
The Haitian Declaration of Independence in the Age of Revolutions

Universal Rights, the Local, and the Global

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In recent years, scholars have reframed and reinterpreted the Age of Revolutions by emphasizing the importance of the Haitian Revolution. Previously left at the margins or forgotten altogether in survey textbooks that highlighted the American and French Revolutions, the world's only successful slave revolution is now championed for conceptualizing and realizing the ideals of equality and freedom in unprecedented ways. Although such ideals were eloquently expressed in the United States and France, they were rarely imagined as extending to slaves, women, or native peoples and were certainly never implemented in a universal way. In the new portrayal of the Age of Revolutions, Haiti has become the place where the bonds of slavery were broken and racial hierarchy was overturned for the first time, making its Declaration of Independence a particularly illuminating source for students.

In repositioning the Haitian Revolution as a distinct and significant counterpart to the American and French revolutions, scholars are coming to grips with the complex and contradictory implications of the successful slave revolution that culminated in the Declaration of Independence proclaimed by Governor-General Jean-Jacques Dessalines on January 1, 1804. We now know that this declaration concluded the

Haitian Revolution, but this result was certainly not clear at the time. This fact may help explain why the only extant official copies of the Haitian Declaration of Independence are two printed documents, published by the government printing press in Port-au-Prince. One document is an eight-page pamphlet and the other is a single-page, broadside printing. Both can be found in the National Archives of the United Kingdom, where they are cataloged with the Jamaican colonial and admiralty records.¹ According to a British official at the time, at least one of the documents was printed in the third week of January 1804. No original manuscript copy signed by the founding fathers remains today.

Analyzing the Haitian Declaration of Independence, for so long dwarfed by the better known declarations in North America (1776) and South America (1810–1822), helps students understand several important features of the Age of Revolutions. To make sense of the declaration and its significance, it is necessary to grasp the unique circumstances that inspired the move toward independence, understand Haiti's regional connections within the Caribbean and Atlantic worlds, and appreciate the contested aftermath of the declaration. On one hand, the document relied on imitation and inspiration. On the other hand, Haitian leaders were aware that their situation required a significantly different document from that of the United States. Together, these elements of similarity and difference emphasize the significance of the Haitian experience as a counterpart to the American and French revolutions—and comparing their founding documents is a particularly lively teaching exercise. These similarities and differences reveal Haiti's self-liberation as a generative force in its own right—a force whose ongoing impact critically influenced interpretations of the radical reach and the pragmatic limits of revolutionary ideals in the early nineteenth-century Atlantic world.

The Haitian Revolution

The Haitian Declaration of Independence concluded a long and brutal revolution that involved international and interracial armies composed of both free and enslaved soldiers. The leaders of the revolution issued the Declaration of Independence to preserve the gains they had achieved: freedom and sovereignty. For students, understanding the complexities of the Haitian Revolution and the diverse people who participated is crucial for an analysis of the inspiration for

and the implications of the Haitian Declaration of Independence. In the classroom, it is easy to get bogged down in the details of the chronology of events, and in doing so overlook the central themes. It is important to emphasize to students that the Haitian Revolution was not simply a slave rebellion on a large scale. Drawing on David Geggus's work, I find it useful to organize the narrative of the revolution into three tripartite groupings: first, the political goals of the revolution: freedom, equality, and liberty; second, legal-racial groupings: slaves, free people of color, and whites; and finally, international warfare between France, Great Britain, and Spain.² The three legal-racial groups sought to secure their own version of freedom, equality, and liberty and the European empires fought to control the Atlantic world's most wealth-producing colony.

The revolution began in 1789 with local rebellions by free people of color who were responding to the French Revolution and demanding equal rights as free citizens. Many historians periodize the Haitian Revolution beginning in 1791, but the resistance (sometimes violent) of the free people of color had a much broader impact for their own legal status and for the actions of the enslaved population. In 1791 enslaved people in the northern plains of Saint-Domingue coordinated a massive uprising and set the sugarcane fields ablaze, destroying the richest area of the colony. The rebels did not articulate their specific goals on paper, but very quickly a division developed between the revolutionary leadership and the population of enslaved people. The leaders sought to secure privileged positions for themselves in a reimagined colonial hierarchy that involved military discipline and plantation labor. The majority of enslaved laborers sought to develop peasant farms on family-owned land.³ The British and Spanish took advantage of the internal turmoil in Saint-Domingue to try to secure possession of the colony; the Spanish invaded the northeast via Santo Domingo (modern-day Dominican Republic) and the British invaded the south and west via Jamaica. The international conflict helped the rebels secure additional benefits, and they forced the French commissioners to abolish slavery in the colony in 1793. The following year, the French National Convention ratified this decision and expanded its application to the entire French Empire. In the colony, a former slave and slave owner, Toussaint Louverture (fleshed out in more depth by Christopher Hodson in this volume), soon secured control over the colony as the French-appointed governor-general. He invited white plantation owners who had fled the colony to

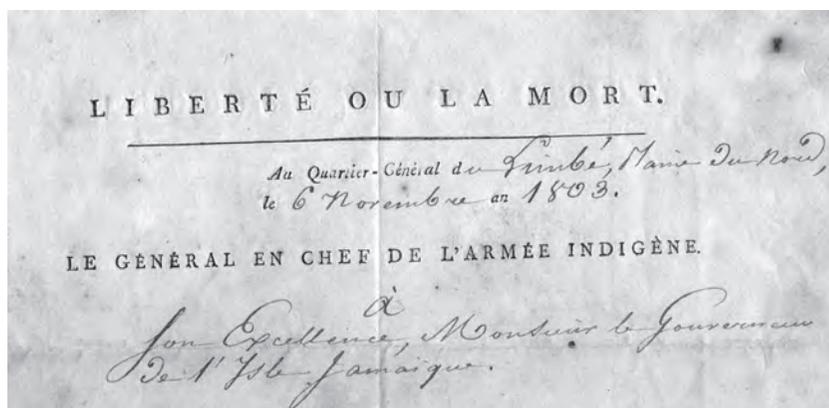
return to their properties and forced former slaves to return to the plantations under the new title of *cultivateurs* (cultivators). Plantation owners were prohibited from whipping as a form of punishment against their laborers, and they were supposed to pay employees a small wage or a share of the crop. Although he implemented these policies with the hope that he could increase colonial production to renew economic productivity, many of the formerly enslaved people criticized them for being far too similar to slavery. Louverture was not the only leader to try to force former slaves back on the plantation, but these policies were only partially successful. For the most part, former slaves refused to return to the sugar plantations, and coffee and cotton became Haiti's primary exports.

In 1801, Louverture issued a colonial constitution that maintained an allegiance to France but also established an autonomous government. Napoléon Bonaparte, newly established as first consul in France, rejected this challenge to his authority and sent forces to disarm Louverture's army and reestablish metropolitan control over the colony. In 1802 a massive army arrived in Saint-Domingue, under the direction of Bonaparte's brother-in-law, Victor Emmanuel Leclerc. The army tricked and captured Louverture and then deported him to France. He died in prison in the Jura Mountains in 1803. The war between Leclerc's forces and the rebel army, then under the leadership of Jean-Jacques Dessalines, was extremely violent. Both sides aimed to completely eradicate the other army. At this point the revolution became a war for independence. Rumors began to spread that Bonaparte aimed to reinstitute slavery in the colony, and Dessalines and his leading generals became convinced that freedom could not be protected under French rule. By the middle of 1803, it was clear that Dessalines's forces were headed toward victory, and he began preparing for independence. He contacted government officials elsewhere in the Caribbean and the United States to notify them of the inevitable move for independence.⁴ At the end of November, the French troops evacuated the island but did not concede defeat in the war. They continued to claim ownership of the island until 1825. Between 1804 and 1825, therefore, both the Haitian government and the French government claimed sovereignty over the territory. The Haitian government felt the constant threat of a French reinvasion and the military became a central feature of the state. Warfare never resumed, but until the French recognized Haitian independence in 1825, it was not clear that the revolution was over.



La Liberté ou La Mort (stamp, unidentified 1793–4, Paris). (No. 4821 from Carl de Vinck collection, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6948658q>; Bibliothèque nationale de France)

Once students have the grounding in the historical events, they can turn to the Haitian Declaration of Independence with an understanding of the context and the motives behind its creation. The signature rallying points of the Saint-Domingue revolutionaries drew on those framed in North America, which students can almost always invoke—a helpful way of shifting the focus to the documents themselves. In 1775, American revolutionary (and wealthy slaveholder) Patrick Henry demanded, “give me liberty, or give me death!” French revolutionaries immediately adopted and adapted the phrase and championed “la liberté ou la mort.”⁵ The phrase grew in popularity during the Terror, and the meaning transitioned to a threat: give me liberty or I will kill you.⁶ The revolutionaries in Saint-Domingue similarly adopted variations on the phrase, and during the war for Haitian independence (1802–1803) Dessalines made the rallying cry “liberté ou la mort” (liberty or death) the official slogan of the Armée Indigène.⁷ Their use of the phrase could both be read as a willingness to die for the cause of liberty or as a



Detail from Jean-Jacques Dessalines to George Nugent, November 6, 1803. (National Library of Jamaica, MS 72 851n; courtesy of National Library of Jamaica)

willingness to kill for the cause. Such continuities illustrate the extent to which the same revolutionary context that produced the American Declaration of Independence also produced the Haitian and later Latin American “acts” of independence.

The founding document of the United States was the first ever declaration of independence and thus served as a precedent for the later initiatives. Indeed, the American Declaration of Independence began a new genre of political writing.⁸ “No document in world history before 1776,” David Armitage argues, “had made such an announcement of statehood in the language of independence.”⁹ The document itself does not use the phrase “declaration of independence” or “independence,” but Armitage tells us, “for months before July 1776 . . . contemporaries had been speaking of the need for ‘an independency,’ a ‘declaration of independency,’ or a ‘declaration of independence.’”¹⁰ By 1804, therefore, the phrase would have been incorporated into the vocabulary of the revolutionary Atlantic. Although the content of the Haitian document was different, its publication helped establish the new genre of postcolonial political writing by announcing, like its American predecessor, the independence and sovereignty of a former colony and the people who lived there. This genre centered on a “distinctive assertion of statehood as independence.”¹¹ Two other declarations of independence had been issued after the American one: Vermont’s Declaration of Independence in 1777 from the United States and the Manifeste de la

Province de Flandres in 1790 from the Austrian Empire. On the other hand, the American declaration was not written in isolation: as Pauline Maier has demonstrated, many local resolutions bolstered the authority of the Second Continental Congress and provided some of the impetus behind the Declaration of Independence.¹² So if, on one hand, neither the Vermont nor the Belgian declarations created lasting nation-states, they may provide students with examples of the textured way such texts varied according to context across time and the space. On the other hand, the local resolutions in the US colonies, explored by Maier, allow students to see how the American declaration—its language and its support—was buttressed at the grass roots.

The Haitian Declaration

On January 1, 1804, Dessalines assembled his leading generals in the city of Gonaïves. He instructed his secretaries to compose a formal Declaration of Independence.¹³ One of the first problems of which students should be aware is that the question of authorship has been a contentious issue with respect to the Haitian declaration. Dessalines did not receive any formal education and he was illiterate, although he could sign his name. Most foreign observers criticized him for being emotional and extremely violent; scholars almost never portray him as a skilled diplomat or a savvy national leader. Nevertheless, it is obvious that Dessalines contributed to the creation of this document and that his authorial voice is clear in all of the proclamations associated with him.¹⁴ Dessalines first tasked his secretary Charéron to write the “acts” that would declare the island independent from France. According to nineteenth-century Haitian historian Beaubrun Ardouin, Charéron composed a document modeled on the American declaration. The text of this first draft no longer exists, but Ardouin claims that it affirmed the rights of “le race noire” (the black race) and articulated the complaints of the population against France.¹⁵ According to Ardouin, Dessalines decided that this document “lacked heat and energy.”¹⁶

Dessalines then instructed his secretary Louis-Félix Boisrond-Tonnerre to rewrite the declaration after hearing Boisrond-Tonnerre state that to write the document someone would need, “the skin of a white to serve as the parchment, his skull for the inkstand, his blood for the ink, and a bayonet for the pen.”¹⁷ Although Ardouin did not condone the vengeful sentiments expressed by Boisrond-Tonnerre, he admitted

that to understand these emotions, one had to think about the context in which the document was produced—a point on which students should reflect.

When making comparisons with other declarations, students might also ask about the format of the document. The document that we have come to know as the *Acte de l'Indépendance* or the Declaration of Independence is composed of three parts printed as an eight-page pamphlet and as a single-sheet broadside.¹⁸ The first part, headed “*Armée Indigène*,” recorded the oath sworn and signed by Dessalines and his generals to renounce France forever and die rather than live under its dominion. The second, the longest and most often reproduced section, makes up the proclamation signed by Dessalines and addressed to the people of “Hayti.” It explains why they should break their connections with France and concludes with an oath “to live free and independent”; this section is the one closest in substance (if not in form) to other declarations of independence before and after 1804. The third section records another oath by which the generals of the Haitian army affirmed Dessalines as governor-general-for-life, with sovereign powers to make peace, war, and name his successor. The words *indépendance* and *indépendant* appear eleven times in the document, which is dated January 1, 1804 (a new year’s day and a traditional holiday on slave plantations), as the first day of Haitian independence (*l’indépendance d’Hayti*). Nowhere does the term *declaration* or its synonyms appear.

The designation as a “declaration” first came from the English-speaking world. When Edward Corbet, a British agent sent to Haiti in early 1804, gave the first copy of the document to the governor of Jamaica in January 1804, he called it “their declaration of independence.”¹⁹ This should not be surprising because the American declaration was already familiar. In French documents, it was more often called a *proclamation* or *acte* of independence rather than a declaration, indicating the distinct genres within Anglophone and Francophone legal and political culture. When Haitian foreign minister Jean-Baptiste Symphore Lissant de Pradine collected Haiti’s laws in 1851, he began with the “*Acte de l’Indépendance*” of 1804, the first year of Haiti’s independent, postrevolutionary history.²⁰

The language of the declaration also offers an opportunity for rewarding analysis for students. One of the first things readers invited to compare the two texts will notice is that most of the Haitian Declaration was written in Dessalines’s voice as a proclamation from him personally

to the people of Haiti as well as to foreign audiences around the world. In contrast, the American declaration was a group composition that referenced “us” and “our” within an overall claim to be in the name of “our people.” Whereas the American document appears to include the population at large, it excludes women, slaves, and natives—it even explicitly bars “the merciless Indian Savages.” Also immediately apparent is that in declaring independence, both the Haitian and American governments sought to re-create the country’s identity to initiate the nation-building process: both documents renamed the territory over which they were claiming sovereignty. The American declaration was the first to use “the United States of America.”²¹ In contrast, “Hayti” had been used by the native Taíno before the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1492, and even in the eighteenth century, the name “Hayti” could be seen on maps. The spelling “Hayti” was used most often in the first decades after 1804, but “Haïti” was also used infrequently. “Hayti” continued to be the official spelling into the mid-nineteenth century when “Haïti” was then adopted. The reason for the transition is unclear.

Why the revolutionary leaders in Saint-Domingue chose the name “Hayti” is not clear, but this was not the only example of native inspiration by these generals. Dessalines’s army, for example, was called the *Armée Indigène*, or Indigenous Army. The army had previously been known as the “Sons of the Inca.”²² In choosing this name, Dessalines and his generals erased the memory of French colonialism and returned to a time of independent rule. The declaration argued that the impact of French colonialism was still too visible on the island. “Everything recalls the memory of the cruelties of those barbarous people,” Dessalines argued, “our laws, our manners, our towns, everything still carries the imprint of the French.” Renaming the island was one way to erase that memory. He also argued that the job was not over: “the French name still haunts our island.”

Revolutionary Goals

The explicit objectives and targets of both revolutionary texts are instructive because “independence” and “freedom” were the goals and justification for the declarations of the United States and Haiti. Students can explore the meanings of these terms with reference to their contexts. Freedom meant freedom from slavery, but for those in the thirteen colonies, freedom was limited to the metaphorical enslavement of

colonialism. In the mainland colonies, the primary goal was to end the alleged tyranny of the British Crown. "A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant," the American declaration argued, "is unfit to be the ruler of a free people." "The primary purpose of the American Declaration," David Armitage argues, "like that of most declarations of independence that have been issued since 1776, was to express the international legal sovereignty of the United States."²³

This language of freedom and independence derived from widely circulated texts of eighteenth-century natural law, most notably the Swiss jurist Emer de Vattel's hugely popular compendium *Le Droit des Gens* (1758). Vattel wrote of the natural condition of humans in the state of nature as "free and independent" (*libre et indépendant*), words that rapidly became integrated into legal and diplomatic vocabularies to describe peoples and states.²⁴ Vattel's work may have been in the hands of Dessalines's secretaries but his language had long since broken away from its immediate source, as in the refrain of the "Hymne Haytiène" (1803): "Vivons, mourons, ses vrais Enfants, / Libres, indépendans" (Let us live, let us die, his true children / Free, independent).²⁵ In natural jurisprudence, the connection between individual freedom and collective independence was metaphorical: humans and states were both persons, sharing similar characteristics of autonomy and vulnerability to extinction or unfreedom. In the rhetoric of the Haitian Revolution, the analogy was far more than metaphorical. If the people of Haiti lost their independence, it would mean more than a return to collective subordination within an empire: it could mean their legal reenslavement. While slavery had been abolished in the colony in 1793 and in the French Empire in 1794, this freedom, the Haitians argued, was not secure under French colonialism. French armies arrived in the Caribbean in 1802 to reassert metropolitan control over the colonies, and rumors quickly began to spread that their plan was to reinstitute slavery. Fear in Saint-Domingue magnified when news arrived that slavery had been reinstated in Guadeloupe and French Guiana.²⁶ "Swear then to live free and independent" (*vivre libre et indépendant*) "and to prefer death to everything that would lead to replace you under the yoke," urged Dessalines.

Students will observe that the process of targeting guilty parties according to each declaration of independence also produced different goals and justifications. In the case of the United States, the British king

was personally responsible for the alleged unlawful impositions on American colonial life. The list of grievances was addressed to the king himself. "Whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends," they argued, "it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government." In the early 1790s, white plantation owners in Saint-Domingue similarly—in a comparison that will provide fodder for student thought—argued for greater colonial sovereignty as a way to preserve their slave society because they felt threatened by the egalitarian rhetoric of the French Revolution. "Freedom," in the Haitian Revolution, therefore, had diverse meanings for various participants who sought to advance their own goals.

In contrast to the American, the Haitian declaration held all "Frenchmen" responsible. No French citizen was welcome in Haiti, nor would they ever be. The distinction, of course, makes sense. The Americans targeted government structures and felt enslaved by state economic policies. Haitians, however, felt personally threatened, and each French citizen had the ability to become a slave master. They had experienced their enslavement in a personal and very violent way. The response, as one should expect, matched that violence. These contrasts encourage the students to ground the two declarations in the different contexts and experiences in which they were produced.

Dessalines justified Haiti's independence by focusing on the incompatibility of the two populations. "What do we have in common with these executioners?," he asked. "Their cruelty compared to our patient moderation; their color with ours, the vast expanse of the seas that separate us, our avenging climate, all tell us that they are not our brothers, that they will never be, and that if they find asylum among us, they will again be the instigators of our troubles and our divisions." Dessalines tried to initiate an endless war; he could see no resolution to the conflict between the two countries. In contrast, the American declaration referenced their "British brethren" and specifically targeted the administration. The Americans valued "the ties of our common kindred," and sought to establish normal diplomatic relations with the British Empire; to "hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends."

Students might consider the timing of each document, which also affected its content. The American Declaration was composed and published before most of the war for independence and therefore preceded the bulk of the bloodshed. In contrast, the Haitian Declaration came

immediately after the most violent and brutal years of the Haitian Revolution. The memory of the quasi-genocidal policies of the French during the 1802–1803 war for independence shaped the Haitian declaration and the future policies of the Haitian government. The declaration was a call to arms and initiated a series of massacres, ordered by Dessalines, during the first months of 1804.²⁷ The Haitian army systematically killed white French men, women, and children. Dessalines made a few exceptions, and these people were permitted to join the Haitian nation; this was made official in his 1805 constitution. White citizens of other nations were protected from this violence, but it terrified them nonetheless.²⁸

Government and International Profile

Thinking about the suggested framework of governance and sovereignty is another way to encourage students to locate points of similarity and difference across the declarations. In the Haitian Declaration of Independence, Dessalines addressed the “citizens” of Haiti. Thereafter these citizens became passive participants in the new nation. In fact, the continued threat of a French reinvasion led Dessalines to establish a military dictatorship. The eternal war against France required a large army and the war materials to supply that army. To secure these supplies, Dessalines, like Louverture before him, concluded that they had to maintain a strong export economy. To do this, he tried to force former plantation slaves, or *cultivateurs*, to return to the plantations. He was largely unsuccessful in reviving the sugar economy but Haiti continued to export coffee and other crops throughout the nineteenth century.²⁹ The Haitian declaration did not reference “rights” and prioritized national independence and universal freedom over individual rights.

Both the American and the Haitian declarations attempted to gain membership in the community of nations and empires in the Atlantic world. “They sought confirmation of their standing alongside other such states,” Armitage argues, “by justifying their secession and, in some cases, their recombination with other territories and peoples. In short, they declared their possession of sovereignty both internally, over all their own people, and externally, against all other states and peoples.”³⁰ The American declaration claimed the rights of “Free and Independent states,” which gave them “Power to levy War, conclude

Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do." Similarly, Des-salines, in his role as governor-general for life, acquired the power "to make peace, war, and to name his successor."

Students will learn much from the declarations by grasping that in order to secure foreign support for their independence projects, the US and Haitian governments composed each document with a public audience in mind and made the text available to foreign readers by printing it for distribution. People around the Atlantic world and beyond could read the text in various newspapers. The US declaration first appeared as a printed document and only later, at the end of July or early August 1776, did the authors sign a handwritten manuscript copy.³¹ "After its publication," Armitage reports, "the Declaration rapidly entered national and international circuits of exchange. Copies passed from hand to hand, desk to desk, country to country, often with (to us) remarkable speed, but sometimes with perhaps less surprising inefficiency and mishap."³²

We do not know which specific document of the Declaration of Independence Boisrond-Tonnerre read aloud to the crowd gathered at Gonaïves on January 1, 1804. As foreign governments reacted to news of the American and Haitian declarations, it became clear that the publication of a document claiming a place "among the powers of the earth" was only the beginning of a protracted period of unprecedented international debate about sovereignty, equality, and freedom. As Eliga Gould's research reveals, it took a contentious debate over almost three decades for the United States to secure equal membership in the community of nations.³³

The debate about the United States did not expedite or facilitate international consideration of Haiti's Declaration of Independence. Rather, the international community in the Atlantic world reacted inconsistently to Haiti's triumphant and provocative self-liberation, which engendered not only fear and rejection but also opportunism and support.³⁴ Leaders in Haiti recognized the explicit challenge that their success posed to European and American slave labor systems and quickly reassured foreign governments that Haiti would be a good neighbor to their territories. At the same time, Haitian leaders sought to capitalize on the continuing conflicts among the European powers by making Haiti a new player in the geopolitics of the Atlantic world. Taken together, these ambitions meant that Haitian leaders were prepared to place limits

on their professions of universal freedom so as to protect the achievements of the Haitian Revolution by forming strategic alliances.³⁵

Conclusion

The scholarly repositioning of the Haitian Revolution as a distinct and significant counterpart to the American and French revolutions illustrates the central role of new evidence and perspectives in inspiring revision of established historical analyses. This makes it an exciting proposition for students. By systematically comparing the respective historical documents associated with the emergence of the United States and Haiti, students will be able to understand the ways ideals such as liberty and equality depended on the context within which they were articulated and promoted. Clearly, there are pitfalls as well as benefits in comparing the Haitian declaration to the familiar and celebrated American precedent. It is unrealistic to expect all nations after 1776 to want to mirror the decisions made by the United States in their effort to establish an independent country. This assumption often begins with the premise that the United States was the model and all other nations attempted to mimic or measure up. Indeed, discussing the Haitian Declaration of Independence in classrooms outside Haiti presents specific challenges because the most familiar reference point—not only in the United States but elsewhere as well—is a document that has come to symbolize so much of contemporary US identity. Freedom, equality, and natural rights stand out in popular consciousness as the most important and memorable values articulated in the American Declaration of Independence. Instructors can certainly anticipate that while most students would struggle to recall the list of grievances against the British Crown, they would have some familiarity with the values espoused in the document. “We hold these truths to be self-evident,” reads the American Declaration of Independence, “that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” The rest of the text, less familiar today, is equally important in terms of the establishment of an independent and sovereign republic and that is why systematic comparison reveals the significance and meaning of other related but unique declarations of independence. Although many of the issues and obstacles were the same, the substantially different contexts of the thirteen colonies and revolutionary Saint-Domingue meant that how

the respective leaders resolved (or attempted to resolve) each issue not only resulted in distinct documents but also launched the countries on different trajectories.

The case of the Haitian Declaration of Independence illustrates the far more fragmentary historical archive of a country that struggled to gain recognition in an Atlantic world that was largely hostile to the Haitian version of freedom and equality. Close reading of documents such as these declarations deepens students' appreciation of the complex ways specific historical contexts intersect with larger geographic, ideological, and cultural contexts. Concepts such as universal rights have meaning for individuals and groups depending on how they are interpreted and lived. The US declaration targeted state policies, and the Haitian declaration aimed to protect individual freedom. Both targeted enslavement (metaphorical or legal). The result, however, was—at least on the surface—dramatically different. The United States established a democratic republic in contrast to the successive military dictatorships that led the Haitian government for most of the nineteenth century. Students should remember, however, that the proclaimed democracy in the United States excluded enslaved people, women, and Native Americans. During this same period, the population at large was continually excluded from state politics in Haiti.³⁶ While many historical actors and scholars have referred to Haiti as a “black republic,” in 1804, the new country was called “l'État d'Hayti” (the State of Haiti) and was not officially described as a republic. Such complexity further illustrates why new evidence and new perspectives will undoubtedly continue to inspire new ways of interpreting and teaching the local and global, immediate and enduring, consequences of the Age of Revolutions.

NOTES

1. Julia Gaffield, “Haiti’s Declaration of Independence: Digging for Lost Documents in the Archives of the Atlantic World,” *The Appendix* 2, no. 1 (2014).

2. David Geggus, *The Haitian Revolution: A Documentary History* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2014), xv.

3. Jeremy Popkin, *A Concise History of the Haitian Revolution* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 48–52.

4. Julia Gaffield, “Haiti and Jamaica in the Remaking of the Early Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (2012): 583–614; Philippe R. Girard, “Jean-Jacques Dessalines and the Atlantic System: A Re-appraisal,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (2012): 549–82.

5. Michel Biard, *La Liberté ou la Mort: Mourir en Député, 1792-1795* (Paris: Tallandier, 2015), 9.
6. Many thanks to Jeremy Popkin for his thoughts on this issue.
7. Philippe R. Girard, *The Slaves Who Defeated Napoléon: Toussaint Louverture and the Haitian War of Independence, 1801-1804* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011), 262.
8. David Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 13.
9. *Ibid.*, 23.
10. *Ibid.*, 17.
11. *Ibid.*, 114.
12. Pauline Maier, *American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence* (New York: Knopf, 1997), see esp. the appendixes, 217-34.
13. The document is available for digital download at the National Archives of the United Kingdom's website. Translations are available in Julia Gaffield, *The Haitian Declaration of Independence: Creation, Context, and Legacy* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015), or by Laurent Dubois and John Garrigus at <http://today.duke.edu/showcase/haitideclaration/declarationstext.html>.
14. Deborah Jenson, "Before Malcolm X, Dessalines: A French Tradition of Black Atlantic Radicalism," *International Journal of Francophone Studies* 10, no. 3 (2007): 329-44.
15. Beaubrun Ardouin, *Études sur l'histoire d'Haïti suivies de la vie du général JM Borgella*, vol. 6 (Paris: Author, 1856), 23.
16. "Manquait de chaleur et d'énergie." Ardouin, *Études*, 23.
17. "Il faut la peau d'un blanc pour servir de parchemin, son crâne pour écritoire, son sang pour encre, et une baïonette pour plume." Ardouin, *Études*, 24.
18. The National Archives of the United Kingdom, CO 137/111, fols. 113-17; for the broadside version see National Archives of the United Kingdom, MFQ 1/184 (removed from the Admiralty records ADM 1/254).
19. Edward Corbet to George Nugent, January 25, 1804, National Archives of the United Kingdom, CO 137/111.
20. Jean-Baptiste Symphore Linstant de Pradine, *Recueil général des lois et actes du Gouvernement d'Haïti depuis la proclamation de son Indépendance jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: A. Durand, 1851); Parick Tardieu, "The Debate Surrounding the Printing of the Haitian Declaration of Independence," in *The Haitian Declaration of Independence*, ed. Julia Gaffield (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015).
21. Armitage, *Declaration of Independence*, 22.
22. David Geggus, "The Naming of Haiti," *New West India Guide* 71 (1997): 43-68.
23. Armitage, *Declaration of Independence*, 21.

24. Armitage, *Foundations of Modern International Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 223–25.
25. Jeremy Popkin, “Jean-Jacques Dessalines, Norbert Thoret, and the Violent Aftermath of the Haitian Declaration of Independence,” in *The Haitian Declaration of Independence*, ed. Gaffield; “Hymne Háýtiène” (1803), National Archives of the United Kingdom, CO 137/111.
26. Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787–1804* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Miranda Frances Spieler, “The Destruction of Liberty in French Guiana: Law, Identity and the Meaning of Legal Space, 1794–1830,” *Social History* 36, no. 3 (2011): 260–79. Slavery was not abolished in Martinique since it was occupied by the British Empire between 1794 and 1802.
27. For more on the massacres, see Philippe R. Girard, “Caribbean Genocide: Racial War in Haiti, 1802–4,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 39, no. 2 (2005): 138–61; Popkin, “Jean-Jacques Dessalines, Norbert Thoret”; Gaffield, “Haiti and Jamaica.”
28. Julia Gaffield, *Haitian Connections in the Atlantic World: Recognition after Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015).
29. Sugar planters in the Spanish colonies of Cuba and Puerto Rico benefited from the collapse of Saint-Domingue sugar and began a new sugar boom in the nineteenth century. For more see Ada Ferrer, *Freedom’s Mirror: Cuba and Haiti in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
30. Armitage, *Declaration of Independence*, 20.
31. *Ibid.*, 12.
32. *Ibid.*, 15.
33. Eliga H. Gould, *Among the Powers of the Earth: The American Revolution and the Making of a New World Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).
34. Gaffield, *Haitian Connections*.
35. Julia Gaffield, “‘Liberté, Indépendance’: Haitian Antislavery and National Independence,” in *A Global History of Anti-Slavery Politics in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. William Mulligan and Maurice Bric (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
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