

Unit Activities, cont'd.

Social and Political Structure in Saint Domingue

The white plantation owners—who comprised just six percent of the island's population—saw themselves as an important province of France rather than a colony. They were euphoric when the National Assembly recognized the principle of colonial representation, and they demanded an end to French economic and commercial restrictions. The free black plantation owners, some of whom were designated as mulattoes, assumed that they would now be treated as property owners with full protection of their civil and economic rights.

At the same time, the middle- and lower-class whites saw the revolution as a chance for their own political and social equality with the plantation owners.

The African slaves still on plantations, or the maroons who escaped to the mountains, also desired the application of the Declaration of the Rights of Man in order to get their freedom and be treated as equals.

Read the primary source below and determine the key issues for the French government on giving rights to the people of color in their colonies.

Abbe Gregoire (1750-1831), a parish priest and deputy from the clergy of Lorraine, spoke in favor of minorities on many occasions during the Revolution. He had won one of the prizes of the Academy of Metz in 1788 for his essay urging relaxation of restrictions against the Jews in order to encourage their assimilation into the French nation, and he favored granting them full rights of citizenship in the debates of December 1789. He also took up the cause of the free blacks. After trying to speak on their behalf in the National Assembly and publishing the pamphlet below, he continued to raise the question in 1790 and 1791. Gregoire argued that giving rights to the free blacks would actually help maintain the slave system (free blacks manned the militias charged with hunting fugitive slaves in the colonies). But, he also suggested that he still believed in the abolition of slavery.

The whites, having might on their side, have pronounced unjustly that a darkened skin excludes one from the advantages of society. Priding themselves on their complexion, they have raised a wall separating them from a class of free men that are improperly called people of color or mixed-race. They have vowed the degradation of several thousand estimable individuals, as if all were not children of a common father

Four questions present themselves relative to free people of color: 1) Will they be assimilated in every way to the whites? 2) Will they have representatives at the National Assembly? 3) What will be the number of representatives? 4) Do those who ask to fill this post have a legal commission? A preliminary examination of what they do in our colonies will resolve these questions by informing us what they should become.

Bearing all the burdens of society more than whites, only partially sharing the advantages, being prey to contempt, often to flagrant insult, to anguish, this is the lot of the people of color, especially in St. Domingue.

One rigorous consequence of what precedes is that the rejection of the people of color threatens the state with an unsettling shock; if on the contrary you fill in the gap that separates them from whites, if by bringing minds closer together you cement the mutual attachment of these two classes, their reunion will create a mass of forces that is more effective for containing the slaves, whose afflictions will no doubt be alleviated and about whose lot it will be permitted to be touched, until that opportune moment when they can be freed The people of color being equal in everything to the whites, one will surely not ask if they should be active in legislation and send deputies to the National Assembly. Subjected to the laws and to taxation, citizens must consent to the one and the other, without which they can refuse obedience and payment. If someone could claim to possess to a higher degree this right that is equal for everyone, it would be without doubt those who, having been more afflicted by long and multiple vexations, have more complaints to lodge. (Abbe Baptiste-Henri Gregoire, *Memoir in Favor of the People of Color or Mixed-Race of Saint Domingue* [1789].)

Unit Activities, cont'd.

Discussion Questions

- Discuss how each of the groups on Saint Domingue might react to the French Declaration of the Rights of Man.
- Predict how the conflict on Saint Domingue might make other colonial powers or other slave-owning societies uneasy. It is important to remember how valuable Saint Domingue was for France's foreign trade revenue and imports.
- Discuss how the events of one revolution led to events in the other revolution.
- Compare the goals and effects of the Haitian, French, American, and English revolutions.

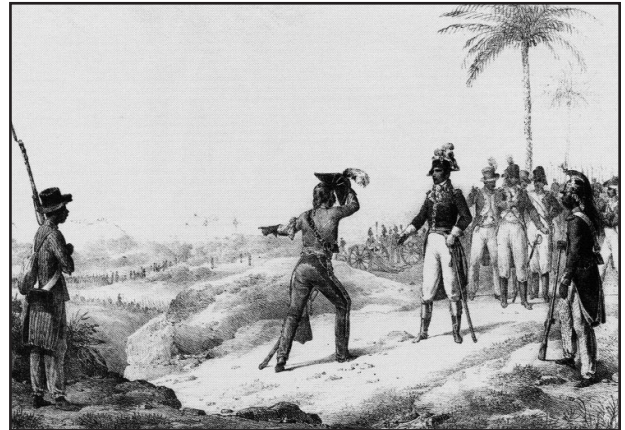
Simon Bolivar:

Since it is not possible for us to select the most perfect and complete form of government, let us avoid falling into demagogic anarchy or monocratic tyranny. These opposite extremes would only wreck us on similar reefs of misfortune and dishonor; hence, we must seek a mean between them. I say: Do not adopt the best system of government, but the one which is most likely to succeed. (Richard W. Slatta, *Simon Bolivar's Quest for Glory* [Texas A and M University Press, 2003].)

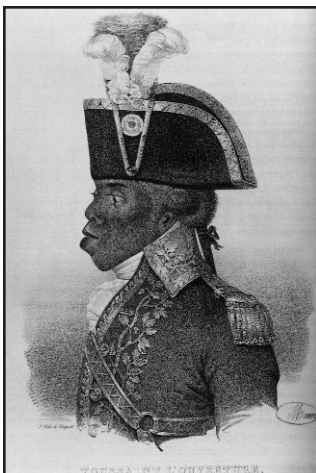
Look at the images of Touissant and Bolivar below and on the following page. How do their military portraits support or weaken your arguments about how much they intended to extend full civil rights to citizens under the control of their proposed governments?



Item #3514. Anonymous, SURRENDER OF TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE (c. 1800–1900). Courtesy of Fritz Daguillard.



Item #3509. Charles Etienne Motte, SURRENDER OF MAUREPAS (c. 1700–1800). Courtesy of Fritz Daguillard.



Item #3516. Nicolas Eustache Maurin, TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE (1838). Courtesy of Fritz Daguillard.

Unit Activities, cont'd.



Item #4087. Anonymus, SIMON BOLIVAR LEADING HIS TROOPS (n.d.). Image donated by Corbis-Bettmann.



Item #2402. Anonymus, SIMON BOLIVAR (1890). Courtesy of The Library of Congress.



Item #4218. Jose Gil de Castro, SIMON BOLIVAR (1825). Courtesy of The Library of Congress.

~~Activity 2: The Wahhabit Influence on the Sokoto Caliphate~~ ~~25 minutes~~

~~Use the sections below to identify the Wahhabi influence on the Sokoto caliphate. Write a thesis paragraph that argues how the Wahhabi reformist ideas led to a revolution in West Africa.~~

~~In the Islamic world—from West Africa to Southeast Asia—Islamic revitalization movements were inspired by the ideals of such religious clerics and activists as Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab in Arabia and Usman dan Fodio in West Africa. The idea of revitalizing Islam or renewing Islam (“teched” means “to make something new” in Arabic) is interpreted differently by different people. For Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab in eighteenth-century Arabia, it meant trying to remove from Islam various practices that he thought were detracting from the worship of the one true God. Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab believed that Islam had fallen into a degraded state. He challenged the polytheistic beliefs and secular practices that had begun to take hold among the Arabian people. His message attracted many followers. Extensive education and travel shaped Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab’s views: He received a formal Islamic education in a literalist school of thought, which stressed adherence to every detail of Islamic law along with the omnipotence and inscrutability of the divine being. After his formal education, he followed in the footsteps of many other Muslim scholars, traveling to Mecca, Basrah, Baghdad, Kurdistan, Hamadhan, Isphahan, and Damascus in search of knowledge. It was 20 years before he returned home. His two decades of travel reinforced the literalist tendencies of his early academic training. According to one scholar, he had seen the “conditions of life among the majority of Muslim peoples and was moved to utter disgust by the laxity in worship among them.” (M.S. Zaharaddin, “Wahhabism and Its Influence Outside Arabia,” *Islamic Quarterly* 23, no. 3 [Great Britain, 1979]: 147.)~~

~~Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab wrote a treatise called *Book of Unity*, in which he “insisted that the Qu’ran and the Prophet were the only valid Muslim authorities, and proposed to return to the fundamental principles embodied in Muslim scriptures. Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab had dedicated himself to the establishment of an Islamic state in which he would be juridical advisor, or *shaykh*.” (Ira Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, 2nd ed. [Cambridge University Press, 2002] 572.) By 1744, his dream began to come true: By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, pilgrims returning home from Mecca were transporting Wahhabi reformist ideals to their own parts of the world—to India, to Indonesia ... and to West Africa. There, one of the most powerful Islamic revitalization movements was led by the Fulani Muslim cleric Usman dan Fodio in what is today Nigeria: “It is well known in our time Islam ... is widespread among people other than the sultans. As for the sultans, they are undoubtedly unbelievers, even though~~