

THE FLAG HERITAGE FOUNDATION MONOGRAPH AND TRANSLATION SERIES  
PUBLICATION No. 3

# HISTORY OF THE HAITIAN FLAG OF INDEPENDENCE

by  
Odette Roy Fombrun



Translated by Christopher Phillips

Flag Heritage Foundation  
Danvers, Massachusetts  
2013

# **HISTOIRE DU DRAPEAU HAITIEN**

**Odette Roy Fombrun**



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The original cover of the 1986 edition

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MONOGRAPH AND TRANSLATION SERIES**

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A flag chart appears in color on the inside back cover.



## EDITOR'S PREFACE

by David F. Phillips

Before the French Revolution, what is now the Republic of Haiti was a French colony called *Saint-Domingue*. It was an agricultural colony, producing enormous quantities of coffee, cacao, indigo, cotton and above all sugar for the European market. This agricultural production depended on slave labor, continually replenished through the African slave trade. By 1789 Saint-Domingue had an estimated half a million African (and some mulatto) slaves and a white population of about 32,000, divided between the planter class (*grands blancs*) and a relatively powerless non-propertied remainder (*petits blancs*). There were also about 25,000 free blacks and free people of mixed race called *gens de couleur* [people of color], some of whom were slaveholders, and communities of escaped slaves (*marrons*, called in English *maroons*) living as fugitives in the interior.<sup>1</sup> The indigenous Taíno (Amerindians) were by then largely extinct as a discrete population.

A draconian law called the *Code Noir* [Black Code] governed the relationships between the ruling whites and the other populations in this racially stratified society. Slave rebellions occurred from time to time and were suppressed with frenzied cruelty. But the French Revolution, beginning in 1789, changed the basis of this society immediately and forever. The Declaration of the Rights of Man, adopted by the French National Assembly in 1789, declared all people equal in theory, but without abolishing slavery. The National Assembly granted political rights to the richest of the *gens de couleur* in 1790. Demands for local recognition of these rights for the *gens de couleur*, but specifically excluding the enslaved black population, led to the insurrection of Vincent Ogé and his savage execution on the wheel in 1791. Agitation for independence was largely limited to the *grands blancs* and the *gens de couleur*, who wished to continue the plantation economy based on slavery but break free of French colonial trade restrictions, which limited imports and exports to France only.

A full-dress slave rebellion broke out in August 1791 (largely in the north where the plantations were concentrated), and the pent-up rage of the slave population was very violently expressed. There was violence in the south as well, where the *gens de couleur* at first allied with the slaves but later switched sides. In response the French revolutionary government revoked the grant of political rights to the *gens de couleur* and sent commissioners with an expeditionary force (the First Commission) to put down the rebellion, which by that time controlled a substantial portion of the territory of French Saint-Domingue.

The military action did not go well for the French. Resistance was fierce, and tropical diseases weakened their forces. To try to unite the anti-slave elements of Saint-Domingue society, in

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<sup>1</sup> I have kept the term *gens de couleur* in French in the text to preserve its specific local meaning. *People of color* would today be thought to include black slaves as well as all people of mixed race, while *mulattos* [*mulâtres*], a word often appearing in the literature but out of favor today, would exclude the free blacks who were included in the *gens de couleur*, but include some mixed-race descendants of slave women and free men who were slaves under the *Code Noir*.

April 1792 France again granted political rights and social equality to the *gens de couleur*, did not revoke it this time, and sent a Second Commission under Léger-Félicité Sonthonax (1763-1813) with a larger military force to try to restore order.

Sonthonax distrusted the white élite, whom he suspected of favoring either restoration of the old royal régime or independence for Saint-Domingue under their own rule. He promised citizenship to the *gens de couleur* and won their support against the *grands blancs* who favored independence. But war with Britain in 1793, and the abolition of the French monarchy, changed the political situation. The slave rebellion gained force and operated now from both sides of the frontier with Spanish Santo Domingo to the east. When Sonthonax left for Port-au-Prince, the general he trusted to guard Cap-Français, François-Thomas Galbaud, betrayed him and began negotiating with the British. To defeat him Sonthonax had to promise freedom and citizenship to thousands of slave soldiers. Once on that course, which alienated both the whites and the *gens de couleur*, he found it impossible to limit it, and in any event had no other allies in his effort to save the colony for France. In the end Sonthonax felt he had no choice but to abolish slavery in the territory under his control; in 1794 the French National Convention under Robespierre extended abolition to all the French colonies.



But Saint-Domingue remained a French colony, even after abolition. François-Dominique Toussaint Louverture (1743?-1803), pictured at left, himself a former slave (*affranchi*), led popular forces, at first on the French side for the abolitionist Sonthonax administration. After overcoming many rivals, black and white, and Spanish and English forces as well, Toussaint Louverture consolidated his control over Saint-Domingue. Against the instructions of Napoleon (who had by now come to power in France), he took over the Spanish portion of Hispaniola (now the Dominican Republic), which had been ceded to France by Spain in 1795 but never actually transferred, and freed the slaves there too. But when, in 1801, he issued a constitution providing for a free state under his lifetime rule, Napoleon sent a powerful military force under his brother-in-law General Charles

Victoire Emmanuel Leclerc (1772-1802) to re-establish French control. The new French régime was expected to restore slavery in Saint-Domingue, as it had in the French Caribbean island of Guadeloupe.

Toussaint Louverture, having agreed to submit his forces to French control, was betrayed and sent as a captive to France, where he died in 1803. But the struggle against the French was continued by others who had served in command under him, including Jean-Jacques Dessalines (1758-1806), pictured at right, and Henri Christophe (1767-1820), both of whom became rulers in Haiti after the revolution.

Leclerc died of yellow fever in 1802 and was succeeded in command of French forces by Donatien-Marie-Joseph de Vimeur, Vicomte de Rochambeau (1755-1813), whose brutality and





massacres helped unite the revolutionary movement against him. After further considerable losses to yellow fever, and defeat at the Battle of Vertières, the French were reduced to a few strong points, principally Cap-Français in the north and Môle-Saint-Nicolas in the west. The blockade of Saint-Domingue made holding these untenable. Rochambeau surrendered to overwhelming British naval power in November 1803, and Môle-Saint-Nicolas was evacuated in December. The revolution had triumphed. Napoleon, busy with war in Europe, had neither the resources nor the will to continue fighting in Saint-Domingue; while France did not formally recognize Haitian independence until 1825, by 1804 it had ceased trying to retain it. On January 1, 1804, in Gonaïves, Dessalines formally proclaimed the Republic of Haiti, which then began its history as a sovereign state.

Mme. Odette Roy Fombrun focuses her study of the flag of Haitian Independence on the few years ending with Dessalines' proclamation of the Republic. Her aim is to clarify and determine from the historical record what flags were actually used in those days. This effort has more than antiquarian interest, as the blue-red and black-red color schemes have long symbolized different classes of Haitian society. As Leslie Péan explains in his May 2012 *Alterpresse* article *Luttes de pouvoir et identité nationale* [Struggles for Power and National Identity]:<sup>2</sup>

The blue and red symbolized the forces at the summit of the social pyramid while the black and red reflected those at the base. The struggles for power have obliged the protagonists to favor one or the other possible interpretations of the colors of the national flag. \* \* \* From blue and red to black and red, we see a remaking of history as the pendulum swings between the élites who control political power.

In another, related aspect, the competing colors reflect the original use of blue to represent the union of black and *mulâtre* élites (the *gens de couleur*), while the black stood (or later came to stand) for a more popular and racialist black-centered view of the revolution. President François Duvalier's 1964 change of the flag's colors from blue-red to black-red reflected these connotations in a deliberate appeal to *noirisme* and to the Haitian underclass. It is in this context that the historical questions about the "original" flag of Haitian Independence, which has continued at least since the debate over the Constitution of 1843, should be understood.

Mme. Fombrun concludes that the red-and-blue horizontal bicolor was the original flag of the nation, as established by Dessalines. But the special importance of the book lies in its array of citations to, and quotations from, relevant excerpts from the record, both eyewitness sources and subsequent historical accounts. This feature of Mme. Fombrun's work, presented in her distinct and idiosyncratic style, allows the reader to follow her reasoning and independently assess her conclusions, which are displayed graphically in the flag chart on the inside back cover.

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<sup>2</sup> At [tinyurl.com/amx5jc7](http://tinyurl.com/amx5jc7) (accessed February 14, 2013).

## EDITOR'S NOTE

This work was originally published in Créole in 1985, by Éditions Deschamps of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, under the title *Istwa Drapo Ayisyen*. It was translated into French by the author and published in Port-au-Prince the same year under the title *Histoire du Drapeau Haïtien*, with the subtitle *Le Drapeau de l'Indépendance* on the title page (the English title *History of the Haitian Flag of Independence* fuses the two). This English translation by Christopher Phillips, from the second French edition (Port-au-Prince, 1986), was commissioned by the Flag Heritage Foundation in 2012 and is published here for the first time.

Sometimes the original French word is reproduced in [square brackets] where it helps illuminate the sense; likewise occasional editorial interpolations (such as the first name of a historical person mentioned by the author only by surname) are set off in brackets. Footnotes by the author are identified with her initials O.R.F. Editorial footnotes are signed ED. French capitalization norms have been followed in the titles of French publications, except where citations in library catalogues showed a different original usage. Page references to works quoted or cited in the Bibliographic Notes and elsewhere follow the original, and may vary from the pagination in other editions of the quoted works.

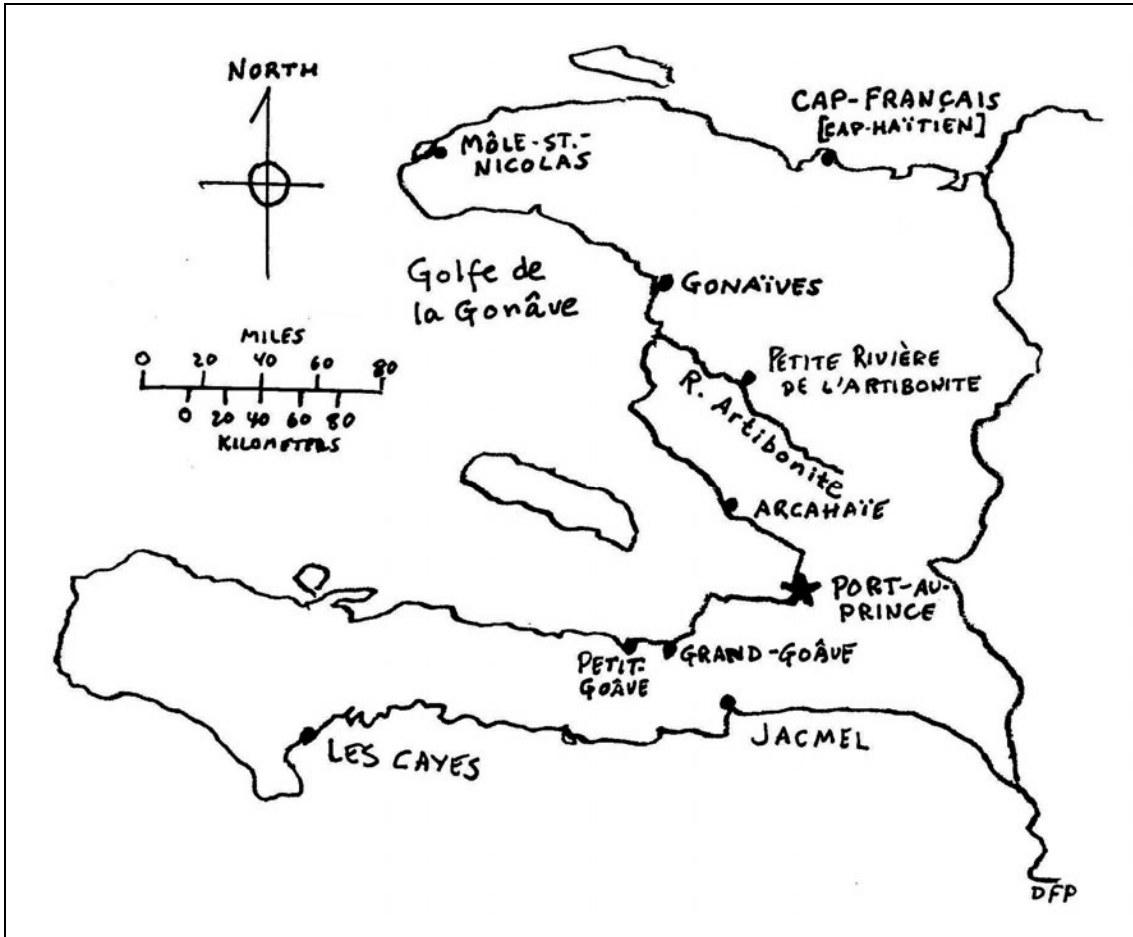
The map on page 9 locates many of the places mentioned in the text. The coin on the title page, showing an early version of the arms of Haiti, is a 25 centime piece from 1814. The painting on the back cover is *Making of the Haitian Flag* (2012), by Nicole Jean-Louis, reproduced here under license with her kind permission.<sup>1</sup> The figures in the painting are (from left) Alexandre Pétion, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, Henri Christophe and Catherine Flon. The portraits of Toussaint Louverture and Dessalines, in the preface, were taken from unattributed 19th century engravings found on Wikipedia. The engraving of the Haitian arms, used as a tailpiece on page 41, is taken from W. R. Hearst, *The American Almanac, Year-Book, Cyclopedia and Atlas* (New York, 1903), under license from the University of South Florida.<sup>2</sup>

I am pleased to acknowledge the helpful assistance of Dr. Whitney Smith for lending us the working copy of the original French text, of Marie-Claude F. Bayard of Odette Roy Fombrun's office, of Michel Lupant, Sophie Rault and Gustavo Tracchia, who helped with points of flag imagery, of Sabine Millauriaux, who advised on the translation, of Adam Phillips and Christina Lazaridi, who introduced me to Professor Laurent Dubois, the Marcello Lotti Professor of Romance Studies and History at Duke University, and of Dr. Dubois himself, who kindly reviewed my preface and editorial footnotes. Thanks are due also to computer specialist Alexander Best, to Charles Fombrun for help with the author's picture, to Debbie Waltmire at Specialty Graphics, who played the key role in the production of this book, to Mary Mount of Specialty Graphics, to Charles Waltmire, who redrafted the flag chart based on a scan of the original, to Hugh Brady of the North American Vexillological Association, and others, who helped assure the circulation of this book, and finally to Arianna Louise Phillips for her encouragement and moral support.

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<sup>1</sup> See [nicole-jeanlouis.artistwebsites.com](http://nicole-jeanlouis.artistwebsites.com) (accessed February 4, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Via ClipArt ETC at [etc.usf.edu/clipart](http://etc.usf.edu/clipart) (accessed February 13, 2013).



# HAITI

This map locates some of the places mentioned in the text.

The border shown is the modern one.



# HISTORY OF THE HAITIAN FLAG OF INDEPENDENCE

## FOREWORD

It was about three years ago,<sup>1</sup> when I was completing Volume I of *Histoire d'Haïti par les Textes* [History of Haiti from Documents], which had been sent to the publisher but had not yet appeared, that I read the book by the Auguste brothers called *Pour le drapeau* [For the Flag].<sup>2</sup> It was and still is the most interesting and best researched, and the least partisan, of the studies that have appeared on the subject. It did not, however, dispel my doubts about the Flag of Independence. In this regard, I wrote to Gérard Gaetjens on March 1, 1985, saying:

When it comes to the description of the flag of the free state of Haiti by the British government agent Mr. Corbet, it could not be more strange. He described the flag that flew in January 1804 as being blue and red, but with *horizontal* stripes which, makes plausible the hypothesis that this flag was adopted at the time Independence was proclaimed....

At the end of September or beginning of October 1985, after declining an invitation to participate in a round table on the Haitian flag, I judged the time to be right to copy out the notes I had taken in the course of my readings. Since I had just finished the three booklets of *Istwa d'Ayiti* [History of Haiti], I decided to do this work in Créole.

Less under the spell of my study than by the feat of mastering my computer, I decided to do it once more. Obviously, too soon and too quickly! Not being totally satisfied with this work – which expressed opinions without the bibliographic references to support them – I set myself the task of rereading my documentation. That is how I came upon the evidence that the blue and red flag was present at Cap-Français [later Cap-Haïtien] in 1803. In fact, the British Captain Loring writes of having *seen* the blue and red flag flying over Fort Picolet on Nov. 30, 1803.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In 1982. ED.

<sup>2</sup> See item 18 in the Bibliographic Notes, below. ED.

<sup>3</sup> Fort Picolet was one of the defense works of Cap-Français. John Loring (d. 1808) was the British commander at the Blockade of Saint-Domingue, as Haiti was called under the French (the British, at war with Napoleonic France, were informally allied with the insurgent forces). The successful blockade compelled French commander Vicomte de Rochambeau to surrender to Dessalines in November 1803, leading to the withdrawal of the French fleet and the establishment of the Republic of Haiti soon thereafter. ED.

## INTRODUCTION

Before tackling this particularly delicate subject, connected as it is with politics in certain respects, I pledge to respect the historical truth, that is, to mention all the available documents without taking sides. Having done that, I will do what anyone would do: I will discuss, explain and question.

Some historians maintain that the flag of Independence was blue and red; others, that it was black and red. Actually, *not a single document* describes the flag that flew in Gonaïves on January 1, 1804, at the moment Dessalines proclaimed Haiti's independence.

We celebrate the Haitian flag on the 18th of May. There are nothing but question marks surrounding the creation of a flag in Arcahaïe on the 18th of May in 1803. Historians have elaborated on this subject to suit their choices. Later we will consider their assertions.

This brief study of the Haitian flag is divided into seven parts.

- I. Before May 18, 1803
- II. From May 18 1803 to Independence on January 1, 1804
- III. After Independence
- IV. Questions
- V. Opinions
- VI. Points accepted or admitted by most historians
- VII. Hypotheses and conclusions.

To justify our conclusions, we will end with important supporting Bibliographic Notes.

## CHAPTER I

### BEFORE MAY 18, 1803

The *indigènes* used flags [*fanions*] of various colors.<sup>4</sup> Thus in his report to the French Directory dated Nov. 12, 1799, Toussaint Louverture describes the flag he used for his vessels as being white, with the head of a black man (*tête de nègre*) in the center.

*Indigènes* struggling against France also used various flags. At Crête-à-Pierrot in 1802, the flag was red.<sup>5</sup> In the South they used blue and white flags.

After the meeting between Pétion and Dessalines [at Arcahaïe], not all the *indigènes* recognized Dessalines' authority.<sup>6</sup> At the military review [*prise d'armes*] at Haut-du-Cap in October 1802, Generals Pétion, Clervaux and Christophe used a [French] blue, white and red flag stripped of the French cockerel (*coq gaulois*).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The word *indigènes*, meaning literally *the indigenous ones*, is the term the predominantly black forces under Toussaint Louverture and Dessalines used for themselves. Their army they called the *Armée Indigène*. Ordinarily *indigènes* would be translated as *natives*, and *Armée Indigène* as *Native Army*. This translation is unsuitable here for several reasons. First, not all the black forces were native to Saint-Domingue; many were natives of Africa brought there by the slave trade. Second, many who were natives, including whites, *gens de couleur*, and many blacks in the continually shifting politics of revolutionary Saint-Domingue, opposed the *indigènes* and their army – where a person was born was not a reliable indicator of his politics. As important for translation purposes is the connotation the word *native* has acquired in the colonial and post-colonial context as a disrespectful term used by white colonists for the colonized population. This alone would have made *native* an unacceptable translation. Also *indigènes* had for the revolutionary forces the additional subtextual meaning of identification with the more-or-less annihilated Taíno people of pre-colonial times. Under the circumstances it has seemed best to leave the terms *indigènes* and *Armée Indigène* in French.

The French word *fanions*, translated here as *flags*, has a more precise meaning of *pennants* not justified here by the context. ED.

<sup>5</sup> At the Battle of Crête-à-Pierrot in March 1802, the revolutionary forces under Dessalines resisted a long siege by the French under Leclerc. They eventually retreated into the mountains. While the French did finally take the fort, the long resistance, and the escape of so many of the enemy, undermined their morale and resolution. ED.

<sup>6</sup> Alexandre Sabès Pétion (1770-1818) fought against Toussaint Louverture in the War of the Knives (between insurgent forces, 1799-1800) and went into exile after the fall of Jacmel in 1800. He returned to Haiti to fight on the French side under Leclerc, but after the betrayal and arrest of Toussaint Louverture changed sides, and joined with Dessalines in the famous meeting at Arcahaïe. After Dessalines' assassination, Pétion succeeded him in power. ED.

<sup>7</sup> The blue-white-red was the French revolutionary tricolor. The cock was a traditional symbol of France, based originally on its Latin name *gallus*, a play on *Gallia*, the ancient name for the country (Gaul) that later became France. It became very popular in the national iconography during the French revolutionary period when the *fleurs-de-lys* and other royal symbols passed from use. The *coq gaulois* was not used on the French tricolor in France. ED.

In January 1803, the revolutionary army became the *Armée Indigène*. But this comprised various groups. In the South, one of them was called the Inca Army until May 18, 1803. The groups that refused to recognize Dessalines' authority, like Lamour Dérance's, probably used a different flag from that of the *Armée Indigène* under Dessalines.

Having been asked by Pétion to adopt a flag different from the French one, Dessalines removed the white in February 1803. Thus the first flag of the *Armée Indigène* was blue and red, with vertical stripes, and included the motto LIBERTY OR DEATH (*Liberté ou la Mort*).

Almost all historians agree that the *Armée Indigène* adopted this [vertically divided] blue and red flag in February 1803 (and therefore before the May 1803 meeting at Arcahaïe), and that Dessalines gave the commanding officers the order to use this flag.

Many of the senior officers, obeying this order from Dessalines, removed the white from the flags they were using. The red and blue vertical bicolor thus became the flag we refer to in our text as the official flag of the *Armée Indigène*.

This blue and red flag was, then, widely used before May 18, 1803. Thus blue and red flags were present at Arcahaïe. On May 19, just as a black and red flag was found on the boat *La Victoire*, one could have found a blue and red flag on another boat leaving Arcahaïe that same day.

No contemporary document, either official or private, speaks of the creation or consecration of the flag at Arcahaïe in the meeting of officers of the West in May 1803. Dessalines could have acted in only three ways.

- (a) He could have called for the *Armée Indigène* to change the blue and red flag, already adopted, to black and red.
- (b) He could have officially consecrated the blue and red flag even though some battalions already had flags of other colors, including black and red.
- (c) Or perhaps he did not speak about the flag at all.

Whichever of these three happened, the two bicolors with vertical stripes were present side by side at Arcahaïe on May 18, 1803.



## CHAPTER II

FROM MAY 18, 1803 TO JANUARY 1, 1804

In his report to [the French admiral] Latouche-Tréville,<sup>8</sup> the Frenchman [Captain Yves-Marie] Bot, who had captured the boat *La Victoire*, speaks about having found there a black and red flag carrying the words FREE OR DIE (*Libre ou Mourir*).

During his interrogation the sailor Jean-Pierre, who was captured with the boat, does not speak about the creation of a flag at Arcahaïe, but about plans of attack developed by *indigène* officers against French positions. He says he left Arcahaïe with three boats, one of which was carrying [General Pierre] Cangé, who had just met with Dessalines.

In his letter to [General Nicolas] Geffrard dated May 19, 1803, confirming that he came to Arcahaïe to meet Cangé, Dessalines also does not speak about a change in the flag.<sup>9</sup>

Who then was this Cangé, whom Dessalines judged it necessary to meet, and felt it necessary to inform Geffrard *immediately* about meeting in his letter of May 19? Cangé was the right-hand man of Lamour Dérance, Dessalines' sworn enemy. Numerous historians agree that Dessalines and Cangé struck an accord under which Cangé continued to pretend to obey Dérance's orders.

In his report to General Lavalette, who had sent him on a mission to Pétion, General Inginac writes of having seen the blue and red flag in the camp of the *Indépendantistes*<sup>10</sup> in June 1803. This means that in the *Armée Indigène*, some senior officers were still using blue and red flags after May 18, 1803.

According to our historians who report the words of Dessalines, it is the blue and red flag that flew over Camp Gérard at the time of the meeting between Dessalines and Geffrard in July 1803. This means that the blue and red flag was still being used in the South as well, after May 18, 1803. (This does not preclude the possible use of the black and red by other battalions.)

Michel Aubourg, Maurice de Young, and a Frenchman, St.-Mansuy (who left the country just after the Siege of Jacmel), wrote that there were many black and red flags at the Siege of Jacmel in September 1803.<sup>11</sup> (Cangé commanded the Siege of Jacmel with Magloire Ambroise.)

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<sup>8</sup> Louis-René-Madeleine Le Vassor de La Touche, comte de Tréville (1745-1804), was at this time a rear admiral commanding a French naval detachment in Haitian waters. His complex name is condensed by convention to Latouche-Tréville. ED.

<sup>9</sup> General Nicolas Geffrard (d. 1806) was a prominent personality of the Haitian Revolution, not to be confused with Nicolas Geffrard (1871-1930), author of the Haitian national anthem *La Dessalinienne*. ED.

<sup>10</sup> The forces seeking independence. ED.

<sup>11</sup> This was the second Siege of Jacmel, not to be confused with the first Siege of Jacmel (June 1799 to February 1800) during the War of the Knives. ED.

Cappoix planted the “*indigène* flag” on several occasions, but the colors are not mentioned precisely.<sup>12</sup>

A lieutenant named Babron, on a French vessel, wrote of having seen some black and red flags at Cap-Français in November 1803.

In his book *King Christophe*,<sup>13</sup> Hubert Cole writes at page 138 that Captain Loring, commander in chief of the English patrol boats, was surprised to see the blue and red rebel flag flying at Fort Picolet on November 30, 1803. This is what put an end to his negotiations with Rochambeau.<sup>14</sup>

A huge pity! Not a single official account or even personal letter exists that speaks about the flag that flew at Gonaïves at the time that the *indigène* officers solemnly proclaimed Haiti’s independence.<sup>15</sup> What was the flag of Independence?

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<sup>12</sup> François Cappoix (1766-1806), sometimes called *Cappoix-la-Mort*, was the hero of the Battle of Vertières in 1803. His name is variously spelled Cappoix, Capoix, and Capois. I have standardized the usage here to *Cappoix*, following that in the title of the work by Dalencourt mentioned at item 9 in the Bibliographic Notes below. ED.

<sup>13</sup> New York, 1967. ED.

<sup>14</sup> Donatien-Marie-Joseph de Vimeur, vicomte de Rochambeau (1755-1813), was the last commander of the French expeditionary force. His surrender at Cap-Français on November 20, 1803, cleared the way for the establishment of the Haitian Republic on January 1, 1804. ED.

<sup>15</sup> On January 1, 1804. ED.

## CHAPTER III

### AFTER INDEPENDENCE

Two foreigners wrote about the Haitian flag in 1804, just after Independence. They both asserted it was blue and red. One does not mention the placement of the stripes, while the other states that they were horizontal.

One eyewitness report is that of Monsieur de Freuil, a former landowner in Santo Domingo.<sup>16</sup> He wrote from Puerto Rico that “at [Cap-Français] they are taking up arms under the red and blue,” and “the flag of the blacks is blue and red....”

Mr. [Edward] Corbet, an Englishman sent by his government to Dessalines in mid-January 1804, right after the Independence proclamation, wrote that the flag of the Haitian state was blue and red, with horizontal stripes. It is undoubtedly this statement that justified the American historian Nicholls in writing that the first flag of the free Haitian state was blue and red with horizontal stripes.<sup>17</sup>

In a speech, Dessalines spoke of a the flag “that we should have adopted a long time ago” [*que nous aurions du avoir adopté depuis longtemps*], without mentioning either the colors or the placement of the stripes. This speech leads us to suppose that another flag was being used in the country and suggests that Dessalines was in the process of changing the flag that day.<sup>18</sup>

What flag was being used? What flag did Dessalines change? On what date did he truly give this speech? There is no definite answer to these questions. The text of the speech has no date. However, someone made a handwritten note [on the document] that says it was May 18, 1804. Who wrote this date, and when?

For the first time in the Constitution of 1805 an official text describes the Haitian flag. It describes it as black and red, with no mention of the flag used between 1804 and 1805.<sup>19</sup>

In 1807 Pétion asked the *Chambres*<sup>20</sup> to adopt the blue and red flag with horizontal stripes, with the arms of the republic and the motto L’UNION FAIT LA FORCE [Union makes strength]. From

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<sup>16</sup> Santo Domingo was the eastern, sometimes Spanish-held portion of the island of Hispaniola, now the Dominican Republic. ED.

<sup>17</sup> See David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour and National Independence in Haiti* (Cambridge, 1979). ED.

<sup>18</sup> See the reference in *Pour le drapeau*, by Claude and Marcel Auguste, p. 13, at item 18 in Bibliographic Notes below. O.R.F.

<sup>19</sup> See Bibliographic Notes, item 10. ED.

<sup>20</sup> The upper and lower chambers of the Haitian legislature. Pétion was at this time president of the Republic of Haiti in the south, distinct from the secessionist State (later Kingdom) of Haiti formed in the north by Henri Christophe after the assassination of Dessalines in 1806. When Christophe committed suicide in 1820, the north was restored to the Republic of Haiti by Pétion’s successor Jean-Pierre Boyer (1776?-1850). ED.

1807 to 1964, all Haitian governments, whether imperial or republican, used the blue and red flag with horizontal stripes.<sup>21</sup>

In 1964 François Duvalier adopted the black and red flag with vertical stripes. It was a new flag since it had the colors of Dessalines' flag and Pétion's arms of the republic (without the cap of Liberty). It also carried the motto of 1807: L'UNION FAIT LA FORCE.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Not counting some secessionist regimes like Christophe's. ED.

<sup>22</sup> After the fall of President Jean-Claude Duvalier, and after this book was published, the blue and red horizontal bicolor was restored, first by a decree of 25 February 1986, and later by the Constitution of 1987. ED.

## CHAPTER IV

### QUESTIONS

Historians discuss the above-mentioned facts at great length. Now it is our turn to ask some questions.

1. If, on May 18, 1803, Dessalines changed the blue and red flag (adopted in February 1803) to black and red:
  - a) Why did he not breathe a word of it in his letter to Geffrard dated May 19, the following day?
  - b) Why, during his visit to Geffrard at Camp Gérard in July 1803, did he emphasize again the orientation [*sens*] of the blue and red on the flag that flew in the camp?
  - c) How can one explain that at the camp of the *Indépendantistes* they were still using the blue and red flag after May 18, 1803?
2. If Dessalines did not change the blue and red flag, who then used the black and red at Arcahaïe?
3. Lamour Dérance, sworn enemy of Dessalines, certainly did not use the same flag as the *Indépendantistes*. Therefore Cangé, who was Dérance's right-hand man, used Dérance's flag. This brings us to the question: was the flag found in the boat *La Victoire* not Dérance's flag? This is all the more believable as this flag did not carry the motto LIBERTÉ OU LA MORT [Freedom or Death] but LIBRE OU MOURIR [Free or Die].
4. At the Siege of Jacmel in September 1803 there were numerous black and red flags. Would these not still have been Dérance's colors? Of course Dessalines had already imprisoned his archenemy, but didn't he still leave the *Armée de Cangé* with the flag it had always used? It is more believable that Dessalines himself liked these colors black and red, as he showed by adopting them officially in 1805.
5. The description of the flag by the Englishman Corbet in mid-January 1804 raises the following questions.
  - a) Was this the flag with the horizontal stripes adopted in January 1804?
  - b) Was this the reason why Pétion, in 1807, did not give any explanation to the Legislature to let them know the story of the flag with horizontal stripes?
  - c) Was the blue and red flag with horizontal stripes the one that Dessalines was changing when he made his speech carrying the date May 18, 1804, in the margin? We must note that because no document mentions the colors of the Haitian flag between March 1804 and the Constitution of 1805, it is possible that Dessalines did give the speech on May 18, 1804. However, we think it is more probable that the

speech was made on May 18 *of the following year*, on receiving from his generals the signed text of the Constitution he signed as Emperor Jacques I on May 20, 1805.

6. How does one explain the presence of so many black and red flags at Cap-Français in November 1803?
- a) Had Dessalines changed the blue and red flag of the *Armée Indigène* to black and red? Doesn't the fact that the English Captain Loring had seen the blue and red flag flying at Fort Picolet on November 30, 1803, prove the opposite?
  - b) Didn't [General Henri] Christophe, who was still in the North and who was known to be an independent character, always use the black and red flag? Doesn't Babron's report prove this when he wrote, in his *Précis des Opérations de Brumaire: Affaire du 26*,<sup>23</sup> in the section on the evacuation of Cap-Français: "The mountains were bristling with enemies. One column, commanded by Christophe, had climbed up behind Fort d'Estaing.... At 10:00 in the morning the black and red *indigène* standard flew over several of our positions...."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> The 26th of Brumaire in the French revolutionary calendar corresponds to November 18. ED.

<sup>24</sup> Quoted by Claude and Marcel Auguste, *Pour le drapeau*, p. 70. O.R.F.

## CHAPTER V

### OPINIONS

Some historians have not hesitated to modify documents to justify their choices, while others put words in the mouths of our heroes to suit their opinions. Thus Timoléon Brutus<sup>25</sup> changes the words spoken by Dessalines at Arcahaïe on May 18, 1803, to suit the thesis he is arguing, without ever mentioning the document he is quoting from.

A number of historians emphasize the important role played by Vodou in Haitian history, and likewise the role of numerous African customs.<sup>26</sup> That is why the Auguste brothers (Claude and Marcel) point out<sup>27</sup> that Lamour Dérance made a “blood pact” with Cangé. This African custom made the two of them allies until death. Strangely, they write, the two met the same end.<sup>28</sup>

The minister Dr. [Arthur C.] Holly gives many explanations why (in his view) Dessalines adopted the blue and red flag in February 1803 and established it on May 18. He mentions first of all the meaning of these colors in Vodou. After discussing the meaning of the flag for a people, Holly suggests esoteric meanings [*sens*] for the colors and their vertical or horizontal placement.

On page 26 of the book cited in our bibliography,<sup>29</sup> Holly describes what took place after the Battle of Pierroux<sup>30</sup> after Pétion suggested to Dessalines the adoption of a flag different from the French one. “Immediately,” he writes,

Dessalines, as befit the status of his quasi-divine mission, sent the order to Pétion, Cap-paix, Clervaux, Christophe, Vernet and all his other lieutenants to make the flag of the units under their command a bicolor from then on by removing the color white.... The two remaining colors of the French tricolor retained their vertical arrangement – the blue next to the pole, the red at the edge: this took place precisely *in February 1803*....<sup>31</sup>

Earlier, on page 22, Holly wrote:

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<sup>25</sup> In *L'Homme d'Airain*, item 4 in the Bibliographic Notes below. ED.

<sup>26</sup> The word *Vodou* refers to the indigenous Haitian religion. It is sometimes spelled *voodoo*, *vodun*, *vodoun*, and even *boudou*; sometimes it is capitalized in English and sometimes not. I have followed the currently accepted academic style. ED.

<sup>27</sup> In *Pour le drapeau*, item 18 in the Bibliographic Notes below. ED.

<sup>28</sup> Cangé was arrested and shot by Christophe in 1806. Dessalines was assassinated, also in 1806, but the exact manner of his death is still disputed. ED.

<sup>29</sup> *Dra-Po: Étude ésotérique de Égrégore Africain, traditionnel, social et national de Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1928), item 17 in the Bibliographic Notes. ED.

<sup>30</sup> Fought in December 1802. ED.

<sup>31</sup> Emphasis added. O.R.F.

Three months after the third day of the Congress of Arcahaïe, that is, Monday, May 18, 1803, the general in chief [*généralissime*] confirmed his instructions regarding the flag by proceeding personally to the Mérotte residence a few minutes out of the town and, under the shadow of a fig tree symbolic of death, removing the white stripe and sewing on the red and blue stripes in the direction we have just described: Jupiter and Mars [blue and red] upright. This act – or rather, this ceremony – shows a great secret of African tradition and proves that Dessalines was an initiate on the highest level. Six months later, in front of Vertières, our occult and national standard (blue and red, we emphasize) received its glorious “baptism of fire” when it was saluted by the French Army in the person of Captain General Rochambeau along with his brilliant staff.

Holly then speaks of the

occult forces that protected the Haitian independence fighters ... Jupiter ... whom the slaves invoked under the term *Hou-Gou pherail*. It is, however, in honor of Mars that Dessalines wrapped his head with a red scarf...

... Under Dessalines as Divine Emperor [*empereur théocratique*] ... the blue, which represented Jupiter, divinity of the West, was replaced by black, the color symbolic of the Sun, of the Queen of Ethiopia, the orthodox divinity of the East invoked by the term *Dam-Bha-Lah*, that is, the Lady bearer of the young boy Messiah [*jeune garçon Messie*], the servant of God.



## CHAPTER VI

### POINTS ACCEPTED OR ADMITTED BY MOST HISTORIANS

Here are points that almost all historians agree on.

1. The *indigènes* used various flags. At the start of their open struggle against the French (October 1802–February 1803) they used the [French] blue, white and red flag without the French cockerel.
2. Dessalines created the first flag of the *Armée Indigène*, blue and red, in the month of February 1803. To this were added the words LIBERTÉ OU LA MORT [Liberty or Death].<sup>32</sup>
3. The report to Latouche-Tréville says that a black and red flag bearing the words *Libre ou Mourir* [Free or Die] was found in the boat *La Victoire*.
4. Jean-Pierre, the sailor captured on May 19, [1803,] said that Cangé, who had just met Dessalines at Arcahaïe, was with his group.
5. Cangé was in the service of Lamour Dérance, sworn enemy of Dessalines.
6. On May 19, Dessalines wrote to Geffrard that he had come to Arcahaïe to meet Cangé.
7. General Inginac<sup>33</sup> wrote of having seen the blue and red flag in the camp of the *Indépendantistes* in June 1803.
8. The blue and red flag flew at Camp Gérard in July 1803 during Dessalines' visit to Geffrard.
9. Some blue and red flags were seen at the Siege of Jacmel in September 1803, as well as many black and red flags.
10. In November 1803 the Frenchman Babron saw some black and red flags at Cap-Français.

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<sup>32</sup> Among the historians who are in agreement about this important fact, let us mention Madiou, Ardouin, Delancour, Cabon, Aubourg, T. Brutus and 11 historians who signed an official report addressed to President Léon Dumarsais Estimé in 1948 (including Lorimer, Denis, Luc Dorsainville, Mentor Laurent, Louis Maximilien, etc.) On this subject, see *Version officielle de l'Historique du Drapeau Haïtien*, at page 27, item 16 in the Bibliographic Notes below. O.R.F.

<sup>33</sup> General Joseph Balthazar Inginac (d. 1847), later Administrator of State Properties under Dessalines. ED.

11. Captain Loring, the English commander, speaks of having seen the blue and red flag flying at Fort Picolet on Nov. 30 1803.<sup>34</sup>
12. In two letters from February 1804, a Frenchman in Puerto Rico writes that the flag of the blacks [*drapeau des nègres*] was blue and red.
13. In mid-January 1804, Corbet, an envoy sent by the British to Dessalines, speaks of having seen the blue and red Haitian flag with horizontal stripes.

These 13 facts form the foundations of our hypotheses.

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<sup>34</sup> This point does not appear in the Créole text. O.R.F.

## CHAPTER VII

### HYPOTHESES AND CONCLUSIONS

To reconcile the accepted facts, including the use of two bicolor flags during the wars of independence and the existence of a flag with horizontal stripes after Independence, we have found only the following explanations.

- a) Dessalines did in fact create the blue and red flag in February 1803 and gave the order to officers under his command to adopt it. In that way it became the “official” bicolor of the *Armée Indigène*.
- b) In May 1803, this flag was used by those battalions of the *Armée Indigène* that were at Arcahaïe, while the battalions of Cangé had some black and red flags.
- c) This last point explains why a black and red flag was found in the boat *La Victoire* that brought members of the Cangé group from Arcahaïe.
- d) The fact that the red and blue flag flew over the *Indépendantiste* camp in June 1803 (as Inginac indicates) means that the officers had obeyed Dessalines’ orders of February 1803. The fact that Dessalines speaks of the meaning [*sens*] of these two colors at Camp Gérard in July 1803 implies that these orders had not been changed.
- e) Cangé, the sworn blood brother of Lamour Dérance along with Magloire Ambroise (part of the Dérance group), continuously used the flag of this chief [Dérance] – hence the presence of the black and red flag at the [second] Siege of Jacmel. (Dérance and these men were always harassing Jacmel – this area was their stronghold.)
- f) The presence of so many black and red flags at Cap-Français in November 1803 cannot be explained solely by the presence of Cangé’s troops stationed at Petite-Anse. It is also explained by the fact that Christophe used the black and red. This was confirmed in Babron’s report.
- g) The fact that the English Captain Loring had seen the blue and red flag flying at Fort Picolet on November 30, 1803, proves that the *Armée Indigène* was still using the blue and red at Cap-Français.
- h) At Independence, the blue and red were arranged horizontally, an assertion backed up by Corbet’s description.
- i) In the Constitution of 1805, Dessalines as emperor officially adopted the black and red (Dr. Holly gives the reasons for this choice). Since no document – not even a letter – describes the flag between March 1804 and the Constitution of 1805, it is not impossible that Dessalines had changed the flag as early as May 18, 1804 – the date written by hand on a text of the speech, which bears no official date.

- j) In 1807, Pétion went back to the flag of Independence, blue and red in horizontal stripes. This flag flew over Haiti from 1807 until 1964.<sup>35</sup>
- k) President François Duvalier restored the black and red flag with vertical stripes, because, like Dessalines (according to Dr. Holly's explanation), he saw his power as divine [*théocratique*]. Some of Duvalier's declarations also lead us to suppose that, for example "I am the Haitian flag, one and indivisible...."

All of our hypotheses are based on the writings of historians cited in our Bibliographic Notes, most of them annotated.

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<sup>35</sup> As noted, Christophe's rival State of Haiti in the north kept the black and red flag until 1820. ED.

## CONCLUSIONS

These hypotheses, in line with all the accepted facts, bring us to the following conclusions, which we support and justify in the Bibliographic Notes.

1. From February 1803 to January 1804 the flag of the *Armée Indigène* was blue and red with vertical stripes.
2. The black and red flag belonged to Dérance/Cangé and Christophe.
3. These two bicolors were therefore widely used, side by side, during the wars of independence.
4. The flag of Independence (January 1, 1804) was blue and red with horizontal stripes.
5. The flag of Independence was changed by Dessalines, either on May 18, 1804, or May 18, 1805.

For all historians and for all the Fathers of Our Country, these two bicolor flags had the same meaning: Union! Union of everyone wishing to fight colonialism, to live as free men in the land of Haiti!



## SUPPORTING BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTES

### 1. MADIOU, Thomas: *Histoire d'Haïti*.<sup>36</sup>

“Around September 1803, the English commodore, Loring, was cruising between [Cap-Français] and Port-de-Paix. As a courteous gesture to General Cappoix, he made him a gift of a bright bicolor flag. This event, taken in isolation, made people in other countries believe that we owed the idea of our two-color flag to the English. Everybody in Haiti knows that in May 1803, when Dessalines entered the plain of Cul-de-Sac, the *indigène* troops were carrying the bicolor, which had been adopted as early as February.”

Volume 2 [1799-1803], p. 408. For the author, this February bicolor means the blue and red flag.

### 2. ARDOUIN, Beaubrun: *Études sur l'histoire d'Haïti*<sup>37</sup>

“Dessalines then had the idea to remove the color white from the flag that was in use: the *indigène* flag became a bicolor, blue and red, and these colors stayed in a vertical position as in the French flag. The order to proceed with this change was immediately sent to all the generals....”

Volume 5, p. 84.

“In this meeting (at Arcahaïe in May 1803), led by Dessalines, it was agreed that Cangé and his lieutenants would still appear to be subject to Lamour Dérance....”

Volume 5, p. 87.

### 3. SANNON, Horace Pauléus: *Histoire de Toussaint Louverture*<sup>38</sup>

“Pursuing his organizational work, the general-in-chief ... went to Jacmel, where he formed the 22nd and 23rd [demi-brigades]. He left Cangé behind to cooperate in the siege with Magloire Ambroise....”

Volume 3, p.184. Cangé and Ambroise, both Dérance’s allies, led the Siege of Jacmel.

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<sup>36</sup> Port-au-Prince, 1847-48 (three volumes). ED.

<sup>37</sup> Paris, 1853–60 (11 volumes). The full title is *Études sur l'histoire d'Haïti, suivies de la vie du général J.-M. Borgella*. For an English translation of an excerpt from this work, dealing with the flag, see [tinyurl.com/b62w8gg](http://tinyurl.com/b62w8gg) (accessed February 17, 2013). After the war General Jérôme-Maximilien Borgella (1773-1844) became President of the Council of the secessionist Department of the South, based in Les Cayes (1811-12). ED.

<sup>38</sup> Port-au-Prince, 1920-23 (three volumes). ED.

#### 4. BRUTUS, Timoléon: *L'homme d'Airain*<sup>39</sup>

“The Constitution of 1805 does not mention the place or the date of its birth. Only the emperor’s approval is dated Town of Dessalines, May 20.”

Vol. 2, p. 90. This allows us to think that the speech, which was only dated in the margin, *could* be from May 18, 1805<sup>40</sup> and not from May 18, 1804.

“The horizontal placement of the two colors under Dessalines became vertical later, under Pétion, without the authority of any constitutional or other law....”

Vol. 2, p. 102. There is confusion here between the words *vertical* and *horizontal*.<sup>41</sup>

In volume 1, page 206, Brutus quotes St.-Rémy,<sup>42</sup> who locates the meeting between Pétion and Dessalines at Plaisance on August 7, according to a document from 19 Thermidor of the year X [in the French revolutionary calendar] (August 7, 1802).

“Christophe [was] kept out of the plan for insurrection...” plotted by Pétion.

Vol. 1, p. 225. This proves that Christophe was only an ally of convenience [*allié de circonstance*].

“... a bulletin from Rochambeau reported ... that a bloody defeat was inflicted on Pétion in December 1802 ... at Pierroux.... An unwritten version perpetuates the idea that Dessalines was acting on that day under the influence of the Holy Virgin, protector of the Blacks. He drew his enormous saber out of the sheath and cut the white stripe out of the tricolor flag.... Dessalines ordered all the generals to make the flag of Independence in the way he himself had just done.... And in this way our blue and red flag came into the world.... It remains established historically that the two-color flag was created before the nation, at Petite-Rivière de l’Artibonite, where it flew over Crête-à-Pierrot in place of the tricolor, which was discarded from then on.... It was carried with glory during the attack on the Butte de Charrier.”<sup>43</sup>

Vol. 1, pp. 263-5. This first flag was created either at Arcahaïe or at Petite-Rivière.

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<sup>39</sup> Port-au-Prince, 1946 (two volumes). *L'homme d'Airain* means *Man of Bronze*. The full title of the book is *L'homme d'Airain: Étude monographique sur Jean-Jacques Dessalines, fondateur de la nation haïtienne*. ED.

<sup>40</sup> Like the Constitution itself. ED.

<sup>41</sup> Historically, according to Mme. Fombrun and her sources, the vertical arrangement preceded the horizontal. ED.

<sup>42</sup> Joseph St.-Rémy (1818-1856), Haitian historian, was the author of *Vie de Toussaint Louverture* (Paris, 1850). ED.

<sup>43</sup> Butte de Charrier was a fortified position supporting the defense of Cap-Français. The successful attack on this position was part of the Battle of Vertières on November 18, 1801, the final battle of the Haitian Revolution. ED.



**5. BRUTUS, Edner: *Révolution dans Saint-Domingue*<sup>44</sup>**

“Pétion and Dessalines understood each other.... The two men shook hands calmly, resolutely. The deal was done at Plaisance on Saturday, Aug. 7, 1802....”

Vol. 2, p. 386.

“Dessalines worried about Christophe.... Dessalines decided to kill Christophe....”

Vol. 2 p. 397. The quotation from page 386 confirms the understanding between Pétion and Dessalines, whereas the one on page 397 emphasizes again that Christophe was just an ally of convenience.

**6. DORSAINVIL, Justin Chrysostome: *Histoire d’Haïti*<sup>45</sup>**

“Before Oct. 13, 1802, in a meeting at Haut-du-Cap, Pétion and Dessalines had established the outlines of their war plan against the French....”

Page 125. The place of this meeting is stated differently by [both Timoléon and Edner] Brutus.<sup>46</sup>

“[At] the Congress of Arcahaïe (May 1803) ... the first Haitian flag was therefore made of two stripes, blue and red, placed vertically and bearing a military trophy framed by a palm tree topped by the Phrygian bonnet.”<sup>47</sup>

Page 127. The detail of the trophy is not mentioned in other texts.

“Dessalines calls Gabart ... [and] orders him ... to occupy the Butte de Charrier at any cost.... Helped by Jean-Philippe Daut, then by Clervaux, he holds on....”

Pages 134-5. Clervaux, from the North as was Christophe, must have used the black and red flag.

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<sup>44</sup> Paris, 1969. ED.

<sup>45</sup> Port-au-Prince, 1954. The full title is *Manuel d’histoire d’Haïti*. ED.

<sup>46</sup> Both say it was at Plaisance. See Bibliographic Notes, items 4 and 5. ED.

<sup>47</sup> The word *trophy* in this sense refers to a stylized display of weapons and instruments of war. It has its origin in ancient Greece, where after a victory a temporary monument (*tropaion*) was built on the battlefield, made from armor and other items captured from the enemy; the Romans followed a similar practice. The trophy was a staple of European decorative art from the Renaissance through the 19th century, especially in a martial or nationalist context. An example of the trophy used as the arms of Haiti, with the Phrygian bonnet at the top, appears on page 41 below, and also on the coin on the title page.

The Phrygian bonnet, or cap, is an iconographic emblem of liberty. This cap, characteristic of the people of Phrygia in ancient Anatolia (modern Turkey), became a symbol of liberty by being confused with the *pileus*, a similar-looking hat worn by manumitted slaves in ancient Greece and Rome. ED.

**7. CABON, Alphonse: *Histoire d'Haïti***<sup>48</sup>

“A document from Camp Gérard and signed by Dessalines, ... an answer to a letter of July 9 written to Férou by Freyssinet, Jérémie’s commander ... that Freyssinet recorded in his official report about Jérémie’s desertion, may be regarded as the first manifesto of Haiti’s independence.”

Vol. 4, p. 309. It is in this Camp Gérard document that Dessalines talks about the blue and red flag, which represents the blacks and the yellows.<sup>49</sup>

“At the instigation of Pétion, the various leaders of the West met at Arcahaïe on May 14; they recognized Dessalines as general-in-chief. It is in this assembly that the bicolor flag was adopted by the *Armée Indigène* by removing the white from the French flag.”

Vol. 4, p. 304. The Auguste brothers proved that no flag was created at Arcahaïe on May 18, 1803.<sup>50</sup>

**8. JEAN-BAPTISTE, St.-Victor: *Le fondateur devant l'histoire***<sup>51</sup>

“During the night of October 13 to 14, 1803 ... embracing Pétion at Haut du Cap ... at the Congress in Arcahaïe where ... he [Dessalines] removed the white from the French tricolor and created the Haitian flag.”

Foreword, p. xxv. See the Auguste brothers [item 18 below].

**9. DALENCOUR, François: *Biographie du général François Cappellet***<sup>52</sup>

On page 54 Dalencour quotes Madiou, who shows Cappellet planting the *indigène* flag at Fort Pageot on April 12, 1803, and at Grand Fort on April 13. For Dalencour and Madiou, this *indigène* flag is the one from February 1803, therefore blue and red. Let us stress that on pages 78 and 79 there are some paragraphs about Union: “Hand in hand....”

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<sup>48</sup> The full title is *Histoire d'Haïti: cours professé au petit séminaire-collège Saint-Martial*. It was published in Port-au-Prince; library catalogues give an uncertain “192?-1937?” as the publication date. ED.

<sup>49</sup> The term *yellows* in this context means the *gens de couleur*, and especially the *mulâtres*; they later used a flag of red and yellow. See, for example, the quotation by Mentor Laurent, item 11 in the Bibliographic Notes, saying that the “red and blue flag is the symbol of the union of the black and the yellow.” ED.

<sup>50</sup> They argue that the flag was created by Pétion in February 1803. See item 18 in the Bibliographic Notes. ED.

<sup>51</sup> Port-au-Prince, 1954. ED.

<sup>52</sup> Port-au-Prince, 1956. The full title is *Biographie du général François Cappellet, le héros de la bataille de Vertières, 18 novembre 1803, laquelle déterminait la capitulation et l'évacuation des troupes françaises de Saint-Dominique*. ED.

**10. JANVIER, Louis-Joseph: *Les Constitutions d'Haïti 1801-1885*<sup>53</sup>**

The 1801 and 1804 constitutions do not describe any flags. In Article 20 of the 1805 constitution it is written that the national colors are black and red. Article 192 of the 1843 constitution says: “The national colors are blue and red placed horizontally. The arms of the republic are the palm tree topped by the cap of liberty and decorated by a trophy of arms bearing the legend L’UNION FAIT LA FORCE [Union makes strength].” This is the liberty cap that François Duvalier abolished in 1964.

**11. LAURENT, Gérard Mentor: *Erreurs et vérités dans l’histoire d’Haïti*<sup>54</sup>**

“Dessalines and Pétion were together for the first time at Plaisance on Aug. 7, 1802.”

Page 203.

On page 261, Mentor Laurent quotes the speech given by Dessalines at Camp Gérard in July 1803: “Today we fight for the independence of our country and our red and blue flag is the symbol of the union of the black and the yellow....” This proves that the flag was used by senior officers after May 18, 1803.

**12. RIGAUD, Milo: *La tradition voodoo et le voodoo haïtien*<sup>55</sup>**

“At no time in Haitian history was Vodou ever dissociated from History itself, nor could it be....”

Page 40.

“This Loa [Grande Aloumandia] was one of the *mystères* that possessed Dessalines, especially when he was going to the *oum’phor* where he served, at Arcahaïe [at the bridge of Mérotte].”<sup>56</sup>

Page 41. Holly also mentions Mérotte.

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<sup>53</sup> Paris, 1886. ED.

<sup>54</sup> Port-au-Prince, 1945. ED.

<sup>55</sup> Paris, 1953. The full title is *La tradition voodoo et le voodoo haïtien: son temple, ses mystères, sa magie*. ED.

<sup>56</sup> In Vodou the original creator god *Bondyé* [cognate with French *bon dieu*, meaning *good god*] is unapproachable, but spirits called *lwa* (or *loa*), who control the circumstances that govern the lives of mortals, may be approached in prayer and propitiation. Rigaud’s word *mystère* [mystery] is equivalent to the Créole *mistè*, another word for such a spirit. An *oum’phor* [or *hounfor*] is a Vodou temple. ED.

**13. AUBOURG, Michel: *Le drapeau dessalinien***<sup>57</sup>

“After receiving the message (from Pétion) when he was camped at Petite Rivière de l’Artibonite, General Dessalines tore off the white color from the French flag. Then the devoted hands of Catherine Flon fashioned the standard with blue and red in a vertical position.”<sup>58</sup>

Page 3. This shows that it happened at the beginning of 1803, before the decisive conference at Arcahaïe. Vergniaud Leconte also – quoted by Aubourg – writes on page 149 of his *Henri Christophe*: “It was in February 1803 that this act of creation took place.”<sup>59</sup>

**14. TROUILLOT, Henock: *Le drapeau bleu et rouge, une mystification historique***<sup>60</sup>

“The thing in question is a map from the French military staff under Rochambeau’s administration (bought with other things by Dr. François Duvalier).<sup>61</sup> The purpose of this colored map, drawn up by the French military staff not long before the taking of Jacmel, was to locate the different regions around this town, which was occupied on one side by the *Armée Indigène* and on the other by the French Army.

“The *Armée Indigène* then had 14 regions in the surrounding area in its possession, and to mark them out with precision, 14 bicolor flags are drawn on the map. Only one of these flags is in blue and red, but a very dark blue close to black. Under the magnifying glass, 13 of those flags clearly appear black and red....”

Page 32 (quoted by Aubourg, reporting on his visit to Maurice de Young, professor at the University of Florida). This has to do with the region of Jacmel. The siege was led by Cangé, Lamour Dérance’s man, who had attacked Jacmel before. As evidence, we quote Cabon, p. 298:

“... the bands of the independent chief [Lamour Dérance] ... were closely watching Jacmel and the region of Grand and Petit Goâve; at the same time, he [Pétion] secured the possible collaboration of Lamour Dérance’s main officers in the common cause.”

Madiou writes

“Lamour Dérance, who was in the hills of La Selle, sent the order to the commander Magloire Ambroise to attack Jacmel ... Magloire Ambroise ... attacked the town.”

Vol. 2, p. 407. Magloire Ambroise was therefore part of the Dérance-Cangé group. Edner Brutus (vol. 2, p. 376) writes:

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<sup>57</sup> Port-au-Prince, 1958; 2d ed. 1964. The full title is *Le drapeau dessalinien: Contribution à l’histoire d’Haïti*. ED.

<sup>58</sup> Catherine Flon was Dessalines’ goddaughter. A painting by Nicole Jean-Louis, illustrating the scene, appears on the back cover of this book. ED.

<sup>59</sup> The reference is to Leconte’s *Henri Christophe dans l’histoire d’Haïti* (Paris, 1931). ED.

<sup>60</sup> Port-au-Prince, 1958. ED.

<sup>61</sup> Dr. François Duvalier, called *Papa Doc*, was President of Haiti from 1957 to 1971. ED.

“Lamour Dérance ... with his friend Lafortune, rose up ... and the mountains of Jacmel also rose up...”

Vol. 2, p. 37. Ardouin says:

“The chiefs of all these bands recognized the authority of Lamour Dérance, as well as Cangé and Gilles Bambars in the mountains of Petit-Goâve.”

Vol. 5, p. 60. Since all these texts prove that Jacmel and its surroundings were controlled by Lamour Dérance and his allies, including Cangé and Magloire Ambroise who carried out the Siege of Jacmel in June 1803, we can deduce:

- a) that the flag of the Dérance-Cangé-Ambroise group was black and red;
- b) that it makes sense that on the map of the French military staff showing this region, the flags were black and red; and
- c) that the Dérance-Cangé flag was black and red proves, rather, that the one of the *Armée Indigène* was blue and red.

All this invalidates the theory that Dessalines created a black and red flag at Arcahaïe. Let us note that even those who support this theory recognize that the flag created by Dessalines after the Battle of Pierroux was blue and red. Thus Timoléon Brutus writes that at Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite, Dessalines

“tore off the color white from the French standard. The amputation done, the stitches of the red and blue in a vertical position made by the pious hands of Catherine Flon created the bicolor symbol of the blacks.... That is how the first blue and red, which should not be considered as our flag, was made. It should be called the flag [*fanion*] of the Black Army.”

We wonder why he says “Black Army” when the *Armée Indigène* had been created as early as January 1803.

## 15. Examination of the SAILOR JEAN PIERRE<sup>62</sup>

In the report of [the French Captain] Yves-Marie Bot to [Admiral] Latouche-Tréville, Bot speaks of having found in the boat *La Victoire* “a red and black flag bearing the inscription LIBRE OU MOURIR” [Free or Die].” This suggests that it was not a flag of the *Armée Indigène*, since the army used the inscription “LIBERTÉ OU LA MORT” [Liberty or Death]. For his part, Jean Pierre

“answered that he left Arcahaïe with three other boats ... answered that Quanger, one of their generals, was on board of one of these boats and was going to disembark at the estuary [*ester*] at Léogâne. Asked where this general came from, he answered that he came from Dessalines.... Asked if he knew how long ago it was that Quanger went to Dessalines, he answered 15 days ago. Asked if it had been a long time since Dessalines

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<sup>62</sup> The entire *Interrogatoire de Jean Pierre* may be read in French as an annex to Jean L. Théagène's essay *Dans la noirceur jubilatoire*, on the website of the Forum Culturel Haitien. See [tinyurl.com/cjmk8cw](http://tinyurl.com/cjmk8cw) (accessed February 14, 2013). ED.

had gone to Arcahaïe, he answered that he went there at the time of General Quanger's departure from Arcahaïe and that he had left him there....”

The Auguste brothers showed that

- (a) The so-called Congress of Arcahaïe did not last several days;
- (b) No flag was made at this meeting of senior officers of the West; and
- (c) Dessalines went there mostly to meet Cangé and discuss the plans of attack on French positions.

**16. *Version officielle de L'HISTORIQUE DU DRAPEAU HAÏTIEN*** [Official version of the History of the Haitian Flag]<sup>63</sup>

Report of June 10, 1948 presented to President Léon Dumarsais Estimé by Pierre Agnant, Félix Diambois, Luc Grimard, Antoine Levelt, Princivil Pierre, Lorimer Denis, Luc Dorsainville, Mentor Laurent and Louis Maximilien.

“... It was in February 1803, and the general-in-chief of the *indigènes* had his headquarters at Petite Rivière de l'Arbonite.... He tore off the color white from the French tricolor and drew the red and the blue closer: the [blue and red] bicolor which would be from then on the flag of the *Indépendantistes* was created.

“In addition, he later ordered all army units to make the French blue, white and red flag into a blue and red flag with the two colors placed vertically. Then he gathered the main chiefs of the army units in a conference [*congrès*] which took place in the town of Arcahaïe on May 18, 1803. All the generals having approved the general-in-chief's decision, he went to the town's parade ground and solemnly presented the new emblem to the regiments assembled in square formation.”

According to these reporters, Dessalines created this blue and red flag at Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite, then consecrated it at Arcahaïe. This theory is also supported by Dr. Holly. This document is the source of the error stating that the flag on the boat *La Victoire* was blue and red.

**17. HOLLY, Arthur C. (Her-Ma-Ra-El): *Dra-Po: Étude ésotérique de Egregore Africain, traditionnel, social et national de Haïti***<sup>64</sup>

See pages 10-11.

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<sup>63</sup> Report of a Presidential Commission. An extract from the report appears, in French, toward the end of a Forum Culturel Haitien post at [tinyurl.com/byv3oc9](http://tinyurl.com/byv3oc9) (accessed February 17, 2013). ED.

<sup>64</sup> Port-au-Prince, 1928. The book was published under the pseudonym Her-Ma-Ra-El. ED.

## 18. AUGUSTE, Claude & Marcel: *Pour le drapeau*<sup>65</sup>

Many of my conclusions are based on this interesting study.

“However, the information from Freuil and Corbet seems to be contradicted by others, notably that provided by St.-Mansuy, who wrote on April 12, 1804 ... ‘the red and black flag has flown there since the evacuation....’ ”

Page 12.

“Captain St.-Mansuy, who had been evacuated to Santo-Domingo with the Jacmel garrison, could not have known that the black and red flag was in fact flying everywhere on national territory at the time he was writing to Quantin....”

Page 12. He continues:

“Unfortunately, this point escaped Trouillot, who saw in this information ‘a confirmation that the colors of the first flag of the nation of Haiti were black and red,’ whereas it would have been much more realistic of him to limit the information solely to the theater of operations where St.-Mansuy fought, [or] at least to see it only as proof of the use of the black and red during the war as well as in the first moments of national independence.<sup>66</sup>

“In fact, the hypothesis of the parallel use by our forefathers of the blue and red and black and red flags at the start of independence should not be excluded from our analysis. On the contrary, it should support it since everything seems to point to the plurality of Haitian flags at that time.”

Page 13.

Concerning the use of flags [*fanions*], the Auguste brothers say (quoting Sannon):

“It is not surprising ... that it was the red flag was carried at Crête-à-Pierrot by Magny and Lamartinière. ‘Magny ordered the hoisting of the red flag at the four corners of the fort.’ ”

Page 15. Concerning the blue and white colors sometimes used in the South, they wrote correctly: “... the ‘blue and white’ colors did not constitute the standard of the South, much less of the *Armée Indigène*. They were used rather as signals according to what Fradin himself indicates when he writes: ‘A flag will be pulled out and hoisted twice<sup>67</sup> and a pirogue will be thrown into the sea and three men will come on board.’ ”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Québec, 1982. The full title is *Pour le drapeau: contribution à la recherche sur les couleurs haïtiennes*. The brothers were also known by the surname *Bonaparte Auguste*. ED.

<sup>66</sup> We do not agree with the second part of the last-quoted sentence, since the flag of Jacmel cannot stand for the period after Independence. O.R.F.

<sup>67</sup> The French is *la mizaine (sic) amenée et hissée deux fois*. Probably what is meant is a flag hoisted as a signal at the mizzen (the smaller, rearmost mast of a two-masted ship). But it could also mean a small mizzen sail in the required colors. *Sic* appears in the original because the usual French word is *misaine*. ED.

<sup>68</sup> A pirogue is a small flat-bottomed boat. ED.

“Better [*mieux*], after the captain tried it, a pirogue and three men came on board his schooner, which took them to Les Cayes.”

Page 22. Concerning the creation of the flag, the brothers say:

“In fact, the only flag created at Arcahaïe was made in February 1803 by Pétion, who changed the French tricolor into blue and red by cutting off the color white, as Dessalines had ordered. It is not surprising, therefore, that this flag was given good placement at the Congress of Arcahaïe and that it flew next to the black and red on May 18.”

Page 46. But does that mean that these two flags were created simultaneously in February 1803? Or on the contrary, that Dessalines gave the order on that date to the different army units to remove the white strip from the French tricolor and then immediately went back on his decision and created the black and red flag, while Pétion and Geffrard maintained the blue and red that they had already adopted? Nothing allows us to affirm or invalidate the one possibility or the other, although Pétion’s insistence and Dessalines’ tolerance toward the blue and red argues in favor of the second hypothesis, or more likely toward confusion resulting from contradictory orders rather than imprecise ones.

“In any case, one thing is certain as of now, that the black and red and blue and red flags were indeed created before the Congress of Arcahaïe. That is, at least, the conclusion we have reached.”

In our view, Dessalines having given the order in February 1803 (as all historians agree) to use the blue and red bicolor, he would have looked capricious to give a counter-order a few days later. We prefer to admit that the black and red flag was definitely in use long before the Congress of Arcahaïe, but among the anti-colonialists who were not under Dessalines – for example, Lamour Dérance, Cangé, Magloire Ambroise and even Christophe, who was never Dessalines’ friend, as is proved by the texts we mentioned above (see Edner Brutus).

Also the fact that *after the war was over* the blue and red flag was hoisted at Fort Picolet, to be seen by the English, goes to show yet again that it was indeed the flag officially adopted by Dessalines.

“... it was mainly questions of organization and strategy that were discussed at the meeting, in particular the allegiance of Cangé’s army, which had just accompanied Geffrard in the South, where it participated, on March 8, 1803, in the attack on Les Cayes but only obeyed Lamour Dérance, who himself systematically refused to recognize Dessalines’ authority.

“... Cangé ... by a curious turn of history, met the same end after Independence as his former chief, with whom he had, by the way, made a blood pact.”<sup>69</sup> Cabon writes (in vol. 4. p. 323): ‘After Dessalines was overthrown, Christophe ordered Cangé’s arrest and death.’ ”

Page 51. Dérance was Dessalines’ prisoner.

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<sup>69</sup> This is an African custom to bind men together. O.R.F.



“The Latouche-Tréville document and the map drawn by Captain Leclerc<sup>70</sup> outline facts in the same sequence and allow us to conclude that Cangé, who led the Siege of Jacmel under the black and red flag, was under the same standard at the time he crossed the Bay of Port-au-Prince on the night of May 18-19, 1803 ... unless the black and red and blue and red flags had been used simultaneously by our ancestors at Jacmel, as is suggested by the reproduction by Michel Aubourg of a gouache painting showing the *indigène* troops carrying many black and red flags and some blue and red flags at their entrance into Jacmel.”

Page 61.

“When, in February 1803, Dessalines ordered his generals to remove the white from the tricolor, Geffrard was among those who received this order. It was certainly followed after that time. According to Madiou, Dessalines, in his address to the Army of the South at the meeting at Camp Gérard at the beginning of July 1803, referred to the flag in these terms: ‘Today we fight for the independence of our country and our red and blue flag is the symbol of the union between the black and the yellow.’ ”

Page 63. Once again, this argues against St.-Rémy’s theory that the blue and red flag was created at Arcahaïe on May 18, 1803.

“... no flag was created at Arcahaïe.”

Page 64. An important assertion proved.

“... General Cangé, during the battle of Cap-Français, commanded the division charged with neutralizing the positions at Petite-Anse....” However, “the naval lieutenant Babron reveals the presence of a flag bearing the same colors at other positions, different from those of the troops camped at Petite-Anse. The mountains were bristling with enemies. One of their columns led by Christophe had climbed the battery of Estaing [*poste d’Estaing*]....<sup>71</sup> At ten o’clock in the morning, the black and red *Indigène* standard flew over many of our positions....”

Pages 69 and 70. This allows us to conclude that Christophe was using the black and red flag.

“It should be noted that General Romain, who served under Christophe, had been charged with neutralizing [Fort] Picolet on Nov. 18. His flags could not have been different from the ones that flew over Les Mornets and whose colors Babron revealed. The same flags must have been raised on Forts St.-Joseph and Grigri.”<sup>72</sup>

Page 70. The fact that Babron saw the black and red flag planted on Les Mornets – occupied by Christophe – allowed the Auguste brothers to conclude that this flag was also planted on the forts occupied by Romain, who was under Christophe. The fact that the English Captain Loring saw

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<sup>70</sup> Not General Leclerc, who commanded the expeditionary force sent by Napoleon in 1801; he died in 1802, before these events happened. ED.

<sup>71</sup> Poste d’Estaing was an artillery battery, now called Batterie des Mornets. It was one of the defenses of Cap-Français. ED.

<sup>72</sup> *Grigri*, in French *gris gris*, is a type of Vodou amulet. ED.

the blue and red flag flying over Fort Picolet on November 30, 1803, and also the fact that Babron wrote in his journal that “on the morning of November 27 ... at 9 o’clock, the *Armée Indigène* took possession of the place as well as the forts Picolet [and] St.-Joseph and the battery of Grigri,”<sup>73</sup> allow us to deduce *either* that the flag planted on the other forts, St.-Joseph and Grigri, was also blue and red, *or* that Dessalines gave the order to raise the blue and red flag because he knew that this flag was known by Loring as the flag of the *Armée Indigène* since he [Loring] had offered one to Cappellet in June 1803. Moreover, how many battalions were there during the combat in the North?

The Auguste brothers write:

“Dessalines ... left l’Artibonite on November 1, heading the 3rd, 4th, 11th and 12th demi-brigades and a battalion of the 10th.... Cangé left Jacmel heading the 21st, 22nd, 23rd and 24th demi-brigades, and Cappellet came from Port-de-Paix with the famous 9th.... Christophe, whose division included the 1st, 2nd, 5th and 27th demi-brigades...”

Page 67. Out of a total of 13 demi-brigades, four would have been Cangé’s and four Christophe’s.<sup>74</sup> If these two generals were using the black and red, it makes sense that mainly black and red flags were seen at Cap-Français.

About the flag after Independence, the brothers write:

“Be that as it may, even if the checking of this information (given by Freuil) against Corbet’s does not allow the assertion that the blue and red flag was flying at [Cap-Français] as well as at Port-au-Prince in January 1804, it seems well established, at this stage of our analysis, that the blue and red flag was in fact used in Haiti in the opening moments of our independence.”

Page 12. In our view, Freuil and Corbet’s assertions allow us to maintain that the blue and red flag was used at Cap-Français and at Port-au-Prince, and also that the blue and red flag with horizontal stripes was the official flag of the free state of Haiti, since Corbet, sent by his government in a special mission to Dessalines, must have seen the flag with horizontal stripes, which he describes on some government buildings at Port-au-Prince.

Regarding Dessalines’ speech, with May 18, 1804 in the margin, the Auguste brothers write:

“... Dessalines sent out a call for the use of only one flag, saying ‘The flag that we have consecrated, the only one that we should have displayed for a long time, will be from now on the indestructible bond [*chaîne*] around which our proud people will always be ready to rally.’ Dessalines’ proclamation, from which we have taken these lines and which bears in its margin the date of May 18, 1804, devoted so little space to the flag referred to as ‘consecrated’ that it did not even mention the colors.”

Page 13. My deductions are different. I tend to think that because the “consecrated” flag was described in the constitution that his generals gave him, Dessalines did not have to describe it. As the Auguste brothers suppose, Dessalines was replacing a flag, the blue and red flag of

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<sup>73</sup> Babron is quoted in Sannon, vol. 3, p. 198. O.R.F.

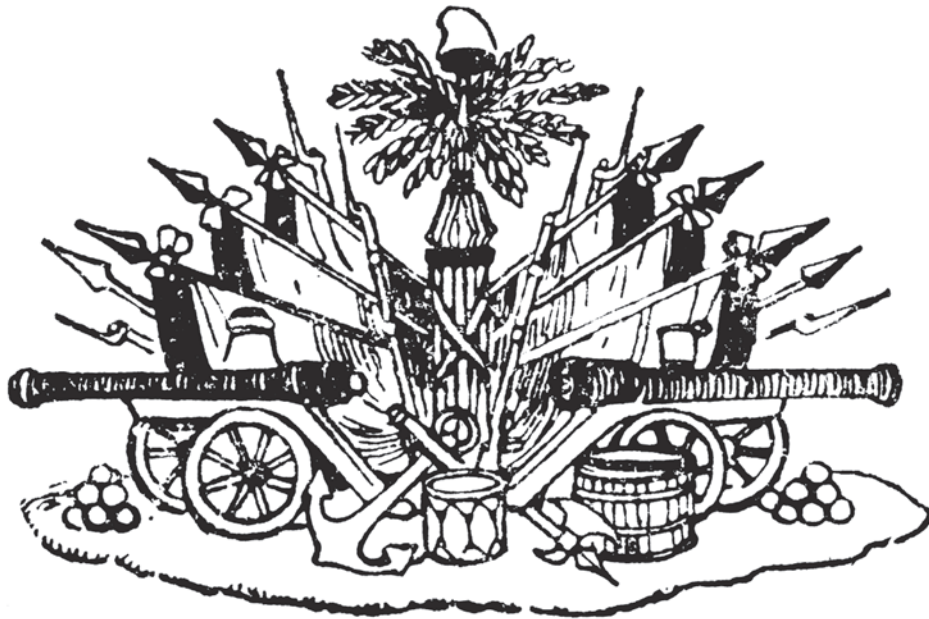
<sup>74</sup> *Demi-brigades* were French revolutionary infantry formations, replacing the old *régiments*. The *régiments* were restored (in France) by Napoleon in 1803. ED.

Independence with horizontal stripes, and was consecrating another, the black and red with vertical stripes. Until further proof that the date written in the margin is authentic, I prefer to date this speech on May 18, 1805, since the Constitution of 1805 was signed by Dessalines on May 20.

However, since no document describes the Haitian flag between March 1804 and May 1805, I will be ready to admit that Dessalines consecrated the black and red flag on May 18, 1804, the day it is proved that the date written in the speech's margin is authentic. (Interesting research to be done.)

In their conclusion, the Auguste brothers write (on page 78): "As for us, we have established the existence of two flags since the war of national liberation, one blue and red, created in February 1803 and not on May 18 ... the other black and red, whose existence is revealed as early as May 19, 1803...." We also think that the both bicolors were in the place of honor during the wars of independence.

Therefore, we should venerate both these bicolor flags as much as those who used them. It becomes easier when we admit that the Independence flag was neither one nor the other,<sup>75</sup> but the blue and red with horizontal stripes.



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<sup>75</sup> Of the vertically-striped flags. ED.



## SUPPLEMENT: HISTORY OF THE HAITIAN FLAG

For those who may wonder what are the important differences between the Auguste brothers' interesting study *Pour le drapeau* and mine, I add this page to highlight the principal ones.

1. The testimony of Captain Loring, mentioning a blue and red flag flying over Fort Picolet in November 1803, is an important document not cited by the Auguste brothers, and could change some elements of the debate. It permitted me not only to assert that the blue and red flag was at Cap-Français in November 1803, but also to state that it was the official flag of the *Armée Indigène*.
2. The Auguste brothers make great use of Babron's document to emphasize that there were numerous black and red flags at Cap-Français in November 1803, without drawing the necessary conclusions. Babron saw this flag planted at Fort d'Estaing by Christophe, who had seized the position. The Auguste brothers deduced that this same black and red flag must have been planted at the other forts (like Grigri and Picolet) taken by Clervaux, since Clervaux was from the Army of the North under Christophe's command. According to Babron, Forts Grigri and Picolet were occupied on November 29.

The conclusion from these assertions is that the four battalions of the Army of the North under Christophe's command used the black and red flag. Therefore it makes sense that there were so many black and red flags at Cap-Français, since the four demi-brigades led by Cangé also used this flag.

3. Loring offered Cappelletti a blue and red bicolor, and once Loring saw this blue and red flag flying over Fort Picolet on November 30, 1803, he reasoned that Dessalines had defeated the French and immediately suspended the negotiations with Rochambeau. This led me to conclude:
  - a) That Dessalines indisputably tolerated the use of black and red flags, but had never given any counter-order to the officers concerning the blue and red flag; and
  - b) That the blue and red remained the official flag of the *Armée Indigène*. It explains why Dessalines had it hoisted over Fort Picolet as a signal to the English of the *Armée Indigène*'s victory.
4. The Auguste brothers quote the speech made by Dessalines with the May 18, 1804, date in the margin and say that this speech implies that Dessalines consecrated a flag but that another was also in use. It seemed to us logical to conclude that as Dessalines officially consecrated the black and red flag in May 1805, the other flag in use was the blue and red. This makes the declarations of Freuil and Corbet clear and precise.

If Freuil saw some blue and red flags at Cap-Français, it is because, after Independence was proclaimed, Christophe adopted the blue and red flag of the free state

of Haiti.<sup>76</sup> Corbet's declaration confirms that the colors of flag of Independence were blue and red, adding the refinement that the stripes were horizontal.

My study complements that of the Auguste brothers; it takes their observations and deductions over lines that they perhaps did not dare to cross.

Miami, January 1986

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<sup>76</sup> Meaning the independent Republic, not the secessionist State of Haiti that Christophe later established in the north, where he used the black and red colors. ED.

## UNION-COOPERATION-FRIENDSHIP

Those who agree with me that the flag of Independence, that is to say the one from January 1, 1804, was blue and red with horizontal stripes – thus better emphasizing the break with France – should still not forget that both bicolors with vertical stripes held a place of honor during the wars of independence, in the *Marronage* as well as in the *Armée Indigène*.<sup>77</sup> For everyone, it meant the union of the blacks and mulattos, of the soldiers and *marrons*, of the old and the new freedmen, to achieve Haiti's independence.

In our day, to liberate Haiti from under-development and injustice, we need large doses of public-spiritedness and the union of all Haitians: the *bourgeois*, blacks and mulattos, the working class and peasants. Together, together! Hand in hand! Let us take as a motto: union makes strength and justice for all – *l'union fait la force et justice pour tous*. Every Haitian should hold both hands wide open, without any reservation, and repeat with faith: WE SHALL SUCCEED.

Let us teach our young people to sing of union and friendship. As examples, on the next page is my Song of Friendship, and here is a new verse for *La Dessalinienne*.<sup>78</sup>

Pou Ayiti ka devlope'l  
Travay ansanm. Travay ansanm!  
Men lan men, tout Ayisyen,  
Lan mòn, lan plenn, lan vil.  
Travay ansanm. Travay ansanm!  
Pou Ayiti ka devlop'l,  
Travay! Travay! Travay ansanm!  
Pou fè tout moun respekte peyi nou.

So that Haiti may develop  
Let us work together. Work together!  
Hand in hand, all Haitians,  
From the mountains, plains and cities.  
Work together. Work together!  
So that Haiti may develop  
Work! Work! Work together!  
So that all may respect our land.

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<sup>77</sup> The *Marronage* was the population of *marrons* [English *maroons*], escaped slaves who formed *de facto* free but nevertheless fugitive communities in the mountainous interior. The *marrons* were one of the important constituents of the Haitian revolution. The word is derived from the Spanish *cimarrón*, literally *wild*, meaning in this context a fugitive or runaway slave. ED.

<sup>78</sup> The Haitian national anthem. The music for the anthem may be heard at [tinyurl.com/bcmtoct](http://tinyurl.com/bcmtoct) (accessed February 14, 2013). ED.

CHANT DE L'AMITIE

Ré majeur O.R. Fombrun (1974)

(I) L'a- ve- nir est à nous. A nous, En- fants du Monde  
 (II) Notre i- dé- al à nous. A nous, En- fants du Monde

Tout au- tour de la ter- re or- ga- ni- sons en- sem- ble  
 Tout au- tour de la ter- re Du Pô- l' Sud au Pôl' Nord

Oui! la main dans la main La ron- de de l'a- MI- TIE.  
 Nous le ré- a- lis' rons C'est - la FRA TER - NI - TE.

1 Tour nous Tour nous la main dans la main Chan- tons Chan- tons 1 Le chant de l'a- MI- TIE  
 2 2 La vraie FRA TER - NI - TE

SONG OF FRIENDSHIP

The future is ours.  
 It is ours, Children of the World.  
 All around the earth, let's organize together  
 Yes! Hand in hand, the circle of FRIENDSHIP.

*Chorus:* Let's turn, let's turn, hand in hand, let's sing,  
 let's sing the song of FRIENDSHIP.

Our ideal is ours.  
 It is ours, Children of the World.  
 All around the earth, from the North Pole to the South Pole  
 We'll make it a reality – BROTHERHOOD.

*Chorus:* Let's turn, let's turn, hand in hand, let's sing,  
 let's sing of true BROTHERHOOD.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**ODETTE ROY FOMBRUN**, a Haitian citizen, was born in Port-au-Prince on June 13, 1917. She holds diplomas from the Teacher's Training School [*l'Ecole Normale d'Institutrices*] of Haiti and the Nursery Training School of Boston, and opened Haiti's first kindergarten.

She studied floral art in Cuba, where her husband Marcel Fombrun was the Haitian ambassador. On her return to Haiti she launched Tabou, the first florist shop in Haiti. During the régime of the dictator François Duvalier, she spent 27 years in exile with her husband and five children, 17 of those years in African countries where her husband was the Representative of UNICEF. During her stay in Africa she wrote and published many books, including two for the Republic of Congo on civic education [*civisme*].

On the departure of Jean-Claude Duvalier on February 7, 1986, she returned to Haiti and involved herself in politics. She participated in drafting the new Constitution and concentrated on the problems of poverty and dependence. She proposes as solutions *Konbitisme*, with its philosophy of cooperation, and *Touris Lakay*, whose motto DO IT TOGETHER extends the effort to the Haitian diaspora. In 1998 she published her autobiography *Ma vie en trois temps* [My Life in Three Times].

Mme. Odette Roy Fombrun has devoted her life to education. She has published many schoolbooks (on good citizenship, Haitian history, geography and the social sciences), books based on research, like *Le Drapeau et les Armes de la République* [The Flag and Arms of the Republic], children's books such as *Élections à Animalville* [Elections in Animalville], ten detective novels, and books of civics in French, such as the four-volume series *Vivre Ensemble* [Living Together], and also in Créole, such as *Dwa ak Devwa tout Ayisyen* [Rights and Duties of All Haitians].

Today, at 95, she still works at the Haitian publishing house Éditions Deschamps and continues to write for the newspapers. She devotes much of her time to the Odette Roy Fombrun Foundation for Education (FORF), which she created in 2007 (bilingual English-French website at [www.forfhaiti.org](http://www.forfhaiti.org)).

## COLOPHON

This book was composed on a Microsoft Word word processing system, with the aid of a Hewlett-Packard Scanjet 3500c image scanner. It was printed with Flint soy-based inks on 60 pound offset paper (12 point C2S paper for the covers) by Specialty Graphics, Inc., of San Leandro, California, on a Harris M-700 web press (text) and a Komori Lithrone 40 sheet-fed press (covers), using PDF Workflow and Kodak EVO digital publishing programs.

The body type font is 12 point Times Roman, 11 point Times Roman for the footnotes.

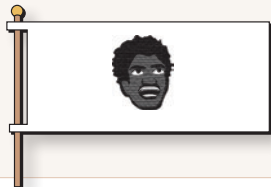
The first printing, in March 2013, was 1200 copies.



## FLAGS OF HAITIAN HISTORY

**1801**

Flag of Toussaint Louverture: White with a black man's head.



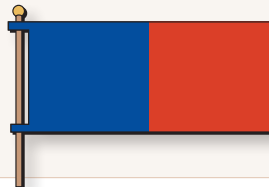
**1802**

Flag of the revolutionaries, without the French cockerel.



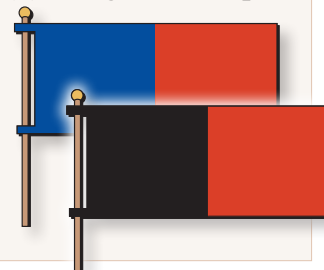
**February 1803**

Flag of the *Armée Indigène* (accepted by most historians).



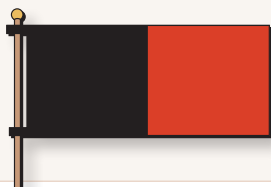
**May 18, 1803**

(1) *Armée Indigène*;  
(2) Cangé-Christophe.



**May 19, 1803**

Flag found on the Cangé group's boat *La Victoire* (Report to Latouche-Tréville).



**June 1803**

Flag seen at the *Indépendantiste* camp (Inginac Report).



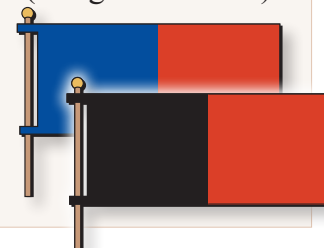
**July 1803**

Flag at the Geffard-Dessalines meeting at Camp Gérard.



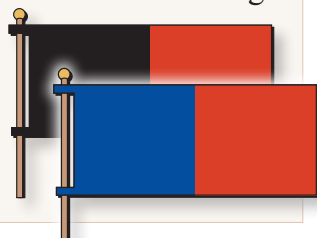
**September 1803**

Flags at the Siege of Jacmel (Cangé-Ambroise).



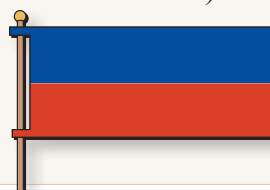
**November 1803**

Flags seen at Cap-Français by Babron and Loring.



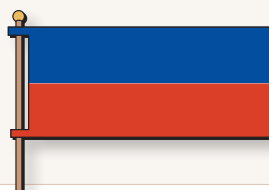
**January 1, 1804**

Gonaïves flag. (not described in contemporary documents).



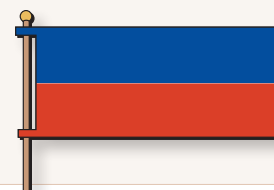
**Mid-January 1804**

Flag described by the Englishman Corbet at Port-au-Prince.



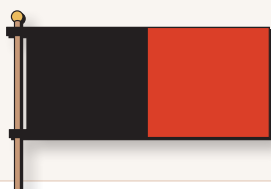
**February 1804**

Flag described by the Frenchman Freuil at Cap-Français.



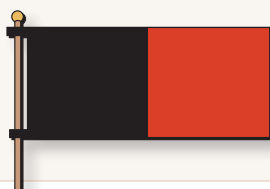
**May 1805**

Flag described in the Constitution of Emperor Jacques I.



**1811 Flag of the Kingdom of Henri I (1811-20)**

Used in the north and east.

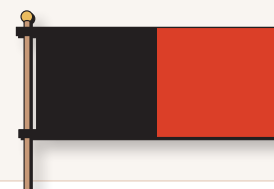


**Flag used from 1807 to 1964**

Described in the Constitution of 1843, Restored 1986.



**Flag of the Constitution of François Duvalier (1964-1986)**



NOTE: These images, following those in the author's original text from which they have been adapted, illustrate the colors and partition lines of the flags of different periods, but do not represent exact proportions. Since the mid-19th century, Haitian flags used for official government or military purposes have included the national arms on a central rectangular white panel. These panels have not been prescribed for use on civil flags, but there has been considerable overlap in actual usage. ED.



*Making of the Haitian Flag*, by Nicole Jean-Louis (2012)

**What was the design of the “original” Haitian flag? What exactly were its origins and the circumstances of its adoption? What flags were actually used in the revolutionary years leading to Dessalines’ proclamation of the Republic in 1804? This study by the Haitian scholar and educator Odette Roy Fombrun explores these questions, symbolically significant in Haitian society and long the subject of debate, in light of the historical record. She quotes extensively from eyewitness sources and later historical accounts published only in French and long out of print. The Flag Heritage Foundation is pleased to make this work available for the first time in English, along with a new preface and notes and a specially redrawn flag chart.**