

The Impact of the Haitian Revolution on the Hispanic Caribbean,  
c.1791-1830

This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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15 July 2010

‘This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text.’

‘This dissertation does not exceed the word limit for the History Degree Committee. It is **79,341** words in length.’

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15 July 2010



The West Indies, published by John Cumming (Dublin, 1814)  
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## Summary

### *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution on the Hispanic Caribbean, c.1791-1830*

This thesis examines how the slave uprising in the French Caribbean sugar colony of Saint-Domingue (1791-1804) had dramatic and long-lasting repercussions on the neighbouring Spanish possessions of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Santo Domingo. Events in Saint-Domingue took place during a period of profound change in the Spanish colonies. Reforms implemented during the reign of Carlos III (1759-1788) had begun to shift the imperial economic focus from the extraction of precious metals in Spain's American colonies towards the potential of intensive agriculture, especially sugar. The process was accelerated by France's loss of Saint-Domingue in 1804, which presented the Spanish islands under Carlos IV (1788-1808) with the opportunity to have a much larger share of the sugar trade – a chance which Cuba and Puerto Rico were quick to seize. At the same time, Napoleon Bonaparte's overthrow of the Spanish monarchy, the war against France (1808-1814), and the writing of a Spanish constitution (1812) precipitated the unravelling of most of Spain's empire, bar the Philippines and the sugar islands in the Caribbean. The thesis focuses on how relations between Madrid and the Caribbean islands were significantly altered in the wake of peninsular upheaval. At the same time, this work also considers the islands' reconfigured relationship with new republic of Haiti, formed by the freed slaves of Saint-Domingue. Drawing from correspondence between the crown and the island authorities, as well as between colonial officials, this thesis also examines the culture of fear that permeated the Spanish possessions. Initially, this fear reflected anxieties about Saint-Domingue-style slave rebellions, but as mainland Spanish colonies became independent – and Santo Domingo fell under Haitian control in 1822 – this fear took on a new dimension and became a vital tie between Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Madrid, contributing to the continuation of colonial rule until the Spanish-American War of 1898.

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## Abbreviations

**ANC** Archivo Nacional de la República de Cuba

**AHPSC** Archivo Histórico Provincial de Santiago de Cuba

**AGPR** Archivo General de Puerto Rico

**AHMP** Archivo Histórico Municipal de Ponce

**AGNRD** Archivo General de la Nación de la República Dominicana

**AGI** Archivo General de Indias (Seville)

**AHN** Archivo Histórico Nacional (Madrid)

**AGS** Archivo General de Simancas

**TNA** The National Archives (London)

**BNE** Biblioteca Nacional de España (Madrid)



*Introduction: Rebellion, Rupture, and Reconfiguration in the Caribbean*

*‘With those two words “liberty and equality” these people will do much damage...’*

– Report to Santo Domingo Governor Joaquín García, 5 November 1790<sup>1</sup>

In 1791 the French Revolution’s arrival in the Caribbean ignited a massive slave rebellion in France’s most valuable colony, Saint-Domingue. The uprising not only uprooted France’s colonial order, but caused deep concern on the neighbouring slave-holding Spanish islands of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Santo Domingo, echoing the anxiety on the peninsula about the events of 1789. The quote that begins this chapter was taken from a commander’s report to the captain-general and governor of Santo Domingo. The Eastern side of the island, which was a Spanish colony, had received a steady stream of news and rumours about Saint-Domingue, which occupied the Western third of the island. Commander Vicente’s remark in many ways embodied the Spanish worldview about the French during this period – hostility, suspicion, and doubt. The fight to keep republican ideas North of the Pyrenees had been under way in Europe for some time. Now it appeared that the same struggle was about to come to the Caribbean’s shores. The island initially named Hispaniola was divided between Spanish and French, and the two sides would take divergent paths in their responses to the events of 1791. And the responses of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Santo Domingo would themselves become an important factor in setting out the different trajectory the islands would take compared with Spain’s other territories in the Americas.

However, it was not the dismissal of ‘liberty and equality’ by Spanish governors that was the genesis of this thesis, but rather the 1808 battle cry of ‘¡Viva

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<sup>1</sup> Commander Vicente to Joaquín García, 5 November 1790, Archivo General de Indias, Seville (hereafter)AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 954

‘Con estas dos palabras Libertad é Igualdad esas gente harán mucho daño ...’; see chapter 2.

Fernando VII!’ in Santo Domingo. It was here I became aware of the many contradictions of the colonial Hispanic Caribbean that had been obscured by a wider historical interest in the march to independence – there has been less scrutiny of the ties that bound each island to an increasingly weak Spain, yet these ties persisted throughout the fraught decades of the early nineteenth century. While researching a master’s dissertation I became interested in the mostly forgotten battle by Juan Sánchez Ramírez and his band of loyalists in Santo Domingo. They defeated Napoleon’s troops in 1808-09 in order to regain their place as Spain’s colony at a time when other Spanish American colonies were beginning to consider very different political possibilities (this is detailed in Chapter 3). The contrary nature of these events at such a critical juncture for the American colonies became the starting point of unravelling a much larger series of events, stretching back to the Bourbon reforms of the 1760s and going into the nineteenth century to intersect with the loss of most of Spain’s empire and the rise of the former slave colony turned republic of Haiti.<sup>2</sup> So in finding Sánchez Ramírez, I also encountered Toussaint L’Ouverture. And in tracing the relationship between France, Spain, and the Caribbean during the age of Atlantic reconfigurations, it became clear that the continuities during this period were as numerous as the ruptures.

Part of my aim was simple: to put Sánchez Ramírez and L’Ouverture in the same story and to explain the impact of the reconfiguration of the French Caribbean on the Hispanic Caribbean world. The reason I focus on Spain and its islands is because of how uncomfortably they sat with the rest of Europe and the West Indies. Of course there were similarities – the British, French, Dutch, and Danish also had slave colonies in the Caribbean. But the changes that swept through the region in the nineteenth century – not least the abolition of the slave trade – were virtually ignored by the Spanish islands. Likewise, the threat unleashed by the French Revolution was

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<sup>2</sup> I will use Saint-Domingue when referring to events that took place on the French colony until 1804, when it declared itself the republic of Haiti.

stifled in Spain, and it would not be until the crisis of 1808 that a form of liberalism began to emerge on the peninsula. Part of the story of Caribbean continuity was also to do with the economic shift towards Cuba and Puerto Rico as much as it was to do with their loyalist mindset, the genesis of which I examine over the course of this thesis. The uniqueness of these islands lies not only in these contradictions, but in the consistency in which such contradictory ideas and practices endured.

Another aim of this thesis is to paint a trans-colonial picture of the Caribbean and bring together the three islands. A cursory glance gives the impression that their stories do not fit – Cuba and to a lesser extent Puerto Rico became rich on sugar and coffee and remained colonies until 1898, while Santo Domingo fell under French and later Haitian rule, becoming independent in 1844. The three islands have not been put together in this context, yet their collective experiences provide a more complete picture of the complications of this period, something that I put in the context of Spain's own struggles and the story of Haitian independence. This thesis, then, brings together these many elements – from the Enlightenment thought of eighteenth-century Europe, to the impact of French republicanism in Spain and beyond, to the Caribbean loyalty to the crown in the age of Latin American independence. But there is one more important factor that arose during this period, and it is the one that provides a route through the historical density of this period – fear.

### *Fear, Haiti, and historiography*

The commonplace observation that 'fear of slave rebellions' kept Cuba and Puerto Rico (though not Santo Domingo) in the imperial fold during and after the age of Latin American independence movements would appear fairly straightforward.<sup>3</sup> By the early 1800s the two islands had seen substantial prosperity during a 'second

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<sup>3</sup> Santo Domingo's bumpy road to independence in 1844 is detailed in Chapters 3 and 4.

slavery' of sugar riches.<sup>4</sup> These islands could not afford to eschew a long-standing relationship with Spain, unlike their more populated cousins in Central and South America, which were economically and demographically different. Santo Domingo, not as prosperous, felt the need to seek the crown's protection from the incursions of the French. The *criollo* – i.e. Caribbean-born Spaniards – elites across the islands wanted to draw on Spain's resources in keeping public 'order' in a society containing rising numbers of people of colour and that would later face the rising threat of republicanism. They feared the combination of a small number of whites and the prospect of independence, which many felt could ignite a race war, like they had seen in the neighbouring French colony of Saint-Domingue. What started out as a battle for equality by mulattos (people classified as mixed European and African parentage) in that colony, sparked complete upheaval, one of the results of which was a slave rebellion that lasted for 13 years and ended with the establishment of the republic of Haiti.

Yet I sensed this 'fear' in the Spanish colonies was far more multifaceted and multidimensional than had been depicted, so I set out to excavate it and give it some shape by tracing the fear from the period of the Saint-Domingue slave rebellion in 1791, through the turbulent decades that followed, until the 1830s. My aim was to unpick it; to understand the contours of this fear; to examine its source – in this case the overthrow of a slave-owning regime – within the context of the continuity of the Spanish colonies. There seemed to be key flashpoints of anxiety: the slave rebellion in what would become Haiti; the arrival of refugee planters and the stories, information, and sugar production technology they brought with them to the Spanish islands; the question of free people of colour; Napoleon's invasion of Spain; and the subsequent independence movements in Latin America. In this stream of events, my aim was to

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<sup>4</sup> For more on the idea of Cuban 'second slavery' see Dale Tomich, 'The Wealth of Empire : Francisco Arango y Parreño, Political Economy, and the Second Slavery in Cuba', in Christopher Schmidt-Nowara and John M Nieto-Phillips (eds) *Interpreting Spanish Colonialism: Empires, Nations, and Legends*, (Albuquerque, 2005), pp.54-85.

discern how the nature of fear changed, and, if so, how it was manipulated by the Spanish colonial authorities. The question, remained, however – how to measure and quantify fear.

Fear was a symbiotic part of the colonial relationship, but that did not make it static. For Caribbean *criollos* in the first half of the eighteenth century, their more immediate threats and worries concerned possibilities such as an attack by Spain's long-standing enemy, Britain, or the loss of goods or money due to piracy. The stability of the Spanish crown, the Catholic Church, and the functioning of the colonial order were not the concerns of the day. What both France and Saint-Domingue brought to the Spanish world by the end of the century was a new and complicated set of anxieties. The execution of the monarch and the Terror in revolutionary France petrified the Spanish crown. Likewise, the example set by the former slaves of Saint-Domingue was terrifying for plantation owners around the Caribbean. These fears were later compounded by Spanish America's embodiment of the larger reconfigurations in the European and colonial world, and these would come in the form of the Spanish constitution of 1812 and the later independence movements. At the same time, social and intellectual changes across Europe and the Caribbean were also a cause for unrest – the rise and growth of print culture and a public sphere, as well as the increase in port traffic and commerce, offered more avenues for the exchange of ideas and information. Although the Spanish inquisition tried to keep 'contagious' ideas out of Spain and its territories, it was an impossible mission – new intellectual forces had been unleashed in Europe and the Caribbean.

Timing and context also had every part in shaping fear, as well as giving me the impetus to undertake research into these particular islands at this particular moment: the period 1791-1830 was the time of reconfiguration of Spanish imperialism. Although it seemed Spain's empire was effectively over by the 1820s, it was not. Indeed, the Caribbean colonies would have a starring role in the empire that

remained. Certainly, by the 1820s, Spain had lost the majority of its holdings, from New Spain to Rio de la Plata, and was left only with two of its Caribbean islands, the Philippines and some small holdings in Africa. Gone were the days of Potosí silver, but they were being replaced by those of Caribbean sugar. This economic turn underpinned a new fear because the crown, the colonial authorities, and the planters knew exactly what could be lost – they had watched the example of Saint-Domingue. As slave imports rose, so did their anxiety. Plantation agriculture in the Spanish Caribbean had taken off as Saint-Domingue's was falling, a point not lost on planters. In addition, the crown, long accustomed to the metal wealth of the Americas, had become interested in the economic potential of agriculture by the late 1700s. This interest would later turn into a dependency when the metal-rich territories of Mexico and Peru declared their independence. So in this context, a slave rebellion could not only ruin a planter's fortune, it could destroy an entire colonial economic system.

However, this story is not merely about the Caribbean or Spain – it is global. The 'entanglement' of Britain, France, and Spain in the region would see shifting power balances throughout the nineteenth century, with the Caribbean mirroring the dramatic changes occurring on the European continent.<sup>5</sup> By 1814, Spain was on the periphery of Europe, its liberal reforms outlined in the 1812 constitution scuppered by the Bourbon restoration, which would spark cycles of civil war that would last until the 20th century.<sup>6</sup> France and Britain, on the other hand, went on to expand their imperial reaches. But while British scholars have long debated the meaning of first and second empires through ideas like Bayly's 'imperial meridian'<sup>7</sup> or Robinson and

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<sup>5</sup> Eliga Gould, 'Entangled Histories, Entangled Worlds: The English-Speaking Atlantic as a Spanish Periphery', *The American Historical Review* 112, No 3, 2007, pp.764-786.

<sup>6</sup> See for instance, Raymond Carr, *Spain 1808-1975* (Oxford, 1982).

<sup>7</sup> CA Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World, 1780-1830* (London, 1989).

Gallagher's 'imperialism of free trade',<sup>8</sup> Spain, it would seem, would have to be resigned to what Josep Maria Fradera has called '*colonias para después de un imperio*' – colonies after an empire – a poetic coda on more than 300 years of imperial rule.<sup>9</sup> Yet it was still an empire, and one in the throes of a sugar revolution in the Caribbean. More broadly, the years 1791-1830 mark a very specific and fraught time for Spain and its American colonies, as well as being a period of drastic economic change through the growing agricultural wealth of the Caribbean. Thus the 'fear of slave rebellions', as such, cannot be divorced from the larger geo-political and economic changes that Spain and its colonies underwent during the early decades of the nineteenth century.

So while this thesis has at its core the concrete objective of examining the Spanish Caribbean during this tumultuous time, I also wanted to undertake the less clear-cut task of trying to understand the anxiety of the period. Deciding how to approach this was not straightforward – whose fear, after all, am I examining? In the end, I decided to focus on colonial administrators. The reason is that they were the link between the crown and the public, and they were at the frontline of anxiety. They had to not only follow royal orders, which often were useless or unenforceable, they also had to work with the planters to prevent runaway slave colonies from growing, and monitor who was coming in and out of their ports. Amid the upheaval of the nineteenth century, they had to worry not only about external threats but internal ones, as pro-independence movements began to be organised by *criollos*. Colonial officers and administrators provided the immediate response when they felt the crown's

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<sup>8</sup> John Gallagher, and Ronald Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', *The Economic History Review*, 6, No 1 (1953), pp.1-15; also see Oliver MacDonagh, 'The Anti-Imperialism of Free Trade', *The Economic History Review*, 14, No 3 (1962), pp. 489-501; DCM Platt, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade: Some Reservations', *The Economic History Review*, 21, No 2 (1968), pp. 296-306; and Platt, 'Further Objections to an "Imperialism of Free Trade", 1830-60', *The Economic History Review*, 26, No 1 (1973) pp. 77-91.

<sup>9</sup> In fact, it is the title of his study of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. See Josep Maria Fradera, *Colonias para después de un imperio* (Barcelona, 2005).

interests to be under threat, and it is along these lines that I trace fear in this work. How did this fear manifest itself? It came out in correspondence – especially between island governors. To measure it – if such a thing is possible – requires an examination of actions. To determine what was provoking panic or concern, it is necessary to look at what was done to quell any disquiet. For instance, in Cuba, one constant action that emerges is the repeated refrain that non-Cubans were not allowed on to the island, especially anyone from Saint-Domingue. This call went out repeatedly, and was often related to rumours that former slaves were going to invade. Another ongoing theme, for example, was the treatment of free people of colour within the islands, and their surveillance. How colonial authorities responded to fear can help to illustrate how the Spanish regime dealt with the dramatic changes that took place during this period.

Writing a history that attempts to trace and examine fear raises complicated questions: to what extent do emotions and history mix, or is it the preserve of psychologists or sociologists? And if emotion does have place in the writing of history, how is it, and should it be, discussed?<sup>10</sup> Is it only limited to people, or can institutions, administrations and governments have an ‘emotional life’? Lucien Febvre, the French historian and one of the founders of the *Annales* school, contends that psychology has a very important place in many aspects of history – including that of institutions – arguing that:

[T]he very subjects from which people claim to exclude all intuitive imagination, i.e. the history of ideas and the history of institutions, are precisely for the psychological historian excellent fields for research, reconstitutions and interpretation ... For the historian cannot understand or make others understand the functioning of the institutions in a given period or the ideas of that period or any other unless he has that basic standpoint, which I for my part call the psychological standpoint, which implies the concern to

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<sup>10</sup> See Peter Stearns, ‘Fear and Contemporary History: A Review Essay’, *Journal of Social History*, 40, No 2 (2006), pp. 477-84.



link up all the conditions of existence of men of any given period with the meanings the same men gave to their own ideas.<sup>11</sup>

Although his idea is clear, the practice is more problematic. Many historians have addressed this issue by taking a broad view of emotions, rather than focus on a specific one, in order to address this question. For example, William Reddy has described as 'sentimentalism' the emotions often found among the public in the early days of the French Revolution, and he argues there is a noticeable shift in public discourse reflecting changes in the interior lives of historical subjects.<sup>12</sup> A recent volume entitled *An Emotional History of the United States* examines many facets of North American life, from literary expressions of grief to anger in the workplace. Its editors contend that: 'History has been felt; the lives of men and women have had an emotional dimension. That dimension had not only given shape to history but also created history, as men and women have acted on their feelings, sometimes knowingly, sometimes not.'<sup>13</sup>

And while analysing emotions opens up new historical doors, focusing on fear can bring together the interior world of people and insight into larger political actions and group mentalities. It is in the realm of the political that much work has been done. Corey Robin argues that there is more than one type of political fear. He says that the first type concerns 'the definition and interpretation by political leaders of public objects of apprehension and concern'; the second type 'arises from the social, political, and economic hierarchies that divide a people'.<sup>14</sup> Stanley Rachman, a psychologist, has noted the difference between the expectation of the real dangers that

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<sup>11</sup> Lucien Paul Victor Febvre and Peter Burke, *A New Kind of History: From the Writings of Febvre* (London, 1973), p.19.

<sup>12</sup> William M Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge, 2001), p.141.

<sup>13</sup> Jan Lewis and Peter N Stearns, *An Emotional History of the United States*, (New York, 1998), p.1.

<sup>14</sup> Corey Robin, *Fear: The History of a Political Idea* (Oxford, 2004), p.18.

trigger fear, and the more vague emotion of anxiety. He outlines three routes to fear: conditioning, vicarious acquisition (meaning direct or indirect observation), and transmission of ‘fear-inducing’ information.<sup>15</sup> Despite these pathways, Kate Hebblethwaite and Elizabeth McCarthy point out that fear is ‘curiously nebulous’.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps for that reason works which focus on this issue of fear have a wide historical range – they stretch from mediaeval to modern times, and examine any number of probable causes, from religion to revolution. Around the period of the American Revolution, for instance, Gordon Wood examines the ‘paranoid style’ of eighteenth-century North America.<sup>17</sup> In my own work, Georges Lefebvre’s classic book, *The Great Fear (La grande peur) of 1789*, was a very important starting point. In it, he picks apart the notion of the ‘great fear’ which stalked the countryside of France at the beginning of the French Revolution and argues that there were different streams of fear, not just one massive panic.<sup>18</sup> More recent events, such as the terror attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001, inform Joanna Bourke’s meditation on fear in late-nineteenth and twentieth-century Britain and North America. She trawls through collective fears and individual responses, as well as the role of the mass media in both. And while she points out that ‘fear has become the emotion through which public life is administered’ in the context of the present day, such an observation would not be out of place with regards to the nineteenth-century Caribbean.<sup>19</sup> This idea goes further for William Naphy and Penny Roberts, who see fear ‘as an historical phenomenon, not as a psychological or instinctual condition, although these factors

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<sup>15</sup> Stanley J Rachman, *Fear and Courage* (New York, 1989); Jim Shanahan, ‘Fearing to Speak: Fear and the 1798 Rebellion in the Nineteenth Century’, in Kate Hebblethwaite and Elizabeth McCarthy, (eds), *Fear: Essays on the Meaning and Experience of Fear* (Dublin, 2007), p.32.

<sup>16</sup> Hebblethwaite and McCarthy, *Fear*, p.9.

<sup>17</sup> Gordon S Wood, ‘Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style: Causality and Deceit in the Eighteenth Century’, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 39, No 3 (1982), pp.402-41.

<sup>18</sup> Georges Lefebvre, *The Great Fear of 1789* (Princeton, 1982[ed]), p.138.

<sup>19</sup> Joanna Bourke, *Fear: A Cultural History* (London 2006), p.x.

may inform our understanding of what constitutes fear'. They claim their interest to be the 'logistics of fear', examining how people, in this case in Early Modern Europe, coped with threats.<sup>20</sup> Jean Delumeau, whose *El miedo en occidente (La peur en occident)* is often referenced in Spanish works around this subject, argues the real issue is even larger – that we must understand the world's 'constant dialogue with fear', and he examines this from ancient to modern times.<sup>21</sup> This work was one of the influences for a conference and subsequent volume in Peru on the issue of fear. *El miedo en Perú* similarly takes a wide approach, sweeping from early colonial encounters to twentieth-century politics, stopping to address the impact of the French Revolution and how colonial officials were worried about its influence in Peru.<sup>22</sup>

Of course this is not to overlook or dismiss the personal fears of people on the ground, which in many ways are more immediate and understandable. Bodily fear during a period of upheaval and uncertainty is an obvious reaction. With regard to the time of the Haitian Revolution, personal tales surfaced in contemporary accounts, such as the *roman à clef* *Secret History Or, The Horrors of St Domingo*, in which a young woman, Mary Hassel, tells in an epistolary manner what she sees during the last days of Saint-Domingue. For instance, in relating a story of a white family in 1802, whose eldest daughter spurned the advances of a Haitian soldier, Hassel paints a grisly picture: 'The monster gave her [the daughter] to his guard, who hung her by the throat on an iron hook in the marketplace, where the lovely, innocent, unfortunate victim slowly expired.'<sup>23</sup> An earlier work of an anonymous creole planter from Saint-Domingue, entitled *My Odyssey: Experiences of a Young Refugee from Two*

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<sup>20</sup> William G Naphy, and Penny Roberts, *Fear in Early Modern Society* (Manchester, 1997), p.2.

<sup>21</sup> Jean Delumeau, *El miedo en occidente* (Madrid, 2002), p.10. Lamentably, this work has never been translated into English, though many of his other works have.

<sup>22</sup> Claudia Rosas Lauro (ed), *El miedo en el Perú, siglos XVI al XX* (Lima, 2005).

<sup>23</sup> Mary Hassel, *Secret History Or, the Horrors of St Domingo in a Series of Letters, Written By a Lady At Cape Francois, to Colonel Burr; Late Vice-President of the United States, Principally During the Command of General Rochambeau*, (Philadelphia, 1808), pp.152-53.

*Revolutions*, tells, through a series of letters, about the fighting on the island between 1791-1798, though he spent some of this time in North America. His letters contain a number of poems, lamenting his change in fortunes: 'I can clearly see the den of crimes, / The results of great disaster and of suffering, / And the tombs of many victims. / Alas, these burnt plains serve but to remind me / Of that first time, how as a pupil of Bellona / I avenged my friends, so vilely slain; / These memories, to this day, shake my very soul.'<sup>24</sup> Joan Dayan argues that Hassel's work blurs the boundary between fact and fiction, revealing the complicated relationships among the many members of colonial society. For Dayan, and Matt Clavin, first-hand accounts and histories written around this period about Saint-Domingue are part of a Gothic discourse about the slave rebellion, and its 'pleasing terror'.<sup>25</sup>

Interactions between people, not just individual observation, also provide valuable information. Events were fueled by stories and rumours, and while there was a small print culture in Spain and the Spanish Caribbean, it was subject to approval by the Inquisition or wary officials. Additionally, many people – including slaves – were illiterate, so the only way they could obtain information was to hear it from someone else. Fear and anxiety could materialise out of rumours. Julius Sherrard Scott's work on the networks of communication among black people in the Caribbean world during this time is testament to the power of this means of transporting information, as well as the potency of misinformation.<sup>26</sup> Michael Craton, in discussing how false rumours of emancipation circulated around the region after the initial slave uprising in Saint-

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<sup>24</sup> Althea De Parham (ed), *My Odyssey: Experiences of a Young Refugee From Two Revolutions, By a Creole of Saint Domingue* (Baton Rouge, 1959), p.168.

<sup>25</sup> Joan Dayan, *Haiti, History, and the Gods* (Berkeley, 1998), p.173; Hassel, *Secret History*; see also Matt Clavin, 'Race, Rebellion, and the Gothic: Inventing the Haitian Revolution', *Early American Studies* (2007), pp.1-30.

<sup>26</sup> Julius Sherrard Scott, 'The Common Wind: Currents of Afro-American Communication in the Era of the Haitian Revolution', (Unpublished PhD thesis, Duke University, 1986).

Domingue, called it the ‘rumour syndrome’.<sup>27</sup> Likewise, Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker’s *The Many Headed Hydra*, while focusing on the British Atlantic world, reminds historians that the maritime nature of European imperial enterprise could put those who spread such rumours and news – sailors, slaves, pirates, contrabandists – well beyond the reach of the authorities.<sup>28</sup> Such elusive characters fuelled fear in the Caribbean as much as events. Because these people were often outside the boundaries of *criollo* society, they could also be on the receiving end of colonial anxiety, bearing the brunt of repressive measures to ensure public ‘order’.

Understanding what compelled colonial officials to act is part of this question as well – fear, after all, can only be contingent on the events that prompt it. The anxieties of administrators of outposts of an empire in the nineteenth century would of course be different to today’s concerns; it is the historian’s challenge not to map modern anxieties on to the past. That is not to say, however, that there is no commonality with the twenty-first century. Context is still key, and understanding the Spanish Caribbean during this period means realising the colonial obsession with public ‘tranquility’, which was difficult to maintain in a world in which foreign ships could bring invasion or illegal trade, or in which rebellious slaves could subvert the existing social order.

The different responses of colonial officials and the general climate of fear have been given many names over the years by historians of slavery, the Haitian Revolution, or the Hispanic Caribbean islands. Antony Maingot has argued that a ‘terrified consciousness’<sup>29</sup> grew out of the slaves’ journey to freedom, as events in Saint-Domingue were an example of actual behaviour, and thus a possibility for other

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<sup>27</sup> Michael Craton, ‘Proto-Peasant Revolts? The Late Slave Rebellions in the British West Indies 1816-1832’, *Past and Present*, 85, (1979), pp.99-125.

<sup>28</sup> Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston, 2000).

<sup>29</sup> Anthony P Maingot, ‘Haiti and the Terrified Consciousness of the Caribbean,’ in Gert Oostindie (ed) in *Ethnicity in the Caribbean: Essays in Honor of Harry Hoetink*, (London, 1996), pp.53-80.

slave-owning islands. The Puerto Rican historian Arturo Morales Carrión blamed the ‘*síndrome haitiano*’ for actions such as the island’s governor ordering the arrest of any people of colour who arrived from Haiti in 1807. He goes on to argue that the establishment of Haiti laid deep social division between members of the public who wanted slave labour to develop the economy against those who wanted free workers.<sup>30</sup> Clarence Munford and Michael Zeuske have called Cuba’s reaction an ‘ambivalent paranoia’, meaning that the elites’ rush to cash in on sugar wealth would only be tempered by the possibility that the same type of social upheaval could happen to them.<sup>31</sup> These contemporary attempts to make sense of the atmosphere are useful – especially as they highlight the gaps between what people feared would happen and what actually did. Yet these vague notions do not go far enough. As Ada Ferrer has written with regards to Cuba,

The fear of Haiti – and in general what is called ‘black fear’ – has penetrated the history of Cuba, and also the historiography about Cuba, that is, the argument that in Cuba independence arrived 80 years late because of the “black fear” ... To allude simply to Haiti – or to black fear – serves as an explanation. It doesn’t demonstrate itself but its existence is assumed ... Although the fear of Haiti is used to explain, it is not itself explained.<sup>32</sup>

Indeed, Ferrer’s work and that of others in a volume on Cuba and the Haitian Revolution examines this question in closer detail. For Sibylle Fischer, however, the question is much wider – it is about a long-standing Western ideological rejection of the revolutionary modernity offered by Toussaint L’Ouverture, as expressed in his

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<sup>30</sup> Arturo Morales Carrión, ‘La revolucion haitiana y el movimiento antiesclavista en Puerto Rico’, *Boletín de la academia puertorriqueña de la historia* VIII, No 30 (1983), pp.139-56.

<sup>31</sup> Clarence J. Munford and Michael Zeuske, ‘Black Slavery, Class Struggle, Fear and Revolution in St. Domingue and Cuba, 1785-1795’, *The Journal of Negro History*, 73, No 1 (1988), pp.12-32.

<sup>32</sup> Ada Ferrer, ‘Noticias de Haití en Cuba’, *Revista de Indias*, 63, No 229 (2003), pp.675-94. See also Ada Ferrer, ‘Reading the Revolution: Contemporary Discourse and Ideology’, Doris L Garraway (ed), *Tree of Liberty: Cultural Legacies of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World* (Charlottesville, 2008); and Consuelo Naranjo Orovio, ‘La amenaza haitiana, un miedo interesado: poder y fomento de la población blanca en Cuba’, in María Dolores González-Ripoll et al (eds), *El rumor de Haití en Cuba: temor, raza y rebeldía, 1789-1844* (Madrid, 2004), pp.83-178.

1801 constitution.<sup>33</sup> Likewise, there is the ‘silencing’ of the ‘unthinkable’ past, as Michel-Rolph Trouillot has described it.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, in comparison with the volumes of work on the French and American revolutions, events in Haiti have received little attention until recent years.<sup>35</sup> However, since around the time of the 200th anniversary of independence there has been renewed scholarly interest in many aspects of the impact of events in Haiti, which include addressing the question of modernity set out by Fischer.<sup>36</sup>

This would not be the case in Spanish Caribbean literature. The main historical themes in Spanish and English about Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic during this period can be likened to the overlapping circles of a historiographical Venn diagram. One circle contains the march towards nationhood (or not, in the case of Puerto Rico); in the next circle is slavery studies, which is usually part of broader transnational works; and in the last one is economics, with a focus on agricultural development (i.e. sugar and coffee) and trade. Imagining the intersections of these

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<sup>33</sup> Sibylle Fischer, *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, (Duke, 2004). See also Eugene D. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge, 1992).

<sup>34</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past : Power and the Production of History* (Boston, 1995).

<sup>35</sup> Key works on the Haitian Revolution include CLR James, *Black Jacobins* (London, 2001[ed]); Carolyn E Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution From Below* (Knoxville, 1990); Thomas O Ott, *The Haitian Revolution, 1789-1804* (Knoxville, 1973). A very unscientific trawl of the British Library online catalogue brought up 2,136 hits for the search terms ‘French Revolution’ while ‘Haitian Revolution’ brought up 14.

<sup>36</sup> Some of these works include Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History* (Pittsburgh, 2009); Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge, 2004). There are also the many and rich offerings from David Geggus and contributors to volumes he has edited, including David Patrick Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies* (Bloomington, 2002); *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World*, (Columbia, 2001); *Slavery, War and Revolution: The British Occupation of Saint Domingue 1793-1798* (Oxford 1982); David Barry Gaspar and David Patrick Geggus (eds), *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean*, (Bloomington, 1997); Paul B. Miller, ‘Enlightened Hesitations: Black Masses and Tragic Heroes in C.L.R. James’s “The Black Jacobins”’, *MLN*, 116, 5 (2001), pp. 1069-90; David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (Durham, 2004); Nick Nesbitt, *Universal Emancipation: The Haitian Revolution and the Radical Enlightenment* (Charlottesville, 2008); Alain Yacou, *Saint-Domingue espagnol et la révolution nègre d’Haïti (1790-1822): Commémoration du bicentenaire de la naissance de l’état d’Haïti (1804-2004)*, (Paris, 2007).

circles, the overlapping sections represent the myriad histories on themes such as race or creole identity. Additionally, the islands – especially Cuba – are bit-part actors in the larger colonial histories of Latin America and/or Spain, sometimes receiving attention, at other times only meriting passing mention.<sup>37</sup> The remainder of this section will focus on slavery and economic ideas, as there is a very large historiography about the struggle for independence across all three islands, but very little that just focuses on this earlier part of the colonial period (opting to put it in the context of the more significant fights for nationhood that happen after 1830 on all the islands).<sup>38</sup> Because their respective historiographies have the question of the nation in the back of their mind, so to speak, the wider regional connections and comparisons often go overlooked, including their responses to Haiti, with the notable exception of David Geggus's work.<sup>39</sup> However, the one area in which they are forced together is in slavery studies. This, of course, has numerous branches. There are the large transnational literatures that tend towards the comparative development of slave societies in the Caribbean and the Americas.<sup>40</sup> Complementing that are works on abolition and the transition to free labour in the Spanish Caribbean, such as

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<sup>37</sup> See for instance, David Brading, *The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots and the Liberal State, 1492-1866* (Cambridge, 1991); Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c1500-1800* (New Haven, 1995); John Lynch, *Bourbon Spain, 1700-1808* (London, 1993); JH Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830* (New Haven, 2006).

<sup>38</sup> See for instance, Frank Moya Pons, *The Dominican Republic: A National History* (New York, 1995); Gordon K Lewis, *Puerto Rico: Freedom and Power in the Caribbean* (New York, 1963).

<sup>39</sup> David Patrick Geggus and Norman Fiering (eds) *The World of the Haitian Revolution* (Bloomington, 2009); Geggus, *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution*; Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*.

<sup>40</sup> There is too large a body of work on this theme to detail here, but see for instance, Hilary McD Beckles, 'Capitalism, Slavery and Caribbean Modernity', *Callaloo*, 20, 4 (1997), pp. 777-89; Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern* (London, 1997); Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison, 1969); David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (Ithaca, 1975); Seymour Drescher, *From Slavery to Freedom: Comparative Studies in the Rise and Fall of Atlantic Slavery* (New York, 1999); Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Social Control in Slave Plantation Societies: A Comparison of St. Domingue and Cuba* (Baton Rouge, 1996); Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, 1982); Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill, 1994).



Christopher Schmidt-Nowara's *Empire and Antislavery: Spain, Cuba and Puerto Rico, 1833-74*.<sup>41</sup> There are works about slaves' roles across Spanish America, such as the volume *Slaves, Subjects and Subversives*, as well as their African pasts.<sup>42</sup> Additionally there is a growing interest in the legal world of slaves, from the codes that were supposed to govern them in the Spanish colonies to the recourse they had against bad treatment.<sup>43</sup> And of course, the question of rebellion and revolution (apart from Haiti), for which there is also an extensive literature.<sup>44</sup>

On more economic matters, outside the bounds of slave labour itself, the national divisions become clearer. Cuban literature tends to focus on sugar in Cuba, for instance, Manuel Moreno Fraginals' *El Ingenio* being the key work on the rise of

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<sup>41</sup> Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, *Empire and Antislavery: Spain, Cuba and Puerto Rico, 1833-74* (Pittsburgh, 1999); Rebecca J. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899* (Princeton, 1992); Rebecca J. Scott, 'Defining the Boundaries of Freedom in the World of Cane: Cuba, Brazil, and Louisiana After Emancipation', *The American Historical Review*, 99, No 1 (1994), pp.70-102; Morales Carrión, 'La revolucion haitiana'.

<sup>42</sup> Jane Landers and Barry Robinson (eds), *Slaves, Subjects, and Subversives: Blacks in Colonial Latin America* (Albuquerque, 2006); Matthew Restall, 'Black Conquistadors: Armed Africans in Early Spanish America', *The Americas*, 57, 2 (2000), pp.171-205; Ira Berlin, 'From Creole to African: Atlantic Creoles and the Origins of African-American Society in Mainland North America', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 53, 2 (1996), pp.251-88; JD Fage, 'Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Context of West African History', *The Journal of African History*, 10, 3 (1969), pp.393-404; Patrick Manning, 'Contours of Slavery and Social Change in Africa', *The American Historical Review*, 88, 4 (1983), pp.835-57.

<sup>43</sup> Alejandro de la Fuente, 'Forum: What Can Frank Tannenbaum Still Teach Us About the Law of Slavery?', *Law and History Review*, 22, No 2 (2008), pp.339-371. He revisits the Tannenbaum thesis about the differing nature of slave treatment from European powers, see Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen The Negro in the Americas* (New York, 1963). See also Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, 'Still Continents (and an Island) With Two Histories?', *Law and History Review*, 22, No 2 (2004), pp. 377-82.

<sup>44</sup> Gaspar and Geggus (eds), *A Turbulent Time*; David Patrick Geggus et al, *Slave Resistance Studies and the Saint Domingue Slave Revolt: Some Preliminary Considerations* (Miami, 1983); David Geggus, 'The Enigma of Jamaica in the 1790s: New Light on the Causes of Slave Rebellions', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 44, No 2 (1987), pp.274-99; Manuel Paz Barcia, *Seeds of Insurrection: Domination and Resistance on Western Cuban Plantations, 1808-1848* (Baton Rouge, 2008); Matt D Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle Against Atlantic Slavery* (Chapel Hill, 2006); Lynne Guitar, 'Boiling it Down: Slavery on the First Commercial Sugarcane Ingenios in the Americas (Hispaniola, 1530-45)' in Landers and Robinson (eds) *Slaves, Subjects, and Subversives*; Rafael Duharte Jiménez, *La rebeldia esclava en la region oriental de Cuba (1533-1868)* (Santiago de Cuba, 1986); Guillermo A Baralt, *Esclavos rebeldes: conspiraciones y sublevaciones de esclavos en Puerto Rico (1795-1873)* (Rio Piedras, 1985).

the sugar industry.<sup>45</sup> Cuban historians have also undertaken a growing body of regional histories which take in other forms of development, such as coffee plantations in the East of the island.<sup>46</sup> Puerto Rico has its own traditions with regard to the histories of both crops.<sup>47</sup> Santo Domingo follows a slightly different path, formed by its ‘tragic narration’, as Pedro San Miguel has called it, of centuries of decline.<sup>48</sup> The writing of colonial history would take a different form to the others, due to the racism of the island’s dictator, Rafael Trujillo (1930-61), whose rejection of the island’s black past – ‘the cradle of blackness’ as Silvio Torres-Saillant has put it<sup>49</sup> – meant that racial questions in a largely mixed-race island would infiltrate many aspects of history during his reign and after. The question of Haiti, however, would

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<sup>45</sup> Some of the many works on sugar in Cuba which cover the earlier period of expansion, ca 1790-1820 include Manuel Moreno Fraginals, *El Ingenio: el complejo economico social cubano del azucar*, (3 vols. Havana, 1978); Francisco Pérez Guzmán, *La Habana: clave de un imperio* (Havana, 1997); Pablo Torner Tinajero, *Crecimiento económico y transformaciones sociales: esclavos, hacendados y comerciantes en la Cuba colonial (1760-1840)* (Madrid, 1996); Anton L. Allahar, ‘The Cuban Sugar Planters (1790-1820): “The Most Solid and Brilliant Bourgeois Class in All of Latin America”’, *The Americas*, 41, No 1 (1984), pp. 37-57; Manuel Moreno Fraginals et al (eds), *Between Slavery and Free Labor: The Spanish-Speaking Caribbean in the Nineteenth Century*, (Baltimore, 1985); Franklin W Knight, ‘Origins of Wealth and the Sugar Revolution in Cuba, 1750-1850’, *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 57, No 2 (1977), pp.231-53; Richard B. Sheridan, ‘“Sweet Malefactor”: The Social Costs of Slavery and Sugar in Jamaica and Cuba, 1807-54’, *The Economic History Review* 29, No 2 (1976), pp.236-57.

<sup>46</sup> Hernán Venegas Delgado, *La región en Cuba* (Santiago de Cuba, 2001); Olga Portuondo Zúñiga, *Santiago De Cuba, Los colonos franceses y el fomento cafetalero (1790-1809)* (Santiago de Cuba, 1992); Carlos Padrón, *Franceses en el suroriente de Cuba* (Havana, 1997).

<sup>47</sup> Laird W. Bergad, ‘Toward Puerto Rico’s Grito de Lares: Coffee, Social Stratification, and Class Conflicts, 1828-1868’, *Hispanic American Historical Review* 60, 4 (1980), pp. 617-42; Lewis, *Puerto Rico* (New York, 1963); Francisco Moscoso, *Agricultura y sociedad en Puerto Rico, siglos 16 al 18: un acercamiento desde la historia*, (San Juan, 1999); Francisco A. Scarano, ‘The Jibaro Masquerade and the Subaltern Politics of Creole Identity Formation in Puerto Rico, 1745-1823’, *The American Historical Review*, 101, 5 (1996), pp.1398-431; Francisco Scarano, *Sugar and Slavery in Puerto Rico: The Plantation Economy of Ponce, 1800-1850* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1984).

<sup>48</sup> Pedro L. San Miguel, *The Imagined Island: History, Identity, and Utopia in Hispaniola* (Chapel Hill, 2005).

<sup>49</sup> Silvio Torres-Saillant, ‘The Tribulations of Blackness: Stages in Dominican Racial Identity’, *Latin American Perspectives*, 25, No 3, Race and National Identity in the Americas (1998), pp.126-46.

become a historical obsession. The focus at first was on Haiti as an ‘occupier’<sup>50</sup> and then later, after the death of Trujillo, with both Haitians and Dominicans cast as mutual victims of colonial oppression.<sup>51</sup> But such binary views have obscured more nuanced understanding of the tangled history of the two sides of the island.

So this thesis fits into many historiographical gaps. It adds to the wide-ranging history of fear, intersects with the rich literature on slavery and race in the Caribbean, and pushes it in new directions. It raises again the question of fear and colonial rule. Most of the works cited earlier in this chapter examine either the present day or the early colonial past, often skipping over the turbulent late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Understanding colonial rule in the context of political and social fear is something that can shed light on the mechanics of empire, and is fundamental in the case of the continuation of colonial rule in the Caribbean. Obviously many historical events give rise to fear or anxiety: wars, famines, revolutions. Likewise, it is hard to imagine a colonial regime anywhere at any time that does not co-exist with some level of anxiety, which can be just as much a historical mover as outright fear and even panic. The Haitian Revolution, like the American and French revolutions, occurred at a time where many forces gave rise to new ideas and new actions, and this upheaval was not limited to France’s colonial world. How other places responded to these new threats and challenges is part of its impact as well. Another aim of this work is to move beyond the march to the nation and concentrate instead on the inter-island connections – as well as the relationship to the metropole in a time of dramatic change.

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<sup>50</sup> For example, works like Emilio Rodríguez Demorizi (ed), *Invasiones haitianas de 1801, 1805 y 1822* (Santo Domingo, 1955); also many histories after the death of Trujillo still espoused anti-Haitian views, such as the work of his successor and three-time president, Joaquín Balaguer, *La isla al revés: Haití y el destino Dominicano* (Santo Domingo, 1983).

<sup>51</sup> Juan Bosch, *De Cristóbal Colón a Fidel Castro: el Caribe, frontera imperial* (Santo Domingo, 1993); Emilio Cordero Michel, *La revolución haitiana y Santo Domingo* (Santo Domingo, 2000).

### *Chapters (and some caveats)*

In attempting to define my question and the limits of my investigation, I ran into a number of problems. First is the issue of the ‘Caribbean’. While this thesis sets out to look at Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Santo Domingo, it necessarily involves Venezuela, Vera Cruz, Cartagena, Louisiana, i.e. the truly Caribbean world of the Spanish empire. And while the Caribbean story is part of the larger Atlantic world, my work focuses on the Caribbean. A more ‘Atlantic’ project would perhaps involve southern US port cities, other European metropolises, and slaving outposts in Africa. Indeed it was difficult enough to find space and time to do a modicum of justice to the archival wealth on these islands alone, much less Spain’s larger circum-Caribbean and the wider Atlantic.<sup>52</sup> In addition to Spain’s territories, there are the islands of the other imperial powers, most importantly Saint-Domingue, as well as France’s Martinique and Guadeloupe; Britain’s Jamaica and, eventually, Trinidad; the Dutch territories of Curaçao; and the Danish West Indies (today’s US Virgin Islands). They are all part of this work, but I took the decision to not write a history of fear in the entire Caribbean. These islands faced many of the same problems as the Spanish ones with regard to the rise and fall of sugar plantations, though with very different outcomes. Necessarily, many of these islands show up in this work, though they often do not in much of the existing literature. Although there is not enough space to elaborate, much French and British historiography falls into the same trap as the Spanish. It is linguistically isolated and although it deals with similar themes, broadly speaking, there seems to be little connection. In a work on Jamaica, Cuba may only come up in passing mention. Indeed, even in key works on the Haitian Revolution as mentioned above, Spanish Santo Domingo, much less the surrounding islands, is virtually invisible, as if the struggle took place in some sort of colonial vacuum. And although the scale of such a

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<sup>52</sup> For works on the circum-Caribbean, see Johanna von Grafenstein, *Nueva España en el circuncaribe, 1779-1808: revolución, competencia imperial y vínculos intercoloniales*, (Mexico D.F., 1997); Gordon K. Lewis, *Main Currents in Caribbean Thought: The Historical Evolution of Caribbean Society in Its Ideological Aspects, 1492-1900* (Topeka, 2004).

pan-Caribbean project lies outside the scope of this work, understanding the Spanish islands means some level of inclusion of the others. Nor, despite this work's title, did I want to get pulled too deeply into the story of Haiti, despite the new and exciting work that has emerged on its revolutionary period. For the purposes of this thesis, what happens on that island is the starting point of a new chapter for the Caribbean, as well as for Spain and its empire. Indeed, understanding Spain's dramatic transformation and the reconfiguration of its nineteenth-century empire was another motivation for this study.

The second problem was the issue of fear and how to map it. As the earlier historiographical overview shows, there are a multiplicity of approaches. In writing this thesis, fear fluctuated within the chapters, as it did throughout the records for this period. Thus, like the emotion itself, fear will fluctuate throughout this work, sometimes being obvious, sometimes subdued by other events – and sometimes, simply, unknowable. So rather than my initial aim of tracing it, and using that as the main focus, I am instead looking at its variations and intersections with other social and political shifts. Despite its often nebulous form, I attempt to give this some shape in each chapter by highlighting the various type of events that were causing anxiety in the islands and the metropole and the official responses to them, as will be detailed in the chapter outlines that follow.

The third issue was that of sources. Because my root concern was the formation and manipulation of fear in the context of the many challenges facing the Spanish Caribbean islands, I took the decision to focus on colonial correspondence, between island governors and in letters to Madrid. Archives in Spain and the Caribbean have a rich seam of colonial correspondence, much of it underutilised. The abundance of administrative material allowed me to cast a wide net in examining this question, leading me away from court documents, which would have provided more depth but less breadth. In dealing with slavery and racial issues during this period, it is

lamentable that there are no written sources from free people of colour, much less slaves. It is only through reports and court proceedings that we can see their treatment in Spanish colonial society, something that court records reveal far more than letters between administrators. The administrative records show the number of laws and the many official attempts to keep ‘order’ and to enforce racial hierarchies, rather than the struggle by people of colour to transcend them legally. But to understand the mechanics of fear, I wanted to start with those who created it. This has also meant that there was not time or space to look at some of the other integral parts of Spanish colonial society, especially the Catholic Church, which would be another project entirely.

The first chapter unearths the roots of this investigation and argues that the starting point for understanding what happens to Spain’s nineteenth-century empire begins at the height of the ‘Bourbon reforms’ undertaken by Carlos III (1759-1788), as he sought to ‘reconquer’ his colonies through administrative, political, military, and economic changes.<sup>53</sup> One of his key reforms was the usurpation of the evolving *criollo* order with new political and administrative structures, which would necessitate the supplanting of *criollo* elites with *peninsulares* from Spain. This was not well-received in much of Spanish America, and would prove to be an important rupture between the crown and its subjects, laying the foundations for later independence movements. Yet in the Caribbean, reform efforts would result in quite a different relationship. This was partly due to the specific historical trajectories, from 1492 until the eighteenth century, of each island, which this chapter outlines. Puerto Rico, while underpopulated, was an important military outpost, and its potential was acknowledged by a military reformer who was quick to tell the crown of the possible agricultural wealth such a fertile island could offer. Its neighbour, Santo Domingo, however, had long fallen away from the imperial gaze. But with the outbreak of the

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<sup>53</sup> David Brading, *Miners and Merchants in Bourbon Mexico, 1763-1810*, (Cambridge, 1971), p.30.

slave rebellion in Saint-Domingue, it would once again become a frontier. Cuba received more attention and benefits than the other two. Fueled by an ambitious planter class and supported by a crown humiliated by the British occupation of Havana (1762-63), Cuba managed to win many concessions and maintain a degree of autonomy during the crown's reforming years, and elites found themselves party to special arrangements with regard to taxation, land use, and trade. The relationship between Spain and Cuba during this period was fundamental to the rise of sugar wealth that came later; the island would be instrumental in the post-1808 empire. This chapter also attempts to focus on some of the political thought of the time, especially the influence of French physiocratic thinkers, as the crown was actively engaged in trying to fill its coffers.<sup>54</sup> Voices of *criollo* elites were also heard in Madrid, especially that of the Cuban planter and lawyer Francisco Arango y Parreño, and this chapter argues that to fully understand the discourses of the time, the political economy that comes from the Caribbean must be considered alongside the more recognised peninsular thinkers.

This period too, saw the effect of the French Revolution in Spain. With such changes running through the background, this chapter also focuses on the ideological struggle of Carlos III's First Minister, the Conde de Floridablanca. He had the second-most important role in governing the Iberian world when the French Revolution forced him to turn all attention to keeping Spain from being 'contaminated' by republican ideas. His fear was palpable in his panicked legislation and his rhetoric of these ideas being 'contagious'. Although the Enlightenment had not passed Spain by, the perceived threat of French ideas was enough to prompt Floridablanca to impose heavy censorship across the empire by the 1790s, and to attempt to drive out any French people living in Spain, and later the colonies. But the battle of ideas that had set France alight would not be limited to that side of the Atlantic, and in crossing to

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<sup>54</sup> Jeremy Adelman, *Republic of Capital: Buenos Aires and the Legal Transformation of the Atlantic World* (Palo Alto, 1999), p.55.

the Caribbean this European question would become global, an important catalyst in the reconfiguration of Spain's relationship with its colonies.

The second chapter focuses on the events of 1791-1804, when fighting began in Saint-Domingue, which by this point was the world's wealthiest sugar colony. This chapter uses those often paradoxical events – from the mulatto insurrection for equality to the slave rebellion that would eventually lead to the establishment of Haiti in 1804 – to explore Spain's reaction to the ideologies and realities of the French Revolution and how it was manifesting itself across the Atlantic. But in considering the Spanish side of events, and how this fits into the islands' changing relationship with Spain and each other, a number of important themes appear that will be elaborated in later chapters. The first is changing racial alliances, as seen through the establishment of black and mulatto militias. Each Spanish island had to form them, due to their small populations. With the outbreak of fighting in Saint-Domingue, and Spain's declaration of war on France, rebel slaves from the French side entered an alliance with the militia in Santo Domingo. Their relationship is the focus of part of this chapter. The second is the problem of immigration, where on one hand the island administrations realised that many of the fleeing planters could be of great use to agricultural projects on Cuba and Puerto Rico, while at the same time legislation from Madrid demanded that foreigners were kept out. That did not stop the arrival of refugee planters, who would end up having a critical role in Cuba's economic transformation. There was also the paradox that while local legislation wanted to keep people of colour out, the number of imported slaves into Cuba, and to a lesser extent Puerto Rico, was rising fast. Within all of those concerns lies the beginning of a repressive society, and one that by the end of the nineteenth century would have well-honed ways of dealing with unwanted elements. The course of this chapter, and the rest of the work, sees the shift away from political thought and into the realm of political action. This shift in tone reflects a shift in sentiment – the islands were facing



what they saw as their most serious threat since the Seven Years War. In addition, there was the issue of constant slave rebellions or conspiracies throughout the region.

Of course, a short time after the establishment of Haiti, the colonies would find themselves with an even larger problem – Napoleon’s invasion of Spain and the placing of his brother, Joseph, on the throne. The third chapter looks at this period, roughly 1805-1814, and the emergence of a new cause of anxiety: republicanism. At the same time as Cuba and Puerto Rico were trying to establish how events in Spain would effect them, other more populated and powerful parts of the empire, angered at their continual political marginalisation, would begin to pull away from the metropolis, willing to test the waters of independence. Santo Domingo, however, would prove to be a counter-example by declaring war on the French in 1808 (the island had been given to France in 1795 under the terms of the Treaty of Basle) and fighting to return to Spanish rule, rather than strike out on its own. The Cortes of Cádiz would hammer out a constitution in 1812, which was heralded as a liberal step forward despite raising many problems over the question of political representation and citizenship across the empire. At the same time, Cuban and Puerto Rican authorities were taking repressive and drastic measures to deal with the French on their islands. Cuba established *juntas de vigilancia*, which were charged with the task of driving out most of the French refugees in the island. There were by this point some 30,000 immigrants, as most had fled from the violence and upheaval of Saint-Domingue. They had brought with them the technology that had furthered the development of sugar in Cuba, as well as transformed the economy in the east of the island by setting up successful coffee plantations. Yet paranoia and politics would replace pragmatism, and the French were forced to find new places of refuge, or in the case of the Puerto Rico, be allowed to stay but under heavy surveillance.

This is not to turn away from the question of Haiti, which, during the period of Spain’s crisis, which ends with the return of Fernando VII in 1814, had been divided

in a civil war, with the black North and mulatto South splitting along a colour line. Henri Christophe in the North, and Alexandre Pétion in the South came to now embody not only racialised fears, but republican anxieties, which is examined in the fourth chapter. Pétion and to a lesser extent Christophe aided Latin American republicans, most notably the Venezuelan Simon Bolívar. Later the island was reunited under the power of Jean-Pierre Boyer, and his power would see the return of a heightened anxiety, culminating in the occupation of Santo Domingo in 1822, which would last until the Dominican independence of 1844. Now Haiti had lived up to the decades of rumours that its people were out to occupy other islands and spread – by whatever means necessary – their emancipatory message. Yet the other side of this act was that Haiti was now strong enough to act in self-defence against attacks from France and Spain to take back the island and return it to its sugar-producing days.

The final chapter focuses on the post-1822 Caribbean, analysing the shifting discourse around Haiti and its numerous alleged plans, and how this intersected with anxiety about the new American republics. Not only were there now rumours of further Haitian invasions, but Colombian and Mexican ones too, which had the aim of ‘liberating’ Cuba and Puerto Rico. These events were monitored by the United States, which, with its southern slavery and long-standing trading with Cuba, was willing to take the island if Spain was too weak to keep it. US presidents during this period felt certain that if the island was ‘liberated’ it would quickly descend into another Saint-Domingue because of the high number of slaves and free people of colour. Haiti remained shunned, as the Latin American republics, forgetting its earlier help, now saw the island as a potential agitator for race riots in the new nations. This would be painfully clear over the issue of who was to receive an invitation to Bolívar’s Congress of Panama in 1826. For Spain, the decade saw the near-end of empire, but also a renewal of the king’s authority. The Spanish crown had defeated the return of liberalism (1820-23), and a renewed regime of repression settled on the peninsula, as

well as Cuba and Puerto Rico. The decade saw the cumulation of larger economic shifts as sugar output was well on its way to the heights reached by the middle of the century. At the same time, the colonial reconfiguration of power meant that Cuba and Puerto Rico's captains-general saw an increasing amount of clout, while the sugar planters saw a boom in wealth. Likewise, despite the continuation of independence conspiracies and small-scale slave rebellions, these islands would not follow Haiti's example. Slave imports increased, and racial hierarchies took a more rigid shape, laying the groundwork for control, repression, and the growth of colonial power in Cuba and Puerto Rico throughout the rest of the nineteenth century.

## Chapter 1

### *Spain's Cordon of Fear, 1750-1790*

Spain's engagement with and contribution to the intellectual currents of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment would have profound consequences for its island colonies.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, new ideas were emerging from the Caribbean. Both streams of thought would foster political and economic changes that would have ramifications for Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Santo Domingo throughout the nineteenth century. In addition, the French Revolution triggered the development of a new type of anxiety in the Spanish world. This chapter examines this formative period in three parts. The first begins with 1789 and the Spanish reaction to the French Revolution and the fear of French 'liberty', while considering the complicated relationship between Spain and France. The second part goes further back, to the reign of Carlos III and considers the crown's engagement with wider eighteenth-century thought, especially political economy and the influence of French physiocratic thinkers.<sup>2</sup> The last part paints a broad picture of the Spanish islands during this period, and the sort of reforms American-born Spanish *criollos* were asking the crown to enact, tracing how the changes made under Carlos III crossed the Atlantic and altered fundamentally the relationship between crown and colonies.

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion on to what extent Spain was involved with the Enlightenment in a broader cultural sense – something that has been the subject of much debate – see for instance Richard Herr, *The Eighteenth-Century Revolution in Spain* (Princeton, 1958); Arthur P Whitaker, 'The Enlightenment in Spanish America', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 102, 6 (1958), pp.555-59; Francisco Sánchez-Blanco, *El absolutismo y las luces en el reinado de Carlos III* (Madrid, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> For a more in-depth and geographically wider discussion of 'Enlightened reform' in Spain and throughout Europe, see for instance Gabriel B Paquette (ed) *Enlightened Reform in Southern Europe and Its Atlantic Colonies, c.1750-1830* (London, 2009) and HM Scott (ed) *Enlightened Absolutism: Reform and Reformers in Later Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Farnham, 1990).

### *Floridablanca and the French threat*

One of the Spanish painter Francisco de Goya's most famous portraits is of the Conde de Floridablanca. It depicts Carlos III's secretary of state staring forward, as if comparing the portrait that a young Goya holds in front of him to his reflection in a mirror that the viewer cannot see. Floridablanca appears as if he were standing in a spotlight, with the background dark, but he is resplendent in red jacket and breeches, a shiny golden vest and a blue sash, his turquoise eyes piercing the viewer with their steady gaze. In the shadows is a person believed to be an architect, Julián Bort, who sits consulting plans for a canal in Aragon. The scene takes place under a portrait of their king. The scene is one of power and progress, as the canal plans on the table symbolise.

This was no ordinary canal, but the Imperial Canal, the highlight of the structural regeneration of Spain, linking the Atlantic with the Mediterranean.<sup>3</sup> Goya painted this portrait in 1783, a time of confidence in the kingdom. Carlos III had been on the throne for 24 years, and had seen not only improved finances but also a firmer grasp on his colonies. The humiliation of the Seven Years War, in which Spain had suffered the embarrassment of British occupation of the key ports of Havana and Manila, had faded. Carlos III, through a series of reforms, had endeavored to increase agricultural output and improve infrastructure on the peninsula as well as reorganise colonial administration abroad. Goya's portrait reflects this, depicting the power Floridablanca possessed as the king's most important adviser.

Known for being cold, reserved, austere, and methodical, José Moñino y Redando – later given the title Conde de Floridablanca – was also unfailingly loyal to the king.<sup>4</sup> Although like many Spaniards during *las luces* he was willing to engage with some new ideas, and even indeed considered 'enlightened' for a time. His

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<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed discussion about the symbolism in this painting, see Robert Hughes, *Goya* (London, 2003), pp.109-110.

<sup>4</sup> Jean René Aymes, *Ilustración y revolución francesa en España*, (Madrid, 2005); José Luis Pardos, *Cronología y personalidad del Conde de Floridablanca: Secretario de estado en el palacio de Santa Cruz (1776-1792)* (Madrid, 2003).



Fig 1: Goya's portrait of Conde de Floridablanca, 1783. Collection Banco de España. Image in the public domain, obtained from Wikipedia.

beliefs, however, were called into question as events in France progressed towards revolution, and he had to defend his views in dramatic fashion. Only six years after this portrait was finished, depicting power and strength, Spain stood terrified that events next door could unleash a similar level of upheaval at home. No one was more concerned than Floridablanca. When news from Paris about the storming of the Bastille crossed the Pyrenees in 1789, he lost no time in trying to keep out any further information. He established a *cordón sanitario*, with the help of the Inquisition. While a real cordon of soldiers near the Pyrenees continued to keep a potential French invasion at bay, the conceptual line Floridablanca demanded aimed to block French revolutionary and anti-monarchical ideas, and prevent them from infiltrating Spanish minds. Floridablanca tried to stop the arrival of many types of media, while at the same time censoring publications within Spain that were commenting on events in France. For instance, in the autumn of 1789 he issued a number of orders that were aimed at preventing the entry of French newspapers or pamphlets via ports and the border regions with France, with the postal service permitted to inspect and seize any suspect packages. Even the Spanish *Gazeta de Madrid* was not allowed to mention events in France – a policy which was upheld for three years, only permitting a report of Louis XVI's execution. The following year no newspapers with reports about France were allowed into Spain, and articles such as fans or stamps bearing revolutionary-themed pictures were not allowed into the country. These sorts of goods were also not permitted to be exported to the colonies.<sup>5</sup> In 1791 all private periodicals were ordered to be suspended.

Floridablanca's tactics were not limited to printed matter – there was a human dimension as well, as thousands of French people lived in Spain. In November 1789 he called for all foreigners to leave Madrid, and by July 1791 there was a *real cédula* in place that forced all non-Spaniards to register as residents or transients, and required a declaration of loyalty to the king. Of registered transients, 4,435 were

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<sup>5</sup> John Lynch, *Bourbon Spain, 1700-1808* (London, 1993) pp.378-79.

French and of residents 13,332 French heads of families were counted.<sup>6</sup> Then, in the midst of this upheaval, Floridablanca suffered an attack that would wound his pride – and could have taken his life – at the hands of a Frenchman. As the minutes from the *junta de estado* from 21 June 1790 record:

Señor Conde de Floridablanca did not attend [the session today] due to the horrible assassination attempt on his life. On the 18th at 10 in the morning, the Secretary, while passing by the patio in the east palace of Aranjuez with the door to the garden, there arrived a man, and with a four-cornered spear he lanced him in right shoulder saying: die bastard!<sup>7</sup>

The assassin – a Frenchman by the name of Paul Peret – had been a vocal critic of Floridablanca. However, Peret was stopped by others in the palace, and no one was seriously injured. Peret was thrown into jail, and later killed. It appeared that he had no connections with any larger plot, but rather was acting out of a spirit that was more the product of personal animosity than revolutionary fervour. Without doubt the unnerving incident added to Floridablanca's growing catalogue of grudges against the French.<sup>8</sup>

Spain's problems did not stop at the Pyrenees – unrest had been growing throughout its colonies in the Americas, but it was a different sort of dissatisfaction with the monarch to what the French had been experiencing. Since Carlos III took the throne in 1759, he had undertaken reforms within the colonies with the aims of reasserting control. During the first 250 years of Spain's empire, the base of power in

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<sup>6</sup> Herr, *Eighteenth-Century Revolution*, p.256. For essays on various cultural aspects of French and Spanish interchange, Jean René Aymes (ed) *L'image de la France en Espagne pendant la seconde moitié du XVIII siècle* (Presses de la Sorbonne nouvelle, 1996).

<sup>7</sup> Minutes, 21 June, 1790 Archivo Histórico Nacional (hereafter AHN), Junta de Estado, Estado, Libros No 3.

<sup>8</sup> Cayetano Alcázar, Molina, 'España en 1792, Floridablanca: su derrumbamiento del gobierno y sus procesos de responsabilidad política,' *Revista Instituto Estudios Políticos*, 71 (1963), p.104.



its colonial territories had been shifting from Spaniards to locally born *criollo* elites.<sup>9</sup> Carlos III and his advisers felt that many of these elites throughout the colonies – which by this point stretched from Florida, through Central America and down to Rio de la Plata and Chile – had too much power, were too inefficient and not making the territories profitable enough. In addition, contraband trade and piracy in the Americas were an expense the Treasury could ill afford. The so-called ‘Bourbon reforms’, which reached their zenith under Carlos III, attempted to change the situation at every level – administrative, economic, political, and social. The crown created administrative *intendencias* and put peninsular Spaniards in charge. In addition, it drove the Jesuits out of all the Spanish kingdoms, which included the Americas and Philippines. The metropolitan usurping of the political and social order would come at a price, and the reforms were a cause for complaint throughout the Americas, and, on occasion, for rebellion and unrest, such as the Comunero uprising over tax changes in New Grenada in 1781. However, continuity won out – until 1813 in the Americas only four viceroys were American-born, and of 602 captains-general, governors, and *audiencia* presidents, only 14 were *criollos*.<sup>10</sup> Yet in the Caribbean islands, there was a very different response to the crown’s initiatives, as will be discussed in greater detail on each island later in this chapter. The island elites, denied political power, had growing economic clout, and one underlying aim of the king’s reforms was to refill war-depleted coffers, a long-standing problem and one that had recently been exacerbated by involvement in the Seven Years War (1756-63). The wealthy *criollos* in the Caribbean islands, especially Cuba, came out of these years of reforms with what were considered to be generous concessions, and this laid the groundwork for a

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<sup>9</sup> For more on the Bourbon reforms within Spain and in other colonies include Herr, *Eighteenth-Century Revolution*; Lynch, *Bourbon Spain*; DA Brading, *Miners and Merchants in Bourbon Mexico* (Cambridge, 1971) and *The First America: the Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots and the Liberal State, 1492-1866* (Cambridge, 1991); Gabriel Paquette, *Enlightenment, Governance and Reform in Spain and its Empire, 1759-1808* (London, 2008).

<sup>10</sup> Herbert S. Klein, *Slavery in the Americas: A Comparative Study of Virginia and Cuba* (Oxford, 1967), p.20.

more symbiotic relationship with the crown than the antagonism that would evolve in other territories.

The pace of change, however, slowed down with the death of Carlos III, and the arrival of his weak son, Carlos IV, on the throne in September 1789. For Floridablanca, the situation was bleak: not only had he lost his king, he had lost his most powerful ally while amassing a number of enemies within and outside the court. The world of Carlos IV differed significantly from that of his father, as the new king's wife and cousin, María Luisa of Parma, was considered to be far more ambitious than her spouse and to wield much power, something she shared with the soon-to-be first minister, Manuel Godoy Álvarez de Faria, with whom she was rumoured to be having an affair.<sup>11</sup> These years of transition would prove to be brutal for Floridablanca, as he fought constantly against criticism and political chicanery. For instance, from 1789 to the following year, he was embroiled in a controversy over the publication of three *sátiras*, or satires. They were political in nature, as the titles indicate: *Conservación curiosa e instructiva que pasó entre los Condes de Floridablanca y Campomanes en Julio 1788*; *Carta de un vecino de Fuencarral a un abogado de Madrid sobre el libre comercio de los huevos*; and *Confesion del Conde*. The last was conceived as an imagined list of wrongdoings Floridablanca was confessing to, for example, 'insolence used with ambassadors', which was referring to his relations with France, something that would finally bring about his demise.<sup>12</sup> Despite his unpopularity in the court and among the public, Floridablanca survived in his role for a couple of more years, adding restrictions against foreigners while increasing his isolation and his enemies. His orders had also crossed the Atlantic – news of events in France had been banned in the Spanish islands as well. Floridablanca's hatred of France infused colonial administrators already fed up with French corsairs and illegal traders.

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<sup>11</sup> Enrique Ruiz Martínez, *La España de Carlos IV, 1788-1808*, (Madrid, 1999).

<sup>12</sup> Antonio Ferrer del Río (ed), *Obras originales del Conde de Floridablanca, y escritos referentes a su persona* (Madrid, 1876), p.280.

For all the criticism he received for his anti-French actions, Floridablanca did have to contend with a country experiencing some unrest, and one that he feared might see its people follow suit behind angry Parisians. For instance, Spain had been hit by severe grain shortages – which occurred with regularity during the Bourbon regime – that had led to bread riots in Barcelona in 1789. This local discontent, however, was never really enough of a threat to tip the situation into political upheaval; Floridablanca gave his largely illiterate and impoverished peninsular public too much credit. There is also an irony to Floridablanca's concerns and actions, in that Carlos III, a Bourbon, had French roots. The two countries had by this point the three *pactes de famille*, forming an alliance between French and Spanish Bourbons. French culture and fashion, like in other European capitals, was also fashionable in Madrid, and the two countries had long had connections of not only geography, but trade and religion. 'Emulation' had a long cultural and political reach as well.<sup>13</sup> However, as inspired as some Spaniards in Europe or overseas might have been by the news and rumours about events in France making their way over the Pyrenees, the border troops, the Inquisition, and a strong monarchy kept a firm hold over the peninsula. But to focus on the rupture in relations between the two countries is to overlook the many intellectual contributions France made to eighteenth-century Spanish political thought, ones that would stretch across the Atlantic and persist into the next century.

### *Remapping the route to riches*

In a eulogy published shortly after the death of Carlos III in 1788, the prominent thinker and politician Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos recalled the achievements of the recently deceased monarch:

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<sup>13</sup> See Paquette *Enlightenment* chapter 1 for more on the practice of 'emulation' during this time. Allan Kuethe and Lowell Blaisdell have argued that such engagement with the French influenced the nature of the Bourbon reforms. See Allan J. Kuethe, and Lowell Blaisdell, 'French Influence and the Origins of the Bourbon Colonial Reorganization', *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 71(3), No 3 (1991), 579-607.

The list of those orders and statutes with which this charitable king won our love and gratitude has been already an object of other more eloquent speeches. My intentions permit only a brief recollection. The establishment of new agricultural colonies, the reappointment of communal lands, the reductions of privileges for the landed gentry, the abolition of rates and the free circulation of seeds ... the opening of new ports for outside consumption, the peace of the Mediterranean ... the free communication with our overseas colonies in gifting them with commerce ... what material so ample and so glorious to praise Carlos III and secure his title as father of his vassals!<sup>14</sup>

The eulogy, read to the *Real Sociedad de Madrid*, was an opportunity for Jovellanos to denounce the Bourbons' predecessors, the Habsburgs: 'To such a sad and horrendous a state had the poor studies [of the Habsburg advisers] reduced our *patria* by the time the Austrian dynasty had ended with the seventeenth century ... The heavens had reserved for the Bourbons the restoration of its splendor and its forces.'<sup>15</sup> Indeed, the reign of Carlos III was marked by a hatred of the Habsburgs before them. Blame for military defeat and economic underdevelopment were laid firmly on the former rulers of Spain. Even after nearly 60 years of Bourbon rule under Felipe V (1700-46) and Fernando VI (1746-59), the peninsula lagged behind its European neighbours. The population was only 10,400,000 by 1787, and would scarcely rise over the next decade; most of the agriculture was still produced by the one-crop system; there was almost no industry, though Catalonia had managed to prosper through its textile trade; and infrastructure such as roads was in need of improvement or lacking altogether. The crown, therefore, continued to rely on precious metals from its American colonies to fill its Treasury, a measure not unlike that of the hated Habsburgs.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos, *Elogio de Carlos Tercero leído a la real sociedad de Madrid*, 8 November 8 1788, (Madrid, 1789).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Jaime Vicens Vives, *An Economic History of Spain* (trans) Frances López-Morillas (Princeton, 1969), pp. 475-515.

Bourbon thinkers under Carlos III began in earnest to search for answers to these problems, and they drew from wider intellectual currents to find them, both internal and external. Within Spain, reformers remembered the cries of the *arbitristas*, who, during the middle of the seventeenth century, had taken to airing their complaints with the Hapsburg's economic policy by publishing pamphlets addressing the king and outlining prescribed changes. They put into the public realm the issue of political economy.<sup>17</sup> They were keen to understand how Spain, with all its mineral wealth and colonial resources, was failing to grow as fast as other European nations. They also wanted to see off the French, English, and Dutch threats to the Caribbean market, understanding that the islands had a key strategic position.<sup>18</sup> Their concerns were not consigned to obscurity with the end of the Habsburgs, but resurfaced a century later among Caroline reformers.<sup>19</sup>

At the same time, the Enlightenment – *la ilustración* – in the peninsula was influenced by ideas in France and Britain that had made their way South. Yet a combination of the Inquisition and heavy censorship directed by Floridablanca meant ideas did not flow freely as they did elsewhere in Europe, while high illiteracy rates meant they did not circulate widely either.<sup>20</sup> Spain's engagement with the Enlightenment followed a different course to that of France, or of Britain, marked with a conservatism and loyalty to the crown that would eschew British ideas about natural rights or the concept of liberty.<sup>21</sup> However, currents of changes did reach the highest levels, and at the core of the crown's concern was its ability to bring about

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<sup>17</sup> Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert, *A Nation Upon the Ocean Sea* (Oxford, 2007), pp.123-24; E Elgar (ed) *Economic Thought in Spain: Selected Essays of Marjorie Grice-Hutchinson* (Aldershot, 1993), chapter 5 'Scholastic Economists and Arbitristas in the Lands of Castile and León'.

<sup>18</sup> Stanley J, and Barbara H Stein. *Silver, Trade, and War: Spain and America in the Making of Early Modern Europe* (Baltimore, 2000), p.4.

<sup>19</sup> Charles C Noel, 'Charles III of Spain', in Scott (ed) *Enlightened Absolutism*, pp.119-129.

<sup>20</sup> See Herr *Revolution* and John Lynch, *Bourbon Spain*.

<sup>21</sup> Though this was somewhat hampered by the banning by the Inquisition of key works such as Denis Diderot's *L'encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des artes et des métiers*. See Herr, *Revolution*, p.43.

‘public happiness’ through improvement in material life, i.e. economic improvement, which it began to realise was possible through agricultural advancement. At the same time, Carlos III was concerned with preserving the supremacy of the monarch – especially against the power of the church – while managing to derive its legitimacy from the relationship between the state and its subjects.<sup>22</sup>

What, then, was open for debate was the way to improve the economic situation for both the crown and the public, drawing from the climate of intellectual exchange throughout Europe. Spanish thinkers found a new range of ideas to engage with, especially from France. Habsburg economic habits had not only annoyed Spanish advisers like Jovellanos, but had long provoked the scorn of other European thinkers. Montesquieu, in his 1748 work *L’esprit des lois*, criticised Spaniards for failing to take advantage of the real riches in the New World, saying ‘when they conquered Mexico and Peru, the Spanish abandoned natural wealth in order to have wealth of sign [silver and gold], which gradually became debased’. He then pointed out that the colonies really had the economic power: ‘The Indies and Spain are two powers under the same master, but the Indies are the principal one, and Spain is secondary.’<sup>23</sup>

One of the problems, however, for Spaniards who wanted to read such works – especially books critical of Spain – is that they often fell into the orbit of the Inquisition. Of course it proved no barrier for intellectuals who had the political means to get works that were banned, and others could gain access by reading works in other languages by authors such as David Hume which had not yet been translated into Spanish.<sup>24</sup> However, for some works that were translated, the conversion into

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<sup>22</sup> For a discussion on the roots of regalism and ideas concerning ‘public happiness’ in Caroline Spain, see Paquette, *Enlightenment*, esp. chapter 2. For more on the concept of ‘Enlightened despot’ rulers elsewhere in Europe, see Derek Beales *Enlightenment and Reform in Eighteenth Century Europe* (London, 2005), pp. 42-56.

<sup>23</sup> Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, (Cambridge, 1989[ed]), Book 21, Chapter 22, pp.393-96.

<sup>24</sup> David Hume’s works were not translated into Spanish until 1789. The works of Adam Smith would have a similar fate and his *Wealth of Nations* would also have to wait until 1794, despite being first published in 1776.

Spanish was often less-than-accurate and sometimes politicised.<sup>25</sup> Despite the criticism of some French writers, their ideas were nevertheless examined by the key thinkers in Carlos III's court. Of special interest were the mid-eighteenth-century ideas of Frenchmen such as Abbé Raynal, Marquis de Mirabeau, Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot and François Quesnay, known as the physiocrats, who came to prominence in the 1760s. The crux of their argument was that the land could be a source of prosperity for all, not just the crown, and that farmers deserved economic incentives, raising the issue of value of property. Raynal's epic work, *L'Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes* (1770) put it simply: 'Gold and silver are not wealth, they only represent wealth ... There is another way of prosperity for Spain ... It is the working of the land'.<sup>26</sup> However, Quesnay, among others, thought that overseas trade was not as valuable as domestic activity, while Spanish thinkers saw their economic relationship with their overseas possessions as integral to overall economic prosperity, though it was perhaps inevitable that much of the concern was focused on Iberian dilemmas.<sup>27</sup> Additionally, there was the idea that a 'natural order' was inherent in society, which the government had a duty to understand and adapt its policies to, which also differed to Spanish ideas about governance. Where physiocrats and Spaniards did agree was on the point that a strong monarch was needed to implement reforms, and that the improvement of agriculture should be the aim.

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<sup>25</sup> See for instance Gabriel B Paquette, 'Enlightened Narratives and Imperial Rivalry in Bourbon Spain: The Case of Almodóvar's *Historia política de los establecimientos ultramarinos de las naciones europeas* (1784–1790)', *The Eighteenth Century*, 48, 1 (2007), pp.61-80. Much Spanish intellectual energy during this time was also directed at challenging the 'leyenda negra', or black legend, and thus works from other European countries that were critical of Spain provoked much response. The problem about the black legend and the writing of colonial history is one of the motifs of intellectual history for this period, with heated debate over the history of the Americas. See Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World: Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Stanford, 2001).

<sup>26</sup> Abbé Raynal, *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements & du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes*, (La Haye, 1774), Vol III, Book VIII, pp.431-32.

<sup>27</sup> Gustav Schachter, 'François Quesnay: Interpreters and Critics Revisited', *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 50, No 3 (1991), p.316.

However strong the monarch, there would be little he could do with any immediacy to overcome decades of neglect and lack of economic innovation. Although these ideas about the profitability of agriculture were gaining momentum, Spain had many obstacles to clear away before it would be able to reap any sort of harvest. The agrarian sector was beset with problems, leaving the country in the grip of grain shortages and high food prices.<sup>28</sup> Two of the more fundamental problems were the country's geographic and climatic limitations. The central plain was arid and not good for planting, while the size of the country and the woeful state of the roads made food transportation costly. Unlike Britain and the Netherlands, Spain's rivers were too prone to drying out or flooding to use for transport, and there were few canals.<sup>29</sup> In addition, Spanish farmers were still using a two-year rotation of cereal crops, which were mostly ill-suited for the dry climate, leaving fields fallow. They also employed plowing techniques and equipment that had little changed since Roman times.<sup>30</sup> Output was low and many people lived at a subsistence level. So the country's top thinkers set their mind to this task of revitalising the vital agricultural sector. Broadly speaking, there were three actions that were deemed necessary: reform of land use; *desamortización*, which was the taking of land from estates, the church, and municipalities to put to better use; and revoking the privileges of the sheep farmers, or *mesta*, whose grazing land many felt could be made to grow crops. Given the level of their ambition, such measures did not come in at once. It was decades into the nineteenth century before many were legally applied.<sup>31</sup>

The contrast of dry, barren Spain, with the lush, fertile islands of the Caribbean could not have been sharper. Here, thousands of miles away, was the potential for plenty for the island's inhabitants, and the possibility of surplus for the

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<sup>28</sup> Lynch, *Bourbon Spain*, pp.200-215.

<sup>29</sup> Gabriel Tortella Casares, *The Development of Modern Spain: An Economic History of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (trans) Valerie J Herr, pp.8-9.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, p.7.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, pp.26-27.



crown. These problems and solutions being proffered in Spain did not go unnoticed in the Caribbean. *Criollos* knew change was underfoot. Jeremy Adelman has argued that this interest in physiocratic ideas and the emphasis on agriculture meant that ‘rather than relying on some divine rhetoric and elaborate map of obligations and trust, creole understandings invoked a political economy in which a commonwealth’s subjects realized their potential through ownership and exchange’.<sup>32</sup> Within Spain, a wide range of works on these themes began to appear. Early tracts, such as Bernardo de Ulloa’s *Restablecimiento de las fábricas y comercio español* (1740), called for increased industrialisation at home and better use of natural wealth of the colonies.<sup>33</sup> Ulloa was followed by José del Campillo y Cosío’s *Nuevo sistema de gobierno económico para la América*, which was written in 1743.<sup>34</sup> Campillo – like most Spanish thinkers – was a supporter of mercantilist trade.<sup>35</sup> He too had recognised the value of the colonies and wanted an improved overseas trading system, noting the wealth of British and French sugar colonies. He said: ‘We will find that the two islands Martinique and Barbados give more benefits to their masters, than all the islands, provinces, kingdoms, and empires of America give to Spain’.<sup>36</sup> He called for ‘economic governance’ to bring this about.<sup>37</sup> His insights in turn influenced Bernardo Ward, who published the influential *Proyecto económico* in 1779. Ward too spoke about how improving trade with and fighting contraband in the Americas would allow

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<sup>32</sup> Jeremy Adelman, *Republic of Capital: Buenos Aires and the Legal Transformation of the Atlantic World* (Stanford, 1999), p.69; see also Kenneth J Andrien and Lyman L Johnson (eds), *The Political Economy of Spanish America in the Age of Revolution, 1750-1850* (Albuquerque, 1994); John H Coatsworth, ‘Political Economy and Economic Organization’ in V Bulmer-Thomas, J.H. Coatsworth, and R. Cortés Conde (eds), *The Cambridge Economic History of Latin America*, vol 1 (Cambridge, 2006).

<sup>33</sup> Bernardo de Ulloa, *Restablecimiento de las fabricas y comerico español (1740)* (Madrid, 1992).

<sup>34</sup> Campillo’s work was not actually circulated until it was incorporated into Bernardo Ward’s *Proyecto económico*.

<sup>35</sup> Campillo was also behind the idea of establishing the unpopular *intendencias* in the Americas. See Brading, *Miners and Merchants*, p.33.

<sup>36</sup> Joseph de Campillo, *Nuevo sistema de gobierno económico para la América*, (Madrid, 1789), p.33.

<sup>37</sup> Paquette, *Enlightenment*, p.99.

Spain the means to build a solid industrial base. He was a proponent of allowing the king to use his power to enact reforms and bring these proposed changes.<sup>38</sup> Likewise, Pedro Rodríguez de Campomanes, who held much influence as a minister and outside of court politics, took an interest in these matters, writing his *Tratado de la regalía de amortización* in 1765, which called for better land distribution, enticing more peasants to farm; though he realised agricultural riches had limits, and also agreed there was more scope for liberalising trade with the colonies.<sup>39</sup> The Conde de Aranda took a more dramatic and almost prophetic turn, drawing from these ideas, when he wrote to Carlos III suggesting that he should ‘dispossess himself of all his dominions in both Americas’ except for Cuba and Puerto Rico, which would be the basis for all trade, bringing more revenue into the Treasury. The other territories could be transformed into independent kingdoms under a federation that recognised the king, and he suggested the establishment of one monarchy in Mexico-Central America, another in Peru and a final one in Nueva Grenada.<sup>40</sup> Perhaps it is no surprise that this suggestion went unheeded.

Jovellanos later weighed in to these arguments with his *Informe sobre la ley agraria* (1794) and his views perhaps reflected the meeting of many of these ideas. Branding mercantilism a leftover from the decline of feudalism meant he differed from many contemporary thinkers, but he did agree with Ward about ending trade restrictions. He also sat uneasily with physiocratic thought, drawing instead from repeated readings of Adam Smith.<sup>41</sup> In fact, a few years later his work on agriculture

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<sup>38</sup> Juan Luis Castellano (ed) *Proyecto economico* (Madrid, 1982) p.3; Francisco Sánchez-Blanco, *El absolutismo y las luces en el reinado de Carlos III* (Madrid, 2002), p.35.

<sup>39</sup> Campomanes initially had Ward’s work published – it had been completed some 17 years previously. Campomanes was also a member of the Real Academia de España in 1762 and established the Real Academia de Historia in 1794; see Sánchez-Blanco, *El absolutismo*, p.265.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in Anthony Pagden, ‘Heeding Heraclides: empire and its discontents 1619-1812’ in Richard L Kagen and Geoffrey Parker (eds) *Spain, Europe and the Atlantic World: Essays in Honour of John H. Elliott* (Cambridge, 1995), p.330; see also Mario Rodríguez, ‘The “America Question” at the Cortes of Madrid,’ *The Americas*, 38, 3 (1982), p.304.

<sup>41</sup> John HR Holt, ‘Jovellanos and His English Sources: Economic, Philosophical, and Political Writings’, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, (1964), p.18.

for the *Real Sociedad de Madrid*, of which he and Campomanes were key members, ostensibly lead to a denunciation to the Inquisition and he was eventually sent to Mallorca, where he remained until 1808. Overall, the works of Enlightenment thinkers from France, as well as Britain, would prove influential to key Bourbon reformers, but the end result was that Spanish political economy became a sort of intellectual patchwork. Following on from the physiocrats, as well as British thinkers such as Locke and Hume, the crown accepted the argument that wealth could be made through agriculture. Yet it balked in the face of ideas advocating a freer market, relying instead on tight mercantilism, which would see heavy control on imports and exports.<sup>42</sup>

For many of Spain's economic thinkers there was another obstacle to improved trade with the Americas: the southern Spanish port of Cádiz, which held a monopoly on trade. For Campomanes, a key issue was Cádiz's stranglehold, as it was the only port for ships to and from the colonies. Its power had to be broken, and Campomanes compared Spanish trade to that of the French and English, who could direct overseas trade through more than one port, though he kept his work within the mercantilist boundaries of the time. But it is worth noting that the main centres of Spanish merchant activity were hundreds of miles away from Madrid, despite it being the hub of economic decision-making. Barcelona, centre of much of the cloth trade with Europe, was more than 300 miles to the East, while the country's main port, Cádiz, was nearly 400 miles to the South. Cádiz by this point had taken over from Seville, which is situated some 75 miles to the North, because the River Guadalquivir was filling up with silt. Campillo and others thought the power of Cádiz's merchants was stifling great potential. Ward put forth many similar arguments, calling for more mercantile protectionism, but at the same time wanting to end Cádiz's monopoly.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> For more on ideas of agriculture and 'improvement' in the 18th-century Britain, see Richard Drayton, *Nature's Government: Science, Imperial Britain, and the 'Improvement' of the World* (New Haven, 2000).

<sup>43</sup> Castellano (ed) *Proyecto economico*, p.XIX.

While these debates were under way, reforms were being enacted that would lead to some fundamental changes to the nature of Spanish trade. Until 1776, the crown had relied on the *flota* system, which had been in place for around 200 years. Twice a year large fleets would cross the Atlantic – leaving Cádiz and returning the following year with hauls of precious metals from the ports of Vera Cruz and Portobello.<sup>44</sup> There was also a *flota* from the Mexican ports to Manilla that would bring back goods from the Far East, such as silks and spices. Smaller ships with registered cargos – *registros* – had licences to trade at other ports around the empire. *Flotas* only crossed twice a year, though eventually the other, smaller ships could and were allowed to make more frequent journeys. Initially gold and silver were brought to Spain as well as hides, indigo, and cochineal. By the eighteenth century, Spain was sending over agricultural goods such as olives and wine. The hauls were uneven: often Spanish products would compose less than a quarter of goods on most fleets, though the value of bullion brought back would be worth three-quarters of the fleet's total haul.<sup>45</sup> The scale of metal transportation dwarfed all else – between 1492 and 1800, some 70 per cent of the world's gold and 85% of its silver were mined from the Americas.<sup>46</sup> With regard to exports the numbers are less dramatic. Between 1785 and 1796, some 27% of exported goods were printed cottons and linens, with silk following behind at 16%, and other textiles at 12% – making various cloths more than half of exports. However much this bolstered the Catalan economy, where much of the cloth trade was situated, the reality was that most of this was re-exported cloth from the Low Countries and Britain. The remainder of exported goods consisted of Spanish-grown agricultural goods, such as oil, dried fruits, nuts, flour, and wine.<sup>47</sup> In

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<sup>44</sup> Carla Rahn Phillips, 'The growth and composition of trade in the Iberian empires, 1450-1750', in James D Tracy (ed) *The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long-Distance Trade in the Early Modern World, 1350-1750* (Cambridge, 1993), p.77.

<sup>45</sup> Phillips, 'Growth ... of Iberian empires', p.99

<sup>46</sup> Ward Barrett, 'World bullion flows, 1450-1800', in Tracy (ed) *The Rise of Merchant Empires*, p.224.

<sup>47</sup> John Fisher, *Commercial Relations Between Spain and Spanish America in the Era of Free Trade, 1778-1796* (Liverpool, 1985), p.50.

the same period Spain received, in addition to gold and silver, sugar imports worth 605,966,253 *reales de vellón*, as well as 376,715,542 worth of hides, 851,367,551 of cacao, and 1,457,111,356 of tobacco, the last of which the crown produced under a royal monopoly.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, tobacco was seen as an integral part of agricultural prosperity from the 1760s onwards – and it proved profitable, though its cultivation was heavily subsidised by Mexican silver. Eventually, sugar would supplant it, and the royal monopoly on tobacco ended in 1817.<sup>49</sup> At this point, sugar, like tobacco, was grown on a small scale, by farmers and some slaves in the Caribbean. The above figures show that sugar, while significant, had nowhere near the impact it would have at the end of the century. But the problems within this balance of trade were evident – and that is not even calculating what was lost to smuggling. Unlike Britain and the Netherlands, which used raw materials from their colonies to fuel economic expansion, as well as industrialisation, the trade between Spain and its colonies was not bearing fruit. The metal that flooded into the Treasury washed back out again in the service of debt. A poor, mostly illiterate peninsular public was cut off from many of the ideas and innovations that had been transforming countries to the North. The result of these factors was that throughout the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Spain would be hit with a triple blow. There would be no lasting commercial revolution, for instance that could have put Barcelona trade on the same footing as London. Agricultural reforms were slow to take effect, if they did at all; and there was no significant industrial development.<sup>50</sup>

For people living in the Caribbean, trade could be a fraught enterprise. Aside from piracy and plunder, one of the system's main failings was the high level of regulation and abuse in Spain. For instance, Seville's merchants had established the practice of hiking up prices by delaying a fleet's sailing time, seemingly creating

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*, p.67.

<sup>49</sup> Josep Maria Fradera, *Colonias para después de un imperio*. (Barcelona, 2005), p.37. See chapters 3 and 4 for a detailed discussion of tobacco in Cuba and the Philippines.

<sup>50</sup> David Ringrose, *Spain, Europe and the 'Spanish Miracle', 1700-1900*, (Cambridge, 1996), pp.15-19.

higher demand, but actually giving more scope for privateers trading around the many Caribbean ports.<sup>51</sup> And given that Spain manufactured little, it was no surprise that many colonists ended up trading with and re-exporting goods from the British, Dutch, and French, all of whom had more liberal commerce laws in the West Indies and all of whom were well-poised to exploit the weakness in Spain's supply chain. Added to this was the growing importance of the North American markets during and after the War of American Independence (1775-1783). And, of course, there was illegal trading. Contraband was rife, and costly to the crown. It was this practice that captured the regime's imagination. The crown's advisers, while praising the value of Spanish America, were more concerned about the mechanics of trade and peninsular output. Much demand for agricultural reform in the Caribbean would end up coming from within the islands, with *criollos* pursuing agricultural possibilities.

So with the influence of new forms of economic thinking, Carlos III was more willing to take some risks in opening trade and allowing for the importation of more produce from the colonies. In 1778, he ended the monopoly of Cádiz and established his version of free trade, or *comercio libre*. It was not outside the boundaries of mercantile protection of the time, but it did allow other Spanish ports to trade with ports throughout the colonies, not just the Caribbean.<sup>52</sup> So Alicante, Alfaques de Tortosa and Barcelona in the East; Almería, Cádiz, Cartagena, Málaga and Seville in the South; and Gijón, La Coruña and Santander in the North; and the Balearic island port of Palma, Mallorca and the Canary Island port of Santa Cruz de Tenerife were

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<sup>51</sup> Geoffrey J Walker, *Spanish Politics and Imperial Trade, 1700-1789* (London, 1979) p.13.

<sup>52</sup> That is not to say that before this point there was no trade at all – certain *real compañías* had trade privileges with some ports in the colonies, but this was an exception rather than the rule. See Antonio García-Baquera González, *Cádiz y el Atlántico (1717-1778): el comercio colonial español bajo el monopolio gaditano*, vol. 1 (Seville, 1976).

now free to do business with the key ports throughout Spain's overseas possessions from the Caribbean to the Rio de la Plata.<sup>53</sup>

In addition to these political and economic reforms, there was one more key element to the changes under the Bourbon regime that would have a lasting impact on the Caribbean islands – military restructuring and investment. Not only were there threats surrounding the peninsula from European neighbours, the American territories had seen the arrival, proliferation, and success of the British, French, Dutch, and Danish. In Europe, the century had opened for Spain with the War of Spanish Succession (1701-14), with much of Europe fighting against the possibility of a French-Spanish Bourbon alliance and dramatically increased power base. The fighting was eventually brought to a close under the Treaty of Utrecht, and Spain's Philip V was forced to renounce claims to the French throne. The treaty also further divided Spain's European empire, including the cession of the strategic Mediterranean posts of Gibraltar and Menorca to Britain, the latter the British would lose to the French in 1756. It was also under the terms of Utrecht that Britain was granted the *asiento*, which gave it a monopoly on the lucrative slave trade between Africa and the Americas, which will be discussed later in this chapter. The agreement also provided a useful cover for illegal trade. Relations between Spain and Britain continued to be jagged throughout the century – alternating between alienation and alliance. Despite the rivalry being in Europe, the conflicts were global. The theatres of war could be the Mediterranean – or the Caribbean. And quite often the motivation was dispute over trade. For instance, the War of Jenkins' Ear (1739-1748) between Britain and Spain was played out in the West Indies, the result of which was a reinforcement of Spanish shipping lanes, making them free from British interference, though Britain would blockade Havana for a couple of months and later would nearly take Cartagena after a difficult siege in a foreshadowing of what was to happen to Cuba's main port some 20

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<sup>53</sup> It should be noted, however, that ports in Venezuela were added in 1788, and in New Spain in 1789. The former was left off because of the success of the Caracas Company, and the latter was not included at first because of fears that it would get the majority of the ships. See John Fisher, 'Imperial "Free Trade" and the Hispanic Economy, 1778-1796', *Journal of Latin American Studies* 13, 1 (1981), p.22.

years later. The security of territories was vital for Carlos III, and the Caribbean port cities of Havana and San Juan, with their strategic locations, were key. The crown poured money into reinforcing these forts, as well as rebuilding its Navy fleet, though it did not have to dig too deep to find the money to pay for these reforms – the majority of funding came from New Spain silver.<sup>54</sup>

When Carlos III took his throne in 1759, he began his reign in a troubled state, as battles had been raging in Europe and North America in the form of the Seven Years War. Initially uninvolved, Carlos III declared war on Great Britain in 1761. In the Caribbean theatre, Spain suffered the humiliation of a British occupation of Havana from 1762-63.<sup>55</sup> Britain also took Manila, in the Philippines, from 1762-64. Spain won back its key ports thanks to the Treaty of Paris (1763), though it lost Florida in the meantime, which would be gained back in 1783. However, it was really an occupied Havana that drove Carlos III to implement military reforms in the colonies. By this point Havana was more than strategically important – it was also a sizable colonial city, with around 36,000 residents by mid-century, making it larger than Quito, Cuzco, Santiago, or Buenos Aires.<sup>56</sup> Despite the relatively high population, the crown knew that there were not enough troops, and Cubans could once again be outnumbered by the British, if the situation arose. One of Carlos III's advisers, Conde de Ricla, suggested in 1763 that creating a militia on the island, modeled on ones in Spain, would be a possible solution to troop shortages in the key defence positions. Carlos III was very taken by the idea, appointed Ricla captain-general of Cuba, and sent him out to implement the plan. Charged with the task of helping him was one of his key military advisers, Field Marshal Alejandro O'Reilly.

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<sup>54</sup> Carlos Marichal, *Bankruptcy of Empire: Mexican Silver and the Wars Between Spain, Britain, and France, 1760-1810* (Cambridge, 2007), p.22-25.

<sup>55</sup> This occupation would also later open up historical debates over the rise of slavery in Cuba, with many pointing the finger at the British as the promulgators of plantation-style slavery. See Manuel Moreno Fraginals, *El Ingenio: el complejo economico social cubano del azucar*, vol.1 (Havana, 1978), pp.34-36.

<sup>56</sup> JH Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492-1830* (New Haven, 2006), p.262.



The Irish-born O'Reilly had been instrumental in reforming the military in Spain and now, with the Conde de Ricla, he set off for Puerto Rico and Cuba.<sup>57</sup>

The manner in which Ricla and O'Reilly interacted with Cuban *criollos* resulted in very long-lived mutual benefits and their deal-making resulted in the formation of tighter imperial ties. Ricla told the small group of elite *criollo* families who had been settled on the island for generations that some reforms would have to be made, partially to pay for better defence. A new militia would be formed, in which they would be expected to play an important role, and economic reforms would be rolled out. Cuban elites, who had had access to different markets during the British occupation, were as keen to continue this as they were to prevent another occupation. So in exchange for a tax rise, the crown experimented with 'free trade' via a *real cédula* of 16 October 1765 – the opening of ports in 1778 was in many ways an extension of these measures. These reforms allowed limited trade between Cuba and nine ports in Spain and were met with local enthusiasm.<sup>58</sup> In exchange for a tax rise and participation in the militia, Cubans gained political and commercial privileges and land, laying the foundation on the island for a very strong connection between the elites, the militia, and the colonial government, which would have serious ramifications in the future, as the following chapters will show.<sup>59</sup> Sherry Johnson argues that the restructuring of the military in Cuba was the defining factor within the social changes that occurred in this period.<sup>60</sup> Like Cuba, reforms in the military and

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<sup>57</sup> Though not, however, Santo Domingo, which remained far less affected by military changes than the other two islands, though it did grow in size. For more see Christine Rivas, 'The Spanish Colonial Military: Santo Domingo 1701-1799', *The Americas*, 60, 2 (2003), pp.249-72.

<sup>58</sup> Walker, *Spanish Politics and Imperial Trade*, p.223; Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, p.304.

<sup>59</sup> Allan J Kuethe, 'The Development of the Cuban Military as a Sociopolitical Elite, 1763-83', *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 61, 4 (1981), pp. 695-704; Franklin W. Knight, 'Origins of Wealth and the Sugar Revolution in Cuba, 1750-1850', *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 57, 2 (1977), pp.231-53; Allan J. Kuethe and G. Douglas Inglis, 'Absolutism and Enlightened Reform: Charles III, the Establishment of the Alcabala, and Commercial Reorganization in Cuba', *Past and Present*, 109 (1985), pp.118-43; Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World* p.303.

<sup>60</sup> Sherry Johnson, *The Social Transformation of Eighteenth-Century Cuba* (Gainesville, 2001), especially chapter 3 for details on the military reforms.

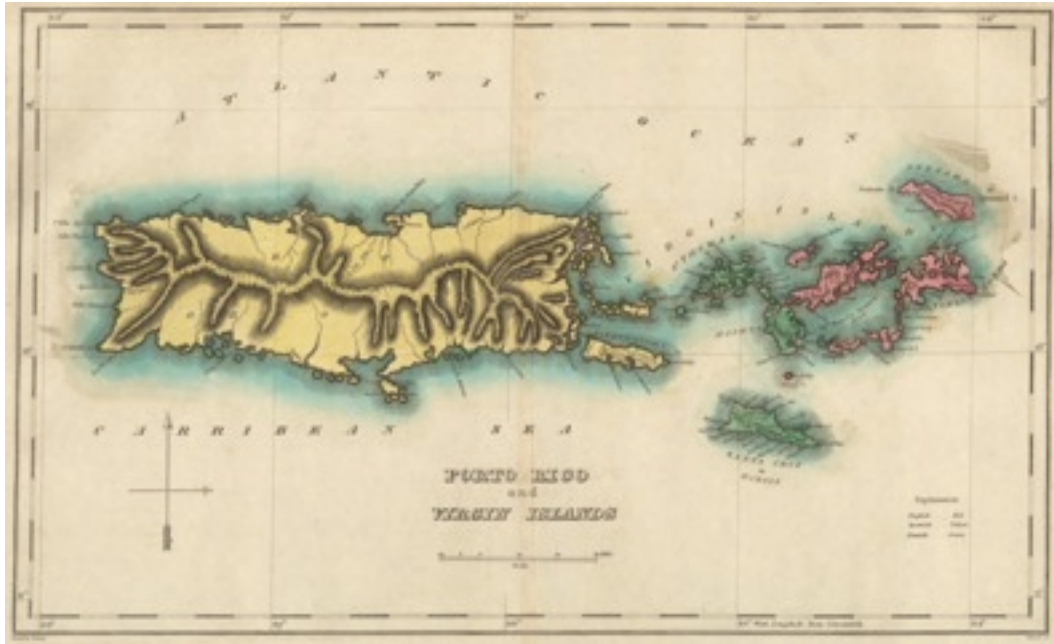
militias in Santo Domingo and Puerto Rico meant that some elite military families received the *fuero militar*, which allowed for privileges such as exempting them from trial by jury. Such measures to reform defence would eventually be rolled out across the empire, though it would turn out that the crown was sowing one of the seeds of its own destruction by allowing local elites high positions in the militias.<sup>61</sup> On the islands, the inclusion of people of colour among the troops would present later problems as well.

O'Reilly, in addition to making these ambitious plans for Cuba, had to stop in Puerto Rico to take stock of the situation there and make sure the fort and garrison were functioning well. After his arrival in April 1765, O'Reilly stayed for two months and wrote his report. Although concerned about military reform, he, perhaps without quite realising it, had stumbled into the debates about political economy.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> For more on the Bourbon reforms and the military in Santo Domingo, see Frank Moya Pons, *Historia colonial de Santo Domingo* (Santiago, 1977) and Margarita Gascón, 'The Military of Santo Domingo, 1720-1764', *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 73, 3 (1993), pp.431-52. The reforms trialled in Cuba were taken to New Spain, New Grenada, Peru and Quito, see Lynch, *Bourbon Spain* p.343.

<sup>62</sup> He did however make a report on Cuba that similarly put its potential in glowing terms, but because the crown had more information on Cuba, I have chosen to concentrate on what he wrote about Puerto Rico.



Puerto Rico, published by H.C.Carey and I. Lea (Philadelphia, 1822). Image copyright © 2000 by Cartography Associates

### *Islands of potential*

Puerto Rico, since its conquest in 1508, had seen its fortunes rise and fall, and by the time O'Reilly had arrived it was more or less functioning as a military outpost. In the early Bourbon years, its troops were charged with patrolling the region and keeping the annual *flotas* between Manila and Cádiz secure. However, it had known sixteenth-century prosperity. It had seen gold mining, and when that had dried up around the 1520s many of its residents turned to establishing *ingenios* (sugar mills). Like its neighbour, Santo Domingo, it found some success. By 1571, Puerto Rico had exported 8,520 *arrobas* of sugar and Santo Domingo 51,570, making the equivalent of 751 tonnes between them.<sup>63</sup> However, a combination of ginger production (which was more cost-effective); piracy, which drove up the cost of transporting sugar; and competition from Brazil – which was producing 25,000 tons of sugar a year by 1610 –

<sup>63</sup> Frank Moya Pons, 'The Establishment of Primary Centres and Primary Plantations' in PC Emmer and Germán Damas Carrera (eds) *General History of the Caribbean: The Caribbean in the Long Sixteenth Century*, Vol II, (New York, 1999), pp.66-67. An *arroba* is equal to 11.5kg.

killed off the much of the early sugar industry in Puerto Rico.<sup>64</sup> By the middle of the eighteenth century it had a small civilian population who were engaged in little legal trade, and rather a lot of illegal.<sup>65</sup>

Puerto Rico lies, almost like a geographical full stop, in the eastern wake of the larger island of Hispaniola, which falls into place behind Cuba. This location in the Caribbean was advantageous to protecting the *flotas* and, for this, the crown used around 80,000 pesos a year from the New Spain coffers to keep the finances of the island afloat, providing most of the income for the soldiers there.<sup>66</sup> When the king sent O'Reilly and Ricla to the Caribbean, his aim was to increase security. The problem that O'Reilly encountered was a common one – how to pay for improvements. Although Puerto Rico did not come close to costing the crown as much silver as Cuba, there was the question of finding a way to fund the construction of the extensions and re-enforcements on the enormous Atlantic-facing fort that had been built in 1529, was well as paying for more troops. First, O'Reilly decided a census was in order, to get a sense of the overall situation on this small outpost.

As he soon discovered, there was more activity than simply a few hundred troops on patrol. He noted there were a total of 44,883 people on the island, of whom 5,037 were slaves.<sup>67</sup> Puerto Rico, like Cuba and Santo Domingo in this period, had low slave numbers in comparison with those in British and French Caribbean islands.

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<sup>64</sup> Moya Pons, 'Establishment of Primary Centres', pp.72-73.

<sup>65</sup> Aida R Caro Costas, 'The Outpost of Empire', in Arturo Morales Carrión (ed) *Puerto Rico: A Political and Cultural History*; Gordon K Lewis, *Main Currents in Caribbean Thought: the Historical Evolution of Caribbean Society in its Ideological Aspects, 1492-1900* (University of Nebraska, 2004).

<sup>66</sup> Comisión dada al Mariscal de Campo Don Alejandro Orreli para la vista de aquella Ysla, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 2395, 15 June 1765. This report would later be followed by *Historia geográfica, civil y natural de la isla de San Juan Bautista de Puerto Rico*, written by Fray Iñigo Abbad y Lasierra and published in 1788. The work echoed O'Reilly's observations about agricultural potential. With regard to *situados* and the remittance of silver to the islands see Stanley J Stein and Barbara H Stein, *Silver, Trade, and War: Spain and America in the Making of Early Modern Europe* (Baltimore, 2000); and Carlos Marichal and Matilde Souto Mantecon, 'Silver and Situados: New Spain and the Financing of the Spanish Empire in the Caribbean in the Eighteenth Century,' *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 74, 4 (1994), pp.587-613.

<sup>67</sup> AGI, Santo Domingo, 2395, Comisión ...

During the period 1659-1765, Jamaica had seen the arrival of 668,073 slaves, and Saint-Domingue 336,323 and in 1764 the latter had a slave population of 206,000, and the former one of 166,900. During the same time, 13,253 slaves had arrived in Cuba, and 1,148 in Puerto Rico.<sup>68</sup> Most Puerto Rican slave owners only had a few slaves working on their small landholdings, and large plantation agriculture was rare. Slaves were still generally governed under the *Siete Partidas*, promulgated by Alfonso X (1221-1284) which drew from the Roman law of Justinian and set some boundaries which would mark out the development of Spanish slavery differently from other models in the region. Although there had been amendments through the centuries, slave laws like the *Siete Partidas* had at their core the idea that slavery was ‘unnatural’ and thus there should be a means of buying one’s freedom, as well as protecting the rights of slaves. Therefore there was the system of *coartación*, in which slaves could negotiate a price for their freedom and pay their masters in installments. Slaves also had recourse to the courts and the church. This is, of course, not to say that it was a benign system, but to give a very general idea of the type of slavery in the Spanish Caribbean at this point – it would later change.<sup>69</sup>

Among the people O’Reilly encountered were not only soldiers and slaves, but contrabandists. The island was suited for this illegal trading, being near so many trade routes, sparsely populated, mountainous, and blessed with many hidden coves which were ideal for stashing goods outside the eyes of the customs houses. Puerto Rico also happened to be near the Danish free port of St Thomas, and people had access to a wide range of products that otherwise were sitting in docks in Cádiz, awaiting

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<sup>68</sup> The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database 2009, Slave Voyages, Estimates, <http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/assessment/estimates.faces> last accessed 24 May 2010; Philip D Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison, 1969), pp.59, 78.

<sup>69</sup> A discussion of slavery in the Iberian world should make reference to the Tannenbaum debate, see Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen: The Negro in the Americas* (New York, 1963), in which he argues that the emancipation had a different tenor because the Iberian system of slavery had different contours to the French and British, for example the right of slaves to buy their freedom, which will be discussed in later chapters. Since the work’s reception in 1946 it has been a subject of controversy, with his thesis falling in and out of fashion, see for instance, Alejandro de la Fuente, ‘Forum: What Can Frank Tannenbaum Still Teach Us About the Law of Slavery?’, *Law and History Review* 22, 2 (2008), pp. 339-71.

permission to be shipped, or simply were not attainable from Spain. Likewise, non-Spaniards had access to goods from Puerto Rico. O'Reilly, in his report to the crown, lamented that:

Illicit trade very frequently takes place in all the Island: foreign vessels arrive often to the south coast and the west ... at whichever port and drop anchor: they send a *lancha* or a canoe to land: this is agreeable to the inhabitants of the town ... such illicit trade is conducted with the Dutch of Curaçao and St Eustatius, The Danish of St Thomas, and St Croix, and the British of these and the surrounding islands: the Dutch carry away most of the tobacco, the English the mulberry and Guayacan wood; the Danish provisions [*viveres*] and coffee, and they all take the cattle, and as many mules as they can obtain.<sup>70</sup>

He, like the European contraband traders, also saw the value and potential of Puerto Rican products, declaring that 'it seems to me that ... Puerto Rico is the most precious island of America, and is in a good position to be useful in a few years to the commerce of Spain, the growth of the *Real Erario* [Treasury], and still be very conducive to the defense of His Majesty's other colonies'.<sup>71</sup> But he also realised it was an uphill battle to stifle contraband.<sup>72</sup> Illegal smuggling had long been the lucrative undercurrent of Spanish imperial trade. This economic resistance to the restrictive practices of mercantilism had cost the crown financially as well as socially. The world of contraband was also one in which people, news and ideas moved back and forth along smuggling routes. These networks and connections would become ever more important during later times of instability.

But for the moment, O'Reilly was more concerned with better defence of the island from foreign invasion – especially the British – and finding ways to pay for it, and he saw the potential to do that in agriculture. He extolled the virtue of the island's fruits, of the potential of its sugar industry, the high quality of its wood and cotton,

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<sup>70</sup> AGI, Santo Domingo, 2395, Comisión ...

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> Wim Klooster, 'Inter-Imperial Smuggling in the Americas, 1600-1800', in Bernard Bailyn and Patricia L Denault (eds) *Soundings in Atlantic History: Latent Structures and Intellectual Currents, 1500-1830* (Cambridge, 2009), pp.142-180.

and the further possibilities of tobacco. O'Reilly reminded the crown that he had 'demonstrat[ed] the advantages that the King can obtain, and also the Nation, from the Island of Puerto Rico', suggesting 'for the rapid growth of this island, the establishment of some men of wealth who can build *ingenios* are indispensable ...'.<sup>73</sup> Its riches could be mined from the earth – the only thing that was missing was sufficient labour. For O'Reilly this would mean finding more slaves. It is at this juncture that the ideas of Europe and the Caribbean began to intersect and take form, in this case via a metropolitan observer. Though, of course, O'Reilly was not a Spaniard, much less a *criollo*, but what he began to articulate – the idea that this island had value, and all it lacked was slaves to effectively mine it – would become the basis of a particular brand of Hispanic Caribbean discourse born out of Enlightenment currents emanating from Spain. What makes the Spanish islands different to the other colonies was the idea that agriculture, not metal, would make it prosperous. This was a sentiment shared by the other imperial powers across the Caribbean, in French Saint-Domingue and British Jamaica, which were producing large quantities of sugar and wealth on their islands, and now it was at last being articulated with regard to the Spanish islands. This is not to say the crown was unaware of the natural attributes of Puerto Rico and the other islands – explorers and naturalists had been documenting and writing about them since Christopher Columbus landed on Hispaniola. But what made the difference was timing – Madrid was being reminded of the islands' potential in the context of Enlightenment thought about the value of land, and in the political atmosphere of a perpetually impoverished crown looking at new ways of filling its coffers. And it wanted to be more efficient not only in developing the islands, but controlling them, a dovetailing of political reform and political economy. What O'Reilly was saying echoed metropolitan writings and colonial ideas, engaging with a particular brand of political economy that extolled the potential of the earth, in contrast to the mineral wealth the crown had

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

long relied on, and went a step further to make a clear link that there was a need for slave labour in order to utilise the full potential of the land.

Given the desire to increase agricultural production, labour was a crucial issue, as most of the native populations on the Spanish islands of the Caribbean had died with relative quickness due to disease, and so attention shifted to the issue of importation of African labour. This gives the islands a very different tenor to other parts of the Spanish empire, for example, Peru or Mexico. That is not to say these regions did not import enslaved Africans, but what was different in the Caribbean is that the question of African slavery would become a dominant theme, and the dependence on imported labour a dominating economic question, over the following years. Also, because all three islands – four, in fact, if Trinidad is considered up until its capture by the British in 1797 – had suffered due to a lack of investment and low settlement populations. In comparison with the great empires of the Aztecs and Incas, the Caribbean seemed mere dots on the imperial landscape. But with the advent of plantation slavery on other islands, such as Jamaica and Barbados, as well the later independence of Britain's thirteen American colonies, which were critical in opening up new markets, Puerto Rican *criollos* were beginning to participate in the growing trade in the region, knowing there was scope for more. So when considering the type of discourses that arose in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, it is possible to see a Hispanic Caribbean embodiment of this thinking. Although to today's mind these ideas seem outdated and reactionary, being pro-slavery and loyalist, this was the reality of the latter half of the eighteenth-century Spanish world. These ideas were an integral part of the trajectory that would see all three islands failing to be swept up in the revolutionary wave that was to come, clinging to slavery and sugar until nearly the twentieth century.





Hispaniola, published by H.C.Carey and I. Lea (Philadelphia, 1822). Image copyright © 2000 by Cartography Associates

To Santo Domingo, sugar wealth was both a distant memory and a far-off dream. Nowhere else in Spain's empire could the effect of imperial neglect be seen with such clarity. For the observer Baron de Wimpffen, who had travelled to the Caribbean, such decline was due to the very nature of Spanish imperialism itself. He wrote:

What a contrast, Sir, in the consequences of the principles adopted by the different powers, as they were actuated either by the spirit of commerce, or of conquest! That introduced into the new world, vices, arts, and wants; this slavery and death. At the voice of the first, I see the indigent Batavian start from his barren wastes, traverse the globe, and by his parsimonious and persevering industry, cover his marshes with the riches of both worlds; and plant at the extremities of the earth, colonies more extensive, more wealthy and more populous than the country that gave them birth: while the Spaniard depopulates his delicious provinces to go and depopulate the Antilles, Mexico, and Peru; and to raise wretched haunts for Capuchins, on the ruins of the proud empire of Montezuma!<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Baron de Wimpffen, *A Voyage to Santo Domingo, in the Years 1788, 1789, and 1790*, (trans) J Wright (London, 1797), pp.27-28.

Santo Domingo, or Hispaniola, as it had been christened initially, enjoyed some success in its early colonial days. Within the first fifty years, gold was discovered, and a significant amount of sugar was produced.<sup>75</sup> At the same time, the sparse population and long coastline meant that the many French corsairs roaming Caribbean waters used it as a smuggling base.<sup>76</sup> Their encroachment and contraband trade became such a problem that the crown ordered the Dominicans to leave some of the settlements on the Northern coast, in an attempt to stop the illegal trading. By the seventeenth century the island's development had all but been extinguished, with gold mining exhausted and sugar planting finished, and even the annual *flotas* had stopped calling in. While the island was larger than Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo was not seen as being as strategically located, and Havana's port was preferred. This combination of factors resulted in the 'devastations' of 1605-06, when the crown's measures, as well as on-going poverty and disease, forced thousands of residents to leave and seek their fortunes in other parts of Spain's empire. By 1769 the population of the whole territory hovered around 70,625, around twice the population of Havana.<sup>77</sup>

The French corsairs, however, eventually got their desired stake in the island, via the Treaty of Ryswick (1697), which had put an end to the War of the Grand Alliance (1688-97) and gave France the western third of the island. With the legitimization of the treaty, former corsairs settled down and began sugar, coffee, and indigo planting, and soon French settlers from Europe were making their way across the Atlantic. The border between the two territories remained a fluid zone, a line of tolerance (*raya de tolerancia*) more than a fixed boundary, though like that between France and Spain it was a boundary the rugged geography of which made crossing

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<sup>75</sup> See Pierre Chaunu and Huguette Chaunu, *Séville et l'Atlantique aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles* (Paris, 1977) for a comprehensive study of trade from Santo Domingo and the rest of the Americas in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

<sup>76</sup> Lynne Guitar, 'Boiling it Down: Slavery on the First Commercial Sugarcane *Ingenios* in the Americas (Hispaniola, 1530-45),' in Jane Landers, and Barry Robinson (eds), *Slaves, Subjects, and Subversives: Blacks in Colonial Latin America* (Albuquerque, 2006).

<sup>77</sup> Frank Moya Pons, *The Dominican Republic: A National History* (New York, 1995), p.73.

difficult. This line, however ill-defined, became a defence priority in the early eighteenth century.<sup>78</sup> And, of course, this political boundary would often be transgressed in the name of commerce, or, quite often, illegal trade. The new French territory, Saint-Domingue, was proving to be a lucrative market for trade. As the colony grew in leaps and bounds in the 1700s,<sup>79</sup> the Spanish side of the island had begun to make a living selling cattle hides to its wealthy neighbour, with some 15,000 head a year sold between 1783-89.<sup>80</sup> The business would stir the economy a little, but it paled in comparison with the dizzying riches produced by France's 'Pearl of the Antilles'.<sup>81</sup> By the late 1780s, the western third of Hispaniola was the world leader in sugar and coffee production, sending from its ports 80,000 tonnes and 40,000 tonnes respectively. It was exporting 210 million *livres* worth of goods to France, and importing slaves, goods and other services worth 197 million *livres*.<sup>82</sup>

As this was occurring, a *criollo* curate from Santo Domingo named Antonio Sánchez Valverde published a tract that outlined the misery of the inhabitants on the Spanish half of Santo Domingo, and the potential for similar riches to those the French were enjoying, echoing the sentiments in O'Reilly's report twenty years later. For Sánchez Valverde, watching the French grow rich was a source of extreme irritation. He too wanted to convince the crown that with some investment – and more slaves – similar wealth could be theirs. However, he had fallen foul of the colonial officers and the crown. An unlicensed visit to the French side of the island in 1782

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, p.433.

<sup>79</sup> For more on the development of Saint-Domingue see John D Garrigus, *Before Haiti: Race and Citizenship in French Saint-Domingue* (London, 2006) and 'Blue and Brown: Contraband Indigo and the Rise of a Free Colored Planter Class in French Saint-Domingue', *The Americas*, 50, 2 (1993), pp. 233-63; and also CLR James, *The Black Jacobins* (London, 2001 [ed]); Thomas O Ott, *The Haitian Revolution* (Knoxville, 1973); Carolyn E Fick, *The Making of Haiti: the Saint Domingue Revolution from Below* (Knoxville, 1990).

<sup>80</sup> Moya Pons, *The Dominican Republic*, p.8.

<sup>81</sup> Wendell G. Schaeffer, 'The Delayed Cession of Spanish Santo Domingo to France, 1795-1801', *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 29, 1 (1949), pp. 46-68.

<sup>82</sup> Munford, and Zeuske, 'Black Slavery, Class Struggle, Fear and Revolution in St. Domingue and Cuba', *The Journal of Negro History*, 73, No 1, pp.12-32

aroused suspicion and led to his arrest, though he was later released.<sup>83</sup> That he was a cleric who was in the habit of issuing political criticism from the pulpit and the pen – even going so far as to praise Oliver Cromwell – probably did little to help his case.<sup>84</sup> Despite this, he left the island for Madrid, where he published his tract in 1785, titled *Idea del valor de la Isla Española, y utilidades que de ella puede sacar su monarquía*. This work would be often considered the first history of the island, as it gives a detailed geographical description, as well as a comprehensive account of the flora and fauna of the island. In the work he lamented that with all its natural riches, and its initial prosperity, it was almost impossible to believe that the island could have fallen into such ruin:

It seems incredible that those depths of happiness ... disappeared with such swiftness. The rapidity of this process ... was no more amazing than its terrifying ruin ... the reasons for this decline were not one, nor two; but the factors that coincided were so powerful that they were capable of destroying an empire established on the most solid foundations.<sup>85</sup>

He had seen for himself the riches in Saint-Domingue, and knew it could be possible on the eastern part as well. But there were, in his mind, two problems. The first was the issue of slavery – that there were not enough slaves, and the slaves they did have were not of much use. One of the earliest estimates, from around 1790, put the number of slaves on the Spanish side at 15,000.<sup>86</sup> And although the manner of slave holdings were small-scale, Sánchez Valverde's writings suggest that the slaves could be resistant to the regime under which they were submitted. He noted: 'Our slaves are useless or work for themselves nearly a third of the year ... The abuse of

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<sup>83</sup> AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 1117, 14 October 1781, Testimonio de los auto formados a consecuencia de las diligencias practicadas ...B

<sup>84</sup> Maximo Rossi, Jr, *Praxis, historia y filosofía: textos de Antonio Sánchez Valverde*, (Santo Domingo, 1994), p.59.

<sup>85</sup> Antonio Sánchez Valverde, *Idea del valor de la isla Española*, (eds) Emilio Rodríguez Demorizi and Fray Cipriano de Utrera, (Santo Domingo, 1971) pp.104-5.

<sup>86</sup> M. L. E Moreau de St Méry, *A Topical and Political Description of the Spanish Part of Saint-Domingo*, (trans)William Cobbett, vol. 1 (Philadelphia, 1796) p.55.

allowing slaves to *jornal* [work as free labourers part of the time, and receiving a daily wage], which is too widely spread in our America, renders useless a large part of what little we have, because this is a species of Negro that live without discipline nor subjugation.’<sup>87</sup> Another contemporary observer, the Martinique-born Mederic Louis Élie Moreau de St Méry, who wrote three comprehensive volumes about the history and geography of both sides of the island, visited the Spanish territory around the same time that Sánchez Valverde was writing his tract in Madrid.<sup>88</sup> St Méry claimed the society had three classes: white, freed people, and slaves, and noted how the Spanish system allowed slaves to buy themselves out of slavery. He pointed out that ‘the prejudice with respect to colour, so powerful with other nations, among whom it fixes a bar between the white, and the freed-people, and their descendants, is almost unknown in the Spanish part of Saint-Domingo ... [but] it must, however, be allowed, that many of the Spanish creoles of this island would turn with disgust from an alliance with the descendants of their slaves’.<sup>89</sup>

The two works present a conflicting picture of slave life in Santo Domingo, though it would seem certainly at odds with the intensive plantation slavery that was being developed on other islands, and next door. This is not to say that slavery in Santo Domingo was not brutal, cruel, or oppressive – indeed, the long history of runaway slaves testifies that it was.<sup>90</sup> But its scale was entirely different, as the number of enslaved Africans had reached hundreds of thousands on the French side. In fact, the year before Sánchez Valverde wrote his tract there had been a change in the slave laws on Santo Domingo, called the *Código Negro Carolino* 1784. These

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<sup>87</sup> Sánchez Valverde, *Idea Del Valor*, pp.169-170.

<sup>88</sup> Although he can be considered a contemporary observer on the Spanish side, Saint Méry was on the Superior Council of the French side of the island, putting him on the highest judicial bodies on the colony, and he went on to write a six-volume work on the laws of France’s colonies. He later became involved in the Revolution in France, and ended up fleeing to Philadelphia, where he wrote his accounts of Santo Domingo and Saint-Domingue.

<sup>89</sup> St Méry, *A Topical and Political Description*, pp.56-57.

<sup>90</sup> Guitar, ‘Boiling it Down’, pp.39-82.

reforms took their legal inspiration from the French *Code Noir* (1685). The Spanish version of these laws called for Dominican owners to allow their slaves holidays – despite complaints that they were already taking enough time off – to provide better health care, not to use arms against them, and to re-iterate the criteria for manumission.<sup>91</sup> The reason this was aimed at Santo Domingo was because the *hacendados* asked the crown to cut back on the number of holidays slaves could enjoy – it seems it was not only Sánchez Valverde who had complaints – as well as wanting to ban them from renting land, and prohibiting any person of colour from using arms.<sup>92</sup> However, the new *código* largely ignored this and echoed the earlier French laws by demanding that slaves must be given religious education, adequate food and water, and a limit of 25 lashes for any wrongdoing. According to Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, what Carlos III actually did through this legislation was lay the basis and adapt the legal structure to provide for the expansion of the plantation-style slavery on the Spanish islands that was proving to be so lucrative in the French colonies.<sup>93</sup> The crown was moving away from the precedents of Alfonso XII. However, for St Méry, Santo Domingo's failure to thrive as an agricultural colony could not be blamed on its lack of slaves or their characteristics, but instead on the laziness of their masters:

The Spanish creoles, now become insensible of all the treasures which surround them, pass their lives without wanting to better their lot. A capital [Santo Domingo], which of itself indicates decay, little insignificant towns here and there ... immense possessions, called *hattes*, where beasts and cattle are raised with little care, are all that present themselves to the view, where nature spreads so many allurements to a people who are blind to her charms.<sup>94</sup>

This stereotype – the lazy, degenerate Spanish *criollo* – made up the second problem for Sánchez Valverde, who appeared to believe that he was fighting an

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<sup>91</sup> Javier Malagón Barcelló (ed), *Código Negro Carolino 1784* (Santo Domingo, 1974) pp. xlv.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Social Control in Slave Plantation Societies: A Comparison of St. Domingue and Cuba* (Baton Rouge, 1996), p.95.

<sup>94</sup> St Méry, *A Topical and Political Description*, p.43.

ideological battle as well as an economic one. Although Sánchez Valverde was dead by the time St Méry published his observations in 1796-97, the idea of the tainted Spanish creole had been plaguing the Spanish colonies, and was bound up with the 'black legend'.<sup>95</sup> Perhaps in St Méry's case it was an unintentional tarring, as he too was a Caribbean creole. Being critical of Spaniards, however, was the intellectual order of the day. So Sánchez Valverde set out to also use *Idea de Valor* to fight against what he saw as unfair criticism. One of the intellectual battles during the Enlightenment was over the history of the Americas and other discovered territories, both their founding and their present state, and the 'type' of people who inhabited them.<sup>96</sup> Sánchez Valverde took special issue in his work with the ideas of Dutch philosopher Cornelius de Pauw. He argued directly against De Pauw's idea of the 'degenerate' creole.

Mr Paw [sic], one of the torches of the present illuminated century among the Foreigners, whose clarity has not arrived to Madrid, because it consists in discussing with total liberty about the most sacred, in the crushing of Religion, inflaming the Ecclesiastical state and speaking about the Spanish. Mr Paw has done all this; and over all has used nine or ten years in assigning those tales he has encountered in the East Indies, against their first inhabitants and against those who discovered and conquered them. His fecund imagination added much to his writings, directing all to establishing a philosophical Romance about the degeneration that had been suffered and is suffered in those great parts of the Globe ...<sup>97</sup>

His response to the charge of degeneracy became intertwined with the case he was making to the crown, and he offered the island's fertility as proof of its strength, rhetorically asking Du Pauw, who had never been to the Americas: 'In what part of Europe is one able to obtain, still with all the determination of the Monarchs, a

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<sup>95</sup> See, for example Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws*, pp. 231-34

<sup>96</sup> See for instance see Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World* and DA Brading, *Classical Republicanism and Creole Patriotism: Simon Bolivar (1783-1830) and the Spanish American Revolution* (Cambridge, 1983).

<sup>97</sup> Sánchez Valverde, *Idea Del Valor*, pp.33-34.

*plátano*, a *piña* or *ananas*, a *guanávana*, a *mamey*, a *zapote*, a *cacao*, an *aguacate*, a *molondrón*, or any of the innumerable species of fruit of the island?’ citing this as symptomatic not of decline, but abundance.<sup>98</sup> In returning to economic problems at hand, Sánchez Valverde reminded the crown that Santo Domingo still had wealth in its mines, and was only lacking the labour to unearth new prosperity. He concluded that ‘In order to commence this work with sufficient frankness Negroes should be introduced on the Island ...’<sup>99</sup> Many strands of Caribbean thought run through his text: an early creole pride, as well as pro-slavery, and physiocratic thought. Only a few years later, these strands would be woven more tightly by the outspoken and influential Cuban lawyer Francisco Arango y Parreño, who became that island’s leading proponent of free trade – and slavery.

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<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, p.36

Some of these terms cannot be translated, but a *plátano* is a plaintain, a *piña* is a pineapple, *ananas* are also pineapples, though perhaps a different variety, *cacao* is cocoa, *aguacate* is avocado, but as far as I am aware there is no English translation for the fruits *guanávana*, *mamey*, *zapote*, and *molodrón*.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid*, p.209.





Cuba, published by H.C.Carey and I. Lea (Philadelphia, 1822). Image copyright © 2000 by Cartography Associates

Indeed, the call for more slaves would be clear and unequivocal from Cuba as well, especially from Arango, whose life intersected with key imperial moments. He was born in the year O'Reilly made his trip to Cuba and Puerto Rico. In fact, his family was one of the long-established and wealthy ones with whom the governor, Conde de Ricla – with the help of O'Reilly – made a deal in 1763. In addition to benefits gained alongside changes in the militia and tax system, these families often had seats on the town council, or *cabildo*, which controlled land tenure, which eventually would lead to great wealth for these families, who often turned the land into sugar plantations. At the time of Ricla and O'Reilly's arrival, agricultural output was limited to some sugar production, cattle raising, bee-keeping, and tobacco planting. The tobacco trade was controlled by a royal monopoly and as sugar took off the producers who could began to change their land use. The crown also controlled the hardwood trade, and used most of Cuba's wood for shipbuilding rather than profit.

During the latter years of the eighteenth century, the Caribbean islands provided Spain with 22.3% of colonial imports into Cádiz – only second to Vera Cruz’s 34.9% – with most ships originating from Havana.<sup>100</sup>

In the late 1700s Cuba was still sparsely populated, at around 171,620 people according to a 1774 census, with there being 96,440 whites, 30,847 free people of colour, and 44,333 slaves.<sup>101</sup> Most farmers were still engaged in the tobacco trade, with towns settled along the coast to help prevent contraband trade, though only really serving to fuel it. It was Cuba, of the three islands, which would expand in the most dramatic fashion a hundred years later. Indeed, the politically powerful, land-rich elite families were well-placed to exploit the shift to sugar.<sup>102</sup> Havana was key in this expansion as it was an important port city – it had come to some prominence when it was declared a free port within the Spanish world in 1776, allowing ships from all over Spain to call from within the empire, though its first real burst of change and growth would be under British rule in 1762-63, during the Seven Years War, when less restricted trade was introduced, as well as more slaves, two changes that were continued upon its return to Spain.<sup>103</sup> By the 1780s an average of more than five million *pesos* a year was coming into Havana via New Spain *situados* and distributed around the region, mostly spent on shoring up military defence, including building battleships.<sup>104</sup> However, the port of Havana was far busier and more profitable than the others in the region, by virtue of its position. Ricla and O’Reilly’s deal was made only a couple of years before the *real orden* opened up trade, but once that started to take effect, Cuba began to cover some of its own costs – an average of 534,404 *pesos*

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<sup>100</sup> Fisher, *Commercial Relations*, p.118.

<sup>101</sup> Kenneth F Kiple, *Blacks in Colonial Cuba, 1774-1899* (Gainesville, 1976), p.115.

<sup>102</sup> For more detailed studies of the mechanics of landholding in early colonial Cuba see Knight, ‘Origins of Wealth and the Sugar Revolution in Cuba, 1750-1850’.

<sup>103</sup> See Francisco Pérez Guzmán, *La Habana: clave de un imperio* (Havana, 1997); Anton L Allahar, ‘The Cuban Sugar Planters (1790-1820): “The Most Solid and Brilliant Bourgeois Class in All of Latin America”’, *The Americas*, 41, No 1 (1984), pp37-57; Moreno Friginals, *El Ingenio*, pp.34-35.

<sup>104</sup> Marichal and Mantecon, ‘Silver and Situados’, p.603.

were collected between 1765-75, almost five times more than what had been there a decade before, and in the following decade it averaged 1,000,745 *pesos* a year.<sup>105</sup>

Arango, like many *criollo* men of his class, arrived in Madrid in 1787 to study law, and that year too turned out to be a very busy one for the Caroline reformers. Although it would seemingly have no impact on Arango, a key re-organisation of the state was under way which saw the establishment of the *junta de estado* and the dismantling of the Ministry of the Indies. The ministry had been established by José de Gálvez, who had been minister since 1776, and was a cumulation of many reforms stemming back to 1717, and more recently those of Fernando VI in 1754, which re-organised the government into the ministries of state, war, navy, finance, and Indies. Carlos III created the *junta de reforma* and involved all ministers in deliberations about the overseas territories, which would eventually turn into the powerful *junta de estado* by 1787, with Floridablanca at its head, along with four others, functioning like a Cabinet. Responsibilities for the Ministry of Indies were divided into justice, and war, finance and commerce.<sup>106</sup> This re-alignment put Floridablanca alongside the king, and give the first minister unprecedented powers at home and in the overseas *reinos*. At the same time, change would be under way in social spheres of influence on both sides of the Atlantic.

A *real cédula* in the same year established the first *Sociedad Económica de Amigos del Pais* in Santiago de Cuba, organised by a small but enthusiastic group of planters.<sup>107</sup> These societies had been established on the peninsula starting in 1765 with the *Bascongada de los Amigos del Pais*, in the Basque country, in the north of

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<sup>105</sup> Kuethe, 'The Development of the Cuban Military', p.701.

<sup>106</sup> For more on this reorganisation, see Jacques A Barbier, 'The Culmination of the Bourbon Reforms, 1787-1792', *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 57, 1 (1977), pp.51-68.

<sup>107</sup> Olga Portuondo Zúñiga, *Santiago de Cuba, los colonos franceses y el fomento cafetalero (1790-1809)* (Santiago de Cuba, 1992), p.3.

Spain, and others sprang up throughout the peninsula.<sup>108</sup> The numbers reached around 60 by 1800, and these organisations had spread throughout the colonies as well. These societies were born out of Enlightenment Spanish political economic thought, and they had as their aim wanting to expand knowledge about agriculture and better ways to develop it and other aspects of the economy. However, they were not without their detractors, and as tensions between France and Spain mounted over the French Revolution, such societies could not avoid Floridablanca's censorial ideological scrutiny.<sup>109</sup> Generally, the peninsular societies focussed on peninsular problems and the colonial societies on colonial ones. There was a failure to consider the possibilities and connections with the colonies; rather, they wanted to study political economy and improve economic techniques and labour within a given area, rather than within a wider imperial reach. However, these societies were not just an occasion for the patrician men to ponder agricultural development – they had some liberty to make suggestions to the crown on ways to improve and develop agriculture, and possibly to be heard.

But even before the establish of a *sociedad* in Havana, Arango, who had been appointed the city's *apoderado* in 1788, spoke to the crown on behalf of his island. The year before he was given this post, he wrote to the crown over the problem of labour shortages in Cuba, invoking the language of 'public happiness' while addressing the issue of slavery, saying:

All the attention of the *apoderado* should be occupied in promoting and encouraging the happiness of his country. With this single principle he will consult their ideas and direct all their operations. In consequence, he will endeavour with tenacity to remedy the ills produced in that colony [Cuba] by the shortage of Negroes, but he will not be so hasty as to favour parties that may perhaps make matters worse. Absolute liberty in this branch of commerce

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<sup>108</sup> The exhaustive study on these societies is Robert Jones Shafer, *The Economic Societies in the Spanish World, 1763-1821* (Syracuse, 1958); for a discussion on how these societies were an important interface with the political world, see Gabriel Paquette, 'State-Civil Society Cooperation and Conflict in the Spanish Empire: The Intellectual and Political Activities of the Ultramarine Consulados and Economic Societies, c. 1780-1810', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 39 (2007), pp. 263-98.

<sup>109</sup> Shafer, *The Economic Societies*, p.58.

with all other nations would of course be the most useful; if the Government is resistant to it, he will at least try to conserve it among us so that we are not deprived by the Allwood contract [with slave firm Baker and Dawson].<sup>110</sup>

After finishing his legal studies in 1789, he undertook further education in economics with the aim of helping to develop agricultural output in Cuba. This would also be the year that an important *real cédula* was issued. Its subtitle, *concediendo libertad para el comercio de negros*, gave a clear indication of the direction in which the crown was moving. Like the earlier *código*, it called for the religious education and proper feeding and clothing of slaves. But the difference lay in the fact that the market for buying and selling slaves now was open, ending the *asiento* and allowing Spaniards and *criollos* to enter the slave trade. The Spanish islands had watched this take place around them via the many free ports that had been set up in the Caribbean after the Seven Years War, especially in places that had been hotbeds of smuggling, such as Castries in St Lucia, and Môle St Nicholas in Saint-Domingue. The British were not far behind, passing their Free Ports Act in 1766.<sup>111</sup> Free British and Danish ports such as Kingston and St Thomas engaged heavily in slave trading.<sup>112</sup> Yet by the time of Carlos IV's *código*, the tide was slowly turning. The order was disseminated across the empire only a year after European abolition movements – especially that of Britain's – had begun to gain momentum. Additionally, the *Société Amis des Noirs* in France had been established the previous year, while the Danish, British, Dutch and Portuguese were moving towards banning the slave trade, which they did in 1792,

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<sup>110</sup> Francisco de Arango y Parreño, 'Instrucción que se formó D. Francisco de Arango cuando se entregó de los poderes de la Habana y papeles del asunto', 15 July 1788, *Obras*, vol. 1 (Havana, 1888), p.3.

<sup>111</sup> Klooster, 'Inter-Imperial Smuggling', p.173.

<sup>112</sup> Neville A.T. Hall, *Slave Society in the Danish West Indies: St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix* (Baltimore, 1992) pp.22-23.

1807, 1814, and 1815. Spain, under international pressure, would agree to abolish the slave trade in 1817 but in practice it was much later before it was stopped.<sup>113</sup>

Arango lobbied with much force for free trade in slavery. Only a week before the *junta* took its decision about this issue, Arango wrote to the government, arguing that there were three ways to go about acquiring slaves. The first being ‘absolute liberty’ for those who are going to bring and distribute slaves in Spain’s possessions; second, to allow only vassals of the kings to do what they want; and third, to keep with exclusive contracts with slave-trading houses.<sup>114</sup> Arango was in favour of the first option. The minutes from the *junta de estado* in 1789 echoed Arango’s argument, convincing the monarch of the need in Santo Domingo, Cuba, Puerto Rico and Caracas for more ‘hands for agriculture, without which they [islands] will not prosper, nor produce for the King and the State the profits that the climate and fertility offer ...’<sup>115</sup>, to which the king assented. The minutes went on to decree that ‘the Negros must be of good *castas*, and those who are useless, infected, or suffering habitual sickness will not be allowed to enter and be sold ...’<sup>116</sup> And just over a week later the official *real cédula* 28 February 1789 was issued, pleasing Caribbean planters who had long had to deal with British, Dutch, Portuguese, and French slave traders to find their labourers, giving them a two-year trial in the slave trade, which ended up lasting until 1796.<sup>117</sup> Arango and his fellow planters were pleased. This

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<sup>113</sup> Spain would agree to abolish the slave trade in 1817 but in practice it was much later before it was stopped. See Emily Berquist, ‘Early Anti-Slavery Sentiment in the Spanish Atlantic World, 1765-1817’, *Slavery and Abolition* 31, 2, (2010); Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, *Empire and Antislavery: Spain, Cuba and Puerto Rico, 1833-74*, (Pittsburgh, 1999); Rebecca J. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899* (Princeton, 1992).

<sup>114</sup> Arango, *Primer papel obre el comerio de negros*, 6 February 1789, *Obras*, p.8.

<sup>115</sup> Minutes, 19 February 1789, AHN, Junta de Estado, Estado, Libros, No 3.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> The Spanish were also encouraged by the 1778 treaty with Portugal in which they gained control of the West African slave ports of Annobon and Fernando Póo, located in the Gulf of Guinea, although attempts to rely on the islands as steady sources of slaves would prove difficult. See James Ferguson King, ‘Evolution of the Free Slave Trade Principle in Spanish Colonial Administration’, *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 22, 1 (1942), p.46.

peculiar outcome was yet another twist in the political economy of Spain and its colonies: free trade – in slavery.<sup>118</sup>

As Dale Tomich has pointed out, Arango's writings 'demonstrated not the incompatibility, nor even the simultaneous coexistence of liberal ideas and proslavery thought, but the ways these positions derive from the shared conceptual field of political economy'.<sup>119</sup> Indeed, Arango and others had constantly pointed out the island's potential, and he was able to synthesise prevailing intellectual ideas with local economic need. For these reasons, Cuba received more official attention. Puerto Rico was a garrison, Santo Domingo a failure, but Cuba was key in both an administrative and economic sense. It would eventually be known as the 'ever-faithful isle', and, like Saint-Domingue for the French, it would become a source of wealth – and increasing anxiety. As Josep Fradera has put it: 'The colonial pact was clear. On the one hand, complete liberalisation of the economy of the island, liberty to import labour and foreign trade; on the other, the formation of the impressive military presence in the island.'<sup>120</sup>

The timing of these changes to the slave trade was unfortunate for Spain. As news of *liberté, égalité, fraternité* spread to France's Caribbean colonies, it was only a matter of time before its slaves, as well as its free people of colour, would question where they fit within this new equation of liberty. The Spanish appeared to be a step behind, gearing up to assemble a sugar plantation economy – beginning what Tomich labeled 'second slavery' – just as the other imperial powers would soon feel the weight of both its moral redress, and public revulsion of the slave trade.<sup>121</sup> Yet the crown thought it was in its financial favour to follow this route, as the decline in the

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<sup>118</sup> Sherry Johnson, 'The Rise and Fall of Creole Participation in the Cuban Slave Trade, 1789-1796', *Cuban Studies*, 30 (2000), pp.52-75.

<sup>119</sup> Dale Tomich, 'The Wealth of Empire: Francisco Arango y Parreño, Political Economy, and the Second Slavery in Cuba', in Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, and John M Nieto-Phillips (eds) *Interpreting Spanish Colonialism: Empires, Nations, and Legends* (Albuquerque, 2005), pp. 54-85.

<sup>120</sup> Fradera, *Colonias*, p.56.

<sup>121</sup> Tomich, 'Wealth of Empire', pp.54-85.

sugar trade of other islands offered enticing economic possibilities that could not be refused, and it would be proven right.

As news of the fall of the Bastille reached Floridablanca, he was presiding over a weak metropole bolstered by increasingly strong colonies recently brought back into line through various administrative, political, and economic reforms. Bullion from New Spain and Peru helped shore up the troops on the Pyrenees and in the Caribbean. Floridablanca, however, in his attempt to stifle panic, tried to prohibit foreigners from entering Spain's kingdoms, which meant all over the Americas as well. Suspicion of France was high, and there were anti-French riots throughout cities in Spain, with many French residents forced to flee in the face of public anger as well as official policy. Trying to stem the momentum of ideas, Floridablanca cracked down on the movement of printed matter, though in a country bordered on three sides by water, port culture would always been more amenable to subverting the rules. Indeed, those parts of Spain's kingdom completely surrounded by water in the Caribbean would become even more susceptible to events in France, though at first it would seem to Floridablanca and others in Madrid that the only real threat was the one marching southward from Paris. But this was far from the case, and the French Revolution would have its own Caribbean version, one that would have an enormous impact on the region at a time when Spain was beginning to reawaken to the potential of the islands and bring them in from the imperial hinterlands. This process would result in the end of France's prized colony and the beginning of a new chapter in Spanish imperial rule.

### *Conclusion*

This chapter has provided context for the events that will follow in the Caribbean by examining the period of rapid change and reform on the peninsula and how that affected two aspects of the colonial relationship: trade and defence. Reforms undertaken in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Santo Domingo would go quite a long way in



renewing the crown's economic interest in them, and their loyalty to the crown, something that would prove very important later on. All this occurred in a climate of uncertainty, as exemplified by Floridablanca and his actions – which ranged across the Caroline years from being engaged with new currents of thought to censorship and paranoia – laying the roots of a colonial anxiety that was born of the manifestations of Enlightenment thought. His reaction, and that of the colonial officials who followed his orders, goes some way to explaining the response in the Spanish Caribbean when the French Revolution arrived at its shores.

## *Chapter 2*

### *Liberty, Anxiety, and Revolution, 1790-1804*

This chapter turns from Europe to the Caribbean to examine the arrival of Enlightenment ideas to the French colony of Saint-Domingue, and how this was received by the neighbouring Spanish islands. It argues that the entry of the French Revolution in its sugar colony, which was part of a series of events that led to a massive slave uprising, drove the Spanish islands deeper into their relationship with the crown. This was articulated through many measures taken by colonial officials stemming from an immediate fear that battles for ‘liberty’ among slaves would erupt in Cuba and Puerto Rico. However, this loyalty would pay no dividend for Santo Domingo, as it was ceded to the French by treaty in 1795. Building on the paranoia of the Conde de Floridablanca, this chapter seeks to trace the emerging forms of fear that arose through these new and terrifying possibilities and how the Spanish administration responded to them. This chapter will outline the events in Saint-Domingue, and examine certain key intersections with the Spanish islands, such as the arrival of refugees or the use of censorship. In addition, it will examine the economic landscape, which was changing with dramatic speed during the last decade of the eighteenth century. Through anxiety and actions of colonial officials, the limits of Enlightenment thought in the Caribbean become clear.

#### *The fight against French ‘contagion’*

It would not have been the first letter the Conde de Floridablanca had received about events in Saint-Domingue, but it may have been the most honest one about what was taking place. The *oidor decano* of the *Real Audiencia* of Santo Domingo, Pedro Catani, explained to the prime minister that ‘in the neighbouring colony, according to the truthful news that I have received, complete anarchy reigns’.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, by

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<sup>1</sup> Pedro Catani to Conde de Floridablanca, 29 December 1790, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 1028, ‘En la Colonia vecina ...’

December 1790, Catani had seen at first hand the events in Saint-Domingue which had been triggered by Vincenté Ogé, a leading *gens de couleur*. Ogé was a mulatto slave-owner and upon hearing the promises of the French Revolution, he led a delegation to Paris to petition the National Assembly for racial equality. Ogé cited the fact that mulattos such as himself were free property owners who paid tax, yet by virtue of their mixed-race status they were denied the full *égalité* promised under the revolution. Their pleas, while sparking much heated debate in Paris, would ultimately remain unfulfilled. Ogé soon left for London and met with British abolitionist Thomas Clarkson. During his time in Britain, Ogé was able to obtain money and credit through which he could buy arms that later would be put to use in a revolt.<sup>2</sup> Upon his return to Saint-Domingue, he ignited a rebellion in the northern Atlantic port town of Le Cap (Cap Haïtian), which was stifled with swiftness by *gran blanc* plantation owners and colonial officials, and other whites, the *petit blancs*, who were now united against the mulattos. Ogé and fellow conspirators fled over the border into Spanish territory, and were eventually caught and handed over to the French. After a grueling trial, they were executed as an example to other people of colour.

Although it was a dramatic incident, this not the first report Floridablanca had received about Ogé's aim and the state of the Caribbean. The governor and captain-general in Santo Domingo, Joaquín García, had been keeping the *junta de estado* in Madrid informed with a steady stream of correspondence. Indeed, when Ogé was caught, a full account of events was duly sent over.<sup>3</sup> For Floridablanca, it was a growing worry in addition to the more immediate one on the other side of the Pyrenees, which had become the *junta's* preoccupation, and one that saw him turn

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<sup>2</sup> CLR James, *Black Jacobins* (London, 2001[ed]). p.59. See also Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution & Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787-1804* (Chapel Hill, 2004) for more about the debates over slavery and *gens de couleur* in the National Assembly, and for events in the neighbouring French sugar island of Guadeloupe. For more on the events of the Haitian Revolution and its causes, also refer to Carolyn E Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution from Below* (Knoxville, 1990) and Thomas O Ott, *The Haitian Revolution, 1789-1804* (Knoxville, 1973).

<sup>3</sup> 11 April 1791, AHN, Junta de Estado, Estado, Libros, No 4, p.39.

from being a cautious supporter of reforms to imposing his own *bloqueo psicológico*, retreating into ultraconservatism, as outlined in the previous chapter.<sup>4</sup> In a meeting on 14 March 1791 it was noted that Floridablanca had said that '[we] ought to execute a defence of the frontier and in order to stop the spreading of bad ideas, and the insubordination, and the conduct and its manifestation, with all the French Colonies. This instruction [will] be circulated to all the governors of our islands'.<sup>5</sup> Like equality, enlightenment also had its limits. It was a complicated situation – French culture and thought, as the previous chapter has shown, was embedded in eighteenth-century Spain, especially among those known as the *afrancesados*.<sup>6</sup> French ideas had been examined and absorbed, yet there was hostility to the events in Paris as the hold of the crown, tradition, and the church inevitably stymied Spanish thought. What did emerge instead, however, was fear. And out of that fear was born an anxiety that could only be quelled with repression.

The situation was such that Floridablanca had called for a cordon of troops to stand at Spain's northern frontier 'in the mode that one makes when there is a plague'.<sup>7</sup> These regulations were only the beginning of his fight against 'contagion'. The metaphor is striking. Germs and disease can spread through the air, invisible and deadly, infecting people, often without them realising it. Biological germs had led to the death of millions of indigenous people in the Americas. Could ideological disease, initially undetected, wreak similar catastrophe? He understood how easy it was for the ideas of the French Revolution to be carried through the air or indeed by sea. For Floridablanca, these French upstarts were a direct challenge to the monarchy; and the state bankruptcy and bread riots of France had an uncomfortable familiarity as well. He thought it could be a lethal combination. A kingdom without an absolute ruler –

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<sup>4</sup> Jean René Aymes, *Ilustración y revolución francesa en España*, (Lleida, 2005), p.150.

<sup>5</sup> 14 March 1791, AHN, Junta de Estado, Estado, Libros, No 4, p.22.

<sup>6</sup> Miguel Artola, *Los afrancesados* (Madrid, 1953).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p.20.

even if he was as weak as Carlos IV – was almost as unthinkable as the prospect of no kingdom at all.<sup>8</sup> These actions and concerns were at the same time being mirrored on the border between Saint-Domingue and Santo Domingo, as troops began to arrive. By November 1789, Havana and other ports had already started enforcing the *real orden* that required any foreigner who was not permitted to be in the port to leave within a month, though to what extent it was followed at this stage is difficult to say, as ports were porous places, easy for people to slip in and out of.<sup>9</sup> But from this point, any non-Spaniard who attracted the attention of the authorities would be told to leave. Likewise, runaway slaves from non-Spanish territories who fled to Cuba found, according to the law, that they would not be free upon arrival, something that had previously been allowed.<sup>10</sup> There would inevitably be some people sympathetic to the French republican cause throughout the peninsula and the colonies, but for those in the seats of power across the Spanish world, what was happening in France could only lead to ruin. As one commander in Santo Domingo remarked in a report to Governor García: ‘With those two words “liberty and equality” these people will do much damage...’<sup>11</sup>

Indeed, these two words would pose numerous questions for France and its most valuable slave colony, as Ogé had made clear. But the riches of the colonies and the problematic means by which they had been acquired been articulated by French Enlightenment thinkers such as Montesquieu, Rousseau, Voltaire, Raynal, and Diderot, who tried to address the fraught question of slavery, which at once was seen

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<sup>8</sup> Alarm at events in France of course was not only limited to the peninsula and the Caribbean colonies, but something that reverberated around the Spanish empire. See, for instance, Claudia Rosas Lauro (ed) *El miedo en el Perú siglos XVI al XX* (Lima, 2005).

<sup>9</sup> *Real orden*, 16 November 1789, Archivo Nacional de la República de Cuba (hereafter ANC), Asuntos Políticos, legajo 297, sig 10.

<sup>10</sup> Juan Bautista Vaillant to Luis de las Casas, 18 August 1790, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 1434, ‘La misma soberana resolucion comunicada por Exmo Sñr Don Antonio Porlier ...’

<sup>11</sup> Commander Vicente to Joaquín García, 5 November 1790, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 954, ‘Con estas dos palabras Libertad é Igualdad esas gente harán mucho daño ...’

to be ‘against nature’ as well as the bringer of great riches. The *Société de Amis des Noirs*, which included advocates such as Abbé Grégoire and Mirabeau, was formed in 1788, yet its calls for abolition and equality, despite the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, fell on deaf ears. The sway of rapid economic growth produced by the Caribbean colonies and the powerful planter interest of the *Club Massiac* were too strong.<sup>12</sup> The colony had, after all, produced by 1776 more wealth for France than all of Spanish America had done for Spain.<sup>13</sup>

The Spanish islands at this moment could hardly have been more different. Saint-Domingue had by the eve of its revolution some 30,000 whites, divided between *gran* and *petit blancs*, 28,000 free people of colour, and, significantly, more than 450,000 slaves.<sup>14</sup> In contrast, around 1790 the Spanish islands combined contained less than a quarter of Saint-Domingue’s total: Santo Domingo had 15,000 slaves and Cuba had 84,590 in 1792, with 17,500 by 1794 in Puerto Rico, and 6,451 in Trinidad by 1789, for a total of 123,851 slaves across the islands.<sup>15</sup> Alongside this was a lack of metropolitan debate about the ending of slavery in Spanish territories – indeed the *Sociedad Abolicionista Española* was not founded until 1864. That is not to say there was no concern about the slavery, but it did not attract the same intellectual scrutiny at this time as it did in France. However, in 1789 Carlos IV felt it necessary to update the slave code again, creating the *Código Negro*, which was a further extension of the 1784 reforms. It generally stipulated and re-iterated the need

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<sup>12</sup> Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws* (Cambridge, 1989 [ed]), p.252; David Geggus, ‘Racial Equality, Slavery, and Colonial Secession During the Constituent Assembly’, *The American Historical Review*, 94, No 5 (1989), pp. 1290-308; Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens*, p.62.

<sup>13</sup> Gordon K. Lewis, *Main Currents in Caribbean Thought: The Historical Evolution of Caribbean Society in its Ideological Aspects, 1492-1900* (Topeka, 2004), pp.123-4; D.A. Brading, ‘Bourbon Spain and its American Empire’ in Leslie Bethell (ed), *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, vol.1 (Cambridge, 1984), pp.417-18.

<sup>14</sup> Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery 1776-1848* (London, 1988), p.163.

<sup>15</sup> Estado de Población y Agricultura en que se halla la Isla de Trinidad de Barlovento, 31 December 1789, AGI, Caracas, legajo 153. Trinidad would be captured by the British in 1797. Also see Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison, 1969), pp.34-35; Kenneth F. Kiple, *Blacks in Colonial Cuba, 1774-1899* (Gainesville, 1976).

for a religious education for slaves and to be sparing with punishments. But the clause setting out the appointment of inspectors to make sure conditions were bearable would increasingly attract the ire of planters, especially those in Cuba.<sup>16</sup> Though for the moment, the slaveowners – long schooled in the colonial mindset of *se obedece pero no se cumple* (one obeys but does not comply) – paid little mind, and there was initially little enforcement of the code.<sup>17</sup>

At the same time, the communities of free people of colour were growing, especially in Havana. The bustling Cuban port had long held most of the island's population, allowing for free blacks and mulattos to engage in the many artisanal jobs needed by the growing city. They also played an important part in manning the militia, which will be discussed later in this chapter. This was not a recent phenomenon – free people of colour had been with Havana since the earliest days of colonialism, their numbers augmented by their right to buy themselves out of slavery.<sup>18</sup> They were very well-organised in Havana, often grouping themselves into collective societies known as *cabildos de nación*, organisations based on their African identities but which also resembled sixteenth-century Spanish religious

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<sup>16</sup> There was also the *Código Negro Carolino* of 1784 which reformed the law in Santo Domingo. See Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Social Control in Slave Plantation Societies: A Comparison of St. Domingue and Cuba*, (Baton Rouge, 1996). For a more detailed discussion of slave codes both of the Spanish and French islands, see Alejandro de la Fuente, 'What Can Frank Tannenbaum Still Teach Us About the Law of Slavery?', *Law and History Review*, 22, No 2 (2008); Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen: The Negro in the Americas* (New York, 1963); Javier Malagón Barcelló (ed) *Código Negro Carolino 1784* (Santo Domingo, 1974).

<sup>17</sup> Julius Sherrard Scott, 'The Common Wind: Currents of Afro-American Communication in the Era of the Haitian Revolution' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Duke University, 1986), p147. Scott argues that the power of rumour and the potential for uprisings informed the king's decision to try and make treatment better.

<sup>18</sup> See for instance, David Wheat, 'Nharas and Morenas Horras: A Luso-African Model for the Social History of the Spanish Caribbean, c.1570-1640', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 14 (2010), pp.119-50 on the role of free African and African-descended women in Havana and Santo Domingo.

confraternities.<sup>19</sup> During this time, colonial officials had little knowledge about the members of such societies, though later they were keen to keep close watch and to make sure African-born and Cuban-born members were separate, fearful of the potential of such possible alliances.<sup>20</sup> Overall, the free people of colour comprised a substantial community – by 1774, their numbers reached 30,847, or about 18% of Cuba's population.<sup>21</sup> By 1792, there were 54,152 free people of colour, about 20% of total population, though the slave population had nearly doubled to 84,590 over the same period.<sup>22</sup>

The debates about slavery, race, equality, and citizenship in France show how the metropole's future was also being determined in Saint-Domingue as much as it was in Paris. These battles were also taking place in the middle of Spain's Caribbean world – with Coro and Cartagena on the North coast of the Spanish main; Trinidad to the East; Louisiana and Florida to the North; and Veracruz to the West, the territorial positioning would not have been lost on Floridablanca or the *junta*, and certainly not the governors in Spanish territories. These islands and their nearest points of land were, by virtue of geography, bound up in France's ideological struggle. Like France, the future of Spain's empire would be contingent on events in the Caribbean. And like the French had done in Saint-Domingue, the Spanish islands were pursuing a course of action that would make Cuba, and to a lesser extent, Puerto Rico the centre of imperial attention and vast wealth. Now the aim for the colonial regime and the

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<sup>19</sup> Matt Childs, 'The Defects of Being a Black Creole': The Degrees of African Identity in the Cuban *Cabildos de Nación, 1790-1820*, in Jane Landers and Barry Robinson (eds) *Slaves, Subjects, and Subversives: Blacks in Colonial Latin America* (Albuquerque, 2006), pp. 209-245; Robert L Paquette, *Sugar is Made with Blood: the Conspiracy of La Escalera and the Conflict Between Empires Over Slavery in Cuba* (Middletown, 1988), p.108.

<sup>20</sup> Childs, 'The Defects of Being a Black Creole', p.212.

<sup>21</sup> Herbert S. Klein, *Slavery in the Americas: a Comparative Study of Virginia and Cuba* (Oxford, 1967), p.98.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, p.202; Kiple, *Blacks in Colonial Cuba*.



planters was to make sure their islands avoided the fate that had befallen the pearl of the Antilles.

Although this ‘contagion’ from France had the potential to spread through the region, the Caribbean was no stranger to such upheaval, having already watched the War of American Independence, which Spain and France had supported. North American ideas of liberty could also move more surreptitiously with sailors off the ships and into the taverns, be taken from the barmaid to the market, or spoken between a merchant and a house slave. But with its retention of slavery and its growing power, the United States, becoming an economic outlet, not a political model. For as much as news and ideas, rumours and misinformation could move informally, so too could letters, quill pens and wax seals from Madrid attempt to keep order.<sup>23</sup> In the absence of authoritative sources such as newspapers, many people were forced to sift through the rivers of hearsay to grasp some nuggets of truth. Yet this distillation of information would not be limited to the public, but to the powerful as well, informing and influencing their actions.

For instance, rumour of a French invasion of the Spanish side of the island, similar to what was taking place in the mountains in Spain, began to circulate. Don Domingo Gonzalez, a ship captain, relayed to Juan Bautista Vaillant, the governor of Santiago de Cuba, that he had been told ‘[the French] were thinking of taking the Spanish part of the Island of Santo Domingo’, and Vaillant dutifully passed it along to Santo Domingo’s captain-general, and it was eventually relayed back to Spain.<sup>24</sup> While in this instance, the information was directed to the colonial regime, just as often rumours about emancipation, or equality, could be directed towards those who

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<sup>23</sup> Scott, ‘The Common Wind’; see also Ira Berlin, ‘From Creole to African: Atlantic Creoles and the Origins of African-American Society in Mainland North America’, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 53, No 2 (1996), pp. 251-88; and Peter Linebaugh, and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston, 2000) for more on the roots of these connections.

<sup>24</sup> Juan Bautista Vaillant to Luis de las Casas, 20 August 1790, AGI, Cuba, legajo 1434, ‘Que oyó tambien dicho Gonzales entre ellos, pensaban tomar la parte Española de aquella Isla de Santo Domingo ...’

might act upon them. It was this momentum that Floridablanca set out to stifle by taking away the one thing that could feed the rumour mill: information. As in Spain, censorship became the frontline of ideological defence in the Caribbean, though in these early days, it had not become clear in the Spanish mind the exact manner of the threat that was developing in Saint-Domingue. Caution was the order of the day. In Trinidad, a French publisher, Juan Viloux, was deported after it was discovered that the *gazeta* he edited had been full of news about the events of 1789. The island's governor, Don José Maria Chacón, wrote to Madrid about the incident, saying that it ' [was] my intention to anticipate the evil and suffocate in its early stage without alarming the public nor exciting their curiosity to discuss the motives of my prudence in whose investigation, the difference of opinions would be to speak at least of this matter that are better in silence'.<sup>25</sup> No government, however, has been able to stop the power of gossip, and when there is social upheaval in one of the most powerful countries in Europe and its colony, which also happens to be the wealthiest island in the region, everyone is going to have something to say about it.

Though the spread of rumours and gossip was worrying, Governor García had a more practical matter to grapple with – the border. As Ogé's failed uprising had made clear, it was too easy for troublemakers from Saint-Domingue to flee and bring their ideas to the Spanish side, disturbing its cherished 'tranquility'. García wanted to station more troops along the porous line between the two territories, and to do that, he needed more enlistees. The particular point of contention was Dajabón, a town established near the river of the same name with a border crossing that saw much activity during this time, though due to its location it long had been an armed area. Extra infantries were sent as reinforcements, such as the *Infantería de Cantabria*, which left Spain in 1791, called in Puerto Rico, and ultimately was posted around

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<sup>25</sup> Josef Maria Chacon to Antonio Porlier, 27 January 1790, AGI,Caracas, legajo 153, 'Siendo mi intencion prevenir el mal o sofocarlo en sus principios sin alarmar el publico ...'

Dajabón.<sup>26</sup> During the first round of military reforms in the 1760s when O'Reilly was establishing the militias, one of the decisions taken was to include people of colour, as well as any remaining indigenous people. For instance, in Cuba in 1778 the small population in many regions meant that tactics such as declaring Indians who lived around Bayamó as 'white' and enlisting them were taken. There were also mulatto infantries, which had both black and white commanders.<sup>27</sup> Even before that, the enlisting of black and mulattos had already been in place and they accounted for nearly a third of militia troops – 3,400 out of total of 11,667. They became divided into two infantries, one *pardo* (mulattos) and one *moreno* (blacks).<sup>28</sup> As Sherry Johnson has pointed out, militia service gave free people of colour a status that would have otherwise been denied to them, providing an 'esprit de corps between the European sector of Havana's community and the free populations of color'.<sup>29</sup> From around 1790, as these troops were being called up and deployed when the situation increasingly demanded it, and the need to keep the militia numbers high meant that worry among officials about this 'esprit' among non-white soldiers was little discussed, though it later would become a cause for concern.

While these re-enforcements were under way, events moved with alarming speed in Saint-Domingue. During the night of 22 August 1791, with the blow of a conch shell, Dutty Boukeman, a slave and voodoo leader, called slaves into action on

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<sup>26</sup> AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 1030, 18 June 1791, 'Da cuenta de haber llegado á aquella ciudad el Regimiento de Infantería de Cantabria...'

<sup>27</sup> Allan J Kuethe, *Cuba, 1753-1815: Crown, Military, and Society* (Knoxville, 1986), p.43. Kuethe's exhaustive study of the military formation also makes an important link in the privileges it granted elites in conjunction with their military service, yet another tie binding them to the crown; Sherry Johnson, *The Social Transformation of Eighteenth-Century Cuba* (Gainesville, 2001), p.60.

<sup>28</sup> Klein, *Slavery in the Americas*, p.217.

<sup>29</sup> Johnson, *Social Transformation*, p.66.

plantations around the northern port of Le Cap.<sup>30</sup> At once, Ogé's initial fight took on an entirely new dimension, moving from the hands of slave-owning mulattos to the slaves themselves. Shortly after the opening gambits of this new battle, Governor García received a letter from the Saint-Domingue governor, Philibert François Rouxel de Blanchelande, pleading for help from the Spanish: 'The white race, and the class of people of colour, and free blacks are united, and there is no one but the slaves that are in open rebellion.' He pleaded to García that the defence of the island was a common cause, and invoked an article from a treaty as proof, and underlined it, noting that they were both loyal subjects of the Catholic Church.<sup>31</sup> García sent him some food, and contacted generals about re-enforcing the border.<sup>32</sup> He also wasted little time in telling Floridablanca about the incident. Floridablanca advised him and the other islands to observe 'perfect neutrality' while at the same time building up the frontier in Santo Domingo. He added the impossible order that there was to be no 'incorporation, mixing nor communication with the French, in order to avoid the results and consequences of their bad example'.<sup>33</sup> By October, distraught French members of the Colonial Assembly had taken their pleas for help across the Windward Passage to the

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<sup>30</sup> For a discussion of the historical accuracy of this event and the larger use of voodoo in the incitement in Saint-Domingue, see Léon François Hoffman 'Un mythe national: la cérémonie du Bois-Caïman', in Gérard Barthélemy and Christian A Girault (eds), *La république haïtienne: Etat des lieux et perspectives* (Paris, 1993); Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens*, p.433; and Robin Blackburn, 'Haiti, Slavery, and the Age of Democratic Revolution', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 63, No 4 (2006), pp.643-74. Antonio Benítez-Rojo has argued that voodoo was an integral part of not only the start of the Haitian Revolution, but that it was the central ideological force – rather than revolution – that propelled and sustained the former slaves' fight. See his work, *The Repeating Island* (Durham, 2005), pp.159-66.

<sup>31</sup> Philibert François Rouxel de Blanchelande to Joaquín García, 25 September 1791, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 1029, 'La raza blanca, y la clase de las gentes de color, y negros libres están reunidos ...'

<sup>32</sup> Joaquín García to Marques de Bajamar, 25 September 1791, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 1029, 'A letra a procedentes de las Comandancias de Daxabon ...'

<sup>33</sup> Conde de Floridablanca to Luis de las Casas, 26 November 1791, ANC, Correspondencia de los Capitanes Generales, legajo 42, No 7, in José Luciano Franco *Documentos para la historia de Haití en el archivo nacional* (Havana, 1954), p.67.

suspicious governor of Cuba.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, a long-standing mistrust of the French thanks to their reputation as corsairs underpinned the reticence with which Cuba and Santo Domingo offered support. The Spanish governors were in a difficult situation, on one hand wanting to fight ‘contagion’ as ordered from Madrid, but yet being uncertain of the situation in Saint-Domingue and what it could mean for them. Despite the wariness of García and other governors, later orders from Madrid called for the whites who fled to Santo Domingo to be given arms and protection.<sup>35</sup> For Arango, the situation was alarming – but not for Cuba. He wrote to the crown explaining the three main differences that would prevent any similar sort of uprising in Cuba: people of colour were loyal to the king, there was a strong military garrison in Havana, and the way slaves were treated, arguing ‘the French have treated them [slaves] like beasts and the Spanish like men.’<sup>36</sup> Others would disagree with his assessment.

Indeed, the Caribbean *cordón* was starting to crumble. So far the strategy in Spain and Santo Domingo had involved troops and censorship. Yet as the months wore on, fighting continued, the rainy season began, and more people from Saint-Domingue began to cross the border, though often they were slaves accepting refuge and support from the runaway slave communities in Santo Domingo, something they had begun doing since the spring. From the early use of slavery in the colonies, there had been cooperation between runaway slaves and *cimarrón* (maroon) colonies. Despite the relatively low slave numbers in Santo Domingo, it, like all slave-owning societies in the Caribbean, had a long tradition of maroon colonies. Such communities on the Spanish islands played an often contradictory role – the inhabitants often managed to secure their autonomy by making deals with the Spaniards, and even

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<sup>34</sup> Joaquín García to the Conde de Llerena, 25 September 1791, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 1030, ‘A la Havana llegó una de las Diputaciones de la colonia pidiendo socorros ...’

<sup>35</sup> David Patrick Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies* (Bloomington, 2002), p.172.

<sup>36</sup> Francisco de Arango y Parreño, ‘Representación hecha á S.M con motivo de la sublevación de esclavos en los dominios franceses de la Isla de Santo Domingo’, 20 November 1791, *Obras* vol. 1 (Havana, 1888), pp.48-49.

sometimes worked on behalf of the crown in chasing down runaway slaves. They were keen to invoke their rights through the legal system, or to appeal for the protection of the crown when needed.<sup>37</sup> One of the main colonies in Santo Domingo was Maniel, located outside of the capital and in the mountains, which was often the case, as difficult terrain offered better protection.<sup>38</sup> During this time, they seemed to have helped those fleeing the uncertainty of Saint-Domingue. One report said ‘[They] inform us now the group of the *bozales* [African-born slaves] have hidden in the vicinity of Maniel 28 *negros simarrones* [sic], and the rest French, who have been received [by the creole slaves], and protected to increase [the size of] their party ... these Negroes are armed with rifles for protection, and amongst them are mulattos taking shelter in this Spanish part ...’<sup>39</sup>

At the same time, the whites of Saint-Domingue were beginning their exodus, one that would accelerate so quickly that few would be left by the end of the decade. Only white planters were given permission to come to the Spanish islands, usually on the condition that they planned to work in agriculture, such as Monsieur De Vanmeuf, who wrote from the southern port of Jérémie (Jeremías to the Spanish) to officials in Cuba, saying: ‘[From] this great disturbance that we have undergone in this part of Santo Domingo, I undertake to solicit from Your Sovereignty a few years of asylum for the knowledge I have of how to cultivate sugar, and plant coffee, united in the knowledge of the afflictions of the Negroes, and the way of overcoming them.’<sup>40</sup> The convergence of all these pressures, the proximity to ports, coupled with metropolitan distance, meant that the colonial authorities in Cuba and Puerto Rico would have little

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<sup>37</sup> Lynne Guitar, ‘Boiling it Down: Slavery on the First Commercial Sugarcane Ingenios in the Americas (Hispaniola, 1530-45)’, in Landers and Robinson, *Slaves, Subjects, and Subversives*, pp. 39-82.

<sup>38</sup> Joaquín García to Marques de Bajamar, 25 September 1791, AGI Santo Domingo, legajo 954. ‘Con los sentimientos propios de la humanidad ...’

<sup>39</sup> Francisco Nuñez to Juan Bobadilla, 8 August 1791, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 954, ‘Estos nos informan ahora que el partido en los bosales tiene ocultos en las inmediaciones al Maniel ...’

<sup>40</sup> ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 4, No 35, in Franco, *Documentos*, pp.66-67.

choice but to let refugees in, and events began to push colonial policy away from the auspices of the crown. As the situation took on its own Caribbean dimensions, the usefulness of Spain's policies and edicts issued from Madrid would vary, and often not sit well with the governors.<sup>41</sup>

### *Islands on high alert*

At the beginning of January 1792, the situation remained volatile. A report to Madrid from Dajabón remarked that 'although the French of this part of the North have had some hope of ceasing the hostilities of the Negroes through the proclamation of civil commissioners, I hear they find themselves with the same affliction as before, because the Negroes of the mountains go in parties and run everywhere, robbing everyone and taking what they find, particularly animals and goods ...' The report noted that many plantations had been set ablaze and that people were fleeing the island.<sup>42</sup> Attempts to placate mulattos and stem further slave rebellions went beyond Saint-Domingue, and on 4 April 1792, the French National Assembly granted equal rights to mulattos and free people of colour – but it still had not addressed the question of slavery.

By now the entire Caribbean had been pulled into the dispute. Slave rebellions had, of course, been part of plantation life throughout the region, such as in Jamaica and the US South, but now the example of Haiti was also cause for concern for the British and North Americans.<sup>43</sup> For instance, even in Bermuda, hundreds of miles East of Saint-Domingue, members of its Council Chamber were so worried they wrote to

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<sup>41</sup> Joaquín García to Marques de Bajamar, 25 September 1791, AGI Santo Domingo, legajo 954.

<sup>42</sup> Unsigned report, 25 January 1792, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 1030, 'Aunque los Franceses de esta parte del Norte han tenido alguna esperanza de que cesarian las hostilidades de los negros mediante la Proclamacion de los comisarios civiles ...'

<sup>43</sup> James Sidbury, 'Saint Domingue in Virginia: Ideology, Local Meanings, and Resistance to Slavery, 1790-1800', *The Journal of Southern History*, 63, No 3 (1997), pp.531-52; Paul Lachance, 'The Politics of Fear: French Louisianians and the Slave Trade, 1786-1809', *Plantation Society* 1, No 2 (1979), pp.162-97.

their governor, Henry Hamilton, imploring him to secure regular troops on the island, saying:

‘That since the Dissemination of opinions respecting the lawfulness of Slavery through these Islands, as also the account of the Insurrections, Depredations and murders committed by Negroes of St Domingo, a very manifest alteration has taken place in the behaviour of the Negroes here, which together with their frequently assembling in large bodies in the night-time, have occasioned great apprehensions in many of the Principal Inhabitants respecting their own safety, as well as the safety of the Community.’<sup>44</sup>

In Jamaica, which was much nearer to Saint-Domingue, there were calls for more troops, coupled with planters’ attempts to present a picture of calm to metropolitan creditors who were becoming concerned about their West Indian interests.<sup>45</sup> The Danish too were concerned about a slave uprising, and formed a contingency plan that called for establishing links with other slave colonies to which they could turn if needed, especially nearby Puerto Rico.<sup>46</sup> Other colonial powers saw that it was clear that the news was spreading through the slave communities, and refugees and runaways were fleeing to their shores – some even making the 100-mile journey from the South of Saint-Domingue to Jamaica by canoe.<sup>47</sup>

Meanwhile, Spain was dealing with its own domestic political chaos. It was under pressure to approve Louis XVI’s acceptance of the French constitution, as other European nations had – especially considering Carlos IV and Louis XVI were cousins – but Floridablanca stood firm in his francophobia.<sup>48</sup> Increasingly considered a diplomatic liability, he was finally dismissed from his duties on 28 February 1792,

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<sup>44</sup> The National Archives (hereafter TNA), Council Chamber of Bermuda to Henry Hamilton, 17 January 1792, Colonial Office 37/43, No 218.

<sup>45</sup> David Geggus, ‘Jamaica and the Saint Domingue Slave Revolt, 1791-1793,’ *The Americas* 38, No 2 (1981), pp.220-3.

<sup>46</sup> Neville A.T. Hall, *Slave Society in the Danish West Indies*, (Kingston, 1992), p.25.

<sup>47</sup> Sherrard Scott, *The Common Wind*, p.214.

<sup>48</sup> Richard Herr, *The Eighteenth-Century Revolution in Spain* (Princeton, 1958), p.265.



and replaced by Pedro Pablo Abarca de Bolea, Conde de Aranda, who also happened to be the cousin of Conde de Ricla. Aranda and Carlos IV promptly dismantled the *junta de estado* and the corresponding power it gave the first minister over other ministers, replacing it with the *consejo de estado*, a seating chart of which is entered in the minutes, with the king and secretary (Aranda) across from each other, and five ministers on either side, representing a new configuration of power.<sup>49</sup> Aranda ignored the myriad proclamations of Floridablanca with regards to foreigners in Spain and the circulation and censorship of printed matter, lowering Floridablanca's *cordón* – but he did not completely let up, indicating some continued concern about France. In a meeting in the summer of 1792, an order was given that ‘all the stamps, printed paper and manuscripts, boxes, fans, and whatever other elusive things that occurs of said kingdom [France], have been retained in Customs, and remitted to His Majesty ...’<sup>50</sup> Aranda, however, was soon replaced in November by the 25-year-old Manuel Godoy, whose attention would be soon absorbed by court politics, Spain's failing agriculture, and looming war with France.<sup>51</sup>

Despite all these political disruptions, events in Saint-Domingue were still being as closely monitored in Madrid as was possible. In fact, discussion in the *consejo* about Saint-Domingue during this time more than tripled.<sup>52</sup> A steady stream of impassioned letters arrived with regularity from García and other officials in the Caribbean apprising the king and ministers of the situation, and asking for more financial and military support. For instance, a letter from the Archbishop and Regent

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<sup>49</sup> 16 April 1792, AHN, Junta de Estado, Estado, Libros, No 5.

<sup>50</sup> 9 July 1792 AHN, Junta de Estado, Estado, Libros, No 5.

<sup>51</sup> For more on Godoy, see for instance, John Lynch, *Bourbon Spain, 1700-1808* (London, 1993); Emilio La Parra López, *Manuel Godoy: la aventura del poder* (Barcelona, 2002); Miguel Ángel Melón (ed), *Manuel Godoy y su tiempo*, (Mérida, 2003).

<sup>52</sup> Jacques A Barbier, ‘The Culmination of the Bourbon Reforms, 1787-1792,’ *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 57, No 1 (1977), p.61.

of Santo Domingo asked for more troops to be sent to Santiago de Cuba and Puerto Rico, to build up defences on the points nearest to Santo Domingo.<sup>53</sup>

Beyond the issue of security, however, was that of finance. All these disturbances were not only causing military problems, but commercial ones as well. The fighting, burning, and fleeing in Saint-Domingue, and the disruptions this had on shipping and supply lines made for an ideal contraband situation. At the same time, it also provided useful reconfigurations in trading patterns, with the British, for instance, picking up trade in Jamaica with the Spanish islands where Saint-Domingue was now falling off.<sup>54</sup> But with restrictions growing on who was allowed to enter ports, as well as antagonism between France and Spain, legal commerce was being severely hampered. A letter from a merchant to Santiago Governor Vaillant decried the 'deplorable situation' and regretfully informed him that a cargo of tobacco for Havana was not going to set sail on time due to all the upheaval in the region.<sup>55</sup> Officially, economic concerns were the only ones that seemed to enter the public sphere of the Spanish islands. The largest publication in the Spanish islands, the *Papel Periodico de la Habana* – which was edited by, among others, Cuba's governor and captain-general, Luis de las Casas y Aragon – carried no news of events in France, much less in Saint-Domingue.<sup>56</sup> The preoccupation of many elites in Cuba, as reflected by this publication, appeared to be agriculture, though the subtexts of articles would often be obvious. An edition from 24 May 1792, which appears oblivious to neighbouring events, lamented that:

Agriculture is, for the most part, a vain science, a name without object: others imagine that it is not necessary in fertile land; and very few think that the principles, the reasoning, and the experiences on which this science is

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<sup>53</sup> Minutes, 16 April 1792, AHN, Junta de Estado, Estado, Libros, No 5.

<sup>54</sup> Adrian J. Pearce, *British Trade With Spanish America, 1763-1808* (Liverpool, 2007), pp.90-91.

<sup>55</sup> Manuel Gonzales to Juan Vaillant, 17 October 1792, AGN Cuba, Correspondencia de los Capitanes Generales, legajo 44, sig 4.

<sup>56</sup> Ada Ferrer, 'Noticias de Haití en Cuba', *Revista de Indias*, 63, No 229 (2003), p.688.

founded, can be useful in furthering their own interests. To prove this carelessness one needs only to observe, that our knowledge [of agriculture] is today, nearly the same now as it was 100 years ago, while the foreigners, our neighbours, have made by their application agriculture progress so rapidly, and have acquired such clear enlightenment about the best means of cultivation ...<sup>57</sup>

While the 'neighbours' remained nameless, and the high cost of their agricultural riches unremarked on, the message was clear. It was time to take action. Dominance in the sugar industry could fall into Cuba's hands if its planters took their chances while their wealthy neighbours fought. While Cuba had been steadily expanding since the independent colonies of the United States had turned into lucrative trading partners, the events in Saint-Domingue provided the catalyst for expanding sugar production on the island.<sup>58</sup> But this adjustment would take some time. In 1791, Cuba only produced 16,731 metric tons of sugar, compared with Jamaica's 60,900 and Saint-Domingue's 78,696, but Cuban planters understood what was at stake, and they also realised that sugar production was going to have to be large scale.<sup>59</sup> Saint-Domingue's prodigious output was, not surprisingly, severely disrupted by the fighting. Arango and the other land-holding elites were well-positioned to exploit this and indeed planters had been clearing land to make room for more sugar. Arango again implored the crown, in his well-known work, *Discurso sobre la agricultura de la Habana y medios de fomertarla* (1792), saying: 'The confusion and disorder than reigned in their [France's] colonies diminished their production and gave value to ours ... Today, in happier circumstances, because of the fatal increase in misfortune of our neighbour, we sell our sugar at an advantageous price; but tomorrow, what will

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<sup>57</sup> *Papel Periodico de la Habana*, 24 May 1792, No 42.

<sup>58</sup> Cuba of course was also a lucrative market for the US, its imports worth 8,200,000 pesos in 1789, while Spain's were worth 87,000 pesos in the same year. See Pearce, *British Trade*, p.191.

<sup>59</sup> Manuel Moreno Friginals, *El Ingenio: el complejo economico social cubano del azucar*, vol.1 (Havana, 1978), p.41.

be? Here is the real concern the island of Cuba should have.’<sup>60</sup> The *consejo* agreed that the situation in Cuba merited a closer look, remarking: ‘Before we take any resolution we agree to send the discourse and project to the Indies, in order to examine it with the attention, brevity, and reserve the matter asks for, in that the happiness of the island is treated with importance, whose growth in population and power ought to be one of the primary attentions of our government’. It could ill afford to pass up the potential revenues. The crown made three signification decisions: that foreign slave traders were now allowed to stay on the islands up to eight days where they were not permitted before; for ten years, the island would not be charged import duty on cotton, coffee, and indigo, though not sugar; and the establishment of a *junta* – which would be set up the following year – with the aim of improving agricultural techniques and increasing sugar production was permitted.<sup>61</sup>

In the same year, a *Sociedad Económica de Amigos de País* was founded in Havana, also with the support of Governor Las Casas and Arango.<sup>62</sup> And while this branch was being set up, the one established in Santiago in 1787 had already stopped meeting. The members of the Santiago branch had hoped the organisation would also be able to help in the aims of increasing the population, as well as establishing schools and studying agricultural techniques. The Havana branch would, not surprisingly, have a strong interest in sugar production.<sup>63</sup> The difference in the economic societies show the contrast between the North and South of the island, separated not only by 760 kilometres (470 miles), but also their different relationships with other islands in the Caribbean, as well as with Spain. The most obvious contrast

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<sup>60</sup> Francisco de Arango y Parreño, ‘Discurso sobre la Agricultura de la Habana y medios de fomentarla’, 1792, *Obras*, pp.62-63.

<sup>61</sup> 12 October 1792, AHN, Junta de Estado, Estado, Libros, No 5.

<sup>62</sup> Izaskun Álvarez Cuartero, *Memorias de la Ilustración: las Sociedades Económicas de Amigos del País en Cuba (1783-1832)* (Madrid, 2000).

<sup>63</sup> Robert Jones Shafer, *The Economic Societies in the Spanish World, 1763-1821* (Syracuse, 1958), pp. 145-54.

was the amount of maritime traffic each port had with Saint-Domingue. Santiago de Cuba, along with nearby Baracoa, lies in the far South-East of Cuba, known as the *oriente*, and only a few hundred miles North of the Saint-Domingue ports of Môle Saint-Nicholas and Saint-Marc, and West of Le Cap in Saint-Domingue. Havana, meanwhile, also received ships from Saint-Domingue, but that was in addition to many from other nations and places within Spain's empire. Havana was a cosmopolitan port city, and because of this, much of the island's agricultural investigations, economic societies, and intellectual thought came from it, and it also became one of the most important imperial administrative centres in the Caribbean, and eventually the empire. Santiago, on the other hand, was smaller and less developed. However, these balances would soon change, with the arrival of coffee planters from Saint-Domingue. They were keen to settle in the hills of *oriente* and resume their work. Often the refugee planters wanted to bring their slaves as well. The pressures of immigration quickly engulfed Santiago. It also meant that port also become a place where some of the new racialised rules were forged and exercised. During this period such control was not as clear as it would be ten years later, but even at this point concern about Saint-Domingue meant that the provincial towns were bound up in events as much as Havana, if not more so. The pressures on Santiago de Cuba were great, and it became quite clear early on that these French planters could offer something in return. They could bring not only their capital to set up plantations, but also their knowledge, helping to modernise sugar and coffee technology. For non-whites, the situation was more complicated. Madrid's edicts and Havana's determination to prevent any people of colour from any of the French island from disembarking in Cuba presented numerous difficulties as they were almost impossible to enforce. Unlike a land border, coastlines were often impossible to police.

These complexities can be illustrated by the case of a Genovese planter with the (probably Hispanicised) name of José Corsí who wanted to leave Jérémie and

move to Santiago. His wife, Maria Balenina, claimed to be from Santiago, as she explained in a letter to Governor Las Casas. She told him how the slaves were destroying the island and now, having fled to Cuba, they were ‘wanting to put in safety, his life, mine, and that of our five children’ by being allowed to emigrate, and bring over 30 slaves.<sup>64</sup> The question of the slaves is where Las Casas drew the line, informing them they could bring their goods over but not their slaves.<sup>65</sup> It was certainly not the first of such pleas, and within a few years the volume of such requests rose dramatically.<sup>66</sup> Beyond the planter/slave divide there was also the question of who was ‘French’. Many of the whites in Saint-Domingue, like those in Santo Domingo or Cuba, had been born in the Caribbean. Or like José Corsí, they claimed to be from elsewhere. Even among the ‘French’ there were different groups, such as the fleeing members of the royalist military, the free people of colour, runaway slaves, or the recent arrivals from France.<sup>67</sup> Yet this term to the Spanish signified inhabitants of the whole of the French world. In the case of Corsí the only ‘French’ were the 30 slaves. And while it was Havana extolling the virtues of the great riches to be made at the expense of the faltering Saint-Domingue, it would be Santiago where the true cost of such wealth would be questioned; after all, Corsí wanted to settle there, not in Havana. But while Havana often attempted to make the rules, it often would be Santiago that suffered the consequences.

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<sup>64</sup> Marina Balenina to Luis de las Casas, 15 August 1792, AGI Cuba, legajo 1434, ‘... y queriendo ponder en salvo, su vida, la mia...’

<sup>65</sup> Luis de las Casas to Juan Bautista Vaillant, 27 September 1792, ANC, Correspondencia de los Capitanes Generales, legajo 43, No 8 in Franco *Documentos*, p.82.

<sup>66</sup> While such requests are usually scattered throughout a given *legajo* during this period it is impossible to say with any certainty what the scale was, especially as many people simply fled, ignoring the paperwork protocols, and many petitions have no doubt been lost. However the various *legajos* in the AGI Seville demonstrate that by the early 1800s, there were enough petitions from either side of the island to fill a few boxes. See AGI, Santo Domingo 1037-40.

<sup>67</sup> Angel Sanz Tapia, ‘Refugiados de la revolucion francesa en Venezuela (1793-1795)’, *Revista de Indias* XLVII, No 181 (1987), p.834.

Still, both cities and the other islands soon realised they had to find a way to deal with the influx. For the immigrants, especially the French refugee planters, an acceptable means for settling had to be constructed, and so religion became another way around this question. In Puerto Rico, for example, instructions from the crown involving land stipulated that it could be sold to ‘foreigners’ but they had to be Catholic and ‘not suspicious’.<sup>68</sup> However, many people were in no state to begin farming, often fleeing with nothing, and instead had to rely on the generosity of their places of refuge. The governor of Trinidad felt compelled to write to the crown asking for enough support to give 1 *real* 4 *pesos* daily to the 89 ‘elderly, women and children that find themselves in absolute, total abandonment’.<sup>69</sup> The overall influx of people was becoming a growing problem for Cuba as well. The lieutenant governor of Holguín expressed his concern to Santiago Governor Vaillant, who passed it along to Las Casas: ‘Without doubt being vigilant in observing what you have communicated to me with regard to the French, they will not introduce contagion to our possessions’ but goes on to lament that ‘[the ports] frequently have feared the enemy nation in them ... and the situation of the population ... it is impossible to contain the arrivals, and departures ...’<sup>70</sup> Despite this being a local problem, Las Casas ended up using larger European rivalries to take drastic action and issue an edict declaring that due to the hostilities between the two nations in Europe, the French no longer had ‘a just motive’ for living in Spanish Cuba, except those ‘with mercy, and the blessing of nature’ who had lived there for more than six years in an official job, recognised trade or by marriage to a Spaniard. Those who did not meet the residency requirements had to leave within 10 days, and he also granted the *auditor de guerra* the right to

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<sup>68</sup> Duque de Crillon, 19 July 1792, Archivo General de Puerto Rico (hereafter AGPR), Gobernadores Españoles, Asuntos Políticos y Civiles, caja 174, fol 99.

<sup>69</sup> Joseph María Chacon to Diego de Gardoqui, 9 August 1793, AGI, Caracas, legajo 153, ‘El Gobierno Intendente de la Ysla de Trinidad ...’

<sup>70</sup> Juan Bautista Vaillant to Luis de las Casas, 25 June 1793, AGI, Cuba, legajo 1434, ‘...el Guarico a los de esta Jurisdiccion se cuentan siento ocho...’

investigate and take whatever measures he needed to find any ‘unauthorised’ French person.<sup>71</sup>

But the people of colour – and keeping them out – would continue being the real cause for concern, like the 20 people who Las Casas heard turned up in port of Baracoa. Writing to Vaillant, he reminded him of the royal order that blacks who were bought or fugitives from the French islands were ‘not to be introduced or allowed to remain’ on the island.<sup>72</sup> Orders given to the *Guardia de los Ríos* in Santo Domingo stipulated that, ‘If you apprehend any Negro, or French Negroes, take care to send them to this command with the arms, and the rest of what is encountered, giving an account of the day, and hour, in which they were caught ...’ also telling them that they would have to go on a daily patrol in parts where ‘one presumes they can introduce Negroes of the French part to ours, and give an account of what you observe’.<sup>73</sup>

However, amid all the edicts to keep people out, there was one group the authorities were very keen to allow in: new slaves. Even though there was this worry of ‘contagion’, and a constant monitoring of borders and ports, there was also a willingness to let slave traders dock in Spanish ports – and now stay for longer – bringing on shore their human wares from Africa.<sup>74</sup> Certainly, there was a noticeable jump in slave disembarkations between 1790 and 1792. In 1790 some 2,718 slaves left the ships carrying them in Cuba; the following year that number went up to 6,731, and in 1792 it would remain at that level, at 6,564.<sup>75</sup> Land was being cleared and more sugar was being planted around Havana, which in turn would lead to higher tax

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<sup>71</sup> Luis de las Casas, 31 May 1793, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 255, sig 20.

<sup>72</sup> Luis de las Casas to Juan Bautista Vaillant, 28 December 1793, ANC, Correspondencia de los Capitanes Generales, legajo 46, No 3, in Franco *Documentos*, p.97.

<sup>73</sup> Ordenes, 17 November 1792, Archivo General de la Nación de la Republica Dominicana (AGNRD), Época Colonial Español, legajo 26, exp 6.

<sup>74</sup> Diego de Gardoqui, 9 June 1792, AGPR, Gobernadores Españoles, Asuntos Políticos y Civiles, caja 174, fol 83.

<sup>75</sup> The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database 2009, Slave Voyages, Estimates, <http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/assessment/estimates.faces> last accessed 17 May 2010.



revenues for the crown. Although the economic configuration of Cuba was changing, it would do little to stem the looming crisis that awaited Carlos IV.<sup>76</sup>

The following year began with a dramatic start: the execution of France's Louis XVI on 21 January 1793. Anti-French sentiment in Spain rose, and the war between the two countries that erupted that year lasted until 1795 and had very high costs.<sup>77</sup> Now even more rumours of a French invasion circulated throughout the Caribbean, and even into Louisiana, with the Governor, Barón de Carondelet, fearful that long-standing trade links with France and the relatively high number of French people living there would mean '[their] contagion would ferment in secret and will produce a terrible explosion'. The crown, therefore, allowed him the power to 'monitor and arrest whatever species blows contrary to the public quiet and calm...' <sup>78</sup> In Santo Domingo, Governor García continued to bulk up defenses on the border, though in one report he pointed out that while they only had around 2,000 men in Dajabón, they were being attacked by some 8,000 troops.<sup>79</sup> Keeping soldiers alive as well as armed, supplied, and clothed was a difficult and costly task, and García was constantly forced to ask for extra funds to be remitted from the coffers in New Spain.<sup>80</sup> Adding to the overall military struggle was the fact that on one hand, many soldiers chose to desert, while on another there were questions about what to do with

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<sup>76</sup> Jacques Barbier, and Herbert S Klein, 'Revolutionary Wars and Public Finances: The Madrid Treasury, 1784-1807', *The Journal of Economic History*, 41, No. 2 (1981), pp.315-39.; Jacques Barbier, 'Peninsular Finance and Colonial Trade: The Dilemma of Charles IV's Spain', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 12, No 1 (1980), pp.21-37.

<sup>77</sup> Herr, *Eighteenth-Century Revolution*, pp.310-11; David Ringrose, *Spain, Europe and the 'Spanish Miracle', 1700-1900* (Cambridge, 1996).

<sup>78</sup> 16 April 26 793, AHN, Junta de Estado, Estado, Libros, No 6.

<sup>79</sup> Report, 9 February 1793, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 1031, 'En Dajabon se compone la guarnición de 979 hombres de tropas veterana...'

<sup>80</sup> Draft letter, 24 October 1793, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 1030, 'Haviendo representando el Gobernador de Santo Domingo la mayor urgencia ...'

the mounting numbers of prisoners of war.<sup>81</sup> García tried to send the captured French Republicans and slaves to other territories. One letter noted a fleet of five ships heading to Puerto Cabello to drop nine immigrants, which then continued on to the port of La Guaira, the final destination for the 188 prisoners of war and 234 slaves of Caracas.<sup>82</sup> Despite their status as prisoners, the French could still cause problems in their shackled condition, as one order pointed out: 'It is strictly prohibited that all the French prisoners of whatever class or condition, discuss the public business of their Country during their time in the dominions of His Majesty ...'<sup>83</sup>

By this point, some of the rebel slaves had decided that an alliance with the Santo Domingo's troops could give them the leverage they needed to fight off the whites, and in exchange García saw his troop numbers receive a much-needed boost, a deal the captain-general could not afford to turn down. The black auxiliary troops were led by former slaves Jean François and Georges Biassou, and later on Toussaint L'Ouverture joined them.<sup>84</sup> For Spain, the fight at this point was still against France. There was potential victory with the help of these soldiers, as Governor García pointed out to the crown. He argued that the black soldiers were of great use and they should be offering those former slaves who were unwilling to fight on the Republican side the protection of the crown, while at same time 'also taking advantage of some of the Negroes of our colony, of accredited faithfulness...'<sup>85</sup> The boost in troop numbers, and their tactical knowledge of the north of Saint-Domingue, would also mean that

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<sup>81</sup> Unsigned, 17 February 1793, AGPR, Gobernadores Españoles, Asuntos Políticos y Civiles, caja 174, fol 183.

<sup>82</sup> Joaquin García to Diego Gardoquí, 25 October 1793, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 1031, 'Por la adjunta nota se instruirá VE son 431 hombres los dirigidos á Caracas ...'

<sup>83</sup> Report, 9 December 1793 AGPR, Gobernadores Españoles, Asuntos Políticos y Civiles, caja 174, fol 205.

<sup>84</sup> For more on Toussaint L'Ouverture, his leadership of Saint-Domingue and his historical depiction, see CLR James, *Black Jacobins*; Sibylle Fischer, *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (Durham, 2004); David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (Durham, 2004).

<sup>85</sup> 19 February 1793, AHN, Junta de Estado, Estados, Libros, No 6.

Spain could focus not only on defence but also its other ambition – a somewhat improbable clawing back the French side of the island, reclaiming what was lost in 1697.<sup>86</sup> García in many ways found himself in a paradoxical situation by 1793. Santo Domingo was a slave-owning society and part of a larger imperial world that was concerned with getting more slave labour into the Caribbean, while at the same time it would have to rely increasingly on an alliance with former slaves to meet its military objectives. And despite a tradition of allowing slaves to buy their freedom, and the tolerance of the subsequent communities of free people of colour throughout the region, many *criollo* members of the militia were wary of these former slaves from the French side. They had not been freed through a long-standing legal process, but through a violent rupture, causing many Dominicans to consider them little more than runaways.<sup>87</sup> Many of these former-slave soldiers reiterated their anti-Republican beliefs, and professed a long-standing loyalty to the crown in the hopes of gaining favour and further privileges among the Spaniards in addition to the freedom they would now be guaranteed in Spain's dominions. In a *memoria* of 1793, General Biassou declared: 'That without flattering myself, I dared to call myself the chief of the counter-revolution ... I undertook a war, scarcely without arms, without munitions, without supplies, and in the end without many means ... on August 23 of the year 1791 ... I undertook a war to save my King [Louis XVI], who I have always considered with the most profound respect.'<sup>88</sup>

In June events reached a crescendo with a violent, bloody attack by the rebel slave forces on Le Cap. They torched the town, a symbolic act, as it was one of the key ports in a region of many plantations. It also was a turn away from burning down

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<sup>86</sup> Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, pp.179-180.

<sup>87</sup> Ada Ferrer, 'Reading the Revolution: Contemporary Discourse and Ideology', in *Tree of Liberty: Cultural Legacies of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World*, Doris L Garraway (ed) (Charlottesville, 2008), p.25.

<sup>88</sup> Memoria del Señor Jorge Biasou, 25 August 1793, Archivo General de Simancas (hereafter AGS), Secretaría del Despacho de Guerra, legajo 7157, No 7.

plantations, which they had been doing, and towards targetting more populated areas. The attack sent scores of whites into boats and away from the burning city. The Spaniards, with the help of their black auxiliaries, were able to make territorial gains from the chaos. By now France was also losing its grip on its other islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe, as they too were pulled into the complicated fighting.<sup>89</sup> Soon after the events in Le Cap, the recently arrived French Governor, Léger-Félicité Sonthonax offered freedom to slaves in the North who fought alongside the French, in the hopes that they could win back some of the people lost to the Spanish flag. The offer was taken up by many slaves, and then extended to the provinces in the South and West. As Spain advanced and the number of rebel slaves grew, and, combined with internal Revolutionary political pressures, Sonthonax found himself forced into completely abolishing slavery on 29 August 1793, ahead of the National Assembly, which would have no option but to ratify the move.<sup>90</sup> Upon receiving the news of Sonthonax's decree from some of his black troops, Governor García issued a proclamation praising his men and condemning the French: '... these revolutionaries were only intent on giving the earth all the good and having put the Colony in a state where the eyes have nothing else to look at but the dust and the blood that has been left in the ruins ...' <sup>91</sup> Navy lieutenant-general and former governor of Santo Domingo Marqués de Socorro noted to the *consejo de estado* that, 'the declaration of liberty of the Slaves of the French part of Santo Domingo I believe to be extended to the rest of the Islands or French Colonies; and the equality of the Negroes and free mulattos to whites that the French Convention has made, has put in immediate risk the dominion of Your Majesty in those islands because the Towns of the coast are for the most part

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<sup>89</sup> See Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens*.

<sup>90</sup> Robert Stein, 'The Abolition of Slavery in the North, West, and South of Saint Domingue', *The Americas*, 41, No 3 (1985), pp.47-55; Doris L Garraway, ' "Légitime Défense": Universalism and Nationalism in the Discourse of the Haitian Revolution', in Garraway *Tree of Liberty*, pp.63-88.

<sup>91</sup> Joaquín García, 21 October 1793, Archivo General de Simancas, Secretaría del Despacho de Guerra, legajo 7151, No 18.

blacks and free mulattos ...'<sup>92</sup> He continued by arguing that the greatest risk still came from France itself, and recommended boosting the sea squadron as part of the overall defence strategy.<sup>93</sup>

The shocking abolition of slavery in Saint-Domingue had numerous repercussions, but one that would have immediate results was the decision by General Toussaint L'Ouverture to stop fighting for the Spanish. He had quickly realised that Spain had absolutely no intention of following Sonthonax's abolitionist example, and so left Georges Biassou and Jean-François by the following spring, and returned to fight for the now abolitionist France. He united the warring factions within Saint-Domingue to defeat not only the French loyalists, but Spain and now also Britain. Indeed, by the autumn, L'Ouverture made gains in Northern Spanish-held territories, while Britain took a serious plunge into this conflict in the South and West of the island, sending 15,000 troops over the next five years.<sup>94</sup> With Jamaica as a nearby base, the British had long had trade connections to Saint-Domingue. Now it too was caught up in territorial ambitions. The news of Britain's involvement spread rapidly. Santo Domingo's Governor García wrote to the crown that 'it seems that the ministers Pitt [sic] and Dundas have agreed to surrender both said Possessions [Saint-Domingue and Santo Domingo]'.<sup>95</sup> The British hoped that France's loss would be their gain.

France's revolutionary struggle had not only crossed the Atlantic, but so too the European wars that followed in its wake. The battle of Saint-Domingue had turned into a European war, with France seeking to quell the slave rebellion, Spain hoping to

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<sup>92</sup> Minutes, 31 October 1794, AHN, Junta de Estado, Estado, Libros, No 9.

<sup>93</sup> Jane Landers, 'Rebellion and Royalism in Spanish Florida', in David Geggus (ed), *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean* (Bloomington, 1997), pp.156-177.

<sup>94</sup> Josef Antonio Urizár to Eugenio de Llaguno, 25 November 1794, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 1032, '... aun que tenia noticia de el Gral negro Tousaint ...'. For more on the debate about why Britain entered in this battle see David Geggus, 'The British Government and the Saint Domingue Slave Revolt, 1791-1793', *The English Historical Review*, 96, No 379 (1981), pp.285-305; and Geggus, *Slavery, War and Revolution: The British Occupation of Saint Domingue 1793-1798* (Alderley, 1982).

<sup>95</sup> Joaquín García to Juan de Araoz, 24 October 1793, AHN, Ultramar, legajo 6232, No 12.

regain the part it traded away, and for the British to try and take territory from the French. The arrival of British troops was another headache for Spain, for Britain had long been an enemy and Spain still had nowhere near the same troop power. The forces in Santo Domingo were struggling. García had to ask the crown to drop import charges on boats that were near the port of Bayajá so they could call in and could re-supply the ill-fed and ill-clothed troops.<sup>96</sup> In the search for food, he had to go so far as to beg for wheat to be sent from New Spain as well, and he received 8,000 *petates*, or small bags.<sup>97</sup> At the same time, war between Spain and France was well under way. The Spanish crown was becoming increasingly burdened with the cost of so much fighting, and in 1793 it had been forced to take a loan from the Dutch to the value of 48,110,000 *reales de vellón*. That soon was insufficient and in the following years Spain was forced to raise money through bonds, or *vales reales*.<sup>98</sup>

As the summer wore on, the Spanish black auxiliaries gained more ground under Jean-François and Biassou, despite the difficult conditions. Jean-François began to act outside of General García's wishes, and in July 1794 massacred some 700 French colonists in Bayajá (known on the French side as Fort-Liberté) who were technically supposed to be under the protection of the Spanish crown.<sup>99</sup> Dominican officers were horrified, and the events were quickly relayed back to Madrid. But they now found themselves in a dilemma – they were in no position to stop the black soldiers from fighting on behalf of Spain, as they relied on their numbers, yet there was growing concern about how their generals were exercising their power. In addition, throughout these months of conflict, the issue of prisoners and what do with them kept returning. The problem was two-fold: food already was scarce enough for

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<sup>96</sup> Joaquin García to Diego Gardoqui, 6 February 1794, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 1031, 'El Gov de Sto Dom: Hace presente la providencia que tomó el Teniente General Don Gabriel de Aristizaval ...'

<sup>97</sup> Joaquin García to Juan de Araoz, 26 April 1794, AHN, Ultramar, legajo 6232, No 13.

<sup>98</sup> Barbier and Klein, 'Revolutionary Wars and Public Finances', p.324.

<sup>99</sup> Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, p.180.

the troops, but also they still feared that these prisoners would spread French ‘contagion’. The regent of Santo Domingo’s *Audiencia* wrote to the crown, saying ‘slaves, prisoners of war, and the rest of the criminals remitted from the French Colony, would be moved in succession of four embarkations to Puerto Rico ... in order to strengthen this mode of our internal security ...’ José Antonio Urizár’s lengthy *informe* focused on what he considered to be mounting threats to security, such as the lack of protection in the capital, as he pointed out that most of the troops were at the border, and explained there was ‘distrust of the blacks with which we must live’.<sup>100</sup> At the same time, many people fleeing Saint-Domingue were trying to leave the island, rather than seek refuge in the impoverished Spanish side. They were making their way to Cuba, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, or anywhere of safety that the currents could carry them. A list in Santo Domingo noted the ‘French families that miserably left fleeing Bayajá’, which included ‘Madam Leman, with four children, presented the worst misery’. She and the other refugees were given some *reales* to give them immediate assistance until they could leave the island.<sup>101</sup> By 1794 some 30,000 whites had fled in this first wave of emigration, with more than 10,000 heading to the US cities such as Charleston and Norfolk. Like their West Indian counterparts, these American ports would soon attempt to stop the non-white immigrants.<sup>102</sup> Some 15,000-20,000 refugees fled to Cuba, and around 1,000 made their way through Santo Domingo and

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<sup>100</sup> José Antonio Urizár to Eugenio de Llaguno, 25 August 1794, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 1032, ‘En este estado con toda precision dispuse oportunamente que los negros esclavos prisioneros de Guerra ...’

<sup>101</sup> Lista de las familias franceses que miserablemente salieron huyendo de Bayajá, 4 September 1795, AGNRD, Época Colonial Español, legajo 28, exp 4.

<sup>102</sup> Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina were quick to ban free people of colour from Saint-Domingue in their ports, or to allow refugees to bring their slaves with them. See Alfred N Hunt, *Haiti's Influence on Antebellum America: Slumbering Volcano in the Caribbean* (Baton Rouge, 1988).

on to Mayagüez and San Juan in Puerto Rico.<sup>103</sup> A few hundred went to Trinidad, and the rest scattered around the Caribbean region, going to places such as Spanish New Orleans, which had earlier French connections, and the coast of Venezuela.<sup>104</sup> Around the same time, the *Sociedad Económica* in Havana formed a *junta de población blanca*, which called on the king to allow more whites to settle on the island, especially in the east of the country, with its proximity to Saint-Domingue, though more decisive royal action on the question of Cuba's racial balance would not be settled until more than a decade later.<sup>105</sup>

While the planters brought their *cafetales* in the East and landowners around Havana expanded their sugar operations, the crown decided to grant Cuba a *consulado*. This was a body which oversaw trade, yet also had administrative and judicial functions. They were not new bodies, the first having been established in Seville (1543) and in the first in the Americas in New Spain (1594). The crown was establishing more in the colonies, including Havana's in 1794. One of its aims was supposed to be developing economic growth, though Arango criticised it for being little more than a tribunal.<sup>106</sup> Indeed, throughout the other colonies, they were using them in an attempt to give *criollo* elites some privileges in exchange for some of the ones lost through peninsular appointments. While this was not so much the case in Cuba, it does indicate the sustained economic and political interest the crown was taking, as Cuba's economy underwent a transformation amid the upheaval. In

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<sup>103</sup> Gabriel Esteban Debien, 'Les colons de Saint-Domingue réfuiés a Cuba 1793-1815', *Revista de Indias* 54-56 (1953), pp.11-37. He argues that there was a first wave lasting until 1798, which was followed by an evacuation from 1798-1802, and a great exodus in 1803-04, and then another triggered by events of 1808; Raquel Rosario, 'Los efectos de la revolucion en Saint Domingue y de la venta de la Lousiana en Puerto Rico: las migraciones en la isla', (San Juan, 1988), p.65.

<sup>104</sup> Carlos Esteban Deive, *Los refugiados franceses en Santo Domingo (1789-1801)* (Santo Domingo, 1984), p.147. See also Sanz Tapia, 'Refugiados de la revolución francesa en Venezuela'.

<sup>105</sup> Álvarez Cuatero, *Memorias*, pp.191-192.

<sup>106</sup> See Gabriel B Paquette, 'State-Civil Society Cooperation and Conflict in the Spanish Empire: The Intellectual and Political Activities of the Ultramarine Consulados and Economic Societies, c.1780-1810', *Journal of Latin American Studies* 39 (2007), pp. 263-98 for a more detailed explanation of *consulados* and their expansion in South America.



addition, the Cuban elites and the crown had been able to come to arrangements that would appear advantageous to both, building on the initial ones undertaken by Ricla and O'Reilly. Gradually, it was becoming clearer to the king and his advisers that sugar revenues could help shore up the Treasury, and in exchange for this, the island would continue to receive certain concessions. Indeed, during this time, the Cuban planters managed to get the crown to back down over its list of demands as outlined in the *Codigo Negro*, forcing Carlos IV to give up on his reforms, while at the same time importing ever higher numbers of slaves.

The labour question was exacerbated by domestic unrest brought about by the growing animosity between Las Casas and the military. He was especially annoyed at the lower-ranking officers who could potentially help the growing sugar economy – especially infrastructure improvements such as building roads – but who refused to undertake such work. Throughout these years the captain-general faced domestic political battles to have this sort of work done. His eventual means of doing so was to strip back the privileges of the *fuero militar*, and this prompted great unrest on the island among Spaniards and *criollos* and between the military and Las Casas.<sup>107</sup> At the same time, the need for agricultural workers meant that Cubans turned in increasing numbers to the slave trade. Estimates range from a total of 21,683 to 40,000 new slave arrivals from 1790-94.<sup>108</sup> In addition, Arango and the Conde de Casa Montalvo went on an expedition to Madrid, Portugal, England, Barbados, and Jamaica to discuss slavery, discover the latest technological advances for sugar production and observe the workings of plantation societies.<sup>109</sup> Yet despite the money and technological knowledge many of the fleeing planters from Saint-Domingue

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<sup>107</sup> Johnson, *Social Transformation*, pp.148-52.

<sup>108</sup> The lowest figure is from the Slave Voyages Database, Estimates, which also includes Puerto Rico, <http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/assessment/estimates.faces> last accessed 17 May 2010. See Matt D Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle Against Atlantic Slavery* (Chapel Hill, 2006), p.55 for a discussion on the varying numbers within Cuba.

<sup>109</sup> Friginals, *El Ingenio*, p.74.

would bring to the east of Cuba, Havana was more wary about what they had to offer, as evidenced by Las Casa's edict banning communication with the French, quickly acting upon a recent *real orden* to do so.<sup>110</sup> He decreed that:

No person, of whatever class or condition, have correspondence with nationals or foreigners, and especially with the French, relative to the present disturbances; nor receive, read or communicate to another, books or papers that contain or recommend the depraved designs they endeavour to propagate ... I make the same special order to the Judges and Magistrates so they can apply all their zeal in order that they [the French] do not propagate similar books and papers ...<sup>111</sup>

### *The end of Santo Domingo*

In June 1795, the *regente* of Santo Domingo, José Antonio Urizár wrote to *consejo* member Eugenio Llaguno in Madrid. In his lengthy discourse, entitled *Modificación, y limite de esclavitud*, he pondered the treatment of the slaves in the face of a changing Caribbean and imperial world, pointing out:

We are seeing the fierce debates ... in the House of Commons in London about the abolition of the slave trade [*comercio de negros*], and the extinction of slavery, as it is opposed to humanity, just legislation, and national dignity: we see that Denmark substantially agreed with England in its resolution and providences, and we are looking at what the Convention of Paris has declared, and proclaimed, the general liberty extinguishing slavery with the terrible expressions it is accustomed to, [expressions which are] infuriating to other Nations, and to their previous system.<sup>112</sup>

Understanding the subtleties of the global shift that was under way, and presumably drawing from his experience of watching events unfold in Santo Domingo, he went on to tell Llaguno that 'it seems to me very important to examine, and try to see if

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<sup>110</sup> Real Orden, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 5, sig 26, 1795.

<sup>111</sup> Luis de las Casas, 13 November 1794, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 255, sig 23.

<sup>112</sup> Josef Antonio Urizár to Eugenio de Llaguno, 25 June 1795, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 1032, 'Estamos viendo los fuertes devates de la Camara, y Parlamento de Londres ...'

there any means to modify slavery without damaging the State, [or] Agriculture ...'<sup>113</sup>

But his proposal was ignored, as the crown and its key thinkers were busy contemplating how best to allow for growth in Cuba and more slavery.

Santo Domingo, meanwhile, was about to be pushed out of the empire altogether. Godoy had put the finishing touches on the Treaty of Basel (1795) that would see the Spanish side of the island given to the French in order to stop the fighting between the two countries. In fact, Godoy received the title *Príncipe de la Paz* for his role in crafting the deal. A short time later, a *real orden* was issued proclaiming that oldest part of Spain's empire was to be evacuated and handed to the French.<sup>114</sup> As might be imagined, the shock for the Dominicans was immediate and this action was seen as a painful betrayal, as well as a fulfillment of everything they had been told to fight against – rule by the French, much less the prospect of life under a regime that supported abolition and republicanism. In practical terms, however, the evacuation would take much longer, and many residents, while upset about the situation, would not or could not go to another island. French rule also took some time to materialise because of their entanglements in the West of the island, which demanded all their attention.<sup>115</sup> In seeing battles raging on two fronts, the crown had made it clear that it was willing to write off its oldest colony in an attempt to keep the power balances on the peninsula in check. Dominicans' years of pleading for resources, for more investment and for more slaves had come to this. Even the small prosperity made with trade to Saint-Domingue had collapsed, while at the same time Cuba and Puerto Rico were receiving the very things that would prevent them from facing imperial irrelevancy. Another type of unification would later come to

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<sup>113</sup> Josef Antonio Urizár to Eugenio de Llaguno, 25 June 1795, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 1032, '... me parece muy importante que se examine ...'

<sup>114</sup> *Real orden* 31 August 1795, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 5, sig 29.

<sup>115</sup> For a more detailed discussion on the administrative and logistical problems delaying the handover, see Wendell G. Schaeffer, 'The Delayed Cession of Spanish Santo Domingo to France, 1795-1801', *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 29, No 1 (1949), pp.46-68.

Hispaniola, though in a more dramatic fashion than the signers of the treaty had envisioned. But it is at this point the trajectories of the three islands diverge, and Santo Domingo began a difficult, uncertain, and completely different path.

It was not only the island of Hispaniola, however, that faced upheaval. Throughout the region, the year 1795 saw rebellions ignite in other slave colonies. Not all involved slaves on plantations – some dealt with maroon colonies. There had been instances in the Bahamas, Jamaica (Second Maroon War 1795-96), Demerara, and Curaçao, as well as the earlier rebellions in France's other colonies, Guadeloupe and Martinique.<sup>116</sup> These were often inspired by rumours of emancipation, though others were born out of more local unrest.<sup>117</sup> The Spanish territories, too, would get their share, partly thanks to confusion born of the *real cédula de gracias al sacar* of 10 February 1795, which allowed some non-whites, such as *pardos* (mulattos) in Venezuela the right to buy certain white privileges.<sup>118</sup> Indeed, that May the Venezuelan port of Coro saw an uprising organised by some 300 free and slave blacks, mulattos and *zambos* (someone who is part indigenous and part black). One of the leaders, José Leonardo Chirino, a *zambo*, was familiar with Saint-Domingue, having accompanied the master of his wife there many times.<sup>119</sup> According to the *expediente*, they 'asked for liberty for the slaves, the surrender to them of the city, with the aim of establishing a republic', the definition of which is never fully spelled out, though the meaning of what they were asking was implicit.<sup>120</sup> The rebellion was

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<sup>116</sup> For a detailed list of rebellions and conspiracies during this period, see David Patrick Geggus, 'Slave Resistance in the Spanish Caribbean in the Mid-1700s' in Gaspar and Geggus, *A Turbulent Time*.

<sup>117</sup> Geggus, 'Slave Resistance'; Sherrard Scott, *The Common Wind*.

<sup>118</sup> James F King, 'The Case of Jose Ponciano de Ayarza: A document on gracias al sacar', *Hispanic American Historical Review* 31, No 4 (1951), pp.640-47.

<sup>119</sup> Johanna von Grafenstein, *Nueva España en el circuncaribe, 1779-1808: revolución, competencia imperial y vínculos intercoloniales* (Mexico D.F., 1997), pp.252-53.

<sup>120</sup> Expediente sobre la sublevación de los Negros de Coro, 12 June 1795, AGI, Caracas, legajo 426. 'Se le presentaron en numero de mas de Trescientos y cinquenta...'

suppressed, but not without a violent fight involving the use of the militia and the execution of some 170 people.<sup>121</sup>

In July, Puerto Príncipe in eastern Cuba had a smaller-scale incident. Led by two slaves named Romualdo and Josef ‘the Frenchman’ (*el frances*), they attacked the boss of *haciendo Cuatro Compañeros*, Serapio Recio. They left him, and went to round up more slaves and were later caught. In the later testimony, it was claimed that ‘they purported to destroy the town of Puerto del Principe, sack it, kill the *caballeros*, and want to do the same to all the whites’, though they claimed that they only wanted the freedom that was due to them, as evidenced by Josef declaring, ‘No one has a master now; we are all free’.<sup>122</sup> The Puerto Príncipe leaders were later sent to the *Audencia* of Santo Domingo for further trial, while the governor of the province was prompted by the whole affair to issue a decree forbidding anyone of colour from carrying arms.<sup>123</sup> Romualdo was also implicated by his association with the *cobrerros*, an autonomous community in the East which had claimed in 1788 that the king had freed them. They would eventually come to an arrangement with uneasy colonial officials who did not want them adding or lending support to the unrest that was all around, and by 1801 they managed to receive official recognition of their autonomy.<sup>124</sup>

In August 1795, a Cuban mulatto named Nicholas Morales would invoke not the king, but the recent *real cédula de gracias al sacar* in order to gain equality. In doing this, he gathered a group of about forty men to convince the governor of Bayamo, in the East of the island, to publish the document, as well as make some tax

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<sup>121</sup> Brian R. Hamnett, ‘Process and Pattern: A Re-Examination of the Ibero-American Independence Movements, 1808-1826’, *Journal of Latin American Studies* 29, No 2 (1997), p.299.

<sup>122</sup> Luis de las Casas to Eugenio Llaguno, 18 August 1795, AGI, Estado, legajo 5A, No 15.

<sup>123</sup> See David Geggus ‘Slave Resistance’, pp.134-35.

<sup>124</sup> For more on the *cobrerros* see José Maria Callejas, *Historia de Santiago De Cuba*, (Havana, 1911), pp. 50-51; Blackburn, *Overthrow*, p.387; Olga Portuondo Zúñiga, *Santiago de Cuba: desde la fundación hasta la guerra de los diez años* (Santiago de Cuba, 1996), p108; Geggus, ‘Slave Resistance’, p.133.

and land reforms, all of which were more than enough incentive for the authorities to arrest him.<sup>125</sup> The following October, a rebellion broke out at the largest *ingenio* in Santo Domingo, in Boca Nigua, about 15 miles outside the capital. Six of the plantation's two hundred slaves were killed and about one hundred people were hospitalised or put in prison once it had been quashed. Despite threatening to kill the whites, the centre of the plot involved revenge for mistreatment by overseers.<sup>126</sup> David Geggus has argued that the very localised nature of events in this case points to the fact that the events in Saint-Domingue are not necessarily 'a good principle for typologising slave revolts'.<sup>127</sup> Indeed, the purpose of outlining so many different rebellions that sprang up in the mid-1790s is not to 'prove' in any sense that slave unrest and the fighting in Saint-Domingue were necessarily linked – though in some cases they certainly were – but rather to emphasise the very unstable nature of colonial society during this period. Not only were there external threats to stability, there were internal ones at the same time as the plantation culture of Saint-Domingue was being destroyed. This too weighed heavily on the minds of planters and administrators.

In addition to such groups, there was the ongoing problem of slaves running away to join maroon communities. In 1796 new regulations were unveiled in Cuba about how to deal with maroons and runaway slaves whose numbers were on the rise during this period thanks to both the arrival of people from Saint-Domingue, as well as the arrival of more slaves to the island, some of whom managed to escape. Effectively, the code institutionalised the practice of hunting the slaves, while at the

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<sup>125</sup> José Luciano Franco, *Ensayos históricos* (Havana, 1974), pp. 20-21; Blackburn, *Overthrow*, p.378.

<sup>126</sup> For details of the uprising, see AGI, Estado, legajo 5B, No 202; Juan José Andreu Ocariz, 'La rebelion de los esclavos de Boca Nigua', *Anuario de Estudios Americanos*, 27 (1970), pp.551-81.

<sup>127</sup> See David Geggus 'Slave Resistance', pp.145-49. Geggus also argues in this article that there have been two types of slave revolution – one outlined by Michael Craton, involving changes that occur among African populations turning into creoles; the second is outlined by Eugene Genovese and argues that some slave uprisings are more directly inspired by other revolutions, such as the example of Haiti. Geggus adds to this list the rebellions inspired by existing claims of freedom, as was the case with the *cobrerros*.

same time demanding, for instance, that the slaves should be not be mistreated upon capture. Arango and others considered runaways and maroons a threat to the burgeoning sugar plantations.<sup>128</sup>

Puerto Rico, too, did not go untouched by these rebellions. In October, Aguadilla, a port in the west of the island saw a small disturbance.<sup>129</sup> Like the other islands, it had found itself with a few hundred refugees from Saint-Domingue.<sup>130</sup> The governor, Ramón de Castro, had already taken ‘precautions’ against French propaganda, but found that they were not sufficient. Whether this had any connection to this insurrection is difficult to surmise as much of the documentation about the uprising has been lost, but like the others, it was quickly stifled.<sup>131</sup> Although many of the ‘conspiracies’ were home-grown, some of the rhetoric used, as well as the involvement of non-Cubans, such as the declaration of freedom by Josef ‘*el frances*’, was enough for the colonial officials to increase their restrictions and monitoring of outsiders. By September, Governor Las Casas had stipulated that all temporary or resident foreigners in Cuba present themselves to their district judge to receive a certificate that verified their situation, with the aim of forming a register that would hold their personal information.<sup>132</sup>

Meanwhile, as the Spanish involvement in Saint-Domingue had now ceased, the evacuation of Santo Domingo had become problematic for Governor García, not least of all because of the question of what to do with the generals Jean-François and

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<sup>128</sup> For a fuller discussion of this practice, as well as maroon colonies in Cuba, see Manuel Paz Barcia, *Seeds of Insurrection: Domination and Resistance on Western Cuban Plantations, 1808-1848* (Baton Rouge, 2008), pp.54-58.

<sup>129</sup> Arturo Morales Carrión, ‘La revolucion haitiana y el movimiento antiesclavista en Puerto Rico’, *Boletín de la academia puertorriqueña de la historia* VIII, No 30 (1983), p.144.

<sup>130</sup> Raquel Rosario, Los efectos de la revolucion en Saint Domingue y de la venta de la Lousiana en Puerto Rico: las migraciones en la isla (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Puerto Rico, Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe, 1988), p.82.

<sup>131</sup> Guillermo A Baralt, *Esclavos rebeldes: conspiraciones y sublevaciones de esclavos en Puerto Rico (1795-1873)* (San Juan, 1985), pp.16-17.

<sup>132</sup> Luis de las Casas, 29 September 1795, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 255, sig 25.

Biassou, as well as the other black auxiliaries and their families.<sup>133</sup> A plan to send them to Cuba was met with Las Casas offering them the option of the isolated Isle of Pines, a small island off the coast of Cuba, or to carry on to Spanish Florida; under no circumstances did he want former rebel slaves on the main island. Nor was he interested in buying any of the slave prisoners of war who were accompanying them, citing the edict of 1790 prohibiting the entrance of bought or fugitive slaves from the French colonies.<sup>134</sup> García wrote to Godoy in their defence, calling the governor of Cuba's action unjust and saying that the soldiers would be under threat if they returned to Saint-Domingue: 'The *real orden* supports that they are not admitted there [Cuba] and is not responsible for the variety of their danger, the quality of the Negroes, nor of the absolute domination of those who admitted in their states after their atrocious and murderous masters ...'<sup>135</sup>

Some of the 700 soldiers and their families went to Florida, others to Spain, Campeche, New Spain, and Trujillo, on the Honduran coast, as well as Trinidad.<sup>136</sup> But the 144 men and women who went to that island were also met with immediate resistance. The governor of Trinidad explained he did not wish for them to settle there. At that time, the island's population was still sparse, but the whites were outnumbered: in 1795 there were 5,257 free people (which does not specify how many were free people of colour); 8,944 slaves, and 1,078 people classified as *indios*.<sup>137</sup> While the arrival of this group would not have in any way tipped the demographic balance, the background of these troops aroused Governor Chacón's suspicion. He wrote to Las Casas saying that unlike Cuba, Trinidad had a weak militia, composed of only 112 men and that 'the negroes being sent over know the use

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<sup>133</sup> For a detailed account, see Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, pp. 179-203

<sup>134</sup> Luis de las Casas to Manuel Godoy, 3 January 1796, AGI, Estado 5A, No 22.

<sup>135</sup> Joaquin García to Manuel Godoy, 15 February 1796, AGI, Estado 5A, No 40.

<sup>136</sup> Joaquin García to Manuel Godoy, 8 April 1796, AGI, Estado 5A, No 61.

<sup>137</sup> Estado de población y agricultura, 1795, AGI, Caracas, legajo 153.



of arms, and what is worse is they have employed them in disobedience of the Spanish Governor committing an outrage [the attack in Bayaja] if one cannot call it an atrocity ... but if the number of veterans [in Trinidad] were at least 800 or 1,000 men, I would tentatively employ the Negroes with certain precautions'.<sup>138</sup>

The auxiliaries were not the only ones vacating the island, and during the year, members of religious orders and families who could afford it left too. Joining the steady stream of people leaving Saint-Domingue, they were a further drain on limited resources in Cuba and Puerto Rico, causing Las Casas, for instance, to ask for more money from New Spain to help pay for the immediate care of the Spanish *criollos* who were coming ashore.<sup>139</sup> In fact, Cuba's captain-general decided that the way to deal with the problem was to establish a *junta* to decide what to do with the individuals and families who arrived in Cuba.<sup>140</sup> The *criollo* settlers often left as they could, when they were able to find boats willing to take them. Records from July 1796, for instance, show that six boats brought a total of 48 whites, 12 free people of colour, and 55 slaves from Santo Domingo to Cuba.<sup>141</sup> By early September, five more boats brought a total of 73 whites, 26 free people of colour, and 81 slaves.<sup>142</sup>

This issue of immigration would be one that the newly appointed governor and captain-general, Conde de Santa Clara, had to contend with immediately. There were often rumours and instances of unwanted people coming to Cuba. He wrote to the governor of Santiago de Cuba in June 1796 telling him of secret orders among lieutenant governors and local judges to block a group of blacks who had been 'sacking, killing, and making as many extortions as they have been able to against the whites, to whom many families have been forced to look for security while fleeing,

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<sup>138</sup> José María Chacón to Luis de las Casas, 30 March 1796, AGI, Estado, legajo 5B, No 132.

<sup>139</sup> Luis de las Casas to Manuel Godoy, 5 October 1796, AGI, Estado, legajo 5B, No 190.

<sup>140</sup> Luis de las Casas to the Consejo de Estado, 27 June 1796, AGI, Estado, legajo 5B, No 83.

<sup>141</sup> Report, 6 August 1796, AGI, Estado, legajo 5B, No 153.

<sup>142</sup> Report, 13 September 1796, AGI, Estado, legajo 5B, No 187.

hiding in the capital in the Spanish part ... if they were white, then the asylum is momentary: they do not believe the government will allow their continued residence ... with the most vigilance do not let them come in furtively ... in view of the people of colour who proceed from that island, or one of the other of the French, they will be put in jail in the moment they disembark ...'<sup>143</sup> The governor, clearly troubled by the recent news wrote again, complaining of the influx of people, to which Santa Clara replied, 'I recommend to Your Excellency that you see to this matter with caution, pondering the many political and gentle means that can be used to move these immigrants to colonies or other destinations far from this Island ...'<sup>144</sup>

In addition to the creation of the *junta* earlier in the year, the former Governor Las Casas had relayed the legal changes with regard to slaves before he left the post – now they must only be *bozales* from Africa, and nowhere else. Although many of the slaves who had participated in the uprising in Saint-Domingue had been African, there was a sense that it was the creolised ones who could be more dangerous and likely to be potential instigators of rebellions. He finished his edict by adding 'so that this beneficial providence [edict] is obeyed as fully as possible, I charge and recommend the Justices and all the inhabitants of this island, that acknowledging that the most minor indulgence or condescendence [in enforcing this edict], may cause, sooner or later, the most fatal and ruinous consequences' ...'<sup>145</sup>

As Dominicans were trying to leave the island, fighting in Saint-Domingue intensified and the British made gains in the South. At the same time, Spain through the second Treaty of Ildefonso (1796) entered an alliance with France to fight against the British, starting the first Anglo-Spanish War (1796-1802). For a Treasury only just out of a war with France, this would plunge the crown into further debt – by 1798 its

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<sup>143</sup> Conde de Santa Clara to Isidro Limonta, 4 December 1798, ANC, Fondo Correspondencia de Capitanes Generales, legajo 30A, sig 16.

<sup>144</sup> Conde de Santa Clara to Isidro Limonta, 30 December 1798, ANC, Fondo Correspondencia de Capitanes Generales, legajo 30A, sig 11.

<sup>145</sup> Luis de las Casas, 25 February 1796, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 255, sig 26.

deficit would reach 800,000,000 *reales de vellón* – while at the same time needing to extract more revenues from the Indies.<sup>146</sup> The colonies brought in 224,115,000 *reales de vellón* to the crown in 1796, but this would drop to 14,176,000 the following year as trade throughout the region was disrupted, not least of all due to the blockade of Cadiz, which lasted until 1798.<sup>147</sup> Caribbean ports had to open up to ‘neutral’ trade with American ships, something the crown belatedly approved by the end of 1797, hoping that continued trading would keep revenues high.<sup>148</sup> These problems were a serious concern for Cuba Governor Santa Clara, who wrote to Godoy, telling him that ‘the need for vigilant precaution that had been impressed upon me by the repeated news of the preparations that the English are making in their Windward Islands, made me not disregard the suspicion that the neutral boats coming from Enemy Ports might lend themselves to the hiding of some individuals in the service of the English who could come to spy on our operations and plans, and to obtain an advantage over the forces of this Plaza and Island ...’<sup>149</sup> His concern was not unfounded – by this point Britain had attempted to take Puerto Rico in February 1797, with the aim of capitalising on its strategic location and its economic potential. The British wanted to build on the island’s nascent sugar industry by resettling planters fleeing Saint-Domingue.<sup>150</sup> Although they did not realise their ambition, when the British turned toward the poorer and nearly defenceless Trinidad, they were able to occupy the island by April, while at the same time fighting to take French territory. By now,

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<sup>146</sup> Barbier and Klein, ‘Revolutionary Wars and Public Finances’, p.333.

<sup>147</sup> Barbier, ‘Peninsular Finance and Colonial Trade’, p.23. See also, Adrian J Pearce, ‘Rescates and Anglo-Spanish Trade in the Caribbean During the French Revolutionary Wars, ca 1797-1804’, *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 38 (2006), pp.607-24 for a discussion how ‘ransoms’ were used between the British and Spanish to protect trade during the disruption of war.

<sup>148</sup> Barbier, ‘Peninsular Finance and Colonial Trade’, p.29.

<sup>149</sup> Conde de Santa Clara to Manuel Godoy, 22 May 1797, AGI, Estado, legajo 1, exp 13.

<sup>150</sup> Report, 29 April 1799, AHN Ultramar, legajo 6232, exps 11, 12; María M Alonso, and Milagros Flores, *El Caribe en el siglo XVIII y el ataque británico a Puerto Rico en 1797* (San Juan, 1998), p.164.

Britain had taken Martinique, and was fighting in Saint Lucia, had gained and lost Guadeloupe, so rumours of an invasion of Santiago de Cuba were not surprising to the region's new governor, Juan Nepomuceno Quintana.<sup>151</sup> Britain had become a serious threat. However, the reunited and invigorated forces led by Toussaint L'Ouverture were proving to be a difficult enemy, and his gains on the British were happily relayed around the Spanish islands.<sup>152</sup> By 1798 the British had lost some 15,000 troops, with many killed by disease as well as fighting, and they stopped their battle to take Saint-Domingue, surrendering to L'Ouverture in August.

Only a few months later, at the beginning of 1799, Santa Clara decided that more drastic action would be needed in Cuba to contend with the dramatic events in the region. As L'Ouverture was consolidating his control in Saint-Domingue, refugees kept leaving for Cuba, often in more impoverished and distressed states than people who were able to get away earlier. One eyewitness, Briton Hugh Cathcart, who was a clerk in Jamaica's colonial administration, wrote: 'The Master of His Majesty's Schooner Mosquito / Mr Arnold / was a short time a Prisoner at Jérémie – from whence he escaped and is now here – He tells me that there are not about seventy whites, in that town and that they are daily going over to Cuba – he describes them to be in the greatest misery ...'<sup>153</sup> With immigration and anxiety high, Santa Clara had to harden his stance, and he issued a proclamation of more than one hundred different rules for Havana. The *banda* gives some idea of what sort of social activities people of the city engaged in, and why they might be a cause for concern. The list starts off demanding that *bozal* slaves must be baptised and instructed in the Catholic faith, as well as being given Sundays off. Free blacks were not allowed to have altars for dances in their gatherings. Justices were to be vigilant about arresting prostitutes and

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<sup>151</sup> Francisco Xavier Infante to Juan Nepomuceno Quintana, 20 April 1797, ANC, Correspondencia de los Capitanes Generales, legajo 52, sig 2.

<sup>152</sup> Joaquin García to Gabriel de Aristizabal, 28 April 1797, AHN, Ultramar, legajo 6232, exp 10.

<sup>153</sup> Hugh Cathcart to Thomas Maitland, 31 October 1799, TNA, British Public Record Office, Colonial Office 245, Nos 76-78.

‘suspicious’ vagrants. There was to be no begging without a license – and absolutely no gambling or games of chance. *Pardos* and *morenos* were not allowed to use arms without clearly wearing a uniform, and no one from the countryside was allowed to use a machete in the city, and everyone was banned from using a *garrote*. There would be no singing or chanting in the streets or in houses after 11pm; in fact, no one should be in the street at all then unless it was an urgent problem and he was carrying a lantern. No gunpower was allowed to be sold. No one could receive a slave inside their house, and the taverns could not give slaves wine to take to their masters. Taverns and shops in the countryside could not buy goods from people of colour. But the one thing that could be permitted was the whipping of slaves.<sup>154</sup>

In considering what Santa Clara was trying to address, Havana comes across as a chaotic, unlawful town, where people of colour sang and danced, carried arms, and worried officials. These myriad problems, and the many unenforceable proclamations that came from the governor, not the crown, were designed to give the semblance of control. This would soon be the concern of the next capitan-general of Cuba, the Marqués de Someruelos. In addition to the domestic worries, the situation in Saint-Domingue was still unresolved. L’Ouverture and the French and the rebel slaves continued fighting as if the incursions and Spain and Britain had never taken part. It was not long before Someruelos received correspondence from General L’Ouverture. The General wrote asking for assistance in an internal matter, which was the catching of a ‘traitor’, his mulatto rival Andre Rigaud, who controlled the south of Saint-Domingue. Rigaud apparently had sent one of his ‘agents’ to Santiago de Cuba to obtain an armed boat and return to the key Southern port of Jérémie.<sup>155</sup> Someruelos wrote to the short-lived first minister, Mariano Luis de Urquijo, about the exchange, however he seemed far more concerned with the form of the letter, rather than its content. He pointed out L’Ouverture’s use of ‘Vos’, which is the informal way of

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<sup>154</sup> Conde de Santa Clara, 28 January 1799, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 255, sig 29.

<sup>155</sup> Marques de Someruelos to Mariano Luis de Urquijo, 6 August 1799, AGI, Estado, legajo 2, exp 11.

saying ‘you’ in Spanish, as opposed to the polite ‘Vuestra Exelencia’, and complained to Urquijo: ‘The language of Vos is unusual between us, and the General Toussaint is black: I believed, in order to continue with security in this point to represent Your Excellency, I ought to continue with regard to him in the same style’. His instinct was right – Urquijo said ‘you have done well in corresponding with him with equal treatment, and you can continue to do so...’<sup>156</sup>

The British also maintained contact with L’Ouverture despite their defeat, as Hugh Cathcart wrote in 1799. ‘He [Toussaint] has pressed me very hard, lately to bring him a Frigate, and seems rather dissatisfied, at my not complying with his request – altho’ I assured him that it was totally out of my power – He then asked me, if that I thought Lord Balcares, would procure him one.’ Later he noted that: ‘He has lately become very inquisitive to know the distance Saint Domingo is from France and England, and also from Jamaica, Cuba and other islands, and seems very curious to know their strength and in what manner they are governed.’<sup>157</sup> Around the same time two conspiracies were uncovered on the mainland, in the Caribbean ports of Cartagena and Maracaibo. These were claimed to be connected with Saint-Domingue. The first involved a group of French slaves who were allied with naval officers, some residents of Cartagena, and local slaves who wanted to kill the governor and other whites. The plans in Maracaibo were supposed to involve two French captains and their black crew who wanted to introduce a Saint-Domingue style of equality.<sup>158</sup>

While the fighting continued in Saint-Domingue, a different battle emerged, but this time it was economic. The neutrality laws that had allowed much-needed provisions in – though the illegal entry of goods had been a constant – had been

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<sup>156</sup> Marques de Someruelos to Mariano Luis de Urquijo, 8 August 1799, AGI, Estado, legajo 2, No 14.

<sup>157</sup> Hugh Cathcart to Thomas Maitland, November 26, 1799, TNA, Public Record Office, Colonial Office, 245, Nos 68-75.

<sup>158</sup> Aline Helg, ‘A Fragmented Majority: Free “of All Colors”, Indians, and Slaves in Caribbean Colombia During the Haitian Revolution’, in David Geggus (ed) *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World*, (Columbia, 2001), pp.157-159.

rescinded. The powerful *consulado* of Cádiz had managed to get *comercio neutral* revoked on 20 April 1799, and so ‘neutral’ boats again were not supposed to call in Spanish ports. Neutral trade would eventually be re-instated in 1801, attesting to the difficulty in stopping trade with non-Spanish vessels. Indeed, the question of ships’ ‘neutrality’ or otherwise was causing problems. For instance, there were American boats that wanted to go Baracoa and trade with the French planters, and enter the port legally and without having to pay a higher tax. To this, the governor of Santiago de Cuba replied, ‘It is fully disgraceful that the named port of Baracoa suddenly exists in a theatre of foreign embarkations, and that our minister in Philadelphia promotes this project’.<sup>159</sup> But the activity of ships came under fire away from Cuba as well, as Someruelos received a stern letter from Commissioner Roume in Saint-Domingue, claiming that informers in Santiago de Cuba had told him that boats were coming to the island and taking ‘black French citizens to sell like slaves and like the inhabitants of that island are ignorant without doubt of the immortal declaration of the rights of men’.<sup>160</sup>

Although Roume’s claim goes against Cuban fears of having ‘French’ slaves in the island, it also illustrates the extent to which Cuba and Puerto Rico were entangled in France’s domestic problem. The Spanish islands were using the opportunity to enrich themselves with the sugar trade, and it was clear to all. Alexander von Humboldt, the German explorer and naturalist, arrived in Cuba for the first time in 1800, and again in 1804. He became good friends with Arango, and eventually wrote about the island more than 20 years later (see chapter 5). He was interested in the agricultural development and the rise of slavery on the island, and noted that: ‘The greatest changes which have been produced in the culture of the sugar cane, and the laboratories of the plantations, took place between the years 1796 and 1800. First,

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<sup>159</sup> Conde of Santa Clara to Jose Pablo Valiente, 22 April 22 and Valiente to Santa Clara, 30 April 30, 1799, AGI, Estado, legajo 2, No 3.

<sup>160</sup> Roume to Marqués de Someruelos, 23 Febuary 1800, AGI, Cuba, legajo 1709, ‘Ciudadano Pothier ... de la republica en Santiago de Cuba me ha informado...’

mules were substituted for oxen, as motive power for the sugar mills; then water-power was introduced ... having been used even by the first settlers in St.

Domingo'.<sup>161</sup> He later added that the customs house in Havana from 1797-1800 contributed an average of \$1,900,000 in revenues, having only produced \$600,000 in 1794.<sup>162</sup>

The colonial officials in Saint-Domingue were, despite the fighting, also trying to regain some export wealth by encouraging people to work on plantations, even though they were no longer slaves. And at the same time they were losing a valuable labour pool, and many of the planters who they hoped could make the island profitable again had fled. Cuba was still reluctant to welcome them, as reflected in a *bando* published in December. Someruelos declared that foreigners, especially those who had managed to disembark beyond the gaze of port officials, had 15 days from its publication to register with judges, magistrates and mayors of where they lived. They also had to prove they 'have some establishment of agriculture, or useful and necessary occupation in the Towns of their Residencies'.<sup>163</sup> Anyone who had been refused or did not meet the criteria had two months to leave Cuba. Someruelos also later felt compelled to add to Las Casas' *bando* of 1796, which only allowed for *bozales* to be brought to Cuba, decreeing that under no false pretense should any slave – especially those who had worked in Saint-Domingue – from any other nation be allowed into Cuba. Although this is roughly what other decrees had said, he felt the need to reiterate the point.

The problem of what to do with fellow Spanish *criollos* mostly from Santo Domingo who were still coming to the island, however, was another matter. A debate had arisen over their treatment. A long plea by Don Cayetano Reyna to the *junta de*

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<sup>161</sup> Alexander von Humboldt, *The Island of Cuba: A Political Essay* (Princeton, 2001 [ed]). p166.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid*, pp.198.

<sup>163</sup> Marques de Someruelos to Mariano Luis de Urquijo, 19 December 1799, AGI, Estado, legajo 2, No 27.



*emigrados* reminded the justices – who included Someruelos and Arango – that there had been a similar situation in Florida when it was given to the British from 1763 to 1783. Of course, one of the prevailing problems with fellow *criollos* in this case is that the Dominicans were generally much worse off than their Cuban counterparts and lacked the technical and agricultural knowledge the French planter refugees had brought. Reyna noted that, ‘All of a family or person that came enjoying a table in the boats to Havana have a pension of three *reales* daily; the rest that do not have this circumstance, and their children, give them a *real y medio*.’<sup>164</sup> Arango, speaking on behalf of the *junta*, explained that their aim was to decide which migrants needed support. He claims they were ‘preparing all that is necessary to welcome those poor people’, though to do this they would have to ask for money from the Viceroy of New Spain, while ‘the number of pensioners augmented daily’. He reminded his audience that they had been contending with this problem for five years, but concluded that ‘the *junta* resolves as always that which is sensible’.<sup>165</sup> However, this problem would soon be further exacerbated.

On 6 January 1801, Governor García, who had remained in Santo Domingo despite the Treaty of Basel, received notice that the island would now fully switch to French rule, and L’Ouverture was prepared to use force to back up this edict. Although he had been engaged in negotiations with some of the French generals who were worried about the growing power of L’Ouverture, they were unable to stop the general’s rise. Fueled by these power struggles, L’Ouverture marched into the east. His nephew, Moyse, led troops into Santiago, an important provincial capital in the centre of the island, and on 11 January, L’Ouverture’s brother, Paul, brought his troops into Santo Domingo. Governor García had no choice but to submit, and a handover

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<sup>164</sup> Cayetano Reyna to the Captain General and magistrates of the Junta, 12 July 1800, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 1693, ‘Pero si devo decir para mi descargo y satisfacción de VS...’

<sup>165</sup> Don Francisco de Arango to the Presidente y Vocales de la Junta de Equivales, 26 September 1800, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 1693, ‘Y para que se cumpliese con toda religiosidad su soberana palabra quiso prevenir...’

was arranged on 22 January. García would later write to Puerto Rico's Governor Castro, explaining his anger and disillusion with the events: 'I, during my time as Governor of Santo Domingo, despite having the best knowledge of Toussaint, and him having been under my orders, and of my favour from 1793 until the end of May 1794, always treated him, and wrote to him (when it was necessary) like a Chief of the French Nation, giving him the treatment that had been customary with Governments of foreign nations.'<sup>166</sup>

Throughout the next few months, more *criollos* left Santo Domingo. Two members of the *real hacienda* who departed in February described there being 'a powerful reason to leave; the rain, the laments, the disorder of the changeover, the lack of help from the old government ... and all the city in general full of terror and fright, waiting for sacking, death and violence ...'<sup>167</sup> García also left, and arrived in Maracaibo in February on a Danish *goleta*, along with his family and secretary Nicolas de Toledo.<sup>168</sup> They were followed by boats bringing the 148 troops remaining in the *Infantería de Cantabria*.<sup>169</sup> Leaving the island was proving to be difficult for many, partly due to British corsairs sailing nearby and plundering these ships. Many people arrived completely impoverished and had to beg for charity. Such was the case for Pedro Sánchez Valverde, who had been a curate in towns such as Higüey and Santiago. He claimed he had tried to leave the island in 1796, but that his application was denied due to war with Britain and subsequent blockades meaning that transport would have been difficult to secure. In his *suplica* to the officials in Maracaibo, whom

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<sup>166</sup> Joaquín García to Ramón de Castro, 17 April 1801, AGPR, Gobernadores Españoles, Asuntos Políticos y Civiles, caja 34.

<sup>167</sup> Juan Gonzales Ferino and Juan de Lauastida to Miguel Cayetano Soler, 13 March 1801, AGI Santo Domingo, Legajo 1039, 'El poderoso motivo de salir ...'

<sup>168</sup> Migares to Antonio Cornél, 24 February 1801, AGI Caracas, legajo 148, 'El 22 del corriente entró en este Puerto en una Goleta Dinamarquesa el Mariscal de Campo D. Joaquín García ...'

<sup>169</sup> Migares to Antonio Cornél, 24 February 1801, AGI Caracas, legajo 148, 'Después de haberse verificado el 26 de enero último la entrega de la Plaza de Sto Domingo al General Toussaint Louverture, arribaron a este Puerto el 21 del presente mes ...'

he hoped would give him a daily pension, he maintained that he did his share to help ‘so equally the loyalty, love and courage with which I exalted the honour of your Royal Arms against the negro Toussaint Louverture’. Now he was forced to draw on his loyalty to ask for help for himself and family members, which consisted of two women and five children, whom he claimed had lost everything to the English privateers, ‘from their jewelry, and their only clothing ... they are exposed now to begging’.<sup>170</sup> By the end of March, some 1,247 individuals, 10 political and military corps, the *Infantería de Cantabria*, 118 administrators, and 250 people without passports had arrived in the Venezuelan port.<sup>171</sup> In Cuba, as some Dominicans arrived, the authorities reminding them of the many rules for accessing financial assistance, such as having to present the correct documentation to officials, as well as not being born in Cuba, nor having emigrated before 1795.<sup>172</sup>

For the *criollos* who stayed behind, the situation was also difficult. L’Ouverture wasted no time in reforming the land use system in the East of the island. Rather than allowing cattle farming to continue, he planned to use the land for more than just grazing. He knew very well the riches that could be made from agriculture, but with a free labour force that was largely resistant to return to plantation-style working in the West, and three-quarters of the whole island almost completely lacking in necessary infrastructure in the East, he faced some serious challenges. In the West of the island, former slaves in the North found themselves coerced into this work again, while in the South former slaves were allowed to work their freeholds rather

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<sup>170</sup> Suplica of Pedro Sanchez Valverde, 21 March 1801, AGI, Caracas, legajo 148, ‘...como igualmente la lealtad, amor y valor con que vindiqué el honor de vuestras Rs Armias contra las del negro Toussaint Louverture ...’

<sup>171</sup> AGI, Santo Domingo, 21 March 1801, legajo 1037, ‘Resumen de las Personas emigrantes a este Pto ...’

<sup>172</sup> Unsigned, 21 June, 1801, AGI, Cuba, 1693, ‘Para que Vd puedo con seguridad de la RI hacienda asignar pensión ...’

than being forced back into plantation agriculture.<sup>173</sup> He tried to lure French planters back, offering promises that no harm would befall them. By 1801 there had been a rise in exports again – sugar was up 13% from the collapse in 1791, coffee up more than 50%, and even cotton managed to rise by 1.54%.<sup>174</sup> L'Ouverture began his reforms in the East by limiting the granting of lands to new proprietors and not allowing new settlements – the Spanish system, based on the notion of *terrenos comuneros*, had allowed for multiple possession of land and no formal system of surveying or using titles, which L'Ouverture considered to be 'backward'.<sup>175</sup> These measures were unpopular with many Dominicans. Once the land distribution system had been re-organised, the new governor also demanded that agricultural workers were given a quarter of profits, and he pushed for higher output. Dominican farmers, more accustomed to cattle ranching and some tobacco and small-scale sugar production, were ordered to cultivate more sugar cane, in addition to coffee and cocoa for export, as L'Ouverture wanted to make subsistence agriculture into a commercial enterprise on that side of the island as well.<sup>176</sup> With that aim in mind, he also opened up more Eastern ports for trade with North America and other Caribbean islands. As

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<sup>173</sup> This difference in practice would lead to rifts that would see the west of the island descend into civil war only a few years later. See David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour and National Independence in Haiti* (London, 1996); Eugene D. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge, 1992). Genovese argues that Louverture was attempting a 'Europeanisation' of the island, in the sense of taking advantage of European technology which 'forced all peoples to participate in the creation of a world culture at once nationally variegated and increasingly uniform'.

<sup>174</sup> Von Grafenstein, *Nueva España*, p.205.

<sup>175</sup> Frank Moya Pons, 'The Land Question in Haiti and Santo Domingo: the Sociopolitical Context of the Transition from Slavery to Free Labour, 1801-1843' in Moya Pons, Friginal and Stanley Engerman (eds) *Between Slavery and Free Labour: the Spanish-Speaking Caribbean in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore, 1985), p.188.

<sup>176</sup> Frank Pons Moya, *The Dominican Republic: A National History* (Hispaniola Books, New York, 1995), p.105

well as changing agriculture, he also attempted administrative reform on the Eastern side of the island, giving offices to mulattos and blacks.<sup>177</sup>

At the same time, rumours were circulating that this newly strengthened L'Ouverture would be striking out at other territories. The Spanish *plenipotenciario* in the US wrote to Someruelos, reporting, 'I have had various conversations about the actual state of that Island [Saint-Domingue], the character and means of General Toussaint ... I do not waste time in informing Your Excellency of the general result. This is reduced to recommending the most vigilance in the Island of Cuba, since the ambitious and active temperament of Toussaint will not let him be idle for long ... this *caudillo* would do something against that Island or that of Puerto Rico'.<sup>178</sup> Puerto Rico's governor had already earlier that year issued orders reiterating that people from the now-united island should be kept out, 'the present very critical occurrences with the motive of emigration from the Island of Santo Domingo, I have understood that in those days many people of Colour of the French Nation have entered this Island that should be repelled'.<sup>179</sup>

On 3 July, L'Ouverture unveiled a constitution. Drawing from his interpretation of Enlightenment thought and adapting it to the historical contours of Saint-Domingue, while addressing delicate French politics, the extraordinary document declared first and foremost that the island was part of the French empire and that the only faith was Catholic. But by then went on to assert that 'there cannot exist slaves on this territory', following this by asserting that 'all men are born, live

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<sup>177</sup> Franklin Franco Pichardo, *Los negros, los mulatos y la nación dominicana* (Santo Domingo, 2003), pp.97-99.

<sup>178</sup> Carlos Martínez de Irujo to Marqués de Someruelos, 20 October 1801, AHN, Estado, legajo 6366, caja 1, No 39.

<sup>179</sup> Ramón de Castro, 13 March 1801, Archivo Historical Municipal de Ponce (hereafter AHMP), fondo Anyuntamiento, sección Secretaria, serie Libro Copiador, subserie Circulares, caja S-527.

and die free and French',<sup>180</sup> which would include the newly added Spanish *criollos*, of which some black and mulatto members were thought to have helped with the constitution.<sup>181</sup> He also made himself governor for life of the colony. The constitution was unveiled with some fanfare and speeches:

... at three in the morning the corps drummers played music ... at 5.30 the General Paul L'Ouverture ... arrived with half the troops; at the same time the music became Patriotic songs ... Citizen Mondion pronounced the following speech, that was equally translated and read in Spanish: Citizens ... Citizen Toussaint Lovuerture, whose actions are of such benefit to humanity; the boss, brother ... in whose glory greatness is founded, in whose liberty rests his power ... the people of Santo Domingo have spoken that they want to be free: now they have attained it.<sup>182</sup>

It is difficult to know how this was received by the former Dominican slaves, or free people of colour who remained in the East, as most the sources from this period are limited to official correspondence. One British observer remarked in a letter: 'Informed you in my last that the Spanish part of the Island had submitted to the power and authority of General Toussaint, after little or no resistance, - It appears however that the Spanish are by no means at their ease under the new Government, a great many of them wishing to quit the country, which the General ... indeed of prohibits.'<sup>183</sup> It hardly comes as a surprise that his move had many detractors among the former slave-owning ranchers and farmers. News of this constitution spread

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<sup>180</sup> Haiti: The 1801 Constitution (English translation), The Louverture Project, Haitian Constitution of 1801, last updated 11 October 2007, [http://thelouvertureproject.org/index.php?title=Constitution\\_of\\_1801\\_\(English\)](http://thelouvertureproject.org/index.php?title=Constitution_of_1801_(English)) last accessed 17 May 2010.

<sup>181</sup> Pons Moya, *The Dominican Republic*, p.107. For more on the constitution and where it sits in a wider Atlantic intellectual context, see Garraway, 'Légitime Défense'; Nick Nesbitt, 'The Idea of 1804', *Yale French Studies*, 107 (2005), pp.6-38; and Julia Gaffield, 'Complexities of Imagining Haiti: A Study of National Constitutions, 1801-1807', *Journal of Social History*, 41, No 1 (2007), pp.81-103.

<sup>182</sup> Copias de la constitución y proclamas, que para gobierno de la isla de Santo Domingo, 3 April 1802, AGI, Estado, legajo 59, No 17, exp 6.

<sup>183</sup> Edward Corbet to William Morreson, 6 March 1801, TNA, Public Record Office, Colonial Office 245, No 5.

around the Spanish world. The governor of Caracas, Manuel de Guevara Vasconcelos, enclosed a copy of the constitution to the most recent secretary of state in Madrid, Pedro Cevallos Guerra. Attached to it was a long letter about the 'despotic hand' of L'Ouverture, saying that 'the authority is clad with this superior character, reserving for himself all the representation and influence necessary to make himself Sovereign under the name of Governor: it seems that the Sovereign has a short time in his life to enjoy the relationship with his Sovereignty'.<sup>184</sup>

However, none of these events went unnoticed by Napoleon, who by now had had quite enough of his increasingly autonomous black general. Although he had named L'Ouverture captain-general in March 1801, he in no way supported the constitution, and plans were afoot to undermine L'Ouverture and his black followers and regain political control of the island. Additionally, the previous year Napoleon had recovered Louisiana from Spain under the third treaty of San Ildefonso (1800), and was eager to reassert French authority in the region, though in the end he would sell the Louisiana territory to the United States in 1803, partly to pay for the high cost of the ongoing battle on Saint-Domingue. On 31 December of the same year Napoleon's brother-in-law, General Leclerc, set sail for the island with thousands of troops and orders to reinstitute slavery.<sup>185</sup> L'Ouverture and his generals heard these rumours, and when they received news that the French authorities had indeed began to institute such a measure in Guadeloupe, they turned against Napoleon. In June of 1802, L'Ouverture was captured and sent to France, where he died in 1803.<sup>186</sup> His successor, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, continued what had turned into a bloody battle,

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<sup>184</sup> Manuel Guevara Vasconcelos to Pedro Cevallos Guerra, 29 January 1802, AGI, Estado, legajo 59, No 17, exp 1.

<sup>185</sup> This ruling on slavery would remain in France's colonies until it was re-abolished in 1848. See Carl Ludwig Lokke, 'The Leclerc Instructions', *The Journal of Negro History*, 10, No 1 (1925), pp.80-90.

<sup>186</sup> So well-known was L'Ouverture at this point, as news of his demise travelled around Europe, the English poet William Wordsworth was moved to pen an ode, declaring: '... Though fallen thyself, never to rise again, / Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left behind / Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and skies; / There's not a breathing of the common wind / That will forget thee; thou hast great allies ...' in *The Collected Poems of William Wordsworth* (Wordsworth Poetry Library, 1994), p.363.

though he was aided by some 14,000 French troops dying of yellow fever. Indeed, by the end of 1802, Leclerc would also be killed by the disease. Napoleon then sent General Rochambeau to finish off the job. During this time the remaining whites – who had come back to Saint-Domingue trusting L'Ouverture's promises – would flee to the closest point of refuge, bringing another wave of immigrants to Cuba and Puerto Rico.

Meanwhile in the Spanish colonies, Cuba again re-iterated the prohibition of any non-‘authorised’ person to be on the islands, though this time it also mentioned neutral traders who had overstayed their welcome – Governor Someruelos had the order printed in the *Papel Periodico de la Havana*.<sup>187</sup> Of course in those islands there was no official report of events across the Windward Passage, and instead, the theme of an October issue of the *Papel Periodico de la Havana* of the same year was yet again on agriculture. A *discurso* examined the reasons behind agricultural decline, which the author put some of the causes down to the bad distribution of land, and the uneven development of towns.<sup>188</sup> Yet this was clearly just an intellectual exercise, as agriculture was improving in both Cuba and Puerto Rico. In fact, Arango was sent to Saint-Domingue in the same year, under orders from Governor Someruelos that included to ‘know the state of tranquility or altercation in which the island finds itself, as much in the former Spanish side as in the French’ and to ‘acknowledge the state of agriculture with regard to the fruits produced at the present time, and the measures being taken for their increase’.<sup>189</sup> Arango reported back, somewhat predictably, that ‘The pen fell from my hands, when I try to begin the sad picture that today can be

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<sup>187</sup> Order, Marqués de Someruelos, 7 January 1802, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 255, sig 32; *Papel Periodico de la Havana*, 9 January 1802 .

<sup>188</sup> *Papel Periodico de la Havana*, 9 October 1802. This censorship was not the preserve of Spain and Cuba. The *Gazeta de México* too reported very little of events in Saint-Domingue. See Von Grafenstein, *Nueva España en el circuncaribe*, p.271.

<sup>189</sup> Marques de Someruelos, ‘Instrucción reservada que se dá al Sr D. Francisco Arango para la Comisión con que pasa al Guarico’ 5 March 1803, in Arango *Obras*, p.336. Guarico was a name that was sometimes used instead of Santo Domingo to refer to the French side of the island. See also Von Grafenstein, *Nueva España en el cicuncaribe*, p.281.



made of the place that was a little while ago the most flourishing and rich colony in the world' and went on to detail the woeful state of Saint-Domingue.<sup>190</sup>

In the East the number of immigrants in Santiago de Cuba now totaled around 20,000.<sup>191</sup> They were transforming the coffee agriculture in that part of the island. With its high mountains, the Sierra Maestra in South-East of Cuba had become a region of *cafetales*.<sup>192</sup> But the immigrants were not strictly limited to coffee, and some returned to sugar planting, with about 300,000 *arrobas* of sugar being produced in 1803, compared with earlier averages of around 80,000 *arrobas*.<sup>193</sup> Still, that had not stopped Someruelos earlier in the year issuing another edict about foreigners in Havana, as it would appear that he was having some difficulty in enforcing them, claiming 'I have arrived at the understanding that the *bandos* published by me and my predecessors have not been duly observed'. He went on to order that people who illegally disembarked without a passport would have to pay a 200 *peso* fine and their slaves would be put in public shackles, and anyone who brought in slaves that were not *bozales* would be fined 100 *pesos* for the first one and 200 *pesos* for the second.<sup>194</sup> He went as far as to request to Rochambeau to respect the same law, to which the French General replied: 'You ask me, General [Someruelos] to not allow the disembarkation in the possessions of His Catholic Majesty any man of colour: your wish will be punctually executed. I will give my resulting orders to the marine officials and I will punish in an exemplary mode those who contravene them.'<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Arango, 'Comisión de Arango en Santo Domingo', 17 June 1803, *Obras*, p.344.

<sup>191</sup> Marqués de Someruelos to Pedro Ceballos, 20 December 1803, AGI, Estado, legajo 2, exp 43; Emilio Bacardí y Moreau, *Crónicas de Santiago de Cuba* (Barcelona, 1909), p.45.

<sup>192</sup> Protocolos notariales escribanías de Santiago de Cuba, 1803, Archivo Histórico Provincial de Santiago de Cuba (hereafter AHPSC), Escribanías Giro, No 235.

<sup>193</sup> Bacardí y Moreau, *Crónicas*, p.46.

<sup>194</sup> Marqués de Someruelos, 18 February 1803, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 255, sig 35.

<sup>195</sup> General Rochambeau to Marqués de Someruelos, 12 March 1803, AHN, Estado, legajo 6366, caja 1, no 52.

Though in his response, Someruelos, while thanking the French General for his cooperation, informed him ‘my resources are already spent, and though my desires are the same, I am absolutely unable to attend to the demands that Your Excellency makes of me, even if I receive orders of my king to execute them, which still I have not received...’<sup>196</sup>

By the summer, the next governor of Santiago de Cuba, Sebastián Kindelán, was forced to issue edicts of his own. In July, he printed a *bando* entitled ‘Orders for Public Order’. He demanded that landlords report the sex, colour, age, occupation, and duration of stay of every tenant. No one could buy a slave who had previously had a foreign owner. After 11pm no individuals, resident or foreign, were allowed out in the street, unless it was to find a doctor, in which case they should have a lantern with them. The use of arms or machetes was prohibited for everyone. *Tumbas* – traditional dances held by the French and often involving people of colour who had managed to find a way in to Cuba – were only allowed on festival days, and even then they had to finish by 8pm. No one could have a private dance in their house without official permission. And, of course, no card games or gambling.<sup>197</sup> Again, turning this around, it would appear gambling was rife, too many people were out at night, and social dances of the free people of colour, as well as the new immigrants, were clearly a cause for anxiety in this small port town.

The French settlers in Santiago had their own neighbourhood, their own theatre, spoke their own language, and had their own social world. There was tension between the settlers and Spanish *criollos* as well, as illustrated by their mutual antagonism over the crown and the church. The immigrants were often taunted with the insults such as the French being ‘baptised in the water of rotten cod’, to which the reply was ‘Godoy’s Spain’, which was a reference to the unpopularity of the first

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<sup>196</sup> Marqués de Someruelos to General Rochambeau, 18 April 1803, AHN, Estado, legajo 6366, caja 1, No 52.

<sup>197</sup> Sebastián Kindelán, 7 July 1803, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 255, sig 36.

minister.<sup>198</sup> Reports of alleged ‘disorder’ by the French even reached Madrid, as disgruntled residents made a complaint to the king, who ignored the problem and reiterated that foreigners could not settle in Cuba outside of what had already been established by law.<sup>199</sup> Yet in a letter from Someruelos to Kindelán, the capitan-general pointed out that ‘I have to say in regard to the people of colour you know well that the slaves that have arrived with their respective Masters, remain tranquil in their labour’.<sup>200</sup> It would seem that private and public fears sometimes did not tally, especially as both governors realised the value of what the French immigrants had brought to their economy. To further protect this, the following month Kindelán set up the *compañía de cazadores*, a group of 60 soldiers and 10 officers posted at five sites around the south coast who were given the duty of contending with the *cimarrones* and runaway colonies, also known as *palenques*, by stifling their coastal incursions and making sure they did not plan any rebellions.<sup>201</sup>

Meanwhile, in Saint-Domingue, Rochambeau was running out of troops and supplies, and he began to realise it was a losing battle, especially after the British blockade meant he would not be able to receive re-enforcements.<sup>202</sup> Finally, with losses mounting from yellow fever and endless fighting, Rochambeau had to capitulate. In December, a ship captain named Caleb Allen brought news of the surrender to Havana, reporting that ‘On December 2 Rochambeau left the port in a *Frigata de Guerra Surveillante* which was immediately captured by British warships manning the blockade of that port; the following day the entire flota left.’<sup>203</sup> Soon

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<sup>198</sup> Bacardí y Moreau, *Crónicas*, p.46.; Debien, ‘Les colons de Saint-Domingue’.

<sup>199</sup> AGI, Estado, legajo 2, No 72BIS.

<sup>200</sup> Marqués de Someruelos to Sebastián Kindelán, 28 July 1804, AHN, Estado, legajo 6366, caja 2, No 93.

<sup>201</sup> Diego Bosch Ferrer, and José Sánchez Guerra, *Rebeldía y apalencamiento: jurisdicciones de Guantánamo y Baracoa* (Guantánamo 2003), p.44; Callejas, ‘Historia de Santiago de Cuba’, pp.55-57.

<sup>202</sup> Lokke, ‘The Leclerc Instructions’, p.87.

<sup>203</sup> Transcript of Caleb Allen’s testimony, 24 December 1803, AGI, Estado, legajo 2, No 39.

thereafter, Rochambeau and his remaining troops retreated, leaving Dessalines victorious. On 1 January 1804, Dessalines declared the establishment of the nation of Haiti,<sup>204</sup> and the former slave colony began its life as a free republic.<sup>205</sup> As British abolitionist James Stephen noted in the same year, ‘A new order of things has arisen in the West Indies, to which former precedents are quite inapplicable.’<sup>206</sup>

For Spain and its island colonies, the end of the 13-year fight in Saint-Domingue also would be the start of a new imperial relationship. The changes had been dramatic, and lessons were learned in seeing how abolition and republicanism wreaked havoc in France’s empire. Indeed, the crown was willing to get rid of its oldest colony in an effort to stop warring with France, and doubtless also to get away from the chaotic situation on the island. But this struggle was beyond the boundaries of Santo Domingo – the years of fighting saw Ogé’s cry for equality turn into a European war in the Caribbean. Indeed, Britain’s ability to take advantage of the situation meant that it added Trinidad to its imperial fold. There was no staying away from the disruption for Spanish officials, however, as refugees from all of Hispaniola looked to Cuba and Puerto Rico for safety and a new life. This in turn caused problems for the Spanish colonies, which at once wanted the knowledge of planters who could help the economy, yet not the labour of their dangerous slaves, and not free people of colour who could also disturb the ‘tranquility’. So more colonial repression, born out of local problems and desires to keep the status quo, became one of the foundations upon which economic and demographic shifts that would for ever change Cuba and Puerto Rico would be built. Here were planted the seeds of the ‘fear’ that would later grow large enough to cast a long shadow over the islands. This would be

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<sup>204</sup> And of course, this was relayed to Spain. See Marqués de Someruelos to Luis de Uguijo, 14 March 1804, AHN, Estado, legajo 6366, caja 1, exp 7 and 70.

<sup>205</sup> The Republic of Haiti, however did not receive diplomatic recognition from France until 1825, Britain in 1843, and the US in 1862.

<sup>206</sup> James Stephen, *The Opportunity Or, Reason for an Immediate Alliance With St Domingo By the Author of the Crisis of the Sugar Colonies* (London, 1804).

compounded by the growth of the nation of Haiti, and the threat of black rule to all islands who still used slave labour. But of all the contradictions of this period, the most surprising one is that despite knowing what happened and being caught up in the events of Saint-Domingue, the Spanish crown and its two Caribbean colonies thought that they could now have the wealth France had squandered by similar means but without the same violent, bloody downfall.

### *Conclusion*

The Spanish response to the slave revolt in Saint-Domingue forced a tightening of the pact between planters and the colonial authorities in Cuba and Puerto Rico, while Santo Domingo was traded as a pawn in the ongoing fight between the French and Spanish in Europe. Thus the three islands were inexorably bound up with these wider ideological and social transformations, as well as economic ones. Cuban sugar planters were well-positioned to pick up the sugar trade the French had left behind, while the crown's war debts were spiraling. The colonial response to this uncertainty was one of deep anxiety – all around war was raging, yet the real threat, as Saint-Domingue had shown, was within. Once colonial officials realised they had to be wary not only of strangers but also of their own *criollo* slaves and people of colour, a much more repressive colonial Spanish state emerged. This is shown through actions such as the authorities' stream of repressive *bandos*, the treatment of refugees, and the censorship and conspiracy of silence aimed at keeping information about Saint-Domingue away from Cuba and Puerto Rico's slaves and free people of colour. This was a starting point for racialised fears about the destructive possibilities of not only slaves, but also all people of colour, as well as the dangerous ideas about liberty from the French that had ignited it. But the damage France was able to inflict on Spain thus far was only a small foreshadowing of what was to come on the peninsula.

### *Chapter 3*

#### *Between Liberalism and Repression, 1805-1814*

The years that followed what became known as the Haitian Revolution brought further tumult to the Spanish Caribbean. Spain saw its king deposed and Joseph Bonaparte put on the throne. While under occupation, the government and Cortes would make a series of decisions that resulted in the unmooring of most of Spain's colonies. The constitutional debates in 1812 would show Spain and the other colonies the true power of Cuba's planter classes. Fear took on an internal dimension during this time of uncertainty, as Spain's colonies were now worried about the fate of their king. In many ways the anxiety that many *criollos* harboured about the French and their capabilities had come true. With the fall of the king, an existential crisis of sorts materialised. Not only did the islands have to contend with an uncertain imperial future – without the security of which they felt certain to fall into French hands as Santo Domingo had – the political reforms implemented among occupied Spaniards was dividing opinion and even putting at risk the Cuban sugar industry. This chapter traces how fear takes on another layer. The previous chapter looked at how Enlightenment ideas were embodied across the Atlantic, but in this decade, it was colonial demands and anxieties that shaped events in the peninsula and in Spain's colonies. This chapter will focus on four interrelated themes: the first is the ongoing issue of rumours of an attack by Haiti; the second is the fall of Spain and its political ramifications; the third is anti-French sentiment in the Caribbean and the loyalist rebellion in Santo Domingo; and the last is the continual growth of the sugar economy and the rising power of the planters.

#### *Race and the rise of republicanism*

Readers of the *Papel Periodico de la Habana* would have picked up the January 6 1805 edition to find the publication's main article expounding on the problem of childhood fears. It explained that 'it is evident that fear is natural in man' but that 'our

fear grows greater or smaller in proportion to how familiar we are with what causes it, and in such a way it happens, for example, that he who becomes accustomed, hears it continuously'.<sup>1</sup> Viewed in retrospect, this article – of course – has a bitter irony, as after more than a decade of violence in Saint-Domingue and instability throughout the region, *habaneros*, as well as others throughout the island, would have been well-accustomed to the many faces of fear: the fear of slave rebellions, the fear of French invasions or British incursions; the fear spread by the refugees who had witnessed the horrors of Saint-Domingue at first hand; and now the fear of the new black Republic.

The ideals of the French Revolution had entered the Caribbean and not only transformed it, but those ideals were also transformed. There was a new type of liberty, equality, and fraternity in France's former 'pearl of the Antilles'. Unlike the peasantry and bourgeoisie in France, it was the enslaved who fought the battle in the Caribbean. It set a worrying example for slaveholders throughout the region. In Santo Domingo, which had been Spain's oldest colony, sat Napoleon's generals and administrators, relegated to the margins of the crumbling remains of France's Caribbean colonies as tactical attention turned back to Europe. Haiti, the newly born republic of former slaves, now sat ringed by slave societies. Of course fear and slavery have always had a symbiotic relationship, but now they were more tightly bound than ever. Within the space of a few years, the emotional landscape of the Caribbean had seen a fundamental reconfiguration. The nature of slavery had changed, as numbers rose and African slaves were supplanting Cuban-born ones, while the former slaves of Haiti were trying to establish their republic. Likewise, the nature of fear had changed. Part of being a slave society in the Caribbean meant living with the threat of runaways, with maroon colonies, even with local disturbances and small-scale rebellions. But the events in Saint-Domingue had changed the scale of those fears. Now, rather than control and discipline over a single plantation, a larger economic project was at stake, as was a larger social and racial order. In addition,

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<sup>1</sup> *Papel Periodico de la Havana*, 6 January 1805, No 2, Havana, pp.5-6.

Saint-Domingue and the French Revolution had convinced many *criollos* and Spaniards of the perils of equality and the security of a monarchy. They would soon realise the fragility of the latter. The idea of loyalism would see a dramatic transformation over the course of only a few years. Napoleon's invasion, coupled with Spain's experiment of liberalism would forever alter the colonial relationship. The first and second decades of the 1800s were full of even more uncertainty than the years that preceeded them. The *Papel* article concluded that 'to cease to be concerned by any fantastic fear, all that is necessary is to find its cause, and thus convince one's reasoning of its falseness'.<sup>2</sup> Yet for the public, amid such uncertainty, the causes of fear could not be reasoned away quite so easily. In fact, motives and causes only seemed to become more muddled as events grew in complexity.

A very clear source of this new anxiety began with the rise of the Republic of Haiti in 1804. Now the worry was not only about the French and their 'contagious' ideas – this was something else altogether: a republic of former slaves. Dessalines, who had taken charge after the capture of L'Ouverture, appointed himself emperor and issued a new constitution in 1805, overwriting the work of his predecessor. In the document, Dessalines christened the former colony with the name of Haiti, and for ever abolished slavery.<sup>3</sup> His document went much further than L'Ouverture's work, declaring that 'no white man of whatever nation may he be, shall put his foot on this territory with the title of master or proprietor', and that all Haitians 'shall hence forward be known only by the generic appellation of Blacks', thus attempting to end the colour gradations that had plagued the island.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p.9.

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed discussion of the origins and use of the name Haiti, see David Geggus, *Haitian Revolutionary Studies* (Bloomington, 2002), pp.207-220.

<sup>4</sup> Haiti, the 1805 Constitution (English translation), <http://www.webster.edu/~corbette/haiti/history/earlyhaiti/1805-const.htm>, last accessed 19 May 2010. For a discussion on Dessalines and his influence in the Haitian national memory, see Joan Dayan, *Haiti, History and the Gods*, (Berkeley, 1998), pp. 16-29.



This constitution was not well-received by the surrounding islands. Indeed, the Spanish colonies immediately became concerned about infiltration – and potential attack – from emissaries representing this new republic. A report from Puerto Rico alerted officials to be on the lookout for ‘a suspicious French Mulatto named Chanlatte [Chaulette] of the age of about 18 to 20 years, ordinary stature, curly hair, and who speaks French, English and also Spanish ... This French mulatto Chaulette, is an emissary of Dessaline [sic], that Negro who has notoriously risen up in the island of Santo Domingo’, claiming his aims were to ‘sow his evil seed in an island that enjoys the most perfect tranquility, loyalty and honour’.<sup>5</sup> Months later, it was said that Chaulette’s mission was to organise a slave conspiracy throughout the Caribbean, which was supposed to be coordinated in Haiti.<sup>6</sup> This would not be the last of such rumours implicating Haiti. The idea of Haiti as a propagator of slave rebellions persisted throughout the century. The unease found in Puerto Rico was not unique. Reports from around the region filtered in about alleged attacks and aggression from the new nation, such as the taking of a ship from Santander, Spain, which was captured by ‘the same negroes from Port-au-Prince’.<sup>7</sup> It appears that in many cases being a non-white from Haiti was enough to brand a man an accomplice in this larger revolutionary project, whether or not he simply happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Authorities in the Spanish Caribbean, long accustomed to dealing with their own rebel runaway groups, became increasingly concerned that the maroons on their islands would make contact with Dessalines’ men. There was also fear that Haitians would infiltrate the population of free people of colour in their islands and incite them into action too, and so measures were quickly taken in an attempt to prevent these connections from forming. In Santiago de Cuba, for instance,

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<sup>5</sup> Circular, Toribio Montes, 30 November 1805, AHMP, fondo Ayuntamiento, sección Secretaria, serie Libro Copiador, subserie Circulares, caja S-527.

<sup>6</sup> Guillermo A Baralt, *Esclavos Rebeldes: Conspiraciones y sublevaciones de esclavos en Puerto Rico (1795-1873)* (San Juan, 1985), p.17.

<sup>7</sup> Testimony, 16 October 1804, AHN, Estado, legajo 6366, caja 2, No 94.

such measures included the further formation of bands of men to attack maroon colonies, as well as more surveillance and restrictions on free people of colour.<sup>8</sup>

Meanwhile, French rule, such as it was, continued in Santo Domingo. Many Dominicans were distraught at this change in fortune, and no one had expected the Treaty of Basel to come to fruition under L'Ouverture, much less for the French to continue to oversee the territory after their humiliation at the hands of former slaves. Yet the small band of troops led by General Louis Ferrand persisted. In any case, the island was large and sparsely populated enough for most of the people living away from the capital, Santo Domingo, not to notice the difference. What they could not overlook, however, was hunger and poverty. And this, coupled with political embarrassment, was enough for many to leave the island if they could scrape together enough to pay for their passage. General Ferrand, however, remained optimistic, at least on paper. He had written a letter to the Governor of Puerto Rico which 'inspired confidence, and destroyed the misconception that France had abandoned its precious possession', as Toribio Montes later related. It appeared that General Ferrand had told him of his plans offer housing and land to any French planter who had fled from Haiti but remained in the Spanish side, with the aim of building up the island's population and improving agricultural output.<sup>9</sup> His territorial control, however, was not as strong as he liked to imagine.

Soon after the Haitian emperor had unveiled his new constitution, General Ferrand ignited the wrath of Dessalines by decreeing it permissible to capture and use or sell as slaves any black and mulatto children found in the frontier zones between French and Haitian territory.<sup>10</sup> The reinstatement of slavery by Napoleon in 1802 had not been rescinded, and General Ferrand had every intention of taking advantage of it.

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<sup>8</sup> Emilio Bacardí y Moreau, *Crónicas de Santiago de Cuba* (Barcelona 1909), p.49.

<sup>9</sup> Circular, Toribio Montes, 8 June 1805, AGPR, Gobernadores Españoles, Asuntos Políticos y Civiles 1754-1897, caja 18, No 20.

<sup>10</sup> Emilio Rodríguez Demorizi, *Invasiones Haitianas de 1801, 1805 y 1822* (Santo Domingo, 1955), pp.101-104.

The news reached Dessalines, who sprang into action, mobilising troops and mounting an invasion later that month, taking much of the northern territory in violent fighting, which included the razing of the village of Moca on 5 April 1805. He later justified his actions, explaining in a speech how, ‘provoked by the decree sent out by Ferrand ... I resolved to go and take control of this integral part of my states and erase there until the end the last vestiges of the European character’.<sup>11</sup> The fighting between France and Haiti was far from over when it concerned the question of slavery. The Dominicans were proving to be a disappointment for Dessalines, with their inability to drive out the French. Because there are few Dominican records from this period it is hard to ascertain how enslaved and free black Dominicans reacted – if they fled to Haiti or if they accepted French rule. But it would appear that Dessalines found them overall to be weak. He said later in the same speech: ‘It would be natural to presume that Spanish Indians, those descendants of the poor Indians killed by the lust and avarice of the first usurpers of this island, would avidly take advantage of this precious occasion to make a sacrifice to the souls of their ancestors; but this species of wretched and degraded men, rather than the sweetness of a free and independent life preferred a master to tyrannise it, and made common cause with the French.’<sup>12</sup>

These developments in Santo Domingo, as well as Haiti, meant even more people were fleeing to Puerto Rico and Cuba. In May, around 418 people arrived in Baracoa, and Governor Kindelán in Santiago was forced to write to Capitan-General Someruelos in Havana asking for help in dealing with the situation.<sup>13</sup> Previously he had reported ‘the arrival of eight French canoes from ... Jeremías [Jérémie] commandeered by mulatto and white families that came fleeing from their fear of

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, pp.105-08

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>13</sup> Sebastián Kindelán to Marques de Someruelos, 7 May 1805, AGI, Papeles de Cuba, legajo 1693, ‘El Gen de Gov de Baracoa con fecha de 1 del corriente me dice ...’

being sacrificed by the Negroes'.<sup>14</sup> As had been the case since the beginning of the conflict, they were not always welcome. It was a similar situation in Puerto Rico, where Governor Montes acknowledged that there was still very much the problem of illegal former and current slaves in the island, but rather than deporting them he issued instructions that 25 *pesos* should be paid for each one to properly accredit their worthiness, and then they would be allowed to stay and be put to use.<sup>15</sup> As in Santiago de Cuba, the authorities of Puerto Rico were also trying to retain people who had the potential to improve the economy of the island. Although there was a long-running anxiety about the 'danger' of people from Saint-Domingue, it had become clear that these refugees were fueling economic changes in the region and officials continued to grapple with the question of how to keep them on the island and remain within the law. At the same time, there was unease about their loyalties in larger geo-political battles. Governor Montes wrote to Madrid about the case of Pedro Gautier, a French planter who had stayed without the requisite papers. Montes used the letter to outline his concerns:

... I suppose that when His Majesty deigned to declare that it is not his Royal Will that the population of his colonies grow with all the French who have taken refuge in them, this was after a prudent examination of all the inconveniences that might arise; [still] I cannot help to at least raise the issue to Your Excellency, that given the local situation of this island [Puerto Rico], and that of Santo Domingo, which belongs wholly to France, a great danger would be posed to the conservation of that [island of Puerto Rico] by the settlement of a considerable number of Frenchmen in it, since they would consider themselves enemies [of the regime] or be at least suspicious [of it] in any case of discord between the two Governments.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Sebastián Kindelán to Marques de Someruelos, 30 June 1804, AHN, Estado, legajo 6366, caja 2, No 87.

<sup>15</sup> Circular, Toribio Montes, 10 October 1805, AGPR, Fondo Gobernadores Españoles, Asuntos Políticos y Civiles, caja 18, 'Las pruebas positivas con que me hallo de que en toda esta isla ...'

<sup>16</sup> Toribio Montes to Pedro Cevallos, 31 October 1805, ANH, Estado, legajo 6375, No 5.

Montes had already taken action over this issue, telling island officials to register all the foreigners, dividing them into three classes: French from Santo Domingo/Saint-Domingue, foreigners who had already been domiciled on the island for a long time, and any other arrivals who were not in either class.<sup>17</sup> Kindelán in Santiago de Cuba had noted that the people who had fled before the rise of Haiti had also turned against the new Republic, and were willing allies: ‘... every Frenchman who remains here ... is a watchtower against that bloodthirsty race which had caused such desolation to its families ...’<sup>18</sup>

Puerto Rico lacks the size of Cuba or Santo Domingo, the two largest islands in the region. The effects of the establishment of Haiti, coupled with the constant flow of rumours, was unsettling to the small island, but it was not alone in this, as other colonies in the region which were smaller in size and had limited defences, such as Trinidad and Jamaica, were concerned as well. For instance, the wife of the Governor of Jamaica, Lady Nugent, described in her journal the climate of unrest and uncertainty:

Dear Clifford returned here yesterday, and she is so courageous that she is a great comfort to me; but she tells me that, before she left Spanish Town, the negroes appeared to be inclined to riot, and to make a noise in the streets, when the troops marched out, but they were soon dispersed by the militia. The black servants here [Port Henderson] seem to rejoice at the bustle, but ... profess to hate the French.’<sup>19</sup>

Likewise, in the now British colony of Trinidad worry was also growing. A report by the governor of the island of Margarita (near Venezuela) to Governor Montes, which

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<sup>17</sup> Unsigned letter, 25 January 1805, AGPR, Gobernadores Españoles, Expediente de las Agencias Gubernamentales 1796-1897, Seguridad Pública 1805-22, caja 370, ‘Las circunstancias del día exigen todo genero de precaución ...’

<sup>18</sup> Sebastián Kindelán to Marques de Someruelos, 25 March 1807, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 138, No 59.

<sup>19</sup> *Lady Nugent's Journal* (London, 1939 [ed]), p.288; see David Cannadine, *Empire, the Sea and Global History: Britain's Maritime World, c.1760-C.1840* (London, 2007), pp.140-150 for a discussion on Nugent and her colonial world in Jamaica.

was forwarded to Madrid, contained news of a ‘a conspiracy by people of colour – hatched, discovered and punished in Trinidad – with the implication that there are other islands in communication with that of Santo Domingo, from which the chaos originated’.<sup>20</sup> A short while after relaying that news, a list of slaves in each part of Puerto Rico was ordered to be drawn up, as well as reports on anyone deemed ‘suspicious’.<sup>21</sup>

Meanwhile, complaints were reaching General Ferrand about the treatment of the French in the Spanish islands, especially Cuba. With linguistic and cultural differences, not to mention the anxiety of connections with Saint-Domingue, the French refugees who fled to the Spanish islands had often kept to their own communities, as discussed in the previous chapter. While they helped modernise sugar technology, and took over much of the coffee-growing in the east of Cuba, for instance, socially they held their own events, communicated in French, and lived near each other. In addition, the long-running and complicated political relationship between France and Spain meant that it would have been more surprising had there not been hostilities between the two groups. Governor Someruelos was forced to write to the French general and counter the claims, which he did by arguing that ‘the large number of French who voluntarily reside in Havana and the rest of the towns of this island and its countryside is the best testament that they are neither ... insulted nor treated badly; on the contrary, it is proof that they are well taken care of and looked after with consideration, as has happened and happens now’.<sup>22</sup> The real core of the dispute, however, appeared to be over the issue of the so-called French ‘agents’ caught in Spanish territory who were not supposed to be there. After all, many of the

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<sup>20</sup> Toribio Montés to Pedro Cebellos, 22 January 1806, AHN, Estado, legajo 6375, No 2.

<sup>21</sup> Francisco Montes, 28 January 1806, AGPR, Gobernadores Españoles, Expedientes Municipal, Manatí, legajo 63, from appendix VII in Raquel Rosario, *Los efectos de la revolucion en Saint Domingue y de la venta de la Lousiana en Puerto Rico: las migraciones en la isla* (unpublished PhD thesis, Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe, University of Puerto Rico, 1988).

<sup>22</sup> Marqués de Someruelos to General Ferrand, 4 August 1806, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 138, sig 33.

refugees had simply slipped in, as Spain and Cuba's strict laws to prevent the arrival of undesired and undocumented immigrants were nearly unenforceable away from the ports. Someruelos ended his letter with a stern reminder: 'And finally, that French emigrants are not permitted, but are refused.'<sup>23</sup> Despite a pause in their European warring, the animosity between France and Spain in the Caribbean still ran deep.

As Santo Domingo under Ferrand lingered, Cuba's agricultural output and cities both grew. The western region around Santiago de Cuba was experiencing a boom in coffee production. Before the bulk of Saint-Domingue refugees arrived around 1800, production had never risen above some 8,000 *arrobas* a year, but by 1805 production had risen to 80,000 *arrobas*, soon rising to around 300,000.<sup>24</sup> Sugar production, meanwhile was averaging some 185,000 metric tonnes during this period, compared with 89,090 metric tonnes in the period from 1792 to 1796.<sup>25</sup>

However, this prosperity, mixed with the continual arrival of slaves, created unease. Colonial life was full of uncertainties, wrought by the very nature of society itself. Atlantic crossings took months, news was often more rumour than fact, slaves could not be trusted, crop prices could fall at any moment, and political power could be subverted by unscrupulous politicians. Wealth was no insurance against this, as the lessons of Saint-Domingue made clear; making more money only meant there was more to lose. That Puerto Rico, by virtue of its size, and Cuba, by virtue of its proximity to Haiti, felt under threat is not surprising. Many of these rumours were without foundation, but the vicissitudes of colonial life meant that any piece of information could often be taken as fact. The state of affairs in Haiti was such that it was difficult to obtain good intelligence. In retrospect, given that the republic was virtually born divided, and that it had been exhausted by war, it is difficult to

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Gabriel Debien, 'Les colons de Saint-Domingue réfugiés a Cuba 1793-1815', *Revista de Indias* 54-56 (1953), pp.11-37.

<sup>25</sup> Josep Maria Fradera, *Colonias para después de un imperio* (Barcelona, 2005), p.705.

contemplate Dessalines conjuring up a widespread revolt with his tired troops and poor provisions. But amid the swirls of rumours, this seemed more than a possibility – it was considered a reality. Yet in those uncertain early years of the republic, the only weapon that Haiti had was rumour. As long as people thought Haitians more dangerous than they actually were, they could spread the country's emancipatory message and further insulate the island from the threat of European incursion. One factor that colonial officials throughout the region had overlooked was Haiti's own fear – the return of a European power and their re-enslavement. For the moment, however, the rumours of Haitian aggression meant that Europeans stayed away and on guard. At the same time this republic was being shunned, ideas about independence were beginning to dawn in Spanish America. Far richer and more powerful than the Caribbean islands, *criollo* elites in territories across the Spanish main had long been discontent with the metropole. For these nascent republicans, Haiti was well-positioned geographically and ideologically to help them with their goals, as a Venezuelan named Francisco de Miranda discovered.

On 2 February 1806, a boat named the *Leander* left New York and sailed towards Haiti, carrying Miranda, who had fought in the French Revolution and now had plans to 'liberate' his homeland. The boat was captained by Thomas Lewis, whose brother, Jacob, was well-known in Haiti as a trader who could easily procure guns and ammunition.<sup>26</sup> Miranda spent the next six weeks planning for his expedition, but he never left the southern port of Jacmel, and did not meet Dessalines; it was future Haitian leader Alexandre Pétion who helped with preparations.<sup>27</sup> Of course, rumours of what was going on had already washed up on Venezuela's shores, and the Spanish islands enlisted a spy to find out more. Madrid panicked about this 'Haitian danger' and announced that this 'virus' was part of a plot to unleash revolutions on all

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<sup>26</sup> Paul Verna, *Pétion y Bolívar: cuarenta años (1790-1830) de relaciones haitiano-venezolanos y su aporte a la emancipación de Hispanoamérica* (Caracas, 1969), p.92.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, p.94.



the European colonies in the Americas.<sup>28</sup> Once again, this fear of Haiti began to spread, and it seemed to signify more than a slave revolt. Emancipation coupled with republicanism was an even more dangerous threat. At the same time, news of the expedition was relayed back to London, and so too was that of Dessalines's ongoing last push against white planters, with the *Times* of London reporting that 'Captain Dodge, of the schooner Mary-Ann ... states that on the 14th and 15th of May, a general massacre of all the remaining white inhabitants of Cape François took place ... On the night of the 14th ... these unfortunate people were strangled in their bed, by order of the Emperor; the blood-thirsty villains, not content with this, plunged their bayonets into their bodies...' <sup>29</sup> A few months later, more reports of Miranda reached London. One described how 120 French troops from Guadeloupe had become involved in a fight against him. Another, from Puerto Rico, proposed that he had reached the Spanish Main.<sup>30</sup> Miranda, in the end, was unsuccessful: he instigated a number of expeditions, but he was captured and killed by Spain. With regard to the attack he launched from Haiti, however, Miranda would later deny he was helped by 'Haitian blacks', illustrating the contradictory treatment of these former slaves.<sup>31</sup>

Miranda's story adds a new layer of complexity to Haiti's place in the Caribbean world. He embodied the emerging 'creole patriot'.<sup>32</sup> Born in the Americas, and increasingly angry about continued Spanish rule, these *criollos* did not share the Spaniards' hatred of the French Revolution. The emergence of creole patriots – which of course is not to say that there was no previous *criollo* unrest in Spanish America – would become another long battle for the Spanish crown. The Bourbons had indeed

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p.148.

<sup>29</sup> 'American Papers' *The Times*, 11 July 1806.

<sup>30</sup> 'America', *The Times*, 8 November 1806

<sup>31</sup> Johanna von Grafenstein, *Nueva España en el circuncaribe, 1779-1808: revolución, competencia imperial y vínculos intercoloniales*, (México D.F., 1997), p.238.

<sup>32</sup> For more on the idea of 'creole patriots' see D.A. Brading, *The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots and the Liberal State, 1492-1866* (Cambridge, 1991).

paid for their reforms, as *criollo* unrest in many other territories could attest, especially in New Spain, but it would get worse in the next few years. Added to this was a growing concern of slave rebellions, which included parts of New Spain, Venezuela, Peru, and New Granada, and not just the islands. These, compounded with more long-standing preoccupations, such as piracy and plunder, and illegal contraband trade, meant that the Treasury still did not have enough to pay for Spain's costly European geopolitics. So in many ways, the issue of slaves and Haiti was of less importance to Madrid than more pressing concerns in Europe and issues in its more valuable colonies. Policy directed at the whole empire often would not be received well in the Caribbean, and often seemed confused and contradictory.

For example, an 1806 *consulta* argued that *pardos* as well as Indians and *mestizos* should be allowed to obtain 'whiteness', echoing previous legislation, but only when it would not threaten the interests of order.<sup>33</sup> But at the same time *pardos* and *morenos* were seen as being a potential threat to order. The documents noted that Miranda's failed expedition was composed of some 2,000 *pardos*, of whom, they said, 'we can only fear terrible effects if they are extracted from their humble and repressed state'.<sup>34</sup> The Caribbean islands mulattoes and *pardos* already had their own militia units, and were deemed necessary owing to the overall lack of manpower.<sup>35</sup> There were laws, however, ensuring these militia members could not carry their own personal guns. Likewise, this *consulta* laid out strict guidelines by which people of colour could obtain their 'equality'. It entailed appealing to the king on the strength of their individual merits, or by proving four generations of free and legitimate

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<sup>33</sup> Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Social Control in Slave Plantation Societies: A Comparison of St. Domingue and Cuba*, (Baton Rouge, 1996), p.148; Jay Kinsbruner, *Not of Pure Blood: The Free People of Color and Racial Prejudice in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico* (Durham, 1996), p.22.

<sup>34</sup> Richard Konetzke, *Colección de documentos para la historia de la formación social de Hispanoamérica*, vol. 3, (Madrid, 1962), pp.821-29.

<sup>35</sup> Mulatto technically refers to someone who has one black parent and one white, while *pardo* can mean a non-white person with varying degrees of colour, though the former term was used in that sense as well in the Caribbean. *Pardo* was a term more often used on the mainland.

ancestors, which would be difficult for almost any non-Spaniard to prove. The document concluded that:

With the aim of conciliating these two extremes, [given that we are] not admitting them absolutely to the graces, or make them fully capable of receiving the honours that the whites of America enjoy, it seemed convenient to give them the possibility of appealing for them to the good will of the sovereign, in light of their [individual] merits and unique and extraordinary accomplishments. [Still, it was also] declared that those *mestizos* who can prove to be the legitimate sons of a pure Spaniard and Indian, can alternate [their status], and obtain all the dignities, offices, and destinies enjoyed and exercised by Europeans and [white] Americans; and as for *morenos* and *pardos*, those able to certify, with all the correct form and solemnity with proper documents and not [just] the information of witnesses, their free and legitimate ancestry for four generations, are capable of any office or rank open to anyone of general or plain status in Spain.<sup>36</sup>

While this was being written, Governor Montes, upon hearing about the Miranda expedition and Dessalines's alleged plans to cause revolts in the region, ordered the arrest of every person of colour who tried to set foot in Puerto Rico, with local judges given the task of enforcing the law. Security trumped labour needs for the moment, or at least on paper. Cuba, too, was no stranger to such plans. The contrast between official policy and Caribbean practice could not have been clearer.

In October 1806 an assassin's bullet extinguished Dessalines' emancipatory fire, and Haiti immediately descended into a brutal civil war. Less than a year later, the country was divided into two, between former revolutionary generals. The Northern half was run by the black former slave Henri Christophe, who eventually made it a kingdom and crowned himself emperor. The mulatto Alexandre Pétion had wanted a united country, but failing that he proclaimed the South his republic, and so the nation was divided along colour lines, with darker-skinned Haitians in the North and mulattos in the South, despite Dessalines' constitution declaring everyone to be black. There were economic ramifications to this split as well, as both leaders had

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<sup>36</sup> Konetzke, *Colección de documentos*, pp.821-29.

very different ambitions and styles of rule. Christophe made deals with other important Haitian men such as military chiefs, and allowed them to lease or run surviving plantations. They were required to pay a quarter of their profits to the state, and a quarter to the workers. The system was criticised for its brutality – the workers had almost slave-like conditions – but it managed to revive some of the export market.<sup>37</sup> Pétion, meanwhile, distributed land among his soldiers in lieu of cash in order to pay them for their services, allowing the development of smallholding. There were still some large plantations but with many people more concerned about the state of production on their own land, there were few willing volunteers for arduous plantation agriculture. The result in the South was the decline of exports.<sup>38</sup> For more than a decade, these two halves would follow their different trajectories, with the North growing comparatively wealthier, or at least Christophe and his coterie. Indeed, Christophe managed to raise enough money to build over the course of his reign the enormous fort, the Citadelle Laferrière, near the regional capital of Cap-Haïtien, and a palace. In the South, the population lingered in poverty, unaided by the North, and shut out from international trade by embargoes. The two sides, however, were united in one aspect – abolitionism, and the desire to spread it. Christophe exchanged letters with British abolitionist Thomas Clarkson.<sup>39</sup> Pétion, for his part, continued to aid disgruntled Spanish *criollos* who were ready for dramatic changes, as he had illustrated with his involvement in the Miranda expedition.

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<sup>37</sup> Frank Moya Pons, 'The Land Question in Haiti and Santo Domingo: the Sociopolitical Context of the Transition from Slavery to Free Labour, 1801-1843' in Friginals, Pons, and Engerman (eds) *Between Slavery and Free Labor: The Spanish-Speaking Caribbean in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore, 1985), p.182.

<sup>38</sup> Moya Pons, 'The Land Question', p.182; David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour and National Independence in Haiti*, (London, 1996). See also Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History* (Pittsburgh, 2009), p.69 for the discussion in Europe of Haiti's economic failure.

<sup>39</sup> Earl Leslie Griggs and Clifford H Prator (eds.), *Henry Christophe and Thomas Clarkson: A Correspondence* (Berkeley, 1952).

In addition to all the changes in the Caribbean, Spain had been caught up in even more problems in Europe. It had chosen to enter an alliance with France, and had lost heavily against the British in the Battle of Trafalgar (1805). Compounding the problems of piracy and incursions in the Caribbean, the British were also about to launch a new and different kind of attack: ending the slave trade. Although the British abolitionists won their battle in March 1807 the impact would not immediately be felt in the Spanish islands.<sup>40</sup> Slave imports in Cuba and Puerto Rico continued their steady rise, with the arrival of enslaved Africans reaching a total of 45,002 between 1800 and 1805, the majority going to Cuba.<sup>41</sup> Although there was not a strong abolitionist movement in the Spanish world, there were Spaniards and *criollos* who were willing to speak out against the practice. The bishop of Havana, Juan José Díaz de Espada y Fernández de Landa, who had arrived in Cuba in 1802, was one such person. Six years after his arrival, he completed a report about the disturbing aspects of colonial life on the island. His *Informe sobre diezmos* of 1808 contains evidence of his thoughts about the disturbing aspects of colonial life, and he also leaves no doubt about its high moral cost. He said:

All the *Reales Órdenes* and *Cédulas* point to the same thing and are directly in favour of agriculture, ignoring the whole population ... Whether or not this [slave] trade is fair, has it influenced the public? Is it necessary and useful to agriculture? Experience and reason will always be persuaded in the negative.<sup>42</sup>

During this time, Britain began to apply diplomatic pressure to Spain to follow suit, which would turn into a very long-running battle. Initially, a *real cédula* of 24 April

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<sup>40</sup> On the issue of British abolition there is a large historiography. See for instance, Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill, 1994); Seymour Drescher, 'Whose Abolition? Popular Pressure and the Ending of the British Slave Trade', *Past and Present*, 143 (1994), pp.136-66; and *From Slavery to Freedom: Comparative Studies in the Rise and Fall of Atlantic Slavery* (New York, 1999); Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill, 2006); Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery, 1776-1848* (London, 1988).

<sup>41</sup> The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database 2009, Slave Voyages, Estimates, <http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/assessment/estimates.faces> last accessed 18 May 2010.

<sup>42</sup> Eduardo Torres-Cuevas and Eusebio Reyes, *Esclavitud y sociedad: notas y documentos para la historia de la esclavitud negra en Cuba*, (Havana, 1986), pp.105-112.

demanding that the ports of the Indies did not admit counsel, agents, nor representatives of any foreign nation who attempted to press an abolitionist agenda, or in any way attempt to hamper slave imports.<sup>43</sup> Sugar output and price was rising, and there was much incentive to make sure they carried on doing so. Cuban *ingenios* were producing an average of 11,819 *arrobos* per mill in 1804, compared with 3,772 *arrobos* in 1761.<sup>44</sup> But another series of dramatic events was around the corner, and one that would not only fundamentally challenge the beliefs of *criollos* throughout the Spanish colonies, but for ever reconfigure Spain's empire. This time, it had nothing to do with Haiti, slaves, or abolition, though they would all figure in the following years. This particular problem started with Napoleon Bonaparte marching into Spain and installing his brother, Joseph, on the Spanish throne in May 1808.

#### *Political crisis and the Cortes, 1808-1814*

This extraordinary change in rule came about under a complicated set of circumstances. Initially, there was intense pressure on the king from a faction of the public to dismiss his prime minister, Godoy, whose political career had been resurrected in 1801. This demand eventually turned into agitation for Carlos IV, who had long been perceived to be weak and ineffective, to abdicate in favour of his son, Fernando VII. A growing number of people wanted political reform, and the fact that the years leading up to 1808 were plagued with poor food supplies and inflation only added to the discontent.<sup>45</sup> However, this local difficulty was compounded by the arrival of Napoleon and his troops. The French emperor had been fighting wars and gaining territory across Europe. His loss of Saint-Domingue and the sale of the Louisiana territory to the United States to pay for the war had not dented his power in

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<sup>43</sup> Marqués de Someruelos, 13 July 1808, ANC, Fondo Asuntos Políticos, legajo 10, sig 25.

<sup>44</sup> Manuel Moreno Fraginals, *El Ingenio: el complejo economico social cubano del azucar*, vol.1 (Havana, 1978).

<sup>45</sup> Charles Esdaile, 'War and Politics in Spain, 1808-1814', *The Historical Journal* 31, No 2 (1988), p.302.

Europe. In 1808 he had managed to gather key Spaniards at Bayonne, and in June declared his brother king of Spain and the Indies, while Fernando VII was forced to go into exile in France.

This political upheaval was met with rioting across Spain. The anti-French sentiment of the previous years had not gone away. In response to the loss of the king, political leaders in Spain decided to divide the country into provincial *juntas*. The *juntas* would be vital to organising the resistance to France throughout the Peninsular War (1808-1814).<sup>46</sup> It was decided that a larger body was also needed, and members of the local *juntas* came together at the *Junta Suprema Central*, which was eventually settled in Cádiz. As Spaniards took up arms, the conflict also drew in Portugal – Napoleon’s initial Iberian target – and Britain, which would send troops to help the Spanish and patrol the waters around Cádiz. At the same time, it was becoming clear to many people who wanted political reform that perhaps the opportunity had arisen. Although initially ignited by the immediate needs of driving out the Bonapartes, these *juntas* and the reforms behind them went on to produce a decisive break in Spanish political culture. Most Spaniards were horrified that there was a Bonaparte on the Spanish throne, and were united in their dislike of the French and their desire to be free of Napoleon’s influence. ‘You [French] still possess no laws, no liberty, nor any good; you have been compelled into enslaving Europe, spilling your blood and that of your children’, wrote Juan Bautista Esteller and Juan Baustista Pardo, secretaries of the *junta* in Seville, in an open letter ‘to the *franceses*’.<sup>47</sup> Although the public took against Napoleon, there would inevitably be collaborators, known as the *afrancesados*, many of whom became key figures in Joseph’s administration. As the previous chapters have noted, despite the unpopularity of the French, there were people who had been influenced by their culture. This was cemented with their

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<sup>46</sup> Raymond Carr, *Spain 1808-1975* (Oxford, 1982), pp.79-81.

<sup>47</sup> Juan Bautista Esteller and Juan Bautista Pardo, 29 May 1808, Guerra de la Independencia 1808-1814: Colección de papeles patrióticos de Don Manuel Gómez Ímez, Biblioteca Nacional de España (hereafter BNE).

arrival, and some Spaniards had to decide where their loyalty lay. Almost 2,500 administrators, on top of nearly 100 nobles, 252 clerics, and nearly 1,000 military members supported and ran the regime.<sup>48</sup> A satirical *letrilla* poem of the time posited the question ‘¿Quién será pues el peor/ De Godoy y Bonaparte?’<sup>49</sup> And with sad and ironic timing, Floridablanca, who had resurrected his political career by helping establish the *juntas*, died at the end of the very same year that the French he so distrusted finally took hold of Spain. His fears of France turned out to be not quite as unfounded as they seemed nearly twenty years earlier.

Indeed, the rupture produced by this turn of events gave rise to a much larger anxiety for the Spanish islands. As the first chapter showed, they felt their continued security and prosperity depended on the support of the crown. Without it, the whole economic project could collapse, and with Haiti lurking near by, the slaves could be incited to revolt as well. These years of uncertainty would lead to an unofficial renewal of the colonial pact between the Spanish islands and the crown, despite the circumstances and the fact that it caused rifts with the rest of the colonies. Fear and uncertainty were key in shaping this. The rest of this section will examine these tumultuous years in more detail, giving special attention on the loyalist rebellion in Santo Domingo, and the later constitutional debates in Spain, two events that show how the nature of Caribbean concerns set it on a different trajectory to its colonial counterparts.

The occupation and war in the peninsula sent shockwaves through the empire. Although it had been built on the Habsburg principles that all the colonies should view themselves as kingdoms of Spain (*reinos*), this had changed under the Bourbons into a more empire-colony relationship, with the many reforms taking away *criollo* power and serving as a reminder of where final authority lay. However, the

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<sup>48</sup> Juan López Tabar, *Los famosos traidores: los afrancesados durante la crisis del antiguo régimen (1808-1833)* (Madrid, 2001), p.47

<sup>49</sup> Letrilla, No date, Guerra de la Independencia 1808-1814: Colección de papeles patrióticos de Don Manuel Gómez Ímez, BNE.



establishment of the *junta central* saw a return to the idea of all parts of the empire being integral kingdoms and, as such, many *criollo* elites in the Caribbean felt as if they too also being attacked by Napoleon, and likewise wanted to set up *juntas*, putting themselves on what they perceived to be equal footing with the peninsular *juntas*. As the failed Miranda expedition had indicated, Spain's relationship with its colonies had been undergoing a transformation, and this crisis of sovereignty and legitimacy would only serve to further this process, though with the Caribbean islands, loyalty to the crown would be assured, as will be explained later in this chapter.

In August, Governor Montes asked Puerto Rican planters to support the fight against Bonaparte, saying that although they lacked money, they should 'take the decision to put at the disposition of the *suprema junta* part of the fruits produced in your *haciendas*. Coffee in good condition, sugar, dye-wood, cotton, skins, are donations that can be placed in Spain ...'<sup>50</sup> Other territories with more resources began to set up their own *juntas*. Cuba toyed with the idea, with Arango and others calling for the creation of a *junta*, though eventually after much political wrangling – even Arango changed his mind – the measure failed by two votes.<sup>51</sup> The *Junta Suprema Central* had, however, recognised by this point that the colonies' help was needed for Spain's survival, and so had to find a way to include them in the political process. It decided to call an assembly – the Cortes – and draw up a constitution, and representatives of the colonies would be allowed to participate. Thus each region was

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<sup>50</sup> Toribio Montes, 8 August 1808, AGPR, Fondo Gobernadores Españoles, Asuntos Políticos y Civiles, caja 174, '...propongo que ya que carezcáis de dinero, toméis el arbitrio de poner á disposición de la Suprema Junta, parte de los frutos que produzcan vuestra haciendas...'

<sup>51</sup> Allan J Kuethe, *Cuba, 1753-1815: Crown, Military, and Society* (Knoxville, 1986), p.155; Larry R Jensen, *Children of Colonial Despotism: Press, Politics, and Culture in Cuba, 1790-1840* (St Petersburg, Florida, 1988), p.18.

permitted to send a certain number of elected delegates (*diputados*) to Cádiz, opening a small door leading towards colonial political participation.<sup>52</sup>

In Santo Domingo, reaction was even more dramatic. Upon hearing the news of Napoleon's invasion, Spanish *criollos* went much further than Cuba's political infighting and Puerto Rico's humble offer of agricultural products, and launched a war against the French troops who were still nominally controlling the island, led by Juan Sánchez Ramírez. He was a wealthy Dominican who had fled to Puerto Rico in 1803 but returned in 1807 to resume his exportation of wood. Sánchez Ramírez soon realised that other people on the island felt the same way as he did about French rule, and that he would have little problem rounding up men who were willing to fight for an end to the reign of Governor Ferrand. Life under French rule, while relatively peaceful with no further incursions from Haiti after Dessalines, was still poor, and the remaining *criollos* and Spaniards had never really accepted the change in power. Many wanted a return to Spanish rule. They had a clear enemy for both the humiliation of Spain and the poverty and suffering of the past few years: France. This arrival of Joseph Bonaparte was the spark that lit their fuse. In perhaps an attempt to forestall similar sentiments across the Hispanic world, as well as to officially lay claim to the crown, Joseph Bonaparte issued a proclamation to all the colonies, saying to unconvinced *criollos*: 'I hasten to make this declaration of my paternal solicitude for your happiness, and to assure you, that it shall be exerted equally for the good of the remotest parts of my dominions ... Look up to me as your protector; I shall ever have your interest at heart...' <sup>53</sup> He also unveiled the so-called Constitution of Bayonne

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<sup>52</sup> Jamie E Rodríguez O, 'The Emancipation of America', *The American Historical Review*, 105 (2000), pp. 131-52; see also Rodríguez O, *The Independence of Spanish America* (Cambridge, 1998).

<sup>53</sup> King Joseph's Proclamation to all the Inhabitants of the Spanish Dominions in the West and East Indies, 11 June 1808, Thomas Southey, *Chronological History of the West Indies*, vol. III (London, 1827), p.214.

in 1808, in which he made clear his power over the colonies in addition that of the peninsula.<sup>54</sup>

These actions only served as further sources of irritation. Sánchez Ramírez used his contacts in Puerto Rico to obtain help from their better-off neighbour, which was host to other refugee Dominicans. Puerto Rico's Governor Montes was willing to give arms and help the struggle, as he had been promised shipments of valuable wood from Santo Domingo to cover the costs. Preparations for battle were soon under way, and 300 troops from Puerto Rico were sent over.<sup>55</sup> In addition, some of the men Montes had sent to Santo Domingo had been able to secure aid from Pétion in the South of Haiti, who gave supplies in exchange for cattle hides, but offered no troops.<sup>56</sup> Montes, however, was not convinced of their good intentions. He later wrote that the Haitians had 'good faith with the Spanish ... but in spite of this, I have ordered that these people are not trusted ...'<sup>57</sup> Little came of the attempt, but it is worth noting that the Dominicans, at the time, seemed willing to ask for support from Haiti, and perhaps it is just as significant that Haitians did not want to get too involved.

General Ferrand was well aware what was afoot. He began a speech in August 1808 by pointing out that 'the news I have just received from Puerto Rico announces that that colony finds itself in a political ferment, which can only result in sinister and regrettable effects'. He implored Dominicans to look at their similarities to the French, saying 'you are already French, or, rather, French and Spanish together are one population of brothers and friends, whose only end is to defend the same

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<sup>54</sup> Diego Torrón Martínez, *Los liberales románticos españoles ante la descolonización americana, 1808-1833*, (Madrid, 1992), p.38.

<sup>55</sup> Frank Moya Pons, *The Dominican Republic: A National History* (New York, 1995), p.114.

<sup>56</sup> Southey, *Chronological History*, p.417; Franklin Franco Pichardo, *Los negros, los mulatos y la nación dominicana* (Santo Domingo, 2003).

<sup>57</sup> Toribio Montes to the President of the Junta Central, 26 November 1808, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 1062, reprinted in Fray C de Utrera (ed) *Diario de la Reconquista* (Santo Domingo, 1957).

interests, and profess the same spirit and sentiments'.<sup>58</sup> This idea did little to quell the sentiments of *criollo* elites such as Sánchez Ramírez, who wrote that the earlier news of Joseph Bonaparte now controlling the Indies – and especially his beloved Santo Domingo – had been the initial inspiration to take up arms: 'From that moment I could not shake from my imagination the idea of war ... [it] produced in my spirit such rancour against [the French] ... I was not able to see them from then on without it irritating me in the extreme'.<sup>59</sup>

The fighting began, with Sánchez Ramírez and his 2,000 men invoking the deposed king in the battle cry of '*Viva Fernando VII!*'. Montes wrote to the *junta* in Cádiz to inform them of events, as well as to ask for support.<sup>60</sup> After a couple of months of fighting, the loyalists managed a key victory in November, in the battle of Palo Hincado. General Ferrand's pride was so wounded he shot himself after the defeat.<sup>61</sup> One of the few surviving French soldiers later wrote in his memoirs that his general's head was 'presented on a spear to the English officials, who received with horror this bloody trophy of ingratitude and barbarity of those ferocious men'.<sup>62</sup> This would not stop the French, however, and General Barquier took over the fight. He had to resort to enlisting Dominican slaves against Sánchez Ramírez, though the Spanish had also offered freedom to slaves if they fought alongside them.<sup>63</sup> In addition, Sánchez Ramírez had received re-enforcements throughout the war of free people of

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<sup>58</sup> Proclamation, General Louis Ferrand, 9 August 1808, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 1042, 'Vecinos de la parte del Este de la Isla de Santo Domingo...'

<sup>59</sup> Juan Sánchez Ramírez, 'Diario de las operaciones practicadas para la reconquista de la parte española de Santo Domingo', May 1808, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 1042.

<sup>60</sup> Toribio Montes to the President of the Junta Central, 15 October 1808, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 1062, in Utrera (ed) *Diario*.

<sup>61</sup> Pons Moya, *The Dominican Republic: A National History*, p.114.

<sup>62</sup> C. Armando Rodríguez (trans), *Diario histórico (guerra dominico-francesa de 1808) por Gilbert Guillermin* (Santo Domingo, 1938), p.60.

<sup>63</sup> Juan Sánchez Ramírez, March 1809, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 1042.

colour who wanted to join the fight, and there was even a *moreno* regiment.<sup>64</sup> The war continued into 1809, by which point British military help had entered the picture.

Britain's ships brought arms and some troops, and proved instrumental in the victory that was finally obtained in July of that year. Britain, for its efforts, was rewarded with a preferential commercial treaty.<sup>65</sup> By this point, other Spanish territories had taken an interest in what was happening in Santo Domingo. When the news of the Dominican victory reached Santiago de Cuba, 'immediately they prepared a music concert, and everyone without distinction of class or person went out into the main streets until ten in the evening, singing praises ...'<sup>66</sup> Spain's government in Cádiz was informed of these developments, and it declared its pleasure in the Regency publication *Gazeta del Gobierno*, saying: 'The conquest of the Spanish part of Santo Domingo is the work of our glorious revolution. The same principles of national enthusiasm and of hatred of tyranny guided the brave conduct of those patriot soldiers.'<sup>67</sup> On 29 April 1810 a *real orden* officially welcomed it back to the imperial fold.

This episode is worth relating in detail not only because of its contradictions, but also its timing. The rift that developed between the peninsula and the colonies during Napoleon's occupation would for ever alter the colonial relationship, yet Santo Domingo was trying to re-establish the security of past times. For Santo Domingo, any Spain – even one where there was no king – was preferable to an uncertain future. This dramatic fight to return to the crown was undoubtably rare – rather than using the opportunity to reach for independence, Santo Domingo's elites sought to defend and return under the protection, however faltering, of Spain, even after being under French rule for more than a decade. This persistence was born of tight cultural links of

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<sup>64</sup> Juan Sánchez Ramírez, 'Diario' August and October 1808, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 1042.

<sup>65</sup> William Walton, *Present State of the Spanish Colonies; Including a Particular Report of Hispaniola, of the Spanish Part of Santo Domingo* (London, 1810), p.255.

<sup>66</sup> Bacardí y Moreau, *Crónicas*, pp.56-57.

<sup>67</sup> *Gazeta de Gobierno*, 1809, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 1042, p.526.

language and religion, but also shaped by a perhaps misguided notion that Spain could not only protect the island, but help it prosper. It was a hope that had lived on in the island for some two hundred years, and one that could not yet be quashed by a treaty alone. The dogged loyalty of Santo Domingo would soon stand in very sharp contrast to other colonies. Santo Domingo's sentiments were becoming less widely held in other places, and within months of that colony's return, the newly formed *juntas* across the empire had become spaces for the articulation of autonomy and eventually independence from Spain, ideas which became manifest from 1810 onwards. The eventual struggle for independence across the Spanish territories added another level of anxiety for the islands, which will be further examined in later chapters. But the years around 1810 were an important turning point, as a new language of representation and rights began to emerge within Spain as well as from its colonies.

Although the territories on continental South and Central America would have loyalists who were willing to die for Spain and republicans who were ready to fight for the cause of independence, the Caribbean followed its own course. Some of this can be attributed to their geographical and demographic shortcomings in comparison with territories such as New Spain and Venezuela. Smaller and less populated, the events in Santo Domingo illustrated just how vulnerable they felt without the crown. At the same time, the 'colonial pact' between Cuba and Puerto Rico and the crown would begin to show its strength. Of the three islands, only Cuba felt in a position to even posit the possibility of its own *junta*. Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo equally feared themselves too weak to stand alone. Initially, however, the wider question was not independence in a straightforward sense, but the limits and power of colonial rule. The rupture Napoleon caused thrust the imperial world into a new place, as Spain's

government was increasingly pushed to the sea.<sup>68</sup> And although the Caribbean islands stood steadfast, once the idea of independence began to spread, for many on the islands it would never be suppressed – a new force had been released.

As Santo Domingo was embroiled in fighting against France, Cuba was waging its own unrealised battles with it as well. Indeed, the neighbouring United States thought this peninsular crisis would end in the secession of Cuba. To US politicians, Napoleon seemed strong enough to take what he wanted, and with the fall of the Spanish crown a carve-up of its colonies loomed. The new pearl of the Caribbean was Cuba, and with Havana only being 90 miles from Spanish Florida, there was some hope that the United States could take both. To this end, the former US president, Thomas Jefferson, wrote to his recently installed successor, James Madison, saying: ‘I suppose the conquest of Spain will soon force a delicate question on you as to the Floridas and Cuba, which will offer themselves to you. Napoleon will certainly give his consent without difficulty to our receiving the Floridas, and with some difficulty Cuba.’<sup>69</sup> Jefferson’s optimism would go unrealised, however, as Spain proved more resistant to Napoleon than the US leaders had expected, though the question of annexation to the United States would follow the island throughout the century. The US had long been interested in the island – not only had it received Cuban sugar, but more importantly, it was a ready market for US exports. At the same time, the US was well aware of the similarities between Cuba and its southern states.

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<sup>68</sup> There is a large amount of historical literature on multiple aspects of Latin American independence. For a recent review of historiographical trends, see Gabriel Paquette, ‘The Dissolution of the Spanish Atlantic Monarchy’ *The Historical Journal* 52, No 1 (2009), pp. 175-212; a selection of key works include, D. A. Brading, *The First America*; Michael P Costeloe, *Response to Revolution: Imperial Spain and the Spanish American Revolutions, 1810-1840*, (Cambridge, 1986); John Lynch, and R.A Humphreys, *Latin American Revolutions, 1808-1826: Old and New World Origins* (Norman, 1994); Brian R. Hamnett, ‘Process and Pattern: A Re-Examination of the Ibero-American Independence Movements, 1808-1826’, *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 29, No. 2 (1997), pp. 279-328; John Fisher, Allan J Kuethe, and Anthony McFarlane (eds), *Reform and Insurrection in Bourbon New Granada and Peru* (Baton Rouge, 1990).

<sup>69</sup> Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 19 April 1809, Library of Congress, Jefferson papers [http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/jefferson\\_papers/](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/jefferson_papers/) last accessed 18 May 2010.

Indeed, they were as keen as the Cubans to make sure the racial balance did not tip in favour of slaves. But in the end, the real attraction was the growing sugar industry.

In addition to these large political realignments, Cuba was contending with its own domestic problems, especially the question of what to do with all the people who had come to the island over the past decade from Saint-Domingue who were French, like the hated Napoleon. By 1808, the number of refugees had reached nearly 20,000 in the East and more than 30,000 across the whole island.<sup>70</sup> As they had been arriving since the 1790s, many families had re-settled and become important contributors to the Cuban economy, mainly in coffee growing – indeed output by this point had nearly quadrupled.<sup>71</sup> But Someruelos's outrage at events in Spain meant that the French refugees were going to take the brunt of his anger and that of loyalist Cubans. To deal with the problem, the governor decided to make some deportations. Initially, however, Someruelos only sent away those French people who were not naturalised, and he called for the surveillance of anyone deemed suspicious.<sup>72</sup> In a December proclamation, he said:

Spy on those ... who have or propagate seditious images or papers: report them to the authorities: allow to live in peace those French afflicted by the burden of their national name, that they are protected by our hospitality, and live peacefully, since the Tyrant is frightened by the lion's roar, still they do not find a secure place where they can protect themselves.<sup>73</sup>

On 12 March, however, the anger toward the French in Havana could no longer be contained. Many of the city's residents – people of colour, sailors, slaves, and white *criollos* – banded together in the streets, shouting 'Long live Fernando VII,

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<sup>70</sup> Bacardí y Moreau, *Crónicas*, p.56; Bohumil Badura, 'Los franceses en Santiago de Cuba a mediados del año de 1808', *Ibero-Americana Pragensia*, V (1971), pp.157-61.

<sup>71</sup> Olga Portuondo Zúñiga, *Santiago de Cuba: desde la fundación hasta la guerra de los diez años* (Santiago de Cuba, 1996), pp.114-15.

<sup>72</sup> Duvon C. Corbitt, 'Immigration in Cuba', *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 22, No 2 (1942), p.287.

<sup>73</sup> Proclamacion, Marqués de Someruelos, 14 December 1808, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 297, sig 54.



death to Napoleon and the French'.<sup>74</sup> With the anger reaching a potentially more dangerous level, Someruelos now had a justifiable reason to expel the French.<sup>75</sup> Shortly after the riots, the authorities established *juntas de vigilancia* in the main towns throughout Cuba. These bodies were charged with deciding which 'foreigners' would be allowed to remain in Cuba. Those hauled in front of these *juntas* had to profess their religion, when they arrived in Cuba, what they were doing there, where they lived, and other personal information. Further justifying their cause to drive out French refugees, a decree from the *junta* in Cádiz arrived ordering all foreigners from Cuba.<sup>76</sup> Following this, Someruelos issued a proclamation that all French people had to leave Havana in 17 days and the rest of Cuba in 25 days. A newspaper from Kingston reported that 'Shortly afterwards [the order was decreed] a rabble, consisting principally of the lower order of Spaniards, sallied forth, and commenced the most desperate acts, by destroying the dwellings of those people, and committing every excess. Many houses were demolished, and several Frenchmen killed and wounded.'<sup>77</sup>

Records from a *junta de vigilancia* in Holguín gives some indication of the families involved, and the lives of these settlers. Many of the white refugees had been in Saint-Domingue for generations, and not all of them were planters. Thousands of people had provided Saint-Domingue with a variety of services, and their abilities to do a range of jobs was also brought over to the Spanish islands. Of course, at the same time there were many free people of colour who were in a similar situation. To give an example, the Holguín *junta de vigilancia* records had notes on the Peroden family, consisting of Juan Bautista (Jean-Baptiste – names were often hispanicised), aged 46, a baker. His family included his wife Tereza Origni, 31, sons Enrique (Henri), 6 and

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<sup>74</sup> Gabriel Debien, 'Refugies de Saint-Domingue expulsés de la Havane en 1809', *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 35 (1978), p.560.

<sup>75</sup> Corbitt, 'Immigration in Cuba', p.287.

<sup>76</sup> William R Lux, 'French Colonization in Cuba, 1791-1809', *The Americas* 29 (1972), p.61.

<sup>77</sup> 'Jamaica Papers', *The Times*, 9 August 1809.

Carlos Victor, 4, and daughters Ángela Josefa, 2, and Clara de Jesús, one month. Also included in the census were their slaves Guillermo, aged 24, Juan Bautista, 17, and Susana, 20. Other members of the household included a female relation of Tereza, Victoria Origni, aged 24, who is listed as a seamstress, and Juan and María Michaela Origni, aged 2 and 4 respectively. There were also the *pardo* members of the household, María Julia, 50, listed as a washerwoman, Maria del Rosario, 20, and María Magdalena, 22, both listed as seamstresses. On the margin of this information, it was noted that ‘The French Peroden, with his wife and the rest of his family here, in this city for five to six years have manifested conduct irreprehensible with the most distinguished of the city ...’<sup>78</sup>

However good the behaviour of some, around 7,000 people were expelled via the Havana *junta de vigilancia*. These urban refugees performed crucial jobs – carpenters, tailors, butchers, blacksmiths.<sup>79</sup> This was also the case in Santiago, which had seen the bulk of immigrants arrive into its ports before either staying or moving to other town, or being turned away. Many French had already had an idea of what might lie ahead after hearing the initial news of Joseph Bonaparte, and hurried to sell their goods and properties. This accelerated after the edicts, and allowed Cuban elites to expand their holdings of property, goods, and slaves. Even the administration took part – for instance, Santiago’s Governor Kindelán bought 14 slaves from the departing French planters, including ‘three negros bozales named Guillermo, Fulgencio, and Ambrosio’.<sup>80</sup>

Kindelán, too, had to contend with social unrest from anti-French residents in Santiago, and he was forced to issue more ordinances. They included prohibiting

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<sup>78</sup> Lieutenant Governor of Holguín to Governor, 7 September 1808, ANC Cuba, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 142, No 108.

<sup>79</sup> Jose Morales, ‘The Hispaniola Diaspora’, 1791-1850 (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Connecticut, 1986), p.59; Debien, ‘Refugies de Saint-Domingue expulsés de La Havane’, p.558; José María Callejas, *Historia de Santiago de Cuba* (Havana, 1911), p.81.

<sup>80</sup> 15 and 24 April 1809, Archivo Histórico Provincial de Santiago de Cuba (hereafter AHPSC), Protocolos Notariales Escribanos de Santiago de Cuba; Escribanes Giro, No. 240.

people from being in the street past 10pm, and ordering heads of households to not allow their children or slaves to leave the house after 9pm. In addition, no more than four people ‘be they Spanish or French’ were allowed to walk the streets together. Punishment could be up to eight days in jail, or, for slaves, jail and twenty-five lashes.<sup>81</sup> Around the same time he published a *bando* – with one side in Spanish and one side in French so everyone could understand – outlining who was to leave, and when. It also ordered that all non-agricultural workers would have to make their case, but also that the region also would be establishing a *junta de vigilancia* to deal with this question. He asked Cubans to refrain from violence, remarking at the end of the document that, ‘A final warning for the Public who, imbued by the Christian and generous character that has always been our currency, far from bothering or extorting the French who have to leave, contribute to helping them embark, giving enlightened testimony of the prudence, moderation, and civility that constitutes the well-earned reputation of the Cuban People.’<sup>82</sup>

However, such an exodus was bound to be beset by some logistical problems. In many cases the refugees had trouble getting out of the country within their allotted time. Many could not find buyers for their goods, leaving them no way to pay their passage, and in any case there was often a lack of boats.<sup>83</sup> Despite these difficulties, thousands streamed from Cuba throughout the summer of 1809. In a matter of months some 6,060 people left Baracoa and Santiago, of these 1,887 were white, 2,060 were free people of colour and 2,113 slaves, indicating that myriad means to keep people of colour out of the island perhaps had not been strictly observed. They mostly headed for New Orleans, as Louisiana had a strong French-speaking community, and it was a slave state as well. Initially, US president Jefferson tried in his final days in office to

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<sup>81</sup> Sebastián Kindelán, 10 April 1809, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 255, sig 41.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Sebastián Kindelán, 18 May 1809, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 255, sig 42.

stop them arriving in the US.<sup>84</sup> Like many southern slaveholders, he did not want slaves or people of colour associated with Haiti entering the US. He had already caused trade chaos with his Embargo Act of 1807 – which initially prohibited American ships from going into foreign ports in order to steer clear of war between France and Britain – but it had proven to be unenforceable and was dropped in 1808. Likewise, the stream of settlers to North America could not be steered off their course. Boat records from Santiago in August 1809 give an idea of who some of the thousands were and where they were going. Boats left from Santiago and called at ports such as Kingston, Curaçao, New Orleans, and Baltimore. New Orleans was the destination of the American ship *Freeman*, Captained by a Robert Sparrows, who took 50 white men, 26 white women, 35 white children, 20 men of colour, and 8 women of colour to Louisiana.<sup>85</sup> By the end of the year, most of the French people had left Cuba, though some families managed to stay through connections, naturalisation, or emigration before the 1790s.

Puerto Rico did not have a comparable situation and was not as willing to force any former refugees out of the island, as they were seen to be especially vital to agriculture.<sup>86</sup> Amid concerns about the French, in May island officials heard that mulattos and black slaves in the region of the north-western port Aguadilla – the same area where an uprising was stifled in 1795 – were saying that the government had kept secret the news that they had all been freed by the king, though it was unclear whether they meant the new or old king, and that this fact ‘had been hidden on the part of the government and the rest of the magistrates’.<sup>87</sup> At the same time, there was also trouble with the staffing of the militia, as a letter from outgoing Governor Montes, who was also captain-general, had made clear, as some people were ‘trying

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<sup>84</sup> Debien, ‘Les colons de Saint-Domingue’, p.18.

<sup>85</sup> 13 May 1809, ANC, Correspondencia de los Capitanes Generales, legajo 446, sig 2.

<sup>86</sup> Aida Caro de Delgado, *Actos de cabildos de San Juan Bautista, 1808-09* (1968), No 90 (1968), 23 July 1810.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

to enlist them [white soldiers] alongside people of colour, without consideration of their [the whites'] distinguished quality' and recommended that whites and *pardos* should be listed separately, 'whites as whites and *pardos* as *pardos*'.<sup>88</sup> The administration also persisted in monitoring the movement of people deemed to be suspicious. An order from the new Captain-General, Salvador Meléndez, called for the drawing up of lists in San Juan, denoting who was 'foreign' and who was simply not from the city.<sup>89</sup> Later in the year he wanted an 'exact and precise knowledge of the foreigners existing in the Island' and demanded that those who were not dedicated to agriculture be brought to the capital with their papers.<sup>90</sup>

Meanwhile, Haiti had not faded from the view of the Spanish islands. Someruelos wrote to the secretary of state of the Regency in Spain over the issue. There had been a *real orden* the previous year requesting the establishment of diplomatic relations with Henri Christophe, but Someruelos had come across reports in the gazettes of Port-au-Prince about the fighting between Christophe and Pétion, and suggested to the crown that it was best to keep the news away from people of colour in Cuba.<sup>91</sup> But Haiti's influence was still there. In Cuba, there was a call for the authorities to 'redouble' their vigilance, especially in keeping an eye on mulatto militia members, as rumours were circulating that Haitians were now planning to spread their revolution to Jamaica, despite the Cuban authorities' knowledge of Haiti's weakness and internal division.<sup>92</sup> Santo Domingo, for its part, pleaded that its remaining militias were 'badly organised, badly paid, and terribly clothed' and unable

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<sup>88</sup> Toribio Montes, 29 April 1809, AGPR, Fondo Gobernadores Españoles, Asuntos Políticos y Civiles, caja 18, No 178.

<sup>89</sup> Salvador Meléndez, 8 November 1809, AGPR, Fondo Gobernadores Españoles, Asuntos Políticos y Civiles, caja 18, No 202.

<sup>90</sup> Salvador Meléndez, 29 October 1809, AGPR, Fondo Gobernadores Españoles, Asuntos Políticos y Civiles, caja 18, No 200.

<sup>91</sup> Marqués de Someruelos to the Secretary of State, 13 August 1809, AGI, Estado, legajo 12, No 50.

<sup>92</sup> Francisco Sánchez Griñón to the Governor, 9 April 1810, ANC, Fondo Asuntos Políticos, legajo 211, sig 80.

to provide much of their own defence.<sup>93</sup> In addition, a conspiracy was uncovered that had the aim of aligning the Spanish part of the island to the *junta* of Caracas, which had already declared its independence. The named plotters included ‘the mulattos Santiago Foló, of French [Saint-Domingue] nationality, José Ricardo Castaños, of the city of Caracas, Juan José Ramires, of Puerto Rico, D[on] Emilio Perzi, of the kingdom of Sardinia, and Cristobal Huber, of Madrid’.<sup>94</sup> For all the islands, there was no escaping the forces of change in the region.

By 1810, the situation in Spain was critical. A *real orden* was circulated from the Regency calling for the monitoring of anyone arriving in the ports across the Spanish territories, saying that ‘... Napoleon Bonaparte [is] to send emissaries and spies to these Dominions, and that it has been verified already by some their departure with the depraved design of introducing in them disorder and bitterness’.<sup>95</sup> The Cortes had many pressing issues to cope with, as well as trying to contend with its internal divisions among liberals, traditionalists, and Americans. The range of problems was large, but only three issues will be examined here which pertain to the Caribbean: the free trade debates of 1810, the abolition debates of 1811, and the eventual constitution of 1812. All of these concerned the islands, and the participation of Cuba and Puerto Rico in these debates – and their particular interests – illustrates not only the nature of their anxieties about economic issues and slavery, but also the growing power of the planter class.

Trade was one of the immediate concerns as revenue was badly needed, and there was some serious debate about the possibility of much freer trade, drawing from the ideas of Jovellanos and others. Indeed, the Regency considered granting a concession to other ports, but the Cádiz *consulado* put up too strong a fight, going as

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<sup>93</sup> Xavier Caro to Nicolás María de Sierra, 18 December 1810, AGI Santo Domingo, legajo 1041, ‘Toda la tropa veterana que hay en la parte Española de esta Ysla...’

<sup>94</sup> Juan Sánchez Ramírez to the Regency, 17 October 1810, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 1042, ‘Paso á las Rs manos de VM testimonio de las causas que he formado contra los mulatos...’

<sup>95</sup> Real orden 20 June 1810, ANC, Fondo Asuntos Políticos, legajo 211, sig 146.

far as burning 500 copies of the printed order ready for distribution.<sup>96</sup> The merchants of Cádiz, still the most important port on the peninsula, had far too much to lose, especially in such difficult times. A few months later, the Regency called for Britain, now Spain's ally against France, to have access to American markets as a politically expedient way to solve the issue of the peninsula's inability to supply America as well as allowing Britain to accumulate money that would be spent on the defence of Spain. As the Cortes wrangled over the Regency's proposals, Britain offered to mediate with the rebellious colonies. Yet the *consulado* again won the argument, with a propaganda campaign that claimed free trade would cause the Spanish economy to collapse, and so the measures were voted down by the Cortes, though the issue of free trade would reappear. Naturally, this defeat was a cause for concern for the Caribbean islands. A letter from Cuba's commercial elites to Cádiz noted that:

The day will arrive in which, unburdened of business more urgent or grandiose, the penetrating eyes of the Cortes will return to the important matter of our overseas commerce, and in this day of justice, in this tremendous day for the interest of the guilds and individuals, Havana will take great care to expose the plotting and abuses of those [guilds and individuals], and the incalculable wrongs that they have inflicted on the good economy and healthy politics of the Spanish nation.<sup>97</sup>

While these debates were taking place, the *juntas* that had been formed throughout the Americas were gaining strength at the expense of a weakened Spain. Yet because of the declaration that these territories were indeed a part of the kingdom of Spain – not just colonies – the question that had to be answered was that of representation, and how many seats Americans would have on the Cortes. Spanish members of the Cortes had a problem: while needing the assistance and economic

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<sup>96</sup> John R. Fisher, 'Commerce and Imperial Decline: Spanish Trade With Spanish America, 1797-1820', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 30, No 3 (1998), pp.469; Michael Costeloe, 'Spain and the Latin American Wars of Independence: The Free Trade Controversy, 1810-1820', *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 61, No 2 (1981), p.210; Mario Rodríguez, 'The "America Question" at the Cortes of Madrid', *The Americas* 38, No 3 (1982), pp.296-97.

<sup>97</sup> Hortensia Pichardo, *Documentos para la historia de Cuba* (Havana, 1973), p.208.

support of 16 million Americans, to give them the proportional representation they demanded would mean that the 10 million Spaniards on the peninsula would be politically outnumbered. The assembly in Spain could potentially be under the control of its imperial subjects. Maintaining the power balance to their favour became the Spanish politicians' priority, though they were ignoring the fact that money from the Americas was keeping Cádiz afloat. Some 195 million *reales* were sent from the colonies to the metropole during the initial stage of the crisis, and from 1808-11 Cádiz received some 600 million *reales*, around 80 per cent of which were from New Spain.<sup>98</sup> Initially, the number of elected deputies was kept low, with 30 Americans out of 99 in 1810, though this would rise to 51 out of 127 by 1812.<sup>99</sup> In fact, many deputies did not attend some of the early sessions; representatives known as substitutes (*suplentes*) from whichever overseas region they were from and who were currently in Spain were voted in as representatives until locally elected ones could arrive, with the exception of Puerto Rico's Ramón Power Giralt, who managed to arrive by 24 September 1810 and participated from the beginning.

Meanwhile, political agitation over what was perceived as an unjust situation was growing in certain regions, such as Caracas, from *junta* members fed up with Spain's mismanagement. They began to take matters into their own hands, and were becoming an acute source of worry to members of the Regency. Attempts were made to limit their impact. Indeed, Power complained to the Cortes about the *orden* that Puerto Rico had received in early September 1810, which prohibited the arrival and entry on the island of people from Caracas and the surrounding region 'without proceeding with the most rigorous examination of their conduct, opinions, patriotism

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<sup>98</sup> Carlos Marichal, *Bankruptcy of Empire: Mexican Silver and the Wars Between Spain, Britain, and France, 1760-1810* (Cambridge, 2007), pp.218-19.

<sup>99</sup> Marie Laure Rieu-Millán, *Los diputados americanos en las Cortes de Cádiz: igualdad o independencia* (Madrid, 1990), pp.3-4; Brian R. Hamnett, 'Constitutional Theory and Political Reality: Liberalism, Traditionalism and the Spanish Cortes, 1810-1814', *The Journal of Modern History* 49, No. 1, On Demand Supplement (1977), p.1086.



and loyalty to the legitimate government'.<sup>100</sup> For Power, this was too unfair a step. Lashing out at the 'barbaric' order, he pointed out to the Cortes that it clearly did not understand the anxiety this caused to people from Venezuela – all of whom were, he claimed, loyal to the crown – who had come to Puerto Rico, as he told them that 'each resident trembles and worries, all waiting to see the moments when their sacred asylum is assaulted'.<sup>101</sup> The order was retracted, but the episode sparked a longer-running debate in Puerto Rico between those that wanted stronger peninsular authority against those who wanted local autonomy.<sup>102</sup>

Another aspect to the overall issue of representation in the Cortes was that of who constituted a citizen, a question which was really about race.<sup>103</sup> There was wide agreement that indigenous people and *mestizos* (part indigenous, part white) deserved to have their own representatives and some political voice, and their citizenship was recognised, as there was a long legal history to their relationship with the Spaniards. The same could be said for slave and free blacks, mulattos and *zambos*, and yet they would find themselves excluded. Just as there were legal frameworks for relations between Indians and the Spanish, so too were there ones for slave and free, including those that allowed slaves to buy their freedom. José Mejía Lequerica, a deputy from New Granada, made an impassioned plea for the inclusion of Americans of African origin, arguing that, 'As plants are improved by grafting, so too are the mixed castes of America ... Why should their blood be deemed impure? I find impure only that of men unsound of body, and eminently pure the blood of men who toil, who till the soil ...'<sup>104</sup> This particular speech, however, was omitted in the Cortes session records

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<sup>100</sup> *Diario de las discusiones y actas de las Cortes*, 15 January 1811, vol. 3 (Cádiz, 1811), pp.349-351.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, p.350.

<sup>102</sup> Rieu-Millán, *Los diputados*, pp.306-307.

<sup>103</sup> See for instance, James F. King, 'The Colored Castes and American Representation in the Cortes of Cadiz', *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 33, No 1 (1953), pp.33-64; Marixa Lasso, *Myths of Harmony: Race and Republicanism During the Age of Revolution, Colombia, 1795-1831* (Pittsburgh, 2007); Mario Rodríguez, *The Cádiz Experiment in Central America, 1808 to 1826* (Berkeley, 1978).

<sup>104</sup> Quoted in King, 'The Colored Castes and American Representation in the Cortes of Cadiz', p.41.

from 1 October 1810, though it did appear in the periodical *El Observador*, as noted by James King, in his influential work on the issue of colour and the Cortes.<sup>105</sup>

Despite the impassioned debate – much of which would attempt to make citizens out of people with African blood as well as stress the supposed racial harmony of the Americas – the real issue for Spain was that if all people of African descent were included the number of Spanish representatives would be lower than Americans, something that American delegates realised as well.<sup>106</sup> That being the case, black Americans in the end would be forced to forgo political representation, and so the issue of racial equality for people of colour would be one with which the new republics would have to contend, and one that the Caribbean islands would try to ignore.

Enslaved Africans, present and future, would further lose out during the abolition debates, which saw attempts to end the slave trade fail. Liberal Spaniards wanted to push the country in new directions, and that included the suppression of the slave trade, as Britain had done. This gave rise to a debate in the Cortes, which roused the not inconsiderable anger of Cuba over this matter. The idea was initially offered in the Cortes in April 1811 by Agustín de Argüelles, a Spaniard and one of the Cádiz *diputados*, who petitioned ‘that the Congress declare this depraved traffic forever abolished’.<sup>107</sup> The debate that followed had the spectre of Saint-Domingue hanging over it, as the abolition of the slave trade became muddled with the abolition of slavery. One of Peru’s representatives, José Mejía, cautioned Argüelles, arguing that ‘the abolition of the slave business requires much meditation and a steady hand, because to liberate at once an immense multitude of slaves, more than the bankrupting

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<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*, see footnote 14 in the article.

<sup>106</sup> Lasso, *Myths of Harmony*, pp.42-43.

<sup>107</sup> *Diario de las discusiones y actas de las Cortes*, 2 April 1811, vol. 4, p.439.

of their owners, would bring disgraceful consequences to the state ...’ but went on to agree that no more slaves should be introduced to the colonies.<sup>108</sup>

Argüelles re-entered the debate to clarify what he was proposing and said ‘the terms that have been conceded, manifest that they do not try to manumit the slaves of the American possessions, which is a matter that requires the greatest care, given the sad example of what befell Santo Domingo [Saint-Domingue] ...’<sup>109</sup> The Cuban representative, Andrés Jáuregui, weighed into the debate by arguing that such an announcement would upset the ‘tranquility’ among races his island was enjoying, saying ‘Remember, Your Majesty, the imprudent conduct of the National Assembly of France, and the sad, fatal results it produced ...’<sup>110</sup>

Yet not all Americans – most of whom were from territories that had few African slaves – felt that an uprising was a real possibility. Antonio de Villavicencio, from New Granada, later remarked that ‘It is completely absurd to fear an outcome similar to that of Saint-Domingue, because of differences in circumstances and precedents’, referring to the smaller slave numbers, especially outside of Cuba.<sup>111</sup> This was an argument that was not without its supporters; yet the Cuban lobby would later weigh in very heavily with its *representación* in defence of slavery, penned by Arango, who once again put pressure on the Spanish government to leave Cuba alone, so that it could continue its course. Cuba’s economic space had opened up and its expansion into the sugar and coffee markets was too valuable to leave to the decision-makers in Cádiz. Arango’s reply has three sections, all of which attempted to justify Cuba’s position. The first section put slavery in a historical context, harking back to the Portuguese slave traders and the arguments of Bartolomé de las Casas for the

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<sup>108</sup> *Ibid*, p.443.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid*, p.444.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, p.445.

<sup>111</sup> AGI, Santa Fé, legajo 747, doc 43, quoted in Lasso, *Myths of Harmony*, p.167.

introduction of Africans to the Spanish colonies. The second part made the bulk of the case. It asked, with the indignation almost rising off the page:

Has Mr Argüelles proven that our traffic, our plantations, our morality in this matter, our local laws, and the conditions of the slaves among us, is the same as that of the English? Does he even touch these essential and indispensable points for comparison? Well, how then can he ask that the assembly deny this? How, in front of the world, can he determine as his only reason [for abolition] that the Congress is dishonest about the improvement of America?<sup>112</sup>

The chapter later brings up Haiti, noting ‘the terrible risks of the vicinity of King Henri Christophe’ going on to argue that any change from the current system would bring disaster: ‘This, if not liberty, is perhaps worse than absolute liberty; because, to say the least, we already know the effects that it had in Santo Domingo...’<sup>113</sup> It concluded in the final section by discussing how the current system could best be enhanced. The Havana planters won the argument, and Spain did not abolish the slave trade for many more decades. Indeed, Cuba and to a lesser extent Puerto Rico, would see slave importation numbers continue to rise throughout the decade. The victory of the Havana planters, however, would rankle liberals in Spain and elsewhere. Joseph Blanco White, the noted Spanish intellectual who was based in Britain, wrote in 1814 that the ‘plantation owners of Havana demonstrated such compassionate hearts; they are more fearsome than [the slaves’] African grandfathers’. He complained that the Spanish government at Cádiz only had commercial interests in mind when pleasing the Cuban landowners.<sup>114</sup> The difference between Britain and Spain and why one abolished the slave trade and the other failed to was, for Blanco White, because ‘between one and the other, it is that there they constituted an immense capital, and here a respectively small interest. For the rest, the other complaints can be reduced to

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<sup>112</sup> Pichardo, *Documentos*, p.227.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid*, pp.241-249.

<sup>114</sup> Joseph Blanco White, *Bosquexo del comercio en esclavos y reflexiones sobre este tráfico considerado moral, political, y cristianamente* (London, 1814), pp.83-91.

the fact that the government favoured the introduction of slaves, encouraging, in this way, various individuals to use their capital for speculation dependent on the work of Blacks...'<sup>115</sup>

In addition to this fight against the Cortes, Cuba also had been contending with troublesome internal events. Román de la Luz Silveira and Joaquín Infante, who were alleged to be freemasons, in 1810 had begun organising an independence movement, whose supporters included not only whites but slaves and free people of colour.<sup>116</sup> The plot was uncovered before any action was taken and brutally suppressed, though that would not stop others from trying to continue organising resistance outside the watchful eyes of the colonial administration. However, the incident, compounded with other complaints, proved disturbing enough for the the Cádiz delegates, in a secret session, to request that Someruelos, who had been captain-general of Cuba for twelve years when he was only meant for five, be taken out of office. His term came to an end in 1812 and he died the following year, and was replaced by Juan Ruíz de Apodaca.

News of the failed plot and the ongoing abolition debates in Spain was not restricted to the elites, and soon slaves and free people of colour knew that changes could possibly be afoot. More rumours again began to circulate that the king had freed the slaves.<sup>117</sup> But at the same time, over the course of the Cádiz debates, from 1810 to 1814, the number of new slaves who disembarked in Cuba reached 22,291 and likewise the port of Havana was growing alongside the burgeoning sugar and slave

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<sup>115</sup> *Ibid*, p.92.

<sup>116</sup> Eleazar Córdova-Bello, *La independencia de Haití y su influencia en Hispanoamérica* (Caracas, 1967), pp.145-6.

<sup>117</sup> David Geggus, 'Slavery, War and Revolution in the Greater Caribbean, 1789-1815', in *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean*, in David Barry Gaspar and David Patrick Geggus (eds) (Bloomington, 1997), p.10.

industries.<sup>118</sup> By 1810, the total number of slaves was around 217,000, while there were 109,000 free people of colour and some 274,000 whites.<sup>119</sup>

A Scottish traveler to the island, JB Dunlop, arrived in Havana in 1811, where he observed that within a well-guarded city lay much diversion. Initially he had to get permission to come into the city, with a resident vouching for his good behaviour, though he noted that ‘These Precautions however appear to be a mere matter of Form, for permission to stay is never refused, even if the motive should be amusement’.<sup>120</sup> And indeed, according to Dunlop, the diversions were many. He observed: ‘Gambling seems to be a Vice to which all are passionately addicted, from the Government down to the most common individual...’ He notes other aspects of Cuban life, including a thriving theatre scene, and fashionable resorts where *habaneros* went to be seen and to promenade.<sup>121</sup> Havana was becoming an increasingly important centre of not only commerce, but was culturally and socially changing as well, fueled by agricultural wealth and trade prosperity.

Despite the economic growth, however, the constant flow of people from other islands – arriving or departing – was a drain on resources. The *junta de emigración* decided that the Dominican immigrants to whom they had initially paid a pension should be cut off, and, ideally, return to their island now that it was under Spanish control. Dominicans in Cuba were told to appeal to the Regency if they did not like this decision. Despite being described as ‘these miserable expatriates, poor and without the slightest succor’<sup>122</sup> there was little sympathy, and in fact transport was being arranged to take them back to the island, to languish again in poverty. There

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<sup>118</sup> The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database 2009, Slave Voyages, Estimates <http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/assessment/estimates.faces> last accessed 19 May 2010.

<sup>119</sup> Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery*, p.383.

<sup>120</sup> Raymond A. Mohl, ‘A Scotsman in Cuba, 1811-1812’, *The Americas* 29, No 2 (1972), pp.235-6.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid*, p.237.

<sup>122</sup> Minister of Gracia y Justicia, 10 October 1811, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 1041, ‘Participa haber denegado el Consejo de Regencia la solicitud hecha por varios emigrados de Sto. Domingo ...’

was little to go back to – the Lieutenant Governor of Santo Domingo, José Núñez de Cáceres, had written to the Regency begging for support. Echoing the often-repeated refrain, he explained that the island was still full of potential, but its suffering – and still loyal – inhabitants did not have any capital for development.<sup>123</sup> The pleas fell on deaf ears, but for Núñez, who would continue in Dominican politics, this constant disregard would become unbearable, forcing him to change his views and eventually the island's relationship with Spain.

Santo Domingo's neighbours were trying to re-group as well, and news reached Cuba that Andrés Rigaud, the Saint-Domingue mulatto who became an enemy of L'Ouverture, had returned to the island, and apparently had gained control of part of the South. He had been in contact with the governor of Baracoa in Cuba in order to find any French planters who had previously fled, as he wanted to repopulate his part of the island with them, though most would have left Cuba by that point.<sup>124</sup> His death in the autumn of 1811 cut short those plans. Pétion consolidated control of the South, and Christophe solidified his claim on the North.

As news of events in Cádiz, and especially the debates about the slave trade, reached Cuban shores, vigilance was again a priority, as external agitators were a constant source of anxiety. One order calling for more monitoring of foreigners entering the ports drew special attention to four men with the French-sounding names, 'La Bastiste, Sicant, Póo y la Farie'.<sup>125</sup> A *real orden* around the same time demanded that everyone – not just the French – show passports when they arrived in Spanish territories.<sup>126</sup> The overall climate was again one of tension. Writing to the Governor of Santiago de Cuba, Someruelos relayed news of the debates in Cadiz and told the governor that they would need a *junta de policía* to 'conserve order, [slaves']

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<sup>123</sup> AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 1041, José Núñez de Cáceres to the Regency, 27 August 1811, AGI Santo Domingo, legajo 1041, '...nadie tiene capitales, esclavos, ni otros medios para su formento ...'

<sup>124</sup> Private letter, 30 April 1811, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 213, sig 41.

<sup>125</sup> Marqués de Someruelos, 9 November 1811, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 213, sig 165.

<sup>126</sup> *Real Orden*, 27 November 1811, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 1042.

tranquility and fields where their movements can be observed'.<sup>127</sup> Indeed, only a short time after that letter, Someruelos received a report from the lieutenant governor of Holguín saying that some more slaves had declared themselves free.<sup>128</sup>

### *Rebellion and restoration*

Around the time of the abolition debates, Power wrote to his mother, Doña Josefa Giralt y Power in San Juan, telling her about events in Cádiz, which she received in January 1812. The letter sparked a series of events in Puerto Rico that nearly led to an uprising. Doña Josefa's slaves, Jacinto and Fermín, found out the contents of the letter, in which – drawing from the events at the Cortes – Power told her that 'if they [the Cortes] give liberty to the slaves, she would be the first in executing the law with hers'. On reading this, she began to cry and tore up the letter.<sup>129</sup> It would not take long for her slaves to discover the source of her anguish, and relay the contents of her letter around the city.

Although the real slavery boom would not come until later, the numbers on the island were creeping up and had already reached 17,536.<sup>130</sup> That, combined with a sizable population of free people of colour, meant the authorities were constantly concerned. Only a short time before the incident of the letter, an order had gone out across the island restricting the movement of people of colour. The regulations stipulated that no more than three people of colour could meet up without their motives being investigated; no slaves could leave their *hacienda* without signed permission from their owners; and owners themselves would be responsible for their

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<sup>127</sup> Marqués de Someruelos to Pedro Suárez Urbina, 23 May 1811, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 213, sig 81.

<sup>128</sup> Letter to Marqués de Someruelos, 29 October 1811, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 213, sig 162.

<sup>129</sup> Expediente, 18 March 1812, in *El proceso abolicionista en Puerto Rico: documentos para su estudio* (Río Piedras, 1974), pp.125-6.

<sup>130</sup> Juan R González Mendoza, 'Puerto Rico's Creole Patriots and the Slave Trade After the Haitian Revolution' in David Geggus (ed) *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World* (Columbia, 2001), p.60.



slaves and would notify the authorities of any troublesome ones.<sup>131</sup> This vigilance, however, was of limited effectiveness, as the networks of communication made it easy for this news to spread. From San Juan news of Doña Josefa's letter reached people further inland, and for a few days confusion reined over the legitimacy of the claims. But eventually the slaves, as well as the free people of colour who were helping to relay the news, were suppressed, with the supposed perpetrators being sentenced to 50 lashes of the whip, and others who took part to 30.<sup>132</sup> A few weeks later, more orders were circulated by Governor Meléndez, who called for 'all the means possible to instruct about slavery and its obligations, of obedience, respect and submission with those they should see and service as their owner ... they disillusioned themselves with the error of liberty ...'<sup>133</sup> The slaves of Puerto Rico were not alone in their hopes. Some of the black and mulatto Dominicans who had participated in the War of Reconquest were now plotting to overthrow the white ruling class and forge an alliance with Haiti. The plan was discovered, and they were apparently dragged through the streets and their remains were fried in coal tar.<sup>134</sup>

Cuba too would see turbulence in 1812. A series of revolts had taken place around the island over the course of the first couple of months of the year, in Havana, Puerto Príncipe, Bayamo, and Holguín. The authorities discovered that these uprisings, far from being local disturbances on plantations, were connected to each other. Their trail eventually led to a free black named José Antonio Aponte, an artisan who was also a sculptor and had been the captain of Havana's free black militia. The authorities found a book with alleged plans and drawings; it apparently had sketches of military garrisons on the island, along with portraits of George Washington and, more significantly, Haitian leaders L'Ouverture, François and Dessalines, as well as

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<sup>131</sup> Circular No 25, 20 January 1812, in *El proceso abolicionista*, p.119.

<sup>132</sup> Circular No 75, 18 March 1812, in *El proceso abolicionista*, p.121-122.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> Silvio Torres-Saillant, 'Introduction to Dominican Blackness', in Torres-Saillant et al (eds) *Dominican Studies Working Papers Series* (New York, 1999), p.9.

Christophe. This was enough for the authorities to pin the blame on Aponte. He was hanged a couple of weeks after the book of drawings was found in his house.<sup>135</sup>

Hopes of liberation or equality would be further dashed by the unveiling of the long-awaited Constitution of Cádiz on 19 March 1812.<sup>136</sup> Not only was there no mention of abolition, but voting rights were not be granted to those of African origin. In other ways the constitution was a liberal document, empowering the Cortes and attempting to create a different political relationship between the monarch and the people. Its liberalism was considered only ‘idealistic and romantic’, but it was also misplaced and misrepresentative of wider and entrenched conservatism across the country.<sup>137</sup> Its attempts to refashion the empire had come too late for some regions, and would be useless for others. And while Central and South Americans would find themselves divided between liberals and loyalists on the bloody road to independence, the Caribbean colonies – and the Philippines – managed to keep an even keel for the time being.

The upheaval and uncertainty across Spain’s imperial world proved an interesting juncture for Haiti. With some of its leaders having previously helped in the Miranda expedition, there seemed to now be even more opportunities to aid other revolutionaries and potentially to bring emancipation to new republics. In 1813, Mexican rebel leader Ignacio López Rayón sent one of his colonels to the North of Haiti to establish relations with and ask for help from Christophe, though apparently the mission failed. However, another Mexican revolutionary, Francisco Xavier Mina,

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<sup>135</sup> Matt D Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle Against Atlantic Slavery* (Chapel Hill, 2006), pp2-4. See Childs’ book for a comprehensive account of events and testimony surrounding the rebellion. Also see the first chapter of Sibylle Fischer, *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (Durham, 2004) for an examination of the trial of Aponte and the larger meanings of his book.

<sup>136</sup> An English translation can be found at the Biblioteca Virtual de Miguel de Cervantes, ‘The Political Constitution of the Spanish Monarchy’, <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/servlet/SirveObras/c1812/12159396448091522976624/index.htm> last accessed 19 May 2010.

<sup>137</sup> Diego Torrón Martínez, *Los liberales románticos españoles ante la descolonización Americana, 1808-1833* (Madrid, 1992), p.43; Carr, *Spain*, p.123.

would be able to secure support from Pétion, as will be discussed in the following chapter.<sup>138</sup>

In Spain, the Cortes met again in ordinary session from 1813-14, though its debates would have a limited impact, and the body as a whole and its struggle to enact reforms soon were laid to waste. Indeed, under the Treaty of Valençay in December 1813, Fernando VII was to be restored to the throne, and Napoleon had to take his brother and his troops out of Spain. Fernando VII, also known as *el deseado* – the ‘desired one’ – returned to Spain on 14 March 1814. By May he had ordered the abolition of the 1812 Constitution, and had some of the leaders involved with it arrested. In fact, in trying to reclaim his power, he had even entertained undertaking an expedition to Haiti, but the king was dissuaded by British abolitionists, including William Wilberforce.<sup>139</sup> Troops were dispatched to take back rebel territories. Spain, tired and bankrupt, tried to return to life under its legitimate monarch, but it would not be so straightforward. Likewise, Santo Domingo had seemingly returned to its past life, but its days as a Spanish colony would again be numbered. For Cuba and Puerto Rico, local disturbances and disagreements were quelled through a combination of political will and commercial interest, a pairing that would stand the islands on much firmer footing than their rapidly dwindling fellow colonies.

The decade after the Haitian Revolution had been no less eventful for the Spanish islands. In many ways they were far more dramatic, and full of ‘unthinkable’ events. In 1791 the overthrow of France and a whole plantation society by slaves seemed beyond the realm of possibility, just as in early 1808 did the idea of a Bonaparte on the Spanish throne. While the larger political world was shifting, Cuba had been experiencing its own social transformations. The nature of slavery on the island had changed – Cuba was developing large plantations and trying to populate

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<sup>138</sup> Von Grafenstein, *Nueva España en el circuncaribe*, pp.241-2.

<sup>139</sup> Tim Matthewson, ‘Jefferson and the Nonrecognition of Haiti’, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 140, No 1 (1996), p.36.

them with African slaves, not *criollo* ones, working them hard and replacing them when they died under the strain. Puerto Rico struggled with social control and runaway rumours. Santo Domingo, sitting alongside Haiti, was focused on its own return to Spain. The breaking away of the Spanish American territories had created another problem for colonial officials in the Caribbean, and one they would be forced to contend with for decades. In the years to come, slavery and republicanism would become more entangled, and colour and freedom would take on new meanings. As the rest of Spanish America severed its metropolitan ties and the spectre of Haiti still loomed large in the Caribbean, the idea of independence was something the Spanish islands felt they could ill afford.

### *Conclusion*

The decade after the establishment of Haiti brought a new set of challenges and anxieties. France proved to be the bearer of more disruption, this time culminating in a political rupture in Spain – and its colonies were left scared and uncertain. With the unthinkable toppling of the king, colonial officials in the Caribbean were forced to believe that they could be next. Although some of the other Spanish colonies embraced this uncertainty and used it as a first foothold on independence, for the islands, the arrival of French rule, coupled with the development of Spanish liberalism, was seen as an existential threat. This was only tempered by the growing power of the Cuban sugar planters, whose intervention in the Cortes debates provided a sort of renewal of the colonial pact. But increasingly repressive measures were needed to combat internal insecurity – this period also brought the rise of local power. A proliferation of orders on behaviour, combined with the forced emigration of Saint-Domingue refugees showed how local governors were trying to contain what they thought could be internal threats. In the space of just over ten years, the islands had gone from their relatively quiet existences on the imperial periphery to being caught up in not only a reconfiguration of the Caribbean world, but of the Spanish empire as

well. Lurking in the back of the official mind, however, was the ever-present possibility of slave rebellion, and years of uncovered conspiracies and suppressed plots attested to this. What the king and colonial officials in the Caribbean could not yet foresee was how this combination of disgruntled colonies, Haiti, and rebellion plots would be played out across their islands in the years to come.

## *Chapter 4*

*'A second edition of the horrors of St. Domingo': Haiti and the Republicans, 1815-1822*

This chapter examines the convergence of a unified Haiti and South American republicanism. This combination led to a further entrenchment of loyalism among elites in Puerto Rico and Cuba, as Simón Bolívar was making headway against the Spanish in South America. The ideas of emancipation and abolition were anathema to the interests of the planters, yet by the end of this period, cracks in their wall of resistance were beginning to show as republicanism started to infiltrate Cuban society, and more prominent *criollos* began to speak out against slavery. In addition, the continued importation of enslaved Africans was not only fuelling expansion of the sugar industry but causing large shifts in Cuba's racial balance. The latter part of this chapter is concerned with the failed independence bid by Santo Domingo and its takeover by Haiti, an event that was the realisation of unspoken planter and politicians' fears. Although the takeover was bloodless, the fact that Haiti now controlled a Spanish territory marked a turning point for Cuba and Puerto Rico as much as it did for Dominicans. Yet what these *criollos* failed to appreciate was Haiti's own fear of European invasion, and its worry that the East of the island would be an easy foothold for France to recapture its territory. In exploring these themes, this chapter will begin by looking at the economic and demographic issues, then move on to the issue of republicanism, and end on the events between Haiti and Santo Domingo in 1822.

### *Restoration and riches*

Fernando VII's return to the Spanish throne was beset with problems, not least of which was the desire of his increasingly agitated empire to be independent. From his vista, he was surrounded with chaos. Spain was poor, weary, and divided over its

loyalty to him. The crown's empire looked increasingly fragile: the failures at the Cortes had opened up fissures that could not be covered. Venezuela, New Spain, Rio de la Plata – key colonial territories – wanted to peel away from the imperial fold, and the situation was beyond the point of negotiation. Fernando VII was forced to send more than 10,000 troops to aid the loyalists in New Granada and Venezuela to prevent this from happening. The Caribbean islands, however, would in these uncertain early years fail to be swept along in the revolutionary fervor, though that is not to say that there was no underlying sentiment for independence, as events in the previous chapter showed and later ones will further illustrate. Yet over the course of this period, independence for these islands became intertwined with questions about the colour of freedom. Could Cubans throw off what was increasingly being called the 'slavery' of despotic rule, yet permit real enslavement to continue? Could all people of colour be free without whites facing a racial war? These were not only questions for the Caribbean colonies, but all parts of the empire that had slave labour, such as Peru and New Granada.<sup>1</sup> These issues, for Cuba and Puerto Rico, would weigh heavily on the minds of *criollo* elites. The years of upheaval that saw the slave rebellion in Haiti and the French occupation of the peninsula would during this period actually ensure a high degree of continuity and loyalty to the crown. For Santo Domingo, however, its fortunes in 1822 would take a turn that was at once foreseeable and yet unbelievable.

Initially, however, the three islands were eager to see if their loyalty had paid off and what the restored crown could do for them. Although Cuba was more important and Santo Domingo more in need, it was Puerto Rico which first received royal benevolence in the form of a *cédula de gracias* on 10 August 1815. The legislation granted a number of important concessions. At the heart of the measures was an emphasis on further agricultural expansion, spurring economic growth, the taxes on which could help fill a battle-weary Treasury in Spain, and pleasing the

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<sup>1</sup> See for instance, Marixa Lasso, *Myths of Harmony: Race and Republicanism During the Age of Revolution, Colombia 1795-1831* (Pittsburgh, 2007); Aline Helg, *Liberty & Equality in Caribbean Colombia, 1770-1835* (Durham, 2004).

merchants of Cádiz who were keen for a resumption of trade without disruption.<sup>2</sup> In addition to the cost of war there also had been the interruption of trade due to fighting in the colonies, causing further chaos to the royal coffers. Puerto Rico's own finances were affected as well, as there had been no remittances from Veracruz for years, owing to New Spain's fight for independence. In attempting to outline measures aimed at economic improvement the legislation allowed for increased immigration, especially – and significantly – of non-Spaniards. Settlement was now extended to any Catholics, thus widening the possibility of new immigrants from beyond the rapidly shrinking Iberian world. Additionally, the provision would help in raising more capital for investment in agricultural technology, something that was needed on the island. For planters who wanted to set up an *ingenio* on the island, there were two pools of labour – slaves, or landless peasant labourers, the *jibaros*. Although in previous years regulations varied over whether or not settlers and refugees could bring their own slaves, under this legislation it was encouraged.<sup>3</sup> Or, if they wished to buy more slaves, they would find that the new regulations abolished taxes on the 'trade and introduction of Negroes in the island'.<sup>4</sup> At the same time planters could draw from this pool of peasant labourers.

In addition, the export of goods was encouraged by the scrapping of duties for three years, and placing none at all for products of sugar refineries. The legislation proved successful, and Spanish *criollos* began to arrive from Santo Domingo, loyalists from Venezuela, French planters from Louisiana, and even some Haitians

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<sup>2</sup> John R Fisher, 'Commerce and Imperial Decline: Spanish Trade With Spanish America, 1797-1820', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 30, No 3 (1998), p.478.

<sup>3</sup> James W. Wessman, 'The Demographic Structure of Slavery in Puerto Rico: Some Aspects of Agrarian Capitalism in the Late Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 12, No 2 (1980), p.272.

<sup>4</sup> *Real Cédula*, 10 August 1815, AGPR, Fondo Gobernadores Españoles, Asuntos Políticos y Civiles, caja 174.



were apparently permitted; by 1816, some 1,319 people had arrived.<sup>5</sup> They were given four and two-sevenths of a *fanega* of land for each person in the family and half as much for each slave.<sup>6</sup> Five years, later 3,499 people had arrived on the island. It may not seem a large wave of immigrants – this made up less than two per cent of the population – but their significance should not be underrated. Although a good proportion of the new arrivals worked in the agricultural trade – labourers, overseers, *hacendados* – many were in related professions as well, such as carpentry.<sup>7</sup> Most of the labour on the island, despite it being a slave society, was done by free people, and often to fill in employment gaps on plantations the *jibaros* would be forced into work. As Sidney Mintz noted, the island ‘presented the curious picture of a Caribbean colony where slaves were treated little worse than landless free men’.<sup>8</sup>

The *cédula* also offered increased opportunity for people of colour. Article 11 stated: ‘Negroes and people of colour, who in the capacity of Colonists and heads of family, come to establish themselves on the Island: they will be allowed one half the land which is allowed to the whites and if they bring Slaves and their property with them, the lands will be augmented in proportion to their Masters’.<sup>9</sup> This change seems at odds to the legislation from less than a decade earlier that attempted to keep out people of colour, and certainly slaves from elsewhere. Yet the growth of this small island was becoming of increasing importance to Madrid. The new round of fighting

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<sup>5</sup> Ivette Perez Vega, ‘El efecto económico, social y político de la emigración de Venezuela en el sur de Puerto Rico (Ponce), 1810-1830’, *Revista de Indias* XLVII, No 181 (1987), pp.869-85.

<sup>6</sup> Duvon C. Corbitt, ‘Immigration in Cuba’, *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 22, No 2 (1942), p. 288. A *fanega* is equivalent to just under 1.6 acres.

<sup>7</sup> Raquel Rosario Rivera, *La real cédula de gracias de 1815 y sus primeros efectos en Puerto Rico* (San Juan, 1995), pp.90-91; Jorge L. China, ‘Race, Colonial Exploitation and West Indian Immigration in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico, 1800-1850’, *The Americas* 52, No 4 (1996), pp.495-519.

<sup>8</sup> Sidney Mintz, ‘Labor and Sugar in Puerto Rico and in Jamaica, 1800-1850’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 1, No 3 (1959) pp.277. This article makes a useful comparison between Jamaican and Puerto Rico labour.

<sup>9</sup> *Real Cédula*, 10 August 1815, AGPR, Fondo Gobernadores Españoles, Asuntos Políticos y Civiles, caja 174; Jay Kinsbruner, *Not of Pure Blood: The Free People of Color and Racial Prejudice in Nineteenth-Century Puerto Rico* (Durham, 1996), pp.41-42.

within Spanish America would demand funds to sustain it, and the island, now bereft of silver from Mexico, had to become more self-sufficient. On a more local level, the island had the capacity to absorb more people yet with the growing slave population and racialised fears during this time, it is hard to imagine that free people of colour received quite the same welcome as Europeans or white *criollos*. Governor Salvador Meléndez later had to issue instructions on how all these new settlers were to be integrated and clarification on what they would be allowed to do. While on the one hand, the immigrants were allowed rights of person and property under the eye of the law during their five-year period of residency, they would be limited in other ways, such as being prohibited to engage in personal maritime commerce, to own shops, or to be sea captains, but ‘they will be able to become involved, in association, in mercantile business conducted by Spaniards; and the contracts of interest that are agreed with them, either verbally or in writing will have the same validity and legal force as if they were between Spaniard and Spaniard’.<sup>10</sup>

Cuba, meanwhile, was improving economically but struggling socially. Around Havana, sugar was booming. To the East of the city, the region around Matanzas saw the number of *ingenios* rise from 37 in 1813 to 93 in 1817; likewise going West from Havana, around Guanajay, the number rose from 59 to 122 during the same years.<sup>11</sup> To fuel this rapid expansion, and the rise of labour-intensive sugar production, slave importation had to keep up with demand. Slave imports were soaring, despite growing European demand for abolition, as discussed in the Congress of Vienna and treaty of Paris around the same time (1814-1815). Already Britain and other nations had banned the trade, yet this appeared to do little to stem the arrival of new slaves in Cuba. Just before the return of the king, in 1813, Cuba saw the arrival of 2,980 slaves and by 1817, the yearly number had reached 25,448 with the total

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<sup>10</sup> Salvador Meléndez, *Establecimiento de colonos extranjeros*, 8 January 1816, AGPR, Asuntos Políticos y Civiles 1754-189, Extranjeros 1807-16, caja 115.

<sup>11</sup> Pablo Tinajero Tornero, *Crecimiento económico y transformaciones sociales: esclavos, hacendados y comerciantes en la Cuba colonial (1760-1840)* (Madrid, 1996), p.174.

being almost nine times more had been brought in by 1813.<sup>12</sup> The table below shows the annual number of slaves who disembarked in Cuba. The numbers between 1815 and 1817 show the sharpest rise, with the totals dropping back by 1822, the fall likely due to not only Britain's antislavery patrols, but the onset of

Year	Slaves disembarked in Cuba
1813	2,980
1814	2,196
1815	7,872
1816	18,384
1817	25,448
1818	20,762
1819	16,051
1820	11,096
1821	8,471
1822	10,729

(Source: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, <http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/assessment/estimates.faces>, last accessed 21 May 2010)

more unrest in the peninsula during another struggle for liberal reforms (1820-23), which will be discussed later in this chapter. The total amount of slaves brought by Spanish, French, and Portuguese traders during this particular nine-year period was a staggering 123,989 – and despite the wishes of European anti-slavery activists, these numbers only got larger in the decades that followed.

Spain showed little interest in stopping the trade, despite promising that it would – the king had agreed to end the practice by 1821 – and Britain continued to

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<sup>12</sup> The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database 2009, Slave Voyages, Estimates, <http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/assessment/estimates.faces> last accessed 21 May 2010.

lean on it diplomatically, as it was also doing with France.<sup>13</sup> It was obvious the crown had no interest in the abolition of the slave trade, as the previous figures indicate. Sugar production was booming. Even coffee – despite the exodus of French planters in 1808 – in the East was growing at an impressive pace.<sup>14</sup> However, with the constant influx of slaves also came an increasing amount of resistance and discontent. The East of the island, for instance, had long been home to groups of runaways, as previous chapters have explained. The communities persisted and during this period planters experienced renewed attacks by runaway slave communities and the *palenques* in which many lived once again became a focus for the authorities. These runaway slaves were accused of forming plots on a regular basis – sometimes with ‘French’ agitators – and being a threat to order. In April 1815 Cuba’s *asesor general* wrote to the governor, Juan Ruíz de Apodaca, suggesting a tax of four *reales* for each slave over the age of 10, and two *pesos* on every barrel of wheat exported from the island in order to raise enough money to combat the problem of runaway slave colonies. Bands of men were formed to raid the communities, such Alfonso Martínez’s, which attacked the *palenque* El Frijol in the South-East of the island in an attempt to subjugate these long-standing troublesome communities.<sup>15</sup>

The *asesor* pointed out that:

When the knowledge of the human heart does not instruct us of its natural propensity for liberty and independence; when the character, inclination and ignorance of the blacks does not make us fearful of their cruelty and rapacity, the terrible example of the French colonies, so repeated in the last twenty-four years would be enough to concern ourselves of the immediate and grave

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<sup>13</sup> Martha Putney, ‘The Slave Trade in French Diplomacy From 1814 to 1815’, *The Journal of Negro History*, 60, No 3 (1975), pp.411-427.

<sup>14</sup> Gabriel Debien, ‘Les colons de Saint-Domingue réfuiés a Cuba 1793-1815’, *Revista de Indias* 54-56 (1953), p.46; Olga Portuondo Zúñiga, *Santiago de Cuba, los colonos franceses y el fomento cafetalero (1790-1809)* (Santiago de Cuba, 1992), p.16.

<sup>15</sup> Noticia, 4 April 1815, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 109, sig 34; Diego Bosch Ferrer, and José Sánchez Guerra, *Rebeldía y apalencamiento: jurisdicciones de Guantánamo y Baracoa* (Guantánamo), p.49. For more detail about runaway communities in Cuba, including el Frijol, see Gabino La Rosa Corzo, *Runaway slave settlements in Cuba: Resistance and Repression* (Chapel Hill, 2003).

danger in which this island finds itself, in view of overtures of the blacks who live in the *palenques* in the immediate vicinities of the city of [Santiago de] Cuba.<sup>16</sup>

The next governor of Santiago de Cuba, Eusebio Escudero, issued a *bando* to try and gain control of the runaway slaves and limit their influence. The order reinforced existing practices, though the new laws attempted to prevent runaways from adding to their ranks. The orders demanded, for instance, that any slave found away from the plantation needed to have signed permission; and any slaves found with an out-of-date pass and more than two leagues from a *hacienda* would be treated as a *cimarrón* and apprehended as such.<sup>17</sup> Less than a month later he issued amended instructions that any slave found in the evening without papers would receive 25 lashes.<sup>18</sup>

#### *Bolívar and Haiti*

Although Cuba was preoccupied with internal concerns, and despite there being an interlude from the constant stream of rumours involving imminent plans from Haiti, the republic was still under constant surveillance. In May, news of an armistice between Christophe and Pétion reached Cuba, though little more than that was reported.<sup>19</sup> But developments a few months later, in December, would have a long-lasting effect for all of Spanish America. The eventual ‘liberator’ of much of South America, Simón Bolívar, arrived in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on 31 December 1815, seeking assistance from the southern leader. Pétion’s willingness to aid republican causes by giving rebels arms, troops, and refuge in Haiti to plan attacks had been well-known since the Miranda expedition almost 10 years earlier. Pétion officially welcomed the Venezuelan on 2 January 1816. Bolívar was also connected to two

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<sup>16</sup> Asesor General to Gobernador Político, 4 April 1815, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 125, sig 2.

<sup>17</sup> Bando, Eusebio Escudero, 24 March 1816, ANC Asuntos Políticos, legajo 255, sig 56.

<sup>18</sup> Eusebio Escudero, 16 April 1816, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 255, sig 54.

<sup>19</sup> 29 May 1815, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 109, sig 10.

British merchants who were based in the south of Haiti, Robert Sutherland and Jacob Lewis.<sup>20</sup>

Bolívar had been in Jamaica for the eight months previously, where he penned his famous Jamaica letter of 6 September 1815. In it he declared, ‘success will crown our efforts, because the destiny of America has been irrevocably decided; the tie that bound her to Spain has been severed’. He, however, was well aware of the apparent lack of similar sentiment in his Caribbean surroundings and was perplexed at the attitudes of the inhabitants, asking: ‘Puerto Rico and Cuba, with a combined population of perhaps 700,000 to 800,000 souls, are the most tranquil possessions of the Spaniards, because they are not within range of contact with the Independents. But are not the people of those islands Americans? Are they not maltreated? Do they not desire a better life?’<sup>21</sup> His desire to see Cuba and Puerto Rico follow in the footsteps of Venezuela would continue for another decade, and will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. For the moment, his attention was focussed on his ongoing battle against Spain.

Bolívar’s time in Haiti was productive – he managed to procure ships, men, and six thousand rifles for his next incursion.<sup>22</sup> Also, while in Haiti, he met with Francisco Xavier Mina, who was fighting for the future of Mexico. The two revolutionaries spent some time together, though Bolívar did not join the Mina mission, as the latter had hoped.<sup>23</sup> After one failed attack on Venezuela, Bolívar was forced to turn back to Haiti, writing that he was going to ‘return to the island of free men and place myself under the protection of the most generous republican leaders in

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<sup>20</sup> William F Lewis, ‘Simón Bolívar and Xavier Mina: A Rendezvous in Haiti’, *Journal of Inter-American Studies*, 11, No 3 (1969): pp458.

<sup>21</sup> ‘A Letter by Simón Bolívar’, Translated by Lewis Bertrand in *Selected Writings of Bolívar*, (New York, 1951), Reply of a South American to a Gentleman on this Island [Jamaica], <http://faculty.smu.edu/bakewell/BAKEWELL/texts/jamaica-letter.html> last accessed 21 May 2010.

<sup>22</sup> John Lynch, *Simón Bolívar: A Life* (New Haven, 2006), p.97.

<sup>23</sup> Lewis, ‘Simón Bolívar and Xavier Mina’, p.461.

the New World'.<sup>24</sup> He professed a great admiration for the Haitian president, declaring to him in a letter dated 9 October 1816 that:

The pen is a loyal instrument for freely transmitting the sincere sentiments that inspire my admiration! If flattery is a venal sin for the lower souls, the due praise of merit feeds the sublime souls. I take the liberty to write to Your Excellency because I do not dare to say all that I feel for you. Absence animates me to manifest the depths of my heart. It is very sweet, without a doubt, to fulfill the duties of recognition: but it is not a duty what encourages the respectful homages that I want to fulfill.<sup>25</sup>

But Pétion's involvement had a price: he wanted to see the end of slavery in the territories Bolívar was trying to liberate. When Bolívar left on a second mission in December of 1816 armed with supplies, before embarking he promised Pétion that he would free the slaves anywhere he was successful. The Haitian general made his wishes clear, saying: 'You know, General, my sentiments in favour of that which you have pledged. you must be struck by how much I desire to see escape from the yoke of slavery those who still suffer from under it.'<sup>26</sup> It was a promise that Bolívar would find difficult to keep, as he, like other *criollo* elites, was distrustful of both enslaved blacks and mixed-race free *pardos*. Eventually he would compromise and free slaves if they fought for independence, declaring that, 'There will be no more slaves in Venezuela, except those who wish to remain so. All those who prefer liberty to repose will take up arms to defend their sacred rights and they will be citizens.'<sup>27</sup> And although he freed his own slaves to help him in the struggle, other landowners were

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<sup>24</sup> Simon Bolívar to Alexandre Pétion, 4 September 1816, quoted in Lewis, 'Simón Bolívar and Xavier Mina', p.460.

<sup>25</sup> Full text in Paul Verna, *Pétion y Bolívar: cuarenta años (1790-1830) de relaciones haitiano-venezolanos y su aporte a la emancipación de Hispanoamérica* (Caracas, 1969), p.271.

<sup>26</sup> Alexandre Pétion to Simón Bolívar, 18 February 1816 quoted in *Pétion y Bolívar*; appendix documental, p.537.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Lynch, *Bolívar*, p.109. The issue of manumission would plague Bolívar for many years. Even after mandating manumission in 1821, further decrees were issued in 1823, 1827, and 1828 due to pro-slavery groups ignoring previous laws. See Harold A. Bierck, Jr, 'The Struggle for Abolition in Gran Colombia', *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 33, No 3 (1953), p.367.

less keen to do so, and thus his fiery words had rather less impact on the lives of slaves than Pétion would have hoped. Pro-slavery groups made sure that the issue was not done away with as quickly as Bolívar would have liked, and the issue of slavery continued to be a political battle in South America for the following decade.

Of course Pétion had more to contend with than helping republicans from Spanish America. He still faced internal and external threats, the most crucial of which were the constant rumours that France or French privateers, acting in the hopes of a large payment from the government, were attempting to reconquer Haiti as a colony and re-enslave its people.<sup>28</sup> Christophe too, in the North, shared similar worries. British abolitionist Thomas Clarkson, who followed events in the islands, wrote in a letter, saying:

There is one circumstance which is an obstacle to his [Christophe's] improvement. This is the apprehension that France may wish some time or other to recover Hayti by force of arms. On this account he is under the necessity of keeping up a large standing army both of horse and foot, the greater part of which he would disband and employ in agriculture, if this apprehension were removed from his mind. I do not mean to imply by this, that he is afraid of the French armies. He is well assured that France can never conquer Hayti: but while he continues in this suspense, he seems to be prevented from making the same improvements in agriculture as in literature and the sciences.<sup>29</sup>

However, their concerns were of little interest to the surrounding islands, as news of his involvement with *criollo* insurgents became more widely known. Not only was Haiti itself a threat in the example it had made of the slave system, now its involvement in republicanism added more potency to ideas about the island. The governor of Santiago de Cuba remarked that he was concerned with the 'protection

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<sup>28</sup> Frank Moya Pons, 'The Land Question in Haiti and Santo Domingo: the Sociopolitical Context of the Transition from Slavery to Free Labour, 1801-1843', in Moreno, Moya Pons and Engerman (eds) *Between Slavery and Free Labor: The Spanish-Speaking Caribbean in the Nineteenth Century*, (Baltimore, 1985), p.185.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas Clarkson to Baron Turkheim, 11 March 1820, Thomas Clarkson papers, St John's College, Cambridge, No 160. By permission of the Master and Fellows of St John's College, Cambridge.



that the *Caudillo* Pétion continues to dispense to the criminals ...'<sup>30</sup> In addition to reports about Bolívar, news had arrived that a 'criminal' expedition from Cartagena had also entered the protection of southern Haiti.<sup>31</sup> Yet for the Dominicans, at this particular moment, Pétion 'lives with us in good correspondence and friendship of immediate neighbours', winning this praise from Carlos Luis de Urrutia, the governor of Santo Domingo, after Pétion reported to him an incident involving pirates.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, Pétion had previously written to Urrutia, reminding him of the good relations between the two sides of the island, saying 'when the Spaniards of Santo Domingo came together to shake off the yoke of France, then our common enemy, under the valiant command and patriotism of General Don Carlos [sic] Sánchez Ramírez I hastened to assure them that I would give all assistance and goodwill to a cause so just and sacred ...'<sup>33</sup> Still, the combination of Haiti's own internal disruptions and preoccupations, coupled with Pétion's revolutionary activity and Christophe's fort-building was enough for Cuba to want to keep the island under close surveillance. The *intendente* of Havana, Alexandro Ramírez wrote to Madrid asking for permission to send a 'secret agent' to observe 'the hostilities of the blacks and mulattos of the French part of Santo Domingo [Haiti]'. Ramírez complained that Pétion had not returned to its rightful owners a ship and cargo that had been captured by pirates in Haiti.

By this [news] and other channels I am further convinced that it is absolutely necessary to not lose sight of the numerous tribes of people of colour of Santo Domingo ... who have sufficient means and strength, and local tactics, to not only aspire to rise up against its former Metropolis, but for greater enterprises, among which they can count this island, barely separated by a channel of

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<sup>30</sup> Eusebio Escudero, 25 September 1816, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 109, sig 50.

<sup>31</sup> Captain General of Cuba to the Governor of Santiago de Cuba, 28 February 1816, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 123, sig 5.

<sup>32</sup> Carlos de Urrutia to the Governor of Cuba, 6 May 1816, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 124, exp 41.

<sup>33</sup> Alexandre Pétion to Carlos de Urrutia, 16 January 1816, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 15, exp 34 in José Luciano Franco (ed) *Documentos para la historia de Haití en el Archivo Nacional* (Havana, 1954).

thirteen leagues, attempting to get in contact, or already being in contact, with their slaves in the eastern part ...<sup>34</sup>

Included in the classified correspondence was other testimony about the mounting number of problems that both sides of Haiti were involved with, and it was not limited to the South of Cuba, traditionally the area most concerned with its neighbour. Martín Folch, an honorary secretary from Matanzas, explained that ‘I have heard it said by trustworthy persons that the said Christophe, when demanding [the return] of a ship of his captured in the vicinity of Cuba, asked for it adding the political threat that if [his request] were rejected, he would land ... 2000 blacks with horns and whips [in retaliation] ...’ He went on to suggest that both sides of Haiti should therefore be monitored:

... [they] should sometimes in Guarico watch over King Christophe, and others in Puerto Principe [Port-au-Prince] observe Pétion ... This fact provides two clear insights: first, it shows that Cristophe is well aware of his superiority over us, founded as it is on his situation and resources; and second, it suggests that his [actual] hostility will not be as brutal as his diplomatic communications. If this system had been established [already] for a few years, we would have had timely and detailed news of the manoeuvres of Bolívar on those two occasions when he visited Santo Domingo to repair problems in his squadron, and regroup his forces to repeat his attack on the Mainland, as well as of the operations of Mina...<sup>35</sup>

Secretary of state Martín de Garay agreed, and said he had informed the king of the idea of sending over a spy who could speak both Spanish and French. Yet, reported Garay, the king was worried about the cost of the enterprise, though in the end he

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<sup>34</sup> Alexandro Ramírez to the Secretario de Estado y de despacho de Hacienda de Indias, 12 January 1818 AGI, Estado, legajo 4, No 8, exp 2.

<sup>35</sup> Alexandro Ramírez to the Secretario de Estado y de despacho de Hacienda de Indias, 12 January 1818 AGI, Estado, legajo 4, No 8, exp 3. In this context Guarico refers to the Northern part of Haiti, though it could also be used to mean all of Haiti.

capitulated, calculating that such a precaution would be worth the expense in the long-term.<sup>36</sup>

Spain's colonies were not the only islands contending with the lingering presence of the slave rebellion in Saint-Domingue, and the republican reality of the divided Haiti. The British sugar colony of Barbados found itself with a potentially explosive rebellion in 1816, adding to the general uncertainty and unease in the region. There had been no significant slave uprising in Barbados since 1702. The rebellion occurred on Easter Sunday April 1816, and it spread to 70 estates throughout the south-east of the island; it was quickly suppressed, and 144 people were executed and 170 deported, and many others were physically punished.<sup>37</sup> Although the British had abolished the slave trade in 1807, they were still years away from granting total emancipation to existing slaves. A misunderstanding over a bill aimed at changing slave conditions, however, gave rise to the rebellion. The slaves involved in the uprising had been under the impression that they were to be emancipated by parliament under the Imperial Registry Bill of 1815, which William Wilberforce had been fighting to pass. Planters worried that the bill, which aimed to prevent smuggling by territorialising slaves so they could not be moved, might pave the way for emancipation. When details of the legislation reached Barbados, they were transformed by word of mouth into an emancipation rumour. But it would be another 18 years before the Abolition of Slavery Act of 1833 made the possibility of freedom a reality for slaves in British colonies. During the unrest in Barbados, some slaves even thought that soldiers from Haiti were due to arrive and defend them against the white planters. Yet according to later testimony, many slaves were vague about this idea, and others had even referred to the island as 'Mingo' (short for Santo Domingo), rather than the name of Haiti, which had been in use for more than a decade at this

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<sup>36</sup> Alexandro Ramírez to the Secretario de Estado y de despacho de Hacienda de Indias, 12 January 1818, and Martín de Garay to Alexandro Ramírez, 5 February 1818, AGI, Estado, legajo 4, No 8, exp 8.

<sup>37</sup> Michael Craton, 'Proto-Peasant Revolts? The Late Slave Rebellions in the British West Indies 1816-1832', *Past and Present* 85 (1979), pp.101-102.

point.<sup>38</sup> News of this rebellion spread throughout the Caribbean, as did the punishments, and officials in Cuba were notified that some of the offenders were being sent to British Honduras – a territory surrounded by Spanish colonies – as retribution.<sup>39</sup>

Matthew Lewis, who owned a plantation in Jamaica, had also been worried about the ramifications of political events in England a few months prior to the rebellion in Barbados. Like slave-owners across the region, Haiti was never far from his mind: ‘... the higher classes are all in the utmost alarm at rumours of Wilberforce’s intentions to set the negroes entirely free; the next step to which would be in all probability, a general massacre of the whites, and a second edition of the horrors of St. Domingo: while, on the other hand, the negroes are impatient at the delay; and such disturbances arose in St Thomas’s-in-the-East, last Christmas, as required the interposition of the magistrates’.<sup>40</sup>

Yet, for all this concern around the region, in Cuba Arango and the other planters put on a united and calm front. Arango argued that it would be, in fact, impossible for Cuba to undergo anything like what happened in Saint-Domingue. In his *Voto particular de varios consejeros de Indias sobre la abolición del tráfico de negros* in 1816, he remained steadfast in his anti-republican views, blaming what happened in the French colony on the revolution in the metropolis and the ‘foolish project of liberating all the blacks and making them equal to the whites’. Reiterating his earlier ideas, he pointed out that such a thing could not take place in Cuba because,

In our possession the prospect is less frightening, because the number of slaves is less than the number of frees, and the total of blacks and mulattos is not disproportionate to whites... The vigilance of the magistrates and the interest of the owners have put out the fire with amazing alacrity and ease,

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<sup>38</sup> Craton, ‘Proto-Peasant Revolts?’, pp.103-04.

<sup>39</sup> 13 March 1817, ANC, Fondo Asuntos Políticos, legajo 109, sig 87.

<sup>40</sup> Matthew Lewis, *Journal of a Residence Among the Negroes in the West Indies* (Stroud, 2005), p.96.

when the flame would have been scarcely discovered. This danger that so many fear can not be increased much with the small number of blacks entering the short space of five years [before the cessation of the slave trade].<sup>41</sup>

Yet his words were not born out by the demographic reality. The high number of slave imports alone during this period, as outlined earlier in this chapter, were enough to cause social unease. In addition, the number of free people of colour had been rising alongside that of the enslaved. Indeed, in the year after he wrote this report, 1817, a census showed that island had 114,058 free people of colour and 199,145 slaves, a total of 313,203 against a white population of 239,830. This was a dramatic rise for all groups – the year after the outbreak of fighting in Saint-Domingue, 1792, there were only 54,152 free people of colour and 84,590 slaves, for a total of 138,742 people of colour compared with 133,550 whites.<sup>42</sup> In twenty-five years the total population of Cuba had doubled, but for whites they had not managed to stretch quite so far, with their numbers being less than twice the population of 1792. However, the number of slaves had more than doubled and so too the population of free people of colour. Yet technically, the number of free people overall was more than that of enslaved, but Arango was perhaps willfully choosing to overlook the reality – whites were outnumbered, and that would only continue during Cuba's sugar boom. The calm, confident face Arango had presented may have hid more conflicting thoughts from the planters he represented.

Madrid and the colonial officials on the island, however, were not so sanguine. The secretary of state in Madrid suggested that if possible slaves should be allowed to marry, 'so in the end when [Cuba] has to terminate its [slave] traffic, it will have been very sensible to have made itself prepared with enough time to avoid a shortage of

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<sup>41</sup> Eduardo Torres-Cuevas and Eusebio Reyes, *Esclavitud y sociedad: notas y documentos para la historia de la esclavitud negra en Cuba* (Havana, 1986), pp.125-126.

<sup>42</sup> Herbert S Klein, *Slavery in the Americas: A Comparative Study of Virginia and Cuba* (Oxford, 1967), p.202; Kenneth F. Kiple, *Blacks in Colonial Cuba, 1774-1899* (Gainesville, 1976).

workers for planting'.<sup>43</sup> As the slave population steadily climbed, and the deadline for the abolition of the slave trade loomed, even Arango's own views began to change, and moved towards supporting an end to the trade.<sup>44</sup> He advocated buying more female slaves so that his slave population could become self-sufficient.<sup>45</sup> This should not perhaps be interpreted as a change of heart by the architect of Cuba's 'free trade' in slavery, but as a realisation that the landscape of Caribbean plantation society, as well as the global dimensions of the slave trade, had been transformed. If Cuba were to have the labour to fuel its sugar mills and coffee plantations, it would be necessary that it came from within its shores. Arango was so concerned about the impact of the changes in the slave trade, he even served as a judge on the Mixed Commission with England, which dealt with the suppression of the slave trade, though he had the aim of protecting the interest of planters like himself.<sup>46</sup> The shifting racial picture in Cuba meant that more slaves could be a threat, statistically speaking, and so many planters like Arango thought perhaps it was time to stop importing them. For years it had been official policy to bring in *bozales*, a practice established around the time of the rebellion in Saint-Domingue, and one seen as a way to avoid unrest or problems with a large *criollo* slave population. Yet as in Saint-Domingue, having a large population of African slaves presented a different set of concerns for planters – especially fear over their tribal connections to each other, and ability to communicate in languages other than Spanish with one another.<sup>47</sup> Despite what Arango thought, the conditions were not so far apart from Saint-Domingue as he would have liked to believe.

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<sup>43</sup> José Cienfuegos to Alejandro Ramírez, 22 April 1817, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 109, sig 97.

<sup>44</sup> José Gomariz, 'Francisco de Arango y Parreño: el discurso esclavista de la ilustración Cubana', *Cuban Studies*, 35 (2005), p.57.

<sup>45</sup> Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery 1776-1848* (London, 1988), p.395.

<sup>46</sup> Gomariz, 'Francisco de Arango y Parreño', p.57.

<sup>47</sup> Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Social Control in Slave Plantation Societies: A Comparison of St. Domingue and Cuba*, (Baton Rouge, 1996), p.54.

The growing gap between white and non-whites made Cuban officials also keen to see the arrival of more white settlers, like those which Puerto Rico had received. The island's *superintendente de Real Hacienda* Alejandro Ramírez – who had been intendent in Puerto Rico in 1815 – set up a *junta de población blanca* after he arrived to take up his new post in Cuba that autumn. The main task of the *junta*, which was organised along with the captain-general, José Cienfuegos, was to petition the king to grant privileges to Cuba that were similar to those Puerto Rico received.<sup>48</sup> By the autumn of 1817, the crown had relented and a *real cédula* was issued. It was in many ways similar to the one released in Puerto Rico. It called for an increase of the white population, and Cuba became re-opened to the settlement of Catholics, with the edict saying ‘...that my command do propose all such further measures as may lead to the increase of the white population of this island of Cuba’.<sup>49</sup> Likewise, these immigrants would receive full rights after five years on the island, though in the meantime they would not be allowed to open a shop or engage with trade against Spaniards. Additionally, they must be armed, join the militia, and ‘keep their slaves in due subjection’.<sup>50</sup> And unlike Puerto Rico, the order was limited to whites. Indeed, in order to encourage reproduction among the slave population, officials put a tax of six *pesos* on each male slave introduced to Cuba during this time, but not on women.<sup>51</sup> With 27,752 slaves disembarking in Cuba in 1817, and 22,855 the following year,<sup>52</sup> the tax quickly began to fill the coffers of the *junta de población blanca*, though it was designed to end in 1820 when, in theory, the slave trade would cease, though

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<sup>48</sup> Corbitt, ‘Immigration in Cuba’, p.288-89.

<sup>49</sup> *Real Cédula* 21 October 1817, British Library, (Havana, 1828).

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Corbitt, ‘Immigration in Cuba’, p.290.

<sup>52</sup> The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database 2009, Slave Voyages, Estimates, <http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/assessment/estimates.faces> last accessed 21 May 2010.

events took a very different course.<sup>53</sup> Like the measures adopted in Puerto Rico, it was hoped that these incentives would help develop the sugar industry. In addition, in the same year, the crown abolished the royal monopoly on tobacco, which inspired some small landholders to plant that crop.<sup>54</sup>

By the beginning of the 1820s, Cuba and Puerto Rico had experienced more than a decade of sugar and coffee growth, and a correspondingly large rise in slave numbers. Cuba was now producing some 13.64 per cent of the world's sugar, and had more than 200,000 slaves.<sup>55</sup> Every part of the island felt the impact – even Santiago saw its slave population rise from 8,836 in 1810 to 23,956 a decade later, alongside a general population rise from 25,727 to 48,665.<sup>56</sup> The population of free people of colour had been rising as well, yet at the same time growing racialised fears meant that restrictions became increasingly oppressive in an attempt to assert white dominance, as well as the continual evolution of the sugar trade.

The British observer Robert Francis Jameson spent 1820 in Cuba and saw the physical manifestations of this paranoia in Havana: 'The mass of being is forcibly conjoined – their bond of union is a *real chain*. *Fear*, say the metaphysicians, first formed society, and it is undoubted that such is the elemental principle of *West Indian society*. Every house is a sort of garrison filled with domestic conscripts serving without pay and whom it is necessary to guard strictly.'<sup>57</sup> His work, *Letters from the [sic] Havana* gives a useful impression of this period – when serious changes were

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<sup>53</sup> Arthur F Corwin, *Spain and the Abolition of Slavery in Cuba, 1817-1886* (Austin, 1967), pp.33-35.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, p.32.

<sup>55</sup> Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, *Empire and Antislavery: Spain, Cuba and Puerto Rico, 1833-74* (Pittsburgh, 1999), p.4; Manuel Moreno Fraginals, *El Ingenio: el complejo economico social cubano del azucar* (vol.1 Havana, 1978), pp.35-38.

<sup>56</sup> Olga Portuondo Zúñiga, *Santiago de Cuba: desde la fundación hasta la guerra de los diez años*, p.130.

<sup>57</sup> Robert Francis Jameson, *Letters From the Havana, During the Year 1820, Containing an Account of the Present State of the Island of Cuba, and Observations of the Slave Trade* (London, 1821), pp.6-7. Italics author's own.



under way but well before the peak of sugar production later in the century. Even before he set foot on the island, Jameson was immediately struck by the extent of sugar planting:

On approaching the shore of Cuba from the north, distance gives a clustered effect to the trees, which, in reality, they do not possess. The country round the Havana is rather of bare of them, as might be supposed from its soil being more valuably employed. But the sugar *ingenios* (plantations) which formerly surrounded the city have now disappeared: the soil has been exhausted, and instead of laboring at its renovation, the planters have gradually receded into the interior, successively occupying new lands, under which class more than half the island may be comprised.<sup>58</sup>

Like many travelogues of this type, Jameson comments on plants and the climate, the countryside outside of Havana, and on trade and commerce. But his observations about slave and free coloured life in the capital present some ideas about life in the city in 1820. On the one hand he speaks of slave owners who were so wealthy they had ‘no less than sixty household slaves’, though he points out that many free people of colour were in a condition not so different to slavery, being ‘subject to most of the restrictions imposed on a slave, such as respect [to] carrying weapons, being out after dark without a lanthorn, &c’.<sup>59</sup> Yet white and free people of colour came together in many areas of life, not least of all gambling, a vice the authorities, while indulging in, were forever trying to ban:

This vice [gambling] and an immoderate love of dress are the bane of the labouring class. You would smile to see groups of black females with silk stocking, satten [sic] shoes, muslin gowns, French shawls, gold ear-rings and flowers in their woollen head-dress, gallanted by black beaux, with white beaver hats, English coats and gold-headed canes, all smoking in concert like their superiors. These are your waterwomen and cobblers, festivalizing on a “dias de los cruces,” or a church holiday. The next day you will have them at

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, p.4.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*. pp.37-40.

your door with some article of this finery, which they are seeking a sale for, to pay for the day's subsistence!<sup>60</sup>

Jameson was clearly disgusted by much of the slave society that he saw, and being an abolitionist, strongly advocated the need to end slavery in the island – though of course at the time, British colonies had yet to free their own slaves, despite having ended the trade. Still, his observations give some small glimpse into Havana life.

Around the same time, however, there was also a growing discomfort with the slave regime from within Cuba as well, which was brought to light by the actions of one of Cuba's representatives to the re-convened Cortes, Father Felix Varela. At a time of increasing racial unease, he flew in the face of the planter opposition and called for the abolition of slavery. He justified his actions with the idea that Cuba, with its racial balance, could soon turn into another Saint-Domingue, but this time aided by the revolutionaries of Spanish America.<sup>61</sup> His proposals to preempt such an outcome included gradual measures such as liberty for slaves who had served their masters for 15 years and a lottery where freedom would be the prize, but abolition would not happen in his lifetime, and the hostility shown toward his views meant that he would never be able to return to Cuba.

Despite its measures in the Caribbean, the crown's financial situation remained precarious, as the costs of quelling independence movements across the Atlantic were high. Initially, in 1814, shortly after Fernando VII had returned to the throne, he had consulted advisors about the problem of raising more revenue, especially as trade had also been disrupted by the outbreak of fighting in the colonies, which had a severe economic impact as well. However, at no point in the early discussion that the king had with his advisers was the possibility of free trade discussed, a decision which would come back to haunt Fernando VII later. In an effort to stall what many saw as

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, p39.

<sup>61</sup> Midlo Hall, *Social Control*, p.54; Corwin, *Spain and the Abolition of Slavery in Cuba*, p.37.

inevitable, a *junta de pacificación* had been set up to deal with independence movements in the Americas. But with an empty Treasury at home by 1817 there was finally talk of trade reform but these would fail to materialise, and the colonies such reforms were meant to keep hold of, or at least temporarily placate, slipped further away.<sup>62</sup> Although there was a ban on direct trade with foreign ships in most Spanish American ports, much 'illegal' trade took place anyway, and had done for years. The Caribbean islands, however, and especially Cuba, were in many ways outside this debate, having been allowed different trading concessions some 20 years earlier, and also having a long and steady tradition of illegal trade and contraband, two conditions that underpinned continued loyalty to the crown.<sup>63</sup>

During this period, Spain faced another loss further North, to the United States. The growing might of the US seemed unstoppable, and a dispute over the Florida territory arose between the two countries. General Andrew Jackson's repeated incursions into Florida resulted in the Adams-Onís treaty of 22 February 1819, in which Spain sold Florida to the US for \$5 million, though it did not come into effect until 1821. The Spanish had never managed to settle Florida to the same extent as their other territories – indeed, they had lost it to the British between 1763 and 1783, though later managed to claim it back. But it had a low population and little agricultural output. For the North Americans, however, there was growing momentum to push back European powers across the continent. Under the terms of the final sale to the United States, a boundary dispute in New Spain was also settled, though by the time the treaty was valid Spain had already been forced into recognising an independent Mexico. But while the empire was disintegrating around them, the crown – and the merchants of Cádiz – could take some consolation that Cuba's sugar was turning into gold, with exports in the past four years alone averaging eleven million

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<sup>62</sup> Michael Costeloe, 'Spain and the Latin American Wars of Independence: The Free Trade Controversy, 1810-1820', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 61, No 2 (1981), p.223.

<sup>63</sup> John R. Fisher, 'Commerce and Imperial Decline: Spanish Trade With Spanish America, 1797-1820', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 30, No 3 (1998), p.476.

pesos, an amount which put it on the same level as earlier silver exports of New Spain.<sup>64</sup>

Money, however, was not the only concern for the crown. The troubled early years of Fernando VII's return only became more problematic. A military revolt in 1820 forced him to bring back the Constitution of 1812, which he had unceremoniously discarded upon his return to the throne, and thus liberalism was restored to Spain. This marked the beginning of the *trienio liberal* though the years that followed (1820-23) would see much political unrest. Another session of the Cortes was called for September 1821, while at the same time loyalists and republicans were still battling in the majority of the colonies.<sup>65</sup> This disruption restored the provincial municipalities (*diputación provincial*) that had been formed in 1813-14 and governors also went about reinstating constitutional *ayuntamientos*.<sup>66</sup> British thinker Jeremy Bentham advised Spain to get rid of its colonies so as to not put its liberal experiment in peril, arguing that at the very least the crown would have to engage in free trade for the colonies to be remotely useful.<sup>67</sup>

During the sitting of the Cortes, more stirrings for independence were rising as well, this time reaching the shores of Cuba. This unrest began to unfold throughout the 1820s. It first came to light in the following years during the uncovering of the *Soles y Rayos de Bolívar* conspiracy. In 1820, one of the organisers who had been fighting in Gran Colombia, José Franco Lemus, returned to Cuba and made contact

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<sup>64</sup> David Brading, 'Bourbon Spain and its American Empire', in Leslie Bethell (ed), *The Cambridge History of Latin America*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1984), p.417.

<sup>65</sup> There was generally a large gap between declarations of independence and surrender and eventual recognition by the Spanish. For instance, by 1821, the Republic of Colombia (New Granada, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Panama) had been established and Mexican independence would be recognised; Spain was finally driven out of Peru in 1821, and Bolivia in 1825. The United Provinces of Central America was established in 1823 and lasted until 1840. Chile declared independence in 1818 but was not recognised until 1840.

<sup>66</sup> Portuondo Zúñiga, *Santiago de Cuba*, p.136; Raymond Carr, *Spain 1808-1975*, (Oxford, 1982), pp. 129-30.

<sup>67</sup> Jeremy Bentham, *Colonies, Commerce and Constitutional Law: Rid Yourselves of Ultramarina and Other Writings of Spain and Spanish America* (Oxford, 1995[ed]).

with the fledgling group, whose actions will be discussed in the next chapter.<sup>68</sup> Now, in addition to fear about slaves and people of colour, the colonial authorities and planters had to worry about the *criollos* as well. Annexation to the United States was also increasingly seen as an option, or by some, as an inevitable way of staving off ruin. As the US Secretary of War, John C Calhoun put it, Cubans are afraid either: ‘One that the island should fall into the hands of Great Britain; two that it should be revolutionised by the Negroes.’<sup>69</sup>

### *Haiti takes charge, 1821-22*

Santo Domingo, meanwhile, limped along its poor, isolated road. It did not receive a *real cédula* with the aim of developing the island, but rather a special *real orden* from the king commemorating the island’s loyalty in its fight against the French during the War of Reconquest (1808-09). The order outlined the awarding of various medals of distinction to key people involved in the fighting, which had taken place a decade ago, in order ‘to perpetuate the memory of the glorious reconquest of the *plaza* of Santo Domingo, and to reward the loyalty, valour and those who contributed to the happy success of such a memorable enterprise’.<sup>70</sup> The following year, on 6 January 1818 Sebastián Kindelán took up his latest post for the crown, this time as governor of Santo Domingo, after a spell as governor of Spanish Florida. As a previous governor of Santiago de Cuba, he was very familiar with Haiti and its relationship to the Spanish colonies, and over the course of his time in Cuba he had many dealings with its authorities – at first French generals and then Haitian ones. However, by the time Kindelán arrived in Santo Domingo, the divided Haiti was in a lamentable state. Pétion’s policy of distributing land, while politically popular, had been economically disastrous. Sugar production had dropped to two million pounds, down from the sixty

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<sup>68</sup> José Luciano Franco, *Ensayos Historicos* (Havana, 1974), p.25.

<sup>69</sup> Quoted in Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery*, p.396.

<sup>70</sup> *Real Orden*, 1 June 1 1817, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 109, sig 110.

million pounds L'Ouverture had managed to get workers to produce amid the fighting and destruction of that period.<sup>71</sup> To compound matters, Pétion died in March of 1818 after an illness, and was succeeded by his popular minister Jean-Pierre Boyer. An eyewitness of the funeral on 1 April reported to the *Times*:

Everyone who chose went to see [the body], and you would have been surprised at the scenes which occurred every instant; they were such as are seldom witnessed on the demise of men in power! In the different quarters of the galleries of the palace, were men, women, and children, some on their knees, other standing, who, after taking a last sight of the body, were imploring Heaven for his soul.<sup>72</sup>

The following year, in 1819, Haitians were disturbed by a rumour which began to circulate claiming an accord now existed between France and Spain to yet again reconquer the island.<sup>73</sup> The north was still under the rule of Christophe, and a reunion with the south did not look likely. Still, struggling American republicans continued to call on both sides of the country for help. For instance, the vice-president of the republic of Venezuela, Juan Bautista Arismendi, established contact with Christophe in 1818. The following year, an agent for Colombia, John B Elbers, managed to obtain 1,000 rifles and 6,000 pounds of lead.<sup>74</sup> During this time Boyer finally realised his and Pétion's dream of reuniting with the North. With the death of Pétion in 1818 and the suicide of Christophe in 1819, Boyer was poised to consolidate power. Before his death, Christophe had made an attempt to buy the Spanish side of the island. A Briton who knew about the deal, John Irving, reported the attempted purchase to the

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<sup>71</sup> Moya Pons, 'The Land Question', p.182.

<sup>72</sup> 'Death of Petion', *The Times*, 14 May 1818, p.3.

<sup>73</sup> Gustavo Adolfo Mejía Ricart, *Crítica de nuestra historia moderna: primer periodo del estado libre en la parte española de la isla de Santo Domingo* (Santo Domingo, 2007), p.25.

<sup>74</sup> Johanna von Grafenstein, *Nueva España en el circuncaribe, 1779-1808: revolución, competencia imperial y vínculos intercoloniales* (México D.F., 1997), p.250-51.

Spanish, but the deal came to nothing.<sup>75</sup> A short while later, panicked rumours reached Santo Domingo that a Haitian named Dezir Dalmassi was sent on a mission by Boyer, though for what was unclear, and suspicion grew among the Dominicans. Dalmassi was supposedly going to lure back people who had left the West of the island. Kindelán wrote of how Dalmassi seemed to have ‘a supposed or real mission from president Boyer to invite and suggest to the citizens that they commit wholeheartedly to the government of their republic and offer them, with this view, promises ... of employment and improvements if they contribute with their influx to the achievement of these perfidious machinations’.<sup>76</sup>

A few months later, Kindelán wrote to one of his generals in the large provincial town of Santiago, saying that ‘the rumours of invasion of our territory have had their great fermentation in the South of the French colony, and there they have sown and spread to the Spanish part’.<sup>77</sup> The force behind these rumours, however, was less territorial ambition and more a question of security. Boyer had been forced into action due to what he saw as Dominican incompetence. He wanted to become stronger in the face of possible European incursions. News of French ships in Martinique rumoured to be heading to Haiti did nothing to reassure him. Boyer felt that the biggest problem was that the island was not in a position to be able to resist attack. He was especially perturbed that the whole of the East, under Spanish rule, was open and mostly unable to defend itself, and could provide an easy point of entry for any European power willing to attempt to re-colonise the republic. Thus, the Haitian leader sent agents trying to foster anti-Spanish sentiment among mulattos on

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<sup>75</sup> Spanish ambassador to London to the Secretary of the Office of State, 10 September 1820, AGI, Estado, legajo 17, no 27.

<sup>76</sup> Sebastian Kindelán to Manuel Caravajal, 18 December 1820, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 970, ‘Segun las partes oficiales que sucesivamente me han ido comunicado ...’

<sup>77</sup> Sebastián Kindelán to Alejandro Infante, 24 December 1820, AGI Santo Domingo, legajo 970, ‘Agregase a esto que los rumores sobre invasion...’

the Spanish side of the island and put forward the idea of a union with Haiti, as this would help to protect the whole island.<sup>78</sup>

Kindelán was in constant contact with the towns that Dalmassi had visited. The military commander in Las Matas wrote to Kindelán saying Dalmassi had ‘offer[ed] me better employment and a thousand things’.<sup>79</sup> To this Kindelán replied that

I understand that general Dalmassi and the other propagators of such seditious problems will be among those malcontent with the change of regime that has taken place in the Northern part as a consequence of the death of Cristophe, and that being unable to implement there their designs of a new attempt [to take over], they come to test the state of the mood of the Spaniards with the perverse aim to alarm them or seduce them, forming between us a coalition that they will baptise with the name government, and in its shade [i.e. under its banner] will challenge the republic and its president Boyer ...<sup>80</sup>

At the same time, Boyer was constantly looking over his shoulder, waiting for rumoured French invasions to materialise. As it turned out, he would have to watch for a few more years, as the former metropole still did not recognise the republic in 1820, and would not do so until 1825, after millions of francs had been paid in compensation, which placed the island into a debt that ruined any possibility of prosperity.<sup>81</sup> While accusations flew between Kindelán and Pétion, the Spanish neighbours of Cuba and Puerto Rico kept abreast of the news, fearful of the aims of a unified country, while Fernando VII in Madrid was also given updates of the situation.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Frank Moya Pons, ‘The Land Question’, p.27.

<sup>79</sup> Oficio del Comandante Militar de Farfán de Las Matas a la Capitanía Gral. dando cuenta de la misión de Dénir Dalmassi, quoted in Mejía Ricart, *Crítica de nuestra historia moderna*, pp.97-98.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> Frank Moya Pons, *La dominación Haitiana, 1822-44* (Santiago, 1978), p.27.

<sup>82</sup> Private letter to the Captain-General of Santo Domingo, 7 July 1821, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 970, ‘El rey se ha enterado de cuanto VS manifiesta en su carta de 31 de enero ultimo...’



By the autumn, the *diputación provincial* was reinstated in Santo Domingo, in line with events on the peninsula. Kindelán proclaimed, with a dose of ironic optimism, in the inaugural session that ‘I promise myself, and indulge myself already with blind trust, that from your preoccupations and difficulties will undoubtedly be born the prosperity of the whole province...’<sup>83</sup> A few days later Kindelán received a letter from Domingo Pérez Guerra, the commander general of the southern frontier, claiming that:

Yesterday, at six in the afternoon a lieutenant colonel of the Republic of Haiti came to me, named Dézir Dalmassi, saying that he came from San Juan after having stopped in Cahobas and Las Matas, in the commission of the president Jean Pierre Boyer, so that this Spanish part submits to said republic; and under the guarantee to keep everything in the same terms, he had an excuse to send troops, because disorder was inevitable ... The commander of Las Matas, and of San Juan gave news of this same official, after he spent two or three days telling them the same, and in reality Sir, confidentially, I believe that in each town of these there are very little that are not aware of the submission, fearful of their small moral force, and of the risk of losing their few possessions ...<sup>84</sup>

By the end of December, Kindelán had written to the Constitutional *ayuntamiento* of San Juan for help, with no result. By the end the year, the situation had become increasingly fraught. Rumours were abounding that Dalmassi had gone to the south-eastern towns of Las Matas, Neiba, and Azua to try to incorporate them into Haiti.<sup>85</sup> In addition, the crown had ordered the mobilisation of troops in preparation for action against corsairs who were working with Bolívar. They were sailing in the waters, surrounding the Hispanic Caribbean islands, plundering ships, and hampering trade. But with no money to back up the demands, Kindelán was hard-pressed to prepare troops while at the same time worrying that once he uncovered the truth of Haiti’s

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<sup>83</sup> Sebastián Kindelán, Arenga inaugural pronunciada, 30 October 1820, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 970, ‘Si, Señores: yo me prometo y lisongo desde ahora con ciega confianza ...’

<sup>84</sup> Oficio del Comandante Gral. de la Frontera del Sur a la Capitanía General Neiba, 9 December 1820, quoted in Mejía Ricart, *Crítica de nuestra historia moderna*, p.100.

<sup>85</sup> Moya Pons, *La dominación Haitiana*, p.24.

intentions, he may well need his militia to perform more urgent undertakings.<sup>86</sup>

Kindelán had cause for concern – reports arrived of plans of some regions on the island to make alliances with Haiti. Letters were dispatched from regional leaders to the republic, declaring their intention to ‘hoist the Haitian flag’, though this was soon followed with pleas for munitions to ready the Spanish side for its own independence struggle, showing the real motivation for their enthusiasm.<sup>87</sup>

Fed up with such information, Kindelán also took it upon himself to seek reassurances directly from Boyer. The two leaders had an exchange of correspondence which Kindelán would later publish and distribute. Kindelán began by asking Boyer to clarify his position on what Dalmassi had been sent to do, and to find out if there was any truth to the continual rumours of invasion. Boyer replied that:

The Lieutenant Col Dezir Dalmassi has for many years been involved in commerce with the Spanish part of the island, where for his own business he resides more frequently than in the Republic: it is true that he always travels with the permission of the Government, which is required by good government and common usage, and he is not the only one who does this; but he has never been entrusted with any mission, and I have always known him to be a man of too great prudence to act in such a reckless manner, and so I think Sir that there is no reason for describing him [in this way]... If I had wanted to listen to the unfounded insinuations, to complaints, and I'll say it now, to disturb the Spanish part, I would have done it a long time ago, because Your Excellency has enough experience to know that there are those who benefit from the liberty and innovations everywhere. In conclusion, I assure Your Excellency that I desire no other titles than those of consoler and pacifier of the oppressed, and that my sword will never lead armies to bloody conquests.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Gobernacion de Ultramar, 7 July 1821, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 970; Frank Pons Moya, *The Dominican Republic: A National History* (New York, 1995), p.118.

<sup>87</sup> Diego Polanco to General Magny, 15 November 1821 and Andrés Amaranthe et al to General Magny, 15 December 1821, in Jean Price Mars, *La República de Haití y la República Dominicana* (Santo Domingo, 2000), pp.116-117.

<sup>88</sup> Jean Pierre Boyer to Sebastián Kindelán, 22 December 1820, AGI, legajo 970, ‘Manifiesto de la Correspondencia entre el Gobierno de esta parte española y el de la vecina de la Republica de Hayti ...’

Kindelán added a postscript at the bottom, dated 10 January 1821, addressed to his Dominican readers: ‘Now, Dominicans, having more than enough judgement and discernment, you have [evidence] to comprehend where the origin of those insidious rumors is, what the objective of the plotters could have been, and that it is not our neighbours who have perturbed this time our repose and tranquility’.<sup>89</sup> Later that month, Kindelán wrote a confidential letter to the secretary of state in Spain, warning that an attack from Boyer was imminent. He explained that some information had fallen into his hands via troops in the north of the island. The plan, he was that ‘they spread the news that the French would arrive in February or March to take possession of the Spanish part and acclimatise the troops before marching against the colony’.<sup>90</sup> In his letter, however, he could not pretend that his troops would be able in any way to withstand an attack, being understaffed and lacking in weapons, and he begged the secretary of state in Madrid to send what he could, realising with a sinking feeling that these pleas would go unmet.

Santo Domingo, however, was not alone in dealing with internal problems. Puerto Rico was contending with a serious slave conspiracy which had taken place around Bayamón, an area to the south of San Juan. It had become one of the main sugar-producing regions over the past twenty years, and the number of slaves had doubled from 1815 to 1820 to just over 1,000.<sup>91</sup> While this was not a high number in comparison with plantations in Cuba, it was sizable for Puerto Rico. This particular plot was to see slaves in Bayamón, as well as other nearby districts, rise up and come together for an attack on the town. As so often was the case, the officials had heard that something was afoot, tipped off by an informer. They local officials gathered men

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<sup>89</sup> Sebastián Kindelán to Jean Pierre Boyer, 10 January 1821, AGI, legajo 970, ‘Ahora bien, Dominicanos...’

<sup>90</sup> Sebastián Kindelán to the Secretary of State, 31 January 1821, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 970, ‘Segun este documento, que parece forjado á designio en el Guarico ...’

<sup>91</sup> Guillermo A Baralt, *Esclavos rebeldes: conspiraciones y sublevaciones de esclavos en Puerto Rico (1795-1873)*, (Rio Piedras, 1985), pp.31-45.

together. The governor sent a force of 350 militia soldiers, including thirty-three cavalry, and nearly one hundred mulatto infantry members to suppress it.<sup>92</sup> Even after it was stopped, local authorities remained on guard. A later report on events in Bayamón by Puerto Rico's Governor, Gonzalo de Arostegui, said: 'I continue to practice the same standard of security, and I dare to affirm to Your Sovereignty that in what concerns this jurisdiction, it is not necessary to be careful because the only black who seems to be guilty, according to the investigations conducted in Bayamón, is the foreman of the *hacienda* of Don José Canales, who was sent to that mayor [of Bayamón] when he was captured.'<sup>93</sup>

In Cuba, tensions were also rising. Santiago's governor was so fed up with maroon communities that he reorganised the *compañía de cazadores de la costa* in 1821 in order to patrol and stifle anything that threatened the region's 'tranquility'.<sup>94</sup> Meanwhile, officials in Havana were also being kept abreast with developments between Santo Domingo and Haiti. Kindelán had written about his fears over the menacing rumours he had heard, noting that 'I do not need to explain myself any further so that Your Sovereignty is convinced vividly of the certain and fundamental principle that the defence, security, and conservation of the Spanish part of this island is a common cause of all the rest of the Spanish possessions that have slavery'.<sup>95</sup> However, in May Kindelán was forced to watch events unfold in Santo Domingo from the vista in Cuba, where he was sent as interim governor, and was replaced by Pascual Real. The new governor stepped into the role and soon discovered the extent of the conspiracy that engulfed the island. Indeed, it was not just Haiti causing problems, but the whole spectre of republicanism; now many Dominicans were

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<sup>92</sup> 26 July 1821, AGPR, Gobernadores Españoles, Expediente de las Agencias Gubernamentales, 1796-1897, Seguridad Pública 1805-22, caja 370.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> Bosch Ferrer and Sánchez Guerra, *Rebeldía y apalencamiento*, pp.68-69.

<sup>95</sup> Sebastián Kindelán to the Señor Gefe Político de la Habana, 21 April 1821, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 107, sig 21.

seriously considering making a bid for independence, with some even looking to win the support of Haiti. The plot was led by the lieutenant governor, José Núñez de Cáceres.

Like many members of the Dominican elite, Núñez de Cáceres had been forced to spend part of his life away from the island. In his case, his family moved to Camagüey in central Cuba when the French took control of Santo Domingo. He returned in 1808, became involved with Juan Sánchez Ramírez's War of Reconquest, and even wrote a well-known poem about the victory in Palo Hicado. Re-established in Santo Domingo, Núñez de Cáceres continued in his literary life, editing a newspaper, *El Duende*, and taking on numerous roles within the administration.<sup>96</sup> As such, he was well-placed to organise this conspiracy. Like many Dominicans, he was also fueled by a deep anger at the economic neglect that caused the island to stagnate since its reunification with the peninsula, a period known as *España boba*, or foolish Spain. Indeed, the return of the 1812 constitution had initially inspired hopes of the island's financial rescue, or at the very least the possibility of receiving some sort of investment. An article from the newly established newspaper *El telégrafo constitucional de Santo Domingo* declared:

Thanks to our wise Constitution, which has laid the main foundations of the happiness of the people, depositing in them and their *ayuntamientos* the political and economic governance, declaring their right to extend their municipal ordinances, to promote agriculture, industry and commerce ... Santo Domingo is going to be an agricultural people, and raise the building of its happiness, of its strength and greatness, on agriculture ...<sup>97</sup>

However, one aspect Núñez de Cáceres had not fully considered was that of slavery. Re-instituted by the French, its continued presence was a source of irritation to Haitian officials, and something they were ready to take action over in addition to

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<sup>96</sup> Biography of José Núñez de Cáceres, *Clio*, No 60, 1943, p.92.

<sup>97</sup> El Telegrafo constitucional de Santo Domingo, 5 April 1821, No 1, reprinted in *Clio*, No 61, pp. 115-16.

concerns about Dominican weakness. This was especially the case as the possibility of Spanish retaliation grew more unlikely – there was not the force to withstand an invasion of Haitian troops. There were many reasons for this, not least that Spain had finally signed a treaty with Britain to end the slave trade in 1821, but also a lack of investment and overall interest. José de la Cruz Limardo, a young Venezuelan doctor who was living in Santo Domingo and who eventually travelled to Haiti, tried to explain the situation to the discontent Dominicans. He had Haitian acquaintances who had pushed the point that ‘they oppose the great difficulty of establishing a Republic under slavery adjoining a Republic of free men’.<sup>98</sup> Yet the matter was ignored, overshadowed by the plot to renounce Spanish control.

By November, this group – composed of Dominican elites, but also some free people of colour – orchestrated a coup calling for the end to Spain’s rule. On 1 December 1821 they unveiled the ‘Estado independiente de la parte española de Haití’. Despite the somewhat misleading name, the idea was to join forces with Colombia, not Haiti, and be taken under the Bolivarian wing. This episode was later remembered as not only *independencia efímera* but also *independencia boba*. For a variety of reasons this experiment was doomed to failure, not least because of Núñez de Cáceres’s inability to secure a concrete pledge from Bolívar, who was too busy fighting his own military and political battles. This, however, did not stop Núñez de Cáceres from issuing a ‘declaration of independence’, which began: ‘No more dependence, no more humiliation, no more provoking the caprice and whim of the Madrid Cabinet’ before going on to outline more than 300 years of complains, and concluding with ‘¡Viva la Patria, viva la Independencia, viva la Unión de Colombia!’.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Verna, *Petión y Bolívar*, pp.452-3.

<sup>99</sup> Declaration, 1 December 1821, AGI, Estado, legajo 12, No 79.

This move, however inspired it was by events on the mainland, failed to gain support from its island neighbours. Núñez de Cáceres invited Governor Arostegui to join him. Arostegui wrote soon thereafter that,

This government has just received, with other official letters ... one in which there is an invitation to take part and cooperate in a plan that had been adopted by some dissatisfied and unwelcome people in Santo Domingo ... Only obstinacy, ignorance, or the most stupid frenzy could have encouraged the author of this paper to address me and reveal in his territory the confidence and ease that [he] had and would find in his favour.<sup>100</sup>

Not only had he failed to secure support from Puerto Rico, another factor that would fuel his eventual failure was the fact that Núñez de Cáceres had not really organised a new government, but rather little more than an anti-Spanish *junta* and thus there was confusion over what would happen next.<sup>101</sup> Regional commanders reported to Núñez de Cáceres that there were ‘innumerable displays of happiness’ over the political change and their alliance with Boyer.<sup>102</sup> In an attempt to seem coherent, the group had issued an *Acta constitutiva del gobierno provisional del estado independiente de la parte español de Hayti*. In the document, the group declared that Spanish Haiti was ‘free, and independent ... that the form of its government is, and ought to be Republican’. It went on to say, in the fourth article, that it would enter an alliance with Colombia, but offered a message to its neighbours that ‘it will send [another message] immediately to His Excellency the President of the Republic of Haiti in the French part of our island, proposing a treaty of friendship, commerce and alliance for common defence and security in both territories in case of an enemy invasion, or of

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<sup>100</sup> Quoted in Emilio Rodríguez Demorizi, *Santo Domingo y la Gran Colombia* (Santo Domingo, 1971), p.128.

<sup>101</sup> Carlos Sánchez i Sánchez, *La ‘Independencia Boba’ de Nuñez De Cáceres, ante la historia i el derecho público* (Santo Domingo, 1937), p.35.

<sup>102</sup> Manuel Machado to José Núñez de Cáceres, 6 February 1822 quoted in Jean Price Mars, *La República de Haití*, p.131.

internal machinations against its liberty and independence'.<sup>103</sup> However, it skirted around the issue of slavery, only going so far as to outline the rights of liberty, equality, security and property, as well as declaring citizens those of 'whatever colour and race', but not specifically spelling out the manumission of the few slaves on its part of the island.<sup>104</sup>

It was not enough for Haiti. With more troops, Boyer could overpower the Spanish side. He initially tried to convince Núñez de Cáceres of the need to unite. In an exchange of correspondence, Boyer said to Núñez de Cáceres: 'I do not expect to encounter in all parts but brothers, friends, sons to embrace. There is no obstacle that is capable of stopping me ... open your heart to enjoyment, to trust, because the independence of Haiti will be indestructible, due to the fusion of all hearts into one whole.'<sup>105</sup> The new nation of Spanish Haiti was stuck – Spain was unwilling or unable to intervene, and with a very limited militia compared with Boyer's 12,000 troops, there was little choice. And so Boyer entered the city of Santo Domingo on 9 February 1822, and, following in the footsteps of L'Ouverture, once again consolidated power. Likewise, for the second time, slavery was abolished. In writing to Francisco González de Linares, a later governor of Puerto Rico, the former secretary of the *diputación provincial*, Juan Francisco Brenes, said '... Boyer took possession of the Spanish part of the Island of Santo Domingo, as a consequence of its disgraceful political change to a Republican system, his first steps were to bring together [public] opinion by means of popularity and [granting] equality to all classes of people of the island, by declaring the absolute liberty from slavery'.<sup>106</sup> Once again, the other islands became extra vigilant. Kindelán, now in Cuba, issued a notice about

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<sup>103</sup> Acta constitutiva del gobierno, 1 December 1821, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 970.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> Jean Pierre Boyer to José Núñez de Cáceres, January 1822, *El Imparcial*, 15 April 1822, Madrid.

<sup>106</sup> Juan Francisco Brenes to Francisco González de Linares, 16 September 1822, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 970, 'Luego que el suspiciar y ambicioso Presidente de la Republica de Haiti Juan Pedro Boyer ...'



capturing free people of colour who had plans to go to Santo Domingo, saying ‘it could have been a danger to the public tranquility, and singularly the superior order and discipline of our slaves’.<sup>107</sup>

Boyer’s second task was to defeat a badly organised expedition from France, which also involved French planters who had been growing coffee near the eastern bay of Samaná.<sup>108</sup> Once that had been taken care of, like L’Ouverture before him, he set about attempting to reform the land use system in Santo Domingo in an effort to make agricultural land more profitable, though this time he went a step further and took control of church land as well. The system of *terrenos comuneros* had lapsed back into confusion, at least where the Haitians were concerned, as the land was not surveyed.<sup>109</sup> A couple of years later he invited black Protestants from the Northern United States to settle in the East of the island, which some 5,000 did, in Samaná, Puerto Plata, and the capital.<sup>110</sup>

Haitian rule did not suit many Dominicans, for a variety of cultural, linguistic, and, not least, racial, problems. Brenes said in his letter to Linares:

This policy, apparently necessary in these circumstances, far from producing the effect that Boyer has proposed, did little else than encourage discontent of the people in general, because of the insults with which the freed slaves injured their masters, the recklessness that the Haitian troops began to use among a Religious people, the difference in customs, in language, and the monumental transition from one legislation to another, occasioned such manifest disgust in the resident whites, blacks, and mulattos of the Island ...<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Sebastián Kindelán, 20 August 1822, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 102, sig 23.

<sup>108</sup> Pons Moya, *The Dominican Republic*, p.124.

<sup>109</sup> Moya Pons, ‘The Land Question’, pp.187-90.

<sup>110</sup> Luis Martínez-Fernández, ‘The Sword and the Crucifix: Church-State Relations and Nationality in the Nineteenth-Century Dominican Republic’, *Latin American Research Review* 30, No 1 (1995), p.71; E. Valerie Smith, ‘Early Afro-American Presence on the Island of Hispaniola: A Case Study of “Immigrants” of Samaná’, *The Journal of Negro History* 72, No 1 (1987), pp.33-41.

<sup>111</sup> Juan Francisco Brenes to Francisco González de Linares, 16 September 1822, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 970, ‘Esta política al parecer necesaria en aquellas circunstancias...’

It does not take a leap of the imagination to realise the disquiet with which elite Dominicans were forced to accept the consequences of their decision, especially those involving land reform, an issue which had been a problem in the past as well. After Núñez de Cáceres' failed experiment at independence, some Dominicans left the island for other Spanish-speaking points, though if they were loyalists there were only a few ports of call remaining. Those who stayed had to face a new, and previously unfathomable, regime. For free and enslaved people of colour in Santo Domingo, it is more difficult to know their thoughts. Did they see the Haitians as liberators, or, due to land reforms, oppressors? And once liberated, where did these people of colour fit into the expanded republic? The archival sources trickle down to a very small stream during this period, and many documents have been lost to the ravages of the Caribbean climate amid decades of political uncertainty, so it is nearly impossible to piece together any sort of complete picture of many aspects of these years under Haitian rule, especially in matters such as administration, local politics, and Dominican-Haitian relations.<sup>112</sup> This may sound insignificant, but it bears pointing out that Haitian rule lasted until 1844 – 22 years, and ones in which many factors, both cultural and political, would have been mediated. And while there were constantly simmering Haitian-Dominican tensions, an independence movement only began to form at the end of the 1830s, and it took years to come to fruition.<sup>113</sup> Núñez de Cáceres would not, however, take any part in this later struggle, having fled first to Venezuela in 1822, where he lived for some years, and then to Mexico, where he died 25 years later.

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<sup>112</sup> This is a topic that was long hijacked under the Trujillo dictatorship, and only more recent scholarly works have been addressing the issue in a more balanced and less racialised way. See for instance, Pedro L. San Miguel, *The Imagined Island: History, Identity, and Utopia in Hispaniola* (Chapel Hill, 2005); Sibylle Fischer, *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (Durham, 2004); Emilio Cordero Michel, *La Revolución Haitiana y Santo Domingo* (Santo Domingo, 2000); and Moya Pons, *La Dominación Haitiana*.

<sup>113</sup> Moya Pons, *La Dominación Haitiana; The Dominican Republic*.

The wider impact of Haiti's control of Santo Domingo, and indeed the story at all, is still largely silenced, outside the internal debates of Dominican history.<sup>114</sup> While much scholarly work is being produced about the earlier part of Haiti's initial fight under L'Ouverture, this intriguing moment remains little mentioned. Stepping momentarily into the discourses of the 21st century, it is a postcolonial rarity – a former colony taking control of another ex-colony which had not only a different imperial power but different languages and culture, and making that relationship last. Boyer and his deputies displayed their clear savvy and cunning, turning on its head the notion that the republic was not functioning, and certainly putting to rest any idea that it was not watching its back for foreign invasion. Indeed, it seems clear that Boyer did what he had to do in order to protect his people, as well as free the remaining slaves on the island, an issue that had been a concern since L'Ouverture's time. By intervening, Haiti showed what it could accomplish well beyond the events of 1791-1804, and at the same time throw in to contrast the woeful and chaotic state of Spain's most neglected colony. But more than that, it proved correct about the fears of captains-general and governors throughout the region – that the former slave republic was a force to be reckoned with. Perhaps if Haiti had continued to be divided it would have slipped further from public consciousness. But this resurgence – in reality, it was only political, as the country was suffering from poor output and a lack of trade – kept it in the mind of planters, and slaves for decades to come. Certainly for the Spanish islands, they were becoming increasingly closed in by republics. Once Cuba and Puerto Rico were surrounded by other Spanish colonies. Now, at every turn lay independent nations. As the engines of Spain's remaining Caribbean colonies kept churning out at a faster speed and higher price sugar and blood, the knowledge of Haiti's potential would increasingly haunt them. Add to that republicanism, a possibility that became a firm reality for most of Spanish America in just over a

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<sup>114</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, 1995).

decade, and the choices were perceived by *criollo* elites to be limited: loyalty, or destruction.

### *Conclusion*

The aim of this chapter was to illustrate the entrenchment of patterns born out of the previous 20 years of change. The implementation of the Enlightenment ideas about land use discussed in the first chapter were indeed beginning to pay dividends for Cuba and Puerto Rico, though this was in large part due to not only the wide gap in the sugar and coffee market left by a weak and divided Haiti, but also the large enslaved labour force brought over from Africa. Yet for all the growing wealth, the crown could not pay for stability. The restored Fernando VII was spending his riches trying to keep hold of his empire while also battling the liberal reformers on the peninsula. As Simón Bolívar and others cut the ties between Spain and its colonies, Cuba and Puerto Rico watched with concern. Bolívar's links with Haiti and Santo Domingo's later attempt to join Colombia pointed to possibilities that many felt would be the undoing of the racial and economic order on the two sugar colonies. This chapter has also shown how slave owners like Arango dismissed the threat of another Saint-Domingue, while the reality was that whites were outnumbered by people of colour. As for Haiti, its leaders were willing to do what they felt was needed to stave off any more European incursions even if that meant taking control of the Spanish side of the island. Haiti had now shown what it was capable of. The two threats of republicanism and Haiti would not fade, and the 1820s saw the emergence of an increasingly repressive order that would continue to bind Cuba and Puerto Rico to Spain in their colonial pact amid the proliferation of other possibilities.

## *Chapter 5*

### *The struggle at the new centre of empire, 1823-30*

This chapter considers the final years of the transformation in the Spanish world and examines three main themes: republicanism and Cuban efforts to bring about political change on the island; the growing wealth and the scale of slavery on the islands; and the larger geopolitical consequences of Cuba and Puerto Rico remaining Spanish colonies. As the 1820s closed, Spain was reeling from the loss of most of its colonies, bar the two remaining sugar islands and the Philippines. The king had managed to suppress another liberal uprising on the peninsula, but that and the battles against republicans in the Americas had left Spain broke and exhausted. The financial responsibility was beginning to shift to Cuba and Puerto Rico, both still enjoying the benefits of sugar and coffee, while ignoring British pressure to stop buying slaves. The US, its power now firmly established, took a very close interest in Cuba, and it became a pawn in larger nineteenth-century power struggles between the old and new worlds. On the islands, the decades of political uncertainty and years of rumoured invasions and annexations had left planters and colonial officials wary and vigilant. In addition to this was the growing problem of republican conspiracies in Cuba. The image of Haiti had not faded either, with rumours arriving with regularity that the freed slaves were going to liberate the islands, as was Simón Bolívar, whose threat came with more credibility. In the new republics, Haiti raised its head as the frightening face of racial equality – a question that many former Spanish territories had yet to resolve. Fear of Haiti by the 1820s became in many ways an emotional canvas upon which anxieties about the racial and colonial order in the Spanish Caribbean were drawn. The combination of these economic and geopolitical factors gave rise to a more entrenched anxiety. Colonial officials now would not only suppress rebel slaves, but rebel *criollos*, and at this point they were far more well-practiced at it. This chapter, then, aims to show how the events of the previous twenty years came to certain endpoints in this decade, and how this laid the foundation for

the finalisation of the colonial deal between Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Spain which was to last until the end of the century.

*'That most valuable of all of the West India islands'*

The remainder of the 1820s were crucial years in the formation not only of the new Latin American republics, but in also further cementing the relationship of Cuba and Puerto Rico with Spain, a process that was being observed with solemn interest by other nations, especially the island's northern neighbour, the United States. At the same time, it was watching as the former Spanish colonies fought for their independence, knowing that Cuba and Puerto Rico were less likely to follow the same course. In 1822, the US Congress recommended that Spain recognise independence of South American republics, something the Cuban captain-general only found out about, much to his alarm, when he read it in a copy of the *Federal Gazette and Baltimore Daily Advertiser*.<sup>1</sup> The following year, in December 1823, the US threw down a geopolitical gauntlet to Europe in a speech that outlined what became known as the Monroe Doctrine, claiming that any efforts of European nations to colonise territories in the Americas would be seen as an act of aggression by the US.

President James Monroe told Congress that,

... the occasion has been judged proper for asserting, as a principle in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonisation by any European powers...<sup>2</sup>

This dislike of European encroachment, however, did not stop the US from becoming further intertwined with the fortunes of Cuba and Puerto Rico. Cuba especially was of

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<sup>1</sup> José Luciano Franco, *La batalla por el dominio del Caribe y el Golfo de México* (Havana, 1964), pp. 302-3.

<sup>2</sup> James Monroe, 'Seventh Annual Message to Congress', 2 December 1823, UShistory.org, 2010, <http://www.ushistory.org/documents/monroe.htm> last accessed 22 May 2010.

interest of a variety of reasons. First of all, it was now the nearest Spanish colony – Spain no longer controlled Florida or Louisiana, and Mexico was independent. And of course, the US, like other rival powers, was well aware of Spain's fall from power. The second factor was the value of trade. Cuba and the US had long been trading partners – in legal and contraband goods sailing throughout the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean worth millions a year, and the US had become Cuba's main partner in trade during this decade. Vying with this interest was that of Cuba's own 'peculiar institution' – like the southern states, it too was now a large slave society, though unlike the US it was actively engaged in the slave trade, despite the British attempt to abolish it.

Cuba had a high turnover of Africans, losing many to death through overwork and disease, whereas losses were smaller in the US, as southern planters attempted to impose a system of social control over their slaves that included encouraging births and, to a degree, family life on plantations, the result of which was a slave population that was able to reproduce itself, limiting the need for more importations.<sup>3</sup> From 1807, when the US abolished the slave trade, until 1865 at the end of the US civil war the number of slaves that disembarked in the South was around 43,423 – mostly from the time around the ending of the trade – while in Cuba and Puerto Rico for the same period it was a staggering 777,941. However, the opposite had held true for the period up to 1807. For instance, 1750-1807 saw some 270,322 slaves imported to the US, while Cuba and Puerto Rico only had about half as many at 138,612.<sup>4</sup> With so few imported slaves after 1807, the US was forced to rely on self-reproducing slave populations. Despite efforts of Arango and others to increase the number of female slaves and encourage reproduction, life was often short and brutal on an *ingenio*, and Cubans were dependent on the continued importation of slaves. The boom of *ingenios*

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<sup>3</sup> Herbert S Klein, *Slavery in the Americas: A Comparative Study of Virginia and Cuba* (Oxford, 1967).

<sup>4</sup> The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, <http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/assessment/estimates.faces>, last accessed 22 May 2010.

across the island, responding to higher demand for sugar, also meant that there was an ever-growing need for more labour. From 1820 to 1824, the amount of sugar exported rose from 215,593 boxes, as measured by the German naturalist and observer of Cuba, Alexander von Humboldt, to 245,324. A decade previously, in 1810, output was 186,672 boxes.<sup>5</sup> In addition there was coffee production and smallholders who were growing tobacco. There was also a growing need for labour in the cities and ports of the island. This demand for more workers meant that the black African population quickly increased throughout the decade, and the racial balance of Cuba underwent changes that worried the white planters and the Spanish administration, augmenting those outlined in the previous chapter. Additionally, the right of *coartación* meant that the population of free people of colour grew steadily as well. The situation in Puerto Rico was similar but on a smaller scale, and with one crucial difference: that island had a large workforce of landless free peasants, *jibaros*, who could undertake much of the agricultural work which meant the island did not employ the same volume of slaves as Cuba.

Humboldt's observations about Cuba had finally been published in 1826 despite his first journey to the island having taken place a quarter of a century earlier. He returned again in 1804, and after he went back to Europe, he stayed in contact with Cubans and kept up to date on the statistical information of the island. His work includes a thorough discussion of the island, its physical life and economic workings. But Humboldt had abolitionist leanings, and, like many Europeans, wanted to see the end of slavery, though of course his actual visit was well before the ending of the slave trade. He was far more optimistic than many on the island about Cuba's potential for prosperity without forced labour. He considered peaceful abolition was possible, or at the very least, thinkable, claiming that it was,

not yet too late, for the horrible catastrophe of St. Domingo happened because of the inefficiency of the government. Such are the illusions which prevail

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<sup>5</sup> Alexander von Humboldt, *The Island of Cuba: A Political Essay* (Princeton, 2001[ed]), p.156.



with the great mass of the colonists of the Antilles, and form an obstacle to improvement in the state of the negroes in Georgia and the Carolinas. The island of Cuba may free herself better than the other islands from the common shipwreck, for she has 455,000 freemen, while the slaves number only 260,000; she may prepare gradually for the abolition of slavery, availing herself for this purpose, of humane and prudent measures. Do not let us forget that since Haiti became emancipated, there are already in the Antilles more free negroes and mulattoes than slaves. The whites, and more particularly the free blacks, who may easily make common cause with the slaves increase rapidly in Cuba.<sup>6</sup>

Of course, his friend Arango would have disagreed. But that did not stop Arango from taking a very detailed interest in the wider debates about the issue of slavery. Indeed when the book was translated into Spanish in 1827, Humboldt's work was considered controversial in Cuba. Arango decided to write commentaries in the margins, mostly about his role in the development of the island's economy. These comments were later published in a different edition, after Arango's death. In addition, a chapter about slavery on the island was not published, though it later surfaced in a 1856 edition in English.<sup>7</sup>

As Humboldt acknowledged, the threat of another Saint-Domingue was still present in the mind of the public. Yet by the 1820s, Haiti was falling further behind economically, shut out and ignored by trading partners, as well as suffering low production from both sides of the island. Boyer struggled to assert his authority over the Dominicans with respect to his land reforms, as well as other aspects of life in the united island. Compounding this problem was hostility from the new republics in South America. They were often confused and divided, as the struggle for Bolívar to establish his Gran Colombia attests. In addition, the question of abolition in the new republics was one that was not straightforward – despite various attempts, many

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<sup>6</sup> Von Humboldt, *The Island of Cuba*, p124.

<sup>7</sup> See 'Introduction' in the 2001 edition of Von Humboldt, *The Island of Cuba* for a full discussion of this episode.

landowners persisted with slavery. At the same time free *pardos* – many of whom had helped in the fight for independence – struggled to find their place in their new, yet racially divided, nations. With all these new anxieties, different types of rumours circulated, and chief among these was that Haiti was to be a racial war agitator throughout the region. No longer a source of nightmares only for slave owners and colonial officials, the free republics feared race riots among their own people, agitated by Haitians, angry at the failure to enact true abolition in places like Gran Colombia. The United States leadership observed this with interest.

Around this time, new types of rumours began to emerge – that Colombia or Mexico were going to ‘liberate’ Cuba and Puerto Rico – and residents there too feared such an event would unleash a Haitian-style uprising. If there were unrest in places like Cartagena, which had few slaves left, the chaos and bloodshed that would be released in Cuba, where whites were a minority, would be unimaginable, or at least it would be on the same par as that of Saint-Domingue. Spain and Cuba had seemingly ignored the lessons of that former colony, and the growing racial imbalance now forced the colonial authorities into further perpetuating a regime of surveillance and oppression on people of colour, while at the same time being forced to watch for incursions from their neighbours, and dissent from within. The United States, too, joined the growing list of potential dangers.

The US secretary of state, John Quincy Adams, was in no doubt about Cuba’s value, writing in 1823 that:

Such indeed are, between the interests of that island [Cuba] and of this country, the geographical, commercial, moral, and political relations, formed by nature, gathering in the process of time, and even now verging to maturity, that in looking forward to the probable course of events for the short period of half a century, it is scarcely possible to resist the conviction that the annexation of Cuba to our federal republic will be indispensable to the

continuance and integrity of the Union itself. It is obvious however that for this event we are not yet prepared.<sup>8</sup>

As European nations, the US, and even Russia began to pile pressure on Spain into recognising the new Latin American republics, they were all well aware that the situation was very different in Cuba. And while they admired the island's impressive wealth, none was so bold as the US to declare their desire to control it, as Adams had spelt out with his remarks about annexation – though there had been rumours that Britain too had its eye on Cuba. To Adams, the immediate threat in the minds of Cubans seemed not so much colonial rule, but that liberty in any form would spark a race war. He wrote that 'were the population of the island of one blood and colour, there could be no doubt of hesitation with regard to the course which they would pursue'.<sup>9</sup> By this he meant joining with the other new republics, yet he was aware, as were Cubans, that to be free might mean the end of not just their prosperity but also their livelihood and social order. Although Haiti had now existed for 16 years, the story of its birth continued stalking the planter imagination. The consolidation, or occupation, with Santo Domingo in 1822 was a reminder that no matter how much other islands or the US tried to prohibit the entry of Haitians, avoid trade with the island, or refuse diplomatic relations, Haitians would neither go away, nor be re-colonised.

By the mid-1820s, Haiti's population was pushing towards 800,000, the majority of whom were Haitians, as the population of the former Spanish side was so low – somewhere around 65,000 – that their inclusion did not have a significant impact on the island's numbers.<sup>10</sup> This combined anxiety about the repercussions of

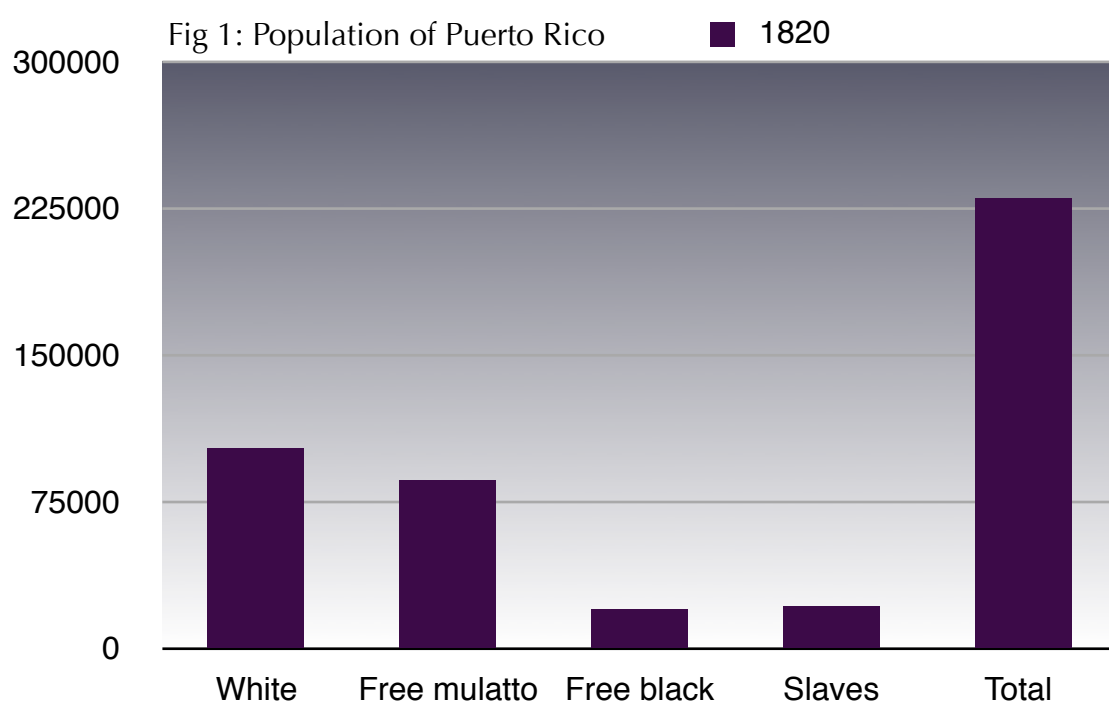
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<sup>8</sup> John Quincy Adams to Hugh Nelson, Washington, 28 April 1823, in Worthington Chauncey Ford (ed), *Writings of John Quincy Adams*, vol. VII (New York, 1917), pp.374-5.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour and National Independence in Haiti*, (London, 1996), p.68.

independence and emancipation was not limited to planters alone. Spanish officials, who already felt their burden increased by agitation for independence, had the island within the colonial orbit of enemies. Indeed, archival documents from this time still refer to Haitians as '*franceses*', implying that in the official mind the free blacks and mulattos of Haiti were still in some way 'French'. But with the inclusion of Santo Domingo and *criollos* like themselves in 1822, Haiti took on an even darker dimension in their imaginations.<sup>11</sup>

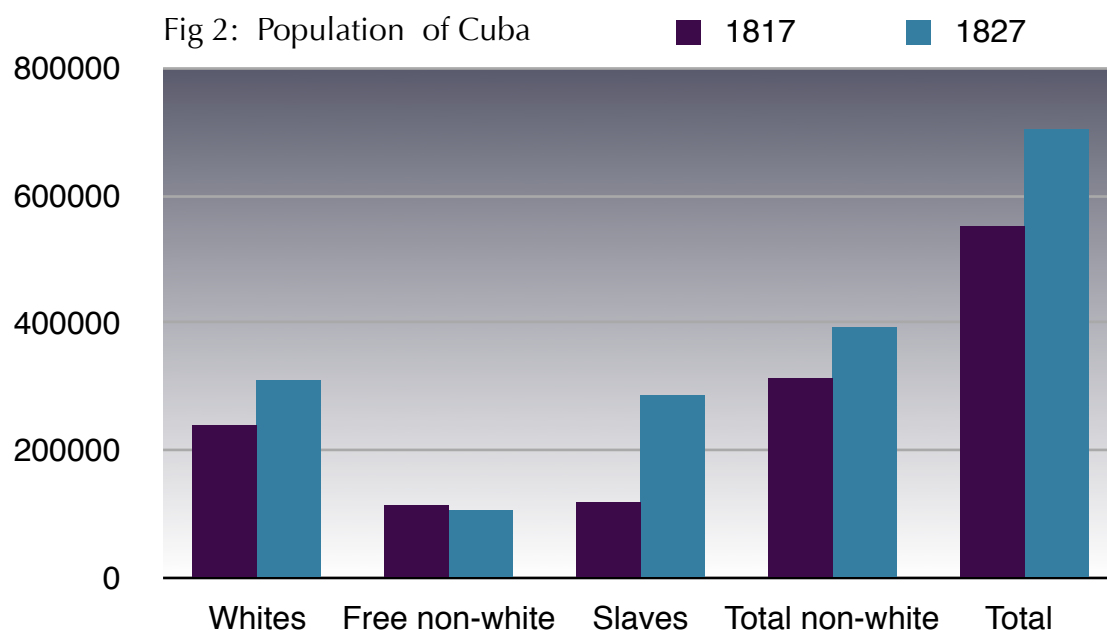


Source: George Dawson Flinter, *An Account of the Present State of the Island of Puerto Rico*, p. 206

For Cuba, population boom was little comfort, as it was mostly black people, although like in Puerto Rico, there had been an official push for more white immigration. But the shifting racial demographic, and its significance, was obvious to all on both islands. In Puerto Rico, according to 1820 figures (see fig 1) there were 102,432 whites, 86,269 free mulattoes, 20,191 free blacks, and 21,730 slaves, for a

<sup>11</sup> Franco, *La batalla*, p.315.

total of 128,190 people of colour out of a total population of 230,622, so whites comprised just under half of the population.<sup>12</sup>



Source: Herbert S. Klein, *Slavery in the Americas*, 202; Kenneth Kiple *Blacks in Colonial Cuba*.

Later in the decade, the Cuban census of 1827 (see fig 2) showed a white population consisting of 311,051 people, with 106,494 free people of colour, and 286,942 slaves, making whites, as in Puerto Rico, slightly less than half (44.2%) of the population.<sup>13</sup> What US secretary of state Adams was referring to in his letter was clear: a Haitian-style uprising was a real possibility, and if it occurred, Cuba – much less Spain – would be able to do much about it. This went directly against the earlier claims by Arango – that the balance of slaves to free people made such an uprising impossible – and public anxiety drowned out his views. As Humboldt observed, quoting at length a passage of the *Representación del ayuntamiento, consulado y sociedad patriótica* of Havana on 20 July 1820 to illustrate attitudes among the elite: ‘In all matters

<sup>12</sup> George Dawson Flinter, *An Account of the Present State of the Island of Puerto Rico* (London, 1834), p.206.

<sup>13</sup> Kenneth F. Kiple, *Blacks in Colonial Cuba, 1774-1899* (Gainesville, 1976), p.3.

concerning changes in the situation of the servant class, the important issue is not so much our fear of a decrease in agricultural prosperity as it is the safety of white people, who could so easily be harmed by an incautious measure.’<sup>14</sup> What really was at risk was not only the safety of white people, but also the prosperity of the island.

By the end of the decade, there was a significant alteration in the Spanish economic landscape. Not only did the metropole lose the wealth of its colonies, the onus was on Cuba and Puerto Rico to adjust to covering their own costs without the *situado* from Mexico, which by this point had stopped for more than a decade. In addition, Spain had even lost its status as the colonies’ main trading partner. In 1792 the South American colonies accounted for 16.6% of Spain’s export market and it had provided some 20% of its imports. By 1827, however, the situation had changed dramatically and Cuba and Puerto Rico, which had absorbed some 4.3% of imports in 1792, were now, along with the Philippines, taking 16.6%. Likewise, imports in Spain from Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines rose from 6.8% to 20.3%, and from the former colonies fell to 0.1%. Throughout the 1820s Cuba became a valuable market for Spanish exported goods. In 1826 the value of imports from Spain was 2,858,792 *pesos* and rose to 4,739,776 *pesos* by 1830. The real trading partner for Cuba, however, was the United States. US imports were worth nearly double the Spanish ones, averaging around six million *pesos* a year from 1826-1830.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, the value of exports to Spain by 1827 were 2,284,249 *pesos* but to the US they were again nearly twice as much – 4,107,449 *pesos*.<sup>16</sup> In the same year, the value of the island’s exported sugar was 5,878,924 *pesos*, with coffee following behind at 3,443,476 *pesos*.<sup>17</sup> Spain’s exports included products such as wine and wheat, worth some

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<sup>14</sup> Von Humboldt, *Cuba*, p.263.

<sup>15</sup> Pablo Tornero Tinajero, *Crecimiento económico y transformaciones sociales: esclavos, hacendados y comerciantes en la Cuba colonial (1760-1840)*, (Madrid, 1996) p.390.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, p.385.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, p.387.

2,541,322 *pesos* per annum though again the US well outstripped Spain, with exports to Cuba worth 7,162,695 *pesos*.<sup>18</sup> So not only had there been a wider political shift in Spain's colonial world, but an important economic one as well, which would go a long way to giving the crown a vested interest in keeping hold of its remaining colonies. By this point, Cuba's value was clear.

While Cuba's wealth was growing with each passing year, Haiti fell further behind. Crippled by the debt owed to France – some payments were even made in coffee rather than currency – Boyer attempted to make land more productive. He enacted the Rural Code in 1826, with the aim of stopping people from squatting on vacant land and instead attaching workers to certain plantations, allowing for more productivity. Large landowners were eager to raise their output, but labour was hard to find. Despite the island being populous, there was much resistance to enforced labour. One fundamental problem was the previous awarding of land to loyal soldiers. This practice had created a situation in which the state was at odds for encouraging anyone to work land other than their own. Because so many smallholders were in the military, it was difficult for Boyer to chastise them.<sup>19</sup> Boyer could not get output to reach the levels he and the handful of powerful mulatto landowners would have liked, and sugar production tailed off. Indeed at one point there was talk of bringing in indentured Chinese or Indian labourers, though these plans came to nothing.<sup>20</sup> All the while, the Dominicans were attempting to keep alive the long-held practice of *obezco pero no cumplo* with regards to changes in land use, and they carried on with their wood and cattle trading.

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, p.390.

<sup>19</sup> Frank Moya Pons, 'The Land Question in Haiti and Santo Domingo: the Sociopolitical Context of the Transition from Slavery to Free Labour, 1801-1843', in Moreno, Moya Pons and Engerman (eds) *Between Slavery and Free Labor: The Spanish-Speaking Caribbean in the Nineteenth Century*, (Baltimore, 1985), p.196.

<sup>20</sup> Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier*, pp.68-69.

In Puerto Rico, George Flinter painted an exhaustive and dramatic picture of economic growth. He noted that in 1828 there were 85,076 acres of land under cultivation for a variety of crops, with the main ones being 11,103 acres for sugar, 9,135 growing coffee, 11,855 for rice, and, largest of all, 21,761 acres for plantains.<sup>21</sup> These and other crops had over the past decade led to higher wealth levels, and subsequently higher export customs revenues. He said that in 1823 all the island's produce was worth \$6,883,371, with \$3,411,845.50 going to the customs house.<sup>22</sup> While this was not on the scale of Cuba, it was useful to the crown. The sugar industry, like that in Cuba, had been transformed, and by the end of the 1820s there were more than 200 large sugar plantations and numerous smaller enterprises, with exports rising from 37,969 *quintales* in 1810 to 277,154 *quintales* in 1829.<sup>23</sup> Many planters who had started out with very little had prospered. Flinter cited the case of 'A French gentleman from St. Domingo, who had only 3000 dollars capital, established himself on the very inferior land on the north side of the island, near the capital, and commenced planting cane. In less than eight years he had thirty slaves, and his property was valued, in 1832, at 40,000 dollars'.<sup>24</sup>

Indeed, as much as Cuba and Puerto Rico's prosperity was obvious, so much more so was Spain's weakness. Monroe remarked to Congress in the same December 1823 speech: 'If we look to the comparative strength and resources of Spain and those new governments [in Latin America], and their distance from each other, it must be obvious that she [Spain] can never subdue them.'<sup>25</sup> It was clear that Spain's imperial might had come to a close. This loss was compounded by further unrest on the

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<sup>21</sup> Flinter, *Present State of the Island of Puerto Rico*, p.159.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, p.162.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, pp.175-79. A quintal is roughly equal to 46kg.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, p.183.

<sup>25</sup> 'Seventh Annual Message to Congress', 2 December 1823, UShistory.org, 2010, <http://www.ushistory.org/documents/monroe.htm> last accessed 22 May 2010.



peninsula, as Spanish liberals fought to keep their constitution alive. Monroe, making his remarks in December, had seen how unkind the year had been to Spain. Tensions in the peninsula by 1823 had become exacerbated as military campaigns in the colonies failed, there was violence as well in the metropole, and the Treasury was running low and beginning to rely on money from Cuba.<sup>26</sup> Adding to this was the spectre of the return of the French, which had been discussed among other European powers at the Congress of Verona in 1822, led this time in the form of restored Bourbon monarch Louis XVIII, and with the aim of returning complete power to Fernando VII. Some 60,000 troops marched into Spain in April 1823. Despite the aims of the invasion, old prejudices were resurrected, and their aggression was met with disapproval, and concern.

In echos of 1808, the captain-general of Cuba, Francisco Dionisio Vives, issued an order in 1823 warning the public to look out for anyone suspicious, but in a change from the previous period, he spoke of his general trust for the French on the island, saying '[T]he French established here or who come to establish themselves here, [are] for the most part pacifist proprietors and farmers, but I know also, that everywhere on the side of good there are always [some] disobedient men'.<sup>27</sup> France's troops proved the deciding factor. From Napoleon providing the trigger for the onset of liberalism, once again France's army shaped the contours of Spanish political life. This time rather than allowing for the birth of liberalism, it presided over the burial of the constitutional *trienio*, though this would not be the last of the Spanish liberals.

The combination of Spain's weakness and the growing confidence of the Latin American republics, however, became a cause of concern for the United States. It, like the islands themselves, had heard rumours around this time that they were to be 'liberated' by Colombia or Mexico, a matter that for a few years became of great

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<sup>26</sup> Franco, *La batalla*, pp.311-12

<sup>27</sup> Bando, Francisco Dionisio Vives, 24 June 1823, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 107, sig 25.

importance for all the nations who had an interest in Cuba. On one side there were the trading partners, the US, Britain, and France, all of whom were eager to see the current situation continue. On the other were the new nations, who wanted to drive the final nail in the coffin of Spanish rule. Spain, of course, had every interest in retaining its most valuable colony. And there was the island itself, with its growing racial imbalance, independence agitators, and powerful planters. The situation was very delicate, and was not aided by the constant swirl of rumours about a European or Colombian or Mexican takeover. US ministers shared this anxiety as it was keen to maintain the status quo on the islands for the moment. President Adams gave instructions to the US special agent to Cuba and told him to keep an eye on the British and French on the island, the size of their fleets in the region, and to 'be mindful of any apparent popular agitation; particularly of such as may have reference either to a transfer of the Island from Spain to any other Power; or the assumption by the Inhabitants of a Independent Government'.<sup>28</sup> Yet the previous year Bolívar, who was contemplating Cuba and Puerto Rico's independence and finding it impossible, wrote that in the panorama of the free Latin America 'we have in front of us the rich and beautiful Spanish islands which will never be more than enemies'.<sup>29</sup> As the decade wore on, his opinion about the fate of those islands would change.

### *Conspiracy and masonic connections*

Fernando VII once again set about re-establishing his absolute power and sent to death many of the liberals who had brought about the return to the constitution, he also stamped out their reforms, such as freedom of the press. This had ramifications in the Caribbean as well for those who sought to use the *diputaciones provinciales* to

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<sup>28</sup> John Quincy Adams to Thomas Randall, Washington, 29 April 1823, in William Manning (ed) *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States Concerning the Independence of the Latin-American Nations*, vol. I (Oxford, 1925), pp.185-86.

<sup>29</sup> Simón Bolívar to Francisco Santander, 23 December 1822, quoted in Franco, *La batalla*, p.320.

push a more liberal agenda on the islands. However, like Fernando VII's killing of his enemies in Spain, officials in Cuba and Puerto Rico were given permission to do what they needed to consolidate their hold on public order. They had more than the disruption in Spain to concern them, however. There was the example, and threat, of the new American republics and the possibility of agitators from within leading the way towards republicanism, if not abolition. Haiti represented both – its involvement with Bolívar and other revolutionaries in the previous decade had shown that it wanted to go beyond abolition, and in the minds of Cubans encourage republicanism as well.

Yet Haiti was not embraced by the new American republics, and instead was treated as the possible agitator of racial warfare. This was especially the case on the Caribbean coast of South America, as it had more slaves than Andean regions. The abolition of slavery was under way, but it was less rapid and dynamic than Petión would have hoped when first extracting his promise from Bolívar a decade earlier. Changes in the law allowed for a graduated emancipation, slowly giving rise to more free people of colour. Laws enacted in 1821 had banned the importation of slaves and decreed that children would be born free, though they would have to work for their mothers' masters until they were 18 – without pay. While technically emancipation, it was hardly an unlimited freedom. However, the number of slaves along the Caribbean coast had dropped from around 14,000 in 1770 to 6,827 by 1835.<sup>30</sup> Throughout this period, many had bought their freedom, and Caribbean port cities such as Cartagena had large numbers of free people of colour who, like their counterparts elsewhere on the islands, took up employment in a variety of important trades. After the wars of independence, this group, labelled generally as *pardos*, began to claim a stake in the

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<sup>30</sup> Aline Helg, *Liberty & Equality in Caribbean Colombia, 1770-1835* (Chapel Hill, 2004), pp.152-161.

societies that were taking shape.<sup>31</sup> But there was much resistance from whites, and this spilled over into the political arena. While this resistance took myriad forms, the ones of greatest interest are those that invoked Haiti. For instance, in the town of Mompox, near Cartagena, anonymous threats emerged in 1823, amid much political uncertainty, that whites would be chopped up with machetes, as had happened in Saint-Domingue. Other rumours emerged around the same time that Haitian agents were sent to Venezuela to destabilise the regime, and two plots to murder whites were uncovered. On one hand these could be the racialised fears of a white class struggling to establish its authority in territories where they were often outnumbered by free people of colour and there were also indigenous populations to contend with; on the other, Haiti was used as a potent symbol of not only a bloody path to racial equality, but also of perhaps a more true meaning of the word equality itself. For some historians of Colombia, the emergence and use of Saint-Domingue in these contexts is arguably not about race so much as a way for people to articulate anxieties about social structure and the quest for equality in the burgeoning republics. Marixa Lasso has argued that in many ways what happened in Colombia was a class struggle, and by invoking Haiti, people of colour were imagining a political possibility that did not see the lower classes, who were usually not white, being oppressed.<sup>32</sup>

So it would seem that Cuba and Puerto Rico were surrounded – to the North, a US that was not ruling out a forced annexation; to the South and West, new republics which supposedly wanted to ‘free’ the islanders from the last vestiges of Spanish rule; and to the East, Haiti. Elsewhere in the Caribbean, other islands were experiencing

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<sup>31</sup> On this question, see Harold A. Bierck, Jr., ‘The Struggle for Abolition in Gran Colombia’, *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 33, No 3 (1953), pp. 365-86; Marixa Lasso, *Myths of Harmony: Race and Republicanism During the Age of Revolution, Colombia 1795-1831* (Pittsburgh, 2007); Aline Helg, *Liberty & Equality*.

<sup>32</sup> Marixa Lasso, ‘Haiti as an Image of Popular Republicanism in Caribbean Colombia Cartagena Province (1811-1828)’, in *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World*, David Geggus (ed) (Columbia, 2001), p.183.

similar turbulence. For instance, 12,000 slaves staged a large rebellion in Demerara – today's Guyana – which managed to spread until it was stopped.<sup>33</sup> A report had arrived in Cuba a month earlier of Jamaican authorities offering a £100 reward for a 'negro man named Baptiste, a native of St. Domingo ... and well known in this city [Kingston] for drumming and singing [who] stands charged with being concerned in a rebellious conspiracy'.<sup>34</sup> The Lieutenant Governor of Holguín, in the South-East of Cuba, circulated an order to not allow the entry of illicit slaves, such as the ones that had supposedly been involved in a conspiracy in Jamaica.<sup>35</sup> The fear that both Cubans and Puerto Ricans would be 'contaminated' by these external forces was ever-present, and the liberalism that had marked much of the last two decades was replaced with the return of a Floridablanca-style censorship. Cuban ports were not supposed to accept any commerce or communication from ships that had come from Haiti.<sup>36</sup> Perhaps not without reason, as this period was marked by suppressed rebellions and uncovered plots, and attention still turned to Haiti when tensions were high. The military garrison had also been built up in Cuba, to some 15,000-20,000 troops, in anticipation of these many threats, both internal and external.<sup>37</sup>

Despite the many outside factors, Cuba was arguably most shaken in 1823 by an internal conspiracy, organised by freemasons. Freemasonry, like *sociedades económicas* and other organisations which had started in the peninsula, crossed the

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<sup>33</sup> Emília Viotti da Costa, *Crowns of Glory, Tears of Blood: The Demerara Slave Rebellion of 1823* (Oxford, 1994).

<sup>34</sup> Kingston newspaper cutting, 13 February 1824, ANC, Fondo Asuntos Políticos, legajo 125, sig 18.

<sup>35</sup> Lieutenant Governor to the Governor of Holguín, 22 March 1824, ANC Asuntos Políticos, legajo 125, sig. 24.

<sup>36</sup> Olga Portuondo Zúñiga, *Santiago de Cuba: desde la fundación hasta la guerra de los diez años* (Santiago de Cuba, 1996), p.142.

<sup>37</sup> Robin Blackburn, *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery 1776-1848* (London, 1988), p.397.

Atlantic and was established by Spanish immigrants in Cuba and other territories.<sup>38</sup> Lodges spread throughout the island, and were generally occupied during this period with plans for independence and burgeoning liberalism. Masonic lodges provided the perfect cover for organising an independence movement, as they were secret societies. They had names such as '*Soles de Bolívar*', invoking the image of independence. In this particular case, known as the conspiracy of the *Soles y rayos de Bolívar*, the main organisers were a Colombian, José Fernández Madrid; a Cuban who was in the service of the Colombian army, José Francisco Lemus; and a Haitian, Servre Courtois, who had previously ended up an officer in the Colombian navy.<sup>39</sup> But it was Lemus who would call himself the general of the 'Republic of Cubanacan'.<sup>40</sup>

Colombian connections convinced Lemus that the time was right to return to Cuba and try to stir up an independence movement.<sup>41</sup> He established himself in these masonic circles and began organising his allies, which also included people of colour. For instance, one testimony mentions conspirator José Nicomedes Valmaseda, 'Who in addition to Spanish possesses French, and understands some of the English language, [and who] has a brother named José Nicomedes Valmaseda ... officially an indigo farmer, currently absent in the island of Santo Domingo ... That said brother is in the French Port-au-Prince, which has become dominated by *pardos* and blacks with their republican government ...'<sup>42</sup> The plan also included the support of liberal elites,

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<sup>38</sup> For more on freemasonry in the context of liberalism and revolution, see Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History* (Pittsburgh, 2009); and on its history in Cuba, see Eduardo Torres-Cuevas, *Historia de la masonería cubana: seis ensayos*, (Havana 2004).

<sup>39</sup> Eleazar Córdova-Bello, *La independencia de Haití y su influencia en hispanoamérica*, (Caracas, 1967), p.151.

<sup>40</sup> Francisco Morales Padrón, 'Conspiraciones y masonería en Cuba (1810-1826)', *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* XXIX (1972), p.368.

<sup>41</sup> Roque E. Garrigó, *Historia documentada de la conspiración de los Soles y rayos de Bolívar*, (Havana, 1927), p.153.

<sup>42</sup> ANC, Primera pieza de la causa por la Conspiración de los Soles de Bolívar, quoted in Garrigó, *Historia documentada*, pp.156-7.

such as judges, mayors, and militia captains fed up with Spanish rule.<sup>43</sup> And women were also involved. Despite not being eligible for masonic membership, many knew what was going on in these circles. Another testimony, given by a Doña Socorro Mancebo, spoke of a woman from Costa Firme, who ‘from the times she had come in contact with her, she [Mancebo] knew to be a bad woman, hearing also that Bolívar, with whom she [the woman] corresponded by letter, professed fondness and affection for her’.<sup>44</sup> Mancebo also had news that a ‘a significant sum of promissory notes by Bolívar’ were to be used to ‘rouse this island to revolt, and establish in it a Republic’.<sup>45</sup>

The plan spread through lodges up and down the island, east into Matanzas, Camagüey, Villaclara, and west into Pinar del Río. Lemus heightened the tension by starting a rumour that Spain had sold the island to the British.<sup>46</sup> Thus when Dionisio Vives arrived to take his post as captain-general in April 1823 the island was in a state of agitation, further disturbed by the publication and spread of propaganda calling for the establishment of Cubanacán. In addition to this, Vives had found out that they were offering liberty to slaves in order to gain their support.<sup>47</sup> A report to Havana from the governor of Puerto Príncipe, Francisco Sedano, noted that ‘the conspirators with false promises had managed to seduce many blacks and mulattos, who forced on them not only an oath of secrecy, but at the same time for the most bloody cooperation’.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Garrigó, *Historia documentada*, p.169.

<sup>44</sup> ANC, Primera pieza de la causa por la Conspiración de los Soles de Bolívar, quoted in Garrigó, *Historia documentada*, p.170.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Garrigó, *Historia documentada*, p.175.

<sup>47</sup> Vives to the Cabinet, 14 August 1823, in Garrigó, *Historia documentada*, p.201.

<sup>48</sup> Governor of Puerto Príncipe to the Jefe Político Superior de la Havana, 10 September 1823, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 107, sig 31.

But the conspiracy began to unravel, and Lemus and others were betrayed. The authorities across the island were on alert, even calling for martial law ‘in order to contain the horrors with which this rebellion threatens’.<sup>49</sup> Lemus was arrested in August 1823, apprehended near Guanabacoa, and provincial officials throughout the island searched for any conspiracy in their region. Vives mounted an investigation into the causes. In a report to Spain from the captain-general, he noted that ‘the entire island would have been a theatre of arson ... in any other country the dangers are smaller and do not compare to the dangers that the conspiracy brings with it, because there are no slaves, but in Havana where the number of blacks is equal to that of whites there would be no end ...’<sup>50</sup> Sedano, like other provincial officials, felt the conspirators ‘ought be punished with all the severity that the laws mandate, and require a public punishment ...’<sup>51</sup> In the end, they jailed more than 600 people.<sup>52</sup> After the incident Vives went on to form a military commission with the aim of suppressing any possible future conspiracy.<sup>53</sup> This would not be the end to the dream of independence, however, though it would be long-deferred. Later that year, the governor of Holguín noted the discovery of Colombian propaganda that had been distributed which said:

Habaneros, Brothers of the island of Cuba. Colombia has known your glorious efforts, she soon will help with all her power: the reign of tyrants has ended in America, she is called to the independent rank that it must to occupy among

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<sup>49</sup> Unsigned, Dirigido a la diputación provincial de la Habana, 23 August 1823, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 107, sig 34.

<sup>50</sup> AGI, Ultramar, 1 September 1823, quoted in Morales Padrón, ‘Conspiraciones y masonería’, p.370.

<sup>51</sup> Governor of Puerto Príncipe to the Jefe Político Superior de la Havana, 10 September 1823, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 107, sig 31.

<sup>52</sup> Morales Padrón, ‘Conspiraciones y masonería’, p.370.

<sup>53</sup> Garrigó, *Historia documentada*, p.249.



the nations of the universe. The Liberator of Colombia, and her soldiers give you a friendly and fraternal salute.<sup>54</sup>

This island-wide plot was the convergence of not only republicanism, but a multi-racial alliance. However, the involvement of people of colour in the plot was not the only internal concern – that summer saw slave unrest and small-scale rebellions, such as the one in Guanabacoa, in the plantation-heavy region around Havana.<sup>55</sup> There were also outbreaks in the East on both sugar and coffee plantations, in Tiguabos and Yagua, where properties were set on fire.<sup>56</sup> And the continued survival of *palenques* continued to irk the authorities. In Santiago, another slave-hunting militia was formed to track down runaways and ‘evildoers’.<sup>57</sup> At the same time, Cuban authorities had to contend with rising numbers of free people of colour, whose involvement with the *Soles* conspiracy, among other unrest, had shown some were ready to fight alongside white *criollos* against the Spanish.

Cuba faced another rebellion in June 1825, as some 200 slaves rose up in Matanzas, near Havana. What marked this disturbance out was that it was apparently organised only by African-born slaves.<sup>58</sup> It spread to 24 estates, and some 15 whites and 43 blacks were killed, and 170 slaves injured.<sup>59</sup> Normally, such conspiracies involved a range of people, for instance not only black slaves but also free mulattos,

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<sup>54</sup> Comunicación reservada del Teniente Gobernador de Holguín al Jefe Superior Político de la Provincia, 25 December 1823, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 116, sig 51.

<sup>55</sup> José Luciano Franco, *Ensayos históricos* (Havana, 1974), p.25.

<sup>56</sup> Diego Bosch Ferrer and José Sánchez Guerra, *Rebeldía y apalencamiento: jurisdicciones de Guantánamo y Baracoa* (Guantánamo, 2003), p.34.

<sup>57</sup> Gabino Rosa Corzo La, *Runaway Slave Settlements in Cuba: Resistance and Repression* (Chapel Hill, 2003), p.118.

<sup>58</sup> Manuel Paz Barcia, *Seeds of Insurrection: Domination and Resistance on Western Cuban Plantations, 1808-1848* (Baton Rouge, 2008), p.34.

<sup>59</sup> Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Social Control in Slave Plantation Societies: A Comparison of St. Domingue and Cuba* (Baton Rouge, 1996), pp.55-56.

as previous examples have shown. Yet what happened in Matanzas shows that *bozales* were willing to take action as well. Such unrest was not limited to sugar plantations either. Earlier that year, in the East of the island, there had been a rebellion organised by a *zambo* named Félix de Rosario, in which the French proprietors of a coffee plantation were whipped, and the property destroyed and set ablaze, before the plotters moved on to destroying another *cafetal*.<sup>60</sup> There was also the case of a 1827 rebellion on a coffee estate on the island, which saw 57 mostly African-born slaves run away and kill some of their overseers, and go on to commit collective suicide rather than return to slavery.<sup>61</sup> In addition to this, the British had taken seriously their role as abolitionists, and were still patrolling the waters around Cuba. When a slave ship was seized, its captives were given certificates of emancipation and set free on the island. The question of what to do with the growing number of *emancipados* was also the subject of public concern and debate.<sup>62</sup>

So throughout these years economic capacity rose, along with governmental power, especially after 1823. Yet despite this, there was nothing slave owners or colonial officials could do to stifle slave rebellions, unrest among free people of colour, and *criollo* conspiracies. Throughout the 1820s, militias and bands of slave-hunters crawled the island, assisting planters to catch runaways and officials to punish ringleaders. Likewise in Puerto Rico, similar practices persisted in the treatment of rebels and runaways. One report noted the capture of eight slaves who had fled in a canoe, but the currents had delivered them back into the hands of their masters.<sup>63</sup> The governor of Puerto Rico, Miguel de la Torre, who had fought for Spain in Venezuela

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<sup>60</sup> Bosch Ferrer and Sánchez Guerra, *Rebeldía y apalencamiento*, pp.17-18, 35.

<sup>61</sup> Paz Barcia *Seeds of Insurrection*, p.36.

<sup>62</sup> Midlo Hall, *Social Control*, p.132.

<sup>63</sup> Excelentísimo Señor Don Miguel de la Torre Gobernador Capitan General, 18 July 1824, printed in Benjamín Moret Nistal, *Esclavos prófugos y cimarrones: Puerto Rico, 1770-1870* (San Juan, 1984), p.141.

and Colombia, was very concerned with re-establishing 'order' on the island. Initially appointed as captain-general in 1822 he was given the role of governor in 1823. As in 1810-14, power had been given to local constitutionally approved committees, while the posts of governor and captain-general continued. And like the captain-general of Cuba, with the return of absolute monarchy, Torre had been given full powers to restore order on the island, and to suppress not only slave unrest, but liberal or other any sort of reformist agitation.

Flinter, an Irish-born British soldier who worked as an interpreter in Caracas between the British and Spanish Americans in 1816, spent years traveling around the West Indies. In his observations on Puerto Rico, *An account of the present state of the island of Puerto Rico*, he gave Torre's reforms glowing praise. He said the island from 1820-23 was on the course for 'inevitable shipwreck', citing the 'confused state of the public accounts; the unbridled licence of the press; the anarchy inseparable from popular tumults; the want of capital and of confidence; the depressed state of agriculture; and, finally, the impotency of a government divided in power and opinion'.<sup>64</sup> Flinter praised Torre, who took up the post in 1822, because he 'executed [reforms] with ... the comprehensive foresight of a political economist'.<sup>65</sup> Torre's first priorities were to untangle the financial mess the island had got itself into, and to quickly find a way to cover the island's costs, while simultaneously reasserting royal authority on the island.

However such reforms did not stifle the will to conspire. A rebellion broke out in Ponce, in the South of the island, and in a place of rapid sugar growth, in July 1825. This attack was supposed to take place during a dance (*bailar una bomba*), but it was discovered before then. The organisers were accused of wanting to take arms, claim property, and assassinate the whites. Not surprisingly, officials thought the

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<sup>64</sup> Flinter, *Present State*, p.11.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, p.9.

conspiracy had been planned by Haitian agents.<sup>66</sup> And the threat of intellectual subordination had not quite gone away either. In Puerto Rico the threat of ‘contagion’ also lingered, and part of Torres’s suppression included texts. There had been a ship from Nantes, France, the *Carlos*, which had been found carrying works by Bentham, Voltaire, and Rousseau. Some 90 volumes were confiscated on the grounds that they ‘promoted revolution, corrupted customs, ridiculed our laws and sowed demoralisation, seeking to spread the ideas that tend towards disorder and anarchy ...’<sup>67</sup>

Torre, like other captains-general before him, was uneasy with Haiti, and correspondingly suspicious of the relationships between whites and people of colour on the island, as well as between free people of colour and slaves. A *bando de policía y buen gobierno* in 1824 outlawed the hiding of runaway or ‘delinquent’ slaves.<sup>68</sup> Around this time, Puerto Rico was struck with another conspiracy, this time emanating from Bayamón, and Torre took further action, enacting his *Reglamento de esclavos* in 1826. This ordinance called for slave owners to make sure that their slaves celebrated feast days in their own plantations and within open view of their owners and overseers.<sup>69</sup> His aim was to stifle the potential for further conspiracies, as well as to limit the overall movement of slaves and ensure their close supervision.<sup>70</sup>

A classified report from the *diputación provincial* in 1823, which would become defunct by the end of the year due to termination of the *trienio*, presented a

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<sup>66</sup> Luis Diaz Soler, *Historia de la esclavitud negra en Puerto Rico* (Río Piedras, 1965), p.213.

<sup>67</sup> Quoted in Jesús Raúl Navarro García, *Control social y actitudes políticas en Puerto Rico, 1823-1837* (Seville, 1991), p.174.

<sup>68</sup> Bando de policía y buen gobierno de 1824 del Gobernador Miguel de la Torre reprinted in Moret Nistal, *Esclavos prófugos*, pp.32-33.

<sup>69</sup> Moret Nistal, *Esclavos prófugos*, p.15.

<sup>70</sup> Diaz Soler, *Historia de la esclavitud*, pp.214-15.

complicated picture of the islands during the first years of the decade. The report focused on keeping stability on the island. One of the authors wrote:

I have said and [I] repeat, that unfortunately the enemies that threaten us are many, they are of different qualities, and those are their aims and purpose, and varied [are] the means of which they serve themselves to disturb our peace. The first and most terrible is the mulatto Boyer, president of the republic established in Santo Domingo. His ambition, his actions, his interest, his aims, which are glimpsed in his latest decrees relating to the Antilles, his close proximity, and the support of the people of colour of this island, are terrible elements for an invasion.<sup>71</sup>

Yet later in the report, the writer implies that Boyer, while being a threat, might lack the means to take action, and perhaps such rumours were stronger than realities, saying,

Where many are lacking, he [Boyer] proceeds intently; how is it possible to undertake expenses that although necessary, cannot be in any way preferable to those sad [people], and it is unpleasant for the government to [be aware of] the probability that there is a conspiracy against the status quo, and be unable, for lack of means, to acquire the ... securities and information necessary to give vigour and action to their providences. Such, however, is our situation.<sup>72</sup>

But for Torre, such intimations were largely ignored. Only a few days later he wrote to the outgoing governor, Francisco González de Linares, of his worry over the threats of Haiti, free people of colour, and republicanism, saying: 'There is much vagrancy, many demoralised youths, too many will turn among the people of colour, and in excess speak publicly of independence'. Yet later in the letter he expressed his concern about the influence of events in South America, with news of recent events and rumoured rebellions making their way to the island. However, in his mind, the

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<sup>71</sup> Informe reservado del Capitán General Miguel de la Torre a la Diputacion Provincial, 13 September 1823, AGPR, Fondo Gobernadores Españoles, caja 175, exp. 21, Asuntos Políticos y Civiles 1754-1897.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

enemy was clear, as he wrote, ‘There is no doubt that we are under threat by the negroes of Santo Domingo.’<sup>73</sup>

Linares had previously received a copy of a *memoria* from a member of the *diputación provincial*, Juan Francisco Brenes, who had visited Haiti in August 1822, only a few months after the Spanish side fell under Boyer’s control. In the report he criticised Núñez de Cáceres’s political failures which left the colony at the mercy of Haiti. He outlined the island’s problems, saying:

Having described in this way the character of the Dominicans, I believe that I should also speak to Your Excellency about the Haitians: they well know that in their own territory they cannot support themselves with just the 20 *reales* of salary that soldiers receive, 50 for colonels, and the respective proportion of this for the intermediary ranks, and it is for this reason that their government, through a particular ordinance, grants them all a property to cultivate and a house. In the Spanish part they lack this second contribution: they [Haitians] earn double the salary, and so they [Dominicans] see themselves as little more than troops of bandits, or stealing bread, or begging for alms, and so they become discontented and disgraced, and desertion and abandonment is seen daily, of entire guards [companies]...<sup>74</sup>

Indeed, the payment of land to soldiers was an important part in maintaining the heavy militarisation of Haiti, something that was felt to be necessary for defence. By the 1820s, Haiti had some 32,000 regular troops.<sup>75</sup> Brenes noted that Haiti also had the potential to draw from the Spanish territory 6,000 to 8,000 armed men, with the possibility of getting more ‘black Spaniards’ from parts of the north.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Miguel de la Torre to Francisco González de Linares, 16 September 1823, AGPR, Fondo Gobernadores Españoles, caja 175, exp 21, Asuntos Políticos y Civiles 1754-1897.

<sup>74</sup> Copia de la memoria presentada por Don Juan Francisco Brenes sobre la situación política de la Isla de Sto Domingo, 16 September 1822, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 970.

<sup>75</sup> David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier*, p.68.

<sup>76</sup> Copia de la memoria presentada por Don Juan Francisco Brenes sobre la situación política de la Isla de Sto Domingo, 16 September 1822, AGI, Santo Domingo, legajo 970.

However, the republic only saw further isolation. Although initially there were some slaves and free blacks in Santo Domingo who had welcomed Haitian rule, the land reforms which saw crown, church, and private lands taken over by the state was the source of a great deal of friction. Small and large land owners alike were proving resistant to orders for increased quantities of sugar cane, cotton, and cacao, and wanted to continue their cattle ranching and tobacco-growing.<sup>77</sup> Pleas filtered to Madrid via Puerto Rico of Dominicans who wanted Spain to bring it back in its somewhat diminished imperial fold.<sup>78</sup> It was a fight it could not afford. Some people in Gran Colombia were also uneasy, remembering the alliance between Pétion and Bolívar, and the unkept promise of total emancipation. There was concern that Haiti, with its heavy militarisation, had the troops to attempt to retaliate this unfulfilled pledge in some way.<sup>79</sup> With the power of Boyer and the unified island, rumours also circulated combining the many fears of authorities and slave owners in Cuba and Puerto Rico – that Boyer was going to invade Cuba, a plan which had the support of Colombia and Mexico, and Bolívar.

#### *Recognition and refusal at the Congress of Panama*

After the defeat of the Spaniards at Ayacucho at the end of 1824, more or less marking the end of the battles for independence, the new and finally recognised republics were looking for a means of expressing their political identities. At the same time, the US was watching events with caution, while continuing its overtures of goodwill to the new republics, though this would eventually cause a complicated domestic political row. In late November 1825, Adams, who at this point was US president, received three invitations to a congress of plenipotentiaries from Latin

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<sup>77</sup> Moya Pons, 'The Land Question in Haiti and Santo Domingo', p.191.

<sup>78</sup> Miguel de la Torre to the Secretary de Estado de Despacho de la Guerra, 2 January 1824, AGI, Estado, legajo 19, No 85.

<sup>79</sup> Helg, *Liberty & Equality*, p.166.

America, which would convene in Panama, organised by Bolívar. Mexico, Colombia, and the United Provinces of Central America requested the presence of their powerful neighbour.<sup>80</sup> Their plan was to discuss numerous political and diplomatic matters to do with regional cooperation. The secretary of state, Henry Clay, replied to the invitations later that month, with the intention of sending a representative, though they would be little more than observers so as to allow the US to continue in its neutral stance. A few days later, Adams made a speech to Congress in which he told legislators about the forthcoming event in Panama.<sup>81</sup> What Adams perhaps did not realise is the great debate this move would generate in the House of Representatives, lasting throughout the first few months of 1826. The Senate was even moved to meet in secret sessions to discuss the matter.<sup>82</sup>

Around the same time, in early 1826, two Cuban conspirators, Francisco Agüero and Manuel Andrés Sánchez, who had been in exile in Mexico, returned to Cuba to ignite another bid at independence. They thought the timing was opportune, with the Congress meeting later that year, as well as the rumours circulating that Bolívar was going to liberate the island. They were unsuccessful, and imprisoned for their efforts. The authorities claimed to find papers that implicated them, as well as revealing them to be freemasons.<sup>83</sup> Such events only added to the anxiety on the island, and abroad. Indeed, there were still international concerns about a European invasion of the island. And then there was the question of Cuba's French-speaking

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<sup>80</sup> Charles Wilson Hackett, 'The Development of John Quincy Adams's Policy With Respect to an American Confederation', *Hispanic American Historical Review* 8, No. 4 (1928), p.514.

<sup>81</sup> John Quincy Adams, 'State of the Union Address to US Congress', 6 December 1825, UShistory.org, 2010, <http://www.ushistory.org/documents/monroe.htm> last accessed 22 May 2010.

<sup>82</sup> On the issue of wider public reaction, see Frances L Reinhold, 'New Research on the First Pan-American Congress Held at Panama in 1826', *Hispanic American Historical Review* 18, No 3 (1938), pp.342-63.

<sup>83</sup> Morales Padrón, 'Conspiraciones y masonería', pp.375-77.



neighbour. In relating the Congress's agenda to Clay, a Colombian minister, José María Salazar wrote:

The descendants of this portion of the globe [Africa], have succeeded in founding an independent Republic, whose government is now recognised by its ancient Metropolis. On what basis the relations of Hayti, and of other parts of our Hemisphere that shall hereafter be in like circumstances, are to be placed, is a question simple at first view, but attended with serious difficulties when closely examined.<sup>84</sup>

Elsewhere in the letter, Salazar had brought up the issue of slavery, with the delegates to consider means of ending the slave trade.<sup>85</sup> A sensitive issue to southern politicians, political ears pricked up at its mention. And while there were many questions that concerned the congressmen and senators – that this meeting was a guise for war, among others – the slave issue was lurking in the background.<sup>86</sup> But concern about Cuba and Puerto Rico were well in the forefront of minds, over both commerce and slavery. To defenders of slavery, the issue was clear. Haiti must not be recognised, and there was also the uncomfortable fact that most of the republics had begun the process of manumission, which should not be encouraged in Cuba and Puerto Rico. The issue of the Congress resulted in months of political fighting. The Senate's foreign relations committee was against the mission to send representatives to the Congress of Panama, though in the final vote on 15 March it won the vote 24 to 19, and the following month the House agreed to give the necessary appropriation with a vote of 134 to 60.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Salazar to Clay, Washington, 2 November 1825, quoted in Hackett, 'The Development of John Quincy Adams's Policy', p.518.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Reinhold, 'First Pan-American Congress', p.356.

<sup>87</sup> Ralph Sanders, 'Congressional Reaction in the United States to the Panama Congress of 1826', *The Americas* 11, No 2 (1954), p.143.

The Congress convened on 22 June and met until 15 July, with delegates from Gran Colombia, Mexico, and the United Provinces, which are now Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Honduras. Representatives from Peru also attended, while Chile, and Argentina did not. The US delegates, in the end, did not attend; one of the two representatives, Richard Anderson, had died on his way there, and the other, John Sergeant, finally arrived on 24 July, well after it had finished.<sup>88</sup> Haiti – desperate to receive more external recognition of its statehood – never received an invitation. Despite agreeing to pay reparations of 150 million *francs* in 1825 in order to secure its France's official recognition of independence, it became clear that Haiti's immediate neighbours had no intention of acknowledging this gesture. Indeed, the instructions that Henry Clay had sent Anderson and Sergeant warned that,

It will probably be proposed, as a fit subject of consideration for the powers represented at Panama, whether Hayti ought to be recognised by them as an independent State ... The President is not prepared now to say that Hayti ought to be recognised as an independent sovereign power. Considering the nature and the manner of the establishment of the governing power in that island, and the little respect which is there shown to other races, than the African, the question of acknowledging its independence was far from being unattended with difficulty, prior to the late arrangement, which, it is understood has been made between France and Hayti. According to that arrangement, if we possess correct information of its terms, the parent country acknowledges a nominal independence in the colony, and, as part of the price of this acknowledgement, Hayti agrees to receive for ever the produce of France at a rate of duty one half below that which is exacted, in the ports of Hayti, from all other nations. This is a restriction upon the freedom of its action, to which no sovereign power, really independent, would ever subscribe.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, p.144.

<sup>89</sup> Anon, *Spanish America: Observations on the Instructions Given By the President of the United States of America to the Representatives of That Republic, At the Congress Held At Panama in 1826* (London, 1829), pp.59-60.

Meanwhile, the issue of an invasion into Cuba still had not been resolved. The British foreign minister, George Canning, had proposed the signing of ministerial notes between the US, France, and Britain that none of them would invade the island.<sup>90</sup> The Spanish ambassador to Paris, the Duque de Villahermosa, wrote to the crown in 1825 warning that its 'most precious jewel' was under threat.<sup>91</sup> Villahermosa reported rumours he had heard via New York, that Bolívar was planning to arm the blacks and start an uprising. To the ambassador, the elites stood firm on the side of Spain, and he reported that 'In this city [Paris] there are some landowners and natives of the island [Cuba] whose fortunes and political existence are identified with the interests of Spain and would be ruined by emancipation'.<sup>92</sup> Though where Bolívar stood amid the rumours was unclear. Juan Diego Jaramillo has argued that Bolívar was using the concern of Britain, France, Russia, and the US about the balance of power in the Caribbean as a bargaining chip, and with the threat of 'liberating' Cuba as ante, he was playing diplomatic poker in order to secure his own interests with regard to Latin America.<sup>93</sup> Indeed, Bolívar wrote to Francisco Santander saying:

Never forget the three political warnings that I have dared to give you: first, that it is not in our interest to admit in the league the Rio de la Plata; second, the United States of America; and third, not liberating Havana. These three points seem to me to be of the greatest importance, because I believe that our league can be maintained perfectly without touching the extremes of South and North; and without the establishment of a new Republic of Haiti... With regard to Havana, we should say to Spain, if you do not make peace, you will soon deprived of your two great islands.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Henry Clay to Rufus King, Washington, 17 October 1825, in *Diplomatic Correspondence*, pp.250-1.

<sup>91</sup> Duque de Villahermosa, 9 November 1825, AGI, Estado, legajo 19, No 130.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Juan Diego Jaramillo, *Bolívar y Canning, 1822-1827: Desde el congreso de Verona hasta el congreso de Panamá* (Bogotá 1983), p.304.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.305-306.

In addition to all the outsiders who were interested in the fate of Cuba, Cubans themselves who lived away from the island also were a source of concern. The one-time representative to the Cortes, Father Varela, had exiled himself in New York, where he wrote articles in a periodical called *El Habanero* that asked ‘is it necessary, for a political change in the island of Cuba, to wait for the troops of Colombia or Mexico?’, answering ‘in my opinion, in that of many, yes’.<sup>95</sup> In 1827, Cuban officials had heard yet again that Bolívar would be arriving from Venezuela to liberate Cuba or Puerto Rico.<sup>96</sup> But the instability that was plaguing South America during this time would have attracted all his attention. Not only were there regional divisions in Gran Colombia, but increasingly racial divides as well. For instance in 1828, in the Cartagena region, a *pardo* named José Padilla had become the focus of a political controversy. Padilla, whose father was originally from Saint-Domingue, was an important commander who had come to prominence defending Cartagena from Spain. However, as fears and uncertainty prevailed about the possible roles for people of colour during the early years of nation-building, Padilla was passed over for promotion. He was an advocate of absolute equality, suffering, as all *pardos* did, from racial discrimination throughout his life.<sup>97</sup> His view won him local loyalty, and the public in the region made him the general commander. Shortly thereafter, a rumour spread through the region that someone overheard a person in the area saying ‘this would be a good night to finish off the whites’.<sup>98</sup> Padilla got tangled up in political machinations and the spectre of inciting an alleged race war, and was unable to defeat

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<sup>95</sup> *El Habanero*, Tomo I, No 5 January 1825, AGI, Estado, legajo 9, No 124.

<sup>96</sup> Franco Ymas to the Captain-General of Cuba, 9 April 1827, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 125, sig 52.

<sup>97</sup> Helg, *Liberty & Equality*, p.197.

<sup>98</sup> Lasso, ‘Haiti as an Image’, p.185.

his rivals, or explain himself to Bolívar. He was executed that October.<sup>99</sup> *Pardocracia* was still evident among nervous generals.

A Mexican agent, meanwhile, had been in touch with Boyer, looking to work together to 'assure the independence of the United States of Mexico' by launching an attack against Cuba, the bastion of Spanish imperialism. The Mexican president at the time, José María Bocanegra, justified the involvement, proposing that

The best way to prepare ourselves to defend our territory, in the case of an invasion, is in effect, to combine our forces with the co-operation of Colombia and Santo Domingo... Santo Domingo is the terror of Cuba: let us take advantage [of this], since the alliance that can be formed with Boyer in order to assume a threatening attitude, and to make all the Spaniards in Havana understand that if they invade us, they will be invaded; if they come to Mexico to end the anarchy, as they say, will go to Cuba to end the slavery of negroes.<sup>100</sup>

The news travelled quickly. The governor of Puerto Rico received a letter from St Thomas, an important stopping point for ships all over the Caribbean, saying that Haiti was getting ready to bring revolution to the two islands, information that was passed along to Cuba.<sup>101</sup> The US, fearing its interests might be threatened, waded into the dispute, writing to Colombia and Mexico to stop them from taking any action. US Secretary of State Clay said in a letter to Colombia that such an action would undermine European pressure on the Spanish crown to end any lingering wars in South America, and that, 'under these conditions, the President believes that a suspension, for a limited time, of the sailing of the expedition against Cuba or Porto Rico, which is understood to be fitting out at Carthagena, or of any other expedition which may be contemplated against either of those islands, by Colombia or Mexico

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<sup>99</sup> See Lasso, *Myths of Harmony*, pp. 115-128 for a more detailed account.

<sup>100</sup> José María Bocanegra, *Memorias para la historia de México independiente, 1822-1846*, vol. II, México, 1892, p.41 quoted in *Nueva España en el Circuncaribe*, pp.250-51.

<sup>101</sup> Díaz Soler, *Historia de la esclavitud*, p.215.

would have a salutary influence on the great work of peace'.<sup>102</sup> Such involvement would become a hallmark of US policy towards Cuba, and one that would last well beyond the period of rumours in the late 1820s. Martin Van Buren, future president but the then secretary of state (1829-1831), wrote to the US minister to Spain in 1830, saying:

The Government of the United States has always looked with the deepest interest upon the fate of those islands, but particularly of Cuba. Its geographical position which places it almost in sight of our southern shores ... Other considerations connected with a certain class of our population make it the interest of the southern section of the Union that no attempt should be made in that island to throw off the yoke of Spanish dependence, the first effect of which would be the sudden emancipation of a numerous slave population whose result could not but be very sensibly felt upon the adjacent shores of the United States.<sup>103</sup>

But the Spanish crown was out of step with public sentiment and issued a *real orden* saying the islands should stop worrying about Haiti now, and that if troops were needed for extra support they would be sent out.<sup>104</sup> But of course, they anxiety did not go away. The rumour mill was fed even more grist when the Spanish ambassador in London reported that an attack on Manilla which Mexico was apparently plotting was actually meant to be a cover for an attempt to free Cuba.<sup>105</sup>

However, despite the decades of paranoia, Haiti did not invade Cuba or Puerto Rico, it had not spread abolition anywhere except next door, and it was not the igniter of race wars in the new Latin American states. Instead, it had to contend with constant threat of invasion itself until 1825; poverty; political fighting and fragile peaces; as

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<sup>102</sup> Henry Clay to José María Salazar, 20 December 1825, AGI, Estado, legajo 105, No 14.

<sup>103</sup> Martin Van Buren to Cornelius P. Van Ness, Washington, 2 October 1829, in *Diplomatic Correspondence*, p.185.

<sup>104</sup> *Real Orden*, 10 September 1830, ANC, Asuntos Políticos, legajo 35, sig 13.

<sup>105</sup> Conde de la Alcudia to Manuel González Salmón, 22 August 1828, AGI, Estado, legajo 96, No 108.

well as being ignored or pushed away by most of the international community. If the fear of Haiti was in any way real in the 1820s, it was only in the fevered imaginations of those whose worst nightmare was to lose life and livelihood in a race war. That these groups included Cuban and Puerto Rican planters is not surprising, nor that the US felt a relationship was too much of a risk for stability in the southern states, but it was a revelation for Haitians that the type of equality and independence espoused by Latin American leaders did not only not include them, but it apparently failed to encompass anyone of African origin. How this was met by free people of colour around the region is hard to know, though incidents like the Padilla episode in Colombia, and the continued presence of free people of colour in conspiracies and plots in Cuba and Puerto Rico attests to the almost certain anger and disappointment.

At the same time, the continued success of Haiti – inasmuch as it remained a republic – meant that its potential could be used by Spanish officials in Cuba and Puerto Rico to suppress people as well as create new powers, as demonstrated by both Vives and Torre. They had a lot of interests at stake. Not only did they feel that had to ward off possible incursions by the US, they had to make sure rebel influences from the American republics did not overturn their social order. At the same time, they watched Spain's liberal experiment fail, and the high cost of those battles, which saw the country go deeper into debt and spend much of the nineteenth century in civil war. Even for the planters, whose wealth perhaps proved some comfort when it became clear that they would get little say in their own governance. With the two periods of reform over, and the return of a more determined crown and officials, the relations between Spain and Cuba's elites would begin to take a very different form, with a small fissure growing into a giant split. The pulse for independence would still continue to beat, and over the course of the next eighty years, many Cubans became engaged in that struggle. Likewise for Puerto Rico, the question of independence would return many times, while social control and attempts to suppress would-be republicans would mount.

Within the span of fifty years, the colonial outposts of Cuba and Puerto Rico saw their fortunes change dramatically. Alongside this was larger shifts in the Latin American and Atlantic worlds. The 1820s were a critical juncture in this. Staying loyal where others had left, these two islands were rewarded with the protection of the crown, something they increasingly felt was needed to contend with the racial imbalance internally and the external threat of invasion from republicans or Haiti, lest they suffer the same fate as Santo Domingo, taken under Haitian control, as their slave populations began to rise.

The 1820s was in many ways a decade where many uncertain aspects of the previous 20 years fell into place, if only temporarily. The lines were re-drawn, and Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines stood behind theirs. Fear had a large part to play in this, as it often does in times of uncertainty, but what makes this period significant is that many strands came together: racial fears, republicanism, economic growth, the rise of US power. It is also useful to see how this fear of Haiti manifested itself in the new republics as well, showing how Haiti had become a symbol of a type of liberation that even the new republics found threatening. The rumours of race war prompted by Haitian involvement in Gran Colombia meant that anyone considering independence in Cuba or Puerto Rico had to factor in the possibility that despite all their efforts, a Saint-Domingue-style uprising could very well happen. This did not stop the slaves arriving, just as the lack of any such race war did not extinguish this ongoing fear of Haiti, or quell the spirit of independence. But the result of the decade was the entrenching of attitudes around the region.

### *Conclusion*

This chapter illustrated how this decade was a critical juncture between the many strands of the other chapters – racial fears, republicanism, the fall of Spain and the return of peninsular liberalism, the spectre of repression in Cuba and Puerto Rico, and



how they coalesced during this time, firming up relationships that would continue for decades. The idea of Haiti, too, became more entrenched, its reputation renewed by fears in the new republics that black rule was a possibility. Within Cuba and Puerto Rico the concern was also very present – despite the assurances of Arango that a Saint-Domingue uprising could not happen in Cuba, the racial balance offered a potentially different version of events. More widely, this chapter has illustrated the growing influence of US power, and the changing nature of international diplomacy and geopolitics, with Spain falling behind in Europe and the world. The revolutionary earthquakes that had struck the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Atlantic world – resulting in US independence, Haiti's slave rebellion, and Bolívar's Gran Colombia – had stopped by this point, with new alignments in the political fault lines. For Cuba and Puerto Rico, little more would shift for decades, as they left this period of transition in the same place they had started, though now they were not only richer, but also the centre of Spain's diminished imperial world.

### *Conclusion*

The ‘fear’ of Haiti in the Spanish Caribbean – of its people, of its potential – was far broader and more complex than it might seem at first sight. It was not just about slave rebellions but about the larger social order; there was no static fear, but anxiety was constantly in flux, relative to changing circumstances. The very nature of Spain’s colonial project in itself was inevitably laden with threats. From the earliest days of the empire the dangers were everywhere: the sea passage between Iberia and the New World; the establishment of colonies in tropical climates; the possibility of plunder on the ocean; the relations with the indigenous people. But by the eighteenth century, these perils had largely disappeared, though plunder and disease remained constant fixtures of *criollo* life. In addition there were social concerns that arose as generations of Spaniards were born in the colonies, giving rise to complicated identities and relationships to people in the peninsula. And with presence of slave labour, and the rising numbers of free people of colour, there was a racial aspect to these changes as well, and a growing need to implement a racialised social order, one that could put slaves at the bottom and keep them there.

However, with the advent of the the Haitian Revolution, a new kind of fear was brought not only to the neighbouring Spanish islands, but to the entire region, as the French Revolution that had preceded it brought to Spain. Although this thesis focused on the Spanish Caribbean, the British and remaining French islands were also in similar states of alert and panic between 1791 and 1804. At once the slave rebellion in Saint-Domingue represented a threat to the social racial order in a broad sense, but also, as this thesis has shown, it created a serious predicament for the Spanish economic project that had come to life under the Bourbons. Convinced of the value of agricultural goods, Carlos III listened to his advisors and granted concessions, giving planters the incentive they needed to expand their operations. This received an unexpected boost when Saint-Domingue descended into chaos by allowing Cuba to pick up much of the sugar business, but also through the French planters who fled to

the island and were able to bring their capital and advanced technologies with them. This not only helped the sugar trade, but also stimulated coffee production in Cuba and Puerto Rico. The rise of the sugar plantations on those two islands coincided with the advent of the republican age in the Americas, as embodied by the US and then the former slaves of Haiti and later Spanish America. This combination provoked not only racialised fears about slave uprisings, but the potential loss of the islands further bound Spain to them in their *pacto colonial*.<sup>1</sup>

Santo Domingo, however, fell outside the boundaries of this arrangement, and in many ways suffered an ‘unspoken’ fate – rule by former slaves. Santo Domingo showed the mirror image of the colonial pact: lingering, isolated, and poor. From a perspective that encompasses all three Spanish islands, this particular case illustrates a different side to this story of Haiti in the Caribbean. The example of Santo Domingo shows two things. First of all, that its experience could not be to the other territories anything other than a frightening example of what might happen to them. Yet the other side of this was the reality and longevity – 22 years – of the Haitian-Dominican relationship. The botched attempt at independence in 1821, coming little more than a decade after a successful fight to become once again a Spanish colony, illustrates the contradiction that was very much part of the Caribbean world. Amid all this, however, the real Haiti was in no way capable of doing what was expected of it, yet Spanish colonial officials were constantly braced for attack. Indeed, Haiti was more concerned with protecting itself – hence the high number of men in its military and its perpetual concern about European invasion. The idea of Haiti was an emotional canvas on which nervous officials and elites drew out their ideas, expressing their anxieties, not only about race but also the changing economic fortunes of the colonial sphere, and larger realignments of Europe and the Atlantic world. The threats had changed – the Arawaks and Taínos that the first Spaniards had encountered on the island had now been replaced by free people of colour; unquestionable royalism had given way to

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<sup>1</sup> Josep Maria Fradera, *Colonias para después de un imperio* (Barcelona, 2005), p.56

passionate republicanism. One of the ways anxiety about these changes could be articulated was by placing them on Haiti. It follows, then, that at moments of great tension – for instance around the time of the 1812 abolition debates, or of the end of the republican wars some 20 years later – Cuba and Puerto Rico received constant notice of Haitian attack, of slave revolts, of looming chaos.

A sense of security for the elites in Cuba and Puerto Rico meant they had to live among a climate of oppression; and inevitably it was the people of colour who suffered this the most under these regimes. Beaten, imprisoned, and made scapegoats for unrest – slaves and free people of colour bore the brunt of colonial anxiety. But that is not to say that whites were excluded. For instance, the treatment of French refugees in Cuba provides an example of the extent of anxiety. Initially wary of their republican ideals, as well as the thoughts and possible actions of the slaves they brought with them, they were given a wary welcome – one that by 1808 had run out. In Cuba, the mechanics of the state even set up a *junta* to find and regulate these immigrants, and ultimately to drive most of them elsewhere into the Caribbean world when Napoleon invaded Spain. And with the advent of independence movements, whites became further implicated in usurping stability, and punished for it.

On the other hand, the constant proliferation of orders, proclamations, testimonies, and arrests which fill up archival *legajos* indicate that the ‘order’ that Spanish officials tried to maintain was fragile. Perhaps Miguel de la Torre would not have felt the need to confiscate copies of Voltaire’s writings in 1823 if this had not been the case. The tools of maintaining public order were well-honed by the 1820s, and officials well-practiced in suppressing slave plots could now turn to uncovering republican plans. And while the question of whether or not leaving the Spanish fold would have tipped the islands into a race war is unknowable, at the time it was not even a question but a certainty, hence the wider interest in Cuba’s future, as expressed by the US presidents. For the new republics of Latin America, the spectre of Haiti loomed, as Simón Bolívar and other generals articulated their ideas about how to

build a nation and what role *pardos* should play, citing the island as dangerous example.

What this thesis has sought to show is how fear endured in the Caribbean: the planters fearing the French in 1791 were very different to those who did not want a Bolivarian intervention in Cuba. Likewise, for colonial authorities, anxiety about peninsular events gradually diminished as *juntas* across Latin America asserted their own authority. Moreover, it is not surprising that these ideas became conflated in the official mind, and often tagged to Haiti. *Criollos* felt that they had no option but to remain loyal to the crown. In many ways Floridablanca's initial concerns were well-founded – liberty needed to be avoided at any cost. Not only had it caused decades of upheaval in France, but it had also cost the French their most valuable colony. He was aware of the danger of the 'contagion' of liberty and lived long enough to see its first manifestations in Spain in 1808. He died before he could witness the extent to which these forces, combined with the frustrations of *criollo* elites, would bring about the end of Spanish rule.

Colonial control lasted in Puerto Rico and Cuba until 1898. The predictions of physiocratic thinkers had come true, and agriculture flourished. On the back of this so had other aspects of the economy, and Cuba even began to bring in Chinese indentured labour in 1847.<sup>2</sup> Yet abolition did not come until later – 1873 for Puerto Rico and 1886 for Cuba. Spain had finally abolished the slave trade in 1867, some 46 years after its initial pledge to Great Britain. Though, of course, there was a nearly 30-year gap in the British colonies between the end of the slave trade and the ending of slavery. But after the practice of enslaved labour had ended in Jamaica, Barbados, and Trinidad, Cuba in the period from 1830 to 1860 saw an enormous influx of African slaves. More than 350,000 people were imported into Cuba from 1830 to 1860, while

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<sup>2</sup> Rebecca J. Scott, *Slave Emancipation in Cuba: The Transition to Free Labor, 1860-1899* (Princeton, 1992), p.29

in Puerto Rico there were 10,250. After 1860 the numbers dropped significantly, with the years 1860 to 1866 seeing around 55,000 slaves imported to Cuba.<sup>3</sup>

The themes explored in this work would come up repeatedly in the years that followed. An outbreak of rebellions in Cuba in 1843 had prompted the colonial authorities to react with previously unseen levels of repression in what became known as the 'year of the lash' in 1844. More broadly, the series of events known as 'La Escalera' saw the island's officials mount a brutal attack on people of colour or any whites accused of being part of a 'conspiracy'. In the crackdown, thousands were killed or beaten.<sup>4</sup> The well-honed techniques of repression were once again displayed in full force. These events were followed a few years later by the twin threats of 'Africanisation' and annexation to the US.<sup>5</sup> The United States once again entered the picture, as southern landowners were also feeling under threat. Plans were drawn up for a filibustering expedition to Cuba with the aim of putting the island under US control after Spain refused President Franklin Pierce's offer to buy it.<sup>6</sup> In the end, Cuba remained under Spain's control. In Puerto Rico, similar fears saw the introduction in 1848 of a *bando contra la raza africana* which was aimed at the policing of all people of colour, as the threat of slave insurrection persisted.<sup>7</sup>

Eventually, it became clear there was no other option than to introduce some form of gradual emancipation once Spain had finally agreed to end the slave trade. The Moret law, which was approved by the Cortes in 1870, stipulated that children of slaves were to be free, and attempted to limit corporal punishment of slaves, as well

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<sup>3</sup> See Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison, 1969), pp.40-44.

<sup>4</sup> Robert L Paquette, *Sugar is Made With Blood: The Conspiracy of La Escalera and the Conflict Between Empires Over Slavery in Cuba* (Middletown, 1988).

<sup>5</sup> C. Stanley Urban, 'The Africanization of Cuba Scare, 1853-1855', *Hispanic American Historical Review* 37, No 1 (1957), p.34.

<sup>6</sup> Leslie Bethell, *Cuba: A Short History* (Cambridge, 1993), pp.12-13. US President James Polk tried to buy the island in 1848 as well.

<sup>7</sup> Francisco A Scarano, *Sugar and Slavery in Puerto Rico: The Plantation Economy of Ponce, 1800-1850* (Madison, 1984), p.166.

as freeing anyone who managed to reach the age of 60. Unsurprisingly, slave owners sought to delay its implementation for a couple of years. These changes had coincided with the most valuable sugar crops to date – from 1856-65 the mean annual value of sugar output was nearly \$70 million.<sup>8</sup>

The issue of independence, of course, did not go away either. In 1868, a *criollo* conspiracy in Puerto Rico turned into a small, though unsuccessful, struggle known as the *Grito de Lares*. In Cuba, too, anger at the colonial regime was growing, and later that year a battle in the East began that would turn into the Ten Years War, which, like events in Puerto Rico, would be unsuccessful in securing independence, but it would open the way to later struggles. Some 20 years after the end of that war, Spain's imperial chapter came to its conclusion, when its defeat in the Spanish-American war meant the loss of its remaining colonies, and US control.

Santo Domingo, meanwhile, also experienced its fair share of drama. It lingered under Haitian rule until 1844, when power struggles caused Boyer to lose control of the island. Dominicans used the opportunity to organise an independence struggle via a secret society known as *la trinitaria*, which was successful and resulted in the establishment of the República Dominicana. The experiment was initially somewhat short-lived, as there was another attempt to deliver the island into Spain's protection in the 1860s. Pedro Santana struck a deal to restore the island to Spain in 1861, but this time there was little appetite for a return to 1809. Resistance mounted, and resulted in a war that lasted until 1865, but one in which the supporters of independence were victorious.

As for Haiti, it continued to linger. A British missionary, John Candler, visited the island in 1841, touring many of its port cities. He noted that in 1838-39 the value of coffee on the island was £834,055, tobacco £51,222, but sugar was not even listed

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<sup>8</sup> Davis Eltis, *Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (Oxford, 1987), p.284.

in the records he had seen.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, output had dropped from 2.5 million pounds in 1820 to around 6,000 pounds in 1842.<sup>10</sup> He was struck by the potential of the island in its trade with Britain and the US but noted,

It is greatly to be lamented, that the commerce of Hayti, large as it is by comparison with that of many other nations, should remain so limited and stationary as it has done. Were the industry of the people brought properly to bear upon the soil, and were the juice of the sugar-cane manufactured into sugar for exportation, instead of being converted into a deleterious spirit which injures and degrades the consumers, the exchangeable products of the country might in a few years be multiplied five-fold.<sup>11</sup>

In the white mind, Haiti still had power, even in the age of abolition, except now it was a symbol of racial war. A striking example is the case of the Morant Bay rebellion in Jamaica in 1865 – well after the end of slavery on the island. A rebellion broke out in the East of the island, over long-held grievances which came to a head over the unfair jailing of a black man who had been squatting on land. It was brutally suppressed – nearly 500 people were killed, even more flogged, and houses burnt down. Such retaliation prompted calls in Britain for an inquiry into Governor Eyre's actions. Eyre maintained that he was keeping order and had taken necessary actions to prevent a race riot. The events also prompted intense public debate began between intellectuals John Stuart Mill and Thomas Carlyle. Carlyle backed Eyre, which was not surprising, as he was opposed to black resistance. In his infamous article, *The Nigger Question*, he mentioned Haiti, saying:

‘Or alas, let him [a free black] look across to Haiti, and trace a far sterner prophecy! Let him, by his ugliness, idleness, rebellion, banish all White men from the West Indies, and make it all one Haiti, – with little or no sugar growing, black Peter exterminating black Paul, and where a garden of the

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<sup>9</sup> John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti: With Its Condition, Resources, and Prospects* (London, 1842), p.105.

<sup>10</sup> David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour and National Independence in Haiti*, Warwick University Caribbean Studies (London, 1996), p.69.

<sup>11</sup> John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, p.113.



Hesperides might be, nothing but a tropical dog-kennel and pestiferous jungle ...'<sup>12</sup>

As for Eyre, his defence of the suppression was that indeed he was saving the colony from a race war. He told the committee how the rioters were 'determined to make Jamaica a second Haiti'.<sup>13</sup>

The idea of Haiti ran far and wide, and took on myriad meanings. The impact of the Haiti Revolution turned out to be more dynamic and long-lasting than has been recognised. As Gwendolyn Midlo Hall pointed out, 'Colonial officials were fairly competent comparative historians, and avidly sought to learn the lessons of the Haitian Revolution to prevent a repetition of similar scenes on their own soil. The archives are full of admonitions and suggestions about how to prevent another Santo Domingo'.<sup>14</sup> But it in many ways was also a success. As well as inspiring fear, it also brought hope to the oppressed and enslaved, and for ever altered the Caribbean. Although the republic was plagued with internal divisions and much poverty, it persisted in its freedom. It is perhaps an irony however, that the liberty of Haiti allowed for the continuation of colonial rule for Cuba and Puerto Rico. The spectre of slave revolts, coupled with the onset of 'second slavery', ultimately resulted in a successful Caribbean reconfiguration for the Spanish crown and *criollo* elites, bringing wealth to the islands, as well as to the Spain – though much of that would be spent on fighting during Spain's turbulent nineteenth century in the Carlist Wars that broke out between 1833 and 1872. The impact of the Haitian Revolution on the Hispanic Caribbean was profound, shaping the historical trajectories of all three

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<sup>12</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question*, (London, 1853), p.22.

<sup>13</sup> Anti-Slavery Reporter, London, 1865; see also Gad Heuman, *The Killing Time: The Morant Bay Rebellion in Jamaica*, (London, 1994); B. A. Knox, 'The British Government and the Governor Eyre Controversy, 1865-1875', *The Historical Journal* 19, No 4 (1976), pp. 877-900.; Gillian Workman, "Thomas Carlyle and the Governor Eyre Controversy: An Account With Some New Material," *Victorian Studies* XVIII (1974), pp. 77-102.

<sup>14</sup> Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Social Control in Slave Plantation Societies: A Comparison of St. Domingue and Cuba*, (Baton Rouge, 1996), p.125.

islands, as well as the metropole. Examining it, moreover, has provided an insight into the role and power of fear in the nineteenth-century colonial world, and how racialised anxieties were about far more than race. Slavery, abolition, republicanism, and colonialism were all factors in the emotional mix, giving rise to repression and resistance.

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