

## Haitian Revolution

and James Weldon Johnson (1871–1938) were among the most persistent critics of the occupation. Haiti inspired many during the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and 1930s, including Langston Hughes (1902–1967) and Zora Neale Hurston (1891–1960), who both visited the island. Unfortunately, much of the mixed-race Haitian elite wanted nothing to do with African Americans or their recommendations for technical training.

After mounting protests by Haitians and their transnational network of allies, the nineteen-year US occupation ended in 1934.

### THE DUVALIER AND ARISTIDE ERAS

The era of the Duvalier dictators, Papa Doc (1957–1971) and his son Baby Doc (1971–1986), was marked by internal repression by the Tonton Macoutes, but the strongmen ensured Cold War collaboration. Many well-educated Haitians moved to Canada, France, or New York and Florida.

The mixed desires to stabilize democracy and avoid waves of poor immigrants to US shores accounted for the last two US interventions in Haiti. In the first, the Bill Clinton administration restored to power Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a Catholic priest who had overwhelmingly won the presidential election in 1990 but was ousted by a military junta in 1991. In fall 1994, the junta left Haiti rather than face a US force, and US and Caribbean soldiers patrolled Haiti.

A decade later, Aristide's rule had been weakened by a united opposition of sweatshop owners, armed guerrillas who opposed the disbanding of the army, and international financiers who choked off credit. These accused Aristide of fraudulent elections and of allying with street thugs. In February 2004, when fears of Haitian "boat people" became real, the George W. Bush administration convinced Aristide to flee aboard a US plane. This intervention was even more multinational, backed by the United Nations' Resolution 1529 and its Multinational Interim Force made up of US, French, Chilean, and Canadian soldiers.

The UN force eventually became the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti, known as MINUSTAH. It remained in a politically unstable Haiti through the 2010 earthquake that devastated Port-au-Prince. The US military sent massive amounts of aid, and hundreds of aid organizations settled in the country. Bill Clinton, as UN special envoy, coordinated much of the fundraising and reconstruction.

SEE ALSO *Dollar Diplomacy; Empire, US; Exceptionalism; Gender; Interventionism; Missionary Diplomacy; Monroe Doctrine (1823); Open Door Policy*

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## HAITIAN REVOLUTION

In August 1791, enslaved people in the northern plains of Saint-Domingue, France's most valuable colony, lit the cane fields on fire and rebelled against the brutal slave system. News of these events quickly reached the shores of the new United States of America. Throughout the Haitian Revolution, at least twenty thousand black, white, and mixed-race refugees disembarked on American shores. Newspapers published their stories, as well as other official proclamations and policies from Saint-Domingue, as Americans sought to find an explanation for the Haitian Revolution that did not implicate their own slave system. While some in the United States supported the Haitian Revolution, none wanted to see the same scenes replay in their cities and on their plantations. The Haitian Revolution, most Americans argued, came about because of the specific kind of slavery practiced in French Saint-Domingue.

### THE AMERICAN REACTION

The Haitian Revolution sparked debate about the nature of American republicanism and forced Americans to be self-reflexive. The result was diverse articulations of American nationalism. Many whites sought to create distance between their own political project while nonwhites hoped that Dominguan and Haitian politics might create a more inclusive version of American citizenship and identity. Few Americans acknowledged the parallels between their own revolution and the events

unfolding in Saint-Domingue. However, the arrival of thousands of French refugees from Saint-Domingue contributed to a broader discussion about migration and citizenship in the new United States.

Most Americans did not recognize the capacity for political thought or action among the enslaved population. Rather, they saw the rebellion as a form of disease, one that they hoped to prevent from spreading onto American soil. As a preventative measure, they were extremely wary of nonwhite migrants from Saint-Domingue. Some of these black and mixed-race migrants had come to the United States willingly, either on their own or with their masters or former masters, while others had been forced against their will to leave the colony.

Despite their precautions against the spread of the revolution, white Americans found—or thought they found—evidence of “French” initiative in rebellions or plans for rebellion among the enslaved population of the United States, the most famous being Gabriel’s Rebellion in 1800 in Richmond, Virginia. By attributing these events to outside agitators, white Americans were able to maintain the front that their slave system was benevolent. Although black and mixed-race residents were inspired by the actions and ideologies of the Haitian Revolution, for the most part this resulted in individual rather than collective action. For example, enslaved individuals resisted their legal status by running away and suing for their freedom.

#### DOMINGUAN REFUGEES IN THE UNITED STATES

Refugees from the Haitian Revolution began arriving in the United States almost immediately after the first uprising in 1791. The US government aided French colonists’ efforts to suppress the rebellion by extending them credit in order to purchase military supplies. Support waned, however, when white French colonists fled the colony; many in the United States saw this as cowardice and accused them of shirking their responsibilities in Saint-Domingue. Americans also blamed Dominguan colonists for the uprising and refused to acknowledge the political ideologies of the enslaved rebels. The Dominguan refugee population was composed of both royalists and republicans, but all of them claimed rights as citizens of the French republic in order to participate in the governance of the colony and most were sure to emphasize the natural connection between Dominguan republicans and the United States. Not all Americans were convinced.

After the battle of Cap Français in 1793 and the declaration of emancipation in Saint-Domingue, thousands of French refugees arrived in the United States. News of the violence in the colony encouraged a renewal of support for French refugees. Ideas of republican

philanthropy inspired Americans to organize sizeable relief campaigns to aid French refugees in American port cities. Americans, however, continued to criticize Dominguan colonists, especially after war broke out between France and Britain and the British occupied the south and west of Saint-Domingue (1793–1798). This led Americans to accuse colonists of loyalty to the British Crown.

The perceived political uncertainty of these migrants in the United States meant that the American government, just like the French government, could not settle on a uniform policy to deal with them and therefore they were subject to temporary and halfway measures. The relationship between the United States and the refugees, as well as with the colony itself, became increasingly complicated as the relationship between the United States and France deteriorated into violence. The Quasi War (1798–1800), two years of naval skirmishes with the French, mostly in the Caribbean, was a period of very high anti-French sentiment, which opened the door for an alliance between the United States and the colonial government in Saint-Domingue, under the leadership of the former slave Toussaint Louverture (1743–1803).

#### THE US RELATIONSHIP WITH SAINT-DOMINGUE

The United States had enjoyed a close relationship with Saint-Domingue since American independence because of trade agreements signed in the 1780s. This relationship strengthened after 1793 when France opened trade with Saint-Domingue and American merchants were quick to take advantage of the new opportunities available. After US-French relations soured and the federal government prohibited trade with the French Empire in 1798, Louverture petitioned to have Saint-Domingue exempted from the embargo. American merchants supported the increasing independence of Louverture’s government, including a special trade relationship. When the 1798 Non-Intercourse Act came up for renewal in 1799, the US government included an amendment known as “Toussaint’s clause,” which allowed American merchants to trade with the parts of the French Empire that were not participants in the war, despite a renewal of the embargo on trade.

This was a moment in which the American government prioritized economic advancement over racism. In doing so, the United States helped Saint-Domingue achieve greater autonomy from the French metropole. Independence in Saint-Domingue was not yet on the table, but the US government knew that its actions might encourage a move toward sovereignty under Louverture’s leadership; nevertheless, Americans were wary and unsure of the benefits and pitfalls of this possibility. Later in 1799, the United States entered into an agreement with Jamaica and Saint-Domingue (under

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Louverture) in order to secure additional commercial benefits and protection for American merchants in Saint-Domingue.

The end of the Quasi War in 1800, however, meant that the US government could no longer explicitly allow its merchants to trade with the ports occupied by Louverture's government, because this would foster the independence of the island—a fact that was becoming more and more appealing to the United States in light of the potential acquisition of the territory of Louisiana from Napoléon Bonaparte (1769–1821).

### INDEPENDENCE AND OFFICIAL RECOGNITION

Bonaparte, recently established as first consul of France, resented what he perceived as a challenge to his authority, and he sent an army to disarm, kill, and deport the colonial leadership of Louverture's government. It is likely that Bonaparte also instructed his brother-in-law, General Victor Emmanuel Leclerc (1772–1802), to reinstitute slavery in the colony. At the very least, rumors began to spread in the colony that this was the case. Leclerc's arrival in Saint-Domingue reignited the smoldering revolution and transformed the war into a war for independence. While Louverture had struggled for greater colonial autonomy, the revolution had not pursued political independence under his leadership. The French army's arrival changed this. It was only when it became clear to the former slaves in the colony that their legal freedom could not be assured under French authority that they began the fight for independence. President Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826) was reluctant to aid Leclerc's forces because of concern over the territory of Louisiana, recently reacquired by the French. The Leclerc expedition did not achieve the quick victory that Bonaparte had hoped and the war dragged on. By the beginning of 1803, it was clear that a French victory was unlikely. The failure to regain control of Saint-Domingue contributed significantly to the sale of Louisiana to the United States in 1803.

After two years of violent warfare between the French forces and the “brigands”—as they were called, now under the direction of Jean-Jacques Dessalines (c. 1758–1806)—the French evacuated the western side of the island. On January 1, 1804, Dessalines and his leading generals announced the independence of the island to the population of Saint-Domingue and to the world at large—the country was to be called “Hayti.”

The US government did not immediately act on this news, and merchants continued to trade with the ports that they had previously been frequenting. Haiti's ambiguous status, however, posed problems both within the United States and between American officials and French representatives in the country. French officials

were relentless in their efforts to convince the US government to prohibit the trade.

Finally, in February 1806, the US government completely prohibited all trade with Haiti. In so doing, Jefferson and the US Congress overlooked their obligations under the law of nations in order to appease the French, to gain an upper hand in securing the Floridas, and to help assuage the fears of southern slaveholders. The prohibition continued until 1810, at which point American merchants were again free to trade with Haiti. In 1813, the United States appointed commercial agents to Cap-Haïtien and Port-au-Prince, despite continuing to withhold official diplomatic recognition.

In 1808, Bonaparte's troops invaded Spain and ousted King Ferdinand VII (1784–1833). The Cuban government remained loyal to Ferdinand and expelled all Frenchmen from the colony. Their number was significant, since Cuba had been a primary destination for people of all colors fleeing the revolution. In 1809, about ten thousand people who had been declared French by the Cuban government arrived in New Orleans. These refugees again posed many of the same problems as the earlier migrants; however, the 1808 American prohibition on the importation of foreign slaves was at the heart of the discussion about this new wave of migration. The governor of Louisiana, however, petitioned the federal government for an exemption on the penalties that would be meted out to any ship captains who broke the ban and imported slaves. This substantial migration nearly doubled the population of New Orleans.

The United States was the last nation of the Atlantic world to extend official diplomatic recognition to Haiti. Along with the prohibition on trade between Haiti and the United States from 1806 to 1810, the American policy allowed the British to become Haiti's primary trade partner. Nonetheless, Haitian leaders continued to try to secure official recognition by the United States throughout the nearly six decades of diplomatic nonrecognition. For example, President Jean-Pierre Boyer (1776–1850) undertook an aggressive campaign in the mid-1820s to encourage and support the migration of free people of color from the United States to Haiti. Boyer hoped that the emigration plans would encourage diplomatic recognition by the United States. While thousands of black and mixed-race Americans migrated to Haiti in the mid-1820s, the program did not succeed in achieving Boyer's goal. Most of the emigrants returned home, because their experiences in Haiti did not meet their expectations. Finally, in 1862, in the midst of the American Civil War, the United States extended diplomatic recognition to Haiti. Without any southern representatives in Congress, President Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865) successfully proposed sending diplomatic representatives to Haiti and Liberia.

The complex relationship between the United States and Saint-Domingue and Haiti reflected the changing interplay of economic, ideological, and political ambitions in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Atlantic world. The actions of American citizens and of the American government both at home and abroad shaped the course of events during the Haitian Revolution. At the same time, events in Saint-Domingue and Haiti challenged American citizens to reconceptualize their own self-identity in the context of the Age of Revolution.

SEE ALSO *Antislavery; Caribbean; French Revolution; Toussaint Louverture*

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## HARLEM RENAISSANCE/ NEW NEGRO MOVEMENT

The New Negro Movement, popularly known as the Harlem Renaissance, was an unprecedented outburst of African American cultural productivity that peaked in the 1920s and was an integral part of American and transatlantic modernism. The black intellectuals who

were the driving force behind it viewed the realm of culture and artistic expression as the foundation for a reinvented black identity and community, and consequently as a path to political equality.

The Harlem Renaissance, far from being limited to the neighborhood that is part of its popular name, must be understood beyond the local or even national perspective. Internationally, one of the most important factors that helped bring about the movement was World War I (1914–1918). The outbreak of war and the resulting demand for workers—to replace those who had enlisted and to fill manufacturing jobs related to military production, especially with the war having the effect of reducing immigration from Europe—gave an additional stimulus to the Great Migration of southern African Americans to the North and thus contributed to the rise of black urban communities and cultural milieus. The black press, *The Crisis* in particular, devoted considerable attention to the war effort, and some leaders advocated black military service as a way to achieve racial emancipation. Eventually, 200,000 black soldiers were sent to France, and many earned high military honors. The triumphant homecoming parade of the 369th Infantry Regiment, popularly known as the Harlem Hellfighters, fostered a sense of pride and a militant stance that characterized what black socialist magazines later identified as the “New Negro.” Thus the symbolic significance of the Great War differed markedly for black intellectuals and artists than for the writers of the so-called Lost Generation, such as Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald. In a 1919 editorial in *The Crisis*, W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963) attempted to channel the military service of black soldiers into the struggle for equality at home, writing, “*We return from fighting. We return fighting*” (14).

Alain Locke (1885–1954), a writer, teacher, and literary theorist who became known as the “father” of the Harlem Renaissance, was the editor of *The New Negro*, a 1925 anthology of black and white writers. Locke compared the postwar position of African Americans to the contemporaneous national awakenings in Europe. He referred to “New Poland” and “New Czechoslovakia” as models for African American community, and other black critics pointed to “New Ireland,” the prewar Irish literary renaissance. The writer and civil rights activist James Weldon Johnson (1871–1938), for example, claimed that the use of the vernacular tradition by the Irish playwright J. M. Synge (1871–1909) should serve as an inspiration for black poets. In the European awakenings, the New Negro intellectuals found an exemplar of the aesthetic search for artistic expression melded with the political struggle for emancipation. These national movements for cultural independence also recognized folk tradition as the source of modern art, which was analogous to the interest in black vernacular culture among New Negro artists.