

SOCIETY: FRIEND OR ENEMY OF THE BLACKS

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In the French Caribbean colonies, a dramatic social and political upheaval occurred alongside the Revolutionary and Napoleonic transformations of the mainland. Whereas plantation owners of the Old Regime had up until roughly 1791 once boasted of hosting thousands of varieties of whipping positions for their slaves and had delighted in blowing them to pieces by “burning a little powder in the arse of a nigger,”¹ by the period between 1801 and 1805 the Caribbean was creating its own “Black Republics” (although Haiti would be the only truly successful one) where former slaves were now citizens and one could openly declare “Anathema to the French name! Eternal Hatred of France!”² and legally requisition all and prohibit any future acquisition of property by whites.³ This development was not entirely welcome in France. This paper is an analysis of the opposition to this change under the Consulate, so far that it resulted in the maintenance and in one instance the restoration of slavery and of the slave trade.

When Napoleon became a Consul after 9 November 1799, the situation in the overseas colonies was almost as grim as it was in France itself. The African island of Réunion was firmly in the grips of counter-revolutionaries, former-slave

revolt and planter counter-revolution in St. Domingue was only now being pacified and a stable government being restored largely due to the efforts of Toussaint L'Ouverture, Guadeloupe under Commissioner Victor Hugues was still facing economic and social unrest, and the Caribbean region remained under the threat of further British incursion, with a recent large-scale invasion having conquered Jamaica and Martinique, temporarily occupied Guadeloupe, and threatened St Domingue. Former plantation owners who had been forced to flee from France by the Committee of Public Safety or from the islands by the respective military leaders and revolutionary slaves had begun returning to France under the Directory and were now pushing the Consulate for government intervention. Stories about massacres of whites in the colonies were being spread, of how for instance 20,000 whites in St. Domingue alone had perished, despite the less popular reality that they themselves had massacred 167,000 blacks.⁴ Furthermore, the rapid disintegration of profits from colonial trade was still a cause of great alarm for the entire nation as well as for Europe as a whole. Napoleon was forced to intervene. However, further background is required to understand why he would take the side of planters so far as to allow a return of slavery, even when it was opposed to some of the fundamental principles of the Revolution, namely liberty.

The most pertinent question is whether Napoleon had any personal hatred or bigotry

1 C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins*, Second Edition, Revised, (New York, 1989), 13.

2 Laurent Dubois and John D. Garrigus , ed., “Haitian Declaration of Independence: January 1, 1804,” *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean 1789-1804: A Brief History with Documents*, (Boston, 2006), 190.

3 Laurent Dubois and John D. Garrigus , ed., “The Haitian Constitution: 1805,” *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean 1789-1804: A Brief History with Documents*, (Boston, 2006), 192.

4 James, 241-42.

towards the blacks or else at least personally desired the restoration of slavery. Historian C.L.R. James directly stated, "Bonaparte hated black people,"⁵ while Patrice Higonnet wrote that the restoration of slavery by the First Consul was entirely "uncoerced."⁶ The latter claim will be addressed in the remainder of the paper, but the question of whether Napoleon hated blacks can be easily addressed. C.L.R. James makes his claim on the basis of Napoleon's dislike for General Dumas. This supposed evidence is weak at best, since not only was Dumas mulatto rather than black, but also the feeling between Napoleon and Dumas was mutual. Furthermore, this suggestion is undermined by the fact that Napoleon trusted blacks enough to create an entire black military unit composed of soldiers from Egypt and the Caribbean, the Black Pioneers, under a black Battalion Chief, Joseph Domingue, otherwise known as "Hercules," entrusted them with an imperial eagle, and had good enough of a relationship with "Hercules" to give him an award of 3,000 francs on 30 November 1809 when he made a personal appeal to the Emperor.⁷

In an age where racial hatred would have been largely acceptable, Napoleon leaves no trace that he hated blacks. The closest comment he made was to O'Meara who recorded that he considered "the negro race to be inferior to the whites."⁸ A feeling of racial superiority is not the same as hatred towards other races, especially since there is no hint in his language that he considered one subhuman. Moreover, he recognized the need to address racial antipathy on multiple occasions, and had conceived of a solution that he hoped would eliminate racial prejudice and slavery within a few generations: interracial polygamy in the colonies. With the pope's blessing, which he thought would be easy enough to obtain and would make this decision easier to accept in the colonies where

5 James, 269.

6 Patrice Higonnet, *Goodness Beyond Virtue: Jacobins during the French Revolution*, (Cambridge MA, 1998), 66.

7 Guy C. Dempsey, *Napoleon's Mercenaries: Foreign Units in the French Army Under the Consulate and Empire, 1799 to 1814*, (London, 2002), 222.

8 Barry Edward O'Meara, *Napoleon in Exile*, (Philadelphia, 1822), II, 219.

Catholicism was dominant, men would be allowed to have two wives, one white and one black, and with their children raised in the same environment, all hatred and jealousy would be done away with.⁹ It would seem, therefore, that it was not a personal sense of hatred for black people that led to his decision, so one must look elsewhere.

Outside of Napoleon, the lobby for the restoration of slavery was almost universally composed of the bourgeoisie, for whom the decision was largely one of economics. This is the state of French colonialism right up until 1789, the vision that the bourgeoisie sought to restore under the Consulate. While the remaining overseas French colonies after the Seven Years War were territorially vastly inferior to those of some countries like Great Britain, they were far more valuable. By itself, St. Domingue was worth more in sugar production than all of Europe's other Caribbean and American colonies combined,¹⁰ producing by the time of the French Revolution 40% of the sugar and 60% of the coffee for the entirety of Europe,¹¹ and in keeping with the mercantilism of the time, France had sole rights to this trade. This incredibly profitable colonial trade provided for two-thirds of all of the country's overseas trade,¹² and colonial trade in general accounted for 40% of the total trade of France and England.¹³ The trade was not only prosperous, but also expanding. Since the end of the War of Spanish Succession at the beginning of the century, despite territorial losses, French overseas trade had at least quadrupled in value and possibly as much as quintupled.¹⁴

By the Consulate in late 1799, the economic situation had changed drastically. Compared to

9 O'Meara, 218, and Somerset de Chair, ed. *Napoleon on Napoleon: An Autobiography of the Emperor*, (London, 1992), 184.

10 Chris Harman, *A People's History of the World: From the Stone Age to the New Millennium*, (London, 2008), 309-310.

11 James, 8.

12 Adam Zamoyski, *Holy Madness: Romantics, Patriots, and Revolutionaries, 1776-1871*, (New York, 1999), 124.

13 George Lefebvre, *The French Revolution: From Its Origins to 1793*, (London, 2001), 23.

14 T.C.W. Blanning, *The French Revolution: Aristocrats Versus Bourgeois?*, (London, 1987), 10.

1790 levels, in Guadeloupe the total surface area farmed decreased from 51,279 hectares to 18,469, or roughly by 36%. Cotton production suffered most, decreasing 75%, whereas sugar dropped 68% and coffee 61%. For his own part, Toussaint L'Ouverture in St. Domingue for his brief time in power was rapidly restoring agriculture compared to what it had been in 1795, but the figures were still grim in terms of what he was providing for export, which was all the planters and for the most part the metropole cared about. In 1801 as compared to 1789, sugar exports were at 13%, coffee exports at 57%, and cotton exports at 35%.¹⁵ From 1789 when the colonial trade brought in 100,000 tonnes of goods to be sold, the figures continued to slump so badly even under Napoleon that by 1813 only 7% of that amount of goods would be brought in.¹⁶

These setbacks were not just abstract numbers in the books of French accountants; they had real and visible effect in France. Most of the port cities as well as business and banking sectors in Paris rallied around Napoleon in hopes of improved business and government interest in promoting trade, including expanding trade in the Indian Ocean but moreover restoring the slave trade, which was the pillar of overseas commerce not by itself but rather because most other trade was interwoven with it, especially the coffee and sugar industries. Bordeaux had suffered a brief financial crisis in 1798-99 and was desperate to improve its position, while the ports of Brittany and the Channel were more completely paralyzed, not to mention Nantes, reduced from a lucrative city due directly to slave trading down to nothing.¹⁷ Shipowners and traders were thus obliged in their own self-interest to side with the planters against emancipation. In addition, another crucial aspect of opposition to emancipation came from the navy

15 Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution & Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787-1804*, (Chapel Hill NC, 2004), 214 and 338.

16 Marcel Dorigny, ed. "Slavery, Colonial Economy and French Development Choices during the First Industrialization (1802-1840)," *The Abolitions of Slavery from Léger Félicité Sonthonax to Victor Schoelcher 1793, 1794, 1848*, (Paris, 2003), 237.

17 Louis Bergeron; R. R. Palmer, trans. *France Under Napoleon*, (Princeton, 1981), 168-9.

itself, which under the Old Regime had controlled the colonies. After the desertions from and purging of the largely aristocratic navy under the earlier phases of the Revolution, the government could desperately use the support of the navy at last, especially in the hopes of an invasion of England, and was therefore well-disposed to listen to its recommendations.¹⁸ Napoleon, always the pragmatist, could hardly ignore such pressing arguments from such an overwhelming power-base of his, both a whole sphere of the military and the majority of the bourgeoisie, especially when examining the prosperous expansion of rival Britain into India.

Regrettably, there were more problems than the economy concerning the colonies. The situation was becoming one of rebellion. Although Napoleon had confirmed his faith in Toussaint L'Ouverture in St. Domingue, it was becoming clear that something was awry. Viewing the situation from the government's position, Toussaint had a habit of flaunting French rule. He had made himself the superior of mainland French officials, dispatching Sonthonax from the island in 1797 and his successor Hédouville in 1798, refused to recognize Leclerc as his superior officer despite being assigned by Napoleon, had taken it upon himself without consulting the French authorities to attack the Spanish portion of the island which he successfully annexed, single-handedly signed treaties with the United States and Great Britain without the consent of the metropole, refused despite reiterated orders to have the local military inscribe in gold letters on the standards "Brave blacks, remember that France alone acknowledges your liberty," and refused to allow more than 2,000 French troops in the colony at a single time. He was also suspected of keeping secret intelligence with the British government in Jamaica and London.

The most grievous insult to French authority came in late 1801 when Napoleon received a copy

18 Count Lavalette, *Memoirs of Count Lavalette*, (Philadelphia, 1894), 226, and General Michel Franceschi and Ben Weider; Jonathan M. House, trans. *The Wars Against Napoleon: Debunking the Myth of the Napoleonic Wars*, (New York, 2008), 15.

of the Constitution of Saint Domingue. Toussaint had created his own colonial assembly, which made him an all-powerful dictator-for-life, and presented the constitution to Napoleon as a *fait accompli*, which would be a crucial decision in the development of colonial relations. Napoleon had placed his confidence in Toussaint, and this was a personal betrayal, something he never could accept from anyone. Moreover, Toussaint was rightfully considered to be the most moderate of the black chiefs, and if he went so far as to personally betray the First Consul, it would be inconceivable to put trust in any of the others. As Napoleon wrote later of this development, "Of all the possible ways of proclaiming his independence, and unfurling the flag of rebellion, Toussaint-Louverture had chosen the most insulting, and that which the Republic could least tolerate."¹⁹ For the rest of the government's consideration, Toussaint was dictating laws to France, an act of insubordination unacceptable in any imperialist nation since this period. In the words of Adam Zamoyski, "A less naive man would not have sent a copy of the constitution drafted by a rebellious black to the most prolific lawgiver since the days of the Roman Empire."²⁰

In addition to the threat of rebellion, the stories of the horrors of the revolts thus far could only have hurt Napoleon's disposition on the matter. Regardless of how justified the revolutionary violence of the blacks and former-slaves of the Caribbean might have been, it does not change the fact that Napoleon always had a strong detestation for such bloodshed in what was essentially a civil war. For the sake of reference, Napoleon had just a few short years earlier risked great trouble by disobeying orders when he refused to serve in General Hoche's campaign in the Vendée for the very same reason. Years later, Napoleon still held this principle dear when he refused to shed any blood when he was returning to Paris in March 1815 after leaving Elba. He was disgusted at the tales of massacres of whites, especially in St. Domingue, and consequently the very

19 De Chair, 178.

20 Zamoyski, 128.

revolutionary violence that enabled the blacks to claim liberty in the first place also made Napoleon regret that same liberty.

Perhaps the final misfortune that led to the return of slavery was the simple lack of an abolitionist lobby in France. The early advocates of emancipation were long-gone. Mirabeau, Condorcet, Marat, and Danton were all dead, Lafayette was already resigned and had already discredited himself by his treasonous desertion to Austria from where he had only recently been freed by Napoleon, and Toussaint himself hurt this lobby through his denouncement of Sonthonax, the man who originally liberated the slaves, as desiring the massacre of whites in St. Domingue. The remaining Montagnard Jacobins, who were responsible for the law of 16 Pluviôse, An II (4 February 1794) that officially ended slavery and made the ex-slaves into full citizens, were also deprived of much influence, their name being soiled through popular association with the Terror and their erroneously being suspected in the investigations into the Infernal Machine as well as having been purged during the Directory. However, even these Jacobins had not all been strongly in favor of emancipation, since they were largely men of property and knew that manufacturing to some degree and commerce especially were linked to slavery and the sugar islands.²¹ More obvious though was the lack of a sizable black population in France to make the issue more concrete to the people, with there being fewer than five thousand blacks in France as figured in 1789, or roughly .02% of the total population.²²

With such an overwhelming lobby in favor of restoring the colonies which in their mind was inseparable from slavery, the utter lack of an abolitionist lobby, the open independence movement in St. Domingue that threatened even an emancipated colonial policy, and an economic situation in France that was in dire-need of addressing, the restoration of slavery could hardly

21 Higonet, 98.

22 *Ibid.*

be called “uncoerced,” which can also be attested to the fact that this decision received less opposition in the French government than either the Concordat or the Legion of Honor.²³ It also was not received hostilely by the international community, especially compared to the future reaction to the d'Enghien affair or the end of the Holy Roman Empire. The decision in France was also not unlike those in other countries during the same period in question. For instance, Thomas Jefferson made a similar decision in the United States, despite being directly involved with slaves and living in a culture where slavery was far more prevalent, when he favored the maintenance of slavery when presented with the threat of economic hardship in the face of emancipation, as well as the potential for insurrection from either the former slaves or the former plantation owners. The difference is that in France the economic damage was already seen, not simply feared, with the threat of further decline in the future and the insurrection from both groups already a reality.

However, there was one more important difference: for France, slavery had already been abolished in St. Domingue and Guadeloupe. It was now not only a matter of whether slavery should be maintained or abolished in regions including Réunion and Martinique where it still existed, but also whether slavery could actually be re-established where it had been ended. This confusion and indecision on the part of the Consulate was enshrined in the law of 30 Floréal, An X (20 May 1802), which, contrary to popular misconception did not re-establish slavery, but rather compromised a middle path, retaining liberty in St. Domingue and Guadeloupe but maintaining slavery where the law of 16 Pluviôse, An II had never been implemented and lifting the ban on the slave trade. It also reserved the right of the government to intervene in colonial affairs.²⁴ The recreation of the slave trade was not an

23 Steven Englund, *Napoleon: A Political Life*, (Cambridge, MA: 2004), 192.

24 For the full text of the law of 30 Floréal, An X, see: Marcel Dorigny, ed. “30 Floréal Year X: The Restoration of Slavery by Bonaparte,” *The Abolitions of Slavery from Léger Félicité Sonthonax to Victor Schoelcher 1793, 1794, 1848*, (Paris, 2003), 229.

entirely undesired development even among the colonials themselves. Toussaint L'Ouverture's Constitution of 1801 empowered him to import slaves from Africa for the purpose of improving agriculture due to the loss of workers in the ongoing revolts of the past decade, although once in St. Domingue these new arrivals would be legally considered “free.” For him, the slave trade provided a useful tool for recruitment even in a free society.²⁵

Although better than no statement at all, the law of 30 Floréal could not last. It did not do enough to appease either the bourgeoisie or the former slaves, who continued to fear a return to the slavery of the past. Napoleon's reassurances of the maintenance of liberty followed by this wavering law meant nothing to them unless backed firmly by law, just as Sonthonax's local declaration of emancipation in 1793 meant little until it was formally backed by the National Convention in the form of the firm law of 16 Pluviôse. Napoleon now had to make an equally firm decision, but it was not as straightforward as his detractors like to suppose. It was a dangerous moment for him: on the one hand, the affirmation of the abolition of slavery would be morally sound and ideologically consistent while potentially gaining him the support of the black colonials, but on the other hand, it risked undermining not only his support from the French bourgeoisie which was one of the crucial pillars of his government's power and legitimacy, but also the economy itself, which he was already grappling with and which it seemed could be rescued through the restoration of slavery while he also firmly believed he risked causing the blacks to commit massacres against the whites if he too-quickly expanded liberty²⁶. In the end, he chose the course he thought would sacrifice half-a-million black colonials for the sake of thirty million mainland Frenchmen and for the potential to help the black colonials in the future.

A quick note must be made here. Napoleon

25 See in particular Art. 17: Nick Nesbitt, ed.; Jean-Bertrand Aristide, intr. “Haitian Constitution of 1801,” *Toussaint L'Ouverture: The Haitian Revolution*, (London, 2008), 49.

26 De Chair, 183.

made a specific error in his rationale that would prove fatal. He associated the revolts in Guadeloupe and St. Domingue over the past decade to the abrupt emancipation under Sonthonax in 1793 and the National Convention in 1794. Napoleon, like most of the members of the Society of the Friends of Blacks before him, viewed the process of emancipation as a gradual one, with liberties being granted over a stretch of years so as to maintain tranquility. The sudden granting of complete liberty and full citizenship in a single moment in 1794 seemed to Napoleon to be too radical of a step, and he associated it with the massacres in the colonies that decade. However, this was a misjudgment. The revolts broke out in 1791 before the declaration, taking the form of popular mass-movements demanding complete emancipation like that eventually issued and threatening to take it by force. In a grave misunderstanding, Napoleon confused the cause and effect of the situation in the form of the delusion popularized by the planters and the sympathetic bourgeoisie. It is also worth noting that any state possessing St. Domingue in particular, but at least a chain of the sugar islands would have maintained or re-established slavery, as the Spanish maintained and the British desired to do had they won the war. In fact, the British abolition of slavery years later would be due to its lack of economic feasibility, with slavery being unnecessary in India. They were fully in support of slavery if they could only obtain a colonial market as valuable as that of the French. The story of abolitionism in France and England is largely one of competing empires, where one would only give up the trade when either the other did as well or it became economically unfeasible, as would be the case for England.

In Guadeloupe, the decision to restore slavery was largely taken on the initiative of the French Governor Richepanse, who had managed to crush a rebellion there. The blacks were thus legally reduced to slaves again. Napoleon's brother-in-law Leclerc had also been dispatched to St. Domingue with 12,000 men²⁷ to commence what Napoleon

27 James, 295.

would later refer to as "One of the greatest follies I ever was guilty of,"²⁸ an attempt to restore French authority on that island. The decision was not made as to whether slavery would be restored on St. Domingue, despite being restored on Guadeloupe, but in his quest to forge an independent state, Toussaint L'Ouverture had already prepared defenses against any possible French expeditions. The campaign will not be detailed here, but suffice it to say that Toussaint spearheaded resistance to the French in terms of defense of liberty against a return to slavery, and the victory of the newly created Haitian state permanently settled the issue of slavery versus freedom in favor of freedom.

Consider, nevertheless, what the black colonials considered freedom and slavery to mean, as compared to what Napoleon considered them to mean, which was important in the events that unfolded. Both Toussaint in St. Domingue and French Commissioner Hugues in Guadeloupe since the Directory had implemented regimes based on forced labor and required ex-slaves to continue working on the plantations, and in fact Toussaint believed strongly enough in the necessity of the permanence of agricultural development that these regulations were written into his Constitution of 1801, explicitly outlying that agriculture "cannot suffer the least disruption in the works of its cultivation."²⁹ In both Commissioner Hugues' Guadeloupe and Toussaint's St. Domingue, little more was offered to the emancipated peoples than the right to work.³⁰ In fact, the free "black Jacobin" state under Toussaint supposedly inspired by the French Revolution was highly totalitarian, with the Constitution of 1801 creating a solely Catholic state, despite the French Revolution's promise of freedom of worship, completely prohibited divorce in spite of that being one of the more important social gains of the Revolution, granted the military

28 O'Meara, 127.

29 See Title VI and in particular Art. 14: Nick Nesbitt, ed.; Jean-Bertrand Aristide, intr. "Haitian Constitution of 1801," *Toussaint L'Ouverture: The Haitian Revolution*, (London, 2008), 48.

30 Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution & Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787-1804*, (Chapel Hill NC, 2004), 339.

direct political power, gave the military free reign to police the island, placed the military outside of civil law in contrast to the Consulate's development to the contrary, and enforced strict government censorship and regulation of all societies, organizations, and publications native and imported. Perhaps the sole benefit it granted was the written guarantee of the permanent abolition of slavery, but that was just enough for the majority of black colonials.³¹

As Napoleon seemed to understand, the situation was largely one of semantics, since in effect Toussaint and Hugues had maintained slavery in all but name, and that was accurate except in one crucial aspect that he failed to truly appreciate: the overlords. The new overseers were not the same men as under the Old Regime. With the restoration of slavery in Guadeloupe and feared in St. Domingue, the old owners were returning, and no matter what promises of change the French government might make, the memory of the past was still alive, with not even a single generation having passed since their expulsion. The thought of all slaves being subject to, without a care of age or of pregnancy, being whipped, mutilated, branded, buried up to their necks and left to be devoured by insects, or stuffed with gun powder and literally blown to pieces was still lively in all of their minds. Even if they were still virtually slaves, they nevertheless considered themselves better off than under their former masters, and it was this psychological aspect that Napoleon failed to understand and therefore was prevented from making proper analysis of the situation and consequently he reacted poorly.

While Napoleon did allow the return of the old land-owners, he was not so blind as to think the situation was perfect. It was known in France that the last real attempt to check the abuses of the colonial overlords, King Louis XIV's Black Code, was a failure because he left it to the colonials themselves to implement it, which resulted in it being largely or entirely ignored. To fix this,

31 Nick Nesbitt, ed.; Jean-Bertrand Aristide, intr. "Haitian Constitution of 1801," *Toussaint L'Ouverture: The Haitian Revolution*, (London, 2008), 45-61.

Napoleon planned to have French soldiers take charge of the island, rather than locally raised militias, who would see that the government's measures were being implemented. Furthermore, he argued for the creation of Chambers of Agriculture for the colonies which would oversee French agents both to prevent abuses and to assist them in carrying out their duties.³² In addition, the black chiefs in St. Domingue were singled out not to return to slavery in the instructions to Leclerc; Napoleon had ordered Leclerc to send them back to France so they could serve in mainland French armies away from the colonies where they were suspected of intriguing for the independence of the islands or their betrayal to another nation. The fact that Toussaint L'Ouverture in particular was not sent back to serve as a general of division in the French armies but rather was cruelly imprisoned was not because of Napoleon's wishes, but because General Leclerc had, falsely as it would later be discovered, claimed he had proof of further treasonous and criminal behavior.³³

The real problem was that Napoleon thought he could force a solution to the colonial unrest and financial decline, but in truth the economic disruption was not a matter of slavery or not, but rather of simply allowing time for the revolutionary fervor in the colonies to settle down to a level of equilibrium, from which point trade would start regenerating. Furthermore, he failed to appreciate that the Caribbean had not experienced a revolt, but rather a Revolution, one on par in its intensity and significance to the one in France, and the black colonials were as fervent as the Parisian sans-culottes. He was not dealing with mere rebel bands or protestors, but soldiers much like his own, children of a revolution and veterans of a decade of warfare versus European armies, against French, British, and Spanish troops. They would be no more willing to submit to French authority when they feared a return to slavery than the Parisian sans-culottes were willing to lie down when threatened by the Duke of Brunswick with a return to the Bourbons and a reversal of the

32 Antoine-Claire Thibaudeau, *Bonaparte and the Consulate*, (Breinigsville, PA, 2009), 93.

33 De Chair, 183.

Revolution.

In the end, Napoleon's expeditions to Guadeloupe and St. Domingue solidified his support amongst the bourgeoisie, but cost thousands of indispensable deaths and failed to regain St. Domingue as well as resulting in the sale of the remainder of New France in the Louisiana territory, consequently defeating whatever value the restoration of slavery and consolidation of the Caribbean colonies was meant to generate. His decision for the maintenance of slavery and its expansion to Guadeloupe, as abominable as it appears in hindsight, was neither uncoerced nor unpopular at home or abroad and was done in a spirit of economic necessity and in the hopes of gradual abolitionism. Little short of a return to Terror to expel the planters and colonial lobby seemed likely to maintain the situation otherwise, and the time for that seemed past. Had Napoleon been personally acquainted with the plight of the blacks through either the practice of shipping slaves on the coast of Africa, or had he been personally involved in the campaigns in the Caribbean colonies, it is entirely likely he would have made the necessary sacrifices to expand liberty for the blacks, as he did when he encountered the Jews in Italy and elsewhere in his campaigns, but unfortunately it was not to be. Perhaps Ben Weider and General Franceschi said it best when they wrote Napoleon was confronted with "a sort of choice between cholera and the plague, between misery in economic chaos and a return to some more temperate form of slavery."³⁴

³⁴ General Michel Franceschi and Ben Weider; Jonathan M. House, trans. *The Wars Against Napoleon: Debunking the Myth of the Napoleonic Wars*, (New York, NY: 2008), 15.