

TREINTA AÑOS EN LA HISTORIOGRAFÍA DE LA REVOLUCIÓN HAITIANA

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RÉSUMÉ

L'auteur présente une ample mise au point de l'historiographie contemporaine relative à la révolution haïtienne couvrant les thèmes et phases suivants: la société coloniale, les germes de la rebellion, l'insurrection de 1791-1793, Toussaint Louverture et le contexte international. Bien que les apports les plus importants de cette période soient parus dans des articles et œuvres spécialisés, il convient de souligner trois œuvres de caractère général: celle de Thomas Ott, *The Haitian Revolution*, les deux biographies de Toussaint Louverture, de Pierre Pluchon et celle de Carolyn Fick, *The making of Haïti*. Ce travail établit qu'en dépit du temps écoulé depuis la première édition de *Black Jacobins* (de C. L. R. James, publié en 1938), l'interprétation de cet auteur demeure encore la plus marquante relativement à la période considérée.

SAMENVATTING

De auteur analyseert de historiografie van de laatste dertig jaar over de Haitiaanse revolutie. Hij doet dit aan de hand van de volgende themes, de koloniale maatschappij, de voorbereiding en de ontwikkeling van de opstand van 1791-1793, Toussaint Louverture en de internationale context. Hoewel de meest belangrijke bijdragen van deze periode waren verschenen in wetenschappelijke tijdschriften en gespecialiseerde publikaties, drie algemene werken zijn van groot belang: *The Haitian Revolution* van Thomas Ott, de twee biografieën van Toussaint Louverture door Pierre Pluchon en *The making of Haiti* van Carolyn Fick. Volgens de auteur blijft *The Black Jacobins* van C. L. R. James, voor het eerst gepubliceerd in 1938, het meest invloedrijke werk, ook in de laatste dertig jaar.

EXAMEN DE LIBROS

THIRTY YEARS OF HAITIAN REVOLUTION HISTORIOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT

The author offers an overview of the last thirty years of historiography on the Haitian Revolution. It is organized under the following general headings: Colonial Society, the Seeds of Rebellion, the Insurrection of 1791-1793, Toussaint Louverture, and International Dimensions. During these thirty years, Cyril James's *The Black Jacobins*, first published in 1938, has remained the leading general interpretation of the revolution have appeared in specialist articles and books. Three general histories, however, have made their mark. These are Thomas Ott's *The Haitian Revolution*, Pierre Pluchon's biographies of Toussaint Louverture, and Carolyn Fick's *The making of Haiti*.

RESUMEN

El autor presenta un amplio balance de la historiografía contemporánea acerca de la Revolución Haitiana. Cubre los temas y fases siguientes: sociedad colonial, las semillas de la rebelión, la insurrección de 1791-1793, Toussaint Louverture y el contexto internacional. Aunque las aportaciones más importantes de este periodo han aparecido en artículos y en obras especializadas, destacan tres obras generales: la de Thomas Ott, *The Haitian Revolution*, las dos biografías de Toussaint Louverture escritas por Pierre Pluchon, y la de Carolyn Fick, *The making of Haiti*. El trabajo asienta que no obstante el tiempo transcurrido desde la primera edición de *The Black Jacobins* (de C. L. R. James, publicado en 1938), la interpretación de este autor permanece aún como la más influyente durante el periodo referido.

Cyril James's *The Black Jacobins* has continued during the last three decades to dominate study of the Haitian Revolution. In 1968 already thirty years old, the book was reissued in a second edition, its prestige enhanced by the wave of decolonization that it had predicted

and by the onset of the new social history. Thirty years later, its reputation is even stronger, boosted by the apotheosis of James himself. The *Black Jacobins* is now firmly ensconced as a college text in Anglophone countries; a third edition appeared in 1980; a German edition in 1984 and, in 1983, a new French edition (which unlike the first French edition of 1949, managed to get right both the author's name and place of origin) was also published.

Nevertheless, though James's *chef d'œuvre* continues to hold its own as the classic interpretation of the Haitian Revolution, a great deal of significant scholarship has appeared in the last three decades. We now know very much more about the colony of Saint Domingue and its dramatic demise than we knew in 1968 or 1938. Many historical findings on the subject have come from works that treat more localized themes than the revolution as a whole. Three general histories, however, have made their mark as interpretive overviews which rival that of *The Black Jacobins*. These are Thomas Ott's *The Haitian Revolution*, Pierre Pluchon's biographies of Toussaint Louverture (1979, 1989), and Carolyn Fick's *The Making of Haiti* (1990).¹

I will briefly examine the contributions of these and other works under five thematic headings: Colonial Society, the Seeds of Rebellion, the Insurrection of 1791-1793, Toussaint Louverture, and International Dimensions.²

COLONIAL SOCIETY

Much has been uncovered concerning the three main sectors of colonial society (whites, the enslaved, and free coloreds). In the last thirty years, the most influential writer on white society has been Charles Frostin (1972, 1975). His massive thesis, *Histoire de l'autonomisme colon*, abridged as *Les Révoltes blanches*, displays in a narrative of the entire prerevolutionary period a more holistic vision of white society than the fractured portrait presented in the works of Gabriel Debien (1974). Developing Debien's work on *l'esprit colon*, Frostin emphasizes secessionist and subversive tendencies among Saint Domingue's planter class and *petits*

¹ The second Pluchon biography (1989) is an expansion of the first with some minor corrections.

² A more detailed critique of some of these works can be found in Geggus (1994, 1983) and reviews in *Time Literary Supplement* (Dec., 1980), 1381, *Histoire Sociale* 45 (May, 1990), 201-203, and *Hispanic American Historical Review* 71 (1991), 385.

blancs. In a provocative formulation, he presents the white population as the most rebellious sector of Saint Domingue society. Frostin thus stresses continuity rather than change in the colonists' turbulent reaction to the French Revolution.

In the study of slavery, Gabriel Debien's *Les esclaves aux Antilles françaises* was a landmark when it was published in 1974, in that it summed up much of that prolific scholar's work of the previous forty years. Whereas Cyril James relies for his picture of plantation society on the works of Vaissière and Peytraud, published around the beginning of the century, Debien argues that patient analysis of plantation records is essential to get beyond the propagandist images bequeathed by planters and abolitionists. The book's last chapter, and its most original, examines the question of whether the conditions of slave life saw improvement in the final years before the slave insurrection of 1791; typical of its author, it reaches no firm conclusion. Debien's preferred genre is the case study, and he begins his *magnum opus* warning that attempts at synthesis would be premature. However, he also lists details of more than 100 manuscript collections to guide future work.

Since then, the assembly and analysis of primary data on slave society that Debien began has accelerated and we now have a far more detailed and accurate picture of the population that made the Haitian Revolution. Structural analysis does not hold the key to all questions of historical causation, but without this type of research it is difficult to discuss the quality of slave life, and impossible to compare different slave societies or different parts of Saint Domingue. There is still very little known about the demographic characteristics of slave populations (Geggus, 1985a). However, it is now apparent that the composition of the slave population varied substantially between the colony's three provinces and between its highland and lowland zones, and that the great uprising of 1791 broke out in the most creolized part of Saint Domingue (Geggus, 1993a). The collation of estate inventories reveals an occupational hierarchy on the plantations, which by the 1780s was dominated by a creole elite that monopolized the most prestigious posts. At the same time, the massive compilation of slave trade data by Mettas and Daget (1978) has shown that Africans, and particularly African males, had never been imported in such large numbers as in the final year before the revolt, and especially in the area where it took place (Geggus, 1990a).

The difficult relationship between leadership and masses is an important theme in James's *Black Jacobins*. Set in the context of creole/African

relations, and the class structure of the slave community, this political cleavage takes on an added dimension. In two recent books, Gérard Barthélemy (1989, 1996) builds the contrast *bossall/créole* into a paradigm for understanding all Haitian history.

Such a formulation of course downplays the distinction slave/free, and the significance of the free colored sector in colonial society. Knowledge of Saint Domingue's free coloreds, invariably the least-studied part of slave societies, has been greatly advanced in recent years, primarily by John Garrigus (1988; 1993, 233-263; 1992, 109-125; 1996).³ Of particular relevance here is Garrigus's exploration of a growing sense of "American" identity among this group, and his brilliant reworking of the significance of their participation in the American Revolution. Less successful, though containing solid research, is Stewart King's (1997) attempt to distinguish "military" and "civilian" castes within the free colored sector.

THE SEEDS OF REBELLION

Historians of the Haitian Revolution could be grouped according to the relative weight they give to indigenous factors of causation (notably *marronage* and voodoo) versus external influences (the French Revolution, antislavery). Haitian nationalist historians stress the continuity of slave resistance between the colonial and revolutionary periods. They argue that the black revolution that began in 1791 was an extension of the age-old activities of fugitive slaves (known as *marronage*), which, they claim, grew steadily more threatening in the later eighteenth century. Jean Fouchard's (1972) *Les marrons de la liberté* has become the classic work in this vein. Haitian writers generally link *marronage* and voodoo, and present the latter as an intrinsically revolutionary vehicle.⁴ For some exponents of the argument, such as Willy Appollon (1972), the French Revolution becomes almost irrelevant to the Haitian Revolution; indigenous factors explain all. Hénoch Trouillot's (1970) *Introduction à une histoire du voodoo* takes a similar approach but, rather than simply argue for an increasing uniformity in the religious lives of slaves that promoted

³ See also, Claude Auguste's series of articles on André Rigaud in *Revue de la Société Haïtienne d'Histoire* (1996-1998).

⁴ Evidence that links voodoo's growth to maroonage is extremely limited. A rare example can be found by Heusch (1989).

political cohesion, he takes a more nuanced view and also notes that religious fragmentation continues into the national period. European critics, who have adopted an empirical approach to these issues, claim the *marronage*/voodoo thesis has been grounded more often in a naive romanticism or a defensive nationalism than in hard evidence. Pierre Pluchon's (1987) *Voudou, sorciers, empoisonneurs*, for example, breaks new ground in its investigation of the charismatic sorcerer Makandal, who was executed in 1758, by going back to the original trial records (Debien, 1974, ch. 19; Hoffman, 1987; Geggus, 1990b, 1991). Expatriate Haitian social scientists like Leslie Manigat (1977), Laënnec Hurbon (1995), Michel Laguerre (1989), have in varying degrees also adopted critical stances toward the black nationalist position developed by their predecessors, but even so, end up displaying a good deal of solidarity on the issue; their approach, moreover, is not altogether dissimilar to the nationalist one.⁵

Although part of Cyril James's originality is to emphasize black agency and colonial class conflict, he nonetheless regarded the French Revolutionary crisis as an essential cause of the Haitian Revolution. Of his successors, Thomas Ott (1973) and Pierre Pluchon (1979, 1989) lean much more toward presenting the black revolution as a by-product of the revolutionary crisis in France. Carolyn Fick's (1990) *The making of Haiti*, on the other hand, may be read as an attempt to combine James's respect for the *conjuncture* of the French Revolution with the Haitian emphasis on the *longue durée*. The book lies not only in the Marxian tradition of *The Black Jacobins*, but gives us a much better-documented, though significantly scaled-down, version of the *thèse haïtienne*. Dr. Fick notes that before 1791, armed revolts had been extremely rare in Saint Domingue, and she accepts that the leaders of the slave revolution were not, as often claimed, leaders of maroon bands. She also obliquely acknowledges that large maroon communities were more prevalent in other colonies, and in general she avoids untenable claims about their increasing activism or participation in the revolution. Instead attention is directed toward the individual, short-term cases of slave absenteeism usually called *petit marronage*. Fick's contention is that such clandestine movements played an important role in the organization of the 1791

⁵ In *Ti difé boulé sou istoua Ayiti*, Trouillot (1977) gives great weight to the ideological impact of the French Revolution on slaves. See also: Michel-Rolph Trouillot's review of *Les marrons de la liberté* in *New West Indian Guide*, 1982, No. 56, 180-182.

slave insurrection. Robin Blackburn (1988, 208), in *The overthrow of colonial slavery*, also suggests that *petit marronage* helped prepare for revolution. Although empiricist critics offer some support for such a position, they suggest that the revolutionary mobilization depended little on maroonage or voodoo, and that it was organized from within the system rather than from outside it (Geggus, 1994, 152-154).

THE INSURRECTIONS OF 1791-1793

Despite other interpretive differences, historians of all schools have generally accorded the famous Bois Caïman voodoo ceremony a special role in launching the slave uprising of 1791. Léon-François Hoffmann (1990) stirred up considerable controversy, therefore, when he argued that the ceremony in fact never occurred. According to this specialist in Haitian literature, it was a myth elaborated in the nineteenth century by romantic abolitionists, disdainful colonists, and spokesmen of the Haitian elite spokesmen.⁶ West Africa historian Robin Law (1997) has recently put forward a valuable perspective on the ceremony. Responding to recent debates about the respective contributions of Central and West Africans to the creation of Haitian voodoo, he sets aside interpretations of the Bois Caïman ceremony that link it to Kongo culture and rehabilitates an older thesis that claims it as a Dahomean blood pact. At issue here is not cultural antiquarianism, but rather the fact that "Congo" slaves became increasingly numerous in the second half of the eighteenth century.

Whatever their influence on the Bois Caïman ceremony, it is now clear that Central Africans constituted nearly half of the Africans in revolutionary Saint Domingue and a clear majority in the North Province. In this light the work of another African historian, Kongo specialist John Thornton (1993a; 1993b) acquires special relevance. Thornton argues that prisoners of war transported from the disintegrating kingdom of Kongo supplied the Haitian Revolution with military skills that creole slaves lacked. Furthermore, his portrayal of Kongo ideologies buttresses the argument that the royalist rhetoric affected by many of the slave insurgents should perhaps be taken more seriously than it was by C. L. R. James.

Carolyn Fick's *The making of Haiti* (1990) seeks to recapture the view-

⁶ For a refutation of this argument, see Geggus (1992).

point of the mass of ordinary men and women who made the revolution. History told explicitly "from below," it aims to put the masses at the center of the political narrative. Here she goes much further than C. L. R. James, who, while acknowledging the political agency of common folk, devotes most of his attention to their main leaders and to wider economic and political forces, as does Pierre Pluchon. In Dr. Fick's study, Toussaint, Dessalines, and Rigaud are demoted, and the people they sought to represent or dominate are brought to the fore. Making vivid use of the American newspaper accounts first exploited by Thomas Ott (1973), Fick does more than any previous historian to unravel the confused chronology of the early days of the great insurrection in the northern plain. I would argue, however, that, she overlooks the full scope of the rebels' plan out of a desire to emphasize its acute degree of no common organization (Geggus, 1992, 41-57). Unlike Ott (1973) and Pluchon (1979, 1989), though like Torcuato di Tella (1984) and Gérard Laurent (1979), Fick accepts contemporary claims that white counterrevolutionaries were involved in fomenting the insurrection.

The particular originality, however, of *The making of Haiti* is its concentration on events in Saint Domingue's neglected south province. The south is especially interesting, because during the revolution it quickly became a bastion of free colored power, and because there the forced labor regime that followed slavery's abolition in 1793 functioned longest. Neither slave-free colored relations nor the revolutionary plantation regime has received much scholarly attention. Fick sheds light on the interplay between free colored rule, plantation labor, and a grass roots militancy that rejected but had to come to terms with both. Bernard Foubert's (1990) massive dissertation on the Labor de plantations in the plain of Les Cayes also deserves mention in this respect. Besides representing a landmark in the genre of plantation studies pioneered by Debien (1974), it provides a richly-detailed view of the slow decomposition of colonial society in the south.

Two works focusing on these early years of the Haitian Revolution stand out for their ample citations of primary materials. For a work published in Haiti, Gérard Laurent's (1979) *Quand les chaines volent en éclats* is unusual in this respect. Jacques Thibau's (1989) *Le temps de Saint-Domingue* contains a particularly interesting selection of materials, whose arrangement reflects the author's television background. Unfortunately, occasional poetic license into the text detracts from the book's historical value.

TOUSSAINT LOUVERTURE

One of the burning questions regarding the outbreak of the slave insurrection has always been whether Toussaint Louverture, later to dominate the revolution, was initially involved or not. "It is proved that Toussaint Louverture was the principal organizer," Jean Fouchard (n.d., 32) declared in a pamphlet published in the 1970s, but he did not offer any evidence. An 1801 memoir by the French general Kerverseau, which first elaborated the story, has recently been published, but its editor Pierre Plunchon believes the story a rumor concocted by Toussaint himself.⁷ The question remains open.

Pluchon's main study of the revolution, which has appeared in two versions, takes the form of a biography of Toussaint Louverture. In a field characterized by biography and romantic enthusiasm, Pluchon's work stands out for its hard-nosed lack of idealism. He displays little admiration for either Toussaint Louverture or the Haitian or the French Revolution. A former director of the Institut Français in Haiti, such sympathy as he shows goes to the hapless French officials sent out to the colony that was slipping irrevocably beyond European control. Central to Pluchon's account is the discovery (made public in 1977) that Toussaint was not a slave when the revolution began but a freedman; for more than a decade, he had owned and rented both land and slaves.

This discovery, made by Gabriel Debien and Marie-Antoinette Menier (1977, 67-80), is probably the most important finding of the recent scholarship.⁸ It makes certain aspects of Toussaint Louverture's career easier to understand. His literacy, christianity, and sophistication compared to other slave leaders all seem less surprising if we know he had spent half his adult life as free man.

Pluchon uses this finding to recast Toussaint as "a man of the Ancien Régime." The black general's outlawing of voodoo, his limited revival of the slave trade, and determination to maintain the system of export agriculture using forced labor and corporal punishment-policies which cost him popular support were rooted in his prerevolutionary past as a

⁷ Spanish documents allow us to trace the story back to 1793, but its veracity remains uncertain.

⁸ The authors state Toussaint was freed in 1776 but this dating results from a confused reading of one of the documents they reproduce. He was evidently free earlier (Geggus, 1985b, 33).

man of property, a slaveowner.⁹ Toussaint's growing distance from the masses, which James was forced to treat as a character flaw, the hubris of a tragic hero moving toward his downfall, clearly had a social basis.¹⁰

Gabriel Debien (1978; 1983) also furthered the study of Toussaint when he discovered the extent of the black general's landholdings and, jointly with Pluchon, brought to light his subversion of a French attempt in 1799 to foment an insurrection in Jamaica.

Though this has done much to advance "pragmatic" against "idealist" visions of his statesmanship, Pluchon probably goes too far in his systematically cynical interpretation of all the key events in Toussaint Louverture's career. He ignores some key documents concerning the leader's commitment to the abolition of slavery, and clearly he has not had the last word on Louverture's switch of allegiance in 1794 from the proslavery Spanish to the abolitionist French republic (Geggus, 1978; Benot, 1988). Particularly original, however, in Pluchon's interpretation is his claim that Toussaint's support for the plantation economy did not extend to the plantations' white owners. He indeed invited them back to the colony, but few in fact regained possession of their estates. They were to be hostages to discourage a future French invasion. Most historians assume that the former slave envisaged a multi-racial Saint Domingue, if only because he valued the technical and managerial skills of the whites. In Pluchon's version, however, Toussaint is a black nationalist who represents the interests of a new black landowning class of military officers. His government, like its predecessors, is *raciste*. It is not faith in republican France that prevents Toussaint from declaring independence, but his reliance on United States trade and fear of a retaliatory embargo imposed by Washington-factors earlier stressed by Thomas Ott (1973, 119-120, 131-132).

The Napoleonic invasion of Saint Domingue in 1802 thus becomes a

⁹ The explanatory power of looking at Toussaint from this angle should not be exaggerated. Jean-Jacques Dessalines and Henri Christophe, both slaves until the revolution, followed similar policies as heads of state, whereas the freeborn Alexandre Pétion was less authoritarian.

¹⁰ James's choice of title was intended, I think, simply to draw a parallel between French and Haitian revolutionaries. However, identifying Toussaint Louverture with the Jacobins also suggests comparison between the relationship of the slave leadership and masses, on the one hand, and that of middle-class Jacobins and sansculotte workers, on the other. That this was not James's intention is evident in the following lines (3rd. ed., 286): "Robespierre's problem was inevitable, he was bourgeois, the masses were communist. But between Toussaint and his people there was no fundamental difference of outlook or aim."

last-ditch attempt to restore French rule rather than an exercise in vengeful megalomania. Pluchon's Napoleon is a pragmatist. Far from being one with the colonial lobby, he initially planned to cooperate with Toussaint, but was forced by the black governor's de facto independence to overthrow him. Pluchon stresses that, above all, Napoleon had no commitment to restore slavery, and decided to do so only belatedly, months after the Leclerc expedition had sailed. This radical piece of revisionism has been vigorously challenged by the Haitians Claude and Marcel Auguste, who see a determination to restore the *status quo* implicit from the beginning of Bonaparte's Policy (Claude and Marcel Auguste, 1985; Marcel Auguste, 1991, 99-100; Benot, 1992).¹¹ It remains a controversial topic.

INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS

The Auguste brothers have also mined Napoleonic archives to explore two quite unusual themes. One is the international participation (Dutch, Spanish, etc.) in the Napoleonic expedition of reconquest; the other concerns the individual odysseys of various figures deported from Saint Domingue to France during the later years of the revolution (Claude and Marcel Auguste, 1979, 1980). Future research on the colonial question in the French Revolution will be greatly facilitated by the appearance of two major documentary collections, one printed, the other on microfiche (*La Révolution française...*, 1968; Geggus, 1993b). The latter, which deals with both metropolitan and colonial events, compiles more than one hundred items, printed and manuscript, covering 20 000 pages of text.

While historians of the Haitian Revolution are divided as to their assessment of the French Revolution's impact on Saint Domingue, French Revolution scholars have traditionally accorded very little attention to colonial matters. Yves Benot's *La Révolution française et la fin des colonies* (1988) marks a notable departure in this respect. Like Robin Blackburn's two fine chapters on the Haitian Revolution in *The overthrow of colonial slavery* (1988, 161-264) Benot's work brings a new level of sophistication to examining the interaction between the two revolutions. Though both echo James's claims regarding working class sympathy for Caribbean slaves, Benot in particular deepens Aimé Césaire's (1962)

¹¹ C. L. R. James's interpretation was that the French government already had secretly determined to restore slavery but that only General Leclerc was informed.

earlier indictment of leading French radicals for their lack of interest in slavery and support for imperialism. Nevertheless, in exploring the popular press, he convincingly reconstructs the growth of antislavery sentiment beyond the elite *Amis des Noirs* and highlights the role of several neglected individuals whose interest in the colonies cannot be reduced to a pragmatic reaction to overseas events. A key discovery in this regard is the early, abolitionist *œuvre* of Léger-Félicité Sonthonax, the commissioner who unilaterally abolished slavery in Saint Domingue in 1793. Sonthonax has not only recently found his first biographer, but in 1990 a colloquium was devoted to his career; the proceedings are forthcoming (Stein, 1985; *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, 1993, 201, 108).

Apart from France, Spain was the colonial power that lost most (in Santo Domingo) but also gained most (in Cuba) as a result of the Haitian Revolution. Although Britain's five-year occupation of Saint Domingue has now been studied in depth (Geggus, 1982a), the even more disastrous Spanish intervention in the colony has so far received only episodic treatment. This is despite the fact that it included the Spanish government's curious experiment of recruiting as auxiliary troops most of the slave insurgents of 1791 (Sevilla Soler, 1980; Deive, 1989; Yacou, 1979; Geggus, 1995; Laurent-Ropa, 1993). The movement of refugees and prisoners from Saint Domingue to the Spanish colonies has been elucidated in a number of studies, as has the revolutions economic impact on them (Sanz Tapia, 1977; Deive, 1985; Yacou, 1987, 1991; Baralt, 1981; Moreno Friginals, 1978; Zeuske and Munford, 1991). The links between these movements and slave resistance in the Spanish Caribbean are disputed (Franco, 1974; Cordova Bello, 1967; Yacou, 1992, 1984; Andreu Ocariz, 1970; Geggus, 1997). Jane Landers (1997) has uncovered the last years of slave leader Georges Biassou's extraordinary career spent in exile in Spanish Florida.

The Saint Domingue diaspora in the British Caribbean and North America continues to be the subject of local or family studies. Paul Lachance's research is bringing a new level of sophistication to work on the Louisiana refugees. Yet there have been no studies comparable in range to Frances Child's *French refugee life* of 1940 or Winston Babb's 1955 dissertation (Cauna, 1994; Wright and Debien, 1975; Lachance, 1994, 1988; Cobb, Sullivan-Holleman, 1995; Branson, 1993; Babb, 1955). New work on U. S. policy toward the Haitian Revolution similarly has been confined to article form, and Rayford Logan's 1941 monograph on

U.S.-Haitian relations has yet to be supplanted (Matthewson, 1982, 1979; 1996; Logan, 1941). Alfred Hunt's *Slumbering Volcano in the Caribbean* (1988) provides a general and fairly superficial study of U.S. responses to the Haitian Revolution.

In the past thirty years the upsurge in work on the antislavery movement has sharpened controversy over whether Haiti's revolution retarded or advanced the abolition process elsewhere. I have suggested that, if the overall impact in Britain was negative, at certain moments news from Saint Domingue assisted the abolitionists. Seymour Drescher, however, in a rigorous analysis of the British antislavery campaign, argues that the Haitian Revolution had no decisive or longlasting influence on these efforts (Geggus, 1982b, 1985c; Drescher, 1986, 98-99, 1977, 168-169, 214-223). Michael Duffy's (1987) position, on the other hand, is that the Haitian Revolution removed a fundamental obstacle to British abolition by lessening British politicians' concern that France would profit from such an event, although he seems to suggest that the Anglo-French war was even more effective in this regard (Duffy, 1987, 391-393; cf. Knight, 1990, 212; Blackburn, 1988). As for slave emancipation in Venezuela, Paul Verna (1969) has described in detail the contribution made by Haitian president Alexandre Pétion, but John Lombardi's (1971) study of the subject does not give Pétion's contribution the same importance.

The ideological transformation of Afro-American resistance under the influence of the French and Haitian Revolutions is the striking theme of Eugene Genovese's wide-ranging book, *From Rebellion to Revolution* (1979). Under the leadership of Toussaint Louverture, the Saint Domingue uprising became the first "bourgeois-democratic" slave revolution and marked a turning-point in blacks' resistance to slavery. Thereafter, Genovese argues, slave resistance evinced a shift away from "restorationist" rebellion toward true revolution, which sought for the first time to eradicate slavery as a system, and to come to terms with the modern state and world economy. The validity of this bipartite typology of slave rebellions has been challenged (Craton, 1982, 13-14, 330-333; Geggus, 1983; Drescher, 1986, 104-109) and Haiti's impact on black resistance and consciousness has been explored and debated (Geggus, 1989; Gaspar and Geggus, eds., 1997). Especially intriguing examples have been found in Brazil, Cuba, and Curaçao (Mott, 1982; Franco, 1974; Goslinga, 1991, 1-20; Palacios, 1983). In his dissertation, Julius Scott sets the Haitian Revolution in almost as broad a geographical canvas as does Genovese. However, apart from putting an original emphasis on net-

works of communication, he stresses a wider range of influences on slave communities than just the French Revolution, influences which range from the American Revolution to reformism and the anti-slavery movement (Scott, 1986).

The accumulated research of the last thirty years makes it now possible to write a much more factually accurate history of the Haitian Revolution, with more social depth and a broader international context, than was possible in 1968. Today, Cyril James's *Black Jacobins* look perhaps less Jacobin and more black than they once did; and, even if we understand better now the constraints under which James's Toussaint Louverture operated, he has lost some of his lustre, both for black nationalists and liberal idealists. James's dissection of the Haitian Revolution, however, remains both an analytic *tour-de-force* and a work of literary distinction and enormous staying-power.

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