

THE DRAGON and THE HYDRA:
A HISTORICAL STUDY OF ORGANIZATIONAL METHODS

You have fifteen, twenty, fifty years of civil wars and people's struggles to go through, not only to change the conditions but in order to change yourselves and make yourselves fit for political rule.

KARL MARX addressing THE IWMA - the body that would later become the First International.

Marx's words hit close to home. I've been involved in such movements for forty years, a product -originally- of the Black Liberation Movement of the 1960's, and subsequently being held as a political prisoner in the U.S. since 1972. And over that period I've participated in a number of mass and party formations. And it never fails to amaze me how much energy and time is dedicated towards establishing various groups claims to being the so-called VANGUARD of some struggle for justice, when in the end most of these exercises turn out to be sterile, when they don't degenerate into fratricidal conflicts.

Furthermore, I'd hazard it to say, that the entire history of Marxist leninist social change has known few other methods. Leading me to further say that a sober analysis of that history points to a struggle for supremacy - not only over the bourgeois ruling class, but also against the working class and all other oppressed people; Against any and all formations either of the latter pull together that escape their control. Thus their mantra of doing everything to SEIZE POWER for the working class and oppresses is a FARCE.

If there has ever been a Marxist Leninist Vanguard party who has found itself in power and did not subsequently follow that script, I'm not aware of it. And while arguments can always be found to rationalize why it was/is necessary to resort to such measures, and many such arguments do make sense-INITIALLY- a closer look always seems to force adherents to fall back on the mantra of the flawed individual(s) who did not hold true to DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM'S (DC) principals, which are themselves wide open to interpretation and manipulation, in order to seize the initiative in a struggle for domination - as opposed to trying to make a "concrete analysis of concrete conditions," as V.I. Lenin instructed.

At the same time, history has shown that such ruthless methods are effective: if the objectives of those who used the DC methods was simply to seize power, then their record during the 20th century WAS impressive. It's proved itself as brutally efficient and capable of ~~Ma~~atching or outdoing anything the bourgeois forces are capable of.

Nevertheless, in the end those who gained power using DC method have ALWAYS ended up using it to defeat the aspirations of the workers and oppressed, and subsequently install the users of it as a new oppressive RULING CLASS.

How could it be expected to produce any other outcome? DC concentrates more power in the hands of a relative few, then any mechanisms the masses the former purport to be serving can muster: A recipe that's bound to conflict with the vagaries of flawed humans.

Stan Goff in his masterful full spectrum disorder (2004, Softskull Press) believes that DC as practiced by Lenin and his Bolsheviks did have a democratic basis, whereby a open and intense democratic struggle was carried out in order to arrive at positions and policies, and then all the party workers would move in a DECENTRALIZED-free wheeling-manner to make possible the implementation of those decisions (in the teeth of czarist repression), which ultimately had the effect of CENTRALIZING THEIR COMBINED EFFORTS.

Only later to change their methods which led to more-all around-centralization and very little democracy; if any.

And without a doubt, any number of other Marxist Leninist/Maoist (style) groups have had similiar experienced.

Yet, if the CLEAR historical tendency is to always gravitate towards LESS democratic and MORE oppressive forms of control, then quite frankly for one to say their use of HISTORICAL MATERIALISM is leading them to formulate correct liberation ideas, theories and plans BY USING DC is ludicrous!

THE CONTEMPORARY SITUATION

Here we are at the beginning of the 21st century, facing a global crisis unknown heretofore in the entire history of humankind. The threats to our COLLECTIVE existence are so multidemsional until it would take many other works to detail

them all. Consequently, I'll limit myself to those that I believe are paramount to helping us break out of self imposed mental roadblock that hinders our efforts to move forward.

The main threat to humankind, the flora and fauna and our entire biosphere is capitalist imperialism. A totally out of control, predatory, global system of accumulation and oppression that's on a collision course with the limitations of our planet; daily devouring children, women, people of color, the poor, workers of all stripes, wild life and the environment in pursuit of profits.

All of our problems primarily rest on the artificial divisions that have been endangered between the oppressed for hundreds of years. Divisions based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, geography, sexual preferences, age and otherwise. These divisions have been fostered-historically-by those who have sought to use them in their pursuit of power and material gain.

Under imperialism, the overwhelming majority of our planets humans are-ultimately-WORKERS. Thus Marx's address to the IWMA still holds true today. Albeit he underestimated the degree of opposition the workers would face and the length of time it would take for them to overcome all of the obstacles in their path.

Marx, superb analyst that he was, due to the EUROCENTRIC predilections that entrapped him, overlooked or dismissed important workers struggles that fell outside of Europe; or he at least failed to study them with the same intensity that he devoted to those European situations that he (primarily) based his-otherwise-well based analysis' upon. That set in motion other willful neglecting of formulating a proper evaluation of these "other" struggles up until today even. And it's a thorough study, evaluation, adaptation (wherever applicable) and understanding of some of these workers struggles that will help us move forward in our struggle against imperialism. There we'll find PROVEN, workable ALTERNATIVES to the flawed DC forms of organizing; Ones that mirror Stau Goff's analysis of the strengths of the early Bolshevics use of that form.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

First off let me state that I'm NOT a Anarchist. Yet a lot of what you'll read here is gonna look a whole lot like

Anarchism! To that I will only quote a unknown ancient, who after racking his brain to formulate answers to vexing problems, only later to discover that those who had come along before him had ALREADY expounded on what he thought were his intellectual inventions, is supposed to have blurted, "Confound-those ancients, they've stolen all of our best ideas."

Therefore, to the Anarchist reader, what follows CANNOT properly be termed Anarchism, simply because the practitioners themselves never knew that word, nor were they in contact with people of that view, as Anarchism is a European ideology and these parties-for the most part-were Africans and Ameridians, with very limited imput by a small number of outcast Europeans. Further, all of the struggles here written about had pretty much taken off and gained success prior to that concepts spread-under it's classical Anarchist thinkers and practitioners.

Still the AFFINITY between Anarchism and the following is NOT rejected; on the contrary, it's welcomed as a sister set of ideas, beliefs and concepts-as long as the Anarchist understands that they stand on a equal footing, in a spirit of INTER-COMMUNAL SELF DETERMINATION.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The following is a short outline of various WORKERS STRUGGLES against early European imperialism, as practiced in Suriname, Jamaica, a number of southern areas of what is today the U.S., and finally Haiti. I'll outline how WORKERS who had been ENSLAVED fought longer then Marx's "fifteen, twenty, fifty years of civil wars and people's struggles..." in order to ultimately be able to exercise their own forms of SELF DETERMINATION and "political rule." And although all of them were as stratified as we are today, they were still able to DEMOCRATICALLY derive methods and policies that were COLLECTIVELY pursued by DECENTRALIZED formations of their own making. And once winning their freedom from the various imperialist powers, unlike the later states ruled by Marxist VANGUARD formations, they never again relinquished their workers based autonomy-until this day; with one exception (Haiti) which deserves special attention.

Afterwords, I hope that you do your own in depth research and study, because to most people the bulk of this history will

be unfamiliar. Then you can decide whether such organizational forms and methods would be useful to us in our struggle to save ourselves and the planet.

SURINAME

"We must slay the Hydra. "that was the Dutch imperialist's main concern in Suriname from their earliest days there.

(Hydra: In Greek mythology a many headed monster, whose heads regrew when struck off. It was finally killed by Hercules. Also the largest and longest constellation in the sky, but with no particular bright star)

On the northern coast of South America, this tropical country borders Guyana and French Guiana and fronts the Caribbean Sea, with Brazil to its south. Geographically about one third-as large as Cuba.

The first European interlopers to visit the area were the British, who were followed by the Dutch. And always it changed hands between them, the Dutch was the main imperial power to occupy the country from the mid 1600's, up until the 1970's. All during that period the over-whelming majority of the indigenous Amerindian populations were either suppressed, forced to flee to less hospitable areas, or exterminated.

The Dutch at that time were one of the world's major imperial powers. Vying alongside of the British, Spanish, Danish, Portuguese and the French for control of North and South America, the Caribbean-and other places in the world.

The Dutch East Indies Company was one of the first and a major CORPORATION in the world. And in Suriname they launched plantation based production of cash crops on a large scale-using ENSLAVED WORKERS imported from different parts of Africa. Added to that were a number of other plantations ran by other European "entrepreneurs," along with their overseers, shop keepers, militia's, artisans, administrators, bureaucrats and sailors; along with a small percentage of (mostly) poor white women who had been exiled from Europe.

Compared to the enslaved Africans and the suppressed Amerindians, one could compare everyone else-but the small number of plantation operating entrepreneurs and administrators-with what we today recognize as the technologically advanced countries

LABOR ARISTOCRACY and petty bourgeoisie, ~~as~~ the latter elements being fully dependent for their livelihood and protection of their persons and property, from the enslaved workers and remaining Indigenous people, on the Dutch military, militia's, the imperial court and the big mercantilist's.

I made those comparisons because we all too often fail to point out that the enslaved Africans were transported across the Atlantic to assume the role of WORKERS, and just about everyone else associated with their plight were also-first and foremost-OTHER WORKERS, similar to our plight today. And the issue of RACE did not-could not-change that basic fact! So keep that in mind as we develop this work.

Amongst the Africans were many different ethnic groups from different areas of the continent, all speaking different languages and with many varied religious and cultural practices. And to give a idea of the STRATIFICATION of these Africans, the fact that they all had dark skins meant next to nothing to them-in terms of solidarity. Where they originally came from everybody had dark skin, friend and enemies alike! Further it was the practice of the plantation owners to try to purchase workers from different backgrounds in order to KEEP them divided as much as possible. And because the work was so brutal and the food was so inadequate, most plantations were really DEATH CAMPS, where the African workers were literally worked to death in a few years, only to be replaced with newly imported enslaved workers, who would also go on to make handsome profits for the owners. Thus the turn over itself was a powerful check on the formation of any solidarity between the enslaved workers.

Be that as it may, almost from the first importation of enslaved Africans, there developed a tradition of flight from slavery: Africans running away to the forests, swamps and highlands. These fugitives came to be known as Bosch Creools: Dutch for Bush Creoles, or "born in the forest" and later BUSH NEGROES, who we'll call MAROONS throughout our study, as a GENERIC name that has come to be used as an accepted way to describe fugitive, enslaved people throughout the western hemisphere.

Throughout the western hemisphere we witness these COLLECTIVE MAROONS developing and using a very effective form of

DECENTRALIZED organizing that not only served to help them defeat their former enslavers, but has helped them to remain AUTONOMOUS from all unwanted overseers for hundreds of years-until our time.

It must be recalled that the Suriname Africans were from many different backgrounds; so when they would come together as Maroons that would have to be factored in: they had to organize using DEMOCRATIC methods, and the glue that held them together was their COLLECTIVE FOCUS on defeating their enslavers attempts to control them; that CENTRALIZED their efforts.

There remained, however, one class of their communities who did not fit into that category: those Africans who did not flee, but were FORCED by Maroon raiders to leave the plantations; they did not enjoy a say in their communities affairs until they had proven themselves.

But as a general rule individuals and small groups would flee the plantations to join the Maroons, and on occasions large conspiracies were organized that saw the enslaved workers preparing the groundwork for Maroon Guerrillas to raid plantations and liberate scores at a time.

All of which exhibits (in the latter example) decisions arrived at by truly DEMOCRATIC means, and then carried out in A CENTRALIZED manner, all done by otherwise DECENTRALIZED groups. Long before our later Bolsheviks!

Over a one hundred and fifty year period the various Maroon communities of Suriname would wage a guerrilla war with the Dutch and English slavers to remain free. And today in Suriname their direct descendents still occupy the areas their ancestors fought on, and most of them have never suffered under slavery-even BEFORE the U.S. signed it's own Declaration of Independence in 1776.

Even as this is written they REMAIN AUTONOMOUS from the government of Suriname-which gained it's independence from the Netherlands-who's Dutch ancestors we're discussing-in 1975. In fact the descendents of the early Maroons were again forced to fight ANOTHER guerrilla war against the newly independent government in 1980; a SUCCESSFUL effort on the part of the Maroons to maintain their autonomy and control over the lands they've historically occupied.

Their decentralized methods had its drawbacks. The one utilized by their enemies in the imperialist camp was the latter's ability to manipulate various Maroon communities into signing "treaties" that gave those communities their freedom from enslavement and land to use in exchange for them cooperating in the hunting down and capturing other fugitives. By doing that the enslavers could avoid the all but useless wars designed to capture or kill the skillful Maroon guerrillas, and EVERYONE in the Maroon communities fell in that category: At the drop of a hat, the women and children in those communities could pack their belongings and escape to pre-arranged and built-up alternative settlements, while the men (and some women) busied themselves in fighting rear guard actions against the pursuing colonial soldiers.

It turns out, however, that although the treaties DID solve some of the imperialist's problems, the Suriname Maroons NEVER really fulfilled their obligations to help the imperialist's to hunt and capture other Maroons. A narrative of the Dutch forces generations long wars designed to either capture or kill the Boni Maroons is instructive in that regard (see the Boni Maroon Wars in Suriname).

By the mid 18th century the Dutch had been forced by over a century of Maroon guerrilla warfare to sign treaties with three of the most powerful Maroon communities: the Ndjuka, Saramaka and the Matawai. All of these Maroon communities had evolved over generations from fugitive Africans—from many different backgrounds into NEW ethnicities, which adopted the already mentioned names. Most importantly, they had soundly defeated all of the imperialist forces fielded to capture or kill them, while continuing to expand their numbers and offer a ever growing threat to the Dutch colony.

The treaties came with yearly "gifts" of all kinds of commodities that the Dutch would deliver to the Maroons: textiles, pots and pans, guns, powder, axes, knives, mirrors, nails, liquor and just about anything agreed upon during the periodic sit-downs between the parties. The underlying objectives of the imperialist, were to both rid themselves of a dangerous enemy and turn them into valuable allies.

Yet once it became known to the STILL enslaved African workers that they could no longer rely on the Njuka, Saramaka and Matawai for refuge and protection, they began to seek out smaller Maroon concentrations. In the early 1700's one of those small groups was headed by a African named Asikan Silvester. Born into this group was a child called Boni. His mother was a fugitive African and his father either African or Amerindian. Subsequently, the group chose Boni to be its new head, after Asikan became too old to serve in that position. This group of Maroons would eventually become known to the Dutch as a NEW center of resistance, and for the next two generations Boni would lead them, and they would be known to history as the Boni Maroons-becoming a ethnicity. Thus the Boni Maroons just replicated what the imperialist's thought they were suppressing by the signing of the treaties with the other Maroons. Consequently, they would not sign any more treaties with either the Boni's or any other Maroons-until the ~~the~~ end of the slave period.

Boni-for his part-would lead his group to aggressively wage war on the imperialist until his death in his mid-sixties.

Yet even while the Boni's became the main fighting force amongst all of those Maroons who were still at war with the Dutch, they still observed and respected the DEMOCRATIC wishes of any fugitives or Maroon groups they dealt with; never trying to CENTRALIZE all control in their hands. And although they were past masters in the use of COORDINATED GUERRILLA CAMPAIGNS amongst all of the DECENTRALIZED groups-during which a UNIFIED COMMAND was essential-they still never demanded that everyone integrate themselves into the Boni community; or put themselves directly under Boni-outside of when participating in agreed upon guerrilla campaigns and during raids. Thus the Dutch recorded their knowledge of the frequent coming together of the DECENTRALIZED fighters of Kormantin Kodjo, Chief Puja, Boni and Baron during large campaigns, while separating and remaining decentralized and AUTONOMOUS otherwise.

Unlike the "Treaty Maroons," they never became dependent upon the imperialist for any thing. Instead, relying on their raiding capabilities to capture guns, power, cannons and other useful items. Moreover, they had perfected methods of large scale, open field agriculture, that allowed them to raise,

harvest and store more food than they could consume—along with more farm animals than they could use to supplement their diets.

Dutch soldiers recorded discovering Boni and related Maroon fields that took them a hour one way and 30 minutes the other way to mark off for destruction; along with so many domesticated chickens until they had to slaughter the excess after feasting on them for days. They and their Maroon foes always noted how much better the Maroons were fed, and how much better physical specimens the Maroons shown themselves to be. It became a prime motivator of the Dutch led troops to hunt for and locate Maroon food stores and farm animals in order to supplement their own poor diets,

During the Dutch's final major campaign in the second Boni War, a expeditionary force of 1600 Dutch regulars and European mercenaries, accompanied by thousands more Colonial ^{Soldiers} ~~and~~ and enslaved African workers and "free negro rangers" was also unsuccessful, causing the commander to return to Europe with less than a dozen of his force he'd led to Suriname; and to die himself within a year.

From then until the ending of slavery the Dutch relied on treachery—in trying to manipulate the various "treaty" ~~and~~ (still) fighting Maroons against each other. And although they DID succeed in getting a younger-less experienced-generation of treaty Maroons to assassinate Boni, Chief Puja and Kormantin Kodjo (who were old men, who had ~~returned~~ turned over their leadership to younger Maroons), the other fighting Maroons continued to exercise their autonomy until slavery was abolished. And today the Boni Maroons still live AUTONOMOUSLY in Suriname proper, ~~along~~ ^{with} ~~more~~ more than 70 thousand direct desendents of the "Bush Negroes."

The Dutch imperialist tried their best to slay the Hydra! They failed. Was it because the Maroons DECENTRALIZES FORMATIONS prevented the Dutch from concentrating their superior resources against any ONE CENTRALIZED LEADERSHIP—any bright star? I think so.

Have the various Bush Negroe ethnicities been able to maintain THEIR AUTONOMY over hundreds of years against ALL oppressive forces through their refusal to allow themselves to be subjected by ANY broad centralizing forces? I think so again.

JAMAICA

Across the Caribbean ~~from~~ from Suriname-in Jamaica-from as early as the 1650's there developed similiar DECENTRALIZED MAROON COMMUNITIES. Only there they were fighting against the local enslavers of the BRITISH EMPIRE. After generations of unseccessful campaigns by the British against the Maroon guerrilla's, they too hit ^{upon} the necessity of trying to divide the fighting Maroons from their main source of new recruits: the enslaved African workers. So the British offered the Maroons "treaties" similiar to those in Suriname.

To force the British to adopt such methods the Maroons fought tenaciously, skillfully and bravely for over 100 years! And even though there (also) we witness a number of DECENTRALIZED groupa, they roughly became to be recognized as the WINDWARD or LEEWARD Maroons. The former located in the eastern (windward) end of Jamaica, and the latter on the western (leeward) side. And history records the most noted Maroon of the Windwards as a African womyn names GRANNY NANNY-who even had a town named after her in the Maroons LIBERATED TERRITORY. Indeed, Nanny Town became the center of the resistance to British plantation imperialism in Jamaica, the headquarters from which the Maroon bands almost succeeded in driving all of the imperialist from the island all together-even though British soldiers captured and burned Nanny Town on a number occassions.

The dominant personality amongst the leewards was a African man named Kodjo. History records Kodjo as leading a tightly controlled and CENTRALIZED operation. And when the Windwards had to make a trek across the island during one fierce suppression effort, seeking the Leewards help, even Kodjo could not force them to abandon their autonomy.

Tellingly it was Granny Nanny who led a segment of DECENTRALIZED Windwards to resist signing the treaties the longest. She went as far as to have the British envoys killed on more then one occassion, and only submitted after Kodjo and all of the male Maroon heads had capitulated.

After that these Maroons were used to help the British hunt and capture new runaways, as well as suppress revolts amongst the still enslaved African workers; although they fiercly clung to

the freedom and autonomy they and their ancestors had fought for!

In fact, over a generation later their descendants would AG-ain engage the British in the Trelawny War in the middle 1790's, during which a mere 267 Maroon guerrilla's fought thousands of British soldiers, local militia and enslaved Africans to a complete stand still.

They, however, were also tricked and placed on boats to be deported to Canada-and later to Africa after accepting a truce.

Even so, from then until our time, the descendants of those remaining Maroon communities in Jamaica still continue to occupy the lands they fought on, and they've NEVER recognized any overlords; neither the later British or black governments!

THE UNITED STATES

It's ironic that those of us who live in the U.S. continue to neglect to thoroughly study and critique the wealth of documented history, about the anti imperialist and anti expansionist struggles that have occurred here since the Europeans first started colonizing this area, other than the well know Native American suppression and genocide.

Like the volumes of works written about the Civil Rights, Black Liberation struggle of the 1960's and 1970's, the early Labor Movement, Womyn's Suffrage Movement, Abolitionist Movement and Reconstruction period, there's a mountain of other revolutionary material we can learn from. And not suprisingly that information concerns the struggles of ENSLAVED WORKERS on these shores prior to the abolition of chattel slavery. In fact, it mirrors the already mentioned struggles in Suriname and Jamaica, with the important distinction that it encompasses MULTI-RACIAL ASPECTS-more so than either of the former cases. Namely, in the U.S.-until the abolition of slavery-Africans, Amerindians and Europeans (in some areas) allied themselves to fight against the imperialist and expansionist powers. That phenomenon was ALSO evident in the Caribbean and South America, but due to the large percentages of enslaved Africans-to enslaved Amerindians and Europeans-most of those struggles were primarily between the enslaved Africans and the European imperialist's.

Thus today in the U.S. such emotionally charged epithets as HILLBILLY and POOR-WHITE-TRASH are TOTALLY divorced from their historical roots, that rest on the fact that the first people to be labeled as such were the descendents of the INDENTURED EUROPEAN WORKERS, who had escaped that status and allied themselves with both the Amerindian and Africans, who had also escaped from slavery or servitude. All of whom combined into MAROON COMMUNITIES in areas that are now a part of the United States.

Initially the derogatory poor-white-trash label was reserved for the rebellious, unexploitable and non conformist early Europeans who the colonial and imperial elites could not control, or use to increase their power; thus the TRASH label. And later the hillbilly lable and imagery was used to similiary ISOLATE those ~~run~~aways who moved into the southern Appalachian mountains to also escape their former indentured status. Both segments were staunch enemies of the imperialist and colonists, who many times allied with Africans and Amerindians who were also fugitives from enslavement. At times these three groups formed TRI-RACIAL Maroon Communities. At other times they were firmly allied, through living seperated; except in the case of the Amerindians and Africans who mixed freely.

Consequently, from the 17th century until the abolition of slavery in the U.S., there were also Maroon communities in areas stretching from the pine barrens of New Jersey, down the east coast to Florida, and in the Appalachian mountains and later to migrate to Mexico's northern border regions. With the best known -but little studied- ones being those who occupied the Dismal swamp of Virginia and North Carolina and the SEMINOLES of Florida: that contrary to popular belief have NEVER been a Amerindian tribe, but instead -from their beginnings- a ETHNIC GROUP made up of Africans and Amerindians, who came together to form the ethnicity; just like the Boni Maroons were formed in Suriname.

All of which replicated the DECENTRALIZED organizing forms of the Maroons in Surimane and Jamaica.

And although their political histories fall short of them winning and maintaining the degree of autonomy achieved in Suriname or Jamaica, the descendents of the Semiholes in Mexico

and the U.S. still fiercely guard their communities against the Mexican and U.S. governments: in Florida they're recognized as a semi autonomous tribe, and the African (semihole Negroes) in Oklahoma, Texas and Mexico also distinguish themselves from their neighbors -while calling the Blacks in the U.S. "state negroes." Because according to New Afrikan nationalist Cadre from the U.S. who have worked around them, the African Seminoles NEVER considered themselves citizens of the U.S. like African Americans do.

Finally, the legendary history and present posture of the people of the Southern Appalachians -in still refusing to fully integrate into fabric of the U.S.- rests more on a forgotten history of their ancestors struggle to remain free from any servitude or domination, then they or we understand. Instead we've adopted the bourgeois myth about them being hopelessly backwards and ultra racist, although in reality true hillbilly culture and practice is really ISOLATIONIST and INDEPENDENT. Reflecting the AUTONOMIST spirit of their ancestors.

HAITI

The history of Haiti provides a excellent laboratory to test my thesis in.

What would become the country of Haiti was once known as San Domingo or Saint Domingo, the western part of the island of Hispanola-in the Caribbean Sea. Today the country of the Dominican Republic occupies the larger eastern part of the island.

There -between 1791 and 1804- we witness one of the most titanic struggles ever engaged in between (enslaved) workers and their over loads. It is through a examination of the events surrounding that struggle that we can clearly measure the strengths and weaknesses of our DRAGON and HYDRA: CENTRALIZED and DECENTRALIZED FORCES OF CHANGE. A much neglected gold mine of historical contributions to our search for historical lessons-on a par with the great French revolution of 1789.

For generations prior to the French Revolution-that set the stage for the Haitian revolt two years later-Magoon guerrillas

and communities had been operating throughout the entire island of Hispanola. And later many of their descendants would distinguish themselves amongst the multitudes of the little known heroic figures of those times. Most notably the intrepid Mackandal who in the pre revolutionary period (CA 1750's) would organize and lead a select group of African Maroons and enslaved plantation workers in conspiracy designed to overthrow the French and colonial powers by the massive and bewildering use of a vast array of poisons: against individuals, livestock, supplies, water and any African workers who were believed to be sympathetic to, or in league with the French.

After years of terrorizing the island, Mackandal slipped-up and was betrayed and subsequently burnt at the stake, fatally crippling his tightly organized -CENTRALIZED- movement.

By that time just about all of the areas original Amerindians had been exterminated, only to be replaced by a endless supply of enslaved Africans, and the later produced so much sugar and other agriculture crops until San Domingo was the crown jewel of the French empire, and the backbone of the French economy. So Mackandal's terror campaigns were quickly pushed to the back of the exploiters minds.

But within two years of the outbreak of the French Revolution, and the subsequent turmoil caused by it in that colonial possession, a new generation stepped into Mackandal's shoes.

One dark night a large assembly of the colonies Africans met at a secret ceremony; both enslaved workers and Maroon guerrillas met on a mountain outside of town. They represented thousands of other Africans-both on the many plantations and in the fugitive communities in the mountains. The ceremony and last minute plans were being overseen by Boukman and a enslaved female-they were both VODUN (Voodoo) spiritual leaders. There was no need to haggle over any last minute plans. They knew better than Karl Marx's (later) "wage Slaves," that "they had nothing to loose but their chains." And the horrible treatment that their "masters" heaped on them added a sense of desperation for them to kill-or-be-killed, once they revolted!

Yet, Boukman and the female offered more INSPIRATION THEN CENTRALIZED leadership. And when the revolt was launched shortly

thereafter, it was led by scores of DECENTRALIZED bands of African workers, Maroon guerrilla groups—who were all joined shortly thereafter by separate Mulatto led groups.

Before the well known Toussaint L'Ouverture came on the stage, the Haitian Revolution was being led by figures that the DECENTRALIZED groups propelled forward: the Maroons Jean Francois, Bissou and Lamour Derance. Also the rebel enslaved workers Romaine the Prophetess and Hyacinthe the fearless leader of the battle of Croix des Bouquets. And the Mulattos had a number of their own independent groups and distinguished leaders plus, there was also a small segment of whites who were in league with the anti slavery wing of the French Jacobins, and who loosely allied themselves with one rebel group or another.

Within two years of the beginning of the French Revolution, and continuing for twelve harrowing years the Haitian revolutionaries would go on to militarily engage and defeat first their colonial enslavers, and afterwards a succession of armies fielded by Spain and England, as well as a traitorous Mulatto army, and finally tens of thousands of Napoleon Bonaparte's veteran French "revolutionary" troops.

The victorious Africans would go on to found the country of Haiti in 1803/1804; the only country in world history established by foremenly enslaved workers.

What better example could we use to weigh Marx's words about the "workers" engaging in "Fifteen, Twenty, Fifty years of civil wars and people's struggles to go through... in order to change yourself and make yourself fit for political rule"? (ref. cited)

The Marxist giant, C.L.R. James, who penned the classic BLACK JACOBINS (1963, Random House) dissects that struggle. In it James compares the Haitian revolutionary army led by Toussaint and later Jean Jacques Dessalines and Henry Christophe with the later Russian Bolshevik Party: [Toussaint and]... his Black army generals filling the political role of the Bolshevik Party. "(James, P. 283) This brilliantly led, tightly organized and courageous army represents my DRAGON here. And James' book does much to rescue them from the shadows of history for our study. They are the ones who would surface as the most notable elements, while scores of the DECENTRALIZED receded to the background.

So on first reading about them you would think that this CENTRALIZED DRAGON was the revolutionaries best weapon. But the

European empire builders of France, England, Spain-and the U.S. wannabe's-were not going to give up, even though they all had been defeated, or were afraid to directly intervene; in the case of the U.S.

As it turned out, however, with Toussaint-backed by the "revolutionary" army-assuming the governership of the island, the emperialists pressured and maneuvered him into a position where him and his (Dragon) army began to impose conditions on the REVOLUTIONARY MASSES OF WORKERS that were intolerable. And "In the north around Plaisance, Limbe, Dondon, the Vanguard [masses] of the revolution was not satisfied with the new regime." (James, PP 275-276)

And astonishingly, in the teeth of Napoleon's renewed threats and the hostile machinations of the British and Americans, "Toussaint submits-along with his generals." (James, PP 325-327)

Thus at one swell swoop, these leaders had been forced to play the role of NEO COLONIAL COMPRADORS our DRAGON had been corraled, hand cuffed and chained, and they subsequently then set out to use the "revolutionary army" to deliver the masses back into slavery! Simply because Napoleon feared them, his secret plan was to place all of Haiti's Africans into chattel slavery, and he sent his brother in law and (eventually) sixty thousand more French troops to accomplish his aims.

Recognizing the weaknesses of the DRAGON forces, and the true intentions of the French "[Lamour] Derance and the petty chief tains, North, South and West, each in his own district summoned Blacks to revolt." (James, P. 327)

So here we see the HYDRA doing battle with the (now) TRAITOROUS DRAGON and THE FRENCH IMPERIALISTS.

"It is a recurrent tale this (Dessalines and his generals hunt down these 'Brigands'. Once more the masses had shown greater political understanding than their leaders." (James, PP 338-339 and footnote 39) Our formerly heroic revolutionary army had been reduced to suppressing the revolutionary masses and forcing the latter into" fighting Black generals [who were] trying to crush the 'Brigands' for the French," [propelling our HYDRA back to center stage]" The little local leaders beat off [their and the French] attacks, Causing the French to be more

open to yellow fever." (James, PP 346-347)

Consequently we witness the DECENTRALIZED HYDRA elements launching the revolution, being displaced by Toussaints army-the dragon-only to resume their leadership roles during a crisis that saw the DRAGON CAPITULATE TO THE FRENCH, thus showing itself as the most indispensable weapon the revolutionaries developed.

Later, as is well known, Toussaint was kidnapped and taken to France where he later died in prison opening the way for his chief lieutenant Jean Jacque Dessalines to (again) switch back to the rebels side rally the revolutionary army to also switch back to the masses side, and along with the Hydra forces go on to totally annihilate the remaining French forces on the island, and declare independence and APPOINT HIMSELF the new countries EMPEROR.

A excellent soldier, Dessalines showed himself to be a cruel tyrant over the Haitian people. Thus he was assassinated by them within a few years of assuming power.

He was replaced by another general from the DRAGON forces: Henry Christophe, who was appointed president in 1807, but by 1811 had declared himself KING. He too would be killed by his own people in 1829.

Thus we can clearly see how Haiti's DRAGON forces played a very ambivalent role in the rebel fight for independence: They started out as tenacious and brilliant fighters against all of the European imperial and colonial elements, and the traiters amongst the Mulatto's, who were all bent on keeping the enslaved Africans underfoot. During the course of the revolutionary struggle they ALL opportunistically switched to the French imperialist's side, and went on to attempt to drown the still revolutionary masses and their decentralized group in blood; hoping that way the French would allow them to serve as a new elite class of African policemen against a reenslaved African workers class.

Failing to suppress the rebels, the DRAGON FORCES rejoined the HYDRA ELEMENTS, and lent their weight to totally defeating the French. Only to once again turn against the revolutionery masses by establishing themselves as a dictatorial and exploitive African elite.

For it's part the DECENTRALIZED HYDRA FORCES never veered from their objectives of winning as much freedom from servitude and oppression as possible. From the pre revolutionary times of Mackandal, up through the 1791-1804 Haitian Revolutionary war, and even down to our time, they've continued to strugple towards those ends. And it's highly instructive to know that in addition to fighting the French during their revolution, they were also under attack by Toussaint's DRAGON forces, who displayed hatred and fear of everything from their refusal to relinquish their MAROON/DECENTRALIZED organizational formations, to their practice of their traditional VODUN (voodoo) Spiritual systems, the latter which did a great deal to inspire their soldiers to martyr themselves for the cause of freedom. And the treacherous attacks carried out on them by Christophe and Dessalines-even while both sides were allied against the imperialists-were early signs that the DRAGON forces were ultimately concerned with power for it's own sake.

Then after being pushed to the side after the French were driven out, the DECENTRALIZED HYDRA elements were forced to-again-go UNDERGROUND and eventually morph into semi secret Vodun societies that until today remain a little recognized or understood autonomous elements amongst the oppressed Haitians. Wade Davis' classic THE SERPENT AND THE RAINBOW, as well as VOODOO IN Haiti, by Alfred Metraux (1972, Shocken Books Inc.) paints a fascinating picture of how these DECENTRALIZED elements went from centuries of being Maroon guerrillas, to revolutionary Fighters, later to be forced underground only to surface as today's Bizango, Zobop, Bossu, Macandal, Voltigeurs and other semi secret Vodun Societies. Thereby constituting a major segment of Haitian society that no domestic or foreign oppressors have ever been able to eradicate; although the dictator "Papa Doc" Duvalier was able to manipulate some of them by integrating them into dreaded "ton ton macoute" secret police.

And in another Stan Goff book, SEX AND WAR, he tells us "there are Maroons in Haiti again, with the wave of repression sweeping the country in the wake of the last U.S.-crafted coup d'etat (February 29, 2004),...twice in 2004 I visited one of these maroon communities in the Central Plateau. "(Goff, P. 8, Sex and War).

And it's hardly the case that we must restrict our study of the strengths and weaknesses of CENTRALIZED and DENTRALIZED groups as I have. What about the history of how DECENTRALIZED forces defeated Napoleon's army in Spain; how DECENTRALIZED forces have defeated every know invader in the border regions of what is today Afghanistan and Packistan, and how DECENTRALIZED INSURGENTS are today defeating the U.S. and her allies in Iraq?

SOME PARTING WORDS FROM A FARSIGHTED MARXIST

C.L.R. James penned the Black Jacobins many years before he would later crystaliz his theories about the ideas here. Yet on this in the Introduction to MARXISM FOR OUR TIMES: C.L.R. JAMES ON REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION, edited by Martin Glaberman (1999, University Press of Mississippi) we learn "In 1948 James wrote what was eventually published as 'Notes on Dialectics.'" This was a study of working class organization in light of dialectics and marked the ultimate break with Trotskyism, the rejection of the vanguard party. The importance of this break and the theoretical validation of the James viewpoint was demonstrated eight years later in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956/and later the French revolt of 1968, the Czech Spring of 1968, and the solidarity movement in Poland in 1980,, On the one hand, no group of the left or of the right was in any way prepared to accept the possibility of proletarian revoution in totalitarian dictatorships of Eastern Europe or in a democratic country such as France. All of their assumptions proved false: that the working class needed a party to lead it in revolution; that the working class needed a press and a network of communication; that what was needed was some crisis in the society such as a depression or a war. With none of these factors in place, the workers of Hungary in forty-eight hours took over all of the means of production in that society, created a form of dual power, forced the Communist Party to reorganize under another name, and was crushed by nothing in Hungarian society-but by a invasion of Soviet tanks."

[And in his own words] "James wrote;"

'Now if the party is the knowing of the proletariat, then

the coming of age of the proletariat can the abolition of the party. That is our universal, stated in it's boldest and most abstract form,, The party as we know it must disappear. It is disappearing. It will disappear as the state will disappear. The whole laboring population becomes the state. That is the disappearance of the state. It can have no other meaning. It withers away by expanding to such a degree that it is transformed into it's opposite. And the party does the same ,, For if the party does not wither away, the state never will.'

[C.L.R. James, NOTES ON DIALECTICS, London: Allison and Busby, 1980, PP 175-76]

"On the other hand, even after the fact, the left could not deal with events that demolished their theories of the necessity of a vanguard party, and proceeded to ignore the movements in Hungary, in France and in Poland—movements which Marx or Lenin would have pounced on to study and to hone and bring up to date their revolutionary theories." Martin Glaberman's INTRODUCTION to "Marxism for our times; C.L.R. James on revolutionary organization," 1999 University Press of Mississippi

CONCLUSION

It's clear that today's CENTER OF GRAVITY, the aspects on which all else is dependent and rests is the SHARED (global) CONSCIOUSNESS of the multitudes of the earths workers and oppressed people's, that their lives are daily becoming more and more intolerable, hence, solidifying them ideologically around the necessity for revolutionary change (like our earlier Maroons were solidified around the need to escape enslavement). And the ability of these multitudes to COMMUNICATE with each other and share ideas and methods about the best ways to proceed towards the goal.

Therefore, the global hardships brought about by today's imperialist's and their voracious accumulation of wealth, and their destruction of the environment and cultures will propel the multitudes to use any and all means to bring about the needed changes—or perish. And modern means of communications will provide them with the means to both update and imitate the

earlier HYDRA'S strengths, avoid it's weaknesses-while guarding against the tendency of the DRAGON'S to concentrate oppressive power in it's hands.

Thus, since both the shared needs and necessity for change is ALREADY present, along with the tools to communicate, then our final consideration is whether or not these masses MUST CENTRALIZE THEIR ORGANIZING (not to be confuse with the obvious need to COORDINATE their efforts!) To that I answer with a emphatic NO! and further, I contend that such centralization will only make it EASIER for our oppressors to identify and level repression upon us-prolonging the crisis our generation must deal with.

The historical records of our DRAGON HYDRA is clear; the choice is yours as to which you will choose.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS TO READ

THE BONI MAROON WARS IN SURINAME, Wim S.M. Hoogbergen (1997, Academic Publishers)

VOODOO IN HAITI, Alfred Metraux (1972, Schocken Books)

THE SERPENT AND THE RAINBOW, (? Wade Davis)

HIDDEN AMERICANS : MAROONS OF VIRGINIA AND THE CAROLINAS, Hugo Prosper Leaming (1995, Garland Publishing, N.Y.)

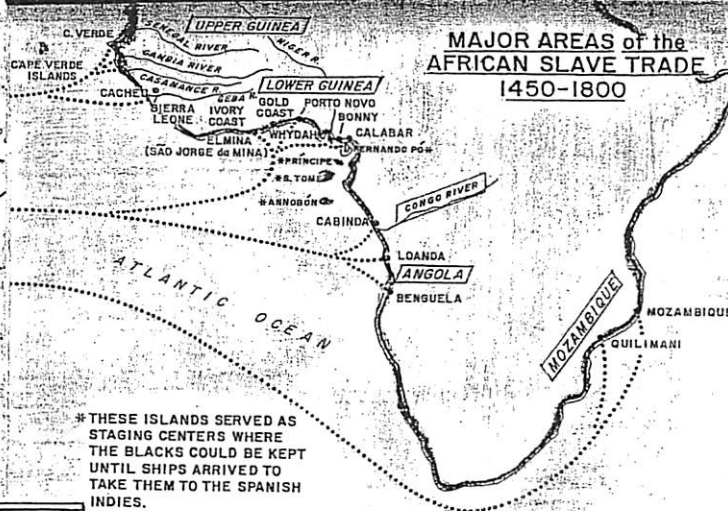
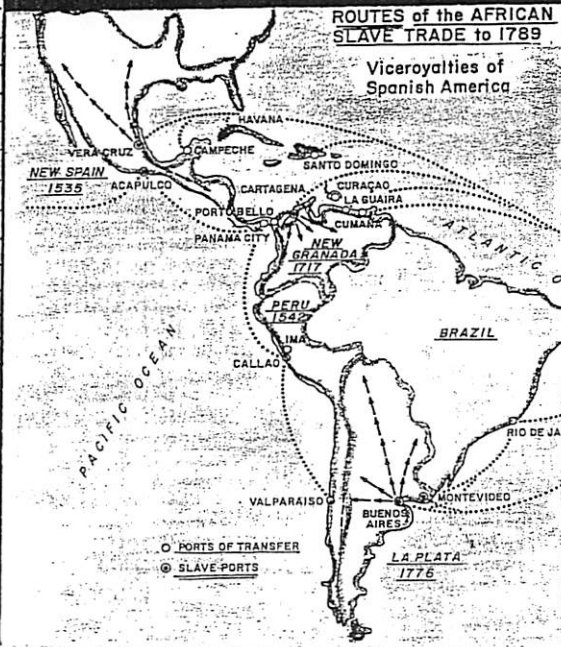
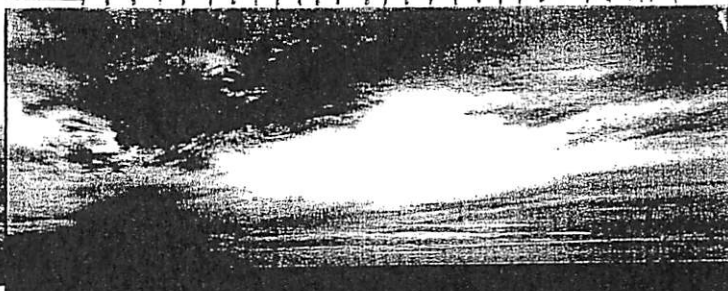
THE BLACK JACOBINS, C.L.R. James (1963 Random House)

FULL SPECTRUM DISORDER, Stan Goff (2004 Softskull Press, N.Y.)

SEX AND WAR, Stan Goff (Kate; reference needed here)

MARXISM FOR OUR TIMES: C.L.R. JAMES ON REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION
C.L.R. James; edited by Martin Glaberman (1999 University Press of Mississippi)

DIASPORA



WHITE ENGLISH WOMEN WERE SOLD TOGETHER WITH BLACK WOMEN AS SLAVES IN JAMAICA, WEST INDIES.

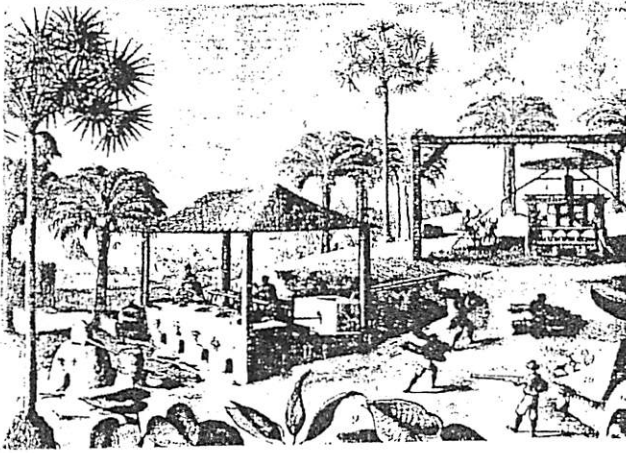
An 1884 wood engraving showing African captives.



A family of Black slaves

WHITE SPANISH WOMEN WERE BROUGHT UNDER ROYAL WARRANT TO THE SPANISH COLONIES IN THE NEW WORLD IN LARGE NUMBERS AND SOLD AS SLAVES IN THE 17th CENTURY AND LATER, LIKE THE AFRICAN WOMEN.

Slaves working on a sugar plantation in the Caribbean during the seventeenth century.



A Surinam planter in his morning dress



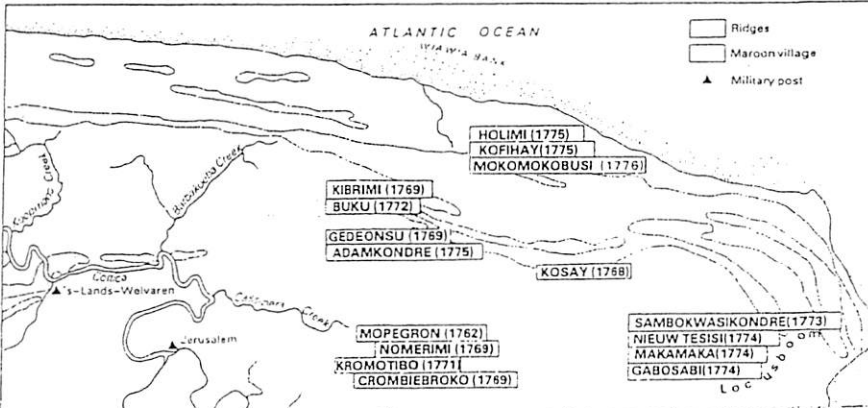
Slaves cultivating sugarcane on a large plantation in the West Indies.




Flagellation of a female slave

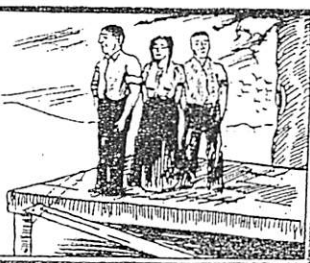
THE FIRST BONI-MAROON WAR, PART TWO 1773-1777

Map 11: The villages of the Boni-Maroons, 1762-1777





IN 1670 VIRGINIA PASSED A LAW FORBIDDING BLACKS AND INDIANS FROM BUYING WHITE PEOPLE AS SLAVES. THIS WAS 51 YEARS AFTER THE AFRICAN'S ARRIVAL IN CHAINS AND DESTITUTION.



Gaanman Boni circa 1730 — "a bosch Creool" (Dutch = Bush Creole) born in the forest). African mother and Amerindian or Dutch father. He became a leader of the later named Boni's ~~settled~~ in the late 1760's. (Aluku) Chief's Pujá, Kormantin Kodjo, Basa and Boni's son Agosú, earlier Baron, ~~settled~~.
 Ndiuka, Saramaka.

The Maroon of the Americas



For more than four centuries, thousands of enslaved Africans managed to escape from the plantations and mines of European colonizers throughout the Americas, searching for freedom in the wilderness. Between the early 16th and late 19th centuries, Maroons challenged the colonial powers and violently resisted enslavement, striking hard at the foundation of the plantation economy of the Western Hemisphere.



European troops chasing Maroons through a swamp

In remote areas throughout the United States, the Caribbean, Central America, and South America, Maroon communities emerged as free and independent societies that forced colonial governments to sign treaties and pacts that guaranteed their freedom, their land, and their political autonomy. These communities emerged as an integration of African, Native American, and European cultural elements.



A private marine of Colonel Fourgeoud's Corps

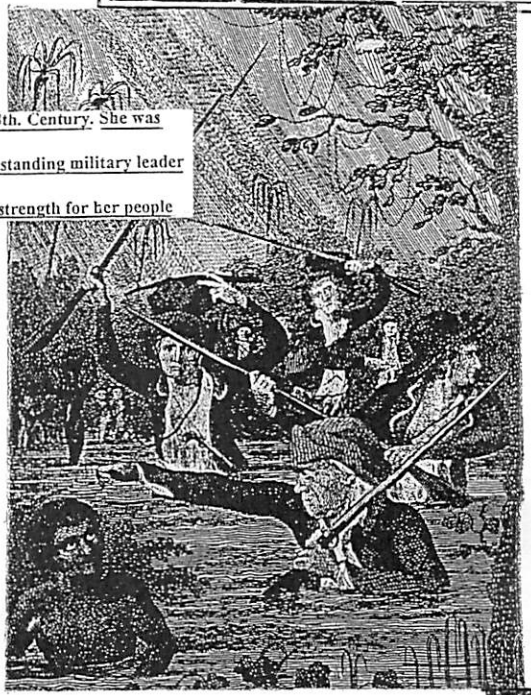


A free negro ranger

Nanny was a leader of the Maroons at the beginning of the 18th. Century. She was known by both the Maroons and the British settlers as an outstanding military leader who became, in her lifetime and after, a symbol of unity and strength for her people during times of crisis.

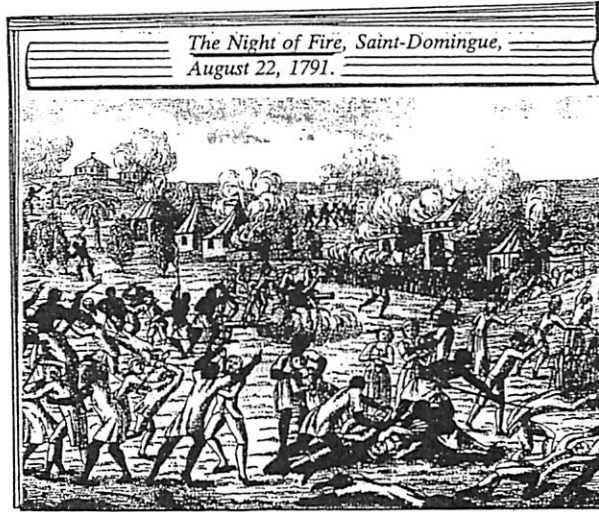


Excellent Nanny of the Maroons



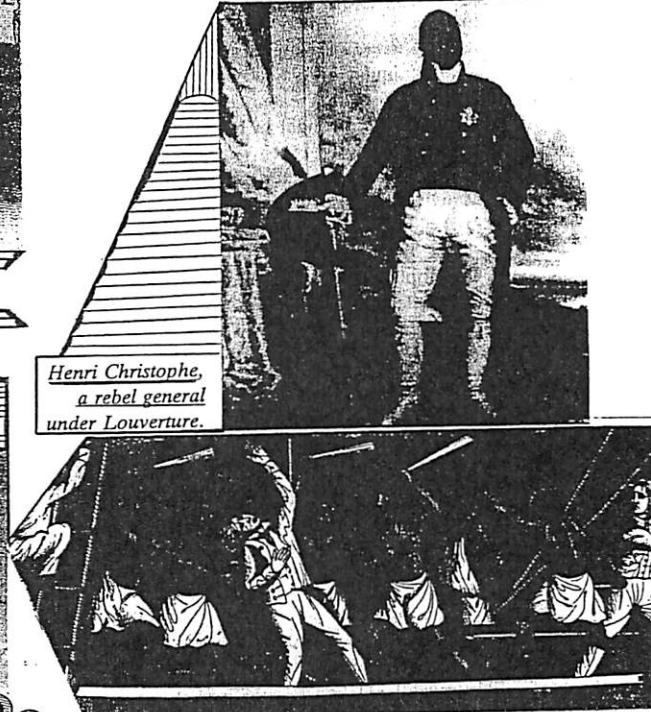


Toussaint Louverture, the Father of Haiti.

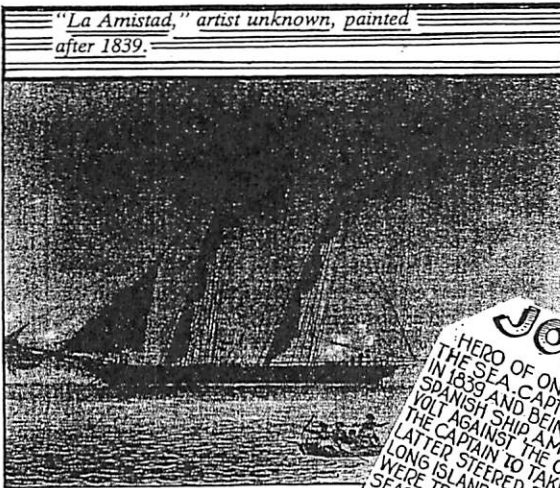


The Night of Fire, Saint-Domingue, August 22, 1791.

BEGINNING OF HAITI'S REVOLUTION



Henri Christophe, a rebel general under Louverture.



"La Amistad," artist unknown, painted after 1839.

JOSEPH CINQUE HERO OF ONE OF THE MOST DARING EDICTS OF THE SEA. CAPTURED IN AFRICA WITH 54 OTHERS IN 1839 AND BEING OFF THE COAST OF CUBA IN THE SPANISH SHIP AMISTAD HE LED A SUCCESSFUL RE-VOLT AGAINST THE CAPTAIN AND THE CREW. HE ORDERED THE CAPTAIN TO TAKE HIM BACK TO AFRICA BUT THE LATTER STEERED FOR THE UNITED STATES. LANDING OFF LONG ISLAND, CINQUE AND HIS GALLANT COMPANIONS WERE TRIED FOR PIRACY AND MURDER ON THE HIGH SEAS. THE ANTI-SLAVERY PARTY CAME TO THEIR RES-CUE AND AFTER A LONG AND SENSATIONAL TRIAL AT HARTFORD, CONN., ALL WERE FREED.

"Trial of the Amistad Captives," by Hale Woodruff, c. 1940.

