

# The Haitian revolution

## Slide 1: the Haitian revolution

The Haitian revolution is the only successful uprising of enslaved people in the Americas. It defeated European armies, but their victory came with a high price.

## Slide 2: decolonial terminology

In our analysis we use terms that are scientifically correct but feels a bit uneasy if you have been trained in the school of colonizing the mind. We don't use the word plantation but labour camp. Plantation has a romantic association. Labour camp is more precise because it designates an institution where forced labour is used. We don't use the word discoverer or planter but the word criminal. In 2001 The United Nations recognized slavery and colonialism as a crime against humanity. If a Surinamese in Holland goes to the supermarket and steals a bottle of lemonade he is called a criminal, not a discoverer. We think that is correct term for a thief. In the same way we think it is correct to call a European who steals gold from the Americas a criminal instead of a discoverer.

In the same way the guy who never planted anything is called a planter, while scientifically it is more correct to call him an enslaver, because enslavement was his business

When the Germans invaded Holland it was called an occupation, not colonization. I think Dutch are correct in their terminology, so the European invasion of the Americas is in their logic an occupation. That logic is correct.

I understand that when you have been trained to regard a crime as a scientific achievement you might feel uncomfortable when you keep hearing me using the new terminology.

## Slide 3: The first voyage of Columbus the criminal

The Taino people discovered Columbus on the 6th of December 1492 when he and his fellow criminals, strolled on the beaches of Haiti, the mountainous island as the Tainos named their island. After the Spanish occupation Columbus renamed the island Hispaniola, Little Spain. To understand what happened since the discovery of Columbus by the Tainos we need an analytical framework to understand colonialism.

## Slide 4: Five dimensions of colonialism

In the conceptualization of Decolonizing the Mind we characterize colonialism as a system of exploitation and oppression with five dimensions:

1. Geographic dimension
2. Economic dimension
3. Political dimension
4. Social dimension
5. Mental dimension

## Slide 5: Geographical dimension

Modern colonization was a major project of five Western European countries: Portugal, Spain, Holland, England and France. Other countries joined but in the end played a small role. The countries were ruled by small elites of criminal gangs headed by a king or queen.

They competed with each other in the robbing and stealing from the colonies. The people living in the colonies had no say in defining their destiny.

Each had a distinctive period in history in which they dominated: their golden age. The Spanish in the early sixteenth century, the Portuguese in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century and the Dutch in the seventeenth century.

### **Slide 6: the robbery by the Spaniards**

Haiti was first colonized by the Spanish. The main activity of the Spanish criminals was the robbing of gold and silver from the people of Haiti. They started the first genocide in the Americas.

### **Slide 7: Spanish criminals move to the east**

The Tainos did not succumb without a fight. One of the leaders of the struggle against the Spanish occupation was Prince Anacaona, who was 29 years old when she was captured and hanged. The Tainos forced the Spaniard to give up their capital La Navidad in the west and move to the east where he established La Isabela.

In the western part of the island French pirates started a competition with the Spanish criminals and established their communities.

### **Slide 8: Slavery and occupation**

After the genocide of the Tainos the Spanish enslavers started in 1517 with the import of enslaved Africans. In the eastern part their French competitors built tobacco plantations with enslaved Africans. Many French enslavers came from Martinique and Guadeloupe to set up their plantations.

The competition often resulted in armed conflicts. These conflicts were often an extension of conflicts in Europe where the process of establishing nation-states was violent.

In 1679 the French and Spanish criminals came to an agreement in the Treaty of Rijswijk in which the eastern part of the island would be occupied by the French and the western part by the Spaniards.

It was not the first treaty that defined the geographical boundaries both in Europe and in the occupied territories. In 1650 and 1667 there was the treaty of Breda. In 1713 the Treaty of Utrecht tries to resolve similar issues.

So the geography of occupation was a direct result of the balance of power in Europe between the rising nation-states. Any resistance against slavery in the occupied countries had to reckon with this reality.

### **Slide 9: The economic dimension: sugar and slavery**

The one crop that shaped the nature of the Haitian economy was sugar. Coffee, cacao, tobacco and other agricultural products indeed were of significance at different times during the European occupation, but sugar was king. In the early seventeenth century sugar was a luxury item, but very soon it developed into a product for mass consumption not only as a sweetener for coffee and tea, but as an important ingredient in the arising consumption industries.

### **Slide 10: The world economy of sugar**

This new industry gave birth to a world economy in which labour, international transport and trade, finance, production, refining and consumption are interconnected.

Labour was the labour of enslaved African. Without slavery there would be no sugar industry.

Without the sugar industry, the European economy would not be able to rise on its feet.

International transport was embodied by the rise of international shipping industry based on sugar. Sugar was based on enslaved labour from Africa. The shipping industry in France made the French cities of Nantes one of the most important slave ports in Europe.

Shipping yards, suppliers of all necessities for the ships, job opportunities for white sailors and officers who guarded the prison ships, the industry became more than just the transport by sea.

With sugar came the rise of finance capital: banks, insurance companies, capital markets.

### **Slide 11: French bourgeoisie and enslavers in Haiti**

C.L.R. James, p. 48: "The planters and small manufacturers of San Domingo were able to establish themselves only by means of the capital advanced by the maritime bourgeoisie. By 1789 the Nantes merchants alone had 50 millions invested in the West Indies." There was a strong connection between the rise of French capitalism and the rise of slavery in Haiti.

### **Slide 12: The political dimension**

The political dimension of colonialism had two aspects:

- The relationship between the political administration in Europe and the political administration in the occupied countries in the Americas. At all times the political administration in the occupied territories was subjected to the control of Europe. So if any problem would occur in the occupied land. The case of Haiti shows that of the political administration in Europe is broken down then the opportunities arise for a fundamental breach between occupiers and occupied.
- The political system of control with the occupied land. This system regulated the relationship between oppressors and oppressed. The relationship was based on a single proposition: the use of terror. It was codified in law. In the French colonies this law was called the Code Noir, the black code.
- But the system depended on the use of terror to subdue people into slavery. All forms of terror were used, but in Haiti the whites had an expression for a particular cruelty: "to bum a little powder in the ass of a nigger". They literally put gun powder in the ass of an enslaved African and made it explode.

### **Slide 13: The Code Noir – the Black Code**

The Black Code was a law that King Louis XIV introduced in 1685. The law stipulates the repression against enslaved Africans in the form of all kinds of restrictions in their lives. One of the most interesting articles is article 12: We desire that if a male slave has married a free woman, their children, either male or female, shall be free as is their mother, regardless of their father's condition of slavery. And if the father is free and the mother a slave, the children shall also be slaves.

This means that the children of white fathers will be enslaved at birth if their mother is enslaved. This was the morality of European civilization regarding family: white fathers enslaving their own children. And when we talk nowadays about single black mothers and relate that to the attitude of males during slavery the connection is never made between the attitudes of white males enslaving their children but black males who are attributed with a lack of responsibility towards their children. In fact, the blacker the man the more responsible he is for his children during slavery and the whiter the man, the less responsible he was.

### **Slide 14: the social dimension**

Social relations in Haiti were organized on the basis of race. At the eve of the revolution in 1789 Haiti counted 30.000 whites, 40.000 free mulattos and 500.000 enslaved Africans (James, 241). Enslaved Africans constituted 87% of the population of Haiti. Compare that to the USA in 1790. The total population of 4 million consisted of 81% white. Africans constituted 19% of the population. A small portion, 7%, consisted of free blacks.

In absolute number the slave society of Haiti was huge. At the time of the legal abolition of slavery in Jamaica there were 311.000 enslaved Africans. In Suriname there were 34.000 and in Curacao 7.000.

### **Slide 15: the mulattoes**

The position of the free mulattoes was of extreme importance in the Haitian evolution. The mulattoes were a significant social and political force. Some of them were wealthier than white enslavers. They owned plantations with hundreds of enslaved Africans, but they were discriminated upon by the whites.

Some professions were closed for them such as judge, lawyer, officer, teacher, etc. In churches and theatres they had to stand when whites were present. They were not allowed to eat or drink in the presence of whites. They were not allowed to dance and sing in the presence of whites. They were not allowed to wear clothes or riding horses that were better than those of whites. If a mulatto hit a white man, his hand was cut off.

They wanted an end to white discrimination, but not an end to slavery.

### **Slide 16: Mental dimension**

The Code Noir stipulated that Catholicism was the only religion that was allowed on the colony. African religions were forbidden. The racist colonized minds of the whites regarded Africans as beasts, as creatures like horses or pigs. They could not imagine a revolt of “pigs” that would end in a free state of black people.

### **Slide 17: Revolts before the final revolution**

Long before the revolution of 1792 marronage in Haiti was a recurrent form of resistance. Some authors trace the Haitian revolution back to the French revolution. The Haitian revolution is seen as an offspring of the French revolution, especially by French historians. Haitian historians trace the roots of the Haitian revolution to the resistance of enslaved Africans long before the French revolution.

### **Slide 18: the poison scheme of maroon Mackandal**

In 1720 1,000 Africans took to the woods. In 1751 3,000 followed their examples. Occasionally they found a leader to unite them. One example of such a leader is Francois Mackandal. He drew a plan to unite all Africans and drive the whites out of Haiti. He was born in Guinea Africa. He told his followers that he had revelations from God like the prophet Mohamed. He might have an Islamic background. C.L.R. James gives the following description of the maroon leader: *“he persuaded his followers that he was immortal and exercised such a hold over them that they considered it an honour to serve him on their knees; the handsomest women fought for the privilege of being admitted to his bed. Not only did his band raid and pillage plantations far and wide, but he himself ranged from plantation to plantation to make converts, stimulate his followers, and perfect his great plan for the destruction of white civilisation in San Domingo. An uninstructed mass, feeling its way to revolution, usually begins by terrorism, and Mackandal aimed at delivering his people by means of poison. For six years he built up his organisation, he and his followers poisoning not only whites but disobedient members of their own band. Then he arranged that on a particular day the water of every house in the capital of the province was to be poisoned, and the general attack made on the whites while they were in the convulsions and anguish of death. He had lists of all members of his party in each slave gang; appointed captains, lieutenants and other officers; arranged for bands of Negroes to leave the town and spread over the plains to massacre the whites. His temerity was the cause of his downfall. He went one day to a plantation, got drunk and was betrayed, and being captured was burnt alive.*

### **Slide 19: Lessons from Mackandal**

The story of Mackandal shows us two important lessons for the Haitian revolution. The first important lesson is that the black masses had gained valuable experience in organising for

revolt. They had learned to build organizational structures with leaders on different levels and a sense of discipline.

The second lesson was that an ultimate goal was defined that would be the paramount goal in the Haitian revolution: complete independence of the whites. Mackandal did not strive to get a peace treaty in order to live side-by-side with the whites. He recognized at an early stage that freedom for all meant the destruction of white power on the island.

### **Slide 20: From Mackandal to Boukman**

Mackandal was executed in 1758 before his plan was brought to bear fruits. His plan was to poison the meals, water and animals of the whites. More than thirty years later Dutty Boukman raised the call from Mackandal. On August the 22<sup>nd</sup> of 1791 Boukman started a mass revolt to drive out the whites from the island. That was the prelude to the Haitian revolution.

Dutty Boukman was a descendent of a Jamaican Maroon. He was born in Jamaica. He had taught himself to read and write. He was called "bookman" because of his habit to try to read as much as possible. Boukman tried to teach others to read and write, but this was against the law. His enslaver sold him to a French criminal who brought him to Haiti.

In Haiti he came to be known as a voodoo high priest. He succeeded in building a large network of secret contacts on plantations on the island. His followers were to be counted in all social layers of black Haiti: house 'slaves', field 'slaves', free blacks and maroons.

His message was a religious one based on the voodoo religion. He told his followers: *"The god who created the sun which gives us light, who rouses the waves and rules the storm, though hidden in the clouds. He watches us. He sees all that the white man does. The god of the white man inspires him with crime, but our god calls upon us to do good works. Our god who is good to us orders us to revenge our wrongs. He will direct our arms and aid us. Throw away the symbol of the god of the whites who has so often caused us to weep, and listen to the voice of liberty, which speaks in the hearts of us all."*

Boukman's plan was based on armed resistance. The whites would not voluntarily give up their power to enslave Africans.

On the night of the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August 1791 with a thunder storm and lightning providing the dramatic scene for the call to rise up the followers of Boukman assembled in the thick forest of Morne Rouge looking over the capital Le Cap.

### **Slide 21: Cecile Fatiman**

He was assisted by a women priest, Cécile Fatiman

In a voodoo ritual Fatiman slaughtered a pig and the main leaders drank the blood to swear an oath of victory or death. The uprising was led by the enslaved of the plantation Gallifet.

Ironically there was a saying in Haiti: "happy as the negroes of Gallifet". This was the plantation where the Negroes were being treated well, according to the whites. This was the plantation where the Boukman revolt started.

Each group went to their own plantation, murdered their enslaver and burnt the plantation to the ground. For nearly a month the inhabitants of La Cap could barely distinguish between day and night because of the thick black smoke that covered the city and came from the mountains of the plantations.

One description tells us: *"They put the whites on wooden blocks and sawed them in half. They beheaded the children and crossed the quivering limbs and heads as trophies on stakes. Girls were raped dozens of times before the eyes of the mothers and murdered on their spears and sticks. Then the mothers met the same fate. Enslaved women took part in the orgy of violence. They tortured the white men that raped them so often chastised and, shouted at them in their*

*dying hours: 'No, do not die, you must still suffer more". They tore off their genitals and shoved them in the still rattling mouths."*

Whites fled to the neighbouring islands of Cuba and Jamaica and to mainland America. But France came to their help with 15 ships and 6,000 men. And then the counter terror began.

### **Slide 22: Counter terror**

In the Boukman revolt 2,000 whites were killed, 180 sugar plantations and 900 coffee plantations were burned down. But once the French army arrived, the counter terror began. In three weeks 15.000-20.000 Africans and mulattoes who had joined them were brutally slaughtered. In November Boukman was captured, tortured to death and beheaded. His head was put on a spear at the gate of the city with the inscription: Head of Boukman, leader of the rebels.

The black in Haiti had learned a dear lesson: freedom comes at a high price and indeed it is often either freedom or death.

### **Slide 23: Toussaint and the French revolution**

There are two important aspects to the Boukman revolt.

The first is that at no time did he and his followers refer to the French revolution as an inspiring example. The French revolution had started two years earlier in 1789 with the storming of the Bastilles. Boukman revolt took place two years later.

The second is that Toussaint Breda, later to be known as Toussaint L'Ouverture, had no part in the planning of this prelude to the Haitian revolution. But he would soon join the revolution.

### **Slide 24: The French revolution**

The French revolution is often presented by historians from the school of scientific colonialism as a great step forward for humanity. It was indeed a great step forward, but for white humanity. The absolute monarchy was replaced by a democratic republic, but not for the majority of the people in Haiti.

The bourgeois capitalist class was liberated from feudalism, but this did not mean any liberty for the enslaved in Haiti.

The philosophy of white enlightenment against the dominance of the clergy in knowledge production did not include blacks. Jean Jacques Rousseau, the main philosopher of the white French Enlightenment spoke about a social contract that binds society together. In the social contract members of society engage in a mutual agreement to build a society. In the occupied lands the black had no say in the society they lived in.

The slogan of the French Revolution— Liberty, Equality and Fraternity— did not apply to blacks, according to leading members of the French Revolution. As one spokesperson put it: *"We have not brought half-a-million slaves from the coasts of Africa to make them into French citizens"*.

### **Slide 25: the split in Haiti**

In France the society was split between the royalists who lost their king and tried to regain some sort of power and the revolutionaries in all shades who wanted a new society based on a declaration of human rights.

In Haiti the whites were split between the poor whites, who were anti-monarchy, and the rich whites who had their links and network with the monarchy. The poor whites hoped that the revolution would help them distribute land to the poor. There were even some rich whites linked to the capitalist bourgeoisie who wanted more free trade for the colony in stead of the

monopoly by the French aristocrats who wanted all products for France. But most rich whites supported the monarchy.

The revolutionaries who came to power in France in 1789 were confronted two years later with the start of the revolution of Boukman.

### **Slide 26: Sonthonax in Haiti**

Within the revolutionaries there were two major currents regarding slavery. One current opted for maintaining the economic advantages from slavery. Their Saint-Domingue was a very important source of welfare for France. And this source was based on slavery.

On the other hand the slogan of the revolution was Liberty and slavery was a mockery of Liberty.

Léger-Félicité Sonthonax was a French abolitionist. He was sent to Haiti with 7,000 men to deal with the Boukman revolt. In Haiti he found that most white colonialists were in favour of the king and thus again saw him as a representative of the new order.

In fact, some white invited the arch enemy of France- their competitor in the Caribbean the British – to invade Haiti in order to quell the black revolution. France had fought quite a few wars with Britain and the British were eager to add the French crown jewel of Saint Domingue to their colonial empire

Sonthonax arrived in September 1792 in Haiti.

### **Slide 27: the free people of colour**

Meanwhile another force was making headway on the revolutionary scene: the free people of colour, the mulattoes. One of their leaders was Vincent Ogé

Ogé was a quadroon, a person with one quarter of black blood and three quarters of white blood. In Haiti they made a distinction between 300 grades of colour.

He lived in France when the French revolution started in 1789. A year later he took the bold step to purchase weapons in London and sailed via New Orleans in Louisiana to Haiti. On October 21, 1790 he landed in Haiti with an army of 250 men and presented a demand to the colonial authorities: full rights for the free people of colour. In this way a revolt of enslaved could be prevented. The colonial authority read the demand as follows: if you don't give me full rights I will call upon the enslaved black for a joint revolution.

The whites were furious. They confronted the rebels with hundreds of white volunteers. Ogé and his men were captured and tortured for weeks to gain more information about the so called joint plan of enslaved and free mulattoes. They were executed in a brutal fashion with all their bones broken. They were beheaded. Their goods and properties were confiscated. The mulattoes would not forget Ogé.

So when Boukman started his revolt ten months later he could count on support of some free mulattoes as well as free blacks.

### **Slide 28: Sonthonax and the new alliance**

In March 1792, eight months after the start of Boukman's revolution, the French National Assembly in France granted full rights to the free mulattoes and free blacks in Haiti. And this was urgently needed. When Sonthonax arrived in Haiti in that same year, his mission was not to abolish slavery, but to prevent slavery from being abolished by the enslaved. He forged a new alliance with the free mulattoes and free blacks and thus managed to contain the black revolution.

### **Slide 29: Toussain L'Overture enters the stage**

Toussain's father Gaou Guinou was born in Benin. His grandfather was a king. His father was captured and enslaved to Haiti. Toussaint was enslaved after birth in Haiti in 1743. When the revolution started in 1789 he was he was 46 years old. In 1776 at the age of 33 he was freed by his enslaver, Bréda. He was called Toussaint Bréda. He taught himself to read and write. He had a good relationship with his enslaver. During the revolution he helped them to escape the island.

As a free man Toussaint he accumulated some wealth and property of his own. He had a small coffee plantation with a dozen of enslaved Africans.

### **Slide 30: assistant to Georges Biassou**

Soon after the execution Boukman a new group of leaders arose with Georges Biassou, Jeanot and Jean Francois as the main leaders. No one had enough authority to be the single leader. Toussaint became an assistant of Biassou. He got more and more involved in strategy, planning and organization.

### **Slide 31: the great betrayal**

Four months after the start of the revolution the whites and their counterrevolution started to have their effects on the morale of the blacks. The blacks could make any progress. Many plantations had been burnt to the ground, but the whites kept their position in the cities with their forts. Famine began to take their toll on the freedom fighters. And on top of that the whites announced that new forces were going to arrive from France. The leadership of the young revolution with the support of Toussaint proposed the biggest betrayal of the black masses: they proposed to the whites that they would cooperate in pushing the masses back into slavery if the whites could guarantee the leaders their freedom and give them political rights. They led an army of 40.000 men and were ready to sell them out and cooperate to subdue them into slavery. But the arrogant whites refused. They would never deal with rascals who have murdered their people and burnt down their properties.

### **Slide 32: the turning point**

Where other leaders were in disarray on what to do next, Toussaint took the decision of his life and never looked back: the only way forward would be to struggle to the end. And for this struggle a well-trained and well-organized army was needed. And that is where Toussaint really made his lasting impression on the revolution. From then onwards he began to organize a small group of people who were willing to go through a rigorous programme of drilling and exercises. From interviews with local inhabitants he constructed maps of the regions. He started to organize his army with officers, who were in charge of specific tasks such as acquiring weapons and ammunition, training and drilling, preparing for battles etc. He personally led attacks against the whites and was able to heap defeat upon defeat to them.

His authority surpassed that of the old leadership of the revolution.

### **Slide 33: strategy and tactics**

War is not about fighting, but about thinking. Toussaint now had formulated a clear goal for the black masses: liberty and equality. The way to achieve this was the armed struggle. A disciplined and well trained and well organized army of blacks is the instrument to achieve this goal.

In Europe France was in war with Spain. After the execution of king Louis XIV by the guillotine the monarch of other European countries began to organize against the French



revolution. In 1793 the kings of Britain, Spain and Portugal joined hands and declared war to revolutionary France.

#### **Slide 34: Strategy in the international arena**

Toussaint saw an opportunity to weaken the French in Haiti by joining forces with the Spaniards in Santo Domingo on the eastern part of the island.

The British now mobilized to attack the French in Haiti. In these circumstances the French took the surprising step to abolish slavery in Haiti to call upon all blacks to unite in the struggle against the English and the Spanish. Because if they would win, they would reintroduce slavery. On February 4 1794 the National Assembly in France formally abolished slavery in the French colonies.

Toussaint recognizes the shift in the international relationship of forces and switches his alliance to the French. He knew what he now had in his hand: the abolition of slavery in Haiti. He also knew the consequences of the defeat of the French: the re-introduction of slavery.

#### **Slide 35: the miscalculation of Toussaint**

It took four long years but in the end Toussaint and the French succeeded in defeating the British and the Spaniards in 1798. The core of the army against the British and the Spaniards consisted of the soldiers of Toussaint. He was in control of the island. He told Sonthonax to leave the island, but he did not want to break with France. Toussaint hoped that the new leader of France, Napoleon Bonaparte would be willing to strike a deal with him. Haiti would stay in the French empire. So there was no need to send troops to Haiti keep the island French. Slavery was abolished all blacks would become French citizens.

By 1800 all foreign troops had left the island. Toussaint was in total control.

Toussaint miscalculated and made the greatest mistake of his life. Napoleon feign a positive response and sent his brother-in-law Charles Leclerc with a force of 12.000 men to Haiti. They arrived in 1802. When Toussaint was invited to discuss his proposal he was captured and sent to France, where he died in a cold cell in April 1803 of a heart attack.

#### **Slide 36: Independence at last**

Napoleon reinstated slavery in the French colonies by law on May 20 1802. But in Haiti the black army, although decapitated, was not beaten. Jean-Jacques Dessalines succeeded Toussaint L'Ouverture as general. In 1803 he managed to inflict a resounding defeat upon the French army of Napoleon. On January 1<sup>st</sup> 1804 Dessalines declared the former Saint Domingue to be independent and renamed the island Haiti. He could have chosen an African name but in honour of the Tainos who fought the first European invaders he used their original name. In France Napoleon crowned himself as the emperor of France. In Haiti Dessalines crowned himself emperor of Haiti in the same year.

#### **Slide 37: Toussaint's vision**

In the short period that Toussaint ruled Haiti his generals discussed what to do with the whites. Toussaint opted for an economic strategy: the economic base of Haiti should be large scale agriculture. The plantations should be restored. One third of the revenues should go to the workers as wages, one third to the (white) manager for their management and one third to the state. Thus the state would have the means to improve the infrastructure of the country, build schools and develop the eastern part of the island. Haiti should engage in trade with other countries.

If France decided to invade Haiti again the white would be used as hostages.

### **Slide 38: cleaning up white power**

Toussaint L'Ouverture saw himself as the heir of the ideals of the French revolution: Liberty, equality and fraternity. This is also the motto of the Haitian flag. His troupes carried the French flag. But after his arrest Dessalines ripped out the white centre of the flag and had his god-daughter sew the blue and red pieces together. The motto of the French revolution remained, but any traces of white influence were categorically removed.

Toussaint's arrest showed that whites could not be trusted. Napoleon's reintroduction of slavery in the French colonies demonstrated that the French would never give up and would invade Haiti again. So the only way to strengthen Haiti is to get rid of all the whites. In February Dessalines ordered the massacre of all the whites in Haiti. Between February and April between 3,000-5,000 whites have been murdered in a systematic way. Dessalines personally led the campaign. It had a distinctive pattern. When he arrived at a location with his men, he spoke about the atrocities of the whites during slavery and their betrayal of the blacks. Then he ordered the killing of the men, followed by the women and children.

### **Slide 39: the tragedy of Haiti**

Dessalines revealed himself as a dictator. Opposition against him quickly developed into a campaign to get rid of him. On October 17, 1806 he was ambushed and murdered. Haiti spiralled into a society that was brought to a still stand with subsistence farming. New local elites arose and split.

In 1825 France threatened to invade Haiti. A crippling embargo by the French, British, Americans together with the invasion threat put the local elite in a dilemma; either face a devastating invasion that would reintroduce slavery or pay reparations to France. The amount was 150 million francs. Ironically in this amount the value was calculated of the negotiators and the Haitian government officials when they were enslaved. Haiti agreed. They paid an amount up to 1947.

### **Slide 40: the inspiration of Haiti**

The Haitian revolution was the first successful black revolution in the Americas. It came with a high price: 100,000 black lost their lives in this struggle.

Despite its problems Haiti was the beacon of freedom in the Americas. In the liberation war of Latin America led by Simon Bolivar there was a moment where he had to flee from Venezuela. He went to Jamaica but was barred from entering the island. Haiti offered him a refuge, aid and protection on the condition that he would abolish slavery in Venezuela. Bolivar promised and fulfilled his promise. The Haitians provided him with soldiers and arms.

Haiti inspired other enslaved populations to rise against slavery. Shortly after the start of the revolution in 1791 other enslaved Africans revolted.

St. Lucia, then a French colony, was visited by French revolutionaries who wanted to execute the royalist. They proclaimed the abolition of slavery in 1793. British forces then invaded the island with the support of white French planters. Black Africans began to set up armed forces to fight the British. But a force of 12,000 British soldiers was too strong for them and slavery was reinstated in St. Lucia.

In March 1795 black Caribs on the island of St. Vincent under the leadership of Chattoyer attacked British forces on the island. They replaced the British flag with the revolutionary French flag. In a period of almost two years several skirmishes took place between the British soldiers and the Caribs. In the end the British got reinforcements and killed 3,000 Caribs and ended the revolt.

Between March and June 1795 enslaved Africans on the island of Grenada revolted against the British criminals. Under the leadership of the free mulattoes Julian Fedon they captured British soldiers and officials. At the peak of the revolt some 14,000 of the 28,000 enslaved Africans participated in the uprising. A large British army came to Grenada and managed to kill 7,000 Africans. Fedon managed to escape and was never found.

On May 10, 1795 some 300 enslaved Africans under the leadership of José Leonardo Chirinos started an armed rebellion against the Spanish criminals. He was clearly inspired by the Haitian revolution. The Spanish quickly suppressed the revolt and executed 170 of them including Chirinos.

In July 1795 the Maroons in Jamaica started the second Maroon war that lasted for eight months. Some 500 maroons fought an army of 5,000 British criminals for more than eight months before they were defeated.

In August 1795 the enslaved from Curacao under the leadership of Tula liberated part of the island for a few weeks. The uprising was quelled in blood by the Dutch. Tula referred openly to the Haitian revolution as a source of inspiration.

In the same year in the former Dutch colony of Demerara in what now is Guiana, a breach occurred among the whites. France had invaded Holland. Royalist and republicans in Demerara came in conflict with each other. In that environment a woman Nancy Wood called upon the enslaved Africans to rise against slavery. Her call was heeded and both enslaved and maroons revolted. The royalist and republicans decided to join their forces and succeeded in crushing the revolt.

The influence of the Haitian revolution is much wider than I have been able to sketch here. C.L.R. James argues that it hastened the abolition of the slave trade and slavery. In the USA the Haitian revolution was used by the abolitionist as an example of a struggle for freedom.