The Treaty of Paris and the Congress of Vienna had more than European significance. Ending two decades of revolution and war, they were attentively followed in more distant world regions. When the news of peace reached the Caribbean in summer 1814, the Gazette Royale d’Hayti commented: «Après vingt-cinq ans d’une révolution qui a ensanglanté l’Europe et porté ses ravages dans les deux mondes, les puissances européennes sont enfin parvenues à conclure une pacification générale. [...] Une nouvelle aurore semble s’élever pour le repos du monde [...]. Notre implacable ennemi n’est plus; l’exécrable Buonaparte qui avait vainement tenté de nous exterminer, vient de succomber sous les efforts réunis des puissances alliées. Aussi heureuse que nous, l’Europe vient de briser son joug tyrannique pour jamais.»

For Haiti, the first postcolonial and post-slavery state in the Atlantic world, the downfall of Napoleon was of primary importance for future political survival. Peace was expected to pave the way for the recognition of independence by the European powers – first and foremost by France. However, the Haitian experience of thirteen years of upheaval and war between 1791 and 1804, followed by another decade of hostile relations with the former metropole, did not convince Haitians to see themselves in a position of simple dependency on a colonial power. Rather, from their extra-European point of view, they considered their nation as the first victor over Napoleon and therefore a secret ally of the anti-Napoleonic coalition. From this perspective, the European powers had in 1814 only followed the path the rebellious slaves had laid with their successful combat in the Caribbean. It remained difficult to explain, though, why Haiti, despite its staunch anti-Napoleonism, remained excluded from the negotiations: «Le traité de Paris se fit, et il ne fut pas question d’Hayti.»

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1 Gazette royale d’Hayti, 16.8.1814, 1–2; see also J. L. de Vastey, Le système colonial dévoilé, Cap Henry 1814, V.
3 Royaume d’Hayti, Déclaration du Roi, s.l., 1816, 1.
Some weeks after the news of peace, representatives of the French government used exactly the same rhetoric of pacification when they addressed the Haitian population with a very different intention: «Nous entrons dans un nouvel [sic!] ère. – L’univers agité par des terribles secousses que lui avait communiquées la Révolution française, aujourd’hui heureusement terminée, vient de se rasseoir sur des bases solides et désormais inébranlables. [...] Partout des chartes constitutionnelles assurent les droits des peuples et la stabilité des états. Enfin au règne arbitraire de la force et de l’injustice a succédé le beau régime des loix et de l’équité.»

On the French side, this similar post-revolutionary language expressed a diametrically opposed political outlook for Haiti. The French colonial lobby considered the former colony not as the first victor over Napoleon, but as a scandalous remnant of the Revolution that had to be restored to French authority as quickly as possible.

French neo-colonial ambitions and Haitian counter-strategies between the First Restoration of the Bourbons and the crisis of 1820 are the focus of this article. It analyses the discursive interplay between the French colonial office’s diplomatic missions that were lobbied by dispossessed planters and the Haitian propaganda initiatives to guarantee national independence by mobilising European sympathisers. Together with France’s financial and military constraints after Napoleon’s defeat, Haitian anti-colonial mobilisation gradually caused the Bourbon government to reassess the political risks of colonial restoration and to finally establish financial indemnification as a primary condition for recognising Haitian independence.

Referring to «Haiti» as a political entity in the 1810s is in need of explanation. After the assassination in 1806 of the state’s first leader, Emperor Jean-Jacques Dessalines, Haiti split into a republic in the south under the president-for-life Alexandre Pétion and a kingdom in the northern part under Henry Christophe, who became King Henry I in 1811. Though both rivals were strongly opposed to any idea of recolonisation, their positions towards French neo-colonial politics varied. They mirror both the political nature of the regimes and their diverging strategies to secure national independence. In both cases, the Haitian responses to French plans of re-submission thus also served a second purpose: discrediting the rival leader and his regime.

This article demonstrates how Haitian political leaders and writers from both regimes strategically used the inextricable contradiction between French colonial politics and the Restoration monarchy’s attempt at political reconciliation to denounce the Ancien Régime colonial. In doing so, they rejected recolonisation and re-enslavement of Haiti’s Afro-Caribbean population, accelerated international recognition of independence and mobilised their own population for another war of liberation. For France, the idea of a return to the pre-revolutionary status quo inevitably raised the...
The immediate political functions and for perilous question of a revival of the Ancien Régime in the metropole. The impossibility of such a return finally led France to consider a different arrangement with its former colony.

This article connects three important strands of recent scholarship that have emerged largely independently from one another and adds a fresh perspective on Haitian political agency in the early postcolonial period. First, scholars of the Haitian Revolution have started extending their focus to the early nineteenth-century long overshadowed by the revolutionary period. Various studies discuss how the different political regimes emerging after national independence in 1804 dealt with the internal organisation of social order, personal liberty and plantation labour after the final abolition of slavery. Also, historians show a growing interest in the Haitian struggle for international recognition in a largely hostile Atlantic world. In this context, Haitian political writings after 1814 are frequently seen as precursors of ideas of négritude and anti-colonial theory in the twentieth century. To a much lesser extent the historical context of this corpus of pamphlets, brochures, speeches, newspapers and correspondence has been systematically taken into account – with the important exception of the writings of the Baron de Vastey. The immediate political functions and foreign repercussions of early-Haitian writings during a crucial period in the struggle for international recognition remain to be explored.

Second, studies approaching Franco-Haitian relations after 1804 from the angle of French colonial politics often struggle with a Eurocentric perspective. Mostly relying on French sources, they highlight France’s military and financial situation as well


9 This criticism is also made by Wirzbicki, «The Light of Knowledge», 276.
as party cleavages in the Restoration period that hampered a forcible conquest of former Saint-Domingue.\textsuperscript{10} Underestimating the Haitian part in the conflict as well as the impact of Haiti's foreign supporters, these studies tend to neglect the problem of external pressure on French colonial initiatives. As this article demonstrates, Haitian responses to French neo-colonialism questioned the ideological basis of French post-revolutionary political legitimacy.

Third, this study connects with an ongoing re-evaluation of global repercussions of the downfall of the Napoleonic Empire, in particular the transnational push for the abolition of the slave trade and the separatist movements in Latin America.\textsuperscript{11} Recent contributions to the bicentenary of the Congress of Vienna are importantly informed by Atlantic history, but have not yet given full credit to the political agency of postcolonial, non-European actors in their quest for recognition and pacification.\textsuperscript{12} This holds particularly true for the role of Haiti in European conceptions of the new international order. Studying these European reactions and the Haitian reception of European politics more closely underlines how political languages impacted perceptions on both sides of the Atlantic. Since the outbreak of the revolutions in France and Saint-Domingue, concepts such as «liberty», «pacification» and «restoration» had taken on multiple meanings to the point that their ambiguities at times blurred distinctions between historical reality, metaphorical uses and conflicting interests. For this reason, paying attention to the contemporaries’ controversial discursive strategies presents «a wise methodological tactic»\textsuperscript{13} for approaching the post-revolutionary threshold in the Atlantic world.

The article starts with an analysis of French intentions and Haitian reactions to the first diplomatic mission in 1814 preparing a return to the Ancien Régime colonial. As developed in the second section, this undertaking resulted in complete failure with international repercussions when the French emissaries threatened the Haitian population with extermination plans. The third section takes into account a second mission in 1816, during which the French negotiators changed their rhetoric to stra-
tectically align colonial politics with the principles of the Restoration monarchy in France. The fourth section puts this Franco-Haitian entangled history into a broader perspective by looking at the British and Russian reactions to the recolonisation plans before the concluding remarks present an outlook on the final steps of the French recognition process of Haiti.

1. «Conserver le fait, mais en ôter l'idée»?:

The French Mission to Haiti in 1814

The Peace of Paris, concluded in May 1814, gave new momentum to the relations between France and its former colony, which had come to a hostile deadlock after the failure of the Leclerc expedition in 1802/03 and the proclamation of independence in 1804. The treaty stipulated that France regain large parts of its colonial possessions lost during the revolutionary wars including «Saint-Domingue». What the editors of the Gazette royale d’Hayti did not know when they rejoiced about Napoleon’s downfall, was that, in a secret clause, Great Britain had promised not to obstruct a French military recovery of the colony and, most importantly, granted permission to France to revive the slave trade for five years.15

Simultaneously, dispossessed colonial planters and Atlantic merchants started lobbying the colonial office to reintroduce the Ancien Régime colonial overseas, including slavery. Alternatively, they proposed to preserve the plantation system with black wage labour or to establish a French protectorate that guaranteed French commercial interests, especially against British competitors.16 Large parts of the planter lobby found that the right man to represent their interests was the colonial secretary Pierre Victor Malouet. Nominated by the Provisional Government after Napoleon’s abdication and in office until his death in September 1814, Malouet had not only been a Grand Blanc in Saint-Domingue, but had served as official representative of the refugee planters with the British government in the 1790s. In addition, he was a reputable writer on colonial affairs who had shown a disposition to reform slavery, but left no doubt about his willingness to preserve the colonial system as such.17

As immediate armed action against the two Haitian regimes was impossible for military as well as financial reasons,18 the colonial secretary’s first measure was to send a diplomatic mission to negotiate their «peaceful» resubmission to the former...

14 Memorandum by Chabannes to Pierre Victor Malouet, 27.5.1814. Archives nationales d’Outre-Mer Aix-en-Provence, CC9A 47.
18 Costs for an expedition of 40,000 soldiers were estimated at 50 million francs; Conseil du Roi, Rapport sur St. Domingue & sur les moyens d’y rétablir l’autorité française, 30.1.1815. Archives nationales Pierrefitte-sur-Seine (AN), AF/V/4, dossier 4.
metropole. Expectations of success were substantiated by reports from French exile planters in New York that southern president Pétion had declared his submission to Louis XVIII.¹⁹ In his instructions, Malouet authorised the three emissaries to offer the Haitian leaders a scheme of social hierarchy essentially based on skin colour. This plan stipulated the emancipation of a small elite by way of lettres de Blancs, while the gens de couleur and blacks who had been free before the Revolution were to be re-enslaved or returned to a condition of personal dependency on the former plantation owners.²⁰ Once they arrived in the Caribbean, the emissaries sought to obtain the approval of Pétion and the northern king, Henry Christophe, for the restoration of large parts of the colonial system by applying the rhetoric of compromise of the French Charte constitutionnelle to Haiti: «[S]a puissance royale, qui a égalé les Ney, les Soult, les Suchet, les Dessoles etc., aux Montmorency, aux Rohan, par un acte de munificence et d’équité auquel toute la France applaudit, peut également rendre un homme noir ou jaune semblable devant le trône et la loi [...] à l’homme le plus blond de la Picardie.»²¹ The fundamental contradiction of this assimilation of noblesse ancienne and noblesse nouvelle in France to the inhabitants of Haiti consisted in the fact that such a vocabulary of reconciliation and equity explicitly excluded a return to the Ancien Régime for metropolitan France whereas it de facto re-established the Ancien régime colonial.

The emissaries’ negotiations with the Haitian leaders in Port-au-Prince and Cap Henry resulted in complete failure. After arresting one of the emissaries, Henry Christophe seized and published his secret instructions, giving North Haiti a welcome opportunity to denounce the reactionary and racist nature of French colonial politics: «Quel intérêt d’ailleurs peut nous inspirer l’assimilation des Soult, des Suchet etc. aux Montmorency, aux Rohan, etc! Qu’avons-nous besoin de savoir qu’ils soient tous confondus ensemble? [...] Nous ne désirons pas de [sic!] devenir blancs par des lettres de blancs; nous nous glorifions de la couleur qu’il a plu à la Divinité de couvrir nos fronts. Nous demandons à jouir des droits naturels de l’homme et des droits politiques que jouissent les nations libres et indépendantes.»²²

Against the background of Haitian expectations of recognition, the new French regime appeared even more tyrannical than the odious Napoleonic Empire, and the legitimacy of the Restoration monarchy seemed more than precarious. The planter lobby was denounced as ultra-colons whose influence seemed to mirror the dominance of intransigent ultra-royalists instead of the king’s proclaimed moderation. In
consequence, the Bourbon Restoration appeared as a symbol of both reaction and terror, of Ancien Régime and Revolution combined, against which Henry Christophe’s writers presented his regime as a post-revolutionary alternative.\textsuperscript{23} For Henry Christophe, the real restoration had not taken place in France, but in Haiti: as a return not to the colonial, but to the pre-colonial status quo with the Haitians of African origin claiming the position of an exterminated indigenous population by «droit de conqueste».\textsuperscript{24}

In a similar vein, South Haitian writers justified independence with reference to the public order and civilisation achieved after the defeat of the French. They argued that the Haitians had neither remained French during the Napoleonic Empire nor were they now subjects of Louis XVIII. In contrast to their northern rival, commentators from Port-au-Prince, however, frequently evoked republican values and compared President Pétion to George Washington.\textsuperscript{25} The attitude of Pétion, an homme de couleur, towards the French mission has been subject to controversy, both among his northern opponents, suspicious of any kind of collaboration with the French, and in historiography. Contrary to Henry Christophe, Pétion received the French negotiator and vaguely suggested some sort of financial compensation if France gave up its neo-colonial ambitions. It remains unclear whether he actually considered further concessions, but he would probably not have accepted reintroduction of slavery.\textsuperscript{26}

As an outcome of the 1814 mission, the two Haitian regimes profited from advocating shared self-images as models of peace, enlightenment and civilisation. The discursive benefit of their propaganda initiatives towards Europe consisted in giving proof of political skills and claiming moral superiority to the French. This paid off when the French emissaries committed a diplomatic faux pas that considerably narrowed the French freedom of action towards Haiti in the following years.

\textsuperscript{23} J. L. de Vastey, Notes à M. le baron de V. P. Malouet, Ministre de la Marine et des Colonies, de Sa Majesté Louis XVIII, et ancien Administrateur des Colonies et de la Marine, ex-Colon de Saint-Domingue, etc. en Réfutation du 4ème Vol. de son Ouvrage; intitulé: Collection de Mémoires sur les Colonies, et particulièrement sur Saint-Domingue, etc., Cap Henry 1814, 16; idem, Réflexions sur une Lettre de Mazères, ex-Colon français, adressée à M. J. C. L. Sismonde de Sismondi, sur les Noirs et les Blancs, la Civilisation de l’Afrique, le Royaume d’Hayti, etc., Cap Henry 1816, 8; idem, Essai sur les causes de la révolution et des guerres civiles d’Hayti, Sans-Souci 1819, 203.

\textsuperscript{24} J. L. de Vastey, A mes concitoyens, Cap Henry 1815, 11. L’abeille haytienne, no. 4, 16-9.1817, 6–9 and no. 5, 1.10.1817, 8.

\textsuperscript{25} The attitude of Pétion, an homme de couleur, towards the French mission has been subject to controversy, both among his northern opponents, suspicious of any kind of collaboration with the French, and in historiography. Contrary to Henry Christophe, Pétion received the French negotiator and vaguely suggested some sort of financial compensation if France gave up its neo-colonial ambitions. It remains unclear whether he actually considered further concessions, but he would probably not have accepted reintroduction of slavery.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{26} For contrary interpretations see L. F. Manigat, Éven
tail d’Histoire Vivante d’Haïti. Des préludes à la Révolution de Saint Domingue jusqu’à nos jours (1789–
2. Restoration as Extermination?: The dérapage of French Diplomacy and Haitian Strategies of Defence

In his correspondence and in a pamphlet, chief negotiator Jean Joseph Dauxion Lavaysse warned the Haitian leaders that the French government, in case of unexpected resistance to its scheme, was ready to send former Napoleonic troops to Haiti to «replace» and «annihilate» the Haitian population by importing new slaves from Africa in order to take advantage of the British acceptance of the slave trade. He also alluded to support from the other colonial powers «ayant à craindre pour leurs possessions l’exemple trop dangereux de l’indépendance d’Haïti».27 He further stressed that Haiti was by no means to become part of the concert of powers, but, on the contrary, would face European intervention in case of further resistance to recolonisation: «[L]es souverains d’Europe, quoiqu’ils aient fait la paix, n’ont pas encore remis l’épée dans le fourreau, et sans doute, vous n’ignorez pas [...] que le principal article du pacte que viennent de signer tous les souverains européens [...] est de se donner tous les secours nécessaires pour détruire tous les gouvernemens qui se sont formés par suite de la révolution française, soit en Europe, soit dans le Nouveau-Monde.»28

After his arrest in North Haiti, Dauxion Lavaysse’s colleague Medina was interrogated by Henry Christophe’s henchmen. They were particularly interested in details about a passage in Malouet’s instructions that suggested deporting black Haitians resisting re-enslavement to an unknown island named «Ratau» and to «purge» Haiti.29 Medina stated: «C’est une invention du ministre Malouet, pour ne pas blesser l’esprit philanthropique de S[à]M[jesté]; c’est un moyen de se défaire des hommes dangereux dans la colonie.»30 He also confirmed that Malouet was willing to «exterminate» the Haitian population down to children of six years of age.

These revelations damaged Louis XVIII’s reputation as a leader pacifying post-revolutionary France, especially as they corresponded almost verbatim to a project of Bonaparte’s general Leclerc in the 1802 expedition.31 North Haitian publications in particular henceforth denounced the «Machiavellism» of the French government ready to sacrifice an entire population to the interests of the ultra-colons and to eradicate the Haitians with the help of their enslaved African «brothers».32 What at the beginning had been vague suggestions or outright threats written in correspondence and memoirs now transformed into an allegedly fixed scheme of extermination: «Nous savons que le cabinet français a adopté l’abominable trafic de la traite pour cinq ans, dans les vues de remplacer notre population après l’avoir exterminée».33

27 Dauxion Lavaysse to Henry Christophe, 1.10.1814, in: Wallez, Précis historique, 120; this was an argument recurrent in memoirs of ex-planters; cf. Brière, Haïti et la France, 19.
29 Ibid., 184 and 187.
30 Ibid., 195–196.
32 Prézeau, Réfutation de la lettre, 21.
33 J. P. de Limonade, Le machiavélisme du cabinet français, Cap Henry 1814, 10–11.
Even the revolutionary terror of 1793/94 and the violence of Bonaparte were presented as incomparable to the «système de dépopulation de ces nouveaux Robespierre» of the Restoration monarchy.

From the end of 1814 the two Haitis started arming for a «war of extermination» to repel the expected French invasion. Reduced to the options of «esclavage ou notre entière destruction», Henry Christophe published a far-reaching plan of defence mobilising the entire population including women and children. The Napoleonic wars also provided models for guerrilla fighting and scorched earth war strategies, again demonstrating the extent to which Haitians saw their independence as a contribution to anti-French warfare in Europe. Once again writers called for mobilisation for a war of national liberation as the insurgents in Russia, Spain, Tyrol and Prussia had done: «notre belle et nombreuse cavalerie vous taille des croupières à la cosaque; lorsque vous êtes bien fatigués, vient la petite guerre de nos Royal Dahomet [a regiment of African origin], ces guérillas, ces tyroliens, ces landwerhs [sic], ces landsturms hâtiens». As part of his strategy of national unification, Henry Christophe also invited Haitians from the South to form an alliance against the French. As during the war of independence in 1802/03, no sacrifice was deemed too great to cause the highest possible losses to the enemy.

Reproaches of deliberating mass extermination became unbearable for the French government, even under a new colonial secretary after Malouet’s death, when it faced public scandal in London. Around the turn of the year 1814/15 news of the secret mission and details about the compromising correspondence of Dauxion Lavaysse reached the British press via Haitian publications. The British papers generally followed the Haitian accounts of the negotiations, saw them as «fatal to the French interests» and welcomed their failure as a blow to the slave trade. The Times copiously reproduced documents available from Haiti, including Dauxion Lavaysse’s threat of a concerted European intervention in Haiti and Henry Christophe’s invocations of Britain as «liberatrix of the world».

The French émigré journalist Jean

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34 Ibid. and 21; also C. de Prézeau, Lettre Du Chevalier de Prézeau, Secrétaire du Roi, etc. etc.: A ses Concitoyens de partie de l’Ouest et du Sud, Cap Henry 1815, 4; Royaume d’Hayti, Déclaration du Roi.

35 Royaume d’Hayti, Plan Général de Défense du Royaume, Cap Henry 1814.

36 P. Charlemagne, Réfutation d’un écrit de Charrault, ex-colon, intitulé: Coup d’œil sur St-Domingue, Cap Henry 1816, 3.

37 Royaume d’Hayti, Plan Général; see also Nicholls, From Dessalines to Duvalier, 48. For the South see Pétion’s speech from December 1814 that also contradicts Manigat’s assumption of an agreement with France; A. Pétion, «Le Président d’Hayti au peuple et à l’armée», in: Collection de pièces, 47–49.


40 The Times, 12 and 13.1.1815.
Gabriel Peltier, serving as Henry Christophe’s representative in London and a broker for news from Haiti, calculated that the potential extermination of all Haitians above six years of age would result in the unbelievable figure of 400,000 victims and provided other shocking details of the diplomatic mission. In the name of the king, the new colonial secretary, Beugnot, publically disavowed the proceedings of Dauxion Lavaysse. Reacting to growing pressure from the media and the general public, he formally took his distance from Malouet’s re-enslavement scheme. From this moment on, it was clear that – as long as it did not send a military expedition – the methods the French government had hitherto resorted to in order to exert pressure on the Haitians were no longer viable. To continue in the same manner would not only have meant risking further public discredit of His Most Christian Majesty, but also possibly provoking resistance on the part of the great powers.

3. «Indépendance réelle» or «indépendance fictive»? The Second French Mission to Haiti in 1816

All military preparations – as unrealistic as they were regarding France’s overall situation during the First Restoration – were suspended by the unexpected return of Napoleon from Elba in March 1815. In the Second Restoration three months later, Louis XVIII, acting under British pressure, confirmed Napoleon’s tactical abolition of the slave trade. It was the only political measure taken during the Cent-Jours that was kept when the Second Restoration occurred. Yet this decision did not substantially change French practice until well into the 1830s. Compared to 1814 France’s military and financial situation further deteriorated between 1815 and the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1818, so that a violent solution to the conflict with Haiti became even less probable.

The two Haitis nonetheless remained on guard. Even if a new expedition ruined France financially, risks still persisted: On the one hand, the agitation of the ultra-colons in the ultra-royalist Chambre introuvable had not lost its power. On the other hand, the obvious disloyalty of former Napoleonic elites had proven that Bourbon reconciliation attempts were far from being successful even in France. Significantly, all the members of the noblesse nouvelle cited by the French emissaries in their 1814 proposals had rallied to the Emperor, confirming Pétion’s predictions to Dauxion.


Lavaysse almost to the day: «Quant aux hommes de l’empire, ce sont les mulâtres de la restauration. [...] Ajvant trois mois, vous verrez Bonaparte entrer en France et les Bourbons s’en aller plus vite qu’il ne sont venus.» 

After 1815, Haitian writers still wondered whether the Bourbons and the disillusioned allied powers would not take advantage of the disastrous climate in the tropics to get rid of untrustworthy Bonapartists, especially if the side effect of their dispatch could be the conquest of Saint-Domingue. 

In 1816, a second mission sent by the ministry of the colonies, this time with royal approbation, arrived in the Caribbean. The negotiators Fontanges and Esmangart were former planters, which did not add to their credibility on the Haitian side. The aim of this mission still consisted in returning «Saint-Domingue» to French sovereignty, but the ministry, admitting the strategic errors made in 1814, had visibly learned its lessons. It reaffirmed the conciliatory promises of the First Restoration without any allusion to the Ancien Régime colonial. During the negotiations, the reestablishment of slavery and the dispatch of French troops were even formally excluded. 

As Henry Christophe left the emissaries without response, they turned their attention to Pétion. Employing a language of paternalism and oubli, they painted Saint-Domingue as a happier France that – similar to Louis XVIII in exile – had been spared the ravages of Napoleon. Although they acknowledged the declaration of independence of 1804 as proof of shared hostility towards Napoleon, they stressed that the logical consequence of the king’s accession from exile to the throne was the resubmission of «Saint-Domingue». Given the possibility of such an «in-dépendance réelle», the «in-dépendance fictive» of leaving Haiti in its present state would be nothing less than irresponsible given the ambitions of other colonial powers and their unwillingness to recognise an independent Haitian state: «le jour où le Roi prononcerait votre indépendance, il vous laisserait dans la dépendance de tout le monde.»

On the Haitian side, the 1814 scenario of Ratau Island had left traces. The North Haitian Gazette Royale saw the new mission as a continuation of the former and regarded the French ministry as well as the new negotiators as heirs of Malouet’s principles. The French frigate’s drapeau blanc remained a «simbole de l’esclavage». Pétion did not fully share these arguments and insisted on his previous position that

45 T. Louverture, Mémoires du général Toussaint-Louverture, écrits par lui-même, pouvant servir à l’histoire de sa vie, ed. Joseph Saint-Rémy, Paris 1853, 133, note 1, see also Collection de pièces, 85.
46 L’Abeille haytienne, no. 2, 16.8.1817, 4 and Pierre Marie Catineau Laroche to Pétion, 25.11.1816, in: Collection de pièces, 81–82.
47 For this mission see Brière, Haiti et la France, 72–76.
48 Fontanges and Esmangart to Pétion, 10.11.1816, in: Collection de pièces, 124–125.
50 Fontanges and Esmangart to Pétion, 2.10.1816 and 10.11.1816, in: Collection de pièces, 89 and 120.
51 Fontanges and Esmangart to Pétion, 12.10.1816, ibid., 101.
52 Fontanges and Esmangart to Pétion, 10.11.1816, ibid., 127 and 123.
53 Gazette royale d’Hayti, 27.10.1816, 1–3.
Haitian submission could only be obtained by an extermination of the population.\textsuperscript{54} Although he accepted the French disavowal of the first mission, he remained cautious – the 1814 instructions had nonetheless been signed by a minister of the King of France.

At this point, Fontanges and Esmangart tried to bypass the aporia of reconciliation by changing their political language. They sharply criticised the new South Haitian constitution that prohibited foreigners from land ownership in Haiti – as did all Haitian constitutions from 1805 to 1918 – for its alleged racism of coloured people against white people.\textsuperscript{55} For Pétion, this exclusion was well-justified as a defence of national sovereignty. China and Japan acted similarly, and France had even expelled Frenchmen from their own country: «Louis XIV, en révoquant l’Edit de Nantes, a exclu des français au sein même de la France. Aucune puissance ne s’est immiscée dans cette affaire, et toutes ont profité plus ou moins des avantages que leur a procurés cette émigration.»\textsuperscript{56} In other words: France would gain more from establishing commercial relations with independent Haiti than from re-establishing a quasi-colonial order on the basis of skin colour. Such historical comparisons not only served to deconstruct France’s alleged paternal superiority, but were part of a broader strategy of discrediting the Bourbon maxim of union et oubli.\textsuperscript{57} From the Haitian perspective, this formula of French post-revolutionary reconciliation evoked both colonialism and racism, whereas the very existence of Haiti necessarily relied on the revolutionary rupture as a foundation stone of national independence.

4. «Nos plus ardents défenseurs»:\textsuperscript{58}

North Haiti and British Abolitionist Diplomacy

Haitian propaganda denouncing France’s neo-colonial ambitions and Haitian critique of any idea of return to the Ancien Régime had a wider impact on Haiti’s international position. Especially North Haitian anti-colonial lobbyism importantly involved the support of British abolitionists who after 1814 became Henry Christophe’s closest international allies and helped him to interest other European powers in Haitian independence.

For British contemporaries, the question of Haiti was more than a purely humanitarian matter. After the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, overlapping with the war against Napoleonic France, the conclusion of general peace had accelerated the

\textsuperscript{54} Pétion to Fontanges and Esmangart, 6.10.1816, in: Collection de pièces, 91–93.

\textsuperscript{55} Fontanges and Esmangart to Pétion, 30.10.1816, ibid., 111–113; cf. also Nicholls, From Dessalines to Duvalier, 53.

\textsuperscript{56} Pétion to Fontanges and Esmangart, 2.11.1816, in: Collection de pièces, 118; Stein, «From Saint-Domingue to Haiti», 206, mentioning this reference, leaves aside its strategic function.

\textsuperscript{57} Cf. Pestel, «Mulatten der Restauration».

\textsuperscript{58} A. de Dupuy, Première lettre du Baron de Dupuy, Secrétaire interprète et Membre du Conseil Privé de Sa Majesté Henry ier, Roi d’Hayti, à M. H. Henry, auteur du Pamphlet intitulé Considérations offertes aux Habitants d’Hayti, sur leur situation actuelle et sur le sort présumé qui les attend, Cap Henry 1814, 8.
mobilisation for an international abolition of slavery, motivated by the double objective to defend their own colonial economic interests as well as to substantiate a national self-image as a «saviour of humanity». The threshold of 1814/15 marked not only British governmental pressure on the colonial powers France, Spain and Portugal, but also the climax of a wave of petitions from civil society.

Nonetheless, British abolitionist sympathies for Henry Christophe’s regime are in need of explanation, especially as their more radical French counterparts, like the Abbé Grégoire, tended to sympathise with the southern republic. The northern kingdom particularly fitted into the British scenario of gradual emancipation. It provided the crucial proof that liberated slaves were capable of cultural advancement, autonomous government and even «constitutional» monarchy. To enhance his role as an abolitionist model, Henry Christophe, who was born in the British colony of Grenada, undertook considerable effort to display his anglophile admiration of George III. Most importantly, he chose the Lancaster system of mutualist teaching as the basis of his educational system, invited British teachers and other experts, and he strategically intended to introduce the English language and Protestantism in his kingdom.

What neither the king nor his Haitianophile supporters like William Wilberforce, Marcus Rainsford and Thomas Clarkson achieved, though, was a formal recognition of independence by the British government. On the one hand, Haiti remained a symbol of revolutionary emancipation that carried the risk of «contagion» towards the slave populations in the British West Indies. On the other hand, the British government had no interest in undermining Louis XVIII’s position in France and the «repos of Europe» by violating the First Treaty of Paris in which Britain had acknowledged France’s rights to «Saint-Domingue». Finally, Clarkson, who took the lead as a British advocate of Haitian interests, did not hold a public office in the 1810s. In contrast to Wilberforce, who was a Member of Parliament, he acted as a «kind of institution himself» to internationally defend North Haiti between 1814 and 1820.

59 Racine, «Britannia’s Bold Brother», 129.
65 Clarkson to Henry Christophe, 26.8.1818, ibid., 113.
He coordinated British support for Haitian education, explored public opinion in France, advised Henry Christophe in international politics and his scribes in publication strategies for European readers, and he defended the king against reproaches of tyranny and despotism.

Two examples illustrate to what extent Clarkson’s initiatives in the direction of France and the European alliance contributed to eradicating the idea of the Ancien Régime colonial and the violent submission of Haiti from the political horizon. Having travelled to Paris in 1815, Clarkson was a careful observer of French domestic politics. He therefore urged Henry Christophe, who had been left largely aside in the 1816 negotiations, to conclude a treaty with France within the lifetime of Louis XVIII. He was convinced that the old anglophile king had developed more moderate principles during his British exile than the Comte d’Artois. Moreover, he believed that Britain would be more disposed to guarantee a treaty made between Henry Christophe and Louis, rather than his successor.\textsuperscript{67} The unstable political majorities in France’s lower chamber presented another risk for Clarkson in his quest for recognition of Haiti. He fully shared the North Haitian view that ultra-royalists and \textit{ultra-colons} «wished to bring back everything in France to its old & slaverish state».\textsuperscript{68} Clarkson welcomed the 1818 elections that excluded many ultra-royalists in favour of «friends of you & to the independence of Hayti»\textsuperscript{69} such as La Fayette, but Henry Christophe understood that the political balance could swing from one moment to the next, from the constitutionalists back to the ultras.\textsuperscript{70}

In 1819, during the centrist government of Élie Decazes, Henry Christophe named Clarkson his official representative in France, even though a formal diplomatic status was out of the question given the French refusal to recognise Haitian independence. Provided with instructions from the Haitian Foreign Secretary, he was sent to Paris to obtain this «condition expresse et \textit{sine qua non}»\textsuperscript{71} of independence in exchange for an indemnification of the planters and a commercial treaty. However, Clarkson’s mission unexpectedly coincided with the reorientation of French party politics after the assassination of the Duc de Berry in February 1820. In Clarkson’s eyes, the association of the ultras to the new government revived the spectre of the Ancien Régime in France as well as in «Saint-Domingue».\textsuperscript{72} In a letter to the liberal deputy Baron de Turckheim, Clarkson therefore outlined the humanitarian costs of any military project towards Haiti by recalling the shocking Malouet plan of

\textsuperscript{67} Clarkson to Henry Christophe, 7.9.1819, The British Library London (BL), Add. Ms. 41266, fol. 89’;
\textsuperscript{68} Clarkson to Henry Christophe, 30.10.1818, BL Add. Ms. 41266, fol. 45’;
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{70} Henry Christophe to Clarkson, 20.3.1819, BL Add. Ms. 41266, fol. 58.
\textsuperscript{71} BL Add. Ms. 41266, fol. 113’.
\textsuperscript{72} Clarkson to Henry Christophe, 28.4.1820, BL Add. Ms. 41266, fol. 157’.
1814: «It was the intention of that minister to have attempted the conquest of Hayti, and to have put the inhabitants to the sword, men, women, and children down to six years of age, and to have filled up their places by 300,000 new negroes to be brought from Africa. [...] But you will say, this project is too bloody to be true. I assure you it is true.»

Relying on the shock value of earlier French missions to Haiti to prevent a military expedition, Clarkson was clearly aware that the window of opportunity for a settlement was by now closed. Turckheim talked to the colonial secretary, Baron Portal, who as a member of a partly ultra-royalist cabinet excluded any negotiations with a Haitian representative. Clarkson recommended to Henry Christophe that he start new propaganda efforts that would again emphasise the contrast between French backwardness and Haitian civilisation and internationalise Haiti’s concern of recognition: «the nearer your Majesty, and the Haytian Government, and the Haytian People are considered to approach to a level with the enlightened Princes, Governments, and Nations of Europe, the less obstruction you will find to being nationalized, or to being received among the acknowledged Governments of the world.»

Yet, this new initiative would not materialise. Paralysed after a stroke and faced with a domestic revolt, Henry Christophe committed suicide in October 1820. His death and Haiti’s subsequent reunification under republican auspices were a double blow for the abolitionists. They lost both their direct connexions to Haiti and a powerful argument for gradual slave emancipation.

Clarkson’s interventions in favour of North Haiti also addressed the Russian Czar, who had become an emblematic figure for the abolitionists. A sympathiser of Quakerism, Alexander I combated the slave trade in the Caucasus regions and used his support for the British struggle against the slave trade to emphasise his role as protector of Christianity against the Ottoman Empire. To French ex-planters, these sympathies appeared paradoxical given the millions of serfs living in Russia or Poland. Clarkson first met Alexander in Paris in 1815, vividly recounting the horrors of the slave trade and informing him of the scandalous French mission to Haiti. Although the Czar disapproved of both actions, he concluded that, given the condem-
nation of slave trade at the Congress of Vienna, harmony between the great powers ultimately weighed heavier than the justifiable demands of the abolitionists.79

Clarkson began a new initiative for international banishment of the slave trade at the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1818, where he also succeeded in obtaining another audience with the Czar about the situation in Haiti. Previously, he had handed over to Alexander a letter by Henry Christophe that aimed at dissipating the negative impression of Haiti the Czar had gained from reading French and German newspapers. Henry Christophe’s emphasis on monarchical order, civilisation and education clearly paid off given Alexander’s reaction: «To see a human Being rising from the Situation of a slave, and founding a populous Empire, was in itself a Surprising thing, but to see him in the midst of Ignorance and Darkness, founding it on the Pillar of education under Christian Auspices was more surprising and truly delightful.»80 He and Clarkson unanimously condemned the «diabolical Plan» of a French invasion though Russian recognition of independence remained out of question unless France would have done so.81

This overall positive attitude to Haiti’s autonomy is even more remarkable as Alexander called in Aix for a crusade against the insurrectionists in Latin America. In contrast to French colonial lobbyists, he did not consider Haiti to be a similar case for allied intervention. Henry Christophe was clearly no Haitian Bolívar.82 In this respect Henry Christophe’s declaration of non-interference on the American continent met Russian expectations.83 In a subsequent letter, the king drew another parallel between the Haitian war of independence and the French campaign to Russia in 1812 to reclaim Haiti’s admittance to the international scene.84

Henry Christophe’s sudden death did not mark the end of a Russian-Haitian rapprochement. Also South Haiti, despite its open support of Bolívar, played the Russian card and offered a commercial treaty. Though such an agreement was unacceptable, Russia in the early 1820s increased pressure on France to reach a peaceful arrangement with its former colony.85

5. Outlook and Conclusion

French negotiations with Haiti resumed in the early 1820s when the ministry, learning its lesson from the 1816 expedition, gradually shifted objectives towards a solution that favoured France’s economic interests rather than the idea of political sover-

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79 Wilson, Clarkson, 145, and Clarkson’s own relation, SJC Papers of Thomas Clarkson, folder 1–5, no. 47.
80 T. Clarkson, Thomas Clarkson’s Interview with the Emperor Alexander I. of Russia at Aix-la-Chapelle, as Told by Himself, ed. P.H. Peckover, Wisbeck 1930, 15.
81 Ibid.; Clarkson to Henry Christophe, 30.10.1818, in: Christophe / Clarkson, Correspondence, 121.
82 Cf. Manigat, Eventail, 269; F.J. Pamphile de Lac-
eighty over Haiti.\textsuperscript{86} Henry Christophe’s suicide and the subsequent reunification of the Haitian territories made a non-military solution appear more likely. In consequence, the option of indemnification in exchange for the recognition of independence became more attractive. Moreover, the anticolonial movements in Latin America had reason to expect that Britain and the United States would sooner or later accept the independence of the former Spanish colonies and might do the same with Haiti. After years of relative inaction, French ultra-royalist colonial politics from 1821 onwards effectively abandoned any military project and came back to the financial option already offered by Pétion during the first mission in 1814, even though it had been sharply rejected by Henry Christophe at that time.\textsuperscript{87} It nonetheless took more diplomatic missions and a complicated process of conciliating Haitian liberty with French constitutional law until an ordinance by Charles X granted «l’indépendance pleine et entière»\textsuperscript{88} in 1825.

Accepting Charles X’s ordinance put the reunited Republic of Haiti, under the leadership of Pétion’s successor Boyer, in an ambivalent position: on the one hand, Haiti paid an enormous indemnity for the recognition of independence \textit{de jure} that \textit{de facto} had already been achieved in 1804. On the other hand, this solution fully fitted into the French monarchy’s attempt to «fermer les dernières plaies de la Révolution».\textsuperscript{89} When the Haitian state indemnified the French planters, the French state simultaneously indemnified the émigrés whose possessions likewise had been confiscated and sold during the 1790s. Taken together, these two highly controversial measures mark another post-revolutionary threshold. Excluding any return to the \textit{Ancien Régime} in terms of property, they legally settled and formally acknowledged both the interests of victims of the Revolution, émigrés and planters, and the rights of the new proprietors, buyers of \textit{biens nationaux} and Haitian landowners. The fact that the indemnification paralysed Haiti’s finances until the end of the nineteenth century and that the French state paid compensations until well into the twentieth century highlights, however, the long-term consequences of these settlements.

As this article has demonstrated, the shift from military conquest and re-enslavement to financial indemnification was the result of a complex political and discursive interplay that impacted on Franco-Haitian relations after 1814. The first two missions to Haiti marked two steps towards a non-violent acceptance of Haitian independence. They fundamentally changed the political discourse about Haiti, thereby limiting France’s scope of action towards its former colony. In the confrontation between the

\textsuperscript{86} For the following see Brière, \textit{Haïti et la France}, 77–126 and Stein, «From Saint-Domingue to Haiti», 208–216.

\textsuperscript{87} From a republican point of view this solution was seen as a proof of counterrevolution; C. de Gastine, \textit{Lettre au Roi sur l’indépendance de la république d’Haïti et l’abolition de l’esclavage dans les colonies françaises}, Paris 1821, 48–49.

\textsuperscript{88} Quoted from Brière, \textit{Haïti et la France}, 112.

\textsuperscript{89} See Louis XVIII’s last speech from the throne in 1824; A. Franke-Postberg, \textit{Le milliard des émigrés: Die Entschädigung der Emigranten im Frankreich der Restauration (1814–1830)}, Bochum 1999, 115.
two postcolonial regimes and the former metropole, the political language of negotiation became an important factor in Haiti’s quest for recognition. In 1814, French and Haitian political discourses were strikingly similar: the conclusion of general peace marked a moment of rising expectations with regard to the international position of the two nations. When the planter lobby and subsequently the colonial secretary transformed this expectation into a call for the restoration of the Ancien Régime colonial, Haitian writers reversed these neo-colonial attempts to denounce the reactionary and exclusivist character of the Restoration monarchy.

The strong impact of this strategy after 1814 can be explained by two factors: first, the European peace settlement permitted France to take measures towards the restoration of the Ancien Régime colonial, whereas an unqualified return to the pre-revolutionary order in France itself was clearly beyond the boundaries of legitimate political discourse. The Haitian reaction to French colonial and domestic politics thus targeted an aporia of the post-revolutionary settlement, undermining the precarious legitimacy of the Bourbon regime. The dérapage of the 1814 mission lastingly discredited key concepts of Bourbon rhetoric such as reconciliation, unification, pacification and paternalism when applied to Haiti’s situation postcoloniale. Threats of re-enslaving or even exterminating large parts of the Haitian population unveiled the Restoration’s inherent violent nature providing Haitian writers and their allies with opportunities to present the French monarchy as a continuation of revolutionary terror and the tyrannical reign of Napoleon.

Second, both Haitian leaders emphasised that Haiti had declared her independence not only to France, but to mankind and the universe as well.90 To a certain extent, this postcolonial universalism paid off as international resonance of Haitian propaganda amplified its impact. The vilification of French colonial politics by Henry Christophe’s writers combined with the efforts of British abolitionists and the British press as well as the mobilisation of the Czar made Haiti a political issue of more than French relevance, thus narrowing French margins of manoeuvre. This pressure influenced the French government to ponder the risks of colonial restoration with regard to its precarious standing among European powers, but also domestic oppositional forces. The course for alternatives, first to the Ancien Régime colonial, then to French sovereignty over «Saint-Domingue» in general, was basically set.

Within the context of the ongoing re-evaluation of 1814/15 in a transnational perspective, Haitian reactions to pacification and restoration in France and Europe underline how non-European contemporaries followed the events in Europe «la carte à la main».91 Even though Haiti took part neither in the Treaty of Paris nor in the Congress of Vienna, both regimes hoped to become an integral part of the post-

90 Cf. Pétion to Fontanges and Esmangart, Port-au-Prince, 10.11.1816, in: Collection de pièces, 130; Gazette royale d’Hayti, 27.10.1816.
91 Anon., «Réponse à l’écrit de M.Henry, intitulé: Considérations offertes aux habitants d’Hayti sur leur situation actuelle et le sort présomé qui les attend, par Columbus», in: Collection de pièces, 1-19, 2.
Napoleonic order of which they considered themselves extra-European precursors. Haitian claims for political agency in the Atlantic world did not only refer to more than two decades of revolution and war in and beyond Europe, but also to irreversible reconfigurations of colonialism and slavery. They therefore invite a re-evaluation of the global ramifications of the post-revolutionary settlement that leaves behind a Eurocentric perspective, but also nuances a postcolonial narrative born out of an idea of «universal emancipation»\(^\text{92}\) that does not fully take into account Franco-Haitian historical complexities.


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**The Impossible Ancien Régime colonial:**

**Postcolonial Haiti and the Perils of the French Restoration**

This article discusses the consequences of Napoleon’s downfall for the world’s first modern post-slavery state, Haiti. It focuses on the interplay between the French colonial office’s diplomatic missions that were lobbied by dispossessed planters to recover the lost colony and the Haitian propaganda to guarantee national independence. These relations ultimately contributed to a shift in French colonial politics towards Haiti, from military conquest and re-enslavement to financial indemnification. Taking the rhetoric of pacification beyond Europe, French diplomacy presented racial hierarchies as an extension of the 1814 compromise between old and new elites in metropolitan France. The Haitian side, however, insisted on the sharp contradiction between the supposed reconciliation in France and a quasi-restoration of the Ancien Régime colonial. Drawing on Haitian, French and British source material, this article analyses how Haitian propaganda attacked the precarious political legitimacy of Restoration France from an extra-European viewpoint to exert pressure on European colonial politics. Relying on Haiti as a model for slave emancipation, British abolitionists significantly contributed to excluding the option of the Ancien Régime colonial. The debate on Haiti’s future forced Louis XVIII’s government to ponder the political risks of colonial restoration. In the outcome, financial indemnification became France’s primary condition for recognising Haitian independence in 1825.

**Friedemann Pestel**

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg
Historisches Seminar
Lehrstuhl für Neuere und Neueste Geschichte Westeuropas
Rempartstraße 15
D–79085 Freiburg
friedemann.pestel@geschichte.uni-freiburg.de