought, Saint Marc would never have hoisted the Union Jack. (181)

At Léogane, as soon as the British had brought security to the town, the inhabitants' common front began to crack, and hostile voices were raised against them. (182) At Arcahaye, Anglophiles remained a minority; most planters, like Lapointe himself, had favoured forming a fourth party opposed both to Sonthonax and to the invaders. (183) In la Grand'Anse, most of those known as garçons ou petits propriétaires were said to be bons patriotes who resented the English presence. It was a region of small planters, and Billard even claimed that most of its population would soon have surrendered to Rigaud. (184) Bérault and Merceron made cryptic references to the opposition they encountered there. (185) The pro-English faction at Bombarde apparently consisted of les chefs, which implies at least indifference among the lower classes. (186) Few merchants were prominent among those who welcomed the invaders, and those that were generally owned plantations. Planters from Jean Rabel and Bombarde moved to the Mole just as most planters of Petite Rivière came to Saint Marc.

This broadly tends to confirm James's judgement on 'propertied San Domingo' and justify Williamson's expectations of the 'people of property'. (187) The planters looked to British arms to restore what they called 'order'; to British capital to revivify their estates, and to British ships to carry their produce. (188) Petits blancs stood to lose the power they had enjoyed through revolutionary direct democracy. Merchants faced rupture with Metropolitan partners and a ten year freeze on debts owing to them.

However, it should also be apparent that such a formula does not exactly fit the facts. While the planters clearly were not always enthusiastic about a British occupation, non-propertied Saint Domingue was not always averse to one. Of those who signified their support



for foreign intervention, at Saint Marc, one-quarter, at Gonaïves, two-thirds, were technically illiterate.<sup>(189)</sup> Debien has printed a list of about 80 anglo-émigrés denounced by a Republican petit blanc for having surrendered Saint Domingue to the British.<sup>(190)</sup> Surprisingly, about one-fifth were small whites apparently without landed property. Many were exempts in the maréchaussée, who may have simply been hanging on to their jobs, but some are mulatto artisans - a group with little to gain from the British presence. When one considers that at Jérémie 'all ranks' welcomed the British troops, and that at Jacmel 'the Tradespeople' were especially said to want English intervention,<sup>(191)</sup> support for an occupation would seem to have come from a wide spectrum of the population. Indeed, the crowds that ubiquitously cheered the redcoats can hardly have consisted solely of planters. Military and civil officiers serving in the colony account for over a quarter of the names on the list. The proportion would be over a third if one included the several ex-officers and men with European commissions found among the planters. According to Debien, most of the officiers were also planters, but, judging from the personal data he provides, under one half appear to have owned plantations. Of those actually serving in the colony, only a third seem to have been planters. Overall, scarcely more than a half of those denounced are known to have owned estates, while at least four of the five bons patriotes also named were in fact coffee planters, not to mention the denunciator himself. A socio-economic explanation of pro-British behaviour is thus not entirely satisfactory.

Nor, by any stretch of the imagination is a 'racial' explanation. Frostin's assertion that the colour question was the mobile essentiel de l'appel des colons aux Anglais<sup>(192)</sup> is perhaps valid as regards la Grand'Anse but it scarcely explains either the February Propositions, originally favourable to free coloureds, or the capitulation of the other parishes, considering that nearly the whole of Saint Domingue was surrendered by the mulattoes themselves.<sup>(193)</sup> The fact that mulattoes also commanded most of the areas that stayed loyal to France merely shows how complex the situation was.

At Léogane, Arcahaye and Jean Rabel, they were almost entirely responsible for bringing in the British; at Saint Marc, partially so. In Saint Louis du Sud, it was the 'whites and richest mulattoes' who requested British intervention.<sup>(194)</sup> Free coloureds were probably also behind the unsuccessful overtures that issued from districts like



Petit Goâve, Anse à Veau and Mirebalais, while from Jacmel they deserted to the British lines. (195) Later in 1794, the British were to be welcomed into the plain of Cul de Sac by the local free blacks, and some even thought the fall of Port au Prince due to mulatto treachery. (196) As for the whites of these areas: they were among the least prejudiced in the colony. Saint Marc, Arcahaye, Léogane and Jean-Rabel were all exceptional for the degree of racial harmony they had enjoyed. They accepted British rule solely on the understanding that full equality would be preserved. Similarly, the Mole had known no racial troubles and the council formed there by the British was quick to advise against a policy of discrimination. (197) Conversely, the areas where Republican rule was strongest - Port de Paix, le Cap, Port au Prince, Les Cayes - had all been scenes of the most violent racism. (198)

The exception to this pattern is obviously the Grand'Anse. One could say, however, that there the British were called in not simply to preserve white supremacy but more to save the whites from being massacred when Rigaud broke through from the south. One might also presume that the divided state of opinion there implied some willingness to accept racial equality under the Republic. Yet, this would be to obscure the deep-seated prejudice that had galvanised les paroisses unies and enabled them to sustain two years of quasi-independence. Bérault observed that on his mission to Jérémie his well-known opposition to la Caste intermédiaire had stood him in good stead. Indeed, he imparted to the undertaking a remarkable spirit of crusading zeal:- 'Je suis à ma place et j'y resterai. Jérémie veut vaincre ou mourir, et c'est mon avis. Je veux donner sur les Mulâtres et je veux concourir à les vaincre'. (199) As Merceron remarked of this region where coloured prisoners were suffocated with sulphur, inoculated with smallpox and drowned at sea in batches, (200) 'La couleur blanche a ici toute sa dignité'. (201)

Such men saw their struggle as heroic. Like the Confederate planters of 70 years later, they were fighting for a way of life. This mentality was shared by de Charmilly and Cadusch, the principal protagonists of l'appel aux Anglais. Yet, it contrasts markedly with that of other whites important in surrendering the colony - like the three Desmarattes brothers at Léogane, or Montalembert or de Jumécourt, architects of the Concordat policy. Though one viewpoint was to prove stronger than the other, neither can be excluded from an explanation of l'appel aux Anglais.

We find a similar pattern when seeking the role of l'esprit



autonomiste, but also a more complex reality that transcends simple categorisation. Firstly, we find the same lack of continuity regarding people and place. Although the areas first to surrender to the British, la Grand'Anse and the Mole, were precisely those that had suffered from government neglect under the Ancien Regime, there is an almost complete lack of correlation between the occupied areas and those parishes which emerged as 'revolutionary' in 1790. La Grand'Anse had withdrawn its deputies from the Saint Marc Assembly and was the only area of the South not to join the anti-government Confédération du Sud.<sup>(202)</sup> Léogane and Saint Marc itself were strongholds of the Pompons blancs. The areas where the Saint Marc Assembly had found most support - Port de Paix, the upper Artibonite, Port au Prince and most of the South - were those that offered most resistance to the British, just as the social group least attached to the occupation, the petits blancs, were the most politically volatile and racist element in colonial society. At the Mole, the only civilian who refused to take the oath of allegiance, (the mayor, Genton,) had been a staunch partisan of the Côté ouest, while most of its citizens had stayed loyal to the National Assembly.<sup>(203)</sup> On the other hand, leading opponents of the Saint Marc Assembly, such as Campan and de Jumécourt, played leading roles in the colony's capitulation.

In 1793, we have seen, both Saint Marc and the Mole had declared for the Counter-Revolution before approaching the English. Like the inhabitants of the Artibonite parishes, they wished to preserve leurs titres et qualités de Français and asked that British troops serve with them under the Bourbon flag. The officers at the Mole had in fact tried to surrender to the Spanish,<sup>(204)</sup> (and in this they were said to be supported not only by the garrison but by the town and the inhabitants of Bombarde).<sup>(205)</sup> Only an accident prevented them. Jean Rabel, Gonaives and the three Artibonite parishes had all been willing to receive Spanish protection. It is true that the British were the preferred party and that the overtures to the Spanish were mainly in deference to the proximity of their forces and the wishes of the free coloureds. As already noted, however, this preference is easily explicable in terms of the colonists' very real fear of Spain,<sup>(206)</sup> and the reasonable desire to profit rather than suffer from a foreign occupation that was unavoidable.

We have already noted how such prominent counter-revolutionaries as Loppinot de Beauport, the marquis de La Rochejacquelein and the



baron de Montalembert, were ready to serve either England or Spain. Finding Jamaica unable to lend assistance, some 29 of these 'principal gentlemen' left Kingston on 30<sup>th</sup> July to join the Spanish forces, but became so disillusioned by their reception that they soon returned to fill important positions under the British occupation.<sup>(207)</sup> Frostin represents such behaviour as a betrayal of the Princes' plans but it was, in fact, in keeping with them.<sup>(208)</sup> Montalembert, de Montagnac and apparently even de Charmilly gained before September the Regent's approbation of their conduct.<sup>(209)</sup> Many colonists during the occupation maintained links with counter-revolutionary circles in Europe - not least Loppinot de Beauport who served with the English intending to assume the Governorship the Princes had bestowed on him.<sup>(210)</sup>

Need one doubt the sincerity of these men's sentiments? The English invariably referred to their allies as 'royalists', as did their enemies. Colonel Deneux impressed Major Grant as a 'Royalist officer most strongly attached to his king'.<sup>(211)</sup> De Chadirac, a creole officer who helped surrender Saint Marc, died before a Republican firing squad with a shout of Vive le roi!<sup>(212)</sup> When Montalembert later raised the Union Jack over a captured town, he supposedly remarked to the Vicomte de Bruges, 'Quel plaisir si, au lieu d'être celui-ci, nous avons hissé celui que vous et moi cherissons!'<sup>(213)</sup>

It is entwined with this thread of counter-revolutionary activity that we find the separatist strand that similarly ran through the Revolution's history and led to the British occupation. The number of léopardins involved is impressive. Apart from de Charmilly and Cadusch, Bérault and Merceron, who played active roles in the colony's surrender, we find at Jérémie in the Conseils de Sûreté and Exécutif Favaranges, Maignie, Huguon, Lacombe and Chaumette.<sup>(214)</sup> Other members of the Côté ouest faction, like the de Léaumont brothers, Jouette and Valentin de Cullion,<sup>(215)</sup> followed events from Jamaica and were soon to surface under the occupation in prominent positions. Though they did not always like or agree with one another, these men had long been working together in the vanguard of the Revolution, and had been closely connected with other leading incendiaries such as Bacon de Chevalerie and Thomas Millet. One notes, however, that these and other leading extremists like Larchevesque-Thibaud, Brulley and Caradeux ainé had nothing to do with the occupation and were often hostile to it.

L'esprit autonomiste thus provided the spearhead of the movement towards Britain but in by no means all cases did it imply a pro-British



stance. Extremists who had genuine leanings towards republicanism or democracy seem to have found la France régénérée a preferable option to George III's England. Moreover, if the Côté ouest faction played the dominant role in the calling in of the English, one may doubt that it was an essential role. Malouet was already negotiating with Grenville when Bérault Saint Maurice arrived in England. Montalembert and de Beaunay left for Jamaica six months before de Charmilly, and the Grand'Anse had already, before Bérault and Merceron's mission, offered to capitulate via the wealthy Legras.

As for the long-term intentions of these men: they are hard to judge. When la Grand'Anse offered to surrender, it made no conditions, but trusted that England would make only honourable demands. <sup>(216)</sup> Faveranges, who masterminded affairs in the region, was at first distinctly sceptical of the British proposals. <sup>(217)</sup> One recalls that de Charmilly said that most separatists wanted absolute independence not British rule. The address of thanks the Conseil de Sûreté sent to George III was sycophantic enough but studiously avoided any reference to the future. <sup>(218)</sup> On October 14<sup>th</sup> we find the British Government receiving from a M. Lacombe a petition from inhabitants of Saint Domingue asking that it take the colony au nom de Louis XVII et de la constitution de 1789. <sup>(219)</sup>

The February Propositions and the discussions that preceded the surrender of Saint Marc show that many colonists were prepared to accept becoming British subjects as a possible outcome of their actions. A petition from 80 planters of Petite Rivière suggests more definitely a desire for British annexation. <sup>(220)</sup> Dated 10<sup>th</sup> December 1793, it observed that France's neglect of both the slave trade and projects to irrigate the Artibonite plain had retarded their plans for changing over from cotton and indigo cultivation to sugar. With British capital, however, the planters could look forward to making Petite Rivière the biggest sugar-growing parish in Saint Domingue. Although the petition was the result of rather special circumstances, <sup>(221)</sup> the link between economic frustration and secessionism could not be clearer. Even so, explicit statements in favour of British annexation are rare indeed. Apart from the overtures of Cadusch and de Charmilly, <sup>(222)</sup> they come from the most unexpected quarters.

Deneux, commandant of the Mole, who had much to say about 'mon amour pour le soutien d'ordre et de la monarchie', wrote to Governor Williamson five weeks after capitulating as follows. 'Vrais français',



he said, such as he and his fellow officers, had hoped to preserve the Mole for the French Crown. They also hoped that Louis XVII would avenge his father. Nevertheless, he went on, 'l'amour de leur patrie... ne leur fera jamais perdre de vue tout ce qu'ils doivent à la nation anglaise. Ce sera une consolation pour eux, si, à la paix generale, ils changent de maitre, d'être sous les loix d'une Constitution qui fait notre admiration et notre étude'.<sup>(223)</sup> Here we have anglophile separatism not on the part of indebted creole planters but royalist gentilshommes militaires, who had first turned to Spain for assistance, who had requested to remain under the Bourbon flag and who apparently possessed not a single plantation between them.<sup>(224)</sup> Only one was a creole and the two principal protagonists had been in the colony but nine and three years respectively.

Such behaviour is extremely difficult to categorise. Yet, we find the same blend of counter-revolution and desire for British annexation in a memoir by the ultraroyalist, Mahé de Corméré, whose connections with the colony were similarly tenuous.<sup>(225)</sup> However, whereas Deneux wrote of admiration for the British Constitution, Mahé de Corméré's plans for colonial reform show no interest whatever in British institutions. Apart from the original, rather ambiguous, Propositions, (signed, one will remember, by scores of royalists,) only in the recommendation by Dubuc Saint Olympe<sup>(226)</sup> that the British law of debt be adopted do we find any desire amongst the colonists to emulate British ways. Yet, he was no extremist; in fact, he had first made this suggestion to the émigré Princes in November 1792. On this crucial subject of debt, it is worth observing that the indebted, autonomist, resident planter, Dubuc Saint Olympe, made the mildest, almost self-sacrificing, proposals, while the absentee authors of the February Propositions took a rather more self-interested line, and it was the reactionary non-planter, de Corméré who suggested that debts to French commerce could be written off sans injustice. Both memorialists favoured an authoritarian government for Saint Domingue and a return to the institutions of the Ancien Regime. Even in the writings of Cadusch, who wanted a self-governing Saint Domingue, there is little that can be called anglophile.<sup>(227)</sup> Both parties doubtless looked on the British predominantly as a source of soldiers, credit and ships. However, on the ideological plane, it was perhaps the royalists who in 1793 had the closest affinities with monarchical England.<sup>(228)</sup>

These examples suggest that Frostin's analysis has definite



limitations. They give, however, no certain idea of what the majority of colonists wanted, those who did not compose memoirs, or sign petitions. Their thoughts remain most difficult to assess. Cadusch acknowledged that by no means all the colonists in the occupied zone had wanted the British called in. (229) More specifically, Edwards stated that the English 'came on the invitation of a few obscure Frenchmen' and that the 'chief planters throughout the colony were altogether unacquainted with the English and entertain no very favourable opinion of their laws, government or manners'. When they landed, he claimed, many went into exile, while others 'remained in silent obscurity...waiting patiently... for better times... The French planters', he concluded, 'acted as any other body of men attached to their country and faithful to their allegiance would probably have acted'. (230) Written to dissuade the English from keeping Saint Domingue, Edwards' book is not entirely trustworthy, (though the manuscript was read before publication by ex- Governor Williamson). By 1800, moreover, when these words were written, Edwards was doubtless additionally concerned to help French planter friends make their peace with the French Government. On the other hand, Venault de Charmilly's reply to Edwards' criticism is extremely evasive, and he freely admitted that self-preservation, not anglo- philia, was the colonists' main motive in looking to England. An attachement was to result only from services rendered. (231)

Garran-Coulon varied through the four volumes of his Rapport in his judgement of the colonists. On balance, though, he considered the majority as basically loyal or neutral, the victims of a few factieux. (232) Similarly, the Précis Historique contains blanket condemnations of colonial society but depicts most colonists as wishing to stay French, though fearing the Revolutionary government. (233) Baron Wimpffen, one should remember, lived in the South from spring 1788 to early summer 1790 without recording any secessionist desires on the planters' part. (234) In the six months before the outbreak of war, letters sent from Saint Domingue reveal much discontent with the Commissioners but no actual aspirations for independence. (235)

It seems reasonable, therefore, to postulate a passive majority of whites whose political fate was decided by groups of activists. Thus, in la Grand'Anse in August 1793, we find that 'M. Favaranges est l'homme qui fait tout. Il a beaucoup d'ennemis'. (236) Even then, on the eve of the Occupation, the colonists were far from united



on a course of action. Sonthonax describes them as, 'divisés en cents partis différents, toujours en guerre, opprimant ou opprimés', adding 'et une partie d'entre eux servirait, peut-être, les uns, les indépendants, les autres, les royalistes, d'autres, les Espagnols ou les Anglais...', (237)

(iv) Conclusion. It would appear, therefore, that the capitulation of Saint Domingue was rather more and rather less than la manifestation ultime et aboutissement de l'autonomisme colon. (238)

Not until Revolutionary legislation threatened the colonial status quo in 1791 was there any attempt to put Saint Domingue into British hands. Not until 1793, when both the colony and the regicide French Republic seemed destined for ruin, can one speak of general support for throwing off French rule. A general desire for autonomy and certain individuals' aspirations for independence clearly played an important part in this development, far more so than Cabon, W.A. Roberts and possibly Debien have realised. However, while the 'creoleness' of l'esprit autonomiste is yet to be demonstrated (239) its anglophile orientation has certainly been overrated. Conversely, the royalist aspect of l'appel aux Anglais would seem more significant than Frostin allows, (240) and the rich diversity of individual action on the colonists' part points towards a situation rather more complex than the one he presents. Overall, the paucity of evidence for a deep-rooted separatist movement and the broad spectrum of support for British intervention both in 1791 and 1793 suggest that the appel aux Anglais is most realistically viewed as an act of self-preservation rather than long-meditated secession. (241)

It is true that in July 1794, after the fall of Port au Prince, de Charmilly managed to work up a number of petitions in the colony, some of which called for closer links with Britain, but, suspiciously, their signatories were rather few or not listed. (242) Perhaps more significant was the observation Dundas made to Williamson the previous month: 'Frenchmen of every description', he said, tend to prefer English protection to living under the French Republic, 'but, on the other hand, they generally feel a predilection for the Antient Government of France, if Monarchy is restored'. (243)



#### CHAPTER IV. THE BRITISH RESPONSE.

The British reaction to these developments in Saint Domingue was no less complex than the colonial response to British intervention. The occupation of the colony was both a defensive and an offensive act, with various economic and strategic implications. Pitt's decision to intervene, as the most recent historian of the Haitian Revolution has said, defies any simple explanation.<sup>(1)</sup> It also raises a great number of questions. Did the decline of the British West Indies, which was rapid in the 1780's, make the Government more, or less, interested in acquiring other sugar colonies? How did the loss of America and Pitt's penchant for free trade affect the issue? Did the Government intend to annexe Saint Domingue, even if the Bourbons were restored to the French throne, or merely to use it as a bargaining counter? How could Pitt reconcile a policy of aggrandisement with his efforts to abolish the slave trade, that had reached an eloquent climax only ten months before the Propositions were signed? Was intervention in Saint Domingue the best means of protecting the British West Indies from its dangerous example and the possibility of invasion? What did the planters think? If the 'pacification' of Saint Domingue was vital for the safety of the British islands, would not its restoration shatter their recently renewed prosperity and accelerate their ruin? Did the Government, therefore, consider the elimination of a rival?

Although in official communications of the British and colonists 'the Protection and Assistance so liberally granted by H.M. Government' was a common phrase, some suspected Great Britain as well as Spain of trying not to conquer Saint Domingue but to destroy it and so enhance the value of its own colonies.<sup>(2)</sup> This view has also been confidently asserted by the historian Lepkowski as well as attributed (incorrectly) to Eric Williams.<sup>(3)</sup> However, while arguing that Pitt's attempts to abolish the slave trade were mainly aimed at ruining the French West Indies, Williams like C.L.R. James depicts the occupation of Saint Domingue as an act of territorial aggrandisement, an alternative strategy for capturing the European market in tropical produce, lost to France 50 years before.<sup>(4)</sup> H.T. Manning, on the other hand, thought that the British Government in 1793 was not interested in acquiring another sugar colony and seized Saint Domingue as a means of forcing France to make peace.<sup>(5)</sup> Sir James Barskett, writing in 1818, assumed that, while the



Government's 'avowed' purpose was to take possession of Saint Domingue, its 'real' intention was the protection of the British West Indies from the spirit of revolution.<sup>(6)</sup> Yet, it was precisely defensive and humanitarian aims that Dundas stressed in his public pronouncements. It was not 'a war for riches', he said in 1796 but 'a war for security'. If Saint Domingue were not occupied, Jamaica would have been worth nothing.<sup>(7)</sup> Whether he thought this in 1793, however, is another matter. The changing situation in the Caribbean is one reason for these diverse interpretations of Government motives. Another is the difference of opinion within the Cabinet. It is also surprisingly difficult to find direct evidence of Pitt's intentions in the early part of the war. While claiming to know 'Pitt's sentiments exactly' or 'the real reason' for his actions, James and Williams, for example, rely almost entirely on a single memoir not written by him but to him. Lastly, this was a multi-faceted situation and the responses it elicited are not easily categorised. According to R.H. Griffiths, 'mystery [still] shrouds the whole of [Britain's] Saint Domingue policy'.<sup>(8)</sup> There thus remains considerable scope for clarifying the points at issue.

(i) The Revolution. Though the English had tried to conquer Hispaniola in Cromwell's time, no attempt was ever made in the wars of the next century to capture what had become la perle des Antilles. The smaller colonies in the Caribbean were often occupied in wartime but even they were usually regarded as bargaining counters whose temporary possession weakened the enemy and brought freedom from attack. Very few West India islands definitively changed hands in the 18th century. The larger and longer-established a colony, the more its transfer would upset the balance of power. Unlike the Neutral Islands that became British in 1763, settled colonies were not attractive propositions for annexation.<sup>(9)</sup> In Great Britain, furthermore, the West India planters were an influential force opposed to the acquisition of new colonies whose produce would compete with their own on the domestic market. In 1763 they proved sufficiently powerful to ensure that Guadeloupe was restored to France, though mercantile and refining interests campaigned for its retention.

Thereafter, however, their political influence gradually waned along with their prosperity, sapped by soil exhaustion and increasing



taxation, and their privileged position was slowly eroded.<sup>(10)</sup> After the breach with America, some commentators began to regard the imperial compact between Britain and her colonies as a hindrance to the profitable workings of free trade - a view Pitt had considerable sympathy with. The majority still considered the West Indies the 'hub of the Empire' but British horizons were broadening and the sugar islands' monopoly of the domestic market came to seem increasingly unreasonable. In 1787, the import of French West Indian cotton and dyestuffs was permitted via a system of free ports; partly to meet the needs of the Manchester mill-owners, partly to provide new markets for British manufacturers and merchants. The inefficiency of British West India sugar production relative to that of the French islands was highlighted by the Privy Council and parliamentary enquiries into the slave trade which began in 1788 and which revealed that French sugar was about 30% cheaper than British. The enormous output of Saint Domingue seems to have made a great impression on British ministers; its trade figures for the years 1787-88 frequently crop up amongst their papers. Lord Hawkesbury, the minister with responsibility for foreign trade, was himself a West India planter but under his and Pitt's direction the Government was now turning its ear to other 'interests' - shipowners, sugar refiners, manufacturers and also the consumer.<sup>(11)</sup> In 1789 it was decided to allow the import of sugar from British India and two years later the production of sugar in Sierra Leone was permitted. When the price of colonial produce skyrocketed after the slave revolt in Saint Domingue, bounties on the re-export of sugar were withdrawn and for the first time foreign sugar and coffee were admitted on to the British market.<sup>(12)</sup> Hence, when Saint Domingue was first offered to the British Government towards the end of 1791,<sup>(13)</sup> its British West Indian rivals had already ceased to be a dominant force in British politics and a new imperial policy was developing, less monopolistic, with an emphasis on trade and which was already drawing Britain and the French West Indies closer together.

Even so, despite many assertions to the contrary, there is no evidence to suggest the Government intended in any way to intervene in Saint Domingue until the situation in Europe made war between England and France almost inevitable. Like the emancipation of the slaves, British intervention was widely anticipated long before it in fact became likely. As early as December 1789, we find colonists assuming that the visit of a British warship to a Dominguan port was an attempt



to stir up discord, even a prelude to conquest.<sup>(14)</sup> As the Revolution moved further to the left in 1791, colonial politicians, seeking to scare the National Assembly and the free coloureds, several times publicly referred to British intervention as probable or imminent.<sup>(15)</sup> Such expectations were often genuine. The Spaniards of Santo Domingo actually believed Governor Effingham of Jamaica to have offered the colonists 18 warships with troops to help them resist the May 15th law; and the naval assistance he sent to le Cap and Port au Prince after the slave revolt broke out was universally interpreted as a devious manoeuvre.<sup>(16)</sup> The truth, however, was somewhat different. Prior to the slave insurrection, Governor Effingham paid little attention to the revolution in Saint Domingue, while Admiral Affleck specifically avoided communicating with the colony. They were principally concerned by the threat of war with Spain (over the Nootka Sound dispute) and, ironically, kept watch on Saint Domingue chiefly because France was still Spain's ally.<sup>(17)</sup> Ships and guns were sent to the colony in September only in response to numerous and desperate requests. Several of the vessels were anyway on their way back to England. Bryan Edwards, who accompanied them, was certainly not a Government agent, though the colonists convinced themselves that he was.

Some public servants nevertheless clearly did wish to profit from the situation in Saint Domingue. Major-General Williamson, it was later said, was an early enthusiast for British involvement, prompted by his 'humanity' and the 'anticipated great political and commercial consequences that must result to Great Britain, and security to the Island of Jamaica'. All that can be said for certain, however, is that he forwarded to Dundas without comment brief accounts of his conversations, with the Port au Prince revolutionaries.<sup>(18)</sup> Lord Gower, British Ambassador in Paris, was also in touch with secessionist elements, even as early as May 1791. He seems to have thought the occasion ripe for taking revenge on France for having aided Britain's American colonies to secede. However, on 31st August he was curtly informed by Lord Grenville, the Foreign Secretary, that such retaliation was out of the question. 'We are fully persuaded', wrote Grenville, 'that the islands in the West Indies are not worth to us one year of that invaluable tranquillity which we are now enjoying'.<sup>(19)</sup> Another figure palpably excited by the disaffection displayed by the Dominguan colonists at this time was Gilbert Francklyn, a wealthy absentee planter and friend



of Lord Hawkesbury. Possessing contacts in Paris, he relayed to the minister news arriving from Saint Domingue and, when Venault de Charmilly came to London in November seeking British assistance,<sup>(20)</sup> he introduced the two men. Hawkesbury, a ponderous man in his mid-sixties, received the articulate, animated Frenchman with caution and reserve. He wrote to Paris to get information on him and the reply was not encouraging. Francklyn himself thought the memoir he presented was written 'with the Vivacity of Imagination which may be expected from a French Creole in the present position of affairs'.<sup>(21)</sup> De Charmilly received two interviews with Pitt but was told there was nothing Britain could do.

With her armed forces run down to a low level, the country was enjoying a period of peaceful prosperity which no minister would wish to jeopardise. Pitt was immersed in projects of financial reform.<sup>(22)</sup> France, moreover, was sending troops to Saint Domingue and no-one could predict how events would turn out. Nevertheless, de Charmilly's overtures, arriving shortly after those of Cadusch, brought by the British frigates from le Cap, seem to have been of considerable interest to the ministry. Hawkesbury mused on the great gains British commerce would make, if the whites of Saint Domingue made themselves independent or sought a foreign protectorate. Even if the blacks were to win, he thought, Britain would still be the main beneficiary of the Revolution, although in that case her own colonies would be endangered. The gains would not only be commercial. The traditional enemy would be hit hard. Her manufactures, merchant marine and navy would suffer and her balance of trade would be massively deranged. Saint Domingue's future, therefore, was very important to Great Britain. For the time being, however, the Government's only option was to be prepared to profit from any contingency, 'so far as Considerations of Interest combined with a due sense of Honour may hereafter suggest'. At least, this was his initial response. From de Charmilly, he learned that about one-seventh of Saint Domingue's sugar exports were currently being smuggled out of the colony on foreign ships. Growing more convinced that France, without any effort on Britain's part was bound to lose some part of its West India possessions, he urged that foreign sugar be allowed into British Caribbean ports. It should cross the Atlantic in British ships, be refined in Great Britain and then be re-exported. By a few simple regulations, of which the French could not complain, Britain could reduce prices at home and recapture her former dominance of the European sugar trade.<sup>(23)</sup> A bill amending the



Navigation Laws was consequently passed in the spring of 1792.

Encouraging the French to break their own laws of trade, this was as far as the ministry was prepared to go, it seems, in interfering in Saint Domingue.

During these months, Francklyn remained in close contact with the French planters who came and went between London and the continent. As already seen, he kept Lord Hawkesbury informed of their movements and may have introduced him to La Rochejacquelein in the summer.<sup>(24)</sup> When Cougniac-Mion drew up in London his incendiary open letter to the colonists of Saint Domingue on July 21st, Garran-Coulon assumed that the British Government was behind it.<sup>(25)</sup> This is extremely unlikely. (The émigrés all looked to Spain at this period.) Even so, it is hard to believe that Hawkesbury, at least, did not have prior knowledge of the letter. There seems, nonetheless, no justification for C.L.R. James's assertion that the British 'busied themselves with schemes and plans of conquest'.<sup>(26)</sup>

So much for the opportunities created by the revolution. As for the dangers, it is not easy to gauge how seriously the Government at first took the spectre of a race war in the Caribbean. As the gory drama in the Plaine du Nord became the talk of the London coffee houses, the Assembly of Jamaica and the West India Committee clamoured for more troops. Yet, to their chagrin, Dundas replied that in the interests of economy the colonial garrisons were actually going to be reduced. Any troops over and above their peacetime quotas would have to be paid and fed by the colonists themselves.<sup>(27)</sup> However, this did not exactly imply indifference, or complacency. After 1783 the island garrisons had remained at wartime strength and they had been further reinforced during the international crises over Holland and Nootka Sound. The number of troops in the West Indies was thus at a record level. So, too, of course was the number of slaves. Governor Williamson's reports from Jamaica were nonetheless on the whole reassuring.<sup>(28)</sup> Above all, the Government was on safe ground for once demanding cash from a colonial assembly. It knew the Jamaicans would pay up to protect their crops, now greatly inflated in value, thanks to the rebel blacks of Saint Domingue. Even so, it does seem the Government saw the situation primarily from a European angle. France was weakened by the slave revolt. Britain and her empire were consequently the more secure. In his Budget speech of February 1792, Pitt looked forward to 15 years



of unbroken peace. Two months later, the campaign for the abolition of the slave trade reached a climax and, despite the anarchy then spreading throughout Saint Domingue and dire warnings from the Jamaican planters, the House of Commons voted to abolish the trade within four years.

Pitt and Grenville had long supported the measure but Hawkesbury opposed it. Dundas was not enthusiastic but in the event it was he who introduced the motion for gradual abolition, perhaps disingenuously. Many must have known the bill would not pass the House of Lords. Dundas was probably most interested in bringing to a swift conclusion a debate profoundly unsettling for the British West Indies. Pitt, however, seems to have sincerely thought he could carry the measure.<sup>(29)</sup> It is interesting to note how the foreign sugar bill would have complemented Abolition, by compensating for the loss of trade that would result, and possibly for any loss of production. It thus helped to underwrite this essay in idealism, reluctant and perhaps bogus though it was, D.B. Davis suggests, on the part of many M.P.s.<sup>(30)</sup> Eric Williams' scepticism takes a different form. He claims that Pitt's Abolitionism was not idealistic but was specifically aimed at destroying France's dominance of the sugar trade. Having failed to persuade the French to abolish their own trade in slaves, Williams argues, Pitt still hoped, by ending the re-export of slaves from the British colonies, to hamstring the economy of the French West Indies.<sup>(31)</sup> This seems implausible, if only because it overrates the French planters' dependence on the British slave trade and because it does not allow for the French and others filling whatever gap would have been left by British withdrawal.<sup>(32)</sup>

While Dundas's bill was delayed in the House of Lords, it lost much of its support both in and out of Parliament. By the end of the year, the changing political climate had made it a dead horse.<sup>(33)</sup> Radicalism, damagingly linked to Abolitionism, spread rapidly in Britain; the French Monarchy was overthrown; the slave revolution in Saint Domingue remained unquelled. Suddenly, war with France became likely. Henceforth, Dundas opposed all efforts to abolish the slave trade and Pitt, though he continued to speak for the cause in Parliament, grew lukewarm in its support. The occupation of Saint Domingue, Williams argues, logically meant the end of Pitt's interest in Abolition and proved the materialist nature of his motivation.<sup>(34)</sup> This does not, of course, necessarily follow. Pitt could indeed 'have had Saint Domingue and Abolition as well'.



The two might actually have complemented each other, both compensating amply for the decline in British production and ensuring that fewer Africans were enslaved. More particularly, Williams quotes from Wilberforce's diary in a misleading way. When in 1792 the Abolitionist wrote that 'Pitt threw out against slave motion on St. Domingo account', he was clearly referring to the dangerous results Abolition might have and not to any plans of conquest. (35)

(ii) The War. However, in November this situation was transformed. The new French Republic repelled its invaders and revealed expansionist tendencies that threatened vital British interests in the Netherlands. Pitt's hopes for continued peace slowly vanished. As war became steadily more likely, steps were taken to protect the British West Indies and a cautious dialogue was opened between the Government and certain émigré planters among the royalists now fleeing to England in great numbers. Yet, throughout December, Pitt was still hoping to avoid hostilities and, when France declared war on February 1st, Britain's military preparations had scarcely begun and no war policy had been formulated. (36) As late as April 3rd, the Duke of Richmond, Master-General of the Ordnance, complained to Pitt that the Government had yet to decide what course of action it was to pursue. (37) Basically, the Government had three options. It could send forces to join with the Austrians in Flanders hoping to march on Paris; it could use its fleet to raid the French coast, perhaps in combination with foreign troops or insurgent French royalists, or it could seize France's colonies. In the event, it attempted all three.

It is not certain just when direct contact began between the British ministers and the growing French planter community in London. Towards the end of November, the baron de Montalembert put forward a scheme via Gilbert Francklyn similar to the one proposed to Spain in the summer. Britain would forbid France to send any more troops to Saint Domingue and would enforce the ban with a naval squadron paid for by the colonists. It would also transport to the West Indies 2,000 planters then serving with the Princes who together with loyal slaves would defeat both the Republican forces and the black rebels. If granted a free passage to Jamaica, Montalembert himself would prepare the ground. (38) By this time, Malouet, the most prestigious figure among the planters, had arrived in London and had been empowered to negotiate with the Government



by and on behalf of his fellow colonists. He had probably already met Lord Grenville, (having befriended his brother in Paris), but as yet he refused to become involved.<sup>(39)</sup> It was therefore the Guadeloupe creole, Louis de Curt, who opened negotiations with the Government. On December 5th, after already meeting Lord Chatham, First Lord of the Admiralty, he had what was apparently his second interview with Lord Hawkesbury. He hoped, if war broke out, that the Windward Isles would be declared either independent or sujettes de la Grande Bretagne, and in the meantime he intended to advise their inhabitants to resist any Republican forces sent to occupy them. Hawkesbury, for his part, would make no promises. He admitted there was a 'great probability' of war but said the 'moment had not yet arrived'. Everything depended on France's conduct towards Holland.<sup>(40)</sup> Meanwhile, strict neutrality was to be observed.

On December 8th, the Home Secretary, Dundas, warned the Governors in the West Indies there was a possibility of war and that the Republicans might attempt to raise the slaves.<sup>(41)</sup> The latter warning had come from Malouet and de Charmilly, who otherwise still kept in the background. At the end of the month, two regiments were ordered to the Caribbean from Gibraltar and Canada and in early February two more would be sent. De Curt met Hawkesbury again on December 18th, this time with the exciting news that the Windwards were in rebellion against the Republic. He wished to sign a treaty arranging for a British occupation. Hawkesbury suggested to Pitt, (who already possessed a number of papers by de Curt), that he be examined by the Cabinet. Nothing could be ventured, however, while hope of peace still existed. Although tension mounted towards the end of the month, when it was realised that the Republic was going to attack the Windwards, the Government still refused, to the colonists' great frustration, either to send arms or to promise it would intervene once war was declared.<sup>(42)</sup> Finally, on January 1st, Malouet overcame his scruples and in private conversation with (it appears) Lord Grenville declared that British intervention was urgently needed in Saint Domingue - that or independence. Grenville replied that war was 'highly probable' and that 'our attention would naturally on every account be turned to the West Indies'. Ideas of independence, he thought 'chimerical and dangerous'. He would therefore see about placing the French islands under British sovereignty, he said, without engaging individuals in



schemes that would endanger them if war were not declared.<sup>(43)</sup>

The case for occupying Saint Domingue had been stated in a memoir sent to Pitt a few days before by one James Chalmers, Lieutenant-Colonel of the late Maryland Loyalists.<sup>(44)</sup> Britain, he said, should commence hostilities by invading Normandy, but in the autumn (after the end of the 'hurricane' and 'sickly' seasons), or sooner if necessary, it should attack the French West Indies. The Convention, he thought, was going to free the slaves of the French islands so as to punish their 'aristocratic' masters; Jamaica, he observed, could easily be reached by canoe. Stressing the 'vast vast importance of French St. Domingo', Chalmers noted firstly the strategic importance of the Mole Saint Nicholas, 'the true key of the New World', as Raynal had called it. Possession of the colony, he went on, would give Britain a monopoly of the European trade in sugar, indigo, cotton and coffee. Its produce and the market it offered for British manufactures would boost industry throughout the empire and so halt emigration from the British Isles to America. One might add that British manufacturers at this time were searching for new sources of good quality raw cotton<sup>(45)</sup> and that the high-grade cotton of Saint Domingue had already attracted their attention.<sup>(46)</sup> Moreover, by monopolising the supply of colonial produce to the markets of northern Europe, Britain would be able to buy naval stores at the lowest prices, while the French, deprived of trade goods, would have to pay for theirs with specie. The merchants of Bordeaux and Nantes, Amsterdam and Hamburg, would be supplanted by those of London and Liverpool, Bristol and Glasgow. The commerce of France would be ruined and, with this enormous accession to her carrying trade, Britain's merchant marine would grow ever stronger.<sup>(47)</sup> Colonies were necessary in the West Indies, Chalmers argued, taking issue with Lord Shelburne, as under conditions of free trade the islands' commerce would be dominated by the Americans. Saint Domingue should be retained after the war, he said, but if other powers objected, the north coast at least ought to be kept, so as to render Jamaica secure. 'Gloomy and perilous as the present state of Europe is,' the lieutenant-colonel summed up, 'yet from these evils the greatest and most lasting benefits may arise'.

In mid-January, Montalembert and de Beaunay took ship for Jamaica with a letter of introduction to Governor Williamson. Dundas informed him that war was likely and that Britain intended to offer 'protection'



to the French West Indies and the 'advantage of becoming British subjects ...to preserve by that means as well those Islands as the present British colonies...from the contagion...which must lead to their utter subversion'. The French colonists, it was expected, would co-operate in these views. Nevertheless, until war was actually declared, Williamson was strictly enjoined to do nothing that would prejudice Britain's neutral status.<sup>(48)</sup>

This remained Pitt's resolve for another month. Hawkesbury had urged him on January 3rd that a decision should soon be made about the Windwards, where a golden opportunity was in the process of being lost.<sup>(49)</sup> De Curt continued throughout January to push for immediate assistance and was now joined by two deputies sent from the Windwards. They, too, stressed the urgency of the situation. However, more politically scrupulous than de Curt, they were reluctant to become British subjects while there was a possibility of the Bourbons regaining the French throne. Hawkesbury replied that their islands could not benefit from the British laws of trade unless placed under British sovereignty. He added that military and naval protection would cost money. It was therefore agreed that the Windward Isles, if occupied, might swear allegiance to the British Crown but be returned to France and pay the costs of occupation, if the Bourbons were restored. The deputies would not assent to Hawkesbury's proposal that Saint Domingue be retained unless the French King made peace on terms à la satisfaction de la Grande Bretagne. On 31st January, the day before the Republic declared war, they presented their Propositions. During the next two weeks, they grew increasingly impatient waiting for a reply. Although Hawkesbury was extremely busy, it seems Pitt was the cause of the delay. Procrastination, as Wilberforce observed, was his great vice.<sup>(50)</sup> Overworked ministers angry at being badgered for interviews, agitated colonists frustrated with ministerial dilatoriness and hauteur: the pattern was set for future relations between the Government and colonial émigrés. Tired of this 'unpleasant situation', Hawkesbury asked Pitt on 14th February for a final decision. As a result, the Propositions were formally received on the 15th and four days later were approved by the King.

It was widely expected that Britain would attack the French West Indies. Public opinion in England favoured a maritime war, one that would re-live the days of Chatham and exact vengeance for the loss of America.<sup>(51)</sup> As soon as the declaration of war was known in the United



States, we find a Charleston newspaper proclaiming, '...it is almost self evident that the first offensive operations of Great Britain will necessarily be against the French West Indies, not only that they are the most vulnerable and disaffected, but also as they promise more national advantages than conquests which must be purchased at much greater expenditure of blood and treasure'.<sup>(52)</sup> Such predictions, however, did not allow for the fact that Britain was then almost without an army and that the French navy actually had a numerical superiority in the Caribbean.<sup>(53)</sup> If France was to be beaten, moreover, it would have to be defeated in Europe. Pitt had been drawn into a war he did not want and now had to start improvising.

On February 28th, orders were sent to the British commander at Barbados to occupy, not Martinique and Guadeloupe, but the smallest, least-protected of the Windwards, Sainte-Lucie and Marie-Galante, and then only if the inhabitants proved favourable. As the number of British troops in the Caribbean was not sufficient to mount a proper offensive, and Britain's naval presence there was extremely weak, the attack was not to be pressed if strong resistance was encountered. Orders had already gone out on the 10th for the capture of Tobago, which had formerly been British and was almost undefended.<sup>(54)</sup> This, then, was the character of Britain's opening moves in the Caribbean. It was to be a cut-price campaign, aimed at collecting windfalls; its chances of success were not rated highly, but it was undoubtedly worth trying.<sup>(55)</sup> So it was. Had the policy been implemented a little more vigorously, it might have succeeded. Yet, it was impossible to synchronise actions on both sides of the Atlantic. Early in January, while de Curt was negotiating in London, the rebellious planters of Martinique, having learned of Republican successes in Europe, had surrendered to a French naval force. They revolted again, however, following the outbreak of war, in anticipation of British help, but not till June 15th, after a great deal of dithering, did a small force of Anglo-colonials disembark in the island, by which time Royalist resistance had almost been stamped out.<sup>(56)</sup> The venture was abandoned amid mutual recriminations. As in the Windwards, British intervention in Saint Domingue was also to prove, in the final analysis, too half-hearted and belated.

Following slowly in the wake of the Windward Isles planters, those of Saint Domingue drew up their Propositions on February 25th and they were presented by Malouet three days later. The fate of America, de



Charmilly exclaimed, was in Britain's hands.<sup>(57)</sup> Curiously, it was to be over a month before they were ratified by the Government and more than three months before it was finally decided to act on them. The causes of this delay are difficult to determine. As already seen, the Propositions underwent a number of changes before their content was finally settled, but it is not clear that the changes made had anything to do with the delay, nor can one say exactly when the different drafts were drawn up.<sup>(58)</sup> In the course of March, it seems that Malouet may have regretted the overtly Anglophile document he initially presented. He was evidently relieved when, in early April, he and Grenville agreed on a joint statement which stressed the planters' desperate circumstances and their past loyalty to Louis XVI.<sup>(59)</sup> However, there is no evidence that Malouet sought to change the Propositions and, far from delaying the Government, he repeatedly pressed for the dispatch of forces.

Certain changes made by the British deserve note. Firstly, there were struck out from the original document the words en sequestre and provisoirement, which suggested British rule would necessarily be temporary. To the same end, the future sovereignty of Saint Domingue was to be decided not only by Britain and France but also by les puissances alliées. This would give Britain additional leverage when peace was negotiated. The grant of 'English' institutions was also refused, as they would prevent the Government making any alterations in the colony's constitution at a later date; it had already had enough problems with the Assemblies of Grenada and Dominica. Parliament's right to make such changes was explicitly stated. The statement signed on April 5th announced that the King had accepted the Propositions and would send troops to Saint Domingue as soon as possible. That same day, de Charmilly was on the point of setting out to get the Propositions accepted in the colony, when suddenly the Government decided to delay his departure. No explanation was given. For over a month, Dundas refused to see Malouet and ignored his letters.<sup>(60)</sup>

Changing military calculations might account for this behaviour. It is possible that, until then, the Government was thinking, not of just using the troops in Jamaica and émigré recruits before mounting a major expedition in the autumn, but of withdrawing its forces from Flanders at the first opportunity and sending them out forthwith to Saint Domingue. As it was still in Republican hands, it may have been thought that, unlike the Windwards, it could not be attempted by local



troops alone.<sup>(61)</sup> Hence, the realisation reached in the first half of April that the troops could not be withdrawn from Flanders<sup>(62)</sup> might have scotched the Government's plans for the West Indies. This, however, is pure conjecture and it does not accord well with the evidence of Richmond's letters cited above (p.75). Pitt indeed hoped to withdraw the Guards from Flanders but was then clearly intending to use them off the French coast.<sup>(63)</sup> Dundas, therefore, may have decided he needed more information on Saint Domingue before becoming involved, and that, as serious operations in the West Indies were being left until the autumn, he had time to procure it.

There is no doubt that the policy Britain should adopt towards the free coloureds occasioned much debate. Various proposals were put forward until it was decided simply to extend to the colony the race laws of the British islands. The Government, for its part, desired to win over this increasingly powerful, indeed dominant, sector of Dominguan society but it also feared the effect that the recognition of racial equality might have on the mulattoes of the British colonies, as well as on the whites of Saint Domingue. The planters themselves were divided on the subject, and attitudes were probably changing as news arrived that the moderate mulattoes in both Saint Domingue and Martinique had abandoned their Royalist allies for the Republicans.<sup>(64)</sup> On May 15th, Dundas received an urgent call from Bryan Edwards concerning 'a question of greater magnitude than the Slave Trade'. He apparently meant the free coloured question, for the mulattoes of Jamaica had lately been showing signs of discontent. He probably argued, therefore, that it would be dangerous if Britain granted civil equality to the Dominguan free coloureds. With a view to framing its Saint Domingue policy, the Government at this time was enquiring among the merchants and planters in London as to the exact status of mulattoes in the British and French colonies. Two memoirs on the subject, one by Edwards, were sent to Governor Williamson as soon as the decision to intervene was taken. The terms of the Propositions could be altered, Dundas told him, but not if it would upset the British planters.<sup>(65)</sup>

Whatever was the cause of delay, Dundas was doubtless encouraged by the favourable reports he received from Williamson during the spring concerning the situation in Saint Domingue. On June 4th, de Charmilly was finally authorised to set out for Jamaica with the Propositions. A misunderstanding must have taken place, for he left believing that



forces were already on their way to the colony. Dundas, however, informed Williamson he should undertake 'such measures that will lead to an amiable surrender' and that he could choose whether or not to employ his own small forces. If serious resistance were anticipated, he should wait till the autumn, as an expedition would be sent to the Leewards and Jamaica 'as shall be necessary'.<sup>(66)</sup> A few days before, Dundas had told Grenville that expeditions would be sent to Mauritius and the West Indies in September. He and Pitt had discussed the matter generally on several occasions and he was now intermittently working on the details, distracted by his many other responsibilities.<sup>(67)</sup>

It was only in July, however, that the Cabinet approved the plan for a West India expedition. Hawkesbury, of course, strongly favoured an aggressive colonial policy, but the Admiralty was loath to increase its work-load in the Caribbean and apparently preferred a defensive West Indian strategy. The Duke of Richmond, for his part, continued to push for an expedition to the coast of Brittany. Dundas, however, argued with enthusiasm that such schemes should not be allowed to divert resources from operations against the French colonies. The Flanders campaign, he considered vital to British interests, as it ensured the co-operation of Austria, but the restoration of order in France, he observed, was not a British war aim and was anyway not likely to be accomplished by an expedition to Brittany. Apart from in Flanders, therefore, Britain's forces would be best deployed in occupying enemy colonies, so as to make secure her own, to weaken France and to enlarge the British Empire. The West Indies was 'the first point to make perfectly certain'.<sup>(68)</sup> Pitt apparently agreed.

The position of Grenville, an austere, aloof man, is less clear. Different scholars have stated both that he was inclined to 'non-intervention on the Continent' and also that he objected to colonial ventures, favouring instead a direct attack on France.<sup>(69)</sup> However, it does not appear that in 1793 he was opposed to a West Indian offensive - far from it. As Foreign Secretary, though, he was concerned about the reaction of Spain, with whom he was trying to form an alliance and who, it was rightly suspected, was also interested in annexing Saint Domingue. 'Nice questions', were involved, 'very serious questions', he stressed. Could he broach the subject in Madrid, he asked, while both the outcome and Spain's intentions were in doubt? Or would it be better 'to stave off all explanations and to make the best of our own game?'<sup>(70)</sup> This,



in the event, is what happened. Numerous historians have assumed, as did such contemporaries as Malouet, that Britain and Spain agreed to partition Saint Domingue, but no such agreement was ever reached and Spain's resentment of British policy, in fact, was later to be a major factor in causing her to abandon the First Coalition.

Throughout August, British prospects looked bright. Civil war spread through France; the allies in Flanders made slow but steady progress, and Dundas prepared to dispatch to the Caribbean 10,000 men under Sir Charles Grey. However, the Government's resolve to concentrate on the West Indies did not last long. Towards the middle of September, news arrived both of an allied retreat in Flanders and of the surrender of Toulon to a British squadron. Eight regiments from Grey's expedition were rushed to Ostend and Pitt began contemplating intervention in the South of France. Toulon's surrender, he thought, was the most important blow yet struck towards the ending of the war. The King warned him about having 'too many objects to attend to' and suggested the West Indies expedition would be best diverted to the Low Countries.<sup>(71)</sup> He and Dundas, nevertheless, were determined the expedition should not be delayed, but in mid-October the Republicans gained another major victory in Flanders and Grey himself had to dash across to Ostend to assess the danger. Meanwhile, the Royalist rebels in Brittany broke through to the Channel coast. These new opportunities and dangers in Europe made Caribbean operations seem increasingly irrelevant to the defeat of France.

If diverted by 'the pursuit of conquests', argued Lord Auckland, the former William Eden and most influential of British ambassadors, 'we risk the fate of the whole war and of the existing race of mankind'. He would regret, therefore, the dispatch of troops to the West Indies but, it must be noted, 'not on account of the mortality to which they are exposed: such mortality may be justified as the inevitable result of an inevitable war; and we are to place in the opposite scale the immense importance of St. Domingo, Guadeloupe and Martinique, or of any one of them'. Even so, he considered the West Indian expedition unnecessary, since only by defeating the Republicans in Europe could France be forced to make such 'sacrifices as may be thought necessary for our future safety'.<sup>(72)</sup> As Windham and the Whigs said, Dundas was hunting sheep before he had killed the dog. As for the King, he thought it 'quite impossible' to send troops to both Toulon and the



Caribbean and therefore wanted the expedition - already held up by winds and commissariat problems - to be delayed six months to see how the Mediterranean fared. The Duke of Richmond, predictably, renewed his demand for intervention in Brittany.<sup>(73)</sup> Grenville, however, said it would be a sign of weakness to abandon the expedition and Hawkesbury argued forcefully that all the troops in Britain could have no effect in Brittany, while it would be exhausting to try and defend Toulon. Moreover, the campaign season in northern Europe was nearly over; that in the Caribbean was just beginning. Dundas, nevertheless, compromised. Troops at Gibraltar, destined for the West Indies, were sent to Toulon, and 4,000 of Grey's soldiers were withdrawn and diverted to the Breton coast. 'You are abandoning objects truly British', Hawkesbury told him, 'in favour of [others more difficult and less important]'.<sup>(74)</sup> As a result, when the West Indies expedition finally sailed on November 25th, it carried little more than 6,000 troops, not its original complement of over 10,000.

This, then, was not exactly the 'reckless', single-minded pursuit of Caribbean spoils depicted by C.L.R. James.<sup>(75)</sup> Furthermore, these preparations, far from proving 'what San Domingo meant in those days', had practically nothing to do with the colony. Grey had been instructed first to conquer Martinique, Guadeloupe and Sainte-Lucie, and then, if possible, detach forces for Saint Domingue.<sup>(76)</sup> So little, it seems, had Dundas expected de Charmilly's mission to bear fruit that as late as October 2nd he was ordering Williamson to send troops to Barbados!<sup>(77)</sup> This neglect of Saint Domingue is surprising. The failure at Martinique in June may have convinced the ministers that no French colonists could be relied on and that the Saint Domingue mission, therefore, had also come to nothing. Perhaps the Windwards were then preferred as the initial target for an expedition because of their upwind position, i.e. for logistic reasons. Perhaps they were thought to be militarily easier options, or perhaps more valuable than Saint Domingue, having suffered less destruction. Undoubtedly, the harbour of Fort Royal was considered an important objective. However, once the eight battalions had been withdrawn from Grey's forces, Dundas gave up hope of taking Martinique and expected Grey to occupy only the smaller Windwards.<sup>(78)</sup> By this time, moreover, (November 11th), he knew that an expedition was being sent to Jérémie and that the slaves of Saint Domingue had been emancipated. Yet, only when the news of Whitelocke's



success arrived - and the surrender of the Mole created quite a stir - was Grey given the option of attacking Saint Domingue first. It was then mid-December and Grey was in mid-Atlantic. Two regiments already embarked at Cork were also ordered immediately to Jamaica, but they proved unable to leave port.<sup>(79)</sup> Far from being obsessed with Saint Domingue, Dundas had evidently not taken seriously enough his commitment to its planters. The Brittany and Toulon expeditions had already failed. The Flanders campaign had achieved nothing. It remained to be seen if Dundas's opportunism was to be entirely undone by this excess of opportunity.

Sir John Fortescue, historian of the British Army, sharply criticised Pitt's ministry, (as did most of the Opposition in Parliament and, more reservedly, the King), both for frittering away its resources and giving priority to the West Indies in its strategy.<sup>(80)</sup> Pitt's biographer, J. Holland Rose, however, retorted that the ministry did not in fact go out of its way to attack the French West Indies and that 'British action was in reality defensive'.<sup>(81)</sup> Three points, therefore, are at issue:- the foolishness or otherwise of Pitt's West India strategy; the motivation that lay behind it, and its place in overall British war policy. One of the difficulties in delineating the role of the West Indies in Government strategy results from the instability of the military situation on the continent. Originally, it would seem, the ministers did not want to send troops to the Low Countries. Although forced to in February by the French invasion of Holland, they still intended to withdraw them once Austrian reinforcements arrived.<sup>(82)</sup> On the other hand, there appears to have been no question either of immediately dispatching troops to the Caribbean. Coastal operations were apparently the Government's first preference. With the French on the offensive, and a peacetime army of only 18,000 men, no soldiers could be spared for the West Indies until new regiments had been raised. Even though France was forced on to the defensive in March, it was anyway wiser to wait until the 'sickly' and 'hurricane' seasons ended in September before an expedition was sent,<sup>(83)</sup> by which time the war could have been over. By mid-April, Pitt, Grenville and even the colonially-minded Dundas had decided that a permanent military presence was essential in Flanders, despite its hindrance to other projects, its unpopularity with public opinion and opposition within the Cabinet from the Duke of Richmond, who wanted to see concentration on attacking the French ports.<sup>(84)</sup> The defence of



Holland was Britain's casus belli and its security remained Britain's major war aim. Although from the very outset the West Indies were in the forefront of Government planning, it should be apparent that they never really took precedence over the European theatre of war.

One may, therefore, dispute Fortescue's description of the West Indian campaigns as 'the most essential feature' of Pitt's military strategy. At the same time, however, Holland-Rose's estimate of them as 'in reality defensive' is equally biased and his claim that 'the French attacked first'<sup>(85)</sup> is patently wrong. He was principally referring to the first dispatch of naval forces on March 24th. These were indeed rushed out to the Caribbean in response to the sailing of a French squadron from Brest,<sup>(86)</sup> (itself intended to protect Saint Domingue from the British). As seen above, however, a West Indian offensive was already being planned in Whitehall and, with what means were available, was being put into effect. Undeniably, defensive and aggressive thinking are not easy to separate in this context, but quite plainly the Saint Domingue Propositions envisaged the colony's possible annexation. Addressing Parliament on April 25th, Pitt declared that the ministry's aim was to obtain 'indemnity for the past and security for the future'.<sup>(87)</sup> This could have meant the acquisition of Dunkirk but most obviously implied were the French West Indies. 'Success in that quarter', Dundas told Richmond in July, 'I consider of infinite moment both in humbling the power of France and with the view of enlarging our national wealth and security'.<sup>(88)</sup> Grenville's papers, too, show that in June and July the Government was looking to the West Indies for a war indemnity, and clearly had Saint Domingue in mind.<sup>(89)</sup>

A note of qualification needs to be entered here, for it is generally forgotten that Britain's West India strategy centred not on Saint Domingue but on the Windward Islands. As the Propositions of Martinique and Guadeloupe stipulated restitution to France should the Bourbons regain the throne, it follows that Britain's opening moves in the Caribbean could not have been directed with any certitude towards territorial aggrandisement. Nevertheless, the Government specifically avoided any commitment to the exiled Bourbons and encouraged Spain to do likewise, and once the initial attack on Martinique failed in June the clause regarding restitution was dropped from the Propositions. When Sir Charles Grey eventually set sail in November, he was instructed that the reduction of some of the French islands would not only render



secure and enhance the value of the British West Indies but would also provide 'a just indemnification' of Britain's war costs.<sup>(90)</sup>

This is not to say that Dundas was lying, when in later years he insisted it was 'a war for security' not 'a war for riches'. The defensive element, always present in Government thinking, became ever more important during the course of the war, especially once Emancipation became part of Republican policy. At the same time, hopes of profitable gains faded. In 1793, occupying enemy colonies for defensive reasons meant primarily reducing the possibility of a conventional naval attack. By 1794, however, it seemed much more a matter of preventing the French from freeing all their slaves and turning them against the British islands. Since such a threat would still exist were peace concluded with the Republic, annexation itself assumed a defensive aspect. In April 1794, Pitt informed the Society of West India Planters and Merchants that he intended to take and 'at any price' to retain after the war all the French West Indies, so as to prevent the spread of Republican 'anarchy' in the Caribbean.<sup>(91)</sup> In December, he used as an argument for continuing the war the fact that peace would entail the surrender of the French colonies to a 'government of anarchy, the horrors of which are even more dreadful than those of slavery'.<sup>(92)</sup> Such reasoning, however, did not play a significant role in ministerial thinking at the outset of the war. Otherwise, the Government would have concentrated, not on the relatively undisturbed Windward Isles, but on strife-torn Saint Domingue.

Similarly, considerations of economic warfare probably became more important as it became clear that the war would be a long one. At its outbreak, however, when French trade was already dislocated, it could not seriously be maintained that an aggressive West India strategy was designed mainly to weaken France's war effort. In April 1794, in fact, Dundas had to acknowledge that campaigns in Europe were more likely to bring about the Republic's downfall.<sup>(93)</sup> But was this a matter that Britain could much influence?

Any justification of the Government's West India policy can only be 'counter-factual' and hence speculative. It seems reasonable, however, to suppose that Grey's 7,000 troops could not have made much difference to the war in Flanders, where the Duke of York already commanded over 34,000 men and the allies numbered 110,000. It is also questionable if they would have had much impact in the South of



France, where, one notes, the Austrians did not think it worthwhile to intervene.<sup>(94)</sup> Less certainly, one might further agree with Hawkesbury that they would have accomplished little in la Vendée, particularly after the levée en masse. War policy, therefore, was a matter of means rather than ends, of choosing where British resources could be deployed to their greatest effect. Without doubt, the ministry's West Indian projects helped to ruin its ventures in Brittany and Toulon. It remains to be considered, however, if the demands of European strategy did not have an even more deleterious effect on the war in the Caribbean.

(iii) Jamaica and Saint Domingue. It should be clear from the foregoing that British policy towards Saint Domingue, albeit half-hearted, was essentially aggressive and not inspired by fear for Jamaica's safety. That was largely a later development. Of the four regiments ordered to the Caribbean between December 1792 and February 1793, none was sent to Jamaica. The Government was not indifferent to the colony's security, but had already, before war was declared, taken what it thought adequate measures for its defence. Even before the slave revolt in Saint Domingue, Jamaica's garrison had been bolstered because of tense relations with Spain, and its crumbling fortifications were being repaired. Then, in response to the colonists' fears of the worsening situation across the Windward Passage, and their agreement to pay for extra troops, another three regiments and a cavalry corps were moved to the island in the course of 1792. When war was declared, there were 3,000 soldiers in Jamaica. In five years, its garrison had almost doubled.<sup>(95)</sup>

The matter is worth stressing, for the failure of Jamaica's slaves to follow the example of the 'Mingo nigra' they sang songs about is not easy to explain, especially in view of their rebellious past. Slave society in Jamaica, it is true, had become more creolized and therefore more stable, than in rapidly-growing Saint Domingue. However, historians have not hitherto appreciated that at this time Jamaica also experienced an unprecedentedly great influx of Africans, difficult to assimilate, even difficult to feed, which substantially changed the character of its society. In the decade following 1788, the process of creolization was interrupted by a wave of panic importing, sparked off by the campaign to abolish the slave trade. Demand for slaves was further increased by the revolution in Saint Domingue, which led to an expansion of the Jamaican



economy and also reduced the re-export trade. While retained slave imports averaged 5,662 p.a. in 1784-87, they rose to 10,596 p.a. in 1789-91 and throughout the 1790's they averaged close to 12,000 p.a. In 1787, 5,703 slaves were imported; in 1793, 25,960.<sup>(96)</sup> It was doubtless important, therefore, and perhaps not accidental, that most of the new arrivals were Ibo and 'Congo', reputedly tractable peoples, many of them women and children. Imports of the more rebellious Gold Coast and Slave Coast negroes declined sharply in this period.<sup>(97)</sup>

In Jamaica, of course, white society had not been shattered by the French Revolution as it had in Saint Domingue. Nevertheless, it was undermined vis à vis the slaves by the Abolitionist campaign in England, which was universally discussed in the colony, to many Jamaicans' alarm. Moreover, as in the French islands, it seems, Abolitionist tracts were communicated to the slaves by free coloureds. Early in 1791, a revolt flared up in the island of Dominica; British planters warned of a 'new Temper and Ideas' among their slaves.<sup>(98)</sup> There was no sign of rebellion in Jamaica, Williamson reported in July, but he would not like to predict, he said, what would happen if Parliament passed an Abolition bill.<sup>(99)</sup> Hence, white Jamaica was fortunate that when the Plaine du Nord went up in flames in August it possessed a garrison of 2,000 soldiers. In Saint Domingue, the same number of troops faced twice as many slaves in a colony almost three times as large.

The garish images of rebellion that filtered through from Cap Français in the autumn of 1791 must have seemed to the Jamaican planters like an enactment of their very worst nightmares - white captives hung from trees with hooks through their chins; men sawn in half; children impaled; women raped on the corpses of their husbands and fathers; hundreds of plantations ablaze. For the first time in nine years, the militia was called out. With ramshackle pomp, it drilled, paraded and patrolled throughout the winter and autumn. As it became clear the revolt could not quickly be put down, committees of security were established in every parish to examine evidence of sedition - one thinks of Revolutionary France and America - and the Assembly called for more troops, particularly cavalry. The purchase of gunpowder was made more difficult. Isolated cannon lying around the island were collected up. In the ports, new arrivals, at least in theory, were strictly vetted, and Spanish vagrants and French free



coloureds already in the colony were deported, if they could not find referees. On December 10th, martial law was declared for the duration of the Christmas holidays.<sup>(100)</sup>

As a second line of defence, the slave laws received some minor ameliorations, following up the reforms of 1788. Grenville, when Home Secretary, had already urged that the slaves' lot be improved, and Dundas, his successor, could not resist pointing out that propaganda was by no means the most obvious explanation of the revolt in Saint Domingue.<sup>(101)</sup> As soon as the Assembly met in October, we find Effingham suggesting with both tact and discretion that something might be done for those 'who do not wilfully reject the happiness you offer them'. The Council concurred, no less discreetly, and the Assembly replied with magnanimity it would continue to make 'more secure and easy' the life of 'the most defenceless part of the community'.<sup>(102)</sup> However, it was not till March 1792, when tension had considerably lessened, one notes, that the necessary amendments were made.

Another sensitive area in imperial relations that was spotlighted by the crisis was the question of the payment for troops. In Britain, where the rising price of sugar made the British planters increasingly unpopular, the Jamaican demand for additional forces was attacked in the press.<sup>(103)</sup> The Government's refusal to pay for reinforcing the garrison, along with its decision to restrict sugar re-exports and permit foreign competition, was bitterly resented by West Indians. Both the Society of Merchants and Planters in London and the Assembly in Jamaica insisted that they were entitled to protection free of charge like other British subjects.<sup>(104)</sup> The Assembly at first tried to have the troops and avoid pledging payment. The Governor refused. Then, under pressure from taxpayers for retrenchment, it decided to take only a corps of dragoons. In May, however, having heard that the whites of Saint Marc had been murdered in their beds, it agreed to take three regiments and pay for them if forced to.<sup>(105)</sup>

Not only between colony and metropole was friction increased by the Saint Domingue crisis, but also within Jamaican society itself. As at le Cap, those with no stake in the plantation system showed little enthusiasm for defending it. Poor whites complained they could not afford uniforms and arms to serve in the militia. When a rumour circulated that the Assembly was going to introduce corporal punishment into the militia, the Kingston company rioted.<sup>(106)</sup> The Assembly became considerably more unpopular when it increased taxation to pay for extra



troops. In several parishes, perhaps the majority, smallholders met to decry its 'extravagance' and petitioned for its dissolution.<sup>(107)</sup> They had less property to protect and less money to spend than the sugar planters of the legislature, and may have lived in upland areas where cavalry were of little use.

The reaction of the slaves is more difficult to assess. While individual planters were known to cover up or lie about plots that involved their own slaves, it was of general concern to the plantocracy to present a picture of peace and internal security to its metropolitan creditors, on whom it relied so much. The Island Agent in London was instructed by the Assembly not to allow any expression of danger to get into the British newspapers. On the other hand, many of the alarming stories that circulated were found by the committees of security to be exaggerated or baseless.<sup>(108)</sup> One thing is certain. As soon as news from Saint Domingue reached Jamaica, it spread immediately among the slave population. As early as 18th September, Williamson was writing;

'Many slaves here are very inquisitive and intelligent, and are immediately informed of every kind of news that arrives. I do not hear of their having shewn any signs of revolt, though they have composed songs of the negroes having made a rebellion at Hispaniola with their usual chorus to it; and I have not a doubt but there are numbers who are ripe for any mischief and whenever any insurrection begins it will be...on the North side of the island'.<sup>(109)</sup>

By early November, Williamson thought perhaps the slaves were now tending to be 'insolent' but felt sure all was well. In Clarendon parish, 'head negroes' had been overheard talking of destroying the whites and dividing up their land. 'Negroes in the French country', they said, 'were men', and they hoped the Jamaican slaves, too, would rebel. Interestingly, they were arrested but then discharged, as it was thought best not to make a fuss. Clearly this was talking rather than plotting. In Westmoreland, it was said, 3,000 blacks, provided with alcohol, gathered to celebrate Wilberforce's birthday, but were peaceably persuaded to disperse.<sup>(110)</sup>

It was in the course of November that alarm began to spread among the whites. The slaves were now, someone wrote from Kingston, 'so different a people from what they were...I am convinced the Ideas of Liberty have sunk so deep in the Minds of all Negroes, that whenever



the greatest precautions are not taken they will rise'. The fate of Saint Domingue, he thought, would probably decide their conduct.<sup>(111)</sup> Much significance was attached to the fact that the wealthier, more industrious slaves, those who took greatest care of their gardens, suddenly neglected them. More specifically alarming, blacksmiths were said to have made cutlasses in the dinner break, and on the Fairfield plantation lead shot was cast in the forge, when the whites were on militia duty. Elsewhere, hidden cartridges were found. Large quantities of powder, it seems, were purchased by black or Spanish pedlars. Several whites were warned by slaves that a rebellion was planned. Various slaves reported hearing talk about weapons and rebellion, often among the Coromantees. One 'daring and desperate spirit', a Coromantee ten years in Jamaica, 'acute' and 'sensible', confessed that a revolt was planned for Christmas but that if prevented it would take place after crop time, when the ships had left. He had intended to join in, he said, because they were his people. He was astonished, however, to see the Maroons join the whites when the militia was mustered.<sup>(112)</sup>

At least one band of runaways, nonetheless, decided at this time to begin attacking the whites. Led by Brutus, an escapee from the work house, it was 18 strong and had been living in symbiosis with the slaves of the Brampton Brian estate in Trelawny, trading with them, attending their dances and possessing wives on the plantation. The slaves on the estate, moreover, now threatened to join Brutus if their master did not return and replace their cruel overseer. However, before there was any violence, Brutus was captured by the militia in January.<sup>(113)</sup>

There would seem small doubt that Jamaica came far closer to a slave revolt in 1791 than anyone has previously realised. Yet, nothing happened. It must be said there is little evidence of panic amongst the whites. Some scoffed at talk of rebellion. In Trelawny, the planters suspended their committee of security, (foolishly, thought the committee in Saint James). Williamson always remained sanguine, at least in his correspondence, confident that the measures taken would cure any thought of revolt. This, it seems, is what happened. The Christmas holiday was the crucial test, since the slaves, as the Governor put it, 'may be said to be at full liberty and many of them the whole time in a state of intoxication'.<sup>(114)</sup> It was precisely then, however, that the militia turned out, over 8,000 strong with 1,000 cavalry.



Together with the garrison, and the Maroons, and slaves willing to give evidence of conspiracies, they surely made the potential rebels think twice. Their moment passed. Another regiment arrived in February and three more in the autumn. Having survived into the New Year, white Jamaica heaved a sigh of relief. In January 1792, Williamson was writing with satisfaction that the slaves were peaceful and wondering why the whites were so busy.<sup>(115)</sup> Although the situation in Saint Domingue was to worsen, serious doubts were no longer entertained as to the safety of Jamaica. The success of the Abolition bill in April caused no more than some swaggering on the part of the blacks in Kingston. A growing influx of slaves from Saint Domingue, brought in mainly by refugees, certainly disturbed 'people who remembered the years 1760 and 1765' but, speaking no English, they had no communication with the Jamaican slaves. Some, in fact, did speak English but this proved of no significance.

Terrifying or simply disturbing for the whites of Jamaica, the revolution in Saint Domingue was in any case the subject of mixed feelings. With regard to the anti-slavery lobby in England, it essentially strengthened the plantocracy, which was able to argue both that the 'wild and enthusiastic doctrines' of the Abolitionists led to revolution and that slavery in Jamaica was a beneficent institution. The revolt, therefore, and its failure to spread to Jamaica gave cause for some self-congratulation, which is evinced in the Addresses of the Assembly.<sup>(116)</sup> Rather more tangibly, the destruction of its rival meant high prices for Jamaican produce and overnight its ailing economy became once more prosperous. The disruption of French trade had already, in fact, brought beneficial results, for at the beginning of the year merchants all over Europe had placed large orders for British sugar, shrewdly anticipating misfortune in the French islands. Governor Effingham had then remarked that 'as a man' he lamented the situation in Saint Domingue, but 'as an Englishman' he rejoiced.<sup>(117)</sup>

How did the Jamaicans now react to the Dominguan planters' appeals for aid? Not surprisingly, Effingham refused to part with any troops. The quantity of guns and ammunition he sent, some writers have thought deliberately meagre but this seems unjustified. The Governor did what he could. Like Admiral Affleck, who commanded the ships he sent to le Cap and Port au Prince, he seems to have considered the French planters' predicament 'a Common cause and very alarming to us their neighbours'.<sup>(118)</sup>



The Assembly apparently agreed. 'Sympathising most feelingly with [its] unfortunate neighbours', it thanked the Governor for sending arms. Although commercially they had gained a 'temporary advantage', the planters complained that, 'the tenure both of our properties and lives is precarious while our slaves have such a precedent of the triumph of savage anarchy'.<sup>(119)</sup>

Some, nevertheless, sympathised more feelingly than others. Effingham suggested, in private, that the Assembly ought to give financial assistance to the Dominguan, as the House of Commons had done to the victims of the Lisbon earthquake.<sup>(120)</sup> A committee chaired by Bryan Edwards recommended that a loan of £100,000 be granted to the colonial assembly at le Cap out of public funds. This, however, was decisively rejected. So, too, was a subsequent proposal, by 18 votes to 9, to lend £10,000. The chances of repayment were slim. However, in February the Assembly voted 20 to 5 to allow £10,000 worth of supplies to be exchanged for bills drawn by the Intendant of Saint Domingue on the French Treasury and made payable in London. Even though the transaction made good business sense,<sup>(121)</sup> it aroused considerable opposition both at the grass roots and from the Governor's Council. At the parish meetings mentioned above, smallholders protested that their taxes were being 'wantonly' increased for the benefit of foreigners. Jamaica's coffee planters were the main beneficiaries of Saint Domingue's collapse but there is little to suggest that they were behind this movement, which was probably less machiavellian and xenophobic than simply anti-government. Edwards denounced its protagonists as 'characters... having neither property nor reputation to lose', trying to act as a Fourth Estate, 'never so happy as in times of public confusion'. The voice of the plantocracy, he spoke of 'sound policy', 'true humanity' and 'our sister colony'. The whole Assembly, he said, believed that Jamaica's fate was bound up with that of Saint Domingue. Even if the bills proved worthless, it would be £10,000 well spent.

The Council, however, influenced by Williamson, now become Governor, disallowed the measure, as it 'deeply implicated national with colonial policy', was not justified by 'State expediency' and lay outside the scope of the Assembly's powers. This created uproar among the Assemblymen, always sensitive on such issues. Unanimously, they declared the Council's intervention 'officious, indecent, assuming and irregular, derogatory to the honour and injurious to the privileges of this House'. Somewhat



unfairly, they attributed it to 'that odious and secret exaltation at the misfortune of a colony whose disastrous situation may [yet] be our own'.<sup>(122)</sup> Williamson prorogued the Assembly but it would not back down and, as the Council had acted unconstitutionally, he finally had to give way. Ironically, the Dominguan then decided that they did not need a loan.

When the Assembly met for the new session in October 1792, it was able to congratulate itself on the peaceful and prosperous state of the island. Within a month, however, it again had cause for alarm. A number of Kingston free coloureds petitioned that certain of their legal disabilities be removed. Occurring just when the mulattoes were beginning to dominate affairs in Saint Domingue, the movement had a sinister appearance. George Hibbert, the merchant, called the petition a 'germ of evil'. Its demands, however, were mild and its protagonists, elders of the Methodist church, had requested Assemblyman Henry Shirley<sup>(123)</sup> to put forward their case. He refused. Leading white Jamaicans seem to have agreed that the mulattoes' complaints were just and needed redress but that any concessions at that moment might encourage them to try and exact full political equality by leading the slaves to revolt. The richest of the free coloureds, they were pleased to note, opposed the petition. The episode had no sequel but left the whites the more uneasy about developments in Saint Domingue.<sup>(124)</sup>

The slave revolution, as we have seen, evoked from the Jamaican planters a show of class solidarity with their commercial rivals in Saint Domingue, which cut across the political divide and somewhat increased class tensions in white Jamaica. The two colonies also grew closer together in other ways in this period. Refugees from Saint Domingue began to arrive in Kingston in September 1791. A great deal of money was also transferred there. By April 1792, after a sudden influx from the West Province, there were as many French in the capital as British.<sup>(125)</sup> Most returned during the next 12 months, but the onset of war brought an even greater flood - refugees, P.O.W.'s, envoys from Europe and hundreds of luckless individuals who tried to flee to the U.S. but were captured by Jamaican privateers. Plantation society was hospitable. Some of the French found jobs; a great many were supported by individual acts of charity by a public subscription. Henry Shirley entertained numerous Dominguan



of all political persuasions, just as de Charmilly in London was introduced to the Society of Merchants and Planters. As a result, many new friendships were formed. (126)

Commercial links between the two colonies also grew stronger, as the French trade laws were increasingly ignored during the Revolution. Jamaican merchants had long supplied southern Saint Domingue with slaves and manufactured goods; according to some, they were responsible for its development. (127) Dominguan cotton, mainly from the Artibonite, was much sought after and since 1787 could be legally imported into Jamaica. In September 1792, 200,000 lbs. were sold in one day. (128) Among the main figures involved in the intercolonial trade was Alexandre Lindo, a Jewish merchant with partnerships in Kingston and London. Active in the slave trade, particularly the slave re-export trade, and a friend of de Charmilly, he was accustomed to discounting French commercial paper and had supplied ammunition and food to the Assembly of the West. (129) Equally prominent, was Alexander Donaldson, who held the contract to supply provisions to the island garrison and also traded with Cuba. He and fellow Scot Alexander Forbes were members of a British company actually established in Port au Prince, which was concerned largely with cotton. Its principal partner, James Grant Forbes, was imprisoned there in November 1793. In Kingston, Alexander Forbes was closely connected with the refugee community and, along with Shirley, helped set up and administer the public fund for its support. (130)

With the outbreak of war, Jamaica had again to face the question of direct aid to Saint Domingue, although this time the implications were more heavy than in 1791. Any attempt to restore order might now lead to the incorporation of Saint Domingue into the British Empire, and as a direct competitor the French colony would ruin Jamaica. In addition, the removal of troops would increase the island's vulnerability to attack at a time when French P.O.W.'s were crowding into the capital. The pontoons were overflowing and in May there was a partially successful break-out from Bath prison. Republican prisoners on parole in Kingston donned swords and cockades and proved disturbingly fond of singing Ça Ira. (131) Furthermore, though the slaves remained quiet, imports from Africa continued to rise. In the 12 months before July, more than 23,000 were imported. In Clarendon parish, there were over twice as many new Africans as in any previous year. As a result of this great influx of whites and blacks, the early summer brought an acute shortage



of foodstuffs, and when the maize crop failed, famine and possible revolt were feared. (132)

At the same time, however, defensive arguments for pre-emptive intervention were stronger than ever. Williamson reported in April that rumours of a general emancipation in Saint Domingue made it very much in the Jamaican planters' interest to do all they could to halt the revolution. (133) In June, we find Henry Shirley and other wealthy colonists providing and fitting out a ship to carry a group of refugees to join the Spanish forces then invading Saint Domingue. They wanted to see order restored as soon as possible - before, perhaps, Britain could get involved. Whatever their motives, Governor Williamson sent along a naval escort, and he, awaiting instructions from Whitehall, was eager to see Britain intervene. Many West Indians clearly regarded helping the Domingans as helping themselves. One of the subscribers to the refugees' relief fund signed himself 'An enemy to Anarchy'. (134) The pernicious 'doctrine of Equality' must be stamped out, wrote a Scots merchant from Dominica, and 'the brave and generous French royalists' saved. (135) Having lived in Guadeloupe, however, before the Revolution, he went on to plead for 'the lives and properties of the British subjects' in the French colonies. For merchants in the intercolonial trade, defence was not the only issue. British connections with the Windward Islands were doubtless more extensive than with Saint Domingue but the Jamaican merchants certainly had good reason for wanting peace restored among their French neighbours. The slave revolt had ruined the slave re-export trade, not only because the Domingans stopped buying slaves but also because the Spaniards, instead of coming to Kingston, could now purchase them 'dog cheap' from the French. (136) Saint Domingue continued to buy dry goods from Jamaica but otherwise its planters insisted on dollars in return for their cotton. Since the Spaniards ceased trading in Jamaica, dollars became extremely scarce. Moreover, once war was declared, all trade with Saint Domingue was disrupted by the Royal Navy, and merchants like Lindo and Donaldson found their cargoes seized even if carried by neutral vessels. (137) On the other hand, if stability returned to the colony, Jamaica's merchants could expect to drive a thriving trade restocking and refurbishing its plantations.

Another interest group happy to see Britain move into Saint Domingue, were the civilian officials. Often merchants themselves, it was they



who would staff the Customs and administration of an occupied colony. The Island Secretary and Agent-General, George Atkinson, was to decline the post of Agent-General for the Saint Domingue expedition, as he thought Martinique would be a richer plum. Nonetheless, he left hot-foot for London and offered his services in financing the occupation.<sup>(138)</sup> More generally, any Jamaicans who wanted to remove from their midst the rapidly-growing body of refugees, becoming both a financial burden and a health hazard, may also have favoured intervention in Saint Domingue.

When de Charmilly arrived on July 21st, therefore, Williamson faced a difficult problem - refugees clamouring for intervention, Jamaicans distinctly ambivalent; the chance of an imperial coup de main of gigantic importance but scant means to carry it out. His troops lacked ammunition and provisions and possessed neither tents nor trench-tools. Even worse, there were only two frigates on the Jamaica Station. At Saint Domingue, there were four and a ship of the line. Williamson proposed an expedition but the Station Commodore vetoed the idea as unsafe. De Charmilly was furious and felt he had been misled.<sup>(139)</sup> The contemporary picture of Britain as a maritime colossus whose fleets and armies would storm through the Caribbean<sup>(140)</sup> was ironically unrealistic. Only more ironic was the unseaworthiness of the French man of war that the Commodore feared and which scarcely dared leave port in case it met a British ship. Similarly, the Spaniards in Santo Domingo, whose supposedly huge land forces caused great alarm to the British and Republicans, were paralysed by fear of overextending themselves.<sup>(141)</sup> Only because the French squadron dispersed in the course of July and August, did the Saint Domingue expedition become possible.

At the same time, pressure for intervention mounted. After the burning of le Cap, Sonthonax moved swiftly towards freeing all Saint Domingue's slaves. He had 'diabolical' designs on Jamaica, it seemed. The spectre of black revolt, allied to a hostile European power with its resources of guns and ships, now achieved a new dimension. Dominguan privateers, furthermore, began attacking Jamaican shipping. A force of 500/600 troops was put together and on September 9th they set sail for Jérémie. Many prominent Jamaicans were unhappy to see them go. The Assembly approved but was uneasy about the strength of the garrison. Within one or two months, however, having reflected, as Williamson said, that it probably meant the salvation of Jamaica, the planters were



'perfectly content'.<sup>(142)</sup> Reconciled, he meant, to one horn of their dilemma rather than the other. The colony's future and that of Saint Domingue seemed to hang in the balance. 'It was', as James has remarked, 'a crucial moment in world history'.<sup>(143)</sup>



CHAPTER V. THE IMPACT OF BRITISH INTERVENTION: WAR AND POLITICS IN THE FIRST YEAR OF OCCUPATION.

(i) Saint Domingue in 1793. According to Sir John Fortescue, the decision to intervene in the French West Indies was a rash one. British forces, he said, would have to fight not only the French but also the climate and 'the entire negro population, which the Revolution had summoned to its aid'.<sup>(1)</sup> In his dislike of all things West Indian,<sup>(2)</sup> however, Fortescue failed to appreciate either the immense value of Saint Domingue or its extreme vulnerability at this time. Few governments could have resisted the temptation presented to Pitt and Dundas in February 1793.

The high mortality of European troops in the West Indies was not unknown to the British ministers,<sup>(3)</sup> but as their initial plans centred on the use of French colonists and of soldiers already stationed in the Caribbean, and as they were not intending to send out forces from Europe till the end of the sickly season, the issue was not immediately relevant. There is also reason to believe that later British losses in the colony were not entirely foreseeable. Moreover, the stakes were high, and in a less sensitive age of low life expectancy, when government was not responsible to the masses from whom troops were drawn, statesmen were less likely to quibble at the cost of a successful campaign.<sup>(4)</sup>

Hopes for success, indeed, were not without foundation. Fortescue was quite wrong to claim the Republicans could muster in mid-1793 6,000 regular troops, and 14,000 white militia as well as 5,000 'desperate ruffians' of all colours. He had misread Bryan Edwards' calculations, which were themselves erroneous. Saint Domingue's white militia scarcely ever totalled half the amount stated and, by mid-1793, three-quarters of the whites had emigrated.<sup>(5)</sup> If at most 3,500 of the troops and National Guards sent from France were still alive, half were sick and many ready to desert to the Counter-Revolution.<sup>(6)</sup> Most of them, moreover, were concentrated in the North. French soldiers in the South, even as early as January had been reduced to 700 fit,<sup>(7)</sup> while at Port au Prince the Artois battalion numbered only 320, 100 of whom were hospitalized.<sup>(8)</sup> By early 1793, the Civil Commissioners had not yet extended their rule outside the North Province but had already alienated most white colonists, so that very few were willing to oppose foreign intervention and large numbers, as already seen, actively favoured it.



Fortescue likewise overestimated the likelihood of black resistance. In the opening months of 1793, the slave rebellion in Saint Domingue came very close to being extinguished. La Tannerie and les Platons, the central strongholds of slave resistance in the North and South, both fell with surprising ease. In November 1792, the northern rebels were routed in the plain, while in January, Laveaux, after losing a good campaigning month through political strife, drove them from almost all their camps in the mountains.<sup>(9)</sup> Abandoned by their mulatto allies, split by factional quarrels, starving and shut up behind the double mountains of Vallière, their situation was desperate. Thousands surrendered. Others fled to Santo Domingo only to be handed back to their masters or kept as slaves by the Spaniards.<sup>(10)</sup>

Throughout the West and South Provinces, the north-west and perhaps the north-east, too, the majority of the slaves had remained on their plantations, while thousands more were now returning to the devastated estates around le Cap and les Cayes.<sup>(11)</sup> Some had gained an extra free day per week. Leading agitators had been freed. Significantly, though, these then became gendarmes who helped police the regime. All in all, they were far more likely to fight for their masters than against them. In the Artibonite region, for example, we find at this time that most planters had returned to supervise their properties, if indeed they had ever left them, and were looking forward to better days.<sup>(12)</sup> The plantation regime had been shaken and undoubtedly weakened but Saint Domingue was still very much a slave colony. Hence, when the British government decided to intervene, circumstances were unusually propitious. All would depend on the speed and effectiveness of British action.

However, in the eight months before British troops set foot in the colony, the situation was to develop dramatically. Two fundamental social changes took place, largely, though not entirely, under the impetus of the threat of foreign intervention. Firstly, as the Republican Commissioners strove to stamp out the counter-revolution and extend their rule towards the tip of the southern peninsula, they effectively destroyed the remains of white power in Saint Domingue, transferring it to their mulatto allies. Simultaneously, the enormous latent power of the blacks, as potential rivals to the mulattoes and successors to the whites, was felt for the first time. British intervention in la Grand'Anse was to check the first of these developments



at the eleventh hour, and the occupation can be viewed as an extended attempt to reverse its progress. Paradoxically, however, Britain's efforts to save the slave regime in Saint Domingue may have been a major factor in bringing about its destruction.

Nonetheless, to depict this deterioration of British prospects as being determined entirely by the threat of intervention itself, i.e. dialectically, would be as inaccurate as to claim that the failure of intervention was implicit in the situation existing before war was declared.

Obviously, the elimination of anti-Republican elements and the transfer of public office from whites to coloureds was well under way by the end of 1792 and was likely to continue, war or no war. On the other hand, it was doubtless the prospect of foreign assistance that inspired the colonists to attempt the ill-fated 'coups' that led to the mass exodus from le Cap in June and the massacre of whites at les Cayes in July, just as the fear of a fifth column made the Commissioners completely intolerant of any white in a position of power.

Similarly, even if the slave revolt had finally been extinguished in the North, the smouldering discontent in the mountains of the West and the insurrection that broke out in the Cul de Sac region in January,<sup>(13)</sup> showed that slave unrest was not at an end. At the same time, though, this insurrection was not really aimed at destroying slavery but was another instance of the blacks being embroiled (not unwillingly, of course) in the mulatto/white conflict and taking advantage of it. They returned to work in May, after gaining certain concessions. It is significant, however, that the previous month a plantation manager had observed that, 'l'insurrection actuelle est bien différente que celles que nous avons essuyées. Ils ne connaissent plus personne et on ne peut les faire rentrer dans l'ordre qu'à coups de canons.'<sup>(14)</sup>

Above all, one cannot be sure, despite a floridly embellished piece of dialectic in The Black Jacobins,<sup>(15)</sup> that it was the outbreak of war that saved the revolt in the North. C.L.R. James claims that Laveaux's campaign against the rebels was cut short by his being recalled to defend the coast against the threat of invasion. This is yet to be proven. More probably, illness forced Laveaux to return to le Cap (on February 12<sup>th</sup>)<sup>(16)</sup> and local political problems and a subsequent order from Sonthonax (on March 10<sup>th</sup>)<sup>(17)</sup> kept him there. As he was also said to be losing over 20 men per day through disease,<sup>(18)</sup>



it may be his campaign, like so many in the West Indies, was defeated by the climate, - an ominous portent for those about to intervene.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the onset of war transformed the situation of not only the veteran warriors in the North but also that of all the blacks in Saint Domingue. It is striking that, as soon as war was declared, all parties immediately looked to the slaves for assistance. In February, the French and Spanish governments both instructed their representatives to enlist the support of the black rebels.<sup>(19)</sup> Simultaneously, Sonthonax requested permission from Paris to institute un nouveau régime on the plantations and by March had called off Laveaux and was making overtures to the insurgents - a fact Garran-Coulon did not realise or tried to cover up.<sup>(20)</sup> Royalist planters fleeing Saint Domingue urged the Spaniards to forestall Republican offers by winning over the rebels, while colonists in London assured the government their slaves were eager to serve the Counter-Revolution and kill mulattoes.<sup>(21)</sup> One notes straightaway the broader frame of reference of Sonthonax's proposals. He was clearly not unhappy in being forced into helping the slaves. Certainly, once he had lost the competition with Spain to win over the principal black chiefs, he was compelled to turn increasingly to the black masses in general to prop up Republican rule - liberalizing the plantation regime; freeing and forming into Legions slaves who had fought in the civil wars; offering rebel bands the sack of le Cap and, ultimately, when an English invasion was imminent, declaring General Emancipation on August 29<sup>th</sup>. Meanwhile, the starving rebels of Vallière had been transformed into uniformed troops of the king of Spain and free men.

These events inevitably gave the blacks a new sense of their power and of their rights. Liberty, hitherto a distant ideal for all but a militant minority, was suddenly theirs. The Spaniards and the Republicans soon found they had bitten off more than they could chew. Their new black troops were quick to see the weakness of their white allies and proved dangerously unruly.<sup>(22)</sup> Plantation work seems often to have ceased. Rebellions multiplied.<sup>(23)</sup>

Thus, between January and September 1793 British prospects of successful intervention in Saint Domingue were considerably reduced. The counter-revolutionary forces with whom the invaders hoped to link up were scattered. Coustard and de Jumécourt were imprisoned; Fontanges fled to Santo Domingo; de Coigne was murdered. Innumerable potential allies took flight or were deported; many thousands left

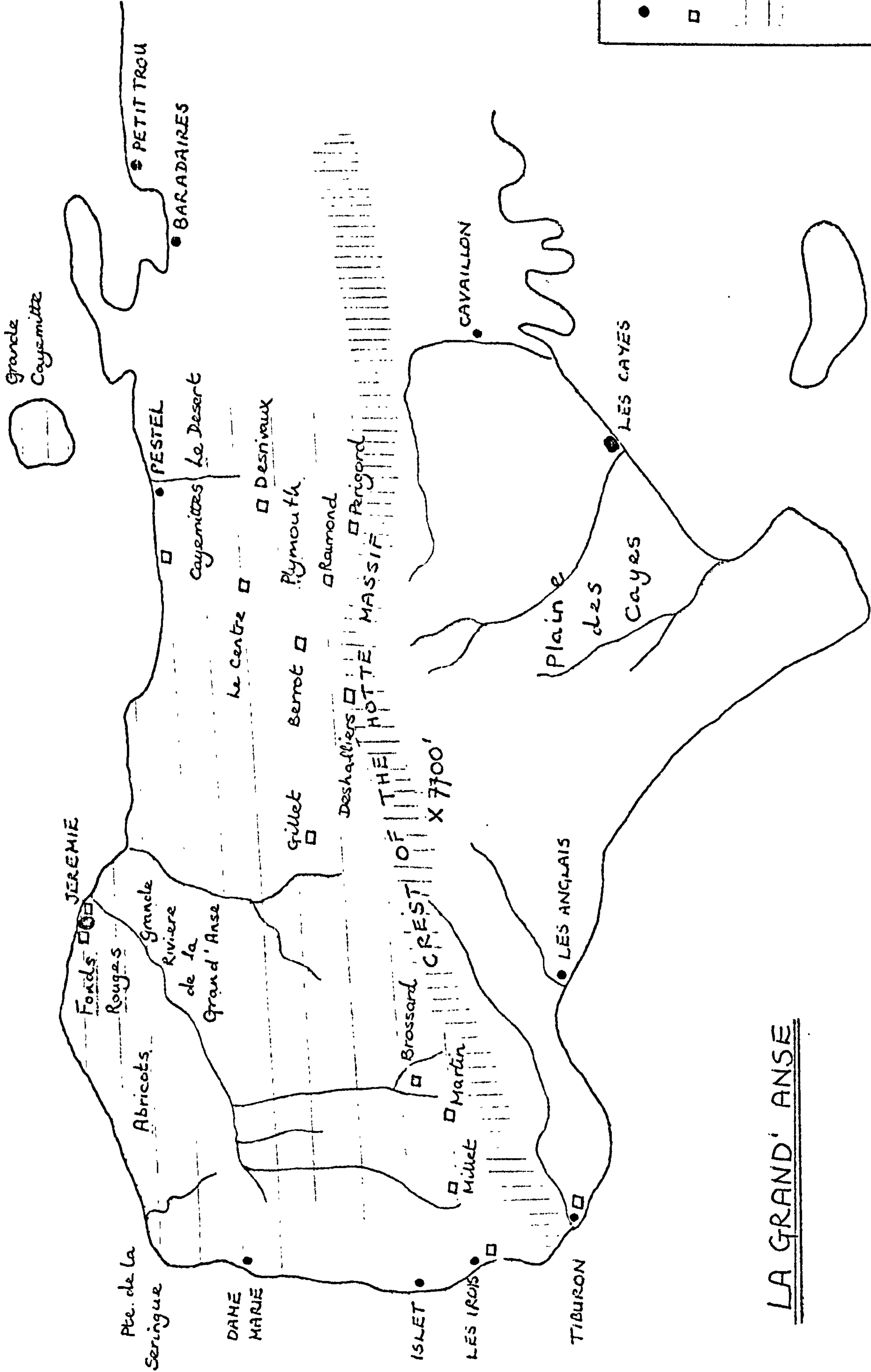


le Cap alone. Most would never return. Command of the North and West Provinces and much of the northern littoral passed into the hands of mulattoes, devoted to the Republic but even more so to establishing the supremacy of their caste. The plantation regime had been critically undermined and slavery actually abolished. Great tracts of the countryside were abandoned to the blacks and much of the plain of Cul de Sac and the surrounding mountains had been desolated.<sup>(24)</sup> In the mornes dominating Port au Prince, Pompé and Dieudonné rose to prominence, leaders later to give the British much trouble, while in the North the black troops of Toussaint Louverture were exchanging their machetes and lances for rifles.<sup>(25)</sup>

As the Spaniards prepared to conquer the colony with an army of ex-slaves and the Republicans swallowed up such potential bridgeheads for British troops as Jacmel, Dame Marie and de Charmilly's parish, Cavaillon, one can well understand the frantic tone of colonists' pleas to the British government in these months. On 31<sup>st</sup> July, in anger and frustration, de Charmilly declared to Home Secretary Dundas, 'England has lost one of those happy moments that rarely offer'.<sup>(26)</sup>

Not all was lost, however. Malouet's secretary, Duban, argued that British prospects had even improved.<sup>(27)</sup> France's alienation of the whites, he said, now ruled out any resistance from them, while the powerful French naval squadron that arrived off Saint Domingue in May had finally dispersed - and this was the sine qua non of any expedition leaving Jamaica. The blacks in the South and West, Duban and others claimed, were still loyal to their masters and sworn enemies of the Commissioners and free coloureds. Certainly, almost all the rebel chiefs, from Grand Amiral Jean François to Jean Pineau of les Crochus, proved hostile to the Republicans and curiously favourable to the Royalists. Conversely, the fact that Polverel was able to imprison Hyacinthe and Guiambois, leaders of the Cul de Sac and Artibonite slaves,<sup>(28)</sup> shows that the ascendancy of the whites did not vanish overnight. Edwards' much-quoted statement that some 100,000 blacks took to the hills at this time and formed 'a sort of savage republic' is clearly fanciful and was rightly ridiculed by de Charmilly.<sup>(29)</sup> Plantation society, in fact, was to prove surprisingly durable both where the Emancipation decree was carried out and where the planter class managed to resist it. Workforces held together as social units even when work was abandoned, while in many areas production was continued or resumed.<sup>(30)</sup>





LA GRAND' ANSE



Fortunately for the English, the mulatto ruling group was split on the subject of Emancipation. A wedge was thus driven between the Commissioners and many of their coloured supporters. It was a fatal dilemma for this classically unstable class. The Republic had guaranteed their civil rights but now took away their property and offended their prejudices. It was less than nine months since the conservative mulattoes of Saint Marc and Arcahaye had deserted their Royalist allies and swung over to the Republicans.<sup>(31)</sup> Even the more radical coloureds had been noticeably opposed to Sonthonax's increasing reliance on the blacks.<sup>(32)</sup> From the earliest days of the slave revolt, military men had insisted the whites could not win without the help of coloured troops inured to the terrain and climate.<sup>(33)</sup> Given the disastrous susceptibility the French and Spanish soldiers had shown to local fevers,<sup>(34)</sup> there was clearly much truth in this. Here, then, was a vital opportunity for the British invaders.

(ii) Early successes. Amid 21 gun salutes and shouts of Vivent les Anglais, Colonel Whitelocke's 600 redcoats <sup>isem</sup> d<sub>k</sub>barked in the tiny port of Jérémie on September 20<sup>th</sup>. A banquet was given, black cockades were worn, and even a song was specially composed, in their honour.<sup>(35)</sup> The British occupation got off to a good start. Anticipating Whitelocke's arrival, the commander of the army of la Grand'Anse, Morin Duval, had retaken the strategic Irois/Dame Marie region that had surrendered to Rigaud shortly before. He was just in time to avert a rebellion among its 12,000 slaves. A few days later, the commander at Tiburon, the Chevalier de Sevré, a local creole, deserted the Republicans and took the oath to George III.<sup>(36)</sup> Hundreds of colonists now flocked into the paroisses unies from Jamaica, Port au Prince and from the mulatto-dominated south coast. The population doubled in a month and soon quadrupled.<sup>(37)</sup> By mid-November, when colonists began returning from the U.S., Morin Duval had 800 men at Irois, while another 1,600 were divided between four camps guarding the southern and eastern approaches to the jumble of hills and valleys that make up la Grand'Anse. Not all were colonists. Many were servants, since the planters liked to live well, or poor émigrés arrived from Europe, or the survivors of French regiments, whom Montalembert began to organise into a Legion.<sup>(38)</sup> Some 280 were ex-slaves led by the much feared and very able Jean Kina. The British, however, to the colonists' dismay, remained in garrison in salubrious Jérémie.



On October 4<sup>th</sup>, they attempted a landing at Tiburon but were driven off from the beach by unexpectedly heavy musket fire, losing two men. Though they had been misled as to the enemy's strength, the British quite unfairly blamed Duval's colonial troops for failing to coordinate with their movements.<sup>(39)</sup> The seeds of mutual disillusion were sown early. Indeed, the Navy's high-handed (if legal) seizure of shipping anchored near Irois on September 23<sup>rd</sup> had created uproar at Whitelocke's first meeting of the Conseil de Sûreté. Nevertheless, he managed to dispel the appearance of treachery<sup>(40)</sup> and, with the prospect of reinforcements arriving in November, relations remained harmonious.

In his opening proclamation, Whitelocke assured the colonists that the small size of his army was deliberately designed to test their goodwill before he proceeded with greater force to conquer the colony. He stressed the need for unity, as did publicists of all parties throughout this most factionalised of revolutions, and emphasised that a colony must be subordinate to its mother country. On the other hand, the colonists could make local laws and supervise financial matters. They were promised protection, faveurs et avantages and help in recovering property in foreign hands. Their enemies were to be punished.<sup>(41)</sup>

The Grand'Anse was a valuable gain but, in British eyes, the great military success of 1793 was the surrender of the Mole Saint Nicholas to a nominal force on September 22<sup>nd</sup>. It was announced to the British public by the cannon of the Tower of London. One of the strongest naval stations in the New World, its fall brought into British hands a huge quantity of stores and artillery and a fine natural harbour; also 149 men of Dillon's Irish Regiment. Surrounded by arid semi-desert, it relied for foodstuffs on the hamlet of Bombarde ten miles away, whose inhabitants, mainly German settlers, signed the Capitulation on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Like the populace of the Mole, however, their loyalty remained uncertain, especially as no troops were available to garrison the place. 'The State of the People's minds', warned the local British commander, 'requires that no difficulties should appear among us'. He feared an attempt to blow up the powder magazine and said a garrison of 500 British soldiers was needed. To his embarrassment, refugees began to pour into the tiny bourg expecting assistance or employment.<sup>(42)</sup>

The occupation of the Mole infuriated Britain's allies, the Spaniards, whose plans to conquer Saint Domingue were similarly being hampered by lack of troops. Their renewal of activity towards December



probably accounts for the second spate of overtures to the British, though news of the fall of Toulon and Sonthonax's increasing reliance on the blacks had anyway powerfully abetted British propaganda. Despite the arrival in October of 200 more soldiers from Jamaica,<sup>(43)</sup> the shortage of troops became critical and more embarrassing than ever. None could be spared for the areas now clamouring for protection. At Gonaives, the three officers who had gone alone to administer the oath of allegiance to the inhabitants found the Spanish flag flying and 'a Negroe, who they called the Spanish general, commanding the place'. Known as 'Tusan', he offered to withdraw his forces, but the three men felt obliged to decline...<sup>(44)</sup> All three of the Artibonite parishes, although they had sent deputies who had signed the Capitulation at the Mole, thus slipped out of British hands. Were it not for Toussaint's hesitation, Saint Marc also would have become Spanish.

However, once Savary's faction was overthrown,<sup>(45)</sup> the commander of the Mole scraped together 50 men to send to Saint Marc under Brevet Major Brisbane along with the remnants of Dillon's Regiment, now depleted through desertion. Arriving on the 18<sup>th</sup> December, they had a tense moment when the 130 French troops in the town, drawn up opposite them on the main square, refused to surrender their arms. At gunpoint, they were forced on board a ship and at least 80 eventually took the oath of allegiance.<sup>(46)</sup> The principal factieux were arrested and some of them, according to an unofficial source, 'mis a mort'.<sup>(47)</sup> In the town and neighbouring districts 1,138 civilians were under arms.<sup>(48)</sup> The British and Spanish agreed to respect each other's de facto positions and co-operated in policing the left bank of the Artibonite. In parts of this vast flood plain the slaves had not worked in the previous two years and in November some had briefly attempted to rebel. However, both plantations and workforces remained relatively intact. Planters returned to their estates. The situation was promising.<sup>(49)</sup>

Far more so was the case of Arcahaye, where the ruthlessness of local dictator, Jean-Baptiste Lapointe, had preserved 50 of the finest sugar estates in Saint Domingue. Just as la Grand'Anse was insulated by the Massif de la Hotte, the narrow coastal plain of Arcahaye had been protected by the triple chain of the Matheux, which additionally contained over 130 coffee and indigo plantations. Before the Revolution, this one parish had produced about one eighth as much sugar and over three times as much coffee as the whole of Jamaica.<sup>(50)</sup> Its population



now numbered 800 mulattoes and whites and 18,000 slaves. Two camps containing 156 men guarded the roads to Port au Prince, and the bourg of Arcahaye was fortified with a ditch, breastwork and four redoubts.<sup>(51)</sup> The British neither could nor needed to spare any men for its defence, when it was placed under their 'protection' on December 24<sup>th</sup>.

Shortly before, the parish of Jean Rabel, commanded by the mulatto, Delair, had accepted a small garrison of British soldiers. It produced some of the best coffee in the West Indies and proved a valuable source of foodstuffs for the Mole. Many of its white planters had been living at the Mole since September.

Twenty miles west of Port au Prince, the port of Léogane called in troops from Jérémie on December 17<sup>th</sup>. In the broad plain surrounding the town were 62 sugar estates very little affected by the Revolution. The district was expected to make an important contribution to the costs of occupation. However, scarcely had the detachment of anglo-émigrés arrived, when the whole plain went up in flames. Raiders from Port au Prince and the South were apparently responsible, and once they had withdrawn, many complete gangs of slaves returned to Léogane. This suggests that the planters' faith in the loyalty of their slaves was not entirely misplaced. Yet, for the want of 300 British troops thousands of pounds worth of property had been destroyed, and the green and orderly landscape was now charred black.<sup>(52)</sup>

A month later, the planters of Petite Rivière almost suffered the same fate, though there external agents were more certainly abetted by the slaves, resisting the restoration of plantation discipline. A planter tells the story:- 'je rentrai chez moi 9 janvier. Le confiance renaissait de toutes parts lorsque le 20 le feu éclata sur plus de 20 h<sup>ons</sup>. en même tems. Ses progrès étaient effrayants...Il n'y avait nulle force armée, point de chefs, point d'ordre, tout annonçait une culbute g.<sup>lle</sup>'. The next day, 50 men were sent from Saint Marc and 50 Spaniards from Petite Rivière. Patrols were formed among the planters. The insurgents had few rifles but fought off the Spaniards with determination. Nonetheless, 'les chefs furent connus, arrêtés et on instruit leur procès'. Some 3/400 were killed and eighty were gaoled. The plain was still being raided in mid-February but small patrols sufficed to keep order. 'C'est un dernier effort des Commissaires', the planter thought.<sup>(53)</sup>

Shortcomings in the Militia accounted for part of the problem. According to Brisbane, it did 'tolerably well' when acting with regular



troops but without them did 'more harm than good'. At the Mole, the Militia was described as 'bred up in ease and luxury and since worn down by anxiety and dismay'. At Léogane, the inhabitants fought well near the town and were able to bear with fatigue but they had neither enough discipline nor mutual confidence to operate at a distance and save what remained of the plain.<sup>(54)</sup>

It is not clear if Léogane with its large coloured community refused like Saint Marc to accept article 4 of the Capitulation, which discriminated against the mulattoes. Certainly, the local British commander felt obliged to issue a proclamation maintaining the free coloureds in their rights.<sup>(55)</sup> The mayor, Labuissonnière, he found 'very respectable and much looked up to by all', but he lamented 'it will require great nicety to manage affairs under a power that has not the means of enforcing an Order should any be refractory and there are a number here of that description'.<sup>(56)</sup>

Like the other occupied districts, Léogane contained many refugees from surrounding parishes, particularly the south-west. Before the end of the year, they were intending to re-cross the Montagnes de la Selle with a detachment of émigrés to raise the Union Jack in the hamlet of Saltrou.<sup>(57)</sup> Though such an expedition was eagerly awaited there, it never seems to have taken place. The 800 British troops then in the colony had been spread out as thinly as possible. No new districts could be occupied. Consequently, overtures from the highly strategic areas of Tortuga, Jacmel and Mirebalais, as well as from Fort Dauphin, Saint Louis and other parts of the South, could not be followed up. This was exceptionally unfortunate. Tortuga was the main source of supply for the Republican army at Port de Paix and a useful base for blockading the north coast; Mirebalais commanded north-south communications, and if taken, would threaten Port au Prince from the rear, while possession of Jacmel would cordon off the southern peninsula. Another crucial opportunity was thus missed.

The reinforcements promised by de Charmilly and expected by Williamson and the colonists, though only half-promised by Dundas,<sup>(58)</sup> had failed to materialise. Just as the Saint Domingue expedition was launched, Dundas's attention had suddenly been snatched away from the West Indies by the promise of success at Toulon and the prospect of defeat in Flanders. As already seen, this caused him to delay the departure of General Grey's expedition and to reduce its strength.



Owing to further problems with the commissariat and the weather, it did not sail till November 25th. Furthermore, the Windward Islands remained very much Britain's priority in the Caribbean. News of Whitelocke's success led to Grey being given the option of attacking Saint Domingue first, but it was then far too late. Only in mid-December did Dundas announce that two regiments would leave Ireland immediately for Saint Domingue. These, however, were kept in port by disease and contrary winds until March 22nd!<sup>(59)</sup> Dundas had clearly been the victim of unforeseen events but it is equally plain he had not taken seriously enough his commitment to the planters of Saint Domingue.

Nevertheless, the British could be pleased with what had been accomplished. As de Charmilly pertinently asked, was ever in the French Wars so much territory gained with so little effort?<sup>(60)</sup> Before 1793 had ended, Williamson was looking forward to promotion and 'most fervently' hoped that when peace came at least the West and South Provinces would be annexed by Britain.<sup>(61)</sup> The colonists, too, seem to have remained optimistic though regarding their 'protectors' with a certain irony and impatient for the fall of Port au Prince and les Cayes.<sup>(62)</sup>

For the time being the British could only resort to bluff and bribery. Twice, in early January and early March, Commodore Ford and his squadron appeared before Port au Prince and called on Sonthonax to surrender. The Navy was determined to seize the shipping in the roadstead and from the beginning Ford excluded the harbour area from the terms he offered, rationalising that the citizens had failed to accept the Capitulation. On the second occasion, he threatened to bombard the town, but nonetheless withdrew without risking a clash with the powerful coastal batteries.<sup>(63)</sup> Without the means to support an aggressive strategy, Ford had undermined the goodwill on which the British had till then depended, and gained nothing. Each time, he had received from the Commissaire a proud and defiant response. The British and Royalists, however, simply assumed he was under the thumb of the mulattoes and continued to regard him as an adventurer who would be glad to be bought off,<sup>(64)</sup> Dundas had authorised bribes of up to £5000, to be paid to the commanders of important posts, and in February Whitelocke offered such a sum to Laveaux for the surrender of Port de Paix. To



avenge the insult, the French general challenged him to a duel.<sup>(65)</sup>  
A campaign without soldiers was not going to succeed.

Cynicism and greed, impotence and empty threats: this was the shabby side of the British occupation. There was also courage and ability and decisive action. When a few hundred troops arrived from Jamaica at the end of January, they were sent immediately against the key stronghold of Tiburon, which was held by over 850 men of all colours. Covered by broadsides from a frigate, the flank companies of the 13<sup>th</sup> Foot landed from small boats amid a hail of musket fire and cleared the beach with bayonets fixed. Through the night of February 2nd/3rd they held out in a house near the palisaded village and, when more troops debarked next morning, the enemy fled from the fort and batteries that overlooked the bay on the hill above. Though on this occasion the colonists camped at Irois did fail to advance and cut off the Republicans' retreat, 150 prisoners were nonetheless taken.<sup>(66)</sup> Two and a half weeks later, the same troops stormed Fort l'Acul, six miles from Léogane, which guarded the road south to Jacmel. Another combined operation, this time the naval side went awry, owing to winds, said Williamson, owing to the drunkenness of a transport captain, said de Charmilly. However, a bayonet charge, up a slope covered with fallen trees and straked with grape-shot, sufficed to put the enemy to flight. The British forces' reputation now rode high and nearby Grand Goâve raised the Union Jack and took the oath of allegiance.<sup>(67)</sup>

The Republicans had been shaken and yielded a lot of ground; the road to les Cayes lay open. The British, however, could do little more by land. They tried to use their seapower to induce the surrender of Port au Prince and suggested to the Spaniards a joint attack on le Cap - in vain. Within two months the Republicans counter-attacked in strength. On April 16<sup>th</sup> Rigaud threw 2000 men at Tiburon fort and, as had happened at Fort l'Acul, a suicide agent blew up the powder magazine. Of the 60 British in the garrison, 28 were killed, along with 30 colonists. The Chevalier de Sevré, however, saved the day with a bold sortie, Jean Kina's corps conspicuously taking the greatest risks. In six hours, the defenders expended 40,000 balls and killed nearly 400 of the enemy. A frigate, arriving the next day, replenished their ammunition and sent seamen to stand guard while naval carpenters re-mounted the guns blown out of the fort. Naval support was clearly essential to the survival of such outposts.<sup>(68)</sup>

Fort l'Acul, now rebuilt, was attacked on May 3rd by over 1200



blacks, probably part of Pompée's band, which lived in the mountains of Rivière Froide and operated independently despite receiving ammunition and orders from the mulattoes of Port au Prince. They had crept up to the ramparts during the night and rushed the embrasures at the sound of the morning gun. Once again they tried to blow up the powder magazine. Once more they were routed by a bayonet charge. Their daring and discipline, in the event, were matched by that of Montalembert's Legion and the Léogane militia, who, though outnumbered three to one, killed well over 50 of them, losing only one man themselves. (69)


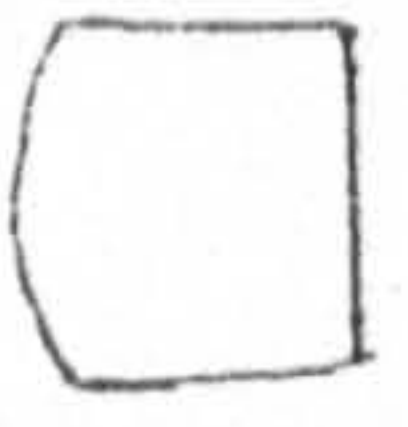


These were desperate if heroic affairs. Although according to de Charmilly 4,500 colonists had by now returned to the occupied zone (including women and children), dissatisfaction was growing with British protection. Luckily on May 19<sup>th</sup> the long-awaited reinforcements arrived, 1860 men (70) under the ebullient General Whyte. Losing little time, a full-scale land-sea attack was mounted against Port au Prince. Fort Bizoton, commanding the littoral three miles south of the capital, was bombarded and stormed in a tropical downpour on June 1<sup>st</sup>, possibly with help from within. As British and colonial troops advanced from the north, the black levies guarding the earthworks surrendered, so their fleeing officers later claimed, with shouts of 'Vive le Roi! Vive Jumécourt! Venez nos pauvres maitres! Nous voulons encore vous servir!' (71) The perimeter forts capitulated one by one and, to the inhabitants' relief, the Civil Commissioners fled into the mountains on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. The next day, the British forces and their French allies were able to celebrate in the capital of la perle des Antilles the birthday of George III.

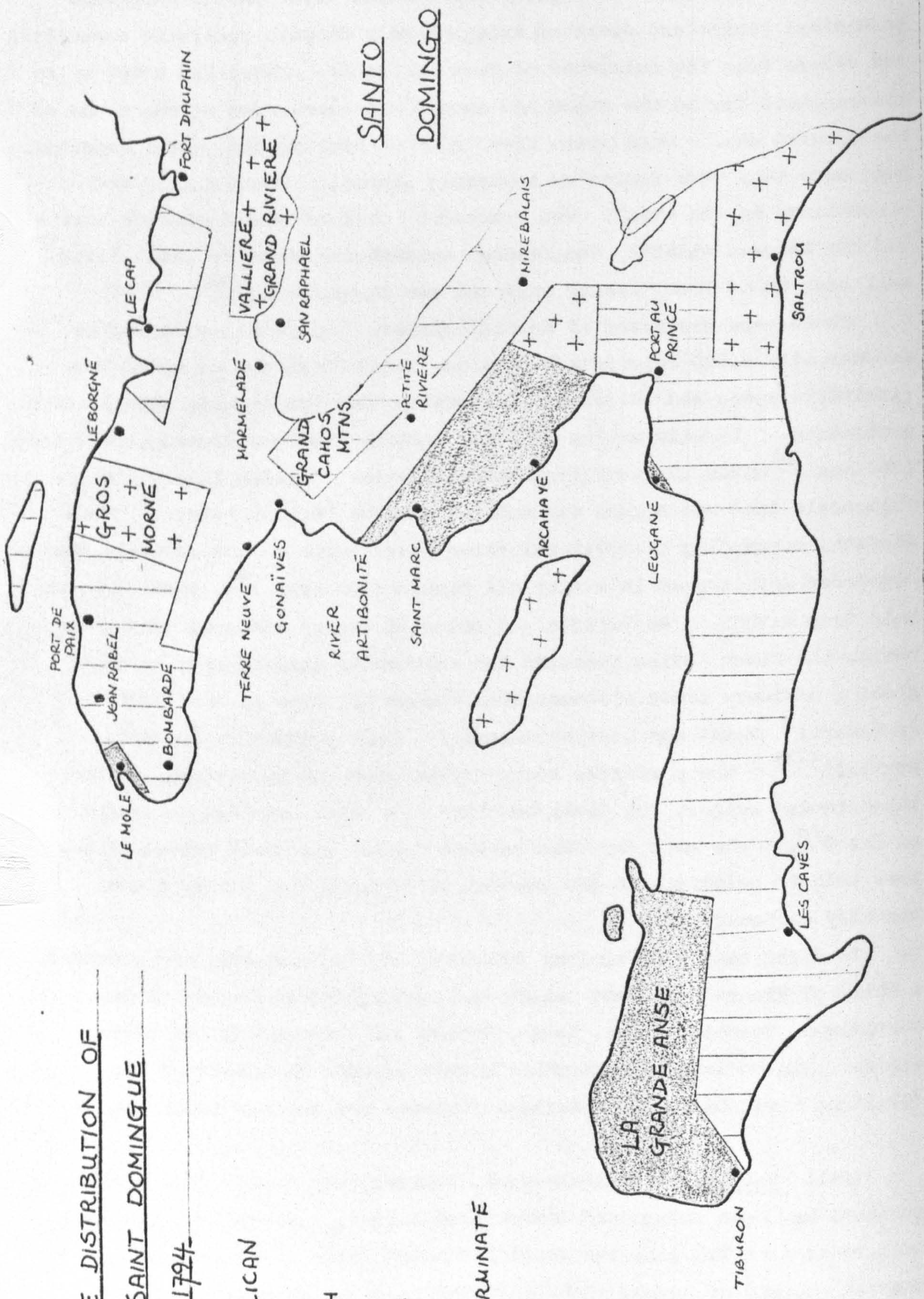
In eight months of minimal activity, the British Army had occupied a third of France's richest colony and lost in combat barely 50 men. Martinique, Guadeloupe, St. Lucia, Tobago and Pondicherry had already fallen. In England the churchbells were ringing in honour of the 'Glorious First Of June'. British fortunes had reached their apogee.

(iii) Failure. In retrospect, however, we can see that Britain's position had been undermined for several months. Apart from the early failure to take Tiburon, the British forces' first major setback had come at the end of March, when Delair surrendered Jean-Rabel to the Republicans. On the 16<sup>th</sup> April, the German settlers of the neighbouring Bombarde/Plateforme district also defected, and two weeks later repulsed an attack by British marines. Partly, these losses were due to the



APPROXIMATE DISTRIBUTION OF  
FORCES IN SAINT DOMINGUE  
28th. APRIL 1794.

- 
 REPUBLICAN
- 
 SPANISH
- 
 BRITISH
- 
 INDETERMINATE



SANTO  
DOMINGO



discrimination the local free coloureds suffered.<sup>(72)</sup> Delair, particularly, was piqued at not being made commandant of his parish. Partly, the fault lay with the paucity of British troops. The colonists expected to be protected, not to bear the brunt of active service in continued insecurity. Similarly, the Republicans now realised how small the British forces really were and with new found confidence went on the offensive.<sup>(73)</sup>

Colonel Whitelocke, however, blamed his colonial allies. In a remarkable letter to Laveaux,<sup>(74)</sup> whom he candidly addressed in 18<sup>th</sup> century fashion as a brother officer and gentleman, he complained he would never again expose British troops alongside colonials. They had already tricked him, he said, at Tiburon and Fort l'Acul. 'Je ne m'attends à aucun changement dans leurs sentiments militaires'. As for deserters from Dillon's Regiment, Laveaux was welcome to them, and to Jean-Rabel, too, which he was going to leave in the colonists' hands anyway as he was intending to regroup the scattered British detachments. Hence, not only the military situation but also Anglo-colonial relations reached a very low point. Left seven months without being reinforced from Europe, the British soldiers were dejected and the colonists severely disillusioned. They had been promised troops for the winter campaign season, which was now over. De Charmilly desperately toured the occupied area trying to quieten discontent.<sup>(75)</sup> On April 28<sup>th</sup> Williamson lamented that the shortage of troops had brought his operations to a standstill and that there was a danger of the colonists rebelling.<sup>(76)</sup>

The next day, there came about at Gonaives, 25 miles up the coast from Saint Marc, 'a most strange circumstance', as it seemed to Colonel Brisbane, 'so complicated, so extraordinary, so mysterious, as to baffle all conjecture'.<sup>(77)</sup> The black auxiliary troops drove out the Spanish garrison 'in the name of the King of the French' and then massacred some 150 white inhabitants. One of the most famous yet obscure events in Saint Domingue's history, it is generally taken to mark the volte-face of the black general, Toussaint-Louverture, whose rallying to the Republic was without doubt one of the major factors in the defeat of the British. Just when their forces were doubled by the arrival of Whyte's 1800 redcoats, 4000 seasoned black fighters and a leader of genius were thrown into the balance against them.

It has not been realised,<sup>(78)</sup> however, that Toussaint's volte-face was itself part of a broader rebellion north of the Artibonite that since the beginning of the year had brought thousands of blacks and

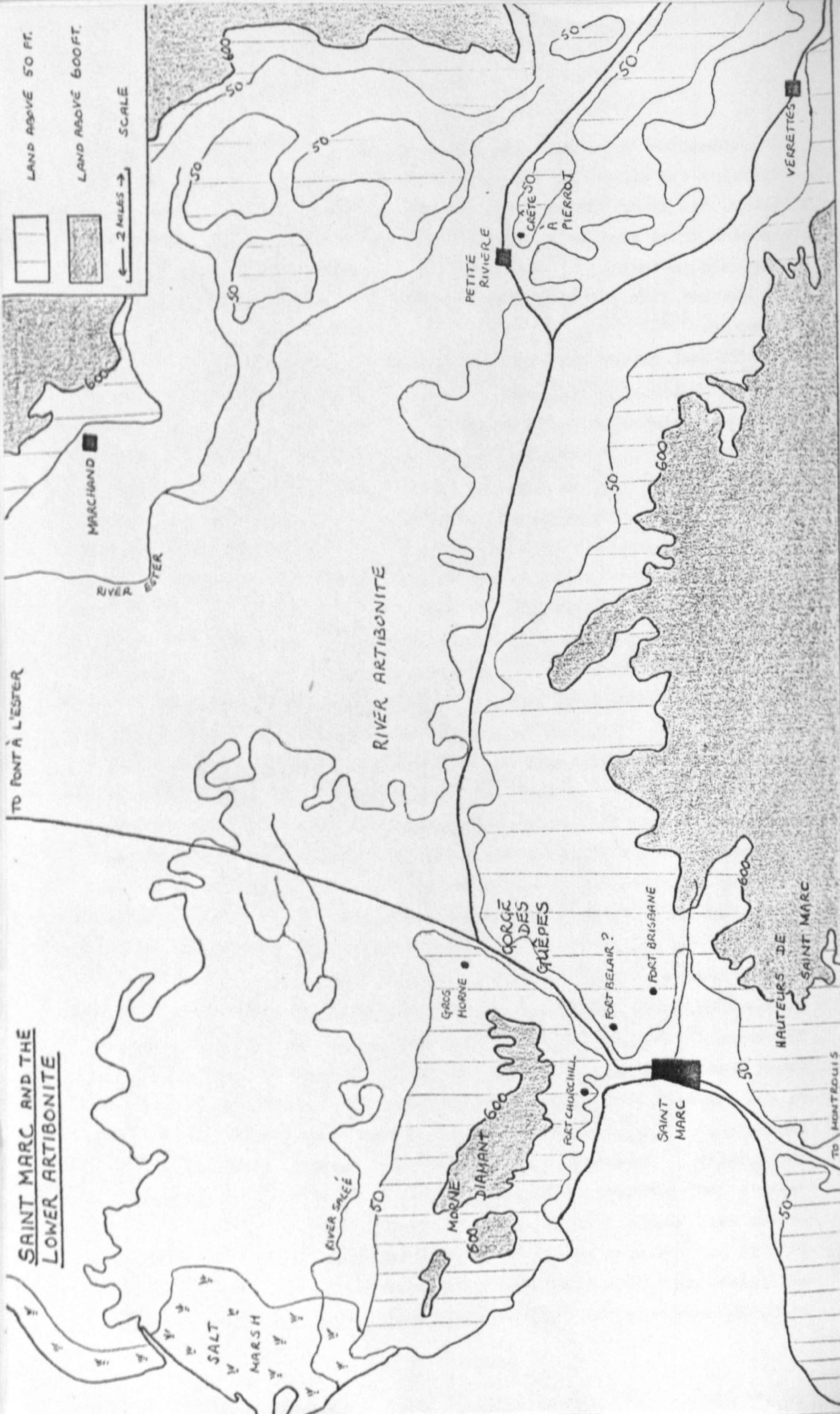
coloureds to oppose the invaders and resist the restoration of slavery. The tide was thus already turning against the scanty Anglo-Spanish forces when Toussaint joined the Republicans. This he did, moreover, long before news arrived that the French Convention had endorsed Sonthonax's policy and abolished slavery in all France's colonies. On the other hand, until he received a copy of the emancipation decree, in early July, Toussaint astonishingly kept up a double game with the Spaniards, staying mainly on the defensive and assuring them of his continued loyalty. Whatever his motives were, the first two months of his Republican career were fairly limited in effect. At great cost, the Spaniards were dislodged from Petite Rivière on May 23<sup>rd</sup> by the mulatto Blancazenave, who had long been harrying them. Toussaint's men moved up to the Ester but on June 11<sup>th</sup>, the Anglo-Royalists forced them back to Gonaives, with heavy losses after a bombardment lasting ten hours. (79)

In early June, therefore, the British were still in a strong position. Recently reinforced, they had some 3500 armed men in Port au Prince, about 1800, mostly mounted, in la Grand'Anse, garrisons at Saint Marc, Arcahaye and the Mole and a strong naval squadron. (80) The psychological advantage was theirs. (81) Port au Prince had fallen almost without a shot and amid mutual recriminations. The Republicans were in disarray and everywhere short of food and ammunition. (82) Yet, the British commanders, by continuing their cautious, defensive policy, wasted this crucial opportunity and so lost the initiative in Saint Domingue.

Firstly, they failed to take Gonaives, Toussaint's link with the outside world, at a time when he was hard pressed on all sides and low on ammunition. Driven back from the Ester, he suffered major losses in the east to Jean-François and Biassou. (83) A major British offensive could have been decisive. On June 15<sup>th</sup> a single warship created havoc at Gonaives. It bombarded the town and a party of 50 seamen spiked its guns. They received no help, however, from Saint Marc and were forced to retire when Toussaint burnt the town in desperation. Five days later his main camp at Marchand was apparently destroyed by the Saint Marc royalists but no troops arrived from Port au Prince. (84) No more was done and within a month, having survived this supreme test, Toussaint had driven off Biassou, defeated the Spaniards to the north (with Villatte's help) and devastated the army of Jean-François. It had also become known that the French Convention had declared slavery abolished by the decree of 16 pluviôse (February 4<sup>th</sup>). The black/Republican alliance was sealed. The independent blacks of Gros Morne



SAINT MARC AND THE  
LOWER ARTIBONITE





immediately joined Laveaux while those already fighting for the Republic in the South became noticeably more enthusiastic.<sup>(85)</sup> Moreover, the loyalty of Toussaint, perhaps still doubtful, was now assured. Insurrection spread throughout the Artibonite region. Meanwhile, vital supplies had started to filter through to Republican ports accompanied by news of resounding French victories in Europe and of the recapture of Guadeloupe.<sup>(86)</sup> Evidently inspired, Laveaux and Villatte captured several Spanish camps on the north coast, while Toussaint advanced to the Artibonite and even crossed the river to occupy Verrettes. 'Il n'y eut pas une journée dans cet heureux mois', Laveaux later wrote, 'qui ne fut pas marquée par des victoires'.<sup>(87)</sup>

If the British failure in the Artibonite can be attributed to a shortage of troops in the area,<sup>(88)</sup> the same is not true of their poor performance further south. Both Edwards and de Charmilly agreed that, by not taking or blockading Jacmel before the attack on Port au Prince, they committed the gravest blunder of the whole occupation.<sup>(89)</sup> In view of the threat posed by its military forces and privateers, the favourable attitude of its planters and the preservation of many of its parishes, its proximity to Jamaica and contiguity with the Grand'Anse, it may well be that the south coast should have been Britain's main priority. Alternatively, perhaps Whyte should have sent his army against Port de Paix and le Cap, where Republican forces were concentrated. However, even without the prospect of prize money, it was not unreasonable that the general's first objective should have been the capital. What was unjustifiable was his leaving his army inactive in the town after it had fallen.

Instead of clearing and garrisoning the mountains that dominate Port au Prince, thereby restoring its fresh water supply, Whyte merely sent 300 local militiamen to prevent Dieudonné's blacks descending from the mornes into the plain of Cul de Sac, now occupied by Montalembert's Legion. The blacks had no artillery and they abandoned several camps without much resistance, but on June 22<sup>nd</sup> the militiamen were suddenly hurled back to Port au Prince by a surprise attack. Unsupported by the British, they lost one third of their number. The blacks now began to raid from the surrounding woods, burning plantations and sniping nightly at the scarlet-coated sentries on the palisades around Port au Prince.<sup>(90)</sup>

Not only should Whyte have secured Morne l'Hôpital and la Charbonnière, but he also ought to have pursued Sonthonax and his supporters through the mountains, sending at least a frigate to cut off their re-



treat. It was already clear they would flee to Jacmel, as Borel had done the previous year.<sup>(91)</sup> Such a pursuit would have been arduous but might have been entrusted to colonial troops, and deserters from the Légion de l'Egalité. Factionalism made the defeated Republicans especially vulnerable. During their retreat, fighting all but broke out between the black and coloured corps, while once they reached the south coast, the mulatto generals divided against one another.<sup>(92)</sup> If Jacmel, commanded by the alienated Montbrun, had been taken, the southern peninsula could have been cut off by a cordon extending north to Léogane and providing in the mountainous interior a healthy location for the troops.<sup>(93)</sup> A general convergence on les Cayes, de Charmilly argued, would have been easy.<sup>(94)</sup> Although his opinion of non-white troops was clearly prejudiced, he may have been correct. Rigaud was a bold, vigorous and obdurate leader, but his Légion du Sud, not yet a year old, had still to win an engagement and had suffered numerous severe defeats at the hands of the Anglo-Royalists. In the second week of June, his men succeeded in ravaging the coast between Tiburon and Irois, but once again they were cut to pieces by the planter cavalry of the Grand'Anse and the cannon of Tiburon fort (and of a Royal Navy frigate).<sup>(95)</sup> Simultaneous attacks on Camp Desrivaux and Camp du Centre failed entirely. Moreover, les Cayes at this time was suffering from famine and relied on Jacmel for its supplies.<sup>(96)</sup> The white planters in the South and probably some of their slaves could be counted on for help, and possibly many mulatto planters, too, who cannot have welcomed the news of the Emancipation decree that arrived on June 8th. De Charmilly in fact claimed to have arranged through two coloured landowners the surrender of most of the South.<sup>(97)</sup>

Another chance was thus lost. Rigaud was allowed to go on consolidating his mulatto dictatorship in the South, while the mountains overlooking Port au Prince were left in the hands of poorly-armed blacks powerful in numbers. This was partly because General Whyte channelled his energies into taking possession of the capital and extending its fortifications; partly because he continued the divisive policy of confining British troops to the ports and using colonials in the interior, but also because he was preoccupied with the matter of prize money. It was widely believed, indeed, that he had secretly let Sonthonax escape on condition that he did not burn the town or the ships in the harbour.<sup>(98)</sup>

This immobility proved doubly fatal, for within two months of its



fall, some 650 of the British soldiers in Port au Prince were to die without firing a shot. Dundas had been warned that troops should be kept outside the town on plantations rather than in the casernes. 'Bâti sur un terrain brûlant sous un ciel homicide', (as the colonists saw it), the colonial capital was notoriously unhealthy.<sup>(99)</sup> Moreover, with singular ill-timing, Whyte's men had arrived at the start of the sickly season. After being cooped up for months crossing the Atlantic, the pallid recruits emerged from the transports into the midst of a tropical summer, without a chance to acclimatise. Set to work digging entrenchments in the steaming rain, mounting guard through the comparatively chilly nights,<sup>(100)</sup> they could offer no resistance to an epidemic of yellow fever that broke out in the crowded capital. By the end of June, two-fifths of the troops there were sick and the death rate in some regiments reached well over 20% per month. The Navy was apparently even worse hit. Military operations ceased.<sup>(101)</sup> By mid-November, 1000 British soldiers had been buried in Port au Prince and only one-third of the survivors were fit for duty. 'They dropt', as Bryan Edwards observed, 'like the leaves in autumn'.<sup>(102)</sup>

In view of the disastrous losses already experienced by the French and Spanish forces in Saint Domingue, and those later suffered by the ill-fated Leclerc expedition,<sup>(103)</sup> one might well assume that any attempt to conquer the colony was doomed. This is the conclusion of a recent study by B. Foubert.<sup>(104)</sup> There is, nevertheless, much to be said for the colonists' persistent belief that Saint Domingue could be saved if only a sufficiently large force was put into action at one time. Once the rebels were overwhelmed, as they nearly were early in 1793, the task of maintaining order could be performed largely by acclimatised colonials, who would return in large numbers to the pacified colony. Malouet and de Charmilly were not entirely deluded to claim that 3000 troops landed in November 1793 would have had an easy job.<sup>(105)</sup> West Indian campaigns had always been wasteful of human life but they were not all failures. It is true, as the Spaniards feared and Leclerc later found out, that keeping the colony might prove more difficult than conquering it but, then again, Leclerc had to fight an army of 30,000 free men, an army of veterans: the British did not. The mortality problem became insuperable only when slavery ceased to be supportable in the minds of most of the blacks.

Furthermore, it is probably erroneous to write off Saint Domingue as an unusually lethal death trap that should not have been bothered



with. Although Edwards stated that yellow fever began to ravage the British forces from the start of the occupation,<sup>(106)</sup> this is simply not true. A degree of sickness was noted at the Mole in October without much alarm, while at Jeremie none appeared until the end of February.<sup>(107)</sup> Mortality was negligible until March. On June 11th, Williamson was still able to comment how much healthier Saint Domingue was than Jamaica.<sup>(108)</sup> It was a cruel coincidence that found the bulk of the British forces freshly arrived from Europe and at their densest concentration in one of the unhealthiest parts of Saint Domingue at the worst time of year. Moreover, whatever was the likelihood of yellow fever breaking out when so many non-immunes crowded into the capital, it became unavoidable after the ill-fated arrival on June 8th of fever-ridden reinforcements from the army in Martinique. What is more, they may have been responsible for introducing a particularly virulent strain of the disease, then killing thousands from Baltimore to Barbados.<sup>(109)</sup> It is also relevant that Port au Prince had become especially insalubrious during the Revolution, because its fresh water supply was repeatedly cut off by insurgents in the surrounding mountains. The shortcomings of General Whyte's policy thus become increasingly evident, and the destruction of the British army looks a little less rigorously inevitable than might be supposed.

Yet, this was not the only setback to British prospects that resulted from the fall of Port au Prince. According to Williamson, General Whyte's predatory and domineering behaviour soon created 'universal discontent' in the capital.<sup>(110)</sup> Firstly, he ignored the capitulation offered by the inhabitants once the Commissioners had fled and left the town at the discretion of the army for five days before offering a pardon from which he excluded recognised revolutionaries.<sup>(111)</sup> In the meantime, royalist officers of Montalembert's Legion sought out and murdered various of Sonthonax's ex-alumni. Though Whyte clamped down on these summary executions, the petty tyranny that certain intriguants franois continued to exercise created much fear and bitterness in the town.<sup>(112)</sup> Whyte regarded Port au Prince as British by right of conquest, as it had not accepted the Capitulation. It was already clear that the ships in the harbour were bound to be forfeited, but the general went further and proclaimed, as had Rodney at St. Eustatius and Grey and Jervis at Martinique, that all public and private property in the town belonged to the conquerors.<sup>(113)</sup> He proposed, however, that only known enemies of 'order' would suffer full confis-



cation, while friends of 'order' would be exempted, and those neither one nor the other would pay a fine. To this end, every inhabitant was to be examined by a joint Anglo-French committee and to make a declaration of his property.

Williamson found the measure 'truly Inquisitorial' and nullified all of Whyte's proclamations, threatening to suspend him if he refused to take orders from Jamaica.<sup>(114)</sup> Whyte did not think himself accountable to Williamson, as he had been assigned to Saint Domingue by Grey, the commander in chief of British forces in the West Indies. Whitehall, however, supported the Governor.<sup>(115)</sup> Whyte asked to be relieved and was replaced on September 18th by Brigadier-General Horneck.

The dispute did nothing to improve the image of the occupying power. Apart from the anomalous question of seniority involved, there may have already existed some personal rancour between the two men, who had served together in the past. Basically, though, it was a clash between two opposed concepts of how the occupation should be conducted. Whyte's approach was military and authoritarian, hostile to interference from the civil power, and indifferent to colonial sensibilities. This was also the attitude of the royalists and émigrés in his army like Montalembert<sup>(116)</sup> and de Jumécourt. Williamson, on the other hand, was above all conciliatory, as befitted a Governor of 18th century Jamaica. Advised at Spanish Town by members of the old Côté ouest faction, he was anxious to restore civil government and to do all he could to reconcile the colonists to British rule. These two contrasting themes in Anglo-colonial thinking were to run through the entire five years of occupation, each dominant at different times. Whyte's policy was probably more efficient, certainly more economical, but Williamson, his sights set on more long-term gains, insisted that his 'system' was right for Saint Domingue. For the time being, the British Government agreed.

The predatory approach<sup>(117)</sup> was efficacious but tended to be counterproductive. This is well seen in the role of the Royal Navy. Naval support was the sine qua non of the British presence in Saint Domingue, and prize money, it may be argued, was essential to the functioning of the senior service, as it helped to reconcile the common seaman, so often in the West Indies the product of the press gang, to his brutalized lot.<sup>(118)</sup> To penurious colonists, however, who expected from the British the protection promised in Whitelocke's proclamation, the seizure of their ship-borne goods, in some instances



after they had capitulated, was a real grievance that reinforced the popular image of British hypocrisy.<sup>(119)</sup> One could say the ill-will of the people of Port au Prince was a fair price for the £400,000 worth of property seized in the harbour and on the wharves; also, that it may well have been Captain Affleck's cutting out of the 'Triomphante' that finally brought Saint Marc into British hands. Nevertheless, a serious consequence of making the seas unsafe for French citizens, even those of pro-British opinions, was to hinder the return of refugees from the United States, most of whom had already been robbed once by British privateers. It was not the most important factor discouraging return to Saint Domingue but must be accounted prejudicial to British interests when acclimatised troops were so desperately needed.<sup>(120)</sup>

The policy of conciliating colonial opinion had good and bad points. In one respect, however, it proved catastrophic. Numerous colonists had argued that the black rebels could only be defeated in their mountain retreats by coloured troops who had been trained at hunting runaways in the maréchaussée. Similarly adept at living on roots and bananas and running barefoot up and down slopes covered with brambles and broken rock, the mulattoes were also excellent horsemen and sharpshooters. Even in November, moreover, after thousands of refugees had returned, they still outnumbered the whites 6:1.<sup>(121)</sup> Hence, from the military point of view they merited at least as much consideration as the white colonists. The London Propositions, however, condemned them to the status of coloureds dans les colonies anglaises.

What the planters probably wanted was the flexibility and pragmatism of the Jamaican system. 'Respectable' coloureds of the old free families, wealthy, legitimate, married and light-skinned, (i.e. those the 15th May law was aimed at), along with any other influential figures, would be granted 'white' status to ally them to the regime. The majority of affranchis, conversely, would lose all the privileges they had gained in 1792 and more besides.<sup>(122)</sup> Nevertheless, some whites had wanted to be more generous. The different draughts of the Propositions reveal an original proposal to grant full equality, that was then gradually whittled down, doubtless under Bérault and de Charmilly's influence, to become the infamous article 4.<sup>(123)</sup>

For many free coloureds it was not an unacceptable price to pay for the preservation of their property. Yet, at Saint Marc and Arcahaye,



they and their white allies accepted the Capitulation only on the understanding that the King would be asked to revoke article 4, which they refused to sign. Meanwhile, they were to receive equal treatment with whites.<sup>(124)</sup> Even then, many had tried to back out of the arrangement before the British moved in. At Jean Rabel, the mulattoes actually revolted against their second class status and this encouraged minor anti-white outbursts at Léogane and Arcahaye.<sup>(125)</sup> In the occupied zone, therefore, white-coloured relations rested on a fragile basis of uncertainty and local anomaly. This has not hitherto been realised.

Bound by the articles signed in February, the British were in a dilemma. When Colonel Whitelocke had landed in Jérémie, he had confidently proclaimed to the mulattoes: choose between article 4 'et la punition de tous vos crimes'.<sup>(126)</sup> This is exactly what the whites of la Grand'Anse wanted to hear. At the Mole, however, the Council criticised article 4 on several occasions and Major Grant had apparently sought permission to revoke it even before the overtures of the Artibonite parishes made clear its impracticality.<sup>(127)</sup> Many, perhaps most, British officers favoured the free coloureds. Major Brisbane, in the Artibonite, paid them 'every attention', assigning to them the principal military commands. Even Colonel Whitelocke became converted to their cause, finding them more 'brave and faithful' than the petits blancs, wealthier and better educated than the Jamaican coloureds and possessing more influence over the slaves than did the whites. He doubted the blacks could be beaten without their co-operation and said, if civil equality was not officially granted, they would rebel. Furthermore, he stressed that outside la Grand'Anse the planters who had stayed in the colony through the Revolution, often serving under mulattoes, did not object to conceding them equal rights.<sup>(128)</sup> On January 19th, Williamson observed to Dundas that he could take all of the South and West Provinces, were he empowered to grant equality of colour. He also sent him a speech by Lapointe, 'to shew that those people possess Talents and Influence', and accepted the colonelcy of the largely coloured Saint Marc Legion.<sup>(129)</sup>

However, it was impossible to please everyone. Demographically as well as ideologically, the years of revolution had greatly strengthened the mulattoes' position, so that many whites feared they would come to dominate the government, if granted equality.<sup>(130)</sup> De Charmilly was willing to countenance only the 'whitening' of coloured families free for several generations and a few other 'well-behaved' individuals - a



notable advance, nonetheless. He repeatedly warned Dundas and Williamson that, by not enforcing article 4, the British were destroying the whites' goodwill towards them and inviting the Jamaican free coloureds to revolt. Brisbane, he said, had greatly alienated the whites of Saint Marc 'par ses liaisons et ses préférences ridicules en faveur des Hommes de Couleur; car il vivait dans une intimité avec les Mulâtres, comme jamais aucun Blanc, surtout un officier français, ne l'avait fait et n'aurait osé le faire'.<sup>(131)</sup> Although de Charmilly was biased, it seems that even in Saint Marc prejudice died hard and that the British presence probably encouraged a regression to old norms.<sup>(132)</sup> At Léogane, the free coloureds felt so insecure, thanks to the bullying of Bérault Saint Maurice, that Captain Smith had to issue a proclamation assuring them he was not going to stir up the past and that he had not been paid to massacre them.<sup>(133)</sup>

On the other hand, even colonists like La Rochejacquelein, who considered the mulattoes to be criminals, came to argue that it was essential to grant them civil equality.<sup>(134)</sup> Williamson summed up the situation at the end of the summer; 'There are a description of Whites who are sanguinary in the extreme against the Mulattoes. I have kept them within bounds, and great numbers of the Whites have no jealousies about them'.<sup>(135)</sup>

Dundas, no more than Williamson, regarded article 4 as sacred. Any improvement, however, in the free coloureds' status, he said, should come at the French colonists' suggestion and should not upset the British West Indies.<sup>(136)</sup> Jamaican whites had been extremely alarmed by an innocuous petition drawn up by some Kingston free coloureds in late 1792.<sup>(137)</sup> Before long, they were bracing themselves for the arrival of Raimond himself, and when Bryan Edwards urgently sought an interview with Dundas the following May, it appears he wanted to emphasise the dangerous effects British policy towards Saint Domingue might have in Jamaica.<sup>(138)</sup> Such considerations may have delayed the decision to intervene. The Home Secretary was perhaps more disturbed by the jealousy that the promotion of mulattoes was creating in the occupied zone and he warned Williamson to be cautious. On 5th July 1794, he instructed him that, though individual exceptions might be made, article 4 'if practicable, must ultimately be complied with'.<sup>(139)</sup> Any flexibility British policy had had in this area finally vanished in the next two months, when de Charmilly reported back to London and the Duke of Portland became Home Secretary. His



first orders were that the Capitulation should be adhered to in spirit and principle. (140)

Williamson, too, one presumes, was under pressure in Spanish Town both from British planters and the Cadusch faction. Before receiving these instructions, he had already begun to alienate the coloured population by his measures to restore civil government. In early July, he revoked all decrees and appointments made by the various British commanders. All commissions for public office he ordered to be validated by the new Conseil Supérieur, which was controlled by extremists. (141) Williamson's chief concern here was administrative streamlining. He assured the mulattoes their interests were not prejudiced. Yet, they found this hard to believe when their posts in the maréchaussée were taken away and given to newly-arrived whites. (142) Their hopes of seeing the Code Noire enforced proved vain. The 1770 criminal code was restored. In the granting of relief to the destitute, the mulattoes suffered marked discrimination. (143) The moment of reckoning came in mid-August when the Conseil Supérieur registered the Act of Capitulation with article 4 unchanged. At the same time it also registered an indiscreet letter from Williamson to Bérault Saint Maurice revealing that suspects deported to Jamaica would not be allowed to return without permission and that those designated by Agent Cadusch would be prosecuted. For the mulattoes this had a very sinister meaning. They recalled the insulting tone of Whitelocke's October 5th proclamation. They heard their old enemies discussing their murder or deportation to Botany Bay. (144) At best, there seemed little place for them under the new regime. At worst, they seemed destined for proscription. Hence, as Laveaux rallied his forces, as the English and Spanish troops dropped like flies, and as news of the great French victory at Fleurus filtered through to the colony, the free coloureds of the occupied zone began to feel they were on the wrong side.

Those of Saint Marc seem to have been secretly won over by the Republicans via what was apparently an elaborate plot laid by Toussaint Louverture. In the middle of August, the black general informed Major Brisbane he was willing to surrender. His coloured allies Blancazenave and Christophe Mornet handed back Verrettes and Petite Rivière and actually joined the British forces. Hostilities ceased and even 10,000 slaves returned to the plantations. Ironically, Brisbane's reputation reached new heights at the very time Toussaint's fifth column spread disaffection in his camp, and while the rebel leader amassed ammunition ready to strike



at his duped and unsuspecting foe.<sup>(145)</sup> At the beginning of September, Brisbane set out to take possession of Gonaïves and only narrowly escaped an ambush by Toussaint's men. The Anglo-Spanish garrisons on the upper Artibonite were overwhelmed by their new allies. Brisbane hurried back to Saint Marc to find that his coloured aide-de-camp, Morin, had led a rebellion of almost all the mulattoes in the town. Most of the plain seems to have risen also. For over two weeks, Toussaint repeatedly attacked Saint Marc and twice captured its north side, burning down 80 houses. However, the white colonists held on and fought bravely, and the blacks became distracted by pillaging. The appearance of a frigate which bombarded their positions proved the decisive factor. The belated arrival of reinforcements from Arcahaye and a Spanish advance down the Artibonite enabled Brisbane to counter-attack. Toussaint, injured in the siege of Saint Marc and always short of ammunition, had already retired when his men were driven back across the river on the 28th. Nevertheless, the mulatto-British alliance was ruined and the slave regime in the plain probably finally destroyed. Toussaint developed his network of camps, based on Marchand, into a strong defensive position.<sup>(146)</sup>

Even Brisbane's trust in the mulattoes was now shattered. Their 'natural Perfidy' seemed beyond dispute. Nearly 300 were imprisoned along with some whites implicated in the revolt. Several were shot. Colonial officers, incited by the infamous Borel, snatched the remainder from prison one night and murdered them on the outskirts of town.<sup>(147)</sup>

A still greater disaster struck Léogane, where there was no British garrison or warship. At the invitation of the local mulattoes, Rigaud appeared before the town with 800 men and took possession on October 7th, meeting little resistance. A great quantity of stores was thus lost. The coloured mayor, André Labuisssonière, and several whites were executed, while 150 others fled to Port au Prince, which was shaken into a frenzy of defensive activity. At Arcahaye, it was believed that if Saint Marc fell the mulattoes and slaves would rise and march on the capital. Lapointe's life was apparently threatened by a plot. With or without his complicity, 109 free coloureds and blacks were seized by white colonists and murdered. Fearful of upsetting public opinion, General Horneck did nothing.<sup>(148)</sup>

Having lost most of their mulatto allies and over half their own troops, the British now had to turn, like the Republicans and Spaniards before them, to the blacks. Under the Ancien Regime, slaves had sometimes



served in the militia or had been specially armed in wartime. Those who served well had occasionally gained their freedom.<sup>(149)</sup> This tendency enormously increased during the Revolution, and paved the way for General Emancipation. It continued under the occupation. Jean Kina had long been a vital prop of the southern plantocracy. Montalembert and the planters of the plain of Cul de Sac had recruited about 150 slaves and, in August, Brisbane began to raise a black corps in the Artibonite.

A crucial opportunity had been lost, however, after the fall of Port au Prince to win over Dieudonné's Légion de l'Egalité, said to be 5000 strong. Several officers and men of the Legion had refused to follow Sonthonax and had stayed on in the town helping to maintain order. Montalembert's purge unfortunately laid low or drove out most of these potentially valuable allies.<sup>(150)</sup> Even so, in the following weeks, Dieudonné himself began negotiating with Montalembert and Whyte, offering to serve, under white officers if necessary, in exchange for their liberty. They would exterminate or force back to work, as desired, the other blacks in rebellion. Here was a chance to restore Port au Prince's water supply and revive agriculture in the surrounding plain, not least to double British forces with acclimatised troops. Yet, again we find military and civil considerations in serious conflict. Officially, these fighters were slaves and Williamson was not empowered to dispose of the planters' property. He offered them British pay and freedom from vexation by their masters but said only the King could grant them their liberty. Either because of the nature or tardiness of this reply, the negotiations broke down.<sup>(151)</sup> By September, the situation had stabilised a little after Montalembert had killed hundreds of rebels in a series of engagements around Croix des Bouquets. The houngan and pro-royalist slave leader Hyacinthe, an important friend of the Cul de Sac planters, was sent to try and re-open the negotiations. Dieudonné, however, had him executed.<sup>(152)</sup>

By this time, colonists so different as Cadusch and La Rochejacquelein were agreed that black troops were indispensable and that they should be given their liberty.<sup>(153)</sup> Brisbane had already reached the same conclusion and was supported by the Saint Marc planters. During the mulatto revolt, the behaviour of the troupes franches of the white creole Dessources led him to extol the black soldier's pre-eminence in a war of patrols and ambushes, indeed 'on all occasions'. 'The Mulattoes', he said, 'dread nothing so much as to fight against Negroes'.<sup>(154)</sup> Since Jamaica had been able to spare merely 55 troops during the September crisis,



Brigadier-General Horneck decided shortly after his arrival to raise a regiment among the slaves. In November, the Chasseurs Royaux began recruiting in the plain of Cul de Sac. Following Brisbane's plan, the slaves were to serve for five years and then be freed. Jean Kina's corps was placed on the same footing.

In the circumstances, this development was doubtless essential but it posed many problems. Besides being expensive and increasing the alarm and alienation of the free coloureds, it undermined the slave regime, further blurring the distinction between slave and free. According to one observer, recruitment often fell on 'chefs de famille dont l'exemple et les conseils contribuoient mieux que les actes de sévérité à retenir les autres dans le devoir'.<sup>(155)</sup> The policy was also said to be opposed by the majority of planters. The author of the Précis Historique accounted it an evil and claimed its supporters were an influential minority blinded by the desire to venge themselves on the mulattoes: 'c'étoit en quelque sorte armer la colonie contre elle-même, c'étoit la déchirer de ses propres mains'.<sup>(156)</sup>

Slaughtered by the 'yellow and putrid fevers', the British by mid-November could barely hold on to their positions.<sup>(157)</sup> Garrisons were everywhere weak and could not be given naval support because of the mortality among the ships' crews. With the end of the rains, the Artibonite became fordable and an attack was soon expected. Hence, martial law was proclaimed on October 25th. The flow of refugees from Republican to British territory was reversed and many young sailors fled to Port de Paix to man the corsairs now doing great damage to British shipping.<sup>(158)</sup> Internal enemies were many. 'They are much more hostile to us now', Williamson observed, 'than when we first took possession'. The colony would be British, he further lamented, had he been authorised to preserve civil equality between white and coloured. 'The Mulattoes are so superior in number to the Whites that the Whites never can extirpate them, but which is the great object of many of them'.

As no British ships were available for blockade duty, the Republicans were now freely importing supplies and ammunition in neutral vessels. At les Cayes, commerce and agriculture revived, while socially and militarily Rigaud's dictatorship achieved new degrees of stability. His black troops, it was noted, fought more boldly since learning of the emancipation decree. Some expected the invaders would soon be expelled.<sup>(159)</sup> In late September, the Spaniards finally lost their foothold at le Borgne and Port Margot and then suffered devastating defeats on their own terri-



tory at San Michel and San Raphaël. Toussaint Louverture, by these victories, brought large quantities of artillery, cash and ammunition into Republican hands and established himself as a brilliant commander.<sup>(160)</sup> They also definitively marked his breach with Spain, till then still unclear. Toussaint now led a victorious and well-supplied army. He commanded some 30 camps in a cordon that stretched nearly 90 miles and had built up an officer corps of talent and experience, consisting mainly of blacks. He and Laveaux now met for the first time, as the white Governor toured in admiration the area commanded by this increasingly powerful ex-slave.

In 20 months, the face of Saint Domingue had changed dramatically. Areas still well-preserved when the British arrived, such as Léogane, Grand Goâve and the Artibonite, had been ruined by fire and desertion, while the abandoned plantations of Cul de Sac were now fast falling into decay. In the Spanish zone, too, 1794 saw the destruction of Plaisance and le Borgne, the only parts of the colony that had survived intact, as well as of Marmelade, Ennery and Gonaïves.<sup>(161)</sup> By a singular and significant irony, after a year in Saint Domingue, the British were now attempting to preserve the slave regime by turning to the slaves with offers of freedom.



CHAPTER VI. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT: ADMINISTRATION AND POLITICS IN THE FIRST YEAR OF OCCUPATION.

(i) Whitehall Planning. Ironically, just when confidence in British intervention was falling away fast,<sup>(1)</sup> Williamson was informed by the Government it had decided to establish a civil administration in Saint Domingue and to make him Governor. This was a novel decision.<sup>(2)</sup> In wartime, conquered colonies were usually kept under military rule. In this instance, however, Pitt's government was concerned to win the goodwill of the colonists, on whom it relied heavily.<sup>(3)</sup>

The Capitulation (appendix C (ii) ) did not require such a restoration. It allowed for the Crown and its representative in Saint Domingue to exercise supreme power, assisted 'dans tous les détails d'administration et de police' by a Conseil Privé nominated by the Governor. There was no question of re-establishing the old Intendancy, the lynch-pin of Bourbon government. The British had no tradition of a judicial/administrative supremo, while many colonists had thought the Intendant's powers too extensive for one man and most recognised that friction between Governor and Intendant had obstructed government under the old regime. To have a British Governor and a French Intendant would simply have compounded previous problems.<sup>(4)</sup>

Governors of British colonies were accustomed to working with Councils of leading colonists, and in occupied Saint Domingue such a body was indispensable from an administrative, if not also from a political, point of view. British commanders, if they knew any French at all, needed the help of men who knew the laws, customs and inhabitants of the colony, who could help frame legislation and deal with the myriad details of everyday administration and government. As all parties were agreed that no Assembly should be called before order was restored, and as the Governor was to wield supreme power while war lasted, an advisory and nominated Privy Council, drawn from the landowners of the three provinces, would give a necessary measure of representation to the colonists (who had experienced some three years of self-government) and thus assuage to some degree their political ambitions in a useful and harmless manner. Unlike the Councils in the old British colonies, and even in Quebec, it would have no legislative powers.

The colonists were to foot the bill for all military and civil expenses (bar those of the navy) but were to pay only those taxes in



force in 1789 and with exemptions granted to ruined property owners. The British Government would make up the deficit and be repaid later. The Navigation Acts would be applied but the export of refined sugar was to be permitted, as was, until the colony recovered, a limited trade with the United States. The colonists had also asked for and been granted the free practice of the Roman Catholic religion and the restoration at the end of the war of the pre-Revolutionary civil law. The structure of the law courts was not mentioned; not because of British pressure but because of the absentee planters' dislike of colonial lawyers. The Original Propositions had actually called for the adoption of the cheaper fees and simpler procedure of the English legal system. However, the demand was dropped from all subsequent drafts and among the colonists in Saint Domingue we find no echo of this opinion. The great backlog of judicial business in the colony had created by the summer of 1794 a general cry for the re-establishment of the law courts - a demand endorsed by Colonel Whitelocke and Governor Williamson. Those who opposed such a move did so because they thought it premature or for more blatantly political reasons. (5)

Premature, it certainly was, but Whitehall had to consider not only Saint Domingue but also the far more stable French Windward Islands conquered in March, where General Grey had restored the civil law almost immediately. Around May 1794, Lord Hawkesbury, the extremely active President of the Privy Council Committee for Trade and Foreign Plantations, was charged with drafting preliminary proposals for the government of these colonies. His main aim was to 'make them desirous of continuing under His Majesty's Government'. (6) Conciliation was the keynote of his approach. He wanted the Governor and leading inhabitants of each colony to be consulted before making his final recommendations. This was rejected as impractical, (7) but most of his other proposals were embodied in the Instructions sent to Williamson on October 7th by the new Home Secretary, the Duke of Portland. (8)

Hawkesbury was impressed that in Grenada British rule and the introduction of English criminal law had driven out almost all the French inhabitants. He found British policy 'absurd' and 'cruel in its consequences' and he criticised the 'idea that the Government and Laws of Great Britain...must be equally good and equally agreeable to foreigners'. It was he, moreover, who had introduced into the Quebec Act of 1774 the special oath that enabled Catholics to hold public office. (9)



He determined, therefore, that until a permanent form of government should be decided upon, as much as possible of the Ancien Regime system should be retained in the occupied colonies. He also recommended that, with the exception of merchants trading in the ports, 'old' British subjects should not settle there. The Instructions thus not only followed the Capitulation's demands in restoring the free practice of the Roman Catholic religion and the civil law and taxation system of the Ancien Regime but went even further and revived in toto the laws and judicial system as they existed before the Revolution.<sup>(10)</sup>

On the matter of criminal law, Hawkesbury had in fact hesitated, being reluctant to deprive British subjects in conquered colonies of trial by jury, yet adamant that the jury system would not work there and that two sets of courts could not co-exist. Portland wanted English criminal law applied to both nationalities, as it had been in Quebec, Saint Vincent and Grenada. However, the issue was decided, doubtless to Hawkesbury's satisfaction, by the opinion of the Lord Chancellor. He ignored the vague notion that English legal privileges were an Englishman's birthright and declared, following the 1774 Campbell v. Hall judgment, that an Englishman was subject to the laws of the place he was in.<sup>(11)</sup>

The irony of this determination to preserve French institutions is that it was considerably more, or less, than the colonists in London had at first asked for. The authors of the Original Propositions (appendix C (i) ) had in fact called for British political institutions and, though desiring to retain the loix et usages permitted to the French of Grenada and Quebec, they had been willing to accept the English law of debt (in certain circumstances), English judicial procedure and legal fees, and (apparently) the English criminal law. The Propositions of the Windward Isles planters specifically allowed for the introduction of English criminal law after 18 months.<sup>(12)</sup> Only in the fourth complete redrafting of the Saint Domingue Propositions was it stipulated that the pre-Revolutionary status quo was to be restored.<sup>(13)</sup>

These early drafts of the Propositions are a problem that historians have previously ignored. They were probably less Anglophile than they seem. Insofar as the criminal law and the law of debt are concerned, it appears the colonists were not expressing a preference but offering what they deemed unavoidable concessions. English criminal law had been introduced into all previously conquered colonies, and the Dominguans



feared that English merchants without adequate means of redress in case of default would not advance them loans. On the other hand, it was the British themselves who balked at promising the eventual adoption of British political institutions. It was feared that, if the old representative system were introduced, Parliament might thereafter be unable to alter the regime and that the Government would repeat the troublesome experiences it had had with Grenada and Dominica.<sup>(14)</sup>

However, the redrafting of the Propositions may also reflect a growing assertiveness among the royalist planters in London, as the French Republic started to totter in March 1793.<sup>(15)</sup> It should be realised that Hawkesbury expected, when it came to establishing a permanent government, that the 'turbulent and factious' would want an assembly but that the moderate colonists would side with the 'wise and discreet' in desiring the restoration of their 'ancient government'.<sup>(16)</sup>

Only on two major points would the wartime administration differ from that of the Ancien Regime. Firstly, the British laws of trade and customs tariff were to be applied, and indeed had been, by Order in Council, since December 1793. The Vice-Admiralty Courts were replaced by British customs officers exercising, however, the powers of their French predecessors, and colonial merchantmen received the privileges of prize ships. This was really the only 'British' feature of the regime. The other departure from the French system was the strengthened Executive with its advisory council, both novelties imposed by the Capitulation. The Governor was to subsume most of the powers previously shared between the Governor and Intendant, apart from their judicial ones. However, although he was to exercise full executive authority, he could not levy new taxes and was to change existing law only in an emergency. As long as British interests were not prejudiced, he should endeavour to follow the advice of his Privy Council and any disagreements were to be reported to Whitehall in detail. Despite these restrictions, the Governor's powers were of a new type similar to those of the new Governor-Generalship of India, more extensive than those under the Quebec system of 1774 and far more so than in the other British colonies.

D.J. Murray has criticised the Instructions for their 'contradictions and obscurities', claiming that nothing was specified as to the legislative functions of the Governor and Conseil Supérieur and that Hawkesbury 'presumed' the separation of Executive, Legislature and



Judiciary would follow from the abolition of the Intendancy.<sup>(17)</sup> It was clear, nonetheless, from article 6 that legislative power lay solely with the Crown and its representative. As well as functioning as an appeal court, the Conseil Supérieur had in the past helped to vote taxes and administer the caisse municipale; it could remonstrate against legislation, which it was nevertheless obliged to register, and within narrow limits it could issue rulings for the better execution of the law, but its power to make 'police laws' had been suppressed in 1766.<sup>(18)</sup>

In organising the Conseil Supérieur, the Governor was ordered to 'attend to' the most reasonable of the previous tables of fees. Colonists' complaints against the exorbitant costs of litigation were thus not ignored.<sup>(19)</sup> Though he was left free to fill judicial posts with former colonial magistrates, Williamson was advised by Portland to choose émigrés who had served in the parlements of France. As a great Whig noble, Portland was doubtless sympathetic to those robe families who had led the révolte nobiliaire against the French Crown, and he had befriended some exiled in England. However, to Williamson he stressed that the character and ability of the judges was a vital point in convincing the colonists of the superior advantages of being British, and indeed he laid repeated emphasis in his correspondence on 'an able and upright administration of the laws'.<sup>(20)</sup>

In his desire to strengthen the Executive and conciliate local opinion, one might say that Hawkesbury took the cardinal innovations of the Quebec Act and extended them even further. However, in so doing, he was also following the Capitulations, for both the colonists and the British realised the situation demanded a strong hand backed by local goodwill. The system, one should remember, was only intended to be temporary. All assumed that peace would bring the introduction of traditional patterns, British or French, or possibly of the Canadian system of 1791.<sup>(21)</sup> Even so, in the context of British colonial history, the Instructions for Governor Williamson represent a 'clear break with traditional forms' and may be considered the prototype of Crown Colony Government.<sup>(22)</sup>

(ii) Early Administration. Like Grey at Martinique, Williamson did not wait for instructions from Whitehall and between May and August 1794 re-established civil government in the occupied zone on a provisional



basis. Till then, administration and government were shared between Williamson at Spanish Town, a few British officials sent over from Jamaica, the local military commanders and the councils they appointed to advise them. It was consequently a fragmented affair.

In charge of all matters of revenue and provisioning was the Agent-(or Commissary-) General, George Bogle. One of a family of Jamaican merchants, he was relatively young for so responsible a position, though he had been long employed in the Agent-General's office in Kingston and had served as Commissary on a previous expedition. He was recommended for the post by the Jamaican Agent, the very wealthy and influential George Atkinson, who was also Bogle's business partner in one of Kingston's most prestigious merchant houses. Allowed a guinea per day and 5% commission on expenditure, he later acquired other lucrative posts under General Whyte and a small clerical staff, which gave him some influence. (23)

Bogle arrived with Whitelocke's expedition and began organising the Jérémie customs. In this he was assisted by another Jamaican merchant, Edward Corbet, who within two months had combined the post of Naval Officer with that of correspondent for a firm of Charleston merchants, overseeing an absentee plantation and importing French wine 'much wanted' in the colony. (24) Comptroller of the Customs at Jérémie, Léogane and, later, Port au Prince, was Henry Francklyn, nephew of the Kingston Collector and son of the absentee planter and pamphleteer Gilbert Francklyn. Early in 1794, another Jamaica customs officer, John Rousselette, was similarly transferred to Saint Marc and Arcahaye. Commodore Ford had already, without consulting Williamson, made his purser Collector of Customs and Commissary for the Mole, and it was soon found expedient to make Rousselette and Francklyn likewise local deputies to Bogle, 'as a check to the impositions', Williamson admitted, 'that I am afraid some of my French friends might be guilty of'. (25) Rousselette was also named Colonel of Militia and Agent-Paymaster of the colonial corps of his district, Comptroller of Port au Prince Customs, Agent of Forfeited Estates and Agent for Prize Money. He had enjoyed a similar plurality in Jamaica. This was indeed an economical use of manpower. Williamson assured Whitehall that his protégé was paid only for the Collectorship but, as Rousselette himself later observed, one could not expect a man to abandon secure employment in Jamaica without profiting by it. (26)



In July 1793, an American sea captain had predicted, 'it would cost a kingdom to pay the expenses of getting a tolerable footing on St. Domingo with an army'.<sup>(27)</sup> From the very beginning, the costs of occupation were found to be great. The colony was eventually to foot the bill, but even in la Grand'Anse Bogle found he was expected to pay in the first instance for the colonial forces, whose lifestyle in the camps he considered luxurious. Trade was reviving, however, and he hoped the export tax would cover these costs, but at the Mole, whose hinterland was barren, there was almost no prospect of trade.<sup>(28)</sup> There the garrison cost £7/800 per month and in three weeks 650 refugees arrived from the surrounding parishes with an equal number of slaves. They expected at least to be fed, and the British could not afford to disappoint them. It was to be a persistent problem. Saint Domingue swarmed with people of all social groups out of work or with no place to live. When nearly 2000 whites fled mulatto-ruled Port au Prince in mid-March, an exhausted Captain Smith at Léogane suddenly found himself distributing 5000 rations per day.<sup>(29)</sup>

The hallmark of Williamson's administration was his desire 'by all manner of means to reconcile the inhabitants of St. Domingo to the British Government'.<sup>(30)</sup> The creation of public offices, therefore, could not simply be a matter of administrative efficiency. It also involved considerations of charity and, primarily, of politics. Thus, at the Mole, Lieutenant-Colonel Dansey and, later, Williamson had to promote recalcitrant and superfluous officers and find jobs for numerous unemployed gentlemen of 'weight and influence'. Williamson had instructed Whitelocke before he sailed that the important thing, when appointing his Privy Council, was to leave out no figure of importance.<sup>(31)</sup> The Conseil Privé at Jérémie was formed from the existing Conseil de Sûreté with the addition of de Charmilly. It was criticised for containing men with no property and proved difficult to manage, as did that region in general.<sup>(32)</sup> The Mole Council consisted of two important refugee planters, both creole, Pierre-Joseph Laborie,<sup>(33)</sup> who was president, and Pierre Collette; a local planter, Jacques-Daniel Jujardy, also named government storekeeper; James Esten, Commodore Ford's purser, who spoke good French; the newly-promoted Colonel Deneux and a small boat owner, Benoit Pittalus, both of whom had helped surrender the place to the British. L. Cougniac  fils acted as secretary. Doubtless at the instigation of Laborie, the council advised against a policy of racial discrimination and was



to be critical of high taxation and legal fees.<sup>(34)</sup> Saint Marc and Léogane possessed Conseils de Police which included free coloureds.

Troops, administrators, the destitute; hospitals, gaols, fortifications, the hire of shipping: all needed money. However, Williamson and, for the time being, Dundas remained sanguine, impressed with the colony's huge potential wealth. Furthermore, by February, trade between Saint Domingue and Jamaica was said to be 'prodigious'; some months later, Arcahaye and Saint Marc were described as 'flourishing'.<sup>(35)</sup> It is true that half of the produce exported in this period, in spite of the Capitulation, the Navigation Acts (and the U.S. embargo of March-June 1794), went to the Americans and other neutrals, but as they paid extra duty this was all for the better from a fiscal point of view. Williamson simply had to accept that American shipping was vital to the conquered colonies. American imports were cheaper and of better quality, while the British merchant marine probably did not have the extra capacity to handle the huge volume of coffee involved and, anyway, would soon be driven from the seas around Saint Domingue by enemy privateers.<sup>(36)</sup>

The Capitulation was also ignored as regards taxation. The export duties the British Collectors placed on American shipping considerably exceeded those known under the Ancien Regime. The Council of the Mole complained in vain, but the Jérémie Council had itself already imposed extra taxation, though it was not a representative body. It raised the poll taxes on plantation slaves from 2 l. 5 s. to 10 l. 5 s. to bring in around £10,000 p.a.<sup>(37)</sup> Giving vent to its esprit colon, it slapped an extra 14 l. 5 s. on absentees' slaves and sequestered outright the revenue of mulattoes living under Republican rule. The Council also asserted the local pride of the Grand'Anse planters by insisting it retain the poll tax revenue for local use.<sup>(38)</sup> Instead, therefore, of financing current expenditure in the less well-preserved areas, it was applied to generously compensating those Jérémie planters who freed slaves to serve in the camps. Some districts, however, had a broader outlook. Arcahaye gave assistance to embattled Saint Marc, though it, too, paid supplementary taxation and was subject to levies to meet local needs. Little evidence has survived of this local taxation raised by the municipal authorities for their own use. At Port au Prince, Saint Marc and Léogane, items of extraordinary expenditure (such as the fortification of la Croix des Bouquets) were met by loans raised by these

parishes on the strength of future revenues and contracted at parish meetings.<sup>(39)</sup>

The increases in taxation were not unreasonable. Colonial produce had risen considerably in price since 1789. In Republican areas, the standard impost was 25% of total income, and this was to be continued by Toussaint, Dessalines and Christophe. Moreover, despite these increases the public revenue of the occupied zone was still completely inadequate for its needs. By mid-summer, it is true, the Customs of Arcahaye and Saint Marc were bringing in £1000 per week, but this did not last and the occupation of Saint Marc had already cost over £7000. It is unlikely the Jérémie Customs grossed more than £12,000 before the end of June.<sup>(40)</sup> From the outset, Bogle and the British commanders had to have specie shipped from Jamaica, American merchants being loath to take bills on Kingston. However, until Williamson arrived and began drawing directly on the Treasury, Bogle's main source of finance was in fact bills drawn on the Jamaican Agent-General, Atkinson, who like his partner took 5% commission on them. As soon as the British landed in Saint Domingue, he had offered his services to the Government. Though it was his associate Sir Francis Baring, no less, who presented the bills at the Treasury, he had great difficulty at first in getting them honoured, so suspiciously large were the sums involved.<sup>(41)</sup> Up to June 1794, the occupation of Saint Domingue seems to have cost Great Britain around £120,000.<sup>(42)</sup> Far worse was to follow.

(iii) The Establishment of Civil Government: May - October 1794.

The re-establishment of the law courts and the multiplication of civil posts following the fall of Port au Prince were to greatly increase the costs of occupation. Being questions of power and patronage, they also deepened political divisions in the colony. No one could doubt the strength of these, when on June 4th 17 whites picked out as revolutionaries from among those found in Fort Saint Joseph were summarily beheaded by Montalembert's soldiers.<sup>(43)</sup>

For two months, Brigadier-General Whyte and his royalist supporters held sway in the capital, monopolising patronage and ignoring Williamson's prior arrangements. The key figure was Hanus de Jumécourt, who was made Chief of Police of the occupied zone - hardly an English institution, remarked Cadusch, who called him a 'Vizir'.<sup>(44)</sup> Supposed supporters of Sonthonax were deported or sent to the pontoons at Port Royal. All



property in the conquered city was declared liable for confiscation, even though most of its inhabitants had abandoned it and joined the British before it fell. An Anglo-French committee - Malouet called it a Revolutionary Tribunal - was set up to review cases individually.<sup>(45)</sup> Montalembert professed amazement that colonists whose goods had been seized by Sonthonax should now expect to retrieve them from the government warehouses. Prize money was at stake. Those who complained or instituted legal actions were regarded as subversive.<sup>(46)</sup> Moreover, residents returning to Port au Prince were refused entry to their own houses by soldiers now occupying them.

Such cases were regarded sympathetically by Whyte's new Conseil Privé.<sup>(47)</sup> It set up an emergency body to deal with them till the civil courts were restored and represented the colonists' fears to the commander. The Council's time was mainly taken up with these and other property cases, the examination of government contractors' accounts, requests for secours and for permits to leave the colony. It also produced projects for re-establishing the postal service and for re-organising hospital administration - a persistent concern. However, one of its first duties was to frame an ordonnance de police. Interestingly, its opening clause recalled the popul<sup>ace</sup> to its forgotten religious duties and threatened severe punishment of any irreverence towards church ceremonies or property. Soldiers, sailors and slaves were barred from taverns and drink shops and their opportunities for handling stolen goods were restricted. A strict pass-system for slaves was revived and a curfew was imposed at 10 p.m. Streets renamed by les anarchistes were renamed yet again.

The lawyer, François Anjo, one of the Conseil Privé, was made police chief of Port au Prince, a somewhat superfluous post, and the city's police force (archers and maréchaussée) was restored with a wage bill of 150,000 l. p.a. Rainville, principal administrator under Sonthonax, became Inspecteur de police and additionally Commissaire de l'arrière. He was an odd choice, opposed by both the Côté ouest and certain Royalists. Moderates, nevertheless, wished to profit from his long administrative experience, though in the event it was he who profited most.<sup>(48)</sup>

De Charmilly's presence in Whyte's Council is at first sight surprising. However, Williamson had made him Colonel en second of Montalembert's Legion and he had since broken with his léopardin colleagues in power at Kingston, and attached himself to the military faction now dominant in Saint Domingue.

In August, he set out for England, intending to put pressure on the Government and posing as the colonists' deputy on the strength of a few petitions he had worked up. Malouet, outmanoeuvred, declined to compete: 'je le laisse poursuivre sa brillante carrière'.<sup>(49)</sup>

On two points, all parties were agreed. Saint Domingue needed more troops and a resident governor who was tactful and could speak French. By July, few doubted that Williamson was the man for the job. One issue, however, was a source of bitter disagreement - the restoration of the law courts. Military men claimed that the political and financial state of the colony called for military government. The great sums needed to pay the lawyers' salaries, Montalembert observed, would be best spent on the army.<sup>(50)</sup> Lawyers, naturally, thought otherwise. One ex-magistrate, however, not re-appointed, claimed that as the best lawyers had all left Saint Domingue the lack of suitable candidates to become judges was another reason why the return to civil procedure was premature. There was, to be sure, a considerable backlog of cases waiting to be settled, especially concerning debt and inheritance. On the other hand, with a ten year moratorium on commercial debts and so many colonists absent, too poor or too busy in the camps to litigate, there was, some argued, little judicial business to be done. They were probably right.<sup>(51)</sup>

Yet, moderate opinion seems to have supported the measure in essence. Colonel Whitelocke, who had found the inhabitants of the Grand'Anse 'extremely litigious', thought it necessary to protect property and restore order. There was a danger that prosecutions might revive old hatreds, but without the courts of law military rule would certainly seem and could well prove to be unduly arbitrary.<sup>(52)</sup>

The Conseil Privé, for its part, feared in the restoration of the Conseil Supérieur the appearance of a rival. It knew it would be a bastion of Côte ouest influence. Williamson, however, disliked the 'strong monarchists', particularly those he called 'Emigrants (I almost say Adventurers)' who had served the Princes and possessed no property in Saint Domingue. 'I give office to none of them', he wrote with future annexation in the forefront of his mind.<sup>(53)</sup> He had friends to reward who had rendered England notable services and whom he thought men of ability. Isolated in Spanish Town, he saw Saint Domingue only through the eyes of his adviser, Cadusch. He thus assured Portland that opposition to the re-establishment of the law courts came 'entirely (from)



persons...guilty of every species of fraud and plunder' who feared prosecution.<sup>(54)</sup> Like Hawkesbury, he doubtless felt that, as Britain held Saint Domingue by the consent of the principal inhabitants and as long as they were footing the bill for the occupation, Britain owed them a civil administration 'on a respectable footing'.<sup>(55)</sup> Certainly, he felt free to proclaim to the colonists in mid-July that His Majesty expected 'greater conquests from his generosity than from his arms'.<sup>(56)</sup>

Accordingly, Williamson announced by the same proclamation the return of the Conseil Supérieur and lower courts. He also nullified all decrees and appointments made by the local commanders and dismissed with thanks their advisory councils. The administration was to be centralised and made uniform. All commissions for public office had to be validated by the Conseil Supérieur. The ambitions of General Whyte were thus curtailed. At Jérémie, on May 17th the sénéchaussée had already been reinstated with some pomp and the additional powers of a court of Vice-Admiralty. The Conseil Supérieur, at first delayed by Whyte and Montalembert, finally met at Port au Prince on August 18th.<sup>(57)</sup> The public outcry, even Williamson admitted, was considerable.

At the centre of the storm were Chauvin Dumas, named Chef de Justice and Premier Président of the Superior Council, and Bérault Saint Maurice, who became Procureur-Général. Dumas was generally acknowledged to be a talented avocat but was little known before the Revolution. Bérault Saint Maurice was a totally obscure court official with only 18 months' judicial experience. Whitelocke and Williamson praised his abilities but Billard thought him imaginative rather than learned: 'il a servi ici la cause Anglaise avec le vif désir de la Place qu'il occupe'. Both were about 33 years old and, with de Ronseray, the Deuxième Président, were the youngest men in the new tribunal, although the most senior.<sup>(58)</sup> Royalists, particularly former magistrates, were furious to see promoted men they thought responsible for the colony's ruin. They, the honnêtes gens, the vrais français, had waited patiently through the years of anarchy only to see the highest offices given to 'les Coryphées des Assemblées... devenues Royalistes depuis deux jours'. So thought creole ex-conseiller Kenscoff de la Pommeraye.<sup>(59)</sup> Like the author of the Précis Historique, he could not forgive Dumas for attacking the magistracy in the Saint Marc Assembly and then, as president of the Assembly of the West, dismissing all officiers appointed by the King. Even the much more moderate Billard called Dumas a 'Caméléon Révolutionnaire qui dit-on a occupé 52 places

dans les Municipalités et Assemblées'. For the vicomte Saint Pont, both Bérault and de Charmilly were traitors and bastards, 'vile... obscure beings'.<sup>(60)</sup>

Similar feelings were aroused by the appointment of the léopardin Jean-Baptiste Mongin as sénéchal of Port au Prince. Dumas' uncle, Etienne Vincendon-Dutour, who was made Substitut Procureur Général, had been even more prominent in the Revolution but his age and experience carried some weight.<sup>(61)</sup> Of the judges of the Conseil Supérieur, Baron and Salvau were outstandingly disreputable, while Bocquet, Conigliano and de Cullion père were ex-magistrates and considered good choices. The other seven were a mixed group but generally were accounted nonentities who would do what Cadusch said. All were thought to have paid Williamson's secretary ten portugaises each for their commissions. Cadusch protested: only a few had.<sup>(62)</sup>

The other judicial appointments reflect the same blend of extremism, ability and incompetence. Even had business been as normal in the occupied parishes, the number appointed was far more than was necessary and, to make matters worse, their salaries appeared to have been increased.<sup>(63)</sup> Those of the Conseil Supérieur alone totalled some 460,000 l. p.a. Williamson was unlucky in that the worsening military situation put his policy in an especially unfavourable light. Even so, well might de Jumécourt complain of the injustice of paying judges 20,000 l. p.a. to try imaginary cases, when Port au Prince was in a state of siege and plantations all round the town were going up in flames.<sup>(64)</sup>

Two contentious decisions by Williamson further embittered the controversy. Firstly, he declared that existing court decisions should be reconfirmed before being executed, and that all judgments made by magistrates appointed by Sonthonax or Polverel could be appealed. This was creating litigation at a stroke. It overthrew the 10 year moratorium on commercial debts and promised millions of livres in fees to the 290 new court officers.<sup>(65)</sup> Additionally, Williamson ordered that planters making a profit should pay  $\frac{1}{4}$  of their past commercial debts, providing this left them with enough to live on and maintain their property. This seemed reasonable, particularly in January when first decreed at the request of the Grand'Anse merchants.<sup>(66)</sup> It shows Williamson's desire for equity. Despite many contrary claims, it did not contravene the Capitulation, which merely authorised the Governor to grant debtors relief. (In fact, Malouet's original intention, until dissuaded by



de Charmilly, had been to grant relief only to ruined planters).<sup>(67)</sup>

However, if creditors deserved justice no less than debtors, Saint Domingue was a debtor society. The inhabitants of Port au Prince and the Cul de Sac petitioned in the autumn that most planters had no hope of meeting even a fraction of their past debts. The intact state of Arcahaye and the Grand'Anse was no excuse for a general law, it was claimed. Even there, revenues at a third of their former levels, were swallowed up by taxes, requisitions and greatly increased running costs. Furthermore, English merchants would cease offering credit, if their advances were used to pay off other creditors.<sup>(68)</sup>

The traditional tensions between planters, merchants and lawyers, as well as those between royalists and revolutionaries, were thus exacerbated. Bérault even sharpened the already fraught question of legal fees by actually adding new ones to the tariff, such as the petite chancellerie of the French parlements. Vincendon-Dutour, moreover, admitted that some judges were making illegal exactions.<sup>(69)</sup> In England, de Charmilly assiduously spread rumours about the new courts. No one trusted them, he said; everyone discussed the lawyers' pasts. Indeed, Bérault and Dumas lived up to expectations, when they declared, to Williamson's embarrassment, that they were not subject to the authority of the military commander, (Whyte, then Horneck). Only the Governor, they claimed, had the right to interfere with the civil administration.<sup>(70)</sup>

Faced with such pretensions, the Conseil Privé urged the now subdued General Whyte to assert what it thought to be his prerogatives. He should not, they said, let the Chef de Justice take over the Governor's power of censorship. In vain, they advised against allowing the journalist Gattereau to print his Affiches Américaines at Port au Prince, which Bérault had recommended. In the case of Paulin Mandel, a renegade priest who had collaborated with Rigaud's insurgents in 1791-2, it suggested Whyte prevent the Conseil Supérieur from prosecuting him lest it arouse factional disputes in the camps. He should therefore monopolise the haute pouvoir policier in criminal cases, and preferably deport Mandel. Whyte replied he did not need advice on the extent of his authority and generally ignored his Privy Council, never consulting it and often not bothering to sign the letters he sent it. De Jumécourt hardly ever attended its meetings.<sup>(71)</sup>

Similarly, Whyte's successor, Brigadier-General Horneck, only sought advice on trivial matters but his Privy Council,<sup>(72)</sup> partly nomi-

nated by Cadusch and Dumas, was to prove more self-assertive. One of its members, however, Billard, had been retained from the old Council.<sup>(73)</sup> Former president of the Club Massiac, he proved the most active of the councillors, drawing up numerous reports and writing privately to Malouet, who regarded him as an influential opponent of Cadusch, moderate and très instruit.<sup>(74)</sup>

In the same terms, Malouet described Billard's colleague, Belin de Villeneuve, who had likewise been active in the Club Massiac. He, however, was a unique figure, perhaps the most generally respected man in Saint Domingue. An entirely self-made creole planter and estate attorney, he had connections with the Royalists in Europe but was considered to be above factional disputes.<sup>(75)</sup>

This could not be said of the Côté ouest appointments, Vincendon-Dutour, de Léaumont père and the secretary, Jouette. According to Billard, Vincendon-Dutour's ideas were now assez saines, except that he wanted to destroy the Conseil Privé, as it prevented the Conseil Supérieur from ruling Saint Domingue. De Léaumont, he thought knowledgeable on business matters, though possessing 'de bonnes vues avec un caractère trop facile'.<sup>(76)</sup> Gueydon was an upright and trusted Cul de Sac planter and Legras a wealthy refugee from the North.

Otherwise an obscure figure, Billard is the man whose opinions we know best, thanks to a memoir he wrote to Malouet.<sup>(77)</sup> The two men's principles, he claimed, were the same, adding that Saint Domingue had only accepted the British because the Commissioners were freeing the slaves and plotting to kill the whites. Billard wanted an assembly to be called only after the war. It should be small, based on wealth and not allowed to overrule the Governor, who alone could maintain slavery. He had favoured the restoration of the law courts but not the main appointments made. In the future, he wanted three provincial Conseils Supérieurs, smaller, cheaper, bringing justice closer to the litigant - the usual southerner's demand. The Administration should be French with different officials handling receipts and expenditure.<sup>(78)</sup> Above all, it should be accountable to the Conseil Privé, acting, as Malouet said, as a Chambre des Comptes. If not, it was in danger of running up huge bills at the colony's expense. To his mind, the Conseil Privé should be not only a guide for the British commander but also 'un simulacre... de représentation Coloniale'. It ought to watch over colonial funds, the treatment of colonists and the making of laws. Instead, it was merely



an English-type Council, he thought, (and in fact considerably less powerful). On November 22nd, the Conseil informed Horneck that its duty was not simply to give advice when asked 'mais encore de provoquer des décisions dans les cas où elles leur paroissent nécessaires'.<sup>(79)</sup>

Billard was worried that the ten year moratorium on debts would make some planters irretrievably indebted, destroying the hopes of their old creditors. Yet, he condemned Williamson's 25% law as a waste of time benefiting only lawyers. Vincendon-Dutour went further and on behalf of the Conseil declared that neither the Governor nor the King had the power to thus break the Capitulation.<sup>(80)</sup> The Council also condemned as contrary to the Capitulation, and dangerously vague and inflammatory, a letter Williamson had written to Bérault Saint Maurice subsequently registered by the Conseil Supérieur as a law and published in Gattereau's newspaper. It authorised Bérault to prosecute with a view to sequestration as friends of the Civil Commissioners those deported to Jamaica and singled out by Cadusch. It greatly alarmed the mulattoes at a critical juncture and shows Williamson in a poor light. The Conseil Privé wanted the letter withdrawn. Like the previous Council, it urged that the censorship of publications be performed not by the judiciary but by the commander, which in effect meant themselves. It also opposed the creation of unnecessary posts by Dumas and Bérault, and this advice Williamson heeded in late November.<sup>(81)</sup>

Further conflict with the lawyers was avoided by the declaration of martial law on October 25th.

In late autumn 1794, Williamson learnt he had been made a Knight of the Bath and Governor of St. Domingo. He never wanted the post, it seems, hoping rather that success in Saint Domingue would lead to the military command in Bengal <sup>(1)</sup>. Sent out in 1790 to command the Jamaica garrison when war with Spain was feared, he had only become Governor of Jamaica because of the sudden death of the Earl of Effingham. Some expected he would be replaced by a more high-born candidate <sup>(2)</sup>, but he was confirmed in the post, having seen Jamaica through a dangerous crisis and proving extremely popular with its inhabitants. Deferential to the Assembly, lax in enforcing the Acts of Trade and indulgent in his assistance to French refugees, he was much praised for his 'mildness', occasionally so for his ability <sup>(3)</sup>. After his dispute with Brigadier-General Whyte, all agreed he should be made Governor of Saint Domingue. Before Williamson could leave Spanish Town, however, he had to wait for a replacement. This took six months.

(i) The Campaign, October 1794 - July 1795. During this period, British fortunes in the Caribbean reached their lowest ebb. The French Republic, while consolidating its position in Europe, drove the British from Guadeloupe in December and from St. Lucia the following June. More alarmingly, in March revolution and race war spread to the British island of Grenada, then to St. Vincent, while French agents were active in Jamaica and may have helped cause the Maroon War that broke out in July <sup>(4)</sup>. For want of men, the British forces in Saint Domingue could do nothing but hang on in increasingly difficult circumstances. In late August 1794, Dundas had announced the dispatch of 2000 reinforcements. Though embarked in September, contrary winds kept them in the Channel, incredibly, until February 1795 <sup>(5)</sup>. They could never have saved Léogane nor the Artibonite and were perhaps too few to permit an offensive but, nonetheless, would have been of infinitely greater use arriving at the end instead of at the start of the sickly season. The British might then have enjoyed the luxury of two fresh regiments free from disease for six months. They would have prevented morale in the occupied parishes sinking to the depths it did, for in the months before Williamson's arrival hundreds of colonists left for North America, while unknown numbers of blacks, free coloureds and petits blancs fled to the Republican zone. Horneck, it was said, considered abandoning Port au Prince <sup>(6)</sup>.



TABLE 1

Regional Distribution of British Troops

Fit, Sick and Convalescent, 26th October 1794

	<u>Fit</u>	<u>Sick and Convalescent</u>	<u>Total</u>
Port au Prince	448 (45%)	539	987
Mole	171 (36%)	302	473
Saint Marc	27 (45%)	33	60
Arcahaye	38 (100%)	0	38
Tiburon	64 (47%)	72	136
Jérémie	92 (54%)	76	170
<hr/>			
British troops	840 (45%)	1022	1862
<hr/>			
Colonial troops	427 (67%)	213	640
<hr/>			
Total	1267 (51%)	1235	2502

Source: WO 17/1986. Only rank and file are given. British officers and NCO's numbered 344, while the three colonial corps listed possessed 190.

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The great surface area of the capital required very long lines of defence and these were dominated by the surrounding heights. All that took place on the parade ground could be seen and heard by the black insurgents hiding in the hills overlooking the eastern perimeter or camped on the enormous Morne l'Hôpital rising 3000 feet directly to the south. Moreau de Saint-Méry had thought the town indefensible. On the other hand, de Charmilly ridiculed the idea that it could fall to an enemy without artillery or trained troops <sup>(7)</sup>. The British, nonetheless, took great pains in elaborating the capital's fortifications. A ditch and earthworks were thrown up round the town and redoubts, small forts and blockhouses added at intervals. The 'citadel' of the system, now Fort National, was an extremely costly stone fort containing bomb-proof underground chambers and a huge blockhouse. It was erected on a hill above the Belair district dominating the town and looking out on to the plain of Cul de Sac <sup>(8)</sup>, where 10 miles away Montalembert similarly turned Croix des Bouquets into an impressive stronghold. The only communication between the two places was by armed convoys of wagons. These were frequently attacked but Montalembert's legion, with about 350 local militia, inflicted severe losses on their assailants and inspired confidence in the capital.

This was shaken by the sudden loss of Léogane, and though in November the blacks pulled back from Port au Prince, they turned in December to attacking Fort Bizoton that guarded the coast road two miles to the south. On the 5th, Pompé's men crept up unseen to the ramparts as the moon set and tried to climb through the embrasures. As at Fort l'Acul, the tiny garrison responded instantly. A brig anchored offshore began cannonading the blacks swarming down the mountain side. Within 45 minutes, 250 lay dead and the rest withdrew. The defenders had lost five men; and yet, the attacks went on (9).

Throughout 1795, the 70 men at Bizoton had to be relieved weekly by sea. Though the fever epidemic had abated in November, the damage was already done and the Port au Prince garrison continued to dwindle under the strain of constant guard duty and overdrinking. In late October, it had about 450 British fit and 540 sick or convalescent; in late December, 366 fit and 462 sick, plus 550 armed colonials (10). Simply to mount a night guard along its far-flung ramparts required 500 men. Hence troops rarely got a full night's sleep. At Bizoton, they were always armed before dawn. Lt-Col. Markham, town commandant and son of the Archbishop of York, never went to bed before the morning gun (11). Of the 4000 soldiers sent to Saint Domingue, under 1800 lived to see the new year. 'Lord have mercy on us', Williamson lamented, 'for we are poor insignificant devils in this Hemisphere'. (12).

The colonists, who complained frequently at this period of poor relations between the army and navy and of warships idle in the ports, did not realize how severely the navy had also suffered. In July, August and September, the Jamaica Station had lost over 440 seamen and, although mortality and morbidity dropped sharply for the next twelve months, the commodore was already 600 men short by October and achieving little success with his press gangs (13). Consequently, privateers of all descriptions were able to raid coastal ports in Jamaica and Saint Domingue, cut out ships in the small harbours and by mid 1795 bring trade between the two colonies to a standstill. Hispaniola's coastline is exceptionally long and indented, and the Jamaica Station lacked small, fast vessels. Laveaux's marine flibustière, Rigaud's south coast seamen, American, Spanish and British freebooters could generally outstrip the British cruisers or lie close in to the shore out of reach of a frigate. Even so, the deadliest enemy was said to be the armed longboats that put out from Léogane and Gonaives to board vessels becalmed off the coast. The fighting at sea was as savage as on land (14).



The Jamaica Station, whose responsibilities included Jamaica, Honduras and the Bahamas, clearly could not patrol, reconnoitre, ferry supplies and provide permanent support for all the outposts in Saint Domingue as well. As a result, in early December the Republicans finally captured the 60 miles of coast between Fesles and the Spanish frontier, a wild region of forests and mountains, said to produce annually six million lbs. of coffee. Till then, 100 or so local planters, supplied by the British, had endeavoured to keep it independent <sup>(15)</sup>. On Christmas Day, Rigaud appeared once again before Tiburon, this time with a flotilla. No frigate was there to oppose him, only a schooner on which the colonists' wives and children had taken refuge. Landing siege artillery, the Republicans sank it with all hands and then began bombarding the British positions above the bay. Perhaps numbering 3000, 800 of them were thought to be troops of the line. For four days, shells rained down on the great fort with devastating effect. When a bomb exploded in the ditch they were crouching in, Kina's men finally panicked, lowered the drawbridge and fled. The British and colonists then effected a desperate retreat by mountain tracks through an ambush to les Irois, where a frigate halted the Republicans' advance. Of Tiburon's garrison of 450, 300 had perished <sup>(16)</sup>.

The disaster at Tiburon had serious repercussions. At Jérémie some 200 mulattoes rebelled (although it is not clear if this was a direct response or provoked by a decision to round them up). Their leaders were executed and 100 were imprisoned at the Mole, where a plot in Contade's legion was also discovered <sup>(17)</sup>. Harsh conditions and Laveaux's agents similarly produced a conspiracy among men of all colours at Saint Marc, and in late January Montalembert claimed to have unearthed a plot to overthrow the British linking men in his legion with revolutionaries at Port au Prince. More executions followed. 'We have nothing to fear from an external foe', Williamson opined, 'but everything from within'. <sup>(18)</sup>.

However, one must remember that the Republican zone was no less troubled by internal strife. In particular, the northern mulattoes began to chafe at Laveaux's reassertion of central control in alliance with the blacks. In November, those of le Cap rioted and may have arrested Laveaux; some wanted him dead. This in turn created, or provided an excuse for, dissension in Toussaint's Artibonite Cordon, which Brisbane then opportunely attacked in concert with forces from l'Arcahaye and Mirebalais <sup>(19)</sup>. Some of the mulattoes who had betrayed Brisbane in September had, it seems, promptly betrayed Toussaint. He had decided since then, being short of ammunition, that the town had become too strong to be attacked. 'Ses propres ruines', he observed, 'lui servent de remparts' <sup>(20)</sup>. Instead, the black leader had

turned against the Spaniards and also tried to revive the plantations around Petite Rivière, which Brisbane was now trying to burn. Deploying a large force of cavalry, Toussaint counter-attacked and retrieved a difficult situation, as in June, with immense energy and skill. Dissension between his subordinates was patched over and at the end of December he was able to undertake a whirlwind campaign in the north-east where he mangled the army of Jean-François (21).

By this time, Saint Marc was defended by some 80 British and about 1250 colonial troops. Well over a quarter were in hospital. The provision grounds in the Artibonite plain had suffered greatly from the fighting and from drought, and by February a food shortage had become a famine. Great numbers of people, particularly after the plot against Brisbane had failed, fled across the river to the Republican zone (22). However, despite reports to the contrary, Toussaint did not dislodge the Anglo-Royalists from their posts on the left bank. When the Spanish abandoned Verrettes in December, the British took it over at the inhabitants' request (23). A lack of ammunition made Toussaint's subordinate commanders hesitant; it also provided at least the occasion for many of the disputes in the Republicans' camp. In the second half of January, Brisbane, reinforced from l'Arcahaye, made frequent attacks in the plain. His death on February 4th, shot in the head, came as a great blow to British fortunes. Verrettes was immediately abandoned. Toussaint, having disposed of his unruly subordinate Blancazenave and received new supplies of ammunition, advanced across the plain and occupied without a fight the hills above the bourg (24).

The following month, the other outstanding young officer in the British forces was also killed in a hail of bullets. Rigaud, turning his attention from the South, had established a battery overlooking Fort Bizoton. One hundred troops were rushed from the Mole to Port au Prince and on March 26th Lieutenant Colonel Markham led a sortie from the capital which led to his death and the capture of the battery. In a headlong charge, Montalembert went on to kill over 700, he claimed, of Rigaud's men, but Bizoton remained under siege and from new positions was subjected to daily bombardment. The navy attempted to create a diversion at Léogane but failed. News then arrived that Saint Marc, too, was under bombardment (25). If it fell, Toussaint's army might drive southwards to join Rigaud. The people of Port au Prince were openly disaffected. In the whole colony, there were under 1000 redcoats fit for service. The British position was never so precarious.



Horneck discussed withdrawing to the Mole, the most secure of Britain's footholds in the colony. Even there, however, sentries were sniped at and patrols beyond its perimeter defences were often ambushed. Its advanced posts had had to be abandoned months before <sup>(26)</sup>. There was cause for relief, therefore, when some 1700 troops arrived from England on April 24th. The pressure on Port au Prince eased. Rigaud withdrew his batteries. Twenty-eight days of continual cannonading had had no effect on Fort Bizoton <sup>(27)</sup>. Though Toussaint Louverture apparently concerted measures with him, Rigaud seems to have failed to win the co-operation of Dieudonné and Pompé. He reappeared briefly in May but quickly retreated. If none of them was able to take the isolated Fort Bizoton, then Port au Prince, now bristling with defence works, might well feel secure.

At Saint Marc, too, mid-April saw a sudden reversal of fortune. Toussaint's plans to attack the town were discovered by some of Dessources's Chasseurs who had infiltrated the dances in the Republican camps and then destroyed one of them in a daring night raid. Nonetheless, dawn broke on the 13th revealing batteries that had been erected during the night and that began to bombard the small forts in the hills around the town. The attackers greatly outnumbered the defenders and for two days the situation was critical. Then, Toussaint's guns were dismounted and Dessources's 200 Chasseurs, descending from the Hauteurs de Saint Marc, rushed his positions. A rout must have followed, for Laveaux tells us the defeat was heavy and forced Toussaint on to the defensive. He retired to Gros Morne and apparently evacuated for a time the Artibonite and even Gonaives <sup>(28)</sup>.

A stalemate ensued for some months. No sooner was the British contingent reinforced, than it began to be whittled away again by disease. In the five companies sent to Saint Marc, almost every soldier was hospitalized by early July <sup>(29)</sup>. At the same time, most of Toussaint's attention seems to have been absorbed by the political, social and racial conflicts that undermined the new Republican polity in the North. The Spanish, too, made some advance against him <sup>(30)</sup>. Consequently, in the thickly-wooded mountains behind Saint Marc and Port au Prince a war of posts and ambushes developed, enemy patrols sometimes clashing in the forests. It was doubtless the same along the Irois river, now the front line of the Grand' Anse. Toussaint's forces, meanwhile, increased daily and his spies were at work. In July, he busily manoeuvred in the highlands above the Artibonite. While avoiding a confrontation in the plain, he was specifically hoping to impress the inhabitants of the Mirebalais region to the west. They were mainly free

coloureds and many wanted, his agents informed him, to drive out the Spanish occupying forces and join the Republicans. (31).

The basin of Mirebalais was a natural fortress surrounded by mountains. (32). A bulwark to the plain of Cul de Sac, controlling north-south communications and the trade route between Port au Prince and Santo Domingo, it was strategically vital. Its ranches, moreover, were an important source of fresh beef and its plantations, of cotton, indigo and coffee, were exceptionally well preserved. Hence, when in late July its inhabitants rebelled against the Spaniards and called in Toussaint's troops, there was panic in the British camp. Simultaneously, the Maroon War broke out in Jamaica. With slaves and free coloureds already in revolt in six West Indian islands, it seemed that de Charmilly's warnings about the subversion of the New World were coming true.

(ii) Martial Law and the Rise of Montalembert. For much of this period, the occupied parishes remained without a judiciary under martial law. The military was able to arrest and deport whom it pleased. The Governor's decrees could not be registered; criminals went unpunished and civil disputes untried; the gaols filled up with alarming speed. Despite their mistrust of the magistracy, Horneck's Privy Council was calling by late November for the return of the law courts. (33).

Although no-one was exempted from the billeting of troops, the army had few qualms about evicting the occupants of houses it wished to use. The Belair district of Port au Prince was reserved exclusively for soldiers and many outlying buildings were demolished to provide material for the fortifications. Hoping the government would grant compensation, the Conseil Privé got such properties valued and spoke up for the dispossessed. (34) It also overruled Mole Saint Nicholas Council when it was tempted to assume judicial powers itself. Such affairs were of no interest to the military commanders. With Port au Prince facing destruction, one can see why Horneck was not over-concerned if judges supplanted notaries in drawing up certain types of inventory during martial law. But of course it mattered to notaries and judges, especially as business was bad and the cost of living sky high.

However, pressured by Bérault and Dumas, Williamson was finally induced to end martial law on January 12th. The move was opposed by many army officers, particularly the increasingly powerful baron de Montalembert. The Cadusch faction, he complained, was trying to rule Saint Domingue and he would have nothing to do with it. If it tried to prejudice Williamson against him, he warned, he would leave the colony (35). The defender of Port au Prince, he could afford to make such threats, for he had the confidence



of the propertied classes. Yet, he was disliked, notably by the planters of Cul de Sac themselves. The requisitions he made on their property, the fines he imposed for disobedience and the personal fortune he was starting to amass, earned him bitter enemies. Abandoned estates tended to be stripped. While some royalists almost idolised him, others like O'Gorman and de Jumécourt (soldiers but also Cul de Sac planters), were already beginning to oppose him <sup>(36)</sup>. The lawyer who wrote the Précis Historique hated him.

He depicts Montalembert as a lawless mercenary, who in order to maintain his position exploited popular fears of the free coloureds and revolutionary petits blancs by fabricating 'plots'. Since the rebellions at Saint Marc and Léogane, all mulattoes were regarded with intense suspicion. The colonists were especially uneasy that 'democratical assassins' deported from Saint Domingue might return to serve in the colonial corps after being recruited in Jamaican gaols. Yet, according to the Précis Historique, nobody was fooled (except the British) when, on January 29th, Montalembert denounced a new conspiracy in the West. Eleven of his legionaries with past 'records' were court martialled and those not executed were murdered on their way to prison. With the complicity of de Rivière, majeur de la place, another 15 (apparently innocent) inhabitants of Port au Prince were tried by a council of war and shot. Horneck then informed his Conseil Privé it need no longer meet. Desertions from the Legion ensued and a further decline in public spirit, everyone fearing to be denounced by the next intrigant who would take advantage of British weakness. <sup>(37)</sup> Free coloureds figured prominently among the executed and even more so among those imprisoned or deported as suspects. Yet, though the Précis Historique presents Montalembert as an oppressor of the mulattoes, Royalists claimed he was regarded as their protector against Côté ouest extremists who wished to exterminate them <sup>(38)</sup>. Certainly, in Jean-Baptiste Lapointe, the baron had a most powerful ally but his relations, too, with the free coloureds, were rather ambivalent. Only by executing scores of his fellows had he gained the (hesitant) trust of the whites and made Arcahaye the most flourishing and secure region in the occupied zone <sup>(39)</sup>. It at first seemed that Bérault and Dumas would win him to their side, but in this important preliminary contest the victor proved to be Montalembert.

The military crisis in April further enhanced his position. When martial law was proclaimed on the 19th, he became commander of all colonial troops and was charged with the defence of Port au Prince. Ominously, he ordered a census of all people and property. Absentees' houses were distributed among army officers and in the plain his men

were encouraged to think of absentee property as their future reward (40). The Côte ouest were no less hungry for spoils but had a less direct approach. Their chance for retaliation soon came. Civil law was restored on May 21st and five days later Williamson arrived at Port au Prince accompanied by Cadusch.

(iii) The Apogee and Overthrow of the 'Côte ouest'. Although the military situation continued to decline, the arrival of the honnête et bienfaisant Governor did something to restore confidence in the British presence and stem the tide of emigration. A crowd of prisoners detained without trial was immediately freed from the pontoons. The Capitulation, Williamson proclaimed, applied to the whole colony; there would be no right of conquest. Taxation would not be increased. Absentee property would be sequestered but none confiscated without judicial process. (41). Moreover, he got to know the colonists. A bon vivant, speaking fluent French and fond of late-night drinking and story-telling, he entertained from 14 to 20 guests a day. (42).

At the same time, however, rivalry between the Cadusch and Montalembert factions increased. When the Conseil Supérieur met on June 1st, speeches were made alluding to imaginary plots and illegal courts martial. (43). Williamson offered Montalembert a seat in the new Conseil Privé but he preferred to stay in the field. De Ronseray, the 2<sup>me</sup> President, was added instead and Billard and Gueydon dropped. The two councils thus came closer together. A burst of legislative activity ensued.

The Privy Council first drew up a law sequestering the property of all absentees and making their employees liable to dismissal. It offered enormous scope for graft and created a storm of protest. (44). Emigration had cut the free population by at least half in the past year and was continuing. (45) So, to complement the absentee decree, tighter controls were placed on the issue of passports. Maritime cases were taken out of the hands of the ordinary courts and a provisional court of Vice-Admiralty established in the capital with one French and two English judges. The postal service and police were reformed and the billeting of troops became compulsory only in an emergency. Williamson thought the British owed their survival in Saint Domingue to the black levies they had raised. (46). It was decided, therefore, to extend what many still regarded as a dangerous experiment and to raise a corps of Chasseurs in every parish. Regulations and terms of service were now standardised. Planters were to supply 1 in 15 of their slaves and



would be paid 2,000 livres for each recruit. After five years' service the men would be freed. The new law's preamble stressed that the maintenance of slavery and the fate of the sugar colonies were at stake.

The existing black corps had fought with loyalty and bravery and most whites (unlike in Jamaica) now seemed to have accepted them as a necessary evil. (47) However, it seems that the measure was rather less equably received in Arcahaye and Jérémie, (which were not represented in the Conseil Privé), than in the districts where work-forces were left idle. It was feared, furthermore, by the free coloureds, who saw the Chasseurs as a counter-poise to their influence and an instrument of persecution. (48) Officers in the corps, like officials of the Administration of Absentee Property, were to be whites who had resided at least five years in the colony. Designed to exclude Montalembert's émigrés from positions of power, as well as to ensure those officering the blacks could speak creole, this clause was often ignored. However, even in the Cul de Sac and Arcahaye, we find enemies of Montalembert and Lapointe commanding the new corps.

The British Government, after lengthy discussions, had accepted that black troops were essential in the West Indies: almost every officer there said so. Dundas and Portland, however, were displeased with Williamson's costly terms of service. After at first reluctantly accepting the granting of liberty, Dundas had forbidden it in December 1794, when it was too late, and then instructed that British officers were to be used. (49) Williamson, though, was on strong ground. Since the Republic had freed all slaves, the offer of liberty was unavoidable. As only men were freed, there would be no long-term addition to the free coloured population. Besides, after five years, he said, most recruits would re-enlist or be dead. (50)

Faced with the anarchy of Saint Domingue's profane and selfish society, Malouet and others often stressed that order and subordination could be inculcated into all its classes through religion. (51) Just as he recommended émigré lawyers, administrators and soldiers to purge and renew Dominguan society, he also wished to use émigré priests. (52) The British agreed. French and Irish priests were sent out and, despite Cadusch's objections, an Apostolic Prefect was appointed, a former colonial cure living in England, the Abbé d'Osmond. His deputy in Saint Domingue, Guillaume Lecun, was already there. He now produced

an interesting proclamation extolling 'le nom chéri de Georges III, protecteur de la religion'. Because of 'l'orgueil et la philosophie... un esprit d'empiété et d'indépendance', it said, Europe's oldest throne and America's most prosperous colony had been smitten by the hand of God. At every Sunday mass, it decreed; Domine salvum fac regem should be sung and a sermon given, specifically mentioning the King of England.

It was in England, where Malouet and de Charmilly were both active, that the first steps were taken to topple the Côté ouest faction now supreme. Portland suggested to Williamson, and at length insisted, that Bérault and Dumas, though deserving of reward, should be replaced by men better qualified for high office, specifically by magistrates of the French parlements recommended by Malouet. The Conseil Supérieur, he thought extremely expensive and larger than necessary. (53) It was an embarrassing situation for Williamson. The Conseil Privé, its esprit colon offended, protested to Portland at local men being replaced by Etrangers ignorant of the colony. (54) The dilemma was to show the Governor at his weakest and most extravagant. Two magistrates, Marnière and Jonquière, were dismissed apparently for being unqualified, the latter receiving a 'loan' of £30. This was a perfect occasion to reduce the size of the Conseil Supérieur. However, Williamson chose instead, while raising Laborie and another lawyer to the magistrature, to compensate Bérault and Dumas by giving them new posts within the Council at their old salaries. This involved displacing without indemnity the Council's venerable doyen, creating a new post of sous-doyen and riding roughshod over various legal technicalities. In addition, Bérault received 25,000 livres; the 2<sup>me</sup> President's salary was increased and an utterly superfluous post of Advocate-General (based on British and French precedent) was invented to reward Vincendon-Dutour, Dumas' uncle, for his part in the deal. The affair was all the more scandalous and unnecessary in that Bérault was also made a procureur du roi and Dumas 'Deputy' for the colony in England at 36,000 livres per annum. (55)

Malouet was also named a 'Deputy'. Willing to work with men of all parties, he was a correspondent of Cadusch and was too influential a figure to ignore. These new creations of the Conseil Privé, though superficially resembling the British Colonial Agents or French West Indian deputies at Versailles were in fact intended to give the Council control of the colony. Designated as the sole channel of communication between the colonists and the British Government, the Deputies were to



present 'tous les plans qui doivent donner lieu aux loix et réglemens destinés à gouverner Saint Domingue'. The Côté ouest thus hoped to screen out their enemies in England as they had in the West Indies and, furthermore, gain a dominant say in legislation. To underline its new constitutional pretensions, the Conseil Privé now adopted the title of 'les propriétaires-planters composant le Conseil Colonial'. (56)

Malouet had warned Hawkesbury well over a year before: if the Governor did not keep control of it, the Conseil Privé 's'érigerait bientôt au-dessus du Gouvernement et les troubles recommenceroient'. (57)

Most property-owners, it was said, loathed the Cadusch faction. Considered responsible for the colony's ruin, (58) its unpopularity now greatly increased. The Conseil Privé had to close down most printing presses for 'upsetting order'. One extreme anti-revolutionary living at Jérémie wrote bitterly to a British M.P. that the government was controlled by the 'same barbarians' as in 1790. The Privy Council, he said, was a secret revolutionary body like the Committee of Public Safety; it stifled the voice of the majority. (59) Friction with the Montalembert faction became intense. On June 15th the planters of Cul de Sac petitioned against the behaviour of the baron's legion in the plain. Montalembert denounced their demands as revolutionary and complained that his military operations were being hindered by jealous opponents. Royalist officers, others said, were being persecuted by Cadusch's men. (60) Williamson, however, kept a neutral stance. Surrounded by ex-léopards, he was probably not aware just how unpopular they were; colonists were afraid to speak against them. (61) Then, on July 7th, Cadusch was killed in a duel. Montalembert sent a naval officer to pick a quarrel with him. The baron meanwhile led his legion in the capture of several enemy camps in the mountains behind Port au Prince.

From this position of strength, he asked Williamson to deport several of his enemies. Using familiar tactics, he claimed that certain escaped prisoners had hatched a plot against the Governor's life. Colonel Murray and Major Spencer supported him, saying they had been robbed. Williamson remained unmoved. He even freed more prisoners. Montalembert thereupon resigned and withdrew to the Mole, pretending to be leaving for London. Immediately, events went his way. His officers organised petitions amongst the merchants of Port au Prince and the managers and attorneys of the Cul de Sac demanding his recall. Threateningly, they noted those who refused to sign, but the public alarm

was probably genuine, for, a few days after Montalembert left, the mulattoes of Mirebalais hoisted the Republican flag and called on those in the occupied zone to join them. At the same time, the all-powerful Lapointe added to the general outcry by denouncing the Côté ouest for planning to use the Black Chasseurs to massacre the free coloureds. As the Republicans advanced south to the Cul de Sac, some mulattoes rebelled at Croix des Bouquets. <sup>(62)</sup> The future of the occupation hung in the balance. Williamson was critically short of all munitions and especially field artillery. Five hundred of his troops were in hospital. <sup>(63)</sup> He had no choice but to declare martial law, and recall Montalembert.

Pressured by public opinion, de Ronseray resigned and Dumas, Vincendon-Dutour and later Bérault left the colony. Williamson suspended the Conseil Privé and sent Belin in haste to pacify Lapointe. He and Montalembert thereupon presented a list of demands. Dumas, Vincendon, de Léaumont, Jouette, Mongin, de Montalet and eight others were to be deported. The maréchaussée and militia should be organised as in the past, with mulattoes receiving full opportunity for promotion. The Code Noire was to be registered by the Conseil Supérieur, making whites and coloureds officially equal. Other demands included a new Conseil Privé (retaining Belin de Villeneuve), the limitation of the number of black troops and permission to make overtures to the mulattoes of Mirebalais. Williamson's reply was firm. He could not deport men without cause, nor undertake government reforms in the present crisis. It was premature, he said, to fix a limit to the number of black troops. On the other hand, he pointed out, many of the proscribed men had resigned their posts. Dumas' deputyship had been withdrawn and the corps of Chasseurs raising at Port au Prince was to be dropped. As for equality for the mulattoes, Williamson had already speedily drawn up a decree for Belin to take with him. He added, rather speciously, that the Code Noire was already in force, as the Capitulation had confirmed all existing colonial laws. Lapointe was certainly at liberty to approach the mulattoes of Mirebalais, as long as he did not upset relations between Spain and Britain. This answer, and the supplies of cash and arms that accompanied it, satisfied the coloured leader, though he still wanted the Code Noire to be registered. <sup>(64)</sup> .

Lapointe now began to use his influence among the free coloureds of Mirebalais. As early as November 1794, as Spanish power was collapsing, he had wanted to seize this valuable parish before Toussaint's



agents could infiltrate and 'republicanise' it. Its inhabitants, he thought, were half pro-British, half pro-French. Billard and, surprisingly, Malouet had supported the scheme but the British refused, having belatedly decided they needed active Spanish assistance. (65)

In December, Madrid rejected proposals for a formal agreement on co-operation, but for the next six months Dundas and Grenville pursued instead plans to send Malouet to Santo Domingo to bring about the effective joint action he continually stressed was essential. (66)

Mirebalais continued to export its produce via Port au Prince and Arcahaye but in May the Spaniards of Santo Domingo cut off the vital cattle trade that fed the British forces. Those of Cuba had already done so. (67) Hence, the pastures of Mirebalais assumed an increased importance, and the expulsion of the Spaniards in fact saved Britain from a diplomatic dilemma. (68)

The plateau of Mirebalais and the adjoining mountains of Grands Bois and Trou d'Eau contained some 450 small plantations where between 5,000 and 12,000 blacks were still working. In Toussaint's words, they were 'des habitations magnifiques, dans le meilleur état possible, bien cultivées et en grand rapport. Tous les cultivateurs sont chez eux et travaillent bien'. He could not have taken the area, he said, but for the complicity of its inhabitants. (69) Most were free coloureds. However, nearly 500 were whites who had mainly fled from the North. The British, it is important to note, controlled all Mirebalais' outlets to the sea and could now offer its coloured planters civil equality as well as the preservation of their slave property. Many probably had relations in the mountains of Arcahaye and only a small clique, it seems, had called in the Republican forces. It is hard to say if these troops were guilty of 'excesses', as Williamson thought, but Lapointe's overtures were certainly well received, and when over 1,000 British reinforcements reached Port au Prince Williamson felt confident he could take the region. (70)

On August 15th, the whites guarding Grands Bois and Trou d'Eau under the creole Lavergne surrendered to colonial forces without a fight. Toussaint, furious, dispatched Christophe Mornet 'afin d'exterminer et ruiner toute cette caste de Royalistes'. At the end of the month, however, he was obliged to withdraw as five columns led by Montalembert and Lapointe converged on Mirebalais and were joined by many of the inhabitants. The campaign, fought in pouring rain, was well-planned but less well carried out. The colonial troops that came through the mountains from Arcahaye disobeyed orders and allowed Christophe



Mornet to escape, carrying off booty and prisoners. More seriously, Dessources' column, that advanced up the Artibonite and took Verrettes, was completely routed when it had to bear the brunt of Toussaint's counter-attack. (71) Nevertheless, the capture of Mirebalais was of crucial importance for the British forces and a personal triumph for Montalembert and Lapointe. This was noted in Whitehall. Dundas retracted his earlier decision to split up Montalembert's unwieldy Legion and awarded the baron the local rank of Brigadier-General. Rather late in the day, he now strongly recommended that the free coloureds be granted full civil and political rights. (72)

Williamson, like a man awaking from a dream, was forced to see his government demolished and rebuilt around him. Enemies of the Côté ouest now freely told him how deceived he had been. When Lambert and de Cotte, the new Chef de justice and Procureur General, arrived in September, reconstruction began in earnest. The Governor had to admit in the preamble of a decree reforming the judiciary, that many of his previous rulings had been contrary to traditional usage and not justified by circumstances. (73) Till now, he had defended his past appointees as talented Anglophiles calumniated by jealous rivals. Henceforth, he called them the best of a bad lot, telling Portland he was indebted to Lambert for dismissing certain mauvais sujets 'unavoidably placed' in the law courts. (74) His controversial decree on the repayment of debts was deemed contrary to the Capitulation and quashed. Retrenchment became the order of the day. All the novel fees, extra powers and new posts created for the Conseil Supérieur were abolished along with the many commissions Williamson had granted for areas not yet conquered.

Montalembert, quick to befriend Lambert and de Cotte, was unassailable. Abetted by the hard-liner, Colonel Murray, he had little trouble getting his critics arrested. (75) Murray was made Inspector and Commissary of Colonial Corps, replacing Cadusch's father-in-law, de Valtièrre, now dead. Much concerned with law and order, he was responsible for tightening up the laws concerning 'stray' slaves and the sale of alcohol, and also for having investigated the finances of la Grand' Anse. Here various irregularities were discovered and Cadusch's friend Faveranges was called to account. (76) Failing to get Mongin dismissed, the léopardin seneschal of Port au Prince, Murray instead had his police powers reduced and partly transferred to Montalembert's henchman de Bussy. A naval officer previously stationed two years in Saint Domingue, he became chief of the capital's



police and maréchaussée, and was to exercise a corrupt and petty tyranny. (77)

The new Conseil Privé, to accord with public opinion, was made up of men largely unconnected with past politics. Not noticeably less creole than its predecessor, it was certainly more military, more northern and more royalist in character. (78) Its first duty was to redraft the decree sequestering absentee property. While its predecessor had been tougher towards the absentees than the British intended, the new Council actually remonstrated in favour of those proprietors unable to leave France. This aside, the Council's handling of this difficult issue proved it to be concerned above all with what was practical. If, in Arcahaye and the Cul de Sac the new decree proved as unworkable as the old, it was not because of its 'obscurity', as its critics claimed, but because Lapointe and Montalembert (tacitly) refused to enforce it. (79)

Two items of great expense, the colonial corps and maréchaussée, were also overhauled. (80) Like the émigré regiments in Europe, they were undermanned and top-heavy with officers. (81) Unlike their European counterparts, however, Williamson had generously placed both on the same footing as British regiments. Contades' small corps at the Mole had twice the number of general officers needed and for a time was actually paid at above the British rate. Some companies had no troopers at all. (82) It was decided, therefore, that no more general officers should be appointed. La Rochejaquelein's Légion de la Couronne was scrapped. Also called the Légion du Sud, it had after nearly a year's recruiting 31 men and officers all related to one another. (83) Some of the horse companies that colonels of black Chasseurs had been permitted to raise were also suppressed as costly anomalies. After much hesitating, it was decided to pay the militia, though allowing full pay and rations only for service away from home. Disobedience, absence without leave and failure to attend review received specific attention. Having been converted into a cavalry regiment with Cadusch as Colonel, the maréchaussée was now replaced approximately on its old footing without its expensive état-major. It was allowed to keep British pay but, like the colonial corps proper, it was deprived of bat and forage, baggage and lodging money.

The Cadusch party was finished. (84) Although Malouet warned that it lived on in strength, attracting all mécontents and revolutionaries, (85) this is probably attributing to it a breadth it never possessed. It



remains difficult to identify it, or the Montalembert clique, specifically with an ideology, or a social group. Heirs to the autonomist and royalist traditions in colonial life and taking on the colouring of these two ethos, they were both, first and foremost, factions intent on lining their own pockets.<sup>(86)</sup> It is uncertain they represented anyone but themselves. The protector/predator role of the military as regards private property guaranteed it at best an ambiguous response from planters and householders. Conversely, though when denouncing Montalembert's behaviour, the Cadusch faction spoke with the age-old voice of colonial antimilitarism,<sup>(87)</sup> it was popularly blamed for the colony's troubles. While even in a conservative area like the Cul de Sac the Côté ouest had supporters among the plantocracy, like the creoles de Montalet and Juré Desravines, most of its leaders during the occupation were lawyers. Cadusch had been a planter all his life, Montalembert for only a few years, but leaders of planter opinion like de Jumécourt and O'Gorman opposed both factions.

Moreover, the divisions between the two factions were not entirely clear cut. Although Montalembert's party was typically the party of the émigrés who had no property to preserve in Saint Domingue, one of Cadusch's most hated alumni, de Coetlory, was an émigré himself. Côté ouest supporters were considered the most violent opponents of the free coloureds but, while Montalembert and his associates were said to behave extremely cruelly towards the mulattoes,<sup>(88)</sup> Dumas and Bérault themselves had tried to win over Lapointe. The baron took his royalism seriously enough to shoot a French prisoner who refused to shout vive le roi but the 'marquis de Cadusch', too, always at least paid lip service to Louis XVI.<sup>(89)</sup> If England possessed, according to Williamson, no more zealous friend than Paul Cadusch, Montalembert, one should note, had publicly declared his willingness to remain a British citizen if the Bourbons had to renounce Saint Domingue in order to regain their throne.<sup>(90)</sup>

Revolutionaries the Côté ouest had been, but having pinned their hopes on the British occupation, and therefore burned their boats where France was concerned, they had little connection with the 'revolutionaries' Malouet presumably had in mind - citizens of Port au Prince who openly declared their support for the Republic, petits blancs who fled to the enemy lines, the militia sergeant of Cayemittes who one day in 1795 ran up the tricolor...

Certainly, their plans for the Conseil Privé and two Deputies bear witness to the old autonomist spirit but were hardly extreme and



were as much the product of factional manoeuvring as of a desire for immediate constitutional change. All the Privy Councils complained of their limited role. The Côté ouest, its enemies said, really wanted independence. This may have been true of many colonists by this time, disillusioned with both England and France. (91) However, the only scheme for giving Saint Domingue a quasi-autonomous status was in fact to come from Malouet and proved very unpopular in the colony. (92)

Indeed, it is not easy to take too seriously the politics of Saint Domingue's factieux. Garran-Coulon ridiculed the antics of colonial spokesmen like Page and Brulley, who changed with ease from royalist to terrorist. (93) Moving in the opposite direction, we have seen Cougniac-Mion and now de Charmilly. Two years before, he had scornfully described the émigré Princes as dans la boue. Early in 1796, the comte d'Artois awarded him a Croix de Saint Louis. (94)

As for the morose and aging Laborie, whatever his opinions early in the Revolution, he was now a respected moderate. He was advocating, at least by spring 1796, that the old administration of Saint Domingue should be fully restored. (95) Nevertheless, he had little love for Montalembert and soon fell foul of the Chef de Justice, who rejected his proposals to reduce the salaries of the Conseil Supérieur. Suddenly, discovering an anti-government pamphlet Laborie had written in 1789, Lambert had him sacked from the Conseil Privé. Williamson then allowed Lambert, an extreme royalist, with no previous connection with the colony, to return to England, partly to explain government policy but also to launch a vendetta against the creole lawyer. (96)

Things had changed since Williamson had spurned the 'strong Monarchists' and insisted colonials take precedence over outsiders. The change of policy, however, had come too late, for in mid-November the Governor learned he was recalled forthwith.

(iv) Williamson's Recall. From early 1795, when it was clear Saint Domingue could by no means pay for its occupation, Portland and Dundas had been growing anxious about costs. The measures Williamson passed in June and July were the last straw. On September 2nd, Portland wrote calling him and his heads of department home to account for their administration, using as an excuse the dispatch of a new Commander in Chief for the West Indies. (97) To Major-General Forbes, who was to stand in for Williamson, he complained that the Governor had disobeyed his instructions about absentee property and the black corps, and had failed to inform him of his arrangements for the Conseil Supérieur.



Given the circumstances, he thought the creation of four (actually only two) extra magistrates 'highly culpable' and their increases in salary 'still more so', while the appointing of two Deputies was 'an unwarrantable and extravagant waste of Public Money'. (98)

Williamson was not quite so guilty as seemed, nor Portland entirely blameless. Anyone who knew the situation in Saint Domingue agreed that slave recruits had to be offered their freedom, that their impecunious masters had to be compensated and that 2,000 livres was a fair price. A black Chasseur, in fact, because he lived longer, cost less than a soldier sent from Europe. (99) Portland's careless wording of a letter was partly responsible for the excesses of Williamson's absentee property decree. He also accepted the salary proposed for Malouet.

For the Conseil Supérieur, the Duke had recommended 'competent even liberal' salaries but not exceeding those of 1789. (100) This was difficult. Prices had risen considerably since then and unlike in 1789 lawyers now depended solely on their salaries. Williamson thought Saint Domingue at least twice as dear as Jamaica; Mme. Rouvray called it in 1796 the dearest country on earth. Duranton, accounted an honest man, thought 15-18,000 livres the minimum necessary for a decent standard of living, when basic necessities cost two or three times their normal ( ? European) price. (101) Moreover, Williamson claimed that his Conseil Supérieur, compared to the reformed Conseil of 1787-89, was smaller and cheaper. It omitted some minor officials and combined, he said, salaries and fees. (102) He may have been deceived, especially where fees were concerned, or simply stating the position subsequent to Lambert's reforms. Whatever, the 1787-89 Council had been an extremely unpopular innovation and had been designed to serve the whole of a flourishing colony. Williamson's conseillers received 20,000 livres, an increase in salary of 60% since 1786. The Attorney General's earnings had been quintupled, it seems. (103) Despite the increased cost of living, Billard claimed that Williamson's salary increases had surprised everyone. Laborie, a conseiller himself, wanted salaries cut back to their 1786 levels. In particular, he and Malouet thought excessive the 90,000 livres paid to the Chef de Justice, while Billard thought the post itself quite superfluous. (104) Though Lambert had added to its functions those of the Chef de Police (and was thus heir to half the Intendant's powers) Billard was probably right. Portland, however, had no quibbles where his protégé was involved, even though he was to hold the post for three years and spent



only two months in the colony. Furthermore, although Portland's initial reaction had been to insist civil government be kept to a minimum and that the judges of the Conseil Supérieur should tour the countryside, thereby making redundant all other paid magistrates, he was to agree by early 1796 that, where possible, the courts should keep functioning during martial law and that reform of the judiciary should wait till after the war. (105)

During Williamson's Governorship, the central administration raised revenues amounting to £126,711 - just 7% of the £1.81 millions Bogle paid out up to 29th February 1796, which did not include the pay of the British rank and file. (106) An unknown but much smaller sum was raised in cash, kind or loans by the different parishes themselves to meet local needs such as fortifications. It would probably have been unwise to remove these 'voluntary' taxes from local control, but Williamson ought nonetheless to have established regular machinery for their administration. Though Ancien Regime practice would have justified his diverting them into central government hands, they were left under the control of various municipal administrations. Anxious not to alienate the colonists, the only taxes Williamson levied were on external trade, (bar a tax on taverns that partly financed the Port au Prince police). The poll tax on urban slaves, too, would have fallen heavily on those town dwellers who lived by renting out one or two domestics or artisans. Williamson might well have exploited the house rent tax or been less lenient with la Grand' Anse, which ought to have paid for its own police and maréchaussée, but clearly he did not think it worth the political cost. (107) Hence, as regards revenue, he could have done rather more, though the benefit would not necessarily have been great.

As for expenditure, Williamson undoubtedly was extremely wasteful and lax but he also faced insurmountable problems. From the beginning, the hiring and arming of vessels was an expense that caused Dundas alarm. Curiously, according to Bogle's summary account, it was responsible for only 1% of expenditure (£26,473 - Ja.), while by March 1796 the hire of 19 ships was costing £12,274 - ( ? Ja.) per month. They were vital, Williamson said, because the navy was 'totally incapable' of providing the assistance he needed. He certainly could have used fewer more efficiently and with smaller crews but, as Bogle's successor observed, their necessity and the 'enormous' cost of provisions and labour made it an expense difficult to reduce substantially. (108)



Another controversial item of expenditure was the secours Williamson handed out to the destitute, i.e. almost everyone who did not receive a soldier's ration. In June 1795, Williamson began adding to the free ration (worth 1½-2 gourdes per week) cash payments of generally two gourdes per week. 'A man formed by nature to be the comforter of misfortune', Williamson earned immense goodwill by his generous response to the tragedy of white Saint Domingue. (109) Yet, he responded to excess. Widows and orphans, the homeless, the aged and disabled undoubtedly had to be cared for. (110) However, Balcarres, the new Governor of Jamaica, was shocked that while refugees in England were paid a flat rate Williamson distributed aid according to social rank. (111) The vicomte Leroi de la Potherie and his wife received 7 gourdes per week each. Malouet's nephew, arriving to take up a post, was accorded 16 gourdes. Destitute 'ladies of quality' were frequently given 'loans' of £30. A number of families were also housed at government expense until the Conseil Privé had them given lodgings money. All claims were vetted by the Council but abuses occurred. (112)

Nevertheless, though two-thirds of the ruined proprietors were said to receive assistance, Bogle and the Conseil Privé insisted that the sum involved was not large and was a point of honour and good policy. (113) Around August 1795, the destitute of the Mole and Port au Prince, it seems, were only costing £220 Ja. per week. (114) This certainly did not include their rations, for at this time Bogle was apparently distributing 19,000 per day, (115) of which only 4,000 could have gone to British troops and no more than 8,000 to the militia and colonial forces. The figures are difficult to reconcile.

Whatever the cause, provisions took 25% of the Agent-General's expenditure and were the second largest item in his account. All foodstuffs had to be imported. Provisions were always very dear in the West Indies in wartime and exceptionally so now, when the seas were highly unsafe and American ships were carried into Republican ports. Given the exodus of colonists from the Caribbean, the influx of troops may not actually have increased total demand for either meat or flour but the specie shipped out to pay the soldiers certainly created a severe monetary inflation. As regards both purchasing and appointments, Bogle was said to be efficient and honest, if guilty of some partiality. (116) On the other hand, receiving commission on expenditure, he had no incentive to drive hard bargains or to exercise control over others. He was responsible, furthermore, only to Williamson and the Treasury. (117) Though the Agent-General in Europe was allowed only 1%, Bogle's 5% commission was approved by the



Treasury. In 2½ years, it brought him an astonishing £86,000. (The Governor's salary was £5,000.) It is likely he also made considerable gains by pocketing the profit made when negotiating bills above par. It is not clear that regulations against this practice then existed.

In 1793, Bogle had been appalled by the spendthrift commissariat of the Grand' Anse militia. Yet, Williamson continued to allow corps commanders to do their own contracting, particularly for regimental hospitals, which appeared in profusion and became objects of speculation and continual complaint. Colonels of colonial corps were also permitted to clothe their own men, although uniforms made up in the West Indies were extremely expensive. Bogle apparently complained to Williamson about waste and disorder but never demurred, it seems, in acquitting the demands made on him. (118) He paid out for whatever a commander signed for. If the Agent-General was merely ineffectual, however, his assistant Rousselette was patently corrupt. With a contractor at Saint Marc, he appears to have colluded, accepting unsigned chits for stores never supplied, in £60,000 worth of fraud. (119)

It was this 'nullité absolue de toute forme d'administration' that was the perpetual complaint of Malouet and the different Privy Councils. (120) Under the Old Regime, financial control had been elaborate. It was largely bureaucratic; responsibility for receipts and expenditure was kept separate and even the Intendant's signature needed counter-signing. The colonists, also, had been allowed (through the Conseil Supérieur) to examine how their taxes were spent. None of these checks, administrative or political, existed in British Saint Domingue, where all power devolved on the Governor. It was never suggested Williamson or Bogle were themselves corrupt - far from it. Yet, their failure to exercise any financial control, it was said, allowed corruption to flourish around them and permitted Williamson to indulge in misguided if well-meant extravagance. The Conseil Privé, therefore, wanted to oversee the use of public money and also to examine in advance all proposed expenditure. Williamson promised several times to co-operate, but, to the Council's utter frustration, never did.

Williamson was incapable of saying no to anyone. (121) This is doubtless why officers' pay and clothing account for over a quarter of Bogle's expenditure (£676,351 Ja.). By the summer of 1795, the pay bill of the colonial corps came to around £33,000 per month. (122) Besides creating too many corps with too many officers, Williamson had



created officers with no soldiers at all. He had named colonels to raise Chasseurs for almost every parish in the North. At Saint Marc and Arcahaye, several officers held commissions in three or four different corps; one held five, drawing 26 dollars per day plus 'gratifications and plunder'. (123) Though the 'émigré corps' (made up of refugee planters) were only used for guard duty, they, like the rest, had a full complement of officers receiving British pay. Much concerned with public relations and his own salary, de Charmilly had insisted it was essential to grant full British pay to colonials. Laborie, however, claimed it was completely unnecessary, as destitute colonists and émigrés had been at first only too glad to be given their daily bread. (124) Similarly, the decision to pay the militia was far from unavoidable. The reforms forced on Williamson at the end of 1795 only went a small way towards remedying these abuses and were not all carried out, as Williamson did not publish the decrees. Such officers as were dismissed apparently received gratuities of £1,000. (125)

How far the Governor was simply naive or weak-willed, un dupe des fripons, it is hard to determine. Laborie suggested he was overworked, and was induced in unguarded moments to sign away millions to those he ought not to have trusted. One man could not be expected, he thought, to cope with both administrative details and running the war. (126) This being so, Williamson surely should have made more use of his Conseil Privé, at least as auditors. The main justification, nonetheless, for the Governor's behaviour was that it was politically necessary. Faced from early on with large numbers of hostile colonists and unable to offer adequate protection, let alone conquer the colony, he was obliged to spend freely. (127) After all, Dundas, Portland and Hawkesbury had all written to him stressing that 'the great object' was to reconcile the colonists to British rule.

Such considerations, however, did not justify Williamson's laxness with the British in Saint Domingue. Despite endless complaints by the Privy Council, he let army officers lodge in the best houses in Port au Prince, leaving the Administration eventually to pay their rent. (128) The Deputy Quartermaster-General was allowed to spend most of the occupation in Jamaica and was later cashiered for corruption. At Saint Marc, which was swallowing up £35,000 per month in early 1796, the peculation of the British officials was 'proverbial'. Chief among them was John Rousselette, Deputy Agent-General and Williamson's own protégé. One of his assistants apparently engrossed £40,000 in two years. After the occupation, Rousselette would boast in an anonymous pamphlet, 'Poor Saint Marc, thou hast enriched not a few (now honest)



men!' (129) Particularly damaging for Williamson was the corruption of his secretary, William Shaw, who was a relative. He was apparently behind the creation of many of the superfluous military and judicial commissions, charging ten portugaises for each one he issued. Though customary in the British islands, such venality had been unknown in a secretary of one of Saint Domingue's governors and consequently shocked the colonists. (130) More seriously, news reached England in the summer of 1795 that Shaw had taken bribes from p.o.w.'s in Jamaica and secured their release. (131)

Although his failings are explained to a great extent by circumstances, Governor Williamson was clearly weak, indulgent and a poor judge of men. Despite this, he was respected by intelligent critics like Belin and Laborie and remained very popular in Saint Domingue. His recall created public consternation. (132) According to the pro-French author of the Précis Historique, his humanity and generosity made him 'le Général le plus dangereux aux intérêts de la France'. (133) However, Great Britain could not afford this sort of campaign. The Government came to accept that the salaries Williamson paid were not excessive and it acknowledged that the weakness of the British presence necessitated some 'latitude' in the deployment of public funds. Yet, it rightly concluded, Williamson could have exercised greater control. He was not 'the proper man to make oeconomical arrangements' and had shown himself unequal to his difficult task. (134)

'Son nom ne périra,' de Charmilly proclaimed with unintended irony, 'qu'avec la colonie.' (135)

(v) Waiting for Abercromby. Though ordered home immediately, Williamson did not leave Saint Domingue till March, 1796. The autumn months had seen the occupied zone plunged into another crisis. Implored by the Privy Council to stay, Williamson resolved to remain in the colony until the situation stabilised. He had good reason to be optimistic, for it was now certain that Sir Ralph Abercromby, the leading British general of the day, was sailing for the West Indies with an army of 30,000 men. At last, it seemed a decisive blow would be struck at the beginning of the campaign season. Hence, through the vicissitudes of these months, there was an underlying mood of confident anticipation. In early August, it was hoped large reinforcements would arrive in September. Eight thousand fresh troops, Belin de Villeneuve thought, would bring victory in a few



months. (136) By September, Williamson was expecting reinforcements for mid-November at the latest, and on September 29th Dundas announced they should arrive around December 1st. (137) Hence, by the time Williamson received his recall, the mammoth expedition was expected imminently.

The reinforcements that had arrived in August proved of little benefit. They were raw recruits who had yet to learn their firing drill and, although judged exceptionally healthy, they were almost immediately engulfed in a devastating new epidemic, which in September and October carried off 1,100 men. (138) To make matters worse, over 1,000 troops destined for Saint Domingue had been sent, owing to a Whitehall blunder, to Jamaica, where they were detained because of the Maroon War. At the same time, the remains of the three original 'Jamaican' regiments were now repatriated. By October 18th, the British troops at Port au Prince had dwindled to 230 fit for duty and merchants had to stand guard on the ramparts. (139) Three weeks later Forbes reported 'most of the British dead at the Mole'. Scarcely a ship had half its crew; Admiral Parker needed 1,500 seamen. Some regiments were almost completely annihilated. (140)

The upswing in mortality coincided with the alarming news that Spain had withdrawn from the war and had surrendered Santo Domingo to France. Furthermore, the situation in the countryside had become critical, as all slaves now knew of the Emancipation decree. The Conseil Privé warned of malintentionnés in the interior. To prevent loyal ateliers being seduced by Republican agents, and also to supply urgently-needed manpower, Williamson decided to let Montalembert recruit slaves in the Cul de Sac without reference to their masters. Specialists were to be exempted, but otherwise any slave who presented himself could be enrolled. Plantations where no white was present were to bear the brunt of recruitment, as this would encourage residence in the plain. The measure met with a good deal of opposition and, in the event, recruits proved hard to find. (141)

The colonists' complaints had remained unchanged for over a year - the lack of troops, of field artillery and small ships, the ineptitude of British physicians and the inactivity of the navy. Desertion and Republican privateers had entirely ruined the coastal trade and sent food prices higher than ever. (142) Because of Spanish recalcitrance, fresh meat had all but disappeared. The British had always found la Grand' Anse 'a continual source of plague and trouble' (143) and now a potentially dangerous affair erupted at les Cayemittes, whose population was said to be showing Republican sympathies. At its centre was a



## TABLE 2

### Regional Distribution of Colonial Forces: December 1795

[illegible]

Sources: WO 1/64, 101 and WO 1/65, 73. The Chasseurs and the Volunteers consisted almost entirely of slaves officered by whites. The Maréchaussée, the York Cavalry, the Prince of Wales' Regiment and the Royal Legion were mainly free coloureds.

captain of affranchis Chasseurs who (apparently) threatened to lead his men over to the enemy if their grievances were not settled. His suspension caused a dispute between Hélié, the Chasseurs' Colonel, and Duperrier, the colonel of militia and local Chef de parti, who overruled his fellow officers and refused to take orders except from the Governor. Colonel Murray was sent in haste to restore order. After investigation, the Conseil Privé decided subversion was not in question, merely personal jealousy and indiscipline. However, within a few months, Murray himself became involved in factional quarrels and had to be recalled. His arbitrary actions and negligence had aroused general resentment, which was further aggravated by a backlog in the Chasseurs' pay and a lack of naval protection. The Conseil Privé now feared that the region's many disaffected inhabitants would profit from the disorder and call in the Republicans. To his credit, Williamson acted swiftly and restored calm before he left the colony. (144)

In the meantime, British prospects began to show distinct signs of improvement, though the stalemate in the Artibonite persisted. Throughout the second half of September, the British had attempted to exploit their capture of Mirebalais by advancing down the valley against Verrettes and Petite Rivière. The fighting was hard and many of Toussaint's troops, 'nus comme des vers de terre', were killed. Yet, overall the blacks lost little ground and took revenge by burning plantations on the upper Artibonite and carrying off the slaves. Saint Marc was too strong to be attacked but Republican patrols, skirmishing in the woods with Dessources' Volunteers, kept its garrison hemmed in, while its inhabitants continued to flee to the Republican zone. (145) Nevertheless, Dominguan society was no more unified there than under the British, and news of the Abercromby expedition greatly increased existing tensions between black and brown, ex-slaves and anciens libres. In fact, by the beginning of 1796, internal divisions had made the French Republic's foothold in Saint Domingue extremely vulnerable.

Although the Artibonite front was defended by staunch Republicans like Guy and Christophe, it was essentially Toussaint's presence that maintained order. 'Si ce n'était pas ses neuf têtes dans la paroisse de Petite Rivière,' an observer wrote, 'les autres sont des girouettes.' The local National Guard commandant was actually in correspondence with Saint Marc. (146) When the Anglo-colonials launched a major offensive shortly before Christmas, most of the inhabitants of Verrettes joined them. Verrettes bourg changed hands several times before being destroyed by Dessources, who also burnt several of the surrounding plantations. Toussaint, however, held his own and rebuilt the bourg on a more



defensible site. By late January, the British had returned to the defensive, having breached the Artibonite's banks to flood the plain south of Gonaives. (147)

In the North, subversion proved far more serious, although there it is not clear how far it was directly favourable to the British. General Laveaux had never enjoyed good relations with the mulattoes, who commanded most of the North Province. (148) Their hostility steadily grew as he began to exercise centralised control, interfering in what had become the independent domains of the parish commanders. Their jealousy and fears were also increased as, more and more, Laveaux's authority came to depend on the rising power of Toussaint Louverture. The coloureds of le Cap wanted Villatte to be made commandant of the North in place of Laveaux's man, Pageot, a white creole planter. In December 1794, they had rioted when Laveaux had visited the town and the situation became inflamed at the end of 1795, when he returned as Governor. As in the British zone, the use of absentee property, in particular, proved an extremely vexatious issue. In January 1796, Rodrigue, the coloured commander of the 1st Regiment declared at a dinner in le Cap that Saint Domingue had no need of France. According to Laveaux, he then stirred up the black cultivateurs of le Borgne (led by a mulatto in at least one district) against the local whites. Laveaux arrested Rodrigue only to see him freed by his fellow officers. (149) At the same time, Delair, the fractious commandant of Jean-Rabel, began to disobey Pageot's orders. (150)

Also in January, agents from le Cap induced 180 of Toussaint's troops to desert and join Villatte. (151) The two generals had in the past disputed the territorial limits of each other's commands. Their relations had become particularly strained in June 1795, when Joseph Flaville, the mulatto commandant of Acul, had led or acquiesced in a revolt by disgruntled black troops and plantation workers. Supported by Villatte, he had claimed his district was not within Toussaint's command. (152) In February 1796, we find him harbouring the pro-Royalist black chief Macaya, who had escaped from prison at Gonaives after trying to win over Toussaint's men to Jean-François. (153)

That same month there broke out in the mountains of Port de Paix a rebellion of plantation workers which cost the lives of many whites. It is not certain if the rebels' leader, Etienne Datty, was a black (as all historians assume) or in fact the mulatto Danty, commandant of Gros Morne, whom de Charmilly had described in August 1795 as 'dévoué aux Anglais'. (154) Laveaux later claimed Pinchinat, the



mulatto politician, was behind the affair. (155) Whichever was the case, it seems that, though the blacks' grievances were largely local in character, they had been deliberately exploited by Datty's secretary, who wanted, according to Toussaint, 'suivre le régime du Cap'. (156) Tension spread to Saint Louis and le Borgne. Toussaint had to rush northwards and, although the British took advantage of his absence from the Artibonite, he managed temporarily to restore calm. Nevertheless the blacks in the mountains of Port de Paix were to revolt another five times in the next seven months. (157)

Moreover, no sooner was order restored in the north-west than Villatte staged a coup at le Cap and threw Laveaux into prison. Uproar ensued as black and brown manoeuvred for dominance in the North. (158) Toussaint swiftly occupied le Cap but rebellions broke out all over the province. It is impossible to know exactly what lay behind these movements. Some thought them part of a concerted mulatto plot to make Saint Domingue independent or at least self-governing. Since early 1793, whites had warned that the free coloureds were now aspiring to complete dominance in the land of their birth: 'They keep up a constant correspondence from one end of the colony to the other. Their agitations, their movements, their Turbulence, their Discontents, the circular letter in which they recommend Union amongst themselves, Mistrust of White People; all this proves they seek self-government.' (159) Rigaud and Villatte were old friends, and the southerner's complicity in the March 26th coup is strongly suggested by his having sent Pinchinat to le Cap early in 1796 and by the latter's actions there. (160) One further notes that even Beauvais, the least partisan of the mulattoes, was at loggerheads with Toussaint at this time. (161)

Yet, with a French expedition due to sail for Saint Domingue, it is difficult to see what sort of independence the free coloureds could have hoped to achieve without coming to terms with the British, who, it is significant to note, kept a squadron cruising off the north coast throughout this period. British agents were active in the north-east and the Artibonite but no firm evidence exists of contacts with le Cap. However, a British document dated 1st June 1796, mentions 'Villatte the mulatto who was much attached to the English' and also Danty 'who wished to surrender Gros Morne'. It adds: 'All the inhabitants of Port de Paix betrayed the most extravagant symptoms of joy when they saw the English squadron pass on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd of May.' (162) This might relate to developments that took place only after Villatte's coup had failed, or it might simply



be wishful thinking. A deal between Villatte and the British seems unlikely, when mulattoes were stirring up the blacks against Laveaux and Toussaint precisely by accusing them of conspiring with the British to restore slavery. On the other hand, in 1793 free coloureds in much of the North had favoured a British or Spanish occupation and the growing assertiveness of the plantation blacks may also have made northern planters eager for the return of slavery. One thing is sure - the Republicans' hold on the North was critically weakened by internal divisions.

This was particularly true of the north-east, where British and Republican agents competed to win over Jean-François' soldiers, abandoned and unpaid since Spain's withdrawal from the war. Jean-François commanded perhaps 4,500, Biassou 3,000, <sup>(163)</sup> independent chiefs perhaps 1,000 or more in the wild mountains of Vallière and Grande Rivière. Their future allegiance, each side knew, could be crucial to ending the military stalemate. From mid-November onwards the vicomte de Bruges at Mirebalais sent emissaries via Spanish territory to negotiate with the various chiefs. A few were turning to the Republicans but Biassou rejected their overtures and apparently donned a red coat. Benjamin, Jean-François' second in command, wanted his men incorporated into the British Chasseurs, provided they could retain their rank. <sup>(164)</sup> Although Jean-François went on fighting the Republicans, much to their alarm, the British failed to win him over and at the end of the year he, Biassou and Benjamin left Saint Domingue for Cuba.

Nevertheless, several factors gained the British strong support among the remaining chiefs - their genuine leaning towards royalism <sup>(165)</sup> and long-standing hatred of those they called les citoyens; the promise of hard cash and of prestigious uniforms (when three-quarters of Toussaint's troops had neither shirt nor trousers), and the expectation that massive reinforcements would arrive imminently. On 6th January 1796, a treaty was concluded with the leaders Titus and Jean-Baptiste Gagnette, who commanded some 5,000 men, not all of whom were fighters. <sup>(166)</sup> They were confirmed in the ranks they held until they should be formed into regiments of Chasseurs, when the best officers (one in every hundred men) would exchange their present fanciful titles for the rank of captain. Men, women and children were to remain free. Ammunition and officers' uniforms would be supplied immediately; pay would commence once the British flag was raised, but until a signal was given, peace should be feigned with the Republicans.



Since December 11th, General Forbes with Admiral Parker's squadron had been cruising off the north coast waiting to intercept Abercromby's convoy before it reached the Mole. Using as an intermediary Colonel Cambefort,<sup>(167)</sup> they, too, liaised with these black Anti-Jacobins and in February landed several hundred guns near Maribaroux.<sup>(168)</sup> It was at this same period that Macaya was stirring up his fellow 'Congos' at Acul.<sup>(169)</sup> As Republican forces were concentrated at Port de Paix and Gonaives, de Bruges thought he could take le Cap with 500 men. As it was, immediately Abercromby's ships should have into view, they, the north-east blacks and the forces at Mirebalais were to converge on the town some 20,000 strong.

Support was also promised by the Spanish settlers of Santo Domingo. By the terms of the Franco-Spanish peace they were now subjects of the godless Republic, though the French were not yet strong enough to occupy the colony. Anticipating the hostility of its Catholic slave-owners, the Republicans tried to force them to emigrate (it was said) by encouraging rebellion among its small slave population. Many did emigrate but the remainder were all the more disposed to resist any French incursions. British ships were usually well received in Spanish ports, by the colonists if not by officials. In December, the inhabitants of la Vega and Santiago secretly agreed to hoist the Union Jack if they received British protection, and by January 120 Spanish troops had deserted to Montalembert's Legion. However, the colonists were naturally reluctant to show their hand until British reinforcements had arrived.<sup>(170)</sup>

This was not true of the blacks in the mountains behind Port au Prince, where Pompé and Dieudonné, who respectively commanded 2,000 and over 3,000 armed men, broke with the Republic and opened negotiations with Montalembert and the merchant Caille, who was a trusted intermediary. By early December, many blacks had come down from their mountain retreats into the plain of Cul de Sac and were awaiting their masters' return. Within two months, work had re-started on a few plantations.<sup>(171)</sup> Pompé and Dieudonné were less precipitate but, to prove their goodwill, they restored the capital's water supply from Source Turgeau and in January laid siege to Leogane and Jacmel. The efforts of Rigaud and Beauvais to appease them were rejected and the Léogane blacks began to desert to them once two of the town's outposts were taken. Contacts were also established with several lesser chiefs in the mountains nearer to the Spanish frontier. Some, like Jean Pineau, had already fought against the Republicans,



whereas Dieudonne himself was theoretically Sonthonax's successor as Commissaire Civile. Yet, he insisted his men were now willing to return to work for their old masters, and in early February, while Pompé attacked Léogane, he claimed that all the blacks as far as les Cayes wanted to join them. (172)

They were anxious, he said, that war with the whites should cease. He asked for a hospital to be built in the mountains and for a regular market where the two sides could trade. The British were cautious and refused to supply ammunition until they were given control of the surrounding heights. However, on January 24th and the two following Sundays they allowed a market to take place on open ground outside Port au Prince where black warriors 'avec defiance et en armes' mingled with citizens of the capital eager to buy up at half-price the abundance of vegetables and poultry brought down from the mountains. (173)

Though one might be sceptical about the likelihood of a mass return to the plantations, Dieudonné's volte-face was undoubtedly genuine and clearly not caused by a shortage of food. After the fall of Port au Prince, he had seemed willing to join the British, and now, when massive reinforcements were again expected, he doubtless wished to secure his future, being in the front line of fire. However, behind this instability lay a complex of regional, class and racial conflict. Like the blacks in the mountains of Port de Paix, Dieudonné's men had complained of being mulcted when bringing down produce for sale in the urban markets. Most towns, but particularly Léogane and Jacmel, were mulatto strongholds. There were no black commanders in the towns, Dieudonné said; the Revolution had benefited only the mulattoes not the Africans. (174) Maroon blacks had traditionally hated the free coloureds who hunted them in the maréchaussée. Probably most of those involved in these negotiations, including the famous Dokos, had been responsible for the January 1793 uprising against the mulattoes of Cul de Sac.

Hence, in early February morale ran high in Port au Prince. Its British garrison was down to 200 men but hostilities had ceased and the renewed inflow of fresh water, fresh vegetables and poultry had had an immediate impact on public health. The Republican camp was deeply divided and in the West and north-east there seemed every likelihood that thousands of black fighters would be won over. Moreover, troops were finally starting to arrive from Europe.

Even so, setbacks soon occurred. In the north-east, Titus was murdered, apparently by Spaniards who sought to disrupt British policy.



Some lesser chiefs began to turn to the Republic and a British landing party was captured at Maribaroux. <sup>(175)</sup> In the West, Pompé seems to have died around this time and Dieudonné complained of difficulties convincing some of his men they would be pardoned by the whites. According to Bryan Edwards, the negotiations broke down because Williamson refused Dieudonné's demand to help exterminate the free coloureds. <sup>(176)</sup> It was then that emissaries from Toussaint Louverture appeared in Dieudonné's camp, having crossed 30 miles of enemy territory. They appealed for unity against the invaders. Dieudonné was overthrown and replaced by his second in command, Laplume, whom Laveaux swiftly made a colonel. <sup>(177)</sup>

All was not lost, however. The Republicans' advances in the north-east spurred Gagnette and other chiefs into open warfare aux nom du roi. Toussaint complained in early March that he was surrounded by enemies on land and sea. <sup>(178)</sup> The arrival of 2,000 troops at Port au Prince enabled Williamson, as soon as the Dieudonne negotiations broke down, at last to attack Morne l'Hôpital. On February 28th, a British column took Camp Turgeau on the lower slopes almost without loss. Meanwhile, watched by the whole town, Dessources' 500 Chasseurs scaled the mountain avec une vitesse incroyable and cleared the enemy from its summit. At least 13 camps were taken and perhaps 2,000 huts destroyed. An attempt to regain Turgeau a week later was completely routed by its new occupants. <sup>(179)</sup> A strong post was soon established at Fourmy 3,000 feet above the town and a blockhouse was erected at Neret. These guarded the route running behind the mountain which connected Léogane with the Cul de Sac. In both Port au Prince and the plain, after two years of embattled confinement, life could begin to return to normal.

When Williamson finally set sail for England, therefore, on March 14th, British fortunes were markedly improving, and his departure was much regretted. Just as he was getting to grips with his arduous task, it seemed, the 'virtuous' Governor was recalled, his hard-gotten experience now going to waste. It had been a familiar complaint under the Ancien Regime. However, the military and diplomatic successes of his governorship owed little to Williamson himself and, despite pressure from Whitehall and the Conseil Privé, his efforts to reduce the costs of occupation had come to very little. Hence, although he had his merits, the Government was right to recall him. Unfortunately, it proved unable to provide a more effective successor.



Williamson handed over to Major-General Forbes, for the famous Abercromby had still not appeared. Two regiments had arrived piecemeal from Gibraltar but the great expedition had yet to materialise. Williamson had shown, nonetheless, what could be achieved, given a few thousand troops. Laplume, it is true, was not Toussaint Louverture; nor was Morne l'Hôpital le Cap or les Cayes (though it was formidable enough in its own way). However, had Abercromby's expedition arrived when expected in December, with the campaign season before it and the Republican camp in a very vulnerable situation - indeed, had the expedition arrived at any time before Williamson's departure - the future of the West Indies could well have taken a different course.

## CHAPTER VIII THE GREAT EXPEDITION OF 1796

(1) Preparations. In both Europe and the Caribbean, British fortunes sank steadily in the second half of 1794, then plummeted in the following spring. The emancipation of France's slaves and the arrival of Victor Hugues transformed the war in the West Indies and forced the British on to the defensive. Guadeloupe was lost, and Grenada almost so, then St. Vincent and St. Lucia. Driven from the Low Countries, by May 1795 all the British infantry had been evacuated from the Continent, and Holland and Prussia had made peace. Spain and Sweden would soon follow. It was in these circumstances that the 'Cabinet' decided in July that a new West India expedition should be the Government's priority.<sup>(1)</sup>

Dundas was the driving force behind the scheme. In 1794, under pressure from the West India Committee and City merchants trading with the Conquered Islands, he had fought hard against opposition from the Admiralty to get adequate reinforcements for the West Indies, complaining it was cruel to send out raw recruits.<sup>(2)</sup> Contrary winds, a shortage of shipping, the French fleet and epidemics among the troops all combined to spoil his efforts, with the results already seen. Refusing to dispatch troops during the sickly season, he temporarily turned his attention to the Cape of Good Hope, but played no part in organising the abortive invasion of Brittany launched in June. Whatever happened there, he argued, 'a complete success in the West Indies is essential to the interests and...contentment of this country'. No European success would palliate defeat in the Caribbean, but success in the Caribbean would compensate for reverses in Europe. Britain should therefore, he said, send out as large and as efficient a force as possible, and it should sail by September 15th.<sup>(3)</sup>

The acceptance of his policy, in the face of Whig clamour about leaving Britain exposed to the threat of invasion, was greatly facilitated by two factors. Firstly, John Pitt had been replaced as First Lord of the Admiralty by the young, colonially-minded Lord Spencer; and in July Spain made peace with France, surrendering to her the colony of Santo Domingo. This was a blow the Government had striven to avert in the previous months. Belated offers had been made to Madrid, and rejected, of a formal agreement on policy towards Saint Domingue. It had also been decided at the last minute to send Malouet to Santo Domingo to encourage the co-operation between the two powers that he had constantly urged.<sup>(4)</sup> But it was too late. Republican forces could now be diverted from the Pyrenees to the Caribbean and from the Santo Domingo frontier to the Artibonite



cordon. French privateers, now able to operate out of Spanish ports, could extend their depredations. Above all, it was feared Spain might now form an alliance with France and that they might turn their combined fleets against the British West Indies.

Nevertheless, although the Franco-Spanish peace made Britain much more vulnerable in the Caribbean, it also added greatly to the prizes being fought for. Santo Domingo was not only twice the size of Saint Domingue but also more fertile and almost wholly undeveloped. Malouet pointed out immediately that its colonists could be expected to assist the British rather than become subjects of Republican France. The promise of land grants, he suggested, would make it easy to raise an army of émigrés to serve there.<sup>(5)</sup> De Charmilly was even more ambitious. He wanted Pitt to declare war on Spain and blockade the Spanish colonies. They would then declare their independence and become commercial satellites of Great Britain. As for the guerre ridicule in Saint Domingue, it could be ended in four months by a blockade and a unified, all-out attack by 12,000 troops.<sup>(6)</sup> De Charmilly was now completely out of favour, despised by the émigrés and ignored by the Government, but Malouet's standing with the ministry had improved and his collaborator, the marquis de Bouillé, was now asked to submit further plans.

With remarkable energy, Dundas spent the summer months putting together what was then the largest expedition ever to sail from Great Britain. The countryside around Southampton and Cork blazed with red uniforms and bell tents mushroomed row upon row in farmers' fields, as an army of 30,000 men was assembled. Hundreds of tons of stores converged on the two ports. Bulky East Indiamen beat their way through gales across the Irish Sea and heavy-laden ordnance ships winched aboard cannon and shot at the wharves of Woolwich arsenal. Shipping was scarce, as British trade was expanding, but Dundas managed to procure in a short period 100,000 tons - over 200 vessels.<sup>(7)</sup> Orders were sent to the West Indies to build barracks and hospitals, and building materials and horses were purchased in the United States.<sup>(8)</sup> A new black corps was to be raised in Jamaica and pioneers were to be recruited in Barbados. Because of public concern about mortality in the islands, considerable care was taken to provide adequate medical supplies. A special Hospital Corps was formed and regulations regarding hygiene, diet and conduct were drawn up by Windham, though rarely followed by commanding officers. Conditions on the troopships were nonetheless better than in previous times and mortality on board was to be lower than in the American War.<sup>(9)</sup> For this much Dundas deserves credit.



He was well aware, however, that the 30,000 men he had drummed up included regiments of the lowest standards, indisciplined and inexperienced. The best of them were gathered at Southampton, and there the expedition's commander, General Sir Ralph Abercromby, had to weed out numerous old men and boys.<sup>(10)</sup> Dundas sought to replace the worst with the elite Foot Guards, but the King's reluctance forced him to relent.<sup>(11)</sup> The troops' morale was not improved by the long delays the expedition experienced, which upset victualling arrangements and caused some regiments to run out of supplies. Poor liaison between the Transport and Victualling Boards was partly responsible and we also find General Whyte being castigated by Dundas for not informing him of the shortages.<sup>(12)</sup> Most of the troops were ready to sail, it seems, before the end of September but, as in the two previous autumns, strong westerly winds hindered both the assembling of the shipping and its exit from the Channel. The last ordnance ship, moreover, did not leave Woolwich until October 26th.<sup>(13)</sup> Meanwhile, behind the scenes, the whole expedition was being jeopardised by a dispute between the two admirals involved regarding precedence. Abercromby, as a result, wished to resign and Middleton, the best man on the Admiralty Board, actually did so. Once that was settled, relations between Army and Navy remained potentially explosive enough to keep Dundas permanently on tenterhooks.<sup>(14)</sup> Despite all the delays, the ships still sailed, on November 13th/14th, at an earlier date than any previous West India expedition.<sup>(15)</sup>

Yet their problems had only just begun. Buffeted by tremendous gales, the ships were forced directly back to port much damaged. Six hundred men were drowned in the Channel.<sup>(16)</sup> In the middle of piloting the Sedition Bill through the House of Commons, Dundas, rushed down to Portsmouth to supervise repairs. The ships sailed again in December only to be scattered by the fury of the Atlantic. Some were blown southwards to Barbados; most limped back to Britain to try again. Forced to camp out through the winter on the Irish coast, half of the 9,000 troops at Cork went down with dysentery or typhus. Many deserted and over five hundred died. Even more were left behind sick when the expedition finally set sail in February, and another 570 had to be hospitalised on reaching Barbados.<sup>(17)</sup> Several ships were captured by the French or sank in the Bay of Biscay. The wastage of life was enormous. Typical was the experience of the 32nd Foot, which was 954 strong on November 1st but reached Saint Domingue six months later with a complement of only 633.<sup>(18)</sup>

Although Dundas was eager for Saint Domingue's capture, it was apparently always taken for granted that the expedition's priority should



be the relief of Grenada, which was a British colony. Thereafter, it had to be determined whether or not Saint Domingue should have priority over Guadeloupe, St Lucia and Holland's undefended Guiana colonies. Guadeloupe, with its myriad privateers and proselytising revolutionaries, was the most dangerous, thought Lord Spencer, but Saint Domingue was the more valuable and, he curiously concluded, the easier option.<sup>(19)</sup> Lying far to the leeward of the others, Saint Domingue would either need a separate expedition or have to go last on the agenda. Sailing ships could reach it easily from the Windwards but return only with great difficulty. Hence, Dundas's original plan, put forward in August, was for a two-pronged attack in the Caribbean, sending 15,000 men to the Windwards and 12,000 to Saint Domingue.<sup>(20)</sup> Neither Abercromby nor Admiral Christian seem to have had much interest in Saint Domingue but the former agreed that, if the campaign to windward finished early enough, he would send reinforcements there. On September 29th, Dundas wrote to Forbes, telling him he could expect 15,600 troops about the beginning of December, including 2,000 from Gibraltar, and that more might arrive later from the Windards.<sup>(21)</sup> The forecast was culpably optimistic, but it would seem Dundas had not been informed how behindhand his preparations then were and did not realise that Abercromby would refuse to sail until they were completed.<sup>(22)</sup>

In November, the minister's attitude to Saint Domingue changed. The foreign troops destined for the colony had still not left Germany. Time was running short. On the 24th, he gave orders that fewer than 5,000 should be sent there in the first instance, to reinforce the garrison, the remainder being concentrated in the Windwards until Grenada and St Lucia had been secured.<sup>(23)</sup> In this, Dundas yielded to the demands of Abercromby and Christian, who were supported by Pitt.<sup>(24)</sup> Already, however, he had come to accept that the great offensive in Saint Domingue might have to be postponed or abandoned, because of the Maroon War in Jamaica. Since December 1794, it is interesting to note, Dundas had begun to display a new concern for the safety of Jamaica, clearly subordinating the campaign in Saint Domingue to the needs of the British colony. Its large population of prisoners and refugees, including a number of Republican agents, made it especially vulnerable in view of what he called 'the extraordinary and unprecedented system now adopted by the Enemy for overturning all regular Government and subordination'.<sup>(25)</sup> It was not so much, it would seem, the emancipation of the slaves per se that had alarmed Dundas as Victor Hugues' subsequent and fearfully effective exploitation in Guadeloupe of this new power in Caribbean politics. Dundas's increasing caution was



naturally reinforced when he learned that most of the forces in Jamaica were being tied down by the revolt of the Trelawny Maroons. Early in November, therefore, he decided to allow Governor Balcarres to demand whatever assistance from Saint Domingue he needed, short of causing an evacuation of the Mole, whose harbour he thought vital for Jamaica's defence.<sup>(26)</sup>

Yet, in January, after lengthy conversations, Pitt and Dundas decided once more to reverse their policy. It was a perfect example of that swift interaction of events in Europe and the Caribbean which kept policy-making for the West Indies several months out of date.<sup>(27)</sup> When news of the proposed expedition reached Saint Domingue, it had considerably strengthened Britain's position there, prompting several black chiefs to negotiate a change of alignment.<sup>(28)</sup> Yet, by that time, Dundas had cut the expedition by two thirds. When he heard late in December, however, of these new developments and of the capture of Mirebalais, he had cause to think again. On January 3rd, Pitt informed Grenville that, once Grenada and St Vincent were retaken, Saint Domingue should be 'with a view either to war or peace...our first object of offence'.<sup>(29)</sup> Having vainly called in November for another expedition to Brittany, Grenville was hostile to any West India venture, while some members of the Cabinet, like the Foxite Whigs, wanted to make peace.<sup>(30)</sup> The King, however, would not hear of it, Abercromby had a real chance, he said, of taking Saint Domingue, and without it the West Indies would not be safe and any peace would be short-lived.<sup>(31)</sup> Most interestingly, Lord Spencer argued that Saint Domingue should be placed first, even though by neglecting Guadeloupe all the British Leewards would most likely be lost. The security of Jamaica and the probable gain of Saint Domingue he thought more than sufficient compensation.<sup>(32)</sup>

Weeks went by, however, as the ships waited for a fair wind. Dundas was bitterly disappointed. Abercromby complained he had intended to finish the campaign in May/June not begin it. It was therefore decided that the easiest objectives should have priority. In early February, new plans were adopted and Saint Domingue went to the bottom of the list. The troops at Cork would sail there immediately, followed later by several foreign corps, but Abercromby was to concentrate on the Windwards and the Dutch Guiana settlements.<sup>(33)</sup> He was to liaise with Saint Domingue and send reinforcements once he had finished. In the event, he did not complete his operations until June and the only news he received from Saint Domingue was what he read in the English newspapers.<sup>(34)</sup>



(ii) The Campaign and the Continuing Crisis in the Republican Zone.

For Saint Domingue, the end result of Dundas's grand design was the arrival of 2,000 troops in February, of over 7,700 on May 3rd and around 3,000 more before the end of July. Both Fortescue and Edwards considerably understate the numbers involved and depict them arriving later than they actually did.<sup>(35)</sup> Critically late though they were, they put the British garrison in a far stronger position than it had ever been before, although the numbers, it is true, are slightly misleading. Not only were they in Abercromby's words 'in all respects a very inefficient force',<sup>(36)</sup> but some 3,500 of them were Germans, French and Dutch serving rather reluctantly in 'foreign corps', almost all of which were cavalry. About 2,500 of the British were also cavalry, and in so mountainous a colony this heavy concentration of horse is difficult to justify. Nevertheless, they were not quite so useless as their critics<sup>(37)</sup> claimed, for in the plains cavalry provided a mobility that was vital when perspiring, woollen-jacketed infantrymen were easily out-run by black insurgents, even though the thick plantation hedges made the terrain less than ideal. The expedition, one should note, had been intended to capture the great plaine du Nord. Much more of a drawback was the fact that most of the foreign cavalry had arrived without their horses. Since their terms of service precluded their fighting on foot, they had to remain non-combatants until supplied with mounts. These had been difficult to find in sufficient quantities and imported horses were just as susceptible to tropical diseases as their riders proved to be. Yellow fever, as in the previous two years, began its ravages towards the end of May and decimated the new arrivals; in some cases even before they stepped ashore. Because the new barracks at the Mole were not finished in time, troops were kept crowded together on their ships in the narrow harbour. This was thought safer than putting them under canvas around the town but in reality it of course maximised the spread of infection. In May and June alone, nearly 1,300 perished.<sup>(38)</sup>

Despite rapidly declining numbers, the garrison still contained in July 8,500 British soldiers and close on 4,000 continentals, (i.e. nearly 50% more than is reported by Fortescue,) together with about 10,000 colonial troops and militia, black, white and brown.<sup>(39)</sup> The carnage during the summer was terrible but recruits continued to arrive, so that on December 1st General Forbes still commanded some 8,500 European troops and over 1,000 colonials.. One must bear in mind, therefore, this great accession of strength, when considering Forbes's failure to substantially improve the British position in the course of 1796, and ask whether more might have been achieved, given the means to hand.



Major-General Gordon Forbes became commander in Saint Domingue only by default. Neither Dundas nor Abercromby was keen to appoint him. Even the heavy-handed General Whyte was thought preferable, and for this reason was chosen by Abercromby for the Windwards expedition. The Army simply had no other able man with West Indian experience.<sup>(40)</sup> At the end of February, he returned from cruising off the north coast and took over from Williamson at Port au Prince, though he was not made Governor.

Anxious to use the two fresh regiments from Gibraltar, but with Port de Paix and le Cap too strong for the forces at his disposal, he had to choose between attacking Gonaives and Léogane. His choice of Léogane was a bad one, prompted by considerations of popularity in the capital,<sup>(41)</sup> though it was also favoured by Montalembert, (who was a Cul de Sac planter,) and by Admiral Hyde-Parker. Gonaives was strategically far more important, being Toussaint Louverture's lifeline to the outside world. An attack in late March, moreover, at the time of the mulatto coup in le Cap, might have had far-reaching consequences. Instead, several thousand soldiers were embarked at Port au Prince on March 17th/18th and sent with a strong naval squadron 20 miles down the coast to Léogane. On the 21st, a bombardment began and the troops were landed. The attack failed for two reasons. Firstly, the town had been insufficiently reconnoitred. Its defences were found to be stronger and its defenders much more numerous than anticipated, with the result that no siege guns had been brought. Secondly, the virtuoso artillery work of Aléxandre Pétion, future president of Haiti, not only forced out of action two of the squadron's three ships of the line and two of the frigates, but also dismounted the field pieces of the advancing troops. A sally by the defenders then drove the British back in confusion. A council of war was held. Some still wanted to carry the place by storm but Forbes thought it best to begin a regular siege, bringing ashore heavy guns from the ships. Hyde-Parker, however, never keen to co-operate with the military and always short of seamen, refused to risk the lives of any more of his men. The attack was called off.<sup>(42)</sup>

Spirits sank in the occupied zone as the campaign season came fruitlessly to a close. With new confidence, the Léogane mulattoes moved up cannon to establish posts near Morne l'Hôpital. Forbes fortified the Grenier post that commanded the northern exit from the mountains but did not retaliate. Believing Port au Prince no longer safe, over 30 French families left for the United States.<sup>(43)</sup> In the central region, where the brutality of the vicomte de Bruges had alienated the mulattoes of Mirebalais, several posts surrendered to the Republicans with little or no



resistance.<sup>(44)</sup> By April 1st, Toussaint Louverture had foiled the mulatto coup at le Cap and, not five years out of slavery, was made Deputy-Governor of Republican Saint Domingue.

Far from abating, however, the social and political divisions within the Republican zone<sup>(45)</sup> became much more pronounced and throughout 1796 it was to be rent with internecine strife. The failure of the le Cap coup sent shock waves through the North Province and forced many mulatto commanders into open or covert revolt, raising the blacks of their districts.<sup>(46)</sup> Villatte entrenched himself in the north-east plain, where he remained until the end of May, adding to the existing ferment in the mountains behind. In the north-west, a succession of rebellions broke out - in Gros Morne, Saint Louis, Jean Rabel and, again and again, Port de Paix, from whose coast British warships were cheered at the beginning of May. Even in le Cap, the situation was so volatile that Laveaux came close to being killed by the very troops Toussaint sent to protect him. Just to complicate matters, a large number of mulattoes, including Candy and Savary, prisoners of the Spaniards, were returned to le Cap in April. Toussaint failed to get them arrested.<sup>(47)</sup> At this critical juncture everything depended, one of Laveaux's correspondents wrote in early May, on preventing the British from profiting from these disorders.<sup>(48)</sup>

Yet, almost nothing was done. On the Artibonite front, the British did advance through the mountains to occupy the Hauteurs de Verrettes but then halted, probably waiting for the rains that would flood the Artibonite. The new Republican fort in the valley below was critically short of men, food and ammunition, as its defenders constantly complained to Toussaint, with some rancour. Apprehensively, they waited to be attacked, but months went by.<sup>(49)</sup> This inactivity seems all the more culpable after the reinforcements of May 3rd almost trebled the size of the British garrison. Forbes thought them 'very bad' soldiers, it is true, and within three weeks large numbers had fallen sick.<sup>(50)</sup> This might have been avoided, however, had he carried out Montalembert's plan for moving them immediately into the interior.<sup>(51)</sup> The baron wanted to extend the western cordon southwards in a chain of tightly-patrolled camps from Grands Bois to Saltrou. While providing a healthy place to acclimatise, this would reduce the loss of slaves and cattle from the occupied zone, he thought, and eventually permit the mountains of the West to be cleared. The plan had serious drawbacks but was surely preferable to just leaving the troops on their ships. The cautious General soon came to be called 'the old woman', or 'dowager Forbes'.<sup>(52)</sup>



By late May, however, Forbes had solid reasons for being cautious. On the 11th, a squadron of ten Republican warships had anchored off le Cap. (The blockade had been called off two months before). They brought with them 30,000 muskets, 400,000 lbs of powder and nearly 3,000 troops and National Guards.<sup>(53)</sup> Toussaint Louverture was now able to re-equip his army and enlarge it to include about 10,000 infantry and two cavalry regiments. The Army of the North was probably rather smaller, while Rigaud's Légion du Sud numbered a little over 5,000 infantry with 1,200 cavalry.<sup>(54)</sup> All three, in addition, could call on large reserves of armed cultivateurs. Accompanying the reinforcements was General Donatien Rochambeau. He was a popular figure with the white planters and issued an enticing proclamation to those of the occupied zone which was much discussed there and contributed to the deep disillusion with British rule fast gaining ground. A plot was uncovered in Port au Prince, apparently, to seize the sole warship in the harbour and burn the town.<sup>(55)</sup> Privateers created havoc off the coasts and in mid-July a vessel was actually cut out at the entrance to the harbour. Although it was re-taken, there were similar incidents elsewhere and a flotilla of transports carrying 400 troops - the crowning insult - was seized close to the Mole.<sup>(56)</sup> As regards ships of the line, the British squadron was stronger than ever, - a 40 gun French ship was taken off le Cap - but it continued to lack the sloops and brigs needed to deal with the privateers and was seriously undermanned. However, what really made Forbes's position difficult was the news that arrived on May 23rd that the French were expecting another, much larger, squadron under Admiral Richéry, said to be carrying 10,000 troops.<sup>(57)</sup> The situation of the previous autumn, so favourable to the British, was now completely reversed.

Like Abercromby, Richéry was in fact never to reach Saint Domingue but this could not be foreseen. Forbes, therefore, after wasting most of April and May, would seem justified in having thereafter adopted a defensive strategy. Dundas certainly thought so. An offensive, he agreed, was not possible.<sup>(58)</sup> Some colonists, though, like the marquis de Fontenille, disagreed and scorned the British for being paralysed, as they saw it, by Rochambeau and his 'crowd of mulattoes'.<sup>(59)</sup> They were probably unaware, however, of Richéry's expected arrival. On the other hand, it should be said, at this time Forbes himself was still expecting reinforcements from Abercromby to arrive in July. Fearing for the worst, nonetheless, General Forbes turned to fortifying his outposts. He erected blockhouses and barracks at the Môle and in the Grand' Anse, and was probably responsible



IN THE MOUNTAINS OF ARCAHAYE

Fort Drouët: on the crest  
of the Montagnes Terribles



Fort Delpêche, chaine des  
Matheux: an outlying wall

Fort Delpêche: rear gate





for building the three forts in the mountains of Arcahaye now known as D  lp  che, Lacroix and Drou  t. Justified or not, this was an unfortunate policy. The tragic irony of the defensive strategy was that, by keeping soldiers inactive in the ports, yellow fever killed far more of them than the Republicans would have done had they stormed even le Cayes or le Cap. This lesson was not learned for another year. It applied equally, of course, to the Navy. Ships left idle in port had their crews decimated; those on blockade duty did not. With six ships of the line at the Mole and a potential strike-force of at least 6,000 troops, it is hard to believe that Gonaives or Jacmel could not have been taken. The problem of yellow fever would still have remained, unless the troops pushed on into the interior, which was perhaps not advisable in the rainy season, but it was far better they die of disease in Gonaives than Port au Prince. At the price of spreading his unprecedentedly numerous forces more thinly on the ground, Forbes might have struck a strategically important blow at the Republicans' sources of supplies and privateering strength, and one of incalculable psychological significance. This was particularly so as the Republican zone remained gravely weakened by internal strife, and some factions were apparently looking to the British as the lesser of two evils.

Cambeport, the royalists' expert on the North Province, wanted to attack Jean Rabel and the island of Tortuga, both of them relatively healthy situations.<sup>(60)</sup> Tortuga was a useful base for blockading Port de Paix and le Cap, (which, unblockaded, received further reinforcements in July). Its planters, moreover, had preserved as much as they could of the slave regime and with their commandant, Labattut, were very reluctant Republicans.<sup>(61)</sup> Delair, the commandant of Jean Rabel, had been openly insubordinate for several months and was encouraging rebellion in the other parishes of the north-west. He had previously served the English and was said, at least by the Republicans, to be again in contact with them.<sup>(62)</sup> Forbes, however, concerned only to strengthen the Mole, decided to move against the village of Bombarde, which was valued solely as a source of fresh vegetables. At 9 a.m. on June 8th, some 3,000 soldiers left the Mole having been kept counter-marching, by error, throughout the night. Under a blistering mid-day sun and without water in their canteens, they had to cross 15 miles of Saint Domingue's most arid terrain. Beneath the cacti and thorn bushes dozens dropped to the ground, their tongues lolling from their mouths. After a short siege, Bombarde surrendered. Delair, significantly, did little to save it. The village, however, was found difficult to supply, as convoys were frequently ambushed on the rocky



plateau and an outlying post where guard duty was neglected was overrun. Faced by a build-up of enemy forces, the isolated garrison left at Bombarde was evacuated after a few weeks.<sup>(63)</sup> This singular humiliation, a stark demonstration of the difficulties confronting the British, was, nevertheless, to be the low-point of their campaign for 1796.

From the end of June, prospects began to brighten, albeit mainly because of divisions among the Republicans. Reinforcements continued to reach the Mole but these were predominantly, to Forbe's dismay, disgruntled and horseless foreign cavalry. The forces that had debarked at le Cap in May also sowed seeds of discord. They were accompanied by Sonthonax, heading another Civil Commission, and about 200 mulattoes came with them. Of these, Toussaint was within weeks demanding the deportation of Antoine Chanlatte for plotting to assassinate him.<sup>(64)</sup> Sonthonax did get Villatte and his 1,500 men to surrender, but his policy of replacing mulatto officials with blacks and his reassertion of (white) centralised control increased existing tensions, as the British were glad to learn. Arrests of mulatto leaders multiplied, especially in the Artibonite, where Toussaint accused Valérai of conspiring to bring in the British.<sup>(65)</sup> Faced with increasing scarcity, food rations had to be reduced and paper money issued to the troops. General Rochambeau, clearly out of sympathy with the new order, clashed violently with Sonthonax and in July he left the colony along with several of the French warships, whose crews could be neither paid nor fed. His departure ended the speculations of the whites in the British zone that the grass might be greener under Republican rule.<sup>(66)</sup>

The final withdrawal of the Spanish forces in June also brought to a head the competition to win over the colonists of Santo Domingo (now officially French) and the black Auxiliaries of the north-east, said to be 10,000 strong.<sup>(67)</sup> Anxious to maintain trade links with the British, the propertied Spaniards and their priests promised to defend their own soil with 20,000 men, in return for military supplies and naval protection, and they expressed willingness to become British subjects. The Republicans, therefore, decided to delay taking possession of the Spanish colony and only occupied Fort Dauphin. There they found the local mulattoes extremely insubordinate and ready to stir up the Auxiliaries whose allegiance remained uncertain. Gagnette was currently leaning towards the Republicans but many of the chiefs still used their 'royalist' titles and most, according to the Spaniards, still wanted a king. Much about them remains obscure but clearly they wanted to stay free of forced labour, and here the British may have been - paradoxically - at an advantage. While in the Republican zone



THE FORTS OF SAINT MARC

Fort Churchill: looking  
westwards across the ravine



Fort Brisbane: with the  
hauteurs de Saint Marc behind,  
looking south-eastwards across  
the Gorge des Guêpes

North corner of Fort  
Churchill: with the bay  
of Saint Marc below





the distinction between a cultivateur and a soldier was rather hazy, and efforts to restore the plantation regime were alienating many blacks, it was fairly sure that the British would never dare risk subverting their hard-preserved slave regime by trying to force such seasoned fighters back on to the estates. British agents, assisted by the Spaniards, distributed guns and money among the chiefs. Sporadic fighting broke out among them and with Republican commanders, and through June and July the situation simmered.

Meanwhile the British went on building up their forces in Saint Marc and in the six camps they now had in the region of Verrettes and Petite Rivière. Toussaint knew that the fort at Verrettes, critically short of food, would surrender if attacked. He therefore kept harrying the British positions, while himself preparing to attack Mirebalais, a move Sonthonax considered vital. In mid-July, we find him deriding the Projects vains and mesures mal combinées of the anglo-royalists,<sup>(68)</sup> but this was a little premature. On the 22nd, he sent more than 1,500 of his men to attack Morne Diamant overlooking Saint Marc, a rocky eminence from which they were used to spying on the town and its harbour. The British were now building a stone fort there 400 feet above the sea, to be named after the new commander, George Churchill. As usual, the raiders emerged suddenly from the surrounding woods shortly before dawn. For two hours, the 130 or so colonial troops guarding the works held them off, but then were driven precipitously from the summit. Under cover, however, of the guns of Fort Brisbane and reinforced by 150 troops from the town, they counterattacked and quickly put the blacks to flight.<sup>(69)</sup>

At about the same time, Toussaint himself occupied the Spanish posts of Lascahobas and Banica, thus threatening Mirebalais. The British responded with a general attack on all fronts, at first unsuccessfully. The Republicans were severely stretched and Toussaint fell ill, but still managed to take three posts at the centre of the cordon, abandoned in panic by Brigadier-General Churchill.<sup>(70)</sup> Around August 10th, however, Toussaint suffered his worst ever defeat. His well-armed 1st battalion, said to number 3,500 men, was caught in open country near Lascahobas by the cavalry of the vicomte de Bruges and a detachment of British dragoons. Only fifty of his troops, he said, escaped.<sup>(71)</sup> A few days later, another 300 were killed, again cut down by cavalry, some four miles from Saint Marc, this time attacking the new stockaded post of Gros Morne, built at the exit of the Gorge des Guêpes into the Artibonite plain.<sup>(72)</sup> The British continued to press hard and Montalembert now occupied most of the, formerly



Spanish, central savanna from Neybe in the south up to Banica. This permitted him to intervene more effectively in the north-east. There, soon after the battle at Lascahobas, Gagnet was murdered and the whole region erupted. Once more the Republicans had to fight on two fronts, or rather three, for in the north-west, too, rebellions continued to flare up throughout the summer and autumn. On August 18th, Sonthonax desperately declared la partie du Nord en danger and attempted to conscript all males aged between 18 and 25. This in turn led to further revolts by plantation workers.<sup>(73)</sup> Abercromby's decision, therefore, taken at the end of June, not to send reinforcements to Saint Domingue<sup>(74)</sup> was singularly unfortunate for General Forbes.

In the mulatto-dominated South, the Republican position was much stronger both internally and externally. It was there, however, that the conflict between white and brown, centralised authority and local autonomism, achieved its most extreme manifestation and with perhaps the greatest potential benefit to Great Britain.<sup>(75)</sup> The commissioners that Sonthonax had sent to les Cayes in June with the express purpose of undermining the mulatto hegemony had by mid-August brought tempers to boiling point in the provincial capital. A combined attack, nevertheless, was organised against the posts of the Grand' Anse, which caught the British by surprise but failed to break the military stalemate. While in the east Camp Thomas, a minor outpost of Pestel, was captured, the column sent against Camp Raimond in the centre suffered heavy losses and inflicted none, though it burned several plantations in the Plymouth region. The main thrust was against les Irois, which Rigaud cut off and besieged for 18 days, beginning on August 11th. He lost many of his 3/4,000 men, while only nine of the British troops were killed, but the colonial losses included the very able chevalier de Sevré, and for a while the situation seemed desperate. General Bowyer's attempts to counterattack with completely untrained Chasseurs proved hopeless and the garrison was lucky Rigaud suddenly withdrew. He had to hurry back to les Cayes, where a massacre of the white population was in progress. To restore order, the inept commissioners were compelled to invest Rigaud with supreme powers and depart. A complete breach resulted between the mulatto South and the Republican government in the North and in Paris. Thus isolated, Rigaud secretly let it be known both in Jamaica and Port au Prince that he was willing to surrender on the terms of 1793. Towards the end of the year, negotiations were begun via white intermediaries.<sup>(76)</sup>

News of Rigaud's outmanoeuvring of Sonthonax excited dissidents in the



North, especially in Fort Dauphin, and in le Cap a plot was discovered to call in the British.<sup>(77)</sup> No sooner were rebellions suppressed in le Borgne and Vallière than others broke out in Saint Louis and Port de Paix and fighting flared up again in the north-east. And so it continued until the end of the year. Despite a vigorous campaign by General Pierre Michel, Vallière was not to be occupied until March 1797. By September the Republicans' stocks of guns and ammunition were once more running low, while troops protested, even rioted, at the continuing shortage of food and cash.<sup>(78)</sup> As the rainy season came to a close in October, Forbes and Montalembert were full of optimism.<sup>(79)</sup> Agriculture was starting to revive in the Cul de Sac and at Arcahaye production reached a new peak. The Grand' Anse recovered from the August invasion and raised another 1,500 Chasseurs. Co-operation between the Army and Navy had notably improved since the departure of Admiral Hyde Parker. The news from Santo Domingo remained very encouraging, and over 800 Spaniards joined the colonial forces at Banica. When raiding the mountains of Léogane, Montalembert, to his surprise, met with no resistance and destroyed several camps. In the north-east, Lieutenant-Colonel Rouvray actually moved up into the mountains of Vallière.<sup>(80)</sup> Had there been at Banica 'a thousand steady British infantry', it was later claimed, le Cap would have fallen.<sup>(81)</sup> The arrival of reinforcements certainly might have ended the hesitations of the north-east 'brigands', (as the Republicans called them), and further encouraged the hesitation of André Rigaud. If 8-10,000 troops debarked in December, Montalembert and Forbes agreed, Saint Domingue, or at least the North Province, would be conquered by May. All one can say is, they may have been right.

However, no such reinforcements were to arrive. In December the garrison was even reduced, thus ruining whatever chances there were of winning over Rigaud. Perhaps prematurely the Government had given up its plans of conquest and, when Spain declared war in October, it had several regiments transferred to other islands. On the other hand, the fact that the British had made so little headway when the Republican camp was so divided also suggests that conquest could by this time have been achieved only at a prohibitive cost. 'The enemy are so much more respectable now than formerly,' wrote a British officer in the South after Rigaud's attack.<sup>(82)</sup> In the North, despite some grave setbacks, Toussaint continued in the teeth of adversity to reveal prodigious powers of leadership, and alongside him other talented generals, such as Pierre Michel, were emerging. There were other signs, too, that Saint Domingue had finally slipped from the grasp.



of the white slaveowners and was, in fact, moving irrevocably beyond the sphere of European influence altogether.

Ironically enough, most of the rebellions that so hampered the Republican war effort in 1796 were usually inspired by fears that Laveaux, Toussaint or Sonthonax were plotting to restore slavery, or were reactions against their attempts to revive the plantation economy. In the minds of the blacks, a decisive break seems to have taken place with the colonial past, a generalised rejection of slavery, certainly, but also of white authority, and to some extent of plantation labour as well. Even in Jean Rabel, where the plantation regime had suffered relatively little, the black labourers who stayed on their estates had long ceased to plant cane and were abandoning the former slave quarters to build new homes in the hills. Some of the creole families, it was later said, would never again work for whites.<sup>(83)</sup> Coffee, it is true, continued to be harvested everywhere in the North and Laveaux and Toussaint indeed achieved a modest success, despite extensive vagabondage, in reviving sugar production. Moreover, some of the unrest on the plantations was due specifically to wartime conditions - conscription and requisitioning or theft by soldiers, while some ateliers, it could be argued, might have worked for their former masters, although they refused to work for the ancien libre who replaced him. However, if the brief period of Toussaint's rule following the occupation suggests that the plantation economy in the North could have been revived, even under white ownership, Moise's revolt of 1800 stands as a serious question mark to such a conclusion. In 1796, Lechasseur's rebellion at le Borgne was directed specifically against the presence of whites and mulattoes in the parish, and the same was true of the insurrections around Port de Paix. Toussaint's nephew, Moise, would not enforce the new labour laws and let his officers obstruct white officials. Macaya, for all his royalist pretensions, suggested to Pierre Michel they combine to massacre the whites of le Cap.<sup>(84)</sup> In the north-west, many of the surviving whites were massacred in the spring, as were 200 or more at les Cayes in August. The departure of General Laveaux in October neatly symbolises this shift of power, which is more subtly expressed in Sonthonax's correspondence in the increasing deference he felt obliged to show Toussaint. Significantly, it was about this time that Sonthonax was supposed to have approached Toussaint with a view to declaring Saint Domingue independent.<sup>(85)</sup> More and more, it seemed probable that any attempt to re-establish slavery in the North, especially since Sonthonax had distributed guns on the plantations, would have to be carried to the point of genocide.



The irony, therefore, was double. The British Government gave up hope of conquering Saint Domingue just when the military situation was at its most favourable and the occupied zone was showing signs of prosperity. Now that success seemed within Britain's grasp, however, it was increasingly certain that the colony would prove a profitless, if not untenable, conquest.

However one interprets the long-term situation, it is clear that in the last two months of 1796 the Republican zone achieved a new degree of stability, as power passed squarely into the hands of the blacks and prospects of a British conquest vanished. The mulattoes remained 'absolument incorrigibles', Sonthonax thought, but he ceased to fear their influence. For their part in crushing the le Cap coup, various black officers, from Generals Toussaint, Leveillé and Pierre Michel down to Captain Henri Christophe, were promoted by order of the Directory, thus furthering their control of the army. At the height of the struggle in September, news of Napoleon's victories in Italy had raised the Republicans' spirits; by November, they knew that Spain was now their ally and that Britain was suing for peace. That month, Christophe's cavalry foiled an attempted landing in the north-east. As relations worsened with the United States, the fearfully successful corsairs of the north coast began seizing American shipping and this brought in much-needed supplies of food and money. At the end of November, Toussaint finally restored calm in the mountains of Port de Paix (and along with it his reputation, then being overshadowed by that of Pierre Michel). 'Je ne doute plus,' wrote Sonthonax on December 2nd, 'du salut de la colonie.' Two days later, he urged Toussaint, now the most powerful man in Saint Domingue, to begin at Mirebalais the final expulsion of the British.<sup>(86)</sup>



CHAPTER IX. THE DEBATE ON SAINT DOMINGUE'S FUTURE AND THE MISSION OF  
GENERAL SIMCOE

(i) Policy-Making and the Public Debate on Saint Domingue. The 'desolated island of St. Domingo, the Eden of the Western World' was becoming increasingly a matter of embarrassment for the British Government. The colony, it seemed, could not be conquered, but neither could it be abandoned, certainly not in wartime, and even if peace were concluded,<sup>1</sup> it could scarcely be returned to the Republicans with anything but extreme trepidation. Meanwhile, month by month, the costs of occupation escalated giddily. Fortunately for the ministry, the Opposition failed, in March 1796, to get the cost of the war debated in Parliament, and the following month Dundas defended the West India campaigns in a major speech, later published, which was conspicuous for saying as little about Saint Domingue as possible.<sup>2</sup> About this time, however, the Agent-General's accounts were received, revealing the expenditure of nearly two million pounds in the colony<sup>3</sup> and during the spring it was learned from Forbes that, unless even more reinforcements were sent out, offensive operations were impossible. Dundas replied, in early July, that policy towards Saint Domingue was being reconsidered.<sup>4</sup>

Of the hundreds of documents concerning Saint Domingue then passing through ministers' hands, one stands out for its originality and boldness, and ultimately for the accuracy of its predictions. It is a single-minded, lucid and forthright critique of the Saint Domingue venture by an officer in the 62nd Foot, Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Maitland.<sup>5</sup> On July 15th, he wrote to his brother, the Earl of Lauderdale, that both British and French were wasting their time in the colony. 'St. Domingo will end in being a Brigand Republick,' he said, 'connected only with America... a Negroe free government arising out of the ruins of European Despotism.' Given Saint Domingue's size, the difficulties of subjugating the rebel slaves, and the paucity of means to hand, he thought the original decision to intervene very dubious. Jobbery alone had maintained the reluctant allegiance of the colonists and crowds of émigrés, and any retrenchment would entail their desertion. Port au Prince, Saint Marc and the Mole, he considered indefensible against large numbers and he doubted that the Government realised the full extent of the army's losses - nearly 6,000 dead up to March 1796. The British forces were now 'annihilated' he claimed, 'and the dreadful scene of mortality exhibited there exceeds every idea of



human credibility. 'Dundas should be told that, if the occupation had to be continued, to fulfill prior engagements or to preserve a bargaining counter, then a high-ranking, and intelligent officer must be sent out and a defensive policy only be pursued. The Government, as it happened, was already thinking along these lines.

The prospect of a British withdrawal from Saint Domingue greatly alarmed Malouet and his fellow colonists.<sup>6</sup> It seemed particularly real, because the desire for peace was growing in Great Britain and in September renewed overtures were made to the French. Malouet realised Britain could not keep the colony and wanted peace but insisted that outright abandon would do incalculable harm. It would make a gift to the Republic not only of its 'enormous production' but of the specie and timber of Santo Domingo as well, and as a result, he suggested, France's paper credit and naval power might be restored. Jamaica, he warned, would be in the greatest of danger, and this sentiment was generally shared by British opinion.<sup>7</sup> He therefore proposed a compromise solution. British involvement in the colony would be greatly reduced but British sovereignty would be retained until the peace. The Administration would be placed entirely in French hands, which he had been advocating for about a year, but now at its head and in charge of all colonial troops he wanted to see a prestigious French commander, such as the marquis de Bouillé. More émigrés and mercenaries were to be sent out and more Chasseurs raised, along with increased taxes, to which the colonists would assent via a colonial assembly. If governed by themselves, they would less readily countenance the corruption then rife and be more willing to make sacrifices. When peace was negotiated, Britain would either declare Saint Domingue independent or restore it to France on condition that it be allowed to choose its own domestic regime. If endowed with sufficient military strength, the colonists, Malouet believed, could force the Directory to sanction in the interests of commerce the maintenance or restoration of slavery, and thus defuse the threat to the British West Indies. The plan was wildly optimistic but at this time Royalists and former slaveowners were becoming increasingly influential within a French Government dominated by moderates, and on these Malouet was pinning his hopes.

Although in launching its autumn peace initiative Pitt's Government had no intention of trying to keep any of its French conquests<sup>8</sup>, there is no evidence it intended to adopt the special strategy for safeguarding Saint Domingue that Malouet wanted. The negotiations never got that far. On the other hand, the ministers were only too pleased to implement his



proposals for limiting Britain's involvement in the colony. Early in September, it was decided to send out General Abercromby, newly returned from the Windwards, to institute major reforms in Saint Domingue. All British troops would be withdrawn to the Mole and no more would be sent out, only émigrés. These and the black corps, the main hope for the future, would be placed under French local commanders and all administration would similarly be handed over, though remaining under his supervision. Expenditure by the British, and this was to be his first concern, should be cut to just £25,000 per month. As war with Spain seemed ever more likely, the first of several orders was given withdrawing regiments to other colonies.<sup>9</sup>

News now started to arrive, however, of the help proffered by the colonists of Santo Domingo. This inspired Malouet, a little contrarily, to put forward fresh plans of conquest, to complain the limit on expenditure was too low and protest at the proposed withdrawal of British troops to the Mole. He now even adopted de Charmilly's line, suggesting that Spanish America's 'inevitable,' 'long-fomenting' move towards independence would be catalysed if Britain allowed free trade with Santo Domingo.<sup>10</sup> The Government, nevertheless, was intent on retrenchment. It asked Malouet to accompany Abercromby to help carry through the administrative reforms, and the marquis de Bouillé was offered the command of the colonial troops. Malouet, duly flattered, sent his baggage to Portsmouth. The experiment in semi-autonomy seemed all set. Suddenly, however, in the middle of October, the scheme was cancelled. The reasons are not quite clear, but they involve both military strategy and political in-fighting. The Duke of Portland appears to have vetoed Malouet's appointment, either because he disliked his pragmatic politics or because he wished to protect his own protégé, Lambert, the overpaid chef de justice. Perhaps because of these tensions in the London émigré community, de Bouillé declined the Government's offer and, when war with Spain broke out, it was decided that Abercromby should lead an expedition, once again, to the south Caribbean.<sup>11</sup>

Although this high-level triumvirate was no longer to go to Saint Domingue, Malouet's scheme of reorganisation was not dropped. It was reiterated in draft instructions drawn up in October for the new commander, who was yet to be named. These instructions<sup>12</sup> were more flexible than Abercromby's in allowing for an improving or worsening military situation. Should the Spanish and French colonists choose to mount an attack on le Cap, then the Mole garrison would be permitted to act offensively and seize Tortuga. Alternatively, if the situation dramatically worsened, the



commander was to be allowed, short of exceeding the stated limit on expenditure, to act as he thought necessary. For the first time, therefore, the possibility of a total evacuation was envisaged.

Obviously alarmed, the London merchants trading with Saint Domingue held a meeting on November 4th whose resolutions were communicated to the Government. Like Malouet, they wanted to ensure that, if Saint Domingue were given up to the Republic, the planters of the occupied zone would not have their estates sequestrated leaving them unable to pay their debts. In response, Portland apparently promised that the merchants would not suffer if the British withdrew.<sup>13</sup>

It soon transpired, however, that the Government was not yet ready to completely abandon Saint Domingue except at the conference table. When instructions were drawn up on November 25th for Forbes's successor, Lieutenant-General Simcoe, there was no mention of carte blanche in the event of unforeseen circumstances.<sup>14</sup> Simcoe's priority was to be the reduction of Government expenditure to £25,000 per month. To achieve this, he would be allowed to withdraw British troops from all the posts in Saint Domingue except the Mole. This, however had to be held, as it was considered vital for the defence of Jamaica and an important bargaining counter in negotiations with France. At the same time, Simcoe made it clear that he nonetheless hoped to be able to undertake offensive operations, and before he sailed in December the Government seems to have promised to send him British recruits, stores and arms along with the services of General Maitland.<sup>15</sup> There was thus a certain ambivalence about his mission that reflected the uncertainties of the situation in Saint Domingue. (News was then reaching Britain both of the divisions in the Republican zone and of the appalling losses suffered by Forbes's troops.)<sup>16</sup> Through the first half of 1797, this ambivalence and uncertainty became more marked. While in Britain domestic pressures largely limited the debate to disputing as to whether the Mole should be held or the colony evacuated entirely, in Saint Domingue it was being questioned not only if the occupied zone need be contracted at all, but also if the whole colony might still not be conquered.

It was probably just as well that Malouet never went to Saint Domingue, for his scheme not only found few supporters but created there an outcry against him. Forbes reported in December that any moves towards self-government would increase factional hostilities and he enclosed an address got up by Montalembert condemning Malouet's plan.<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, with Lord Malmesbury negotiating in Paris, Malouet concentrated increasingly



on effecting a rapprochement with the Republic and made himself the more unpopular by publishing in December a pamphlet that was politically courageous and misunderstood. It stated both that Britain wanted Saint Domingue to be restored to France and that slavery was morally reprehensible and would one day be abolished. He was actually arguing that, for the present, slavery should be maintained and that Britain and France should co-operate in preserving it - this was the point of the pamphlet - but to the hard-line royalists and creole planters with whom he was working it was heresy of the worst order.<sup>18</sup>

Under the Ancien Régime, an éclairé administrator and friend of Raynal; in 1789, a monarchist of the liberal school; Malouet was something of an outsider among the colonial émigrés. Nonetheless, despite this element of ideological difference, emphasised by R.H. Griffiths,<sup>19</sup> the monarchien and ex-bureaucrat was here surely acting first and foremost as an absentee planter. At bottom, both Malouet and the colonists who now cursed his name had exactly the same aims. Both wished to stop Saint Domingue being handed over to a French Government that would put an end to slavery and proscribe all whites who had collaborated with the British. The difference was this. Malouet in London knew that the British could not possibly keep the colony and that the Domingans, therefore, would have to make their peace with the Republic or remain (or become) refugees. The colonists in Saint Domingue, on the other hand, were rightly sceptical of any Paris Government's desire to parley with the émigrés and, confronted with the rise of Toussaint and Rigaud, doubted France could even attempt to put the colonial clock back. They therefore, as the debate intensified in 1797, vigorously asserted their loyalty to Great Britain or abandoned the sinking ship.

When Simcoe reached Saint Domingue in February, he found the colonists despondent in the expectation that he would evacuate Port au Prince. The news of the negotiations in Paris broke the colonists' confidence, he said, though the rather more cynical Maitland thought it was the knowledge that drastic economies were impending. Both agreed there was no public spirit in the colony and little military discipline. Corruption and factional quarrelling were everywhere. Emigration and desertion now greatly increased.<sup>20</sup> Laborie, Cambefort, Duranton and others confirmed this picture in their correspondence. They had hoped that Malouet and de Bouillé under Abercromby's direction might have saved the colony, though the gloomy Laborie thought no one could have done it. By mid-February, all three shared the general view that the blacks must eventually win and were them-



selves planning to leave.<sup>21</sup>

At the same time, however, Montalembert raised another petition protesting against the proposals for self-government and calling on the British to remain in the West Province. The planters of Arcahaye did the same.<sup>22</sup> After one month's fighting, moreover, Simcoe's abilities inspired a general confidence in the colony that, along with the desperate circumstances, did something to galvanise public feeling, as even Laborie admitted. A public collection was raised; the Conseils Privé and Supérieur offered to take a cut in salary, and the planters of Cul de Sac volunteered their slaves as soldiers free of charge.<sup>23</sup> All regretted Simcoe had not appeared two years earlier. When copies of Malouet's pamphlet reached the colony about June, the reaction was extravagant and a public meeting in Port au Prince declared his Deputyship revoked. Even the citizens of the capital, who had never lost any love on the British or their émigré allies, were in no hurry to surrender to an army of ex-slaves believed to be ill-disciplined and vengeful.<sup>24</sup>

Simcoe was much impressed with Saint Domingue. 'It is no trifling prize', he wrote, 'that England has at stake.' He was, moreover, convinced that the security of Jamaica depended on a British presence there. Maitland, too, somewhat surprisingly, came to think it 'indispensably necessary' in view of the potential danger from the black corps the British would have to abandon if they pulled out.<sup>25</sup> On other points, however, they differed. Maitland, whom Simcoe treated as an equal and who reported separately to Whitehall, recommended that the British should withdraw to the Mole and Jérémie, while they still had time to do it with decorum, after first having taken Jean Rabel, Tortuga and Tiburon to provide for their defence. These were all to be held purely as military posts. Saint Domingue, he thought, was Britain's most complex problem of the war, but this plan he considered a cheap and secure way of controlling the Windward Passage and preserving something to bargain with when peace was negotiated. He was extremely critical of the behaviour of the French and colonists in the occupied zone and suggested that if they wanted to try and hold the West Province they should be given ammunition and cash in a lump sum and perhaps two frigates and be left to fend for themselves. Port au Prince, Maitland thought both militarily indefensible and a centre of corruption and disaffection the British would be well rid of. While tending to take a pessimistic view of the military situation, he was also willing to admit that his more optimistic colleagues might yet be proved right.<sup>26</sup>



Chief among these was the Francophile, George Churchill. He blamed on officers unable or unwilling to speak with the colonists the idea that Saint Domingue was too big to be held, and noted that sickness in the garrison was now declining. The long-resident planters, he stressed, wanted only Britons in positions of authority and they implored him 'on their knees', he said, not to implement the scheme for self-government.<sup>27</sup> Simcoe, it soon emerged, had no intention of doing so. Local rivalries and the state of the colonial corps meant that the West Province, at least for the time being, would not be able to defend itself, and the Mole, he considered, despite General Whyte's fortifications, could not hold out alone. Withdrawal was therefore impossible. Conquest, on the other hand, Simcoe informed Dundas in April, would not be difficult. Three thousand troops landed in Santo Domingo six weeks previously could have taken the whole island, he wrote. Again in mid-June, he asserted that two thousand trained troops or six thousand new ones - a revealing comparison - could have conquered Hispaniola at any time since his arrival.<sup>28</sup> If such claims seem fatuous in retrospect, it should be said that Simcoe was always willing to return with an army to carry them out.<sup>29</sup>

However, the dispatch of further reinforcements was out of the question, for in Britain, just when the Government faced an unprecedented financial and military crisis,<sup>30</sup> the full disaster of the Saint Domingue campaign was now becoming public knowledge. 'In these adventures, 'Edmund Burke declaimed, 'it was not an enemy we had to vanquish but a cemetery to conquer... Every advantage is but a new demand on England for recruits to the West Indian grave.'<sup>31</sup> In April, it was reported to the House of Commons by a Select Committee on Finance that the occupation had cost well over 4.3 million pounds and had claimed in just its first three years the lives of more than 7,500 British soldiers.<sup>32</sup> Dundas wrote to Simcoe insisting he carry out the proposed reforms immediately, as the ministry now stood pledged on the matter to Parliament.<sup>33</sup> In March, there had appeared in the London bookshops Bryan Edwards' Historical Survey of the Island of St. Domingo, which publicised the shortcomings of British policy and endeavoured to show the hopelessness of trying to conquer the colony with the means the Government possessed.<sup>34</sup> Dundas's energies had already been turned to capturing Spain's colonies,<sup>35</sup> while the merchants of the City had for long been far more interested in Demerara and Martinique than the former perle des Antilles. Matters came to a head on May 18th, when the Foxite Whigs demanded an immediate withdrawal from Saint Domingue.<sup>36</sup>

Fox made a skilful speech in which he followed Burke's line that it



was pointless fighting to preserve a colony that would inevitably be surrendered to the Republicans, and which was almost worthless as a bargaining counter. To abandon it, he said, would not affect negotiations with France. How harrowing it must be, he added with malice, for a minister to see the faces of the soldiers as they embarked for the West Indies! In previous years, Fox had actually criticised the Government for sending too few troops to the Caribbean, but with his usual deftness he now argued that such practical criticisms of specific schemes were not inconsistent with his fundamental objection to any campaign in the West Indies. Dundas defended his West India policy deploying every argument at his disposal. He appealed, irrelevantly, to precedent and, speciously, to Saint Domingue's importance to the French Navy. The produce of the occupied zone, he said, amounted in the previous year to 1½ million sterling and employed over 400 ships, forgetting to mention that its trade was mostly with America. Before the war, he claimed, the colony had not been unhealthy, which was somewhat less than the truth, while his promise that expenditure was now limited to £300,000 per annum was to prove wholly unrealistic. His assertions that Saint Domingue was both an important bargaining counter and vital for the defence of Jamaica were similarly dubious but they were opinions widely shared by his audience. Bryan Edwards, for example, now an M.P., 'was persuaded that all Europe could not prevent St. Domingo from being a negro colony' but still suggested Britain might keep Tiburon and the Mole to control the Windward Passage. Wilberforce, too, recognised the emergent power of the blacks, and thought British intervention had been unwise, but, while criticising some of Dundas's arguments, he also said there was no need to abandon the colony. The motion was defeated by 116 votes to 31.

The troops, therefore, were to stay in Saint Domingue, but hopefully not for much longer. A new round of peace talks was soon to open in France and the reports then arriving from the colony of continuing high mortality during the winter and of corruption and disunity among the colonists both distressed the King and angered Dundas. On June 9th, he ordered Simcoe to immediately carry out his Instructions for reducing expenditure and withdrawal to the Mole, no matter what the consequences. Jérémie might be retained as a military post but no reinforcements would be sent. If the West Province fell to the Republicans, it would not be for lack of British 'liberality', he said, but for 'a want of energy, union and public spirit in the Colony itself'.<sup>37</sup>

In this spring of 1797, we find Saint Domingue receiving an



increasing amount of public attention. Just as in Philadelphia Moreau de Saint-Méry was publishing his massive Description, which had remained in manuscript since the late 1780s, the baron Wimpffen's account of a visit to the colony on the eve of the Revolution now found printers in both London and Paris. Like Laborie, who was at this time writing the Appendix to his Coffee Planter, he cautiously suggested the British might still succeed in Saint Domingue.<sup>38</sup> De Charmilly, smarting from the attacks of Bryan Edwards, went further and claimed that conquest was still an easy matter. A vigorous propagandist, his Lettre to the Jamaican planter appeared in July, published at his own expense, and was distributed 'à toutes les personnes les plus importantes dans ce pays'. It was both a defence of his own reputation and a last-ditch attempt to change British policy on Saint Domingue.<sup>39</sup> Withdrawal, he argued, would be to betray the loyal efforts of her colonists and destroy Jamaica. Any peace with France - and here he showed more acuity - would be short-lived and prejudicial to Britain, which ought to keep all its colonial gains to counterbalance French expansion in Europe. Though beset with crises, Britain alone had preserved her industry and now monopolised the trade of Europe. "Que pouvait espérer de plus une nation commerçante?" It was 'le moment vrai de sa gloire'. The book is a monument to de Charmilly's debased delusions, but also to his prescience.

A far more sombre work on Saint Domingue also appeared at this time, hastily put together by a doctor on leave from Port au Prince General Hospital, Hector McLean. The grisly prose of his Enquiry brought vividly to life the mortality statistics that were then the 'terror and astonishment' of the British public. 'The name of St. Domingo is execrated and dreaded by all descriptions,' he wrote. Men would no longer enlist for fear of being sent to the West Indies. 'At present,' he observed, 'neither military talents nor numbers are of use; our hospitals contain our garrisons.' The 'Brigands' could be subdued only by a treaty or by other blacks, and even then it would be too dangerous to return them to the plantations. A policy of extermination, he added, would be both wrong and impossible.<sup>40</sup>

At the end of June, Lord Malmesbury set out for Lille on his second attempt to make peace. The colonists of Saint Domingue were something of a problem. The British wished to be rid of them but the Republic regarded those who had collaborated with her enemies as traitors. Nevertheless, they were not the stumbling-block to peace that R.H. Griffiths imagines,<sup>41</sup> for, although the British Government intended to ask that they might remain



in the colony without suffering for their past actions, there is no evidence it was prepared to insist on it. Malouet had asked this to be made a pre-condition of the negotiations but without success. He was allowed, however, by Grenville to propose that a ceasefire be arranged independently of the talks. Thus neutralising the Saint Domingue question would save the colony from further destruction and create a friendlier atmosphere for negotiating. Above all, it would allow the colonists to bargain with the Republicans, he said, for the 're-establishment of order and subordination among the Negroes'. To this end, Malouet corresponded with the French deputy Vaublanc, a former slaveowner, hoping he could get himself invited to Paris for talks with the Government.<sup>42</sup> Politics were now moving to the right in France and many émigrés had gained permission to return. Sonthonax had recently been recalled and Barbé-Marbois, the former Intendant, was now president of the Conseil des Anciens. Even so, Malouet's scheme proved completely unrealistic and on 4th September the peace negotiations themselves were brought to an abrupt end by a coup d'état that purged the Government of right-wing elements. The Directory did not wish to make peace. The war was to continue.

(ii) 'A Chaos of Vice and Folly': Reforming the Administration.

Simcoe's priority, according to his Instructions, was the reduction of Britain's monthly outlay in Saint Domingue to £25,000. Yet, in the single month before he arrived, expenditure there had run to an incredible £700,000.<sup>43</sup> In terms of administration and military organisation, little had changed since Williamson's day, although the army and occupied zone had considerably increased in size. After two weeks in the colony, the general was writing home, 'I have a wonderful Chaos of Vice and folly to wade through'.<sup>44</sup>

How much General Forbes knew about the corruption that flourished around him is hard to say. Reports conflict.<sup>45</sup> He spent much of his time promoting friends and relatives to new posts or to those of others he had dismissed, but this was not exceptional. In October 1796, he swore to Dundas he had received nothing more than his major-general's pay. His enemies, however, said he should be tried for venality. Unlike Williamson, he spoke no French and, even more than his predecessor, paid little attention to the Conseil Privé, which went on complaining about the ruinous contracts the British made and the complete absence of financial control.<sup>46</sup> William Wigglesworth, who replaced Bogle as Agent-General, was by all accounts an able, much-respected figure, who had been seconded from Pitt's



Committee for Auditing the Public Accounts. Forbes appears to have made little use of his talents, preferring instead the advice of his secretary, James Esten.

Bilingual, a man of smooth address, Esten was greatly disliked for his venality and the influence he came to wield. Originally Commodore Ford's purser, he had been Deputy-Commissary for the Mole until his irregular accounts and personal unpopularity led to his removal in 1795. He then attached himself to General Forbes and was made 'Secretary in Chief' of the Mole, profiting considerably from Government contracts. Though this post was soon suppressed as part of Williamson's belated reforms, he then stepped directly, as the Commander in Chief's secretary into the shoes of William Shaw.<sup>47</sup> The arbiter of promotion and dismissal, and the creator of new jobs, he earned many enemies. But above all, it was by becoming head of the Régie Royale of absentee property that he earned his fortune and at the same time substantially reduced the potential revenue of the occupied zone.<sup>48</sup>

The failure to effectively exploit either the estate revenue of the absentees, or even the existing tax system,<sup>49</sup> let alone to tap the colony's full taxable capacity, and the failure also to pursue previous Administrations' debtors, largely explains the very low revenue raised by the British Administration. Only the Customs were efficiently managed, with American ships paying double the former duties. What internal taxes were levied stayed mostly in French hands in the localities and frequently went to line the pockets of district commanders like Lapointe, Montalembert or de Bruges. Simco was consequently authorised to increase taxation, though not too severely. As for the enormous sums expended, they can be attributed to the interaction of a number of factors. These include rampant monetary and real-cost inflation; the absence of administrative checks on public expenditure; widespread individual corruption, and the wasteful organisation of the military, the hospitals and of land and sea transport.

The hospitals of the colonial corps were one area Simcoe did not have to investigate, as one month before his arrival Forbes finally sanctioned their overhaul. Having sprung up without permission throughout the occupied zone, they had been for two and a half years the subject of complaint and proposed reforms. Corps commanders had either run their own hospitals and presented huge bills for their supplies, or else they had contracted, to the Government's disadvantage, with a friendly surgeon. Sometimes the contractor was also the regimental surgeon and hence got paid twice. Contrary to French and British practice, no stoppages were made



from a soldier's pay when sick, and this represented a considerable loss since a third of a European regiment and 12% of a black corps were usually found in hospital. Henceforward, troops were to be treated within their regiments, stoppages were to be made and provisions supplied by the Commissary-General.<sup>50</sup>

Apart from provisions, corps were easily the Agent-General's largest item of expenditure. Although Williamson had dismissed many of the superfluous officers he had commissioned, he never carried through his proposed reform of the colonial regiments.<sup>51</sup> Neither did his successor, who himself proved generous with commissions. Consequently, at the end of 1796 there were over forty different colonial corps, including militia, with only 9,600 troops but about 1,800 officers and NCO's.<sup>52</sup> In reality, the situation was worse. Officers were concentrated in the black and émigré corps, and as Forbes held no reviews, the true number of troops was never known. Simcoe found in one corps of Chasseurs 200 less than were on the payroll. Some commanders, said Maitland, enrolled their own slaves and kept them working on their plantations, while pocketing their pay. At best, a corps of 900 Chasseurs cost £32,000 per annum. One, in its first year, had cost the Government £60,000, so overcharged were its supply contracts.<sup>53</sup> Because of the military crisis that greeted Simcoe's arrival in the colony, he was not able to re-organise the colonial regiments until May 1797. He then reduced their number to 14 and put many officers on half-pay. Clothing contracts were taken out of the colonels' hands and the soldiers' pay was docked accordingly. While clothing was to be purchased in Britain, provisions, it was decided, were best bought from the Americans.<sup>54</sup> Henceforth, each corps was to keep proper accounts, and at long last it was ordered that all public accounts should be passed before payment by the Conseil Privé and the Governor. Furthermore, a joint-commission of the two Conseils was set up to examine the accounts of all public officials, trustees and lessees of absentee property.<sup>55</sup>

In the meantime, Wigglesworth, at Simcoe's request, had produced a list of recommended economies. The most significant reform, and the biggest single saving outside the colonial corps was to be in the carriage of stores, then costing £46,000 p.a. The existing transport contracts with the planters of Cul de Sac and Mirebalais had been negotiated by the Conseil Privé itself but were unavoidably expensive, given the high price of mules and the wage levels then prevailing. More particularly, the carriage of military supplies to distant outposts like Banica and Neybe were the subject of considerable abuse, it was said.<sup>56</sup> By returning to



the corvée used earlier in the occupation, it was proposed to save over £40,000 p.a.<sup>57</sup> Sea transport was a bigger problem. The hire of armed schooners for ferrying troops and stores between outposts was currently costing around £86,000 p.a. In the last ten months of 1796, it had absorbed £130,000. Dundas wanted to replace the schooners with British transport ships, but Simcoe said these would have neither the speed nor the acclimatised crews of the local vessels. However, a more efficient use of them and the elimination of overmanning, he thought, would save another £30,000.<sup>58</sup>

Simcoe's other major cuts concerned military officers in all corps but particularly the foreign cavalry regiments, whose allowances were exceptionally high. By reducing the number of horses allowed to an officer and compelling him to collect his own forage, while reducing the amount allowed, it was hoped to save £30,000 in the coming year, and another £16,000 by abolishing the cash lodgings allowance. The number of staff officers was cut and so were the table expenses of district commanders. Lastly, the supply and delivery of wood, candles and oil were taken over by the Commissary-General with a planned saving of £25,000 p.a. It seems that the construction of fortifications had been a fertile ground for fraud, in which, there is evidence to suggest, the Conseil Privé itself collaborated with Major Péchon, ingénieur du roi. Simcoe decided, nonetheless, to add to the defences of the capital, that were so beneficial to its building contractors.<sup>59</sup>

In the civil sphere Simcoe made few changes, apart from cutting the secours of the Port au Prince poor from £15,000 to £5,000 p.a. The court at the Mole was suppressed and the Conseil Supérieur was restored to full activity after seventeen months of martial law, which Forbes had maintained at the request of the rival Conseil Privé. The salaries of the two councils, which totalled less than £18,000 p.a., were in some cases objects of envy, the general observed, but, in the circumstances, he doubted they were too high for the posts concerned.<sup>60</sup>

In June, Simcoe reintroduced the taxes of the Ancien Regime, till then uncollected outside the Grand' Anse, and increased their rates. The 3 livres capitation on plantation slaves was raised to 4 livres; that on urban slaves from 24 to 26 livres. The 2½% house tax was revived at 7½% and the duty on exports, which provided the greater part of Government revenue, was increased by a third. The property of absentees, if not leased out by the Régie Royale, was to pay substantially higher rates; for example, domestic slaves belonging to absentees paid a surcharge of 66



livres. A business tax was also devised. Merchants, shipowners and entrepreneurs were to pay 10 portugaises p.a.; small traders and artisans, 100 livres. Civil officials had their salaries reduced by 5%. All taxes henceforth were to be paid into the Caisses du Roi; the municipal administrations were suspended. Non-payment would result, after one month, in the billeting of troops on a property and, after six weeks, in the seizure of movables and their sale two weeks later. Every six months there was to be a cadastral survey and, once a year, a census.<sup>61</sup> The general clearly had long-term plans.

It seemed unlikely, however, that even if all went to plan, the new fiscal regime would raise more than £250,000 p.a., and that was assuming the Régie Royale of absentee property would yield that year £100,000.<sup>62</sup> Simcoe's reforms, moreover, only reduced expenditure by £4-500,000 p.a.<sup>63</sup> It was simply not possible, everyone agreed, to get down to the limit set by the British Government, whose £300,000 contribution would not even cover the cost of the black corps on their new footing. At the end of August, General Whyte, having increased the taxes on shipping, retailers and imports, reported that even with a public revenue of £319,000 p.a. there would be a deficit of £125,000 on an annual expenditure he estimated at £744,000.<sup>64</sup>

This was bad news for Portland and Dundas. It was made worse by accompanying reports of mass emigration and desertion to the enemy. Simcoe's public relations were good and it was generally admitted that, in carrying through his reforms, he created the minimum of friction.<sup>65</sup> The Conseil Supérieur pointed out (wrongly) that the tax increases contravened the Capitulation and (rightly) that the forecast increase in revenue was far too optimistic, but it registered the decree without demur. Its objections were poo-pooed by the Conseil Privé, which suggested however Simcoe might consult an assembly of colonists about the reforms - an idea the Conseil Supérieur naturally opposed. The suggestion, nonetheless, was probably not meant seriously, being a ritual gesture expected by public opinion.<sup>66</sup> In the Grand' Anse, however, the reforms met with much discontent, compounded by an insecure military situation. But their greatest impact was on the foreign corps, which experienced 'a frenzy of desertion'. Montalembert's Legion for some months seemed on the verge of mutiny and practically all the Rohan and Hompesch Hussars chose to return home rather than be drafted into a new corps.<sup>67</sup> It was only the promise of double pay that had got them to serve in the West Indies, and to replace them now would be extremely difficult. The leading colonial commanders - Montalembert.



de Bruges, Cambefort, - also pulled out, taking with them their accumulated wealth.

Their departure of course did cut costs but, at the same time, inadequately protected plantations could not produce revenue to pay taxes or rents; nor could planters whose animals were stolen perform the corvée. As more and more colonists took ship for America, the amount of specie in circulation dwindled, providing an additional obstacle to the collection of revenue.<sup>68</sup> After a certain point, the policy of retrenchment and financial autonomy became self-defeating.

(iii) 'A Game of Chess': the Campaign of 1797. General Simcoe's arrival found the occupied zone in a critical position. Successive and still-continuing troop withdrawals had weakened the British garrison at the very time Toussaint was massing his forces for a general attack. Simcoe commanded, in theory, no more than 5,000 white troops (two-fifths of them foreign), 5,800 black Chasseurs and a militia capable of fielding 3-4,000 armed men.<sup>69</sup> The true situation, however, was even less satisfactory, as account should be taken of sickness, inflated muster rolls and avoidance of militia service. Toussaint probably had around 20,000 men, though he claimed 48,000, and Rigaud some 12,000.<sup>70</sup> No advances had been made in winning over Rigaud and nothing decisive had been settled with the colonists of Santo Domingo. At sea, however, the balance of power had overwhelmingly shifted in favour of the British. Le Cap was under blockade and Simcoe straightaway ordered that Léogane and Gonaives also be blockaded. This considerably disrupted the Republicans' supplies, he said.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, during the spring the Navy was to conduct several successful cutting-out operations, seizing from Jean Rabel on April 20th nine merchantmen in a night raid.<sup>72</sup> A specialist in the use of light troops, Simcoe had originally hoped to form a sea-borne strike-force of 1,000 picked soldiers.<sup>73</sup> Led by Maitland, it was to capture Tortuga and raid the north coast ports. He never got the chance, however, as the extra men and supplies he was expecting never materialised and on arrival the defence of the occupied zone immediately became his priority.

At the end of February, when Saint Domingue's rivers were at their lowest level and the colony's roads at their most negotiable, Toussaint Louverture finally advanced into the mountains of the north-east, driving out the pro-British chiefs and winning over most of their few remaining men. Lieutenant-Colonel Rouvray, son of the famous planter, withdrew from Grande Rivière and with the chiefs Abraham and Roquelaure fell back



on Banica.<sup>74</sup> Toussaint then moved in early March against the outposts of Mirebalais. For five days, he besieged the camp at Boucan Carré before being driven off by its mulatto defenders, but he overran soon afterwards the posts to the south and west. On the 27th, Montalembert set out from Croix des Bouquets to relieve the vicomte de Bruges, shut up in the fortress of Mirebalais. Because, said Maitland, of his foolish choice of route, he was ambushed in the mountains and lost almost a fifth of his men.<sup>75</sup> De Bruges, about to be cut off, set fire to his very expensive citadel and fled via Grands Bois into the Cul de Sac. After his brutal treatment of the free coloureds, he dared not risk a siege. The occupied zone was thrown into an uproar. The planters would not believe, perhaps unrealistically, that de Bruges had been faced by over 6,000 men. It was said he and Montalmebert had already planned to leave the colony, having no need to endanger further the fortunes they had made. De Bruges, for his part, claimed he was almost out of ammunition and that many of his 500 soldiers were wounded. Even so, he might have tried to hold Grands Bois and ought not to have withdrawn without informing his advanced posts. By something of a miracle, about 500 troops from distant Banica - a curious collection of guerriers, Spaniards and regular Chasseurs with their women and children - managed a circuitous retreat through Spanish territory to arrive in the Cul de Sac over a week later.<sup>76</sup> Meanwhile, in Mirebalais, Grands Bois, Neybe and Lascahobas, slave-owning colonists were surrendering to troops of battle-hardened ex-slaves.

At the beginning of April, panic reigned among the whites of the plain. In the mountains south of Port au Prince, forces from Léogane had invested Morne l'Hôpital and, with a battery erected on the mountain opposite, destroyed the Grenier post by bombardment. The great danger now was that the forces of Toussaint and Rigaud would link up in the Cul de Sac and march on the capital. Trying to restore calm, Simcoe went out to Croix des Bouquets on the 5th. He ordered Montalembert to re-occupy his posts at the edges of the plain and promised the colonists he would not withdraw but fight, if necessary, from town to town. To his great good fortune, reinforcements arrived on the 11th from Jamaica. Mainly Irish, they were a disgrace, he said, but they strengthened his hand and within a week he had retaken all the enemy camps on the heights above the Rivière Froide. In this wild region, Dessource's Volunteers once again distinguished themselves, scaling precipitous slopes and manoeuvring silently in the upland woods, while a British column advanced unseen through the mists on the valley floor. Mid-way through the offensive, on April 17th, Toussaint made a timely



descent into the Cul de Sac from the north, but just as swiftly was driven back by Montalembert's cavalry.<sup>77</sup>

Flushed by this success, Simcoe hurriedly embarked 2/3,000 Chasseurs at Port au Prince and sent them to Arcahaye. He was hoping to attack Gonaives but, finding that Toussaint had grouped most of his forces there, it was decided to move against Verrettes as a preliminary to the recapture of Mirebalais, which was thought essential. However, midway through hauling cannon over the mountains of Arcahaye, the attack was called off, as troops had to be rushed to les Irois in the South, where on April 20th Rigaud had appeared in strength. Only 50 men were in Irois fort, which stood on the seashore on a rocky outcrop, when at midnight Rigaud's men began scaling its walls. Some 330 Chasseurs cut their way through from the bourg nearby, and after a successful sortie forced the assailants to pull back and begin a regular siege. They burned the village of Dame Marie further up the coast but at Islet, east of Irois, were heavily defeated. Rigaud then began to land heavy artillery in the adjacent bay. Meanwhile, another Republican force ravaged the Pestel region. In the Grand' Anse all was confusion and the situation was looking serious, when, quite by chance, two British frigates arrived, which sank Rigaud's flotilla and drove his men into the interior. When Maitland's relief force appeared, the danger had already passed. The military position was thus difficult to assess. Rigaud had lost his navy, all his siege artillery and between 800 and 1,000 killed and wounded. The Anglo-colonials had lost nine killed. Yet, Maitland dourly observed, the British were surviving only by rushing troops from one outpost to another. In the Grand' Anse, all public confidence and military discipline, British or colonial, was at end. If ever Toussaint and Rigaud, he said, should unite to launch a synchronised offensive, the effect would be fatal.<sup>78</sup>

'Nous purgerons bientôt notre territoire,' wrote Toussaint on May 23rd, 'des hordes tyranniques qui l'infestent.' 'Resserrés dans de faibles parties de la colonie,' the British, he thought, could not hold out much longer.<sup>79</sup> He had good reason to feel confident. Three weeks before, in recognition of his capture of Mirebalais, Sonthonax had proclaimed him Governor of Saint Domingue. An uprising in the north-east had easily been quelled, and he now gathered his forces for an attack on Saint Marc. Toussaint, however, had not counted on the pugnacity of his opposite number. Although Simcoe's mission was essentially civil in character and short-term, the general was still determined before leaving the colony to strengthen the position of the occupied zone. New blockhouses were built around Port au Prince and in the



Cul de Sac, and plans were made to attack Gonaives fort and then Tiburon. First of all, however, Mirebalais had to be retaken.<sup>80</sup> While it remained in Republican hands, the capital lay exposed to a north-south pincer movement and blacks would continue to desert from the plantations of Arcahaye. Although Simcoe complained that Port au Prince was so full of spies it was impossible to prepare a coup de main, his attack on Mirebalais appears to have taken Toussaint completely by surprise. At the end of May, in heavy rain, columns of cavalry and infantry crossed the mountains from Arcahaye and the Cul de Sac and re-occupied the region without a fight. Everywhere the Republicans withdrew before them; but, as so often before, escaped unharmed. Churchill's troops advanced too late to cut off their retreat and his hussars were unable to catch their well-mounted cavalry, though a number were drowned re-crossing the Artibonite, now in flood.<sup>81</sup>

Meanwhile, the British at Saint Marc were 'all suspense and anxiety'. Toussaint had collected at Gonaives 'a most formidable force' - variously put at 10-14,000 or 5-6,000 men - and on June 3rd he launched a massive attack<sup>82</sup> on the town that had kept him at bay for four years, the key to the occupied zone. After three assaults, the Gros Morne post at the mouth of the gorge was overrun and in the hills to the south Camp Guilhem was evacuated. Forces were concentrated on the defence of Fort Churchill, which came under heavy bombardment, as did the town itself, baron Cambefort's new fire brigade proving of great utility. On June 7th, the fighting achieved an unprecedented intensity, when 1500 of Toussaint's elite troops, ladders in hand, stormed the fort through a hail of lead shot. For half an hour their bodies piled up beneath its walls. Four times they fought their way through a breach and were driven back. Had their ladders been longer, the fort might have fallen. Yet again, seapower proved to be a vital factor, for another large column had advanced up the ravine on the fort's seaward side only to be decimated by the guns of a sloop anchored offshore. Then, welcomed as a saviour, Colonel Dessources arrived in the harbour of Saint Marc. The blacks withdrew, abandoning their artillery and leaving behind 500 dead.

Now was the time to counter-attack, as Toussaint's dispirited troops re-crossed the swollen Artibonite. Port au Prince and the Grand' Anse were safe, as Rigaud and Laplume were then fighting each other, Simcoe seized his chance. Reinforcements were ordered up from the South and General Churchill was told to advance. The plan was to trap Toussaint on the left bank by landing troops near the river's mouth and sending Dessources's men down from the mountains and Depestre's from Mirebalais.



However, when Simcoe arrived at Arcahaye to press the attack in person, he found that Churchill, whose conduct at Jérémie had already been severely censured, had not moved. Dessources said the attack was impracticable and wished to retire to Jamaica. His and Lapointe's officers were in high pique at the reduction of their allowances. Depestre, at the same time, had disobeyed orders and captured Lascahobas, only to find he could not safely withdraw. 'O for three half pay captains who scarce have bread to eat in England, wrote the general on June 17th, 'I believe we would have drowned Toussaint's army the other day and choaked the Artibonite with Blackamoors.'<sup>83</sup>

While torrential rains fell daily in the mountains, the plain turned more and more into a quagmire. For a while, Simcoe still thought he might take Verrettes, which was weakly defended, and the fort on the Crête à Pierrot. He could then leave the colony with the British entrenched along the Artibonite. However, while a siege train was assembled at Saint Marc, the army bivouaced in the fields around Arcahaye became stricken with malaria, and the campaign fizzled out.<sup>84</sup> Towards the end of June, minor operations near Léogane brought some success, but overtures to both Laplume and Rigaud were sharply rebuffed. Simcoe concluded he had done what he could and sailed for England on July 10th. He was glad to get out, he confided in a private letter. Desertion was spreading through the colonial corps and he feared a mutiny. Of the British soldiers, he had a very low opinion; Dundas's adoption of 'Company troops', he described as a great blow to English military honour. Relations with the Navy were once again bad; the naval force was 'totally insufficient' and consequently he was refused a frigate for his homeward passage.<sup>85</sup> Plainly, he felt cheated. The Government had sent him to reduce expenditure to an unrealistically low level, while with a little more support, he thought, he could have conquered the colony. 'I was beaten by proxy,' he claimed, '...had it not been for rain and an attack on Jérémie... I think great things might have been done... 3,000 men when I arrived might have finished the business... The cheapest way for Great Britain to act would be to conquer this island by contract; was I 20 years younger I would certainly bid.'<sup>86</sup>

Cause for optimism could indeed still be found. Although Toussaint's attack on Saint Marc had greatly impressed the British and colonists, the town's outposts were soon rebuilt and subsequent raids in July and August were defeated with ease and considerable carnage.<sup>87</sup> The blacks of the north-east were once again making overtures; and so were the neighbouring Spaniards. In August, 3,000 of them repulsed a Republican attack near



Banica.<sup>88</sup> The Republicans otherwise showed little sign of activity. The spate of desertions in the colonial corps was halted after a number of executions, and General Whyte on the 28th reported a 'perfect tranquillity' in the colony. However, it was mainly due, he added, to the internecine strife then besetting the Republican zone.<sup>89</sup>

Once Simcoe left, in fact, it became clear that slave-owning Saint Domingue was entering its last days. Though the occupied zone had been kept intact, it had suffered heavy losses in the spring campaign. At Mirebalais and in the Grand' Anse, the retreating Republicans had burned plantations and carried off many of the remaining slaves - 1,200 from the Plymouth region alone.<sup>90</sup> Even Arcahaye had been affected and the once opulent Cul de Sac now appeared 'an Absolute Desert'. The livestock convoys that crossed the plain en route for the capital were often ambushed by large bands of raiders. The British troops there felt keenly the futility of their presence and longed to return home, while despondent colonists sold off their belongings at low prices and got ready to leave.<sup>91</sup> So many took ship for North America that in July all emigration had to be forbidden.

Meanwhile, Simcoe's determination to fight on, and the political reaction in France then bringing fresh hope to Malouet and his friends, was in Saint Domingue bringing together in common cause all enemies of the old order, black and brown. The divisions in the Republican camp, which the whites always emphasised, as if they somehow justified their own desire for dominance, were slowly being overcome. In July, Toussaint arrested his chief rival in the North, Pierre Michel, without any ill consequences, and abruptly the following month he had Sonthonax deported. A rapprochement with Rigaud now became possible, and along with it, the kind of co-ordinated campaign that the British feared.



CHAPTER X. WHITE SOCIETY UNDER THE OCCUPATION

(i) The Population of the Occupied Zone. Wasted by years of revolution, many features of Saint Domingue society were accentuated during its final years, as with a victim of a fever approaching death. This was particularly true of its shifting instability of population, which makes any head-count of the British zone's inhabitants extremely hazardous. The number of slaves might be put at around 70,000 during the middle years of the occupation but it is more certain that it was subject to steady erosion. The free coloured population fell sharply in the autumn of 1794 only to rise and fall again successively as Mirebalais passed in and out of British hands, and the number of whites, too, was subject to similar fluctuations.

Reliable data are sparse. According to de Charmilly, between September 1793 and May 1794, 4,500 whites of all ages returned to their homes in the occupied zone.<sup>1</sup> Almost 2,000 of them had fled Port au Prince in March for Léogane, whose civilian population at that time, mainly mulatto and black, numbered at least 2,500. Of the 2,500 civilians at the Mole, most of them refugees from the surrounding parishes, half were slaves, (table 3). Saint Marc's total population was perhaps something over 3,000, again, mainly mulatto and black, and included 640 free men bearing arms. In the mountains behind Saint Marc and in the Artibonite plain, there were another 500 men under arms, and at Arcahaye there were 800 mulattoes and whites when the British arrived, of whom at least three quarters were mulattoes.<sup>2</sup> Before long, however, disillusioned planters were leaving for New England and petits blancs for the Republican zone. In June 1795, the Conseil Privé complained of 'une dépopulation sensible'. 'La population blanche,' wrote Chauvin Dumas three months later, 's'est presque évanouie.'<sup>3</sup> That of the Grand'Anse, he said, referring to adult males, had fallen from 4,000 to 1,500; that of Port au Prince, from over 1,800 to 500. At Saint Marc, only 60 remained, and at Arcahaye, too, an exodus was beginning, 80 having left in the previous two months.

In 1796, as the military situation improved, there were signs of a fresh influx from Europe and America, but emigration persisted and then accelerated until checked in mid-1797. At the Mole, during the last two years of the occupation, the civil population totalled about 1,500, of whom 200, able-bodied free men aged between 16 and 60, did militia service.<sup>4</sup> The militia of Port au Prince, it seems, remained about 7/800 strong throughout the occupation, 200 of them being refugees from other parishes. The capital contained another 7/800



TABLE 3      POPULATION OF THE MOLE, 18th OCTOBER 1793

REFUGEES

	Men	Women	Widows	Girls	Boys	Total
Whites	338	69	16	86	101	610
Mulattoes	10	35				45
Slaves	305	373				<u>678</u>
						1333

RESIDENTS

Whites	179	99	37	101	94	510
Mulattoes	14	39	1	16	7	77
Slaves	265	345				<u>610</u>
						1197

SOURCE: CO 137/91



able-bodied men who by virtue of payment or employment were exempt from militia service. The total free civilian population was probably nearly 5,000 and was balanced by an equal number of slaves.<sup>5</sup> What one cannot say is what proportion of the free men were whites, though the great majority of the women were presumably coloured. At Arcahaye and Saint Marc, mulattoes predominated; at the Mole and in the Grand'Anse whites were much the most numerous. In December 1795 in the whole colony there were over 5,000 men serving in the militia, but by March 1797 there was said to be only 3/4,000 liable for service.<sup>6</sup> Hundreds of colonists, it is true, served in the different Légions or as officers in the black corps, though there they may have been outnumbered by émigrés from France. In fact, during most of the second half of the occupation it would appear that half or more of the whites in the British zone were foreign soldiers sent from Europe.

(ii) Town and Countryside; Environment and Economy. All the towns of occupied Saint Domingue were garrison towns. Cavalry clattered through their dusty streets and whole regiments drilled on their places d'armes. Everywhere amid the familiar throng of black faces and madras handkerchiefs, in the markets, bars and brothels, were red-coated soldiers with money to spend and time to kill. This was not an entirely new departure, especially for the Mole or for Port au Prince, where 1,200 troops had been stationed under the Ancien Regime. Even Saint Marc had been used to a peacetime garrison of 50, and moreover, it was only ten years since the last war. Governed by majeurs de la place or commandants pour le roi, well provided with gun batteries, Saint Domingue's towns had always had a military as well as a commercial function, and militia reviews in the colony had been frequent. Now, however, with the exception of Jérémie, they were places under siege, cut off from the surrounding countryside and ringed with fortifications. Hemmed in by mountains, crowded, claustrophobic and tense, they awoke with the morning gun and fell silent at curfew.<sup>7</sup>

Port au Prince<sup>8</sup> had been ravaged by fire in 1791 and besieged three times before falling to the British. Stretching 1 1/4 miles from north to south, it presented to its conquerors a spectacle of scattered and dilapidated, sometimes empty, wooden buildings, most of them single-storied with verandas and sloping roofs. Its wide streets were pitted with holes and, according to the weather, thick with dust or mud. The drainage channels were choked with weeds, and stagnant water; the cemetery with corpses. Of some 1,200 properties, about a quarter were in ruins, without roofs, doors or windows, and the raising of fortifications led to further demolition and damage,



though during the occupation about 80 houses were rebuilt. In the upper town, half a mile from the wharves, could be found extensive barracks, a large military hospital and the spacious maison du roi, where beneath chandeliers the commander in chief entertained. It was the capital's only stylish building. While the barracks accommodated most of the garrison, officers were usually lodged privately. Until Williamson's arrival, all householders were obliged to billet troops and the army seems to have had few qualms about evicting occupants from desirable property. Further sources of friction were the reluctance of some officers (and British merchants) to pay rent and the keeping empty of property designated for troops, which led to thefts by vagabonds (and neighbours) and angered its evicted occupants.

Under the occupation, Port au Prince possessed 6 inns, 12 billiard halls and well over a dozen cabarets, where the colonial passion for gambling was given full rein. In the market place, there were 150 stalls selling bread or meat products, 200 sellers of vegetables and 50 marchands pacotilleurs. Among the various shopkeepers, there were 16 beef butchers, twice as many as in 1789. The number of merchants, ship-owners and contractors in the colony, including foreigners, was put in June 1797 at 80, of whom the great majority would have lived in the capital.<sup>9</sup> The port was of course much quieter than in previous times. By 1795, privateers had all but ruined the coastal trade and trade with Jamaica, whilst almost the only sugar shipped from Port au Prince was that brought from Arcahaye. However, the capture of Mirebalais, in August, greatly increased the volume of produce exported, and imports from England during the following years were considerable, as plantations were refurbished. In 1796, an eye-witness, though a biased one, described the harbour as teeming with British merchant ships and dispatch boats, money in abundance, the wharves loaded with produce and warehouses full of agricultural implements. Even so, the quantity of coffee handled was probably little more than half that of earlier years and the amount of sugar about a tenth.<sup>10</sup>

The next largest town in the occupied zone and the most comparable in situation was Saint Marc. Like Port au Prince, it was surrounded by a dry ditch and earthworks, with several small forts and redoubts in the hills behind. In 1789 it had contained 250 houses; of them, about 80 were burned down in September 1794. 'Ses propres ruines,' observed Toussaint Louverture, 'lui servent de remparts.'<sup>11</sup> A thousand yards in length and 500 yards wide, Saint Marc possessed a hospital, a large church and an impressive 'Government house' fronted by an Ionic colonnade. Unlike Port au Prince, many of its houses



were built of stone and, though usually single-storied, were among the finest in the colony. Rows of trees once lined the town square and the main street but they had since been cut down. As in the capital, the side streets were strewn with garbage and human excrement. A powerful stench pervaded the town and was all the worse for it being down wind of a churchyard where thousands of bodies lay but inches beneath the sun-baked soil.<sup>12</sup> A plan to build public toilets was cancelled as part of General Forbes' economies. Although the port of Saint Marc enjoyed a busy Indian summer in 1794, (appendix E (ii)), with the free coloured revolt in September its commerce was almost entirely destroyed. So, too, was its source of fruit and vegetables in the plain. The poor went hungry and many more deserted across the Artibonite.

Jérémie, on the other hand, peaceful and backed by a prosperous hinterland, was much busier than ever. It was a picturesque and salubrious small port built on the lower slopes of a hill. Most of its 180 houses were two-storied with broad balconies and tiled roofs. Its garrison never numbered more than a few hundred and was usually dispersed on nearby plantations.

The Mole, contrarily, was quite transformed by the occupation. Firstly, the arrival of the British caused about a quarter of the population, petits blancs and blacks, to decamp to the Republican lines.<sup>13</sup> Thereafter, as table 3 shows, refugees came pouring in from the surrounding parishes, and this they were still doing two years later. Between September and November 1795, 138 enrolled there for poor relief, including 32 from le Borgne, 16 from Fort Dauphin, 11 from le Cap, 10 from Acul, and 8 each from Dondon, Jean-Rabel and Port Margot.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, the Mole gained a garrison that fluctuated between 500 and 1,500 men and became a base for a squadron numbering up to 11 ships of the line. A great deal of building was undertaken, moreover, chiefly barracks and blockhouses that were linked by a new road, and the town itself must have grown considerably, if one can believe Lieutenant Howard. His journal mentions in May 1796 1,100 wooden houses (? 110). They were like rows of stables, he thought, set out on a sandy terrain that was traversed by several streams of fresh water.<sup>15</sup> With a barren hinterland but a perfect natural harbour, situated nearly three miles inside a rocky inlet, the Mole was essentially a naval base. Early in 1794, however, it drove a thriving trade exporting the produce of Jean-Rabel and Spanish-occupied le Borgne. Yet, this soon came to an end and the town reverted to being the backwater it literally was, only now cut off from Bombarde as well, its main source of vegetables and poultry. The



population lived virtually in famine conditions and almost never ate fresh meat. Only 46 died, however, out of 1,500 in two years, until at the very end of the occupation an outbreak of smallpox decimated the non-whites.<sup>16</sup>

Of the smaller bourgs, Croix des Bouquets in the middle of the Cul de Sac had become a rural fortress, surrounded by a deep ditch with a redoubt at each corner mounted with cannon. Entry was gained via one of two drawbridges and within the enceinte the presbytery had been converted into a citadel, also protected by a ditch and drawbridge. Most of its hundred or so houses were now thatched with banana leaves and covered with whitewashed mud daub.<sup>17</sup> It was here that the few remaining planters of the plain gathered of an evening. Here de Jumécourt and O'Gorman spent most of the occupation. Here, too, were the warehouses of the planters' transport company, where the mule trains and convoys of heavy carts gathered before crossing the Cul de Sac. But above all, Croix des Bouquets was the headquarters of the baron de Montalembert and his Legion. In May 1797, we find 2,000 soldiers based there, along with 400 militia and maréchaussée; There were also some 400 poor, receiving daily rations:- 10 men, 15 widows, 133 wives and 225 children.<sup>18</sup>

The bourg of Arcahaye, Lapointe's headquarters, was similarly beleaguered in appearance but a little smaller, more picturesque and situated on the seashore. In its busy port there were always several schooners loading sugar or coffee for Port au Prince.<sup>19</sup> Much smaller still, the hamlet of les Irois consisted of barely a dozen huts and a landing stage. And yet, a British officer noted, 'wretched as is its appearance .... it contains several billiard tables, to which game the French are much devoted.'<sup>20</sup> A mud fort erected on a hillock further along the beach marked, after the loss of Tiburon, the frontier of the Grand' Anse. As for life in Mirebalais, isolated behind its mountain barrier, little is known. The town possessed a very fine stone church, a parade ground lined with elms and over 100 houses, mostly owned by gens de couleur. It was overlooked by a hugely expensive stone fort, the work of the vicomte de Bruges. Livestock was plentiful there, and in June 1797 oxen apparently could be had for 3 dollars, sheep for half a dollar and horses for two dollars.<sup>21</sup>

These prices, however, are scarcely credible, and can only be explained by the town having been burnt a few days before. Bullocks cost usually about 200 livres coloniales in the Cul de Sac and cavalry horses were then fetching up to £40 or £50 sterling in Port au Prince. A good mule cost between 500 and 825 livres in the West and up to 1,000 or 1,100 livres in the Grand' Anse, where they had to be imported by



sea.<sup>22</sup> Saint Domingue, some said, was the dearest country in the world, and during the occupation prices were generally considered to be three times higher than in Europe. Prices had always been high in the colony, partly because of the prevalence of credit, partly because so much had to be imported. Now imports had to cross a sea infested with privateers and pay insurance rates often in excess of 25%. Labour was more scarce than ever, and the influx of specie that paid the troops probably also helped push up prices. During the autumn of 1793, the cost of a barrel of flour in the capital rose from 5 to over 8 dollars U.S. In the first five months of 1797, the price of lumber doubled. 'The price in America,' one Yankee trader observed, 'is nothing. It will meat a profit here.'<sup>23</sup>

For the planter, however, the high cost of supplies and the hazards and expense of wartime freight were perhaps the least of a long list of problems. In addition to the usual dangers of drought and hurricane and fluctuating prices, most estates in the occupied zone had to cope with a shortage of manpower and of draught animals, onerous taxation and requisitions, sometimes extreme degrees of physical insecurity and, at worst, partial or wholesale destruction of buildings, equipment and crops. The plain of Léogane went up in flames almost as soon as the British arrived. Only 6 of its 54 sugar plantations escaped without damage, and though the factory buildings remained substantially intact, the plain remained too unsafe for much restoration to be done before the parish was lost in October 1794.<sup>24</sup> The lower Artibonite in the same period was turned into a no man's land, where patrols clashed and brief campaigns were fought. Most of the slaves fled or were forcibly moved either across the river or to Saint Marc. The proximity of Toussaint's cordon made even the growing of vegetables dangerous. Elsewhere, however, plantation life continued, though under varying conditions.

Sheltered behind the Massif de la Hotte, the region least affected by the Revolution was the Grand' Anse. Its roads, according to one officer 'infinitely too bad for description',<sup>25</sup> added to its isolation. East of Pestel lay swamps and thick forests, while the vertiginous track connecting Tiburon and les Irois narrowed to a few inches in places (as it still does) some 600 feet above the sea. Scattered through the mountains between Pestel and les Irois, guarding the passes leading southwards, were about a dozen fortified camps. They were manned by a militia of small planters, managers and book-keepers, along with 'such of their negroes as they can trust'. So



observed Captain Colville touring this region in September 1793.<sup>26</sup> He enjoyed the 'delightfully cool air' and found the scenery 'beautifully romantic throughout' with 'stupendous mountains and deep glens ... well broken by rivulets and waterfalls and covered with cedar, mahogany and others of the finest West India forest trees'. The famous Camp Desrivaux then consisted of a mud fort partly enclosing the buildings of a coffee plantation and a temporary barracks. Its defenders, Colville noted, were still boastful of their victory over Rigaud three months before; their buttons bore the legend le 19 juin.

The Grand' Anse, excepting Tiburon, possessed eight sucreries and about 200 other plantations, half of them of coffee.<sup>27</sup> Although overall few of them seem to have lost more than a handful of their slaves,<sup>28</sup> it is interesting that in the eastern region, even at this early date, Captain Colville found 'a vast profusion of coffee berries rotting in the ground for want of hands to take them in.' 'The negroes', he recorded, 'had deserted some months since in great numbers and in many places we saw the dreadful monuments of their incendiary devastations.' The coffee plantations, some of them 'at the tops of the highest mountains', were larger than in Jamaica but in fact among the smallest in the occupied zone. Outside the Fonds Rouges district immediately behind Jérémie many had fewer than 50 slaves and less than 60 acres planted with coffee.<sup>29</sup> Their grand' cases were rather spartan, with very little furniture or cutlery. Nevertheless, guests were sumptuously entertained. Captain Colville dined on the largest and finest-flavoured mutton and turkey he had ever encountered, and he echoed Moreau de Saint-Méry's praise of the profusion of European vegetables and fruit that was available in the mountains. There was also 'plenty of fresh butter and cream cheese'. He was much impressed by 'some very famous claret' and the 'large and frequent libations of 'American Petite Biere', as well as by the girls who served it. Some of the planters, he remarked, looked more like 'jolly English grasiers than French creoles'. Their life, he thought, was a comfortable one.

Averaging around 100,000 lbs. per estate, coffee yields appear to have been high in la Grand' Anse. Under the occupation it exported more than 15 million pounds per year. This is, at first sight, extremely surprising, as in the period 1788-91 Jérémie's exports to France averaged only about five millions per annum.<sup>30</sup> Under the old regime, however, most of the region's produce was sent to le Cap or Port au Prince for sale, and this probably accounts for the discrepancy. Even so, it seems likely that production had increased in the early 90s, as the high, virgin slopes of the interior, towards the very crest



of the Hotte Massif, were brought into cultivation. There, amidst a strange landscape of jagged peaks and wild escarpments, pitted with sinkholes and caverns, the coffee tree yielded up to 5 lbs. of berries per year. The canton of Plymouth, Moreau de Saint-Méry tells us, was in 1789 the scene of frantic pioneer activity.<sup>31</sup> It was Saint Domingue's frontier. As such, it had attracted 'tous les ambitieux, tous les spéculateurs du reste de la Colonie'. These were the men, it should be remembered, of Camp Desrivaux. The coffee boom of the late 1780s and the competition between whites and coloureds for valuable land concessions may well explain much of the mental climate of the revolutionary Grand' Anse.<sup>32</sup>

More than any other region of Saint Domingue, les paroisses unies, as they styled themselves, were 'a white man's country', characterised by an unusually high ratio of whites to non-whites. Early in the occupation this ratio probably even increased, as the prosperity, security (and perhaps salubrity) of the area attracted many refugees as well as petits blancs seeking employment. Unlike in the West, the military found it difficult to recruit poor whites, as plantation work paid so well. It was the local planters, however, 'hair brained' riders of their unshod ponies,<sup>33</sup> who officered the militia and the regional black corps. Patriarchs on a small scale, they were among the first in the colony to arm their own slaves. Frequently creoles, like the chevalier de Sevré or the Onffroy brothers of Tiburon, or the Espeut of les Irois, they were fighting to defend or recover plantations where they had been born or which were their own creations. In the face of republican tendencies among the petits blancs, it was their self-righteous and independent settler mentality that held the Grand' Anse together. It also kept them for a long time self-governing. 'These distant districts,' General Simcoe observed, 'are mighty apt to consider themselves independent and at parochial assemblies seem inclined to distribute, secretly, their respective revenues.'<sup>34</sup>

Yet, even here where the plantation regime was at its most stable, it was a long drawn out but losing battle. Plymouth, as Captain Colville saw, had been partly abandoned before the British came, and in June 1794 over 160 colonists left les Irois when much of the southern littoral was burned. Both regions were again ravaged in August 1796 and once more in April 1797, when Dame Marie bourg was burned, and Plymouth alone lost 1,200 slaves.<sup>35</sup> These were, on the other hand, only frontier regions, and until 1797 production went on increasing. Coffee plantations were in a sense, moreover, difficult to destroy, being less dependent on male skilled labour and valuable equipment than



sucreries and having a less combustible crop. Even with grand' case and storehouses burned down and with their mature male slaves absconded, a caféière could still be kept going by its master or gérant making periodical visits from a nearby camp. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the economic and political cost of Rigaud's successive incursions bore heavily on the Grand' Anse.

The other coffee-growing areas were mainly inhabited by mulattoes. Grands Bois and Mirebalais, which had a militia of over a thousand men, had about 500 white inhabitants when they passed into British hands and most of these were refugees from the North. The mountain of Grands Bois stood on the Santo Domingo frontier, dominating both the plateau of Mirebalais and the eastemend of the Cul de Sac. It covered about 40 square miles and contained nearly 90 coffee plantations rising one above the other. Much of it was still wooded, most of the plantations being under 20 years old with largely African workforces. When Toussaint briefly visited the region in August 1795, he was greatly impressed by its 'habitations magnifiques ... et en grand rapport', though fifteen months later there were signs of a shortage of labour.<sup>36</sup> By that time about a fifth of the estates were under the Administration des Biens des Absents. Transport remained the region's worst problem: nothing could be moved except on the back of a mule.

Frequently exposed to attack, Mirebalais seems to have fared less well. Many of its outlying plantations had to be abandoned and their remaining slaves, as at Saint Marc, regrouped on others closer to the bourg, if they were not recruited as Chasseurs. Mirebalais' main crop was indigo, which even more than coffee needed constant attention, lest the plants be strangled by weeds. So fast do they grow in the Caribbean, that a few months neglect could be fatal. Apparently very little indigo was exported under the occupation; many estates seem to have produced only vegetables. Cotton production, however, may have remained considerable.<sup>37</sup> In both Grands Bois and Mirebalais taxation was extremely high. In place of the corvée, for example, the rapacious commandant, de Bruges, demanded a levy of 66 livres per slave.<sup>38</sup>

Exactions were also very great in the mountains of Arcahaye. This is evident from the Debien's study of the Maulévrier caféière, a plantation of some 130 slaves owned by an absentee. There, in addition to more or less annual contributions patriotiques ranging from 2,000 to 4,500 livres, payments (apparently in kind) of about 1,300 livres were made every month towards the upkeep of the local camps. Furthermore, arms had to be purchased and the plantation's économies were paid, it seems, an astonishing 66 livres per night to mount guard, though



this seems scarcely credible. Before the Revolution, Maulévrier employed one économe, at 1,200 livres p.a. plus board, or did entirely without. Under the occupation, to provide extra security, there were always two or three, and they received 2,000 livres along with their food, which was worth as much again.<sup>39</sup> The manager received 14,000 livres, a substantial increase, though he no longer resided and made only monthly visits into the mornes, now more isolated than ever. None of the stewards stayed very long, and surely not because of their low wages; elsewhere in the Matheux and in the plain one finds économes paid only 1,000 livres plus board.<sup>40</sup> Life must have been very tense surrounded by slaves on these wooded mountain ridges, where raiders often appeared in the night.

The Maulévrier study is particularly interesting because it shows how, even on a relatively well-preserved plantation, production could diminish. The annual yields were, in French pounds, as follows:-  
1790 146,000 lbs, 1791 135,000 lbs, 1792 124,000 lbs, 1793 c. 100,000 lbs, 1794 73,000 lbs, 1795 86,500 lbs, 1796 (incomplete year) 50,000 lbs.<sup>41</sup>  
Then, in October 1796, when the estate was leased, its potential production was estimated at only 40,000 lbs p.a. Its buildings were in fair shape but it had lost a large proportion of its mobilier, in fact about 45% of its slaves. Only 77 remained, and its 65 carreaux of gardens (181 acres) were not tended as well as before. Moreover, being situated near a military post, it was liable to more corvées than other estates.<sup>42</sup> The loss of slaves is surprising, as the manager's correspondence does not mention any at all, bar the enlistment of five of the best men as soldiers. We learn only that the plantation was pillaged in 1796 and lost 10 of its 25 mules.<sup>43</sup> It is a curious illustration of the gérant-absentee relationship.

Coffee cultivation was long established in the mountains of Arcahaye. A typical estate would have over 100 acres of coffee trees and an impressive array of stone buildings such as were rarely encountered in Grands Bois or la Grand' Anse. It would also be showing signs of soil exhaustion.<sup>44</sup> In May 1795, there was said to be 300 plantations in production in these mountains,<sup>45</sup> an estimate that must have included not only the coastal range and the Matheux behind, but also the smaller estates on the third chain, which overlooks the Artibonite and was not officially part of the parish. This means that, although Toussaint's forces intermittently occupied the hauteurs de Verrettes, the region remained in production at this time and effectively part of the British zone. In August 1795, however, Toussaint ordered that the revolt be carried into the mountains and



that produce which could not be carried off should be burned.<sup>46</sup> Naturally, the cantons nearest the Artibonite suffered most. Many must have been abandoned, though les Délices was still being exploited at the end of the occupation. Fond Baptiste and the Matheux were apparently not greatly affected, at least until 1797. Troops who crossed the Montagnes Terribles in June 1797 returning from Mirebalais saw miles and miles of coffee trees heavy with berries but most of the plantation buildings in ruins; it seemed they had been destroyed in the previous twelve months.<sup>47</sup> Production, however, did not necessarily cease after such destruction. In September 1797, all the buildings on the Dumas/Fontenay plantation were burned along with 30,000 lbs. of coffee, but one finds threemonths later the owners harvesting a new crop.<sup>48</sup>

Similarly, in the Montrouis district between Arcahaye and Saint Marc plantation life became increasingly precarious in 1797. The post on the isolated Marie sucrerie in the Ravine Sèche was evacuated twice in four months, the second time, complained the plantation's lessee, merely on the rumour of an enemy incursion. He was able to spend only six consecutive weeks there in six months, though a year before it had been perfectly safe. Of the plantation's 100 slaves, but 25 were field workers and of these 11 turned maroon, while the local commandant tried to recruit all the remaining males. Twenty of the mules, many he himself had supplied, had died of morves. The plantation, in addition, lacked water. Unable to cut its 100 acres of cane, the lessee, Jacques Marie Saint-Cheroz, would not pay the rent and so lost his lease. Yet, the estate was immediately re-let in January 1798 for 26,000 livres p.a.<sup>49</sup>

The road from Montrouis to Arcahaye passed through over 20 miles of forest and by the middle of 1796 was all but impassible. Not only cut by the beds of torrents flowing down from the mountains, it was now overgrown with shrubs and creepers and blocked with fallen trees. On emerging, however, into the plain of Arcahaye, the visitor was struck by 'a general idea of vast opulence'.<sup>50</sup> All was cultivated and symmetrical in the narrow coastal plain; endless canefields and neat plantation houses, bridges, canals and aqueducts. Its 48 sucreries were not large and most made only muscovado, but their soil was extremely productive. About half were left in the hands of gérants. There were in addition about 70 cotton or indigo plantations, and numerous lime-kilns, potteries and distilleries, probably mostly owned by free coloureds. It was here that Jean-Baptiste Lapointe held sway. Because of his brutality, and of the mountains that rise up sheer from



the plain, hemming it in, the plantation regime remained largely intact.

The volume of exports from the parish enormously impressed the British and, according to Lapointe, was greater than under the Ancien Regime. He claimed that, while Arcahaye had never previously produced more than 20 million pounds of sugar, production under him rose to 25 millions.<sup>51</sup> This was probably not too much of an exaggeration, though somewhat artful. Firstly, a new sucrerie had been established in 1789. Secondly, under the occupation very little clayed sugar was produced, so that the volume of sucre brut (from which it was refined) would naturally have increased. From what one knows of conditions on the estates in this period, one would expect output to have fallen. The inventories of 14 of them, drawn up in the autumn of 1796, indicate an average output of only 382,000 (French) lbs.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, most of the figures given were predicated upon an increase in the labour force. On the other hand, there is good reason to think they were deliberately understated and certainly we find Governor Williamson in July 1795 expecting a crop of 14,000 hogsheads, that is, over 24 million pounds.<sup>54</sup> More reliable figures are not available. The produce of Arcahaye was shipped partly to Port au Prince from Arcahaye bourg and the rest was sold directly to Americans from the wharves of les Vazes and Boucassin.

The most serious problem confronting the plantations of Arcahaye was a lack of manpower. Of the absentees' estates that were leased out it was often observed that they needed 20, 30, 50 or even 100 more slaves to work at full capacity. This was in September/October 1796, before marronage became important, in the spring of 1797. On the vast Poy la Générale estate, one third of the fields were left uncultivated because the workforce, although probably the largest in the plain, was too small. Of its 298 slaves, 35% were children, another 16% were without value and only 22% were adult males - an extreme example but of a widespread phenomenon. For most of these plantations, natural decline during six years without new imports was probably the main cause of this imbalance, though in the case of the Raby and Bellanger estates substantial losses had occurred during the local revolt of 29th/30th March 1792. On the latter estate 246 acres of canes had gone up in flames. With one exception, however, only on the Robert plantation had buildings been set on fire, and at that only the slave quarters. In 1796, the Robert slaves were still living in ajoupas they had built for themselves.<sup>54</sup> The recruiting of Chasseurs considerably worsened the labour shortage. (Poy la Générale had lost at least 20 of its best men before the above inventory was made).<sup>55</sup> As the 26th June 1795



decree allowed 1 in 15 slaves to be enlisted, irrespective of age or sex, it hit the sugar plantations, with their relatively low sex ratio and older population, especially hard.<sup>56</sup> Lapointe, moreover, refused to allow planters to put forward as recruits only their least-seasoned or specially-purchased Africans, which they were entitled to do, and there is also evidence that he enlisted specialist slaves, again contrary to the decree.<sup>57</sup> In addition, he requisitioned without payment older males to serve in the camps as auxiliaries, thus further depleting the plantations. Whether or not these estates had relied on hired labour before the revolution to get them through crottime, many probably adopted this expedient under the occupation. Very few slaves seem to have been imported and practically none at all before 1797. For plantations living on borrowed time, it was not an attractive alternative.

Judging from the terms of plantation leases, a month's work by a slave was nominally valued at 8 gourdes. In March 1796, the Conseil Privé suggested that a fair daily wage, in view of the scarcity of men and animals, should be 2 gourdes for a white ouvrier,  $\frac{1}{2}$  gourde for a black manoeuvrier and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  gourdes for a cart with three mules and two drivers. In the Cul de Sac, however, at this time we find slaves hired out at the following rates:-<sup>57 bis</sup>

field slaves	1 <u>gourde</u> per week
carters, masons	2 <u>gourdes</u> per week; 6/8 <u>gourdes</u> per month
sucriers, cooks	2 <u>gourdes</u> per week; 10 <u>gourdes</u> per month
drivers	4 <u>gourdes</u> per week

Yet, these were absentees' slaves let by the Administration in an area where there was little demand for agricultural labour. Rates in Arcahaye were probably much higher.

Although compensation for supplying recruits to the army amounted to only 2,000 livres, planters and managers were so anxious not to part with their own 'seasoned' slaves that they often preferred to purchase a substitute, which usually cost them 3,000 livres. Arcahaye, according to Malouet d'Alibert, was the most expensive part of Saint Domingue<sup>58</sup> but in the Grand' Anse, in fact, substitute Chasseurs sometimes cost 4,000 livres. Or so their purchasers claimed. They were frequently, it appears, imported Africans. James Esten, however, bought a group of adolescent Ibo males at only 2,000, as well as others at 2,500 and 3,000, while Jean Kina seems to have paid no more than 2,200 for the fighting-men he purchased.<sup>59</sup> Mules, too, were an important item of purchase, as only 11 of the sucreries in Arcahaye had water mills. Even a small sucrerie making 300,000 lbs p.a. needed more than 50 mules for its



moulin à bêtes and another 24 to pull four carts.<sup>60</sup> Under the occupation, water mills were erected on at least two more plantations.

Even in the plain of Arcahaye, at the heart of the occupied zone, agriculture became something of a military operation, particularly on the exposed plantations of Boucassin, near the opening of the Cul de Sac. There, where the plain extended into forested gorges, plantation life took on a pioneer aspect, with slaves carrying arms and grand' cases turned into blockhouses pierced for musketry, always open to attack. When raiders appeared, the whites and the male slaves would take up their guns and retire inside the grand' case, from where on a small plantation they could cover the other buildings. With its elevated position, its ground-floor masonry two feet thick, and upper storey of pitch-pine, the average grand' case was in structure not unlike the tall blockhouses that the British erected throughout the colony. On the Montbazon estate, in 1798 the gérant actually added his own ditch and drawbridge.<sup>61</sup> Not even on the coast were plantations free from attack, for in both Arcahaye and the Grand' Anse privateers from Petit Trou or Baradères came ashore to pillage.

Formerly owned by the chevalier de Rohan, the Montbazon plantation in the district of Boucassin is of especial interest as it was taken over by the London merchants Turnbull Forbes and managed by their Port au Prince subsidiary, Bertrand, Littledale and Co.<sup>62</sup> Via the accounts and correspondence of its manager, Jean Lestage (former lessee of the small Maré plantation), its vicissitudes through at least the last year of the occupation can be followed in some detail. In March 1797, it employed a gérant, who was paid 16,000 livres p.a., two économes receiving 1,000 livres with board, and a comptable, who was paid 24,000 livres p.a. but who probably was not employed solely on the work of the estate. It then possessed only 122 slaves - 32 children (26%), 43 men and 47 women. Of the adults, 25 (20%), were too old or otherwise infirm to work; 6 were domestics (5%), and there were always between 8 and 12 (6-10%) in the hospital. One can say, therefore, that nearly half, depending on what work the children did, were almost entirely unproductive. Another 12 acted as watchmen, watermen and hedgecutters, and there were 8 sucriers and 4 carters. The number actually working in the field fluctuated between 18 and 29 - not enough to cut one third of the cane.

Artisans from nearby plantations had to be hired to perform specific tasks, and in May 50 field-workers were hired from the planter Larac. That month, following the loss of Mirebalais, over 100 Chasseurs were camped on the plantation for 40 days. On June 16th



the estate was raided and four men were abducted. They later escaped and returned. Between March and June, two males died and two were drafted into the army. Two more recruits were called for in December; for one of which a substitute was supplied. As the campaign season opened, the situation grew more tense. Boats plying to and from Port au Prince now needed an armed escort. The manager, however, remained optimistic. The quality of the sugar, he admitted, was not good, but this was due to the poor state of the equipment, particularly the mills. The estate, he insisted, could still make the same quantity as in the past. He was even hoping to buy some slaves. Because of the plantation's exposed position, its hired workers were withdrawn and the manager had great difficulty finding someone willing to supply replacements. In January an attack was beaten off without loss save the expending of 500 shots, and the plantation was again raided in February. By the end of the month, the workforce was down to 85 adults and 29 children, with between 12 and 15 in the hospital. Yet, it remained untouched by the fierce fighting that had now reached the plain. Boucassin fort was besieged for four days until its 3,000 attackers were forced to withdraw. For a while, an atmosphere of bravado prevailed. 'Les habitants' it was claimed, 'après s'être bien battus, sont rentrés chez eux et roulent.'<sup>63</sup>

In March, however, the posts in the mountains were suddenly lost and the Montbazon estate became part of the Boucassin cordon. Troops were billeted there for 14 days, their officers eating up a lot of its food. The whites of the plain were in despair, loath to see the British pull out but afraid of staying and being massacred.<sup>64</sup> Anxious to get his crop in, Montbazon's gérant managed at great cost to hire 44 slaves and paid a new levy of five slaves in cash. Armed barges from Léogane then seized and carried off 22 barriques of sugar from the plantation's wharf. About a month later the parish was evacuated. But in the meantime, it was said, all the managers of the plain had established secret connections with the armed men in the forests who had once worked for them and, remarkably, when the British withdrew, few of the whites of Arcahaye went with them.<sup>65</sup>

Strange though it seems, production on the Montbazon estate had gone on increasing throughout the occupation. Though it apparently never equalled its pre-revolutionary output, it steadily recovered from the dislocation of the years 1791-93, when probably little planting was done and when it may have lost many of its slaves. Between March 1793 and May 17th 1794, it produced only 203,200 (French) lbs of muscovado and 109,000 lbs of syrup.<sup>66</sup> Then a fire took place on the



estate. Between August and December 1794, 131,200 lbs were produced from 24 cane pieces of 3rd, 5th, but mainly 6th ratoons, and 22 cane pieces were planted. Between January and June 1795, 192,000 lbs were produced from 66 pieces, 17 of them 1st ratoons but many also were being cut for the 6th or 8th time. Thirteen pieces were also planted. Hence, even before the estate changed hands, its fortunes were improving under Lapointe's stern eye, although running at a loss. From August 1794 to 17 June 1795, its revenue and expenditure respectively amounted to 146,000 and 152,000 livres. In the period up to 28th January 1796, the estate moved into the black, selling 259,000 lbs with another 48,000 lbs left in store. Unfortunately, the accounts for the spring of 1796 have not survived. This was the cutting season and the first time that new canes would have been cut under the occupation. A final account shows the estate making a substantial profit. Between 1st June 1796 and 31st December 1797, it shipped 569,366 lbs of muscovado to England and sold in Saint Domingue 131,673 lbs, as well as 267,175 lbs of syrup. Revenue amounted to 569,629 livres; expenditure to 331,215 livres - a profit of 238,413 livres, or nearly £7,000.

Hence, although the record is not complete, it would seem that through 1795-97 the plantation was producing about 450,000 lbs p.a., perhaps more, at an annual profit approaching £4,300. For 1798, a crop of 550,000 lbs had been anticipated. The profit to the owners, however, was probably even greater. The above calculations used only local prices, while most of the crop was sold in England. The final account shows prices per 100 (French) lbs ranging from 68 to 75 livres with an average of 70 livres. In England at this period, the prices paid by importers excluding duty were over 50% higher.<sup>67</sup> In November 1797, Turnbull Forbes informed the Government that that year alone they had received from the estate over 400 hogsheads, producing a clear profit of more than £8,000.<sup>68</sup> Although the two accounts do not tally, they both clearly suggest that towards the end of the occupation sugar cultivation could produce a gross profit of around 40%.

How far one may generalise from such a limited example is by no means clear. Earlier in the occupation sugar prices had been lower, in England falling below 40 shillings per cwt in the latter half of 1794. Thereafter, however, they had risen steeply, remaining over 60 shillings after April 1795 and passing 70 shillings in March 1798.<sup>69</sup> Local prices, nevertheless, are more relevant, as most of the trade of the occupied zone went to the United States.<sup>70</sup> According to Lapointe, the average price of muscovado during the occupation was 75 livres per quintal<sup>71</sup> but this seems unlikely. The average price the



Montbazon estate received for its locally-sold sugar in 1796-97 was 71 livres. In mid-1796, prices were around 63-66 livres, and a year earlier about 60 livres, which was their level through 1789-90. However, one must remember that this was still very much higher than their pre-Revolutionary level of around 40 livres.<sup>72</sup> As for coffee, the indications are less clear. During 1789-90 prices fell from an all-time high of 30 sous per lb to the still good price of 20 sous but then dropped lower. Under the occupation, plantation inventories invariably show coffee left in store estimated at 15-16 sous but selling prices were undoubtedly higher, if only because of the transport factor. Debien records a sale at Port au Prince in June 1795 at 30 sous but the acquisition of Grands Bois a month later probably depressed prices somewhat. At le Cap in August 1796 coffee was selling for 26 sous. In 1797, the Cassanet plantation in the Grand' Anse received an average price for its coffee of only 20½ sous but prices were also said to have fallen that year.<sup>73</sup> The price of cotton, on the other hand, went on rising on the international market and must have made many fortunes, among merchants if not planters.

In November 1794, the Conseil Privé claimed that even in Arcahaye and the Grand' Anse planters were making only one third of their former revenues. Malouet, ten months later, observed that a third of the planter's income was being swallowed up by public contributions. Laborie said that the labour shortage greatly limited production on some plantations but also noted that the accounts of absentee estates drawn up in 1795-96 revealed very large receipts. They also showed very large debits, but he doubted these were genuine.<sup>74</sup> The considerable sums paid for absentee property when it was put up for auction, and the substantial bribes supposedly paid when it was not, certainly indicate a high level of return on staple production under the occupation. So, too, does the public revenue raised in Arcahaye, which built at least five fortresses and provided la Croix des Bouquets with a loan of 600,000 livres. High taxes and rents, bribes and increasing running costs, all were made possible, it would seem, by the considerable profits made from selling at wartime prices.<sup>75</sup>

The destruction of the North had cut a large hole in the world supply of both sugar and coffee. The strength of demand for Saint Domingue's produce during the occupation can be seen not only in prices but in the double duties paid by American shipping. Thanks to this expedient and other increases, the annual customs revenue of the British zone came close to half of that of the entire colony before the Revolution. Complete trade figures for the period of the occupation



do not exist, but production was evidently much higher than has been thought. Lepkowski, the only historian who has attempted to assess the decline of Saint Domingue's economy in these years, gives figures that are infinitely too low and which apparently take no account of either the occupied zone or of the Republican South.<sup>76</sup> In April 1796, the Conseil Privé estimated that the occupied zone, at a maximum, possessed 800 plantations worked by 60,000 slaves, producing 60 million livres of exports - 30 million pounds of coffee, 15 million pounds of sugar,  $\frac{1}{2}$  million pounds of cotton, 20,000 pounds of indigo. Annual customs revenue, it said, came to about 3 million livres.<sup>77</sup> In 1796, in fact, customs revenue amounted to some 4 millions, or £114,000 sterling. Whereas in 1788 the entire colony's exports had been valued at just £5½ million, those of the occupied zone in 1796 still came to over £1 million; Dundas put them at £1½ million.<sup>78</sup> This was probably the year of highest output, but not necessarily so; exports to Great Britain were actually higher in every other year of the occupation except 1793 (appendix E (iv)). The production of the British zone, then, was comparable to that of most other colonies in the Caribbean. As an economic unit, Saint Domingue had not been destroyed in 1791. This should be remembered when considering the recovery, or supposed recovery, of the years 1799-1802.

The great plain of Cul de Sac, nonetheless, seems to have remained entirely unproductive under the occupation. Extending some 20 miles in length and between 5 and 10 miles in width, with 118 sucreries producing before the Revolution some 50 million pounds of sugar, it seems to have produced under the occupation little more than a few casks of syrup. In 1791-93 it had been the scene of pillaging, murder and a number of pitched battles. Many slaves had fled the plantations or been killed; much of the livestock had been carried off, though few buildings had been burned. Work was abandoned for months at a time. Hedges and fences were broken down and the fields became choked with weeds. When the British arrived in June 1794, work had been resumed since a few months, at least on the estates near Port au Prince, but few whites dared stay overnight in the plain. For a week or so, the plantations came to life. Missing slaves returned and production restarted. Then, just as at Léogane and in the Artibonite, armed bands came down from the mountain forests and all around the capital plantations went up in flames.<sup>79</sup> The Cul de Sac never really recovered.

By September 1794, Montalembert, whose own plantation was reduced to ashes, had gained some control over the plain and he intended to restart production on the states around his fortified camp at la Croix



des Bouquets. What success he had is not certain, but the construction of his citadel and the high price of lumber undoubtedly led to the further pillaging of plantations for building materials.<sup>80</sup> Absentees' estates were the obvious targets. Until the middle of 1796, at least, probably no whites resided on any of the estates, though owners and gérants made visits in daylight to 'encourage' their remaining slaves, and forage was collected for the cavalry. The only communication between Port au Prince and la Croix des Bouquets, a distance of ten miles, was by armed convoys of wagons. These became more frequent after the capture of Mirebalais and Grands Bois in August 1795. Montalembert's exactions from the local inhabitants were by all accounts extremely vexatious, even extending to fines for disobedience. Tired of having their carts and mules requisitioned without payment, they set up that autumn with Government assistance a haulage company. On October 17th, 33 planters and managers, including de Jumécourt, O'Gorman, Merceron, Lemeilleur and Lathoison Desvarreux, assembled in the presbytery to discuss terms. These were eventually settled a month later after further meetings with the Agent-General, representatives of the Conseil Privé and of the planters of Mirebalais, Grands Bois and Trou d'Eau.<sup>81</sup>

Each of 50 participants agreed to provide a well-equipped cart with 10 mules, a driver and valet; two pack-mules with a driver, and to keep 4 mules in reserve. Forage was to be supplied from their plantations. The company would buy mules in Santo Domingo and each participant would pay five portugaises for harnesses. The Government agreed to a loan of 300,000 livres on the security of the participants' properties. Each week, unless the rivers and roads were impassable, a convoy of 50 carts was to be sent to Port au Prince carrying crops. It would return with provisions for the planters and stores and ammunition for the army. The Government would pay 3 gourdes per cartload of 1,200 lbs as far as Croix des Bouquets and 3 gourdes per day thereafter. A pack mule carrying up to 175 lbs would cost 2 gourdes. The commandant of Croix des Bouquets was to provide an escort at the cost of 1 gourde per white or black infantryman and 2 gourdes per cavalryman. For each cannon supplied the company would provide a cart and team. At the foot of the mountain of Grands Bois a post and entrepot were established, from where mule-trains carried the planters' coffee to Port au Prince at a cost of 33 livres per load. The planters of Mirebalais brought their produce to the warehouse at Croix des Bouquets and then paid per 200 lbs load 2 gourdes, for coffee, 3 gourdes, for cotton, or 6 gourdes, for indigo. Like the inhabitants of Grands Bois, they received gratis each return trip 5 cartloads for provisions.



As already seen,<sup>82</sup> conditions began to improve in the Cul de Sac at the end of 1795 and the capture of Morne l'Hôpital the following February brought a new degree of security to the region. Plantation owners rushed, it seems, to appoint managers and overseers to their estates, so as to begin repairs, plant food crops 'et commencer même une culture utile'. Nevertheless, even on the Damiens plantation only three miles from the capital it was still not considered safe enough in July for the manager to reside.<sup>83</sup> By the autumn, however, when military posts were being established in different parts of the plain, including lonely Fond Parisien, prospects for the whites were looking brighter. Montalembert, who had merely 22 slaves left on his estate, was planning to hire a workforce and, having driven many planters to live in the capital, now tried to persuade them to return. A census was taken in August, and in November a general corvée was organised to clear the roads of tropical undergrowth. During November and December, some 40 absentees' estates were inventoried and leased out.

Almost all the estates, everyone agreed, needed two or three years before they could make any taxable revenue. The canes left standing were so old they were fit only for making syrup or for re-planting. Even the Lemeilleur estate with its 225 slaves, whose owner was on hand and which had lost only 12% of its workforce, had but seven canepieces free of weeds. The Cazeau plantation had six, all in ratoons, and the Descloches plantation thirty acres but they were among the more immediately workable of the absentee estates. Before the Revolution, one had been worth £10,000 p.a. while the other used to yield a half million pounds of sucre blanc. Usually, the canefields were in a state of complete abandon. Conditions, however, varied. The Baugé plantation, one of the most ravaged of the plain, had kept most of its slaves but had all its buildings burned down bar two slave huts. The duc d'Orléans' long-abandoned, and admittedly small, estate had only 79 slaves but all its buildings intact, if dilapidated, and valued at 113,000 livres. The giant Peyrat estate, on the other hand, with most of its buildings burned still had 110,000 livres worth in good shape and over 300 slaves but not a single animal. Situated near a forest and isolated, it was frequently raided, though rare, anyway, was the estate with over 30 mules. In general, those near Port au Prince had lost most of their slaves, while those beyond the Grande Rivière had at least one or two hundred. On almost all, however, were the buildings badly damaged and falling into ruins, with a great many showing signs of arson.<sup>84</sup>

Impressive ruins they were, nevertheless, these massive stone walls



topped with charred timbers - water-mills, warehouses, stables, great aqueducts arching across the countryside. The grand' case of the Lepine plantation near Fond Parisien had marble floors and papered walls, though this was exceptional.<sup>85</sup> Unlike in the plain of Arcahaye, half the estates had made refined sugar, so that, adjoining the main factory building with its row of copper cauldrons, there was usually a long, solidly-built refinery which might itself be worth as much as all the buildings on a medium-sized caféière (40,000 livres). These purgeries, along with the grand' cases and cases à nègres, seem to have been the buildings most frequently damaged. The boiling-houses and mills, the most important structures, tended to survive, perhaps because their roofs were more often tiled, rather than shingled or thatched. On the Laserre plantation, however, the cauldrons of the sucrerie had been punctured by saboteurs.<sup>86</sup> The plantations of Saint Domingue, said Hector McLean, a doctor at Port au Prince military hospital, were 'more splendid and permanent' than those of the British West Indies. French colonists, he thought, regarded the islands as their home. Whether or not his reasoning was correct, it was an observation he extended to the capital, too, whose water supply, drainage ditches and rows of trees distinguished it, he said, from its British Caribbean counterparts.<sup>87</sup> Venault de Charmilly, in a similar vein, wrote of his surprise on seeing the lack of irrigation works in Jamaica.<sup>88</sup>

In February 1797, General Forbes reported to London that agricultural work or re-building was under way on many plantations in the Cul de Sac.<sup>89</sup> Others, however, said that raids from the mountains continued and that the few gérants who returned to the plain based themselves in the military camps and merely exploited the plantations for their forage, milk and wood, not even attempting to persuade the slaves back into the canefields.<sup>90</sup> This was perhaps a little exaggerated. The leases of Cul de Sac plantations put up for auction in July/August fetched good prices, while one would not find Richard Dalton, lessee of the Coustard estate, hiring five sucriers, unless he was harvesting a lot of cane.<sup>91</sup> Laborie, however, also painted a gloomy picture, albeit diplomatically. Agricultural work, he observed, was being 'attempted with diffidence, difficulty and danger'. 'Almost all' the plantations, he added, had recently been burned by troops to prevent raiders hiding in them.<sup>92</sup> A more absurd irony could scarcely be imagined - a defence of plantation slavery relying not merely on enlisting the slaves but on burning the plantations as well!

General Simcoe put a stop to the destruction but apparently too



late. 'It is indeed melancholy,' wrote Dr. McLean early in 1797, 'to ride among these wide-extended ruins. Everywhere marks of opulence, elegance and commerce, all now levelled with the ground.'<sup>93</sup> When Lieutenant Howard arrived in the Cul de Sac in August, there were only three plantation houses left standing and work was in progress on only 'one or two' estates near the main road. It was the only road still visible. By late November, raiders were descending from the mountains in large bands. Playing cat and mouse with the soldiers, they abducted or killed slaves and burned or looted what remained on the plantations. Some of them were now mounted and attacked the livestock convoys that crossed the plain from Santo Domingo, driving off cattle into the woods. With its buildings burned down, trees torn up by the roots, fences broken and equipment scattered over the countryside, the Cul de Sac, wrote Lieutenant Howard, had become 'one great Ruins' overgrown with weeds. Early in 1798, amidst apocalyptic desolation, he wrote its epitaph and that of all slave-owning Saint Domingue: 'Unhappy colony, I do not know if you merited your fate ... I leave that to Him who in His wrath sends the destroying Angel "to ride on the whirlwind and direct the Storm"'.<sup>94</sup>

(iii) Colonists, Emigrés and Englishmen. Dominated by the pursuit of gain, white society in Saint Domingue was profane, selfish and fast-living. Under the occupation, profligacy and irreligion Laborie said, took still deeper root, despite the whites' straitened circumstances and what he considered the manifestation of divine wrath.<sup>95</sup> In the highly-charged, fin du monde atmosphere of the British zone, the traditional tensions between merchants, planters and lawyers, between residents and absentees, civilians and soldiers, were heightened, while the past turmoil of the Revolution and the presence of a foreign occupying army further complicated the situation. Sources of friction, therefore, were cultural and political, as well as social and economic. Creoles and émigrés, British, Germans, Dutch and French, royalists and revolutionaries, were thrown together in the most exotic of circumstances, where corruption, debauchery, disease and sudden death were the common motifs of daily life.

Laborie, like Malouet and so many other liberals then turning into conservatives, argued that the strict enforcement of the law and the revival of organised religion was the path to social salvation.<sup>96</sup> As seen above, however, the judges appointed in Saint Domingue in 1794 were objects of derision or factional hostility,



while under martial law a multitude of crimes went unpunished.<sup>97</sup> The colonial police, moreover, headed by Roland de Buissey, was noted for its illegal exactions, venality and petty oppression.<sup>98</sup> As for the efforts of Guillaume Lecun, the Apostolic Prefect, they seem to have met with little success. While the first police law passed under British rule exhorted the population about the neglect of religion in the colony, three years later we find Lecun denouncing to the Pope the immorality of the great white families.<sup>99</sup> Gambling remained a ruling passion, and right up to the evacuation of Port au Prince thousands of gourdes continued to change hands every month in its gaming houses.<sup>100</sup> What was perhaps the philosophy behind such behaviour, was pithily expressed in the rather unorthodox will of one Jean-Baptiste Bon, of Fond de Nègres: 'Quelque soit l'evenement qui m'attende, peu m'importe, je m'en f. Je m'y prépare sans le craindre ou l'apprehender.'<sup>101</sup>

The Dominguan temperament, all commentators agreed, was violent and disputatious. Even under the Ancien Regime, the marquis de Bouillé warned, he had found the French islands more difficult to govern than the occupied British colonies, while Governor Balcarres considered the French refugees in Jamaica 'a set of people infinitely more clamorous and ferocious' than those he had had to deal with in the Channel Islands.<sup>102</sup> Factious and turbulent, the Dominguans seemed to embody for the British the worst features of the French and West Indian personalities. They were, de Charmilly observed, 'des malades qui sortent des convulsions de quatre années de troubles' and, he added, 'leur sensibilité mérite d'être ménagée.'<sup>103</sup> This is precisely, of course, what hard-line xenophobes like General Whyte and Colonel Murray had no intention of doing, and it is surprising perhaps that disputes within the armed forces were not more frequent than they were. Duperrier, the militia colonel commanding Camp Desrivaux, refused to acknowledge any authority below that of the Governor and was consequently arrested, while in 1797 one Major Desbrosses was sentenced to be beheaded for striking the British commander of les Irois.<sup>104</sup>

Among the planters, Lieutenant Howard distinguished two types. The 'great planters', it seemed to him, had been brought up in France and had returned to recoup their squandered fortunes. They were cruel to their slaves, 'profuse, devoid of all Religious Ideas, passionate, Proud and particularly zealous in what is called the point of Honour'. He did not like them. On the other hand, there were the military officers, cadets of good family, who served in Saint Domingue, married a mulatress or white creole, became rich and



had children who then conformed to the 'great planter' stereotype.<sup>105</sup> What appears to be a third type were the creole planters described in the Précis Historique, who 'libres de tout ambition et ayant renoncé au désir de revoir la patrie de leurs pères, vivoient dans une entière incurie au milieu de leur atelier; se consolant de leurs dettes entre les bras de leurs esclaves ... et ayant toujours assez quand leur cave et leur magasin étoient suffisamment approvisionnés'.<sup>106</sup> Were these the men, one wonders, that Maitland later described<sup>107</sup> as 'a number of the lower order of the Old French who have fixed themselves in possession of parts of the interior, who are totally indifferent to (British) or French manoeuvres till you interfere with them and whose only idea of Government is to raise enough to live on, deriving their luxuries from America, neither wishing to attack you nor to be attacked themselves'? These stereotypes are difficult to pin down. Dulau d'Allemans, for example, or Cocherel, whom Howard doubtless had in mind, (being commandant at Saint Marc), might fit both the first and the second. Clearly, wealth, place of origin and of residence were variables that in themselves did not connote a specific social type. Under the occupation, however, the chief division between planters was that which separated those who had been ruined from those still in production. However much plantation profits were reduced during these years - and as seen, for some they probably rose<sup>108</sup> - the planter whose property had been destroyed had to rely on jobbery, Government handouts or an officer's pay in the black corps. This may help explain why so many political and administrative posts went to southern and northern creoles who had lost their estates, which in turn may have influenced legislation. Opposition to payment for militia service and the extra duties it implied was apparently greatest in areas where such a diversion of manpower most stood to harm agriculture. Similarly, while no planter welcomed requisitioning by the military, the levy of slaves for the black corps was most resented in Arcahaye and the Grand' Anse, whereas at Saint Marc the Government compensation was probably seen as a useful source of income.

All planters, however, shared certain sectional interests that set them at odds with the merchants and lawyers. It has already been described how the vexed question of debts became a source of controversy during the governorship of Williamson.<sup>109</sup> Creditor merchants gained leave to recover from planters still making profits



25% of their past advances, and were supported by lawyers seeking to increase the volume of litigation. 'Les habitants,' complained the Conseil Privé, 'sont les véritables partis à consulter.'<sup>110</sup> As the merchants never had a voice in the council, the law was eventually withdrawn. The merchants, nevertheless, made considerable profits in the British zone and, until the shipping tax of 1797, contributed little to the costs of occupation.<sup>111</sup> (Urban slaves were never recruited, nor, until 1797, taxed.) This was particularly galling, as their fortunes had suffered less during the Revolution. On the other hand, they continued, and especially after the evacuation of Mirebalais, to accumulate bad debts, while militia service in the capital was said to be 'écrasant'.<sup>112</sup> Mounting night guard on the ramparts of Port au Prince, we find in 1795 even the recalcitrant merchants of the British community.

They and their clerks came from both Britain and Jamaica, and in the former instance suffered high rates of mortality. The most prominent was Richard Dalton of Dalton, Leriche and Baumann (or Beaumont), a man with influential City connections, who set up in Port au Prince soon after it fell and who remained there, moreover, after its evacuation. Already established in the capital, was the Jamaican James Grant Forbes, while Bertrand, Littledale, the Turnbull, Forbes subsidiary, appeared rather later. Other 'Port au Prince merchants', leasing houses in the city for 3 or 5,000 livres p.a. were S.B. Whitaker and Wilton, Guillis, while Donaldson, Forbes of Kingston had an agency at Jérémie, run for them by Dubourg Saint Colombe. Several of the British civilian officials, men not noted for their honesty, were also merchants and others like Esten who wished to become merchants traded on their own account. As already seen, some returned to England with huge fortunes.<sup>113</sup> Several speculated in plantation leases. As early as 1794, Dalton had leased five sucreries in the Cul de Sac. Donaldson and Co. leased two estates near Jérémie, and George Bogle two more with a combined rental of 32,000 livres p.a. In the Cul de Sac, at least, these ventures were not a success. William Forbes, who took on two of the better estates in the plain and a caféière in Grands Bois, was unable by mid-1797 to pay his rent and Dalton, too, refused to pay his, because of debts owed him by the Government.<sup>114</sup> In 1794, it seems, he had advanced some 300,000 livres for the equipping of Chasseurs and the fortification of Croix des Bouquets, as well as making a loan of 600,000 livres to the planters of that parish, with



the intention of speculating with their produce.<sup>115</sup>

The largest single lessee of absentee property was the Port au Prince merchant François Daumas, who took on eight estates as part of a short-lived contract to supply the army with firewood and forage.<sup>116</sup> He was one of the Government's main suppliers, but probably the wealthiest of the capital's merchants was Arnaud Roberjot Lartigue. Boastful and big-spending, friend of former Governors and Versailles magnates, he owned some 2½ million livres worth of urban and rural property, and sided with the planters on the question of debt repayments.<sup>117</sup> Although he was said to be 'toujours ouvert au parti triomphant', most merchants, one gets the impression, were hostile to the British presence. Closely allied to France's mercantile bourgeoisie, and penalised by the law on debt, they played little part in the public life of the occupied zone. Though many themselves owned estates, they were less committed to the slave regime than were the planters. Among the organisers of a plot discovered at Saint Marc in January 1795 was one Massac, 'négoçant fort riche',<sup>118</sup> and when Port au Prince was evacuated in May 1798, it was Jean-Baptiste Camfranq, Bernard Borgella and other merchants who led the way in welcoming its conquerors.<sup>119</sup> In this, they were joined by the poitevin entrepreneur Louis Ragnos, one of the capital's richest men. Considering the huge amount of building and demolition work undertaken in the British zone, he and his fellow contractors were probably among the chief beneficiaries of the occupation.

Saint Domingue's lawyers were objects of a particular resentment. Not only had they shared but little in the losses of the Revolution, for which many of them, 'Coryphées des Assemblées', were held partly responsible, but they were paid high salaries from public funds at the same time as avoiding militia service and charging expensive, sometimes illegal, fees.<sup>120</sup> In the summer of 1794, the council of the Mole ordered that judicial charges in its jurisdiction be cut by half. It was overruled, however, by the Conseil Privé; Vincendon-Dutour claimed that legal business was at a tenth of its level of three years before. Merchants could not sue for debt; most planters were absent, and the remainder were too poor or too busy in the camps to undertake lawsuits.<sup>121</sup> Lawyers were always well represented on the Conseil Privé, be they conservatives like de Ronseray, radicals like Vincendon or moderates like Ango, Billard and Busson. As most were plantation owners, they did indeed share in the losses of the Revolution - hence the bribes paid to get posts on the Conseil Supérieur and an assured income.

Of those who failed, we find the former greffier Louis Bonvallet



practising as a notary, while Pélage-Marie Duboys appeared as a barrister before the court of which he had been Deputy Attorney-General.<sup>122</sup> Duboys also managed an absentee estate in the Cul de Sac, until he was replaced by a Jamaican merchant, but it was doubtless rents from his eight houses in the capital that bought him the leisure to write his invaluable Précis Historique. Because of the dearth of litigation, minor officials who depended heavily on fees, such as seneschals, registrars and lieutenants de juge, frequently complained that they were not earning a living wage.<sup>123</sup> However, a lot of inventory work was generated by Government demolitions and the Administration of Absentee Property, for which notaries charged eight livres an hour, albeit grumbling about the high cost and poor quality of their clerks.<sup>124</sup>

As Saint Domingue became more and more an absentee society, it seemed to the planters in Europe that it might become dominated by lawyers and dishonest estate attornies. In 1789, absentees in Paris, fearful of a 'déspotisme sénatorial', called for a reduction in the powers of the Conseil Supérieur. Those in London in 1793 demanded both that judicial procedures be simplified and made cheaper and that plantation managers be compelled to produce regular accounts to be inspected by the Administration. These provisions, moreover, they wanted written into the Capitulation lest a future Colonial Assembly, controlled by avocats and attornies, attempt to revoke them.<sup>125</sup> The resentment felt by resident planters, on the other hand, for their wealthier absentee neighbours had also flared up at the beginning of the Revolution, and in the occupied zone this turned into bitterness on the part of men worn down, as Malouet said, by continual service in the camps, public exactions and internal quarrels.<sup>126</sup> Officially, though belatedly, given vent through differential rates of taxation, this resentment was most profitably expressed by the military and the employees of absentee estates, particularly in the Cul de Sac. There Montalembert was supported against the local planters by the gérants and économés, who 'tous trouvoient plus ou moins leur avantage dans le subversion commune'.<sup>127</sup> Some, like Carpot de Montville on the Damiens plantation, were able to combine negligent and self-serving supervision of an estate with a captaincy in a black corps.<sup>128</sup> All whites on the plantations anyway spent much of their time soldiering. At the same time, no doubt,



they had to develop their range of persuasive powers to keep the slaves on the estates and working - cajolery, bribery, brutality - but of this we know little.<sup>129</sup>

A great many, however, were thrown out of work by the Revolution, and this was true of the petits blancs in general, 'that herd of foreigners', one Frenchman observed, who called themselves 'Garçons'.<sup>130</sup> It was especially true of the seamen in the coastal trade, who from the beginning of the occupation began deserting to man the privateers of Léogane and Port de Paix, or simply to become pirates. They thus further destroyed the livelihood of the remaining caboteurs. In 1795, a dispute blew up between the planters of Arcahaye who wanted to trade directly with American shipping, and the caboteurs and merchants of Port au Prince, who wanted to maintain their role as intermediaries by confining American ships to the capital. The Administration compromised by allowing Americans access to the wharves of les Vazes and Boucassin but not to Arcahaye bourg,<sup>131</sup> - a fair balancing of interests. It was unemployed seamen, enlisting for two years, who provided most of the early recruits for Montalembert's Legion. United by colour prejudice rather than by any desire to protect the colonists' property, they had to be given, so the baron argued, severe discipline plenty of activity and 'une abondance'.<sup>132</sup> This meant extra pay and plunder. Their turbulent past history in the National Guard helps explain why the royalist baron faced so many plots, real or imagined, amongst his men, though his retaining them after their contracts had expired also created much discontent.

From the gamblers and felons of the capital to the restless overseers moving from estate to estate, the petits blancs, said Lieutenant Howard, were 'a disgrace to human nature', 'the Dregs of the Nation'. Daily they committed 'murder, rape, oppression, cunning and low deceit', and it was the blacks and free coloureds who suffered. As in all the islands white society had to keep up a show of solidarity, and with amusing results. Because of the 'exorbitant' prices of all 'Handicraft works, construction and mechanical operations', artisans got rich very quickly and behaved with wild extravagance. A farrier, the lieutenant claimed, would come to shoe a planter's horses wearing a silk coat and fine linen with three or four slaves carrying his tools. Flashing diamond rings and a gold snuff-box, with complete familiarity he would invite himself to dinner and discuss politics, as if an old friend.<sup>133</sup> Yet, there were limits, as the desertions to the Republicans show, both to the solidarity of the whites and the racism of the petits blancs.



One reason the Conseil Privé opposed the markets held for Dieudonné's men in January 1796 was fear that 'des gens malintentionnés de tous couleurs' would conspire with the 'brigands'.<sup>134</sup>

At the very bottom of white society, were the destitute, the social debris of the Revolution. They included men and particularly women and children of all social groups, but especially widows, the aged and disabled. From the very start of the occupation, they received a daily food ration from the Quartermaster's stores and, later, a weekly cash payment as well, usually of two gourdes. Cases were vetted by the curé, then by the Conseil Privé. Some, as already seen,<sup>135</sup> were more favoured than others. The once wealthy were spared the indignity of collecting a daily ration and given cash in lieu and sometimes an additional payment, if the Governor intervened. The vicomte Leroi de la Potherie, who in August 1793 had got drunk and gambled away 40 portugaises in a night,<sup>136</sup> received seven gourdes per week. Also deferentially treated was the baron de Romilly, formerly of Louis XVI's bodyguard, who had lost all his property and was disabled by wounds. Less favoured were the likes of Laroche, 'vieillard honnête, déplorablement pauvre', or the blind veuve Seignière with three young children. Regarded with some suspicion was Jeanne Dufour, also with three young children, who had lost her licence to sell alcohol and whose husband obviously was absent in the Republican zone. In the half year from September 1795 to February 1796, some 675 individuals were added to the list of officially destitute. Six hundred were whites, of whom about 240 were children, over 30 of them being orphans. A hundred were men, unemployed through sickness, infirmity or market conditions, and of the women another hundred were widows. In the case of the veuves Guillot, Dupouy and Salagnac, we find three generations of widows in the same family.<sup>137</sup>

For much of the occupation, it seems, colonists formed only a minority of white society. By February 1797, it was claimed that they were outnumbered by 'at least' ten to one by 'the more numerous class of Emigrés, strangers to the Colony and Adventurers of all descriptions'.<sup>138</sup> As soon as Port au Prince had fallen, there appeared strutting in its streets some 50 or 60 young émigrés from London, sent by Malouet, they said on a mission.<sup>139</sup> In the get-rich-quick tradition of the West Indies, hundreds more followed, as the army of the Princes dissolved, seeking compensation in the colony for what they had lost in Europe.<sup>140</sup> They thus reinforced the attitude of British officers like Whyte, Spencer and Murray, who considered that Port au Prince was theirs by right of conquest and



felt cheated of its spoils. As of August 1794, émigrés were paid four gourdins per day and later, despite the hostility of Governor Williamson, they gained posts in the legions and black corps. The appointment in September 1795 of Lambert and de Cotte (who was already living in Jamaica) opened up the civil administration to them, and some leased absentee property or even bought small plantations.

The colonists uniformly hated them. They were invariably described as intriguants, violent, vexatious and ignorant (of colonial ways, that is). Outsiders had never been popular in the colony, even those who owned estates, and relations between the colonists and the military were notoriously bad in the Caribbean.<sup>141</sup> Moreau de Saint-Méry had attributed the déprivation des mœurs in Saint Domingue to the influx of troops in wartime.<sup>142</sup> At the Mole, conflict between the officers and the inhabitants was of long-standing and in the first year of the occupation it was of considerable concern to the British.<sup>143</sup> The conflict now had a political dimension, of course, most émigrés being fervent, if not vindictive, Royalists. Their presence thus sharpened political divisions in the colony, and the frequent denunciations of supposed conspirators by Montalembert, de Bruges and de Bussy added greatly to the feeling of insecurity among whites and coloureds.<sup>144</sup> The military credentials of the émigrés were often very impressive, and Laborie had to admit they were usually brave and good officers. However, when the command of a foot company brought an annual profit of 18,000 livres and that of cavalry regiment 200,000 livres, the patronage they received naturally enraged indigent planters who scraped along as lieutenants and ensigns. Moreover, it was in their interest to prolong the war and with it their profiteering. This outlook, Laborie said, eventually spread to the planters, too. Indeed, the émigrés had no monopoly either of patronage or corruption, but being outsiders were obvious targets for resentment.<sup>145</sup>

Attitudes towards the British themselves of course depended to a large extent on the political viewpoint of the individual colonist. Also, there is no doubt that of the different commanders Williamson, Horneck and Simcoe were more popular than Whitelocke, Whyte and Forbes, none of whom could speak French. Initial enthusiasms, moreover, were clearly soured early on by the weakness of the occupying forces, disputes between the Army and Navy and the preoccupation with 'plunder and prize money', even though very little actual pillaging took place.<sup>146</sup> Even the strongest partisans of a British



occupation must have regarded the official rhetoric about 'protection' and 'generosity' with some cynicism. Furthermore, the behaviour of the troops justified only too well Moreau de Saint-Méry's strictures on the garrison influence. Although the first regiments sent from Jamaica won high praise in the colony, General Simcoe thought that the 'depravity' of the British and Foreign troops was partly responsible for the indiscipline of the colonial corps.<sup>147</sup> On the other hand, he himself, accessible and disinterested, was evidently much admired, as was the stern but just General Maitland, and at Saint Marc successive British commanders appear to have got on well with the population, particularly General Churchill, who married a local creole.<sup>148</sup> The author of the Précis Historique, in fact, who was opposed to the British presence, presents on balance an almost favourable portrait, more critical of the factions that exploited British ignorance and weakness than of the British themselves.<sup>149</sup>

Although its national genius tended to be perceived, not least in Saint Domingue, as one of bluff, calculating hypocrisy, Britain enjoyed at this period considerable international prestige. Even Commissioner Sonthonax drank a toast to George III with the observation that he ruled a free people. However, while the French liked and admired the English, wrote Charles Malenfant, the English hated the French.<sup>150</sup> Obviously an exaggeration, - Malenfant had been imprisoned in irons by General Whyte when badly wounded - the contrast was nonetheless real. Early on in the occupation, garrisons smitten by disease began to blame the colonists for having called them in. At the Mole, Major-General Grant used to taunt the French by saying that Britain did not want to keep Saint Domingue, adding cruelly that the Republic was sending 20,000 troops and that the colonists would all be guillotined. When reproached, he declared that an Englishman had a right to express his opinion.<sup>151</sup> As for the haughtiness of General Whyte and his mockery of the colonists, General Maitland himself disapproved, and he lost notoriously little love on Saint Domingue and its inhabitants, regarding them for the most part as factious and corrupt.<sup>152</sup> Even a British civilian official, sympathetic to the colonists' plight and willing to praise the 'prodigies of valour' of the 'brave few', displayed an incredible condescension: - 'With the utmost admiration,' he wrote, 'must the civilized world reflect on the philanthropy of the British nation, that forgiving and forgetting every species of political finesse and hypocrisy, demonstrated by (France) at various periods, the godlike emanation, forgiveness, actuated them to render that benevolent assistance in every shape to its miserable subjects in that colony.'<sup>153</sup>



Lieutenant Howard clearly agreed but was rather more bitter. The British, he exclaimed, were sacrificing all in the colonists' cause, while they, instead of thanking England 'for every morsel of Bread they put in their mouths ... hate us, nay even despise us by making a ridicule of all our military motions ... laughing at our discipline, courage and military knowledge ... those Gentlemen have so much to do in decorating their pretty persons and debauching the wives and daughters of honest citizens that it would be horrid to take up one moment of their precious time.'<sup>154</sup> He was specifically angry about the poor co-operation received from an émigré artillery commander, the comte de Gauville, but he was also, it would seem, sensitive about the abilities of the inexperienced British corps, as well as jealous of the French preponderance in lucrative military and civil posts. Although every officer in the Légions de Saint Marc, de Contades and du Sud had been an officer in the French Army, Colonel Murray demanded in September 1795 in the name of all the British field officers that French officers of superior rank should no longer be allowed to command British officers. The demand was not accepted, it seems, but it served to prevent de Charmilly, promoted from militia captain to colonel of dragoons, being allowed to return to the colony.<sup>155</sup>

Another example of friction within the armed forces was the free use made by army officers of the horses of the Maréchaussée, which under Cadusch's colonelcy was pretending to be a cavalry regiment.<sup>156</sup> More often friction occurred between soldiers and civilians. In April 1795, at the height of Montalembert's influence in Port au Prince, the magistrate Jean Baron was struck by a British officer for protesting at being evicted from his house and was imprisoned. He came close, some said, to being shot.<sup>157</sup> A few months previously, when the chevalier de Volant's plantation buildings were burned down for military reasons, General Horneck did not bother to inform their owner in advance, although he was Lieutenant-Colonel of Port au Prince militia.<sup>158</sup> When eleven York Hussars deserted from Saint Marc in March 1797, it was immediately assumed that townspeople were responsible for leading them astray. Arrests were made and a trial begun, which for lack of evidence soon had to be abandoned.<sup>159</sup> As for the British civilian community, its avoidance of militia service and the corruption of men like Shaw and Esten can hardly have endeared it to the colonists, particularly in hard-pressed, Anglo-phobe Port au Prince.



Even its most admirable figures, the hospital inspectors Jackson and McLean, were engaged in a bitter dispute with their French counterparts about the treatment of the sick. Grappling earnestly with the mysteries of yellow fever, Hector McLean daily spent from six to eight hours on horseback visiting the sick, changing his sweat-soaked shirt five times. Equally dedicated, Robert Jackson, an indefatigable eccentric, went everywhere on foot, visiting sometimes twice a day every barrack and hospital in Port au Prince. Theirs was perhaps the grimmest experience of any expatriate to survive the occupation. In the packed wards of the military hospital, 'surrounded by ... countrymen, in every stage of misery, looking up for assistance,' wrote McLean, acutely aware of his own ineffectiveness, '...I have witnessed scenes of misery I can never forget.'<sup>160</sup>

Unusually, McLean was willing to learn from the French, at least in matters of diet. In this respect, it is curious that, whereas most commentators made much of plantation hospitality, the substantial breakfasts and late-night petits plats, he represents the colonists as being frugal and sober, consuming little meat or wine, in marked contrast to the British.<sup>161</sup> Both he and Captain Colville were also struck with the colonists' love of bathing, either in a river or a baignoir, in which they would spend sometimes hours immersed up to their necks, reading, eating or receiving visitors with a lack of modesty the captain considered typically French. 'Some of them are satisfied with demi-bains,' he wrote, 'in which to see them seated with their hair full dressed is ridiculous enough and did they not assure you of the contrary, you might suppose them in the situation (in which) General Harnick at Port au Prince (was received) by the Chevalier de Montault ... which is not reconcilable to English ideas of delicacy.'<sup>162</sup>

In having a good word to say for everyone, from Borel to Montalembert, Governor Williamson was exceptional, but even he strongly disliked the émigrés, whom he equated with adventurers. An early complaint from the royalists in both Saint Domingue and Martinique was that the British were favouring Patriots, petits blancs and mulattoes.<sup>163</sup> One of Whyte's officers wrote in July 1794 that he preferred to command 20 mulattoes to 100 petits blancs 'or even of the Royalists, Emigrants or whatever they call themselves'.<sup>164</sup> Even so, a number of officers did praise the performance of the Legions, and one or two passed favourable comment on the Grand'Anse militia, though Simcoe thought it 'much inferior' to Rigaud's forces.<sup>165</sup> (So it probably was by that time, though Simcoe never actually visited the region.) Several officers, in fact, and not just



Brisbane, Bradshaw and Churchill at Saint Marc, appear to have enjoyed genuinely cordial relations with the French. Lieutenant-Colonel Bowyer, for example, of the 66th Foot, who succeeded de Sevré as commander of the Chasseurs des Irois, left the Grand' Anse with the warmest of feelings towards its 'many worthy Inhabitants', whose 'civility and attention', he told a colleague, he would long remember.<sup>166</sup>

Overall, there can be little doubt that the dominant impression the British received of their collaborators was one of verbal restlessness. At the Mole, they were 'prone to argument and theory', at Saint Marc 'naturally volatile', in Port au Prince 'all quarrelling amongst themselves'.<sup>167</sup> De Charmilly, in Williamson's words, had 'many good points ... but was a thorough Frenchman ... a little too lively in his ideas of character and fact'. For General Forbes, both colonists and émigrés were a 'violent, discontented and turbulent set of men ... their party violence,' he said, 'exceeds anything of that kind which ever existed perhaps in any Nation.'<sup>168</sup>

Such assessments were felt to apply with even more force to the Republicans, with regard to whom the British assumed a posture of blunt pragmatism, sometimes pompous, sometimes humourous, but invariably cynical. Thus, Colonel Whitelocke's first proclamation announced that the purpose of West India colonies was to make money, not to extend the range of human knowledge or to act as a theatre of republican virtues.<sup>169</sup> In the same spirit, Commodore Ford wrote to Laveaux in March 1794, 'The ... arrogant Threats ... respecting Negroes and People of Colour under arms, and not free, is no more than I expected from an Officer whose Mind appears so strongly marked with Republican Effusions ... When Prisoners are found intriguing for vile and seditious purposes, planting the Tree of Liberty, hoisting the Bonnet rouge and singing unbecoming Songs in the Streets ... contrary to all Precedent such conduct will not be passed over with Impunity by Britons, whose General Comportment is like their Government, not tinctured with Levity, nor stained by Cruelty.'<sup>170</sup> 'A complete drubbing to the French Maniacs' was the usual sort of toast drunk in the Kingston European Club, while the Jamaican planter Henry Shirley described Dominguan politics as consisting primarily of 'violent aristocrats' and 'violent democrats', the latter being 'madmen'.<sup>171</sup> Sonthonax was universally dismissed as a corrupt charlatan, and, having failed to bribe Laveaux, Williamson persisted



in believing as late as September 1794 that he would seek an honourable surrender.<sup>172</sup>

Rather aptly, one finds much of future Anglo-colonial relations during the occupation prefigured in the diary entry of a British captain dated 21st September 1793. The day the first troops disembarked at Jérémie their officers were invited to a dinner held in their honour. The regimental band performed; artillery was fired, and creoles and redcoats regaled each other with songs, one written especially for the occasion. The atmosphere was jovial. Barthélémy Faveranges gave 'a long harangue ... in which the generosity of the English was extolled as was also (the colonists') own bravery ... But notwithstanding their professions,' the captain wrote, 'the true Frenchman could not be hid and their politeness went no further than words and idle communing as they placed themselves in the best seats and helped themselves to what was most delicate while several of the British officers were obliged to feed standing, two out of the same plate ... The dinner ... was also charged at a high rate to the British Government.'<sup>173</sup>

(iv) Attitudes to annexation. In chapter III it was suggested that, while there existed in Saint Domingue a small number of positively Anglophile activists (mainly planters) and a minority of committed Republicans (mainly petits blancs), the attitude of most colonists towards Great Britain was determined not only by socio-economic status and past political beliefs but also, and to a large extent, by the unfolding of events in the colony and in France. This remained so during the occupation and, while one can be sure only that the colonists always violently disagreed with one another, various general trends can be identified. British prestige in Saint Domingue, such as it was, declined rapidly after the first few months of the occupation, mainly because of the paucity of the troops sent, their behaviour and their propensity to die in large numbers. At the same time, the French Republic went dramatically from strength to strength in Europe, while its domestic regime steadily retreated from the extremism of the year II towards a moderation that suggested, at least to Malouet, that it might eventually countenance the restoration of the colonial status quo. On the other hand, colonial Royalists drew increasingly closer to Britain as their cause in Europe became a lost one and as the Spaniards, on whom many had pinned their hopes, met with or caused in Saint Domingue even greater disasters than the British. Meanwhile, the increasing



monopoly of power in the Republican zone by ex-slaves made British rule seem relatively more attractive, and it undermined, to an extent Malouet completely misjudged, the appeal of returning under French rule with an end to hostilities. Nevertheless, in the long run, the prospect of restoring agriculture under a forced labour regime and the degree of security offered by the ascendancy of Toussaint Louverture made this for many an acceptable option, at least preferable to exile, and for some perhaps a Brave New World.

At Jérémie, Arcahaye and doubtless elsewhere, the first British troops to arrive in 1793 were met by cheering crowds, though behind the scenes a certain amount of bribery and intimidation had gone into preparing the ground for them.<sup>174</sup> Charles Malenfant and the vicomte de Grouvel, both writing in 1814, claimed that the colonists credulously were misled into believing the British would take Saint Domingue in the name of the Bourbons, but this is untrue. Although at the Mole and Saint Marc colonists had requested that the Royalist flag be raised, the request was refused or dropped before the capitulation was signed.<sup>175</sup> On the other hand, in the Grand' Anse, at the Mole and particularly Port au Prince, it was noted that there existed une masse de Canaille that was Republican in sympathy though from September 1793 onwards it decreased in size as desertions among petits blancs and mulattoes mounted. On the eve of the occupation, there was among the 'Emigrants' in Kingston, Captain Colville said, a strong pro-Spanish party, and a year later Williamson opined that the 'strong Monarchists' would revolt against British rule if ever the Bourbons regained the French throne.<sup>176</sup> Briefly, in September 1794, after the collapse of the Spaniards and the massacre at Fort Dauphin of over 700 colonists, he seemed convinced that all property owners had been won over to the 'superior Excellence' of the British Government, but British fortunes themselves continued to plummet and, by November the new Governor had to admit that the British were facing far more hostility than previously.<sup>177</sup>

Colonel Whitelocke had observed in July that a few colonists zealously supported the British Government but that 'a very considerable body of Inhabitants' still favoured 'the Democratic Government of France'. Captain Colville agreed that annexation by Britain was the policy of a 'weak and unsupported minority' but said that the majority genuinely desired, or feigned to desire, eventually to return under Bourbon rule.<sup>178</sup> Henry Shirley's analysis - a Kingston viewpoint -



was a mixture of these two. The majority of colonists were either violently pro-Bourbon or violently democratic, the latter supporting the British only so long as a French fleet did not appear. 'Entirely English', however, were certain 'Trading People', (? Grand' Anse merchants like Plunkett), and a few 'Gentlemen', who were led by Cadusch and included many ex-revolutionaries.<sup>179</sup> In the Jamaica Royal Gazette, we find a 'French gentleman' writing from Saint Marc in March 1794 singing the praises of English law, but equally the official celebrations in Kingston following the fall of Port au Prince included toasts drunk not only to the Royal Family and Duke of York but also to 'la prompte restauration de la Monarchie en France'.<sup>180</sup> As for the petitions drawn up in July at de Charmilly's behest, they are difficult to interpret. Most are fairly explicit about desiring closer ties with Britain but not all and their signatories, it seems, numbered no more than 600.<sup>181</sup>

By November 1794, according to Billard, une défiance facheuse reigned in the British zone and particularly in Port au Prince, where the 'vain and arrogant' General Whyte had made many enemies. Republicans could be found in all districts but in the capital they were especially strong and a few months later were openly avowing their allegiance to the Convention.<sup>182</sup> At the beginning of 1795, plots to overthrow the British were discovered in all the occupied towns. Malenfant implied, rather dishonestly, it seems, that disillusioned moderates and royalists were behind them, but all the evidence suggests that the men involved were former revolutionaries of all colours.<sup>183</sup> However, even at this low-point in the occupation, we find the editor of the Courrier Royal de Saint Domingue, which was published at Saint Marc, reporting British news in terms of 'notre Cabinet' and 'nos Généraux', and more significantly, anxious to reassure his readers that the British Government still intended to retain its colonial conquests.<sup>184</sup> While most of the Republican zone remained in anarchy, men of property, like it or not, knew their options were few. Talk of American rule, a rejection of both Britain and France, was purely fanciful and one doubts how sympathetic to such ideas were the phony creole marquises and chevaliers who chose to ennoble themselves during the Revolution and occupation.<sup>185</sup> Similarly, Royalists like the vicomte Saint Pont went out of their way to stress that the great majority of colonists had never wanted Saint Domingue to become British and resented the imputation, but then admitted that, if the Bourbons were restored and forced to cede



the colony, they, too, like Montalembert, would accept to become British subjects.<sup>186</sup> For surely the majority of planters at least, Cadusch summed up the situation in lapidary fashion: 'Saint Domingue ... veut et doit être anglais; sans cela plus de fortune pour notre génération.'<sup>187</sup>

However, in the spring of 1796 disaffection in the British zone reached a new high. The Abercromby expedition had not arrived and the attack on Léogane had failed ignominiously. Then at le Cap General Rochambeau appeared, who was something of a hero among French planters. Rightly suspected of pro-slavery opinions, he offered an amnesty to the colonists in the British zone. This excited a lot of attention; another plot was discovered in the capital and a dangerous situation developed in the Grand' Anse. There, rumours of betrayals had frequently circulated and in the previous year a militia sergeant had run up the tricolor at les Cayemittes. Now, it seems, certain chefs de Camp approached the Republican commissioners in the South offering to surrender the Grand' Anse provided that Rigaud was not a party to the treaty and that only European troops garrison the region.<sup>188</sup> The negotiations, however came to nothing and Rochambeau stayed only two months in the colony. After his departure most colonists were said to have supported the British, not wishing to surrender to Toussaint or Laplume any more than to Rigaud.<sup>189</sup> Moreover, the prosperity of the occupied zone had considerably increased by 1796, and to such an extent said Grouvel 'qu'il ne fallait rien moins qu'une vertu surnaturelle pour ne pas oublier tout a fait notre patrie, nos parens et nos amis.'<sup>190</sup> It was in this atmosphere that the colonists learned of the British scheme for partial withdrawal and Malouet's plan to approach the Directory. Outside Port au Prince, opposition seems to have been virulent and widespread, uniting both vrais propriétaires and military and civil officers anxious not to lose their jobs.<sup>191</sup> Ironically, the British were never so popular as when they began making plans to pull out.

At this point, in January 1797, a curious sketch of the state of colonial politics was drawn up by the idiosyncratic General Rouvray père, a pompous right wing eccentric who had been the backbone of white resistance to the slave revolt in the North.<sup>192</sup> While advancing an Anglophile interpretation of the Dominguan esprit, it testifies in itself to the byzantine petty hatreds that were the legacy of the Revolution. Saint Domingue, Rouvray said, was dominated by two



factions that were each split into several mutually hostile groups. Their two leaders (Montalembert and Cambefort) were merely military figureheads as real power lay with the lawyers, alias coulevres de le société civile, whose opposition to the Administration had caused the Revolution, and also the rising of 1769. They now combined with the military royalists only because they needed men who stood well with the English. Of these, Cambefort and de Villars were not real royalists, he said, and in 1791, moreover, they had aided the rebel slaves. He himself regarded the monarchy as having ceased to exist after the 'October days' of 1789. This was both estimable in appearance, one notes, and ethically convenient. Rouvray was fiercely royalist in sentiment but he had long advocated in his private correspondence a pragmatic neutrality as regards the Princes: family property came first.<sup>193</sup> He had also long been a partisan of colonial free trade. The planters' real desires, he now claimed, whatever their posturing, were to become British. Even if the Bourbons were restored in France, only British capital could restore slavery in Saint Domingue. Britain alone could protect her colonies, which enjoyed, furthermore, the most liberal of political systems and of criminal law. Although French law should be retained in Saint Domingue, the courts should be reformed. Rather like Mahé de Corméré, therefore, or the officers of the Mole garrison, the marquis de Rouvray, seems to provide another example of Royalist secessionism.

According to Laborie, however, among those who denounced Malouet's manoeuvring most loudly were men who in a crisis would be among the first to go over to the Republic.<sup>194</sup> The author of the Précis Historique, moreover, enjoyed recording how the thanksgiving services held to celebrate allied victories in Europe met with very little public support. And when news arrived of the coup d'état in France that put an end to Malouet's plan, he described the public response in a similarly jaundiced manner. Some, he said, feared that the new intransigence would prevent their ever returning to France; others hoped that a continuation of the war might lead to the restoration of the monarchy, while a few reconciled themselves with everything, as long as the English would be humiliated.<sup>195</sup> Although the London absentee community began pressing in the autumn for an all-out British conquest, or at least urging that the West Province should not be abandoned,<sup>196</sup> it must have been obvious to everyone there was now no real possibility of Saint Domingue ever becoming British.



By late November, Malouet was suggesting that, in the event of a withdrawal, if a capitulation could not be signed protecting persons and property then planters and their slaves should be shipped to Britain's new and largely uncultivated possession of Trinidad to begin a new life. In December, though still with de Charmilly calling for a British conquest, he proposed that, in case of defeat, he and Montalembert should lead the colonists to settle in Canada and so guard it against republicanism - a scheme Dundas regarded with some favour.<sup>197</sup> Most Dominguan exiles, however, since 1793 had headed for the United States and this seems to have been true of those who left with the British in 1798. In May, when Port au Prince, Saint Marc and Arcahaye were evacuated, 206 whites (perhaps family groups) took ship for North America, one third going to Charleston, and 159 for Jamaica. Another 220 or so were sent to Jérémie, from where the following month 46 went to the United States and 12 to Jamaica.<sup>198</sup> There were already at this time about a thousand refugees receiving public aid in Jamaica. At the end of October, after the evacuation of Jérémie and the Mole, the Governor listed 700 male and 200 female white evacuees (excluding children under ten);<sup>199</sup> it is not clear if these were just recent arrivals. In England, the number of refugees rose to about 150 at the end of July and by the end of the year it stood at about 200, including women and children.<sup>200</sup> All these figures are indubitably incomplete, and of the numbers who left in 1797 we know next to nothing. It seems likely, however, that in 1798 more whites chose to stay than to leave,

The factors affecting such a decision were numerous. Irrespective of political beliefs and degrees of racism, one may presume that the colonists who had spent most of their lives in Saint Domingue were more inclined to remain than men accustomed to living in Europe. Creoles were particularly numerous among those who went to Jamaica, especially creoles from the South, Debien has observed.<sup>201</sup> Planters, of course, stood to lose most under Republican rule, but planters whose estates were still in production had more reason to stay than those who owned abandoned ruins. Departures from Arcahaye and the Grand' Anse were surprisingly few, the British found. As for merchants and lawyers, one finds few in Jamaica, and along with some wealthy planters, Malouet said, there remained behind almost all town householders, shopkeepers, overseers and artisans.<sup>202</sup> Louis Ragnos and Roberjot Lartigue remained in Port au Prince, and though



François Daumas left for the U.S., he returned in 1799. As the Republican authorities officially proscribed all who held public office under the British (bar militia officers continuing in their posts), degree of association with the occupying power was obviously a critical factor; Although Toussaint and Rigaud agreed to an amnesty, no one would have expected Lapointe, de Bruges or Montalembert to have stayed, in view of the atrocities they committed or acquiesced in. Perhaps another consideration was the existence of friends or relatives already in exile or the previous transfer of funds, for colonists had been sending their valuables and families to both Jamaica and the United States since 1791.

There may also have been a regional factor. As whites tended to regard Toussaint as humane and Rigaud as cruel, one might expect emigration from the Grand' Anse to have been relatively greater than from the West. Yet, there is no strong reason to believe this was so. Rigaud secretly agreed to the same capitulation as had Toussaint and when Jérémie, Cayemittes and Pestel were evacuated in the last week of August, almost all the planters, it was said, stayed put, willing to test the amnesty. This is the more surprising in that in Jamaica, (unlike North America), there were considerable opportunities and demand for men skilled in coffee cultivation. In fact, five Grand' Anse planters claimed to be the only ones to have left the region for Jamaica,<sup>203</sup> presumably meaning in the final evacuation, for there were certainly others. The five concerned were extreme Royalists, all soldiers owning large caféières, four of them Croix de Saint Louis. Most had held prominent positions under the occupation. None, however, were noted Anglophiles, far from it, and one is not surprised to find Desombrages<sup>204</sup> moving at the peace of Amiens to Cuba. Lastly, the very tight controls in Jamaica on the admission of slaves from Saint Domingue must have been a weighty consideration for planters reluctant to abandon large workforces that represented a great part of their fortune. While there is some evidence to suggest that colonists leaving for the United States took with them slightly more slaves than those going to Jamaica, privileged figures, such as Loppinot and de Montagnac, were given special permission to ship their slaves to Jamaica, and this was clearly an opportunity that could not be turned down.

Of the figures prominent during the occupation, one can say fairly certainly that the lawyers tended to remain when the troops pulled out, especially if they had been out of favour with the British,



like P.M. Duboys, or had a léopardin background, like Mongin, Baron and Bérault Saint Maurice. Billard, Laborie and de Ronseray, on the other hand, moved to Jamaica along with several other members of the different Conseils Privés, - Dulau d'Allemans, Dubreuil de Villars, de Jumécourt. (The latter presumably decided that his supposedly great influences over the blacks of the Cul de Sac had now come to an end.) The creole Belin de Villeneuve, however, whose eyesight was failing and who remained relatively uncompromised, returned to his plantation in the North. He was killed there two years later in Moyse's rebellion. Other creole planters who chose to try their luck under the new regime were Pierre Collette of Jean Rabel, and J.B. Dignerion and the comte O'Gorman, both of the Cul de Sac, all very rich men. O'Gorman, however, gave up and moved to Jamaica in 1800. The Rochejacquelein, though rather more tenacious, provide a similar case,<sup>205</sup> and another creole Royalist, Major Kenscoff, also decided to stay, 'obligé pour ne pas mourir de faim,' he said, 'de prendre le parti qui doit l'humilier pour le reste de ses jours.' He had served throughout the occupation and hinted that perhaps one day his Chasseurs might again be of service, if ever the British returned...<sup>206</sup> Jamaica, nonetheless, was where most military officers went, at least in the first instance - Cocherel, de Bruges, Dessources, etc. The Belgian Julien Depestre, however, a colonel of Chasseurs, went to the United States and the baron de Montalembert back to England. De Rouvray père returned to Baltimore, hoping to obtain a concession in Cuba or in the British Caicos Islands, but his son remained in British service as a colonel of black troops.

Laborie, the aged creole lawyer, told his absentee friends in England that he would have liked to retire to France with the 3,000 gourdes he had saved up but that his political principles, his colonial habits and his inclinations left him no choice but to settle in Jamaica, 'chez la puissance à laquelle je me suis voué sans autre restriction que ma qualité naturelle de sujet des Bourbons rois de France.' Both by buying an estate and publishing what became a much sought after manual, The Coffee Planter of St. Domingo, he endeavoured to capitalise on the Jamaican coffee boom.<sup>207</sup> Prominent among those who settled in the colony, were creole and creolized families from the south coast - the Onffroy, the Espeut, L.M. de Léaumont, Reignier du Timat, the Plunkett brothers, etc. Several became naturalised.<sup>208</sup> As the region had long been closely linked with Jamaica, this movement might be considered as the natural culmination of Anglophile creole autonomism, although also founding Jamaican dynasties at this time we find Colonel Deneux, who surrendered the Mole,<sup>209</sup> and the less than



Anglophile administrator Louis Vendryès, who had come to Saint Domingue only in 1788.

Venault de Charmilly, under sentence of death in France, was already a naturalised British subject, and played the role sufficiently well to escape detection when he was captured at sea and briefly imprisoned in Bordeaux. After the evacuation, he married an English-woman and used her fortune to buy a sugar estate in Jamaica, just when the British sugar market collapsed. He divided his time between Jamaica and England, and served in the Peninsula War as a colonel of cavalry. Regarded as an importuning nuisance by the Government, he retained his reputation as an indigent and dishonest foreign adventurer and was never really accepted, it seems, by his adopted countrymen.<sup>210</sup>

(iv). Military Life. Most of the British soldiers sent to Saint Domingue - at least three in every five - died there. European troops who survived a year in the colony usually saw six or seven out of every ten of their comrades perish. But for frequent reinforcements, many regiments would have been almost entirely wiped out. Without doubt, death from disease<sup>211</sup> was the central experience of the soldier's life in Saint Domingue. It created an atmosphere of fear and despair, and even before leaving Europe, a contemporary wrote, 'the officer and soldier bound for this service look upon themselves as doomed to certain destruction'.<sup>212</sup>

While such an attitude clearly affected the behaviour of the troops in the colony, it also made recruiting for the Army a difficult task. Along with the massive wartime expansion in the armed forces, it helps explain why standards in the Army sank to a low level in these years. To produce the numbers required, Dundas allowed young subalterns to recruit independent companies in the workhouses and gaols, which were then assembled into regiments and sold to whoever could afford the price of a colonelcy.<sup>213</sup> The large number of Scots officering these corps adds to the impression that political patronage carried more weight than military experience. Half-trained, without discipline or esprit de corps, the new regiments were, in the words of one of their surgeons, but random agglomerations of 'men radically ill-calculated for soldiers'. Largely raised in the manufacturing towns, they were 'unsound in health, dissolute in morals, aggrieved and discontented on various accounts'.<sup>214</sup> The growing social and political tensions in English society also found expression, it seems, in the army. These, then, were the troops sent to Saint Domingue, the better regiments being reserved for the Windward Isles



or, as with the Guards, kept out of the West Indies altogether. There were some exceptions. Williamson thought the troops he sent from Jamaica 'choice lads' and certainly the prestigious Royals were admired by other corps as the 'neatest, best-looking men' in Port au Prince.<sup>215</sup> The 82nd Foot also, which disembarked in August 1795, impressed many observers, though one colonist remarked it was the first batch of reinforcements that even looked like a corps réglé.<sup>216</sup>

The 82nd, significantly, after a trouble-free voyage from Gibraltar, was one of the few regiments to arrive in good health. Usually, troops had spent the previous winter camped on the coast of Ireland, buffeted by storms and weakened by dysentery. Typhus frequently broke out in their makeshift hospitals or amid the accumulating filth of the troopships, on which the men were generally confined for from two to six months. Of the 9000 gathered at Cork in the autumn of 1795, over 500 died before the convoy set sail.<sup>217</sup> Desertion was rife. Mutinies were numerous, and at Southampton, too, troops rebelled against the poor quality of their food. One ship was left three days in the Channel without any provisions. Because of the freak gales that lashed the European coastline in 1794-96, the voyage itself was often a nightmare. 'The vessel rocked so much,' wrote one junior officer, 'that almost every wave broke directly over so that ... the soldiers in the Hold were almost drowned in spite of everything I could do to keep the water from them.' On the Abercromby expedition, in fact, hundreds of troops were drowned in the Channel and the Bay of Biscay, their bodies being washed ashore along the south coast.<sup>218</sup>

Manchester mill-hands, Lincolnshire labourers, Irish and Westphalian peasants, however novel for them was the experience of becoming a soldier, their introduction to the West Indies must have been still more dramatic. Towering mountains and lush vegetation, a violent climate and a bizarre population, these were the soldier's first impressions as he was drawn into a world of savage conflict, where death assumed the most terrifying forms, and on a scale of fantastic senselessness.

'Broiling on a gridiron must be fool's play,' wrote Lieutenant Howard at Saint Marc. The heat in August, he claimed, was unimaginable.<sup>219</sup> In Port au Prince, soldiers fainted in the street. On a twelve mile march, over 50 out of 2000 died of thirst; while a regiment of hussars travelling mainly by night, took 77 hours to cover the 60 miles between Saint Marc and the capital.<sup>220</sup> The



colonists themselves thought temperatures higher than usual, and it may be relevant that the troops came from a Europe slightly cooler than it is nowadays. However, the ease with which they became fatigued probably owed much to their tight-fitting flannel uniforms that became caked with sweat, and the soldiers' tendency not to wash.<sup>221</sup>

It was not only the heat that impressed the newcomers. 'Dreadfully disagreeable, high, parching, blighting winds' were also subjects of complaint and soon after arriving Lieutenant Howard felt moved to describe the worst thunderstorm of his life: 'each flash or sheet of fire seemed to swamp the whole plain, the Deluge of rain ... came down as if a River was falling from the Clouds.'<sup>222</sup>

During the first half of the occupation, most of the British troops were confined to the coastal towns. Surrounded by an exotic enemy, hydra-like and elusive, numbering tens of thousands, they were unable to set foot beyond their picket lines without being attacked. Patrols were ambushed; sentries and forage parties were sniped at. As their numbers dwindled, military duties fell the more heavily on the survivors. Consequently, men went for months without taking off their clothes for a full night's sleep. 'Imprisoned within the walls of a town half demolished', the Port au Prince garrison was under particularly severe strain, until the Morne l'Hôpital was captured.<sup>223</sup>

As only four of the thirty or so regiments sent to Saint Domingue managed to arrive in the dry healthy months from December to March, it was never very long before new arrivals were struck down with yellow fever or malaria. The effect could be shattering. Men, fit in the morning were sometimes dead by nightfall. Two weeks after reaching Saint Marc, a bewildered officer was writing, 'hundreds almost were absolutely drowned in their own blood bursting from them at every Pore, some died raving mad, others forming plans of attacking, others desponding'. Thirty blacks, he said, spent all the daylight hours digging graves and could scarcely keep pace with the dying, though up to five bodies were placed in each grave.<sup>224</sup> At Saint Marc, the sick were crowded into barns and stables. At Port au Prince, the great wards of the General Hospital were packed with the victims of yellow fever whose groans and stench in the summer heat made the building a nightmare to experience. Dr. McLean described the rows of prostrate figures, their 'low, muttering, grim, melancholy which is lost in meditating wrath, without an attempt to move.' 'The eye has an expression,' he said, 'of anguish unspeakable, and a langour in its movement; an inclination to shut all objects.' As death approached, the patient would throw up large quantities of digested blood, the fearful 'black vomit'. He became incontinent,



and fetid secretions oozed from his gums. His nose would often bleed and a haemorrhage might also occur from the corners of the eyes. Some men, delirious, tried to leap out of the windows. Others, tragically, remained clear of mind until death.<sup>225</sup> The troops lived in terror of the General Hospital; so few ever returned from it alive. If a soldier fell sick, he hid his symptoms for as long as possible. Depressed by the 'daily spectacle of death', without confidence in their doctors, the British garrisons sank into a 'general gloom'.<sup>226</sup> On landing at the Mole, Simcoe was immediately struck by the listlessness of the troops. Some regiments gave themselves up for lost, Lieutenant Howard remarked, and tried to hasten their end.<sup>227</sup>

Trapped between the mountains and the sea, between un terrain brûlant and un soleil homicide, and poisoned, so it seemed, by the very air they had to breathe, troops of all ranks found an escape through drunkenness. Rum was cheap. In the boredom of the rainy season, when they were left idle in their barracks, soldiers including officers daily could be found in a drunken stupor.<sup>228</sup> Along with their ten ounces of salt meat and pound and a half of bread, they received each day a quarter of a pint of rum, which they liberally supplemented in the cabarets and billiard halls of the seaports. Laws which limited the number of such haunts and banned from them soldiers and seamen do not seem to have had much effect in the early years of the occupation. Similarly, efforts to replace the rum ration with spruce beer had only a belated and partial success, though the measure was recommended to the government in 1793. 'Drunkenness in those days,' wrote a former regimental surgeon, looking back from the 1840s, 'was unrestrained and terrible.'<sup>229</sup> Of course, it was an age of alcoholic excess. For the six week voyage to Barbados, the officers of the York Hussars took with them thirty dozen bottles of port.<sup>230</sup> Even an advocate of moderation like Dr. McLean thought it reasonable for an officer to drink a whole bottle of claret with his dinner.<sup>231</sup> However, the stories of troops filling their canteens with rum before campaigns or smuggling it into their messes suggest an obsession born of desperate circumstances.<sup>232</sup>

The tension eased somewhat when the reinforcements of 1796 arrived and some of the British troops began to be moved into the countryside and mountains, formerly the preserve of the colonial corps. By the end of 1797, we find them camped in ruined plantations in the Cul de Sac, in blockhouses on the hills around the Mole, manning outposts up the Irois river and on the Morne l'Hôpital and even



astride the Montagnes de la Hotte with a view of both sides of the southern peninsula. For these fortunate few, all of them light troops, this meant a healthier if more lonely existence. In the forts on the high mountain ridges behind Arcahaye, troops were not only free from fever but also escaped the dysentery and leg sores that were the perpetual complaint of soldiers in the plain. At the same time, they had to endure extreme isolation, cut off from the coast by a landscape of huge chasms, plunging ravines and thick woods, where raiders could move freely. Four and a half thousand feet above the Artibonite, nights were chilly and deathly silent, a stark contrast to the steamy plains where insects droned incessantly. It was another world but equally oppressive in its own way.

However, military life was not without its lighter side. 'A man inclined to libertinism,' Lieutenant Howard noted with studied discretion, 'finds here perhaps the largest field in the world to gratify himself in.'<sup>233</sup> Sex, like rum, was cheap; (though many soldiers in fact had brought their wives with them).<sup>234</sup> An officer, furthermore, might even play the country gentleman. A few days after a battle at Saint Marc and in the midst of an epidemic we find Lieutenant Howard going off to join a bird-shooting party on a nearby plantation. He evidently enjoyed the conviviality and clubbishness of mess life. Having transferred to Port au Prince, he proudly recorded in his journal the foundation on January 1st 1798 of the 'St. Domingo Cavalry Club' by a handful of junior officers; its motto: 'Loyalty'.<sup>235</sup> More surprisingly, he whiled away spare hours in the Cul de Sac by taking down descriptions of the local flora. He admired the plain and the 'immense mountains' surrounding it, 'covered to their very tops with wood', and also the verdant confusion of the slave quarters, 'the most Picturesque Prospect I have ever seen'. When a party of 600 dragoons and hussars in the uniforms of their different corps made a gruelling fourteen hours' ride without food across the Montagnes Terribles following vertiginous tracks sometimes twelve inches wide, and when for the greatest part of the journey, 'the horses appeared to be standing on their heads or vice versa', he was still able to describe it as a 'singular and ... charming sight'.<sup>236</sup>

To a large extent thoughts of promotion seem to have occupied the minds of the young subalterns. This is the impression given by the correspondence of Captain Guthrie at Jérémie, and Thomas Howard,



too, mentioned the 'immoderate desire of Command' of his German colleagues, who rejoiced at the death of their Colonel.<sup>237</sup> Saint Domingue, in this respect, offered considerable scope for advancement. Moreover, supernumerary staff and garrison posts abounded which brought officers extra sources of income, while some colonels were able to double the command of a British regiment with that of a colonial corps. The allowances granted to officers in the foreign Hussars actually amounted to double pay.<sup>238</sup> Until lodgings allowances were instituted, officers profited as regards accommodation by commandeering the most palatial of the town houses left by absentees and leaving the government to pay the rent.<sup>239</sup> Rank and file also benefited in that the usual deductions from their pay to cover the costs of clothing and hospitalization were not made during much of the occupation. Most of these abuses, however, which grew up under Williamson and Forbes, were eradicated during or shortly before the governorship of General Simcoe.

Such perquisites it was argued, were justified by a cost of living said in May 1797 to be at least four times as high as in Europe. A pair of riding boots cost two portugaises; and an officer might need four pairs a year. Horses died as frequently as men, and new chargers could cost over £40 sterling. The repair of weapons was especially expensive. Most interestingly, in an effort to stay alive, some officers spent in less than a year £100 or £150 on medical treatment.<sup>240</sup> Nonetheless, many soldiers clearly did well out of the occupation. The colonels of the colonial corps were considered extremely corrupt and were accused of pocketing the pay of their Chasseurs, seizing absentees' property and speculating in the provision of clothing and medicaments for their men. Depestre and Dessources may have been exceptions but Montalembert undoubtedly amassed a fortune.<sup>241</sup> British officers, too, evidently shared in the spoils. Although Governor Williamson used most of his personal fortune in supplementing his £5000 salary, his successor, General Forbes, lined both his own pockets and those of his friends.<sup>242</sup> The corruption at Saint Marc was notorious. In July 1797, we find a major in the 66th Foot, recently returned home, writing for the enlightenment of a fellow officer, 'that if he wants to invest any of his St. Marc's wealth in the funds, to let me know as they are now very low'.<sup>243</sup>

Another enterprising officer was Lieutenant-Colonel George Hallam, who for most of 1796 lived it up in Government House with his brother in law General Forbes. As well as being given a number of staff appointments, which were later vetoed or withdrawn by the Government,



he used his influence to obtain the lease of a valuable plantation on the river Seringue and imported some 70 slaves from Jamaica to increase its workforce. Other officers also leased absentee plantations. When commandant of les Irois, he spent so much of his time on the estate that Simcoe ordered him to relinquish the lease. He refused, pointing out that the articles of war did not prohibit the growing of coffee by officers, but he was eventually cashiered.<sup>244</sup>

Simcoe's reforms caused most of the foreign troops to choose to return to Europe. At the same time, many deserted. Desertion had not been uncommon in the foreign corps, which consisted to a large extent of French prisoners of war recruited in British gaols and discontented Germans who had enlisted to serve only in Europe. Their officers were émigré provincial nobility or minor German aristocrats. In June 1796, Montalembert's Legion, which was gradually transformed from a colonial into a foreign corps, lost 37 of its new recruits, who fled to the enemy with their horses and equipment.<sup>245</sup> British soldiers found desertion less attractive. Of the one or two hundred who had deserted by the autumn of 1796 most had probably tried to escape from the colony as seamen.

Friendship, food and drink, women, promotion and graft: the soldiers on occasion also had to fight; but not often. For the most part, this was a war of posts and ambushes. Colonial troops sometimes conducted raids but the Europeans usually fought on the defensive behind fortifications. Apart from the capture of Tiburon, Fort l'Acul and Fort Bizoton in 1794, and the brief Morne l'Hôpital, Léogane and Bombarde expeditions of 1796, the main exception was the fighting in the Artibonite, which came to an end in 1796. The capture and recapture of Mirebalais involved only minor skirmishes. For this and other reasons, battle casualties were remarkably few, although Republican losses were enormous.<sup>246</sup> Lieutenant Howard described with enthusiasm cavalry actions in and around the Gorge des Guêpes in which hundreds of ill-trained raiders were massacred on their feet, their heads split vertically or sliced off through the mouth by the sabres of the hussars and dragoons.<sup>247</sup> This sort of engagement, which also took place in the Cul de Sac, at Lascahobas and in the Grand' Anse, clearly did much to boost morale, especially when fought against numerically superior forces. But more often there was the tedium of endless guard duty and the frustration of trying to pin down an enemy, adept at ambush and night raids, who could not be out-run or out-ridden. Not least, there was the climate and the terrain



of what Forbes called 'this vile country'.<sup>248</sup> Because the transport of tents and baggage was difficult, troops on campaign had to sleep in the open, usually soaked to the skin. It took nearly five days to get a cannon from Arcahaye to the Hauteurs de Verrettes for an attack that never took place. When the York Hussars were sent to attack Mirebalais, they had to cut their way along a narrow mountain path overgrown with shrubs and blocked by fallen trees. Overcome by the heat and lack of water, feverish men dropped out begging to be left to die, only to be bled by the surgeon. On the Bombarde expedition, soldiers drank their own urine.<sup>249</sup> However, it must be pointed out that, on the Mirebalais expedition, while the hussars were wilting on their horses, their slaves were carrying a 6-pounder cannon along the same path.

According to a Haitian historian, the war between Toussaint and the British was distinguished by its humanity; prisoners, he said, were always well treated.<sup>250</sup> According to a memorialist writing in 1798 however, 'Jamais guerre n'a plus dégradé l'humanité.' He singled out, it is true, the vicious conduct of the colonists but also implied their example was followed by all concerned. 'Cette guerre qui ne porte aucune des caractères de civilisation et de la raison humaine ... fait de tigres dangereux des soldats qu'on y emploie ... De part et d'autre ... on se livre (à une) atroce fureur.'<sup>251</sup>

Specifically, he was pleading for the better treatment of black prisoners - 'car ce sont des hommes,' he felt it necessary to point out, 'et ils ont goûté de la liberté.' From the start of the occupation, Colonel Whitelocke thought the whites of the Grand' Anse 'perfectly savage' to the blacks and mulattoes they captured.<sup>252</sup> In December 1794, Toussaint denounced in a proclamation the 'cruautés atroces et inouis' of the British on the Artibonite; prisoners were drowned at sea in batches or languished in chains, their cheeks branded Georges Roy. This was a frankly propagandist piece aimed at the mulattoes of le Cap, but as already seen, it certainly had a substantial basis in fact.<sup>253</sup> Six black chiefs captured in the plain at this time were beheaded by troops under Brisbane's command. Toussaint's soldiers (white and black) also decapitated their enemies (white and black) and sent their heads back to him as trophies.<sup>254</sup> When Lieutenant Howard came to Saint Marc in mid-1796, he found that neither side took prisoners, and apparently had no qualms about following suit. Williamson, in fact, wrote approvingly to Dundas that Dessources' Chasseurs gave no quarter.<sup>255</sup>



This was both a race war and a civil war. It partook of the intensity of both types of conflict. While the colonists had never treated rebellious blacks with anything but savagery, they and their émigré allies were regarded by the Republicans as traitors to their country. By the beginning of 1795, so many had been executed on falling into Republican hands that their morale was seriously shaken.<sup>256</sup> Concerned about 'the nature of the war in Saint Domingue', Whitelocke approached Laveaux early on, arguing that the whites ought not set an example of cruelty. Although he refused to let 'Français anglomanisés' be exchanged as prisoners of war, Laveaux personally ordered the deaths only of two, one of whom had been guilty of mistreating Republican prisoners. When Jean Rabel was re-occupied in March 1794, he protected its planters from the violently Republican Lesuire, who hated colonists. Thwarted, Lesuire took revenge by shooting 64 whites captured at le Borgne.<sup>257</sup> Montalembert, for his part, was known to execute Republicans who would not shout vive le Roi.<sup>258</sup>

It is not clear how far the British troops themselves suffered. Laveaux early in 1794 threatened to take vengeance on his British prisoners if ex-slaves were not given p.o.w. status.<sup>259</sup> Probably he did nothing, but certainly in 1796 British troops were used to build fortifications at le Cap and Fort Dauphin. Moreover, in the desperate summer of that year, we find Sonthonax urging the Republicans in the South 'exterminer les Anglais et les traitres qui se battent sous leurs drapeaux ... Qu'aucun pitié, qu'aucune considération vous arrête.'<sup>260</sup> Presumably, it was not without reason that Lieutenant Baskerville, abandoned in Tiburon fort, committed suicide rather than fall into the hands of Rigaud's men,<sup>261</sup>

Yet, it is difficult to get an overall picture. Hundreds of prisoners were exchanged by both sides and the British enrolled large numbers in their black corps. They also generally allowed women and children to join their families in the enemy zone, which was not true of Rigaud. The atrocities, it seems, were largely the work of the colonists. They did most of the fighting and presumably all the questioning of prisoners. The British attitude was a mixture of disapproval and acquiescence,<sup>262</sup> salutary neglect, it was doubtless thought. Colonel Whitelocke, however, despite his ignorance of French,



was able to save from execution a number of Grand' Anse Patriotes.<sup>263</sup> Grouvel and Malenfant, writing for a French audience in 1814, stressed how hard were conditions on the British pontoons, where many died, but Malenfant also added that whereas Whyte was severe to prisoners, Williamson was more typical of the British officers. Mulattoes were kept in chains, but many white officers were allowed parole at the Mole or in Jamaica. The Précis Historique, in fact, is remarkably complimentary to the British.<sup>264</sup>

'The war is horrid', wrote General Simcoe a month after his arrival in February 1797. 'The Eastern appendages of Jackals and Vultures are really {? wanted} and an honest {? Frenchman} has faithfully promised me to import two pair of the latter species to breed in our mountains.' Finding that neither side gave quarter, he ordered that 'cruelties and outrages' in the conduct of the war should cease.<sup>265</sup> With Toussaint ascendant in the Republican zone, it is probably from this period that date the more humane and better known relations between the two sides. They were nonetheless marred during the final campaign in 1798 when Lapointe massacred his prisoners.

In many ways, the quality of life improved in the last 18 months of the occupation. However, with Lieutenant Howard the futility of the war weighed heavily. Whatever was gained in the healthy season was lost in the sickly months, while the troops continued to waste away. The Government, he thought could not possibly know the full facts. 'I hope in God Government ... will decide on recalling the miserable remains,' he wrote in September 1797, 'and not leave us here to perish without being ... of the smallest utility.'<sup>266</sup>

(vi) Attitudes to Race and Slavery. 'Car ce sont des hommes,' Dumouriez' remark<sup>267</sup> (see above, p.263) suggests that the savagery of the fighting owed much to the combattants' attitudes to race. Of course, this can only be a partial explanation. Blacks tortured blacks. Whites slaughtered whites, in France as well as in her colonies. The slaveowners were fighting for their survival as a class: the blacks for their freedom. Undoubtedly, however, even at



a time when many slaveowners, unlike succeeding generations, denied that negroes were innately inferior beings or thought this an open question,<sup>268</sup> the whites' perception of their black opponents as at least physically different and culturally inferior made it easier for them to treat them with inhumanity.

Although London possessed a large black population in the late 18th century, it is probable that many, if not most, of the troops sent out to the West Indies were seeing negroes for the first time. Lieutenant Howard on first stepping ashore noted with pleasure that some slaves were 'by no means ugly setting aside their colour'.<sup>269</sup> Lack of prior acquaintance did not mean lack of preconceptions. It is amusing to read the lieutenant's account of being lost in a wood at night during a thunderstorm. When he and his anxious men came across seven or eight negroes roasting a carcass in a clearing, they immediately assumed it to be an act of cannibalism, 'a thing not at all uncustomary among the Caribbean Negroes'.<sup>270</sup> Yet, such prejudices and fears did not necessarily imply hostility. Howard arrived believing the slaves to be cruelly treated. Every time he heard a whip crack, he said, he wanted to snatch it and whip the master.<sup>271</sup> The anti-slavery campaign, as such posturing suggests, had already reached a wide audience in England. Simcoe, somewhat ironically for a commander trying to conquer the colony, was opposed to slavery on religious grounds, and when Governor of Upper Canada had sought to abolish it. One thinks of the ambivalence of Pitt's position. Besides striving to 'choak the Artibonite with Blackamoors', the general also hoped, according to his biographer, to free the slaves in Saint Domingue.<sup>272</sup> However, he must have kept extremely quiet about it, or he would not have been so popular with the colonists. They remained totally committed to the slave system, as the uproar over Malouet's pamphlets shows. Even an advocate of mild reform like the lawyer Dubois was unimpressed with the Republicans' experimentation with forced labour and continued to regard slavery, it seems, as a necessary evil.<sup>273</sup>

Curiously, Lieutenant Howard's opinions changed in the West Indies, just like those of baron Wimpffen and many others before him. 'I am persuaded my heart is not grown harder,' he wrote after 15 months in Saint Domingue, 'yet I {now} see the Business in a very different Light.' He expressed sympathy for those 'poor unfortunate blacks' who were the victims of acts of cruelty and he thought protective legislation should be introduced, but the slave regime in general he found far less harsh than he had anticipated.<sup>274</sup> In this



change of attitude various factors may have been involved. Conditions, in some ways and in some places, doubtless were better than some Europeans believed, but simply the sight of the system functioning, that is, of men 'accepting' to be slaves, surely also gave it an air of reasonableness. The lieutenant was certainly impressed by the wealth tied up in the West Indies and was also influenced by the planters' claim that their self-interest was a check against cruelty and that most imported Africans had been born bondsmen. Moreover, remembering how the disillusioned Wimpffen ended up declaring that the slaves and planters deserved each other,<sup>275</sup> one wonders if Lieutenant Howard, too, was disappointed to find on the plantations not noble savages but real men.

Of the slaves, he preferred the Africans, being 'by no means so corrupted in their morals and behaviour as the creole slaves than which nothing can exceed', and who, he noted, had been set a bad example from birth. Most of the Africans, however, he considered fit only for manual tasks, as their 'natural handicaps' persisted, either through 'obstinacy' or 'incapability'.<sup>276</sup> His prejudices were thus tempered with environmentalist ideas, and one may be fairly sure that he was merely indulging in metaphor when he described the mulattoes as a 'Race of Evil Beings rather than men'. He praised the respect they showed to their parents and he thought that the bronze-skinned griffonne, the offspring of a mulâtre and a negress, exceeded in beauty all other colours except white. Nevertheless, with the exception of the 'harmless, inoffensive' free blacks, he depicted the male free coloureds as treacherous and inhumane, 'sanguinary, proud, disdainful, Ignorant except in low cunning and deceit'. Mulatto slaves he described in the same terms.<sup>277</sup> Evidently, the revolts at Saint Marc and Léogane in 1794 were seen as confirming all that the colonists said about the mulattoes. It should be recalled, however, that earlier in the occupation British officers had generally had a high opinion of the free coloureds and that some, like Major Brisbane, had mixed freely with them.<sup>278</sup>

How far attitudes to the blacks were affected by the war and the experience of defeat is difficult to gauge. Coming to rely for their own defence on an army largely composed of blacks, and eventually being taught a lesson in warfare and in humanity by an aged ex-slave, the colonists, one might expect, had to make considerable mental readjustments. Clearly, they had difficulty in recognising in Toussaint's disciplined demi-brigades of 1797 their field-hands and



flunkies of four years before. The morose Laborie complained that the British commanders thought in European terms, not realising that a handful of whites could defeat an army of blacks, 'without courage or discipline, ill-armed and worse commanded', but by the spring of 1797 he had to admit that day by day the rebel slaves were turning into effective soldiers.<sup>279</sup> Yet, in the eyes of the defeated, 'brigands' they remained. When the blacks' martial qualities were acknowledged, it was not their bravery, or determination or tactical skill that were usually emphasised but their 'cunning', their barbarity, their familiarity with the climate and terrain, their ability to survive with little food and no clothing, that is to say derogatory qualities or biological factors that set them even further apart from the whites; in short, 'slavish' attributes.<sup>280</sup> For Edmund Burke, the blacks of Saint Domingue were a 'race of fierce barbarians', who thrived on the 'poisonous air' whites could not safely breathe.<sup>281</sup>

The black Chasseurs, it is true, were praised for their courage, loyalty and toughness, and an intense esprit de corps grew up in some of the regiments which must have brought black and white closer together, just as on those plantations where masters, overseers and slaves fought side by side. However, the relationship remained a paternal one - white officers and black troops. Loyalty and physical endurance were precisely the qualities, of course, that made a good slave, and any black who courageously defended the system ipso facto reinforced it. Courage on the part of blacks was anyway no new discovery, and had often been explained as a product of their lack of foresight.<sup>282</sup> They had témérité, the colonists conceded, but not bravoure, or as de Charmilly opined, negroes do not know 'what we call courage ... but they have a sort of indifference for life ...'<sup>283</sup>

The colonial lawyer Duboys had relatively liberal views on slavery and race relations but his attitudes to blacks were changed very little by the cataclysm in Saint Domingue. Through most of the Précis Historique he insisted that negroes were incapable of either working or rebelling without external compulsion; the entire slave revolution was 'un mouvement imprimé si éloigné de leur caractère apathique'. When Christophe Mornet occupied Port au Prince in 1798, he admired the discipline of his ragged troops but explained it in terms of the 'caractère du Noir, naturellement docile, sobre et habitué à toutes espèces de privations'. Even in the autumn of 1799, we find him only slightly more willing to see blacks as autonomous beings. Slavery, he then wrote, so undermines a slave's confidence



that he always hesitates to act by himself and will do so only in extreme circumstances.<sup>284</sup>

The British were equally grudging. Wilberforce warned the House of Commons in May 1797 it took too little account of the blacks of the French islands. They were no longer, he said, like the inhabitants of India, 'too low for the storm that was passing over them; they stood erect, and influenced its direction.'<sup>285</sup>

'Experience has proved,' wrote Robert Jackson a year later, that they would not 'barter their independence for a Madras handkerchief or an ear-ring.' Nevertheless, the doctor continued, 'they are by disposition so indolent, so unenergetic in action, and so divided amongst themselves, that it is ... more than probable that ... the conquest of Saint Domingue might have been effected.'<sup>286</sup> Lieutenant Howard noted in his journal daring exploits and courage on the part of his opponents but also poor marksmanship and a general tendency not to stand and fight when attacked.<sup>287</sup> He seems to have neither respected nor disdained them. The much more bigoted Colonel Chalmers, however, arguing a political case, insisted that Toussaint's men did not 'merit the name of soldiers' and was adamant that Britain's failure had nothing at all to do with her 'contemptible foe'.<sup>288</sup>

Such prejudices had some basis in fact. In terms of casualties, the British undoubtedly were defeated by disease and not by the insurgents.<sup>289</sup> European troops, moreover, were apparently never beaten in open country, and no major stronghold was ever stormed by the Republicans. Because the blacks generally kept to the mountains, however, Chalmers felt able to characterise them as 'timid' and assert that negro troops would never be able to oppose Europeans. As Inspector-General of Colonial Troops, he had to admit that Dessources and Depestre moulded their men into 'very respectable' units but he immediately added that these were good only for fighting other negroes, which in the circumstances could not be disproved. Blacks were 'grown up children', unfitted for liberty. Toussaint, he claimed, 'this boasted chief', relied mainly on mulatto officers. He even attributed the success of the Jamaican Maroons to their 'Spanish blood', and then went on to state that neither blacks nor mulattoes were 'of a warlike disposition'. They in fact had 'an almost insuperable aversion' for warfare.<sup>290</sup> (One wonders whom the British were fighting.) Similarly, Bryan Edwards reported that in the Republican zone plantation blacks did their best not to be recruited, having learned how hard was a soldier's life.<sup>291</sup> This was naturally just what a planter wished to believe. It is more surprising, however, to find Thomas



Maitland, soon after the evacuation, describing Toussaint as timid. He thought him ambitious but neither very able nor very determined, possessed of 'cunning' rather than 'sense', and like most creoles, 'strongly attached to (his) ancient prejudices'. The greatest favour he was able to do for him, he said, was to send to him his old master, who was a prisoner of the British. Maitland seems to have thought Rigaud a better soldier and regarded the mulattoes in general, alias 'all trash of colour', as more dangerous. Toussaint's failure to declare Saint Domingue independent, which evidently annoyed Maitland, he attributed to the black leader's 'fears' and predicted he would surrender to the French without a fight.<sup>292</sup>



## CHAPTER XI. THE SLAVES AND FREE COLOURED

(i) The slave population of the occupied zone. It is a commonplace that the history of a slave society must rely for the most part on the perceptions and representations of that society by its master class. Of the thoughts and feelings of Saint Domingue's slaves, we know next to nothing; of their actions, we know almost only what whites chose to record. This is true even of the basic structural features of black society, for the makers of censuses and inventories had different notions, for example, of what constituted ethnic identity, of who was creole and who was not, of what age a slave might be, and whether the existence of the old and very young deserved to be recorded at all.<sup>1</sup> Hence, not only does the individual slave remain a distant and obscure figure, a quasi-caricature, but the overall picture presented by the slave community can be extremely hazy. This is particularly the case as regards the fundamental question of numbers, for which data are anyway sparse.

When in 1794 the administration of the Grand' Anse reported there were 30,000 slaves in the paroisses unies (presumably including Tiburon), the Conseil Privé assumed there were 33,000.<sup>2</sup> It was apparently customary to estimate under-registration at 10%. Either figure, however, indicates a substantial increase on the returns of 1788-91.<sup>3</sup> The Plymouth region, we know, had been rapidly expanding, and one might expect population returns to have been more accurate when the planters were self-governing than under the Ancien Regime. On the other hand, these global figures are difficult to square with what is known of the size of plantation workforces under the occupation. This, however, derives solely from absentee estates, which here may have been smaller than average, and dates from the start of 1797, by when it is possible numbers had diminished.<sup>4</sup> One can only be cautious, therefore. Lapointe claimed that the slave population of Arcahaye numbered 18,000,<sup>5</sup> that is slightly more than the official pre-Revolutionary figures, which seems possible, though there is no question of the population having naturally increased. In the Cul de Sac, a census of September 1796 revealed 11,400 slaves on 180 estates. This, it was observed, meant that over 15,000 slaves, 'les plus alertes, les mieux portans', were missing, and this accords well with the evidence of surviving plantation inventories.<sup>6</sup> The slave population of Port au Prince was 4,600 in November 1797 and had probably fluctuated little during the occupation. That of the Mole was about 1,000, and that of Saint Marc probably about



the same, with an uncertain number in the surrounding hills. In Mirebalais and Grands Bois, the Précis Historique mentions 4/5,000 before the withdrawal of March 1797,<sup>7</sup> which seems surprisingly few, though doubtless much of Mirebalais was not in British hands.

Taken together, these figures suggest a total slave population of around 70,000 prior to the spring of 1797. This matches the Conseil Privé's estimate of April 1796, which mentioned 60,000 slaves on 800 plantations and apparently excluded urban slaves, although it was given as a maximum. Another estimate - of May 1797 - that there were 37,000 slaves working in agriculture and over 3,400 engaged in trades or domestic service, apparently refers only to productive adults and so does not really give an indication of the losses incurred that spring.<sup>8</sup> These affected Arcahaye and more particularly the Plymouth region, which lost 1,200 slaves, as well as Mirebalais, where whole ateliers disappeared over the Montagnes Noires into the Republican zone.

Fortunately, a fairly detailed picture of the slave population on the eve of these losses can be assembled from the inventories of the absentee plantations leased out by the Administration between September 1796 and February 1797. About 200 survive, providing a sample of some 15,500 slaves. Drawn from all parts of the occupied zone and accounting for about a quarter of the blacks living in the countryside, it may be considered representative, though far more so of the West than of the Grand' Anse.<sup>9</sup> Compared to the pre-Revolutionary population, the sample is more creolized, with more children, fewer young adults and a lower proportion of males. It shows the impact not only of the Revolution but also of the five-year cessation of slave imports, during which the higher rates of mortality suffered by Africans and males in general must in any case have reduced their preponderance in the population. On the coffee plantations, just over half of the slaves were Africans; on the sucreries, two-thirds were creoles.

Almost half the creoles, however, were aged under 15, so that among the adults Africans easily predominated in the mountains and were nearly as numerous as creoles in the plains. On the cafénières the sexes were almost equally balanced (103:100), but on the sugar estates, where the sex ratio was 93:100, women clearly outnumbered men. Remarkably, on both types of plantation, children accounted for 28% of those present, while around 10% were listed as aged 60 or over.

On many estates in the Cul de Sac, children made up 35%, even 40%, of the workforce, and in June 1797 the Bonrepos sucrerie had 39 working adults and 104 children.<sup>10</sup> To a great extent, these high percentages



TABLE 4

THE EVOLUTION OF THE WORKFORCE OF THE LABARRE PLANTATION

(i)

	Men	Women	Children	Total
<u>1790</u>	71	47	51	169
<u>1796</u>	44	50	57	151
<u>1798</u>	49	49	59	157

(ii)

	<u>Men</u>		<u>Women</u>	
	1790	1796	1790	1796
<u>15-19</u>	11	3	9	9
<u>20-29</u>	19	2	10	13
<u>30-39</u>	22	11	16	10
<u>40-49</u>	8	14	6	12
	60	30	41	44

Sources: A.N.O.M., Absentee Inventories VI, Labarre inventory;  
 Debien, Comptes II, 18-20, 43-44.



of children, and the positive growth rates that went with them on some plantations, simply resulted from heavy losses of male adults. However, it also seems likely that natality may have increased and particularly in the Cul de Sac, where very little work was done. On the Damiens estate near Port au Prince, the birth rate accelerated during the years 1793-96, so that in September 1796 11 of its 46 children (those under 15) were less than a year old.<sup>11</sup> Several plantations - Boutin, Coustard, Marin, d'Orléans, - exhibited fertility ratios (children under 5 per 1,000 women of childbearing age) well above 800,<sup>12</sup> far exceeding those of 18th century France and Sweden or of modern central Africa, which are in the range 700-780.<sup>13</sup> Yet, caution is required. On the Labouille Desmornays plantation, one finds a fertility ratio of 1,550 which surely can only be explained by mothers having abandoned their children, or having been killed.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, even including these examples, the overall fertility ratio for the Cul de Sac was only 540.<sup>15</sup>

In the plain of Arcahaye, where the slaves worked 'comme en 1789',<sup>16</sup> and which was relatively little affected by marronage, especially female marronage, the ratio was much lower, as one might expect - 321.<sup>17</sup> However, there was a tremendous variation between individual estates, reflecting differing age distributions within the fertile age band, different proportions of creoles within this group and doubtless other factors as well, not readily discernible. We have noted already the case of Poy la Générale (p. 225) whose slaves were 35% children and who had a fertility ratio of 640. The Raby atelier, by contrast, had only 10% children and a fertility ratio of 138. The Labarre plantation, which is similarly the subject of a well-known monograph, turns out to be the most exceptional of all - 37% children; fertility ratio, 784.<sup>18</sup> Unusually, we are able to follow its evolution through until after the British left (table 4). For much of the occupation, it would appear, the workforce was actually growing; in 1796, 29 of its 57 children were under 5 years old. The Labarre plantation is remarkable for two reasons. Firstly, it was leased to Lapointe, whose reputed severity towards the blacks was proverbial, though here its impact is not apparent. Secondly, over half of the women of childbearing age on the estate were African, which was unusual in this region. Unlike, however, the nubile women of the Raby workforce, a similar proportion of whom were African, they were concentrated in the 15-29 age-range and this doubtless explains their fecundity.

Creole women, on balance, and not only in Arcahaye but also in the Grand' Anse, tended to be more fertile than the Africans, but this may



simply be because in this sample they were also younger.<sup>19</sup> There seems no doubt, however, as to the influence on fertility of plantation labour. The coffee plantations of the Grand' Anse reveal a fertility ratio fittingly mid-way between that of the run-down sucreries of the Cul de Sac and those of Arcahaye - 439. The heavy and more intensified labour demanded by the truly industrial sugar plantations, and maintained by the severity of Lapointe, evidently made its mark. Furthermore, considering that in the plain of Arcahaye most of the females of child-bearing age were creole, whereas in the Grand' Anse the great majority were African, the sterilising effect of sugar plantation work is all the more startling.

One may not, of course, be measuring variations in fecundity so much as frequency of intercourse, which could well have been lower on the sucreries and among Africans; either way, it seems likely that fertility was related to the incidence of disease and disability. African women were about 40% more likely than creoles to be sick or disabled, while both groups but particularly the creoles were notably more unhealthy in the plains. Without counting those over 60 listed as infirmes, we find that about one in ten of the rural slave population towards the end of 1796 was either wholly or partly incapacitated.<sup>20</sup> This must have seriously limited its productive potential, particularly in view of its unfavourable age-structure. In fact, only one fifth of the slaves were valued at 2,000 livres or more, the lowest price paid for an unseasoned field hand. As table 4 shows, Lepkowski and others who point to plantations where the number of slaves scarcely declined<sup>21</sup> forget that during the five or six years that slave imports had virtually ceased the mature had grown aged, while the rebellious and able-bodied were supplanted by babes in arms. Probably no more than 40% of the slaves were physically fit field hands.

When we realise that, of a sample of 15,500 slaves, nearly two-fifths were over 60 or under 15, that one tenth were classed as entirely worthless, that one in ten of the total population, one in seven of the adults and one in six of the men aged between 15 and 49 were sick, disabled or dying, we gain a considerable insight into not only the physical limitations of plantation slavery but also into the 'loyalty' of those slaves who chose not to rebel.

(ii) Treatment and conditions. For too long, proclaimed General Whyte following the fall of Port au Prince, had the slaves of Saint Domingue been the playthings of the deceitful Civil Commissioners. Henceforth, he announced, they were to enjoy under honest and straight-



forward British rule ... 'les bienfaits d'une vie consacrée à l'industrie'. The British, it appears, were in no doubt as to what slaves were for. They would be protected by the law against cruelty, Whyte stated, and all runaways who came to Port au Prince within a week would be pardoned, unless guilty of murder or insurrection, but thereafter all who were found armed would be executed as traitors.<sup>22</sup> As will be seen, however, the question of how to regard the slave who bore arms could not be settled so simply. Although black prisoners often were savagely treated, at this very time Whyte was negotiating with the chief Dieudonné, hoping to use his men as mercenaries, and in the Artibonite the British were actually buying back from the plantation slaves the guns and sabres they had acquired in the previous two years.<sup>23</sup>

Exactly how far the conditions of the slave's life changed under the occupation is not easy to say. One can identify certain influences at work but probably the discrepancy between the law and its enforcement, and the variations between one plantation and another, were as great as in earlier times, if not considerably greater. Marriage between slave and free was very swiftly forbidden, and, rather spitefully, public prosecutors were authorised to seek to nullify existing contracts. Manumissions, in theory, became restricted to slaves who had performed a notable public service, such as the betrayal of a conspiracy, and in October 1795 the Conseil Privé decided to forbid all manumissions, at least temporarily, in whatever circumstances. However, Governor Williamson remained open to persuasion in given cases and we still find after this date planters freeing their mistresses and coloured offspring in their wills or banding together to insist that a certain local commandeur be rewarded with his liberty. Sometimes, freedom was made conditional upon serving three years in the maréchaussée.<sup>24</sup>

Also in the autumn of 1795, the large number of 'ostensibly free' but unemployed blacks living in Port au Prince became the subject of a complaint by Colonel Murray. He insisted they were a danger. The Conseil Privé, however, replied this was a delicate issue and that it was far safer not to enquire too closely into their legal status. This also seems to have been the attitude of the Ancien Regime administrators, to judge from the account of M. Fouchard, who argues that these marginals had long been very numerous in the colony.<sup>25</sup> The urban blacks were a privileged sector among the slaves, and not just as regards their freedom of movement and, presumably, higher standard of living; right until the end of the occupation, successive administrations held



back from drafting them into the army, despite pressure from the military. Domestic servants and artisans, though some had been used as soldiers by the Port au Prince extremists and later by Sonthonax, they seem to have been reluctant soldiers and sceptical of Republican promises of emancipation.<sup>26</sup> Like the slaves of le Cap, they had remained close to the whites for most of the Revolution, and living in such proximity and with a high degree of interdependence, both groups, it seems, were mindful of each other's interests. Many whites, moreover, otherwise destitute, depended on the earnings of two or three of their slaves who hired themselves out in the towns. It was because of them that the urban capitation was not collected until 1797 and the same reasons probably applied to recruitment. According to the police law of 24th June 1794, unemployed blacks and runaways had to be denounced to the authorities within 24 hours of their discovery but, evidently, this was not taken seriously, though the penalty was corporal punishment.<sup>27</sup>

The same law also prohibited the sale of alcohol to slaves and forbade their playing games or even sitting at a table in the cabarets of the capital. Each slave had to carry a pass bearing his age, name and profession, which his master was to renew every four days, and those caught carrying a weapon, or just a stick, were to receive 20 lashes. Slaves were forbidden to rent dwellings and had to obey a 9.30 curfew, half an hour before that of the whites. Like soldiers and seamen, they were barred from trafficking with jewellers and goldsmiths. This was an effort to prevent thefts and the movement of stolen property, which were prominent features of urban life. Even bulky goods, left unguarded on the wharves, tended to disappear, and easy pickings were to be had in the empty houses of Port au Prince. Just as town slaves were said to raid the gardens of the blacks on the nearby estates, earning their enmity, it was supposed that plantation slaves, evading the night patrols, committed much of the larceny in the capital. The volume of crime, combined with martial law, caused so much overcrowding in the prisons that in January 1796 Governor Williamson set up a cour. prévôtale to deal summarily with such cases. It took a hard line and hangings were apparently frequent. Although it was abolished a year later, the police chief, de Buissy, was known to act without reference to the courts where blacks were concerned. This laxity, however, could sometimes work both ways. When a slave belonging to the Captain of the Port killed a sailor in a waterfront brawl, the matter was ignored.<sup>28</sup>

On the plantations, we hear of at least one instance of gérants being court-martialled - they were also Chasseur officers - for killing



the commandeur of the estate they managed.<sup>29</sup> Yet, when slaves were whipped to death, the law was never invoked, said Lieutenant Howard. He implied, however, this was not a common occurrence and opined that soldiers and thieves in England were whipped more severely. On the other hand, he also described the grim situation on certain large estates, where the cruelty of the planter evoked a sullen apathy among the slaves, which in turn led to punishments that were unheard of in Europe. Moreover, the behaviour of the lower class whites repelled him, as already seen, some of them boasting when drunk of the number of blacks they had shot.<sup>30</sup> Nonetheless, the lieutenant's overall impression of slavery was a favourable one, and he concluded that once protective legislation was introduced guarding the slaves against wilful injury, they could be considered better fed, housed and clothed, and less worked, than any European day labourer. This was not an unusual reaction among visitors to the West Indies and, as Howard's ideas were initially anti-slavery and as he was aware of the overtly cruel aspects of the system, his testimony merits some consideration. At the time of writing he had spent some 14 months in the colony, mainly in the Saint Marc/Montrouis area, but he had also made a few trips through the plain of Arcahaye, as well as to Port au Prince and Mirebalais. His experience, therefore, was shallow but he had probably seen conditions at their worst. One might ignore as myopic or uninformed his opinion that, as most plantation blacks had been born and brought up as slaves, slavery itself did not embitter their lives, and his admiration of regulations regarding communal provision grounds and their periodic inspection by government officers may also have been naive. However, his observation of physical conditions is less easy to dismiss.

The plantation slaves' day, he reported, started at 5 or 5.30 a.m. and they worked until 8 a.m., when they broke for breakfast. This lasted half an hour, but was sometimes dragged out until 9 o'clock. Dinner was at 1 p.m. and lasted one or one and a half hours, and the working day ended at 6. This might suggest that working at night had become unadvisable, or perhaps Lieutenant Howard never saw a sugar estate in crop-time. On every plantation, he said, clearly meaning sucreries, there was a large hospital and the slaves were well cared for. No master, Howard noted, would let his slaves carry the sort of loads English city porters bore, for fear of injury. The children, in particular, he thought well fed. More or less every hut had its pigs and chickens, and usually two or three goats, which provided milk. On Sundays and public holidays, the slaves worked in their own gardens. They were forbidden, it seems, to wear shoes, bare feet being the badge of slavery



but on market days, the women would dress up in the finest linen, wearing petticoats of muslin worth 15 or 18 shillings a yard, gold earrings, and handkerchiefs costing three or four pounds each. One might guess, therefore, that, to afford such finery, the slaves can have eaten precious little of their poultry and drunk little milk. Even so, one gets the impression that, in straitened and difficult circumstances, the planters were paying more attention to their slaves' well-being.<sup>32</sup>

More than ever before, however, Saint Domingue's plantations were in the hands not of their owners but of managers and attornies, to whom paternalism had little to offer. It was almost axiomatic that on absentee estates, through neglect or overwork, the slaves suffered, and in wartime it was practically impossible for an absent owner to exercise any supervision. In the present circumstances, moreover, all losses could be conveniently blamed on les brigands or easily covered up,<sup>33</sup> while, as workforces diminished in strength, the temptation must have been to drive the slaves harder. Perhaps an even less favourable trend was the leasing out of absentee estates, for leasing had always engendered short-term, wasting policies on the plantation and consequently had been rare in the colony. James Esten, who leased three estates in Arcahaye, had long-term plans but these themselves involved working the slaves hard. In the ten months he leased the Imbert plantation, instituting a programme of repairs and replanting, as well as harvesting, he lost 9% of the workforce, - 14 maroons and 4 dead.<sup>34</sup> One would not be surprised, in fact, given the example of the British West Indies in the 1820s, to find that, as time began to run out for the slaveowners, a hard-driving ethos became widespread in the occupied zone.

Yet, though a plausible scenario, this does not seem to have been the case, and for a variety of reasons. Lessees of absentee property were at least in theory made responsible for any losses they caused and the Esten case might easily be explained by political developments (the Republican capture of nearby Mirebalais), while the number of deaths that occurred, even in a young, acclimatised workforce, actually seems rather low. Many planters and most gérants and économes, we have seen, intended to remain in the colony after the British left, or take their slaves away with them; such interests obviously ran counter to a policy of maximum exploitation. Above all, the British took over, not the slave system of 1789, but that of late 1793. From early in the Revolution, Debien has noted there was a tendency towards stricter surveillances of the slaves but also greater liberality as regards their



material well-being.<sup>35</sup> Then, the disruption of the years 1791-93 brought spasmodic rebellions, periods of idleness, bargaining between whites and blacks over conditions, and finally Sonthonax's reforms culminating in emancipation.<sup>36</sup> Even in the plain of Arcahaye, we find in 1793 workforces denouncing their masters or gérants to the municipality and generally standing up for themselves; 'on ne peut leur faire aucun châtiment', it was said.<sup>37</sup> La Grand' Anse, it is true, experienced much less disruption, but one may doubt that even there the large-scale arming of slaves would have been undertaken without some mollification of the slave regime. Such evidence as exists of conditions under the occupation, when the blacks of the North and South were living as free men sometimes only a few miles away, certainly suggests that the whites of the British zone were at pains to keep their slaves bien disposés.

Apart from the observations of Lieutenant Howard, one discovers that in the first two years of the occupation the baron de Montalembert distributed over £400 (Jamaican) 'to the deserving Negroes to encourage and dispose them well towards the British'.<sup>38</sup> This may have referred to certain 'brigand' chiefs, but more likely it meant the head drivers of the Cul de Sac. The commandeur was a crucial figure on any estate, and on several in both Arcahaye and the Grand' Anse we find the driver had been freed, and in two cases was paid a salary of 600 livres.<sup>39</sup>

On the Montbazon plantation, after the raids of February 1798, the manager distributed 25 portugaises to its loyal workforce. Though critically short of hands, it was apparently never worked on Sundays.<sup>40</sup> This was also true of the Maulévrier plantation in the Matheux, where around 1792-3 the manager began making extra issues of food and clothing, (though no more than the Code Noire prescribed, one notes), and persuaded the slaves to establish gardens of their own on the estate, allowing them two free hours at mid-day, as well as Sundays and holidays, and every now and then an extra free day. This was not intended as an economy, for he purchased from the slaves, in addition to any mules they raised, their maize and beans, which he then distributed as their weekly ration.<sup>41</sup> For these slaves, at least, this was a new departure, a new independence and prosperity. However, as the manager's intention was to keep them on the estate and isolated, they were also forbidden to leave, as were strangers to enter. There and elsewhere, it appears, maroons found it difficult to get very far without being betrayed by a reward-hungry slave neighbour or being caught by a patrol.<sup>42</sup> The pattern would seem, therefore, one of extra handouts and tighter surveillance. But what of the working day?



Lepkowski, pointing to an estate where output greatly declined but the number of slaves did not, has suggested that under British rule the pace of life on the plantations probably slackened.<sup>43</sup> This may have been so, but the argument is fraught with difficulties. As table 4 shows, an estate might suffer little overall decline in numbers and yet lose in six years fully half of its young men. At the same time, in the productive areas of the occupied zone, - Grands Bois, the Grand' Anse and the plain of Arcahaye, - it is by no means clear that output did decline, and it may well have increased, though not because the slaves were working harder.<sup>44</sup>

On the other hand, it is fairly certain, given the circumstances and the state of most plantation buildings and hedges, that little repair work was undertaken in this period, and on the sucreries there is some evidence of a tendency to continue harvesting ratoons, so as to avoid the demanding and time-consuming business of planting new canes. This was undoubtedly the situation on estates that were leased.<sup>45</sup> Programmes of improvement, moreover, must have been few, and, considering that on the Maulévrier plantation construction work had previously occupied at least one third of the atelier's time,<sup>46</sup> this may similarly have represented on some estates a notable reduction in work-load. However, this has to be off-set against frequent corvées for the military and the proportionately greater demands made by the daily round when the strongest men in every workforce had been lost to the Chasseurs or the Republicans. On the Dumoulceau estate in the Cul de Sac, for example, we find most of the 70 and 80 year olds, though nominally worthless, working in the fields.<sup>47</sup> Labour was at a premium. But so, one imagines, was moderation. In truth, it seems impossible to say if on the sucreries of Arcahaye or the caféières of the Grand' Anse slaves really were working 'comme en 1789'<sup>48</sup> or not.

In the Cul de Sac, however, there is no doubt that the slaves' lifestyle had radically changed. During the entire occupation, it seems, very little cane was either planted or cut and most ateliers cheerfully let the cane-fields become choked with weeds, like the roads that ran through the plain. By the time the British left, there must have been on its abandoned estates men in their twenties - though few enough - who had never cut cane in their lives, as well as children who had done no work at all. With the exception of a few plantations, the 'revival' of 1796-97 probably amounted to little more than clearing up operations and the collecting of forage.<sup>49</sup> The slaves, however, were not necessarily idle nor left in peace. Some were drafted into



the military camps to minister to the troops. Most, it appears, ran away. The remainder were exposed to attacks by raiders, especially if they attempted to work in the fields, and as elsewhere, they were liable to be killed, abducted or have their huts burnt down.<sup>50</sup>

Nevertheless, left to their own devices, they were turning to their gardens and livestock, perhaps building a new ajoupa, and fashioning a new life. Malenfant described the industry with which they set about adding to their jardins nègres, planting vegetables along the plantation paths and selling them to buy clothes and bananas. Only a few old Africans, he said, roamed the forests looking for firewood, which they would exchange for rum.<sup>51</sup> Changes were taking place that already looked far beyond the Revolution. As on the Maulévrier estate in the Matheux, or the Foäche plantation at Jean Rabel, imperceptibly, a peasantry was being born.

(iii) 'Bons nègres', 'Brigands' and Peasants: Black Responses to the Revolution

At the end of August 1791, a few days after the great revolt began in the Plaine du Nord, some Spanish soldiers guarding a hilly part of the frontier met with a solitary negro, armed with a lance, a machete and a pair of pistols. The insurgents, he told them, were not concerned with the Spaniards but in the French part not a white was to be left alive. The rebel leaders were promising their followers, it was later reported, that once the whites were eliminated they would divide up the land.<sup>52</sup> This, one might say, was the authentic voice of the Haitian Revolution, a direct expression of its most profound aspirations. It represents, however, only one extreme of a broad range of slave responses to the events of the 1790s. While this brief encounter was taking place on the frontier, plantation slaves on estates in Quartier Morin were fighting off the rebels and thousands more were fleeing into the hills and forests, and into le Cap, to avoid the conflict. In the West, Port au Prince went up in flames, but the slaves of the Cul de Sac did not move. Meanwhile, after two months, the disillusioned rebel leaders, were trying to negotiate something very close to a return to the status quo. This does not mean, of course, that their followers would have accepted it, but then again, the rebels, both in the North and, when they belatedly appeared, in the West, showed themselves willing to traffic in slaves and, later, to co-operate with the Spaniards in defending the slave regime.<sup>53</sup> Hence, even among those who themselves refused to remain slaves, the commitment to overthrowing the system, as opposed to opting out of it, was to say the least ambiguous.



In Saint Domingue, and in presumably any slave society, there had always been slaves who plotted and slaves who betrayed the plotters, inveterate rebels and devoted servants and, it would appear, a mass in between who accepted what apparently they could not escape. If the slave system was scarcely founded on consent, it did not survive through brute force alone. Whips and bayonets and warships engendered attitudes of submission which themselves took on a life of their own.<sup>54</sup> To overcome them, it required not only a demonstrable weakening in the power of the master class but also courage, imagination and energy, a bold appraisal of how things might be, and literally - in view of the tens of thousands who perished - a determination vivre libre ou mourir. However, as liberty resides very much in the eyes of the beholder, the political options that confronted the plantation slave were not simply for or against revolt. The slave who took up arms at this time and headed for the hills may have been embarking on a war against slavery, or he may have been seeking, like many before, the lonely and less militant life of the maroon. Either way, as we have noted, he might become a sort of bandit mercenary, a type not uncommon among 'primitive rebels',<sup>55</sup> self-serving, employing a conservative, 'Church and King' rhetoric, perhaps demanding certain reforms in the system but also willing, at a price, to defend it. On the other hand, plantation blacks, left largely to their own devices on abandoned or semi-abandoned estates, might effectively cease to be slaves and take a different, though similarly circumscribed, view, feeling little desire to leave their huts and gardens to risk death when they were already as free as they wished to be. In the Republican North they might even rebel against being recruited.<sup>56</sup> While some might regard this state of independence as a temporary wind-fall, and later submit to a revival of the plantation routine, others, having become accustomed to being masters of their own time, might fight to the death rather than be coerced back into the fields, either as slaves or as paid cultivateurs. Revolutionism and militancy, in other words, did not necessarily go together. Nonetheless, we can say that from 1791 onwards the Dominguan slave had basically three alternatives:- he could remain a slave; he could become a soldier, or a peasant.

Slavery, said Toussaint Louverture, was borne by the blacks only so long as they knew no better state. Now free, he wrote in November 1797, they would die a thousand times rather than again be enslaved.<sup>57</sup> Just when slavery became intolerable in the minds of most of Saint



Domingue's blacks, it would be foolish to try and say. However, a succession of significant events may be singled out as having progressively both weakened the structure of white power and encouraged a revolutionary mentality among the blacks. The slave regime having been undermined by the reformism and, more particularly, by the revolutionary disturbances of the years 1784-90, the great leap forward obviously came in the autumn of 1791 with the outbreak in the North, though it also demonstrated, one should note, that rebellion would bring starvation, torture and mass slaughter. The defeat of Governor Blanchelande a year later by the rebels of les Platons, Garran-Coulon mentions, was of great inspiration to the slaves,<sup>58</sup> although the geographical area of the revolt was then shrinking. Meanwhile, it was becoming apparent that European troops sent to the colony were dying like flies, and with the whites abandoning the countryside, even the non-rebellious were tasting the fruits of freedom. In the spring of 1793, we have noted a new militancy in the West followed swiftly by the profound impact of the war, which soon led the French, Spanish and eventually British to compete in offering guns and freedom to part or all of the slave population.<sup>59</sup> The hitherto powerless began to sense their power. Sonthonax's decree, some said, was felt like un coup d'électricité.<sup>60</sup> The Spaniards immediately found to their cost they could not control the blacks they had enrolled, and in a single day in July 1794 these curious counter-revolutionaries would massacre more than twice as many whites as had been killed in the first month of the rebellion. More than this, at the beginning of 1794 some of the Auxiliaries and unarmed plantation blacks had taken a stand against Spanish attempts to restore slavery and it was behind this movement a few months later that Toussaint Louverture finally and for a variety of reasons flung his weight.<sup>61</sup> On the one hand was the Government of France, declaring all the slaves to be free, on the other was an army of blacks, no longer rebels, now explicitly committed to making black emancipation a reality. The French, like the Spaniards, became almost entirely dependent on black troops, and the effect of their victories and increasing expertise hardly needs stressing.

When the mulatto coup of March 1796 was foiled, there was no doubt that an ex-slave had become the most powerful man in Saint Domingue. It was also at this time that Toussaint began extending his influence into the West Province. In February, in the mountains behind Port au Prince, Dieudonné was overthrown when trying apparently for the second time to carry his band over to the British, and some months later the famous Dokos maroons, who had also flirted with the British as well as



traded with the Spaniards but otherwise remained aloof, similarly decided to open relations with Toussaint.<sup>62</sup> These were important events, not simply from a military point of view but also because they indicate the development of a mature revolutionary-consciousness among the smaller rebel bands and were major steps towards the re-unification of the colony under black rule. (Much of the anarchy that swept the Republican zone in 1796 was itself attributable to a violent determination never to see slavery restored). The final dispersal of the reactionary mercenaries in the north-east early in 1797, brought both movements significantly closer to fruition, and made the remaining slaves of the occupied zone appear archaic anomalies.

How, then, had they responded to this mounting military and psychological pressure? Laborie, writing at the beginning of 1797, thought that in six years their numbers had been cut by over 50%, but that while the submissiveness of the remainder had been somewhat eroded, he considered it amazing that it persisted at all.<sup>63</sup> Although by mid-1795 almost every estate had lost at least some slaves,<sup>64</sup> Laborie's figure of 50% seems rather high and suggests he was unduly influenced by what he saw in the Cul de Sac. Not all the slaves missing, of course, were insurgés. Six years without slave imports and the normal rate of natural decrease could have accounted for about half of these losses. In the first four years of the revolt, 12,000 slaves from the colony as a whole had been taken to the United States,<sup>65</sup> and more left in 1796. Others were in Jamaica. Some of those missing, according to the whites, had been kidnapped or forced to join those they referred to as les brigands. Many had been killed; mostly in the act of rebellion, no doubt, but some also in fighting the rebels. Among the rest, there appears to be a basic division between those who had actually revolted, usually before the British had arrived, and those who slipped away, generally later and by themselves, perhaps to join the insurgents, perhaps to hide in the towns or to live independently in the mountains. Wherever they went to, most are classed partis pour les brigands.<sup>66</sup>

Table 5, based on the more detailed of the inventories of absentee estates drawn up between September 1796 and February 1797, gives an idea of the range of losses in the plain. The Bellanger plantation, it was noted, had suffered most of all the sucreries of Arcahaye. Its 45% can therefore serve as an undoubted maximum figure for that region's losses. In the Cul de Sac, the plantations of Croix des Bouquets seem to have survived better than those of Port au Prince, where 14 sucreries had an average of only 63 slaves each. In the Grand' Anse the recorded losses were only a few per cent.<sup>67</sup> Surprisingly, the Maulévrier



caféière in the Matheux<sup>68</sup> was mentioned as having suffered considerable losses which appear to have been around 40%, (though one should note that before the Revolution the atelier had had a very high death rate).

Such indications are useful and help to compensate for the absence of information in most of the inventories. The data are far from satisfactory, but one might hazard the guess that, by 1797, losses amounted to well over a half in Port au Prince parish, well under one fifth for Arcahaye and the Grand' Anse, and somewhere in between for the other occupied districts.

A clear distinction needs to be made between those areas where production had been maintained almost without interruption, (La Grand' Anse, Arcahaye, Mirebalais and Grands Bois), and areas where the plantations had known long periods of idleness and disorder, (Port au Prince and Croix des Bouquets, Léogane, the Artibonite). In the latter, revolts broke out within weeks of their falling to the British. The former do not seem to have experienced any notable insurrection during the whole of the occupation. This distinction, however, needs to be qualified. Firstly, even in the Grand' Anse, with its small, mainly African (and therefore not very homogeneous ateliers), and its exceptionally high ratio of whites to blacks, higher than ever during much of the occupation, there was no shortage of conspiracies. While it was said that the arrival of the British forestalled a rebellion on the south coast, we find four months later that some more plots had been uncovered, and this was mentioned in such a matter of fact way that might suggest they were not unusual. Others come to light en passant, which, doubtless like these, had been betrayed.<sup>69</sup> On the other hand, one cannot assume that the revolts in plains of Léogane and the Artibonite and around Port au Prince were necessarily caused by the plantation blacks baulking at attempts to get them back into the canefields and boiling houses. The whites claimed that each of the three conflagrations was the work of existing rebels raiding from the mountains and intimidating the slaves still on the estates.<sup>70</sup> This was probably more true than false. At Léogane, great numbers of slaves, instead of joining the attackers, crowded into the town and, remarkably, even after Rigaud had driven out the whites in October, the planters tried to send back an envoy to speak with the slaves and so maintain them, it was supposed, in obedience to their absent masters - an extraordinary episode.<sup>71</sup> The Artibonite rebellion in February did far less damage, and, though the plantation slaves clearly joined in in large numbers, estate work was resumed and the plain continued in production until



Toussaint's coup in September. Having been infiltrated and revolutionised, all the ateliers in the plain then rose once and for all, although the mountains behind Saint Marc remained unaffected, and in the town the domestics fought alongside their masters.<sup>72</sup> In the Cul de Sac, the ascendancy of de Jumécourt, acting through the young voodoo priest Hyacinthe, had been broken by 1794, but apparently there were signs that slaves, having been forced to search nomadically for food, were returning to their estates when the devastating attacks began from the mountains of Rivière froide.<sup>73</sup>

As to the identity of the insurgents, the structure of the population left on the plantations provides few unequivocal indications, as so many variables are involved. The exceptional predominance of females among the coloured slaves points clearly towards heavy losses among their male counterparts, although at the same time the plantation mulatress, almost always a domestic, frequently a menagière, was arguably the least likely of all slaves to take to the hills.<sup>74</sup> The negative sex ratio of Africans in their twenties is itself eloquent but scarcely enlightening. More certain evidence is provided by some 35 inventories which together list 575 slaves missing of their own volition. To these I have added four jailed as mauvais sujets. In all, 10.7% were children, usually babies taken by their mothers or 10-14 year olds who had fled by themselves. Of the adults, 36% were women. Men, therefore, accounted for less than three fifths of the rebels and runaways, which shows the limitations of using the sex ratio as an index of slave losses. However, the amount of variation between these few examples shows the folly of trying to generalise. In the Grand' Anse, few losses are recorded and these were as a rule solitary marrons. In Fond Baptiste all 183 of the well-fed but hard-driven slaves of the Andrault caféière had disappeared.<sup>75</sup> Even in the same parish, many different factors might influence the behaviour of an atelier during the Revolution other than its actual composition, - treatment in the past, presence of the master, attitude of the head driver, security of personal possessions, food supply and shelter. Perhaps the most important, certainly as regards runaways during the occupation, was the proximity of the plantation to some wooded no-man's land or to Republican territory, and hence its exposure to enemy incursions. This might explain the two vague patterns we find. Where losses were few they were on the whole male. However, where a mass exodus was possible the proportion of women was close to that of the men and this in turn entailed losses of children. The sex ratio in the plain of Arcahaye was actually lower than in the Cul de Sac, not because



TABLE 5. LOSSES OF SUGAR PLANTATION SLAVES THROUGH  
REBELLION AND DESERTION c.1791-96

% of the original  
'atelier' missing by 1797

Total Men Women Children

Port au Prince<sup>1</sup>

Damiens	25	30	22	16	Since June 1793. <sup>2</sup> Another 13% were dead
Bellevue Desmornays	35	56	41	7	
Laboulle Desmornays	63	75	66	33	

Croix des Bouquets

Baugé	17	18	21	10	Since September 1792. Another 13% were dead.
Lemeilleur	12	29	4	0	
Jouanneau	15	30	16	0	
La Judonnerie	73	85	65	63	
Laserre	14	24	10	0	
Michau	28	21	57	0	
Noailles	1	6	0	0	
Ségur	16	33	13	0	

Arcahaye

Bellanger	45	?	?	?	Either absent or shot.
Borderie	1	1	0	2	
Descac	6	?	?	?	
Foucault	3	10	0	0	Since February 1794.
Guilhem	5	?	?	?	
Labarre <sup>3</sup>	17?	40?	0?	0?	
Raby <sup>3</sup>	30?	?	?	?	About another 10% had been killed.
Vergès	3	7	0	0	

- 1) The information for this parish was taken from P.R.O., T 64/228. For the others it derives from A.N.O.M., Absentee Inventories.
- 2) However, it seems that over a third of the original workforce had already been lost in the first 18 months of the revolt.
- 3) The 1791 figures have been estimated from data in Debien, Comptes II, 20, 43, and Léon, Marchands 148. As it was assumed that male births were balanced by natural mortality, the Labarre losses are probably understated.



it had lost more males, but because it was so difficult to escape from; few females could have got away successfully. In the Cul de Sac, however on an exposed plantation like Labouille Desmornays, the insurgés included various infants, invalids, and even an Ibo woman ninety years old.<sup>76</sup>

While the statistics of slave loss are not in themselves easy to interpret - is it more surprising that 20% of a workforce rebelled or that 80% did not? - one wonders what sorts of distinctions really lay behind the terms used, marrons, insurgés, parti pour les brigands. Marrons were usually solitary (and Africans), while insurgés went in groups. But should not all maroons now have been classed as rebels? According to the ideologues of Haitian history, the maroon had always been a militant; 'flight led to fight', as Manigat says.<sup>77</sup>

Debien, however, who disagrees, points out that planters continued during the early years of the Revolution to distinguish marrons from brigands, and must have had some reason.<sup>78</sup> The situation, in fact, was probably even more diversified. De Charmilly claimed, in August 1795, that three-quarters of the blacks living in the forests were there because they feared being killed by the rebels if they stayed on their plantations.<sup>79</sup> Though a long way short of the truth, this was surely not a complete fabrication. At any rate the maroon/rebel distinction was still commonly made during the occupation. Planters, in fact, complained that 'discontented' slaves who had merely left their master 'for a time' were immediately classed by the British as deserters to the Republicans and when they returned were wrongly seized and enrolled in the black corps.<sup>80</sup> Petit marronage, in other words, persisted in the midst of revolution. But for some historians, this was not real marronage anyway. Lieutenant Howard, however, was familiar with the phenomenon of bands of 5-10 blacks living in the forests around Saint Marc and Montrouis. They were referred to as runaways not rebels, and were not considered dangerous.<sup>81</sup> As to what relations they had with the larger, armed bands, one can only guess.

The majority of the insurgents were of course Africans, who formed the majority of the adult population. On the other hand, it was the creoles who by and large took control of the revolt and became its chief beneficiaries. One would like to know, however, if the African, brooding over his lost freedom in an alien world, was more prone to rebel than the creole, born into slavery but more receptive to the new ideas coming from Europe, and possessing more 'pretensions', as the whites saw it. M. Houdaille has suggested that desertion was less common among the Africans, but the sample he used was not very



large.<sup>82</sup>

Of the 517 adult insurgents mentioned above, 57 were listed as creole and 93 as African. As the districts concerned were highly creolized, this seems to indicate substantially greater losses among the latter, but when the origins of so many of the slaves was unknown much uncertainty remains. The only really detailed inventory we possess suggests that the contrast was not so much between creole and African, as between the creole women and the rest of the slaves.<sup>83</sup>

Of particular interest is the behaviour of the specialist slaves, - drivers, domestics and artisans. Although their positions of relative privilege gave them some stake in the preservation of the system, their social skills and status within the slave community meant that they also had most to gain from the revolution. To judge from the absentee inventories, drivers were almost as common among the rebel males as among those who stayed behind. They were men accustomed to command and possessed a good knowledge of creole, and sometimes of several African languages. While examples exist of commandeurs who fled their estates almost alone,<sup>84</sup> it seems that very often their influence was decisive in deciding the fate of a plantation. The revolt in the North is said to have been organised by some 200 commandeurs, (though Boukman himself was apparently a postillion), and in the Cul de Sac in 1792 it was the head drivers that the whites negotiated with. On the other hand, we find drivers in the North rewarded with medals, or executed by the rebels, for keeping their estates intact and in production.<sup>85</sup> Hairdressers and valets, on the other hand, became more expendable in times of revolution. Though enjoying close relations with their masters, they were perhaps for this very reason - the Figaro syndrome - less likely to mythologise them and accept their hegemony, and if one may generalise from a couple of examples they were not infrequently mauvais sujets.<sup>86</sup>

As for the relative losses of specialist and other slaves, only two inventories provide any details.<sup>87</sup> On one estate 75% of the male domestics and artisans and 88% of the male (79% of the female) field slaves were absent; on the other, 40% of the male domestics and artisans, 70% of the male field slaves. As the specialists included more aged slaves than the nègres de jardin, it seems that elite status did not do very much to reconcile the male specialist to his lot.

What, then, can we say of the slaves who remained on their plantations, those whose subordination, if diminished, Laborie found astonishing? Firstly, they contained a high proportion of old and sick, even before the heavy losses of 1797. Secondly, the impact of



the Convention's emancipation decree had probably not been immediate. Sonthonax's power to abolish slavery was viewed with some scepticism and the British, it seems, encouraged the belief that the Republic would one day execute all slaves who were illegally freed by the Commissaire and bore arms.<sup>88</sup> However, by the summer of 1795 it was said that the blacks were well-apprised of the true situation in the Republican zone. 'Believe me, they are a very knowing people,' Governor Williamson informed Whitehall, 'and it takes a great deal of art and management to keep them in the right way.'<sup>89</sup> 'Art and management', we have seen meant extra économies on the plantations and extra hand-outs and free days for the slaves to tend their gardens. The slave's garden and his hut, his pigs and chickens, were obviously an important focus of attachment. This was an aspect greatly stressed by Colonel Malenfant in 1796, and M. Debien has brilliantly evoked in two studies the way in which slaves were slowly transformed into peasants.<sup>90</sup> Not simply because of their thatch roofs were slave huts frequently targets for the firebrands of raiders, whose strategy, it seems, was as much to disperse the labour force as to destroy the means of production. It was perhaps the absence of individual gardens and the sense of belonging they brought, (as well as of the free time that went with them), that caused the mass departure from the Andrault caféière mentioned above (p.290). The high losses of the Maulévrier estate, too, might be connected with its late development of jardins nègres.

Although little is known of the slave family in Saint Domingue, social ties must have been another stabilising factor, and the persistence of petit marronage or short-term absenteeism underlines, in a way, that it was not simply coercion that kept the slaves on the plantations. However, social bonds were not necessarily broken by making a break for freedom. Solitary children were sometimes snatched by bands of raiders that apparently contained their mothers, while some took their young children with them when they fled. Among small and polyglot groups of insurgents one also notes couples of the same age and ethnic group.<sup>91</sup> The following paraphrased extracts from the letters of a Cul de Sac gérant give an idea of the to-ing and fro-ing that could take place as a plantation was steadily destroyed. The year is 1797.

6 February. When the workforce was out cutting wood, raiders burned a slave hut and ran off when the manager appeared.

2 March. Charles, aged 16, absconded with the manager's horse and the blanket of a Chasseur camped nearby.



31 March. Charles returned a few days later, then left again with his mother, aged 50, his two brothers, aged 10 and 8, and a rifle and cartridges stolen from the guard house.

19 May. Pierre, a mulatto aged 18, joined the maroons.

10 July. Raiders burned a thatched grand' case and the hospital.

12 November. Two young boys returned after marooning for over a year.<sup>92</sup>

Whether voodoo ceremonies continued under the occupation to be practised in the Cul de Sac is not known. It seems to have been an important element in the uprisings in the plain, and participation had been severely punished by the whites.<sup>93</sup> However, those who would see voodoo solely as a vehicle for rebellion must remember that for nearly three years the houngan Hyacinthe put his influence and connections at the service of the planters and was one of their main allies.<sup>94</sup> Moreover, it was said of de Jumécourt, the leader of this party, and a man who stood well with the commandeurs of the plain and even, it appears, some chefs de brigands, that he owed his reputation as 'le blanc qui connoit tout' to the fact 'qu'il s'est fait recevoir vaudoux'.<sup>95</sup> This, of course, was the opinion of his enemies. Yet, their denunciation of him as 'l'ami des nègres et l'ennemi du reste' and the picture they paint of his affable relations with blacks and his pretence of great influence over them is a useful warning against polarizing opposites. For example, what is one to make of the behaviour of the rebel chief Samson, who towards the end of 1797 began sending to his former mistress in Port au Prince presents of fruit and vegetables from her abandoned estate? In January 1796, when he and the other rebels in the mountains south of the Cul de Sac came to the special markets held outside the capital, '(il) ne daigna même pas d'informer de sa maitresse; et dans toute occasion manifesta de la plus grande insolence.' Now, however, he assured her of his devotion and that he had been exerting his influence on the chiefs Mamzelle and Pierre Cyr to protect her plantation.<sup>96</sup> Only the grand' case was destroyed.

This appears to have been a matter of political manoeuvring, and anyway it is quite understandable that an ex-slave might take a subtle pleasure in doing a favour for his former master or gérant, - like Toussaint Louverture and Bayon de Libertat. Nevertheless, it does seem clear that slave loyalty, or black acceptance of the ideology of white rule, was along with fear, inertia and varying calculations of self-interest an important element in keeping slaves slaves. Planters began arming selected slaves in 1791, and on some estates, we have seen, whites and blacks continued to fight alongside one another right up to



the evacuation,<sup>97</sup> In 1794, as Republicans gained control of the southwest, those slaves that had previously been armed held out at Cap Rouge and refused to serve the Republicans, while those on the estates, it was said, seemed disposed to accept their masters back.<sup>98</sup> Conspiracies were denounced and maroons caught and handed over by fellow blacks. On the Montbazon estate in June 1797, four male slaves were tied up by raiders and carried off thirty miles it was said, into the woods. Yet, they escaped and returned,<sup>99</sup> Though we know little about relations between plantation blacks and the rebels, 'abducted by brigands' was clearly not always a euphemism. In the Cul de Sac, it was believed the rebels had contacts on every estate, who tipped them off and helped them lay their deadly ambushes.<sup>100</sup> On the other hand, we hear of slaves being killed by raiders, and their livestock and gardens were surely not spared the insurgents' depredations. Mullin and Debien have written of the resentment created in the slave quarters by the marauding of maroons, and one can see that such resentment might be reciprocated by the fighting men with contempt.<sup>101</sup> Plantations where the slaves huts had been burned down but most of the workforce stayed put<sup>102</sup> testify to this hostile clash of different mentalities. Although distance, social and spatial, tends to lend enchantment, it was doubtless among the specialist slaves, and in the grand' case in particular, that the whites came closest to achieving hegemony. Servants and drivers, we find, handled large sums of money for their masters and some even ran estates single-handed. The Lacour plantation in les Cayemittes was managed for at least two years by its driver, a forty year old Chamba named Hyppolite. According to his planter neighbours, he was better than the best white gérant and in 1797 they demanded he be freed.<sup>103</sup>

Until its final hours of existence in Saint Domingue, slavery as a social institution remained as complex as ever. With the Republican successes of the spring of 1797, the loss of slaves from the British zone greatly increased and notably from Arcahaye, where, General Simcoe observed, sugar estate work had become 'peculiarly odious' to the blacks.<sup>104</sup> When Christophe's army broke through into the plain a year later, some 300 slaves decided their moment had come and fled to the Republican lines. Others, however, muskets in hand, withdrew with their manager and book-keepers inside their plantation blockhouse and remained slaves. Some companies of Chasseurs deserted; others fought with a suicidal bravery few colonists were willing to display. From the interior of the Grand' Anse, Lieutenant-Colonel Hallam's 71 slaves



(34 of them men) marched cheerfully to the coast, he said, ready to accompany him to Jamaica.<sup>105</sup> Most, it is true, had come from Jamaica in the first place, but this could not be said of the 90 slaves who, de Montagnac claimed, followed him freely to the British colony. In all, 1,600 adult and adolescent slaves were evacuated to Jamaica, 700 of them males. Many perhaps went under duress, but the impression they made there was of being 'an innocent, loyal and attached people'.<sup>106</sup> On the other hand, it was also said that, at Jérémie when the evacuation was announced, the hitherto passive slaves became extremely insulting, gathering in small groups to discuss their coming freedom and at night singing Revolutionary songs. The chevalier de Montagnac, in fact, about to take ship, was abandoned by his trusted valet, who had accompanied him to America over 20 years before. He was now, he told his master, as free as he was.<sup>107</sup>

(iv) From Slave to Soldier. 'Armer les nègres', observed a colonist in 1776, 'c'est vouloir détruire les maitres'. 'If you train them to arms', argued de Charmilly twenty years later, 'to that pride, that equality, and familiarity necessary in the military life, all the sistem of the colony is lost'. 'C'étoit la déchirer de ses propres mains'.<sup>108</sup> Although the use of slave-soldiers began in various parts of Saint Domingue in the autumn of 1791, it was always regarded as a dangerous experiment and was only adopted under the occupation because there was no alternative. Before the British arrived, some 170 armed slaves had been freed in the Grand' Anse (presumably Jean Kina's corps) and during the summer and autumn of 1794 other units were raised in the Artibonite and Cul de Sac. At first, recruiting was confined to slaves volunteered by willing planters or those taken from forfeited or absentee estates. Then in June 1795, a levy of 1 slave in 15 became compulsory and regiments were raised in all parts of the occupied zone. The institution, therefore, strongly favoured by military men, was able to establish and prove itself gradually, leaving its opponents unable to take a stand, and the refusal of Whitehall to allow the manumission of recruits after five years' service was simply ignored.<sup>109</sup>

Around 1,000 strong in June 1795, by the end of the year the black corps numbered some 4,300 including officers, who were all whites, and by the end of 1796 they contained about 6,700 men of whom just over 5,000 were ex-slaves. In July 1798, there were perhaps 6,000.<sup>110</sup> At no time were there anything like the 9,000 or more mentioned by Pauléus-Sannon and others, and while they may have



suffered a high mortality rate,<sup>111</sup> it seems highly unlikely that the total number of black troops raised even approached the 12,000 reported by Malenfant.<sup>112</sup> The great majority of these men served as Chasseurs in corps about 800 strong. While all the officers were whites, affranchis were allowed to enlist as sergeants and occasionally as sergeants-major. The rank and file were armed with a musket and a machete, and wore a red jacket, coarse trousers and a round hat with a panache. Some corps, like Dessources's Volunteers, also had companies of horse. The men received British pay and rations, and shared equally with white and coloured troops in the distribution of prize money. Care was apparently taken they should not feel discriminated against. Their distinctive characteristics - their machetes and the sergeants' lack of a sword and breastplate - were functional. Moreover, when hospitalised they were allowed full pay, whereas white troops, in theory, were not.<sup>113</sup>

Practically all of the black troops were Africans; that is, four fifths of those supplied by sucreries, who were usually in their thirties, and nine tenths of the recruits from coffee plantations, who were mainly twenty years old. Owners and managers were allowed to choose which of their able-bodied slaves should make up their quota and they naturally preferred to keep their best workers. The least favoured 'nations' - Mina, Mozambique, Moco - were unusually prominent in the corps and accounted for almost a fifth of the Africans conscripted, though nearly a third were Congoes, as in the population at large.<sup>114</sup> Towards the end of the occupation, planters tended to supply newly-imported slaves specially purchased to fill their quotas. However, the original levies were to a large extent trusted slaves whom it was thought safe to arm and eventually manumit. Others were former rebels who had changed sides, apparently attracted by the terms of service. And some were genuine volunteers, for in the panic at the end of 1795 colonels were briefly permitted to recruit any slave who presented himself, irrespective of his master's wishes. Although the response was apparently disappointing, there seems small doubt that for the young fieldhand enlistment in the Chasseurs was a very attractive proposition. It was said, in fact, in March 1796, that half of the Chasseurs were former rebels who had changed sides, apparently attracted by the terms of service.<sup>115</sup>

Money, a full stomach and a prestigious uniform: the attractions were up to a point those that caused young males in any poor and



oppressed social group to become soldiers. However, for the slave at the bottom of the plantation hierarchy the appeal must have been unusually great. 'A soldier's ration', wrote Governor Effingham when black corps were first being discussed in Jamaica, 'will be a great temptation to them'.<sup>116</sup> Ten or twelve ounces of meat, sometimes fresh, a third of a loaf of bread and a gill of rum, together with fresh vegetables purchased out of a wage of six pence (later eight pence) every day:- this represented a substantial improvement in diet, and comparative wealth besides. The uniform, too, for men who normally spent six days a week half naked and, moreover, who prided themselves on their Sunday best, must have seemed singularly attractive, while the transition from bare feet to shoes was itself pregnant with symbolism. For, above all, military service meant freedom, immediate freedom from the plantation and, eventually, the status of a free man. This was guaranteed, furthermore, not by shadowy authorities born of revolution, but by the planters and a king. Being the traditional sources of power in the colonial world, they projected a certain security, along with a comprehensible ideology of legitimacy and hierarchy that was decked out in the usual trappings of flags, medals and ceremony. In the distribution of medals to their slaves, the planters had displayed since 1792 an uncharacteristic liberality, and the scarlet tunic, of course, was not just a flamboyant item of clothing but, in Jean François's words, *l'habit du Roi*.<sup>117</sup> Each black corps had a chaplain who was instructed not only to inspire his charges with the love of religion but also to end each prayer with three shouts of Vive le Roi! and each service with 'God save the King' (apparently in Latin).<sup>118</sup> As for the regimentation, discipline and flogging, these were nothing new; slaves adapted well to military life.<sup>119</sup>

To the climate and terrain, they were already adapted, and this was their great strength, though 12% were regularly hospitalised. Able to survive on only water and bananas, they were capable of 'an infinitely greater degree of fatigue' than white troops and were powerful runners, whom Europeans could catch only on horseback. 'La guerre de ce pays', wrote Belin de Villeneuve, 'doit se faire avec les jambes. C'est la troupe qui marchera ... la plus vite qui aura tous les succès'. (For this reason, officers had to be young creoles, he said; badly-chosen émigrés were like 'des tortues à la tête des lévriers'.)<sup>120</sup> Williamson praised the Chasseurs' intimate knowledge of the mountains and passes and General Whyte agreed, in the forests and mountains black troops were 'formidable'. However, he pointed



out, they enjoyed no special advantage as regards the rain; there was nothing they would not do, he said, to avoid getting wet.<sup>121</sup> Like their opponents, they fought by surprise and ambush, and we have seen them infiltrating dances in enemy camps and manoeuvring silently through the mountain forests. Yet, they could also be bold in attack and, as already noted, storm gun batteries on the tops of mountains and launch frontal assaults up steep slopes with incredible speed.<sup>122</sup> In the plains, and particularly under artillery fire, the black troops were less effective and this seems to have been especially true of the Republicans. According to Lieutenant Howard, on the rare occasions they drew up in regular order, they never stood their ground after the second or third discharge.<sup>123</sup> Evidently they lacked the training that enabled European troops to stand still and be killed.

When attacking, however, the Republican blacks displayed a bravery that was only too often suicidal. Throughout the occupied zone, whether 'nus comme des verres de terre' like Toussaint's men in 1795, or fully equipped and regimented as in 1798, they were cut down by the hundred, year after year. And yet, their numbers grew and at the same time, as was frequently noted, their skills in the arts of war.<sup>124</sup> Perhaps the most famous action was the attempt to storm Fort Churchill described above (p. 211), when Toussaint's troops, finding their assault ladders too short, stood on one another's shoulders trying to scale the walls, while for fully half an hour their dead piled up around them. They were said to be his elite corps; Desrouleaux's demi-brigade, which attacked a month later, cut much less of an impression<sup>125</sup> - or was it, as Toussaint used to claim, his presence that made all the difference? Of their style of fighting, we learn disappointingly little. They tended to emerge suddenly from the woods at dawn and attack en masse, scattering if resisted to snipe from behind bushes and rocks. This exploitation of the terrain, of weight of numbers and the use of surprise would seem to have been general. In the Cul de Sac by 1797, bands of raiders 60 or 70 strong, sometimes mounted, would appear without warning to attack a convoy or plantation and then melt away again into the woods, to the frustration of their pursuers.<sup>126</sup> A graphic description of the difficulties of mountain warfare has been left by the vicomte de Grouvel, which apparently refers to the expulsion of Dieudonné's band from the Morne l'Hôpital in 1796. The blacks not only appeared in great numbers, firing from rocky eminences and from behind trees, but further unnerved their opponents by beating drums, howling and whistling, and trumpeting eerily on conch shells.<sup>127</sup> Was this how Toussaint's men fought, too? Or did the acquisition of a uniform imply a certain



Europeanisation?

Another fascinating glimpse of Republican troops in action is provided by Captain Colville, who took part in the attempted landing at Tiburon in October 1793. While trying to row ashore, the British boats floundered and were then thrown into confusion by a hail of musketry from the beach that was both powerful and disturbingly accurate. 'The enemy', the young captain ruefully admitted, 'were ... seen to turn up their backsides in derision at our ineffectual fire. They seemed to take their time with great coolness and either retired into the wood or threw themselves on their bellies or back to reload - some even fired in these positions. Either their pieces or their powder must have been of a quality superior to ours to give them such an advantage over us in the range of shot - their balls even going through the sails of the transport a mile distant'.<sup>128</sup> In view of the location, these were more likely to have been former free coloureds than ex-slaves. Trained in the maréchaussée, accustomed to hunting, the gens de couleur already had an established reputation as sharpshooters. From what we know of the plantation blacks, on the other hand, they did not turn into marksmen overnight<sup>129</sup> and there is no reason why they should have done. Given the constant references in Toussaint's correspondence to the need to conserve powder, his soldiers can have had little opportunity to practise.<sup>130</sup> On the other hand, the constant admonitions themselves are probably connected with an exuberant tendency, noted among several rebel groups, to fire off their weapons 'pour s'amuser'.<sup>131</sup> Before the campaign of 1798, in fact, we find Toussaint issuing orders against insubordination and the desertion of posts 'pour piller, marauder ou fuir et se cacher dans les bois',<sup>132</sup> which suggests that the problems of moulding his levies into an army were not yet entirely overcome.

As for the war at sea, we know that armed barges, powered by oars and crammed with fighting men of all colours, were the terror of becalmed shipping. Although they seem to bear at least a passing resemblance to the marauding naval brotherhoods that were then operating in the Bight of Biafra,<sup>133</sup> they were, according to Laborie, mostly manned <sup>by</sup> petits blancs who had fled the British zone.<sup>134</sup> They were thus a creole institution, and perhaps not so much revolutionary as throwbacks to the 17th century, for they preyed on Republican and neutral shipping as well as British. For this reason, Rigau clamped down on them towards the end of the occupation.<sup>135</sup>

Returning to the black troops in British pay, one corps in



particular stands out, that of Jean Kina. Though not quite the only corps commanded by an ex-slave,<sup>136</sup> its chief was one of the dominant figures of the occupation, the equal of Toussaint Louverture, some said, if with a good deal of exaggeration.<sup>137</sup> Jean Kina was an African from the Laroque-Turgeau estate in the bay of Carcasses, near Tiburon. It was a cotton plantation and its owner apparently resided in the colony.<sup>138</sup> One might suppose, therefore, that the type of slavery he experienced was of the small-scale, patriarchal kind, and where the work-load was relatively light. Middle-aged at the time of the occupation, he had probably lived some twenty years in Saint Domingue; on the probable conservatism of creolized Africans, we have already remarked. Furthermore, the extremely isolated position of the plantation, on a very rugged stretch of coast far from any town,<sup>139</sup> suggests it was among those least troubled by the turmoil of the Revolution. Hence, it is not so surprising that it was this region that produced the planters' ideal 'bon nègre', a fearless defender of royalty, slavery and white supremacy. He first emerges from the anonymity of the plantation in 1792, leading a corps of nearly 200 slaves freed by the white masters in the conflict with the free coloureds. 'Ce nègre', it was said, 'est craint absolument de tous les brigands et non brigands, mulâtres et nègres, son aspect les fait trembler'.<sup>140</sup> A man of fierce temper, he appears to have shared in that mentality, common to white and slave, which classed the free coloureds as objects of envy but not respect. He is reputed to have refused several times to accept his liberty,<sup>141</sup> though one may well doubt it, for as early as 10th May 1792 we find the Colonial Assembly and Governor ratifying his manumission, already effected by the commune of Tiburon, with his master's consent. Two months later the Assembly awarded him a medal and a pension, later fixed at 300 livres (half of the rate for free coloureds), though he never received it.<sup>142</sup> In January 1793, the column commanded by him and the chevalier de Sevré was almost solely responsible for the capture of the inaccessible rebel stronghold of les Platons, where five months before an expedition led by the Governor had been routed.<sup>143</sup> As the southern planters waited for an attack by the Civil Commissioners, his corps was increased in strength and at the beginning of September the Conseil de Sûreté de la Grand' Anse began paying him a pension of 500 livres per month in lieu of providing food for his family (which had been costing rather more).



At the beginning of the occupation, we find him at les Irois, attached to Morin Duval's army. 'He is a well looking, middle aged man of great fidelity', Captain Colville wrote, 'and has frequently refused the freedom offered him, conceiving his example of more effect on those of his colour in arms while acting apparently from the motives only of duty and attachment to his master. By a superior degree of activity and cunning and more courage than is generally met with in negroes, he has acquired great influence over them and under his orders they have remained uncontaminated by the neighbouring disaffected and in a bush fighting warfare peculiar to themselves have at different times a good deal annoyed them. Their appearance was as it may be supposed very grotesque - instead of Drum and Fife they used the Banger and Coromantee Flute, the musical instruments of their native country. Some had fire arms, others bill hooks fastened to long poles and plantation watchmen's hangers and were in general wretchedly attired in their osnaburgh frocks'. They were now, however, promised British pay and clothing, and as a first instalment, were immediately issued with shoes.<sup>144</sup>

The Grand' Anse whites stressed to the British the extent of his influence over the blacks, and Whitelocke and Williamson were careful to award him marks of respect. After the capture of Tiburon in February 1794, he was presented with a ceremonial sword. The following month he and his men distinguished themselves, when besieged by greatly superior numbers, by executing a bold sortie from the fort and putting their attackers to flight. He seems to have inspired an intense loyalty, for so incensed were his soldiers on this occasion that he had been wounded that they forced their prisoners, before killing them, to lick his wounds. 'The King has not a better friend', wrote Colonel Whitelocke in July, 'than Jean Kino'. His attachment to the whites was 'remarkable', his attachment to royalty 'as conspicuous as his Honour and Integrity',<sup>145</sup> His men were described as a 'Negro Militia', fluctuating in number between two and five hundred. This would suggest that only a minority of them had been freed, and when Williamson in September said he would put them on the same footing as the other black corps then raising in the Artibonite, he presumably meant they would gain their liberty after five years' service.

In December, however, the corps was decimated, when after a long bombardment it was forced to abandon Tiburon and make a desperate retreat through the mountains to les Irois.<sup>146</sup> Thereafter, his 'Volontaires' seems to have become a strange mixture of slave and free.



Apart from manumitted slaves, they also contained many anciens libres, some with property in the Grand' Anse and others, deported from Arcahaye and Saint Marc, whom he recruited in Jamaica on the pontoons of Port Royal.<sup>147</sup> While his men on night patrol occasionally tried to abduct slaves from plantations he began in 1796 to purchase Africans at his own expense, whose pay he then kept himself. In September, he was allowed to buy in Jamaica 37 'new negroes ... accustomed to a state of warfare in their own Country', whom the Government agreed to replace if killed. With Simcoe's reforms of the spring of 1797, the corps was divided into two companies, one of Chasseurs and one of gens de couleur, and in the final months of the occupation we find it split into three. It consisted of 148 rank and file and 46 others, 10 of whom were women or retired officers. As most of the men in the first two companies had a surname, one suspects that anciens libres, or at least manumitted slaves, then predominated. The second in command was a Major Schevenard, doubtless a 'Curaçolien', not uncommon on the south coast, but of what colour?<sup>148</sup>

Kina's importance after the fall of Tiburon became more symbolic than practical. He commanded fewer men and his corps was dwarfed by the new regiments of Chasseurs that favoured whites were allowed to raise. Having been transferred to Port au Prince, (where his officers lived in a derelict house until evicted to make way for a body of Chasseurs)<sup>149</sup> his corps ceased to play a prominent part in military matters. In the capture of Morne l'Hôpital, it was Dessources's and Depestre's corps that had the key roles, with the whole of the capital for an audience. Moreover, as a declared enemy of the free coloureds, (though now one himself), he had to contend with the power of Lapointe, who with Montalembert brought to an end his recruiting in the gaols, which anyway had created great alarm.<sup>150</sup> Mortality in his corps would appear to have been high. In a petition to George III dated 7th May 1797, he complained that, having commanded 450 blacks, he now had none and had to purchase forty to make up a company.<sup>151</sup> This was probably untrue, though of the 37 he purchased in October 1796 8 died in nine months. In June 1795, he had recruited 60 men in Jamaica and another 60 four months later, (although most of these were gaoled in Saint Domingue or seized by Lapointe). His ability to buy so many slaves, if obviously dependent on credit, suggests he was a man of some substance. He received a colonel's pay of some £40 sterling per month, and at the end of 1795 he began to draw his pension



from the Administration of the Grand' Anse. In December 1796, it was increased to 600 livres p.a. He had at least one personal servant.<sup>152</sup>

If Jean Kina was an exceptional figure, his mentality, such as we perceive it, was not atypical and may indeed have been common to the black Chasseurs in general. Whether it was rooted in a certain experience of slavery, or simply shaped by the tempting opportunities of military life and the ideology that went with it, thousands of Dominguan blacks became armed and loyal defenders of the slave regime. In colonial societies, it is not an unfamiliar phenomenon: sepoys, askaris, Salou Scouts ... In March 1796, Belin de Villeneuve wrote of the Chasseurs' 'extrême subordination et leur fidélité'. They knew, he said, they were much better off than the Republican troops.<sup>153</sup> General Maitland, trying to dispel the doubts of Governor Balcarres, called them 'inoffensive' and 'orderly' in the extreme; 'the only feeling I have known them to possess is panting to return to their old masters', though he added this did not apply to mulattoes and newly-arrived Africans.<sup>154</sup> Perhaps surprisingly, desertion in the black corps was almost non-existent before the defeats of 1797, and prior to the final campaign it was still less than among the white troops.<sup>155</sup> Those who did desert in 1798, according to Maitland, did not join the Republicans but told their officers they thought they were going to be sold and 'left ... with tears in their eyes'.<sup>156</sup> Certainly, several officers regarded the disbanding or abandoning of their regiments with considerable emotion, suggestive of an intense esprit de corps that cannot have been entirely one-sided.<sup>157</sup>

'Armer les nègres', therefore, did not mean the end of slavery, as Malouet and many others had at first feared. No black Chasseurs seem to have actually rebelled, though some at Mirebalais did pass information to the Republicans.<sup>158</sup> The British and planters, moreover, unlike a Confederate general of the next century,<sup>159</sup> found no real contradiction in slaves making good soldiers, at least none they could not easily rationalise.<sup>160</sup> Other problems, however, were posed by the slaves who took up arms themselves. Firstly, those who at the end of 1795 were permitted to enroll themselves in the Chasseurs without their masters' consent had considerably perturbed the Conseil Privé. A desperate measure, it shook the foundations of the colonial regime, it was said, and hence was quickly dispensed with.<sup>161</sup> The negotiations held with Dieudonné and other chiefs also created a sharp controversy between military and planter opinion. Could the Governor



recognise as free armed men whom colonists would still claim as their property? To treat rebels as free men, argued the Conseil Privé, and bargain with them in the market place as equals was a bad example, both for the loyal slaves and for the rebels, whom it would only make more confident. Such 'tolérance', they said, was 'humiliante pour les propriétaires et dangereuse pour la colonie'. Montalembert replied that it was strategically important and that it was pointless trying to treat the chiefs of armed bands as if they were still slaves.<sup>162</sup> Each argument carried weight, and in the event, both parties were willing to defer to the other, when Laplume's coup rendered the debate academic. The same problem had to be faced, nonetheless, every day, as regards the treatment of captured rebels. Having borne arms, could they safely be sent back to the plantations, or even to the chaîne du Roi? Was it fitting to accord them p.o.w. status and exchange them for white prisoners? Or should they all be killed, which after all was the traditional solution to slave rebellion? All three methods were used, though to what extent is not clear. It was a vexed question, particularly in 1794, when Laveaux seems to have threatened to give tit for tat. Commodore Ford replied that whether or not blacks were slaves was 'the Question at issue by the contending Powers' and still to be decided. 'I have no Enmity ... whatever to Men of any Colour', he said, 'on the contrary, I wish all men were as free as my thoughts on the Subject'.<sup>163</sup> What this meant, however, is hardly clear. Two years later, we find Belin de Villeneuve insisting that captured 'brigands' should not be sent back to the plantations. They should not be exterminated either, he said, albeit less forcefully, but enrolled as Chasseurs.<sup>164</sup>

Yet, once peace came, what would become of all these black soldiers? This was a question that troubled both Republicans and Anglo-Royalists. Colonel Malenfant thought they would happily settle down as estate workers, if their gardens and poultry ceased to be pillaged. Governor Williamson said they would want to re-enlist, if they were not already dead.<sup>165</sup> To an uncertain degree, both were proved right. Strangely enough, however, it was Colonel Jean Kina himself, who on the island of Martinique in December 1800 was to lead a revolt against the plantocracy, 'mangeurs de chaire humaine'.<sup>166</sup>



(v) The Free Coloureds. At the beginning of the occupation, free coloureds were extremely numerous in the British zone, far outnumbering the whites in the Artibonite, Saint Marc and Léogane and in the parish of Arcahaye, and probably equalling their numbers in Croix des Bouquets and Port au Prince. Their military importance, the wealth and education of their richest members, the beauty of the women and the great number unemployed in the towns, these were among the British soldier's first impressions of the colony. After the revolts of the autumn of 1794, however, and the plots, deportations and executions that followed, they bulked less large in the population. Although still numerous and though the acquisition of Mirebalais brought many more into the occupied zone, they are not easily visible through the medium of official correspondence.

They were a very diverse social group, as we have seen,<sup>167</sup> and it was apparently the wealthiest, slave-owning sector that was closest to the whites, while the men of small property looked to the Republicans.<sup>168</sup> The free blacks, however, may have been an exception. Earlier in the Revolution, they had allowed themselves to be manipulated by the whites into opposing the free coloureds proper, and under the occupation commentators like Malouet continued to advocate a policy of playing one group against the other.<sup>169</sup> While, like many others, expressing the strongest dislike of mulatto males,<sup>170</sup> Lieutenant Howard found the average free black 'a harmless, inoffensive creature', either very industrious or a 'complete vagabond', engaged all day in 'sleep, love, smoking and gambling'. Much less likely to have been born free than the mulattoes, many were probably runaways, affranchis sans l'être. Having made the transition from slave to free in their lifetime, their ambitions may not have been as great as those of other gens de couleur. Closer to the slave population, they may unlike poor mulattoes have favoured the preservation of the slave system, since from it derived what status they had. Equally, if the richer, lighter-skinned free coloureds were similarly anxious to assert their own claims to distinction the resulting alienation might well have made free blacks willing allies of the whites. Montalembert, hard on the mulattoes, treated the nègre libre Joseph Cazeaux as a confidant.<sup>171</sup> Whatever the reasons, at the time of the evacuation many more male free blacks accompanied the British to Jamaica than did mulattoes.<sup>172</sup>

Very much the majority of free coloureds, however, were women. While some of them got rich through prostitution, almost all, it was



said, were retailers of muslin and Madras handkerchiefs, which was a big business in the Caribbean. They dressed with style and taste, and were accounted 'much more elegant in manners and appearance' than those of Jamaica.<sup>173</sup> Nevertheless, they might still have to live several to a small house or even to a room, together with their children and perhaps their black mothers, too.<sup>174</sup>

Under the occupation, according to Laborie,<sup>175</sup> the free coloureds were treated better than under the Ancien Regime. This was both true and untrue. As within white society, existing social trends and tendencies were pushed to extremes. In some places and under certain circumstances, as Laborie said, gens de couleur were treated as equal with whites. Elsewhere, however, and on other occasions, persecution was as savage as in the worst days of the Revolution. Relations, we have seen, worsened in mid-1794, when the discriminatory article 4 of the Capitulation was registered as law, when slave free/marriages were declared null, and when the local Conseils on which some free coloureds served were abolished. The revolts that followed greatly strengthened the racist reaction. A policy of juste milieu, Billard claimed, was no longer possible; it was dominate or be dominated.<sup>176</sup> When Dundas argued two years later that the free coloureds had to be treated with equity, because their co-operation was vital, Forbes replied that they could never be trusted; they were incorrigibly deceitful, he said, and planned to kill all the whites.<sup>177</sup> However, as long as political institutions remained non-existent, the issue of racial equality could to some extent be glossed over; there was room for special cases and local variation. What was unacceptable in the Grand' Anse, was probably unavoidable in Arcahaye, where it is difficult to see that mulattoes could have been excluded from parish meetings, (which was apparently the case in the Cul de Sac). In fact, Williamson seems to have told Lapointe that the equal rights granted by the defunct Code Noire were still in force, since the Capitulation reactivated all previous colonial laws.<sup>178</sup> This was a transparent but convenient fiction. Among the destitute, non-whites were positively discriminated against; they received food rations but never cash payments, even if habitants. Whether, as soldiers, they ever served outside the corps specially reserved for them, either with whites or as officers in the black corps, is not clear, but in the Grand' Anse and in the Artibonite, some at first seem to have served mixed up with blacks in corps of Chasseurs.

Many were doubtless demi-libres, anxious to have their freedom ratified by military service.<sup>179</sup> In the Grand' Anse, however, the



free coloureds had never enjoyed the independence of those of the West. In Billard's words, they even contained a few 'bons sujets', or as Bérault Saint Maurice observed with a sinister scorn in January 1794, 'ils sont plus souples et plus humbles que jamais'.<sup>180</sup> Most, however, had already left Jérémie; and only a year later, following the loss of Tiburon, a rebellion seems to have occurred. Two hundred were arrested and their leaders executed.<sup>181</sup> This coincided with a mulatto plot at Saint Marc, itself betrayed by a mulatto.<sup>182</sup> Then in the autumn a crisis blew up among the anciens libres in the Chasseurs des Cayemittes. Already aggravated by arrears of pay, they seem to have become alarmed that they were being assimilated to the blacks in their corps and that they would lose their free status. There was talk of them going over to the enemy. Thereafter, it was recommended they be grouped separately in flank companies (du Roi and de la Reine) so as to preserve their ancien esprit.<sup>183</sup>

By denying them civil equality but protecting their rights as slaveowners, the British occupation had placed the free coloureds in a position of crippling uncertainty, that was all the worse for those who were perhaps already aspiring to be masters of an independent Saint Domingue. Both the Republican and British zones, we have seen, were constantly troubled by their wavering, plotting and tergiversation.<sup>184</sup> Just as the coloureds of Saint Marc spied for Toussaint, those of Petite Rivière spied for the British. Though Guyon and Reubel were agreed in driving the Spaniards out of Mirebalais, they then divided on who to replace them with. Families, like the famous Chanlatte and Savary, were frequently split. The free coloureds of Arcahaye and Saint Marc had many relatives in Mirebalais and the Artibonite, and this added of course to their political instability. In this respect, though much mistrusted, Lapointe was quite unusual. His godson, Gréfin, however, having been persuaded to admit the British into Léogane, declared he had been tricked when only 250 soldiers arrived, and as a result was arrested. Lapointe had him freed and brought to Arcahaye, but as he then called Lapointe a traitor, his godfather had him executed.<sup>185</sup> Despite this disunity, even so, we have also seen fear growing among the whites that the mulattoes were becoming a colony-wide political force, and extreme racists like Bérault Saint Maurice thought they were out to subvert the New World.<sup>186</sup> The resentment and fears the free coloureds had always aroused thus became magnified during the occupation and the white response became in some quarters yet more barbaric. It was a vicious circle.



The 1794 rebellions, as noted above, met with bloody retribution.<sup>187</sup> 'Envoyer au Cayes du Fond' became a grim metaphor for dumping mulatto bodies in the sea.<sup>188</sup> Thereafter, the free coloureds of the occupied zone had to live with a constant feeling of insecurity, always liable to be arrested if not murdered. Some whites, Williamson admitted, really wished to exterminate them.<sup>189</sup> The baron de Montalembert never left Croix des Bouquets on campaign without taking hostages from the mulatto population, and the Port au Prince police exercised a petty tyranny against them, exacting arbitrary fines and seizing their slaves at will.<sup>190</sup> Hundreds were deported to Jamaica. The worst persecution, however, took place in distant Mirebalais or beyond, on the Spanish frontier. For example, the Chasseurs of the vicomte de Bruges used to forage daily on the plantation of an old mulatto named Laserre, who, when reduced to his last patch of maize, finally resisted and in defending his house shot dead one of the soldiers. His property was burned to the ground in retribution, which in turn caused fifty mulatto soldiers to desert to the Republicans. In August 1796 alone, some forty free coloureds were murdered in this area, either out of spite or to appropriate their property afterwards; some of them were in Government service. In May 1797, Maitland reported that de Bruges had apparently been responsible for some 400 murders in the region, using the blacks of the maréchaussée or units of Chasseurs.<sup>191</sup> No wonder then we find in March 1796 over 800 free coloureds surrendering their camps in the Cahos Mountains without a fight. (It is interesting, moreover, that they consisted of only seven or eight families.<sup>192</sup> Although filial piety was sometimes mentioned as a characteristic of the mulattoes, the existence of these extended families comes as something of a surprise; as a political force, it must have made them the more feared). Apparently, the situation was at its worst under General Forbes, who spoke no French and was anyway too weak to discipline de Bruges. 'La différence de la langue de la puissance dominatrice élevoit entre elle et les opprimés un mur impénétrable pour la multitude; toutes les avenues d'ailleurs qui pouvoient les en rapprocher étoient occupées par les oppresseurs'.<sup>193</sup>

This raises the question of Lapointe's relations with his fellow free coloureds and his position under the occupation. Both are difficult to assess. According to many, he established his credibility with the whites only through his extreme severity to the gens de couleur of Arcahaye, so earning their enmity.<sup>194</sup> On the other hand,



he was referred to as the leader of the free coloured community, demanding for it equal rights; he was able to win over the mulattoes of Mirebalais, and he protected those persecuted by Montalembert and de Bruges.<sup>195</sup> Now, it seems quite clear that whites like Malouet and particularly Billard exaggerated the number of executions that took place in Arcahaye, and that Malenfant completely misrepresented the situation by claiming that the victims were white moderates or royalists. To depict him as a monstre, it would appear, was a way of justifying their prejudices. The Précis Historique, in fact, doubts he was party to the massacres and attributes them to the white planter Laval and his henchmen.<sup>196</sup> This, however, would suggest that his power within his own parish was considerably less than it otherwise would seem. Most probably, after the revolt at Saint Marc he had come under pressure from pro-Republican elements in Arcahaye and ordered or acquiesced in the murder of about 100 mulattoes and blacks.

Thereafter, his local position was secure, and the whites slowly ceased to mistrust him. At the height of the crisis, he had sent his family to Jamaica to prove his loyalty (but perhaps also to transfer funds there, just in case), and the Republicans had to admit he could not be bought.<sup>197</sup> Williamson praised his 'superior firmness'. The whites were careful to call him 'citoyen de couleur', said Malenfant, 'et les nègres n'osaient lui parler'.<sup>198</sup> With the capture of Mirebalais, his influence greatly increased and he began to dissociate himself from Montalembert with whom he had allied to oppose and overthrow the racist Côté Ouest party. Although Depestre's black corps may have been a rival source of power, like Rigaud in the South and temporarily, Villatte in the North, he achieved a high degree of local independence. He ran Arcahaye as an autonomous financial unit collecting taxes and building fortifications. British troops were very rarely stationed there, and he seems to have supplied the Administration with few military statistics.

Jean-Baptiste Lapointe was, interestingly, a griffe, darker than a mulâtre and without white parentage. He had been educated in France and may have been at some time an officer in the French Army. He was by all accounts an intelligent man who seems to have impressed all who met him. Even de Charmilly acknowledged he had 'real talents'. The mainspring of his behaviour is not difficult to locate. He owned over 400 slaves and by the end of the occupation four plantations whose value he estimated at four million livres. If this was an exaggeration, there is no doubt he was a very wealthy man. To cover his 'expenses' in calling in the English, he said, the local planters gave him a gratuity of £11,000, and when in 1798 one of his plantations was



burned, they again collected for him an indemnity.<sup>199</sup> According to Lieutenant Howard, he had by 1797 amassed £100,000, which he mainly had invested in English funds.<sup>200</sup> Although he lost most of his fortune during the evacuation, he was still able to buy a number of properties in Jamaica, where he eventually settled.



(i) The Establishment of 'l'Administration des Biens des Absents'.

When the British arrived in Saint Domingue, they found 'les propriétés du Pais mais très peu de propriétaires', it was said, 'et par conséquent beaucoup de propriétés à l'abandon et en péril'.<sup>1</sup> Absenteeism, long prevalent in so rich and unhealthy a colony, had been greatly increased by the Revolution, which had scattered colonists between Basle and Boston, St. Thomas and Scotland. Moreover, throughout the occupation, mulattoes and petits blancs continued to flee to the Republican zone, abandoning their property in the occupied parishes. Emigration was a constant factor, and Dominguan refugees in North America and Europe tended to prefer the security of their often penurious exile to the prospect of return to la perle des Antilles. Keeping a keen eye on events, though receiving personal news sometimes years out of date, most were determined to sit out the bloody struggle in the Caribbean.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to estimate what proportion of colonial real estate belonged to absentees at this period. Hard evidence obtains only for property sequestered because its owners could not prove residence in a friendly or neutral country. (Since some were sequestered unfairly and others exempted through bonus proof, and an unknown amount of property remained in the care of Curateurs des Successions Vacants, even this category is not exactly represented). Between 30 and 40 of Arcahaye's 48 sucreries were sequestered, though on 15 of these a co-owner was present.<sup>2</sup> Port au Prince parish also contained 48 sucreries. An official list dated October 1796 shows only 6 with all, or almost all, their owners present, 9 whose owners were in a friendly or neutral country (mainly the U.S.) and 14 with an owner presumed to be in France, though three of these had a co-owner present).<sup>3</sup> Of the remaining 19 we know nothing, being either beyond reclamation, British jurisdiction or simply the administrators' knowledge. Of the parish's 61 other plantations, we can be sure only that they were not sequestered, but most probably they were all abandoned. In the town of Port au Prince, less than a fifth of the inhabitable houses belonged to absentees, though at Saint Marc, where many of the houseowners were free coloureds, the figure was about a third.



Although the absentees who drew up the London Propositions had expressed considerable concern about this large amount of landed property left in the uncertain care of attornies, managers or tenants - 'mercenaires en général très infidèles' - <sup>4</sup> the final draft had not mentioned the problem. However, once the fall of Port au Prince had assured the British a firm foothold in the colony, an Act of Parliament was passed, placing in Government custody the revenue from all properties whose owners resided in enemy territory or could not prove otherwise. Those deemed 'Enemies of His Majesty' would be liable to forfeit their revenue. For the rest, some sort of safe-keeping was envisaged. The details were left to be worked out on the spot.

The Government's principal motive at this stage was to prevent colonial revenue reaching France and indirectly helping the Republic's war effort. But at the same time 'Enemies of His Majesty' could also be punished and other proprietors persuaded to leave France and return to the colony, (which some did, via a neutral port), to tend their property and join the fight to retain slavery. Griffiths is wrong to say that absentee property was sequestered to provide subsistence for the troops, but at least one administrator suspected that the Government intended 's'assurer dans les cas prévus d'une indemnité justifiée par les loix de la guerre'.<sup>5</sup> Portland's correspondence on the subject lays great stress on safeguarding the rights of the individual.<sup>6</sup> It reflects a genuine Whiggish regard for private property and, more importantly, a desire to advertise it to potential British subjects.

Happily for public relations, sequestration did have a more benevolent face. As Governor Williamson told the Conseil Supérieur, 'La sagesse et la prudence ordonnent le sequestre des biens des absents pour être administrés sous les yeux du G<sup>u</sup>vernement. Mais cette administration vraiment paternelle loin d'effrayer, sera un moyen d'assurer aux malheureux leur propriété et de les sauver de la cupidité des dépositaires infidèles, le gouvernement devenant par cette loi le dépositaire et le garant de produits'.<sup>7</sup> This was not all propaganda. Eager to extract all it could from the Customs dues of the occupied areas, and with an eye on the future, Pitt's ministry had every interest in preventing the dilapidation and ensuring the most productive use of property misappropriated, neglected or abandoned. The dishonest estate manager has always posed a problem to the legislator, and during the Revolution in Saint Domingue such men seem



to have had a field day. The army, too, was known to seize crops and building materials and make excessive requisitions from plantations without resident owners.<sup>8</sup> Government supervision might check not only private fraud but also clandestine sales of sugar and coffee to American ships. Ruined or abandoned estates also raised legal difficulties best solved by government intervention, while the problem also had strategic dimensions, since much of the property consisted of increasingly restless slaves.

Little could be done until May 1795, when Williamson finally arrived in the colony. At the first meeting of his Privy Council, he told its members their immediate priority was to frame a law concerning absentee property. After receiving his consent, it was published on June 27th. As it erred from Portland's instructions by sequestering all absentee property,<sup>9</sup> the decree had a short life and consequently will not be discussed here. The error was partly due to careless phrasing in a letter from Portland to Williamson,<sup>10</sup> which gave the Côte Ouest council scope to express vengefully the bitter feelings of the resident colon towards proprietors who watched from a safe distance the struggle to save the colony. The decree denounced the 'calculs egoistes, craintes pueriles, esperances criminelles' of those who had fled to the U.S. and elsewhere. It also envisaged penalising the returning absentee by withholding part of the accrued revenue of his property. It was, on the other hand, less severe than Sonthonax's decree on absentee property, which decreed the confiscation of property of those in enemy territory. The Conseil Prive regarded the prospective revenue as a welcome means of meeting current expenditure. By September, some 61,000 livres had been 'anticipated' in this way.<sup>11</sup> However, the decree created uproar in absentee circles and among enemies of the Côte Ouest. The Administration it set up was able to make no headway, paralysed (partly) by public knowledge that a new decree was necessary.

After several weeks' work by a new, more conservative Conseil Prive, this appeared on September 26th.<sup>12</sup> It was much more detailed than its predecessor and more favourable to both absentees and their representatives. Only if a property lacked a legally accredited representative was it to be sequestered by the Administration. Those with bona fide attornies but whose owners could not be proved resident in a friendly or neutral country were not to be taken over but to account to the Administrateur Principal every six months. If an attorney could prove both the legality of his procuration,<sup>13</sup> and that his employer was not living under French rule, the property would



be left alone. Wherever possible, managers should be kept on, because the safety of the occupied zone depended on the military service of this 'classe nombreuse'. However, representatives would be dismissed and taken to court, if their accounts showed that they had abused their position, while owners who should subsequently be judged enemies of Great Britain might suffer outright confiscation. All occupants of absentee property, therefore, were to present their credentials to their local administrator. Those maintained were to produce their accounts within one month. Sequestered property was to be inventoried, and either exploited directly through a manager or leased out to the highest bidder. All the revenue accruing to absentees of uncertain residence was to be paid over to a Receiver General until the merits of each case could be judged. Close relations of an absentee proprietor might receive assistance out of the revenue of his property or be made its attorney, should it lack one.

In addition, the administrative organisation was to be restructured. Laurent-Marie de Léaumont, now his brother was no longer on the Privy Council, lost the ostensibly lucrative post of Principal Administrator of the West. He was confined instead to overseeing the five parishes within the sénéchaussée of Port au Prince. Louis Vendryès, administrator of the parish of Port au Prince, likewise had his scope for commission reduced by the hiving off of the parish of Croix des Bouquets. In other respects, the decree followed that of June, which itself was based on the old colonial institution of Biens et Successions Vacants, which continued to exist alongside it.

(ii) Opposition to the Administration. The swift redundancy of the June 27th decree was not the sole reason for the meagre results it achieved. The new Administration encountered an immediate and deep-rooted opposition at all levels of colonial society that lasted throughout the occupation. In August 1797, Vendryès was to write, 'Ma place, en opposition avec tout le public, continuera à me susciter de nouveaux ennemis en pressant comme je le dois l'intérêt du Gouvernement, et à abreuver ma famille, mes amis et moi-même d'amertume et de chagrin'.<sup>14</sup> The opposition initially took the form of objections to the appointment of individual administrators and then of wholesale of the decrees. At least one man was gaoled for attacking an administrator in the course of his work. The hostility is not hard to understand. Given the precedent of the 1784-86 reforms, the absentee legislation was not



likely to please anyone. Essentially, it threatened interests in all classes of society.

In the towns the new decree meant an end to the rent-free accommodation for squatters and the tenants of absentees' houses, as well as the invasion of privacy entailed by an official inspection. Attornies, even not impostors, stood to lose their procurations if they began between January 1792 and the start of the occupation, and anyway they had little desire to have their accounts examined. One Dupré, attorney of the merchant house of Kercado, had been forging bills of lading, and though he had the audacity to claim that his employers 20,570 livres, he was found to have defrauded them of over 380,000 livres.<sup>15</sup> Plantation managers could be dismissed only if guilty of malversation. However, to a large number, this condition offered no security at all. Chapoteau, who managed an estate for the infamous Caradeux de la Caye, now in Philadelphia, was one of the many prompted to leave the colony by the establishment of the Administration des Biens des absents. Having sold the plantation's domestics, he was arranging to ship its copper cauldrons to America, when Vendryes asked that his passport be withdrawn.<sup>16</sup> The management of the plantations was to be based on the decrees of 1784-86, that had attempted to systematise plantation book-keeping and secure better treatment of the slaves. They had then created a storm of protest; now the managerial class had even more to hide. While the revenue and resources of an absentee estate had perennially offered its employees scope for speculation, the manager of a plantation that had ceased to make enough revenue to pay his wages was perhaps under even greater temptation, especially when contact with a distant master was extremely precarious and any loss could be blamed on les brigands.

Not only attornies and managers were at fault. Some co-owners, like the vicomte d'Allemands, appear to have profited greatly from their partners' absence,<sup>17</sup> while abandoned or negligently-supervised estates were prey to anyone willing to risk a foray into an often treacherous countryside. Slave huts and outhouses were known to be demolished and carted away. Timber was very scarce. Even mills were stolen.<sup>18</sup> Slaves, too, on absentee plantations were appropriated by neighbours, who, especially in the Saint Marc area, proved reluctant to reveal their presence.<sup>19</sup> Thus not all damage to plantation property was the work of the 'brigands'.

A rumour reached London late in 1794 that the magistrates of the Conseil Supérieur were seizing goods from absentee estates in anticipa-



tion of their salaries.<sup>20</sup> Though apparently untrue, it is indicative of colonial attitudes. Absentees had always been resented by less fortunate or more 'American-minded' colonists, and their opting out of Saint Domingue's revolutionary struggle increased this resentment. The Revolution, however, had also enabled a lucrative retribution to be enacted, and it is with this spirit of malevolent profiteering that the Administration clashed head on.

By the end of 1795, only the Grand' Anse and the towns of Port au Prince, Saint Marc and the Mole had been brought under the Administration.<sup>21</sup> Taken by the British in August 1795, Mirebalais and Grands Bois resisted until January 1796. In the meantime the coffee crop had been transported to the coast and shipped with probably little benefit to its owners and none at all to the Administration. At Croix des Bouquets, two administrators in succession failed to establish themselves, though finally successful in July 1796. Greatest resistance came from the well-preserved and immensely wealthy parish of Arcahaye, which held out until August 1796. Here public objections forced out the first administrator; the second resigned two weeks after opening his office and a third choice declined the appointment. Certain plantations in the parish were placed under the direct supervision of the Principal Administrator, de Léaumont, but not one of their occupiers sent him their accounts. Elsewhere, when accounts were examined, they were generally found wanting (débattu) and very little cash reached the Administrators.<sup>22</sup> Not surprisingly, then attornies and managers were reluctant to declare their credentials.



Such remarkable recalcitrance owed its success partly to the difficulty of communication in these darkest years of the occupation, and partly to faulty legislation and a defective executive. From September onwards, de Léaumont complained in a series of letters to the Governor in his Privy Council that the decree was being ignored to the detriment of Government policy, absentee interests and respect for the law (and also, he might have added, his own commission-based salary). No penalty had been provided for failure to present credentials, he repeatedly pointed out. As the Administration was 'toute française', he blamed the Conseil Privé for inaction rather than the Governor. Actually, Williamson, always distracted by the war, probably lost interest in such matters after October 1795, when he knew of his recall.

De Léaumont, much disliked by the Conseil Privé, seems justified in his complaints. He received no reply to his letters.<sup>23</sup> He brought the Dupré and Chapoteau affairs to its notice but it failed to have them tried in a higher court or to withdraw their procurations. In Dupré's case, they even accepted his nominee for replacement after fleeing the colony. Similarly, the Administration got little help from the military, who, especially in the Grand' Anse, granted passports to indebted individuals without giving the stipulated three weeks' warning for the benefit of creditors. The September 26th decree, he said, should be enforced properly or be abrogated.<sup>24</sup> Abrogation would at least end the dangerous struggle against authority and save the administrators becoming a financial burden on the Government. The implied suggestion that a minimum wage should be fixed, since commission on their meagre receipts was insufficient, was perforce adopted in February 1796. Few other adjustments were made until the whole Administration was reorganised in October.

Table 6 shows what was achieved in these first sixteen months. If such figures are far from impressive, the facts behind them are even less so. Because of the accessibility of urban property, it was in the towns that the Administration first got off the ground, and urban rents account for about one third of its total revenue. Absentee houses, particularly if empty, tended to be preferred for Government use. In the summer and autumn of 1795, Louis Vendryès and an assistant engineer carried out the unpopular work of valuation in Port au Prince. British officers initially refused them entrance to their lodgings, as Williamson had forgotten to inform them of the administrators' mission. It was characteristic of the way inefficiency worsened relations, always strained, between French civilians and British military.

On September 1st it was estimated that out of 145 (inhabited) absentee properties in the town, the 61 occupied by the Government had an annual rental of 286,000 livres, while the 74 others were valued at 175,000. The British had picked the best of the absentees' houses. Captain Young, Captain of the Port, was ensconced in a merchant's house worth 15,000 livres p.a. The



Conseil Privé, conscious that the colony was bound by the Capitulation to foot the bill for the occupation, tried several times to have the troops paid a lodgings allowance instead of using absentee property indiscriminately. It persuaded Governor Williamson to issue a decree to this effect but he never implemented it, probably for two reasons. Firstly, a lodgings allowance required specie and this was in short supply. Secondly, officers like Colonel Murray and Major Spencer tended to regard Port au Prince as British by right of conquest and absentee property as theirs to dispose of as they wished. 25

Not only British, colonial and émigré troops were lodged at public expense but also certain needy refugee squatters, who were occupying 28 small houses in September. Williamson demanded their eviction, but in many cases appears to have relented, having a ready sympathy for such casualties of the war. Also rehoused were houseowners evicted by the Government. The Government's bill in Port au Prince for this period ran to nearly 440,000 livres for absentee property alone. To save on specie it was paid into trust in notes of the Commissary General. Nearly a dozen of the houses when vacated by the troops evidently proved too derelict to attract more discriminating tenants, but nevertheless considerable repair work was financed out of individual rents. It accounts for most of the debit in Table 6.

Plantations and slaves, in Port au Prince parish, supplied a mere ninth of its revenue, and this itself is deceptive. Most of it came from the recruitment of 24 slaves into the Chasseurs, for which 2,000 livres were paid each. Although payments were supposed to be made to the managers or attornies of absentees' estates only if they possessed the local administrator's permission, apparently the money, (one third cash, two-thirds in bills drawable on Jamaica), often went to line dishonest pockets. The remaining revenue from the handful of plantations taken into possession at this time came entirely from the hiring out of their slaves.

In the other parishes a similar situation prevailed. At Saint Marc, 67 houses were leased by December 1795 but not a single plantation had been taken over. Its impressive revenue came from the sale of slaves, (569 in 1795), to the Chasseur regiments of Dessources and Cocherel. Black recruits likewise account for most of the Administration's revenue in la Grand' Anse, Mirebalais and la Croix des Bouquets, while the Mole produced only urban income. Three factors explain this paucity of revenue from the absentees' plantations: their physical condition, the military situation, and Government indecision what to do with them, compounded with the popular opposition already mentioned. The Administration des Biens des



Absents failed not merely to put them into productive use but to take more than a few into possession in the first place. This is understandable, at least in the Cul de Sac and Mirebalais. As long as the countryside remained unsafe, outlying plantations were difficult to visit, let alone live on and bring into production. It was in this situation that the Administration had to locate the absentee plantations and ascertain the whereabouts of their owners, to assess the competing claims of often bogus attorneys and then determine their suitability to continue. As already seen, the extracting of credentials and accounts proved a hard job. Matters were further held up by appeals against sequestration, disputes with the Curateurs aux Successions Vacantes and delays granted for procuring residence certificates, while the ease with which these were fabricated meant that time had to be taken to change the law. Special cases like that of the duc d'Orléans' plantation had to await consideration by the Governor. The Ingénieur du Roi was often too busy to assist in the valuation of property and the proclamation of martial law in December 1795 held up the granting of leases. However, the fundamental issue was: what to do with these plantations? Should the Administration try to exploit them directly, or should it lease them out, or just put the slaves up for hire? <sup>26</sup>

On July 28th 1796, the Governor seems to have decided to lease out all the slaves from the plantations that could not be defended. Up till then Vendryès had been pursuing such a policy in Port au Prince parish with the slaves of the Damiens plantation, 100 of whom he had assembled in the town. However, he now objected that slaves should be kept on or returned to their own estates now that the plain of Cul de Sac was becoming more safe thanks to the multiplication of posts in the plain and mountains. Significantly, he noted in a draft letter, (though later crossed through); that 'preservation not production' was the aim of the Administration.<sup>27</sup> This attitude, however, was probably dispelled by the arrival of irate letters from the Duke of Portland, as it became evident in Whitehall that Saint Domingue could not pay but a minute fraction of the spiralling costs of occupation. Of all the departments involved, the Administration des Biens des Absents caused most concern. Insofar as was consistent with justice to the individual, 'every advantage' was henceforth to be reaped from absentee property. <sup>28</sup>

It has been seen that over half the Administration's total revenue in this period was not regular revenue at all but came from the sale of slaves to become Chasseurs. At 2,000<sup>1</sup>livres each, they represented a net loss not only to their owners but also to the assets of the Administration and to the cultivable capacity of the colony. Though specialist slaves



were exempted from recruitment, the Chasseurs of necessity siphoned off the strongest part of the labour force.

Some two-thirds, then, of the Administration's gross revenue came from the Government. This pleased neither the economy-conscious ministry in London nor the administrators themselves, who received a low commission on Government rents. Additionally, as most of these payments were not made in cash, individual administrators often had difficulty in meeting current expenditure. Apart from in the plain of Arcahaye, which evaded the Administration's control for fourteen months, and la Grand' Anse, where 114 estates were sequestered, most plantations were still beyond its cogniscence and of those that were it would seem that only one was actually in production. Even where the Administration functioned best, in the Grand' Anse, plantation managers proved reluctant to hand over their revenues; after one year, they owed the Administration 110,000 livres.<sup>29</sup> The low yield of the Administration was the only complaint against it. The Conseil Privé, acutely suspicious of the administrators accounts, accused de Leumont of delaying the transfer of funds in his possession for the purpose of speculation. Such behaviour was encouraged by the illegal but general practice of paying rents in bills of exchange, and had been commonplace in Ancien Regime accounting in France and Saint Domingue. Certainly the tardiness in rendering account looks suspicious: Vendryes' account for 1795 was presented in August 1796, and de Leumont's general account for July-October 1796 in May 1797. Nevertheless, an examination of their papers suggests they had in fact little leeway for misapplying funds.<sup>30</sup> The fault lay with the occupants of absentee property.

(iii) The 'Régie Royale'. Even before Portland's criticisms were received, Lapointe and the Attorney-General de Cotte had proposed a scheme for leasing out the absentee estates of Arcahaye, which Forbes had shelved owing to the opposition it aroused and the pressure of military business. Around the same time, the racist extremist <sup>see</sup>Valentin de Cullion file returned to the colony from America. He wanted to the absentee policy being pursued by Sonthonax in the North adopted in the British zone. Instead of trying to ascertain the whereabouts of absentees and the validity or otherwise of their representatives' credentials, all absentee property should be sequestered and leased out.<sup>31</sup> The leasing of plantations had been very rare in Saint Domingue,<sup>32</sup> because the property always suffered by it, despite legal safeguards. Now, however, it seemed the only <sup>way</sup> to ensure that those running absentee estates would part with any of the revenue. Providing that commercial rents were charged, the absentees would benefit in the long run, and the Administration would have a valuable source of cash.

There was, however, considerable scope for administrative corruption, and it was this that brought together Lapointe, de Cullion and General Forbes's



influential secretary, James Esten. In August they had an ordonnance drawn up permitting them to farm out all the absentee estates in Arcahaye, which was then specially amended by instructions from Forbes. The whole project was opposed by the Conseil Privé and it was never registered by the Conseil Supérieur. The amendments enabled Esten to fix rents and choose tenants à l'amiable, not as previously stated, according to the highest tender and in the presence of a judge. Managers, moreover, were no longer asked for their past accounts. Being able to choose tenants, Lapointe claimed, was both prudent and just, since it meant that men long connected with an estate could be preferred over outsiders indulging in speculation. This, however, was not the only use to which it could be put, and it was not a policy that was always followed. Besides, the highest bidder would often be the man with most personal interest in an estate, as would later be found. In a single day, 34 sucreries and 33 caféières along with a number of houses and slaves were leased out for a total annual rental of 1.7 million livres. Esten, Lapointe and their agents were said to have taken at least as much in bribes from the lessees.<sup>33</sup> Estates producing 5/600,000 lbs of sugar or 150,000 lbs of coffee were let for extremely low rents around 30/40,000 livres or 20/25,000 livres respectively. As in the North, rents were generally put at between a sixth and a third of gross revenue, whereas even a half would have been considered much too small.<sup>34</sup> Public opinion in Saint Domingue and London was scandalised and factional hostilities were increased, but in October a Régie Royale was set up to apply the same methods to the rest of the occupied zone.

The plan was initiated by de Léaumont, who had decided to throw in his lot with Esten. The previous system had clearly failed and most of the Conseil Privé accepted that leasing was the simplest and best alternative. (Belin and Dulau d'Allemands, on the other hand, were not exactly disinterested parties, having been awarded leases in Arcahaye, and Belin also stood surety for Esten as a lessee.) The Conseil Supérieur offered no criticism; everything depended, de Ronseray remarked, on who was running the new administration. Contrary to the evidence of the Précis Historique, the Conseil Privé also approved Forbes's exclusion of disputes involving absentee property from the cogniscence of the law courts and his arrogating that jurisdiction to himself. Legal wrangles had cost the previous administration a lot of time and money. However, it was no reason for abandoning legal checks on the granting of leases; this did seem suspicious, the Conseil Privé observed. Forbes blustered to the Duke of Portland about 'some miserable legal forms' and looked rather guilty. De Léaumont retained his post, more mistrusted than ever, and Malouet d'Alibert, Malouet's nephew, was kept on as a receiver as before, though now merely a sinecurist, as receipts could easily have been paid directly to representatives of the Agent-General.<sup>35</sup>

To be formally taken into possession, absentee estates were visited by the local administrator together with a notary and three local habitants, who drew



up an inventory and agreed on the rental value. Such was the web of complicity involved, and in Arcahaye, the influence of Lapointe, that little trust could be placed in such safeguards. The leases followed standard forms, and required the tenant to supply two guarantors, forbade him to use the slaves off the estate, and stipulated that at the expiry date the plantation should be well provided with food and, in the case of sucreries, that a quarter of the canes should be grandes cannes. Any necessary repairs carried out would be reimbursed at the end of the lease. Some clauses were novel:- estates on which troops were billeted had to provide one slave for every 30 infantry and 15 cavalry, but also any extraordinary taxes could now be deducted from the rent.

Considering all the controversy aroused, one is a little surprised to find that the majority of the new lessees were the estates' previous representatives. In Arcahaye, where 15 absentee-owned sucreries were already under lease, Esten leased 15 to a resident co-owner, 3 to their manager and only 7 to outsiders. In the British zone as a whole, at least one fifth of the leases were granted to co-owners, probably slightly more to the absentees' attornies (or guardians if they were minors), and at least 10% went to men who, though possessing no formal connection with the property, were close relatives of the owner.<sup>36</sup> Of the remainder, most were local planters living close by. About a seventh overall were local military commanders. The records are not complete but fewer than 10% seem to have been British:- 4 merchants, 3 administrators, 1 soldier and the Jamaican planter, Henry Shirley, acting through Jean-Suzanne de Léaumont.<sup>37</sup> Esten himself leased three estates, or rather arranged for three minions to retrocede their leases to him. This did not add to his popularity. The properties were considerably undervalued, and when put up for auction in July 1797, after Esten's demise, they were re-let with increases in rent of respectively 60%, 114% and 306%.<sup>38</sup>

The Régie Royale had a short history. With General Simcoe's arrival the Conseil Privé came into its own. In March, it called Esten to account in person and in June the Régie was abolished. Some wanted all the leases to be annulled so as to restore confidence in the Government. Simcoe and Portland, however, thought it was more important to keep faith with the present lessees and only in cases where collusion could be proved in the fixing of rents were plantations re-leased, this time to the highest bidder. The new rentals were usually about three times as high as the old.<sup>39</sup> The administrators were placed under the direct supervision of the Conseil Privé and the Agent-General's department, to which they now had to transfer their receipts every month. All had to re-apply for their jobs after their accounts had been investigated. De Léaumont was sacked and de Cullion was replaced by Malouet d'Alibert, whose sinecure was abolished. Esten made a timely resignation. Accounting procedures were standardised. In Port au Prince, rents were revalued to



bring in an extra 20,000 livres p.a. Although this represented an undervaluation of only 7%, we find certain influential figures like the baron Santo Domingo having their rents tripled. At the other end of the scale, the likes of veuve Millet 'sans moyens', who had not paid any rent for two years, were now evicted. Even so, of the capital's 120,000 livres of rent arrears two-thirds were considered unreclaimable.<sup>40</sup>

It was only in the occupation's last year, therefore, that the great resource of absentee property began to be efficiently exploited, and even then it was handicapped by the artificially low rents established by the Régie Royale. They came to some 3.1 million livres, just over half deriving from 31 sucreries in the plain of Arcahaye and 31 caféières in the mountains behind. About 10% were urban rents, mainly from Port au Prince, and the 113 estates in the Grand' Anse were leased for 828,700 livres.<sup>41</sup> Hence, though it considerably increased Government revenues, it was never as important as the Customs duties.

In spite of the reforms, the administration of absentee property continued up till the end of the occupation to be a subject of bitter complaint. About 25 proprietors in Britain tried repeatedly to have the sequestration order lifted from their estates, though very few succeeded, usually because they did not possess their title deeds, it seems, or because they did not send a proper certificate of residence. A letter of recommendation from Grenville or Portland was not acceptable. General Whyte said there was little point in the whole business, if it did not force absentees to return to the colony, since their managers were growing nothing but fodder and pocketing the proceeds. Nevertheless, even when they did return, most were not allowed, in contradiction of the September 1795 decree, to re-possess their properties. The Government, General Maitland said, needed the money, and he did not feel inclined to act otherwise.<sup>42</sup>



TABLE 6. THE ADMINISTRATION OF ABSENTEE PROPERTY RECEIPT AND EXPENDITURE

(i) July 1795-October 1796

000s livres coloniales

	<u>C</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Port au Prince	723	218	504
Arcahaye	0	0	0
Grand' Anse	774	119	654
Croix des Bouquets	145	21	123
Mirebalais	72	45	27
Mole	178	24	154
Saint Marc	1,562	256	1,306
Other	18	3	15
	<u>3,386</u>	<u>600</u>	<u>2,786</u>

(ii) October 1796-Evacuation

Port au Prince	475	85	390
Arcahaye	1,872	24	1,847
Grand' Anse	824	14	809
Croix des Bouquets and Mirebalais	163	18	145
Mole			c.130
	<u>3,334</u>	<u>141</u>	<u>3,321</u>

Notes: Both tables are based on the accounts and correspondence in P.R.O. T 64/223-226B. The figures for Saint Marc are estimated from the data for 1795 only. The figure for the Mole in table (ii) is derived from the half-period total in WO 1/68, 283. The Grand' Anse figures in table (i) derive from T 64/224/4, with the addition of 388,000 livres receipts for 194 recruits, though it was not actually paid in this period, and of 88,020 livres, added to both credit and debit columns, which was the amount of expenditure and commission deducted before receipts were credited and not entered as a debit in the original account. This was doubtless the sort of variation in accounting procedures that irritated the Conseil Privé so much.



CHAPTER XIII      'LIKE THE LEAVES IN AUTUMN': DISEASE AND MORTALITY  
AMONG THE BRITISH TROOPS.

(1) Yellow Fever in the West Indies. In the Caribbean and on the North Atlantic seaboard, 1793-98 were years of notably high mortality, apparently caused by a 'pandemic' of yellow fever spread by the great population movements resulting from revolution and war. It is not entirely clear just how unusual such outbreaks had been in the region. Relying only on contemporary clinical descriptions, one cannot be sure. The 18th century mind tended to confuse one fever with another and medical men were especially contradictory on the subject of 'yellow' fever.<sup>1</sup> It would seem, however, that the disease was introduced into the West Indies from Africa in the 1640's and that thereafter it enjoyed a spasmodic history, appearing as epidemics of the 'black vomit fever' or maladie de Siam.<sup>2</sup>

Yellow fever begins with lassitude, a sudden headache and burning fever. It can vary greatly in severity, but in 'classic' cases the eyes become inflamed, nausea is experienced and pain in the muscles and back. The pulse is initially high but falls as compulsive vomiting sets in. Jaundice and delirium may appear but its most characteristic symptoms are a falling pulse accompanied by continued high temperature, the vomiting of partly-digested blood, and, in the later stages, generalised haemorrhage. It is not contagious and survival of an attack gives immunity for life. Unfortunately, its clinical resemblance to other fevers, including pernicious tertian malaria, viral hepatitis, leptospirosis, dengue and blackwater fevers, makes it difficult to diagnose even nowadays.<sup>3</sup> Even so, after considering all the clinical and epidemiological evidence, one may be fairly certain that the grisly descriptions of the 'St. Domingo Remittent' published during and after the occupation generally refer to yellow fever.<sup>4</sup>

Robert Jackson and Hector McLean, who served as Assistant Inspectors of Hospitals with the British forces, realised that jaundice was not necessarily always present in an attack and that it also occurred in other diseases, as did occasionally the vomiting of altered blood. While stressing the appearance of haemorrhage and black vomit, they both noted the fall in the pulse, the reversion from constipation to



diarrhoea, the coated tongue with bright red edges and other significant symptoms. They also remarked how the symptoms changed on the third day. The disease occurred all year round but principally from May to November. It was largely confined to the ports. Typically affected were young men recently arrived from northern climates. It was neither contagious, nor amenable to treatment with cinchona bark and rarely occurred twice, they thought, in the same person. Yellow fever is the obvious diagnosis. It is true that McLean insisted the disease was different from the one that ravaged Philadelphia in 1793, now acknowledged to have been yellow fever, but quite clearly he was misled by reports that it was contagious.<sup>(5)</sup>

The epidemics that spread through the Caribbean were similarly often thought to be contagious.<sup>(6)</sup> However, urban yellow fever tends to be localised; its vector, Aedes aegypti, rarely travels over 100 metres. Hence, one can see how such a confusion might take place. More surprisingly, perhaps, the disease was often treated as a ghastly novelty. De Charmilly, in fact, claimed that until the Port au Prince outbreak of June 1794, yellow fever was known in Saint Domingue only by name.<sup>(7)</sup> This might make one think that either this disease or its antecedents was not actually yellow fever. Yet, it was everywhere observed that 'Seamen and Strangers' proved far more vulnerable to it than did colonists. West Indian born whites and other long residents suffered little more than the black and the coloured population which generally escaped infection.<sup>(8)</sup> Curiously, we find the same phenomenon in the 1729 outbreak at Cartagena - local inhabitants largely immune, yet adamant they had never before encountered the disease.<sup>(9)</sup>

It was in the south Caribbean that the great epidemic of 1793 first took hold. The French troops sent to Saint Domingue in 1792 to put down the slave rebellion had suffered very severe losses from disease, and at the end of the year, sickness was also said to have reached exceptional levels in the Jamaica garrison. However, these outbreaks attracted little attention and their cause remains unknown.<sup>(10)</sup> In March 1793, a 'malignant, pestilential fever' of novel appearance broke out in Grenada, possibly introduced by a ship from Boullam in West Africa.<sup>(11)</sup> Whether the fever was really spread by shipping has been hotly debated, but it soon appeared in neighbouring islands and in May was seemingly carried north to Jamaica. Not till October, however, when some thought it was re-introduced by sailors, did it really



begin to spread there. After disappearing for five months, it returned with renewed violence in the summer of 1794. At first some Jamaicans thought it to be the plague; some, an entirely new disease; others, 'a severe version of the common remitting fever of this isle'. Only in mid-1794, after much debate, were doctors identifying it as the synochus putris or 'the yellow fever of the West Indies'.<sup>(12)</sup>

When British troops had landed in Martinique in June 1793, they stayed on shore only 48 hours but immediately contracted a 'putrid' fever which revealed itself on the return voyage.<sup>(13)</sup> In the early summer of 1793, refugees from Martinique seemed to have already carried the disease to Dominica and Barbados, where by October it had killed 500 and 300 whites respectively. In July, as is well known, a great epidemic was started in Philadelphia by the refugees who fled le Cap with Governor Galbaud, or by the ships they sailed in; over 4,000 died in four months.<sup>(14)</sup> At the same time, 'calenturas putridas malignas, de toda especie' destroyed the Spanish battalions guarding the Santo Domingo frontier.<sup>(15)</sup> Nevertheless, only in June 1794, de Charmilly claimed, did la fièvre jaune first reach Saint Domingue, introduced by troops from the fever-ridden army in Martinique.

This clearly cannot be true.<sup>(16)</sup> Fenning and Collyer's New System of Geography, published in 1786, interestingly classed Saint Domingue unlike Jamaica and Martinique as salubrious, but Moreau de Saint-Mery and other writers leave one in no doubt that the haemorrhagic maladie de Siam had already had a long history in the colony and that the West Province in particular was noted for its fevers.<sup>(17)</sup> More importantly, under the occupation the colonists seem to have been by and large immune to the disease that decimated the British forces, just as the refugees who caused the epidemic in Philadelphia rarely fell victim to it themselves. The extent of the colonists' immunity is not precisely known. Epidemics in the period 1793-98 killed many in the small towns of Saint Marc, Mirebalais and les Cayemittes, though yellow fever was not necessarily responsible.<sup>(18)</sup> At the Mole, no colonist succumbed to the disease, but in Port au Prince in July 1794, Cadusch reported 10-12 inhabitants dying each day along with 25-30 soldiers. Henry Shirley, however, said the inhabitants were not affected, but then again, he was not there.<sup>(19)</sup> It seems quite possible that there was a high death rate among recently-arrived colonists, but equally it cannot be doubted that most habitants (de



Charmilly included) had had prior experience of yellow fever.

'Contagionist' arguments for the origin of fever often concealed an element of parti pris. No-one wished their own town to be branded a source of deadly infection. Disease, therefore, should be shown to be imported. Moreover, West Indians who traced the Grenada outbreak to the Boullam expedition were only too happy to discourage colonising ventures in West Africa.<sup>(20)</sup> As for de Charmilly, he was hoping Britain would annex Saint Domingue and was to a great extent responsible for the British presence there. Nonetheless, though he and Cadusch had good reason to lie, their statements need not be dismissed as fabrication. As noted already, a great many who experienced the epidemics of the 1790's had difficulty relating them to any previously known disease. The dramatic impact of the 1793-94 pandemic and contemporary confusion as to exactly what was yellow fever can best be explained if one examines its previous history in the West Indies. Epidemics of yellow fever had been at their most common in the Caribbean in the period 1690-1770, when the proportion of non-immunes in the population was assuredly at its highest. They tended to appear in areas of most rapid development - at first in Barbados, then Martinique, Saint Domingue in the 1730's and 1740's, the Guianas and Windward Isles in the 1760's, Cuba somewhat later. However, it is important to realise that few outbreaks have been recorded in the two decades after 1770, especially among civilians.<sup>(21)</sup> Dr. William Wright practised in Jamaica during the years 1764-77 and 1783-86 without ever, it seems, encountering the disease.<sup>(22)</sup> Though medical historians have generally assumed otherwise, it was probably malaria rather than yellow fever that decimated the British expeditions sent to Havana in 1762 and San Juan in 1781.<sup>(23)</sup> In Saint Domingue, Moreau de Saint-Mery implied, the disease had become fairly unusual by 1790. Both there and in Jamaica it was believed to affect only newcomers.<sup>(24)</sup> What is more, it seems to have become less virulent. With a remarkably felicitous choice of metaphor, an early 19th century writer described the years 1773-93 as follows:-

'les germes de la fièvre jaune demeurés latens, dans les lieux qu'elles avaient infectés, se développèrent pendant cette période, quand des circonstances favorables le leur permirent; mais il paraît que...la maladie...dans le cours de ces vingt années devint aux Antilles, sporadique, individuelle, lente dans sa marche, et incertaine dans ses effets meurtriers'.<sup>(25)</sup>



One might assume, therefore, that yellow fever had become both less virulent in this period and effectively endemic. Local inhabitants must have acquired immunity in childhood or shortly after arrival in the Caribbean, often through a mild or inapparent attack. It thus did not, as some historians have thought, appear solely in epidemics, disappearing for many years at a time.<sup>26</sup> The disease was probably maintained through the regular introduction of infected mosquitoes by slave ships from West Africa or by shipping from other infected areas.<sup>27</sup> Given the presence of infected aegypti, the prevalence of yellow fever is determined mainly by the proportion of non-immunes in a population and their physical proximity. Since infection can be spread only by non-immunes in the early stages of an attack, the relation between incidence of immunity and of infection is more geometric than arithmetic - hence the disasters that befell European armies crowded into Caribbean port towns in war time. In the late colonial period, though the influx of newcomers was great, they were absorbed piecemeal into a largely immune population. Moreover, a growing percentage of them went to work on coffee plantations in the mountains far from the towns that were the foci of infection. These factors probably ensured that new arrivals did not become infected en masse. At the same time, increasingly frequent contacts with West Africa, as the slave trade reached its peak, ensured they did, in time, become infected. By postulating a low level of endemicity, one may thus account for both the decreased incidence of yellow fever epidemics and the immune status of the resident population in the 1770's and 1780's.

More difficult to explain is why the disease became less virulent. It may be that decreased incidence of itself led to decreased virulence. As the virus cannot be transmitted from mosquito to mosquito, fewer infected humans at any given moment also meant fewer infected mosquitoes. The chances of infection resulting from the bite of only one mosquito, rather than of many, were thus increased and, therefore, it could be argued, the prospects of acquiring immunity via a mild or inapparent attack. This might seem a likely hypothesis, given that cases do appear more severe in epidemic than endemic situations and yet vary considerably within those situations.<sup>28</sup> However, experiments with monkeys have so far failed to reveal a marked correlation between initial dosage of



virus and the severity of an attack.<sup>29</sup>

Alternatively, it could be that different strains of the yellow fever virus, although producing cross-immunity, vary greatly in virulence.<sup>30</sup> In the decades before the Revolution, the strain prevalent in the Caribbean could have been of a mild variety, sometimes described as 'yellow fever', sometimes as a type of 'common remittent', which nevertheless rendered its victims immune against other more fulminating varieties known earlier in the century and which regained prevalence in the 1790's. Interestingly, both Dr. Jackson and William Lempriere observed that the 'common remittent' of Jamaica tended to produce immunity against 'yellow fever'.<sup>31</sup> Thus, it might not have been without reason that most doctors in Jamaica and those tending the British troops in Saint Domingue considered 'yellow fever' to be merely an 'aggravated' form of the 'common remittent'.<sup>32</sup>

It is not clear how far the epidemics of the 1790's were actually spread from island to island and how far they resulted simply from an influx of non-immunes. In the first case, the idea of an extra-deadly strain of virus is peculiarly apposite; in the second, it is superfluous. Whether or not the virus was unusual, the pandemic was doubtless intensified by the movements of refugees and soldiers from island to island which increased the circulation of infected men and mosquitoes. Greatest stress, however, should be laid on the wartime influxes of non-immunes. Seamen, soldiers, their wives and children, prisoners of war, military contractors and their clerks, they doubled the white population of many West Indian towns. Simply by overstretching the existing medical services and creating in themselves new health risks (and, therefore, the chances of multiple infection), they might explain much of the apparently increased virulence of yellow fever in the 1790's. Here the example of Jamaica is instructive. The greatest increase in the death rate of the island garrison in these years took place in 1792, before the pandemic had begun and when several new regiments arrived. Furthermore, during the war its overcrowded seaports witnessed a general increase in morbidity that affected everybody and an increased case fatality in many diseases besides yellow fever.<sup>33</sup>

A third contributory factor may have been the climate. Rainfall, and more particularly temperature, can affect the incidence of yellow fever through its influence on the breeding of the Aedes aegypti.



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While in the 1780's Jamaica and Saint Domingue experienced long periods of drought, we know that the Jamaica and Philadelphia epidemics of 1793 were preceded by unusually hot, dry weather following on exceptionally heavy rains.<sup>(34)</sup> During the years the British occupied Saint Domingue rainfall was observed to be unusually high at the generally dry, and healthy, Mole Saint Nicholas and everywhere temperatures were thought to be higher than usual.<sup>(35)</sup> Increased rainfall, it is true, would have had more impact on the malaria-bearing Anopheles than the domestic Aedes, which breeds in man-made containers rather than puddles, and certainly, dual infection may have been an important factor behind the high death rates that will be examined below. However, remembering that Port au Prince's water supply was cut off for much of the occupation, thus increasing reliance on storage vessels, it is highly significant that urban water shortages are known to cause the number of Aedes to multiply in a town.<sup>(36)</sup> In Philadelphia and Baltimore, during the epidemics of 1793-94, it was noted that mosquitoes had become unusually numerous.<sup>(37)</sup> This may well have been the case in Saint Domingue.

Thus, in addition to the great influxes of non-immunes into an endemic region, the movements of population between infected areas and the possible introduction of a new strain of virus, Saint Domingue in the 1790's may have witnessed a notable increase in the vector population as well. These factors go far in explaining the level of mortality in British-occupied Saint Domingue.

(ii) Counting the Dead. In the 18th century, many of the European troops sent out to the West Indies died there from disease. Losses were especially severe in wartime, but it is difficult to get an overall picture from the scattering of data available, some of which is reviewed at the end of this section. During the 1780's, the problem attracted the attention of a number of writers in Great Britain and by 1790 we find Lord Grenville at the Home Office and Adam Williamson in Jamaica actively concerned with reducing the loss of life in West India garrisons.<sup>(38)</sup> Nevertheless, it was to take the deaths of thousands more troops in Saint Domingue and the Windward Islands before even basic lessons would be learned regarding the siting of camps and the use of black regiments, while real medical advances still lay far in the future.



TABLE 7

MOLE NAVAL HOSPITAL

% of deaths due to 'fever'

(1) (not including 'hectic' & 'intermittent' fevers)

	<u>Jan/Mar</u>	<u>Apr/June</u>	<u>Jul/Sept</u>	<u>Oct/Dec</u>
1794		70	55	73
1795	31	56	45	50
1796	63	68	80	68
1797	32	27	58	33
1798	22	57	43	
Overall	= $\frac{943}{1733}$ = 54%			

(11) % of terminated 'fever' cases resulting in death

(slightly exaggerates fatalities as cases who absconded not included)

	<u>Jan/Mar</u>	<u>Apr/June</u>	<u>Jul/Sept</u>	<u>Oct/Dec</u>
1794		33	29	56
1795	33	29	30	34
1796	28	32	48	29
1797	28	28	54	30
1798	29	59	47	
Overall	= $\frac{943}{2461}$ = 38%			

Source: ADM 102/730 and 731.



During the first five months that the British were in Saint Domingue, mortality and morbidity among the troops were, if anything, fairly low. This was the 'healthy season'. Most of the soldiers sent from Jamaica had already spent at least a year in the West Indies. Some were more recent recruits, but equally some were probably creoles. They were, therefore, to some extent acclimatised. Many, moreover, were stationed in Jérémie, the most salubrious part of Saint Domingue. In March and April, however, disease spread rapidly in the other out-posts so that by June 4th about 14% of the soldiers sent from Jamaica had already perished.<sup>(39)</sup> Well under a quarter of them were killed in action. Yet, until 'incredible numbers' began to die in Port au Prince of 'a most dangerous fever',<sup>(40)</sup> Williamson remained unconcerned. Probably most of the fever cases in these early months were either malaria (the 'intermittent fever' common in the dry season) or some other local fever with relatively low mortality that were considered a normal part of West Indian life.<sup>(41)</sup> The sole information we have on case-fatality comes from the Mole naval hospital. There the mortality rate in 'fever' cases, before as well as after June 1794, remained fairly constant at about 33% (Table 7 (ii) ). This could mean that seamen had brought the disease from Jamaica before June 1794, as one might expect. Case fatality in the Philadelphia 1793 epidemic was, significantly, around 30%. However, such a rate could not possibly account for the high overall level of mortality. In Jamaican hospitals mortality in fever cases was rather higher.<sup>(42)</sup> It would seem, therefore, that the fever among seamen at the Mole was not generally yellow fever.

Certainly, the level of mortality among the British troops after June 1794 was exceptional. While the death rate for the army as a whole in the period June 1st - September 1st apparently averaged a lugubrious 10% per month (at least), that of the Port au Prince garrison was even higher.<sup>(43)</sup> Phenomenal losses were incurred by the newly-arrived 41st and 23rd Regiments, three-quarters of whose men were stationed in the capital (Table 8). The death rate in their battalions companies in July and August was six times higher than the rate in those of their sister regiment, the 22nd, which was stationed mainly at the Mole. However, in September and October, the 22nd, too, was to be decimated, losing 60% of its complement in eight weeks.<sup>(44)</sup>



TABLE 8.                      Estimated monthly death rates, summer 1794.  
Partly-acclimatised and unacclimatised troops.

	Men dead per 100			% dead in 3 months	no. dead in 3 months
	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Aug.</u>		
1st Foot	10	8	8½	24	107
49th Foot	6	5½	10½	20	65
23rd Foot	22	29	10	48	319
41st Foot	15	24	12	44	318

Sources: WO 17/95, 125, 151, 162 and 1986.

Not surprisingly, the four 'Jamaican' regiments fared rather better, (Tables 4 and 5). Yet, it is strange to note that in the summer the detachments of 'Jamaican' troops at Port au Prince generally suffered fewer sick and dead than did their comrades in the other outposts. This was certainly true of the 49th and the Artillery, often so of the Royals (or 1st Foot), and was apparently also the case with the 13th and 20th Regiments, who seemed to have lost around a third of their men in the three summer months, although garrisoned principally in the Grand'Anse and at the Mole.<sup>(45)</sup> The explanation is probably twofold. As immunity to yellow fever is acquired after only one attack, while immunity to malaria in the West Indies is a product of several years' exposure to the disease, one might presume these troops were more vulnerable to the latter than to yellow fever. In the summer, when yellow fever raged at Port au Prince, malaria was probably not present there to the extent it was in the more rural areas.

The capital, indeed, was only partly responsible for the hecatomb that engulfed the British forces. Of the 2,000 soldiers who died between June and December, not 60% were stationed in Port au Prince, where the death rate during the autumn fell below that of the army as a whole. The mean monthly rate of loss for the period August 31st to December 31st was about 9.5%.<sup>(46)</sup> The movement of troops between the different outposts makes it difficult to localise and explain this continued high level of mortality. The fighting



TABLE 9.

Monthly Returns of the 49th Foot 1793-94

		<u>No.</u> <u>Dead</u>	<u>%</u> <u>Dead</u>	<u>No.</u> <u>Sick</u>	<u>Observations</u>
1st Nov.	1793	0	0	11	368 men arrived Sept/Oct.
1st Dec.		4	1	26	
1st Jan.	1794	2	0.5	19	12 enlisted between
1st Feb.		4	1	38	January and June.
1st March		8	2.2	21	
1st April		17	4.7	88	
1st May		10	2.9	96	17 P.O.W.s
1st June		22	6.6	96	16 P.O.W.s
1st July		19	6.1	106	2 P.O.W.s
1st Aug.		16	5.5	106	
1st Sept.		30	10.4	119	21 enlist
1st Oct.		17	6.5	99	
1st Nov.		19	7.8	112	4 enlist
<hr/>					
Total:	Dead	168	44%		
	Discharged	6			
	Deserted	5			



around Saint Marc doubtless contributed but the number of British involved was small. The loss in December of Tiburon was a costly disaster but most of its British defenders had already died of disease when Rigaud attacked it. Between August 1st and December 1st, its garrison of 200 men (mostly of the ill-fated 23rd and 41st Regiments) had been whittled away at a rate of well over 15% per month.<sup>(47)</sup> Possibly, this period saw yellow fever transmitted from Port au Prince to the other outposts, particularly to Saint Marc and the Mole, where the 22nd Foot was suddenly stricken and where from August to October two-thirds of the garrison were sick. This hypothesis receives some support from the registers of the Mole naval hospital, in which the percentage of fatal cases caused by 'fever' and the percentage of 'fever' cases resulting in death rose to exceptional levels in the last quarter of the year, (Table 9). Throughout the occupation, Port au Prince was to retain its reputation as a death-trap but it came to be recognised that between August and October, and especially in November, the Mole was equally or even more unhealthy.<sup>(48)</sup>

Always split up into several detachments, the 49th Foot served at one time or another in almost all the outposts of the occupied zone. Although it proved along with the Royals one of the most durable of the British regiments, and was therefore exceptional, its experience of Saint Domingue was in a sense representative (Table 5). It appears that from the end of March until December, this 'healthiest' of regiments always had between a quarter and a half of its men sick. By August, in fact, it was the only regiment with half its men fit for duty. However, in most corps morbidity levels began to drop in October, and by December Port au Prince was the only centre where the sick still outnumbered the healthy. In its second year in Saint Domingue, the 49th's mean monthly rate of loss did not fall but rose, from 4.6% to over 5%, and when the regiment was drafted at the end of August 1795 only 125 veterans were still alive. The originally much larger 23rd and 41st Regiments had shrunk to almost the same size. In their first year in Saint Domingue, they buried over three-quarters of their men and at least another 20 deserted or were discharged.<sup>(49)</sup>

Catastrophic though they were, the losses of 1794 were out-matched by those of the following year. As always, in the early months of the year mortality was low. However, in May and June fever once more spread throughout the army. Chiefly affected were



TABLE 10

Selected Monthly Mortality Rates - 1795

officially reported deaths per 100 men

	<u>July</u>	<u>Aug.</u>	<u>Sept.</u>	<u>Oct.</u>	<u>Nov.</u>
81st Foot	7.0	8.6	25.4	27.4	17.2
96th Foot	23.6	c.35.5	42.4	8.5	?
82nd Foot		5.1	14.8	23.2	24.2
83rd Foot		1.1	27.8	c.60.0	?
130th Foot		0.8	34.2	c.33.0	62.3
All British forces	13.5	c.15.5	17.7	21.4	17.4
<hr/>					
Total no. reported dead	334	381	552	547	371

Source: WO 17/1987

the 96th Regiment that had arrived from Ireland in April. Least affected were the original 'Jamaican' regiments, while the 22nd, 23rd and 41st suffered to an intermediate extent. By July 1st, the 96th had lost since embarkation 41% of its men. Yet, the worst was still to come. The desperately needed reinforcements that appeared in August and October (including recruits for the 96th) disembarked straight into their graves. As Table 10 shows, they disappeared at a rate scarcely credible, though the number of dead may well be understated by more than 100. The surviving sources are far from complete and contain several inconsistencies. Nevertheless, a close examination of regimental and general returns allows one to estimate with some confidence that the total British dead of 1795 amounted to around 3275.<sup>(50)</sup>

Perhaps another 200 perished in the first two months of 1796, battle casualties bulking large for the first time. However, in March when apparently 73 more died, the death rate fell to 1.8% per month, despite the great influx of fresh troops, who now made up half the British forces. This figure is open to doubt, as the returns are self-contradictory. Even so, by April 1796, it is fairly certain that the death toll in the British forces sent to Saint Domingue had reached something close to 5730. This estimate, based on two sets of calculations, tallies well with one made by Lieutenant-Colonel Maitland which put the number dead at 129 officers and 5720 men.<sup>(51)</sup> Given some of the errors in his calculations, which he admitted were rough, the figure of 5730 would seem to be accurate within 1%.

For the period after April 1796, however, calculations become steadily more hazardous. The number of regiments and parts of regiments sent out to Saint Domingue greatly increased. Some did not stay very long, while when a regiment was disbanded, it is not always clear if the troops were repatriated or drafted into other corps.<sup>(52)</sup> Troops sent to Jamaica to convalesce pose special problems, and the position of the Irish Brigade is particularly obscure. Above all, very few returns survive for this period and their accuracy is questionable. Fortescue, in fact, thought losses were deliberately covered up.<sup>(53)</sup>

The two regiments that arrived from Gibraltar shortly before Williamson's departure suffered almost no loss in February and March, but in April the 66th Foot at Port au Prince was suddenly stricken, apparently with yellow fever, which by the end of May was rampant both



there and at the Mole (Table 11).

TABLE 11

66th Foot: Monthly Mortality Rates 1796

<u>Total strength</u>		<u>% dead</u>	<u>no. dead</u>
1105	March	0.3	3
1103	April	9.1	100
1018	May	17.1	174
844	June	19.2	162
683	July	5.9	40

Sources: WO 17/186; S.R.O., GD 188/28/6.

On May 3rd, when the great convoy from Cork finally reached the Mole, it contained but two-thirds of its original complement of nearly 9,000 British troops.<sup>(54)</sup> Over 500 had died in the camp at Cork between mid-October and mid-February and another 556 were left behind in its squalid hospitals. Several hundred more seem to have died on the voyage and 563 were left hospitalised at Barbados. However, allowing for some 700 late arrivals, the number of British troops that debarked in Saint Domingue was considerably more than Bryan Edwards imagined.<sup>(55)</sup> Although epidemic fevers raged in almost all the outposts during the summer months and the loss of life was appalling, mortality rates did not reach the levels of previous years. The overall rate for the British troops seems never to have exceeded 9% per month during the period June-September and by November was down to 4.9%. Some 1260 British soldiers were buried in May and June and around 1940 between July and September.<sup>(56)</sup> These might best be regarded, however, as minimum figures as the official returns do not inspire much confidence. With the exception of the 82nd Foot at Mirebalais, which was said to have lost two-thirds of its men in three months,<sup>(57)</sup> the greatest losses were apparently suffered by the foreign corps sent by sea to Saint Marc and Port au Prince. They had arrived in better shape than the British and on July 1st only 13% were sick, as opposed to 40% of the line regiments.<sup>(58)</sup> Nevertheless, in just 10 days in July, the York Hussars lost 23% of its men - 8 officers, 16 NCO's and 150 troopers.<sup>(59)</sup>

When Pitt's Government, in the spring of 1797, was forced by the Whigs to reveal the cost of the Saint Domingue campaign, it placed the

following statement before Parliament.

TABLE 12   Losses up to 30th September 1796 (Official Figures)

	<u>Dead</u>	<u>Discharged</u>	<u>Deserted</u>
British Troops	7530	333	123
Foreign Troops in British Pay		1067	

Source:   P.P., 1796-7, XLIII 867.

These figures are certainly understated.   They may not have included West Indian recruits into the British regiments but these surely numbered no more than a few hundred at most.   Even so, fraudulent though they probably are, they provide no justification for the response of Sir John Fortescue, who declared:   'I have no hesitation whatsoever in saying that the [number of dead] is positively misleading and should at the very least be doubled'.<sup>(60)</sup>   By my own reckoning, about 500 British had by then deserted or been discharged and some 9050 had died.   There is little doubt that by the end of 1796 about 10,000 British soldiers had died in Saint Domingue.

To Dundas's surprise and the distress of George III, the death rate rose during December and January to around 7% p.m.<sup>(61)</sup>   When General Simcoe arrived in mid-February, it was estimated that over 1600 British troops had died since September 1st.<sup>(62)</sup>   However, the death rate fell suddenly in February and March and, though sickness spread rapidly in April, fatalities remained relatively few, even at Port au Prince.   In May, the death rate was still only 2.5%, although a quarter of the British troops were sick.   Calculations are complicated because of the withdrawal of more than 2000 troops between December and March, the discharge of many in January and the arrival of some 1000 reinforce-



ments early in 1797. Nevertheless, for the six months following December 1st, the number of British dead can be put at 'only' 780.<sup>(63)</sup> During the summer months, too, it seems that mortality was lower than usual (Table 13).

TABLE 13                      Death Rates in Two Regiments: Summer 1797

	%				
	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>August</u>	<u>September</u>	<u>Location</u>
<u>67th Foot</u>	2.7	2.6	4.2	?	the Mole
<u>69th Foot</u>	5.3	2.4	8.8	3.3	les Irois

Source:    WO 17/187 and 190.

The army, of course, was becoming increasingly acclimatised, but even so, over a third of a regiment such as the 67th Foot consisted of recruits arrived within the previous nine months. It appears highly likely, therefore, that Simcoe's reforms had had a salutary effect.

For the last year of the occupation very few general or regimental returns have survived and almost no evidence of arrivals, departures or losses. One has to rely largely on guesswork. The 3rd Irish Regiment appears to have lost 80% of its men in the last seven months of 1797; others remained almost intact. The newly-arrived 60th Foot, we are told, suffered severely from yellow fever, as did recruits for the 56th. Between May and mid-July 1798, 200 invalids were discharged as being 'perfectly useless'. However, by the latter month, most of the 2,100 British survivors were seasoned men, 'by no means liable to the violent disorders of the Climate; but falling off gradually from waste of Constitution, [and] the disorders incident to constantly living on Salt Provisions in a Tropical

Climate'.<sup>(64)</sup> All in all, most regiments probably lost around 60% of their complement between 1st June 1797 and the end of the occupation.

No figures for total losses during the occupation can pretend to accuracy within 500 men, but one may fairly assume that in five years some 12,500 British troops lost their lives in Saint Domingue and nearly 1,500 had to be sent home as invalids (Table 14.).

TABLE 14.                    Annual Arrivals, Losses and Departures of British Troops

	<u>Arrived</u>	<u>Departed</u>	<u>Died</u>	<u>Discharged/Deserted</u>
1793	800	0	10	0
1794	3215	0	2180	75
1795	4050	495	3275	120
1796	10210	2290	4700	420
1797 before June 1st	1000	955	400	520
Final 16 months	1250	2100	2130	575
	————	————	————	————
	20525	5840	12695	1710

Note: The number of troops sent to Saint Domingue was actually under 20,525 but 330 men of the Irish Brigade served in the colony on two occasions.

Probably another 1,000 died on their way there. The losses of the foreign corps may be put at between 2,500 and 5,000. Bryan Edwards thought the number of British seamen who perished to be well over 5,000. However, as only 1,730 died in the Mole naval hospital, where the rate of loss was about three times higher than at Port au Prince, a more likely estimate is 2,500.<sup>(65)</sup> One is thus a very long way from Malenfant's guess that over 45,000 white troops, excluding French allies, were lost by Great Britain, and even further from the ludicrous figures reported by Béranger-Féraud.<sup>(66)</sup> Above all, given that Fortescue thought that 'at the very least' 15,000 British soldiers died in Saint Domingue before 1797, when in the whole Caribbean he thought 25,000 had perished, his much-quoted global figure of 100,000 men lost through the West India campaigns would seem highly questionable.<sup>(67)</sup>

Britain's losses in the Windward Isles must have been far greater



than in Saint Domingue, though, as with the Leclerc expedition four years later, the proportion due to battle casualties was undoubtedly much more important. One would like to know just how unusual the British losses were in the context of Caribbean warfare. McLean thought them unique.<sup>(68)</sup> However, comparable data ~~are~~ not easily come by, nor can one generalise too readily about the British experience itself. While the Royals and 49th Foot lost some 45% of their men in their first year in the colony, the 23rd, 41st, 96th and 130th lost about the same proportion in only three months. Some cavalry regiments that arrived in May 1796 lost little more than a third in a year; another, the 29th Light Dragoons, lost 64% in six months. Death rates were higher in 1794-95 than in 1797-98, but overall were usually in the range 50% - 75% p.a.<sup>(69)</sup>

Amazingly, under the Ancien Regime, the average annual mortality of the Saint Domingue garrison had been only 6.25% p.a. (sailors, 3.13%).<sup>(70)</sup> Moreover, by 1785 these rates had improved to 2.86% and 1.85%.<sup>(70)</sup> Similarly, in Jamaica the garrison death rate was only 3.3% p.a. in 1790-91, rising to over 5.5% in 1792, and 8.7% in 1793.<sup>(71)</sup> At Martinique during the years 1770-73 the Perigord Regiment was said to have been persistently attacked by yellow fever but still lost only 35% of its men.<sup>(72)</sup> It was in wartime, which brought great influxes of non-immunes, that the West Indian 'disease environment' was at its deadliest. 'A los primeros pasos de la Guerra', wrote a Spanish administrator in 1795, 'el Europeo está moribundo'.<sup>(73)</sup>

In 1792-93, the French corps sent out to Saint Domingue to suppress the slave rebellion suffered very severe losses, though one must remember that they included over 1,500 prisoners of war as well as troops who were deported or driven out with Governor Galbaud. In the North, the second <sup>x</sup>~~batal~~<sup>^</sup>ion of the 44th Regiment lost, nonetheless, about 62% dead in the 7½ months prior to May 1793.<sup>(74)</sup> At insalubrious Fort Dauphin, the total losses of the Pas de Calais and Morbihan National Guards averaged about 75% after a year fighting the blacks and Spaniards, while at les Cayes disease claimed 'only' 36% of the Provence Regiment in 11 months, total losses amounting to 43%. (Men from the Mediterranean seaboard probably enjoyed a significant degree of immunity to both falciparum and vivax malaria). Also in the South the Berwick Regiment lost 51% in seven months and the Seine Inférieure National Guards 60% within only three months of their arrival.<sup>(75)</sup> Stationed

in the particularly unhealthy plain of les Cayes, the wettest part of Saint Domingue, the latter corps had arrived in October, the wettest month, and had to bivouac without tents on sodden ground. It was perhaps an exception. In the same area, disease carried off 19% of the Aube Volunteers in just over 3½ months.<sup>(76)</sup> Reckoning that between 3,000 and 3,500 French troops were still alive in August 1793 it seems that the overall level of mortality in the French corps was not quite as devastating as that which the British were to experience.

Certainly, in Jamaica, where mortality was thought to be of unprecedented severity in the 1790's, death rates in the garrison never approached anything like those in British-occupied Saint Domingue.<sup>(77)</sup> Jamaica had actually fared worst during the American war, losing twice the number of troops in half the time, that is 3,500 in 3½ years. Even then, however, in the dozen regiments involved the mean death rate for the first year after arrival was still under 30%. Furthermore, overall morbidity never rose above a third, it seems.<sup>(78)</sup> Evidently, it was in the chaotic, makeshift world of military expeditions, when troops were at their densest concentration, that the soldiers suffered most. The expedition to San Juan in 1781 lost 77% of its 1,400 men. Between June and October 1762, 40% of the British troops who had captured Havana died of disease, while of the 12,000 British and Americans who laid siege to Cartagena in 1741 70% perished, including 77% of the British.<sup>(79)</sup> Perhaps the most tragic aspect of Britain's losses in Saint Domingue is that they were not quite, in fact, unique.

(iii) Causes of Mortality. Anxious to combat the prejudices of previous historians, Ralph Korngold claimed not only that Britain lost 40,000 men in Saint Domingue but that more than half were killed in combat.<sup>(80)</sup> This was perhaps wishful thinking. While it is possible that battle casualties were on occasion covered up,<sup>(81)</sup> all the evidence suggests they were in fact a very small proportion of British losses. Up to November 1795, according to Lieutenant-Colonel Maitland, only 100 British soldiers had died in action - probably an under-estimate but not a gross one.<sup>(82)</sup> Most deaths occurred at Port au Prince and the Mole, where there was little fighting. When the fighting was severest, in 1797-98, the death rate was at its



lowest. On two occasions, nearly 50 British died when outposts were over-run<sup>(83)</sup> but otherwise the battle casualties reported were always remarkably low. At Saint Marc, the York Hussars lost 500 men dead in 11 months, but only seven of them were killed in action.<sup>(84)</sup> There seems no need to discount such reports as products of racial prejudice. The British fought mainly on the defensive behind fortifications. When they did advance, the enemy usually withdrew and their musketry, even by 18th century standards, could be extremely inaccurate.<sup>(85)</sup> (There was no reason for it to be otherwise). All in all, it is difficult to believe that much more than 1,000 British troops were killed in combat or died of wounds, and the actual total was probably a lot less.

The great majority unquestionably died of disease. Yet, beyond the general impression that most British deaths in Saint Domingue were due to yellow fever, it is not easy to assess the relative importance of the different factors involved. The epidemics that swept Port au Prince in 1794 and Port au Prince and the Mole in 1796 were fairly certainly yellow fever. It was the disease that attracted most contemporary attention, and regiments like the 66th Foot and the 29th Light Dragoons had suffered dramatic losses are known to have been its victims. Moreover, it was said to occur all year round. It is true that some of the worst losses, those of 1795 and particularly in the 96th Regiment, were attributed by McLean to 'ship fever' (i.e. typhus) that the troops brought with them from Ireland.<sup>(86)</sup> However, this diagnosis was not the product of his own observations. In view of the rarity of typhus in the West Indies and also of the contemporary tendency to associate the two fevers, it seems more likely that when the troops disembarked, the typhus then on board ship merged into an epidemic of yellow fever.

However, yellow fever, an urban disease in the West Indies, was clearly not the sole scourge of the British troops. Even at Port au Prince, where it was 'strongly marked', the discerning Dr. Jackson thought that from April to December a variety of fevers were present. 'Flux' and diarrhoea were common throughout the year, as at Saint Marc, doubtless because of the appalling sanitation in both towns and their use of wells for drinking water.<sup>(87)</sup> The Mole tended to be healthier, except in the autumn, when 'intermittents' (presumably malaria) were just as common as 'remittents'. There were no swamps in the area,



unlike at Port au Prince, and we probably see here the influence of the increased rainfall of these years.<sup>(88)</sup> 'Fever' (excluding 'intermittents') was responsible for only half the deaths in the Mole naval hospital, 'flux' and scurvy killing large numbers, (Table 3 (i) ). At Mirebalais, yellow fever in its most violent form existed alongside protracted 'double tertians', which seem to have killed many colonists. In other rural areas, such as the Cul de Sac and the swampy district of les Irois, malaria was not surprisingly prevalent, and this was also true of the lower mountain slopes.<sup>(89)</sup> Around les Irois, it sometimes assumed the pernicious form still called 'bilious remittent'. This was also found at Saint Marc and in both places killed many colonists. Jackson thought it a variety of yellow fever but his description and the slow, imperfect recovery of those who survived it are suggestive of falciparum malaria.<sup>(90)</sup> The terrible disease that decimated the York Hussars at Saint Marc, leaving them 'drowned in their own Blood',<sup>(91)</sup> may have been yellow fever but its rapid termination also suggests pernicious malaria.

Malaria, therefore, may well have been as common among the British forces as yellow fever, especially as it can recur, whereas the latter leaves its victims either dead or immune. What is known of soldiers who survived two years in Saint Domingue, though they were of course a minority, suggests that they experienced at least two or three bouts of fever.<sup>(92)</sup> Even so, despite being confined to the ports, yellow fever doubtless killed more soldiers than did malaria. It is usually more fatal, (though some might dispute this); observers certainly thought it so at the time, and it had and has no cure, while malaria was treated with cinchona bark shipped out to the West Indies by the ton. The decreased mortality but continuing high morbidity of the spring and summer of 1797 probably reflect a shift in the relative incidence of malaria and yellow fever, as troops moved into the countryside on campaign. However, the overall mortality of the British troops points to case-fatalities much higher than those either disease exhibits nowadays, rarely being more than 10% and often much less. It seems likely, however, that the high death rates are at least partly explained by multiple infection. Some regiments, we know, arrived suffering from typhus and descriptions of yellow fever cases sometimes beginning with fits of shivering perhaps suggest the simultaneous action of both diseases.



Malaria, though, was a more probable alternative. 'Remittent' fevers sometimes were observed to develop into 'intermittent' fevers and the persistent problem of relapses among yellow fever convalescents suggests additional infection, as normally convalescence is rapid. When Saint Marc was surrounded by an open ditch and Port au Prince general hospital was situated next to a marsh, simultaneous infection was a real risk.

Contemporaries, however, tended to explain the British troops' vulnerability to fever in terms of three factors. These were:- a general level of debility, an excessive consumption of alcohol and inept medical treatment. They were wrong, of course, to think such factors made the soldiers more susceptible to fever, but they undoubtedly affected a patient's chances of recovery or death. In the first place, these were not men in the best of health. Often recruited in prisons and workhouses, only the worst regiments were sent to Saint Domingue. Pallid, thin men from the new industrial towns, Dr. Jackson felt they radically lowered the standards of the British Army, as regards both discipline and fitness. Before disembarking in Saint Domingue, some had spent from three to six months crowded on board troopships. Many had passed mid-winter camped on the Irish coast, racked by dysentery and typhus. Half the Cork expedition had fallen sick before it set sail.<sup>(93)</sup> (It is worth reflecting that not a few of these troops must have contracted typhus, malaria and yellow fever all in the space of a year.) On the other hand, these new regiments often remained fit for months after their arrival, while in the long run, the German and French peasants in the foreign corps do not seem to have proven any more hardy. Furthermore, it was precisely the healthiest, most impressive-looking regiments, such as the 82nd, which arrived after a trouble-free voyage from Gibraltar, that suffered some of the worst losses in Saint Domingue. The robust, hearty individual, in fact, was thought peculiarly prone to yellow fever.<sup>(94)</sup>

Even so, as noted above, troops were progressively worn down by their life-style and conditions in Saint Domingue. Coming from a Europe slightly cooler than it is today, they had great difficulty coping with temperatures considered high even for the Caribbean. Unwashed, clad in flannel shirts and ill-fitting woollen uniforms that were permanently soaked with sweat and prevented proper thermo-

regulation, soldiers became easily exhausted and subject to 'heat stress'.<sup>(95)</sup> Sleep was a luxury in under-manned garrisons and soldiers often went to bed in wet clothes. What little nourishment they could derive from a diet entirely lacking for months on end in fresh meat and vegetables was often denied them because of persistent dysentery. The heat and the salt meat diet, the brackish or contaminated drinking water and, above all, the mental state of the troops, help explain what some observers considered to be the most debilitating aspect of the soldier's life - the great quantity of alcohol he consumed.

Over-drinking can be seen as both a cause and effect of the high rate of mortality. Hector McLean has graphically evoked the claustrophobic tension and general despondency that prevailed in the British garrisons, hemmed in by an unseen enemy and haunted by 'the daily spectacle of death'. 'Debauches of wine' they imagined, would 'banish not only their fears but their dangers'.<sup>(96)</sup> It is also relevant that, in the folk medicine of 18th century England, rum and other spirits were considered a remedy for fevers, and certainly in the Windward Isles we find troops treating alcohol as a prophylactic, afraid that 'a sober hour might give the Disease an Opportunity to attack'.<sup>(97)</sup> As death in yellow fever is usually the result of hepatic or renal failure, a patient's alcohol consumption is an important determinant of his chances of survival.<sup>(98)</sup> Although officers frequently drank several bottles a day, wine was not the chief danger. Claret at least contained 'the nutrient of the grape', McLean rightly remarked.<sup>(99)</sup> Much more lethal was the raw cane rum on which the troops spent their money. They smuggled it into their messes (and into the hospitals), they filled their canteens with it before campaigns and on occasion they bartered their rations for it. This is one reason why all contemporary writers stress the matter of regimental discipline, pointing out that the new, badly-officered corps generally suffered the worst losses.<sup>(100)</sup> (The other reason concerns enforced cleanliness both personal and general).

The question of alcohol further overlaps with that of medical treatment, for to the horror of the French, hospital patients received a bottle of Madeira per day - 'le comble de la déraison!' - and wine or brandy was specifically prescribed in fever cases to raise a falling pulse. Until 1797, some patients even went on receiving their daily rum ration. Because of lax supervision in the general hospitals,



orderlies and convalescents were known to carouse together and this frequently led, the Conseil privé claimed, to relapses and death.<sup>(101)</sup> For several years, critics had condemned the unwieldy institution of the general hospital.<sup>(102)</sup> They bred disease, it was thought. The smaller, regimental hospitals were more economical, provided more personal care and could treat soldiers with less delay, yet they were under-used. In Saint Domingue, the main hospital buildings were usually large and well built, unlike in the British islands, but at Port au Prince men were still cramped 80 to a ward with one doctor between them. The Government made considerable efforts to send out a sufficient number of medical staff, and medical supplies generally were in abundance. However, orderlies fresh from Europe died as fast as their patients and, since 33% of European troops were regularly on the sick list, and also 12% of the black corps, the hospitals were persistently overcrowded and undermanned. Nursing, therefore, was entrusted to invalid soldiers and those considered the scum of the regiments. As the quality of nursing is vital in yellow fever cases - there is no other treatment as such<sup>(103)</sup> - the situation must be accounted extremely deleterious.

Since yellow fever has no specific remedy, it is ironic that the French and British clashed so violently as to the appropriate method of treatment. The army was being sacrificed, so the colonists claimed, to the ignorance of the British doctors. Some French physicians denounced them in the English press and formally complained to the Army Medical Board. Both sides claimed to have had more success than the other but it is significant that the troops themselves favoured French methods and lost confidence in their own doctors.<sup>(104)</sup> Indeed, Hector McLean had to agree it was absurd sending out to the West Indies doctors with no experience of tropical medicine. Somewhat misguidedly, he attacked the 'vanity' and 'impudence' of his French colleagues, who 'equally oeconomic of medicines and the truth...committed their patients to a nurse and left the issue to nature', which was really the best course of action. However, he came to recognise the importance of nursing and agreed that patients needed a special diet in place of the salt meat they continued to receive in hospital. He also adopted from the French their copious use of tisanes and lemonade, important in combating dehydration caused by continual vomiting, and their habit of warm baths, 'to cleanse the skin of impurities'.



British methods by contrast were violent. In the language of the day, they were 'inflammatory', designed to excite the pulse and produce perspiration or salivation, as opposed to the 'anti-phlogistic regime' of the French. Great stress was laid on drugs, (mercury, camphor, laudanum, calomel), and 'cordials', (cinnamon water and cinchona bark infusions), as well as on wine. Purgatives, including the infamous James's powder, had pride of place. British remedies were not always bad. Where malaria was concerned, the French were of course wrong to reject the use of quinine but, as McLean realised, it had no effect in cases of yellow fever. Calomel, then one of the latest fads in West Indian medicine, has been recommended till recently in treating malaria but in yellow fever, where the stomach lining is attacked, aperients are positively harmful.<sup>105</sup> McLean came to appreciate the deleterious effects of medicines that irritated the stomach but, nonetheless, came up with a fiendish stimulant of his own - cayenne pepper wrapped in balls of dough!

Yet, he was no quack. Adventurous and eclectic, both he and Jackson represent a new empiricist approach to medicine that heralded the advances of the 19th century.<sup>106</sup> One is impressed with his honesty and humility when grappling with forces that he confessed were beyond his comprehension. Neither man was afraid to say he had been wrong, and Jackson's acuteness of observation demands respect. It is unfortunate that their contributions to the treatment of yellow fever involved as many steps backwards as forwards. Both men became convinced that dousings with cold water were of the greatest benefit ... if employed early enough - the usual escape clause. The method was unorthodox but not original. Although explicitly borrowed from the Indians of Asia and North America, it had long been known in British folk and formal medicine. Cold sponge baths clearly brought patients relief but the scenes described of buckets of cold water being poured from great height on to feverish and unsuspecting victims partake of tragedy and farce.<sup>107</sup> The treatment must have added to the already great strains on the patient's heart.

Perhaps more serious was the doctors' reaffirmation of the traditional 'cures' of blood letting and blistering.<sup>108</sup> Venesection had been going out of fashion in the British West Indies but had remained standard practice in Saint Domingue. McLean, however, adopted it with a vengeance, taking sometimes 16 ounces from his already anaemic



patients. It is therefore easy to understand why he had such difficulties in building up the strength of those who survived into convalescence. Blistering was meant to stop vomiting. Burst blisters, however, attracted swarms of flies. They then became deep ulcers full of maggots that tortured the patient with their burrowing. These could only be killed, McLean observed, with turpentine 'which almost throws the patient into fits'. Not surprisingly, neither doctor was able to claim much success for his work. Lieutenant Howard ascribed his survival of an attack of fever to a concoction his black nurse gave him.<sup>(109)</sup> Whether true or not, it is probable that the better results McLean achieved treating officers in private houses owed much to the nursing of the local female population.

When the best medical minds of the day floundered in this fashion, it might seem that the mortality in Saint Domingue was completely unavoidable. Yet, some facts were known only too well:- that yellow fever only occurred in the towns; that malaria was found near swamps; that in the hills troops only suffered from leg sores and dysentery and that on the high ridges of the interior they stayed as healthy as in Europe. In Jamaica, the annual death rate in the mountain camps was around 2%; in the lowland camps it was 8.6%.<sup>(110)</sup> Commanders and engineers repeatedly refused to heed medical advice about the siting of camps and outposts. Jackson warned that, as long as new regiments were garrisoned in the ports, two thirds would die each year. He asked that the European garrison of Port au Prince be camped in a crescent in the mountains around the town, but in vain. Of course, strategic and medical considerations could not always be compatible. All commanders, including Commissioner Sonthonax, it is interesting to note, thought that white troops were needed to guard the ports, while the British simply did not trust the citizens of the capital to be left unguarded.<sup>(111)</sup>

Nevertheless, advances were made. By 1797, more and more British troops were moving into mountain outposts. Mortality was reduced at the Mole by building new barracks in the hills above the port. The swamp at les Irois was partly filled in. Believing inactivity to be harmful, General Simcoe got troops out of their barracks on exercises and at Fort Bizoton he replaced British with colonials. When a new regiment arrived, it was sent to salubrious Jérémie. Along

with improvements in hospital organisation and restrictions on the drinking of rum, these changes clearly had, as already seen, some impact. With more camps in the mountains and 'judicious arrangements', Jackson thought, many, perhaps five sixths, of the British dead could have been saved.<sup>(112)</sup>



#### CHAPTER XIV. THE FINAL YEAR

The autumn of 1797 found the British Government more anxious than ever to extricate itself from Saint Domingue. The occupied zone had survived the spring offensive Dundas, observed, only because of two chance arrivals - that of a regiment from Jamaica at Port au Prince and of two frigates calling in at les Irois. The next attack might prove more serious. It was imperative that the continuing waste of men and money be reduced and also obvious that the colonists would not supply the amounts required. Ideally, Dundas was hoping to negotiate a total evacuation by special agreement with the Directory. Despite the coup d'état of fructidor, he still thought at the end of October that the Republicans might accept back under French rule the inhabitants of the occupied zone without molestation, if Jamaica and Saint Domingue were made neutral. However, he accepted that this was unlikely and, while pursuing negotiations, he drew up instructions for a withdrawal to the Mole and the Grand' Anse. The colonists of the West were to be offered £60,000 and naval support, should they decide to stay and defend themselves and thereby negotiate their own settlement. Those that wished to leave would receive free passage to Europe or North America, with the prospect for some of land grants in Trinidad. Civil government was to be dismantled by the New Year, and British, Foreign and Colonial forces were to be reduced to 4,000 in number. The only reason, it was stressed, for retaining the Mole and Jérémie was the protection of Jamaica, and this was deemed less important than in the past, as both Jamaica and the Navy were now stronger. If these two points could not be held without erecting new fortifications or risking considerable loss of life, they, too, were to be abandoned. The commander of the Grand' Anse, however, was to take orders from the Governor of Jamaica and could be commanded to stay, if the safety of Jamaica warranted it.<sup>1</sup>

Early in November, Pitt and Dundas discussed these draft instructions at length and then passed them on to Portland and Grenville with the observation that 'every hour of delay is a source of uncalculable expense'<sup>2</sup> - a sentiment in which they all concurred. Yet, it took nearly two more months before the instructions were made

official, on January 1st.<sup>3</sup> The difficulty may have been finding a commanding officer to carry them out. General Whyte, left in command since Simcoe's departure, was not favourable to ideas of evacuation and anyway entirely unsuitable. Maitland, who believed the Grand' Anse and the Mole could be held until the peace, was willing to return but first wanted Whyte to be recalled.<sup>4</sup> At first, it seems, a Major-General Hunter was chosen for the job, and then, in December, one Major-General Nesbitt with Maitland as his second in command. In the meantime, British merchants trading to the colony pressed for compensation in the event of a withdrawal, and the colonial émigrés, deserting Malouet for de Charmilly, argued desperately in favour of a British offensive.<sup>5</sup> The news from Saint Domingue, as usual, was ambiguous, but it revealed significant signs of decay in the British position. In September, while yet another attack on Saint Marc was repulsed, enemy movements in the Cul de Sac started to become threatening. Blacks occupying the Crochus mountains north of the plain began harrying communications between Arcahaye, Mirebalais and Croix des Bouquets. Although a night attack by Depestre's corps completely cleared the mountains without difficulty, it was probably only the small band of Jean Pineau that they had for adversaries. Mirebalais became relatively secure, but the fact that raiders had penetrated close to the capital convinced Dundas that the West was indefensible.<sup>6</sup> Nesbitt, however, under the influence of the London émigrés, doubted that the Mole and Jérémie could stand alone and, just like Simcoe before him, went out hoping to preserve the occupied zone intact.<sup>7</sup>

Had he not died before reaching Saint Domingue, the general would have found his optimism misplaced. Toussaint and Rigaud mustered their forces during January and at the end of the month launched a concerted attack on all the posts of the occupied zone. The Mole and Saint Marc held firm and then counter-attacked, but Lascahobas in the Spanish zone was lost and with lightning speed Toussaint advanced from the Artibonite to seize on February 7th the passes south of Mirebalais. Grand Bois was evacuated and Whyte ordered all the troops in the Cul de Sac to fall back on Croix des Bouquets. Several attacks were beaten off in the mountains of Arcahaye but a group of some 2,000 Republicans broke through to besiege Boucassin fort. The Chasseurs de la Reine were rushed from Port au Prince and on February 17th they routed the attackers, killing some 300 including their general. Mirebalais, however, surrounded by 8,000 men, could not hold out and on the 25th its 300 black defenders



fought their way over the Crochus mountains losing only 20 dead. Meanwhile, Rigaud had taken two small posts on the Cayemittes front and then switched his attention to les Irois, beginning a regular siege. Laplume advanced from Léogane and with reinforcements from the mulatto Beauvais, took the brand new mountain citadel of Lacoupe (present day Pétionville) after a bitter contest on February 15th. As in most of the battles of this campaign, almost all the troops on both sides were uniformed blacks. The other mountain posts east of the capital, Grenier and Neret, were precipitately abandoned a few days later. Just as in June 1794, General Whyte did almost nothing to support them and on March 1st the Fourmier post on top of Morne l'Hôpital was surrounded. A brief lull ensued.<sup>8</sup>

This was the situation when General Maitland arrived early in March. Although the Republicans were said to be at least 12,000 strong, 'regularly Regimented, Armed and Clothed', Maitland doubted there had been any sudden increase in Republican strength and suggested Whyte had panicked. Nevertheless, while there was little sense of danger in the British garrisons, Maitland said the situation was worse than he expected and he immediately recommended to Dundas a voluntary and total evacuation that would save lives, money and honour. The lines of Port au Prince, he thought, could not sustain a serious attack, though Whyte contrarily disagreed. The Grand' Anse was now almost paying its way, but he doubted that Jérémie could hold out if Rigaud captured les Irois, which was now being bombarded from three sides. If the Grand' Anse fell, he stated controversially, reversing his previous opinion, it was dubious that the Mole either could or should be held.<sup>9</sup>

Even as he was writing, the British position was crumbling dramatically. In the second week of March, the cordon of Arcahaye, 'the work of years', suddenly collapsed. Garrisoned by only 300 men, the very expensive chain of mountain forts was abandoned by its Irish commander, who had blenched at the sight of 4,000 assailants. At the same time, after successfully relieving the Fourmier post, General Whyte decided to give up the Morne l'Hôpital. Keeping mountain garrisons supplied with water and ammunition was simply too dangerous. Desertion was now a major problem, not only, as before, among the European and mulatto troops, but also for the first time in the black corps, while in the plain of Arcahaye over 300 slaves fled to the advancing army of Toussaint and Christophe. Even so, having descended from the mountains, the Republican soldiers,



despite their usual enormous sacrifices, could still make no headway against the forces of Lapointe and Depestre. Cavalry remained the decisive factor in the plain. On the 27th and 29th March, over 700 of Christophe's 6,000 troops were killed, before his army was driven back into the mountains, and a few days later O'Gorman's horsemen claimed another 90 victims near Croix des Bouquets. However, several Arcahaye plantations were burnt and Fort Williamson at les Vazes was accidentally blown up.<sup>10</sup>

By this time, relations between Whyte and Maitland had become so strained that the former withdrew to the Mole in a huff and resigned his command to the Scotsman. Nesbitt had not arrived and Maitland, who had been privy to his instructions, had refused to inform Whyte of their contents. With the costs of defence and casualties mounting, he now decided that if Nesbitt did not appear by mid-April he would evacuate the West. Rumours and denunciations flew thickly in the occupied zone. To try and calm the colonists' fears, Maitland blustered vaguely, but on April 23rd he approached Toussaint Louverture with an offer to withdraw.<sup>11</sup> If the colonists were guaranteed good treatment, he would hand over the West Province with its property intact, removing only the guns of the forts. Toussaint accepted.

To preserve order, martial law was declared and at least one civilian, guilty of sedition, was executed by being strapped over the muzzle of a cannon and blown apart. To believe Maitland, however, confusion was kept to a minimum. Convoys were assembled off Saint Marc, Arcahaye and Port au Prince, and all who wished to leave were allowed free passage to either Jérémie and the Mole or Jamaica and the U.S. While some colonists scrambled to put together their possessions and ship off their workforces, bargaining with ships' captains for extra freight space, others, said Maitland, high-born Frenchmen, tore off their Croix de Saint Louis and liaised with their former slaves in the Republican army.<sup>12</sup> Since January members of the Conseil Privé had been employed on roving commissions, examining outstanding claims on the Government in the British zone. They and the magistrates of the Conseil Supérieur were now paid off with six months' salary, though a reduced civil administration was later established in the Grand' Anse. While the general's attempts to investigate corruption at Saint Marc were ineffective and naive,<sup>13</sup> his efforts to summarily clear up all claims on the British Government with once and for all ex gratia payments also proved un-



realistic, though to the Cabinet they seemed at the time commendably efficient. Wages of public employees had not all been paid up to date; compensation for recruited slaves was still outstanding, and no account was taken of damages owed by the Government. (It would take a special board set up in London another five years to deal with these and other claims for compensation.)<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, much was accomplished in a short space of time, and when 4,000 colonial troops were transferred to Jérémie and the Mole, desertions were surprisingly few. Saint Marc was evacuated on May 6th, Arcahaye the following day and Port au Prince on May 8th.

Everything now depended on how the campaign went in the Grand' Anse, where Brigadier-General Spencer had been pinned down with some 400 European and 2,000 colonial troops for several months. He had made a couple of sorties from les Irois in mid-March and after receiving a thousand reinforcements captured one of Rigaud's camps in April but overall could make little impact on the Republican entrenchments and dared not risk an attack in the mountains for fear of ambushes. He therefore concentrated on holding his posts and keeping Rigaud's army out of the interior. Maitland was severely critical of his conduct and wondered why, when the enemy numbered only some 4-7,000, he had let Rigaud establish such a strong position. It was typical, he said, of the indolent and corrupt way the war had been managed that Spencer should 'stuff ... all his men into posts without leaving any moving force'. Between February 19th and April 28th, he had lost 166 colonials killed and 21 British and Europeans. Republican losses for half that period were put at over 1,200 killed and wounded. Maitland, moving to Jérémie in May, wanted to strike an offensive blow, like Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart had done from the Mole and favoured a landing at les Anglais behind the Republican lines. The arrival of his squadron caused Rigaud, anticipating an attack, to abandon all his gains at both les Irois and les Cayemittes. However, Maitland was also greeted by freak rainstorms that made any offensive temporarily impossible and the colonial troops of the Grand' Anse he found unreliable, (which partly explained Spencer's past conduct). Yet, with about 2,300 British troops and over 7,000 colonials he was in a strong position, and before going on the defensive in mid-June he made a bold attempt to take Tiburon, as if to show how military affairs might have been conducted. While a naval squadron cannonaded the fort of les Anglais, Dessources's Volunteers with considerable daring made their way



through the mountains of the Republican zone to cut the town off from the north. Taken by surprise, its defenders were said to have been fleeing, when it was discovered that cross-currents prevented troops being landed from the ships. Maitland waited three days for the tide to turn, then gave up.<sup>15</sup>

He now wished to evacuate the Grand' Anse and, in conformity with Government instructions, he sought the permission of the Governor of Jamaica. Balcarres, however, said he had received no Government directions on the matter - an oversight by Dundas - and refused to take responsibility for a withdrawal that would greatly undermine, he said, Jamaica's security, though he agreed that the Grand' Anse did not seem tenable. Having acted till then entirely on his own initiative, Maitland was loath to upset the Jamaicans, especially as an evacuation would force on them hundreds of refugees, and he feared his enemies in the Cabinet.<sup>16</sup> He therefore awaited permission from Whitehall, stressing that Rigaud was now building roads up to the frontiers of the Grand' Anse for bringing up artillery. By mid-July, Toussaint was doing the same across the trackless arid terrain surrounding the Mole. Its five block-houses, Maitland pointed out, would never withstand a siege if heavy artillery were brought up. (Less than a year before, he had declared that the blacks were 'totally unfit (for) a regular siege'.)<sup>17</sup> Although Jérémie and the Mole were important to the defence of Jamaica, the expense and difficulty of holding them would outweigh their utility. The humanity of Toussaint Louverture, he added, made the colonists less determined to resist, particularly as they knew that anyway when peace was signed Saint Domingue would be returned to France. This was especially true of the subordinate officers of the colonial corps, usually creoles, who were intending to remain in the colony. Till then, they had been buoyed up hopes of taking les Cayes, but they might lose heart when they realised this was impossible. Meanwhile the British garrison continued to be worn down, newcomers perishing of yellow fever, veterans being invalided home, 'perfectly useless'. Jérémie and the Mole could not be held for an outlay of less than £500,000 p.a. and, as either bargaining counters or outposts of Jamaica, they were not worth that much. The defence of Jamaica should be concentrated on Jamaica itself, where at least all public expenditure reverted to Britain.<sup>18</sup>

Lord Balcarres initially said he would take 3,000 white colonial troops from Saint Domingue, and Maitland seems to have, perhaps



deliberately, misunderstood him in thinking he meant black Chasseurs. At any rate, he stressed that they and their officers were not at all dangerous and would cause no trouble in Jamaica. This was another instance of Maitland reversing his opinions of the previous year but in general his appraisal of the situation in Saint Domingue remained accurate. General Hédouville, the new Agent sent out by the Directory, was merely a cypher, he observed, real power lay with Toussaint, Laplume and Rigaud. Despite their jealousy, Toussaint and Laplume might co-operate but Toussaint and Rigaud would never join forces. Although Rigaud was officially still proscribed by the Directory and Hédouville was empowered to deport him, it was with Toussaint, with his conciliatory attitude towards the whites and his desire to establish trade relations with the British, that Britain might most profitably co-operate. From May onwards, in fact, the two generals began an exchange of flour and fresh vegetables. As for Hédouville, Maitland rightly surmised he would try and play Rigaud against Toussaint and so cause further bloodshed.<sup>19</sup>

On July 27th, Maitland informed Balcarres he had almost decided to evacuate and asked for his and Admiral Hyde Parker's reactions. He could bring with him 4,000 colonial troops, he said, and if Balcarres wished to exclude Dominguan slaves he should write him a strong letter forbidding their shipment to Jamaica. (Lapointe's had just been deported from Kingston.) The Mole, Maitland suggested, a sensitive topic in Jamaica, was actually of little importance to the Navy, as the French could not support a Caribbean squadron and, once besieged, it would cease to provide a haven for British ships. Balcarres did not agree. 'In the eyes of the world', and particularly in the eyes of Jamaica's slaves, its evacuation would seem a drastic step, and would increase Jamaica's refugee problem. As for the admission of black troops, (having realised his mistake), he said this was for the Assembly to decide but he agreed to take Dessources's corps and suggested the rest be kept at the Mole. On July 30th, Maitland received two letters that broke the deadlock. One was from Toussaint Louverture pressing for negotiations to start on a British withdrawal, (and Maitland knew that Toussaint and Rigaud had met the previous week). The other was from Dundas, which conveyed both Government approval of his actions and a copy of Nesbitt's instructions. He now apparently realised he had over-rated the importance the Government attached to Jérémie and the Mole, and determined immediately to evacuate them.<sup>20</sup> Envoys were sent to Toussaint and Rigaud.



Balcarres and Hyde Parker were furious when informed of this fait accompli by brief and hurried notes and resented being out-manoeuvred by a young officer who had the ear of the Cabinet. In vain, they tried to persuade him to change his mind. Ironically, the Government, ever wavering in its Saint Domingue policy, was about to change its own mind. Because, it seems, of the activities of bands of runaways in Jamaica, they now decided that the Mole and Jérémie were worth the expenditure of half a million pounds and at the end of August sent out a new commander with orders to hold them. Reinforcements were to be despatched in the autumn.<sup>21</sup> Fortunately for all concerned, this about-face, which would have achieved nothing, took place too late to affect events in Saint Domingue. Negotiations were begun with representatives of Toussaint and Rigaud early in August. Exactly why, on the 10th, Maitland then invited Hédouville to send a representative is not clear; perhaps it was just a formality, perhaps he was putting pressure on Toussaint, who was not dealing quite so openly with the Agent as he pretended and who insisted that the Mole be surrendered only to his own representatives.<sup>22</sup> This, Maitland willingly conceded, happy to drive a wedge between Toussaint and the Republic; it was the best way to preserve the security of Jamaica.

While Toussaint did not wish to prejudice his relations with the Directory, his and Maitland's interests were substantially the same. He had no designs on Jamaica and would later betray a Republican conspiracy in the island to Governor Balcarres.<sup>23</sup> Both he and the British Government looked forward to mutually profitable commercial relations and both had a common interest in keeping in Saint Domingue as many of the black Chasseurs and white colonists as possible. The Chasseurs were an embarrassing problem, mistrusted by the Republicans and feared by the British planters. Dundas had assumed they would be left behind and reclaimed by their former masters. Most eventually were, including several thousand turned back from Jamaica. Bending the laws of the Republic, Toussaint and Rigaud granted broad amnesties to most non-émigrés and the black general later arranged in secret for the return of evacuees from Jamaica under the guise of prisoners of war. Lastly, after the terms of evacuation were formalised, both leaders signed secret clauses guaranteeing future neutrality and arranging future trade relations.<sup>24</sup> Hostilities ceased on August 20th and the last troops sailed from the Mole at the beginning of October.



(i) The Consequences of the Occupation for Britain. A source of great wealth for the French, Saint Domingue under British rule proved to be a heavy financial burden. In five years, it exported to Britain but one-third as much produce as Martinique and less than a twentieth of the quantity exported by the British West Indies (Appendix E (iv) ). The only commodity market it had any impact on was that of coffee in 1794, when imports into Great Britain doubled and Saint Domingue was responsible for perhaps half the increase. Thereafter, however, its coffee exports to Britain dwindled, while those of Jamaica and Martinique surged forward and were joined by those of Demerara. In 1796, Saint Domingue accounted for merely 0.6% of Britain's raw cotton imports, while the British West Indies supplied 54 times as much sugar. As a market for British produce, Saint Domingue was similarly negligible.<sup>(1)</sup>

Not surprisingly, therefore, the duty levied in Britain on trade with the colony came to little more than £150,000. The revenues raised in the occupied zone did not amount to much more - about £495,000. The two Agents-General, on the other hand, paid out during the occupation some £5,765,000 and to this should be added the pay of the British rank and file which was probably around £500,000.<sup>(2)</sup> Perhaps one should add to this the cost of equipping and transporting the troops sent from Europe - say, 25,000 men at £30 per head: £750,000. Moreover, by 1805 another £100,000 had been spent by the St. Domingo Claims Board set up in London to assist colonial refugees and settle outstanding debts.<sup>(3)</sup> At least £50,000 more was paid out between 1819 and 1822, when it was decided to settle the claims of colonists who had stayed in France during the occupation.<sup>(4)</sup> Throughout the 1830's, in fact, about £800 p.a. was still being paid out in pensions to a dozen colonists.<sup>(5)</sup> Nevertheless, whatever contingency expenses one includes under the costs of the occupation, the total figure undoubtedly fell far short of the £30,000,000 reported by Rainsford and of the £20,000,000 reported by Malenfant and Korngold.<sup>(6)</sup>

The number of men killed, also, was considerably less than the figures usually given. Fewer than 13,000 British troops died in Saint Domingue, and probably not more than 20,000 men were lost to the army and navy, dead, discharged or deserted.<sup>(7)</sup> It seems impossible therefore, to justify Sir John Fortescue's famous statement that 'the secret of England's impotence for the first six years of the war may be said to lie in the two fatal words, Saint Domingo'.<sup>(8)</sup>



Losses in the West Indies, although appalling, were less than Fortescue thought and, of them, Saint Domingue accounted for but a small proportion. He himself concluded that British casualties in the West India campaigns totalled almost 100,000, half of them fatalities. His figures, however, contain several contradictions, and it appears likely that the magic number 100,000 is greatly inflated. The '18,600 dead' for 1794, 'official returns', clearly include men discharged and deserted; he had already written that the British dead that year, including the crews of the transport ships, numbered 12,000, and this, too, may seem a little high since the Conquered Islands it is unlikely more than 8,000 British troops died and in Jamaica the death toll was 200. As most of his other figures are guesswork and his estimates for Saint Domingue are demonstrably cavalier, Fortescue's statistics certainly need revision. There is no doubt, at least, that far more men were lost in the Windwards than in Saint Domingue. <sup>(9)</sup>

Secondly, the relative impact of these losses was less than might be imagined. In November 1794, by which time only 3,500 troops had been sent to Saint Domingue and about 10,000 to the whole of the West Indies, the British Army numbered 112,000 regulars <sup>(10)</sup> and the war in Europe had already been lost. Until the evacuation of April 1795, far more troops were sent to the Continent than to the Caribbean. For this and other reasons, it is difficult to agree with Fortescue that the West India campaigns were really 'the essence' of Pitt's military policy. <sup>(11)</sup> In July 1794, there were over 25,000 British troops in northern Europe. Moreover, 6,000 of them were lost in just the first three months of 1795. <sup>(12)</sup> In the West Indies, at least men did not freeze to death. What is more, the European war was scarcely any cheaper than the war in the West Indies. In three years, the Duke of York's army cost £6,574,733 and accomplished nothing. <sup>(13)</sup> Even worse, nearly 1½ million pounds were paid to the Prussians in 1794 for troops that were never supplied. One should not forget the other subsidies - 1.62 millions to Austria alone <sup>(14)</sup> - and the different expeditions to Brittany and to Toulon. In these five years, military expenditure totalled almost 150 million pounds. <sup>(15)</sup> Pitt's war policy was a series of costly disasters. In no one respect was the occupation of Saint Domingue unique.

Critics of the West India strategy must also remember that, while



the war in Europe was a complete failure, notable successes were achieved in the Windward Isles. What, though, can be said of the Saint Domingue venture? Was it a total waste? According to its proponents - Dundas, de Charmilly, Colonel Chalmers - the occupation bought five years of security for the island of Jamaica and so enabled it to enjoy a prosperous boom period. The argument carried weight. Jamaica was then importing between one and two million pounds' worth of British produce each year; it supplied most of Britain's sugar and coffee and its trade was worth close to a million pounds per annum in Customs revenue. However, two questions arise. Was Jamaica ever really in danger of invasion, or of active subversion, from Saint Domingue? and was its defence best served by occupying its neighbour? According to Hawkesbury, it was 'evident almost to demonstration that there was no medium between keeping those possessions at all events or losing Jamaica altogether', so great was the threat of a servile war. Governor Balcarres thought Jamaica might resist for several years the attacks, piracy and incendiary example of a neighbouring 'Kingdom of Banditti' but that its all-important commercial credit would be destroyed. (16)

Although the Republicans certainly wanted the British to think that Jamaica was in danger of imminent invasion, it has never been established that there was any direct intervention in the island from Saint Domingue during the period of occupation. As early as October 1793, Sonthonax had proclaimed that the Blue Mountain Maroons were at his command but this was just bravado. His correspondence of 1796 clearly shows he had little idea of what was happening in Jamaica and a gauche attempt to gain information via a flag of truce was easily scotched by the Kingston authorities. Though several of his colleagues urged him to intervene, he was too hard-pressed to organise anything but the defence of Saint Domingue. (17) The following spring a letter by Sonthonax detailing invasion plans came into British hands. Having been dropped in the Cul de Sac, however, it was fairly obviously a red herring. (18) It is ironic that, when a plot really was hatched in Saint Domingue, by Commissioner Roume in 1799, it was to be betrayed to the British by Toussaint Louverture himself. (19) Nevertheless, there is little doubt that from about 1794 onwards the French minister in Philadelphia, the Government in Paris, Victor Hugues in Guadeloupe and Rigaud in the South collaborated in sending agents to Jamaica, who were usually English-speaking free coloureds. They liaised with prisoners of war and were said to have



made contact with some of the Maroons.<sup>(20)</sup> Yet, this activity produced few results and it is difficult to see that it would have proved any more harmful had the British never occupied Saint Domingue. As for the threat of invasion, this was mainly a matter of naval superiority. Though the crossing between the two colonies was short, a large force could not be risked without adequate protection. In this respect, it was not the British forces in Saint Domingue but the failure of any large French squadron to reach the West Indies that saved Jamaica from invasion.<sup>(21)</sup> Moreover, to the navy's annoyance, warships were tied down protecting and supplying the outposts in Saint Domingue when they could have been patrolling the seas around Jamaica. British intervention, furthermore, by failing to quash the slave revolution and actually catalysing its development, undoubtedly worsened its impact on the minds of Jamaica's slaves. The occupation thus made more potent the dangers it was meant to suppress.

The defensive justification for intervention, therefore, does not seem well-founded. Here one should note that the alternative strategy recommended by Admiral Hyde Parker in 1798 and endorsed by M.W.B. Sanderson, that of occupying just the main ports without getting involved in a large-scale campaign,<sup>(22)</sup> was pointless. The main ports could not have been occupied without a major campaign. Mortality would not have been reduced, since they were the foci of infection, and nor would enemy privateering have been much affected. Saint Domingue's coastline was far too long and indented. Such a policy would not have been acceptable to the colonists and on balance would probably have been little less expensive. Jamaica would have been best defended, not by tying up troops and ships in Saint Domingue, but by concentrating them closer to home.

If the occupation is to be justified, (moral considerations apart, of course,) it is as an attempt to extend Britain's tropical empire. This, moreover, was the original rationale of intervention, rather than the defence of Jamaica. Was it really attempting the impossible? Some factors in the British defeat were constant and unavoidable - Saint Domingue's great size, the unhealthiness of its seaports, its difficult climate and terrain, the numerical superiority of the Republicans and insurgents. Few of these factors were immutable, however; the importance that they assumed derived from their interaction with other factors more easily controlled - the numerical weakness of the British forces, their reluctance to move outside the coastal towns, the alienation



of the mulattoes, certain tactical errors such as the failure to attack les Cayes, Jacmel or Port de Paix before occupying Port au Prince. In three successive autumns, one might add, Atlantic gales prevented reinforcements arriving in time for the healthy season. The later experience of Leclerc's expedition, which debarked in January, should make one cautious on the subject of mortality, but from the evidence presented in Chapter XIV, it seems that with the knowledge then available to British commanders the exceptionally high death rates of the white troops could have been substantially reduced. Moreover, as argued in Chapter IV, the mortality problem only became insuperable once slavery ceased to be supportable in the minds of most of the blacks. When the decision to intervene was taken, the slave regime was substantially intact in most parts of the colony, and the slave revolt came close to being extinguished. Until April 1794, Toussaint Louverture was still fighting on the side of the slave owners. Furthermore, it took many years of warfare to mould from the fieldhands and domestics of the Ancien Regime the disciplined battalions of veterans that were to defeat the forces of Napoleon.

All hinged on delivering a heavy blow early in the war. Even the occupation's severest critic, Thomas Maitland, accepted that General Whyte could have been successful in June 1794 and thought, had circumstances been right, the 1796 campaign might have ended favourably.<sup>(23)</sup> The socio-political tensions within the Republican zone at that time made it extremely vulnerable. After 1803, after 1815, planters went on concocting hopeless schemes for the restoration of their power. It does not, however, seem pie in the sky to suggest that, if Grey's expedition had debarked in Saint Domingue instead of Martinique, the occupation would not have been for Great Britain such a costly mistake. As for the relative merits of the European and colonial strategies, one may suggest with some confidence that the European campaign suffered far less from the removal of troops to the Caribbean than did the West India campaign from the diversion of troops to the continent.

There was of course an internal contradiction in Government policy, since the acquisition of Saint Domingue would have ruined the reviving economy of the British islands. Pitt suggested they might have to grow other crops. However, the Jamaican planters replied they were willing to share with their French counterparts their monopoly of the British market, providing in return they were permitted to trade with whom they pleased, and thereby obtain cheaper imports. This was a possible solution

profitable for all concerned. In Pitt's conversations with the Society of Merchants and Planters early in 1796,<sup>(24)</sup> one can see, reading between the lines, it might have been adopted, had Saint Domingue been annexed, and the era of Free Trade thus brought forwards by 30 years or more.

Few lessons were learned from the occupation of Saint Domingue. White attitudes to blacks do not seem to have changed appreciably; men such as Toussaint and Jean Kina were simply considered exceptionally cunning. Black troops, having proved 'safe', were now adopted on a permanent footing in the British Caribbean, so as to reduce the losses of white regiments. Greater care was henceforth taken with the siting and construction of barracks, but in the treatment of yellow fever the renewed emphasis on venesection was a great step backwards. The pioneer Hospital Corps was abandoned and not re-established for another 20 years.

No regimental banner bears the words 'St. Domingo'. No minister or general wished to preserve in his memoirs the history of the occupation. It was an episode best forgotten and which the 19th century had no need to remember. Some of the survivors lived on with vivid memories into the 1840's, but by mid-century not only Saint Domingue but all the British and French islands had become somnolent backwaters ignored by Europe. However, in a church in Salford, Lancashire, a faint echo still remains of those forgotten expeditions and of the horror with which contemporaries learned of their fate. On a funerary monument commemorating the death of a Major Thomas Drinkwater can be read the following inscription:-

'Thrice had his foot Domingo's island prest,  
Midst horrid wars and fierce barbarian wiles;  
Thrice had his blood repelled the yellow pest  
That stalks, gigantic, through the Western Isles!' (25)



(ii) British Intervention and the Destruction of Saint Domingue.

With the expulsion of the British forces in September 1798, slavery's 300 year history in Saint Domingue came to an end. The attempt to shore up the crumbling edifice had failed. Although for five years the plantation economy was kept alive to an extent not hitherto appreciated,<sup>27</sup> the impact of the occupation on the course of Haitian history would appear to have been slight. And this may indeed have been so. However, a case can be made out for the British occupation having had a major influence on long-term developments, namely that it promoted that very destruction of the plantation regime that it was intended to prevent, and which was the most profound change then taking place in the Caribbean. The argument is both factual and counter-factual.

Firstly and simply, as regards physical damage, we have seen how the arrival of British forces led within months to the desolation of the plains of Leogane, the Artibonite and Cul de Sac, of Grand Goave and of the mountains of Port au Prince, till then largely intact.<sup>28</sup> In addition, the recruitment of over 7,000 black soldiers, apart from its effect on the minds of the remaining slaves, obviously represented at the simplest level a substantial weakening of the plantation regime. Later, as the British zone became a battlefield, the mountains of Mirebalais and Arcahaye came to share a similar fate as the coastal plains. It might be said of course of the areas where production had previously ceased, that the rebellion and arson would anyway have occurred as soon as an attempt was made to force the slaves back into the fields. But at the same time, it may be that the nature of the British intervention, the extremely small numbers of troops at first involved, was a crucial factor here, and that a more powerful expedition would have met with quite different results. As for Arcahaye and the Grand' Anse, it was clearly the British presence that kept slavery functioning there as long as it did, but the question is, whether a peaceful transition to another type of (communal) labour regime would have done less damage in the long run.

One could argue that the slave revolt by February 1793 was already unstoppable and that ultimately this meant the end of plantation labour. However, as we have noticed, it was the outbreak of war that dramatically broadened the scope of the then languishing revolt and rescued it from what could have been extinction.<sup>29</sup> The causal factor here, it is true, was not intervention itself but the threat of intervention and then invasion by the Spaniards. Whether or not the British intended to intervene, Sonthonax would have declared slavery abolished; (though one may doubt if the Convention would have done likewise). And the Spaniards, too, would have taken rebel blacks into their pay. Hence the appropriate counter-factual

scenario to the British occupation is the situation as it was developing in the early summer of 1793. One cannot tell, of course, how the Spaniards or Republicans would have fared without British interference, but certainly in the South and West one might have expected to see a transition to a forced labour regime defended by an army and gendarmerie of blacks and mulattoes, with the Civil Commissioners and free coloureds jockeying for power. The Spaniards, one presumes, would have occupied the whole Artibonite plain, and possibly Arcahaye. Thereafter, much would have depended on their relations with the powerful free coloured community of the West and on the calculations of Toussaint Louverture. While it is conceivable they might have been able to establish an enclave where the slave regime was preserved or restored in some form, they may well, if deserted by Toussaint, have been expelled even more quickly than actually happened. What is clear, however, is that the balance of power between the free coloureds and blacks at this time was far more in the former's favour than it would ever be again.

That the power of the blacks was increasing rapidly, one cannot doubt, but the British occupation was to contribute to this trend in two significant ways. In the first place, it isolated the mulattoes of the West, (where numerically, proportionately and economically they were at their most powerful), and cut them off from those of the South and North. In so doing, it brought to an end their ascendancy in Saint Marc, Port au Prince and, later, Mirebalais. Since the free coloureds were at their weakest in the North Province and yet remained such a powerful faction there until the crisis of 1796, then one might wonder if Villatte's bid for supreme power in March <sup>30</sup> would have achieved different results in a Republican zone that included Lapointe and Montbrun and where their forces and those of Rigaud had freedom of movement. This line of argument seems the stronger if one notes that Britain's five-year attempt to preserve the slave regime meant that far more blacks had to leave their estates to become soldiers than would have been the case if the Spaniards alone had intervened. <sup>31</sup> Literally, it forced thousands more than just the guerriers of mid-1793 to fight for their liberty, instead of receiving it on a plate from Sonthonax and peacefully becoming cultivateurs. As for the psychological effects of participating in such a war of liberation, one can only guess, but in military terms the effects were obvious. In July 1793, most of the black rebels were armed with lances and machetes, and Toussaint (not yet l'Ouverture) was leading only a few hundred men. By 1798, he commanded a devoted army of veterans, numbering at least 13/14,000, as against Rigaud's 8,000. <sup>32</sup> The British occupation carried forward and extended, therefore,



the effects of the slave revolt, breaking down the mental and physical shackles of slavery and plantation habit, and enabling the ex-slaves to develop the military skills with which to defend their freedom. At the same time, it also made the free coloureds increasingly dependent on the martial skills of the blacks. The implications of this shift in the internal balance of power as regards the future policy of Bonaparte and therefore the entire history of the country might well have been profound.

Needless to say, this is simply speculation, an attempt to relate causally important social changes to an event of perhaps no singular significance or obvious consequences. Indeed, while most modern Haitians have apparently never heard of Great Britain, mention of l'occupation brittanique even to the average member of the elite tends to conjure up images of the 1640s and the pirates of l'isle Tortue. Even so, tangible remains of this brief episode in the life of the people are still to be found dotted about the Haitian landscape. Fort George still looks down on Port au Prince, though under another name, and continues in use by the army. Substantial ruins still stand at the Mole, and in the hills above Saint Marc the walls of Forts Brisbane and Churchill have also survived. On the hillock at les Irois, only a few cannon, half buried, recall the existence of its mud fort, but further up the coast at Tiburon not all the masonry of de Sevré's defences have yet disappeared, and scraps of rusted steel are scattered in the surrounding fields. Fort Williamson, blown up in 1798, is now an anonymous pile of rubble to the north of Arcahaye, though the massive stonework of Fort Bizoton is still much in evidence and on the lonely Dominican frontier Fort Biassou, the haunt of bandits in the nineteenth century, survives as a reminder of the advanced positions of the British occupying forces. It is in the mountains of Arcahaye, however, that the most impressive ruins are to be seen. There, at a height of over 4,000 feet, stand at least three very solid stone forts, overgrown with creepers and brushwood, their cannon pointing skywards, but still largely intact; and in the mornes all around them are the opulent ruins, equally lifeless, of the caféières they were built to protect.

But this is not quite all. There is a street game little girls play in Haiti, that appears to be known in most parts of the country, though some say it is particularly associated with the Grand' Anse, and others with Saint Marc. It consists of a dance variously performed but accompanied by a short refrain, whose opening words, rather curiously, are totally without meaning in creole. It seems they are the ghosts of English words, learned by the young girls of a previous generation who sought to attract the attention of a Brisbane or a Whitelocke - 'Si si mi, dé commandé. La vé ron, dé commandé' as he rode by during slavery's final days in Saint Domingue.<sup>33</sup>

APPENDIX A.CURRENCY AND EXCHANGE RATES(i) Official Exchange Rates

Always being scarce and continually exported from the region, specie circulated at a premium in the West Indies. There was no Dominguan currency per se and the livre tournois was officially fixed at 150% above par to attract coinage into the colony. Similarly, the pound sterling in Jamaica stood at 140.

1 <u>livre</u>	=	20 <u>sols</u>	=	240 <u>deniers</u>
24 <u>livres tournois</u>	=	36 'livres de Saint Domingue'		
£1 sterling		£1/8/0 'Jamaican currency'		
£1 sterling		24 <u>livres tournois</u>		
1 Spanish <u>piastre</u> or 'gourde'		8 l. 5 s. de Saint Domingue or 4 'gourdins'		
1 'portugaise' or half-joe ( <u>meia dobra</u> )		66 'livres de Saint Domingue'		
1 'Jamaican dollar' or <u>piastre</u>	=	4/6d sterling = 6/3 3/5d 'currency'		

(ii) Actual Exchange Rates

In the 1790's, the Spanish milled silver dollar, the commonest medium of exchange in both Saint Domingue and Jamaica, was generally rated at 6/8d 'Jamaican currency', or 4/8d or 4/9d sterling, sometimes more. In Europe, it was usually bought for 4/6d sterling and sometimes less. Similarly, guineas, theoretically worth 29/4d 'currency', fetched 32/6d in September 1795.

During the occupation, British currency was apparently undervalued by about 4% against the 'livre coloniale'. Usually, the 'pound Jamaican' was calculated at 24 l. 15 s. instead of 25 l. 14 s. and the pound sterling at 34 l. 13 s. not 36 l. It seems that, for convenience, the 'gourde' was made equal to the 'Jamaican dollar', both being abstractions, merely the Jamaican and Dominguan exchange rates for the piastre.

To provide small change, piastres were cut up into bits, also called ryals in Jamaica and escalins in Saint Domingue. In both colonies, they were valued wholesale at 11 to the piastre.



APPENDIX B.        SOUTH AND WEST SAINT DOMINGUE ON THE EVE OF THE  
OCCUPATION AS SEEN BY AMERICAN MERCHANTS AND FRENCH COLONISTS

- 1) Jérémie: early June. 'an Insurrection was daily expected at Jérémie which occasioned very considerable Alarm.' (examination of J.B. Boccalin)
- 2) Miragoâne: 26th August 1793. 'if there is no alteration in this government white men won't be able to stay in this part of the island much longer...[debts cannot be collected] for there is no laws.' (Bigar to Lynham)
- 3) Les Cayes: 30th August 1793. 'the Spanish Inquisition when in the zenith of power did not equal what is daily committed here, Molato sons have assassinated the unhappy authors of their existence. Men are here frequently massacred in cold blood and the prisons are filled with the most respectable and most virtuous Characters. Such is French Democratic Liberty.' (Wright to Wright)
- 4) Port au Prince: 11th September 1793. 'No American trusts his property on shore during the Night and the harbour is crouded with women and children praying to Masters of Vessels to take them off.' (Mumford to Powers)
- 5) Les Cayes: 16th/18th October 1793. 'We are in great fear of more trouble every day and no man dare speaks as all law is in the hands of the yellow and black faces...[everyone is freeing their slaves] from fear of being killed ...White men is worse than ever negroes was.' (Haight to Haight and to Adams)
- 6) Saint Marc: 4th November 1793. 'Nous sommes ici dans l'état le plus déplorable, toujours sur le qui vive...Je ne marche qu'avec un poignard... J'ose vous annoncer l'incendie de Saint Marc.' (anon.)
- 7) Saint Marc: November (letter of 12 février 1794). Sonthonax and Polverel 'ne se donnaient même pas la peine de dissimuler leur horrible projet; ils marquent du geste et de la voix au milieu des rues de Saint Marc les victimes qu'ils devaient immoler.' (Préval to Préval)
- 8) Port au Prince: 7th November 1793. 'les nègres de la plaine de Cul de Sac ne travaillent plus de tout, parce qu'ils savent bien que la liberté donnée par les Commissaires ne vaut rien, mais qu'ils en profiteront tant que les choses dureront comme elles sont et qu'ils ne se rangent à l'ordre comme autrefois aussitôt que les choses se rétabliront. Malgrez tout ce bouleversement, il y a encore dans les montagnes de la Voute et de la Rivière froide des habitations ou les nègres travaillent comme auparavant et sur lesquelles les propriétaires resident et sont parfaitement tranquils.'

Depuis près d'un mois, on n'assassine ni n'incendie plus dans la plaine.' (anon.)

9) Port au Prince: 13th February 1794. [Vos esclaves sont] 'fort tranquilles...La récolte dans toute la dépendance sera fort peu de chose; les jardins ayant depuis longtems été négligés. Ils sont encore presque partout empoisonnés; cependant depuis quelque tems les nègres commencent à travailler...la mauvaise foi de cette nation américaine nous a tous ruinnés...mais quand je compare notre position à celle de tous les habitants de la partie du nord qui ont tout perdu généralement, je vois que nous sommes encore moins malheureux; et qu'avec le tems nous parviendrons a réparer nos pertes, nous en avons tous grand besoin. Je ne vous parle pas de la situation politique de la colonie. Vous devez aujourd'hui la connoitre.' (Thénet to Bérard)

Sources: J.A.V.A.C., papers of the 'Speedwell' (1), 'Jefferson' (2), 'Fox' (3), 'Nancy' (4 and 5), 'Union' (6, 7 and 9); WO 1/59, 49 (8).



(i) The Original Propositions

- 1) Les habitants de St. Domingue ne pouvant recourir a leur souverain légitime pour les délivrer de la tyrannie qui les opprime invoque la protection de sa majesté Britannique et lui pretent serment de fidélité; la suppliant de conserver en sequestre leur colonie, et de les traiter comme Bons et fidels sujets jusqu'a la paix générale époque a laquelle ils seront soumis définitivement aux conditions arrêtés entre sa majesté Britannique et le gouvernement de France relativement a la souveraineté de St. Domingue.
- 2) Jusqu'a ce que l'ordre et la tranquillité soient rétabli dans la colonie le représentant de Sa Majesté Britannique aura tout pouvoir de Régler et ordonner provisoirement l'administration et de prendre toutes les mesures de sureté et de Police qu'il jugera convenables.
- 3) Personne ne pourra etre recherché pour Raison des troubles antérieurs excepté ceux qui seront juridiquement accusés d'avoir provoqués ou exécutés des incendies et des assassinats.
- 4) Tous les propriétaires blancs et Gens de couleurs resteront armés et seront formés en compagnies de milices; tous les non propriétaires qui ne seront point engagés et soldés dans des corps militaires seront desarmés.
- 5) Les Gens de couleur propriétaires auront les mêmes droits que les Blancs; les non propriétaires de quelques castes qu'ils soient ne seront admis dans aucune assemblée politique.
- 6) Le Régime civil et Politique sera le même que celui des colonies anglaises mais aucune assmblé ne pourra etre convoquée qu'après le Rétablissement de l'ordre dans tous les quartiers de la colonie. Jusqu'a cette époque le représentant de Sa Majesté Britannique sera assisté dans tous les details d'administration et de Police par un comite de six personnes choisis parmi les propriétaires des trois paroisses de la colonie.
- 7) Les dettes contractées par les habitants jusqu'au premier janvier dernier ne pourront etre poursuivis pendant dix années et ne porteront aucun interet a compter de l'époque ou les insurrection et les incendies ont devasté la colonie; ladite époque demeurant fixée au premier aout 1791.
- 8) La saisie réelle des habitants ne pourra avoir lieu que pour les avances de fonds stipulées pr. rétablissement et amelioration des manufactures. Mais les lettre de changes et Billets a credit posterieurs aux desastres de la colonie produiront comme par le passé la contrainte par corps et la saisie des meubles et des revenues.
- 9) Le représentant de Sa Majesté Britiannique Pourra confirmer ou destituer les officiers de justice et nommer provisoirement les titulaires sur la

présentation du comite.

10) Les droits d'importations et d'exportations pour les denrées et marchandises D'Europe seront Régles sur le même pied que dans les colonies anglaises.

11) Les manufactures de sucre Blancs conserveront le droit d'eporter leur sucres terres.

12) La Religion Catholique sera maintenue sans exclusion d'aucun autre culte evangélique. Les Prêtres qui auront pretés serment a la République seront Renvoies et remplacés par ceux actuellement refugiés en angleterre.

13) Jusqu'a ce que les quartiers qui sont devastés soient reparés la navigation sera libre avec les etats unis: et lorsque le gouvernement anglais etablira le Regime prohibitif qui a lieu dans ses autres possessions il prendra des mesures pour garantir l'approvisionnement de premiere necessite en vivres bois et animaux et salaisons.

13) (SIC) La gestion des biens des mineurs et des proprietaires absens sera soumise a une comptabilite exacte et a une responsabilité effective de la part des gérans et fondés de Pouvoir.

14) Les frais de justice seront Regles par des tarifs et les formes de procedure civiles usités dans les colonies anglaises et seront réduites aux termes les plus simples et les moins dispendieux.

15) Tous les droits et privilèges accordés aux canadiens et aux habitants de la Grenade, loix et usages conservees dans ces colonies a la demande des habitans, seront egalement garantis et conservés aux habitans.

16) La colonie acquittera sur les impositions locales tous les frais de garnison et d'administration mais ne supportera pas la depense des escadres destinées a la protéger; les droits percus en Europe sur l'importation de ses produits devant etre considerés comme la solde de cette protection.

17) Le Representant de Sa Majeste Britiannique a St. Domingue reclamera aupres du gouvernement espagnol les négres et les animaux vendus dans son territoire par les Négres Revoltés.

(Margin Notes)

Note. Cette condition premiere satisfait a notre delicatesses et nos devoirs envers Louis XVII sans contrarier aucunes des vues que peut avoir le gouvernement anglais.

Na. Il importe fort au bon ordre et a la bonne police de la colonie que les articles 13 et 14 soient statués pendant la plein et entier exercice de l'autorité royale comme articles de capitulation affin qu'aucune assemblée ou des gens de justice et des comptables auroient d'influence ne puisse les annuller.

Na. Il y a eu en la guere des brigandages commis par les espagnols et le gouverneur anglais obtiendra tout de suite un grand credit sur les habitans en se montrant disposé a leur procurer justice.

Source: WO 1/58, 533-8



## (ii) The Capitulation

(N.B. Various texts exist. As the one in CO 319/4 contains many errors clearly due to its English copyist, I have used the text in Frostin, Intervention 362-5, which derives from a copy of the one registered by the Conseil Supérieur in August 1794. However, two important departures from the British text need noting. In article 5, devra choisir should read pourra choisir and in article 12, seul port d'importation should read seul pont. Interestingly, the version in Placide-Justin, Histoire 264-7, omits the prohibition on a colonial assembly meeting in wartime. It was apparently the text de Charmilly signed on behalf of the Grand' Anse planters on September 3rd, 1793.

1) Les habitants de Saint-Domingue ne pouvant recourir à leur légitime souverain pour les délivrer de la tyrannie qui les opprime, invoquent la protection de Sa Majesté Britannique et lui prêtent serment de fidélité, la suppliant de conserver leur colonie et de les traiter comme bons et fidèles sujets jusqu'à la paix générale, époque à laquelle Sa Majesté Britannique, le Gouvernement de France et les puissances alliées décideront définitivement entre elles de la souveraineté de Saint Domingue.

Accordé.

2) Jusqu'à ce que l'ordre et la tranquillité soient rétablis dans la colonie, le représentant de Sa Majesté Britannique aura tout pouvoir de régler et d'ordonner toutes les mesures de police et de sûreté qu'ils jugera convenables.

Accordé.

3) Personne ne pourra être recherché pour raison de troubles antérieurs, exceptés ceux qui seront juridiquement accusés d'avoir provoqué des incendies ou des assassinats.

Accordé.

4) Les hommes de couleur auront tous privilèges dont jouit cette classe d'habitants dans les colonies anglaises.

Accordé.

5) Si, à la conclusion de la guerre, la colonie reste sous la domination de la Grande-Bretagne et que l'ordre y soit rétabli, alors les lois relatives à la propriété et à tous les droits civils qui existaient dans la dite colonie avant la Revolution de France, seront conservées. Néanmoins jusqu'à la formation d'une assemblée coloniale, Sa Majesté Britannique aura le droit de statuer provisoirement ainsi que l'exigera le bien général et la tranquillité de la colonie, mais aucune assemblée ne pourra être convoquée qu'après le rétablissement de l'ordre dans tous les quartiers de la colonie. Jusqu'à cette époque, le représentant de Sa Majesté Britannique sera assisté dans tous les détails d'administration et de police par un comité de 6 personnes qu'il devra choisir parmi les propriétaires des trois provinces de la colonie.

Accordé.

6) Attendu les incendies, insurrections, révoltes des nègres, vols et pillages qui ont devasté la colonie, le représentant de Sa Majesté Britannique, au moment où il prendra possession de la colonie, pour satisfaire à la demande qu'en font les habitants, sera autorisé à proclamer qu'il accorde, pour le paiement des dettes, un sursis de dix années, qui commencera à courir du jour de la prise de possession, et la suspension des intérêts commencera à courir depuis l'époque du 1er août 1791 pour n'expirer qu'à la fin des dix dites années de sursis accordées pour le paiement des dettes, et cependant ne pourront être comprises dans lesdits sursis les dettes pour compte de tutèle et compte de gestion des biens des propriétaires absents, et aussi les dettes pour tradition de fonds de propriétaires.

Accordé.

7) Les droits d'importation et d'exportation pour les denrées et marchandises d'Europe seront réglées sur le même pied que dans les colonies anglaises.

Accordé. En conséquence le tarif sera rendu public et affiché pour que personne n'en ignore.

8) Les manufactures de sucre blanc conserveront le droit d'exporter leurs sucres, tenus sujets aux réglemens des droits qu'il sera nécessaire de faire à cet égard.

Accordé. Les droits sur les sucres blancs seront les mêmes que ceux qui étaient perçus dans la colonie de Saint-Dominique en 1789.

9) La religion catholique sera maintenue sans acceptation d'aucun culte évangélique.

Accordé, à condition que les prêtres qui auront prêté serment de fidélité à la République seront renvoyés et remplacés par ceux réfugiés dans les états de Sa Majesté Britannique.

10) Les impositions locales, destinées à acquitter les frais de garnison et d'administration de la colonie seront perçues sur le même pied qu'en 1789, sauf les modifications et décharges qui seront accordées aux habitations incendiées, jusqu'au moment où leurs établissements seront réparés. Il sera tenu en conséquence compte par la colonie de toutes les avances qui pourront être faites par la Grande-Bretagne, pour suppléer au déficit des dites impositions. Le dit déficit, ainsi que toutes les autres dépenses publiques de la colonie autres que celles relatives aux escadres des vaisseaux du Roi qui y seront employés seront defrayés par la colonie.

Accordé.

11) Le représentant de Sa Majesté Britannique à Saint-Domingue s'adressera au gouvernement espagnol pour la restitution des nègres et des animaux vendus dans son territoire par les negres revoltes.

Accordé.



12) L'importation des vivres, bestiaux, grains et bois de toute espèce des États-Unis de l'Amérique, sera permise à Saint-Domingue sur des vaisseaux américains.

Accordé, pourvu que les bâtiments américains n'aient qu'un seul port d'importation; cette importation aura lieu tant qu'elle paraîtra nécessaire pour l'approvisionnement et le rétablissement de la colonie, ou jusqu'à ce qu'on ait pris des mesures pour la mettre à cet égard sur le même pied que les colonies anglaises. Il sera tenu un état exact des vaisseaux, avec la description de leur cargaison, lequel sera envoyé tous les trois mois aux Commissaires de la Trésorerie de Sa Majesté Britannique, ainsi qu'à un des principaux Secrétares d'État. Sous aucun prétexte, il ne sera permis aux dits vaisseaux de prendre en chargement aucune denrée de la colonie, à l'exception de la mélasse, du rhum et du tafia.

Aucune partie des susdites propositions ne pourra être considérée comme une restriction au pouvoir qu'a le Parlement de la Grande-Bretagne de régler le gouvernement politique de la colonie.

(1) Conseil Privé11th June - 22nd Sept. 1794

C.A.I. Hanus de Jumécourt  
 P.F. Venault de Charmilly  
 le comte O'Gorman  
 F.R. Ango  
 J.B. Lespinasse  
 J.M. Delarue  
 E.J. Billard (added 2nd July)  
 Rolland (secretary)

22nd Sept. 1794 - 26th Feb. 1795

P. Belin de Villeneuve  
 E.G. Vincendon-Dutour  
 J.S. de Léaumont  
 Billard  
 L. Gueydon (added 25th Sept.)  
 F. Legras (added 21st Nov.)  
 H. Jouette (secretary)

11th June - late July 1795

Belin de Villeneuve  
 Vincendon-Dutour  
 de Léaumont  
 C.P. de Ronseray  
 Jouette (secretary)

August 1795 (interim)

Belin de Villeneuve  
 Billard  
 P.J. Laborie  
 Duranton

28th Aug. 1795 onwards

Belin de Villeneuve  
 Laborie (until 26th October)  
 le vicomte Dulau D'Allemans  
 le chevalier Dubreuil de Villars  
 J.B.J. Busson  
 J.B.J. Loménie de Marmé (added 11th Nov.)

In July 1797, Dulau D'Allemans and Belin de Villeneuve retired.  
 On 8th August 1797, Billard and Hanus de Jumécourt were reinstated.



(ii) Conseil Supérieur

Dumas, Bérault Saint Maurice, de Ronseray, Bocquet de Fréven, de Conigliano, Valentin de Cullion père, de la Chasse de Couédie, Gouin, Petit Deschampeaux, Chesneau de la Mégrière, Bascher de la Boisjoly, Baron, Salvau de Jonquière, Bourdon de la Millière, Philippe de la Marnière.

In July 1795, Jonquière and Marnière were replaced by Laborie and Collet, and in September, Lambert and de Cotte replaced Dumas and Bérault.

In August 1797, Petit Deschampeaux died and Baron was dismissed.

(iii) Administration des Biens des Absents

Receiver-general: A. Malouet d'Alibert.

Principal Administrators: L.M. de Léaumont (Port au Prince); Duranton and, later, Reignier du Timat (Grand'Anse); Saint-Aigne (Saint Marc).

Local Administrators: L. Vendryes (Port au Prince); Trinquart (Saint Marc); Brault Adam, then Cizos (Croix des Bouquets); Saint-Cyr Prévost (Mirebalais); Reignier du Timat, then P. Morin (Abricots); Oliver (Cayemittes); Richer (Jérémie); Gasnier du Tessé (Mole); Valentin de Cullion (Arcahaye).

APPENDIX E.TRADE FIGURES(i) Exports from the Grand'Anse (livres weight)

	<u>Coffee</u>	<u>Cocoa</u>	<u>Cotton</u>	<u>Brown Sugar</u>	<u>Clayed Sugar</u>
Year ending 30th Sept.1794	15,946,604	558,504	298,037	386,300	30,546
Year ending 30th Sept.1795	16,979,165	681,851	317,411	484,787	2,310

Source: WO 1/63, 423. livre = 1.08 lbs.

(ii) Exports from Saint Marc and Arcahaye, 5th July - 22nd August 1794 (livres weight)

	<u>Coffee</u>	<u>Indigo</u>	<u>Cotton</u>	<u>Brown Sugar</u>	<u>Clayed Sugar</u>
<u>Saint Marc</u>					
to Br. ports	348,440		201,862	611,441	
to Fo. ports	873,891	1,020	23,301	725,942	2,000
<u>Arcahaye</u>					
to Br. ports	163,315		56,050	383,978	
to Fo. ports	49,477		5,500	237,779	

Source: CO 137/93 Williamson to Portland 13th September 1794.

(iii) Exports from Port au Prince, 20th Feb. 1795 - 29th Feb. 1796 (livres weight). Produce of Arcahaye, Mirebalais and Grands Bois.

<u>Coffee</u>	<u>Indigo</u>	<u>Cotton</u>	<u>Brown Sugar</u>	<u>Clayed Sugar</u>
8,660,416	6,072	609,300	9,846,439	12,032

Source: WO 1/64, 246 - 7.



British Trade with Saint Domingue, Martinique and the British West Indies

Pounds sterling, Customs House values

	<u>Saint Domingue</u>		<u>Martinique</u>		<u>British West Indies</u>	
	<u>Exports</u>	<u>Imports</u>	<u>Exports</u>	<u>Imports</u>	<u>Exports</u>	<u>Imports</u>
1793	4,753	?	1,216	?	4,339,613	2,546,762
1794	182,162	116,649	355,309	173,781	4,494,594	3,337,903
1795	236,282	163,726	358,134	244,305	3,838,240	2,176,433
1796	106,812	31,829	558,991	891,311	3,487,394	2,870,549
1797	154,514	165,137	818,043	467,753	3,521,231	2,647,032
1798	271,162	61,237	803,207	1,144,968	4,510,789	4,447,372
1799	19,896	?	704,942	856,620	5,154,371	4,503,375

Sources: P.R.O., CUST 17/15-21; BT 6/141 and 185. When the sources conflict, I have chosen the highest figures. Trade with Ireland is not included.

APPENDIX F.BRITISH TROOPS SENT TO SAINT DOMINGUE.

<u>Number</u>	<u>Regiment</u>	<u>Date of Arrival</u>
801	13th and 49th Foot with artillery and engineers.	Mid-Sept. to late Oct. 1793.
370	20th Foot.	31st Jan. 1794.
500	1st battalion Royals with artillery.	Mid-Feb. - late April.
1860	Battalion companies of 22nd, 23rd and 41st Foot.	19th May.
290	Flank companies of 22nd, 23rd, 35th and 41st Foot.	8th June.
40	Remainder of flank companies after convalescence in Jamaica.	June - August.
55	Detachments of 16th and 62nd Foot.	c. 1st October.
100	Miscellaneous recruits.	Jan. - Dec.
1505	81st and 96th Foot.	24th April 1795.
148	Recruits for the Royals.	April.
110	Miscellaneous recruits.	Jan. - July.
125	Flank companies of 130th Foot.	Late July.
1161	82nd Foot and 3 companies of 83rd Foot.	Early August.
513	Detachments of 130th and 83rd Foot, and 18th Light Dragoons.	October.
483	Miscellaneous recruits.	Aug. - Dec.
2200	66th and 69th Foot with artillery.	February 1796.
6700	17th, 32nd, 56th, 67th Foot, with detachments of 39th, 93rd and 99th. 13th, 14th, 17th and 18th Light Dragoons with artillery, engineers and hospital corps.	May - July.
400	3rd Irish Regiment.	Late August.
910	Miscellaneous recruits.	Jan. - Dec.



<u>Number</u>	<u>Regiment</u>	<u>Date of Arrival</u>
336	Return of 3rd Irish Regiment.	April 1797.
400	40th Foot and other detachments.	April.
580	2nd Irish Regiment.	Sept. - Dec.
400	Miscellaneous recruits.	Jan. - Dec.
400	60th Foot.	Early 1798.
250	Miscellaneous recruits.	Jan. - Sept. 1798.

Most of these figures, which include officers, N.C.O.s and drummers as well as rank and file, are open to question. Regimental returns, district returns, estimates given in military correspondence and those in printed works are very often at variance, with errors difficult to identify. Most of the regimental monthly returns (WO 17) are incomplete; some are totally lacking. However, I have usually preferred their evidence to that of other sources. I have also obtained useful material from JAJ IX 213, CO 245/1, 157-9, the Royal Gazette, S.R.O., GD 193/3/5 and WO 1/60, 15 and 265.

The number of recruits is difficult to pin down. Whitehall recruiting statistics show hundreds raised in Britain for regiments then in Saint Domingue but it is not clear how many reached the colony. Regimental returns usually show occasional large additions of recruits along with fairly regular but numerically small enlistments, which may have been made in Saint Domingue itself, though more probably in Jamaica, where recruiting parties are sometimes mentioned.

## GLOSSARY

A.G.N.	Archivo General de la Nación, Dominican Republic
A.N.	Archives Nationales, Paris
A.N.O.M.	" " , Section d'Outre-Mer
B.N.	Bibliothèque Nationale, Manuscrits, Paris
B.M., Add. Ms.	British Museum, Additional Manuscript
B.M., Eg. Ms.	" " , Egerton Manuscript
B.P.L.	Boston Public Library, Massachusetts
C.U.L.	Cambridge University Library
H.M.C.	Historical Manuscripts Commission
I.J.	Institute of Jamaica, Kingston
J.A.	Jamaica Archives, Spanish Town
J.A.V.A.C.	Jamaica Archives, Vice-Admiralty Court Papers
N.L.S.	National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh
P.P.	Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons
P.R.O.	Public Records Office, London
R.A.M.C.	Royal Army Medical College Muniments
S.R.O.	Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh
U.C.M.M.	Universidad Católica de Madre y Maestra, Dominican Republic
W.I.C.L.	West India Committee Library, London

As all works cited are listed in the bibliography, only short titles of secondary works are given in the notes. Two oft-quoted and well-known books are cited only by their authors' names:- Moreau de Saint-Méry, Description...de la partie française de l'isle Saint Domingue and Garran-Coulon, Rapport sur les troubles de Saint Domingue.

Reference to the Public Record Office is omitted in citations of P.R.O. Colonial Office, War Office and Foreign Office papers.



## NOTES

### INTRODUCTION

- 1) Debien, Les Colons 29-57.
- 2) Garran-Coulon I 16. Officially, the average importation in 1785-90 was 29,333 p.a. but illegal imports were généralement reconnu to be au moins 9/10,000 p.a., according to one contemporary: CO 245/10, 6 and 122. However, see Geggus, Slaves part 2. A contemporary Spanish estimate put them at 3000 p.a.: U.C.M.M., Colección Incháustegui, Documentos AGI-AGS 1750-99 II, (hereafter: 'U.C.M.M. typescripts'), 'Estado de lo que fué el comercio de dicha colonia antes de la revolución' - not at 25,000 p.a., as reported in Laurent, Archives 11. Fouchard, Liberté 218, puts legal imports for 1790 at an incredible 46,471. Some account should be taken of a small re-export trade to Santo Domingo.
- 3) The 'Précis Historique des Annales de la Colonie Françoise de Saint Domingue depuis 1789 à l'année...', (hereafter: 'Précis Historique'), I 2 gives the 1789 population as 35,000 whites, 30,000 free coloureds, 480,000 slaves. The Intendant estimated it at 35,440 whites, 26,666 free coloureds, 509,642 slaves: Garran-Coulon I 15-18. Troops and seamen probably amounted to another 5000.
- 4) Garran-Coulon IV 18.
- 5) Ott, Revolution 204-5.
- 6) Ott relied incautiously on contemporary American newspaper reports and on fantasy works like Alexis, Black Liberator. Cf. Geggus, Volte-Face, for an example of how errors compounded by successive writers have clouded an already obscure issue.

### CHAPTER I

- 1) Merivale, Lectures 66.
- 2) Saintoyant, Ancien Regime II 352; Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 105-6.
- 3) Laborie, Appendix 46; Maurel, Cahiers 26.
- 4) Moreau de Saint-Méry I 35; Wimpffen, Voyage 54; Frostin, Révoltes blanches 366-7.
- 5) Rotberg, Haiti 29, 32; Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 81.
- 6) Wimpffen, Voyage 202-8; Moreau de Saint-Méry II 907ff.
- 7) Wimpffen really only knew the Jacmel area. Moreau de Saint-Méry, though infinitely better informed, was most at home describing the North.
- 8) Corvington, Port au Prince I 81ff.
- 9) Moreau de Saint-Méry III 1384, II 987, I 358.

- 10) Rotberg, Haiti 31; Ponce, Vues and Moreau de Saint-Méry *passim*.
- 11) Vaissière, Saint Domingue 291-2; Cabon, Haiti I 253; Debien, Grand' cases *passim*.
- 12) Malenfant, Colonies 169; Wimpffen, Voyage 117; Laborie, Appendix 113; Brougham, Inquiry I 44-50; Vaissière, Saint Domingue 299, 329.
- 13) Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 17-18, 46, 79; Vaissière, Saint Domingue 300-1.
- 14) Especially against lawyers acting as plantation attornies who swindled absentee owners in collusion with their managers: Wimpffen, Voyage 327.
- 15) Debien, Les Colons 44.
- 16) Moreau de Saint-Méry I 18. Cf. Wimpffen, Voyage 107-118. Neighbours, he said, hardly knew one another. He also stressed local jealousies and disputes.
- 17) Quoted in Vaissière, Saint Domingue 327.
- 18) Frostin, Histoire introduction, and Révoltes blanches 17, 60-62.
- 19) The plantation leases and inventories in A.N.O.M., Domaine, Saint Domingue, Administration anglaise, 15 vols., (hereafter: 'Absentee Inventories'), give a good idea of the extent to which intermarriage and inheritance had complicated land ownership in the plains of Cul de Sac and Arcahaye. Furthermore, these properties were watered by elaborate irrigation works, whose financing had demanded a certain degree of corporate organisation on the planters' part. See CO 245/6-8 *passim*.
- 20) See above, n.16; also, Vaissière, Saint Domingue 323-4. Frostin, Histoire examines the 'moral decline' of 18th century Saint Domingue.
- 21) Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 17-18, claims that whites were more often married than in Jamaica. However, the numbers cannot have been very impressive, as the sex ratio of the white population was nearly 230:100. See above, n.3, for sources.
- 22) See Wimpffen, Voyage 167-9; Vaissière, Saint Domingue 280; Debien, Un Colon 13, 15.
- 23) Debien, Etudes 1-137, Plantations et Esclaves 47, Les Colons 41-42. However, to a certain extent sugar and coffee planters bid for a different sort of slave: Geggus, Slaves part 2.
- 24) Debien, Les Colons 42.
- 25) Vaissière, Saint Domingue 115. Cf. Thésée and Debien, Colon niortais 29, n.17.
- 26) Malenfant, Colonies 209.
- 27) Debien, Etudes 136.
- 28) Frostin, Histoire I 433, II 687-714.
- 29) Debien, Main d'Oeuvre 260, Les Colons 42; Wimpffen, Voyage 59.
- 30) Vaissière, Saint Domingue 338.
- 31) CO 245/1, 130-8, memoir by César Dubuc Saint-Olympe.



- 32) Debien, Les Colons 36-37.
- 33) Madariaga, Fall 118; Goveia, Leeward Islands 164-6, 206-212, 218-224; Brathwaite, Jamaica 135-150, 167-175.
- 34) Debien, Etudes 136.
- 35) Précis Historique I 35; Pauléus-Sannon, Histoire I 69.
- 36) Debbasch, Marronage 39.
- 37) 'Manager' is here used to translate gérant, and 'overseer' to translate économe. Confusingly, in Jamaica and in many monographs 'overseer' denotes a manager.
- 38) Carteaux, Soirées 39.
- 39) Debien, Les Colons 40. Cf. Wimpffen, Voyage 63.
- 40) Debien, Les Colons 30.
- 41) Edwards, Survey 166; (unless otherwise stated, notes refer to the 1801 edition). Edwards was a former president of the Assembly of Jamaica.
- 42) Rotberg, Haiti 383-5.
- 43) Thésée, Négotiants 134.
- 44) One merchant house found that most of its 50 clients could apparently do little more than cover production costs: *ibid.* 208, (though clandestine sales were probably a factor here). Wimpffen was 'surprised at the trifling profits of the planters': Voyage 72-78. Yet, Léon, Marchands 126 estimates a 15%-20% net profit for one Arcahaye sucrerie. Others made 10%, but 5%-8% was more normal; Debien, Plantations et Esclaves 169.
- 45) Hill, Haiti 9.
- 46) Thésée, Négotiants 76, 220-1; Thésée and Debien, Colon niortais 34.
- 47) CO 245/1, 130-8.
- 48) Proceedings of the Assembly 7.
- 49) Cf. the cahiers printed in Maurel, Cahiers 270-1, 301-2, 312-3.
- 50) Laurent, Archives 5.
- 51) Gaston-Martin, Esclavage 174-5. In 1788-9, le prix commun et le plus modéré of a newly-imported slave was 2100 livres coloniales: CO 245/10, 6; Edwards, Survey 241. However, around April 1789, prices reached 2800 livres: Wimpffen, Voyage 71, 76-78. That is, twice what English contraband traders charged. On the currency, see Appendix A.
- 52) For contemporary estimates of its extent, see WO 1/59, 517-8; CO 245/10, xiii-xiv, 1-18, 119-122; Laurent, Archives 8-12.
- 53) Fieldhouse, Empires 91. However, in 1790 the Spanish Empire was thrown open to foreign slaveships.
- 54) Ragatz, Fall 16, 126.
- 55) Wimpffen, Voyage 324. A Spanish source says 6%, sometimes nothing, was charged: Laurent, Archives 7. Boissonade, Veille 309, says interest rates went up to 15%. Whatever, it was much less than what Virginia planters were

paying around 1770: see Miller, Origins xv. The subject is discussed further in ch.III.

56) Boissonade, Veille 309 - perhaps a conservative estimate, given that the 50 estates dealing with Romberg, Bapst et Cie. owed in 1791 nine million livres: Thésée, Négotiants 215-7.

57) Bégouen-Démeaux, Foäche 25.

58) Cited in Debien, Les Colons 40.

59) Debien, Magistrats II 1.

60) Frostin, Histoire II 632-6.

61) Fieldhouse, Empires 40-41; Laborie, Appendix 63-73.

62) Frostin, Révoltes blanches 369-370. These were generally young lawyers from the Paris bar, like Pélage-Marie Dubois, who was probably the anonymous author of the Précis Historique: Geggus, Auteur passim; WO 1/59, 781-5.

63) E.g. Saintoyant, Ancien Regime and Boissonade, Veille passim; Ardouin, Etudes I 40-41; Gaston-Martin, Esclavage 108-9. Frostin, Histoire, however, is broadly favourable and Vaissière, Saint Domingue positively enthusiastic. Précis Historique I 4, 13 claims the only scope for corruption in the colony was the retention of and speculation with public funds by financial administrators. This was standard practice in 18th century France: Bosher, Finances.

64) Edwards, Survey 31; Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 18-22. Cf. Laborie, Appendix 7-14; Dalmas, Histoire I 19.

65) Moreau de Saint-Méry I 18-19.

66) Pauléus-Sannon, Histoire I 10-15. The militia was reviewed every three months in Saint Domingue but in Jamaica and St. Kitts it was not reviewed once in the nine years following the American War: Laborie, Appendix 109; CO 137/89, Williamson to Dundas 18th September 1791; Goveia, Leeward Islands 79.

67) See above, n.48.

68) See Debien, Esprit d'Indépendance and Esprit Colon.

69) See Debien, Magistrats passim, Frostin, Histoire II 646, 724-6. This call to the British remains unproven.

70) See his review of Frostin's Histoire.

71) It was, Garran-Coulon noted, the source of favours, local commands and Croix de Saint Louis: I 20, IV 102. However, for one revolutionary colonist who refused to be bought off with a Croix de Saint Louis, see Thésée, Négotiants 132-3.

72) Frostin, Révoltes blanches 13; 166-7.

73) Ibid., 370-1; Lynch, Revolutions 11-12; Goveia, Leeward Islands 78-79; Cambridge Modern History VIII 417; Kinsbruner, Movements 36; Boxer, Portuguese 202-3; Lynch, Revolutions 192; Brathwaite, Jamaica 72.



- 74) Fieldhouse, Empires 104.
- 75) See Bégouen-Démeaux, Foàche 111-2; Thésée and Debien, Colon niortais 31-32, 41.
- 76) Garran-Coulon IV 25-26.
- 77) Frostin, Histoire II 649ff.; Palmer, Revolution; Godechot, Revolution. They may be summarised thus:- internationally-felt pressures of population growth, rising prices and egalitarian ideas; the interaction of war and revolution; the government search from the 1760's onwards for new sources of revenue; the opposition this met with from 'constituted bodies', defending and trying to extend their privileges; the temporary alliance of such bodies with popular forces who shared the increasing desire for personal autonomy.
- 78) Boissonade, Veille 555-6; Garran-Coulon I 154; Debien, Esprit Colon 33.
- 79) See Debien, Esprit Colon 494; Saintoyant, Revolution I 50-51.
- 80) See Frostin, Révoltes blanches 302. Judging from the romanticised rubbish he wrote about North America, (see the quotation in Palmer, Revolution 254), his reliability is perhaps suspect, though he knew Saint Domingue rather better than the U.S.
- 81) Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 4.
- 82) Maurel, Cahiers 63-64.
- 83) This is perhaps what had limited British colonial losses to thirteen: Metcalf, Jamaica 228, 237.
- 84) As will be seen, however, many colonists trusted their slaves to the extent of arming them as allies. This curious but common phenomenon, though always the product of desperate circumstances, says much for the cohesion of slave society.
- 85) Frostin, Histoire II 647.
- 86) An interesting testimony to this is a légère apologie des Français, written by a creole who was to be the last Governor of Saint Domingue, François Galbaud: A.N., Dxxv 49/470, 'Réflexions sur l'esprit de Politique qui guide la France et l'Angleterre'. He resented 'les sarcasmes continuels et peu fondés que se permettent les Anglais venus en France sur ma Patrie' and 'cet orgueil si justement reproché aux Anglais'. He further thought unjustified 'cette maturité de jugement et cette justesse de raisonnement auxquels ils prétendent'. Yet, the nation he preferred after the French, was the English.
- 87) Frostin, Histoire II 632-4; Burns, History 506; Keith, Policy I 53-65.
- 88) Both the generous capitulation accorded to Guadeloupe, and Whitehall's later decision to allow foreign subjects to retain their own laws and institutions (apart from the criminal law) and even to permit Catholics to circumvent the Test Act, pointed towards a more humane period in the history



of imperialism. War, henceforth, held less terror for the West Indian. See the comments of the Comte de la Barre in Debien, Un Colon 135.

89) Frostin, Intervention and Histoire passim.

90) Even in Quebec, where a policy of discrimination was simply not practicable, English colonists dominated the Council. In Dominica, French colonists were belatedly granted the franchise only if they understood English, while elsewhere discrimination was much more marked: Goodridge, Dominica 155; Russell, Grenada 15-21; Shepard, St. Vincent 46; Nardin, Tabague 180.

91) P.R.O., 30/8/348, 163-175, 268-270; Russell, Grenada 15-21; Cambridge History of the British Empire III 51-3; Harlow and Madden, Documents 81-82.

92) Murray, Development 51; B.M., Add. Ms. 38353, 130.

93) Boromé, Occupation 104, 114; Attwood, Dominica 206. Even French Grenadians born under British rule seem to have maintained close links with France to the extent of buying property there: FO 27/37, Caseaux to Grenville 12th November 1791.

94) Galarneau, Opinion 11-105; Wallot, Canada 368-370, 402-3; Chalmers, Remarks 82.

95) P.R.O., 30/8/348, 349; Russell, Grenada passim; Goodridge, Dominica 156; Shepard, St. Vincent 56-75; S.R.O., GD 51/1, 512.

96) Toussignant, Seigneurs passim.

97) Galarneau, Opinion 63.

98) Précis Historique I 226.

99) And not only the large ones; see A.N.O.M., Absentee Inventories.

100) Moreau de Saint-Méry I 34 calls it une manie. Frostin, Histoire II 693-4 criticises Debien for the importance he attaches to this phenomenon but is not convincing.

101) Moreau de Saint-Méry I 9.

102) See Précis Historique I 131, where it is claimed that plantations run by Frenchmen were at least 50% more productive than those of creoles.

103) Ibid. For an example, see Debien, Etudes 1-137. See also the lament of the creole Rouaudières in Debien, Lettres 20-21.

104) In 1788, the comité coloniale wrote to the king, 'Sire, les liens du sang, ces liens que rien ne saurait rompre, ont uni pour jamais votre noblesse avec Saint Domingue; votre cœur est devenue créole par les alliances': Maurel, Cahiers 120 n.2.

105) In this respect, one should note that the French West Indian seeking an education had to go to Europe, unlike his Spanish- and English-speaking counterparts.

106) Quoted in Vaissière, Saint Domingue 323. Cf. the memoir of Dubuc Saint Olympe, cited above, n.31. Before the Revolution, he says, all classes in Saint Domingue were 'occupés d'une manière trop avantageuse à eux-mêmes' to interfere in matters of government, though it were oppressive 'en plus d'un



point'. Because of 'l'ignorance incroyable des habitants de Saint Domingue et cette vanité qui est le Compagne ordinaire des grandes richesses acquises par héritage et d'une éducation peu soignée...et cette diversité d'opinions multipliée presque en proportion exacte du nombre des individus', only in late 1789 'le rage de se mêler de l'administration générale de la colonie s'empara de toute les têtes'.

107) Kinsbruner, Movements 17-18; Gibson, Spain 205-6.

108) Saintoyant, Ancien Regime II 355. Cf. Frostin, Histoire I 4: 'les blancs... s'aspiraient profondément de former une nation distincte de la Métropole, avec ses droits reconnus, et dont les rapports avec la France seraient ceux d'un associé et non ceux d'une colonie'.

109) Debien, Les Colons 33.

110) Ibid., 35. They certainly did so in the West and South.

111) One need not appeal to the vagaries of national character to explain such phenomena. The amount of miscegenation can be attributed to the very high sex ratio of the white population, which according to Moreau de Saint-Méry was exceptional: I 107. Manumission very much reflected the degree of miscegenation and was facilitated, de Charmilly claimed, by the relative wealth of Saint Domingue's plantation managers. Mixed marriages, he further observed, were encouraged by the French laws of inheritance and bastardy: Lettre 16-17.

112) Lettre 16-17.

113) Moreau de Saint-Méry I 91-92, 102, 105, 107-8.

114) French law restricted inheritance by bastards and in 1773 bequests made to coloured bastards were specifically limited, but to little effect: Laborie, Appendix 50-51; Cabon, Haiti I 346-7.

115) 'Mulatto' will be used in its broader sense of 'free coloured'.

116) This tendency was apparently echoed among the planters of 19th century Louisiana: see Degler, Neither 84 n.94.

117) Brathwaite, Jamaica 174.

118) Garran-Coulon II 551; Casimir etc., Problemas 52.

119) The maréchaussée was the rural mounted police, in which service was compulsory for mulattoes.

120) Cited in Gisler, Esclavage 95.

121) Edwards, Survey 35.

122) Maurel, Cahiers 61 n.; Thésée and Debien, Colon niortais 24; Edwards, Survey 33, but cf. Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 25-37.

123) Edwards, Survey 34-35; also Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 36-37.

124) Vaissière, Saint Domingue 217 and Moreau de Saint-Méry I 85 give conflicting views. Mixed marriage, pace Hall, Social Control 145-6, was not banned in Saint Domingue.

125) Debien, Les Colons 35; Frostin, Histoire II 661.



- 126) Gisler, Esclavage 97-98.
- 127) The British West Indian colonies further displayed a more enlightened attitude in legally recognising as 'white' persons three generations removed from a black ancestor. The segregation of the militia was a greater grievance in Saint Domingue, where the free coloureds, often wealthy and talented, formed the backbone of the institution. See Edwards, Survey 33-35 and his memoir of 16th May 1793 in CO 137/91; also the accompanying French memoir, probably by V.P. Malouet. Criticisms of Edwards' opinions are found in Précis Historique I, ch.I, and Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 25-37, both written specifically to refute them.
- 128) W.D. Jordan, The American Chiaroscuro in Foner and Genovese, Slavery.
- 129) Debien, Les Colons 36; Genovese, World part 3. See also the French memoir cited in note 127, which mentions un lien politique between the mulattoes and les véritables colons.
- 130) Frostin, Histoire II 658-684; Debien, Magistrats II passim.
- 131) Debien, Les Colons 137.
- 132) Saintoyant, Ancien Regime II 359.
- 133) See Gisler, Esclavage 96 n.1, 98 n.4; Debien, Les Colons 36; Fouchard, Marrons 325, and the French memoir cited above, note 127.
- 134) The Intendant in 1789 put the slave population at 509,600: Garran-Coulon I 18. The 1789 census showed 465,429: Ducoeurjoly, Manuel I clxxxiv. Under-registration, however, was a notorious fact and seems to have been put at around 10%: see CO 245/5, Billard's report of 11 octobre 1794. Cf. above, note 2.
- 135) Debbasch, Marronage I 71.
- 136) Edwards, History II 2; Geggus, Slaves part 1.
- 137) Gaston-Martin, Esclavage 119.
- 138) Such men rarely ran away: Davis, Societies 24. For a case-study of an atelier of creolized Africans, see Debien, Plantations et Esclaves, second study.
- 139) Most of the accomplices of the poisoner Macandal were apparently house slaves: Fouchard, Liberté 493.
- 140) Debien, Etudes 119. It has been suggested that the greater creolization of Martinique's slave population helps explain its greater stability in the Revolution: Wilgus, Caribbean 99-100. It might, on the contrary, explain why Martinique's slaves were the first to revolt at the news of the French Revolution.
- 141) Debien, Les Esclaves 345.
- 142) Geggus, Slaves part 1. New World planters generally claimed that a high sex ratio was the main cause of their slave population's low natality. It seems this may have led them to exaggerate the disparity between men and women.



- 143) Wimpffen, Voyage 55.
- 144) Cited in Vaissière, Saint Domingue 174.
- 145) Genovese, Red and Black 160-1; Edwards, Survey 36-37.
- 146) See Wimpffen, Voyage 242 and Précis Historique I 8, whose probable author, P.-M. Dubois, was arrested in 1789 for championing slaves' rights: cf. Geggus, Auteur passim and Edwards, Survey 45.
- 147) E.g. see Debien, Archives privées 427 and Plantations et Esclaves 52-53.
- 148) Gisler, Esclavage 38, 41 n.1.
- 149) Cited in *ibid.*, 70, 193. Cf. the sensitive Wimpffen's rapid accommodation to colonial ways: Voyage 98.
- 150) Cited in Gisler, Esclavage 51 n.5.
- 151) Malenfant, Colonies 205.
- 152) This paragraph is based on Gisler, Esclavage 77-127.
- 153) *Ibid.* 120.
- 154) *Ibid.* 45.
- 155) Debien, Les Esclaves ch.20; Debien, Main d'Oeuvre 277-283.
- 156) Garran-Coulon IV 25-26.
- 157) Debien, Les Esclaves 494.
- 158) Rotberg, Haiti 29; Gisler, Esclavage 39. Fertility was markedly lower on the sucreries, despite the greater creolization of their workforces: Geggus, Slaves part 1.
- 159) Debien, Les Esclaves 493; but cf. Debien, Main d'Oeuvre 282.
- 160) A.N.O.M., Absentee Inventories, especially those of Fond Baptiste; Thésée and Debien, Colon Niortais 44-45.
- 161) Moreau de Saint-Méry I 85. But cf. Laborie, Appendix 59.
- 162) Gaston-Martin, Esclavage 165.
- 163) Sheridan, Era 108; Genovese, Slaveholders part 2; Degler, Neither 44-46; Curtin, Census 29; Thomas, Cuba 69-75.
- 164) Laborie, Appendix 56; Debien, Les Esclaves 394-5. The attempts of Fouchard, Liberté ch.7 and Hall, Control 62-66 to emphasise overt resistance to slavery in Saint Domingue are not notably successful.
- 165) Patterson, Sociology 274-9: high ratios of black to white and African to creole, mountainous topography, poor conditions aggravated by absenteeism, lax white vigilance and, latterly, the unsettling effect of reformism. Only the concentration of Akan slaves was lacking.
- 166) See the list in Tyson, Toussaint 7. Jean-Baptiste, Haiti 44, 62, confuses revolts with conspiracies and maroon disturbances. Given that evidence of conspiracy was doubtless often extracted by torture, one wonders how reliable much of it is. Cf. Moreau de Saint-Méry I 392; Vaissière, Saint Domingue 232.
- 167) Davis, Societies 110; Debbasch, Marronage 75.



- 168) Debbasch, Marronage 102, 40; Debien, Les Colons 31 and Les Esclaves 466-8. One must remember that the 'liberty' in question almost certainly meant the life of a fugitive or death in revolt. Fouchard, Liberté does something to advance the 'Haitian' viewpoint but grossly overstrains his evidence. Without any adequate quantification of the phenomenon, the debate over marronage continues, each side concentrating on different aspects.
- 169) Garran-Coulon III 299; Debbasch, Marronage I 186-191.
- 170) Finley, Institution isolates the last two factors as the essential strengths of slave systems in all periods. 'Inferiority' is of course a portmanteau word but one might observe that self-deprecation remains a West Indian trait.
- 171) Price-Mars, Oncle 57, 94-95; Moreau de Saint-Méry I 69-70; Ducoeurjoly, Manuel II 112; Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 13-14. Cf. Degler, Neither 54-59; Boxer, Brazil 176-7, 313; Patterson, Sociology 152, 281.
- 172) Price-Mars, Oncle 172.
- 173) Cf. 'shipmates' in Jamaica, 'mulongues' in Martinique, 'malungos' in Brazil, 'mati' and 'sibi' in Surinam, and 'carabelas' in Cuba.
- 174) Moreau de Saint-Méry I 70; Debbasch, Marronage I 17. Cf. Patterson, Sociology 171-3.
- 175) Debbasch, Marronage I 40. See the moving request for manumission by an elite slave in Bégouen-Démeaux, Foäche 110.
- 176) Moreau de Saint-Méry I 79.
- 177) Ibid. 67-69. Wimpffen, too, thought the 'Sorcerers' 'extremely dangerous': Voyage 131.
- 178) See Gluckman, Rituals for a comparison of possible relevance.
- 179) Saintoyant, Ancien Regime II 358; Vaissière, Saint Domingue.
- 180) At least this is the interpretation of Davis, Culture 414.
- 181) Carteaux, Soirées 267-8; Wimpffen, Voyage 240.
- 182) Cited in Pauléus-Sannon, Histoire III 35.
- 183) Gisler, Esclavage ch.I; Davis, Culture 391ff., and Revolution 39-98; Debien, Les Esclaves 493.
- 184) Gaston-Martin, Esclavage 168.
- 185) Thésée and Debien, Colon Niortais 32-60; Boissonade, Veille 322; Léon, Marchands 138-9. Debien, Les Colons 32, 58 perhaps underrates the early impact of the Amis des Noirs in the colony and seems unclear when they first became known there.
- 186) Bégouen-Démeaux, Foäche 110-1; Thésée and Debien, Colon Niortais 31, 41.
- 187) Augier, etc. West Indies 144, 146; Patterson, Sociology 279.
- 188) Wimpffen, Voyage 63, 108.
- 189) Goveia, Leeward Islands 147, 164.
- 190) Debien, Les Colons 31, 58; CO 245/1, 130; Edwards, Survey 25-38.
- 191) Fieldhouse, Empires 113.



## CHAPTER II.

- 1) The phrase comes from the colonists' letter to the king, supposedly written on 31st May 1788, printed in Maurel, Cahiers 115-123; see Carteaux, Soirées 28-30.
- 2) Debien, Les Colons 53-54.
- 3) Maurel, Cahiers 16-20, 124.
- 4) Ibid. 30.
- 5) Ibid. 38-39; Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 48; Debien, Les Colons 66, 73.
- 6) Debien, Les Colons 66.
- 7) Ibid. 64-75.
- 8) Laborie, Appendix 48. This revealing passage perhaps helps explain why Frostin and Debien do not agree on the importance of the petits blancs in colonial society.
- 9) Précis Historique I 31, 57. Cf. Pétion, Discours 2: 'Les desseins ambitieux de quelques chefs de partie, jaloux de jouer un grand rôle, les manœuvres de gens qui, n'ayant rien à perdre, ne conçoivent ni d'espoir ni de ressource que dans le désordre.'
- 10) Garran-Coulon I 82-88; Debien, Les Colons 208-9.
- 11) Garran-Coulon I 161-175.
- 12) Boissonade, Veille 335 and 478; Maurel, Cahiers 348-392.
- 13) It is printed in Maurel, Cahiers 263-283.
- 14) Curiously, Maurel doubts its authenticity, while accepting as genuine the much more extreme letter that accompanied it: ibid. 235-242, 299-303. A pamphlet by Cocherel, deputy for the West, provides a striking parallel: see Pauléus-Sannon, Histoire I 60.
- 15) Boissonade, Veille 404; Maurel, Cahiers 107-9.
- 16) Some actually wanted to divide the militia into five classes, separating planters and attornies from petits blancs, and first and second generation affranchis from other free coloureds, as well as from free blacks: Maurel, Cahiers 200.
- 17) Palmer, Revolution *passim*. Cf. Garran-Coulon I 145.
- 18) Debien, Les Colons 83-93.
- 19) Rotberg, Haiti 41; Ott, Revolution 32-35.
- 20) Debien, Les Colons 215.
- 21) Garran-Coulon I 161ff.
- 22) Ibid. I 159, 182-4.
- 23) Vaissière, Saint Domingue 359-367; Debien, Travaux 41. However, see Wimpffen, Voyage 339-340 and Debien, Les Colons 209 for eyewitness accounts that stress the 'town against country' aspect of these struggles. Outside the North, merchants often seem to have supported the Revolution, as did



- some minor officials like Mongin and Bérault Saint Maurice.
- 24) Saintoyant, Révolution II 425. The Parisian politician Pétion observed that both assemblies were disrespectful of the National Assembly: Discours 40-43.
  - 25) See above, note 1.
  - 26) See Maurel, Cahiers 270-1, 301-2, 312-3; Debien, Les Colons 140-2.
  - 27) They are printed in part in Garran-Coulon I 170-5.
  - 28) Pétion, Discours 23.
  - 29) See Maurel, Cahiers 263-282, 30-31.
  - 30) Debien, Les Colons 380-1.
  - 31) See the opinions of Daugy and of the second Colonial Assembly in Garran-Coulon II 98, 191.
  - 32) In Saint Domingue, this may have been due to the de facto demise of the Exclusif: cf. Léon, Marchands 137 and Debien, Les Colons 152, though by August 1790 trading with the Americans apparently had still not become generalised: see Debien, Nouvelles I 23.
  - 33) See below, ch. III p.41.
  - 34) Wimpffen, Voyage 338, and Debien, Nouvelles I 15ff. both witness how far the Assembly had alienated colonial opinion.
  - 35) CO 137/89 Effingham to Grenville 19th March 1791; Wimpffen, Voyage 338.
  - 36) Also known as Pompons rouges or Crochus.
  - 37) Garran-Coulon II 341-352.
  - 38) For divergently extreme interpretations, see: Rüsch, Revolution and Roberts, French.
  - 39) Saintoyant, Révolution I 157-8.
  - 40) See below, note 60. Brissot suggested as a major factor abetting the slave insurrection the declining effectiveness of the maréchaussée resulting from the distraction of the free coloureds: An Inquiry 15.
  - 41) See above, p.27.
  - 42) Debien, Les Colons 156-169.
  - 43) Garran-Coulon I 106, also II 3-8.
  - 44) Ibid. I 109-114.
  - 45) Ibid. II 42-73.
  - 46) Ibid. II 87-119; Extraits des délibérations; Extraits des registres; Léon, Marchands 141.
  - 47) See above, note 37.
  - 48) As early as August 1790, the Archbishop of Santo Domingo remarked it was inevitable, in view of their numerical preponderance, that the free coloureds forcibly gain equality with the whites: UCMH typescripts I, Fernando to García agosto de 1790.
  - 49) Garran-Coulon II 212-4; WO 1/58, 1-11; Edwards, Survey 6, 93-103.
  - 50) Cited in Vaissière, Saint Domingue 368.



- 51) Wimpffen, Voyage 335; Carteaux, Soirées 77.
- 52) The Jamaican slaves were well informed both of the campaign for Abolition in England and of the slave revolt in Saint Domingue. Some celebrated Wilberforce's birthday or sang songs about the Haitian rebels. Others discussed the prospects of rebellion in Jamaica. Yet, with over 2000 troops in the otherwise undisturbed colony, they remained passive: CO 137/89, various letters. In most slave colonies most of the time, rebellion amounted to suicide. So it did in Saint Domingue in the autumn of 1791 for thousands of slaves; hence the rebels' anxiety to negotiate by November.
- 53) At full strength, the colony's peacetime garrison numbered 2,600: Moreau de Saint-Méry II 1007, 1013. However, although some 1,100 troops were sent out in January 1791, disease, desertion, officers' resignations and the deportation of the Port au Prince Regiment cannot have left many more than 2000 in the colony by August.
- 54) See Garran-Coulon II 203.
- 55) See the narratives in Carteaux, Soirées 86ff. and Debien, Les Colons 333-5.
- 56) Leyburn, People 137; Fortescue, Army IV 76.
- 57) Cited in Nicholls, Idéologie 669.
- 58) See below, pp.34-35. Of course, it was not always at the command of their own masters.
- 59) See Carteaux, Soirées 94-103; Métral, Insurrection 91-97; Garran-Coulon II 324-6, 341-2.
- 60) Apart from vague contemporary rumours, the earliest complete versions of the story seem to be General Kerverseau's report of the year X, cited in Laurent, Erreurs 19, and that in Ardouin, Essais 16-17, which was based on verbal traditions collected in Haiti before 1841. In support of such a theory, one notes that the early insurgents carried royalist banners, and called themselves gens du roi, spared the lives and property of administrative officers, and included among their demands the restoration of the monarchy: Garran-Coulon II 193, IV 47-48; Roume, Rapport 47-48. In 1811, such a manoeuvre was attempted by the royalist authorities in Venezuela: Lynch, Revolutions 197. Suggestive of a mulatto-inspired plot, is the evidence given by certain slaves, coloureds and whites just before, as well as after, the revolt began; the dominant role played by a mulatto at the famous meeting on the Lenormand plantation; mulatto leadership of rebel bands and the obscure behaviour of survivors of the Ogé rebellion: see UCMH typescripts, various letters August/October 1791; Debien, Les Colons 333; Garran-Coulon II 211-216; Saint-Rémy, Vie 18, 28; Debbasch, Marronage I 95. Jean-François and Biassou claimed to have been 'enveloppés dans les malheurs de la colonie': Garran-Coulon II 308-312. The scope for guesswork is enormous.



- 61) Garran-Coulon II 562.
- 62) Carteaux, Soirées passim.
- 63) Dalmas, Histoire I 117-8; Métraux, Vaudou 34-35.
- 64) Leyburn, People 139-140; Fouchard, Marrons 359-360.
- 65) Métraux, Vaudou 34-39; Leyburn, People 137-9.
- 66) Though it is usual to speak of 50,000 rebels, Garran-Coulon thought 12-15,000 more realistic, apparently referring to the end of August: II 214.
- 67) Debien, Les Colons 334; An Inquiry 17; Carteaux, Soirées 88-90; Garran-Coulon II 213, 217-8.
- 68) Garran-Coulon II 266-8; McIntosh and Weber, Correspondance 30, 35.
- 69) Garran-Coulon II 254-6, 335.
- 70) Ibid. II 256; Garran-Coulon, Débats I 267; Debien, Etudes 172; Léon, Marchands 193. Some 4-5000 slaves from the plain were said to have taken refuge in le Cap, while one contemporary estimate has 30,000 loyal blacks crowded into the town: CO 137/89, Effingham to Dundas 7th September 1791.
- 71) Pauléus-Sannon, Histoire I 89.
- 72) Gaston-Martin, Esclavage 128; Moreau de Saint-Méry III 1395-6.
- 73) See Debien, Plantations et Esclaves 46. The Grand' Anse region contained many slaves of British provenance but was exceptionally stable, owing to its low black:white ratio. The numerical predominance of Africans amongst the slaves and the ethnic make-up of its African population - few Gold Coast and Slave Coast negroes, numerous 'Congos' and Ibos - may also have been contributing factors: Geggus, Slaves part 2; Précis Historique I 61.
- 74) Geggus, Slaves part 5. Bryan Edwards was surprised that a 'very considerable part of the insurgents' were creole: Survey 16.
- 75) WO 1/58, 1-11; Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 13-14; Pauléus-Sannon, Histoire I 88-89.
- 76) Debbasch, Marronage I 95. The 200 inventories in A.N.O.M., Absentee Inventories reveal several cases of commandeurs rewarded for maintaining order in difficult circumstances.
- 77) Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 13-14. This may have been because the Africans were concentrated on the coffee plantations, where life was easier and which were furthest from the towns, or because they had greater difficulties communicating, owing to language barriers.
- 78) WO 1/58, 10-11; Garran-Coulon II 213, III 484-5; Carteaux, Soirées 1-3; Debien, Etudes 172; Ott, Revolution (thesis) 65; I.J., Ms.36F, dossier 103. At Quartier Morin, slaves fought off the rebels independently for several days: Dalmas, Histoire I 123-5.
- 79) Debien, Etudes 172.
- 80) Précis Historique I 35; Pauléus-Sannon, Histoire I 69.
- 81) UCMH typescripts, García to Lerena 18 de septiembre de 1791, and to



- Bajamar 25 de septiembre de 1791, with enclosures; Roume, Rapport 16; Garran-Coulon III 389, 482; Précis Historique I 70; Léon, Marchands 193; Debien, Etudes 122-3.
- 82) Garran-Coulon II 324, 334, 565.
- 83) Debbasch, Marriage I 74; Debien, Les Esclaves 468-9.
- 84) A.N., Dxxv 110/870-2 passim; Garran-Coulon II 74-176, 509-514, III 300.
- 85) Garran-Coulon III 151; Placide-Justin, Histoire 244.
- 86) The army and navy were already dislocated by the Revolution, and from October 1791 onwards the deepening rift between Right and Left and the approach of war with Austria impeded efforts to intervene: James, Jacobins 112.
- 87) Cf. Garran-Coulon II 269.
- 88) Ibid. II 281-7.
- 89) By the decree of 24th September, which was the result of Barnave's manoeuvring and the reactionary climate that set in in Paris in the summer of 1791.
- 90) Dominated by Brissot and other members of the Amis des Noirs.
- 91) Roume, Rapport 26ff.; Garran-Coulon III 81, 99-101.
- 92) Foubert, Volontaires passim.
- 93) CO 245/10, 22-23.
- 94) CO 245/1, 130-8; also the letters in Debien, Etudes 120-4, which tend to exaggerate the dangers of the situation: cf. below, ch.V
- 95) Garran-Coulon II 484, 509-514, III 99-100, 299-301; Roume, Rapport 15, 44; Précis Historique I 70.
- 96) Précis Historique I 141-2; Roume, Rapport 15; Léon, Marchands 148-9. Cf. Gegus, Slaves part 5 and A.N.O.M., Absentee Inventories for the relatively intact state of the Arcachon plantations.
- 97) Roume, Rapport 47-48; Laveaux, Compte-Rendu 11; Thesée, Négociants 177-183.
- 98) Garran-Coulon III 149; Debien, Etudes 120-4.
- 99) Garran-Coulon II 482, 487-500, III 71-77; CO 245/10, 19-40; Léon, Marchands 146-7; Thesée, Négociants 177-183; A.N.O.M., Absentee Inventories, Grand' Anse plantations.
- 100) Foubert, Volontaires
- 101) UCM typescripts, García to Lerena 25 de diciembre de 1791 with enclosures; Garran-Coulon II 306-311, 564-570, 609; Ott, Revolution (thesis) 59-60; Jean-Baptiste, Haiti 27.
- 102) Garran-Coulon II 304. Rebels in the North and West sold fellow blacks to the Spaniards as slaves; Ibid. IV 46; A.N. Dxxv 39/392, letter no. 19; Monte y Tejada, Historia IV 104-5, 141, 154-5.



- 103) See USM typescripts, García to Lorena 18 de septiembre and 25 de noviembre de 1791 with enclosures.
- 104) Roume, Rapport 47-48. The sophisticated demand for general liberty, signed Jean-François, Blasseur and Belair and dated July 1792, was unquestionably drawn up by a friendly European or free coloured. It is printed in Le Document no.3, 239-243. However, as early as 26th September 1791, a note demanding that the whites evacuate the North was found in a rebel camp, though never sent: WO 1/58, 1-11.
- 105) Roume, Rapport 47-48. By March, the Governor of Santo Domingo thought the rebels would die rather than place themselves in their masters' hands: B.M., Eg. Ms. 1794, García to M<sup>es</sup> de Bajamar, 29 de marzo de 1792.
- 106) Garran-Coulon II 344-6.
- 107) For evidence on either side, see Garran-Coulon II 506, III 40, 116, 173, 264-9, 293-5, and II 362, 422, 453-4, III 38. James's positive verdict, Jacobins 121-2 is rather weakly based.
- 108) Précis Historique I 75-76; Thesée, Négotiants 179-180; Debien, Nouvelles 34-35.
- 109) Leon, Marchands 146; Farrel and Debien, Colons 340.
- 110) CO 245/10, 19-24.
- 111) Roberts, French 198; Garran-Coulon II 126-8, 523-4, III 99, 255.
- 112) See the population statistics in Ducoeurjoly, Manuel, Introduction ii;
- 113) Garran-Coulon III 317, 356-7, 385. For conditions in the South by the summer, see Appendix B.
- 114) Garran-Coulon III 140ff.
- 115) Ibid. III 176-192, 223-8.
- 116) Ibid. III 275, 279, 371.

### CHAPTER III

- 1) Frostin, Intervention 357 and Histoire I xxxx.
- 2) Garran-Coulon IV 102-5.
- 3) Jean-Baptiste, Haiti 23. This line of argument can be variously applied. The paucity of evidence of secessionism before 1793 can be attributed not to the lack of support for it but to its scant feasibility; during 1793, one might say that the colonists were inhibited from showing their true sentiments by a justifiable scepticism as to Britain's ability to protect them, while after 1793, disillusion with foreign occupation could explain hostility to it.
- 4) Frostin, Intervention, Histoire and Révoltes Blanches. His emphasis on separatist ambitions is shared in varying degrees by the majority of writers on the Revolution, but especially Rüsch, Revolution and Jean-



Baptiste, Haiti. Cabon, Haiti III and Roberts, French, however, say the colonists acted essentially conservatively in the face of revolutionary chaos. Frostin, Intervention 296 claims that Debien's Esprit Colon and Un Colon 'mettent en valeur la permanence de l'esprit autonomiste et anglophile chez la plupart des colons de Saint Domingue'. This is clearly untrue. Debien's views are above all cautious. Cf. his review of Frostin's thesis.

5) Frostin, Intervention 357.

6) Ibid. 296, 313.

7) See chapters I and II.

8) Debien, Un Colon introduction and 135; Frostin, Intervention 296.

9) 'Si la France nous abandonnerons...si nous avons le malheur de changer de patrie...il faudra bien souffrir ce que nous ne pouvons empêcher.'

10) Debien, Un Colon 165.

11) Maurel, Cahiers 63-64.

12) See above, ch.II, 28-29.

13) Thesée, Négotiants 130.

14) Garran-Coulon II 181-2, IV 106-7. He also claimed that les planteurs had official relations with Jamaica from the start of the Revolution: I 46. —

15) Ibid. II 181-2. Even at this early date, the idea of a pan-Caribbean union was not without supporters. See Young, Travels 401.

16) CO 137/88-100; J.A., 1B/5/3/19-20; J.A., 1B/5/14/1-2; J.A., 1B/5/12/1 and J.A., 1B/5/13/1, which cover the years 1789-98.

17) Edwards, Survey 56-57. Here he probably relied on the evidence of Cadusch: Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 10.

18) Ex-mousquetaire, for 15 years a man of affairs and sugar planter in Saint Domingue, he was in his own words 'habitant de la partie de Sud, qui devait presque son établissement aux Anglais et aux négociants de la Jamaïque, connaissant l'Angleterre par plusieurs voyages' (Lettre 2-3); in the words of another, 'célèbre par le désir d'être un personnage intéressant dans le changement de domination à Saint Domingue sur lequel il avait fondé ses plus belles espérances de fortune,' (Précis Historique I 122). The abusive and self-assertive tone of his Lettre very much suggests the parvenu.

19) Lettre 4, 52.

20) Debien, Nouvelles 8.

21) Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 3-4, 52. Saint-Germain, a headstrong and slightly shady emissary of the Club Massiac, soon abandoned by them, seems to have envisaged as a measure of last desperation threatening to appeal to the English, and actually doing so, should the Amis des Noirs prove victorious. This, however, he saw as a sacrifice. See Debien, Les Colons 207-8.

22) See Millet's comments in Garran-Coulon IV 108. Others might have noticed the British Government's past reluctance to take over settled colonies. Cf.



Parry and Sherlock, History 118-125. Very few wartime occupations had led to transfers of sovereignty.

23) Frostin, in fact, implies that British annexation had more devotees than did absolute independence: Histoire I 11; Révoltes blanches 14. Debien thinks that both movements were really the same: Esprit d'Indépendance 21. Frostin, in one place seems to agree: 'Colonie française, colonie anglaise, autonomie, indépendance, peu importait les appartenances et les formules.' The essential desire, he explains, was for self-administration and freer trade: Histoire II 648. He thus seems to abandon much of the case made out in Intervention. However, contemporaries were known to distinguish anglophiles from indépendants. See Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 3-4, and Sonthonax's words, printed above, p.67. Clearly, not all separatists thought the English would follow the French example of 1778 and attach no strings to helping an enemy colony to secede.

24) Garran-Coulon I 238 n.

25) Debien, Nouvelles 20. For the moderate temper of the Assembly's early sessions, see Garran-Coulon I 168.

26) Debien, Nouvelles 15-20.

27) Thésée, Négotiants 208-9.

28) Ibid. 101; Laborie, Appendix 42; Gaston-Martin, Esclavage 176, Mettas, Honfleur 17-18, n.23; Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 20-21.

29) Thésée and Debien, Colon Niortais 36, n.39; Thésée, Négotiants 209-210.

30) Thésée, Négotiants 101, 132.

31) Garran-Coulon II 191; Debien, Nouvelles 27.

32) E.g. Clausson, Precis; Carteaux, Soirées.

33) Carteaux, Soirées 127-8.

34) Constitution 1-55. The author greatly admired English Liberties but treated England as l'ennemi naturel. However, his inclusion of Congress's Adress to the Inhabitants of Quebec of October 1774 raises doubts whether his patriotism was stronger than his revolutionism.

35) Cormier, Mémoire passim.

36) Debien, Esprit Colon 47; Petion, Discours 41-42.

37) Debien, Esprit Colon 47.

38) Ibid.

39) Garran-Coulon II 277-9, III 15.

40) Ibid. II 110-2; Extraits des Registres...17 juillet 1791.

41) FO 27/36, Gower to Grenville 13th and 20th May and 26th August 1791; Parrel and Debien, Colons 309.

42) Parrel and Debien, Colons passim.

43) Extraits des Registres...17 juillet 1791; Extraits des Délibérations.



- 44) Garran-Coulon II 118, 279; McIntosh and Weber, Correspondance 19, 23. Bryan Edwards said it would have produced civil war if imposed on Jamaica: Survey 87. Pace Fouchard, Liberte 123, he was never 'Consul anglais' at le Cap.
- 45) CO 137/89, Williamson to Grenville 5th August 1791. Williamson thought them 'men of the first consequence'. Their names were Jean Boyer, (un pêcheur, according to Précis Historique I 51, but probably a merchant), Miroux and Marie (perhaps the Genevan-born merchant-planter Raymond Marie but more probably the watchmaker J. A. Marie).
- 46) Garran-Coulon IV 111, II 188ff.
- 47) Ibid. II 188-192; Debien, Nouvelles 27; Blanchelande, Mémoire (supplément) 6.
- 48) Léopardin and sometime president of the Saint Marc Assembly, he had been colonel of the troops raised to defend the deputies in July 1790.
- 49) Garran-Coulon II 230-3, 290ff. Garran-Coulon's chronology is here in error. See A.N., Dxxv 46/433, Blanchelande to the Minister of Marine 16 novembre 1791.
- 50) Garran-Coulon, Débats I 38; Debien, Esprit d'Indépendance 23.
- 51) The Governor would surely have mentioned it in his dispatches. See CO 137/89, Effingham to Dundas 7th and 17th September 1791. Edwards, who introduced the two men, similarly says nothing of secret proposals: Survey 4-5. The allegation in Castonnet-Desfosses, Révolution 88 and Jean-Baptiste, Haiti 137 that the envoy sent to Washington sought Saint Domingue's entry into the Union remains likewise unsubstantiated.
- 52) Members of the Côté ouest faction. Pierre-Jean Raboteau, an apparently French-born petit négociant, owned various properties in the town of Saint Marc. Either he or one of his cousins, Jean-Isaac or Pierre-Isaac, was probably the anonymous who supplied most of the information for Edwards's Survey. Jacques-François Bérault Saint Maurice, a creole, was a minor judicial official, son of a rich southern sugar planter and president of the Saint Marc Assembly in its extreme phase.
- 53) Garran-Coulon IV 119; Lacroix, Mémoires I 121.
- 54) See WO 1/58, 1-11; UCMH typescripts, the reports in García to Lerena 25 de noviembre de 1791; CO 137/89, Effingham to Dundas 17th September 1791.
- 55) Edwards, Survey 6-7; Garran-Coulon II 223.
- 56) Edwards, Survey 6 gives September 26th; Garran-Coulon II 241 gives the 21st and Précis Historique I 50 gives the 20th. However, see E.R.O., ADM 51/20, 100 and 228, logs of the 'Alert', 'Blonde' and 'Daphne'.
- 57) Edwards, Survey 9: 'very earnest wishes were avowed in all companies, without scruple or restraint, that the British administration would send an armament...to receive (the colony's) voluntary surrender.' The marquise de Rouvray, however, was complaining that not enough people wanted the British to intervene: McIntosh and Weber, Correspondance 31.



- 58) Dundas Papers I, pieces no.3 and no.5.
- 59) Its tenets include:- Saint Domingue and France are 'deux sociétés fédérées', each possessing 'le droit imprescriptible...de tendre irrésistiblement à son bien être'; Saint Domingue is the source of French greatness, its wealth being drained to pay for France's wars; philosophy that denies that blacks are property is immoral, since slavery saves them from cannibalism; a free coloured's rights derive solely and 'contractually' from the master who freed him, and even he cannot confer political equality as only la république can accord la droit de cité; the National Assembly intends to abolish slavery; Saint Domingue has constamment chéri et respecté the king but the yoke of the National Assembly must be thrown off.
- 60) Dundas Papers I, Affleck to Pitt 25th September 1791.
- 61) The Assembly's letter of thanks of 25th September is indeed suspiciously sychophantic (ibid. piece no.2; also in FO 27/37) but then so is that of Civil Commissioners Roume and Mirbeck of 15th February 1790 (CO 137/90). The gratitude was genuine.
- 62) CO 137/94, Williamson to Portland 16th January 1795. Garran-Coulon II 227-8 claims that Cadusch's unpopularity had nothing to do with his secessionist activity, however.
- 63) CO 137/89, Williamson to Dundas 18th September 1791. Another envoy of the Assembly of the West expressed a personal desire for Independence to the Governor of Santo Domingo: UCMH typescripts Urizar to Bajamar 25 de septiembre de 1791.
- 64) Précis Historique I 51; Garran-Coulon II 157; Maurel, Grimouard 32-35.
- 65) Dundas Papers I, piece no.4, dated 23rd November 1791.
- 66) Garran-Coulon II 397-422, 571.
- 67) Ibid. II 351, 397. Cf. Précis Historique I 114: 'une cabale aussi folle dans ses conceptions que nulle dans ses moyens'.
- 68) Ibid. II 355.
- 69) Ibid. II 437, III 258-9, 350. Edwards, Survey 4. Jamaican merchant houses like Alexandre Lindo, Donaldson and Thomson, James Grant Forbes, had probably long been trading illicitly in Saint Domingue, selling slaves and buying cotton. Certainly, their connections were to become extensive in the next two years. See J.A.V.A.C., (1793), papers of the 'Peggy', 'La Marguerite' etc. Lindo supplied ammunition and provisions to the Assembly of the West and was a friend of de Charmilly and Berretz: CO 245/5, 235; WO 1/58, 31-34. The South, moreover, had long contained a number of English and Irish residents.
- 70) See Parrel and Debien, Colons passim. The Pacte de Famille was a Bourbon treaty of mutual assistance dating from 1761.
- 71) A doctor from la Rochelle, Cougnac-Mion had been 20 years in Saint Domingue, where he had made a wealthy creole marriage. As a commissioner of



the second Colonial Assembly, he was sent to request aid from the king and National Assembly, 'indeed to seek for succour wherever he could obtain it... a very sensible intelligent man': CO 137/91, Williamson to Dundas, 6th /9th June 1793. He seems to have been introduced into counter-revolutionary circles by the marquis de la Rochejacquelein and in September was presented by the baron de Montalembert to the Regent at Coblenz. La Rochejacquelein was a maréchal de France, active in the Club Massiac; Montalembert, a colonel of Household troops.

72) Garran-Coulon III 329.

73) However, Cougniac-Mion and La Rochejacquelein knew the Jamaican planter Gilbert Francklyn and he kept Lord Hawkesbury, minister and fellow planter, informed of their movements. At the end of June, Francklyn suggested to Hawkesbury that he meet La Rochejacquelein. Owing to the latter's public position, as representative of the Princes, he recommended it be 'by accident': B.M., Add. Ms. 38228, 46-47, 192. Coming from Coblenz in May, La Rochejacquelein had told Lord Auckland, ambassador to the Hague, that Spain had agreed to take Saint Domingue and hold it for the Regent, providing England did not object: H.M.C., Fortescue Mss, II 267.

74) See A.N., C<sup>8A</sup> 103, 14-15, 178-184.

75) Frostin, Intervention 357.

76) See below, notes 171, 172 and 206. The correspondence in UCMH typescripts, and B.M. Eg. Ms. 1794, 255-328 suggests that Spanish behaviour was at first more callous than actually malicious. Cf. Geggus, Volte-face.

77) Debien, Les Colons 315ff.

78) Parrel and Debien, Colons 340.

79) In May 1792, the creole de Leyritz brothers, extreme royalists, reported that the colonists' discontent might result in an attempt at secession but in view of 'un attachement non douteux pour la personne du roi', their support for the Counter-Revolution might be won in return for a grant of autonomy: Parrel and Debien, Colons 318-325. For a more positive appraisal of Saint Domingue as a site for counter-revolution, see Cormier, Mémoire 36.

80) Garran-Coulon III 176-192.

81) Ibid. III 258, 283.

82) Ninety percent of the electorate boycotted the elections to the Convention. The legislative assemblies of the Directory were to contain at least 200 royalists and as many indecisive moderates: Godechot, Revolution 159, 185.

83) B.N., Laveaux Corresp. I, Pigné de Montignac to Laveaux le 12 décembre 1793. Some naval officers had apparently planned to intercept the Commissioners' fleet: WO 1/58, Francklyn to ? 23rd November 1792.

84) A memoir, probably by Malouet, enclosed in Dundas to Williamson 5th June 1793, CO 137/91, stresses the repercussions in the colonies of the



Prussian army's retreat. Its effects were particularly noticeable in Martinique, where the Governor remarked that the planters were Royalists, when they thought the king triumphant, Republicans, when the Republic seemed to be winning, and Anglophiles, when they feared Republican revenge:

A.N., C<sup>8A</sup> 103, 11.

85) See Galarneau, Opinion 105-143; Wallot, Canada 361-3.

86) Garran-Coulon III 279, 363, 386.

87) Dundas Papers II 21, memoir probably by Malouet.

88) WO 1/58, 17-23, minute dated 1st January 1793 possibly by Grenville, who knew Malouet personally.

89) UCMH typescripts, de Jumécourt to Arata 25 de diciembre de 1792.

90) A.N., C<sup>8A</sup> 103, 14-15; CO 137/91, Dundas to Williamson 12th January 1793. He was accompanied by J.B. Dignerion and the Comte de Beaunay, both sugar planters.

91) A.N., C<sup>8A</sup> 103, 160-177.

92) FO 27/41, report of meeting of 25th February; appendix II ii. At least another 40 colonists in London signed the Propositions between March and mid-August: WO 1/58, 91-93, 115-191. Roughly, 30% owned property in the Cul de Sac alone, 30% in the North and 15% in the South. The number of London signatories is put at 420 in WO 1/58, 525. The following comments apply to the final 13 Propositions agreed on with the British Government, not the original 17 discussed below in ch.'s V and VI. Five different preliminary drafts can be found in WO 1/58, 475ff. The chronology of, and influences behind, their development are not entirely clear. Both Murray, West Indies 50 and Lokke, Malouet 382 confuse preliminary and final drafts.

93) The import of wheat would be allowed but American ships had to be single-deckers.

94) Frostin, Intervention 312.

95) WO 1/58, 17-23, 35-42, 107.

96) See above, note 88.

97) A.N., C<sup>8A</sup> 103, 178-184, 160-3.

98) See Hampson, Revolution 64. The completely divergent interpretations of Malouet's dealings with the British Government found in Frostin, Intervention and Griffiths, Malouet both seem extreme. Griffiths ignores Malouet's autonomist leanings in January/February 1793 and makes the man too 'French', too centralist. He exaggerates the European orientation of his policy in 1796-97. Both he and Frostin fail to appreciate the influence on Malouet's thinking of events in Saint-Domingue and fluctuations in Royalist fortunes.

99) FO 27/40, 187-190, 175-8.

100) P.R.O., ADM 1/4157, proposals dated 15 février 1793. Some, however, assumed this would take place: WO 1/59, 155.



- 101) The words are de Curt's, who on December 5th told Hawkesbury that France would be defeated in one campaign but that the French monarchy would never be re-established: FO 27/40, 175-183. Even a non-colonist like Lally-Tollendal had before the king's trial become a British citizen, though remaining sujet de coeur du roi de France: *ibid.* 190.
- 102) FO 27/41, de Fontanges cadet to Malouet, no date.
- 103) Lefebvre, Revolution II 11-14; Hampson, Revolution 167-171.
- 104) He nevertheless kept clear of the Princes till the summer, accepting that Saint Domingue's destiny was in British hands and wanting to avoid any embarrassment with Monsieur. By late May, however, he was trying to arrange that England recognise Marie Antoinette as Regent and receive as a war indemnity France's Indian colonies: FO 27/42, Malouet to Grenville 29 mars and 31 mai 1793.
- 105) Frostin, Intervention 318. Yet, from August onwards, Malouet advocated Anglo-Spanish co-operation. Frostin attributes the volte-face to personal ambition as it gained Malouet a place in the Princes' entourage. However, Malouet's own explanation carries great weight. He argued that, since the strategic situation had changed considerably in Sonthonax's favour, (see below, ch.V), England could not succeed alone: WO 1/58, 341-8; WO 1/59, 45-48. He also knew in August, unlike in February, that the south of France was in revolt and that the Spaniards had already occupied much of Saint Domingue and were, furthermore, threatening his Fort Dauphin plantation. He also seems to have thought they recognised Louis XVII: Dundas Papers II 1-4.
- 106) WO 1/58, Malouet to (?) King 12th March 1793, which evinces real panic at France's declaration of war against Spain. It also shows him trying to extract conditions from the British, apparently to satisfy royalist scruples. It ends by asserting his loyalty, despite the force of events, aux principes qui doivent me diriger.
- 107) WO 1/58, 35-42, 405-8, 520.
- 108) Frostin, Intervention 360
- 109) CO 137/94, Williamson to Portland 13th January 1795.
- 110) WO 1/58, 101-2. Colonists in France generally kept quiet, but one observer thought it evident most wanted 'passer sous un gouvernement qui peut conserver aux uns leurs propriétés échappées aux flammes, aux autres fournir les moyens de rétablir leurs biens déjà dévastés: WO 1/58, 107, undated letter by Michel, merchant-planter of Nantes.
- 111) See Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 87 and above, note 92.
- 112) E.g. Thomas Millet and Larchevesque-Thibaud.
- 113) Garran-Coulon III 275, 279, 371.
- 114) WO 1/58, 35-42. Malouet, Mémoires II 195-213 does not appear very reliable here.



- 115) Monte y Tejada, Historía IV 13-14.
- 116) WO 1/58, 31-34, letter by Berretz films.
- 117) WO 1/58, 219-221, letter probably by de Beaunay, a creole planter and ex-naval officer, on which the rest of this paragraph is based.
- 118) Garran-Coulon IV 119-120, III 353. Both men were thought genuine democrats by Jamaicans who met them, though Garran-Coulon would hardly have agreed: WO 1/58, 207-210; CO 137/91 Williamson to Dundas 5th September 1793.
- 119) Most colonists preferred to flee to the U.S. but many ended up in Jamaica, as at this time 90% of American shipping in the area fell prey to British privateers: J.A.V.A.C., (1793), 'Fox' papers, Hall to Stewart 31st August 1793.
- 120) CO 137/50, undated letter by Gilbert Francklyn; CO 137/91, Williamson to Dundas 10th and 13th April, 20th June, 6th and 13th July 1793 (with inclosures); WO 1/58, 199-221.
- 121) CO 245/1, 160. Apparently through an officer in one of the Irish regiments at le Cap.
- 122) Garran-Coulon III 353. Claude-Isaac, chevalier de Borel, sugar planter of Verrettes, militant racist and léopardin, in April he had tried to hold Port au Prince against the Commissioners' forces. Always a soldier of fortune, he had been captured in 1778 by Arabs in Egypt, when on a secret mission: Appel interjetté 45 n.l. The Jamaican press announced, 'M. Borel is a friend to independence or a annexation with England': Royal Gazette 1793, no.11 p.23.
- 123) Garran-Coulon III 322-6.
- 124) See *ibid.* III 287-9. How many thought like Admiral Cambis that 'la Commission Civile n'est point la Convention Nationale'? See A.N., Dxxv 54/521, log of the 'Jupiter'.
- 125) Sometime president of the Saint Marc Assembly, léopardin and pamphleteer, he was sent to France like Cougniac-Mion by the second Colonial Assmebly but appears to have been little inclined towards foreign intervention.
- 126) Garran-Coulon III 366-482, esp. 446 and 461-2. Cougniac-Mion thought he could win over Galbaud (A.N., C<sup>8A</sup> 103, 176) as apparently did de Beaunay but see Malouet's version:- Galbaud, 'ardent républicain mais très brave homme et créole propriétaire rallioit à lui ce que restoit des honnêtes gens...ce parti quoique anti-royalistes prêteroit probablement encor à une negociation': WO 1/58, Malouet to Dundas 15th August 1793.
- 127) A.N., C<sup>8A</sup> 103, 187-190.
- 128) Frodin, Intervention 326-7, 357.
- 129) Charles-Joseph Loppinot de Beauport was, like Montalembert, a French-Canadian soldier long in le service du roi, though more closely acquainted with the colony. He owned a coffee plantation near Jérémie and in 1790 was commandant particulier of Port au Prince.



- 130) See above, note 127; also, B.M., Add. Ms. 38228, 192.
- 131) See WO 1/58, 377-383.
- 132) See above, note 127.
- 133) UCMM typescripts, Urizar to Acuna 27 de septiembre de 1793; Ardouin, Etudes II 108; Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy I 257.
- 134) B.N., Laveaux Corresp. I, García y Moreno to Jean-François 9/10 juillet 1793.
- 135) See CO 137/93, 170-3; A.G.N., Archivos Real de Higuëy, Leg. 22/48, 51, 52; also below, note 171.
- 136) Frostin, Intervention 358; Dundas Papers II, Malouet to Dundas 9th November 1793.
- 137) CO 137/93, 170-5.
- 138) UCMM typescripts, Vaillant to Alcudia 3 de mayo de 1793. Vizien Desombrages had served 20 years in the colony and owned a plantation at les Cayemittes.
- 139) To borrow the phrase of Mlle. Perrotin.
- 140) There were 750 in Port au Prince alone: Garran-Coulon III 356.
- 141) Ibid. IV 23-37.
- 142) Ibid. IV 72, 97.
- 143) Ibid. IV 210-1.
- 144) However, the campagnard party in the French Windwards, where there was no slave revolt and much less of a race problem, also wanted an English occupation. Martinique's planters were in several respects more extreme than those of Saint Domingue - they openly seceded in September 1792, were the first to sign an agreement with the British Government and revolted again in the spring of 1793, anticipating British help.
- 145) Jérémie, Cap Dame Marie, Abricots, les Cayemittes.
- 146) Whites formed an unusually large percentage of the population in this recently-settled area, insulated against outside influence by poor roads, swamps and high mountains. See above, p.36 and, on the slaves, ch. II n.73.
- 147) François Legras: 'one of the richest inhabitants of the colony!', he had been allowed to cross from Jamaica to Jérémie some time before and this is doubtless why Williamson was expecting overtures from April onwards, the very time Commandant Desombrages left for Cuba: WO 1/58, 409-412; CO 137/91, Williamson to Dundas 13th April, 20th June, 13th July 1793. Desombrages, too, soon ended up in Kingston.
- 148) Précis Historique I 122.
- 149) CO 137/91, Williamson to Dundas 8th September 1793 (secret).
- 150) Garran-Coulon IV 152-172.
- 151) CO 137/92, 263-4.
- 152) Ibid. 265-8. Possibly, it was the Conseil de Paix et d'Union that caused these changes or the mayor, Savary. The approach to Spain was later said to



- be simply a safeguard against Spanish vengeance: see below, note 197.
- 153) CO 137/92, Williamson to Dundas 19th January 1794.
- 154) CO 137/92, 177-180; B.M., Add. Ms. 38229, 128.
- 155) J.A.V.A.C., (1793), 'Triomphante' papers, Dubourg and Bonvallet to Grant 9th December 1793. The previous meetings were chaired by Constant de Castelin with the notary Navailles as secretary.
- 156) Ibid., piece no.13.
- 157) CO 137/92, Whitelocke to Williamson 18th December 1793.
- 158) Jacmel, Baint, Saltrou and Cayes de Jacmel. Three hundred whites from the latter district had also fled to Saltrou, from where they too, called for British protection: CO 137/92, 241-4 and Whitelocke to Williamson 29th December 1793.
- 159) CO 137/92, Williamson to Dundas 15th December 1793 and 15th January 1794; CO 137/91, Williamson to Dundas 19th October 1793.
- 160) Four of them, Pellier, Menauteau, Rumadon and Branday, are referred to as bons royalistes; see below, n.161.
- 161) CO 137/91, Carles to Williamson 29th September 1793; CO 137/92, Grant to Williamson 4th January 1794.
- 162) Mayor and National Guard Commandant since late 1791, his personal ascendancy was total. Educated in France, moins exalté than the other free coloureds, he avoided reprisals against the whites. He is said to have been an officer in the Chasseurs du Comte d'Artois.
- 163) Garran Coulon IV 177-180; CO 137/92, 283-4.
- 164) CO 137/92, Brisbane to Grant 27th December 1793.
- 165) Ibid., address of 80 habitants of Tortuga; Milner to Grant 2nd January 1794.
- 166) James, Jacobins 135.
- 167) CO 137/92, Williamson to Dundas 15th December 1793.
- 168) See *ibid.*, 263 and Brisbane to Grant 27th December 1793; CO 137/91, Dansey to Williamson 25th October 1793 and Conseil de Sûreté to de Charmilly 1e 18 août 1793.
- 169) The British privateers were 'more savage to them than Blackbeard the pirate ever was': CO 137/50, Williamson to Nepean 19th October 1793.
- 170) Jérémie and the Mole would soon have fallen, some thought: CO 245/5, report of 1e 11 octobre 1794; CO 137/92, Williamson to Dundas 25th November 1793; Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 119-120. The people of Saint Marc said they could not resist much longer: CO 137/92, 263; cf. appendix B. Léogane was actually being besieged: WO 1/59, 1-4.
- 171) One proclamation announced to the French colony's 'Tropa de Capriciosos' that their crimes 'les hace indignos de vivir sobre la faz de la tierra, y acre hedores al mas vil tormento': A.N., Dxxv 39/392, proclamation of 13 de julio de 1793.



- 172) Where the planters were said to 'fear the Spaniards more than the brigands': CO 137/92, Whitelocke to Williamson 29th December 1793.
- 173) See below, n.183. Cf. the case of Morin at Saint-Marc: B.N., Sonthonax Correspondence I, letter to Toussaint 3 vendémiaire V.
- 174) Garran-Coulon IV 269-287.
- 175) De Charmilly distributed over £2000 Secret Service money in the Grand' Anse: WO 1/61, 523-6. Lapointe spent his own money: P.R.O., 30/8/349, 376.
- 176) Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 102.
- 177) B.M., Add. Ms. 38229, 128.
- 178) Edwards, Survey 176-7; Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 128ff.
- 179) Garran-Coulon IV 146-8; Cabon, Haiti III 203. When Carles reported to Williamson on 29th September that 'all' the garrison and 'most' of the town were willing to accept the Capitulation (CO 137/91), he was evidently exaggerating or mistaken. Desertions from the Mole were to be common.
- 180) See CO 137/92, Brisbane to Grant 21st and 22nd December 1793, Grant to Williamson 19th and 24th December 1793, and pp.195-7, 279-281.
- 181) J.A.V.A.C., (1793), 'Triomphante' papers, examinations of Esten and Grant.
- 182) CO 137/92, Smith to Whitelocke 24th December 1793.
- 183) Debien, Comptes, Profits II 39; Cabon, Haiti III 205.
- 184) Debien, Esprit d'Indépendance 35; CO 245/5, report of 11 octobre 1794.
- 185) 'Des gens à qui l'on a sûrement fait la leçon de Kingston prennent à tâche de détruire ici toutes les nouvelles que M.B. et moi donnons: vous savez d'où cela part. Mais ils sont peu dangereux...quelques bavards qui savent à peine lire.' See below, notes 199 and 201.
- 186) Schoelcher, Vie 123.
- 187) See CO 137/91, Williamson to Dundas 13th July 1793.
- 188) See CO 245/10, passim and CO 245/1, 130-8.
- 189) CO 137/92, 264-5, 277; collections of 400 and 300 signatures.
- 190) Debien, Esprit d'Indépendance 32ff. It is an impressionistic sampling. This is the denunciation's strength. A more comprehensive list might reveal all the occupants of public office at the time of surrender but tell us little. E.g. militia officers who accepted to serve under the British were pardoned after the occupation even by the rigorous General Hédouville. The middle of the road man had no choice.
- 191) CO 137/91, Williamson to Dundas 8th October 1793; CO 137/92, 243-4.
- 192) Frostin, Intervention 313.
- 193) Laveaux's sweeping condemnation of the mulattoes is excessive: Compte Rendu 16-17. He whitewashed equally guilty whites and was wrong about Savary and about Candy at Fort Dauphin, though the main culprit there was probably another mulatto, Albert: see Précis Historique I 146. Nevertheless, it remains true that, with the exception of Ouanaminthe, the Mole and the Grand' Anse, occupied Saint Domingue was surrendered to its invaders by the



gens de couleur.

- 194) CO 137/91, Williamson to Dundas 19th October 1793.
- 195) Garran-Coulon IV 212-4.
- 196) Ibid. IV 643; B.N., Laveaux Corresp. I, Grandet to Laveaux 30 juillet 1794.
- 197) J.A.V.A.C., (1793), 'Triomphante' papers, minutes of the Council of the Mole le 4 décembre 1793. Fissous, apparently one of its members, was married to a mulatress: Debien, Esprit d'Indépendance, 39.
- 198) However, 28 refugee habitants from Port de Paix at Tortuga applied for British protection: CO 137/92, address dated 20th December 1793.
- 199) CO 137/91, Bérault to de Charmilly le 19 aout 1793.
- 200) Schoelcher, Vie 72; WO 1/59, 214-5.
- 201) CO 137/91, Merceron to de Charmilly le 19 aout 1793. Equally, it seems that the south coast mulattoes responded by killing Bérault's father and one of his sisters and burning down their plantation: WO 1/61, 580.
- 202) In 1769, too, it had been, with Saint Louis, one of the least revolutionary districts in the South: see Frostin, Histoire II 675-6.
- 203) Précis Historique I 122-3.
- 204) Deneux later claimed that they also tried to contact the English in July, but this is not borne out by the evidence: e.g. his own statement, CO 137/92, 38. Dillon's Regiment did send a deputation but apparently later.
- 205) A.N., C<sup>8A</sup> 103, 164-5.
- 206) See CO 137/92, Brisbane to Grant 21st December 1793: 'the dread, the abhorrence, all ranks of people here have against the Spaniards is inconceivable.'
- 207) WO 1/58, 377-383; UCMH typescripts, Arzobispo Fernando to Acuna 25 de septiembre de 1793; WO 1/58, 409-426. A mishap had forced them to return around 10th August before setting out again. Numerous colonists from different parts of Saint Domingue answered Spain's call but within a month a hundred had (re)joined the English: CO 137/93, 170-5.
- 208) Cougniac-Mion and Loppinot de Beauport were instructed to solicit aid from the Allied Powers, especially Spain: A.N., C<sup>8A</sup> 103, 178.
- 209) Grouvel, Corps 186. The vicomte de Saint Pont claimed, albeit in July 1795, that Monsieur approved the Propositions, alias the 'petition from the royalists to the British ministry'. He insisted that no strings were attached to it: WO 1/61, 525.
- 210) CO 137/50, Williamson to Nepean 15th December 1793.
- 211) CO 137/92, Grant to Williamson 4th December 1793.
- 212) Laveaux, Compte Rendu 53.
- 213) Grouvel, Corps 187.
- 214) Louis Barthélemy de Faveranges, lieutenant de juge in the sénéchaussée of Jérémie, sometime president of the second Colonial Assembly, owned a coffee plantation at Roseaux. The chevalier de Lacombe, ex-naval officer, was a sugar planter at les Cayemittes. Francois Maignie de Sailenave was a



rich creole with plantations at Cayemittes and in the North.

215) Laurent-Marie and Jean-Suzanne de Léaumont were creole planters from les Cayes and deputies to the second Colonial Assembly, Laurent-Marie being an ex-president. Hilaire Jouette was an unscrupulous and dishonest sugar planter from the West and second president of the Saint Marc Assembly.

Claude-François Valetín de Cullion, militant revolutionary, avocat and owner of various properties in the South, had been a vice-president of the Saint Marc Assembly.

216) CO 137/91, powers accorded to Legras, 23 juillet 1793.

217) See above, note 201.

218) CO 137/91, address dated 24 septembre 1793.

219) WO 1/58, 397-400.

220) CO 137/92, 195-7.

221) Occupied by the Spaniards, Petite Rivière was cut off from its natural outlet, Saint-Marc.

222) See above, pp.44-45.

223) CO 137/92, Deneux to Williamson 1 novembre 1793. The following biographical details that were enclosed in the letter presumably identify those behind it:- Lambert Marie Antoine Jean Deneux, b. Tours 1761, joined colonial artillery 1784, commandant of the Mole April 1792; Sulerand Carles, b. Carcassonne 1757, soldier since 1773, came to the Mole July 1790, écrivain de la place; François Eugène Pecquerie, b. Paris 1751, page to Prince de Lamballe, artillery lieutenant 1778; Lascaris de Jauna, b. Martinique 1760, joined Saint Domingue militia 1778, adjutant de la place 1792; Louis Duhoux de Montigny, b. Clermontois 1754, page to Prince de Condé 1766-73, served in Saint Domingue throughout the American War.

224) See Etat détaillé. However, Carles claimed to have lost his fortune in the Revolution, and Duhoux's daughter was married to a planter: CO 137/92, Carles to Shaw 14th November 1793; Debien, Esprit d'Indépendance 44.

225) CO 245/10 and Geggus, Memoir passim; P.R.O., 30/8/125, 187-9. Guillaume François Mahé de Corneré was a high-ranking financial administrator in France. His brother Edouard was an official in Saint Domingue. He was the author of several tracts on the colony, on national finances and also in defence of another brother, the marquis de Favras, the conspirator. He owned property at le Cap but apparently never visited the colony.

226) WO 1/58, 661-674. Initially an outspoken autonomist, he had soon become, like most planters of la Croix des Bouquets, an opponent of the Saint Marc Assembly.

227) See above, p.46, note 66, and CO 137/93, 170-5.

228) Cf. above, pp.50-51 and note 101.

229) WO 1/59, 67.

230) Edwards, Survey 22-23, 172.

- 231) Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 87, 103-4, 106.
- 232) Garran-Coulon I 118, III 319, 446.
- 233) Précis Historique I 26, 173.
- 234) Wimpffen, Voyage passim.
- 235) I owe this information to M. B. Foubert, who has examined some 1200 letters posted in this period.
- 236) See above, note 201.
- 237) Cited in Jean-Baptiste, Haiti 178.
- 238) The phrase comes from Frostin, Histoire xxx.
- 239) Most of those on the lists of denunciation published by Debien were probably European-born (Esprit d'Indépendance 45), like the signatories of the Propositions. As for de Charmilly, Saint Domingue's leading anglophile, he was brought up in England: WO 1/58, de Charmilly to ? 15th February 1793. He and Bérault, Cadusch, Raboteau, their friend Lemoine, mayor of Jérémie, all had a good command of English, as did Laborie, but this was probably not unusual.
- 240) According to Edwards, the most genuinely pro-British area was Saint Marc, the Pompon blanc stronghold: Survey 169. The Grand' Anse, on the other hand, was to be a constant trial to the British.
- 241) Here it must be stressed that in early 1793 Saint Domingue was still very much a prize worth preserving. This explains the colonists' desperate sense of urgency in these months. Something of great value was still within their grasp but was fast slipping away: see ch.V.
- 242) See below, ch.VI, note 49.
- 243) CO 137/93, letter of 6th June 1794. Williamson agreed: 'a number' of planters were 'strong monarchists' who would revolt against the British even in peacetime, if the Monarchy was ever restored: WO 1/60, 93-94.



## CHAPTER IV

- 1) Ott, Revolution 76.
- 2) See Garran-Coulon IV 72. It had often been said the Amis des Noirs were in British pay.
- 3) See Lepkowski, Haiti 62, 69; Mealing, Simcoe 219.
- 4) Williams, Capitalism 146-9; James, Jacobins 132-6.
- 5) Manning, Government 339.
- 6) Barskett, History 186.
- 7) Speeches of February 1796 and May 1797, cited in Williams, Capitalism 147 and Ott, Revolution 76.
- 8) Griffiths, Malouet 251.
- 9) See Parry and Sherlock, History 124-5; Augier, etc., Making 95.
- 10) Ragatz, Decline passim. The duty on sugar rose dramatically. West Indian pleas to continue trading with the 13 colonies after their independence were ignored. Customs and Vice-Admiralty Court procedures in the islands were tightened up and in 1786 French spirits were allowed to compete in the British market with West India rum. In 1788, Parliament began to consider the abolition of the slave trade.
- 11) See Ehrman, Pitt 329-341; Williams, Capitalism 145-6.
- 12) Armytage, System 61-62 says it was presumed most foreign sugar would be re-exported. This must have been the case, for the Government insisted on keeping it separate from British produce. The act, however, allowed unhindered access to the British market: 32 Geo III cap.43, Statutes at Large. The British planters complained this broke the compact existing between Britain and her West India colonies: W.I.C.L., III 170-181.
- 13) It was rumoured overtures had been made earlier but no proof of this has come to light. See B.M., Add.Ms.38227, 43; F.O. 27/36, Gower to Grenville 20th May 1791.
- 14) See Debien, Un Colon 135, 142 and Les Colons 208.
- 15) See Garran-Coulon II 105-112; also II 119-120 and LV 108.
- 16) See UCM typescripts, García to Bajamar 24 de agosto de 1791; Edwards, Survey 9; Précis Historique I 50; Garran-Coulon II 145ff.
- 17) CO 137/88-89, passim; P.R.O., ADM 1/244, letters of 8th and 18th September 1793.
- 18) See St. Domingo Review 6; above, pp.43-44.
- 19) See FO 27/36, Gower to Grenville 20th May and 26th August 1791; H.M.C., Fortescue Mss. II, 176 and 181.
- 20) See above, pp.45; WO 1/63, 409ff.
- 21) B.M., Add. Ms. 38227, 43, 50, 140-1, 144-5.
- 22) See Coupland, Pitt 15-23, speech of 17th February 1792.



- 23) B.M., Add. Ms. 38351, 105-110, 128-137, 149-152, notes apparently written by Hawkesbury between November 1791 and March 1792. He thought British traders, being more 'fair and honourable', would be preferred to the Americans; on which, see appendix B, letter 9.
- 24) See above, ch.III, note 73.
- 25) See above, p.46; Garran-Coulon III 132-4.
- 26) See James, Jacobins 132.
- 27) CO 137/90, Dundas to Effingham 7th January 1792.
- 28) CO 137/90, passim.
- 29) Davis, Revolution 425; Ehrman, Pitt 391-402.
- 30) Ibid.
- 31) Williams, Capitalism 146.
- 32) Although the French Windwards were largely dependent on foreign slavers - Dutch and British - Saint Domingue certainly received no more than a quarter, perhaps less than a tenth, of its slaves from foreign traders: Geggus, Slaves II (ii); P.R.O., BT 5/9, 146-7.
- 33) Anstey, Abolition 276-8.
- 34) Williams, Capitalism 147-9.
- 35) See *ibid.*; Wilberforce, Life I 340-1; Anstey, Abolition 276, n.96; Ehrman, Pitt 400.
- 36) Duffy, Policy 3-19; Cambridge History of Foreign Policy I 218-9, 236.
- 37) C.U.L., Add. Ms. 6958/7, 1245-6. Pitt apparently replied on the 4th mentioning Flanders, the French coast and the West Indies. No area was given priority and the West Indies, it seems, were to be left until the end of the year.
- 38) WO 1/58, Francklyn to ?, 23rd November 1792.
- 39) See above, pp.49-50.
- 40) FO 27/40, 175-183.
- 41) Dundas Papers I, Digest...of Proceedings...December 1792 to December 1793.
- 42) FO 27/40, 203-4, 253-260; B.M., Add. Mss. 38310, 87-88, and 38352, 7-13.
- 43) WO 1/58, 17-23, and above pp.49-50.
- 44) PRO 30/8/334, 127-134. Possibly related to George Chalmers, Hawkesbury's principal assistant, he may well have been the Colonel Chalmers mentioned in the bibliography, although the National Union Catalogue gives that writer's name as Charles. James, Jacobins 132 wrongly gives his name as John.
- 45) Edwards, Cotton 87-88.
- 46) Early in 1792, it was fetching in London about 25% more than Jamaican cotton: see Royal Gazette 1792, and below, p.95.
- 47) See the memoir of Mahé de Cormeré, CO 245/10; Geggus, Memoir 35-36.
- 48) CO 137/91, Dundas to Williamson 12th January 1793.
- 49) This paragraph is mainly based on B.M., Add. Mss. 38235, 89-90; 38352,



- 126-177 and 38228, 217-315.
- 50) Davis, Revolution 438, n.90.
- 51) Matheson, Dundas 174-5; Duffy, Policy 21.
- 52) See Royal Gazette 1793, no.15, 22.
- 53) Cambridge History of the British Empire 44; Sanderson, Strategy 73; Fortescue, Statesmen
- 54) See above, note 41.
- 55) Cf. the Marquis of Buckingham's opinion in H.M.C., Fortescue Mss. II 405.
- 56) See Léméry, Martinique; B.M., Add Ms. 38229, 45.
- 57) WO 1/58, letter to Lord ?, 15th February 1793.
- 58) See above, pp.49-50 and below, p. ; appendix B.
- 59) FO 27/42, papers of March and April; above, 50-51.
- 60) WO 1/58, 43-90.
- 61) The claim - of Fortescue and others - that the colonists misled the Government as to the numbers of troops required, is not true as regards Saint Domingue. Malouet said over 2000 were needed to take just the West Province; by August, he was calling for 15,000. Cadusch, Dubuc Saint Olympe and Thiballier all spoke of 10-12,000. Such examples can be multiplied. See above, ch.I, note 31, and ch.III, note 58; WO 1/58, 198-205, 211-214, 221, 348, 389-395, 526, 530.
- 62) See below, p.85.
- 63) H.M.C., Fortescue Mss. II Pitt to Grenville 30th March 1793. Steven-Watson, Reign 366 implies Pitt was trying to fight on three fronts at once with only 20,000 men but this was not the case.
- 64) See ch.V, notes 31 and 123; WO 1/60, 371.
- 65) CO 137/91, Edwards to Nepean 15th May, and Dundas to Williamson 15th June 1793; B.M., Add. Ms. 12431, 223-233; below, p.95. This gathering of information made public the hitherto secret Saint Domingue negotiations, much to the distress of Malouet, whose family was still in France.
- 66) CO 137/91, Dundas to Williamson 4th June 1793; WO 1/58, 409-412. Dundas's French may have been responsible for the misunderstanding. The translations of de Charmilly's letters in Dundas Papers (I no.4; III 1-2) contain appalling errors. Both men, moreover, spoke with pronounced foreign accents.
- 67) H.M.C., Fortescue Mss. II 395. Dundas was Home Secretary, President of the India Board, Lord Advocate and Treasurer of the Navy.
- 68) H.M.C., Fortescue Mss. II 407-8; Sanderson, Strategy ch.V; Matheson, Dundas 181. James, Jacobins 134 wrongly attributes this quote to Pitt, but the two men worked together closely.
- 69) Cp. Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy I 219, n.2, and Sanderson, Strategy ch.V.



- 70) H.M.C., Fortescue Mss. II 399, letter of 21st June 1793.
- 71) C.U.L., Add. Ms. 6958/7, 1317-8.
- 72) H.M.C., Fortescue Mss. II 454.
- 73) Matheson, Dundas 187-190; Sanderson, Strategy ch.V.
- 74) B.M., Add. Ms. 38310, 98 and 108.
- 75) See Jacobins 134.
- 76) For Grey's instructions, see CO 318/12, 451-558.
- 77) CO 137/91. The order was not countermanded until November 9th.
- 78) CO 318/12, 553-8.
- 79) Facts relative to... 10-19.
- 80) Army IV passim; Statesmen 85-126. Sheridan, however, in January 1794, complained that not enough troops had been sent to the West Indies.
- 81) Cambridge History of the British Empire II 44-45.
- 82) Duffy, Policy 18-21; Fortescue, Statesmen 95; above, note 63.
- 83) See above, note 41.
- 84) Duffy, Policy 21-28; above, note 37. In February, 6,500 troops were sent to Flanders.
- 85) See above, note 81.
- 86) See H.M.C., Fortescue Mss. II 402, (wrongly dated).
- 87) Cited in Duffy, Policy 49.
- 88) Letter of 8th July, cited in Matheson, Dundas 181.
- 89) H.M.C., Fortescue Ms. II 399; Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy I 552-3. Certain advocates of the 'European' strategy like Richmond were also eager for an indemnity, such as the destruction of Cherbourg or of the merchant shipping at Nantes; above, note 37.
- 90) See CO 318/11, 129-138, 423ff.
- 91) Royal Gazette 1794, no.28, 22.
- 92) Coupland, Pitt 126-8.
- 93) See Matheson, Dundas 198.
- 94) Cf. Duffy, Policy 69.
- 95) See CO 137/88-91, various reports.
- 96) P.R.O., CUST 17/15; CO 137/91 passim; J.A., Council Minutes 7th August 1793; B.M., Add. Ms. 12431, 24; Patterson, Sociology 291.
- 97) Curtin, Census 159-162; Geggus, Slaves II, sections ii and iii. The collapse of the French slave trade in 1792 probably also encouraged British slavers to move southwards.
- 98) W.I.C.L., III 142; CO 137/90, the Assembly to Fuller 4th and 5th November 1791;
- 99) CO 137/89, Williamson to Grenville 4th July 1791.
- 100) See Royal Gazette (hereafter: 'RG') 1791, no.'s 44-52 and CO 137/89-90.
- 101) CO 137/89, Grenville to Effingham 21st April 1791; CO 137/90, Dundas to Effingham 7th January 1792.



- 102) Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica IX, 1-5; Jacobs, Effingham..
- 103) See RG 1792, no. 2, 22-23.
- 104) W.I.C.L. III, 164; RG 1792, no. 18, 25.
- 105) CO 137/90, Williamson to Dundas 6th May 1792; J.A., Council Minutes 5th May 1792; RG 1792, no. 8, 25-27, no. 19, 19.
- 106) RG 1791, no. 's 44, 48, 49.
- 107) RG 1792, no. 14, 22, no. 16, 20-22, no. 17, 22, no. 18, 26-27; CO 137/90, 14th April 1792.
- 108) See below, note 112; CO 137/90, Assembly to Fuller 4th November 1791.
- 109) CO 137/90, letter to Dundas.
- 110) CO 137/89, Williamson to Dundas 6th November 1791, and anonymous letter extract of the same date.
- 111) CO 137/89, anonymous letter of 18th November 1791.
- 112) CO 137/90, report of the committee of security of Saint James, and Williamson to Dundas 27th November 1791.
- 113) Ibid.; RG 1792, no. 2, 23.
- 114) CO 137/90, Williamson to Dundas 21st November 1791.
- 115) Ibid., letter of 15th January 1792.
- 116) See note 119. The island Agent pressed Dundas to get Abolition debated in Parliament and quickly laid to rest: CO 137/89, Fuller to Dundas 18th November 1791.
- 117) See H.M.C., Fortescue Ms. II 29; CO 137/89, Effingham to Grenville 19th March 1791.
- 118) P.R.O., ADM 1/244, Affleck to Stephens 8th September 1791; Edwards, Survey (1797 ed.) iii.
- 119) Journals of the Assmbly IX, 5-6.
- 120) This paragraph is largely based on RG 1792, no. 16, 20-22, and Journals of the Assembly IX, 50-102.
- 121) The supplies were to be purchased in Kingston, and the Assembly would anyway have had to buy commercial paper to pay its London debts. There was still a risk of course, for the bills might be repudiated in Paris.
- 122) See RG 1792, no. 's 10 and 11.
- 123) Custos, Chief Judge and Lieutenant-Colonel of militia for the parish of St. George, Shirley was a leader of the pro-Government faction in the Assembly and one of the most active members of its Committee of Correspondence, frequently drawing up reports and, with Bryan Edwards, drafting its Addresses.
- 124) See B.M., Add. Ms. 12431, 223-233; CO 137/91, correspondence for December 1792.
- 125) UCMH typescripts, Gonzalez to Vaillart 15 de abril de 1792.
- 126) See RG 1793, no. 31, 17; Wright and Debien, Jamaique 64, 91; Edwards, Survey 4, etc.
- 127) WO 1/59, 507-9.

- 128) RG 1792, no.36.
- 129) See above, ch.III, note 69; Two Reports 25; RG 1792, no.16, 20-22.
- 130) See above, ch.III, note 69; A.N., DDxxv 31/324, Reignier du Timat to Levy 1 decembre 1793; J.A.V.A.C., 1794, the 'Industry' and 'Marie' papers. It is not clear if they were connected to Turnbull Forbes and Co. of London, who traded a great deal with the French and, in the spring of 1793, began making substantial loans to Dominguan refugees in Britain. They definitely had relations with Thomas Forbes of New Providence, which port after July 1792 was allowed to admit French sugar.
- 131) RG 1793, no,21, 22, no.25, 23, no.35, 22.
- 132) J.A., Council Minutes, 7th August 1793; RG 1793, no.31, 22, which says about 30,000 blacks were imported between October and July.
- 133) CO 137/91, letter to Dundas 10th April 1793.
- 134) See RG 1793, no.33, 15.
- 135) N.L.S., Ms. 1075, Barry to Pitt 25th August 1793.
- 136) See CO 137/90, Williamson to Dundas 4th September 1793; RG 1793, no.30, 22.
- 137) See J.A.V.A.C. 1793, papers of 'La Margueritte', 'Peggy', 'Beaver'; Colville of Culross Papers, notebook apparently by Captain the Hon. Charles Colville of the 13th Foot.
- 138) Saint Domingo Review 47; CO 137/50, Atkinson to Nepean 20th October 1793.
- 139) CO 137/91, Williamson to Dundas 31st July 1793; Colville of Culross Papers, notebook; above,
- 140) E.g. see Franco, Historía 222.
- 141) See A.N., DDxxv 54/521, log of the 'Jupiter', 3 mai 1793; UCMM type-scripts, passim; Geggus, Volte-face.
- 142) CO 137/92, 51-63.
- 143) James, Jacobins 136.



## CHAPTER V.

- 1) Fortescue, Army IV 79-80, 140.
- 2) Cp. ibid. IV 432 and Ragatz, Fall 227-8.
- 3) See below, ch.XIII,
- 4) See Auckland's comments, above, p.83.
- 5) Fortescue, Army IV 329-330; Edwards, Survey 179, 174; Laborie, Appendix 111.
- 6) In the North, the 2nd battalion of the 44th Regiment lost some 60% of its men between September 1792 and May 1793: A.N., DDxxv 49/466. Mortality was sometimes even higher in the South: Foubert, Volontaires passim. Cf. WO 1/58, 551 and CO 245/1, 160; Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 92-96; Colville journal.
- 7) CO 137/91, memoir by Thiballier, 1st July 1793.
- 8) P.R.O., HCA 30/390, letter 2 bis. Deportations had by June apparently reduced the garrison to 75 men: J.A.V.A.C., 1793, 'Milly Huntress' papers, Leyonide to Demun.
- 9) UCMH typescripts, Garcia to Gardoqui, 18 and 25 de noviembre, 25 de diciembre de 1793, 25 de febrero de 1794; Garran-Coulon III 246-247.
- 10) A.G.N., Archivo Real de Higuëy, Leg. 22/52, proclamation of 22 de junio de 1793.
- 11) E.g. see P.R.O., HCA 30/400, Bénech de Solon to Nairac, 3 janvier 1793; Debien, Plantations et Esclaves 141; Garran-Coulon III 249; Foubert, Volontaires.
- 12) Thésée, Négotiants 185.
- 13) See Debien, Etudes 123-4.
- 14) Ibid.; Garran-Coulon III 300-1.
- 15) James, Jacobins 123-4.
- 16) Saint-Rémy, Vie 57; Pauléus-Sannon, Histoire I, 113.
- 17) Garran-Coulon III 249; Laveaux, Compte Rendu 10.
- 18) Monte y Tejada, Historía IV 9.
- 19) Pauléus-Sannon, Histoire I, 126-7.
- 20) Cabon, Haiti III 159; UCMH typescripts, Garcia to Gardoqui, 25 de abril de 1793; Garran-Coulon IV 38-39; below, note 23.
- 21) Monte y Tejada, Historía IV, 13-18.
- 22) UCMH typescripts, Garcia to Acuna 12 de agosto de 1793; Monte y Tejada, Historía IV, 43ff.; Laveaux, Compte Rendu 19; Garran-Coulon IV 49, 74, 78.
- 23) Garran-Coulon IV 72, 78, 97.
- 24) The amount of damage, however, was often exaggerated by men on the spot for purposes of self-dramatisation. Cp. the descriptions of Grands Bois in Debien, Etudes 124 and B.N., Laveaux Corresp. I, Toussaint to Laveaux 28 Fructidor III. Cf. Leon, Marchands 148.
- 25) Even by late June, perhaps only 1/5 of the Spanish 'Auxiliaries' had guns. The situation improved during the summer owing to the black chiefs' constant



- demands on the Spaniards and Toussaint's capture of Dondon arsenal. See Cabrera to Cassasola, 29 de junio, 13 and 18 de julio de 1793 in Monte y Tejada, Historía IV.
- 26) Dundas Papers III, 2.
- 27) WO 1/58, 377-383, unsigned memoir.
- 28) See Garran-Coulon IV 78.
- 29) Edwards, Survey (1797 ed.) 143. The figure was omitted from later editions. Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 97-100.
- 30) Garran-Coulon IV 65-66; Monte y Tejada, Historía IV 146; Wright and Debien, Jamaïque 64-65; J.A.V.A.C. 1794, 'Union' papers, Thénét to Bérard, 13 février 1794; WO 1/58, 541-552; CO 245/10, 19-40; below, appendix B, letters 8 and 9.
- 31) Garran-Coulon III, 317-8. The changeover came around late December 1792, when news of Valmy and Jemappes showed the Counter-Revolution to be in retreat and when race riots in several towns proved the Commissioners to be valuable allies against the whites.
- 32) An amnesty he had offered to the rebels was ruined by Villatte, who arrested those who surrendered: UCM typescripts, Garcia to Gardoqui 25 de abril de 1793. Montbrun forbade the recruiting of slaves: Garran-Coulon IV 90.
- 33) Garran-Coulon III 339-344; A.N., DDxxv 46/433, Blanchelande to the Minister of Marine, 16 novembre 1791. Interestingly, the British Government had been seeking to raise coloured corps in the West Indies to reduce the drain on manpower.
- 34) It has not hitherto been appreciated that by late July, after one month's campaign, the Spanish offensive was halted by disease. La flor de la Tropa, lamented Governor Garcia, had perished: Monte y Tejada, Historía IV 77-84.
- 35) Royal Gazette 1793, no. 40, 22-23; Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 107.
- 36) J.A.V.A.C., 1793, 'Cérès' papers.
- 37) Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 124; Grouvel, Faits 60.
- 38) CO 137/92, Bogle to Williamson 18th November 1793. However, émigré was used to designate both refugee colonist and European royalist seeking employment in Caribbean.
- 39) See Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 130-1.
- 40) See above, note 36.
- 41) Pauléus-Sannon, Histoire I 145-8.
- 42) CO 137/91, Dansey to Williamson 18th and 25th October 1793.
- 43) Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica IX, 213 shows 801 officers and men sent to Saint Domingue by 14th October. These clearly include a detachment that sailed on October 20th. See Royal Gazette 1793, no. 42, 22. The widely-quoted figures in Edwards, Survey 176-7 are surely wrong. The Colville journal details only 500 troops sent in September.
- 44) CO 137/92, 178ff.
- 45) See above, p.57.
- 46) CO 137/92, Brisbane to Grant 21st and 22nd December 1793.



- 47) J.A.V.A.C. 1794, 'Union' papers, Préval to Préval 12 février 1794.
- 48) CO 137/92, 257.
- 49) See above, note 47; CO 137/50, Williamson to Nepean 15th December 1793; Garran-Coulon IV 160-1; Cabon, Haiti III 170.
- 50) Basic data taken from Patterson, Sociology appendix 5 and Barskett, St. Domingo appendices I and II.
- 51) CO 137/92, Milner to Grant 2nd January 1794.
- 52) CO 137/92, Whitelocke to Williamson 18th and 29th December 1793, and Smith to Whitelocke 24th December 1793.
- 53) See above, note 47.
- 54) WO 1/60, 216; CO 137/91, Dansey to Dundas 25th October 1793; CO 137/92, Smith to Whitelocke 24th December 1793.
- 55) Cabon, Haiti III 218-9.
- 56) Smith's letter, cited above, note 54.
- 57) CO 137/92, Whitelocke to Williamson 29th December 1793, and Williamson to Dundas 19th January 1794; WO 1/60, 277-284.
- 58) CO 137/91, Dundas to Williamson 4th June, Charmilly to Dundas 8th September, Conseil de Sûreté to Dundas 24 septembre and Williamson to Dundas 8th October 1793.
- 59) See above, pp.83-84.
- 60) Lettre 170.
- 61) CO 137/50, Williamson to Nepean 15th December 1793; CO 137/92, Williamson to Dundas 19th January 1794.
- 62) Below, note 91; J.A.V.A.C. 1794, 'Union' papers, various letters.
- 63) Précis Historique I 145.
- 64) E.g. see CO 137/ 93, Smith to Williamson 22nd March and Williamson to Dundas 10th March 1794.
- 65) Laveaux, Calomnies passim.
- 66) CO 137/92, Whitelocke to Williamson 3rd February 1794; Cannon, 13th Foot 43.
- 67) CO 137/93, Williamson to Dundas 2nd March 1794; WO 1/59, 114; Cannon, 13th Foot 44; Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 137-8. Grand Goâve was destroyed early in April: Royal Gazette 1794, no.15, 22.
- 68) CO 137/93, Hardyman to Williamson 20th April 1794; Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 145-7; Edwards, Survey 183, 185.
- 69) CO 137/91, Smith to Whitelocke 4th May 1794; I.J., Ms.36, f.5; Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 143; Edwards, Survey 186.
- 70) Secondary works and contemporary correspondence mention 1600, but the regimental monthly returns suggest a figure around 1860: WO 17/ 124, 125 and 151. Cf. CO 245/1, 157-9 and WO 17/1986.
- 71) B.N., Laveaux Corresp. I report by Grandet 30 juillet 1794; Précis Historique I 157.



- 72) See WO 1/59, 372.
- 73) Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 177; WO 1/59, 381-8, 413.
- 74) B.N., Laveaux Correspondence I, Whitelocke to Laveaux 16th April 1794.
- 75) Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 147-8; Edwards, Survey 186.
- 76) CO 137/93, Williamson to Dundas 28th April 1794.
- 77) CO 137/93, 82.
- 78) This paragraph is based on Geggus, Volte-Face passim. Toussaint's defection additionally furthered the process of Black Emancipation by putting the Spniards entirely in the hands of Jean François, who was henceforth allowed to free whatever slaves he liked: see WO 1/59, 321.
- 79) B.N., Laveaux Corresp. I, Toussaint to Laveaux 15 juin 1794; Monte y Tejada, Historia IV 213.
- 80) See CO 245/1, 157; Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 181-2. Some 290 troops arrived from Martinique on June 8th,
- 81) This may have been of particular importance, if there was any truth in Montalembert's observation that 'the brigand' was 'rash' and 'insolent' after the slightest success but 'timid' after experiencing failure: Dundas Papers III 42-47. Craton has remarked on the 'manic depressive' character of the plantation slave.
- 82) From April to June, American shipping almost disappeared from Caribbean waters owing to a U.S. Government embargo. Cf. J.A.V.A.C. papers 1793-94.
- 83) B.N., Laveaux Corresp. I, 81; Pauléus-Sannon, Histoire I 169.
- 84) Royal Gazette 1794, no.26, 23, no.27, 23.
- 85) Laveaux, Compte Rendu 35-38; Cabon, Haiti III 294; WO 1/59, 305.
- 86) Laveaux, Compte Rendu 37; B.N., Laveaux Corresp. I, letters of the French plenipotentiaries in Charleston and Philadelphia. The vibrant spirit of these letters, written in the heroic style of the year II, contrasts noticeably with the cynicism of contemporary British correspondence.
- 87) Laveaux, Compte Rendu 40.
- 88) Between 80 and 150 redcoats were stationed there and by late May many were sick. Perhaps another inhibiting factor was the hope of being able to bribe Toussaint: see CO 137/93, Williamson to Dundas 25th May and 16th June 1794.
- 89) Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 181-3, 192; Edwards, Survey 204. Edwards, Survey (1797 ed.) 173 says Jacmel and les Cayes were easy targets and should have been taken, not realising the strength of the provincial capital now that Rigaud had added to its fortifications.
- 90) Précis Historique I 164.
- 91) See the letter in Cabon, Haiti III 210-211.
- 92) B.N., Laveaux Corresp. I, Grandet to Laveaux 30 juillet 1794; Pauléus-Sannon, Histoire I 156-8.
- 93) Cf. Wimpffen, Voyage preface.
- 94) Lettre 182-3.



- 95) Rigaud's losses were put at 900 dead and wounded. Even so, over 160 inhabitants, white and coloured, were evacuated to Jamaica: Royal Gazette 1794, no.s 24, 25, 35.
- 96) Cabon, Haiti III 225. Based on an American newspaper report, Ott's discussion of the fall of les Cayes, (Revolution 78), which never actually happened, indicates the expectations of public opinion and is an example of how contemporaries lived in a world of rumour and misinformation.
- 97) Lettre 181; WO 1/60. 277-284, 383-5. Williamson lamented his inability to take up offers from the South: CO 137/93, letter to Dundas 19th July.
- 98) Precis Historique I 158-161; Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 153-4, 164.
- 99) CO 245/1, 130-8. Of course, it was not the sun that made Port au Prince unhealthy but poor sanitation, swampy ground to windward and, above all, its wells and domestic water containers in which the vector of yellow fever, Aedes aegypti, customarily breeds; added to which, one must mention its vulnerability, as a major seaport, to imported infection.
- 100) CO 137/90, Williamson to Dundas 15th January 1792 had warned that fatigue duties endangered the lives of European troops. At Port au Prince, the diurnal variation in temperature is nowadays 10<sup>0</sup> C: Anglade, Esanace 19.
- 101) WO 17/1986, 125 and 151, various returns; WO 1/59, 429.
- 102) Survey 194. WO 1/61, 46-47, gives 673 dead before August and 1,000 dead by mid-November .
- 103) Between late January and late July 1794, over 800 Spaniards died in Fort Dauphin out of some 2,000: Monte y Tejada, Historia IV 224. Leclerc lost nearly 25,000 out of 35,000 men in nine months.
- 104) Foubert, Volontaires
- 105) WO 1/60, 42; Lettre 179.
- 106) Survey 179.
- 107) CO 137/93, Dansey to Williamson 25th October 1793; Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 132, Dansey, however, soon succumbed himself, but the Mole retained until the following autumn its reputation as the healthiest spot in Saint Domingue: WO 1/59, 221. Cf. below, table 1, p.145.
- 108) WO 1/60, 39.
- 109) See below, ch.XIV, part (i).
- 110) CO 137/93, Williamson to Dundas 19th July 1794; WO 1/59, 429.
- 111) Precis Historique I 161; CO 137/93, 152.
- 112) Precis Historique I 160-1, 174; Corvington, Port au Prince II 133-4.
- 113) CO 137/93, 154. Grey and Jervis's claim was overruled by Dundas but eventually settled in their favour.
- 114) See above, note 110.
- 115) CO 137/93, Dundas to Williamson 10th September 1794.
- 116) As he had acquired a plantation only in 1790, the colonists did not regard



'Monsieur le Baron' as one of them, though he owned other estates through his wife.

117) One should say - short-term predatory approach, for Williamson's more subtle policy, partly the product of a weak personality and puny resources, clearly had an acquisitive dimension. Moreover, he demanded a cut of the Port au Prince prize money himself, but also wanted it shared with the colonial forces.

118) In 1797, when sailors' wages were long in arrears, (miserable as they were, having remained unchanged since Cromwell's time,) the crew of the frigate 'Hermione', which had been over four years on the Jamaica station, and had had a notably poor record in the prize courts, murdered its officers and surrendered to the Spaniards: J.A., Council Minutes, 6th December 1797.

119) However, generally, such goods were acquitted by the court: J.A.V.A.C. 1793, 'Triomphante' and 'Cérès' papers; 1794, 'Maréchal de Lévis' and 'Union' papers. The ships seized at Port au Prince also contained goods belonging to colonists at Saint Marc and Léogane.

120) See WO 1/59, 370. British plans to raise colonial corps in the U.S. seem to have come to nothing.

121) WO 1/60, 309.

122) Cf. the plans of Mahé de Cormeré, CO 245/10, 287-290; of de Carmilly, WO 1/59, 9; and of (?) Malouet, Dundas Papers II, 33-35. Even the Saint Marc Assembly had discussed granting 'white' status to the very light-skinned.

123) WO 1/58, 475-538. The first five or six drafts contain sizeable concessions to the free coloureds. Presumably, Malouet and his colleagues changed their minds because of the growing mulatto hegemony in Saint Domingue. News was probably then reaching London that even the conservative coloureds of Saint Marc had adopted 'Jacobin' principles and rallied to Sonthonax. Lokke, Malouet is confused and misleading.

124) CO 137/92, 269-271.

125) WO 1/59, 350-372.

126) Proclamation of 5th October 1793, cited in Garran-Coulon IV, 165-6.

127) See above, note 124 and Ch. III, note 197; also, WO 1/59, 651-2.

128) Undated report (July 1794), WO 1/59, 213-4. Cf. *ibid.*, 323-4.

129) CO 137/92, Williamson to Dundas 14th and 20th January 1794.

130) WO 1/59, 348-352, 372.

131) WO 1/59, 13-31, 381-4, 389-395, 405-7; Lettre 162.

132) CO 137/93, Williamson to Dundas 28th April 1794. However, an unusually candid sample of letters posted from Saint Marc in February 1794 reveals no complaints on this heading. One even observes that all free men were indebted to the mulattoes Bacquet and Charles Savary for opposing Sonthonax: J.A.V.A.C. 1794, 'Union' papers.



- 133) Cabon, Haiti III 218-9.
- 134) WO 1/59, 559-563.
- 135) WO 1/60, 161.
- 136) CO 137/89, Dundas to Williamson 5th June 1793.
- 137) B.M., Add. Ms. 12431/223-233; CO 137/91, Williamson to Dundas, 2nd December 1792.
- 138) P.R.O., 30/8/137, 17; CO 137/91, Edwards to Nepean, 15th May 1793; WO 1/60, 371.
- 139) CO 137/93, Dundas to Williamson 5th July 1794.
- 140) CO 137/93, Portland to Williamson 5th September 1794.
- 141) CO 137/93, 155.
- 142) Précis Historique I, 169.
- 143) CO 245/5, passim.
- 144) Précis Historique I, 165.
- 145) WO 1/59, 597-8; WO 1/60, 121-146.
- 146) WO 1/60, 215-265; B.N., Laveaux Corresp. I, Toussaint to Laveaux 4 octobre 1794 and procès-verbal of an assembly at Petite Rivière 30 septembre 1794; Métral, Expedition 335. However, it may be that Blancazenave, Christophe Mornet and their men really did defect temporarily but were soon won back by Toussaint. The tone of the Petite Rivière letter is certainly apologetic, and Laveaux, Compte Rendu 40 actually says Brisbane had bought the two commanders. Laveaux, it is true, always presented the mulattoes in the worst possible light, but then again, no mention of a plot is to be found in Toussaint's correspondence.
- 147) Précis Historique I, 171.
- 148) CO 245/5, minutes of 17 octobre and 22 novembre; WO 1/60, 261; Précis Historique I, 171.
- 149) Cabon, Haiti III 160.
- 150) Précis Historique I, 159-160.
- 151) CO 137/93, 141ff.; WO 1/60, 75-83.
- 152) Précis Historique I, 169. A houngan is a voodoo priest.
- 153) WO 1/59, 435, 559-563, 632.
- 154) WO 1/60, 97-99.
- 155) Précis Historique I, 265.
- 156) Ibid., 177.
- 157) This paragraph is based on CO 137/94, Williamson to Portland, 14th November 1794.
- 158) Laveaux, Compte Rendu 41-42.
- 159) See the letters printed in Cabon, Haiti III 294.
- 160) B.N., Laveaux Corresp. I, 152.
- 161) Cabon, Haiti III 251, 255; WO 1/59, 311; B.N., Laveaux Corresp. I, Toussaint to Laveaux 19 juillet 1794, report by Chabot 29 septembre 1794.

## CHAPTER VI.

- 1) In September 1794, the Government stopped providing passages on credit for émigré colonists, and London merchants stopped granting loans on the strength of Saint Domingue property, though only temporarily: WO 1/59, 545-554.
- 2) Murray, West Indies 49.
- 3) Despite the assertion in Murray, West Indies 51, the signing of the Capitulation did not 'compel' the Cabinet to reorganise the colonial government. Saint Domingue's Capitulation allowed for the restoration of civil law only after the war was over. The Windward Islands' Propositions did envisage the immediate return of civil liberty but were not binding, as the colonies had to be taken by force.
- 4) B.M., Add. Ms. 38351, 208; Geggus, Memoir 33.
- 5) See below, ch. VI section (iii).
- 6) B.M., Add. Ms. 38353, 160.
- 7) WO 1/59, 599-602.
- 8) The Portland Whigs joined Pitt's ministry in July 1794, forcing the overburdened Dundas to shed some of his responsibilities. Although the colonies then came under the umbrella of the Home Secretary, Dundas, as Secretary for War, retained a dominant influence in this sphere. He apparently did not want the job and accepted it only at the King's insistence: B.M., Add. Ms. 40102, 18-19.
- 9) B.M., Add. Ms. 38351, 202; Harlow, Founding II 775.
- 10) Copies of the Instructions exist in CO 245/3 and CO 319/4, and in abridged form, in Harlow and Madden, Documents 83-88.
- 11) B.M., Add. Ms. 38353, 140-1; WO 1/59, 599; Keith, Documents 40-41.
- 12) CO 318/11, 129-138.
- 13) See below, note 14.
- 14) See WO 1/58, 489 marginal note (in English), which adds that perhaps the 1791 Canadian Constitution would be best for both Saint Domingue and Britain.
- 15) See above, ch. III, pp. 50-51.
- 16) B.M., Add. Ms. 38353, 135. Many colonists indeed called for the status quo of 1789, 1787 or 1784, but the Propositions clearly envisage a legislative assembly and even the conservative Mahe de Cormere would have accepted a small advisory body: Geggus, Memoir 33.
- 17) Murray, West Indies 55.
- 18) Cabon, Haiti II 583; Laborie, Appendix 3-4.
- 19) Instructions, art. 11; B.M., Add. Ms. 38353, 140.
- 20) CO 245/3 Portland to Williamson 7<sup>th</sup> November 1794 and passim.
- 21) See Appendix C; CO 318/11, 455, and above, notes 14 and 16.
- 22) Cambridge History of the British Empire II 155-6; Manning, Government 342.
- 23) CO 137/50, Williamson to Yonge 8<sup>th</sup> September 1793; The St. Domingo



- Review 47-51; whose author was probably John Rousselette: see below.
- 24) J.A.V.A.C., 1793, Eagle papers, Penman and Co. to Corbet 18<sup>th</sup> November, and Desroches to Branchu 22 novembre 1793.
- 25) CO 137/94, Williamson to King 12<sup>th</sup> December 1794.
- 26) Ibid.; CO 245/1, 148; St. Domingo Review 69-70.
- 27) Ott, Revolution (thesis) 104.
- 28) Until le Borgne fell in September 1794, the Mole had exported some produce from the Spanish-occupied areas.
- 29) CO 137/92, Bogle to Williamson 18<sup>th</sup> November 1793; CO 137/93, Smith to Williamson 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1794.
- 30) CO 137/94, Williamson to Portland 20<sup>th</sup> December 1794.
- 31) CO 137/93, Williamson to Dundas 25<sup>th</sup> May 1794; WO 1/62, 43; CO 137/91, Additional Instructions of September 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- 32) WO 1/59, 49-50; WO 1/60, 671, etc.
- 33) Barrister and President of the Chamber of Agriculture of le Cap in 1789, he was elected a deputy to the States-General and later was made President of the Superior Council of le Cap. A sullen man, said to have turned revolutionary out of spite for the Intendant, he was, nonetheless, by 1790 calling for free trade and self-government for Saint Domingue: Precis Historique I 197; Maurel, Vent 156.
- 34) See above, ch.III n. 197 ; WO 1/59, 651-2; CO 245/5, 88-90.
- 35) CO 137/92, 315; CO 137/93, Williamson to Dundas 1<sup>st</sup> August 1794.
- 36) See CO 137/91 Dansey to Williamson 25<sup>th</sup> October 1793. In August 1795, Bogle wanted to continue importing the Americans' superior flour, while taking 50% of his needs from England: 'You know the French are particularly nice in the article of Bread': WO 1/62, 236.
- 37) Unless otherwise stated, references to 'livres' and 'pounds' refer to 'livres coloniales' and pounds sterling.
- 38) There had been two poll taxes on plantation slaves. One financed the parish police forces and was administered by the Superior Council. The other was applied to the upkeep of the parish churches, roads and bridges and was controlled by the parish assemblies until 1787, when the Intendant angered the colonists by consolidating the taxes and taking them over, though the Superior Council remained as watchdog.
- 39) CO 245/5, 82-89; WO 1/64, 228, 246-7 funds were advanced for Montalembert's activities by the British firm Dalton, Leriche and Beaumont. Richard Dalton, who had influential connections in the City, established himself at Port au Prince immediately after it fell: P.R.O., T 81/7 minutes of 20 janvier 1796, etc.
- 40) CO 137/93, Williamson to Dundas 1<sup>st</sup> August 1794; also cp. appendix E and P.R.O., A.O. 3/200, abstract 5, voucher 2.
- 41) P.P., 1796-7 XLIII 869; CO 137/50, Atkinson to Nepean: 20th October 1793;



WO 1/62, 203.

42) P.R.O., AO 3/200, final account. This does not include the pay of the British rank and file, who anyway represented no extra cost.

43) WO 1/63, 417; St. Domingo Review 19.

44) WO 1/59, 629. Soldier, planter in the Cul de Sac since 1786, opponent of the S. Marc Assembly autonomists, promoter of the concordats with the free coloureds, he had briefly collaborated with Borel but had then been imprisoned by him. Williamson saw him, through Cadusch's eyes, as 'always a violent party man and of all parties': CO 137/93, letter to Dundas 19<sup>th</sup> July 1794. The Precis Historique I 161 describes him as 'remuant par caractère... uniquement occupé des moyens de se rendre nécessaire'.

45) See above, ch.V, section (iii).

46) WO 1/59, 587; WO 1/63, 417-8.

47) See appendix D (i) and P.R.O., T 81/5 passim.

48) WO 1/59, 571-8; WO 1/61, 58.

49) WO 1/63, 55-57. The petitions are in Dundas Papers III 4-25 and WO 1/59, 413-420, 461-482. They were signed by at most 600 colonists: WO 1/63, 398.

50) WO 1/59, 587.

51) See CO 245/5, 89-90; WO 1/60, 487-497.

52) WO 1/59, 212, 217; WO 1/61, 60; WO 1/63, 44.

53) WO 1/60, 93-94; above, ch.III n.243.

54) CO 137/94, Williamson to Portland 14<sup>th</sup> November 1794.

55) WO 1/63, 497-509, memoir probably by Hawkesbury.

56) CO 137/93, 155.

57) Precis Historique I 164; Appendix D (ii).

58) WO 1/61, 60-61, 440, 614; above, ch.III n.52. Dumas had used his eloquence to effect in the Revolution. Though conservatives depicted him as an extremist, he had tried to moderate its course in 1791-2, when he had produced a still-born constitution which weakened the Assembly and allowed the Governor to veto legislation: Garran-Coulon II 406-421; Roume, Rapport 6-13; Blanchelande, Supplément 5. De Ronseray was regarded as a capable royalist. Substitut Procureur-General in 1789, he possessed through his wife, who hated Cadusch, substantial plantations in the South.

59) WO 1/60, 487-497.

60) WO 1/61, 60, 526.

61) 'Doyen des avocats', owner of several plantations, deputy to the States-General, he had in 1791 congratulated the Port au Prince regiment on murdering its colonel.

62) WO 1/61, 61-67, 487-497; WO 1/59, 628.

63) See above, ch.VII.

64) WO 1/59, 763-8.

65) CO 137/93, 146-9; WO 1/61, 67-68.

66) Ibid. The original decree was carelessly drafted and needed extending in



the 'Instructions pour les tribunaux' of 7<sup>th</sup> June 1794. One of the merchants involved was probably Edward Plunkett, an Irish-born naturalised Frenchman, who had lived at Islet some 16 years. Also established at Baltimore, he had relations at Kingston, where he had recently acquired British nationality, and at Havana. One of his brothers had been a general in Habsburg service: J.A.V.A.C., 1793, Cérès and Beaver papers, etc.

67) This was also Dubuc Saint Olympe's plan: WO 1/58, 661-674.

68) CO 245/5 minutes of 4 novembre 1794.

69) P.R.O., T 81/14 decree of 17 septembre 1795; CO 245/5, 90.

70) WO 1/59, 571-589; WO 1/61, 61.

71) CO 245/5, minutes of juillet-septembre 1794.

72) See appendix D (i).

73) A French-born lawyer opposed to the free coloureds, he had built up a moderate fortune as a planter in the South.

74) P.R.O., T 81/6 passim; WO 1/61, 23-26.

75) Mercy-Argenteau told Lord Elgin that as regards talents and moral virtue he had been considered 'comme le chef de cette colonie' by both the old government and the inhabitants. Belin had left Baltimore for the Spanish zone in the spring, ready to renounce France if the Monarchy was not to be restored and to join whatever power offered protection. He arrived at the Mole in July, having fled the Fort Dauphin massacre. Dissatisfied with the Spaniards, he had probably already been in touch with Cadusch, a fellow northerner: WO 1/59, 151-162, 257-299, 607-610; CO 137/93, 170-5. 'N'ayant d'autre passion que celle de pouvoir compter pour quelque chose...se prêtant également à tous les parties' is the worst the acerbic Dubois could say of him: Precis Historique I 194.

76) WO 1/61, 33-34, 63. Cf. ch.III n.235.

77) WO 1/61, 33-76.

78) Cf. the views of the financial administrator, Mahé de Cormeré: Geggus, Mémoire 33. Billard condemned the Grand' Anse's financial semi-autonomy but advised it be left unreformed until after the war.

79) CO 245/5.

80) Ibid., 99-101.

81) Ibid., minutes of octobre-novembre 1794; Royal Gazette 1794, no.50, p.5.

## CHAPTER VII

1) CO 137/93, Williamson to Dundas 20<sup>th</sup> July 1794; CO 137/50, Williamson to Nepean 15<sup>th</sup> December 1793, etc. The knighthood was intended to impress the colonists; he was to be invested at Port au Prince. It was not a golden handshake conferred after his recall, as has been claimed

2) Franco, Documentos 77-78. Son of a Lieutenant-general of artillery, a



a soldier since the age of 12, he had been trained as an engineer/gunner and had served in the French West Indies in 1762. He was 58 years old: Dictionary of National Biography.

- 3) See the Journals of the Assembly, Royal Gazette, etc., particularly CO 137/95 Balcarres to Portland 11<sup>th</sup> May 1795.
- 4) See CO 137/95, Balcarres to Portland 27<sup>th</sup> September 1795 with enclosures, but also Furness, War passim.
- 5) WO 1/60, 157, 206-7; WO 1/62, 21-23. The Admiralty was extremely inefficient at this period but there is no evidence it contributed to the delay: B.M., Add. Ms. 40179, 9-26.
- 6) WO 1/61, 709; Précis Historique I 179.
- 7) Moreau de Saint-Méry II 1079, 1082; Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 163.
- 8) Corvington, Port au Prince II 135-9.
- 9) Précis Historique I 173; Royal Gazette 1794, no.52, 19; WO 1/60, 341-6; WO 1/63, 103.
- 10) WO 17/1986, returns of 26<sup>th</sup> October 1794; Edwards, Survey 203.
- 11) St. Domingo Review 29; WO 1/62, 157-160.
- 12) CO 137/94, Williamson to King 16<sup>th</sup> June 1795.
- 13) P.R.O., ADM 102/426 and 730; J.A., 1B/5/3/20, minutes of 29<sup>th</sup> September 1794.
- 14) CO 137/95, Williamson to King 27<sup>th</sup> April 1795; Royal Gazette 1794, no.'s 36-52; Defermon, Rapport 7; Cabon, Haiti III 295; WO 1/62, 399; WO 6/6, 291.
- 15) WO 1/60, 277-284; WO 1/63, 103.
- 16) WO 1/62, 5-10.
- 17) WO 1/62, 71-73; WO 1/63, 47-51.
- 18) WO 1/63, 103-4; B.N., Lav. Corresp. II, Toussaint to Laveaux 6 pluviôse III; CO 137/94, Williamson to Portland 5<sup>th</sup> March 1795.
- 19) WO 1/63, 103; B.N., Lav. Corresp. I, Toussaint to Pierre Michel and Laveaux 4 and 19 frimaire III, and the misdated proclamation in vol. II 328-9; Laveaux, Compte Rendu 45-51.
- 20) B.N., Lav. Corresp. I, Toussaint to Laveaux 4 octobre 1794.
- 21) B.N., Lav. Corresp. I 163, II 2, 426.
- 22) See below, n.24.
- 23) Laveaux, Compte Rendu is incorrect in saying Verrettes fell in December. The account of its capture in Gragnon-Lacoste, Toussaint 106-110, supposedly based on Louverture family papers, and also used in Schoelcher, Vie, 110-1, either refers to events of one year later or is entirely bogus. Cf. WO 1/65, 21-22; B.N., Lav. Corresp. I 163, and below, n.24.
- 24) B.N., Lav. Corresp. II Toussaint's letters of 29 nivôse, and 6, 12 and 18 pluviôse III; WO 1/61, 157-9.
- 25) WO 1/61, 709; Précis Historique I 178-9; St. Domingo Review 29.
- 26) WO 1/60, 675-7.
- 27) Précis Historique I 180ff.



- 28) WO 1/62, 125-143; Laveaux, Compte Rendu 56-57. His correspondence is silent for several months.
- 29) WO 1/61, 157-160.
- 30) See B.N., Lav. Corresp. II 65-123.
- 31) B.N., Lav. Corresp. II, Toussaint to Laveaux 26 messidor and 3 thermidor III.
- 32) 'L'homme de génie en ferait un champ de gloire,' had written Moreau de Saint-Méry (II 919). Though regarded as impregnable, it was, ironically, to change hands during the war more times than any other parish.
- 33) CO 245/5, minutes for November.
- 34) P.R.O., T 64/230/9, letter by Vendryes 15 octobre 1795; T 81/6 passim.
- 35) WO 1/63, 100.
- 36) WO 1/61, 314, 521; Précis Historique I 195.
- 37) Précis Historique I 172-7.
- 38) WO 1/61, 526, 710.
- 39) WO 1/61, 23-26; WO 1/63, 42-57.
- 40) Précis Historique I 180-6.
- 41) Dundas Papers II 22-23; Précis Historique I 185-6; P.R.O., T 81/14, first proclamation.
- 42) St. Domingo Review 8-9, 26; WO 1/61, 568, 595.
- 43) Précis Historique I 185-6.
- 44) See below, ch. The text of this and the following decrees can be found in P.R.O., T 81/14 and 17, or in I.J., Ms.36F, dossier 2.
- 45) WO 1/63, 411-422; CO 245/5, minutes for June 1795.
- 46) WO 1/61, 420-7; WO 1/62, 49.
- 47) This included Malouet, who two years before had said that the arming of slaves meant the end of slavery; see WO 1/58, 35ff.; WO 1/60, 255; WO 1/61, 161-2, 455, 821-6; Dundas Papers II 30-31, but also WO 1/63, 167. Briefly, at the height of the Maroon War, the Jamaicans thought a black corps would be needed in Jamaica but otherwise abhorred the idea: CO 137/88-100 passim.
- 48) Précis Historique I 186.
- 49) WO 1/60, 97-99, 152, 290; WO 1/62, 95-106, 149-152, 351-2.
- 50) WO 1/61, 420-7; WO 1/62, 13-19.
- 51) WO 1/59, 421-4, 656; Dundas Papers II 32-34; Laborie, Appendix 96, 114, 129.
- 52) WO 1/59, 63, 189, 193-4.
- 53) WO 1/61, 91, 135-144, 177, 213; CO 137/94, Williamson to Portland 13<sup>th</sup> January 1795.
- 54) WO 1/61, 221ff.
- 55) WO 1/61, 439-441, 637-643.
- 56) CO 245/5, minutes of 15 juin and 17 juillet 1795.
- 57) B.M., Add. Ms. 38353, 135.
- 58) WO 1/59, 647-8; WO 1/61, 158-161, 741-4; Précis Historique I 192.
- 59) WO 1/61, 521-2.
- 60) Précis Historique I 186; WO 1/61, 521, 710.



- 61) WO 1/61, 737-740.
- 62) Précis Historique I 193; WO 1/61, 731-4.
- 63) WO 1/61, 309-318; WO 1/63, 363.
- 64) WO 1/61, 731-4; WO 1/63, 411-422.
- 65) WO 1/61, 23-26, 44; WO 1/63, 42.
- 66) WO 1/60, 407ff.; WO 1/61, 125-130, 181-184, 261-7; Lokke, Diplomacy, passim. Williamson was ready by late 1794 to let the Spanish take the North, as he assumed Britain would gain it at the peace. Even Charmilly came to agree that Spanish co-operation was necessary but insisted it must be bought with subsidies not territory, whereas Malouet accepted that the two powers would divide the colony: WO 1/61, 199-202.
- 67) WO 1/61, 679-681; Royal Gazette 1794, no.32, 23.
- 68) Spain had actually made peace with the Republic in July but this was not known in Port au Prince till September.
- 69) WO 1/61, 717; B.N., Lav. Corresp. II, Toussaint to Laveaux 19 thermidor and 28 fructidor (undoubtedly meant to be thermidor) III. This last letter has been responsible for Schoelcher (Vie 145) and many others wrongly assuming that Toussaint retook Mirebalais in September.
- 70) WO 1/61, 599-600.
- 71) WO 1/61, 717-721; B.N., Lav. Corresp. I 128, II Guion to Toussaint 29 thermidor III, Toussaint to Laveaux 5 fructidor III. According to Toussaint, Dessources lost at least 300 out of over 600 men; according to Williamson, 91 out of 485: WO 1/62, 274. Regimental returns show only 74 dead but another source reports several hundred killed: WO 17/1987, September returns; WO 1/66, 581.
- Assuming that Dessources' regiment was 'a famous corps of white creoles', C.L.R. James calls this a 'victory of the black sansculottes over the old planters': Black Jacobins 159. Politically, this was true, but the bulk of troops on both sides were ex-slaves and, of the five Republican commanders in action, one was white and two were mulattoes.
- 72) WO 1/63, 478, 521; WO 1/62, 349.
- 73) P.R.O., T 81/14, decree of 17 septembre 1795.
- 74) WO 1/61, 575-7, 663-7; WO 1/64, 1, 53-54.
- 75) Précis Historique I 198-9; WO 1/61, 715. Two lawyers were gaoled merely for repeating planters' complaints that he was ruining the estates of the Cul-de-Sac.
- 76) P.R.O., T 81/14 and 7, decrees and minutes of September 1795.
- 77) B.M., Add. Ms. 38352, 12; Précis Historique I 205, 216, 271, 315-6.
- 78) See Appendix D (i). Representing the South, were Busson, a meticulous lawyer, who though involved in the secession of la Grand' Anse had been seneschal of le Cap and owned numerous properties in the North, and de Villars, a Louisiana-born soldier who owned a south coast plantation and had been commandant of Leogane. Busson became the Council's man of affairs, as Billard had been.
- 79) Cf. below, ch.



- 80) P.R.O., T 81/14, various decrees December 1795.
- 81) However, of all the emigré regiments then recruiting in Europe, de Charmilly's was the most top-heavy and Montalembert's a close third, Double-officering was permitted for the West Indies but no cavalry regiment needed 17 majors! See P.P. 1795-6 XLI 821.
- 82) WO 1/60, 319, 325; WO 1/61, 821-6.
- 83) See Wright and Debien, Jamaïque 66, which wrongly assumes it to have been a black corps. As compensation, Rochejacquelein was made colonel of the new Chasseurs de Cayemittes.
- 84) Mongin and Faveranges retained the seneschalcies of Port au Prince and Jérémie. L.M. de Léaumont stayed as Principal Administrator of Absentee Property but with reduced powers. Borel, after commanding colonial troops at Saint Marc, had probably left early in 1795. Raboteau was a prisoner of the Republicans. De Charmilly had left the fold and was now in the political wilderness, already out of favour with Montalembert, ignored by the British government and superseded by Malouet as Deputy. Around November, Dundas decided he could keep his colonelcy on condition he did not return to Saint Domingue: WO 1/63 passim.
- 85) WO 1/61, 725-8.
- 86) Cf. Précis Historique passim.
- 87) E.g. CO 137/95, Dumas to Portland 24 septembre 1795. ~Q.
- 88) Précis Historique I 173-5, 206-214, 220-5, 257, 271.
- 89) Ibid. 178; Dundas Papers I, piece no. 5; CO 137/93, Cadusch to ? 14 June 1794.
- 90) WO 1/61, 339-340, 524.
- 91) See Dundas Papers II 22.
- 92) See below, ch. IX, pp. 195-9.
- 93) Garran-Coulon IV 471-7, 579-580.
- 94) A.N., C<sup>8A</sup> 103, 187-9; WO 1/65, 707.
- 95) Cp. WO 1/64, 225-242 and Laborie, Appendix passim.
- 96) WO 1/64, 141-3; Précis Historique I 204.
- 97) P.P. 1796-7 XLIII 869; WO 1/61, 467-471.
- 98) WO 1/61, 529-539; P.P. 1796-7 XLIII 868.
- 99) Dundas Papers II 30-31; Laborie, Appendix 136; WO 1/61, 595; WO 1/62, 477.
- 100) CO 245/3, Portland to Williamson 10<sup>th</sup> December 1794.
- 101) WO 1/61, 567-8, 727-749; McIntosh and Weber, Correspondance 161.
- 102) P.P. 1796-7 XLIII 868.
- 103) Cp. ibid., WO 1/61, 67 and Laborie Appendix 29-30.
- 104) WO 1/61, 66; WO 1/64, 397; Précis Historique I 204.
- 105) WO 1/61, 529-539; WO 1/64, 129.
- 106) P.R.O., AO 3/200, Bogle's final account. £227,282 in specie was shipped from Jamaica; the rest was met largely by bills of exchange.



- 107) WO 1/64, 237-9.
- 108) P.R.O., 30/8/349, 300-5, 343; WO 1/64, 49.
- 109) Laborie, Appendix 124.
- 110) Ibid.; St. Domingo Review 10. Though in the North, Sonthonax, faced with the same problem, restricted such handouts to orphans and the aged: B.N., Sonthonax Correspondence I passim.
- 111) CO 137/95, Balcarres to Portland 10th May 1795.
- 112) P.R.O., T 81/5-7 passim; St. Domingo Review 11.
- 113) WO 1/61, 821-6; Laborie, Appendix 124.
- 114) P.R.O., AO 3/200, abstract 18, vouchers 2 and 25.
- 115) WO 1/62, 236.
- 116) St. Domingo Review 47-51; P.R.O., 30/8/152, 180. The provisions bill was also inflated by duplication in the supply of rations to hospitals; the listing of dead men on the muster rolls of some colonial corps, and wastage when transporting stores 'up-country' sometimes amounting to 40%. The usual practice of deducting the cost of rations from troops' pay was never implemented in the colonial corps and was completely abandoned in May 1795.
- 117) P.R.O., AO 3/200, Bogle's final account.
- 118) P.R.O., 30/8/152, 180 and 30/8/349, 312.
- 119) WO 1/65, 759.
- 120) WO 1/61, 821-6; WO 1/64, 121-6, 173-210, etc.
- 121) WO 1/61, 734, 821-6, etc. 2
- 122) WO 1/62, 313.
- 123) P.R.O., 30/8/349, 312, 339; Laborie, Appendix 127.
- 124) WO 1/60, 627; Laborie, Appendix 136-7. This was certainly true of the marquis de la Rochejacquelein, who, though a maréchal de France, initially served as a volunteer leading small groups.
- 125) WO 1/61, 821-6.
- 126) Laborie, Appendix 121.
- 127) P.R.O., 30/8/ 152, 179-180; WO 1/64, 346-351.
- 128) See below, ch.
- 129) St. Domingo Review 35-38, 69-73. Internal evidence shows him almost certainly to have been the author.
- 130) Laborie, Appendix 13, 121; Précis Historique I 199.
- 131) CO 137/95, Balcarres to Portland 31st August 1795.
- 132) WO 1/65, 690-1; CO 245/5, minutes of 17 novembre 1795.
- 133) Précis Historique I 211.
- 134) WO 1/63, 497-509; WO 1/66, 373-385. He was made a Lieutenant-General in January 1797 and died as a result of a fall in October 1798.
- 135) Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 104-5.
- 136) WO 1/61, 743.
- 137) WO 1/62, 277, 335.
- 138) WO 1/62, 243-6; WO 17/1987, returns of 1st October and 1st November 1795.



- 139) WO 1/64, 1-4; WO 1/62, 399.
- 140) CO 245/4, Forbes to Dundas 10<sup>th</sup> November 1795; J.A., Council Minutes, 29<sup>th</sup> October 1795; WO 1/62, 403.
- 141) CO 245/5, minutes of 25, 26 septembre and 14 octobre 1795; WO 1/62, 477.
- 142) WO 1/61, 821-6.
- 143) CO 137/94, Williamson to King 12<sup>th</sup> December 1794.
- 144) P.R.O., T 81/7-8, minutes of 24 octobre, 11 novembre, 8 décembre 1795, 18 février 1796.
- 145) B.N., Lav. Corresp. II 237ff.
- 146) See B.N., Lav. Corresp. II 294. At the same time, it is true, mulattoes of Mirebalais were begging their Republican friends to come and rescue them: *ibid.* II, Toussaint to Laveaux 26 frimaire IV; *ibid.* III, letters of Sannon Eloy 12 and 13 janvier 1796.
- 147) *Ibid.* III Toussaint to Laveaux 21 and 24 nivôse, 15 pluviôse IV. It was probably some time in 1796 that Toussaint built the famous fort of Crête à Pierrot. Despite popular belief, it was not a British fort, which should be obvious from its location, defending the right bank of the Artibonite and the south-east approach to Petite Rivière.
- 148) See Laveaux, Compte Rendu 22ff.
- 149) *Ibid.* 68-69; Cabon, Haiti III 290; WO 1/65, 79. Gragnon-Lacoste, Toussaint 158 describes Rodrigue as white, quite improbably and contrary to Laveaux's testimony. His source was presumably the mulatto historian Saint-Rémy, Vie 129.
- 150) B.N., Laveaux Corresp. III 11, 12, 29, 30, 45-48.
- 151) *Ibid.* III Toussaint to Laveaux 29 nivôse IV.
- 152) *Ibid.* I 133, II Toussaint to Laveaux 29 and 30 prairial III etc.
- 153) *Ibid.* III Toussaint to Laveaux 3 ventôse IV.
- 154) WO 1/63, 332. French vowels tend to become nasalised in creole. The Datty were a white family long-established in the north-west.
- 155) Laveaux, Compte Rendu 70.
- 156) B.N., Lav. Corresp. III 68-80.
- 157) See B.N., Sonthonax Correspondence I *passim*; Lav. Corresp. III, Toussaint to Laveaux 30 germinal and 22 floréal IV.
- 158) Mulatto commanders were often able to mobilise black support, while some like Flaville and Desravines stayed loyal to Toussaint, but in general the crisis polarised Republicans along racial lines.
- 159) WO 1/59, 348-352, 372 (June 1793).
- 160) Schoelcher, Vie 167, 202. Rigaud, Villatte and Beauvais had been in the free coloured contingent that fought alongside the American colonists at Savanna and Yorktown.
- 161) See Cabon, Haiti III 289.
- 162) Dundas Papers III 38-39. Cf. WO 1/65, 807.
- 163) WO 1/64, 121-6, contemporary guesses by Malouet.
- 164) WO 1/64, 41-42, 61-68.



165) The great majority of Dominguan blacks, whether born in the Congo basin, on the Slave Coast, in Yorubaland or Saint Domingue itself, had been brought up in monarchical societies. The insurgents of 1791, long before they enlisted with the Spaniards, had called themselves gens du roi, carried royalist banners, spared the lives and property of officials and included in their demands the restoration of the monarchy: Garran-Coulon II 193, IV 47-48; Roume, Rapport 47-48. When seeking recruits among Toussaint's men, Jean-François vaunted l'habit du Roy and the power of the king of Spain: B.N., Lav. Corresp. II, letter by Jean-François 11 juin 1795. Cf. the Dutch Republic's difficulties in impressing inhabitants of the E. Indies, when competing with the monarchical Portuguese

166) WO 1/65, 1-7, 45-49, 57-59, 99. Of Gagnette's 2000, 30% were unarmed. It is uncertain if they were women and children, or men without firearms.

167) Formerly colonel of the regiment of le Cap, deported by Sonthonax to Baltimore, he had offered his services to the British in January 1794.

Apparently because of difficult communications, it took two years before he returned to the colony, where he demanded equal status with Montalembert. Perhaps his use as a negotiator with the north-east blacks lends weight to the rumours that in 1791 he had conspired with the rebels.

168) B.M., Add. Ms. 39824, 13; B.N., Lav. Corresp. III Casa Calvo to Laveaux 21 de febrero de 1796.

169) In 1793 Macaya had rebuffed the Civil Commissioners with the cryptic declaration that he was the subject of three kings, who were descended from the Magi. These were the kings of France and Spain and the king of the Congo, lord of all blacks: Dalmas, Histoire 220; Korngold, Toussaint 82-83. Perhaps it is him who is remembered in the folk song 'Ouindé Macaya' (King Macaya): see Comhaire-Sylvain, Contes xi. The Royalist-Republican division was doubtless deepened by African resentment of creoles and mulattoes. Toussaint spoke of the north-east blacks as 'nos malheureux frères africains, trop foibles et trop faciles à séduire': B.N., Lav. Corresp. III, Toussaint to Laveaux 16 ventose IV. Yet, as the great majority of black adults in Saint Domingue were African, the division is only partly explicable in racial terms. Toussaint's own men were derided by their opponents as 'Congos tout nuds'. Even at the level of commanders, Jean-François and Pierrot are obvious exceptions to this pattern, while Gagnette was apparently an 'ancien libre' of le Cap: see B.N., Sonthonax Correspondence I, letters to Toussaint 14 fructidor and to Laveaux 30 thermidor IV.

170) P.R.O., T 81/7, minutes of 30 decembre 1795; WO 1/64, 121-6; WO 1/65, 9, 15, 61, 129-133.

171) WO 1/62, 471-2; WO 1/64, 121-6; WO 1/65, 41.

172) WO 1/65, 1-41; Précis Historique I 208.

173) Ibid.; P.R.O., T 81/7 minutes of 30 decembre 1795, 25 and 26 janvier



1796. Montalembert thought the markets a good means of allaying the blacks' suspicions. The Conseil Privé, piqued at not being consulted about them, thought them dangerous and wanted them stopped.

174) B.N., Lav. Corresp. III Toussaint to Laveaux 4 ventose IV; Laveaux, Compte Rendu 108-9.

175) WO 1/65, 129-133, 747; B.N., Lav. Corresp. III Toussaint to Laveaux 11, 16 and 22 ventose IV.

176) WO 1/65, 65-66, 107; Edwards, Survey 389.

177) B.N., Lav. Corresp. III 63.

178) B.N., Lav. Corresp. III, Toussaint to Laveaux 16 and 22 ventose IV, and the proclamation of généraux Gagnette, Guéri, Roclore, Dutemple, etc. 10 mars 1796.

179) WO 1/65, 107, 115-6, 685-692.

## CHAPTER VIII.

- 1) Matheson, Dundas 213-6.
- 2) WO 1/59, 437-441; PRO 30/8/368, 26-32; WO letters of July-December 1794.
- 3) B.M., Add. Ms. 40102, 5-9.
- 4) See Lokke, Diplomacy passim; WO 1/61, 261-7.
- 5) WO 1/63, 243-254, 259-289.
- 6) WO 1/63, 297-304, 329-340. De Charmilly presented much the same plan as he had put forward in 1791, except that what he then called 'le flambeau de la liberté' he now termed 'the poison the French have brought from North America'. His pose as an expert on Spanish America, his ideas and his movements, make one suspect he had met the revolutionary Francisco Miranda either in London or Paris. Cf. above, p.45.
- 7) Facts...conduct of the war 32-53.
- 8) Spencer Bernard Papers, OM 11/10, De Lancey to Lewes, 25th September 1795; B.N., Laveaux Corresp. III, French vice-consul at Alexandria to Laveaux 28 ventôse IV.
- 9) See Jackson, Outline 29, 34, 48; Wright, Memoir 97-103; Facts...conduct of the war 186-7. Dundas was adamant that the ratio of one man per two tons of shipping should not be exceeded: WO 6/5, letter to Whyte 5th December 1795. In the American War, troopships sent to the West Indies had an average mortality of 11%: Klein and Engerman, Facteurs 1222.
- 10) See below, p.     ; N.L.S., Ms. 3835, 127.
- 11) H.M.C., Fortescue Mss. III, 102; N.L.S., Ms. 1075, 104-9; B.M., Add. Ms. 40102, 5.
- 12) WO 6/5, Dundas to Whyte 5th December 1795; N.L.S., Ms. 7199, 164.
- 13) Facts...conduct of the war 44.
- 14) N.L.S., Ms. 1075, 16-19; S.R.O., GD 51/1, 662.
- 15) Facts...conduct of the war 57.
- 16) Wright, Memoir 99.
- 17) See below, pp.
- 18) WO 17/141.
- 19) Spencer Papers I, 139-140.
- 20) H.M.C., Fortescue Mss. III, 102; Sanderson, Strategy 311-2.
- 21) CO 245/4; WO 1/62, 335-362.
- 22) See Fortescue, Army IV 478-9.
- 23) See *ibid.*, 470, and WO 1/65, 97-104.
- 24) S.R.O., GD 51/1, 675; N.L.S., Ms. 7199, 174.
- 25) WO 1/60, 311-5, 351-6; WO 1/62, 117.
- 26) J.A., 1B/5/14/2, letters of 13th and 14th November 1795; WO 1/62, 431-5; WO 6/5, 196.



- 27) Cf. above, p.79 and ch. III, note 84.
- 28) See above, pp.173-5.
- 29) H.M.C., Fortescue Mss. III, 166.
- 30) Matheson, Dundas 217, 223.
- 31) B.M., Add. Ms. 40100, 167, 175.
- 32) WO 1/65, 1-6 (wrongly dated).
- 33) WO 1/62, 505; N.L.S., Ms. 3835, 137; Fortescue, Army IV 487.
- 34) N.L.S., Ms. 3835, 142.
- 35) Cp. WO 17/1988, garrison returns; Fortescue, Army IV 471-2; Edwards, Survey 395.
- 36) Fortescue, Army IV 485.
- 37) E.g. Laborie, Appendix 134; Chalmers, Remarks 34.
- 38) See below, p. 335.
- 39) See note 35. I give only a round figure for the colonial troops, as their returns were said to be fraudulent. Montalembert's Legion, having received so many European reinforcements, is best considered a 'foreign' corps. As for the York Hussars' status, see below, ch.X, note
- 40) N.L.S., Ms. 3835, 125-6.
- 41) Laborie, Appendix 135; St. Domingo Review 41.
- 42) See WO 1/64, 359; WO 1/65, 141-150; B.N., Sonthonax Correspondence I, letter to Pétion 10 nivôse V; Chalmers, Remarks 39-40; St. Domingo Review 41.
- 43) B.M., Add. Ms. 38231, 25-27.
- 44) B.N., Laveaux Corresp. III, Toussaint to Laveaux 22 ventôse IV.
- 45) See above, pp.170-6.
- 46) B.N., Laveaux Corresp. III, correspondence of ventôse - floréal IV; Laveaux, Compte Rendu 87-93.
- 47) B.N., Laveaux Corresp. III, Toussaint to Perroud 29 germinal IV.
- 48) Ibid., Perroud to Laveaux 22 floréal IV.
- 49) Ibid., letters of Delangle and Dubuisson to Toussaint 29 germinal and 15 messidor, Toussaint to Laveaux 5 floréal, Mornet to Toussaint 16 messidor IV.
- 50) WO 1/65, 169-176.
- 51) Ibid., 763-770 (20 avril); Dundas Papers III, 42 (7 mai).
- 52) St. Domingo Review 37, 39-46. This, however, is a very biased portrait by a protégé of Williamson.
- 53) B.N., Laveaux Corresp. III 234; WO 1/65, 169. These figures are maxima; many sources give much smaller estimates.
- 54) Pauléus-Sannon, Histoire II 5, 9.
- 55) S.R.O., GD 193/3/8, report by de Bussy.
- 56) B.N., Sonthonax Correspondence I, letter to Pierre Michel 22 floréal IV; WO 1/65, 221, 237.
- 57) WO 1/65, 173-6.
- 58) Ibid., 205-9

- 59) Ibid., 789-791.
- 60) Ibid., 825-7.
- 61) B.N., Sonthonax Correspondence I, letters to Labattut 30 fructidor IV and 17 brumaire V, and to Desfourneaux and Toussaint 22 frimaire V; Laveaux, Compte Rendu 55, 57.
- 62) B.N., Sonthonax Correspondence I, 44, 47; B.N., Laveaux Corresp. III, 198, 274; Laveaux, Compte Rendu 93.
- 63) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Journal I, 43-50; St. Domingo Review 43-44.
- 64) B.N., Laveaux Corresp. III, Toussaint to Laveaux 13 prairial and 9 messidor IV.
- 65) Ibid., same to same 25 germinal, 2 floréal and 28 prairial IV; WO 1/65, 806-9; B.N., Sonthonax Correspondence I, letter to Toussaint 5 messidor IV; WO 1/64, 320; Laveaux, Compte Rendu 92; Debien, Plantations et Esclaves 146.
- 66) See above, note 55; WO 1/65, 882.
- 67) This paragraph is mainly based on WO 1/65, 239-249; B.N., Sonthonax Correspondence I, letters to Toussaint 6 messidor, to Pierre Michel and Grandet 16 and 22 messidor IV; Laveaux Corresp. III, Toussaint to Laveaux 9 messidor IV.
- 68) B.N., Laveaux Corresp. III, Toussaint to Laveaux 9 and 30 messidor IV.
- 69) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Journal I, 68-72.
- 70) B.M., Add. Ms. 39824, 30; B.N., Sonthonax Correspondence I, letter to Roume 25 thermidor IV; below, note 71.
- 71) B.N., Laveaux Corresp. III, Toussaint to Laveaux 26 thermidor IV; WO 1/65, 385-6; WO 1/64, 310-322.
- 72) B.P.L., Lieutenant Howard's Journal I, 82-II, 2. Anglo-colonial losses in this action totalled two wounded; on July 22nd they came to 38 killed and wounded.
- 73) B.N., Sonthonax Correspondence I, late thermidor onwards; Debien, Plantations et Esclaves 146.
- 74) N.L.S., Ms.3835, 151.
- 75) This paragraph is based on WO 1/64, 321; WO 1/65, 345-363; J.A., Council Minutes, August 1796; Cabon, Haiti III 321-2; James, Jacobins 181-5.
- 76) WO 1/65, 565-571; WO 1/67, 1-4.
- 77) B.N., Laveaux Corresp. III, letters of Pierre Michel 1er and 2me sansculottide IV, Grandet to Laveaux 5me jour complémentaire IV.
- 78) B.N., Sonthonax Correspondence I, fructidor IV to nivôse V; Cabon, Haiti III 350.
- 79) For the following, see WO 1/65, 365-379 and WO 1/64, 507-513.
- 80) Spencer Bernard Papers, OM 9/6a.
- 81) Chalmers, Remarks 38-39.



- 82) J.A., Council Minutes, 27th August 1796, letter by Coote Manningham.
- 83) Debien, Plantations et Esclaves 145-8.
- 84) See B.N. Sonthonax Correspondence I, passim. The leaders concerned were all Africans. However, before concluding that the rejection of plantation labour and white authority were 'African' traits, one must consider Debien's evidence from Jean Rabel (note 83), where it was the Africans who remained working in the fields, exploited by the creoles. Pierre Michel, moreover, who did enforce the labour laws, was also African, while Flaville, who did not, was a mulatto.
- 85) See Cabon, Haiti III 355-6.
- 86) B.N., Sonthonax Correspondence I, fructidor-nivôse, quotations from letters to Bessière and Toussaint, 12 and 29 frimaire V.

## CHAPTER IX.

- 1) In both Britain and France, public opinion was now tending to favour peace, and the appearance of a more moderate government in Paris had already at the end of 1795 caused Britain to make tentative overtures. The quotation is from Plowden, History 63, published in 1794.
- 2) Parliamentary Debates XXXII, 10th March 1796; Facts...conduct of the war passim.
- 3) P.R.O., AO 3/200.
- 4) WO 1/65, 169, 205-9.
- 5) WO 1/64, 343-354. Maitland, then 36 years old, had served about 10 years in India and spent two years in the House of Commons. The Lauderdale family were a politically powerful Scots family. The earl was a radical Whig, a former friend of Brissot and enemy of the war.
- 6) See *ibid.*, 307; WO 1/65, 817-821; Dundas Papers II, 21-36.
- 7) See Chalmers, Strictures 31 (written in August); WO 1/64, 387-9; below, ch.XV, note 11.
- 8) H.M.C., III 241; B.M., Add. Ms. 40100, 188.
- 9) WO 1/65, 267-322; WO 6/6, 65-73.
- 10) WO 1/64, 359-371.
- 11) On this affair, see WO 1/64, 391; WO 1/65, 943-6; N.L.S., Ms. 3835, 153-5; Précis Historique I, 249.
- 12) WO 1/65, 325-342.
- 13) WO 1/64, 407; Lokke, Merchant passim.
- 14) WO 1/65, 415-499. John Graves Simcoe had distinguished himself in the American War as an active commander of light troops. Nearly 45, he had sat briefly in the House of Commons and had latterly been Governor of Upper Canada.



- 15) WO 1/65, 393-412; WO 1/66, 89-93.
- 16) It was in November that Edmund Burke added to the later printings of his Regicide Peace the lines cited below, p.200. Cp. Burke, Two Letters 155, Burke, Works V 240 and Fitzwilliam, Correspondence IV 366-7.
- 17) B.M., Add. Ms. 39824, 32-37; Precis Historique I, 249.
- 18) Griffiths, Malouet 263-9; Bégouen-Démeaux, Foäche 173-183; below, pp.
- 19) Griffiths, Malouet 222-301. In addition to the criticisms made above, ch.III, note 98, it is difficult to accept Griffiths' statement that Malouet's real object was to re-assert the 'Frenchness' of Saint Domingue and that he considered obtaining peace more worthwhile than securing the colonists' future: see *ibid.* 242, 263, 267. This does not square with Malouet's suggestions that Saint Domingue be made independent by international agreement, and still less with his proposals of January 1793 and September 1796, ignored by Griffiths, that Saint Domingue become independent in armed defiance of France. See note 10 and above, p.50.
- 20) WO 1/66, 61-74, 121-141; WO 1/67, 81-98, 141-2, 323-342.
- 21) Dundas Papers II 9-12.
- 22) WO 1/66, 53-57; Précis Historique I 250.
- 23) Laborie, Appendix 142-3; Précis Historique I 252; WO 1/66, 395-6.
- 24) See Precis Historique I 291.
- 25) CO 245/1, 119; WO 1/67, 67-71, 158-9.
- 26) WO 1/67, 135.
- 27) P.R.O., 30/8/349, 344-5.
- 28) CO 245/1, 104; WO 1/66, 93, 125-132, 194; WO 1/67, 67-71.
- 29) WO 1/67, 73-74, 341.
- 30) With an annual deficit now reaching 19 million pounds, the Bank of England had to suspend cash payments in February. The Austrians were considering withdrawing from the war, while in December the French had almost invaded Ireland, then seething with discontent. In April, the Channel Fleet mutinied, followed in May by that of the North Sea.
- 31) See above, note 16.
- 32) See P.P. 1796-7 XLIII 867.
- 33) WO 6/6, letter of 8th April 1797.
- 34) Edwards had begun the work in October 1794, when the annexation of Saint Domingue still seemed to threaten the prosperity of the British West Indies and when Jamaican sugar prices had fallen by nearly one fifth, owing partly to imports from Martinique.
- 35) In January, Dundas got George III to sanction an attack on Buenos Aires. Trinidad fell to Abercromby in February. Charmilly put forward schemes to 'faire révolter les créoles' of South America, and suggested he go to Paris to contact Francisco Miranda: B.M., Add. Ms. 40100, 186; WO 1/67, 487-514.
- 36) Parliamentary History XXXIII, 575-594.



- 37) WO 6/6, letter of 9th June 1796.
- 38) Wimpffen, Voyage introduction; Laborie, Appendix 143.
- 39) See Lettre 212-232; WO 1/67, 578. His personal standing was now extremely low with the ministry and was not improved by his demands for a peerage and compensation for the loss of his plantation, which in fact he had sold before the occupation began. Nevertheless, compared to de Curt or Montalembert, he was treated unfairly by the Government.
- 40) Mclean, Enquiry preface, 21, 41, 80.
- 41) Griffiths, Malouet 281-2.
- 42) CO 245/1, 120-6; WO 1/67, 545-575, 615-635; Dundas Papers II, 13-20.
- 43) Fortescue, Army IV 546.
- 44) WO 1/66, 73.
- 45) St. Domingo Review 45-61; Laborie, Appendix 138-9; WO 1/64, 326; WO 1/66, 495-500.
- 46) P.R.O., 30/8/349, 330-1; WO 1/64, 322, 331-9; WO 1/65, 685.
- 47) On Shaw, see above, p.167.
- 48) St. Domingo Review 32, 54-58; Laborie, Appendix 13, 119-122; below, p.
- 49) See above, p.163. Since mid-1796, General Whyte had levied a tax on houses and market stalls at the Mole, but he was exceptional.
- 50) WO 1/67, 245-259; P.R.O., 30/8/349, 338-9; WO 1/64, 336-7.
- 51) See above, pp.159, 165-6.
- 52) See WO 17/1988; Chalmers, Remarks 45.
- 53) WO 1/66, 650-670; WO 1/67, 130-1.
- 54) WO 1/66, 130, 161-179; Chalmers, Remarks 45.
- 55) T 81/14, 179; WO 1/66, 124; Précis Historique I 273-4.
- 56) See T81/14, contracts and règlements 22 octobre and 8, 12 and 24 novembre 1795; Précis Historique I 254, 261.
- 57) WO 1/66, 97-104. In the Grand' Anse, however, rather than have the hated corvée restored, the planters agreed to pay an extra capitation.
- 58) See AO 3/265; WO 1/66, 140, 183.
- 59) WO 1/66, 97-104, 459-490; Laborie, Appendix 44. Cf. CO 245/5, 24 novembre 1795.
- 60) WO 1/66, 97-104, 138.
- 61) T 81/14, 154-175; WO 1/66, 145-160.
- 62) WO 1/66, 275-6. In fact, the Régie Royale raised only £60,000 in 1797: see AO 3/265.
- 63) Cp. Précis Historique I 279, and Chalmers, Remarks 46.
- 64) WO 1/66, 137, 293-6, 307, 322; Laborie, Appendix 139; WO 1/67, 131-5; Maitland thought the minimum expenditure would be £600,000 p.a.
- 65) WO 1/67, 305-310; St. Domingo Review 63.

- 66) WO 1/66, 137, 211-221; Dundas Papers III 50-65.
- 67) Spencer Bernard Papers OM 10/25a, OM 8/2 and 21; WO 1/66, 189-190; WO 1/67, 265-7, 277, 294-5, 335-8.
- 68) E.g. see Spencer Bernard Papers OM 8/17, 9/22 and 10/9; P.R.O., T 81/14, decree of 20 novembre 1797.
- 69) Cf. WO 17/1988 and 1989. Précis Historique I 256 gives rather lower figures.
- 70) See Edwards, Survey 393; Cabon, Haiti III 374. This is not counting the independent chiefs. Chalmers, Remarks 53-58, 66, insisted Toussaint had far fewer men actually under arms. In September 1798, Toussaint told Laveaux that his army was 23,000 men strong: B.N., Laveaux Corresp. III, letter of 3 vendemiaire VII.
- 71) WO 1/66, 81, 281-2.
- 72) Sanderson, Strategy 268.
- 73) WO 1/65, 393-412. Simcoe had tried to raise a black corps in America as early as 1777: Dictionary of National Biography.
- 74) WO 1/66, 85.
- 75) WO 1/67, 67-69, 75, 81-86.
- 76) Précis Historique I 251-260; Spencer Bernard Papers OM 9/7.
- 77) Précis Historique I 256-263; WO 1/66, 89-93, 111-118; Cabon, Haiti III 351; Chalmers, Remarks 51. The Republican positions at Boutillier and Saint Laurent may have been taken a month earlier or later; the sources conflict.
- 78) S.R.O., GD 193/2/1, Simcoe to Maitland 25th April 1797; WO 1/67, 118-121, 127-9, 141-2, 191-4.
- 79) Pauléus-Sannon, Histoire II 22.
- 80) S.R.O., GD 193/2/1, Simcoe to Maitland 30th May 1797.
- 81) WO 1/67, 165-175; B.P.L., Lieutenant Howard's Journal II, 46-56.
- 82) See S.R.O., GD 193/2/1, Littlehales to Maitland 2nd, 7th, 14th June 1797; WO 1/67, 179-185; B.P.L., Lieutenant Howard's Journal II 69-79. The version in Schoelcher, Vie 218, taken from Madiou, is completely wrong.
- 83) See WO 1/66, 190, 194; WO 1/67, 165-172; S.R.O., GD 193/2/1, June correspondence; Précis Historique I 286.
- 84) B.P.L., Lieutenant Howard's Journal II 80-82.
- 85) WO 1/66, 194, 140.
- 86) CO 245/1, 104.
- 87) B.P.L., Lieutenant Howard's Journal III 21, 27-30, 41.
- 88) WO 1/66, 309; WO 1/67, 274.
- 89) WO 1/66, 307-9.
- 90) WO 1/67, 165-172; Laborie, Appendix 119; Précis Historique I 264.
- 91) B.P.L., Lieutenant Howard's Journal III 33, 39-41, 45; WO 1/66, 577-581.



## CHAPTER X

- 1) Lettre 148-9
- 2) See CO 137/92, 257; CO 137/93, Smith to Williamson 22nd March 1794; WO 1/60, 257. The figures are extrapolated from the number of rations distributed.
- 3) CO 245/5, 20 juin 1795; WO 1/63, 419-420.
- 4) Fergusson, Contagion 366; Précis Historique I 280.
- 5) Précis Historique I 253, 279, 303; WO 1/61, 47.
- 6) Above, p. 169; Précis Historique I 256.
- 7) Cf. below, pp. 258-9.
- 8) See above, pp. 1, 2, 145; also, Précis Historique I 59, 303, II 48; CO 245/5, passim, and the papers of Louis Vendryès in P.R.O., T 64/230 and 226B.
- 9) See CO 245/5, 30 août 1794; P.R.O., T 81/14, decree of 7 septembre 1795 concerning the sale of alcohol; WO 1/66, 274; Précis Historique I 273.
- 10) Cp. Grouvel, Faits 76, WO 1/64, 248 and below, appendix E.
- 11) B.N., Lav. Corresp. I, letter of 4 Octobre 1794.
- 12) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. II 53-57, 65; Moreau de Saint-Méry II 874 ff.
- 13) Cp. Edwards, Survey 178, who probably exaggerated, Moreau de Saint-Méry II 748 and table 3.
- 14) CO 245/5, septembre-novembre 1795.
- 15) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. I, 38.
- 16) Fergusson, Contagion 366.
- 17) See B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. III, 44. It seems that the general shortage of shingles and planking was causing a premature Haitianisation. Cf. Moreau de Saint-Méry II 958.
- 18) Spencer Bernard Papers, OM 10/29c.
- 19) See above, p. 108.
- 20) Captain Colville's notebook, (unpaginated).
- 21) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. II 57.
- 22) Spencer Bernard Papers OM 8/22; Absentee Inventories, passim; below, n.60.
- 23) JAVAC 1793, Nancy papers, letters of Mumford to Powers, Echo papers, Burnham to Perkins 20 October 1793; Spencer Bernard Papers OM 10/9.
- 24) See WO 1/59, 504-5.
- 25) Captain Colville's notebook.
- 26) Ibid. In 1795 the marquise la Rochejacquelein wrote to her children from Camp Desrivaux, 'Imaginez votre pauvre mère dans un camp, entourée d'hommes les plus grossiers, car les habitants de ce quartier-ci sont presque tous de la dernière classe des Français; tous les officiers du corps de votre père ne sont pas d'un autre genre: pas une seule femme blanche chez qui je puisse aller tant il est impossible de voyager dans ce quartier,' Wright and Debien, Jamaïque 66.

- 27) Dundas Papers I, statistical table; Barskett, History appendix I; however, these figures clearly do not include the 200 mini-plantations of Dame Marie which grew a mixture of coffee, cotton and vegetables and sometimes had only 4 or 6 slaves. Cf. Moreau de Saint-Méry III 1373, 1400.
- 28) For slave population estimates, see ch. XI.
- 29) See Absentee Inventories, *passim*.
- 30) Cp, below, appendix E; WO 1/64, 248-9; Barskett, History appendices I and II, and Dundas Papers I, trade figures for 1789.
- 31) Moreau de Saint-Méry III 1395-1400. Under the occupation, some new land was also cleared on Grande Cayemitte: P.R.O., T81/8, 28 mars 1796; CO 245/5, 147.
- 32) 'Les gens de couleur avaient presque toutes les propriétés de cette paroisse, mais ils les ont vendues à mesure que la terre y a acquis de valeur; il en reste encore cependant': Moreau de Saint-Méry III 1400. Coffee prices rose sharply during the late 80s to a peak of 30 sous per lb in 1789.
- 33) See above, note 25.
- 34) CO 245/1, 104.
- 35) See above, pp. 116, 190, 210.
- 36) See above, p. 157. Habitation meant a plantation and not just its buildings, which in this region were rarely extensive. Many of the Grands Bois inventories in Absentee Inventories noted that production could be increased if an estate had more slaves.
- 37) See below, appendix E, Port au Prince trade figures. One must bear in mind that most of Jérémie's and Arcahaye's cotton was no longer exported via the capital.
- 38) Précis Historique I 243.
- 39) Debien, Etudes 93, 128-130.
- 40) Absentee Inventories VI bis Leroux plantation; P.R.O., T 81/28, Montbazou plantation dossier.
- 41) Debien, Etudes 102, 128.
- 42) Absentee Inventories VII, Maulévrier plantation lease and inventory; below, p
- 43) See Debien, Etudes 129.
- 44) Absentee Inventories, *passim*.
- 45) WO 1/62, 157.
- 46) B.N., Lav. Corresp. II, Toussaint to Laveaux 28 messidor III.
- 47) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. II, 61.
- 48) P.R.O., T 81/28, Bertrand Littledale correspondence, 3 10bre 1797. This was probably the Fond Baptiste plantation formerly owned by Louis Seguneau.



- 49) Absentee Inventories VII and IX, Marie plantation leases and inventories; B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. II, 2, 67-68; Précis Historique I 301; P.R.O., 30/8/349, 332.
- 50) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. II, 5-8, 12-13.
- 51) P.R.O., 30/8/348, 365-377.
- 52) In Absentee Inventories, 14 of the 27 Arcahaye sucreries' inventories give such details. Debien, Comptes II 41 suggests that the Labarre plantation had its revenue halved. The 1796 inventory, however, said it was making 300,000 lbs and this is probably an underestimate, as Lapointe was the lessee; Absentee Inventories, VI.
- 53) WO 1/61, 317-8. The hogshead contained 1,800 lbs. Probably, Williamson meant barriques, which held about 1,600 livres. The livre weighed 1.08 lbs..
- 54) Cp. Absentee Inventories, passim, Thésée, Négotiants 179 and Léon, Marchands 148.
- 55) P.R.O., T 81/27, enlistments.
- 56) See Geggus, Slaves, part (i).
- 57) See Absentee Inventories, Guilhem plantation.
- 58) P.R.O., T 64/228, Damiens and Soissons dossiers; T 64/225/5.
- 59) P.R.O., T 64/231/22, réclamation 22 juillet 1798.
- 59) Data from Absentee Inventories, Estienne, Gasnier, Imbert plantations etc.; P.R.O., T 81/27, Kina papers; T 64/224, Esten papers, etc.
- 60) A.N., AB XIX 3302, dossier 14.
- 61) See Absentee Inventories, Descac-Mahé, Sabourin, Bailleul, Tausias plantations; P.R.O., T 81/28, Bertrand Littledale dossier; Spencer Bernard Papers, OM 10/9.
- 62) They agreed around June 1795 to buy the estate for £36,000 in annual instalments, the Rohans guaranteeing they would not be deprived of it for any cause, Turnbull, Forbes accepting all profits and losses: Lokke, New Light 674; WO 1/68, 465-7. It is not clear they actually purchased the estate. Officially, it was in their name. More exactly, however, it seems they were helping the Rohans circumvent the law on absentee ownership - note the date - while acquiring an option to purchase. On Turnbull, Forbes, see above, ch.IV, n.130. The following is based on P.R.O., T 81/28, Bertrand Littledale dossier.
- 63) WO 1/68, 353.
- 64) WO 1/69, 219.
- 65) Ibid., 279, 437-442.
- 66) These and the following figures are in French pounds and have been converted at the rate of 1,600 per barrique and 1,000 per boucaud.
- 67) See Ragatz, Fall 340.
- 68) Lokke, New Light 674. They offered to prove this on oath. As most of its profits were realised in England, the estate had to be advanced cash by Bertrand Littledale. In December 1797, this amounted to 100,000 livres.



- 69) See above, note 67.
- 70) WO 1/66, 599. In 1796, as much as four fifths went to North America but this was an exceptional year, it seems. Martinique, closer to Britain by sailing ship and further from America, presents a different picture. Little was said in official correspondence about trade regulation. Williamson was indulgent but in February 1796 had to restrict American imports. This was said to have caused some stagnation: Laborie, Appendix 127.
- 71) See above, note 51.
- 72) Data from above, notes 51 and 60; B.N., Sonthonax Correspondence I, letter to Laveaux 30 fructidor IV; Absentee Inventories, VII, Merot plantation; CO 245/10; Thésée, Négotiants 220.
- 73) Data from Debien, Etudes 102-3; Thésée, Négotiants 221 (this graph appears to confuse livres tournois and coloniales); I.J., Ms.36F, dossier 97; B.N., Sonthonax Correspondence I, as for note 72, above; above, note 29; S.R.O., GD 193/2/4.
- 74) CO 245/5, 4 novembre 1794; WO 1/61, 451-5; Laborie, Appendix 124.
- 75) See St. Domingo Review 55.
- 76) Lepkowski, Haiti 75-76.
- 77) P.R.O., 30/8/349, 332.
- 78) WO 1/64, 248; WO 1/66, 297-303, 599; Parliamentary History XXXIII, 575-594.
- 79) WO 1/59, 359, 507, 528-9; Grouvel, Faits 73-74; below, appendix B, (9).
- 80) WO 1/60, 465-6; WO 1/61, 708.
- 81) See above, ch.IX, n.56.
- 82) Above, p. 174.
- 83) P.R.O., T64/228, Damiens dossier, letter of 28 juillet 1796.
- 84) See notes 29 and 60; WO 1/61, 71. For pre-Revolutionary yields, see P.R.O., T81/1.
- 85) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. III, 43.
- 86) See note 29.
- 87) McLean, Enquiry 8-9.
- 88) Lettre 81.
- 89) WO 1/66, 49.
- 90) Précis Historique I 242-3.
- 91) See Absentee Inventories, Bauge, Jouon, Jouanneau, Soissons leases; above, note 57 bis.
- 92) Appendix 119.
- 93) Enquiry 219.
- 94) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. III, 33-34, 44-55.
- 95) Laborie, Appendix 129.
- 96) Ibid. 113-4; above, pp. 153-4.
- 97) Above, pp. 124, 140-1.
- 98) Précis Historique I 217, 221, 226-7, 293-4, 303.



- 99) Above, p. 137; Franco, Historia 257.
- 100) See Précis Historique I 299. The phenomenon was not confined to the British zone. See B.N., Sonthonax Correspondence I, letter to Municipalité de Jacmel 29 frimaire V.
- 101) JAVAC 1793, Jefferson papers, volontés dernières of J.B. Bon, 15 janvier 1793.
- 102) WO 1/63, 359-360; CO 137/95, letter to Portland 10th May 1795.
- 103) WO 1/59, 395.
- 104) See above, p. 170; Précis Historique I 304; and on the Grand' Anse in général, above, pp. 219-222.
- 105) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. III, 3-4.
- 106) Précis Historique I 131.
- 107) WO 1/64, 352.
- 108) See above, pp. 229-230.
- 109) See above, pp. 140-1, 143, 158.
- 110) CO 245/5, novembre 1794.
- 111) Précis Historique I 294.
- 112) Grouvel, Faits 77; WO 1/62, 399; St. Domingo Review 21.
- 113) See above, p. 96, 133, 165-7, 204; ch.VI, n.39.
- 114) See below, note 116; P.R.O., T 64/226B/10c, letter to de Bussy 28 juin 1796.
- 115) P.R.O., T 81/8, 26 février 1796
- 116) P.R.O., T 64/226B/10/A; T 64/228, contract.
- 117) Précis Historique I 202; Maurel, Cahiers biographical appendix; Debien, Massiac 92.
- 118) WO 1/63, 103-4.
- 119) See Précis Historique I 320, II 1. A member of the Committee of the West in 1789, Camfranq was an enemy of Montalembert and had been deported to Jamaica in August 1795. Borgella had been the last mayor of Port au Prince and a supporter of Sonthonax, and would become a friend and leading supporter of Toussaint Louverture. In August 1796, a Luc Borgella had fled the capital for Gonaives: B.N., Sonthonax Correspondence I, letter to Municipalité des Gonaives 24 fructidor IV.
- 120) See above, pp. 138-141, 143.
- 121) CO 245/5, report of novembre 1794.
- 122) Bonvallet had apparently opposed the British occupation, (above, ch.III, n.155), but by 1797 he was reinstated in his post, because of the absence of his replacement, Lescamela. On Duboys, see above, ch.I, n.62.
- 123) CO 245/5, passim.
- 124) See Fissous' comments in Absentee Inventories II, Soissons dossier.
- 125) See Maurel, Cahiers 289; WO 1/58, 533-8.
- 126) Debien, Les Colons 42; WO 1/61, 523.

- 127) Précis Historique I 193. Cf. ch.XII, part (ii).
- 128) P.R.O., T 64/228, Damiens dossier.
- 129) See below, pp. 274/275.
- 130) WO 1/59, 369.
- 131) CO 245/5, 3 septembre, 9 octobre, 2 novembre 1795.
- 132) WO 1/65, 921-2.
- 133) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. III, 6-9.
- 134) P.R.O., T 81/7, 25 janvier 1796.
- 135) Above, p. 167.
- 136) JAVAC 1793, Jefferson papers, Kenscoff to Despinefort 9 aout 1793.
- 137) Data from CO 245/5, and P.R.O., T 81/7-8, Conseil Privé minutes.
- 138) Dundas Papers II, 9-10.
- 139) WO 1/59, 529.
- 140) Précis Historique I, 165, 173-4.
- 141) See Ardouin, Haiti I, 33-37; Ragatz, Fall 31-32.
- 142) Moreau de Saint-Méry I 31-32.
- 143) WO 1/59, 223; above, pp. 58, 106.
- 144) See Précis Historique I 226 and passim; above, pp. 136, 147, 151-2.
- 145) Laborie, Appendix 128, 136-9.
- 146) S.R.O., GD 51/1, 488; WO 1/61, 40-41; WO 1/63, 39-44.
- 147) WO 1/66, 647-8; below, part (v).
- 148) WO 1/62, 157-160; St. Domingo Review 67-68.
- 149) E.g., I 225-6.
- 150) Malenfant, Colonies 72, 87, 105. Cf. ch.I, n.86.
- 151) WO 1/59, 384; WO 1/61, 162-3; also above, p. 113.
- 152) WO 1/67, 449-453; WO 1/64, 346-9.
- 153) St. Domingo Review 7, 14.
- 154) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. I, 71-72. He similarly regarded his German fellow officers as generously rescued from their 'native Dunghills'.
- 155) WO 1/62, 265; WO 1/63, 457.
- 156) I.J., Ms.36, dossier 2, arrêt of 26 novembre 1794.
- 157) Précis Historique I 177.
- 158) WO 1/64, 263.
- 159) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. II, 41.
- 160) See McLean, Enquiry 16-19, 118-9, 197, 257.
- 161) Ibid., 14-16; B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. III, 5; Captain Colville's notebook. Perhaps this only applied to the Port au Prince bourgeois. However, cf. the remark of the Jamaican planter Simon Taylor: 'the English Customs and formality, with the Rotine of Dissipation that prevails there would not at all suit me!': S.R.O., GD 22/1/316, letter of 22nd May 1784.
- 162) Captain Colville's notebook.
- 163) WO 1/59, 381-5; WO 1/63, 21-28.
- 164) WO 1/59, 323-4.



- 165) WO 1/59, 211, 216; WO 1/60, 85, 215, 338, 670-1; WO 1/66, 133; Chalmers, Remarks 6; McLean, Enquiry 233-4.
- 166) S.R.O., GD 188/28, letter to Guthrie 3rd April 1797.
- 167) CO 137/91, Dansey to Williamson 25th October 1793; B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. I, 63; WO 1/64, 346-9.
- 168) CO 137/94, Williamson to King 5th March 1795; WO 1/65, 373-5. According to Maitland, de Charmilly was 'the most troublesome and insufferable' man he ever met, 'a Mixture of low cunning, deceit and at least folly if not villainy': WO 1/69, 611.
- 169) Pauléus-Sannon I 144-8
- 170) B.N., Laveaux Correspondence III, 434-5.
- 171) See Royal Gazette 1793, no.16, p. 22, and 1794, no.16, p. 22; WO 1/59, 430 ff.
- 172) WO 1/60, 161.
- 173) Captain Colville's notebook.
- 174) See ch.III, n.175; Garran-Coulon IV 135-6.
- 175) See above, p. 56.
- 176) Captain Colville's notebook; ch.III, n.243.
- 177) WO 1/60, 174-5; above, p. 126.
- 178) WO 1/59, 216-7; Colville notebook, preface. Cf. above, p.67.
- 179) WO 1/59, 430 ff.
- 180) Royal Gazette 1794, no.11, p. 22, no.25, p. 27.
- 181) See ch.IV, n.49. Curiously, the Saint Marc petition in WO 1/59 is much less compromising than the one in Dundas Papers II. This duality recalls the overtures of December 1793: see above, p. 54.
- 182) WO 1/61, 40-42, 157-167; WO 1/59, 429.
- 183) See above, p. 147.
- 184) WO 1/62, 51 ff.
- 185) See Précis Historique I 179; Laborie, Appendix 47.; Dundas Papers II, 21-36.
- 186) WO 1/60, 487-497, 521-7.
- 187) WO 1/63, 101.
- 188) See CO 245/5, octobre/novembre 1795; Précis Historique I 232-3; B.N., Laveaux Corresp. III, Desfourneaux to Citoyens délégués etc. 28 thermidor IV.
- 189) S.R.O., GD 193/3/8.
- 190) Grouvel, Faits 76.
- 191) See above, pp. 194-8.
- 192) Spencer Bernard Papers, OM 9/2 and 3. Maréchal de France, and wealthy planter, de Rouvray arrived in the occupied zone in June 1796, forced from exile in Baltimore by poverty. He does not seem to have played a prominent role. His son Edouard commanded the Chasseurs du Nord.
- 193) McIntosh and Weber, Correspondance passim.
- 194) See Begouen-Demeaux, Foäche 179.



- 195) Précis Historique I 248, 302-4.
- 196) WO 1/67, 645-670, 673-680; WO 1/66, 589-600; Griffiths, Malouet 290-2.
- 197) WO 1/67, 684-5, 833; H.M.C., Fortescue Mss. IV, 184.
- 198) WO 1/69, 648-670, 717-8; P.R.O., 30/8/349, 354.
- 199) See CO 137/100, Portland to Balcarres 23rd August 1798 and Balcarres to Portland 29th October 1798.
- 200) WO 1/68, 451; P.R.O., 30/8/349, 349-351.
- 201) Wright and Debien, Jamaïque 84. Unless otherwise stated, this is the source for all references to French colonists in Jamaica.
- 202) WO 1/68, 382-4; above, n.65.
- 203) WO 1/70, 85-87; CO 137/100, petition and memoir of 'General' Joseph de Loppinot, chevalier de Montagnac, Lieutenant-Colonel Desombrages, Captain Léonard Parouty, chevalier de Laffitte de Liestadt.
- 204) See above, ch.III, notes 138 and 147.
- 205) See Wright and Debien, Jamaïque 66-68.
- 206) S.R.O., GD 193/3/5.
- 207) See Begouen-Demeaux, Foäche 179-180.
- 208) Between 1790 and June 1798, there were only 16 naturalisations. A sharp rise followed, falling off in 1799: Wright and Debien, Jamaïque 85, 184-5.
- 209) See above, ch.III, pp. 63-65.
- 210) See WO 1/73, 394-415, 489-499; WO 1/75, 9-27; Tarleton, Reply passim; Maurice, Diary II, 352-5. In 1809 he was criticised in Parliament in connection with Moore's defeat in Spain, and it then became publicised he had welched on gambling debts contracted at Brookes's Club while drunk.
- 211) The subject is examined in ch.XIII. Despite the assertions in Edwards, Survey 385 . . . . . regarding the 96th Foot . . . . .  
. . . , no regiment actually 'perished to a man'. The 82nd Foot, however, 989 strong in August 1795, was reduced in three years to only one private and 30 other ranks. After a year, in fact, it had numbered barely 100 men and by June 1797 was down to 39: S.R.O., GD 193/3/5, return of the 26th August 1798; WO 17/1988 and 1989.
- 212) McLean, Enquiry 80.
- 213) Jackson, Outline 27-48; Chalmers, Remarks 37, 83.
- 214) Ibid. 28.
- 215) McLean, Enquiry 207.
- 216) Précis Historique I 198.
- 217) See Jackson, Outline 35.
- 218) See B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. I, February and March 1796; Spencer Papers I, 159; Wright, Memoir 99. Thomas Phipps Howard served with the York Hussars, which consisted mainly of Germans and French, though twelve of its officers were British. It appears in the Army List but was usually classed as a foreign corps.



- 219) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. I, 77.
- 220) Ibid. I, 43, III, 31; McLean, Enquiry 210
- 221) See McLean, Enquiry 15, 72, 269;
- 222) S.R.O., GD 51/1, 533/1; B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. I 81.
- 223) See McLean, Enquiry 12.
- 224) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. I 61-62.
- 225) McLean, Enquiry 83-102, 228, 235; Jackson, Outline 59-69.
- 226) McLean, Enquiry preface, 12, 172.
- 227) WO 1/66, 62; B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. I, 62.
- 228) Laborie, Appendix 140-1.
- 229) Fergusson, Notes 150
- 230) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. I, entry for 22nd February 1796.
- 231) Enquiry 255.
- 232) Cf. below, ch.XIII, part (iii).
- 233) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. III, 5.
- 234) The 1,400 at the Mole in August 1798 were accompanied by 168 women and 82 children: S.R.O., GD 193/3/5, garrison return. By becoming General Forbes's mistress, the wife of one private earned her husband immediate promotion to captain, according to St. Domingo Review 54.
- 235) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. II 3, III 51.
- 236) Ibid. II, 61-62, III, 44, 52. Cf. above, p. 220 for Captain Colville's impressions of the Grand' Anse.
- 237) S.R.O., GD 188/28; B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. I, 63.
- 238) Spencer Bernard Papers, OM 8/2 and 21.
- 239) See P.R.O., T 81/8, 16 avril 1796.
- 240) Spencer Bernard Papers, OM 8/22.
- 241) Précis Historique I 289; WO 1/66, 189; WO 1/67, 131; Spencer Bernard Papers OM 9/11 and 12.
- 242) St. Domingo Review 39-46, 54-56, 60.
- 243) S.R.O., GD 188/28, Urquart to Guthrie 1st July 1797. Lieutenant Walter Synott, the officer concerned, was already applying for leave on the grounds that he had expectations of 'a very advantageous situation' in England: Spencer Bernard Papers, OM 10/22.
- 244) Upon appeal he was reinstated. He lost his slaves during the evacuation but the Government refused him compensation. See, St. Domingo Review 59-61; WO 1/67, 233, 649-654; P.R.O., T 29/77, 10th February 1801; Spencer Bernard Papers OM 11/6; S.R.O., GD 193/3/5.
- 245) WO 17/1988, return of 1st July 1796; B.N., Lav. Corresp. III, 473.
- 246) See below, ch.XIII, part (iii).
- 247) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. I, 84, III, 29.
- 248) WO 1/65, 373-5.
- 249) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. I, 49, II 45-51, 82; St. Domingo Review 43.

- 250) Nemours, Relations 154.
- 251) B.M., Add. Ms. 31237, 15-20, memoir by Charles François Dumouriez, the pro-Girondin general who had deserted the Republic in 1793.
- 252) WO 1/59, 214-5.
- 253) See B.N., Lav. Corresp. II 328-9; above, p. 124.
- 254) See Royal Gazette 1794, no.52, p. 19; B.N., Lav. Corresp. II, Toussaint to Laveaux 26 messidor III, and Desrouleaux to Toussaint 24 frimaire IV.
- 255) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. II 2, 8; WO 1/60, 339.
- 256) S.R.O., GD 51/1, 488.
- 257) B.N., Laveaux Corresp. I, Whitelocke to Laveaux 7th April 1794, Grant to Laveaux 18th September 1794, with reply; I.J., Ms.36, f. 3.
- 258) Précis Historique I 178.
- 259) Above, note 170.
- 260) B.N., Sonthonax Correspondence I, letters of 6 fructidor IV, 7 nivôse V, etc.
- 261) Edwards, Survey 199.
- 262) Cf. Lord Dalhousie's comments at Martinique: 'A shocking<sup>war</sup>! The only way is to let Frenchmen murder Frenchmen. They are butchers at best'; S.R.O., GD 45/14/502.
- 263) Garran Coulon IV 136..
- 264) Malenfant, Colonies x, 73,105, 192; Grouvel, Faits 73.
- 265) CO 245/1, 118; WO 1/66, 135.
- 266) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. III, 39. The journal breaks off abruptly in February 1798 but Howard actually lived for another 50 years.
- 267) Above,p.
- 268) See Davis,Age of Revolution 184-195; Jordan, White 435-457.
- 269) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. I 27.
- 270) Ibid. II, 9-11. Cannibalism was known in Saint Domingue but almost exclusively among the Mondonga of the Congo basin.
- 271) Ibid. III, 7.
- 272) Riddell, Simcoe 300; WO 1/66, 194.
- 273) Geggus, Auteur 6-7.
- 274) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. III, 7, 18-19; above, p. 18,n.149;
- 275) Wimpffen, Voyage 336.
- 276) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. III, 14-15.
- 277) Ibid.
- 278) Above, pp. 121-2.
- 279) Appendix 134, 142.
- 280) WO 1/60, 339; WO 1/61, 420-7; Dundas Papers II, 30-31.
- 281) Burke, Two Letters 105.
- 282) Moreau de Saint-Méry I 47; Jordan, White 436.
- 283) Cri des Colons 232; WO 1/63, 167-9.
- 284) Précis Historique I 141, 154, 318, II 69.



- 285) Parliamentary History XXXIII, 575-594.
- 286) Outline 98.
- 287) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. II, 39, III 27-29.
- 288) Chalmers, Remarks 47, 65, 81. A defence of Government strategy and the planters' reputation, the work is inaccurate as well as biased. Written arounde July 1802, it is coloured by the news that Toussaint had recently surrendered to Leclerc after only a brief campaign.
- 289) See ch.XIII, part (iii).
- 290) Remarks 2-3, 27-29, 47-48, 55.
- 291) Survey 256-7. Charles Malenfant, toom though remembered for warning Leclerc in 1802 against underestimating Toussaint's army, was still convinced in January 1796 that the blacks preferred plantation work to soldiering: A.N., AB XIX, 3302/14.
- 292) S.R.O., GD 193/6/4, undated draft letter to Littlehales, probably December 1798; WO 1/70, 21-28.

## CHAPTER. XI

- 1) See above, ch. I, n. 3; Geggus, Slaves, part I, section (iv) and notes 5 and 7.
- 2) CO 245/5, report of 11 octobre 1794.
- 3) See Dundas Papers I, statistical table; Barskett, St. Domingo, appendix I; Moreau de Saint-Méry III, 1358, 1373, 1400.
- 4) See A.N.O.M., Absentee Inventories, (hereafter: 'Abs. Inv. '), passim.
- 5) PRO 30/8/349, 366. At the end of 1796, he said the parish had ordered 500 slaves from Jamaica and was expecting 500 more from adjoining districts: WO 1/64, 439.
- 6) See Précis Historique I, 228; above, note 4.
- 7) Précis Historique I, 243.
- 8) PRO 30/8/349, 332; WO 1/66, 275-6.
- 9) Abs. Inv., passim; P.R.O., T 64/228. It is analysed in detail in Geggus, Slaves.
- 10) Abs. Inv., Croix des Bouquets and Port au Prince inventories; Debien, Comptes II, 44.
- 11) P.R.O., T 64/228, Daniens dossier.
- 12) Abs. Inv., passim.
- 13) Houdaille, Zone 155, n. 1.
- 14) P.R.O., T 64/288, Laboulle Desmornays dossier.
- 15) Sample of 37 estates, taken from Abs. Inv. and P.R.O., T 64/228. The Croix des Bouquets ratio was 512; that of Port au Prince, 643.
- 16) See below, n. 48.
- 17) Geggus, Slaves part I, section (iii).
- 18) Abs. Inv., Poy la Générale, Raby and Labarre inventories. On Labarre, see Debien, Comptes; on Raby, Léon, Marchands.
- 19) Above, n. 17.
- 20) Geggus, Slaves, part III.
- 21) Lepkowski, Haiti 71.
- 22) CO 137/93, 152.
- 23) See above, pp. 125, 263-5; B.N., Lav. Corresp. I, proclamation of 26 fructidor II.
- 24) See CO 137/93, 149; CO 245/5, 15 octobre 1795; I.J., Ms. 36F/103; Abs. Inv. VI, Lacour inventory; Laborie, Appendix 178.
- 25) CO 245/5; 12 septembre 1795; Fouchard, Marrons 341-2.
- 26) See Précis Historique I, 120, 145, 308; CO 245/5, 42-44; above, p. 112; also, WO 1/59, 342, 375.
- 27) CO 245/5.
- 28) CO 245/5, passim; S.R.O., GD 188/28/3, Faveranges to Guthrie, 17 mai 1796; P.R.O., T81/7, 12 and 16 decembre 1795; Précis Historique I 288.



- 29) See above, n. 11.
- 30) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. III, 3-7, 19-20; above, p. 241.
- 31) Jnl. III, 14-22.
- 32) Ibid. III, 16-20.
- 33) See above, p. 223; Malenfant, Colonies 206-7.
- 34) Abs. Inv. V, Imbert lease and inventory; P.R.O., T 64/224/6/2/B.
- 35) Debien, Les esclaves 491-3.
- 36) See above, pp. 33-35, 101-3.
- 37) See Debien, Etudes 124.
- 38) See P.R.O., AO 3/200, Bogle's final account.
- 39) P.R.O., T 64/224/6/2/5, Basquiat plantation; Abs. Inv. VI, Lambert and Lacour plantations.
- 40) P.R.O., T 81/28, Montbazon dossier.
- 41) Debien, Etudes 124
- 42) See *ibid.* 130, and above, n. 40.
- 43) Haiti 71.
- 44) See above, pp. 220-2, 225, 228-231.
- 45) Abs. Inv. *passim*; Debien, Comptes II, 41-43; above, note 34 and pp. 228-9.
- 46) Debien, Etudes 88.
- 47) Abs. Inv. III, Ducayla and Dumoulceau inventories.
- 48) A.N., AB XIX, 3302, dossier 14, unpaginated report by Charles Malenfant, written January 1796, though he had left Saint Domingue in August 1795.
- 49) Above, pp. 231-5.
- 50) Above, n. 14, letter of 14 aout 1796; Abs. Inv., Ducayla, Fauveau and Robert inventories; B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. III, 44-45.
- 51) Malenfant, Colonies 202. Cf. above, n. 48.
- 52) UCMH typescripts, enclosures in García to Lerena, 18 de septiembre and 25 de noviembre de 1791.
- 53) Ch. II, n. 102.
- 54) In the spring of 1793, a desperate Cougniac-Mion wrote that, once the slaves' spirit of subordination were eroded, the edifice which rested on it would collapse, even with a soldier standing behind every slave: P.R.O., 30/8 /349, 198-9.
- 55) See Nobsbaum, Bandits 26-27, 70-71.
- 56) See above, pp. 190, 192.
- 57) Above, p. 22.
- 58) Garran Coulon III, 149.
- 59) Above, ch. V, part (i).
- 60) Jean-Baptiste, Haiti 160.
- 61) See Geggus, Volte-face *passim*, and on the Forçé Dauphin massacre, CO 137/93, 236-7.
- 62) See above, pp. 125, 174-5.
- 63) Laborie, Appendix 129

- 64) WO 1/62, 224.
- 65) Above, n. 48; P.R.O., T 81/14, decree of October 1796, restricting the export of slaves.
- 66) See Abs. Inv. passim.
- 67) Although the sex ratio of the slaves in their 20s was negative, as everywhere else, this was probably due to unrecorded recruitment, which was considerable in this area.
- 68) See above, p. 223; Abs. Inv. VIII. Its manager informed the absent owner in 1799, '...malgré tout, j'avais eu le bonheur de vous conserver...le plus bel atelier de la paroisse, dont aucun ne m'ont abandonné dans nulles circonstances': Debien, Etudes 125.
- 69) See JAVAC 1793, Cérès and Speedwell papers; B.M., Add. Ms. 38229, 128; Abs. Inv., Jacquier/Sejournet inventory.
- 70) See above, pp. 108, 115.
- 71) CO 245/5, octobre 1794.
- 72) See above, pp. 123-4.
- 73) WO 1/59, 342, 375-6; Grouvel, Faits 73-74.
- 74) Cf. the losses of the Laboulle Desmornays estate, where the mulatresses, though mostly field slaves, were the most loyal element of the workforce; above, n. 14.
- 75) Abs. Inv. I. For the atelier in 1789, see Debien, Vivres.
- 76) See above, n. 14.
- 77) Although his paper in Rubin and Tuden, Perspectives, the latest review of the subject, assumes a critical stance towards the 'Haitian school', it would seem very much in the same tradition, spurning 'unconditional obeissance to empirical data', appealing to 'the logic of historical reasoning' and using rhetorical questions about class struggle to produce a ratio of words to facts. While pretending to examine the connection 'if any' between marronage and revolution, he explicitly assumes a direct link and ignores Debien's pertinent question: when and in what manner did Jean François, Biassou, Boukman, Jeannot and Macaya command bands of maroons?
- 78) Les esclaves 468-9.
- 79) WO 1/63, 336.
- 80) WO 1/66, 495-502.
- 81) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. II, 9, 69.
- 82) Houdaille, Zone 154.
- 83) See above, n. 14. 76% of the African men, 86% of the African women, 73% of the creole men, and only 52% of the creole women were missing.
- 84) P.R.O., HCA 30/400, Benech de Solon papers; Abs. Inv. VI, Lagarde inventory.
- 85) Précis Historique I, 80-82; Debien, Plantations et Esclaves 141; UCM type-scripts, enclosures in Garcia to Lerena, 25 de enero de 1792.
- 86) When in August 1794 the Port au Prince whites were asked to vouch for those of their slaves who had been armed by Sonthonax, only 3 out of 73 could not



- find guarantors; one was a hairdresser: CO 245/5, 42-44. For the career of the perruquier Larose of the Foäche plantation, see Debien, Plantations et Esclaves and CO 245/2, election papers. In 1796, he led the band that murdered the remaining whites in Jean Rabel bourg, then became an officer in Toussaint's army; his son became a joint lessee of the Foache estate. In 1799, we find Larose representing Jean Rabel in the electoral assembly of the North.
- 87) P.R.O., T 64/228, Desmornays dossiers.
- 88) WO 1/59, 49.
- 89) WO 1/61, 595.
- 90) Etudes 130-1; Plantations et Esclaves 138 ff.
- 91) Abs. Inv., Imbert, Lerebours inventories, etc.; above, n. 87.
- 92) P.R.O., T 64/228, Truitié de Boulainvilliers dossier.
- 93) Malenfant, Colonies 215-9.
- 94) See Ibid. 18-20; WO 1/59, 494, 342, 358.
- 95) S.R.O., GD 193/3/8, report by de Buissy, 3 avril 1798.
- 96) Spencer Bernard Papers, OM 9/25.
- 97) Above, pp. 227-8.
- 98) WO 1/60, 281-4.
- 99) Above, n. 40.
- 100) See note 96.
- 101) Rubin and Tuden, Perspectives ; Debien, Esclaves 435. Cf. Hobsbawm, Bandits 107.
- 102) See Abs. Inv. Baugé, Ducayla and Robert inventories.
- 103) Abs. Inv., Lacour inventory.
- 104) WO 1/66, 189-190.
- 105) S.R.O., GD 193/3/5, letter of 24th August 1798.
- 106) CO 137/100, Balcarres to Portland 29th October 1798. Cf. Bolivar's remarks regarding the Venezuelan slaves in 1816: 'The tyranny of the Spaniards has reduced them to such a state of stupidity...that they have lost even the desire to be free!! Many of them would have followed the Spaniards or have embarked on British vessels (to be sold) in neighbouring colonies': Genovese, Red 77.
- 107) Wright and Debien, Jamaïque 132-3.
- 108) Thesee and Debien, Colon niortais 20; WO 1/63, 167-9.
- 109) See above, pp. 125-6, 152-3.
- 110) See WO 17/1987-90, returns of colonial corps; WO 1/68, 235; WO 1/69, 727.
- 111) As above apparently did the black corps who fought in the War of Independence in Spanish America: Lynch, Revolutions 85-86; Johnsen, Bolívar 81. Williamson expected most would not live long enough to be freed: WO 1/62, 13-14.
- 112) See Pauleus-Sannon, Histoire II, 21; Cabon, Haiti III, 276; Malenfant, Colonies 90.
- 113) P.R.O., T 81/14, decrees of 26 juin, 4 juillet, 28 decembre 1795, and 21 janvier 1796, and the reply to the undated memoir by Rochejacquelein.



- 114) See Geggus, Slaves part IV, section (ii). It is interesting that the recruits names bear signs of the times. Both Kina and Dessources had a 'Marlbrough', and there was also in the latter's corps a Chasseur called 'l'Assemble'; P.R.O. , T 81/27/16.
- 115) See Précis Historique I, 246; WO 1/65, 685 ff.; CO 245/5, 14 octobre 1795.
- 116) CO 137/89, letter to Grenville 19th March 1791. Cf. above, n.48.
- 117) B.N., Lav. Corresp. II, adress of 15 juin 1795.
- 118) P.R.O., T 81/14, decree of 28 decembre 1795.
- 119) Brougham, Policy II, 127-8.
- 120) WO 1/65, 685-692. Cf. WO 1/60, 631; Dundas Papers II, 30-31; B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. II, 38-39.
- 121) WO 1/61, 420-7; P.R.O., 30/8/189, 120. Was this because of their susceptibility to chest complaints, or because of beliefs about the permeability of the fontanel, still current in the West Indies?
- 122) See above, pp. 149, 176.
- 123) B.P.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. II, 38-39. Cf. Chalmers, Remarks 27-28.
- 124) Above, pp. 191, 211; Laborie, Appendix 142; Dundas Papers III, 19; St. Domingo Review 8.
- 125) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. III 27-30; above, p. 262.
- 126) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. III 45-50. Howard also describes how on one occasion in 1797 six saddle horses were stolen by night from inside the very barracks of Saint Marc: II 42.
- 127) Grouvel, Faits 91-103. Cf. Foubert, Volontaires.
- 128) Captain Colville's notebook.
- 129) See B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. III, 29; WO 1/ 59, 1-4; perhaps also, Grouvel, Faits 91-103.
- 130) B.N., Lav. Corresp., passim.
- 131) A.N., DDxxv 39/392, letter no. 24; I.J., Ms. 36, f. 5.
- 132) See Pauléus-Sannon, Histoire II, 52-53.
- 133) On these, see Oruno Lara's paper in Rubin and Tuden, Perspectives.
- 134) Laborie, Appendix 127.
- 135) Edwards, Survey 395; WO 6/6, 291.
- 136) When the remnants of the north-eastern rebel bands were finally ousted from Valière in March 1797, they were formed into three companies of Guerriers du Nord under their chiefs Abraham, Roquelaure and Pierre Lesec. Simcoe was anxious to provide them with uniforms and presented gifts to their womenfolk. In July, he held a ceremony to bless their flags: Précis Historique I, 235, 260, 289; WO 1/66, 140.
- 137) WO 1/36, 195.
- 138) See Moreau de Saint-Méry III, 1350, 1355, 1359, and below.
- 139) Even nowadays the peasants of the region go for years on end without making a visit to les Cayes, the nearest town.



- 140) Cited in Foubert, Volontaires.
- 141) WO 1/59, 219; Colville notebook.
- 142) P.R.O., T 81/27, Kina papers.
- 143) See Foubert, Volontaires.
- 144) Colville notebook.
- 145) WO 1/59, 219.
- 146) See above. p. 147.
- 147) CO 245/5, 28 novembre 1795; Précis Historique I, 188.
- 148) P.R.O., T 81/27, Kina papers.
- 149) P.R.O., T 64/226B/10c, letter of 3 mai 1796.
- 150) Précis Historique I, 204; CO 245/5, 30 octobre 1795.
- 151) WO 1/66, 529-530. In it, he refers to himself as 'le premier nègre...  
dévoué à votre Gouvernement en cette isle' and he signs himself 'Colonel  
Commandant les Chasseurs de Georges III, Guerrier de la Montagne à Saint  
Domingue'.
- 152) See note 142.
- 153) WO 1/65, 685-692.
- 154) WO 1/70, 24-28.
- 155) WO 1/65, 685-692; Spencer Bernard Papers, OM 10/25a, 31b and 9/20. The  
corps that were affected in June 1797 were those containing free coloureds  
and Spaniards - the Chasseurs du Nord, Kina's corps, the Jérémie affranchis -  
but this may be just coincidental.
- 156) See note 154.
- 157) S.R.O., GD 193/3/5, Lasserre to Maitland, 21 aout 1798; above, p.255.
- 158) B.N., Lav. Corresp. III, Toussaint to Laveaux 16 ventôse IV.
- 159) Howell Cobb, quoted in Degler, Neither 78.
- 160) See above, pp. 248-255.
- 161) P.R.O., T 81/7, 20 janvier 1796; T 81/8, 15 février 1796.
- 162) P.R.O., T 81/7, 25 janvier and 5 fevrier 1796; above, p. 125.
- 163) B.N., Lav. Corresp. III, 434-5.
- 164) WO 1/65, 685-692.
- 165) Above, note 48; WO 1/62, 13-19; WO 1/61, 420-7.
- 166) To be the subject of a forthcoming study.
- 167) CH. I, part (iii).
- 168) J.A. Council Minutes, 14th March 1793; above, p. 57.
- 169) Saintoyant, Revolution I 109-110; Dundas Papers II, 35.
- 170) Jnl. III, 14; above, p. 270.
- 171) Précis Historique I 179.
- 172) CO 137/100, Balcarres to Portland 29th October 1798. The numbers were 50  
and 12. In 1789, according to Moreau de Saint Méry, free blacks had accounted  
for one third of the free coloureds. Of the women, however, who left for Jamaica  
in 1798, 25 were black and 230 were 'coloured'.

- 173) Colville notebook; B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. III, 10-13.
- 174) See Abs. Inv., Saint Marc inventories; P.R.O., T 64/228, Port au Prince urban inventories.
- 175) Appendix 128.
- 176) WO 1/61, 41-43.
- 177) WO 1/65, 378.
- 178) WO 1/61, 725-8.
- 179) See P.R.O., T 81/16, 12.
- 180) B.M., Add. Ms. 38229, letter of 20 janvier 1794.
- 181) Above, p. 147.
- 182) B.N., Lav. Corresp. II, letter to Laveaux 6 pluviôse III.
- 183) P.R.O., T 81 / 14, reply to memoir by Rochejacquelein: CO 245/5, papers regarding the Duperrier case, autumn 1795.
- 184) Above,
- 185) Malenfant, Colonies 84.
- 186) See note 180 and above, ; PRO 30/8/349, 407-410
- 187) Above, p. 124.
- 188) Précis Historique I 171.
- 189) Above, p. 126.
- 190) Précis Historique I, 213, 221, 256, 186-8.
- 192) B.N., Lav. Corresp. III, Toussaint to Laveaux 22 ventose IV.
- 191) WO 1/67, 162; Précis Historique I, 220-5; B.N., Lav. Corresp. III, letters by Eloy.
- 193) Précis Historique I 225.
- 194) WO 1/61, 37, 23-26; WO 1/63, 55-57, 43; Malenfant, Colonies xi, 23-31.
- 195) WO 1/59, 218; WO 1/61, <sup>600</sup>725-8; Précis Historique I, 224-5, 221.
- 196) Précis Historique I, 170-2; Malenfant, Colonies xi; above, n. 194.
- 197) WO 1/59, 597-8; Royal Gazette 1794, no. 40, p. 22.
- 198) Malenfant, Colonies 23-31.
- 199) PRO 30/8/349, 365-377.
- 200) Jnl II, 14.



## CHAPTER XII

- 1) P.R.O., T 64/230/9, Vendryès to Forbes 10th June 1796.
- 2) WO 1/64, 431.
- 3) P.R.O., T 64/226B/10/K.
- 4) CO 245/1, 128.
- 5) See note 1.
- 6) CO 245/3, passim.
- 7) Ibid.
- 8) Abs. Inv. Basquier plantation; P.R.O. T 64/228, Saint <sup>M</sup>artin dossier; CO 245/5, 13 juillet 1795; WO 1/61, 708.
- 9) Although after a month it was decided to exempt that of proprietors in New England.
- 10) CO 245/3, letter of 7th March 1795.
- 11) CO 245/5, minutes of juin-aout.
- 12) See P.R.O., T 81/17, 30-67; WO 1/61, 829-876.
- 13) And that it did not date from the time of the Civil Commissioners, when it was said such positions were extorted by force.
- 14) P.R.O., T 64/230/14, letter of 20 aout 1797.
- 15) P.R.O., T 64/225/3.
- 16) P.R.O., T 64/230/9, August 1795.
- 17) See note 15.
- 18) P.R.O., T 64/228, Soissons and Damiens dossiers; Abs. Inv. Chancelier inventory; T 64/226B/10c, letter 10 septembre 1795.
- 19) P.R.O., T 64/224/7/8. letter of 31st September 1795.
- 20) CO 245/3.
- 21) The rest of this section is based mainly on T 64/225, sections 1-3.
- 22) In the Grand'Anse, only the revenue from the directly exploited estates enabled the administration to fight the court cases brought against it; P.R.O., T 64/224/4.
- 23) Saint-Aigne, the Administrator Principal of Saint Marc, made the same complaint: T 81/17, letter of 17 janvier 1796.
- 24) Vendryès said the same in September 1795: T 64/230/9.
- 25) Précis Historique I, 180; P.R.O., T 81/7, minutes of 17 decembre 1795.
- 26) In the September decree but not its predecessor, leasing was apparently looked on as a less likely alternative to direct exploitation.
- 27) P.R.O., T 64/226B/10c
- 28) CO 245/3, Portland to Forbes 3rd August 1796.
- 29) WO 1/64, 449.
- 30) P.R.O., T 64/226B and 230; WO 1/64, 449.
- 31) WO 1/64, 255-7; Précis Historique I 245; Cabon, Haiti III 338-9.
- 32) Laborie, Appendix 24-25.

- 33) WO 1/64, 429-444; Précis Historique I 246.
- 34) See WO 1/64, 313-4; WO 1/66, 501, 575; B.N., Sonthonax Correspondence I., 30 vendémiaire V.
- 35) P.R.O., T 81/17, various documents, October 1796; WO 1/64, 325; WO 1/60, 1-15, Précis Historique I 246.
- 36) WO 1/64, 429-444; Abs. Inv. passim.
- 37) Henry Shirley was a good friend, and creditor, of Jean-Suzanne's brother, the Administrator Principal.
- 38) Abs. Inv., Gasnier, Imbert and 'Pierre' Segueineau estates; T 64/224, various papers.
- 39) WO 1/67, 429-431; WO 1/66, 534-5; Abs. Inv. Soissons, Jouon, Jouanneau, Bauge, Hugon estates.
- 40) P.R.O., T 64/226B/10 and 10c, correspondence for 1797.
- 41) P.R.O., T 64/226B/10A.
- 42) WO 1/68, 5-10, 181; WO 1/66, 573-5; CO 245/1, 106-111; Abs. Inv. Caillaba and Leroi plantations.



## CHAPTER XIII

- 1) See Dancer, Assistant 77-79; Webster, Letters passim.
- 2) Scott, History I 279-453; Hirsch, Pathology I 316-392; Carter, Fever passim.
- 3) Hunter etc., Medicine 19-35 and passim; Woodruff, Tropics 313-333; Strode, Fever 389-417.
- 4) See Jackson, Outline 59-69 and Treatise 247-284; McLean, Enquiry 83-102; Scott, History I 295-6.
- 5) McLean, Enquiry preface, 73, 137.
- 6) See Wright, Memoir 371-5; Fergusson, Contagion 1023-4; Scott, History I 314.
- 7) Venault de Charmilly, Lettre 165.
- 8) See below, notes 11 and 12; Lempriere, Jamaica II 22-28; Wright, Memoir 371-5. In Dominica, however, there perished hundreds of refugees from Martinique, black and white, creole and African: Moreau de Jonnès, Monographie 84. The Bahamas were possibly another exception. Almost the entire population was stricken with fever in the autumn of 1794 and many died: WO 1/62, 455.
- 9) See Webster, Letters 38.
- 10) See below, pp.331-340; also Lempriere, Jamaica II 44, who thought the Jamaican outbreak probably yellow fever, which he called 'continued fever'.
- 11) Chisholm, Essay passim; Webster, Letters 39-46; Scott, History I 299-315.
- 12) Royal Gazette 1793, no.44, 20, 22, and 1794, no.'s 23-36 passim; Lempriere, Jamaica II 44-54.
- 13) CO 318/11, 290; Chisholm, Essay 129.
- 14) Royal Gazette 1793, no.41, 23, and no.44, 20; Powell, Dead passim.
- 15) Monte y Tejada, Historia IV 49-81.
- 16) British troops entered Port au Prince on 4th/5th June. We do not know when the epidemic began there but, as the sick reinforcements arrived from Martinique on 8th June, it must have been soon after then for a causal connection to be presumed. However, if infected mosquitoes brought by the reinforcements transmitted the yellow fever virus, it would not have become apparent for at least 3-6 days, because of the incubation period. If the sick troops themselves were the source of the infection, it would have taken two weeks.
- 17) Fenning and Collyer, Geography II 62, 82, 86; Moreau de Saint-Méry II 672-3, 721-2, 1067, 1116, III 1187; Ducoeurjoly, Manuel II 101-3; Pouppé-Desportes, Maladies I 191ff.
- 18) See B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Journal II 83; Jackson, Outline 51-57, 63.
- 19) Fergusson, Contagion 366; WO 1/59, 632, 429.
- 20) See Webster, Letters 42-46.
- 21) See the data in Hirsch, Pathology I 316-393 and Scott, History I 324-332.



- 22) Wright, Memoir 104.
- 23) See Dancer, San Juan 20n and passim; Hart, Siege 32-33. Note the rural environment and the predominance of 'intermittent' fevers.
- 24) Moreau de Saint-Méry II 673; Jackson, Treatise 250.
- 25) Moreau de Jonnès, Monographie 83. Cf. Devèze, Traité xxx, 44-45, and Béranger-Féraud, Traité 56.
- 26) Cantlie, History 231 states there was 'no yellow fever' in Saint Domingue between 1763 and 1793. Carter, Fever 66-67 was probably also wrong to think it disappeared from Grenada and the Windwards in the 1770s and 1780s. He ignored evidence of local immunity and relied too much on Chisholm's account.
- 27) The cases of Martinique and the Bahamas, noted above, n.8, could be explained in terms of their very low slave imports. Monkeys, the main maintenance host of the yellow fever virus, are not found in the West Indies, except Trinidad.
- 28) Augustin, History 1052-4 also concluded that virulence was determined by the number of bites, after observing how the gradual eradication of mosquitoes from New Orleans during the 1905 epidemic reduced both the incidence and virulence of the disease.
- 29) Strode, Fever 448.
- 30) See Hunter etc., Medicine 26; Strode, Fever 183, 448.
- 31) Jackson, Treatise 250. Cf. his descriptions of the 'putrescent' type of 'common remittent' : *ibid.* 140ff.; also Lempriere's not very convincing attempts to distinguish the 'continued fever' from the 'common remittent': Jamaica II 58-71.
- 32) Jackson, Treatise 247 and Outline introduction; McLean, Enquiry passim. Dancer, San Juan 53 observed that the 'remittent' sometimes 'developed into' yellow fever.
- 33) See Lempriere, Jamaica II 22-56.
- 34) *Ibid.* II 47-58; Powell, Dead ch.I.
- 35) Jackson, Outline 82; McLean, Enquiry 72.
- 36) See Carter, Fever 11-13.
- 37) Scott, History I 293, 333.
- 38) See CO 137/88-89, various letters. New barracks were built, black 'pioneers' were added to white regiments and efforts were made to recruit a coloured corps.
- 39) Cp. appendix F and CO 245/1, 157-9. I have reckoned that nearly 50 men had been discharged or were prisoners.
- 40) WO 1/59, 429.
- 41) Generalizations about mortality rates in tropical fevers are risky. Mild cases are easily overlooked and yellow fever can vary greatly in severity. It commonly kills 5%-15% 'of whites under good conditions' and losses of over 50% are known. Falciparum malaria, according to Pampana, Malaria 19,



only very exceptionally leads to up to 25% fatality among untreated cases of first infection, and usually very much less. Pernicious forms, however, can be just as deadly as yellow fever but in the Americas the latter disease has proved to be the more lethal: see Woodruff and Bell, Synopsis 308; Strode, Fever 389, 422; Hunter etc., Medicine 26, 384; Winslow, Man 184.

42) In the Island Hospital, 'fever' case fatality ran at 50% in 1793 and at 62% between January and July 1794. In Port Royal naval hospital, it totalled 41% in 1794, whereas it ran at 34% in the Mole naval hospital for the worst nine months of 1794: Royal Gazette 1794, no.6, 20, and no.32, 20; P.R.O., ADM 102/426-7.

43) WO 17/1986, 17/125, 17/151, etc. General Whyte admitted the returns for the period were not accurate; the circumstances were desperate. Regimental returns became quickly out of date and overall do not tally with reported losses. Calculations are made the more difficult by the arrival in June of eight flank companies whose numbers are not precisely ascertainable.

44) WO 17/1986, returns of 31st August and October 26th.

45) Data derived from WO 17/95, 162 and 1986; CO 245/1, 157-9; WO 1/60, 211. As the latter reference seemingly only details rank and file, probably for October 1st, these last two estimates depend on extrapolation using the 49th Foot as a model.

46) Returns for 31st August, 26th October and 1st January in WO 17/1986 and 1987, allowing for 44 dead at Tiburon in late December.

47) WO 17/124, 191 and 1986.

48) Jackson, Outline 6.

49) WO 17/125 and 151.

50) The margin of error would seem about plus/minus 3%. Some 120 men were discharged or deserted. The figures in Fortescue, Army IV 466 cannot be relied on.

51) WO 1/64, 345-6. While Maitland omitted some of the dead at Saint Marc, his figures for the 66th and 67th Foot show overestimates of about 160. Cf. WO 17/186.

52) I have assumed that the 130th Foot was repatriated in late December 1795, the 22nd, 41st and 96th in April/May 1796 and that the 23rd was drafted into the 22nd shortly beforehand.

53) Army IV 473. He overlooked, however, the returns of 1st December and 18th July 1796 in WO 17/1988 and Dundas Papers III 48. The fact is, most of Forbes's papers have been lost. S.R.O., GD 188/28/6 is invaluable.

54) See above, ch. ; WO 17/1988, returns of 3rd May, June and July; Jackson, Outline 35. Between 1st February and 3rd May, 548 died. Many had deserted or been discharged before sailing. Others were captured at sea or detained in Jamaica or the Leewards.

55) Edwards, Survey 385. His chronology is also in error and misled Fortescue.



- 56) S.R.O., GD 188/28/6. An addition of 75 was made, being the dead of the third Irish Regiment for September. WO 17/187 and 190 were used to estimate total enlistment, desertion and discharges during this period.
- 57) Cp. Jackson, Outline 61-62 and WO 17/1988, July returns.
- 58) Jackson, Outline 38; WO 17/1988, July returns.
- 59) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Journal I 62.
- 60) Fortescue, Army IV 565.
- 61) See WO 6/6, Dundas to Simcoe 9th June 1797; S.R.O. GD 188/28/6; WO 17/187 and 190.
- 62) WO 1/66, 61.
- 63) Cp. returns of 1st December and 1st June in WO 17/1988 and 1989, and for the proportion of dead to discharged, WO 17/187 and 190; also, Jackson, Outline 69-70.
- 64) WO 1/68, 195-239. Cf. WO 17/190, WO 17/237 and WO 17/1990.
- 65) See Edwards, Survey 386; P.R.O., ADM 102/704, 730 and 731 passim. This is allowing for 270 deaths at sea and elsewhere on land. During the period of the occupation, another 1920 seamen of the Jamaica Station died in Port Royal naval hospital: P.R.O., ADM 102/426 and 427 passim.
- 66) Malenfant, Colonies 91; Béranger-Féraud, Traité 61-62.
- 67) Fortescue, Army IV 496, 565.
- 68) McLean, Enquiry 1.
- 69) Total mortality for the whole occupation was around 62% but several regiments spent under a year in the colony.
- 70) Moreau de Saint-Méry II 1068.
- 71) Data from Lempriere, Jamaica I 224ff.
- 72) Béranger-Féraud, Traité 54.
- 73) UCMH typescripts, Urizar to Alcudia 25 de junio de 1795.
- 74) A.N., DDxxv 49/466.
- 75) Data from I.J., Ms.36, f.4; Foubert, Volontaires passim; CO 137/91, memoir by Thiballier 1st July 1793.
- 76) See Foubert, Volontaires passim; Moreau de Saint-Méry III 1321-2; Anglade, Espace 13 and 21.
- 77) See Lempriere, Jamaica I 2-3, 224ff.
- 78) Data from Hunter, Jamaica 33-60. Cantlie, History I 163-5 and Anderson, Fever 2-3 only mention the worst cases.
- 79) Data from Cantlie, History I 166; Hart, Siege 48; P.R.O., 30/8/196, 11; Moreau de Jonnés, Monographie 72.
- 80) Korngold, Toussaint 115-6.
- 81) See above, ch.VII, n.71, which concerns a colonial corps and is the only example I have found.



- 82) WO 1/64, 345.
- 83) At Tiburon in December 1794 and on the Palliser plantation near Bombarde in June 1796.
- 84) B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Journal II 40.
- 85) See *ibid.* II 39 and III 29.
- 86) McLean, Enquiry 73-74, 220.
- 87) Jackson, Outline 91.
- 88) See *ibid.* 50-51, 82-85, 92.
- 89) See *ibid.* 62-71, 86, 92; Scott, History I 295.
- 90) See Jackson, Outline 67, 81-82; Hunter etc., Medicine 383-5; also Dancer, Assistant 85.
- 91) See above, pp.       ; B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Journal I 62.
- 92) See *ibid.* *passim*; Scott, History I 334.
- 93) Jackson, Outline 27-48.
- 94) See *ibid.* 59, 63-67; McLean, Enquiry 37-39, 213, 221.
- 95) Cp. McLean, Enquiry 2, 210, 269 and Leithhead and Lind, Heat *passim*.
- 96) McLean, Enquiry 10-15; B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Journal I 42, 62, III 35.
- 97) R.A.M.C., book no.35, second letter; Hultin, Diaries 357-8, 362.
- 98) Manson, Diseases 296; Strode, Fever 420.
- 99) Enquiry 250-5; Claret contains potassium, thiamin, calcium and vitamins not necessarily present in the soldier's diet.
- 100) Rollo, St. Lucia 151; Hunter, Jamaica 22-27; Lempriere, Jamaica I 207, 220-3; McLean, Enquiry 207; Jackson, Outline 45-48, 67.
- 101) WO 1/61, 46-47, 391-4, 733-4, 821; WO 1/64, 121-6; WO 1/67, 245-259.
- 102) On the hospitals, see Hunter, Jamaica 257-8; Lempriere, Jamaica II 12; McLean, Enquiry 227-235; Jackson, Outline 48; P.R.O., T 81/8, report of 7 mars 1796, and above, n.101.
- 103) Manson, Diseases 296; Hunter etc., Medicine 27-28.
- 104) See above, n.101; McLean, Enquiry 16-19, 111; B.P.L., Lt. Howard's Journal I 41; CO 245/5, report of 12 octobre 1795.
- 105) Woodruff and Bell, Synopsis 152, 310.
- 106) See King, World 154.
- 107) See Jackson, Water 24-26; McLean, Enquiry 146-167; Hultin, Diaries 356-8.
- 108) See McLean, Enquiry 129-135, 162-171; Jackson, Outline 78.
- 109) Journal III 35.
- 110) See Lempriere, Jamaica I 220-3, 231; Jackson, Outline 88-98; McLean, Enquiry 205, 217.
- 111) B.N., Sonthonax Correspondence I, letters to Toussaint 20 and 22 frimaire V; Dundas Papers II 30-31; WO 1/64, 343-6.
- 112) Jackson, Outline 50-51; Laborie, Appendix 141.

#### CHAPTER XIV

- 1) WO 1/67, 357-414, 417-440.
- 2) H.M.C., Fortescue Mss. III, 390-1.
- 3) WO 1/69, 1-92; WO 6/5, 312 ff.
- 4) WO 1/67, 305-330.
- 5) WO 1/68, 310-7; Lokke, New Light passim; WO 1/69, 105-117.
- 6) See WO 1/67, 345; WO 6/5, 312 ff.; Précis Historique I 296; BP.L., Lt. Howard's Jnl. III, 41-49.
- 7) See WO 1/69, 131-5, 151.
- 8) WO 1/69, 159-165; WO 1/68, 353-4; S.R.O., GD 51/1, 533/1; Pauléus-Sannon, Histoire II 48-49.
- 9) WO 1/69, 167-179, 251-2.
- 10) WO 1/69, 217-243, 301-9; WO 1/68, 137-145.
- 11) WO 1/68, 145; WO 1/69, 183-8, 191-2, 273-9, 291-2.
- 12) WO 1/68, 149-154; WO 1/69, 437-442.
- 13) St. Domingo Review 71-73.
- 14) See P.R.O., E 29/73-85; T 81/1-3.
- 15) WO 1/69, 293, 387-399, 403, 421-430, 505, 525.
- 16) WO 1/69, 733-743; WO 1/70, 5-13; CO 137/100, Balcarres to Maitland 4th July 1798.
- 17) Above, note 4.
- 18) WO 1/68, 195-218; WO 1/70, 21-28.
- 19) Ibid.; Pauléus-Sannon, Histoire II, 61-62; WO 1/69, 427.
- 20) CO 137/100, various letters; S.R.O., GD 193/2/12, Toussaint to Maitland 11 thermidor VI.
- 21) CO 137/ 99 and 100, passim; WO 6/5, 365 ff.
- 22) See S.R.O., GD 193/2/12, correspondence of July and August 1798. The letters in this collection, I am informed by Professor Joseph Boromé, differ from the copies he sent to Hedouville in insisting that he had full powers of negotiation.
- 23) See ch. XV, n. 19.
- 24) WO 1/70, 85-87, 97; CO 137/100, secret convention of 31st August 1798, Balcarres to Portland 30th October 1798.



CHAPTER XV.

- 1) P.R.O., CUST 17/16-21; Schumpeter, Statistics tables 17 and 18; Parliamentary Papers, House of Lords, 1806 XXXIX 205.
- 2) See P.R.O., AO 3/200 and 265; P.P., 1809 V 141, 277. I have not included here revenue raised and spent locally by district authorities.
- 3) See P.R.O., T 29/73-85 and T 81/1-3.
- 4) See B.M., Add. Mss., 38369, 365-8; 38279, 201; 38379, 256-7.
- 5) P.R.O., T 50/56.
- 6) Malenfant, Colonies 91; Korngold, Toussaint 118; <sup>; Rainsford, Haiti 412.</sup> Cf. Schoelcher, Vie 233-4.
- 7) See above, p.
- 8) Fortescue, Army IV, 325,
- 9) Ibid., 385, 496, 565; Geggus, Destruction *passim*.
- 10) P.P., 1795-96 XLI 821. Fencibles and Independents numbered 15,000.
- 11) See above, pp. 85-86.
- 12) Fortescue, Army IV, 396, 324.
- 13) P.R.O., 30/8/239, 141.
- 14) Duffy, Policy 87, 515.
- 15) Ibid., 504.
- 16) WO 1/63, 497-509, memoir probably by Hawkesbury; CO 137/98, Balcarres to Portland 20th August 1796.
- 17) See B.N., Sonthonax Corresp. I, letters of 27 messidor, 30 thermidor IV and 28 vendémiaire V; J.A., Council Minutes, 26th August 1796.
- 18) J.A., Council Minutes, 1st July 1797. The letter lost 'dans une rue de Kingston', mentioned in Wright and Debien, Jamaïque 117, doubtless concerns a similar, if not the same, ruse. Republican messengers can hardly have been so clumsy.
- 19) See CO 245/1, 34; Wright and Debien, Jamaïque 140. Similarly, in the next decade, it was the mulatto Pétion who espoused the cause of international abolitionism, while the black King Christophe was at pains to discountenance it.
- 20) See J.A., Council Minutes, 21st September 1795; Précis Historique I 230; CO 137/95, Balcarres to Portland 27th September 1795 and inclosures.
- 21) Cf. Cabon, Haiti III, 314; . . .
- 22) Sanderson, Strategy 116.
- 23) WO 1/64, 343-5.
- 24) See J.A., 1B/5/13/1, 29th April 1796.
- 25) Cited in Scott, History I, 334. In September 1793, when a captain in the 62nd Foot, Drinkwater had accompanied Whitelocke's expedition as a volunteer.

- 27) Above, pp. 229-231.
- 28) Above, ch. V,
- 29) Above, ch. V, part (i).
- 30) Above, 171-2.
- 31) For the impact on Jean Rablel of Toussaint Louverture's recruiting for the campaign of the summer of 1796, see Debien, Plantations et Esclaves, study of the Foache estate.
- 32) CO 137/100, Balcarres to Portland, 30th October 1798
- 33) I am grateful to Monsieur Jean Fouchard and the manager of the Livres Pour Tous bookshop, Port au Prince, for information regarding this song.



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