

How well did the Haitian Revolution produce liberty?

1 2 3 4 5

What evidence supports your evaluation?

How well did the Haitian Revolution produce equality?

1 2 3 4 5

What evidence supports your evaluation?

How well did the American Revolution produce liberty?

1 2 3 4 5

What evidence supports your evaluation?

How well did the American Revolution produce equality?

1 2 3 4 5

What evidence supports your evaluation?

Which of the Atlantic Revolutions best lived up to the ideals of liberty and equality?

How well did the French Revolution produce liberty?

1 2 3 4 5

What evidence supports your evaluation?

How well did the French Revolution produce equality?

1 2 3 4 5

What evidence supports your evaluation?

How well did the Venezuelan Revolution produce liberty?

1 2 3 4 5

What evidence supports your evaluation?

How well did the Venezuelan Revolution produce equality?

1 2 3 4 5

What evidence supports your evaluation?

Student Handout 1.1—American Revolution

BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

Socially and economically, the thirteen British colonies in North America fell into two groups. The southern colonies, Virginia the largest among them, had largely plantation-based agrarian economies dominated by a planter elite and worked by African and African-American slave laborers. These plantations focused on **cash crop** production for the Atlantic economy. The northern colonies had relatively large commercial and handicraft sectors, dominated by mercantile capitalists and worked by indentured servants and free artisan labor. Northern agriculture featured a large population of small, independent farmers, and its scale was much smaller than in the southern colonies. Slavery was part of the northern economy but not to the same extent as in the south. Also present in the colonies were two groups that formed direct links with other world societies: the British colonial government, consisting of both administrators and soldiers, and members of Indian nations living both outside and within the boundaries of the colonies themselves.

CAUSES

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, European states passed laws to protect their own commercial interests. These laws, taken together, formed an economic system called **mercantilism**. The mercantilist system of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries benefited colonial elites while enriching European governments. But by the second half of the eighteenth century, many colonists began to resent the restrictions the mercantilist system placed on their economic activity. This was true among both the increasingly-wealthy elites and the laboring classes. Resentment intensified in British North America after the 1763 British victory in the Seven Years' War, which the colonists called the French and Indian War. The British imposed a series of taxes and policies on the colonies to offset the cost of defense during the war and to maintain an army of 10,000 in the colonies. Taken together, these exactions began to swing public opinion against the British. Tensions came to a head after a colonial militia and British troops exchanged shots in the Massachusetts towns of Lexington and Concord in 1775.

The causes of the American revolution were not only economic. The Enlightenment protest against absolutism, expressed in a call for liberty and equality, found fertile soil in North America. Different groups, however, had differing interpretations of these ideas. To the merchant and planter elites, freedom was taken primarily to mean freedom from British mercantilist economic restrictions. Equality was taken to mean equality before the law, not economic or political equality among classes or races. Many people in those groups who were not in a dominant social position, such as slaves, indentured servants, artisan laborers, mariners, and small farmers, wanted real social and economic equality. Many were ready to attempt to gain it by revolution, which gave the movement a second dimension—a struggle to reform society and to rid it of anti-democratic features.

RESULTS

The American revolution produced freedom and equality but in terms most favorable to elite groups. Immediately after the revolutionaries' victory in the war, the British army departed, and the new United States found itself outside of the British mercantilist system. After a brief

experiment in a decentralized confederation, the Constitutional Convention of 1787 created a federation with a strong central government, shifting power from individual states to the national government. That national government, however, was an Enlightenment project, with separate legislative, executive, and judicial branches and elections built into the system. Racial inequality was built into the system as well. Despite the initial objections of some delegates to the conventions, a compromise allowed slaves to be counted as three-fifths of a person to determine the size of a state's representation in the House of Representatives without allowing slaves to vote. However, northern states, through legislative and judicial decisions, gradually abolished slavery, and all but two states halted the importation of African slaves. The new United States shortly began to expand its borders. From the administration of George Washington forward, the United States moved to acquire Indian lands. This led to a series of treaties, broken treaties, and wars that would see the United States occupying North America from the Eastern seaboard to the West Coast by the mid-nineteenth century. Indian nations were pushed off ancestral lands and onto reservations, at the cost of many lives.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What different groups of people lived in the British colonies before the revolution?
2. How did mercantilism and social/political inequalities provoke resentment in the colonies?
3. How did different groups in the colonies understand Enlightenment ideas?
4. What type of government did the American revolution produce?
5. In what way did the American revolution produce freedom? What were the limits of this freedom?
6. In what way did the American revolution produce equality? What were the limits of this equality.

Student Handout 1.2: American Revolution—Stamp Act, British Parliament, 1765

An act for granting and applying certain stamp duties, and other duties, in the British colonies and plantations in America, towards further defraying the expenses of defending, protecting, and securing the same; and for amending such parts of the several acts of parliament relating to the trade and revenues of the said colonies and plantations, and direct the manner of determining and recovering the penalties and forfeitures therein mentioned.

Source: Edmund Morgan, ed., *Prologue to Revolution : Sources and Documents on the Stamp Act Crisis, 1764-1766* (Chapel Hill : University of North Carolina Press, 1959), 35.

Patrick Henry was one of the many colonial voices in North America urging resolutions against the Stamp Act. In a speech to Virginia's Colonial Legislature on March 23, 1775 he argued that:

We have done everything that could be done to avert the storm which is now coming on. We have petitioned; we have remonstrated; we have supplicated; we have prostrated ourselves before the throne, and have implored its interposition to arrest the tyrannical hands of the ministry and Parliament. Our petitions have been slighted; our remonstrances have produced additional violence and insult; our supplications have been disregarded; and we have been spurned, with contempt, from the foot of the throne! ... I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!

Source: Henry, Patrick. "Speech before the Virginia House of Burgesses", in L. Carroll Judson, *The Sages and Heroes of the American Revolution* (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1970), 157.

Student Handout 1.3— The Constitution of these United States of America, 1787

Preamble

We the people of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the common Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Article 1, Section 2

Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons. ...

Amendment I [ratified in 1791]

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Student Handout 2.1—French Revolution

BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

On the eve of the revolution, French society and, to a great extent, politics were dominated by a hereditary nobility. On the other hand, France's economy, increasingly tied to the growing Atlantic economy through its colonial empire, was dominated by a capitalist **bourgeoisie**. Both the nobility and the bourgeoisie benefited from ties to the monarchy. The nobility maintained its social prestige through its role at the royal court, and the wealthy bourgeoisie enriched itself by having royal protection in the mercantilist economic system. Part of the French peasantry still owed feudal obligations to the nobility, that is, laws and practices left over from the medieval era. But a large part of the peasantry was made up of small, independent landowners. Similarly, French manufacturing took place in workshops rather than in large factories. The urban, artisan laborers who worked the shops were known collectively as *sans-culottes*—"without breeches"—because their pants hung loose to the feet, unlike the clothing of the nobility. France's colonial empire shrank severely when it lost India and North America to the English in the 1763 Treaty of Paris, which ended the Seven Years' War. However, revenues from the empire in the late eighteenth century, especially from the slave plantation-based Caribbean colony of St. Domingue (later Haiti), enriched French society, especially the commercial bourgeoisie.

CAUSES

Enlightenment thinkers like Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Rousseau had criticized the French system of absolute monarchy during the decades leading up to the revolution. Heredity was not a rational way to choose political leaders, they argued. A better system would be one in which each individual, freely exercising reason through the equality of a vote, would take part in choosing a government. God did not reserve talent to the nobility. Why then, should France reward them with privilege? While the French monarchy supported the American revolution to check Britain's power, Enlightened France supported it because of its ideals of freedom and equality. In 1787, state debt from both the Seven Years' War and French support of the American revolution proved too great for the French monarchy to bear. Failing in his attempt to levy taxes on the nobility, which paid little or no tax, Louis XVI called a meeting of the Estates-General, a large meeting of delegates representing the clergy, the nobility, and the "Third Estate," that is, everyone else in society. The delegates, including clerics and nobles, as well as representatives of the Third Estate, brought with them grievances from their constituents, often phrased in the Enlightenment language of liberty and equality.

The fiscal crisis coincided with a spike in the price of bread, which affected the *sans-culottes* most intensely. It was not only hunger that inspired the ensuing bread riots. Beneath calls for bread lay an anti-capitalist cry for government regulation of the market to provide a measure of security, particularly to the poor. The call for a degree of economic equality resonated with the Third Estate's own grievances. Emboldened by the *sans-culottes*' action, the Third Estate withdrew from the Estates-General and declared itself the National Assembly in June 1789. The revolution was on.

RESULTS

The Constitution of 1792 guaranteed representative government, civil liberties like freedoms of speech, religion, and assembly, and equality before the law. Furthermore, it ended the special legal privilege of the nobility and clergy. The revolution became more radical after the execution of Louis XVI in 1793. The National Assembly granted unprecedented legal rights to women, abolished slavery, and instituted price controls. But these reforms were rolled back under the Empire of Napoleon Bonaparte, who came to power in a *coup d'état* in 1799. Though Napoleon was uninterested in genuinely representative government on a parliamentary model, he enshrined many of the principles of the 1792 Constitution, such as equality before the law and civil liberties (though not freedom of the press) in his Napoleonic Code of 1807. This legal basis would remain intact with the 1814 restoration of the French monarchy under Louis XVIII. The new king, too, would not be absolute, but rather would rule under the Constitutional Convention, which placed limits on the monarch's authority and provided for a degree of representative government in the Chamber of Deputies, elected by a small, wealthy percentage of French society.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What groups of people populated France before the revolution?
2. What crises provoked the revolution in France?
3. How did different groups of people in France understand Enlightenment ideas?
4. How was the French monarchy of 1814 different from the pre-revolutionary monarchy?
5. In what ways did the French revolution produce freedom? What were the limits of this freedom?
6. In what ways did the French revolution produce equality? What were the limits of this equality?

Student Handout 2.2—“Cahiers de Doléances”

In 1789, King Louis XVI convened the Estates General to get approval for changing the economic structure of the French government, and for an increase in taxes. He also ordered that complaints from the people, *cahiers de doléances*, be collected.

Cahier of The Third Estate of Dourdan, 29 March, 1789

The order of the third estate of the City, *Bailliage*, and County of Dourdan, imbued with gratitude prompted by the paternal kindness of the King, who deigns to restore its former rights and its former constitution, forgets at this moment its misfortunes and impotence, to harken only to its foremost sentiment and its foremost duty, that of sacrificing everything to the glory of the *Patrie* [fatherland] and the service of His Majesty. It supplicates him to accept the grievances, complaints, and remonstrances which it is permitted to bring to the foot of the throne, and to see therein only the expression of its zeal and the homage of its obedience.

It wishes:

1. That his subjects of the third estate, equal by such status to all other citizens, present themselves before the common father without other distinction which might degrade them.
2. That all the orders, already united by duty and a common desire to contribute equally to the needs of the State, also deliberate in common concerning its needs.
3. That no citizen lose his liberty except according to law; that, consequently, no one be arrested by virtue of special orders, or, if imperative circumstances necessitate such orders, that the prisoner be handed over to the regular courts of justice within forty-eight hours at the latest.
4. That no letters or writings intercepted in the post be the cause of the detention of any citizen, or be produced in court against him, except in case of conspiracy or undertaking against the State.
5. That the property of all citizens be inviolable, and that no one be required to make sacrifice thereof for the public welfare, except upon assurance of indemnification based upon the statement of freely selected appraisers. . . .
15. That every personal tax be abolished; that thus the *capitation* [a poll tax] and the *taille* [a seigniorial tax] and its accessories be merged with the *vingtièmes* [twentieth parts] in a tax on land and real or nominal property.
16. That such tax be borne equally, without distinction, by all classes of citizens and by all kinds of property, even feudal and contingent rights.
17. That the tax substituted for the *corvée* [required labor on public works] be borne by all classes of citizens equally and without distinction. That said tax, at present beyond the capacity of those who pay it and the needs to which it is destined, be reduced by at least one-half. . . .”

Source: John Hall Stewart, *A Documentary Survey of the French Revolution* (New York: Macmillan, 1951), 76-7.

Student Handout 2—The French Constitution of 1793 Of Citizenship

4. The following are admitted to exercise the rights of French citizenship:

Every man born and domiciled in France, fully twenty-one years of age

Every foreigner, fully twenty-one years of age, who, domiciled in France for one year

Lives there by his labor

Or acquires property

Or marries a French woman

Or adopts a child

Or maintains an old man

Finally, every foreigner who is considered by the legislative body to have deserved well of humanity. ...

Of the Guarantee of Rights

122. The Constitution guarantees all Frenchmen equality, liberty, security, property, the public debt, the free exercise of worship, universal education, public relief, unlimited liberty of the press, the right of petition, the right to assemble in popular societies, and enjoyment of all the rights of man.

Source: John Hall Stewart, *A Documentary Survey of the French Revolution* (New York: Macmillan, 1951), 458–9, 468.

Student Handout 3.1—Haitian Revolution

BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

Haiti was the French colony of St. Domingue (Santo Domingo), the most productive colonial economy in the world. Dominated by plantation agriculture, primarily to supply sugar and coffee to the world market, Haiti had a slave population of nearly 90 percent. African slaves were brought to the island in the Atlantic slave trade. The balance of the population consisted of peoples of European ancestry and of mixed heritage, defined in the law of the colony as “white” or *gens de couleur* (people of color), respectively. Both of these groups owned slaves. French administrators governed the island. By 1788, the native Indian population had died out completely as a result of the Spanish conquest, harsh labor policies, and introduction of infectious diseases from **Afroeurasia**.

In no way were any of these racial groups united, except perhaps in opposition to each other. There were even divisions within the slave population, primarily between a larger group of agricultural laborers and a smaller group involved in domestic service and, in some cases, the management of the plantation system. The white population consisted of a planter elite known as *grands blancs* and a larger class of *petits blancs*, men and women who participated in the economy primarily as artisans or merchants in the cities. *Gens de couleur*, like whites, were divided by class, though the disparity of wealth was not as great as that between *grands* and *petits blancs*.

CAUSES

The root of the Haitian revolution was the fundamental imbalance in Haitian society. Slaves made up the vast majority of the population and were oppressed on a daily basis in the most naked ways and thoroughly deprived economically in a system that produced great wealth. For this slave population, the most pressing issue was the termination of slavery and the social inequality it entailed. As the colony was 90 percent slave, this issue was inevitably the focus of the revolution. Political unrest in the colony began, however, with class tensions among the white population. As a French colony, St. Domingue did not receive representation in the Estates-General of 1789.

The *grands blancs* sent representatives anyway. These people were ultimately admitted into the French National Assembly, but the vote was restricted to whites who owned twenty or more slaves. This policy kept out the *petits blancs*, and it held in elections for local assemblies. The *petits blancs*, arguing in a nationalist manner for their rights as Frenchmen, fought the *grands blancs* in a civil war between town and country. Both groups, however, based their political claims on their French heritage, the *grands blancs* arguing for liberty to represent the colony, the *petits blancs* demanding political equality with the *grands*. This left both the *gens de couleur* and the slaves out of the loop. After revolts by the *gens de couleur* led by Vincent Ogé resulted in a wave of racial oppression, the slave population leapt into the opening left by the political crisis, staging a coordinated rebellion in August 1791. By 1794, Toussaint L’Ouverture, a brilliant general and former slave, assumed leadership of the rebellion.

RESULTS

Haiti proclaimed its independence from France in 1804, as a republic. As all of the groups in the revolution except the slaves conceived of liberty and equality in terms of their own situation, none of them had supported the abolition of slavery. It was this, however, that the slave population demanded. The whites, both *grands* and *petits blancs*, wanted to hold on to white privilege. The rebels accordingly drove them off the island. The *gens de couleur* wanted to keep the right to own slaves. They were also driven off or deprived of their slave property, though some of them stayed and retained economic and social power. The Haitian revolution abolished slavery on the island. It was the first major successful slave revolt in the Atlantic world, and L'Ouverture became known among the slave population of the Americas as a liberating hero. The Haitian revolution also gave strength to the anti-slavery movement among European peoples. In the following decades, abolitionists used the example of Haiti to convince slave owners that using free labor was, if nothing else, a good way to avoid a bloody uprising.

The newly-independent Haiti, however, faced two immediate economic problems. On the one hand, slave-owning societies, like the United States, placed an embargo on Haiti, fearing that its example would encourage other slave revolts. This embargo deprived Haiti of many of its former markets. On the other hand, the former slaves proved very unwilling to continue plantation labor, which they very sensibly associated with slavery. This led to continuing class tension among those who remained on the island and a rapid transition from democracy to dictatorship.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What groups of people lived in Haiti before the revolution?
2. How did the long-term and immediate causes of the Haitian revolution differ?
3. How did different groups of people in Haiti understand the Enlightenment ideas of liberty and equality?
4. What did the Haitian revolution accomplish, and what problems did the new country face following independence?
5. In what ways did the Haitian revolution produce freedom? What were the limits of this freedom?
6. In what ways did the Haitian revolution produce equality? What were the limits of this equality?

Student Handout 3.2—Haitian Cahiers, 1789

In the French Caribbean colony of Saint Domingue (later renamed Haiti when it became an independent country), the wealthier people were inspired that the French revolution might bring more economic independence and greater protection of their property. The free people of color who lived on the island also demanded that they be included in the new French government's definition of citizen.

JOURNAL, Containing the Complaints, Grievances, and Claims of the Free-citizens and colored landowners of the French Islands and Colonies:

Article I. The inhabitants of the French colonies are exclusively and generally divided into two classes, Freemen and those who are born, and live, in slavery.

Article II. The class of Freemen includes not only all the Whites, but also all of the colored Creoles, the Free Blacks, Mulattos, small minorities, and others.

Article III. The freed Creoles, as well as their children and their descendants, should have the same rights, rank, prerogatives, exemptions, and privileges as other colonists.

Article IV. For that purpose, the colored Creoles request that the Declaration of the Rights of Man, decreed by the National Assembly, be applied to them, as it is to Whites.

Therefore, it is requested that Articles LVII and LIX of the Edict [the Black Code] dated March 1685, be rewritten and carried out in accordance with their form and content. . . .

Source: Cahiers, contenant les plaintes, Doléances, et reclamations des citoyens-libre et propriétaires de couleur, des isles et colonies Françaises (Paris, 1789), George Mason University, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution, <http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/searchfr.php?function=find&keyword=cahiers&Find=Find#>

Student Handout 3 -Toussaint L'Ouverture

Toussaint L'Ouverture (1743–1803) was born a slave on the French colony of Saint Domingue, but his owner freed him when he was 33. Although Toussaint became a landowner and slave owner, he helped lead the revolution that started in 1791 and separated the eastern part of the Caribbean island from French control.

Proclamation after he freed the slaves in the Spanish-occupied territory that he had liberated:

I have never considered that liberty is the same as license, that when men have gained their liberty they have the right to live in idleness and create disorder. It is my firm intention to see to it that the cultivators remain at their work, that they be given one fourth of the income of the plantations and that no one can treat them unjustly without suffering for it. But at the same time it is my wish that they work harder than before, that they obey orders and be strict in the performance of their duty.

A proclamation in 1800:

I have been informed that the useful measures I have taken are misrepresented by many ill intentioned persons of all colors. . . They say to the cultivators: "You claim you are free. All the same, you must remain on my plantation whether you like it or not. I will treat you as I had done in the old days, and show you that you are not free." Military men and police officers are hereby instructed to arrest any person guilty of such talk.

Source: Ralph Korngold, *Citizen Toussaint* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1965), 196, 206.

Student Handout 4: Venezuelan Revolution

BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

The revolution in Venezuela was one of several in South and Middle America that led to the emergence of independent republics. Under Spanish rule, a planter elite, called *hacendados*, dominated Venezuela. Among the elite, those born in Spain were known as *peninsulares* (from the Iberian Peninsula) and those native to America as *criollos* (creoles). The *hacendados* achieved their preeminence primarily through cocoa and coffee production, which was, before the revolution, brought to the Atlantic market through the Spanish mercantilist system. Politically, Spain ruled Venezuela as a colony, though town councils, most importantly that of Caracas, the future capital of independent Venezuela, allowed the *hacendados* a measure of political influence over local affairs. The bulk of the *criollo* population was less well off than the *hacendados*. They worked primarily in urban positions as artisans, soldiers, and small-to-middling traders. The majority of the population was of combined Native American and European ancestry, known in Spanish as *mestizos*. This population was mainly made up of peasants. Though *mestizos* wanted to end the *criollos*' white privilege, they did not necessarily want to end slavery. Two groups of people were outside the political system despite being very much a part of Venezuelan society. First, African slaves, whose labor was essential for the colony's plantation economy, constituted about 20 percent of the population. The foremost goal for slaves was freedom, specifically the end of slavery. As a minority of the population, however, and with the Venezuelan elite profiting from slave labor, slaves were not in a good position to force their demands. Second, the native population, suffering from the disease and death brought by Europeans in the sixteenth century and known as the **Great Dying**, made up less than 10 percent of the total population at independence. The natives were thoroughly marginalized politically and economically.

CAUSES

By the nineteenth century, the economic interests of white Venezuelans and the Spanish imperial government had diverged. While Spain viewed its colonies as a steady source of income to be kept under control, the *hacendados* wanted the freedom to sell their cocoa and coffee on the open world market in order to fetch the highest price. Discontent with Spain was not limited to the upper classes. The Spanish colonial government sought, above all, to preserve Venezuela's hierarchical social order. Anyone who wanted greater social, political, or economic equality in the colony had, at some level, to oppose Spanish government. Napoleon's 1808 conquest of Spain provided Venezuelan revolutionaries with a window of opportunity. In 1810, the town council of Caracas deposed the Spanish colonial governor and established a *junta*, or group dictatorship. Simón Bolívar, a wealthy *criollo* profoundly influenced by the European writers of the Enlightenment, traveled to Europe himself at this point

to rally support for the revolution. Though he was largely unsuccessful, he did bring back with him Francisco de Miranda, an important Venezuelan dissident who had been in exile in England. Upon Bolívar and Miranda's return, the *junta* passed the most radical legislation the revolution witnessed. Restrictions on trade were lifted, which pleased the *hacendado* elite. The abolition of taxes on food, of Indian tribute payments to the government, and of slavery itself satisfied the different egalitarian goals of the other Venezuelan groups.

RESULTS

The revolution's gains, however were rolled back when Spain briefly reconquered Venezuela after Napoleon's fall in 1814. Slavery was restored, and when Bolívar, having successfully elicited aid from independent Haiti, permanently liberated Venezuela in 1819, it remained intact. Venezuela continued to be ruled, as it had in 1810, by *hacendados*. White privilege, too, remained the order of the day, *criollos* reserving a greater measure of political and economic status than *mestizos*. The revolution did, however, end Spain's mercantilist restrictions on Venezuelan commerce, and the new republic traded its cocoa and coffee on the open world market.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What groups of people lived in Venezuela before the revolution?
2. What were the first reforms of Bolívar and Miranda?
3. How did different groups of people in Venezuela understand the Enlightenment ideas of liberty and equality?
4. What did the Venezuelan revolution accomplish?
5. In what ways did the Venezuelan revolution produce freedom? What were the limits of this freedom?
6. In what ways did the Venezuelan revolution produce equality? What were the limits of this equality?

***Student Handout 4—Simón Bolívar, “Message to the Congress of Angostura,”
1819***

It would require no alteration in our basic laws to adopt a legislature similar to the British parliament. Like the North Americans, we have divided the national congress into two chambers: the chamber of representatives and the senate. The first is very wisely structured: it enjoys all the powers appropriate to it and is not in need of reform, since the constitution conferred on it the origin, form, and functions demanded by the people to ensure that their wishes would be legitimately and effectively represented. If the senate were hereditary instead of elective, it would, I think, be the base, the bond, and the soul of our republic. During political upheavals, this body would deflect lightning away from the government and repulse the waves of popular unrest. Loyal to the government out of a vested interest in its own preservation, it would always resist any attempted incursions by the people against the jurisdiction and authority of their magistrates. ...

The creation of a hereditary senate would in no way violate the principle of political equality; it is not my wish to establish a noble class: to do that, as a famous republican has said, would be to destroy equality and freedom simultaneously. I wish, rather, to point out that it is a profession demanding great knowledge and the means adequate to obtain such instruction. We should not leave everything to chance and to the results of elections: The people are more gullible than nature perfected by art, and although it is true that these senators would have no monopoly on virtue, it is also true that they would have the advantage of an enlightened education. . . .

Equally, [the senate] will serve as counterweight for both government and the people, a mediating force to buffer the barbs these eternal rivals are forever hurling at one another. ... Precisely because no other form of government is as weak as democracy, its structure should be all the more solid and its institutions continually tested for stability. If we fail in this, we can be sure the result will be an experiment in government rather than a permanent system, an ungovernable, tumultuous, and anarchic society rather than a social institution in which happiness, peace, and justice rule. ...

Source: David Bushnell, ed., *El Libertador: Writings of Simón Bolívar* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003), 42-3, 46.

Student Handout 4—Simón Bolívar, Kingston, Jamaica, September 6, 1815

Simón Bolívar (1783-1830) was born in Caracas in the Spanish colony of Venezuela. He was educated to learn about Enlightenment thinkers by European tutors, traveled in revolutionary France under the control of Napoleon Bonaparte, visited the new United States of America, and led an armed revolt against Spanish control of South America. After one devastating defeat by the Spanish, he traveled to the Caribbean to gain support from Jamaicans and the new government of independent Haiti. Funds from the Haitian government helped pay British and Irish mercenaries from the Napoleonic wars who helped defeat the Spanish by 1824.

The emperor Charles V entered into a pact with the discoverers, conquerors, and settlers of America, which is, according to Guerra, our social contract. The monarchs of Spain entered into solemn contract with them, stipulating that they performed these acts at their own expense and risk, without any cost to the royal treasury, and in turn acknowledging them to be lords of the land, authorized to organize the administration and function as appellate court, with other exemptions and privileges too numerous to mention. The king pledged never to alienate the American provinces, since he held no other jurisdiction than that of supreme dominion, granting a kind of feudal ownership to the conquerors and their descendants. At the same time, there exist express laws exclusively favoring those born of Spanish parents in the new land in matters of civil and ecclesiastical employment and regarding collection of taxes. Thus, in obvious violation of the laws and subsequent agreements, those native-born Spaniards have been stripped of their constitutional authority granted them in the code. ...

Source: Simón Bolívar, "The Jamaica Letter: Response from a South American to a Gentleman from This Island," trans. Frederick H. Fornoff, in David Bushnell, ed., *El Libertador: Writings of Simón Bolívar* (Oxford: Oxford UP